

Business plan

2024 - 2025

Using oversight and evidence to prevent offending and make communities safer



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Foreword from our Chief Executive



This is the first business plan published since I was appointed as CEO of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales in November 2023. Publication also coincides with the election of a new government who, as I write will be charting the way forwards with a focus on their five missions. Through this business plan, the YJB will contribute to several of these missions. Most notably ‘Take Back Our Streets’, through an evidence-based approach to youth justice policy and practice. Successful youth justice will enable children to reach their potential and create safer communities with fewer victims, all of which contributes towards the wider missions to ‘Break down barriers to opportunities’ and help ‘Kick start our economy’.

Earlier this year we published the Board’s Strategic Plan for 2024 to 2027¹, which sets out our vision for the youth justice system, reflecting the evidence-based Child First framework. This is firmly rooted in decades of national and international evidence of what works in youth justice and preventing children offending.

This business plan translates our strategy into specific actions we will deliver in the coming year, to continue to drive improvements across the system whilst establishing foundations for work in the subsequent two years. Our three strategic objectives are to:

- support improvement of youth justice services (YJSs) in local communities
- focus on addressing disparities across the youth justice system
- advance adoption of the evidence-based Child First framework by providing advice and support to influence policy and practice.

Over recent years, we have undergone an internal reorganisation to ensure we use the resources allocated to us effectively, delivering value for money. We are responsible for making grants of just over £92m a year, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Justice, to support local authorities in England and Wales with the provision of YJSs which prevent children offending. Our reorganisation has placed us in a stronger position to monitor local youth justice partnerships, work closely with them to identify and disseminate effective practice, and be a critical friend to provide support where improvements are needed. We have strengthened our use of research and data to make informed strategic and financial decisions, and we use evidence and intelligence to inform our advice to ministers, and the wider youth justice system on what can be done to improve and to influence the development of policy and guidance.

This plan sets out what we are planning to deliver on behalf of the public and how we will lead improvements across the youth justice system to prevent children offending, reduce

¹ [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118444/yjb-strategic-plan-2024-27.pdf)

the numbers of victims and protect our communities. We will adopt a flexible, agile approach and will provide appropriate challenge where we need to.

We are in a period of social, political and economic change. This year we expect to be the subject of a review under the Cabinet Office Public Bodies Review Programme², which will provide an independent assessment of our operations and effectiveness. This is a process that we are excited by and view as an opportunity to ensure we are fit to face the complex challenges of the future and that we are able to provide the best service we can to ministers, the public, children, victims and our communities, within the budget we are allocated. Although we are in a period of change, we will offer stability and support to the youth justice sector through our leadership and evidence-based approach.

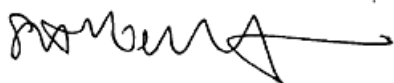
People are at the heart of our work – those who work in the YJB, people working in the youth justice sector and those affected by youth justice including children, their families and the victims of crime.

This plan sets out our commitment to the people in the YJB to be an exemplary public sector employer. We champion the local youth justice partnerships, which involve colleagues from local authorities, police, courts, probation, education and health, as well as charities, volunteers and the third sector. We advocate for changes in the secure estate to better prevent offending and re-offending by children.

Youth justice is locally based, has a strong sense of community and is led by compassionate and talented professionals who put children first. Children themselves, as well as families and others affected, including people who are the victims of crime, should be active participants in youth justice. By listening to them, we can better understand their journey, their experience, their identity and their place in the community. Co-production and participation underpin effective youth justice work.

We will continue to support our colleagues in the Youth Custody Service to ensure better quality outcomes for children by providing them with advice, healthy challenge and the expertise of our staff and board members, and, through our routine engagement with YJSs.

This business plan sets out our commitment and my personal commitment to deliver positive outcomes for children and their communities, and to operate in a way that reflects public service values.



Steph Roberts-Bibby
Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board



² See: [Public Bodies Review Programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Who we are

Our outlook and approach are defined by our vision and mission.

The principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children³. Achieving this aim is at the heart of what we do. This aim is reflected in our vision for the youth justice system. Our Child First framework, based on decades of national and international research on what works in youth justice, is based on the evidence that the most effective way to reduce reoffending is by empowering children to grow to be the best versions of themselves and to contribute positively to their communities.

To do this we need to understand 'how' best we can achieve this aim. Consequently, we spend significant effort in understanding how to translate the evidence into practice. We apply this understanding, either directly through our statutory functions, or to use in influencing practice and policy owned by others. This is set out in our mission.

Our vision

“A youth justice system that sees children as children first, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.”

Our mission

“The Youth Justice Board is the only statutory body to have oversight of the entire youth justice system. We provide independent, evidence-based advice and leadership to drive improvements that increase children’s positive outcomes and prevent offending.”

In working to achieve this vision, our mission statement provides more detail about our core purpose and the approach we will take:

To deliver against our mission we will:

- support improvement throughout the youth justice system and in the provision of local youth justice services.
- inform ministers, the public, practitioners and policymakers about the operation of the youth justice system.
- influence practitioners and policymakers to apply Child First evidence in delivering positive outcomes for children.



³ Section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998: [Crime and Disorder Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

How we work

Our [values](#) shape how we deliver the mission and vision and describe the culture we strive to develop through our policy and practice.

Inclusive



“We strive to challenge discrimination and promote equity in all that we do. We work with others to eliminate bias both within the Youth Justice Board and in the youth justice system.”

Collaborative



“We work together to deliver our strategic plan. We encourage system-led change and are enablers of innovation. We actively encourage, facilitate, and engage in partnership working to help meet the needs of children, victims, and their communities, and acknowledge that children are also victims.”

