

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COMMUNITY JUSTICE ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



North Lanarkshire
Community Justice
Partnership



Contents

Foreword	3
Background	4
Governance arrangements	5
What have we been doing?	6
Looking forward	11

Foreword

I am pleased to present North Lanarkshire Community Justice Partnership (NLCJP) Annual Report 2024–2025. This has been a year shaped by both challenge and achievement, reflecting the continued commitment of partners to improving outcomes for people in the justice system, victims, families and communities.

The ongoing cost of living crisis has intensified pressures on individuals and families, contributing to rising demand for mental health, recovery and wider wellbeing support. Despite these pressures, the partners across community justice have continued to deliver improvement activity in diversion, early intervention, custody, bail supervision, community sentences and throughcare. The voices of people with lived experience have shaped our understanding and influenced the direction of local practice. North Lanarkshire’s achievements this year demonstrate our shared aspiration to create safer, healthier and more resilient communities.



Alison Gordon

Chair NLCJP

Chief Social Work Officer

Education, Families,

Justice & Integrated Practice



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?

Diversion from Prosecution is an early intervention option by the prosecutor in any case where the accused has identifiable need that has or appears to have contributed to their offending behaviour. It aims to reduce further offending, prevent people unnecessarily entering the justice system and provide a faster, more proportionate response. During 2024-25, Diversion from Prosecution awareness raising sessions were delivered to 70 social work staff across children and families, older and younger adults teams. This was part of a 3 year programme of training developed and delivered by NLC Restorative Justice Services to partners including Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Police Scotland and North Lanarkshire Council. The sessions are designed to increase the knowledge and understanding of diversion across agencies to promote the use of the scheme and benefits to participants. In 2024-25, 242 Diversion from Prosecution Orders were successfully completed, which represents a 49% increase from the previous year.

Whilst comparisons in years can be impacted by factors such as the timings and lengths of orders over reporting periods, the level of increase is significant, which in part may be attributed to the programme of training delivered.

The North Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Service is funded by North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (NLADP) and developed in partnership with the NLCJP and Police Scotland, for people arrested and held in police custody. The service was delivered by two local third sector organisations Phoenix Futures and Recovery Scotland who employed support workers with lived experience 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. An independent review of the service was carried out in 2024 concluding in early 2025. Evaluation showed that the service had received 458 referrals during the evaluated period. 84 % of these referrals were in respect of adult males. Those with support needs related to drugs / alcohol were evenly split and significantly, 60% were considered to have had no previous engagement with recovery services. Evaluation findings included clear evidence that the service was successful in engaging hard to reach individuals at a time of personal crises. It noted the commitment and resilience of the staff involved and the effectiveness of the approach. Police Scotland custody centres in North Lanarkshire have arrest referral champions whose role is to raise awareness of the arrest referral service to their colleagues to improve understanding of the scheme.

During the reporting period, there were 255 assessments undertaken for bail supervision, which represented an increase of 70% from the previous year. This resulted in 58 people being subject to a bail supervision order, which represents a 57% increase from the previous year.





Case Study

Layla was assessed and made subject to bail supervision in relation to a domestic abuse offence. She had no previous involvement with Justice Services or any other statutory agency. There were two main issues identified at the time of being placed on bail supervision: her misuse of alcohol and the breakdown of her relationship with her husband and (adult) children. At the first point of contact a bail supervision management plan was devised and co-produced with Layla, which set out arrangements for supervision, monitoring and support and who would be involved.

A person-centred assessment of need was made which was flexible and responsive to Layla's needs and would provide targeted interventions including Addiction Recovery, Housing and support from the Tackling Poverty Team. P's daughter provided support for her to attend bail supervision appointments and the justice support worker completed home visits, demonstrating trauma-informed practice to best ensure compliance and engagement. Layla was assessed for an alcohol rehabilitation place and was successful, completing an eight-week residential placement which she found difficult but understood was her best chance to make the necessary changes to her life. At the end of her placement, Layla moved into temporary accommodation as bail conditions were still in place not to approach her family home. She continued to work with her addictions recovery and justice workers in the lead up to her court date, but has made significant progress to move on with her life more positively.

During 2024-25, 1231 Community Payback Orders were completed. Community Payback Orders provide courts with a credible alternative to custody that manages risk and addresses need to reduce the likelihood of further offending. The NLCJP's [Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2023-28](#) is focused on wellbeing and welfare, recognising the intrinsic links between need and risk. The impact of addiction, mental health, homelessness and poverty are widely recognised as factors, when addressed, that reduce people's likelihood to reoffend. NLC's Restorative Justice and Locality Teams have developed positive links with both statutory and third sector organisations to support people who are subject to a Community Payback Order to access to key services to address needs including maximising income, housing, recovery and when ready, employability support.

North Lanarkshire communities have benefited from almost 91,000 hours of unpaid work carried out by individuals subject to a Community Payback Unpaid Work Order delivered by NLC's Restorative Justice Service. Demand continues to grow and during the period of this report 139,024 hours were imposed by Courts in relation to unpaid work and other activity, which denotes a further rise of more than 5,000 hours imposed in this regard over the last year.

- The woodwork workshop teaches joinery skills which enables bespoke items to be made from reclaimed wood pallets which were destined for landfill. Partnerships have been made with family learning centers, nurseries, schools and communities, which resulted in the construction of 554 items including outdoor classrooms, and play equipment in the form of trucks, trains and cars to promote outdoor play for children throughout our community.
- The bike recycling workshop refurbished bikes which are donated by individuals or have been discarded in local recycling centers. The bikes are repaired to a gold standard and are distributed to local community groups, schools and individuals. In total 1443 hours of unpaid work were completed through this initiative resulting in 364 bikes being donated to individuals within our community.

