

## Community Justice Update Report 2023-2024

### Introduction

The [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) (the Strategy) was published in 2022 outlining a vision for “a just, safe, resilient Scotland” where “we can all live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe”. To support community justice partnerships to achieve this vision locally through their Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plans, the Scottish Government published a Community Justice Performance Framework containing nine national outcomes against which local performance can be measured. This update report focuses on the direction of travel in relation to achieving the national outcomes according to available data and complements Edinburgh’s Community Justice [Annual Return](#) 2023-24. The limitations of the data trends should be recognised however as they are presented against a backdrop of external factors such as Edinburgh’s increasing population and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. The national outcomes, supporting data (from 2016 where available), and local updates are set out below.

### National outcome 1 – More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution

Graph 1 – Diversion from prosecution; assessments, cases commenced and cases completed

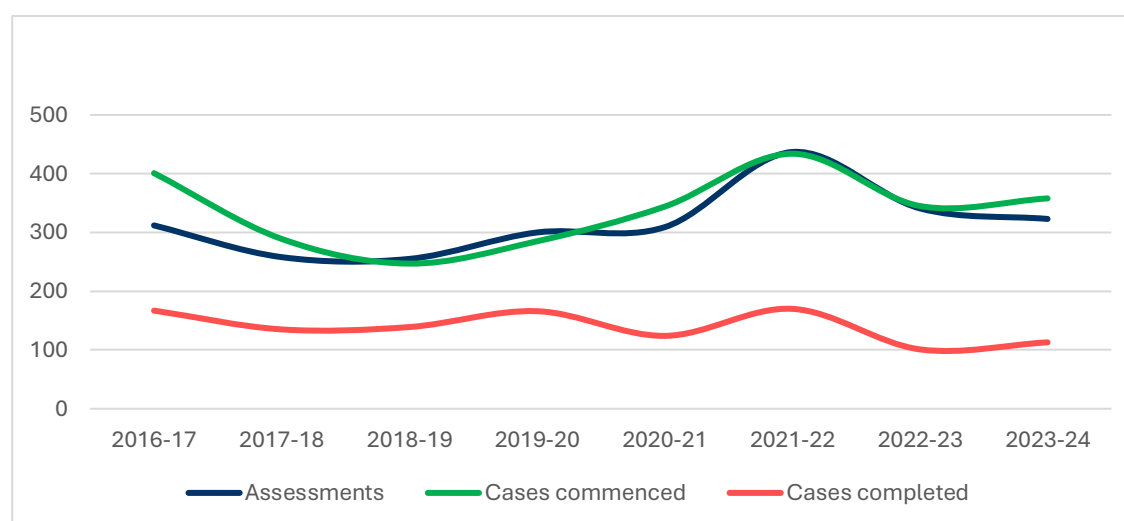


Table 1

Diversion from prosecution	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24

Assessments	312	258	255	300	309	437	341	323
Cases commenced	401	289	247	285	344	434	345	358
Cases completed	167	135	139	166	124	170	101	113

Source: [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland 2023-24- Part 1](#)

Note – prior to 2022-23, Midlothian figures were amalgamated with the City of Edinburgh. Not all diversion interventions are completed in the same year as their commencement

Local context – the numbers of diversion cases commencing and completing have increased in the past two years. Additionally, a new IT system for justice services is being introduced over the next two years to support improved recording of diversion completions. From 2024, people completing diversion programmes have access to a wider range of interventions to suit their needs following internal review and restructuring within justice services.

