

National Strategy for Community Justice: Review Consultation

Analysis of Consultation Responses

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

On 27 September 2021, the Scottish Government published a targeted [consultation](#) seeking views on the current [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) (the strategy). The consultation formed part of the statutory review of the strategy.

The consultation closed on 8 November 2021, and 52 responses to the consultation were received.

The responses contributed to the Scottish Government concluding that a revised strategy was required and the responses will help to inform the development of a new strategy.

This report presents an analysis of the responses to the consultation, and sets out the Scottish Government's next steps.

1.2 Summary of responses

Overview

There was broad support for shortening and simplifying the strategy in order to make it more user-friendly, and for more specific and time-limited aims and actions than at present.

Themes from the respondents included:

- The need for accessibility and clear language to aid understanding by a wider audience
- Suggestions that different versions of the strategy or supporting sources could be produced for different audiences
- Providing greater clarity of roles, responsibilities and actions for community justice partners
- Including SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) aims and actions in the strategy
- Being cognisant of local aims, actions and capacity to deliver

Vision and mission statement

There was broad support for the current vision in the strategy, and more mixed responses in relation to the mission statement and how useful both have been at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice.

Themes from the respondents included:

- Broad agreement with the focus and ambition of the vision
- Concerns raised over the scope and ambition of the mission statement
- Specific concerns in relation to certain wording, e.g. 'reintegration', etc.

- The need to define the scope of community justice, and alignment to other policy areas
- Areas that should be more prominently reflected in the strategy, e.g. trauma-informed practice, partnership working, pandemic recovery, etc.

Priorities

When asked about the existing priorities in the strategy, the vast majority of respondents agreed that a renewed community justice strategy still requires a focus on Improved Community Understanding and Participation, Strategic Planning and Partnership Working, Equal Access to Services and Effective Use of Evidence-Based Interventions. There were a number of comments in relation to the meaning of these priorities, as well as the benefits and challenges of delivering them.

There were more mixed views in relation to how useful the priorities have been at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice.

Themes from the respondents included:

- Providing greater clarity of roles (including for the third sector), responsibilities and actions for community justice partners
- The connections between the priorities and the work of local, national and third sector partners and the alignment to existing structures and strategies
- The involvement of those with lived experience of the justice system, their families, victims and communities, in the planning, development and delivery of services

Principles

There was broad agreement with the principles in the current strategy with some stating that they remain helpful, clear, relevant and evidence-based, and most found them broadly useful at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice, as they provide context and a strong starting point for partners to build on.

Themes from the respondents included:

- Areas that should be more prominently reflected in the principles, e.g. the role and needs of victims, trauma-informed practice, addressing causes of offending and supporting those in the justice system to access universal support services, etc.
- That the principles are too complex and should be shorter, sharper and more memorable
- Providing greater clarity of roles, responsibilities and actions for community justice partners

Impact of the strategy

Respondents generally felt that collaboration in the effective and strategic use of resources (including by sharing staff, expertise, information, property, and finance) across the community justice sector could be improved and raised a number of

challenges to this. Respondents did however provide some good practice examples from their local areas.

The majority of respondents felt that the strategy had achieved its aim of providing a shared vision to help partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice and that the strategy had influenced the work of their local area/organisation to some extent. With respondents noting in particular the impact that the strategy has had in bringing some partners together and in forming community justice partnerships, difficulties with ensuring collaborative approaches and embedding the shared vision were however raised.

A number felt that the most useful element of the strategy was in establishing the shared vision, priorities and a common language for partners, whilst the least useful elements included the length, language and accessibility of the strategy and the lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities for partners.

Themes from the respondents included:

- The importance of collaborative working and the need for more clearly defined roles, responsibility and accountability for partners
- The need for a clear shared vision and definition of community justice to steer the work of partners
- The links between the national strategy and the work and planning of local areas
- The difficulty of engaging with and implementing the current strategy due to its expansive nature and length
- Challenges to improvement action related to the pandemic, funding and the consistency and availability of data
- Examples of the co-location of services in local areas for the benefit of service users

Future thinking

Respondents noted a wide range of what, in their view, are the main priorities for community justice over the next 3-5 years.

Themes from the respondents included:

- Emphasising the collaborative approach needed to implement the strategy, which should be accompanied by clear governance arrangements and responsibilities for partners and clear alignment to the Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (OPIF)
- The need to continue to improve community understanding and participation, including the voice of those with lived experience
- The focus on reducing the prison population and promoting the use of community-based alternatives
- Ensuring recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that appropriate funding and resources are directed to community justice
- Addressing the underlying causes of offending, and ensuring equal access to services that are trauma-informed

- Ensuring appropriate support for victims, witnesses and families of individuals affected by the justice system
- Promoting early intervention, prevention and support for young people

1.3 Next steps

The Scottish Government has committed to developing a new community justice strategy, and it is expected that this will be published in Spring 2022, following a public consultation exercise in due course.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

This report presents an analysis of the responses to the [National Strategy for Community Justice: Review Consultation](#), and sets out the Scottish Government's next steps. We would like to thank all respondents for their contributions. Where granted permission, responses have been published in full on the [Scottish Government Consultation Hub](#) website.

The current model for Community Justice came into operation on 1 April 2017, underpinned by the [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) (the Act), which places duties on a group of statutory partners to engage in community justice planning and to report against a set of nationally-determined outcomes.

The Act also established [Community Justice Scotland](#) and required Scottish Ministers to produce a [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) (the strategy), an [Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework](#) (OPIF) and [Guidance for Local Partners](#) to support the delivery of the new model.

As per section 16 of the Act, Scottish Ministers reviewed the current strategy by 24 November 2021. This consultation formed part of that review process.

2.2 The consultation process

This consultation was open from 27 September 2021 to 8 November 2021. Respondents were invited to respond in a number of different ways, including online, via email and via post.

The consultation was primarily intended to be responded to by partner organisations that are engaged with or have a direct interest in the current strategy.

Analysis is based on those who responded to the consultation and is therefore not necessarily representative of the wider population.

Consultation responses were analysed and allocated to certain themes under each question. For any given question, the number of themes identified may differ from the number of comments received as one comment could include a number of themes.

Consultation events

Three virtual workshop sessions were held to encourage participation in the consultation. The events provided attendees with the opportunity to find out further information about the consultation from officials, and to provide feedback to help shape the approach to the revised strategy.

The events were attended by a broad range of stakeholders, including social workers, community justice co-ordinators, third sector organisations (including victims organisations) and national community justice partners.

A summary of the discussion from these events is included in section 6 of this report.

2.3 Who responded

There were 52 responses to the consultation. Of these the majority (40) were received from groups/organisations and 12 were received from individuals. 46 respondents gave permission for their responses to be published.

A list of respondent organisations is available in Annex A.

