

Event report: Third Sector engagement with local Community Justice

Under the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, the statutory Community Justice partners are required to engage and involve Third Sector partners in the planning, delivery and reporting of services and improved outcomes.

In July 2021, the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum (CJVSF) and the Community Justice Network held a joint discussion event online to explore current Third Sector engagement with local Community Justice Partnerships (CJPs). Thirty seven people attended the event, including facilitators. Participants included Community Justice Coordinators, Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs), Third Sector Service Providers and staff from Community Justice Scotland.

The Third Sector Providers in attendance offered a range of services to victims, people who have committed crimes and families of those caught up in the justice system.

Purpose of the discussion

The purpose of the discussion event was to:

- Establish (and help increase) awareness of:
 - Routes that exist for Third Sector organisations to engage with CJPs
 - The range of organisations working in different areas.
- Share experiences of engagement to-date
- Identify and raise awareness of areas of good practice and how we can build on these
- Identify and raise awareness of new and ongoing blockages/ barriers in relation to Third Sector engagement and explore how we can help to address these.

This paper summarises the key themes and points emerging from these discussions and identifies actions for further improving Third Sector engagement with local Community Justice Partnerships.

Current Third Sector engagement with Community Justice Partnerships

Third sector engagement routes and degree of involvement across the country are very diverse. Ahead of the session, all participants received a copy of a draft table, which provided basic information about each CJP, including Third Sector engagement routes. This table was developed based on information contained on the CJP websites and in published CJOIPs, Annual Reports and Participation Statements and was checked with Coordinators in advance of the session.

Awareness, understanding and experiences of the different routes/ structures

Third Sector

Awareness and understanding of the different structures for engaging with CJPs was variable across Third Sector participants. One Third Sector participant was not aware of any local engagement routes (nor the existence of the Community Justice Coordinator role) prior to the discussion event. Others observed that they understand CJPs at a superficial level; They would generally know where to start with making links but had sometimes found it complicated to find a way in and it often been time consuming, involving having to work through a range of different contacts to find ‘the right person’ in different areas. Staff changes across CJPs had also caused challenges for partners in some instances and sometimes meant a loss of connection/ relationship and institutional memory.

In general, the diversity set out in the table reflected the experiences of Third Sector organisations working across multiple local authorities. Where it is working well, Third Sector partners are engaged in discussions at an early stage and have been able to bring together their collective knowledge, skills and experience. Levels of engagement, however, are not consistent across different areas. Third Sector experiences varied considerably across individuals, and even within organisations. In some instances, Third Sector participants have good relationships and clear ideas about some Partnerships but have struggled to engage with others.

Resources such as the table prepared for the event were viewed as helpful for making Third Sector participation easier, particularly for those organisations working across more than one local authority.

Community Justice Coordinators

A number of Coordinators commented that the table was also helpful for them as it showed them information and ideas from other areas about practice and approaches.

Between them, local CJPs have trialled a range of different approaches to engaging their local Third Sector partners and Coordinators are interested to learn more about how other areas were approaching Third Sector engagement. They would be keen for more opportunities to discuss with peers how well the approaches they had tried were working locally and to share any lessons learned.

Routes and activities for Strategic Level Engagement

For the strategic activities, CJPs have used a mixture of engagement methods, as set out in the table below.

Engagement method	Comments from discussion event
Third Sector representation at the Community Justice Partnership Board	<p>A number of participants were surprised at the extent to which Third Sector involvement on CJP Boards varied across Scotland. Participants recognised the ambition to reflect local circumstances and needs but suggested that the role of Third Sector partners on CJP Boards could benefit from more clarity and better consistency across the country.</p> <p>At present, areas which do have Third Sector organisations represented on their CJP Board tend to make use of one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from Third Sector intermediary organisations • Representatives from local Third Sector (community justice) forums. In many instances, these forums are facilitated by the local Third Sector Interface (TSI). • Representatives from individual Third Sector providers. <p>In some instances, Third Sector staff noted that they had been invited to attend a CJ Board with a clear role and remit to communicate and link with the wider Third Sector about CJP activities and developments. In others, Third Sector</p>

