



developing, supporting & understanding
youth and criminal justice

High risk and prevention: Broader vision and greater impact

CYCJ Strategy 2017-2019

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

@CYCJScotland

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Vision

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

CYCJ role and outcomes

CYCJ contributes to this vision by developing, supporting and understanding youth and criminal 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 encourages and what helps to prevent offending and reoffending.
2. Youth and criminal justice practice and policy are informed by our best knowledge and evidence
3. Youth and criminal justice stakeholders work together to design, develop and implement improvements
4. Youth and criminal justice practitioners have the skills, confidence and support they need to best prevent offending and reoffending

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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 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)

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Priorities

Our work spans across youth justice topics and issues, but for 2017-19 we have three priorities, which we will advance through a range of projects:

- Maximise our impact by undertaking **in-depth local improvement** projects focused on both preventative and high risk issues
- **Sustaining** the dramatic improvements made across youth justice, ensuring care is taken by all stakeholders involved when diverting attention and resources to other priorities
- Strengthen our connections and reach across youth and criminal justice with a particular focus on the **health and education** sectors
- Undertake **criminal justice** practice development and improvement work and improve learning between the **youth and adult** justice systems

This will require building capacity within the CYCJ team to ensure we have the skills, knowledge and connections needed in relation to improvement methodologies, health and education sectors, and criminal justice.

These priorities have been informed by a Delphi stakeholder research exercise conducted by CYCJ in autumn 2016; discussions with NYJAG, CYCJ's Executive Governance Group and the three implementation groups.

Stakeholders

CYCJ's stakeholders are those who are affected by, or have an interest in, youth and criminal 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, young people and adults who are, have been, or at risk of being, involved in offending**
- **Families, friends and communities of those involved in offending**
- **Victims of offending**
- **Practitioners:** paid staff and volunteers from statutory, third and private sector organisations who provide support or services to those who are, have been, or are at risk of, being involved in offending.
- **Policy makers**
- **Researchers**
- **Educators and Intermediaries**
- **General public**

In 2017-19 we have identified seven specific stakeholders across practice, policy and research with whom we will particularly seek to strengthen our connections and contributions to: Social Work Scotland, Child Health Commissioners Group, Care Inspectorate, Community Justice Scotland, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), Association of Directors of Education (ADES), Institute for Children's Futures (University of Strathclyde).

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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

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

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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.

1. There is a good understanding of what encourages and what helps to prevent offending and reoffending

- 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 stakeholders to share their knowledge and experience

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

- 2.1. Provide youth and criminal 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 and criminal justice stakeholders to discuss and reflect on knowledge & evidence
- 2.4. Improve awareness and accessibility of knowledge and evidence

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

- 3.1. Develop and support collaborations to improve youth and criminal justice
- 3.2. Support stakeholders to identify, design and implement change where required
- 3.3. Build and maintain strong relationships across youth and criminal justice stakeholder groups

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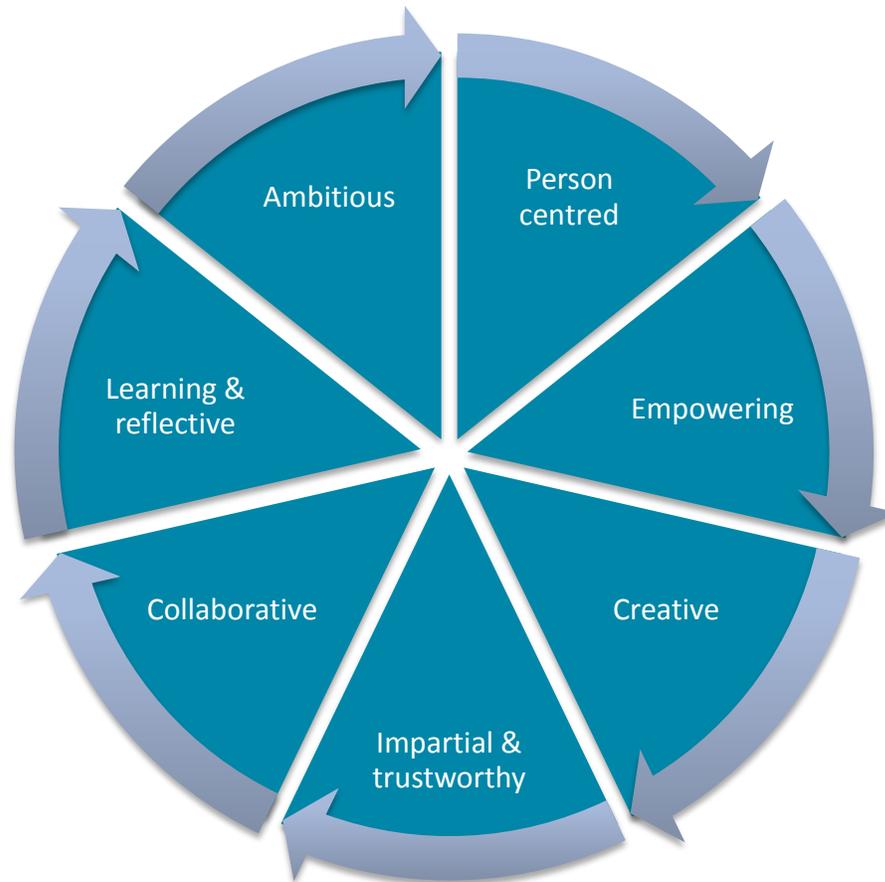
4. Youth and criminal justice practitioners have the skills, confidence and support they need to best prevent offending and reoffending

- 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.

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 practitioners (with recent practice experience), 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 members of the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, a recent development within the University of Strathclyde, designed to strengthen the impact of work related to children's lives across the university. An important focus for us during the period of this strategy will be to ensure we maximise the opportunities this new development offers, and ensure we are making a significant contribution to the shape, direction and work of the new institute.

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CYCJ staff are also associate members of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), an academic collaboration across the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Strathclyde and Stirling. This allows us to participate in joint projects, access small research and knowledge exchange grants, and engage with other academics based in Scotland who focus on crime and justice issues.

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 2017-19 to better understand our contribution and impact.

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