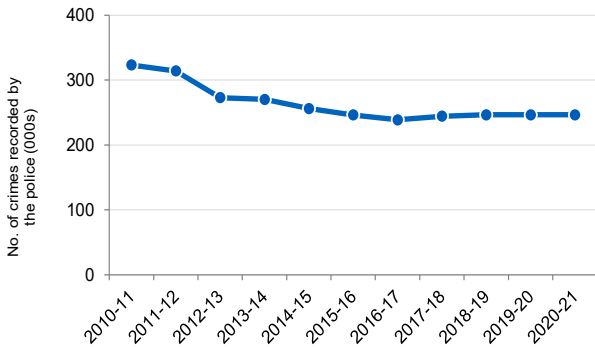




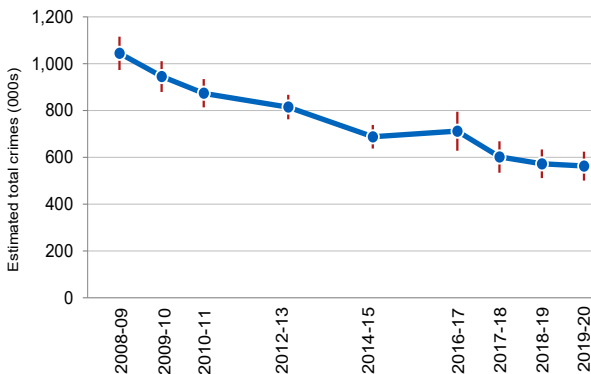
# Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief | March 2022

## Crime

**Police recorded crime at one of the lowest levels since 1974 and is down 22% since 2011-12.** Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of crimes recorded remained almost unchanged. The 2020-21 figure includes 20,976 crimes under Coronavirus legislation (compared to 107 in 2019-20). All other crimes collectively decreased by 8%.



**Crime has fallen by 46% since 2008-09.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that around 1 in 8 adults were victims of crime in 2019-20 (11.9%) compared to 1 in 5 in 2008-09 (20.4%). The estimated number of crimes fell by 46% over the same period, and by 21% since 2016-17. The SCJS detected no change in the overall victimisation rate between 2018-19 and 2019-20.



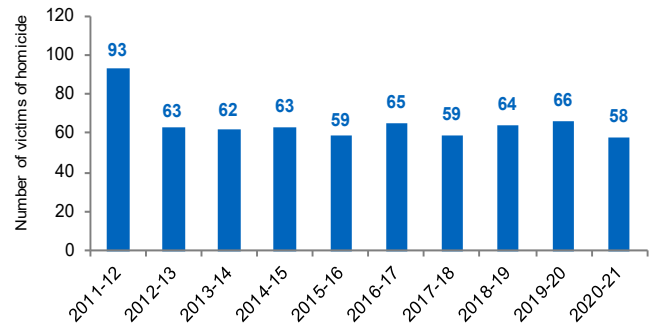
**Violent crime has fallen over the long term.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police fell by 4%, to 8,972 in 2020-21. This decrease is due to the recording of fewer crimes across every category except "other" violence, which rose by 22%. This is due to an increase in online crimes of threat and extortion. Overall, non-sexual crimes of violence remained at a lower level than all years between 1980 and 2011-12. The SCJS showed a 39% fall in violent crime between 2008-09 and 2019-20 and that an estimated 48% of violent crime in 2019-20 was reported to the police.

**Sexual crimes fell for a second consecutive year.** Sexual assault, and rape & attempted rape, both fell between 2019-20 and 2020-21, while other sexual crimes continued to rise. Overall, sexual crimes remain at one of their highest levels. Multiple factors lie behind the long term increase in recorded sexual crime including a greater willingness of victims to come forward, more historical reporting, more online offending and the impact of new legislation. The SCJS for 2018-20 (2018-19 & 2019-20 combined) estimated that 3.6% of adults experienced at least one serious sexual assault since the age of 16, unchanged from 2008-09.

