

JUSTICE

THE STRATEGY FOR JUSTICE IN SCOTLAND

SUMMARY



safer
scotland
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

PURPOSE

To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

VISION

Our vision is 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

NATIONAL OUTCOMES

We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger

We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others

Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

JUSTICE OUTCOMES

We experience low levels of crime

We experience low levels of fear, alarm and distress

We are at a low risk of unintentional harm

Our people and communities support and respect each other, exercising both their rights and responsibilities

We have high levels of confidence in justice institutions and processes

Our public services are fair and accessible

Our institutions and processes are effective and efficient

Our public services respect the rights and voices of users

PRIORITIES

Reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime

Reducing reoffending

Tackling hate crime and sectarianism

Enhancing efficiency

Supporting victims and witnesses

Widening access to justice and advancing law reform

Reducing the damaging impacts of drug and alcohol problems

Preventing offending by young people

Reducing the harm from fires and other emergencies

Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime

Strengthening community engagement and resilience

Transforming civil and administrative justice

APPROACH

Building safer communities

Getting it right for every child

Whole system approach

Making justice work

Victims and witnesses legislation

Reducing reoffending II

Road to recovery

Equally well

Early years framework

Achieving our potential

Reassuring the public

Police and fire reform

**THE STRATEGY FOR
JUSTICE IN SCOTLAND: SUMMARY**

Contents

Introduction	01
Outcomes	04
Evidence	07
Priorities	09
Reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime	10
Reducing the damaging impacts of drug and alcohol problems	11
Preventing offending by young people	12
Reducing reoffending	13
Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime	14
Reducing the harm from fires and other emergencies	15
Tackling hate crime and sectarianism	16
Strengthening community engagement and resilience	17
Transforming civil and administrative justice	18
Widening access to justice and advancing law reform	19
Enhancing efficiency	20
Supporting victims and witnesses	21
Innovation	22
Ambition	24
Taking the strategy forward	26

Introduction

Upholding the rule of law and protecting society are essential not only to support a flourishing economy in Scotland but to ensure that people lead productive lives in safe and secure communities.

This strategy sets out our approach to making the justice system in Scotland fit for the 21st century. The justice system is broadly defined to include the many people and organisations who work to keep our communities safe and to administer justice in its various forms: civil, criminal and administrative.

The justice system is a vital public service and one in which powers are already largely devolved to the Scottish Parliament. In recent years, the Scottish Government, working closely with many partners, has demonstrated how much can be achieved when decisions about Scotland are taken within Scotland by people committed to delivering the best outcomes for Scotland.

“Transforming justice in Scotland will require a collaborative approach across the public sector.”

Using the full powers made available to us, we have implemented a distinctive and highly effective approach. At its heart, this approach is about doing the right thing for the people of Scotland; it is based on the following principles:

- **outcome-focused:** we are focused on the single Purpose and National Outcomes to make a tangible difference to the lives of the people of Scotland. For example, we are investing both in early years programmes to reduce the factors that can lead to future offending and in diversionary activities for young people at high risk of offending; and we have given our police service a new statutory purpose to work in partnership with others to increase the wellbeing of communities.
- **evidence-based:** we have looked harder and more systematically at the evidence than ever before and have done what the evidence tells us is most effective, even when that has not been the easiest thing to do. For example, we have acted to reduce the number of short prison sentences for less serious offenders because the evidence tells us community sentences work better to reduce reoffending and therefore make our communities safer.
- **clear priorities:** we have used the evidence and our focus on outcomes to identify clear priorities to guide our collective effort. These priorities include reducing crime and supporting victims; addressing the underlying causes of crime, such as alcohol and drug misuse; and preventing offending by young people. They include reducing harm from fires and other emergencies and tackling social issues such as hate crime and sectarianism. And they focus on transforming civil and administrative justice and reforming the law itself.
- **innovative:** we have developed new, internationally recognised approaches. For example we have developed a multi-agency approach to map and tackle serious organised crime; we are tackling violent crime through a new assets-based approach; our *No Knives, Better Lives* initiative has contributed to widespread reductions in knife crime; and our recovery-focused drugs strategy has dramatically increased access to treatment.
- **ambitious:** we have done the difficult things necessary to deliver the right outcomes. For example we are implementing radical reform of the police and fire and rescue services to protect frontline capability from financial cuts; we are undertaking the most radical transformation of the courts and tribunals system in at least a century; and we are taking determined measures to eradicate the scourge of sectarianism from our society.

This approach has worked:

- **Recorded crime now stands at a 37-year low.** It has fallen by a quarter since 2006/7.
- Consequently, there were **126,000 fewer victims** of crime in 2010/11 than in 2006.
- In part, these achievements underline our sustained investment in a highly effective police service **with over 1,000 extra police officers** and crime clear-up rates at record highs.
- These achievements reflect our success in dealing effectively and proportionately with offenders: **re-offending rates are at their lowest in a decade**; sentence lengths for knife crime have risen by 79% since 2006/7; and our courts are now much more efficient than when we took office.
- They also reflect our progress in reducing and preventing offending by young people: **the number of children referred to the Children's Reporter on offence grounds was down 31%** in 2011/12.
- They demonstrate our headway in tackling the underlying causes of crime, for example the number of adults who reported **taking an illicit drug in the last year has fallen by over a fifth** since 2006.

