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**2021 - 2022**



Falkirk Community Justice Partnership

Annual Report of Activity

# Introduction

The Falkirk Community Justice Partnership want to prevent and reduce further offending by addressing its underlying causes. We want to safely and effectively manage and support those who have committed offences to help them to (re)integrate into the community and realise their potential for the benefit of all citizens. We want to ensure outcomes/interventions for those who have committed an offence are proportionate and maximise opportunities for rehabilitation and desistance from crime.

The Partnership’s pledge to secure better outcomes for people with convictions, victims and witnesses, families and communities in Falkirk is set out within a Community Justice Outcome’s Improvement Plan. The current plan is available for view on the [Falkirk Council website](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/people-communities/docs/community-justice/01%20Falkirk%20Community%20Justice%20Outcomes%20Improvement%20Plan%202020-2023.pdf).

The following report represents a summary of progress made towards achieving community justice outcomes in Falkirk, within the reporting year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

An activity template is also submitted annually to the national body, Community Justice Scotland, in accordance with statutory requirements outlined within the Community Justice Act (2016). For an overview of community justice activity across Scotland, a national Annual Report is prepared and published by Community Justice Scotland on their [website](https://communityjustice.scot/).

# Local governance arrangements

The Falkirk Community Justice Partnership consists of statutory partners – typically represented at senior officer level to ensure that they are able to provide strategic leadership, make decisions and commit resources necessary to the work of the Partnership. All statutory partners are represented at local level with the exception of Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), who facilitate Sheriffdom meetings for Coordinators to attend. In the case of the local authority, a range of relevant services are represented such as Justice Services, Housing, Adult Social Work Services, Children’s Services and the Community Planning Partnership.

Understanding of purpose and duties is maintained by the Community Justice Partnership Terms of Reference. The partnership is currently chaired by the Service Manager, Justice Services and chairing arrangements are formally reviewed on a biennial basis. Partnership meetings are held on a quarterly basis.

Partnership progress and issues are reported into the Public Protection Chief Officers Group, who in turn have a direct reporting line into the Community Planning Leadership Board.

The third sector are represented at partnership meetings by CVS, Falkirk and District’s Third Sector Interface. Meetings are also attended by the Senior Manager of Cyrenians, who had held the role of chair of now suspended Safer Communities Forum -a collection of third sector organisations and community groups with a role in promoting safety and justice. The Safer Communities Forum underwent a review in 2021-22 and is to be replaced with a Safe and Empowered Communities Forum, with a broadened focus on the intrinsic link between feeling safe and a sense of community belonging, inclusion and empowerment.

# Activity highlights

**Improved access to drug and alcohol support**

A new Recovery Service was established, co-located with Justice Services. The service is delivered by Change Grow Live and provides Justice Service users with effective screening and triage to ensure they receive the right package of drug or alcohol support, at the right time.

The justice-based Recovery Workers:

* Provide effective screening and triage to ensure individuals receive the right package of care, at the right time.
* Will co-produce a tailored, comprehensive Service User Plan (SUP) in conjunction with partners, underpinned by multi-agency communication and families/carers input.
* Will facilitate individuals access to other support services, including MAT and specialist harm reduction.
* Will contribute to justice reports, e.g. court reports

Since September 2021: 99 referrals were made and 95 of those received support. 67% of all discharges were planned. Outcomes were as follows:

* Significantly high engagement with the Recovery Coordinators
* Significantly high retention
* High planned discharge from the service
* Enhanced collaboration and partnership work
* Positive feedback from service users
* Better outcomes for service users
* Reduction in substance related offending behaviour.

