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Case management guidance

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How to work with children

Advice and information on how to work with children in contact with the youth justice system. It covers building relationships, supervision, developing interventions, meeting different needs, safeguarding, work with victims, restorative justice and dealing with non-engagement and breach.

The role of the YJS case manager

All children should have a designated youth justice service (YJS) worker who is responsible for:

- engaging the child and building a positive relationship

- ensuring assessments are undertaken, kept up to date and regularly reviewed
- ensuring any specific requirements of the court are addressed in the order, or if adjustments need to be made, taking appropriate action (e.g. variation of the order; change activity within the scope of the order)
- working with the child and their parents or carers to plan engagement and work to be undertaken
- providing supervision through regular and agreed contact and being accessible to the child (and their parents or carers) throughout the period of contact with the YJS (includes maintaining contact with children who are remanded or sentenced to custody)
- reviewing the progress of the order when there is significant change (and at least every three months) with the child (and their parents or carers) and adjusting if a re-assessment or re-formulation of plans is necessary to achieve positive outcomes
- managing transitions (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-manage-transitions) to adult or other services
- managing closure of the order/contact with the child (including early revocation of the order because of positive progress made). In doing so ensuring that the child has their needs and rights met as well as any on-going support required to maintain progress beyond the end of an intervention

If the child is placed out of area, there will also be specific considerations depending on:

- the reason for the placement
- its likely length
- the child's status in the justice system
- whether caretaking arrangements are necessary for delivery of the court order

Children who are looked after by their local authority remain the responsibility of their home

YJS, but day-to-day delivery of interventions and support may be provided in the area in which they are living. More information is within the case responsibility (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/case-responsibility) section.

Working with children should be a dynamic process as circumstances, problems and positive events may affect the child's circumstances and needs. Your aim should always be to:

- help the child to develop a positive self-identity
- encourage desistance by assisting them to engage with individuals and agencies who can support them
- undertake strengths-based work to help the child to develop a positive view of themself and their place in society; and a safe lifestyle

The relationship you build with the child will be pivotal to this. In addition to your relationship with the child you must also build a relationship with the parents or carers. This will start from the initial assessment and be maintained throughout the child's contact with the YJS. The parents/carers understanding and involvement will be crucial to the child's success. More information is within how to support parents and carers in the youth justice system (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-support-parents-and-carers-of-children-in-the-youth-justice-system). This includes advice on how to work in a whole family way (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-support-parents-and-carers-of-children-in-the-youth-justice-system#whole-family-way).

You will undertake some of the work directly but will also ensure that the support and activities being provided by others are co-ordinated and delivered (e.g. the different requirements of a Youth Rehabilitation Order).

Information on the conditions and requirements that can be attached to a Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) is in the how to use reports section (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-

management-guidance/how-to-use-reports#requirements-youth-rehabilitation-order)

You will need to develop relationships with different services to obtain information to inform assessments and plans; or to gain access to services for children (or help them to re-connect to services previously providing support). To do this you will need a good knowledge of the resources available, such as:

- resources within the YJS
- services provided by statutory bodies
- programmes and services run by voluntary and community organisations
- youth services
- education and other provision in custody

You should be prepared to act as an advocate and broker on behalf of the child and ensure that they are able to access the services and support they require to meet their rights and needs. This will also reduce the likelihood of offending. This may be a central role that you play and require commitment and perseverance. There is a range of resources and tools available on the Youth Justice Resource Hub (https://yjresourcehub.uk/).

How to build a relationship with a child

The basis of any work with children should start with the development of a relationship with them. The care and concern you demonstrate will contribute to them feeling valued and developing a positive pro-social identity. To do this it is important to:

- demonstrate empathy
- respond to their needs and what is important to them
- respect their individuality

- not define them by their previous behaviour or offences, or their current behaviour which might limit future possibilities

Children may have been negatively affected by relationships but can be supported to lead more positive lifestyles through trusted, quality relationships. You can build trust by being reliable and showing respect, for instance by being on time and keeping any promises you have made.

You should be aware that children in the justice system may have experienced events which have impacted on their behaviour and are associated with experiencing trauma. Adverse childhood experiences can relate to personal experiences of abuse (verbal, physical and sexual) and neglect or they can relate to growing up in an environment where a child may have felt unsafe and uncared for due to the behaviour of their parents or other individuals living in the same household (e.g. because of family conflict, domestic violence or parental inability to properly care for them). Other experiences which may be linked to trauma include bereavement, involvement in, or witnessing gang violence and various forms of exploitation. Children may also have had negative experiences with authority figures, including labelling and discrimination.

For more information, read how to work in a whole family way (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-support-parents-and-carers-of-children-in-the-youth-justice-system#whole-family-way).

Trauma can have a substantial impact on children's ability to form positive attachments and bonds with others. They may find it difficult to establish a trusting relationship with the professionals supporting and assisting them. The first stage when working with children who have experienced trauma is to recognise the possibility that they may have experienced it and to work with them in a way that can help them to:

- experience the youth justice service as a safe and secure base
- develop and maintain a trusting relationship with those working with them
- build on this relationship and develop social bonds with others and in their community

Building a trusting relationship may not be easy and will require time and perseverance. It is also likely to require self-reflection on your part and understanding as to why a child might respond in a particular way. The Youth Justice Resource Hub (https://yjresourcehub.uk/relationship-based-practice-guidance-a-trauma-and-ace-trace-informed-approach-cwm-taf-pathfinder-july-2021/) contains materials to assist in developing relationship-based practice. Trust will include setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries, not promising confidentiality if the child confides concerning information to you, responding to their concerns and taking them seriously.

The Youth Justice Institute has developed a relationship-based practice framework (https://youthjusticeinstitute.co.uk), an evidence-based model designed to promote desistance with children, including, promoting trust and problem solving.

When contacts need to be face-to-face

You will need to consider how you maintain contact with the child, engage with and supervise them. The nature of the contact will be determined by the needs of the child and how best to safeguard both the child and others. It is likely that this will be a blended approach, with both face-to-face meetings and contact via technology and social media. Face-to-face contact however remains essential and will help you to:

- assess the child's home circumstances and living arrangements
- check for welfare and ensure public protection
- build a relationship and undertake specific work

However, the scope to work with them in other ways should also be explored. This should depend on their preferences and be balanced against the need to manage any public protection concerns and the amount of contact which is appropriate in each circumstance. The aim should be to develop an appropriate blend of contact that is effective and safe for the child, victim and community. Particular consideration should be given to how children who have committed internet enabled offences are supported.

Initial assessments of the child's and family situation should ascertain the equipment to which they have access, how comfortable the child feels with this type of contact and how they are able to engage with it when planning contacts. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that youth justice services can successfully engage with children in a variety of different ways using different technology (e.g. Zoom, WhatsApp, FaceTime etc). This offers the scope to plan interventions using online resources such as YouTube and to record messages and advice which can be sent to children and their families.

How to involve children in the planning process

You should ensure that children are active participants in developing the intervention plan. It should be a learning process which enables them to:

- think about how they would like to be in the future
- consider their goals and aspirations
- develop personal competence (e.g. self-regulation and motivation)
- acquire the skills necessary to achieve this

As part of the maturation process children need processes and support to help them to navigate to these end results and acquire a pro-social identity.

You should engage the child from the outset to think about their plan, the barriers in their lives and how

these can be overcome. The way they respond to an intervention can depend on a range of factors including:

- previous experiences of the justice system
- their motivation; their support networks and associations
- learning styles
- other identified challenges

You should actively encourage children to participate in the development of their plan, to review what is and is not working and why. They should be empowered to try and find their own solutions and to identify and pursue their own goals and aspirations.

Parents and carers should be actively involved to develop a shared understanding of the situation and how they can best support their child's progress. More information is within how to support parents and carers in the youth justice system (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-support-parents-and-carers-of-children-in-the-youth-justice-system).

You should always provide the child with a copy of their plan so they understand its contents, can see their contributions reflected and to reduce potential anxieties about what they may be asked to do. This might not be in a written format and could be pictorial, or an audio recording – you should be led by what best meets the needs of the child. Some examples of materials for children are on the Youth Justice Resource Hub (https://yjresourcehub.uk/?swp_form%5Bform_id%5D=1&s=materials+for+children).

How to develop an intervention plan

An intervention plan is required for all children on court orders or otherwise supervised by a youth justice service (YJS). The plan translates the assessment of what the issues might be for a child into what needs to be done to tackle these and the action required.

The plan is produced by the child with their YJS worker. It will identify all actions required to meet the child's needs and any other actions which can support the child to lead a positive and safe lifestyle. The YJS worker should review the plan at regular intervals with the child (and their parents or carers) and amend as necessary.

