Youth Justice Plans: YJB Practice Note for Youth Offending Partnerships

May 2019

Innovation and Engagement Directorate
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Youth Justice Board for England and Wales 2019

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1. Legal framework
Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services.

Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth offending partnership’s responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out:

- how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded
- how the youth offending team (YOT) or equivalent service will be composed and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out.

The youth justice plan must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State and reinforced within YJB Terms and Conditions of Grant 2019. ‘Modern Youth Offending Partnerships’ and ‘YOT Management Board Guidance for Wales’ provide additional guidance about drafting a youth justice plan and its relationship to other strategic plans.

Standards for children in the youth justice system 2019 are to be implemented this year. Self-assessments against these are required at the end of this year (April 2020) in order that each service can baseline their performance. Any identified gaps against the standards will be required to form part of the youth justice plan in 2020 and thereafter.

This guidance recognises the distinct delivery landscape in Wales. The Welsh Government has responsibility in relation to health, education, social services, housing, local government, language and culture and public services. Youth Justice Partnerships are made up of devolved and non-devolved organisations working together. Partnerships in Wales are expected to evidence in their plans, partnership working across these boundaries to achieve effective delivery of youth justice services and improve outcomes for children.

2. Timing
The YJB recognises that plans require considerable preparation. It also recognises that each local area will have its own governance and oversight arrangements for the completion and sign off of statutory plans.

YJB Regional leads in England and Wales can provide advice on completion, providing the request is made within a reasonable timeframe.

It is acceptable to gain an “in principle agreement” via the chair of the YOT Management Board to minimise submission delay, if, for example, awaiting Cabinet sittings.

Due to the late confirmation of youth justice budgets, we request that plans be submitted by 5 August 2019.
The submission of an acceptable plan is a condition for receipt of your Youth Justice Grant.

Completed plans should be submitted through your regional YJB link and copied to CBU@yjb.gov.uk. Plans will be reviewed for completeness and you will receive feedback accordingly.

3. Duration of the youth justice plan

Statute requires the production of an annual plan, but the YJB welcomes plans that cover more than one year. Plans covering more than one year will require an annual refresh and updating of key information, particularly relating to finance, governance and key achievements from the previous year.

Annual updates should also be submitted by the **5 August 2019**.

4. Content and structure

This guidance recognises that plans should be developed to best fit specific local needs and references. Therefore, the YJB does not prescribe a specific template but does outline a set of recommended sections and suggestions for considering how youth justice services are delivering against the three key performance indicators to, reduce first time entrants, reduce reoffending and appropriately minimise the use of custody; and in Wales the four key indicators relating to devolved services that have been agreed with the Welsh Government. Plans need to demonstrate evidence of how:

- the service demonstrates a Child First ethos and practice
- partner agencies will work together to improve outcomes for children
- the needs of your cohort have been assessed to inform delivery decisions
- local priorities have been identified and planned how these are to be met.
- services are measuring and reporting on impact.
- risks to delivery are identified, being responded to and mitigated against.

**Standard sections:**

**A. Introduction**

This should include a high-level review of last year’s plan, including:

- any major in-year changes to governance or service delivery
- any major challenges and/or achievements
- the partnership’s response to individual or thematic HMIP inspection reports published in the previous twelve months.
B. Structure and governance
This section should provide an overview of how the local authority is meeting statutory requirements for the oversight of youth justice services.

Please set out how the local partnership board works to:

• hold the service to account for its operational practice and performance outcomes

• monitor and meet conditions set out in any grant made by the YJB, e.g. timely submission of data, compliance with secure estate placement information or completion of national standards audits.

• support the YOT in overcoming barriers to effective multi-agency working and ensures that partner agencies make an effective contribution to delivering against key youth justice outcomes.

C. Resources and value for money
Your youth justice plan will need to provide assurance that the YJB grant will be used exclusively for the intended purpose i.e. ‘the delivery of youth justice services’.

Therefore, local Youth Justice Partnership Boards are required to include, within their annual Youth Justice Plan, a budget which provides details of how they propose to use the funding to fulfil the purpose of the grant. The format of this is at the YOT’s discretion, but must allow the YJB to clearly identify how the grant has been spent.

A table showing the financial, staffing and in-kind contributions made by local partners and others should also be submitted (via Connectivity) through the Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF).

