

Criminal Justice Inspection of Youth Justice Agency's Community Interventions – April 2024
Recommendations & YJA Response and Progress Report

Strategic recommendations	Actions	Progress Report	YJA Lead/Owner
1. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Department of Justice agree and implement an improvement plan that ensures a shared vision, strategic collaboration and ownership of the vision for youth justice in Northern Ireland with synergy across all relevant strategies, and an effective monitoring framework to ensure the vision is achieved. (Paragraph 2.6).	<p>1. Within 4 weeks of the inspection report's publication, a letter will issue from Director ROD to the Chief Constable advising of recommendations and inviting support to address strategic recommendation 1. Letter to include invite to PSNI to join the Strategic Framework for Youth Justice Implementation Group and contribute to future annual actions plans developed under the Strategic Framework.</p> <p>2. By October 2024, YJA Chief Executive to organise meetings on at least a bi-annual basis with senior PSNI operational contacts to ensure greater strategic collaboration between YJA and PSNI. 3. Commencing October 2024, YJA representative on the PSNI's Youth Forum to provide an annual written update to the YJA Board on key issues and synergies with YJA priorities. 4. By December 2024 YJA Chief Executive (who is also DoJ Children's Champion) to seek an annual meeting with the PSNI</p>	<p>This action has been completed.</p> <p>The first YJA/PSNI strategic meeting has taken place. Future meetings will focus on areas of common interest and collaboration.</p>	Chief Executive / Director

	Children's Champion to explore issues of common interest.		
2. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency should develop effective and regular strategic scrutiny of Youth Justice Services Directorate case work quality and workload trends. (Paragraph 2.9).	<p>The database working group have been tasked with creating procedures for case work quality assurance and review.</p> <p>1. Commencing September 2024, case work audit reports to be discussed quarterly at local area team management meetings. 2. Commencing October 2024, workload trends to be reviewed quarterly at the YJS senior management team meetings 3. Commencing In November 2024, the YJS Director will report annually to the Board on YJS case work quality and trends. 4. Chief Executive and lead YJA statistician to present annually to YJA Board (starting at January 2025 Board) on emerging trends from YJA workload data.</p>	<p>The database working group met on the 13th June 2024 to review existing data collection processes and agree a process for the review and recording of case work quality. This paper has now been shared with Area Mangers who are working on creating the final guidance.</p> <p>This is ongoing.</p>	Director

3. Within three months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency in partnership with the Department of Justice should review the Executive Agency Framework Document to ensure Youth Justice Services Directorate operations are reflected and linked to the provision of high-quality services and retention of a highly skilled child focused workforce. (Paragraph 2.14).	1. Review and revise the YJA Framework document to reflect this recommendation and secure the approval of DoJ Governance Unit for the changes (by July 2024). 2. Continue to deliver on the YJA Workforce Plan 2022-25 (CEx and Directors) 3. Retain retention and recruitment on YJA risk register (YJA Board) 4. Escalate retention and recruitment risk within DoJ, including to the Departmental Risk Register (CEx and Director of Corporate Services)	Complete. Framework document reviewed and amended to address this recommendation (June 24). A progress update on the YJA Workforce Plan was discussed at the YJA Board in June 2024. The retention and recruitment risk is the no.1 risk on the YJA risk register and has been escalated to the Departmental Risk Register. The Chief Executive has also discussed the risk and potential mitigations with the Director of ROD, the Permanent Secretary and the Minister. A business case for a retention and recruitment allowance was submitted to FSD in March 2024.	Director of Corporate Services / Director / Chief Executive
4. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency should develop a strategic profile of its partnerships and an action plan to monitor and improve access to interventions and services across its Youth Justice Services. (Paragraph 2.28).	1. Map regional and local provision of partnerships highlighting the services offered, gaps and opportunities by December 2024. 2. Develop an action plan to address gaps and maximise opportunities that improve access to interventions and services across YJS by December 2024.	A reporting template has been developed. YJS teams are currently undertaking a local scoping exercise to map services and links across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. This will facilitate dev of an overarching action plan with composite local action plans. Feedback to be available for Nov SMG mtg	Assistant Director lead / Director
5. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Public Prosecution Service for Northern	1. YJA to join the PSNI led Out of Court Disposals Working Group which oversees the use of Community Resolution Notices and other forms of out of court disposals	YJS Director has become a standing member of the PSNI led Out of Court Disposals Working Group and attended her first meeting in May 24.	Assistant Director lead/Director

