



FIFE COUNCIL

JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

PRIORITY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2021 - 2022

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FOREWORD

I am very pleased to introduce and endorse our Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan. The purpose of the plan is to set out clearly the Service's priorities for the forthcoming reporting year, and to define the Service's development agenda over the same timeframe.

Offending and re-offending is a significant problem within society at large, and Fife is no different in that regard. Fife's geographical make up presents a microcosm of the Scottish landscape with a unique urban rural mix over a large area with pockets of significant deprivation. The subsequent demography presents challenges to the Service, this plan sets out new approaches to address some of those challenges.

The challenges however are not solely linked to those issues, the coronavirus pandemic has presented global problems and presents the world with new challenges. These are mirrored within the Justice System as Courts have battled to maintain services, prisons have had to take unprecedented actions and staff across the country have had to consider their own safety whilst undertaking day-to-day tasks.

The ongoing issues of substance misuse, domestic violence, the impact of mental health and childhood trauma have all increased since the initial lockdown and our Justice Service sets out clearly in this plan its priorities to tackle these issues by:

- ❖ Identifying key priority areas.
- ❖ Introducing plans to pro-actively change attitudes to offending behaviour.
- ❖ Re-focussing upon improving outcomes for service-users.
- ❖ Planning to respond to demand at a more local level.
- ❖ Tightening up on risk management arrangements.
- ❖ Ongoing and increasing investment in staff.

I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to those involved in the preparation of this plan, from across the Justice Social Work Service who have positively contributed to the plan and to the forward-thinking vision of the Service as we embark upon our recovery.



Kathy Henwood
Head of Education & Children's Services
(Children & Families & Justice Services)
Chief Social Work Officer

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present our Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan for 2021/22. The plan clearly sets out these priorities and challenges along with what actions will be deployed to meet them and sustain ongoing improvement in performance. The plan sets out a clear vision which will be reviewed annually and reported on within the same timeframe. It is expected that the plan may be subject to change in light of the pace of recovery, subsequent competing priorities and other external factors. It is also acknowledged that fiscal decisions at Government level may reset priority and improvement targets.

This plan is not only produced to set priorities and targets but to inform staff, service-users, elected members, partner agencies and the general public about what these are, and how they ultimately aim to assist in the reduction of re-offending in Fife.

The plan will set out our internal structures, strategic priorities, operational demand and key challenges with the aim of providing clarity on what specifically goes on within the Service and what we are doing to ensure we can continue to meet our targets whilst achieving positive outcomes.

Within all that we are committed to listening to our local communities, including those who experience crime and those who have been convicted of an offence, ensuring they play an active role in shaping the future. We will build upon our commitment to service-user participation and seek to engage with local communities to tailor services at a local level wherever possible.

The Management Team and I believe that this plan provides a clarity for those staff working within Justice Services, around the ethos of the Service, its priorities and its direction. Furthermore, it opens the Service up to external scrutiny by elected members and the wider public, including those who may be recipients of our Service either directly or indirectly. In that sense the plan's existence, purpose and design allows for ongoing development, scrutiny and review to afford the Service the opportunity to meet new challenges as they arise, to retain fluidity in ongoing resource allocation and to continue to tackle the issue of re-offending within our communities with a clear sense of purpose and direction.



Steve Hopton
Service Manager
Justice Social Work (Fife)

3. Understanding the Fife Context

Fife is the third largest local authority area in Scotland by population, that population is around 370,000, which equates to approximately 7% of the country's total population. The next formal census is planned this year (2021) which will update and confirm any changes in population and demographic make-up, and how those changes may bear influence upon crime and re-offending. In addition to the year-on-year changes, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic will play a significant part in planning, resource allocation and future development across all services in Fife and beyond.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) published their 2020 data which evidences an increase of those areas ranked in the most deprived 20%, 10% and 5% rankings. In Fife these can be exemplified by the information below relating to the most deprived 5% and their direct correlation to crime rate. Fifteen of Fife's defined data zones fall into the most deprived 5%, compared with six in 2012 and ten in 2016. Of those fifteen currently noted, ten are geographically located within the Levenmouth locality, and most are within the most negative crime ranking.

In the most recent reporting year (2019/20) Fife's figures for direct work are detailed below, it provides a basic overview of the amount of work and gives an oversight to the variety and complexity of that work undertaken by workers every day.

Criminal Justice Social Work Reports:	2,121
Throughcare Reports (HBR, HLR & HDC)	368
Community Payback Orders Supervised:	1,141
Drug Treatment and Testing Orders:	49
Diversion from Prosecution Cases:	106
Supervised Bail Orders:	14
CPO's with Unpaid Work Requirement:	809
Number of Community Based Throughcare Cases:	114
Number of Custody Based Throughcare Cases:	275
<u>In performance terms the Service saw:</u>	
CPO first direct contact made within one week:	73%
First Induction/CMP Meeting within one week:	73%
CJSW Reports submitted by the due date:	99%
CPO's successfully completed:	77%
Successfully complete Groupwork Programmes:	65%

4. Operational Delivery Functions

Fife Council Justice Services are responsible for providing a statutory social work service for those living within Fife involved in the justice system.

