# Community Justice Scotland

Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local area annual return template
## Reporting year April 2025 – March 2026

April 2026

**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 gather information and 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 the area, and such community bodies or 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 | *Dumfries and Galloway* |
| Name and contact details of the partnership Chair | Name: Gordon Pattinson<br>Email: Gordon.Pattinson@dumgal.gov.uk<br>Telephone: |
| Contact for queries about this report | Name: Vikki Binnie<br>Email: Vikki.Binnie@dumgal.gov.uk<br>Telephone: |

## 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 30 September 2026.*

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

Date: 16 September 2026

Name: 

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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.

### 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, delivery of services, or other as relevant.

**Challenges / Negatives**

Many of the challenges highlighted in the 2024/25 return remain, including continued funding pressure on all partners, increased demands for all services and pressures further exacerbated by numerous legislative changes. Recruitment challenges continue throughout the sector, becoming even harder in rural areas like Dumfries and Galloway. As with other areas of social work, recruitment in Justice Social Work (JSW) was a major theme during 2025. JSW experienced numerous vacant social worker posts across multiple teams for several months, longer than anticipated as recruitment to these vacant posts proved difficult.

We would once again highlight Community Justice Partnership (CJP) funding is largely utilised for the CJP Manager role; locally, this is supplemented by additional funding but leaves no capacity for any tests of change, collaborative working approaches etc. In recent years, such initiatives have typically been jointly funded by JSW, ADP, and Welfare Rights; however, tightening budgets and increasing demand, are placing significant strain on collaborative funding opportunities whilst third sector services are finding sustainability more challenging than ever.

Increases in the prison population and subsequent legislative changes to try and alleviate the impact of this continue. Unintended consequences of these changes on community partners and the wider community feed into challenges highlighted above. Importantly this includes a loss of faith in the justice system and further erosion of community confidence in justice. Stronger national communication around why changes are being made, assurances on the safety of communities, particularly victims/survivors and the effectiveness of community sentences should be a priority.

The National priority for the Scottish Government to reduce the prison population has placed significant strategic and operational demands on Justice Social Work (JSW) over 2025/26. The pace and range of change activities that JSW have had to engage with and respond to has been challenging, i.e., The Commission on Sentencing and Penal Policy, The Thematic Inspection of prison-based services, prisoner early releases, the publication of the Care Inspectorate self-evaluation of performance quality and outcomes report, Part 1 of the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023, and several new/updated guidance documents published. At times responding to national agendas and priorities has significantly stretched the capacity of JSW and adversely impacted on local priorities designed to meet the demands of Aim 2 to “ensure that robust and high-quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available”.



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Capacity and resources are an ongoing challenge, despite the Scottish Government review of JSW funding, a year-on-year budget means that longer term planning is very difficult, and whilst small annual uplifts over recent years in the budget received from Scottish Government is welcomed, this is alongside increased staffing costs and on-going increased demand on our services.

Funding for the delivery of the Caledonian System (Integrated approach to behaviour change for men convicted of domestic abuse offences) has been nationally reviewed resulting in a small reduction to our resource; this despite evidence of increasing demand and positive practice. JSW is committed to the delivery of nationally accredited behaviour change programmes and therefore will continue to fund their delivery using core funding where necessary.

The increase in demand is only expected to continue following the recent publication of the Report from the Commission on Sentencing and Penal Policy and anticipated policy changes towards greater use of community alternatives and sentences.

Collaborative work with local partners has helped to mitigate some of the resource challenges. The Homeless and Housing options and Police partners have been critical during 2025 to facilitate the safe placement of those offenders managed under Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Stable, risk assessed allocation of housing is a key element of risk management planning in the community and supports community safety. The housing crisis has made this work extremely challenging and JSW continues to work with partners to find solutions to this complex problem.

With the continuing strains of the high numbers in the prison population, HMP Dumfries has seen a significant increase in statutory prisoners subject to both Enhanced ICM & MAPPA.

Prison Based Social Work (PBSW) and programmes officers at HMP Kilmarnock have been severely short-staffed thus having an impact on their progression ability and programme delivery. There are separate business cases in to address these issues to tackle the backlog of Generic Programme Assessments (GPA) as well as a range of PBSW reports and risk assessments.

The increase in population in HMP Dumfries also affected Prison Based Social Work (PBSW) bringing an uplift in their workload. A national review took place of social work provision in every establishment which brough HMP Dumfries an increase in our social work budget. This has provided the opportunity to increase the compliment of both Social Workers and Social Work Support, with the new staff expected to be in position soon.

HMP Kilmarnock Integrated Case Management (ICM) – challenges; Due to an ever-increasing number of prisoners subject to statutory release, the volume of ICM case conferences required has grown substantially over the course of the year. A significant number of sex offenders transferred from HMP Low Moss to HMP Kilmarnock in September 2025. As all individuals were statutory prisoners subject to Enhanced ICM, this resulted in a substantial increase in the number of case conferences required. Consequently, considerable additional demands were placed on case management staff, prison-based social work services, and Local Authority Criminal Justice Social Work partners, creating sustained workload pressures across all agencies involved in the case management process.



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HMP Dumfries: Staffing issues within the Case Management team have caused concerns through the year. The development of new staff into role has alleviated some of the strain, but recent retirements and promotions have exacerbated this issue. Recruitment is ongoing with additional support coming from the Residential function to tackle the backlog of Generic Programme Assessments (GPA's).

HMP Kilmarnock further highlight Risk Management Team activity has been adversely affected by the increased demand arising from higher caseloads across PBSW, Programmes, and ICM functions, particularly in relation to progression cases involving transfers to less secure conditions.

HMP Kilmarnock reported that PBSW resources are currently insufficient to meet the growing volume of risk assessments and reports required to support ICM reviews, Parole Board processes, and pre-programme suitability assessments. Furthermore, the availability of accredited programme places, facilitators, and treatment supervisors across the prison estate has not kept pace with the increasing needs of the prison population. This has created additional pressures on progression pathways and has impacted the timely progression of individuals through the sentence management process. HMP Dumfries faced similar issues, highlighting that RMT activity has been adversely affected by the increased demand arising from higher caseloads across Prison-Based Social Work (PBSW) and Integrated Case Management (ICM) functions, particularly in relation to progression cases involving transfers to less secure conditions.

PBSW resources are currently stretched beyond capacity to meet the growing volume of risk assessments and reports required to support ICM reviews. Furthermore, the lack of an accredited programme unit in Dumfries, and treatment opportunities across the prison estate has not kept pace with the increasing needs of the prison population. This has created additional pressures on progression pathways and has impacted the timely progression of individuals through the sentence management process.

It has not been possible to do any targeted work with victims or those with lived and living experience of justice other than through the Lived Experience post funded by JSW. The close working relationships built up with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and the Public Protection Partnership (particularly Violence Against Women and Girls agenda) has been critical, enabling us to evidence areas of crossover and consider the needs and voices of victims more effectively and authentically. If this is truly a priority for community justice a ring-fenced resource needs to be in place.

During the last reporting period we highlighted - We recognise that those involved in justice have contact with health services prior to, during and after justice involvement. Health remains an integral partner within ADP structures and our alignment with ADP ensures we remain sighted on activity; however, it has been more challenging to access specific data in relation to justice experienced people. Systems are not set up to capture this information out with justice settings i.e. police custody and prison as people should be accessing universal services. Work remains ongoing to improve communication and data capture, particularly with partners involved in health and social care. Very little progress has been made in relation to this despite an initial constructive meeting with HSCP Managers and Senior NHS representation at CJP meetings.

Despite JSW developing positive working relationships with the courts and partners and an interesting input from Emma Forbes at Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), despite previous attempts at local engagement, there continues no local



representation from COPFS or Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS) at our partnership meetings over this reporting period. Dumfries and Galloway is not alone in this challenge. This is challenging and hugely frustrating and has been highlighted to both Community Justice Scotland and Scottish Government on numerous occasions. Both statutory partners are engaging at a national level yet receive very little in the way of updates or the impact of their involvement at a local level. A national position on whether they continue to be required to engage locally is required.

It is increasingly the case that JSW is having to consider procuring bespoke services to attempt to meet the needs of service users, such as Change Mental Health. As budgets retract and eligibility criteria increase many service users do not meet the threshold for services.

Whilst the introduction and increase in referrals to Dumfries & Galloway Rape Crisis and Sexual abuse Support Centre (DGRC&SASC) Criminal Justice Advocacy Support Service, part of the National Advocacy Service (NAS) is positive funding and capacity are constant issues with the former being provided from the Victims Centred Approach Fund (VCAF). This fund only allows for two full-time posts for the whole of D&G; any additional associated work must come from alternative funding sources. The two workers provide regionwide support in a variety of formats, including in-person in the Dumfries Centre, outreach across all four localities and court support locally and nationally. The biggest challenges however come from the delays in the justice system itself. This could be anything from holdups in communication to survivors following video recorded interviews (VRI) to often unavoidable delays in the initial investigation which survivors wouldn't necessarily be privy to. This can be really disheartening for survivors as they are often left wondering if their cases are being investigated and if they will be proceeding to court.

Length of the court process, delays in preliminary hearings and sentencings has meant that survivors are sitting in caseloads for much longer and require more emotional support as a result. Conversely, keeping some survivors engaged presents its own problems and some choose to disengage through lack of trust in the process. DGRC&SASC work hard to balance capacity to meet the increase in demand for emotional support and the additional input required to keep some survivors invested in the idea of a justice system that is committed to improving outcomes for women and girls.

Despite building effective relationships with our local prison and HMP Kilmarnock which enables us to access data and information we do not have the same access to that information for women or young people. This means that this local return cannot highlight best practice or activity that takes place in HMP Polmont or establishments supporting women through their time in custody and the build up to release.

Nitazenes and xylazine have emerged as significant risks within the illicit drug supply across the region and are associated with increased overdose risk. Whilst ADP lead on work to tackle this it is also an obvious concern and challenge for justice.

Strong partnership working supports continuity of care for people involved in justice pathways, including throughcare and naloxone provision. Our local ADP identified that challenges remain in addressing alcohol and drug related harms linked to justice pathways.



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Whilst the rate at which crimes relating to the possession of drugs in Dumfries and Galloway has decreased since 2021/22, it remains consistently higher than the rate for Scotland as a whole. This indicator is based on where the crime occurred rather than where the person involved lives. This means the figures include offences detected on key transport routes, such as the M74 or ferry ports. As such, the person involved could live outside Dumfries and Galloway or even outside of Scotland.

As widely publicised, there has been increasing community concern and unrest in relation to small boat crossings and immigration more generally. This has resulted in wide spread protest activity at a number of locations across Scotland, including Dumfries. From February 2026, a series of weekly demonstrations took place in the vicinity of a local Dumfries hotel accommodating asylum seekers, as well as on the High Street. These demonstrations frequently attracted counter-protests from groups and individuals who supported immigration.

The Policing of these protests, both locally and nationally, placed additional demands on Police resources when operational capacity was already under significant pressure. The requirement to deploy officers to manage and maintain public safety during these events consequently added to the existing demands on limited Policing resources.

**Positives / Opportunities**

Justice Social Work and Change Mental Health started to work together to pilot a new support service to help people affected by mental health; these are people who have been sentenced to complete a Community Payback Order (CPO). The service will work with individuals alongside their CPO to support them to be safe and stable in their mental health and be prepared to complete the CPO more effectively, reducing the risks of further custodial sentence and improving social wellbeing. This is a pilot project that JSW funded for one year until March 2026. More information is available within this report.

A targeted safeguarding from custody process has continued to work effectively in Dumfries and Galloway. This good practice has been shared in joint meetings with Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership and Clackmannanshire Community Justice Partnership as both wanted to learn from our local experience. Details have also been shared more widely with other community justice partnerships across Scotland for learning and development as appropriate.

Service user feedback now forms one aspect of qualitative data that informs practice across the JSW service with regular reviews of the themes being identified. They are also actively including service users in their recruitment process. Although this has required a lot of thought and planning to ensure that service users are supported through this, it has been hugely beneficial in terms of listening to service users' views and recruiting the right people into our service.

PoP Lived Experience Project received part funding for a further year supported by Apex Scotland. A new Service Level Agreement was developed with future sustainability highlighted.

JSW in DGC are engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement to meet the demands of Aim 2 and "to ensure those given community sentences are supervised and supported appropriately to protect the public, promote desistence from offending and enable rehabilitation by delivering high quality, consistently available, trauma-informed services and programmes". As mentioned in previous reports there is JSW Strategic Plan, 2024-



28 with clear strategic outcomes linked to community justice outcomes, that we continue to review and work towards. During 2025/26 we have executed several projects to towards meeting these aims.

The JSW Quality Assurance framework is in place, although this will be subject to continuous development throughout the life of their strategic plan. Alignment and crossover between this plan and the DGCJOIP have taken place to ensure there is no duplication, rather outcomes and achievements can be cross referenced where applicable. Justice Social Work recognise Quality Assurance as a key strategic priority in providing an evidence base for performance and actions. Quality Assurance is now a key feature of routine practice and intrinsically linked to policy and procedures and Quality Improvement activities.

