

2017 Community Justice Consultation Findings

Introduction

This report provides a summary of results of consultation activity which spanned from September to November 2017. It provides an overview of survey responses received at Midfest Family Fun Day 2017, Midlothian Tenants Day and the full Autumn 2017 public questionnaire. Results reflect responses received from the individuals who live or work in the Midlothian local authority area as well as individuals held in custody at HMP Edinburgh who were identified as Midlothian based.

Background

Section 20 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on Community Planning Partnerships to make all reasonable efforts to secure participation in the development of our Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2020. Statutory partners must be able to demonstrate how they have engaged with stakeholders to agree the potential content or scope of the plan.

A Communication and Engagement Strategy and Plan 2017 was produced to outline the activity planned to progress actions SO1.2¹ and SO1.4² (since revised). This details the consultation activity which would take place between September and November 2017.

Consultation activity included a needs priority ranking exercise which took place at the Community Safety and Justice Village at Midfest Family Fun Day on 3rd September 2017. Further responses to the same exercise were gathered at Midlothian Tenants Day on 8th September 2017. A copy of the exercise is attached in Appendix 1.

A full questionnaire was developed and distributed to individuals who lived and worked in Midlothian. The questionnaire was available in an online format and paper copies were also made available in Council offices, libraries and leisure centres across Midlothian. The consultation period ran from 4th October – 12th November 2017. Survey questions were adopted from a consultation that took place in Autumn 2016 so that results could be compared. The layout and wording of the information page and questions were slightly adapted from the 2016 consultation to better reflect the purpose of the consultation and clarify what is being asked of respondents. A copy of the 2017 questionnaire is attached in Appendix 2.

Consultation also took place among Midlothian residing individuals held in prison custody at HMP Edinburgh. Responses were gathered between the 16th and 20th of September 2017. Questions were mostly similar to those asked in the other consultation activities mentioned but adapted to reflect their particular circumstances (eg. questions added to find what types

¹ SO1.2 - "Use appropriate communication channels, including social media, to promote understanding of Community Justice and a raised awareness of Criminal Justice processes."

² SO1.4 - "Improve the general public's understanding and recognition of community based sentences."

of support they have received or would like to be available in prison or on their return to the community.) A copy of the 2017 Midlothian prisoner survey is attached in Appendix 3.

Summary of responses

A total of 394 responses were received, a significant increase (+222%) on the previous year's consultation period when 122 responses were received. Broken down, the total constitutes 338 responses (86%) for the full questionnaire; 49 responses (12%) to the needs priority ranking exercise undertaken at Midfest and Tenants Day; and 7 (2%) responses to the prisoner survey.

The full questionnaire and prisoner survey collected both quantitative and qualitative findings whereas the needs priority ranking exercise undertaken at Midfest and Tenants Day produced strictly quantitative results.

Awareness of community justice

The question "*Were you aware of Community Justice as a way of reducing offending?*" appeared in the full questionnaire only. 338 responses were received for this question, representing 86% of total responses.

45% of people (n=153) who answered this question stated they were aware of community justice. While results demonstrate that a lot of work is required to raise public awareness of community justice and what is involved, it also represents a significant increase in awareness from the previous year where as few as 28% reported this statement.

When asked where they had heard about community justice, 36% of respondents (n=64) made reference to their work place or role, 23% (n=40) made reference to local or national media (including social media) and 11% (n=19) stated they had heard through general conversation or existing interest. A further 7 responses (4%) made reference to face-to-face public engagement activity such as Community Council meetings, tenants meetings, information stalls or previous consultation.

Themes/Key findings:

- Effectiveness of local (and national) communication and engagement planning/activity is evidenced by an increasing awareness of community justice.
- Despite the overall rise, there is still significant work to do to raise the profile of community justice among the Midlothian public and key stakeholders

Factors thought to influence desistence from (re)offending

Respondents were asked to prioritise a number of supports that are known to have an influence on the likelihood of offending. This question was asked in all consultation activity with slight variations in the way it was asked in accordance the purpose of each survey. Please refer to appendices 1, 2 and 3 for information.

