

## Future-proofing Youth Justice - how will we get there?

At the 'Grappling with uncomfortable truths: Future-proofing Youth Justice in Scotland' event on February 6, we asked *you* to join us in doing something a bit different. Inspired by findings from CYCJ, together we went on a journey to figure out how we can best work together, tackle the challenges and navigate a path to a confident youth justice system, where mistakes can be made and trust is a given.

Using Lego, string, your imagination (and a tub of farmyard animals), you created a vision of how youth justice should look in 2025 – and what it will take to get there. We asked you to share your thinking with the room, and this is what you told us:

### Developing a rights-respecting mindset

*"Just Do It"*

*"Keep the faith and hold your nerve - the youth justice agenda is there"*

*"Getting it rights(s!) for every child"*

*"Learning from other countries and where there is a more rights-based justice system"*

*"Protecting a young person's potential when in conflict with the law"*

*"Change of culture and attitudes regarding under 18s as children"*

*"Children to know their own rights in the first place, taught in all schools"*

### Strategy, vision and leadership

*"One Vision. One Strategy"*

*"Develop a collective vision and a shared strategic plan"*

*"Governance oversight of rights respecting next steps - new group, existing networks?"*

*"Mapping stakeholders and activity to prevent duplication"*

*"Leadership effectiveness can vary depending on those leading organisations"*

*"Re-establish a distinct Youth Justice Strategy locally"*

*"We need bridging finance during the transition - need to continue investment in high risk as well as prevention and early intervention"*

*"How do we evidence positive outcomes? These can take time to measure - short term nature of funding and KPIs can result in services not continuing"*

### **Participation**

*“Change the way we train those working across the justice sector, using the voice of justice/care experienced people”*

*“Engage with young people’s family - supporting parents and carers”*

*“Involve children and young people in planning and design”*

### **Public, political and media engagement**

*“Dialogue with all stakeholders - children and young people, families, communities, press - learn new language - tools and training to help and empower others speak about these issues”*

*“Engagement with politicians - cross party dialogue”*

*“Develop a partnership to begin to put ambitions into action”*

*“Generate a wider debate through the media - bring them on board to join the conversation”*

*“Challenging negative perceptions in the media”*

### **Policy, practice and services**

*“All organisations do a rights assessment - monitor where we are”*

*“Don’t just focus on the aspirational stuff - what can we achieve now to make a difference e.g. no children in cells at police station or court”*

*“Consider how to target services to the best effect”*

*“Push Whole System Approach towards 26, without losing what needs to be done - victims”*

*“Service provision - is what we have meeting the need? What do we replace things with?”*

*“Requirement for regular and refresh training on children’s rights for CHS panel members and courts”*

*“Early years support and focus on school wellbeing”*

### Legislation

*“Legislate the definition of a child and other developments - especially judiciary”*

*“Presumption and automatic allocation of an advocate for ALL children in ALL settings that are relevant e.g. court/panels”*

### Looked after children

*“#KeepThePromise”*

*“Must align with the Care Review action plan as it develops”*

*“Put children and supporting them at the centre, not youth justice”*

Thank you to everyone who contributed! We promise to keep the faith and hold our nerve – and keep this conversation going. Look out for more from us – and get in touch at [cycj@strath.ac.uk](mailto:cycj@strath.ac.uk) if you'd like to play a part in making this change happen.

This event was based on [‘Rights Respecting? Scotland’s approach to children in conflict with the law’](#) and [‘The Contribution of CYCJ: Boundary Spanning and System Development’](#).

[#RightsRespecting](#)

[#YJfutureproof](#)