



Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

Business plan 2019-2020

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Foreword

I am pleased to be sharing with you our business plan for 2019-2020. The plan outlines the work we are doing this year against our revised strategic plan. Whilst great strides have been made in the reduction of children entering the youth justice system, those children who do so are more challenged and their needs are more complex.

We must respond to the needs of these children, working effectively with our partners to deliver change that will help them turn away from crime.

With a Board of largely new members, we have reflected on our business objectives so that they underpin the YJB's reason for being. Our Board has set us system improvement priorities which will deliver better outcomes for children. Changes to our structure and approach over the last year are now settling and as a streamlined organisation we are concentrating focus on children who need our help.

Our revised vision better articulates this, identifying that children need to be treated as children, and fairly, to help them build on their own strengths and make a constructive contribution to society. Whilst risk must be managed our focus is also towards positive intervention and support for children, many of whom have faced adverse childhood experiences, exploitation or who have themselves been victims. We are committed to ensuring that children are treated as children first, and offenders second. We will seek to model this in all that we do, ensuring that our work with partners reflects this.

Our success is reliant on effective relationships and partnerships with youth justice services, local authorities, government and many other key stakeholders. Like others we face financial pressure and constraint. We are therefore grateful to those who assist us with the delivery of our priorities and statutory functions and the advances collectively we continue to make. We look forward to working with you and others as we develop a re-framed YJB towards the delivery of a service which benefits and impacts positively on children in the justice system.

I would like also to thank everyone across the YJB for their hard work over the past year. Change on the scale we have faced is not easy organisationally or for individuals but the dedication and commitment shown by our staff has been unswerving. Their professionalism, skill and passion to helping children give me confidence that we will make progress in our ambitions for the future.



Colin Allars

Chief Executive, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

Child first, offender second

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is committed to championing and embedding a 'child first, offender second' approach to the youth justice system. We will deliver a strategy which ensures children are treated according to their individual needs (including but not limited to their levels of maturity and development and mental health needs). This does not mean that their offending behaviour will not be addressed, but means that children should be treated as children throughout all stages of the youth justice system. We will develop how the rights of the child are put at the forefront of our work, ensuring that the child is treated as a child, and that their rights are recognised throughout the youth justice system.

We are committed to looking beyond just the need to stop a child offending – to work constructively with children to help them make positive contributions to society. A child first, offender second approach means that all youth justice services:

1. Prioritise the best interests of children, recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused and developmentally informed.
2. Promote children's individual strengths and capacities as a means of developing their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.
3. Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work promotes desistance through co-creation with children.
4. Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

To achieve this, we will:

- develop and implement how 'child first, offender second' can be operationally and practically embedded within the YJB, evidenced in all core business activity and embodied by all staff demonstrating that the YJB is led by this guiding principle
- review and enhance our Participation Strategy, so that the views of children are central to our work, and lead to change in the system to support children into positive outcomes and successful adulthood

- define a strategy of how we will work with our partners and youth offending services to ensure that 'child first, offender second' is considered in all wider youth justice system issues.

Priorities programme

Our Board's priorities focus on areas where we want to improve outcomes for children so that offending is reduced and they can go on to lead productive lives into successful adulthood.

The YJB's work in 2019-2020 will focus on six key areas where we will:

- demonstrate tangible sustainable improvements
- align with the 'child first, offender second' guiding principle
- influence system improvement
- maximise strategic links and relationships.

The full strategy for each priority can be found [here](#). We will deliver the following under each priority strand.

Improving local practice

We will focus on improving the following:

Out-of-court disposals

- determine whether there are opportunities from improvements in the police information, communication and technology infrastructure to improve the transfer of out-of-court disposal information between police and local authorities
- assess how to improve the way out-of-court disposals are applied to children and how local authorities administer their application
- enhance and promote good practice between local authorities and police (focusing on screening, assessment and intervention)
- publish updated guidance on the application of out-of-court disposals, working with police partners to ensure practices are complementary and able to meet children's needs.

Trauma informed practice

- identify how the enhanced case management (ECM) project in Wales can be sustained, following evaluation
- replicate the ECM model in South West England
- assess how trauma informed practice has worked in practice and develop an action plan to support expansion of the practice, ensuring alignment and promotion of our 'child first, offender second' approach.

Sector-led improvement

- introduce pathfinders to develop and promote good practice across the youth justice system.

Assessment and information sharing

- identify and introduce improvements to AssetPlus and improve efficiency in its use
- complete a process evaluation of AssetPlus, including building an understanding of practitioner experience
- support the Department for Education testing alternative assessment approaches to AssetPlus.