3. Vision, mission statement, priorities and principles

3.1 Overview

This section asked questions about the overall structure and content of the current strategy.

Question 1: Do you think that it would be helpful to shorten and simplify the strategy, to make it more user-friendly?

Forty-seven respondents responded to this closed question. The majority (85%) answered yes, that it would be helpful to shorten and simplify the strategy, to make it more user-friendly, while 15% answered no.

Forty-three respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question.

Yes

Of those who answered yes, forty respondents responded to the open section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Accessibility, language and a better understanding for a wider audience	24
Different versions of the strategy or supporting sources could be produced	16
Comments on the current strategy	9

Clarity of roles, responsibilities and actions	8
General comments on the length of documents	4

Accessibility, language and a better understanding for a wider audience

The largest number of comments received related to the need for accessibility and clear language to aid understanding by a wider audience. In general, these respondents felt that a shorter and simpler strategy, which is accessible and uses appropriate language, would enable a better understanding of community justice for a wider audience, including partners in the sector and wider communities.

‘Sacro would support the strategy being more user friendly, making it accessible to a wider audience. It should take account of language and minimise the use of jargon so that it is easily understood by communities and all age ranges.’

Sacro

Different versions of the strategy or supporting sources could be produced

Some respondents commented that different versions of the strategy, or supporting sources, could be produced for different audiences.

A number of options were suggested, for example:

- Videos or animations
- Graphics or infographics
- User-friendly version for the wider public
- Summary of key points for partners
- More detailed guidance document for community justice partners
- Separate delivery plan
- Signposting to external guidance and documents

Comments on the current strategy

Some respondents commented on the length of the current strategy, which is 56 pages long, and suggested that there are too many components (vision, mission statement, priorities and principles) and that much of the narrative detail is not, or no longer needed.

Some of those commenting on the current strategy highlighted positive aspects, including the use of infographics and a clear structure.

Clarity of roles, responsibilities and actions

A number of responses suggested that clarity of roles and responsibilities within community justice, and similarly clarity on actions that need taken forward would make the strategy more user-friendly. Of these a number suggested that a road/route map style strategy is preferred.

General comments on the length of documents

A small number made general comments about the length of published documents, noting that the capacity to consider lengthy documents must be considered, and that documents should be user-friendly, with key messages retained, no matter their length.

No

Of those who responded no, 7 responded to the open section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Detailed information within the strategy is required	6
Different versions of the strategy or supporting sources could be produced	5
Strategy should be strengthened, but not necessarily shortened	3
Accessibility, language and a better understanding for a wider audience	1

Detailed information within the strategy is required

A number of respondents commented that detailed information is required within the strategy document and that it should not be diluted, with a small number suggesting that the length of the strategy is reflective of the complexity of the community justice landscape.

Different versions of the strategy or supporting sources could be produced

As with those who answered yes, some respondents commented that different versions of the strategy, or supporting sources, could be produced for different audiences.

A number of options were suggested, for example:

- A summary
- Accessible version
- Infographics

Strategy should be strengthened, but not necessarily shortened

A small number of respondents agreed that the strategy should be stronger, more user-friendly and useful, but that this does not necessarily require that the strategy is shortened or simplified.

Accessibility, language and a better understanding for a wider audience

One organisation commented that the strategy should ‘reflect the needs of [the] audience who are accessing it for a specific purpose’, and that the primary purpose is to inform the delivery of community justice for those who hold a statutory duty.

Separately, they noted that communication of community justice needs improved, but that this is not a task solely for the strategy.

Not answered

One respondent did not respond to the closed question, but commented that the content is more important than the length of the strategy.

Question 2: Do you think that the strategy should contain more specific and time-limited aims and actions than at present?

Forty-eight respondents responded to this closed question. The majority (73%) answered yes, that the strategy should contain more specific and time-limited aims and actions than at present, while 27% answered no.

Forty-three respondents responded to the open ‘Please explain your response further’ section of the question.

Yes

Of those who answered yes, thirty-one respondents responded to the open section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
SMART aims and actions	28
Long-term ambitions	4
Other considerations	4

SMART Actions

The largest number of respondents who answered yes and commented on this question referred to the need for SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) actions, or similar, in particular highlighting a desire for:

- Absolute clarity around what the specific aims and actions are
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities and ownership of actions, to create more accountability and garner buy-in from partners
- An action plan with associated timescales for delivery and a mechanism to enable a review of progress
- Specific aims and actions that are measurable and aid the assessment of progress

Long-term ambitions

A number of respondents suggested that, as well as more specific and time-limited aims and actions, the strategy should also reflect the longer-term aims of community justice.

Other Considerations

A number of responses highlighted other considerations that any aims and actions in the strategy must take into account, including:

- COVID-19 and ongoing recovery work as part of the Recover, Renew, Transform Programme
- Links to local priorities and Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plans (CJOIPs)
- The needs of rural, remote and island communities
- The ongoing development of the National Care Service

No

Of those who responded no, twelve responded to the open section of the question, the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Local aims and actions	9
COVID-19 and ongoing recovery work	4
No change needed	2

Local aims and actions

The largest number of respondents who answered no and commented on this question suggested that the strategy was not the most suitable vehicle for specific and time-limited aims and actions.

Whilst some responses noted the importance of clear national aims, these responses suggested that it is for local partners to determine the most appropriate specific and time-limited aims and actions for their local area, based on local needs.

COVID-19 and ongoing recovery work

Some responses noted the need for any aims and actions within the revised strategy to reflect the impact of the pandemic and the associated recovery work that is ongoing, with some referring to the current strain on the justice system and capacity of partners to fulfil further specific and time-limited aims and actions.

No change needed

A minority of respondents commented that no change to the scope or content of the actions within the strategy is needed.

3.2 Vision and mission statement

This section asked questions about the [vision and mission statement](#) in the current strategy.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the current vision?

Forty-seven respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 23% answered 'strongly agree'
- 60% answered 'agree'
- 9% answered 'neutral'
- 6% answered 'disagree'
- 2% answered 'strongly disagree'

Forty-five respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Agree generally with the vision	35
Specific topics raised	29
Concerns with part of the vision	9
Defining community justice	6
Disagree with the vision	2

Agree generally with the vision

The majority of respondents generally agreed with the current vision. In particular some stated that the vision remains relevant, that they largely agree with the focus and ambition of the vision and that it supports the evidence of what works to reduce further offending.

Some did however suggest alterations and raised specific topics, as per the below.

Specific topics raised

A number of responses highlighted specific areas that they believe should be reflected in the vision, including:

- Scope of community justice with regard to prevention
- Trauma-informed practice
- Good practice examples
- Communities, victims and witnesses/lived experience
- Person-centred approach
- Consistency of services
- Partnership working
- Pandemic recovery
- Links to other related policy areas

- Resourcing

Concerns with part of the vision

Some respondents stated that they disagreed with the latter part of the vision. In particular they questioned the use of the word ‘reintegration’, as it suggests individuals have been integrated into their communities previously – and this is not the lived experience of all within the community justice sphere. Instead a number offered an alternative based on supporting integration or belonging in the community.