- More generally, we have recorded wider successes in improving community safety. For example, the **overall number of fires in Scotland has fallen by 20%** since 2006/7, and accidental dwelling fires are at their lowest level since devolution.

Despite this positive track record of progress, we recognise there is much work still to be done. We know that we have deep and entrenched problems in our society which need to be tackled, particularly relating to young offenders, knife crime, drug misuse and sectarianism. We also face financial challenges, as the current models of service delivery are not financially sustainable in the long term.

In response to these challenges, the Scottish Government is working with its partners to transform how the justice system operates. This transformation involves improving local services, creating more equal access, speeding up delivery of justice and offering effective alternatives to custodial sentences. The changes will also greatly improve how victims and witnesses experience the justice system. To achieve this transformation will require a collaborative approach across the public sector.

This summary document outlines the aims and priorities of our justice strategy, and the approaches we will take to ensure that our vision of a safer and flourishing Scotland is realised.

Outcomes

Reform of the justice system is at the heart of the Scottish Government's public service reform agenda.

The justice system we aim to deliver has specific goals which are designed to make a real difference to both our society and our economy. This vision has been defined as follows:

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, where individual and collective rights are supported, and where disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly.

This vision will be delivered through a set of outcomes, consistent with the National Performance Framework which guides all public services in Scotland towards our shared Purpose:

to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

The strategy is focused on three National Outcomes which are particularly relevant and guide our work within the justice system. These are:

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

These three National Outcomes have been broken down to a set of eight 'justice outcomes' which describe the Scotland we want to create and sustain, and which capture the key aims of the strategy. These are:

We experience low levels of crime.

We experience low levels of fear, alarm and distress.

We are at a low risk of unintentional harm.

Our people and communities support and respect each other, exercising both their rights and responsibilities.

We have high levels of public confidence in justice institutions and processes.

Our public services are fair and accessible.

Our institutions and processes are effective and efficient.

Our public services respect the rights and voice of users.

Based firmly on evidence, we believe that focusing our activity and resources on delivering these outcomes is the best way to deliver our justice vision.

The justice vision places people at its centre, whether they are victims, witnesses or people seeking civil justice. Equally, it is crucial that people who offend are given punishment that is both effective and proportionate, to better protect society from future offending.

We know from the evidence that social and economic factors are at the root of many criminal and civil justice problems, ranging from fire deaths to sectarianism.

This tells us that the justice system cannot solve these problems in isolation. Instead, it requires all relevant people within the broader public sector and our partners to take responsibility and work together in helping to prevent crime and social harm. This includes the police, fire and rescue service, health, education, social services, the courts, tribunals and the law itself.

It also means that work with children, young people and parents is crucial, as is working to reduce poverty and disadvantage which we know are major contributing factors to many justice issues in Scotland. Partnership working must be focused on the **person**, not the problem.

NUMBER OF RECORDED CRIMES AND OFFENCES (EXCLUDING MOTORING OFFENCES)

651,630
2006-07

**LOWEST FOR
A GENERATION**



Evidence

Robust evidence is the essential underpinning of our strategic approach. It guides our priorities and helps to identify what works best to deliver them. This evidence is set out in the supporting Evidence Paper, which is part of the much broader evidence base developed by the Scottish Government and its partners and by academia including the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and the Scottish Institute for Policing Research.

The strategy draws upon various types of evidence. It looks first at the contextual evidence, helping us to understand the broader factors that help to shape both justice outcomes and the environment in which justice institutions operate. These factors include demographic trends, socio-economic factors and technological developments. As the Evidence Paper describes, there are many examples of such factors affecting justice outcomes; a key one is Scotland's high consumption of alcohol, underlining the need to address this issue as a means to improving a range of outcomes.

It then considers justice in Scotland in both historical and international perspective, helping to identify which issues are particularly relevant for modern Scotland. For example, we know that while homicide rates have been on a downward trend in recent years, they remain relatively high compared to our international peers. This reinforces our commitment to reduce violent crime.

The strategy draws upon evidence of which interventions work most effectively to deliver our outcomes. A series of evidence accounts has been developed in support of the justice outcomes and our major reform programmes. For example, the evidence tells us that community sentences are a much better route to reducing reoffending for less serious offenders than short prison sentences and so this has become a key part of our approach.

An Equalities Assessment has been undertaken to support the strategy. This focuses in particular on data and evidence relating to protected equalities characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. It identifies problems that are experienced disproportionately by different equalities groups and helps us to guide our interventions towards improving equalities outcomes.

