



CPO

connect

IMPACT REPORT

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w i s e g r o u p

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FOREWORD

Sean Duffy, Chief Executive

The Wise Group is a leading social enterprise created to care and make a lasting and positive difference to people's lives. Last year we supported nearly 50,000 people through mentoring to help people into jobs, tackle fuel poverty and support those leaving prison to reduce reoffending and successfully re-enter society.

At the heart of everything we do lies our Values. We relentlessly live our Values, and are unwaveringly committed to Colleague Wellbeing, one of our key guiding principles and the cornerstone of nurturing others. We support our customers through a mentoring approach, based on our understanding of the importance of connection and the value of relationships. Our team provides the glue between individuals and communities and the services they need, leading to sustainable outcomes and longer-term impact.

Through our proven track record in providing care in the Justice sector we are inspired every day to deliver support that complements the National Throughcare programmes and local justice social work initiatives across Scotland. We are now able to think about this support in a new way, to help create a new opportunity for alternatives to custody. Working with Justice Social Work and others we have been inspired to challenge ourselves to look for new ways to do more and go further towards sustainable futures.



THE JOURNEY TO CPO CONNECT

Hamish Robertson, Strategic Development

Reducing re-offending in Scotland is underpinned in Scotland by National Throughcare Programmes integrated into each of our 32 local authorities and prisons.

The Wise Group is the managing partner of New Routes Mentoring, Scotland's largest national Throughcare programme aimed at reducing re-offending of short-term male prisoners. In the year April 2020 to March 2021, 1,117 individuals completed the New Routes programme, that's over 70% of those who started on the programme during that year.

Recent data shows that only 10% of those who engage with New Routes throughcare are re-convicted within a year against the national average of 53%. It's much easier to arrive at your destination if you have a good idea of how to get there before you start. Having the right information and advice about where you are aiming to get to as well as the chance to hear from others about their experiences is key to a successful journey. The Wise Group has long held data and insight into barriers to desistance.



THE JOURNEY TO CPO CONNECT

Hamish Robertson, Strategic Development

Rooted in this data and insight, the CPO Connect service was created by the Wise Group during the pandemic and is a secure and flexible online learning programme which complements the National Throughcare programmes and local justice social care initiatives across Scotland. The programme counts towards the “other activity” element of a CPO’s Unpaid Work Order. It is for the benefit of the community and has also supported a reduction in the backlog of unpaid work hours by providing a national platform for the completion of the “other activity” element of the Unpaid Work Order. It is a practical and accessible way to reduce outstanding unpaid Work Hours with the added benefit of learning something new and beneficial. Trained facilitators deliver a series of two-hour sessions from a selection of pro-social themes.

This second report aims to critically review the first 9 months of the CPO Connect service and ensure our preparedness for an increase in demand. The Wise Group has committed over £50,000 in self-funding to the programme to ensure continuation of the service. The report will provide further information on the service and the potential for future impact.



CONTEXT

Data from the Justice Analytical Services Monthly Safer Communities and Justice briefings suggests that if courts return to the pre-pandemic business levels the number of new CPOs per month could be in the region of 1400, adding even more to the current backlog. It is also worth noting that potentially, 1000 of these per month could include an Unpaid Work requirement.

Additionally, the Audit Scotland report published 15 July 2021 highlights “Little progress has been made in increasing the proportion of offenders given community sentences, as opposed to custody. In 2016/17, 59 per cent received a community sentence. This fell to 55 per cent in 2018/19 before returning to 59 per cent in 2019/20”. Therefore, it is likely that Scottish Government will take appropriate improvement action, resulting in an increase in community sentences.

As the Scottish Parliament Criminal Justice Committee turned its attention to the urgent need for reforms in the Scottish Justice system in the report “Judged on Progress” published 10th January 2022 calling for improved alternatives to custodial sentences, it is likely that the number of CPOs will increase further creating additional demand on already stretched services.



THE FIRST NINE MONTHS IN NUMBERS

Since launching in February 2021 CPO Connect has supported:

- Over 400 clients have made over 2100 bookings
- Resulting in the successful completion of over 1700 hours of unpaid work
- 10 Local Authorities have been early adopters of CPO Connect
- 80 case workers have made referrals to the service
- 87% of clients felt their knowledge improved after attending a CPO Connect session and 96% said they intend to apply the learning to their lives.

