

Community Justice Scotland
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

**Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland
Local Area Annual Return Template
Reporting year April 2023 – March 2024**

April 2024



Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland Local Area Annual Return Template

1. Background

This reporting template has been developed in discussion with community justice representatives from local areas. This template is designed to enable local areas to report on progress towards the community justice outcomes.

2. Statement of Assurance and Data Usage

The information submitted to CJS using this template will be used by CJS in its role to monitor, promote and support improvement in, and keep the Scottish Ministers informed about, performance in the provision of community justice.

In line with provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), CJS will use appropriate data to ensure that there is continuous reporting, development and progress towards the national outcomes. By providing data to CJS you are consenting to its use by CJS as indicated. Community Justice Partnerships should be aware that any information held by CJS is subject to statutory Freedom of Information obligations.

Completion of the template can help local partnerships to fulfil their requirements under s23 (1b) of the Act by using the developed content to inform the production of the publicly facing summary statement of annual progress.

3. General principles of the template

The template and guidance have been developed using the following principles:

- Support CJS in developing the evidence base for local community justice activity and progress across Scotland within the reporting year
- Support CJS to comply with their duties set out in the Act, Sections 26-30
- Support local partners to comply with their local reporting requirements set out in section 23 of the Act.



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4. How to fill in the template

The return should be completed and consulted on with partners involved in community justice in your local area. In line with the Act this includes statutory partners, third sector bodies involved in community justice in relation to the area, and such community bodies other persons as partners consider appropriate. CJS expects that completion of this template will be a collaborative effort.

This template incorporates guidance to support completion, with the text (*in blue*) providing reflective prompts to consider when developing your answer, which can be deleted and replaced with your response. These should be considered together through the development of your answer rather than addressed individually.

There is no expectation that areas will return substantial numerical data. It is likely that local areas will not have the national data indicators set out by the Community Justice Performance Framework at the time they are completing this template. **It is not anticipated that CJS will routinely use or refer to local level national indicator data in the context of the national outcome activity annual report.** If in developing the national report it becomes apparent that local-level data may support further analysis of particular outcomes, for example in identifying potential recommendations, exploring data outliers, or areas for further development, we expect this to be taken forward in discussion with the relevant local areas and partners.

Instead, we want partners to focus on the qualitative evidence drawn from their activity and insights about impact. Relevant local supporting evidence from the [CJS improvement tool](#) that will supplement the national indicator data has been specified under each national outcome in this template. We would encourage partners to develop the response to this template in conversation with each other and view it as an opportunity to reflect on your strengths and needs in partnership.

Where the template asks for evidence, a written response will suffice and there is no expectation that you send additional supporting documentation – if there are any aspects CJS is unclear on, it will be our responsibility to request clarification where necessary.

If any response or evidence requires details about people with lived experience (e.g. evidence in respect of someone's life story) please DO NOT include any identifiable personal or sensitive information (as outlined in Schedules 2 & 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998) as CJS does not require such information. If this is unavoidable then please ensure that the data is fully anonymised.

If you have any queries about completing the template, then please email CJSImprovement@communityjustice.scot.



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1. Community Justice Partnership / Group Details

Name of local authority area/s	<i>Renfrewshire Council</i>
Name and contact details of the partnership Chair	Name: John Trainer Email: john.trainer@renfrewshire.gov.uk Telephone: n/a
Contact for queries about this report	Name: Jamie Gardyne Email: Jamie.gardyne@renfrewshire.gov.uk Telephone: n/a

2. Template Sign-off from Community Justice Partnership / Group Chair

Enter the name of the chair to confirm that the local community justice partnership representatives have agreed this return as an accurate record. It should be returned to CJS by 27 September 2024.

For the purpose of submitting this return to CJS ensure you have agreement from community justice partners.

For the purpose of publishing this template as part of your s23 duty (publish a public-facing annual report on progress towards national and local outcomes) you should follow local governance arrangements.

Date:.....26 September 2024.....

Name:...John Trainer



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3. Governance Arrangements

Last year, we asked partnerships to describe their governance structure for community justice arrangements and include links to wider community planning. Please describe any substantive changes since your previous answer.

No change.

4. The year overall

This section should be used to reflect some of the a) challenges/negative implications and b) opportunities/positive implications from the reporting year on the community justice partnership. This can include impact on the improvement activity, partner collaboration, and delivery of services.

Challenges

The Community Justice Lead Officer was appointed to the post in March 2023 following a 2-year vacancy. Service demands stemming from the Lead Officer's previously role meant that they could not effectively transition to the new position until the end of June 2023. From then to September 2023 the Lead Officer was also responsible for completing statutory justice social work returns owing to broader system and resource challenges. This impacted the Lead Officer's available capacity and extended the period for bedding in and orientation.

Over the course of the year the prison population increased significantly. National data shows these largely related to the number of people sentenced and in custody, with significant increases in the numbers of individuals sentenced to short sentences less than one year. Short periods in custody can be disruptive and damaging, impacting jobs, housing, health and wellbeing, and relationships. Addressing this disruption is resource intensive and ultimately elective on the part of the person convicted.

Accommodation challenges in the national prison estate have been well publicised in the media. This has resulted in a high degree of public awareness and interest in the impact of responsive measures. This narrative must be balanced with national messaging which promotes community justice as an early and effective approach in addressing the needs and behaviours of people who offend.

