

Criminal Justice Board for Wales

Annual Report, 2022-2023



Cyfiawnder
Troseddol
yng Nghymru

**Criminal
Justice
in Wales**

Contents

Foreword	3
Background – Who we are and what we do	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Delivering our priorities.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Meeting the needs of Victims and Witnesses	6
Meeting the needs of people who have offended	9
Early Intervention and Prevention.....	11
One public service approach to advance Race equality.....	13
Our ambition for 2023-2024	15

Foreword

Our vision for our Criminal Justice Board for Wales remains clear, to deliver a fair, effective and efficient criminal justice system.

I am therefore delighted to publish our second annual report which explains all the work that we have been doing together over the past year to improve criminal justice outcomes for everyone who comes into contact with it, whether as an employee, victim, witness or a person who has offended. I want to pay special tribute to a few key achievements last year as they provide an excellent example of how, when we work in partnership to address shared and complex challenges, we can achieve more.

After the world protested against racism and demanded change in 2020, we moved swiftly and committed to a one public service response to advance race equality. Our commitment has resulted in the publication of the Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales and the establishment of a Criminal Justice Race Equality Independent Oversight and Advisory Panel. It is the combination of our clear vision and commitment, alongside increased transparency and accountability with people from ethnic minority backgrounds, which makes us confident that we will deliver the change that is needed.

I am also proud of the work that the Board has done in bringing together a picture of our performance and response to rape in Wales. Having a picture of our activity which is analysed against our rape performance data means we can better identify and monitor locally and nationally what's working and making a difference to survivors of rape. This way of working provides Wales with the foundation to come together and to capitalise upon the opportunity afforded to us through [Operation Soteria](#), part of the UK government rape transformational programme, which means that all Welsh Police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service are working to the same aspirational academic objectives to improve the response to rape.

I want to acknowledge the success of our remote evidence sites. Working with Welsh Government, we have opened thirteen new sites specifically for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual abuse, with over 200 people using them this year. Their success has been recognised with a nomination for an innovation award by the Centre for Justice Innovation.

I have reflected on the Board's approach to delivery and have seen how adopting a set of core principles has made a key difference. These include collective and shared priorities, a focused plan, evidence-based practice, strong leadership, robust governance and effective Local Criminal Justice Boards.

I want to end with a thank you, to all the hard-working people across criminal justice, wider public services and third sector organisations who have come together

consistently with a shared passion and drive to improve the outcomes for people who come into contact with our criminal justice system. Without you none of the achievements we have outlined in this report would have been possible.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all as we deliver our aspiration for 2023-2024.



Amy Rees
Chair of Criminal Justice Board for Wales
Director General Chief Executive HM Prison and Probation Service

Background – who we are and what we do

The Criminal Justice Board for Wales ('The Board') brings together criminal justice partners including: His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), the Youth Justice Board, Police services in Wales, Chief Constables in Wales, Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association, Voluntary Sector bodies and the Victims Commissioner.

The purpose of our work is to reduce crime and make communities safer by achieving better outcomes and experiences for those who encounter the Criminal Justice System in Wales whether as victims, witnesses or offenders.

Delivering our priorities

We reflected on our achievements in 2021-2022 (Criminal Justice Board for Wales [Annual Report](#)) and agreed that success was driven by a range of factors. These include our robust governance structure, effective coordination and strong partnership working. One factor that made a significant contribution to our achievements was the collective focus and energy we applied to a few key shared issues to affect positive change for people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. It is these founding principles that we have applied this year to agree our 2022-2023 work programme.



Meeting the needs of Victims and Witnesses

To improve our response, and ultimately the experiences of victims and witnesses across the criminal justice system, the Board agreed that they would focus on the following four key areas across Wales.

Increasing the use of remote evidence site in Wales

- We have opened more sites and more victims and witnesses are using them
Thirteen new dedicated new remote evidence sites for victims of violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence (VAWDASV) went 'live' across Wales. These have significantly enhanced the range of [special measures](#) available to victims of VAWDASV in Wales and have improved access to justice.

To further enable the effective use of the sites, HM Courts and Tribunal Service are developing an automated booking process which will go live in spring 2023.

202 survivors of VAWDASV across Wales used the sites during 2022. 175 people used them to give evidence at criminal court and 27 people used them during family court proceedings.

