

Strengthening participation, connections and engagement

**CYCJ Strategy
2014-2016**

CYCJ is funded by the Scottish Government and hosted by the University of Strathclyde



Vision

Our vision is a Scotland where all individuals and communities are safe and flourish; and where Scottish youth justice practice, policy and research is internationally renowned and respected.

CYCJ role and outcomes

CYCJ contributes to this vision by developing, supporting and understanding youth justice practice, policy and research in Scotland, and through seeking and sharing learning internationally. This involves working with a range of stakeholders to advance four outcomes:

1. There is a good understanding of what supports, and what are barriers to, children and young people being safe and flourishing
2. Youth justice practice and policy are informed by our best knowledge and evidence
3. Youth justice stakeholders work together to design, develop and implement improvements
4. Youth justice practitioners have the skills, confidence and support they need to best help children and young people

CYCJ's contribution

Our rationale is that by making progress on the four short-term outcomes above, CYCJ makes a contribution to our vision. This assumes that by improving understanding, strengthening the use of knowledge and evidence, supporting collaborative

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improvement endeavours, building skills and confidence, and better supporting practitioners, we help individuals and communities to be safe and flourish.

By improving these four outcomes we help Scotland to meet its obligations set out in the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and to advance several of the National Outcomes set by the Scottish Government, most notably:

- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens (National Outcome 4)
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk (National Outcome 8)
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger (National Outcome 9)
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others (National Outcome 11)
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs (National Outcome 15)

During 2014-16 we will work to strengthen our understanding of the contribution we make and how it can be enhanced.

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Stakeholders

CYCJ's stakeholders are those who are affected by, or have an interest in, youth justice. We always work in partnership with a range of stakeholders, and our key stakeholder groups are listed below. We aspire to be aware of and influenced by our stakeholder views and needs, but to retain impartiality to enable us to facilitate and broker between them.

Children and young people, and their families: all children and young people are affected by youth justice, however, we seek to work most closely with those children and young people who are, have been, or are at risk of being, involved in offending. We will be undertaking work to explore how we can better work with children and young people to improve youth justice.

Practitioners: paid staff and volunteers from statutory, third and private sector organisations who provide support or services to children and young people, and their families. We work particularly closely with those supporting children and young people who are, have been, or are at risk of being, involved in offending. These stakeholders include: children's reporters, social workers, police, teachers, psychologists, youth workers, children's panel members, nurses, support workers and residential child care officers. Our key mechanisms for engaging with practitioners include the National Youth Justice Advisory Group (NYJAG) and four champions groups (Early and Effective Intervention; Managing High Risk; Reintegration and Transitions; Vulnerable Girls and Young Women). CYCJ has a remit to facilitate and support activity by NYJAG and the four champions groups.

Policy makers: those who guide decisions and activity relating to children and young people through developing principles, protocols and statements of intent. We work

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particularly closely with those who develop policies which affect children and young people who are, have been, or are at risk of being, involved in offending. These stakeholders include; local and national politicians, Scottish Government civil servants, local authority officers, strategic managers. Our key mechanisms for engaging with these stakeholders is through NYJAG, the NYJAG executive group and the four champions groups, as mentioned above.

Researchers: those undertaking or supporting research and inquiry across a range of settings, particularly academia, practice and policy environments. We work closely with those whose research focuses on youth justice issues, but also with those who research issues affecting youth justice. This group includes local government researchers, Scottish Government analysts, third sector research and policy officers, individual academics, research centres and networks. Our connections with this group are facilitated through being hosted by the University of Strathclyde and through academic representation on our Executive Governance Group. We have individual relationships with these stakeholders and work together on particular pieces of work, but we are looking to strengthen our strategic relationships with research centres and networks.

Educators and Intermediaries: this group refers to those stakeholders who play a role in supporting youth justice practitioners, policy makers and researchers to learn and develop skills. This group of stakeholders includes college and university lecturers, the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Social Services Council, NHS Education Scotland, Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), Police College via Tulliallan, With Scotland and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children (CELCIS). We connect with these stakeholders primarily through direct relationships focused on individual pieces of work, and have close relationships with some but not all of these stakeholders.

