



Youth Justice
Agency

BUSINESS 2024-2025 PLAN

**DoJ Business Plan 2024-25
Deliverables**

YJA Theme

YJA Strategic Outcomes

YJA Reporting Lead

YJA Business Activities for 2024-25

Strategic Theme – Address Harm and Vulnerability

We will work with partners to provide early stage diversionary approaches to address issues that contribute to offending behaviours. We will provide practical support to victims, and develop policies and legislation to protect those most vulnerable in our society

Earlier Stage Diversion

YJA Outcome

1

Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support

Colleen Heaney

- a) Further embed a strategic approach to Earlier Stage Diversion by working to deliver alternatives to children entering the formal justice system. This will include:
 - working with PSNI to further expand, within available resources, the use of Community Resolution Notices where appropriate; and
 - working with PSNI and PPS to develop and test a new diversionary disposal that doesn't attract a criminal record
- b) Implement agreed findings from QUB evaluation of Children's Diversion Forums.
- c) Continue to review the Youth Engagement process and implement recommendations, particularly to reduce unnecessary delay.

Community-based Interventions

YJA Outcome

2

Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending

Colleen Heaney

- a) Continue the review of Youth Conference guidance and align to the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) model of practice.
- b) Return 90% of youth conference reports to court within 20 working days and 30 days for PPS.
- c) Embed new YJA procedures for children to ensure their Education, Training and Employment (ETE) status improves during their time with us.
- d) Maximise victim involvement in the Youth Conference process.
- e) Monitor trends in young people coming into contact with the YJA and adapt Model of Practice (MOP) in response to changing needs (e.g. neuro diverse, unaccompanied minors, ethnic minorities) (subject to adequate resourcing levels).

Strategic Theme – Challenge Offending Behaviours and Support Rehabilitation

We will work with partners to provide early stage diversionary approaches to address issues that contribute to offending behaviours. We will provide practical support to victims, and develop policies and legislation to protect those most vulnerable in our society

We will work with people who offend to challenge their behaviour and support them to become active and responsible citizens. Working with our partners we will promote rehabilitation, and when a custodial sentence is imposed our focus will be on resettlement leading to integration back into society.

Joint Custodial and Community based Interventions

YJA Outcome

2

Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending

**Mary Aughey/
Colleen Heaney**

- a) Custody champions group to continue to monitor the implementation of the custody-community transition guidance paper.
- b) Continue the roll out of a shadowing scheme where custody and community based staff learn more about the various roles and practices within each directorate.
- c) Ensure safe staffing levels across all services.
- d) Juvenile Justice Centre to continue to support, influence and assist in the delivery of effective community based programmes in preparation for leaving custody to ensure the child is connected.
- e) Continue to support children and young people and their family/carers throughout the care planning process to promote a positive return to their community.
- f) Review the bail support scheme to include escalation when appropriate.
- g) Support a seamless transition back into the community through targeted use of Enhanced Case Management.
- h) Implement recommendations from Trauma Informed Oregon Reports in support of YJA's journey to becoming a trauma-informed organisation.
- i) Help reduce further the incidence and impact of re-offending by children by working in partnership and in a trauma-informed way to develop and deliver appropriate social, mental health and therapeutic supports. This will include:
 - Working with SBNI and HSC Trusts on developing and sharing trauma-informed practice;
 - Embed the joint Acorn mental health and therapeutic service across Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre; and
 - Deliver the CAMHS YJA co-located mental health pilot and work with HSC Trusts to seek sustainable funding to roll out the model across all five YJA area teams.
- j) Review and develop OBA measures across all areas of YJA work.
- k) Review and deliver an ongoing refurbishment programme that continues to reflect a child friendly, therapeutic and modern environment for children and young people across YJA.

YJA Outcome

3

Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment

DoJ Business Plan 2024-25 Deliverables	YJA Theme	YJA Strategic Outcomes	YJA Reporting Lead	YJA Business Activities for 2024-25
<p>Strategic Theme – Challenge Offending Behaviours and Support Rehabilitation</p> <p>We will work with people who offend to challenge their behaviour and support them to become active and responsible citizens. Working with our partners we will promote rehabilitation, and when a custodial sentence is imposed our focus will be on resettlement leading to integration back into society.</p>	<p>Custodial-based Interventions</p>	<p>YJA Outcome</p> <p>3</p> <p>Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment</p>	<p>Mary Aughey/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A multi-disciplinary approach will be taken to develop individual needs based care plans for young people informed by YJANA. b) Identify education and employment opportunities for young people leaving custody in partnership with the educational and vocational departments. c) Establish a Partnership Board with the South-Eastern HSC Trust (with a reporting line to the Children’s Social Care Services Strategic Reform Programme) to maintain and, where appropriate, develop further shared services with Lakewood and improved connections into community-based services for children leaving custody or secure care. d) Promote quality improvement in service delivery.

**DoJ Business Plan 2024-25
Deliverables**

YJA Theme

**YJA Strategic
Outcomes**

**YJA Reporting
Lead**

YJA Business Activities for 2024-25

Strategic Theme - Deliver an Effective Justice System

We will lead work to make our justice system faster and more effective, and more importantly, to serve the needs of those who engage with it. We will ensure appropriate access to justice for our citizens. We will also deliver a system, which supports other court users in the early and proportionate resolution of civil and family proceedings. We will support and empower people working within the justice system to deliver effectively.

**Resource
Management**

**YJA
Outcome**

4

YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused

Corporate (All)

- a) Implement actions in workforce plan to meet current and emerging business and operational requirements across YJA with an emphasis on piloting the senior practitioner role and assessing the outcome of the business case seeking to introduce a Retention and Recruitment Allowance (RRA) for roles requiring a social work/youth work qualification.
- b) Continue to improve the impact of YJA's investment in learning and development.
- c) Maintain effective systems of internal communication, staff engagement and well-being support within YJA.

**YJA
Outcome**

5

YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance

Corporate (All)

- a) Continue to seek ways to reduce unit costs while maintaining the quality of service, including by exploring with Justice partners how to make use of spare capacity in the JJC.
- b) Effectively implement all agreed inspection and audit recommendations, including those from the CJINI inspection of Youth Justice Services (anticipated for publication in July 2024).
- c) Provide information within statutory time limits in relation to pre-YJA historic case files in support of the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Scheme.
- d) Maintain and develop the YJA case management arrangements and MIS database to provide enhanced statistical and management information.
- e) In accordance with the YJA Equality Action Plan, further develop YJA data to help improve understanding of the factors contributing to over-representation of certain groups in the youth justice system.
- f) Complete the relocation of the Belfast Area Team and Corporate HQ to new accommodation.
- g) Seek ways to improve our external communications and transparency through delivery of key objectives in the YJA Communication Action Plan 24/25.



Youth Justice Agency

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