

Reducing Reoffending in Scotland

Impact report



Prepared by Audit Scotland
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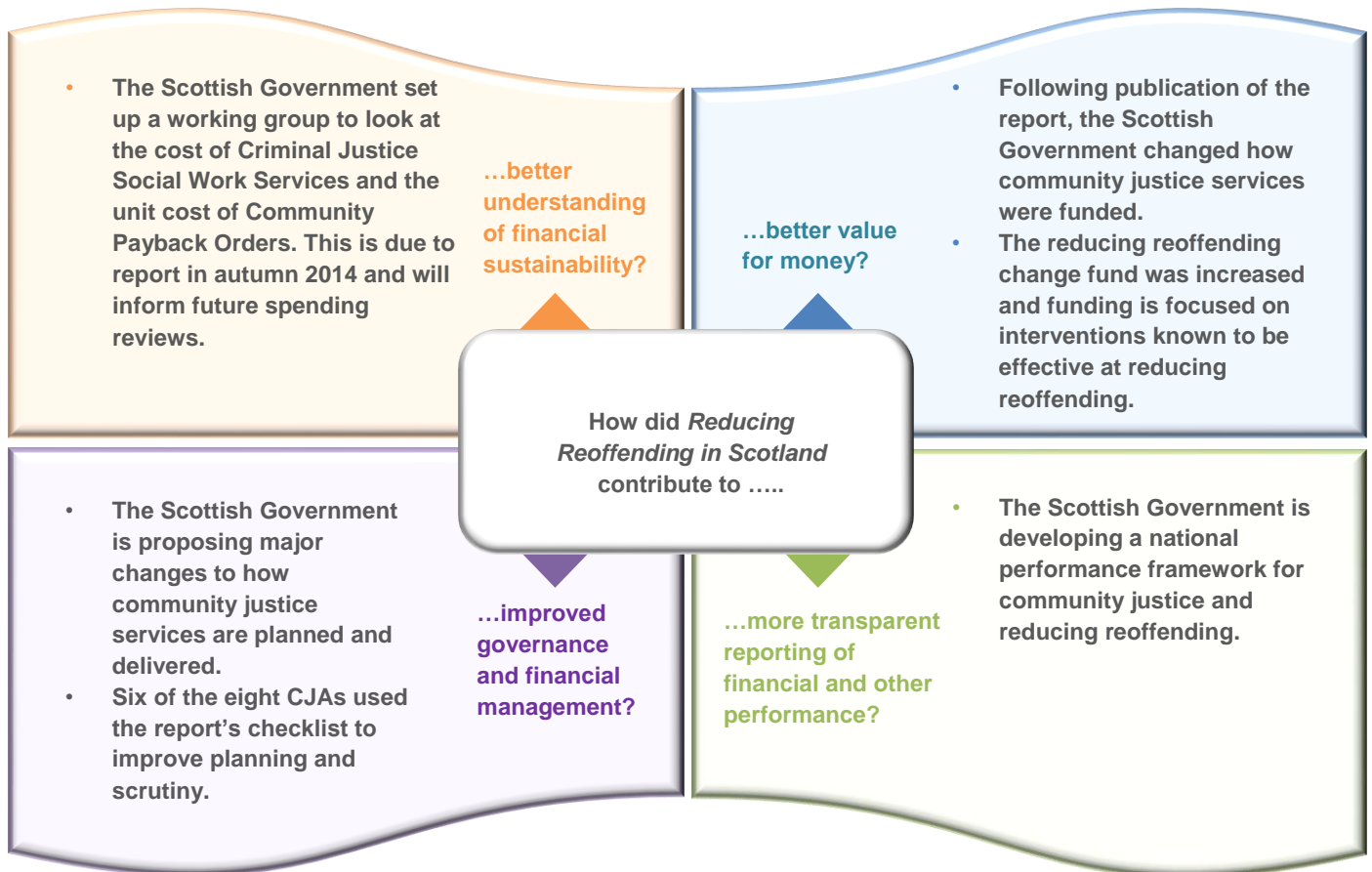
Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Government and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

