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Annual Report  
2022 - 2023

## Highland Community Justice Partnership Annual Report, April 2022 - March 2023

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: Apex Highland, Families Outside and RASASH.

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

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Ross MacKillop is the Independent Chair of the Community Justice Partnership who meet quarterly, and it is a Sub-Group of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The Community Justice Partnership also provide an update on a quarterly basis to the Highland Public Protection Chief Officers Group (HPPCOG).

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 its strong history of partnership working throughout Highland and its dedication to tackling inequalities within communities.

Within the reporting year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, the Covid-19 pandemic has still continued to have an impact on the work of the Community Justice Partnership. This means there are still some challenges to face, but there have also been some great achievements during this time.

**Here are some of the highlight from the past year:**

## Position Statement in relation to the CJ Plan 2018/21

The Community Justice Plan 2018-21 and the subsequent Addendum 2021-22 expired in March 2022. The new National Strategy for Community Justice was published in June 2022. The partnership was waiting for the publication of other national documents before confirming their outline for the new Community Justice Plan for Highland. All documents have now been published, therefore, the CJ Plan for Highland is now likely to run from 2024 onwards.

The Highland Community Justice Partnership have published a Position Statement in relation to the foregoing.

[View the Plan here](#)

## Development of the CJ Plan 2023 Onwards

The Community Justice Partnership has approved the following priorities for the new Community Justice Plan for Highland:

- Diversion and Early Intervention
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Employment, Employability, and Unpaid Work
- Policy, Partnership and Engagement
- Victims
- Housing
- Bail

As a result of work in relation to the Strengths and Needs Assessment carried out, the new plan will also have a focus on:

- Women and dependents
- Poverty
- Victims

The plan will also take cognisance of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP), the new National Strategy for Community Justice and the new Community Justice Performance Framework CJPF, (formerly the OPIF).

## Community Justice Conference – Where is the Justice in Poverty

The Highland Community Justice Partnership Conference took place on Friday 17 March 2023 in the Drumossie Hotel in Inverness. The theme of the conference was how poverty can affect people making them more vulnerable to entering the justice system and how it still affects them when caught up in the system.

Speakers on the day included:

- Nicola McAlley MC
- Retired Sheriff David Mackie
- Dr Suzanne Zeedyk
- Dr Isobel Grigor, Calman Trust
- Alan Grant, HTSI, Custody Link Coordinator/Mhairi Wylie, CO, HTSI
- Dr Brieghe Nugent

The conference was very well attended, with many important messages being relayed by the speakers and which reflected well in the evaluations.

STV covered a piece in relation to the conference and the work of Apex Highland in their evening news, and MFR also highlighted the key messages around the conference.



## CPO Development Role

The partnership agreed to this role being implemented with a view to increasing third sector engagement of organisations to work with those on CPOs and Unpaid Work across the Highland area.

A Toolkit is being devised to inform those third sector organisations interested in working with those on CPOs/Unpaid Work which will provide information and guidance.

This approach could lead to a wider range of activities that those on CPOs/Unpaid Work can become involved in, assisting them in developing skills which in turn could increase their chances of a more positive destination.

This approach not only has benefits for those on such orders, but also for the organisations they will work with, and of course the wider community.

There has been some groundwork in relation to publicising the work of those carrying out CPOs on social media.

The Toolkit will be published in due course.

## Discussion on female offending

It had been identified through the work of the Community Justice Partnership that Highland seemed to have a higher rate of female offending and reconviction, per head of population than many other areas in Scotland.

Through discussion around the new CJ Plan, this was highlighted as a priority the partnership wanted to look at.

A group of people directly involved in this work were invited to look at the potential issues and discuss how this might be taken forward.

The partnership agreed to fund a separate piece of research work in relation to this to better understand the issues and needs of females who offend within the Highland area.

## Custody Link Worker Project

The Custody Link Worker Project has continued throughout the period in question staffed by 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.



Criteria for engagement:

- 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.

The team work with clients on a one-to-one basis to help them identify their individual issues which increase their risk of offending behaviour and help 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 it can also identify where there may be gaps in provision.

The project has highlighted areas of commonality and areas of need and there has been a higher uptake on the number of referrals than originally first thought.

There is a very high incidence of past trauma in clients lives and they frequently have multiple needs. Clients have responded well to the non-judgemental approach of the project and high levels of trust have been established with the link workers who often see clients who are highly motivated to effect a positive change in their lives.

The Custody Link Project had 52 active clients on 1st April 2022. Between April 2022 and March 23, a further 165 referrals were received from Police Custody and 7 clients self-re-engaged. Of these new referrals, 81 engaged with a Link Worker.

Throughout the period 40 clients reached a stage where they felt that they had established a crime free life and no longer required the support of a Link Worker.

At the end of the period there were 81 active clients.

