

JUST US!

We're on Twitter!
@NAC_MAD_2017

YOUR VOICE MATTERS... CHANGE IS POSSIBLE



Making A Difference (M.A.D) creates their FIRST MAGAZINE! Have a look....

Individuals who are or have been involved in the Justice System are often labelled as “offenders” and are a stigmatised group. This makes it difficult to re-integrate into the community and make positive changes. These people also have many other positive labels such as “individuals”; “parents”; “friends” and many more.

Already in place in North Ayrshire is an engagement strategy where service users and staff can get together and participate in fun activities which are absolutely voluntary! The group is called **M.A.D** – Making A Difference.. and everyone is welcome! Every month the group meet to discuss current events and new opportunities and it was at one of these meetings where the idea of a community magazine was discussed. The magazine is a bit of fun with recipes, quotes and updates on what’s happening in North Ayrshire. We also hope that we will be able to share the knowledge, passion and talents of individuals by including stories, artwork and the experiences of those who have been involved in the Justice System.

Have a look inside.. and even better – if you’re interested in being involved speak to someone in Justice Services and share your ideas.

Service User Involvement Groups

Across the three Ayrshire local authorities (North, East and South Ayrshire) there are service user involvement groups. These three service user involvement groups – MAD (Making a Difference – North Ayrshire), CVN (Community Voices Network) and P.I.N.G (People's Involvement Networking Group – South Ayrshire) are comprised of service users and a range of professional partners. The groups meet on a monthly basis with a focus on creating spaces for service users to participate in services in different ways.

The core aims of the various groups include:

- Establishing and enhancing effective partnerships
- Encouraging and enhancing opportunities for individuals after they leave the Justice System
- Establishing and putting in place a opportunities for user involvement and participation
- Building community services
- Supporting recovery, desistance and social integration

People have felt that having an activity to participate in or by having a common goal to work towards allowed relationships and conversations to develop in a much more natural and holistic way.

PAN Ayrshire #JustFootball Tournament 30th September 2018

All of the service user involvement groups across Ayrshire Councils joined together and organised a football event. The event was a fundraiser in which every council fielded teams both workers, service users and members of the community. A large gathering of people turned out to support and play and to earn the rights to brag to fellow workers and friends. One of East Ayrshire's teams won the tournament, but second place was also an East Ayrshire team with the East dominating the final. Notable attention to one of our own North Ayrshire teams who move to the semi-final BUT were bitterly disappointed in being beaten on penalties. This drove a couple of the players to "hang up their boots", feeling robbed by their place in the final by some "poor refereeing".





Community Justice
Ayrshire.

“There was a great energy and enthusiasm on the day and the enjoyment experienced by service users and those representing partner organisations was visible for all to see”



Community Justice Scotland is a national body which is responsible for reducing reoffending. It launched in April 2017. Colleagues from Community Justice Ayrshire and the three groups met regularly over a number of months to plan and organise the tournament. Not only was this essential for ensuring the success of the event, it also allowed for relationships to develop between the staff and service users involved in the planning group.

The groups were keen to make the event as family friendly as possible so arranged a bouncy castle, face-painting, colouring activities for children and a buffet to accompany the football. People were encouraged to bring their friends and family along on the day to show their support and join in with the friendly competition.

Regular training sessions were held in the run-up to the tournament to allow participants to build up their fitness levels, confidence, and skills. A range of partners participated in the tournament including members of the recovery community, champion's board, police, prison and social work with 16 teams in total taking part!

The competition was fierce but friendly and not even the occasional rain shower managed to put a damper on the day!



Allan Weaver @weaver_allan · Oct 8

Service user feedback from last weeks **#JustFootball** tournament has been superb. It's about inclusion & making that meaningful connection, that difference. As always with the NA Justice Team & @NAC_MAD_2017, it's onwards & upwards. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



↻ 11

♡ 21

Following the event, a range of benefits were reported by participants including increased self-esteem and self-confidence. Improved relationships were reported both across and amongst service users, social work staff and partner agencies. Attendance at the groups has continued to grow and a number of the groups have chosen to continue the weekly football training sessions as people were benefitting from these.

Thanks to the kind donations from friends, family and colleagues, the groups managed to raise almost £2000 for the Howard League Scotland.



**HOWARD
LEAGUE
SCOTLAND**

The Howard League for Penal Reform in Scotland is Scotland's only independent penal reform organisation whose members seek improvements to the criminal justice system in Scotland.

"The tournament was hugely positive for our clients, encouraging team work and healthier lifestyles. Following on from the tournament we have identified and incorporated fitness sessions in to our weekly timetable of supports, football at the Power League, Kilmarnock as well as weekly dance and fitness sessions. It is clear to see the drastic increase in mood and self-esteem on completion of these sessions"

"(One of our service users) spoke very highly of his involvement. He felt taking part in the tournament was really beneficial for him. He believes that it has improved his self-esteem and self-confidence and he has since been able to build on this and has now gained employment. Prior to this he stated that he had been struggling with his mental health and had been feeling very low"

ARE CURRENT REFORMS TO THE DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS GOING FAR ENOUGH?