	staff had been invited to attend the Board on behalf of their own organisation. In such instances, they only felt able to contribute individual organisational experience, service updates and views.
Third sector engagement in local Third Sector forums, which feed in to CJ Partnership Board	<p>Some areas have set up, or linked in with existing, local Third Sector forums. Some of these have a specific community justice focus whilst others are broader in their remit. Local forums were found to be helpful for supporting broader engagement and participation and ensuring a range of views could be fed in to the Partnership. They have been helpful for providing a structured place to gather views and information, promote discussion and share updates and learning.</p> <p>The extent to which local forums have been well attended has varied. Challenges around the resourcing of them, and Third Sector capacity to engage across multiple local forums, were identified as key factors in this. During Covid, a number of the groups and forums have met online, rather than face-to-face, and some areas have plans to continue operating a blended model in the future as they have found that the use of digital meetings has helped to increase engagement and ensure a broader range of Third Sector organisations are able to participate.</p>
Third sector engagement in specific multi-agency thematic working groups/forums, which feed in to the CJ Partnership Board	No further specific comments received in relation to these.
Events (both online and face-to-face)	A range of events have been used to bring Third Sector partners together (often along with statutory partners and/or individuals and families with lived experience). During Covid-19, some areas have held online events.
Written engagement exercises, including consultation exercises	Most CJsPs have undertaken consultation exercises on draft versions of their local Community Justice Outcomes and Improvement Plan (CJOIP), with Third Sector partners invited to contribute their feedback, and some CJsPs have also involved Third Sector partners in providing contributions to their annual report. Digital annual reports were identified as an opportunity for including links to other organisation's websites, short films, articles partners etc. This can serve to broaden engagement, as well as increasing overall awareness and understanding of the role of the Third Sector in community justice.

Routes and activities for Operational Level Engagement

From participants' accounts, the most effective Third Sector engagement to-date has often come from shared operational activity and collaboration rather than engagement at a strategic level. Engagement routes and activities which have been used for operational level activities included:

- **A contractual model:** Purchasing Third Sector services which contribute to outcomes in the CJOIP
- **Participatory Budgeting:** One area has held a Participatory Budgeting event and invited applications from Third Sector groups. Further details can be found [here](#).
- **Project involvement** - Involving the Third Sector in specific projects – e.g. delivering research projects to inform needs assessment activities or supporting engagement with unreached communities and listening to the voices of people with lived experience.
- **MATAC process:** Third sector partner involvement in the MATAC (Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination) process to identify and manage the most harmful domestic abuse perpetrators.
- **Early release meetings:** In some areas, third sector partners were involved in planning meetings for the emergency early releases taking place during Covid-19.

An opportunity for more to be done in relation to cross-agency operational level meetings to support individuals was identified, e.g. building on the learning from the early release scheme to hold regular multi-agency meetings for individuals that are leaving prison.

Identifying the range of organisations working in different areas

Ahead of the session, all participants also received a draft of a list of different sources of information that can be used to find out about Third Sector services. During the discussion, participants noted the large range of places that people could access information about what services are available. In addition to the sources listed in the document, participants were able to identify a number of other potential sources that could be used to find out information about Third Sector services. We have updated the list to reflect these.

Participants observed that, in the past, considerable effort and resources have been put into mapping exercises and developing databases of contacts/service information, to assist engagement between statutory and Third Sector partners. Challenges remain, however, in terms of:

- **Maintenance** – Consideration needs to be given to how these databases can be effectively maintained over time, given that the information often becomes out of date very quickly.
- **Access to directories/databases** - In the past, some databases have been difficult to find and/or required a password to access them, which meant that they were not widely used.
- **Deciding what to include in a directory** – For example, some organisations will contribute to relevant outcomes but not necessarily self-identify as being relevant to the directory's 'theme'.
- **Coordination of directory information** - Whilst there is lots of information available and lots of places to get that information from, it is not co-ordinated across the different directories.
- **The role that directories can play** – Whilst helpful for getting a sense of the range of services available in a local area, participants questioned the extent to which directories can help to establish relationships between different organisations. They queried whether people actually use them at an operational level to identify new services they could refer people in to and to make links with new organisations. Some Third Sector partners observed that databases of contacts for Third Sector organisations sometimes don't shift the 'cloak of invisibility', when it comes to Third Sector initiatives being known by statutory partners at a local level. Whilst many Third Sector organisations are small and offer specialist service provision, larger providers often have higher visibility.