The operational delivery of this broadly fall into two categories:

Area based and Women's Justice Team –

- responsible for completion of Court reports, bail supervision, Diversion from prosecution programmes and the supervision of Community Payback Orders. In addition, the teams based in Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy provide a social work presence within the Sheriff Court in their area to assist Sheriffs and offer support to those appearing in Court and their families.

Specialist Teams–

- Throughcare – The work undertaken by these teams is primarily delivered under statute. The Throughcare teams work Fife-wide and provide reports for the High Court, Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Parole Board whilst supervising those on statutory supervision following release from prison. The team also maintains contact with sentenced prisoners who will be on supervision on release, primarily through the Integrated Case Management (ICM) process and when reports are requested.
- Groupwork – delivering both the Caledonian System for men convicted of domestic abuse offences and Moving Forward Making Changes for those convicted of sexual offences.
- Drug Treatment and Testing Orders – delivers an intensive intervention that specifically targets the reduction in illicit drug use by the offender. The principles are that by reducing the offender's use of illicit drugs there will be a significant reduction in offending behaviour
- Unpaid Work – a requirement of a Community Payback Order which provides support to community groups or charities as well as individuals who can apply for help with their projects. Unpaid work in the community provides the labour and tools and the community groups provide the materials e.g. paint, plants or building materials.

The aim of our Service is to work effectively to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and promote community safety. Research has demonstrated the links between offending behaviour and issues such as poverty, poor mental health, substance misuse, unemployment, literacy and childhood trauma. Our interventions are therefore reflective of the issues that require to be addressed to reduce risks both to the individual and the wider community.

5. MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)

The fundamental purpose of MAPPA is public protection and the reduction of serious harm. The protection of children, adults at risk of harm and other members of the public is paramount. MAPPA offer the potential for a co-ordinated approach to the management of people who commit sexual offences, restricted patients subject to mental health legislation and the 'critical few' other high-risk individuals who are assessed by the Responsible Authorities as posing a risk of serious harm by reason of their conviction/sentence.

The core intention behind MAPPA is the reduction of the risk of serious harm defined as; the likelihood of harmful behaviour of a violent or sexual nature, which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, may reasonably be expected to be difficult or impossible.

The MAPPA Co-ordinator is employed on behalf of all the Responsible Authorities - and plays an essential role in the co-ordination, support, and administration of the strategic and operational functions on behalf of MAPPA in Fife. The co-ordinator's role is a dedicated function carried out on behalf of all the Responsible Authorities, accountable to those operating the joint arrangements, through the MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group.

In Fife as of 31 March 2020, 477 individuals were being MAPPA managed, of these individuals 333 were at liberty and being managed in the community setting.

Within Fife, there are positive working relationships with Police Scotland, Fife Council Housing Services, NHS Fife and other agencies which contribute to the ongoing robust risk management of individuals subject to MAPPA to ensure there is appropriate sharing of information in a timely manner. There is a focus on building and sustaining positive working relationships with the individual and all professionals involved in that individual's risk management plan. All agencies are working collaboratively to minimise the potential of future re-offending and further risk of serious harm. Whilst acknowledging that each partner agency has different strengths and roles, we are all committed to the same outcome.



6. KEY CHALLENGES

6.1. Impact of Pandemic and Road to Recovery

At time of writing the Justice system more widely continues to be affected by the consequences of the initial period of lockdown in March 2020. Court business has noticeably slowed due the difficulties in adhering to the safety guidance and many thousands of cases across the country have been deferred until later in the year when it is hoped that an easing of restrictions will allow for business to return to Court and begin to address the backlog. It is very difficult therefore to quantify the number of cases outstanding and what impact these will have on new cases coming through, but it's likely to take many months, if not years, to return to the pre-lockdown position.

Unpaid Work has suffered a similar fate in terms of backlog following on from the first lockdown and the subsequent second period of lockdown at the beginning of 2021. Upon return to work in mid-2020 supervision of service-users undertaking Unpaid Work reduced from a 1:5 ratio of supervisors to service-users to a 1:2 ratio. This clearly had a dramatic impact on the ability to supervise Orders in accordance with expectation. This was quickly recognised by the Scottish Government and legislation was enacted to ensure all outstanding and new Community Payback Orders with an Unpaid Work element had a twelve-month extension built in to address the expected delays in completion.

In addition to that change, the Government have also recently introduced a 35% reduction on all unpaid work hours with exceptions to those convicted of sexual, domestic abuse and stalking offences. This will have some impact locally as Fife Justice Social Work Services have around 66,000 hours of Unpaid Work outstanding, it is anticipated this will reduce by around 20,000 hours following the 35% reduction. Nevertheless, the Service's ability to administer the remaining hours will be severely hampered as it is very likely that the pace of recovery will be slow, and it is probably the case we will need to recommence at the 1:2 ratio and work towards increasing that in line with Public Health advice.

