

# **Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Business Plan 2015/16**

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# Introduction

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) Our Board has agreed a new vision and mission statement, as well as a number of strategic objectives. These are outlined in our Strategic Plan 2015–18 and act as a helpful framework to shape the immediate actions we will take in 2015/16 to meet our statutory aim of preventing offending and reoffending by children and young people.<sup>1</sup>

This plan is aimed at managers and staff at the YJB and outlines the actions we will take to meet our priorities. It provides all members of staff with a clear line of sight between individual objectives, corporate priorities and the delivery of our statutory functions.

For the first time, we set out a small number of priority programmes, which have been chosen in response to the most pressing challenges faced by the youth justice system.

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<sup>1</sup> This business plan meets requirements set out in the framework agreement between the YJB and the Ministry of Justice, and enables the YJB to discharge its statutory functions in accordance with governance requirements for public bodies.

# The challenge ahead

## Working with a changing cohort

We have seen significant reductions in first-time entrants and the use of custody in recent years.<sup>2</sup> However, the youth justice system is facing a number of challenges. The average number of previous offences per offender has been rising each year since 2006/07.<sup>3</sup> Over the same period, the average time spent in custody for those young people sentenced or remanded to custody has increased. There have also been increases in the rates of assaults, restraints and self-harm in custody.

These trends suggest that there is a growing proportion of young people in the youth justice system who have more entrenched offending histories and related health, educational and safeguarding needs. The increased complexity of the cohort under supervision by youth justice services has been linked to the increase in the binary reoffending rate from 35.5% in 2011/12 to 36.1% in 2012/13.

Within the overall reduction in numbers in the youth justice system, we still see significant over-representation of Black and Minority Ethnic groups, particularly in custody and on remand. In addition, we know that children who are, or have previously been, looked after (particularly those placed in children's homes) are over-represented in the youth justice system when compared to their peers.<sup>4</sup>

## Delivering effective youth justice services

The public service delivery landscape has changed significantly recently. Changes to the commissioning and service delivery structures across youth offending teams' (YOTs') partners in health, education, police and probation have, in turn, had an impact on the way in which youth justice services in custody and the community are configured and delivered.

Youth justice services themselves have been impacted by changes brought in by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO). Local areas have responded positively to the devolution of funding for young people remanded to custody, and we have seen the number of remanded young people decline. In addition, the formalisation of the out-of-court disposal framework introduced by LASPO has changed the way in which YOTs and police services engage locally with young people at the fringes of the system. Emerging evidence suggests that YOT resources are increasingly deployed to support young people on out-of-court disposals.

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<sup>2</sup> Further information is provided in our Strategic Plan 2015–18.

<sup>3</sup> All figures are taken from the [Youth Justice Statistics](#) published by the Ministry of Justice.

<sup>4</sup> See '[Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England as at 31 March 2014](#)' (Department for Education, 2014).

More widely, recent legislative changes have introduced new powers to address gang violence and anti-social behaviour, as well as supporting young people with special educational needs. These changes are likely to have an impact on the way in which youth justice services are delivered in custody and the community. All these changes have furthermore taken place against a backdrop of significant funding reductions in children's and youth services.

In response to these structural and legislative changes, YOTs are increasingly aligned with other services locally, including early intervention, those addressing the needs of looked-after children or family services (including local 'Troubled Families' initiatives).

In the secure estate, commissioning arrangements for health and education have changed. NHS England is responsible for the delivery of health provision across the secure estate, while the YJB has recently awarded contracts for the provision of education in under-18 young offender institutions (YOIs). It is therefore important that we continue to work with these partners to be effective in our role as commissioners of secure services for children and young people.

We need to fully understand these developments to ensure that our work to support the youth justice sector delivers positive outcomes.