Table 1 at the end of this document indicates what information is required. Should a YOT having difficulty submitting this via YJAF, they should seek advice from YJB Information and Analysis Team informationandanalysis@yjb.gov.uk

This section should also include:

• a separate description of how any other relevant grants from the YJB are being used for their intended purposes, this includes the Junior Attendance Centre bespoke grant (where appropriate) and/or other grants made to individual partnerships to promote effective practice through the YJB’s Priorities Programme

• confirmation of compliance with the minimum staffing requirements set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (which requires that the YOT has a nominated person from each of the following statutory partners: police service, children’s social services, national probation service, education and health). Where this cannot be confirmed, the plan should set out the steps being taken to ensure compliance with this requirement.
D. Partnership arrangements

This section should:

- describe the YOT’s links to, and relationships with, other key service delivery providers especially those responsible for secure accommodation, directed at safeguarding children and those directed at protecting people from harm; this will include approaches to managing Serious Youth Violence. It is expected that as a minimum, an agreed mechanism is in place to report on (and where appropriate escalate) these high-risk cases and any significant incidents occurring, to partnership board member level.

- describe how the strategic development and ongoing operational practice between the YOT and the range of local partners who contribute specialist services to support children in the Youth Justice System are functioning and managed.

- describe other commissioning arrangements that are intended to secure improvements against the relevant national youth justice outcomes. This is particularly important where key service delivery activity is undertaken outside of the YOT by third sector and private providers.

E. Risks to future delivery against the youth justice outcome measures

This section should:

- include proportionate information on emerging or continuing concerns about performance on reoffending outcomes and subsequent impact for children. Action plans to reduce risks i.e. where performance is good, measures to sustain performance are sufficient, should be included. Where performance is poor, the plan should include the findings of analysis in to why this is the case, including the identification of concerns relating to any specific groups within the cohort, along with actions and timescales by which improvement measures will be put in place. This is particularly important for services in areas which have enduring gangs, serious youth violence (SYV), County Lines and criminal exploitation issues.

- highlight emerging or continuing concerns about improvements against First Time Entrants and Custody measures and the actions planned to reduce these risks, with particular reference to reoffending by looked-after children and those being resettled from custody

- describe any planned service reviews, self-assessments, peer reviews or audits that the service intends to undertake, including those related to thematic inspection findings.

While not directly linked to a national indicator outcome measure, it is recommended that this section also includes intended actions to respond to the diverse needs of children and young people in contact with your services including your service strategy and provision for areas such as:

- Prevention, diversion and out of court disposals, clarifying the difference between the three focus areas and how your service plans to meet the
needs of children

- Addressing Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) disproportionality concerns, and
- The challenges associated with Serious Youth Violence and County Lines activity.

5. Approval and sign off
The plan should include evidence that it has been approved by the chair of the YOT Partnership Management Board. A table that includes electronic signatures is sufficient. If the plan is subject to wider local council scrutiny committee permissions, YOTs can still submit the plan, highlighting that it is pending this wider sign off.

If you are concerned that the plan may not satisfy a particular requirement, the YJB strongly recommends that you discuss this with your regional YJB “Head of Innovation & Engagement” prior to submission as soon as you become aware of this.

6. What happens to the plan following submission
After approval, all youth justice plans are stored centrally and used for oversight purposes. They are also submitted to the HMI Probation Information Bank as part of the body of evidence provided by the YJB to assist in decisions regarding which services to inspect.

Welsh youth justice plans will also be analysed and information may be shared with the Welsh Government.

7. Additional points
Your plan can cover service delivery over and above youth justice provision, provided that the requirements set out at section 4 above have been satisfied.

While the YJB expects the plan to focus on how the local partnership aims to achieve improvements against the three nationally set youth justice outcome measures, the setting of specific targets is left to local determination. The inclusion of other outcome targets and measures is also a matter for local discretion.

The YJB regards the plan, once submitted and approved, as a public document and will make it or its content available to anyone on request. We would also encourage you to consider making your plans available online.

The YJB recommends that you consult with children in the preparation of the plan.

The YJB recommends that you consider the production of a summary version for the general public and for children.
While the YJB provides grant to local areas, it is neither a signatory to the plan nor directly responsible for its contents. Consequently, neither the YJB nor the Ministry of Justice logo should appear on the document.

**Table 1: Partner contributions to the youth offending partnership pooled budget 2018/19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Staffing costs (£)</th>
<th>Payments in kind for services (£)</th>
<th>Other delegated funds (£)</th>
<th>Total (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Probation Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police and crime commissioner**</td>
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<tr>
<td>YJB Practice Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welsh Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other***</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* For multi-authority YOTs, the totality of local authority contributions should be described as one figure.
** Any money from the police and crime commissioner that has been routed through a local crime reduction partnership should be included here.

*** It should be noted that the ‘Other’ category is for additional funding that the YOT can use for any general youth justice activities which are funded through other routes with governance sitting with the YOS Partnership Board.