Key performance indicators for youth justice services frequently asked questions

Version 1.2

Contents

Introduction

This document contains frequently asked questions and answers the YJB have been receiving and responding to around the new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It is a live document and will be added to with new FAQs on an as and when basis.

Youth Justice Services (YJSs) should check this document and the KPI recording guidance document as a first port of call before contacting the YJB.

If you have a question that is not answered within this document, please contact statistics@yjb.gov.uk around any counting rules queries or your case management system supplier for any system specific queries.

Why do we need to change the KPIs?

The current KPIs (First Time Entrants, reoffending rates and the number of children in custody) provide a helpful overview of how the youth justice system as a whole is delivering against our shared overarching aim of preventing offending and reoffending by children. These measures should continue to inform discussion at a local level. YJB and MoJ will also continue to use the information to perform their oversight function and to understand the performance of the system as a whole.

However, it is hard to tie a change in any one of the current KPIs specifically to the work of an individual YJS partnership. For example, changes to the FTE rate could be largely the result of a demographic bulge, or the economic climate, rather than an indication of the local YJS partnership's performance. Fluctuations in the current measures do not always reflect what makes a successful YJS partnership.

We need a set of YJS KPIs which both recognise and celebrate the strength of partnerships and provide intelligence to enable us all (Management Boards, the YJB, the MoJ) to focus our attention where there are challenges – including providing the evidence to be able to hold partners to account.

We acknowledge that any set of KPIs is inevitably a proxy snapshot of the range of work and issues within a service. We have aimed to strike a balance between not asking you to report against an unmanageable number of metrics, but still providing insights across the range of key areas we know are important to address the needs of children today to tackle (re)offending.

We are also clear that KPIs mean very little (or can be actively misleading) if the numbers are not accompanied by thorough analysis and narrative to explain what the data are telling us. These are not a set of targets: we want the KPIs to be used as a source of information and intelligence to facilitate the better partnership working and service improvements, we know everyone is trying to achieve. We will keep the KPIs under review to ensure they provide the insight and evidence needed to drive performance.

Who do you mean by 'the YJS partnership'?

By 'the YJS partnership' we mean the multi-agency group of organisations which contribute to/are part of the work of the YJS: local authorities, including education and social care; statutory partners in health, police and probation; and non-statutory partners such as housing, the voluntary sector and elected members who contribute to the delivery and oversight of youth justice services, and who may be part of the YJS management board.

These KPIs are designed to indicate the success of that partnership, in recognition that YJSs do not operate in isolation from other local services. We recognise that successful partnership working is central to enabling children to succeed and that the most effective YJS partnerships are those where there is strong multi-agency collaboration. To deliver the best outcomes for children, all services must work towards reducing the barriers to desistance. The revised KPIs will provide transparency on the strength of YJS partnerships.

Why change the measures now?

The youth justice system has developed significantly since the current set of KPIs were introduced, with the multi-agency model now much more firmly embedded. Whilst the number of children entering the system with a statutory disposal has fallen significantly, it is clear YJSs are working with increasingly complex caseloads. We need KPIs which help us understand how YJS partnerships are responding to this different context.

This is also important in enabling us to make the case to HM Treasury around YJS funding: at the last Spending Review we successfully negotiated an uplift in the YJS core grant based on the complexity of need and challenges which YJSs face. Given the current economic climate, it has never been more important to be able to a) deliver value for every taxpayer pound; and b) be able to evidence that value, and the impact that YJSs have. Key to this is having a strong performance oversight function, which in turn relies on having a strong data set.

YJB are reviewing how scrutiny and accountability is improved. Improved KPIs will allow for better understanding of the most effective interventions YJS partnerships are undertaking.

When will we be expected to start recording the new KPIs?

YJSs will be required to record data on the new KPIs from 1 April 2023. We have extended the quarter one deadline to 31 October 2023 following feedback from the sector to give as many YJSs as possible the opportunity to report this data via case level returns rather than using the KPI template. There is no expectation to retrospectively record data, please only record data on new KPIs from 1 April 2023.