Beth Weaver

A criminal record can make it harder to find a job and employers are using criminal records checks more and more. The Scottish Parliament is reviewing reforms to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and practices of disclosure, with the aim of reducing unnecessary barriers to employment for people with convictions while promoting the protection of vulnerable groups. Do they go far enough?

Research shows that employment is key to desistance and reintegration. However, it's not as straight forward as getting a job and giving up crime; it depends on the nature and/or quality of the work and how it changes the way the person sees themselves and is seen by others. If employment can support desistance and reintegration, this would suggest that public protection is increased rather than risked when barriers to employment are removed.

The purpose of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 is to clear the records of many people with convictions, by setting periods following a specific sentence after which the person is deemed rehabilitated and does not have to disclose their convictions (unless special circumstances apply). It has been criticised for its lengthy rehabilitation periods. Following consultation in 2015, the Scottish Government has proposed reforms to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in 2018. However, these reforms pertain principally to basic disclosure: they make no direct changes to the higher level disclosure system concerning standard or enhanced disclosures. The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill's provisions relating to spent convictions, have the overall effect of restricting disclosure in two key ways: firstly, by generally reducing the length of time before a conviction (or other disposal) is deemed to be spent; secondly, by modifying the 1974 Act's threshold, currently set at a custodial sentence of 30 months or longer, before a conviction never becomes spent. The Bill changes this so that a sentence of up to 48 months' imprisonment may, in time, become spent.

While the U.K. allows for the disclosure of all convictions, cautions and police records in certain contexts and situations, continental Europe disclose only recent, unspent convictions and again, unlike the U.K., they tend to prevent private agencies, the media, and the general public from having access to criminal records; such information is considered private and confidential. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has criticised the the U.K. system of disclosure for the following: that no distinction is made on the basis of the nature of offence, the disposal of the case, the time elapsed or relevance of the data to the employment in question; that the mandatory disclosure of all convictions is disproportionate and does not allow the

exercise of any discretion to balance public protection and privacy; and that disclosure should be limited to only convictions.

The disclosure of criminal histories has significant impacts on access to employment and potentially on prospects for desistance. The need to bring Scottish and UK practices in closer alignment with the European Court of Human Rights has resulted in recent and ongoing reforms to both the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and disclosure guidelines. This research into the evidence suggests that existing reforms could go further. Existing laws and reforms proposed for governing disclosure retain the requirement that some spent convictions will always be disclosed in certain circumstances, irrespective of evidence establishing whether the risk of reconviction is equivalent to that of non-convicted persons. This is likely to continue contributing to risk-averse reactions from many employers and might negatively affect people's efforts to 'go straight'.

A Poem by one of our M.A.D Members...

Domestic Violence JUST SAY NO

You get in a relationship; you think it's the one,
before you know it your friends disappear one by one.

But you're in this life that you think is for you,
before you know it there's police and paramedics there for you.
That's when we realise the domestic abuse has begun,
but we don't have the feeling that we want to run.

'Cos they make us feel like we're the one.

They'll break us down 'til it's just you two,
every other day you'll see some black and blue.

But I'm here to tell you that you can get out,
you just have to realise when it's time to shout,
and slowly but surely you will come out.

I'm Yvonne and I've told you straight,
I just hope you get it before it's too late.

M.A.D Lentil Soup

Tried and tested at the New Street Justice Office by members of the MAD group and served to the staff... This recipe makes 6 large portions of hearty soup. Can you believe that one portion is only 25 pence?! We recommend making the portion for 6 people and freezing some for another day. It tastes great with crusty bread and butter! YUMMY!!



"This reminds me of my mum's soup"

"I'm 42 and I've never made a pot of soup in my life – couldn't have been easier!"

"Making soup always brings back memories of growing up"

Ingredients

- 150grams of red lentils
- 6 carrots peeled and chopped into circles
- 1 large or 2 small onions diced
- 2 ham or veg stock cubes
- Extra water
- Salt and pepper to season



Method

1. Add stock cubes to boiling water and wait until they dissolve.
2. Add stock and lentils to a pan.
3. Leave lentils to soften on the heat.
4. Prepare your carrots and onions by peeling and chopping them.
5. Add the vegetables.
6. Add salt and pepper to season.
7. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and cover with a lid and leave to simmer for 45-60 mins
8. Add more boiling water if required if the soup gets too thick

"The best soup I've ever tasted!"

"Absolutely delicious and heart-warming!!"

"Amazing for just 4 ingredients."

Making a Difference...

Make a difference
Accept change
Do something kind
every day; Don't fall
back; Don't Worry

PAN AYRSHIRE Inclusive Justice Event **22nd November 2018**

As previously mentioned, across Ayrshire are service engagement groups. These are similar to M.A.D and they offer exciting activities and opportunities and really value the voice and experiences of people who have been involved in the justice system, (obviously we're the best).

