

Turning Lives Around

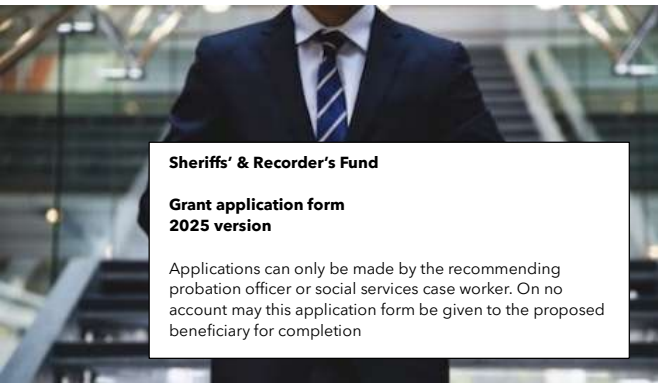
The latest news from the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund

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Message from the Chair

"Our online application process has reduced the average turn-around time on grant applications from 22 days to 8 days, meaning we can get assistance to prison leavers quicker and when they are at their most vulnerable."



Our online grant application form was launched in May 2025, making the process much more accessible to our users and partners.

NEWSFLASH

The Sheriffs' Prison Walks have raised more than £100,000 – the largest ever fundraising event for the Fund. A huge "Thank you" to Sheriff's Consort Elspeth Hughes-Penney, whose brainchild this was, and to everyone who participated and donated.

I am delighted to introduce our first newsletter to provide all our supporters and followers with the latest news about the Fund's activities.

Firstly, I would like to thank last year's Sheriffs, Alderman Gregory Jones, KC, and David Chalk who retired from office in September 2025 and to welcome the new Sheriffs, Alderman Sheriff Robert Hughes-Penney and Sheriff Keith Bottomley: they have certainly hit the ground running! I am also delighted to welcome The Right Honourable Lady Rose of Colmworth, DBE, PC, Her Honour Wendy Joseph, KC, and Thomas Grant, KC as new Patrons of the Fund. Dame Vivien Rose is one of the most senior judges in the UK and was appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court in 2021. Her Honour Wendy Joseph, KC, is a former judge at The Old Bailey and author of the acclaimed "Unlawful Killings" and "Rough Justice". Thomas Grant, KC, is a practising barrister and the award-winning author of "Court Number One: The Old Bailey Trials that defined Modern Britain".

In May 2025 we launched our online application form and, since then, we have seen a huge increase in the number of applications to the Fund, which is not surprising given the backdrop of the Early Release Scheme introduced in September 2024. We have funded all eligible applications and, at the same time, increased the average grant value to £200.

These are busy times for the Fund and we remain very grateful to all the livery companies, 200 Club members and other supporters who enable us to do this very valuable work.

The Fund in numbers ¹

1,186	Grants made
41%	Increase in no. of grants
£200	Average grant

Average grant - £



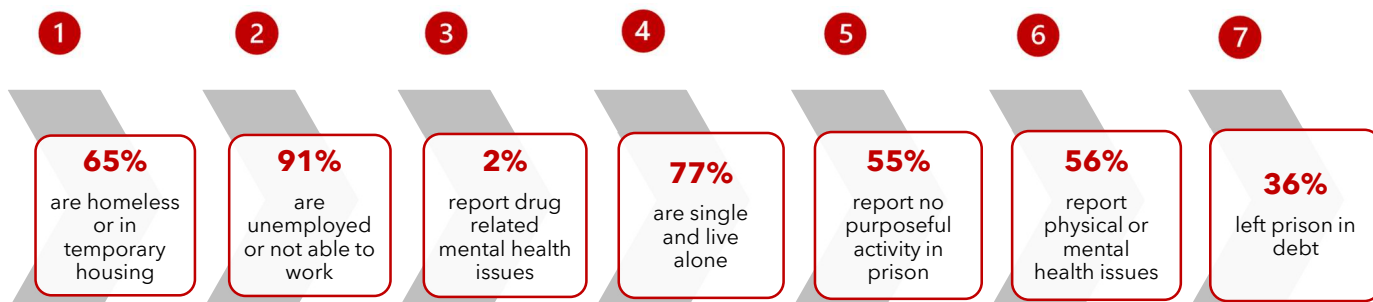
1. For the 9 months ended 31 December 2025, or as a comparison with the same period last year