Resettlement and transitions

By the very nature of custody, children within the secure estate are some of the most vulnerable and damaged. Despite several resettlement support initiatives being put into practice, outcomes for some children leaving custody remain poor. We will:

- identify methods by which we can implement a ‘constructive resettlement’¹, framework for justice placed children in secure establishments. The particular work streams will include:
 - developing appropriate measures to monitor progress in resettlement
 - ensuring policy approaches are consistent with ‘constructive resettlement’ practices - through:
 - putting in place adequate escalation processes to be used by all practitioners where ‘constructive resettlement’ is being applied
 - implementing this in a selected geographical area
 - embedding ‘constructive resettlement’ practices with local delivery partners – through:
 - identifying a Pathfinder area to work with as an exemplar of ‘constructive resettlement’
 - supporting the Pathfinder area to address barriers, develop good practice and help expand the practice across the full stretch of the youth justice system
 - develop and publish practice information on the Youth Justice Resource Hub
 - addressing structural barriers to positive outcomes for children resettling into the community – through:

¹ How to make resettlement constructive: <https://yjresourcehub.uk/yjb-effective-practice/youth-justice-kits/item/610-how-to-make-resettlement-constructive-yjb-document.html>

- securing consistency with 'constructive resettlement' by supporting improvements to the use of Temporary Release
- produce an interim report for the Cabinet Office on children's resettlement experiences in relation to accommodation, identifying systemic issues impacting on children
- the collection of additional information to inform a further report for the Cabinet Office.

Safety and education in custody

The secure estate accommodates a high proportion of children with complex needs and difficult behaviours. It is important that we develop a clear understanding of the Youth Custody Service's (YCS) Youth Justice Reform Programme to influence improvements to safety and education for children in custody. We will:

- develop effective oversight arrangements for the services children receive in the secure estate to better understand how this impacts on their experience of the criminal justice system, where improvements need to be made and how we can influence these
- assess the efficacy of improvements that will be made to safety and education, advising ministers as required
- ensure YJB Board members' expertise is available to support improvements in safety and education in custody.

Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) disproportionality

Our focus on BAME children aims to address the adversity they face, given that they are disproportionality represented in almost every part of the youth justice system.

The YJB's aim is to see a downward trajectory in the overall representation of BAME children within the youth justice system (measured using the Relative Rate Index²). Disproportionality starts earlier than a child's first contact with the criminal justice system, therefore we will seek to influence issues such as employability, and the place of sport as a means of building on the strengths of BAME children to help them desist from harmful behaviour. Our aims are to:

1. **improve trustworthiness** in the youth justice system, increase trust from the BAME community for the criminal justice system
2. develop effective **prevention and diversion**
3. improve **positive outcomes** for BAME children

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663385/technical-guide-statistics-race-cjs-2017.pdf

Our work will include:

- update and publish our 'Journey of the Child' document with the latest available data. We will also complete an annual report in line with the Lammy Review's 'explain or reform' agenda which will, where possible include other relevant agencies' responses
- support a partnership to increase an evidence-based approach to achieving positive outcomes through utilising the power of sports participation of BAME children
- identify partners to develop and disseminate effective means of reducing disproportionate treatment at key decision points, operationally and strategically, applying a pathfinder concept
- assess how the YJB can help to ensure the voice of the child is heard as stop and search is applied to under 18s
- secure improvement in the way that mentoring and traineeships respectively work for BAME children, for example, through working with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education
- use our internal Performance Oversight Board to identify local authorities whose youth offending teams have substantially higher levels of disproportionality, offering advice on how to use the YJB disproportionality toolkit
- work with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) using data from the YJB Summary Tool to breakdown figures on disproportionality within police areas to assist them when analysing and completing their Police and Crime Plans and to assist in monitoring and oversight of Scrutiny Panels
- review out of court disposals with the National Police Chiefs' Council and seek to put processes in place to monitor their use centrally and locally. We will develop processes which reduce disproportionality so that they are:
 - applied consistently
 - demonstrate transparency
 - national and local in their operation
 - help to produce positive outcomes for all children involved.

Reducing serious youth violence

Our aim is to see a sustainable reduction in serious youth violence³ in the cohort of local authorities persistently in the top quartile⁴ of serious youth violence and a reduction in the number of children being exploited through involvement in county lines.

We will work with a reference group of youth offending teams to identify effective practice in reducing serious youth violence – we will:

- publish good practice findings
- work with and provide support to local authorities with persistently high serious youth violence
- monitor levels of violence in local authorities with persistently high serious youth violence and analyse data from other sources to develop understanding
- support a reference group in addressing serious youth violence and learning from their experience and knowledge
- assess how trauma informed practice can best be applied to reduce serious youth violence
- using a pathfinder approach, we will focus on reducing serious youth violence and supporting others to reduce theirs including a pathfinder to address county lines
- collaborate with government agencies and align with their strategic objectives to reduce violence and address county lines
- identify funding, both locally and centrally, which could be directed towards addressing serious youth violence and seek to influence the distribution of this funding, so that it can have greatest impact.