The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 1st August 2023. It makes provisions regarding the determination of bail, bail conditions, release arrangements and pre-release planning. The Act serves to better support decision making and processes for people who are accused and/or convicted, and justice partners support underlying policy objectives. Challenges relate to the resource and capacity implications on justice partners, and the potential impact of future standards and requirements.



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Proposed changes in relation to national throughcare commissioning arrangements aim to benefit a broader range of people transitioning from custody back into communities. Renfrewshire Community Justice Partnership supports this, however the specifics about how this will be delivered are not known. The challenge for local partnerships will be identifying how to work with commissioned delivery partners to delineate responsibility and add demonstrated value where possible.

Positives / Opportunities

On the 31st March 2023 published a revised Community Justice Performance Framework. The framework identifies 9 national outcomes and 10 associated indicators that guide improvement work among justice partners. In May 2023, Community Justice Renfrewshire published its local Outcome Improvement Plan, outlining a high-level response to how Renfrewshire's community justice partners will work together to achieve national improvement outcomes.

In July 2023 the Care Inspectorate published its revised guide to self-evaluation for community justice in Scotland. The guide identifies quality indications that help justice partners determine how effective our services are. Renfrewshire Community Justice Partnership supports self-evaluation and has made good progress in embedding this approach into its improvement activity. Our Strategic Group has incorporated indicators relating to leadership and direction into our Terms of Reference, making clear our vision for achieving the best possible outcomes for the people in Renfrewshire who are justice experienced.

Over the course of 2023/24 Community Justice Scotland (CJS) responded to demand among local partnerships to produce guidance to support improvement activity. CJS facilitated several engagement and consultation sessions that ultimately led to the development of targeted resources aligned to specific milestones in the justice processes. The resources and extensive opportunities to engage with CJS over new or re-emphasised legislative and policy priorities has helped orientate local improvement activity in a national context whilst strengthening relationships and opportunities for learning.



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Priority Action One

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution¹

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people undertaking diversion from prosecution and are used to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people supporting the delivery of diversion from prosecution and are used to support improvement.

5. What activity has taken place to increase successful completion of diversion? What impact has there been as a result?

Early progress has been made to ensure that more people in Renfrewshire successfully complete diversion from prosecution.

During 2023/24 our justice social work staff enhanced our early intervention services to improve capacity to support diversion and other community-based measures. This has improved the team's responsiveness and resilience, instilling COPFS confidence that Renfrewshire is better placed to respond to the needs of people for whom diversionary options are being considered or agreed. Evidence suggests this work is leading to an increase in diversion referrals.

Capacity has been created in the local third sector to provide support to people – including those on diversion – with space and time to have prevention and treatment-focused conversations in relation to alcohol, drugs and mental health issues. The provider – RCA Trust – has been commissioned to supplement local health and social care services and is readily utilised by our justice staff to provide people on diversion with accessible, responsive support. Our justice staff also ensure clients who might benefit from employability support and referred into provision offered by our core service and/or commissioned providers.

¹ National Indicator:

Number of diversion from prosecution:

- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed



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We have continued to work closely COPFS and other stakeholders throughout the North Strathclyde Sheriffdom regional meetings. These support a shared context for diversion delivery, sharing learning, positive and negative, to refine our local offer.

We have made progress in understanding the views of people supporting the delivery of diversion to support improvement. Feedback includes:

- There is good communication between social work and the Procurator Fiscal making it possible to question and clarify issues as they arise, especially for more complex cases*
- We are good at meeting assessment timelines*
- There is good joint working between both adult and children's social work teams in the area to look at the person as a whole (and if appropriate their family) to identify their needs and circumstances.*
- Staff are our expert resource that are skilled in forming respectful and trusting relationships with clients, ensuring interventions are person-centred and take cognisance each person's characteristics and life events. Improvement work is underway to listen to service user's views to better inform future practice and development needs.*

Evidence shows around 90% of those who commence diversion in Renfrewshire complete it, similar to the figures cited in the Joint Review of Diversion from Prosecution. This, combined with the evidence that local diversion referrals are increasing shows there is confidence and effectiveness in our provision.

Over the course of 2024/25 we will engage with clients subject to diversion to understand the impact it has had for them. We will review the range of services we offer and refer in to, making sure there is a pathway of support to all those who need it. We will look at how we can foster better inter-agency understanding and response in respect of people's circumstances, including people who have learning or behavioural needs. We will review the people who did not engage with the offer of diversion to understand if anything could have been done differently and adapt our approach if necessary.



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Priority Action Two

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people in police custody receive support to address their needs²

Local Evidence:

- There is an effective relationship between community justice partners, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) and police custody centres for local population.
- pathways and support are in place from police custody centres for the local population,

6. What activity has taken place to support people in police custody to access support? What impact has there been as a result?

There has been limited focused improvement activity to support people in police custody access support owing to the local prioritisation of other outcomes.

Over this period work was being progressed nationally to develop a new arrest referral pathway for people arriving into police custody. This addressed issues regarding the basis for information exchange between Police Scotland staff and people in custody, and the scope for other agencies to offer arrest referral services on justice partner's behalf. Community Justice Renfrewshire will consider if and how it can add value once pathways are established and learning can be reviewed.

Over the course of 2023/24 links between community justice and Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership was strengthened. Joint working between the Community Justice Lead Officer and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards Lead Officer has helped delineate actions and tasks, making best use of capacity and resource.