JSW initiated an improvement project, following a self-evaluation to identify how Justice Social Workers were deploying resources to cases. Initial findings indicated we were not targeting our practices consistently on activities that were evidentially effective, proportionate, and impactful. JSW have now completed a Quality Improvement process including key stakeholders and have produced a new 'Intensity Setting Guidance'. This will now be monitored via regular Quality Assurance activities to ensure calibration and a cohesive approach. The pressure on the service comes from the volume and range of services we are required to deliver, consequently we must ensure our practice is targeted where is will be most impactful.

JSW have continued to enjoy a positive relationship with the Court, with regular meetings being established with both Court Administration and Sheriffs. This has allowed Justice Social Work to work directly with Justice partners around sentencing trends and options available. Recruitment challenges were discussed at the Stranraer Sheriff Court Liaison Meeting, and the Sheriff engaged in identifying some solutions to reduce the number of requests for Supervision Progress Review. The collective solutions resulted in the service continuing to fulfil all statutory responsibilities.

Police Scotland has now completed the national rollout of Body Worn Video (BWV) cameras to all frontline operational officers. The introduction of BWV is intended to enhance public confidence in policing, improve officer and public safety, and provide transparent, high-quality evidence of interactions between police officers and members of the public.

BWV was introduced within V Division (Dumfries and Galloway) in January 2026. Since its implementation, the technology has delivered a range of positive outcomes across the community justice sector, including:

- Reduced demand on the wider criminal justice system through an increase in early guilty pleas.
- Faster access to justice for both victims and offenders because of earlier case resolution.
- Reduced court attendance requirements for victims, witnesses and police officers, minimising personal disruption and delivering associated cost savings across the justice system.

The availability of BWV has also contributed to the de-escalation of incidents, facilitated the earlier resolution of complaints against the police, enhanced officer and staff safety, and strengthened public trust and confidence in policing through increased transparency and accountability.



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Summary Case Management (SCM) is a revised approach to the management of specific case types such as domestic abuse and shoplifting. Historically, many of these cases were scheduled for trial but were subsequently resolved through late guilty pleas, often at short notice and on the day of trial. This resulted in multiple court dates being set unnecessarily as well as avoidable disruption and distress for victims and witnesses who had been cited to attend court.

Under SCM, evidential material is collated and disclosed to the defence at the outset of the reporting process. This earlier disclosure enables the defence to assess the evidence at an earlier stage, creating greater opportunity for timely case resolution and early guilty pleas. As a result, the number of cases progressing unnecessarily to trial is reduced, along with the number of victims, witnesses and police officers required to attend court.
The implementation of SCM delivers a range of benefits across the criminal justice system, including improved efficiency, reduced court demand, earlier resolution of cases, and a reduction in the impact of court proceedings on victims, witnesses and justice partners. These benefits closely align with those realised through the introduction of Body Worn Video (BWV), supporting a more effective and victim-focused approach to justice.

Introduction and increase in referrals to Dumfries & Galloway Rape Crisis and Sexual abuse Support Centre (DGRC&SASC) Criminal Justice Advocacy Support Service, part of the National Advocacy Service (NAS). The increase in NAS caseloads would suggest that more people are reporting to the police, or that people who are reporting to the police are being made more aware of, or being directly referred into, the NAS service. While this is a welcomed scenario it isn't without its challenges as highlighted in the challenge section above.

Despite the considerable increase demand on all partner agencies involved in the Integrated Case Management process, HMP Kilmarnock conducted 285 ICM case conferences over the year with 99.3% being delivered on time. HMP Dumfries conducted 112 ICM case conferences over the year with 100% being delivered on time. JSW attended 102 of these, with the majority of those not attending being Probation Services in England. All families requested attended the case conference.

Over the reporting period, the Risk Management Team (RMT) at HMP Kilmarnock saw 42 prisoners presented for transfer to less secure conditions with 31 successfully moving on. Four prisoners moved on to National Top End whilst 27 progressed to HMP Open Estate at Castle Huntly. Since January 2026, the RMT at HMP Dumfries discussed 19 prisoners for transfer to less secure conditions with three successfully moving on.

The MACRIB continues to ensure those nearing liberation have had the opportunity to prepare and engage with all our partner agencies in preparation for release. There continues to be interest from other areas of our local approach.

We have had specialist input at our CJP meetings from several people including Dr Emma Forbes, National Lead for Domestic Abuse, COPFS in relation to 'The impact of national justice drivers on violence against women'. An invitation to this input was extended to all VAWG and wider PP colleagues. We also had Youth Justice colleagues provide us with an update on local activity and developments with young people, highlighting areas of crossover and opportunities for joint working.



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We facilitated a meeting between Inverclyde CJP and HMP Dumfries in relation to the Multi Agency Community Reintegration Board process, again sharing good practice and challenges for learning and development purposes.

We supported a meeting between SPS colleagues, People Plus and local UPW and Employability Managers around employability opportunities for those with justice involvement and how we might develop this further.

As a partnership we agreed to provide a small amount of funding to support activity during 16 Days of Activism, recognising the clear links between our two agenda areas. This helped facilitate the first of what will now be annual Dumfries and Galloway Reclaim the Night marches in both the East and West of the region.

| Dumfries Reclaim the Night | Stranraer Reclaim the Night |
|---|---|
|  |  |

Despite the weather, both marches were well attended and were supported not only by community organisations and partners but also by individuals who thought they should take a part in standing with women to tackle violence against women and sexual crimes.

Connections with wider justice stakeholders - As a partnership we also supported the local Domestic Abuse Conference as part of 16 Days where the intersection between domestic abuse and justice was evident. Further detail is contained in this report.

The JSW Programme Delivery Team were invited to deliver a workshop at the Dumfries and Galloway Domestic Abuse Conference in December 2025. The workshop focused on the Caledonian System and provided an overview to partners of the system and how it operates here across Dumfries and Galloway. Additionally, the Caledonian Woman's Service Worker has undertaken DASH-Ric Training for Trainers and is now involved in rolling the DASH-Ric training this out across agencies in Dumfries and Galloway.

Our Community Justice Partnership Manager supported the new Alcohol and Drug Partnership podcast series taking part in a podcast discussion focussing on women's health and accessing support.

We have continued to take part in joint collaborative responses to national consultations with our violence against women and girls colleagues and local ADP including:

- Voices in Justice: Parole Reform
- Domestic Abuse Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform
- Prostitution (Offences and Support) (Scotland) Bill
- Prevention of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill
- Early Release, Sentencing and Penal Policy Recommendations
- Domestic Homicide Suicide Review Guidance
- Changes to Early Release of Short-Term Prisoners

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- Protections in the justice system for women and girls.
- Expansion of Naloxone

We have continued to build on and develop our local performance framework evidencing progress towards national outcomes. The addition of data regarding access to and use of appropriate adults within police custody was included for the first time last year. This has received positive feedback both locally and nationally. It should be acknowledged that this would not have been possible without the support and time of the Public Protection Performance Lead Officer.

We undertook a collaborative piece of work with the Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership and Southwest Scotland MAPPA colleagues to develop an awareness raising training video for justice stakeholders. More detail on this can be seen in Priority Action 13.

We supported and funded a series of training provided by Families Outside for local multi agency staff. This was coordinated by our Public Protection Training, Development and Communications Co Ordinator. All sessions were well attended and feedback was positive.

We continue to share learning opportunities provided by the national Community Justice Network and Community Justice Scotland with local partners.

Continued development of the MAPPA data dashboard to identify areas of positive work, and areas that require further exploration. Over the last year we have brought in MAPPA meeting audits, this aids in demonstrating to the SOG that our meetings remain appropriate and of a high standard. We have also added areas of focus around restricted patients and community outings.

There have been no significant case reviews for MAPPA in the April 2025 – March 2026 period. It shows excellent management of individuals, and our commitment to protecting the public from harm.

There was no increase in MAPPA levels across this reporting year. This tells us that the Southwest Scotland MAPPA arrangements are correctly identifying the appropriate MAPPA level for which individuals should be managed at.

A public health approach to justice continues to be one of the four key priority areas for our local ADP. This priority is owned by DGCJP, highlighting the strategic alignment and collaboration across agenda areas.



**Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland**
**Local Area Annual Return Template**

## 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 prosecution[1]

**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?**

Colleagues involved in mental health report that there is improved understanding of how to access the specialist mental health pathway from court.

In the lead up to the new Diversion from Prosecution Guidance due to be actioned later in 2026, JSW are seeing an increase in more complex referrals involving mental health, child-related incidents and domestically aggravated incidents. As indicated in previous reports, the team that deliver Diversion is staffed by paraprofessionals and consequently, they require a higher degree of professional support and training. In response to some of the referrals we receive we have trained this team to increase their understanding and awareness of domestic violence and sexual offending. We anticipate that we may need to review our current model of delivery when the new Diversion guidance is published.

Those subject to diversion has indicated the impact was largely positive. Service users stated they have been treated with dignity and respect. The power of relationship-based practice to effect positive change is clearly evidenced to support desistance. Many indicated communication about the process was clear and informative and the support and guidance offered aided them to make positive decisions and move on. There is clear evidence in our performance data of signposting, referrals and advocacy towards appropriate service, such as health addictions, third sectors partners, i.e., Relationship Scotland.

Police Scotland will issue Direct Measures where proportionate to the circumstances of the offence and suitable to do so. Where the nature or seriousness of the offending precludes the use of a Direct Measure, officers are required to submit a Standard

[1] National Indicator:
Number of diversions from prosecution:
- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed

Prosecution Report (SPR) to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), outlining the circumstances of the offence and providing relevant background information.

In September 2026, enhancements were introduced to the national case reporting application through the incorporation of a structured antecedent template within the SPR. This replaced the previous free-text format and established a more consistent and comprehensive approach to the provision of information to COPFS.
The structured template ensured officers provided:

- A clear justification where a Direct Measure had not been issued.
- An assessment by the reporting officer of the suitability of alternatives to prosecution.
- The views of the victim and any child affected by the offending.
- Relevant information regarding the accused, including:
    - Family circumstances, including personal background, dependencies and any impact on children.
    - Mental health considerations.
    - Alcohol and/or drug dependency issues.
    - Personal circumstances, including employment status, attitude towards offending and identified vulnerabilities.
    - Medical conditions and disabilities.
    - Criminal justice history, including previous convictions and any identified risk to the public.

This technical enhancement has improved compliance with the Lord Advocate's Guidelines by ensuring that COPFS receives all relevant information at the earliest stage of proceedings. As a result, prosecutors are better equipped to make informed decisions regarding the most appropriate disposal of a case, including consideration of diversion from prosecution and other alternatives to formal court proceedings.
The consistency of information provided through the SPR process supports more effective decision-making and contributes to a more efficient and person-centred criminal justice system.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS), as Scotland’s national skills body, contributes to early intervention activity through delivery of career information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services across schools and community settings.

At a **local level**, SDS continue to support Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) arrangements where required by:

- Delivering targeted career guidance to young people involved in diversion activity
- Supporting individuals to identify strengths, build confidence, and explore positive pathways into education, training and employment
- Contributing to multi-agency discussions, including structured deferred sentencing and diversion planning

At a **national level**, SDS:

- Provides a consistent all-age careers service designed to reach individuals within their communities and support those disengaged from traditional provision
- Delivers CIAG aligned to social justice principles, ensuring equitable access to services regardless of background or circumstance



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Over the reporting period Skills Development Scotland have had few referrals for young people on diversion to prosecution but would welcome referrals and would work closely with partners for the best outcomes for those involved.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 needs[2]

**Local Evidence:**

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

Police Scotland has a policy to make sure that everyone who comes through police custody, wherever they may be in Scotland, has access to health care while in custody and then support within their home community once they leave. Police Scotland works closely with the 14 NHS Boards and 32 Local Authorities and supporting partners to deliver this.

The Community Justice Scotland Act 2016 legislates for the provision of support for people for any vulnerabilities, back into the communities where they live.

Ongoing local and national work in relation to arrest referral has continued. Nationally this is being driven forward by Police Scotland, and a local Working Group is now well established in Dumfries and Galloway Chaired by Police colleagues. Health colleagues report that there is an improving menu of services and supports that are available to someone following arrest.

Custody mental health pathway remains in place and are being utilised appropriately overall. Positive conversations around challenges take place when they arise and resolution sought.

With You continue to receive funding as part of their wider regional drug and alcohol service to undertake arrest referral for those in police custody with drug and/or alcohol issues in Dumfries and Galloway. Challenges continue to be engagement following referral and missing information on referral forms. Discussions remain ongoing with police colleagues to resolve these issues. The possibility of Assertive Outreach Workers attending custody suites is still in early discussion. Over the reporting period With You received 34 referrals via arrest referral. Of these 17 were alcohol, 11 drugs and 6 both. As highlighted engagement can be challenging with just 9 of the 34 referrals assessed for support. Whilst the numbers may seem low, they are comparable to, and ahead of some other AR With You provision elsewhere in Scotland. Furthermore, there are no geographical restrictions to arrest referral within Police Scotland. An individual resident in Dumfries and Galloway can be referred to the local 'With You' support service regardless of their location of their arrest. (in Scotland).

