

Community Justice Scotland
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland:
Local area annual return template
Reporting year April 2024 – March 2025**

Sept 2025

1. Background

This reporting template has been developed in discussion with community justice representatives from local areas. This template is designed to enable local areas to gather information and report on progress towards the community justice outcomes.

2. Statement of Assurance and Data Usage

The information submitted to CJS using this template will be used by CJS in its role to monitor, promote and support improvement in, and keep the Scottish Ministers informed about, performance in the provision of community justice.

In line with provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), CJS will use appropriate data to ensure that there is continuous reporting, development and progress towards the national outcomes. By providing data to CJS you are consenting to its use by CJS as indicated. Community Justice Partnerships should be aware that any information held by CJS is subject to statutory Freedom of Information obligations.

Completion of the template can help local partnerships to fulfil their requirements under s23 (1b) of the Act by using the developed content to inform the production of the publicly facing summary statement of annual progress.

3. General principles of the template

The template and guidance have been developed using the following principles:

- Support CJS in developing the evidence base for local community justice activity and progress across Scotland within the reporting year
- Support CJS to comply with their duties set out in the Act, Sections 26-30
- Support local partners to comply with their local reporting requirements set out in section 23 of the Act.

4. How to fill in the template

The return should be completed and consulted on with partners involved in community justice in your local area. In line with the Act this includes statutory partners, third sector bodies involved in community justice in the area, and such community bodies or other persons as partners consider appropriate. CJS expects that completion of this template will be a collaborative effort.

This template incorporates guidance to support completion, with the text *(in blue)* providing reflective prompts to consider when developing your answer, which can be deleted and replaced with your response. These should be considered together through the development of your answer rather than addressed individually.

There is no expectation that areas will return substantial numerical data. It is likely that local areas will not have the national data indicators set out by the Community Justice Performance Framework at the time they are completing this template. **It is not anticipated that CJS will routinely use or refer to local level national indicator data in the context of the national outcome activity annual report.** If in developing the national report it becomes apparent that local-level data may support further analysis of particular outcomes, for example in identifying potential recommendations, exploring data outliers, or areas for further development, we expect this to be taken forward in discussion with the relevant local areas and partners.

Instead, we want partners to focus on the qualitative evidence drawn from their activity and insights about impact. Relevant local supporting evidence from the [CJS improvement tool](#) that will supplement the national indicator data has been specified under each national outcome in this template. We would encourage partners to develop the response to this template in conversation with each other and view it as an opportunity to reflect on your strengths and needs in partnership.

Where the template asks for evidence, a written response will suffice and there is no expectation that you send additional supporting documentation – if there are any aspects CJS is unclear on, it will be our responsibility to request clarification where necessary.

If any response or evidence requires details about people with lived experience (e.g. evidence in respect of someone's life story) please DO NOT include any identifiable personal or sensitive information (as outlined in Schedules 2 & 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998) as CJS does not require such information. If this is unavoidable then please ensure that the data is fully anonymised.

If you have any queries about completing the template, then please email CJSImprovement@communityjustice.scot.

1. Community Justice Partnership / Group Details

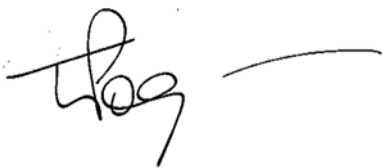
Name of local authority area/s	The City of Edinburgh
Name and contact details of the partnership Chair	Name: Councillor Tim Pogson Email: cllr.tim.pogson@edinburgh.gov.uk Telephone: 0131 529 4164
Contact for queries about this report	Name: Suzan Ross Email: suzan.ross@edinburgh.gov.uk Telephone: 07990791548

2. Template Sign-off from Community Justice Partnership / Group Chair

Enter the name of the chair to confirm that the local community justice partnership representatives have agreed this return as an accurate record. It should be returned to CJS by 26 September 2025.

For the purpose of submitting this return to CJS ensure you have agreement from community justice partners.

Date: 25 September 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Pogson', followed by a horizontal line.

Name: Councillor Tim Pogson

3. Governance Arrangements

Last year, we asked partnerships to describe their governance structure for community justice arrangements and include links to wider community planning. Please describe any substantive changes since your previous answer.

No change to governance arrangements

4. The year overall

This section should be used to reflect some of the a) challenges/negative implications and b) opportunities/positive implications from the reporting year on the community justice partnership. This can include impact on the improvement activity, partner collaboration, delivery of services, or other as relevant.

Challenges / Negatives

In May 2024, the Community Safety and Justice Partnership (CSJP) held a development session to consider key community safety and community justice issues impacting Edinburgh. This event was designed to seek input from partners on the direction and function of the CSJP including addressing low attendance at some CSJP meetings.

The CSJP was further impacted by a wider City of Edinburgh Council structural review encompassing community safety, community justice, and community planning services. Partnership working continued, however overarching CSJP meetings were placed on hold as key CSJP personnel left the organisation, and staff were recruited into new leadership posts. A follow up development session took place in May 2025 with partners whereby it was agreed that plans would be put in place to resume meetings and proposals drawn up to agree partnership function, direction, decision making, and governance.

As highlighted in previous years, the City of Edinburgh Council (the Council) welcomed the additional Scottish Government monies awarded in 2024/25 to local authorities to commission Third Sector support in delivering improved community justice outcomes. Longer term planning in relation to community justice Third Sector service development and the delivery timeframe however remains a challenge due to the late notification of the award coupled with the funding's short-term nature leading to uncertainty for staff and recruitment challenges. Additionally, the piecemeal funding model leads to repeated annual procurement exercises which does not make best use of resources.

Positives / Opportunities

Although CSJP meetings were placed on hold for a period in 2024, partnership working continued at pace to support people in the justice system and address specific community safety issues impacting Edinburgh. Multi-agency preventative work relating to young people engaged in antisocial behaviour and on the cusp of crime particularly around the bonfire/fireworks period, continued to expand with Lothian Association of Youth Clubs, Young People's Service, Police Scotland, Lothian Buses, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), and education services working together throughout the year to embed pro-social behaviours to discourage and divert young people away from involvement in crime and disorder. The co-ordinated citywide multiagency activity also provided opportunities to work with the private sector who in 2024, supported some of the young people's diversionary

activities around bonfire night with free event tickets while Lothian Buses supported many activities providing transport to and from venues. The positive work continues into 2025/26.

Throughcare and Aftercare (TCAC) and Adult Justice Services have together developed a dedicated pilot-based Social Work role focussing specifically on care leavers (under 26 years old) involved with the justice system. The project recognises their status as emerging adults and the need for access to transitional and developmentally appropriate services bridging youth and adult systems. It also aims to address the disproportionate representation of this high priority group across social service sectors, prison populations, and community-based justice services. The initiative employs early interventions, proactively supporting the young adults to reduce their contact with the justice system and into positive destinations and outcomes. Supports provided to address their needs include relationship-based, trauma informed assistance with accessing housing and education/employment in line with care leaver pathway entitlements, and assistance with successful community rehabilitation. The project is being funded for one year initially and to date has contributed to a clearer understanding of the intersection between care experience and justice involvement in Edinburgh. Going forward the project will continue to gather data, conduct analysis, and identify gaps in provision to better inform service design for this vulnerable population.

A new justice services structure implemented in 2024 following an internal Council review has facilitated the development of more accessible supports for men in the justice system. The new Justice Pathways Service (JPS) has now been established to deliver a wide range of supports for men based on their needs at the time of engaging and creating a more equitable provision that delivers the right justice supports at the right time.

Priority Action One

Enhance intervention at the earliest opportunity by ensuring greater consistency, confidence in and awareness of services which support the use of direct measures and diversion from prosecution

Nationally determined outcome:

More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution¹

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people undertaking diversion from prosecution and are used to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people supporting the delivery of diversion from prosecution and are used to support improvement.

5. What activity has taken place to increase successful completion of diversion? What impact has there been as a result?

Justice Services has worked to provide a range of interventions and supports to individuals who are completing diversion from prosecution interventions. Following the restructuring of

¹ National Indicator:

Number of diversion from prosecution:

- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed

justice services in 2024, the aforementioned JPS was created to provide holistic community-based supports to men in the justice system. The new service focuses on providing appropriate support to individuals at the right time and offers both 1:1 and groupwork supports to men irrespective of their stage within the justice journey. Under this new model, diversion from prosecution referrals make up a large part of the JPS social work caseload with those completing diversion having access to a wider range of interventions and all supports offered being tailored to suit their needs and address issues they may have.

Working with partners

To support the availability and delivery of varied interventions, JPS has worked with Third Sector partner CGL to co-facilitate a SMART recovery group. Additionally, during the reporting period, and recognising that many of the men attending JPS may be nutritionally deficient, JPS has initiated a new group co-facilitated with Edinburgh Community Food (ECF) supporting men to improve their diet, while exploring basic cooking skills using limited equipment (which often mirrors the facilities men can access at home), and discussing healthy eating on a budget.

JPS has worked with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to incorporate flexibility within the delivery of diversion for men. This ensures that complex cases where the alleged behaviour is serious are granted additional time to conduct the diversion assessment. Examples included, one case involving a male who had transitioned to adult justice services from the Young People's Service as he had reached 18 years of age. The alleged offences were serious however he was initially reluctant to work with the service and his engagement was poor. However, with encouragement and time flexibility built in, the individual changed his mind and has since responded well to the interventions offered. Another case involved an 18-year-old male charged with sexual offences alleged to have occurred in his mid-teens. After engaging in a brief period of intervention following initial reluctance, the case was successfully diverted.

JPS considers all diversion cases referred carefully and has been able to recommend diversion without intervention for those cases where an individual has already taken steps to address the issues identified which contributed to the alleged offending. For example, linking in with local recovery hubs for support with substance use or engaging with NHS programmes to support improved mental health.

Table 1 below shows a slight increase in the number of assessments conducted when compared with the previous year. The number of cases commencing in the reporting period fell by 7% however cases successfully completed increased by 128%, some of which will relate to cases started in the previous reporting period but also demonstrating the improved engagement with individuals undertaking diversion, supporting them to achieve a successful outcome.

Table 1 – data on diversion from prosecution 2022-2025

Year	Assessments undertaken	Cases commenced	*Cases successfully completed
2022-23	341	345	101
2023-24	323	358	113
2024-25	335	312	258

* Not all diversion interventions will be completed in the same year as their commencement.