- Squad placements have benefitted the local communities through activities such as landscaping. In total 2049 hours have been completed that have ranged from one to two-day pieces of work to larger projects with a duration of four to six months.
- The Home Improvement workshop provides opportunities for service users to gain experience in decorating, painting, and plastering. In addition to increasing the opportunities for unpaid work in the community this initiative is intended to give service users skills that can help them in the labor market. Once the individual is proficient in these disciplines, they utilise the skills learned on a project within the local community. This provides more experience to enhance employment pathways.
- In partnership with NLC Housing Solutions, Education and Restorative Justice Services developed and delivered learning events at our community allotments in Townhead, Clydeside, and in Wishaw. These events enable children and people in the local community to sow seeds and learn about different growing techniques. Participants can take away some of the produce and invited back later in the year to experience the harvest taking place. In total 2876 hours have been completed within our allotments with the produce being distributed to local sheltered housing complexes, foodbanks and the public.

NLC Restorative Justice Services have been working with Viewpark Gardens Trust since February 2025 to date. There have been two squads working there from Sunday to Wednesday each week. During this time the unpaid work squads have put undertaken 5280 hours on site, removing 150 tons of green waste. The Trust and service users have transformed overgrown gardens, and the plan is that the Gardens will be open to the public by the summer of 2026. There has been significant benefits to service users observing and contributing to the transformation that will benefit the local community.

During 2024-25 NLC Housing Solutions Public Protection Team has established pathway planning arrangements are in place with the Scottish Prison Service for implementation of SHORE (Sustainable Housing On Release for Everyone). During 2024-25, 293 Prevention and Sustainability Assessments were recorded on Housing Management system for designated area managers to access and assign to support the needs of service users. NLC Housing Solutions Public Protection Team are actively engaged in supporting 73 people in the justice system who are either subject to statutory supervision or receiving voluntary throughcare support, an increase of 16% from the previous year.

During 2024, 192 people who registered for support with Routes to Work had a criminal conviction, 17 females and 175 males. Of those, 56% of people advised they felt their criminal conviction was a barrier to work. Other barriers reported included financial hardship, long term health conditions, limited work experience, substance related conditions and family/relationship breakdown. Routes to Work supported 42 people were supported to achieve a qualification and 55 progressed into employment. Routes to Work are funded by NLC's Employability Support and Skills Development Service.

Within NLC's Justice Services a coproduced assessment tool is used to identify an individual's needs and strengths to support the development of an intervention plan to reduce reoffending. During 2024/25, there were 379 initial and final justice stars available for analysis, which highlights the impact of the work undertaken by services across community justice. Of range of areas assessed, the largest increase in self-reliance was seen in the area of a crime free life, further increases are noted in mental health well-being, managing strong feelings and drugs/alcohol all important factors that contribute to reducing reoffending.

In North Lanarkshire, during 2024-25, 60 individuals were subject to Scottish Government's Early Release Programme. NLC Justice Services led the NL CJP multi-agency response to pre-release planning to ensure all individuals were risk assessed and that appropriate safe and supported transitions back into the

community. The model adopted was replicated from arrangements during the pandemic, which meant that there was a clear process in place for the necessary professionals to respond in a way that was recognised as being successful previously.

North Lanarkshire ADP funds a Phoenix Futures linkworker post in HMP Addiewell to provide pre and post liberation support to those being liberated to North Lanarkshire. An Outcome Star and Recovery Plan is completed prior to release that will support the person's transition to the community. Support provided can include gate pick up, accessing treatment, attending appointments and benefits claims. The service can also a peer mentor with lived experience.

In November 2024, NLC Justice and Children and Families Social Work hosted the annual Justice Conference which explored the theme of Youth Justice with a focus on the new Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the UNCRCC. with lived experience helping to plan and deliver key inputs. The programme for the conference can be found here [Justice Conference 2024](#). The conference was attended a range of partners across social work, community justice partners and third sector colleagues.





Looking forward...

In June 2025, the NLCJP held a partner and key stakeholder development day to reflect on the progress on the partnership reaching the mid point of the current North Lanarkshire Outcome Improvement Plan, which helped identify actions to be taken for the remainder of the plan.

The development of NLCJP partnership meetings during 2024-25 to include presentations by third sector colleagues has been viewed positively by partners and presenters as it has facilitated valuable connections between services and partners. However, the main purpose of this meeting development has been to hear from the voices of victims, survivors, people with lived experience and their families in the justice system, via the third sector organisations providing them with support in relation to their experiences. The valuable insights gained through the presentations provide partners with a greater understanding of how people can experience the justice system and can be used to inform key stakeholder engagement and strategic planning. Organisations included Assist, Families Outside, Phoenix Futures, Circle and Lanarkshire Rape Crisis. Additionally, agreement was made with Victim Support Scotland to be a member of the NLCJP.

The NLCJP have also undertaken a range of activities to engage those with lived experience of the justice system, which has resulted in the commitment by the partnership to develop a key stakeholder group that would sit alongside and be represented at partnership meetings. The group will have representation from those with lived experience of the justice system including those who have perpetrated crime, their families and victims/survivors.

The relaunch the NLCJP Endorsed Third Sector Network in partnership with Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire is a welcomed development and arrangements already underway to re-establish this important connection to local based services.

The North Lanarkshire Restorative Justice Steering Group continues to oversee the development and implementation of this test for change initiative to provide opportunities for people to participate in a restorative justice process. The members of the group include the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Police Scotland and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration, who have all supported the planning around this test for change and have given a commitment to work in partnership with Justice and Children and Families Social Work during its implementation.



