

***Annual General Meeting 17 May 2019  
Justice Standing Committee  
Annual Report 2018 - 2019  
Lillian Cringles & Jane Martin***

1. This report seeks to advise the Executive Committee on the activity progressed through the Justice Standing Committee (JSC) for April 2018 through to March 2019. The report outlines the activities including the professional and leadership priorities that have influenced national policy and practice.
2. The Justice Standing Committee has continued to be involved in advising, responding to consultations giving evidence to the Justice Parliamentary Committee and influencing the national debate. This included Scottish Hate crime legislation, prisoner voting Transforming Parole, Protective orders for people at risk of domestic abuse and Female Genital Mutilation (FMG) Bill to name but a few.

**Purpose:**

- ❖ The unique voice for the leadership of Justice Social Work in Scotland.
  - ❖ Supports practice which is led effectively and creatively to contribute to achieving fairer, safer and more inclusive communities in Scotland.
  - ❖ Promotes partnership between justice social work and communities, local government departments, the 3rd sector, ministers, academics and other professional bodies; and
  - ❖ Works collaboratively towards improving the lives of the people we work with and, as a result, outcomes for communities as a whole.
3. The Committee has met on eight occasions during this reporting period with no meetings having to be cancelled. The Committee has been well attended with a strong commitment from most of the membership organisations.
  4. The Committee focused on continuing to build new relationships with relevant partners and has retained a strong interface with the Scottish Government, Community Justice Scotland, The Parole Board for Scotland, COSLA, SOLACE and academics. There remains some providers within the Justice arena at a National Level which the Committee will seek to develop stronger working relationship, for example Anne Pinkman, Programme Manager Scotland & Northern Ireland, Prison Reform Trust.
    - The Committee has continued to make significant contributions to the Community Justice agenda, including work undertaken to support their Learning, Development and Innovation Group. The joint chairs have met with the CEO and members of her staff on twelve occasion through this reporting period and covered a number of areas including, training, diversion and community payback.

5. The Chairs have attended a significant amount of meetings, seminars and conferences on behalf of the Committee. Other Committee members have provided support with training representations and we have been supported by other CSWOs in giving evidence to the Justice Committee. It is a priority for the Committee to raise awareness of our work and we are striving to ensure appropriate representation at relevant meetings. We have recognised throughout this period that the increased demand on our membership within their own organisations has had an impact on our ability to meet the significant increased demand for our attendance at a range of events. We believe that in one way this shows that the Committee is viewed in a positive light by the wider Justice Community, however, we are acutely aware that this perception may change if we are unable to meet the high number of requests received.
6. The JSC is dependent upon considerable support of our sector leaders to operate effectively. In particular, the Committee is greatly enhanced by consistent representation across Scotland and Social Work Scotland appreciates the voluntary contributions and considerable assistance from a range of individuals.

### **Summary of Activity**

We recognised that the JSC had a number of outstanding challenges and areas of work which had to be addressed before we could develop the JSC to a point when it would be in a position to fully deliver on its purpose.

Given the increased focus on some critical areas during the reporting period i.e. ViSOR, SPS/SLA, the High Level Advisory Group, inspection and the review of mental health for young people in custody (HMY Polmont review), our agenda has been somewhat dictated by the demand of these high risk areas.

The following provides a snapshot of some of the areas we have represented Social Work Scotland during the reporting period, many members have attended events, conferences and meetings which are all too many to mention.

### **ViSOR**

Work has continued to support the implementation of ViSOR which has been particularly challenging given the barriers in relation to usage. A scoping exercise has been undertaken which has informed discussion with Scottish Government, CoSLA, Solace and Chief Social Work Officers. Most authorities now having an improvement plan in place. We have had discussion with Scottish Government, the Chief Social Work Advisor and our own Executive Committee with regards to the fact that we believe that as a Standing Committee we have done everything that we can in addressing these ongoing challenges. The issues of the ViSOR vetting and use of the system has now been escalated to include the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, COSLA and the Home Office.