Some also questioned the use of the word ‘manage’, which does not reflect the breadth of community justice and may cause confusion between the work of community justice partnerships and justice services.

Defining community justice

Some respondents suggested that further clarity of the definition of community justice is needed, as confusion about the scope of community justice continues. In particular it was highlighted that clarity is needed around the distinction between justice social work and community justice and the extent to which prevention forms a part of community justice.

Disagree with the vision

A small number of respondents disagreed with the current vision, with one respondent stating that it was not specific or measurable.

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the current mission statement?

Forty-six respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 24% answered ‘strongly agree’
- 48% answered ‘agree’
- 24% answered ‘neutral’
- 2% answered ‘disagree’
- 2% answered ‘strongly disagree’

Forty-four respondents responded to the open ‘Please explain your response further’ section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Agree generally with the mission statement	25
Scope and ambition of community justice	18
Pandemic recovery and resourcing	9
Penal policy reflections	7
Not necessarily needed	3

Agree generally with the mission statement

Many respondents agreed generally with the current mission statement, particularly the intention and the fact that it relies on a strong evidence-base.

Some however raised issues around its scope and ambition and other specific topics, as per the below.

Scope and ambition of community justice

A number of respondents raised the issue that the mission statement does not necessarily reflect the scope and ambition of community justice, as it focusses solely on penal policy.

Some respondents state that the mission statement should include other aspects of community justice which are within the gift of community justice partners for a local area and shifts the narrative away from custody, for example:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Partnership working
- Trauma-informed practice
- Accessibility and availability of services
- Links to other related policy areas
- Rehabilitation
- Communities, victims and witnesses/lived experience

Pandemic recovery and resourcing

A number of respondents reflected that the mission statement should be developed to include or take account of recovery from the pandemic, and the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum adds that it should:

‘reflect the transformative ambitions of the Justice Recover Renew Transform programme, which seeks to utilise the learning and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to reform and drive improvements to the justice system.’

Associated with recovery from the pandemic, some respondents highlighted the need for investment and resources to deliver on community justice.

Penal policy reflections

Some respondents provided reflections on the Scottish Government’s penal policy (i.e. policy relating to how those who have committed criminal offences are dealt with), with some detailing the link between penal policy and achievements in community justice, and others stating that the policy as set out in the mission statement has not yet had the desired effect.

Not necessarily needed

A small number of respondents suggested that a mission statement was not necessarily needed, given the intention to simplify and streamline the strategy.

Question 5: 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?

Forty-six respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 11% answered 'very useful'
- 28% answered 'quite useful'
- 33% answered 'neutral'
- 26% answered 'not very useful'
- 2% answered 'not at all useful'

Forty-two respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Partnership working	17
Audience and language	11
Action plan	9
Links to other related policy areas	9
Needs updated to reflect developments	9
OPIF	4

Partnership working

A number of respondents noted that the broad nature of the vision and mission statement allowed a range of partners and local priorities to be reflected in the strategy.

Some however noted that the shared responsibility of community justice should be emphasised more clearly, and that the roles and responsibilities of local and national partners, including the third sector, require to be more clearly defined. This would ensure partners can understand their role, participate and contribute to the delivery of driving improvement in community justice.

Some respondents stated that partnership working or multi-agency collaborative working should be explicitly included within the vision and mission statement. Some noted that the strategy alone will not drive effective partnership working, but that a clear strategic direction can be helpful.

Audience and language

A number of respondents noted that there is clarity of language in terms of the expectations of the vision and mission statement, whilst others noted that the

language is not easily understood by all, including those in the community, and does not help partners work together to drive improvement. Linked to this, a small number of respondents highlighted that the audience of the strategy needs to be clearer.

Action plan

Linked to the point outlined above that the strategy alone will not drive effective partnership working, a number of respondents suggested that a clear action plan is needed alongside a strategy to ensure effective implementation. For example, reference was made to 'specific aims and actions with appropriate timescales', 'a manageable, measurable and accountable range of key priorities and associated actions for all national and local community justice, public health and protecting people partners' and 'a clear action plan and oversight arrangements'.

A small number also noted that the fulfilment of the vision and mission statement is dependent on other factors including, 'resource availability, judicial decision making, and different communities' experiences of community justice'.

Links to other related policy areas

Some respondents stated that the consideration and alignment of this strategy to other related strategies and policy areas, for example housing, youth justice and employability, would be helpful in ensuring a shared understanding of complex and multiple needs, preventing silo working and encouraging cross sectoral working.

Needs updated to reflect developments

A number suggested that the current vision and mission statement require updating to reflect developments, including:

- Pandemic and recovery
- The creation of Community Justice Scotland
- Utilising a public health approach and focus on prevention and early intervention

OPIF

Lastly, a small number of respondents highlighted that the vision and mission statement may be more meaningful for partners and communities, when viewed in a local context, supported by the OPIF, which is a more practical tool to drive improvement.

3.3 Priorities

This section asked questions about the [priorities and associated improvement actions](#) in the current strategy.

Question 6: Do you think that a renewed community justice strategy needs a focus on each of the following?

Forty-eight respondents responded to this closed question in total. This question asked respondents to select each option that applied.

Of those that responded:

- 94% selected 'Effective Use of Evidence-Based Interventions'
- 90% selected 'Equal Access to Services'
- 83% selected 'Improved Community Understanding and Participation'
- 81% selected 'Strategic Planning and Partnership Working'

Effective Use of Evidence-Based Interventions

Forty-two respondents responded to the open 'Please add any comments on this priority' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Evidence-base	22
Delivery of interventions	9
Clarity of the priority	7
Experience of victims	4

Evidence-base

A number of respondents commented on the importance of focussing resource on what is effective and therefore improves outcomes and promotes public trust and confidence in community justice.

Others commented on the evidence-base for interventions, with some stating that there is an extensive, up to date, evidence-base on what works, that needs to be translated into practice, and continually evaluated. One respondent suggested that this evidence-base should also drive the development of strategic planning of local community justice partnerships and include the use of strategic needs and strengths assessments.

A small number suggested that evidenced-based interventions should be rephrased as evidenced-based practice, and Social Work Scotland noted that this should include 'trauma-informed practice and the 'what works' and desistance models of practice'.

Delivery of interventions

Some respondents commented on the delivery of interventions noting that they should be responsive to risk and need, be person-centred, and focussed on the quality of relationships between those receiving support and those delivering the intervention. Social Work Scotland also noted the importance of high-quality training

across the sector and the use of consistent quality assurance and improvement processes for interventions.

