

Justice Social Work

Annual Performance Report 2022-23

1) Introduction

The Justice Social Work (JSW) service continues to be diverse, complex and busy and consists of Caledonian, Community Payback Orders (CPO), Connections (Women's Centre), Pre-Disposal, Throughcare, Unpaid Work, Support Work and Admin. teams. Its primary remit is to provide statutory supervision and support to individuals who have offended, using interventions which are proportionate to risk and need. This supervision ranges from low level for those on Diversion from Prosecution to very high level, usually with support from Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), for the "critical few" who pose significant public protection concerns.

The individuals with whom the service works may have mental health problems, learning difficulties, personality disorders, drug and/or alcohol problems, behavioural/anger management problems, neurodiversity issues etc., often undiagnosed, and a poverty of aspiration for themselves. JSW staff are responsive to these increasingly complex needs and risks and accept their professional responsibilities to respond accordingly in a person-centred manner in order to deliver individual and statutory outcomes.

This Annual Report reflects the performance and effectiveness of the service in 2022-23. It has been a challenging year in many respects but particularly in relation to: the Covid created backlog of cases coming through courts; the crossover between social work information systems Carefirst and Dynamic 365; the inability to use the national LSCMI risk/needs assessment database for the entire year; and the need to relocate our Unpaid Work Team and premises to four separate locations. These have resulted in logistical, resource, staffing and morale issues across the year and have impacted upon clients.

In spite of these challenges the report demonstrates the continuing commitment that the service has to fulfilling the JSW Delivery Plan's vision that "Every person that we work with achieves the best possible individual and statutory outcomes".

2) Background

The Justice service Performance Management Board (PMB) first initiated the development of a service-specific performance management framework in 2019 as a means of highlighting the effectiveness of the diverse, complex and busy service.

Following the very positive Care Inspectorate Report for Community Payback Orders in Aberdeen, published in February 2021, with only 2 recommendations being taken forward by the service, the Performance Framework continues to be an important tool for continued quality assurance and service improvement.

The Risk, Audit and Performance Committee agreed in June 2021 that the Performance Framework should be used as the basis for a report outlining the performance of the justice service and that this should be presented to the committee on an annual basis for its consideration and scrutiny.

3) Strategic Context

Justice social work is delegated by Aberdeen City Council to the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership's (ACHSCP) Integration Joint Board (IJB) as set out by the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. The partnership's Strategic Plan 2022-25 sets out the priority objectives for all of the delegated functions and services. In addition, the Scottish Government have outlined those [national health and wellbeing outcomes](#) which all partnerships must strive towards.

ACHSCP is a statutory member of the local community planning partnership, 'Community Planning Aberdeen'. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out how public bodies should work together with their local communities to design and deliver better services. There is a strong alignment between the integration partnership's strategic plan and the community planning partnership's [Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#). This improvement plan outlines our "Vision for Aberdeen City" with "Prosperous People" stretch outcomes that will be sought to promote the safety and wellbeing of the local population and contribute to the city's overall prosperity.

AHSCP is also a statutory community justice partner and as such has a shared responsibility for the strategic planning and delivery of local community justice services. The community justice model is underpinned by the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 which sets out the [Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework](#) as guidance to community justice partners on how to improve their local outcomes. Community Justice Scotland, the national corporate body has also produced a [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) designed to help community justice partners prioritise key areas, facilitate improvement and support communities to realise its vision of the country being safer, fairer and more inclusive.

4) Covid Recovery

The pandemic had a significant impact on the JSW ambition to build on the very positive Care Inspectorate inspection report and put in place further developments and improvements for the benefit of the individuals that the service works with, the service workforce and other stakeholders.

There were many challenges with our recovery from the pandemic, on our own service delivery models and also on the wider justice system. This involved having to respond to legislative and operational changes brought in by other agencies such as the Scottish Government, the Justice Directorate, the Procurator Fiscal Service, Police Scotland, the Courts, Scottish Prison Service, housing and third sector organisations. Court backlogs resulted in increased Court hearings and, in some instances, virtual Courts were used due to prisoner transport issues with individuals appearing from prison settings which affected JSW having contact with the service users within expected timescales if released. The implementation of new Bail

Supervision and Electronic Monitoring legislation in May 2022 resulted in a significant increase in Bail Supervision assessments undertaken and Orders being imposed by the Court.

Further impacting this was the withdrawal of the computer based LS/CMI risk/needs assessment tool due to glitches in the system which meant resorting to a paper based format which had resource implications. This was a national issue affecting all areas of JSW and service users in communities as well as in custody. Also, the transition from the social work information system, Carefirst to the newly created D365 system had some impact in terms of workers confidence with a new system, however, a lot of work has been undertaken with in house training and support from the Analytic and Insights team.

Whilst in the midst of recovery from the pandemic, the Unpaid Work team had to vacate their premises at the end of January 2023 and relocate to other council buildings on a temporary basis. Thus far the service has coped well with the contingency arrangements and without a significant impact on service users or service delivery. However, this involves the use of council buildings which may require to be vacated in the coming months due to upcoming plans for these sites and identifying alternate permanent premises is proving difficult. Discussion and negotiations with the relevant departments are ongoing and alternate premises are being pursued with some urgency.

