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Item No: 13

Meeting Date: Wednesday 26th November 2025

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board

Report By: Kelda Gaffney, Depute Chief Officer, Operations and Governance and Chief Social Work Officer

Contact: Lynsey Smith, Assistant Chief Officer, Operations and Governance

Phone: 0141 274 6000

Justice Social Work and Community Justice Overview Annual Update

Purpose of Report:	To update the Integration Joint Board on: • Justice Social Work developments; and • Community Justice Glasgow developments.
Background/Engagement:	Engagement in relation to the community justice agenda is undertaken with service users, Justice Social Work staff and the broader community justice partners.
Governance Route:	The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development. HSCP Senior Management Team ☐ Council Corporate Management Team ☐ Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐ Council Committee ☐ Update requested by IJB ☐ Other ☐ Not Applicable ☒
Recommendations:	The Integration Joint Board is asked to: a) Note the contents of this report.

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Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

The Integration Joint Board is a named statutory partner to community justice through the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. The work of Justice Social Work contributes to the achievement of the Vision and Partnership Priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan, particularly Priority 1 – Prevention, Early Intervention and Wellbeing and Priority 4 – Strengthening Communities to Reduce Harm.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	This proposal supports the delivery of all 9 National Outcomes, with emphasis on: • People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer. (Outcome 1) • People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected. (Outcome 3) • Health and social care services centered on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services. (Outcome 4) • People using health and social care services are safe from harm. (Outcome 7) • Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services. (Outcome 9)
Personnel:	No identified implications.
Carers:	No identified implications.
Provider Organisations:	Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, Glasgow Community Justice and third sector commissioned services. Wider community justice partners such as Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, Crown and Procurator Fiscal Service, Neighborhoods and Regeneration Services and Scottish Court Service.
Equalities:	Justice services play a key role in promoting equality by working with people and communities to tackle the causes of crime, which are often rooted in inequality. This is achieved through an increased emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation. Justice services work with specific types of crime, such as violence against women and girls, and all forms of hate crime.
Fairer Scotland Compliance:	In its planning, Justice Social Work takes account of the impact of poverty on those involved in the justice system.
Financial:	No identified implications

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Legal:	No identified implications.
Economic Impact:	No identified implications.
Sustainability:	No identified implications.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None.
Risk Implications:	No identified implications.
Implications for Glasgow City Council:	Glasgow City Council is a named, statutory partner to Community Justice through the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.
Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is a named, statutory partner to Community Justice through the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.

Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both	
Direction to:	
1. No Direction Required	☒
2. Glasgow City Council	☐
3. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	☐
4. Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	☐

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Integration Joint Board on:

- Justice Social Work developments; and
- Community Justice Glasgow developments.

2. Key Justice Social Work Developments in 2024-25

2.1 Prison Population Pressures and Justice Social Work Response

2.1.1 Scotland continues to face a sustained crisis in prison population management, with numbers exceeding 8,000 and projections indicating further increases into 2026. Key contributing factors include persistently high remand rates, longer custodial sentences, court backlogs, and limited capacity within the prison estate.

2.1.2 In response, the Scottish Government implemented emergency early release schemes in 2024 and introduced legislative reforms in 2025 to reduce automatic release thresholds for short-term prisoners. While these measures have provided temporary relief, systemic pressures remain, particularly in relation to remand practices and sentencing policy.

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- 2.1.3 Emergency early release has now been used twice in recent years to alleviate overcrowding. The first scheme, enacted between June and July 2024, saw the release of approximately 477 short-term prisoners in four tranches. Releases were governed by strict eligibility criteria and public safety safeguards, enabled by the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023. Individuals within 180 days of their scheduled release were considered, excluding those convicted of sexual or domestic abuse offences.
- 2.1.4 A second initiative to address the prison population crisis is currently under consideration. The Scottish Government has proposed the Early Release of Prisoners and Prescribed Victim Supporters (Scotland) Regulations 2025, which will be debated in Parliament. If approved, the regulations will take effect from November 2025 through April 2026. The initial tranches in November and December are expected to release approximately 440 prisoners, with the potential total reaching 800-840 depending on capacity and population trends.
- 2.1.5 Justice Social Work (JSW) services have had to rapidly adapt to these measures. Accelerated release timelines have compressed throughcare planning, placing additional strain on prison-based social work teams who are already operating under resource constraints. Simultaneously, the shift toward community-based sentencing has increased demand on local JSW services to manage supervision, electronic monitoring, and community payback orders. While JSW broadly supports these reforms and their alignment with rehabilitation objectives, their successful implementation has required strengthened strategic oversight, improved data monitoring, and enhanced resources to ensure effective support for individuals transitioning from custody to community.
- 2.1.6 Additional investment from the Scottish Government in 2025 has enabled JSW in Glasgow to expand staffing in response to these emergency measures. Recent statistics indicate a marked and sustained rise in the use of community-based interventions, including diversion from prosecution, structured deferred sentences, and bail supervision. Glasgow also continues to report historically high levels of electronic monitoring usage.

