

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

Supporting Youth Justice Services to prevent offending

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

Introduction

The purpose of this Framework is to bring together all the services which prevent youth offending into a single joined-up vision of prevention activity. It assists devolved services and partners to understand their role in the prevention of offending and in supporting youth justice services to achieve this It also sets out the importance of taking a Child First approach to prevention across Welsh Government services and defines what this looks like in practice. The Framework reflects the strategic and operational landscape in Wales and the unique position of youth justice and its overlap with justice systems and services concerned with children's welfare, health and wellbeing.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[1] identifies a child as an individual who has not yet reached the age of 18 years of age. The age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is 10 years of age. The youth justice system is concerned with children aged 10 to 17 years of age.

Justice services in Wales comprise a range of local, regional and national agencies working together. While criminal justice is not devolved to Wales under current constitutional arrangements, there are important interfaces between youth justice and devolved responsibilities which play a key role in preventing offending. In particular, services such as education, health and children's services are statutory members of Youth Justice Services, and others are providers.

There is a strong interface with devolved services as some are statutory members of youth justice services, notably children's services, education and health, and others are providers of services to which children in the youth justice system may require access (e.g. Early Help, housing etc). The operation of the youth justice system relies on integration between devolved, non-devolved and third sector organisations to enable youth justice services and their management boards to function and to support children to lead happy, healthy, safe and crime free lives.

What do we mean by prevention?

Youth justice services work with children where there are concerns about entry into the youth justice system. This does not always mean that offending has occurred, as youth justice services may also work with children who have completed a court order but who need additional support and assistance. Preventative work is voluntary and relies on the skills and abilities of professionals to engage with children and their families and carers.

Children who are referred to youth justice services (because they are on the cusp of the criminal justice system) may have come to the attention of education providers, the police or Children's Services, generally because of behaviours which may lead them into the criminal justice system or because of safeguarding concerns that are connected to criminal activity (e.g. various forms of exploitation) or their domestic environment. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures[2] set out the processes relevant to safeguarding children, including those where there is an interface with the criminal justice system.

Youth justice services gatekeep referrals to ensure they are the most appropriate agency to work with the child and their family, identify other agencies which could provide support (or who are already involved) and advocate for that support. This includes signposting children (and their families) to mainstream services, directly working with them to identify and address problems and encouraging children to participate in positive and educative activities. Youth justice services have the expertise to deal with some of the more specialist issues which might arise due to various forms of exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour. They have established relationships with relevant agencies notably the police, schools, children's services and with other agencies concerned with children's well-being and welfare.

Youth justice services may also be involved in wider preventative work, including:

Work with schools to raise awareness about crime and its consequences.

Work with residential care providers to understand the implications of criminalising care experienced children.

The youth justice system and prevention

It is well established that the more contact children have with the youth justice system, the more likely they are to be drawn into it and be liable to offend. The route through which they come to the attention of the Police, local authorities and youth justice services is determined by what they have done and how they are dealt with; whether it is justice-based or led by concerns about their safety and well-being. This could be through prevention, anti-social behaviour and diversion.

The following definitions are based on the YJB definition of prevention and diversion (which also provides a summary of the available out of court options).[3] The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014[4] sets out the main provisions in relation to responses to anti-social behaviour.

Prevention

Prevention is support and intervention with children (and their parents/carers) who may be displaying behaviours which may indicate underlying needs or vulnerability. In practice this involves a tiered approach of **early** and **targeted** prevention.

The aim being to address unmet needs, safeguard, promote positive outcomes and stop children entering the formal youth justice system.

Anti-social behaviour

Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.

Conduct capable of causing nuisance, or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises.

Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

Diversion

Diversion is where children with a linked offence receive an alternative outcome that does not result in a criminal record, avoids escalation into the formal youth justice system and associated stigmatisation.

This may involve the youth justice system delivering support/ intervention that may or may not be voluntary and/ or signposting children (and parent/carers) into relevant services.

All support should be proportionate, aimed at addressing unmet needs and supporting pro-social life choices.

Child First in practice

The well-being approach taken in Wales is firmly aligned with Child First. Child First evolved from youth justice and makes clear that when children come into contact with criminal justice services they should be treated differently to adults. As previously described children are affected by the environment in which they grow up and whether it nurtures them or not. They may not have the capacity or personal resources to deal with the difficulties they encounter.

A Child First approach needs to be recognised and understood by all the agencies which are partners in and contributors to youth crime prevention. Child First has been defined by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) as:

See children as children.

Develop pro-social identity for positive child outcomes.

Collaboration with children.

Promote diversion.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a foundation for further understanding. The overarching principles (known as articles) which apply to all children are that acting in their best interests is a primary consideration (Article 3). Children should be supported to thrive and develop (Article 6) and be afforded the opportunity to express their views and for those views to be respected (Article 12). Actions should be non-discriminatory and promote equality of opportunity, irrespective of the child's situation, personal characteristics and environmental circumstances (Article 2). Children also have the right to be able to recover from any form of neglect, exploitation and abuse in a sympathetic environment (Article 39). Arrangements should also be in place for dealing with children that does not involve resorting to judicial proceedings, with a range of alternatives that are appropriate to their well-being, circumstances (and offence) (Article 40).

The articles provide a benchmark for meeting needs, providing services and ensuring rights and entitlements can be accessed particularly health, education and a safe, stable and supportive family life. The protection of all these rights rests with adults. Child First principles associated with prevention activity are:

1. Recognising that children who are vulnerable to offending are vulnerable children.
2. Advocating for and brokering children's access to their universal rights and entitlements.
3. Giving children the opportunity to amend their behaviour and to learn from their mistakes in a non-stigmatising, non-discriminatory and supportive way.
4. Addressing children's needs from the perspective of what has happened to them rather than what they have done wrong.
5. Identifying strengths, potentials and opportunities to support children to lead happy, safe and healthy crime free lives.

6. Helping children to improve and maintain the relationships they value.
7. Recognising that children and still maturing and developing and some of the mistakes they make are due to immaturity.
8. Recognising children cannot solve the problems they experience through their own efforts and need trusted individuals to support them.
9. Providing targeted and specialist support to children with particular difficulties, whether due to offending, health-harming behaviours or other reasons, recognising and positively responding to diversity.
10. Involving children and their families/carers in decision-making. Valuing and respecting their views and understanding needs and aspirations from the child's rather than the professionals' perspective.

Preventative Child First practice should aim to positively impact on children's life chances by:

Improving physical, emotional and mental health wellbeing.

Supporting recovery from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Fostering attachment to school and encouraging educational attainment.

Strengthening positive and supportive relationships in the family and community.

Developing pro-social networks and peer groups.

Helping them to acquire life and social skills and increased self-confidence.

Assisting them to cope with difficulties and developing resilience.

Improving the quality of family life or the circumstances in which they are living, so they have a stable and secure base.

Providing advice and support to enable them to lead healthy lifestyles to be safe and less susceptible to negative influences and harm.

Seeing each child as a unique individual with their own needs and protecting them from discrimination and inequality.

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds can be overrepresented in the criminal justice system. The Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Plan for Wales[5] identifies actions to end over representation, which includes monitoring prevention and early intervention activity. The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan[6] aims to reduce racism in Wales as a whole.

Trauma informed approaches

Trauma can result from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances which have a lasting effect. Children can experience developmental trauma, which occurs in early years of life and arises from negative experiences from caregivers which can affect their relationships with others as they mature. Children who have experienced trauma may not have developed age-appropriate cognitive skills, have difficulty in regulating their emotions, not have developed essential life skills, struggle to communicate with others and find it difficult to process and retain new information. They may not be able to reason, feel empathy or regard the intentions of others (adults or professional workers) as positive.[7] When they reach adolescence, these difficulties can give rise to behaviours which sometimes result in involvement with the criminal justice system, and which may not always be understood as a symptom of their life experiences.

