

NYJAG May 2020 Newsletter

Dear NYJAG Member,

We recently met as an Exec (see note of meeting) and agreed that we would issue a brief newsletter to bring you up to date with some key issues and encourage you to engage in strategic youth justice issues, despite the huge challenges we're currently facing day to day.

Life under lockdown

All our NYJAG partner agencies are working hard to maintain as many key services as possible, and there are many good examples of joint working and innovation. However, we also recognise that in amongst all the changes, the rights of young people must be upheld. If you have any issues/concerns, then please continue to raise these with CYCJ and NYJAG so that issues can be addressed as effectively as possible.

It has been suggested that it would be helpful to share with members any guidance/good practice specifically around the issues of delivering safe and effective youth justice practice in light of the COVID-19 restrictions. Rather than trying to produce any national guidance, we are proposing to promote the use of the [Knowledge Hub](#) as the most effective platform for people to upload and share information that might be helpful.

Age of Criminal Responsibility

You'll remember that we responded on the issue of having a list of 'places of safety'. Police Scotland has come back to us for further discussion around the issue. Specifically they are looking for our input on having robust arrangements in place for each local authority to provide a suitable place for a child to be kept, while decisions are made as to where it is appropriate for them to be placed. In other words, this is really the stage prior to a possible 'Place of Safety' being required, and is based on the importance of preventing a child needing to be in a police station at any point. While we are confident that every local authority would be able to provide such a resource during normal working hours, the challenge is to identify such a resource outwith these times. We will have further discussion with Social Work Scotland regarding this, but Grace Fletcher will be in touch with you in due course for your views.

Youth Justice Standards

Scottish Government plans to set up a working group to review the responses to the consultation and where appropriate, amend the Standards. They have requested representation of NYJAG on this, so please respond to Ranald or Grace by **June 19** if you are interested in being part of this extremely important work.

Sentencing Guidelines consultation

The consultation on Sentencing Young People has been extended to August 21. While I am sure that many of you will be contributing to this on an individual/agency basis, we are keen to also submit a NYJAG response. We will be in touch again soon with details of how you can contribute to this.

Sixteen and 17 year olds

The Scottish Government consultation on the Children's Hearings being extended to all 16 and 17 year olds is due to open at the end of June 2020 for four months. If anyone is interested in being part of a small working group to respond to this consultation, please contact either Ranald or Grace by **June 19**.

Next NYJAG Meeting

We have decided not to go ahead with the meeting on June 3. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, and we will see how things have progressed by then in terms of whether it might be possible to meet in person. In the meantime, we would encourage you to join in with one of the national networks that are continuing during lockdown - both the WSA Leads and EEI Forum meetings are taking place online hosted by CYCJ. Contact CYCJ@strath.ac.uk for further information.

If you have queries on any of the above, or suggestions as to how we can best stay connected as NYJAG and support each other to promote best practice at a local and national level, please get in touch with us.

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NYJAG Co-Chairs (May 27, 2020)