[2] National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres



There are currently no formal arrest referral pathways for wider issues related to offending behaviour such as trauma, housing, employability etc. A model utilising a single point of contact to triage referrals to other partner agencies has been discussed but not yet progressed.

Police Scotland's National Custody System captures an individual's decision to accept or decline an arrest referral. If accepted, then an online referral is made with the consent of the individual. Details of current or previous offending will not be disclosed when making such referral, nor will any warning markers.

At present there are 4 arrest referral champions within V division however all officers have access to a healthcare and intervention intranet page guiding officers on the latest information and support

Also available within Dumfries and Galloway is NOVA Scotland, support for veterans. NOVA Scotland is a service that can provide specialist, trauma-informed support to veterans who are at risk of entering or already in contact with the criminal justice system.

The service addresses underlying factors such as mental health, housing, substance use, isolation and employability, helping to reduce reoffending and improve outcomes for individuals' families and communities. This service is open to any veteran who comes into custody, wherever they live in Scotland.

Where the 'With You' or NOVA Scotland support networks are not appropriate for the individuals' circumstances, i.e. offending is due to financial hardship not a dependency then officers will create a Vulnerable Persons Database record outlining their concerns. Where an increase in referrals is received for an individual resulting in an escalation in risk or concern, then there are opportunities for an initial referral discussion (IRD) to share information. Ultimately this allows intervention by appropriate agencies to keep children and adults safe.

Mental Health Pathway (MHP)

The Mental Health Pathway, also known as the blue light pathway, is a collaboration between Police Scotland, NHS 24 and the Scottish Ambulance Service. The Mental Health Pathway provides a direct means for Police and Ambulance Staff to contact qualified mental health practitioners via a dedicated contact number when assisting individuals experiencing mental health episodes. Theses mental health practitioners operate from the mental health hub of the NHS 24 contact centre making this service available 24/7.

Mental health practitioners have access to previous medical information allowing them to make an assessment of the circumstances, determining the most appropriate care and support measures for that individual, informing Police or Ambulance accordingly. The primary purpose of this pathway is to ensure persons receive the right treatment at the right time and reduce time and resources conveying persons to hospital when attendance is not required.

The 2025/26 referral activity report shows that 571 referrals were made to the Mental Health Pathway of Dumfries and Galloway, 478 of which originated from Police Scotland. These referrals were resolved as follows:

- Information / Advice given to referral service = 51.8%
- Discharged with self-care advice = 16.3%
- Intoxicated, thus unable to engage in service = 7.9%
- Signposting / Referral to another service = 22.6%



- Offered Mental Health Assessment = 16.5%

Care and Welfare of persons in Police Custody.
The content from the previous 2024/25 report remains accurate and current.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 supervision[3]

**Local Evidence**

- Mechanisms are in place to support a high-quality bail assessment.
- Referral pathways are in place that support identified needs of people on bail supervision.

**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?**

Police Scotland has implemented enhancements to the antecedents and remarks sections of the national case reporting application. These enhancements ensure that comprehensive safeguarding, risk and vulnerability information is provided to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) at the earliest opportunity.

The provision of this information enables COPFS to undertake a fully informed assessment of each case and make appropriate recommendations to the court. This supports a balanced and proportionate decision-making process that takes account of the rights, welfare and safeguarding needs of victims, accused persons and any other individuals affected by the offending behaviour.

The decision to impose electronic monitoring measures similarly rests with the court. Police Scotland's role is to ensure that all relevant information relating to the accused, victim, risk factors, vulnerabilities and safeguarding is captured and communicated.

Police Scotland are duty bound to have regards to a person's right to liberty under Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights ("ECHR") and must consider whether it is reasonable and necessary to keep that person in custody.

The specific duty in terms of section 50 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 ("2016 Act") to take every precaution to ensure that a person is not unreasonably or unnecessarily held in police custody, must be considered in every case. Information detailed in the 2024/25 return remains unchanged.

Part 1 of the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 came into force in May 2025 which limits bail refusals with a focus on public safety and victim welfare. This bill enables Justice Social Work to provide 'Additional Information' to the court to support the court in making decisions about the feasibility of bail and the need for additional measures such as Bail Supervision orders of Electronic Monitoring.

The Early Interventions Team in DGC have taken a pro-active approach and provide a morning custody screening process to identify early who may be suitable for Bail. The

[3] National Indicator:
Number of:

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



team have established relationships and work closely with the police, Courts, defence agents and involved professionals to assess suitability for Bail Supervision.

In Addition, Dumfries and Galloway, introduced the Additional Information Proforma to Court, with concise and up to date information enabling an informed decision which considers risk balanced with the needs of the individual in custody. Feedback from the Sheriffs indicate they find this information useful and it supports their decision to request a Bail Supervision Assessment.

Despite this our Bail numbers have fallen in 2025/26 and the projected direction in 2026/27 is a continued fall. We do not yet have clear information to explain this trend however it may be due to two reasons the effectiveness of the bail screening process and the introduction of Part 1 of the Act and Lord Advocates Guidance. Other causation factors could be potentially be an increase early pleas upon accused first appearance thus no need for court bail pending trial. This could be as a consequence to the new Summary Case Management Process or Body Worn Video.

During the management of the Order there remains communication with Crown Office, Procurators Fiscal Service (COPFS), defence agents as required. The Early Interventions Team support people subject to Bail Supervision focusing on stabilisation, promoting engagement with addiction and mental health services, and compliance with Bail restrictions for people, in alignment with the National Justice Strategy to reduce remand cases.

Fundamental to establishing these processes, has been the continued positive relationship with the Court and Sheriffs which has been significant in building trust and facilitating good communication, ultimately leading to effective and responsive risk management beyond Bail Supervision. Justice Social Work have received consistent positive feedback via the Court Liaison Meetings about the service that they provide.

Regular assessment meetings are now established in the East and latterly the West of the region. This gives a forum for discussion regarding assessment and recommendations to Court. There is a quality assurance function to this, ensuring shared thresholds and understanding. Unpaid Work are now also in regular attendance which has proven to be a helpful development towards the JSW One Service Approach.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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?**

The use of electronic monitoring is determined by the Court. Police Scotland will ensure that the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Office (COPFS) are provided with relevant background information in relation to the accused and any victims. The enhancements made to the antecedents section of a standard prosecution (as outlined in section 7 of this report), ensures officers provide this information by mandating responses to set questions and providing officers with guidance on content required.

This information is submitted to COPFS to ensure that a full understanding of the circumstances is available for consideration. This allows COPFS to present this information to the court and support or oppose electronic monitoring.

The JSW bail screening process includes consideration of suitability for EM Bail. Assessment includes regular discussions with victims of (alleged) offences and recommendations for 'away from' addresses as well as to a person's own address.

It is important to highlight again that there have been continued instances of EM bail being imposed without an assessment being requested from Justice Social Work which would include consideration of Bail Supervision. This is contrary to evidence which shows that Bail is more effective when support is provided.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### Priority Action Five

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 sentences[4]

**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 about 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?***

Developing services to meet need can be clearly evidenced by our partners in Justice Social Work.

**Availability of local programmes**

The new nationally accredited sex offender programme Moving Forward 2 Change has been rolled out across Dumfries and Galloway. As a result, staff within Community Teams have been trained in the case management role. Additionally, the Programme Delivery Team, towards the end of 2025, undertook the new Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C) Practitioner Training to allow the rollout of this new Programme. Initial work in terms of locality arrangements; resource preparations and the start of pre-programme work began in 2025 with the first group looking to start May 2026. The pre-programme sessions have commenced. Initial feedback from both the facilitators and the case managers of service users undertaking the programme has been positive.

Dumfries and Galloway JSW continue to deliver the Caledonian Programme, demand for which continues to be high, both in relation to the men's programme and associated women's service, where multiple (ex)partners for each man may be offered support. Throughout 2025-26, 236 JSW Court reports were prepared for offences

[4] National Indicator:
Percentage of:
- community payback orders successfully completed
- drug treatment and testing orders successfully completed



related to domestic violence, representing over a quarter of all reports. This resulted in 55 CPOs with Caledonian Programme Requirement being imposed, and at the end of the year there were 80 open Caledonian cases. Over the same period 143 women were offered the Caledonian Women's service. All figures indicate an increase in demand over recent years.

Our Programme Delivery Team deliver the group aspects of both Caledonian and MFMC/MC2C (sex offender programme) across Dumfries and Galloway. Made up of just over 5 FTE Men's Programme workers, and just 1.5 FTE Women's Service workers, the team continues to be kept very busy ensuring demands are met and practice standards remain high, despite a small reduction in funding for the Caledonian delivery this year.

Having identified an issue of the impact that lower-level mental health problems have in respect of engagement from service users and a gap in local provisions, JSW have commissioned a service from Change Mental Health. This commission is to work directly with service users to aid engagement with community orders and support service users to improve their ability to engage with offence focussed interventions. The funding made use of an aspect of JSW budget that is ring-fenced to third sector organisation spending. Success will be measured by improved engagement with orders and service user engagement with health and third sector agencies and partners. Initial feedback from both the service users and the Justice Social Work case managers is extremely positive and we are currently expanding the roll out of this service to those service users subject to Unpaid Work. Achieving the procurement of this service within the timescales required was highly challenging and is an example of the difficulties inherent to a year-on-year budget.

**Availability of referral pathways to support the needs of local population on community disposals.**

**Substance use**
A key enabler in DGC is good local strategic and operational relationships with both NHS and third sector partners. Substance related offending needs to address both the clinical needs of the individual and the social factors contributing towards drug use and offending. A holistic public health approach as described by MAT Standards, a treatment model that is designed to meet the health and social needs of the individual is most effective. How interventions were delivered was equally important and should be driven by an ethical, trauma informed approach that addresses the impact of stigma and human rights. This should offer a degree of agency and choice to the individual to support engagement and collaboration in the treatment process. MAT standards are positive and enabling and an opportunity to have standardised and clear access to treatment across the range of justice options, from diversion from prosecution to Licence conditions. However, the need for clear national substance related offending strategy is evident locally to shape partnership working. It is not within the gift of JSW to deliver a holistic approach that would be most effective.

**Mental Health**
Available pathways are whole population routes that JSW has very limited influence over. There is limited local forensic input often targeted at the high-risk cases. Many of those subject to CPOs, have low level anxiety, depression, often managed by negative coping mechanisms that brought them into conflict with the law. They will be managed



by primary services, some of which are nurse lead practices due to low availability of local GPs. Many service users are undiagnosed, with potential neurodiversity, and /or personality disorder.

**Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people with experience of community disposals to support improvement.**

Service user feedback now forms one aspect of qualitative data that informs practice across the JSW service with regular reviews of the themes being identified. JSW are also actively including service users in their recruitment process. Although this has required a lot of thought and planning to ensure that service users are supported through this, it has been hugely beneficial in terms of listening to service users' views and recruiting the right people into our service.

During the process of rehabilitation, people gain new knowledge, skills, experiences, relationships, and opportunities, creating a sense of self determination and hope for the future.

Feedback from service users in 2025 indicates an increase from 76% to 88% of service users stating that being on a Community Payback Order (CPO) helped; ***"being open with people and communicating with people, also doing tasks in UPW has made me more confident in things".***

An increase of 74% to 94% of people stated their attitude towards offending changed during their CPO; ***"I now feel more positive about the future". "I know I'm not the same person I was and know it was so wrong"; "I never wish to reoffend; this has opened my eyes".***

Mr X explained he has benefitted from the opportunity to learn about himself; he felt he learned the skill of "introspection". The CPO has been beneficial and positively surprising. He has worked hard on positive self-talk and is able to better problem-solve, rather than ruminate.

Mr Y said they found the sessions highly beneficial, likening them to counselling or talk therapy, and he appreciated the support and flexibility provided. He also expressed an interest in continuing to attend unpaid work and exploring employment options, including starting his own business or part-time work.

Mr Z's frequency and seriousness of offending have reduced for the first time since he was a teenager. He seeks advice and approval, which has supported him to make positive changes to his lifestyle. He has learned new pro social problem-solving skills.

Other Justice partners notice the change in people. Police interactions with Mr Q, are calmer and more productive, as he is no longer anticipated to be aggressive. There appears to be trust building and Police gave him positive praise. A positive change in how people are viewed by others, especially those in authority, is highly correlated with an increase in desistance from crime.

The following table shows the results of feedback from service users at exit interview stage of a Community Payback Order. These are a comparison of the first and second 6 months of 2025. During this period JSW had employed 1 additional UPW Senior Social Worker, who alongside their colleague, have brought highly structured, well-planned compliance to Unpaid Work procedures, which is reflected by the figures.