Despite the above noted challenges, JSW have increased staffing levels in the pre-disposal team, the commitment of staff in all departments has been very positive and has reduced the impact of these and our collaborations with partner agencies, which were already of a high standard has remained close with continued joint working.

Table 1 below gives an indication of the effects of the pandemic recovery on some aspects of the JSW workload with 2019/20 as the pre-Covid benchmark (see also Appendix 1 for the 2021-22 CPO Annual Report).

Table 1: Covid Impact on Service Volumes

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Justice Social Work Reports	1,126	715	935	1271
Community Payback Orders	1,055	506	667	909
Diversion commenced	114	150	168	149
Bail Supervision commenced	45	4	26	117
Structured Deferred Sentence	25	11	30	40
Throughcare cases commenced in the community	32	38	40	39
Total no. of hours of Unpaid Work completed	52,854	32,153	36,683	*Unavailable as yet

*It is anticipated this figure will be available on completion of the CPO return to the Government in November 2023.

As these figures indicate, Justice Social Work Reports and Community Payback Orders are increasing to pre-pandemic levels. Diversions from Prosecution have remained steady, there is a significant increase in Bail Supervision assessments and Orders and Structured Deferred Sentence is increasing also which may be reflective of the commitment to reducing the number of people remanded in custody.

During the pandemic Justice Social Work continued face to face contact with all individuals coming out of court/custody for those considered to pose a high risk of harm to others and those considered to be particularly vulnerable. This has resumed for all service users.

The Scottish Government allocated additional funding to JSW in May 2021 to address backlogs and support recovery with an additional amount specifically for third sector. The funding was originally only available to 31st March 2022 which meant that the recruitment of additional staff could only be on a fixed-term basis exacerbating issues as the recruitment to vacancies already in establishment was difficult during Covid. This additional funding has since been confirmed to continue until 2026 and following a recruitment drive during 2022/23 the service is now almost fully staffed.

5) Headlines

Despite the significant and sustained impact of the pandemic on our service delivery, the recovery process has been ongoing over the past year and there have been notable aspects that are worth highlighting and commenting upon.

Diversion from Prosecution numbers have been sustained and is considered to be very positive. While it may be indicative of the need to reduce court backlogs by using alternatives to prosecution, it enables individuals who have committed offences and have significant underlying needs to be diverted into support and, ideally out of offending and Court processes, at an early stage. This disposal, particularly when imposed by the Problem-Solving Court, is again intended both as a lower level, albeit intensive, intervention and as a diversion from custody.

The increase in Bail Supervision is significant when compared to pre pandemic levels and the additional service demands are being met by an increase in staffing levels to support this service. This offers a robust and credible alternative to remand in custody, whereby people accused or convicted of an offence (or offences) are assessed as requiring a level of supervision, monitoring, and support to adhere to bail conditions. Those who the court may decide would otherwise be held on remand pending trial or for reports after conviction are instead released on bail on the condition that they meet with a bail supervisor (or nominated worker from a relevant agency) 3 of times per week, subject to an assessment of suitability and compliance management. The overarching aim of bail supervision is therefore to reduce the use of remand by giving confidence to the court that people bailed in the community will be supported to comply with the conditions of bail, and that any non-compliance will be robustly managed. Bail supervision involves Bail Supervision assessments being provided to the Court with a proposed a package of supervision and support to the person. This can include the provision of direct support, as well as signposting and assistance to access relevant support services, including accommodation, employability, drug and alcohol services, or mental health support. Access to appropriate support services whilst subject to bail supervision is dependent on statutory and third sector services provided in local areas. As such, local collaboration between community justice partners is critical.

In terms of the Caledonian Programme, whilst it is believed that domestic offences increased during the pandemic, this did not increase the number of Caledonian Programme

assessments undertaken nor requirements imposed. There was in 2021-22, however, a 35% increase in the number of Caledonian cases on workers caseloads which was reflective of the difficulty in delivering programmatic groupwork during the pandemic and the timescale of orders having to be extended to complete. Whilst this was problematic, in 2022/23 the Groupwork resumed to 3 groups per week ongoing and with the National Caledonian Training programme has also resumed, new workers are again accessing this training therefore this is gradually reducing the caseload of individual workers.

6) Objectives

The JSW Delivery Plan 2021-2024 has four key objectives which seek to make Aberdeen a safer place in which to live, and which the service is working towards although again, the specific activities and initiatives aligned to each objective was significantly impacted by the pandemic. These four objectives also form the basis of the Performance Framework together with a number of relevant, objective-specific metrics to enable the service to reflect on how well it is meeting or progressing towards each particular objective.

Please note that national data from 2022-23 has not yet been collected by the Scottish Government, therefore to a large extent 2021-22 has been referenced for comparative purposes.

To contribute to the creation of safer and fairer communities

One of the wider outcomes from supporting individuals with their assessed needs, helping them complete their orders and in doing so, assessing, and managing any risks that present themselves is the positive impact on our communities with the result that Aberdeen is a safer place to live and work.

A) Delivery of Community Payback Orders was a huge challenge during Covid when we prioritised workloads in respect of risk and need with those assessed as highest risk, most vulnerable, released from custody and those who did not have telephones being seen face to face.

During this current reporting period the CPO service delivery has largely resumed to pre-covid practice. Workers have continued with what worked well such as increasing appointments in the community rather than office based and maintaining regular virtual contact with clients where appropriate for additional support.