- **Survivors are telling us that giving evidence in this way is beneficial for them**
Those who used the sites told us¹ that they felt less nervous and more confident giving evidence via the remote evidence sites. Many survivors also told us that the live link facilities located away from the court meant that they would not encounter the perpetrator or their family or friends on the day of the trial. This was a key reason why they asked for this provision.
- **We have dedicated special measures advocates in Wales**
The [special measures](#) advocates pilot was funded by the Home Office and all Welsh police forces participated. The advocates became a dedicated resource within witness care units to ensure all vulnerable witnesses going to court to give evidence were aware of their rights set out within the [Victims' code](#) to apply for special measures if they wish. Following discussions, advocates where applicable, would complete and submit special measures applications on behalf of vulnerable witnesses. The pilot has proven very successful with the advocates contributing to the number of survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence giving evidence via the remote evidence sites in Wales. 80% of witnesses spoken to by advocates in South Wales and Gwent asked to apply for special measures.
- **The sites have been nominated for an Innovation Award**
The success of the sites has been independently recognised by the [Centre for Justice Innovation](#) and nominated for an innovation award alongside other outstanding work. The result expected is in the spring of 2023.

Understanding and improving our response to Rape survivors in Wales

- **We created a Wales picture of our Rape response**
The Board aimed to understand the response to rape victims at a Wales level. Therefore, we brought together the regional [Joint National Action Plans](#) (JNAPs) in Wales into one place. This has enabled the Police and CPS to identify, share and adopt good practice across Wales to benefit rape survivors. Across Wales, specialist rape trauma training was provided to all specialist officers and CPS lawyers, scrutiny panels have been consistently introduced, and an 'opt out' ISVA support process for all rape survivors is being examined to increase support. In addition, the Wales JNAP gives a spotlight to the collective challenges for the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to focus on together and resolve. These include a continued focus on increasing police seeking early advice across Wales. The collation of local JNAPs into a national plan was recognised as good practice by the central CPS and National Police Chief Council JNAP team, who are now working towards a new national reporting template for the CPS and Police to align with the launch of the National Operating Models under [Operation Soteria](#) from June 2023.

¹ 35 survivors who completed feedback forms said not being in the same location as the perpetrator was beneficial and made them feel safer.

- We are effectively using the adult rape dashboard to monitor and evidence improvement

Working in partnership with the Insights team in the Ministry of Justice, we have used the [data they collate and publish](#) for adult rape at a local and Wales level. We have used this to analyse whether more survivors of rape are reporting to the police, timeliness and whether we are achieving more effective outcomes. Positively, rape cases in Wales are being heard an average of 100 days earlier than the average time across England and Wales. It has also helped us understand where we need to focus our efforts. We identified that levels of victim disengagement pre-charge remain high, and Police are working with the specialist support sector to gain more insight into the reasons behind this.

- We have developed a Wales child rape dashboard to understand and respond effectively

Together, we agreed that our focus was the response that we provide to all victims of rape in Wales. Therefore, for internal purposes we have developed a child rape dashboard, including people who report non-recent child rape crimes. The dashboard will help us better understand the prevalence of this appalling crime and ensure that the right response and services are in place to support victims' recovery.

Ensure compliance with the Victims' Code

- We have the tools to better understand, monitor and improve victims' experiences across the system

The Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) across Wales examine a number of cases with victims of different types of crimes to tests if their victims' rights, as set out in the [Victims' Code](#), have been met. This means that LCJBs can understand if victims' rights are being complied with consistently and can identify where more work needs to be done. South Wales and Gwent's first examination found an increase in the timeliness in which victims received support. 90% of victims were updated after first hearing and more special measures applications are being submitted, including for rape victims. This process provides the LCJBs and the Board with a mechanism to hear the victims' voice and understand the issues that matter to them across the system. This evidence is being used to shape the Board's response to victims at a local and Wales level.

Increasing successful prosecutions of domestic abuse cases

- We better understand the reasons why domestic abuse survivors disengage with the criminal justice system

The journey of a domestic abuse victim was used to understand their experiences and why they may disengage at different points across the criminal justice system. Several recommendations were made and accepted. These include ensuring survivors are offered the right support at the right time, keeping survivors updated and supporting them to understand more about the criminal justice process and next steps. The approach is being adopted across Wales to ensure survivors receive an effective response. The LCJBs and the Board will continue to use the domestic abuse performance data to monitor if the actions being taken are making a real impact for domestic abuse survivors.

Meeting the needs of people who have offended

The Board agreed to concentrate on following three areas to add the more value

Finalised delivery of the ‘Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales’

- We have made a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable people who have offended in Wales

The [framework](#) comes to an end in March 2023 but that doesn’t mean we are not continuing to work with these vulnerable groups of people. The table below outlines how and where work will continue to be delivered. Some will transition into business as usual, and some is now part of wider programmes of work. This builds onto our [2021-2022 Annual Report](#) and provides some key examples of the work undertaken and delivery with the six specific vulnerable groups of people.