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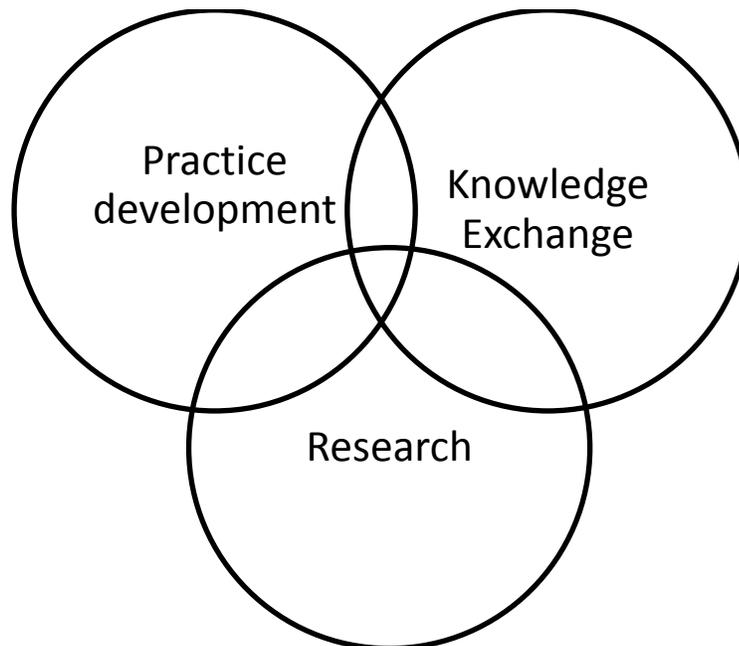
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General public: everyone in local communities and wider society has a stake in youth justice. Mechanisms for engaging with this broad stakeholder group include directly working with local communities to improve youth justice, holding public events and exhibitions, through social media channels and through working with those whose work reaches a public audience (journalists, film makers etc).

Areas of work

To make progress on our four outcomes CYCJ's work focuses on three areas:



- 1. Practice Development:** Working with practitioners and policy-makers to undertake, support and coordinate activities to improve youth justice
- 2. Research:** Undertaking, supporting and coordinating research
- 3. Knowledge Exchange:** Sharing and disseminating knowledge

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Our efforts are strongest where activities combine practice development, knowledge exchange and research, and we always seek to ensure this happens.

Our activities

CYCJ undertakes 13 different types of activity designed to advance our four outcomes. Several of our activities support more than one outcome, but activities are listed below, against the outcome where the greatest contribution is anticipated. Our understanding about our contribution and impact will be further developed during 2014-16.

1. Stakeholders have a good understanding of what supports, and what are barriers to, young people being safe and flourishing

- 1.1. Identify knowledge gaps
- 1.2. Conduct and support primary research to meet knowledge needs
- 1.3. Identify and synthesise research evidence
- 1.4. Support all youth justice stakeholders to share their knowledge and experience

2. Youth justice practice and policy are informed by our best knowledge and evidence

- 2.1. Provide youth justice guidance, support and advice based on the best knowledge and evidence
- 2.2. Produce evidence-based resources and tools for practitioners and policy makers
- 2.3. Provide opportunities for youth justice stakeholders to discuss and reflect on knowledge & evidence
- 2.4. Improve awareness and accessibility of knowledge and evidence

3. Youth justice stakeholders work together to design, develop and implement improvements

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- 3.1 Develop and support collaborations to improve youth justice
- 3.2 Support stakeholders to identify, design and implement change where required
- 3.3 Build and maintain strong relationships across policy, practice, research and with young people and their families/carers

4. Youth justice practitioners have the skills, confidence and support they need to best help children and young people

- 4.1 Provide and support excellent learning and skill development opportunities
- 4.2 Design and deliver interventions which help young people stay safe and flourish

Each year we produce an annual workplan which details the specific projects we will undertake under each activity.

Priorities

Our work spans across youth justice topics and issues but for 2014-16 we have three priorities, which we will advance through a range of projects:

- **Participation and engagement** of children and young people in improving youth justice
- Strengthening **community connections**, relationships, engagement and attitudes
- Improving connections between the **youth and adult** criminal justice systems

These priorities have been informed by a stakeholder research exercise conducted by CYCJ in early 2014; discussions with the NYJAG executive group, CYCJ's Executive Governance Group and the four champions groups. It also builds on some of the issues highlighted in key policy documents, including: *Preventing Offending by Young People* -

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A Framework for Action (2008), Preventing Offending by Young People - A Framework for Action: Progress 2008-11 and Next Steps (2011), and on the progress of a range of policy and practice initiatives, most notably the Whole Systems Approach (WSA), Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and the Early Years collaborative.

