



Public Sector Equality Duty Report

April 2025

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Chief Executive Foreword

Community Justice Scotland believes that diversity and inclusion are the foundations of our success and integral to the way we do business. This report highlights the significant steps in our journey to create an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered.

Over the past year, we have made thoughtful efforts to advance our commitment to equality and diversity. We have implemented initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities, promoting equitable opportunities, and cultivating a culture of belonging. In addition to providing training for our staff we have also been driving meaningful, lasting change throughout our Organisation.



The highlights in this report reflect our ongoing efforts and put a spotlight on areas where we have made substantial progress as well as areas where we need to further our efforts. It is through transparency and accountability that we can continue to learn, grow, and improve.

I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made, but I also recognise that our journey is far from complete. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every individual—regardless of their background, identity, or experience—feels included and has equal opportunities to thrive.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this important work. Their dedication and passion are the driving forces behind our progress. Together, we will continue to build a diverse and inclusive workplace where everyone can succeed.

Who We Are

The [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) established Community Justice Scotland (CJS), and we commenced operation on 1 April 2017. As the national organisation, we are dedicated to promoting, monitoring and supporting improvements in the delivery of community justice in Scotland

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 sets out four main functions for Community Justice Scotland:

Promote the [National Strategy for Community Justice](#):

- 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 nationally determined outcomes).
- 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.
- 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.

CJS publishes a three year [Corporate Plan](#) to share our strategic direction with our stakeholders, staff and the people of Scotland. On a yearly basis we publish our [Business Plan](#) highlight the activities for the year ahead and how they link into our vision within our corporate Plan.

Public Sector Equality Duty

On 1 July 2024, CJS were listed as an authority under the Equality Act 2010 (schedule 10). Although we do not provide a service directly to individual members of the public, we support the national and local organisations who do deliver community justice services directly to individual members of the public and communities across Scotland and must consider our duties under the Act in that context as well as an employer. Under the duty, CJS must consider how our functions will affect people with different protected characteristics. These functions include our policies, programmes, and services. The duty supports good decision-making by helping decision-makers understand how activities affect different people. It also requires public bodies to monitor the impact of the activities they do. This is our first report under this duty.

Our Values

We are a value driven organisation. We use our values in everything we do, values-based recruitment, values-based policies, values-based working.

Our Values: Respect, Effective, Compassion, Fairness, Understanding and Integrity



Respect



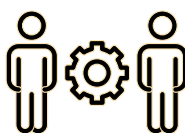
Effective



Compassion



Fairness



Understanding



Integrity

Our People Strategy

Our [People Strategy](#) sets out our vision for the type of organisation we want to be. We learn from each other and promote continuous improvement in what we do.

Values Based

By feeding our values through everything we do we will provide an environment that recognises and appreciates our people

Talent Development

By investing in our people and seeing their potential we create an environment that recognises the value of learning, growth and enhanced capability

Wellbeing Focused

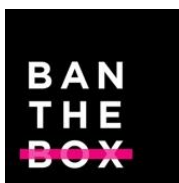
By putting personal wellbeing at the heart of everything we do, we hope to create an environment where people feel supported and can then support others

Inclusive and Accepting

We strive to provide a trusting and safe environment, where we work collaboratively and empower one another

Accreditations

As part of our commitment to equality and diversity, CJS have participated in several accreditations over the years. Gaining accreditation is a powerful way to demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity, and to benchmark our progress against recognised standards



Outcomes

Community Justice Scotland is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We have a committed programme around inclusion and equity.

What do we mean by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

Equality means **making sure that everyone has access to the same opportunities.**

In addition to equality, we also need to consider equity. **Equity** differs from equality in a subtle but important way. While equality assumes that all people should be treated the same, equity takes into consideration a person's unique circumstances, adjusting treatment accordingly so that the result is equal.

Diversity at work **means considering the differences between people and placing value on those differences.**

Inclusion is as an environment where everyone feels welcome, of value, with the ability to contribute.

Equality Outcomes 2024-25

Below are the objectives we set for CJS for 2024-25

Outcome 1 Build a diverse and inclusive workforce and where staff feel staff, valued, and empowered.	Outcome 2 Engage with, and respond, to our different customers (internal and external) and stakeholders' interests and needs.
Outcome 3 Meet our legal responsibilities under the Public Sector General and Specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and continue each year.	Outcome 4 Build shared responsibility and accountability for achieving improvements

Outcome 1

We said – *Build a diverse and inclusive workforce and where staff feel, valued, and empowered.*

What We did – Ensured all staff have the right knowledge, skills and awareness through a number of staff training sessions including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Change Management and People Management. Through this training we developed several transformative benefits to the organisation including equipping our staff with the skills to adapt to change, becoming a more agile workforce and creating an inclusive environment where employees from all backgrounds feel valued, respected, and empowered.

