JUSTICE COMMITTEE

PRE-BUDGET SCRUTINY OF THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S DRAFT BUDGET 2019-20

SUBMISSION FROM COMMUNITY JUSTICE GLASGOW PARTNERSHIP

In his review of public services (*Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services*, June 2011), Dr Campbell Christie identified a need to “prioritise preventative measures” and stated that “unless Scotland embraces a radical, new, collaborative culture throughout our public services, both budgets and provision will buckle under the strain.”

Evidence from the Scottish Government highlights that in Glasgow the direct social and economic costs of crime cost public services £825 million per annum, of which £578 million relates to ‘reoffending’ (based on 2014/15 costs and data). With such substantial investment in justice services, it is contingent upon partners to harmonise investment and ensure prevention is at the heart of the use of public resources.

In providing the Justice Committee with evidence in relation to the Government’s draft budget, the Community Justice Glasgow partnership wishes to express:

- Our concern at the imbalance in justice spend, which is heavily skewed away from preventative, community focussed responses
- Our view that with a focus on commissioning planning, there is scope to plan a shift in resources, over an extended period of time, towards prevention and towards realising the policy objectives within the national Community Justice Strategy
- Commissioning planning starts in the local arena, and in Glasgow we have established a Collaborative Commissioning Strategy
- There is a gap in robust commissioning plans at a national level

Most professionals across the justice system would suggest they know what works to reduce re-offending and to make communities safer, but when reviewing how the public purse is spent in relation to justice, there is little evidence that spend reflects this knowledge. Re-offending costs an estimated £3 billion pounds a year in Scotland (*Audit Scotland, Reducing Reoffending in Scotland*, 2012). Reoffending also costs our communities, victims of crimes, families of those convicted and those caught in cycles of reoffending. Analysis of spend suggests that while we spend £254 million in restricting liberty, and a further £67m supporting the reintegration to communities from custody, we only spend £61m (16% of criminal justice spend) on rehabilitation (*Audit Scotland, 2012*).

Nationally, the evidence suggests preventative spend is marginal in comparison with the reactive spend. This mirrors a wider public sector pattern, as highlighted by the report of the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services.

Justice Reinvestment

Following a custodial sentence, the figures project (for Glasgow) a reconviction rate of over 40% within 12 months (with higher percentages for the shortest sentences), but for those completing a Community Payback Order, the figure is under 30% (Scottish Government, 2016). What is required is a shift in our use of justice tools, and that is most effectively
achieved through a shift in our justice spend – a ‘justice reinvestment’ from custody towards community, to ensure our community response to offending and to those convicted is as robust as our custodial response.

The Scottish Government have initiated small scale tests of justice reinvestment. Following the report from the Commission on Women Offenders (2012), the Government provided time-limited investment (£3m) for new community based justice services for women, seeing the initiation of 16 projects across Scotland, including a number of new Women’s Justice Centres, such as Tomorrow’s Women Glasgow. In 2015, they announced a top-slice of £1.5m from the Scottish Prison Service budget, to be distributed via Community Justice Authorities to focus on reducing our over-reliance on custody for women. A number of interesting areas of work were launched, and the Government continued this investment, announcing an intention to sustain the reinvestment moving forward.

While such investment can have an impact, £1.5m top sliced from an SPS budget of £396m (2015/16 Scottish Budget) is arguably a marginal shift, and spread thinly across the country is likely to have marginal impact. A further national investment of £4m to support Community Sentencing was announced in September 2016 (not gender specific). These investments continue to point in the right direction, and perhaps give hope for further scale as success is demonstrated. What is absent is clarity on how these investments will contribute to savings in the justice system, which can be further invested in the community.

As a partnership, we would call for the Scottish Budget to be supported through a robust national Community Justice Commissioning Strategy which has a long-term plan to shift resources towards effective, preventative measures.