Social Work Scotland also commented on the availability of evidence-based, accredited programmes across Scotland.

Clarity of the priority

A number of respondents commented that the language of this priority should be simplified and that there could be a clearer ask in relation to specific actions and the use of evidence based interventions.

Experience of victims

A small number of respondents highlighted that the experience of victims, public safety and the nature and severity of an offence should be reflected in the interventions used.

Equal Access to Services

Forty-one respondents responded to the open ‘Please add any comments on this priority’ section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Meaning of equal access to services	21
Current availability of services	13
Difficulties with improving equal access to services	11
Specific and measurable ask	8

Meaning of equal access to services

A number of respondents commented on the importance of consistency of provision and equal access to services and what, in their view, this means.

Some noted that it is key to human rights, and that timeous access to services is fundamental to providing opportunities for intervention and diversion, and in addressing underlying multiple and complex needs and therefore reducing reoffending.

Others noted that the services should be person-centred, high quality, relevant and appropriate.

A number reflected on the need to provide support services to victims and to give people affected by crime a voice.

Other respondents noted that equal access to services should not equate to equal service delivery and structures across Scotland. For example, some noted the

differences between rural and urban areas, and the fact that local partnerships should be able to agree how to meet local needs and deliver services.

Others noted the need to address equal access of services by different groups of people who may require different responses, and that intersectionality should be considered.

Current availability of services

A number of respondents noted that the availability of services across Scotland is currently inconsistent, with one referring to a 'postcode lottery', and that this should therefore remain a priority.

Others reflected on the fact that those in the justice system often do not have equal access to services for a number of reasons, including custody transitions, integration and visibility in communities and the communication between services.

Difficulties with improving equal access to services

Some respondents noted the difficulties with improving equal access to services, including:

- The diverse geography of Scotland, including rural, remote and island communities
- Resourcing and limited service capacity

Specific and measurable ask

A number of respondents commented on the nature of the actions associated with this priority and noted that they must be more specific, measurable and linked to the person-centred outcomes within the OPIF.

Improved Community Understanding and Participation

Forty respondents responded to the open 'Please add any comments on this priority' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Benefits of understanding and participation	19
Comments on community engagement and participation	12
Current lack of understanding	10
How community understanding and participation can be improved	9
Difficulties with improving understanding and participation	7

Benefits of understanding and participation

The largest number of respondents highlighted the associated benefits of improved community understanding and participation, as well as the increased understanding of justice partners, including:

- Reducing the fear of crime
- Changing attitudes to community justice
- Increasing trust and confidence in community disposals
- Reducing stigma
- Increasing opportunities for inclusion and integration
- Achieving outcomes

Comments on community engagement and participation

A number of respondents commented on community engagement and participation, highlighting the importance of the involvement of victims of crime, those with lived experience of the justice system, and their families, in the planning, development and delivery of services.

Current lack of understanding

Some respondents highlighted the current lack of understanding of the term community justice and the role of community justice partners, including confusion with the term criminal justice and the work of justice social work.

How community understanding and participation can be improved

Some suggested ways in which greater understanding and participation could be achieved, including:

- Additional resources
- Linking with existing structures (work being carried out by Community Justice Scotland on communications, the National Standards for Community Engagement, Community Planning Partnerships, Health & Social Care Partnerships, etc.)
- Publishing a shorter and more user friendly strategy, with clear definitions and consistent messaging
- A national communications strategy/plan

Difficulties with improving understanding and participation

Lastly, a number of respondents highlighted the difficulties of communicating and engaging on community justice. For example, opinions may differ across different communities (e.g. those living in areas with higher crime rates and antisocial behaviour may have a different perspective on some issues) and the complexity and breadth of scope of community justice.

Strategic Planning and Partnership Working

Thirty-nine respondents responded to the open ‘Please add any comments on this priority’ section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Partnership working and the role of partners	21
Difficulties with improving strategic planning and partnership working	13
Benefits of strategic planning and partnership working	10
Involving communities and the third sector	6
Role of Community Justice Scotland	4

Partnership working and the role of partners

The majority of respondents reflected on the importance of partnership working in community justice and its inclusion in the strategy.

A number of these responses however noted that further clarity on the roles, responsibilities and the accountability of community justice partners, nationally and locally, is needed. Some suggested that this clarity would allow partners to more effectively contribute towards driving improvement in community justice.

Difficulties with improving strategic planning and partnership working

A number of responses noted the difficulties with improving strategic planning and partnership working, including:

- The cross-sectoral nature and breadth of community justice, and existing structures and strategies that are in place across different sectors
- Working across remote, rural and island communities
- The potential implications of the proposed National Care Service
- Budget and resourcing
- Competing demands of individual community justice partners, locally and nationally
- The experience and expertise of the workforce

Benefits of strategic planning and partnership working

A number of responses noted the benefits of improving strategic planning and partnership working, including:

- Sharing good practice
- Making best use of resources
- Reducing duplication
- Providing more streamlined, and better co-ordinated services
- Gaining local buy-in

- Whole system responses to offending and re-offending
- Embedding community justice as a key consideration for all partners

Involving communities and the third sector

Some respondents highlighted the importance of involving communities and the third sector in strategic planning.

The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum noted the key challenges and concerns around third sector involvement and that it would welcome a clear statement in the revised strategy, ‘on the role of the third sector as core partners in local community justice activity, alongside a clear plan for how to support improved third sector participation in community justice in future’.

Role of Community Justice Scotland

A small number of respondents suggested that a revised strategy would not need such a focus on strategic planning and partnership working, given the role of Community Justice Scotland, the annual reporting cycle and the OPIF. A number also suggested that this element could be included in a self-evaluation framework, as part of the OPIF.

Question 7: How useful do you think the current priorities and improvement actions are at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice?

Forty-five respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 18% answered ‘very useful’
- 44% answered ‘quite useful’
- 16% answered ‘neutral’
- 18% answered ‘not very useful’
- 4% answered ‘not at all useful’

Forty respondents responded to the open ‘Please explain your response further’ section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Alignment of the strategy to the work of partners	18
Updates and revision required	11
Impact of the strategy	10
Specific actions and clarity of roles and responsibilities for partners	8

Alignment of the strategy to the work of partners

A number of respondents reflected on the alignment of the direction in the strategy to the work of local, national and third sector partners.

Some stated that the priorities help to raise the profile of and focus community justice work within their organisation or local area, and to work with and see the connections to the work of relevant partners.

Some suggested that it is important that local plans align to the national strategy and framework, and that there is consistency in planning and delivery, and others noted that local plans had been more effective in driving improvement. One noted that the improvement actions in the strategy were overly prescriptive and not useful to every partnership.

Updates and revision required

A number noted that the priorities were helpful at the time the strategy was published, when community justice partnerships were being established and CJOIPs were being developed, but that some revision and updating is necessary, including ensuring alignment to the OPIF.

