



SCSN Briefing Paper No 14

The Strategy for Justice in Scotland – Scottish Government 2012

1 Purpose

The purpose of this briefing is to bring to the attention of network members the existence and content of the Strategy for Justice in Scotland, published by the Scottish Government in September 2012.

2 Introduction

The Government defines its purpose, in the context of this document, as *'focusing government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth'*.

The Justice Strategy is intended by the Scottish Government to support this purpose, with its vision of *'a justice system that contributes positively to a flourishing Scotland, helping to create an inclusive and respectful society, in which all people and communities live in safety and security, individual and collective rights are supported, and disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly'*.

It is important to understand what is meant by 'Justice' in the context of the document and how wide ranging the Government expects this work to be. They consider the justice system *'broadly to encompass all of the many people and organisations in the public, third and private sectors that work and interact to keep communities safe and to deliver justice in its various forms - civil, criminal and administrative. This strategy is as much about community safety as it is about justice but we use the term 'justice' as shorthand for the two related concepts'*.

While public sector reform has been the most visible and widely publicised element of the strategy, it is clear that this document is also about the Government defining how partners and organisations will work together to further the aims of the strategy as a whole and community safety in particular.

3 Strategic Approach

The overarching strategy in delivering outcomes is built around partnership working, a focus on the individual as citizen, accused, offender, victim or witness and outcome based performance management. The guiding principles are:

- Greater integration of public services at a local level driven by better Partnership, collaboration and effective local delivery
- A decisive shift towards prevention

- Greater investment in the people who deliver services through enhanced workforce development and effective leadership
- A sharp focus on improving performance, through greater transparency, innovation and use of digital technology.

4 Community Safety

Section 3 of the strategy document discusses the factors which shape the justice system, the supporting evidence gathered in constructing the strategy, justice trends, international experience, what works in delivering outcomes and the geography of justice in Scotland.

Within the section analysing trends, outcomes and performance, paragraph 3.2.4 discusses community safety as a broad concept. It states that evidence spanning various dimensions of community safety shows that Scotland is becoming a safer place to live. Specifically trends, both rising and falling, in the following areas are described:

- Crime
- Perception of risk of crime
- Perceptions of neighbourhood quality
- Community tensions, particularly hate crime and sectarianism
- Illicit drug use
- Fatalities in homes, road accidents and fire casualties

Some of these topics are also covered in paragraph 3.4, which illustrates how certain members of society are more likely, statistically, to become victims or casualties or to have a disproportionate fear of crime. The actions intended to address these issues are defined and set out in Section 5 of this paper.

5 National and Justice Outcomes

There are three National Outcomes, identified as the most relevant from the 16 contained within the National Performance Framework which can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/9>

These are:

- 1 We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger;
- 2 We deliver strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others; and
- 3 Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Eight justice outcomes have been developed which encapsulate what the Government is trying to achieve through this strategy. All of these must be achieved in order to deliver the stated vision and outcomes. Each of these has aligned priorities which are important in their delivery. The outcomes and priorities are as follows:

- 1 We experience low levels of crime

Priorities – Reducing crime, particularly violent and organised crime, tackling the damaging impact of drug and alcohol problems and reducing reoffending.
- 2 We experience low levels of fear, alarm and distress

Priorities – Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime, improving the experiences of victims and witnesses.
- 3 We are at a low risk of unintentional harm

Priorities – Reducing the harm from fires and other emergencies and improving emergency response.
- 4 Our people and communities support and respect each other, exercising both their rights and responsibilities

Priorities – Tackling hate crime and sectarianism, strengthening community engagement and resilience and diverting young people by taking a whole system approach to early years.
- 5 We have high levels of public confidence in justice institutions and processes

Priorities – Transforming the civil justice system by simplifying procedures and improving services.
- 6 Our public services are fair and accessible

Priorities – A focus on widening access to justice, enhancing capability, improving information and advice services, giving people options to engage with alternative dispute resolution and where necessary, providing legal aid to take forward proceedings.
- 7 Our institutions and processes are effective and efficient

Priorities – Reforming the police and fire services, ensuring all organisations are operating efficiently and that working relationships are strong and well organised.
- 8 Our public services respect the rights and voice of users

Priorities – Services must be focussed around the needs of system users, of whom victims are of paramount importance.

An extensive list of front line approaches designed to deliver these priorities can be found in the summary document of the justice strategy, on the following web page: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/09/5160/0.

6 Conclusion

This briefing has been prepared to give quick and accessible guidance to the main content, drivers and intentions of the justice strategy. The strategy is by necessity a more detailed and comprehensive document, but one which should be read with interest within the community safety sector both in terms of outlining Scottish Government strategy and importantly in defining the expectations of how this will happen.

The full justice strategy document can be found at the Scottish Government website, or by visiting the following web page:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/09/5924/0

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