The Community Justice Lead Officer had engaged with local Police Custody Healthcare to understand the health-based services offered to people from Renfrewshire who find themselves in custody. Although there are good examples of people being successfully referred into local alcohol and drugs services, there are also challenges around interfacing systems which impede the flow of information and referrals. The MAT Standards Lead Officer has and will continue to oversee work to improve how information is shared and what can be done to improve links to local systems, although some aspects of this work will require to more significant changes at a national level.

In terms of young people detained in custody over the last year police and social work discussions have developed about the suitability of a young person being detained for a prolonged period. Based on personalised assessment this has meant the use of secure care until court appearance. This is an ongoing area for future development.

² National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres



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Priority Action Three

Support the use of robust alternatives to remand by ensuring high quality bail services are consistently available and delivered effectively

Nationally determined outcome:

More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision³

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms and support a high quality bail assessment
- Referral pathways are in place that support identified needs of people on bail supervision
- Consequently the number of bail supervision cases have been rising

7. What activity has taken place to increase the use of bail, and support people to access services to address needs while on bail? What impact has there been as a result?

Renfrewshire Council justice social work implemented bail supervision in February 2024. Before this, justice social work teams undertook a significant amount of preparation work involving peer learning, stakeholder engagement and pathway mapping.

We identified areas that had previously implemented bail supervision to identify what we could learn. We paid close focus to areas that shared demographic and structural characteristics with our own, increasing the transferability of lessons learned. Breach processes were scrutinised to identify thresholds for actions and responsibilities of those involved.

Together, Justice SW and the CJ lead reviewed national guidance, templates, and associated research to identify the inputs and processes that would be required to deliver bail supervision in Renfrewshire. Interpreting and translating this information into practice and process was challenging and time intensive.

We spoke with other justice stakeholders including COPFS and sheriffs to inform them of our development and implementation dates. We encountered instances where Court looked to impose bail supervision before our provision was operational but later addressed this through enhanced messaging and the local Court JSW team.

Three full time staff members were recruited into the justice social work team to create essential delivery capacity, across early intervention areas such as diversion and bail. Justice SW also resource a children and families worker to support this within its wider wholes systems approach. We draw on exiting needs-based approaches and supports to create outcome-focused client action plans, case working with colleagues across

³ National Indicator:

Number of:

- assessment reports for bail suitability
- bail supervision cases commenced
- bail supervision cases completed



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other teams, services and organisations in the same way as other community-based justice work.

Early consideration has been given to impact measures. Aside from service user outcomes, we will continue to develop some focus on the impact of bail supervision on the balance of social work service demand against the proportion of our population who are still remanded in custody. To be effective and sustainable we aim to support Court decisions around bail that offer the best information possible to assist it to address risk and need in a consistent way.

Priority Action Four

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

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

8. What activity has taken place in your area to increase the use electronic monitoring technologies? What impact has there been as a result?

Electronic monitoring of bail was introduced in Renfrewshire in May 2023. As was the case with bail supervision, a period of learning, review and development was undertaken before go live to ensure we were informed, resourced and supported to deliver effectively.

Unvalidated data from the 2023/24 period suggests around one third of assessment reports for bail suitability submitted to the courts recommended bail with electronic monitoring. This demonstrates our efforts to identify all instances where electronic monitoring offers an opportunity for accused individuals to avoid remand and the disruption it brings to them and their families.

After EM bail commences, there is little involvement with partners unless that person is also subject to bail supervision. Insight suggests the numbers of people subject to both is relatively small.

Future improvement activity will be better informed through comparison of local and national evidence gathering. There will be value in looking at the relationships between electronic monitoring of bail and the impact this has on the remand population. This and other measures should be used to determine a national outcome that allows justice partnerships to prioritise improvement work and attribute responsibility.



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Priority Action 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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences⁴

Local Evidence

- Availability of local programmes to support desistance from domestic abuse and sexual offending.
- Availability of referral pathways to support the needs of local population on community disposals.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people with experience of community disposals to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of the community justice workforce with regard to supporting the needs of people subject to community disposals to support improvement.

9. What activity has taken place that will support people serving sentences in the community to desist from offending, address their needs, and help them successfully complete their sentence? What impact has there been as a result?

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of people serving sentences in the community in Renfrewshire has increased, with number on 2022/23 recovering to around 75% of that experienced in 2019/20. The percentage successfully completed sits slightly higher than the trend leading up to the pandemic. Looking specifically at the proportion of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders completed, latest figures show this to be around 35%. This is broadly in line with previous rates and applies to a relatively small total number of orders (17 in 2022/23).

In Renfrewshire, people serving community sentences can access a wide range of services. These are being regularly reviewed and shaped through the partnership to make sure people benefit from all available supports. More detail of these can be found [here](#)

Renfrewshire has a strong network of third sector organisations that make a huge difference in the communities they're based. Just one example is the fantastic work delivered as part of the [Scottish Government's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

⁴ National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- community payback orders successfully completed
- drug treatment and testing orders successfully completed



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Fund, which has helped address issues around local health inequality. Engagement with justice staff has highlighted a drive to improve activity, awareness and coordination of justice-specific support services and community-based opportunities. This has potential to help people on community sentences develop the social and relational skills that help reduce offending behaviour. Staff have attended trauma informed practice sessions and this learning and culture is an area for continuous development and shared values.