## National outcome 2 – More people in police custody receive support to address their needs

Graph 2 – Arrest referral at St Leonard’s Police Station and assertive outreach

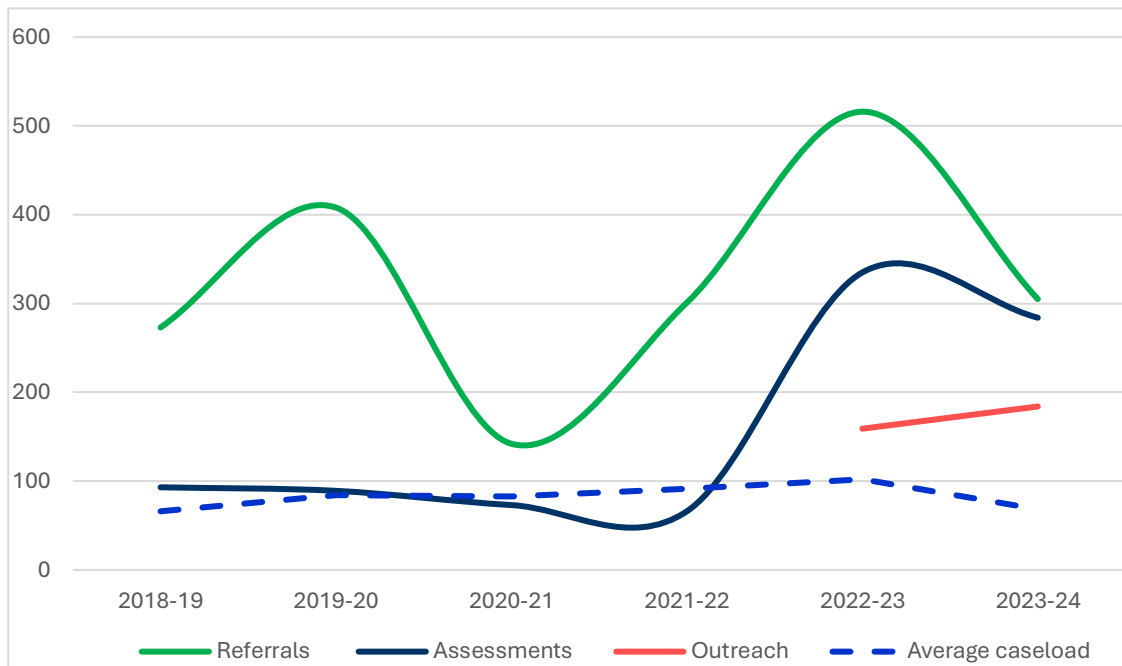


Table 2

<b>Arrest referral – custody and outreach</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Referrals (custody)	273	408	142	301	516	305
Assessments (custody)	93	89	73	66	335	284
Outreach					159	184
Average caseload	66	84	83	91	102	68

Source: Edinburgh and Midlothian Offending Recovery and Support Service - Edinburgh data

Note – assertive outreach was introduced in August 2022

Local context – access to people in custody was restricted in 2020-21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, referrals and assessments peaked in 2022-23 with the introduction of

a justice services funded assertive outreach service. Referrals and assessments fell in 2023-24; anecdotal evidence suggests that less people are being taken into/held in custody. Therefore, the opportunity to engage with some individuals in police custody suites has reduced. Recognising this shift in practice, justice services introduced funding for an assertive outreach service to actively follow up those who are most at risk including individuals arrested and released on an undertaking, to encourage them to engage with supports to address their needs.

### National outcome 3 – More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision

Graph 3 – Bail supervision cases

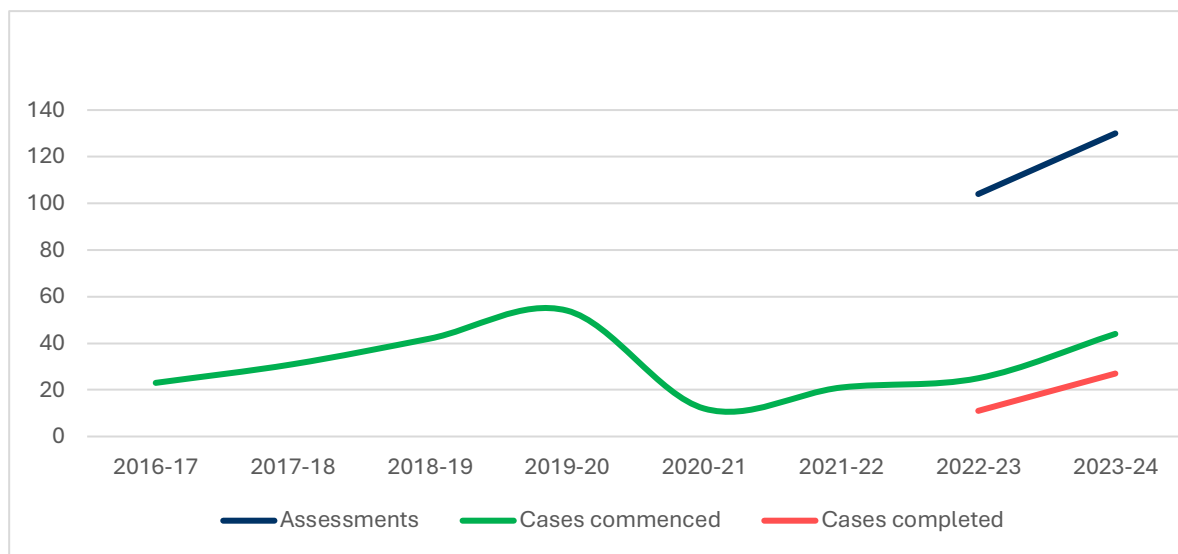


Table 3

Bail supervision	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Assessments							104	130
Cases commenced	23	31	42	54	12	21	25	44
Cases completed							11	27