Despite the best efforts of JPS to engage individuals, occasionally it is necessary to return referrals for diversion to COPFS. For example, where an individual consistently fails to attend appointments or completely denies their involvement or presence in the alleged matter. Similarly, very occasionally, referrals are returned where there are concerns about risk, particularly in relation to domestic offending.

Challenges

The delivery of diversion faces challenges in cases where a significant time period has passed between the alleged offence occurring and the diversion referral being made. This can create difficulties in contacting the individual concerned with some cases having to be returned to COPFS for remarking. Additionally, time delay between incident and referral can also lead to cases being returned to COPFS as an individual's circumstances may have changed. For example, an individual was referred to diversion for alcohol related matters nine months after the alleged incident occurred by which time his health had deteriorated, and he no longer had capacity to make his own decisions. Therefore, it was considered inappropriate to proceed with the assessment and the case was returned to COPFS for consideration.

Next steps

Following a self-evaluation exercise conducted by justice services in 2024 supported by the Care Inspectorate, diversion was an area highlighted for development, more specifically relating to increasing uptake, developing local guidance for staff, and improving information recording. The establishment of JPS has improved the variety and accessibility of interventions for men completing diversions, more cases have been completed successfully, and a new information system is being rolled out to facilitate improved recording. Additionally, the active staff recruitment exercise at JPS is expected to conclude over the next few months. A fully staffed JPS team will then be in a position to further facilitate ongoing development of the delivery of diversion.

Priority Action Two

Improve the identification of underlying needs and the delivery of support following arrest by ensuring the provision of person-centred care within police custody and building upon referral opportunities to services including substance use and mental health services

Nationally determined outcome:

More people in police custody receive support to address their needs²

Local Evidence:

- There is an effective relationship between community justice partners, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) and police custody centre for local population.
- Referral pathways and support are in place from police custody centre for local population

² National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres

6. What activity has taken place to support people in police custody to access support? What impact has there been as a result?

Arrest referral

Edinburgh's arrest referral service has continued to be delivered within St Leonard's Police Station. Commissioned jointly by the Council's justice services and Midlothian Council, the service is delivered by Third Sector organisation Change, Grow, Live (CGL) and is an integral part of the continuity of care model provided by the Edinburgh and Midlothian Offending Recovery and Support Service (EMORSS). The model delivers supports to people across three key elements of the justice system, from point of arrest, into prison, and on their return to the community. Support is provided as far as possible by the same worker or small group of workers within EMORSS which allows for the development of positive relationships crucial to encouraging engagement.

EMORSS workers offer the arrest referral in person service on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons while the support is available on a referral basis for people in custody out with those times. Referrals are received from Police Scotland custody staff and NHS custody nurses based at St Leonards as part of their proactive engagement with the most vulnerable. People may also self-refer as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2 – referral sources – arrest referral 24-25

Arrest referral sources	St Leonard's Police Station
Self-referral	148
Police	13
Nurses	30
West Lothian Assertive Outreach	25
<u>Total</u>	<u>216</u>

Arrest referral supports are tailored to the individual's needs with a focus on harm reduction and reducing risk. In the reporting period 843 individuals were seen in custody of which 148 agreed to a full on-site assessment to identify their needs and arrange follow up support. The service is supplemented by an Assertive Outreach Recovery Co-ordinator.

Assertive Outreach Recovery Co-ordinator

The Outreach Recovery Coordinator co-ordinates all referrals into arrest referral, following up each case and proactively engaging those who are hard to reach, and presenting the highest risk of drug-related harm; this included carrying out 79 home visits over the year. The work also included linking in with Arrest Referral Champions in St Leonards to promote the EMORSS service and encourage referrals. The Co-ordinator hosted a weekly drop-in service at Broughton Street and visited Edinburgh Sheriff Court to further encourage referrals into the service from the NHS Court Liaison and Diversion Service and the court social work team.

The Outreach Recovery Coordinator also attended the weekly Community Inclusion Health Huddle (CIHH), building good working relationships with support services in the community such as Streetwork which has been particularly useful for locating and attempting to re-engage individuals who have not followed up on their arrest referral acceptance or initial outreach intervention as the case study below demonstrates.

Case study; arrest referral/assertive outreach – worker perspective

I first came across Individual A through an arrest referral. He'd given consent for follow-up, and staff at the Salvation Army helped me get in touch. I spoke to him over the phone and arranged to meet him at his temporary accommodation. When we met, he was clearly in alcohol withdrawal - shaking and struggling. He told me he was worried about having seizures if he couldn't get alcohol soon. We kept it brief. I gave him a bus ticket and booked him in for an in-office assessment, however he didn't attend.

Not long after, I found out he'd been arrested again and had lost his accommodation at the Salvation Army. That made things more challenging as he had no phone and wasn't staying anywhere consistently. I reached out to Streetwork and asked them to pass on a message if they saw him.

Purely by chance, I bumped into him while I was out visiting another client. We arranged another appointment but again, he didn't turn up. A few weeks later, I saw him in custody at St Leonard's and he told me he'd been down south staying with family. It was an unexpected meeting, but a productive one. We managed to have a proper chat and put together a short-term plan for when he was released. Because he still didn't have a phone, I went back to Streetwork to help bridge the gap. The very next day, he rang me from the Streetwork phone, and we agreed to meet there. This time, we managed to complete the full assessment, and I officially took him on.

Things were still a bit chaotic for him, and as a team we agreed that I'd be his recovery coordinator; it made sense, given I already had a connection with him and the flexibility to be where he was. Later that same week, he turned up at the CGL office on his own asking for support. A colleague recognised it was urgent and got him in to see someone straight away. He came back the following week too, and since then he's been consistently engaging, being supported to address his alcohol use and to become stable in the community. His journey really shows how important persistence and visibility are in this work. If I hadn't kept turning up and working with partners like Streetwork, he might have slipped through the gaps.

Meeting people where they're at, both literally and emotionally, is what makes the difference, and in this case, it helped Individual A take those first steps toward something more stable.

Priority Action Three

Support the use of robust alternatives to remand by ensuring high quality bail services are consistently available and delivered effectively

Nationally determined outcome:

More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision³

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms are in place to support a high quality bail assessment.
- Referral pathways are in place that support identified needs of people on bail supervision.

³ National Indicator:

Number of:

- assessment reports for bail suitability
- bail supervision cases commenced
- bail supervision cases completed

7. What activity has taken place to increase the use of bail, and support people to access services to address needs while on bail? What impact has there been as a result?

Bail supervision activity

Following a justice services review of service provision and consideration of how to improve outcomes for people being supported within the justice system, a dedicated 'Court Team' was created in 2024 to focus on providing a Court Social Work Service. This newly established team has assumed responsibility for conducting all supervised bail and electronic monitoring assessments and providing related assessment reports. The team has worked to improve the conversion rate from supervised bail assessments to Bail Supervision Orders and to increase confidence in the use of bail supervision through improved communications with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). Local information about the new Court Team has also been provided to Sheriffs to encourage greater use of this resource through increasing the number of bail supervision referrals. This focus has resulted in a notable increase in the number of bail supervision assessments carried out which in turn has led to a 280% increase in the number of bail supervision cases commenced in the reporting period. Cases successfully completed have seen a 100% increase when compared with the number reported in 2023/24 as Table 3 below shows.

Table 3 – data on bail supervision 2022-2025

Year	Number of assessment reports for bail suitability submitted to the courts	Bail supervision cases commenced	Bail supervision cases successfully completed
2022/23	104	52	104
2023/24	130	44	27
2024/25	425	167	54**

**some cases commencing in 2024/25 will not successfully complete until 2025/26; those are not captured in this figure and the data will be revised upwards in 2026

During the reporting period, the Court Team approached every individual whose bail was opposed by the Procurator Fiscal to explain how the bail supervision service operates and to request consent to carry out an assessment to enable them to be considered for bail supervision. Where consent to conduct an assessment was given, the team considered welfare, risk, and need as well as the specific concerns of the court to create a tailored action plan with the individual, setting out how their identified needs would be managed. The team aimed to complete the assessment before he/she was seen by the Sheriff to avoid delays to the process.

As part of the robust bail assessment process, the Court Team staff confirmed the support of all agencies who would be involved in the individual's care before the final draft was shared with the defence agent. Collaboration with the Third Sector and other partners formed a key element in preparing a workable plan. This plan was activated where the Sheriff agreed to

the bail supervision and the individual subsequently attended an appointment with justice support services JPS for men or Willow for women to enable interventions to commence without delay. Due to the challenges in facilitating the increased number of bail supervision cases commenced in 2024/25 and subsequent appointments needed, an additional justice worker was recruited to support the JPS to manage and support the men attending their interventions appointments. A range of 1:1 specific supports and group activities were offered to assist those on bail supervision including for example, practical and emotional supports, relationship building, assistance with accommodation, and attending appointments for welfare, mental health, and alcohol/drug dependency.

Follow up opportunities for bail assessments

Although conducting a bail supervision assessment prior to each case being heard by the Sheriff is considered best practice, it is not always possible to achieve this during busy periods and cases are prioritised according to vulnerability. In cases where women have been remanded without an assessment being conducted either due to work pressures or where consent was refused, they are offered a follow up opportunity for a bail supervision assessment while in custody to improve their likelihood of being managed in the community. Going forward, the JPS and Court Team will explore how to introduce follow up opportunities for men in custody with the focus being placed on the most vulnerable.

Self-evaluation and local guidance

A justice services self-evaluation exercise was conducted in 2024 which highlighted bail supervision as an area of development. The creation of the Court Team has contributed to improvements in this area evidenced by the increased use of bail supervision during the reporting period. Additionally, the service has been further enhanced by the drafting of new local guidance/procedures to support improved practice and enhance staff confidence in their roles and responsibilities. A new information recording system is also being implemented which will assist staff to more easily record bail supervision activity with accuracy and efficiency.

Priority Action Four

Strengthen options for safe and supported management in the community by increasing and widening the use of electronic monitoring technologies

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

8. What activity has taken place in your area to increase the use electronic monitoring technologies? What impact has there been as a result?

Use of electronic monitoring technologies

The use of electronic monitoring (EM) technologies has continued to support the management of people in the justice system in Edinburgh. For every bail assessment conducted, consent is sought from the individual being assessed in relation to their willingness to participate in the EM scheme and recommendations made to the Court where

appropriate. Over the past three years, EM as a condition of bail issued by Edinburgh courts has risen by 141%.