There was an increase from 83% to 94% of service users stating they have been treated with dignity and respect. The power of relationship-based practice to effect positive change is evidenced by Mr P for the first time in his life; with a lengthy criminal history,



he said he trusts a social worker and is proactively seeking advice and guidance. Other service users commented**: "*The staff, have been professional and considerate during my time here, these members of staff are an asset to this place and deserve full support going forward to continue to grow the success of this operation"; "I have always been treated fair by all including office staff; friendly and helpful"; "The staff have always been helpful and treated me with respect. I have enjoyed the experience".***

| Question | Jan-Jun '25 | Jul-Dec '25 | Jan-Jun '25 | Jul-Dec '25 | Jan-Jun '25 | Jul-Dec '25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | YES | | NO | | No Response | |
| You learned a new skill | 55% | 52% | 29% | 42% | 16% | 6% |
| Treated with Dignity & Respect | 83% | 94% | 5% | 3% | 12% | 3% |
| Your circumstances taken into account | 93% | 97% | 2% | 3% | 5% | 0% |
| Received & understood information about my order | 93% | 94% | 2% | 3% | 5% | 3% |
| Being on CPO helped me | 76% | 88% | 14% | 12% | 10% | 0% |
| On CPO I have looked at why I offend | 81% | 82% | 14% | 9% | 5% | 9% |
| Attitude towards offending has changed during CPO | 74% | 94% | 16% | 3% | 10% | 3% |
| On CPO you considered impact on victims | 79% | 73% | 14% | 21% | 7% | 6% |
| Contact with other agencies on CPO | 19% | 21% | 64% | 76% | 17% | 3% |

Unpaid Work (UPW), as a requirement of a Community Payback Order (CPO) continues to be a very popular Court disposal in Dumfries and Galloway. At the end of March 2026 there were 316 individuals subject to a CPO with an UPW requirement; in total they had 63,785 hours of unpaid work imposed by the Court. In response, staff across the service continue to work hard to help individuals fulfil the requirements of their unpaid work orders. Operating over a 7-day week, careful planning is required to promote compliance and equal opportunities for individuals to attend. In addition, to ensure a variety of meaningful unpaid work projects are available, much focus has been given to our relationships with local partners. The benefits of these efforts are evident in small sample of the positive feedback received:

- "I have been walking my dogs from the cemetery up to the Rugby Park for six and a half years and I have noticed a great difference in the area due to the work that has been achieved through the Comm-Payback Service. I would just like to say on behalf of myself and the community, job well done, keep up the good work"
- "On behalf of everyone at our nursery, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for building the beautiful wooden train for our children. The time, care, and effort you put into creating it is truly appreciated. The children were so excited when they saw it, and it has already become a much-loved feature in our outdoor area. It not only encourages imaginative play but also brings so much joy and excitement to their day. Your hard work and kindness have made a real difference to our



nursery community. Thank you for giving your time and skills to create something so special for our children."



- "Just to say thanks for the work completed at the school. The trampoline is now in the ground and much more accessible for our children. Also thank you for removing our old trim trail and removing all the soil."
- "The children (and staff) are loving the new planters, bench and water wall! We are so pleased with the quality of the items and the waterwall is even better than we had expected with all the little additions that you were able to add on. The children are going to get so much from the items with the planters providing natural screening (once our climbing plants take off) from the roadside allowing more privacy and a more natural space for the children to play. We are going to use the planters attached to the bench to plant some more sensory plants in (such as herbs and fragrant plants) to provide children a quiet and calm space to sit and enjoy the outdoors. The water wall is already providing the children so many opportunities to explore cause and effect, direction, gravity, forces, volume and measure alongside, and most importantly, a chance to guddle, which is their favourite thing. We cannot thank you all enough for the hard work that has went into each item and we know that the children are going to benefit for years to come. It won't be long before we have our next request in!"
- "I just wanted to convey my thanks and gratitude to the Community Payback Team for the work they did on the unit. It has been truly refurbished into something that looks unique and blends in with the branding of the site. Its impressive. As always, I will continue to be an advocate for the Community Payback Scheme."
- "Just wanted to say thank you to you and your community payback team. Everyone has done a fantastic job and the grounds around our [Canine] centre are looking so tidy. With one thing and another we had been unable to keep on

top of grounds maintenance throughout the summer, so the help of the community payback teams has been invaluable."

- "I would just like to say how very grateful we are for the donation of the beautiful, handmade planter. It is particularly impressive given that, as far as I am informed, none of the group had made anything like this previously.
  It was beautifully made, got a great many admiring comments and really made a difference. Can you express our thanks to all the members involved in the project?"

**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.**
By upholding our social work standards and values, we reduce stigma and support service user engagement with their community order, as the feedback above indicates. Local JSW staff also benefit by creating a supportive and compassion workplace. JSW staff surveys indicate that staff feel they have opportunities to support their wellbeing and personal resilience.

In 2025, JSW updated their Leadership and Governance structures, one of the aims of the new structure was to create processes and practices, that support a 'one service approach' as defined in the JSW strategy. In essence, to create a culture of interconnectedness and develop the ability to cooperate and work together, learn from each other and to support each other. Feeling valued and supported in the workplace, which also helps lowers stress.

JSW staff survey 2025.

- 90% of staff stated they were confident in their role & had the ability to work autonomously within the JSW service.
- 76% of staff stated they had been given the essential training to do their job properly.
- 66% of staff agreed there was good communication methods used within the service
- 82% stated they were able to manage their workload.
- 88% of staff agreed the JSW service delivered a high-quality service
- 74% of staff felt supported and their contribution to delivering a high-quality JSW service was valued.
- 68% of staff felt they had the opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge & experience.
- 84% of staff felt confident in their use of digitalisation

The case management of low intensity cases related to sexual or domestic offences has been a challenge. Evidence clearly indicates that cases should be prioritised and managed by risk rather than case type. However, JSW had to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence of paraprofessionals, who manage low risk intensity cases. Staff were supported through in-house training and development sessions and are managed and led by an experienced Senior Social Worker, to ensure professional standards.

As part of our 'one service approach', an internal transfer process was developed in 2025, supported by an internal practice guide. Comments and observations by staff



have indicated increased communication, collaboration and efficient movement of cases, contributing to the efficient and effective use of our resources.

A review instigated changes to the Governance structure of JSW, the commencement of the Operational Management Meetings in October 2025 has delegated autonomy to the operational managers, about the focus on the quality of practice and how improvements are instigated and implemented. This has engaged and upskilled the operational managers, increased management capacity across the service and is developing the confidence and competence across the management team.

The Unpaid Work Department undertook a self-evaluation process in 2025 which led to the creation of a Work Plan for improvements. This led to the reviewing and completion of several Unpaid Work Procedures to ensure that practice was being consistently delivered to the highest standards and that service users were receiving a quality service. Again, quality assurance measures are being used to ensure adherence to these procedures.

POP Lived Experience Project continues to engage with those on Community Payback Orders in the West of the region. The POP Practitioner, hosted by Apex Scotland engages with service users when they are six weeks into their orders. All feedback received is gathered and analysed with the data used to help shape and improve services. Examples of activity people who come to groups can be seen below.









Danny, the POP Practitioner provided us with the following feedback:

*For the last year we have been hard at work with two different placements. We have continued our journey with the Unexpected Garden and Stranraer F.C, With the Unexpected Garden I am out there two or three times a week, with one group session and multiple 1 to 1s. With Stranraer F.C I go out once a week with our volunteers and we pitch in with cleaning the stands, power washing or whatever odd jobs they have for us on that day. They also give us the option if anyone would like to go on placement out there with the groundsman, some people love this option as it gives them something to do throughout their week.*

*I have been working with Justice Social Work supporting on the hours of people that may be a little more chaotic than the average person and may not be able to engage with normal CPO groups at Black Parks, whether it be problems with other participants or just the fact that they have never engaged with CPO's or any other services. I have also been working with JSW where I do CPO feedback forms. I am currently sitting at about 42. I think this is going well in my eyes. Although not every person wants to do the feedback I feel I am getting quite high engagement from the amount of people I contact.*

*I am also in a group called Community of Practice with various other services from many backgrounds such as ADP, NHS, SDA and many more. We get together and discuss various matters surrounding our local area with drugs and alcohol being quite high in the list and recovery groups coming a close second. We have been asked by the Chair of ADP to see if we would need funding to help with recovery groups or even starting new groups which would be a great help for people in recovery. In the future I would love to come up with new group ideas to try and get more individuals to engage with my service.*

*Case Study: I have a participant that has been trying to pull away from the group and will only work with me on a one-to-one basis which is fine for me, but I don't think it is great for his own mental health. I have tried to bring this issue up with him on a weekly basis but to no avail. I try and explain to him he is a positive person for the group as he has changed his life round at such an early age (21) and is living proof that people can learn and change, but since he has found God he feels people and the way they talk are like the devil in his ear and he does not want to surround himself with people that he thinks are going to be a bad influence on the way he thinks and behaves now. I understand this but try to explain to him that isolation can be worse in some circumstances as he lives in a remote area and has no friend group where he lives. I know his struggle with mental health and I know he does partake in smoking cannabis, but he is just over a year in recovery from class A drugs and has thrown himself in to fitness, going to the gym every day. We are going to try and get him engaged again with other people, any local service, it does not have to be mine, so my line manager has suggested taking him to another colleague, even on a one to one to start with, as he showed a desire for his CSCS card, we think this may be a good way to get him to engaged with employability.*

We have also received the following feedback from JWS on the support provided by Danny to those undertaking CPO –

*"Danny provides 1:1 support on a weekly basis and facilities a person-centred approach to a male who is currently subject to a number of Court Orders including Unpaid Work.*



**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

*This male has a lengthy and diverse criminal history and has been assessed as not being able to manage in the general unpaid work groups due to several issues. However, this male service user attends and engages well with his personal placement with Danny and has successful completed one Community Payback Order with Unpaid Work and is working on another Order. Danny liases with Justice Social Work on a weekly basis for updates on this individual which allows him to tailor his support/intervention based on the needs/risk of the individual at that time. The male Danny supports has advised he feels Danny is down to earth, easy to get on with and can talk to him about his problems as knows he will understand his difficulties".*

*"Danny from Apex Scotland is able to offer our service users a small group on a Wednesday and Friday, where they carry out work for the local football ground and the Unexpected Garden. Everyone who takes part in the group have all made comment about how excellent Danny is as a group leader and mentor. I know that Danny goes out of his way to ensure that the service users are treated with respect whilst also ensuring that they are carrying out the work to a good standard. Danny has also provided a small number of service users with a 1:1 support which has been crucial to our service and without it we would not have got our service users through their hours".*

*"Danny's groups are an important part of our service and without it we would have a number of service user that would otherwise struggle to get through their unpaid work".*

**Feedback from The Unexpected Garden**

I would like to extend my support to Apex Scotland for their community support, for both your service users and the wider community. We have had the privilege of having a long-term group assist us at the Unexpected Garden project, with our food poverty project and enriching and maintaining our community greenspace. It has been wonderful to see your service users enjoy and help support the outdoor space, and the project as part of their journeys. We pride ourselves on having a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone; Danny and your groups have always contributed to the space and been part of the garden project. I would like to highlight that your staff always bring a passion to their community and what they do, it can be really seen in the way they interact with the service users and the wider community.

We have really benefited from the insight of your groups in how we can shape the space, and their effort in our project. This includes helping grow free community produce, planting beds and trees to enrich spaces for mental wellbeing, building and site work, assisting with event set ups, to various levels of manual labour and maintenance. We aim to have groups also learn and develop skills in the space too, their support has been invaluable to the community project.

As our project has progressed, and we have had differing voices from your groups contribute over the years, we have been able to add this valuable information to how we shape our projects and space, especially in our volunteering, support, and employability events and activities.

Thank you again for all your ongoing support, we really appreciate it. And we hope to continue to be part of your service users next steps and journeys.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### Priority Action Six

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?**

Dumfries and Galloway Rape Crisis (DGRC) recognise each survivor's unique response to criminal justice outcomes and their right to seek restorative justice should they wish. We acknowledge that there are concerns within the violence against women and girls' sector about restorative justice in the context of sexual violence therefore it is not actively promoted as part of the service provided by DGRC. However, DGRC have had enquiries from survivors who have expressed an interest in engaging with the process. Their protocol aligns with their empowerment model of support whereby survivors have choice and control to make informed decisions about their healing journey. DGRCs neutral role is to provide survivors with information, signpost to relevant agencies and provide emotional support throughout and following the process. To date they haven't had any survivors who have moved to engage beyond the information gathering stage; that's not to assume that they won't pursue restorative justice in the future.

**Police Direct Measures – Younger Children**

Police Scotland will continue to support local partnerships in the uses of a formal warning where a child has committed a minor crime/offence. It is equally essential that the needs of victims are considered, and their voice is considered in the context of warnings. A Restorative Warning is a process facilitated by trained personnel that involved the warning of a child, whilst addressing the impact on the victim and the community. The victim will be informed of the outcome. The decision to apply this process will be made by the Divisional Concern Hub and the information shared lawfully with relevant partners via the Early and Effective Intervention Co-Ordinator.