The management of the supervision element of Community Payback Orders has provided a fair degree of challenge also but has largely been manageable within the context of restrictions, building closures and ensuring staff safety. It is acknowledged that Orders have been managed in a different way as staff access to resources has been limited and home visits have been reduced according to health and safety considerations. Within the context of supervision, Groupwork has posed the most obvious problems in that it involves working with groups of men. Large groups were suspended in March 2020 and have not, to date, recommenced. One-to-one work was undertaken following the easing of the first lockdown, but this too was suspended following the decision to lockdown again at the turn of the year. This will also be reintroduced gradually in line with public health guidance but is priority for the Service given the high-risk nature of the offending behaviour and the need for this to be addressed timeously.

As with Unpaid Work it is unlikely that Groupwork involving Caledonian and MF:MC will be able to return to full capacity immediately upon the initial easing of restrictions. These are likely to recommence on a one-to-one basis before increasing in size with progress very much dependent upon advice and guidance from the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland. The most pressing impact upon these Orders are those which will be nearing the end of their timescales and will require priority to negate, or at least minimise, the possibility of returning Orders to Court to request time extensions.

Staff response to the pandemic has been exceptional, they have adapted new ways of working, overcome numerous hurdles, provided exceptional support to service-users, continued to ensure the National Outcomes and Standards are met and that risks are managed in accordance with assessment and priority. The Management Team too have ensured staff have been supported to work at home, that essential equipment was provided, PPE was readily available and that emotional and moral support was available at all times.

In addition, the lockdown measures in place have resulted in a number of key processes with both SPS and The Parole Board for Scotland moving online. The resultant savings in staff time, particularly in terms of Throughcare, has been positive for staff and they have commented on the benefits to be gained by continuing in this method where appropriate.

Moving forward out of lockdown will not be without its difficulties but staff and managers are keen to return to the office environment to again experience that camaraderie that comes from being part of a team, the support that comes from colleagues and again reconnect as a group of friends and acquaintances who, without knowing it, rely heavily upon each other for professional support and emotional well-being.



6.2. Service Delivery in a new context

Experience during the period of the pandemic, adapting to remote working, changes to how to deliver unpaid work and the various groupwork activities, the introduction of new technologies, ever-shifting developments in Social Work practice, etc., has set a scene for Justice Social Work and presented an opening into the future. A future that may have been many years away but by virtue of the circumstances of the pandemic has presented itself in the present. Mass home working, multi-agency meetings over MS Teams, remote Team meetings and supervision, working with service-users over WhatsApp, the list goes on.

In addition, the now established practitioner led groups and service-user participation groups, along with detailed service-user feedback will inform and develop more responsive services. As practice evolves across statutory and third sector partners, a shared learning and development of community-based practice involving those partner agencies can promote greater understanding of the role of Justice Social Work not just within the wider justice context, but within the wider community context locally and nationally. Developing ways of 'joining up' with colleagues in other services to ensure that service-users receive that holistic, whole systems approach to care, risk management and rehabilitation.

An example of these developments in providing a more responsive, needs led service is the current pilot in the Glenrothes area where areas of support are identified at report writing stage and individuals receive intensive, short-term one-to-one support which provides encouragement and assistance for individuals to gain access to specialist services. This allows for swift, focussed intervention with the aim of meeting welfare needs, reducing re-offending, reducing potential harm to victims and, where applicable, allow for offence-focused work to commence more promptly.

Dealing with cause and effect, root and branch, presenting and underlying issues is the way forward to ensure engagement, confidence and success. The Service has recognised this but not simply in a way that impacts upon those under our supervision, but also with staff. Bottom-up management, building upon the experiences of those having direct contact with service-users whose knowledge and hands-on involvement is used to shape policy, practice and performance and whose value to the Service is recognised and ability to contribute to service development is encouraged.

In addition to the staffing context, many new challenges are likely to be encountered through numerous proposals for changes in technology. These are wide and varied but include complete replacement of the Social Work database, fundamental change to file storage and retention, the introduction of Oracle for all Management, Finance and Staffing oversight. All these require investment in planning, training and implementation. Further changes in computerised systems, telecommunications and hardware presents the Service with ongoing challenges in keeping staff up-to-date, aware, prepared and able to feel confident in their ability to continue to deliver the day-to-day job in the face of ever changing and developing programmes and systems.

Delivering services to the expected standards in the face of these challenges, and those being presented by an inevitable backlog of cases at Court will not be easy and may require further investment from central Government to alleviate the pressures brought to bear, this too presents problems as Local Authorities across Scotland, and beyond, will be required to actively compete for scarce resources.

This is not a negative outlook but a realistic one, the challenges are real not hypothetical, the context is new and in that regard holds a number of unknowns. Can we deliver, of course we can. But that doesn't mean it will be easy and at times very challenging, however we are a good team, we work together and together we will continue to deliver the best service we can whatever hurdles or barriers we need to overcome.