EM is a useful tool in supporting people comply with their bail conditions. It is particularly helpful when used alongside bail supervision thus ensuring that the individual subject to EM also has a tailored support plan in place to provide further motivation. The increased use of successful EM as a condition of bail demonstrates its effectiveness as an alternative to remand.

Additionally, to aid rehabilitation, EM can also provide reassurance about the restriction of movement of a monitored person by imposing time and locational limitations upon them within a range of justice disposals.

Examples of the use of EM technologies in Edinburgh are shown in Table 4 below. The numbers of breaches/breach rates relating to the Orders listed are not included as the Council does not have access to that information.

Table 4 – use of electronic monitoring technologies in Edinburgh over the past three years

Electronic monitoring (EM) technologies	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
EM as a condition of bail (Orders issued by Edinburgh courts)	75	135	181
EM as a condition of bail (within Edinburgh)	-	-	137*
Restriction of Liberty Order (RLO) (issued by Edinburgh courts)	228	292	293
RLO (within Edinburgh)	-	-	204*

*the Scottish Government has requested the inclusion of local authority specific figures as shown here therefore data for previous years is unavailable

A male individual subject to an RLO from Edinburgh Sheriff Court commented:

"I was really nervous while being on tag. If I went out after 5pm I was always worried that I was going to be late for my curfew. But it has been good for keeping myself away from getting into trouble."

eSafe

Where the Parole Board or the Court have granted a condition or requirement to monitor an individual's electronic devices for example as part of a Community Payback Order, Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO), or Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO), remote electronic monitoring of internet enabled devices can be considered. The eSafe managed monitoring service tracks an individual's use of their I.T. devices to detect signs of inappropriate and/or criminal behaviour. It is only deployed as part of an agreed strategy of the risk management plan and is undertaken with the individual's knowledge. Potential offences/breaches are reported to the lead agency and where concerns emerge relating to risk and harm, eSafe will notify Police Scotland via the 999 system. The use of remote electronic monitoring software continues to be developed by the Council's justice services and Police Scotland.

Priority Action Five

Ensure that those given community sentences are supervised and supported appropriately to protect the public, promote desistance from offending and enable rehabilitation by delivering high quality, consistently available, trauma-informed services and programmes

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences⁴

Local Evidence

- Availability of local programmes to support desistance from domestic abuse and sexual offending.
- Availability of referral pathways to support the needs of local population on community disposals.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people with experience of community disposals to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of the community justice workforce with regard to supporting the needs of people subject to community disposals to support improvement.

9. *What activity has taken place that will support people serving sentences in the community to desist from offending, address their needs, and help them successfully complete their sentence? What impact has there been as a result?*

Supports for people serving a community sentence

A range of interventions exist to support people to service their sentence in the community. A few examples are illustrated below.

Edinburgh Community Food (ECF)

During the reporting period, Third Sector charitable organisation ECF worked collaboratively with the [Willow](#) service to deliver a nutritional guidance and support service for women in the justice system. Recognising the relationship between healthy eating, good mental health and quality of life, ECF have developed a programme focussed on food and nutrition. The programme provides a range of activities and learning including:

- Key nutritional information for a healthy diet
- Practical demonstrations of cooking healthy meals
- Exploring healthy ingredients on sale at local supermarkets
- Cooking healthy meals on a budget
- Safe food preparation and storage

⁴ National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- community payback orders successfully completed
- drug treatment and testing orders successfully completed

- Exploring various cooking ingredients and flavours including use of herbs and spices in cooking
- Cooking as part of a team and group lunches
- 1:1 nutrition sessions
- Using kitchen essentials
- Kettle cooking

The nutrition sessions are hosted collaboratively by Willow staff and ECF and the women are supported to develop skills around cooking and to increase their confidence around food, food choices, and cooking skills, encouraging longer term positive health behaviours. The service recognises that some women may not have access to conventional cooking facilities particularly those living in temporary accommodation and creative cooking solutions are employed to support women in those circumstances. The service also provides other supports where required alongside the nutritional learning, for example supports for literacy issues, learning difficulties, and mild learning disabilities.

The collaboration benefits from the input of peer supporters which further encourages participants to develop improved interpersonal skills and reduces the risk of their reoffending. For women who are interested in continuing their learning, ECF offers pathways into volunteering and food/nutrition/food hygiene educational courses. Sessions are delivered at the Women's Justice Centre where a range of wider supports for women in the justice system is available.

During the reporting period there were:

- 166 attendances at the lunch clubs; two lunch clubs are held each week, some women may attend more than one lunch club
- 146 1:1 nutrition conversations took place between the women and an ECF nutritionist
- 1006 portions of food were made and consumed by the sessions' attendees

Evaluating the impact of the service has presented some challenges in relation to attendees' literacy, inconsistent attendance, and participants being at a stage in their justice journey where they are able to consider how the service has influenced them. ECF regularly encourages feedback, both paper-based and online (via a QR code) with forms displayed on the ECF noticeboard alongside the 'Recipe of the Week' at the Women's Justice Centre. Qualitative verbal feedback is routinely captured in addition to ECF facilitator observations and feedback from Willow staff.

Feedback included:

"Thank you, I needed some hot food... I enjoyed making the scrambled eggs in the kettle, it really worked" – woman living in accommodation with limited cooking facilities on attending a session demonstrating 'kettle cooking' – group attendee

"K has come on such a long way, a few years ago I would never have imagined she would be able to even join in a group" – Willow staff member

Justice Pathways Service (JPS)

JPS is a newly created service providing a wide range of interventions and supports to men in the justice system based on need and irrespective of their stage in the justice system. It supports those serving community orders through 1:1 and groupwork supports and facilitates access to more specialist interventions where needed. Groups include health and wellbeing,

SMART recovery and nutrition, dietary and cooking supports. Many interventions are delivered collaboratively with the Third Sector. As well as working with people serving community sentences, JPS also supports people completing a diversion intervention and those on bail supervision with more information on those areas included under Priority Actions One and Three respectively.

Case study – JPS and NHS joint working

A community sentence may address a specific issue where it is identified as a driver of offending and reoffending, for example, in the following short case study, JPS in collaboration with NHS Lothian, supported an individual to complete a CPO with a drug treatment requirement.

Individual G began working with JPS after the Court imposed a CPO with a drug treatment requirement to address problematic substance use that had been a key factor in G engaging in a pattern of offending behaviour. The requirement aimed to address the issues G faced by focussing on stabilising/reducing his substance use while supporting him into recovery and community rehabilitation. JPS linked in with NHS Lothian to enable G to access medical intervention and Opiate Replacement Therapy in conjunction with non-medical interventions:

- 1:1 support
- SMART recovery group (group-based addiction recovery model)
- Survive and Thrive (NHS course supporting individuals move on from interpersonal trauma)
- Relapse prevention support

A key challenge was G's accommodation instability with periods homelessness and rough sleeping significantly impacting on his health. A priority therefore was also to secure temporary accommodation for G to support his recovery. Despite the considerable accommodation challenges, the treatment requirement facilitated the provision of additional supports to enable the health and housing concerns to be addressed, which in turn had a positive impact on G's recidivism.

Community Interventions Services for Sex Offenders (CISSO)

Agencies across Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Scottish Borders continue to work together under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to manage individuals presenting the highest risk of harm to the public and communities. CISSO has supported those partner agencies within the MAPPA framework with the risk management of people with convictions for sexual offences through the delivery of community-based group treatment programmes and individual interventions, addressing the behaviour and attitudes associated with sexual offending.

In 2023/24 (latest MAPPA data available), CISSO received 70 new referrals, which resulted in 84 people receiving a service. CISSO also continued to deliver the Moving Forwards Making Changes (MFMC) programme prior to the national roll out of the redesigned Moving Forward 2 Change, which included an adapted MFMC group for men with enhanced learning needs.

Other group-based programmes delivered included lower intensity interventions for men whose offending was technology based and Survive and Thrive for men with interpersonal trauma. This psychoeducational intervention aims to increase understanding of how past interpersonal trauma can impact on current functioning and employs practical strategies to support people to manage this impact more effectively. CISSO also continued to work

collaboratively, supporting national training on working with people with sexual offending, using a model of online resource packs, virtual delivery, and face to face, allowing for greater flexibility for future training events.

On 31 March 2023, 60 Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPO) were in place in Edinburgh/Lothians. SOPOs place conditions on an individual's behaviour, providing a power of arrest if breached thus enhancing the police role in their management. For some, a SOPO is sufficient to provide daily life structure, through which they may avoid further offending. SOPOs will remain in force until the Order ends however are being replaced by Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPO) which have a lower threshold in that they can be applied for in a wider range of circumstances and also prohibit an individual from doing anything described in the Order. On 31 March 2024, there were 50 SHPOs in place in Edinburgh/Lothians.

CPO Connect

Justice services have partnered with the Wise Group to provide individuals in the justice system who wish to engage with 'other activity' opportunities as part of a Community Payback Order (CPO), with access to the CPO Connect programme. The programme delivered flexible, live, online sessions throughout the week including evenings and weekends to ensure maximum availability for those with other commitments. The sessions were hosted by trained facilitators, with mentors also available to provide 1:1 supports to individuals. Each participant had access to a menu of live sessions available to book weekly to address a range of issues including the examples shown in table 5 below:

Table 5 – examples of CPO Connect courses in 2024/25

Topic	Content	Learning Outcome
Mental wellbeing	Explore different ways to improve your wellbeing and mental health. Learn about self-esteem, mindfulness, self-care and discover tools to manage anxiety and depression.	Develop a toolkit of techniques to improve mental wellbeing and prioritise self-care.
Dealing with conflict	Understand the difference between anger and aggression and use it to help manage conflict in different environments. Learn what is acceptable and what is not and how to approach challenging situations.	Be able to identify triggers and how to manage anger.
Building positive networks	Learn about positive relationship with self (self-worth). Understand personal boundaries and peer relationships. How to build positive relationships with friends, family, and support organisations.	Ability to differentiate between positive and negative relationships and the impact this can have on your life and choices. Understand the importance of building a support network.

During the reporting period across 71 sessions held, 12 individuals completed 142 hours of 'other activity'.

