



Welsh Affairs Committee

Monday, 8 December 2025

Keith Fraser
Chair
Youth Justice Board

Dear Keith,

Thank you for participating in my committee's inquiry into *prisons, probation and rehabilitation in Wales*.

During the session, we were unable to cover all of the questions my committee had intended to ask you. As such, I would be grateful if you could provide answers and clarifications to the following:

- How effective has the Youth Justice Blueprint been, and are there any aspects of its approach that ought to be adopted with regard to adult offenders?
- The implementation of the Youth Justice Blueprint is overseen by the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel, which is co-chaired by a member of the YJB. The YJB carried out a review of the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel in 2024, and agreed three focus areas for Wales. Could you outline what progress has been made against each of these focus areas?

I would be very appreciative if you could also fill in the survey linked below to provide your experience regarding giving evidence.

The survey should take no longer than five minutes to complete and neither Committee staff nor Members of Parliament are able to see individual responses, and answers are not linked with individual evidence. Further information about how we look after personal data is available the privacy notice in the survey.

The survey does also contain optional diversity monitoring questions, which allow us to understand whether different groups have different experiences when giving evidence, so that we can improve the way we work. It also ensures we are aware of the diverse range of voices that provide evidence.

I would therefore be very grateful if you could spare the time to fill in the below survey:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nt3mHDeziEC-Xo277ASzSh02a84io6BGIxcJV5Do4e1UOE01SIBZOVpESIAxOTNKOUNSVzIFUjI5TyQIQCN0PWcu>

Thanks again for your contribution to my committee's inquiry.



**Welsh Affairs
Committee**

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Jones MP
Chair of the Welsh Affairs Committee



Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
3A/3B 3rd Floor, 10 South Colonnade,
Canary Wharf, London E14 4PU



Ruth Jones
Chair, Welsh Affairs Select Committee



Date: 17 December 2025

Dear Ruth,

Subject: Inquiry into Prisons, Probation and Rehabilitation in Wales.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in you committee's inquiry into prisons, probation, and rehabilitation in Wales and for your follow-up questions in relation to the areas we were not able to cover in the session.

You have asked:

- How effective has the Youth Justice Blueprint been, and are there any aspects of its approach that ought to be adopted with regard to adult offenders?
- The implementation of the Youth Justice Blueprint is overseen by the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel, which is co-chaired by a member of the YJB. The YJB carried out a review of the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel in 2024 and agreed three focus areas for Wales. Could you outline what progress has been made against each of these focus areas?

I will address both points, but it will help if I first explain some of the background and context of the Blueprint.

Youth Justice Blueprint in Wales Background and Context

The Youth Justice Blueprint (YJBP) for Wales was developed in 2019 following a ministerial directive from the Welsh Government and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). This directive aimed to create Blueprints for the delivery of youth justice and female offending services, reflecting the devolved landscape in Wales. The overarching principles and objectives for the YJBP were to:

- Take a 'children first' approach to youth justice, ensure that it is child-centred rather than service focused, ensure that it meets the individual needs of children and responds to their best interests.

- Take a trauma-informed approach throughout the various stages of the youth justice system, from prevention and early intervention to resettlement from custody, recognising and responding to ACEs and indicators of complex need.
- Embed trauma-informed approaches into community and custodial practice to effect cultural and systemic change and deliver consistent approaches in meeting children's needs.
- Align devolved and non-devolved services through a shared vision, values and approach which underpins the design and delivery of services.

The implementation of the YJBP ran in parallel with the Female Offending Blueprint for Wales, but they are fundamentally different. The Welsh Government commissioned Youth Justice Board (YJB) Cymru to develop advice and recommendations for youth justice in Wales. These recommendations represented an evolution of an existing system, with many elements being continuous improvement based on previous successes, good practice, and evidence. The more transformational aspects of the YJBP centred around custody.

The YJBP was published alongside an initial 5-year implementation plan (2018-2023), and the programme infrastructure was formally stood up by the Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice in September 2019. The YJB provided project management and expert advice to the Blueprint, which was overseen by a dedicated Project Board and Steering Group rather than the Welsh Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP). WYJAP instead played an advisory role.

