



# FJSS GROUP

## IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025

*...for a fair, just, tolerant and inclusive Scotland.*



November 2025

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# Executive Summary

The activity year 2024–2025 marked a period of steady yet significant growth and expanding responsibility for FJSS Group. Markedly changing perceptions within the UK's social justice and political landscape such as the hardening rhetoric around immigration and race issues, funnelled by the contagion of the summer riots have made our mission to promote a fair, just, and inclusive Scotland more important than ever.

Despite these challenges, we are delighted to report remarkable progress across our core work areas. During the reported period we reached over 4,100 people through our legal and welfare support, advocacy programs, student engagement programs and other endeavours. We strengthened existing partnerships, established new others, and deepened our diversity and inclusion work involvement across Scotland.

Our annual flagship event, the **Justice Sector Equalities Conference 2025** was another huge success. The event this year was elaborate and smaller in format, but still as big in reach and outcomes. Focus was on organisations whose work feeds into justice delivery blended with the leading stakeholders in the Scottish justice sector. This set the stage for the insightful and thought-

provoking conversations that characterised the event.

This year also marked the introduction of our **New Impact Framework** - a

practical tool designed to measure and sustain progress and ensure accountability towards achieving a more inclusive Scottish justice system within a foreseeable timeline. While this does not necessarily mean that the critical pipeline factor that is a key characteristic of the justice system will be discarded, it helps the key stakeholders to introspect on effectiveness of measures within their own spheres of influence.

While there has been marked progress and significant paradigm shift that should be noted, much more remains to be done as inclusivity of service across social injustice services remains remote. In the coming year, our focus will be on building stronger partnerships, expanding access to our support services, and amplifying our voice in the policy development space where change begins.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners, sponsors, volunteers, and community members whose collaboration and commitment continue to make our impact possible.



## From the Chief Executive

Dear Colleagues, Partners and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the [FJSS Group 2024/2025 Impact Report](#), a reflection of a year marked by purpose, progress, and great people. This report tells the story of FJSS Group's efforts to make justice more equitable to the Black Community in Scotland, to empower them, and support those navigating life's complex challenges.

Over the past year, we have continued to grow in both reach and depth. The [Justice Sector Equalities Conference 2024](#) was a turning point that led to the creation of the [Justice Sector Interface](#), a platform that now fosters ongoing dialogue and collaboration between community groups, justice professionals, and policymakers. The [2025 Conference](#) built on this success, bringing together even more diverse voices to discuss reform, inclusion, and shared responsibility in shaping a fairer justice system.

