

# NORTH LANARKSHIRE COMMUNITY JUSTICE ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



North Lanarkshire  
Community Justice  
Partnership



# Contents

Foreword 3

Background 4

Governance arrangements 5

What have we been doing? 6

Looking forward 11

# Foreword

Welcome to the North Lanarkshire Community Justice Partnership (NLCJP) Annual Report 2023-24. The NLCJP is responsible for the implementation of community justice to reduce reoffending in North Lanarkshire and has representatives from across justice statutory organisations, as well as an endorsed third sector network.

In this report you will find examples of how partners have worked together to improve support and interventions for those in the justice system to reduce reoffending and therefore make communities safer. There are also examples of how people with convictions have paid back their communities by carrying out projects to improve the lives of people in North Lanarkshire.

The partnership would like to express our thanks to colleagues across services and the third sector for their diligence and commitment to the delivery and improvement of services. We are also grateful for the contribution of those people with lived experience of the justice system, which has been invaluable in helping us better understand how we can make services more accessible.

The publication of the Revised National Community Justice Strategy in June 2022 was welcomed by the NLCJP, following the necessity to extend the previous North Lanarkshire Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (NLCJOIP). The NLCJP consider the aims and priorities of the revised strategy as a positive direction for community justice. In October 2023, following final consultation, the North Lanarkshire [North Lanarkshire Outcome Improvement plan 2023 to 2028](#) was published.

The NLCJP is committed to the implementation of the plan and working together to reduce reoffending.



**Alison Gordon**  
*Chair NLCJP*  
*Chief Social Work Officer*  
*Education, Families,*  
*Justice & Integrated Practice*



**Andrew Thomson**  
*Vice Chair NLCJP*  
*Superintendent (Partnerships)*  
*Lanarkshire Division*  
*Police Scotland*

# Background

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (the Act) sets out the statutory duty of designated partners to implement the Scottish Government national strategy relating to community justice at a local level. Community justice is principally about organisations working together to ensure that people who have offended address the underlying causes of their behaviour, and pay back to the community where appropriate. It aims to encourage rehabilitation, reduce reoffending, and protect the public, leading to fewer victims and safer communities.

The membership of partnership includes statutory partners:

- North Lanarkshire Council (across services)
- NHS Lanarkshire

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board
- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
- Scottish Prison Service
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

Additionally, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire representing third sector colleagues.



# Governance Arrangements

The North Lanarkshire Strategic Leadership Board is the key strategic multi-agency planning mechanism in North Lanarkshire and is responsible for the joint delivery of the priorities detailed in The Plan for North Lanarkshire on a partnership basis. At a community level, the role is provided by 9 community boards. The 9 Boards enhance and support community involvement to provide a single approach for local community-led decision making. This is further enhanced through the ongoing delivery of coproduced local Outcome Improvement Plans in each of the 9 Community Board areas. Action plans stemming from these, highlight and address the key priorities for each area.

Local Partnership Teams have been established to drive delivery of the LOIPs and with responsibility for effective monitoring and management. The responsibility for driving forward the community justice agenda has been devolved to North Lanarkshire Community Justice Partnership, with the leadership board providing strategic oversight and appropriate connections to other partnerships.



# What have we been doing?

The North Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Service is an 18 Month Test of Change (ToC) funded by North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (NLADP) and developed in partnership with the NLCJP, for people arrested and held in police custody. The service is delivered by two local third sector organisations Phoenix Futures and Recovery Scotland who have employed support workers with experience of the justice system to engage with people whilst being held in custody to improve access to treatment where alcohol, drugs or mental health issues have been factors in their presentation within police custody. During the reporting period 309 individuals have engaged with the North Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Service. The service is currently being independently reviewed to better understand the needs of people in custody centres and the effectiveness of the delivery model. There have already been a number of very positive outcomes achieved for individuals as well as improvements to referral pathways to support services, which has reduced reoffending.

While we await national developments in relation to the use of electronic monitoring within bail, there has been regular dialogue with local sheriffs and partner services across the three sheriff courts in Lanarkshire in court liaison meetings. These meetings regularly include discussions to raise awareness of the availability of support and the management of risk related to bail supervision and electronic monitoring. Additionally, meetings with local defence agents took place in October and December 2023 to increase awareness of both bail supervision and electronic monitoring bail.

