



Fife Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2025-2028

CONTENT

Foreword

What is Community Justice?

Community Justice in Fife

Fife profile

Priority areas

Participation statement

Foreword

Fife has a proven track record of working to deliver on 'community justice'. The 2016 Act introduced a new way of working, as opposed to a new way of thinking. Community Justice partners have long recognised the importance of acting at an early stage and supporting people in changing behaviours and reducing risk. There is a strong commitment to working closely with individuals and communities to find solutions to local problems.

The aim of community planning in Fife is to strengthen Fife's future by bringing together public and voluntary organisations to work together in Fife's communities, an aim shared with the National Community Justice Strategy. Community justice work in Fife is firmly embedded within this community planning structure.

2022 saw the launch of a new National Strategy for Community Justice and along with the revised National Outcomes have provided a refreshed direction for our work here in Fife, complementing our local strategic thinking.

Throughout the life of this plan, we will look to improve outcomes for people across all stages of the justice journey, focusing on early intervention, alternatives to custody, and ensuring person centred, tailored support is provided to people returning to our communities after serving a custodial sentence.

We know there are challenges ahead, as community justice partners we are operating in a complex, ever changing environment, but recognise that working together we have a greater chance of improving the lives of individuals and communities.

Councillor Margaret Kennedy

Chair of the Fife Community Justice Partnership

What is Community Justice?

Community justice is where people who have broken the law are held to account and supported to reconnect and contribute to their communities. Where it is safe to do so, people who commit certain crimes receive community-based sentences. This can include treatment for underlying issues such as drug or alcohol addiction, unpaid work, fines and compensation, or restrictions of liberty such as electronic tagging and curfews. The evidence shows that community justice can help people stop breaking the law again, leading to fewer victims and safer communities.

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places a statutory duty on a number of partners to determine how services are delivered in Fife, specifically with the aim of supporting the prevention of re-offending. This work is captured within the nationally determined aims and outcomes.

National Framework

The [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) lays out four national aims (see table 1 below) which are underpinned by [13 priority actions](#):

National Aims	
1	Optimise the use of diversion and intervention at the earliest opportunity
2	Ensure that robust and high quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available across Scotland
3	Ensure that services are accessible and available to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence
4	Strengthen the leadership, engagement, and partnership working of local and national community justice partners

Community Justice in Fife #1

In April 2024, colleagues within Fife Council's Research and Insight Team, produced a report '**Know your Population: Community Justice**' to support local improvement work in relation to national outcomes for Community Justice, recognising that the starting point for planning improvements is to know your population.

Key points to note from this report include:

Housing

- There is a strong association between prisoners and homelessness, with estimates that between 15% and 32% of prisoners were either homeless or living in temporary accommodation prior to imprisonment.
- 79% of prisoners who reported being homeless before custody were reconvicted in the first year after release.
- In 2022/23, 'Discharge from prison/hospital/care/other institution' was given as the main reason for a homelessness application by 92.6% of applicants

Health

- The proportion of the Fife population in receipt of prescriptions for anxiety and depression is greater in the most deprived areas (27.1%) than least deprived (15.3%), with Levenmouth seeing the highest rates.
- Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Levenmouth are the areas linked with the highest rates of alcohol-related hospital admissions. Levenmouth and Cowdenbeath are the only two Fife areas to be above the Scottish rate for alcohol-specific deaths.
- Fife (275.98 per 100,000) remains significantly above Scottish rate (228.36) for drug-related hospital admissions, having first overtaken this in 2010/11 - 2012/13.
- Those living in the most deprived areas are nearly three times more likely to be problem gamblers.

Community Justice in Fife #2

Safer Fife

- The Fife crime rate has increased for the third consecutive year.
- Fife shoplifting charges increased to 77 per 10,000 population in 2022/23. Only Dundee City and Aberdeen City had higher rates.
- Fewer than 20% of calls to the police result in a crime being recorded, with there being a strong link with mental health distress in many cases.
- In Fife 4,903 incidents of domestic abuse were reported in 2022/23, a 17% decrease from 2021/22. This was still above the 2019/20 figure, appearing to be a legacy of the increase in incidents seen during the Covid pandemic.

Community Justice

- The proportion of community disposals continues to reduce, to 12.8% of the Fife total in 2022/23. Of these, community payback orders accounted for the largest proportion.
- The percentage of community payback order with unpaid hours remains below pre-covid numbers, at around 55-60%.
- The average length of Fife community payback unpaid work hours is higher than the Scottish rate, at 140-160 hours.
- While the number of prison arrivals have seen a long-term decrease at Fife and Scottish level, the gap between Fife and the Scottish rate has been narrowing.
- There is evidence of a growing link between homelessness and prison, with the percentage of prison arrivals with no fixed abode seeing a long-term increase. Those with no fixed abode accounted for 9.1% of arrivals in 2022/23

Community Justice in Fife #3

Plan for Fife

- Community Justice activity in Fife supports the delivery of the Plan for Fife 'Thriving Places' priority:
- *Thriving Places are safe, well designed and maintained places that promote wellbeing, where people are proud to be, and where they have access to the services and facilities they need at different stages of their lives'.*
- The deliberate alignment between the Plan for Fife and the CJOIP allows ease of reporting for partners and a consistency of approach. The local Community Justice Lead will contribute to the annual Plan for Fife update report.

