

COMMUNITY PAYBACK ORDER (CPO)

ANNUAL RETURNS TEMPLATE

FINANCIAL YEAR: **2024/25**

LOCAL AUTHORITY: **The City of Edinburgh**

TEMPLATE RETURN DATE: **Friday 31 October 2025**

Please return all completed templates to
CJS at CJSImprovement@communityjustice.scot and copy
the Scottish Government at cpo@gov.scot

1. Background

Under the Community Justice (Scotland) Act (2016), local authorities have a statutory duty to report on the operations of Community Payback Orders (CPO) within their area on an annual basis to Community Justice Scotland (CJS). CJS will then collate these returns and summarise them in a report which is laid before Scottish Parliament.

To assist with this reporting duty, CJS, in collaboration with representatives from Justice Social Work, the Scottish Government, and Social Work Scotland, has developed a template of questions for local areas to complete. This template is designed to support the reporting requirement.

2. Completing the template

Please answer the following questions contained in this year's CPO template. When answering the questions, please ensure that all case studies and feedback are anonymised. We understand that maintaining anonymity may be more challenging for some local authorities. If this applies to your area, you may provide a more general response to the questions.

Please ensure all answers are relevant to your local area within the 2024 to 2025 reporting year.

If you need any support in completing this template and or have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with CJS. Contact details can be found on the title page of this form.

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions in this template.

3. Questions to answer

1) Reducing risk of reoffending

Please provide a case study or examples of your work with people subject to a Community Payback Order (CPO), focusing on how you work to address their offending behaviours and reduce the risk of reoffending.

A range of interventions is employed to support people subject to a CPO to address their offending behaviours and to reduce their risk of reoffending. For those subject to a supervision requirement, a holistic plan is agreed with the individual to address their needs including those directly related to the offending behaviour. Positive relationship building between the supervising officer and the individual subject to supervision can also be a key motivator in achieving positive behavioural change towards desistance. Specialist interventions are utilised to address specific types of offending and examples of those include:

- SMART recovery (group-based addiction recovery model)
- Relapse prevention support
- Caledonian System to address domestic abuse offending
- Edinburgh Alcohol Problem Solving Court facilitates access to treatment to address alcohol use delivered alongside psychosocial interventions, while frequent court reviews provide motivation and encouragement to individuals to engage with supports
- Moving Forwards 2 Change group work programme delivered by the Community Interventions Service for Sex Offenders (CISSO)

In addition to the interventions listed above, holistic supports are delivered alongside signposting where appropriate, to assist people to address their unmet needs relating to housing, welfare, and mental health. For those completing unpaid work as part of a CPO, the Cyrenians community garden project provides a safe, supportive environment where individuals can complete their hours in the outdoors. In addition to teaching practical gardening skills, the project assists individuals with relationship building, teamwork, developing confidence, and achieving positive mental health and wellbeing to support their desistance.

Staff observation of positive impact of the garden project:

“When A first arrived in the garden, we wondered how he would integrate with the group as he was both abrupt and withdrawn when he first joined. We spent quite a lot of time with him one-on-one giving him the space to discuss his mental health and where he was at. Over time, he became more and more integrated with the group and the initial awkwardness seemed to disappear. A became more confident in himself and became a positive influence on the rest of the group. He reported that having the weekly routine of attending the garden gave him a sense of purpose and he enjoyed the tasks he was assigned whilst here. It was rewarding that he got to a place where he felt comfortable enough to

openly discuss his mental health and found the gardens a safe space to heal”.

2) Support for underlying needs

Please provide a case study or example of your work with people subject to a CPO, which demonstrates how their underlying needs (e.g. mental health, substance use) are identified, and how you work to address those.

Individuals subject to a CPO with a supervision requirement undergo an assessment for which clear criteria has been developed to establish risk and underlying needs. Interventions are available to address mental health concerns, physical health problems, substance use, and other issues. Examples include:

- Local community-based recovery hubs providing supports to individuals to address drug and/or alcohol dependency
- [Survive and Thrive](#) NHS psychoeducational course supporting individuals to move on from their experience of interpersonal trauma and equipping them with coping strategies for the future
- Health and Wellbeing groups delivered within Justice Pathways Service (support service for men in the justice system) to support men towards improved mental and physical health
- Peer supported interventions and group activities for women in the justice system who have experienced domestic abuse, supporting them to move on from their experience
- An NHS nurse assigned to Willow (service for women in the justice system) providing support for immediate health needs and facilitating access to relevant community healthcare

The case study below illustrates how the nutrition and wellbeing interventions available at Willow supported B towards achieving improved mental and physical health while completing her CPO.

