



Restorative Justice Action Plan

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025




Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Inesa Velaviciute
Community Justice Scotland

Pamela Morrison
Children and Young People's
Centre for Justice



CONTENTS

CONTENTS	2
FOREWORD: KARYN MCCLUSKEY	4
FOREWORD: FIONA DYER	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE.....	9
PROGRESS OF THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ACTION PLAN	10
Outcome 1 – Restorative Justice is Available Across Scotland	10
1.1. National Policy and Practice Framework.....	10
1.2. Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law: Publication of Restorative Justice Chapter in Policy, Practice and Legislation Guidance	10
1.3. Restorative Justice Test Cases.....	10
1.4. Survey on Restorative Justice Service Provision for Children across Scotland	12
1.5. Restorative Justice in Prison Protocol.....	12
1.6. Collaboration with Police Scotland.....	12
1.7. Restorative Justice Development Forum	13
1.8. Restorative Justice and Antisocial Behaviour	13
1.9. Stakeholder Awareness Raising	14
Outcome 2 – High Quality Restorative Justice Services are Delivered by Trained Facilitators.....	17
2.1. Restorative Justice Online Learning Module.....	17
2.2. Restorative Justice and Hate Crime Training.....	19
2.3. Restorative Justice Practitioners' Network.....	19
2.4. Tools and Knowledge Sharing around Restorative Approaches	20
Outcome 3 – There is a Public Awareness and Understanding of Restorative Justice Across Scotland.....	20
3.1. Annual Statistics for Restorative Justice Section on CJS Learning Hub	20
3.2. Engagement with Educational Institutions	20
3.3. Restorative Justice Art Exhibition	21
3.4. Restorative Justice Awareness Week 2024	23
3.5. Updated Restorative Justice Animation Video	25

3.6. Restorative Justice Image Bank	26
NEXT STEPS.....	27
CONCLUSION	31

FOREWORD: KARYN MCCLUSKEY

At Community Justice Scotland, we've never shied away from asking difficult questions – especially when it comes to how we respond to harm. This fifth annual Restorative Justice Progress Report reflects the work done in 2024/25 to help realise the Scottish Government's ambition, set out in the 2019 Restorative Justice Action Plan: to make restorative justice services available across Scotland.

When someone is harmed, it can shake their sense of safety, identity, and control. That harm ripples out – into families, communities, and systems. And if we don't respond in a way that helps people, we risk compounding that harm. Restorative justice offers a different way. It's not soft, nor easy – but it is human. It's about creating a space for people to be heard, to understand, and to begin to repair what's been broken.

Restorative justice is rooted in values we hold close: compassion, accountability, and the constructive dialogue. It gives those affected by harm a voice, a choice, and a chance to be part of a process that acknowledges their experience. For those who've caused harm, it can be a powerful moment of reckoning – and responsibility.

Over the past year, we've worked with partners across Scotland to explore what high-quality restorative justice service looks like in practice. We've supported live cases, developed tools and frameworks, and worked to build understanding across sectors.

This is about more than a service – it's about a shift in how we think about justice. I want to thank everyone who's been part of this journey – practitioners, partners, and most importantly, the people who've chosen to take part in restorative justice. Their courage and honesty are shaping this vital work.

This work is not a quick fix. It's a long-term commitment to doing justice differently. And we remain steadfast in our belief that restorative justice must be available to anyone in Scotland who wants it and should never be out of reach.

Karyn McCluskey

Chief Executive, Community Justice Scotland

FOREWORD: FIONA DYER

On behalf of Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, I am very pleased to introduce the 2024-25 Restorative Justice Annual Report, detailing the impressive work and commitment of colleagues to make restorative justice available across the whole of Scotland. This is a central ambition of the Scottish Government's action plan and is an extremely important step in creating a more rights-respecting justice system.

For children and young people in conflict with the law, restorative justice is an effective way of giving victims an active role in addressing the harm they have faced, helping them to overcome the powerlessness they often feel in the justice process. For those who have caused the harm, it can create a greater understanding of the impact of their actions and encourage future desistance.

Throughout the past year at many conferences and events I have attended across Scotland and beyond, including the Justice with Children World Congress in Madrid, I have heard prominent calls for more restorative justice. In Madrid, I heard a very powerful story from a child witness who realised during the court process that a custodial outcome was not going to address the root injustices at the heart of the incident she had witnessed. This is almost entirely missed in media coverage of serious incidents involving children and young people, yet rings true for many victims and witnesses who feel sidelined by the justice system. At CYCJ, we also know from the evidence of the damaging impacts for children of journeying through the traditional justice system.

That is why this work around restorative justice is so important. As can be seen from this report, there has been much work across Scotland to meet the Government's ambition. Undertaking actual test cases is allowing real and important learning on the ground and is a key part of the wider goal of raising public awareness and confidence in restorative justice. Along with research evidence this is placing Scotland in a prime position, not only to rollout restorative justice to everyone who wishes to access it, but to make sure it is delivered to the highest standard.

I am really looking forward to seeing how this work develops over the coming year and beyond.

Fiona Dyer

Director, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice

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 funded Community Justice Scotland (CJS) and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) to support the delivery of the Action Plan. This report reflects the progress delivered by the two organisations and Scottish Government colleagues in the financial year 2024/25. All previous quarterly and annual reports are available online on [Community Justice Scotland's Restorative Justice Learning Hub](#).

2024/25 Highlights:

The progress will be detailed under headings related to the three outcomes of the action plan, as detailed below.

1

Restorative Justice is available across Scotland

CJS and CYCJ made substantial progress during 2024/25 to establish the foundations for meeting the ambition that RJ is available across Scotland. The work focused on four key strands:

- Supporting the delivery of a number of real restorative justice (RJ) cases to inform the development of a nationally consistent RJ service provision in Scotland.
- Linked to above; contributing to the evidence base on RJ with children and young people.
- Finalising the national RJ Policy and Practice Framework, due for publication in summer 2025.
- Establishing forums and working groups to support workforce development.

- Raising awareness and promoting understanding of RJ in Scotland among professional audiences both nationally and internationally.