Fife Community Justice Partners

- There is a strong willingness from CJ Partners within Fife to work together to build on the already extensive CJ activity in Fife with a view to improving outcomes for all those involved. The CJ Partnership currently include representation from the following agencies:



Fife Community Justice Partners

Fife Council Justice Social Work Service

Fife Council Housing Service

Fife Health & Social Care Partnership

Police Scotland

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Skills Development Scotland

Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP)

Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP)

Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service

The Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service

Fife Centre for Equalities

Fife Voluntary Action (FVA)

BRAG Enterprises

Scottish Prison Service

Fife Employability Service

Families Outside

SACRO

Victim Support Fife

Fife Profile

The [Know Your Population: Community Justice](#) Report published in May 2024 provides the following information, which is useful in setting the scene in Fife:

Fife is the 3rd largest of 32 local authorities by population, and the 13th largest by geographic size, covering 1,325 square kilometres of land. Bounded by the River Tay to the north, and River Forth to the south, Fife's coastline extends for around 185 kilometres.

While Fife has a mixture of urban and rural settlements, two-thirds of people tend to live in urban areas, mainly in or near the three largest urban centres of City of Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes. The remaining people live in smaller towns or villages. Central and south Fife are characterised by a mainly urban and industrial landscape, while the southwest of Fife and most of the east of Fife, are more rural in nature.

Fife has a decentralised structure based around 7 Area Committees, which are the same as Health and Social Care Localities. Each Area is built up from a local grouping of Fife's 22 multi-member Wards, within which are settlements (or towns). The differences between committee areas extend beyond settlement type. Each Area has a distinct profile, creating both challenges and opportunities for residents.

The ongoing effects of the cost of living crisis reach across social groups, and throughout Fife. While fuel costs have fallen from a historic high (although they have subsequently risen again) and interest rates somewhat reduced by the summer of 2024, this is unlikely to have a significant effect on those affected. Food and fuel prices remain higher than they were pre-pandemic. Continued housing market instability, including rising rents, short-term mortgage deals and a shortage of affordable housing, will leave many Fifiers in an uncertain financial situation.

Priority areas

Of the nine national outcomes linked with the Community Justice Framework, the following are of particular focus within this CJOIP and for the reasons provided as evidence:

National Outcome		Local Evidence	Focus
2	More people in police custody receive support to address their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence of an increasing link between mental health issues and contact with the police, with mental health distress associated with a large proportion of non-crime calls to the police. Early identification of such individuals, alongside sharing of information, will minimise risk of arrest and police involvement. • Ill health due to drink and drugs continues to be an issue in Fife. Mid-Fife is strongly linked with alcohol-related harm, while Fife continues to be linked with a high rate of drug-related hospital admissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve links with Custody Suites • Liaise with ADP re monitoring of MAT standards in custody
4	More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community payback orders continue to account for the largest proportion of Fife community disposals. Completion rates should continue to be monitored in order to assess the impact of unpaid work and other targeted measures • Variety of agencies including Justice Social Work staff are trained in restorative approaches • DBI training for Housing staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop online opportunities listed in the CJS Online Community Interventions & Support Directory • Improve our understanding of restorative practices and approaches and identify how we can promote and support this process • Follow updates on national RJ services.
5	More people have access to, and continuity of, health and social care following release from a prison sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicates that there is a strong link between deprivation and imprisonment, suggesting that some individuals may be entering prison with pre-existing health conditions. This makes it important that such conditions are recorded, and consideration given to any linked support that will be required upon release. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve links with Health & Social Care partners in Fife
6	More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness is strongly associated with prison, both prior to and post incarceration. With research highlighting the importance that having a place to live has on future reoffending, it is vital that the housing needs of individuals in prison are proactively addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Liberation meetings in Fife • Develop Fife Council Housing Service Prison Release project • Develop links with national Voluntary Throughcare provider • Encourage peer support and mentoring
7	More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rates vary across Fife, with particular challenges faced by residents of Mid-Fife. With many traditional industries vanishing, heavily affecting areas such as Glenrothes, it is of great importance that people with convictions can access all necessary support to increase their readiness for employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop links with Opportunities Fife, Employability, BRAG.
9	More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver engagement opportunities with service users and the work force, and communication with the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop lived experience feedback into service provision

Participation Statement

As community justice partners in Fife, we aim to ensure that our plans reflect the perspectives of those people most affected by Community Justice.

One of our main challenges is how to authentically involve communities across Fife in shaping our local community justice agenda (as required by national outcome 9 - “more people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice”). We will continue to work on that over the period of this plan, especially in terms of providing a voice to those with lived experience.

We will also continue to look to engage agencies who may not have previously considered themselves to be part of the effort to reduce reoffending, to encourage them to consider the relevance of their services, especially in relation to prevention and early intervention.

We commit to:

- encourage participation in our planning, design and development of services
- make use of evidence around service user involvement to facilitate development of a co-ordinated approach to the provision of service for all affected by community justice in all its forms.
- work closely with our partners who have greater expertise in working with service users with lived experience, to enable us to gain a better understanding of the impacts our services have, and how best to improve.
- continue to develop our engagement methods.

We recognise the importance of a coordinated communication and engagement strategy which highlights our shared statutory responsibility as a partnership. This plan outlines our approach to achieving the best possible outcomes for all those affected by community justice in Fife.