



# Just Communities

## 2020/21 Annual Summing Up

Welcome to our fourth Annual Report Newsletter, and the third and what should be, final one relating to our current Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2018-2021.

As in previous years, despite the challenges and unpredictability of Covid, we were asked to complete an annual activity reporting template for 2020/21; this was submitted to Community Justice Scotland in September 2021. The template evidences the work we do locally to meet National Community Justice Outcomes; every local authority area in Scotland is required to do this by law. 2020/21 was an extremely challenging year for us as a partnership, for our local communities and for every individual within our communities. Covid has had a huge impact on every stage of the justice journey, which has continued through 2021/22 and will take many years to recover from.

A huge thanks to everyone that has contributed to community justice outcomes, whether they realise it or not. Every small act of kindness has never been more appreciated and never been more important.

### *Remember*

***Strong, connected communities working together can have a much greater effect on the lives of people than services alone ever could.***

### **REMINDER**

As always it's good to remind ourselves of what Community Justice is. In a nutshell it's about us all working in partnership to try and put things in place to reduce offending and reoffending; this involves lots of people at lots of different times! Ultimately those who have the most influence on people are their local communities, friends and family.

Most of those involved in this partnership live and work in Dumfries & Galloway so we are also very much part of local communities across Dumfries and Galloway.

When we start to think about solutions to offending we need to also think about why people behave the way that they do. This means we need to think about trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), smarter responses to supporting change in people who get in to trouble, like more use of diversion and community sentencing options, and looking at some of the wider societal issues behind offending behaviour. This means it's crucial that we also continue to link effectively with other partnerships like the Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Violence Against Women and Girls Sub Committee (part of Public Protection) Suicide Prevention Group Youth Justice Partnership and work with colleagues in health, education, employability and more.

No one person or organisation can tackle this alone.

Because Community Justice is so broad this is reflected in the make up of our partnership. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 identifies a range of statutory partners who have a duty to cooperate. More information on this can be found in the [National Strategy for Community Justice](#)

We also have strong and inclusive third sector involvement which definitely adds value to our partnership and helps statutory partners deliver and support people more effectively.



### Annual Report

#### Special points of interest:

- Local Priorities 2020/21
- Challenges and Opportunities
- What did we do?
- Multi Agency Training
- Throughcare/Aftercare
- Community Sentences; the smart option!
- Partners working together
- Life Stories and impact; the journey
- Final words



## Foreword from the Chair

2020-21 has again been a challenging year for all partners within the Community Justice Partnership for Dumfries and Galloway. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has stretched all services at the critical front line and made everyone realise the critical role they play in people's lives. As chair of the DG CJP I am proud of the commitment the partnership and members have to local priorities and that our local partners are fully committed to working together. There unfortunately remains continuing challenges to have full engagement with National statutory partners on our local partnership, but we will continue to raise and challenge as necessary.

In early 2021, the partnership agreed to extend the CJOIP by a further year and shared this position with Community Justice Scotland which was against their national position. Locally, it was felt that a national requirement to undertake local SNSAs at a time of national emergency was inappropriate and would not be an effective use of finite partnership resources, increasingly so with the operational pressures on partners and with developing health crisis and lockdowns. Unfortunately Community Justice Scotland had produced a position of which they may not support our position, however a meaningful SNSA is a significant and important piece of work however one that requires to be undertaken correctly and with the capacity and support of all partners to be effective and have value. As chair I must guard against inappropriate use of resource in extremely difficult times, however I hope this can be a priority for 2021/22, focused on local priorities.

As a partnership we will continue to support and allow our partners to focus on their operational priorities to those they work with in recovering from the pandemic, while being fully aware of the significant challenges locally and nationally.

As we look forward to the challenges we will face in 2021/22, the work of front line staff in all our partners has been a huge credit both to their agency/partner and the partnership as a whole. This report details much of the good work that this has allowed to be ongoing across the region, from moving on services, supporting families and locally driven community re-integration work. These, through the use of context and visuals, and the rich detail in the real life stories that we were able to use, highlight the positive differences made in people's lives, both personally and in the local community of which we are very proud.

***Gordon Pattinson,  
Chair, Dumfries and Galloway Community Justice  
Partnership***



**Just Communities**

**strengthening relationships, building resilience and reducing reoffending**

# Challenges and Opportunities in 2020/21 HIGHLIGHTS



2020/21 was a year like no other for all of us. Whilst there were many personal challenges we all shared there were also challenges to individual organisations and indeed to strategic partnerships. This was also a time when we saw communities come together to support each other, creating opportunities where there had previously seemed to be none. This was also the case with partnerships and despite the challenges we must recognise there were also opportunities to work better together for the benefit of others.

Challenges	Opportunities
All partners had to rightly concentrate on operational delivery and supporting their local communities. This meant that partners rightly had to step back from strategic partnership activities to some extent, until they established new ways of working within their own services / organisations and communities had the reassurance they needed.	New and more effective links have been made and relationships strengthened with the Community Learning and Development Partnership, the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Group and Housing First Working Group. This can only benefit us moving forward.
Work towards strategic outcomes as detailed in the CJP Action Plan and others was delayed during this time as operational work was the priority. Whilst this was reflected in the Options Paper presented to the D&G CJP in January it did not appear to be considered at a national level and created additional work for local partnerships when the onus should have been, and indeed locally was, on operational delivery.	We were able to continue to support the provision of training, moving to an online platform. This actually meant that more people could attend/access training without the need for travel and has proved an effective option that may be used more going forward.
It was apparent very early on that not everyone had access to laptops, smart phones etc which left already vulnerable people even more vulnerable.	Digital inclusion became increasingly important for all of us. Additional funding was made available to the partnership to support Justice Social Work colleagues to support their service users through the purchasing of equipment, dongles etc. This helped work to continue that contributed towards unpaid work hours and other activity.
Initially not all partners had access to the same digital platform making communication more difficult. At a national level some organisations used Zoom which was not accessible to local authorities. This was resolved as everyone moved to Microsoft Teams. In some respects this has even increased and improved communication.	There have been opportunities to think more creatively about how we link with third sector partners, other strategic partnerships and communities. An example of this is The Little Box of Kindness project. This was jointly funded by D&G CJP and the local Alcohol and Drug Partnership and is discussed in more detail later.