2

High quality Restorative Justice services are delivered by trained facilitators

In 2024/25, CJS and CYCJ took key steps to strengthen the quality of restorative justice delivery in Scotland by contributing to the development of a skilled and supported facilitator workforce. This work centred on two key areas:

- Delivering accessible online and in-person training to build both foundational and specialist knowledge.
- Coordinating practitioner networks and working groups to support collaboration, share resources and best practice, and identify ongoing training and practice needs.

3

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

CJS and CYCJ made considerable progress during 2024/25 toward achieving the third outcome of the action plan by further increasing current public awareness and understanding of restorative justice across Scotland. This work focused on three key strands:

- Delivering outreach through a range of public-facing activities to engage diverse audiences across Scotland.
- Delivering strategic online communications, with enhanced activity during Restorative Justice Awareness Week 2024.
- Developing and improving digital resources to increase accessibility and more accurately represent the current RJ landscape in Scotland.

The next steps in 2025/26:

In the coming financial year, Community Justice Scotland, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice and the Scottish Government will continue to work in partnership to progress toward the outcomes of the Restorative Justice Action Plan and the development of a national

restorative justice infrastructure. This work will focus on four areas:

- Exploring sustainable models for RJ delivery through test case work and evaluation and embedding RJ within wider policy and practice.
- Building operational capacity through skills development in the workforce and partnership working.
- Continuing targeted engagement with stakeholders and the public to raise awareness and understanding of RJ.
- Working on developing RJ initiatives across community, education and justice settings to enhance conflict resolution methods, promoting restorative practices as proactive and preventative approaches to harm and conflict.

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In May 2019, the Scottish Government published [*Justice in Scotland: Rapid Evidence Review: Uses of Restorative Justice*](#) to support policy development and the delivery of Scotland's Restorative Justice (RJ) vision and strategy. The paper offers a broad overview of how RJ is implemented in other countries, taking into consideration offence types, the effectiveness of RJ for people harmed and people who cause harm, and how it is offered at varying stages of the justice system.

This led to the development of the [*Restorative Justice Action Plan*](#), which was published in 2019. The Scottish Government's vision is for restorative justice to be available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it, and at a time that is appropriate to the people and case involved. It also sets out that approaches taken must be consistent, evidence-led, trauma informed and of a high standard. Together these seek 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 fifth year of delivery: April 2024 – March 2025. The information will be presented under headings related to the three outcomes of the action plan covering the availability of RJ across Scotland, the quality of the RJ services delivered and public awareness and understanding of RJ. The report will conclude with the next steps toward achieving the outcomes and a summary.

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 demonstrate how these activities made progress towards each outcome.

Outcome 1 – Restorative Justice is Available Across Scotland

1.1. National Policy and Practice Framework

Throughout the year, Community Justice Scotland has worked closely with the Scottish Government and key stakeholders to progress the development of the Restorative Justice (RJ) Policy and Practice Framework. This work has been shaped by consultation with people affected by harm, key stakeholders and expert organisations. Children and Young People's Centre for Justice continued to collaborate with CJS to ensure the policy and practice framework aligns with the rights and needs of children and young people.

The revised document was submitted to the Scottish Government in March for consideration of next steps, including further consultation and publication timescales.

1.2. 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 was updated and published in June 2024.

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.

1.3. Restorative Justice Test Cases

A key focus for 2024/25 has been the RJ Test Case project. The Scottish Government was interested to learn from existing services about how RJ is operating and how that learning could

inform service development more widely across Scotland. The RJ Test Case project examines the question:

“What are the emerging opportunities and challenges across key themes in Restorative Justice service delivery that require consideration and/or resolution in the future development of a nationally consistent Restorative Justice provision across Scotland?”

To answer the question, SG funded, via CJS and CYCJ, a number of test cases which have been running during this period and examining four key themes of operational delivery: information sharing, risk management, partnership working and tailoring to meet individuals’ needs. CJS and CYCJ have been monitoring the progress of 21 cases in total, though for a range of reasons, which will be explored in the final report, not all will proceed to the stage of facilitated communication. These RJ cases feature a range of harm types and take place across nine local authority areas. In line with the Scottish Government’s guidance, cases involving gender-based violence were excluded from the project. The cases are being delivered by a range of statutory and third sector referral agencies and RJ service providers.

Project work in 2024-2025 focused on project planning and case recruitment:



To recruit the cases, CJS and CYCJ presented the project to stakeholders at every opportunity, including at Community Justice Partnership meetings and RJ Stakeholder meetings. Flyers were shared at the CYCJ conference and circulated through RJ mailing lists and CYCJ’s monthly e-

bulletin, which has a readership of over 3000 professionals. CJS and CYCJ also arranged more targeted meetings with organisations working with those affected by harm, including Victim Support Scotland and existing third sector and statutory RJ services. Cases were commenced during 2024/25 and remain underway at time of writing. CJS and CYCJ will deliver the RJ Test Case Project Report to Scottish Government by October 2025.

1.4. Survey on Restorative Justice Service Provision for Children across Scotland

In quarter one, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice developed and distributed a 22-question survey to map existing restorative justice practices involving children under 18 across Scotland. The survey aimed to identify service strengths, gaps, and potential partner agencies for the Scottish Government's RJ test case project.

The survey was shared via CYCJ's e-bulletin, distribution lists and RJ networks, generating 123 completed responses. The findings were published in January 2025 in a report titled [Capturing the Organisation and Delivery of Restorative Justice with Children across Scotland: Reported findings from a practitioner-focused survey](#). The report was also presented at the National RJ Stakeholder Group meeting in February.

The volume of responses suggested investment and interest in restorative justice services for children in Scotland. However, the survey highlighted inconsistencies in the delivery and awareness, as well as understanding of definition, of restorative justice across Scotland. This provided further evidence of the need for a national directory of available RJ services which can be updated on a regular basis.

1.5. Restorative Justice in Prison Protocol

Community Justice Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), coordinated a short-life working group to develop a protocol that ensures a consistent and equitable approach to restorative justice within custodial settings. The group is made up of members with experience of and/or a future role in delivering and supporting RJ delivery in prison custody, including SPS Head of Offender Outcomes, Director-Practitioner at Space2Face (Shetland-based RJ service provider), Justice Healthcare Service Manager, Chaplaincy and Prison-Based Social Work Management. The group met monthly from April 2024 to December 2024, when they took a hiatus to progress the protocol with Scottish Prison Service governance. The protocol is with SPS while they consider how best to embed into SPS systems. Once this stage is complete, the short-life working group will reconvene to plan next steps.

