



FJSS GROUP IMPACT REPORT 2023



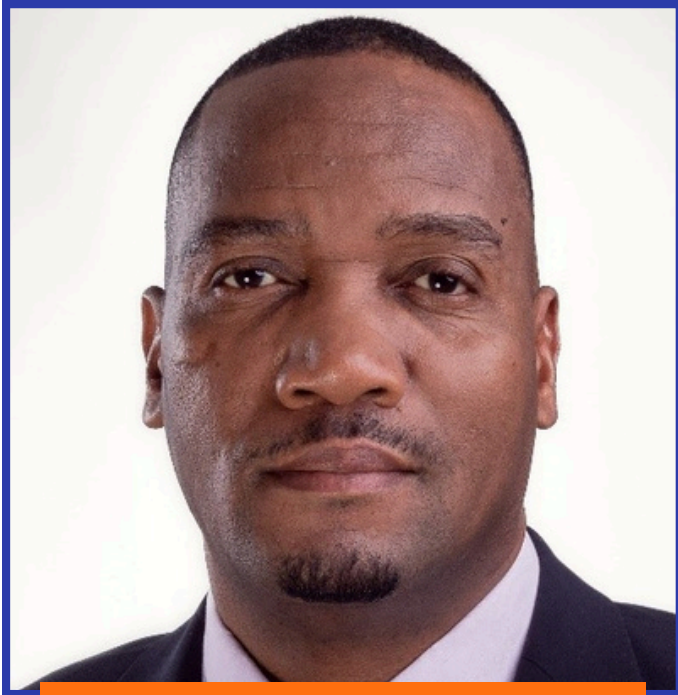
APRIL 2024

 www.fjssgroup.org
 info@fjssgroup.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
		ABOUT FJSS GROUP	2
		2023 AT A GLANCE	3
		THEORY OF CHANGE	4
		PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP	5
		POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT	6
		CHALLENGING EXCLUSION AND MARGINALISATION	7
		REFLECTING ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF HISTORICAL INJUSTICE	8
LEGAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT	9		
WELFARE SUPPORT SERVICES	10		
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERING	11		
CARRYING THE BURDEN	12		
SERVICE USER BENEFIT ANALYSIS	13		
CONCLUSION	14		
CONTACT US	15		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



SILENCE CHIHURI

FOUNDER/CEO FJSS GROUP

In 2023, FJSS Group made significant strides towards our main goal: advancing racial diversity, and inclusion in Scotland. We pursued this objective through carefully crafted programs and initiatives, aiming to lead ongoing discussions on the human rights protection and empowerment of ethnic minority communities in Scotland.

We played a crucial role in shaping inclusive policies by organising tailored partnership events. These events fostered constructive dialogues with stakeholder organisations, leading to evidence-based recommendations. By facilitating such discussions among policymakers, community leaders, and ethnic minority groups, we established a vital platform for addressing systemic inequalities and promoting social cohesion.

Throughout 2023, providing essential legal aid to individuals facing discrimination and injustice remained an important part of our work. Through pro-bono consultations and representation, we empowered those unable to afford legal assistance to assert their rights and seek justice.

Our educational events in West Lothian secondary schools served as platforms for historical enlightenment and the cultivation of a culture of inclusivity and respect among students. This was our way of challenging the perpetuation of mindsets and attitudes that contribute to racial injustice in future generations.

In response to widespread food insecurity, FJSS Group collaborated with local shops and community organisations to provide food aid to vulnerable individuals from ethnic minority communities. This initiative aimed to alleviate immediate hardships and promote well-being.

This report outlines our efforts in 2023, highlighting their impact within Scotland's existing social, cultural, and economic contexts. We hope it provides readers with a deeper understanding of our work and encourages support for our ongoing journey.



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.

