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**2020 - 2021**



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 spans 2020-2023 and is available for view on the [Falkirk Council website](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/people-communities/community-justice.aspx).

The following report represents a summary of progress made towards achieving community justice outcomes in Falkirk, within the reporting year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

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

Membership of the Falkirk Community Justice Partnership is shown on the diagram below:

Partners are typically represented at senior officer level to ensure that they can 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 Community Justice Coordinators in Tayside, Central and Fife. In the case of the local authority, a range of relevant services are represented such as Justice Services, Housing, Adult Social Work and Children’s Services. We work closely with other partnerships to meet common aims, such as the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. The third sector are represented at partnership meetings by CVS, Falkirk and District’s Third Sector Interface and the Chair of the Safer Communities Forum – a collection of local third sector organisations and community groups who have role in safety and justice.

# Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The pandemic presented a range of challenges across the workforce, resulting in a temporary closure of some services, reduced service capacity or move to online services which presented disruption to service users and/or a need to rapidly increase digital access. Changes to staffing arrangements due to an increased proportion of the workforce working from home, self-isolation and sickness and temporary role changes to respond to challenges resulted caused capacity issues for partners and impacted progression of some planned activity.

The backlog of court cases resulting from the pandemic will also present significant challenges for the justice workforce for years to come. This will have a wide-ranging impact on all services involved in supporting the justice population and increased pressure on resources.

Despite challenges, the partnership has worked resiliently to support communities, assess and respond to emerging service priorities, and adapt practices to ensure that those in our justice system have maintained access to the support they need. The following section details some activity highlights achieved during the year.

# Activity highlights

**Tackling Inequalities, Improving Outcomes**

Integrated Care Fund monies from the Health and Social Care Partnership have been used to support ongoing work to reinstate and embed the Tackling Inequalities, Improving Outcomes Project, collocated in Justice Services. The project supports individuals in a variety of ways and helps them with things like budgeting, applying for new benefits, setting up payment plans, registering with GP surgeries, referring to local services, liaising with housing officers, registering for new houses and assisting to bid on new properties, engagement in support from drug and alcohol services such as Community Alcohol and Drugs (CADS) and Change Grow Live (CGL), emotional and well-being support. During the reporting year, the project received 100 new referrals and early evidence suggests a high level of engagement (93% attendance rate).

Service Users were supported 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

**Targeted assessment of health needs and access to support**

Scottish Government’s Mental Health Strategy Action 15 funding was used to employ a Justice Community Psychiatric Nurse, co-located with Justice Services. The Community Psychiatric Nurse provides assessment of individuals with mental health needs who are subject to Community Payback Orders, licence conditions or other orders. They support transitions between community and custody as well as supporting individuals to access the most appropriate mental health service provision in the community.

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.

**Supporting digital inclusion and communication via technology**

Many services were able to adapt to new ways of working remotely, with an increased reliance on technology to provide service users with online access to information and support. Although this rapidly changing landscape came with its challenges, partners demonstrated resilience by preventing full loss of service wherever possible. Leaps in digital inclusion were made this past year, with partners supporting those most vulnerable in the community to access online services through the provision of devices and IT training.

2020-2021 also saw a range of new digital initiatives within prisons. Mobile phones were introduced for prisoners across the prison estate, allowing prisoners to maintain contact with family, friends and service providers following the temporary suspension of visitors. Video conferencing technology and virtual courts were also utilised.

**Ensuring safe transitions from prison**

The Scottish Prison Service, NHS Forth Valley, and Falkirk Council worked closely together to identify individuals suitable for early release to reduce the prison population to allow for easier social distancing for the safety of prisoners and prison staff. This close working relationship ensured that eligible prisoners would not be released without adequate support for their needs.

In addition, the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Support Team and HMP Low Moss have overseen the development of a protocol for safe transitions of prison leavers returning to the community. This involves ensuring prescriptions are authorised in advance in the event of a Friday release from prison to individuals returning from Low Moss to the Falkirk area will not face delays in receiving prescriptions. A Standard Operating Procedure is to be developed and shared with other prison establishments.

**Providing support from the point of arrest**

A pan-Forth Valley Arrest Referral Service is in operation within Falkirk Police Station, aimed at reducing harm in our communities. The service is funded by the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and managed by Change Grow Live. A steering group oversees practice by supporting referral processes, resolving issues and influencing a move towards diversion from prosecutorial action. The group contains multi-agency representation from: the Alcohol and Drug partnership; Police Scotland; NHS; Change, Grow, Live; Families Outside; and Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils.

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

Unfortunately, an initial increase in referrals was disrupted by Covid-19 due to the lack of access to the custody suite as the result of Covid restrictions.

**Supporting communities through the Unpaid Work Service**

The Unpaid Work Service provides those on a Community Payback Order with an opportunity to build skills that will improve their future employability as well as a chance to repair harm and take pride in building something positive within the community. It also aims to strengthen community ties and raise awareness and understanding of Community Payback Orders. Falkirk Justice Services have a dedicated email inbox for unpaid work requests from internal and external agencies and communities.

While the Unpaid Work service was impacted by the pandemic, with service users unable to complete unpaid work hours when in full lockdown, small work teams were able to operate when guidance allowed. This provided opportunities to support local food banks and deliver food parcels to vulnerable people in Falkirk as well as those shielding from Covid-19.

In October 2020, Unpaid Work Teams salvaged over 500 metres of wrought iron fencing from an area in Falkirk which was to be demolished. The old fencing will be upcycled for a War Memorial which is being built in Langlees Falkirk.

Unpaid Work Teams also supported building projects at a site in Falkirk, which houses services such as support for Additional Support Needs and a service for children who have experienced Trauma. Unpaid Work Teams built a pergola and paved the garden at the property.

Work was also carried out at a local school and nursery, which involved laying a path network in the school garden for wheelchair users and building planters for the children to plant vegetables.

Justice Services have continued to work with Cyrenians in the regeneration and ongoing maintenance of the walled garden set in the grounds of Dollar Park. The Walled Garden offers a range of features including a sensory garden, picnic area, bandstand and a pond. It was brought to life by individuals undertaking Unpaid Work as part of their Community Payback Order, alongside the third, public and private sectors and community groups.

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

Falkirk Justice Services worked with a range of internal networks and external agencies to support “other activity” components of CPOs. Service Users are assessed and consulted to identify suitable types of support for their needs.

Justice Service users could also 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 Women’s Support Service
* Educational activity with Cyrenians
* Case Management / Welfare interviews during lockdown scheduled weekly or fortnightly with Service Users for up to an hour
* Identified training opportunities with Partner agencies such as Falkirk Council Employment Training Unit

Blended Home Learning Packs created by Dumfries and Galloway Justice Social Work were adapted for use in Falkirk. The pack focusses on: the individual; feelings and emotions; taking responsibility; problem solving; and goal setting. The Pack had a good uptake with Service Users 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 Service Users, such as reparation, personal support and problem solving.

Service Users were also able to take part in numerous online learning opportunities. This was facilitated by using free online resources, Service Users were sent links to well-known educational websites to search for courses that may benefit their personal development and employment prospects.