1.6. Collaboration with Police Scotland

Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice engaged with Police Scotland to explore operational considerations for restorative justice and opportunities for the test case project in a policing division where RJ is established. These ongoing

discussions aim to inform the development of services that align with existing operational systems and build on current practice.

To strengthen relationships and support future collaboration, CYCJ attended the RJ for Practitioners training course for police officers at Tulliallan Police Training College in October 2024, gaining valuable insight into police perspectives and practices related to RJ.

1.7. Restorative Justice Development Forum

In the final quarter, Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice established a new development forum for leaders and managers from statutory and voluntary sectors across Scotland. The bi-monthly forum, launched in May 2025, will provide a platform for those in a leadership role to exchange knowledge and practice regarding the development of restorative justice in their local areas, with a particular focus on overcoming challenges and barriers.

This community of practice responds to requests for strategic support and is designed to contribute to the delivery of the Restorative Justice Action Plan.

1.8. Restorative Justice and Antisocial Behaviour

Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice have explored the application of restorative justice to address antisocial behaviour. In July 2024, CJS met with the Scottish Professional Football League Trust to discuss integrating RJ into programmes aimed at addressing the use of pyrotechnics. CJS now sit on their working group to develop an approach to addressing the use of pyrotechnics in football.

In August, both organisations met with senior representatives from Police Scotland and East Renfrewshire Social Work to consider restorative responses to local antisocial behaviour and broader community issues. CJS also engaged with Police in Edinburgh on using RJ to address harm and support community resilience.

CJS and CYCJ both contributed to the Scottish Government's Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour, which was co-chaired by CYCJ's Director, participating in a stakeholder engagement event in June 2024 and the formal consultation in March 2025. The Group's report titled [*Antisocial Behaviour - Whose responsibility? Towards a more effective response to antisocial behaviour in Scotland*](#) was published in February 2025 and calls for an expansion in access to restorative justice services, arguing this would contribute both to addressing immediate impact and harm on individuals and communities, whilst also supporting longer-term preventative goals.

1.9. 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 tailored and involved both face to face and 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.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Workshops and Interactive Events

- Roundtable discussion with children's panel members
- Webinar with Dr. Steve Kirkwood
- Restorative Justice Council annual conference and reflective blog
- CPD session for Public Defence Solicitors' Office
- Presentation at Age of Criminal Responsibility Learning Event

Local Authority and Other Engagement

- RJ inputs to local authorities, community justice partnerships, youth justice forums, and third sector organisations
- Specialist RJ presentations to Moray Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership and Rape Crisis Centre Managers
- Engagement with Prison Fellowship Scotland
- Engagement with Scottish Mediation
- RJ information stall at National Youth Justice Conference
- Ongoing engagement with Victim Support Scotland

International Knowledge Exchange

- Workshop at European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) International Conference in Tallinn
- Presentation at International Experiences with Children and Conflict with the Law Event
- Contribution to EFRJ publication *From Survivors to Survivors*
- Interview for Turkish publication *Restorative Justice Conversations with the Experts*
- Membership in EFRJ committees and working groups

A. Workshops and Interactive Events

Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, in collaboration with the Policy and Practice team at Children's Hearings Scotland, hosted a roundtable discussion with children's panel members from five localities across Scotland. The session explored participants' knowledge, understanding, and experiences of restorative justice, examining its potential application within the Children's Hearings System. The discussion generated insights and opportunities to engage with national and stakeholder groups and helped inform CYCJ's work on exploring opportunities for integrating RJ within the Children's Hearing redesign.

As part of its communications activity for Restorative Justice week in November, CYCJ hosted a webinar with RJ academic Dr. Steve Kirkwood titled *Reflections on a Practice Framework for Restorative Justice*. In the session, Dr. Kirkwood presented a summary of his critical examination of the connections between values, principles, knowledge, assumptions, and practice guidelines, culminating in a proposed Practice Framework for Restorative Justice. The webinar included a Q&A segment, giving attendees the opportunity to engage directly with the material. 84 participants from a wide range of disciplines and organisations attended, with feedback describing the session as "highly informative" and "valuable". Engagement continued beyond the live event, with the [webinar's recording](#) receiving 53 views on CYCJ's YouTube channel.

In the days leading up to the RJ week, CYCJ attended the Restorative Justice Council's annual conference in Cardiff, bringing together colleagues and partners from across the UK to exchange knowledge and explore ways to expand restorative justice access to more people and communities. A blog titled [Paving the Way to a Restorative Future: Reflections from the Restorative Justice Council Conference 2024](#) was published on CYCJ's website and circulated via the e-bulletin and other mailing lists.

As a continuation of professional development support, Community Justice Scotland delivered a follow-up CPD session to 30 solicitors from the Public Defence Solicitors' Office. Building on a previous introductory webinar, the 2025 session provided deeper insight into RJ processes and supported ongoing dialogue within defence sector.

At the Age of Criminal Responsibility Learning Event in February, CYCJ shared data and insights on the role of restorative justice in responding to harm caused by children – both those above and below the age of criminal responsibility. The event provided an opportunity to present important context relevant to RJ, and discussions reflected a growing interest in its potential to strengthen community confidence and improve support for those affected by harm.

B. Local Authority and Other Engagements

Community Justice Scotland attended a number of meetings with stakeholders and also provided inputs on RJ and restorative practices to local authorities in Stirling and East Renfrewshire, and at an event co-hosted by CJS and COSLA for Community Justice Partnerships. The CJS team also provided specialist inputs on RJ and sexual harm to the Moray Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership and Community Justice Partners, and in partnership with RJ academic Estelle Zinsstag presented a paper with a national-level overview of RJ in cases involving sexual harm at the Rape Crisis Centre Managers' meeting.

