

Annual Impact Report

**November 2024
to
October 2025**



**Next
Chapter
Scotland**

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OUR VISION

We have a vision of a future society in which everyone is treated equally for who they are in the present and no one's future is defined by their past.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help people in Scotland who have been involved with the criminal justice system to navigate the stigma and discrimination they can face.

OVER
12,500,000
PEOPLE IN THE
UK HAVE A
CRIMINAL
RECORD

OUR CULTURE

As an organisation, we pride ourselves on our human-focused culture. As a team we value:

Integrity

Courage

Individual difference

Person-centredness

Diversity

Humour and lightness

Being open and honest

**Our non-judgemental
approach**

Collaboration

We care about helping people – both on an individual level and by tackling systemic injustice.

In communicating with external stakeholders, we strive to be:

Brave and Balanced

Honest and Hopeful

Informed and Inquisitive

Professional and Passionate

Accepting and Agitating

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



The last 12 months have seen Next Chapter Scotland's reach and capacity increase exponentially. This year's impact report will give you a taste of the successes and learning we've enjoyed throughout 2024/25, whilst we have so much to look forward to in the coming year.

As always, everything we do is a testament to our highly skilled, committed team of staff and volunteers. Each team member brings with them their own unique experiences and insights and it is this that makes Next Chapter Scotland the organisation that it is.

The vast majority of our year has been spent listening to people's experiences, whether that be those people who have sought help through our helpline services or shared their stories with us via our Amplifying Voices project. This listening (which is an on ongoing priority for us) has meant that we have absolute confidence that the services we are delivering and developing will help to meet people's needs.

As a group of Trustees, we thank each and every one of you for your support over the past year.

“

If any part of your life feels harder to manage because you or a loved one have been involved with the criminal justice system, we're here to help.

”

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER



I'm not sure I'll ever write a message for our annual report that doesn't start with something akin to; "What a year it's been!"

The last 12 months have been a non-stop whirlwind of action: we no longer feel like the new kids on the block and instead are being viewed as key stakeholders and trusted partners; we've developed a brand new strategic plan, which we're confident will help to meet the needs of the people we exist to support; we've had some funding successes that we're incredibly proud of and yet our eyes are still well and truly fixed on increasing our sustainable income to reduce our dependency on grant funding; our team feels more like a family than a group of colleagues; and we've managed to help so many people feel less alone.

This report will share with you the headlines of our successes and I couldn't be more proud but, for

me, the highlights lie in the quiet moments in which we help individual people - the moments when someone realises that there is a light on the other side of the pitch black where they currently stand; when they know that, although we may not have all of the answers, we'll walk by their side so they don't need to face it alone; when they believe us when we tell them that their life still has value and meaning and that things will get better.

If Next Chapter Scotland closed tomorrow (don't worry, we're not going anywhere!), I will be nothing but proud of the way we've been able to touch lives for the better.

As I write this, we're waiting to hear from a number of funding applications, the outcomes of which have the potential to have a transformational impact on our scale and reach. So watch this space - we've so much more we want to do!

OUR FIRST YEAR IN NUMBERS



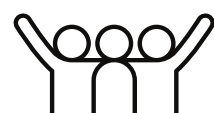
16,000 website visitors

290 people supported on the helpline



2,167 follows on social media

45 outreach venues



8 Listening Ear matches

11 student placements hosted



£87,498 income

Over 3,000 volunteer hours



OUR PRIORITIES

Our priorities form the basis of our strategic plan. They were developed by the Board following engagement with people who have been involved with the criminal justice system and professionals working within the criminal justice system.

1

Share clear and accessible information to help people who have been involved with the criminal justice system navigate any discrimination they may face.

2

Bring people together to foster hope and amplify the voices of people who have been involved with the criminal justice system.

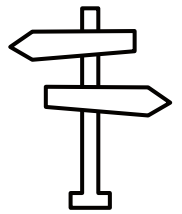
3

Support people who have been involved with the criminal justice system to challenge the discrimination they face.

4

Help to breathe life into the ideas that people who have been involved with the criminal justice system have on how best to improve 'the system'.