Source: [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland 2023-24- Part 1](#)

Note – data collection for bail assessments and cases completed commenced in 2022 allowing for the development of trend data going forward

Local context – the data shows that following a dip in bail supervision cases commencing during the COVID-19 pandemic, assessments, cases commencing, and completions have increased over the past two years. Following a justice services review conducted in in 2023-24, a newly established Court Team is approaching every individual whose bail is opposed by the Procurator Fiscal to explain the bail supervision service and request their consent to carry out an assessment so that they may be considered for bail supervision in the community. Additionally, over the past two years, there has been an increase in the use of electronic monitoring (EM) technologies to support the management of people on bail with 75 people supported in 2022-23 and 135 supported in 2023-24.

## National outcome 4 – More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences

Graph 4 – Community Payback Orders (CPOs) commencing and successfully completing

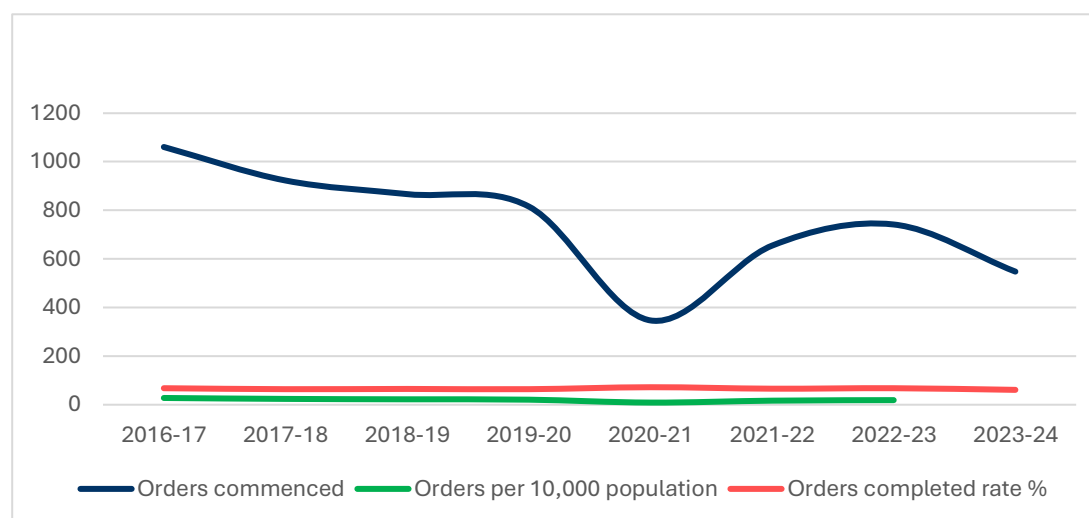


Table 4

CPOs	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Orders commenced	1061	923	867	816	347	655	742	548*
Orders per 10,000 <sup>1</sup>	28	24	22	21	9	17	19	
Completion rate %	68%	64%	65%	64%	72%	66%	68%	61%**

Source: [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland 2022-23 \(local authority tables\)](#)

\*this figure is provisional; Scottish Government figures are due to be published in January 2025

\*\* not all orders are completed in their year of commencement resulting in a time lag in relation to obtaining accurate successful completion rates; this figure therefore may be revised upwards in 2025-26

Local context – the CPO completion rate increased during the COVID-19 recovery period and over the past two years the City of Edinburgh Council (the Council) has also increased the opportunities available to people completing CPOs to support them to engage with projects and programmes that interest them and to encourage successful completion. For example, following feedback that many community payback participants prefer to work outdoors, the Council commissioned community garden project work as an option for completing unpaid work where participants learn transferrable gardening and landscaping skills. This project has proved popular, attracting positive feedback from those completing their Orders.