Integrity



“We fulfil our duties and obligations responsibly. We are professional and always act in a way that deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom we have dealings with.”

Accountable



“We take responsibility for the work we do, for our actions, our behaviours and our performance.”

Bold



“Our work and advice remain firmly evidence-based and, even if the message is difficult, we will not shy away from saying what evidence tells us to be true. We will continue to champion the needs of children wherever they are in the youth justice system and will make sure that we give them a voice.”

What we do

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998⁴ established the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB), its statutory functions and set out that “the principle aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children”.

We are accountable for delivering these statutory functions and offering value for money. How we meet these expectations has evolved over the past 25 years to reflect the political and cultural landscape in which the youth justice system operates and the evolving evidence about effective practice which meets the needs of children. We are also influenced by the recommendations from internal and external reviews and the steer that we receive from the ministers responsible for youth justice⁵.

The Act set out the requirement that each local authority should establish a youth offending team (now commonly referred to as youth justice services - YJSs) and a local youth justice management board responsible for co-ordinating YJSs in their area. The YJB is responsible for monitoring those services alongside setting strategic direction for the youth justice system:

Monitoring and overseeing the operation of the youth justice system

We work directly with the 157 local YJSs and their management boards. We seek to understand how effectively they are working and the strength of the multi-agency partnerships that are in place to deliver services to children and their families, victims and communities. We also use this evidence to develop an understanding of the functioning of the system as a whole.

Our Oversight Framework⁶ provides a structure for analysing and monitoring the performance of local YJSs and the wider system to provide understanding about the services that are being delivered. We use this to identify how to support improvement and to disseminate effective practice. The framework enables our operational teams to make expert judgements founded on qualitative and quantitative information and insight.

Each year we undertake a review of the annual plans which are developed by each youth justice management board. This provides insight into their progress over the previous year, where they will be focussing their effort in the coming year, and how they are reflecting on the objectives set out in our strategic plan. This also aids us to identify areas of strength in the system, and areas for improvement.

Advising the Secretary of State on the:

1. Operation of the youth justice system and provision of services.
2. Most effective way of pursuing the principal aims of the youth justice system.

⁴ [Crime and Disorder Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/17)

⁵ [Annual strategic steer for the Youth Justice Board 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674441/Annual-strategic-steer-for-the-Youth-Justice-Board-2023-to-2024.pdf)

⁶ [Youth justice oversight framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674441/Youth-justice-oversight-framework.pdf)

3. Content of any national standards related to the provision of youth justice services, or custodial accommodation used for children.
4. Steps that might be taken to prevent offending by children.

We provide independent evidence-based advice both directly to ministers and through engaging and supporting officials. We draw upon national and international evidence, which we make available to the public, youth justice sector and government to support the development of policy and practice that is effective for children, victims and communities.

Our advice draws upon evidence from our oversight of the youth justice system and youth justice services. By bringing together insight from both research and practice, we are in a unique position to drive improved outcomes for children, victims and the communities in which they live. We listen to the voice of children, victims and sector colleagues and make sure that they are heard across government.

Administering and distributing grant funding on behalf of the Secretary of State for Justice to local authorities to support the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services

We set terms and conditions for grants to ensure best value for the public purse. We use insight gained from monitoring the operation of the youth justice system to understand how the grant is used to prevent offending by children.

We provide advice to ministers on the options for revising the grant funding formula so that it is distributed more fairly and equitably to target funding to where it is most needed, reflecting changes in population and need.

With agreement of the Secretary of State we award targeted grants to support innovation and apply the evidence base in practice in line with our strategic priorities.

Providing assistance to local authorities and other organisations in the use of information technology and equipment which is used to support the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services

We provide support to local authorities and other organisations through the provision of the Youth Justice Case Management System⁷, AssetPlus⁸ and the Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF)⁹ which is the tool for delivering shared youth justice IT. These platforms and applications provide the infrastructure for YJSs to exchange information about a child's individual needs and strengths across the youth justice system throughout their journey and report on system performance.

⁷ [Case management guidance - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ [AssetPlus: assessment and planning in the youth justice system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁹ [YJB Services | Shared](#)

Collating and publishing information about the performance of the youth justice system

We publish research, statistics, analysis and independent advice on the operation of the youth justice system and local YJSs. The insight that is gained improves outcomes for children by aiding decisions, encouraging a joined-up approach between different service providers and identifying the best value for money.

➤ **Data and statistics**

We collect, publish and analyse data including the annual Youth Justice Statistics publication and data on Key Performance Indicators¹⁰ as well as providing briefings on what the data tell us.

➤ **Official statistics**

We publish the YJB annual Youth Justice Statistics¹¹ and other ad-hoc statistical publications.

➤ **Internal management information data**

Our internal management information data includes our quarterly Youth Justice Data Summary, which is shared with local YJSs, and monitoring and advising ministers on serious incidents in the community.

➤ **Research evidence**

We publish research and evaluation reports, evidence reviews, research summaries and presentations.

➤ **Soft intelligence**

We maintain records about strategic engagement with partner organisations, local YJS activity and performance, meeting minutes and papers, presentations, online message boards and records of ad-hoc conversations with stakeholders.

Commission research to support practice development.

We undertake an annual research prioritisation process with stakeholders and other government departments to identify and fill gaps in the evidence base around youth justice. We ensure the research we conduct, and commission reflects our strategic priorities, and has potential benefits for the youth justice sector.