# Responding to the challenge

Our Strategic Plan 2015–18 sets out three priorities:

- Developing and championing a **child-centred and distinct youth justice system**, in which a designated youth justice service keeps children and young people safe and addresses the age-specific needs of the child, to the benefit of the community.
- Developing a **‘centre of excellence approach’ in youth justice** which will support innovation by using and interpreting available evidence to support the delivery of youth justice services in custody and the community. Also more effectively drawing on the contribution of academic institutions and other relevant bodies.
- **Driving continuous improvement** in youth justice services delivered in custody and the community through our robust monitoring system and by identifying and promoting best practice.

These priorities act as the guiding framework to respond to the challenges outlined above and to deliver our statutory functions.

## How we are configured to deliver our objectives

In January 2015, we completed an organisational restructure which aimed to ensure greater integration between core YJB functions in relation to the secure estate and community services. As part of the restructure, the YJB’s executive management structure changed to support delivery of the YJB’s business, as shown below.

**Table 1: The YJB’s executive management structure and oversight responsibilities (2015/16)**

Name	Role	Responsibility
Kate Morris	Director – Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector oversight and performance improvement (custody and community)</li> <li>• Placements</li> <li>• Contract management</li> </ul>
Louise Falshaw	Director – Partnerships and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and making known good practice</li> <li>• Policy advice and strategic planning</li> <li>• Business reporting</li> <li>• Data and information</li> </ul>

Kevin Venosi	Director – Commissioning and Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioning secure services</li> <li>• Change management to support the delivery of youth justice services across the community and custody</li> </ul>
Dusty Kennedy	Director – YJB Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector oversight and performance improvement (custody and community) – Wales only</li> <li>• Policy advice and strategic interface with the Welsh Government</li> </ul>
Martin Skeats	Head of Finance and Business Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial assurance</li> <li>• Audit function</li> </ul>

## Delivering our priorities

The tables below show how we deliver our priorities and respond to the challenges outlined above.

### Championing a child-centred and distinct youth justice system

**Strategic objective 1:** Oversee the delivery of distinct youth justice services which deliver against the three youth justice outcomes (first-time entrants to the criminal justice system, rate of reoffending, and the use of custody), as well as ensuring the safety of children and young people.

Statutory function	Oversight	Outcome	Measurement
Determining in which secure accommodation a young person is to serve their period of detention (placement function) <sup>5</sup>	Operations Directorate	Youth justice services are distinct, child-centred and age appropriate	Reducing reoffending by children and young people
Commissioning services across the secure estate and the community	Commissioning and Change Directorate	Youth justice services ensure the safety of children and young people	
Monitoring youth justice services against National Standards	Operations Directorate		

<sup>5</sup> Outlined in the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Order 2000.

**Strategic objective 2:** Maximise our influence on the work of key partners nationally and locally to contribute to the effective delivery of distinct youth justice services in the community and the secure estate.

Statutory function	Oversight	Outcome	Measurement
Advise the Secretary of State on the operation of the youth justice system, including setting National Standards	Partnerships and Performance Directorate	National policy developments support delivery of positive outcomes in child-centred and distinct youth justice services  Policy initiatives support delivery against three main outcomes	Reducing first-time entrants to the youth justice system  Reducing reoffending by children and young people  Reducing the use of custody for children and young people

**Strategic objective 3:** Work with the Welsh Government to adapt the youth justice system to reflect the policy context of a devolved government and the commitments outlined in our joint strategy '[Children and Young People First](#)'.

Statutory function	Oversight	Outcome	Measurement
Deliver our statutory functions in a devolved context, and in line with the 'Children and Young People First' Delivery Plan.	YJB Cymru/Welsh Government	Youth justice services in Wales are delivered effectively	Outlined in the 'Children and Young People First' Delivery Plan

### Developing a 'centre of excellence' approach

**Strategic objective 4:** Develop a more holistic and responsive approach to the way in which we exercise our statutory functions to commission research and promote good practice, and improve our capability to build, translate and disseminate the evidence base across the sector.



