

The week in review

This week's round up includes new investment to support child and vulnerable witnesses, latest official figures for homicide in Scotland, and ministerial engagements with a range of justice system professionals.

Supporting child and vulnerable witnesses

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf has announced £950,000 to improve evidence facilities for children and vulnerable adults.

The new Scottish Courts & Tribunals Service (SCTS) Centre for Child and Vulnerable Witnesses, opening in Glasgow next year, will increase opportunities for pre-recording evidence, particularly for the most serious criminal cases. This supports the Scottish Government's commitment to improving the experience of victims and witnesses through the criminal justice system.

Justice Secretary [@HumzaYousaf](#) has announced £950,000 to improve evidence facilities for children and vulnerable adults. It will mean fewer children have to attend court to give evidence.

Read more: <https://t.co/e10zf770Ha> pic.twitter.com/hGxM5d9yiL

– ScotGov Justice (@ScotGovJustice) [October 29, 2018](#)

The new hearings suite, situated centrally in the city close to a range of transport links, will mean children and vulnerable people can be supported to give their best evidence in a safe and secure environment – helping ensure fewer children must attend court to give evidence during criminal trials. Read more on the [main Scottish Government website](#).

Murder and culpable homicide cases fall again

The number of homicides in Scotland has reduced significantly over the last ten years, according to official National Statistics published this week.

The number of cases of homicide (either murder or common law culpable homicide) has fallen from 97 in 2008-9 to 59 in 2017-18.

[The bulletin](#) also presents victim and accused data, the circumstances associated with the homicide, and additional details relating to the method, motive and relationship between the victim and the accused.

Find Humza Yousaf's response to figures [on the blog here](#) or read the Justice Secretary's comment article in the *Scotsman* newspaper, linked below.

Humza Yousaf: No complacency over falling homicide rate
<https://t.co/2IaY9jIYx1>

– The Scotsman (@TheScotsman) [October 30, 2018](#)

Visit to Scotland's largest prison

On Wednesday the Justice Secretary visited Scotland's largest prison, [HMP Barlinnie](#) in Glasgow. Mr Yousaf met the Governor, managers and prison officers, as well as speaking with a number of inmates.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf has visited Scotland's largest prison, HMP Barlinnie in Glasgow, where he spoke with the Governor, managers and prison officers, as well as meeting a number of inmates.

Read more about the prison here: <https://t.co/J0oF0fIvHLpic.twitter.com/oauku6g5pk>

– ScotGov Justice (@ScotGovJustice) [October 31, 2018](#)

The Cabinet Secretary addressed prison officers at the Prison Officers' Association annual conference in Peebles the following day. Mr Yousaf thanked them for all of their work to keep Scotland's prisons running and their contribution to keeping communities safe through work to support rehabilitation and desistance.

Justice Secretary [@HumzaYousaf](#) addressed prison officers at the Prison Officers' Association annual conference in Peebles, where he recognised the complexity of their role and thanked everyone for all they do. 1/3 <https://t.co/1nsQE28ZIA>

– ScotGov Justice (@ScotGovJustice) [November 1, 2018](#)

E-monitoring to help rehabilitate and safeguard public

On Thursday evening Mr Yousaf visited one of G4S' Electronic Monitoring Control Centres, where he met with staff and was given a hands-on demonstration of how tags operate.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf visited G4S Electronic Monitoring (EM) Control Centre, where he was shown how electronic tags operate, met staff and observed their response to alerts. [#desistance#saferscotland#justicepriorities](#)

pic.twitter.com/ajrqD2uFkz

– ScotGov Justice (@ScotGovJustice) [November 2, 2018](#)

Cashback makes impact across Scotland

The transformative impact of CashBack for Communities projects, funded by the proceeds of crime, have been outlined in a series of annual reports and evaluations published this week. The reports were prepared by partner organisations who have been delivering a range of activities from diversionary youth work to projects providing opportunities to get into employment, education, or volunteering.

Since 2008, £92 million has been committed to community initiatives to improve the quality of life of young people right across Scotland, with Phase 4 of CashBack having placed an increased emphasis on helping tackle inequalities – raising the attainment, ambition and aspirations of young people who face disadvantage.

