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## **Justice Committee Pre-Budget Scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget** **Evidence from Turning Point Scotland**

We are grateful for the opportunity to share our thoughts on priorities for the Scottish Government's Justice budget 2020/21.

Turning Point Scotland works with adults who are experiencing a range of support needs in relation to their involvement in the criminal justice system, problematic drug and/or alcohol use, homelessness, mental ill-health, physical and/or learning disability. We work from the belief that people matter, that they are the experts on their support needs and that it is for us to work creatively with them and with partners to ensure that those needs are met.

Our criminal justice services have been developed to work with each person to address the issues that drive their offending. They include 218 and Turnaround, combinations of residential and community support that offer an alternative to custody and the Glasgow Criminal Justice Tenancy Sustainment Service that enables people to address the housing related drivers to their offending. We work to build effective partnerships both within the voluntary sector, as lead providers of the SHINE mentoring PSP in the North, and with statutory services through the Low Moss Throughcare PSP.

We are a member of the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum (CJVSF) and have contributed to their evidence. We support their submission.

We wish to raise three particular points in greater detail.

### **1. We must rebalance investment**

There can be no doubt that there are urgent demands within the prison system. We are confident that the case for investment to meet these demands will be well made, but if we were to step back and consider an evidence based approach to delivering the vision and

outcomes we have set for our criminal justice system, this investment does not represent an effective use of our resources or any kind of best value.

Prison is just one part of our criminal justice system, and the evidence tells us that it is not the part that delivers the recovery, reintegration and prevention that we know is essential to reducing the number of people in custody. Yes, we must meet the current demand but unless we invest in tackling the issues that drive that demand we will only continue in that same direction; by continuing to focus on firefighting we are continuing to miss opportunities to prevent the fire.

We are under no illusions that such a shift will be easy; painful decisions will need to be made across the sector and we must all look to how we can facilitate this change.

Change cannot happen without a clear statement on where it is that we're heading to. We have the overarching ambition of the National Performance Framework and the criminal justice specific vision and priorities and we have a stated position that prison should be used *"only where necessary to address offending or to address public safety, focussing on recovery and reintegration"*<sup>1</sup>. What we are lacking is the roadmap to get us from where we are now to where we need to be.

We need to set a big target. For example, we will close HMP Barlinnie in 5 years' time and it will not be replaced, or it will be replaced with a smaller prison with half the capacity. The investment we make now to address our current crisis can then be positioned within a phased, focused and time limited plan of action to shift our resources. Through this we can build our capacity around prevention, early intervention, diversion and community based alternatives to custody, thereby reducing demand for prison places.

## **2. We need to make better connections**

As much as prisons are just one part of our Criminal Justice system, this system is just one part of a network of public services, all tasked with delivering the outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework but all still operating separately. Along with the vision and principles we have set for criminal justice, we have strategies on problematic drug and alcohol use, on ending homelessness, on improving mental health and tackling loneliness and social isolation. It is through these strategies that we will deliver prevention, early intervention and reduced reoffending. Diversion from prosecution, community sentences and alternatives to custody that address the root causes of offending – all of which are

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<sup>1</sup> Justice in Scotland: Vision and Priorities (Scottish Government 2017)

necessary if we are to reduce our over-reliance on prison must draw from and support the effective delivery of these broader services.

Evidence such as Hard Edges Scotland<sup>2</sup> shows us that while the services might be designed and delivered to address single issues, they are often working with the same people. These services are (at least in theory) shaped by policies and strategies that all acknowledge the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma and mental ill-health on driving these issues. These policies and strategies all reference the need for greater integration between services – and the Christie recommendations highlighted person centred, integrated approaches as key to effective public service deliver – yet we continue to plan, resource and deliver services almost entirely separately.

We are starting to see better integration of services. The health and social care integration agenda has made some progress in coordinating planning, resources and delivery, but when we redesigned the community justice system just a few years ago we missed an opportunity to integrate Community Justice Partnerships into the Health and Social Care Partnerships. One of the main elements of the Housing First model of support, adopted by the Scottish Government as the default model to address homelessness among people with multiple and complex needs, is that housing is provided with a package of support that enables people to address the route causes of their homelessness. The Dundee Drugs Commission has recently called on the Scottish Government to consider reform of the Alcohol and Drug Partnership structure to give the partnerships greater control over the design and delivery of services in their area in order to support a coordinated and integrated approach. Their recommendation for the full integration of substance use and mental health support was made for Dundee specifically but it is a move that we would welcome across Scotland.

Again, the people using these services are those who are at greatest risk of committing and/or being the victim of crime. This is where the prevention and early intervention happens. These are the services that must form the basis of diversion, community sentences and alternatives to custody. Integrating planning and resources for criminal and (especially) community justice with these services is how we deliver recovery and rehabilitation and reduce the prison population.

We believe that consideration must be given to how we can integrate work on these interrelated issues, and make best use of the resources dedicated to them. This must happen at a local level, to inform service planning, commissioning and delivery and at a national policy level to ensure that we have effective funding, evaluation and accountability mechanisms in place.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://lankellychase.org.uk/resources/publications/hard-edges-scotland/>

### **3. The third sector are an asset**

We are able to adapt our models and approaches to shifting priorities and emerging evidence. Many of our services are built around the people we support and are already making the kind of connections across policy silos that the system needs. However, the support that we can give the system is limited by the way in which we are funded.

The specifics are fully addressed in the CJVSF submission but we must emphasise the need for longer term, sustainable funding and a distribution mechanism that ensures the funding reaches us.

In conclusion we draw again from the Dundee Drugs Commission who, in setting out their recommendations on how to fix a broken system, called for “...an honest and transparent acknowledgement of the failings that have taken place...and the willingness and determination to learn and exploit the lessons that are evident from these failings.” Defensiveness and protectionism will stand in the way of the changes that we need to make. We are all part of this change and we must all be prepared to make the hard decisions that are necessary to drive us forward.

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