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Summary of overall progress

Contribution to key aspects of public sector audit



Introduction

1. This report summarises the impact made by the joint Accounts Commission and Auditor General for Scotland performance audit *Reducing Reoffending in Scotland* published on 7 November 2012.
2. The report followed on from the Auditor General and Accounts Commission report, *An overview of Scotland's criminal justice system*, published in September 2011. Following on from the overview, we undertook a performance audit looking specifically at the efficiency and effectiveness of approaches taken to reduce reoffending.
3. The audit focused on what happens to adult offenders sentenced in court. We identified the scale and nature of reoffending, the range of options for sentencing and the amount of money spent on reducing reoffending. We also assessed the effectiveness of partnership working, including the role of Community Justice Authorities (CJAs). We did not include young people referred back to the children's hearing system by a sheriff. Neither did we look at preventative work designed to stop people offending in the first place or measures to prevent low-level offenders going to court, such as police warnings or fines imposed by a procurator fiscal.
4. The key messages from the report were:
 - Reoffending is a continuing problem in Scotland. Reconviction rates have remained relatively static over recent years; 30 per cent of people convicted in 2009/10 were reconvicted within one year compared with 32 per cent in 1997/98. In 2010/11, more than one in five people convicted (9,500) had ten or more previous convictions. The Scottish Government estimates that the total economic and social costs of reoffending are about £3 billion a year.
 - In 2010/11, SPS, CJAs and the Scottish Government spent an estimated £128 million on services to reduce reoffending and £254 million on restricting the liberty of offenders. The total amount spent by these bodies on dealing with convicted offenders was £419 million. More detailed information on the unit costs and quality of the range of services delivered is needed to make an overall assessment on how efficiently this money is being used. However, variation in the costs of criminal justice social work services indicates there is potential to improve efficiency in this area.
 - There is a strong body of evidence on what is effective in reducing reoffending, but there is a mismatch between what is currently being delivered and what is known to be effective. There is an urgent need for a more strategic approach to planning, designing and delivering services at both national and CJA level. Such an approach needs to be based on an analysis of need, the level of demand, evidence of what works and costs of delivery.
 - Demand for services to reduce reoffending is increasing and SPS, CJAs and councils need better information on the needs of offenders to plan and manage services. Access and availability vary across the country and the level of support for prisoners serving short sentences needs to improve, particularly in relation to their housing needs.

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- Many bodies are involved in reducing reoffending. They have different governance and accountability arrangements and different geographic boundaries, resulting in a complex landscape. Eight CJAs were established in 2007 to develop a more coordinated approach to delivering services for offenders and reduce reoffending. CJAs have brought people together, but the way they were set up and inflexible funding have significantly limited their effectiveness. They have made little progress with reducing reoffending.
 - There needs to be stronger leadership at national, regional and local levels if reoffending is to be tackled effectively. There has been limited progress with many of the problems identified in the 2006 *National Strategy for the Management of Offenders* and these need to be addressed.
5. The report's findings and recommendations covered a number of the Accounts Commission's strategic priorities, in particular those concerned with new ways of designing and delivering services and good quality performance information. We recommended that there should be a fundamental review of how offenders are managed in the community and how services for offenders are planned, designed and delivered. We also recommended that improvements were made in how criminal justice services are funded and how performance is measured. A complete list of the recommendations, along with an update of progress against each one, is included in Appendix 1.