Trauma-informed services and responses are open to the possibility the child has experienced trauma as the reason why they are reacting to the world in the way they are. They can help children to develop trusting relationships, which assist them to feel safe, make good choices, be active participants and feel empowered. Services are sensitive to those needs, do not re-traumatise or harm the child further, start from a position of what has happened rather than what they have done. Within criminal justice settings helping children to overcome their experiences can help them to desist from offending (and prevent it occurring).[8]

The Welsh Government are committed to increasing understanding of the impact of trauma. *Trauma-informed Wales* is a Framework[9] which provides a definition of a trauma-informed approach and contains five principles and four practice levels which explain how individuals and organisations can identify and support those who have experienced trauma.

Traumatic Stress Wales[10] aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages living in Wales at risk of developing or experiencing (complex) post-traumatic stress disorders. It is a national initiative that works through a network of easily accessible, locally based services centred around the people they are trying to help, including children and young people.

The Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales prioritised the development of trauma-informed approaches within youth justice across Wales. The Welsh Government, Youth Justice Board, Health Services and Forensic Adolescent Children Service (FACS) contributed to the development of Enhanced Case Management (ECM).[11] This is an approach to trauma informed practice, which youth justice services can access for any child they have concerns about where trauma may be evident. ECM is provided with input from psychology services provided by FACS.

The context in Wales

Wales has long recognised the specific status of children in society, notably by incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into domestic law through the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Welsh Government and partners adopted a Child First approach to children in the justice system, advocating they should be treated as children foremost and not be defined solely by their behaviour. The Youth Justice Blueprint[12] for Wales which is jointly owned by the Welsh Government, UK Government, Youth Justice Board and Policing in Wales reinforced this in its child-centred, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) aware and trauma-informed focus. Further, the Welsh Government Programme for Government 2021-2026 sets out the ambitions for and commitments to work to support children and young people who face the greatest challenges.

In January 2024 the Welsh Government published an update on the Children's and Young People's Plan.[13] This brings together activity taking place across Welsh Government to support all children and young people in Wales. It also details how the actions we are taking are contributing to reaching our national milestones.

The youth justice system has the principle aim of preventing offending (section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998). The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 also places a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who need care and support and to provide services to encourage children not to commit offences. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to set well-being objectives, specify how they will be met and to develop services to help children to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their circumstances. Children at risk of entry to the justice system often have acute problems and vulnerabilities, which if not addressed make them susceptible to offending, re-offending, entering the adult criminal justice system and developing lifestyles which can perpetuate the continuation of inter-generational criminal behaviour.

The Future Generations Act identifies five sustainable ways of working through which preventative services can be delivered:

Long-term – Prevention activity delivered by youth justice services is integrated into the prevention landscape in Wales. It is a core element of the Welsh Government's approach to promoting the well-being of children and a childhood that does not bring them into contact with the criminal justice system. Preventative activity takes many shapes and forms and involves being able to access the rights and entitlements provided by mainstream and universal services. However, some children need targeted or specialist support to help them with their problems.

Prevention – There is considerable evidence that preventing children from entering the criminal justice system in the first place is likely to reduce the likelihood they will become involved in criminal behaviour. Children come to the attention of the criminal justice system because of problems which have arisen outside of it. The solutions

lie in providing early intervention and support, understanding and meeting their needs (particularly regarding education, health and family life), addressing their vulnerabilities (within and outside of their domestic environment), and systematically responding to prevent and protect them (and others) from harm. Positive outcomes are associated with reducing harms and vulnerabilities and providing effective (early) interventions in the family, school and community. Prevention aims to improve the quality of life and life chances.

Integration – Effective prevention requires a shared understanding that it is aiming to improve outcomes for children who face a variety of challenges. Children who are susceptible to getting into trouble with the law often have unmet needs which makes them vulnerable and likely to be known to different services. Prevention activity requires a coordinated and cohesive approach between different individuals and agencies. Services should fit the child and not the child the service.

Collaboration – Youth crime prevention requires collaboration between the youth justice service with any agency which can help a child to lead a positive lifestyle and support their family and carers to nurture this. Youth justice services often act as advocates and brokers helping children and their families to access and sustain engagement with the services they require. This involves working with schools, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), substance misuse services, Youth Work, Families First, Early Help and Children's Services.

Involvement – Children and their families/carers should be involved in decisions which affect them. They need a trusted adult in their lives who will advocate for and support them. Professional involvement should empower children to feel they have control over their lives and be enabled to pursue what matters and is meaningful to them. Engagement with children and their families should be strengths-based, focus on potentials and developing skills and opportunities, help to develop resilience, healthy lifestyles, educational attainment and assist them to see value in these actions.

The Welsh Government supports youth justice prevention activity in Wales through the Promoting Positive Engagement grant which is part of the Children and Communities (CCG) grant.[14] The CCG enables local authorities to consider how youth justice and other services can support children who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Childhood and Individual Development

Adolescent development

Children require particular support because they are still maturing into adulthood and do not have cognitive and/or emotional maturity. This is because the developing brain acts in a different way to the mature brain and development can be impacted by childhood experiences.[15,16] While positive childhood experiences can support healthy social, emotional, and cognitive development, adverse childhood experiences can affect the how the body responds to stress.[17] Potential sources of childhood adversity and trauma include what are termed Adverse Childhood Experiences (see below), which are intrafamilial events or circumstances and extrafamilial circumstances linked to structural or social inequalities, for example poverty or discrimination.

Frequent exposure to chronic, uncontrolled stress, can lead to maladaptive behaviours, including the adoption of health harming behaviours, which include anti-social behaviours. Those who have been exposed to childhood adversity and trauma can be impulsive, take risks and experience fluctuating emotions.[18] Risk taking and experimentation are part of growing up can result in involvement in the criminal justice system. For most it is transient. Adolescent anti-social and criminal behaviour is often low level, impulsive, the result of poor decision-making and being susceptible to peer and other influences. Children are not always capable of making rational decisions, regulating their emotions, or thinking about the consequences of their actions. When they get into trouble there needs to be an appropriate response[19,20] which supports the process of natural desistence, which can occur either because of maturing and growing up or because low-level contact with the criminal justice system is enough to deter them from further involvement.

Neurodivergence

Awareness of neurodivergence has increased exponentially in recent years which has resulted in growing referrals for assessment and support, with long waiting times for services in many regions. It is important to recognise some children and young people who may come into contact with youth justice may have additional needs resulting from the impact of neurodivergence such as autism or ADHD, even if not diagnosed and will require adjustments to meet their needs. Through the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme Welsh Government are seeking an integrated all age approach to recognising the impact of neurodivergence, particularly for those who may have not accessed services. The National Neurodivergence Team website[21] has resources to raise awareness and to provide advice and guidance. The Neurodivergence Ministerial Advisory Group provides the Welsh Government with advice and guidance on policy development and support.

Similarly young people with a learning disability may find themselves involved in the criminal justice system and additional care must be taken to ensure that individual needs are recognised and support provided to ensure they fully understand the situations which they may become involved with and the resulting consequences. The Learning disability Strategic Action Plan[22] was published in 2022, it includes commitments to improve individual well-being and access to advocacy and self advocacy. The Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group provides advice to the Welsh Government on improving services and support.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Public Health Wales (PHW) defines Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as traumatic events, which occur in childhood that significantly affect health and well-being. ACEs can occur because of various forms of abuse and/or neglect or be associated to the environment in which the child is living and growing up, because of domestic violence, parental separation, parental substance misuse and/or alcohol abuse and incarceration. Experiencing ACEs can have a negative effect on physical and mental health and be associated with health-harming behaviours, victimisation and involvement in the criminal justice system. There is also some evidence to suggest there are associations between serious youth violence and ACEs.[23]

Public Health Wales identifies that health, education, social, criminal justice and other services can all benefit if ACEs are prevented. This requires an understanding of what ACEs are and their impact and helping children to build the resilience to lead healthy lives.[24] Building resilience comes from forming caring relationships, which includes positive attachments to others, the presence of a trusted adult and strengthening family and wider relationships. Other factors include bolstering physical and mental well-being, self-esteem and developing social, emotional and cognitive coping and problem-solving skills. This can be achieved by forming strong bonds and relationships in families, schools, and the local community and providing opportunities for active engagement, social and emotional learning.

