



Children and Young People's
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Next Steps for Restorative Justice in Scotland: Stakeholder Insights and Pathways Forward

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Introduction

This paper reports on work produced at *Restorative Justice in Scotland: A Day of Reflection, Learning and Action, with a focus on children and young people*, which took place in Glasgow on Tuesday 18 November 2025, hosted by the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) and supported by Scottish Government. The event invited 80 leaders, policy makers, experienced restorative justice (RJ) practitioners, and academics from a broad range of statutory and third sector organisations across Scotland to reflect on learning from the current RJ landscape, and to work together to co-produce next steps for overcoming barriers to ensuring RJ is available to all. Appendix 1 provides a list of participating organisations. Whilst the day was designed to support development of RJ provision more generally, there was a focus on children¹ and young people in Scotland. This paper presents analysis of key themes, learning and recommendations from the day and is intended for consideration alongside other key documents and reports produced by the Restorative Justice National Team² as part of wider work to support delivery of the Scottish Government's Restorative Justice Action Plan³.

Roundtable discussions centred upon four key questions:

- How do we maximise opportunities to use RJ as a tool to support Scotland's response to harm caused by (and to) children?
- How do we develop a more co-ordinated approach to promote the benefits of and access to RJ with relevant groups and the wider public?
- What are the current barriers to a national RJ service/provision and how do we overcome those barriers (i.e. solutions)?
- What are the key messages from children and young people, and what are the unique opportunities of RJ with children and young people?

Delegates were also invited to design the future of RJ in Scotland using activities built on co-design principles adopted throughout the Scottish Approach to Service Design and based on Promise Design Tools and included consideration for evaluating and measuring the success of their designs. The findings from this exercise have been incorporated into the recommendations of the report with the write up attached as Appendix 2.

¹ Within this report 'a child' or 'children' refers to a person under the age of 18 in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

² Scottish Government has continued to provide funding for a Project Manager, two full time and one part time RJ Project Leads, a development and comms officers and administrative support. Posts are hosted by Community Justice Scotland and CYCJ, ensuring links with community justice partnerships and the third sector. CYCJ's role is to ensure that specific consideration is given to the needs of children and young people in conflict with the law and child victims.

³ [Restorative Justice Action Plan](#)

Key thematic findings

Data provided by delegates at the event was coded thematically with clear recommendations emerging as follows.

Communications

“At its core RJ is simple, it’s about narratives and stories”

Throughout the day there were consistent messages coming from delegates on the theme of communications. Delegates identified that stories communicating the power of RJ for healing are the best tool we have for helping to increase knowledge and understanding of RJ in both practitioner and public audiences.

A strong need for a coordinated approach to raising awareness, supported by key partners and targeted at both local and national level, was identified consistently by delegates. A communications strategy should be led by clear and consistent messaging and carefully considered language, which makes clear what RJ is, promotes potential benefits⁴ and underpinning principles, as well as providing clarity on how to access RJ services. Resounding support was expressed for the voice of those with lived experience and human stories to centre communications work, and for good examples of RJ working effectively. Many delegates felt that messages should also highlight the financial benefits of RJ on the public purse. Good quality accessible resources which consider the needs of specialist groups should support this work. It is hoped, as well as widening access to RJ services, this work could help address misconceptions and misunderstandings of restorative justice. Delegates hoped this may even challenge wider societal values associated with punitive approaches to harm and remedy.

Where children and young people have caused harm to others, delegates spoke of promoting narratives and knowledge through a developmental lens, which supports understanding of the drivers behind children's harmful behaviour whilst highlighting the unique healing pathway restorative justice offers to individuals and communities harmed. Delegates highlighted that for the child who has harmed, this creates opportunity to examine the impact of their behaviour in a supported and relationship-focussed intervention, which can reduce risk of causing future harm to themselves and others.

⁴ Why me? Offer a range of resources to support effective communication of restorative justice [How to get the message out about Restorative Justice — Why me? Restorative Justice](#)

Delegates suggested RJ promotional material and activity should consider a rights-based rhetoric, drawing on existing policy and legislation as its bedrock⁵.

Recommendation

Develop a co-ordinated awareness raising campaign through promotion of real-life stories, which communicates clear and consistent messages, promotes restorative justice as an option available to those impacted by harm, and highlights the financial benefits of RJ.

Produce high quality, accessible resources, which consider the needs of specialist and diverse groups.