Once the Explanations and Conclusions section of the AssetPlus Framework has been completed, the intervention plan can be developed. This requires judgement about:

- what the child feels is important to them
- how needs will be addressed
- what conditions of the order must be met (and how)
- how relationships will be developed to give the child a sense of security with the YJS
- the length of the order; what to do when and how activities are prioritised
- how strengths-based activities will feature in the interventions delivered
- whether the child needs to be referred to an external agency for specific help and support (or whether an existing referral needs to be followed up)
- whether there are any practical problems which need to be resolved to help the child to develop stability

AssetPlus also asks what can be done to help the child to develop goals and life opportunities and how they will:

- not offend
- protect everyone from harm
- keep safe
- repair harm, encourage a sense of closure and help the child move forwards (through restorative justice)

The intervention plan needs to:

- relate to issues identified in the assessment
- address any requirements of the court
- identify with the child (and their parents or carers) what would help them and provide them with opportunities to make changes in their lifestyle for themselves
- build on positive factors/relationships in their lives
- encourage pro-social attitudes, values and relationships
- not interfere with attendance in education, training and employment
- enable the child and their parent or carer to see the progress that the child is making

The plan should also cover the needs of parents and siblings, for more information, read how to work in a whole family way (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-support-parents-and-carers-of-children-in-the-youth-justice-system#whole-family-way).

You should always discuss culture, heritage, background and any experiences of discrimination and racial abuse and record these when planning interventions (and in delivery and review of progress made). You should consider:

- how these factors may have contributed to the child's offending
- the impact on them, how they might be limiting opportunities
- how structural barriers can be overcome

Your plan should take account of children's life experiences and personal circumstances to ensure that wider needs are addressed.

How to complete the Pathways and Planning section of AssetPlus

The Pathways and Planning section of AssetPlus highlights the areas in the assessment where further action is identified. The intervention plan should address each of these and integrate actions which:

- build on strengths and create resilience
- support desistance
- protect the public

You should give particular consideration to children who have experienced problems with attachment and trauma when developing their intervention plan. However, the principles of trauma-informed working apply to all children irrespective of their background. You should consider how you can incorporate the following when planning and delivering interventions:

- safety: assist the child to feel physically and emotionally safe and remain so
- trustworthiness: expectations are made clear and are consistently practiced helping to build relations with the child
- choice: children's preferences are considered in routine practices and crisis situations wherever possible
- participation: input from children is incorporated in decision-making
- empowerment: opportunities to maximise children's empowerment are identified, recognising strengths and protective factors, and building skills to assist them in the future

What children say about YJS supervision

Children identify that they want a good relationship with their worker. This was evidenced in the evaluation of the enhanced case management approach (https://gov.wales/evaluation-enhanced-case-management-approach-0). You must be someone they can trust, who has empathy, who is reliable, does not let them down and who helps them to explore their interests and what they might do in

life. They want to feel cared for and valued as individuals. They also want to be able to feel they can manage what they are being asked to do. This is helped by not being overwhelmed by multiple professionals and numerous appointments.

In its thematic inspection of the experiences of Black and Mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/document/a-thematic-inspection-of-the-experiences-of-black-and-mixed-heritage-boys-in-the-youth-justice-system/), HMI Probation identified that the skills, understanding, knowledge and integrity of the worker and the relationship they form with children are the most important factors in promoting meaningful and effective engagement and helping children to feel listened to and understood.

How to prioritise and sequence work with the child

When intervention planning, you should sequence the work in the most effective and manageable way for the child. This should take account of what the child requires at any stage of their contact with the youth justice service (YJS), any stress or difficulties they may be experiencing and the help they require to develop structure and routine throughout their period of contact with the YJS. You should consider:

- the child's developmental needs, maturity, ability for cognitive engagement
- their learning style, speech, language and communication needs, learning difficulties and disabilities
- experience of trauma and evidence of harm to themselves (because of adverse childhood experiences, exploitation etc) or others (public protection concerns)
- the type and severity of the crime committed
- working with the child to identify their skills, strengths and goals
- prioritising actions that will be most effective in meeting their needs to lessen the likelihood of

offending (may not always be offence focused work)

- developing a collaborative approach by undertaking joint activities to support relationship building and learning
- providing choice, where possible and appropriate
- how the child's engagement can be sustained
- not overloading the child with services, workers and activities
- assessing where the child is in their understanding of their behaviour and willingness to engage

Other factors which are relevant when considering how best to sequence interventions are:

- ensuring the number of workers and activities the child is expected to engage with is manageable for them
- carefully considering how new workers are introduced, particularly if the child has difficulty forming attachments
- providing a consistent point of contact for the child and ensuring they know who they can talk to if they are experiencing difficulties with anything they are being asked to do

When finalising the plan questions to consider are:

"Is the plan proportionate to the gravity of the offending behaviour and the likely length of involvement with the YJS?"

"Does it address key issues and concerns in respect of public protection?"

"Does it address key issues in relation to the safety and well-being of the child?"

"Does it fully take into account the child's diversity needs and protected characteristics and how responses should be individually tailored?"

"Is it realistic and achievable?"

"Is it sufficiently tailored to the child's needs and meaningful to them?"

"Will it help the child to develop a pro-social identity?"

How to support children's participation and co-creation

The child's right to participate in decisions which affect them is one of the guiding principles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/). The Convention is explicit in stating that this right extends to children involved in administrative and judicial proceedings indicating that children should be able to express their views in all matters which affect them.

This can be interpreted as throughout their engagement with the criminal justice system and when working with youth justice services (YJSs). This gives children the right to be involved in planning and reviewing actions which directly affect them as individuals. Co-creation means designing a project or activity jointly with children and is a further element of participatory practice.

Assessing and working with children should be a participatory process in which the child is encouraged to identify what matters and is meaningful to them. They should develop aspirations and be supported to achieve their goals to lead happy, healthy and safe lives. Participation can occur in different ways:

Understanding

It is important to ensure that children understand the processes they are involved in (in the police station, at court, under the supervision of the YJS and whilst in custody), are supported throughout those processes to be able to make informed choices about their future and are afforded continuous opportunities to express their views and feelings.

Feedback

You should ask children for feedback on the service they have received from the YJS, for example by using the 'What Do You Think' element of AssetPlus or using other bespoke self-reporting tools for children in the youth justice system. The YJS may also want to consider other ways in which it can involve and consult with children about the services they have received to inform future direction and develop a feedback cycle so that children can see that their views matter and are considered, or where this is not possible to understand the reasons why.

Information

You should explore ways in which the child can provide information to the YJS management board so that it is able to directly hear from and engage with children about their involvement with the service, their priorities and to draw on their expertise.

Opportunities

You should provide enhanced opportunities for participation where children can share their knowledge and observations, for example by contributing to the design and development of a service or activity, information which is provided to children about processes or activities, participating in an event the YJS has organised or taking part in recruitment activity.

Opportunities for participation should not be limited by the perceived constraint that children in the criminal justice system have little or no choice and the child/worker relationship is not equitable. Whilst there are activities children must undertake (and understand the reasons why) and conditions of orders which have to be met, there are always opportunities to explore what can be done to jointly co-produce activity with children to give them a sense of agency, identity and empowerment.

HMI Probation produced supporting children's meaningful participation in the youth justice system (https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/document/supporting-childrens-meaningful-participation-in-the-youth-justice-system/).

This document provides useful information including a 'How To' guide for co-creating children's meaningful participation in a youth justice setting.

Peer Power developed this suite of resources (https://www.peerpower.org.uk/resources/), including an exploration of participation in youth justice (explaining some of the barriers and enablers), what children feel are priorities for youth justice services regarding participation and co-creation, a resource pack explaining how to develop practice and a short series of films highlighting the same.

How work should be undertaken

Most work undertaken with children is on an individualised and bespoke one-to-one basis. A plan should be developed which takes into account the uniqueness of each child and factors identified in the assessment. Different interventions are required depending on the child's needs:

- the identification of specialist help and support (for example, from substance misuse services, CAMHS or other health services which provide emotional and mental health support)
- activities and engagement which will support and encourage desistence by helping the child to understand and learn about the impact of their offending on themselves and others
- engagement in mainstream community activities and with community groups which can broaden horizons, offer a sense of belonging, help children to work towards their future goals and aspirations and promote social inclusion
- help to build strong and supportive relations with others which can assist the child develop positive purpose, identity, beliefs and values

Proposed activities should be discussed with and explained to the child. They should be encouraged to set their own goals and objectives and where possible and appropriate, exercise choice so that activities assist them to acquire a positive sense of direction in life.

The content of the intervention should have relevance to the child's life, and methods should be used which engage, interest, motivate and are meaningful to them and enable them to participate fully. Materials and methods should reflect:

- different stages of development (including the impact of trauma)
- maturity
- disability
- sex
- sexuality
- community, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Successful outcomes depend on children being motivated to take up and engage with interventions. To actively involve and engage children, workers should:

- be aware of the child's perceptions
- communicate with them in an appropriate way
- have clear values and purpose
- be consistent, reliable and predictable in interactions with them
- give consistent feedback
- be solution-focused and encourage small steps towards change
- model problem-solving and pro-social behaviour
- be open, active, optimistic and realistic

There are a wide range of tools, techniques and approaches which can be used. For example:

- Using an identity lens: constructive working with children in the criminal justice system (https://www.nacro.org.uk/wp-

content/uploads/2020/01/Using-an-identity-lens-toolkit.pdf)

The Youth Justice Resource Hub (https://yjresourcehub.uk/) also contains details of interventions which have been found to be effective in the sector.

