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Our Ref: KM/CW/HI

Dear Mr Robinson

### **Supported and validated self-evaluation of community justice in Scotland**

I am writing to provide feedback on the recent self-evaluation of community justice undertaken by the Shetland community justice partnership and validated by the Care Inspectorate.

#### **Background**

The Scottish Government has asked the Care Inspectorate to support the implementation of community justice in Scotland and to provide scrutiny in this area of work. We agreed that our approach to scrutiny at this early stage of community justice would be through a model of supported and validated self-evaluation<sup>1</sup> using 'A guide to self-evaluation for community justice in Scotland.'<sup>2</sup> The aim is to build capacity among community justice partnerships to quality assure their own work and use the insights gained to plan and implement improvements. For the purpose of this activity, partnerships who volunteered were asked to gauge their progress in relation to three specific quality indicators; *planning and delivering services in a collaborative way; effective use and management of resources and leadership of strategy and direction.*

Having expressed an interest in being involved in this work, the Shetland Community Justice Partnership (CJP) received notification on 27 May 2019 that we would undertake a supported and validated self-evaluation in their area. Scheduled activities took place between May and October 2019.

The CJP is chaired on an interim basis by the Director of Development Services for Shetland Islands Council. The work of the partnership is supported by the Community Safety and Justice Officer who co-ordinated the supported and validated self-evaluation activity on behalf of the partnership.

We engaged with partners in Shetland in the following ways:

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/4690/Supported%20and%20validated%20self%20evaluation%20of%20community%20justice%20in%20Scotland.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hub.careinspectorate.com/media/437466/a-guide-to-self-evaluation-for-community-justice-in-scotland.pdf>

- We sought to build capacity for self-evaluation by helping partners to become familiar with the quality indicator model and the self-evaluation process. We did this through delivery of a briefing to the partnership, on-going dialogue with the Community Safety and Justice Officer and attendance at a self-evaluation workshop hosted by the partnership.
- Staff from the Care Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary read the self-evaluation and supporting evidence which the partnership submitted.
- Care Inspectorate staff met with a range of relevant partners and groups to explore the supporting evidence and triangulate key findings of the self-evaluation.

As a result of these activities, we are pleased to be able to validate the partnership's approach to self-evaluation as considered and mature. We consider that their methodical and reflective approach has enabled the partnership to appropriately identify strengths and areas where improvement is required. We are confident that the partnership is well placed to further develop a culture of continuous improvement as they strive to achieve excellence in the implementation and delivery of the community justice model.

We note the key messages below:

### **Partnership approach to self-evaluation**

Prior to being notified of their selection for the supported and validated self-evaluation, the partnership had proactively undertaken work to evaluate their progress against the three quality indicators. They designed a questionnaire based on the Care Inspectorate's guide to self-evaluation which was circulated to all partners. The individual survey responses provided a snap-shot of partners' views regarding strengths and areas for improvement and highlighted areas of consensus and divergence. This provided a strong foundation for self-evaluation. Following notification, the partnership decided to hold a workshop to review the questionnaire responses and consider strengths and areas for improvement. A small working group was established to co-ordinate the workshop and take forward the outputs. Not all partners attended the workshop. While the survey data allowed the views of non-attendees to inform the discussion and evaluations, partners accepted, and we agreed that wider participation would have enhanced the self-evaluation process. None-the less, partners were able to reach consensus on their evaluations and the working group was tasked with collecting and collating the supporting evidence from the wider partners. The final submission was considered and agreed by the whole partnership prior to submission.

From the outset, the partnership demonstrated commitment to and ownership of the self-evaluation process. Their decision to adopt a multi-layered approach using questionnaires and discussion supported them to confidently reach consensus on their overall evaluation against the Care Inspectorate's six-point scale.

The resulting self-evaluation was clear, concise and captured the open and reflective nature of the partnership's discussions. The strengths and areas for development were well balanced, carefully considered and were supported by helpful practice examples. The self-evaluation was accompanied by a range of relevant supporting evidence which was very well organised and referenced across the quality indicators. Given the national community justice model is still in the early stages of development, there was inevitably less evidence in support of some of the quality indicators. Partners also recognised that mechanisms to support the recording of progress against agreed actions could be stronger.

## **Feedback on self-evaluation against the quality indicators**

### ***Planning and delivering services in a collaborative way***

The work of the partnership is underpinned by a strong and coherent community justice outcome improvement plan which is concise and accessible. The plan is appropriately informed by a robust strategic needs assessment, is strengths focussed and reflects a clear commitment to preventive and early intervention approaches. In developing the plan, partners consulted widely with a broad range of statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and communities of interest to secure maximum investment and raise awareness of the wider community justice approach. The themes and priorities within the plan are well understood by partners and are aligned to the local outcome improvement plan and wider national outcomes and objectives.