From April 2023, the KPIs will form part of the YJB's Data Reporting Requirements. It is a priority for us to minimise any operational burden that may occur as a result of these changes and we will work closely with CMS providers to embed these changes.

Counting rules and guidance on how to record the KPIs have been published alongside this FAQ document. YJB regional leads will work with YJSs to ensure that appropriate support is provided where necessary.

How did you decide on the list of proposed KPIs?

MoJ and YJB worked together to develop an initial range of metrics based predominantly on the intelligence we have received from YJSs about the challenges and priorities you face, in addition to research (including HMIP findings) around the common features of high performing YJSs.

We then carried out extensive engagement – with academics, other government departments, policy officials, and the frontline. We have engaged with the Association of 'Youth Offending Team' Managers (AYM), YOT Managers Cymru (YMC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, analysts and information managers to further develop proposals. We have used information gathered through surveys, webinars and information submitted to the MoJ via email to inform the KPIs.

Have you listened to our feedback?

As a result of the feedback received, we have made changes to the initial set of KPIs proposed. For example, remand is no longer proposed as a KPI given the low numbers of children receiving custodial remand in many parts of the country. Further to this, we have included additional measures on victims and substance misuse. Following engagement, we have separated SEND from ETE, these will now be two KPIs in recognition of the complexity and quantity of work being undertaken by YJS partnerships in these areas. The KPIs will now record if management boards are contributing data which identifies racial disparity in their individual services.

Concerns were raised that the KPIs on serious violence and wider services are reflective of the profile of children on the caseload rather than performance. However, reducing youth violence and promoting effective partnership working remains a priority. Continuing to collect data will help us to understand best practice and to target support where needed.

These KPIs reflect a judgement about areas that are strategically important in delivering effective services for children. The intention in revising the KPIs is to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how local multi-agency partnerships are operating at both a local and central level.

How will the KPI data be used?

We recognise that YJS Partnership KPIs are just one tool used to understand a complex environment. A rising – or falling – number could indicate a variety of different issues, and therefore analysis and interpretation of the local situation will be essential for the KPIs to be useful. For small YJSs, fluctuations in numbers may not always be statistically significant. KPIs will be understood within the context of other data and soft intelligence.

This data will be used by:

- Management Boards / YJSs themselves: to understand your own performance – both what is working well and where you need to focus your efforts to deliver improvements; to engage with and hold partners to account where the data reveal challenges/issues; to evidence wider issues which need escalating.

- HMIP: to inform their pre-fieldwork stage at inspection.

- MoJ: to demonstrate the efficacy of YJSs when making the case for funding; to evidence widespread or systemic issues in order to escalate with relevant sponsoring other Government Departments or national leadership; to identify where there are structural barriers in the system.

- YJB: to carry out its oversight function; to understand barriers to desistance in order to bolster partnerships where needed; to determine where challenges are wider than a single area and may require a more coordinated/central response; to assess regional trends and patterns.

YJB's quarterly Performance Oversight Board responds to concerns about service delivery and identifies and disseminates good practice across the system. The existing Board is under review to ensure that YJSs are assessed effectively to inform decisions on when to intervene to support underperforming services. YJB will use the KPIs as a key element of intelligence, alongside other data such as the information provided by YJB regional leads. Recognising the importance of gaining a holistic view, assessments will use a combination of evidence and data to act on emerging need. YJB will send out further information before April 2023 about its new performance oversight function and plans. Therefore, KPIs will form part of the YJB's assessment of 'priority' YJSs for intervention.

Will the new KPI data be published / how will YJSs be able to see the data?

The Statistics and Analysis Team are developing reporting around the KPIs and we will aim to publish back to YJSs on YJAF via a bespoke Tableau dashboard. Tableau is an interactive business intelligence and data visualisation platform.

