



SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026-2029



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Foreword

Our Strategic Policing Plan (SPP) for Scotland 2026 builds on the strong strategic foundation set and delivered through the outcomes of the Joint Strategy for Policing 2020 and 2023. It sets a clear direction for the policing system through high level strategic outcomes which build on those described and evidenced in [2020](#) and [2023](#).

Since the last SPP was published in 2023, there have been a number of leadership changes at the Authority and Police Scotland, including the appointment of Chief Constable, Jo Farrell.

Over the last two years, the Authority, Police Scotland and Forensic Services have all delivered significant improvement and transformation programmes. Police Scotland has developed a clear long-term Vision 2030 which drives an ongoing programme of work underway to further build on the reform of policing and enhance the safety and wellbeing of people places and communities across Scotland. Forensic Services has designed and implemented a new operating model and set out its own vision in the Forensic Services Strategy 2025, to further improve on provision of world leading forensic services to the wider criminal justice community.

We continue to see increased demand pressures and complexity challenging the policing system; however we also see a system responding to these challenges through increased productivity, transformation and innovation whilst delivering a balanced budget. Demands for policing and forensic services continue to grow and evolve. Prioritising services to ensure the greatest threats, harms risks and vulnerabilities are met has become routine. Collegiality and partnership through whole system working with a range of partners and stakeholders across and outside the justice sector are key to identifying and taking forward collaborative solutions to challenges.

This Plan reflects the progress made in the policing system to date. It describes the outcomes we aim to deliver for the people, places and communities of Scotland, while working with key stakeholders and partners to take forward public service reform and continuing to deliver best value.

With a focus on promoting continuous improvement, the SPP focuses on the oversight and delivery of safer communities and improved wellbeing by a thriving policing workforce that embraces innovation and optimises efficient service delivery.

Our relationship with the public and communities of Scotland is fundamental to driving public trust and confidence in and understanding of the policing system. We are committed to listening and responding to all communities across Scotland, including those who have been historically marginalised.

Fiona McQueen CBE, Chair of the Scottish Police Authority

Strategic Context and Alignment

This Strategic Policing Plan sets out strategic outcomes which are aligned within the national strategic hierarchy and are cohesive across the policing system, linked to the [strategic policing priorities](#) of Government and also to the Scottish Government [Vision for Justice](#) published in 2022.

As detailed in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, the Authority is responsible for producing a strategic plan for the policing of Scotland which reflects and delivers against the Scottish Government set policing priorities, most recently reaffirmed on 26 January 2023.

These outcomes demonstrate a consistency of the strategic direction for policing over recent years, building on the evidence based developed in 2023, but have been enhanced to better reflect the coordinated action across and between the Scottish Police Authority, Forensic Services and Police Scotland in delivering on the policing purpose of improved safety and wellbeing of people places and communities in Scotland.

This Strategic Police Plan sets a clear strategic direction for organisational, operational, transformation and business plans across the policing system which will deliver progress towards these outcomes. This recognises the contribution that all parts of the system play in the achievement of progress towards outcomes, while recognising the significant operational and public facing responsibilities of Police Scotland in this area.



Values and Core Delivery Principles

Recognising the distinct but complementary roles of the Scottish Police Authority, Forensic Services and Police Scotland, each organisation has a specific set of values.

The Authority's values are Respect, Integrity and Public Service.

Forensic Services' values are Integrity, Impartiality and Professionalism.

Police Scotland's values are Integrity, Fairness, Respect and Human Rights.

The common value across the system is integrity, which reflects the absolute centrality and criticality of legitimacy, public trust and the importance of the concept of policing by consent.

Ensuring consistent compliance with our values, and having them at the centre of our policing system culture, underpin our strategies, policies, practices, decision-making and individual interactions with communities, colleagues, stakeholders and partners

Delivery principles

Four common core delivery principles apply across the policing system, underpinning the strategic outcomes. These delivery principles describe our common approach to **how**, not what, we deliver across Police Scotland, Forensic Services and the Authority.

Delivery Principle One:

Services are effective, high quality and values-driven, focused on improving local and personal outcomes for people, places and communities.

Delivery Principle Two:

Policing is delivered in a positive and professional way that maintains its legitimacy and inspires public trust and confidence

Delivery Principle Three:

Services are ethical, impartial, anti-discriminatory and rights-based

Delivery Principle Four:

Policing is efficient and sustainable, and achieves best value

Our core delivery principles provide coherence, stability and a focal point to reflect and respond to the strategic environment, in which policing is challenged with delivering effective oversight, scientific excellence, safer communities, and an effective response to threat and harm; whilst adapting to the changing external landscape in which we operate.

We recognise the increasing, and increasingly complex, demands on and for policing and the changing nature of threats to citizens and crime and the importance of prevention and early intervention.

This strategic policing plan builds on insights from the public, our partners, colleagues and stakeholders and shapes a future policing response to changing threats to maintain safety and wellbeing through dedication, innovation and continuous improvement.

The principle of policing by consent is fundamental to Scotland's social fabric. Providing a fair, just and effective policing response relies on earned trust with communities from which policing draws its legitimacy.

Future developments in policing and the innovative use of technology will require ongoing dialogue with the public about how to find a proportionate and explainable balance between individual privacy and public and community safety and protection.

The governance and oversight of policing is characterised by openness, transparency and clear accountability, where decisions regarding service development and transformation are made in the public interest and underpinned by legality, proportionality, evidence, recognition of best practice, take account of operational and strategic risk and reflect changes in the external environment.