Ace Hub Wales[25] was established to help Wales to become more ACE aware and to provide a platform from which evidence and learning could be shared. Resources include a *Trauma and ACE (TrACE) Informed Organisations Toolkit*[26] designed to help to embed ACE awareness and trauma and ACE informed practice.

The Child Poverty Strategy for Wales[27] sets out how outcomes for children and their families can be improved and children can be supported to reach their potential.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Like the ACE Hub, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence policy development in Wales is underpinned by a trauma-informed approach. The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 ensures there is a focus across the public sector on the prevention of abuse and violence, the protection of victims and support for those affected. It places a duty on Welsh Ministers, local authorities and local Health Boards to prepare and publish strategies to end gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The *Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Blueprint*[28] will look at the needs of children and young people to ensure service responses are appropriate, harms are prevented and addressed and there is clarity and cohesion in parallel approaches to safeguarding, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Strategy set out the needs for a whole system approach to ensure we prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence, and to protect and support those who have experienced this. Adopting a Public Health approach to the work of the Blueprint ensures focus on the underlying principles, which are

to challenge public attitudes

to increase awareness in children

increased accountability for those who perpetrate violence and abuse

prioritise and focus on prevention

confident and informed workforce

provision of inclusive and accessible services that are trauma informed and needs led.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a **mandatory** element of the Curriculum for Wales, set out in the RSE Code, and is an opportunity for learners to understand and develop healthy relationships of all kinds. It is also part of a whole school approach including anti bullying and learning about violence against woman and online safety.

The *Relationships and Sexuality Education Code*[29] sets out mandatory learning for healthy relationships, safety and respect at developmentally-appropriate phases. The VAWDASV Blueprint will support the implementation of the Code.

Wales Without Violence

Preventing violence among children and young people requires collective and coordinated action. *Wales Without Violence: a shared framework for preventing violence among children and young people in Wales*[30] provides a framework to understand the key elements needed to successfully develop primary prevention and early intervention strategies to end violence among children and young people through a public health, whole-system approach.

Wales Without Violence was developed by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit and Peer Action Collective Cymru, and was informed by the views of over a thousand children, young people and professionals across Wales. It is intended to support local areas to deliver their statutory duties under the Serious Violence Duty[31] as well as guiding broader action on the prevention and early intervention of violence.

Wales Without Violence outlines nine violence prevention principles which should underpin violence prevention activity across Wales:

1. **Recognise that violence is preventable:** Violence is a public health issue. This means it can be prevented before it occurs and responded to more safely and effectively when it does happen to limit future harm.
2. **Build partnerships for prevention:** Prevention is everyone's business. We have a collective responsibility to create systemic change to prevent violence and protect people vulnerable to it.
3. **Co-produce the solutions:** Co-production allows children and young people to have their voices heard in matters that affect them. Evidence also tells us that interventions developed in partnership with communities are much more effective.
4. **Uphold children's rights:** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ensures children and young people are safe, aren't discriminated against and have what they need to survive and develop, among other protections.
5. **Take a trauma-informed approach:** Individuals, families, communities, organisations and systems should take account of the adversity and trauma that may affect someone. It's about recognising and supporting a person's strengths to overcome their experience.
6. **Use an intersectional lens:** Violence prevention work must address the multiple and intersecting inequalities that shape the social and cultural context in which it occurs.
7. **Integrate multi-agency data into decision-making:** Using data to understand patterns and trends in violence, whilst establishing robust data sharing agreements, ensures prevention efforts are targeted where they're needed most.

8. **Take an evidence-based approach:** Programmes should be evaluated to understand their implementation process and impact, with any findings shared to build the evidence base for violence prevention.
9. **Be proactive in involving communities:** It is important to engage people where they are, ensuring work is culturally informed by the participation of communities in the prevention of violence.

Further, Wales Without Violence outlines nine violence prevention strategies, spanning from the early years to early adulthood and include prevention activity which can support individuals, whole communities, and effect systemic change. You can read more about each strategy in the handbook where you can also find a theory of change which illustrates the key outcomes and impacts expected if each strategy is implemented effectively.

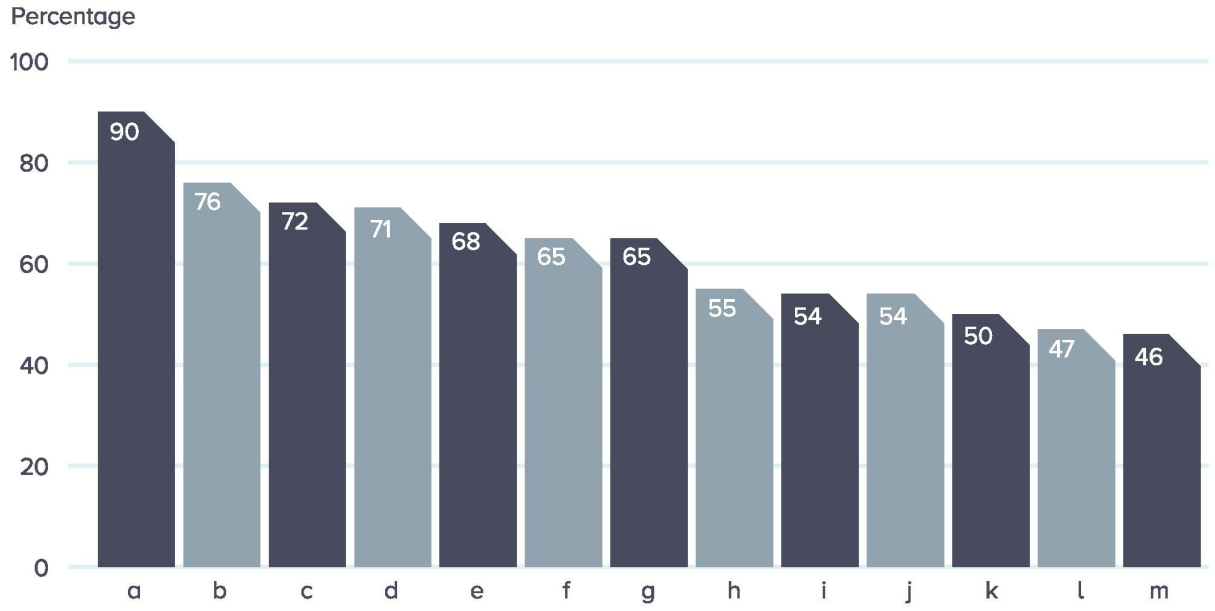
1. **Families, parenting and early years:** Providing a safe, secure and stable home environment lessens the risk of experiencing violence during childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.
2. **Employment and training:** Secure employment, and the high self-esteem and good mental health that come along with it, can lessen the risk of becoming involved in violence.
3. **Early Identification and support:** When things go wrong, children and young people must be listened to, believed and helped.
4. **Connection to safe activities and trusted adults:** Children and young people's risk of becoming involved in violence can be buffered through strong connections with caring adults (outside of parents and caregivers).
5. **Safe community environments:** Creating protective environments that allow children and young people to thrive and develop is an important strategy in promoting their physical and psychological safety, and their health and wellbeing.
6. **Schools and education:** Education settings play a crucial role in violence prevention. These are places where children and young people learn societal norms, develop a sense of belonging and acquire knowledge, skills and experience.
7. **Reducing poverty and inequality:** Reducing poverty and inequality are fundamental building blocks in preventing violence and improving safety.
8. **Policy and legislation:** A robust legislative and policy framework lays the groundwork to prevent violence and provides a structure for protecting victims, witnesses and children.
9. **Social norms and values:** This strategy focuses on strengthening social norms and values that support non-violent, respectful, nurturing, positive and equitable relationships for all children and young people.

