

# Reimagining Justice with Children and Young People



**Building Rights Respecting  
Services Together**



DARTINGTON  
SERVICE  
DESIGN LAB



Children and Young People's  
Centre for Justice

## Reimagining Justice with Children and Young People Building Rights Respecting Services Together

### Why?

Significant legal and policy changes are being introduced in Scotland to ensure that children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect them; this is reflected in Scotland's commitments to [#KeepingThePromise](#) and incorporating the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC). These changes will ensure that children, young people and their families are at the core of decisions being made about them, while providing an opportunity for them to shape the delivery of services they receive.

To develop a rights-respecting approach to children and young people in conflict with the law, and align with the commitments made in The Promise, systemic change is required. An [independent evaluation of CYCJ](#), conducted in 2020, recommended that we utilise our unique position within the sector to offer increased support to local authorities and other partners in the evaluation, design and delivery of services. As a boundary-spanning organisation, CYCJ is well placed to offer this support, using our knowledge of policy, legislation and best practice across Scotland, the UK and further afield. To underpin this work, we have developed a new model, grounded in the 7 principles of the [Scottish Approach to Service Design](#) (SATSD), aimed at building rights-respecting services that put children and young people at the heart of Reimagining Justice.

### What?

This approach holds children's rights at the core whilst working towards meeting The Promise; it provides an opportunity for reflection and evaluation at a time of significant change across policy, legislation, and practice. Combining our expertise in practice development, participation, and research, we create a space in which all forms of knowledge and expertise are valued equally. The meaningful involvement of children and young people is at the core of Reimagining Justice; we ask them and their families what their needs are, before exploring different ways in which you could meet those needs whilst still aligning with your organisation's existing aims, objectives and budgetary capacity.

Tailoring our approach to your capacity and resources, we will establish priorities and areas for development. We identify where we should focus in order to achieve the most impact, asking the question: 'what change is needed in order to improve outcomes for all?' Our integrated approach supports joined-up thinking and ensures consistency with the wider [policy and practice frameworks and guidance](#) for children and young people in conflict with the law.

In 2022, CYCJ received funding from The Promise to progress Reimagining Justice. We now have a team comprising of Practice Development Advisors, Participation Advisors, and a Service Designer from [Dartington Design Lab](#) to support you, and your stakeholders through the change management process. We can support your team to become more developmentally-, systemically- and trauma-responsive as they deliver child-friendly justice services which uphold children's rights.

Judicial proceedings are also a critical part of a child-friendly justice system too. That's why CYCJ are also supporting the development of Youth Courts in Scotland as part of Reimagining Justice (see Appendix 2).

### **How?**

Taking direction from your aims and objectives and what you want to achieve, we will use a range of tools and methods from the SAtSD. In applying these tools and methods, we will support you to understand and define the problem from all perspectives; we will work together to create ideas and potential solutions that can then be carefully tested and adapted. In doing so we will establish what sustainable, effective change might look like, in line with your wider aims, objectives, organisational context and capacity. This approach focuses on putting those who receive services at the heart of service design, not simply identifying what needs to change and presenting them with the changes made. Working together we can ensure that services are designed to meet children's needs, as opposed to fitting children's needs into existing service models. The views and knowledge of those who deliver services are also critical to informing the design and development process. Combining the views, opinions, knowledge, and experiences of everyone involved will provide a holistic understanding of what effective, meaningful, and sustainable service provision would look and feel like.

## **The 3 Phase Design Process**

### **Phase 1 (Discover and Define)**

This involves initial discussions, information gathering from those within your organisation at various levels (and from partners) using questionnaires, workshops and other methods tailored to meet your needs. CYCJ will work closely on this with a strategic lead (senior decision maker in a position to support change) from within your organisation.

CYCJ's Participation Advisors will support you to engage with children, young people, and their families to seek their views on:

- What matters to them
- What has been effective to date
- What they would like to see change

The Participation Advisors will make clear to these stakeholders how their feedback will be used and included throughout.