In addition to directory information, some participants identified a need for link worker type roles to help actively establish and maintain relationships. The importance of lived/living experience was also highlighted and participants were keen to ensure that people with lived experience have a voice in the local discussions as well and that provision is developed around the individual person.

Understanding the challenges and barriers to effective Third Sector engagement

Participants identified the following challenges/ barriers to effective Third Sector engagement with CJPs:

1. A lack of clarity over what Community Justice is and the role of CJPs
2. The use of silo-based approaches to tackling system change
3. A lack of clarity over the role of the Third Sector in CJPs
4. Third sector capacity and power imbalances
5. Coordinator capacity
6. A lack of clear structures and processes to support two-way data and information sharing and promote collaborative working
7. Reporting and accountability challenges

1. Lack of clarity over what Community Justice is and the role of CJPs

Both Coordinators and Third Sector partners voiced concerns about the lack of a shared understanding, vision or focus for community justice, which all partners can work towards. Establishing shared values and a sense of core goals/outcomes were identified as key to ensuring progress can be made across complex systems. The processes for developing the forthcoming national Community Justice Strategy and updating OPI framework were seen as potential routes for helping to develop a more shared understanding.

Related to frustrations about the lack of common knowledge and understanding about community justice, there were questions raised during the discussions about what a Community Justice Partnership is and what its purpose should be. It was suggested that separating out its strategic and operational activities/ roles could be helpful in this regard.

2. Silo based approaches to system change

Thematic silos

The lack of understanding of what community justice is makes it difficult for organisations to see where they fit and to make coordinated, effective interventions. This can lead to siloed approaches to community justice being used, rather than a whole system approach. Many Third Sector organisations contribute to community justice outcomes but they do not necessarily see themselves as a “community justice” organisation. If there were greater clarity and common understanding about what community justice is and the outcomes it is trying to achieve, participants thought more organisations would be enthusiastic and willing to take this on board in their own service delivery and partnerships to support a more joined up approach. Linkages to such organisations need to be made in order to support a whole system approach.

As part of this, a more holistic approach needs to be taken to commissioning and this will require strong strategic leadership to ensure that resources are aligned to support system change. The role of CJPs in strategic commissioning, and how this links with other strategic commissioning activities undertaken by, for example, Health and Social Care Partnerships, CPPs and ADPs was also raised. A number of participants noted that it would be more effective in the longer term to move funding upstream, to support preventative and early intervention measures. As such, CJPs need to be able to influence wider strategic commissioning discussions taking place at a local level.

Geographical silos

Working across more than one CJP area is a persistent challenge for Third Sector organisations, given the diversity and inconsistency of engagement routes and activities across the country. Addressing this challenge could enable more strategic commissioning to take place over larger geographical areas and support better use of Third Sector contributions across partnership areas.

Participants reported that there can also be a disconnect between prison area and area of return. Not all local CJPs have a prison in their local area, although they will have people returning to their area from a variety of prisons across the country. This can present challenges for third sector providers (and other partners) locally to ensure that people returning to their communities are engaged and connected into the relevant networks and support services.

3. Lack of clarity over the role of the Third Sector in CJPs

Participants noted a lack of clarity about the role that Third Sector partners are expected to play in Community Justice Partnerships. Whilst the statutory community justice partners have a duty to involve them in local planning and reporting, some areas reported that getting senior managers in some statutory organisations to recognise the necessity of actively including Third Sector providers as partners can be difficult.

This lack of clarity over the role of the Third Sector can also lead to partnerships struggling to identify the most appropriate routes and activities for Third Sector engagement.