Characteristics of children in the youth justice system

Since 2008, the youth justice sector has successfully reduced the numbers of children entering the youth justice system, and those who receive a court order and are placed in custody. Research by Aberystwyth University in 2019[32] estimated that on average 50% of youth justice service activity is prevention focused, 35% concerned with diversion and out of court disposals and 15% relates to children on court orders. This indicates there is significant activity in steering children away from criminal justice involvement.

The Youth Justice Board has published data on the needs and concerns of children (in England and Wales) sentenced by courts which gives an indicate of the breadth of problems experienced.

a	Safety and Wellbeing
b	Substance Misuse
c	Mental Health
d	Speech, Language and Communication
e	Learning and Education
f	Significant Relationships
g	Lifestyle
h	Parenting
i	Family Behaviour
j	Relations to Others
k	Accommodation
l	Physical Health
m	Care History



Youth justice services indicate that prevention caseloads can have the same characteristics as children on court orders. Needs can arise from harmful behaviour leading to safeguarding concerns, children being vulnerable to various forms of exploitation (including from gang associations and activities), sexualised behaviour, the negative effects of trauma, attachment, lack of nurture and care and having (diagnosed and undiagnosed) behavioural difficulties (Aberystwyth University 2019).

The assumption that children with the most complex needs are only those on statutory court orders is mistaken. Children who come into contact with justice services often live in the most deprived areas, where poverty is a significant factor in their lives.[33] The Welsh Government delivers a range of initiatives[34] aimed at improving the quality of children's lives and future prospects, by creating pathways out of poverty and supporting the well-being of children and their families.

Anti-social behaviour and community safety

Children whose anti-social behaviour causes problems in the community may be dealt with by neighbourhood policing or local authority anti-social behaviour teams. There should be a graduated approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour which gives children the opportunity to amend their behaviour to prevent a re-occurrence and possible escalation into the criminal justice system. This includes issuing informal warnings and talking to them (and their families) about what they are doing and its impact. Youth justice services will be involved if an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) is required, which can last for six months. This is a voluntary (non-legally binding) written agreement in which the child agrees to stop their behaviour and to receive (voluntary) support from the youth justice service, based on an assessment of their needs.

If an ABC is not effective in stopping the behaviour, the agency which has concerns (police, local authority, housing) can apply for a civil injunction. The youth justice service must be consulted in this process, and informal measures should have been explored and exhausted. The injunction will contain prohibitions, but also positive requirements to support the child to address the underlying reasons for their behaviour. A civil injunction does not result in a criminal record, although breaching the injunction is a criminal offence.

The police or local authority can apply for a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) when a child has been convicted of an offence but is also engaging in anti-social behaviour. The youth justice service must be consulted to find out their view and if this has not happened the Crown Prosecution Service should request this information. The CBO will contain prohibitions and positive requirements and can last from one to three years. Breaches are also a criminal offence.

Anti-social behaviour can also be dealt with by a Community Resolution (which is an out of court disposal) issued by the police.

Diversion and use of out of court disposals

Whereas prevention services and responses to anti-social behaviour are to prevent offending from occurring, diversionary services are directly concerned with children who have offended (usually a low level, less serious and sometimes a first-time offence). The intention is to avoid prosecution and acceleration into the criminal justice system by using out of court disposals. Decisions about what disposal should apply in what circumstances often takes place in decision-making panels involving the police and youth justice service. Children who receive an out of court disposal will be required to engage with the youth justice service on a voluntary basis (unless they receive a youth conditional caution). This involves identifying their needs, providing advice and support, helping them to understand what they have done wrong and the consequences of their actions, may contain a restorative justice element and ensuring they get any identified assistance and services from the appropriate agency.

Children in residential care can be at increased risk of police involvement in incidents which are not tolerated in the same way had the child not been in care. As a result, children can be drawn into the criminal justice system for relatively minor offences. The *All Wales Protocol: reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults*[35] identifies actions criminal justice agencies, local authorities and care providers can take to respond to incidents and divert children away from the youth justice system.

Tiers of Preventative Support

Prevention requires a co-ordinated approach which involves universal, targeted and specialist services. Prevention is best understood as a tiered approach which starts from the position of helping children to access their universal and mainstream entitlements and moves on to more targeted and specialist support should it be required.

The following model is based on work undertaken by the Criminal Justice Board for Wales.



Targeted Primary Prevention Servicesand Diversion

Diversion and use of out of court disposals for those who have committed low level offences

Early Primary Prevention Services

Targeted support for those identified as vulnerable to offending for various reasons or because of involvement in anti-social behaviour

Universal Primary Prevention Services

Universal services are available to all children which enable them to thrive and develop and prevent other problems occurring including entry into the criminal justice system

Within the context of youth crime prevention, examples of approaches which fit this approach include:

Universal Primary Prevention services

Universal and mainstream services assist children's personal and social development through formal and informal learning, access to health and well-being support and provide sport, social and other recreational opportunities and activities. These services include healthcare, education and having access to appropriate and safe play provision.

Early Primary Prevention services

Youth Justice Services: Early and targeted prevention services delivered by youth justice services to stop children entering the youth justice system, as previously described.

Stop It Now! Wales:[36] The Lucy Faithful Foundation provides a range of services and support for parents and professionals to raise awareness of child abuse and keeping children safe. This includes training, public education sessions, a toolkit for practitioners and confidential advice.

StreetGames[37] is a 'sport for development' charity who support a network of community organisations to create a positive change in the lives of young people in underserved communities through sport and physical activity. As a national partner, StreetGames receives funding from the Welsh Government, through Sport Wales, to develop sport and physical activity opportunities for under-represented groups.

Positive Futures[38] is a sport based social inclusion programme used to engage young people and support their personal, educational and social development by providing substance misuse and anti-social behaviour.

Fire and Rescue Services[39] deliver a range of programmes for children and young people on fire safety, the consequences of anti-social behaviour and helps them to develop interpersonal and vocational skills. Their flagship programmes, Phoenix and Reflect, are fully funded by the Welsh Government.

Targeted Primary Prevention Services and Diversion

Youth justice services: work with the Police, local authorities, statutory and third sector organisations to divert children who have offended from prosecution in court by using out of court disposals where appropriate, as previously described.

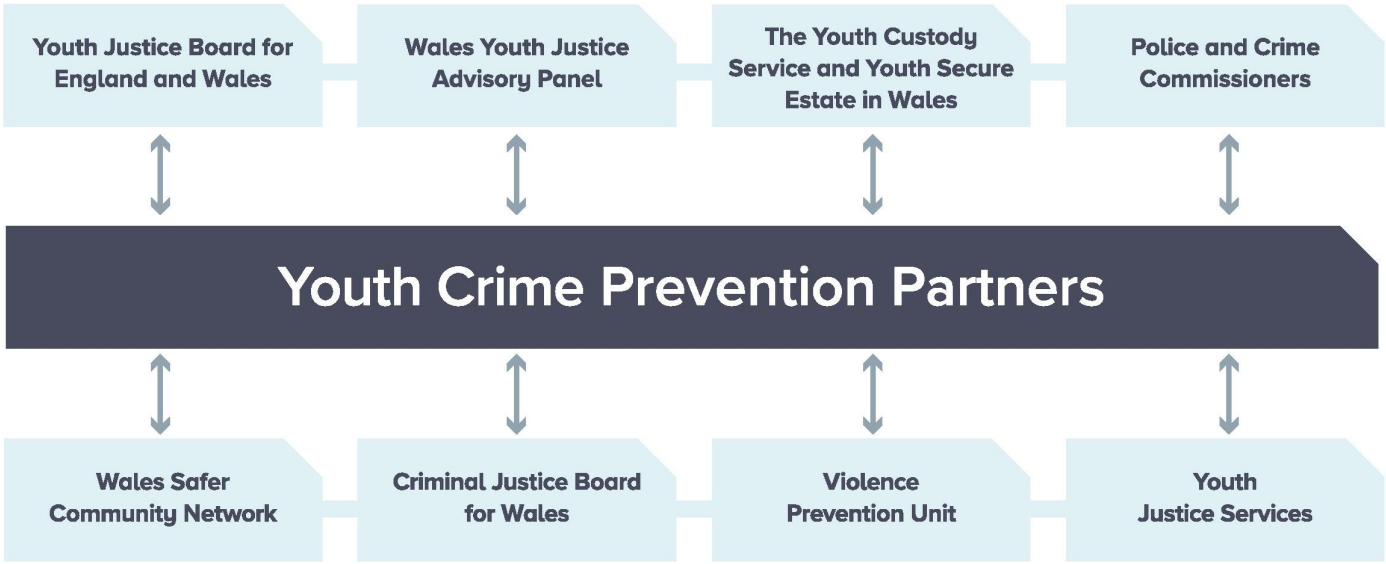
Turnaround: is a UK Government funded scheme which is being delivered by youth justice services. The programme addresses gaps in support and helps some groups of children who would not normally receive assistance from youth justice services. Eligible children are those who are subject to a No Further Action decision, a Community Resolution, who have received a first caution and who have been discharged, acquitted, or fined by a court. It also includes children who have been interviewed under caution and attended a voluntary interview. Children subject to anti-social behaviour sanctions are also eligible for Turnaround support[40] (secondary prevention).