Furthermore, CJS engaged with Prison Fellowship Scotland who were interested to become more involved in the national RJ landscape. The organisation has since joined the RJ in Prison Protocol Group and contributed to the RJ art exhibition.

Children and Young People's Centre for Justice attended and presented at several forums including the National Youth Justice Advisory Group, Early and Effective Intervention Forum, the Diversion from Prosecution Forum, Glasgow Youth Justice Strategy Group and Midlothian Community Alcohol Partnership. CYCJ also provided inputs to a range of statutory and third sector organisations such as Circle, Our Hearings Our Voice, Sacro, Youth Link, Action for Children, and Orkney Islands Council – to raise awareness and explore the potential for collaborative working around RJ.

CYCJ team also made contact with Scottish Mediation to find out more about their work and to share the work of the RJ project team. It is hoped that by learning more about their processes that are embedded, resulting in mediation being nationally available, will allow further consideration on how RJ is operationalised.

Together, CJS and CYCJ delivered a joint presentation to the Pan-Ayrshire Community First Delivery Group, offering an introduction to RJ and an overview of the national landscape. This formed part of broader efforts to support local authorities and community organisations to explore and develop RJ practice.

At CYCJ's National Youth Justice Conference in June 2024, both organisations hosted an information stall on restorative justice, sharing information sheets and a call out for potential restorative justice test cases.

CJS and CYCJ also presented to a group of staff from Victim Support Scotland to raise awareness of the principles of RJ whilst providing an overview of activity in Scotland, including the test case project. A need for a centralised directory of RJ services emerged from this interaction and both organisations are currently looking at potential routes for its implementation.

Further engagement by CYCJ with Victim Support Scotland included supporting their learning and scoping the needs of those harmed by children in conflict with the law. This work will inform service design in relation to victim access to information and the single point of contact, in line with the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024. Discussion within this process has included consideration of the role of RJ in meeting victims' needs while upholding the rights of children in conflict with the law.

C. International Knowledge Exchange

In May 2024, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice delivered a workshop at the 12th International Conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) in Tallinn, Estonia. The workshop entitled *The Future of Restorative Practice: Engaging with Children and Young People* emphasised the importance of involving children in the rollout of restorative justice services. It also provided an overview of the participation work undertaken in Scotland, offering context by discussing the needs and vulnerabilities of children in conflict with the law. The

workshop was attended by over 30 delegates and received highly positive feedback, resulting in greater discussion and interest in this area. A reflective blog [*An Inspiring Journey to the European Forum for Restorative Justice*](#) was published on CYCJ's website.

CYCJ also presented at the International Experiences with Children and Conflict with the Law event, hosted by Aberdeen University and held at the University of Edinburgh in March 2025. The event included a roundtable discussion, bringing together a range of local and international stakeholders, including representatives from Mexico and Malawi, to share learning and inform the development of RJ with children in Scotland.

Community Justice Scotland's Learning Development and Innovation Lead contributed to the publication [*From Survivors to Survivors: Conversations on Restorative Justice in Cases of Sexual Violence*](#), produced by the European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) Working Group on Gender-Based Violence. It addresses a significant gap in restorative justice literature by amplifying the voices of survivors of sexual violence who have engaged in RJ. Designed as a peer support resource for survivors considering restorative justice, the publication also offers valuable insight for practitioners and policymakers by highlighting diverse restorative justice practices and methodologies across jurisdictions. The work was launched on 25 November 2024, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, through an online event led by the editors and contributors, which explored both the challenges and opportunities for RJ in cases of sexual violence.

Also in 2024, the Head of Restorative Justice at CJS was interviewed by Dr Rahime Erbaş, Associate Professor of Criminal Law at Istanbul University, on the role of restorative justice in addressing harm, supporting recovery, and its development in Scotland. The interview will be included in the forthcoming publication titled *Restorative Justice Conversations with the Experts*, due to be published in Turkey in 2025.

In February 2025, two members of Community Justice Scotland were appointed to committees and working groups within the European Forum for Restorative Justice, contributing to areas including training, gender-based violence, and communications. These two-year roles will support international knowledge exchange, peer learning, and sharing of international best practice, placing visibility of Scotland's work within the wider restorative justice field.

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 2022, Community Justice Scotland commissioned the development of an online learning module for frontline, operational staff. The content was developed by Professor

Tim Chapman and Tania Nascimento designed to offer a basic introduction to and overview of Restorative Justice by detailing its definition, principles, implementation, benefits, risks, and myth-busting. The module is available for stakeholders and the public and can be accessed via both the [RJ Learning Hub](#) and [Resources](#) section on CJS website.



Since its launch on 7 June 2024, 244 individuals have registered for the module. To date, 125 users have completed the course and received their certificates. Feedback from 102 respondents who completed the online evaluation form has been highly positive, with most participants rating the module as 'excellent' or 'very good'. The data also indicates a clear increase in participants' awareness and understanding of RJ after taking the course:

- 56% (57 people) reported their knowledge had significantly improved;
- 37% (38 people) reported it had moderately improved;
- 6% (6 people) reported it had slightly improved;
- 1% (1 person) reported no improvement.

Additionally, the module generated increased interest in restorative justice development and delivery in Scotland, with 54 people signing up to a mailing list to receive further updates – highlighting the growing engagement with RJ practices.

Community Justice Scotland continued to monitor user feedback to ensure the module's effectiveness, relevance and inclusivity throughout the year. Based on this feedback, several improvements in content and design were identified in the last quarter to enhance the learning experience and support memory consolidation. New supporting materials were added, a number of images replaced to ensure images are representative of the communities RJ services serve and an accessibility audit was carried out, with the adjustments made to fully comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1, Level AA standards set by the Scottish Government.

Further recommendations received from this audit as well as user suggestions will assist in carrying out a more comprehensive update to the module in 2025/26, which will also involve a

consultation process with stakeholders to gather insights and ensure it continues to meet their needs.

2.2. Restorative Justice and Hate Crime Training

In October 2024, Community Justice Scotland delivered a 4-day Restorative Justice and Hate Crime training course. Designed primarily for Criminal Justice Social Workers and those working in Community Justice, the course was also attended by a wider range of justice professionals.