Secure Schools

The YJB believes that Secure Schools are an opportunity to obtain a step change in the effectiveness of custody and therefore is prioritising secure schools with the aim of supporting the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to successfully deliver the first secure school in 2020. We will:

- support YCS and MoJ in areas where the YJB has specialist knowledge

³ For the purposes of this analysis, 'serious youth violence' is defined as the most serious robbery, drugs or violence against the person offences (those with the gravity scores of 5 or more as outlined in the Police National Legal Database)

⁴ Youth offending teams (YOTs) in the top quartile for three or more quarters during 2017-2018.

Work in 2019 to 2020 to achieve our priorities and system aims

We have a statutory responsibility to oversee the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services. We have set out the following activities and business objectives that will deliver this duty:

Advising ministers

We will continue to advise ministers about the operation of the youth justice system and how that the system could be improved. We will:

- provide ministers with a quarterly report on the performance of the youth justice system, including any emerging issues, and matters adversely impacting children (through our horizon-scanning, intelligence and expertise); we will include advice on how concerns may be addressed
- advise on the performance of individual youth justice services, escalating areas where poor performance is occurring
- provide effective and informed advice on funding for youth justice services, and the development of new initiatives aimed at improving performance in the system
- set out advice on youth justice priorities
- use our expertise to inform and support cross-government policy development affecting youth justice issues.

Overseeing the youth justice system

We will deliver our oversight function through scrutiny of the operational performance of individual strands of the youth justice system, and also through the overarching perspective of our Youth Justice System Oversight Group which examines the youth justice system as a whole – we will:

- review and refine our internal scrutiny processes, carried out via our Performance Oversight Board, to ensure that we have the most efficient methods in place to conduct our oversight responsibilities
- work towards achieving an increase in the effective exchange of information across the youth justice application framework
- continue to produce an annual assessment of future demand for youth detention accommodation for sentenced and remanded children, for the Secretary of State
- enhance the outputs of the quarterly Youth Justice System Oversight Group.

Supporting and influencing the delivery of services

We will sustain and continue to build strong strategic relationships to deliver the greatest positive impact for children in the youth justice system, both directly and through others. We will continue to lead the way in encouraging effective practice of youth offending services through promoting innovation and improving performance. We will:

Promote innovation

- improve our intelligence gathering and methods of dissemination through use of the Youth Justice Resource Hub, Youth Justice Sector Improvement Partnerships and work with the Association of YOT Managers
- identify funding, both locally and centrally, which could be directed towards youth justice services and influence the distribution of this funding, so that it has greatest impact.

Improve performance

- embed the revised *standards for children in the youth justice system*, ensuring that services are delivering quality practices and working towards good outcomes for children
- examine how lessons can be learned from poor performing youth offending teams, and how to put this into practice
- enhance technological solutions in place for supporting the youth justice system through continuous review and improvement.

Establishing an evidence base

We will ensure that our work is supported by a sound evidence base, demonstrating transparency around our performance management of youth offending services and subsequent decision-making. We will:

- develop and publish a long-term Information, Communications and Technology Strategy which will be initiated within the forthcoming year
- continue to publish annual statistics to provide whole youth justice system intelligence
- produce quarterly youth offending performance data and analysis to inform and support our oversight functions
- establish a youth justice research board comprised of sector experts.

Organisational effectiveness

Following a period of streamlining and restructuring, we will strive to be an effective corporate body. We will be a robust organisation, focused on supporting our people to deliver for the best interests of children in the youth justice system. We will:

- implement our communications and engagement strategy
- host the Youth Justice Convention 2019, to facilitate the sharing of best practice, networking between practitioners, professionals, experts and policy makers
- streamline our business processes, including a review of our risk management and audit processes to ensure assurance on business processes
- demonstrate transparency of our financial spending and controls through maintaining our value for money approach, which will also be captured within our Annual Report and Accounts
- work across the organisation to improve the YJB and all it delivers, making use of the People Survey and improve on our staff engagement scores
- strengthen our equality and diversity outcomes through staff workshops and a targeted action plan, ensuring that the YJB works within the Equalities Act 2010 and engenders staff confidence.

Resource

Our business activities will be delivered within our available finance and staffing resources.

Money

We receive most of our funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The MoJ is responsible for setting our budget and formulating the overall justice policy framework within which we operate.

A significant majority of our spend is directed towards the delivery of frontline youth justice services. The remainder of our funding is used to deliver our functions and work to support the system to meet its aims.

YJB anticipated expenditure for 2019/2020

Anticipated expenditure	£ (millions)
Funding to frontline services	£72.2m
<i>YOT Grant - £70.7m</i>	
<i>Pathfinder funding - £1.5m</i>	
Activities in Wales funded by the Welsh Government	£0.14m
Other programme expenditure	£7.6m
YJB administration	£2.9m
Total	£82.8m

People

The YJB



Directorate	People
 Programme Delivery	22
 Innovation and Engagement (England)	19
 Business Support Services	13
 Strategy & Planning	12
 Oversight, Intelligence & ICT	12
 Innovation and Engagement (Wales)	8
 Organisational Development & Change	3
Total	92*

* This figure includes the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Senior Police Advisor who sit outside of this structure