1



INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING

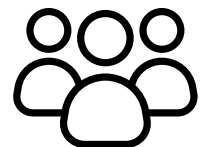
Our helpline service, that originated as an information, advice and signposting service, has now expanded to include much needed advocacy for those people facing the most complex of circumstances. Our new advocacy service launched on the 1st September and the demand is already outstretching our capacity.

In the last 12 months we have supported 290 people via our helpline (324 since it launched).



Over 16,000 website visitors (over 24,000 since we launched) and 29,000 page views.

In the last 12 months we have provided support across 45 outreach venues, connecting with over 2,500 people.



“

There is no other service provider offering this kind of support, and I'm truly grateful.

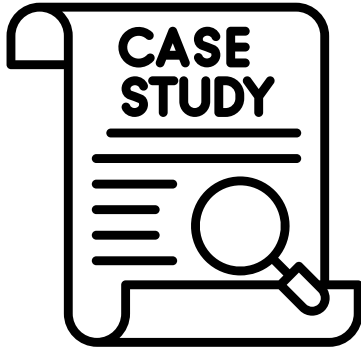
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CHANGE

100%

of respondents reported the information was helpful and they felt more knowledgeable.

Our Listening Ear service combats isolation by matching people with a volunteer who can give them a safe space to talk, once a week. We currently have 8 matches underway.

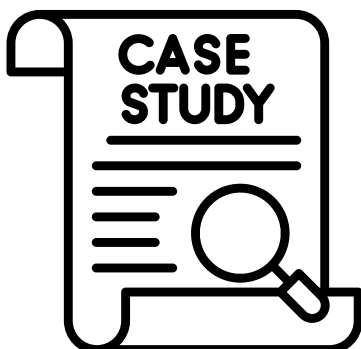


Paul previously had no social interaction with anyone, was afraid to leave his home and was extremely isolated. These calls have allowed him to regain his confidence and to share his worries and feelings. He has now started to go out socially and has been attending local community groups as these were researched and he was encouraged and supported to attend with his match. He had someone to discuss safeguarding himself with, but also someone to listen when he needed it most.

In last year's impact report we gave ourselves the target of 30 helpline users per month by the end of 2025. We're pleased to say we supported 35 people in September and 50 people in October.

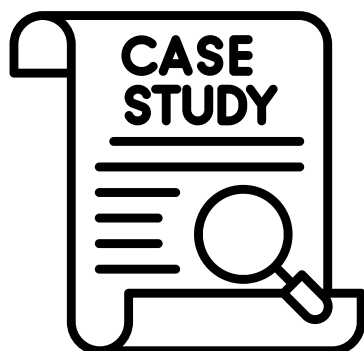


The information and support I received were incredibly helpful. I've been feeling anxious about my son's situation, and the staff responded quickly, with genuine care and understanding. What stood out most is that they truly understand my son's disability—I didn't have to keep explaining things over and over like I often do with other services. That made me feel seen and respected.



Kieran came to us for support with understanding his disclosure and how a previous conviction may affect this. We supported Kieran with understanding and gaining access to his disclosure and this ensured he was able to apply for a new role within his company.

Our Advocacy Project will begin accepting referrals in early 2026. There is a vacuum in Scotland: once your criminal law solicitor has supported you through to sentencing, there is no-one to then support you through any rights violations you might face whilst undertaking your sentence. We want to go some way towards filling that gap.



Next Chapter have been an amazing help. I was listened to and supported emotionally through a triggering process that reactivated past trauma for me. I was supported in a trauma-informed way. While I had the skills necessary to respond to disclosure emails and read policies - I was having difficulty with it due to the emotional aspects. Discussing this with Next Chapter helped me decide my next steps. Once I had decided what I wanted to communicate to disclosure Scotland - Next Chapter was able to help me draft emails that were professional, concise and got my message across without getting all lost in the emotion of it. It is clear that the member of staff who supported me was practising in a trauma-informed way and Next Chapter are getting this right. I don't see that improvement is needed - but would stress that this is what is working well - so a trauma-informed approach and training for staff should remain central because it makes all the difference.

Having recently found myself in the most traumatic of situations and not knowing where to turn to for advice, I was advised to contact Next Chapter Scotland. Just talking to someone who was non-judgmental, empathetic and actually listening to my concerns alleviated my anxiety and enabled me to focus on what was important at that moment.