Leadership and Culture

“Is Scotland ready and culturally motivated for RJ to be embedded?”

Delegates identified key issues and challenges on the theme of leadership and culture. Strong leadership and “buy-in” is essential; for local and national champions to drive awareness raising and effectively address barriers to RJ access. There is a need to build trust, overcome barriers and support increased confidence with leaders and representatives from groups and organisations who hold concern or have historically expressed distrust of RJ. For example, leaders from victims' organisations and those working to support and advocate for women and children affected by domestic and sexual violence.

Several attendees at the event considered Police Scotland and Victim Support Scotland key partners to support “national level push” of RJ. Collaborative messaging and leadership were identified by delegates as critical to supporting a positive ‘landing’ of any new funds or service structures. For example, there was a message expressed by many that funding for RJ should not take from other vital support services that meet the needs of those harmed by crime. It was identified by delegates that widened access to RJ services could alleviate pressure on other statutory services and suggested that further research to explore this in a Scottish context could be useful in making the case for a national RJ framework for sustainable funding.

Recommendation

Create conditions for collaborative buy-in from all relevant leaders and agencies to support a robust partnership approach to embedding RJ at a local and national level.

⁵ [The Victims' Rights Directive](#) establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and ensures that persons who have fallen victim to crime are recognised and treated with respect. They must receive proper protection, support and access to justice.

Legislative and Policy Drivers

“Uniformalise a service across the country”

Throughout the day a range of suggestions and ideas were generated by delegates in respect of legislative and policy drivers. One clear message conveyed was that strong leadership across the whole system is required to support embedding of restorative justice. This whole system approach should incorporate local operational settings alongside broader strategic landscapes and should consider embedding restorative approaches from early years services onwards. Some of those in attendance suggested that funding to support delivery of RJ could be put on sounder footing by making RJ a statutory requirement. In absence of new legislation, it was suggested a requirement be made to compel reporting on delivery and impact of RJ by local authorities, in the hope this would prioritise resources and incentivise investment in RJ services. For example, it was suggested by some delegates that RJ could be incorporated into Community Justice Outcome Plans, which would embed practice and reporting across all local authority areas and not just within their justice systems.

There was consensus that the roll out of RJ provision would support delivery of key national programmes and frameworks, like the Whole System Approach, Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and multi-agency approaches to Contextual Safeguarding⁶. Likewise, recent legislation, namely the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 and the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, represent timely opportunities for development of policy and regulations to support delivery of RJ in Scotland. Consequently, there was a call for Scottish Government departments to ensure integration and co-ordination of RJ through relevant workstreams, portfolios and cross-departmental policy approach. The Victim Taskforce, for example, was repeatedly flagged as a key opportunity to promote a co-ordinated approach to RJ work and messaging. [National Performance Framework - gov.scot](#), was also highlighted.

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) was identified as a key agency in terms of possessing awareness of RJ and then using this awareness to promote understanding and opportunities for RJ. Several delegates suggested that Children's Reporters would utilise RJ services if they were locally available. Acknowledgment was made of the significant changes for Children's Hearing panel members currently with the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Children's Hearing Redesign. Several delegates expressed hope these changes could create opportunities for restorative justice through provision of enhanced

⁶ [national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023.pdf](#)

training provision, which could increase panel member awareness of the benefits of RJ as well as a knowledge of available local services.

The Single Point of Contact (SPOC)⁷ currently being developed by Victim Support Scotland on behalf of Scottish government as a result of the Children (Care and Justice) Act 2024, was highlighted by many of those in attendance as a major opportunity for raising awareness, widening access, and supporting the development of infrastructure and referral pathways for effective RJ provision. Likewise, the Victim Passport⁸, which was a recommendation from the Victim Centred Approach workstream of the Victims Taskforce, was flagged as an opportunity for RJ, with its focus on helping to identify possible outcomes and the development of a 'digital front door'. However, it was acknowledged that increased awareness would likely lead to an increase in demand, therefore there needs to be strategic planning to deliver and meet raised expectations.

Recommendation

Consideration to be given to creating a requirement to deliver or a duty to report on the provision of RJ services within local areas. This could support access for service users and provide a framework for sustainable funding of services.

Map out relevant policy, legislative and government-departmental landscape to ensure a coordinated approach to maximising opportunities for RJ throughout.