Ten participants from various local authorities – Edinburgh, Highlands and Islands, Inverclyde, and Glasgow – took part. The training focused on the specific harms associated with hate crime, the support needs of those affected, and how theory can be applied in practice. Grounded in the restorative justice principles taught by academic Tim Chapman (University of Strathclyde and the European Forum for Restorative Justice), the course prepared participants to facilitate restorative justice interventions.

In November 2024, CJS collaborated with the [Faith & Belief Forum](#), [Interfaith Glasgow](#), and the [Why Me?](#) RJ charity to deliver RJ practitioner training as part of the [Interfaith Restorative Justice Project](#). The project focused on applying restorative justice practices to address hostility within and between faith communities in Solihull and Glasgow, providing training and support to help faith groups manage local conflicts. CJS and Why Me? co-delivered a 3-day training session for nine facilitators from Interfaith Glasgow.

Following the delivery of this initial RJ facilitator training, CJS provided additional support to set up Community Listening Circles amongst faith communities in Glasgow. These listening circles offer a restorative space to process experiences of hate, hostility and prejudice, supporting community healing and dialogue in response to complex societal tensions.

The findings from this work, along with broader research into the ways individuals and communities across the UK responded to and were affected by the summer unrest in 2024, will be presented in [Why Me?](#) charity's forthcoming report.

2.3. Restorative Justice Practitioners' Network

CJS continues to Chair the Restorative Justice Practitioners' Network which is open to current restorative justice practitioners, those awaiting training or practice opportunities, and individuals with a general interest in restorative justice.

The network forms part of the Restorative Justice Forum Scotland, alongside the Scottish Network for Restorative Justice Researchers. Meetings are held three to four times per year, primarily online, and the network currently has 157 members.

Meetings provide opportunities to discuss case work and challenges, share knowledge and explore good practice, exchange resources, and seek peer support. Participants also receive updates on the national restorative justice landscape.

2.4. Tools and Knowledge Sharing around Restorative Approaches

In quarter three, CYCJ Chaired the first meeting of the Restorative Approaches group with members from YouthLink, Education Scotland, Community Justice Scotland and the Violence Reduction Unit where they discussed training and current work in relation to restorative approaches. The aim of the group is to share current resources, training, and ongoing work; identify gaps in practice; explore opportunities for collaboration; and begin developing a structured and consistent approach to delivering restorative practices across Scotland.

This meeting laid the groundwork for what is now the bi-monthly Restorative Approaches Group, which CYCJ continues to chair with regular participation from the same partner organisations and others. In recent months, the group has been actively developing a shared resource document capturing information on available training, resources, and initiatives.

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 November 2024, Community Justice Scotland delivered two educational sessions to improve knowledge and awareness of restorative justice among students at both secondary and higher education levels. The team presented to Advanced Higher Modern Studies students from Edinburgh and the Lothians at George Watson's College Crime and Justice Conference, providing an introductory talk on RJ and its application in Scotland. CJS also delivered a seminar to

postgraduate students on the Rehabilitation and Criminal Justice Work course at Stirling University, exploring RJ's role in community justice and its links to rehabilitation.

Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, along with stakeholders including children, members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, parents, and professionals, contributed [video content](#) to a resource created by Education Scotland for the Children, Classrooms and Challenging Behaviour event held in November 2024. The event featured Professor Laura Lundy and a panel of key stakeholders discussing the application of a rights-based approach to address marginalisation and exclusionary practices in Scottish schools. CYCJ's contribution highlighted the potential of restorative approaches in addressing harm, equipping children with conflict resolution tools, fostering accountability, and promoting rights-respecting behaviours through real-life learning. The resource will be used by Education Scotland more widely.

In efforts to enhance conflict resolution and support difficult conversations at Northfield Academy in Aberdeen, CJS, alongside partners from CYCJ and Education Scotland, have been meeting with the school and looking for ways to support their restorative practices. As a result, CJS led a workshop on restorative language and conversations to 60 staff members in February 2025. The session explored how restorative values and techniques can be integrated into school culture through trauma-responsive dialogue and engagement, with practical opportunities for staff to apply these approaches in their daily interactions. Following this session, the Academy is now in the process of finding suitable dates and identifying staff members to undertake restorative justice facilitator training, which will be delivered by CJS and CYCJ colleagues.

Over the year, as part of the aim to widen understanding of restorative justice, CYCJ responded to requests for interviews from students from a range of schools and universities who are currently researching restorative justice as part of their studies. This allowed current practice and policy in Scotland to be shared and supported deeper analysis of the RJ process and its application across a range of disciplines (namely law, criminology, and social work).

3.3. Restorative Justice Art Exhibition

Aiming to increase public awareness and understanding of restorative justice and reach new audiences, Community Justice Scotland, in collaboration with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Fife College's Learning Centre at SPS, held a multimedia RJ arts exhibition at Maryhill Community Centre, Glasgow, from 14 – 17 October 2024.

In July 2024, CJS team delivered an introductory restorative justice workshop at HMP Low Moss, introducing participants undertaking arts projects to RJ principles and their potential to support rehabilitation and healing. The dialogues during the workshop provided inspiration to artworks, the exhibition of which, titled [Restorative Voices: Seen and Heard](#), took part at the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) and offered a unique perspective on the intersection of mental health, wellbeing, the justice system and restorative justice.



Photo É Savan Panchal

The exhibition attracted 91 attendees, including members of the public, family and friends of the artists, justice professionals, and academics. Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many advocating for expanding and touring the exhibition across Scotland to engage broader audiences. Attendees also engaged directly with the RJ team, seeking further information and deepening their understanding of restorative justice and restorative practices.

Based on 50 feedback forms collected, the impact on awareness raising was as follows.

