



Beginnings Belonging Belief

A Community Justice Plan for Ayrshire
2018-21

Welcome

We all want our communities to be safer and stronger, and for everyone to be able to live a good life. To do this, we are working together to **prevent** and **reduce re-offending** and to promote **inclusion** and **equality** for all in Ayrshire.

Community Justice Ayrshire is a partnership which was set up so that a collaborative approach could be taken to achieve the aims above. This partnership includes representation from statutory and third sector agencies across Ayrshire and from people who have been involved in the justice system or used community justice services. You can find out more details about Community Justice Ayrshire and our partners from our website www.communityjusticeayrshire.org.uk

The way we deliver local community justice outcomes is through our **Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan** (CJOIP). Our first CJOIP (2017/18) allowed us to continue the work we had started with partners under the previous arrangements for community justice, and to build relationships with new partners and people who use community justice services in Ayrshire. We now aim to build on this work, and to set the direction for 2018-21.

This plan is for all of those affected by crime. That includes people involved in offending, their families, victims, communities and those working in the justice system. We need everyone to work together to succeed. We recognise that there is much work to be done to raise awareness of community justice amongst local organisations and people who live in our communities. We are committed to working with partners to break down the barriers and stigma faced by people who have been involved in the justice system, so that they may move on with their lives.

Our Plan is called **Beginnings, Belonging, Belief**. We know from talking together that these three **Ambitions** are the most important steps to moving away from crime and leading a better life.

We know it can be hard to change, and some people will need more than one **Beginning**. We have learned much from research and from the real life accounts of people who have recovered from addiction after many lapses and relapses, and from those who have moved on from offending after many years of being involved in the justice system. We want to create opportunities to support people at the time that they are ready to move on and make changes to their lives.

We understand how important it is to feel a sense of **Belonging** in our family or community. This can be a physical community such as the area that we live in, or it can be a community of interest where people are brought together by a common aim or belief, such as a faith community or a support group. We want to foster this sense of belonging in the people we work with and to create an environment where they feel that their voices are heard, their opinions are valid and that they can shape the way that we work with people in the future.

Some people will only take the first step when they (or others) have a **Belief** that change is possible. We have heard many stories about how having 'that one person' in your life who believes in you can be the catalyst for change. These powerful relationships may be with a family member or someone who is working in a supportive role. We want to create opportunities for those with lived experience of the justice system to offer hope and belief to others who are further behind in their journey towards desistance or caught up in addiction, to thrive and go on to be 'that one person' for others.

These three **Ambitions** are not a straight line or set of steps, they are maybe more like a circle or a spiral.

Our Conversations together have helped us understand how these three Ambitions feel.

Beginnings

I know that the first step can be the hardest one. I would like the opportunity to build a new, positive life for myself. I want to move on from my past and to plan for a new future – one where anything is possible. I will take responsibility and use my skills and strengths to overcome the setbacks that life may throw at me. I hope that those around me will support me if I need more than one new beginning.

Belonging

I live in a place where I feel I belong. I have somewhere I can call home – and it feels like home. I have people around me who understand me and who support me. They might be family, friends or workers. I feel part of my local community. I am not judged or labelled for my past decisions or actions – people just see me for who I am now, not who they think I am or who I was before.

Belief

I have hopes and dreams for the future. I believe in myself. I can reflect on what I have done and the impact this has had on others. I accept I have made some mistakes but know that I am on a different path now. I believe I can lead a full and active life and can contribute to my local community. Other people believe this about me too – my family, friends and workers.

We have consulted with a wide variety of partners and service users in the making of this plan, including the three Service User Involvement groups in Ayrshire: MAD (Making a Difference), PING (Peoples' Involvement Networking Group), and CVN (Community Voices Network). More information on these groups can be found on our website.

Our Plan describes what we will do to achieve our three overarching **Ambitions** during 2018-21. We call these **Our Commitments**. Each year we will review our progress and update our list of **Commitments**.