2.2 Glasgow Sheriff Court Social Work Team

- 2.2.1 The implementation of the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023, which came into effect in May 2025, has had a direct and significant impact on JSW services. The Act introduced a revised test for bail and granted new powers requiring courts to consider information provided by JSW staff prior to making decisions regarding remand.
- 2.2.2 As a result, the workload of the Court Social Work team has increased, with a corresponding need for social workers to be present in court to facilitate timely bail assessments. This heightened activity has had a positive impact in strengthening partnership working between JSW, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, and Sheriffs.

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2.2.3 Glasgow Sheriff Court Social Work Team has played a leading role in responding to the prison population crisis by offering credible alternatives to remand and custodial sentences. The team has piloted several innovative approaches to enhance the visibility and impact of social work within the court setting.

2.2.4 One key development has been the increased presence of social work staff in the custody court each day. This has enabled Sheriffs, defense agents, clerks, and Procurator Fiscals to seek real time advice and guidance on matters such as community resources and an individual's suitability for community-based disposals. This approach has also allowed social work staff to raise public protection concerns directly with Sheriffs, drawing on information held within social work records.

2.2.5 Feedback received to date indicates that this enhanced model of engagement has significantly supported judicial decision-making, enabling Sheriffs to make more informed assessments about whether individuals can safely remain in the community.

2.3 Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs)

2.3.1 Scotland continues to face significant challenges in responding to evolving drug misuse trends. Despite ongoing efforts to reduce harm, drug-related mortality remains persistently high. Patterns of drug consumption are shifting, notably from injection to inhalation, while emerging substances such as ketamine and synthetic opioids, often used in combination, are complicating treatment and prevention strategies.

2.3.2 In response to these challenges, the Glasgow Drug Court Team has worked closely with the HSCP Organisational Development team throughout 2024-25 to review their structure, processes, and procedures. This review aimed to ensure the service remains contemporary and responsive to changing patterns of drug use and offending. It was also prompted by a decline in referrals to the Drug Court, which does not reflect the actual prevalence of drug-related offending in the city.

2.3.3 Following this review and consultation with the Sheriff Principal at Glasgow Sheriff Court, the Drug Court Team will now offer a Structured Deferred Sentence (SDS) option for individuals who are not suitable for the more intensive Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO). The SDS provides a valuable preparatory period during which individuals engage with social work and addiction services, allowing for comprehensive assessment and personalised planning prior to sentencing.

2.3.4 This approach enables courts to make more informed decisions, enhances individual readiness for treatment, and supports rehabilitation by addressing underlying needs such as housing, mental health, and substance misuse. It also strengthens public protection and judicial confidence by demonstrating early engagement and compliance, ultimately contributing to more successful outcomes and reducing reliance on custodial sentences.

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2.4 Unpaid Work (UPW)