Finally, the strategy considers the geography of justice in Scotland. This evidence demonstrates how poor justice outcomes are concentrated in certain localities and underlines the need to focus interventions on particular places in order to deliver national improvement.

In combination, this evidence base has helped to identify the clear priorities at the centre of our strategic approach, and the best means to deliver them.



To find out more about the supporting evidence, read our accompanying [Evidence Paper](#).

Priorities

This strategy sets out our ambitious and innovative approach to justice in Scotland. Our approach is grounded firmly in the evidence and is above all about doing what is right for the people of Scotland, using the full powers at our disposal to achieve better outcomes.

Extensive evidence has helped us identify 12 priority areas for action. These are the areas which will have an important impact on successfully delivering our justice outcomes and vision.

This section summarises the priorities and approaches for each of the justice outcomes.

We experience low levels of crime

Although crime and victimisation in Scotland are falling they are still too high, and levels of violent crime are higher than in the UK and much of Europe. Levels of anti-social behaviour and knife crime amongst young people are also high.

Based on the evidence we know that, alongside deterring and reducing the opportunities to commit crime, tackling the root causes of crime is central to reducing crime.

Four priorities have therefore been identified to support this outcome.

Priority 1: Reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime

Reducing crime is our first priority. Recorded crime has already fallen significantly but we want to go further. Given that the root causes of crime lie beyond the justice system, this priority must be achieved by collaborating with other public service partners.

In particular, we are tackling Scotland's high rate of violent crime and working to disrupt and dismantle serious organised crime.

Approach:

- Work jointly with partners in other agencies to create innovative ways to both prevent and reduce high risk and vulnerable groups committing crime at an early stage; working with children and families is a priority.
- Take a 'public health' approach to violent crime, knife crime in particular, with a focus on prevention and early intervention before even the first indication of violence.
- Ensure courts have sufficient powers and discretion to punish violent offenders appropriately.
- Ensure those already involved in violent crime are given help to change their behaviour.
- Continue to support innovative partnership approaches to violence reduction, and the "No Knives, Better Lives" youth programme to prevent and deter young people from carrying and using knives.
- Increase detection and certainty of punishment, particularly for violent crime.
- Apply a range of measures to reduce sex crime and protect society from sex offenders.
- Pursue our ground-breaking, multi-agency approach to map and tackle serious organised crime and seize criminal assets.
- Take strong action to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women, including providing support to victims from key frontline services and working with perpetrators through our ground-breaking Caledonian system.

NUMBER OF RECORDED CRIMES OF POSSESSION OF AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON

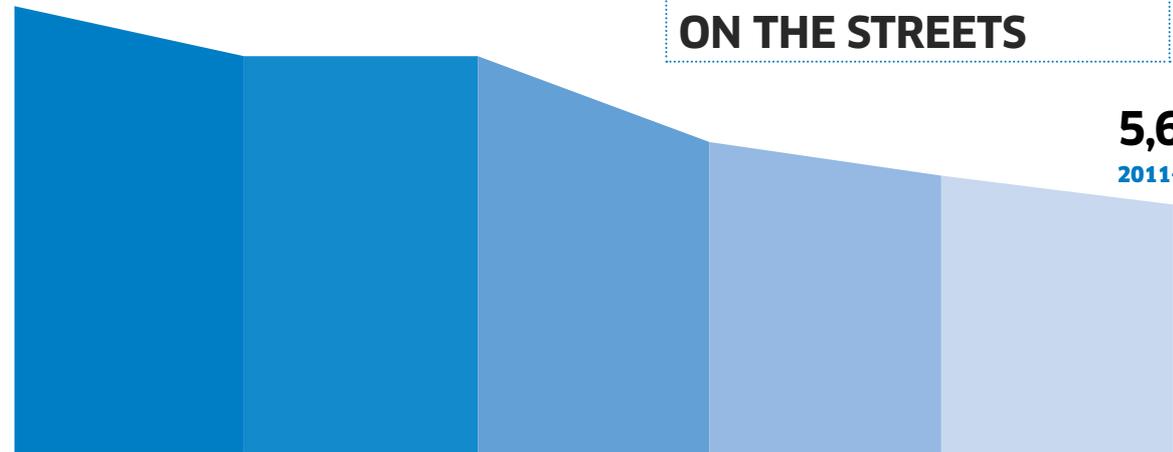
10,110

2006-07

**44% FEWER WEAPONS
ON THE STREETS**

5,631

2011-12



Sentence lengths for knife crime have increased by 79% since 06/07; offensive weapon possession has fallen by 44%

Priority 2: Reducing the damaging impacts of drug and alcohol problems

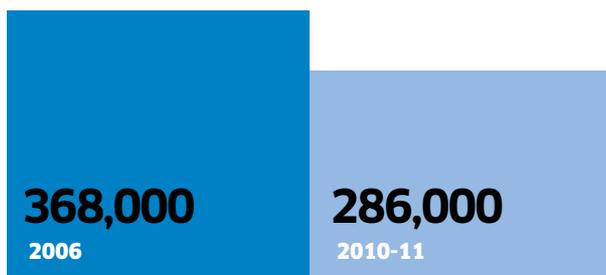
Alcohol is a significant factor in violent crime, and illegal drug use is linked to both acquisitive crime and organised criminal gangs. Our approach involves tough enforcement, coupled with person-centred recovery, so that the impacts of drug and alcohol misuse can be contained and addressed.