Restorative Warnings should only be carried out where:

- The chid admits the offence, and
- There is no information that would prevent a warning from being delivered.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 sentence[5]

**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?**

Ongoing referrals continue to be made from Prison health care at HMP Dumfries to mental health services. Good relationship continues as does effective joint working. Prison healthcare sits as part of the Mental Health Directorate and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) works across both prison environment and community mental health.

Over the reporting period there have been more challenges in relation to people being released from other establishments and returning to Dumfries and Galloway, particularly in relation to the Mental Health Act and responsibilities.
HMP Kilmarnock - Links Centre chair a CRM, (community re-integration meeting) every Tuesday whereby internal and external stakeholders are invited to speak about prisoners about to be released in the community. They have a range of attendees including East, South, North Ayrshire Housing, Upside, DWP, advocacy, homelessness services and more.
They also offer Samaritans; veterans help as well as other addictions services.

The CRM speaks to those in their care 8 weeks prior to liberation with the new DWP IEI service seeing individuals at 8 weeks, 5 weeks and 3 weeks prior to release then on the day of liberation to ensure any benefits are set up for their release.

HMP Dumfries continue to host monthly Multi Agency Community Reintegration Board (MACRIB) meetings which are well attended by all partners. MACRIB discusses individuals who are within six weeks of liberation into the D&G region. The board consist of several partners, including NHS, JSW, addiction services etc. to provide the opportunity to individuals to access and be referred to health and social care services in the community. Sign posting to the Samaritans, Veterans support, Listeners service and peer mentors, including peer Naloxone training prior to liberation with the offer of a Naloxone pack, are available to all.

[5] National Indicator:
Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

During the 2025/26 reporting period, development of MAT standards within justice settings continued in preparation for formal national benchmarking, which is scheduled to commence from 2026. While justice services were not subject to RAGB[6] assessment during this period, local work focused on strengthening governance, clinical pathways and service delivery arrangements to support implementation of MAT Standards 1 to 10 within HMP Dumfries. A comprehensive prison MAT Standard Operating Procedure and associated pathways have been developed, covering same-day access to treatment, informed choice, harm reduction, retention in treatment, psychological support, liberation planning and continuity of care.

Despite this progress, a number of challenges remain. Workforce capacity continues to be a significant issue, with limited dedicated addictions nursing resource affecting service resilience and the ability to consistently deliver proactive interventions, recovery support and transition planning across the prison population. There is also currently no commissioned dedicated substance use advocacy service, although advocacy provision is being explored through ongoing ADP scoping work. Further areas for development include the absence of prison-specific governance and training plans for MAT Standards 6 and 10, the lack of a formal GP pre-registration process for people prior to liberation, and ongoing work to strengthen integrated planning between mental health and substance use services under MAT Standard 9. Addressing these gaps will be important to ensure full readiness for future justice-setting benchmarking and to support equitable access to MAT across custody and community settings.

[6] Red, Amber Green Blue



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 sentence[7]

**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?**

Our Prison discharge Protocol was reviewed in 2024, but we have been unable to rehouse any individuals via the protocol in 2025/26 due to a number of factors including:

- Local Housing Emergency which was declared in June 2024
- Slowdown in turnover within the RSL sector

Dumfries & Galloway also lease accommodation from RSL Partners and Private Sector Landlords for use as furnished temporary accommodation to allow us to fulfil our duty to accommodate and currently we continue to use hotel accommodation to supplement this. It is always the aim of the service to accommodate prison liberations within furnished temporary accommodation where possible. On occasions we do place prison liberations in hotel accommodation for a short period with a view to moving them to furnished accommodation as quickly as possible.

It is always the aim of the Housing Options and Homeless Service to ensure that where a prison leaver is subject to MAPPA restrictions, they are housing within temporary accommodation that is deemed manageable by the responsible agencies following completion of an environmental risk assessment. Our Prison Liaison Officer and Sex Offender Liaison Officer attend MACRIB meetings with our local Prison to ensure the transition from prison estate to community living is a planned and supported transition to ensure public protection for the individual and the wider community.

Our Housing First Programme is available to anyone liberated from Prison who meets the criteria. The programme is available across the East of the Region and support provision is provided by Turning Point Scotland. We work hard through this programme

[7] National Indicator:
Number of:

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



to maintain permanent tenancies where a service user is given a custodial sentence and maintain contact with the service user during their prison sentence.

Homelessness prevention is a key strand of the Housing Emergency Action Plan, and a multi-agency approach will be taken to preventing households from entering the homeless system by assisting to maintain and sustain current accommodation where it is suitable to do so.

As noted above Housing First continues to operate in the east of the region, supported by Turning Point Scotland and overseen by the Housing First Working Group. Following a successful tender process, Turning Point Scotland retained the contract which will run until 31st March 2029 with the option of two further years should the commissioners continue to be happy with outcomes. At the time of writing the Housing First service is supporting seventeen service users (twelve men and five women – this includes one couple). There are eleven permanent tenancies with twelve tenants. Of these we now have one tenancy sustained over four years, two tenancies that have been sustained for over three years, three over two years and one for over a year. Six people are in temporary accommodation, and two people are currently in prison. In total, twenty permanent tenancies have been provided since the service began.

**Successes:**

- 11 people are engaging with Specialist Drug and Alcohol Services (SDAS), and two people have been discharged as they no longer need support.
- 9 people are engaged with mental health support
- Partnership working continues to go well, especially with SDAS and HMP Dumfries Addictions and Mental Health nurses.
- People being supported have real choice in where they live in Dumfries and the type of property they are offered.
- Fidelity to the model is high, and all partners understand the importance of Housing First principles.
- The new contract will start on 1st April 2026. The service has now been expanded to cover Dumfries, Lockerbie and Annan. This will now offer real choice for those people who wish to move away from past associates allowing them a fresh start in a new community.
- The age criteria has now been expanded to include anyone aged twenty-one or over. People aged eighteen to twenty-one years can be considered in exceptional circumstances.

**Challenges:**

- Lack of options to be housed out with Dumfries was a challenge, however this is no longer an issue due to expanded areas in the new contract.
- Repeat offending behaviour continues to be a challenge; people know each other because of the area.
- Due to the current housing crisis, there can be long waits for permanent tenancies at this time

**Making a Difference: Housing First, People First**

Tom is a 42-year-old man with a long history of substance misuse, offending behaviour, homelessness, and social exclusion. He experienced significant childhood adversity, having been raised in an environment where criminal activity and drug misuse were



commonplace. His mother was a well-known drug dealer in their local community, exposing Tom to drugs, violence, and exploitation from an early age.

Growing up in this environment meant that Tom had little opportunity to experience stability or positive role models. He began experimenting with alcohol and drugs during his early teenage years and quickly developed a dependency on heroin and crack cocaine. His substance use became a way of coping with the trauma, neglect, and instability he experienced throughout his childhood.

Tom's addiction led to a pattern of criminal behaviour, including theft, drug-related offences, and breaches of court orders. Throughout his adult life he spent many years in prison, moving repeatedly between custody and the community.

Over time, Tom became institutionalised. Prison provided routine, structure, and predictability that he struggled to recreate in the community. Upon release, he often found it difficult to manage everyday responsibilities such as maintaining accommodation, attending appointments, managing finances, and building healthy relationships.

Following each release from prison, Tom returned to his hometown where he reconnected with individuals involved in criminal activity and substance misuse. These associations made it increasingly difficult for him to remain abstinent or engage positively with support services.

A significant turning point occurred when Tom's mother died from a drug overdose. Despite their complicated relationship, her death had a profound emotional impact on him. Following her death, he lost the accommodation where he had been staying and became homeless.

Without stable housing, Tom's mental health deteriorated further, and his drug use escalated. Rough sleeping and unstable accommodation increased his vulnerability to exploitation, violence, and further offending.

Tom was referred to a multi-agency support service specialising in homelessness, addiction recovery, and offender rehabilitation. He began his journey with Housing First Dec 2025 and has stated that this service as saved his life.

I was assigned Tom back in January 2026, and we collectively decided his support would include the following:

- Emergency accommodation followed by supported housing.
- Structured drug and alcohol treatment.
- One-to-one keyworker support.
- Trauma-informed counselling.
- Mental health assessment and ongoing psychological support.
- Assistance with benefits, budgeting, and independent living skills.
- Development of a relapse prevention plan.
- Support to disengage from negative peer influences by relocating away from his hometown.

Although Tom's recovery was not linear and included periods of relapse, he gradually began to engage with support services and build trust with professionals. Relocating away from his previous environment reduced his contact with individuals involved in crime and drug use, allowing him to focus on recovery.

Over time, Tom achieved the following:

- Maintained engagement with drug treatment services.



- Reduced his use of heroin and crack cocaine.
- Secured stable accommodation.
- Improved his physical and mental wellbeing.
- Rebuilt confidence and developed daily living skills.
- Reduced offending behaviour.
- Began enjoying previous hobbies, such as swimming and art.

Tom's story demonstrates how adverse childhood experiences, trauma, addiction, bereavement, homelessness, and repeated incarceration can become interconnected, creating significant barriers to recovery. His case also highlights the importance of trauma-informed, person-centred, and multi-agency support.

With stable housing, consistent professional support, and the opportunity to build a life away from previous negative influences, Tom was able to make meaningful progress towards recovery and reintegration into the community. While challenges remain, his journey illustrates that positive change is possible when individuals receive the right support at the right time. Tom is now 146 days clean from substances misuse.

HMP Kilmarnock facilitate a weekly Community Reintegration Meeting (CRIM) which allows a range of partners including DWP, Housing, Justice, NHS and other third sector agencies to work with the prison to map out a liberation plan. The meetings are led by the Head of Offender Outcomes within HMP Kilmarnock and look to discuss the support needs of people due to be liberated to Ayrshire in the next six weeks. This is a similar model to the Multi Agency Community Reintegration Board (MACRIB) which is well established in HMP Dumfries for those being liberated back to Dumfries and Galloway. Details of MACRIB activity can be seen below:

| **HMP Dumfries MACRIB Stats 2026** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **Mar** | **Apr** | **May** | **Jun** | **July** | **Aug** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Liberations from HMP Dumfries (0-6 weeks) | 13 | 13 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 7 |
| Liberations returning to D&G (0-10 weeks) | 27 | 24 | 23 | 23 | 18 | 9 | 10 | 15 |
| Liberations returning to D&G (10 weeks - 6 months) | 22 | 18 | 18 | 13 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 15 |
| Individuals on remand with D&G postcode | 62 | 68 | 68 | 66 | 55 | 61 | 63 | 57 |
| HDC cases | 7 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 7 |
| **Total** | 131 | 133 | 127 | 118 | 98 | 100 | 110 | 101 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| MAPPA case | 18 | 16 | 15 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| Involved with Homeless | 8 | 12 | 8 | 20 | 15 | 28 | 11 | 27 |
| Involved with Upside | 4 | 8 | 15 | 17 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| Involved with New Routes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Involved with APEX Scotland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Men are invited to an appointment within the prison link centre on a Thursday approximately 6-8 weeks prior to liberation, where they will meet with the link centre prison officers and link centre partners to discuss their support needs. Following this, the



support needs of the men will be discussed at the CRIM on a Tuesday morning, and partners will ensure all plans are put in place to link that individual with the support required. This allows everyone involved with supporting the individual to be up to date of their plans for transition from custody back into the community[8].

As noted earlier HMP Dumfries continue to facilitate a monthly Multi Agency Community Re-integration Board (MACRIB) which allows a range of partners including DWP, Housing, Justice, NHS and other third sector agencies to work with the prison to map out a liberation plan for individuals in their care due for release or being released from other establishments back to Dumfries and Galloway[9].

The Link Centre within HMP Dumfries hosts several agencies who work on-site with individuals prior to release. The contracted services who work within the Link Centre are NHS, Dumfries & Galloway Council Housing, Upside, NHS Specialist Services, DWP and Social Security Scotland. However, budgetary constraints on partner agencies have resulted in Apex Scotland, Citizens Advice & D&G Council Adult Literacy Services no longer offering support within the Link Centre.

As highlighted previously Dumfries & Galloway Council provides a Housing Advice and Homeless Service to prisoners in HMP Dumfries who wish to return to the D&G area on liberation. They will also intervene with rent arrears or anti-social behaviour prior to liberation to prevent evictions where possible and all legal tenancy matters are tackled whilst in prison. On most occasions this reduces the burden of housing intervention on liberation and can prevent evictions. HMP Dumfries also liaise with other agencies and refer to Housing First for intensive prisoner support needs prior to liberation where appropriate. Staff within the prison will assist the individual with their plans for liberation, this includes assistance applying for a Community Care Grant, linking with the DWP for claim preparations and arrangements for temporary accommodation or returning to their tenancy. Individuals who require homelessness assistance including temporary accommodation will be advised prior to liberation of any arrangements, and in most instances will be asked to attend the Housing Advice Team Office on the day of liberation for temporary accommodation to be offered.