Statutory function	Oversight	Outcome	Measurement
Identify, make known and promote good practice	Partnerships and Performance Directorate	The youth justice workforce is better equipped with skills and knowledge which enable them to be more effective in their work to prevent offending and reoffending	Reducing first-time entrants to the youth justice system
Commission research	Partnerships and Performance Directorate	Evidence and good practice are used more effectively to support continuous improvement at a local/provider level	Reducing reoffending by children and young people  Reducing the use of custody for children and young people

### Driving continuous improvement

**Strategic objective 5:** Make better use of our systems of data collection and analysis to inform the continuous improvement of youth justice services, with a specific focus on reducing reoffending. The YJB will continue to press for more efficient and effective transfer of data so that those making decisions about a child's welfare have the fullest and most up-to-date information on which to base those decisions.

Statutory function	Oversight	Outcome	Measurement
Use YJB data to support the YJB's monitoring function	Partnerships and Performance	Able to prioritise YJB resources to improve performance  Contribute towards the three outcome measures  Improve the quality of information and better interpret the findings from analysis	Reducing reoffending by children and young people

**Strategic objective 6:** Make better use of existing statutory powers to improve the performance of youth justice services in the community and the secure estate, with a specific focus on reducing reoffending. As part of this objective, we will ensure that the facts and statistics about reoffending are clearly published and fully understood by decision makers.

<b>Statutory function</b>	<b>Oversight</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
Monitor the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services both in the community and in secure establishments	Operations Directorate	Contribute towards the three outcome measures	Reducing first-time entrants to the youth justice system  Reducing reoffending by children and young people
Make grants, with the approval of the Secretary of State, to local authorities or other bodies for them to develop good practice	Operations Directorate	Contribute towards the three outcome measures	Reducing the use of custody for children and young people

## **Priority programmes**

The successes in reducing first-time entrants and the reduced use of custody enable us to focus our attention more explicitly on addressing and reducing reoffending by children and young people. A small number of priority programmes have been selected in response to this immediate challenge. These priority programmes do not represent the YJB's full range of responsibilities, but help to focus our efforts effectively.

A small number of cross-cutting themes will be embedded across all priority programmes. Each priority programme will consider how best to respond to the needs of victims and how the voices of children and young people can help shape our work. Given the persistent over-representation in the youth justice system of both Black and Minority Ethnic young people and looked-after children, each programme will consider how to address this over-representation. Progress against these cross-cutting themes will be monitored closely as part of improved programme governance and business reporting processes in 2015/16.

**Table 2: Overview of YJB priority programmes 2015/16**

<b>Workstream description and output</b>	<b>Senior responsible officer</b>	<b>Link to priority</b>	<b>Outcome measurement</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
<p>Reducing reoffending programme*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking research and analysis using YOT and secure information to enable resources to be focused on reducing reoffending rates</li> <li>• Promoting the use of the reducing reoffending toolkit to develop local action plans to reduce reoffending in YOTs where performance requires improvement</li> </ul>	Kate Morris	<p>Child-centred and distinct youth justice system</p> <p>Centre of excellence</p>	Increased use of the reducing reoffending toolkit by YOTs	March 2016
<p>YOI reform programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and implementing a set of reforms in the public under-18 YOIs, including a new education offer</li> </ul>	Kevin Venosi	Child-centred and distinct youth justice system	<p>Reducing violence in under-18 YOIs</p> <p>Improved educational attainment</p>	March 2016
<p>Resettlement programme*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving resettlement outcomes for young people leaving custody in England</li> </ul>	Kevin Venosi	Child-centred and distinct youth justice system	Improved resettlement outcomes for young people through improved partnership working and accountability across all youth justice and local authority staff	March 2016