Graph 5 – Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) commencing and successfully completing

<sup>1</sup> Orders per 10,000 population are based on National Records of Scotland (NRS) mid-year population estimates for 16 to 70 year olds. The estimates used for 2022-23 were the mid-2021 ones, as mid-2022 estimates were unavailable at the time of publishing. The mid-year population estimates for 2012, 2013 and 2014 were revised by NRS in July 2016. Figure not yet available for 2023-24.

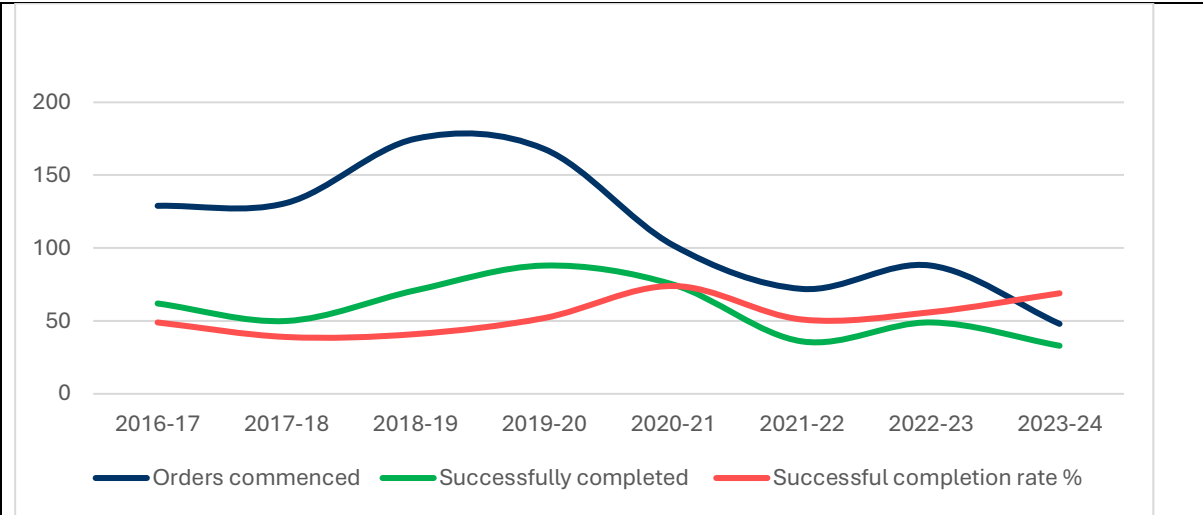


Table 5

DTTOs	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Orders commenced	129	131	175	168	102	72	88	48*
Successfully completed	62	50	71	88	75	36	49	33**
Completion rate %	49%	39%	41%	52%	74%	51%	56%	69%***

Source: [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland 2022-23 \(local authority tables\)](#)

\*this figure is provisional; Scottish Government figures are due to be published in January 2025

\*\* not all orders are completed in their year of commencement resulting in a time lag in relation to obtaining accurate successful completion rates; this figure therefore may be revised upwards in 2025-26.

\*\*\*Some DTTOs did not successfully complete due to factors other than breach e.g. an individual being transferred out of the local authority area. This data is limited in that the completion rate does not reflect those other factors.

Local context – due to significant clinical staffing issues impacting on the capacity to provide treatment for new referrals, the DTTO service in Edinburgh was suspended to new assessments/Orders from 2022. Existing clients however have continued to be supported to complete their Orders. A review of the service concluded in October 2024 and justice services is working towards implementing a new sustainable model/service (Justice Pathways Service) in 2025. Individuals impacted by substance use will continue to be supported according to the complexity of their needs/risk posed while being able to access the wider range of interventions available within the new and existing service; Justice Pathways Services and Willow for men and women respectively.

## National outcome 5 – More people have access to, and continuity of health and social care following release from a prison sentence

Graph 6 – number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from prison to community