Feedback from service users, staff and justice social work has been positive. Recovery workers said:

***‘****One of my previous service users has just been released from prison and was in touch with me last week hoping to re-engage, I have booked him in to see me next week and we can assess if he still needs our help. This has happened previously with a couple of service users getting in touch after prison saying they would like to continue working with me.’ (Voluntary Throughcare)*

‘*We have had a few referrals that haven’t been needed, service users who have committed an offence when drunk but don’t have a drink problem as such, in those cases instead of closing at triage I have met with them face to face and offered them advice around problematic drinking and relapse prevention but then discharged them with the knowledge that they can contact me at any time or be re-referred.’ (Early and Effective Intervention)*

**Developing pathways into mental health support**

Justice and Mental Health Leads have worked collaboratively to improve pathways for mental health support. A Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) post was embedded within Justice Services in 2020 using Action 15 funding and shared management between Justice and the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership. Bringing mental health support in house within Justice Services has allowed for earlier assessment and access to secondary care, reducing barriers for a client group who are often considered “hard to reach”. The CPN worked closely with professionals across Health and Social Care in 2021-2022 to support more effective transitions between support as well as delivering interventions on a 1:1 basis or as a group.

129 new referrals were made to the Justice CPN within the period with a 75% engagement rate. Support provided is dependent on the individual requirement of the person seen. Clients may be referred on to other services if this is deemed to be appropriate following assessment and can include referral to services such as Substance Misuse Services, Secondary Care Mental Health Services and Psychology. Intervention work is also offered around the clients presenting mental health need, for example anxiety management, depression education, looking at skills work to further develop coping strategies (for example Decider Skills) and safety planning. We also hope to introduce the Trauma intervention Survive and Thrive in a group format (this is in the planning stages) and an emotional resilience group.

**Tackling Inequalities, Improving Outcomes Project**

The Tackling Inequalities, Improving Outcomes (TIIO) project is a partnership initiative to reduce the health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of the people in the criminal justice system by addressing the issues impacting on the individual’s health and wellbeing to support their engagement with Community Payback Orders (CPOs) / licence interventions that address their offending behaviour.

An important element of the TIIO project is the support that staff provide for clients to access and engage with universal services. As well as assertive linkage with services (including making appointments, sending reminders, and accompanying clients to appointments), staff have provided a degree of advocacy and support during appointments with universal services.

100% of new referrals (104) were assessed as suitable for the service with 85% of an overall engagement rate. TIIO supported clients subject to community sentences or licences to:

- Optimise levels of physical and emotional health & well-being

- Reduce stigma and promote social inclusion

- Engage with substance misuse services

- Be better supported to manage their recovery

- Promote community safety and well-being

- Improve self-management skills

- Connect to local communities and feel less socially restricted and isolated

- Be supported to be independent and manage long-term conditions

- Increase social skills

**Keepwell within Justice Services**

Justice Services worked in partnership with NHS colleagues to ensure ongoing provision of a co-located Keep Well nurse 3 days each week to conduct keep well assessments and provide healthcare advice and support, especially to those who have difficulty in accessing GP services.

The outcomes of Keepwell appointments were varied depending on the needs of the service users. These included:- GP registration and telephone triage appointments; organised appointments for secondary care and preparation for the appointment; basic mental health support / referrals, i.e. Woodlands; referral to mental health nurse; psychology support preparing for appointments; alcohol intervention; referral for alcohol support from other agency; referral to Addictions Support and Counselling; referral to Change, Grow Live; referral to drug use intervention from other agency; suicide intervention; referral to dentist; support to attend a dentist; advice on nutrition, healthy snacks budgeting and recipes; exercise advice; support with isolation; support with hearing aids; referral to support with volunteering and employment; referral for arranging a carer; referral to Occupational Therapy; and men and woman’s general health advice.

**Overcoming barriers to universal support (Social Inclusion Project)**

The Social Inclusion Project (SIP) aims to bring multi-disciplinary agencies/services together to coordinate and commit to the intensive case management of identified individuals across the Falkirk local authority area. The project aims to help those who face barriers or exclusion from universal services, improving their life opportunities and reducing likelihood of further offending. The multi-disciplinary approach of the project is essential to the delivery of effective and responsive recovery planning that ensures the appropriate support and intervention opportunities are available and accessible for the individual.