The original areas of focus for the Blueprint were:

- Prevention
- Pre-court diversion
- Community
- Custody
- Resettlement and transitions
- System oversight

Implementation was affected by the global pandemic, with activity being slowed or paused as a result. When implementation restarted some of the areas of focus were re-scoped and the system oversight work was stopped. The delivery period was extended to March 2025 and in recognition of the pressures on organisations across the sector, three areas were prioritised: prevention, community, and custody. The objectives of the Prevention and Out of Court workstreams over the course of the Blueprint, remained unchanged. The objectives in relation to community and custody were re-framed to a focus on trauma informed practice instead of the original transformational vision for a new secure estate in Wales.

Impact of YJBP

The YJBP provided the platform for Wales to continue leading the way in terms of the continuous improvement of services for children underpinned by an evidence-based

whole-system approach. The YJBP implementation plan concluded in March 2025, and most delivery areas moved into 'operational delivery' status.

As a programme of work to evolve an already successful system, it is difficult to directly link quantifiable benefits to the Blueprint. However, in addition to strengthening collaboration across justice delivery partners in Wales the YJBP programme also:

1. Produced guidance on the key legislative and policy differences in Wales to compliment YJB Case Management Guidance and Constructive Resettlement Materials.
2. Upskilled practitioners in both community and secure settings in Trauma-informed practice.
3. Established a new psychology service offer to all youth justice teams in Wales, including Enhanced Case Management (ECM).
4. Worked with National Probation Service (NPS) and Public Health Wales to identify trauma-informed practice, as part of a wider refresh of transitions guidance for Wales.
5. Developed a prevention Framework for Wales which has been published by Welsh Government.
6. Laid the foundations for long-term change to further improve pre-court diversion practice across Wales.

There is much that the adult system can learn from youth justice and the delivery of the YJBP; following the evidence to promote prevention and diversionary approaches and ensuring interventions are developmentally informed (particularly for young adults whose brains are yet to fully mature). We also now better understand the links between trauma and offending behaviour and trauma informed practice is producing promising results with increasing up take of this across England and Wales for children in contact with the justice system.

Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel and a continued focus

There is a strong commitment from Welsh Government towards partnership working, prevention and keeping children away from the youth justice system. This is demonstrated through the Welsh Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP) which Welsh Government and the YJB jointly chair. As stated above WYJAP provided advice to the YJBP programme rather than oversee this. As a sub-group of the YJ Board, WYJAP has established thematic areas of focus based on evidence and our oversight of the whole system. These represent the areas of the system with the greatest challenge or opportunity to achieve positive outcomes for children. The areas of immediate focus are:

1. Partnership with **Education** and the role of schools as a place of safety, early identification, and intervention.
2. Partnership with **Health** and the needs of children who come into contact with the youth justice system and how their needs can be met; and

3. Partnership with **policing** and the relationship between youth justice and child centred policing.

Racial disparity and violence against women and girls will be common themes running through each area of focus with the strategic lead for the latter resting with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Blueprint Board. The initial intent is to conduct a series of thematic reviews on each of these areas. The aim being to bring partners together, review both policy and practice and provide a platform for future evidence-based improvement work. WYJAP held a session around education in July and is planning another on health for the New Year. These are long-standing and complex issues which are rooted in how different systems work together with different (sometimes competing) priorities. In turn these challenges are often more pronounced in financially challenging times. The devolved landscape can also provide challenges to effectiveness and efficiency particularly where policy areas are adjacent or where there is potential overlap.

It is too early to consider achievements in relation to them. With its diverse membership having a collective focus on these systemic challenges, the Panel is identifying areas where it can add value to work already being carried out by policy and practice and to connect workstreams for greater impact and a joined-up approach.

Continuous improvement of out of court resolutions is a specific piece of work that is being observed by WYJAP. This is unfinished work carried over from Blueprint that is being delivered in partnership between YJB, Policing in Wales, PCCs and Youth Justice Services. A delivery framework has been established which is strategically led by YJB and Policing. The aim is to bring consistency in practice to all areas of Wales, ensuring the OOCR offer for children is the same across the country. This work is building on previous success and using evidence of what works as the basis of the continuous improvement. A steering group is overseeing delivery and reporting progress to WYJAP.

Progress to date includes the establishment of evidence-based themes (areas) of improvement focus and the mapping of current delivery processes and structures. The implementation work will be taken forward at pace from January 2025.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Fraser, Chair
Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