<p>Developing a 'centre of excellence' approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a revised model to promote and share good practice and evidence</li> <li>• Developing a more holistic approach to the way in which we exercise our statutory functions to commission research and to identify, make known, and promote good practice</li> <li>• Improving our capability to build, translate, and disseminate the evidence base across the sector</li> </ul>	<p>Louise Falshaw</p>	<p>Centre of excellence</p>	<p>Increased awareness of the YJB's approach to evidence among practitioners in both community and custodial settings</p> <p>Increased use of YJB good practice materials</p> <p>Better, more widespread use of evidence in YJB policy-making, performance improvement activities and commissioning</p> <p>Improvements in public and stakeholder perceptions of the YJB's capability to build and translate the evidence base</p>	<p>March 2016</p>
<p>Roll-out of AssetPlus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering an assessment and planning interventions framework for YOTs and secure establishments in England and Wales to replace Asset and its associated tool, leading to improved outcomes for young people who have offended or are at risk of offending</li> </ul>	<p>Louise Falshaw</p>	<p>Drive performance improvement</p>	<p>Effective roll-out of AssetPlus</p>	<p>July 2016</p>

<p>Youth justice application systems strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and implementing new agile business process-based applications in support of our oversight, monitoring and performance improvement functions</li> </ul>	<p>Martin Skeats</p>	<p>Drive performance improvement</p>	<p>Implementation of new business process-based applications</p>	<p>July 2016</p>
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\* To include Wales-specific activities.

## The Welsh context

Many of the matters that drive the delivery of youth justice services in Wales are devolved to the Welsh Government, as reflected in the joint youth justice strategy, '[Children and Young People First](#)', published in July 2014. This joint strategy brings together the Welsh Government and the YJB's vision and commitment to improve services for children and young people from Wales who are in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the youth justice system.

The agreed delivery plan enables the Welsh Government and the YJB to monitor the implementation of the strategy, ensuring it remains relevant and responds to the changing needs of the youth justice system and how services are organised and delivered.

## Strategic alignment

In order to deliver our strategic objectives and ensure delivery against outcomes, it is important that we fully understand the wider context in which we operate. Successful delivery will depend on identifying and influencing those policy developments across Whitehall that have the biggest potential to contribute to delivering positive youth justice outcomes. The most important current government policy developments are:

- the review of the youth justice system, led by the Ministry of Justice
- the Troubled Families initiatives, led by the Department for Communities and Local Government
- the Liaison and Diversion programme, led by NHS England
- ongoing work to improve outcomes for children in care, led by the Department for Education
- the focus on youth violence and child sexual exploitation, led by the Home Office
- the focus on vulnerable young people as part of the Cabinet Office's oversight of youth policy.

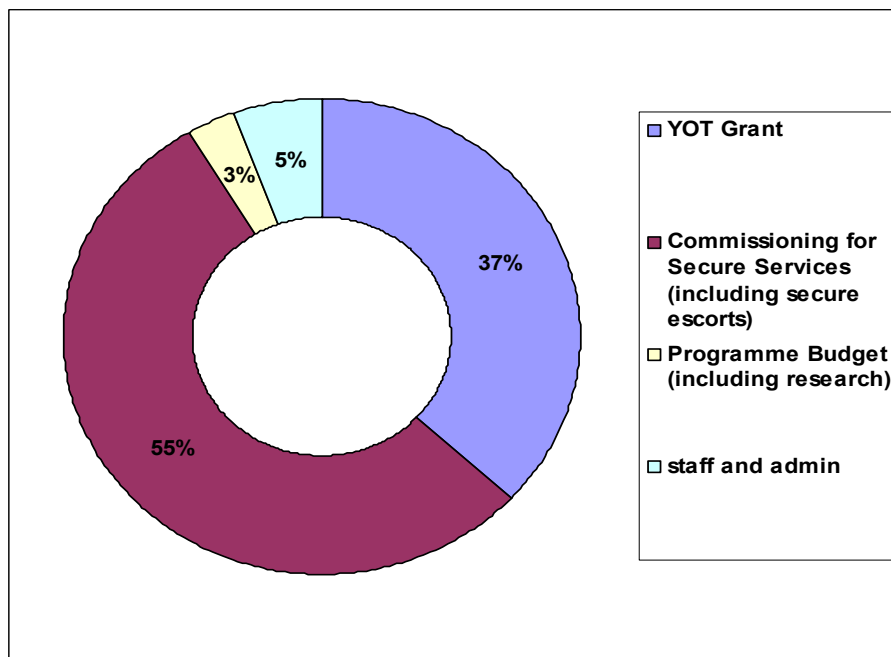
These will be kept under review.

