



Annual Report  
2020 - 2021

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## Highland Community Justice Partnership Annual Report, April 2020 - March 2021

The Highland Community Justice Partnership consists of members of the following -  
The Highland Council (1 Elected Member);  
Local Authority (Criminal Justice Social Work and Housing); Police Scotland; Scottish Prisons Service; Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service; Scottish Courts & Tribunals Service; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; NHS Highland; Skills Development Scotland; Victim Support Scotland; DWP; SCRA; HADP; Third Sector Interface and representatives from the wider third sector—currently held by Independent Representation.



The role of the Partnership is simply - to work better together in partnership to help prevent offending and reduce reoffending.

The Partnership which is currently Chaired by Independent Chair Ross MacKillop meet quarterly and is a Sub-Group of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The group reports to the Community Planning Partnership Coordinators Group for Highland and ultimately the Community Planning Partnership.

The post for the Community Justice Partnership Manager for Highland is hosted by Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI). This is unique, being the only such post in Scotland which is hosted within the Third Sector. HTSI is well placed in this regard, due to a strong history of partnership working throughout Highland and its dedication to tackling inequalities within communities.

Within the reporting year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the work of the Community Justice Partnership and whilst there are still some real challenges to face, there have also been some great achievements during this time.

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### Independent Chair

The CJP appointed Ross MacKillop as their Independent Chair early in 2021. Ross took over when Niall MacLennan from SFRS stood down at the end of March. Ross retired from the police earlier in the year and has a lot of knowledge and experience to offer the partnership.

Our thanks to Niall for his commitment and dedication to the partnership over his previous tenure as Chair.

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## Achievement Report

The Partnership has produced an Achievement Report which outlines the successes over the period of the recent CJ Plan 2018-21. You can view it here -

[https://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/uploads/9/5/2/0/95206114/achievement\\_report\\_-\\_community\\_justice\\_partnership\\_plan\\_2018-21\\_website.pdf](https://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/uploads/9/5/2/0/95206114/achievement_report_-_community_justice_partnership_plan_2018-21_website.pdf)

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## Addendum to CJ Plan 2018-21

As the Community Justice Plan 2018-21 expired in March 2021, the partnership compiled an Addendum to the Plan which will now run until 2022.

The Community Justice Plan Addendum can be viewed here -

[https://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/uploads/9/5/2/0/95206114/updated\\_2021-22\\_plan.pdf](https://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/uploads/9/5/2/0/95206114/updated_2021-22_plan.pdf)

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## Development Circles

The Community Justice Partnership have undertaken a series of Development Circles to look at areas of work to progress in relation to the new plan from 2022 onwards. Various partners have attended the virtual sessions with some valuable inputs and good suggestions around areas for future development.



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## Strengths & Needs Assessment for Community Justice

In the last year work has continued to progress the Strengths and Needs Assessment for community justice in Highland.

The Partnership approved a written report outlining several areas where their focus should be. In addition to this, the Partnership commissioned Azets to prepare an analysis of data around community justice which would assist in identifying areas which the Partnership may find useful to focus on.

The report focusses on a trend analysis over a 10-year period and an 'Index Score' which will assist in understanding how Highland performs against the average. The report has identified mental health, reconviction rates and female offending as potential areas of interest. Azets have also provided a toolkit which the Partnership can use in relation to Key Performance Indicators which should make it easier to measure any progress around specific areas of work.

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## Custody Link Worker

The Custody Link Worker Project started in January 2020 with the appointment of 2 Link Workers and a Coordinator. This is a 3-year project which is jointly funded by the Big Lottery, The Robertson Trust, Police Scotland and the Community Justice Partnership. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic referrals didn't properly start until July 2020.



The Link Workers should be based in the custody centre at Burnett Road Police Station in Inverness but have been working remotely due to circumstances.

They will engage with people coming into custody from the following criteria:

- All women over the age of 18
- All 18–26-year olds
- Anyone over the age of 18 with two instances of custody within the last 6 months
- Anyone over the age of 18 where this is their first instance of custody

However, for safety reasons there are a few caveats around the criteria above.

They work with individuals on a one-to-one basis to help them identify their individual issues which increase their risk of offending behaviour and work with them to identify their aspirations for change. The team also work closely with community-based resources, to which people are signposted, this supports the development of those services, and can identify where there may be gaps in provision.

At its core is the identification of and support to access resources within the community which can increase their personal resilience and wellbeing.

The project is already starting to highlight areas of commonality and areas of need.

