



Fife Justice Social Work Service

TURN Men's Group

Annual Report



2021 – 2022



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BACKGROUND

Within Fife Justice Social Work Service, it was acknowledged that there was a lack of services available for our service users and the many barriers they face accessing opportunities due to their convictions. TURN men's group was developed to help address inequalities which are often present for our service user group. The group outcomes include measurable improvements in the following areas: mental health and wellbeing, confidence and increasing self-esteem, integration and connection with local communities, development of social skills, progression of educational skills, all increasing the opportunity to transition into volunteering within the wider community. During the initial stages of development, fundamental aspects of the group were influenced by a group of service users who were interested in becoming involved in the project. Several focus groups were co-ordinated to gather the views of service users and what they believed would meet their needs and improve their life chances. Further to these initial discussions, the focus groups were also used to develop the name of the group and the logo, which were co-designed by the service users involved who felt a name such as TURN was representative of the changes they wanted to make in their lives. These focus groups transitioned into the core membership of TURN men's group ensuring that the service users had a sense of ownership and that their contributions were valued. At that time, this appeared to be an approach that had not been adopted by any other local authority. Together with service users, the structure of the group was agreed with weekly sessions taking place as part of a wider modular programme. This group launched in the Dunfermline area and service users resident in the West of Fife area could be referred by their supervising officer.

In response to the global pandemic and national lockdowns, TURN men's group was suspended from March 2020 until October 2020. Within a short timescale, in response to the acute needs of service users, the group transitioned initially to 1:1 telephone sessions, eventually developing into group virtual sessions via Microsoft TEAMS. To ensure consistency and that the aims of TURN men's group continued to be met during the pandemic, an activity booklet was developed to accompany sessions.

From June 2021, the group were permitted to revert to a physical group with a primary focus on supporting local communities following a significantly challenging period through the midst of the pandemic. The group's successful re-launch was recognised at a national level when it won a COSLA Excellence Award 2022 under the category, *'Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health'*.

RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

The beginning of the global pandemic in March 2020 seen Fife Justice Social Work Service adapt their delivery methods and practice significantly as a result of government restrictions prohibiting face-to-face contact. In line with restrictions, TURN men's group was suspended indefinitely until such a time that restrictions allowed group to recommence. Concerned by the significant impact this would have on our service users, TURN men's group adapted its practices to ensure that service users continued to receive intensive support through what was a significantly challenging period.

From April 2020, TURN men's group introduced 1-2-1 telephone sessions for an hour per week with each TURN group member. To accompany these sessions and to continue the learning they would have received via TURN, the co-ordinators developed activity work packs which were provided to everyone involved. The activity booklets focused on a range of topics and utilised resources from Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Government's Clear Your Head Campaign and NHS Inform. As time progressed, the sessions were then delivered via Microsoft Teams in group format, except for service users who did not have access to the internet, who continued to receive telephone calls. The basis of these sessions involved mental health check-ins and provided a safe environment for service users to share peer support and for staff to monitor and signpost accordingly. Whilst group was operating virtually, this gave TURN men's group the opportunity to increase capacity and support additional service users. Primarily these sessions provided crucial support and advice, but additionally they offered routine and structure for the service users whilst enabling them to continue developing their skills. The activity booklets were greatly received by service users and later adapted to be offered to all service users who had an Unpaid Work requirement. Given the significant backlog of unpaid work hours due to the Pandemic, this offered individuals the opportunity to utilise their other activity hours.

From March 2020 to April 2021, TURN men's group recorded:

- **27 service users supported**
- **198 telephone support sessions delivered on a 1:1 basis**
- **48 group video sessions**

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“My favourite thing about TURN was feeling proud to be a part of something and I didn't feel isolated anymore, especially during the pandemic. It was so good to have people listen to me”

POST-PANDEMIC: OUTDOOR PROJECTS

As restrictions eased, TURN men's group transitioned back to physical groups from June 2021, however indoor contact continued to be restricted therefore the group were only permitted to meet outdoors. As well as continuing to focus on the positive outcomes for service users, TURN assisted in supporting the wider community by completing the following projects.