Approach:

- Deliver our “Road to Recovery” drugs strategy, including:
 - o better protection and support of children whose parents misuse substances
 - o disruption to the supply of drugs into communities
 - o providing opportunities for people to access appropriate treatment and support for their recovery including at all stages of the justice and prison systems

o reduce excessive alcohol consumption through *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol*. including the introduction of minimum unit pricing for alcohol and record investment in prevention, treatment and support services

SELF-REPORTED DRUG USE DOWN BY OVER A FIFTH



Individuals in the general adult population taking any drugs in the last year have declined by more than a fifth since 2006. Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

Priority 3: Preventing offending by young people

Evidence shows that poor criminal and civil justice outcomes are clearly associated with multiple deprivation in terms of poverty, poor health and poor attainment so improving children's early years experience and tackling inequality are key.

There are already a number of social policy frameworks in place to tackle these significant social problems. We are also working in partnership to divert those at high risk of offending away from crime.

Approach:

- Continue to focus on the delivery frameworks aimed at maximising families' resources, raising parenting skills, improving child wellbeing and reducing the impact of poverty on children; these include the *Early Years Framework* and *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC).
- Invest over £270 million in an Early Years Change Fund to move from crisis management to prevention and early intervention at a local level, while meeting the needs of the individual.
- Through our Cashback for Communities initiative, we have invested £47 million, confiscated through the Proceeds of Crime Act, to help 600,000 young people take part in sporting, cultural and community projects.
- Support young people who offend through the "whole system" approach by removing unnecessary bureaucracy and enabling more timely, joined-up and appropriate interventions to divert young people from crime.

Priority 4: Reducing reoffending

Reducing the rate of reoffending is crucial as many crimes are committed by people with prior convictions. Each time someone is sentenced or convicted is an opportunity to help them desist from crime and recover from their problems, which might be drug or alcohol misuse, mental health issues or violence. From evidence, we know that to achieve this requires the integration of multiple public services to tackle the underlying reasons for offending behaviour.

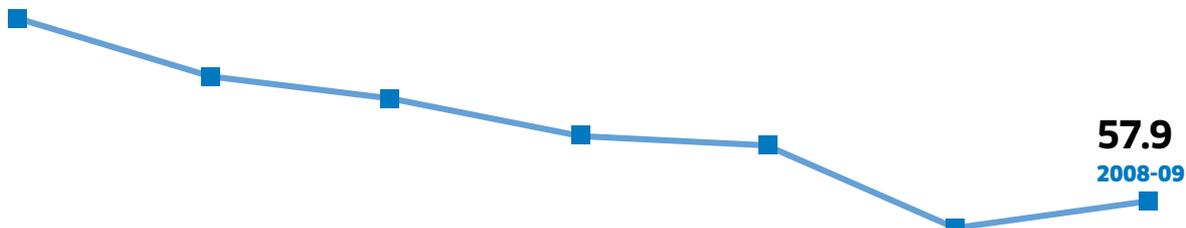
Approach:

- Continue to deliver effective community sentencing through the new Community Payback Order which is a crucial alternative to custody. The orders are a more constructive form of justice where offenders pay back the community they have harmed with unpaid work, and receive help to get back on track.

- Focus on early intervention by building on the existing Reducing Reoffending Programme and other community justice initiatives such as the “whole system” approach.
- Improve commissioning and rehabilitation services with a fundamental review of funding, a new performance management framework and a review of “Voluntary Throughcare”.
- Ensure better cross-system working by helping prisoners to access health, housing and support into employment when they leave custody.
- Target prolific offenders to reduce cost and social harm.

REDUCED REOFFENDING

63.9
2002-03



One year reconviction frequency rate

We experience low levels of fear, alarm and distress

The evidence tells us that, overall, people are feeling safer in their communities. This is important as a lack of local safety and security can inhibit community engagement and people can become socially excluded. However, there is still a gap between the public's perceived risk and actual risk of crime which needs to be addressed.

