

Harrow
Monitoring
Group
publication

Harrow Monitoring Group Response to the Ministry of Justice Consultation on the Oversight and Funding of Youth Justice Services

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Note: *This correspondence has been sent by email. We would therefore appreciate it if any response could also be provided by email.*

Part A – Youth Justice Service Performance and Oversight

Questions 1–15

Executive Summary of Harrow Monitoring Group's Response

Harrow Monitoring Group welcomes the Ministry of Justice's consultation on strengthening the oversight and funding of Youth Justice Services (YJS). We support the Government's recognition that the current national oversight framework has become fragmented, placing unnecessary administrative burdens on practitioners while failing to provide a coherent picture of service performance, partnership effectiveness and overall system health.

We agree that reform is necessary. However, we believe that significant progress requires more than reorganising governance arrangements. Future oversight must recognise the increasingly complex needs of children entering the youth justice system and ensure that all statutory partners, not only YYS, are accountable for achieving better outcomes.

We support the proposed move towards thematic National Standards, a Quality Performance Framework and clearer differentiation between individual service performance, partnership effectiveness and wider system health. Nevertheless, we recommend strengthening these proposals by introducing independent validation alongside structured self-assessment, ensuring that oversight promotes learning while maintaining public confidence.

The consultation should place greater emphasis on **prevention**. The effectiveness of the youth justice system should not be judged solely by compliance with statutory processes or reductions in reoffending, but by sustained reductions in first-time entrants, successful diversion, improved educational engagement, stronger family support, reduced disproportionality and successful rehabilitation into adulthood.

The response also highlights the importance of addressing persistent ethnic disproportionality. National oversight should require every YYS to analyse local patterns of disproportionality, publish measurable objectives for reducing inequalities and evaluate whether interventions are achieving desired improvements. This is particularly important in highly diverse boroughs such as Harrow, where culturally competent services are essential to effective engagement with children, families and communities.

We support reform of the Youth Justice Board's funding arrangements but recommend that future allocations better reflect the complexity of children's needs rather than relying primarily on caseloads or population measures. Funding should recognise factors including child poverty, mental ill-health, neurodiversity, child exploitation, educational exclusion, housing

insecurity and demographic diversity. Longer-term funding settlements would also support workforce stability and enable more effective planning.

Finally, we believe that effective youth justice depends upon a highly skilled workforce, strong multi-agency collaboration, meaningful participation by children, families and victims, and independent assurance that promotes continuous improvement. We therefore urge the Government to develop an oversight framework founded upon shared accountability, evidence-based practice, transparency and a sustained commitment to prevention and rehabilitation.

Together, these proposals should support a youth justice system that places greater emphasis on prevention, shared accountability, evidence-based funding and improved outcomes for children, victims and communities.

This consultation presents an important opportunity to modernise youth justice governance. If implemented effectively, the proposed reforms can help create a more coherent, equitable and preventative system that delivers better outcomes for children, victims and communities.

Introduction

We take the opportunity to respond to the Ministry of Justice's consultation on the future oversight and funding of YJS. We recognise the vital role that YJS play in preventing offending, protecting victims, supporting rehabilitation and enabling vulnerable children to achieve positive life outcomes. We also welcome the Government's acknowledgement that the youth justice system has changed significantly over the past two decades and that national oversight arrangements have failed to evolve at the same pace. The consultation correctly identifies fragmented accountability, duplication of reporting requirements, increasing complexity of children's needs and funding arrangements that no longer reflect current patterns of demand. These are important issues that require reform.

However, the consultation also presents an opportunity to examine more fundamental questions about how the youth justice system is governed, how success is measured and whether existing structures genuinely enable children to avoid offending and build positive futures.

We believe that meaningful reform must extend beyond administrative restructuring. A revised oversight framework should create a coherent national system that strengthens collective accountability, reduces inequalities, promotes prevention, supports professional practice and places children's long-term wellbeing at the centre of decision-making.

Although this consultation is structured around individual questions, we have approached it as a single programme of reform. Accordingly, the responses that follow are underpinned by five consistent themes: prevention and rehabilitation; funding that reflects the complexity of children's needs; shared accountability across statutory partners; an emphasis on outcomes rather than procedural compliance; and fair, transparent and sustainable funding arrangements.

Why Harrow Monitoring Group is Responding

Harrow Monitoring Group is an independent community organisation that has monitored public services, governance and equalities in the London Borough of Harrow for many years. Our work includes scrutiny of children's services, education, safeguarding, housing, planning, public health and local government accountability. We regularly respond to Government consultations where national policy has significant implications for local communities.

Our interest in youth justice arises from our wider concern for children's wellbeing and the effectiveness of public services designed to protect vulnerable young people. Youth justice does not operate in isolation. Children entering the justice system often have histories involving educational exclusion, poverty, adverse childhood experiences, mental health difficulties, neurodiversity, family instability, exploitation, care experience or unmet special educational needs. Consequently, the effectiveness of YJS depends heavily upon the wider performance of children's services, schools, health services, police, probation, housing providers and voluntary organisations.

Our understanding of youth justice has also been enriched by the experience and guidance of practitioners who dedicated their careers to public service. We gratefully acknowledge Donovan Reuben, a former social services practitioner who supervised Community Payback work, and the late Ross Simpson, whose long service with the Middlesex Probation Service provided valuable insight into the operation of the criminal justice system. Their professional experience has informed our appreciation of the challenges faced by practitioners and reinforced our belief that effective youth justice depends upon prevention, rehabilitation, sound professional judgement and strong multi-agency collaboration.

Harrow provides a particularly relevant context for this consultation. It is one of London's most ethnically diverse boroughs, with children from minority ethnic communities forming the overwhelming majority of the school-age population. Effective youth justice therefore requires cultural competence, community trust and genuine partnership with families and local communities. At the same time, Harrow has experienced significant challenges within children's services in recent years, demonstrating how weaknesses elsewhere within the children's system inevitably affect the young people entering youth justice interventions. Our response therefore combines national policy observations with practical reflections drawn from local experience.

General Observations

The consultation correctly identifies that national oversight has become fragmented over time. Responsibility is currently divided between the Ministry of Justice, the Youth Justice Board and HM Inspectorate of Probation, each exercising different oversight functions through separate frameworks, reporting requirements and accountability arrangements.

We believe this lack of coherence is symptomatic of a wider structural problem. Successive reforms have gradually created a system characterised by distributed accountability without unified responsibility. Individual agencies retain separate responsibilities, yet no single organisation possesses comprehensive responsibility for ensuring that all components operate coherently as one integrated system.