We continue to focus on attending to needs such as benefits/housing/health/stabilising drug and alcohol use as early as possible into the Order (or ideally from first contact with the service) to enable individuals to concentrate on offence focussed work and CBT interventions such as: Caledonian, MFMC, drug and alcohol interventions, anger management and bespoke programmes of work responsive to risk/needs of individual clients. Referrals are also made to JSW support work, Venture Trust and any other agency which will provide specific support.

The recent and positive additional post of a Development Officer for Justice Social Work and Alcohol and Drugs Action supports our service users to access the Assertive Outreach Service which can offer support to those who are struggling with substance

misuse to receive appropriate support at the time they most need it. This enables service users to stabilise the issues affecting them which improves their ability to engage with their supervision and reduces their likelihood of further offending.

There was a 52% drop in CPO numbers between 19/20 and 20/21, however, 2022/23 reflects that numbers are now returning to pre-covid levels as noted below.

Unfortunately, with the introduction of the new D365 information system we are not yet able to provide exact numbers of male and female service users although we understand this will be available in the coming weeks. See also Table 7: Exit Questionnaires.

Table 2: Number of Community Payback Orders

	Aberdeen			
	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Orders	1,055	506	669	1271
Male	894	441	570	
Female	161	65	99	
Under 18	17	7	5	

B) The Unpaid Work team resumed to normal service during the recovery from covid, however, had to vacate their premises at the end of January 2023 and relocate to other council buildings on a temporary basis. Thus far the service has coped well with the contingency arrangements and without a significant impact on service users or service delivery. The service has continued some practices which were implemented during covid such as retaining the use of Learning Packs and home working projects for those where their health precludes them from participating in a work party or craft workshop environment. During 21/22, 36,683 hours of unpaid work were undertaken. See (Table 1) and Table 7: Exit Questionnaires

C) The number of individuals in custody on 31st March 2023 where Aberdeen have Throughcare supervision responsibility was 121 and those in the community subject to licence conditions and Supervised Release Orders was 52. There has been a high percentage of remand prisoners and the Government's introduction of Bail Supervision and Electronic Monitoring in May 2022 as a direct alternative to remand does not appear to have had a significant impact on this as SPS indicate that remands have not reduced significantly during this period. On the other hand, in light of the notable increase in Supervised Bail Orders imposed in Aberdeen from 26 in 2021/22 to 117 in 2022/23 it would appear that this increased Bail Supervision is supportive of preventing the number of remands being significantly higher. (See Table 8: Other Interventions).

Table 3: Number of Individuals Released on Licence

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Female	1	1	1	1
Male	37	39	32	39

D) Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) places a statutory duty on the responsible authorities in a local authority area to jointly establish arrangements for assessing and managing the risk posed by certain categories of offenders. This includes all registered sex offenders under MAPPA Category 1 and those assessed as presenting a high risk of serious harm under MAPPA Category 3 for violent offenders.

The MAPPA Co-ordination Unit provided statistics which reflect that on 31 March 2023 there were 8 active cases in Aberdeen managed under MAPPA Level 2 for Category 1 Sexual Offending. Throughout the year there were 46 cases referred to MAPPA in total, however, many of these cases were referred due to Parole Qualifying dates whilst in custody and where release was not granted during the 2022-23 period.

In terms of MAPPA Cat 3 cases for violent offenders, there were 7 active cases managed in the community under MAPPA Level 2 as at 31 March 2023, 36 were referred to Mappa over the course of the year and 26 of those referred were managed in the community under MAPPA arrangements at some point during the 2022-23 period however, 11 of these individuals were removed from MAPPA under review where their risk/needs were considered to no longer require the intense risk management of MAPPA processes and without further offending. The remainder were returned to custody.

Again, we continue to see a significant increase in MAPPA Category 3 referrals for domestic abuse offenders, primarily from HMP Grampian which in recent years is at odds with the national picture. This may be explained by changes in practice within prison based social work at HMP Grampian who are very pro-active in undertaking Risk of Serious Harm Assessments and referring into MAPPA. It is our experience that this has a positive impact on risk management and victim safety planning as once a robust risk management plan is in place and agreed actions completed, some of these cases are removed from MAPPA when under further review it is considered that active and alert multi-agency risk management is no longer required.

E) The scheduled Quality Assurance programme has been fully re-established during 2022/23. This forms part of the JSW Delivery Plan and Action Plan and there are quotas which Senior Social Workers meet for each Performance Management Board Meeting which is chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer for Adult Services. Whilst Quality Assurance suffered during the pandemic with the demands of delivering the justice service at that time, there is evidence that QA's have resumed and being undertaken appropriately.

[To fairly, effectively, and proportionately implement court orders and release licences](#)

This objective is largely process-driven but in saying that, being able to say that JSW, as diverse, complex, and busy as it is, is an efficient service and that this contributes very significantly, to the effectiveness of the service and the achievement of positive individual and statutory outcomes is a noteworthy statement to make.

F) In 2020/21, 75.6% of Community Payback Orders (CPOs) were completed successfully, above the Scottish average of 73%. In 21/22 we increased this to 78.5%. It is however difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from CPO data as the imposition of orders was significantly affected by the pandemic such that numbers were down compared with pre-pandemic years. For example, the number of women made subject to orders decreased from 17% to 13% but was that because: the tenacious outreach and support delivered by the staff in the Connections Women's Centre was successful; women complied with lockdown so offended less; or the Courts were prioritising higher risk cases. The answer may be any one of these explanations but is more likely to be a weighted combination of them all.