- 2.4.1 In 2025, the Justice Community Payback Unpaid Work (UPW) service in Glasgow advanced exciting and innovative arrangements by partnering with well-established local organisations to develop placements across each of the three locality areas. This has strengthened connections with communities and increased the visibility of UPW activity, reinforcing its value as a restorative justice sentence.
- 2.4.2 By working directly within their own communities, individuals subject to UPW are given meaningful opportunities to contribute to repairing harm. This fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability, as participants witness the positive impact of their efforts. Examples of work undertaken across all three service providers include pathway cleaning, grass cutting for vulnerable residents, support for community cafes and food banks, charity shop assistance, furniture restoration and uplift, painting, and graffiti removal for local services.
- 2.4.3 The practical skills gained through such UPW placements can support future employment and training opportunities, aiding reintegration and rehabilitation. Evidence suggests that when individuals actively contribute to improving their communities, they experience a sense of fulfilment and begin to view themselves as responsible and valued members of society.
- 2.4.4 In partnership with JSW, Community Justice Glasgow, and Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability, an employment event was held for individuals serving Community Payback Orders. Seventeen services hosted stalls, offering pathways to improved employment prospects. Post-event evaluation showed overwhelmingly positive feedback from both service users and providers, highlighting the value of such engagement opportunities.
- 2.4.5 Support for individuals undertaking UPW has also been strengthened through a dedicated health improvement plan. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde continues to deliver the Health & Wellbeing programme in collaboration with JSW and UPW service providers. A notable initiative within this programme is the partnership with Glasgow Council on Alcohol, which developed and delivered community justice-specific alcohol awareness sessions. These are scheduled regularly throughout the year, and Alcohol Brief Intervention (ABI) training has been provided to UPW staff. To date, 168 individuals have attended alcohol awareness sessions, and 100% of UPW staff are on course to complete ABI training in 2026. A recording system has been developed to measure the impact of ABIs delivered in community justice settings, with data reported back to NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.
- 2.4.6 Another standout initiative was the creation of the “Tree of Hope,” a collaborative art installation displayed at Parkhead Forge Shopping Centre. Created by individuals undertaking UPW, the tree featured 1,000 leaves carrying messages of hope, symbolising a collective commitment to suicide-safer communities. As part of this work, SuicideTALK training was delivered to those completing UPW, and a suicide prevention training plan was developed across all the Community Payback Services. This programme was highlighted as a case study of innovative practice in the Scottish Government commissioned report from [the Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour \(February 2025\)](#).

2.5 Prison and Community Throughcare

- 2.5.1 JSW continues to prioritise the enhancement of risk assessment and management practice for staff and the strengthening of confidence in this area across both prison-based and community-based social work teams. A key focus has been the implementation of updated Standards and Guidance for Risk Management Practice (2025), supported through joint development sessions facilitated by the Risk Management Authority (RMA). These sessions have fostered greater alignment and collaboration between prison and community teams.
- 2.5.2 Staff development has been further supported through targeted training in risk formulation and complex domestic offending, ensuring practitioners are equipped to respond to complex risk profiles. The Bail and Release Act (Scotland, 2023) introduces new provisions for long-term prisoners, with an emphasis on improving release arrangements prohibiting prisoner release on days when essential community-based support services e.g., housing, benefits, health, and social care, may be unavailable (such as weekends) to ensure smoother transitions.
- 2.5.3 JSW is actively contributing to several national initiatives reviewing prisoner pathways and progression planning. This includes participation in a national review of the role of social work within prison-based settings, aimed at clarifying and potentially expanding the scope of social work practice in custodial environments.
- 2.5.4 In a local innovation, the HMP Barlinnie prison-based social work team, in collaboration with community colleagues, is developing a test of change. This initiative explores the potential for social work to contribute beyond statutory responsibilities, particularly in addressing the social care needs within the prison estate. This approach may help mitigate unmet programme needs and enhance holistic support for individuals in custody.

3 Community Justice Glasgow

- 3.1 The Community Justice Glasgow Partnership was established to deliver the statutory functions of the [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) and includes the statutory partners named in the Act, alongside local third sector representatives. Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership is a key partner in Glasgow, both by statute, and arguably more importantly, through a joint understanding of the opportunities created through collaboration and communication to deliver a shared vision.
- 3.2 Community Justice Glasgow collaborates with its partners to support people who have committed offences from the point of arrest, through prosecution and sentencing (whether in the community or in custody), and during their reintegration into the community. It also collaborates more widely with victim organisations, communities and families impacted by another's imprisonment – in recognition of the wider impacts. By working in partnership, we aim to improve outcomes for those who are impacted by the justice system, reduce reoffending, and make our city safer for everyone. The work is steered by Glasgow's [Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 2023 - 2028](#) – developed collaboratively with our direct partners and stakeholders.

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- 3.3 The governance of Community Justice sits within the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership structures. Community Justice is also aligned with the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board, and the local scrutiny arrangements for Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, via the SAFE Glasgow Partnership.
- 3.4 A full overview of the work of Community Justice partners can be reviewed within the most recent [Annual Report 2024/2025](#). The work Community Justice Partners engage in collectively is broad. Community Justice Glasgow Team has started the process of a mid-point review of the [Community Justice Outcome Improvement](#) (CJOIP) improvement areas with direct partners and wider stakeholders. Face to face interviews, focus groups and a survey having taken place that will prioritise the emerging themes.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Integration Joint Board is asked to:
- a) Note the contents of this report.