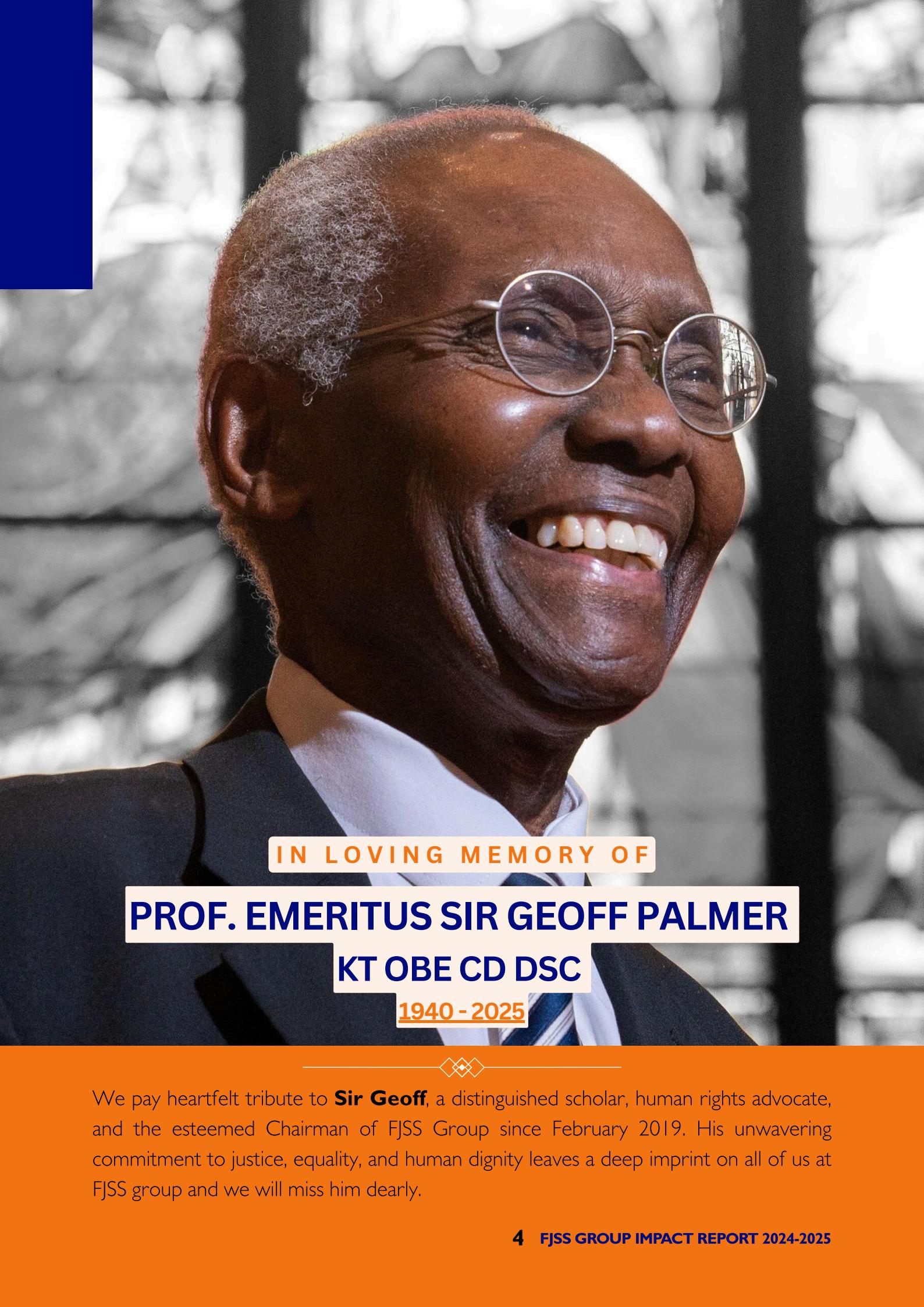
Beyond advocacy and policy work, we have been privileged to support individuals and families through our legal and welfare support services, immigration

advice, and anti-racism education initiatives. Our team has worked tirelessly to ensure that people in need can access justice, find community, and rebuild confidence as valued members of a society where everyone deserves fairness and dignity.

As we look to the future, our focus remains on deepening impact, strengthening partnerships, and expanding our mentorship and volunteering opportunities for young people, creating a Scotland where equality is lived, not just promised.



**Silence Chihuri**  
Founder/CEO, FJSS Group



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

# PROF. EMERITUS SIR GEOFF PALMER

KT OBE CD DSC

1940 - 2025



We pay heartfelt tribute to **Sir Geoff**, a distinguished scholar, human rights advocate, and the esteemed Chairman of FJSS Group since February 2019. His unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity leaves a deep imprint on all of us at FJSS group and we will miss him dearly.

# About FJSS Group

Fair Justice System for Scotland (FJSS) Group is a fully incorporated SCIO based in West Calder, West Lothian in Scotland that advocates for vital reforms that are necessary to transform the Scottish justice system from being conservative and racially exclusive, to one that reflects the diversity and ethnicity of talent that characterises Scottish society today. The organisation engages with the key stakeholders that constitute the Scottish justice sector and the Scottish Government. This connects our work with high-level policies and processes that shape the Scottish justice system including the Scottish Government's race equality and safer community outcomes.