Participants commented:

"Learned about recognising my triggers and understand what triggers them. How I develop my control of my emotions and take responsibility for my behaviour"

"I found myself feeling comfortable enough to talk about my emotions which I hope to be able to do moving forward"

Cyrenians garden project

Individuals sentenced to community payback have the opportunity to complete their unpaid work hours in the Cyrenians Community Garden which is made possible through the use of [NHS Green Space Projects](#). The Community Garden project teaches participants a range of practical skills including gardening, landscaping, garden furniture making, health and safety when using garden tools, and plant care as well as growing herbs and vegetables. Individuals are also supported to develop transferable social/softer skills such as relationship building, working as part of a team, and achieving mental wellbeing. Many engaging with the project have found it to be a positive experience with their completed tasks bringing a sense of achievement, pride, and increased confidence. The project is delivered in a safe, supportive environment and a pathway into volunteering is also offered for those seeking employability supports.

During the reporting year, 264 project learning sessions took place with 83 different people attending and completing a combined total of 2,435 hours of unpaid work.

The impact of this much valued project is evident from quotes below:

"You helped make what has been a pretty rubbish period of my life a whole lot more bearable than it might have been"

"I sometimes wake up in the morning feeling like I can't be bothered to come in, but then always feel like it was worth it at the end of the day"

"They have collectively made a difficult experience more manageable and often enjoyable too. Even though I'd have preferred not to have this order, I feel grateful for being assigned to this project. I look forward to a future day when I return to the garden on my own accord and see the abundance in summer. I feel an affinity to the group of other attendees too - a great bunch of people."

"Peaceful setting, good team environment, supportive, time to reflect"

"Coming here is making me want to eat more fruit and veg!"

Staff observations included:

"We supported our longest attending member to finish his order; X was with us on and off for more than a year and a half and although he struggled with his attendance, we were always glad to welcome him back."

"When he first started, it was clear he did not want to be in the garden and was not motivated at all. As time progressed, we saw him blossom as he became more confident and comfortable with the group and the staff. X told us that outside the garden he would normally keep his head down and avoid interactions but that in the garden he was comfortable to be who he is."

"We got to know his very specific sense of humour and his natural sense of kindness towards others. Although his journey here with us was not linear in terms of progression, we strongly felt as though we had been able to offer him a safe space in which he could socialise with people outside of his circle and in which he could gain confidence and learn new skills."

Priority Action Six

Ensure restorative justice is available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it by promoting and supporting the appropriate and safe provision of available services

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

10. What activity has taken place to make restorative justice available to people and support them to access it, and what impact has there been as a result?

Edinburgh's Young People's Service worked with registered charity [includem](#) to explore restorative justice opportunities with young people under 18. A case involving a group of young people and a group of residents was identified however the complexities and challenges presented could not be overcome, and staff were unable to proceed with the restorative approaches.

Staff involved in the process have suggested that there is a need to identify people who would potentially engage in restorative justice much earlier in the justice process. For example, exploring whether the question could be posed to victims/witnesses as part of Police Scotland's process for obtaining statements.

Priority Action Seven

Enhance individuals' access to health and social care and continuity of care following release from prison by improving the sharing of information and partnership-working between relevant partners

Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to, and continuity of, health and social care following release from a prison sentence⁵

Local Evidence

- Health and social care circumstances/care plans are reflected in collaborative plans for release.
- Referral pathways and information sharing arrangements are in place to support timely access to health and social care supports upon release.

11. What activity has taken place to support people to access health and social care support after release from prison, and what impact had there been as a result?

Healthcare from custody to community

⁵ National Indicator:

Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community

The continuity of care model via EMORSS has been implemented in Edinburgh to ensure that supports are provided at each stage of the justice journey. This applies from point of arrest through to prison and includes preparation for release and the transition from custody to community where individuals can continue to be supported for up to one year post liberation. A key element of supports provided involves focussing on the physical and mental health of those being assisted.

The partnership agreement between justice services and NHS Lothian, facilitated by Scottish Prison Service (SPS) enables individuals in HMP Edinburgh to receive NHS clinical treatment for their physical health needs including treatment for drug and alcohol dependencies while simultaneously receiving psychosocial supports for mental health, addiction, recovery, and motivation from prison based EMORSS staff. All individuals eligible for voluntary throughcare are contacted three months prior to release with advice on supports available.

The full range of EMORSS supports available to people serving short term prison sentences is also available to those on remand. In recognition of the particular vulnerability of this group whose releases are often unplanned and unexpected leaving little time for support planning, targeted awareness sessions are conducted to encourage them to engage with pre-liberation support. This includes support with arranging appropriate prescriptions/medications and follow up health appointments ready for release to support the transition from prison healthcare to community provision.

Every eligible individual being released to Edinburgh is offered a prison gate pick-up on their day of release. This intensive 1:1 assistance provides motivation and companionship to the most vulnerable as they navigate essential appointments including healthcare and registering with a GP.

27 gate pick-ups took place in the reporting period.

Feedback from those who received support on release included:

"I just wanted to thank you for your time and help during my sentence. I've got really good support in place and am definitely going to pursue a career in addiction-based work. I'm planning on doing some Open University stuff over the winter. Also sticking with AA."

"Very helpful, especially good help with the lib pack on the lib day. All staff are great, very approachable. I'd like to thank you for the help and support, and I want to help others thanks to CGL."

Naloxone provision and training

During the reporting period, Naloxone training was successfully delivered in HMP Edinburgh primarily by Peer Naloxone Champions. This peer-led delivery model empowers those with lived experience and encourages individuals to engage with the harm reduction training as part of their preparation for release, further strengthening community resilience.

As a result of increased use of peer-led training, the number of individuals EMORSS has directly trained has decreased over the past few years. EMORSS targeted training however, at individuals who may not meet the criteria for peer support. This included those not in receipt of prescribed medications, those without a peer on their landing, and those without a history of substance use, ensuring that no one was excluded from the lifesaving intervention.

49 people were offered training with 17 accepting and receiving training via this route. The NHS Addictions team continued to provide Naloxone to individuals on prescription, further expanding access.

The Access Place

For those who are homeless, EMORSS accompanies them to the Access Place, a 'one-stop-shop' in Edinburgh city centre offering a multi-disciplinary primary healthcare service to people aged 16 and over who are experiencing homelessness/ in temporary accommodation and who have additional needs.

The service delivers high quality co-ordinated care for people who have multiple and complex needs to support them to access permanent accommodation, improve their health, maximise life opportunities, increase hope, and move on into communities where they are active citizens. 'Complex needs' are identified as persistent, problematic and interrelated health and social care needs affecting a person's life including mental, psychological and physical health needs, and drug and alcohol recovery needs, including underlying adverse childhood experiences or experiences of trauma. They may also have had sporadic and inconsistent contact with services or been serially excluded from services.

Voluntary throughcare

People being released from prison and accessing voluntary throughcare are supported to access healthcare where required; this can include accompanying them to health appointments. All women attending Willow can meet with the co-located NHS Willow nurse to address their health needs and be encouraged to engage with additional community health supports as required.

Case study; prison healthcare to community provision pathway

The EMORSS case study below illustrates the complex and multi-faceted needs many people in the justice system face and their journey into receiving supports and encouragement to help them maintain stability and crime free lives.

I first met Individual E while he was serving a prison sentence. At that time, he was on the brink of homelessness and had a long history—over 30 years—of problematic drug and alcohol use. E was prescribed 45ml of methadone and faced numerous challenges including mental health issues, financial instability, and difficulties managing his benefits. E presented well physically due to the structured environment in prison, which had helped him gain weight, although he expressed dissatisfaction with his appearance. His mental health was fragile, and his life story was marked by severe trauma which dated back to childhood. Substance use had been a coping mechanism for years and his way of numbing the pain from a lifetime of suffering. He had lost all belief in himself and had essentially given up on life.

Upon his release from prison, we provided E with a liberation pack containing essential items to help him through the transition period. We immediately began working to secure his tenancy, which he was close to losing. His home was unfurnished, so we applied for a grant and managed to make the house liveable within three days of his release.

We also addressed his financial and healthcare needs through:

- *Assisting with setting up Universal Credit*

- *Supporting his application for Adult Disability Payment*
- *Re-registering him with a GP*
- *Arranging continuation of his methadone prescription*

With the foundations in place, we began implementing E's recovery plan. He engaged fully with all appointments and showed consistent commitment. He began attending:

- *Weekly SMART Recovery meetings at our hub*
- *Mutual aid groups, which we supported him to attend initially*
- *A local recovery café, where he began building social connections*

We also referred him to LEAP, a residential rehabilitation centre. His referral was successful, and all assessment appointments have been completed. E is now scheduled to enter rehab within the next four weeks.

E's incredible progress included:

- *Methadone reduced from 45ml to 15ml*
- *Regularly attending mutual aid meetings and recovery cafés*
- *Building friendships within the recovery community*
- *Showing high levels of motivation and willingness to change*

He is now only months away from achieving complete abstinence and is feeling much more positive about himself and his future.

E's journey illustrates the impact of holistic, person-centred support during a critical period of transition. His story is a testament to resilience, the importance of coordinated care, and the power of community in recovery.

Priority Action Eight

Ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed consistently and at an early stage by fully implementing and embedding the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards across all local authority areas

Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence⁶

Local Evidence

- SPS admissions and liberations information is shared with relevant partners to support suitable accommodation planning.
- Proportion of admissions where housing advice was provided.
- Percentage of people leaving prison who have been housed by the local authority and have maintained tenancy for more than 1 year

⁶ National Indicator:

Number of:

- homelessness applications where prison was the property the main applicant became homeless from

12. What activity has taken place to support people to access suitable accommodation following release from prison, and what impact had there been as a result?

Prison based housing support

Edinburgh has continued to fund a full-time Prison Outreach Officer based in HMP Edinburgh to support people entering and leaving custody with their accommodation needs. This key role working collaboratively with SPS and other support agencies within HMP Edinburgh focusses exclusively on assisting people to actively engage with support around their housing circumstances to reduce the risk of prison release homelessness presentations. Recognising that early intervention is key, the Prison Outreach Officer conducts assessments with people entering custody to establish their housing situation and where they have an existing tenancy, supports them to sustain it where their sentence timeframe and benefit eligibility allows.

Aspiring to embed the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards, the Council's justice services and SPS data sharing agreement facilitates information sharing between both partners to ensure that individuals scheduled for release from prison are targeted and encouraged to engage with appointments offered to discuss their housing. This proactive approach seeks to support a smooth, properly planned transition from custody to community where each individual has adequate accommodation set up for their release.

In addition to actively promoting the service to individuals scheduled for release within three months to generate self-referrals, the Prison Outreach Officer receives referrals from partners specifically SPS officers, EMORSS workers, prison based social work, and housing providers where an existing tenancy applies. Table 6 below shows that the Prison Outreach Officer received less referrals this year when compared with the previous two years. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this could be due to staffing and workload pressures impacting the ability of SPS to complete core screening duties resulting in lower referral numbers.