This distinction is important. Fragmentation is not simply an administrative inconvenience; it affects frontline practice. YJS frequently become accountable for outcomes that depend substantially upon the performance of statutory partners. Delays in accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, shortages within children's social care, school exclusions, housing instability or inconsistent probation support all influence youth justice outcomes, yet these factors often remain outside the direct control of YJS themselves.

We therefore welcome the consultation's intention to distinguish more clearly between service performance, partnership performance and wider system health. Nevertheless, these distinctions should be accompanied by equally robust mechanisms for holding every statutory partner accountable for its contribution to youth justice outcomes.

A second overarching observation concerns the changing profile of children entering the youth justice system. As the consultation recognises, fewer children now enter the system, but those who do often present with considerably more complex needs requiring coordinated interventions across multiple agencies. This reality reinforces the importance of investing in prevention rather than concentrating resources primarily on statutory intervention after offending has already occurred.

Finally, we believe the consultation underestimates the significance of diversity and disproportionality. England's youth justice population continues to demonstrate substantial ethnic disparities. Nationally, Black and Mixed Heritage children remain significantly overrepresented relative to their proportion of the general population, while these disparities become even more pronounced within custodial settings. Within London, the demographic profile differs substantially from the national picture, with Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage children comprising the majority of YJS caseloads. National oversight arrangements should therefore require every YJS to demonstrate not only awareness of local disparities but measurable progress in reducing them.

The following responses address each consultation question individually. They should, however, be read as a coherent whole. Where a principle has already been explained in an earlier response, it is not repeated unnecessarily. Instead, subsequent answers build upon that analysis while focusing on the specific issue raised by each question.

Question 1

Should National Standards remain structured around system phases (Option 1), or be re-structured into thematic areas with cross-cutting principles (Option 2)?

We support Option 2.

The existing phase-based structure reflects the historical progression of children through a relatively linear justice pathway. Contemporary practice is significantly more complex. Children frequently move between diversion, prevention, court interventions, education, safeguarding, mental health support and family interventions simultaneously rather than sequentially. The consultation itself acknowledges that children's journeys are increasingly non-linear and characterised by overlapping interventions.

A thematic framework better reflects modern practice because it focuses upon the capabilities required throughout the system rather than administrative stages within it.

Themes such as leadership, partnership accountability, safeguarding, evidence-based practice, workforce development, victim support and continuous improvement remain relevant irrespective of where a child enters or leaves the system. Similarly, cross-cutting principles including children's voices, safeguarding, equality and disproportionality should influence every aspect of practice rather than appearing as isolated requirements.

We particularly welcome the proposed emphasis on leadership and shared accountability. Youth justice has always depended upon effective collaboration between local authorities, police, health, probation, education and voluntary organisations. Oversight should therefore assess whether those partnerships genuinely function as integrated systems rather than concentrating solely upon YJS performance.

However, we recommend that two further thematic areas receive explicit recognition.

The first concerns prevention and early family support. Prevention should not be regarded merely as activity that precedes formal involvement with YJS. Rather, it should represent a continuous philosophy underpinning every intervention throughout a child's engagement with public services.

The second concerns workforce capability. National Standards should recognise that successful youth justice depends upon experienced practitioners supported through manageable caseloads, continuing professional development, supervision and workforce stability. These factors significantly influence outcomes yet currently receive relatively limited attention within national oversight arrangements.

Overall, Option 2 offers greater flexibility, better reflects contemporary practice and provides a stronger foundation for continuous improvement than retaining a predominantly phase-based structure.

Question 2

If National Standards remain as phases of youth justice (Option 1), do you agree with the proposed new standards?

Should the Government ultimately decide to retain Option 1, we support introducing dedicated standards covering victims, early intervention and prevention, and updated Out-of-Court Resolutions. These additions appropriately recognise the significant evolution of youth justice practice over recent years.

Nevertheless, we believe these proposals should be strengthened.

The proposed Early Intervention and Prevention standard should move beyond procedural expectations towards measurable outcomes. Services should be expected to demonstrate reductions in first-time entrants, improved educational participation, reduced exclusions, increased family engagement and successful diversion away from formal criminal justice processes.

Similarly, the Victims standard should recognise restorative justice not merely as a procedural option but as an opportunity to rebuild community confidence, repair harm where appropriate and support rehabilitation.

The consultation also proposes clearer expectations around disproportionality. We strongly support this objective but recommend that the standards require every YJS to publish annual analyses explaining local disparities, measurable objectives for reducing inequalities and evaluations demonstrating whether interventions have succeeded.

One significant omission concerns children with neurodevelopmental conditions, speech and language difficulties, autism spectrum conditions and learning disabilities. These characteristics are disproportionately represented among children entering youth justice interventions and should receive explicit attention within National Standards rather than being subsumed under broader vulnerability categories.

We also recommend that trauma-informed practice should become an explicit national expectation rather than simply good practice. The overwhelming evidence demonstrates that many children entering youth justice have experienced significant trauma, exploitation or adverse childhood experiences. National Standards should therefore require all services and statutory partners to demonstrate trauma-informed approaches throughout assessment, intervention and rehabilitation.

Question 3

If National Standards are restructured around thematic areas (Option 2), to what extent do you agree with the proposed thematic areas and cross-cutting principles?

We strongly agree with the principle of thematic standards but recommends several refinements.

The proposed themes provide a stronger framework than existing arrangements because they reflect organisational capability rather than administrative processes. Leadership, joint accountability, evidence-based practice and continuous improvement are all fundamental characteristics of effective YJS.

However, we believe the framework should place greater emphasis upon measurable outcomes rather than organisational processes. The ultimate purpose of youth justice is not merely compliance with standards but achieving lasting improvements in children's lives and reducing offending.

We recommend incorporating an additional thematic area entitled Prevention, Diversion and Rehabilitation, recognising that successful YJS should be judged as much by the number of children prevented from entering the formal justice system as by the quality of statutory interventions delivered afterwards.

We also recommend expanding the proposed Partnership Accountability theme. Current arrangements often allow statutory agencies to participate within management structures without sufficient accountability for delivering agreed actions. National oversight should therefore examine the quality of partnership contributions, including attendance, leadership, financial commitment, workforce contributions and responsiveness to identified risks.