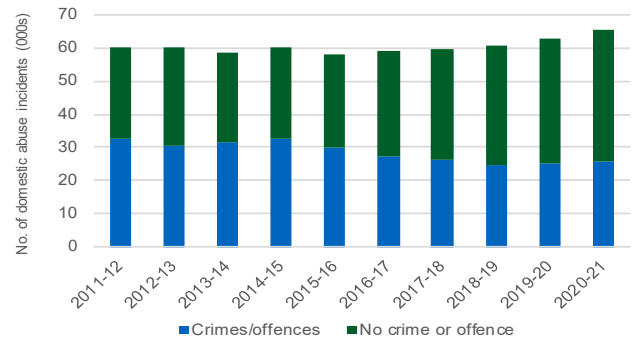
**Women more likely to experience partner abuse.** The SCJS, for 2018-20, estimated that 3.2% of respondents had experienced partner abuse in the year prior to interview. A higher proportion of women than men experienced this, at 3.7% and 2.6% respectively.

**Increase in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 56.3% in 2020-21, up from 51.5% in 2019-20. This is the largest increase on record and likely reflects the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the volume and types of crime recorded.

**No. of victims of homicide at record low.** There were 58 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2020-21, a 38% decrease from 2011-12 and the lowest value since comparable records began in 1976. Since 2012-13, the number of victims of homicide each year ranged between 58 and 66.



**Increase in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 65,251 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2020-21, an increase of 4% on 2019-20. In 2020-21, 40% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.

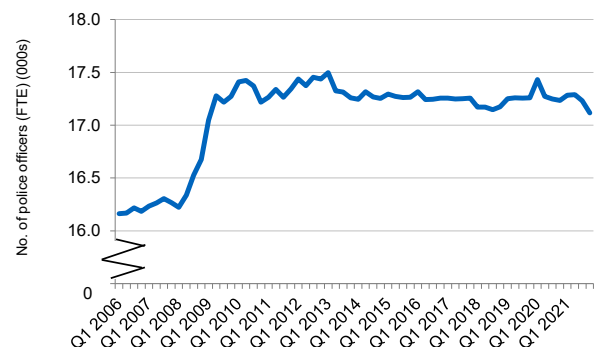


## Shorter Term Crime Trends

**\* New \*** The number of crimes recorded by the police in February 2022 was higher than the same month of 2021 but lower than the same month of 2020. Police recorded crime was 8% higher in February 2022 than the same month of 2021 (when pandemic restrictions were in place) but was 9% lower than February 2020 (pre-pandemic and restrictions).

## Policing

**There were 17,117 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 31 December 2021.** This was 883 (+5.4%) more officers compared to the position at 31 March 2007.

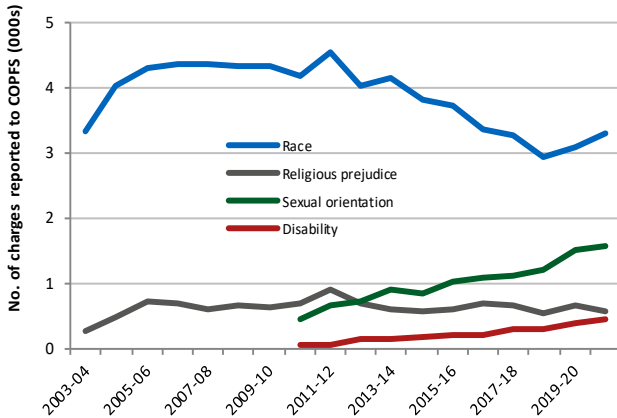




# Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief | March 2022

## ▼ Hate Crime

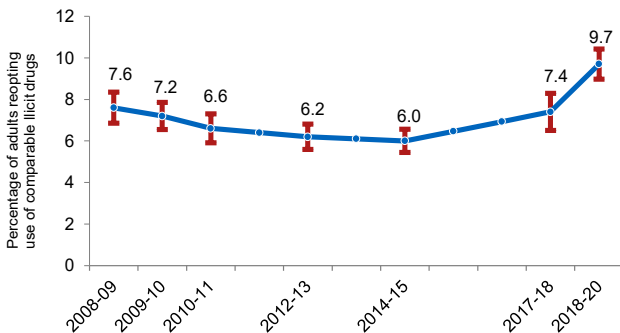
- ▶ **Increase in hate crime charges.** There was an increase in the number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 for race, sexual orientation and disability aggravated hate crime charges, with a decrease in religious aggravated charges and a slight decrease in transgender identity aggravated charges. Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.



- ▶ **Numbers stable for police recorded hate crime.** Between 2014-15 & 2019-20, the number of hate crimes recorded by the police was relatively stable, at around 6,300 to 7,000. In 2019-20, 62% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 20% sexual orientation, 8% religion, 4% disability and 1% transgender identity. The remaining 5% included multiple hate aggravators.

## ▼ Drugs

- ▶ **Self-reported illicit drug use amongst adults has increased in recent years.** Where the drug types included in the SCJS are generally consistent over time, self-reported use has risen since 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 7.6% in 2008-09 and 7.4% in 2017-18, to 9.7% in 2018-20). Between 2017-18 and 2018-20, self-reported use of any drug listed in the survey during the 12 months prior to interview, increased from 9.5% to 13.5%. In the 12 months prior to interview, those aged 16-24 were the most likely to have reported using drugs. Cannabis was the drug most commonly used by adults.

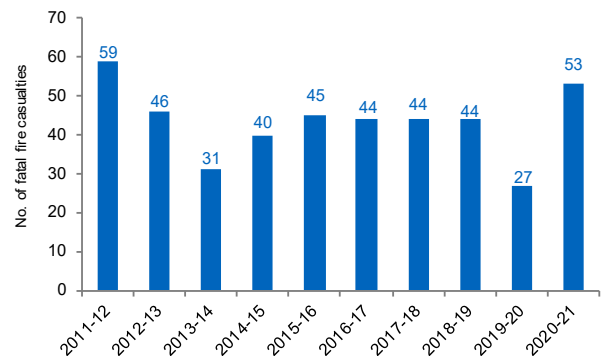


To have a more comparable measure since 2008-09, the figures in this chart exclude poppers, glues, solvents, gas or aerosol and prescription only painkillers not prescribed to the respondent.

## ▼ Community Safety

- ▶ **Improved public perception of local crime rate since 2008-09.** The public feel safer in their local communities. The SCJS found that, in 2019-20, 73% of adults thought that the local crime rate had stayed the same or reduced in the past two years. This shows an improvement from 69% in 2008-09 and no change since 2018-19 (73%).

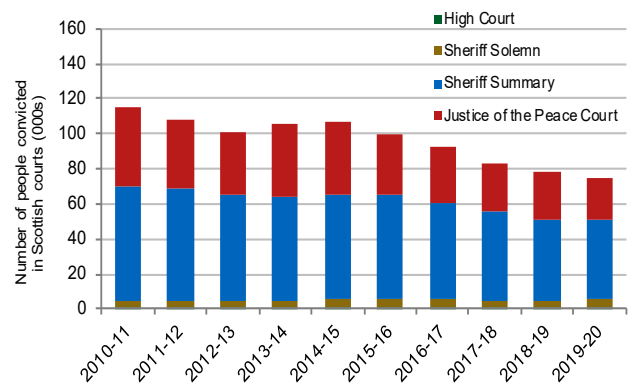
- ▶ **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (77%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2019-20, unchanged from 2018-19 (78%) but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.
- ▶ **Most adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reported that, in 2019-20, 55% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, unchanged from 2018-19 (56%) but down from 61% in 2012-13.
- ▶ **Number of fires fallen 22% in the last decade.** In 2020-21, there were 25,147 fires in Scotland, up 3% on 2019-20 but 22% lower than in 2011-12. There were 53 fire fatalities in 2020-21, nearly double the historic low of 27 in 2019-20 and the second highest in the last decade.



- ▶ **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2011-12.** In 2020-21, there were 1,891 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 496 due to assault with a sharp object. These were, respectively, 57% and 47% lower than in 2011-12.

## ▼ Criminal and Civil Proceedings

- ▶ **Lowest number of convictions in last 10 years.** In 2019-20, the number of people convicted in Scottish courts fell by 4% from 2018-19 to 75,251. This is in line with the general downward trend of the last ten years.

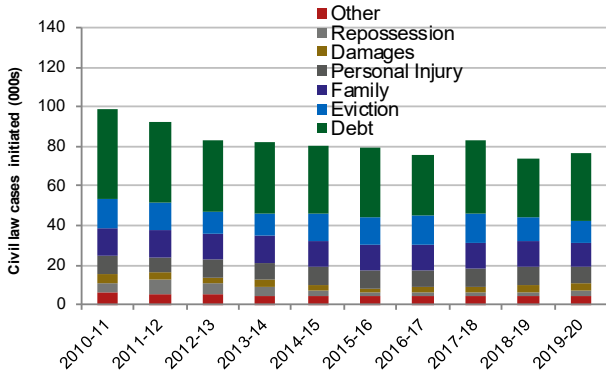


- ▶ **Fall in convictions in most categories between 2018-19 & 2019-20.** There were notable falls in the number of convictions for unlawful use of a motor vehicle (down 18% or 1,358 fewer convictions), drug crimes (down 11% or 575), and shoplifting (down 9% or 533). However, convictions for violent crimes increased by 11% in 2019-20, with more than half of this increase accounted for by new offences under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (206 convictions).
- ▶ **Rise in community sentences in 2019-20.** The number of community sentences in court rose by 7% between 2018-19 and 2019-20, from 15,211 to 16,296. The proportion of all convictions resulting in a community sentence rose to 22%, the highest in the past decade.



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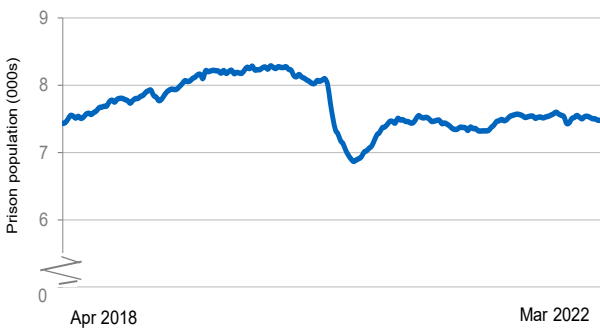
- ▶ **No. of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds down by almost 60 per cent in last 10 years.** Statistics published by the [Scottish Children's Reporter Administration \(SCRA\)](#) show that, in 2020-21, 2,207 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a decrease of 59% since 2011-12.
- ▶ **Long-term downward trend in initiated civil law cases, normalising after the rise in caseload in 2017-18.** There were 74,400 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2019-20 (excluding summary applications). This represents a rise of 3% from 2018-19.



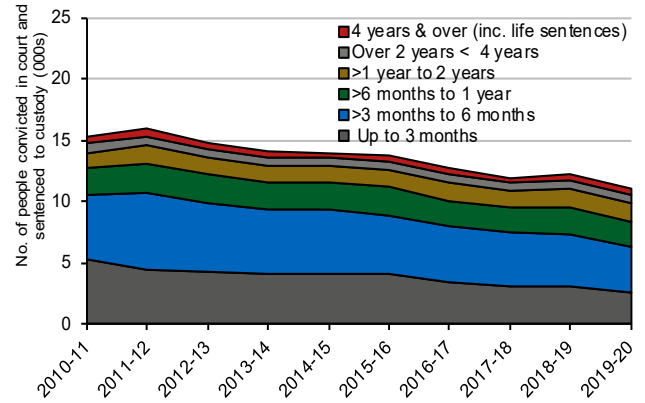
- ▶ **There was an even split of case types either increasing or decreasing since 2018-19.** Increases were seen in damages (up 23%), repossessions (up 18%) and debt (up 16%). Decreases were recorded in evictions (down 15%), family and personal injury (both down 6%). Debt actions remain the most common, constituting 46% of principal crimes. Family and eviction actions were second and third most common, at 16% and 14% respectively.

## Prisons & Community Sentences

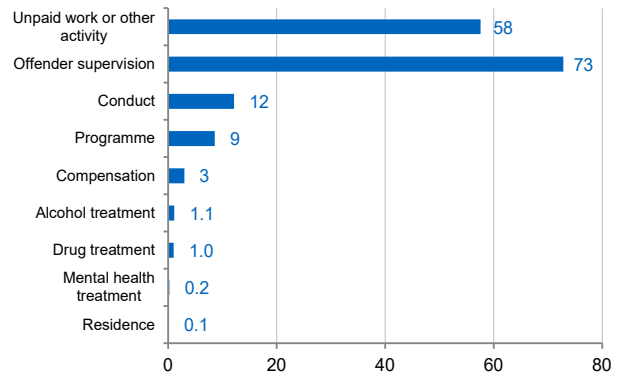
- ▶ **The prison population has risen from its lowest point at the end of May 2020.** Daily population figures for Friday published by the Scottish Prison Service, show that the prison population rose from around 7,500 in April 2018 to around 8,300 in November 2019, but fell sharply in the early days of the lockdown in early 2020. This was due to a drop in the number of sentenced admissions following the Covid-19 outbreak and the early release of prisoners. After a period of stability (around 7,400 from February 2021), the prison population overall has grown slightly to 7,476 at 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020, but grew to over 2,000 by September 2020. After a fall over Christmas 2021 in line with previous years, the remand population has grown again, exceeding previous records in February to a new peak of 2,289 on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but has since fallen slightly to 2,201 on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (29% of the overall prison population).



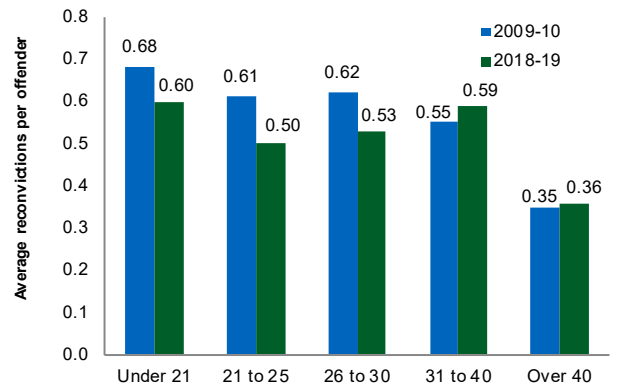
- ▶ **Average custodial sentence is almost a year.** For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2019-20 was almost a year (356 days) in length. This was 9% longer than in 2018-19 and 29% longer than in 2010-11 (9¼ months). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of up to one year or less fell to 75% in 2019-20, the lowest proportion of the last decade.



- ▶ **Community payback orders more likely to have supervision than unpaid work in 2020-21.** There were 8,169 community payback orders imposed in 2020-21, 51% lower than in 2019-20. The suspension of delivery of unpaid work due to Covid-19 during part of the year was a major factor in more orders being issued with offender supervision requirements (73%) than unpaid work or other activity requirements (58%).



- ▶ **Reconviction rates are at one of their lowest levels in 22 years.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 11% lower than it was a decade ago. The fall in the last decade was driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 12% for under 21s, 18% for 21-25 year olds, and 15% for 26-30 year olds. In contrast, average reconvictions increased for the older age groups over the decade, with a 7% increase for 31-40 year olds and 3% for those aged over 40.



### Any Queries?

If you require further information on any of the statistics in this brief, please contact [Justice\\_Analysts@gov.scot](mailto:Justice_Analysts@gov.scot) or speak to Alan Fleming (0782 501 1477). Monthly reports with more detail on how COVID-19 has affected the justice system are available [here](#).