Who, When and How to Widen Accessibility

“Measure of success should be the number of people aware of and offered RJ; not just how many people participate”

Delegates identified that successful delivery of RJ in Scotland must consider where service provision would best optimise accessibility of those who have experienced harm, as well as those who have caused harm. It was acknowledged by those at the event that RJ will not be suitable for all, however broad consensus was expressed on the guiding principles of equal access to information and choice, and the need to address the current “postcode lottery” that exists with RJ provision across Scotland. It was highlighted that partnership amongst key support agencies, alongside well-evidenced research, should inform the best model of RJ delivery for Scotland. This should incorporate trauma-informed principles and an understanding that experience of and recovery from harm is unique to individuals. Views were expressed by some

⁷ A new Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is being created for people harmed by a child, including creating ways for victims to get advice and support, even when the child who caused harm is under 12. The SPOC is expected to provide clearer information, be kind and trauma-informed, and help people find the right support when they need it.

⁸ [A Victim-Centred Approach to Justice in Scotland: Scoping and Modelling Project | Victim Support Scotland](#).

delegates that Scotland may benefit from creation of a national body to oversee RJ in Scotland.

Attendees at the event highlighted that delivery models and referral pathways must consider **who** is best placed to make the offer of RJ (taking into consideration individual, cultural and developmental needs), at which point in the reporting or formal processing of harm this should take place, and the need to ensure the offer window is wide and ongoing, not a one-time offer, including in the case of historical harms. Delegates suggested information about RJ could be incorporated within the 'Care Card' provided by Police Scotland at the point a crime is reported. Some delegates believed there should be an automatic referral or 'opt out' approach, especially in the case of harm caused or experienced by children. It was hoped this would remove administrative barriers and support increased awareness of the benefits of RJ across the whole system and should also be considered in responding to harm caused by children under the age of criminal responsibility.⁹

The need for clear guidance on how an RJ process would run parallel to any formal justice and legal process was made clear. The Scottish Government Restorative Justice Policy and Practice Framework provides guidance on this ¹⁰. There was broad consensus amongst delegates that RJ should not be used as a direct alternative to prosecution, however support was expressed for increased deployment of RJ during a Diversion¹¹ process, if appropriate. The impact that lengthy judicial processes and delays in criminal cases coming to court has upon those involved in the case was considered by delegates, especially on those harmed.

Opinion was divided with regards to delivery models; statutory or third sector, centralised or localised. Central to this was consideration of how a national service would be effectively administered, and whether local need and local responses would be better placed to shape RJ provision. It was suggested by some that third sector delivery may promote greater accessibility for those harmed and reduce barriers that may be associated with statutory services. However, within current models of statutory delivery, specifically those working with children and young people, there exist good, effective examples of partnership working to overcoming barriers to delivery. For example, within Early and Effective Intervention pathways.

⁹ The age of criminal responsibility in Scotland is **12 years old** under [the Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

¹⁰ [Restorative Justice – Policy and Practice Framework - gov.scot was published on 12 March 2026](#)

¹¹ Under the Whole System Approach, the driving ethos of minimising a child's contact with the adult justice system means that RJ should be able to be accessed in a timely and child-centred manner, irrespective of any more formal responses to the behaviour in question. This should include when a child is considered under Early and Effective Intervention, via existing statutory/voluntary services, via the Children's Hearing System, or under Diversion from Prosecution. (Restorative Justice Policy and Practice Framework, 2026:8)

Tied to system location of national RJ services was the issue of who is best placed to deliver RJ; those working in an RJ specialised role or those delivering RJ as part of their wider role. With the latter, some concern was noted about capacity to prioritise RJ delivery, or to develop practise wisdom over time, especially in the context of statutory duties and wider priorities. Some enthusiasm was expressed for exploring models supporting those with lived experience to become RJ Facilitators themselves. Whichever model of funding and delivery is selected, there existed consensus amongst those in attendance that building on existing local networks and partnership arrangements would best support implementation.

Steering groups at local and national level were identified as key to supporting coordinated approaches to robust, stakeholder-led decision-making on who is best placed to deliver RJ locally. Likewise, many delegates believed opportunities for shared learning, resources and expertise should be maximised; utilising skills and knowledge from one local authority to support embedding of RJ in other local authority areas through development of case studies, consultation, or partnership approaches to delivery.

Fundamentally agreed upon was the need for any RJ process to be victim-sensitive and the critical importance of investing in victim support services, which can support effective identification of need and referral pathways to RJ providers. However, many delegates highlighted this does not discount the importance of RJ work delivered by statutory agencies. Also widely recognised throughout the day was the opportunity RJ can present for individuals who have caused harm to access support and not only explore the impact of their behaviour on others, but also open doors to exploring the impact their own lives and adverse experiences have had on them.