Our new CJOIP sets out our nine **key areas of focus for 2018-21**, and identifies the high level commitments that we are making in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for those who live in our communities. In addition to this, commitments linked to specific themes or topic areas will be agreed and taken forward via four Pan-Ayrshire thematic groups:

- **Whole Systems Approach for Women**
- **Health & Justice**
- **Children & Families Affected by Justice**
- **Throughcare & Community Integration**

In addition to the thematic groups above, there are three area specific groups where local actions are agreed and delivered. These are:

- **South Ayrshire Community Justice Joint Action Group**
- **East Ayrshire Community Justice Collaborative Network**
- **Safer North Ayrshire Partnership**

Each of the thematic and local action groups has decided on their key areas of focus for 2018-19. Details of the actions being taken forward by the groups and the associated performance management framework can be found on our website.

We also link in with and contribute to other strategic partnerships across Ayrshire, working together on many cross-cutting issues and areas which span community justice. These include our local Alcohol & Drug Partnerships, Violence Against Women Partnerships, Child Protection Committee, Adult Protection Committee, and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

A diagram outlining the structure and associated groups can be found at page 17.

Community Justice Ayrshire aims to:

- Tackle the causes of offending to prevent it happening
- Work with people who are at risk of re-offending
- Support people who have committed crimes to move away from offending
- Work with partners to break down barriers to ensure that everyone in our communities has equal access to opportunities and have the chance to flourish in life.

“Equality is treating everyone the same, but equity is taking differences into account so everyone has a chance to succeed. The first one **sounds** fair, the second one **is** fair.”

Key Areas of Focus:



Keep Out of the Justice System



Gender Specific Approaches



Families



Victims and Witnesses



Inclusion / Equality



Hearing Service Users Voices



ACEs and Trauma



Strength in Recovery



Restorative Justice

Our Commitments are for all of those affected by crime. That includes people involved in offending, their families, victims, communities and those working in the justice system.

Starting from Strengths not Needs

Most plans start by looking at needs, gaps and weaknesses – What is wrong? What needs fixed? What are our problems? Who is to blame? What is missing?

Community Justice Ayrshire take a different approach. We start by looking at our Strengths. To do this we are using a model called **SOAR**.¹ This stands for:

- S**trengths
- O**pportunities
- A**spirations
- R**esults.

To do this we ask different questions – What are our greatest assets? What are the best possible opportunities? What future do we want to see? What results will we achieve?

We know that this approach is more positive, it helps us all work together, it makes us more creative and innovative, and it lets us build on what has worked well. Here are some examples of strengths we can build on Ayrshire. (You can read more about our SOAR approach in our ‘Starting from Strengths not Needs’ document on our website).²

A long tradition of good partnership working	Strong and resilient local communities	A wide range of support and services to help people
Our skills, talents and gifts	Service users' own views, ideas and experiences	What we have learned about 'what works' in reducing reoffending
A commitment to keeping service users at the centre of what we do together	Our links with other partnerships and other parts of Scotland	Our focus on three Ambitions: Beginnings, Belonging, Belief

¹ <http://www.soar-strategy.com/>

² www.communityjusticeayrshire.org.uk



Keep Out of the Justice System

We know that once people are involved in the formal justice system, it is very difficult to get back out, particularly if they get a criminal conviction. We will continue to promote and champion all efforts to stop people being drawn into and escalated up through the formal justice system. For those who do find themselves involved in the justice system, we will work with them to find ways to build resilience and capacity to move on from offending.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We Will:

- ❖ Promote arrest referral, Police and Procurator Fiscal direct measures, mental health triage, supporting people in distress, Prevention First, Early & Effective Intervention, Diversion from Prosecution and bail supervision as appropriate.
- ❖ Once a person has received three Recorded Police Warnings, the police will escalate their case to a more serious level. We will work with Police Scotland to encourage a referral to any support services people need as soon as they have had two Warnings.
- ❖ Continue to support the work of the 'Court Screening Service for Women, which aims to reduce the numbers of women who are remanded in custody unnecessarily.
- ❖ Develop / promote diversionary opportunities to reduce the numbers of children and young people who enter / progress through the formal justice system.
- ❖ Work with partners to ensure that the aspirations and strengths of people who are serving sentences in the community at the heart of their case management plan.
- ❖ Work with the Scottish Prison Service to strengthen throughcare links with for people returning to Ayrshire from prisons outwith Ayrshire
- ❖ Consult with people with lived experience of the justice system to find out what worked well, and identify gaps in services / support to encourage desistance / recovery.
- ❖ Continue to support the development of peer mentor roles as a means of fostering belief that change can happen.
- ❖ Continue to support the Electronic Monitoring Demonstration project currently being carried out in Ayrshire, which is being led by East Ayrshire Council.



Gender Specific Approaches

We know from research that those who have had the most difficult start to life are more likely to have poor outcomes in later life, including involvement in the criminal justice system. We also know that women and men often have very different 'journeys' into the justice system, and the evidence around the value and benefit of gender-specific and trauma-informed approaches is clear.

Women may be involved in the justice system as victims of domestic violence, sexual exploitation or a variety of other reasons. Many of these women have mental health problems and addiction issues, very often caused by them trying to find ways to cope with the problems they face in life.

We know that for young men in particular, insecurities and lack of opportunities can lead to bonds being made with like-minded youths or gangs in order to feel that they belong somewhere. This can often lead to violence, and an escalating involvement with the criminal justice system.

Whilst recognising that there are common issues across the genders, where appropriate we are committed to finding gender specific approaches to help both men and women avoid / move on from involvement in the justice system.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We will:

- ❖ Continue to develop a 'Whole Systems Approach for Women' across Ayrshire.
- ❖ Further develop and support Mentoring approaches including gender specific service such as Shine.
- ❖ Continue to work with partners to reduce the high numbers of women from Ayrshire who are remanded in custody.
- ❖ Work with Service User Involvement groups to gather feedback about 'what works' and implement accordingly.
- ❖ Work with our Violence Against Women Partnerships and 'Equally Safe Ayrshire' to develop actions to support gender equality.
- ❖ Support our local Women's Aid groups to further develop their services for women affected by domestic violence.
- ❖ Continue to learn from the experiences of men and women who are involved in the Caledonian System.
- ❖ Work with partners to consider the development of non-court mandated interventions for domestic violence (if appropriate).
- ❖ Pilot the use of the Strengths & Resilience Monitor for women serving community sentences.
- ❖ Support the further development of gender-specific support networks, such as 'Heart & Soul', the Ayrshire Women's Hub, peer support groups and 'men's sheds'.



Families

We know that families can be a big support when people are trying to move on from offending. We also know it can be stressful having a family member involved in the justice system. Family members often have to deal with issues around rejection, stigma, and victimisation by neighbours and the community. For families 'left behind' while a loved one is in prison, they can often feel as if they have had a bereavement. Family members may need support to help them deal with a variety of overwhelming feelings of grief, anger and worry and to help them to readjust throughout the course of arrest, trial, imprisonment and release.

Families Outside estimate that up to 27,000 children per year are affected by parental imprisonment in Scotland – which is more than the number who are affected by parental divorce. Having a parent in prison is one of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which can have an impact on life outcomes for children.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We Will:

- ❖ Increase the understanding of the impact of the justice system and promote the well-being of children and families who have been affected by it by delivering the 'Out of the Shadows' training in association with Families Outside.
- ❖ Work with HMP Kilmarnock's Family Strategy Group and other partners to promote local information, support and services for families of people in the justice system.
- ❖ Continue to promote the award winning East Ayrshire Council and HMP Kilmarnock 'Positive Play in Prisons' initiative as a way to improve relationships and resilience for prisoners and their families.
- ❖ Work with partners to improve access to support for families with loved ones held in prisons outwith Ayrshire.
- ❖ Work with partners to shape the development of the new Family Visitor Centre within HMP Kilmarnock.
- ❖ Work with partners to try to break the inter-generational cycle of offending, by linking services and promoting the development of a 'whole family approach' to working with those who are involved in the justice system.