The proposed cross-cutting principle on disproportionality is particularly welcome. Nevertheless, the framework should require all services to demonstrate measurable progress rather than simply acknowledging disparities. This is especially important within London boroughs such as Harrow where highly diverse populations require culturally competent interventions informed by local demographic realities.

Finally, we recommend introducing a further core principle centred upon community confidence, legitimacy and public trust. Effective youth justice depends not only upon professional collaboration but also upon constructive relationships with families, schools, voluntary organisations, faith communities and local residents. Oversight arrangements should therefore recognise community engagement as an important component of effective youth justice practice.

Question 4

Should disproportionality be included as an individual standard/thematic area or integrated throughout the National Standards?

We consider that disproportionality should be both an individual thematic standard and embedded principle throughout every National Standard.

The consultation presents these approaches as alternatives. We believe they are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Disproportionality is sufficiently significant to justify a dedicated standard requiring every YJS and its statutory partners to develop evidence-based strategies for reducing inequalities. At the same time, equality of outcomes should influence every aspect of practice including prevention, assessment, diversion, sentencing support, victim services, custody, resettlement and rehabilitation.

National data demonstrates that disproportionality remains one of the defining characteristics of the youth justice system. Black children remain substantially over-represented among first-time entrants and throughout the youth justice population despite representing a much smaller proportion of the national child population. The disparities become even greater within custodial settings where children from minority ethnic communities collectively account for more than half of those detained.

For London, the issue assumes even greater significance. Most YJS operate within communities where children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds form the majority of those entering the youth justice system. Consequently, disproportionality cannot be viewed simply as an equality issue; it is a fundamental question of service effectiveness.

Harrow illustrates why this matters. The borough has one of the most diverse child populations in England. Most school-aged children belong to minority ethnic communities and come from families representing a wide range of languages, faiths and cultural traditions. Youth justice interventions that fail to understand these communities will inevitably struggle to gain trust, secure family engagement and achieve sustainable behavioural change.

However, ethnicity alone does not explain disproportionality.

National Standards should require YJS to analyse overlapping disadvantage including poverty, educational exclusion, special educational needs and disabilities, neurodiversity, speech and language difficulties, adverse childhood experiences, family instability, care experience, mental health needs and child exploitation.

Many children experience several of these disadvantages simultaneously.

Every YJS should publish annually an analysis of disproportionality across ethnicity, gender, disability, care experience and deprivation; measurable objectives for reducing identified disparities; evaluation of whether interventions have improved outcomes; and evidence demonstrating community engagement in designing solutions.

Without measurable expectations, there is a danger that disproportionality becomes acknowledged but insufficiently addressed.

Question 5

To what extent do you agree with the introduction of a Quality Performance Framework to define high-quality practice and support continuous improvement?

Strongly agree, subject to important safeguards.

We welcome the proposal to introduce a Quality Performance Framework that complements National Standards by defining what good practice actually looks like. The consultation correctly identifies that existing National Standards have become largely compliance-based and provide limited guidance regarding excellence in professional practice.

However, the effectiveness of such a framework will depend almost entirely upon how it is implemented.

There is an important distinction between supporting improvement and replacing independent scrutiny.

The consultation proposes that the framework should underpin structured self-assessment rather than routine reporting to central government. While reflective self-assessment is good professional practice, we have reservations about relying too heavily upon organisational self-evaluation.

Experience across public services demonstrates that organisations frequently overestimate their own effectiveness. This has been evident nationally in children's services, adult social care, education and healthcare. Harrow itself has experienced situations where optimistic internal assessments were subsequently contradicted by external inspection findings.

A high-performing organisation should certainly undertake rigorous self-assessment, but equally, public confidence depends upon periodic independent validation.

We therefore propose that the Quality Performance Framework should operate through three complementary mechanisms: robust local self-assessment; structured peer challenge involving neighbouring YJS; and periodic independent external inspection, with the emphasis, similar to the Ofsted inspection framework, remaining firmly on substance over structure and impact over paperwork.

The framework should also place greater emphasis upon measurable outcomes rather than procedural compliance.

Examples might include: reductions in first-time entrants; reductions in reoffending; educational participation; employment and training outcomes; successful family engagement; timeliness of access to mental health services; victim satisfaction; successful resettlement following custody; and reductions in disproportionality.

These outcomes better demonstrate service quality than administrative compliance alone.

The framework should also explicitly recognise workforce quality. Experienced practitioners remain the single greatest asset within YJS.

Measures should therefore include workforce stability, professional development, supervision quality, staff wellbeing and manageable caseloads.

Children benefit most from trusting relationships with experienced professionals rather than repeated changes of caseworker.

Question 6

What areas or aspects of youth justice practice should the framework cover to be most useful to your local area?

We believe the framework should reflect the realities of contemporary youth justice rather than simply organisational structures.

In particular, we recommend that it covers:

Prevention and early intervention.

The most successful YJS are those preventing children from entering the formal justice system in the first place. The framework should therefore evaluate diversion programmes, family support, school engagement, restorative approaches and multi-agency prevention activity rather than concentrating predominantly upon statutory case management.

Partnership effectiveness.

Youth justice depends upon effective collaboration between local authorities, police, health, education, probation, housing providers and voluntary organisations. Performance should therefore examine whether partners consistently fulfil their responsibilities rather than evaluating Youth Justice Services in isolation.

Children's lived experience.

Services should routinely obtain independent feedback from children and families regarding dignity, fairness, accessibility, communication and trust.

Victim experience.

Victims should receive meaningful opportunities to participate in restorative approaches where appropriate and should influence service improvement through structured feedback.

Rehabilitation.

Too often performance concentrates upon statutory compliance rather than sustainable behavioural change.

The framework should examine educational outcomes, stable accommodation, employment, positive family relationships, mental wellbeing and successful transition into adulthood.

Diversity and cultural competence.

YJS should demonstrate that interventions reflect local demographic realities.

Within Harrow this includes effective engagement with highly diverse communities, understanding cultural influences upon family life and working collaboratively with voluntary organisations and faith groups.

Workforce capability.

Workforce recruitment, retention, supervision, continuing professional development and practitioner wellbeing should all form part of quality assessment.

Innovation and learning.

Services should demonstrate how they evaluate new approaches using evidence rather than simply adopting fashionable initiatives.

Finally, the framework should explicitly recognise that children's needs rarely fit neatly within organisational boundaries.

Effective youth justice increasingly requires integrated responses spanning education, safeguarding, mental health, social care and community organisations.

