

National Guidance for Local Criminal Justice Boards

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Purpose

1. This guidance sets out an operating framework for Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) to encourage a consistent approach across England and Wales.

Background

2. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 set out in law the reciprocal duty on Police and Crime Commissioners¹ (PCCs) and other Criminal Justice agencies to work together to provide an efficient and effective Criminal Justice System (CJS) for police force areas (PFAs). One way this works effectively is through LCJBs, of which the majority are currently chaired by PCCs.
3. LCJBs bring together criminal justice partners to identify priorities, address cross-cutting issues, reduce reoffending, improve the experiences of victims and witnesses, and deliver agreed objectives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the local CJS.
4. They are predominantly aligned to PFAs and operate as voluntary partnerships. In Wales, in addition to four LCJBs, there is the “Criminal Justice Board for Wales”.

Administrative arrangements

5. LCJBs provide a unique opportunity for partners to work together in the common interest to improve the CJS in the local area and should:
 - Hold quarterly meetings (as a minimum)
 - Be supported by effective sub-groups, where necessary, to drive activity on behalf of the LCJB
 - Be governed by a Terms of Reference which should be reviewed every three years by the Chair and Members (or more regularly should that be required)
 - Agree a Business Plan or formal ‘Action Plan’ setting out the LCJB’s strategic priorities, how it will meet its priorities and how it will measure its success
 - Produce minutes of each meeting or a summary of discussion and ensure they are an accurate reflection of the discussion and agreed actions

Membership

6. To be fully effective, LCJBs should include membership at a senior level from all CJS partners.

¹ All references to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) include Police and Crime Commissioners; Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners; and Mayors who exercise PCC and equivalent function

7. Boards should therefore comprise of local decision makers including:

- The PCC
- A senior Police Officer
- A senior representative from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- A senior representative from His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS)
- A senior representative from His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), representing the Probation Service, the Prison Service, and the Youth Custody Service
- A senior representative from the Youth Offending Team (YOT)
- A senior representative from the Legal Aid Agency (LAA)
- A legal professional from the defence community (noting an individual legal professional is unable to bind all members of the local legal community to any given action)
- A victims' service provider and a witness service provider
- A representative from other rehabilitation service providers such as education/health/Local Authority
- Other individuals, whether as members or on an ad-hoc basis, as considered appropriate

8. A member of the judiciary or magistracy should be invited to attend the LCJB, noting that the judiciary or magistracy can only comment on the operational impacts for the courts, not on policy and are in no way accountable to the LCJB.

Expectations of members

9. LCJB members must actively engage in board meetings and help to facilitate a collaborative approach to the local CJS. Members are expected to:

- Attend Board meetings with authority to speak on behalf of their organisation
- Share data and analysis as appropriate and necessary to enable the LCJB to fulfil its role
- Drive actions between meetings
- Refer, on behalf of their organisation, emerging local CJS issues to the LCJB for discussion

- Work with local, regional and national counterparts as necessary to identify and overcome barriers to improving the delivery of justice
 - Be accountable, to the Board, for any work done in LCJB sub-groups
 - Champion the work of the LCJB within their organisation
10. At all times, members must respect policing, prosecutorial and judicial independence and decision-making.

The role of the Chair

11. Section 10 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 places a duty on PCCs and other criminal justice bodies to “*provide an efficient and effective CJS for the police area*”.
12. In March 2022, the PCC Review (Part 2), carried out by the Home Office, identified LCJBs as a critical vehicle to empower PCCs with the levers to bring together criminal justice partners to effectively tackle crime. In line with recommendations made by the Review, a suitable legislative vehicle is being sought to place LCJBs on a statutory footing and mandate that the PCC act as Chair.
13. By taking a leading role in local CJS partnership arrangements, PCCs can help CJS partners and agencies promote positive improvements to the system, seek to align priorities and address cross-cutting local criminal justice issues.
14. The Chair should demonstrate strong leadership and establish a collaborative forum that supports joint working and improves services across the CJS, whilst respecting the fact that they do not have the authority to manage or direct other individual agencies. To achieve this, the Chair has the following convening responsibilities, all of which should be carried out in consultation with Board members:
- To set, implement, and review the LCJB’s Terms of Reference
 - To establish in consultation with CJS partners, an agreed LCJB Business Plan or formal ‘Action Plan’ and, where appropriate, hold partners to account for its delivery where actions are agreed collectively
 - To ensure the LCJB decides how to engage positively with relevant national programmes
 - To discuss, where appropriate, the strategic plans of individual criminal justice organisations so that inter-dependencies can be identified, and plans can be aligned
 - Where appropriate, to foster discussion of decisions being taken by individual criminal justice organisations which are likely to affect the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the local CJS

