

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing & Communities Committee

24 January 2022

JUSTICE UPDATE REPORT 2020-21

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

(Report No. 22/18)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update for Committee on the work of council services and partners to meet local and national outcomes for Community Justice for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. It provides an update on the effectiveness of the arrangements for the supervision of serious offenders and approaches being used to help people make positive changes in their lives and tackling the underlying causes.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The Perth and Kinross Community Justice Partnership

- 1.1 The [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) (the Act) was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2017, along with the publication of the [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) and established a new model for the governance and delivery of Community Justice in Scotland. The Act established Community Justice Partnerships (CJPs) in each local authority area comprising of statutory partners (Police Scotland; Scottish Prison Service (SPS); Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS); Skills Development Scotland (SDS); NHS Scotland; Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board; Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, the local authority; and representation from the third sector.
- 1.2 The Act requires statutory partners to work together to deliver a Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) for their area and report on progress to Community Justice Scotland (CJS) via an Annual Return. The Perth and Kinross Community Justice Partnership (PKCJP) launched its first CJOIP, a three-year plan on 1 April 2017 (the plan was extended in 2020 by one year due to COVID-19). Annual Returns have been submitted to Community Justice Scotland (CJS) since 2018, highlighting PKCJP progress against the CJOIP.

2. JUSTICE UPDATE 2020-21

- 2.1 The PKCJP Annual Return 2020-21 (Appendix 1) was submitted to CJS in October 2021. Appendix 2 provides a glossary of terms within the Return. The Annual Return contains contributions from Perth and Kinross Council (PKC); Police Scotland; Perth and Kinross Association Voluntary Service (PKAVS); and Tayside Council on Alcohol (TCA). The Annual Return highlights continued good progress against the CJOIP.

2.2 The reporting period spans a full year of COVID-19 restrictions, including two periods of lockdown and the introduction of a tier-based system in October 2020. A summary of the associated challenges and opportunities can be found in Appendix 1.

2.3 From a PKC perspective, the Annual Return highlights examples of positive work being carried out by a range of teams, often in partnership with other stakeholders and includes:

- **One-Stop Women’s Learning Service (OWLS)**

Who, in collaboration with other services, offer women a safe space where they can access a number of crucial services, improve their mental health and wellbeing, as well as address the reasons for their offending behaviour. This wraparound service builds the self-confidence and self-esteem of women enabling them to become more involved in their community. The OWLS project created two surveys to collate views from women and services regarding the ability to access the service and support during the pandemic. The two surveys provided good insight into the views of the women and their experience of utilising the OWLS service, along with the views of the partner agencies. A summary of the findings can be found in Appendix 1.

COVID-19 presented significant challenges to engage with people and the provision of support. In recognition of the resultant isolation, the OWLS service reached out in the form of ‘Motivational Messages’, ie, a text message twice a week. The messages were intended to be uplifting and translate into hope and were delivered within the context of recognising that the pandemic has been an unusual and worrying time. The following provides examples of the messages sent: *“Remember you are all unique and strong women, and every journey begins with a single step”*; *“If you don’t like something change it. If you can’t change it, change the way you think about it”*.

The text messages were positively received by the women and supported ongoing engagement with OWLS during lockdown. These are two of the positive messages received: *“These messages actually make my day”*; *“keep these coming they are so uplifting”*.

- **Evolve**

Following on from the success of delivering a gender specific service for women (OWLS), the Public Protection Team researched and developed a new project specifically for men, open to Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW). This includes men subject to Community Payback Orders (CPOs) and those being released from custody on a supervision licence. The project is based at the Neuk and seeks to incorporate the latest theory and research into desistance (the process of abstaining from crime by those with a previous pattern of offending) including the impact of trauma on men who offend. Working in the Neuk, a community support facility for those with mental health difficulties, has provided the project with links to several services in Perth and Kinross.

The service aims to not only address the causes of a man's offending behaviour but promote positive life choices and identities through using group work and communal activities which are delivered in a trauma informed environment.

The project began actively working with men in October 2020, and while the COVID-19 restrictions limited the ability of the groupwork element, one-to-one work continued. An early task for the men was to name the project. The group settled on the name Evolve which denotes a journey of growth; building on who they are and expanding their horizons about the individuals they would like to become.

Although a fledgling service, initial feedback from the men who have attended has been highly positive: *"I want to make the time left on my Order useful, these meetings have made me think like I haven't in the past and gave me an understanding of why I think and feel the way I do"*.

- **The Westbank Project**

Is delivered from Westbank House where the Unpaid Work Team (UPW) are based. They have continued to engage with the public via Facebook, the Council website and newsletters. These communications have detailed the work undertaken by the team to support local communities, as well as providing engagement opportunities. The team received 72 requests for work during 2020-21. Examples of work undertaken (work as permitted under Scottish Government COVID-19 guidelines) includes the provision of picnic benches to local schools, decorating and restoration work.

An example of feedback received is: *"...I speak on behalf of all the volunteers and trustees of the Museum when I say they have all done a magnificent job for us. ...We struggle a bit in all sorts of ways, particularly this year, and it means so much that the buildings not only look so much better but that they are now weather-proof for a good while to come. ...job has helped hugely..."*

The Westbank Hub continued to provide opportunities to a range of community groups, including courses to learn new skills thereby helping individuals to ready themselves for the job market. A notable example of this is an individual who completed the forklift training as part of their CPO. They subsequently returned to undertake the telehandler training before progressing to secure full-time employment.

