



**MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF  
EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL COMMUNITY JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP**

**11am – 1pm, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021, hosted on MS Teams**

---

**Partnership Members Present:**

Neil Mitchell (NM), Police Scotland - Area Commander, (Chair)  
Iain Gorman (IG), H&SCP - Head of Operations, (Vice Chair)  
Jim Goodfellow, ELC - Councillor  
David Abernethy (DA), Scottish Prison Service - Governor, Edinburgh Prison  
Maureen Allan (MA), Chief Officer - Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL)  
Professor Marion Ellison (ME), Queen Margaret University  
Carol Tugman (CT), Local Delivery Relationship Lead – Social Security Scotland (SSS)  
David Girrity (DG), Scottish Fire & Rescue Service  
Lynsey Davidson (LD) – Skills Development Scotland (SDS)  
Kirsty MacDiarmid, Public Protection Service Manager  
Sharon Saunders (SS), ELC - Head of Communities & Partnerships

**Others in Attendance**

Stephanie Kerr (SK), ELC - Community Justice Coordinator  
Justine Sharp (JS), ELC – Justice Social Work Services (Minute Taker)  
Trish Carlyle (TC), H&SCP – General Manager  
Julie Morton (JM), ELC - Service Manager – Statutory Services  
Alison Lynch (AL), ELC – Justice Social Work Services  
Nicky Sandford (NS), ELC – Housing Options Team  
Alannah Juchniewicz (AJ), Police Scotland - Community Planning Officer  
Shamin Akhtar (SA), Cabinet Spokesperson for Health and Social Care  
Richard Thomson (RT), Improvement Lead – Community Justice Scotland  
Philip O’Kane (PO’K), Client Support Advisor, Team Leader – Social Security Scotland (SSS)

**Apologies:**

Caitlin McCorry (CMC), ELC - Connected Communities Service Manager  
James Coutts (JC), ELC - Housing  
Ciara Webb (CW), ELC – Justice Social Work Services  
Stuart Milnes (SM), ELC – Justice Social Work Services  
Judith Tait (JT), ELC - Chief Operating Officer Children’s Services & CSWO

East Lothian Community Justice Partnership

Item No.		Action by
1.	<p><b>Introductions and apologies</b>            NM welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.</p> <p>March minutes agreed as an accurate record.            Job title to be amended for P O’K.</p>	SK/JS
2.	<p><b>National Community Justice Agenda (CJ Scotland)</b></p> <p>NM introduced RT, Improvement Lead (Community Justice Scotland), to the meeting. His role within CJ Scotland is to identify ways to improve Community Justice outcomes and to influence the necessary changes within the context of the National Strategy for Community Justice. RT talked the members through the National Community Justice agenda, explaining the various tasks which were currently being covered by his team.</p> <p>Prior to today’s meeting, a discussion had been held with SK regarding the CJ LOIP. CJ Scotland are currently reviewing both the OPIF and the national strategy.</p> <p>As a result of Covid, RT informed the members that court had imposed <b>38%</b> fewer custodial sentences and <b>49%</b> fewer orders in the last year. Back in February 2021, it was recorded that over 29,000 Sheriff Summary court trials were still outstanding (overall backlog of 35,000 cases). This number continues to increase. SA suggested the possibility of engaging with other CJ partnerships to find out how they were dealing with the backlog of trials.</p> <p>NM thanked RT and his team for all of their hard work. He expressed interest in seeing whether the direction would change regarding Justice services, due to the appointment of the new Justice Secretary.</p> <p>JM informed the partnership that JSWS had recently noted an increase in diversionary disposals. She stated that some form of intervention still needed to be provided. This could be made available by third sector agencies, such as SACRO and VCEL. JSWS expect a further influx to arise in September.</p> <p>JM went on to say that there had also been an increase in admonishments in relation to older summary cases. There have been some cases, where the court has wrapped up repeat offences into one single case. These in turn, could possibly result into a custodial sentence.</p> <p>DA raised that the number of people on remand has doubled over the last few months. Some prisoners have been on remand for 14/15 months. He also noted that there has been an influx in people wanting to live in East Lothian after leaving prison. However, not all of these people have a local connection to the area. DA proposes to contact SPS headquarters to further discuss the local connections chain from an SPS standpoint.</p> <p>ME notified the partnership that they were currently establishing a Scottish Centre for Social Justice at Queen Margaret University. She offered to have a further discussion with RT about this.</p> <p>NM welcomed RT to stay for the rest of the meeting.</p>	<p>DA</p> <p>ME</p>