We have made good progress in promoting community justice as a linked, wider responsibility and culturally developing awareness of why it matters and where everyone fits in. Sharing not just the needs of those in conflict with the law but also the victims and communities affected to our local third sector organisations. More detail of how we've approached this is outlined in our engagement and communications work. This is being achieved through various partnership workshops, seminars and other events, all with the aim to increase awareness of how existing and developing projects can help the rehabilitation and reintegration of people who are justice experienced. An example has been the promotion of a health, wellbeing and cultural participation pathway. This supports people who are referred in from justice social work and other routes a 'socially prescribed' activity that helps them make progress towards health and wellbeing goals. Examples include gym membership, walking groups, gardening activity or cooking classes.

A significant proportion serving community sentences experience problematic substance use. This can contribute to poor decision making and risk-taking behaviour that can result in offending behaviours. In Renfrewshire, we have a strong network of public and third sector support to help people in their treatment and recovery, that aligns to these needs. Clear referral pathways are in place and justice staff have good awareness of how and when to use them.

We work well across social work and employability services (both public and third sector) to address barriers to employment. Social work staff ensure employability needs are identified through justice social work reports and those who are sentenced receive tailored support to help move them closer to work. More detail is provided in the employability section below.

We have engaged with staff responsible for unpaid work and identified a need for a refreshed training programme for supervising staff. This will increase knowledge and awareness of trauma responsive practice and help staff be alert to health and wellbeing needs given their high degree of exposure to the client group. Early work has progressed in partnership with the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Improvement Lead, drawing on learning from a similar approach taken in neighbouring Glasgow.

For people subject to an unpaid work requirement, a creative approach to engagement is proposed through a participatory photography project. In partnership with Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, the project will involve those undergoing unpaid work being offered therapeutic support to reflect on the behaviours and underlying factors that contributed to their offence(s) and explore how community interventions can help them recover. Learning and outputs for this will be produced in 2024/25.



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Priority Action 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

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

10. What activity has taken place to make restorative justice available to people and support them to access it, and what impact has there been as a result?

We recognise that there may be value in progressing this further, particularly where it supports the victims' need. Although not actively pursuing local approaches currently we recognise and would actively support future evidence-based developments.

Priority Action Seven

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to, and continuity of, health and social care following release from a prison sentence⁵

Local Evidence

- Health and social care circumstances/care plans are reflected in collaborative plans for release.
- Referral pathways and information sharing arrangements are in place to support timely access to health and social care supports upon release.

11. What activity has taken place to support people to access health and social care support after release from prison, and what impact had there been as a result?

⁵ National Indicator:

Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community



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Early work was undertaken during 2023/24 to understand the provision and processes that allow people leaving prison to access health and social care support.

Engagement with health colleagues to understand this population has revealed that around 80-90% of people admitted to custody have an identified health or social care requirement. Insight shows 90% of the prison population are on prescribed medication and around 80% have addiction or alcohol issues. We have also identified that many people in custody use drugs like cocaine and street Valium recreationally and do not identify this behaviour as addiction.

We acknowledge that people being released from custody have experience of unhealthy lifestyles. Many of their health needs are associated with poor social and economic circumstances. Having reviewed evidence of learning and behavioural needs, we understand that very few people in custody have a diagnosed learning disability. However, anecdotal evidence from health colleagues suggests that many people in custody struggle with problem solving and find difficulty in developing and implementing strategies to cope with stress.

Building on this information, we have commenced some initial work to understand the provision and processes for people returning to Renfrewshire from custody. People who require opioid substitution therapy are referred into local alcohol and drug recovery services (ADRS). Processes are in place to ensure people who undergo planned liberations are provided with community appointments prior to liberation dates, supported by allocated and duty workers as required. People who are liberated following court appearances are contacted by court and other workers and encouraged to attend ADRS or the relevant third sector providers.

Our health and social work partners have revealed that for some people leaving custody there is no prior notification. This makes it harder to engage with people and ensure they have provision in place to support their release. We also know there are limitations to our data which makes understanding this population quite challenging. Although we can see who is in receipt of a service or open to health or social work, we cannot easily identify people who have been offered support through ADRS and refused or who have not engaged. This makes it difficult to identify characteristics or circumstances that act as barriers to engagement/access. We also know there are challenges around people who are leaving custody from remand. Information sharing can be problematic with prisons and there is a greater onus on the individual to seek services out. We understand this is a national issue and one being considered within the current thematic review.

Over the course of 2024/25 we will work to develop a better understanding of the justice population who use local health and social care services while living in our communities. We have evidence that we have a strong offer of multi-agency support, such as that offered through our CIRCLE Recovery Hub, where people in recovery can access peer and professional support to aid relapse prevention, foster skills for independent living and improve socialisation through leisure and vocational activities. We also know that our mental health teams offer a broad range of tiered services that aim to provide accessible and proportionate help at times of need. Our local third sector organisations are also very active making a huge difference to people in their communities, such as the provision offered through the Community Mental Health and



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Wellbeing Fund mentioned earlier. We also acknowledge we need to review the pathways and evidence of people's journeys to understand how well our justice population is served by current services and what can be done to improve, refocus or reshape them.



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Priority Action Eight

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence⁶

Local Evidence

- SPS admissions and liberations information is shared with relevant partners to support suitable accommodation planning.
- Proportion of admissions where housing advice was provided.
- Percentage of people leaving prison who have been housed by the local authority and have maintained tenancy for more than 1 year

12. What activity has taken place to support people to access suitable accommodation following release from prison, and what impact had there been as a result?