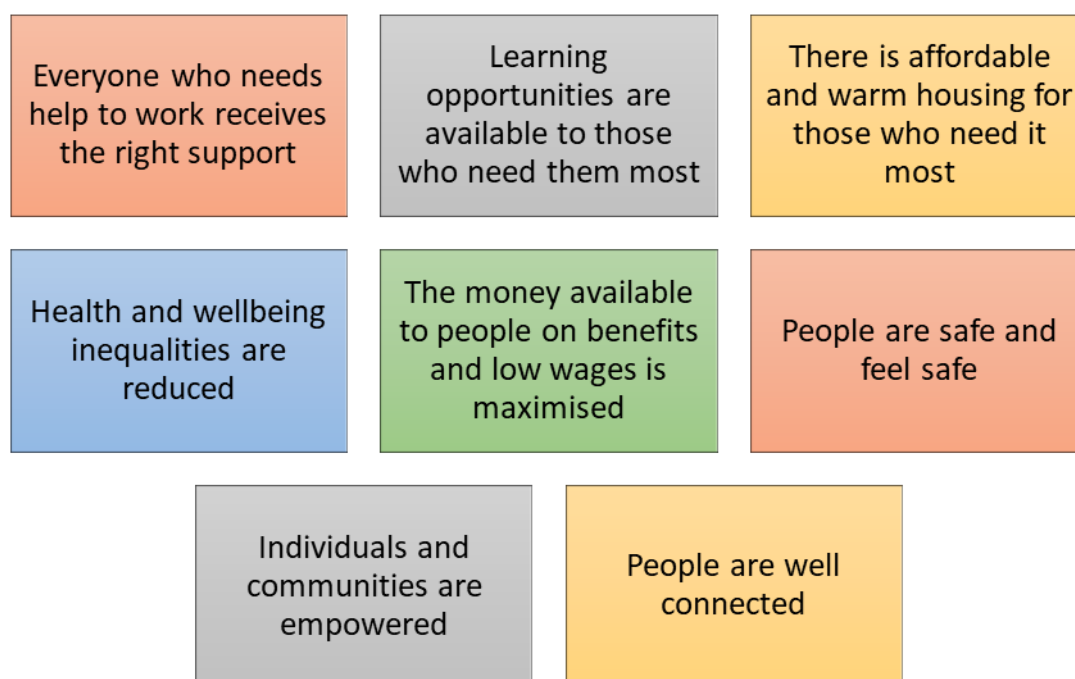
# What are our local community justice priorities?



This should have been the third and final year of our Just Communities three year plan for 2018-2021. In January 2021 an Options Paper was considered by partners in relation to our 2018-2021 plan, reflecting on our ability to fully deliver community justice outcomes during covid-19 and potential delays to progress as partners rightly prioritised operational delivery, emerging issues over the covid-19 period, reviews of both the National Strategy for Community Justice and the National Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework and the requirement to undertake work on a new, more up to date and relevant Strategic Needs and Strength Assessment (SNSA). Partners unanimously supported the option to extend our current plan by twelve months.

The landscape continues to change during the recovery period from covid-19 and partners are continuing to respond and react rather than recover at this time. Since submitting our return to Community Justice Scotland the national review work continues. We have now been advised to delay publication of our local plans until this work is complete

Our local Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan also has to feed in to and support the overarching Local Outcome Improvement Plan that sits across the Community Planning Partnership; we provide quarterly updates to the Community Planning Partnership to help demonstrate this. These overarching outcomes can be seen below



# What did we do?

## Training & Development

One of the biggest protective factors for those involved in offending and wanting to break that cycle is employment. Approximately one in five men and one in ten women have a criminal record reflecting the fact that this isn't a group of people sitting on the margins, these are people just like all of us who need a second chance to change their life and contribute to their local community. The changes included in the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 can and will have a huge impact on the opportunities available to people, impacting not just them as individuals but on their families and their communities. In March 2021 colleagues from Apex Scotland delivered free multi agency training on the changes to the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 and disclosure. As always this was extremely well attended. Apex also extended an offer to attend and update individual organisational teams if required.



Forty-four people from a wide range of partner agencies attended the training to increase their own understanding and awareness of the changes to enable them to support those using their services more effectively. Whilst partners now understand the changes better, they also know that disclosure is complicated and if more specialist advice is required referral to Apex is the best option. Locally relationships between partners are good and support can be given to colleagues from any agency over the phone if needed. Following the training Apex have engaged with Skills Development Scotland and Job Centre Plus locally. We would have been unable to negotiate this free training offer without the close working relationships that have been established throughout the lifetime of the partnership.