Diversion from Prosecution provides an early intervention opportunity for people to be supported to address issues in their lives and to reduce their risk of further offending. During the reporting period 368 assessments for Diversion from Prosecution were undertaken, resulting in 242 individuals being diverted from formal justice systems, which demonstrates a 38.29% increase from the previous year's figures of 175.

Diversion Awareness training was delivered by North Lanarkshire's Restorative Justice Services to Police Scotland Inspectors in Lanarkshire at Jackton Police College. Due to its success, it was identified that police sergeants would benefit from this training, therefore a further 5 training sessions were delivered in March 2024. It is anticipated that these inputs will further increase the number of people diverted from the justice system.



Bail Supervision is an early intervention court mandated service for people in the justice system that enhances bail requirements and access to support to address issues in their lives which may have contributed to their offending behaviour. During the reporting period, there were 150 suitability assessments carried out (106 males and 44 females), 37 cases commenced (23 males and 14 females) and 24 cases completed. Services in North Lanarkshire are delivered by SACRO Paths to Positive Change and North Lanarkshire Council's Women's Community Justice Services. There was a total of 66 referrals made to care and treatment services including GP's, Housing, Mental Health Services, BBV and Addiction Services. Additionally, 43 referrals were made to additional support services including The Moira Anderson Foundation, Men's Shed, Chris's House, Intensive Services and Pheonix Futures. A further 66 referrals were made into additional services, such as foodbanks, NLC Tackling Poverty Team and Routes to Work.



## Case Study

Kevin was released on bail supervision, having been charged with wasting police time. From the first instance of meeting Kevin, it was evident he was suffering from severe mental health issues, addictions, and daily living skills. He was experiencing voices in his head on a daily basis and was afraid of his own actions as he had previously attempted suicide.

Following court, Kevin was initially accommodated in an emergency homeless unit. However, following contact with NLC Housing Solutions Team, accommodation was identified in a 7 bed unit, with support workers available 24 hours a day.

Kevin was also referred to the Phoenix Futures Project and supported to attend recovery meetings, as well as cognitive behavioural therapy sessions designed to support his recovery. It became evident that Kevin's mental health issues were strongly linked with his childhood traumas. Liaison with the NHS Lanarkshire forensic psychiatrist who had assessed Kevin whilst in custody, resulted in a fast track referral to the community mental health team who fast-tracked Kevin into the service, who diagnosed Kevin as having a significant mental illness.

Kevin is now receiving the appropriate treatment and support to address his mental health and has been living a crime-free life for several months. He now has his own tenancy, in an area where he feels safe and supported. While Kevin is currently unfit for work, he has been supported to access appropriate benefits. However, it is Kevin's hope that once he is more stable he will be able to find secure employment. Whilst there are still day to day challenges for Kevin, he feels supported and access to appropriate services.

NLC Justice Services continue to work with people subject to Community Payback Orders (CPO). Individual case management plans are developed with people to identify specific offence focussed interventions to manage risk, as well as needs and welfare. Interventions are delivered in partnership with colleagues in statutory and third sector organisations. During the reporting period:

- 44 people in the justice system subject to an Unpaid Work Requirement completed Emergency First Aid at Work SCQF level 4 with no fails. A Manual Handling SCQF Level 4 Course was delivered as a new initiative and 3 unpaid work students passed with no fails.
- NHS Lanarkshire Keep Well Service (KW) held 30 clinics for people involved within Justice Services. 75 people attended KW clinics, with 168 referrals made onto other services. People attending clinics are offered a holistic health check with a focus on cardiovascular disease prevention.
- NLC Housing Solutions have carried out 318 prevention and sustainability assessments to assess need in relation to not only housing but support for sustainable accommodation.
- NLC Tackling Poverty Team has generated £714,737.24 for people in the justice system and their families. A total of 402 benefit checks were completed for 616 individuals.
- NLC Employability Support and Skills Development fund a dedicated post to support people in the justice system to reduce barriers to employment by offering skills development education and training. 218 referrals were made to Routes to Work in the reporting period. Additionally referrals were also made to Skills Development Scotland, Enable and Remploy.