Table 6 – Prison Outreach Officer activity

Prison based Housing Outreach Officer activity	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Referrals	355	391	297
Tenancies maintained	48	45	75
Tenancies terminated	9	18	23
Temporary bed spaces arranged	41	73	65

The data shows that the number of tenancies maintained while an individual was in prison increased by 67% when compared with the previous year. The widespread awareness of the challenges in securing affordable housing in Edinburgh may have encouraged existing

tenants to engage with housing supports, recognising the significant difficulties they would face in securing replacement accommodation.

The data also shows however, that the number of tenancies terminated increased. Many individuals spend a considerable period of time on remand and for most cases, DWP cover rent payments for up to 6 months only. Those individuals on remand for more than 6 months begin to accrue rent arrears and this may encourage them to terminate their tenancy. Conversely, some individuals on remand may be willing to accrue rent arrears and prefer to address the debt on release, rather than face the challenges of attempting to access social housing via a new application.

Collaborative working

The Prison Outreach Officer supports people being released to Edinburgh from other prisons and works collaboratively with staff across the wider prison estate to ensure that they are supported as far as possible with their accommodation needs. In November 2022, the Scottish Government removed the requirement for homeless applicants to have a local connection to the area in which they presented to be considered for social housing.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some people without a local connection who have served sentences in HMP Edinburgh looked to remain in the City on release while a lesser number with a local connection to Edinburgh travelled to other local authority areas to seek accommodation. As well as working in partnership with SPS, the Officer works with other support agencies involved in supporting those in prison including EMORSS, DWP, social work, Upside (the new national prison voluntary throughcare service), and NHS.

Challenges and homelessness

Significant delays in the court system have impacted on remand numbers which remain high, with many people spending longer periods on remand. This has created uncertainty for many individuals as they are unsure what action to take relating to their tenancy. Some are willing to risk accruing rent arrears rather than terminate their tenancy and have to re-enter the housing system on release, navigating the difficulties that temporary accommodation entails. Others choose not to address their situation and refuse to engage in any housing related matters.

The demand in Edinburgh for affordable housing considerably outstrips supply and there is an acute shortage of affordable social housing and bed spaces. Despite individuals in prison engaging with the Prison Outreach Officer who will also highlight to housing colleagues those who are particularly vulnerable, up to 50% of bed space requests may not be honoured due to no accommodation being available. Accepting a gate pick up therefore and engaging with housing supports and voluntary throughcare does not guarantee accommodation on release and delivering SHORE remains aspirational.

As part of the housing supports provided, the Prison Outreach Officer makes individuals aware of the significant pressures on Edinburgh housing and the uncertainty around securing a bed space. This may have led to a reduction in the number of bed spaces being requested/arranged as prison leavers seek housing elsewhere.

Table 7 below shows data on the % of households presenting as homeless and stating the reason as "due to being discharged from prison"

Table 7 – homelessness data including homeless presentations following release from prison

Year	Total homeless presentations	Homeless presentations following prison release	% of homeless presentations citing prison release as reason
2019/20	3556	101	2.8%
2020/21	2215	80	3.6%
2021/22	2540	81	3.2%
2022/23	3542	104	2.9%
2023/24	3871	108	2.8%
2024/25	3817	96	2.5%

Homeless presentations reduced by 1% in 2024/25 when compared with the previous year which had seen presentations at their highest since 2019/20. During the same period, the numbers citing prison release as a reason for homelessness reduced by 11%, falling to the lowest level for three years.

Tenancy sustainability

To understand the rate of tenancy sustainability amongst those who had been housed in Edinburgh following a period in custody, data from 2023/24 was examined to explore the outcomes of the 28 individuals who were housed by the Council or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) on liberation. Of the 28 housed, one year later in 24/25, 23 cases remained in their allocated homes, a sustainability rate of 82%. 3 individuals (11%) had returned to prison, one tenancy ended (reason unknown), and for one RSL property, the situation is unknown.

Housing emergency

Edinburgh declared a housing emergency in November 2023, and the situation has worsened since this time. A report to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 25 April 2025 demonstrated that the Council's failure to accommodate (i.e. offering temporary accommodation to households presenting as homeless at the time of presentation) had increased to 57.9% in March 2025. To address this, Committee agreed to a pause on the advertising of Council homes for permanent let, with any empty homes being offered to the Temporary Accommodation Service to offer as suitable temporary accommodation.

The impact of the pause on advertising Council homes, coupled with increased numbers of homeless presentations and households requiring emergency accommodation has had an impact on the availability of temporary accommodation. The Prison Outreach Officer does, however, continue to refer people due to be liberated for bed spaces on their day of release and the Council does its best to ensure that those presenting are offered accommodation that meets their assessed needs.

Priority Action Nine

Enhance individual's life skills and readiness for employment by ensuring increased access to employability support through effective education, learning, training, career services and relevant benefit services

Nationally determined outcome:

More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment⁷

Local Evidence

- Effective links between the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and Community Justice Partnership supports:
 - i. local employment, education and training providers to respond to the needs of those with convictions
 - ii. local employment, education and training providers are confident and competent in providing effective conviction disclosure support
 - iii. local employers to develop more inclusive recruitment processes and employ people with convictions.
- Referral pathways are in place to connect people to appropriate services and support:
 - i. at commencement of, during and at the end of a CPO
 - ii. following release from custody.

13. What activity has taken place to support people to access employability support, and what impact had there been as a result?

A range of community justice Third Sector partners delivered activity to support people into employment, training and/or volunteering.

Encompass employability service

The Encompass project provides employability supports to people in Edinburgh living with complex needs for example, those impacted by homelessness, and those who have been in the justice system/people with criminal convictions looking to move on from past offending. The project is managed by Access to Industry whose staff work to deliver bespoke supports to individuals facing challenges entering the labour market so that they may access education, training, and volunteering opportunities. Tailored employability assistance involves each individual receiving one-to-one support from their assigned worker in a safe and supportive environment while completing an individualised, regularly reviewed, personal development action plan. Topics covered include:

- Creating a CV
- Job searching
- IT skills
- Improving communication skills

⁷ National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions

- Confidence building
- Interview practice

This is supplemented by learning and groupwork sessions as applicable to their area of interest.

Community and peer mentoring related roles have proved popular with people at Encompass with many engaging with the 'Working with Communities' course delivered by Edinburgh College as a route into peer supporting.

Access to Industry accepts referrals from a range of sources including social work services, SPS in HMP Edinburgh, Crane supported accommodation, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), NHS Lothian's Orchard Clinic, justice services Unpaid Work Team, and Edinburgh's local recovery hubs. Access to Industry also attends at the Links Centre in HMP Edinburgh weekly to offer practical employability support to people as part of their preparation for release.

Links with construction industry and employers

Access to Industry continues to support individuals in HMP Edinburgh to access training to enable them to obtain the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) qualification prior to their liberation. In 2023/24, the Scottish Government withdrew funding for the scheme which created challenges for prison leavers looking to be trained however since then, Edinburgh's Capital City Partnership (CCP) and Access to Industry have worked together to source funding to ensure this valuable provision that supports people with convictions into employment was sustained in 2024/25 and continues at least in the short term. Community based weekly CSCS and driving theory training sessions also took place at the Access to Industry premises in the City's Cowgate. Work is underway with CCP to be able to support and track more successful CSCS candidates towards jobs in the construction industry.

Access to Industry has been working with employment organisations/agencies and delivering training sessions on disclosures and recruiting people with convictions to encourage more employers to consider recruiting people with convictions. This has resulted in people being able to secure jobs within the legal sector, NHS, tour operators, the Third Sector, and the Council. Similarly, Access to Industry is working with Edinburgh University's Future's Institute to plan a small number of paid internship positions that would be suitable for Encompass' students.

Access to Industry Volunteering

Access to Industry is also running a project entitled Make your Mark in collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland combining learning on heritage and stonemasonry with confidence building and opportunities towards volunteering in the heritage sector. Feedback from participants is included in the [Volunteering with the Scottish Stonemasons' Marks Project](#) clip filmed at Linlithgow Palace.

Additional volunteering opportunities have been available within Royal National Institute of Blind People, and Lothian Buses.

Challenges

Due to the high cost of living and housing in Edinburgh, the majority of Encompass students looking to be supported into employment cannot realise financial benefits from working full

time which would result in loss of their welfare benefits. Therefore, for many, part-time work is the only realistic option to enable them to gain experience while still retaining their welfare payments.

Increasing numbers of people referred to Encompass have been convicted of sex offences which presents particular challenges for Access to Industry and the individuals concerned, as employers and educational establishments are extremely reluctant to engage with this demographic. Equally, volunteering positions may be closed altogether to this group. Access to Industry addresses those challenges through working closely and carefully with the individuals referred however, more may need to be done nationally to address this difficult area of work.

Access to Industry's community garden in Edinburgh's Canongate also offers opportunities for individuals to work outdoors and to acquire gardening skills. Those activities may be accessed as part of community payback 'other activities' and for which individuals receive accreditation towards their required CPO hours.

During the reporting period AI actively supported 302 people, a 13% increase on the previous reporting period.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

Community justice partner and universal service provider SDS worked in partnership with every state school in Scotland, delivering career information, advice and guidance to enable young people from S1 to S6 to develop their career management. This included advice and career supports for young people who have been in conflict with the law. SDS recently closed its central premises in Shandwick Place and shifted to a community venue delivery model. Libraries, community centres, and other key community locations are utilised to deliver SDS supports facilitating access to training and employment for local communities.

All age services offered include:

- Personalised career information, advice and guidance
- Advice on the routes into careers including jobs, apprenticeships, training and learning
- Help with CVs, application forms, and interviews
- Careers events
- Information on the local labour market
- Access to Scotland's careers web service, My World of Work
- Redundancy support
- Support for parents and carers

SDS has also produced a liberation leaflet specifically for those leaving prison to encourage them to engage with the service and meet up with an SDS adviser or access their online resources. A QR code also allows individuals to set up an appointment with SDS directly.

CPO Connect

The CPO Connect programme funded by justice services and described under Priority Action Five offers a selection of employability specific courses to support people completing CPOs to increase their employability skills. These optional courses are available to individuals who chose to engage with the 'other activities' element of a CPO which focusses on personal development. Courses are delivered online with daytime, evening and weekend

learning sessions available to increase access and maximise engagement. Table 8 below highlights employability related topics delivered via this flexible resource.