VISION

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

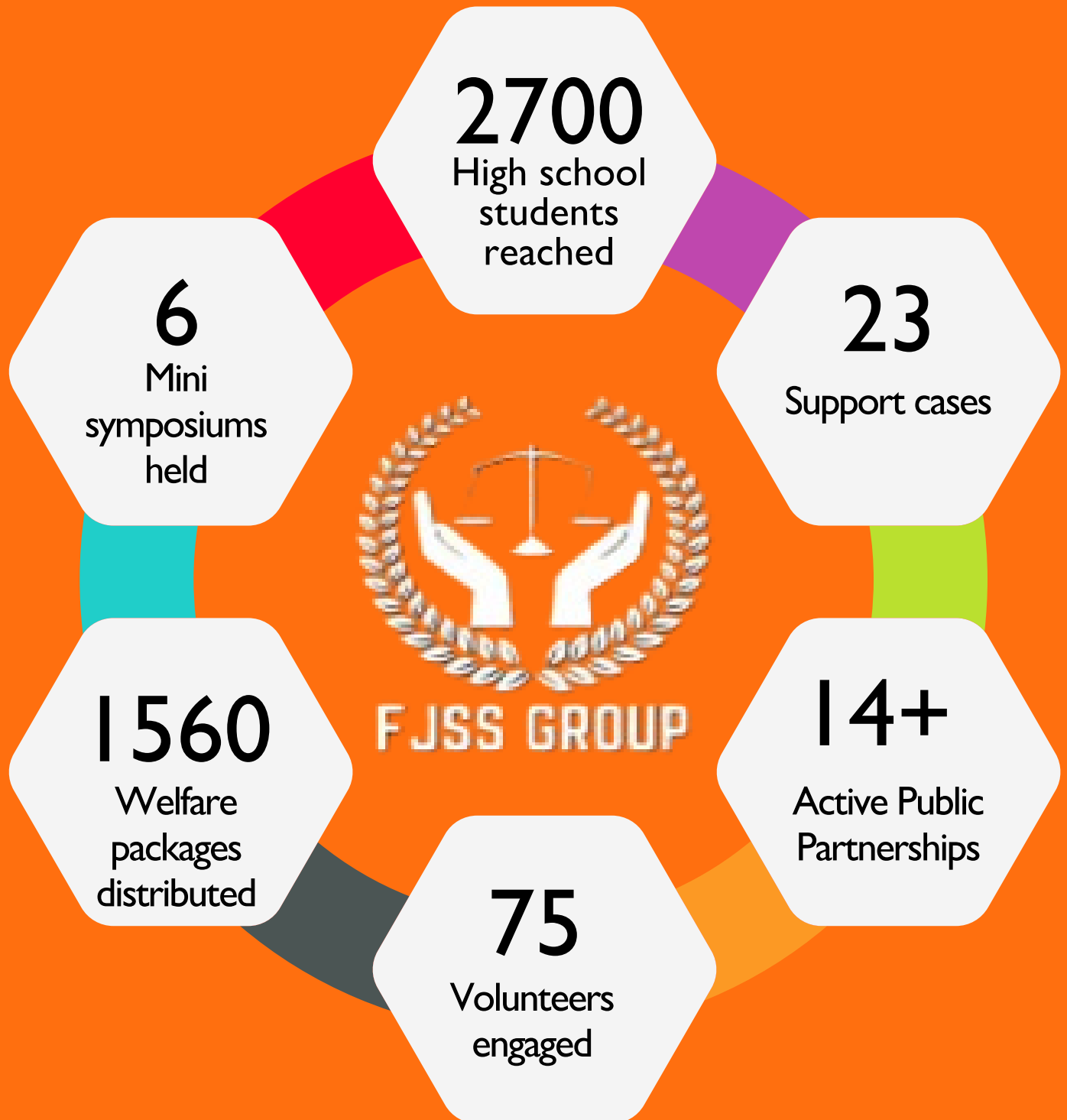
MISSION

To be the 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.

