



## Restorative Justice Action Plan

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024




Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scottish Government's vision for the [Restorative Justice Action Plan](#) is:

"Restorative Justice is available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it, and at a time that is appropriate to the people and case involved. Approaches taken must be consistent, evidence-led, trauma informed and of a high standard. This seeks to ensure the needs of persons harmed and their voices are central, and supports a reduction in harmful behaviour across our communities."

The Scottish Government have worked collaboratively with key stakeholders over the past year on the priorities of the Restorative Justice (RJ) Action Plan.

What's the progress so far?

1

## Restorative Justice is available across Scotland

- CJS submitted a draft of the National Restorative Justice (RJ) Policy Framework to the Scottish Government for feedback and presented it to the RJ Stakeholder Group. Further consultations with stakeholders will commence in 2025.
- Restorative Justice features as a workstream within the Transformational Change Programme 'Person Centered and Trauma Informed' under the Vision for Justice in Scotland.
- Publication of Restorative Justice chapter in the 'Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law: Policy, Practice and Legislation' guidance.
- CJS conducted several interviews and consultations with experts who have lived experience, exploring RJ principles, and their ideal characteristics of a trauma-informed service. CYCJ facilitated parallel engagement projects with children on their perceptions of RJ.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Sheriffdom Lothian and Borders Development group meeting took place, focusing on the findings of the World Café research, updates on RJ test cases, policy and practice framework.
- A feedback channel for stakeholders to communicate with the CJS RJ national team has

been devised and disseminated.

- CJS submitted the Restorative Justice Delivery Model Options Appraisal paper to the Scottish Government and presented it to the RJ Stakeholder Group. The paper remains with the Scottish Government for consideration.
- CJS worked in partnership with key stakeholders and service providers to deliver and evaluate Restorative Justice test cases. Two cases were completed, and one case is in its early stages.
- Various presentations on RJ and the Action Plan have taken place across numerous local authorities and organisations, as well as national and international events.
- Publication of an information sheet 'Creating Restorative Communities' for RJ practitioners.
- Publication of a paper 'Restorative Approaches for Communities in Conflict'.

2

### High quality Restorative Justice services are delivered by trained facilitators

- CJS completed an online RJ Learning Module for operational staff and the public. To be published in June 2024.
- CYCJ hosted a webinar on 'Restorative Justice: Rights, Needs and Voices of Children and Young People'.
- CYCJ organised and facilitated a 'Restorative Justice from a Children's Rights Perspective' training course for RJ practitioners.

3

### There is a public awareness and understanding of Restorative Justice across Scotland

- CJS and CYCJ delivered lectures and workshops on RJ in educational institutions.
- CJS and CYCJ collaborated during the RJ Awareness Week 2023, increasing social media engagement with both the public and stakeholders.
- CJS and CYCJ collaborated to update the RJ animation video to reflect the current landscape of RJ service development in Scotland as well as increase the tool's accessibility. The animation to be released in January 2025.
- CJS secured a place to participate at the Spit It Out Festival to deliver a talk and Q&A on RJ in Scotland.

## What are the next steps?

- The Scottish Government will continue to work with stakeholders Community Justice Scotland, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice on the next steps of the action plan, which include:
- The continuation of the RJ cases testing in partnership with existing RJ providers and the Community Justice Partnerships as well as children services.
- Progress the commitment to the improvement of awareness and understanding of RJ in Scotland using a more strategic approach.
- Publication of an online RJ Learning module accessible to both professionals and the public, with ongoing monitoring and evaluation to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary enhancements.
- Development of RJ initiatives within educational settings to enhance conflict resolution methods as a proactive and preventative approach.
- Increased communication with the public via social media and delivered RJ awareness events.
- Establishing a diverse and representative RJ photo bank that accurately portrays RJ principles, processes, and participants.
- Supporting Community Justice Partnerships, Children's Services and their stakeholders in developing restorative justice approaches and services across Scotland.

# THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Scottish Government's vision for the [Restorative Justice Action Plan](#) is:

"Restorative Justice is available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it, and at a time that is appropriate to the people and case involved. Approaches taken must be consistent, evidence-led, trauma informed and of a high standard. This seeks to ensure the needs of persons harmed and their voices are central, and supports a reduction in harmful behaviour across our communities."