The importance of considering speech, language and communication needs was raised repeatedly throughout discussion, as was the need to consider wider intersectional factors like poverty, literacy, ethnicity, and care experience when developing an accessible model of RJ delivery for Scotland.

Recommendation

Ensure delivery models in Scotland promote improved access to RJ which are flexible to the needs of the people and case involved.

Information about and opportunities to access RJ could be incorporated within the 'Care Card' provided by Police Scotland at the point a crime is reported.

Resources

"The money has to follow the vision"

Throughout the day, delegates explored the issue of sustainable funding models for RJ in Scotland. Some expressed hope that a national funding framework would reduce problematic 'year on year' funding, which delegates highlighted creates barriers to development and investment, and undermines the infrastructure that supports effective and wide-spread RJ delivery. It was suggested by delegates that development of a national funding framework could address the 'postcode lottery' currently evidenced in Scotland's patchy and inconsistent RJ provision¹². The application of a robust cost-benefit analysis, which includes examination of projected savings across all relevant domains of statutory duty and fiscal responsibility, would strengthen the case for sustainable funding, claimed several delegates. Safe and Together¹³ and research on Early and Effective Intervention, were highlighted as good examples of evidenced-based approaches to investment. Assessment of demand for RJ services in Scotland was identified by some delegates as a key action in building the case for Scotland-wide, sustainable funding. As would learning from funding models elsewhere in the UK and beyond.

Several delegates encouraged consideration of RJ funding and resourcing within the nuanced landscape of reporting requirements and organisational Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), alongside developing models that embed evaluation culturally and financially when developing RJ services.

Without designated funding, those at the event highlighted the challenge for RJ to be resourced and protected in the context of competing financial and service demands across both statutory and third sectors. Some delegates proposed that RJ provision be mandated through statute, believing this would create a duty upon central government to fund services and hoped this would address current patchiness of provision and inequality of access to RJ services across Scotland. Frustration was expressed across the board that funding is made available for testing but not currently supported with follow on development funding.

The case was made by several delegates for funding test of change in areas where leadership, multi-agency support and appetite exist, which can then be examined and shared more widely.

As highlighted previously in this report, many of those in attendance emphasized the prime importance of maintaining investment in victim support services, which would

¹² CYCJ RJ Survey Report 2024-25

¹³ The Safe & Together Model is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help social workers and other key professionals to engage with families experiencing domestic abuse in a child-centred, strengths-based way. It provides a perpetrator pattern, child-centred, survivor strengths-based approach to working with domestic abuse (taken from [Safe and Together – Scottish Women's Aid – Training](#))

in turn support necessary RJ infrastructure; identification of need, through referral to delivery and on to follow up care.

If funding is not provided by central government to support a national approach to RJ delivery, delegates suggested that strong leadership and collaboration across key agencies would be required to develop the opportunities presented. It is expected the forthcoming Options Appraisal, led by Community Justice Scotland and supported by CYCJ, will provide opportunity to explore key issues and actions identified above.

Recommendation

Create a national funding framework supported by robust reporting requirements.

Test for change and pilot funding should be supported by follow on funds that enable learning to become embedded.

Evaluation should be embedded culturally and financially in RJ services.

Training, Accreditation and Support

“Make sure RJ is the same everywhere and used correctly”

Delegates considered key issues, opportunities and challenges in relation to training, accreditation and support. Development of a well-trained, robustly accountable, and adequately supported RJ workforce was generally upheld as the bedrock upon which successful delivery of RJ across Scotland can be achieved. Some delegates believe a strategic RJ training plan for Scotland, which delivers a standardised model of training, would support continuous learning and improve quality assurance.

As is also reflected in the Scottish Government commissioned Training Needs Analysis (2022)¹⁴, the need for specialist training for RJ with specific groups (e.g. children) and harm types (e.g. sexual violence/coercive control) was clearly identified. It is important to note this need for specialised knowledge is critical for safe and effective screening of RJ referrals, even if cases do not progress to delivery. It was felt by many delegates that provision of specialist training and support would increase confidence across the board; for referrers, those accessing RJ services, and for RJ Facilitators themselves.