Piggies Lane, Leys Park, Dunfermline

The group were tasked with transforming a derelict piece of land which had been raised at an area meeting by a local Councillor. To undertake this project, TURN men's group collaborated with Dunfermline Community Payback Team. TURN men's group were responsible for sourcing materials whilst the Community Payback Team completed the landscaping of the area, as well as building 6 large planters. The estimated project cost was in excess of £2,500 therefore TURN men's group was responsible for applying for funding through Fife Council's Local Community Planning Fund, as well as requesting donations from various organisations. The service users were involved in every step of the process, from sourcing materials to attending writing sessions to complete the donation letters. The group decided on the creation of a 'Wellbeing Garden' as it was recognised the wider impact the pandemic had on the local community and at a time when indoor contact continued to be prohibited, they wanted to offer residents a peaceful place to meet and connect with their friends and family. The garden was officially opened on the 15th of September 2021, with an opening ceremony attracting representatives from across the council, as well as the local community, Councillors, partner organisations and local media.



Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum

Following a meeting at the Dunfermline Greenspace Forum, TURN men's group were contacted and asked to transform the entrance of Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum. Using materials already sourced for the Piggies Lane Project, we collaborated with Dunfermline Community Payback team who made 5 large planters. To pay for materials, we applied for and were granted funding from the Carnegie Trust who were highly supportive of this project. TURN group members were able to learn new skills whilst it also provided wellbeing benefits supporting their mental health taking part in activities outdoors. Additionally, the project was seen as a visual improvement to a key entrance point to the Heritage Quarter of Dunfermline. A board member from Carnegie Trust commented *"The Trustees were pleased to support the TURN project to help the individuals involved reconnect with their local community and gain new skills. The new planters will provide a welcome and vibrant sight for visitors and locals to enjoy."*



"The whole experience of working together and creating something from scratch has been a joy and a learning experience and meeting up with the group every week is a lifesaver for those of us that can be quite isolated."



CREATIVE MODULE

From October 2021 to December 2022, a drama lecturer from Fife College facilitated sessions with TURN men's group to encourage group members to promote their creative skills with the aim of creating a short, scripted video to be shared throughout the service and beyond. The service users were asked to decide on a topic for their video project and decided on the idea of "what advice would I give to myself as a teenager". The group took part in various brain-storming sessions, before moving on to creating story boards to decide on the content and order of their video. The video itself took 6 weeks to develop and 2 weeks to film. The video derived from lived experiences of the service users as they each recorded individual testimonials as they reflected on the negative choices they made throughout their life and how those impacted upon their current circumstances. Throughout discussions, the group decided that they wanted to highlight the importance of 'choosing the right path' in life and summarised this through the name they gave to their video project which was "Turning Point".

The group proposed that the finished video be shared within educational settings as a form of early intervention. The video has since been shared on our Justice Service Twitter page and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from fellow Local Authorities, Community Justice Scotland, The Scottish Association of Social Work amongst others. It has also been shared with several high schools across Fife as well as social work students, providing crucial learning in the innovative practice Fife Justice Social Work Service promotes.

The aims:

- Develop team working skills
- Encourage reflection and goal setting
- Step out-with their comfort zone
- Develop language and communication skills
- Build confidence
- Develop creativity



"Making this video was life-changing. I've never felt comfortable to tell my story as I was scared of what people would say. But to think that I could change just 1 person's life or help them makes me proud to keep pushing and make myself a better person."



ADDITIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

TURN men's group has continued to offer various areas of learning promoting further development of skills, alongside the modules covered above.

Overdose & Naloxone Training

This was a session delivered by 'We Are With You', Fife which provided crucial training for group members whilst providing them the opportunity to ask questions and take receipt of naloxone kits. Despite not all of our service users suffering from drug or alcohol addiction, many of them have a close family member or friend who does.