<p>Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding of risk and need • Provision of services aiming to prevent VAWDASV • Shared understanding of ‘what works’ <p>Future work: Work undertaken to understand risk, provision and ‘what works’ for perpetrators of VAWDASV will be driven forward within the Tackling Perpetrators workstream of the Welsh Government VAWDASV Strategy. Continued working with criminal justice partners to ensure a collaborative response.</p>	<p>Women in the Criminal Justice System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce level of complexity • Reduce demand on upstream services • Better understand the distinct needs and vulnerabilities • Ensure mechanisms as in place <p>Future work: The objectives are being delivered as part of the Women in Justice Blueprint² change programme that applies a whole system response to women who enter the criminal justice system.</p>
<p>Ex-Armed Service Personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve identification and recording • Improve understanding of needs and experiences • Prevent ex-ASP transitioning out of the armed services coming into contact with the CJS <p>Work embedded into business as usual</p>	<p>Black Asian & Minority Ethnic Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully subsumed into Criminal Justice Board for Wales Race Equality Priority • Work achieved within IOM workstream has fed into the current work around the wider whole system Criminal Justice Board for Wales Race Equality Delivery Plan

² In 2022 The Blueprint name was rebranded.

<p>Work continues to improve systems to better identify needs of ex-armed forces personnel to tailor support and needs such as mental health, housing and specialist mentoring.</p> <p>Champions in place in Police, Prison and Probation settings.</p> <p>A promise signed by Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure those serving or having served in armed forces are treated fairly and not disadvantaged within the CJS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be reported directly into Criminal Justice Board for Wales <p><u>Future Work</u></p> <p>The objectives above have been absorbed into the <u>Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action plan.</u></p>
<p>Offenders’ Families and Significant Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the impact, provision and support services offered to families. • Working in partnership to ensure children and young people of offenders are identified at arrest, at sentencing and on imprisonment <p><u>Future Work</u></p> <p>The cross-agency Family Connect group has been established to bring together leads for family and significant other ties across the justice system in Wales.</p> <p>Family Connect will continue to share best practice and work together to support the families of people who have offended. This will be monitored through multi-agency arrangements.</p>	<p>Young Adult and Care Leavers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and analysis of our shared data • Improving identification & recording • Ensuring the opportunity to safely share experiences of being in care <p><u>Future work</u></p> <p>Work to develop a whole system approach to supporting young adults will continue through a new steering group, overseeing and learning from the development of the new young adult hub in Cardiff.</p> <p>Work to reduce the criminalisation of care experienced young adults will continue through a Welsh Government led, multi-agency steering group.</p> <p>We will incorporate learning and practice from the Women’s Justice Blueprint in ensuring trauma informed transitions from Youth Justice into adult services, taking best practice in delivery and information sharing to improve the outcomes for young adults.</p>

Map the interventions offered to sexual offence perpetrators in Wales

- We understand the interventions offered to sexual offence perpetrators and areas we want to develop
- The Board scoped the interventions and services provided to people who have perpetrated sexual offences across Wales, including services for children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour. The results illustrate that in

Wales there is a raft of intervention and treatment processes on offer, but we would benefit from looking further into early intervention and prevention approaches. The outcomes were provided to the VAWDASV Blueprint team in Wales, which includes criminal justice and devolved partners, to consider with a whole system response.

Review the offending landscape across Wales

- We have a picture of the needs and drivers of offending behaviour across Wales, and we will use this to enhance our response

The Board recognised that over the last few years a lot has been done in Wales to reduce reoffending; not least the [framework](#) and the Blueprints joined up approach on Women and young people. Therefore, the Board agreed to undertake a review to find out:

- What are needs of people who have offended across Wales, which can influence or lead to offending behaviour?
- Do we have the right services in place locally and Wales-wide to meet their needs?
- Is the work that we are all doing via single agencies and in partnership joined up?

The review made several recommendations including setting up a Taskforce to implement the recommendations which was established in January 2023. LCJBs will build on the review's findings and finalise a robust assessment of needs and services, review existing commissioning approaches to fund services to address offending and maximise collaboration and joint commissioning. An interface will be built between youth offending management teams and LCJBs to ensure they support each other to prevent and reduce offending behaviour. The Board will continue to deliver on the recommendations throughout 2023-2024, with the outcomes published in next year's annual report.

Early Intervention and Prevention

We concentrated on four areas of delivery, building on the thinking and work we commenced in 2021-2022.

Embedding early intervention and prevention as a priority across Wales

- We will ensure that early intervention and prevention features within each priority We asked ourselves last year 'what works to address the drivers of offending?'. The findings from our report reinforced the need for an all-Wales cross government approach to prevention of crime and associate harm. We recognise this aspiration is complex and multi-faceted. So, whilst we continue to work in partnerships in Wales to achieve this aspiration, we continue to ensure early intervention and prevention features in key policy areas across Wales. An example is the focus on early intervention and prevention within the Welsh Government Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and applying a collaborative approach.