The annual reports and evaluations for the first year of Phase 4 can be read on the [Cashback for Communities website](#).

All CashBack for Communities partners' annual reports and evaluations for 2017/18 are available to view at

<https://t.co/2AC890EZFz>

Colourful, powerful and impactful! Huge well done to all for progress and help in [#tacklinginequalities](#)

pic.twitter.com/rq2PFFQFdC

– CashBack4Communities (@CashBackScot) [October 29, 2018](#)

The post [The week in review](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).

[Justice Secretary comments on homicide figures](#)



Commenting on today's publication of Homicide in Scotland 2017-18, Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf said:

“While the number of homicides in Scotland has fallen this year and has reduced significantly over the last 10 years, one death is one too many. Behind these figures are grieving families and friends and my sincere sympathies go out to all those who have lost a loved one.

“We recognise the enormous trauma experienced by families bereaved by murder and culpable homicide. That is why we are currently funding Victim Support Scotland to develop and deliver a bespoke service for these families, ensuring dedicated and continuous support.

“We are determined to help people break free from cycles of violence. We will continue our efforts to drive down violent crime in our communities, both through education and enforcement, supporting prevention work with people of all ages and ensuring our law enforcement agencies and courts have the resources to deal with those who harm others.”

Background

The Scottish Government continues to invest in the National Violence Reduction Unit – investing over £12 million since 2008. This includes delivery of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme working in 23 local authorities, and the Medics Against Violence work which includes training professionals such as dentists, doctors, vets, fire fighters and hairdressers across the country to recognise signs of domestic abuse and offer support and guidance to victims.

The Scottish Government has since 2009, also invested over £3.6 million in the No Knives Better Lives – a programme that aims to reduce incidences of violence and knife possession among young people by raising awareness of the potentially devastating risks and consequences of carrying a knife, and encouraging young people to make positive life choices. This year will see the delivery of the NKBLs Balisong Play in schools across every local authority across Scotland. The Balisong play is a unique and powerful way to engage and open up discussions with young people about the risks and consequences of carrying a knife and the challenge of speaking up in situations where other people might be at risk.

People who are convicted of a non-sexual crime of violence in the Scottish courts are now more likely to receive a custodial sentence than they were 10 years ago. The average custodial sentence length for handling offensive weapons has almost doubled over the last ten years, from 218 days in 2007-08 to 391 days in 2016-17.

Scottish courts have the power and discretion to sentence up to a maximum of five years in prison if convicted of carrying a knife in public, up to life imprisonment for anyone convicted of assault with an offensive weapon, and an automatic life sentence for an offender convicted of knife murder.

Access the full statistical publication:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/2018/10/1417>

Access the statistical news release:
<https://news.gov.scot/news/homicide-in-scotland-2017-18>

The post [Justice Secretary comments on homicide figures](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).

Safer Communities and Justice Brief : October 2018

Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services have recently published the October edition of the Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief.

This brief provides, in a single place, a concise but comprehensive overview of all the most important Justice and Safer Communities statistics.

The brief includes a special feature on its back page, with this month's article on the recently published civil justice statistics for 2016-17.

A copy of the brief has been placed on the Crime and Justice Statistics section of the [Scottish Government website](#).

Any suggestions for improvement or for other aspects to cover in the brief would be very welcome and should be addressed to JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot.

The post [Safer Communities and Justice Brief : October 2018](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).

Justice Secretary pays tribute to Scotland's Jewish communities

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf has paid tribute to the contribution of Scotland's Jewish communities to the life of the nation.

On Sunday October 28th Mr Yousaf addressed Scotland's Jewish Gathering in Edinburgh, where Jewish people from across the country were coming together through the weekend to hear speeches and take part in discussions and workshops.

The Justice Secretary said:

“It was my pleasure and honour to attend the Gathering and join the Jewish community on this important occasion.

“This event presents an ideal opportunity to reflect on the diversity of Scotland and the important role our faith communities play in supporting public cohesion.

“On behalf of the Scottish Government, I pay tribute to the huge contribution which Jewish communities make to our society.