Ireland should agree an action plan to evaluate the approach to Community Resolution Notices for children. This should ensure regular quality assurance, monitor equity in use, and assess how the needs of children, families and victims are met. (Paragraph 3.54).	(by June 24) 2.Community Resolution Notices to become a standing item on the Quarterly Youth Engagement Clinic Steering Committee chaired by YJA and attended by the PSNI and the PPS effective from September 2024. 3. YJS Director to propose to partners a review the CRN referral scheme focusing on monitoring, quality assurance, equity and their impact at the Out of Court Disposals Working Group. 4. YJA to continue to measure the impact of CRN Referral Scheme referrals via user surveys (current and ongoing).	A review of the CRN Referral Scheme, in partnership with PSNI, is planned for November/December 2024. This will include reviewing quality assurance and the measurement of impact.	
Operational Recommendations	What needs to be done	Progress Report	YJA Lead/Owner
1. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency should develop a training needs analysis of current and future training needs to ensure it supports continued delivery of high-quality, personalised and responsive services for all children by its Youth Justice Services Directorate (Paragraph 2.19).	High quality and appropriate training remains central to YJA staff development and professional practice. We will undertake a training needs analysis that will commence in September 2024	New L&D officer is now in post and has begun designing a framework for the analysis.	Assistant Director lead
2. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice	YJA introduced a new case supervision policy and procedure in	The case management working group met June 2024 to discuss the	Director / Case Management working group

Agency should develop a process for regular quality assurance of Youth Justice Services Directorate case work. (Paragraph 2.20).	March 2024 which takes account of professional development, reflective practice and quality assurance. All staff now have access to regular supervision. Quality procedures to be reviewed and agreed recommendations implemented within 6 months.	review and development of YJS quality assurance procedures.	
3. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency should evaluate its new Needs Assessment to include an examination of how well it supports analysis of desistance needs and the safety of the child and others. (Paragraph 3.48).	Given the Youth Justice Agency Needs Assessment was developed internally, we are commissioning an external evaluation of the tool to ensure it supports both desistance and safety. Next Steps: 1. Agree a tender specification by 30 th September 2024 2. Tender to academic partners 3. Evaluate tenders and commission tender 4. Implement agreed findings	The tender specification, scoring matrix and evaluation panel have been agreed. The tender specification was uploaded to 'e tenders' on 25/9/24.	Assistant Director lead
4. Within six months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency should review the approach to Earlier Stage Diversion referrals to ensure all are within scope, and that analysis and recording of offending needs and the safety of the child and others is effective in supporting sustainable desistance. (Paragraph 3.66).	We have commissioned and are awaiting the findings of an evaluation of Children's diversion Forums, one aspect of which will focus on the appropriateness of referrals from CDFs to YJA ESD cases. We are developing/revising YJA quality assurance processes to include the monitoring of appropriateness of ESD cases. We will ask the evaluators of the YJA assessment tool to provide	The CDF Evaluation Report will be shared with YJS at a Staff Development Day on 3 October, and an event for stakeholders/ partners will be arranged later in the year. An action plan will be developed in response to the recommendation in the report. This will include plans to further ensure that referral to YJA via CDFs are appropriate. YJA is currently developing a more robust and consistent approach to	Assistant Director lead

	advice on how best to record and analyse the needs and safety of children involved in ESD cases.	the quality assurance of case work, and this will include ESD cases.	
5. Within three months of report publication, the Youth Justice Agency in partnership with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland should update its guidance on Juvenile Justice Centre Order supervision and develop a mechanism for joint quality assurance of resettlement cases. (Paragraph 3.74).	YJA and PBNI continue to meet bi-annually to review our partnership working. We will update our JJCO Supervision guidance ensuring quality assurance is focused on. A review and update of the 2018 guidance will commence in partnership with PBNI and be completed by 30 th September 2024. Quality assurance of these cases will become a standing agenda item on the joint bi-annual meetings. We will also develop and implement a process for monitoring and quality assuring.	A second meeting with PBNI AD will take place on Monday 30 September to finalise the changes to the guidance. Discussion will then begin on agreeing quality assurance processes and plans for implementation of same.	Assistant Director lead