This report will provide an overview of the progress for the RJ Action Plan during the fourth year of delivery: April 2023 – March 2024. This will be detailed under a number of headings with relevance to the three outcomes of the RJ action plan, as detailed below. The report will conclude with the next steps for the RJ Action Plan, challenges and a summary.

1

Restorative Justice is available across Scotland

2

High quality Restorative Justice services are delivered by trained facilitators

3

There is a public awareness and understanding of Restorative Justice across Scotland

# PROGRESS OF THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ACTION PLAN

This section of the report will detail the progress of the RJ Action Plan under subject headings and consider how these activities have satisfied the outcomes of it.

## Outcome 1 – Restorative Justice is Available Across Scotland

### 1.1. National Policy and Practice Framework

Significant progress has been made during 2023/24 toward developing a National Restorative Justice (RJ) Policy and Framework for Scotland. This work has been shaped by continuous consultation with people affected by harm, key stakeholders, and expert organisations, also ensuring that RJ practices align with the rights and needs of children and young people.

Early in the year, a draft of the RJ Policy Framework was shared with the Scottish Government and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) for feedback. The draft framework reflects input from ongoing RJ case testing to ensure it is grounded in practice. In quarter two, The Scottish Government provided early comments and amendments on the draft and expert input was sought to refine critical aspects such as data and information sharing. Plans to undertake an Equality, Human Rights, and Island Communities Impact Assessment (EQHIRA) were initiated to ensure the policy is inclusive and equitable.

CYCJ continued to collaborate with Community Justice Scotland to ensure the policy and practice framework is accessible, and rights-based, with its language and content tailored to children and young people.

In March 2024, the RJ Stakeholder Group received an overview of the framework development, and comments were invited. Further consultations with the stakeholders will commence in 2025, and the Scottish Government will provide guidance on the process.

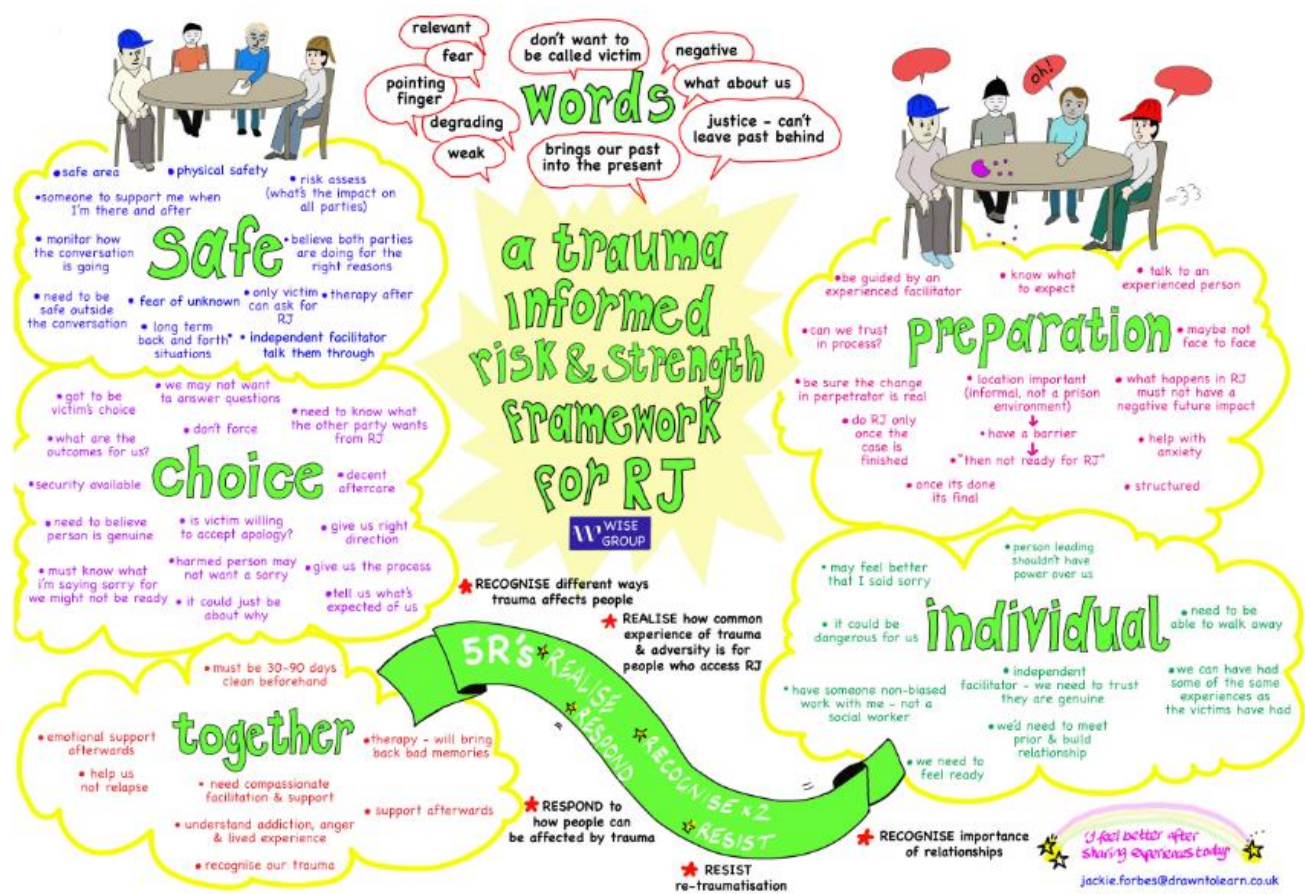
### 1.2. RJ and Transformational Change Programme under Vision for Justice