6.3. Maintaining a flexible approach to change

As a profession, social work is known as an agent of change. When faced with the most recent crisis brought about by the global pandemic the values of social work as a profession were brought sharply into focus. Very quickly, the Service adapted to the changes and considered new methods of working, considering what could be done rather than focussing on barriers to change. Undoubtedly the changes brought about by the challenges of the global pandemic will need reviewed and refined as time passes but many of the changes brought about by necessity have kick started a process which is unlikely to be reversed.

The pandemic became a great leveller with a change of focus towards welfare needs and well-being. Power imbalances associated with the supervision of statutory Orders became less noticeable when workers were checking in with service-users by telephone or video call. Attention was paid to reviewing the effectiveness of contact when it was being conducted remotely. A Service decision was taken that staff and service-users needed to be involved in this to inform the development of this Service that was more responsive to need. The development of the Practice and Road to Recovery Groups, along with the Service User participation group has led to a shared feeling of contribution to the development of the Service going forward. It is intended that these groups will continue to become embedded but the challenge as time passes will be to hold on to that 'we are all in this together' feeling.

The staff group have needed to adapt to remote working and the Service has had to consider how to deliver unpaid work and groupwork whilst still keeping staff and service-users safe. The pace of change has been remarkable and the resilience of staff to adapt to these changes whilst still delivering a high standard of service is to be commended.

Wholesale changes in the recording and storage of client information; moving from paper based to electronic client records stored within Sharepoint, continues apace and will be supplemented by the introduction of the SWIFT replacement system in the next year. Again, it is to staff's credit that they have adapted to these changes whilst working from home, isolated from colleagues and business support as they tried to learn and implement new working practices.

The pandemic required a crisis-based approach from all services and local responses to need were facilitated by local multi-disciplinary teams including all key services and replicated in each local committee area. Whilst no longer crisis orientated, it has been recognised that these local groups offer an opportunity to develop place-based practices across each area that can be responsive to local need and develop services accordingly. Our Service will continue to be represented at these groups and increase the understanding of the role of criminal justice social work within the wider justice context.

It is recognised that over the next year the focus will shift towards recovery and reopening of services. This will be very much guided by both Government advice and local public health considerations to ensure on-going safe practices for staff and service users. Undoubtedly, there will continue to be restrictions on staff returning to the large corporate offices as social distancing will remain in place. This will restrict numbers working within buildings at any given time. It is therefore likely that the Service will need to implement a flexible approach to working practices involving staff continuing to work from home for a proportion of the working week. A risk-based approach will be implemented to consider service-user contact with priority being given to re-establishing office based, face to face contact with those deemed at highest risk of harm to themselves or others or subject to a programme requirement to address domestic abuse or sexual offending. Work on reducing the significant backlog of unpaid work hours will also commence with consideration being given to the use of, rehabilitation related 'other activities' and work based personal placements within partner agencies in addition to the regular work squads.

The Recovery response to the pandemic represents an opportunity to build upon the changes implemented over the past year and to hold on to the development of links with partner agencies. There will be more challenges to come as the reality of the true costs of the pandemic in both a monetary and psychological sense begins to emerge over the next year. However, the lessons of the past year will stand our Service in good stead. We have an infrastructure from which to continue to develop a responsive, needs based service which supports resilience and strength across our workforce and service-users.

7. Examples of Innovative Practice

Justice Social Work is an area of social work practice which can be overlooked or misunderstood. Whilst Unpaid Work is tangible and most often used as an example of the implementation of Court Orders, there are many other aspects of work undertaken within the Service. We are fortunate to have a dedicated, dynamic, forward thinking workforce who are encouraged to contribute to service delivery in innovative ways. Staff are enabled to do so through a variety of practitioner led groups relating to practice, performance and planning. This in itself sets out the innovative practice of bottom-up management and practice development which has, within its first year, provided extremely positive outcomes across the Service, examples of this are:

- ❖ Improved Supervision Documentation
- ❖ Updated Exit Process
- ❖ Service-User Participation Group
- ❖ Inclusive Serious Incident Review Process
- ❖ Enhanced Bail Supervision Scheme
- ❖ Suicide Prevention Pack

In addition to the above the addendum on pages 20-22 has a cross-section of examples of innovative practice from within the Service, illustrations of good practice with service-users and further examples of service and practice developments which provide a context to how we can engage service-users to address issues that may in some way contribute to their offending behaviour.

8. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Fife Council's Justice Social Work Service has identified the key strategic priorities for the year 2021/22. These are set within the context of the ever changing and developing landscape caused by the global pandemic and will be subject to ongoing review. However, it is likely these will remain our key priorities for the full period and possibly beyond. These identified key priorities are not an exhaustive list of the Service priorities but highlight the key drivers which will underpin the plans for change, openness and positive scrutiny. These are:

8.1. Investment in staff

Investment in staff is the most important part of this entire strategy but does not solely relate to an increase in resources or staffing budgets. It means building a competent, well-trained staff group who are confident, feel valued, empowered and are provided with the tools and the opportunities to influence policy, practice and performance.