## TRAUMA

We continued to build on our programme of Trauma Informed Practice training and awareness raising across Dumfries and Galloway. Community Justice Scotland provided funding for local partnerships to coordinate the next level of trauma training, Trauma Skilled, and we jumped at the chance! Delivery was changed to online and was open to all partners. This time we saw fantastic engagement from colleagues in education and Police in particular and feedback was extremely positive. Although we had previously shared online Trauma training via TURAS with all partners we did this again at the beginning of the pandemic for those who may have missed training previously and were now working from home.



*Gives me a better understanding on individuals circumstances and how they may feel.*

*Understanding working in a trauma informed approach with boundaries and showing compassion while having patience. Really enjoyed this training, so relevant*

*Being in a multi-agency role I will be able to use the learning to help colleagues in other agencies. It will be good to support with mental health clients and people being victim of historical known traumatic incidents*



# The Impact of Covid; A snapshot

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The impact of Covid was, and continues to be huge. Those involved in the justice system were no different, and indeed they were impacted on in ways which many other people may not have considered.

Face to face delivery of accredited and non accredited programmes delivered by Justice Social Work was suspended at the beginning of 2020 as a result of lockdown. The importance of providing some form of continuation of programme work for men was underpinned by research indicating the harmful effects of stopping these interventions whilst only partially completed. Guidance to support delivery of programme work via the telephone and other electronic means was developed, and whilst not ideal it enabled work to continue. A return to face to face delivery of group work was however prioritised as changes to restrictions began to happen. Dumfries and Galloway was one of the first to return to small group work.

A major challenge following each of these lockdowns has been to ensure that all the men required to engage with programme work as part of their court orders, have been afforded the opportunity to do so. The team continue to provide individual, and two to one delivery of programme and other behaviour change interventions when appropriate. There has also been learning for the Women's Service element of the Caledonian System from lockdown practices and this will be incorporated into the 'return to normal' changes going forward.

## Community Payback

Unpaid work was for the most part an outdoor activity that allowed for social distancing and good ventilation. Although numbers of those attending were severely limited for the most part of the reporting period, a wide range of activities were still sourced and provided variety for service users and a visible presence in local communities.

During the periods of lockdown March 2020 – June 2020 Dumfries and Galloway unpaid work developed a range of Blended learning packs – these packs allowed for written responses to be completed by individuals. They related to subjects such as Covid 19 guidance, Unpaid Work and CPO requirements, Relationships and Drug/ Alcohol Awareness.

Individuals with literacy needs were supported on a one-to-one basis by staff members to complete the packs.

The blended learning packs developed in D&G are designed to encourage reflective thinking and insight into offending behaviours. Each of these packs were assessed by case managers and unpaid work hours awarded for efforts made.

The Blended learning packs were shared with other local authorities through the unpaid work network national forum.

Other activity mainly focussed on online training and education courses through certificated providers/partners and Open University. For those who were digitally excluded a range of tablets and data were sourced and distributed. More about CPO later!



## Police Scotland

Policing through the pandemic saw a time of unparalleled change, where officers continued to provide a service under extreme circumstances whilst also meeting and dealing with the additional demands the circumstances brought. This period saw an accelerated and wider use of technology and the introduction of new practices throughout policing, many of which were introduced at speed due to necessity but will remain as we move forward due to the potential to improvements that have been identified.

It is acknowledged that although there were some positives here were also challenges especially in respect of the reduced ability for contact and face to face interactions with partners and the community.

Due to restrictions within the court service during this time, there was an increase of people released on bail meaning a rise in the number of persons who required to be managed by police.



During the summer of 2020 a small initiative was piloted called 'The Little Box of Kindness', this was jointly funded by CJP and ADP. The Little Box of Kindness Initiative was a partnership approach to help improve individuals' and families' physical and mental health and wellbeing during the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic. Even as restrictions began to be lifted, local people being supported by organisations were reporting their ongoing fear and anxiety, negative thought processes, boredom and family tensions. Alcohol and Drugs Support South West Scotland (ADSSW) and Apex were the lead partners for the project. During June and July 2020, a hundred boxes were produced and distributed to service users from ADS, Apex, We Are With You and the NHS Specialist Drug and Alcohol Service. This also included several Family Boxes of Kindness to help service users with children participate in fun and creative activities together. This felt like a real community project with local beekeepers getting involved by donating locally produced honey, we even included some lavender seeds so people could nurture them and watch them grow.

Some of the benefits are highlighted here:

**Use of time:** Managing boredom is a very important part of our collective approaches to promoting a person's recovery from alcohol and drug problems. Boredom is often cited as a factor in lapse and relapse. Although COVID 19 lockdown restrictions were gradually being lifted, service users continued to report having too much time on their hands and not enough to do.

Many were socially isolated before going into lockdown, and the pandemic exacerbated this. Including crafting activities in the boxes, makes people focus on one thing and use your hands which is a great boredom buster.

**Social relationships:** The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented challenges for everyone involved, from the children, to their teachers and their parents. The Family Box of Kindness and Wellness included activities for service users and their children to work on together.

**Government advice was to create a new routine for family life:** life changed for all of us for a while. We know routine gives children and young people an increased feeling of safety in the context of uncertainty. It is also important to encourage maintaining a balance between being on and offline and discover new ideas for activities

to do from home.

**Physical health:** Premium local honey was donated from the local beekeeper's association and John Mellis Honey. Local raw honey that hasn't been pasteurised is said to help alleviate symptoms of hay fever because it still contains lots of pollen from local plants and trees.