Cook club

B began working with the Willow service after receiving a CPO. She expressed an interest in food and cooking, and as part of her support at Willow, attended Catkins; a weekly nutrition and cooking group delivered jointly by Edinburgh Community Food (ECF) and a Willow staff member. Small groups of Willow clients come together to cook a recipe of their

choice supervised by ECF and Willow. The group is laid back and aims to empower women to make informed choices around food, food shopping, and cooking.

B also regularly attended the weekly lunch group where she was always happy to talk about food. The lunch groups ensured that she had access to a healthy lunch where she was able to consume at least two portions of her five a day, and nutrients such as fibre and vitamins. During her initial period with Willow, B was in temporary accommodation and had limited access to a kitchen. ECF provided her with information on kettle cooking and gave her some basic ingredients that she took home to try out. She then moved to accommodation with proper access to a kitchen.

B almost always ate microwave meals however acknowledged that they were not a healthy option and often proved to be more expensive, commenting "I haven't always had the best diet in the world". After a few months of regularly attending Catkins, B said that she was eating more healthily now than she had ever done. She also purchased a good kitchen knife so she could prepare her own meals at her accommodation. Staff observed that when she attended Catkins, she would always join the lunch group and be keen to chat about food and healthy options. She also mentioned that after completing her CPO, she would like to access ECF volunteering opportunities. She commented: "I think I am eating more healthily now than I have ever done in my whole life"

"It's nice to have the company and learn new things"

"Fresh food feels better!"

Personal outcomes for B included:

- Increased confidence and self-sufficiency in the kitchen
- Healthier lifestyle – self-reported dramatic reduction of reliance on ready meals and reduced spending on fast foods
- Reduced social isolation – the lunch clubs and cooking groups are about bringing women together around a table to enjoy home cooked food, share recipes and tips, and gently increase their interest in food and confidence in cooking

Staff also observed that the cooking programme may also have had a positive impact on her experience of being within a social work setting, increasing the likelihood of future engagement.

3) Unpaid work

Please describe a case study or provide examples of unpaid work activity.

A range of unpaid work activity is carried out to improve public areas, community facilities, and community gardens. Examples of work undertaken included:

- Serving customers in charity shops
- Sorting charity shop donations
- Repairing, upcycling and servicing bicycles
- Painting and decorating a care home
- General litter picking and rubbish collection
- Weeding and cutting back overgrown shrubbery
- Maintaining public pathways by clearing leaves/mud
- Creating composting bays
- Installing garden irrigation systems
- Repairing garden cold frames
- Repairing and erecting fences
- Laying and reinstating decking
- Trimming hedges
- Building birdboxes
- Restoring garden furniture
- Clearing snow from paths
- Gravestone repair
- Graffiti removal

4) Other activity

Please describe the main types of "other activity" carried out as part of unpaid work or other activity requirement.

Justice services worked with Third Sector providers to ensure the availability of a range of 'other activities' to suit individual's needs, interests, and abilities. Key partners included the Wise Group and Access to Industry and other organisations that facilitate volunteering for the benefit of the local community. Examples of other activity delivered includes:

- First aid training

- Employability supports delivered by Access to Industry's [Encompass](#) service
- Access to Industry's in-house skills-based education and training modules
- English language courses
- Training in forklift driving
- Learning modules delivered in-house including managing social anxiety, help for panic attacks, and dealing with depression
- Dealing with PTSD
- Anger management courses
- Health and wellbeing modules
- Managing alcohol use course
- Volunteering work

Additionally, the Wise Group delivered 110 training sessions via its CPO Connect programme, supporting individuals to complete 288 hours of 'other activity' towards pro-active self-improvement. Training was delivered virtually through groupwork sessions supplemented with 1:1 mentoring support meetings. Sessions were delivered flexibly, with daytime, evening, and weekend provision offered, enabling those working standard hours to participate. Topics covered included overcoming anxiety, healthy eating, and gambling as shown in the table below:

Table 1

Topic	Content	Learning Outcome
Mental wellbeing	Exploring different ways to improve wellbeing and mental health. Learn about self-esteem, mindfulness, and self-care. Discovering tools to manage anxiety and depression.	Develop a toolkit of techniques to improve mental wellbeing and prioritise self-care.
Overcoming anxiety	Understanding anxiety - what keeps it going and what makes it worse? What can we do about it? Learn techniques to address bodily sensations, thoughts and behaviour that can impact anxiety.	Step by step learning to understand, manage and beat anxiety.
Managing conflict	Understanding the difference between anger and aggression - using this 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 relationships 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 a positive and negative relationship and the impact this can have on your life and choices. Understand the importance of building a support network.