The Service has already committed to this by ensuring that Team Managers receive appropriately targeted training in staff and budget management along with a professional level of input on the importance of effective professional supervision for all our staff. This process will continue throughout the duration of the plan to ensure consistency across the Service as well as ongoing support for the management Team.

The Service started to explore the benefits of having front line staff more actively involved in process, policy, practice and performance development. This initially focused on areas such as customer engagement and effective supervision, and soon resulted in a number of improvements across the Service. This then led to the more formal development of a number of staff led groups which are designed to empower and grant ownership to staff across all levels. These groups are

- ❖ Practice & Performance Group
- ❖ Road to Recovery Group
- ❖ Senior Practitioners' Group
- ❖ Unpaid Work Focus Group

These groups are intended not only to produce positive results but to actively encourage staff to participate in influencing the future direction of the Service and establishing a culture of 'bottom up' policy direction. Building the confidence of staff to enable this form of management and co-operative leadership will remain the Service's top priority. Having this embedded within our Service will lead to a confident, engaged, motivated and participative workforce, which will result in staff sharing aspirations and positively impact upon the Service's plans and aspirations going forward.

8.2. Training & Development

Individual and organisational learning and development is a critical component in creating positive cultures, developing knowledge and skills and ultimately improving the service we offer to individuals. The Justice Service in Fife continue to strive for excellence through their commitment to learning and development. The Service is well supported in this area, internally through HR Workforce Development and Strategy, and externally, through Community Justice Scotland and other partners such as Health Promotion. Despite the pandemic in 2020-21, delivery on key training priorities through digital platforms has placed the Service in a very strong position as we move into the 2021-22 training plan which has been created in consultation with managers, stakeholders and external agencies.

BASW views training as a way to enable justice workers to acquire new knowledge and skills as well as maintain and improve their standards across all areas of their practice by ensuring learning and development is rooted in evidence, excellent practice, our code of ethics and commitment to promoting social justice. Additionally, it increases morale, reduces turnover and enables career progression.

In Fife we have always had a service committed to the above and this continues into 2021-22 where our Training Plan has provided opportunities for personal development, access to qualifications as well as local and national training. In relation to some of our core business, and in meeting our statutory obligations, our training needs will continue to be met through ongoing collaboration with Community Justice Scotland. Other priority areas will be supported though our internal colleagues in Workforce Development. Amongst others, key priorities for 2021-22 include:

- Transforming Psychological Trauma Training at levels 1,2 and 3 (in line the National Trauma Training Framework).
- Suicide Prevention.
- Working with Individuals with no Recourse to Public Funds.
- Drug and Alcohol training programme tailored to the needs of individual teams.
- Loss and Bereavement in a Criminal Justice and COVID-19 context.



8.3. Service-User Participation

One of a number of positives from the coronavirus pandemic over the past year or so has been the improvement in relationships between staff and service-users. This was particularly evident during the initial period of lockdown in March 2020 when little was known of the coronavirus and there was a general state of fear and alarm across the country. A large proportion of service-users relied heavily on their respective workers for access to food, medicine, advice and essential human contact. The restrictions in place at that time meant that the previous conventional methods of contact had to be changed and changed quickly. A number of different approaches were tried but the 'walk and talk', less formal approach was very much embraced by staff and service-users alike. This, in addition to the removal of the more formal physical structures and symbols of authority, led to a more relationship-based interaction between professionals and service-users.

To evidence this more robustly a service-user questionnaire was commissioned through the practitioner led Practice Group which elicited a large, positive and very informative response. From this, it was evident that service users valued the service response to the pandemic, as well as being asked to contribute their thoughts via the questionnaire. It was clear they were keen for their voices to be heard, and as a Service, it was important we listened to their collective voices to shape and influence practice going forward.

As a consequence, a Service-User Participation Group (SUPG) was formed and met for the first time in January 2021. To date these meetings have taken place remotely via MS Teams and have proved very successful with the facilitators remaining focussed upon ensuring the participants lead on the direction of travel. The group will continue to meet four-weekly and have already identified a number of early priorities focussing upon the initial periods of intervention, supervision and unpaid work. The group will attempt to ensure there is sufficient representation from across Fife, across the different services and across the demographic divergences the Service experiences.

8.4. Changing attitudes towards offending behaviour.

This priority covers a vast area and does not solely link to those who offend or with whom we work, although these do remain an instrumental focus for the Service. Attitudes to offending vary widely across society as does the level of insight into the Criminal Justice System itself. It is incumbent upon those who work within that system to address and dispel any misconceptions held by the public, and within that our Service can play a pivotal role in providing information and education to key groups in the communities at a local level and through targeting schools and educational establishments.