East Lothian Community Justice Partnership

<p>3 a)</p>	<p><b>Actions from previous meeting</b> Most actions complete. Outstanding actions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Delivery of trauma informed training in more detail as “Pan Lothian Recovery Action”. It was agreed that the trauma informed approach should be rolled out to Elected Members too.</li> <li>10. Evaluate TRANSFORM and CONNECT.</li> <li>18. Draft LOIP - service mapping detail to be added to VCEs website.</li> <li>20. Monitor releases from remand without a service (Scope – 6 months).</li> <li>25. KMacD to have discussion with DA re. Equally Safe Priority 4.</li> <li>42. SK to explore further possible summary suggested by DA.</li> <li>43. Members are to send any suggestions/good practice ideas in their dept to JT.</li> <li>45. DA &amp; IG to have further discussion re. people leaving prison (near miss occurrence – drugs).</li> <li>46. SK to produce formal spreadsheet to show transparency of finance in CJ.</li> <li>48. NS to circulate the ministerial statement that was sent in March.</li> </ul>	<p>JT - To be kept as an action.</p> <p>DMacD/JM</p> <p>SK - To remain as an action.</p> <p>JT</p> <p>KMacD</p> <p>SK</p> <p>JT</p> <p>DA/IG</p> <p>SK</p> <p>NS</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Updates from Workstream Leads</b></p> <p>a. Getting it Right to Reduce Reoffending</p> <p>NS informed the partnership that there was not a lot to update on since the last meeting. The workstream had decided to cancel their most recent meeting on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May. This decision was made in order for them to stop and take stock of where the group was at. NS had met up with Alison Lynch (AL), Steph Kerr (SK) and Judith Tait (JT), to discuss the current situation of the workstream and decided that the group had become quite large in numbers. An email was sent out to all who attend the meetings to find out what would be best to cover, going forward, in these meetings. NS mentioned that they intend to work on a more thematic route. It was also announced that AL would act as co-chair for all future workstream meetings.</p> <p>b. Early Intervention &amp; Prevention</p> <p>Since the workstream last met on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021, work has begun to pick up. AJ informed the partnership that the MYPAS project was now well embedded. A Mental Health service SPOC has been implemented in schools. AJ announced that Stuart Milnes (SM) was to act as co-lead for all future workstream meetings. He shall also oversee the Justice Social Work actions which are noted at the end of the EI&amp;P action plan.</p> <p>AJ mentioned that YCOG was also well underway. This group shall be reviewed by the workstream leads, NM and LMck in due course.</p>	<p>AJ/SM/NM/LMck</p>