Violence Prevention Principles

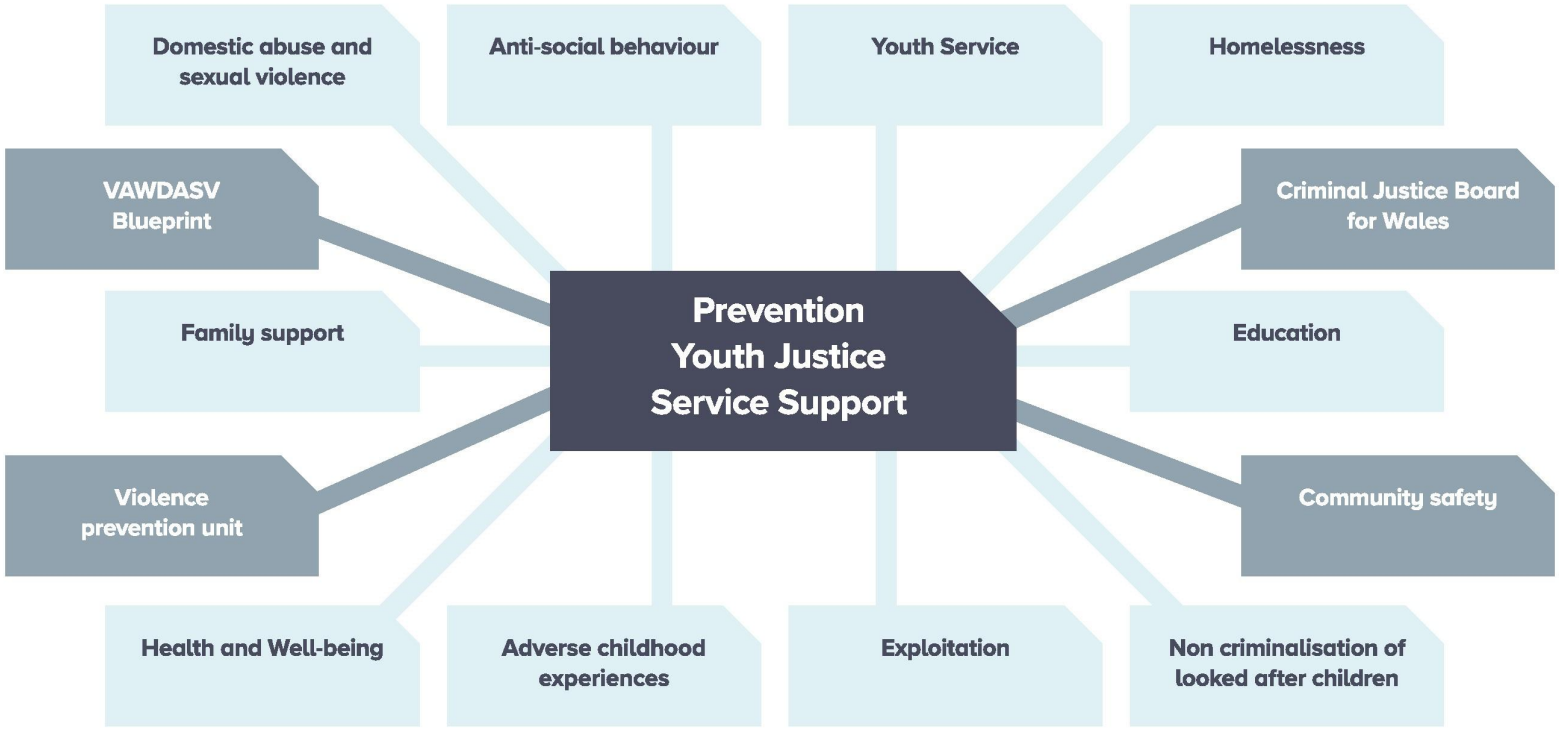
The nine strategies are the core of the Wales Without Violence Framework, spanning from early years to early adulthood and include prevention activity which can support individuals, whole communities, and even effect systemic change. You can read more about each strategy by clicking the headings below, and the theory of change illustrates the key outcomes and impacts expected if each strategy is implemented effectively.

The strategic environment

Youth justice services have a statutory composition of criminal justice (police and probation) and welfare and well-being focused services (health, education and children's social care). However, the breadth of support children and their families may require is much wider than this (see below). Additionally, the main criminal justice partners which work locally, regionally and nationally are briefly described here:



At a local level, Public Service Boards in Wales, which are made up of a range of partners, must assess the state of economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of its local authority area and publish a well-being plan with goals (reviewed annually) to address identified need. The analysis of need can look at particular categories of individuals and whilst the needs of children in the youth justice system are not explicitly mentioned, vulnerable children and children living in particular circumstances are.



On a national level the Welsh Government's Children and Young People's Plan sets out what it has and will do to support children to thrive and develop. All policy areas relating to children and young people are intended to have a direct impact on preventing children from offending. The following is a summary of activity being undertaken (policy areas already discussed in the Framework are not repeated here).

School, education, learning and attainment

School and attachment to school is one of the most important protective factors in children's lives. This comprises maintaining engagement in school/education, identifying and responding to additional learning needs with the right support, developing literacy, numeracy and skills and encouraging children to learn and attain and be able to develop vocational skills and access employment.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: The Framework[41] is a systematic way of identifying[42] and supporting 11 to 18 year olds at risk of not being in education, training or employment (NEET), who are NEET or who are at risk of homelessness It provides a mechanism for local authorities and their partners to identify vulnerable children and young people, provide appropriate support and monitor its impact to ensure positive outcomes for young people. Each local authority should have an Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator to co-ordinate and oversee the delivery of NEET prevention activity, and a Youth Homelessness Co-ordinator similarly working on the prevention of youth homelessness.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA): The EMA is an allowance of £40 per week, paid directly to the learner fortnightly, attached to an eligible learner's attendance at their learning centre. The learner must have a learning agreement with their learning centre, setting out their attendance and performance requirements to enable them to achieve their planned learning programme qualifications. EMA is a means-tested grant targeted at low income families and learners can use their EMA as it best suits their needs, for example, course materials, food, travel or extra-curricular activities. Care leavers and those in the youth justice system are exempt persons for the purpose of means-testing; the exemption also applies to those in receipt of certain benefits or who have responsibility for a child of their own. The recent independent review of the EMA Scheme[43] (published 17th July 2024) highlighted that learners and learning centres believe there to be a correlation between strong attendance and educational achievement, evidence collected suggests that the EMA allows learners to focus and concentrate on their studies with attendance being encouraged by receipt of EMA.

