Impact case study

Local training. Regional value.

Developing shared protective security capability through multi-agency collaboration

How Aberdeenshire Council partnered with Skills for Justice Training to bring regional organisations together through a locally delivered protective security programme.

Skills for Justice

Aberdeenshire COUNCIL

November 2026



Delivery of the SFJ Awards qualification in Counter-Terrorism Protective Security and Preparedness (CTPSaP)

Connecting organisations for shared regional preparedness

Three locally delivered CTPSaP* cohorts brought council employees and regional partners together to develop shared protective security knowledge and professional connections. Each organisation funded its own places, and all participants benefited from group discount.

71%

of participants came from outside Aberdeenshire Council



8 council participants

20 partner participants

28

Participants

completed five days of tutor-led CTPSaP training

3

Local cohorts

Delivered in Aberdeen

10

Organisations

Aberdeenshire Council and 9 regional partners

4

Local authorities

Learning together

*Skills for Justice delivers the SFJ Awards Level 3 CTPSaP Award in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the SCQF Level 7 Award in Scotland, reflecting different national qualifications frameworks.

The reach behind the network

The participating organisations work across essential services, busy public spaces and major venues. Their responsibilities illustrate why building shared knowledge and connections across agencies matters: the potential value of learning together extends way beyond the professionals in the classroom.

5.6m+
National Trust for Scotland visitors in 2024/25

700,000+
People served by four participating local authorities

2m+
Aberdeen International Airport passengers annually

590,000
People in NHS Grampian's service area*, supported by 20+ hospitals

15,000
Capacity at P&J Live arena

These figures illustrate the scale of the participating organisations' wider responsibilities, not the number of people directly reached by the training.

Why learning together matters

> "Training together provides a shared understanding of protective security principles, terminology and good practice. Just as importantly, it helps strengthen professional relationships and networks that can support future collaboration, preparedness and information sharing across the region."

Graham Smith
People and Places Security Officer, Aberdeenshire Council

*Source: National Records of Scotland, Mid-2025 population estimates.

A shared challenge. A collaborative response.

For organisations responsible for keeping people, places and services safe, effective protective security depends not only on their own plans and preparedness, but on the ability to work together across organisational boundaries.

Graham Smith, People and Places Security Officer at Aberdeenshire Council, had previously undertaken CTPSaP training with Skills for Justice in Manchester. As the council considered its preparedness and emerging requirements, including Martyn's Law, Graham identified an opportunity to bring specialist learning closer to home.

By inviting neighbouring authorities and regional partners to participate, the council adopted a collaborative, whole-of-society approach to strengthening protective security capability and regional resilience.



> Counter-terrorism protective security is not something that any individual organisation can address in isolation.
>
> **Graham Smith | People and Places Security Officer, Aberdeenshire Council**

A council-convened, locally delivered model

Aberdeenshire Council brought regional stakeholders together, while each participating organisation funded its own places. Skills for Justice Training managed bookings, onboarding and payment directly.

01

Council outreach

Invited local stakeholders to participate

02

Partner funding

Each organisation paid for its own learners

03

Skills for Justice support

Managed onboarding and payment

04

Local delivery

Hosted at client's chosen location in Aberdeen



> We also valued the flexibility and support provided in arranging the training locally and bringing together participants from different organisations.
>
> **Graham Smith | Aberdeenshire Council**

Value of the local arrangement

Local participants could access specialist training without out-of-region travel and accommodation costs.

Ten organisations. Different roles. Shared learning.

Council staff trained alongside 20 professionals from nine partner organisations, bringing perspectives from local government, healthcare, higher education, major events, transport and heritage into one learning environment.

16 Local authorities

Participants across four councils

- Aberdeenshire Council · 8
- Aberdeen City Council · 4
- Dundee City Council · 3
- Moray Council · 1

2 Healthcare

Participants representing a regional healthcare network

- NHS Grampian · 2

Wider organisational reach:
20+ hospitals and wider healthcare services serving north-east Scotland.

