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**National Strategy for Community Justice: Review Consultation**

**Closes 8th November**

This consultation invites comments as part of the review of the National Strategy for Community Justice. As section 16 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, Scottish Ministers must review the current strategy by 24 November 2021. Following this review, Scottish Ministers have committed to developing a new strategy, and it is expected that this will be published in Spring 2022, following a public consultation exercise in due course.

The consultation asks 14 questions in total on:

* The simplicity/accessibility of the document, including if it should contain more specific and time limited aims and actions than it does currently **(Questions 1 & 2)**
* For views on the vision and mission statement **(Questions 3, 4 & 5)**
* For views on priorities and what the strategy should focus on, including how useful the current priorities and improvement actions are at helping partners/communities to work together effectively **(Questions 6 & 7)**
* For views on the current principles in the strategy, including how useful they are at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice **(Questions 8 & 9)**
* For views/feedback on the impact of the strategy currently overall **(Questions 10, 11, 12 & 13)**
* For views on what the three main community justice priorities over the next 3-5 years should be **(Question 14)**

Highlighted in green are questions that we can respond to linking in to overarching principles. Highlighted in red are questions that we are less able to respond to, given we do not perform a service delivery function/are unable to gauge views of members on the impact of the strategy within such a short time frame.

**Questions**

**Vision, mission statement, priorities and principles**

**Overview**

The current strategy includes a vision and mission statement for community justice in Scotland, priorities to drive delivery towards these and principles that underpin the vision. These four components are supplemented by a range of contextual information.

As per section 15(2) of the Act however, the strategy may include, in particular, aims and actions:

The strategy may contain such material in relation to community justice as the Scottish Ministers consider appropriate, including in particular—

(a) a statement of the aims of community justice,

(b) action that the Scottish Ministers propose to take, or consider that others should take, to achieve, or support the achievement of, those aims,

(c) action that the Scottish Ministers consider that others should take to facilitate access to relevant general services by persons who have been convicted of an offence following the release of such persons from imprisonment or detention in a penal institution.

Setting out each component and the contextual information in the strategy may have been helpful and necessary when the model of community justice was being established. There may however be potential to simplify the strategy and to make it shorter, with less headings and a clearer focus. This may assist both partner organisations and the public in understanding and using the document. There may also be potential to consider the inclusion of more specific, time-limited aims and actions to be taken forward during the lifetime of the strategy.

1. **Do you think it would be helpful to shorten and simplify the strategy, to make it more user friendly?**

Yes

No

Please explain your response further

1. **Do you think that the strategy should contain more specific and time-limited aims and actions than at present?**

Yes

No

Please explain your response further

**Vision and Mission Statement**

The current strategy sets out a vision and mission statement as follows:

**Vision:**

Scotland is a safer, fairer and more inclusive nation where we:

* prevent and reduce further offending by addressing its underlying causes; and
* safely and effectively manage and support those who have committed offences to help them reintegrate into the community and realise their potential for the benefit of all citizens.

**Mission Statement:**

We will achieve this vision by effectively implementing the Scottish Government’s plans for penal policy to:

* Deliver a decisive shift in the balance between community and custodial sentences by:
  + increasing the use of community-based interventions; and
  + reducing the use of short term custodial sentences;
* Improve the reintegration from custody to community.

1. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the current vision?**

Please explain your response further

1. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the current mission statement?**

Please explain your response further

1. **How useful do you think the current vision and mission statement are at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice?**

**Priorities**

The current strategy sets out four priorities, each with associated improvement actions for delivery by partners, as follows:

**Priorities:**

* Improved Community Understanding and Participation
  + Informing local communities about community justice issues and involving them in the decisions that affect them will support reintegration, reduce stigma, and lead to the delivery of better, more responsive services and improved community justice outcomes.
* Strategic Planning and Partnership Working
  + A strategic approach to community justice planning and partnership requires that both statutory and non-statutory partners collaborate effectively towards common goals and co-ordinate their activities effectively.
* Equal Access to Services
  + The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places duties on statutory partners who have a key role to play in improving community justice outcomes.
* Effective Use of Evidence-Based Interventions
  + In order to maintain confidence and protect the interests of people who have been victims of crime, it is important that the interventions available reflect the appropriate level of risk and the nature and severity of the offence, and should be robustly and consistently applied and delivered.

The priorities currently mirror the ‘structural outcomes’ in the OPIF. While this may not be the case going forward, we recognise the need for the new strategy and OPIF to align strategically and to be consistent and clear in their use of language. The Community Justice Outcome Activity Annual Report sets out evidence and commentary on progress towards structural outcomes (as well as the person-centred outcomes), which are consistent with these priorities, and improvement actions.

1. **Do you think that a reviewed community justice strategy needs a focus on each of the following?**

**Select all that apply**

* Improved Community Understanding and Participation

Please add any comments on this priority:

* Strategic Planning and Partnership Working

Please add any comments on this priority:

* Equal Access to Services

Please add any comments on this priority:

* Effective Use of Evidence-Based Interventions

Please add any comments on this priority:

1. **How useful do you think that the current priorities and improvement actions are at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice?**

**Principles**

The current strategy sets out a number of principles as follows:

**Principles**

Our vision for community justice is underpinned by the following principles:

* People must be held to account for their offences, in a way that recognises the impact on victims of crime and is mindful of risks to the public, while being proportionate and effective in preventing and reducing further offending.
* Re-integrating those who have committed offences into the community, and helping them to realise their potential, will create a safer and fairer society for all.
* Every intervention should maximise opportunities for preventing and reducing offending as early as possible, before problems escalate.
* Community justice outcomes cannot be improved by one stakeholder alone. We must work in partnership to address these complex issues.
* Informed communities who participate in community justice will lead to more effective services and policies with greater legitimacy.
* High quality, person-centred and collaborative services should be available to address the needs of those who have committed offences, their families, and victims of crime.

1. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the current principles?**
2. **How useful do you think the current principles are at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice?**

**Impact of the strategy**

Overall, implementation of the strategy has been supported by Community Justice Scotland which has a key role in promoting the strategy, and to monitor, promote and support improvement in performance in the provision of community justice. The Community Justice Network has also played a key role in supporting Community Justice Partnership Coordinators, who take a key role in facilitating the preparation of and reporting on local plans, and Community Justice Scotland organises regular meetings of Community Justice Partnership Chairs.

In addition, community justice partners of a local authority area have a statutory duty to have regard to the strategy when preparing their Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plans, and these must be reviewed after the publication of a revised national strategy (section 20(2)(a) and 22(2)(a) of the Act).

We recognise that community justice statutory partners, who are not traditionally justice partners, and the third sector, who are a crucial delivery partner, can make significant contributions to people’s life chances and outcomes, through the model of community justice.

A key part of the review process is understanding what impact the strategy has had, and where there may be scope for improvement.

1. **Thinking about the strategy overall, to what extent has it led to collaboration in the effective and strategic use of resources (including, as referenced in the current strategy, by sharing staff, expertise, information, property, and finance) across the community justice sector?**
2. **Thinking about the strategy overall, to what extent has it achieved its aim of providing a shared vision to help partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice?**
3. **Thinking about the strategy overall, would you say that it has influenced the work of your local area/organization?**

**13) Thinking about the strategy overall:**

**a) which elements do you find most useful**

**b) which elements of the strategy do you find least useful?**

**Future Thinking**

The Scottish Government will publicly consult on the development and direction of the new strategy at a later date, but early views from partners on key future priorities are welcomed.

**14) In your view what are the three main community justice priorities over the next 3-5 years?**