Restorative Justice features as a workstream within the Transformational Change Programme 'Person Centred and Trauma Informed' as part of the Vision for Justice in Scotland. In July 2023, CJS provided input on the Programme Definition Document, which is now with the Scottish Government for sign-off. The document outlines work to date and planned activities aimed at achieving outcomes over the coming year and once completed, it will guide the project management approach for delivering RJ in Scotland.

### 1.3. Restorative Justice World Café Research Project

In March 2023, Community Justice Scotland ran a series of consultations with experts by lived experience to explore their views on trauma-informed Restorative Justice and its principles. A one-to-one interview format was also offered as an alternative for those who did not wish to participate in a group setting.

This work continued in the following months, with the CJS national team hosting three one-to-one interviews in April, June and July with individuals who experienced and caused harm. The conversations considered what people need in an RJ service that respects choice, safety, preparation, togetherness and individuality.



Both the interviews and the consultation provided an insight into the additional support people may need to take part in RJ. Output from both will be used to design a clear roadmap for RJ service development including a person-centred policy and screening tools.



## KEY FINDINGS



People wish choice and agency in service contact and engagement

RJ availability is important to both those who cause harm and experience this

Safety is extremely important, and this includes the protection of other recovery goals and ambitions

No time limit can be applied on RJ process and/or its conclusion

The civil and criminal justice system causes further harm to those who experience it

Communication, clarity and honesty are important throughout

Support should be available from people who have similar experiences in both harm and RJ, as mentors and facilitators

Facilitation in RJ should be independent of both the criminal and civil justice systems

In parallel to the World Cafés carried out by CJS, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice have continued to engage with children and young people in various projects throughout the year. Engagement work took place over six weeks with three groups of children and young people including those in a local youth group and two from a local secondary school (a group with additional support needs and a group taking part in an alternative curriculum). The work aimed to gain their views on what a Restorative Justice service should look like, including where it should take place and who should facilitate it.



The engagement work resulted in the production of two resources developed by children and young people themselves. Firstly, '[Know Your Rights](#)' document was published in both an interactive online version and a leaflet form. The purpose of this resource is to support children and young people to navigate Restorative Justice and consider their rights throughout the process.

Another resource was produced for practitioners carrying out RJ processes. '[Key messages from children and young people](#)' document highlights the important points children and young people want practitioners to know when carrying out a Restorative Justice process.

#### **1.4. Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law: Publication of Restorative Justice Chapter in Policy, Practice and Legislation Guidance**

The Restorative Justice chapter of the '[Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law: Policy, Practice and Legislation](#)' guidance has been published in June 2023.

This practice guide is aimed at practitioners and managers who work with children and young people who are at risk of, or come into conflict with, the law. It is also valuable for academics, policymakers, educators, students and anyone else with an interest in youth and criminal justice. The guide is renewed every year to ensure the information provided is relevant and accurate.