We convene regular meetings of our Academic Liaison Network to bring together academics from across the United Kingdom and Europe who have an interest in youth justice and the experience of children. This informs our work and supports us being an evidence-informed authoritative voice on youth justice.

¹⁰ [Key performance indicators for youth justice services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/key-performance-indicators-for-youth-justice-services)

¹¹ [Youth justice statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/youth-justice-statistics)

Identify and share evidence-informed practice across the sector.

Our Youth Justice Resource Hub¹² serves as a platform to make the link between theory and practice by enabling youth justice professionals, academics, researchers, students and volunteers to access evidence-based practice, knowledge resources and research.

We promote collaboration between colleagues in youth justice services by facilitating Developing Practice Fora and support discussion with the wider youth justice sector by hosting a range of stakeholder fora which meet at regular intervals to discuss matters of policy, guidance and practice.

Our Operations teams are active in supporting the sector, sharing evidence and good practice with local YJSs. We co-chair the Hwb Doeth, which is the primary forum for sharing and developing practice in Wales. We also facilitate the Workforce Development Council, working closely with the Youth Custody Service and the Youth Justice Institute as co-chairs to ensure learning about effective development strategies are identified and shared across the sector. The Workforce Development Strategy will be reviewed when the current strategy ends in 2025.

Wales

Devolution has resulted in marked differences between England and Wales in the administration of services for children. Although justice remains a reserved matter with decisions taken by UK government and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in Westminster, the Senedd Cymru has delegated responsibility for a significant range of policy areas that directly shape the lives of children, including education, social care and health. In addition, the Welsh Government provides funding to prevent offending by children in Wales.

What we do in Wales

In support of delivering our strategic priorities in Wales, we tailor our responsibilities to take account of the contextual differences. Some of the ways we do this are:

➤ **Working jointly with the Welsh Government**

We have a long-standing relationship with the Welsh Government, with a partnership agreement in place. This agreement sets out the role that our Operations directorate plays in working with Welsh Government officials to guide strategic and operational direction in Wales.

The YJB jointly convenes the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP) with the Welsh Government, which has a dual purpose in providing a whole system overview and acting as a strategic reference group. It also has an advisory role to delivery of the joint Welsh Government and MOJ's Youth Justice Blueprint. At a national level, WYJAP enables the YJB, Welsh Government and wider partners to:

- understand the data and evidence behind offending.
- consider the ways in which collaboration can help address some of the challenges.

¹² [About – Youth Justice Resource Hub \(yjresourcehub.uk\)](https://www.yjresourcehub.uk)

- inform the advice to Welsh Government ministers.

➤ **Youth Justice Blueprint**

The joint Welsh Government and the MOJ's Youth Justice Blueprint was published in 2019. The Blueprint uses a dispersed partnership model of responsibility to achieve its objectives, deliver the required outcomes and realise the intended benefits. The YJB holds the leadership position on behalf of the partnership and provides the stewardship and oversight of implementation.

➤ **Use data and evidence**

We gather data and evidence which we use to to understand youth offending in Wales and advise Welsh Government (including ministers, Senedd Parliamentary Committees, and officials) when they are developing policies which are relevant to children in Wales. Our insight is used to ensure that the distinct circumstances in Wales are reflected when we respond to consultations, briefings and submissions.

➤ **Collaboration and strategic relationships**

We play an active role across national strategic relationships in Wales and provide evidence-led advice and expertise about offending, particularly when we are collaborating with devolved inspectorates, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Police and Crime Commissioners, criminal justice partners and third sector organisations.

➤ **Oversight and evidence-based advice**

The combination of our oversight and evidence-based advice influences systemic action, improvement, and change to impact and influence strategic and operational direction in Wales. An example being the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales¹³.

➤ **Welsh Language Act**

We manage engagement with the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure that the YJB is compliant with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

➤ **Criminal Justice Board for Wales Anti Racist Action Plan**

We are actively supporting the Criminal Justice Board for Wales in implementation of their Anti Racist Action Plan¹⁴ which is a collective commitment by justice partners in Wales to eliminate racism and advance race equality in the delivery of justice in Wales. This work is in alignment with the Welsh Government work to achieve the same goals across all public services and Welsh society.

¹³ [youth-justice-blueprint_0.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

¹⁴ [Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Areas of strategic development

We publish a Strategic Plan every three years which sets out our objectives based upon what the evidence is telling us and contextualised by our statutory functions and any steer we receive from ministers.

Our recently published Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2027¹⁵ sets out three strategic objectives which are set out below. Our strategy is delivered through our core work, reflected in statutory functions, along with the improvement activity we are committed to delivering in 2024 - 2025 to further translate the strategy in action.

Support improvement of youth justice services in local communities:

Over the next three years, we seek to improve the overall performance of local YJSs by:

- monitoring youth justice services and partnerships against evidence-based expectations and standards.
- supporting YJSs to improve delivery.
- providing YJSs with stable and fair funding.

Moreover, we seek to support the improved performance of YJSs in how they:

- divert children away from formal criminal justice outcomes.
- respond when children are involved in violent crime.
- provide services for victims of crime which reflect standards set out in the Code of Practice¹⁶.
- support children and reduce the use of custody, including the availability of alternative placements to support the use of bail or remand in the community.
- support children when they are in custody and when they return to the community.
- understand how to apply Child First evidence to all aspects of service delivery and supporting workforce development.

