

Criminal Justice Committee
Wednesday 16 September 2026
5th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Policing, non-criminal demands and inter-agency support

Introduction

1. At its [meeting on 24 June 2026](#), the Committee agreed to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to give evidence, and to hold a number of evidence sessions with key stakeholders to explore current priorities and challenges across the criminal justice sector.
2. The evidence programme was designed to provide the Committee with an overview of the key priorities it identified during work programme discussions. During those discussions, Members raised concerns about policing in Scotland. In particular, the Committee discussed the time dedicated to responding to non-criminal callouts, pressures on frontline policing, resources available for preventative policing, public confidence, and geographical inconsistencies.
3. The Committee began this work at its meeting on [2 September 2026](#). The Committee heard initial evidence on justice system pressures and priorities at its meeting on 2 September 2026. Members may wish to consider today's evidence in the context of issues raised during that session.
4. At its last meeting on 9 September 2026, the Committee heard from two witness panels covering courts, backlogs and workforce issues, and the experiences of court users.
5. This morning's evidence session and the evidence taken to date will help inform the Committee's understanding of current pressures and priorities across the justice system.
6. At today's meeting, the Committee will hear from the following two witness panels:
 - A panel focusing on frontline policing and non-criminal demands
 - A panel focusing on the health response and inter-agency support
7. Together, these sessions are intended to explore the operational and strategic challenges associated with the police response to non-criminal callouts, including evidence on the operational collaboration between policing and health partners.
8. The Committee will continue its wider programme of evidence-gathering with stakeholders throughout September and early October, culminating in a final session with the Cabinet Secretary.

Overview of evidence sessions

Frontline policing and non-criminal demands

9. During this opening session, the Committee will focus on the extent to which police resources are absorbed by non-criminal matters that fall under the remit of other public services. The session may consider the operational time dedicated to non-criminal reports when partner services are unavailable, the impact of these demands on community policing, whether strategic progress is being made to transfer demands to appropriate services and how well partnership agreements operate.

Health response and inter-agency support

10. The second session will focus on prevention and early intervention methods, cross-agency collaboration between the police, NHS health boards and social care providers. The session may consider the impact of early intervention models, including the extent to which early response can prevent health needs escalating to crisis point, operational collaboration with the police and health partners, progress made against recommendations on custody and mental health protocols. The session may also consider evaluation, data sharing and multi-agency care planning.

Written correspondence

11. Prior to the summer recess, the Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Minister for Victims and Community Safety seeking information on issues raised during the Committee's initial discussions on Session 7 priorities. The response has been published on the [Committee's webpage](#).
12. The Committee invited Healthcare Improvement Scotland to participate in the evidence session. Healthcare Improvement Scotland believed it would not be best placed to participate in the session and instead provided written evidence. The submission provides information on Healthcare Improvement Scotland's role in prison and custody centre inspections, early intervention in psychosis and the Mental Health and Substance Use Protocol programme. The submission has been published on the [Committee's webpage](#) and may assist members in their questioning of witnesses.

Clerks to the Committee
September 2026