

COMMUNITY JUSTICE NEWS MORAY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MORAY COMMUNITY JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP 2020-21



NOVEMBER 2021

WHO ARE WE?

The Moray Community Justice Partnership was formed in 2017. It comprises a number of national and local organisations, including Police Scotland, Moray Council, NHS Grampian, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Prison Service, Families Outside, Skills Development Scotland, TSI Moray and Victim Support

Scotland. All work together to reduce offending in Moray.

The Partnership aims to improve outcomes for victims, witnesses and the wider community as well as helping those who have committed offences as they reintegrate into the community. This newsletter provides an

overview of Community Justice activity in Moray between April 2020 and March 2021.

A more detailed report in a format determined by the national oversight body, Community Justice Scotland, can be found here: www.yourmoray.org.uk/downloads/file139177.pdf

UNPAID WORK

Many people completing Community Payback Orders are required to undertake Unpaid Work.

This can comprise anything from 20 to 200 hours of unpaid work and can take many forms including refurbishing community spaces, decorating, gardening, helping in a charity shop or undertaking delivery of furniture for the elderly.

This work is arranged through local community groups and charities. In a survey of the people and groups that benefitted from this work, 100% said they were 'very satisfied' with the work undertaken and would 'definitely' use the service again. A survey of people undertaking unpaid work found that 86% thought that their work had benefitted the local community.

Examples of projects that have benefitted from Unpaid Work can be found here:

www.twitter.com/MorayUnpaidWork



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Part of an individual's hours of unpaid work (up to 30% to a maximum of 30 hours) can comprise 'other activities'. These can include learning skills, like completing a CV or preparing for a job interview. Research suggests that finding employment is a key factor in reducing reoffending.

75% of people completing surveys reported that they had completed other activities. These included counselling, engagement with money advice and employment services, offshore skills training, adult learning, public service vehicle training, first aid and Construction certification.

SUPERVISION

People completing a community sentence may be required to attend regular supervision with a Criminal Justice Social Worker. Supervision aims to change the way that people think and behave.

Of those people taking part in supervision who completed surveys, 90% indicated that their thinking and behaviour had changed during the course of supervision and 100% indicated that supervision had helped them to stop or reduce their offending.

EARLY & EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION

Moray has a dedicated Youth Justice team that works closely with other agencies (e.g. Police, Fire Service and Education), using Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) to keep young people out of the Justice system.

In 2020-21, 167 young people under 18 were referred by Police Scotland to a range of agencies, including Youth Justice, to address underlying issues that influenced their behaviour. Statistics provided by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) show very low numbers of young people being referred to the Children's Reporter and Procurator Fiscal, an indicator of the success of the EEI approach.

DIVERSION

For young people whose behaviour continues to be a concern, diversion from prosecution provides an opportunity for young people to engage in programme work as an alternative to formal prosecution.

In surveys completed by young people undertaking Diversion, 100% reported an improvement in the issues that had contributed to their offending behaviour and all agreed that Diversion had helped to stop their reoffending.

PEOPLE LEAVING PRISON

For people leaving prison, access to housing, health and benefit services are key elements in aiding their successful reintegration into the community and helping them desist from offending behaviour.

In March 2020, a formal data sharing protocol was agreed between the Scottish Prison Service and the Housing and Criminal Justice Social Work services of Moray Council.

This agreement enabled the legal sharing of data so that Housing and Social Work could



receive advance notice of the imminent release of people from prison.

This has improved planning for

people prior to their release, enabled better access to health services and reduced the number of instances when people present at services in a 'crisis' situation.

GENDER

At all stages of the justice process, from arrest to completing a community or prison sentence, the overwhelming majority is male. There is therefore a risk that services can be predominantly targeted on the needs of the male population.

In Moray, Criminal Justice Social Work operates 'female only' squads for completing unpaid work and there is a bespoke Women's Group for women who are open to the service. This group addresses women's needs and provides peer support to attendees.

IMPACT OF COVID-19



COVID-19 had a huge impact on Community Justice during the period covered by this report.

Courts were closed, people were unable to complete community sentences and much of the valuable work that benefits our local communities did not happen. It will take several years for the backlogs accumulated during the pandemic to be cleared.

However, partners worked creatively to develop practical solutions to overcome barriers and the lessons learned will inform the development of services into the future.

Many of the Community Justice partners host food larders stocked by Moray Food Plus. These are important in normal times but even more so during the pandemic.

PLANNING AHEAD

Moray's new Community Justice Improvement Plan is due in 2022 but cannot be prepared until the Scottish Government's new Community Justice Strategy is issued and Community Justice Scotland (the national oversight body) has issued a new Performance & Improvement Framework.

In the meantime, the Partnership has commissioned a piece of research on Community Justice in Moray. This work, which is being undertaken by Families Outside and the Moray Wellbeing Hub, uses a range of engagement methods to consult people who have committed offences, their family members, partner organisations and the wider community. This will help us to better understand what makes a difference for individuals at risk of offending or reoffending and inform the development of our new plan.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE IN ACTION



Mr S had been in prison since 2012. Ten weeks before his scheduled liberation date, the Scottish Prison Service notified Criminal Justice Social Work of his imminent release.

Mr S had no accommodation to return to in Moray so the services liaised to enable a Housing application to be submitted in advance of his release.

Discussions took place between Housing Needs and Criminal Justice Social Work to consider the type of property and location that would be most suitable for him. Risk factors were also considered in relation to his temporary accommodation needs.

Suitable temporary property was identified by Housing Needs and, with the help of the Scottish Prison Service, a homeless interview was carried out by telephone. Mr S was given details of the temporary accommodation property, which he duly accepted.

Matters were complicated by a delayed Parole Board hearing and a request for additional information. This meant that a new temporary accommodation property had to be found and a

further set of risk checks undertaken.

On the day of his release, Mr S attended the Criminal Justice Social Work office in Elgin. Because of Covid19 restrictions, the main Council Offices were not open to the public so arrangements were made for all the necessary housing paperwork to be delivered to the Criminal Justice office for Mr S to sign.

Mr S moved into his temporary tenancy as planned. During his time in temporary accommodation, he fulfilled all requirements for meetings with Housing and Criminal Justice Social Work staff.

A few weeks later, a 'settling in visit' was carried out by the Temporary Accommodation Team to ensure that he was staying in the property and maintaining it to a reasonable standard.

After a period in temporary accommodation, a suitable permanent option was found and after the completion of the necessary checks, Mr S signed his tenancy agreement.

Mr S is settled in his new property and has maintained his tenancy as required.



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