We are unable to provide the update for CPO completions in terms of 2022/23 as yet due to the transition in information systems from Carefirst to D365 and also with the Scotland data not being available at present. There are indications that should will be available in the coming weeks.

G) The Court and associated Pre-Disposal Team is effectively the front door to the Justice Social Work service and was impacted drastically during covid, again this service has in many respects returned to pre covid levels. The concern currently is that due to prisoner transport issues which have also been discussed nationally in the media, the Court continue to use virtual Courts in some cases. This impacts on our ability to meet with service users within timescales as they are often released from custody late in the day or they can be released from prisons across Scotland with lengthy travel requirements for the individual to return to Aberdeen. We do not have a clear picture of the overall impact of this as yet, however, we are working with prison based social work and SPS in order to maintain some contact with individuals who are released from custody under statutory supervision or who require a voluntary service to ensure they have the support they need and to offer appointments at the earliest opportunity.

There were 909 CPO's imposed in Aberdeen in 2022/23, however, due to the transition from Carefirst to D365 we are unable to report accurately in terms of the number of first inductions/case management meetings within 5 days at this time. We are also unable to provide the average figures for Scotland for comparison purposes due to Scotland Data not being available as yet.

H) We continued to deliver MAPPA, MARAC and any other multi agency public protection meetings throughout the pandemic, as with many other meetings, the format for these changed from in person to Teams meetings in collaboration with partner agencies. Therefore, there has been no change and these meetings continue as normal.

I) JSW in Aberdeen is accredited to deliver the Caledonian System which includes a Men's Programme for higher risk perpetrators of domestic abuse in tandem with a support service for women and children harmed. The majority of Justice Social Work reports to court for offences of a domestic nature are assessed for Caledonian with approximately a third resulting in the imposition of Community Payback Orders with 2-year Caledonian Requirements. Where a Supervision Requirement is imposed without a Caledonian

requirement the individual will still be supervised by Caledonian trained workers because of the nature of the offence.

Table 6 shows assessments in 20/21 when court business was reduced and an increase in assessments and CPOs imposed the following year. This appears to have reduced again in 2022/23 and it may be that the increase in 2021/22 was reflective of the Court prioritising these cases within the Court backlog. Domestic abuse accounts for a significant amount of the workload across the service for Admin, support work, social work, MARAC, MAPPA and Throughcare.

Table 6: Number of Caledonian Assessments undertaken, and Requirements imposed

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Assessments	171	202	161
Orders	49	64	49

J) The computer based LS/CMI risk/needs assessment is utilised by JSW nationally from Justice Social Work Report stage to ongoing assessment and case/risk management planning throughout the statutory supervision process. Whilst recovering from the pandemic the LS/CMI risk/needs assessment tool was withdrawn from use in March 2022 due to glitches in the system resulting in incorrect risk/needs scoring outcomes. This was a national issue which received national media attention due to concerns in public confidence and service user concerns in terms of their case and risk management which may have been impacted by this and affected all areas of JSW and service users in communities as well as in custody. During the entire reporting period of 2022-23 JSW had to resort to paper based assessments which impacted on the time taken to complete these as well as issues transferring to other local authorities and prison settings.

During this time the Scottish Government as lead agency along with the Risk Management Authority commenced remediation work with the LS/CMI service provider where the entire system was shut down and scrutinised and all affected cases were identified. During this time JSW Service Managers attended the monthly national meetings to ensure Aberdeen JSW were aware of any developments and took part in the remedial and investigative work required. Fortunately, Aberdeen were affected by only 12 such cases and once these were investigated there was evidence that the case and risk management plans for the individual service users concerned reflected that workers had implemented appropriate planning in each case with no adverse affects from the assessment and therefore no issues arose from these.

However, there will be an impact from this ongoing as there is a requirement to upload the paper based assessments following completion of the remediation work. A process has been agreed at a national level and steps are being taken to support this.

Training in the use of LS/CMI was further impacted by covid due to the lack of training available during the pandemic, however, the Risk Management Authority have reinstated a rolling training programme in respect of Risk of Serious Harm Assessments and associated Risk Management Plans.

To reduce offending by promoting desistance

The essence of this objective is our JSW value base. This is what we do every day and what we do to the best of our ability. Despite the impact of the pandemic we prioritised, assessed, supported and sometimes fed. We gave out phones so that we could remain in contact with individuals. We worked creatively to overcome Covid challenges including adapting unpaid work to provide home learning and craft home working packs to support service users to undertake their unpaid work hours. We collaborated very closely with 3rd sector agencies and built upon already existing relationships.

During the pandemic we learned how to work more creatively to support service users in very difficult circumstances and following this we have evaluated these practices. We have continued to pursue what we did well during covid and have continued virtual contact where appropriate, we continue to support those affected by physical and mental health issues by providing the home learning and craft home working packs to undertake their unpaid work. We built on existing relationships with our housing colleagues and where necessary we can now provide support to prepare tenancies with basic supplies and identify potential issues with utility connections prior to the service user being released from custody. We also continue working closely alongside SPS, Housing and Substance Misuse services to ensure that everyone leaving prison has suitable accommodation, medication, and support.