Table 8 – examples of CPO Connect employability related content in 2024/25

Topic	Content	Learning Outcome
Preparing your CV and Job searching	Designing and writing your C.V; what content to include: how to update your C.V; ten tips for a great C.V; sourcing job opportunities and best practice in job applications.	To be confident and equipped to design, prepare and write a great CV. How and where to search, apply and source job opportunities to give you the best chance of employment success.
Interview and Presentations Skills	Preparing for an interview; conducting yourself at an interview; top ten tips for interview success; presenting yourself in a confident way, how to present or pitch yourself or an idea.	To be confident and equipped to prepare for and conduct yourself at an interview; to be able to present yourself confidently. To help you in your self-awareness and confidence.
Work Readiness	Preparing for getting back into work, getting settled into work life & dealing with work issues & work life balance.	Feel suitably prepared for work life. To understand and manage going into employment, and a new job, finding work/life balance.

EMORSS traineeships and volunteering

Traineeship posts within the EMORSS service were funded by justice services and the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (EADP). The traineeships provided opportunities for two individuals with lived experience and in recovery from substance addiction and offending to complete paid work placements, study fully funded SVQ 3s in Health and Social Care and receive 1:1 employability mentoring. During the reporting period both recruits successfully completed their traineeships and moved on to permanent full-time employment.

Many people with lived experience have been out of the workplace for many years with little or no higher education and/or work experience making it difficult for them to enter employment. EMORSS also offers volunteering opportunities enabling individuals to gain valuable work experience with some using this as a stepping stone to completing a formal traineeship or securing a peer mentoring role, bringing visible recovery into the service. As well as offering health and social care training opportunities, during the reporting period, EMORSS worked with an individual in recovery who was interested in working in an administrative environment and completed several months of volunteering within the EMORSS office before securing a paid administrator role.

EMORSS also supported various initiatives within HMP Edinburgh relating to peer mentoring including training peer mentors to deliver the Naloxone programme to individuals in custody. Additionally, CGL Edinburgh facilitated a peer Naloxone programme in Edinburgh utilising volunteers, most with lived or living experience, to target areas of the City with high overdose rates, and engage members of the public through delivering education on overdose awareness and providing Naloxone training and kits to support the reversals of opiate overdoses.

Case study; from training to employment

Individual D was successful in being offered a traineeship with CGL EMORSS. D had lived experience of battling with substances for over 20 years and during active addiction, had a history of offending related to addiction, as well as multiple health and social issues related to long term substance use.

After a period of over two years abstinence, D was looking for opportunities to give back to their local community and gain work experience to re-enter the work force. D initially came to CGL as a volunteer, working across Edinburgh services doing a variety of roles including peer Naloxone training and groupwork facilitation. Whilst volunteering D was encouraged to apply for the paid trainee post once a role became available at EMORSS. D was successful and became a trainee for EMORSS.

As a trainee, D completed an SVQ 3 in Social Care and worked in EMORSS providing psychosocial support, groupwork, harm reduction and throughcare. D's lived experience proved to be impactful and an asset to the service in that he was able to bring to EMORSS, a prosocial model using his own recovery experience to support individuals aiming to recover. D also gained other experiences having not worked for decades including working as part of a team, meeting deadlines, recording information accurately, understanding boundaries, and respecting confidentiality in a work setting. While the traineeship only lasted twelve months, D was encouraged to look for employment near the end of his traineeship and successfully secured a permanent full-time post working in the social care field.

Priority Action Ten

Enhance community integration and support by increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence⁸

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms are in place for partners to support people serving short term sentences.
- Proportion of people liberated from short term custody:
 - i. made aware of support
 - ii. accepting support offer
 - iii. with a co-ordinated pre-release plan in place.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people accessing voluntary throughcare to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of community justice partners in delivering voluntary throughcare to support the needs of people leaving short term custody.

14. What activity has taken place to support people to access voluntary throughcare? What impact had there been as a result?

EMORSS voluntary throughcare

⁸ National Indicator:

Number of:

- voluntary throughcare cases commenced

Justice services in Edinburgh commissioned Third Sector partner CGL to deliver the EMORSS which provides voluntary throughcare to people being released to Edinburgh from across the prison estate and to those on remand in HMP Edinburgh. EMORSS staff based within HMP Edinburgh identify individuals due for release predominantly through interrogating the prison information system (PR2) however may also access names of those eligible for voluntary throughcare from justice social work under existing data sharing arrangements with SPS. EMORSS pro-actively contacted eligible individuals three months prior to their liberation date and again at one month prior to release, inviting them to engage with the supports on offer. This included prison-based holistic support within HMP Edinburgh and HMYOI Polmont to address needs, creating an individualised, co-ordinated pre-release plan for each person to assist their transition from custody to community and to support rehabilitation. People intending to travel to Edinburgh having been released from other prisons across the estate are offered telephone appointments.

Support provision is wide ranging and may include assistance with practical matters such as accommodation, GP/dentist registration and appointments, applications for welfare benefits, and arranging/collecting prescriptions as well as help with other needs such as linking in with mental health supports, addictions services, relationship building and emotional support. Gare pick-ups are available to support people navigate the move from custody to community which for those with multiple needs, can be overwhelming.

EMORSS voluntary throughcare continues to support individuals post release to successfully reintegrate into their community while continuing to address their unmet needs. In addition to providing 1:1 support, individuals are linked into the wide range of existing holistic community services available according to their needs, including recovery hubs and NHS mental health supports. For example, Willow for women offers a one-stop shop of supportive interventions, including access to an NHS nurse, groupwork, nutritional/healthy eating groups and supports for domestic abuse. For men, the JPS offers SMART recovery groups co-delivered with EMORSS, and other 1:1 and group interventions.

People in the justice system have often experienced significant disadvantages and live with multiple and complex needs in relation to poverty, poor education, diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health conditions, physical health challenges, alcohol and drug dependencies, relationship/family difficulties, poor housing, history of trauma, and limited experience of employment. Many are overwhelmed with the challenges they face to turn their lives around and make repeated attempts to make positive changes before they can succeed. The percentage of people being supported via throughcare who report improved circumstances reflects the challenges they face.

EMORSS utilises the Recovery Outcome Web (ROW) validated tool to routinely gather feedback from individuals in receipt of voluntary throughcare to measure their progress towards improved outcomes. Feedback is sought at the start of contact, every three months thereafter, and at contact end. Results from 108 responses are shown in table 9 below.

Table 9 - voluntary throughcare outcomes 2024/25

Outcome	Progress	Number supported and %
Drug/Alcohol Use	Improved	12 (11%)

	Same	95 (88%)
	Worse	1 (1%)
Offending Behaviour	Improved	12 (11%)
	Same	96 (89%)
	Worse	0
Physical/ Mental Health	Improved	10 (9%)
	Same	98 (91%)
	Worse	0
Family/ Relationships	Improved	7 (6%)
	Same	99 (92%)
	Worse	2 (2%)
Housing	Improved	6 (6%)
	Same	101 (93%)
	Worse	1 (1%)

Despite the challenges faced by people accessing voluntary throughcare, comments received from those who engaged with EMORSS were positive. Of the 111 feedback forms collected, 100 (90%) reported high satisfaction scoring 8 out of 10 or above across core areas which asked how they felt about the service, whether their needs were met, whether the service was timely and professional, and whether their caseworker was professional and able to support their needs. Responses included:

“I always felt in a better headspace after meeting my worker”

“My worker always makes me feel at ease and valued even when I don’t value myself”

“Was always professional with warm touch, never awkward and always been able to chat about difficult situations or problems; I never thought I could say this but recommended services to anyone, also trustworthy, thank you again”

“So friendly and supportive, not judgemental, trustworthy, it has helped me in ways you could never imagine. Thank you!”

“I hope your work doesn’t go unnoticed. Without the support I would not be the person I am today”

Partnership working

EMORSS worked with key partners NHS, SPS, justice services, and other Third Sector agencies to ensure the effective delivery of voluntary throughcare, including engaging with multi-agency forums such as SPS Addictions Strategy Meeting, Women’s Throughcare Meeting, HMP Edinburgh’s Blood Borne Virus Meeting, and the Community Inclusion Health Huddle.

EMORSS has also developed working relationships with local agencies that can contribute to voluntary throughcare provision for example, Crisis Skylight Edinburgh, and Shelter for accommodation supports, and CHAI for financial inclusion/welfare advice enabling individuals to access benefits checks and income maximisation advice. Individuals were also linked into the ERA Community Café, and 12 Step Fellowship recovery meetings in the community.

Liberation packs

EMORSS offered liberation packs to individuals being released from prison who were particularly vulnerable and in greatest need for example, those without settled accommodation and/or basic essentials. EMORSS received excellent feedback from recipients of the pack which showed how much they were appreciated. The packs included backpack, mobile phone, hat, gloves, wipes, torch, diary, a list of useful numbers, deodorant, toothbrush, and water bottle/ flask. 39 packs were distributed in 2024/25.

Early release scheme

The SPS early release scheme Standard Determinate Sentence (SDS) 40 took place in February and March 2025. Delays in receiving the list of individuals eligible for early liberation created unpredictable spikes in demand for support which EMORSS met through:

- Adapting service delivery plans to accommodate increased volume
- Prioritising support for those with limited external networks
- Close co-ordination with SPS staff and external partners to ensure timely liberation planning and community handovers

Case study – pre-release planning in voluntary throughcare

The case study below demonstrates co-ordinated interventions employed to deliver supports to those in custody.

Individual J is a male in his 20s who was referred to EMORSS in December 2024 while serving a short-term sentence in HMP Edinburgh. J presented with problematic substance which he reported had in part been a recreational habit that had gotten out of hand; a factor in his increased use was also that he felt more confident when taking Subutex (opioid) and that it masked his mental health issues.

A support plan was created with J to address the issues he raised through psychosocial and motivational interventions while a referral was made to NHS Addictions (prison treatment team) to access Opiate Replacement Therapy to stabilise his substance use.

While in custody, J attended weekly motivational meetings with his worker while simultaneously committing to his medical treatment programme. In January 2025, he commenced Buprenorphine which supported him to achieve stability and abstain from illicit opioid use. During this time, his support meetings focussed on identifying triggers, managing urges, relapse prevention, developing healthy coping mechanisms, and building self-esteem.

J's turbulent personal life and history however caused him to struggle emotionally; he agreed to be referred to NHS clinical psychology for trauma focussed work and was placed on the

waiting list. J's 1:1 supports continued in readiness for his release while a plan was put in place for him to transition to support in the community.