Following the workshops and information gathering, CYCJ will offer a consultation workshop with a core team you identify, to:

- share emerging themes
- explore the similarities and/or differences from different perspectives
- consider gaps, refine
- define the problem.

This will help us to understand what you want to focus on, and which achievable changes can have the greatest potential impact. From the workshops CYCJ will provide a brief record,

reflecting the potential actions, to aid your thinking and build evidence for what you might do next, working alongside children, young people, and their families. Discussion can then take place to consider whether you wish to proceed to Phase 2 and/or Phase 3.

### **Phase 2 (Develop and Deliver)**

This involves creating your service design brief, based on Phase 1 information. It will include identified priorities, timescales and planning steps. Using the findings from Phase 1, CYCJ will support you to generate a range of ideas to be planned and tested on a small scale. These can then be refined, based on user feedback. The most effective ideas gathered from children, young people, and their families (alongside those from practitioners and strategic leads) will undergo a period of evaluation and validation, before progressing to the Deliver phase. CYCJ can support you and - if helpful - facilitate reflective meetings with all those closely involved in the change process.

CYCJ's Participation Advisors can also provide ongoing support and advice to aid your continuous engagement with children, young people, and their families who are receiving/potentially receiving your services. In addition, we can consult with justice-experienced children and young people from a wider national context, which can be helpful. This is an intensive part of the service design process. It requires close collaboration between CYCJ and the improvement team; we'll meet attendees from your organisation to progress and test ideas, and evaluate the most effective solutions to achieve the identified objectives and aims. Once a new approach has been identified for implementation, CYCJ will support you to do final testing, and launch the new process/service, ensuring integration of feedback loops to aid ongoing evaluation.

CYCJ can also support the workforce development required to assist with implementing and understanding change. At the concluding improvement session, CYCJ will explore with you a final analysis of learning from the project and provide a brief final report. Whether it's ensuring consistent engagement through the design phases, or supporting with the dissemination of learning at its conclusion, we have the requisite skills and connections to ensure that you can communicate effectively about the project and what it's looking to accomplish.

### **Phase 3 (Evaluation)**

This final phase is costed and provided by the CYCJ Research Team. This will be a full or part service evaluation over a 1–3-year period. The focus and scale of this evaluation will be led by you and could include one or more of the following:

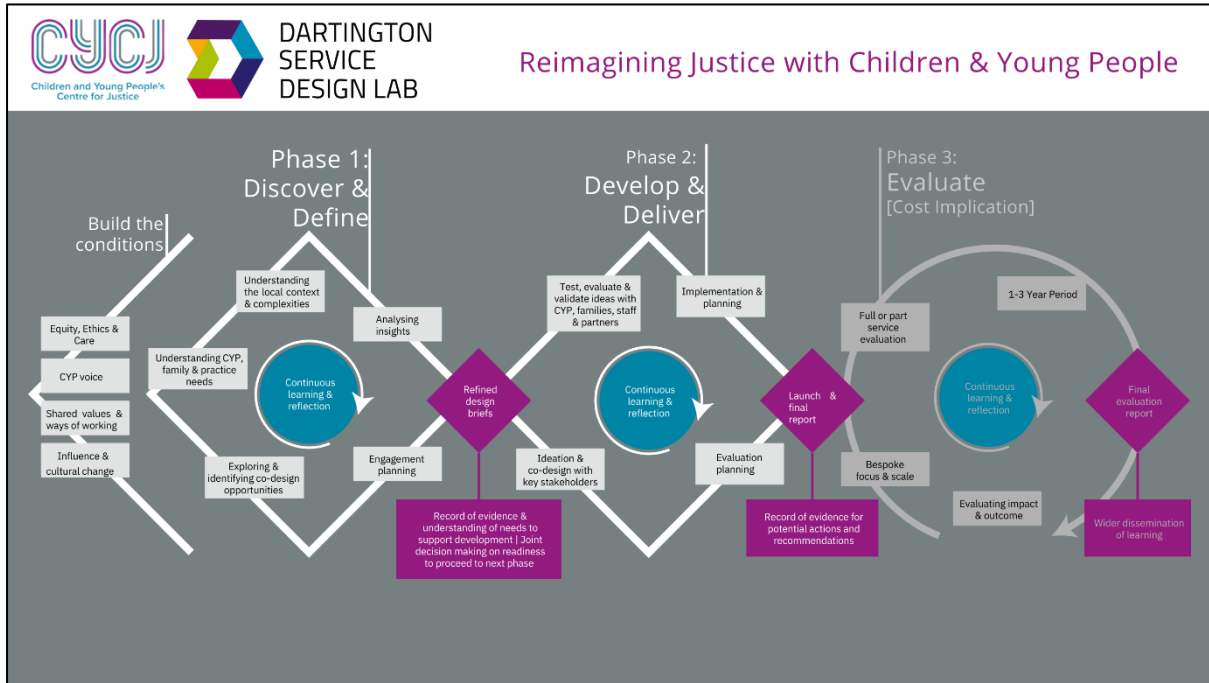
- Additional data gathering to identify impact and outcomes
- A final evaluation report.