The partnership has a consistent and committed core membership which proactively seeks to engage and partner with wider stakeholders in the delivery of partnership activities. Longstanding and mature relationships, characterised by a respect for the expertise and contribution of each partner, have resulted in the development of several innovative projects. In March 2019, the partnership hosted a very well attended 'Participatory Budgeting Event' in which funding bids from third sector partners were put to a public vote. The event helped to raise community awareness of the work of the partnership and increased the visibility of third sector and non-statutory services. It also generated new links between third sector services which has resulted in improved working relationships. Strong partnership work led by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had also resulted in the development of the Bridgehead Programme. This aims to reduce offending behaviour and prevent victimisation of Shetland residents by working with those involved in or at risk of offending behaviour to build skills and encourage pro-social aspirations.

Some partners which include Scottish Court and Tribunal Service (SCTS) and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) are not regularly represented or meaningfully engaged in partnership meetings. Dialogue with COPFS and SCTS is maintained via the Executive Manager for Criminal Justice Social Work who attends a local user group hosted by the Sheriff Clerk. A range of mechanisms to support engagement of statutory partners have been trialled and the partnership continues to explore how more effective dialogue and participation might be achieved. Similarly, representatives of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) based on the mainland are not always able to attend in person, and there are limited contingency arrangements. None-the-less, the partnership demonstrated strong and robust relationships which enabled them to resolve a contentious issue relating to a lack of access to prison visits. People from Shetland serving custodial sentences and their families were experiencing disadvantage and discrimination because of difficulties associated with travelling to the mainland for prison visits. This prompted a challenge from the partnership to SPS, leading to agreement that Shetland will participate in a pilot to trial virtual visits.

Partners clearly recognise and value the contribution of the third sector at an operational level and are committed to supporting and investing in specific initiatives. However, the partnership has appropriately recognised that mechanisms to ensure that third sector and non-statutory partners are consulted and involved in the planning and delivery of services at a strategic level need to be stronger. The presence of a Community Justice Forum and Third Sector Forum supports the sharing of information but is not currently enabling effective strategic engagement.

## ***Effective use and management of resources***

Partners are using well-established relationships to assist them in sharing, leveraging and maximising available resources to deliver effective interventions and reduce the demand on higher level services. Resource investments are supported by a comprehensive strategic needs assessment and reflect a clear understanding of local needs. A commitment to implementing sustainable preventive and early intervention approaches was evident in a number of jointly-resourced projects, delivered in partnership with other strategic forums and organisations. For example, in conjunction with the community planning partnership, known locally as the 'Shetland Partnership', the CJP has supported the work of the ANCHOR: Early Action project which seeks to move towards prevention and family-centred support, rather than top-down crisis management. Working in conjunction with families and service providers, which includes those involved in the justice system, the combined research and support project aims to gather and share evidence to inform service improvement and embed a culture of learning.

Similarly, the partnership has provided funding and input to support a series of successful, innovative and wide reaching 'Unpacking Justice' seminars over a period of three years. Led by Space2Face, a small third sector restorative justice project, the seminars attracted participation from elected members, statutory and non-statutory partners and communities of interest and delivered inputs from national and international speakers on subjects including punishment, procedural justice, community engagement, stigma, co-production, justice and the arts and restorative justice practice. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to evidence informed practice and a willingness to work in partnership to re-shape and recreate sustainable services based on need.

The partnership was using the deployment and expenditure of resources to maximise impact. Criminal justice social work leaders demonstrated proactive efforts to invest in and promote partnership with third sector organisations who were best placed to tackle the inequalities and disadvantages experienced by the community justice population. By sharing information about funding sources and providing direct financial support to partner agencies, the CJP was adopting a 'spend to save' approach which was resulting in improved outcomes for service users and contributing to a reduced demand on costly front-line services. The work of the partnership was strongly and ably supported by a well-regarded and well-connected community planning and development team which served to maximise the reach and influence of the partnership and secure buy-in from wider strategic groups.

Whilst local needs are well understood and there is a strong will to pool resources, partners acknowledged that more could be done to develop a strategic approach to joint budgeting and deployment. Partners clearly recognised the need to map and broaden their understanding of their collective resources. In addition, through the self-evaluation partners identified high levels of duplication, with the same partners attending multiple meetings. The Shetland Partnership and the CJP were alert to this and consideration was being given to how structures could be streamlined to maximise the efficient use of resources over time.

## ***Leadership of strategy and direction***

Community justice oversight, governance and accountability arrangements are the responsibility of the Shetland Partnership. Their local outcome improvement plan outlines a strong, coherent and accessible vision for Shetland which is clearly informed by a comprehensive assessment of strengths and needs. The themes and priorities in the

community justice outcome improvement plan and the local outcome improvement plan are well aligned and the priorities and outcomes are well understood by all partners.