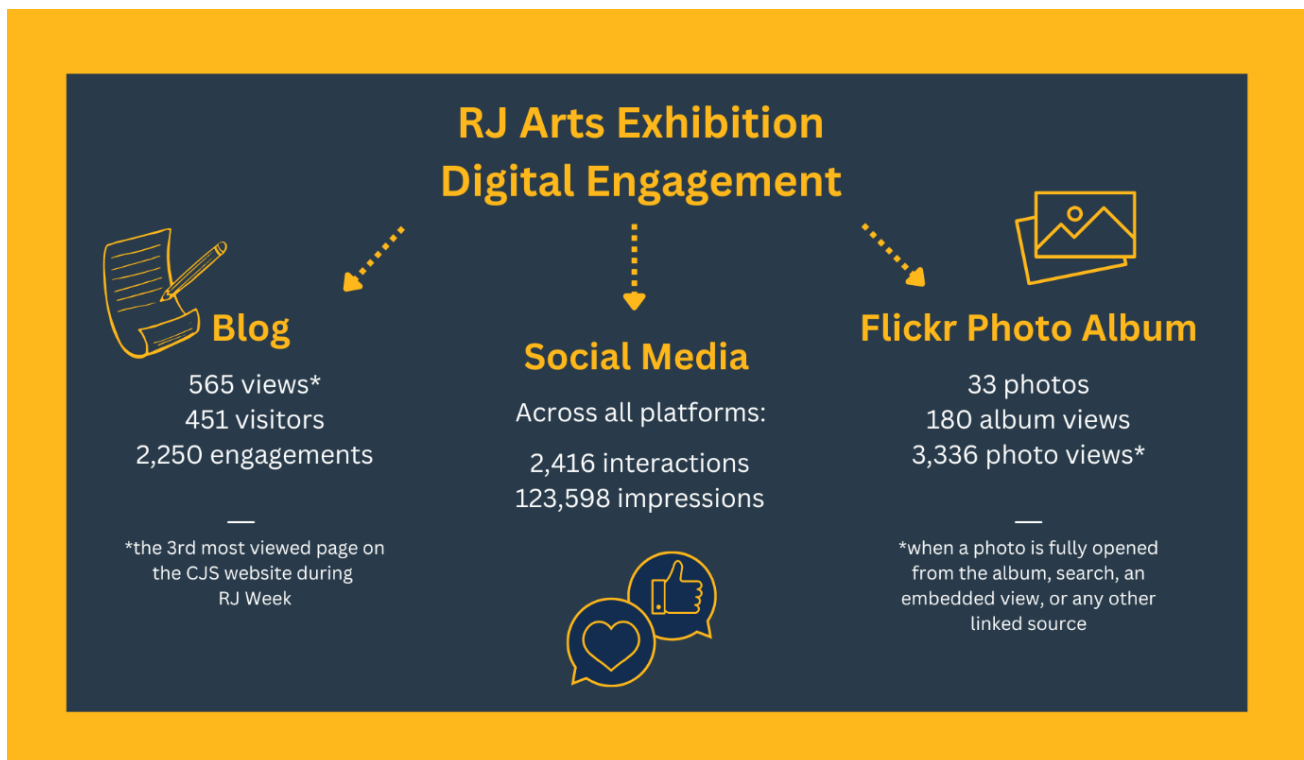
- 36% of respondents had little or no prior knowledge of restorative justice:
 - 12% reported no prior knowledge;
 - 24% reported very limited knowledge.

After attending the exhibition:

- 94% stated their knowledge had improved:
 - 44% reported significant improvement;
 - 38% reported moderate improvement;
 - 12% reported slight improvement.

Feedback highlighted both new insights gained and the emotional and educational impact of the exhibition, underscoring the unique effectiveness of art in communicating the principles of restorative justice. The exhibition also served as a catalyst for ongoing engagement and collaboration, including an invitation to deliver a seminar on restorative justice to postgraduate students at the University of Stirling.

The reach of the exhibition extended well beyond in-person attendance. The following statistics highlight levels of digital engagement, including interactions on social media, access to a [digital photo album](#) from the opening event, and readership of a [blog capturing experiences and reflections](#) from the exhibition:



Promotion through social media and the support of the festival's media partners significantly enhanced the visibility of the exhibition and its core message: "The festival received 107 pieces of media coverage between 16 September and 21 November 2024, spanning national and regional broadcast, print, and online platforms across both traditional and arts media"¹. While not all individual events were named, the breadth of coverage contributed to increased public awareness of the festival, supporting wider engagement with its programme and potentially encouraging discovery of the exhibition and the concept of restorative justice.

3.4. Restorative Justice Awareness Week 2024

Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice collaborated and supported each organisation's communications during the Restorative Justice week 2024, which took place from 17-23 November, raising awareness among the public and decision-makers, promoting RJ to existing and new audiences in the UK and globally.

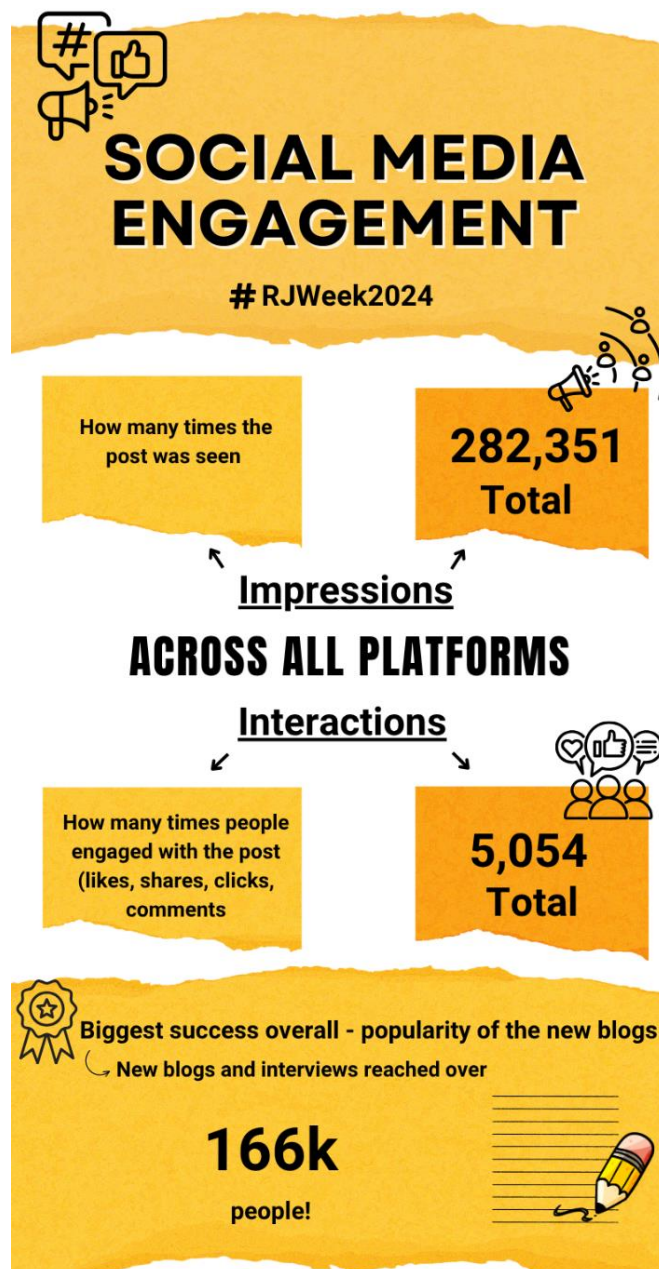
The theme *The Promise of Restorative Justice in a Polarising World* explored how RJ can bridge divides, foster understanding and build resilience in increasingly fractured societies. A unified message shared across countries aimed to amplify the global impact on RJ's importance and transformative potential in helping those affected by crime to find a way forward.