10 Public-facing places

Participants across five organisations

- P&J Live · 3
- National Trust for Scotland · 3
- Robert Gordon University · 2
- Union Square Aberdeen · 1
- Aberdeen Int'l Airport · 1

28 participants • 10 organisations • 4 local authorities • 3 Aberdeen cohorts

Specialist expertise. Grounded in practice.

For Aberdeenshire Council, provider credibility mattered. Graham highlighted the connection between Skills for Justice Training and SFJ Awards, both part of The Workforce Development Trust, as a source of confidence in national alignment.

SFJ Awards developed CTPSaP with the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO); the qualification is endorsed by NaCTSO and Counter Terrorism Policing.

Why the relationship mattered

Skills for Justice provides the learning; SFJ Awards is the awarding body. Both are within The Workforce Development Trust group. Their relationship, and the qualification's development with NaCTSO, were important to Aberdeenshire Council's training provider choice.

The council also wanted training grounded in real-world responsibilities and operating environments. As Graham noted, "The knowledge, credibility and operational experience of the trainers stood out."

Drawing on backgrounds in counter-terrorism policing, protective security, intelligence, major event security and crisis response, our trainers connected protective security principles with real-life situations across different organisational settings, bringing decades of experience and tangible insight into the classroom.

> "The trainers' operational backgrounds gave credibility and context to the course material. Being able to draw on genuine professional experience helped demonstrate how protective security principles translate into practice."
>
> **Graham Smith | People and Places Security Officer | Aberdeenshire Council**

One programme. Measurable savings. Wider regional value.

Aberdeenshire Council's collaborative approach extended specialist learning beyond its own workforce, helping to strengthen regional protective security capability while delivering significant savings.

For participating organisations

Practical learning and professional connections

Participants developed their understanding of protective security alongside regional counterparts, gaining perspectives from different operating environments and building connections that can support future knowledge-sharing and multi-agency collaboration.

For Aberdeenshire Council

Extending capability beyond its own workforce

By bringing regional partners together, the council helped extend specialist learning beyond its own employees, supporting the development of shared knowledge and professional relationships across organisational boundaries.

For the wider region

A stronger foundation for multi-agency preparedness

A wider network of professionals with the knowledge and connections to recognise security risks, consider proportionate protective measures and support coordinated preparedness can help organisations prepare for Martyn's Law and contribute to a more resilient region.

33% saving

As a not-for-profit provider, Skills for Justice Training is committed to delivering affordable, people-focused learning that addresses workforce challenges. Through transparent, VAT-inclusive pricing and collaborative local delivery, we helped Aberdeenshire's participating organisations achieve significant cost efficiencies.

The 33% saving is calculated against the standard course fee. Future pricing may vary, with discounts available for group bookings and public-sector organisations.

How other councils could build regional capability

Aberdeenshire's approach shows how councils can work with Skills for Justice Training to bring local organisations together for specialist learning, strengthening professional relationships and creating opportunities for more coordinated protective security preparedness.

1 Convene regional partners

Identify and invite neighbouring authorities and organisations with responsibilities for protecting people, public spaces and essential services.

2 Enable joint participation

Each participating organisation selects and funds its own delegates, enabling wider participation without one council having to finance every place.

3 Coordinate local learning

Skills for Justice supports local delivery arrangements, manages bookings and onboarding with participating organisations, and provides expert, practitioner-led training.

4 Create connections and build resilience

Professionals learn together, developing shared knowledge and relationships that can support future multi-agency collaboration, coordinated preparedness and regional resilience.

More resilient together.

Shared learning. Stronger networks. A foundation for regional preparedness.

“One of the wider benefits has been the opportunity to build a network of people with a common understanding of protective security and preparedness, which extends the value of the training beyond the qualification itself.

It increases the number of people within the region who have a formal grounding in counter-terrorism protective security and preparedness.”

Graham Smith

People and Places Security Officer, Aberdeenshire Council

Skills for Justice

How might this work in your region?

Bring partners together to strengthen protective security capability.

Aberdeenshire Council’s approach shows how a locally coordinated programme can bring neighbouring authorities and partners together.

Speak to us about local delivery, direct booking support and current pricing.

Contact us about your requirements

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