Families often describe feeling punished along with the offender – "it's not just the prisoner who's being punished – it's the family as well"*

*Families Outside website www.familiesoutside.org.uk



Victims & Witnesses

Victims and witnesses of crime can feel invisible in the justice system and that their needs and experiences are overlooked. We want to make sure that victims' voices are heard and are championed at local and national level. This includes understanding that some people involved in offending have also been victims of crime – not just children, young people and women, but men too.

In 2016/17 Victim Support Scotland offered support to over 100,000 victims of crime and had 126,676 contacts with witnesses of crime. We are committed to ensuring that victims and witnesses receive the support they require, and that their voices heard and their opinions are taken into account.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

- ❖ Deliver our Ripple Effect training to practitioners to raise their awareness of the impact of crime on victims.
- ❖ Actively seek the views of victims of crime in order to shape future policy development and service delivery.
- ❖ Work with our local Victim Support services to identify other ways that we can work together to better support victims.
- ❖ In accordance with the aims of Victim Support Scotland, we will work with our local Victim Support services to develop a new 'victim centred' approach, working with partners to streamline points of contact, improve information flow and ensure victims of crime feel supported through the criminal justice system. This will reduce the need for victims to have to retell their story to several different organisations as they seek help.
- ❖ Promote the new national Statutory Guidance on Restorative Justice to help those who have caused harm and those who have been harmed to communicate about what happened and find a positive way forward.

“Until I became involved in restorative justice, my victims were just an A4 piece of paper” - Peter Woolf



Inclusion & Equality

We know that people who are involved in the justice system are socially excluded and face many inequalities. This includes inequalities linked to both offending and to being a victim of crime. We have agreed 'Shared Equality Outcomes' with other local organisations in Ayrshire, so we are all working towards the same equality goals. We want people in Ayrshire to experience safe and inclusive communities; have equal opportunities to access and shape public services; have the opportunity to fulfil their potential throughout life; and for public bodies to be inclusive and diverse employers.

The Management of Offenders Bill which will be enacted within the life of this plan, will modernise the existing law on the rehabilitation of offenders, and we are committed to using this opportunity to help people with convictions and employers understand the new requirements under the legislation. This will lead to more opportunities for people to move on from their involvement in the justice system and play an active part in their local communities and economy.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We will:

- ❖ Work with partners to help deliver the Ayrshire Shared Equalities Action Plan.
- ❖ Combine our efforts with those of partners to provide opportunities for people involved in the justice system to access training, volunteering or employment opportunities.
- ❖ Support the work being done in North Ayrshire by 'Recruit with Conviction' to train staff on how to assist people to disclose a criminal record, and to help employers to understand the changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 brought in by the Management of Offenders Bill, and look for opportunities to roll this out in East and South Ayrshire.
- ❖ Raise awareness of 'Release Scotland' amongst partner organisations.
- ❖ Continue to support the development of peer worker / mentor roles across a variety of service areas; giving people more choices and opportunities for personal development which can in turn inspire and motivate others to make changes in their own lives.
- ❖ Work with partners from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and financial inclusion services to raise awareness of welfare reform and the rollout of Universal Credit across Ayrshire, and enhance lines of communication to ensure that claims are made timeously to minimise disruption to payment.
- ❖ Seek the views of service users to ensure that we are aware of the challenges they face when accessing services, and learn from examples of good working practices.
- ❖ We will raise awareness of the loneliness and social isolation faced by people who are involved in the justice system, and promote training for practitioners in coping with loneliness and social isolation.



Hearing Service Users Voices

We know that people are the best experts in making changes to their own lives. Sometimes organisations and services don't listen to the people who are most affected by what they do. We have been working with the University of Strathclyde on a Service User Involvement project for community justice. The overarching objective is to work together to inform and support the design, development, implementation and review of a multi-layered service user engagement strategy/plan and practice across Ayrshire Community Justice Services.

The focus is on creating spaces for service users to participate in services in different ways, to be decided by those service users. This will help us to understand the best way to involve people in everything we do and to introduce new ways of working together with service users. This project, which is funded by the three Ayrshire Community Planning Partnerships is due to conclude within the life of this plan.

In addition to the above initiative, we are committed to using a variety of other means to reach out to users of wider community justice services to ask for their opinions on what works well, and what changes we could make to create more opportunities for people to move on with their lives.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We will:

- ❖ Continue to support the Service User Involvement Initiative, and ensure that the conclusions and recommendations contained within the final report are considered and implemented as appropriate.
- ❖ Work with wider community justice partners to find ways of gathering feedback from service users with 'quieter voices' from within our communities.
- ❖ Ensure that feedback from service users is considered when developing strategic plans and commissioning services.
- ❖ Seek service user representation (either physically or remotely) on all thematic groups.
- ❖ Continue to support the development of peer mentor approaches across Ayrshire, and put processes in place to allow mentors to feedback comments from service users.

'It's the camaraderie between guys...a lot of guys get out of the nick and they've got all these pals inside...then they come out here and they've got nothing...[now] they've got other guys like-minded to themselves...it's about supporting each other'. (Service User Involvement Participant)



Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma

The body of evidence linking a range of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to health-harming behaviours and poorer health outcomes is becoming increasingly better understood.

Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences has been found to have a strong and graded association with a range of health behaviours and outcomes, including: early onset of alcohol use; alcohol addiction; illicit drug use; depression; low life satisfaction; unintended teenage pregnancy; HIV risk behaviours, as well as a range of non-communicable diseases and premature death.

Although these experiences are surprisingly common in the general population, certain vulnerable groups, such as people involved in offending, are known to have experienced higher levels of adversity than others.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We will:

- ❖ Work with partner agencies across Ayrshire to develop a forum to coordinate the strategic direction of work related to ACEs.
- ❖ Share the feedback from the Community Justice Ayrshire ACEs conference: 'Start Where You Are and Do What You Can', held in February 2018 and actively promote the use of the video footage of the speakers' inputs from the conference as standalone training resources.
- ❖ Develop an overview of what support is currently available for people who have / are experiencing ACEs and trauma.
- ❖ Raise awareness of people working with children and parents (including expectant parents) of the links between ACEs, children's development and behaviours, and later offending.
- ❖ Work with partners to identify psychologically informed training needs / opportunities / resources.
- ❖ Promote training for practitioners in trauma-informed practice, so that they understand why people sometimes act as they do, and to help services to respond appropriately. This includes linking to other local and national training opportunities.
- ❖ Develop a calendar of events to capture and promote the work being done to tackle ACEs and trauma across Ayrshire



Strength In Recovery

We believe that people with lived experience of the justice system have a wealth of knowledge and understanding that is unique to their circumstances. Most people involved in the justice system move away from offending behaviour through time, with many people going on to help others in similar situations to make the necessary changes to allow them to do so too. Often we hear accounts of how one significant person has fostered a sense of belief in those who are ready to change, which helps that change to start to happen.

Ayrshire has a number of very active Recovery Communities for people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse. They offer hope and aspiration for the future, companionship and a sense of community, a broad programme of activities to help people structure their day, as well as peer training, volunteering and work opportunities. We are committed to building on the work that our partners in the Alcohol & Drug Partnerships across Ayrshire are doing to foster the strength and capacity that people in recovery have, along with their personal experience of recovery. This in turn will inspire hope in others who are less advanced in their own journey to recovery.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We will:

- ❖ Contribute to the development of the three Alcohol & Drug Partnership strategies 2018-21.
- ❖ Build stronger links with our local Recovery Communities, including delivering recovery groups at HMP Kilmarnock in partnership with North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.
- ❖ Support the delivery of the Steps to Excellence® programme within HMP Kilmarnock in association with South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.
- ❖ Campaign for more opportunities for people with lived experience of the justice system to access training, volunteering or paid employment, recognising the strength and resilience within them.
- ❖ Raise awareness of the added value that the Peer Mentoring approach brings to the overall Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) agenda.
- ❖ Celebrate the strength, resilience and successes of people in recovery via a variety of mediums including social media, the CJ Ayrshire website and via events and meetings.
- ❖ Use the three Service User Involvement groups in Ayrshire and the Mutual Aid group in North Ayrshire to build individual and collective capacity and belief by sharing experiences and success stories, and offering support as necessary.



Restorative Justice

There is growing evidence that restorative justice offers a powerful alternative to the traditional criminal justice system in some circumstances. Restorative justice brings those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward. This is part of a wider field called restorative practice.

Our Commitments

What are we going to do in 2018-21?

We will:

- ❖ Learn from the experience of delivering restorative justice practices from within Scotland, the UK and beyond.
- ❖ Promote the new national statutory guidance on Restorative Justice to help those who have caused harm and those who have been harmed to communicate about what happened and find a positive way forward.
- ❖ Make links with the Scottish Restorative Justice Forum, which creates opportunities for practitioners from different agencies to share examples of best practice.
- ❖ Learn from the experience of restorative justice services across Scotland, and consider the feasibility / applicability of developing a local model
- ❖ Participate in Prison Fellowship Scotland 'Sycamore Tree' restorative justice training and share learning thereafter.
- ❖ Identify other training / networking opportunities to learn more about the application of restorative justice.

Eighty percent of the public believe victims of crime should have the right to meet their offender – according to a poll carried out by IPSOS MORI on behalf of the Restorative Justice Council – and among people who had been a victim of crime, this figure rises to 85%.

About Community Justice Ayrshire

What is Community Justice Ayrshire?

Community Justice Ayrshire is a partnership covering East, North and South Ayrshire. We have been set up as part of a new approach to preventing and reducing reoffending in Scotland. This was introduced by the [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#). Each local area in Scotland has something similar and there is also a new national organisation called Community Justice Scotland.

This new approach replaces the previous arrangements led by Scotland's eight Community Justice Authorities (CJAs). This included South West Scotland CJA which covered this area and Dumfries and Galloway.

Who is involved?

The Community Justice Ayrshire partners are listed here. Each of these organisations already plays a role in preventing and reducing re-offending. Community Justice Ayrshire brings these organisations together to share information and learning, and to look at new opportunities for joint working.



Over time, other organisations will also be asked to get involved in our work. This includes local voluntary sector organisations who work with people involved in the justice system.

How does Community Justice Ayrshire make decisions?

The Community Justice Ayrshire partners meet together as a Board four times a year. These meetings are open to the public.

The Board reports to each of the three Ayrshire Community Planning Partnerships. This helps us to link to wider issues (like housing, health and work) and keeps us in touch with priorities for local communities across Ayrshire. This Plan links closely to the Community Planning Partnerships' plans, such as their Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans.



How will we know we are making progress?

Thematic groups have been established along with local action groups in East, North and South Ayrshire to support the Community Justice Ayrshire Board and to help deliver the Commitments Plan. At every Board meeting, the groups will report back on the progress they have made. This will include both achievements and areas for improvement.

The way we measure our performance is described in our 'Starting with Strengths not Needs' document. This also shows how we are helping to deliver the new [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) at a local level.

Where can I find out more?³

www.communityjusticeayrshire.org.uk

[East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership](#)

[North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership](#)

[South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership](#)

[Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)

[National Community Justice Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework](#)

[National Guidance for Local Partners in the New Model for Community Justice](#)

[National Strategy for Community Justice](#)

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³ The full Community Justice Ayrshire Operating Arrangements document can be viewed at www.communityjusticeayrshire.org.uk.

Appendix 1