Cooking Skills

Cooking course which was delivered over a 6 week period. This offered the group the opportunity to develop their cooking skills as well as focusing on nutrition, meal planning and cooking on a budget. Given the increased foodbank requests it was crucial for the group to look at ways in which they can make their food last longer whilst also reducing waste.

Outdoor Team Building Activities

The group travelled to Lochore Meadow's, Outdoor Education Centre where they kayaked across to the Island and took part in various team building activities such as 'The floor is lava' and 'how to get an item from A to B'. The group had to work as a team to overcome the challenges, promoting their communication skills and building their confidence. One group member commented at the end of the session that it was *"the best day I've had in years"*.

Physical Health and Fitness

It is recognised that many of the service users attending TURN do not have the access to the resources to enable them to attend fitness classes or their local gym. As NHS states, regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact upon mental health issues such as depression, as well as decreasing the risk of major illnesses. These sessions were facilitated at a local martial arts gym, FuDog.



COSLA EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022

The COSLA Excellence Awards are the annual celebration of Scottish Local Government success which recognises areas of best practice and innovative service delivery over five categories. Under the category *'Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health'* TURN men's group submitted a nomination. We believed our innovative practice throughout the pandemic and beyond, accompanied by our service user's contribution to group made us worthy of submission. The first stage of the process involved submitting our nomination to the Council's Executive Team who would then select nominations for submission to COSLA. We were delighted to be selected to represent Fife by the Council's Executive Team and grateful for the opportunity to share the success of our group. Following this, we were then contacted by COSLA who advised we had been shortlisted for the award, with the next stage of the process involving delivering a presentation to the Adjudication Panel followed by questions.



COSLA received over 170 applications, and on Thursday 24 February 2022, TURN men's group were announced **winners** of the *'Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health'* category. This is an outstanding achievement not only for TURN men's group, but as a representative of Justice Social Work and Fife Council as the only nomination to be shortlisted.

Most importantly, the success of winning this award has highlighted to the service users that their commitment to group and efforts have been recognised at a national level. We plan to celebrate this achievement with past and present service users of TURN men's group on the 8th June 2022 to acknowledge their achievements by presenting them with a certificate, and an opportunity for us to capture some photographs of them with the award.



EXPANSION OF SERVICES TO LEVENMOUTH

Given the success and impact TURN men's group has made in the West Fife area, plans are now underway to establish a group in the Levenmouth area. This will increase service user's access to TURN men's group, but additionally it will foster new connections and networking opportunities with local organisations in the Levenmouth area.

- **Focus group of 4 service users established in February 2022.**
- **8 weeks of discussions identifying support service users required, skills they would like to learn or develop and services they faced barriers in accessing.**
- **Suitable location and meeting point for group identified in April 2022 at Sailors Rest, Leven.**
- **April to May 2022: Meetings held with Levenmouth Police, Active Fife Coordinators, Community Trade Hub, BRAG enterprises, Food Resilience Team, Silverburn Park and Local Community Planning Team.**

Throughout this process it became evident that there was a lack of facilities that would be suitable for our group. Therefore, following a meeting with Community Trade Hub it became clear that the services they provide could facilitate all the learning criteria we planned to achieve and the objectives of our group. We are currently in communication with Community Trade Hub (CTH) and proposing a potential partnership for a pilot project of 12 months, whereby CTH would facilitate weekly sessions for 4 hours, exposing service users to new experiences and skills which are crucially linked to employability. TURN facilitators would continue to screen referrals made by colleagues within the Service, ensuring that the service users accessing this support will be motivated and understanding of the commitment they are making to the project. TURN facilitators will attend each session to provide additional oversight and support, ensuring that all risk assessments are carried out, protecting the group, staff and others who may be accessing the service. To achieve this, a joint funding bid has been made to the Local Area Committee and we await the outcome.