On 22nd November 2018 there was an event held in North Ayrshire for these groups to come together and share their experiences. Over 70 people attended! The aims of the day were: to share the benefits of these groups; share the learning that has been made in terms of barriers to success; to share the future plans of the groups and the benefits for those that have attended. We even had two of our own M.A.D members contribute by giving a speech!

Some feedback...

"We were delighted to host an event for the three service user involvement groups, MAD, PING & CVN in November 2018. Over 70 people from justice services across Ayrshire came together to share learning from the project, and to celebrate the successes achieved to date. It was a truly inspirational event, with members of the groups inspiring others with their stories of how they are changing their lives and feeling more positive about the future. The groups really are going from strength to strength, and it was apparent from the event that not only the service users are feeling the benefit of being involved in the groups, but social work staff are also feeling reinvigorated in their roles. We look forward to watching and supporting the groups as they develop further in the future."

- Alison Dillon, Community Justice Ayrshire

New Street Opens for the First Time to have a MAD Christmas Day

25th December for the first time across Ayrshire – staff dedicated their time to facilitate a Christmas day breakfast for staff and service users! The event was very successful and well attended. Allan Weaver Senior even showed off his domestic skills by turning on the wrong oven....thank goodness for Beth, who saved the day and served up a full cooked breakfast for 12 people in total. Shame about the baked beans – no one touched them!



I never knew getting into trouble could be so much fun... It broke up an extremely lonely day!

This day was so uplifting and gave me a great feeling. It's very important for people that don't have any family and I really enjoyed handing out the xmas presents!

We spent the rest of the morning chatting and having a laugh over tea and coffee!



It was a really lovely morning, to see everyone in such high spirits and how happy everyone was! It's something I would love to do again next year!



We then handed out individually hand wrapped gifts made by MAD members and Christmas hampers!

Buddy the New Street Mascot was even here waiting for some left over breakfast scarps and a Christmas Hamper! WOOF!

Casually Waiting Outside New Street



For My Christmas Hamper

A PERSPECTIVE FROM A MEMBER

The M.A.D (Making a Difference) group has been in existence since June 2017. Chris is a service user who has been involved in the MAD group in a number of occasions, through a number of different avenues. He was happy to speak to the Magazine about his experiences.

How did you become involved with the local Criminal Justice department?

"I was picking some daft charges and ended up on Supervision....drink had been a big problem for me, I hadn't learn to control it properly..... Supervision helped with this and I explored different coping strategies with my worker.... We built up a good relationship."

How did you become involved with the M.A.D group?

"My worker suggested I get involved with the M.A.D group. I went along to the first meeting and really enjoyed it.... Everyone involved appeared genuine and I could sit and talk to people...get advice...I felt like I was being listened to.... It felt like I had support... I feel the same as the workers that attend... we all get treated the same as each other."

What parts of the M.A.D Group have you been involved in? What benefit do you think you have got from these activities?

"My worker suggested the boxing. I had previous experience of MMA and wanted to get back into that sort of thing. When I first started I had really low self-confidence, after the first week though I started to feel more motivated and started going to the gym myself too. I think my confidence has increased. Since I've been involved with this I have started looking for work and can interact more easily with other people. I've seen a big difference in my mood and my anger. I feel like I have got something more out of this than I would have got from Supervision alone. My relationship with Allan (who takes the boxing) has had a massive impact on this.

I was also involved with the Pan-Ayrshire football event on the 30th of September 2018. I had heard about it at the M.A.D group and put myself forward. It was so busy that day with a good atmosphere.... It was good to see families attending together.... It felt really safe and there was good banter but it was also really competitive. My team made it to the Semi- finals but was beaten by a team from East Ayrshire.... They went on to win the Tournament."

What advice would you give to other people wanting to be involved with the M.A.D group?

Just go for it and don't be nervous.... Everyone is kind and genuine and they're not there to judge you..... They all want to give you help.

What does the future look like for you?

I want to stay involved with the M.A.D group when my order ends.... Always good to have somewhere to go for advice. I would like to be involved in maybe running the boxing and helping to train other people. That's something I want to talk to staff about.

GET INVOLVED!

What's already happening with M.A.D?

Every month we meet together at Ardrossan Civic Centre and we discuss what activities are in place, how we can develop these and we look for new ideas. (Plus there's a free coffee!). We meet every **Wednesday around 1:30pm-3:30pm.**

On Tuesdays we have **football training** in Kilwinning – Pennyburn Astroturf, from 5pm-7pm. Transport available.

On Wednesdays we have a **boxing class** at Ardeer Community Centre from 12pm-2pm. Suitable for all levels and is great for fitness!

We are also looking to develop a drop in service and are looking for members to expand

Take a look at the television in the waiting room at the New Street office! This is fairly new and you will find updates and information on it about upcoming events.

If you like reading then help yourself to a book from the book shelf in reception!

Come along and try something new! Meet new people and we are always looking for suggestions and new ideas as to how we can develop these services.

*Be part of **M.A.D***