Preparing your CV and job searching	How to design and write your C.V; what to include and how to regularly update your C.V including ten tips for a great C.V. Sourcing job opportunities and best practice when applying for jobs.	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 success.
Diet and healthy eating	Understand the link between diet and mental/physical health. Learn what our body needs to adequately fuel it. Shopping on a budget.	Develop knowledge on healthy eating and how to eat well on a limited budget.
Benefits and Budgeting	Benefits overview and benefit maximisation. Energy advice. Budgeting skills. Accessing bank accounts and credit unions accounts.	Understand the financial support you may be entitled to and how to access it.
Alcohol and drug education	Understand the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body. How to identify problematic drug and alcohol use. How to access support for drug and alcohol use.	To provide a level of education/insight to the participant on alcohol and drug use and its link to addiction.
Understanding gambling and addiction	Learn about the impact of problematic gambling and how it can develop into an addiction. Understand how problematic gambling can be managed and treated using a CBT approach.	Increase understanding and awareness of gambling addiction, possible causes, the links to other addictions, and mental health issues.
Home energy advice	The session will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are my energy bills going up? • Government support • Energy awareness & behavioural change • Support from energy companies – Warm Home Discount 	To answer any questions on energy issues and/or point customers in the right direction of how to deal with their specific issues.

5) Feedback

Please provide a summary of quotes or feedback on the impact of supervision requirements and or unpaid work or other activity requirements from the following perspectives:

- People subject to a supervision requirement
- People undertaking unpaid work or other activity requirement
- The community and beneficiaries of unpaid work

Feedback from people subject to a supervision requirement/undertaking unpaid work/other activity included:

“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”

“I learned to work as a team; learned things I never knew how to do”

“It was a positive experience getting to do different work experience”

“Being paired with a nice supervisor, working, and being sociable”

“The community gardens were a fantastic way to spend a Saturday”

“It was a supportive and positive environment, making sure everyone contributed”

“Seek help and be vulnerable if you feel like you may have failed before as it’s not too late”

“The program subject and contents were well designed”

Feedback from beneficiaries of unpaid work included:

“Getting some jobs done costs money so being able to use community payback saves us money and by them helping in our garden then the community benefits as well as the organisation” – Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre

“The Cyrenians Community Garden situated within the grounds of The Royal Edinburgh Hospital has greatly benefitted from having unpaid workers completing community payback orders. We do a wide variety of work such as growing vegetables, garden maintenance, and create new spaces for the public to enjoy. The participants learn new skills, create a sense of doing something valuable, and they leave with a sense of achievement. They have an opportunity to give something back to the community, but they build their own sense of connection and sense of pride too through their meaningful work. We’ve witnessed a lot of participants gain an interest in the environment and nature whilst completing their order within the community garden, and we’ve also seen the impact on the individuals themselves. We believe this type of setting provides time for reflection, growth, and to recognise the impact individuals have on the environment and people around them” - staff team at Cyrenians Royal Edinburgh Hospital Garden

“I think the team that came out got enjoyment from the work they were doing, they had a chance to complete their hours and made a difference”
– Water of Leith Visitors Centre

6) Benefits and challenges of other CPO requirements

Please mark with a cross the requirements that were imposed by courts in 2024 to 2025.

- Compensation requirement
- Programme requirement
- Residence requirement
- Restricted movement requirement
- Conduct requirement
- Alcohol treatment requirement
- Drug treatment requirement
- Mental health treatment requirement

For each of the requirements that were imposed (up to a maximum of 300 words) please describe innovative and practice examples, challenges, and impact associated with each.

Compensation requirement

Feedback from staff in Willow has been mixed regarding their experiences of having oversight of CPOs with a compensation requirement. It was highlighted that this can be a positive and therapeutic experience for women and those who were victims of the offence. For example, for one woman who was extremely remorseful and ashamed of stealing money from a family felt that paying money directly to the family was important as she felt she had been able to 'payback' for harm caused. The compensation requirement also likely had a positive impact on the family as the financial loss incurred was reduced through repayment.