1. COOKING SKILLS

- SVQ level 4 Cooking Skills qualification (7 weeks) - *Rachel to email Karen to order assessment packs
- Baking, Fakeaways, Foodbank recipes*
- Meal Planning & Budgeting*
- Nutrition (1 week)

2. CREATIVITY

- Making/Producing video project (5 weeks)
- Arts & Crafts [make your own photo frame] (1 week)
- Upcycling [The Shed, Methil] (2 weeks)

3. PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Football fitness (6 weeks)
- Hill walking/coastal path (2 weeks)

Gym pass

4. EMPLOYABILITY

- 7 habits course (6 weeks)
- Workshops: CV writing, interview skills, job applications & disclosure information & advice (1 week)
- Money and Budgeting (1 week)

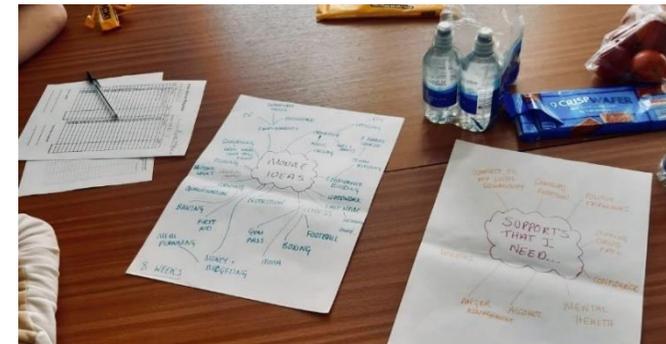
5. GARDENING

- Volunteering [Community Garden] / Local Project (8 weeks)

Grow your own fruit & veg

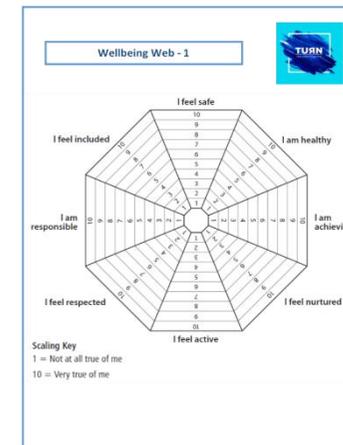
6. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- First aid course (2 weeks)
- Team building & confidence building exercises [outdoors] (2 weeks)
- Community Trade Hub (overview of different skills [4?]) (4 weeks)



POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

Case studies have been detailed below which share the positive outcomes of service users who have been part of TURN men's group. Information has been taken from the service user's evaluation feedback form which all are required to complete when they successfully end their involvement with group. Secondly, information has been taken from the wellbeing web which is based on the SHANNARI wellbeing principles. The 8 wellbeing principles are *safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included*. We present these principles to each service user prior to them commencing group in the form of a wellbeing web (*they are required to circle the number that represents how they feel using the scaling key of 1= not at all true of me to 10 = very true of me*). They complete this again at the end of their involvement with TURN. Following on from individuals leaving group, they are offered a 3-month, 6-month and 12-month check in call where a TURN co-ordinator will assess how the individual is progressing and identify if any support or intervention is required.



- **DL:** Completed TURN and was supported by staff to secure a volunteering opportunity at Salvation Army charity shop. Additionally, he joined a local mental health community gardening group in a bid to stay connected to his community. 3-month & 6-month check-in call identified he continued to volunteer and reported no further offending.

“TURN has given me the confidence to achieve everything I wanted to.”

PRINICIPLE	1 ST WELLBEING WEB (BEGINNING)	2 nd WELLBEING WEB (END)
SAFE	1	9
HEALTHY	4	8
ACHIEVING	3	8
NURTURED	4	7
ACTIVE	5	8
RESPECTED	2	9
RESPONSIBLE	3	8
INCLUDED	2	9

- **CF:** Joined TURN men’s group as he felt socially isolated and lacked confidence because of his severe anxiety. His goal was to be ready for employment and be able to work within a team. Completed his time with TURN as he secured employment, following support from TURN co-ordinators & referral onto an employment agency. 3-month & 6-month check-in call identified he continues to be in employment, has made new positive connections and reported no further offending.