The main topics that clients required support with are listed below:

Individual clients were advised/ supported around:	Clients
Mental Health	80
Referral and Signposting	65
Drugs and Alcohol	56
Emotional Support	56
Housing	55
Finances	53
Criminal Justice	51
Offending	45
Physical Health	43
Education, Employment and Training	33
Children	27
Safeguarding	25
Parenting	16
Risk Assessment	11
Other	9
Safety Planning	6
Family Law	5

Over the period, 198 connections between clients and support services were made which includes 35 for drug and alcohol support, 21 referrals to Foodbanks and 16 referrals for telephones/devices.

Stirling University are supporting the project with an academic evaluation which is in addition to an internal evaluation.

## Case Study

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

On first contact the client was extremely upset. She explained that there had been an incident involving alcohol use whilst in charge of children which led her ex-partner to take on temporary care of the children. During this incident, her ex-partner threatened that he was going to a solicitor to gain full custody of the children. The client became distraught and threatened to harm herself causing her ex-partner to call 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 her children. The client had agreed to her ex-partner having temporary custody until she had worked on her 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 was in unsecure accommodation and made redundant during our period of engagement.

Client identified main Barriers to regaining custody of children as:

- Poor Mental health
- Alcohol use
- Insecure Housing

The client contacted her GP and started medication to help with mental health and abstaining from alcohol.

She was referred to Addictions Counselling Inverness (ACI) for counselling on alcohol consumption, and Advocacy Highland to help with dealing with social work.

She was also sign posted to Inverness Women's Aid and Shelter for advice on housing options.

The Link Worker provided a significant amount of emotional support for this client enabling and encouraging her to remain motivated and hopeful whilst navigating social work, other services, and court appearances.

Within 6 months the client had secured permanent housing, had gained employment, and has had full custody of her children granted to herself by the court. She reports that her mental health has improved, that she has abstained from alcohol use since being in custody and has not been arrested subsequently. The client has strengthened the support networks available to the family and has become much healthier overall.

You can find out more about the [Custody Link Project here](#).



## Café 1668

The Café provides a warm and safe place for all within the city centre of Inverness at 86 Church St, Inverness, IV1 1EP, and is open for business, 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday for those who are vulnerable. Free meals are available to those in need Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 12 noon to 2pm.

A community food larder is available during opening hours, which also helps with food waste.

Profits are reinvested to support those most disadvantaged and vulnerable locally.

It is also somewhere that people can get advice as a Link Worker has been employed to assist in signposting to other services and offer practical help. There is also access to a telephone and laptop in order that people who have no digital provision can access services.

The Café is also hosting some Drop-in Sessions including Voiceability & Social Security Scotland and a Homeless Mental Health Drop-in.

During the festive period in December 2022 the Café provided a safe place for Operation Respect, a multi-agency operation which seeks to assist those who find themselves in a vulnerable situation during this time of the year.

You can find out more about [Café 1668 here](#).





## Small Change for Justice II

Following on from the huge success of the original event in 2017, the Small Change for Justice II event, which had been postponed for 2 years took place in the Drumossie Hotel on Friday 18 March 2022.

On the day, ten groups pitched their ideas for funding of a maximum of £4,000 each in relation to their work with those who have offended, those who have been affected by crime or who are involved in working to prevent offending.

The invited audience were asked to vote for the groups who in their opinion should receive the funding. The groups included:

- [Apex Highland](#)
- [Lochaber Hope](#)
- [Newstart Highland](#)
- [Care & Learning Alliance](#)
- [RASASH](#)
- [Collywobbles](#)
- [Stepnstyle](#)
- [CAB IBS](#)
- [Café 1668/Birchwood Highland](#)
- [Families Outside](#)



All ten groups were successful and received the funding they requested. The groups have been working on their projects over the past year and the reports have been gathered in. A compilation report in relation to all the projects will be published and circulated when complete.

## Community Justice Dragon's Den

In the Community Justice Dragon's Den event which took place digitally on Tuesday 22 March 2022, two organisations pitched for larger sums of funding (between £20k & £40k). The panel which had representation from the Community Justice Partnership and Criminal Justice Social Work decided that both organisations should be successful to progress their projects in relation to:

- Creating opportunities for people to undertake their Community Payback Order with an unpaid work or other activity requirement within communities and on community projects
- Working with people who have an offending history to support their recovery and reduce their risk of reoffending within rural and remote Highland

The successful groups:

- [Socially Growing](#)
- [Café 1668](#)

are funded for a year to complete their projects and will report to the Community Justice Partnership in relation to their progress.

## 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 year in question, the meetings have been a mixture of face-to-face meetings and virtual meetings. This enables more people from outlying areas of Highland to link into the Forum without the need to travel a considerable distance.

Important issues raised at the Forums are fed back to the Community Justice Partnership for their information, discussion, and consideration.

Several important links have been made through the opportunity to network at the Forum which have resulted in important collaborative working.

## Community Justice Newsletter

The Community Justice Newsletter has continued to be produced over the period 2022-23 and is 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 both in Highland and nationally.

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

## Contact Details:

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

[Community Justice Partnership Web Page](#)

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

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