During the time spent in temporary accommodation, Housing Support or Housing First staff work with the individual to resolve any support issues and links with relevant services. This support continues through to resettlement when housed, helping with applications for community care grants and changing address with DWP etc. In instances where someone has their own tenancy, a referral will be made to Dumfries & Galloway Council's Housing Support Team prior to discharge. The Housing Support Team Coordinator allocates an Officer who will arrange to visit the tenant to offer support once they have returned to their property.

[8] Everyone who is eligible, will be invited to participate in the CRIM process 6-8 weeks prior to liberation.

[9] Everyone who is eligible, will be invited to participate in the MACRIB process 6-8 weeks prior to liberation.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 employment[10]

**Local Evidence**

- Effective links between the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and Community Justice Partnership supports:
  - 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?**

Profile of JSW services users in DGC

- Male=85%
- Female=15%
- 85% White Scottish
- 65% Unemployed/ NIW
- 78% Aged- 29- 39

Education and Employment- Female 13% Male 20% scored on LSCMi and as contributory factor in relation to offending.

Whilst 65 % unemployed not all are seeking or fit for work. General work would involve stabilising individuals to reach a position where they would be in position to consider employment. UPW has and is continuing to do significant work to improve the quality of projects to create opportunities to increase people's experiences, skills development, knowledge and confidence, to increase their employment opportunities. UPW also includes working with Local Authority and wider partners willing to offer personal placements, to provide real examples of a workplace setting. JSW continues to have a good working relationship with Apex Scotland to specifically support people into employment.

[10] National Indicator:
Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions



**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

Employability, Skills and Partnerships (previously the Local Employability Partnership) used an evidence-based approach in identifying the need for employability interventions for those with MAPPA restrictions and those at stages 1-3 of the employability pipeline with experience of the Justice system. Two contracts were awarded on this basis to Apex Scotland, with both the MAPPA and Community Justice programmes starting delivery in the first Quarter of 25/26, which was an extension of already established programmes running in the previous financial year. The purpose of these contracts was to provide more intensive/targeted employability support to the identified target groups.

- Anyone referred to DG Works (D&Gs employability brand) for support, except those with MAPPA restrictions (who go direct to Apex Scotland for support), are assigned an Employability Key Worker to support their journey from day one with the service. 9% (142) of all clients supported via DG Works in 25/26 had a disclosed criminal conviction. All these clients were offered the additional specialised support required.
- Employability, Skills and Partnerships work strategically with other employability partners to identify individuals who may benefit from the support on offer. This includes, for example, case conferencing regularly with the likes of DWP to identify appropriate referrals for support.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Locally:

- SDS plays an active role within the Local Employability Partnership (LEP), aligning services with community justice priorities.
- Careers advisers provide tailored CIAG support, helping individuals explore career ideas, reviewing strengths as well as career management needs plus linking individuals to training, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities.
- SDS works with partners to support individuals with convictions to access inclusive pathways and progression routes.
- Employer engagement activity promotes inclusive recruitment and supports employers to consider individuals with convictions.

Nationally:

- SDS delivers Scotland's Career Service across schools, centres and community locations, providing consistent access to CIAG for individuals of all ages.
- Services are designed to be accessible, inclusive, and responsive to those facing barriers, including those involved in the justice system.
- SDS contributes to national employability priorities, supporting individuals and businesses to develop and apply skills for sustainable economic growth.
- SDS receive information from the Scottish Prison Service on people being released and we follow up with them to offer support where we have current contact details. This information is received through the 16+ Participation Portal. Discussions are taking place at National level to review and renew the Data Sharing Agreement we have in place.

SDS deliver services through a Hub and Spoke model in Dumfries and Galloway and have two main centres in Dumfries and Stranraer colleges and 14 outreach venues across the region. Many of the outreach venues are employability 'hub' type facilities with a range of partners in attendance at the same time.



**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

SDS continues to develop their approach to Trauma Informed Practice with all Careers Advisers attending training to further embed within their practice. They have a new approach to practice and one of the key elements is around trauma.

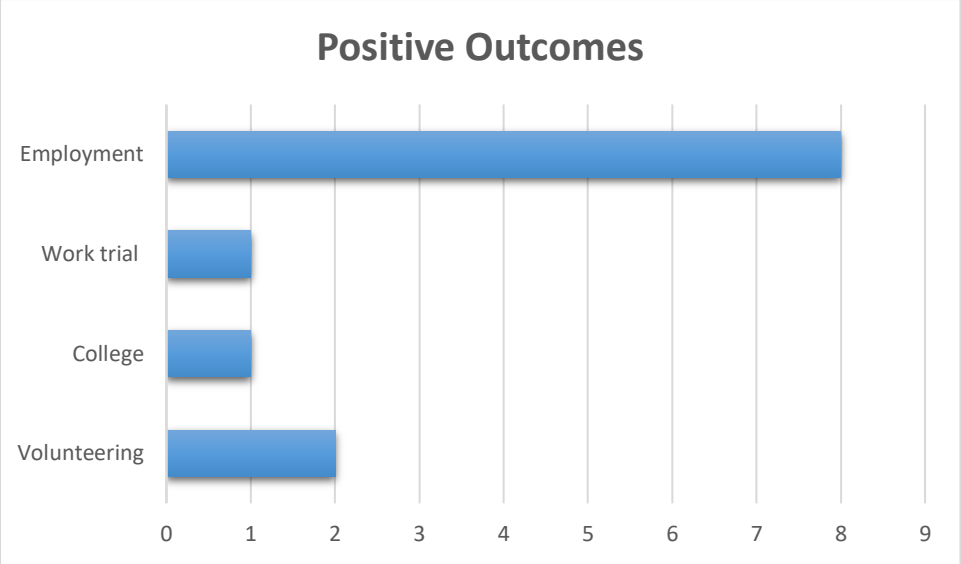
As detailed above over the reporting period Dumfries and Galloway Employability, Skills and Partnerships have supported Apex Scotland to provide **specialist support, funded through No One Left Behind (NOLB) for those subject to MAPPA** or with complex convictions. This provides an end-to-end support service for individuals across Dumfries and Galloway. Since its inception the service has received 26 referrals, 21 of which have engaged positively. Most enter the service at stage 2 of the employability pipeline; however, four people have started at pre stage, demonstrating the complexity, high level of need and support required. Of those who chose to engage, attendance at appointments stands around 95%

This is a very difficult group to progress when it comes to employability outcomes due to the nature of the convictions and stigma attached to their offences, but this service has produced some outstanding outcomes through the support provided. This included supporting eight people into employment, three of those have sustained their employment over 12 months. Outcomes are detailed in the following charts.

Outcomes:



**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**




Five participants also gained their driving license, completed their theory test, took driving lessons and passed their driving test.

Due to the complexity of the individuals and involved and their offending four people were recalled to court for further offences or breach of restrictions. Two returned to prison and two were given extended restrictions.

Apex Scotland also delivered a specific **justice experienced employability support service** across the region. During the reporting period the service worked with 40 participants, helping them to understand the nature of their convictions, when convictions would be spent and how to disclose their convictions appropriately. Unfortunately, the funding for this service was not continued at year end, which was unexpected, leaving some people unable to complete work they had started. Apex Scotland will endeavour to support them through other services or onward referral as appropriate.

**Foundations for Change(FFC)**[11] is the new integrated pipeline/participant journey approach adopted by Apex Scotland locally. This single, streamlined approach creates consistency of understanding across partners and those needing support rather than having several distinct services with different names and remits.

FFC covers stages 0-5 of the participant journey although the primary focus will be 0-3 where the emphasis is employment not necessarily being the main final aim, for example volunteering or a more stable life may well be exactly what is required at this stage.

In Apex Scotland's new way of operating Practitioners will be out in the community meeting participants in their local areas which will enhance opportunities for people to access Apex Scotland. This initial pre-stage 1 is about access, signposting to other appropriate services and soft skills such as building confidence and establishing trust. An example of this would be: - Referral from Justice Social Worker from court where the individual wasn't subject to any order but needed immediate support. We helped them complete a crisis grant, secured a food parcel, helped them with bus times to their accommodation, and the following day phoned to check on their wellbeing, gave

[11] Foundations for Change is the new Apex Scotland participant journey. The service previously known as Moving On now sits within this journey.

information on registering with the GP. Contact was maintained, and the individual started to engage in a more structured way.

Stage 1 is where the Practitioner adds a bit more structure such as attending appointments at a scheduled time rather than turning up when it suits them. Practitioners will also look at engaging in more structured conversations regarding participants' aspirations and involve more intensive mentoring.

Stage 2- Barrier removal – undertake Apex Scotland initial assessment, set goals and action plan, advocate for participants if needed, but with the longer-term goal of them being able to do this independently. This stage also considers core and basic skills work or signposting to other appropriate agencies to help with this.

Stage 3 is about vocational activity, such as identifying any accredited or non-accredited training. Recruitment process and disclosure guidance. This helps individuals to understand, manage and confidently communicate their convictions. This is helpful not just for employability purposes but can reduce the anxiety and stigma around disclosure requirements which leads to improved confidence and self-esteem.

An example of this is an individual who was referred for assistance in finding out if their criminal record would affect their application to college. They were supported through the process of this and with their application, which was successful.

Stage 4 and 5 are focused on sector-based training, transition into employment and other opportunities, and sustaining these positive destinations.

Impact - Through this integrated model, FFC supports individuals to increase confidence and self-efficacy, improve wellbeing and emotional regulation, reduce barriers, progress towards employment, training, or other meaningful activity.

Over the reporting period, Apex Scotland worked with 66 individuals with justice experience. 40 of those showed improvement in all 4 areas and 20 received full disclosure support.

*Amy came to us initially looking for help with a food parcel and after a short chat together it became apparent Amy was struggling after being evicted from supported housing for spending two nights at a friend's house and not informing the supported housing, she wouldn't be home. Amy was on a tag for an assault and had been housed in the West of the region. She was then forced to spend a few nights with a male friend, and this has resulted in a relationship forming fast, however Amy recognised this was not the right choice for her. The male has shown signs of being aggressive towards her, controlling what she should wear and calling her fat, this is making her feel very unsafe and vulnerable. I advised Amy to contact the local homeless team she was then offered a place in Newton Stewart however she felt this would make her more isolated from services and more vulnerable. She felt she had no other choice but to go back to the males flat. A few days passed with no contact from Amy I became worried and managed to get her on the phone. She told me how the male had taken her phone off her and she was held in the flat against her will for 2 days, I asked Amy if she could come to the office for an appointment but not tell the male where she was going, she managed to get away from him and attended the appointment. She was very upset during this meeting and told me about all the abuse that had taken place in such a short period of time and how unsafe she felt. I advised Amy to get Police involvement, but she was scared this would make her situation much worse. I sat and had a long chat with*



*Amy regarding her options with housing, we contacted the local Women's Aid office, and we got Amy into supported living. This was a huge relief to her that she wouldn't need to go back to him. Amy has now enrolled in an Own My Life course through Women's Aid. Amy is now doing so much better after all the support she has received. I have referred her to CAB for an appointment to have a benefits check to make sure she*

*is getting all she's entitled to. Amy is also keen to volunteer in our foodbank after receiving help herself. I am hoping to get Amy involved in a female craft group that I'm looking to set up once a week, to make her feel less isolated and start to build her confidence up again. I have weekly meetings with Amy helping to form a routine and offering structure and helping her to seek new opportunities.*

HMP Kilmarnock Link Centre is staffed by dedicated SPS staff, hosting a number of partners who work on site with people in their care prior to release. The contracted services working from the Link Centre include the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Social Security Scotland. DWP operate a service in HMP Kilmarnock through the link centre with a number of designated prison work coaches. In addition to being part of the weekly CRIM process, DWP receive a list of all upcoming planned liberations which allows for appointments to be offered in advance of release.

Following initial engagement whilst in custody, men are given a time slot to come into their local DWP office following liberation. DWP aim to have the prison work coach deliver the appointment with the person in the community to ensure consistency for the individual and increase chances of engagement. DWP also have safeguarding officers who will go and visit a person should they miss appointment.

HMP Dumfries provides a number of certified courses which are transferable into the community to help individuals leaving our care to become employability ready. These include Barista training, Health & Safety, First Aid at Work and CV Writing. We have recently employed an Employability & Reintegration Officer who will be working with those within six months of liberation to provide a tailored pre-release programme to try and have the individual both community and employability ready.

A number of partners come into HMP Dumfries to support individuals into employment. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) operate a service in HMP Dumfries through the link centre with a designated prison work coach. DWP receive a list of all upcoming planned liberations which allows for appointments to be offered in advance of release. Springboard run Destination Hospitality courses several times a year, providing skills, qualifications and experience in the hospitality industry and involves potential employees. Apex Scotland previously provided employability support within HMP Dumfries through D&G Council. However, their contract was not renewed, and this service is no longer available. We are currently exploring potential support from another 3rd Sector organisation, Triage, who are currently working with D&G Council with a view to providing this support. Our Recovery Officer, in conjunction with People Plus, gives prisoners the opportunity to attain qualifications as peer mentors, including peer naloxone trainers.