**Emotional health:** People with no history of mental illness are developing serious psychological problems for the first time because of the lockdown, amid growing stresses over isolation, job insecurity, relationship breakdown and bereavement. Many of the people we support have pre-existing mental health problems, ranging from anxiety and depression to more severe and enduring conditions.

The craft materials included mindfulness based colouring books for both adults and children, which have been demonstrated to promote calm and relieve stress. [See Carsley & Heath 2017: Evaluating the effectiveness of a mindfulness colouring activity for test anxiety in children].

Service users also suggested that "snap bands" and fidget spinners would be beneficial in managing anxiety. One of the major issues that affects those with anxiety is this feeling that they're inside of their own head. They feel like they're unable to experience the world, and that they're so lost in thought that they cannot seem to focus and enjoy life.

The wristband anxiety treatment is designed to take them out of their own head and snap them back into reality. It's a physical reminder designed to get you to stop over-thinking and prevent anxiety from getting worse. Fidgeting also helps people cope with stress and anxiety and fidget spinners are just a tool that assist people to fidget.

**Improved self-esteem:** we are aware that many of the people receiving support are facing even more financial hardship than in the past. Many are heavily reliant on food parcels and crisis grants, simply to survive. This is probably set to continue for a considerable period of time.

The Box of Kindness and Wellness will contained a variety of treats that an emergency food parcel would not have. We believed this would help would raise self-esteem and self-worth.

*"Douglas got one for his mum and all the family, and his mum said she was really grateful for it and for someone thinking about them as sometimes she feels very alone".*

*More feedback on the benefits of the boxes can be seen in the 'Impact' section of this report.*

## THROUGH CARE AND AFTER CARE: linking to our local outcome Equity and Equality, Opportunity and Integration

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Locally throughcare services have continued to be delivered by Justice Social Work (on a voluntary and statutory throughcare basis) and Apex Scotland as the third sector partner delivering the Shine Women's Mentoring Service and New Routes Service for men. Throughcare services support people prior to and post liberation helping to identify and overcome barriers which may impact on their ability to move on with their lives successfully, engage with support services to help address barriers and build skills and resilience and reduce or stop offending. By identifying and overcoming barriers and access to services and support, people are able to make a much more successful transition from custody back to their community, this in turn leads to an increased likelihood of reducing or desisting from offending behaviour in future.

Over the last year Shine received 8 prison referrals which is the same as last year and 10 community referrals, which is two less than last year. This means that a total of 18 vulnerable women received support during 2020/21.

Shine supports women coming back to Dumfries and Galloway after being in prison and also supports women on community payback orders to complete their order successfully. The pandemic meant that all face-to-face contact, including gate pickups were stopped. While face to face meetings have now restarted, gate collection has not yet resumed. Apex have reported that Shine Mentors have spent much of their time providing wellbeing support to the women they have been supporting, regularly checking in by phone, face time etc.

What difference did it make? There are case studies and personal stories included in this report which show the difference this type of approach makes. All names have been changed.

Women working with Shine mentors use Outcome Star as their action planning tool, a different tool is used by New Routes whilst JSW track progress differently again. This makes comparison between services difficult

The six-month time limit on support from Shine can be problematic, particularly in a rural area like Dumfries and Galloway where there is not the same availability of other support services. If women are still undertaking CPO hours when the time limit is reached, they can get referred back into the service to allow the support to continue, otherwise it is at the discretion of the Mentor, the organisation they work for and Sacro as the lead partner. We are always told how important relationships are and 'stickability' is to vulnerable people colliding with justice services, it therefore doesn't make sense for these types of mentoring services to be constrained by time limits.

### **FOCUS ON LIVED EXPERIENCE**

Mentee is particularly vulnerable and has a history of self-harm and overdose. She was supported by the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) for a number of years. The worker had previously been her leaving care worker, so they had a solid relationship, built on trust. The mentee struggles to form a positive rapport with new workers. Shine Mentor went on maternity leave, leaving mentee with no support for a period of time. She has since relocated to Dumfries and was eventually allocated a new mentor. She struggled to build a relationship with him and so failed to make her various appointments which she had been supported to do previously; her psychiatrist discharged her. She was advised that if she was having suicidal thoughts, she could contact the specialist nurse, based within her GP practice.

Since returning from maternity leave the Shine mentor has reengaged with her mentee which is extremely positive and has been trying to reconnect her with CMHT. This individual is currently prescribed anti-psychotic meds and has been involved with the CATS service recently. Her Shine Mentor states, 'I feel that if I was to close her case, she would be extremely vulnerable and fear the worst'.

'This mentee is particularly isolated, given her location and has no family support. She was discharged early from her CPO given her progress which on the surface seems really positive. Sadly, she now feels that she has no-one to turn to as she enjoyed her order, and as a result struggles with her mental health'.



## THROUGH CARE AND AFTER CARE



**Justice Social  
Work**

Apex took over the New Routes mentoring service for men in D&G in August 2020 although it was not until October that their mentor could access the prison due to delays with enhanced disclosure. Prior to this time the service was provided on a part time basis by Wise Group; numbers were low with people mainly being supported whilst still in custody.

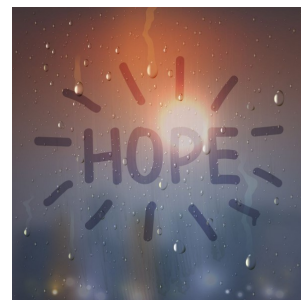
Operating the service in covid times has been very challenging. It has been a very different service with no gate pickups and limited access to many prison establishments due to national lockdowns and localised shutdowns in individual prisons. The service was extended to the over 25 age group in September 2019 as a temporary measure and this has continued, the vast majority of referrals are now for this age group. There has also been a far greater number of men serving their sentence out with D&G than previously, it is then a challenge for mentors to try and maintain contact with these men; it should be recognised that family and friends face the same challenges often with very limited resources.