We continue to be committed to ensuring our recruitment processes are fair, transparent, and inclusive. As part of this commitment, we have implemented an equality recruitment process that includes a blind sifting. This approach ensures that all applications are assessed solely on the basis of merit and relevant criteria, without any bias. By anonymising candidate information during the initial screening,

we aim to promote diversity and equality, ensuring that every applicant has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Community Justice Scotland (CJS) has implemented a comprehensive Health and Safety program, which includes the creation of an Employee Passport. This allows need for reasonable adjustments because of personal characteristics to be recorded and agreed, including caring duties for others. Our line managers have actively supported and encouraged staff to utilise these initiatives. We have also provided staff with the essential tools and equipment, including software, to assist them in their daily tasks.

Engaging with individuals who have experienced the justice system is essential to the work of Community Justice Scotland (CJS). Many experience significant trauma and have health inequalities. We remain committed to amplifying their voices by involving those with lived experience in significant projects and narrative development. We will continue to consider how best to further ensure that those with lived experience can inform strategy, delivery, policy and practice across the justice system.

We continue to support our line managers through monthly training sessions focusing on; updates in legislation and law, sharing best practice and updates from CJS.

Case Study

CJS has recently supported colleagues in returning to work following physical injuries. This support included the purchase of necessary speech recognition software, allowing our colleague to continue responding to emails and developing documents. The software is now available for the wider team and can be used as a tool when working on large, detailed documents, enabling staff to dictate rather than type. Similarly, we support colleagues' mental health by providing access to counsellors and recently aided a colleague in accessing physiotherapy, which helped speed up their recovery and return to work.

These actions demonstrate CJS' commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive workplace where colleagues feel valued and empowered. By providing necessary

tools and resources, as well as promoting mental and physical well-being, we are fostering a healthier and more productive environment for our colleagues.

Outcome 2

We said – *Engage with, and respond, to our different customers (internal and external) and stakeholders' interests and needs.*

What We did – We continued to use a variety of engagement tools and software, including templates for feedback, surveys, Mentimeter, Slido, and Padlet. We have adopted a people-first approach and appropriate language in all stakeholder interactions. We frequently use external venues to deliver training to members of the justice workforce and regularly assess and update a list of appropriate venues with accessibility in mind.

CJS has carried out Equality Impact Assessments and included equality-focused questions within a new grant application and assessment process.

Internally, we conducted a staff survey in March 2025 and will work on the outcomes during 2025-26. A staff consultation was undertaken from January to February 2025 on a new proposed workforce planning structure for CJS. This consultation included briefing staff altogether on changes, meeting with teams and individuals, and engaging with union representatives.

These steps highlight CJS' commitment to addressing the needs and interests of both internal and external stakeholders, fostering a responsive and inclusive environment. By using various engagement tools and ensuring accessibility, we are enhancing communication and collaboration.

Examples of our collaboration work can be found in the case studies below.

Case Studies

Stigma

CJS set out to identify stigmatising language used in the media around people involved with the justice system. This links to work carried out on our [framing toolkit](#) where we have looked at the importance of words and how we at Community Justice Scotland and our justice partners talk about community justice in our public communications. We will continue to consider at how we could potentially help shift the way people describe others within the justice system.

We are currently working in partnership with three local authority community justice partners - Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and Aberdeen - to create a language guide/toolkit on stigma to support other local authority community justice partners to use in public communications. In addition, this will also raise awareness around stigmatising language and its impact on people in the justice system and their families.

What is Community Justice? Film

[Research shows](#) that 70 per cent of the public don't know what community justice means. When people talk about 'justice', we want that to be less about entities like prisons, punishment and police custody and more about Scotland's progressive justice system which is community focussed ('community first') and one that concentrates on the best way to achieve the right outcome for people. Sentences served in the community are more effective than sentences served in prison. One reason for this is because community sentencing allows a person-centred approach which tackles root causes of behaviour, i.e. addiction, mental health, trauma, Adverse Childhood Effects (ACEs) etc., through tailored specific support (drug/alcohol counselling, therapy, support groups).

We developed a new video with The Union agency, which creatively explains what community justice is and how it works in Scotland. It uses visual metaphors as well as compelling, person-first language to communicate the benefits of community justice for everyone.



What about a community sentence?

Outcome 3

We said – *Meet our legal responsibilities under the Public Sector General and Specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and continue each year.*

We did – CJS has undergone a programme of change on our website to improve accessibility in line with international and UK Government standards. As an organization, we developed best practices with the wider team to ensure all website documentation complies with accessibility guidelines. Our recently developed grant application form underwent an accessibility check and has been produced accordingly.