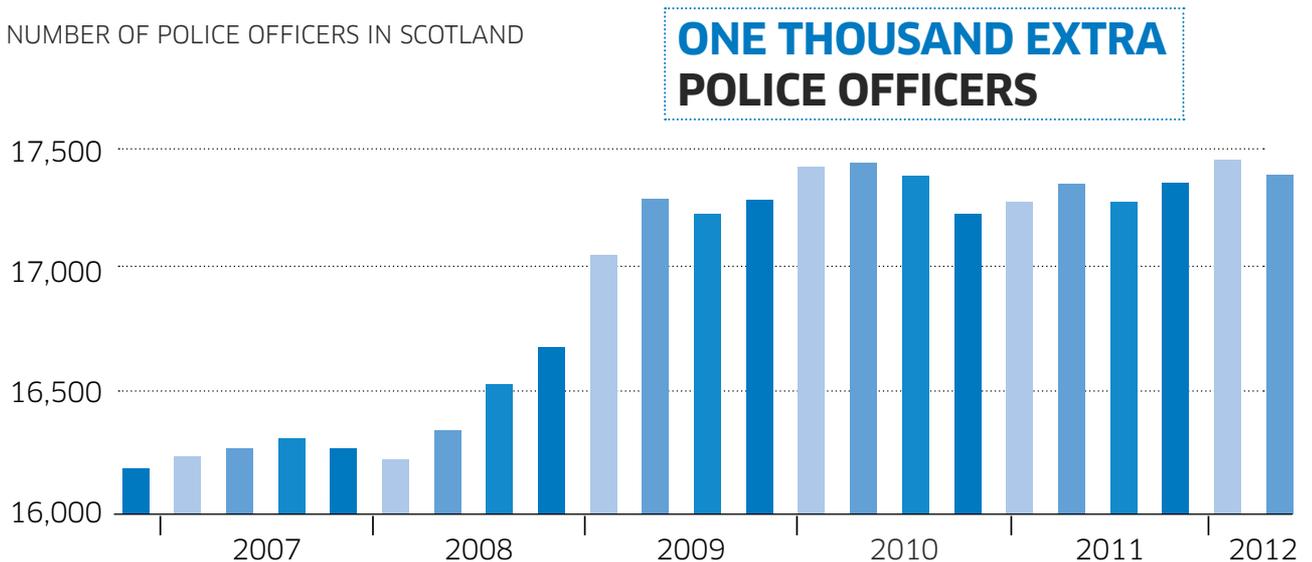
Priority 5: Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime

Approach:

- Provide visible policing, supported by our commitment to maintain 1,000 extra officers in communities.

- Ensure that victims and witnesses have positive experiences of, and confidence in, the justice system.
- Support to develop the resources of individuals and communities, such as CashBack for Communities.
- Ensure effective communication between justice organisations and local communities.
- Reassure the public that people who commit crimes will be dealt with, and that the most serious criminals will be imprisoned.

NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND



We are at a low risk of unintentional harm

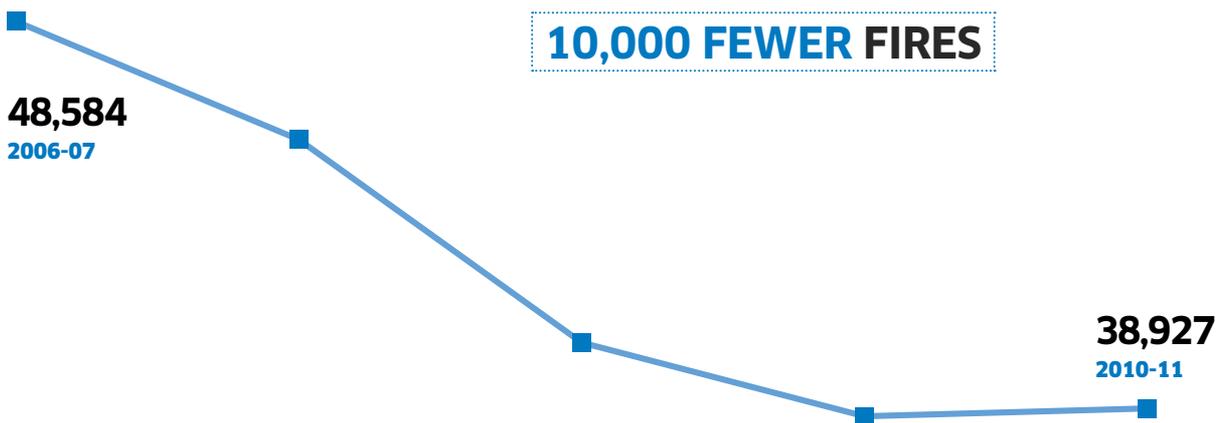
As in any society, people in Scotland face various types of risk of unintentional harm. Most of these risks are on positive downward trends as we have already achieved a great deal in reducing accidental injuries, damage and death. However, certain areas require continued focus. For example, Scotland still has a higher rate of fire casualties than other parts of the UK. Measures to improve personal safety at home, within communities and on the roads are also required.

Priority 6: Reducing the harm from fires and other emergencies

Approach:

- Deliver our ambitious plans for a new single Fire and Rescue Service for Scotland to protect frontline services and enhance effectiveness.
- Ensure that individuals, businesses and communities are equipped to reduce fire risk, prevent fires happening, and minimise injury or damage from fire and other emergencies.
- Continue to invest in national and local multi-agency arrangements to ensure people and communities are as prepared as possible to deal with emergencies.