All 394 respondents gave an answer to this question. Broken down this equated to 338 responses to the full questionnaire, 49 responses to the Midfest/Tenants Day survey and 7 responses to the prisoner survey.

The complete findings of 2017 consultation activity in regards to priority support needs for reducing (re)offending are shown in the diagram on the next page.

When asked to consider which support needs were high priority for reducing (re)offending in Midlothian...

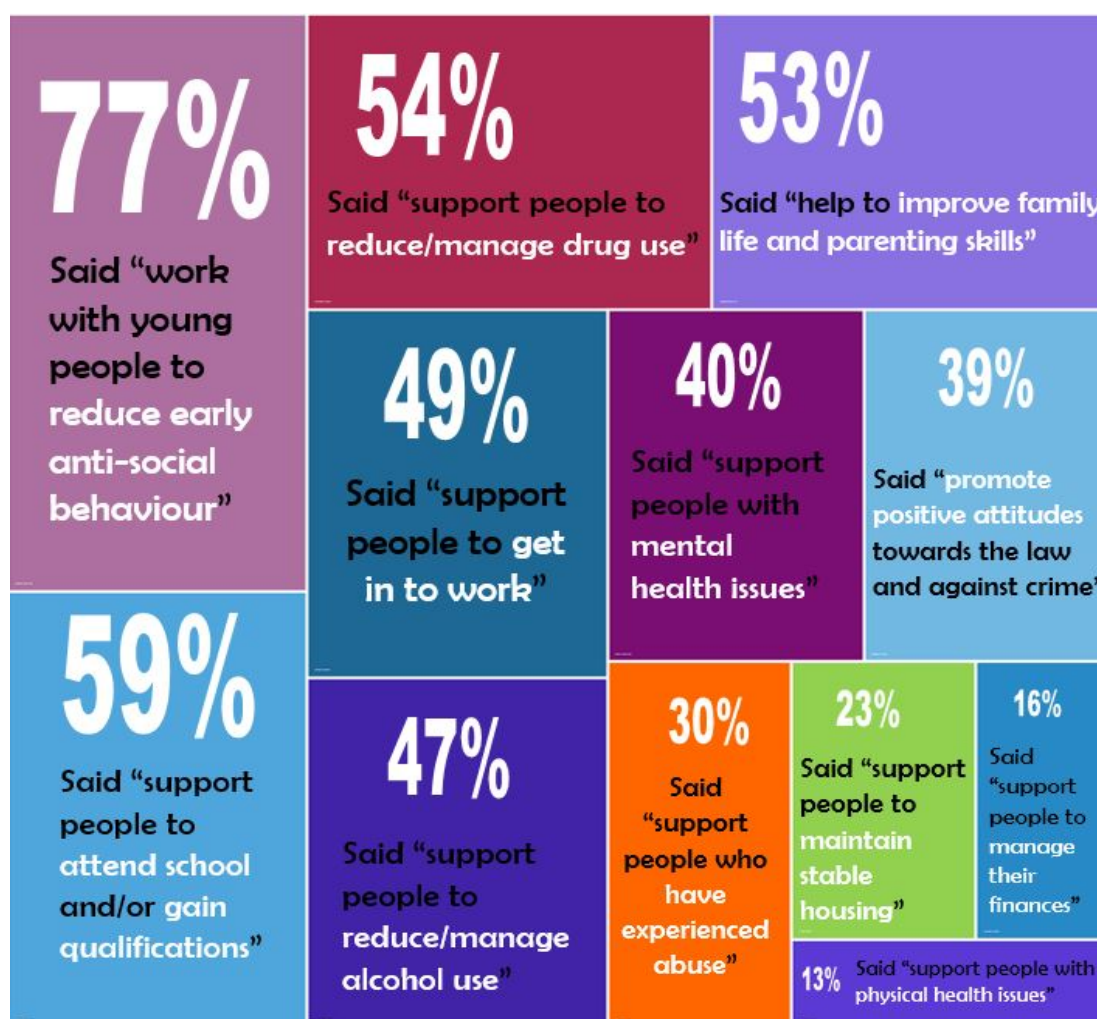


Figure 1 – All 2017 results for priority support needs

Overall results show that "working with young people to reduce early anti-social behaviour" was thought to be the biggest indicator of future offending or reoffending, with 77% of respondents rating this as one of the highest priority support needs. "Supporting people to attend school and/or gain qualifications" also received high support, with 59% of respondents rating this as one on of the top priorities with a view to reducing (re)offending. Support for this priority need was closely followed by "supporting people to reduce/manage drug use" at 54% and "helping to improve family life and parenting skills" at 53%.