Next Chapter Scotland is an excellent resource for anyone who finds themselves in a situation within the criminal justice system and requires support and advice.





FOSTERING HOPE AND AMPLIFYING VOICES

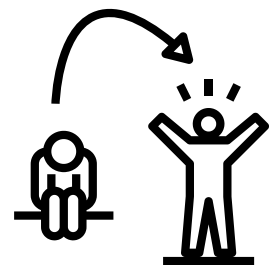
Through our Amplifying Voices project we have heard the experiences of **over 300 people**, from 29 of the 32 local authority areas in Scotland. 12 themes were identified from the data:

Mental health and trauma
Physical health
Finances and employment
Stigma
Racism
Impacts on families

Navigating the justice system
Effective representation and advocacy
Accountability
Person-Centredness
Moving On
Speaking Up and Lived Experience

Our final report, entitled 'What is the Point?: The Human Impact of Scotland's Justice System' not only fills key knowledge gaps around the true effects of the criminal justice system, but serves as a call to action by making a series of recommendations which would make real changes to people's lives.

Over the course of the year we have helped people to be heard by the Scottish Government in relation to Scotland's Anti-Racism Observatory, National Justice Social Work Standards and Outcomes, Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission and the National Care Service Charter of Rights. We have also shared data with Police Scotland on why people feel unable to make formal complaints. Additionally, we have facilitated lived-experience input into a number of pieces of academic research.



“The people affected by the criminal justice system need to feel heard.”

Our Amplifying Voices Ripple Mapping event in June brought together 35 experts from across the third, academic and statutory sectors to consider the emerging themes from our Amplifying Voices data, prior to the report's release.

The event included our first ever 'Platform'; an opportunity for professionals to hear, directly from people who have been involved with the criminal justice system, how their lives are impacted by their experiences.

Some of the key learning points identified by professionals include:

“Don’t judge. Take people at face value.”

“Think about lived experience involvement earlier in processes.”

“Ensure that lived experience is central and not peripheral and challenge myself and others to do the same.”

“Move towards more collaborative research and activism.”

“Prioritise being an advocate and ally.”



In the last year, we have established a Research Ethics Committee (REC) with four academics from academic institutions across the UK. The role of the REC is to ensure that all of our research activities place the safety and wellbeing of participants at their core. At present we are undertaking research into the Moorov Doctrine and human rights breaches in the community.

3



DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS

We have developed and launched two training courses:

Defend Your Rights! - This skills-based course takes a human rights-based approach to supporting people to support themselves. The course helps participants to: understand their rights; know how to defend their rights when they are at risk of being violated; and develop their assertiveness and self-advocacy skills. (In person and online)

Surviving the Storm - The UK's first and only course designed specifically for people with a conviction for a sexual offence, written by people who've been there. A rights-based manual to surviving life after conviction for a sexual offence. (Online)

4



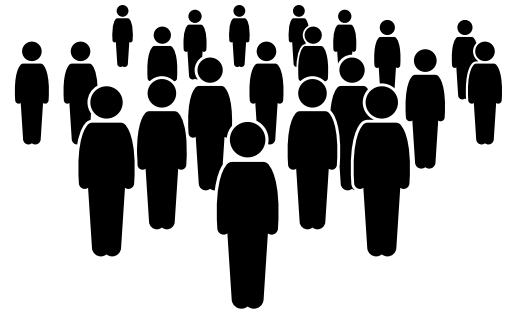
BREATHING LIFE INTO IDEAS

Over the past year, we have done the groundwork for a number of projects that have come directly from people who have been involved with the criminal justice system:

- A podcast
- Support for people to become self-employed
- An employability trading arm

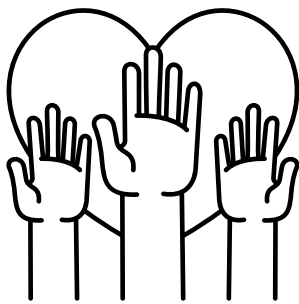
We hope to bring these projects to fruition over the coming year.