Life Skills within HMP Dumfries also offers opportunities for individuals in preparation for release. Springboard continue to support by running the "Destination Hospitality" course two to three times per year, providing participants the opportunity to learn new skills, gain qualifications and work with potential employers in the hospitality industry prior to release. Over the years, this has led to several individuals' securing employment before



their release, giving them something positive to work towards and hope for the future. Working with the gardens, Life Skills also runs a “Grow a Brighter Future” course, where participants grow their own produce and learn basic cooking skills to make meals from the produce. The items grown emulate the produce people may receive in a food parcel in the community and provide the knowledge and skills they may need to make the most effective use of them.

Following initial engagement whilst in custody, people in custody are given a time slot to come into their local DWP office following liberation. DWP aim to have the prison work coach deliver the appointment with the person in the community to ensure consistency for the individual and increase chances of engagement. DWP also have safeguarding officers who will go and visit a person should they miss appointment.

NC: Collective is a Scotland-based social enterprise creating meaningful paid work and progression opportunities for people affected by the justice system, particularly those who face significant stigma or barriers to traditional employment. It is a further employability arm of Next Chapter Scotland.

The original model is a professionally managed business support service. Organisations contract with NC: Collective to deliver work across areas such as administration, data, funding and impact, communications, digital support and other specialist services. NC: Collective then match projects to skilled associates, manage delivery, provide quality assurance and remain the client’s main point of contact throughout.

Alongside this, NC: Collective are expanding into specialist training and development. This includes employability, self-employment, enterprise, digital skills and other practical learning designed to help people build confidence, develop capability and move towards sustainable economic participation.

The aim is to create more than one route forward. For some people, that may be direct employment. For others, it may be self-employment, training or paid project work through NC: Collective. At the heart of NC: Collective is a simple principle: people should be recognised for the skills, potential and contribution they can make today, not defined solely by their past. Whilst all the development work took place during this reporting period NC: Collective was officially launch on 1st April 2026. More details on how it has progressed will be available in the next report.

HMP Dumfries have continued to expand and enhance the opportunities available to those in their care introducing a number of training courses, including Barista, First-aid at Work, Health & Safety & Manual Handling, which are all certified and can be used in the community.

The Recovery network continues to develop within HMP Dumfries. In conjunction with People Plus, the SPS education provider, they have a number of trained and certified Peer Mentors, covering not only Recovery, but the entire journey through the justice system. They have also introduced two certified courses exploring victim empathy. With the addition of their new Employability & Reintegration Officer to support those in their care on their journey back into the community.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 sentence[12]

**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?**

During this reporting period Upside, the new national throughcare service became available across the country. Throughcare is provided to people in short term custody or on remand giving them the practical and emotional support they need to transition to community life. This was its first year in operation, replacing Shine (for women) and New Routes (for men), the previous throughcare provision.

As with the previous mentoring services, Upside is voluntary and will address any issues individuals may have on release such as health, housing finance, skills and employment. Importantly, Upside can also connect people with family support if required. As well as helping with immediate challenges, Upside will also try to establish the long-term support required to rebuild lives with dignity and purpose. Upside support is available to people serving a custodial sentence of 4 years or less or to those remanded in custody.

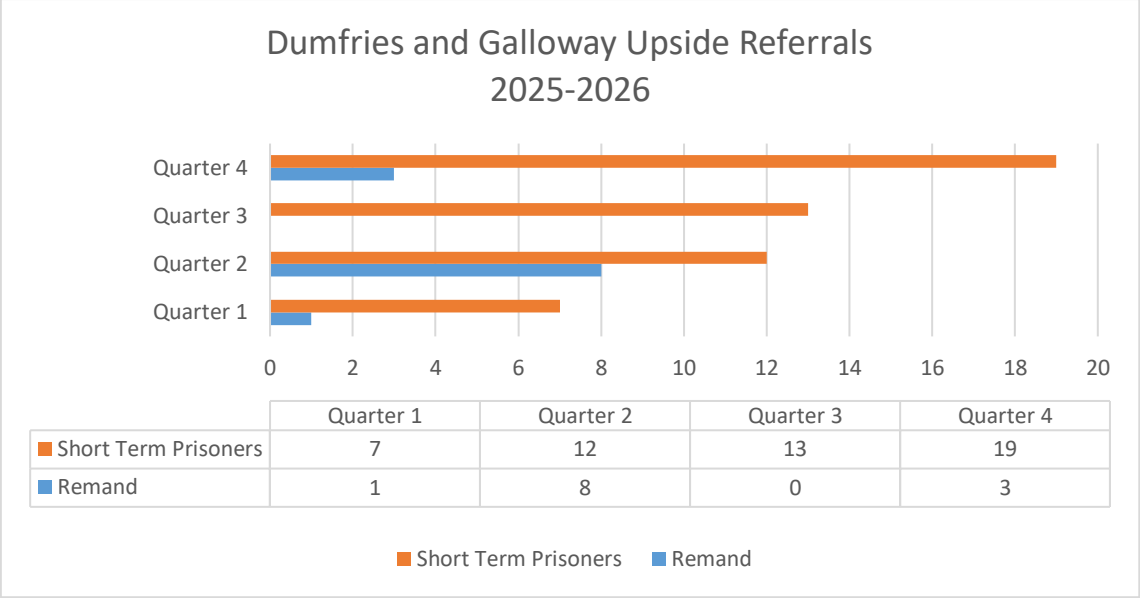
Apex Scotland staff provide this support locally and are based in the community and HMP Dumfries in D&G. They also have a Lead Practitioner for the National Team based locally.

During the reporting period referrals can be seen below, it is encouraging to see referrals beginning to increase over the last quarter:

[12] National Indicator:
Number of:
- voluntary throughcare cases commenced

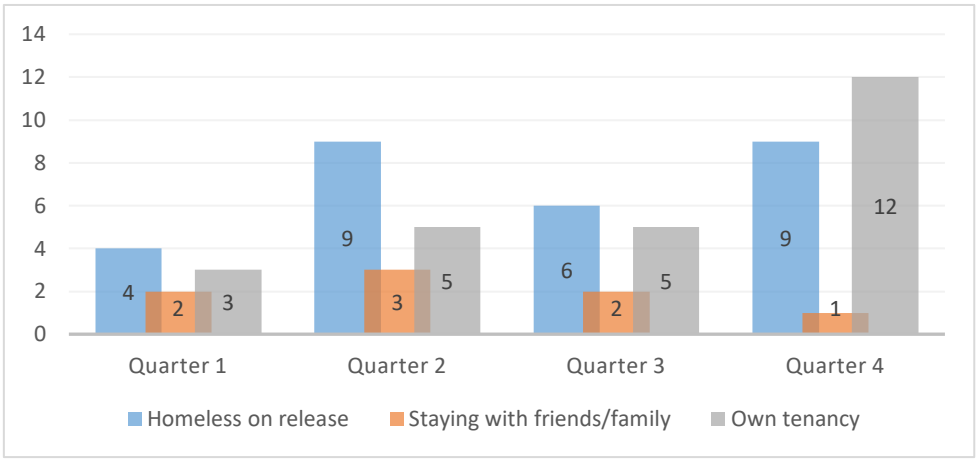


**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**




| | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Short Term Prisoners | 7 | 12 | 13 | 19 |
| Remand | 1 | 8 | 0 | 3 |

One of the biggest challenges to those being liberated from prison is accommodation. The following graph shows the status of local referrals on release:




Upside provides dedicated throughcare support to people as they transition from prison, back into the community. Community Workers will engage pre-release to identify and construct a plan to meet identified needs. Examples of the support areas are finances, access to housing, mental health, registration with GPs, substance use, etc.
Support plans respond and adjust to needs as these evolve and enable key support to be provided as situations change.

The community journey is for twelve months from point of release from prison. Upside also offers a gate pick-up service to each person accessing support.
All eligible individuals will be approached up to twelve weeks prior to liberation to offer the service. Community Workers then engage with the person to establish the relationship and build rapport, assessment of needs and agree liberation support.

HMP Kilmarnock implemented a wide range of improvements in 2025/2026 in direct response to the HMIP visit. They have worked closely with external partners including DWP to implement the IEI project, various housing providers to ensure adequate throughcare upon release through their weekly Community Reintegration Meeting (CRM) and reviewed the Links centre services to ensure they are offering services fit for those

in their care. This review also considered the library service offered as well as publicising what they do to ensure a clear support pathway for those in our care upon release.

The Link Centre within HMP Kilmarnock is staffed by dedicated SPS prison officers and hosts a number of agencies who work on-site with individuals prior to release. The contracted services who work within the Link Centre are Ayr Housing Aid, North Ayrshire Council Housing, Upside, DWP and Social Security Scotland. A referral to the Link Centre can be requested from an SPS Prison Officer at any point of the individual's sentence.
Social Security Scotland provides a variety of benefits, including:

- **Disability support**: Adult Disability Payment, Child Disability Payment, and Pension Age Disability Payment
- **Family support**: Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant, and Best Start Foods
- **Carer support**: Carer Support Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement
- **Funeral support**: Funeral Support Payment
- **Job support**: Job Start Payment
- **Heating support**: Child Winter Heating Payment and Winter Heating Payment
- **Young carer support**: Young Carer Grant

Application for any of the benefits administered by Social Security Scotland can be made online, by phone, through the post or in person. Face-to-face support is provided by appointment only and is available in the Link Centre every Thursday. Telephone appointments are also available. For any prisoner who would like to make a claim, the staff would take basic details and then arrange for a follow up appointment prior to liberation for the application to be made.

Both HMP Kilmarnock and HMP Dumfries can apply for bank accounts for men whilst in custody, however banks reserve the right to refuse applications and will in some cases (e.g. where they are possibly worried about reputational damage), meaning some men are not able to have this set up prior to leaving. Men can access their bank accounts using systems inside the prison. People refused an account whilst in custody can attend a bank in person after release and set one up (as bank won't ask if they have been in prison) - advice is given in liberation packs about available banks.

HMP Kilmarnock Links centre in addition to the above have recently been involved with the renewal of the liberation packs to ensure everyone gets a bespoke service from their respective local authority.

GP registration – For men in HMP Kilmarnock returning to an Ayrshire address, the NHS will write to the individual 2-3 weeks prior to release to establish if they are already registered, if they need to change GP, or if they are not registered. The NHS will then complete and send a registration form and a clinical summary to the community provider.

**HMP Dumfries and HMP Kilmarnock**
Prescriptions - For planned liberations, patients are either provided with a 28-day supply of medication on day of release, or with a prescription to access the medication whilst in the community (or a mix of these), with the exception of OST (Opioid Substitution Therapy). Patients in receipt of OST will be given an appointment to attend addiction services to receive a prescription.
Addiction services – Everyone will now be offered an appointment with NHS addiction services 7-10 days prior to release, including harm reduction advice and naloxone training. Any patients on OST will be referred to the local CAT teams or other organisations.



Mental health services –If the individual has a diagnosis which comes under Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) criteria, they will be referred to their local team. Prison healthcare have links with the CMHTs in Ayrshire/Dumfries and Galloway and can link in with their referral/triage meetings. If a patient is open to psychiatry, the clinical psychiatrist would complete an onward referral. If a patient is involved with low-level psychological intervention, they will be highlighted to the CMHT, and the prison healthcare team will consider if there are any third sector agencies within their community they could be linked with. If there are increased risks to the patient's welfare, prison healthcare can organise multidisciplinary meetings to include other professions, such as social work and housing.

Dumfries & Galloway Justice Social Work are provided with details of people due to return to their local authority following release from prison custody. A letter/email is sent to everyone due to be released advising them of their entitlement to voluntary throughcare and some information on the types of support that is available. This provides contact details for justice social work services, as well as addiction services and third sector organisations. JSW also attend the monthly Multi-Agency Community Re-integration Board (MACRIB). Voluntary Throughcare letters are usually sent out between 4-6 weeks prior to release.

JSW contact all those made subject to a custodial sentence and offer Voluntary Throughcare. There is a very small uptake, anecdotal information suggests, those exiting custody with no further JSW involvement prefer not to come back to justice services, preferring to be supported by third sector services.

JSW has noted an increase in the use of Voluntary After Care to continue to support individuals post statutory license, particularly those who pose a higher risk and are willing to work on a voluntary basis to address ongoing needs, i.e., complete forensic work.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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

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

We continue to support VAWG colleagues throughout the programme of 16 Days 2025 events and use this opportunity to highlight the links between these two agenda areas. For the first time DGCJP agreed to provide a small amount of funding to help ensure the first Dumfries and Galloway Reclaim the Night Marches could take place. This would have been much more challenging without our contribution.

On the 25th November 2025 there was an online seminar for Elected Members and NHS Board members. This session was led by the Chair of the White Ribbon Steering Group with support from the Community Justice Partnership Manager and Chair of VAWG, VAWG Coordinator and VAWG and MARAC Development Officer; there were approximately 20 attendees. The event covered what is violence against women and the White Ribbon Campaign. There was positive engagement at the session.