## Our Vision:

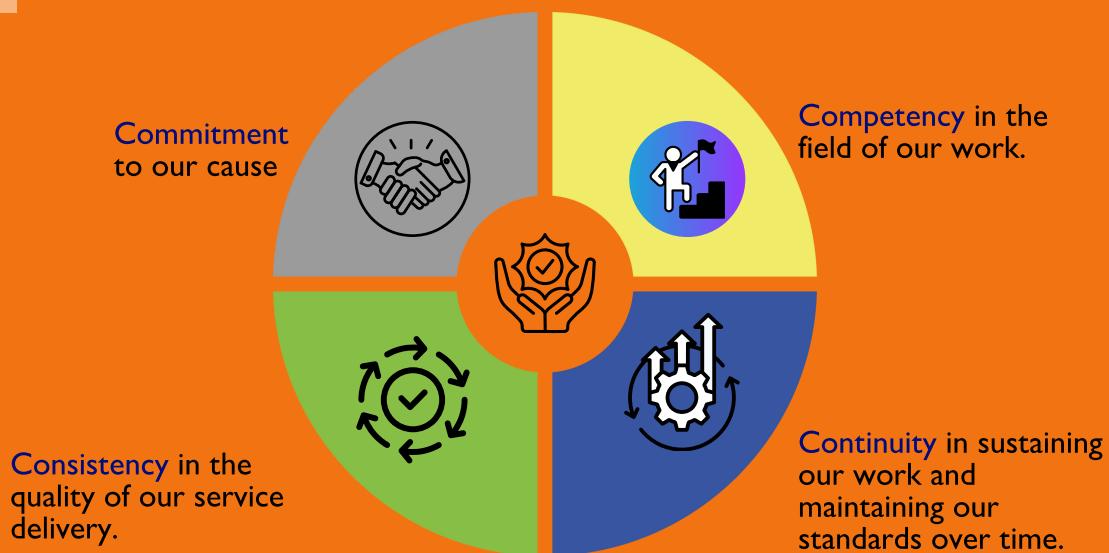
For a fair, just, tolerant, and inclusive Scotland where opportunities are defined by need and the diversity of talent

## Our Mission:

To be a leading voice for a national program of justice sector policy reforms that will bring the necessary changes to allow the development of a people-focused community and social justice agenda in Scotland.

## Our Values:

Our work is anchored on the **four C's**:



# Our Impact Areas

**Advocacy and Policy Influencing:** We engage in policy development to ensure justice sector reforms align with equality principles, convening key stakeholders through our annual Justice Sector Equalities Conference, mini-symposiums, and roundtables.

**Legal Services:** We offer free, high-quality legal aid to help individuals navigate legal challenges with competence and dignity, ensuring fair access to justice for all.

**Immigration Advice and Support:** We support immigrants with reliable legal and welfare guidance, helping them understand their rights, regularise their stay, and access essential services.

**Anti-Racism Education:** We promote social cohesion and cross-cultural understanding through community events, school engagements, and public education initiatives across West Lothian and beyond.



**Human Rights Safeguarding:** We help community members understand, assert, and advocate for their fundamental human rights, contributing to a fairer and more inclusive society.

**Community Welfare Support:** We provide free essential food support to promote equity and preserve cultural identity, and culturally sensitive mental health services for the Black African community in Scotland.

**Youth Mentorship:** We empower young people from ethnic minority backgrounds with confidence, leadership skills, and awareness of racial justice issues through targeted training and mentorship.



**Volunteering Opportunities:** We offer meaningful volunteer roles that build capacity, foster civic responsibility, and equip individuals with hands-on experience in advocacy, community support, and leadership.



Volunteering with us can give you with a positive attitude towards a more just and fairer society.



## The FJSS Group Strategic Engagement

With our work directed toward both beneficiaries - those in need of legal, welfare, employment, or other forms of direct support, and justice sector leaders and decision-makers, we remain intentional in our engagement strategy to ensure meaningful and measurable outcomes.