“I always felt included, I enjoyed all the modules, learning new things and keeping myself busy”

PRINICIPLE	1 ST WELLBEING WEB (BEGINNING)	2 nd WELLBEING WEB (END)
SAFE	2	9
HEALTHY	3	8
ACHIEVING	1	10
NURTURED	6	8
ACTIVE	6	8
RESPECTED	4	9
RESPONSIBLE	6	9
INCLUDED	2	8

- **PR:** After battling depression for several years, PR was extremely hesitant about joining TURN. Once he joined, the difference in his confidence and mood was noticeable within a few short weeks. He completed his time with TURN as he secured employment and to continue supporting his mental health, he became a regular attendee of Andy’s Mans Club. 3-month and 6-month check-in call identified he continues to be in employment which has encouraged him to complete further qualifications, he has reported no further offending.

“Fantastic staff, great activities. It helps people get involved and come out of their shells. TURN has been great, I think it’s really good, I would encourage other people to get involved”

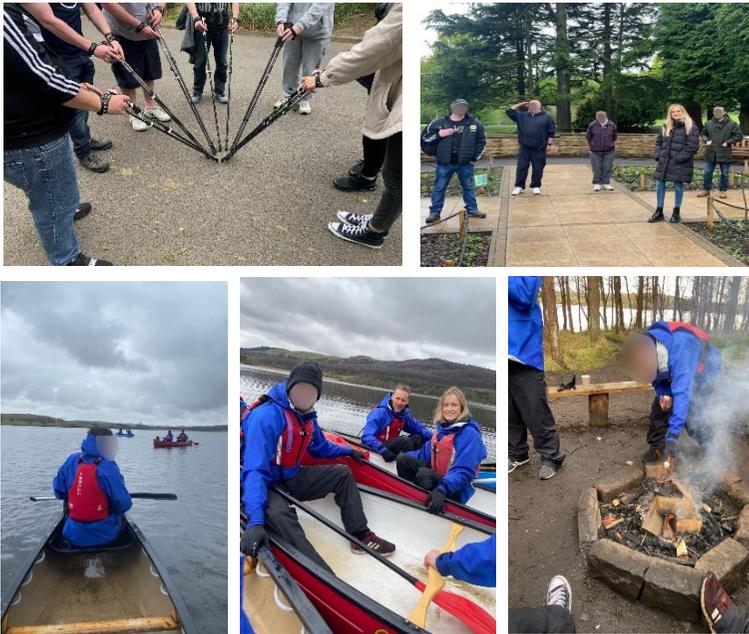
PRINICIPLE	1 ST WELLBEING WEB (BEGINNING)	2 nd WELLBEING WEB (END)
SAFE	5	10
HEALTHY	6	8
ACHIEVING	6	10
NURTURED	4	10
ACTIVE	5	10
RESPECTED	6	10
RESPONSIBLE	6	10
INCLUDED	6	10

NEXT STEPS

Despite the great success of TURN men's group over the past 12 months, there is still work to be done to ensure that service users involved with Fife Justice Social Work Service can access the resources and opportunities that TURN provides. The expansion into Levenmouth is already underway with positive progress made as a potential partnership with Community Trade Hub continues to develop. Once TURN men's group becomes established within Levenmouth, it is hoped the group can be launched in other areas.

TURN's success relies upon the commitment of service users and the practitioners working within Fife Justice Social Work Service who promote the group and share our success stories. Additionally, it is crucial that TURN co-ordinators continue to make positive connections within local communities through communications and shared initiatives with partner agencies.

TURN has and will continue to strive to ***make a difference*** to the service users we support.



“TURN provided for me a pathway back from a very dark place. The acceptance, support and comradeship was what I needed to make me feel human again. With the help of the group and particularly the group facilitators I was able to feel included, motivated and able to tackle new experiences with some confidence. I cannot thank TURN enough for the improvement in my mental and physical health and besides it was fun, thanks!”