YJSs will be sent further details on how to view the dashboards in the near future.

The initial output will focus on the high level measures for each KPI with data on sub measures being published in the following quarter.

The YJB aim to publish initial findings from national data on key performance indicators in a future publication.

What are the headline measures for the new KPIs?

1. **Accommodation** – the proportion of children in suitable accommodation at the end of their intervention programme/order

2. **ETE** – the proportion of children in suitable ETE at the end of their intervention programme/order

3. **SEND/ALN** – the number of children with a formal plan in place as a proportion of children with identified SEND/ALN

4. **Mental health** – the number of children with a screened or identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing at the end of their order as a proportion of children with an order ending in the period

5. **Substance misuse** – the number of children with a screened or identified need for intervention/treatment to address substance misuse at the end of their order as a proportion of the number of children with an order ending in the period

6. **Out of court disposals** – the number of children who completed intervention programmes in the period as a proportion of the number of children with an out of court disposal ending in the period

7. **Wider services** – the proportion of children connected to/supported by wider care and support services at the end of their order

8. **Serious violence** – the number of proven serious violence offences as a proportion of the 10-17 population

9. **Victims** – the number of victims engaged in restorative justice opportunities as a proporion of the total number of victims who consent to be contacted

10. **Management board attendance** – the number of senior partners attending management boards (out of five)

What about the other data we're submitting for the KPIs?

The Statistics and Analysis team at the YJB have developed a series of sub measures around these data. Work on developing the reporting for the sub-measures is ongoing and will be available in the coming months via Tableau dashboards.

Will there be transparency around how data is counted?

Yes – we will be publishing a list of variables and filters alongside a methodology of how data is counted for each indicator on the Document Library of YJAF.

How is this joined up with other work across government?

We are working across government to ensure these KPIs are as closely aligned as possible with the work of other government departments and agencies in recognition that YJSs are the central bridge for multiple services. For example, the KPI on victims has been drafted to align with YJSs' responsibilities outlined in the Victims' Code. Similarly, the definition of out-of-court-disposal aligns with HMI Probation's definition used during inspection.

Serious Violence is a cross-Government priority. The Serious Violence KPI aligns with the Home Office's multi-agency approach to reducing Serious Violence which will ask agencies to work together to reduce violence levels.

Where possible, we have worked to align the definitions we have used with definitions used by other agencies. We are aware that in some cases, the definition of 'suitable' for

ETE and accommodation, may not completely align. Honest reporting is central to the support we can provide. We encourage YJSs to record the challenges they are facing in line with the definitions provided.

We have concerns about data quality. Will there be an opportunity to resubmit data?

Yes – YJSs will have the opportunity to resubmit data if they wish to. We anticipate data quality issues in the first several quarters and the data we receive will help in refining guidance and counting rules so we can assist services in recording data in a consistent way and improve data quality in the future. While we expect to derive some useful insights from initial returns, any output will be carefully caveated to outline data quality issues.

How will the new KPIs work in practice?

A KPI guidance document explaining what and how to capture this new data set is published on gov.uk. Please refer to the guidance alongside this FAQ document. We are working closely with CMS providers to ensure that any operational burden is minimised.

Do YJSs need to provide historic data around the KPIs?

No – the YJB do not expect or require YJSs to provide data for KPIs unless they relate to orders or intervention programmes ending on or after 1 April 2023.

How will these KPIs be used to address racial and ethnic disparities?

Reducing racial and ethnic disparities is a priority. We explored the possibility of a standalone KPI measuring racial and ethnic disparity. However, initial scoping demonstrated that YJSs do not have a standardised way to collect this data, which made collecting and analysing this data difficult to deliver.

Once all YJSs are submitting KPI data via case level data returns, ethnicity data can be analysed and reported on.