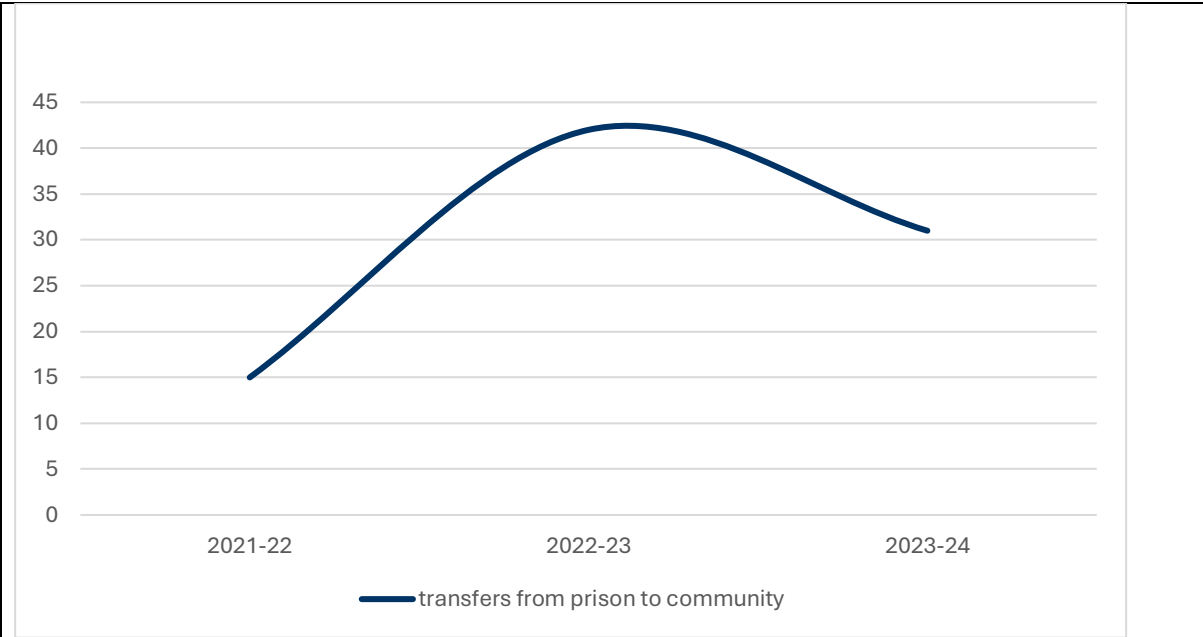


Table 6

<b>Transfers in drug/alcohol treatments</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Prison to community	15	42	31

Source: [Public Health Scotland – National drug and alcohol treatment waiting times](#)

Local context – the data shown is collated from local Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships and shows the continuation of care referrals by transfer/movement type where Edinburgh was the receiving service. As yet, there is no emerging pattern due to insufficient data being available. In addition to the numbers supported shown in graph 6 above, many people received psychosocial supports and ad hoc clinical interventions not captured within this national outcome indicator. For example, in 2023/24, the Edinburgh and Midlothian Offending Recovery and Support Service (EMORSS) which provides support to people in HMP Edinburgh and to those eligible for voluntary throughcare in the community, supported 388 individuals with varying degrees of prison recovery support. EMORSS continues to work closely with the NHS addictions team based at HMP Edinburgh so that individuals have access to the most appropriate substance misuse treatment. EMORSS also continued to support HMP Edinburgh’s Recovery Café ‘The Cove’, delivering 86 substance use awareness group sessions to those using the Cafe in 23/24. This supplemented the regular drug awareness sessions informed by drug trends within the prison provided to the whole of the HMP Edinburgh prison population.