## East Lothian Community Justice Partnership

<p>NS explained that the Scottish Government were proposing to suspend local connection referrals between Scottish local authorities, as recommended by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group. On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019, the local connection provisions in section 8 of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 were commenced. This gave Scottish Ministers the power to modify the 2003 Act, with two subsequent public consultations and a statement on modifying local connection by the then Housing Minister published in March 2021.</p> <p>The aspirations of the Scottish Government to abolish local connection have been delayed as a result of lockdown restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. The feeling was that the Scottish Government could not be seen to be supporting free movement around the country through lifting local connection restrictions in respect of homelessness, while also enforcing lockdown restrictions to push people to stay at home or stay local. However, now that restrictions are lifting, the Scottish Government aim to introduce legislative change at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Local connection is defined as a connection which a person has with an area because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• they are or were in the past normally resident in it, and this residence was of their own choice; or</li><li>• they are employed in it; or</li><li>• they have family associations; or</li><li>• they have special circumstances.</li></ul> <p>The decision to suspend local connection referrals is based on the belief that people who are homeless should have the choice to present to the local authority of their choice and they may have good reasons for doing so. The Scottish Government view is that households are more likely to resettle successfully, and avoid repeat homelessness, if they are living in an area of their choice where they can access services and support they require to integrate into the local community. The ability to have a fresh start in another area is considered critical in helping people to sustain a safe and settled home.</p> <p>Local authorities currently have a power, but not a duty, to refer households they have assessed as homeless to another local authority, depending on individual circumstances. Currently, this power is rarely used (170 cases per annum nationally) and 90% of homeless households have a connection to the local authority to which they made their application. In East Lothian, 95% of cases last year had a connection to East Lothian, so above average, meaning we had around 40 cases per annum with no local connection to East Lothian. However, the likelihood is that once local connection is abolished, this will increase homeless applications to East Lothian. There are sources of evidence to suggest this is likely to be the case – the housing market area assessment for SES plan HNDA2; NRS household projections (migration rather than balance between births and deaths) and the number of cases who attempt to present in East Lothian, due to being unhappy with temporary accommodation provided by the City of Edinburgh Council.</p> <p>East Lothian Council and other organisations raised some potential benefits and also concerns via the two formal consultations on local connection regarding prison leavers. For example, the abolition of local connection could benefit some people leaving prison, in terms of encountering difficulties reintegrating into their local communities. However, concerns were also noted about the potential of an increased demand on certain areas and the</p>	
--	--

East Lothian Community Justice Partnership

	<p>ability to move around could mean issues re. sharing information, GDPR, and the ability to provide appropriate support and issues re. risk assessments. There are also likely to be difficulties on taking forward the planned preventative approach in terms of engaging with people in prison prior to release. In addition, there are concerns that the abolition of local connection may have an adverse impact on the management and supervision of individuals who are subject to post-release orders, parole conditions or other post-release supervision – either upon their release from prison, and/or subsequently in the community. The impact on the operation of MAPPAs and other public protection arrangements (including Child or Adult Protection duties) have been highlighted.</p> <p>These discussions remain ongoing and NS has agreed to prepare a draft statement regarding concerns raised by the partnership to provide to the Scottish Government.</p>	NS
7.	<p><b>Review of TRANSFORM</b></p> <p>As DMacD is retiring, there is currently no one in place to take over as chair of this police led initiative. NM confirmed that, although they did have a replacement for DMacD, he was concerned about them not being up to speed with what has happened so far. Therefore, JM suggested that a review should be the way forward. JM and NM shall have a further discussion regarding the progress of this group. It was also suggested that AL had a discussion with DMacD's replacement regarding the group.</p>	JM/NM AL
8.	<p><b>Community Justice Data</b></p> <p>The time has come for the ELC Annual Report to be produced. This report shall be different in order to reflect the impact of Covid and the potential changes occurring as a result of the OPIF. The deadline is <b>24<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b>. Therefore, all CJ requirements must be in by July. SK shall send an email request out over the next week. The Annual Report shall be signed off at the next partnership meeting.</p>	SK
9.	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p><b>a) Partnership Timeline</b></p> <p>NM explained that the Leads group were looking to pull together some form of partnership timeline. By doing so, would help the partnership to be more co-ordinated across the workstreams, e.g. would help to prevent the overlapping of reviews. NM shall discuss this further with AJ.</p> <p><b>b) Long Term Vision Consultation – Scottish Fire And Rescue Service</b></p> <p>DG raised that the Scottish Fire And Rescue Service have launched a public consultation for communities across Scotland to offer their views on the future direction of the service. The details for this can be found on their website. The consultation shall close on <b>18<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b>. DG shall forward both the details and the website link to SK, to in turn, circulate to members. She shall also share the details via the CJ Twitter account.</p> <p><b>c) Scottish Centre for Social Justice</b></p> <p>ME informed the members that, at Queen Margaret University they were currently in the initial stages of setting up a Scottish Centre for Social Justice. This shall be an enabling platform for collaborative work between themselves, local authorities, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations, etc. This is due to open</p>	NM/AJ DG/SK

East Lothian Community Justice Partnership

	<p>on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. ME shall provide further information about the centre over the coming weeks. DA offered ME the opportunity to visit the prison, in order to speak to people with lived experience of social injustice.</p>	<p>ME DA/ME</p>
10.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 10:30am – 12:30pm (MS Teams)</p>	