¹⁵ [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118444/youth-justice-board-for-england-and-wales-strategic-plan-2024-27.pdf) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹⁶ [The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales and supporting public information materials](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118444/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime-in-england-and-wales-and-supporting-public-information-materials.pdf) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Support improvement of youth justice in local communities

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Monitoring YJSs and partnerships against evidence-based expectations and standards to support delivery of improved services.	Implement an intelligence framework which will draw together evidence and intelligence from all sources available us.	Intelligence framework launched and we use it widely.
	Monitor quality of key performance indicator (KPI) data returns and develop dashboards.	KPI dashboards available for internal use and the data quality is sufficient to be ready for external publication in 2025 - 2026.
	Analyse Youth Justice Plans for 2024 - 2025 which are submitted to us.	An analytical report produced which identifies the key themes including strengths and areas for development.
	Publish research on different approaches about the integration of YJSs with other local service providers, including analysis of current practice and barriers to change.	Research report is published, and a plan for dissemination of findings is implemented.
	Implement a new digital and data strategy for 2024 - 2027.	New digital strategy is published and first year milestones are met.
	Complete a user-centred assessment of the YJAF, used by YJSs and in secure settings to share case management information.	A user-centred assessment is completed, which can be used to inform future redesign.

Support improvement of youth justice in local communities (continued)

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Improved performance in the response for children involved in violent crime.	Analyse and share findings on serious incident notifications submitted to the YJB in 2023 - 2024.	Serious incident notifications published internally and externally identifying key themes.
	Publish a new Serious Violence Toolkit on YJAF.	Serious violence toolkit is published and available for use by local services.
Improved performance in understanding how to apply Child First to all aspects of service delivery and supporting workforce development	Publish research on the operationalisation of Child First practice in YJSs.	The research report is published, and a plan for dissemination of findings is completed.
	Commission and publish research to understand training and other needs of the youth justice workforce and future investment requirements.	The research report is commissioned, and delivery milestones met.
Improved performance in diversion of children away from formal criminal justice outcomes.	Evaluate the rollout and implementation of the new Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool.	The new tool is rolled out and all local YJSs are using it.

Focus on addressing persistent disparities across the youth justice system, particularly racial disparity

It has been recognised for many years that many children who come into contact with YJSs experience inequality in their lives. Although we have consistently expressed our commitment to address these disparities, they are often so deeply rooted that we do not have direct influence over the levers that will drive the fundamental changes needed to overhaul the structural barriers that children and communities face.

While the youth justice statistics suggest that there has been limited progress in reducing overrepresentation of children from minoritised racial communities against certain measures, it is unacceptable that despite nearly a decade of focus on addressing this since the Lammy Review¹⁷ it is still the most persistent and significant disparity in the criminal justice system.

As well as racial disparity, children who have contact with YJSs are more likely to have experienced care, live in poverty, have been exposed to trauma or present with

¹⁷ [Lammy review: final report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/lammy-review-final-report.pdf)

neurodivergent conditions or speech and language difficulties, and that many have experienced more than one of these factors.

We will maintain our focus on seeking to address disparities and will scrutinise every aspect of our own work and where we can influence others on reducing racial disparities in the youth justice system by:

- identifying and informing stakeholders about racial disparities in youth justice processes and outcomes.
- ensuring equitable outcomes and access to services for all children, irrespective of their protected characteristics.
- enabling effective action to reduce disparities.
- championing inclusion and becoming an anti-racist organisation.

Focus on addressing persistent disparities across the youth justice system, particularly racial disparity

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Enabling effective action to reduce disparities.	Continue to support the delivery of the Elevate mentoring and coaching programme and evaluate for learning and future delivery options.	A third iteration of the programme is developed and rolled-out.
Identify and share good practice about what works in reducing disparity.	Complete and publish learning about the processes and decision-making involved in producing and utilising Pre-Sentence Reports.	Research report is published and a plan for dissemination of findings is delivered.
	Publish research which has collected examples of good local practice in tackling racial disparity in youth justice.	Research report is published and a plan for dissemination of findings is delivered.

Focus on addressing persistent disparities across the youth justice system, particularly racial disparity (continued)

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
<p>Support Pathfinder projects which focus on actions that aim to reduce over-representation of black and mixed heritage children in different parts of the youth justice system; increase understanding of disparity within the youth justice system; and develop effective approaches, tools and resources which support these ambitions.</p>	<p>Provide targeted funding to support two Pathfinder projects: the London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) and the Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder in the West Midlands Police Force area.</p> <p>Ensure that grant funding is managed effectively and in line with government guidelines.</p> <p>Support evaluation and dissemination of learning to inform both policy and practice.</p>	<p>The Pathfinders are established, and delivery is commenced in line with the project plans.</p> <p>Evaluation indicates that the Pathfinder projects are meeting their objectives.</p>

Influence development of policy and practice to advance adoption of Child First throughout the youth justice system.

We will bring together our analysis of evidence and data with insight we have gathered from oversight of local YJSs to advise, influence and engage strategic delivery and policy development across statutory partners including ministers, government stakeholders and other organisations which influence how services for children are delivered. To meet our strategic objectives our ambition is to support the development of the following:

- providing advice to the Secretary of State regarding the review of the standards for children in the youth justice system.
- Work with MOJ colleagues with a view to bringing the statutory Referral Order guidance into scope of the case management guidance to ensure consistency and ease of access.
- understand and develop measures of positive child outcomes.

We will also prioritise those areas where we believe there will be most benefit for children if lead agencies and departments take action to:

- improve the court experience and outcomes for children.
- create models of child custody which are care-focused and promote a pro-social identity.

- recognise the vital role of education settings to identify and support children who are at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system.