#### **1.5. Feedback Channel for Stakeholder Communication**

In response to the findings and recommendations of the '[Sheriffdom Lothian and Borders Stakeholder Communication Needs Survey](#)' published in February 2023, a feedback channel for stakeholders to communicate with the CJS RJ national team has been devised and disseminated. The selected method is a feedback form, enabling stakeholders to offer comments, express concerns, and deliberate on any other matters related to Restorative Justice that warrant attention. To date, two responses have been received, generally rating communication as satisfactory and expressing interest in additional information updates. The form is circulated every quarter alongside the updates, and it remains accessible at any time via the button located at the bottom of each newsletter report. Stakeholders have been encouraged to proactively utilise this feedback mechanism.

#### **1.6. Restorative Justice Delivery Model Options Appraisal**

Work on the RJ Delivery Model Options Appraisal began in October 2023, utilising the HM Treasury Green Book method to ensure a systematic and evidence-based approach. In November 2023, Community Justice Scotland convened a longlisting workshop with a small and

focused group of national stakeholders to generate and assess potential RJ delivery models. The workshop produced a shortlist of four delivery model options for further consideration:

- A “do minimum” option;
- Two intermediate options;
- A “do maximum” option.

Each option was evaluated; six spending objectives were identified, against which potential options would be considered. The spending objectives were developed considering the Scottish Government’s vision for Restorative Justice as set out in their Restorative Justice Action Plan and considering the key findings of research and reports on RJ in Scotland submitted to the Scottish Government such as the [‘Restorative Justice Training Needs Analysis for Scotland’](#) and [‘Designing and Implementing Restorative Justice in Scotland’](#).

The Children and Young People’s Centre for Justice (CYCJ) played a key role in ensuring the rights and needs of children and young people were considered and included in the appraisal process. Following the workshop, CYCJ worked closely with CJS to refine the options and contribute to the final appraisal paper.

The completed Restorative Justice Options Appraisal paper was submitted to the Scottish Government in early January 2024. An overview of the appraisal process and the shortlisted options were presented to stakeholders at the RJ Stakeholder meeting on 5 March 2024. The paper remains with the Scottish Government for consideration.

## 1.7. Restorative Justice Test Cases

Throughout 2023/24, Community Justice Scotland worked in partnership with key stakeholders and service providers to deliver and evaluate Restorative Justice test cases. These cases aim to inform future RJ service models and delivery methods in Scotland by providing data on operational processes.

In June 2023, CJS chaired a meeting with the Community Justice Partnerships (CJPs) from the Sheriffdom Lothian and Borders Development Group to discuss potential RJ case referrals. The discussion aimed to identify cases that could support the evaluation of the initial test site while ensuring that CJPs were up to date on the ongoing development of RJ practice and policy frameworks.

Collaboration with CYCJ included discussions with local authorities across Scotland to identify suitable RJ test cases. Meetings with children and justice teams focused on integrating RJ at key decision points, such as Diversion from Prosecution.

CJS worked with two RJ service providers to deliver three test cases during the year:

- One case in East Lothian, led by SACRO.
- Two cases in an island setting, delivered by Space2Face.

The Restorative Justice processes for the island cases were completed by quarter four. The East Lothian case, initiated later in the year, is in its early stages with contracts and agreements being finalised.

Monitoring of the completed island cases has provided invaluable insights into key aspects of RJ service delivery, including:

- Referral pathways;
- Information and data sharing protocols;
- Partnership working;
- Managing risk;
- Person-centred outcomes and onward referrals.

CJS, in collaboration with CYCJ, have been developing evaluation tools to analyse the learning from these test cases. These tools aim to capture the practical and operational elements of RJ processes while maintaining confidentiality for those involved.

The current Restorative Justice test cases do not include domestic or sexual harm.

## **1.8. Stakeholder Awareness Raising**

In addition to the continued engagement with the local authorities and various third sector organisations in relation to RJ service provision and test cases, Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice participated and provided various inputs and needs-led discussions on the RJ Action Plan as well as attended national and international events.

These aimed to raise awareness and understanding of Restorative Justice among 'referring practitioners,' defined as individuals who come in contact with people harmed, people responsible for causing harm and other relevant parties (e.g. family members). The inputs were modified to suit particular agencies and involved both face to face and/or online meetings, covered information relating, but not limited to, an overview of RJ, involving a definition, principles, the vision of Restorative Justice in Scotland and the progress of the Action Plan.