We engage policymakers, public and private institutions, and partner organisations by:

- Hosting the annual Justice Sector Equalities Conference, alongside workshops, mini-symposiums, roundtables, and other policy engagement platforms.
- Participating actively in equality forums, human rights networks, and council consultations.
- Representing FJSS Group on advisory boards and coalitions.
- Maintaining membership in key sector organisations.
- Building partnerships and collaborations with similar or complementary institutions.

We engage beneficiaries by:

- Organising advocacy campaigns and public awareness events.
- Hosting cultural and community celebration events.
- Holding legal and welfare clinics and providing case-by-case support sessions.
- Offering mentorship and work experience opportunities for students and young people.
- Distributing high-value food packages free of charge to individuals and families in need.

# Our Approach

At FJSS Group, our approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion is simple yet impactful.



We engage the system by working directly with justice sector leaders, policymakers, and communities to drive meaningful reform.



We address and mitigate policy inadequacies by using research, advocacy, and lived experiences to inform practical, equitable solutions.



We collaborate—building strong partnerships across public, private, and community sectors—to ensure that progress toward inclusion is not just discussed but achieved and sustained.

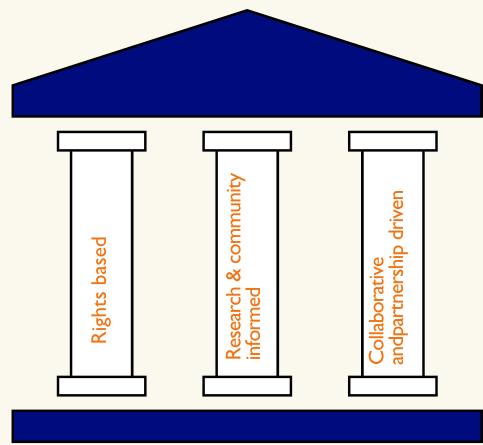
## Our Work Model

Our model combines principle with practice. It is:

**Rights based:** Grounded in the belief that every person deserves fair treatment, dignity, and equal opportunity.

**Research and community-informed:** Our advocacy and programs are informed by lived experiences, community insights, and credible data.

**Collaborative and partnership-driven:** We know lasting change takes collective effort, so we collaborate with credible organisations, to tackle injustice and inequality on multiple fronts.