Only 13% of respondents felt that "supporting people with physical health issues" was one of the top priority needs for reducing (re)offending. Respondents were also less likely to

prioritise the relationship between reducing (re)offending and “supporting people to manage their finances” or “supporting people to maintain stable housing”. This was consistent with the results of previous consultation activity carried out in Autumn 2016, where these statements were more likely to be ranked as low priority.

Respondents of the prisoner survey were much more likely to prioritise “support for getting in to work” than the general Midlothian population, at 100%<49% of respondents retrospectively. Support for physical health issues was also much higher, with 83% of respondents of prisoner survey rating this as a high priority compared to only 12% of respondents of the general surveys. “Supporting people to reduce/manage drug use”, “help to improve family life and parenting skills” and “support for people with mental health issues” were also favoured as priorities among respondents of the prisoner survey, with 83% of respondents rating each statement as a high priority need.

Themes/Key findings:

- In general, working with young people to reduce early anti-social behaviour was seen as top priority.
- Support for getting in to work seen as top priority among prisoners.

Current availability of support/services

A total of 292 respondents provided an answer to the question “Thinking of the support needs listed in question 3, are you aware of any services or circumstances which are helping to reduce offending in your local area?” in the full questionnaire.

119 respondents stated that they were aware of services or circumstances, equivalent to 35% of total respondents asked. 38% of respondents (n=45) who reported an awareness referred to work undertaken by Midlothian Council, many with specific reference departments such as Lifelong Learning and Employability, (Criminal Justice) Social Work, Community Safety Team, Housing Department, Mental Health Team and Welfare Rights. There were 19 mentions of early prevention activity in schools such as Police talks and “Cooldown Crew”. There were also several mentions of third sector organisations/projects such as MELD, SACRO and Y2K.

Respondents of the prisoner survey were also asked their experiences of finding and receiving support in the community and in prison. 2 respondents of 7 respondents were positive in regards to the support received by the community (Midlothian area). 1 respondent reported that they had they had experienced no difficulties seeking support and another respondent stated that they had “*always found the council helpful*”. 3 respondents were negative in regards to community support, with the main concern being a lack of awareness on “*who or where to ask*” for support or advice. One respondent reported that they had “*been left frustrated with the lack of advice for the future*” by their allocated social worker.

3 of 7 respondents (43%) had reported some difficulties in finding or receiving support in prison. 1 respondent stated specific concerns around finding advice/support for their housing situation upon release from prison. 1 respondent made reference to difficulties on getting advice on debt, stating they had “*tried 3 times to get an appointment*”. Another respondent shared concerns on the process of seeking support in prison, stating frustration over the time to fulfil requests.

During their time in prison, respondents were most likely to feel supported with education/skill building (57%, n=4) followed by support for physical health issues (43%, n=3). 1 or more respondents had also stated that they felt supported with their alcohol use, drug use, changing attitudes towards crime, housing, employment, family life, coping with trauma or mental health problems. No respondents reported that they had felt supported with managing money, which answers given to other questions indicated that this was issue for some respondents. Further analysis would be required to establish whether respondents who had not felt supported in other topics; a) did not require this type of support/service; or b) could not access this type of support/service.

Themes/Key findings:

- There is significant work to do to raise awareness of organisations and services in Midlothian and develop public/partner understanding of relevance to community justice Objectives.
- Some prisoners indicated that the range of support availability in HMP Edinburgh was overall positive but less so in the community.
- Some prisoners expressed concerns of seeking or arranging services to support their release (with mention of housing and finances)

Future needs of communities

A total of 307 respondents provided an answer to the question “What more do you think needs to be done to reduce offending and re-offending in your local area?” in the full questionnaire.