A number of outputs were published and promoted via joint mailing lists, CYCJ's monthly e-bulletin and on social media platforms using the hashtags #RJWeek2024, #RJWorks,

¹ [Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival 2024 Festival Report.](#)

#Restorative Scotland, resulting in increased engagement with both the public and stakeholders. Content featured blogs, interviews, media articles, service updates, research findings, a digital information booklet, RJ process illustrations, webinars, animations, photographs from the RJ art exhibition, and quotes from the professionals in the field. In addition, extensive signposting directed audiences to resources from partner organisations, RJ materials on various platforms, and in-person and online events across the UK and Europe.

Through diverse communications on social media channels such as LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Instagram and Facebook, the organisations reached over 282k people, continuing to significantly grow RJ's digital footprint, compared to reaching over 32k people in year 2022 and 59k in 2023. Detailed engagement statistics below highlight the success and impact of the content the partners released during the week:



Two new blogs by CJS accounted for much of this engagement reaching over 115k people and generating over 2k interactions. Both pieces, [The Role of Art in Communicating Restorative Justice](#) and [We Need to Listen to People in the Justice System](#), emphasised the importance of actively listening to the lived experiences of those within the justice system to inform more compassionate and effective practices. The [interview with Dr. Clair Aldington](#) on how the restorative circle group the Encounter of Encounters tackled international political violence and terrorism with restorative justice and art was also incredibly high performing content, attracting over 51k impressions and 571 interactions across all social media platforms².

3.5. Updated Restorative Justice Animation Video

Community Justice Scotland and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice have updated the [Restorative Justice in Scotland animation video](#) to reflect the current RJ service development across Scotland, and to improve the engagement tool's accessibility.

This collaborative project, originally completed in 2021, was developed to raise awareness and understanding of restorative justice within a Scottish context and covers what RJ is, how the process works and the benefits to people who have experienced or caused harm and to the wider community. The animation was produced with support from the Scottish Government's Restorative Justice Stakeholder Group and included lived experience quotes provided by the charity [Why Me?](#) and [Youth Just Us](#).

Following stakeholder feedback from the [Restorative Justice Animation Impact Survey](#) (2021) conducted with over 340 participants, CJS and CYCJ revised the animation to improve its accessibility, addressing audio quality concerns adding subtitles and more signposting links in description for further information.

The updated animation was finalised in the last quarter and is now publicly available via [Community Justice Scotland's Youtube channel](#) and [CYCJ's webpage dedicated to Restorative Justice](#). It has also been incorporated into the [RJ e-learning platform](#) and will continue to be used in awareness raising sessions and stakeholder/public engagement activities.

The survey respondent suggestions have also been instrumental in shaping plans for a broader animation series that will be developed throughout 2025/26. The future animated video clips will concentrate on topics tailored to diverse audiences – including professionals, the public, and individuals who may want to access RJ – and will incorporate a range of learning styles and accessibility needs.

² This content, along with some of the professionals' quotes, was promoted through sponsored posts on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. As a result, it achieved the highest reach among new audiences, specifically individuals who do not typically engage with CJS's social media accounts.

3.6. Restorative Justice Image Bank

In the last quarter, Community Justice Scotland worked on creating a more representative collection of images that authentically reflect the principles and processes of restorative justice. The photoshoot was carried out in March 2024 and aimed to capture realistic scenarios as well as broader concepts of harm, repair, and reintegration, ensuring representation of communities RJ services serve.

Work is now underway to upload the images to a [Flickr digital photo bank](#), which will be accessible for both stakeholders and public use as a valuable resource in strengthening RJ messaging with relevant and high-quality visuals.

NEXT STEPS

Significant progress has been highlighted across all outcomes of the Restorative Justice Action Plan within 2024-25, and Community Justice Scotland, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice and the Scottish Government will continue to work with stakeholders on the next steps to progress them further toward the development of a national restorative justice infrastructure.

What are the next steps for 2025/26?

The progress will be presented under headings related to the three outcomes of the action plan, as detailed below.

1

Restorative Justice is available across Scotland

In 2025/26, significant work will continue towards the national implementation of restorative justice across Scotland. The focus will remain on building a sustainable, consistent, trauma-responsive, safe and inclusive model of delivery that operates in parallel with the criminal justice system and upholds the rights of those affected by harm, including children and young people.

A key milestone will be the publication of the National Restorative Justice Policy and Practice Framework, scheduled for summer 2025. This Framework, developed through extensive consultation with key stakeholders, expert organisations, and individuals with lived experience, will outline the principles and standards required for high-quality RJ in Scotland. As a living document, it will remain in working format during the test case phase to ensure continuous reflection, feedback, and refinement based on practice, including input from service providers, partner agencies and people who use the services. The Framework will continue to evolve in line with findings from implementation and stakeholder engagement.

