

PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

As stated in the Dumfries and Galloway Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan, work has taken place over the last eighteen months in preparation of this new plan. A large part of this involved undertaking a robust Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment (SNSA) to help identify areas of focus for Dumfries and Galloway; this was a huge undertaking and would not have been possible without partners seeking support and agreeing to fund the analytical support required. Data was sourced, analysed and scrutinised, stakeholder horizon scanning workshops took place with local community justice partners and regular Community Justice Partnership (CJP) meetings continued with plan development included as an agenda item.

As part of this and to ensure local communities were involved, a number of important focus groups¹ have taken place with recovery groups, family groups and with people with lived and living experience of justice, including those in HMP Dumfries and HMP Kilmarnock. Focus groups have been facilitated jointly between D&G CJP and ADP and with colleagues from Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership with the aim of listening and learning from people involved. As well as learning about people's own journey and experiences, we facilitated discussions about the National Aims and Priorities for Community Justice and how this might impact on them. Those with lived and living experience were positive about the direction of travel at a national level but were keen that any support in police custody should be delivered by a partner agency or peer rather than by police². Clear themes emerged around childhood trauma, stigma in the community.... *'labelled as criminal, not seen as human being or person, you then start to believe in that, and start to act that way'* and substance use and mental health support. There was also a feeling that there wasn't enough regard or consideration given to the families of those involved with the justice system, often judging families for the harm caused by individuals. All feedback was carefully considered, often used to evidence why we prioritised the areas we did. This can be seen in the final CJOIP.

As mentioned above, regular CJP meetings continued to take place which acted as scrutiny and problem solving sessions, often enabling us to find solutions, source data, have room to discuss and challenge constructively. Baseline of current activity and work towards the national aims and priorities took place over a number of months. This was again scrutinised to consider local improvement activity and priority areas. Regular reports have also been submitted to Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership for their consideration and input throughout. Unfortunately, due to funding constraints a wider community consultation did not take place on this occasion.

Other strategic partnerships have had the opportunity to consider the CJOIP as it developed, and since completion strategic links are evidenced and incorporated into the final document.

Dumfries and Galloway Community Justice Partnership has also actively sought feedback and been supported by Community Justice Scotland during the development stages of the draft CJOIP. Whilst work is underway for the first year of this plan final publication has been delayed due to national developments and changes within the local CJP. This CJOIP will be shared widely between November 2023 and January 2024. This provides an additional opportunity for community and stakeholder consultation, for feedback to be gathered and changes/amendments to be made providing further assurance that the identified priorities are the right ones for us. Final publication will take place in February 2024.

¹ Five focus groups took place, three in Ayrshire and two in D&G.

² Feedback from focus group participant 'It would make a difference if it was a peer person asking or going into cells to ask'