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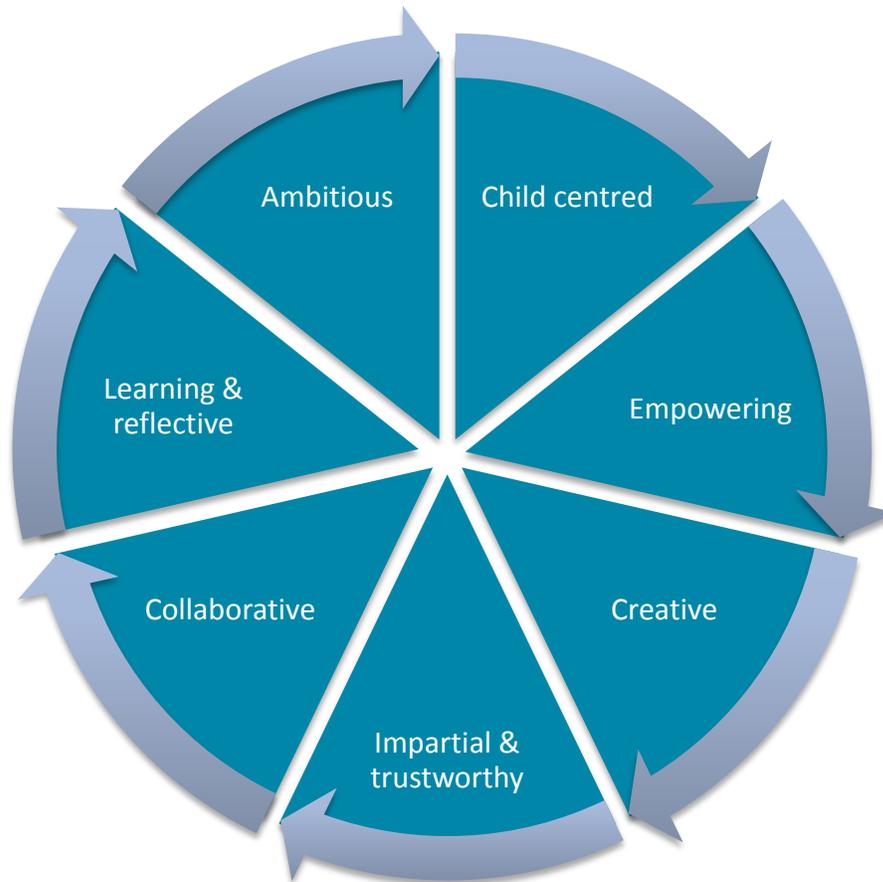
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How we work and what we stand for

We seek to always demonstrate and encourage the following traits, which we refer to as our virtues:



We assess our strategies and plans against these virtues and regularly reflect on whether they are always guiding what we do and how we do it.

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Staff, governance and accountability

CYCJ is a team of social work and psychology practitioners, researchers, and specialists in knowledge exchange and practice improvement.

Our strategic direction is governed by an Executive Governance Group (EGG), consisting of people with experience of youth and criminal justice from lived experience, research, policy and practice perspectives. Membership includes the chair of the NYJAG. This group drives our overarching strategy and approves strategic decisions. The EGG meets on a quarterly basis.

Our main funders are the Scottish Government, Care and Justice Division in the Children and Families Directorate. We are accountable to the Scottish Government for this funding, and report on progress on a quarterly basis. Each year we agree an annual workplan with the Scottish Government and we work closely with them to achieve our outcomes.

We are hosted by the University of Strathclyde, which as well as supporting our connections to the research community, provides services and support on issues such as research ethics, human resources and insurance. We are accountable to the University of Strathclyde on such matters.

We are currently exploring the role of children and young people in our governance structure, and there is the potential for structures or mechanisms to be created or adapted to facilitate this.

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Continuously learning and improving

To maximise our contribution we adopt a continuous learning approach which involves a constant process of exploring how we are performing and identifying improvements.

We do this by setting clear outcomes and performance indicators, having clear virtues to guide how we work, seeking regular feedback from those our work is intended to benefit, supporting the CYCJ team to reflect on individual and team performance, and learning from others.

To ensure this knowledge and information is used to help us improve, the CYCJ team and other stakeholders attend quarterly improvement sessions, where we explore the evidence about how we are performing against our outcomes, assess whether we are working in accordance with our virtues, identify actions which may help us improve and reflect on actions previously undertaken to support improvement. An action plan is developed following each improvement session.

We will also be undertaking evaluation work in 2014-16 to better understand our contribution and impact.