How to deliver group work and group interventions

Consideration may be given to delivering some work on a group basis, for certain types of activities e.g. learning through sport and undertaking practical activities.

If you choose to deliver directly to groups of children, you will need to have processes in place to manage the composition of the groups and how children will be identified who might benefit from this approach. Age, maturity, sex, knowledge of each other (because of gang and post code tensions) and the types of offences committed would need to be assessed when putting a group together, so that children feel safe with each other and can work in an environment which promotes learning and engagement.

Where group activity takes place in localities which are affected by gangs and affiliations to specific groups you should give special consideration to ensure the safety of all concerned. Venues should be accessible and safe, with risk assessments in place which follow local procedures and safe working practices. This includes whether weapons detection systems are in use and how that is communicated to the child.

Group activities should be scheduled at a time which does not clash with education or training activity with which the child is already engaged and any curfew requirements they may have. Attention should be given to how children will get to and from the venue safely.

When to visit children at the accommodation in which they are living

Face-to-face visits with children at the accommodation they are living in can:

- be part of contact arrangements
- be used to promote engagement
- respond to well-being concerns
- be part of risk management arrangements for serious harm and/or safeguarding

Visits inside the property may not always be appropriate, for example where there is a risk of harm to workers due to parents refusing admission or illness in the household. Visits could, however, take place outside of the property, giving consideration to confidentiality and the nature of the discussion with the child (and their parents/carers) etc.

Face-to-face visits should be risk assessed to ensure the safety and well-being of all concerned and be authorised by a manager in the youth justice service (YJS). You should be familiar with the local authority/YJS policy in relation to home visits, lone working and safe working practices in the community. This includes public health advice about social distancing and other health concerns.

When a concern arises from a home visit, workers should know what action to take and who to escalate them to. For example, if it relates to safeguarding, a referral may need to be made to children's services.

Where needed, you should collaborate with housing services to ensure appropriate accommodation. You may support children and families with housing applications and liaison with landlords as appropriate. If a child's housing situation deteriorates, you may intervene to avoid housing instability.

How to work with other agencies when developing intervention plans

You have a responsibility to arrange and co-ordinate services and plans to ensure that all work with children (and parents or carers) has the best possible chance of success. At the same time, it should ensure that children and their families are not overloaded with different workers and competing demands. This is likely to overwhelm and demotivate the child and their parents or carers and decrease the likelihood of success. You should be familiar with the referral criteria and pathways into different services.

If work is being delivered on behalf of the youth justice service (YJS), the case manager should monitor service delivery with the provider to ensure that:

- they are delivering what was specified in the intervention plan
- the child is attending as required
- the work remains relevant, particularly if the child's circumstance, situation and response changes

If intervention plans are complex or have multiple components, such as combinations of criminal justice, health, safeguarding and welfare elements, it may be helpful to convene a multi-agency meeting or to discuss the child at any multi-agency panels or meetings the YJS already attends/hosts. This is to ensure that information is shared across agencies, collective actions are agreed, duplication is avoided and there is a clear joint plan for the child.

For further information, please read:

- How to manage Multi Agency Arrangements
- How to safeguard children in the youth justice system
- How to manage the likelihood of harm through multi agency arrangements

If the child is discussed as part of formal multi-agency discussions such as How to manage multi-agency public protection arrangements or other networks addressing gang-related issues, safeguarding or risk of harm meetings/panels, notes of these meetings should be attached to the child's case file and actions for each agency clearly recorded. If there are concerns about the response or lack of response of any partner agency, this should be raised and escalated through line management and locally agreed processes and procedures.

Where possible, assessment, planning and review schedules across different agencies (children's services in particular) should be aligned for consistency to ensure that information is effectively shared and up-to-date and that plans reflect the actions each agency is taking. Wherever possible, children and parents/carers should be present, at least for part of the meeting.

What you need to know about information sharing

When you share information with other agencies and individuals about a child, you must consider:

- necessity and proportionality: personal information should only be shared when necessary to promote the safety of an individual or the public
- consent: wherever possible this should be obtained in advance, but lack of consent may be overridden where there is a safety concern
- data protection: You should be aware of your duties under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and local policies and procedures

What a child should be aware of when offences are disclosed

The disclosure of offences for children broadly fall into two areas:

1. Spent and unspent convictions
2. What would be disclosed on a DBS check.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all convictions have a rehabilitation period, meaning the amount of time until the offence becomes 'spent'.

Unspent convictions will come back on all record checks and if asked by an employer or financial institution these must be disclosed. Spent convictions do not have to be disclosed in these circumstances but may still come back on a DBS record check. View the table of rehabilitation periods (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rehabilitation-periods) for more information.

As of November 2020, a filtering process was introduced into DBS checks, certain offences that are spent will automatically be removed from DBS certificates but they remain on the Police National Computer.

Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Caution will not show up on a standard or enhanced DBS check. A conviction for a non-specified offence received whilst under 18 will not show up on the DBS check after five and a half years. However, convictions for a specified offence will never be filtered. You can view the full rules and list of specified offences (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide) on GOV.UK.

The Youth Justice Legal Centre provide information sheets (https://yjlc.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/2023-03/YJLC-14-Criminal-Records_Childhood-Convictions_0.pdf) on understanding convictions and how to tell prospective employers and education providers.

How to supervise children who deny they have offended

There may be instances where you are developing plans and supervising a child who denies they have

offended or denies involvement in specific aspects of the offence of which they have been found guilty.

In these instances, the emphasis should be on focusing on future behaviour and building the child's strengths and capacity than re-visiting past behaviour.

When supervision can be suspended

The youth justice service (YJS) has the authority to approve variations in supervisory and contact arrangements where there is an acceptable reason for doing so. Acceptable reasons could include illness, bereavement or becoming a parent. A senior manager in the YJS should approve an agreed period during which reporting will be suspended. This should include consideration of whether it should stop entirely or whether face-to-face contacts are decreased, and telephone contacts increased, depending on the circumstances.

When taking these decisions, managers should consider the length of time the child has been on the order, their engagement and the seriousness/significance of the issue giving rise to the request.

Children and their families may request a suspension in supervision arrangements for a planned holiday. Decisions about such requests must be taken by a senior manager in the YJS. When taking such decisions managers should have regard to the:

- risks to public safety posed by the child
- seriousness of the offence
- length of time the child has spent on the order
- number of contacts which would be missed
- child's engagement to date

The YJS has the authority to refuse such requests if it considers that continued engagement with the YJS is necessary.

Where the decision is taken to support a request to suspend supervision for longer than a month, an application should be made to the court to vary the order and allow for the agreed and specified break in supervisory arrangements. The YJS case manager should confirm the proposed holiday address and travel details, with copies of the travel arrangements (e.g. flights) if the proposed destination is abroad. Holidays cannot be approved if the child is subject to bail conditions. If it is evident at the start of the order that holiday arrangements have been made, these should be discussed at the earliest opportunity to indicate the likely course of action.

When to review progress against the intervention plan

Intervention plans should be reviewed at regular agreed intervals with the child's participation throughout the order, at least once every three months; and more often particularly if positive events or setbacks occur. This enables you and the child to reflect on progress made regarding safety and well-being and desistance from offending; and consider revocation. This should include obtaining information from agencies and professionals who have been working with the child to ensure that:

- there is a shared understanding
- all relevant and current information is assessed
- the impact of changes in the child's circumstances are analysed and understood

You should review progress to identify if the plan put in place is having the intended effect and how the service has engaged with the child and options for early revocation. The review process should incorporate:

- on-going assessment
- engagement with the child (and their parents/carers)
- discussion of progress and setbacks

Amendments to the intervention plan should be made as necessary in response to any significant incident or change in circumstances. Children should be invited to comment on what is and is not working well for them, rather than simply being given feedback.

Any work undertaken should maximise the chances of helping children to re-frame their experiences, build self-efficacy and identify how any structural barriers to progress could be removed. Case recording should reflect any changes to intervention plans and the rationale for them.

How to manage the end of an order

When a court order is nearing conclusion, you should discuss with the child (and their parents/carers) what help and support they feel they need and how this can be provided to support desistence. This will help towards the development and maintenance of a pro-social lifestyle. This could include:

- referring the child to mainstream and/or specific services in the local area
- arranging support from a third sector organisation or other community-based service which provides youth support/mentoring/outreach
- identifying individuals or agencies the child can contact if they need help or someone to talk to

These ongoing support mechanisms should be put in place well before the end of the order, to avoid placing the child in a vulnerable position. How to manage transitions (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-manage-transitions) contains more information about how to plan for the ending of relationships.