NUMBER OF FIRES IN SCOTLAND



The overall number of fires in Scotland has fallen by 20% since 2006/7, and accidental dwelling fires are at their lowest level since devolution

Our people and communities support and respect each other, exercising both their rights and responsibilities

Enabling people to take personal and collective responsibility for themselves and others, and involving them in local decision-making can help build safer and more resilient communities.

Some communities, however, still foster intolerance and prejudice towards those who seem different. In particular, stamping out sectarianism and hate crimes against society requires long-term effort and a community-led approach to promote respect for the rights of others.

We have always supported Scotland's diverse communities and must continue to lower barriers and eliminate fear and distrust to achieve the "One Scotland" aim of tackling sectarianism, racism and bigotry.

Priority 7: Tackling hate crime and sectarianism

Approach:

- Invest £9 million over three years to tackle sectarianism in Scotland by healing divides which cause fear, mistrust and suspicion of others.
- Tackle the underlying reasons for sectarian behaviour.
- Give victims more confidence to report hate crimes by strengthening legislation to ensure that victims receive a good service from the police and justice agencies.
- Fund both the Scottish Inter Faith Council to support interfaith relations and "Belief in Dialogue", a good practice guide to improving relations created by the Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief Relations.
- Provide nearly £9 million during 2012/15 to tackle racist attitudes and improve the lives of minority ethnic communities in Scotland.

Priority 8: Strengthening community engagement and resilience

Approach:

- Ensure that the new single police and fire and rescue services are responsive to citizens' needs through increased local accountability and more effective collaboration with community planning partnerships.
- Strengthen social networks and the opportunities for people to help each other through the "Link Up" CashBack for Communities-funded project. This helps people to resolve problems without resorting to the police, social work or health services.
- Improve community engagement so that hate crimes and the under-reporting of crime against minority communities is tackled more effectively.
- Enhance community resilience by working with the voluntary sector and supporting outreach work to empower people to cope both with potential disasters such as fire or flood, and everyday challenges faced by those in need.

“The new single police and fire and rescue services will be responsive to citizens’ needs through increased local accountability and more effective collaboration with community planning partnerships.”

“The clear-up rate for all recorded crime of 49% remains at the highest level in over 30 years; for violent crime, the clear-up rate is 75%, a 36-year high.”

We have high levels of public confidence in justice institutions and processes

Although confidence in the justice system is slowly improving, there are still those who doubt its fairness, accessibility and treatment of victims and witnesses.

Modernising the court and tribunal estate to reflect users’ needs, patterns of business and travel, and to take advantage of information technology will help give people more confidence in, and respect for, the justice system. Also important is improving people’s knowledge and experience of how investigating and sentencing decisions are made. Ensuring that disputes are dealt with in the right forum, that judges have the right kind of experience for the case in hand, and that the judiciary is diverse, appointed on merit and well trained, will help maintain public respect for the legal process.

Priority 9: Transforming civil and administrative justice

Approach:

- Reform the courts and tribunal system to provide more access and options when resolving disputes.
- Ensure that low value or straightforward cases are dealt with at the appropriate level in the court system.
- Modernising the court and tribunal estate to reflect users’ needs and harness new technology.
- Introduce a unified structure for all Scottish tribunals to increase efficiency, simplicity and cost-effectiveness.
- Encourage self-representation by putting the user at the centre of an accessible and affordable tribunal system.

Our public services are fair and accessible

Every person in Scotland has a right to be treated fairly with equal life chances and access to services. But these rights are only worthwhile if they can be exercised. Reducing inequality and supporting these rights and life chances will improve safety and security for everyone.

Priority 10: Widening access to justice and advancing law reform

Approach:

- Increase public knowledge and understanding of civil law, such as family law, consumer protection and employment rights.
 - Maintain the broad scope of legal aid, while pursuing efficiencies and developing new models of delivering access to justice.
 - Reform criminal procedure and update the body of criminal and civil law to keep pace with changes in society and international standards.
- Improve public education, information and advice services about the justice system.
 - Resolve disputes more quickly and efficiently by promoting alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as mediation.

Our institutions and processes are effective and efficient

Progress has already been made in cutting costs, however, the justice system must also be fit and financially sustainable for the 21st century. Further efficiencies need to be made while safeguarding accountability, consistency and compatibility.