4. Third sector capacity and power imbalances

Power differences between Third Sector and Statutory partners were seen to be a major barrier to partnership working. A number of participants felt that the Third Sector was often not seen as an equal partner in CJPs and the power imbalance between statutory and Third Sector means that the Third Sector can be excluded from discussions. Furthermore, statutory processes can often take a long time to deliver outcomes and some Third Sector organisations noted that they have in the past had to disengage from processes that are taking too long without any meaningful progress.

Third sector capacity to be involved

Coordinators have found hesitancy from some Third Sector organisations to get involved in high level strategic planning activities. Capacity was identified as the main barrier to participating, with some (particularly smaller) organisations unable to resource staff to take part in strategic, area-wide discussions as well as deliver front-line services. Other Third Sector organisations reported, however, that they had had the opposite experience – They had been keen to be involved and had had to fight for representation on the Community Justice Board.

Third sector organisations reported that it can be hard for them to know how/where their time is best spent, given the large number of strategic groups and partnerships that are operating at both local and national levels. There is an opportunity cost to participating in these groups, with involvement diverting staff time and resources away from other activities. Before agreeing to participate, Third Sector organisations were clear that they need to understand what they can/are expected to contribute to these groups, as well as what the benefits of participation will be. With 32 LAs, even the larger Third Sector providers with national reach do not have enough resources to develop relationships with all areas separately, as much as they might like. In some instances, larger, national providers may conclude that they need to focus on engaging nationally, at overarching Government or political level, instead.

These capacity issues were linked to broader, sustainability challenges for Third Sector organisations. The lack of sustainable, multi-year funding can also hamper the statutory partners' view of the Third Sector involvement in strategic discussions, since it casts doubts over the longevity of their involvement.

In some instances, geography can also be a barrier to effective working (e.g. Third Sector providers unable to physically attend meetings in Wick, Moray and Campbeltown all in the one day).

Third sector partners noted that developing strong operational relationships also requires significant time and resource. This engagement is more likely to be directly resourced than strategic engagement is, either through grant funding or contracts, although concerns were raised by Third Sector participants about the extent to which funding for service delivery has been cut in recent years. Community Justice Partnerships themselves do not have contracting responsibilities and the purchasing of Third Sector community justice services therefore tends to be done through individual statutory partners (most commonly through the local authority).

Coordinators are often well placed to hear about potential funding streams in other areas (e.g. ADPs, IJBs or from individual CJP partners) that Third Sector organisations may not know about. As such, some Coordinators have taken on a role of promoting funding sources to Third Sector partners, in order to support a more holistic approach to community justice.

5. Coordinator Capacity

Community Justice Coordinators also reported capacity concerns, with Coordinators expected to take on a variety of roles and responsibilities within the different partnerships, with varying

degrees of support from local partners. This impacts on the time and capacity available for them to find and develop relationships with a variety of Third Sector (and statutory) partners.

Some areas have had periods (or are experiencing periods) without a Coordinator in post and this also creates challenges for the level of engagement activity being undertaken by the Partnership.

6. A lack of clear structures and processes to support two-way data and information sharing and collaborative working

A lack of information sharing remains a challenge. A number of participants were keen to see better use of shared planning data, including data from Third Sector partners, to develop the CJOIPs and ensure that services are designed to meet individual's needs.

Participants noted that there is a need for clear processes to be in place to support the two-way flow of information and keep interactions going, so that people can feed in where they need to.

The Third Sector are often reliant upon information sharing agreements being developed and misunderstanding and misuse of GDPR legislation was identified as a barrier to information sharing. Third Sector participants noted that data protection and consent 'issues' are sometimes used by statutory partners as a reason not to share an individual's relevant personal information, rather than these issues being addressed and resolved.

Building relationships is central to making the partnerships work. The challenge of people moving on and losing links when they go was also a consistent challenge, highlighted across organisations, sectors and partnerships. There was a suggestion that this loss of linkages reflects a lack of clear processes for building and maintaining strong partnership arrangements. Participants suggested that better governance and membership of partnerships and good processes could help to cut across over-reliance on individual relationships. In some instances, however, participants had found that there can be processes in place and it is still not happening. Relationships were highlighted as being necessary to support and cement processes and links.