There are however other examples where women have denied or minimised their offending and/or the impact this has had, and they have felt resentment at having to pay money as 'compensation'. Whilst this can create conflict within the supervisory relationship between the woman and social worker, which can impact negatively on other aspects of the women's Order, a manager within the service reflected that where the Court had outlined a clear payment plan, this had proved to be helpful in clarifying the expectations of the compensation requirement.

Programme Requirement

This requirement was used for men required to complete the Caledonian Men's Programme. This accredited intervention programme is delivered primarily via groupwork but may also include 1:1 work. The benefit of having a separate programme requirement helps reinforce to the participant that it is an additional requirement to 'standard' supervision and that the supervising social work team can return an Order to the Court either under breach or for review if the requirement is not being met. A request for a programme requirement can also be added to an existing CPO although given the length of the Caledonian programme, the individual subject to the CPO may be required to consent to an extension. The imposition of this additional requirement is contingent on a specific assessment of suitability produced at the justice social work report stage.

The requirement may present challenges in that it increases the intensity of the Order for example; the Caledonian Programme requires significantly more intervention than standard supervision. The accredited programme includes 14 pre-group sessions and 22 group sessions and can take around 18 months to complete. Successful completion of the programme requirement requires significant commitment and momentum. One way of overcoming this challenge, however, is to request two-year CPOs.

The impact of completing the programme requirement is ideally that the men will change underlying attitudes and behaviours making their partners (ex and future) and children safer. It is also worth noting that as part of the programme requirement, partners of men are offered a service from Willow (for women) focused on safety planning, while the Caledonian System approach also includes having oversight of the needs of all children linked to men on the programme.

Conduct requirement

The Willow service works with women in contact with justice services, including women who are made subject to a CPO where a conduct requirement is imposed. Examples of conduct requirements included quite complex examples with multiple requirements, to more simple requirements such as to engage with drug and alcohol services. Women attending Willow undergo a holistic assessment to ascertain their mental and physical health needs and personal circumstances. Willow's multi-disciplinary team made up of social work and health professionals undertake this in collaboration with the women to identify areas of risk, need, and vulnerability. Trauma informed principles are embedded

within Willow and core to all aspects of service delivery, shaping how the women are supported to meet their obligations to the Court whilst subject to their CPO and holding them to account if they are unable to do so, irrespective of whether a conduct requirement is in place or not.

A benefit of the conduct requirement highlighted by social workers is that it can provide a clear focus on an area of a woman's life linked to a specific risk and need and offer an additional incentive for her to want to address that area, given that it is a specific expectation of the Court. A Willow staff member commented: "*there have been examples where 'a conduct requirement provides very clear focus e.g. on accessing and engaging with drug and alcohol services and in examples where an individual already has some internal motivation, the external requirement can act to support engagement and longer-term change'*".

Alcohol and drug treatment

As those requirements have similarities, one case study example of a drug treatment requirement is provided:

C had a history of repeated involvement in offending and previous experiences of custody which appeared to be directly linked to an established pattern of substance use and ongoing issues with his mental health. He was made subject to a Structured Deferred Sentence, during which he was supported by a justice worker and a social worker. C reoffended during his SDS and returned to Court where a CPO with both supervision and drug treatment requirements was imposed as an alternative to custody.

The requirements provided enhanced recovery focused support and intervention to assist C to make the necessary changes to his circumstances which would reduce the risk of further offending and subsequently further periods of custody. His action plan included:

- *regular support and supervision with a substance use focus*
- *relapse prevention and safety and stabilisation intervention*
- *access to a range of group supports and one to one intervention to aid recovery including SMART groups and trauma interventions*
- *practical support to address barriers to recovery including support with housing and welfare benefits*
- *supported involvement with specialist substance use services as required*

The requirements enabled progress to be made in assisting C focus on stabilising his substance use while being compelled to engage with treatment services which he found motivational. Notably, the support he received throughout his SDS was invaluable in preparing him to better cope and comply with the increased demands of his intensive CPO.

7) Organisational improvements and ongoing challenges

Looking back at last year (2023-24), have there been any improvements to the challenges you noted? Are there any challenges you are still facing this year (2024-25)?

Last year's report highlighted an increasing Edinburgh population, the national drive for more community sentences, increased bail supervisions and diversions, and proposals for the early release of people in prison placing additional burdens on community justice services. Those key challenges remain. New recurring investment was awarded in 2024/25 and while this was most welcome and has supported the recruitment of some new posts, a portion of this funding has had to be used to meet the costs of the unfunded pay award. Therefore, as was the case last year, there is limited capacity for justice services to manage increased numbers requiring community support without increased resources.