**National outcome 6 – More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence**

Graph 7 – Numbers presenting as homeless in Edinburgh following prison release

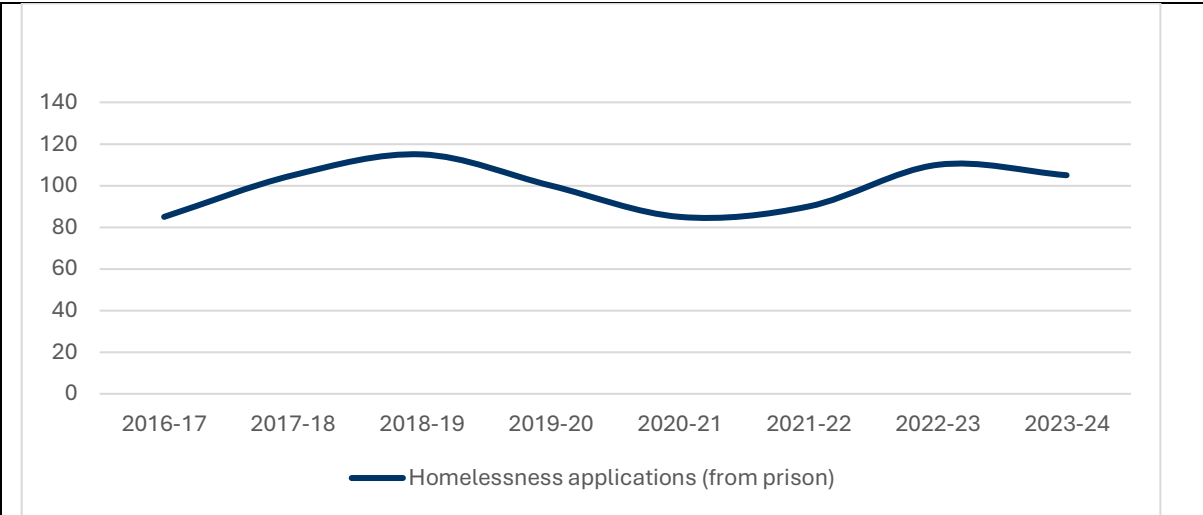


Table 7

Homelessness applications	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
From prison	85	105	115	100	85	90	110	105

Source: [Scottish Government Homelessness in Scotland: prison homelessness data](#)

Note – figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Local context – the Council continues to fund a full-time dedicated Prison Outreach Officer based in HMP Edinburgh whose focus is solely on supporting people in custody/ being liberated from custody with their accommodation needs. This includes liaising with other prison establishments where an individual being released into another local authority area plans to travel to Edinburgh as their preferred place of residence. Therefore, not all of the numbers quoted in table 7 above relate to people leaving HMP Edinburgh. Despite the efforts of voluntary throughcare and housing staff supporting people during their transition from custody to community, significant challenges remain in securing appropriate housing for people with accommodation needs who are leaving prison. The Council declared a Housing Emergency in November 2023 highlighting the homelessness pressures on the housing market and rising housing costs.

## National outcome 7 – More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment

Table 8 – employability data for people with convictions

Participants with criminal convictions using No One Left Behind employability services	2023-24
Number	41
%	4%

Source: [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: NOLB Publication Tables July 2024 v 2.0](#)

Local context – [No One Left Behind](#) is the national strategy placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services. It promotes a strengthened partnership approach where the Scottish and local government (Partnership Agreement for Employability) work together with public, third, and private sector partners to identify local needs to support evidence-based decisions, flexing these to meet emerging labour market demands. This

national strategy aims to deliver a system that is tailored and responsive to the needs of people of all ages who are seeking help and support on their journey towards/into work, particularly those with health conditions, disabilities, and others who face disadvantage in the labour market. Table 8 above shows the participation in No One Left Behind programmes; as a newly created national indicator, there is insufficient data available to show an emerging trend. Additionally, other nationally and locally commissioned employability programmes exist that support people with convictions into employment but are not included in this dataset. The Community Justice [Annual Return](#) 2023-24 provides more information on employability supports in Edinburgh for people with convictions.

## National outcome 8 – More people access voluntary throughcare following a short-term prison sentence

Graph 8 – voluntary throughcare cases commenced

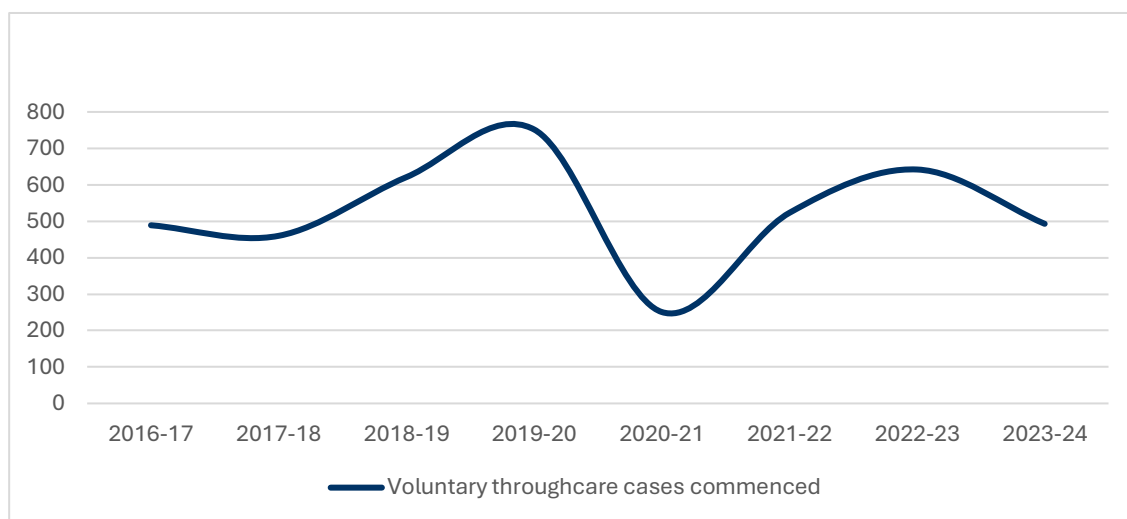


Table 9

Voluntary throughcare	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Cases commenced	489	460	621	752	251	523	642	493

