



# Community Planning Aberdeen

## Improvement Charter

### Improvement Project Title:

**A Presumption For Diversion From Prosecution**

### Executive Sponsor (Chair of Outcome Improvement Group):

**Angela Scott, Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council**

### Project Lead:

**Claire Duncan, Lead Social Work Officer, AHSCP**

### Aim statement (What are we trying to accomplish? Over what time? Numerical target for improvement?)

**Increase the number of individuals aged 16 – 25 appropriately diverted from court by 10% by end March 2019**

### Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan:

**Primary Driver: We will effectively manage and support people involved in the adult Criminal Justice System in the community to reduce the likelihood of their reoffending and improve outcomes for these individuals, their families and communities.**

Secondary Driver	Improvement measures and aims	Baseline	17/18	20/21	20/26
Clear identified pathways and information flows are put in place to divert people from prosecution, reducing the likelihood of their reoffending and enabling them to improve their life chances <i>[National Outcome: Improved Collaborative Working]</i>	Increase in number/% of people who were appropriately diverted from Court (recognising that this will depend on factors including numbers reported by police, crimes alleged against individuals, etc)	63 (aged 16-17) 14 (aged 18-25) 33 (aged 26+) 2015-16	+1%	+2%	+5%

### Business case (Benefit to clients/ stakeholders/ residents:? Are costs reduced now or in the future by addressing this issue?)

#### Benefits to Individuals, their families, victims and communities:

- The less contact an individual has with the justice system, the less likely they are to have further involvement in offending.
- Positive diversion addresses the causal factors for offending, and not the simply the offence. This minimises the likelihood of reoffending and creates opportunities.
- Focussing on individuals aged between 16 and 25 years provides early and effective intervention that is desistance focused, and addresses trends in crime perpetrated within this age group, where the causal factors for those would benefit from the type of support offered as part of diversion from prosecution.
- The project provides a focus to assess effectiveness of interventions and increase access for those who can benefit from such approaches.
- Increasing the use of diversion means individuals do not receive a conviction which remains on their permanent record, allowing them to move on from the offence.
- The stigma of a criminal conviction impacts on families as well as individuals. Diversion from prosecution reduces the stigma and improves the life chances of

children within a community.

- These harmed by crime and offending can have increased involvement in a justice process as part of restorative justice approaches applied within the project. This retains sense of power and control in decision making.
- Communities benefit from individuals reducing their involvement in offending from an early stage through diversion opportunities, and investing more positively in economic growth and citizenship.

**Benefits to stakeholders:**

- Diversion from prosecution reduces unnecessary court time for public services which can then be used more effectively and focus on more serious and complex cases.
- Addressing offences at an early stage addresses the causes for offending at an early stage. This reduces the likelihood of further offending and time spent in both custody and on community sentences.
- The presumption against short-term sentences means more individuals with complex needs will require supported as part of community based sentences. Diversion provides a way of allowing CJSW to provide an enhanced service to these individuals, by addressing other, lower level offending at its earliest opportunity.

**Impact to cost and resources:**

While impact to cost and resources will be experienced during the short, medium and long term, improving the provision of diversion from prosecution towards sustainable outcomes for those involved is a longer-term, preventative aim. Monitoring balancing measures will allow for resources to be realigned where possible and cost savings to be monitored as a result. The benefit here will be a process which can be measured and the implementation of client feedback into the process to allow more evidence-based improvement.

**Measures: (How will we know if a change is an improvement?)**

**Staff within relevant organisations divert individuals from Prosecution.**

- Increase in understanding diversion from prosecution within local police and COPFS (requires baseline measurement to establish whether improvement achieved).
- Increase in individuals receiving training input within local police and COPFS.
- Increase in cases from local Police to COPFS which recommend diversion from prosecution (within Standard Police Report).
- Increase in cases put forward for diversion from prosecution from COPFS to CJSW.

**Clear processes for Diversion from Prosecution are in place**

- Increase in number of service users satisfied with the diversion process.
- Increase in partner satisfaction regarding clarity of processes

**Appropriate and effective Diversion options are available to meet need**

- Increase in number of records completed on data sharing spreadsheet (as a % of actual referrals?)
- Increase in number of times data sharing spreadsheet is reviewed by partners to inform planning?
- Increase in number of agreed care plans
- Individuals improvement against identified need/s (recorded on Outcomes Measurement Tool)
- Increase in self-reported improvement in sustainable outcomes
- Increase in numbers of 'successful completion' reports
- Individuals diverted to the Employment Project have improved outcomes/successfully complete Diversion

- *Measure re diversion to social media/communication act sexting offences - tbc*

#### **Change ideas (What can we do that will result in improvement?)**

- Map of data sharing processes
- Single point of contact in Police Scotland Aberdeen Division
- Single point of contact in CJSW, Aberdeen City
- Training/Awareness-raising input on diversion from prosecution for local police officers and COPFS.
- Information Sharing Protocol
- Data recording mechanism by CJSW in Aberdeen City
- Individualised care plans
- Person-centred outcome measure
- Exit questionnaire for clients
- Regular comparison of crime/offending data against recorded 'needs' of individuals diverted
- Process to ensure sustainability and quality of diversion interventions
- Diversion to Employability Project
- *Diversion relating to social media/communication act/sexting offences – tbc*

#### **Potential Barriers and Considerations:**

- Changes to crime trends and reporting
- Data and information sharing arrangements
- National and local practice – ensuring consistent approach
- Risk of Up-Tariffing (ie diverting individuals when support could be provided elsewhere)
- Increased pressure on resources due to potential increase in numbers being diverted
- Victim perceptions of Diversion as 'soft justice'

#### **Project Team:**

Claire Duncan, Lead Social Work Officer, AHSCP – Project Lead  
 Gemma Fraser, Improvement Lead, Community Justice Scotland  
 Emma Heffernan, Research Officer, CJS  
 Lesley Simpson, Criminal Justice Social Work Service Manager, Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership  
 Alan Townsend, Procurator Fiscal, Aberdeen City (COPFS)  
 Lorna Murray, Pre-Disposal Team Lead, Criminal Justice Social Work  
 Alison Stewart, Victim Support Scotland  
 Clare Hyslop/Nicola Williams, Barnardo's  
 Elaine Logue, Police Scotland  
 Gail Walker, YJMU Police Scotland  
 Andrea McGill, Children's Services  
 Zoe Galloway, Sacro  
 Ross Gibson, Policy Officer, Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice  
 Val Vertigans, Community Justice Officer  
 Individual/s with lived experience – tbc