THE IMPACT ON THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN ITS CARE

Courts can impose CPOs as an alternative to custody. Research shows that community sentences are far more effective in reducing re-offending than short term prison sentences. 53% of people released from short term prison sentences go on to re-offend within one year as opposed to less than 30% of those given community-based sentences. Sheriffs imposing CPOs can also be informed of progress an individual is making with their community sentence.

Feedback from Local Authorities and their clients tells us that the service is well received and works well for both. The referral process, feedback loop and reporting to referrers greatly simplifies case management and there have been no technical problems experienced to date. It is an ideal service to support Justice Social Work Teams alleviate some of the unprecedented constraints on their time and workload.

THE IMPACT ON THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN ITS CARE

Local authorities tell us:

- the referral process is simple and takes about four minutes
- they receive relevant and usable data for everyday use and for continuous improvement
- the service helps with case management and feeds easily into CareFirst
- generally, minimal resource is required from them
- there is a robust security process and feedback loop
- it is easily adaptable to cope with any increasing caseload demand and
- once operational, the CPO Connect model supports an unlimited number of referrals
- it saves time and therefore, money

And they pinpoint real benefits for their clients too:

- the service is easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection
- there is less paperwork to complete
- it is person centred and focused on the real needs of clients
- clients are effectively supported to address offending behaviour
- individuals are supported to change their thinking and behaviour
- they can develop increasingly pro-social attitudes and perspectives
- it provides routine and reduces social isolation
- no travel is required, and geography is not a barrier
- no social distance considerations – uninterrupted service regardless of Covid restrictions
- there are numerous evening/weekend sessions when many other services are unavailable

CPO Connect can help you to help your clients, support the reduction in the backlog of UPW hours, save you time in identifying suitable Other Activity and is the easiest referral you will ever make. But don't just take our word for it. Here is some of the feedback from colleagues:

Unpaid Work Case Manager, Highland Council

"The reporting throughout is very beneficial. I receive a notification when a client fails to attend a session, and this means I can follow up straightaway if necessary. There's also a comprehensive weekly report which details all the information I need to update CareFirst."

Justice Officer, Stirling Council

"CPO Connect is certainly the easiest referral I make. There's no hunting around for paperwork or emails, it's all done on the online form in a couple of minutes. Then, I get a confirmation email straight away and I can see it's been sent to the client. For a worker's perspective, it's spot on!"

Community Justice Assistant, Angus Council

"I've been referring to CPO Connect since it started. The process is incredibly smooth to make a referral. It's an online form which takes me just a few minutes. The clients get notified they've been referred and someone from the Wise Group team calls them to welcome them onto the programme and explain how it works. The feedback I get from the clients is that they enjoy the sessions, the content is relevant, and it's delivered in a relaxed, informative way. I even attended one session just to check it out and was really impressed by how the facilitator managed the group and encouraged people to participate."

Justice Support Assistant, North Lanarkshire

"Feedback has been good so far with no problems highlighted to me. The referral process has been very straightforward from my point of view which has encouraged me to make more referrals."

Client feedback:

“A service I can see many people in my situation, due to it's easy to use and effective process that helps me in certain aspects of my life”.

“Easy to use, easy to contact and it applies to what I am trying to get better at”.

“All of the sessions I was a part of I took away something that benefited me, as my boss said he noticed a difference in me and how I conduct myself at work”.