Data gathered at the event supports wider anecdotal knowledge gathered by the RJ National Team; individuals accessing RJ training often do not gain timely opportunities to practice, which contributes to skills loss and missed opportunities to develop confidence and experience in the workforce. This is true of those working in

¹⁴ [Restorative-Justice-Training-Needs-Analysis-for-Scotland.pdf](#)

both statutory and voluntary sectors. Whichever model of delivery is preferred for Scotland, consideration will require to be given as to how resources (both training development and practitioner support) are matched with case demand and practice opportunities.

Strong support was expressed for Scotland joining other UK nations in developing a formal accreditation and registration process of restorative justice practitioners. Within this was recognition that work with children, in themselves identified as a vulnerable group in legislation, requires a specialist level of training, knowledge, and safeguards.

For some, the need for registration extended to RJ supervisors in the hope this would develop a more robust structure of support and expertise in Scotland. It was hoped by many delegates that the presence of such standardised structures could reduce risk of harm to individuals by poor practice and would reduce risk of 'RJ' suffering reputational damage.

Recommendation

Develop a strategic RJ training plan for Scotland which accounts for specialisms.

Consider the need for a formal process of practitioner and supervisor accreditation and registration.

Evidence, Evaluation and Lived Experience

“Ensure RJ is an empowering experience and doesn't reinforce power imbalances”

Throughout the day there were consistent messages from delegates about evidence, evaluation and lived experience. Delegates suggested that developing a national model of RJ provision in Scotland should be supported by a framework of evaluation that recognises nuanced measures of success in RJ delivery alongside capturing learning from what is not working. For example, better understanding of the longer-term impact of RJ on both persons harmed and those responsible, it was hoped, would support the case for sustainable funding and longer-term infrastructural investment. Themes identified in the Restorative Justice Test Case Project¹⁵, were explored; including understanding the impact of having RJ offered, even if declined, or the process only partially explored, as a means of measuring success. Learning from international models of successful RJ delivery was highlighted as important,

¹⁵ Restorative Justice Test Case Project – Summary Report
<https://www.cycj.org.uk/resource/restorative-justice-test-case-project-summary-report/>

e.g. New Zealand and Northern Ireland, whilst recognising the need for robust Scottish research that address gaps in knowledge and data.

Gaps in data and knowledge identified included the views and experiences of girls and children of colour who do not appear as well represented in available relevant literature. In the context of harm associated with sexual and domestic violence, some delegates identified a need for robust and specialist Scotland-specific research, testing and learning. Existing models, like Safe & Together¹⁶, were offered as examples of important learning to support this planning. There was recognition amongst delegates that children and young people who have caused harm are also likely to have experienced harm. That said, it was recognised that different harm types may dictate differing attitudes and support for RJ amongst children and adults.

Delegates emphasized the need for the voices of those with lived experience of harm and justice processes to be at the heart of design and delivery of RJ services. From research discussed at the event, it was suggested that children's attitudes to justice and fairness appear to be informed by their developmental stages and life experience. Therefore, it was suggested, further interrogation of this could help inform service delivery options and reduce barriers to engagement for children and young people. The need for careful consideration in balancing children's rights whilst ensuring RJ services are victim-led was highlighted throughout, and with it the importance of data and the voices of those with lived experience to inform this.

Recommendation

Identify data gaps and fund research to address these. Examples suggested by delegates included exploring views and experience of girls and children of colour and Scotland-specific research into RJ within the context of harm associated with sexual and domestic violence.

Develop a framework of evaluation that measures successful delivery of RJ, including learning from what is not working.

Information Sharing

“Until we have a way of connecting persons harmed with persons responsible, we will not move forward with RJ”

Key issues and challenges identified by delegates relating to information sharing largely reflected broader research and evidence from Scotland¹⁷. Specifically, how a

¹⁶ [Companion-document-The-Safe-and-Together-Model-and-Domestic-Abuse-Perpetrator-Programmes.pdf](#)

¹⁷ [The local provision of restorative justice in Scotland: an exploratory empirical study and Restorative Justice Test Case Project summary report](#)

service delivering RJ can confidently and lawfully access the contact details of both persons harmed and those responsible for the harm. The need for clear and consistent protocols, be it local or national, to enable lawful data sharing was resoundingly identified. There emerged a 'call to action' for all relevant agencies, through strong and committed leadership, to work together to support the formation of lawful data-sharing protocols and remove barriers to those wishing to access the benefits of RJ. Delegates highlighted that protocols need to be rigorous, adequately tested, and promote accountability to all parties, alongside clear guidance on the recording and retention of people's personal information. Police Scotland was identified as a key agency in supporting effective and consistent data sharing processes. For example, through utilisation of existing frameworks, like Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) and the Vulnerable Persons Database (VPD).