How to plan interventions and recognise diversity

You have a responsibility to:

- treat children with fairness, dignity and respect

- promote their well-being irrespective of who they are and what they have done
- create safe environments and relationships that support children and are sensitive to individual difference and diversity

The Equality Act 2010 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) protects people against discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to the provision of services and support to them. This covers:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

When planning and delivering interventions youth justice service workers should ensure that they provide equality of opportunity to remove/minimise any disadvantage associated with a child having protected characteristics and meet their needs to promote inclusion.

You should be aware of overlapping needs – for example some children may have neurodivergent conditions or mental health needs as well as another protected characteristic. You should also be aware that educational needs are often not identified in some groups, including Black children and girls.

How to adapt for the child's sex and gender

Sex is biological (male or female), while gender may not be binary. 'Feminine' or 'masculine' is sometimes used to describe behaviours and/or

feelings. The Equality Act 2010 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) protects people against discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to the provision of services and support to them.

Some people do not express their gender in the way society expects for their biological sex, for example girls as 'tomboys'. When taking decisions about the composition of groups, for example for reparation activities or residentials, you should always distinguish and separate by sex and not by gender.

Girls are recognised as having different needs and experiences from boys and their reasons for offending can differ as well. Abuse and unsettled relationships (linked to violence and victimisation) may feature in their backgrounds and the reasons for their involvement in the criminal justice system. This would suggest that recognising the likelihood of trauma and taking a trauma-informed approach may be an appropriate way of working. Strengths-based approaches also include helping the child to:

- feel safe and secure
- feel empowered
- develop self-esteem and self-confidence

Positive, supportive and healthy relationships may help to address their individual needs and experiences and practical and emotional support should be provided. Attention also needs to be given to who the child feels safest in working with (e.g. a male or female worker). You should also account for any pregnancy and parental/caring responsibilities e.g. considering flexible appointments, the location and length of appointments.

Some children may be considering their gender identity, and may identify as transgender, or non-binary. Your response to this should be delivered in a non-judgemental and factual way, so that children are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices. It is important that your response does not reinforce stereotypes or encourage harmful behaviour.

How to adapt for a child's sexual orientation

Exploring sexuality and sexual orientation is a normal part of growing up. Children may have a clear view of what is right for them or may be exploring or feeling unsure about their sense of self. Their views may also change over time. Recognising the child's sexuality (for example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight) and the way that the child refers to themselves conveys openness, respect and sensitivity. Children who are exploring who they are and their place in the world may need the support of a trusted adult (because of difficult experiences at home, bullying and/or discrimination (in-person and/or through social media).

When developing a relationship and the support a child needs you should explore what needs to be addressed to experience the youth justice service as a safe and inclusive place, and whether support from specialist community organisations would be beneficial.

How to adapt for a child's race and ethnicity

The definition of race under the Equality Act 2010 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) includes colour, nationality, ethnic origins and national origins. This includes Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people (https://yjresourcehub.uk/working-with-gypsy-roma-traveller-children-and-young-people-effective-practice-for-youth-offending-teams-youth-justice-board-august-2020/).

It is well established that children with a Black or Mixed ethnicity are disproportionally represented at all stages of the criminal justice system (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report). A thematic inspection of the experiences of Black and Mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/document/a-thematic-inspection-of-the-experiences-of-black-and-mixed-heritage-boys-in-the-youth-justice-system/)

identified that discrimination is prevalent, and that disproportionality is not being sufficiently addressed.

HMI Probation suggest that there need to be a number of actions to address this. These include:

- having a clear understanding of what is driving disproportionality locally
- what the needs are with an action plan to address
- establishing effective processes for gaining feedback from children from over-represented groups on the services they receive and use this feedback to assess, review and improve the quality and suitability of service provision
- ensuring staff have the confidence to discuss culture and/or experience of discrimination and will escalate concerns when there is evidence of discrimination
- making sure that staff understand what is expected of them in their work with boys with Black and Mixed ethnicities and that they are inducted, trained and supported to work effectively with this group of children
- considering the impact of discrimination in assessment
- exploring the impact of these experiences and the challenges being faced
- better use of services commissioned specifically for Black and Mixed ethnicity boys that are integral to and not 'add-ons' to interventions
- working with partners to remove barriers in access to services
- providing effective support to parents and carers to promote engagement
- improving the quality of management oversight to make sure that it is sufficiently focused on diversity and what this means in practice and that there are clear escalation routes to address any barriers to specific groups accessing the services they need

- addressing gaps in specialist provision for particular communities, either by delivering it in-house or by commissioning it from appropriate local community organisations and evaluate referral and uptake rates for the services provided

HMI Probation produced guidance (https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/about-us/effective-practice-library/) that provides further insights into effective practice when working with Black and Mixed ethnicity boys.

How to adapt for the child's faith, religion and belief

When working with children, religion, religious belief and philosophical belief should be recognised and respected. Religion and belief may be significant for the child and their parents/carers and influence what it is appropriate for the child to undertake in their intervention plan. Religion and belief may be a supportive factor and links to community faith groups can offer the opportunity for pastoral support, mentoring and practical assistance. You should avoid arranging activities that interfere with religious observance including religious holidays and festivals.

How to adapt for disabilities

The Equalities Act 2010 defines disability as physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. For children in the justice system these are commonly associated with emotional and mental well-being, speech language and communication needs and learning difficulties and disabilities (including attention difficulties – attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactive disorder, dyslexia and dyspraxia) which may have an impact on what work is appropriate and how it is delivered.

You should consider shorter sessions, a mixture of written, pictorial and active learning resources and regular breaks when working with children with

additional needs. You may also refer to a speech and language, mental health or disabilities specialist for advice on tailoring supervision and suitable resources.

How to adapt for mental health

Youth justice service (YJS) workers should seek advice from health experts in their teams to:

- assist in gathering information for the AssetPlus assessment
- determine what support the child needs if there is evidence of problems relating to emotional and mental well-being, and who it should provide it

Information gathering should include identifying if the child has an existing health diagnosis, has had any previous specialist health assessments or been referred to mental health services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). It should also include whether they have been referred/engaged in other activity such as counselling, family therapy (and what the status of their current engagement is) and how this will impact on what is expected of them.

The health input from psychology (where YJSs have access to it), CAMHS or other health specialists to which the YJS has access should help identify the referral pathway for the child to relevant health services. The YJS should also advise on how interventions and support should be delivered to take account of child's ability to participate and engage.

Trauma-informed and relationship-based approaches can help to build trust and engagement and encourage children to talk to about the issues that are concerning them and help them to cope with their anxieties. Children should be supported to attend health appointments and to engage with professional assistance.

How to adapt for speech, language and communication needs and neurodiversity

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) encompasses a wide range of difficulties related to all aspects of communication in children. These include difficulties with:

- attention and listening
- comprehension
- forming sounds and words
- social communication

Many children in the justice system are also neurodivergent, and cases of autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are often underdiagnosed. This affects how a child might convey information and how they receive and understand it from others. SCLN can also be a hidden disability and is not always formally identified, which might lead to misunderstanding of the child's behaviour.

Children with SLCN may have difficulty in following instructions and remembering what they have been told. This will have an impact on how they engage with their worker, the support of the youth justice service and comprehension of what they have been asked to do. It may also take time to build a relationship and to understand their needs.

Care should be taken to ensure children are able to engage and participate in interventions and the way in which they are delivered. Oral and written interventions may not be meaningful unless they are aimed at the right level of communication skill. Some useful resources to assist in understanding speech, language and communication needs are as follows:

- speech language and communication needs in the youth justice system (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speech-language-and-communication-needs-in-the-youth-justice-system)

- Nacro briefing on speech language and communication difficulties (https://www.nacro.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Nacro-briefing-on-speech-language-and-communication-difficulties.pdf)

AssetPlus contains a speech, language and communication and neuro-disability needs screening tool to help to identify needs. A child with identified SLCN should have an Education Health and Care Plan (England) and in Wales if it is identified as an Additional Learning Need, an Individual Learning Plan.

If you have access to a speech and language therapist, they will be able to provide advice and guidance on engaging with children with SCLN and what type of resources to use. Resources are also available from a several specialist organizations, for example:

- Sentence Trouble (https://yjresourcehub.uk/sentence-trouble-guide-improving-communication-the-communication-trust-november-2020/) is a guide to help improve understanding and communication with children
- The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists have produced The Box (https://www.rcslt.org/learning/the-box-training), a free online eLearning tool to help professionals in the justice system to identify and work with individuals with SLC needs
- Afaisic (https://www.afasic.org.uk/) also provides a range of resources

How to adapt for physical health

Assessment will identify whether the child has any physical health problems and if they are likely to have an impact on activity the child could undertake. For example, asthma or any other form of temporary or permanent physical disability.

The impact of substance misuse or acquired brain injury may also influence how well the child is able to look after themselves and/or is being looked after by others, behavioural inhibitions, the effect on

everyday functioning and ability to engage in activities/interventions. Support may be required so that the child can access health care services e.g. a doctor or dentist.

How to work with children who do not speak English as a first language

You should ensure that children can engage with the youth justice service (YJS) in their language of choice, particularly when it is evident that English is not their first language. This might mean having translation and interpreting services available and being able to deliver work in the child's chosen language. It is important that they are able to communicate in the way they are most comfortable with and are fully able to express themselves to reduce any barriers to engagement.