Over the last year New Routes received 22 referrals from custody, 16 of these were from HMP Dumfries. Of those 22, 12 continued to engage with the service once released and 11 of these also engaged with another support service, for example for help with addictions, mental health, employability etc.

Justice Social Work reported there were less cases commenced for voluntary assistance this year, falling from 59 in 2019/20 to 24 in 2020/21. It should be noted that people could be working with JSW and one of the other mentoring services in tandem if they felt that required that level of support. Statutory throughcare also fell slightly from 135 to 123 (66 in the community and 56 in custody).

*As mentioned every year we need to recognise that Throughcare can be challenging for us locally as there is no facility for women or for young men locally. We also have a number of men returning here from prisons all over Scotland, not just HMP Dumfries.*

**People can be receiving support from Justice Social Work and from one of the third sector mentoring services at the same time if they want to. This can provide extra support for those that feel they need it and demonstrates strong and effective partnership working. Good communication between all those involved is crucial.**



Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for Dumfries and Galloway operates as part of MAPPA Southwest Scotland, working collaboratively with agencies throughout Ayrshire. Justice Social Work are the lead for the management of registered sex offenders in the community who have received a court order i.e., Community Payback Order or who are under extended sentences which include an offender being subject to licence conditions. The Scottish Prison Service lead for those in custody and Health Boards lead for restricted patients. There are several other agencies involved in the management of MAPPA clients including Police Scotland, Homeless Services, Registered Social Landlords and third sector organisations.

Planning for how COVID-19 would impact MAPPA and its operational delivery was underway before lockdown commenced and has continued to be reviewed throughout the reporting period. MAPPA Meetings continue to take place when they should in their management cycle. Risk Management Plans and any contact continue to be shared between agencies and updated on relevant systems. This ensures those who pose the most risk are managed very effectively, keeping communities safe.

## Community Sentences; The Smart option

There are a range of community sentencing options available to a Sheriff for consideration, perhaps the one you might have heard more about is a Community Payback Order. Local communities and service users are invited to identify local projects and pieces of work that could be supported by those undertaking community payback orders. This is usually done on an on-going basis however due to COVID this was understandably much more challenging this year. However, this remains important for justice services as it enables effective planning of both projects and resources. It also helps local communities and those using services to feel heard and valued and increases the visibility and impact of community sentencing options.

Information on local unpaid work activity has been positively reported in the local press over the last year and positive feedback received from community groups both east and west of the region, examples of this are included to give you a flavour of the work undertaken and the community benefit of that work.

Dear Sir/ Madam

We would like to thank you most sincerely for the refurbishment work that you undertook in respect of the Iron Railings at the entrance to the Play Fields at Leswalt. For some time these had been left to the elements and we were increasingly concerned that the young people and others accessing the recreational grounds at Leswalt could have caused injury to themselves due to the poor condition that the railings had deteriorated to. Your kind work has removed any of these risks alongside bringing these railings back to an extremely high standard. We have a great sense of pride in our local community and we want to thank the Unpaid Work Department for their kind and hard work in restoring the railings and improving a part of our local environment.

With Kindest Regards to All involved

Leswalt Community Association

### COMMUNITY PAYBACK ORDERS

The unpaid work team is made up of both Community Payback Officers and Unpaid Work Supervisors. When possible they have continued to organise projects and work groups from their bases in Dumfries, Newton Stewart, Stranraer and Annan but this has been really difficult when factoring in social distancing and other restrictions in relation to the pandemic, this meant numbers were severely limited for most of the year. Luckily we have a creative team in D&G who worked closely with partners, including the third sector to come up with innovative alternatives!

During the periods of lockdown March 2020 – June 2020 Dumfries and Galloway unpaid work developed a range of Blended learning packs – these packs allowed for written responses to be completed by individuals. They related to subjects such as Covid 19 guidance, Unpaid Work and CPO requirements, Relationships and Drug/Alcohol Awareness. People with literacy needs were supported on a one-to-one basis to complete the packs. Other activity mainly focussed on online training and education courses through certificated providers/partners and Open University. For those who were digitally excluded a range of tablets and data were sourced and distributed.

The Blended learning packs are designed to encourage reflective thinking and insight into offending behaviours. Each of these packs were assessed by case managers and unpaid work hours awarded for efforts made. The Blended Learning packs were shared with other local authorities through the unpaid work network national forum.

## Community benefit

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An example of a project that did go ahead is Heathhall Nursery Pirate Ship: This is a project Unpaid Work competed in collaboration with HMP Dumfries. The Unpaid Work team were asked if they could do anything with the old ship as it was used a lot by the children at the Heathhall nursery in Dumfries, but it had seen better days. It had to be totally refurbished as most of the wood was rotten.

Between the Community Payback team and the Prison they were able to completely remake the ship using a lot of recycled material. This project took about four weeks to complete between the uplift of the ship and until the team were able to return it. This was the first time that Unpaid Work had undertaken work for this nursery.

The service users who worked on this project enjoyed doing it as it was a completely different kind of project, there was about four to six service users who were mainly involved from the start to the finish. As you can see from the pictures this was a great success; the note below evidences the impact. The children at the nursery were delighted with their new pirate ship.