K) “Desistance is the process of abstaining from crime amongst those who previously had engaged in sustained offending.” It is neither quick nor easy and can take a considerable time to change thinking, behaviours and underlying problems. Desistance research emphasises the need to: adopt an individualised approach; develop positive relationships as individuals are influenced to change by those whose advice they respect and whose support they value; recognise and build on people’s strengths.

L) It is important that individual outcomes as well as statutory outcomes are achieved as a result of the engagement between our staff and the individuals that they supervise and support. We know that many, if not most of our clients have experienced bereavement and adversity in childhood which has significantly impacted on their thinking and behaviour. We are very aware of the need to listen to our clients as to what works for them and seek their views on how they think services could be improved. We are also very mindful of the factors that have led people to offend and seek to reduce the influence of these on an individual’s behaviour. Getting feedback about what has worked is beneficial to the ongoing improvement of our person-centred service delivery.

M) In respect of feedback from CPOs, there was a slight increase in the number of Supervision Exit questionnaires completed in 2022/23, however, Unpaid Work Exit questionnaires increased by approximately 50%. It is notable and extremely positive that 98.5% of JSW service users experienced improvements in at least one domain. Many individuals reported significant improvements in all domains: Housing, Education and Employment, Drugs, Alcohol, Personal Relationships, Self Esteem, Mental Health, Physical Health, Money Issues and Coping Skills. These positive outcomes are perhaps reflective of increased access to most services as well as specialist services post Covid and of the people-centred service they get from JSW.

It is recognised that improvement is required in terms of service user feedback in order to effectively evaluate our service, identifying what we are getting right and what we need to improve in order to provide the best service to those working with us. Exit questionnaires are a valuable resource to achieving this and increasing the number of Exit questionnaires it is part of the Justice Social Work Delivery Plan which is being progressed to develop this further.

Table 7: Number of Exit Questionnaires and comparison of 'Before' and 'After' Supervision Improvements

	21/22 Q1 & 2		21/22 Q3 & 4		22/23 Q1 & 2		22/23 Q3 & 4	
Responses	26		30		20		31	
	People/ Improvement		People/ Improvement		People/ Improvement		People/ Improvement	
People reporting improvement in at least one area	19	84%	23	91%	16	100%	37	97%
Housing	11	64%	9	67%	3	100%	9	89%
Education and Employment	6	67%	11	73%	8	63%	7	100%
Drugs	6	67%	7	86%	5	100%	7	86%
Alcohol	4	75%	4	75%	6	100%	13	100%
Personal Relationships	10	70%	15	53%	7	86%	13	100%
Self Esteem	12	75%	11	82%	8	100%	14	100%
Mental Health	15	80%	18	83%	10	100%	19	89%
Physical Health	4	75%	7	43%	4	75%	7	86%
Money Issues	8	63%	9	78%	5	100%	11	100%
Coping Skills	13	85%	12	92%	6	100%	16	94%

To promote the social inclusion of people with convictions

This objective is about improving outcomes for people in the justice system by intervening at the lowest possible level, providing both supervision and support, linking into other services and agencies as appropriate and, ideally, linking individuals into community supports in the longer term.

N) A Fiscal Work Order is a Direct Measure offered by the Procurator Fiscal as an alternative to Court and the numbers of these tend to fluctuate, however, have remained consistently

low in recent years. Diversion from Prosecution is also an alternative to Court and in Aberdeen all 16/17 year olds are referred to Barnardo's while individuals aged 18 and over are offered a bespoke service tailored to their individual needs. This is overseen, and is largely delivered by JSW however, clients are at times referred on to whatever service best meets their needs e.g. mental health, Children's services, ADA, Housing. Figures continue to remain steady with 149 Diversions being imposed in 2022/23 and it is considered that a positive of Covid recovery is that, in trying to reduce court backlogs, individuals with slightly higher risk/ needs offending than previously are increasingly being referred for Diversion thus allowing us to assess and address underlying needs at an early stage. The use of Structured Deferred Sentences has increased by 25% in 2022/23 from that in 2021/22 and is continuing to rise. This disposal, particularly when imposed by the Problem-Solving Court, is again intended both as a lower level, albeit intensive, intervention and as a diversion from custody. The significant increase in Bail Supervision is attributed to the legislation imposed for Bail Supervision and Electronic Monitoring in May 2022. It is anticipated this will support the long term goal to reduce the number of individuals remanded in custody whilst providing intense intervention and support services to the person.

Table 8: Other Interventions

	20/21	21/22	22/23
Fiscal work orders	16	7	12
Diversion From Prosecution	150	168	149
Structured Deferred Sentence	11	30	40
Bail Supervision	4	26	117
Drug Treatment and Testing Order	0	13	10

O) Improved partnership working across a range of services achieved during covid continues to be built upon, an example of which is the developing a shared care model with mental health and substance misuse services. This has been further improved by the recruitment of a dedicated Development Officer liaising between Justice Social Work and Alcohol and Drugs Action involving improved access to services via the Assertive Outreach project which supports service users to obtain necessary assessment and prescribed medication when other routinely available routes have been unsuccessful or for various reasons their prescriptions have been withdrawn. We also commission services from Aberdeen Foyer to deliver Other Activity and Employability services and there are opportunities for wider collaboration and development through this service as well as Adult Learning and Community Education.

7) Conclusion

As this report shows, we continue to improve our service delivery during and post covid and due to the committed endeavours of the entire justice workforce, we kept the service open

throughout covid, prioritising individuals with the highest risk and greatest vulnerability. We continue to improve and build upon the improvements made and close working relationships with partner agencies to provide a meaningful, person centred approach to those we work with.

As referenced earlier, particular highlights included the significant increase in Bail Supervision, structured deferred sentences and whilst diversion from prosecution remains similar to the previous year, indications are that these are steadily increasing in recent months. Despite the Unpaid Work Team being displaced at present due to the landlord serving a notice to quit the long standing Unpaid Work premises in the centre of Aberdeen, largely due to commitments of the staff who are located in various Council buildings and the Council who have endeavoured to assist with identifying these temporary and permanent premises, there appears to have been minimal affect on the service or service users. The Caledonian Programme for Domestic Abuse and the Moving Forward Making Changes Programme for sexual offenders have fully resumed group work. Along with this National Training has resumed fully with a combination of virtual training platforms as well as face to face enabling JSW to strive to have workers fully trained in Caledonian and MFMC as well as undertaking the necessary training for Risk of Serious Harm Training. This is reducing the impact of covid and the recovery process on long standing workers who were already trained in these areas and whom we relied upon to undertake the majority of this work whilst awaiting training opportunities for newly appointed workers.

The recruitment issues experienced during and post covid now appear to be resolved with JSW being almost fully staffed. Once all staff have undertaken the necessary training, most of which is on a rolling training programme nationally, this will continue to promote improved working and service provision.

We are continuing to be impacted by Court backlogs and the issues experienced by the Court in relation to prisoner transport for Court appearances resulting in the Court's continued use of virtual Courts post pandemic in order to ensure Court hearings are taking place as scheduled. We are working closely with SPS, Prison based social work, housing and other partner agencies to ensure where possible that those released directly from custody in such cases receive an appropriate service and support for their individual circumstances whilst recognising this may impact on our service delivery in terms of timescales for first appointments etc. The national withdrawal of the LSCMI Risk/ Needs assessment database, resource implications and teething problems experienced in extracting data from the new social work system D365 have also impacted the service and workers. However, it is expected that these issues are being resolved and whilst resource intensive at present, additional resources are being provided at least for D365 with continued support from the Analytical and Insight Team. These issues are not expected to continue into 2023-24.

On a more positive note, during covid JSW learned some unexpected strengths of their service users and workers as well as partner agencies and will continue with the positive adaptations made to services where appropriate and will continue to support service users to build resilience and make positive changes.

In conclusion, the Justice Social Work service has made very positive progress during 2022/23 with covid recovery which featured significant increases in MAPPA referrals, changes in legislation and practice in terms of Court business and Supervised Bail aimed at reducing remands in custody. We are aware of the impact of the past 3 years on our workforce where at times workers may have felt additional pressures in a fast changing environment due the issues noted above and we are committed to supporting workers to progress, maintain their professionalism and continue to provide the high quality of service ongoing. JSW are confident that it will continue to provide robust, person-centred support that will keep our communities safe through the effective assessment and management of risk and also deliver positive individual and statutory outcomes by helping our service users to address the impacts of the multiple disadvantages that they have experienced in and throughout their lives.

COMMUNITY PAYBACK ORDER ANNUAL REPORT

FINANCIAL YEAR: **2021/22**

LOCAL AUTHORITY: **Aberdeen City**



1) In this section, please give examples of work with people subject to CPOs specifically to **address offending behaviours and the risk of reoffending**. (Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words.)

Attending to needs such as benefits/housing/health/stabilising drug and alcohol use as early as possible into the Order (or ideally from first contact with the service) to enable individuals to concentrate on offence focussed work and CBT interventions such as: Caledonian, MFMC, drug and alcohol interventions, anger management and bespoke programmes of work responsive to risk/needs of individual clients. Referrals are also made to JSW support work, Venture Trust and any other agency which will provide specific support.

Comments from exit questionnaires evidence that the process of supervision is in itself “transformative”. More specifically, the quotes below demonstrate the impact that Caledonian and MFMC have on higher risk individuals.

- “In my opinion the work done in Moving Forward Making Changes has helped me develop better thinking styles and coping mechanisms that will help me not to reoffend”
- “More than anything else, realising to what quite extent the offending behaviour was wrong. Having given it, and its impact, a lot of thought, I deliberately steer clear from situations (and thoughts) that could potentially lead to re-offending. Although I also think a different, greatly improved mindset and lifestyle now compared to then has also been a big help”
- “The Caledonian order has made me view a lot of things differently and approach situations with a different and a much better manner.”
- “My worker has been excellent. I have told lies in the past, I now feel guilty & I was able to be honest with group facilitators too. I was dreading the course (Caledonian), the groupwork requirement but now I am glad that I went on it.”
- “I think it would be something to do with gaining coping strategies, being challenged on my own thinking styles and this has made me reconsider things and admit I'm wrong sometimes.”

2) In this section, please give a summary of feedback, may include quotes, from people subject to CPOs about the **impact on them of a Supervision Requirement**. (Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words.)

78.5% of CPOs were successfully completed with feedback from Exit Questionnaires evidencing the almost universally positive impact that supervision had on individuals' lives. It is significant that out of the 10 EQ domains, and at a time of considerable stress, clients particularly reported improvements in their Mental Health, Coping Skills and Self-Esteem, likely due to the support they had received, and in Education, just maybe attributable to Unpaid Work Learning Packs.

Clients identified a range of skills learned; positive self talk, consequential thinking, the link between emotions and behaviour, self-reflection, self-calming techniques etc. and highlighted the importance of feeling valued.

- “I had really bad moments during the first months of my supervision. However, I felt that someone care about me, even though I felt really bad about myself. I was able to share my concerns and to work towards improvements in my mental health”

- “With the support of my SW, I realised that alcohol had been indeed a problem of mine. I had to give it up for several months only to find out how good it is to be free from addiction. I was reminding myself that alcohol helped me somehow to cope with my life, emotions, or nonsenses like that. Now I don't drink and I'm happier than ever”
- “I had plenty of advice from my SW about how I should have worked with myself to change my attitudes and beliefs about relationships. I am happy single but I have understood that the issue was always in me and to have a happy, successful relationship I must first change myself. I keep working on it”
- “Despite there being a few hiccups along the way I listened to the advice being given to me and i haven't came to the attention of the Police since being on the order”

3) In this section, please report on the following:

- Types of **unpaid work projects** carried out
- Example(s) that demonstrate(s) **how communities benefited** from unpaid work (Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words.)

- Home working on:
 - Woodwork Design Project
 - Upcycling furniture
 - Art therapy
 - Knitting
- Painting and decorating of:
 - Ukrainian Refugee properties and supporting the community engagement officers in delivering donated starter home packs
 - Learning Centre in preparation for the opening of pilot scheme to bring learning centres into the heart of communities
 - Fit Like Hubs - a group of services working together to support Children and young people's mental wellbeing across the city offering practical and emotional support
 - Indoor spaces in Pupil Support Centre and associated charity organisations
- Helping to establish:
 - A safe outdoor space for children with garden furniture, planters and storage shed
 - Ongoing project in partnership with Cornhill Hospital and funded by Historic Scotland to establish a new outdoor space for service users. UPWs are involved in laying of new slabs, cutting in new wildflower beds, laying new gravel pathways, removing dead hedges and refurbishing of current Garden furniture.
 - An allotment and outdoor space to provide a safe outdoor learning environment for adults with LD. This project was a steep learning curve for all and this year they produced a great harvest.
 - Edible Community Garden and ongoing maintenance - UPWs planted memory trees with the local community and laid new paths. UPWs in the workshop made planters, benches, signs and erecting a shed.

- Community Garden at Springhill, the UPW's built new compost bays with pallets, cut back bushes, cut grass, established paths, lots of new skills for UPW's to learn. Positive feedback on social media from the Community
- Beach and community clean ups.

4) Summary of feedback, may include quotes, from people subject to CPOs about the **impact on them of an Unpaid Work Requirement**. (Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words.)

The following quotes from unpaid workers demonstrate the importance of the role of Task Supervisors and the impact they have.

- "I have loved coming to Community Services (sic), X has been amazing with me helping me learn about Woodwork. Y has also been amazing with the Walking Tours. I have learnt a lot about my city. Overall 10/10 experience"
- "The unpaid work supervisors were great, friendly and helpful. Feel a little more confident having been out of work a while"
- "The Supervisors at the Park are good at what they do. Coming to Unpaid Work is a lot easier when the supervisors are good with people of all sorts but still able to get them to do the tasks at hand. Good examples for any young person headed the wrong way in life"
- "I was surprised by what I learnt at Community Service and feel i have developed good skills which are beneficial. X was a great supervisor and helped lots"
- "I enjoyed the Unpaid Work because I was trusted to do the work and get on with it and had a sense of pride in attending and never missed a day. Helped to fill my week whilst I was out of work"
- "St Vincent de Paul charitable foodbank which I thoroughly enjoyed and have continued to do it voluntary"
- "I did my unpaid work at Auchmill (golf course) at which I plan to keep working with on a voluntary basis".

5) **Types of 'Other Activity'** carried out as part of an Unpaid Work Requirement. You may want to comment on the impact of completing Other Activities, for individuals or for the community. (Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words.)

Given the restrictions on premises, vehicles, lack of individual placements and reduction in third sector services we have had to be as flexible and creative as possible in blending other activity with home/ workshop/ outdoor work to support completion of orders. For example:

- "I did 3 craft packs, which were sanded then painted, then in the Joiner's Workshop"
- "Workshop design pack, Blended Learning pack and 2 Home wood packs"
- "I contributed to the shed I designed"
- "The tour walks with quizzes, open university courses from home and initial work from home packs"

Other Activities primarily fall into the following categories:

Learning - Blended Learning educational packs, online courses, alcohol awareness courses, woodwork design project, adult learning courses and qualifications, artwork

Volunteering/ Coaching - local boxing club, 8 ball pool, Care Hub, Foodbanks, community outreach group, charity shops, caring for others, drug/alcohol support, home schooling

Training - Driving lessons funded by transitions fund, Forklift driving, CSCS Cards, employment training, craft packs, woodwork design project,

Third sector/ Other - Venture Trust, Foyer employability and support service, Historical walks

6) Summary of feedback, may include quotes, from beneficiaries **about the impact of Unpaid Work on the community**. (Bullet point will suffice. Max 300 words.)