Public bodies in Wales have a duty to provide services in Welsh under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This is intended to enable people in Wales to communicate in Welsh if they choose to do so. Other languages may be predominant in the YJS locality and should be catered for.

Restorative approaches and how to use them

Restorative approaches are part of the youth justice system and the requirement to undertake this type of activity can be part of an out-of-court resolution, a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order, or within custodial sentences providing appropriate planning and risk assessment has taken place.

Restorative approaches support children to develop a 'pro-social' identity, and to help them to make a positive contribution to their community. Identity is the way we think about ourselves and our place in the world. It is shaped by our experiences in life and affects the way we think and behave. Children can be supported to develop a pro-social identity by helping them to engage in constructive activities, to develop beneficial interactions with others and to

understand the implications of their offending with appropriate support. The focus of reparative activity should be to help the child to move forward by understanding and learning from the impact of their actions on the victim and community.

Restorative justice is an approach which can take many forms and therefore be tailored to the individual's ability, situation and circumstances. There should be a connection between the offence committed and the proposed activity and consideration of whether it should directly or indirectly involve the victim. Reparation activity should:

- help children to recognise the positive contribution it (the reparative activity) can have for themselves and others (e.g. doing something useful for the community)
- help to build the child's sense of self-worth by identifying something they would be good at
- notice and praise the child's positive skills, qualities, attributes and talents
- help them to reflect on their behaviour and understand that actions have consequences
- be an opportunity to help the child to develop constructive interests and widen their horizons
- be purposeful forward-looking activity which helps them to learn from their mistakes

Restorative approaches support the child to find their own way of doing something for the victim or the community and therefore gain something positive from the process to encourage desistance and build a sense of community. Reparative activity should not be punitive, harmful or shaming and should be a safe process for all concerned. Restorative approaches should be driven by the aim to:

- engage children in their community
- be a learning process and help the child to think about what is important in the future and to move on from past mistakes

Further information on restorative justice can be found on The Restorative Council website (https://restorativejustice.org.uk/) and the Association of Chief Police Officers website (https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Flibrary.college.police.uk%2Fdocs%2Fappref%2FACPO-Restorative-Justice-Guidance-2011.docx%23%3A~%3Atext%3DRJ%2520can%2520be%2520an%2520alternative%2520disposal%2520to%252C%2520or%2Cproblem%2520solve%252C%2520reduce%2520re-offending%2520and%2520improve%2520community%2520cohesion.&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

What restorative approaches are appropriate and when they are not

Restorative approaches are intended to help victims play an active role in the justice process as well as helping children to learn from their actions. The nature and type of reparation can vary considerably.

It may involve direct contact between the victim and the child (if both parties agree and this can be safely managed) or take a number of indirect forms, involving doing something for the victim which does not involve personal contact, or doing something to assist their local community.

In selecting an appropriate restorative process for a particular victim and child, case managers and restorative justice practitioners need to think about what would be suitable. This is based on their discussions with the child and victim and is likely to be informed by:

- whether or not they want to meet each other
- how this could be facilitated
- whether other restorative options would be more appropriate

Decisions should be guided by an assessment of the risks, needs and wishes of both parties. Parents/carers should be included in the process.

Restorative interventions can follow a lengthy period of preparation as children and victims may need time to consider the options to make an informed choice about what they feel comfortable doing and may change their minds throughout the process of engagement.

This best practice guide (https://restorativejustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/Best%20practice%20guidance%20for%20restorative%20practice%202011.pdf) provides further information on what to consider when assessing, preparing for and delivering various forms of restorative activity, the skills required and the processes to follow. Crown Prosecution Service guidance (https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/restorative-justice) also provides useful information on restorative justice practice.

You should be clear about your reason for utilising a restorative approach with a child. Case managers have the responsibility for determining what the plan of activity should look like for the child and to agree it with them. This should be supported and informed by the views of specialist restorative justice workers within the service.

When assessing what form reparative activity should take, there is no 'one size fits all'. You should consider the child's maturity and cognitive ability; and use approaches which are meaningful to them and within their capability. This involves exploring what they feel they would like to do, what would make a difference, how this could be carried out and by giving them the opportunity to think about what would help them, their victim and community.

Restorative justice requires cognitive skills and the ability to:

- think things through and reflect on personal behaviour
- understand the consequences of any actions and the impact of the offence on the victim

Children who have experienced developmental trauma may be unable to do this until they have developed positive relationships, have processed some of their own trauma and have the perception to process the requirements of reparation. For further information, see Trauma and ACE Informed Reparative Work (https://yjresourcehub.uk/working-with-children-in-a-trauma-informed-way-trauma-informed-practice-pathfinder-cwm-taf-youth-justice-service-updated-september-2022/).

Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities, speech, language and communication needs and other needs may also have difficulties with comprehending restorative approaches and processes. They may be less able to think about the impact on others or communicate their views and therefore have a voice which limits participation and engagement and the potential benefit. They may need additional support to take part, if reparation is considered appropriate for them, or require more creative approaches.

Direct reparation (letters of apologies/conferences) require executive cognitive skills and may be appropriate for children who are demonstrating emotional maturity and an understanding of consequences.

For this type of reparation to be effective, children must have experienced empathy and be able to have empathy for others. For children who have experienced trauma, this comes from having their own experiences of being a victim (e.g. adverse experiences) validated by a trusted adult.

This does not mean reparation cannot be undertaken, it is more a question of when, if it is to be meaningful. You should give attention to questions of timing. Where there is a victim, restorative approaches will only be effective when both the child and the victim are ready and able to engage in a positive way; and should not be used if this is not the case. Community reparation may be a useful way to prepare a child to undertake more direct reparation at a later stage.

Restorative approaches should be planned with the child and be supportive of their identity

development and movement forward. You should be aware of the power dynamics on your relationship with a child in the justice system, and not aim to inflict shame or frame it as the child 'paying their dues'. Rather than repaying society, the child is re-engaging with it; facing the future and shaping their place in it

What services the YJS should offer victims

Youth justice services (YJSs) are referred to as service providers under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974376/victims-code-2020.pdf) and have several duties placed on them.

The Code states that victims, whether an adult or child are entitled to the following:

- information about the progress of the child's case upon request.
- information on appropriate victim services if a request for additional support is made

In the following cases, you must notify the Victim Contact Scheme (https://www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime) about all relevant victims within one working day of sentencing:

- the child receives a sentence of 12 months or more for a violent or sexual offence
- the child is detained under the Mental Health Act 1983

All victims are also entitled to be offered the opportunity to engage in voluntary restorative justice activities. Victims can however ask for their details not to be passed on (to the YJS) if they do not wish to participate. In every case a decision must be taken to invite the victim to take part in a restorative activity taking into account:

- their wishes

- feelings and concerns
- any sensitivities in the case, including the vulnerability of the victim
- whether the child is able and willing to engage

The process should determine whether reparation is appropriate, what form it should take (direct or indirect) and what the victim and child feel comfortable with. The process should also manage expectations of what is and is not feasible, realistic and safe. Informed written consent must be obtained for every victim who agrees to take part in restorative justice or direct reparation.

All YJS staff who work with victims must receive appropriate training (including facilitating restorative justice processes, particularly mediation and conferencing) and be familiar with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

Certain types of victim have 'enhanced entitlements. These are:

- vulnerable or intimidated victims (including victims under the age of 18 years)
- persistently targeted victims who may require specialised assistance)
- victims of the most serious offences (including a bereaved close relative)

You should also ensure there is a process to request and receive feedback from victims which you should periodically analyse and review. This might include numbers of:

- victims contacted and response rate (pre-court and for statutory orders)
- reparations offered and received by type e.g. direct or indirect reparation
- victims offered reparation but who did not want it
- instances where the YJS assessed reparation was not appropriate

You should also consider asking victims if they were satisfied with the service offered. There must be a complaints process in place so that victims who feel

that their rights have not been met can raise their concerns. Complaints should be acknowledged and the processes and timescales for a response explained. Victims dissatisfied with the response may appeal to the Parliamentary Ombudsman (http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/).

How to manage victim information

All victim information obtained and held by youth justice services (YJSs) should be stored and shared in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. You should ensure that there are robust arrangements in place for managing information and ensuring it is retained only for as long as is necessary. You should follow local policies and procedures in this respect.

In managing protection of the public and risk of harm there will be instances where you can, and should, record the names of real or potential victims within the child's case record. You should note that the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974376/victims-code-2020.pdf) only covers actual and not potential victims. The critical factor in your decision is whether you consider there is a real and potentially significant impact for the victim or potential victim and their name needs to be recorded in order to mitigate against this.

If there is no or limited risk of harm, there is no justification for recording the victim's name on the child's case file. The victim's details should be held in a separate system. You may also record the following information:

- whether the victim is a child or an adult
- known or unknown to the child
- their sex
- their ethnicity

Recording victim's details on the child's case file without using the information for the purpose of

preventing offending/reoffending removes the legitimate purpose for recording and may breach the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and GDPR.