The framework should therefore reward genuine integration rather than parallel working.

Question 7

To what extent do you agree that performance information should be organised and used across three tiers: Youth Justice Service; Management Boards and Partners; System Health?

This proposal represents one of the strongest aspects of the consultation because it directly addresses one of the principal weaknesses within current oversight arrangements.

The consultation correctly observes that YJS frequently become accountable for outcomes that are heavily influenced by the performance of partner organisations.

Separating accountability into three distinct levels should improve transparency.

Nevertheless, the success of this model depends upon ensuring that each tier carries genuine accountability rather than simply different reporting arrangements.

Tier One should continue to assess the operational performance of individual YJS. Tier Two should become considerably more robust than current arrangements.

Management Boards should not merely receive performance reports. They should be expected to demonstrate leadership, challenge poor partner performance, allocate resources appropriately and intervene where statutory agencies fail to meet agreed responsibilities.

For example, persistent delays in CAMHS assessments, inadequate educational provision, poor housing support or insufficient probation engagement should become visible partnership performance issues rather than being reflected solely in YJS outcomes.

Tier Three should provide national intelligence regarding wider system performance.

However, it should not simply aggregate local statistics. It should identify emerging national trends requiring cross-government action.

Examples include: increasing child exploitation; knife crime; county lines activity; mental health pressures; online criminal exploitation; housing insecurity; persistent educational exclusion; and changing demographic patterns.

Importantly, each tier should contain both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Performance cannot be understood through numerical indicators alone.

Independent inspection findings, practitioner experience, children's voices, victim feedback and community confidence should all contribute to national understanding.

Finally, escalation arrangements require further clarification. The consultation refers to escalation where partnership engagement is inadequate but provides relatively little detail regarding consequences.

For accountability to become meaningful, statutory partners should be required to respond formally where persistent weaknesses are identified.

Otherwise, there remains a risk that YJS continue carrying reputational responsibility for failures occurring elsewhere within the wider children's system.

Question 8

Do you agree that the proposed suite of performance measures will provide an effective picture of Youth Justice Service performance, partnership effectiveness and overall system health?

We agree with the principle of introducing a clearer and more coherent performance framework, but we do not believe that the proposed measures are yet sufficiently comprehensive to present an accurate picture of either YJS performance or wider system effectiveness.

The consultation rightly recognises that current reporting requirements have grown incrementally over many years, creating duplication and placing unnecessary administrative burdens upon practitioners without always generating information that is useful for improving outcomes.

We therefore support the intention to rationalise performance reporting and to distinguish between indicators that measure individual service performance and those that assess partnership effectiveness or overall system health.

However, there remains a risk that the revised framework will continue to measure what is easily quantifiable rather than what is most important. Numerical indicators undoubtedly have value, but they cannot, on their own, explain why children offend, why some interventions succeed while others fail, or whether public services have genuinely improved children's lives.

The revised framework should therefore incorporate both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quantitative indicators should continue to include first-time entrants, reoffending rates, use of custody, timeliness of assessments and statutory compliance. These remain important indicators of operational performance.

However, they should be complemented by longer-term outcome measures including educational attendance and attainment, participation in employment or training, stable accommodation, improvements in mental health, reductions in substance misuse, successful family engagement, access to speech and language therapy, and sustained disengagement from criminal exploitation.

These outcomes provide a more meaningful indication of whether rehabilitation has been achieved.

The framework should also include measures relating to children who never enter the formal youth justice system because effective preventative interventions have been successful. Public services should not be judged solely on how effectively they respond to offending but also on how effectively they prevent offending from occurring.

We also recommend that every YJS should routinely publish information regarding disproportionality across ethnicity, gender, disability, care experience and socio-economic deprivation. While national statistics demonstrate persistent inequalities, meaningful improvement depends upon understanding how these disparities manifest locally and whether local interventions are reducing them.

Finally, the performance framework should include measures of workforce capacity and stability. High staff turnover, excessive caseloads and difficulties recruiting experienced practitioners inevitably affect service quality long before performance indicators begin to deteriorate. Workforce resilience should therefore be regarded as a leading indicator of future performance rather than simply an operational management issue.

Question 9

How should the voices of children, victims, families and communities be reflected within the oversight framework?

We strongly welcome the consultation's recognition that the voices of children, victims and families should play a greater role in evaluating YJS. However, we believe the proposals should move significantly beyond consultation towards genuine participation in service design, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Children and young people possess direct experience of how public services operate in practice. Their perspectives often reveal barriers that are not apparent through management information or inspection findings. National oversight should therefore require every YJS to demonstrate how children have influenced both individual interventions and wider service development.

Listening to children must become an integral component of quality assurance rather than an occasional engagement exercise. Equally important are the voices of parents and carers.

Many families supporting children involved in the youth justice system face considerable challenges including poverty, insecure housing, mental ill-health, caring responsibilities and limited confidence in statutory services. Their experiences provide valuable insight into whether services are accessible, culturally competent and genuinely collaborative.

This is particularly relevant in boroughs such as Harrow, where families come from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Effective engagement cannot rely upon standard consultation techniques alone. YJS should demonstrate that they actively remove barriers to participation, provide accessible communication and work constructively with local community organisations and faith groups where appropriate.

Victims should also have a stronger voice within the oversight framework. The consultation rightly recognises the importance of victim-centred practice. However, victim involvement should extend beyond measuring satisfaction with individual cases.

Victims should contribute to the evaluation of restorative justice programmes, community confidence initiatives and wider service development where appropriate.

Community confidence represents another important omission. Youth justice ultimately exists to protect communities as well as support children. National oversight should therefore include periodic measures of public confidence, particularly among communities experiencing disproportionate levels of youth violence or anti-social behaviour.

Trust in public institutions influences reporting of crime, willingness to engage with restorative justice and broader confidence in local public services.

Finally, participation should itself become measurable. YJS should demonstrate how feedback has influenced policy, changed practice and improved outcomes rather than simply recording that consultation has taken place.

Question 10

Do you agree with the proposal to introduce structured self-assessment as a central feature of the new oversight framework?

We support structured self-assessment as an important component of continuous improvement but does not believe it should become the principal mechanism through which service quality is assessed.

The consultation correctly observes that existing oversight arrangements have become disproportionately focused upon reporting information upwards to central government. Reducing unnecessary reporting should release professional time for direct work with children and families. We therefore welcome the intention to simplify reporting requirements and encourage reflective practice.