A sample of responses to our Customer Satisfaction Survey all rated the quality of the work and the attitude and behaviour of Unpaid Workers as very good. All felt that they had benefitted from the work undertaken and would recommend the service to others.

“There had been few people helping with the garden since Covid and the gardens were becoming unmanageable for the people who *were* trying to maintain them. The larger jobs in particular had been put aside for a couple of years due to the enormity of them. The team ‘rescued’ the garden and provided a place where people feel included and welcomed”

“The tenant told me what a difference getting their garden done had made to their life. Relief of the anxiety felt before and after the job was done - ‘neighbours not looking and judging anymore’. ‘daughter can play in garden now’”

“We were at risk of losing our community allotment before they stepped in as we could not get on top of the work. So not only did they help us keep it they have continued to support us by building us a compost and levelling ground to make it safe for all. So, the group can now support people who are unsteady on their feet as the ground is much safer for them. They helped clear the general path too making it safer for all the allotment users not just our group. They continue to support us by making signs for our vegetables, picking up sheeting for our shed roof and taking away rubbish”

When asked what improvements the service could make one beneficiary said:
“I think the only thing I would suggest is that you sing your praises more. You make a significant difference to the communities that you work in”

7) What **organisational challenges** have there been in completing orders effectively this year, both those with Unpaid Work and those with Supervision Requirements? Issues may or may not be related to the covid pandemic. (Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words.)

The main organisational challenges have been:

- Responding flexibly to frequent Covid related changes to process and practice in the wider criminal justice system. Virtual courts, PF/ court priorities, backlogs, working from home, reduction in third sector services have all had an impact on JSW and required changes to practice.
- Recruitment and training of staff, both QSW and support workers, has proved difficult and has increased the pressure on existing workers.
- Covid and staffing issues have meant that we have been unable to consistently deliver CPO first contact after court. We hope to be able to reestablish this early engagement contact, plus an enhanced support work service, when we have staff in post.
- Practical issues have also impacted on our ability to deliver JSW services. For example, during Covid we couldn't transport clients in UPW vehicles and, now that we are allowed, we can't get the vehicles we were due to get 2 years ago because shortage of materials is affecting manufacturing.
- Only a small increase in new Caledonian requirements but big increase in Caledonian cases on caseloads because throughput has been challenging (no groups during Covid) and extensions have had to be requested. On top of that we have had recruitment difficulties and, when new workers do come into post, they cannot be trained until they have been fully inducted (up to a year) and training is available.
- Getting some people, both staff and clients, out of their homes and back into the building has proved harder and slower than expected.

8) Outline the **main barriers, if any, to accessing community support and wider services** (eg drug and alcohol services, mental health services). How have these barriers been addressed?

Drug and alcohol services are inconsistent and fragmented. Whilst there are pockets of good practice, this needs to be consistent across all services. An 18month JSW/ ADP drug and alcohol development officer has recently been appointed to develop a "shared care" model between substance misuse services and JSW.

Mental Health services continue to be hard to access. We carried out a brief survey where 12 JSW staff were questioned about current clients' mental health, both to give the service a better picture of the issues and to find out if we were asking the right questions. The responses covered a total of 253 clients, 71% of whom had Mental health issues to a greater or lesser extent.

The main findings were that:

- The prevalence of mental health issues is high amongst those subject to statutory supervision
- There is little point in asking solely about mental health without asking about drug/alcohol use and prescribed medication
- We are asking some, but not all, of the right questions

- Need for a shared language
- Need for improved pathways into services
- Need for training for workers

These initial findings have been passed to substance misuse and mental health services, including the Forensic Pathways Review Group, and a more comprehensive survey will be carried out in 2023.

Appropriate training is being sought.

9) Is there **any other relevant information** you wish to highlight? For example, this may include:

- Areas for improvement and planned next steps
- New ways of working and benefits achieved from these.
- Examples of work carried out in collaboration with community justice partners and wider community partners, including the third sector, to deliver CPOs

(Bullet points will suffice. Max 300 words).

Our commitment to relational practice means that we aim to have a consistent SW for the duration of supervision and, if an individual returns to the service, they will wherever possible be supervised by their previous worker.

“I have had the same worker for four years. There should be a category for amazing. She has helped me out so much and supported me through all my difficult times and has really helped. I feel positive about moving forward but I am going to miss her support”. In Exit Questionnaires relationships with workers are all described as good or very good.

Still on relationships we piloted an UPW Order/Task supervisor hybrid post (now permanent) to work with higher needs women. This has been very successful in supporting women to complete their orders by integrating UPW, other activities, adult learning, group work and tenacious outreach.

We also have an Order Supervisor who takes clients on historical walks/ talks around Aberdeen. Not only does this improve health, it also sparks up interest in their city and promotes civic responsibility. These tours are very popular with clients who see their city in a new light and who clearly then cascade their new knowledge to family and friends.

Partnership working with Adult Learning and employability services, greatly reduced during Covid, are now working to capacity and we have plans to further develop our partnerships with these resources.

And a final quote, “I've not offended in over 2 years and I can't be any more proud, all I need to do now is focus on the future and hope for the best”.

COMPLETED BY: Lesley Simpson
DATE: 28th October 2022

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Appendix 2