Raising awareness and communication of key messages

Media coverage

6. The report had extensive media coverage. The Auditor General did broadcast interviews with BBC and STV and also appeared on BBC Good Morning Scotland. The Senior Manager appeared on the BBC and Newsdrive after giving an interview at a conference on reoffending. Several local radio stations used the podcast.
7. Most media coverage focused on the following key messages:
- A quarter of offenders have previous convictions, and one in five has 10 or more.
 - There is a mismatch between what works to reduce reoffending and what services are offered.
 - Reoffending rates have been static for the past 13 years.
8. Most broadcast interest was focused on the fact that there is a mismatch between what works and what services are offered. Other angles included the Daily Mail reporting that reoffending cost Scotland £3 billion a year and the Daily Express reporting that a third of offenders who leave prison immediately reoffend. Following discussion at the Public Audit Committee, there was some renewed coverage of the Auditor General saying there needed to be stronger leadership.
9. The main report has been downloaded more than twice as much as the Audit Scotland average. The key messages document was only downloaded half as much as average. A breakdown of media items and downloads is provided in the table below:

Media items/downloads	Number of items: Twelve months after publication
National press	16
Local press	2
Television	8
National radio	9
Local radio	3
Specialist press	1
Web	7
TOTAL MEDIA ITEMS	46
Main report downloads	5084
Key Messages downloads	229
Podcast downloads	229
TOTAL DOWNLOADS	5542

Presentations by the audit team

10. On the day the report was published, Miranda Alcock (Senior Manager) presented our findings at *No Offence*, the Criminal Justice Community Network's national conference. This provided an opportunity to promote the report to a mixed audience of policy makers, practitioners, representatives from the third sector and ex-offenders.
11. In addition, the team gave a number of other presentations following publication, including to:
 - The Criminal Justice Services Volunteers Forum
 - Fife and Forth Valley CJA Board
 - Lothian and Borders CJA Board
 - Tayside CJA Board
 - West Lothian Reducing Reoffending Committee

Parliamentary consideration

12. The Auditor General briefed the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee (PAC) on 21 November 2012. At the same session, the Committee also took evidence on the report from the Scottish Government, CJAs and the Scottish Prison Service (SPS).
13. During this evidence session, the Scottish Government confirmed they would consult on the redesign of community justice structures; that there would be changes in the CJA funding

formula from April 2013 - leading to more flexibility in the way CJAs could allocate money; and that it would establish demonstration projects in several prisons to test the impact of different support packages for offenders as they leave prison. It also announced that the money available through the Reducing Reoffending Change Fund would increase from £7.5 million to £9.5 million over three years.

14. The CJAs provided a collective written response to our report for this evidence session, in which they welcomed the report and its recommendations. Following the evidence session, the Committee agreed to refer the report to the Justice Committee, highlighting its concerns around governance and accountability arrangements for CJAs and performance management in particular.
15. The Justice Committee invited the Auditor General to brief the Committee on the report at its meeting on 4 December 2012. The discussion focused on CJA structures, accountability and governance; engagement and information sharing with partner bodies such as the NHS and police boards; and the scope for better leadership.
16. MSPs asked several parliamentary questions relating to reducing reoffending following publication of our report. These related to a wide range of issues identified in the report and often referenced the report. Questions concerned, for example, the number of rehabilitation programmes in prisons, the involvement of the Third Sector in the criminal justice system, reoffending rates by prison, the Scottish Government's plans for redesigning community justice structures, reconviction frequency rate following different types of sentences, and Scottish Government spend on reducing reoffending since 2007.
17. The Scottish Liberal Democrats Justice Spokesperson, Alison McInnes, MSP referred to our report when leading a parliamentary debate about reducing reoffending and asked about access to education programmes in Scotland's prisons. Figures provided by SPS showed that over the previous six months only one third of prisoners had attended an education programme despite resources being available for access in a number of Scotland's prisons.

Local consideration of the report

18. All CJAs discussed the report at their board meetings but how it was used varied. For example, members of North Strathclyde CJA requested regular reports on progress to address recommendations in the report whilst other CJA boards took no further action. In addition, the report was discussed at a number of local and national meetings. Northern CJA used the report at a development day for board members and Lothian and North Strathclyde CJAs used it in workshops and meetings with partners. At these meetings, the report received a largely positive response and generated discussion about what needed to be improved.
19. Six CJAs used the questions at the end of the report with board members to generate discussion and focus on priority areas. Lothian CJA also used the questions at the end of the report to amend their survey of board members and in turn, used the feedback to inform their approach to capacity building. A number of CJAs stated that as a result of our report they are more focused in developing and taking forward plans for improved services and they are

better at identifying short, medium and long term outcomes. Tayside CJA created a members Finance and Scrutiny Committee and Glasgow CJA has instigated a commissioning strategy from Criminal Justice Social Work.