The Service has taken advantage of the opportunities presented through social media, in particular our Twitter page [@fcjusticesw](https://twitter.com/fcjusticesw), to spread the word on what work we do, why we do it and how it helps. This has already proved a highly effective strategy with a focus on continuing communication between partners, the wider group of stakeholders and communities. Improved communication which will continue to stimulate dialogue, enhance knowledge and further develop confidence in justice systems for the public and for key stakeholders.

We have now provided numerous schools in the area and throughout central Scotland with on-line seminars on work within the Justice system, where we fit into the wider processes and what benefits can be gleaned for service-users and the wider society at large by ensuring the work undertaken on Community Payback Orders is both challenging and meaningful. It is the Service's intention to continue to engage pro-actively with schools and further education establishments as we progress, but to also expand beyond the classroom boundaries to more public facing meetings. There are also processes in place to ensure reports are presented to Local Area Committees across Fife which will provide elected members with information relating to their respective areas, and how Justice Social Work is responding.

In addition to the above, we will continue to provide statistical detail, including crime and sentencing data, but it is important to contextualise this with real life examples of work, outcomes and the success of the input from the Service. It should be noted however, not every case is successful and there is no magic wand to prevent offending, but changing, or aiming to change, the public perceptions as to the individual and societal influences behind those actions, along with the efforts being made to tackle these should start to have a positive impact on changing attitudes to offending behaviour.

8.5. Promote Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as; *'not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the mental stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.'*

This definition may well be aspirational but at its lowest level underpins the edict that we should all feel valued and be seen as valuable. This at times may seem a very distant possibility for those going through the significant trauma of the Justice system with lengthy delays to its many processes, the stigma associated with many convictions, the personal impact offending may have upon families and within the wider community context.



As more is being understood of the impact of early childhood trauma on those within the Justice system, and the impact of the pandemic, it is clear that this will be a key area to be addressed in the coming months and years. The impact of trauma can lead to many emotional and behavioural issues, and whilst challenging, by working collaboratively with relevant partners and agencies it is likely that we can begin to address this. An example of this is the on-going partnership with NHS Fife to locate an Assistant Psychologist and Mental Health Nurse within the Women's Justice Teams. This has proved to be very successful and it is hoped that an evaluation will open the door to similar services in the future.

Within the context of mental health and well-being it is our responsibility to ensure the ongoing mental welfare of our staff. The experience of working through the coronavirus pandemic has provided a first-hand opportunity of learning what works best in terms of staff support at difficult times. We consulted staff to gain an understanding of their experiences during this time and can use this rich source of information to better inform Service priorities for staff support in the months to come.

Fife Council have recently introduced a number of positive initiatives to assist with staff mental wellbeing including training for managers to recognise and address any such issues. There can be little by way of argument that good mental health at work supported by an informed and understanding management group can reduce absence, increase productivity and provide for a happier more content workplace.

As a Service our priority will be to ensure we work in a trauma informed manner with staff and service-users and offer appropriate training and support and advice given their particular circumstances. It shall also be the Service's priority to ensure that staff and service-users feel valued, respected and offered support when required to ensure their continued mental health and well-being.

8.6. Increase focus on the use of alternatives to Custody

In line with Scottish Government policy, Fife Justice Social Work Services are committed to reducing the levels of custody and use of remand within the Justice system. Ensuring that there are sufficient, varied, reliable and credible alternatives available to the Courts provides an ongoing challenge but also provides the Service with the opportunity to trial potentially effective methods of intervention. Figures for 2019/20 show that around 15% of cases that were referred to Justice Social Work resulted in a custodial sentence, which means that close to 85% were dealt with by way of some type of community sentence. Whilst it is worth acknowledging that not all these will be subject to supervision, a significant proportion are. In the same year 2019/20, Fife Justice Social Work had 1141 new Community Payback Orders to supervise. In order to maintain or increase this level of community-based supervision the Service will require to continue to produce reliable and credible options, but also ensure that the Courts remain confident in the Service's ability to supervise these Orders robustly and in accordance with National Outcomes and Standards.

In addition to those tried and tested programmes relating to standard levels of supervision, the Service offers specific programmes of work for women within the Justice system, those convicted of sexual offences including Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF:MC), perpetrators of domestic abuse, including the Caledonian Programme, a Road Traffic Group, SMART Recovery and TURN a small project for men in the West-Fife area that will hopefully roll-out across Fife this year and beyond. New programmes are considered regularly by way of research, national modelling and internal planning.

Those noted above focus upon services available to individuals sentenced following an outcome at Court. We are also looking to ensure we have a range of services available to offer Court for those for whom remand in custody is being considered but bail is available.