Investigating the interventions and approaches that work to address the driver of offending behaviour and scale up across Wales

- We have collated a picture of which interventions are working and enabling people to live crime free lives

This year we entered stage two of this objective. Public Health Wales researchers utilised the evidence base gathered last year to test whether any of the interventions that showed signs of working could be scaled up and delivered across Wales to address the driver of offending behaviour more widely. Secondly the researchers analysed the evidence to pinpoint any gaps in provision for the Board and LCJBs to look to address. Public Health Wales researchers have identified a number of programmes and projects that show promise and would benefit from further evaluation before scaling up and these findings were submitted to the Board in March 2023 to sign off and progress via the Board's 2023-2024 work programme.

Improving our response to Adverse Childhood Experience and trauma across the Criminal Justice system

- We have identified areas for criminal justice organisations to adopt to become trauma informed.

Building onto the work delivered via the [Early Action Together Programme in Wales](#) we wanted to review what was still being delivered across all criminal justice organisations in Wales; and to understand if there is more we can do to work towards a criminal justice system that is trauma informed. Public Health Wales researchers completed this review as part of the wider 'what works' review noted above, and the recommendations informed what we will deliver as part of the Board's 2023-2024 work programme. The review identified positive work continuing in all four police force areas and in HMPPS, but also a need to ensure there is national consistency around embedding and sustaining the Wales National Trauma Framework. Building on the outcomes of this review, we wanted to go further and maximise the opportunity presented via Public Health Wales Trauma Informed Wales Framework. South Wales Police, North Wales Police and HMCTS have agreed to be part of a trailblazer pilot. During 2023 they will work with Public Health Wales to apply the framework and test how trauma informed they are and what more they could do. We look forward to reporting next year on what we found and what we have done.

Understand neurodiversity in the criminal justice system in Wales, with a focus on women

- We will undertake research during 2023 to understand the prevalence of neurodiversity in women within the criminal justice system

The Board secured funding for further research into the prevalence of neurodiversity in women within the criminal justice system. The work will be delivered through the Women in Justice Blueprint and the Board will be updated on progress during 2023. We will report the outcomes of this research in next year's annual report.

One Public service approach to advance Race Equality

This year we continued to build onto the work we commenced in 2021-2022 and focused on a few key objectives and progress is summarised below.

Finalise and implement Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales which will provide the framework for far reaching systemic change in Wales

- We have published our [Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales](#)
On 8th September 2020 we were proud to launch and publish our [Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales](#) which sets out seven shared commitments which all criminal justice organisations will deliver against. Importantly, the plan works alongside the Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action [Plan](#) as a one public service response to address racism in Wales. To deliver against the seven commitments, the first delivery plan covering 2023-2025 has been developed. We will report progress and areas of further work annually.



Embed the Criminal Justice in Wales Race Equality Independent Oversight and Advisory Panel

- **We have established an Independent Oversight and Advisory Panel**
The Independent Oversight and Advisory Panel, which consists of 12 people from diverse backgrounds with a range of expertise and lived experiences of the criminal justice system and racial injustice across Wales was launched at the same time as the Action Plan. The Panel will ensure that we build trust with ethnic minority people and increase transparency. The Panel will also help us check and test if the work we are doing is resulting in real change within communities and ensure all of the work that we do is driven and informed by ethnic minority people in Wales.

Development and implementation of a dashboard to identify and monitor proportionality and representation across the Criminal Justice System in Wales

- **We have developed an initial race disparity dashboard that we will evolve**
We have developed an initial dashboard. This product is pivotal to improving transparency around ethnic minority representation within the workforce across the criminal justice system and identifying and examining disparity and disproportionality of outcomes in the system for people from an ethnic minority background. Evolving, implementing and utilising the dashboard is a priority for 2023-24.

Implementation of a criminal justice cultural competency and workforce representative minimum standards framework

- **We will test our cultural competency framework in the spring of 2023**
A cultural competency framework has been developed and will be tested in the spring and published in the Summer, 2023. The framework will allow criminal justice organisations to benchmark their approaches to attracting, recruiting and retaining people from ethnic minority backgrounds as well as ensuring all staff are cultural and racially competent.

Our ambition for 2023-2024

The Board has continued to learn lessons during 2022-2023 which include:

- Strengthening communication and partnership connections - we recognise that we have made progress in this area at a Wales level, but we must continue to reflect on our shared goals and our infrastructures so that at a national and local level we maximise the opportunities to collaborate on shared issues and avoid duplication.
- Focus on doing a few things well – we have achieved a great deal this year, as set out above. We attribute this to purposefully selecting a few key things that we could all get behind to achieve effective tangible outcomes.

- Continued focus on robust data and evidence – we have built on the learning in 2021-2022, and during 2022-2023 continued to develop performance data linked to our objectives to evidence how we are making a difference and where we need to focus moving forward. This will be further enhanced during 2023-24.

These lessons, alongside criminal justice data, evidence and policies, have helped shape what we want to focus on in 2023-2024 which forms the new Criminal Justice Board for Wales work programme illustrated below.