How do I find out more?

Visit [www.cycj.org.uk/reimaginingjustice](http://www.cycj.org.uk/reimaginingjustice) or email [cycj@strath.ac.uk](mailto:cycj@strath.ac.uk)

# Appendix 1

## Dartington Design Lab Reimagining Justice Visual



## Appendix Two

### Youth Courts

CYJ are supporting the development of Youth Courts in Scotland as part of the [Reimagining Justice Project](#).

If Youth Courts are to be a success, and lead to better outcomes for children and young people in conflict with the law, partnership working is required. Utilising feedback from a wide range of stakeholders – including children and young people – our Youth Court Blueprint is designed to support partners and encourage consistency. Read our Youth Court Blueprint, published in November 2023 [HERE](#).

#### Policy:

- [Whole System Approach](#) – Early and Effective Intervention, Diversion from Prosecution, Court Support, Community Alternatives to Secure Care and Custody, Managing Risk of Harm and Improving Integration.
- [The Promise](#) – children and young people must be supported in a way that recognises their age and is trauma informed.
- [A Rights-Respecting Approach to Justice for Children and Young People: Scotland's Vision and Priorities](#) - we must do more to avoid criminalising our children.
- [Working with children in conflict with the law standards](#) - ensure that every child in Scotland in conflict with the law has positive outcomes.
- [Sentencing young people guideline](#) – the maturity of children and young people under the age 25 should be taken in account when sentencing.

#### Why 'Youth Court'?

- Most children who find themselves in conflict with the law do not go on to offend in adulthood, with many of those engaged in serious offending not known to justice systems ([McAra & McVie, 2022](#)).
- Children who experience a range of adversities are significantly more likely to encounter the Criminal Justice System in adulthood ([McAra & McVie, 2022](#)).
- Children who are economically deprived are 2.7 times more likely to face adversarial police action than more affluent children who commit the same frequency and severity of offence ([McAra & McVie, 2010](#)).
- 1 in 9 young men from the most deprived communities have spent time in prison by the time they are 23 years old ([Webster & Kingston, 2014](#)).
- 81% of children under the age of 12 who were reported to the [Children's Hearing System](#) for displaying a pattern of offending behaviour had parents who were deemed to pose a risk to them (due to domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health issues, criminal behaviours, abuse or neglect).
- [Care experienced children](#) are more likely to be reported to police and to attract a criminalising response, even when trauma related or involving minor offending.

**What could it look like?**

- Glasgow Youth Court has been in operation since June 2021 and was evaluated in May 2023 by CYCJ. The report can be found [here](#).
- Structured Deferred Sentencing Courts operate in Hamilton, Lanark and Airdrie. Evaluated 2018-19 by UWS. The report can be found [here](#).

**How do I find out more?**

Please contact [cycj@strath.ac.uk](mailto:cycj@strath.ac.uk)