

# Reviews for children and young people in custody under the Whole System Approach Information for Local Authorities

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This Information Sheet is designed to provide information for local authorities regarding reviews for all children (aged under 18) and young people (aged under 21) in custody, as part of the **Whole System Approach** extension. Since its inception in 2011 the plan was always for the Whole System Approach to include provision for children and young people under 21.

A pilot, involving four local authorities, provided positive evidence of improved partnership working and outcomes when the age was extended to all those under 21. Following discussions with key stakeholders it was agreed that the WSA should be extended to include all young people under the age of 21, in line with the Scottish Government's vision and priorities. This extension to include young people up to 21 will be effective across all local authorities from 1st April 2023.

## What is expected of local authorities?

On the day a child/young person is remanded or sentenced to custody, you should submit **CJSWRs and a Child's Plan** (where available). Any other relevant information should be shared in keeping with the principle of proportionality, information sharing protocols, and statutory guidance. These documents should be submitted to the SPS secure email: **PolmontCasework@prisons.gov.scot**. This information will then be shared as appropriate across establishments (Polmont, Grampian and Cornton Vale) and with relevant staff within these establishments (Personal Officers, First Line Managers, health etc). These should not be shared directly with personnel.

It is the local authority where the child ordinarily resides that is responsible for **organising and chairing** all reviews. SPS establishments will notify local authorities (via their identified WSA lead or through their generic email address) of the need for the initial custody review.

Contact details for establishments:

HMP YOI Polmont casework team: 01324 722288 or **PolmontCasework@prisons.gov.scot**  
HMP YOI Grampian: Banff Hall First Line Manager: 01779 485834  
HMP YOI Cornton Vale: 01786 835308 or **corntonvaleicm@prisons.gov.scot**

## Purpose

The purpose of the initial custody review is to ensure that a plan is developed for the child/young person throughout their stay, including a plan for their release. The release plan will promote discussion on: who will meet the child/young person at the gate; options for early release where appropriate; how agencies will keep in touch with the child/young person; and who is the named contact with responsibility for this.

The type and timescale for **initial custody reviews** depends on the child/young person's legal status:

For children and young people entering custody **on remand or who have been sentenced** reviews should be held **WITHIN 10 working days** of being detained. Family members should be encouraged to attend reviews for all children and young people who have been sentenced or fully committed.

For children/young people **on seven day remand** a **telephone call** should be undertaken with the Personal Officer **ASAP**.

For children who are **looked after** by the local authority, reviews should be held within 72 hours, in line with good practice guidance.

During the review information should be shared, including strengths, needs and risk. Supporting children/young people throughout their time in custody requires continuity of planning and support. This includes during both their sentence and their release, and will require the promotion of partnership working. Engaging children, young people, and their families (where appropriate) in this process is crucial.

Subsequent review meetings should take place throughout the child/young person's detention, at a frequency determined by the length of sentence and the child/young person's needs. A pre-release meeting should take place at least 10 days prior to liberation, and prior to the SPS pre-release case management board.

Reviews will be held in an appropriate setting within the YOI, or via video conferencing. Reviews should be attended by: the child/young person; their family (where appropriate); the allocated community-based social worker/Lead Professional/a social worker from the child/young person's home area who knows or has full information about them; the chair from the local authority; staff from the receiving establishment; and any other relevant professionals, including third sector organisations. The number of professionals attending reviews should be limited; as much notice as possible should be given to maximize the chances of appropriate attendance.

If the review is in person, SPS should be notified in advance about who will be attending, and whether any worker in attendance wants to complete further work with the young person immediately after the review.

A **template** has been developed to support the chairing of reviews. Reviews should be recorded as per local arrangements and the Child's Plan should subsequently be updated; both the minutes and the Child's Plan should then be shared with SPS.

The community-based social worker or Lead Professional should maintain contact with the child/young person throughout the period of detention, at a frequency based on the child/young person's needs. Outwith reviews, communication and the sharing of information and plans between the Lead Professional and Personal Officer should be ongoing.

**For further info/support contact CYCJ on 0141 444 8622 or [cycj@strath.ac.uk](mailto:cycj@strath.ac.uk)**