



March 2019

## **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.

This will be the final edition of this update in its current format. In the interests of increasing efficiency, sharing resources, reducing duplication and spreading the word to a wider audience, we are planning to test the merging of the Community Justice Bulletin with the regular update on Equalities issues – Watch This Space!

### **1. Aberdeen Community Justice Group**

The meeting of the CJ Group on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 was hosted by SFRS colleagues at the Community Fire Station on Anderson Drive. Prior to the meeting, members had the opportunity to take part in a tour of the Station, and gained a fascinating insight from trainee fire-fighters on duty at the time.

The main focus of the Group in recent months has been the refresh of the ‘community justice’ priorities in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). The revised LOIP can be found on the [Community Planning Aberdeen](#) website. It includes three new Stretch Outcomes which relate specifically to Community Justice. These are aimed at preventing offending/reoffending and the harm caused through the use of appropriate and effective interventions.

Stretch Outcome 8	25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026
Stretch Outcome 9	25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction each year by 2026
Stretch Outcome 10	2% fewer people reconvicted within one year of receiving a community or custodial sentence by 2026

The specific improvement projects which are to be taken forward over the next few years can be found against the Stretch Outcomes in the LOIP. Members of the CJ Group will be leading on taking these projects forwards.



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## 2. Putting Communities at the centre of Community Justice

A number of community representatives from across the City, as well as representatives from partner organisations, attended a short event in the Reception area of Marischal College after work on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019. This was hosted by the CJ Group which seeks to raise awareness about and increase the involvement of community members in Community Justice. Cllr Jenny Laing, Chair of Community Planning Aberdeen (CPA), welcomed everyone and introduced the event, highlighting that although sentences served in the community have been shown to be more effective than sentences served in prison, data collected nationally has shown that nearly two thirds of the public don't know what 'community justice' is.



The audience was given an overview of the national 'Second Chancers' campaign, which aims to raise awareness of what community justice is and build confidence in it as an effective sentencing option that reduces offending, reduces the number of victims and improves lives. The campaign includes an audio exhibition which was displayed during the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019 across two venues in

Aberdeen; the Reception areas at Marischal College and the Health Village on Frederick Street.

The exhibition included stories of people who have made mistakes, perhaps once, perhaps twice or more, but have grabbed a second chance and made positive changes to themselves and their community. If you didn't manage to catch the exhibition, the 'stories' can be viewed on-line at <https://secondchancers.tv/>

Jonathan Aitken-Smith, Chair of the Civic Forum and member of the CPA Community Engagement Group, then went on to launch a short new questionnaire aimed at finding out from community members in Aberdeen what they would like to know more about in relation to Community Justice, and how they would prefer to receive information and give their views. The aim is to provide people with the information needed to actively participate in Community Justice. The results of the survey will be used to design the next steps in engaging with communities. Follow the link to access the [Citizens Space survey on-line](#).



*At the Health Village the Second Chancers exhibition was shown alongside the Community Payback Team's permanent table displaying items made by clients in their workshop.*



### 3. National Updates

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A **national Community Justice Strategic Partnership Group** has been created, comprising senior representation from all statutory Community Justice partners. Representation from Third Sector, Social Work Scotland and CJ Coordinators is to be invited to join this group.

Scottish Prison Service are starting to **share information about people going into and coming out of prison** with local Housing and Social Work leads via an information sharing agreement. Five local authorities have signed up to this so far, and an Information Sharing Protocol for Aberdeen is being pursued, in order to enable this.

The **Health and Justice Collaboration Improvement Board** draws together senior leaders from Health, Justice and Local Government. Its purpose is to lead the creation of a much more integrated service response to people's needs in key areas where Health and Justice services intersect. The Board has initiated a number of workstreams:

- health & social care in prisons;
- quality of clinical IT systems in prisons;
- use of tele-health in prisons;
- principles have been developed in relation to responding to individuals 'in distress';
- work is to be done around information sharing, to map out where information exchanges take place in the Justice System, where they are problematic, etc. One of the aims of this is to highlight the positives of effective information sharing, and demonstrate how not sharing information in some situations could be harming people.

Follow the [link](#) to find out more about this Board.



Community Justice Scotland have been compiling their first Annual Report on outcomes activity across Scotland – follow the [link](#) for more information. An action plan is being developed from the recommendations contained in the Report.

On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019, CJS held a Smart Justice Festival at the Drill Hall in Leith, Edinburgh. Attendees could visit a range of talks and workshops, including:

- Dr Dance (Peter Lovett) – a Dance Psychologist who led a participative workshop around the benefits of dance for promoting inclusion and stimulating thinking/innovation;
- Robert Nilsson – who spoke about the Youth Crisis Centre within the HelsinkiMissio (in Finland) which supports inclusion and provides a range of family support initiatives, a youth crisis point providing preventative advocacy with young people, and intergenerational activities including Albert's Living Room which provides a meeting space for people of any age at risk of loneliness;
- Dr Kitty Stewart - Associate Professor in Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and Associate Director of the LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, who gave an overview of evidence linking poverty and poorer outcomes.



## 4. Relationships Matter

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By nature, we are social creatures and it makes sense that relationships are central to our health and happiness. When our relationships become difficult the effects can impact on all aspects of our lives including our self-esteem, our ability to make good life choices, and our mental & physical wellbeing. Close relationships with a partner, family and friends provides love, meaning, support and increases our feeling of self-worth, giving us the confidence to do well.

Taking action to strengthen our relationships and build connections can be hard work. There may be tears. Almost without exception people who seek support say they are glad they did. Some may make huge changes in their lives. For others a small change is hugely significant. Counselling creates a safe environment in which you can explore the issues you are facing individually or as a couple. It can give a clearer understanding of how those issues impact upon you and ways to manage them.



Established in 1965, The Spark has been supporting individuals, couples and families with challenging relationship for over 50 years. The Spark's services include:-

**The Relationship Helpline** – Immediate and free access to a listening support service for individuals. The service is available by telephone **free** (0808 802 2088) or via webchat [www.thespark.org.uk/webchat](http://www.thespark.org.uk/webchat) Tues – Thurs 11am – 2pm

**Relationship Counselling** – Services are available face to face, by telephone and online by calling our national appointments team **free** on 0808 802 0050.

**Children & Young People** - Early intervention services to enable young people aged 10 – 25 years to develop essential relationship skills. [www.thespark.org.uk/children-young-people/](http://www.thespark.org.uk/children-young-people/)

**Professionals** – Programmes include Relationship First Aid, Scottish Mental Health First Aid, Diploma in Relationship Counselling, COSCA Counselling Skills, Emotionally Focussed Therapy, Team Dynamics, Helpline Training and many more [www.thespark.org.uk/professionals/](http://www.thespark.org.uk/professionals/)

## 5. Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

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The [Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#), which criminalises psychological domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour, came into effect today (1<sup>st</sup> April 2019). An awareness campaign to increase the public's understanding of the wide-ranging nature of domestic abuse and to encourage victims of abuse to seek help has also been launched. The Act includes a statutory sentencing aggravation to reflect the harm that can be caused to children growing up in an environment where domestic abuse takes place, and includes further measures to protect victims.