- Where appropriate, to encourage organisations to share findings of inspections/reports where cross-CJS consideration or a cross-CJS response would be beneficial
 - To keep under review opportunities to co-fund and co-commission partnership activity, where to do so would be in the interest of the CJS as a whole
 - To encourage collaboration with relevant partners to comply with the Victims' Code
 - To engage with Regional Probation Directors on the delivery of Community Payback and commissioning activity as they develop their Regional Reducing Reoffending Plans (and co-commissioning takes place where there are agreements to do so)
 - To regularly review the work of the LCJB to ensure that the local CJS is operating efficiently and effectively
15. At all times, the chair and members must respect policing, prosecutorial, and judicial independence and decision-making, as well as acknowledging that the LCJB chair cannot hold individual partners to account for their own agency'/organisations' performance.

Victims' Code

16. The Victims' Code sets out a minimum level of service that criminal justice bodies must provide to victims of crime, including families bereaved by crime. The Victims' Code also provides enhanced entitlements for certain categories: victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims, and vulnerable or intimidated victims.
17. PCCs are responsible for commissioning the majority of local services for victims and are well placed to have oversight of how well the CJS locally is meeting the needs of victims. The [Victims Strategy](#) assigns PCCs formal responsibility for monitoring the compliance of CJS bodies with the requirements in the Victims' Code. LCJBs can be a useful forum for identifying issues and determining effective local interventions.

Data sharing

18. Sharing data across organisations is vital to reducing crime, supporting victims and witnesses and improving criminal justice outcomes. Data is integral to partners' joint-responsibility to maintain the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the local CJS.
19. LCJBs should use data to identify emerging local trends or patterns so that partners can better plan, adapt to meet challenges and drive system improvement.
20. Historically, data-sharing has been fragmented which has hampered the ability to influence activity locally. The position is much improved and LCJBs now have access to a range of sources which specifically allow for local interrogation. These sources can be found at Annex A and will be updated as and when required.

21. LCJBs can use the data from the dashboards and data sets at Annex A to:

- Produce summary reports of local data
- Combine data with local management information to demonstrate an assessment of system performance at a local level
- Compare dashboard metrics/statistics with LCJB activity to determine whether local initiatives are making an impact on the data
- Identify and discuss local issues including potential plans to address these
- Identify areas of good practice and drive best practice discussions within the local area and with other LCJBs
- Inform discussion on emerging workload pressures

Sharing best practice

22. LCJBs are uniquely placed to identify and share best practice and intelligence relating to the efficient and effective operation of the CJS. LCJBs may also want to refer or escalate matters of general importance. This can be done between LCJBs, via the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and via the Criminal Justice Board (CJB) Secretariat, based in the MoJ.

23. Due to the nature of the PCC's role and their engagement right across the CJS, PCCs are also able to tap into existing national and regional structures to raise issues that affect LCJBs across the country.

24. LCJBs, via their chair, should also use the APCC network to highlight effective working practices and share local initiatives.

Criminal Justice Board (CJB)

25. The National CJB maintains oversight of the CJS at a national level and promotes a collaborative approach to addressing its challenges. The CJB is chaired by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Ministry of Justice. It meets twice a year and is attended by senior leaders from across the CJS.