School Exclusions: Welsh Government guidance on school exclusions starts from a position that schools must have policies and procedures in place that promote good behaviour and prevent poor behaviour. The principles should include promoting self-discipline and respect for others, and the importance

of listening to all members of the school community, including the learners. They should be relevant to every member of the school community, including staff and parents and carers.

The decision to exclude should only be taken in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy and if allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school. For further information *see Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units.*[44]

Additional learning needs:[45] Children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for extra support, known as additional learning provision (ALP). ALP can take many forms; it may include any support that takes place inside or outside the mainstream classroom, where it is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age. Learners with ALN are given an individual development plan which describes the ALP they require and sets out who provides it.

Whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being:[46] The Whole School Approach (WSA) Framework aims to address the emotional and mental well-being needs of all children and young people, as well as school staff, as part of the whole-school community. It recognises that the school alone cannot meet all the needs of what is a complex population of young people whose needs will vary as they progress through infancy to adolescence and early adulthood. It is about building resilience amongst children and young people, as well as taking preventative action and addressing needs. We want to ensure children can understand their own emotions; are able to manage challenges within and outside of school; and to nurture learners' so they experience positive emotional and mental well-being.

Tackling Bullying, Prejudice and Harassment in Schools: The Welsh Government has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying or racism in the Welsh education system. Prejudice-related behaviour and prejudice-related bullying of any type is unacceptable in schools. The Welsh Government produced statutory anti-bullying guidance – Rights, Respect, Equality[47] – to help schools combat bullying and harassment and ensure all children feel safe, secure and supported in school.[48] The guidance sets out our expectation that prejudice-related bullying is carefully considered within a prevention strategy that expressly considers the needs of all learners with protected characteristics.

Community Focused Schools: Community Focused Schools play a prominent role in tackling the impact of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage on educational attainment. High quality learning and teaching has a major impact on the outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged learners, but the home environment and the wider community are also significant influences. By working collaboratively across school, home and the community we can support our children and young people more effectively.

Training and Employment

The Young Person's Guarantee:[49] Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) is the Welsh Government's key commitment to provide everyone aged 16 to 24, living in Wales, with support to gain a place in education or training, help to get into work or self-employment. The YPG provides an umbrella structure that sits above Welsh Government funded programmes for young people, aiming to fully utilise existing interventions, and to create a straightforward journey for young people regardless of circumstances and background.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+):[50] provides specialist employment support and mentoring for people who are under-represented in the labour market. Each young person who enrols on CfW+ will receive a youth employment mentor who will help them overcome barriers to employment and to complete any necessary training before moving on to finding employment. Mentors also help participants with soft skills as well as wider issues they may be experiencing, such as health or confidence issues.

Apprenticeships: The Policy Statement on Apprenticeships[51] sets out a strategic framework for the future of the apprenticeships programme, with a focus on addressing the challenges that individuals and employers face because of the impact of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. It outlines how apprenticeships can support recovery and optimise outcomes from government investment, ensuring we maximise social and economic benefits.

The Statement sets out three objectives and related actions, all of which align with our refreshed Economic Mission and support our Employability and Skills Plan.

Objective 1: Building resilience and sustainability.

Objective 2: Addressing skill shortages and promoting growth.

Objective 3: Inclusive apprenticeships improving people's life chances.

Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+) has seen over 10,000 starts since the beginning in 2022, demonstrating a real need for this provision. The majority of these young people are vulnerable in some way – at risk of becoming NEET (with all the health and social vulnerabilities that brings) and/or facing many barriers to accessing more 'traditional' education routes. JGW+ provides them with individually tailored support to help them into further training or work.

Careers Wales[52] provide an all age, professional, independent and impartial careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales, tailored to individual needs. Careers advisers utilise a breadth of local and national labour market information to help guide young people with careers decisions at key transition points.

Working Wales[53] is the Welsh Government's approach to delivering free, impartial, employability and careers guidance and support tailored to an individual's needs and circumstances. The service, delivered by Careers Wales, is available for individuals aged 16 and over, careers advisers undertake a needs-based assessment, which includes barriers to employment, and referring the individual to appropriate support.

Travel and Transport

The Wales Transport Strategy[54] sets the Welsh Government agenda for an accessible, affordable, safe and reliable transport system which works for all our people and communities, including children and young people. The National Transport Delivery Plan outlines the wide range of actions being taken to make this vision a reality.

In 2022 Transport for Wales (TfW), with the support of the Children's Commissioner, introduced a Children and Young People's Charter. Welsh Government have asked TfW to build on this important initiative by setting up a Children & Young People's Advisory Group, which will help us ensure their voices are heard in future decisions about transport services.

Children and young people already benefit from fare concessions on rail and bus services:

Under-5s travel for free on all National Rail services.

Under-11s can travel for free at any time on Transport for Wales-operated rail services.

Under-16s can travel for free off-peak when accompanied by a fare-paying adult.

Children under 5 travel for free on local bus services when accompanied by an adult and also receive discounted travel until their 16th birthday.

Mytravelpass: Children and young people aged 16 to 21 years of age can apply for a travel pass, which gives them discounted bus fares (by a third) on travel within Wales.

Promoting health and well-being

Children in the youth justice system can have health-related problems for various reasons. This includes not being registered with a doctor or dentist and being able to access health care when they need it. Children can put themselves in vulnerable positions because of their lifestyles particularly when under the influence of alcohol or drugs and engaging in risky behaviour e.g. driving when not qualified to do so. Emotional and mental well-being can be affected by significant past events, current circumstances and concerns about the future. Whilst some children need the support of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, others who are emotionally vulnerable may need other forms of specialist therapeutic assistance.

The **Programme for Government**[55] prioritises investment in mental health service redesign to improve prevention, tackle stigma and promote a 'no wrong door' approach to mental health support.

Healthy Child Wales Programme
The Healthy Child Wales Programme and Flying Start programme play a crucial role in improving health outcomes, promoting child health, and well-being for children in Wales.

The Healthy Child Wales Programme supports all families in Wales through a universal offer, which is tailored according to need. The programme is delivered primarily by Health Visiting Services for under 5s and School Nursing Services for school-aged children.

Welsh Government has published a new unified operating model to underpin the existing school nursing frameworks in Wales. The operating model will effectively extend the current Healthy Child Wales Programme by extending the universal public health offer to all compulsory school-aged children, regardless of setting.

Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035[56] identifies priorities as giving children the best start in life and providing a sustainable approach to ensuring that services support the development of healthy parent infant relationships and infant mental health. The strategy also recognises that those in contact with the justice system may require additional support in protecting their mental health.

Suicide Prevention and self harm strategy: delivery plan 2025 to 2028[57] it sets out a number of principles that confirm a focus on inequalities and at risk groups, multi-sectoral collaboration with the need to ensure that work is person-centred with the involvement of those with lived/living experience.

The **Nyth Nest Framework**[58] has been developed to assist Regional Partnership Boards in Wales to plan services to ensure a 'whole system' approach for developing mental health, well-being and support services for children and their families.

Welsh Government initiatives in relation to responding to **ACEs** and becoming **trauma informed** have been discussed in the relevant sections of this Framework.

Speech Language and Communication

We know that Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) development is an important indicator of children's overall wellbeing. Children's SLC skills have an impact on a wide range of outcomes including behaviour and mental health, employability, and their likelihood of entering the criminal justice system.

In response to this, the Welsh Government has prioritised children's speech, language and communication skills as they are essential for positive long-term outcomes.

The Talk With Me: Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Delivery Plan, seeks to drive improvement in the way in which children in Wales are supported to develop their SLC skills.

Talk With Me (TwM) was developed in partnership with professionals including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). This has helped us identify the actions we need to take over the coming years.

