



## Community Justice Update – Aberdeen

Please find below some updates relating to Community Justice issues, both local and national. If you have any Community Justice ‘news’, issues, or practice you would like to share, or comments/queries about any of the below, please don’t hesitate to contact Val Vertigans, Community Justice Officer.

Email: [vavertigans@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:vavertigans@aberdeencity.gov.uk) or Tel: 07342 060939

For past minutes of the Community Justice Group, and other information about Community Justice, follow the link to the [Community Justice page](#) on the Community Planning Aberdeen website.

### 1. Aberdeen Community Justice Group

At the meeting of the CJ Group on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 members of the Community Justice Group received the final report about the ‘Rapid Rehousing’ improvement project, which had an aim to “increase by 5% the number of prisoners owed a statutory homelessness duty that are suitably rehoused (whether in private sector or social rented sector accommodation) within six weeks of release, by May 2018”. A number of ideas had been tested as part of the project, including: the assigning of a Case Officer to actively work cases, coordinating services and where possible, aligning housing support provision; and showing prisoners details and pictures of a property in advance, as well as the offer of same-day viewings and sign up on the day of release. In addition, prison Throughcare Support Workers supported prisoners involved in the project.

In total, four individuals were ‘rapidly rehoused’ by the end of May 2018, and six by the end of June 2018 (the project was extended to include presentations from prison received in May 2018).

One prisoner who has been ‘rapidly rehoused’ said: *“Getting this opportunity has been brilliant. I have settled into a community and it has aided with my addiction issues. I’m not around other users and can stay in my flat when I want time to myself. I feel I have something worth working towards and it is mine. I appreciate all the support I have been given and it is a great service and opportunity for prisoners being released. My self-esteem and confidence has grown and I’m going to be attending further education at college. My general well-being is so much improved. I continue to engage with my through care officers and I am happy.”*

Prior to upscaling the project, it was agreed that further testing would be done, including in relation to the involvement of other landlords, eg RSLs, and that the progress of those who had been ‘rapidly rehoused’ would be tracked for a period of time to further inform the project.

The second half of the October meeting comprised a workshop at which members discussed possible ‘Community Justice’ priorities for inclusion in the current ‘refresh’ of the CPA Local Outcomes Improvement Plan – on which, more to follow next time.

For more information about the Community Justice Group, or the wider Community Justice agenda in Aberdeen, please contact the author (details above) or follow the above link to the minutes of meetings of the Group.



## 2. Keeping it Together – Support for Families

The Community Justice Group’s ‘Support for Families’ project team held a launch of the ‘Keeping it Together’ project on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December at Aberdeen Sheriff Court. The aim of the project is to try to engage with families at an earlier stage of the justice system, with a broader offer of support from Families Outside, the Action for Children-run Family Centre & Help Hub at HMP Grampian, and Alcohol & Drugs Action in Aberdeen.

The aim of Thursday’s event was to raise awareness of the initiative among those working in the court environment, and it was attended by a wide range of professionals including Scottish Court and Tribunals Service staff, solicitors, Criminal Justice Social Workers, a Sheriff, representatives from NHS Grampian and Skills Development Scotland, Victim Support Scotland and other third sector organisations.

Are you a family member, loved one or friend affected by any of these.....



.....support is here

**Keeping it together with...**

0800 254 0088 support@familiesoutside.org.uk www.familiesoutside.org.uk

01779 485840 HMPGrampian@actionforchildren.org.uk

01224 594 700 helpline@alcoholanddrugsactions.org.uk www.alcoholanddrugsactions.org.uk



The highlight of the launch event was the showing of a new film (the first of its kind in Scotland) about the experience of visiting someone in prison, which has been developed by the project. The film will play a key role in increasing understanding and awareness of prison visiting, not only for visitors but also

for prisoners and professionals. The film can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMg0e8uftvHTcRBUSVocqfg>

The project has engaged with family members along the way to inform the approach – hearing from them that they would like information and support at an earlier stage and would also like to receive information in the form of leaflets or videos.