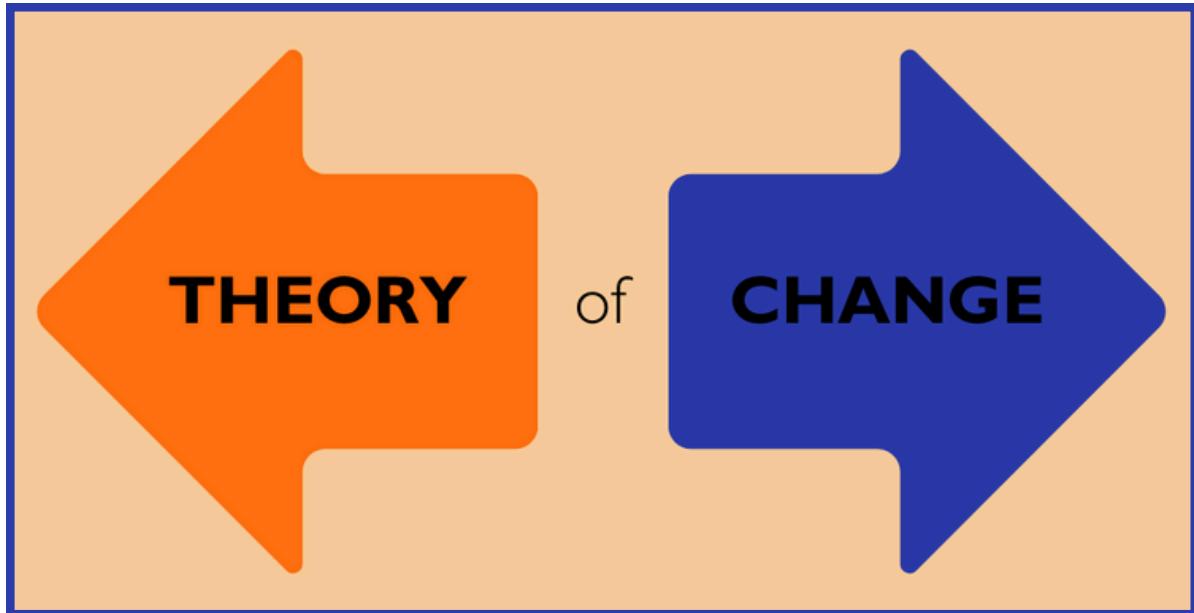
VALUES

Our values are underpinned by our four C's: Commitment to our cause, Competency in the field of our work, Consistency in our delivery of service and Continuity in terms of how we sustain our work and maintain our level of service

2023 AT A GLANCE



THEORY OF CHANGE



At FJSS Group we pride ourselves as the credible voice for justice sector reforms that will help create a diverse and inclusive justice system in Scotland. Premised on this singular objective, our “Theory of Change” is based on “process” as the main driver for the desired level of change to realise the desirable outcomes. The “process” consists of various innovative initiatives intended to contribute to the change process. They are outlined below:

Practical and Effective Partnership

- Providing a leading voice for racial inclusion and diversity nationally to influence change in the Scottish justice system. Working collaboratively with key stakeholders to achieve this.
- Being locally visible in all key platforms and forums in West Lothian such as the Third Sector Strategy Group, and the local TSI, the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian.

Service User Benefit Analysis

- Obtaining and acting on essential feedback from service users to help shape our change agenda such as the food distribution program and the community mental health support program.
- Conducting periodic surveys and production of reports to highlight the priority and aspirational perspectives of communities we serve.
- Facilitating participation in programme design and implementation for our volunteers.

Policy Development to Enhance Delivery

- Diversity and Inclusion Programme
- Policy Symposiums
- Policy review and development support

Outcomes With Impact

- Challenging exclusion and marginalisation

PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

At FJSS Group, we highly value partnerships as crucial channels for driving effective and sustainable change. In 2023, through collaborations with various entities including UK Government agencies like Police Scotland, Community Justice Scotland, and the Prosecution Service, local authorities such as the West Lothian Council and educational institutions like Heriot-Watt University, we asserted our position as leading advocates for racial diversity and inclusion in Scotland.



Our engagement with government stakeholders involved well-planned programs and events, such as **our collaboration with the West Lothian Council on the Slavery Working Group.**

In this initiative, we provided valuable insights, data, and grassroots perspectives to advocate for equitable policies, support policy-making processes, and champion systemic change.