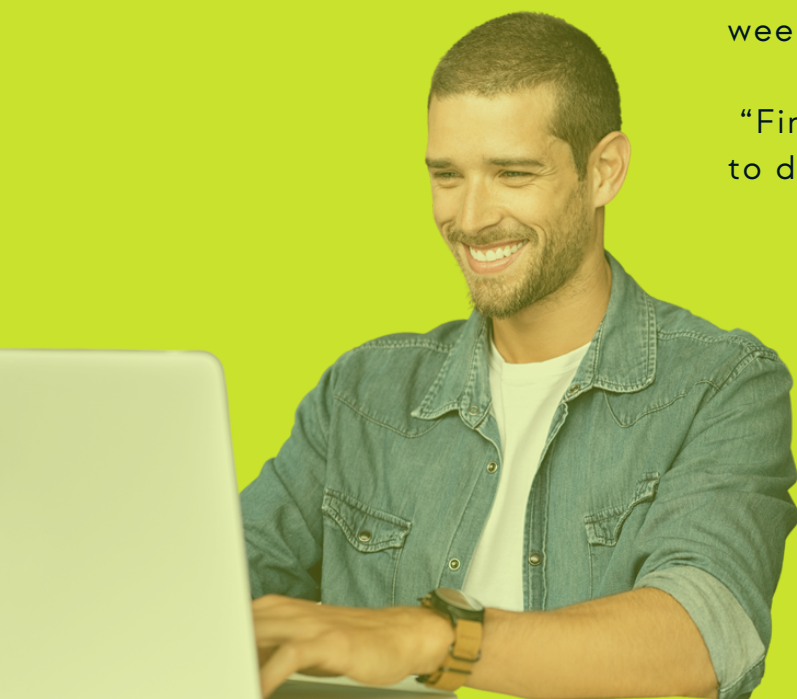
“Thought the sessions were really enjoyable & engaging, I can't remember if I had a moment of boredom”.

“The facilitators made me feel really comfortable. Which I think this helped me and others settle in better to sessions”.

“It's a no brainer... I can do the sessions from home.”

“I work full time, so the evening and weekend sessions really suit me.”

“Finding out about the triggers and how to deal with your anger was good too.”





NEW DEVELOPMENTS

We strive to continually improve the CPO Connect service based on feedback and insight from clients and the care and justice sectors. As a result we have plans to make some exciting and innovative additions to CPO Connect in the coming months.

These include:

New topics added to our online group learning programme:

- **Understanding Gambling Addiction.** Designed to improve understanding of problem gambling behaviour and psychology, the sessions will also introduce tools and mechanisms to recognise and address gambling addiction.
- **Digital Skills.** We are developing a suitable model which will introduce what digital means and how it's changing the way we live and work. Clients will gain valuable skills and the confidence required to participate fully in the increasingly digital world.
- **Self-reflection peer support group.** Facilitated by a qualified counsellor, these sessions will allow for open discussion on a range of topics as directed by the group. The aim is to provide a therapeutic space to explore issues further and find strategies to overcome challenges.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

CPO Connect Directory, exclusively for CPO Connect customers, the directory will allow you to:

1. Search your local area for interventions, services and training which contribute towards Other Activity. The directory will include the option to search by location, service type or category and a 'one-click' referral option. The aim of the directory is to make it quick and easy to connect your client to the services they need.
2. Find local third sector organisations who can host Individual Placements for your clients. Search by area of expertise, skill set and location and connect with charities and social enterprises in your area. Each organisation listed will be ready and willing to host a placement, providing you with confidence to make the referral directly via the directory.

CPO Connect 'on-demand':

- Our group sessions and topics will be available anytime, anywhere by accessing our on-demand service. This is perfect for clients who need that extra level of flexibility to access the CPO Connect programme. On-demand sessions will require interaction with the learning material, ensuring each participant is engaged and present during the session.



2022-2023

Together with the justice and care sectors, the Wise Group continues to demonstrate how collaboration with social enterprise can generate sustained positive change in the lives of individuals.

The Wise Group believes that the period from spring - summer 2022 will be when we truly see the added value, impact and potential that this service can offer to augment and support the work of our colleagues in Justice Social Work, and it is for that reason that the Wise Group has committed further investment from its own reserves to support our partners to keep this service operating beyond March 2022.

Beyond March 2022, the Wise Group will continue to work with Justice Social Work colleagues within the ten Local Authorities who have been early adopters of CPO Connect and we warmly invite discussion with representatives from further Local Authorities who may be interested.

CONTACT US

We will continue to share updates as CPO Connect develops and positively impacts. In the meantime, for more information, or to discuss CPO Connect in more detail, please contact:

Victoria_Leiper@thewisegroup.co.uk

Alternatively, if you believe that CPO Connect can support you to support your clients and would like to make a referral, you can do so via the following link:

<https://www.thewisegroup.co.uk/cpoconnect/>

