

Education, Training and Employment



Youth Justice Board
Bwrdd Cyfiawnder Ieuencid

This brochure is an introduction to the YJB's education, training and employment initiatives in the youth justice system

It describes:

- the link between youth justice and education, training and employment
- the kinds of education, training and employment initiatives available in the community and the secure estate for children and young people
- how we want education, training and employment for young people who have offended (or who are at risk of doing so) to develop in the future.

What's the link between youth justice and education, training and employment?

Full engagement in school or college life has a huge impact on a young person's personal and social development.

Children and young people who are not engaged in education, training or employment are much more likely to offend or reoffend than those who are.

Full engagement in school or college life has a huge impact on a young person's personal and social development, and allows him or her to gain the skills and qualifications needed for employment. These benefits are widely recognised as major factors in preventing young people becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour, and can reduce the longer term risks of reoffending.

Why is the YJB involved?

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales. We work to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people under the age of 18, and to

ensure that custody for them is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour.

We think that all young people who have offended should be engaged in learning or work opportunities that are appropriate to their needs, so that they can acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to build a positive future and stay away from crime and anti-social behaviour.

To achieve this, we work in close partnership with the Department for Education and Skills, the Learning and Skills Council, Connexions (the Government's information and advice service for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England) and other agencies to ensure that all young people in the youth justice system are taking part in learning or training and have opportunities for achievement.

Education, training and employment in the youth justice system

While youth justice services do not actually provide education and training themselves, the YJB funds a number of initiatives to support the engagement and achievements of both young people who have offended, and those who are at risk of doing so.

Within the youth justice system, there are therefore several hundred practitioners working directly on education, training and employment issues:

- youth offending team (YOT) education workers and learning mentors in the community
- teachers, learning support assistants, heads of learning and skills, and education managers in the secure estate for children and young people
- Connexions personal advisers in YOTs and in the secure estate in England

- mentors and support workers in voluntary sector organisations that are working in partnership with YOTs and secure establishments.

The major challenge for education practitioners is to ensure that young people in the youth justice system can:

- keep up with their education or training when they enter the system, or
- be re-engaged if they were not already taking part in education or training.



Education, training and employment in the community

The YJB has set a target for YOTs that 90% of the young people they supervise should be in suitable education, training or employment during and at the end of their sentence.

The role of YOTs

The vast majority of young people who offend are dealt with in the community. YOTs play a key role in helping these young people to stay in mainstream education, or to access training or employment opportunities. Although YOT practitioners are not teachers or trainers themselves, it is their job to be aware of:

- any difficulties a young person has in accessing education, training or employment
- the potential impact of those difficulties on any work being done to address his or her offending behaviour.

They also ensure that each young person's educational assessments and records are kept up to date and available at all stages of his or her involvement in the youth justice system.

The YJB has set a target for YOTs that 90% of the young people they supervise should be in suitable education, training or employment during and at the end of their community sentence. This can only be achieved through working closely with local partners: in Wales, for instance, YOT practitioners are expected to work as part of the local young people's partnership in order to co-ordinate education, training and employment activity.

The YOT education worker

The role of the YOT education worker is crucial to the success of our education, training and employment strategy within the community.

YOT education workers come from many different backgrounds, bringing a variety of skills to the role. They work alongside the supervising officer (this is the main practitioner assigned to each young person who is on a court order), making sure that there is



a referral mechanism in place that fast-tracks those young people who need the most help to access education, training or employment, so that they can enter mainstream provision as quickly as possible.

Engaging young people in mainstream education

If young people are excluded from mainstream education, it becomes more difficult to work with them and to address any offending behaviour before it becomes entrenched. While some young people with severe behavioural problems may not be able to learn in a mainstream school, we think that in general every effort should be made to turn the situation around before exclusion is used.

There is a legal obligation for local authorities to ensure that young people of statutory school age are in either school or another full-time education placement (for instance, in further education college, or pupil referral unit). Where permanent exclusion is the only option, the law requires all agencies involved and the family to work together to find an appropriate alternative placement within six working days. The overall aim is to return the young person to a mainstream placement.

Engaging young people in vocational training

While (re)integration into mainstream education is the best way forward for many young people, it is important to look at the needs of the individual: a better option for some may be vocational training, which is based upon the practical skills needed to get a job. As a result of the *14 to 19 Education and Skills White Paper* (published in February 2005), there is now increasing flexibility around whether 14 to 16-year-olds attend school or college.

All young people aged 16 to 19 have a right to free continuing education: for instance, in further education colleges, which offer a variety of courses linked to a range of qualifications and accreditation. YOTs therefore have college prospectuses and Connexions literature about local opportunities available. In Wales, Careers Wales provides information, advice and guidance, and the Wales Young Offender Learning Project is working on strategies to improve participation and attainment for Welsh young people.

Education, training and employment initiatives in the community

Preventing a young person from becoming disengaged from education in the first place is clearly preferable to picking up the pieces later, when anti-social behaviour and criminal activity may have become entrenched. The YJB is involved in several initiatives that focus on working with young people who may be at risk of dropping out of education.

Mentoring schemes

Mentoring pairs a volunteer with a young person at risk of offending. The volunteer's role is to motivate and support the young person as part of a stable relationship, over an extended period of time. The relationship is built upon trust and a commitment to confidentiality and equality between the mentor and the young person.

The time spent together is structured and has clearly identified objectives. These should help the young person to identify and achieve educational, vocational or social goals that address the factors that put him or her at risk of offending.

Some YOTs have specific 'learning mentor' schemes in place (as a result of YJB funding). These focus on literacy and numeracy, and work with young people who are hard to reach and engage through the usual educational services. The schemes are being monitored by external evaluators: however, it is already apparent that there is considerable advantage in using volunteer mentors to help re-engage young people and support them towards taking part in education, training or employment.

Restorative justice in schools

We have developed and implemented restorative justice programmes in schools. This initiative gives schools a new way of resolving conflicts between pupils, and aims to reduce the victimisation and bullying that can lead to young people truanting and so becoming disengaged from mainstream education (and therefore more likely to commit crime or anti-social behaviour).

Restorative justice brings together bullies with their victims in order to work out a response to the situation. It is about focusing on the victims' needs and resolving the conflict by encouraging the young people who have carried out the bullying to be



accountable for the consequences of their actions.

Restorative justice is used as part of a variety of approaches, including:

- peer mediation
- the 'no blame approach' (where rather than receiving direct punishment, bullies discuss with their classmates the root cause of their behaviour, and find a way forward with the help of a teacher)
- restorative justice conferences (in which the victim and the bully communicate with each other, helped by a member of staff).

For more information, see the 'Restorative justice' area of our website (www.yjb.gov.uk).

Safer School Partnerships

Close working between police and schools is crucial to keeping young people in education, off the streets and away from a life of crime. The Safer School Partnerships programme is a joint initiative between the Department for Education and Skills, the YJB and the Association of Chief Police Officers. It focuses on areas where there is a high level of crime and anti-social behaviour committed in

and around school – crime committed by and against young people.

All schools involved in the initiative have a police officer based in their school, who works with school staff and other local agencies to:

- reduce victimisation, crime and anti-social behaviour
- create a safer environment for pupils to learn in
- work on whole-school approaches to behaviour and discipline
- identify and work with young people at risk of becoming victims or offenders
- ensure the full-time education of young people who have offended
- support vulnerable children and young people through periods of transition (such as the move from primary to secondary school).

More information is available from the 'Safer Schools Partnerships' section of www.yjb.gov.uk.

PLUS literacy and numeracy strategy

Because this strategy originated in the secure estate, it is discussed in detail in the next section.



Education, training and employment in the secure estate

All schools involved in the initiative have a police officer based in their school, who works with school staff.

Young people who are sentenced or remanded to custody receive education or training direct from teachers in their secure establishment.

The YJB has set this performance indicator for the secure estate for children and young people:

In 2006/07, 90% of young people will receive 30 hours a week of education, training and personal development activity (25 hours for young offender institutions).

The education and training received by young people in custody is monitored by both Ofsted (like all other schools) and the YJB.

National Specification for Learning and Skills

The YJB was made responsible for commissioning and purchasing all places for young people sentenced or remanded to custody by the courts in April 2000: and at that point, there

was a great deal to be done to improve education in the secure estate.

In 2002, we produced the *National Specification for Learning and Skills*, which sets out the requirements for educational service providers working in young offender institutions (YOIs). This led to:

- an increase in the number of hours of education delivered (in line with what young people were entitled to in mainstream education)
- the introduction of a new staffing and management structure that takes account of the special needs of young people in the secure estate.

To ensure that education and training provision was consistent across the secure estate, we adapted the specification for use in secure children's home and secure training centres.