Impact of the strategy

Some respondents highlighted the recent [Audit Scotland](#) and [Scottish Sentencing Council](#) reports on community justice, and the need to be able to drive improvement, and demonstrate that improvement, in community justice and the role that a revised strategy could play in this.

Related to this, a small number of respondents commented on the need for consistent data, to be able to assess impact and drive improvement.

Specific actions and clarity of roles and responsibilities for partners

Some respondents noted that more specific actions, with associated timescales, and clearer roles and responsibilities for community justice partners would assist with ensuring that progress is made. The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum reflected on the learning gained from working in partnership and continually monitoring implementation during the pandemic, for example on the Emergency Early Release Programme, that could inform the development and implementation of the strategy.

3.4 Principles

This section asked questions about the [principles](#) in the current strategy.

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the current principles?

Forty-seven respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 21% answered 'strongly agree'
- 68% answered 'agree'
- 9% answered 'neutral'

- 2% answered 'disagree'
- 0% answered 'strongly disagree'

Forty-five respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Agree generally with the principles	37
Suggested additions	19
Wording considerations	13
Role and needs of victims	7
Reflecting principles in practice	7

Agree generally with the principles

The majority of respondents who answered this question generally agreed with the principles, with some stating that they remain helpful, clear, relevant and evidence-based.

Some however raised specific topics for inclusion and other considerations, as per the below.

Suggested additions

A number of respondents suggested additions to the current list of principles that they felt were missing, including:

- Trauma-informed and responsive approach
- Human-rights based approach
- Person centred relationships within service delivery
- Addressing causes of offending and supporting those in the justice system to access universal support services
- Prevention and early intervention
- Third sector services
- The role and needs of families
- The need to engage meaningfully with the voice of lived experience, by those whose lives have been effected by crime

Wording considerations

Some respondents stated that the principles could be considered complex, including within the context of the other strategy components and how they fit together, and could be better expressed. Some suggested that the principles should be shorter, sharper and more memorable, and one suggested that they should be reordered to reflect importance and current thinking.

A number also noted the same concern as with the vision, and the use of the word 're-integrating'. Other specific wording considerations include that 'People must be held to account' could be considered to be too vague, 'practice' is a more suitable descriptor than 'intervention' and 'engaging communities' may be more accurate than 'informing' communities.

Role and needs of victims

A number of respondents specifically noted that the role and needs of victims should be reflected more prominently in the principles.

Reflecting principles in practice

Some respondents noted that despite the fact that the principles are agreeable, there must be a shared understanding of what they mean and they must be reflected and translated into practice. Some also noted that clear aims, actions, structures and resources are needed to achieve these principles.

Question 9: How useful do you think the current principles are at helping partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice?

Forty-five respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 11% answered 'very useful'
- 51% answered 'quite useful'
- 27% answered 'neutral'
- 7% answered 'not very useful'
- 4% answered 'not at all useful'

Forty-two respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Principles are generally useful	15
Implementation	15
Suggested improvements	14

Principles are generally useful

A number of respondents noted that the principles are generally useful and helpful for partners, as they provide context and a strong starting point for partners to build on.

Some however raised specific points on implementation and suggested improvements, as per the below.

Implementation

Some respondents noted that whilst the principles are generally useful, further clarity in relation to implementation of the principles is needed. Including the roles and responsibilities of partners and the funding and resources needed for partners to follow the principles.

Some respondents also commented on the difficulty of measuring progress towards improvement in community justice without national outcome evidence.

Suggested improvements

A number of respondents suggested improvements that could be made to the principles in order to help partners and communities to work together effectively to drive improvement in community justice, including:

- Embedding partnership working, and joint action planning
- More specific and clearer language
- Emphasis on community engagement and public understanding
- Increasing the shared understanding of community justice
- Reflecting the learning from people with lived experience, and their families, within the principles
- Closer alignment with the wider strategy and OPIF

4. Impact of the strategy

This section asked questions about the overall impact of the current strategy.

Question 10: 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?

Forty-one respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 5% answered 'to a great extent'
- 80% answered 'to some extent'
- 15% answered 'not at all'

Forty-two respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Reflections on collaborative working	20
Challenges	17
Local level work and good practice examples	16
Suggestions for a revised strategy	10

Reflections on collaborative working

A number of respondents shared reflections on collaborative working within community justice, with some stating that the current strategy has helped to identify and bring together relevant partners, but that more clearly defined roles, responsibility and accountability that is well understood and effective, is needed.

Some stated that all partners do not have the capacity to fully engage, and that the value of collaborative work needs to be clearly highlighted. The role of Community Justice Scotland and the third sector in terms of collaboration in the effective and strategic use of resources was also raised by some.

Challenges

A number of respondents suggested that there has not been a major shift in the strategic and effective use of resources in the sector, and highlighted a number of challenges, particularly in relation to the sharing of financial resources. It was suggested that these challenges include:

- A lack of sufficient funding, and the current funding model for community justice
- The current approach and process for developing and commissioning services
- The increasing pressure on resources due to the pandemic
- Consistency and availability of data and information about services
- The potential impact of the National Care Service

Local level work and good practice examples

Some respondents noted that the collaborative use of resources has been successful locally, and shared examples of good practice. Some stated that the strategy underpins and is reflected in local partnerships and plans, whereas others stated that it is not clear whether the strategy has impacted local level successes. The Care Inspectorate also noted its self-evaluation of community justice partnerships led in partnership with HMICS between 2018 and 2020 which specifically focussed on Quality Indicator 8.1 'Effective use and management of resources':

'Using the themes in this indicator partnerships considered how well they were leveraging resources; the effectiveness of joint deployment and expenditure of resources and the extent to which they were achieving best value. Partnerships who had undertaken a strategic assessment of needs were well placed to identify the resources required to meet needs or reduce the need for expensive, specialist services. There were examples of innovation to deliver sustainable and resource efficient services, including co-location and an emphasis on early intervention and prevention. Third sector partners played a central role in identifying and leveraging available resources. Strategic approaches to joint budgeting and deployment were in the early stages of consideration and examples of partnerships mapping the totality of available resources were limited.'

Some examples of good practice shared by respondents include the co-location of services for the benefit of service users, jointly funding a new post and working collaboratively across agencies to focus resource on improving pathways, early access to support and ultimately outcomes.

Suggestions for a revised strategy

A number of respondents suggest improvements and revisions that could be made to the strategy to enhance the collaborative use of resources, including:

- Setting clear priorities and actions for each partner, aligned to the OPIF to measure effectiveness
- Establishing clear links across other strategies
- Having a clear focus on sharing resources and working with the third sector
- Sharing good practice examples and encouraging a more consistent approach across Scotland

Question 11: 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?

