



Future Model for Community Justice in Scotland

**UNISON Scotland's Submission to the Scottish Government on their
Consultation on a Future Model for Community Justice in Scotland**

July 2014.

INTRODUCTION

UNISON is Scotland's largest trade union representing over 160,000 members working in the public sector – the majority of who work in local government. We represent community justice social workers across Scotland, who will be affected by the Scottish Government's proposals as well as many working in the voluntary sector supporting offenders and victims of crime.

UNISON Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government on their consultation on a Future Model for Community Justice in Scotland. We have consulted widely with our members who have expertise in this field and set out their views in our response.

GENERAL COMMENTS

UNISON Scotland responded to the consultation on "Redesigning the Community Justice System" in April 2013 in which we supported Option B to put the statutory responsibility for the strategic planning, commissioning and delivery of services firmly within the local authority, delivered by local planning frameworks (Community Planning Partnerships, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships or the proposed Health and Social Care Partnerships).

We are pleased, therefore, to welcome these proposals which give Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) the responsibility for the delivery of community justice services, and the key role of local authorities and other partners in co-ordinating delivery which allows flexibility for local delivery whilst retaining local democratic accountability, a key principle for UNISON Scotland.

As stated in our response to the earlier consultation, UNISON Scotland fully supports the aims of the Scottish Government to reduce reoffending. We welcome the fact that reoffending rates have fallen over the years but accept that there is still a lot more that could be done, particularly in areas of prevention which would deliver clear improved outcomes.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government has not chosen a national service as its preferred method of delivery, but are happy to support a national framework to help assure consistency of service across Scotland.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Chapter 2

Question 1: Do you have any general comments on the overview of the new arrangements for community justice?

As stated above UNISON welcomes the proposals for services to be delivered by CPPs thereby giving a key role to local authorities and other partners.

Chapter 3

Question 2: What are your views on the governance and accountability arrangements?

UNISON is happy to support the governance and accountability arrangements outlined in Chapter 3, as we believe it gives a balance between national and local arrangements.

Chapter 4

Question 3: What are your views on the arrangements for local strategic planning and delivery of services for community justice?

UNISON believes that in addition to the core set of partners outlined in Chapter 4, there are other groups of people who could make constructive contributions to the planning and delivery of services. We would, therefore, suggest that there should be engagement with wider community and voluntary organisations, such as victims and their families as well as offenders' organisations, who we believe all have a vital role to play in reducing offending

Chapter 5

Question 4: What suggestions do you have on how a national performance framework for community justice in Scotland could operate under the new model?

We believe that a national framework can assist with consistency of delivery across Scotland, as long as it is sufficiently flexible to allow local delivery to meet the needs of each community, as they are likely to differ across the country.

Chapter 6

Question 5: What are your views on the functions to be delivered by Community Justice Improvement Scotland?

The functions to be delivered appear to be appropriate for the National Body to hold. They appear to allow for a balance between local and national delivery whilst providing accountability to the Scottish Government and local authorities and their partners.

We particularly welcome the commitment to workforce development for community justice, focussing on the continuing professional development of all staff.

Question 6: Does the name “Community Justice Improvement Scotland” adequately reflect the responsibilities of the new national body and the functions?

We think the name is appropriate to reflect the aims of the new national body.

Chapter 7

Question 7: Are the skills and competencies in paragraph 105 and referenced in paragraph 106 sufficient to allow the body to fulfil its functions as noted in Chapter 6?

We believe that professional advice will be crucial to the new body.

Question 8: Is the organisational structure shown at Figure 3 and the expected size of the staffing complement sufficient to allow Community Justice Improvement Scotland to fulfil its functions as noted in Chapter 6?

UNISON believes it is essential that trade unions representing the practitioners and workforce should have a place in the organisational structure.

Question 9: What other suggestions do you have for the organisational structure for Community Justice Improvement Scotland to allow it to fulfil its functions as noted in chapter 6?

Again, we believe that trade unions representing the practitioners and workforce should have a place in the structure.

Question 10: What are your views on the proposed location for the headquarters of Community Justice Improvement Scotland?

We do not have a specific view on the location of the headquarters, but think it would be sensible to be located in the central belt.

Chapter 8

Question 11: Are the professional areas noted in the list at paragraph 114

appropriate to allow the Board of Community Justice Improvement Scotland to fulfil its functions?

Again we believe that representatives of practitioners and other members of the workforce should be represented on the Board through their trade unions. We also believe that representatives of the community should be part of the Board.

Chapter 9

Question 12: What are your views on the arrangements for the national Hub for innovation, learning and development?

We welcome the introduction and arrangements for the national hub for innovation, learning and development but believe that trade unions have an integral role in learning and development of the workforce and should be treated as key partners for this.

Chapter 10

Question 13: What are your views on the arrangements in support of the transition process?

UNISON welcomes the attention given to the transition process and believes that good communication with the workforce and other bodies will be essential to ensuring a smooth transition. The timing of the legislation will be important in ensuring that the timescales are adhered to, although we accept that a degree of flexibility will be required.

We understand that CJAs may remain in place for a period following the implementation of the new system, but believe that the staff involved must be assured of their positions following this period.

Chapter 12

Question 14: What impact on equalities do you think the proposals outlined in this paper may have on different sectors of the population?

UNISON welcomes the adherence to the Equality Act 2010 and that the consultation process will include engagement with a variety of organisations on the impact of the proposals.

Chapter 13

Question 15: What are your views regarding the impact that the proposals in this paper may have on the important contribution to be made by businesses and the third sector?

UNISON welcomes the intention to engage with a variety of organisations to develop a Business Regulatory Impact Assessment

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

UNISON is concerned at the minimum mention of staff in the proposals. It is the workforce that delivers community justice across Scotland and scant attention has been paid to involving them or their representatives in any of the structures proposed in the consultation.

We believe that there should be representatives of practitioners and the workforce on the Board for Community Justice Improvement Scotland, preferably through their trade unions.

We also note that there is no question arising from Chapter 11 – Funding the Model for Community Justice in Scotland. UNISON believes that adequate resources must be given to both the set up and running costs, particularly to the transition costs and the costs for the National Hub for Innovation Learning and Development.

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