Recommendation

Key agencies need to work together to create lawful data-sharing protocols to remove barriers to accessing RJ.

Schools, Parents and Communities

"Opportunities to influence behaviour, shape norms and values during formative years"

It was widely acknowledged by attendees that school communities and the education sector represent a key opportunity for embedding restorative approaches and culture from an early age; with delegates proposing the need for this to be experienced and modelled by the whole school community. Some delegates questioned the helpfulness of the term 'restorative justice'. However, there was broad agreement that frameworks to support RJ and restorative approaches in education could support a balance of rights with responsibility, development of empathy, and embed conflict resolution skills. It was suggested that learning could be shared from sites where RJ is working, including when supported by School-Based Officers and Police Scotland colleagues. Delegates suggested that education staff could be trained to identify where RJ may be beneficial and effectively communicate the impact and benefits of RJ to children. Hope was expressed this may reduce risk of exclusion (either formally or self-selecting) from school.

Parents, carers and wider family were highlighted by delegates as key stakeholders in supporting engagement and reducing barriers to children and young people accessing restorative justice. Feelings of shame was identified as a significant barrier to engagement, for all parties. Additional vulnerabilities faced by Care Experienced children, or those with little or no family support, was emphasized by some delegates who highlighted the need for trusted and caring adults for any child

accessing an RJ process. Many of those in attendance spoke of the need to understand better families' support needs, and the impact of values and culture, in overcoming barriers to children accessing RJ. For example, a "whole family approach" was suggested to ensure the whole family understand the benefits, process and potential outcomes of any RJ process.

Wider social factors like poverty and drug and alcohol use were identified by delegates as drivers of harmful behaviours and community issues. In response to this, delegates hoped RJ could work alongside other supports and interventions, to provide means for individuals and communities to come together, have their individual needs heard, and explore opportunity for repair and healing.

Recommendation

Consider RJ as a whole family approach and develop greater understanding of parent and carers' needs to support their children to access RJ.

Recommendations

CYCJ wish to thank all stakeholders for their invaluable contribution in developing these important recommendations, which provide deliverable actions to support high quality RJ being made available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it.

1. Develop a co-ordinated awareness raising campaign through promotion of real-life stories, which communicates clear and consistent messages, promotes restorative justice as an option available to those impacted by harm, and highlights the financial benefits of RJ.
2. Produce high quality, accessible resources, which consider the needs of specialist and diverse groups.
3. Create conditions for collaborative buy-in from all relevant leaders and agencies to support a robust partnership approach to embedding RJ at a local and national level.
4. Consideration to be given to creating a requirement to deliver or a duty to report on the provision of RJ services within local areas. This could support access for service users and provide a framework for sustainable funding of services.
5. Map out relevant policy, legislative and government-departmental landscape to ensure a coordinated approach to maximising opportunities for RJ throughout.
6. Ensure delivery models in Scotland promote improved access to RJ which are flexible to the needs of the people and case involved.
7. Information about and opportunities to access RJ could be incorporated within the 'Care Card' provided by Police Scotland at the point a crime is reported.

8. Create a national funding framework supported by robust reporting requirements.
9. Test for change and pilot funding should be supported by follow on funds that enable learning to become embedded.
10. Evaluation should be embedded culturally and financially in RJ services.
11. Develop a strategic RJ training plan for Scotland which accounts for specialisms.
12. Develop a formal process of practitioner and supervisor accreditation and registration.
13. Identify data gaps and fund research to address these. Examples suggested by delegates included exploring views and experience of girls and children of colour and Scotland-specific research into RJ within the context of harm associated with sexual and domestic violence.
14. Develop a framework of evaluation that measures successful delivery of RJ, including learning from what is not working.
15. Key agencies need to work together to create lawful data-sharing protocols to remove barriers to accessing RJ.
16. Consider restorative justice as a whole family approach and develop greater understanding of parent and carers' needs to support their children to access RJ
17. A national satisfaction survey to understand public opinion and community confidence, and any changes in attitudes to restorative justice.