Case study; voluntary throughcare

Individual C is a woman in her twenties who first came into contact with the service soon after release through attending the Drug and Alcohol Awareness Sessions that the EMORSS Recovery Coordinator co-facilitated at Willow Women's Justice Centre for their Health Group.

At her assessment, she presented with problematic alcohol use and physical and mental health difficulties. The Recovery Coordinator initiated a support plan to support her to decrease her alcohol intake and improve her health issues. She agreed to fill in regular alcohol diaries to create a clear picture of how many units she was consuming daily in order to facilitate a reduction plan. During discussions with her, she was given tips on reducing her alcohol intake.

She was supported to engage with CHAI at one of their weekly clinics in the EMORSS Broughton Street premises to receive advice on financial matters which led to her being supported to claim for Adult Disability Payment as her mental health and physical health severely impacted on her daily living. She was also assisted by the EMORSS worker to apply for a bus pass to support her to get to appointments.

Individual C did not feel safe in her living situation. She was living with family members and was finding this a real strain. The EMORSS worker liaised with Willow workers around a housing application, and she was supported to complete and submit an Edindex application.

Although she regularly filled in alcohol diaries and participated in creating a reduction plan, she struggled to stick to the plan and due to her relationship breakdown with her partner, her drinking increased. She shared that she was fearful of a life without alcohol. She was encouraged to consider various recovery activities she could attend in order to keep herself busy and manage her urges to drink alcohol, but her physical health and regularly feeling physically unwell due to her drinking limited her ability to attend these activities. At this point, EMORSS made a referral to a detox at the Ritson Clinic, and she is currently waiting to be assessed. She was also referred to LEAP as she expressed an interest in residential rehabilitation, but after attending the LEAP information day, she realised that she was not yet ready to commit to that process.

She continues to engage with EMORSS to focus primarily on reducing her alcohol.

Priority Action Eleven

Deliver improved community justice outcomes by ensuring that effective leadership and governance arrangements are in place and working well, collaborating with partners and planning strategically

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

Local evidence:

- Mechanisms are in place to support engagement in each local authority, specifically:

- a community justice outcomes improvement plan (CJOIP)
- a participation statement
- an annual report on progress towards nationally and locally determined outcomes.
- Mechanisms are in place to support an effective interface between national partner organisations and their local representatives within Community Justice Partnerships.
- Evidence of mechanisms to engage non-statutory partners in strategic planning
- Use of the Care Inspectorate 'self-evaluation guide to support quality improvement for community justice in Scotland', with focus on Leadership and Direction

15. How has your partnership worked to develop local leadership and enhance strategic planning and collaboration? What impact had there been as a result?

During the reporting period, the CSJP was impacted by successive personnel changes coinciding with an internal Council review. The new Partnership leadership has recently canvassed the views of the membership to inform strategic direction and focus in 2025/26. CSJP leadership changes however, did not impact the extensive collaborative working and strategic planning which took place with statutory and Third Sector partners to ensure the delivery of effective community justice services. Examples include:

Partnership with Women's Aid

Justice services continued its partnership with Edinburgh Women's Aid (EWA), providing a peer support service for women in the justice system who have been victims of domestic abuse. The peer support service works collaboratively across Domestic Abuse Services (DAS) and Willow (support services for women in the justice system) ensuring that women serving community sentences and/or receiving Willow supports can also benefit from peer mentoring in a closed group setting. The service supports women who are ready to move on from their experiences of domestic abuse to regain their independence and confidence through participating in a range of activities together and engaging in facilitated group discussion.

Groups are hosted jointly by staff from Women's Aid and justice services covering topics such as identifying needs, understanding boundaries, conversations about self-esteem, relationship building, and coping mechanisms. All groups are delivered in a safe, supportive environment and include a member of staff with lived experience, embedding co-production into the service.

The model also offers opportunities for women who have graduated from the programme, to become peer mentors themselves and when confident to do so, to take on co-facilitator roles in a group setting. The service uses the Empowerment Star measurement tool to gauge impact and results from feedback during the reporting period are shown at table 10 below:

Table 10 – feedback from women supported by the EWA peer mentoring service 2024-25

Area measured	Improvement rating (year average)
Support networks	90%
Health and wellbeing	84%

Empowerment and self esteem	92%
Would recommend on exit	100%

Individual feedback included:

“The program subjects and content were well designed and there is huge power to hearing your own story from someone else, and seeing their progress versus being told you are not alone, and that your life will improve”

“I needed people, a support network that were peers rather than just professionals. Being able to meet people who just ‘got it’. No explanations necessary. This brought some joy, purpose, and structure to a hard time”

“I learnt a lot about my needs and boundaries and also about psychology generally which I find very interesting. The topics fit very well into figuring out how we ended up in these situations and how to avoid such relationships again”

Going forward, the service will be establishing additional routes into education and employment for women who are interested, and strengthening links between EWA supports provided and volunteering opportunities across Third Sector partners.

Citywide Bonfire Strategic Planning Community Improvement Partnership (Bonfire CIP)

Significant planning for the bonfire/fireworks period in 2024 took place with multi-agency meetings commencing in March 2024 and continuing throughout the year. Work included educational presentations delivered jointly by Police Scotland, SFRS, and Lothian Buses in state secondary schools to discourage firework/bonfire related crime and antisocial behaviour and encourage engagement from young people on keeping safe.

Targeted resources were deployed to support young people previously involved in antisocial behaviour/on the cusp of crime during the period to engage with diversionary activities including local organised fireworks displays. The CSJP leadership provided a small grant to the Bonfire CIP to support this work. Additionally, Third Sector providers, Youth Clubs, Housing Associations, schools, local businesses, transport networks, Waste and Street Cleansing Services, licensing teams, and statutory partners co-ordinated a range of actions to minimise disruption and disorder. While pockets of disorder did occur during the period, there was a reduction in the levels of violence seen during the same period in 2023.

Working in partnership with NHS Lothian

Partnership arrangements with NHS Lothian supported delivery of key community justice services. For example, a nurse is assigned to the Willow service for women in the justice system ensuring they can use this resource for any immediate health needs and also be supported to access relevant community healthcare.

The Drug Treatment and Testing Order service was restructured in 2024 moving it away from a stand-alone arrangement to an integrated service within JPS for men, replicating the successful model in place for women.

The vision for the service is to:

- Bring about a more integrated model of service delivery for people impacted by substance use, including better links with the Recovery Community and Third Sector.
- Establish a more seamless pathway and consistency of response across all Justice Services, which is both flexible and proportionate in terms of people's history of involvement in offending and that can reflect and adapt to changing complexity of need/risk.
- Create a more responsive and holistic service by removing allocation limitations, which are based on the type of order people are subject to rather than individual need. This allows for a wider range of sentencing options for people affected by substance use proportionate to their journey in Justice, irrespective of their clinical treatment needs. This moves us from a provision where access to specialised intervention and wrap around support was contingent on a specific type of Order i.e. a DTTO.

The service will achieve this by:

- Completing assessments – Justice Social Work Reports (clear criteria has been developed for both Community Payback Orders with supervision and drug treatment requirements and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders), Alcohol Problem Solving Court and Diversion.
- Supervising Orders, including Community Payback Orders, Drug Treatment and Testing Orders, and also Diversion, Supervised Bail, Structured Deferred Sentences; and Voluntary Throughcare.
- Delivering groupwork (for Orders/Licences, Diversion, Supervised Bail, Structured Deferred Sentences, and Voluntary Throughcare) including provision of relapse prevention and smart recovery groups, contribution to Survive and Thrive, Road Traffic Group, Stepping Stones and Health.
- Undertaking Trauma and Mental Health Screening, helping to define the persons needs/risks and intervention pathway.
- Linking with the Recovery Community and Third Sector, including peer supporters

This has contributed to the ability within JPS to offer a greater number of programmes and opportunities for men to meet varying levels of intensity and need irrespective of the type of Order being completed.

Other examples include working with NHS Lothian under MAPPA arrangements as described under Priority Action Five above, and co-located nurses within St Leonard's Police Station and Edinburgh Sheriff Court led by the Court Liaison and Diversion service which provides access to mental health and other clinical supports in a custody setting.

Priority Action Twelve

Enhance partnership planning and implementation by ensuring the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families are effectively incorporated and embedded

No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

16. How has your partnership worked to understand and incorporate the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families into partnership planning and implementation? *What impact has there been as a result?*

Incorporating the voices of those with lived experience into service design, planning and delivery is integral to key community justice services with mechanisms for obtaining feedback built into early-stage service planning. Additionally, families of those in the justice system are supported through the provision of the Travel Service and justice services work with Victim Support Edinburgh to ensure support is available for victims and witnesses to crime. Examples include:

Just Us

Just Us is a peer-led group started within and supported by the Willow Service since 2013. They are made up of women who are nearing the end of their involvement with Willow or have completed their work with the main Willow service. Just Us offers a pathway for women to remain at the heart of service, whilst also being able to begin to shape their futures and move on at the same time. The aim of Just Us is to help professionals better understand the issues faced by women in contact with the justice system and encourage them to think about how they can best offer support. They also offer an opportunity for women who are/have been involved in the justice system to understand that they are not alone with their experiences and that they have something positive to contribute.

Over the years, Just Us has taken part in many events, sharing their experiences with a wide range of professionals including Police, Social Workers, Social Work Students, Sheriffs, Elected Members, and Members of Parliament. One of the key opportunities they offer involves delivering Conversation Cafés, where they show a powerful video highlighting a woman's journey through the Justice System. The video includes footage from a Police Station in Glasgow, Edinburgh Sheriff Court, and HMP Edinburgh. After the video, they invite attendees to reflect on the woman's journey and the barriers and potential opportunities we each have to positively make a difference to this journey and consider ways to offer more effective support.

Looking ahead, Just Us plan to provide an opportunity for the Edinburgh Equally Safe Community to have its own bespoke Conversation Café hosted at the Women's Justice Centre, where the Willow Service is based.

Members of Just Us have expressed that being part of the group feels empowering, allowing them to give something back and build their own self-confidence and develop skills. The women have described having experiences they never thought possible, such as sharing a cup of tea with a Sheriff at court. Just Us hopes to continue meeting with a variety of professionals in different roles, sharing their lived experiences, and reflecting on what truly helps (and what does not) in delivering trauma-informed practice.