Influence development of policy and practice to advance adoption of Child First throughout the youth justice system

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Influence development of policy and practice to advance adoption of Child First throughout the youth justice system.	Launch a modernised Youth Justice Resource Hub.	Hub is launched and available for use by youth justice services and interested parties.
	Use the Academic Liaison Network as a regular forum to bring together youth justice researchers to share and discuss findings from research to inform our decisions, advice, and position statements.	A network of experts is in place to collaborate and share relevant evidence.
	Publish a self-assessment toolkit for organisations working with children in the youth justice system.	Self-assessment toolkit is published and tested in relevant organisation.
	Engage with MOJ colleagues on the potential to bring statutory Referral Order Guidance into scope of case management guidance and update where relevant in line with the evidence base.	An agreed position is reached, and we are able to work towards updated guidance being published, informed by engagement with the sector.
	Monitor and update the evidence in key position statements as a range of evidence-based statements on key themes of interest for youth justice practitioners.	We will review evidence on key issues and develop agreed positions to inform advice and ensure that existing positions are up to date with the latest evidence.
	Support organisations awarded targeted “Pathfinder” project funding to develop innovative and independently evaluated practice to provide learning and long-term benefit for the sector.	Support and apply rigorous oversight of grant terms and conditions to ensure value for money.

Influence development of policy and practice to advance adoption of Child First throughout the youth justice system (continued)

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Review the standards for children in the youth justice system.	Scope a review of the national standards for children in the youth justice system and provide advice to ministers and MOJ officials to inform decision about a wider review.	Ministers receive sound evidence-based advice to inform decision about whether to progress a review of national standards.
Inform and shape evidence-based policy and practice across government, statutory partners and third sector organisations.	Respond to relevant inquiries, consultations and recommendations issued by stakeholders and where appropriate publish our response.	We respond to inquiries and consultations with detailed evidence and within defined timescales and are able to identify our influence.
Advise, influence and engage organisations which work with children.	Continue to convene a range of stakeholder fora – including Voluntary and Community Sector Leaders Group (VCSLG); External Stakeholders liaison Group (ESLG); Youth Advisors Network (YAN); Developing Practice Fora; and Heads of Service meetings.	We are facilitating a range of effective sector networks where stakeholders evidence and details from practice experience.
	Convene and host four Youth Justice System Oversight Group (YJSOG) meetings to draw together government departments and agencies from across the youth justice system to focus on a strategic theme understand and inform the development of our strategic and inform guidance or practice.	Four YJSOG meetings held focussing on strategic themes.
Understand how positive outcomes for children can be measured.	Undertake a review of evidence on how positive outcomes can be measured.	Commence this work by identifying appropriate measures, citing the underpinning evidence.



Our people

“We will aim to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer. We will do this by developing a People Strategy for 2024 - 2027. We will ensure that this aligns with the Civil Service People Plan and establishes strong people priorities that will enable us to deliver our Strategic Plan”

We will strive to be an inclusive anti-racist organisation and will make sure that our policies promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

How will we continue to aim to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer?

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Be a lean, efficient, and productive organisation which is focussed on delivering its statutory functions and any steer from ministers.	Provide accurate and timely management information and advice to enable effective senior leadership decision making on how we are structured, our budget and how we deliver our remit.	Cabinet Office Review results in a positive review of the YJB.
	Ensure we have sound financial and governance processes and procedures which are enablers in our aim to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer.	
Continue our excellent achievements in moving away from being a London-centric organisation through the Places for Growth programme.	Advertise all posts as national, by default and monitor our workforce locations accordingly.	80% of our workforce, including 100% of SCS equivalent staff and non-executive Board members based nationally by 2030.

How will we continue to aim to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer (continued)

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
Engage our people and empower them to achieve their full potential and do their best work.	Develop and deliver a clear communications plan to embed a new set of core values to ensure that we describe the standards of behaviour needed from our staff to achieve the very best for each other and for children who encounter youth justice services (YJSs).	Staff confirm through performance discussions that core values are embedded in how we behave and deliver our objectives.
	Prioritise the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff through delivery of a health and safety action plan, careful planning of our work and consideration of the impact of our work and initiatives on our workforce.	People Survey 2024 shows equal to or better than Civil Service scores in relation to bullying, harassment and discrimination.
	Develop and deliver a staff engagement plan which focuses on our strengths and supports an engaged and motivated workforce.	People survey 2024 score for Engagement to equal that of Civil Service.
Continue to be a resilient, high performing and inclusive public sector organisation.	Ensure we have a robust business continuity plan in place which enables us to respond to changing priorities and situations.	People survey 2024 score for inclusion and fair treatment to equal that of Civil Service.
	Deliver an equity, diversity and inclusion action plan which encourages an open and inclusive culture where all feel they belong, are welcome, empowered and can reach their potential.	