In line with HMIP's thematic inspection of the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system, racial and ethnic disparities will be addressed within the Management Board KPI. The aim is to examine the work conducted by both YJSs and their partner agencies in reducing disparities.

Will there be flexibility on initial returns?

Yes – we expect all YJSs to submit a return, but we understand that it may not be possible to record all variables until YJSs can record the data on the CMS. We recognise this may take time and will be monitoring returns and working with YJSs to understand which variables cannot be submitted via the template, and which variables will only be able to record once it becomes available on the CMS.

We've previously advised that apart from the Management Board KPI, only one method of data submission would be accepted per YJS per quarter (i.e. template or case level data) with the preferred method being case level data. This was due to the complexities of reporting from separate sources.

Following feedback from some services who said that some data were held in separate systems for certain KPIs, the YJB Statistics and Analysis Team have identified a solution that allows reporting from separate sources but only for different KPIs (e.g. Victims being summary level and other KPIs on case level), therefore if it is not possible to submit data on specific KPIs via case level data, services can submit data on the KPI template. We cannot accept a mixture of data sources for the same KPI.

If services are unable to submit data on any or all of the KPIs, please contact statistics@yjb.gov.uk.

Do the new KPIs only apply to under 18's only?

The new KPIs should count those aged under 18 at the start of the order, but they can be aged 18 over 18 at the end or during the intervention programme/order.

Is there a severity ranking for diversionary outcomes?

Unlike substantive outcomes (cautions and sentences), there is no severity ranking for diversionary outcomes, therefore if a child had more than one diversionary outcome in the period, only the most recent one should be counted.

Do we count diversionary activity facilitated by Early Help or other agencies?

In the case of diversionary outcomes with interventions facilitated by Early Help or another agency other than the YJS, every effort should be made to capture the data in your CMS.

Do we count children who transferred to probation or another YJS before their order ended?

Where a programme ends early for any reason including transfer of the child to the Probation Service or another YJS, the end date must be the date of transfer or other relevant date from which termination applies. Therefore, if a child has been transferred during the reporting period, we count them as intervention closing in the order.

Do we count children that are missing at the end of their intervention?

If the child is missing, presumably the child is not in ETE, and should be counted as such. If the child is in education, count what was known at your last contact with them. For accommodation, please count the most recent information that was available up until the point they were missing.

KPI specific questions

KPI 1: Accommodation

How are custodial remands of four weeks or more going to be calculated by the YJB?

We are going to calculate this based on unbroken periods of custodial remand of 28 days or more not resulting in a custodial sentence using hearing dates and remand decision and then last hearing date which will be their outcome date and the type of outcome received to calculate this.

How do we record accommodation for a child whose order ended but they are either remanded or sentenced in custody at the time of the order ending?

This should be recorded as 'Other'. We are adding in custody as an option to record as an accommodation type as part of the 2024/25 Data Recording Requirements.

What are the definitions for suitable and unsuitable accommodation?

In determining whether accommodation is "suitable" practitioners must consider:

- The need for arrangements to be sustainable over time. Temporary and short-term accommodation arrangements should be avoided;

- The child's specific circumstances and needs, such as their health needs and need for supportive relationships, and their protected characteristics, such as SEND/ALN status and race, ethnicity and cultural needs;

- The child's voice and preferences, such as their want to be closer to their home area (although closeness to home may not be appropriate for every child);

- Providing the child with a nurturing and emotionally supportive environment, and one that supports them in their journey towards desistance;

- Relevant safeguarding concerns and the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider;

- For a child being released from custody, the importance of arrangements that are made, agreed and communicated well in advance of the child's release date.

Practitioners should make a professional judgement on suitability based on the individual needs and circumstances of each child. As stated in the counting rules, in the case of a child being placed in a 'Bed & Breakfast' or categorised as having 'No Fixed Abode' or unknown accommodation arrangements, this will be categorised as unsuitable. For all

other placements, assumptions should not be made based on the type of accommodation that has been arranged. For example, returning to one's family home may be suitable for some children and unsuitable for others.