Good progress has been made to build a profile of the population of people who are released from custody and who require access to suitable accommodation. This comes from a variety of sources in both qualitative and quantitative ways.

National indicators show that in Renfrewshire the number of homeless applications where prison was the property the main applicant became homeless from has reduced from a high of 105 in 2016/17 which was 13% of all homeless applications and the highest of all the local authorities in Scotland to 61 in 2023/24 which is 5.9% of all homeless applications. Although this is positive, our partnership worked to develop a broader understanding of the number of departures from Scottish prisons over the same period. This context showed that both the number of people leaving prison and the number of Renfrewshire homeless applications stemming from custody both reduced by a third, suggesting a relationship where one has impacted on the other. This has helped us realise that although we believe we have made good progress reducing the number of homeless applications for people liberated from prison, we may look to demonstrate this through additional measures.

Our housing partners have established processes in place to offer support to people who arrive into custody and need support and advice with existing tenancies. When notified by Scottish Prison Service, our housing staff work closely with people new to custody who require help with housing related benefits to prevent or mitigate the accrual of arrears. For people who are sentenced, we take time to understand their circumstances and longer-term intentions. We also work closely with private rented

⁶ National Indicator:
Number of:

- homelessness applications where prison was the property the main applicant became homeless from



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tenants who understand the impact of their custodial period on their housing arrangements, supporting them with the necessary documentation if they need to declare their change in circumstances. In 2023/23, we helped 21 people sustain their tenancy while in prison and supported 9 people to end their tenancy appropriately.

We also help people who are liberated from custody and transition back into our communities. When SPS notify us of people who are due to be liberated, or after receiving notification from prison-based support services or our outreach employability colleagues, we reach out to people who we understand have housing issues and who are at risk of homelessness. We contact the relevant prison and organise appointments with the person in question to understand their circumstances and build a relationship. We work collaboratively, drawing on insight from social work staff to understand risks and needs that might influence their housing solution. Local providers of temporary and supported accommodation understand the needs of this population well and assist with planning and administration for people arriving into their facilities and care. Our housing colleagues support people with their transition back into housing and our communities, often taking a key role in referring the client on to other health, social care and wellbeing supports. Specialist projects such as My Life Ahead – a partnership with Renfrewshire Council and Turning Point Scotland – help people whose tenancy is at risk due to behaviours stemming from alcohol and/or drug dependency.

We know there are parts of this work we'd like to improve. We have good relationships and communication links with the prison establishments that service most of Renfrewshire's prison population. For other establishments, these links could be strengthened. We also know that our support is more readily accessed by people serving long-term sentences where there is a higher degree of case management and transition planning, supported by National Standards and resourcing. People serving short-term sentences do not always engage with us in prior to liberation, and we need to understand what we can do to promote our offer of support in the right way. We now make contact with all those being released, however uptake of voluntary involvement is low and we require to understand why. This work will be developed, but within a context of overarching housing challenges where the number of local homeless applications is growing, and the turnover of social rented housing is slowing. Progress towards national improvement outcomes will remain in focus however this will be balanced with our response to other significant housing-related demands stemming from lack of suitable housing availability, resettlement programmes, asylum dispersal and the cost-of-living crisis.



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Priority Action Nine

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment⁷

Local Evidence Employability Partnership (LEP) and Community Justice Partnership support

- i. local employment, education and training providers to respond to the needs of those with convictions
 - ii. local employment, education and training providers are confident and competent in providing effective conviction disclosure support
 - iii. local employers to develop more inclusive recruitment processes and employ people with convictions.
- Referral pathways are in place to connect people to appropriate services and support:
 - i. at commencement of, during and at the end of a CPO
 - ii. following release from custody.

13. What activity has taken place to support people to access employability support, and what impact had there been as a result?

Our partners have worked hard over the course of 2023/24 to improve access to employability support for people accused and convicted of offences.

Renfrewshire Council's employability service – Invest – have skilled and specialist staff who work with people accused or convicted of offences. Their involvement with people spans from early measures such as diversion from prosecution and bail supervision, people who have been sentenced and serving community orders, people who are nearing liberation from custody and those who live with historic convictions.

Our Community Justice Lead Officer works closely with Renfrewshire's Local Employability Partnership (LEP), chairing a dedicated justice subgroup to look at the specific needs and developing opportunities for people who are justice experienced.

Over 2023/24, population analysis and self 'evaluation helped identify the extent to which providers respond to the needs of people with convictions. Client and partner feedback identified that although effective, core Invest support could be supplemented with pre-employment support to help justice clients improve their resilience, confidence and instil in them employability aspirations. This informed a commissioning specification, and the award of grants to West College Scotland and The Lennox

⁷ National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions



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Partnership to deliver pre-employability programmes to justice clients over the course of 2024/25. This enhances provision that ran over the course of 2023/24, which was delivered solely by West College Scotland.

The population analysis and self-evaluation activity also helped us gauge the confidence of local teams, services and organisations in providing disclosure support and the barriers around employing people with convictions. During 2023/24, we commissioned Apex to deliver specialist support to people with sexual convictions with a view to helping them into employment. Feedback from partners identified one of the biggest challenges was around the receptiveness of potential employers and training providers to provide opportunities to them. This meant that people with sexual convictions who had made progress and were job ready had nowhere to go. This is a complex area.