Forty-one respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 7% answered 'to a great extent'
- 85% answered 'to some extent'
- 7% answered 'not at all'

Forty-one respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Implementation and the role of partners	13
Impact of the strategy	11
Establishing a shared vision	10
Partnership working	6

Implementation and the role of partners

Some respondents noted the strategy was useful in creating a clear vision, but that it had not been successful in ensuring collaboration. Respondents mentioned examples of good practice, but also noted that partnership and collaboration was inconsistent across Scotland. Respondents also stated that there was a need to better clarify roles and responsibilities in future strategies.

'The strategy has been effective at providing a clear, shared vision for partners, however there is an opportunity for the strategy to go further by providing further

clarity as to the role and potential contribution of individual statutory partners within local community justice partnership arrangements.'

A Community Justice Partnership

Impact of the strategy

Many respondents were generally positive about the impact of the strategy overall in achieving the above aim with one noting that 'it has cemented the aspirations for community justice and therefore has had a positive impact on collaborative working across partner agencies'. However, a number of responses were less positive with one noting that it had not helped reduce the prison population and others emphasising the lack of awareness of the strategy across communities.

Establishing a shared vision

Many respondents noted that the strategy had played a role in driving progress and setting a common vision for partners to work towards, while some noted that there was still significant progress to be made. One respondent commented that the strategy had helped to underpin good and effective practice and that the strategy's wide scope was inviting to a range of partners. Another respondent gave the example of the requirement to reference the strategy in the development of local plans as a way that the strategy had helped to establish a common vision, with another noting the 'synergy between the national justice vision and local plans'.

In relation to the scope of the strategy, some felt that the strategy should include more of a focus on the promotion of early intervention, while one respondent noted that the 'expansive, cross-cutting and over ambitious nature of the current strategy has made delivery at a local level particularly challenging'.

'Shared vision could be greater established by supporting all partners and communities to better understand their role within community justice and ensuring this is echoed in all relevant strategies and plans.'

A Community Justice Partnership

Partnership working

Some respondents described the strategy as being helpful in promoting partnership working, with one commenting that it provides 'a foundation for partners to work from'. Conversely, some respondents said that the role that the strategy had in promoting partnership working was more limited, with one noting that significant partnership working had taken place in their area prior to the publication of the strategy. Some responses referenced the work that had been taken forward locally (with the input of Community Justice Scotland) and stated that this would have happened without the existence of the strategy.

Moreover, some respondents noted that there were continuing issues with ensuring the buy-in of partners towards a shared vision. Other responses described the importance of relationships between partners that have developed over time and questioned the role of the strategy in assisting this – with one indicating that the strategy has become less used over time.

Question 12: Thinking about the strategy overall, would you say that it has influenced the work of your local area/organisation?

Forty-two respondents responded to this closed question. Of those that responded:

- 17% answered 'to a great extent'
- 74% answered 'to some extent'
- 10% answered 'not at all'

Thirty-nine respondents responded to the open 'Please explain your response further' section of the question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Implementation and impact	14
Community justice partnerships	9
Shared vision	6
Planning	6

Implementation and impact

A number of organisations stated that the strategy had influenced how they aligned their work, but many stated that this was only to a limited extent with other aspects (i.e. Community Justice Scotland) having a greater role. However, one respondent reported that the strategy had provided the impetus to change their structural arrangements – in that they had combined two partnership groups to create a single partnership group with a more streamlined focus.

Community justice partnerships

Many respondents highlighted the beneficial role of the strategy when they were first forming a local community justice partnership – with some commenting on the continuing impact that it has in providing a focus to encourage collaborative working and increased understanding. Some partners were critical of structural aspects associated with the strategy – such as the lack of national body to support it at the time of publication and the challenges brought by its expansive focus.

'The strategy has been helpful in bringing partners together within the community justice partnership and has enabled us to work together more collaboratively.'
A Local Authority

Shared vision

As per the previous question, some respondents discussed the strategy's role in providing a shared vision and underpinning principles – with one community justice partner referring to the strategy as providing an 'overall road map' and one partnership noting that it was useful for policy direction but not used to inform day to

day activity. One respondent also noted it had increased the local focus on diversion from prosecution and the issues around the imprisonment of young people.

Planning

Many respondents commented on the role that the strategy had in enabling them to develop their local CJOIPs and associated documentation. Others commented that it had been of more limited influence, and that local planning documentation was of greater influence.

Question 13a: Which elements of the strategy do you find most useful?

Thirty-nine respondents responded to this open question, and the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Shared vision, priorities & principles	15
Focus on prevention, reintegration and addressing complex needs	10
Partnership working	9
Focus on understanding the evidence-base and taking action	6
Structure of the strategy	6

Shared vision, priorities & principles

Some respondents commented that the strategy was useful in communicating aims and principles, as well as a shared vision and priorities – with one noting that it defined a common language for community justice. Several respondents said that the underlying principles of the strategy were positive, helped to define a common sense of purpose and continued to resonate. One noted that these were helpful in ‘addressing the use of short term prison sentences that promote negative outcomes for individuals compared to completing community disposals’.

‘The vision, mission statements, priorities and principles continue to resonate. Collectively they set out a clear set of aims and objectives for community justice that provide an overarching framework to guide and inform local partnerships.’
Social Work Scotland

Focus on prevention, integration and addressing complex needs

Some respondents commented favourably on the strategy’s focus on both prevention and integration – with one noting violence and prison reduction. Some responses discussed the complex and multiple needs of the individuals involved in the justice system, with one response also highlighting the references to the impact on families in the strategy.

‘The strategy acknowledges the wider societal issues that impact on how people can be reintegrated, for example addressing access to employment, housing, and

addiction services will have a direct impact on this principle and cannot be addressed by community justice only.'

Police Scotland

Partnership working

Some respondents noted that the strategy was useful in promoting partnership working, the need for a responsive service and collaboration in the achievement of outcomes – with one commenting on its usefulness in 'contextualising the parameters of community justice'. One response emphasised this by noting that its 'usefulness was in establishing local partnerships particularly in the diverse range of partners who have a role to play in community justice'.

'The strategy provided a useful guidance document for Community Justice Partners, the Partnership and Coordinator when we were getting to grips with the new model for Community Justice and was used during the developing our Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan.'

A Community Justice Partnership

Focus on understanding the evidence-base and taking action

A number of respondents commented on the focus on evidence-based actions and noted that this content was very helpful. One respondent noted that the contextual information helped to provide a justification for the inclusion of improvement priorities. One respondent noted, however, that the complexity and expansive nature of the strategy were difficult to implement.

Structure of the strategy

A small number of respondents commented positively on the structure of the strategy saying that it was easy to follow, contained helpful infographics and was accessible. One respondent also stated that it gave a clear summary of the legislative background.

Question 13b: Which elements of the strategy do you find least useful?