You may share the victim's details with the police, MAPPA or the probation service, for example, if it is within the context of public protection. However, information recorded should be kept to the minimum time necessary to help safeguard that individual(s) and the rationale for sharing must be defensible, clearly evidenced and recorded.

An example of when it is appropriate to record the victim's details might be where a child has made threats towards another child (also subject to YJS supervision) which are assessed as real and there is concern they will act upon these if the opportunity arises. In this instance it may be appropriate to include these concerns in the Risk Assessment and Planning Process in AssetPlus, for example 'to ensure that appointments with (named child) and (other named child) do not coincide with one another, to avoid the risk of physical harm from one to another'.

Given that plans should be shared with the child and their family you must ensure that you do not include the name of a victim/potential victim in any information provided. Where it has not been considered necessary to record the victim's details, it is important to be aware of where this information can be obtained should there be a change of circumstance which would necessitate the information being held.

As Data Controllers, YJSs should be aware of the lawful basis of recording such information and if further information is required the local authority should be consulted.

How to encourage engagement ('compliance')

As the professional it is your responsibility to find ways to engage children. This involves being flexible, creative and responsive. In the child's first contact with you, you should explain to them the

requirements of the court order; check they understand it and explain to them that it is important they work with the youth justice service (YJS) as it is what the court is expecting them to do. They also need to understand what will happen if they do not attend or engage and that, if this occurs, the YJS will have to consider what action to take as a result.

It is good practice to provide a written document or 'contract' with the YJS which sets out what they are required to do, such as attending appointments as agreed and not attending under the influence of any substances. One way to check understanding is to ask the child to explain in their own words what they think is required of them. It is important to recognise that it may not be sufficient to explain things once, as children may forget what they have initially been told and may need to be reminded about what they need to do.

At the start of the order you should explore with the child how they will work with you, for example whether they are required to attend appointments in particular locations, whether your contact with them will be remote (such as through video links or other social media) or a mixture of both. If the child is required to attend a particular location, you should explore whether they feel safe to do so; or are likely to experience any difficulties with attendance which affect how contact is arranged. You should establish that:

- the child can tell the time
- they are able to get to the appointment location, know where it is and how they will get there
- any support they need to maintain their appointments is available
- they have access to IT e.g. phone and/or laptop and are able to engage with the YJS through these means

All staff and services working with children in the justice system should make every effort to encourage children to participate in and engage with support. This might include:

- tailoring interventions to the individual child, taking into account any mental health concerns, or speech, language and communication needs
- tailoring the service to meet the child's cultural and diversity needs, and recognising past adverse experiences and trauma
- setting appointments at a set time each week to help the child remember to keep them
- reminding the child about their appointments by text or phone call; or using social media methods with which the individual child is familiar and comfortable
- ensuring appointments do not clash with education, work, religious observance, other service appointments or any preferred activity for the child
- praising the child for progress and achievements, even small steps
- addressing early any challenging behaviour in sessions, lateness or problems with engaging the child and tailoring your approach accordingly
- informing and involving parents, carers and other significant professionals or relatives of the child's progress and enlisting their support in encouraging engagement, including using engagement/compliance panels as necessary
- treating the child at all times with respect and courtesy, remaining professional and avoiding over familiar behaviour

Early revocation

After the halfway stage of an order has been reached, you should always consider an application for early revocation of the order if:

- the requirements set out in the initial plan have been met
- there has been significant progress in the priority areas originally identified in assessment
- the child has positive factors or engagement with universal services meaning progress is likely to be sustained

You do this by making an application to the court and providing a report on the child's positive engagement and progress. In the case of a Referral Order, the case must first go to a progress panel, who will take the decision as to whether to make the application.

Early revocation should always be considered as an option when these criteria apply. If the application is unsuccessful, a further application may not be made for another three months.

How to respond to non-engagement ('breach')

It is incumbent on you to make every effort to engage children in completing their order. The use of breach should be limited to those exceptional circumstances where all other options for engagement have been unsuccessful. The breach of a court order is a criminal offence and every effort should be made to prevent this and ensure the child's full engagement.

The first aim of any youth justice service (YJS) worker is to engage the child, so barriers to achieving this need to be viewed as the responsibility of the adults rather than the child. There should be a general presumption against taking breach proceedings, unless there is a very good reason. This might include an urgent concern about public protection; or a further serious offence.

High incidences of breach action taken against children indicate that there is an issue with the performance of the service and its ability to engage children. Evidence indicates the more frequently a child is taken to court, the more negative the outcomes for that child are likely to be. This means that breach action should only be taken as a last resort.

If a child misses an appointment, you should follow this up with them and their family to establish the reason (for example, sickness, lack of transport, forgot the appointment), and what could be done to support them in the future. If the reason is not acceptable you may choose to record a warning.

You should also stress that you want to continue to work with them and help them to complete their order successfully. If more than one warning is given, you should use local procedures to investigate what more can be done to improve engagement; such as an engagement/compliance panel. Court processes should not be used as an alternative to warnings.

Serious concerns, such as an act of violence or public protection concern, may lead you to consider taking breach action. In some circumstances, you may also be considering breach as a result of problems with engagement. The judgement on whether or not to breach should be signed off by a manager of operations level at minimum, and include the following:

- the stability of the child's living arrangements
- the child's attachments and relationships – including whether they have trusted adults who can support them keep the appointments
- the evidence on what has worked well and not worked previously to engage the child
- whether the child has the capacity to understand the process, and sufficient maturity and emotional intelligence to respond appropriately

It is important not to penalise a child because of factors beyond their control – for example a child looked-after (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-manage-transitions#child-looked-after) or child in the care of one parent who works or has younger children may not have the same level of support in engaging as other children. You should always take into account that an ultimate outcome of taking the child back to court could be a custodial sentence. The breach report should always give an account of any positive engagement and progress against goals and factors which could support further engagement. It should indicate that you are prepared to continue working with the child and to support them and suggest any alterations which would increase engagement.

The YJS's levels of breach action should be tracked in line with standards for children in the youth justice system (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957697/Standards_for_children_in_youth_justice_services_2019.doc.pdf) and reported to its management board as part of regular performance management data. The board should have oversight of actions to avoid high levels of breach. It should also monitor the demographics to ensure that breach action is not disproportionately taken against children from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnicities, those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds and children that are vulnerable or looked after. Any decision to take breach action should be accompanied by a review led by an independent manager. This should consider any:

- gaps identified in services which have led to a failure to engage this child
- learning that can be taken for the development of individual staff or the service
- alterations that can be made for this child to engage them better

How to manage staff working with children in YJSs

Children should be allocated a worker within two working days of the order being made. This is so that induction arrangements are put in place and their engagement with the youth justice service (YJS) and intervention planning can begin as quickly as possible.

Managers are responsible for ensuring the quality of the intervention plan and its implementation for each child.

There should be quality assurance processes in place which ensure that assessments and intervention plans are checked, are of sufficient quality and work is consistently undertaken to a good standard and in an appropriate way. Staff should receive induction and refresher training to ensure their practice is consistent with

organisational expectations, policies and procedures and is up to date in terms of practice developments and initiatives. There should be a workforce development plan in place.

Case managers and other staff delivering elements of community orders should be regularly supervised and provided with a reflective space to discuss their practice and concerns. In particular, staff should have access to support when working with particularly distressing cases, whether through external support, line management, team discussion or other means. YJSs should operate using a learning culture, and support staff in a non-blaming manner.

The delivery of effective interventions relies on staff being committed, skilled and trained in appropriate methods of delivery and techniques to engage and develop relationships with children. YJS workers should have access to the resources to deliver the requirements of court orders. This includes access to specialist workers and services and agreed pathways for referrals to services so that children's needs can be promptly dealt with. If there are difficulties in obtaining access to services, the management board should be made aware. There should also be a range of appropriate materials and resources available to deliver work which meets the needs of individual children. Staff should be encouraged to develop positive relationships with children and to adopt innovative and good practice.

YJSs should understand the profile of the children they are working with; what their needs are; and the approaches required to address them. The cohort of children they are working should be periodically analysed to identify if there are common needs or concerns and to ensure that work is meeting those needs and helping to support desistance. This information should be shared with the management board and be reported in the youth justice plan.

The YJB has various toolkits which can help to monitor and track outcomes for children, in respect of disproportionality (https://yjresourcehub.uk/youth-justice-service-toolkits-youth-justice-board-updated-august-2022/). Please also see ways to improve

quality (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/ways-to-improve-quality).

How to respond to particular types of offending

Youth justice services should be able to offer a range of work and have a portfolio of different resources available, so that bespoke approaches can be taken with each child. This will enable them to address the child's needs and ensure that harm (to the child or others) is reduced and their practical and emotional problems are addressed.

For example, responses to acquisitive crime such as shoplifting and theft may have a restorative element and interventions associated with motoring offences are likely to focus on the dangers and consequences of illegal driving and endorsements and disqualification.

