

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Communities, Housing & Public Protection Committee
<b>DATE</b>	11 March 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Justice Social Work Service Annual Performance Report 2023-24
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	ACHSCP/25/040
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Fiona Mitchelhill, Chief Officer HSCP
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Claire Wilson, Chief Officer Adult Social Work
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Val Vertigans, Strategic Service Manager Justice Social Work service
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share the Justice Social Work Service Annual Performance Report for 2023-24 in line with the Communities, Housing & Public Protection Committee's remit.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the Justice Social Work Service Annual Performance Report 2023-24 (at Appendix 1), which provides assurance about progress made over the period.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Justice Social Work (JSW) service continues to be diverse, complex and busy, albeit demand is now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Examples, in relation to the year 2023-24, include:
- the number of Justice Social Work Reports requested continues to surpass pre-pandemic levels;
  - Diversions from Prosecution increased significantly, with Aberdeen City having the highest number of Diversions per 100,000 population of any area in Scotland in 2023-24;
  - the number of Bail Supervision cases commenced also continued to increase, potentially reflecting the commitment to reducing the number of people remanded in custody;
  - numbers undertaking the Caledonian Programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse continue to increase.

- 3.2** In relation to Community Payback Orders, although numbers of Orders imposed have not reached pre-covid levels, the complexity and length of Orders have increased. As of 31st March 2024, there were 1,258 active CPOs. Supervision of individuals on CPOs focuses 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 support them to concentrate on offence focussed work and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) interventions.
- 3.3** As set out in the Annual Report, the Unpaid Work Service has continued to face challenges in terms of suitable premises, access to vehicles, and reduction in individual placements offered by charitable organisations. Notwithstanding, the Service has continued to cope well, without a significant impact on service users or service delivery, for example through 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. The CPO Annual Report at the Appendix to the Annual Report provides more information about the delivery and impact of our Unpaid Work Service during the course of the year. The CPO Annual Report has been submitted to Community Justice Scotland as required by the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 (as amended).
- 3.4** As with other areas, demand on the Service in terms of the number of individuals in custody also remains high. On 31st March 2024, the number of individuals where the JSW Service have Throughcare supervision responsibility increased to 137 (up from 121 the previous year). Individuals are supervised and supported, in conjunction with partners as required, to meet licence requirements, improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
- 3.5** The commitment of staff across the service has not faltered, and the report demonstrates our continued drive to fulfil the JSW Delivery Plan's vision that "Every person that we work with achieves the best possible individual and statutory outcomes".
- 3.6** Justice Social Work cannot operation in isolation, and continues to work closely with partner organisations and services, including:
- as part of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and MARAC (multi agency working around the safety of those harmed by or at risk of domestic abuse);
  - as part of the Scottish Prison Service's regular Case Management Board and Integrated Case Management pre-release processes;
  - regular working with services including Health, Housing, Substance Use, Employability, and a range of third sector partners, to provide person-centred supports to clients;
  - the Court and Procurator Fiscal Services;
  - as part of Community Planning Aberdeen's multi agency Community Justice Group, and the related Local Outcome Improvement Plan projects.
- 3.7** As referenced in section 9 of the Annual Report, in terms of moving forwards, planned improvement and developmental work will include:

- review of the Delivery Plan, with the new Plan expected to be in place for 2025-2029, in line with the Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan timescales;
- related review of the Service's Performance Framework;
- completion of the Self Evaluation required by the Care Inspectorate in relation the current National Thematic Review of Performance and Quality Assurance, and progression of resulting improvement work (*NB this has now been completed*);
- involvement in multi agency 'Community Justice' projects, including increasing numbers of exit questionnaires completed, improving supports for individuals where there are concerns with substance use, and improving confidence in Community Justice;
- ensuring adherence to revised National Outcomes and Standards, once published; and
- exploring the possibility of developing and piloting a lower-level Domestic Abuse programme.

**3.8** In addition to the above, the Scottish Government, in response to the rapid rise in the prison population, took emergency measures to release prisoners early across the prison estate. In collaboration with Scottish Prison Service and other relevant services, the release of 19 'Aberdeen' individuals was successfully coordinated, in June 2023, to ensure, that those transitioning from prison to the community have access to housing, healthcare, financial support, in the same way as we would seek to deliver for those being released from prison on a routine basis. Detailed plans are now being made in light of the passing, by Scottish Parliament, of the Prisoners (Early Release) (Scotland) Bill in November 2024, which will take effect in February 2025, with prisoners being released in three tranches between mid-February and mid-March 2025.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Justice Social Work is funded primarily via ring-fenced funding based on service volumes as reported to Scottish Government on a regular basis.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. JSWS undertakes statutory functions and legal advice is sought as required.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			<b>N/A</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			<b>N/A</b>
<b>Operational</b>	No significant risks identified in relation to this report	Assessment and mitigation of risk relating to individual clients forms the basis of JSW's fundamental ongoing service delivery across the piece. Arrangements are in place for escalation, in conjunction with partners as required, including as part of MAPPA.		<b>N/A</b>
<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			<b>N/A</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			<b>N/A</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified in			<b>N/A</b>

	relation to this report			
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<b>Impact of Report</b>  The proposals within this report support the delivery of aspects of the policy statement under the following headings:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting People with the Cost of Living</li> <li>• Caring for Each Other</li> <li>• A Safer Aberdeen</li> </ul>
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<b><i>The proposals within this report support Prosperous Adults section of the LOIP, specifically in relation to Stretch Outcome 9:</i></b>  10% fewer adults (over 18) charged with more than one offence by 2026

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Claire Wilson, Chief Officer Adult Social Work.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Justice Social Work Service Annual Performance Report 2023-24.

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Val Vertigans
<b>Title</b>	Strategic Service Manager, Justice Social Work Service, HSCP
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:vavertigans@aberdeencity.gov.uk">vavertigans@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Tel</b>	01224 069553