STUDENTS



We have supported student placements from the University of the West of Scotland, the University of Strathclyde, the University of Stirling, the University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University.

We value the contribution students make to our team as they both increase our capacity significantly and also bring with them fresh views and insights that never fail to contribute to our overall development as an organisation.



VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers support almost every aspect of our work:

- Listening Ear project
- Legal support
- Social media
- Advocacy
- Media liaison
- Speaking Up and Speaking Out
- Trustees

We are so very grateful for their time and dedication.

We intend to expand our volunteer offering even further in 2026, introducing volunteer roles within our helpline team.

OUR 2026-2029

PRIORITIES

We've refreshed our strategic priorities for 2026 - 2029, to reflect both the needs of the community and the passions and skills of the team.

1

Providing clear and accessible information, signposting and advocacy to support people to navigate stigma and discrimination and defend their rights.

2

Promoting wellbeing by fostering hope and tackling isolation.

3

Bringing people together to amplify their voices.

4

Undertaking research that places the human experience at its centre.

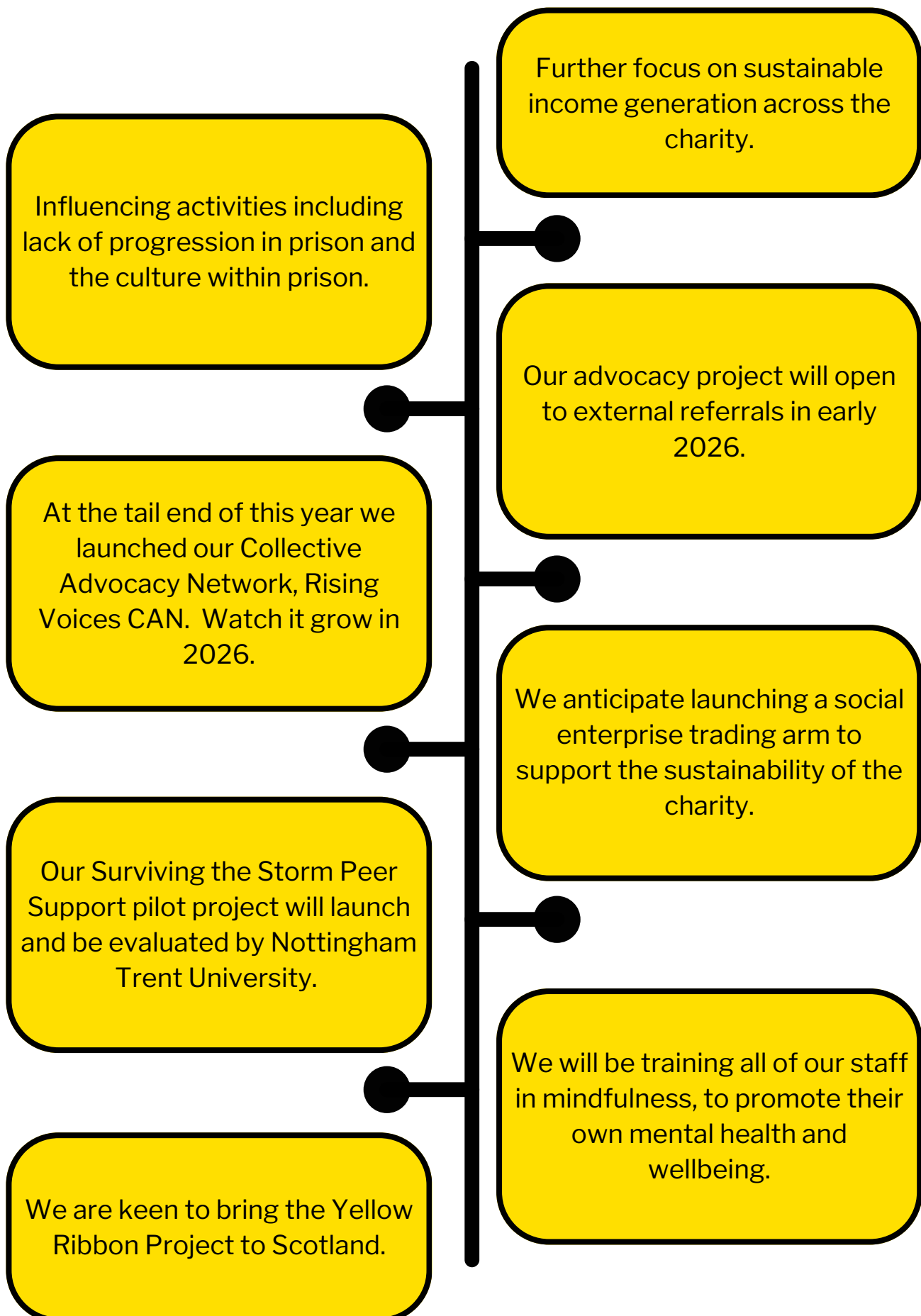
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Challenging stigma through influencing and advocacy.