Tensions can arise when the processes used to allocate funding drive competitive, rather than collaborative behaviours. Participants reported that the current focus on competitive tendering, for example, tends to drive competitive behaviours, rather than collaborative ones. It reduces the incentive for organisations to share information and recognise the strengths of other organisations that it may be beneficial to partner with. Addressing this structural barrier was seen to be important for supporting partnership working towards shared outcomes.

A lack of nationally disseminated information about CJPs and national policy and service developments was also highlighted as an issue by some participants.

7. Reporting and accountability

There was some confusion amongst participants about what CJPs are expected to report on (e.g. is it community justice outcomes across all partners? The added value of the partnership?). There were calls for greater clarity on this issue to be provided nationally in order to support how the Third Sector feeds in to reporting processes.

As part of the annual reporting process, some participants suggested that CJS could ask CJPs more specific questions around third sector engagement to help share learning about different approaches and the extent to which engagement is working well.

Concerns were raised that, although CJS has a role on reporting annually, they do not have the powers to allow them to take the follow-up actions which may be required. As such, participants felt there is little accountability for areas which are not meeting their statutory obligations around community justice. Some participants were keen to see legislative changes introduced to award

more powers to Community Justice Scotland (CJS) to enable them to hold CJPs that are not performing to account.

Building on good practice and addressing barriers

Whilst different approaches have worked for different areas, the following common factors for successful engagement were identified and each discussed further below the table:

Common factors for successful engagement
1. Basic information about the CJP is easily accessible
2. Roles are clear and commonly understood
3. Clear governance structures and mechanisms are in place, which support engagement
4. Clear communication routes and processes have been developed and information is shared regularly
5. Spaces have been created where people can develop personal relationships, explore shared values and engage more widely
6. Third sector engagement is effectively resourced
7. CJPs engage with the Third Sector at the earliest possible stage
8. Links have been made between community justice and other policy and practice areas
9. Engagement is regularly monitored and reviewed

1. Basic information about the CJP is easily accessible

In order to support the third sector to engage with community justice partnerships, participants considered it essential that they are easily able to access basic information about the CJP, including:

- Who the main CJP point of contact are and what their role is
- Routes and opportunities for them to engage with the CJP
- The local community justice plan (CJOIP)
- The latest annual report

In general, the main point of contact for Third Sector organisations wishing to engage with the CJP is the Community Justice Coordinator. In some instances, it will be a TSI or other Third Sector contact. Third sector organisations reported that it is not always easy to identify the relevant point of contact within a CJP. Whilst some CJPs have set up a web-page/site which includes this information, this is not the case across all areas.

The table, which was circulated ahead of the event, was found to be helpful because it does some of the background research for people and clearly shows people the route in to engaging with different partnerships, which then saves people time. A more coordinated approach to ensuring that this information is available for each area and is updated regularly would be welcomed.

2. Roles are clear and commonly understood

For effective collaborative working to occur, all partners and stakeholders need to be clear about the role of each of the following plays (or should play) in relation to each element of the community justice strategic commissioning cycle:

- Individuals and families (including victims, witnesses, those who have committed crimes, those at risk of entering the justice system, families of those caught up in the justice system and wider members of the general public)
- Third sector and community organisations (both service providers and intermediaries)
- The Community Justice Coordinator
- Statutory CJP partners.

Participants suggested that there also needs to be a clear purpose/ objective each time the CJP or its associated sub-groups/forums meet. Every statutory and Third Sector partner needs to be clear about what they are expected to contribute to each meeting. If there's no clear role/contribution, then it may not be relevant for them to attend.

What is the role of Third Sector partners in community justice?

Participants noted that Third sector partners are expected to play a very varied role in community justice – e.g. front line service delivery, contributing to strategic discussions and activities, acting as representatives/links to the wider sector. There is a capacity issue here, particularly given the number and variety of partnerships that they are expected to engage in.

Part of the challenge is ensuring the right person(s) participate(s) in the relevant groups/activities and is supported to do so. Clarifying the role of the Third Sector in Community Justice Partnerships helps to make it easier to identify who may be the most appropriate person(s) to be involved in each local area and which mechanisms need to be in place to support this engagement.