Thirty-six respondents responded to this open question, the following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
Length, language and accessibility	14
Gaps in the strategy	11
Roles and responsibilities of partners	10
Links with other policy areas and strategies	7
Definition of community justice and role of Community Justice Scotland	5
Lack of measurement data	3
Lack of guidance on prioritisation	3

Time limited nature and lack of implementation support	3
Absence of associated funding	3

Length, language and accessibility

A large number of respondents stated that the length and the complexity of the strategy was not useful – and some noted that while the contextual information could be useful, it may no longer be needed or might be more appropriate in an appendix.

The length was also mentioned as a barrier to the accessibility of the strategy – with one commenting that the strategy requires significant time to read and absorb. Some responses indicated that the strategy was difficult to engage with and that a summary may be useful in future.

Gaps in the strategy

A significant number of responses highlighted areas which they felt should have been included (or had more of a focus) within the strategy – these included:

- Trauma-informed practice
- Local strategic needs and strengths assessments
- Prevention and early intervention
- Throughcare
- The impact on families affected by the justice system
- The sharing of good practice examples and ‘good news stories’
- Detail on community justice partners
- Detail on the accompanying measurement framework (OPIF)

Roles and responsibilities of partners

It was the view of many respondents that the roles and responsibilities of partners could have been more explicitly detailed in the strategy. One respondent noted that the ‘lack of detail has impacted some partners ability to assume ownership of community justice within their organisation’. Another noted that:

‘The National Strategy does not draw clear lines of delivery, governance, and accountability in community justice, and in turn delivery by local partnerships is always likely to be varied.’

Links with other policy areas and strategies

Some respondents commented on the need for a revised strategy to ensure links to other strategies and related policy areas.

‘whilst the current strategy highlights some causal links to the wider landscape/community planning, it has not been explicit enough in linking to other national strategies where there is the potential to have shared outcomes.’
A Community Justice Partnership

Definition of community justice and role of Community Justice Scotland

Some respondents commented that the strategy needed to differentiate more clearly between community justice and justice services to avoid confusion. Some respondents also stated there was not a clear definition of community justice within the strategy, and one respondent felt that the strategy needed to provide greater clarity on the role of Community Justice Scotland.

‘The strategy requires to further contextualise the role of the leadership organisation Community Justice Scotland (CJS) and more explicitly define the relationship and support available to local partnerships.’
A Community Justice Partnership

Lack of measurement data

Some respondents noted the lack of an effective measurement framework to support the strategy or suggested its subsequent inclusion.

Lack of guidance on prioritisation

Some respondents noted the lack of information about which aspects of the strategy should be prioritised – with one respondent noting the competing priorities of community justice partners. Others mentioned the wide scope of the strategy and the issues this posed for delivery.

Time limited nature and lack of implementation support

Some respondents noted that the strategy contained out of date material and that the implementation plan, which is referred to in Chapter 10, had not materialised.

Absence of associated funding

Some respondents commented that the strategy did not include sufficient information around funding – specifically how the improvement actions within the strategy would be resourced, with one respondent commenting that the priorities required national funding.

5. Future thinking

This section asked respondents for views on key future priorities.

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

Forty-seven respondents responded to this open question. Some suggested more than three priorities and the length and detail of the answers varied significantly. The following themes emerged:

Theme identified	Number of comments relating to this theme
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Delivery of community justice	28
Promote early intervention, prevention and support for young people	22
Improved community understanding and participation	20
Reduce prison population, reduce the use of short sentences and promote the use of community alternatives	19
Promote evidence-based practice	18
Support for victims, witnesses and families of individuals affected by imprisonment & restorative justice	17
Addressing the underlying causes of offending & equal access to services	12
Trauma-informed services	11
Funding & resourcing	10
Public safety, violence reduction & reducing reoffending	10
Recovery from the pandemic	6
Input of individuals with lived experience	6
Alignment with the OPIF	4

Delivery of community justice

A significant number of responses suggested that the strategy should focus on the delivery of community justice across Scotland. For example, some respondents indicated that the strategy should advocate learning from health and social care and adopt a public health approach.

Others stated that the strategy should have a focus on partnership working, and that it should advocate a more collaborative approach with multi-agency working and collective investment of resources. Some respondents suggested a priority on effective governance and making effective links between criminal justice and community justice services, and others stated that it should emphasise governance arrangements, accountability and the responsibilities of partners.

Several responses also noted that the strategy should have a role in promoting effective implementation, systems that meet the needs of users and the use of management information.

Promote early intervention, prevention and support for young people

A number of responses stated that the strategy should include a priority on early intervention. Some responses indicated that the strategy should include a focus on prevention via engaging at the earliest possible opportunity with individuals. Some also emphasised that the strategy should include a focus on diversion and, specifically, maximising alternatives to prosecution.

Some noted that the strategy should promote support being provided to young people and emphasised the importance of tackling the root causes of offending.

Specific reference was made to reflecting [the Promise](#) and improving transitions between children and adult services and ensuring that the rights of children and young people are reflected.

‘Ensuring that individuals receive the help and support they require at the earliest opportunity and do not have to wait lengthy periods of time to access support.’
A Community Justice Partnership

Improved community understanding and participation

Some responses indicated that the strategy should retain the current priority of improving community understanding and participation. A number indicated that engagement between partnerships and the judiciary should be prioritised. Whilst others noted that the strategy should be informed by public engagement and include a focus on what community justice means in practice. Linked to this, a number suggested that the reduction of stigma should also be prioritised.

‘Ensure that public understanding of community justice includes the clear evidence that trauma, poverty and mental ill health or poor wellbeing – have a direct correlation with those involved in offending.’
A Community Justice Partnership

Reduce prison population, reduce the use of short sentences and promote the use of community alternatives

A significant number of responses stated that the strategy should focus on actions to reduce the prison population (including the use of remand) with some responses stating that the strategy should emphasise that prison should only be used where it is necessary to address offending. Many suggested actions related to the reduction of short term sentences and, correspondingly, encouraging a greater use of community-based disposals and diversion from prosecution.

Promote evidence-based practice

A number of responses emphasised that the strategy should be informed by the available evidence base. Some included examples of interventions that they felt were effective and emphasised the importance of third sector input. One response suggested that the strategy should be informed by a national strategic needs assessment.

Support for victims, witnesses and families of individuals affected by imprisonment & restorative justice

A number of responses indicated that the strategy should prioritise support for victims and witnesses, ensuring that they receive appropriate support and feedback and to improve their overall experience of the justice system. Some responses also indicated the importance of the recognition of the needs of families.

‘We think it is imperative that a national Community Justice strategy gives strong consideration to the formal and informal community resources that need to be put in

place or maintained sufficiently to support the individuals that we work with, their families, and the victims of the crimes that have been committed.’