In 2025, CJS produced this first report under the Public Sector and Equality Act. We will continue to build on promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across the staff and our work. We will continue to increase our undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments, having completed two significant EIAs related to the Re-Commissioning of Voluntary Throughcare Service and the Workforce Planning of CJS.

Equality and Legislation is a standing item on our Human Resource and Remuneration Committee, and we provide regular updates to our main board through this committee. By continuously improving practices and reporting on progress, we are setting a strong foundation for equality, diversity, and inclusion

Case Study

Following the decision of the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs a new £5.3M grant was awarded to establish a national throughcare service to support people leaving prison after a period on remand or a short-term prison sentence. CJS was asked to commission this new service.

As part of the grant assessment process, CJS considered options for how best to incorporate the views of people with lived experience of the justice system in the review of applications for the grant fund. This continued the project team's efforts to embed the views of people with lived experience across the commissioning process which, prior to the grant assessment process included depth interviews with people

in prison and in the community on their experiences of release and throughcare, a key spending objective in the options appraisal process and a key element in the grant criteria.

Inclusion of the perspective of people with lived experience of the justice system was essential in ensuring the viability of proposals and ensuring that services offer effective support to individuals based on their needs as they leave prison or custody at court.

The following approach was identified to support the participation and contribution of people with lived experience of the justice system in the process:

Application Form – Included a specific question in the application form focusing on lived experience participation in future delivery – this required the applicant provider to demonstrate their commitment to the meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience in service delivery and improvement.

Lived Experience Assessment Panel – a dedicated panel made up of people with lived and learnt experience of the justice system was convened and facilitated by an experienced third sector organisation run by people with lived experience to feed into the assessment process. This panel was responsible for carrying out an initial review of viable applications and their views were considered by the professional stakeholder panel to support them in making their assessment of the viable applications.

Inclusion of people with Lived Experience of the justice system in Full Assessment Panel – Including people with a lived experience background as part of the main assessment panel helped facilitate participation in all levels of assessment and decision making. This included participating in the Q&A session with the provider applicants, rescoring and contributing to the discussion on the final recommendation to fund to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs. The feedback from the panel members and the facilitating organisation was positive: “We welcomed the opportunity for people with lived experience to be involved in the decision-making process for commissioning this important new service. This was the first time this type of approach had been taken for a grant of this nature and size and we’d like to see other organisations following this lead. We know panel

members felt included, valued, and heard and that their input was considered meaningfully alongside others. An authentic and meaningful process from start to finish, we have been very impressed by the approach taken by CJS and the willingness to learn lessons and respond throughout the duration of our collaboration. We <the facilitating organisation> are very proud to have been able to support this commission and everyone from the team has learned a great deal by being involved in this process. This is how commissioning should be done.”

Outcome 4

We said – *Build shared responsibility and accountability for achieving improvements*

We did – Building shared responsibility and accountability is an ongoing process that requires consistent effort and adjustment as the CJS staff grows and evolves. We continue to foster this through the creation of safe shared spaces that encourage feedback from staff and ensure everyone has the tools, training, and resources they need to succeed.

We have developed a new monthly conversation template based on feedback from colleagues, along with an improved performance management document that consolidates multiple documents into one comprehensive template.

CJS will continue to review policies and practices through the lens of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Case Study

Community Justice Scotland (CJS) has created a Restorative Justice (RJ) learning module aimed at embedding a restorative culture which is on our website [Restorative Justice Learning Module - Community Justice Scotland](#). This initiative was achieved in collaboration with RJ specialists and academics. Throughout the module's development, CJS engaged with stakeholders from target audiences to test both the module and its accessibility. Following initial consultations, further revisions were made based on feedback received. Additionally, CJS staff participated in personal development sessions to advance the project. Alongside safeguarding protocols, CJS has designed case oversight robustly, working with the

research team to ensure high ethical standards. This approach has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Strathclyde.