Appendix 1

Participating organisations

Aberdeenshire Council	Kibble Safe Service
Action for Children	Midlothian Council
Angus Council	North Lanarkshire Council
Argyll and Bute Council	Orkney Islands Council

Children's Panel Member	Police Scotland
Children's Hearings Scotland	Rape Crisis Scotland
City of Edinburgh Council	Restorative Justice Forum
Clackmannanshire Council	Sacro
Community Justice Scotland	Scottish Government
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)	Scottish Police Authority
CYCJ	Scottish Prison Service
Cyrenians	Scottish Quaker Community Justice
Dumfries & Galloway	Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)
East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland
East Dunbartonshire	South Ayrshire Council
East Lothian	South Lanarkshire Council
Edinburgh Napier University	University of Edinburgh
Glasgow City Council	Thriving Survivors
Highland Third Sector Interface	Turning Point Scotland
Hilliam Research	Victim Support Scotland
His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS)	West Dunbartonshire
Inverclyde Council	Youthlink
Includem	

Appendix 2

Creative Exercises

The final section of the day involved two creative exercises built on co-design principles adopted throughout the Scottish Approach to Service Design. These were based on Promise Design Tools including problem scoping, 'how might we', and idea development. Delegates were provided with a range of creative materials to support this task. The use of creative materials gave delegates the opportunity to think visually about many of the concepts, problems, and solutions that had been discussed throughout the day. As well as providing the visual themes which are discussed below, these activities allowed space for playfulness and collaborative thinking.



Delegates were separated between two activities detailed below with 5 groups working on the 'future spaces and places' activity and 4 groups working on the 'magic wand' activity.

Activity 1 Future Spaces and Places

The 'future spaces and places' activity provided the opportunity to build a 'vision of the future' for RJ. Delegates were asked to think about the physical space or place, asking questions like:

- What might future spaces and places look like?
- How might it feel to be there?
- How does this fit into the wider community?



Visual themes emerged from the drawings and models created during the activity including bridges symbolising connection and the overcoming of barriers, as well as depictions of individuals working collaboratively.

Priority areas were collated and have been grouped into the following themes:

Resources

It is clear from the responses that resourcing in general was a priority for stakeholders which was also reflected in visual themes of financial investment in RJ. It is unclear what in particular funding is sought for, but this reflects wider concerns that stakeholders are being asked to 'do more with less'. This priority also sought resources of skilled practitioners providing consistent availability across Scotland. The CYCJ practitioner focussed [survey](#) on RJ, published in 2025, highlighted that availability of RJ services was patchy and inconsistent across Scotland. This has resulted in a postcode lottery with services not available on a universal basis.

Workforce Development

Workforce development was also highlighted as a priority including training for RJ facilitators to achieve a skilled and specialist workforce, and a need for trained facilitators to have the opportunity to practice and shadow to improve their skills.

Responses also highlighted the importance of examples of best practice and case studies to support wider understanding of the potential of RJ, and the need to embed this at an early stage. For example, the opportunity for staff and pupils in Primary schools to learn and practice restorative justice and restorative principles.

In relation to training providers, delegates hoped for clarity on who can provide training - considering accreditation and national agreement on providers.

Communication

Communication was prioritised by all groups in a range of ways. Firstly, it was highlighted that clear communication with children is vital to ensure the voices of children are listened to when they are harmed or cause harm to others. This includes their desire to access restorative justice. Furthermore, communication with, and support provided to people who have been harmed should be improved. Information from the test case project highlighted that the offer of RJ can have a positive impact even if they later decide not to progress with the approach.

Two groups stated the importance of community buy-in and confidence in the approach seeking improvements in public awareness of RJ and how it can be accessed. Suggestions were given around RJ being presented more within films and on TV giving it more visibility to the wider public.

Data Sharing

Data sharing was highlighted as a focus area for change to achieve the desired space or place. The hope is that this would be achieved on a national basis to provide consistency and equity.

Collaboration

Although only one group highlighted collaborative working as one of their top priorities, many other groups noted it within their 10 things that are needed to achieve their desired goal. Responses highlighted the importance of systems aligning, work being joined up and agencies working together in a multi-disciplinary way. Furthermore, the possibility of national frameworks and legislation were mentioned as a method to support collaboration and consistency. Despite not being highlighted as a priority for change, visual themes throughout the activity reflect a focus on collaboration and joined-up working – several groups designed bridges or ties connecting various people, showed practitioners as superheroes gathered as a team, and used words like ‘together’ as areas of visual focus within their designs.

Tracking Progress

The final step in the exercise was to consider how progress might be tracked when moving towards the changes identified. Three questions were posed to help delegates think about this is measured.