Our LEP justice subgroup responded by developing a brief for a provider to work with people with complex convictions - including sexual offenders – whilst at the same time undertaking a work with local employers and providers to understand their knowledge and awareness of the disclosure process and the barriers that prevent them from recruiting people with sexual convictions. This work – progressing over 2024/25 – will provide useful learning that will help our local employability and justice partners provide targeted education to address gaps in knowledge and raise awareness of certain messages that might challenge stigma and misconception.

One of the major strengths of our local employability provision is the efficiency of our referral pathways. Justice social work staff report having good knowledge of the core and commissioned employability support available to clients and trust in outcomes. Our staff readily make recommendations for employability provision at court report stage and make onward referrals into Invest for people who are sentenced (or subject to diversion). Invest coordinate the client's support, utilising core and/or commissioned services where appropriate. Sideway referrals are made to our LEP's other priority population subgroups, such as people who require mental health support, people who have disabilities, and young families, all of whom receive targeted help alongside employability supports. Monitoring takes place through employability measures and in accordance with the client's case management.

A concerted effort is made to work with people who are due to be liberated from custody and arrive back into our communities. Our Invest colleagues work closely with staff at Low Moss prison – which accommodates around half of people in Renfrewshire who are in custody – and undertake weekly outreach visits with people nearing the end of their sentence. Prison-based appointments help Invest staff establish relationships and build trust and start to plan what development and employability support that person might need or benefit from on release and provide an opportunity to secure involvement from other providers such as housing, community learning and benefits.

We are aware that proposed nationally commissioned throughcare provision will commence in April 2025. We look forward to working with the provider/providers in extending the reach of our local employability supports.



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Priority Action Ten

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence⁸

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms are in place for partners to support people serving short term sentences.
- Proportion of people liberated from short term custody:
 - i. made aware of support
 - ii. accepting support offer
 - iii. with a co-ordinated pre-release plan in place.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people accessing voluntary throughcare to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of community justice partners in delivering voluntary throughcare to support the needs of people leaving short term custody.

14. What activity has taken place to support people to access voluntary throughcare? What impact had there been as a result?

Throughout 2023/24 Renfrewshire's justice social work staff have continued to offer voluntary throughcare to eligible people liberated from custody, in accordance with guidance. Prioritisation of other improvement outcomes has meant there has been little opportunity to undertake significant improvement planning in relation to voluntary throughcare.

Initial analysis of data has shown a general decrease in the number of voluntary throughcare cases commenced in Renfrewshire, from 311 in 2016/17 to 98 in 2022/23. More extensive analysis is required to account for this number as a proportion of people leaving custody over this time, and the impact of other factors such as early measures like diversion from prosecution.

Recruitment into our social work team over 2023/24 has created extra capacity to deliver voluntary throughcare services. This is an area of focus for 2024/25, combining other areas such as employability, housing and health to look at the overall experience of people as they transition from custody back into the community, As mentioned in

⁸ National Indicator:

Number of:

- voluntary throughcare cases commenced



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previous sections, our partners have also continued to offer support to people who are liberated.

We know we need to critically review our voluntary throughcare offer and see it through the eyes of our clients. We need to know if our offer comes at the right time, through the right means, and promotes the right things. We are acutely aware we have huge potential to better involve and/or signpost our local third sector organisations who can be viewed as more accessible and approachable source of help.

We are conscious that new national throughcare provision will be implemented in April 2025, offering support to a wider range of people than the population serviced under current arrangements. Our local voluntary throughcare offer must complement and add value to national arrangements. We will not be able to fully design our local provision until fuller details of the national offer is communicated and/or implemented.

The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 presents another major influence in our local voluntary throughcare direction. The Act sets out a requirement for identified partners to engage in pre-release planning for individuals nearing liberation and sets out a deliverable relating to guidance for such planning alongside throughcare support standards. We recognise this as a critical component of our improvement work and await its delivery to inform our local approach.

Priority Action Eleven

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

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

Local evidence:

- Mechanisms are in place to support engagement in each local authority, specifically:
 - a community justice outcomes improvement plan (CJOIP)
 - a participation statement
 - an annual report on progress towards nationally and locally determined outcomes.
- Mechanisms are in place to support an effective interface between national partner organisations and their local representatives within Community Justice Partnerships.
- Evidence of mechanisms to engage non-statutory partners in strategic planning
- Use of the Care Inspectorate 'self-evaluation guide to support quality improvement for community justice in Scotland', with focus on Leadership and Direction



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15. How has your partnership worked to develop local leadership and enhance strategic planning and collaboration? What impact had there been as a result?

Developing local leadership and enhancing strategic planning has been a key partnership priority over 2023/24.

Prior to the arrival of the current officer, our lead officer post was vacant for a period of two years. This impacted our ability to plan and deliver coordinated improvement activity, with developments taken forward by individual teams, services and organisations. The arrival of the current officer coincided change at a national level following the revised National Strategy for Community Justice in 2022 and the publication of the Community Justice Performance Framework and Community Justice Improvement Tool in March 2023. We used these resources to support a reset and redirection of our partnership, driven by the national justice vision.

We took time to consider how our work fits with local community planning priorities, following our Community Plan's refresh in September 2022. This outlined the need for focused efforts to tackle health inequalities, particularly around reducing the impact of alcohol and drugs, providing mental health and wellbeing support and helping people live safely and independently at home and in the community.