Nevertheless, self-assessment has well-recognised limitations. Organisations naturally assess their own performance through their local knowledge, competing priorities and organisational culture. While this insight is valuable, it also creates the potential for unconscious bias, selective emphasis and over-optimistic judgements.

Experience across children's services nationally demonstrates that internal confidence is not always reflected in independent inspection findings.

Harrow itself provides an important illustration. In recent years, serious weaknesses within children's services became evident through independent inspection and external scrutiny despite previous local assurance arrangements. This experience reinforces the continuing importance of independent challenge.

Accordingly, we recommend a three-stage assurance model.

The first stage should consist of robust annual self-assessment using a nationally consistent framework.

The second should involve structured peer review undertaken by experienced professionals from neighbouring YJS, providing both support and constructive challenge.

The third should comprise periodic independent inspection undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Probation or another appropriately independent body.

These three elements are mutually reinforcing rather than competing: self-assessment promotes organisational learning; peer review provides constructive professional challenge; and independent inspection maintains public confidence.

The consultation also proposes that self-assessment should encourage innovation.

We support this objective. However, innovation should always be evidence-led.

Services should evaluate new interventions systematically and publish findings demonstrating whether they have improved outcomes before they become embedded within routine practice.

Self-assessment should therefore become a tool for organisational learning rather than an alternative to independent accountability.

Question 11

Do you agree with the proposed changes relating to annual Youth Justice Plans and their relationship with self-assessment?

We support that the statutory requirement for annual Youth Justice Plans should be modernised and better aligned with the proposed Quality Performance Framework. However, we do not believe this should reduce either transparency or accountability.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 rightly requires every local authority to prepare an annual Youth Justice Plan because youth justice is a statutory partnership responsibility rather than simply an operational service.

The quality of these plans is therefore of fundamental importance. They should not become descriptive reports documenting activity. They should become strategic evaluations demonstrating effectiveness, learning and future improvement.

Our experience within Harrow illustrates this distinction: recent Youth Justice Plans have generally described governance arrangements, service developments and statutory responsibilities competently. However, they provide comparatively limited critical evaluation of why particular outcomes have or have not been achieved, what lessons have been learned

from underperformance, how identified inequalities have changed over time, or whether strategic objectives have demonstrably improved children's lives.

Performance information is frequently presented descriptively rather than analytically. Similarly, while partnership structures are outlined, there is relatively little assessment of whether individual statutory partners have consistently fulfilled their responsibilities or how partnership effectiveness has influenced outcomes.

We consider that future Youth Justice Plans should be explicitly structured around the proposed Quality Performance Framework.

Every plan should include: a transparent self-assessment against each national standard; an independent commentary from the Youth Justice Management Board; evaluation of previous year's objectives; analysis of disproportionality and equality outcomes; assessment of partnership effectiveness; workforce analysis; financial sustainability; evidence of participation by children, victims and families and measurable priorities for the following year.

This would transform Youth Justice Plans from compliance documents into genuine public accountability statements.

We further recommend that every Youth Justice Plan should include an accessible public summary written in plain English.

Communities have a legitimate interest in understanding how local youth justice services are performing, how public money is being spent and what improvements are planned.

Finally, while reducing unnecessary bureaucracy is welcome, simplification should never result in reduced transparency. Public accountability depends upon honest evaluation rather than optimistic reporting.

National oversight should therefore encourage openness about challenges alongside recognition of success.

Question 12

Do you agree with the proposed changes to the funding model for Youth Justice Services?

We agree that the current funding model requires reform. The Youth Justice Board's funding arrangements have evolved incrementally over many years and no longer adequately reflect the complexity of modern youth justice practice. We therefore support the principle of developing a more transparent, evidence-based funding methodology that better reflects local need and enables longer-term planning.

However, we are concerned that the consultation focuses primarily on improving the mechanism for distributing funding without addressing the more fundamental question of whether overall investment is sufficient to meet increasing levels of need.

Over the past two decades the profile of children entering the youth justice system has changed significantly. Although fewer children enter the formal system, those who do frequently present with multiple and complex needs including mental ill-health, neurodevelopmental conditions, special educational needs, trauma, exploitation, substance misuse, unstable family circumstances and poor educational engagement. Supporting these children requires intensive multidisciplinary interventions that are significantly more resource-intensive than traditional case management.

The funding model must therefore recognise complexity rather than simply caseload volume.

We welcome the proposal to move towards a formula based upon objective indicators of local need. Nevertheless, we believe that the indicators proposed remain too narrow.

Funding should reflect not only population size and deprivation, but also the prevalence of child poverty, educational exclusion, children in care, care leavers, serious youth violence, child criminal exploitation, county lines activity, mental health needs, special educational needs and disabilities, speech and language needs, housing insecurity, family homelessness and local demographic diversity.

These factors are well-established predictors of youth justice involvement and place significant demands upon local services.

The consultation also gives relatively little attention to London's distinctive demographic profile.

Boroughs such as Harrow operate within highly diverse communities where YJS require cultural competence, multilingual engagement and strong relationships with community organisations. These additional responsibilities carry resource implications that should be recognised within national funding arrangements.

Equally important is funding stability.

YJS require experienced practitioners capable of developing trusting relationships with vulnerable children and families. Short-term annual funding settlements inevitably undermine workforce stability, innovation and long-term planning.

We encourage that Government moves towards multi-year funding settlements aligned with wider local government financial planning.

Finally, prevention should become an explicit funding priority as there remains a tendency across public services to invest substantially more resources in responding to offending than preventing it.

Future funding arrangements should actively reward successful diversion, early intervention and reductions in first-time entrants.

The most successful YJS should not necessarily be the one managing the largest caseload efficiently, but the one preventing children from requiring statutory intervention in the first place.

Question 13

Do you agree with the proposed approach to determining local funding allocations?

We support the principle of using objective evidence to determine funding allocations. Transparency and consistency are essential if local areas are to have confidence in the fairness of national funding decisions.

However, the consultation provides relatively limited detail regarding how different indicators will be weighted or periodically reviewed. Without greater transparency there is a risk that local authorities may struggle to understand whether allocations genuinely reflect changing patterns of need.

We recommend that the funding formula should satisfy five principles.

First, it should reflect current rather than historic demand. Communities change rapidly. Population growth, migration, economic pressures and changing patterns of youth offending all influence local demand. Funding models should therefore be reviewed regularly using the latest available evidence.