Following the transition to the new community justice model, strong leadership from the CJP resulted in the development of a coherent strategic plan and secured high levels of participation from a wide range of stakeholders and community groups. However, in the interim, the partnership has faced several challenges in their efforts to embed the new model. Over the last two years significant restructuring and re-organisation has taken place across the Shetland Partnership and leaders acknowledged that during this period of review their focus on community justice business drifted, resulting in a gap in oversight whereby the CJP annual plan was not signed off. We agreed with the partners' reflection that the plan was possibly overly ambitious and contained a large number of actions, some of which have drifted over time. Whilst partners attributed this to a lack of direct accountability regarding the ownership of actions and the absence of robust reporting mechanisms, we suggest it has been compounded by the lack of a consistent CJP chair and the absence of contingency leadership arrangements.

Following the review of Shetland Partnership structures, new leadership arrangements have recently been confirmed in the form of a management and leadership team. To ensure strong and supportive leadership, this team has been established to operate as a 'working team' rather than a formal board with a focus on enabling improvement as well as scrutinising performance. An exception reporting model has been introduced to minimise bureaucracy and maximise the efficient use of time for all partners. Leaders were visible and present and flat management structures mean that leaders were well sighted on issues and challenges across strategic partnerships and operational services. The interdependence between the Shetland Partnership and the CJP is clearly reflected in the Shetland Partnership's terms of reference and whilst these arrangements are new and untested, partners were confident that they will result in improved accountability and oversight.

Reflecting their commitment to improvement, the Shetland Partnership has published a new Outcome Improvement Framework outlining how progress in delivering improved outcomes will be monitored and reported to communities and partners. Shetland Islands Council and NHS representatives have been working jointly to develop a new framework for use across council and NHS services to assist in evidencing progress against directorate and strategic plans, such as the CJOIP and wider Shetland Partnership outcomes. Central oversight for measuring high level outcomes will sit with the community planning support team, aiding consistency and accountability. Work is on-going to clarify regular reporting mechanisms between the CJP and the Shetland Partnership however it was noted that the CJOIP is currently being reviewed and that the intention is to focus on a smaller number of projects to 'declutter' the landscape and enable more streamlined reporting.

Within the CJP there was clear investment from a number of core statutory members who shared a strong consensus. However, there was no regular representation from the Integration Joint Board (IJB), COPFS or SCTS and the need to secure the strategic participation of the third sector was well recognised. The absence of these partners has diminished the partnership's ability to ensure improvements in important areas of responsibility and limited the level of reflection and challenge within the group. Despite this, effective collaborative relationships between leaders was helping to ensure that there were lines of communication to related forums such as the Shetland Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. The CJP has clearly benefitted from the support and influence of the community development team who have facilitated effective links between

the CJP and wider strategic forums. Leaders have identified that for the future it will be important for them to consider how they can establish a cohesive and coherent 'fit' between the Shetland Partnership, CJP, IJB and wider strategic forums to minimise duplication and ensure clear, consistent connectivity.

Despite the challenges of the changing landscape, leaders were enthusiastic and committed to the community justice model and were clearly seeking to establish an enabling and innovative leadership culture. Participation in the Voices for Equity project has seen members of the management and leadership team and CJP paired with individuals from the community who have experience of inequalities. This was resulting in more considered and accountable decision making and demonstrated that leaders were seeking to model an open and reflective approach. We found that the CJP was adding value to the strategic landscape and all partners expressed optimism about the CJP's capacity to develop and evolve effectively.

### **Next steps**

Our assessment is that the Shetland Community Justice Partnership knows itself well. Partners have identified relevant and realistic areas for improvement and have recognised the need to streamline plans and prioritise effectively. The partnership is clearly committed to developing an improvement plan which incorporates learning from their self-evaluation. This includes facilitating the meaningful engagement of all statutory and third sector partners and strengthening the interface with the Shetland Partnership and wider strategic forums. Plans are in place to review the community justice outcome improvement plan and associated performance reporting mechanisms and the partnership has recognised a need to establish consistent leadership arrangements.

We are confident that the partnership has the ability and willingness to achieve its objectives and is prepared to invest to ensure delivery. The size of Shetland will always present challenges in terms of capacity. We would agree with the partnership's own assessment that effective collaboration going forward is critically dependent on securing on-going support from the Community Safety and Justice Officer role. Partners also noted that despite the introduction of 'island proofing' legislation in the form of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, their remote geography presents on-going challenges in accessing national resources which other mainland community justice partnerships benefit from, such as training and networking events. We agree that it is essential for all national bodies to keep in mind the need for creativity in how they can support improvement on an ongoing basis.

Yours sincerely

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