Building on the work undertaken to date, Community Justice Scotland and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice will continue to progress the Restorative Justice Test Case Project. A report highlighting learning and key findings on information sharing, risk management, partnership working and tailoring to meet individual needs will be submitted to the Scottish Government by October 2025, however some of these cases might continue to be progressed beyond this date to allow completion, and to support ongoing learning.

CJS will use the insights from this project, along with relevant data, to revise the RJ Delivery Model Options Appraisal Paper. This paper, originally submitted to the Scottish Government in early 2024, considered four potential delivery models ranging from "do minimum" to "do

maximum” options. The revised version will incorporate up-to-date evaluation findings and cost analysis based on real cases to inform estimates on potential costs locally and nationally and support Scottish Government decision-making around a sustainable national RJ model. CYCJ will continue playing a key role in ensuring the rights and needs of children and young people are considered and included in the appraisal process.

With support from the Scottish Government, CYCJ plans to host a stakeholder event later in the year, inviting leaders, experienced practitioners, policymakers and academics from across Scotland to come together to support co-production of next steps for overcoming barriers to ensuring RJ is available throughout the country. Outputs from the event will be captured by CYCJ in a report for the Scottish Government.

Work to support wider policy development and implementation will also continue in 2025/26. CYCJ will continue to be involved in the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, which contains measures designed to improve the experience of victims, witnesses and children who have caused harm. This includes the need to provide greater clarity of victim’s right to request information from the Scottish Children’s Reporter and also the concept of a single point of contact (SPOC) for victims in the Children’s Hearing system to access information and receive support. CYCJ will contribute to this work, led by Victim Support Scotland, to ensure the needs and rights of children (both those who are harmed and those who cause harm) are considered in this process.

Meanwhile, CJS will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service to finalise and implement a national protocol outlining how RJ should be delivered in custodial settings. Both CJS and CYCJ will also continue contributing to national steering and working groups to ensure RJ remains visible within wider policy and practice developments.

In response to stakeholder needs, CJS and CYCJ will explore the development of a digital directory of RJ services in Scotland. This resource will aim to improve public and professional access to accurate, up-to-date information on where and how to engage with RJ services. In parallel, CJS and CYCJ will continue to lead the RJ Development Forum, supporting local areas to build capacity, promote partnership working, and develop RJ services that are locally responsive and consistent with national standards.

Engagement with stakeholders will remain a cornerstone and an ongoing commitment in the next financial year. CJS and CYCJ will collaborate with the RJ Stakeholder group, RJ practitioners and research forums on a national level as well as continue the local engagement with Community Justice Partnerships and Whole System Approach leads, ensuring local contexts and needs are identified and flexibility in RJ delivery is understood, considered and incorporated in the roll out of RJ services. CJS and CYCJ will continue the awareness-raising activities on RJ and its benefits as well as the development of the RJ Action Plan via presentations, workshops and events.

Work will continue to develop restorative approaches across justice, education and community settings. These practices – while distinct from formal RJ methods– compliment them, playing a crucial role in proactive conflict resolution and contributing to a broader culture of repair, prevention, and community wellbeing.

2

High quality Restorative Justice services are delivered by trained facilitators

In 2025/26, Community Justice Scotland and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice will continue to prioritise the development of a skilled and supported restorative justice facilitator workforce, recognising that high-quality service delivery relies on specially trained, knowledgeable and confident practitioners.

Building on training activities delivered during 2024/25, CJS and CYCJ will continue to provide a mix of accessible training opportunities, including both online and in-person formats. In particular, CJS will monitor and evaluate the RJ e-learning module to ensure it remains relevant, up to date, and responsive to the needs of stakeholders. Planned improvements will be informed by user feedback and aligned with the evolving policy and practice landscape.

CJS will also continue to offer RJ and hate crime training to a range of professionals, including Criminal Justice Social Workers, those working within Community Justice Partnerships, and other justice stakeholders. Two RJ and hate crime training courses are currently scheduled for the 2025/26 financial year.

Alongside this delivery, CJS will scope the feasibility of a national RJ Training Programme for Scotland. This work will ensure RJ service design and delivery are informed by evidence and explore sustainable options for supporting ongoing professional training and development opportunities. The aim is to support a national approach to workforce development that is consistent, equitable, and trauma-informed.

CJS and CYCJ will also continue to coordinate practitioner networks and various working groups, which play a vital role in supporting collaboration across sectors, sharing best practice and resources, and identifying future training and support needs.

3

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

In 2025/26, Community Justice Scotland and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice will continue to work together to raise public awareness and understanding of restorative justice across Scotland. A central focus of this work will be the development and implementation of a strategic approach to communications, which will guide coordinated and strategic activity to ensure RJ is more visible, accessible, and understood by a broad and diverse public.

It will support targeted public-facing outreach and engagement, including online and in-person activities designed to reach a wide range of audiences. Activities will also promote the voices of those with lived experience and highlight the benefits of RJ in real-world contexts.

Building on existing work, CJS will further strengthen online communications, with planned improvements to social media content and engagement, and regular website updates with new content. CJS and CYCJ will also continue to lead enhanced communications activity during Restorative Justice Week 2025, aligning with international partners to amplify shared messaging and spotlight RJ developments in Scotland.

In addition, CJS will focus on further development of new digital resources, including accessible tools that will be designed to support members of the public, professionals, and communities in understanding what RJ is, how it works, and how it can be accessed.

CONCLUSION

Over the past year, Community Justice Scotland and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice have made continued progress in supporting the implementation of the Restorative Justice Action Plan and advancing the vision for safe, inclusive, and trauma-informed RJ practice across Scotland that can operate alongside the criminal justice system.

Progress was supported through RJ test case project, stakeholder engagement, and policy advancement. Notably, this year saw significant collaboration with statutory and third-sector partners to explore the operational challenges and opportunities in Scotland. Engagement with the public through targeted communications and innovative outreach forms has also increased, improving public awareness and understanding of RJ and increasing interest from those affected by harm and those who have caused it. This further underscores the urgency of establishing a clear and adequately resourced national infrastructure.

As demand for restorative justice continues to grow, the focus will remain on building a robust, accessible, and evidence-informed model that reflects Scotland's commitment to person-centred justice. Continued partnership working, evidence gathering, and responsive policy development will be essential in shaping the next stage of service development.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