SIP supports individuals who are not currently subject to community orders with Justice Services. Those who are on a Justice order may instead be considered for the Tackling Inequalities, Improving Outcomes project.

**Providing support from the point of arrest**

An Arrest Referral Service is in operation at Falkirk Police Station to offer drug and alcohol support to individuals in need from the point of arrest. The service is funded by the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and meets cross-cutting aims of early intervention. Partnership working between the ADP, Police Scotland, NHS, Change Grow Live and Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils has been essential.

The service aims to provide an early intervention response to those in custody by offering a person-centred approach, supporting people from the point of arrest. In practice this looks like:

– Provision of Recovery Workers

– Co-located services

– Provision of injecting equipment

– Naloxone provision

– Alcohol Brief Interventions

– Resources made available to help and support

– MH support available during periods of high stress and anxiety

– Veteran service assistance available for ex service personnel

Following a suspension of visits due to Covid-19, recovery workers regained access to the custody suite in 2021. This has been a positive step forward for service delivery.

**Supporting Communities through Community Payback Orders**

Throughout 2021-22, unpaid work teams assisted in a range of projects to support local communities. This included work for schools and nurseries around the Falkirk area, such as extending paths for wheelchair access at Carrongrange School and ground work at St Mary’s nursery for a safer play area. The teams continued to support supply and deliveries of food parcels to vulnerable members of the community on behalf of Falkirk Food Bank. The teams also provided gardening work for community groups by weeding and rotating numerous flower beds throughout Falkirk and surrounding areas so that they could be planted with summer bedding, The teams supported local Police in reducing anti-social behaviour by dismantling a drinking den in a wooded area after community complaints were made, as well as clearing reported fly-tipping. Justice Services were also in close communication with Housing and Adult Social Care and carried out numerous fence repairs for Falkirk Council tenants and garden work for elderly and disabled tenants.

The unpaid work service reached out to local third sector organisations in 2021 via CVS Falkirk’s news bulletin and networks to offer unpaid work personal placements. The advert was targeted at third sector organisations working in local areas with the highest levels of deprivation to maximise community benefit.

Unpaid work undertaken as part of a Community Payback Order (CPO) provides clients with opportunities to provide payback to communities through meaningful work that benefits vulnerable people directly or support services/project that benefit those in need. Falkirk Justice Services have a dedicated email inbox for unpaid work requests from internal and external agencies and communities. Requests for unpaid work support for local projects are assessed for eligibility and work that concerns community safety, reducing the fear of crime or environmental improvements to public spaces are particularly welcomed.

The email inbox allows local services to request support with projects so that stakeholders are given a say in how unpaid work can benefit public spaces or service users. The email inbox has been shared with elected members to enable them to access, suggest projects and request services from Unpaid Work.

Falkirk’s Unpaid Work Team received national media recognition for their work with Cyrenians in the transformation of the walled garden in Dollar Park after a visit from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans, Keith Brown, in 2021.

The Senior Supervisor of the Unpaid Work Team spoke on the value for individuals carrying out unpaid work in the garden, saying “There is trepidation sometimes… but by the end of the day they’ve completely changed their attitude and ask if they can come back tomorrow.” and “there are quite a few who come back and say ‘I’ve got a job’ because of the skills they learned when they were here”, Some people have taken such pride in what they’ve achieved that they’ve returned as volunteers following the end of their work order.

The project is a good example of what unpaid work can bring to Falkirk’s local third sector and the communities that benefit, with Cyrenians noting “we couldn’t get through our work without the input from them and likewise – it’s a good working partnership”

The Cabinet Secretary also voiced praise for the work undertaken, stating “We find by and large we have less recidivism from people who get a community sentence, compared to those who go to prison. As long as the community feels safe, if the people that are doing the work get something good out of it, then that’s got to be a good thing.”