Secondly, the formula should recognise complexity rather than simply numbers. A YJS supporting a relatively small number of highly vulnerable children may require greater investment than another managing larger numbers with less complex needs.

Thirdly, the methodology should be transparent. Local authorities and communities should understand how funding has been calculated and what evidence has informed national decisions.

Fourthly, the methodology should encourage prevention. Funding should not inadvertently reward higher levels of offending. Instead, services should retain incentives to reduce first-time entrants and reoffending without fearing reductions in future resources as a consequence of successful prevention.

Finally, there should be scope for exceptional local circumstances as no national funding formula can perfectly capture local realities.

Government should therefore retain limited flexibility to respond where emerging issues, such as organised criminal exploitation, demographic change or exceptional safeguarding pressures, create demands not fully reflected within the formula.

Question 14

Are there any additional issues Government should consider when developing future oversight and funding arrangements?

We believe there are several issues that deserve greater consideration.

The first is the relationship between youth justice and wider children's services. Youth justice outcomes are heavily influenced by the effectiveness of education, safeguarding, health, housing and social care.

The consultation acknowledges partnership working but stops short of proposing stronger mechanisms for holding every statutory agency accountable.

Where weaknesses exist elsewhere within children's services, YJS should not become the sole focus of external scrutiny.

Secondly, greater attention should be given to workforce sustainability. Recruitment and retention challenges affect many YJS.

Increasing complexity has placed considerable pressure upon practitioners. National oversight should therefore monitor staff turnover, vacancy rates, supervision quality, professional development and staff wellbeing.

Thirdly, Government should invest more heavily in research and evaluation. Many innovative programmes are introduced locally but relatively few undergo rigorous independent evaluation.

National learning would benefit from a stronger evidence base identifying which interventions consistently improve outcomes across different communities.

Fourthly, community organisations deserve greater recognition. Voluntary organisations, youth groups, mentoring schemes and faith communities frequently possess trusted relationships with vulnerable young people that statutory agencies struggle to establish.

National oversight should encourage genuine partnership rather than treating voluntary organisations simply as commissioned providers. Their contribution should be recognised as part of the wider preventative ecosystem supporting vulnerable children rather than solely through contractual service delivery.

Fifthly, digital technology presents both opportunities and challenges. Online exploitation, social media, cybercrime and digital communication increasingly influence youth offending.

Oversight arrangements should therefore recognise emerging forms of harm alongside more traditional patterns of offending.

Finally, Government should consider introducing periodic independent reviews of the youth justice system itself.

The consultation correctly recognises that oversight arrangements have not kept pace with changes over the past twenty years.

Future reform should not depend upon another major review decades later.

A formal national review every five years would enable Government to respond proactively to changing evidence and emerging challenges.

Question 15

Do you have any further comments?

We welcome this consultation as one of the most significant reviews of youth justice governance for many years.

The consultation correctly recognises that the youth justice system has changed fundamentally since existing oversight arrangements were introduced.

We support the ambition to reduce bureaucracy, clarify accountability and strengthen continuous improvement.

However, structural reform alone will not transform outcomes. The greatest challenge facing youth justice today is not organisational design but the increasing complexity of children's lives.

Children entering YJS often present with multiple overlapping disadvantages including poverty, trauma, educational exclusion, exploitation, mental ill-health, neurodiversity, family instability and insecure housing.

No oversight framework can succeed unless these wider determinants receive equal attention.

Similarly, equally important, youth justice cannot become detached from broader questions of equality.

National evidence consistently demonstrates substantial ethnic disproportionality throughout the justice system.

London presents a markedly different demographic profile from many other parts of England and Wales.

Consequently, cultural competence, community engagement and understanding of local diversity should become central components of effective practice rather than supplementary considerations.

Harrow illustrates these realities. As one of London's most diverse boroughs, effective youth justice depends upon building trust across communities, recognising different cultural experiences and working collaboratively with families and voluntary organisations.

Future national standards should encourage this locally responsive approach.

Finally, Government should continue shifting the emphasis of youth justice from managing offending towards preventing offending.

Every child diverted away from crime represents a positive outcome not only for that individual but also for victims, families and society.

Investment in prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation delivers far greater long-term social and economic value than responding after offending has become entrenched.

Oversight arrangements should therefore judge success not by the volume of activity undertaken but by the number of children whose lives have been positively changed.

Harrow Monitoring Group believes that an effective youth justice system should ultimately be judged not by how efficiently it manages offending, but by how successfully it prevents offending, diverts children from unnecessary criminalisation and enables rehabilitation into responsible adulthood.

Part B – Stable and Sustainable Funding

Questions 16–25

Introduction

The following responses should be read alongside Harrow Monitoring Group's responses to Part A of this consultation. Where issues concerning prevention, workforce capability, partnership working, disproportionality, service quality and the increasing complexity of children's needs have already been addressed in detail, they are not repeated here. Instead, Part B focuses specifically on the funding implications of those principles and the practical operation of a fair, transparent and sustainable funding model.

The following are Harrow Monitoring Group's responses to the questions in this section.

Question 16

Do you agree that we should reform the funding formula, recognising that it is likely to result in a significant redistribution of funding across services in England and Wales?

We agree that the current funding formula requires reform. As discussed in Part A, the profile of children entering YJS has changed significantly over recent years. Although overall caseloads have reduced, the complexity of need has increased considerably, making it increasingly difficult for historic funding arrangements to reflect current service demands.

In Harrow, the YJS operates within one of the country's most diverse boroughs, working alongside children's services, education, health and safeguarding partners to support children whose needs frequently extend well beyond offending behaviour. Funding arrangements should recognise the complexity of this local operating environment rather than relying solely on historic demand patterns.

However, redistribution should not become an objective in itself. Any changes should be evidence-based, transparent and implemented in a way that protects service continuity. A revised funding formula should seek to improve fairness while avoiding unnecessary instability for local services.

We therefore support reform, provided that the revised formula is founded upon robust evidence, regularly reviewed to reflect changing patterns of need, and accompanied by appropriate transitional arrangements where significant changes in funding occur.

Question 17

Do you agree that the principles outlined above are the right ones to guide the design of a new funding formula?

We agree that fairness, transparency and the avoidance of perverse incentives provide an appropriate foundation for a revised funding formula. These principles are consistent with good public administration and should underpin future funding decisions.

However, we recommend that two additional principles receive explicit recognition.

The first is stability. YJS depend upon experienced practitioners, effective partnership working and sustained preventative programmes. Funding arrangements should therefore provide sufficient certainty to enable long-term workforce planning and service development.