How will we continue to aim to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer (continued)

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
<p>Invest in developing our staff to cultivate the skills they need now and in the future which support us to be a resilient organisation.</p>	<p>Review the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by our staff to deliver our strategic plan ensuring priority is given to skills required for building an evidence base, understanding the youth justice system, digital, technology, financial and commercial.</p>	<p>Our Skills, Knowledge and Behaviours guidance is published internally.</p> <p>People Survey 2024 score for learning and development to equal that of Civil Service.</p>
	<p>Undertake a gap analysis and focus our learning and development offer on supporting our people to excel in these areas.</p>	
	<p>Develop and deliver organisational and directorate development plans which focus on empowering staff to develop the skills, knowledge and capability to deliver their roles now and in future.</p>	
<p>Effectively manage and adapt to uncertainty and change.</p>	<p>Develop our leadership skills, at all levels of the organisation, to ensure change and resources are managed effectively and communications are clear and decisive.</p>	<p>People survey 2024 score for Leadership and Managing Change to equal that of Civil Service.</p>

How will we continue to aim to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer (continued)

What are we trying to achieve?	What we will do in 2024 - 2025:	We will have been successful when:
<p>Attract and retain a diverse workforce with the skills, knowledge, and capability to effectively navigate emerging challenges in today's public sector.</p>	<p>Refresh our reward strategies to make sure they attract, motivate, engage, and retain high performing, skilled and knowledgeable people.</p>	<p>Our People Strategy 2024 - 2027 is agreed and published and includes recruitment strategies and our approach to resourcing.</p> <p>People survey 2024 score for Pay and Benefits to equal that of Civil Service.</p> <p>People survey 2024 scores for inclusion to equal that of Civil Service.</p>
	<p>Develop the skills of all recruiting managers through workshops, guidance, and advice from experts to focus on potential and strengths of applicants and to ensure a swift and fair recruitment experience.</p>	
	<p>Develop and deliver a resourcing approach which meets the needs of the YJB and adheres to Civil Service protocols.</p>	
	<p>Apply our Equity Diversity and Inclusivity action plan to ensure that we advance equal opportunities for staff with protected characteristics and delivers against the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>	



Governance and response to risk

External governance arrangements

Governance arrangements are in place to ensure that we can meet the ambitions that our Board set out in our three-year strategy. Our internal governance arrangements are supported by our framework with our parent department, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and our memorandum of understanding with the Youth Custody Service (YCS) and MOJ Youth Justice Policy Unit (YJPU).

Assurance processes are in place to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are being followed and are effective.

MOJ and Youth Justice Board (YJB) Framework Document

Our framework document sets out the broad governance framework within which we and MOJ operate. It sets out our responsibilities, how the day-to-day relationship should operate, including in relation to performance, governance and financial matters.

Our performance is reviewed by MOJ via quarterly Business Assurance meetings which are Chaired by the Head of the Arm's Length Body Centre of Excellence. We are represented by our Chief Executive. These meetings are used to review performance, risk and finance to provide assurance that we are performing effectively.

YJB-YCS-YJPU Memorandum of Understanding

Our memorandum of understanding with the YCS and YJPU sets out key roles and responsibilities for each organisation.

YJB-Welsh Government Memorandum of Understanding

We have a separate agreement with the Welsh Government in place to recognise the distinct delivery landscape in Wales.

Internal governance

Internal governance arrangements ensure that the right structures are in place to support us deliver against our statutory responsibilities.

We have the following Board sub-committees:

Performance Committee

The Performance Committee provides the Board with assurance that we are meeting our statutory responsibilities to monitor the operation of the youth justice system and provision

of youth justice services (YJSs), as well as providing assurance that the business and strategic plans are being delivered.

Finance Audit Risk Assurance Committee (FARAC)

FARAC advises our Board and Chief Executive on the management of risk, control and assurance on financial matters.

People and Remuneration Committee (PREM)

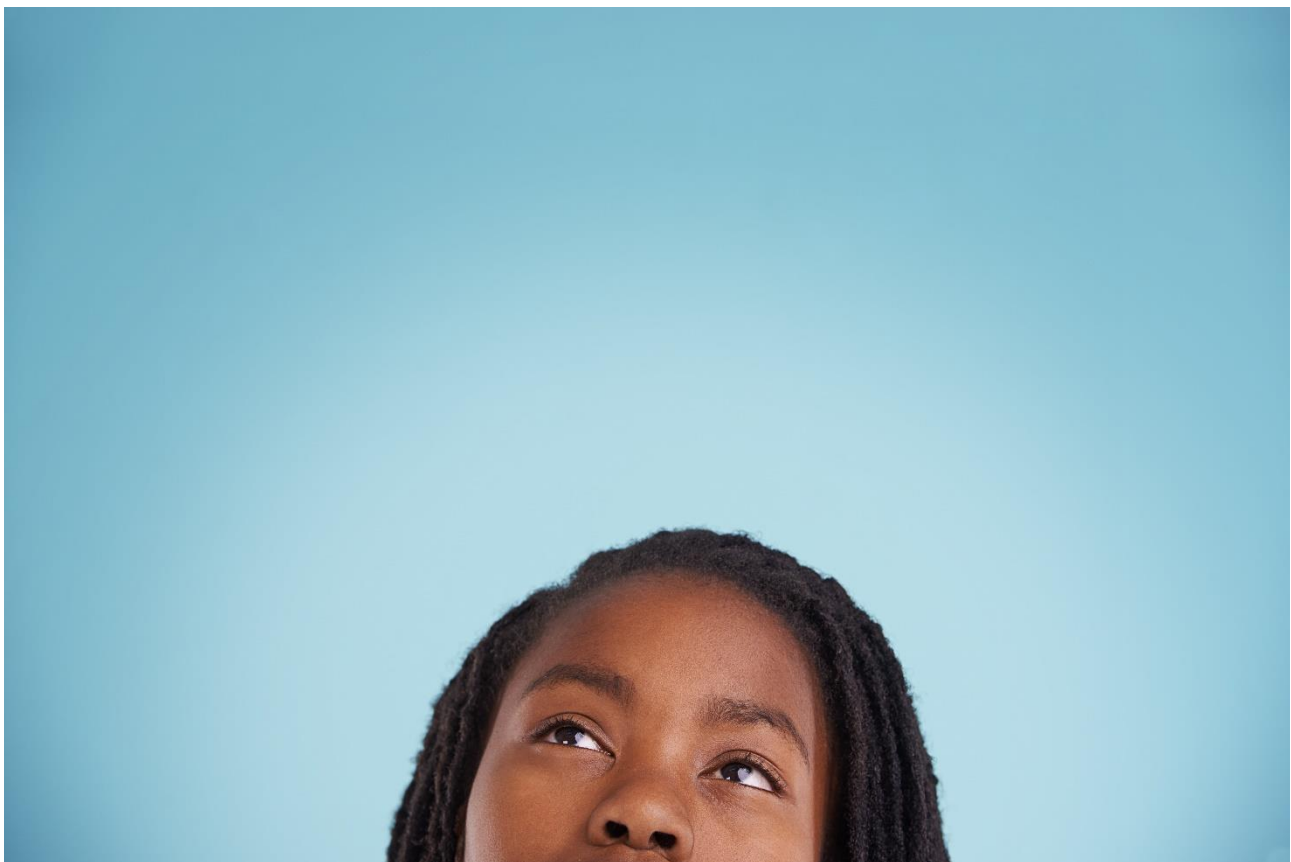
PREM provides oversight of how we value and nurture our people, and ensures we are honouring our commitment to be an exemplary public sector employer.