### **Service Level Agreement (SLA) – Scottish Prison Service (SPS)**

We have been working tirelessly over the past year with colleagues within SPS to find a solution acceptable to both parties. We have developed a National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Social Work Scotland (SWS) (acting on behalf of Chief Social Work Officers in areas where SPS prisons are located). This final version is now with the Local Authorities for sign off. As we have consulted at each stage of the development of the MOU we are confident that there will be no significant difficulties with at this final stage.

We will then move to the next phase which will be to develop a suite of documents which will allow the development of local agreements between the CSWO and the Community Prison Governor. To do so we will identify a small group of Justice Managers to take this work forward and the commitment of the CSWO from the relevant authorities support will be crucial.

This remains an extremely challenging agenda, however, we feel we have made real progress in this area and remain confident we can find a solution, which will provide an acceptable outcome for both parties.

### **High Level Advisory Group (HLAG)**

We have been involved in the High Level Advisory Group for the inspection of Criminal Justice Social Work Services. The purpose of this group is to provide advice and guidance to the Care Inspectorate on the development of the methodology for inspections of Criminal Justice Social Work and the supported and validated self-evaluation of Community Justice.

The primary role of the High Level Advisory Group has been to provide comment and offer advice and guidance on the overall scope and purpose of the inspection and supported and validated self-evaluation, the key principles that should be adopted and the methodology.

We have as representatives been in a position to share information on developments within our own organisation/partnership/professional group to inform the work and raise awareness of design and implementation of a new approach to scrutiny around Community Justice.

We have also taken the opportunity to have the Justice Lead from the Care Inspectorate, Clare Wilson, attend the Standing committee on three occasions.

### **Expert Review of Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for Young People in Custody**

The JSC has represented SWS on the review which is due to concluded the end of May 2019. There will be a significant amount of recommendations which will need to be given careful consideration by SWS.

The background to the review is as follows:

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice instructed Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) "to investigate specific matters connected with prisons or prisoners which have been referred to the Chief Inspector by the Scottish Minister".

Following the recent tragic deaths of KA and WL at HMP & YOI Polmont ("Polmont") and in collaboration with the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Children and Young People, the Cabinet Secretary for Health & Sport and Minister for Mental Health, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice instructed HMIPS to undertake, with a mental health expert, a time-limited review into mental health provision for young people entering and in custody.

The principal aim will be to review arrangements for young people, both untried and convicted, with mental health and wellbeing needs, entering and in custody, including:

- the information available to the SPS prior to entering custody;
- reception, screening and assessment arrangements ;
- health and wellbeing culture linked to on-going support and supervision;
- treatment and interventions during their time in custody; and
- arrangements by SPS for their return to the community.

### **Conclusion**

As Chairs we recognise the increased demands on the JSC from the wider Justice Community. We have struggled to deal with the demands placed upon the Committee, including the loss of the support previously provided for a two day a week basis, despite fierce lobbying we were unable to pursued the Scottish Government to continue this funding, this post will be crucial in the period ahead.

The Co-Chairs would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge their appreciation of support from the following:

- Alex McCallum for the chairing of the unpaid work sub group. We wish Alex well in his up and coming retirement.
- Audrey Howard, Liz Gossan and Nicola Rogerson for their facilitation of the practice network.
- Jackie Hamilton for her input with regards LSCMI.

- Sharron Stirrat for ensuring strong representation from the third sector.
- Allison Scott for her ongoing work with regards to programme delivery.
- Gillen Oghene and Kim McPartland for their work on the cross border challenges.
- Mike Hendry for his input regarding Home Detention Curfews.
- The administrative support from Marion Jackson, Dumfries and Galloway Council which has been vital to the effective operation of the Committee.

We have made progress over the year particularly in the rebuilding of relationship and reestablishment of the credibility of the JSC along with the high-risk areas identified above.

Colleagues are aware that the JSC will require a new Chair following this meeting. We wish our successors well and ask the Executive Committee to endorse the report along with a commitment to ensuring the support required is made available to the new Chair.

**Lillian Cringles / Jane Martin**  
**Joint Chairs of SWS JSC**

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Lillian Cringles' and the signature on the right is 'Jane Martin'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.