



# Business Plan

2026/27

# Introduction

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 established Community Justice Scotland (CJS) as the national organisation for promoting, monitoring and supporting improvement in the delivery of community justice options and outcomes by partners in the public and third sector across Scotland.

This Business Plan describes how CJS intends to perform its statutory functions, operate efficiently and effectively, and deliver actions designed to improve the justice system in Scotland in line with the [Scottish Government's Vision for Justice and National Strategy for Community Justice](#)

The work of CJS is to assist everyone who experiences the justice system in Scotland. Victims, people who have broken the law, practitioners and professionals working within the criminal justice system, members of the Scottish Government, policy makers and legislators - but most importantly the population of Scotland who need to be assured that the system of justice is fair, safe and effective.

2026 will see CJS reaching the 10th anniversary of its establishment. In this time we have made a significant contribution specifically to community justice in Scotland and to the justice system more broadly. More will always need to be done with continuous necessary improvements to the system being delivered collaboratively and speedily and new options explored. CJS will be at the heart of the changes to come. In the period of this plan there will be further changes to bail and release from custody, as more elements from the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 are implemented. We will continue to press for an expansion in the use of Electronic Monitoring and increased momentum in delivery of Restorative Justice nationally. We will also continue to play a part in the improvement of existing community justice services such as the expansion of Caledonian system training which is has been accredited by the Scottish Advisory Panel on Offending Reduction (SAPOR) integrated programme focusing on addressing the behaviour of male perpetrators of domestic abuse; and the delivery of voluntary throughcare which aims to facilitate positive transitions for people from custody back into their communities and is now being provided by Upside, a collaboration of third sector organisations commissioned by CJS on behalf of the Scottish Government who fund that work.

Ultimately it is our belief that only a 'Community First' approach that can secure long-term relief from the emergency release actions which have been required to mitigate the risks caused by the Scottish prisons populations,

which far exceed the numbers the prisoner numbers and staffing levels that the buildings were designed for, and are too high when compared with those in most European countries. Early Release can only ever be, at best, a temporary tactical step to ward off an even more profound crisis. We support a much more ambitious, strategic approach, with community-based solutions aimed at reducing offending and making Scotland safer.

Realistically that can only be delivered by significant investment in community justice and smarter working across the whole system. The body of evidence as to the efficacy of a 'Community First' approaches and outcome continues to grow. Community Justice Scotland has a pivotal role in highlighting that evidence and publicising it. We will continue to work with partners, including Scottish Government, to achieve that aim. We also intend to play a full part in delivery of Public Sector Reform which will drive the impetus for much greater collaboration between public, third sector and private agencies to deliver effective services for the people of Scotland by the most efficient means possible.

This plan articulates our intention to increase the momentum of the improvement and change that has happened in the past decade. It plainly states our commitment to working with other agencies, stakeholders and the public to bring about even more change and it reinforces our ambition to be a thought leader and a catalyst for the further improvements in Scotland's justice system that need to happen now.



Created by CJS, short film ['Who are Community Justice Scotland?'](#) explains the mission and purpose of the organisation.

## **CJS' vision**

We want Scotland to be a place where everyone can feel safe. That is why we need a justice system that everyone can rely on. We will achieve that goal through constant innovation and by working closely with our partners to develop new ways of supporting the various organisations that help to break the cycle of reoffending, allowing people who have committed a crime to make a positive contribution to society, by working with them, their families and communities.

## **Corporate priorities**

Our [Corporate Plan to 2026](#) outlines our strategic aims to bring about the change outlined in the [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#).

We will continue to operate under the four corporate priority outcomes it sets out and that relative to our Services (Outcome 5). In 2026/27 we will implement a new performance reporting regime which will better demonstrate our contribution and impact.

## **Our aim**

Our aim is to drive progress in the field of community justice. We work hard to create better outcomes for communities by supporting the partners who work across justice and allied sectors to support victims of crime, those who have broken the law, their families and communities.

Our focus is on results, seeking solutions that work and delivering the right balance of redress and rehabilitation for our society. We work with professionals delivering community solutions, politicians across all parties, experts in all relevant disciplines, the media and local communities to challenge outdated perceptions of what is needed to deliver a fair and equitable justice system. With the support of our partners, we can help everyone appreciate and value the benefits of community justice options and outcomes as crucial for an effective justice system and build a safer Scotland for everyone.

## What we do

[The Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016, Section 4](#), sets out **four main functions** for Community Justice

Scotland.

