

NYJAG Executive Group

May 13, 2020, 10am-12pm

Minute

1. Welcome/introductions/apologies

Fiona Dyer, CYCJ
Ranald McTaggart, Renfrewshire (chair)
Holly Maclean, CYCJ (minutes)
Colin Convery, Police Scotland
Janine McGowan, Edinburgh
Kevin Carter, West Lothian
Russell Hamilton, Action for Children
Gordon Bell, SCRA
Grace Fletcher, East Ayrshire
Lauren Sorrell, Scottish Government
Diane Dobbie, South Lanarkshire

2. Previous minutes

- Many actions from previous minutes no longer relevant due to COVID – e.g YJ conference has been cancelled.
- Action – SG to consider going back to Care Inspectorate re them inspecting on standards
 - This is still under discussion with Care Inspectorate. **Action: Lauren to discuss with David.** Standards were meant to launch on 1st April but this has been delayed.
- Action – WSA meeting to agree implementation of the EEI Core Elements
 - On hold at the moment in terms of core elements being implemented. This is an agenda item for next YJIB.
- Action - Diane to ask SG if Nick Hobbs could be invited to present at DIVERT
 - **Action: Diane to discuss with Nick.**
- Action – NYJAG to speak to the commissioner's office re how we can support them, and how we can link to the YJIB.
 - **Ranald discussed this with Nick before COVID but needs to revisit.**
- Action – to up-date NYJAG exec on outcome of strip searching paper
 - Paper hasn't gone to SWS yet. FD will update once it has been presented. See further discussion under AOCB
- All other actions complete.

3. COVID 19 – how are agencies coping/responding.

- Gordon Bell discussed SCRA's focus on continuing to run hearings where possible, and to make decisions in terms of interventions where the need for this is pressing. Hearings taking place virtually, some with more success than others. There should be dialogue occurring between LAs and SCRA in deciding which cases are prioritised. Mentioned the benefits of embracing some aspects of tech changes going forward. Some young people and families have actually found it easier to engage as virtual hearing format feels less formal.

- Discussed issues in relation to assessments and social background requests social workers are completing. The need for reporters and/or panel members to be mindful of pressure practitioners are currently under.
- Discussed the need to be inclusive as possible. Providing young people with devices, access to internet, data etc. Issues with rural areas where access is limited.
- Russell Hamilton discussed Action for Children's services are trying to keep some form of face to face contact with young people who are at highest risk – through windows, opposite side of garden etc. Funding has been made available to provide money for fuel, food payments, activities, phones etc. Continuing to support the provision of liberation packs for people leaving Polmont – providing directions, contacts, forward services etc. Continuing to communicate through email but challenge has been building relationships with young people in Polmont who have entered either shortly before or during lockdown. Ambition remains to widen the access to service, to more localities and/or to remand prisoners.
- Colin Convery advised that Police Scotland is working on a Community Impact Assessment of new police powers in relation to young people. Currently in early stages, but will be sharing with NYJAG and other partners and looking to engage through consultation. Guidance for police also being developed in terms of how the COVID response will change young people's behaviour and how best to respond to this.
- Discussed the challenge of delivering interventions in secure centres during lockdown. This appears to be an issue across the wider estate, due to staff needing to be redeployed into care/education. Acknowledged that this might impact on the progress of some care plans. Also noted that mobility plans are significantly hampered by lockdown measures. Access to tech to communicate with workers/family and scheduling virtual meetings has also been a challenge. **Action: Lauren to raise these concerns with Liz and David and discuss with secure unit(S).**
- Discussed issues with preparing young people for release, and not being able to do this in the normal way. Identified good multi-agency support in organising and assisting early release.
- An additional £4,000,000 S.27 funding has been distributed to local authorities to support the provision of Structured Deferred Sentences and Bail Supervision schemes. **Action: NYJAG members are encouraged to liaise with their local Community Justice contacts to discuss how to promote such measures as alternative to remand for young people.**
- At WSA Leads meeting on 12th May, attendees discussed potential benefits of sharing any good practice/guidance related to risk assessment/safe working in delivering youth justice. Members discussed the potential benefits of this. **Action: CYCJ to organise folder for this on the Knowledge Hub and promote this to NYJAG members through email, e-bulletin etc.**