# Our Key Partners



FACULTY OF ADVOCATES



POLICE  
SCOTLAND  
Keeping people safe  
POILEAS ALBA



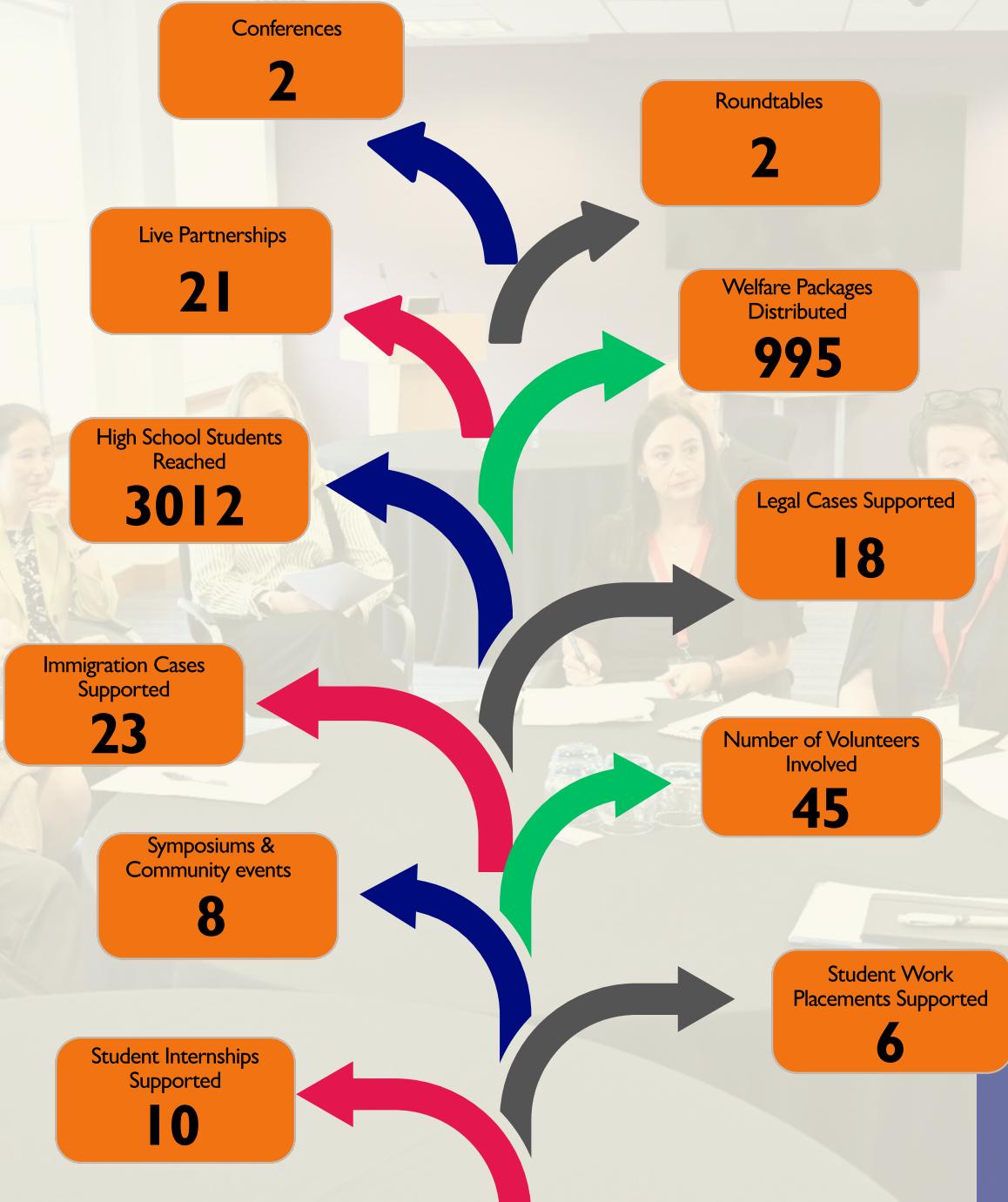
## FUNDERS:



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK  
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE  
HUMANITARIAN ACTION



# The Impact: Statistics



**4100+**  
**People Reached**



# The Impact: Policy and Advocacy

The following lists some of FJSS Group's Policy and Advocacy engagements between 2024 and 2025:

- Hosting the [Justice Sector Equalities Conference \(2024 and 2025\)](#), convening Scotland's justice sector leaders to discuss persistent barriers and co-develop practical strategies for diversity and inclusion across policing, judiciary and policy spaces.
- Launching the [Justice Sector Interface](#) at CONF2024.
- Delivering the [West Lothian High Schools Debate Series 2024](#) at West Calder High School, engaging over 13 high schools.
- Publishing a feature article on Bond UK, titled "[How Diversity Challenges Prejudice and Promotes Understanding in Scotland](#)," amplifying our advocacy on a national stage.
- Leading a three-part [Anti-Racism Series](#) in partnership with the [Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland](#), tackling racism across immigration, policing, and education sectors.
- Co-hosting an [Information Event with Citizens Advice Bureau](#), providing free expert guidance to Black community members on a range of livelihood issues.
- Organising "[The Danger of Commercialising Equality and Diversity Work](#)" with the late Professor Sir Geoff Palmer OBE, sparking essential dialogue on authenticity and ethics in EDI practice.
- Facilitating a [Roundtable Meeting with UK Windrush Commissioner, Rev. Clive Foster MBE](#), ensuring lived experiences continue to shape national policy reform.
- Hosting the [FJSS Group–Home Office Information Event](#) on e-visas and Windrush compensation, directly addressing systemic challenges affecting Black and migrant communities.