<p>Engage</p> <p>Promote the <a href="#">National Strategy for Community Justice</a>.</p>	<p>Improve</p> <p>Monitor, promote and support improvement in, and keep the Scottish Ministers informed about, performance in the provision of community justice (and in particular, performance in relation to the achievement of the <a href="#">nationally determined outcomes</a>).</p>
<p>Quality</p> <p>Promote and support improvement in the quality and range of provision of community justice (and in particular, improvement in meeting the needs of persons with a history of offending behaviour) and making the best use of the facilities, people and other resources available to provide community justice.</p>	<p>Communicate</p> <p>Promote public awareness of benefits arising from persons who are convicted of offences being sentenced to community disposals rather than imprisonment or detention in penal institutions, and, managing and supporting persons with a history of offending behaviour with a view to them not offending in the future or, if that is not realistic, reducing future offending by them.</p>

In delivering these functions we act as expert advisors on community justice matters to our statutory partners, including Scottish Ministers and a wide range of other partners and stakeholders.



*Figure 1 Created by CJS, short film 'What is community justice?' explains the benefits of a community first approach to justice*

## **How We Work**

CJS is a value-driven organisation. We use our values to inform us of everything we do, including our work as detailed in this plan, our recruitment and the policies and procedures we have developed. Our values are:

- Respect
- Effectiveness
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Understanding
- Integrity

# Outcomes

## Outcome 1

**The community justice model is more effective across Scotland, with improved approaches developed, supported and implemented.**

**In 26/27, we will:**

- 1.1 Engage with statutory community justice partners to support further improvement in community justice provision and the achievement of National Strategy outcomes and improve approaches across the 32 local authority areas.
- 1.2 Support the Scottish Government's transformational change programme (TCP2) -Shifting the balance from custody to community.
- 1.3 Support the Scottish Government's revision of the National Strategy for Community Justice, contribute to any subsequent refresh of the strategy and coordinate the review of the Community Justice Performance Framework.
- 1.4 Deliver and contribute to a range of improvement projects with national and local partners including:
  - Developing options for the expansion of electronic monitoring technologies in line with our [National Improvement Recommendation](#) issued in October 2025
  - Supporting improvements in bail support and compliance and use of electronic monitoring for bail.
  - Supporting the Scottish Prison Service's programme to improve prisoner progression
  - Evaluating the 'community to residential rehab project' and providing recommendations on its expansion
  - Supporting Police Scotland's project to improve arrest referral in custody hubs
- 1.5 Deliver work which moves the sector closer to the Scottish Government ambition that high quality Restorative Justice (RJ) services are available at an appropriate time for anyone who wishes to access them.
- 1.6 Continue to manage the national voluntary throughcare grant on behalf of the Scottish Government, work with the service provider Upside; and review the operation of the grant.



*Figure 2 A mentor from Apex Scotland helps share carpentry skill. Photo from Capturing Community Justice Flickr photo bank.*

## **Outcome 2**

**Community justice is fully considered in emerging national policy and legislation to improve community justice practice and support efforts to shift the balance from custody to community.**

**In 26/27, we will:**

- 2.1 Support SG with the development of policy proposals arising from the recommendations of the Independent Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission.
- 2.2 Drive strategic engagement with MSPs following the commencement of the new session of the Scottish Parliament, including members of the Justice Committee and relevant justice spokespeople to support their understanding of community justice and to encourage positive public discourse on the use of community justice options and appreciation of the positive outcomes.
- 2.3 Support the implementation of Diversion from Prosecution National Guidance by developing a learning product and upskilling practitioners.
- 2.4 CJS will support the SPS Civil Contingency Taskforce to support shifting from custody to community.
- 2.5 Guide and support Information Sharing Agreements between all justice community partners and relevant stakeholders.

## **Outcome 3**

**The community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice.**

**In 26/27, we will:**

- 3.1 Develop and publish insight briefings and regular research briefings providing evidence-based guidance to advance decision-making in the sector and improve outcomes.
- 3.2 Improve understanding of community sentences and strengthen recognition of community justice as a credible, evidence-based sentencing option, highlighting its social and economic benefits with those delivering services and local communities.
- 3.3 Position Community Justice Scotland as a national leader in justice reform by demonstrating expertise, driving innovation, and showcasing impact.
- 3.4 Build confidence in community justice by sharing success stories, data, and testimonials that demonstrate the effectiveness of community justice.
- 3.5 Deliver a national event
- 3.6 Further develop the Community Interventions and Support Directory (CISD).

## **Outcome 4**

**The community justice workforce is fully supported through access to a range of quality training, resources and services.**

CJS provides a range of training in blended and face to face formats to a range of practitioners including justice social workers (JSW), paraprofessionals, third sector partners, and police. This includes a range of core training delivered every year to create a skilled workforce to support delivery of justice in the community as well as Caledonian System training and advice to those delivering the system in their local area. This core work includes the design and development of online learning products using our Learning Management System Thrive.