For further information about the project, please contact:

**0800 254 0088**  
support@familiesoutside.org.uk  
www.familiesoutside.org.uk

**01779 485840**  
HMPGrampian@actionforchildren.org.uk

**01224 594 700**  
helpline@alcoholanddrugsactions.org.uk  
www.alcoholanddrugsaction.org.uk



### 3. Unpaid Work in Action



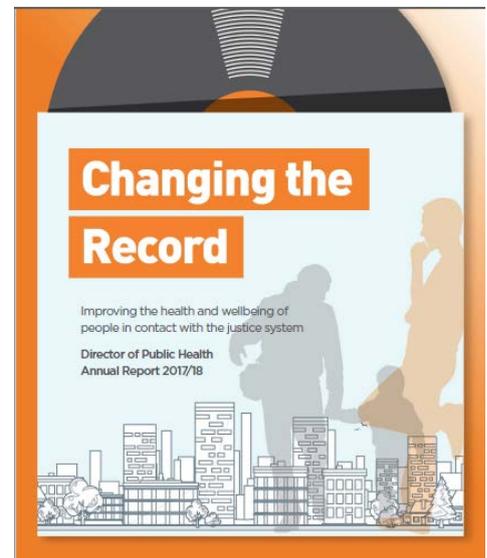
The Criminal Justice Social Work Service Unpaid Work Team have been busy making a range of Christmas craft items at the workshop at Willowdale. These are being sold at the stall set up in the courtyard at the Health Village on Frederick Street – the seasonal theme aims to brighten up the outside areas for users of the Health Village. To date in the region of over £300 has been raised for charity in only a few months. This is one of the areas that provide a good opportunity for individuals on a Community Payback Order Unpaid Work Requirement to pay back to those in need within the community, while at the same time learning new skills that may help them with their own wellbeing or into future employment.



### 4. Director of Public Health Annual Report

The Director of Public Health for NHS Grampian has recently published the Annual Report for 2017-18. The 'Changing the Record' Report has its focus on 'Improving the Health and Wellbeing of people in contact with the Justice System'.

The Director of Public Health introduces the Report by saying that *"The primary purpose of this report is to raise awareness about the needs and inequalities which exist. Improving wellbeing, reducing inequalities and meeting the health and social care needs of people in contact with the criminal justice system require coordinated local action and I hope that this report can act as a starting point for building the shared understanding and consensus that facilitate joint action."*



Click on the 'Changing the Record' image above to access the full Report. In addition, a short animation has been developed by NHS Grampian to accompany the Report. This can be found on the NHS Grampian Hi-Net Home Page at: <https://www.hi-netgrampian.org/>



## 5. Input at Grampian, Highland and Islands Sheriffdom Conference

Representatives from HMP Grampian and Aberdeen City Council Housing Support Service recently delivered a presentation to the Grampian, Highland and Islands Sheriffs' Conference, in Banchory, which was attended by around 25 Sheriffs. The aim of the presentation was to give a better understanding to Sheriffs about the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners when released from HMP Grampian and HMP Inverness.

Information about opportunities for prisoners in terms of Health services, including Substance Misuse and Mental Health, Employment and Education, was conveyed, to show the work that takes place to support clients to prepare for liberation. The presentation highlighted the excellent partnership working between internal and external partners especially through the regular prison 'Case Management Board' meetings, when both admissions and liberations are discussed by partner agencies.

Those presenting then provided information about the role of the SPS Throughcare Support Officers, including the provision of pre and post liberation support, with the emphasis on liberation day support. Issues around supporting individuals to attend appointments were covered, as were the numerous barriers for community reintegration, including finances, Mental Health support, isolation etc.

The final part of the session was presented by a representative from Aberdeen City Council Housing Support Service who gave an update regarding the significant improvements which have taken place in terms of allocation of accommodation to prisoners on their day of liberation. The work of ACC staff within the prison was also highlighted, and attendees were updated about the 'Rapid Rehousing' project.

Feedback from Sheriffs was that it was exactly what they had hoped for and they all learned a great deal about the support which is offered to offenders both in custody and in preparation for and after release into the community.

The food bank operated by CFINE will be open through the festive period to provide support to individuals and families in Aberdeen. Run from 2 Poynerook Road, the service is also appealing for donations to bolster stock levels for the weeks ahead. Opening hours: 24 December, 10am-4pm; 27 December, 10am-3pm; 28 December, 10am-3pm; 31 December, 10am-3pm; 3 January, 10am-3pm; 4 January, 10am-3pm

**ADA FESTIVE OPENING TIMES** 

Monday 24th & Monday 31st Dec - we close at 5pm.

Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, 2nd Jan  
All services closed.

Thursday 27th – Normal Service Opening, No Exchange Street Clinic or Torry & Seaton Outreach  
Thursday 3rd Jan – Normal Service Opening, Except Torry & Seaton

On all other days, including weekends, our normal services will be in operation.

With all our very best wishes

Helpline - 01224 594700  
Scottish Registered Charity SC013582  
[www.alcoholanddrugsaction.org.uk](http://www.alcoholanddrugsaction.org.uk)

December 2018