Key activities and events included:

### **A. Leadership and Policy Contributions**

In May 2023, the CJS Head of RJ presented at the Restorative Justice Leaders' Summit in London, hosted by the Restorative Justice Council. The input focused on Scotland's progress in RJ policy, communication, and national development, and highlighted the importance of effective communication with diverse audiences. In June 2023, the CJS Head of RJ led a workshop at the 12th European Forum for Restorative Justice Conference, sharing insights into Scotland's RJ policy progress.

## **B. Workshops and Interactive Events**

In September 2023, CJS hosted a workshop in Edinburgh with Dr. Ian Marder from Maynooth University, attended by eighteen justice professionals. The two-hour interactive session emphasised the role of Restorative Justice in fostering a community-centric approach to justice, beyond victim-offender dialogues. Participant feedback provided valuable insights into areas requiring further exploration, shaping the design of future events.

A [podcast interview with Professor Tim Chapman](#) was published in November as part of CYCJ's 'Creative Conversations' podcast series. It explores the differences between Restorative Justice and 'restorative practice' or 'restorative approaches'; the need for RJ facilitators to examine their own conscious and unconscious biases; and the relationship between children's rights and Restorative Justice. The podcast has been played 71 times.

In November 2023, CJS and CYCJ led a joint interactive workshop at the North Lanarkshire Justice Conference, exploring what Restorative Justice is, how it can be implemented and look like for adults, children and young people across Scotland.

## **C. Local Authority and Other Engagements**

CJS team attended a number of meetings with stakeholders and also provided inputs on RJ and restorative practices to Sheriffs from across the east and west of Scotland and other justice as well as social work professionals. Highlights included a talk at Edinburgh Sheriff Court for the Scottish Association for the Study of Offending (SASO) in October 2023, a keynote speech at the Annual Sheriffs Conference in November 2023, inputs to South Lanarkshire local authority and Victim Support Scotland in March 2024.

Following feedback from the engagement sessions with local authorities, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice delivered a half day information sharing sessions – aka a roadshow – for local authority staff in East Lothian. They were designed to introduce CYCJ's work specifically in relation to Restorative Justice and children in conflict with the law. Community Justice Scotland attended the session on 24 October 2023 and provided an input on RJ's key principles and processes, and the current Scottish context.

Furthermore, CYCJ provided inputs to other stakeholders including at the national EEI forum, a Law Society conference, Polmont Young Offenders Institute and Fire and Rescue Scotland.

## **D. International Knowledge Exchange**

In January 2024, CJS hosted discussions with professors from the University of London on community justice, including Restorative Justice and recent developments in the field. These discussions offered valuable insights into practices across England and Wales, highlighting both challenges and opportunities that parallel those in Scotland. The knowledge gained will contribute to the development and implementation of Restorative Justice policy in Scotland. In March 2024, the CJS team also welcomed academics from the Czech Republic, interested in the application of restorative approaches in the Scottish prison system.

## 1.9. Use of Restorative Practices in Community Settings

In October 2023, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, in collaboration with Education Scotland, published an information sheet for Restorative Justice practitioners entitled '[Creating Restorative Communities](#)'. This resource explores how restorative approaches can improve community cohesion, strengthen relationships and increase public confidence in RJ with the aim of shifting culture and mindset away from punitive processes.

To improve the experience of justice for those who experience harm, Community Justice Scotland has been working with justice organisations and community partnerships to improve community engagement using restorative approaches. A paper '[Restorative Approaches for Communities in Conflict](#)' was published in March 2023, considering the ways in which restorative conversations and circles might be used within new and existing community participation and engagement processes, to the benefit of communities, justice organisations and the system. This work has already garnered interest from Police, Social Work, the Judiciary and Education with the potential to develop inputs and partnership working for communities into 2024/25.

## Outcome 2 – High Quality Restorative Justice Services are Delivered by Trained Facilitators

### 2.1. Restorative Justice Online Learning Module

In response to a consultation on enhancing Restorative Justice knowledge and stakeholder communication in November 2022, Community Justice Scotland has commissioned the development of an online learning module for front-line, operational staff. The content was developed by Professor Tim Chapman and Tania Nascimento and designed to offer a basic introduction and overview of Restorative Justice by detailing its definition, principles, implementation, benefits, risks, and myth-busting.

Digital platform design is in progress, with the release scheduled for June 2024. The module will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete and will be accessible via the CJS [Restorative Justice Learning hub](#) for stakeholders and the public.

