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Inside Justice Factsheet

Community justice

The aim of community justice is to improve local quality of life. It lets people get involved in making their area a better place to live in by helping to reduce anti-social behaviour like graffitiing, vandalism and drug dealing.

In your community

Community justice is also about making sure that people who are affected by bad behaviour and crime have a say in how things are sorted out in their community. This means getting involved in the 'justice process' – like helping courts and the police focus on the crimes that local residents say are causing them the most problems.

Local people in the community can come up with ideas on how to reduce crime - for example, by drawing attention to a local street that may be particularly bad for drug-dealing.

Who works as part of the 'community justice team'?

The work of a community justice team is done by various 'agencies' working together with local residents, including:

- the courts
- the police
- the Probation Service and Youth Offending Services (who supervise adult and youth offenders during their sentences)
- the Crown Prosecution Service (which is responsible for presenting and bringing the crimes to court), and
- people who provide advice and support on drug and alcohol issues, housing, education and so on

For example, a judge or magistrate could meet regularly with community members to find out about the effect of crime on their neighbourhoods. This makes sure they are aware of the impact of crime locally.

The community members can suggest tasks that could be carried out by offenders who have been sentenced to unpaid work.

Community justice can also be a resource for things that do not involve going to court, such as counselling and advice services.

You can get involved in community justice in a number of ways

You can get involved in a number of ways, from attending public meetings, to becoming a member of a community justice forum or advisory group. You could:

- suggest an unpaid work project for offenders to carry out as part of their community sentence – such as removing graffiti, clearing up a piece of land or a canal/river
- become a magistrate or Special Constable, or volunteer to sit on a Youth Offender Panel
- get involved with Victim Support or the Witness Service

If you would like to offer support to a community justice team, please contact community.justice@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk

People that cause problems in the community

Community justice is also about supporting the people that cause trouble. An important aim is to make sure that once someone has gone to court and been sentenced, they are supported to help them not re-offend – perhaps by having a volunteer support worker to help with issues such as addiction, housing or employment problems.

Offenders sentenced by the court will ‘pay back’ for the harm they have caused – for example, by working for the benefit of the community on a local project.

Where are the projects?

The level of anti-social behaviour varies from area to area and is most common in places where people feel excluded or find it hard to tackle the issues they face on a daily basis – for example, drug or alcohol addiction, a family relationship or being in debt.

Community justice schemes are currently running in:

North Liverpool
Salford
Bradford
Birmingham
Devon and Cornwall
Hull
Leicester
Merthyr Tydfil
Middlesbrough
Nottingham
London – Haringey, Newham and Wandsworth

Other areas of the UK will follow.

Organisations

Inside Justice Week

Inside Justice is an annual campaign to open up the Criminal Justice System to the public through a series of co-ordinated events and media activity across England and Wales. You can find out about local events, give your opinion on Inside Justice’s Facebook page and on Twitter, use the website resources. There are 42 local criminal justice boards in England and Wales. Each of these is hosting a range of activities throughout the week of **17- 24 October** but you can also become involved in the work of the criminal justice system and learn more throughout the year.

Website: <http://insidejustice.cjonline.gov.uk/>

Community Channel

Community Channel is a not-for-profit, free to air television channel in the UK launched in September 2000. Owned by the Media Trust, a registered charity, its remit is to give a voice to community groups, charities of all sizes and not-for-profit organizations through using news, current affairs, documentaries and lifestyle programming.

Website: www.communitychannel.org/

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Email: feedback@communitychannel.org

Community Channel is not responsible for the content of other sites listed.

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