A Health and Social Care Partnership

Addressing the underlying causes of offending & equal access to services

‘Prevention and reduction of offending, including a social justice approach that tackles the root causes of offending. This includes poverty, substance misuse, addiction, trauma and poor mental health.’

Scottish Association of Social Work

Some responses indicated that the strategy should seek to address the underlying causes of offending – with some providing examples of contributing factors. Some suggested that the strategy should prioritise integration – including a focus on employability and housing services.

A number of responses also stated that the strategy should maintain its present focus on encouraging equal access to services, and include a focus on addressing human rights and inequalities.

Trauma-informed services

Some responses suggested that there should be a focus in the strategy on ensuring that services across the community justice sector were trauma-informed, with some suggesting that the strategy should include an emphasis on trauma-informed practice.

‘Trauma, with a focus on developing trauma-informed and responsive practice across the whole of the community justice system and all of the processes within it.’

A Community Justice Partnership

Funding & resourcing

Some responses advocated for the strategy to reflect the importance of funding and resourcing and how decisions around these contribute to the ability to undertake improvement activity. A number of responses stated that the strategy should emphasise the importance of the long-term resourcing of services and delivery of equitable services. Some responses suggested that the strategy should focus on the realignment of funding from spend on custodial settings to community-based interventions.

Public safety, violence reduction & reducing reoffending

A number of responses stated that the strategy should contribute to reduce reoffending, with some suggesting a priority on public safety and reducing the risk of harm – with two responses suggesting a focus on the reduction of violent crime. Some suggested that the strategy should seek to refocus the approach to community justice to one which was more aligned to harm reduction and another suggested that taking action to address drug deaths should be a priority. One response also included an emphasis on the role of electronic monitoring in ‘imposing effective control over some offenders’.

Recovery from the pandemic

Some responses indicated that the strategy should prioritise the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with one referencing the impact of the pandemic on unpaid work.

Input of individuals with lived experience

Some responses emphasised the importance of including the experience of those with lived experience of the justice system, both within the strategy development itself and in ongoing implementation of local improvement actions.

Alignment with the OPIF

Some noted that the strategy must align to the OPIF. A mention was also made of the importance of having a revised OPIF that partners can use to 'track progress and identify areas for improvement'.

6. Consultation events

This section sets out a brief summary of the discussion from the events held alongside this consultation, as described in section 2.2. Three virtual workshop sessions were held during the consultation period and the events were attended by a broad range of stakeholders, including social workers, community justice co-ordinators, third sector organisations (including victims organisations) and national community justice partners.

Strategy content and structure

- Attendees were generally comfortable with the content of the current strategy, while acknowledging that context was needed to support the implementation of the new structures, the fact that elements of the ambition require updating to reflect the current context and that a clearer delivery plan is needed. The OPIF was noted as being crucial to implementation.
- It was highlighted that there have been achievements in community justice in recent years that the strategy must build on and must continue momentum following publication.
- There was general agreement that a shorter and more targeted document with clearer actions would be beneficial.

Purpose and audience

- It was noted that there is still debate about the meaning of community justice - the new strategy needs absolute clarity on this and needs to ensure a shared understanding of other terms, e.g. prevention, public health, etc.
- Attendees stated that the purpose and audience for the new strategy needs to be clear, and appropriate language should be used. Some suggested that different documents or sources for different audiences may help to ensure wider understanding and accessibility.

- The importance of collaborative working in the first strategy was noted positively – but that improvements to this approach are needed. Linked to this some attendees highlighted that:
 - There is regional variation in the involvement of national partners and there is a need to ensure the strategic inclusion of the third sector in community justice
 - It is difficult for some partners to actively contribute to community justice partnerships due to their capacity and resource
 - Many local community justice partnerships are now well established and their work is improving, and that the strategy should complement this

Roles and responsibilities

- Attendees states that there needs to be more clarity on the roles and responsibilities of statutory partners and those in the community justice sector, and that there needs to be accountability associated with these responsibilities.
- It was noted that there needs to be more support and direction for partners in implementing the actions in the strategy and detail on how doing so helps to fulfil the aims of the strategy. It was also noted that consideration should be given to updating the national guidance to support this.
- Some highlighted that there is a need to retain flexibility in the strategy so that local areas can focus on local priorities, and that national partners should engage local partners in how they can work together to deliver national strategies, as well as local ones.

Linkages and logistics

- Some noted that the linkages to related policy areas and other strategies needs to be clear (including the Justice Vision and the National Care Service).
- Resourcing and funding concerns were raised, including in relation to short-term funding and funding to deliver on any new priorities in the new strategy.
- It was suggested that engagement with all statutory and non-statutory partners, the third sector, those with lived experience and communities is needed in the development and delivery of the strategy.
- It was noted that there should be flexibility in the timescales associated with reporting against the new strategy, to allow local plans to be updated to reflect the new strategy.

Future strategy

Attendees suggested the following topics could be included/reflected in a revised strategy:

- Prevention
- Public health approach
- Mental health pathways
- Understanding of community justice

- Unpaid work backlog
- Prison and remand
- Drug deaths
- Trauma-informed practice
- Victims' experiences and interests
- Restorative approaches
- Lived experience
- The pandemic

7. Next steps

The review of the current strategy, as per the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, is now complete, and the Scottish Government has concluded – informed by this consultation exercise – that a revised strategy should be developed.

A public consultation on proposals for a revised strategy is currently being prepared, taking into account the learning and conclusions from the review and in liaison with key partners. This consultation will be published in due course.

As noted in the current [Programme for Government](#), it is expected that the new strategy will be published during Spring 2022, and will set out clear aims for partners, with an emphasis on early intervention and encouraging a further shift away from the use of custody.

8. Annex A

8.1 List of organisational responses

- Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership
- Aberdeenshire Community Justice Partnership
- Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership
- Audit Scotland
- Clackmannanshire Community Justice Partnership
- Community Justice Scotland
- Community Justice Services, the City of Edinburgh Council
- Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum
- Dundee City Council
- East Dunbartonshire Community Justice Partnership
- East Lothian Community Justice Partnership
- East Renfrewshire Community Justice Partnership
- Falkirk Community Justice Partnership
- Falkirk Council Justice Services
- Families Outside
- Fife Centre for Equalities
- Glasgow City Council
- Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership
- Midlothian Community Justice Working Group
- North Lanarkshire Community Justice Partnership
- Outer Hebrides Community Justice Partnership
- Perth & Kinross Community Justice Partnership
- Police Scotland
- Sacro
- Scottish Association of Social Work (part of BASW UK)
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Community Safety Network
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (representing Quakers in Scotland)
- Scottish Sentencing Council
- Shetland Community Justice Partnership
- Skills Development Scotland
- Social Work Scotland
- South Lanarkshire Council
- The Care Inspectorate
- The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)
- The Wise Group
- Venture Trust
- Victim Support Scotland
- West Lothian Council



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