Peer mentoring

Lived experience is incorporated into the interventions provided by EMORSS with peer mentoring being an integral part of the supports provided to people in the justice system and particularly for those with an alcohol and/or drugs dependency requiring specialist support. The visible recovery helps individuals to build resilience and stay motivated in their attempts to achieve a life free from addiction and crime. The EMORSS traineeship pathway has also enabled people with convictions to become qualified to support others and has provided opportunities for paid employment to those successfully completing the programme.

The EMORSS group worker in partnership with a Recovery Coaching Scotland worker co-ordinated 'Recovery Panels' activity within the Recovery Café at HMP Edinburgh involving external speakers with lived experience sharing their recovery journeys. These sessions aimed to provide varied perspectives on recovery and promote peer-led learning as part of preparation for liberation. Peer Naloxone training was also successfully delivered by Peer Naloxone Champions on the halls, a model that empowers individuals with lived experience and fosters peer-led harm reduction. Feedback included:

"I realised these sessions are enjoyable and a really good tool to my recovery journey, thank you!"

"You have helped me in so many ways whether it was advice or just a chat or support, I felt all my needs were met and I didn't have urges to use; having the support in place has helped me self-manage"

"Learning all the tools I learned and the way I was listened to when I talked was genuine, thanks to all!"

Peer mentoring is also an integral part of the Women's Aid Peer Support service delivered in partnership with justice services DAS described above under Priority Action Eleven. A participant on the programme commented:

"Each week gave me a positive sense of purpose and value in attending with women who understood me and within aspects our shared experiences, the strength we all have inside us"

Support for families of those in the justice system – Sacro's Travel Service

Justice services continued its partnership with Third Sector provider Sacro to deliver the Travel Service supporting eligible Edinburgh residents to maintain relationships with their relatives/ loved ones in prison. Sacro assisted Edinburgh residents with travel to Scottish prisons and the State Hospital. Sacro's team of volunteer drivers collected registered passengers from their home, drove to a prison/hospital visit and returned the passenger/family home at no cost.

Maintaining contact with loved ones can lessen the impact of imprisonment on families and reduce the likelihood of re-offending on release. Individuals who may be able to benefit from the service include, those with additional needs/disability, low-income families, and those travelling with young children.

Support for victims and witnesses to crime

Justice services worked together with Victim Support (VS) in Edinburgh to ensure that victims and witnesses to crime had access to specialist emotional and practical supports to assist them to move on from their experience. Supports are tailored to suit needs and may

be provided face to face, online and web chat, or by telephone depending on each individual's preference. Practical supports include accompanied court familiarisation visits prior to the trial date to assist those who are concerned about appearing in court to give evidence, as well as court support on the appointed day. In 2024/25, across all mediums, VS Edinburgh delivered 6202 support sessions.

Referrals into VS originate from various sources including the COPFS, Police Scotland, other support agencies, and Council services including the Family and Household Support Service which supports individuals involved in neighbour disputes. Council services submitted 119 referrals during the reporting period.

VS in Edinburgh has relocated to alternative premises with the new venue being a designated 'remote link site' equipped with live video link facility from which victims and witnesses may give evidence away from the Court environment.

VS in Edinburgh is a member of both the CSJP and the Scottish Government led Victims Taskforce set up to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses to crime as they navigate their way round the justice system. Additionally, many individuals involved in crime have themselves been victims of crime and VS materials are available within the Court buildings and police stations, highlighting supports VS can offer.

The VS Emergency Assistance Fund provided financial support for essentials to the most vulnerable victims of crime. Following feedback from those who have applied to the fund, the amounts awarded for some essential items have increased for example the food award has risen to £240, up from £150, to reflect pressures from the general increase in cost of living. Many of the fund's awards support enhanced safety measures for victims of domestic abuse for example, a doorbell camera or personal safety alarm. During the reporting period, 184 Edinburgh applications were received of which 89 were approved for support.

VS continued to run lived experience workshops on key topics to listen to the voices of survivors and consult on proposed service amendments. For example, feedback received led to VS extending its National Support Service opening hours to seven days a week provision as well as one late night opening per week; those changes have proved popular with those accessing VS.

Routine feedback collated from those using the service included comments below:

"I would like to continue my support with Alan, he has been so supportive, he truly is one in a million"

"The two volunteers were fantastic; I'm so pleased with the service. Without it I would have been on my own and not knowing what was going on" – individual who received support to attend court

"Staff at the helpline were amazingly helpful, thank you!"

Priority Action Thirteen

Support integration and reduce stigma by ensuring the community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice

Nationally determined outcome:

More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice⁹

Local Evidence

- Community justice partner contribution to joint activity across policy areas to tackle stigma.

17. What partnership-driven activity has taken place to improve understanding of and confidence in community justice across the workforce and local community?

Encouraging confidence in community justice

Sharing case studies that illustrate positive partnership working, gathering staff feedback, and reviewing comments from people using community justice services are a key part of demonstrating community justice activity locally. The public facing CPO annual report is shared widely across local partners and the public through social media showcasing the range of community justice activity that has taken place by those completing community payback. The report also provides an opportunity to highlight work carried out by those undertaking unpaid work in the community, supporting various projects to improve the local landscape and to share feedback from the beneficiaries of the work. Examples of recently undertaken unpaid work activity publicised through the report included:

Prestonfield School - the team organised the delivery of woodchips for the wildlife garden and spread them around the relevant areas as part of a general tidy up

Dr Neil's Garden, Duddingston Village – the garden benefitted from work to fix a drainage area, and the interior of one of the garden shelters was repainted. The team also erected new fencing and laid new decking. All rubbish was cleared away and the garden left in a much-improved condition.

Southside Community Centre – the team cleaned and redecorated rooms in the Community Centre, painting the space and creating a brighter and more welcoming environment for those using the facility

The above examples highlight the community benefits that unpaid work teams bring to the City of Edinburgh through their support for community projects which in turn helps increase public confidence in and support for community sentences. A public consultation for partners, staff, and the general public was conducted in the summer of 2024 to gauge the level of public awareness and support for unpaid work as an alternative to custody including the perceived impact on offending. Public awareness of CPOs and unpaid work remains high with 100% of respondents stating they either fully or partly understood the purpose of a community disposal. Feedback also showed that 96% of respondents supported either in full

⁹ National Indicator:

Percentage of people who agree that:

- people should help their community as part of a community sentence rather than spend a few months in prison for a minor offence

or partly, community payback as a tool allowing people to pay back to the community for their crimes. Comments from a range of respondents included:

“As the offence has already taken place, it cannot prevent previous offending but could help in rehabilitation and prevention of reoffending” – member of the public response.

“It offers diversionary activity, the chance to build new skills and allow people to reflect on their conviction(s) and the reasons they offended” - member of the public response.

“It’s an opportunity to look at the wider community’s needs and not just be focused on the personal” – member of the public response.

“The offenders get an opportunity to make amends in a meaningful way which has the potential to help them feel they have a positive contribution to make” - member of the public response.

“Work within the community provides a useful service and reduces the prison population” - member of the public response.

“While there may not be a direct relationship between the crime and the payback, if the unpaid work improved the local environment, then the community benefits” – member of the public response.

“I am a supporter of unpaid community service when it’s done well and allows the offender to understand they are better off contributing and especially at the end of the program, they are followed up with options on how not to reoffend” – member of the public.

“I just wanted to say thank you! YOU have made a massive difference to our wildlife garden, and it looks brilliant. All the children and staff are very thankful for all your hard work organising the materials and applying them to the landscape, thanks again, much appreciated!” – feedback from a primary school in the south of Edinburgh.

“It’s great know that the work I’ve done helps other people” - individual undertaking unpaid work.

“I appreciate the opportunity to have a go at new activities” - individual undertaking unpaid work.

“I’ve found a job now and thanks! I’ve enjoyed working in the Community Garden especially helping staff with the polycrub” - individual undertaking unpaid work.

“Unpaid work is a really important aspect of community justice because it allows people who have committed crime(s) to give something back to their local community while at the same time, learning new skills and engaging in teamwork – those transferable skills can be taken into employment. Being appreciated for the work they have done in communities also supports those undertaking unpaid work to feel like they have a stake in society which in turn can encourage them to live a crime free life” – staff member feedback.

Supporting volunteering and employment

People undertaking unpaid work often carry out activities within Edinburgh’s community gardens, enhancing and maintaining the space for residents to enjoy. As well as improving the visual amenity, which encourages public confidence in community justice, the community garden projects provide volunteering opportunities for those who have completed their

community sentences but may not be ready to move into employment. They offer pathways for individuals to gain more work experience or undertake meaningful activity to provide structure to their day and support their desistance. Third Sector providers Cyrenians and Access to Industry both manage community gardens which provide supports and volunteering opportunities for people in the justice system.

Encouraging employer and employee confidence

Access to Industry has continued to deliver training to potential employers looking to employ people with convictions to dispel some of the myths associated with recruitment, encourage employer confidence, and address the concerns they may have. Additionally, individuals can access tailored advice and supports relating to their own convictions and how to navigate the disclosure system effectively. An educational programme is also offered to employers focussing on best practice in relation to disclosure and how it interacts with the jobs market.

Highlighting community justice in action

Community justice unpaid work projects have been highlighted on social media posts for example the Brake the Cycle project featured on [Facebook](#), while the public has been encouraged to contribute to the conversation around unpaid work and community justice via social media and traditional media outlets such as [The Herald](#).

Arrest referral workshops

Police Scotland led workshops which took place across local areas in 2024, encouraged a range of statutory and Third Sector partners and staff working in justice services to consider how the community justice offering at point of arrest could be improved. The workshops helped promote the value of community justice in the custody setting and how timely interventions can prevent individuals being further drawn into the justice system and contribute to desistance.

18. Look ahead for your local area. Please tell us what the next steps are for your partnership.

The CSJP conducted a self-evaluation exercise and canvassed members for their views on the Partnership strengths and weaknesses in relation to a range of issues including Partnership operation, activity, planning, strategic direction, vision, and governance. The results are being collated and will form an agreed approach for the Partnership's development, revised Terms of Reference, and way forward in 2025/26. This exercise is being supplemented by a review of the Partnership's grant monitoring practice, application process, and decision making for awarding funding to community safety and community justice projects. This will ensure the Partnership's limited budget is managed effectively and allocated to community justice/community safety areas likely to evidence the greatest impact.

The CSJP will follow up changes implemented in the coming months with a further evaluation after twelve months to ensure that partners remain invested in the Partnership's work and to support its continuous development.