

# **PE2107/E: Use more money recovered from the proceeds of crime to support community-based charities that train animals to assist in the detection of drugs**

## **Scottish Government written submission, 28 July 2025**

Money recovered through proceeds of crime legislation is paid into the Scottish Consolidated Fund and decisions on how this is disbursed is a matter for the Scottish Ministers. Currently, funds are committed to fund the CashBack for Communities programme. POCA receipts are, by their very nature, unpredictable and it is not possible to forecast the level of receipts that may be recovered in any given year.

We greatly value the strategic role the third sector plays in enabling the transformation and delivery of services. We recognise that the Sector needs clarity and stability to secure its resilience and to grow its capacity.

As part of the [Programme for Government 2025-26](#), we have committed to delivering a Fairer Funding pilot that provides multi-year funding to third sector organisations, prioritising those that deliver frontline services and tackle child poverty.

The pilot consists of government grants to third sector organisations totalling over £130m over 2025-26 and 2026-27. Eligibility for inclusion in the pilot was judged against agreed criteria across all government portfolios. It was not possible for third sector organisations to apply to take part in the pilot.

The organisations were selected in Autumn 2024 to receive two-year funding, based on them meeting either one or both of the following objectives in the Programme for Government: National organisation providing essential, ongoing, frontline support to communities across Scotland; and organisations which directly deliver against the Scottish Government's priority of eradicating child poverty.

The pilot will support projects in areas including health, education, justice, poverty and culture, and is the first step towards mainstreaming multi-year funding agreements across the third sector, and balances our ambitions against the challenging financial situation. Our commitment to increasing multi-year funding has also been welcomed by participating third sector organisations and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.

We will be undertaking a robust evaluation of the pilot, and are committed to delivering an interim assessment by May 2026. This work will help us to identify any impacts, and build the case for further multi-year funding arrangements.

The letter asks for clarity about specific work to improve grant making processes. We are continuing to improve grant-making practices and develop a consistent approach to manage grants effectively across all grant funding. At the end of 2023, a dedicated Grants Capability and Assurance team was established to drive consistency, effectiveness, and efficiency across all grant-making activity. The team has since created a Grant Improvement Group, which brings together key stakeholders across the Scottish Government to coordinate improvements in grant policy and operations.

In line with wider efficiency reforms and to improve consistency of grant management, the introduction of system-led capabilities targeting the front end of the grant management process are currently being explored and piloted within the Scottish Government. This work is still at an early stage.

The Committee is also aware that the Scottish Government has previously provided funding to Dogs Against Drugs through the Serious Organised Crime Community Grant Scheme.

The charity was awarded £10,000 for a specific time-limited project relating to fast-parcels. The project was aimed at detecting and identifying controlled drugs sent to post offices and distribution centres within Shetland, preventing these drugs from reaching communities. The funding available through the Serious Organised Crime Community Grant Scheme has now been fully committed.

In December 2024, Dogs Against Drugs was provided with a one-off grant of £30,000 from the money ringfenced for SOC-related projects. That funding stream has now been exhausted.

I am aware that Police Scotland provides valuable support to the charity which enables it to support officers to remove illegal drugs from Shetland and raise awareness of the harm they cause. Whether additional support could be provided by Police Scotland is an operational matter and it may be that the charity could raise this issue with Police Scotland directly, if it hasn't already done so.

**Organised Crime and International Justice Cooperation Unit**