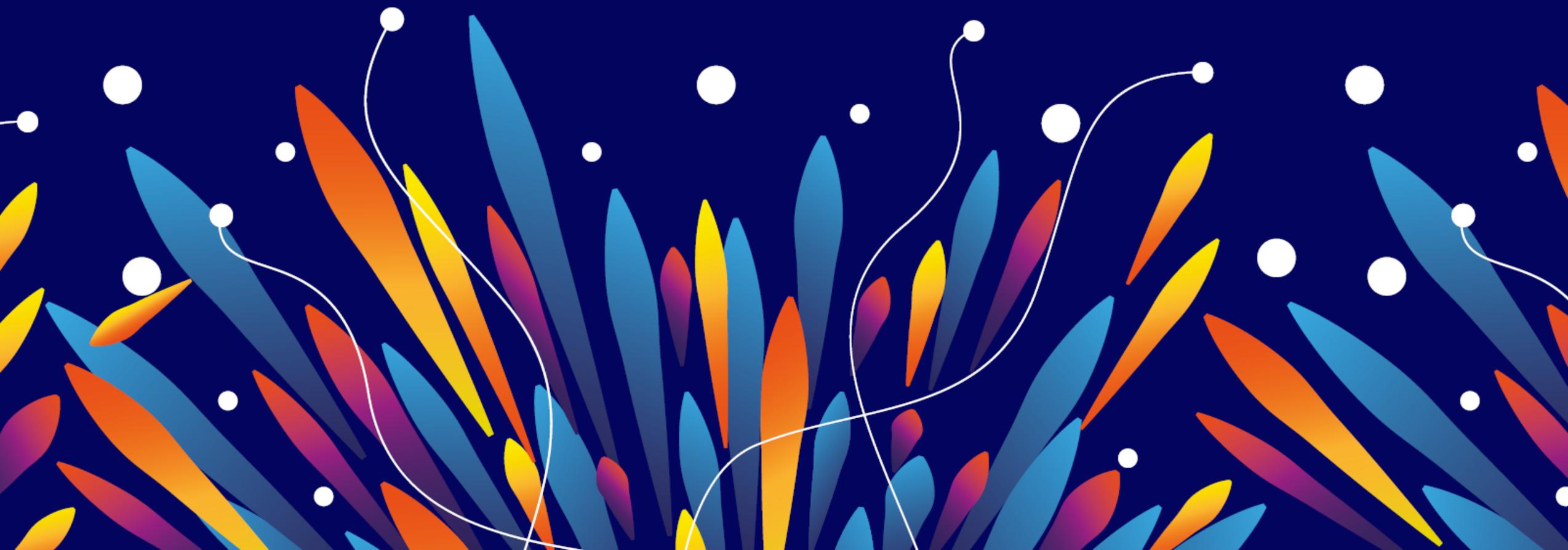


SCOTLAND'S  
**HOUSING**  
**FESTIVAL**



# Breaking the Cycle: Safe Housing on Release for Everyone

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# BREAKING THE CYCLE:

Safe Housing on  
Release for Everyone



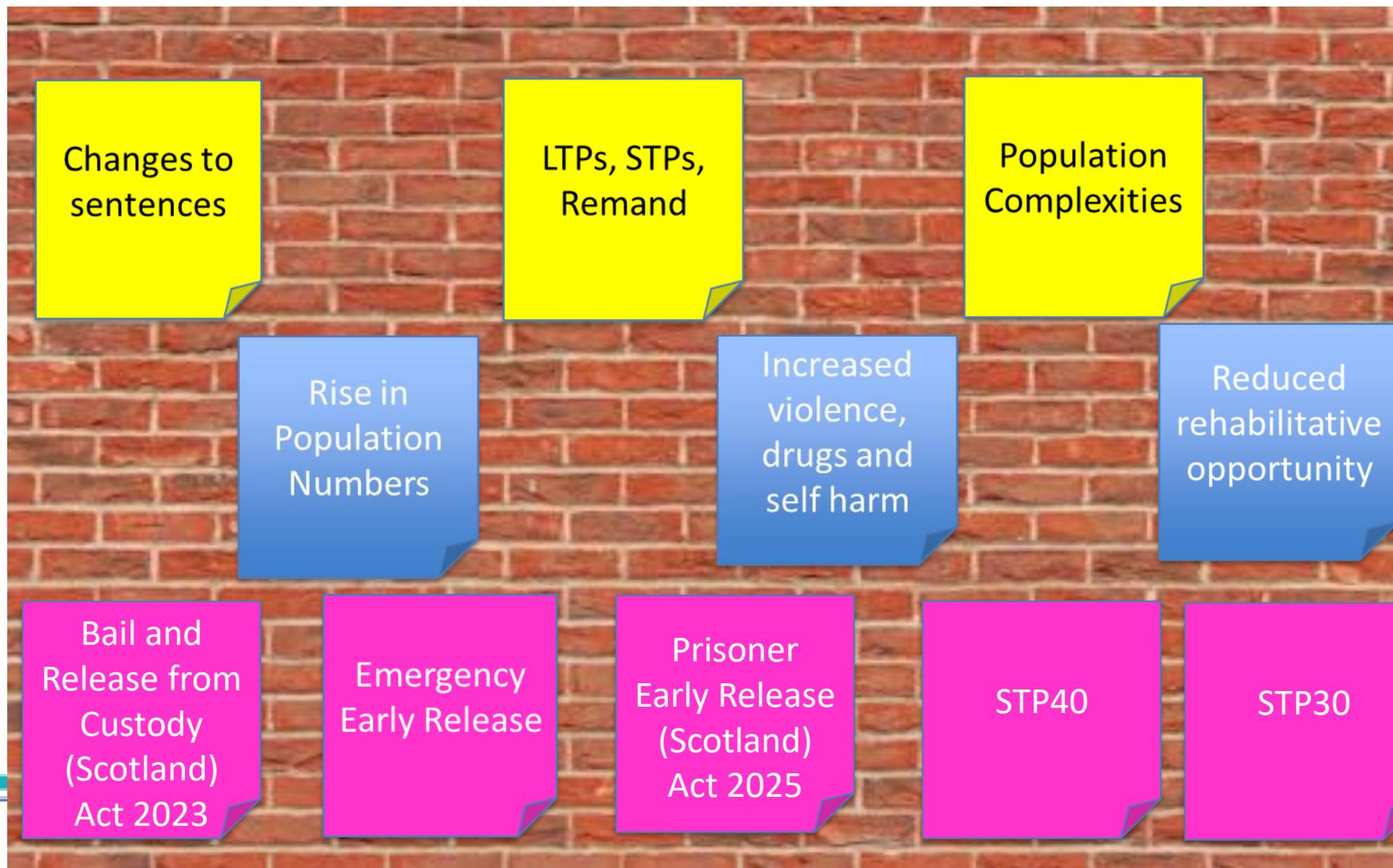
CIH CONFERENCE MARCH 2026,  
LIZ COOPER, SPS POLICY MANAGER  
(HOUSING, WELFARE AND  
THROUGH CARE)

## WHAT WILL I COVER TODAY

- Background to current situation
  - Why is this unsustainable
  - How do we break the cycle
  - SHORE Standards
  - Legislation, Policy and Ask and Act pilots
- 
-

# UNLOCKING POTENTIAL TRANSFORMING LIVES

## BACKGROUND- CURRENT SITUATION IN SCOTTISH PRISONS



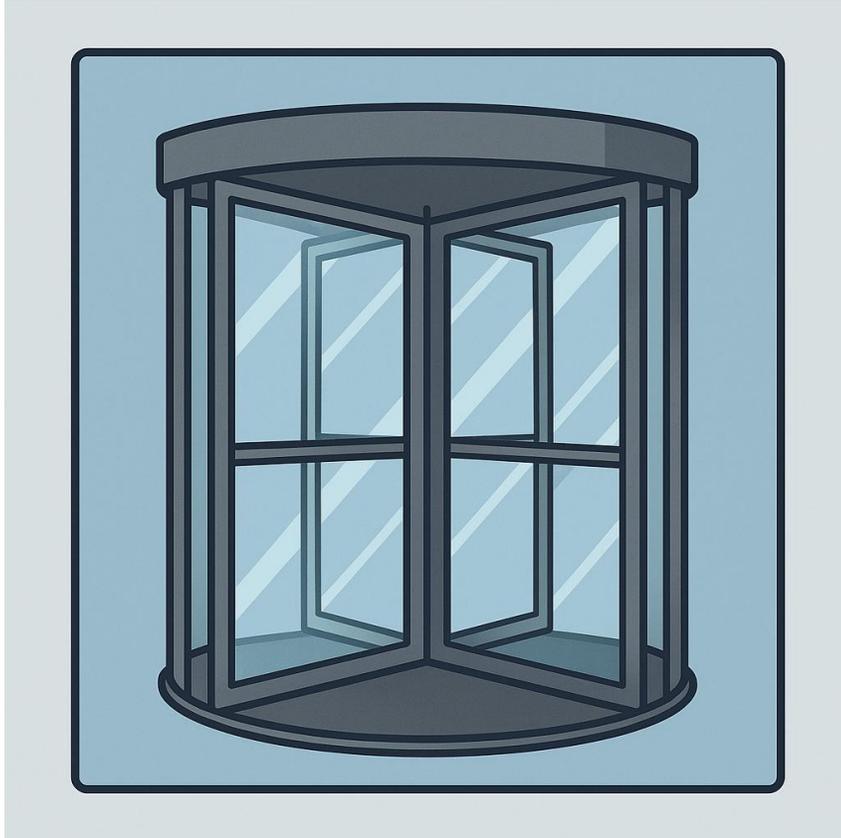
## UNLOCKING POTENTIAL TRANSFORMING LIVES