Reducing reoffending

People who offend tend to have a higher incidence of issues in certain areas than the general population. Research shows that there are key factors, known as the **7 Strategic Pathways**, that influence reoffending:

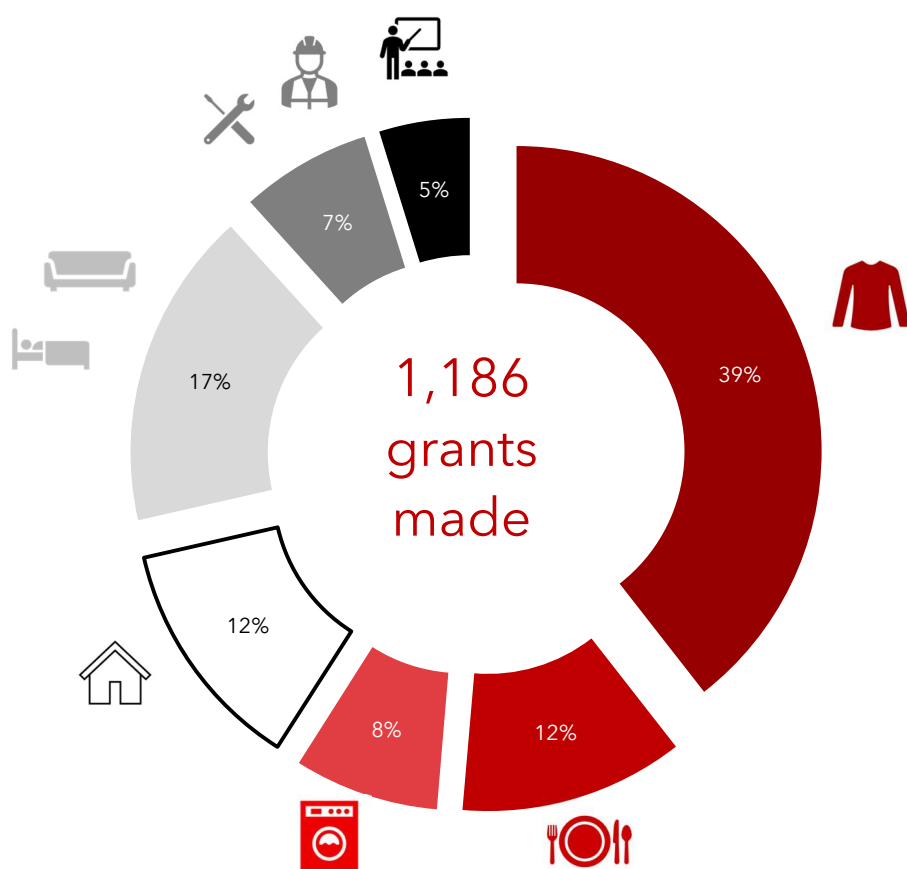
1. Accommodation
2. Employment and Education
3. Drugs and Alcohol
4. Family and Social Support
5. Life skills and behaviour
6. Physical and mental health
7. Debt management and access to benefits

Where our applicants are on these Strategic Pathways and how our grants can help is shown below.



Grants made

So far this year (9 months to 31 December 2025), we have received 1,266 applications for welfare and rehabilitation grants, which is 26% higher than the corresponding period last year. We funded 100% of the eligible applications. Over 80% of our grants were for clothing and household goods (including kitchen utensils and appliances and bedding), including 20% that were for both clothing and household goods.



From clothing for job interviews, work clothes and baby clothes, to bedding, kitchen appliances and utensils, white goods, furnishings and furniture, we provided:

- 147 grants to help prison leavers moving into permanent accommodation;
- 37 grants to enable prison leavers to get ID to then be able to register for Universal Credits;
- 19 grants for clothing for dependants of single mothers;
- 57 grants for Education and Training courses;
- 39 grants for tools of trade including plumbers, carpenters, construction workers, bricklayers, seamstress, barbers;
- 43 grants for work clothes, principally PPE for construction and railway workmen.