**CJS will:**

- 4.1 Develop a learning pathway of key courses delivering necessary knowledge and skills for newly qualified Justice Social Workers (JSW) for their first year.
- 4.2 Continue to develop and deliver bespoke refresher learning products for LSCMI (Level of Service/Case Management Inventory) and SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment) and RM2K( Risk Management 2000).
- 4.3 Develop training around core correctional skills. This will include embedding in existing learning as well as new discrete products.

- 4.4 Develop learning products for National Practice Standards for JSW and CPO ( Community Payback Order ) Guidance.
- 4.5 Deliver the rollout of the Caledonian system to JSW, paraprofessionals and third sector partners in local authority areas which currently do not use the system.
- 4.6 Scope new commissioning projects in conjunction with SG to improve community justice delivery across Scotland by service providers and outcomes for individuals.



*Figure 3 Caledonian System uses an integrated whole family approach to address domestic abuse of women by men in Scotland*

## **Evolving CJS**

**CJS will use technology to streamline internal processes and improve efficiency, while providing responsive, people-focused support that empowers our teams across Community Justice Scotland to deliver their best work.**

**CJS will:**

- 5.1 Develop a new Corporate Plan to support the continued strategic delivery of our statutory functions.
- 5.2 Deliver an effective and efficient finance function for CJS including embedding the new finance system and seeking to further improve efficiency by adding automation.
- 5.3 Continue to provide personalised support and an HR function that helps each employee feel welcome, heard, and equipped to thrive. This will be delivered

through wellbeing resources, clear guidance, inclusive practices, practical tools, and opportunities for growth and feedback.

- 5.4 Through our business support team continue to provide trusted, expert support across governance, compliance, management support, operations, infrastructure and resilience - strengthening our organisation from the frontline to the Chief Executive, with a particular focus on Data Protection and Risk Management.
- 5.5 Empower the organisation through our Digital Strategy with a focus on AI and digital innovation to unlock new possibilities and shape the future of our work.
- 5.6 Delivering an Insights and Intelligence Strategy to outline a data driven approach will drive and influence improvement in community justice and help CJS to become an even more data-driven organisation.
- 5.7 Continue to improve our internal project management approach.
- 5.8 Facilitate effective change across CJS by delivering a structured improvement framework (Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills programme).

# Our Budget

CJS is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) funded by the Scottish Government through grant-in-aid.

Currently, funding settlements for central government public bodies are on an annual basis. For 2026/27, CJS will receive Core funding of £4.060million as well as additional funding support for Restorative Justice (anticipated at £0.361 million).

A more detailed breakdown of expenditure for 2026/27 is shown here:

Area	Salaries (£)	Operational (£)	Total (£)
Insights & Intelligence	375,215	32,000	407,215
Learning & Engagement	1,631,545	177,044	1,808,589
National Engagement (Policy, Partnerships & Projects)*	646,947	215,957	862,904
Communications	259,862	48,810	308,672
Corporate Services	416,410	278,576	694,986
Governance & Leadership	333,908	5,420	339,328
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,663,887</b>	<b>757,807</b>	<b>4,421,694</b>

*\* The National Engagement figures detailed above include anticipated total funding of £361,694 for Restorative Justice. This is a provisional figure, and we are hoping that the funding allocation for this will be confirmed by the start of the 2026/27 financial year.*

CJS will conduct an annual review of resource allocation in February 2026 to ensure resources are allocated effectively and continue to support delivery of this business plan.

CJS acknowledges that there is considerable strain on the public finances and that situation is likely to apply for at least the duration of this plan. In recognition of this, we are committed to demonstrating value for money and maximising efficiencies and effectiveness.

## How we will report effectiveness

Our effectiveness will be measured by the impact we have on our mission to improve the justice system by enabling and supporting use of community justice options in all appropriate cases to bring increased benefit to all those involved in or affected by it. We will measure improvement in the use of community justice options, drawing principally on reports and statistics

produced by JSW, SCTS and relevant third sector organisations.

We will report to the CJS Board on the impact CJS is having within the justice sector and society more generally. This will include assurance that our work is delivering in line with this plan and highlight areas in which we need to improve.

Our progress against all the measures laid out in this plan will also be reported through our Annual Report and Accounts which are published each year. This and reporting impact of CJS more broadly will be developed through the performance reporting project which will be implemented in April 2026.







## APPENDIX 2 – CJS BUSINESS PLAN 2026-27 – STATUTORY & REGULATORY

In addition to the activities outlined in this Plan, CJS undertakes several statutory and regulatory functions, which are business as usual for the organisation. These include:

Annual Report & Accounts	Improvement
Business Management	Information
Business Planning	National Training
Commissioning	Project Management
Communications	Human Resources
Digital	Policy
Finance	Risk
Governance	Statutory Reports (OAAR and CPO)
Health and Safety	Training & Learning

\*\*This work is as agreed at this time and will be impacted by any in-year work that is yet to be shared with CJS\*\*