We also partnered with other non-profits sharing similar or complementary goals to enhance our impact and reach. For instance, **our collaboration with the British Institute for Human Rights (BIHR) led to the production of Using Human Rights, a guide to the Human Rights Act** for people accessing our organisation's services. By pooling resources, expertise, and networks, such partnerships facilitated efficiency in addressing systemic issues.

Furthermore, we established new partnerships with educational institutions like Heriot-Watt University and the University of Stirling, expanding our technical capacity, reach, and impact.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT



At the heart of our mission lies the empowerment of voices too often unheard. Through our strategic policy collaborations with key UK Government institutions, and local authorities, we serve as architects of change, fostering inclusivity and diversity, and guiding these organisations to the path of equitable representation.

Our signature mini symposiums gather the foremost minds from various organisation's departments and leadership roles, uniting them in a singular space to map out the most important policy areas for their organisations. This offers the opportunity for honesty, objectivity, and innovation which in turn result in transformative outcomes.

In 2023, **6 mini symposiums were held** with representatives from across UK Government agencies, Tertiary Institutions and other sector-relevant organisations where we analysed policies and procedures in light of racial diversity and inclusion and provided relevant feedback.



CHALLENGING EXCLUSION AND MARGINALISATION



Championing racial diversity and inclusion lies at the core of our work at FJSS Group. Our carefully planned programmes, activities and events, are geared towards challenging systemic barriers to equality.

Yearly, the **Equalities Workshop** is held to highlight the existing lack of racial diversity and inclusion in the work scope, specifically the legal profession, in Scotland. **Last year's workshop, held in June, recorded its highest, most racially and professionally diverse attendance.** It provided a platform for the key stakeholders in the sector to analyse the existing gaps in employment and to propose practical ways to address them.



Similarly, but targeted to a different audience, our Secondary School Debate Series are designed to enlighten and raise awareness about racial prejudice and discrimination among young people for the benefit of next generation Scotland. Last year, we celebrated Black History Month with **over 18 High Schools**, reaching out to **an average of 2700 students and 200 teachers**, equipping them with important, often overlooked, historical knowledge and the right attitudes for driving change.

REFLECTING ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF HISTORICAL INJUSTICE



Our longstanding project, the Windrush Consultative project, was launched in 2021 to amplify the stories and experiences of the Windrush generation, spotlight the living conditions of those still alive and expedite government-provided compensation for them.

In June 2023, we hosted a series of events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the passengers of the Empire Windrush in the UK. These events included a photo exhibition of the top 10 Windrush personalities as commissioned by King Charles III.

These programmes and activities spotlight the remnants of historical injustice that continue to exist in Scottish Society. The slave trade and colonialism laid the foundation for the racial discrimination, prejudice and injustice that black people continue to suffer today.

LEGAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT



At FJSS Group, we extend legal guidance and representation to people from ethnic minority backgrounds who face financial barriers or seek solace in services that truly understand their circumstances. With a focus on employment, immigration and UK settlement-related issues, we strive to ensure that all voices are heard regardless of financial constraints or systemic barriers.

In 2023, we **handled 12 employment, immigration and civil-related legal cases**. We also **provided support to over 23 student cases across 6 universities in Scotland**., Issues ranged from language barriers to coursework submissions and racial discrimination. The majority (**75%**) of the cases involved International Students but **100%** involved students from the black community.



WELFARE SUPPORT SERVICES

FJSS Group provides crucial food and mental-health support to the Black African community in Scotland. The food distribution has four main objectives:

- To provide food equity and prevent hardship in the Black African community in Scotland.
- To mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis and its effect on low income families and the Black African community are in this demographic group.
- The food parcel service ensures that the Black African community can maintain their identity and culture because we provide them with the type of food ingredients that they would ordinarily get in Africa.
- The food distribution program is one of many ways that our characteristically high profile connects with the grassroots communities that we serve

In 2023, **multi-nutritious welfare packages were distributed to an average of 60 families every two weeks.** Beneficiaries of our food welfare services included students, immigrants, low-income earners and others in dire situations of need.