Thankyou for  
fixing our pirate ship  
for all the  
children at Heathhall  
nursery x



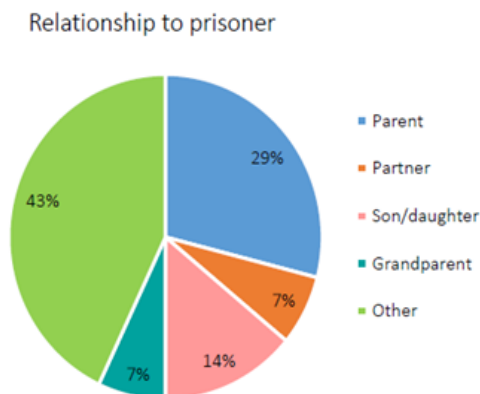
Dumfries & Galloway



## Supporting Families

Once again the Community Justice Partnership supported a bid from Families Outside to our local Alcohol and Drug Partnership because of the cross cutting nature of the work and the people supported by both partnerships. This was again successful enabling the Families Outside Family Support Coordinator to continue providing services across Dumfries and Galloway.

Between January 2020 and December 19 families were supported by Families Outside, five received direct one to one support which is almost half of those supported last year and fourteen received support via the helpline. This impacted on 31 family members, the family members relationship to the person in prison can be seen below:



As with other areas of work, a lot of family support has had to be provided remotely over the last twelve months by third sector colleagues; Children and Family Social Work were however still carrying out home visits if needed. We understand that much of the year was extremely traumatic and challenging for those with a loved one in prison.

Whilst face to face contact fell the volume of helpline contacts increased dramatically. Concerns increased in relation to lack of visits, early release information and criteria and concerns about suspension of home leave.

Although numbers receiving direct support fell this year positive outcomes were still achieved with the families involved understanding the process better and feeling more included.



The Multi Agency Reintegration Board (MACRIB) continues to operate for all people leaving prison and returning to Dumfries and Galloway. Whilst this approach has proved effective since its implementation strengthening the group and ensuring all the partners that are required are represented was one of the areas of focus for the Cyclical Offending Dumfries and Galloway Short Life Working Group.

For the MACRIB process to continue through the pandemic it had to develop into a virtual meeting through MS Team's, due to SPS not having this facility open to them in the early days, Prison Based Social Work thankfully offered to facilitate. Numbers have been greatly reduced due the backlog of courts, and there have been a greater number of individuals being on remand for longer and then being released from court having served their time already. Extended periods of time on remand creates its own problems for individuals, their families and support services who are unable to predict this happening, the MACRIB is looking at trialling a process to try and mitigate against this, but this is in the very early stages.

The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 granted Scottish Ministers powers to instruct the early release of prisoners from custody where necessary in May 2020. This was largely to support the continuation of prison services and to protect the health of both staff and prisoners. This only applied to prisoners serving a sentence of eighteen months or less and who were within three months of their scheduled release date. People convicted of sexual or terrorism offences, subject to a post release supervision order, serving sentences for domestic abuse or non-harassment orders, or those convicted of some covid-19 related offences were excluded. Locally a high-level strategic oversight group was established with partners from SPS, Police Scotland, Social Work, Housing, Health and the CJPM. We developed a local information booklet which included details of support services, help with travel and also incorporated a consent pre-release. Justice Social Work was identified as the key contact to oversee each individual due for release and being released ensuring no one fell through the net. Because numbers were fairly low in D&G and in recognition that all releases during this time would be more challenging, partners decided to use the same protocol for all people being liberated, not just early release. Since MACRIB was already embedded the process was probably more straightforward for us in Dumfries & Galloway but it wasn't without it's challenges.



Greater links have been made between CJP and Community Learning and Development through attendance and involvement with the Community Learning and Development Partnership. Partners in Lifelong Learning work have worked hard within HMP Dumfries to develop a Literacy Peer Mentor (LPM) Group. Once recruited, LPM Volunteers attend an intensive training course, including all aspects of adult literacy learning. This gives the volunteers the skills and tools they need to support their learners. Once the training is complete the volunteers sign a work agreement and are then matched with a learner who needs help. All LPMs attend a monthly meeting, have access to training and receive one to one support. There are currently 38 Literacy Peer Mentors who are trained and support over 120 learners. Evidence of the impact of this can be seen below:

*'I've always been very good at helping people out with prison, I owned my own business and was quite successful, so when I saw the posters asking for prison mentors I applied straight away. Following an interview, I completed the training course with seven fellow prisoners. The course gave me an insight into adult literacies and taught me how to help others with literacy issues. My first learner was quite challenging, it was difficult to get him to focus because he just wanted to talk, but after getting advice from Jacki and talking things through I was able to get my learner to start to learn. I've worked with three learners so far and each are different. My current learner is working on his CV but has never had a job which is a challenge. I've learnt so much in my time as a literacy Peer Mentor and I'm enjoying being able to help'*

**JM'S STORY**  
AT SCHOOL I WAS NEVER VERY GOOD AT LEARNING, SO I NEVER WENT. I LEFT SCHOOL EARLY & DIDN'T REALLY DO VERY MUCH WITH MY LIFE EXCEPT THE ODD JOB HERE & THERE. HAVING NOT GONE TO SCHOOL MEANT I COULDN'T READ & WRITE PROPERLY WHICH I FOUND EMBARRASSING. WHEN I FOUND MYSELF IN PRISON, THAT IS WHEN I KNEW I HAD TO GET SOME HELP; I COULDN'T FILL IN THE FORM NEEDED TO GET MY LAUNDRY WASHED. AFTER SEEING THE POSTERS FOR THE LITERACY PEER MENTOR SERVICE, I WAS INTERVIEWED BY JACKI SWEENEY & WAS INTRODUCED TO M. TO START WITH M HELPED ME WITH MY LAUNDRY SHEET & GAVE ME A TEMPLATE TO COPY THEN WE BEGAN AT THE BEGINNING WITH THE SOUNDS OF WORDS. THAT WAS LAST YEAR & I AM NOW ABOUT TO BEGIN AN ADULT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD AT LEVEL 3.