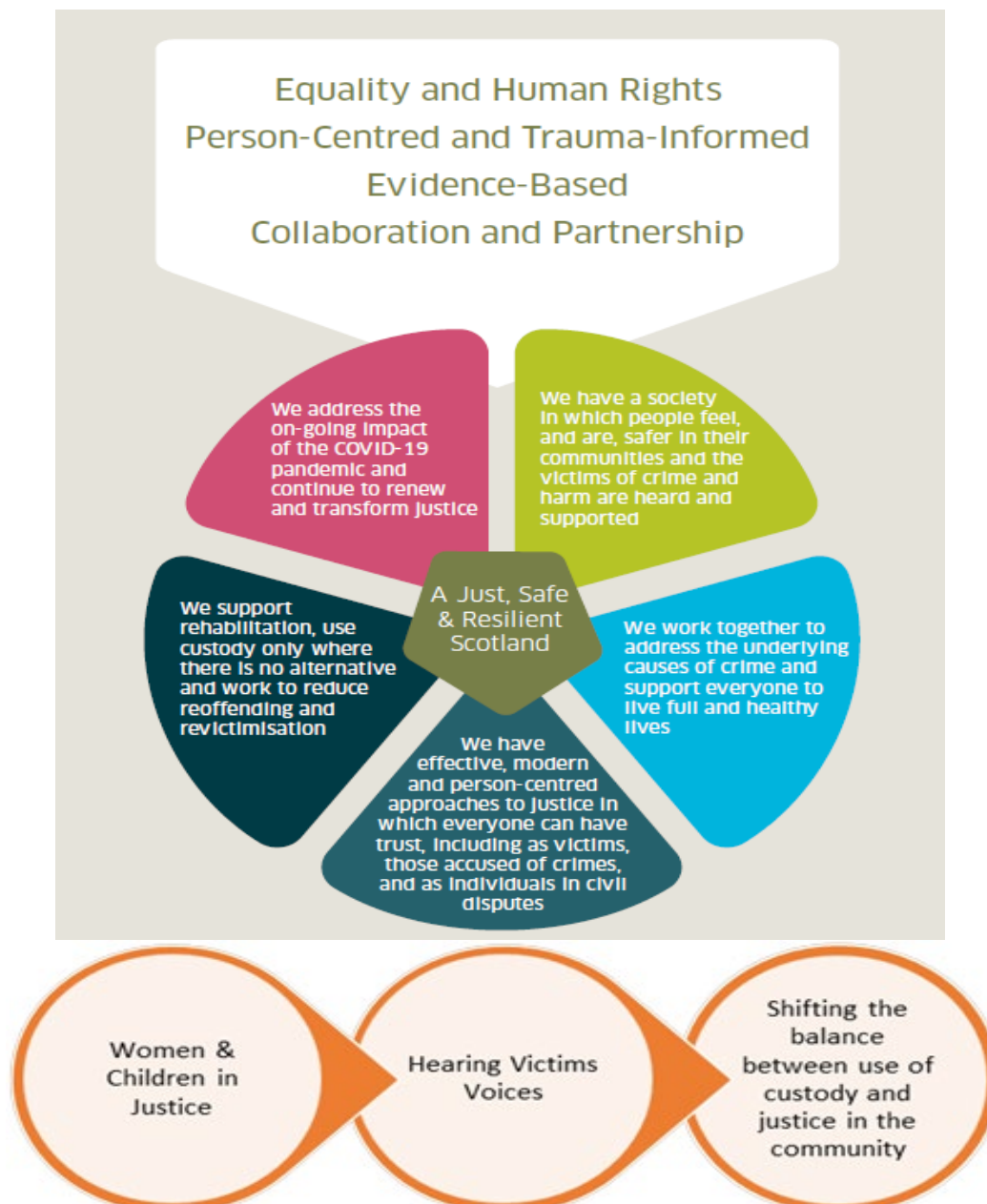
## Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief | March 2022

### Monthly Feature: The Vision for Justice in Scotland

The [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) was published on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022. It sets out the transformative vision of the future justice system for Scotland. The overarching vision – for a just, safe and resilient Scotland – is supported by five aims. The aims span the full journey of criminal, civil and administrative justice, with a focus on creating safer communities and shifting societal attitudes and circumstances which perpetuate crime and harm.

Work to deliver the vision will be supported by four core principles: founded in equality and human rights; person-centred and trauma-informed; evidence-based; and collaboration and partnership. There are three priority areas of action: women & children; hearing victims' voices; and shifting the balance between custody and community justice.

A year one delivery plan was published alongside the Vision. Work to develop a year 2-4 action plan and measurement framework is ongoing.



For further information please contact Oonagh Fraser, Justice Analytical Unit, Justice Analytical Services at [justice\\_analysts@gov.scot](mailto:justice_analysts@gov.scot).