The TwM campaign centres on 10 evidence based key messages for SLC development, all based on responsive interactions between adults and children. We are investing in the development of bilingual evidence-based interventions to enable early years practitioners to provide the right support at the right time.

Children experiencing economic or home disadvantage are at higher risk of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), and supporting families to develop their children's SLC skills through responsive interactions is a key way of addressing this need.

SLC skills follow a social gradient, with children living in poverty being at higher risk of having SLC needs. By identifying and supporting these children at the earliest opportunity, we can help to narrow the disadvantage gap.

One of many resources Youth Justice Services teams can use to improve their Speech Language and Communication provision without requiring full SLT provision, including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' 'The Box' training and resources which are designed to give professionals in the justice system the ability to identify communication issues and the skills to work successfully with individuals who have such issues. We encourage teams to make full use of these resources to support their work and meet the needs of the children they work with. The 'The Box' resources could also help to establish the level of demand for SLTs within the youth justice system and support more considered work in this area in the longer term.

Welsh Government provides funding for speech and language therapists in every Flying Start[59] service in Wales, and that is consistent in every Flying Start service. With the expansion of Flying Start an increase access to SLC support for those children, young people and families has started. We aim to identify and support children and young people earlier and more effectively, because early identification of those speech and language communication needs can reduce the risk.

Substance misuse education and support

Substance use amongst children is generally associated with alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. It is often recreational use but can also be problematic. Offending may be linked to being in possession of illegal substances, offending whilst under the influence and acquisitive crime. Children can also be exploited through County Lines, which involves being coerced into storing drugs and/or transporting them to other areas.

The Welsh Government's **Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022**[60] sets out policies for raising awareness of the harms of substance misuse, actions to improve physical and mental well-being and ensuring timely access to effective, good quality services. It focuses on preventing harm, early identification, and intervention to divert children who begin to misuse substances and to support those engaged in more serious use. Through our Substance Misuse Action Fund the Welsh Government ring-fences money for children and young people within the money allocated to Area Planning Boards. Recognising the rise in demand for support, the ring-fenced allocation has increased by £1.5m in 2023-24 taking the total to £5.25m and increased by a further £1m to £6.25m in 2024-25.

Substance Misuse Treatment Framework[61] recognises the role that youth justice services play in assessing children's needs in relation to substance use and responding to them. The Framework emphasises the role of early identification and prevention and of providing harm reduction approaches and interventions. Further, children's involvement in County Lines and concerns which can arise from exploitation are also referenced.

Homelessness

Children need stable and suitable living arrangements. The quality of accommodation can affect how they live their lives and whether they have a stable base, adequate (financial and emotional) family support or have experienced multiple moves and homelessness. The Welsh Government are developing legislation focussed on earlier intervention and prevention of homelessness. The proposed legislation will assist in formalising and supporting the good prevention based work already underway in relation to youth homelessness.

The **Ending Homelessness Action Plan**[62] sets out the high level actions Welsh Government are taking to tackle and prevent homelessness. It sets out the vision for homelessness to be rare, brief and non-repeated. The plan includes youth-focused housing and support actions.

The **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** referenced on page 15 includes the prevention of youth homelessness. Local authorities have a Youth Homelessness Coordinator based in the youth service, working with their housing, education and social services colleagues to ensure those at risk of homelessness are identified early and supported.

Preventing Homelessness and Promoting Independence[63] is a flexible framework for local authorities and their partners to use to provide a planned approach to homelessness prevention and housing options for young people.

The Care leavers accommodation and support framework for Wales[64] provides guidance to improve the transition from care into independent living. The framework is designed to ensure that care leavers have the flexible support they need so that no care experienced person falls through the cracks. Young care leavers need support from their corporate parents throughout and beyond this transition.

The Youth Homelessness Innovation Fund aims to increase the housing and support options available for young people. The projects are specific to vulnerable young people aged 16-25 at risk of becoming homeless or currently homeless including but not limited to, care leavers, disabled young people and those who have previously been in the youth justice system. The evaluation of the youth homelessness innovation fund includes case study examples.[65]

The Housing Support grant[66] is allocated to local authorities to commission services to prevent homelessness and support people to have the capability, independence, skills and confidence to access and/or maintain a stable and suitable home, including for young people aged 16-25 at risk of becoming homeless or currently homeless, and pre tenancy work with individuals under 16.

Family Support

Families have an extremely influential role in bringing up children and supporting them to lead purposeful and fulfilling lives and ensuring they receive good quality, nurturing care. Adverse childhood experiences can be linked to the quality of care received and whether home is a safe and secure base.

Parents may require early intervention universal or targeted parenting support[67] to meet children's needs, manage challenging behaviour and in developing effective parenting skills. Social services may also be involved if there are safeguarding or child protection concerns.

Families First[68] is designed to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families, with emphasis placed on early help, prevention, and providing support for the whole family. A key element of Families First is the

Team Around the Family which brings together a range of professionals to help a family address the challenges they face. The programme works with a range of partners including youth work providers, police community support officers, youth offending teams and community rehabilitation services. Families First support families to build resilience, giving them the skills to manage any future difficulties that life may bring.

Each local authority in Wales has a **Family Information Service**[69] – the front door of the authority for parents and families looking for advice, information and signposting on a range of services available within their local area.

Family Ties for children with parents in the justice system – Under the Women's Justice Blueprint published in 2019, Welsh Government jointly fund with HMPPS in Wales, the Visiting Mums Service. The service, run by Prisoner Advice Care Trust (PACT) is operational at both HMP Eastwood Parc and HMP Styal and supports Welsh women who are serving sentences. Visiting Mum identifies women who are at risk of losing contact with their children and offers specialist support to preserve and strengthen family ties. Mothers are invited to engage in parenting and relationships programmes and to receive support from the team, which may include assistance engaging with social workers and other services.

The maintenance of positive familiar relationships between mothers in prison and their children is crucial for both mother and child. These relationships help aid women's rehabilitation, reduce anxiety in prison, reduce self-harm and contribute to good order and discipline in prison. These relationships also have a significant impact on the children's emotional wellbeing, their attainment at school and the risk of going on to become offenders themselves. Half of women in prison are mothers, leaving children the hidden victims of separation, family breakup and loss of the family home. The Visiting Mums Service run through the pandemic and still provided specialist support to Welsh women serving sentences. During COVID-19 digital **'purple visits'** were introduced in place of 'face to face' visits. This ensured continued and remote contact between mothers in the criminal justice system and their child/children could still take place.

Welsh Government jointly chair the Wales Family Connect Group, with HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales. The Group brings together leads from across the justice system to discuss and improve the support available to children of people in the justice system.

Parenting. Give it time provides positive parenting expert information, advice and support to parents with children 0-18 years of age on all aspects of parenting. More specifically, it includes information and resources for the older child including 'Top Tips for parents with Teenagers' and 'Positive Parenting Top tips', and under the Supporting You section, resources to support the parent and carer, including

'Looking after yourself and manage stress', and 'Taking care of you and your family' for parents and grandparents dealing with difficult circumstances.

Regional provision for care experienced children and young people with complex needs: Welsh Government's Improving Outcomes for Children Programme focuses on the changing nature of placements for children with the most complex needs, including placements in secure accommodation. There are a number of strands to this, including developing alternatives to secure accommodation, and working with residential and foster care providers, the police and CAMHS on approaches to managing difficult and potentially damaging behaviour.

As part of the general duty to secure sufficient provision to meet the needs of care experienced children, Local Authorities must consider the need for secure accommodation and alternatives to secure accommodation. Given the specialist nature of these placements, and the fluctuating population in secure children's homes, Local Authorities are expected to develop regional approaches to this. The code of practice for Local Authorities makes it clear that secure placements should only be made where absolutely necessary, and where other alternatives have been considered. It must be a positive intervention and be made on the basis that it is the best option to meet the particular needs of that child.