In May 2023 our partnership published Renfrewshire's Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan. The plan outlined our response to national improvement outcomes against a context of community planning priorities. We made a choice not to commit to improvement actions at this stage, instead deciding to take time to better understand our population, their needs, and the impact of our local provision. This follows the improvement approach advocated by Community Justice Scotland, with an expectation for targeted improvement delivery over 2024/25.

An important part of this was strengthening relationships with our partners, many of whom had undergone significant organisational change since the departure of the previous lead officer. We took time to understand their own policy drivers and how they were responding to them. This let us identify common ground and show where justice improvement activity could serve their interests and expectations. Partners fed back they felt respected and listened to, which in turn prompted them to participate in developing our vision.

We also took time to review the governance arrangements for other partnerships to understand what we could learn and implement to support effective decision making. We developed proposals to rename our previous Community Justice Renfrewshire Steering Group' to Renfrewshire Community Justice Strategic Group'. This was backed up with a suggested terms of reference that clearly identified the group's remit as identifying a shared vision for community justice in Renfrewshire, with partners tasked with promoting an ethos and culture that supports collaboration through effective leadership and direction. The group would be responsible for exploring new and enhanced ways of working by embracing learning and scrutiny and promoting an outcome-focused model matched to community needs. Our suggested terms of reference (later approved in June 2024) makes explicit reference to the Care Inspectorate's quality indicators for 'Leadership and Direction', embedding these at the heart of our approach.



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We proposed to support the strategic group with operational sub-groups, responsible for undertaking improvement planning work such as gathering population and service impact insights and identifying suggested improvement opportunities. This separation of operational and strategic responsibilities will help us draw on the right people for the right conversations, making best use of our resources and expertise.

Renfrewshire's Community Justice Strategic group is aware of its commitment to Keep The Promise. We have noted the following key messages in relation to Community Justice from The Promise :

- That we must do all we can to prevent the imprisonment of those with parenting responsibility*
- We must do all we can to prevent the imprisonment (either on remand or as part of a sentence) of those with parenting responsibility and progress the presumption against short custodial sentences.*
- The needs, views and rights of children must be taken into account as part of sentencing decisions. Failure to do that means that criminal courts do not have a holistic view of the impact of imprisonment.*
- That the Care Review had heard stories of a complete failure of planning and support for the children of parents facing imprisonment, leading to children being abandoned or going to an inappropriate place.*
- If parental imprisonment takes place there must be wraparound support for the family, with planning for the likelihood of imprisonment and clear support for children who are impacted. Parents facing imprisonment must be supported to make plans for their children and everything must be done to avoid emergency removal and a panicked response.*
- We must do more to ensure that children's experience of a parent being in prison is as supportive as possible. There must be no reporting of anything that will identify or stigmatise the children and families of people who offend.*
- We must reduce the worry for children of imprisoned parents so that the experience of prison visiting is as positive and non-stigmatising as possible. Where it is safe to do so, the relationship between child and parent must be supported.*
- We must do all we can to avoid the imprisonment of pregnant mothers. For mothers who are in prison at the time of giving birth, there must be support for them to care for and remain with their babies for as long as possible where it is safe to do so.
They must be fully involved in all decisions about their baby and be given all the support they need to nurture. Support must follow them when they leave prison so there is a smooth transition of care.*

The Promise will continue to inform our strategic direction and future plans. Representatives from Renfrewshire's Community Justice Strategic group also sit on Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group . The Chair of Renfrewshire's Community Justice Strategic group is also chair of Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group. This helps to ensure collaboration and appropriate alignment to The Promise.



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Priority Action Twelve

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

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

16. How has your partnership worked to understand and incorporate the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families into partnership planning and implementation? *What impact has there been as a result?*

As part of our stakeholder mapping, we have sought out conversations with organisations that support the wider community of people impacted by the justice system. We have done this to broaden our understanding of people who may have had a negative experience of community justice, so that we may design our future communications activity sensitively and respectfully.

We are especially interested in the views and experiences of women who have been impacted by gender-based violence and their attitudes towards a community justice approach in respect of the accused perpetrator. The organisations we have spoken to have provided candid accounts of how the justice system can cause amplify feelings of trauma and vulnerability for women affected by gender-based violence. For people convicted of such offences, related victims and survivors can be feelings of dissatisfaction with the sentencing outcome. Awareness and feelings associated with such outcomes can sometimes prevent other victims and survivor's willingness to report such behaviour and pursue justice proceedings.

We recognise women within the justice systems are often victims too. We also recognise different offending patterns and reasons behind this. Our justice social work service includes a specific women only service which supports women wherever they are within the system. Many women are supported through various statutory and 3rd sector organisations. Strategically these are issues considered within our GBV strategy group as are many crossovers in support required.

The impact of these insights has and will continue to influence our engagement and communications strategy. Although we will seek to educate the public about community justice in terms of what it aims to do any why, we must acknowledge there may be a population of victims and survivors of crime who might not support it. In terms of lessons learned, we have had early discussions with organisations to consider what our partnership can do to scrutinise our own processes and outputs to ensure sentencing decisions have been informed by full and balanced insights. There may be scope at a national level for these insights to inform a broader approach to community justice messaging.



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Our community justice partnership has agreed to work closely with our gender-based violence strategic group as they refresh our local gender-based violence strategy. We have agreed to undertake joint engagement work with affected women to ensure we develop our activity in accordance with community justice and gender-based violence policy objectives.