Additionally, short-term annual funding to facilitate collaboration with the Third Sector was highlighted in 2023/24 as an unsuitable model as it does not support long term community justice development and effective service planning. The model does not make best use of resources as due to its short-term nature, repeated procurement exercises are needed, and uncertainty is created in the Third Sector justice workforce. National funding arrangements did not change in 2024/25 therefore the challenges highlighted remain.

8) Collaborative working across justice partnerships

Please provide any examples of work with community justice partners, including the third sector, to effectively deliver CPOs.

Individuals completing a CPO have access to trauma enhanced, gender specific groupwork and other supports within Justice Pathways Service (JPS) for men and Willow for women. Both JPS and Willow work with

partners to assist individuals to address their unmet needs and offending behaviour while providing motivation and encouragement to complete their Order successfully. For those sentenced to unpaid work as part of a CPO, various options exist to suit needs, abilities, and preferences. Examples of services and supports:

JPS has collaborated with Edinburgh Community Food (ECF) to set up a nutrition group for men serving a community sentence, focussing on improving diet and basic cooking skills using limited equipment. The group also discusses food hygiene, tips for selecting low-cost healthy eating options, and enables attendees to try a range of easy to cook, healthy foods.

JPS offers a SMART recovery group as part of its available groupwork interventions. The group which focuses on addiction recovery, is facilitated jointly by staff from JPS and Edinburgh and Midlothian Offending Recovery and Support Service (EMORSS). Third Sector provider EMORSS is delivered by Change Grow Live and brings specialist addiction support to the group.

Willow provides access to a co-located NHS nurse within its one-stop-shop of supportive interventions for women in the justice system, including those completing a CPO. This key resource offers a comprehensive and holistic assessment of each woman's health needs on entry to the service, recognising that women in the justice system often neglect their physical wellbeing. The NHS collaboration enables any immediate physical health needs to be addressed while also supporting women into engagement with community-based supports.

Justice services collaborated with Edinburgh Women's Aid to offer peer support to women completing CPOs who are survivors of domestic abuse. The Peer Support Programme is facilitated by women with lived experience ensuing co-production is evident within the service and is delivered jointly with justice services in a safe and supportive environment. It includes group sessions, discussions on lived experiences, identifying needs, understanding domestic abuse dynamics, self-esteem and self-care, breaking down isolation, coping mechanisms, and supporting others. The Programme also provides opportunities for the women survivors to train to become peer mentors and use their experiences to support others accessing Domestic Abuse Services. The Programme is supplemented by a women survivors' social group.

9) Additional information

Is there any other relevant information you wish to highlight? This may include:

- Any new and/or notable trends in the CPO cohort (e.g. changing needs, offence types, demographics)
- Areas for improvement and planned next steps.
- New ways of working and benefits achieved from these.

Trends

Challenges exist in some areas relating to supports for people convicted of sexual offences, more of whom are serving community sentences. Employer/organisational concerns about reputational harm significantly restrict or preclude opportunities in employment and volunteering for this group. A national approach to addressing this area of work may be required to ensure individuals convicted of sexual offences can be fully supported to successfully rehabilitate into the community.

Areas for improvement

There have been some instances of individuals engaging initially with unpaid work and subsequently looking to discontinue the commitment due to mental health/other issues. The unpaid work team will look to explore what more can be done to support individuals to successfully complete their CPO hours.

Ongoing staff training supports the delivery of improved outcomes for individuals being supported to complete their CPOs.

Please see answer under Q7 for ongoing challenges.

Next steps

Staff from the unpaid work team are working on a newsletter to increase awareness of the work of the team and to share updates on community payback projects with partners and other staff groups.

As part of 'other activity' development, Third Sector partner Cyrenians is exploring the development of new modules relating to its community garden project for participants' completion during poor weather. Learning options being considered include cooking, nutrition, growing food/herbs, and appropriate care/storage of garden tools.

Staff are currently developing the service available for women subject to a CPO with unpaid work with the initial focus centred on induction and more tailored support for 'other activity'.

New ways of working

Justice services concluded an internal review in 2024 to improve service integration, and a new structure was implemented which has facilitated greater access to a wider range of supports for people completing CPOs.

Staff working within the unpaid work team have forged closer links with supervising social workers, further supporting co-ordinated decision making and ensuring a joined-up approach to supporting individuals is employed.