Our new Enhanced Bail Supervision initiative will clearly differ from the current Bail Supervision process in that all individuals appearing at Court from custody will be offered the opportunity to have a bail supervision assessment. All bail supervision reports will be made available to the Procurators Fiscal, Solicitors and Sheriffs on the day of the Court appearance. Through engagement with the intensive nature of a Bail Supervision Order individuals will benefit by having their needs addressed, and it is hoped this will lead to a significant reduction in re-offending, risk of harm and the use of custody. Longer term, we are hopeful of seeing a reduction in the need for high tariff Orders if individuals comply with the bail process as the need for more intensive intervention, if found guilty, is reduced through this early intervention. The Service will also look to build on the use of Structured Deferred Sentences as a credible alternative for the Court where appropriate - these are imposed after an individual appears at Court, and where their offences are of a lower level, and it is evident the individual could benefit from a short period of support and intervention.

These initiatives and the available alternatives to custody do provide the Courts with options where risks can be mitigated against. These alternatives to a custodial sentence are available, are credible and are robustly managed.



9. Conclusion

The preceding detail outlines what the Service has identified as its key priorities over the coming year. Notwithstanding the uncertainty surrounding the ongoing pandemic and the pace of recovery the six identified areas will form the foundation of how we move forward over the forthcoming year. The empowerment of staff to participate, drive and take ownership of their Service will be supported by a detailed training plan and the continuation of well-established practitioner led focus groups. Service-users will also be encouraged to participate in, and influence, practice through their own participation group which will retain the priority of ensuring their ideas are taken seriously and taken forward.

Changing attitudes towards offending and focussing on alternatives to custody will ensure that the wider justice system and the integral partnerships work together to make positive use of the available resources to provide robust and credible programmes that ultimately help to reduce offending and make communities safer.

Promoting positive mental health and well-being is more relevant now than perhaps at any time in the recent past. The pandemic has had global impact and has had negative connotations for many thousands of families, including those here in Fife. This not only includes those we work with, but those whom find themselves victims of crime. The numerous lockdowns and associated isolation, the inability to see close family and friends, to socialise, and to live normally has had a severe impact on people, including staff, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure we promote positive mental health and support emotional wellbeing as we move out of this very difficult period. The acknowledgement of these issues is only the start.

The plan has also highlighted the key challenges ahead, the unknown route or routes to recovery and all the attendant difficulties, known and unknown. The new ways of working across Fife, including fast-paced technological change, will be testing. Despite the pandemic, nothing has halted the tide of change, it may have been slowed somewhat but the pace will quicken again as we emerge from lockdown. This too will require the Service to be flexible to what's coming, to ensure we continue to meet needs, to provide services, to continue to help the vulnerable in whatever capacity and to ensure our staff remain fit and able to continue to deliver vital help, support and care to those who need it most.

These are the key priorities and challenges we've identified at this point in time, they may change, there may be more, and they may be different. The Service is committed to tackle these individually and, where necessary, collectively with our partners. We have an experienced management group to lead us and an outstanding staff group who will continue to deliver regardless of whatever challenge presents itself, just as they have done over the past twelve months. As Service Manager for Justice Social Work in Fife I can confidently guarantee that.

ADDENDUM

Examples of Good Practice:

SMART Recovery Groups:

These sessions run across the Service on a weekly basis for around an hour at a time and are facilitated by Social Work Assistants. This is a valuable, low-cost, harm reduction intervention for service-users, and an appropriate service response given Scotland's drug deaths are rising at present. Due to the chaotic nature of these groups' attendance can fluctuate, but it can range from 2 to 8 attendees per session. As a response to the pandemic, over the last 12 months, these face to face sessions have taken place virtually, with service users accessing support via MS Teams.

Swifter Domestic Abuse Disclosure Process:

Previously the decisions to make domestic abuse disclosures via the Power to Tell scheme were taking up to 6 weeks as the agreement to disclose had to be made at a decision-making forum involving Police Scotland, Social Work, Fife Women's Aid and Housing. It was identified that this timescale was potentially placing individuals and their children at risk of harm, despite most referrals being clear cut i.e. the perpetrator does have convictions for violence, domestic abuse etc. It was agreed that instead of delaying disclosure for up to 6 weeks an Electronic Decision-Making Forum (EDMF) would be set up involving each service that is represented at Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) meetings.

Each key agency would receive email referrals from Police Scotland as and when they were received. The email from Police Scotland would highlight the reason for the disclosure, along with the proposed wording to the victim. Each service would then respond with information they held on any of the cases, as well as their approval, or disapproval, for disclosure. A unanimous decision must be reached prior to Police Scotland undertaking the disclosure. It has been noted that this process has accelerated the disclosure of risk via domestic offending to individuals, thereby reducing the risk of harm to potential victims and their dependents.

Welfare Pilot:

In a new initiative in Glenrothes all individuals attending for a Justice Social Work report are being offered a welfare assessment should they wish it. The assessment identifies areas of support required including accommodation, physical and emotional health, addictions, and finances. If areas of support are identified, and the individual consents, they receive intensive, short-term one-to-one support which provides encouragement and assistance to gain access to specialist services. This allows for swift, focussed intervention with the aim of addressing their welfare needs, reducing re-offending, reducing potential harm to victims and, where applicable, allow for offence-focused work to commence more promptly should the individual be made subject to the conditions of a Community Payback Order.