Priority 11: Enhancing efficiency

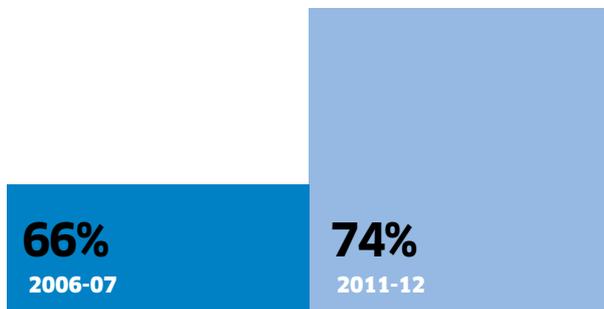
Approach:

- Reform the police and fire and rescue services to:
 - o protect and improve frontline services, reduce duplication, and provide services more innovatively

- o make communities safer by providing more equitable access to specialist support, expertise and national capacity when, and where, it is needed
- o strengthen relationships between local authorities, services and communities
- Continue to work on improving processes for getting people to court, avoiding people being called unnecessarily to court, ensuring an efficient and timely flow of information among partners, and upgrading IT and management systems.
- Create a unified Scottish Tribunals Service.
- Ensure that expensive court time is used proportionately and efficiently.

SUMMARY COURT CASES COMPLETED WITHIN 6 MONTHS

NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF CASES COMPLETED WITHIN 6 MONTHS



Our public services respect the rights and voice of users

We must continue to treat victims with fairness, respect and inclusivity, so they are not seen as passive spectators, but as people with legitimate needs. Similarly, being a witness is an important civic duty and should be recognised and valued as such.

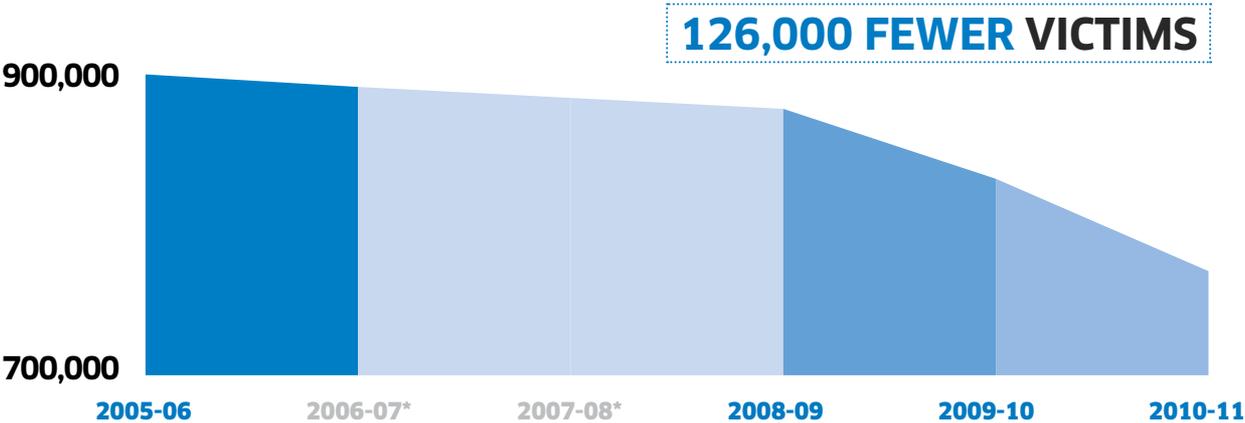
Priority 12: Supporting victims and witnesses

Approach:

- Ensure that services to victims and witnesses are improved through proposals in the Victims and Witnesses Bill, which include:

- o creating an automatic right to special measures for victims in cases involving sexual offences and domestic abuse
- o introducing a victim surcharge so that offenders pay towards the cost of supporting victims
- o placing a duty on relevant public agencies to set clear standards of service for victims and witnesses
- o improving the way cases are managed, so that when victims and witnesses are required to give evidence the case will go ahead on the day as planned
- o giving victims the right to contribute directly to parole decisions for criminals subject to life sentences

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VICTIMS IN SCOTLAND



Falling crime means that 126,000 fewer people in Scotland were the victim of crime in 2010-11 than in 2006 *Figures not estimated

Innovation

Innovation is central to our approach. To tackle some of Scotland's most enduring and complex problems, we know that business as usual is not enough. We must continually look for ways to do things better and more cost-effectively, informed by the evidence of what works. That means harnessing new technologies and embracing new ways of working.

Working with our partners, we have demonstrated a track record of innovation. We have commissioned leading experts such as Lord Carloway, Lord Gill, Dame Elish Angiolini and the late Campbell Christie to cast a critical eye over problem areas and key services and to recommend innovative solutions. These reviews have helped to shape the future agenda for criminal and civil justice in Scotland and how we organise our public services and focus our resources.

Several examples illustrate our innovative approach. The significant recent reductions in violent crime have been supported by a 'public health' approach to tackling violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention. Key to this is the commitment to support the national Violence Reduction Unit in developing innovative practice. Another example is the development of the *No Knives, Better Lives* youth engagement programme, which provides education and support to young people to prevent and deter knife carrying and use.

In tackling problem drug use, our ground-breaking *Road to Recovery* strategy makes it clear that recovery is the aim of all drug treatment and rehabilitation services, and that this requires both a significant change in the way that services are planned, commissioned and delivered and wider cultural change to challenge stigmatising behaviours.