The majority of respondents expressed a need for more work around offending prevention and early intervention with young people as well as a holistic approach to dealing with complex needs. Examples of comments received include; *“Making sure that disadvantaged and disaffected people have appropriate support and resources to break out of cultures of petty offending, particularly in young people”*; *“Intervening earlier with youth, making sure supports are well advertised”* and *“Tackling inequality in a country at the root will reduce reoffending - education is the way forward but you also need to look at how we treat offenders”*. Several respondents noted a need for more restorative justice work, community policing and drop in centres.

5 of 7 respondents provided an answer to the question “How could we improve support offered in the community (Midlothian area) to help people to lead positive lives?” in the prisoner survey. 2 respondents made reference to hopes for a better connect between SPS and community services, stating they felt *“forgotten about”* in prison or felt that *“prisoners became unfortunate statistics”*. 2 respondents had stated a need for more advice on making sure support was in place on their return to the community, with a particular need for advice on financial matters such as benefits or debt. 3 respondents mentioned concerns over how they would be treated upon their return to the community stating a need for greater *“understanding”*, *“listening”* from their community as opposed to *“vigilantism”* and *“judgement”* and a need for frontline services to *“reach beyond punishment to include rehabilitation”*. 1 respondent said *“more advertising [of services] would give individuals the choice”*.

Themes/Key findings:

- A more holistic approach to meeting complex needs was seen as essential for breaking the cycle of offending
- Young people were again central with the majority of comments noting a need for more preventative work at an early age
- Some prisoners state a disconnect between prison and community based services, raising particular concerns in preparation for release
- Residents and prisoners alike stated a need for attitudinal change in terms of the way people with an offending history are treated in the community

Unpaid Work disposals

A total of 306 respondents (of the full questionnaire) provided examples of Unpaid Work they'd like to see in Midlothian. Please note that individuals/organisations have ongoing opportunities to contact Criminal Justice Social Work with requests therefore below findings are only a small sample of ideas.

Respondents were asked to give examples of Unpaid Work they'd like to see in Midlothian as one of the community based sentencing options available to courts. Consistent with last year, the highest majority (45%) of respondents who provided feedback had mentioned gardening or landscaping for public spaces or less able/vulnerable communities in their answer. 41% made reference to other community improvements such as street/park maintenance and graffiti removal with some stating these types of jobs will *"make a visible difference to those in the community"* and *"help everyone to be proud of our community"*.

Many thought the work should have a restorative aspect, stating it should involve talking to, or providing work for, victims of the crime committed, stating that this could help to *"ensure a better understanding of the effects of their behaviour"*. There were also several more general mentions of understanding and repairing harm with comments such as *"help them see how their crime could have impacted others or the community"* and *"anything that helps them see the value of giving back to society"*

Several mentions were also made to work that would help the individual to build skills or learn a trade that would help them with their future employability. Comments included "building skills and developing a work ethic could really help the individuals move their life in a new direction" and "work resulting in training qualifications or mentorship which could assist in breaking the crime cycle/get jobs".

Themes/Key findings:

- Respondents noted a need for **noticeable** payback for communities and victims
- There was support for Unpaid Work that helps to develop skills, work experience or otherwise improves future prospects
- Unpaid Work was seen as an opportunity to promote a more positive attitude towards the community, work and the law

Community participation in community justice planning and delivery

273 respondents gave an answer to the question “How would you or your organisation be able to support people in the community from becoming involved in offending?” in the full questionnaire.

Of the total number who answered this question, 72% (n=194) of respondents gave an example of the work they are doing - or would like to do - to prevent (re)offending as an individual or representative of their organisation.

Among the most common response was working with young people either in education, as a volunteer/mentor or through their own positive parenting. Staying aware and informed, joining a local community council and/or participating in consultations or projects were also popular answers.

In keeping with the previous year’s consultation, respondents stated a recognition of responsibilities for vigilance against crime and reporting of criminal activity. Respondents also indicated an awareness of their role in creating more inclusive communities with comments such as *“being aware of an individual’s personal circumstances”* and *“promoting a positive attitude towards rehabilitation”*.