### 2.2. Training on Restorative Justice from a Children's Rights Perspective

In collaboration with the Scottish Network of Restorative Justice Researchers (SNRJR), CYCJ hosted a joint webinar on '[Restorative Justice: Rights, Needs and Voices of Children and Young People](#)' in December 2023. The webinar aimed to cover what RJ can offer children and young



people, what it could look like and how children and young people could influence the development of Restorative Justice in Scotland. It was attended by thirty practitioners and allowed for discussion and the development of thinking in this area.

In February 2024, a '[Restorative Justice from a Children's Rights Perspective](#)' training course was delivered by Professor Tim Chapman and Dr Annemieke Wolthuis of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. This training explored the intersection between RJ and trauma-informed practice and looked at how these approaches can be combined to uphold the rights of children in conflict with the law. Seventeen practitioners attended, including from the third sector and statutory services.

### Outcome 3 – There is a Public Awareness and Understanding of Restorative Justice Across Scotland

#### 3.1. Annual Statistics for Restorative Justice Section on CJS Learning Hub



#### 3.2. Engagement with Educational Institutions

In December 2023, Community Justice Scotland delivered two workshops at George Watson's College in Edinburgh as part of their Crime and Justice Conference for the advanced higher modern studies students from schools across Edinburgh and the Lothians. The workshops explored what RJ is and its impact on individuals and communities.

In February 2024, the CJS Head of RJ was interviewed by a student from Stirling University on the benefits and use of Restorative Justice and benefits its development in Scotland.

In March 2024, CJS delivered a guest lecture to Strathclyde University's criminal law students on criminal justice issues and the role of Restorative Justice within it. The class examined the

idea of RJ and what values underlie it, the history and development of RJ in Scotland today, and what future of RJ could look like.

### **3.3. Restorative Justice Awareness Week 2023**

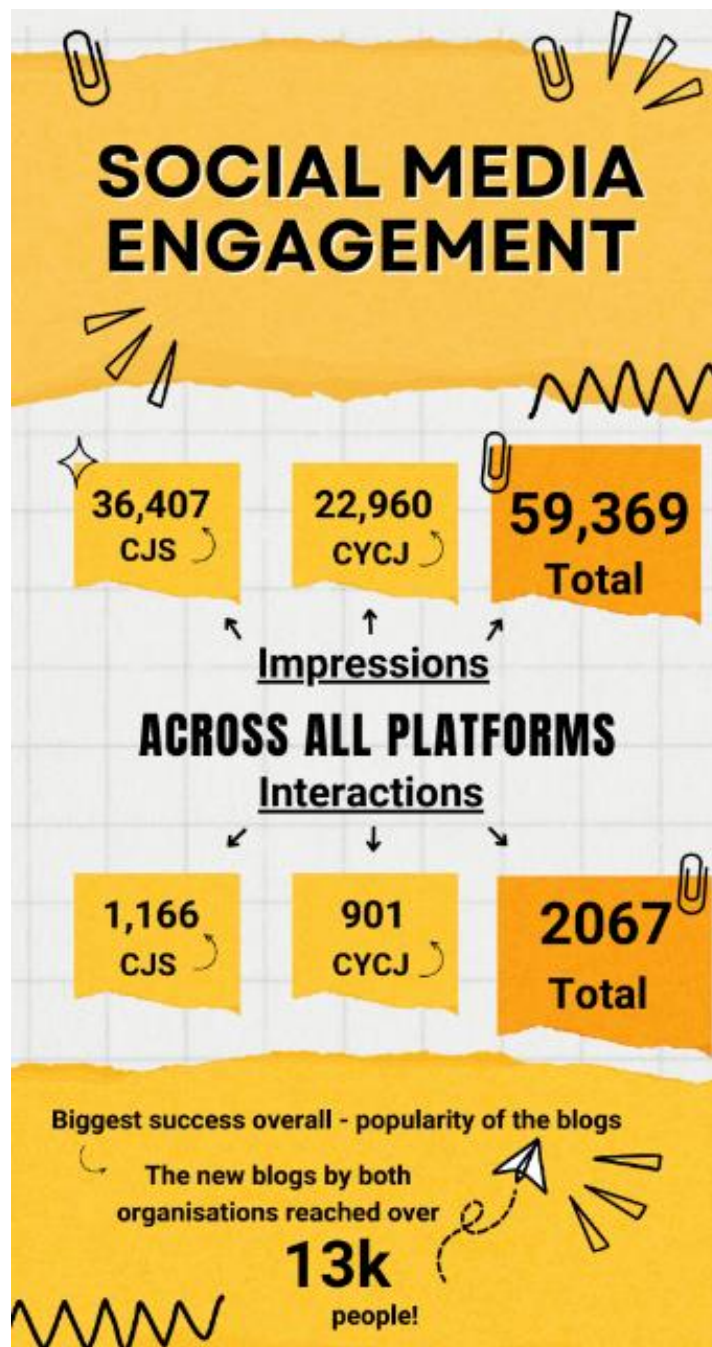
Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice collaborated and supported each organisation's communications during the Restorative Justice week 2023, which took place from 19-25 November, raising awareness among the public and decision-makers, promoting RJ to existing and new audiences in the UK and globally.