There has been a higher uptake on the number of referrals than originally first thought and there are plans to recruit another link worker into the team.

Stirling University are supporting the project with an academic evaluation.



## Cafe 1668

HTSI, as part of the merger with In This Together assumed responsibility for the Café at 86 Church St, Inverness, IV1 1EP, formerly known as Our Place in November 2020.

The vision for the Café moving forward is that of a safe place for those who are vulnerable. During the festive period in December 2020 the café provided over 200 meals free of charge to those who were in need. It also acted as a community food table to those in need of food items.

The Café will provide a hot meal and/or drink to those in need, it will also be somewhere that they can get advice. A Link Worker has been employed to assist in signposting to other services and offer practical help, such as access to a telephone/laptop in order that people can access services.

The Café is open 9 - 5 Monday to Friday and everyone is welcome. [Cafe 1668 | Facebook](#)

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## Case Study

### Background

Client has a history of post-natal depression and previous mental health breakdown and was using alcohol to cope.

### Link Worker Involvement

On first contact client was extremely upset. She explained that there had been an incident involving alcohol use whilst in charge of children and this led her ex-partner to take on temporary care of the children.

During this incident her ex-partner threatened the client that he was going to a solicitor to gain full custody of the children, the client became distraught and threatened to self-harm, the ex-partner called the police, and the client was detained for her own safety.

The client recognised she needed help and the main concern was losing custody of their children, the client had agreed to ex-partner having temporary custody until she had worked on the issues.

Throughout conversations it became clear that the client was being threatened and intimidated by her ex-partner who appeared to be very controlling and had made false allegations about the client to social work. The client felt that when dealing with social work her voice was not heard. The client was in unsecure accommodation and made redundant during our period of engagement.

She identified main Barriers to regaining custody of children as:

- Poor mental health
- Alcohol use
- Unstable Housing

### Suggested Actions

The client contacted her GP and started medication to help with mental health and abstaining from alcohol. She was referred to Addictions Counselling Inverness and Advocacy Highland to help with dealing with social work. She was also signposted to Inverness Women's Aid and Shelter for advice on housing options. The majority of service provided for this client was emotional support coming up to court dates and supporting the client to remain motivated and hopeful whilst navigating social work and other services.

### Outcome

Within 6 months the client secured permanent housing, has gained employment, and has had full custody granted to herself by the court. She reports that her mental health has improved, and she has abstained from alcohol use since being in custody. She has strengthened support networks available to the family and has become much healthier overall.



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## Community Integration Plan

The Emergency Early Release of some prisoners in 2020 afforded an opportunity for partners to work together to ensure services were in place to assist those being released. In Highland this worked very well and reinvigorated the work around the Community Integration Plan which SPS, HMP Inverness are now piloting. Agencies such as Scottish Prisons Service, Criminal Justice Social Work, NHS Highland, Housing and the Third Sector are now working together to pilot a process and pathway for some of those leaving prison and settling back into their communities.

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### Case Study Background

Mr A has had long standing issues with alcohol addiction which has led to offending behaviours such as serious assault and domestic violence. This has meant that Mr A has had several periods in custody over the years and has found it difficult to break the cycle.



Mr A was liberated on Christmas Eve 2020 and was reunited with family and remained abstinent, throughout the festive period. Since, Mr A has had several lapses and relapses and has continued to be supported by the CIP team. Mr A has benefitted from a two-week Detoxification programme in New Craig's Hospital, organised by Social Work and an addictions Psychiatrist.

Mr A has also been admitted to Beechwood house for a fortnight's rehabilitation programme and is on the waiting list for their fourteen-week programme. Unfortunately, Mr A's brother passed away whilst A was in Beechwood; they continued to support him, and Mr A stayed for an extra week to try to come to terms with the loss. Mr A was initially allocated a temporary furnished accommodation, but the property was unsuitable, due to steep stairs, very expensive heating systems and there were also issues with judgemental neighbours, who were abusing Mr A, without cause.

Housing Staff were contacted about these issues and quickly managed to get Mr A moved to a one bed ground floor flat in Invergordon and Mr A reports being much more content there. It has been a difficult time, with Mr A being released during Lockdown and boredom and frustration, plus the lack of his normal support groups has made it difficult for him to settle and remain abstinent. The high level of support through the CIP has helped Mr A to get through some very difficult times and he continues to work on his recovery. Mr A has attended at the Smart meeting local to him and maintains contact with his AA friend. Mr A intends to attend at AA meetings when they start operating again.