Equality Outcomes 2025-26

As part of our continuous improvement programme, we will actively continue to expand on these initiatives across the next 12 months as well as integrating feedback, adopting new technologies and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. In addition to the objectives that we have identified we will continue to identify new opportunities and foster a culture of learning and inclusivity across CJS. We remain committed to driving progress to ensure that we embed diversity, equity and inclusion into our day-to-day activities and across our services, policies, practices and values. Below are the objectives we have set for 2025-26

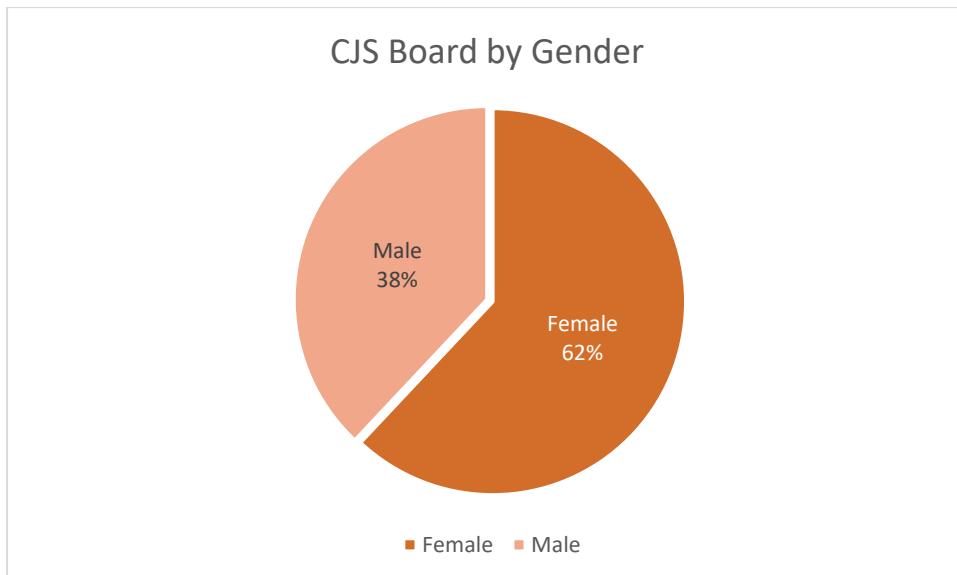
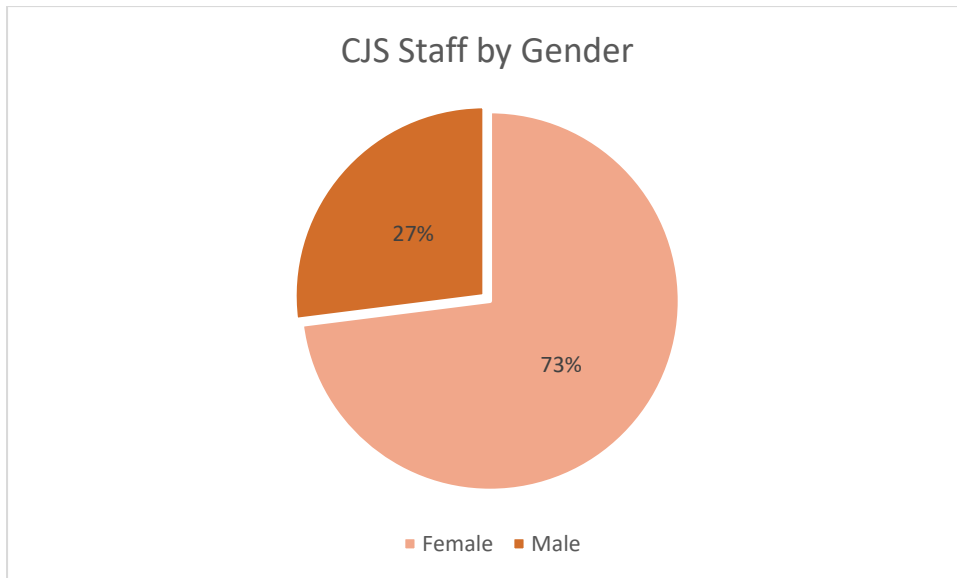
Outcome 1 - To continue to develop our workforce with a team of people from wide ranging backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences and who are valued.	Outcome 2 – Continue to develop our use of Equality Impact Assessments as this will inform our policies and practice and help reduce negative impact and barriers
Outcome 3 - We will continue to align wellbeing and inclusion across the organisation	Outcome 4 – Continue our work around inclusive communication through ensuring our processes and systems are easy to understand by all

Key Outcomes will include:

- Progress with internal communication project
- Continued use of Equality Impact Assessments across the business
- Update justice web in line with guidance and ensure it is fully accessible
- Review CJS People Strategy
- Continue to invest in positive recruitment and encourage current staff to access career conversations.
- CJS will ensure that responsivity principles are embedded in all our training courses.
- CJS will promote inclusion across its stakeholders and partners
- CJS will promote DEI through its procurement practises.

Appendix A – Equality and Diversity Data

To protect the privacy of our staff, we have not shared specific figures for groups with fewer than five members when reporting on Equality and Diversity information. As a result, some data has been withheld.



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To view our privacy policy, visit our website
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