The chosen theme of 'Restorative Justice Works' aimed to highlight how it works, why it works and who it works for. It also complemented the message both RJ teams wanted to spread about its efficacy and the transformative power of the process on the lives of people affected by crime to those who haven't heard of it before.

A number of outputs were published and promoted on various social media platforms using the hashtags #RJWeek2023, #RJWorks, #Restorative Scotland, resulting in increased engagement with both the public and stakeholders. The content featured blogs, service updates, reports, podcasts, animation, research outcomes and quotes from people with lived experience of harm and focused on what people of Scotland would like to see in a well-functioning, trauma-informed national Restorative Justice service. In addition, signposting also took place towards information shared by partners, the existing RJ resources on various websites, and in-person and online events across the UK and Europe.

Through diverse communications on social media channels such as X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook, the organisations have reached over 59k people, continuing to significantly grow RJ's digital footprint, compared to reaching over 32k last year. Detailed statistics below highlight the success and impact of the content the partners released during the week.





The analysis of content performance indicated the new blogs accounting for the highest engagement rates, reaching over 13k people. Community Justice Scotland's blogs, 'How Restorative Justice Can Repair The Broken and Heal The Harm' and 'Raising Awareness and Advocacy for Restorative Justice in Scotland', generated 8,283 impressions and 158 interactions across all social media platforms. The content focused on RJ's transformative impact for both persons who experienced and caused harm, and the importance of communication, education and society's active engagement in helping RJ to reshape the way people experience justice. CYCJ's blog 'Nuggets of Wisdom – Children and Young People's Perspectives on Restorative Justice highlighted some of the learning from the engagement with children and young people so far and attracted 5,155 impressions and 246 interactions.

CYCJ's podcast interview with Professor Tim Chapman exploring RJ, restorative practices, and their connection to children's rights, was another very high performing content, generating 3423 impressions and 121 interactions. Community Justice Scotland's interview with Andy Hook of Street Scotland on using restorative practices to help communities through street soccer was also very well received and attracted over 3k impressions and 138 interactions.

### **3.4. Updated Restorative Justice Animation Video**

Community Justice Scotland and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice are collaborating on updating the Restorative Justice animation video to reflect the current landscape of RJ service development across Scotland, and to improve the tool's accessibility. In response to the Scottish Government's extension of the deadline for delivering the Restorative Justice Action Plan and its outcomes, the script has been revised to remove time-bound information. A higher quality voice-over has been recorded in January 2024 at the University of Strathclyde. The updated version of the video is expected to be released by January 2025. On completion, the animation will be distributed to all stakeholders and will also be accessible to the public via Community Justice Scotland's Youtube channel.

### **3.5. Restorative Justice at the Spit It Out Festival**

In efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of Restorative Justice and reach new audiences, Community Justice Scotland secured a place to participate at the Spit It Out Festival and deliver a talk and Q&A on RJ in Scotland. The event was scheduled to take place in Edinburgh on 7 June 2024 and introduce Restorative Justice as an optional, additional justice intervention to addressing harm caused. Unfortunately, the festival was cancelled. Full programme can still be accessed online following this link: [Festival Programme](#). The team is continuing to explore alternative platforms, public events and festivals to bring Restorative Justice to new audiences.

## NEXT STEPS

Significant progress has been highlighted across all outcomes of the RJ Action Plan within 2023-24, however this has not been without identifying risks, challenges and learning throughout the period in order to fuel continuous improvement across approaches taken.