## Moving forward together, just communities, strengthening relationships

The following pages show some of the innovative work taking place locally that contributes to community justice outcomes. This work often lies with partners or other strategic partnerships but impacts and links closely to those in the justice system.

Local Homelessness Team led on work to develop a new Housing First service in the East of the region. A requirement of the Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together Workplan was for each local authority area to develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP). The initial plan came into force in April 2019 and is a multi-agency plan on reducing homelessness in D&G. The Scottish Government also sees Housing First as an integral part of any policy to end homelessness and reiterated the need for all RRTPs to include this following the initial COVID-19 lockdown.

D&G committed to developing a Housing First project within the region in year 4 of their plan. However, due to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic this was brought forward a year and work commenced developing the pilot in early 2020. Housing First is a concept developed in America which offers permanent accommodation to the most vulnerable and complexly disadvantaged people as quickly as possible and provides ongoing support to help them recover from any needs they may have, such as mental health and substance use issues.

A working group of strategic partners across from Health, Mental Health, ADP, Addiction Services, Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, Justice Social Work, Community Justice and Registered Social Landlords was set up in November 2020 to look at the level of need and how we would resource the project, agree a service specification and governance arrangements. The group met monthly via Teams.

The support element of the project was subject to procurement in March 2021 by the Housing Options and Homeless Service of the Council. Turning Point (Scotland) were duly appointed as the successful provider. Discussions with Health Services have also led to resourcing from the Community Mental Health Team and Addiction Services being supplied directly to the service. The pilot project was agreed as 20 tenancies over two years within the DG1 and DG2 postcode areas. Wheatley Group Ltd (DGHP) have committed to providing the required properties. I'm sure you'll agree this is a really exciting project and one which should provide savings in the longer term.

**Firesetter Intervention:** The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service deliver a Juvenile Firesetters Intervention Programme (soon to be known as Fire Safety Support and Education). This involves engaging with young people who have become involved in risky firesetting behaviour, have a fascination with fire, have been responsible for the deliberate actuation of fire alarms or making hoax calls. Referrals can be submitted by Youth Justice, Social Work, Police Scotland, Education or family members. Each session is unique and specific to the young person, their individual needs, the type of behaviour they have been displaying or taking part in.

A joint statement from the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and Police Scotland was created detailing the dangers of deliberate firesetting and

derelict buildings. This statement was sent to specific Schools for distribution to students and parents when there was a rise in deliberate firesetting in their area. Further information on this subject was also sent to Education for distribution to all Primary and Secondary Schools prior to holiday periods.

During 2020/21 sessions were suspended due to covid19 restrictions. Three sessions were carried out in the east of the region – two sessions were face to face (when covid19 restrictions were relaxed) and one session was carried out via MS Teams.



**SCOTTISH**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland



Apex Scotland's Moving On service provides support to service users (16+) in Dumfries and Galloway to address personal barriers mainly related to employability. The service is aimed at those involved in or at risk of becoming involved in offending behaviours, and those who are socially isolated as a result of problems including homelessness, substance misuse, poor literacy and numeracy, lack of work or education, etc. The Moving On Service continues to be the main employability service engaging with those on CPO, although links have been made with colleagues in adult learning to enhance this provision. The Moving On service is funded through the Local Authority and contributes to the Scottish Government's "No One Left Behind" – next steps for the integration and alignment of employability support in Scotland. Whilst having a focus on employability, a holistic assessment is carried out, enabling staff to support and signpost to other relevant partners for help with addiction, mental health etc. People are also encouraged to take responsibility for their offences and work with a Personal Development Mentor to produce a letter of disclosure, enabling them to disclose previous convictions to employers in the correct way, whilst focussing on the positive steps they have taken to move their lives forward; this can be extremely empowering for the individuals involved. Unsurprisingly referrals to the service fell over the reporting period with 82 referrals received compared to 196 the previous year. However, engagement rates actually increased from 55.6% to 77%. As in previous years the majority of those referred were male with only eleven female referrals, and the bulk of referrals were for those aged between 25 years and 40 years of age. Interestingly, whilst the overall number of referrals increased so did their individual complexity. There has also been a difference in the type of individuals we are supporting in the East from the West. Service users in the West have been far more chaotic and presenting with more complex need. 47% in the West had a substance Misuse issue compared to 28% in the East and 55% in the West had been in prison compared to 20% in the East. People attending presented with the following barrier

Barrier	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Substance misuse	43%	38.2%	39%	Increase
Criminal Record	60%	81.6%	83%	Increase
Housing issues	17%	16.3%	26%	Increase
Spent time in prison	24%	27%	40%	Increase
Literacy/numeracy issues	13%	12.2%	37%	Increase
Have never worked	20%	25.5%	22%	Decrease

Apex was able to continue to offer a basic service over this period offering welfare checks which involved contacting current service users and any new referrals by phone and to assist with any issues if required. Service users were grateful for the contact during these uncertain times. Time spent attending Moving On can be counted towards the 'other activity' element of CPO. As referral numbers fell last year Apex staff became involved in other local developments. During the COVID19, Apex Personal Development Mentors helped Justice Social Work in the delivery of the Blended Learning Packs (BLP's). Service users in general have engaged well with the BLP's and this has allowed Unpaid Work Hours to be achieved in a time when service users could not get out in groups due to restrictions.