## How we use our resources

The proposed activities outlined in this plan need to be delivered within our agreed financial and human resources. During the last three years, the YJB has delivered savings in line with its targets. Since the 2012/13 financial year, the YJB's budget has reduced by 39% to £196m in 2014/15. The indicative budget for 2015/16 includes further decreases.

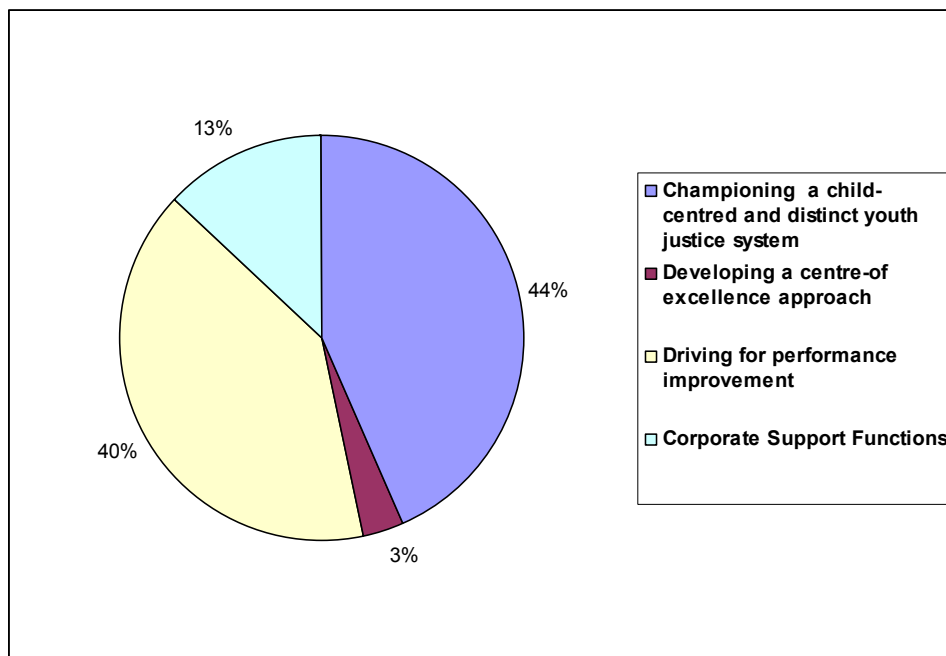
The majority of the YJB's finances are used to commission secure services and make grants to local areas for the provision of youth justice services.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1: YJB proportionate financial expenditure 2013/14**



Our priorities not only help to shape our work for 2015/16, but also enable us to outline how we deploy our staff resources to meet these priorities.

**Figure 2: Human resource allocation against our priorities 2015/16**



<sup>6</sup> A statutory instrument recently laid before Parliament changes existing grant conditions to: 'to make grants to local authorities and other persons for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services'. For further information see: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/79/pdfs/uksiem\\_20150079\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/79/pdfs/uksiem_20150079_en.pdf)

## **What makes us an effective organisation**

In order to continue to support the youth justice system effectively, it is important to ensure that our governance structure and business ICT infrastructure are fit for purpose. We want to ensure that our stakeholders have continued confidence in our stewardship of the resources available to us.

First and foremost, this means ensuring that we comply with existing public and parliamentary scrutiny requirements. We will ensure we have appropriate arrangements in place to comply with corporate governance obligations, as set out in the Framework Agreement between the YJB and our sponsor department. In addition, we want to make the most efficient use of shared services and manage our information appropriately.

Above all, we strive to ensure that we engage and motivate our staff and support them to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver the YJB's mission.