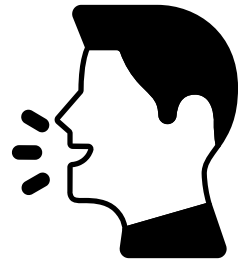
6

Developing the charity into a sustainable, resilient organisation.

WATCH THIS SPACE



WORDS FROM THE TEAM



My first full year with Next Chapter Scotland has been one of the most rewarding in my career. Our commitment to supporting people caught up in the process of criminalisation, regardless of the category of offence assigned to them, has enabled us to reach individuals who have often had nowhere else to turn. Few terms capture the spirit of our work better than leading-edge, ground-breaking, and innovative. Over the past year, our impact has been truly unprecedented, and I look forward with real optimism to the opportunities and possibilities that lie ahead.

I'm looking forward to building on the strong foundations we've laid this year, continuing to grow our impact, strengthen connections and deliver the exciting projects ahead in the year to come.

We've come a long way in the last year and, while we still have so much more we want to do, what we have achieved in the last year is nothing short of incredible. This last year has shown us we can do anything we put our passion and commitment to. Working for Next Chapter has given me so much joy in the last year and the work we do is unlike anywhere else. What's even better is that the best is yet to come...

What an incredible year it's been - the organisation has continued to grow, and we've achieved so much! But what's most exciting are the plans we've put in place for the future. Our three-year strategic plan, plus some very innovative ideas we have in the pipeline. Can't wait to read next year's impact report!

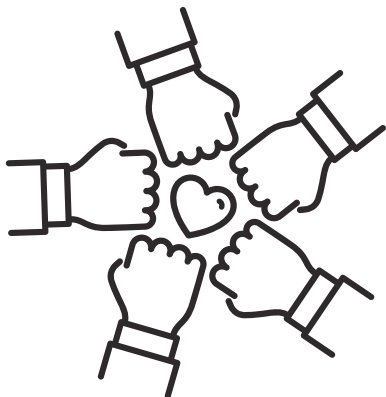
WHAT YOU CAN DO



INSPIRE

We are always looking for new Trustees to join our Board. If you have been involved with the criminal justice system and are keen to influence the direction of the charity, please reach out.

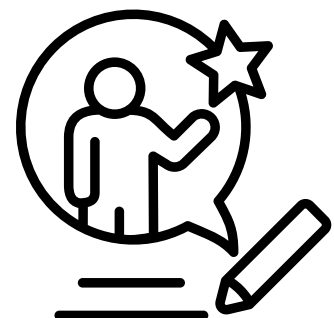
Donations are always very gratefully recieved, no matter the amount. The more donations we have, the more we can do. So please consider making a donation if you are able.



As we expand, we are constantly looking for ways to include volunteers in the work of the charity. Volunteers benefit the charity because they bring skills, experience and expertise that help to improve the services we offer and hopefully being involved with the charity as a volunteer will benefit you by allowing you to share your time to help others and build your experience in the field of criminal justice support.

We are always looking for people who are happy to speak out about their experiences. Whether that be through writing a blog post, submitting a piece of creative work or even speaking out publicly to the media - we're grateful for every contribution, anonymous or otherwise.

Every voice is unique and together we're so much more powerful.



THANKS TO OUR DONORS AND ALL OF OUR FUNDERS



The Inverclyde Trust



The **Hilden** Charitable Fund



THE
WEAVERS'
COMPANY