During periods of lockdown, some individuals were signposted to online courses by the team. One individual attended a Youth Offending module via the Open University. Phone contact was maintained throughout the course and the person was able to reduce a proportion of their UPW CPO and gain an understanding and insight into their previous offending behaviour.

- **Diversion from Prosecution Scheme**

CJSW has continued to offer a diversion scheme which is delivered on a one-to-one basis by a Criminal Justice Assistant (CJA).

The support looks at behaviour which may put the person at risk of committing further offences and to offer practical support and advice. Where existing services are in place, contact will occur to ensure that the person is engaging and making best use of these resources.

- **Bail Supervision**

CJSW in partnership with the Children, Young People and Families Service (CYPFS) has continued to offer Bail Supervision to those aged 16 to 26. The service gives young people the opportunity to engage with services and receive intensive support from a Bail Officer before they attend court for sentencing. The focus is on reducing re-offending and affording the person the opportunity to change their behaviour with appropriate support. It also provides the Sheriffs with evidence of a young person's compliance should they be considering a CPO.

Perth Sheriff Court reduced their business during lockdowns which was diverted to Dundee Sheriff Court. This has had a detrimental impact on the relationship with local Defence Agents and ultimately affected the ability to ensure Bail Supervision was universally available and deliverable.

Quote from the Bail Supervision worker: *"I think my biggest success has been that the project has not failed and totally shut down through Covid. It was only a year old and still in its infancy prior to the first lockdown and it came to a halt. I have worked hard with CJS, court and solicitors to keep communication going and offer support to potential individuals meeting the requirements for Bail Supervision".*

- **Right Track (Structured Deferred Sentence)**

This scheme run by CJSW works with individuals aged 16 to 26 and gives them the opportunity to engage in intensive support provided by a Right Track Officer, prior to attending court for final sentencing. The scheme helps ensure that remand is only used where necessary, and as Right Track is also part of the work at the Westbank Project, it allows the young person to work on their chaotic lifestyle and develop a more structured way of life prior to being sentenced at court. Example feedback includes: *"It makes it easier being in that safe space to speak to you about what problems I have"; "It looks really good for me returning to court when I have managed to build up quite a lot of hours."*

- **Caledonian System**

As outlined in the previous CJP Annual Return 2019-20, PKC's CJSW was successful in a joint bid with Dundee City Council's Criminal Justice Service to run the Caledonian System. This is an integrated approach to address men's domestic abuse and to improve the lives of women, children and men.

During this reporting period, members of the prison based social work team at HMP Castle Huntly had the opportunity to be trained in delivering the Caledonian System's pre-group work sessions as part of a pilot programme. This is the first piece of accredited Intimate Partner Violence intervention work to take place within custody and was delivered by prison based CJSW.

This was in co-operation with SPS, and the social work staff were appropriately assessed and trained by the Caledonian National Co-ordinator before delivering the pilot. The pilot concluded in the summer of 2021 and the evaluation is currently sitting with the SPS and Scottish Government for consideration on future roll out and delivery. The pilot was well received, and the assessment work was delivered and co-produced with CJSW from the prisoner's supervising local authority, Clackmannanshire Council.

- **Early Release Programme**

The early release of prisoners during COVID-19 saw agencies work together to manage risk of re-offending, provide support and address a myriad of present social issues and needs for those being released. The Early Prisoner Release Programme is an example of well-co-ordinated, multi-agency collaborative working.

Meetings were held fortnightly with attendance from Police Scotland, CJSW, Safer Communities Team (SCT), Housing, and Integrated-Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (I-DART). It is notable, and a testament to the local working relationships, that during the reporting period, all those released from a custodial sentence had access to suitable accommodation which was either a secure tenancy or temporary accommodation.

Through the work undertaken for the Early Release Programme, this has become embedded in the daily practice for the SCT. Information is received three-months in advance of all releases which enables proactive planning, including identification of suitable housing and the provision of release packs to people being released from custody, thereby supporting their initial integration back into the community and lessening their propensity to offend.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The PKCJP Annual Return 2020-21, submitted to CJS, illustrates the positive work being undertaken by both statutory partners and third sector organisations. Partners and third sector organisations are committed to the shared aim, echoed in the CJOIP, to work in partnership to reduce re-offending and support those who have committed offences. It is the intention of the partnership to build on this progress, thereby ensuring the communities in Perth and Kinross remain safe places to live. A full Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment will be completed by the PKCJP during 2022.

3.2 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the approach being undertaken by Perth and Kinross in respect of the PKCJP and notes the content of the 2020-21 Justice Update and CJS Annual Return.

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes/None
Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	None
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

This report relates to Objective No. (v).

Corporate Plan

1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

This report relates to Objective No. (v).

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key priority area:

- Safe and Protected.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 This report contains no proposals which would have a financial impact on the Council. All relevant areas of work pertinent to CJSW will be taken forward within budget.

Workforce

2.2 There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 There are no asset management implications arising from this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties. The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

The proposals have been considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

Sustainability

3.3 There are no issues in respect of sustainability from the proposals in this report.

Legal and Governance

3.4 This report contains no proposals which would have a legal or governance impact on the Council.

3.5 N/A.

Risk

3.6 There are no issues in respect of risk from the proposals in this report.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 None.

External

4.2 None.

5. Communication

5.1 There are no communication issues in respect of the proposals in this report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2.1 [The Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1 - Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland, Local Area Annual Return Template 2020-21

3.2 Appendix 2 - Glossary of Terms