Some offending behaviour may be connected to alcohol and substance misuse. Work to address this may focus on providing advice about alcohol and cannabis use and reducing habitual use. Social media is predominant in everyday life and may be a catalyst or contributory factor to offending.

These resources provide further information: Social media briefings (https://yjresourcehub.uk/wider-research/item/402-social-media-briefings-2016.html) NSPCC: Online Safety for Children - Tips and Guides (https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/).

Work should start with understanding why a child has committed a particular form of offence (but care taken to not define them by it) and the motivations behind it e.g. carrying weapons may be seen by the child as legitimate due to fear of victimisation and for self-protection. Some activities may not be viewed as criminal such as public order, or sexting offences. Some children may be drawn into harmful

activity through the internet and social media or exploitation.

Consideration needs to be given as to whether the child has the cognitive ability, emotional capacity or communication and social skills to express themselves and learn from their experiences. You should also consider what process of learning might suit them best and what techniques might support this e.g. using techniques associated with Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy. The following resource explains this technique (https://girfec.fife.scot/__data/assets/pdf_file/0032/187484/PACE-School.pdf) and how it might be used when working with children in the justice system.

How to respond to violent offences

Being subjected to adverse childhood experiences and trauma can have a serious impact on natural brain development. A report (https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/627789/) by Manchester Metropolitan University and Manchester Youth Justice suggests that understanding what the child has gone through in the past may help to understand violent impulses. This is because of the impact on the child's:

- emotional and mental well-being
- thought processes
- ability to manage emotions and self-regulation
- feelings on what they need to do to stay safe in what is perceived to be a threatening world

The follow-up of the Edinburgh Study Causes and Impacts of Offending and Criminal Justice Pathways (https://www.law.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/ESYTC%20Report%20%28March%202022%29%20-%20Acc.pdf) is also informative. Trauma-informed practice is based on the idea that the child's offending is an accrual of their adverse experiences, whereby helping them to disclose and understand these experiences helps them to recover. This requires the development of safe, respectful and committed relationships. Work

should focus on helping children to lead safe lives and recognise that those involved in certain types of crime may also be victims and have been subject to exploitation (including through social media).

The YJB has developed the following toolkit (https://yjresourcehub.uk/youth-justice-service-toolkits-youth-justice-board-updated-august-2022/) to monitor and address serious violence.

How to respond to knife offences

Offences where a knife or other bladed article is used or displayed carry a higher gravity score than offences of simple possession. Possession offences are eligible for an out-of-court resolution, unless there are aggravating factors such as a large or 'zombie' style weapon, or repeat incidences.

If the child indicates that the motive for carrying the weapon was fear or self-protection, this should be regarded as a safeguarding concern, and action taken to assess risks to the child's safety, any escalating risks to others and measures taken to protect them and others.

For more serious offences of knife use or intimation, you may wish to use resources to address attitudes to violence and weapon possession. For more information please see the YJB's Knife Crime Evidence and Insights Pack (https://yjresourcehub.uk/our-work/knifecrimeevidenceinsights_feb25/)

The Serious Violence Duty

The Serious Violence Duty (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet) was introduced in the Policing, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 to prevent and tackle serious violence. The duty will be placed on local authorities, youth justice services (YJSs), probation services, fire and rescue services and health authorities to form a partnership (core duty

holders). Educational institutions and prisons/youth custodial establishments have a duty to co-operate with core duty holders where necessary.

The role of the partnership is to establish the local 'problem profile', to undertake a strategic needs assessment and to publish a strategy setting out how serious violence will be addressed locally, the partnership will work together and the collective actions will be taken. This includes:

- engagement plans with Police and Crime Commissioners
- the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London
- Violence Reduction Units
- voluntary and community organisations and children
- identified funding streams or resources

The YJS should nominate a representative from the service who will be a member of the partnership. For further information see the statutory guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty).

The duty is intended to complement the work of Violence Reduction Units which operate in 18 areas across England and Wales. For further information see the Violence Reduction Unit interim guidance (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876380/12VRU_Interim_Guidance_FINAL__003_2732020.pdf).

How to respond to harmful sexual behaviour

Depending on the offence committed, initial consideration should be given to whether the child is dealt with through the criminal justice system or child welfare system. Protocols exist in England and in Wales which can assist with this (see how to safeguard children in the justice system). Consideration should always be given as to whether children who commit offences that relate to harmful sexual behaviour are diverted from the

system (where appropriate) and what the local mechanisms are for making those decisions, which would include consideration of the seriousness of the offence, offence type, age of the child and age of the victim.

Harmful sexual behaviour can take many forms, including inappropriate behaviour, sexual assaults and possessing and making indecent images. Children who have committed sexual offences may initially deny their involvement (this does not necessarily mean a risk of repeating/continuing the behaviour). They could also be unaware that their actions (particularly on-line and through social media) were unlawful or have poor/immature sexual knowledge.

Children who have committed harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced sexual, physical and emotional abuse themselves or have difficulties in cognitive functioning. They may have difficulty understanding consent and coercion because of learning difficulties. They may also have low self-esteem compounded by some of these factors. Being identified as a child who has displayed/engaged in harmful sexual behaviour may also lead to rejection (by family and peers) and anxiety about being identified as a perpetrator. Children should not be labelled as abusers or sex offenders; their actions should be seen within the context of their personal development.

The needs of children who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour will be identified by AssetPlus, however further specialist assessments may be required to gauge the child's needs (e.g. what the child has been through and what their current situation is), understand their sexualised behaviour; and to help to plan appropriate interventions. The AIM Project (https://aimproject.org.uk/portfolio-item/model-and-guidance/) has developed useful resources including the AIM3 assessment model, which provides a structured approach to gathering and analysing information about the child. AIM also has a framework for assessing children with learning disabilities.

For more information on harmful sexual behaviours:

Greater Manchester Safeguarding: harmful sexual behaviours presented by children and young people (https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/harmful-sexual-behaviours-presented-by-children-and-young-people)

NICE: harmful sexual behaviour among children and young people (https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng55)

Youth Justice Legal Centre (YJLC) Legal Guide: Children facing allegations of Sexual Offending (https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides/children-facing-allegations)

YJLC Legal Guide: Sexting (https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides/sexting) - for more information regarding youth-produced sexual imagery

Children who have committed sexual offences should be assessed and managed through multi-agency arrangements and a co-ordinated approach with children's services, child protection and local safeguarding arrangements. Children who sexually harm others may be both perpetrators of abuse and also victims of abuse. A holistic approach should be taken to planning interventions with consideration given to the child's (changing) developmental status, its effect on their understanding of their behaviour and how this fits in the wider context within which they are living (involving parents and carers where appropriate). It should also consider any cultural influences/perspectives.

Children who have committed harmful sexual acts may require specialist support and services. Advice should be sought from health experts the youth justice service has access to determine what this should look like. The Good Lives Model (https://www.goodlivesmodel.com) was specifically developed as a strengths-based approach to addressing harmful sexual behaviour.

Children who commit certain sexual offences may also be required to register their name, date of birth and address with the police under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents) and to notify them of any temporary or permanent change of address within 14 days or any plans to leave the UK for any period of more than eight days, at least 24 hours beforehand. Schedule 3 of the Act sets out the specified offences. In certain circumstances, the court may direct someone with parental responsibility to register on the child's behalf until they reach 18 years of age. See also How to manage multi-agency public protection arrangements.

How to handle offences of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation

The YJB has developed guidance to support youth justice services in the identification and management of children's involvement in extremism.

You can download management of children at risk of engaging with or involvement in terrorist-related activity (https://yjresourcehub.uk/managing-extremism-for-under-18s-community-practice-advice-august-2018/) guidance from the Youth Justice Resource Hub.

How to understand the profile of children in your area

Youth justice services (YJSs) should understand:

- the profile of the children who are using the service
- their needs
- the interventions and approaches required to address them

You should periodically analyse the cohort of children you are working with to identify if there are common needs or concerns and to ensure that interventions are meeting those needs and

supporting desistence. This information should be reported to the management board and be included in the youth justice plan.

Profiling should, as a minimum, examine offence type, informal or formal options, ethnicity and gender. However, there may be other indicators of disproportionality locally which require investigation and understanding.

YJSs have an obligation under the Serious Violence Duty (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet) to provide information to inform a local needs assessment to understand the nature and extent of serious violence in their locality. This should form part of the local profiling of children who are at risk of or entering the youth justice system.

Local profiling should always consider disparity, disproportionality and the over representation of any particular groups of children on caseloads, to ensure the reasons for it are thoroughly explored, to identify any particular trends and to ensure specific needs are always considered and provided for. This should be reflected in strategic planning and operational delivery.

The YJB has various toolkits which can help to monitor and track outcomes for children, in respect of disproportionality (https://yjresourcehub.uk/youth-justice-service-toolkits-youth-justice-board-updated-august-2022/). Please also see ways to improve quality (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/ways-to-improve-quality).