During the reporting period 133,941 hours were imposed by courts in relation to unpaid work and other activity. Unpaid work provides an opportunity for people in the justice system to give something back to their community, as well as learning new skills to reduce their risk of reoffending. NLC Restorative Justice Services continues to engage with local communities and groups to identify projects, including a presentation to community board members in March 2024 projects. During the reporting period:

- 54 squad projects within North Lanarkshire Communities have been completed, ranging from 1 or 2 days to large projects with a duration of up to 4 to 6 months. The work completed included painting and decorating, ground works including constructing poly tunnels, rubbish removal, ground clearances, grass cutting, hedge trimming, slabbing/monoblocking, constructing fencing and outdoor buildings. These activities were taught by NLC Restorative Justice Unpaid Work Supervisors who are qualified in these skills.
- Larger projects involved a 400M pathway at Auchinloch to cut back overgrown paths, lopping overhanging tree branches and laying new pathway.
- A 700M project at Salt Lane Woods removing overgrown bushes and rubbish, to allow local residents to walk their dogs safely.
- The construction of pirate ships, spitfire planes, trucks, outdoor classrooms, mud kitchens encouraging imaginative play therapy for children within family learning centres, nursery and schools. Additionally, much of the materials utilised by unpaid work are bound for landfill.
- In total 721 bread baskets full of produce from the Clydeside and Townhead market gardens were donated to the local community. The fresh organic produce is provided to the local foodbanks, sheltered housing and children's houses through North Lanarkshire Council. Individuals are able to transfer these skills to their own home setting and are provided with the materials to establish a market garden of their own.
- NLC Housing Solutions and NLC Restorative Justice Services have facilitated learning events at the community market gardens in Townhead and Clydeside in Wishaw. The events provided opportunities for children and people in the local community to sow seeds, learn about different growing techniques and also take home some of the produce. They are then invited back later in the year to experiencing harvesting what they have sown.
- Over 304 bikes have been refurbished by people undertaking unpaid work in NLC Restorative Justice Services bike workshop, which have then been donated to community groups, schools, and individuals. Additionally, bike repairs are carried out for people in the local community who cannot afford the financial cost of this. Working in partnership with Police Scotland the service has been able to supply replacement bikes for those who have been the victims of bicycle theft. In total the bike workshop has completed 8341 unpaid work hours.



In North Lanarkshire there has been a dedicated voluntary throughcare support service, Community Bridges since 2011, which is funded through North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership to work with people serving a short term prison sentences and who have problematic alcohol or drug use.

The NLCJP Education and Employability group undertook work as previously reported to consider the employment needs of people who have served short term prison sentences. However, findings concluded that for most people leaving prison, the barriers to employment were so significant, that additional voluntary throughcare support was necessary, if there was to be a more longer term goal of employment.

Bridges and Beyond Voluntary Throughcare Team offers person centred outreach support to individuals who originate from North Lanarkshire serving a short-term sentences in prisons across central Scotland and is funded by NLC's Employment Support and Skills Development Services. The employability support begins by reducing the barriers to employment, including access to suitable housing, financial hardship, fractured family relationships and trauma, which by being addressed, increases a person's readiness to pursue employment.

The development of the Bridges and Beyond Throughcare Service demonstrates a commitment by NLCJP to ensure that those people in the justice system, who are far removed the employment market, are given the right support for employment readiness in the future. The service is already seeing success particularly for people who have been caught up in cycles of serving short term prison sentences.

[Community Bridges and Bridges and Beyond - Youtube Video.](#)



# Looking forward...

NLCJP will continue to engage with organisations including Community Justice Scotland and the Care Inspectorate. Additionally, the partnership will continue to participate and inform developments nationally.

The NCJP's publication of the revised North Lanarkshire Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2023-28 sets out a comprehensive programme of work, closely aligned to the national strategy, but underpinned by a local evidence base. There are 5

key priorities that are underpinned by 31 actions, which will be driven by annual plans of activity. Crucially, mechanisms will be developed to ensure the participation of those with lived experience, staff, the third sector and local communities.

Additionally, NLCJP is committed to the process of self-evaluation to measure our effectiveness in improving lives, reducing reoffending and therefore making North Lanarkshire a safer place to live.