### Risk, Challenges and Learning

Table 1: Risk, Challenges and accompanying Learning and Mitigation

Risk/Challenge	Learning/Mitigation
<b>Timescales</b>	
Following delays in the delivery of the Restorative Justice Action Plan as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, delivery of the vision within the Scottish Government plan remains without a refreshed time frame presently. This has impacted on stakeholder confidence and their clarity as to how RJ will progress in Scotland.	CJS and CYCJ continue to progress action to promote and develop RJ in Scotland against the outcomes within the plan. The teams remain flexible in their ability to work to available budgets and the changeable landscape through routine workplan reviews and monthly conversations with Scottish Government colleagues.
<b>Funding and Resource</b>	
Increased pressures caused by the wider economic context have impacted on national deliberations on funding and future resource for the development and delivery of RJ in Scotland.	<p>To continue progress in the development of RJ in Scotland using a limited budget, both CJS and CYCJ are identifying test cases in RJ to progress with new and existing providers. This will support a more informed approach to Restorative Justice roll out and provide necessary data and information on the cost of such a provision.</p> <p>The development of policy in RJ for Scotland, led by CJS, will also support justice organisations to take a national position on RJ and consider their role in its integration and delivery.</p>

<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	
There continues to be varying levels of knowledge on RJ and how this can support individuals to recover from harm where appropriate. This can often skew the views of staff and the public where opinion based, and hamper access to further information on RJ for those who wish to access this.	<p>CJS and CYCJ will continue to develop inputs, workshops and online sessions to enhance awareness and knowledge of RJ. The RJ e-Learning Module will also support frontline staff in their knowledge and development, using a format accessible to them.</p> <p>CJS and CYCJ will continue to seek ways to work with expert stakeholders in a range of harm types and to understand more about the experience of those harmed.</p>
<b>Public Engagement</b>	
The conversation about justice in Scotland is becoming more punitive in nature, which impacts the views of the public on restorative justice as an additional support tool to criminal and civil justice processes where appropriate.	CJS and CYCJ have a specific focus on engagement and accessible expertise in the development of communications to inform the public. During the coming year, this will use a range of mediums, including social media and the arts, to communicate effectively on RJ, its methods, benefits and potential use.
<b>Need for further partnership working with Gender-Based Violence Sector</b>	
Organisations working to address VAWG and GBV have communicated the need for Scotland's RJ provision to be responsive to the needs of those affected by GBV and for RJ providers to have a thorough understanding of the unique risks, challenges and complexities in cases involving GBV. There is a need for further partnership working with GBV and VAWG organisations to develop robust risk assessment processes in order to ensure that Scotland's RJ provision is safe, trauma-responsive and available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it.	<p>CJS continue to engage with the sector on the development of RJ policy in Scotland. Presently, there are no plans to carry out test cases in RJ within these crime types, and instead, ways to develop more robust and expert practice will be explored with stakeholders.</p> <p>The Scottish Government are also engaging with Gender-based violence experts to understand how best to work collaboratively towards RJ availability in these cases that is safe, appropriate and expert-led. This includes the development of further research to understand international practice and a deeper understanding of coercive control.</p>

Increasing demand for accessible RJ across Scotland	
As a result of increased media interest and the ongoing development of RJ resource and awareness raising across Scotland, people who have both caused and experienced harm are actively seeking to explore RJ without the national resource to do so currently.	CJS will support the testing of RJ cases which are identified by stakeholders. This will generate case studies and learning to inform the Scottish Government on the resource and capacity needed to support more individuals to access RJ across Scotland. The model identified will require flexibility and consideration to equality impact and the needs of rural and island communities.

## CONCLUSION

Significant progress continues to be made in advancing restorative justice (RJ) in Scotland. The work undertaken to date, along with the efforts planned for the coming year, is laying the groundwork for a trauma-responsive, inclusive, and safe RJ provision that operates in parallel with the criminal justice system.

While RJ activity at the local level remains in the early stages of development, there is evident enthusiasm for its potential. Many community justice areas are actively increasing awareness, accessing training, and identifying pathways to further implementation. However, this enthusiasm is tempered by concerns around resource availability, sustainable delivery, and the complexities of applying RJ to specific crime types.

No single organisation holds all the answers to the complexities surrounding RJ development. Progress relies on collaboration, resource-sharing, and sustained engagement with those most affected by harm. As the national framework for RJ continues to evolve, it is essential that this momentum is maintained and strengthened through ongoing partnership, learning, and commitment to achieving the vision outlined in the RJ Action Plan.



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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