Welsh Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP)

We jointly convene WYJAP with the Welsh Government to understand data and evidence about offending, consider ways in which collaboration can address challenges and inform advice to ministers.

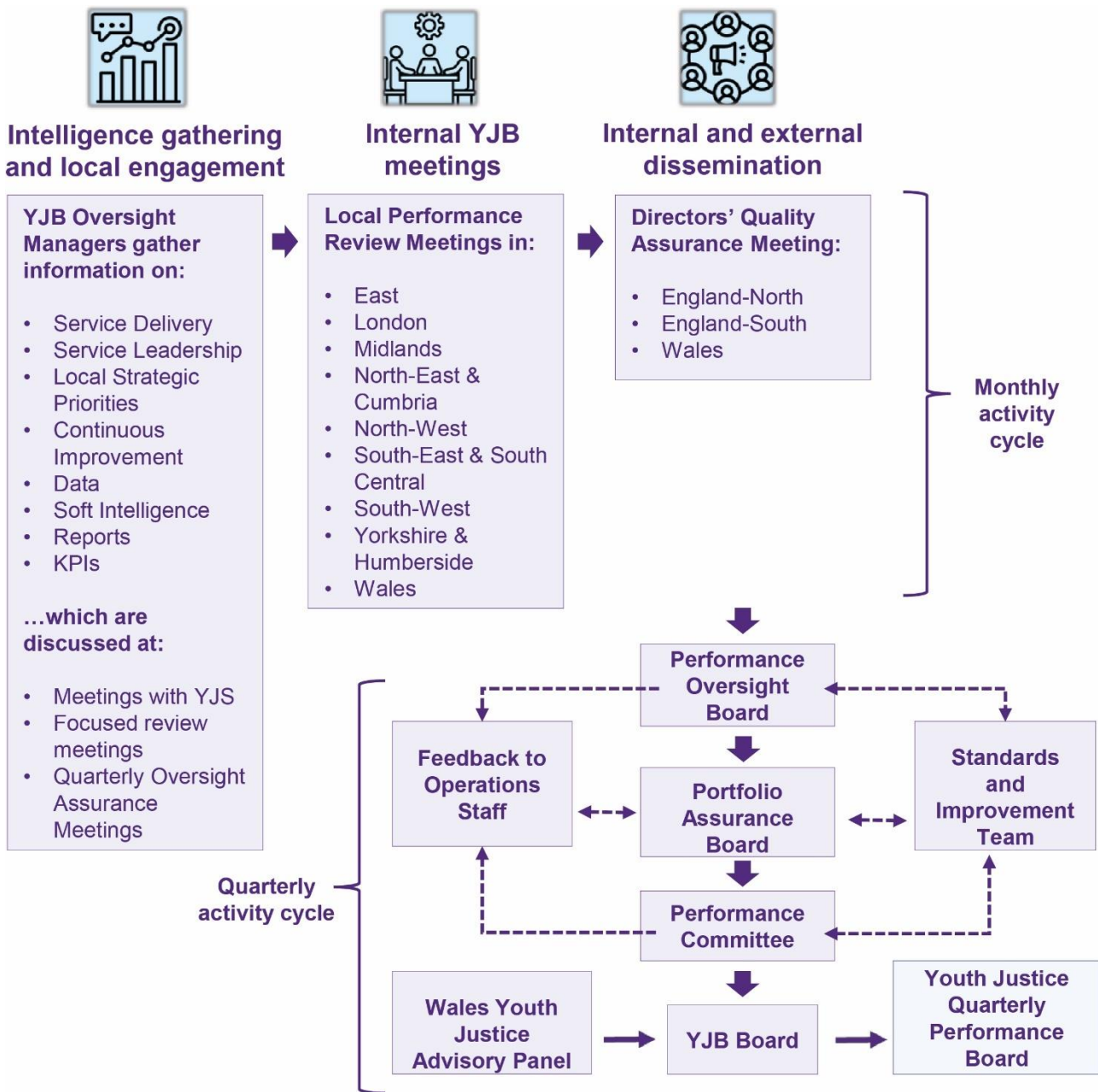
Portfolio Governance and Management Framework

In addition, these sub-committees have frameworks in place to guide the organisation through all aspects of internal management, including Project Management; Financial Governance; Benefits Management; and Risk and Assurance.