Regional provision for children with complex needs is intended to prevent escalation to and facilitate de-escalation from secure welfare and tier 4 mental health inpatient provision. In this context 'complex needs' is defined as high end or severe emotional, behavioural and mental health needs requiring specialist, multi-agency care and support in a home setting which is jointly commissioned by the region's statutory partners. In addition, children and young people with complex needs are often on the periphery of justice settings or are known to police. Therefore, children's services should also be looking to support these children with alternative placements to de-escalate their behaviours and prevent entry into the justice system.

Youth Work

Young people need to be able to engage in positive activities in their local area and be provided with opportunities for informal learning and education. They require places they can voluntarily access, where they will receive informal help and support. Youth workers provide invaluable advice and guidance, deliver outreach services to get to know the children in their local area and encourage them to engage with the service. Several youth justice services in Wales are co-located with Youth Work services within local authorities, which enables young people to access this mainstream provision. Changes to workforce registration requirements introduced in 2023 stipulate that all paid, qualified youth workers and youth support workers, regardless of setting, must register with the Education Workforce Council.

The **National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2019** sets out the vision for youth work in Wales. Its aims are that young people are assisted to thrive; that youth work is accessible and inclusive; voluntary and professional staff are supported to improve their practice; youth work is valued and understood; and there is a sustainable model of delivery.

Work is underway, under advice from the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board, to develop the recommendations made by the Interim Youth Work Board in its report 'Time to deliver for young people in Wales',[70] aimed at achieving a sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales. This will include steps to support and strengthen partnerships between stakeholders to improve the planning and delivery of youth work.

Community safety

Community safety is a partnership approach to reduce crime and disorder in local communities. The Morgan Report introduced the idea of 'community safety' by taking a 'holistic' local approach to crime reduction and prevention. This was expanded within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, giving key agencies a legal duty to work together to address crime and improve public safety rather than police alone.

The terms 'community safety' and 'safer communities' are often used interchangeably; however, the latter generally reflects the broader ambitions for citizens in Wales. Much of the recent work of 'safer communities' in Wales has been driven by the Welsh Government's Working Together for Safer Communities Review 2017. The review created a vision that safer communities will exist in Wales where 'every community is strong, safe and confident in a manner that provides equality of opportunity, social justice, resilience and sustainability for all'.

As a result of the report, the Wales Safer Communities Network was created as the strategic voice for all those involved in community safety across Wales. The Network was established through a joint approach between Welsh Government, WLGA and Policing in Wales to foster safer communities by promoting and encouraging partnership working and co-ordinates work at local, regional and national levels.

The Safer Communities Network for Wales[71] is designed to coordinate work on community safety across Wales – championing the importance of community safety and coordinating work at local, regional and national level. The Network is hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association.

Appendix One: Youth Crime Prevention Partners

There is a strong culture of partnership working in Wales which encompasses criminal justice agencies, statutory services and third sector organisations. Key justice partners and partnerships in Wales are as follows:

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is a non-departmental public body responsible for overseeing the youth justice system in England and Wales. It is sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and has several statutory functions, which include advising the Secretary of State for Justice, government departments, local authorities, those working in youth justice services and other organisations about how well the system is operating by monitoring youth justice service activity. One of its priorities is to pursue a vision for a Child First youth justice system. For further information Youth Justice Board for England and Wales – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Youth Justice Services

There are 17 youth justice services in Wales (covering the 22 local authorities) which work with children on the cusp of entering the system, those who are subject to out of court disposals, on statutory court orders, in custody on resettlement from custody and in transition to adult services (notably the Probation Service). Youth justice services are required to produce an annual youth justice plan and to work within the strategic and operational framework of *Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System.*[72] Both the Plan and Standards require there to be local strategies and partnership arrangements to prevent children from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. Details of the youth justice services in Wales can be found here Youth justice services: Wales – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Youth Custody Service and Youth Secure Estate in Wales

The Youth Custody Service[73] is part of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). It has operational responsibility for the youth secure estate in England and Wales, which accommodates children and young people aged 18 years and under. There are two secure establishments in Wales; Hillside Secure Children's Home which is run by Neath Port Talbot local authority and HMP Young Offender Institute Parc (in Bridgend) which accommodates boys aged 15 to 17 years of age and is operated by G4S.

Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel

The Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP) is a national forum which brings together strategic leads with a shared interest in youth justice. It is jointly convened by the Welsh Government and comprises representatives from the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), HMPPS, HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), the Association of Directors of Social Services, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, SOLACE and YOT Managers Cymru.

Police and Crime Commissioners

Police and Crime Commissioners are responsible for making sure that police in their area meet the needs of the local community. Commissioners must consult on and produce a Police and Crime plan which outlines their priorities and how they will be addressed in partnership with others. Police and Crime Plans for each of the four police forces in Wales indicate a commitment to support, protect and divert children from crime, to be trauma-informed and develop child centred policing.

Violence Prevention Unit

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (www.violencepreventionwales.co.uk) comprises members from police forces, the South Wales PCC, Public Health Wales, HMPPS, Home Office Immigration and the voluntary sector. It takes a public health approach to preventing violence, by understanding its causes based on evidence and developing interventions to tackle it based on this information.

Criminal Justice Board for Wales

The Criminal Justice Board for Wales brings together criminal justice partners including HMPPS, HMCTS, the YJB, Police services in Wales, Chief Constables in Wales, PCCs in Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association, voluntary sector bodies, the Victims Commissioner and YOT Managers Cymru. Its purpose is to reduce crime and make communities safer by achieving better outcomes and experiences for those who encounter the criminal justice system whether as victims, witnesses or offenders.

Endnotes

1 Research and reports | UNICEF

2 Safeguarding Wales

3 Final Report: Prevention and Diversion Project – Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (February 2023) – Youth Justice Resource Hub (yjresourcehub.uk)

4 ASBCPA 2014 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk) and YOT_Practitioners_Guide_Injunctions_to_prevent_gang_related_violence.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

5 The Criminal Justice Ant-Racism Plan for Wales Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

6 Anti-racist Wales Action Plan | GOV.WALES

7 Resources

8 Trauma-informed practice – HM Inspectorate of Probation

9 Trauma-Informed Wales (traumaframeworkcymru.com)

10 Home – All Wales Traumatic Stress Quality Improvement Ini (nhs.wales)

11 Public Health Wales and Bangor University (2021) *Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and Trauma Informed Approaches in Youth Justice Services Wales: An evaluation of the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) Project*. Wrexham: Bangor University ResearchGate

12 Supporting young people who offend | GOV.WALES

13 Children and young people's plan | GOV.WALES

14 Children and Communities Grant programmes – ExChange (exchangewales.org)

15 Resources

16 House of Commons – The treatment of young adults in the criminal justice system – Justice Committee

17 Evidence shows too many young people in the criminal justice system suffer from violence, poverty, and abuse growing up

18 Beyond Youth Custody – Developing best practice in the resettlement of young people leaving custody

19 Academic insights – HM Inspectorate of Probation

20 The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public | BASW

21 National Neurodivergence Team website https://autismwales.org/en/

22 Learning disability strategic action plan 2022 to 2026 | GOV.WALES

23 e-space

24 Resilience - Understanding the Interdependence Between Individuals and Communities – World Health Organization Collaborating Centre On Investment for Health and Well-being

25 Home – ACE Hub Wales

26 TrACE Toolkit – ACE Hub Wales

27 Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024 | GOV.WALES

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29 Curriculum for Wales: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code | GOV.WALES

30 Perspectives of Children and Young People – Wales Without Violence

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34 Breaking the links between poverty and offending – Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (cycj.org.uk)

35 All Wales Protocol Reducing the criminalisation of children in care and care leavers: all Wales protocol | GOV.WALES

36 Supporting practitioners – Stop It Now

37 Our Strategy – StreetGames

38 Newport Live | Positive Futures

39 Youth Interventions – South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (southwales-fire.gov.uk)

40 Guidance and regulation – GOV.UK

41 Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

42 Youth engagement and progression framework: early identification

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