Source: [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland 2022-23 \(local authority tables\)](#)

Note – figures are Scottish Government collated data from justice social work services. Other nationally commissioned services exist and discussions on the development of this national indicator are ongoing.

Local context – the Council has commissioned Third Sector provider Change Grow Live (CGL) to deliver voluntary throughcare to eligible individuals in Edinburgh. The support includes custody to community transition planning, a range of supports to address needs, and prison gate pick-ups are also offered to provide additional assistance when individuals are at their most vulnerable. Since 2022, voluntary throughcare has also been supplemented with assertive outreach which seeks to encourage more individuals who have spent time in custody, to engage with supports in the community. This national indicator should be viewed against the backdrop of [Presumption Against Short Sentences](#) legislation introduced in 2019 and designed to reduce the number of people required to serve short term prison sentences. The effect of this legislation therefore may impact on the number of throughcare cases commenced in future.



## National outcome 9 – More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice

Graph 9 – Confidence in community justice

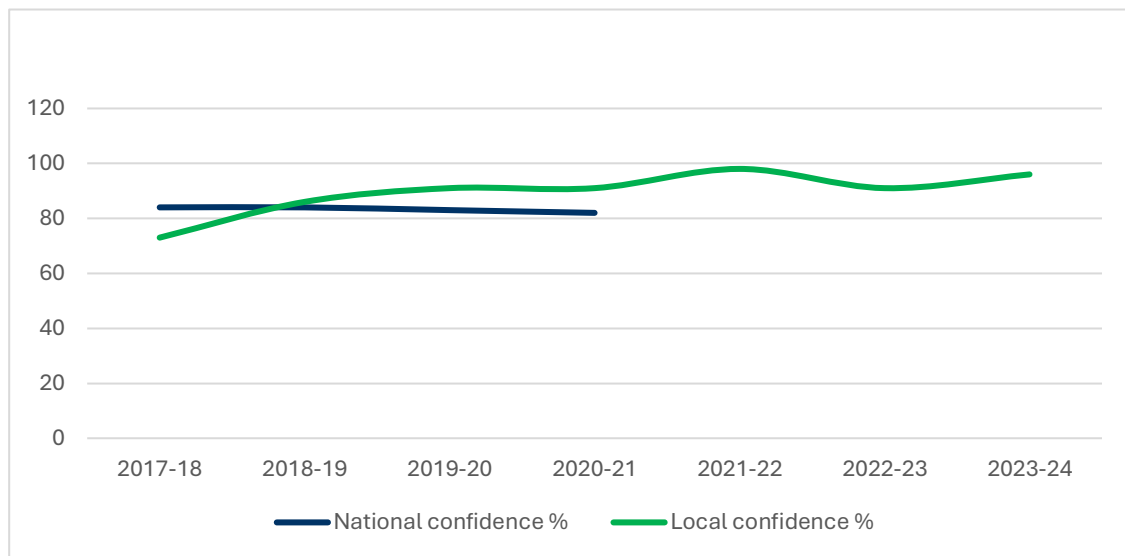


Table 10

Confidence in community justice %	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
National	84%	84%	83%	82%	-	-	-
Local	73%	86%	91%	91%	98%	91%	96%

Source: National – Community Justice Scotland latest available assessment, local – results of Community Payback Order annual consultations.

Note - the national indicator considered the % of people who agree that people should help their community as part of a community sentence rather than spend a few months in prison for a minor offence.

Local context – as part of the Council’s local Community Payback Order annual public consultation, respondents were asked whether they agreed that ‘community payback gives people an opportunity to replay the community for the crime(s) they committed’. The local indicator figures shown shown in table 10 above relate to the % of people who agreed either in whole or in part with the statement; results over the past five years indicate that public support for community payback has remained consistently high.