Oversight and Performance

Our oversight of local YJSs is integrated with our governance structure, and is set out in the following model:



Our Oversight Managers have ongoing contact with the local YJSs at focused review meetings, oversight assurance meetings and other discussions to gather and review information and data about their performance.

The intelligence picture they build feeds into our internal performance and review processes, which determine judgements about performance; the approval of improvement plans; serious incident reviews; and the identification and sharing of best practice.

The Youth Justice Quarterly Performance Board provides a forum for updating ministers and colleagues from other government departments and statutory partners with information on performance and cross-cutting matters.

Developing Practice Forums and workforce development activity allow best practice to be identified and replicated to improve capability across the system.

Risk

We identify, monitor and mitigate risk through our Risk Management Framework. Strategic risks are reviewed monthly by our Senior Leadership Group, with FARAC providing assurance that risk is being managed appropriately.

The strategic risks we have identified for 2024 - 2025 are shown below, and each has a detailed control and mitigation plan in place:

Risk	Context
<p>Strategic risk 1: Insufficient evidence base to provide sound and effective advice.</p>	<p>The development of an intelligence framework, the implementation of a digital and data strategy and the insights derived from these will support our ability to provide sound, evidence-based advice incorporating all our intelligence from our work across the system.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 2: Failure to deliver our statutory monitoring function.</p>	<p>The embedding of our oversight arrangements, set out in our oversight framework, will ensure we are able to effectively carry out our statutory monitoring function and continue to deliver the strategic steer from ministers to improve local YJSs.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 3: Failure to deliver our statutory function to support the IT provision for YJSs.</p>	<p>We will develop a digital and data strategy and a comprehensive programme of works to support the robust delivery of IT provision to YJSs and meet user needs. We will continue to follow government advice in response to the management of cyber risk to our online services.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 4: Failure to realise benefits and evidence the full impact of our work.</p>	<p>We will review and enhance our approach to benefits management and ensure the benefits we identify are realistic and achievable to enable maximum impact.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 5: Failure to adhere to our organisational-wide governance processes leading to a lack of corporate discipline and ability to maximise our resources.</p>	<p>We will embed our assurance processes to ensure we are applying appropriate governance to our work and develop a strong and effective corporate culture that balances holding staff accountable with a positive and compassionate working environment.</p>

Our main strategic risks for 2024 - 2025 (continued)

Risk	Context
<p>Strategic risk 6: Ineffective relationship with the sponsoring department, Welsh Government and wider partnerships affecting collaboration and delivery of objectives.</p>	<p>The Public Bodies Review of the YJB will assess our roles and responsibilities and those of the sponsor department in relation to youth justice. This will be an opportunity to further build on the MOJ-YJB Framework Agreement and ensure current arrangements enable us to deliver to the best of our ability on the core aims of preventing offending, reducing crime, creating safer communities and promoting positive child outcomes.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 7: Failure to manage the budget effectively to ensure that our resources, including capital, targeted investment and core grant, are utilised to maximise impact on driving system improvement and delivering statutory functions.</p>	<p>We are working in a fiscally challenging environment and recognise the financial pressures and challenges within the department for 2024 - 2025. We will continue to implement comprehensive budget management processes and look for opportunities in the 2025 - 2028 Spending Review so that we can maximise funding opportunities for youth justice services and ensure resources are used effectively.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 8: Failure to have sufficient and/or appropriately skilled staff to effectively deliver our strategic and business plans.</p>	<p>Through robust governance processes we will ensure our business commitments are proportionate to the size of our workforce.</p> <p>We are developing our People Strategy which will set the direction for embedding our future approach to leadership, culture and the development of talent and skills across the organisation.</p>
<p>Strategic risk 9: Ineffective/insufficient leadership at senior and Board level.</p>	<p>Efficiency savings will have to be managed in a way that does not undermine effective organisational leadership. We will draft a People Strategy to identify and develop the skills and capabilities needed at senior leadership and Board level to provide the direction, vision, motivation and inspiration needed to support the successful delivery of our core aims of preventing offending, reducing crime, creating safer communities and promoting positive outcomes for children. Board member recruitment should be managed in a way that ensures that skills required by the organisation are understood and addressed.</p>



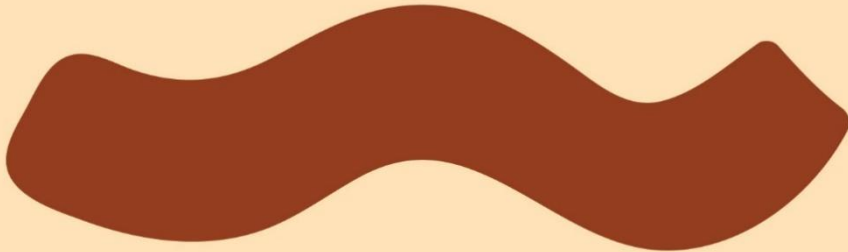
Our finances

Each year, we publish our Annual Report and Accounts¹⁸ in which we reflect on our achievements during the year and the value we provide with the public funds that we receive.

Our budget allocation for 2024 – 2025 is as follows:



¹⁸ [Youth Justice Board Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



Youth Justice Board / Bwrdd Cyfiawnder Ieuencid

Clive House
70 Petty France
London
SW1H 9EX

Welsh Government Buildings
Llys-y-ddraig Penllergaer
Business Park
Penllergaer
Swansea
SA4 9NX

YJB.Enquiries@yjb.gov.uk