CJPs need to work with Third Sector partners locally to clarify:

- The contribution that Third Sector partners can make to the partnership at each stage of the strategic commissioning cycle¹: Which groups and activities (both strategic and operational) can/should the Third Sector contribute to? Where can they add value?
- Whether the partnership needs:
 - the views of a single Third Sector organisation, focused on service updates and individual organisational experience
 - a Third Sector participant to be able to link in with and engage the wider Third Sector in partnership activities.

3. Clear governance structures and mechanisms are in place which support engagement

Areas with strong Third Sector engagement have established clear routes for participation, with clear governance structures and mechanisms designed to support flexibility and differing levels of engagement at different points and times. This helps to make best use of the Third Sector's time and resources.

Governance structures

Clear governance structures are important for helping Third Sector (and others) to understand where different groups fit within the bigger picture, and how work is being joined up (or not, as may be the case).

Some participants were keen to understand if the local governance arrangements were a driver for engagement. For example, is there a difference where the CJP is well-linked to the local Community Planning Partnership? Does it vary if it sits within the Health and Social Care Partnership instead?

Engagement processes and mechanisms

¹ For further details on this, please see the CJVSF briefing on a strategic approach to commissioning in community justice, available at: <https://www.ccpsscotland.org/cjvsf/resources/strategic-approach-commissioning-criminal-justice/>

As set out in the earlier section of this paper, CJPs have trialled a range of mechanisms for engaging their local third sector. Those that have been most successful have given consideration to how broad third sector engagement can be encouraged and what mechanisms are available (or need to be put in place and resourced) to support this.

Third Sector partners are more likely to get involved in CJP activities where there are clear benefits to them doing so, e.g. the CJP activities make a clear difference to the vulnerable individuals that Third Sector staff are working with, staff are able to learn and share practice and gain new insights, staff are able to link their own service in more effectively with partners/the bigger picture etc.

4. Clear communication routes and processes have been developed and information is shared on a regular basis

Clear communication routes and processes need to be in place to support the two-way flow of information between the CJP and broader Third Sector colleagues. At a local level, communication routes and processes that were mentioned included: email updates/communications, newsletters, local forums and meetings/events.

Once clear routes and processes have been developed, information and opportunities for participation needs to be shared regularly to help with awareness raising and to encourage stronger engagement.

Participants also highlighted the importance of sharing information at a national level and having clear channels in place to support this. The CJVSF newsletter was mentioned as a useful resource for both statutory and Third Sector partners to be able to share information. Communications to CJP partners during the pandemic from Social Work Scotland and Community Justice Scotland were also highly valued.

5. Spaces have been created where people can develop personal relationships, explore shared values and engage more widely

Participants identified a need for spaces to be created at a local level to enable people to develop relationships, understand different perspectives, explore shared values and engage more widely with other individuals and organisations. Experiences during the pandemic have suggested that using digital technology to offer some of these activities online may help to increase participation.

At an individual service level, a need for more regular, informal discussions between commissioning bodies and individual providers about what is working or not, on a project or case basis was also identified. This was seen to be important for establishing more active and more effective partner relationships.

At a national level, participants commented that sessions such as this event are helpful for bringing Coordinators and Third Sector partners together to discuss strategic issues.

6. Third sector engagement is effectively resourced

Many CJPs are making use of TSIs (Third Sector Interfaces) to act as a bridge between the Community Justice Partnership and the wider Third Sector. TSIs are doing this very well in some areas but they are facing resourcing and capacity issues, with their time and energy split across a broad range of policy and practice areas. If wider Third Sector engagement is sought, then participants were clear that mechanisms need to be properly resourced to support this so that any representative is able to link with and draw on the knowledge, skills and experience of a broader range of organisations.

7. CJPs have built in early engagement of the Third Sector

Earlier, sustained involvement of Third Sector partners was identified as a key component of successful engagement. Third sector participants observed, however, that in many areas they are often brought in very late to discussions and processes, e.g. to comment on the final draft of a CJOIP or an individual support plan, when there is less they can do to assist active change.