### Current Circumstances

There have been three reviews for Mr A and the most recent Mr A was able to attend. This was an extremely positive review and Mr A presented really well and remains motivated despite his recent loss and lapses. Mr A believes the support of the CIP has helped him pull back from his lapses quicker than he has before. The fact he has managed through this with the lack of face-face contact during a pandemic has been extremely positive.

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## **Case Study, Apex SMART Recovery: Background**

Around 2015, "it" (my addictive behaviour) got bad. I couldn't really pinpoint one thing. I fell into a depression and felt worthless. My relationship with my dad has not been good since being a young kid, due to his drinking and an abusive home life. I had found myself homeless when I was young. Between all that, and the breakdown of my personal relationship, life was hard! I started using cannabis and alcohol at first, but then cocaine came into it for a while. Later, Valium and other sedatives were addictions too. I was always open minded about drugs - I did a bit of everything if that chance was there, but alcohol and Valium in the end became my main addictions.

I knew I needed to change.

## **Apex Involvement**

I was referred to Apex in September 2020 during my 14-week Residential Project at Beechwood House, to take part in SMART recovery groups, and was allocated Carlie as my Personal Development Mentor. It wasn't easy. I sadly lost my sister suddenly during this time, and that was a massive trigger to start using again. It looked like I was going to be homeless again after leaving Beechwood. I didn't want to go to Cale House, and I spoke to Carlie about my concerns. Carlie said she thought I should consider it a safety net, because I would be tested daily to ensure I was maintaining my recovery. One thing I did know, was that I couldn't face going back into a B&B, as this was not a therapeutic environment for my recovery.

## **Outcome**

Carlie spoke to housing, and together, we came up with a plan. I was involved in a pilot project (the first person in the Highland Council region), where, if I went to Cale House and if I engaged with Apex and complied with all tasks that were given to me, that I would be housed sooner than I initially expected - we were talking months instead of years. I completed the SQA employability award - and then lockdown happened!

I have continued to attend SMART twice a week since leaving Beechwood and have explored other avenues to help with my recovery. I am glad to say I have been in recovery from addiction for over 7 months now and have just received the offer of a permanent tenancy of my own - a brand new build - somewhere to call "home". Naturally, I had an urge to celebrate - so instead, used a SMART tool and took myself for a walk - one of my new hobbies since giving up my addictive behaviours.

SMART is a great group with even greater facilitating. It is so welcoming and friendly and provides helpful tools to go over and cover. They help you in different situations that you may struggle with in recovery.

10/10 - would recommend.

## HTSI - Community Justice Excellence Award

The Community Justice Excellence Award was presented to Apex Highland during the HTSI Awards Ceremony which was held digitally in January 2021. In his nomination, James Maybee of Criminal Justice Social Work in Highland said that Apex Highland's "Can do spirit and solution focused approach is nothing short of inspirational".



Alistair McDonald pictured with the HTSI Award for Community Justice Excellence

## Small Change for Justice II

Following on from the huge success of the original Small Change for Justice event hosted by the Community Justice Partnership in 2017, this event was due to take place in March 2020 with those organisations guaranteed a place to pitch at the event having been informed. However, due to the outbreak of Covid19 the event had to be postponed. It is anticipated we will be able to host this event in early 2022.



Small Change for Justice, 2017

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## Community Justice Third Sector Forum

The Forum is organised by the Partnership Manager and meets quarterly. It is open to any third sector organisation who has an interest in community justice, whether it be working with those who have committed crimes, those who have been victims of crime or those working to help prevent crime. During the past year the meetings have been held virtually and this has enabled some people to link into the meeting where before they would have found it difficult to travel to a face-to-face meeting in Inverness. Several important links have been made through the Forum which have resulted in collaborative working.

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## Community Justice Newsletter

The Community Justice Newsletter has continued to be produced over the past year and disseminated electronically. As a partnership, we feel it has been important to keep those we work with, or those with an interest in community justice up to date with what's happening in Highland and nationally especially during these difficult times.

If you would like to receive our newsletter, please contact [cjmanager@highland.tsi.org.uk](mailto:cjmanager@highland.tsi.org.uk)

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If you would like to find out more about the Community Justice Partnership and their work, then please visit:

<https://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/community-justice-partnership.html>

or contact the Partnership Manager, Margaret McShane [cjmanager@highland.tsi.org.uk](mailto:cjmanager@highland.tsi.org.uk)

Follow us on Facebook - [Community Justice Highland](#) or Twitter - [@HighlandCJP](#)

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