**Developing the use of “other activity” components of Community Payback Orders**

In 2021/22, Justice Service users could take part in the following as part of the “other activity” requirement of their CPO:

-Drug and Alcohol Counselling (if this was not already part of a requirement)

-Work with the Tackling Inequalities Improving Outcomes Projects

-Work with Justice Women’s Service

-Educational activity with Cyrenians, a 4 day course over 4 weeks that focuses on self-awareness exercises, personal development, goal setting, CV writing, Job applications and Interview Skills

-Identified training opportunities with Partner agencies such as Falkirk Council Employment Training Unit

A Self-Awareness Workbook was also developed. This workbook focusses on: the individual; feelings and emotions; taking responsibility; problem solving; and goal setting. The workbook has a good uptake with clients openly expressing their views and thoughts, there has been some very insightful answers to certain sections which has had a benefit to Unpaid Work Officers and Social Workers. It has highlighted areas that workers can further explore with clients, such as reparation, personal support and problem solving.

Some Clients are also offered Online Learning opportunities. This was facilitated by using free online resources, clients were sent links to specific courses on well-known educational websites that may benefit their personal development and employment prospects.

Justice Service users completing 'other activity' have been provided with the opportunity to improve their employability, skills and self-confidence, and have also been offered the opportunity to reflect upon their behaviour and their life choices, within a safe environment, either alone, in a group or on a 1:1 basis. Having a selection of delivery methods/options available has allowed the 'other activity' requirement to cater for a range of needs and learning styles, of both males and females using the service.

**Overcoming employability barriers**

A justice employability pipeline is in operation for people on a CPO and individuals can have hours allocated as part of “other activity”. The service is delivered by Cyrenians and jointly funded by Justice Services and Employability and Training Unit (ETU).

The service has a person-centred approach and can deliver on a 1:1 basis or as part of a groupwork programme. SVQs can be delivered as part of a Falkirk Employability Award. Individuals are supported on a 1:1 basis on breaking down barriers to employment. This includes supporting people to write CVS and letters of disclosure.

The Justice Employability project helps clients with positive use of time, the majority being support towards work but also volunteering or education if work isn’t suitable.

Building confidence and breaking down barriers that have prevented clients from moving forward into work, volunteering, further education or training. The service aims to educate clients on how to disclose their convictions to potential employers in a controlled way and explain to them about their convictions (e.g. when do they become spent convictions.)

Cyrenians have also been delivering an outreach service for justice service clients since June 2021. The following support has been carried out with clients:

Community Integration

* Community Exploration, where staff and client engage in a walk around the community, speaking about services, groups and organisations.
* Barrier Breakdowns, where a specific barrier is hampering integration, specific sessions aimed at resolving this. (e.g., Scared to use bus in to town).

Wellbeing

* Addressing Isolation. Similar to exploration, but solely targeted at groups, hobbies and interests of the clients and then tailoring this with what’s available in the community
* Lifestyle Changes. The support here can range from healthy eating to active lifestyles, drug and alcohol signposting, etc. This is a lighter touch than the step below.

Employment

* Volunteer Search. These sessions were aimed at anything from showing the range of opportunities present in the client’s community to helping them apply for these opportunities. This will involve work alongside local TSIs and groups such as Volunteer Scotland.
* Employment Search.

The outreach service has received positive feedback from staff and clients since it began. One client who received support said, *“finally see a bit of light, after some dark months”.*

# Challenges and next steps

Lack of dedicated funding, staffing shortages and the backlog of court cases arising from the pandemic continued to present key challenges for Community Justice Partners and the service users we support.

A new [National Strategy for Community Justice](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-strategy-community-justice-2/) was published in June 2022, guiding the direction for Community Justice activity in the years ahead. This will also be supported by a new national Outcomes Performance and Improvement Framework, publication of which is anticipated on 31st March 2023.

In light of these new documents, Falkirk Community Justice Partnership have approved an extended review period to the current Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) 2020-2023. A position statement has been published on the [Falkirk Council website,](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/people-communities/community-justice.aspx) noting a new publication date for the revised CJOIP will be 1st April 2024.