KPI 2: Education, Training and Employment

The new KPI on suitability of ETE and listening to the child's voice – what if the child does not think the provision is suitable but the practitioner does?

The child's voice should be taken into consideration alongside other factors, however, ultimately it is down to the practitioner's professional judgement around whether overall provision is suitable or not.

How do we record children in year 12 or 13?

If a child is in year 12 or 13 (even if this in the same establishment as the school), please record as college.

Does the full-time ETE classification account both for the hours offered and attended?

A school aged child is in full time ETE if they complete 25 hours or more of ETE per week and an above school age child is in full time ETE if they complete 16 hours or more of ETE per week regardless of the number of hours offered.

How do we record school refusers?

When recording school refusers on the template, please leave the 'hours attended per week' section blank and count these as 'number of children not in ETE' . When recording on the case management system, please enter zero under 'hours attended per week'.

Do we count children in more than one category?

Children can be counted in more than one category. For instance, if they are in college and working in the evenings, they would be counted under both 'college' and 'part-time employment'.

If a child finishes an order in August, they are not technically in school due to holidays, how should this be reported?

Data may fluctuate dependent on school terms. If fluctuations in data occur, this data will be scrutinised to understand this.

KPI 3: Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs

How will we identify which children are SEND?

Currently this is captured on AssetPlus but will be available to record on the CMS when updates are made to the systems.

KPI 4: Mental Health

What dates qualify at the start of the intervention?

Any appointments offered prior to the formal start date due to take place on or after the formal start date of the intervention programme/order that the YJS is aware of should be counted as at the start of the intervention. Any appointments attended before the start date where the child will continue to attend on or after the start date of the order should be counted.

KPI 6: Out of court disposals

How do we record triage and diversion programme outcomes?

Different terminology is used across different services for diversionary out of court disposals, but there are only four recognised outcomes for this (as per the Data Recording Requirements). Triage should be recorded as 'Community Resolution with YJS intervention'.

• Community Resolution with YJS Intervention

• No Further Action Outcome 22 with YJS Intervention

• No Further Action Outcome 22 Deferred Prosecution/Caution with YJS Intervention

• No Further Action Outcome 20/21 with YJS Intervention

KPI 8 Management board

How do we record attendance?

This is a binary count (0-1) rather than a count of the number of people attending, so please record '1' if at least one individual representing the partner agency attended the most recent quarterly meeting.

KPI 10: Victims

Will the victim data be summarised across the perpetrator or do we need to ensure that processes are only recorded against one perpetrator which is quite open to error?

Following the counting rules published in the KPI guidance, point 10.1.3 'The total number of unique victims should be counted. If the offence or offences involved multiple victims, all victims should be counted. If there was a victim of an offence that involved multiple perpetrators, they [the victim] should only be counted once'.

As long as the victim is counted, it doesn't matter if perpetrators have interventions ending in different quarters. What matters is that the victim is counted.

For the number of victims who requested information about the progress of the child's case, what is the definition of 'progress' and what is the definition of 'contacted'?

'Progress' refers to how well the child is engaging with the intervention programme/court order. There is deliberately no specific definition of 'contacted' in the context of this KPI because it should be driven by what the victim wants. For example, if a victim prefers to be contacted by phone, that should be the form of contact used.

For the number of victims who requested information about the child's case and the number provided with information, what is the definition of 'information'?

There is no specific definition as the information provided should be driven by the victim and what they want. To record data for this metric you need to know whether the victim has requested information, and whether it has been provided.

For the number of victims who asked for additional support and the number of victims provided with information on appropriate services that support victims what is the definition of 'additional support' and what is the definition of 'appropriate services'?

'Additional support' refers to any support beyond that which is standard.

'Appropriate services' reflects that there are a range if services which may meet the needs of individual victims – victims are more than just victims and may require services beyond specific victims' services.