At a strategic level, we are grateful to have secured Victim Support Scotland as a decision-making voice at our Community Justice Renfrewshire Strategic Group. This will influence our approach to engagement and communications and help us consider the voices of a wider community of people with lived experience of justice as we design and deliver out improvement activity.

Priority Action Thirteen

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice⁹

Local Evidence

- Community justice partner contribution to joint activity across policy areas to tackle stigma.

17. What partnership-driven activity has taken place to improve understanding of and confidence in community justice across the workforce and local community?

Over 2023/24 our partnership developed an Engagement and Communications Plan. The plan identifies how our partners will work together to ensure more people across our workforce and community understand and have confidence in community justice. Increasing understanding and confidence in community justice will address the issue of stigma and make it easier for individuals subject to community justice interventions to look for, embrace and receive help from available supports.

At a local level, increasing understanding, confidence and addressing stigma presents an opportunity to understand what people know and what experience(s) have contributed to this. This informs communication approaches and our thinking around improvement and service design. It lets us test out innovative ideas and approaches to ensure they are aligned with people's needs and expectations.

One of the first things we did was consider lessons learned from previous engagement and communications activity delivered through our 2018-2021 Community Justice

⁹ National Indicator:

Percentage of people who agree that:

- people should help their community as part of a community sentence rather than spend a few months in prison for a minor offence



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Outcome Improvement Plan. We noted that although there was lots of awareness raising and promotion, there is a gap in quantifiable evidence in how these activities improved knowledge and awareness. This has underlined the importance of future engagement activity having clearly defined outcomes/outputs and a clear picture of what it will inform.

We took time to review national sources on information to help us understand what people feel about community justice. We also looked at research into the relationships between stigma and health and wellbeing outcomes, and the damaging impact of 'criminal' labelling. This revealed to us that there is a considerable proportion of the public who are not aware or are not convinced of the merits of a community justice approach in disrupting offending and supporting public protection. However, as discussed in the previous sections, sensitivity is needed around the experiences of victims of crime, particularly people who have been victim of domestic abuse and sexual offending.

We progressed from this to having conversations with partners and stakeholders to gauge if this national picture was echoed locally. Feedback revealed that while there is a general acceptance of the benefits of rehabilitating people who have offended, there is also concern at how this affects victims of crime, particularly women, children and young people who have been subjected to domestic abuse.

Our local partners who work people with convictions confirmed that stigma is prevalent in this population group. Partners who provide employability support to such individuals often need to spend time building up their confidence and self-awareness to help them consider their value and potential contribution to our communities. Unfortunately, anecdotal evidence suggests there is a limited understanding of convictions, disclosure, and the context around offending behaviour among employers and service providers.

One thing that came through strongly was the feeling that more can be done to promote the work our partners deliver and the positive impact it can have on the justice-experienced population. We recognised there were no recent examples of promotional or awareness raising activity highlighting good practice or partnership/service level improvements or developments.

We gave thought to how we could use existing forums and panels to gather insight, making best use of collective resources. We found the greatest potential relates to the third sector and the routes they have to the voices of people who are justice experienced. However, we found that our third sector organisations sometimes don't recognise how their work contributes to community justice outcomes, and that we need to do more to help our local organisations see the justice population as a subset of people already in receipt of provision.

At the end of this information gathering process we identified three key audiences for engagement and communications activity over the duration of our outcome improvement plan: clients and people with lived experience; staff and providers, and the wider community.

We have developed a programme of engagement activity over the course of the next 12 months that will introduce the concept of community justice through a person-centred,



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narrative-based approach that builds a picture of the needs and circumstances of people who have offended.

18. Look ahead for your local area. Please tell us what the next steps are for your partnership.

Our partnership will continue with improvement planning across the priority areas identified by our strategic group. This direction is important as it is not possible to deliver equal progress against all community justice improvement outcomes given the breadth of coverage.

We have embraced Community Justice Scotland's suggested approach to planning, delivering and monitoring improvement activity. This approach is resource intensive and often involves significant work to create the right conditions with operational partners, though we believe outputs and outcomes it produces demonstrate best value. Where appropriate, we ask that the expectation around local partnership impact take cognisance of this.

We hope to further strengthen our links with our third sector partners and make clear and measurable links between the work they do and our justice improvement outcomes. We want to make sure our third sector understand our local justice-experienced population by sharing our insight into their characteristics and needs and provide access to knowledge and support to ensure they are confident in balancing these against the needs and expectations of their wider communities. This will help us co-design and support and interventions that are evidence-led and leverage resource to best effect. This presents opportunities to provide a more varied and peer-led approach to rehabilitation and re-integration.

The voices and experiences of people who are justice experienced are important in helping us understand where we can do better. We will deliver the activity outlined in our Engagement and Communications Plan, namely conversations with people who are subject to unpaid work requirements, people in custody and nearing liberation, and the wider of population of people who have been impacted by crime. We will be mindful of our social climate and use our resources to challenge stigma, particularly where this might impact people's willingness to participate in integrative opportunities.

We are conscious that we are dependent on the input from partners, and that we are fortunate to have secured the commitment from key influencer and decision makers at a strategic level. However, we are mindful that resource pressures and stemming from policy decisions, legislative requirements, and the resulting impact of service demand can have a bearing on the amount of discretionary resource that exists to support further change and improvement.

We will continue to be informed by, and where appropriate, aligned to The Promise and as a partnership we will be directed by emerging statutory guidance in relation to the



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*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act
2024.*