Police Scotland continues to have close engagement and participation with CJP ADP, Public Protection Partnership, Violence Against Women and Girls Committee, and the Poverty and Inequality sub-group. This close collaboration ensures a focussed working partnership and understanding of activities, objectives and shared goals.

Collaborative development of the South West Scotland MAPPA training and awareness raising video resource with Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership.

Delivery and coordination of multi-agency training supported by Public Protection colleagues.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

Skills Development Scotland continue to be an active partner within the Dumfries and Galloway Community Justice Partnership and Local Employability Partnership benefitting both in the following ways:

- Contributes to planning, performance discussions, and alignment of justice and employability activity
- Supports integration of skills and employability within wider community justice planning

Nationally SDS works collaboratively with national CJS statutory partners to deliver outcomes for individuals, communities and the economy

They also provide a national framework for CIAG delivery based on the principles of a community delivery approach that supports local partnerships

A new draft Terms of Reference has been developed, supported by an Induction pack for new partners and members of DGCJP. Clarity on governance is required prior to final sign off.

### 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 a partnership we rely on the knowledge and expertise of those working directly with victims and survivors, they are the ones who know their service users best. It feels right to include information in this section in the format in which we received it, and to understand better what our partners feel their role within the local CJP landscape is.

DGRC understands its role within the CJP locally as a conduit for survivor voices, ensuring that actions are trauma informed and designed to mitigate further harm and distress. Our experience as practitioners supporting survivors of sexual violence through the criminal justice process is that survivors are often left feeling vulnerable as perpetrator wellbeing is prioritised. It is this conversation that we bring to the table on their behalf. We are pro-active in several Public Protection fora which allow for survivor feedback, the most recent and arguably significant piece of work being our involvement in the Multi-Agency VAWG Self Evaluation where we facilitated survivor feedback sessions that will ultimately inform strategic planning. We routinely gather feedback through our support model which helps us to constantly reshape and improve our service based on survivor needs and through our community engagement activities we capture the voices of our wider communities in relation to attitudes to Gender Based Violence offending.



**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

When investigating crime, enquiry officers will ensure that victims and witnesses are informed of the services provided by Victim Support Scotland (VSS), including the range of support available.

Victims and witnesses are advised of their right to self-refer to VSS and are also offered the option of being referred directly by Police Scotland. This referral opportunity is typically provided at the point the crime is first reported.

Police Scotland V Division has also introduced a retrospective VSS referral process, whereby victims are re-contacted at a later stage in the investigation and offered a further opportunity to access support should the initial offer be declined.

This approach reflects recognition that being a victim of crime can be a distressing experience, with individuals often processing events in different ways and at different times. The introduction of retrospective referrals is considered good practice, ensuring that access to support remains available throughout the investigative process and that victims are provided with appropriate opportunities to receive assistance when they are ready to engage. Police Scotland has close engagement with VSS at both national and local (V division) level ensuring that the views and experiences of victims are considered. V Division of Police Scotland, covering the Dumfries and Galloway regional area, has one of the highest VSS acceptance rates across all Police Scotland divisions, and consistently exceeds national average for VSS acceptance.

**Public Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Police Scotland undertakes user experience surveys to better understand the experiences, views and expectations of the communities it serves. As part of this process, individuals who have been victims of crime or who have reported incidents to the police may be contacted and invited to provide feedback on their experience of policing services.

The findings from these surveys are used to identify areas of good practice, recognise where Police Scotland is performing effectively, and highlight opportunities for improvement in the service provided to victims, witnesses and the wider public.

In addition, Police Scotland conducts its annual ‘Your Police’ survey, which provides members of the public with an opportunity to share their views, concerns and priorities. This engagement helps ensure that policing services remain informed by, and responsive to, the needs of Scotland's diverse communities.

Police Scotland also monitors complaints submitted directly to the organisation and those referred to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC). Analysis of complaints and associated learning enables the organisation to identify recurring themes, understand areas of public concern, victims needs and implement appropriate improvements where necessary.

Collectively, these feedback mechanisms support a culture of continuous improvement, accountability and reflective practice. They help ensure that Police Scotland remains responsive to the needs and expectations of the public and is committed to delivering policing services that are effective, accessible and centred on the communities it serves.

At a recent VAWG Sub-Committee data scrutiny session, DGRC&SASC reported an uptick in referrals into their Criminal Justice Advocacy support service, which now represents the majority of caseloads within the organisation. This work forms part of the delivery of Rape Crisis Scotland’s National Advocacy Service (NAS). Advocacy practitioners provide support and information through all stages of the criminal justice process, from before a statement is made through to the resolution of a court case. Workers support survivors to receive updates regarding the progress of their cases,



provide information about special measures, attend court with survivors and can act as in-court supporters if requested as well as provide general emotional support throughout the process and after the court process concludes. Survivors in receipt of DGRC&SASC's emotional support service can also access advice and support from the criminal justice advocacy practitioners who provide information and will facilitate joint appointments with criminal justice colleagues. Good local relationships with Public Protection Unit colleagues means DGRC&SASC can also arrange for joint information sessions with survivors and police with no pressure to report until a level of safety and trust has been established. This is particularly helpful where an individual who was been reluctant to report to the police at the beginning of their support journey feels confident to seek justice. Challenges and positives are highlighted earlier in this report, however it is important to highlight again that *'keeping some survivors engaged presents its own problems and some choose to disengage through lack of trust in the process. DGRC&SASC work hard to balance capacity to meet the increase in demand for emotional support and the additional input required to keep some survivors invested in the idea of a justice system that is committed to improving outcomes for women and girls*'.

It is important to remember that people involved in justice are also members of our local communities and as such should be aware of their rights (during and after justice involvement) and the services available to them. In November 2025, Next Chapter Scotland (NCS) launched an advocacy service for people affected by the justice system, helping individuals to understand their rights, have their voices heard and navigate systems and services that can often feel complex or difficult to access.

Their advocacy work is person-centred, non-judgmental and rights based. They support people to understand the options available to them, communicate their views and needs, and engage more confidently with organisations and professionals. This can include helping individuals prepare correspondence, understand processes, identify appropriate support and build their own self-advocacy skills.

NCS does not provide legal advice or replace the role of solicitors or statutory services. Instead, they help people better understand their situation, identify appropriate routes forward and ensure their voice remains central to decisions affecting their lives. Their approach is informed by lived experience of the justice system, giving the organisation a strong understanding of the stigma, practical barriers and power imbalances people can encounter. They also use recurring themes from individual advocacy to inform wider influencing and collective advocacy work. This also supports Priority Action Thirteen, particularly regarding stigma.

This area is an example where it would be beneficial to have representation from COPFS at the partnership, specifically in regard to their Victim Information and Advice Service which supports victims through the process, giving updates on case progression and supporting victim impact statements. Victim Impact Statements can help those affected feel heard and involved, potentially aiding their healing and recovery.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 justice[13]

**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 the reporting period we worked with the Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership and MAPPA colleagues to produce an awareness raising video for MAPPA to boost confidence in the arrangements in place. The local MAPPA Co-Ordinator in Dumfries and Galloway attended DGCJP to deliver an input about MAPPA which included a screening of the video. Partners were enthusiastic about its use and keen to utilise it locally. It has been agreed that the video will be used for training and awareness raising internally at the current time.

The catalyst for the development of the video was the Ayrshire MAPPA co-ordinator attending an Ayrshire delivery group highlighting some of the difficulties faced with "outings" of Registered Sex Offenders in the community by internet-based groups, highlighting the highest number of outings in one year had been 80. These tend to happen more in the summer months when people are more active and outdoors. The video was funded by Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership.

Training and development remain a priority for MAPPA Southwest as evidenced by the development of Service Delivery Forums with one dedicated to training. Over the reporting year MAPPA team have used several opportunities to both deliver and attend relevant training. In July, Department of Work and Pensions provided an input to staff around their role within MAPPA, and completion of notifications to their service. MAPPA Coordinators have continued to deliver awareness training where appropriate to colleagues in Housing, SPS and third sector support services. Staff are consistently asked via the service delivery forums, if there are any training opportunities or identified needs, so that we can ensure our staff are supported and skilled to work with MAPPA individuals.

**Engagement with the community**: As part of the MAPPA public engagement forum, MAPPA Southwest used opportunities to hold dialogue with activists, to spread the MAPPA awareness message. Partners remain dedicated to engaging where appropriate and informing the public of our ongoing and continued commitment to protect our communities from harm.

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[13] 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



**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

Following discussion at our local DGCJP meeting about an increase in people with justice involvement completing suicide attempts were made to access data and information around this subject both locally and nationally. In the main the cohort identified were at different stages of justice, from investigation to post sentence. The link between them was the offence type. This was also raised through the National Community Justice Peer Network and contact made with Scottish Government. As a result of some of those discussions Next Chapter Scotland (NCS) developed and has been delivering a pilot peer support group for people under investigation or with a conviction for a sexual offence, creating safe, non-judgmental spaces where participants can connect with others who understand the challenges of living with the stigma of this particular offence type.

Rather than focusing solely on offending, the approach recognises the whole person and the wider social and emotional consequences that can follow conviction.

The pilot is being externally evaluated by Nottingham Trent University (NTU). This collaboration combines NCS's lived-experience knowledge and direct engagement with participants with academic expertise, helping to build an evidence base around the value and impact of peer support.

Learning from the programme is helping NCS understand how peer-led approaches can reduce isolation, reduce the risk of suicide, strengthen wellbeing and provide meaningful support to people navigating life following conviction for a sexual offence.

Reducing stigma through activity:
Health & Fitness - The PT Department at HMP Dumfries continues to host the Parkrun every weekend to those in their care (and any staff who wish to participate), mirroring activity that takes place in local communities. As well as supporting individuals' health, fitness and mental wellbeing, it offers the chance to continue being part of the Parkrun community beyond release.

The PTI's are also trained to deliver the "Street Soccer" initiative, allowing individuals to achieve qualifications in coaching/fitness which are transferable into the community.

The HMP Dumfries gardens area continues to offer a host of opportunities and initiatives for local people and their families. Local Care Homes visit the establishment every Friday and the prison has several individuals who have been trained by the Trellis organisation in designing gardening projects for those suffering with Dementia. The Gardens and the Joinery workshop also support various community projects including Lockerbie Rotary, D&G Woodlands and local schools.

HMP Dumfries Family Contact Officer supports prisoners' families, providing bonding visits, which include play sessions in the gardens followed by preparing and eating lunch as a family, family days in the gardens with over 100 visitors and a host of stalls and games throughout the day. Early Years Scotland are also based in the prison 3/4 days per week, offering additional support to families. HMP Dumfries also host Easter, Hallowe'en and Christmas parties for all families through the year reducing stigma and providing opportunities for bonding and fun.

Our local ADP supports regular Practitioner Forums. The forum held in August 2025 brought together staff from health, social care, justice, housing and third sector organisations. The event focused on trauma informed and stigma informed practice, responding to learning needs identified by practitioners. The programme included presentations, discussions and opportunities to network, supporting staff learning and



stronger partnership working across services. 60 delegates attended the event with all completing evaluation forms. The average satisfaction score was 4.9 out of 5 for the event. Future training priorities were identified through those who attended. Feedback showed that people felt their understanding of trauma informed and stigma informed approaches had improved and identified ways they could apply this learning in their own roles. People also reported increased awareness of partner services, how people can be supported, and the range of support available locally.

SDS promotes inclusive career services aligned to equality and social justice principles. Furthermore, SDS staff are trained to deliver non-stigmatising, person-centred support across all services.

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

*Reflective questions to consider in developing your answer:*

*What are the next steps for your partnership?*

*What opportunities are there?*

*What barriers and/or risks?*

The justice landscape continues to be busy, complex and challenging. The Scottish Sentencing Council and Penal Policy Commission report: Justice That Works has published its recommendations recently. Significant change to the Justice system in Scotland is anticipated in 2026 and beyond that will impact on community justice and statutory partners, particularly Justice Social Work and SPS.

The shift from custody to the community, exacerbated by high prison numbers, has already see the roll out of the Emergency Early Release Scheme, which will be following by the STP30 scheme where certain criteria of prisoners will be released at 30% of their sentence. Part 2 of the Bail and Release (Scotland) Act 2023 came into force in February 2026 and is concerned with support for those returning to the community from prison.

We have recently been involved in supporting a local response to the Prison population and Penal reform consultation. Statutory partners and others have been involved in the review consultation of the National Community Justice Strategy – with Scottish Government also updating the National Vision for Justice. Until both consultations are complete, analysed and decisions made on direction of travel it is difficult to know exactly what the next steps for the partnership are. JSW colleagues are anticipating significant change - considerations implementing change/resourcing and governance.

At the present time we will continue to work towards the current National Aims and Priority Actions within the National Community Justice Strategy and to further develop our local Community Justice Performance Framework and evidence base.

**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