20. "I would say overall your report was influential in terms of our response to the Community Justice redesign and also in terms of influencing our new Area Plan where we have strengthened links to local partnerships in anticipation of transition, and been clearer on how we add value to other work underway locally and nationally" (SWSCJA).
21. In a response to Audit Scotland's survey seeking views from central government bodies on the audit process, the Scottish Court Service mentioned that they thought the report would help to assess the current approaches to stop people offending and measures to prevent low-level offenders going to court. They also commented that it may lead to a fuller consideration of more radical approaches to pre-court diversion including problem solving approaches, support, counselling or education.

Contribution to national policy developments

22. The report was welcomed and praised by parliamentary committees, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, and individual MSPs. It raised the profile of reoffending in Scotland and as a result, reducing reoffending was specifically mentioned in Single Outcome Agreements guidance. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is now a greater awareness and understanding of criminal justice among members of community planning partnerships.
23. The Scottish Government announced a Reducing Reoffending Change Fund during the course of our audit and in November 2012, it announced that the fund would increase from £7.5 million over 3 years to £9.5 million over 3 years (to March 2015). The money has been allocated primarily to develop and deliver mentoring schemes for persistent offenders – one of the interventions our report identified as delivering positive results.
24. The Scottish Government used the report to inform policies at a national level, in particular in relation to the redesign of community justice services. In December 2012, the Scottish Government launched a consultation on redesigning the Community Justice System. Our report was referenced in the introduction, alongside the Angiolini Commission's report on women offenders. Twenty eight of the written responses received by the Scottish Government included positive references to our report, including responses from councils, the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW), CJAs and third sector organisations.
25. On 16 December 2013, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice referred to the evidence in our report when announcing major changes to how community justice services are structured and run. Changes include transferring responsibility for planning and delivering community justice from CJAs to CPPs; developing a national strategy for community justice and reducing reoffending and creating a new national body to oversee this work and to commission, manage and deliver services nationally where appropriate. The Scottish Government issued a consultation paper on the proposed arrangements in April 2014, and is planning to introduce legislation in the 2014/15 Parliamentary session.

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26. In April 2013, the Scottish Government made some changes to the way CJAs are financed. The distinction between 'core' and 'non-core' funding was removed and CJAs no longer need to approach the Scottish Government with requests to vire money between budget headings. This gave CJAs more flexibility to fund services in their area to meet the local needs of offenders based in their area.
 27. The Scottish Government has set up a working group to look at the cost of criminal justice social work services and the unit cost of Community Payback Orders. It has appointed a research team to take forward this work. The work will inform future spending reviews, the redevelopment of the funding model for community justice and the redesign of community justice. A final report with recommendations will be considered by the working group in November 2014.
 28. The Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Service published a 'Reducing Reoffending Evaluation Pack' This includes advice for service commissioners and providers about how to evaluate their services to ensure that they are targeting resources appropriately.
 29. Work on developing a national performance management framework is ongoing, due to the proposed redesign of community justice. The Scottish Government has developed guidance for CJAs to support the development of their area plans for 2014 – 17. The plans will be reviewed and CJAs given detailed feedback. There are plans to develop a national performance framework and a national strategy for community justice and reducing reoffending. The Scottish Government report that a national performance framework will be in place before legislation relating to new structures is passed.