For Harrow, stable funding would also support longer-term partnership planning across the Council, police, health, education and the voluntary sector, reducing the uncertainty associated with annual funding decisions and enabling sustained investment in prevention.

The second is prevention. As discussed in Part A, funding arrangements should encourage successful diversion and early intervention rather than inadvertently rewarding higher levels of statutory activity. The most effective YJS should not be financially disadvantaged because fewer children require formal justice interventions.

Question 18

Do you agree that allocating MOJ funding to Youth Justice Services across England and Wales based on relative levels of need is the most appropriate approach?

We support that funding should be allocated according to relative levels of need rather than historical allocations or simple population size.

This is particularly relevant in Harrow, where demographic diversity, differing patterns of deprivation and a wide range of cultural and linguistic communities require services that are both flexible and culturally responsive. A formula based solely on population or historical allocations would be unlikely to capture these local characteristics adequately.

However, accurately measuring need remains the principal challenge.

As discussed in Part A, need extends beyond the number of children entering the youth justice system. It increasingly reflects the complexity of children's circumstances, including mental ill-health, neurodevelopmental conditions, exploitation, educational exclusion, poverty, unstable family circumstances and safeguarding concerns.

Consequently, the methodology used to assess relative need should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to reflect emerging evidence rather than becoming fixed around historic patterns of demand.

Transparency is equally important. Local authorities should understand how funding allocations have been calculated and have confidence that the underlying methodology is objective, evidence-based and regularly updated.

Question 19

Aside from diversion data currently collected by the YJB, what alternative or supplementary datasets could be considered to provide a comprehensive measure of need in your local area?

We agree that First Time Entrant data alone is no longer an adequate proxy for measuring youth justice need. As recognised in the consultation, today's YJS increasingly work with smaller numbers of children presenting with significantly greater complexity.

We therefore recommend supplementing diversion data with objective datasets that are already collected nationally and satisfy the criteria outlined within the consultation.

Potential indicators include the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), rates of persistent school absence and permanent exclusion, numbers of children in care and care leavers, prevalence of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, indicators relating to child criminal exploitation, youth homelessness and temporary accommodation, local mental health prevalence, and measures of serious violence affecting children.

No single dataset will adequately represent need. A composite model using several independently collected indicators is likely to provide a more accurate reflection of demand while avoiding perverse incentives.

In Harrow's case, these indicators would provide a more rounded understanding of local need than First Time Entrant data alone, particularly when considered alongside measures of educational vulnerability, deprivation and safeguarding demand.

The formula should also be reviewed periodically to ensure that future evidence can be incorporated as children's needs continue to evolve.

Question 20

To what extent do you support providing all Youth Justice Services with a standard allocation towards core business costs before the remaining funding is distributed through the funding formula?

We support providing every YJS with a standard allocation sufficient to meet unavoidable core operating costs before applying a needs-based funding formula.

Every service, irrespective of size, requires minimum organisational capacity to fulfil statutory responsibilities, maintain governance arrangements, recruit qualified staff, undertake safeguarding responsibilities and deliver essential functions. These fixed costs do not reduce proportionately in smaller services.

For boroughs such as Harrow, maintaining this baseline capacity is essential if specialist practitioners are to be retained and effective multi-agency working sustained, irrespective of fluctuations in annual caseloads.

However, the core allocation should represent only the baseline necessary to sustain statutory provision.

The remaining funding should continue to reflect relative need using an evidence-based formula that recognises local complexity and changing patterns of demand.

This approach appropriately balances equity with efficiency by ensuring that every YJS possesses sufficient capacity to operate effectively while directing additional resources towards areas experiencing greater need.

Question 21

If a new funding formula is introduced, which approach to managing the transition would you prefer?

Response

Option B – Gradual implementation.

We support a gradual transition towards any revised funding formula.

While we recognise the importance of moving towards a fairer distribution of national resources, the benefits of a revised formula could be undermined if implementation creates unnecessary instability for local services.

As discussed in Part A, effective YJS depend upon experienced practitioners, stable partnerships and long-term preventative programmes. Significant reductions in funding over a short period could disrupt workforce retention, weaken local partnerships and reduce investment in prevention precisely when services are being asked to improve outcomes.

A phased implementation over a longer period would provide local authorities and their statutory partners with sufficient time to adapt workforce plans, commissioning arrangements and financial planning while maintaining continuity of support for vulnerable children.

In Harrow, gradual implementation would also provide sufficient time for local partnerships to adjust workforce planning and commissioning arrangements without disrupting established relationships with children, families and community organisations.

However, the implementation period should not become excessively prolonged. The funding formula should be reviewed regularly during the transition to ensure that it continues to reflect changing patterns of need and does not simply delay necessary reform.

Question 22

Which future grant arrangement would best support effective delivery of Youth Justice Services in your local area?

We support Option B – Merge core grant and Turnaround funding into a single grant agreement while retaining a ringfence for early intervention activity.

We back simplifying funding arrangements where this reduces unnecessary bureaucracy and provides greater local flexibility.

However, we also believe that prevention and early intervention require continued protection.

One of the principal themes of our response to Part A is that effective youth justice should increasingly be judged by the number of children prevented from entering the formal justice system rather than solely by how statutory interventions are delivered after offending has occurred.

Maintaining a ringfence for preventative activity provides assurance that resources intended to support diversion and early intervention cannot gradually be displaced by short-term operational pressures.

This is particularly relevant in Harrow, where early intervention depends upon coordinated working between the YJS, schools, children's social care, health services and community organisations. Protecting preventative funding helps sustain these partnerships.

Option B therefore achieves an appropriate balance between administrative simplification and protecting investment in prevention.

Should Government adopt this approach, reporting requirements should also be streamlined to ensure that reducing bureaucracy becomes a genuine outcome of the proposed reforms.

Question 23

If Option B were implemented, when should this change take effect?

Response

Option B – After the current Spending Review period (no earlier than April 2029).

We support implementation after the current Spending Review period.

Introducing significant changes before existing funding arrangements conclude would create unnecessary uncertainty for local planning, workforce management and commissioning decisions.

YJS require sufficient time to prepare for revised governance arrangements under Part A before implementing major funding reforms.

Aligning implementation with the next funding cycle would provide greater certainty for local authorities while allowing Government to refine the funding methodology using the evidence gathered during the transitional period.