Our Strategic Outcomes

These five overarching strategic outcomes set out the direction for the services across the policing system, delivering against the Strategic Policing Priorities set by Scottish Government and providing coherence and coordination which underpins the development and delivery of organisational, operational, transformation and business plans through which progress towards the outcomes will be made.

Strategic Outcome 1:

Communities are safer and more secure, with less crime and improved wellbeing

Policing will be delivered through a proactive and intelligence-led approach to keeping people safe and responding effectively to existing and emerging threats. There is a focus on problem solving, prevention, early intervention and harm reduction, and a renewed emphasis on policing working in and with communities, listening and being responsive to local needs through enhanced community policing.

Society is changing. We find ourselves moving at an ever-increasing pace from the purely physical to the hybridised digital world; a move that brings threats from new and more complex crimes as well as providing opportunities to embrace technology to counter these threats. This shift also affects traditional crime, much of which now has a digital element. To protect people effectively, the policing system has and will continue to evolve, adapting to the needs of communities whether they be defined by place or otherwise, sharpening its focus on keeping people safe from harm across the spectrum, whilst embracing innovative technologies and partnerships to enhance safety and wellbeing.

Strategic Outcome 2:

Services are designed and delivered in a trauma-informed and person-centred way to ensure victims and communities are supported and have trust and confidence in policing.

The policing system will offer informed, sensitive and locally responsive support to victims, vulnerable people and others who are experiencing crisis. All policing services will be designed and developed through inclusive engagement from a listening and learning policing system that values and fully takes account of lived and living experience.

The role of policing is in improving the safety and wellbeing of people, wherever they live and however they define or see themselves as part of a community. This means services must continue to look to improve, to reflect, learn and evolve to meet the specific and changing needs of individuals and communities, ensuring that vulnerabilities are understood and responded to by the most appropriate service at the earliest opportunity.

Strategic Outcome 3:

Partners and stakeholders are involved in developing a responsive and proactive approach to prevention, early intervention and harm reduction.

The policing system will champion collaboration and work in partnership at every opportunity, building effective long term improvement focused relationships. Policing will empower and support the design and development of whole system innovative and collaborative solutions to wicked societal and system-wide challenges. The focus will be on making the 'whole system' more integrated, joined up and accessible for people in need, promoting access to appropriate intervention, support or care by the most appropriate agency at the right time.

To achieve these aims the policing system will work with partners to deliver system best value by effectively optimising the impact of finite resources. Policing will make best use of the statutory role of policing to work in partnership through community planning partnerships and with other stakeholders and partners to maximise the effectiveness of public protection arrangements to deliver a successful early intervention and prevention focused approach.

Strategic Outcome 4:

The policing working environment is safer and its culture more inclusive and is one which enables everyone to feel valued and supported.

People across the policing system will benefit from a well-led working environment where people thrive and can access the training, skills, equipment and professional development opportunities to enable them to perform to the best of their abilities and deliver the best possible services for the people places and communities in Scotland.

People are central to the success of policing in Scotland. They are drawn to serve from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a range of different skills and life experiences to policing but are brought together under our shared values and common purpose. It is essential that people are equipped with the skills, knowledge, technology and support they need to deliver safely and effectively, all within a positive and inspiring working environment.

Strategic Outcome 5:

The policing system delivers best value through efficient, effective and sustainable services, which are collaborative and innovative

Policing will reflect, learn and improve at the system level, organisational level and as individuals and teams. Policing will actively seek opportunities for innovation and coordination, challenging itself and partners to drive improvement, through an enhanced commitment to work collaboratively and sustainably. Delivering optimised outputs through strategically aligned, well designed and successfully delivered

transformation programmes which maximise benefits, return on investment and best value. Policing will be future focused, embracing emerging technological advances to better counter the threats of today and prepare for the future threats and harms identified in horizon scanning. Policing will continue to adapt and to evolve to be highly prepared for and responsive to emerging societal, economic and geopolitical changes which will come in the future.

Oversight of Delivery, Implementation and Reporting

The core delivery principles and strategic outcomes detailed in this strategic policing plan drive and shape the enabling annual, national and local, organisational, operational, transformation and business plans which guide the day-to-day policing of Scotland.

Police Scotland, Forensic Services and SPA Corporate have their own annual planning arrangements and set of performance indicators and measures aligned to the Police Scotland 2030 Vision, Forensic Strategy 2025 and SPA Corporate Strategy 2026 respectively.

Together these annual plans deliver progress against the strategic outcomes for the policing system laid out in this Strategic Policing Plan which aligns to the Scottish Government Policing Priorities.

The Scottish Police Authority lays an Annual Report and Accounts in Parliament each year, reflecting the delivery of policing in Scotland in the preceding financial year ending on 31 March.

This report brings together the assessment of policing performance and effectiveness with a detailed account of the way the policing budget has been allocated to deliver on the policing purpose of improving the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland.

The evidence base to inform this assessment is comprehensive and the process runs throughout the year. The Authority Board Committees receive detailed quarterly performance reports on the progress made by Police Scotland, Forensic Services and the SPA Corporate Team against the annual commitments and milestones laid out in the relevant national and local delivery plans.

In June the Chief Constable makes a formal assessment of Police Scotland's performance and reports that to the Authority in public.

The Authority engages directly with COSLA and every local authority in Scotland to invite evidence on the level of policing performance experienced in their communities, to shape the annual report.

The Authority also seeks and incorporates evidence of performance from key stakeholders and partners such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Audit Scotland, COPFS, PIRC, the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner and its own Internal Audit function.