Changes within Society

There were numerous ideas on what changes we might see around us to track progress. These included community cohesion and public confidence, and confidence in the justice system. Other suggestions considered improved attitudes to

children in conflict with the law and children in general. Furthermore, a reduction in offending behaviour and breaking generational cycles of offending behaviour was mentioned, in addition to an increase in school attendance and engagement with services and reduction in prison population.

Outcomes we may see

Many of the responses noted the outcomes specifically for people who have been harmed, for example, the child feeling a sense of closure and a sense of being heard and understood. In addition, children who have caused harm may also feel heard and provided with support resulting in children feeling valued, achieving better outcomes and becoming happier individuals. Outcomes also included benefits to staff working with children where they may achieve greater staff morale as well as the wider community benefits highlighted above.

How might this be measured?

Delegates suggested that surveys and opinion polls could track progress including national happiness survey, data gathering and satisfaction surveys focusing on public opinion and community confidence. Furthermore, tracking the number of referrals and re-referrals could also help to identify progress made.

Activity 2 The Magic Wand

For this activity delegates were asked to consider the barriers to restorative justice that had been discussed throughout the day and design a 'magic wand' that could remove these barriers. The magic wand may have abilities to shift people's thinking or change policy or practice. Delegates were encouraged to think about what problems were being solved, why the change needs to happen, and identify the impact on communities and individuals.



Visual models included magic wands with the ability to reduce the cost of implementing RJ practice and build collective understanding of the benefits of RJ. In one of the examples above, magic wands are situated within a 'full glass', emphasising positive attitudes and availability of resources. The glass is surrounded by people of all ages, displaying the need for community cohesion and connectedness as a protective layer or 'buffer' to the challenges identified throughout the event.

Following this, groups were asked to choose the most and least achievable 'magic power' and consider why.

Least likely to happen?

All four groups who carried out this task identified funding and investment as the magic power that was least likely to happen, with one group envisaging that the magic wand had created a "money tree". The reasons given as to why this power seemed the least achievable differed however, with some groups highlighting a lack of action whilst others stated RJ was not the top priority for decision makers. There were lots of ideas of what changes could be made to make this more achievable including policy change, partnership collaboration, collecting more evidence and rationale, and aligning Scottish Government priorities between departments. All groups agreed that Scottish Government and decision makers held the power to

make changes happen, although some groups added that it is everyone's responsibility and requires a top-down and bottom-up approach.

Most likely to happen?

There was less consensus between groups about the magic power which was most likely to happen. Ideas included a test of change, a local authority approach, myth busting exercise and a national communication strategy. Despite the differences in what changes were most likely to happen groups agreed that this is achievable as the infrastructure and good practice exists, and a lot of the time change is led by passionate and motivated individuals. When asked what changes could make this more likely ideas were varied from starting small with local pilots, being consistent, research and lived experience leading to more national agendas and Government departments leading and sharing agendas. Again, groups felt that although the Scottish Government held power to make this happen, it was the responsibility of everyone including those with multi-agency networking opportunities.

Tracking Progress

The final task in the activity, similar to the places and spaces activity, was to consider how progress towards these changes could be tracked including what changes or impact would be seen.

What changes or impact might we see around us?

Awareness

Participants highlighted throughout the groups that more people being aware of RJ in communities and normalised within society would be a change we may see around us. This could be in media headlines, highlighting RJ in a positive light as well as a change in perception where everyone knows what it is. This could be evidenced by hearing success stories being shared and hearing people talk about it.

Voice

Furthermore, change could also be evidenced by hearing the voices of those directly involved in RJ including children and young people. For example, both those harmed and those who have caused harm feeling that their voices have been heard and the feedback from future engagement with children in schools is more positive.

Availability

Participants also highlighted that the increased availability of RJ in Scotland would evidence change. Ideas for this included seeing RJ taking place in all the spaces and places where children are including schools and victims' organisations. Tangible examples and local data could capture this change as well.

How might we monitor these barriers and how close are to overcoming them?

One idea for monitoring these barriers would be to have an opt out system, where processes are put in place to allow everyone affected by harm the opportunity for RJ. This would be at a time where the individuals feel ready and informed of the process. Overcoming data sharing issues would be vital for this to work in practice. The suggestion of a “data app” was given, in addition to more research and a common dataset for Scotland. Monitoring barriers should include participation of children and young people and those with lived experience of RJ.