Examples of other comments received include:

“I volunteer and work closely with the youth of Mayfield. I find out about activities or great activities and involve them. It’s all about keeping people busy and making them feel their efforts are making a difference.”

“[I have an] interest in assisting youths, getting people fit and able to find employment and offering encouragement”

“Encouraging and welcoming involvement in voluntary work, making best use of their talents and skills. Befriending people at risk of offending. Advocating on behalf of people re local supports, employment, substance misuse etc. Contribute human hours to a drop in facility”

Themes/Key findings:

- Respondents are often unclear how they could impact on a reduction of offending and reoffending
- Despite this, there is a willingness for greater participation evidenced by engagement (or desire to engage) with partner agencies to meet the needs of communities
- There was some recognition of the need for a cultural change in the way vulnerable groups are treated within communities to facilitate integration.

Other comments

197 other comments were received. Examples of comments received are:

“It would be good to see people become more valued so they would hopefully not need to re-offend”

"[There] needs to be better joined up working between all agencies in Midlothian"

"I feel people are very quick to judge police and the justice system however I do feel we could be doing as a community in supporting offender rehabilitation"

"I think more should be done to offer offenders training and education"

Prisoner survey comments included:

"Information in leaflet form would be a help to understanding what to expect in the future and how to cope"

"Give people a chance to show that they have changed their ways instead of trying to put you back in prison when no crime or offence was committed. In my opinion, this just causes problems in the future for people to trust, work with or go to for help"













Next Steps

Amendments are being made to the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2020 to reflect feedback. This will be published at www.midlothian.gov.uk/csip.

How can we reduce offending in Midlothian?

With a view to reducing offending, how important is it to support each of the following?

Please select a priority level

	High	Medium	Low
 Support people to attend school and/or gain qualifications.			
 Support people to reduce/manage alcohol use.			
 Support people to reduce/manage drug use.			
 Support positive attitudes towards the law and against crime.			
 Work with young people to reduce early anti-social behaviour			
 Support people to maintain stable housing.			
 Support people to get in to work.			
 Improve family life and parenting skills.			
 Support people to manage their finances.			
 Support people who experience abuse.			
 Support people with mental health problems.			
 Support people with physical health problems.			



How can we reduce offending in Midlothian? Give your views and win £50!



CONSULTATION ENDS MIDNIGHT 12TH NOVEMBER 2017

The Midlothian Community Safety and Justice Partnership would like to hear from you as part of the Autumn 2017 Community Justice Consultation.

What is Community Justice?

- It is a way to reduce offending and re-offending.
- It is a way of making sure everyone has access to services and opportunities to get support for their needs.
- It is a way to help people lead positive lives so that less people will commit crime and less people will become a victim of crime.
- It is a way of involving people who live or work locally in the decisions to make their community safer.

How can you help?

- We want to know how we can improve our services so that less people will become involved in or be affected by crime.
- We want to know how we can support people with an offending history to make changes and give a positive contribution to society.

**Return your completed survey by 12th November 2017 to take part.
As a thank you, one lucky survey entrant will win £50!***

This survey is available:

- in **paper copy** at Midlothian Council receptions, leisure centres and libraries
- to **complete online** at www.midlothian.gov.uk/csjp

If you would like more information, or to request another format, please contact us:

- by **email** at CSJP@midlothian.gov.uk
- in **writing** to CSJP, Midlothian Council, Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, EH22 3AA
- by **telephone** to Hamish Fraser or Nicola Bruce on 0131 561 5216 or 0131 270 6732

**Please note that while employees of Midlothian Council are encouraged to take part in the survey, they will not be eligible to win the prize draw.*

1. a) Were you aware of Community Justice as a way of reducing offending?











YES / NO

b) If **YES**, where did you hear about it?

2. Research shows that there are a number of factors which make people more likely to offend. Which of the following types of support do you think are **most** important for reducing offending?