Suicide/Self-Harm Prevention Arrangement

Following several suicides within Fife, a response plan which aimed to deliver a service to individuals who may present in crisis was developed. It was identified that practitioners were often not always confident when working with individuals who were experiencing self-harm and suicidal ideation. In conjunction with other agencies the Service developed a work pack to help support practitioners to become more confident and competent when dealing with people experiencing such matters.

In partnership with Fife Samaritans a proactive out of hours contact service was established. It was acknowledged that individuals were reluctant, for several reasons, to call services when having thoughts of suicide, including anxiety, embarrassment and feeling ashamed. Samaritans Fife Partnership were approached by Fife Justice Social Work to forge a partnership agreement to enable Fife Justice Social Work to make a direct referral for individuals who are deemed vulnerable and at risk of suicide.

Breakfast Club

This resource was run, pre-pandemic, every Thursday morning in Dunfermline, and was used as a stand-alone intervention or as a first step before being referred on to the TURN Men's Group. It provides a less structured, social experience where men can try out domestic and cooking skills, including preparation and tidy up afterwards. Speakers from partner agencies have been used and some guided discussion each week to help socially isolated men, who often have severe anxiety or other mental health issues, to practice interaction in a safe environment. Participants have reported an increase in confidence, a sense of inclusion and the importance of being made to feel welcome and accepted by others in the group. Unfortunately, these groups were suspended as a result of the pandemic, however there are plans in place to reinstate these meetings once assessed safe to do so.

TURN Men's Group

This project has been developed within the Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath Area teams since January 2019. It provides male service-users an innovative way to address their identified needs linked to their circumstances and factors which relate to their offending behaviour. Unlike other groupwork programmes offered within Justice Social Work Services this project does not focus on offending behaviour and it is not a requirement of their Order. Rather, men are encouraged to consider their strengths and the positive contributions they can make within their local community. Facilitators work in a creative, supportive manner to address the key aims of the project; to promote good physical health and mental well-being, increase self-confidence and encourage teamwork. The modular approach allows men to explore different themes with clearly defined aims for each module. The sessions have been 'virtual' since the onset of the pandemic, but participants have valued the efforts made to maintain contact via weekly online sessions, so that virtual groups can be formed with the benefits of social group interaction. As we look towards a welcomed return to face to face groups, service-users are already discussing the next project which involves the regeneration of a piece of wasteland in Dunfermline town centre and transforming this into a mindful space for the wider community to enjoy.

Dad's Group

This six-week programme was a new programme developed in partnership with an Early Year's Officer from the Beanstalk Family Nurture Centre in Dunfermline. It aims to provide fathers with improved confidence, knowledge and skills in their role as a parent. It was evaluated at the end of the pilot programme with a view to developing it to be run again and potentially rolled out to other teams across the service. The pandemic has meant a pause to this work, but it is anticipated that a further programme will be set up to run later in the year

Responding to the Needs of Drug Users:

Since the closure of the Drug Court in Fife and the return to Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTO), positive elements of work that had been developed have been retained in practice, these include the provision of auricular acupuncture SMART group meetings, close links with Addiction Services, Reiki and most recently via one member of staff's personal interest in the introduction of Kinetic Shift.

Additionally, since 2018 the team has obtained access to residential rehabilitation at the Turnaround facility in Paisley. A very successful outcome of this intervention was a service-user who had moved to long term rehabilitation in Glasgow with Phoenix Futures and has not come to the attention of police since discharge from the facility.

Measuring success in the case of a long-term habitual drug misuser is relative, many of the individuals have entrenched behaviours that have impacted on both them and their families for many years. Misuse of substances can often occur as a result of the individual's own traumatic experiences which they struggle to process or understand. Drug misuse is a means of temporarily escaping these traumas and the underlying factors require to be addressed before meaningful change can occur and be maintained.

Service-User Participation Group

The Service-User Participation Group (SUPG) involves a maximum of eight service-users who meet on a four-weekly basis to discuss topics relating to Fife Justice Services. From the initial sessions, service-users offered honest feedback about services provided currently and how these could be enhanced in the future. One of the issues highlighted unanimously by the group was the confusion and anxiety around Court appearances and subsequent expectations of the Sheriff and Justice Social Work. SUPG members identified the requirement for a leaflet/pamphlet to provide information in straightforward language, avoiding jargon and acronyms, alongside visual portrayals of the Justice System to aid their understanding. This project is now progressing, and service-users are excited to be executive authors and designers of those leaflets which will be distributed to all users of Justice Services in the future. Alongside specific projects, the SUPG will be involved in providing feedback and perspectives on different areas within the Service e.g. internal review format. There are also plans to launch a dedicated SUPG mailbox which will provide service-users the opportunity to submit areas for discussion and feedback will be provided by the SUPG participants to the wider service via communication in the proposed service-user newsletter.