4. Implementation Groups

- These groups will shortly be coming to an end and are in the process of drafting reports on the impact they had had. **Action – if members would like to share feedback to groups on their impact then can do so now.**

5. YJIB & New Strategy – consultation

- The planned consultation events for this were postponed due to COVID. Aiming to now share a questionnaire to stakeholders and practitioners to identify what they think priorities for strategy should be. Also hoping to engage with young people themselves. CYCJ will host a Qualtrics survey so people can submit responses online. There was some discussion about the value of drawing together a NYJAG response to this in

addition to members responding individually. Hoping to launch strategy by late Autumn but keen to make sure we get it right, and if more time is needed for consultation there is flexibility for this.

- **Action: consider how we can engage with full NYJAG to pull together a response.**

6. ACR Update – place of safety

- Continuing to implement ACR as planned. Addressing issues of what guidance might look like and how this will fit with child protection. Trying to engage experienced practitioners in this process, particularly those with a youth justice perspective.
- Further discussion about the 'Place of Safety' issue. Grace Fletcher advised that Police Scotland had contacted NYJAG for further clarification. They are looking for each Local Authority to provide a resource where a child could be taken as an alternative to a police station, while decisions are made as to where they might require a more formal 'place of safety'. It was agreed that during office hours then a suitable social work resource would always be available for such a scenario. The challenge will be when this is required out of hours, and there might be the added requirement of it being a resource where forensic evidence might be required to be acquired. It was acknowledged that the language around this can be confusing due to the legislation as it stands. It was agreed that Social Work Scotland should probably be taking the lead on this response, but that NYJAG should still aim to offer input.
- **Action: Ranald to contact Ben Farrugia to discuss the Social Work Scotland response**
- **Action: Consider how to consult with the full NYJAG for a collective response**

7. Standards – YJ, EEI and Secure

- Scottish Government is setting up a working group to review the Youth Justice Standards in response to the consultation. Keen to get a NYJAG representative on this working group – one from Exec and one from wider group. **Action: if anyone would like to be involved then contact Ranald or Grace.**

8. Consultations – pending and revised deadlines

- Deadline for the Sentencing Council Young People consultation has been moved to 12th August. **Action: if someone from NYJAG Exec can lead on this then let Ranald or Grace know.**

9. Social Work Scotland – any items to take to the standing committee?

- None

10. NYJAG – are we going to try a meeting? If so what's the agenda?

- Discussed the potential issues of sharing virtual meetings of 30+ people. Also that there are several virtual forums continuing to meet and whether NYJAG would therefore be useful at this time. Groups still keen to engage with NYJAG members though.
- Will share today's meeting minute with NYJAG
- **Action: Ranald to collate a 'newsletter' to share with NYJAG members that will include:**
 - **Information on WSA Leads meetings and encourage them to attend**
 - **Request for volunteer to work alongside NYJAG Exec member to respond to consultations.**

- Ask for input on idea of sharing resources in relation to risk assessment on Knowledge Hub
- Ask for input on place of safety
- Details of next meeting in September. To encourage attendance at WSA Leads meetings if LA is not already represented
- **Action: Holly to cancel June's NYJAG meeting.**

11. AOCB

- Discussion in relation to substance misuse in secure care and what the current approach is on intimate searching where there are grounds for concern. Colin confirmed guidance on this for police is still that if there's grounds to believe young person is holding illegal substances they will be strip searched.
- **Action: Lauren to write to secure units and find out info on their processes: how often they strip search young people, on what grounds etc.**

12. Date of next meeting

- Next planned meeting not until 19th August. **Action: Holly to organise an additional meeting between now and then.**

Items on hold (to be revisited in due course)

1. Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation
2. Secure Care/secure care transport
3. Care Review
4. Post graduate certificates
5. Strip searching paper update
6. Drug related deaths – Diane
7. ASBOs – are they being used in local authorities?