Wales

Because of a lack of secure places in Wales, most Welsh young people who go into custody are placed in England. All secure establishments are required to meet the language and cultural needs of these young people, and there is a range of arrangements in place to support the Welsh Curriculum in different establishments.

Changes to the delivery of education to young people in YOIs

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for post-16 education and training (except higher education) in England. So that the teaching is more compatible between custody and community, the YJB has a partnership agreement with the LSC, which now has responsibility for all post-16 offender education, including all young people in YOIs.

The new service is called OLASS (offender learning and skills service), and has been in place across England since August 1 2006. Details of what OLASS provides, and how it does it, are outlined in the *Offenders Learning Journey*; and in YOIs this has now superseded the YJB's *National Specification for Learning and Skills*.

Education, training and employment initiatives in the secure estate

With the small proportion of young people who go into custody, organisations that provide learning have the opportunity to carry out a thorough educational assessment and use intensive programmes to address any gaps in their learning that may have developed while they have been out of school.

PLUS literacy and numeracy strategy

Developed by the YJB in partnership with the Arts Council England and the Department for Education and Skills, the PLUS strategy:

- provides support to establishments in developing their education plans
- offers learning resources and training to help embed literacy and numeracy across the whole curriculum (as required by the *National Specification for Learning and Skills*).

Although it originated within the secure estate, PLUS is now used in the community as well. A team of PLUS development advisers has been established across the country to support the use of the strategy in

Re-engagement into mainstream education, training and employment is key to helping a young person avoid further offending.



both custody and community settings. PLUS therefore provides continuity and consistency between the education support that young people receive in custody, and the provision they receive on their release.

Entry to Employment (e2e)

Entry to employment is an LSC-funded programme for young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in any education, training or employment. It aims to provide young people with training and 'getting ready for work' skills (such as interview techniques and what to expect in a working environment), as preparation to getting a job. A variation of this programme, in which young people in the secure estate received training before their release, was piloted by the YJB and LSC in 2004/05; and the YJB's evaluation of the programme is available from our website (www.yjb.gov.uk).

Resettlement

The resettlement into the community of young people who have been in custody presents many challenges, largely because many were not 'settled' before they entered the secure estate. Re-engagement into mainstream education, training and

employment is key to helping a young person avoid further offending or anti-social behaviour, and so is a priority for the YJB, YOTs and secure establishments.

YOT education workers work to remove barriers to education and employment through a variety of programmes. They help young people with problems they may encounter accessing provision by:

- ensuring that young people of school age who enter custody remain on the school roll
- accessing funds for the reintegration of young people who offend into education (through the Department for Education and Skills' Vulnerable Children's Grant)
- helping with access to mainstream services in vocational training (for example, through the Entry to Employment programme – see above).

For more information on national targets for the resettlement of young people who have offended, see *Youth Resettlement: A Framework for Action* (available from www.yjb.gov.uk).

Looking forward

We want all young people who have offended or who are at risk of offending to have the same access to education, training and employment services as everyone else. In order for this to happen, we are working to ensure that:

- school exclusions are used only as a last resort, and young people stay in mainstream education wherever possible
- schools that are ready and that have the appropriate support use restorative justice approaches wherever possible
- more Safer Schools Partnerships are put in place
- schools and YOTs work in partnership to improve behaviour and attendance levels
- where exclusion of a young person under the supervision of a YOT is considered, the YOT education worker is fully involved in discussions and planning to ensure that relevant risk factors are taken into account
- local education authorities and other agencies work closely with YOTs to ensure that the young people they supervise are given the same opportunities as others to access education, training and employment
- employers and education providers are aware of the potential of these young people to contribute to and benefit from their organisation.





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The YJB has published a series of corporate brochures. The following titles are available to order from the YJB website or its order line:

Tel: 0870 120 7400

Fax: 0870 120 7401

Stock code	Title
B281	The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
B282	Wiring Up Youth Justice
B306	Education, Training and Employment
B307	Custody
B308	Accommodation
B309	Working with Victims
B310	Health
B312	Monitoring Performance and Improving Practice
B313	Prevention
B314	Parenting
B315	Getting Involved

For more information on the processes and organisations of the youth justice system as a whole, see the Youth Justice System publication (B311)

**Youth Justice Board for
England and Wales
Bwrdd Cyfiawnder
Ieuencid Cymru a Lloegr**
11 Carteret Street,
London SW1H 9DL
Tel: 020 7271 3033
Fax: 020 7271 3030
www.yjb.gov.uk

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