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I am pleased to advise you and the Committee that the [Vision for Justice: Three Year Delivery Plan](#) has now been published on the Scottish Government website.

This Delivery Plan builds on the progress made in the past year since the Vision for Justice was launched. It provides a high-level overview of the main areas of work that are being undertaken and further reforms that will be introduced over the period 2023-2026. It brings together the work being undertaken across the Justice sector, which will help us to meet our vision for a just, safe and resilient Scotland.

The Delivery Plan has been prepared in consultation with key Justice organisations. In particular, the plan has been approved by the members of the Justice Board for Scotland, which represents key justice organisations, who have also agreed to share collective ownership of this Delivery Plan. The Plan also reflects activity developed through engagement with organisations that support victims and witnesses, including the victims of violence against women and girls. This includes engagement with third sector organisations and other stakeholders through the work of the Victims Taskforce. Papers and minutes for the Victims Taskforce are published on the Scottish Government website: [Victims Taskforce - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). Officials also held a workshop with key victims' organisations in early October to share a draft of the Plan and to get feedback on the draft and on how best to ensure on-going effective engagement as the Plan progresses.

Published alongside the Delivery Plan is a [Measurement Framework](#) which sets out how each of the outcomes in the Vision for Justice will be measured and reported. The Measurement Framework has also been approved by the Justice Board. The framework is linked separately; as with the Delivery Plan it will be developed further over time as new measures become available. We would be happy to provide further updates to the Committee as that work progresses.

The Delivery Plan was one of the topics discussed at our recent appearance before the Committee on the post-Covid Criminal courts backlog. I would also like to take the opportunity to provide some additional information on other topics that were raised.



In relation to the funding for victims' support organisations, I am happy to clarify that the Victim Centred Approach Fund (VCAF) was established following a commitment in Ministers' 2021 Programme for Government. The purpose of the Fund was to connect funding with longer-term outcomes, create a transparent and open process, support recipients with consistent evaluation approaches and offer more security to organisations through three year funding awards.

That meant that the VCAF replaced a number of previous grants across a number of different policy areas, where some of the recipients had previously been receiving grant funding from the Scottish Government, and others receiving grants for the first time or for new projects. This fund is worth £48m over the period from 2022-2025 and is split between a number of different organisations. Details of the three year allocations were published in March 2022: [Victims will benefit from key support – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/justice/victim-centred-approach-fund).

The three year VCAF is separate from specific additional funding provided during the Covid pandemic to help support organisations working with victims and witnesses. The VCAF is also separate from the Victims Surcharge Fund, funded from a surcharge on court-imposed fines, which helps to provide direct, practical help to victims.

The Committee also asked about engagement with stakeholders on the development and progress of justice Transformational Change Programmes (TCPs). Engagement with stakeholders is being undertaken in the most appropriate manner for each TCP. For example, TCP1 with its focus on embedding the trauma-informed practices and person-centred approach has strong engagement with victims' organisations and also reports bi-annually to the Victims' Taskforce. TCP2 is overseeing progress with the Community Justice Strategy and associated Delivery Plan which were both developed with community justice partners. TCP3 is formed of a number of different projects, including judicially-led projects, and the engagement is taking place with stakeholders through the individual projects, often at local level.

Another area that was raised was work undertaken in relation to the impact of short periods in custody. The Committee asked specifically about the impact of short-term imprisonment and being held on remand on the physical and mental health of prisoners. The Scottish Government commissioned four health needs assessment into the specific health needs of prisoners with reference to mental health, physical health, substance use needs and social care needs. These assessments are published on the Scottish Government web site. A synthesis report on all four needs assessments was published in September 2022: [Prison population health needs: synthesis report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/justice/prison-population-health-needs-synthesis-report). The analysis confirms that some subgroups in the prison population, for example, people on remand and older age groups, have particular needs. For mental health, the prevalence of conditions is generally higher in younger age groups and in females relative to male prisoners: [Prison population: mental health needs - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/justice/prison-population-mental-health-needs). The research also found that being in custody for a short-sentence or on remand can make it difficult to get good engagement with health care services: [Supporting documents - Prison population: physical health care needs - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/justice/supporting-documents-prison-population-physical-health-care-needs). Work is being progressed in response to the health needs assessments.

A wide range of both qualitative and quantitative research has also been undertaken over time looking at the impact of short-custodial sentences on individuals and on rates of re-offending. This includes: [What Works to Reduce Reoffending: A Summary of the Evidence \(2015\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/justice/what-works-to-reduce-reoffending) prepared by Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services. Work has also been undertaken on the causes and impact of Scotland's relatively high use of remand, including

the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee's: [An Inquiry into the Use of Remand in Scotland](#) (2018) and Scottish Government funded research into [Decision-Making on Bail and Remand: Interim Findings Report](#) (2022).

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

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