26. The Criminal Justice Lead for the APCC is a member of the CJB so that the Board can be properly informed of emerging priorities, challenges, and trends at a local level.

Review

27. This guidance will be reviewed bi-annually by the MoJ in collaboration with partners including, but not limited to; the Home Office, CPS, Attorney General's Office, HMCTS, HMPPS, Judicial Office and APCC.

Contact

28. Please contact the CJB Secretariat via criminaljusticeboard@justice.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Annex A: Data Sources

- The '*CJS Delivery Data Dashboard*' brings together data from partners across the CJS presenting data in an accessible format from the police, CPS and the courts. It is published quarterly:

<https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/>

- The '*Crown Court Information Tool*' displays data on all Crown Courts in England and Wales and provides an overview for key statistics for workload, disposals by offence group, average duration and number of hearings by disposal group, waiting times, trial outcome reasons and outstanding cases. It is updated quarterly.

[Crown Court information \(June 2022\) | Tableau Public](#)

- The '*Criminal Court Statistics*' presents the latest statistics on type and volume of cases that are received and processed through the criminal court system of England and Wales. The figures give a summary overview of the volume of cases with statistics broken down for the main types of cases involved. Also published are detailed breakdowns of the headline court caseload and timeliness statistics, broken down by court or Local Justice Area. It is updated quarterly.

[Criminal court statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- The '*Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly*' displays trends in the use of out of court disposals, defendants prosecuted, offenders convicted, remand and sentencing decisions and offender histories at a national level across England and Wales. Pivot tools are published that allow users to break down the statistics by Police Force Area and other characteristics such as offence, age, and ethnicity. It is published quarterly.

[Criminal justice statistics quarterly - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- The '*Women and the Criminal Justice System*' publication compiles statistics from data sources across the CJS, to provide a combined perspective on the typical experiences of females who come into contact with it. It considers how these experiences have changed over time and how they contrast to the typical experiences of males. It is updated bi-annually, alternating with the '*Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice*' System publication

[Women and the Criminal Justice System 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- The '*Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System*' publication compiles statistics from data sources across the CJS, to provide a combined perspective on the typical experiences of different ethnic groups. It considers the over-

representation of minority ethnic groups at many stages throughout the CJS when compared with the White ethnic group. It is updated bi-annual, alternating with the *'Women and the Criminal Justice System'* Publication.

[Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System, 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnicity-and-the-criminal-justice-system-2020)

- The Youth Justice Board publishes the *'Youth Justice Annual Statistics'* and experimental statistics such as *'Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children in the Youth Justice System'*. This includes data on the use of remands, children in youth custody and behaviour management in the Children and Young People Secure Estate. These statistics are published annually and include local level pivot tables.

[Youth justice statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/youth-justice-statistics)

- The *'Safety in the Children and Young People Secure Estate Report'* contains data on assaults, self-harm and deaths in the Children and Young People Secure Estate. In 2023, it will be expanded to include data on Separations and Use of Force. It is published quarterly.

[Safety in the Children and Young People Secure Estate: Update to June 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-in-the-children-and-young-people-secure-estate-report-june-2022)

- The *'Youth Custody Data Report'* is a snapshot of all children and young people in the Children and Young People Secure Estate on the last day of the month. It contains breakdowns by sector type, ethnicity, gender, age, region of Youth Justice Services, region of Establishment, offence group and distance from home bands. It is published monthly.

[Youth custody data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/youth-custody-data)

- The *'HMCTS Weekly External MI – Crime dashboard'* is a bespoke dashboard covering Crown and Magistrates' jurisdictions and includes a variety of workload metrics. It is updated each Monday. Requests for access should be made via: [Data Request Form](#).
- The *'HMCTS Trials - External MI dashboard'* provides case-level trial outcome reasons for Crown and Magistrates' Courts. It is updated on a monthly basis. Requests for access should be made via: [Data Request Form](#).

HMCTS provide two dashboards of local MI that are not subject to the same quality assurance as official statistics. Data from these dashboards must therefore not be shared or published externally.

- This page summarises the statistics available:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics>