

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee
DATE	13 January 2026
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Justice Social Work Service Annual Report and Community Payback Order Annual Report 2024-25
REPORT NUMBER	ACHSCP/26/007
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Fiona Mitchelhill, Chief Officer ACHSCP
CHIEF OFFICER	Claire Wilson, Chief Officer Adult Social Work
REPORT AUTHOR	Val Vertigans, Strategic Service Manager Adult Social Work
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share the Justice Social Work Service Annual Performance Report and Community Payback Order Annual Report for 2024-25 in line with the Communities, Housing & Public Protection Committee's remit.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the Justice Social Work Service Annual Performance Report and Community Payback Order 2024-25 Report (at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), which provide assurance about progress made over the period.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Justice Social Work Service Annual Report 2024-25

- 3.1 As set out in the Annual Performance Report at Appendix 1, 2024–25 has been a year of significant activity, challenge, and progress for the Justice Social Work Service. Despite increasing complexity in the needs of those we support, legislative changes, and ongoing system pressures, the service has continued to deliver high-quality, person-centred interventions that prioritise public protection and individual outcomes.
- 3.2 Demand on the Service is now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Highlights in relation to the year 2024-25 include:
 - the number of Justice Social Work Reports requested by the Courts increased by 5% from the previous year and continue to surpass pre-pandemic levels;

- Diversion from Prosecution cases have reduced overall in 2024-25, after the significant increase seen the previous year, but still remain higher than the four year period from April 2019 to March 2023;
- the numbers on Bail Supervision have reduced over 2024-25 by 29% compared to the previous year. This is due to a number of factors including changes in legislation which mean that sheriffs are more reluctant to remand and will offer standard bail rather than requesting assessment for Supervised Bail or an Electronic Monitoring Order, a decline in bail being opposed by Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), for the same reasons, and implementation of a new process, in conjunction with the Court;
- the number of Community Payback Orders (CPO) imposed increased significantly, up by 24% from the previous year and returning to pre-pandemic levels;
- the number of CPO Unpaid Work and Other Activity Requirements stood at 701 as at 7th May 2025, up from 524 as of 2nd May 2024 (an increase of 34%);
- numbers undertaking the Caledonian Programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse remain significant;
- the number of individuals where Aberdeen has statutory Throughcare supervision responsibility increased to 255 as at 31st March 2025 (up from 190 as at 31st March 2024).

3.3 The Performance Report also includes:

- an overview of specific current challenges (in addition to the general overall increase in demand), and work being progressed to address these, including: the wider partnership response to those released from custody via virtual courts, and unplanned liberations from other courts; the increase in the number of Unpaid Work Requirements and how we respond to this; and improving pathways for young people, in collaboration with Children's Services;
- an overview of how we listen to the voice of those we work with, via completion of Exit Questionnaires, and reflects the overwhelmingly positive nature of these;
- how we are moving forwards via our refreshed [JSW Service Delivery Plan for 2025-29](#), which encompasses areas identified for improvement and gaps in support or services identified.

3.4 The report presents an overview of the huge amount of work undertaken by the service during the year, showing what has been achieved, including the positive outcomes for our clients. It also reflects the ongoing commitment and dedication of the staff who work within the service within an increasingly challenging context.

3.5 Justice Social Work cannot operate in isolation, and continues to work closely on a multi agency basis with a wide range of 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), and as part of Community Planning Aberdeen's multi agency Community Justice Group, and the related Local Outcome Improvement Plan work.

Community Payback Order Annual Report 2024-25

- 3.6 The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 requires local authorities to report on the operations of Community Payback Orders (CPO) within their area on an annual basis to Community Justice Scotland (CJS). CJS will then collate these returns and summarise them in a report which is laid before Scottish Parliament.
- 3.7 The Community Payback Order (CPO) was introduced by the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. A CPO can consist of one or more of nine requirements including offender supervision, compensation, unpaid work or other activity, mental health treatment, drug treatment and alcohol treatment. Every order must contain either an unpaid work or other activity requirement or an offender supervision requirement, or both.
- 3.8 The Annual Report at Appendix 2 is completed on a template provided specifically by Community Justice Scotland for this purpose. This was submitted to Community Justice Scotland prior to the 31st October 2025 deadline.
- 3.9 The Annual Report includes case studies and other information about how CPOs are implemented in Aberdeen City. It also provides an overview of feedback received from clients and placement providers about the Unpaid Work undertaken, which is overwhelmingly positive and demonstrates the value of this to both client and community. Related challenges are also summarised.
- 3.10 Numbers of Community Payback Orders imposed have increased significantly from 2023-24 to 2024-25, up by 24% and returning to pre-pandemic levels. The chart on page 16 of the Annual Report shows the increasing trend over time.

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. The Community Payback Order Annual Report (Appendix 2) has been submitted as required by the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. 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) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			N/A
Compliance	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			N/A
Operational	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.		N/A
Financial	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			N/A
Reputational	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			N/A

Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified in relation to this report			N/A
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8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals within this report support the delivery of aspects of the policy statement under the following headings:-
<u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 3 – Communities and Housing (crime rate, homelessness) • Theme 5 – Health and Social Care (supporting victims of domestic abuse)
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p><i>The proposals within this report support Prosperous Adults section of the LOIP, specifically in relation to Stretch Outcome 9:</i></p> <p>10% fewer adults (over 18) charged with more than one offence by 2026</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Claire Wilson, Chief Officer Adult Social Work, on 10 December 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 JSW Service Delivery Plan for 2025-29

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Justice Social Work Annual Performance Report 2024-25
- 11.2 Community Payback Order Annual Report 2024-25

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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