During this period Apex also developed an online training and information portal allowing those service users with reliable internet to continue to access employability short courses, awareness sessions and the SQA Employability Award allowing service users to continue gain valuable new skills and improve their employability prospects without 1-1 contact during the lockdown periods. Unfortunately, many service users do not have reliable internet service or the skills required to navigate online this has proved to be a major barrier to engagement but for those who have managed to take advantage of this new approach the feedback has been very positive.







## IMPACT: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES ANY OF THIS MAKE?

As always, it's important that we don't lose sight of the reason we are doing what we do. This can only truly be captured through the real life stories of those involved in the justice system. We'd like to extend a huge thanks to all of those people who were generous enough to share their story with us and the staff and organisations that supported them along the way. The stories provided demonstrate just a little bit of the chaos that many people in the justice system live with.

Sam was referred to Apex by JSW just before the COVID19 pandemic started, Sam was not keen to engage with any services at this time.

He had a 30-year history of offending behaviour and had served both long and short term prison sentences, he also has a long history of problematic drug and alcohol misuse. Sam has never engaged with the any service either while in prison or when living in the community.

An Apex Personal Development Mentor made contact with Sam and invited him to the office to meet him, Sam was not keen at all, and the first few appointments did not appear to be productive.

It became clear that Sam had several barriers to engagement, which were discussed in detail over several appointments. Sam was supported to get his eyes tested resulting in him getting glasses; he was also given a dictionary by Apex so he could learn the meaning of words as he struggled with this.

Over the months Sam has been supported both face to face and over the phone in completing his BLP's and he has now finished his UPW hours using these. Sam has continued to engage twice per week (despite his UPW being finished) and has also met and engaged with a trainee Addiction Support Worker currently on a placement at Apex.

Sam's level of engagement and change in mind set around engagement truly has been remarkable, he has become more confident and has a clearer plan for his own personal recovery than he had 13 months ago. Sam's engagement with all services involved has increased and he is more positive about his involvement with services. Sam has also recently advised a friend to engage with Apex as he can see how he has progressed during the past year or so.

### **Feedback to Apex Manager from Justice Social Work about Sam and his progress:**

*'I have spoken with Sam this week who expressed his gratitude towards the support he has received from David, his Personal Development Mentor, over the past few months. He commented as follows:*

*"David deserves praise for the support he has given me. He has remembered everything I've ever said which was a great support to my PIP assessment" (They had a phone assessment this week which David supported him with and at the end of the call, David provided additional information to support the application.)*

*David has been "a massive help in my life and has been absolutely brilliant and great".*

*Sam also commented that the Trainee Addiction Worker has also been great and that he likes her.*

*Not sure how much you know about Sam, but he is very mistrusting of agencies and David has gone to great lengths to get him to accept support. I believe Sam is now accessing support from Apex with a variety of issues – even coming to the office regularly which was previously really difficult for him to do. This has enabled Sam to be proactive in dealing with difficulties in his life, which previously he would have ignored. Sam was initially referred to Apex as a way of reducing his UPW hours so the fact that he has been engaging for several months without any 'compulsion' to do so is brilliant. He is coming to the end of his Community Payback Order in a few weeks, and it is really positive that he feels able and willing to continue to access the support from Apex'.*



## IMPACT: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES ANY OF THIS MAKE?



*"I had three service users who loved the lavender seeds and have given me updates every week on the progress of them. One said ...they had never seen seeds grow and it was amazing".*



*"I genuinely thought when I gave a box to Lucy and James their eyes literally lit up. It was more the feeling of them being thought about and not what was actually in the box although when they opened the box there was a massive smile on their face. Through lock down they didn't obviously have much interaction with anyone so Lucy said she really appreciated us thinking about them whilst making the boxes up and the list of people who would have liked a box. When I gave the box over to them, I even had a smile on my face because I know it meant so much to them".*

*"The box of kindness I received was so lovely, I felt really appreciated and I was grateful of how someone had nominated me for this box. It made me feel like I meant something other than just a person who is receiving support and help regarding my issues".*

*"Amazing, I was overwhelmed by the kindness of you for starters and also the other services that donated. I liked everything and immediately planted the lavender, which is already growing, and I've started to paint some stones, loving that. VERY therapeutic, everything was lovely, and the tasty honey and chocolate was a lovely treat. HONESTLY so well thought out. AN HONEST THANK YOU AND THAT'S FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART"*

**As always we want to finish by saying thank you.**

**Thank you to all our partners who continue to support the work of the partnership, even when they have all had to work so very hard within their own organisations to support local communities across Dumfries and Galloway; none of this could have been achieved without you all!**

**We also want to say a heartfelt thanks to you!**

**All of our communities have faced many challenges throughout the last year, and many continue to do so. To see the way communities came together during such a difficult time really was heart warming.**

**Sometimes we don't see the difference we make to the life of an individual at the time but I am sure many lives were changed because of the actions of those who cared.**

**From the life stories we continue to see how hard people work to turn to their lives around, and how hard our partners work to support them to do that.**

**As we said last year, nobody wants to live their life in and out of courts and prison but it takes a lot of work and commitment to make things different; often this begins with hope!**



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