### SOME FACTS

- **8,376 people** in Scottish prisons (20 Feb 2026) — **highest rate per 100,000** in Western Europe
- **4% of homeless applicants** (1,740 in 2024–25) gave **prison as their last address**
- **Prisoner Survey 2024: 45%** of respondents lost their accommodation on entry; **29%** unsure where they'll live on release
- **25%+** want help with **literacy and numeracy**
- **30%** report problematic **drug use**; **31%** were under the influence of **alcohol** when offending
- **2,293 people** (28%) in prison are **sex offenders** (Feb 2026)
- **73% of custodial sentences** were for **< 1 year 2023-24**
- **Over 50%** of releases are **unplanned from court**

## WHY THE CURRENT SYSTEM IS UNSUSTAINABLE



- Temporary solution not a cure
- Strain on prison staff and community services
- Insufficient time to prepare properly
- Risk of reoffending
- Root causes unaddressed
- Anxiety for victims

## HOW DO WE BREAK THE CYCLE

- Strengthened preventative approach
- Early intervention
- Reduced use of remand
- Community Sentences
- Supported accommodation for those who need it
- Information on local options
- Plan for release from admission
- Improved data sharing
- More housing stock and embed Housing First in Justice



- Refresh of SHORE Standards 2024
- Data Sharing Agreement – oils the engine
- Shift from reactive to proactive
- Collaborative approach to planning for release
- Housing Options Training Toolkit
- Ask and Act Pilots
- Focus on frequent flyers



SCOTTISH QUALITY STANDARDS  
HOUSING ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT  
FOR PEOPLE IN AND LEAVING PRISON

Sustainable  
Housing  
On  
Release for  
Everyone



Revised 2024

Scottish Quality Standards – Housing Advice, Information and Support for People on Remand or  
Serving a Short Term Sentence

## LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- Christie Commission 2011
- Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023-Release Planning and Throughcare Standards
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2025
- Scottish Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission report Feb 26
- Prisoner Pathway Project



## ASK AND ACT PILOTS

### SWAP

City of Edinburgh Council



Testing 'Ask and Act' duties in the community and custodial environment.

### HOME FROM PRISON CYRENIANS



Testing 'Ask and Act' duties in the custodial environment.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL  
TRANSFORMING LIVES

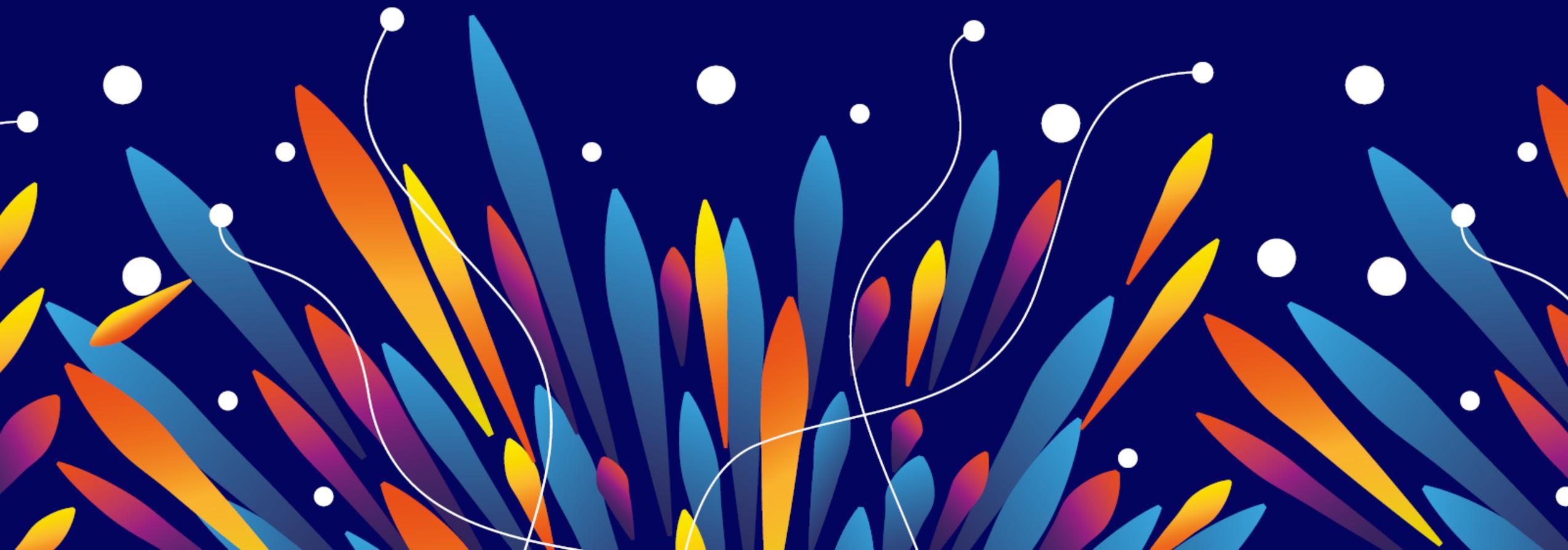


## CONTACT DETAILS



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SCOTLAND'S  
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# Are We Anti-Racist?

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