# The Impact: Conference and the Interface Program

## The Justice Sector Interface

**The Justice Sector Interface Group (JSIG)** was established following the Justice Sector Equalities Conference 2024, after the presentation of the draft Roadmap to the Diversification of the Scottish Justice Sector. The Interface was created as a bridging platform to sustain momentum from the conference and drive practical, measurable progress in advancing diversity and inclusion across Scotland's justice sector.

**The JSIG operates around four key objectives:**

1. To uphold agreed benchmarks that sustain post-conference progress on diversity and inclusion.
2. To strengthen collaboration among sector stakeholders through good practice exchange, information sharing, and evaluation of existing equality policies.
3. To convene regular meetings between annual conferences to maintain high standards of engagement and tangible outcomes.
4. To track and consolidate progress from justice and diversity-focused groups, promoting coordination and reducing duplication across initiatives.

**Membership** includes leading justice and civic institutions such as Brodies LLP, Bemis Scotland, Citizens Advice Bureau, Crown Office Prosecution and Fiscal Service, Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland, Judicial Office for Scotland, Judicial Institute for Scotland, Law Society of Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Report Scotland, Scottish Legal Aid Board, Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Government, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service.

**The FJSS Group** and **Law Society of Scotland** jointly provide secretariat functions, including agenda drafting, minute compilation, and progress reporting.

The Interface operates through **three key engagement structures**:

- **Post-Conference Meeting:** Reviews and validates the conference report and sets annual priorities.
- **Justice Sector Roundtable:** A bi-annual forum for refining conference themes, agendas, and objectives.
- **Annual Conference:** Brings together sector leaders to present updates, policy commitments, and sector-wide progress.

The JSIG ensures the conference remains an **action-driven** platform rather than a discussion forum, **translating dialogue into measurable impact**. It provides a **unified mechanism for continuous collaboration, monitoring, and accountability**, helping shape a more inclusive and representative Scottish justice system.

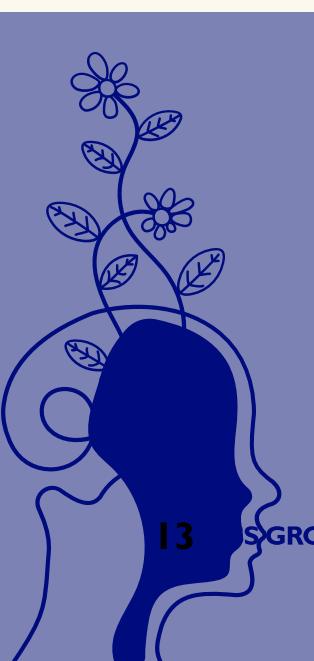


## The Impact: Mental Health and Drugs Support

**FJSS Group** continues to champion mental health and addiction support that recognises and responds to the unique needs of Black communities in Scotland. Through our work, we address the cultural and systemic barriers that often limit access to care, combining practical support with advocacy to promote healing, resilience, and inclusion.

Recently, we launched a new **Accelerated Knowledge Transfer (AKT) partnership with Edinburgh Napier University**, aimed at creating fairer, more compassionate addiction and justice support. The project will co-create a framework shaped by Black individuals with lived experience of substance use and justice involvement, and develop pilot training for justice professionals that promotes anti-racist, trauma-informed, and culturally competent practice.

This partnership reflects what FJSS Group stands for — collaboration, equality, and system-wide change. By grounding our work in lived experience and community insight, we continue to build pathways toward a justice and welfare system that serves everyone with fairness, dignity, and care.



# The Impact: Community Welfare Support



**18 Legal Cases Supported:** Provided free legal guidance and representation that helped individuals and families navigate justice processes and secure best possible fair outcomes.



**23 Immigration Cases Supported:** Offered vital assistance to immigrants facing residency and documentation challenges, enabling them to live safer, more stable lives.



**995 Welfare Packages Distributed:** Distributed essential food packages to individuals and families in need, reducing hardship and promoting dignity and wellbeing.