“Of course this Gathering takes place against the backdrop of widespread shock and sadness at the appalling attack on the Jewish community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The thoughts and prayers of people across Scotland are with everyone affected by this despicable act and we stand in solidarity with the Jewish community across the world.

“In Scotland we will continue to work together to tackle prejudice and build the society we want to be – a safer, stronger and fairer nation where equality and human rights are fully respected and each person, every family and all communities can flourish.”

The post [Justice Secretary pays tribute to Scotland’s Jewish communities](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).

The week in review

This week saw a commitment from the Scottish Government to establish a financial redress scheme for in-care abuse survivors, plans to strengthen the home detention curfew system and the launch of a new play highlighting to young people the dangers of knife crime.

Justice Committee consider justice budgets

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf was at the Parliament’s Justice Committee this week, responding to MSPs’ pre-budget scrutiny questions about the resourcing of key justice and community safety services.

Watch the Cabinet Secretary’s appearance at Committee session in the video linked below.

Anti-knife-carrying message goes nationwide

On Wednesday the Justice Secretary visited Stewarton Academy, Ayrshire, for the national tour launch of the No Knives, Better Lives '[Balisong](#)' play, which highlights the dangers of knife crime.

The Scottish Government is providing an additional £25,000 to YouthLink Scotland this year to ensure that 'Balisong' will be seen in every local authority throughout 2018-19, including a showing in HM Young Offenders Institute Polmont.

Real pleasure watching [#Balisong](#) – it did almost have me greetin'!

Powerful, hard-hitting and communicates such an important msg for our young ppl on the dangers of carrying a knife.

Well done to the actors, production team and amazingly talented [@RubiedMoon](#) who wrote it! <https://t.co/wIgXKd5ahK>

– Humza Yousaf (@HumzaYousaf) [October 24, 2018](#)

Redress scheme for in-care abuse survivors

A financial redress scheme for survivors of child abuse in care will be put in place, Deputy First Minister John Swinney announced to Parliament this week.

Mr Swinney was outlining the Government's response to the recommendations of the InterAction Action Plan Review Group on the provision of financial redress for victims and survivors of abuse in care.

Mr Swinney and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon met members of the Group just ahead of his Parliamentary statement and thanked them personally for their commitment, time, and collaborative approach to this work.

Read the [Deputy First Minister's statement](#) on the main Scottish Government website, or watch proceedings on the [Scottish Parliament YouTube channel](#).

Deputy First Minister [@JohnSwinney](#) has confirmed the Scottish Government will put in place a financial redress scheme for survivors of abuse in care. pic.twitter.com/fwsyiFM4XH

– Scottish Government (@scotgov) [October 23, 2018](#)

Strengthening home detention curfew regime

✖ The Justice Secretary confirmed plans to strengthen the system of allowing some prisoners to serve part of their custodial sentence outside prison with a 'home detention curfew' (HDC) electronic tag.

Mr Yousaf announced immediate actions were being taken by the Scottish Prison Service, Police Scotland and the Government after receiving two independent inspectorate reports into the HDC regime.

Read Mr Yousaf's statement to Parliament [here](#)

Girls get in on goals

On Friday Minister for Community Safety Ash Denham visited Gracemount High School, Edinburgh, to see pupils taking part in a 'Girls Only' School of Football – supported by the Government's Cashback for Communities programme that invests the proceeds of crime into projects that support Scotland's children and young people.

The Scottish Football Association currently receives £1.75 million to deliver their Phase 4 (2017-20) Cashback programme – which includes the School of Football programme for girls and boys. The SFA has developed the 'Girls Only' Schools of Football to deliver a range of benefits, including developing self-confidence and social skills.

Thank you to [@ashtenRD](#) for coming along to [@GracemountHigh](#) which is a [@ScottishFA](#) School of Football via [@CashBackScot](#) ⚽

Some amazing young girls in the project and thank you to [@PEGracemount](#) for all the support.

Always love visiting these school and makes you so proud
pic.twitter.com/52jre3VxET

– Paul Hugh McNeill (@PaulHMcNeill) [October 26, 2018](#)

The post [The week in review](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).