Progress on implementing recommendations

30. Detailed information about progress on implementing the recommendations we made is available in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1. Progress on implementing the recommendations in *Reducing reoffending in Scotland*

<p>The Scottish Government should improve arrangements for funding community justice to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the money is targeted towards effective approaches to reduce reoffending • there is more flexibility to meet local needs and priorities • allocations are more responsive to change in demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following publication of the report, the Scottish Government revised its guidance on how funding for CJAs should be used. From April 2013, the distinction between ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ money was removed, allowing CJAs to allocate money more flexibility according to local priorities. • During our audit the Scottish Government announced that the Change Fund for Reducing Reoffending would increase from £7.5 million to £9.5 million over 3 years. The money has been allocated to developing and delivering mentoring services, which we mentioned as a positive intervention in our report.
<p>The Scottish Government should improve the range of performance measures to assess the effectiveness of SPS, CJAs and councils in reducing reoffending.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been limited progress on developing a national performance management framework due to the proposed redesign of community justice and funding arrangements. • The Scottish Government plans to develop a national performance framework and a national strategy for community justice and reducing reoffending. It reports that a national performance framework will be in place before legislation relating to new structures is passed (planned for the end of the 2015/16 session). • In the interim, the Scottish Government developed guidance for CJAs to support the development of their area plans for 2014-17. The Government intends to review all the plans and provide CJAs with more detailed and constructive feedback than was previously the case.

<p>The Scottish Government should review current arrangements for managing offenders in the community to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are clear and shared objectives to reduce reoffending • those working to reduce reoffending have appropriate powers • there is clear accountability and a mechanism to promote collective responsibility for reducing reoffending • arrangements promote and support what works in reducing reoffending and allow flexible service delivery • there is a more coordinated and strategic approach to working with the third sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the publication of our report, the Scottish Government issued a consultation on how community justice services should be structured and delivered. Following analysis of the response to this consultation, the Government announced new proposals for how these services will be run. Changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transferring responsibility for planning and delivering community justice from CJAs to CPPs - developing a national strategy for community justice and reducing reoffending - creating a new national body to oversee this work and to commission, manage and deliver services nationally where appropriate. • The Scottish Government issued a further consultation paper on the proposed arrangements in April 2014, and is planning to introduce legislation during the 2014/15 Parliamentary session. • The third sector has been involved in developing some of the proposals and the criminal justice voluntary sector forum is developing a paper on how to use the third sector more strategically, to inform the Scottish Government's proposals.
<p>The Scottish Government, SPS, CJAs and councils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together, and with other relevant public and third sector providers, to improve how services to reduce reoffending are planned, designed and delivered to ensure that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet the needs of offenders, in particular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) have been established to deliver more effective services to offenders, which meet their needs. PSPs typically involve the SPS, CJAs and organisations within the third sector. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the 'Shine' women's mentoring service was launched in April 2013 and is now available nationally. It is led by Sacro, in partnership with seven other third sector organisations, the

<p>those serving short prison sentences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise the level of demand - Are based on evidence of what works - Take into account costs of delivery. 	<p>Scottish Prison Service, the Association of Directors of Social Work and eight CJAs. The project is funded by the Reducing Reoffending Change Fund which combines Scottish Government funding with additional funding from the Robertson Trust and SPS. The programme aims to support women following release from short prison sentences and on Community Payback Orders to reduce the risk of reoffending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'New Routes' mentoring project for young male prolific offenders is available across Scotland. It is a PSP led by the Wise Group. It offers help to those on short term custodial sentences to live more productive lives when they return to their communities. • The Scottish Government has commissioned an evaluation of the use of mentoring support and the use of the PSP process, and intends to commission a separate evaluation of the 'Shine' project.
<p>CJAs and councils should work together to improve their understanding of the unit costs of different types of criminal justice social work activity and how these relate to the quality of service delivered. This work should be used to inform decisions on how resources are used and where efficiency could be improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government has set up a working group to look at the cost of Criminal Justice Social Work Services and the unit cost of Community Payback Orders. It has appointed a research team to take forward this work. The work will inform future spending reviews, the redevelopment of the funding model for community justice and the redesign of community justice. A final report with recommendations will be considered by the working group in November 2014.