**45 Volunteers Engaged:** Engaged a diverse network of volunteers who gained work experience while giving their time, skills, and passion to supporting the reach and impact of our work across Scotland.



**10 Student Internships Supported:** Provided hands-on learning opportunities for students to build skills, knowledge, and pathways into the justice sector.



**6 Student Work Placements Supported:** Partnered with educational institutions to give students real-world exposure to justice and advocacy work.



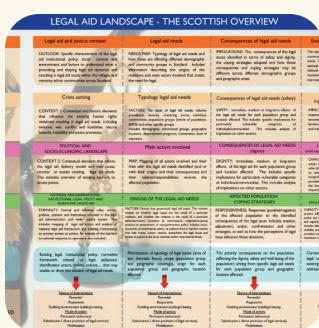
# The Impact: Research and Publications

We launched the 2nd Edition of **The West Lothian Connection** at Bathgate Academy - an educational resource uncovering West Lothian's historical ties to transatlantic slavery and how its legacy still shapes prejudice and discrimination today.



We published our **2023 Impact Report**, capturing our progress, reach, and results from the previous year, and reinforcing our commitment to progressing in our mission.

We published the **2024 JSEC Objectives Booklet**, clearly outlining the conference's goals, expected outcomes, approaches, key indicators, and practical tools for achieving them.



Our **Overview of the Scottish Legal Aid Landscape** analyses the current justice and legal aid context — examining needs, gaps, existing capacities, and responses — and explores how these factors impact different demographic groups, with the aim of advancing diversity and inclusion across the sector.



# The Palestinian Project

## **Healing Children's Hearts: Gaza Children Mental Health and Recovery Programme**

In response to the 2023 Gaza conflict, which left thousands of children dead, injured, or displaced, FJSS Group launched the Healing Children's Hearts project. Proposed to the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Initiative, the programme addresses the severe psychological trauma and loss among Gaza's children, many of whom live amid destroyed infrastructure and disrupted education.

### **Goal:**

To restore wellbeing, resilience, and hope among war-affected children in Gaza through trauma-informed care, psychosocial support, and education recovery.

### **Key Objectives:**

- Provide trauma and mental health support to 4,000 children.
- Train 20 local professionals in trauma counselling.
- Establish a tele-mental health bridge between Scotland and Gaza.
- Rehabilitate safe spaces for learning and play.
- Create medical evacuation pathways for critical cases.

### **Implementation & Outcomes:**

Delivered over 12 months with partners including UNICEF, NHS Scotland, and Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, the project combines local delivery with telehealth training.

Expected outcomes include direct support for 4,000 children, a 40% reduction in trauma symptoms, and a sustainable mental health network linking Scotland and Gaza.





## Structure, Governance and Management

**FJSS Group** is governed by a diverse and distinguished board that includes, among other members, Professor Amos Haniff, Professor Maxwell Chipulu, Sheriff Frank Crowe and Dr Alison Chiwara. Our team of dedicated staff and volunteers is led by Founder CEO, Silence Chihuri.



**Dr Amos Haniff** is an Associate Professor of Project Management at the Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University and the Vice Chairman of FJSS Group board. Since joining Heriot Watt University seventeen years ago, Dr Haniff has held positions in the school of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society (EGIS), Edinburgh Business School (EBS) and School of Social Sciences (SoSS), and taught in the Edinburgh, Borders, and Dubai campuses of the universities.



**Silence Chihuri** founded Fair Justice System for Scotland (FJSS) Group in October 2012 as a direct result of the challenges that he faced as he tried to enter the legal profession in Scotland. He studied law at Edinburgh Napier University and Strathclyde and a master's in human rights at Stirling University. Silence has been an avid human rights campaigner and through his work at FJSS Group seeks to highlight the plight of Black people who are sometimes discriminated against for the mere reason of the colour of their skin.

# Be part of the change.

*Donate  
Engage  
Volunteer*



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