Our beneficiaries - shedding light on the issues:

87%

are male

77%

are single and live alone

56%

are in temporary accommodation

9%

are homeless

23%

are long term unemployed or have never worked



25%

report no source of income

6%

are employed

71%

are on state benefits

46%

have mental health or neuro- divergent issues

40%

have no Level 1 educational qualifications

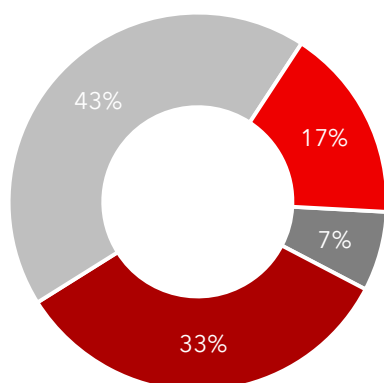
80%

of fathers are estranged from their children

85%

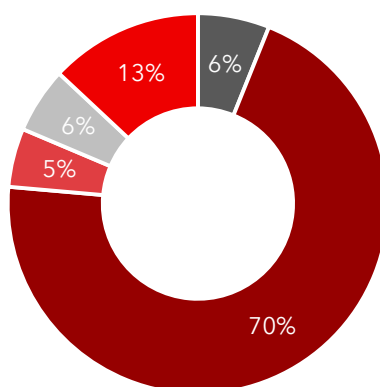
of mothers are single parents

Education



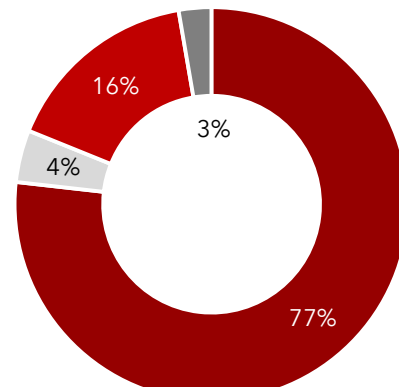
- Excluded from school
- **No qualification**
- Level 1 or 2
- Level 3 and above

Employment status



- Employed
- **Unemployed**
- Never able to work
- Long term unemployed

Relationship status



- **Single**
- Single parent
- Living with spouse or family
- Living as a family unit

Fundraising events

The Fund's rich variety of fundraising events has continued this year with two light-hearted looks into the justice system and a lot of walking!



Trial by Jury

In January 2026, the Old Bailey's Grand Hall was the stage for Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *Trial by Jury*, performed by the English National Opera, with cameos from some of Britain's most senior judges and barristers. Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill, the lady chief justice, was one of seven serving judges singing in the chorus for the three-night run.

"An awed audience gathered in Britain's most intimidating court, which over the centuries has sentenced murderers, traitors, swindlers and terrorists to prison or death, for a spectacular performance." The Times, 19 January 2026

Justice? Trial & Error

In March 2026, Court No 1 was converted into a theatre as judges and barristers took to the stage in a satirical revue made up of vignettes and songs about trials that took place at the Old Bailey over the last 4 centuries. The production included, amongst others, vignettes of the historic trials of Lord Haw Haw and Ruth Ellis and the moral dilemmas presented by notorious trials associated with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the Profumo Affair. This was the 12th annual production in the Trial & Error series, devised by HHJ Peter Rook KC, and it was performed to 5 sell-out audiences.

London Prison Walks

A series of six sponsored walks, organised by Elspeth Hughes-Penney, the Sheriff's Consort, starting or ending at some of London's most notorious prisons, with prison visits. The Sheriffs' and their consorts were accompanied on walks to or from HMPs Brixton, Wandsworth, Pentonville, Wormwood Scrubs, Downview and YOI ISIS variously by The Recorder, Prison Governors, livery company Masters, Old Bailey judges, members of the prisons' staff, prison leavers and partner charity representatives. Thank you to the Prison Governors for giving the walkers access to the prisons – an eye-opening experience for many.

Upcoming events

Justice For All

A series of debates bringing together key decision-makers from the legal, political, corporate and non-profit sectors to raise awareness and drive forward much-needed reforms in justice, rehabilitation and corporate social responsibility.

Dates for your diary:

18 May 2026: Justice for Prison Leavers

29 June 2026: Financing Justice

Old Bailey Choir Summer Concert - 23 June 2026

The fabulous Old Bailey Choir will be joined in the Grand Hall at the Old Bailey by the Pearly Kings and Queens in a London-themed evening of music composed by John Rutter and Bob Chilcott, with readings by the actor, Robert Glenister (*Only Fools and Horses*, *Hustle* and *Spooks* to name some of his credits).

How to support us

Every penny of every £ we receive in donations goes to a prison leaver and we do not reject any grant applications on the grounds of insufficient funds. A donation of £200 would help a prison leaver to start to rebuild their life and to reduce the risk of reoffending. To make a donation please scan the QR code opposite, or visit our website www.sr-fund.org to see other ways in which you can help.