Our organisation also provides mental health support service geared towards providing appropriate and culturally sensitive support. The mental health support service is delivered by people from our community who understands the deep cultural perceptions that are associated with mental health challenges in the African community. Our team includes people who have been supported by the service and their lived experience provides vital input that is used to design a program that is fit for purpose.

The food distribution and mental health support programs some of the many ways that our characteristically high profile connects with the grassroots communities we serve.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

We believe and have seen practically how volunteering can be a transformative avenue for marginalised people, offering them not only a sense of purpose but also a pathway to empowerment and inclusion. Our volunteers at FJSS Group develop new skills relevant to UK society, expand their networks, and gain valuable experiences that may have been previously inaccessible. Beyond these tangible benefits, volunteers also gain a sense of belonging and community; a place where they can voice their concerns and be a part of the change they want to see.



FJSS Group is a **95% volunteer-run** organisation which does high-level work that requires high-level skills. The sheer fact that this work is carried out by ethnic minority volunteers further goes to challenge societal stereotypes, as it showcases the talents and capabilities of these individuals who are often overlooked and underestimated.

In 2023, we had an **average of 20 volunteers per quarter** who were involved in all aspects of the organisation's work including policy development support, legal support, community outreaches, among others. By the close of the year, while some volunteers remained with us, some others had progressed into paid work, while others started businesses or were signposted to other opportunities.

CARRYING THE BURDEN

Advocating racial diversity and inclusion often comes along challenges securing funding, recognition and appreciation of the work involved. Sometimes it feels as if the responsibility to address issues around racial discrimination, exclusion and lack of diversity is the responsibility of the marginalised community who are left to do the work using their bare hands. Most black-led organisations doing this work are small charitable organisations that do not have the same visible presence as the other bigger organisations. This makes it difficult to get funding for they work they do which often goes unnoticed by policy and decision makers.



This highlights the crucial role FJSS Group plays as an organisation dedicated to promoting racial equality, diversity, and inclusion. By shouldering this huge advocacy burden, we provide much-needed support, resources, and a platform for ethnic minority communities to amplify their voices and effect change collectively. Our efforts help to distribute the weight of advocacy more evenly across society and support systemic change while easing the burden placed on individuals who already bear the brunt of inequality.

SERVICE USER BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Below is an overview of our service user benefit analysis. Service users include both our strategic partners who access both our expertise and policy input and the community who access our services:

Practical and Effective Partnership



Users see real-time and measurable progress, and benefit from in their aspirational objectives and operational outcomes because that is helped through their partnership with our organisation.

Policy Development Support



Users can ensure their policies align with best practices, fostering a diverse and conducive environment where their service users can benefit from diversity and inclusivity of those policies.

Challenging Exclusion and Marginalisation



Participants gain insight and essential tools to recognize and address racial discrimination, leading to more inclusive and stronger communities.

Legal Services and Support



Users can receive expert legal counsel, advice and support without the usual barriers such as language, financial affordability and other cultural dynamics that can affect their access to such services.

Welfare Support Services



Individuals and families facing economic hardship and mental-health challenges benefit from reliable access to food and social welfare support reducing stress-related impact of the cost of living.

Creating opportunities through volunteering



Volunteers gain personal development, skills, improved career prospects, increased confidence in interaction and asserting their individual skills and knowledge.

CONCLUSION



At FJSS Group, we are proud of our work and achievements made in the year 2023. Our organisation remains committed and dedicated to championing racial diversity and inclusion through the work that we do as highlighted throughout this report.

We do however recognise that without the support of our volunteers, our staff, and external partners committed to our shared values and objectives, our work will not be delivered at the level that we have been doing over the years.

We appreciate the support that we get from the wider public and we would like to continue to appeal for that support. Some of the many ways our organisation can be supported include:

- volunteering
- donating
- partnering
- getting involved in our programs, and
- sending us your feedback.

CONTACT US



FUND DONATE PARTNER NETWORK



www.fjssgroup.org



+44 131 285 1013



info@fjssgroup.org



Justice House,
24-26 Main Street,
West Calder, United Kingdom
EH55 8DR.



[@fjssgroup](https://www.instagram.com/fjssgroup)