PLEASE SELECT A MAXIMUM OF 5 PRIORTIES

Tick 5 (✓)

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
|  | Support people to attend school and/or gain qualifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Support people to reduce/manage alcohol use. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Support people to reduce/manage drug use. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Promote positive attitudes towards the law and against crime. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Work with young people to reduce early anti-social behaviour. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Support people to maintain stable housing. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Support people to get in to work. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Help to improve family life and parenting skills. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Support people to manage their finances. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Support people who have experienced abuse. | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Support people with mental health issues.

☐

Support people with physical health issues.

☐

3. Thinking of the support needs listed in question 2, are you aware of any services or circumstances which are helping to reduce offending in your local area? **Please give details.**

4. What more do you think needs to be done to reduce offending and re-offending in your local area? **Please give details.**

5. How would you or your organisation be able to support people in the community from becoming involved in offending? **Please give details.**

6. Unpaid Work (Community Payback) is one of the sentencing options available to courts. Do you have any ideas on the types of Unpaid Work you'd like to see in Midlothian? **Please give details.**

Any other comments?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

If you would like the chance to **win our £50 prize draw**, please give your contact details below. (Your personal information will not be made public or shared with any other agencies.)

Name.....

Organisation.....

Address.....

Email address.....

Would you like to receive information on survey results and outcomes?

YES / NO

Please return completed surveys by midnight, 12th November 2017.

You can do this by:

- **Posting** it by FREEPOST to:

COMMUNITY JUSTICE
MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL
FAIRFIELD HOUSE
8 LOTHIAN ROAD
DALKEITH
EH22 3AA

- **Emailing** a scanned copy to CSJP@midlothian.gov.uk
- **Handing it in** to a local Midlothian library or Midlothian Council reception desk

The Midlothian Community Safety and Justice Partnership are a multi-agency partnership working to make Midlothian a safe place to live, work, visit, grow up and grow old.

Find out more about the Midlothian Community Safety and Justice Partnership by picking up the 2017 Guide or visiting:

 https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/396/emergencies_safety_and_crime

 www.twitter.com/midCSJP

 www.facebook.com/MidlothianCSJP

View the 3 year plan for Community Justice (Midlothian) at:

www.midlothian.gov.uk/csjp

We want to hear your views

Midlothian Council would like to hear about your experiences of support in prison and outside in the community.

We believe everyone from Midlothian should be given the same opportunities to get support for their needs in order to lead positive lives away from crime.

We would like to know how we can improve our services to prevent people from coming into contact with the criminal justice system. We would also like to know how you think we could help people in prison to feel part of their community when they return.

Please help us to improve the lives of our citizens by completing this short survey.

Address/Home area before custody (Optional)













Address/Home area on release (Optional)

NOTE:

OPTING TO GIVE US YOUR ADDRESS WOULD HELP US TO IDENTIFY SUPPORT NEEDS SPECIFIC TO PEOPLE IN CERTAIN AREAS OF MIDLOTHIAN. ANY INFORMATION YOU CHOOSE TO PROVIDE WOULD BE HANDLED SECURELY AND KEPT ANONYMOUS.

IF YOU WOULD PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE THIS, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 1.

1. How important is it to support each of the following? (Please tick ✓)

	Very important	Important	Less important
 Support people to attend school and/or gain qualifications.			
 Support people to reduce/manage alcohol use.			
 Support people to reduce/manage drug use.			
 Support positive attitudes towards crime and the law.			
 Work with young people to reduce early anti-social behaviour.			
 Support people to maintain stable housing.			
 Support people to get in to work.			
 Improve family life and parenting skills.			
 Support people to manage their finances.			
 Support people who experience abuse.			
 Support people with mental health problems.			
 Support people with physical health problems.			

2. During your time in prison, have you felt supported with the following?
(Please tick ✓ all that apply)

Education/skills ☐

Alcohol use ☐

Drug use ☐

Changing attitudes towards crime ☐

Housing ☐

Employment ☐

Family life ☐

Managing money ☐

Coping with trauma ☐

Mental health problems ☐

Physical health problems ☐

3. What problems, if any, have you experienced with finding or getting support in prison?

4. What problems, if any, have you experienced with finding or getting support in the community (Midlothian area)?

5. How could we improve support offered in the community (Midlothian area) to help people to lead positive lives?

6. Any other comments? (Feel free to continue on the blank side of the page)