Elsewhere, we have made inroads in tackling serious organised crime, by developing an intelligence analysis method which, for the first time, is able to measure the number, nature and geographic distribution of organised criminals and groups in Scotland. This has enabled a more informed and tailored response to tackling organised crime which involves: diverting people away from organised crime and its markets; disrupting organised criminal activities; protecting communities, businesses and the public sector; and improving the arrangements for co-ordination among partner agencies.

In the courts system, the Making Justice Work programme is transforming efficiency through new measures, including the use of video conferencing and a text messaging scheme to remind witnesses to attend court. In addition, we have worked with partners to improve efficiency through an award-winning IT project – the Cross Agency Information Sharing Hub. This ‘data hub’ establishes whether people due to appear in court are already in prison, enabling the accused to be brought from prison for the hearing and eliminating a common reason for delay. This innovation, alongside wider measures to improve the attendance of witnesses has the potential to generate significant efficiency savings.

These innovative solutions, and many others, have helped to deliver the progress recorded in recent years and will continue to support our ambitious agenda into the future.

“We must continually look for ways to do things better and more cost-effectively, informed by the evidence of what works.”

Ambition

Our vision and outcomes articulate our ambition for justice in 21st century Scotland. Through our priorities, we have made clear our intent to tackle some of Scotland's most entrenched problems including violence, problem drug use and sectarianism.

Already, we have set ourselves challenging targets and have delivered against them. We have accelerated court processes – meeting and surpassing our target to increase the percentage of criminal cases in summary courts completed within 26 weeks. We have succeeded in reducing the rate of reoffending. And we are on course to meet our national target that by March 2013 90% of people will wait no longer than three weeks from referral to appropriate drug or alcohol treatment that supports their recovery.

Despite the clear progress to date, we know both that we can never be complacent and that we have more work to do. The evidence shows us that there are areas in which outcomes are currently weaker in Scotland than in comparable countries, and areas where there are better ways of addressing issues. Working with our partners, we are taking tangible steps to deliver on our ambitious agenda, harnessing all the powers currently available to us to act in the best interests of Scotland.

In the police and fire and rescue services for example, we are implementing the most significant reform in over a generation. This reform will enable us to protect and improve local services by stopping duplication of support services. It will create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity. And it will strengthen local accountability by establishing a new formal relationship with every local authority, creating the opportunity to involve many more local councillors and better integrating police and fire services with community planning partnerships.

In parallel, we are also undertaking the most radical transformation of our court and tribunal system in at least a century. In terms of criminal justice, for example,

Lord Carloway has proposed a series of reforms that will put Scotland at the forefront of human rights practice. In civil justice, Lord Gill has drawn up a bold reform agenda designed to ensure that cases are managed effectively and are dealt with at the right level. And our ambition for the tribunal system is to deliver an integrated tribunal service, by bringing separate tribunals into a unified structure under single leadership. This aims to deliver improved efficiency, more effective judicial deployment, enhanced independence and greater consistency of practice.

These reforms demonstrate that we are ambitious for Scotland. As the next section will show, we have put the framework in place to deliver on that ambition.

“Despite the clear progress to date, we know both that we can never be complacent and that we have more work to do.”

Taking the strategy forward

The Scottish Government and our partners are fully committed to taking forward the approaches set out in this document to deliver our shared vision and outcomes.

We believe that it is only through the pursuit of such an ambitious and innovative approach, rooted firmly in the evidence, that we will secure our desired outcomes for the people of Scotland.

Progress towards achieving the strategic outcomes will be formally monitored and managed by the Justice Board, which includes Scottish Government Directors, non-Executive Directors and the heads of key justice organisations.

The members of the Justice Board positively endorse the strategic approach set out in this strategy. While respecting the proper separation of powers essential in a fair justice system, they will develop business planning, co-ordinate risk management and monitor delivery of both the portfolio of justice change

programmes and ongoing core business. They will support communication and improve partnership working at all levels across justice organisations.

In addition to monitoring overall progress using annual National Performance Framework indicators, a new set of indicators will be developed to monitor benefits, outputs and progress towards the justice outcomes.

To achieve our justice vision and outcomes requires a joint effort and co-operation from all sectors of society – the public sector, partners, businesses, communities and individuals. It may be a challenging task but, as a shared endeavour, we feel confident that we will successfully achieve our aim of making Scotland safer and stronger. The evidence has demonstrated that we are already making good progress but there is much good work still to be done.

“Our vision is 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, where individual and collective rights are supported, and where disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly.”



For more information or to comment on *The Strategy for Justice in Scotland* you can find the full strategy and supporting evidence paper at <http://scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/justicestrategy>

Or please contact
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**The Scottish
Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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ISBN: 978-1-78045-889-2

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APS Group Scotland
DPPAS12887 (09/12)

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