This approach also provides an opportunity to evaluate whether the proposed oversight reforms have improved partnership accountability before introducing significant financial changes.

Question 24

To what extent do you agree that greater public visibility of partner contributions would strengthen accountability?

We strongly agree that greater transparency regarding partner contributions would strengthen local accountability.

As discussed in Part A, YJS frequently depend upon the effective contribution of statutory partners whose financial and operational commitments vary considerably between local areas.

Greater transparency would also assist local scrutiny by enabling Management Boards, councillors and communities in boroughs such as Harrow to understand how statutory partners are contributing to shared youth justice objectives.

Publishing partner contributions would help Management Boards, elected members and local communities understand whether agencies are contributing proportionately to the delivery of youth justice services.

However, transparency alone is unlikely to secure consistent partnership commitment.

Greater visibility should therefore be accompanied by clear expectations regarding minimum partner contributions, regular review by Management Boards and formal explanations where agreed contributions are not achieved.

The objective should not be to encourage public comparison between organisations but to promote shared accountability and informed local decision-making.

Question 25

What additional measures would most help strengthen partner contributions in your area?

We believe that stronger partnership contributions depend upon clearer expectations, greater transparency and more effective governance rather than additional statutory duties alone.

In Harrow, this would complement existing partnership arrangements by encouraging clearer agreements regarding financial, staffing and specialist service contributions, while recognising that effective prevention depends upon the sustained involvement of education, health, police, probation, housing and the voluntary sector.

National guidance should establish a common framework describing the minimum financial, staffing and operational contributions expected from each statutory partner while allowing appropriate local flexibility.

Management Boards should review partner contributions annually as part of the Youth Justice Plan and publish a summary explaining how each organisation has supported local delivery. This would complement the greater transparency proposed elsewhere in the consultation while encouraging shared ownership of outcomes.

Government should also encourage longer-term partnership planning by aligning funding cycles wherever possible. Short-term funding arrangements often discourage strategic investment and make it more difficult for statutory and voluntary partners to develop sustainable preventative programmes.

Finally, effective partnership working should become an explicit measure of system performance rather than simply a governance requirement. Partnerships should be assessed not only on the existence of formal structures but on whether collective investment is demonstrably improving outcomes for children, reducing reoffending and strengthening prevention.

Conclusion

We commend the Government's recognition that youth justice oversight requires fundamental reform. The consultation provides an important opportunity to replace fragmented governance with a more coherent national framework that supports learning, strengthens accountability and ultimately improves outcomes for children and communities.

We support many of the consultation's proposals, including the move towards thematic National Standards, the introduction of a Quality Performance Framework, clearer differentiation between YJS performance and wider system-wide accountability, and the simplification of reporting requirements. Collectively these proposals have the potential to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and allow practitioners to focus more directly on supporting children, victims and families.

Nevertheless, successful reform will require more than revised organisational structures. A modern youth justice system must recognise that offending behaviour rarely develops in isolation. It is frequently associated with poverty, educational exclusion, mental ill-health, trauma, neurodiversity, child exploitation, unstable family circumstances and wider social inequalities. Effective oversight should therefore assess how well statutory partners work together to address these underlying causes rather than evaluating YJS in isolation.

The consultation should also place greater emphasis on prevention. The long-term success of youth justice should not be measured solely through reductions in reoffending but through sustained reductions in first-time entrants, improved educational engagement, stronger family support, reduced disproportionality and successful transitions into adulthood. These outcomes require sustained investment, stable funding and a highly skilled workforce supported by robust professional development.

Finally, we believe that the future oversight framework must be founded upon three enduring principles.

The first is shared accountability, ensuring that every statutory partner is responsible for its contribution to outcomes for children.

The second is independent assurance, combining self-assessment with peer challenge and external inspection to maintain public confidence.

The third is child-centred prevention, recognising that the greatest success of any youth justice system is not how effectively it manages offending after it occurs, but how successfully it prevents vulnerable children from entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

If these principles guide future reform, the Government will have the opportunity not merely to improve oversight arrangements but to create a more effective, equitable and preventative youth justice system that delivers better outcomes for children, victims and communities alike.

Summary of Recommendations

Harrow Monitoring Group recommends that the Government:

1. Adopt thematic National Standards supported by cross-cutting principles rather than retaining a predominantly phase-based structure.
2. Make disproportionality both a dedicated national standard and a cross-cutting principle, requiring measurable local action to reduce inequalities.
3. Introduce a Quality Performance Framework that focuses on outcomes for children rather than procedural compliance.
4. Complement structured self-assessment with peer review and periodic independent inspection to ensure robust external assurance.
5. Strengthen accountability across all statutory partners so that Youth Justice Services are not held solely responsible for outcomes beyond their direct control.
6. Place greater emphasis on prevention, diversion and early intervention within both performance assessment and funding arrangements.
7. Develop a funding methodology that reflects the complexity of children's needs, including mental health, neurodiversity, exploitation, educational exclusion, care experience and demographic diversity.
8. Introduce longer-term, multi-year funding settlements to improve workforce stability and support strategic planning.
9. Require YJS to publish annual analyses of disproportionality, partnership effectiveness and measurable progress against agreed objectives.
10. Modernise annual Youth Justice Plans so that they become evidence-based evaluations of service effectiveness rather than descriptive reports of activity.

11. Recognise workforce capability, professional development, supervision and staff wellbeing as key indicators of service quality.
12. Strengthen participation by children, families, victims and local communities in service design, evaluation and continuous improvement.
13. Encourage innovation that is supported by robust evidence and independent evaluation.
14. Improve transparency by publishing accessible public summaries of Youth Justice Plans and annual self-assessments.
15. Ensure that the success of the youth justice system is measured primarily by its ability to prevent offending, reduce reoffending, support rehabilitation and improve children's long-term life outcomes.
16. Reform the funding formula so that allocations reflect the complexity of children's needs, including factors such as deprivation, educational exclusion, neurodiversity, child exploitation and safeguarding pressures, rather than relying primarily on caseload volumes or First Time Entrant data.
17. Introduce a stable, transparent and regularly reviewed funding model that provides multi-year certainty for Youth Justice Services, supports workforce planning and reflects changing patterns of local need.
18. Protect investment in prevention and early intervention by simplifying grant arrangements while maintaining dedicated support for diversion and preventative activity.
19. Strengthen shared financial accountability by increasing transparency regarding partner contributions and establishing clearer expectations for the financial, staffing and operational support provided by all statutory partners.

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