Getting more active, early Third Sector involvement is needed in order to support system changes and the delivery of more effective outcomes. It also reduces the risk of engagement becoming a 'tick-box' exercise that does not support meaningful changes.

8. Links have been made between community justice and other areas

The need to build linkages other policy and practice areas was seen to be vital for improving how we support individuals, families and communities. Relevant areas identified included: children and families, housing, addictions and recovery, mental health, physical health and employability. Some areas have already linked (or are starting to link) their CJOIP and associated activities to other initiatives and partnerships, such as Violence Against Women Partnerships, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs), Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), Suicide Prevention Groups and Youth Justice.

During the discussions, some participants observed that they had not appreciated the range of services across different areas/ populations that are supported by Third Sector organisations. Linking Community Justice Partnerships to related policy areas can also be helpful for connecting with these organisations that do not necessarily see themselves as 'community justice organisations', particularly smaller ones who may have less capacity to engage strategically with all the different partnerships that could potentially be relevant to them. It can also help to identify early intervention and prevention activities that are taking place (or needed) further upstream in the system. Similarly, there is a need to improve linkages between support in the community and support in prisons to ensure appropriate throughcare support is in place.

9. Engagement is regularly monitored and reviewed

Third sector engagement needs to be regularly monitored and reviewed if CJPs are to work towards further improvement. A few areas reported that they have steps in place for this already, for example, reviewing annually which Third Sector provider organisations attend the CJP board.

Role of participation statements

Participation statements are developed when producing a new CJOIP. They set out how statutory community justice partners have engaged with the Third Sector, community bodies and others in developing their plan. Event participants noted that in the table of CJP information there were a few areas that do not appear to have published participation statements. They were surprised to see this, given that areas have a statutory duty to produce these.

The participation statement was originally intended to be a live document but, in practice, tend to be updated only rarely and engagement is captured through other mechanisms, such as minutes of meetings. A few participants suggested that better use could be made of participation statements, to help highlight engagement routes and to share practice.

Next steps

At an individual level, participants identified a range of actions that they were intending to do as a result of the discussion, including following up links made during the discussions sessions to build relationships with other partners and to learn from what is happening elsewhere.

In addition, participants identified the following steps that local Community Justice Partnerships and national organisations could take to help further strengthen Third Sector engagement in community justice at a local level.

Local Actions for Community Justice Partnerships

1. Review the list of common factors for success (in the table above) and ensure that each of these is in place for the Partnership
2. Make use of the Self-evaluation tool² developed by the Care Inspectorate to review partnership working
3. Work with Third Sector partners locally to clarify the contribution that Third Sector partners can make to the partnership at each stage of the strategic commissioning cycle: Which groups and activities (both strategic and operational) can/should the Third Sector contribute to? Where can they add value?

National Actions for CJ Network, CJS, CJVSF and Scottish Government

1. Update and share the table with basic information for each CJP on an annual basis
2. Update the list with the additional sources of information about Third Sector Services that participants identified during the discussions
3. Hold further national discussion events/collaborative activities with CJ Network, CJVSF and other partners to:
 - a. provide more opportunities for Coordinators and Third Sector Partners to discuss how well the engagement models they have been trialling are working in their areas and to share learning
 - b. help build connections and identify solutions to some of the common challenges faced
 - c. discuss what is community justice and how the Third Sector can best engage with that.
4. Ensure Third Sector engagement at each stage of the strategic commissioning cycle is considered in the annual reporting.
5. Ensure that specific outcomes and indicators around partnership working are included in future reporting requirements and the national OPIF.
6. Explore how Participation Statements are currently used by CJPs and how we could make better use of them
7. Capture and protect learning/progress around third sector engagement arising during COVID-19.
8. Develop good practice guidance for Third Sector engagement in local partnerships
9. Once it has been developed, share the national vision more widely to help increase awareness of community justice and the broader range of organisations that can help to meet community justice objectives e.g. those working in mental health, youth work, homelessness, addictions etc.
10. Explore the potential for dedicated posts to support third sector engagement in local CJPs

²<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/3551/Community%20Justice%20self%20evaluation%20guide.pdf>