How to manage the likelihood of harm through multi agency arrangements

There may be a significant level of concern about a particular child's safety and well-being and some children will be identified as likely to cause serious harm to themselves or others. Youth justice services (YJSs) should have arrangements in place

to ensure that the child is kept under regular review e.g. through (risk and safeguarding) panel meetings. These meetings are likely to be regular, multi-disciplinary, involve senior managers within the YJS and appropriate representatives from children's services, CAMHS, education, the police etc.

Where there are ongoing and significant public protection and safety and wellbeing concerns this enables the responsibility to be to be shared and mutually agreed plans to be put in place for the child which will reduce the risks to themselves and others.

How to safeguard children in the justice system

Youth justice services (YJSs) should have a designated safeguarding lead and all staff should understand their role in relation to safeguarding. The YJS manager should be a member of the local safeguarding board and provide it with locally agreed information about children for whom there are high/very high safeguarding concerns. This might include children for whom multi-agency referral forms have been raised (child protection and children in need (of care and support), children in custody and children subject to serious incidents, serious case reviews and child practice reviews.

National and local safeguarding procedures should be followed for England (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) and Wales (https://www.safeguarding.wales/). This includes participating in the development of contextual safeguarding processes.

There must be effective arrangements in place to assess needs thorough quality assurance processes and a clear understanding of the referral process to children's services and multi-agency safeguarding hubs where there are high/very high safeguarding concerns. There should be good partnership arrangements with children's services, education, health and schools. YJS workers should

have a good understanding of the needs of children for whom there may be specific safety and well-being concerns, to be able to identify these children and take appropriate action:

- children who go missing
- child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation – this useful summary of resources (https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/tackling-child-exploitation-resources-pack#3-key-guidance-and-reports) contains more information
- county lines – this practice guidance (https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/tackling-child-exploitation-resources-pack#foreword) contains further information as does the National Referral Mechanism (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales)
- children at risk of being trafficked
- children at risk of being drawn into terrorist activity who are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism
- where appropriate work with Channel and Prevent (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance), practice advice is also available on the Youth Justice Resource Hub (https://yjresourcehub.uk/managing-extremism-for-under-18s-community-practice-advice-august-2018/)

Consideration should also be given to disproportionality in safeguarding arrangements and whether there is sufficient alignment with child protection and care plans. Also, whether there is clarity about what professionals are doing to keep children safe and where there are significant concerns, that they are discussed in detail at high-risk panel meetings and other appropriate local fora.

The following resources may be of interest:

Safeguarding adolescents: a practice guide (https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Safeguarding%20Adolescents_A%20Practice%20Guide_2020_FINAL%20.pdf)

Child Victims of Modern Slavery Training Programme (https://www.npcc-msoicu.co.uk/about-msoic/training/e-learning-child-victims-of-modern-slavery/)

The Youth Justice Legal Centre YJLC legal guide on Safeguarding First: Child rights and welfare submissions for Criminal Practitioners (https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides/safeguarding-first-child-rights-and-welfare-submissions-criminal)

The YJLC guidance on exploitation (https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides-and-toolkits/child-criminal-exploitation)

Safeguarding arrangements should also consider children remanded or sentenced in youth detention accommodation. The following practice guide (https://norfolklscp.org.uk/about/policies-procedures/children-in-specific-circumstances/516-safeguarding-the-welfare-of-norfolk-children-and-young-people-in-police-custody-and-the-secure-estate) also considers children in police custody.

YJSs should consider undertaking periodic audits of children subject to safeguarding arrangements, for example:

- the number of children at risk of county lines and involved in county lines
- children subject to various forms of exploitation
- children for whom Multi Agency Referral Forms have been made

This is to be able to identify safeguarding trends and ensure that responses to children are audited and their needs are understood.

How to manage multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)

Children who meet the following criteria must be referred to the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) for the area:

Category 1

Registered under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Category 2

Have committed violent offences or other sexual offences (not subject to notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003) required to and have served 12 months or more in youth detention accommodation.

Category 3

Other children who may present a risk of serious harm to the public and for whom a multi-agency approach and management at level 2 or 3 is required.

As lead agency for children, the youth justice service (YJS) should identify and undertake a comprehensive risk assessment. It should then make referrals to MAPPA and identify the appropriate management level. MAPPA agencies have a duty to view the needs of the child and the YJS and children's services must attend when a child under the age of 18 is discussed:

Level 1

Risks can be managed by the YJS without the need for multi-agency meetings.

Level 2

A multi-agency meeting would add value to the YJS plans and one or more of the following apply: there is a high or very high risk of serious harm; the risk is lower but requires the active involvement and co-ordination of agencies to manage the presenting risks of serious harm; the child has been previously managed at level 3, but no longer requires this level of management.

The child will be discussed at a level 2 multi-agency public protection meeting, and a risk management plan agreed. Whilst the YJS case manager should attend as they are likely to have the most detailed knowledge of the child, a more senior YJS manager should be present at all meetings where a child is being discussed, to ensure the additional factors are properly and fully addressed.

Level 3

The criteria for level two are met, but the serious nature of the case or its high-profile nature require senior representation from the YJS. It will be discussed at a level 3 multi-agency public protection meeting, and a risk management plan agreed. Whilst the YJS case manager should attend as they are likely to have the most detailed knowledge of the child, the YJS manager should be present due to the serious nature of the case.

The MAPPA guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa--2) provides more detailed information about the role of the YJS and the MAPPA process.

Integrated Offender Management

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements are to manage children whose offending is most persistent and prolific. Children are identified through the AssetPlus assessment, and local arrangements within the youth justice service (YJS) such as risk panel meetings. IOM brings partner agencies together to share resources for managing these cases. The Home Office's Integrated offender management (IOM) guidance

(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-offender-management-iom) contains more information. This should be relatively rare for children, as YJSs are already multi-agency arrangements. Children who transfer from the YJS to probation service supervision may be managed through IOM.

How to manage oversight of safeguarding and public protection

Managers provide oversight of public protection and safeguarding by ensuring that:

- robust quality assurance and risk management processes are in place
- multi-agency meetings regularly take place to discuss children where there are significant concerns about safety and well-being and/or public protection (including decisions to issue warnings or to take breach action)

The youth justice service should be represented at a strategic level at the following meetings:

- multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- MAPPA strategic management board
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) (https://safelives.org.uk/resources-for-professionals/marac-resources/) for domestic abuse and violence
- the Safer Communities board
- Integrated Offender Management
- other local meetings concerned with missing, exploited and trafficked children
- meetings concerned with community safety and public protection to share intelligence with partner agencies and to safeguard children and protect the public

Managers should ensure that staff have the training, resources and networks to address the following:

- child criminal exploitation

- child trafficking
- organised gangs
- county lines
- use of knives and serious drug related offences

This is to safeguard children and protect the public. They should also monitor and audit safeguarding, child protection, MAPPA and MARAC referrals, serious incidents and any involvement in child safeguarding practice reviews and share this information with the management board. The learning from this involvement should inform policy and practice development. It is good practice to consider holding multi-agency learning reviews when serious incidents arise and to share the findings with the management board and local children's safeguarding board.

Weapons detection systems

Some youth justice services, schools and other public buildings use detection systems to identify whether individuals coming into the building are carrying a weapon. These include metal detecting systems such as walk-through knife arches, or wands which are waved over visitors. They are used to check for concealed weapons. If there is a sound, this may indicate that the individual may have a weapon and they may be turned away from the premises.

Weapons detection systems only detect metal weapons and may be a semi-permanent feature of a public building in which you see a child; or used on a temporary or ad hoc basis, for example at the start of group sessions. If you are meeting children on premises which carry out these checks, you should advise them of the security arrangements and be ready to address any anxiety this may cause for children, parents or carers. This might involve explaining that the system is there to keep them as well as others safe, and that services have a duty of care for children and staff on their premises.

It is important that children and their carers feel, as far as possible, that this is a safe and appropriate meeting place. It would be good practice to engage children in the decision to install a system, subsequent communications about it, the risk of stigma and the impact on their identity and sense of safety.

When weapons detection systems should be used

It is the decision of each local area as to whether to use any weapons detection system; and if so, where and how. This will be informed by local assessment of the level of risk of weapon related crime, and the assessment of the impact that having such systems may have on perceptions of safety. Local areas ensure that:

- someone monitors the effectiveness of the system
- there is a process to take action if the system indicates a possible concealed weapon
- there is a clear consequence for either a refusal to use the system; or an incidence of a possible weapon possession

Weapons detection systems are intended to be a preventative measure to keep people safe. If a child is found to be in possession of a weapon, this should be regarded as a safeguarding concern. You will need to work with children's services to assess the child's situation in terms of why they felt unsafe, why they felt a need to carry a weapon and what action will be taken as a result.

If your service is considering using weapons detection systems, you may wish to look at the Youth Justice Resource Hub (https://yjresourcehub.uk/weapon-detection-measures-in-youth-justice-services-various-youth-justice-services-october-2021/), which includes the experiences of services who have used a range of systems and their assessment of the positives and negatives of these.





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