

# Youth Justice Board

January 2023



# What is the Youth Justice Board?



An **independent**  
**body**



Made up of  
**experts**



With **functions** set  
out in law

Led by the Chief Executive (Claudia Sturt) and supported by the Chief Operating Officer (Steph Roberts-Bibby), and the Chief Strategy Officer (Jamie Bennett) who work following the Board's direction with a team of public servants.

# Who are the YJB Board members?



Keith Fraser- Chair



Keith Towler



Sharon Gray



Brian Tytherleigh



Prof. Neal Hazel



Susannah Hancock



Louise Shorter



Jacob Sakil

**x3**  
**vacancies**

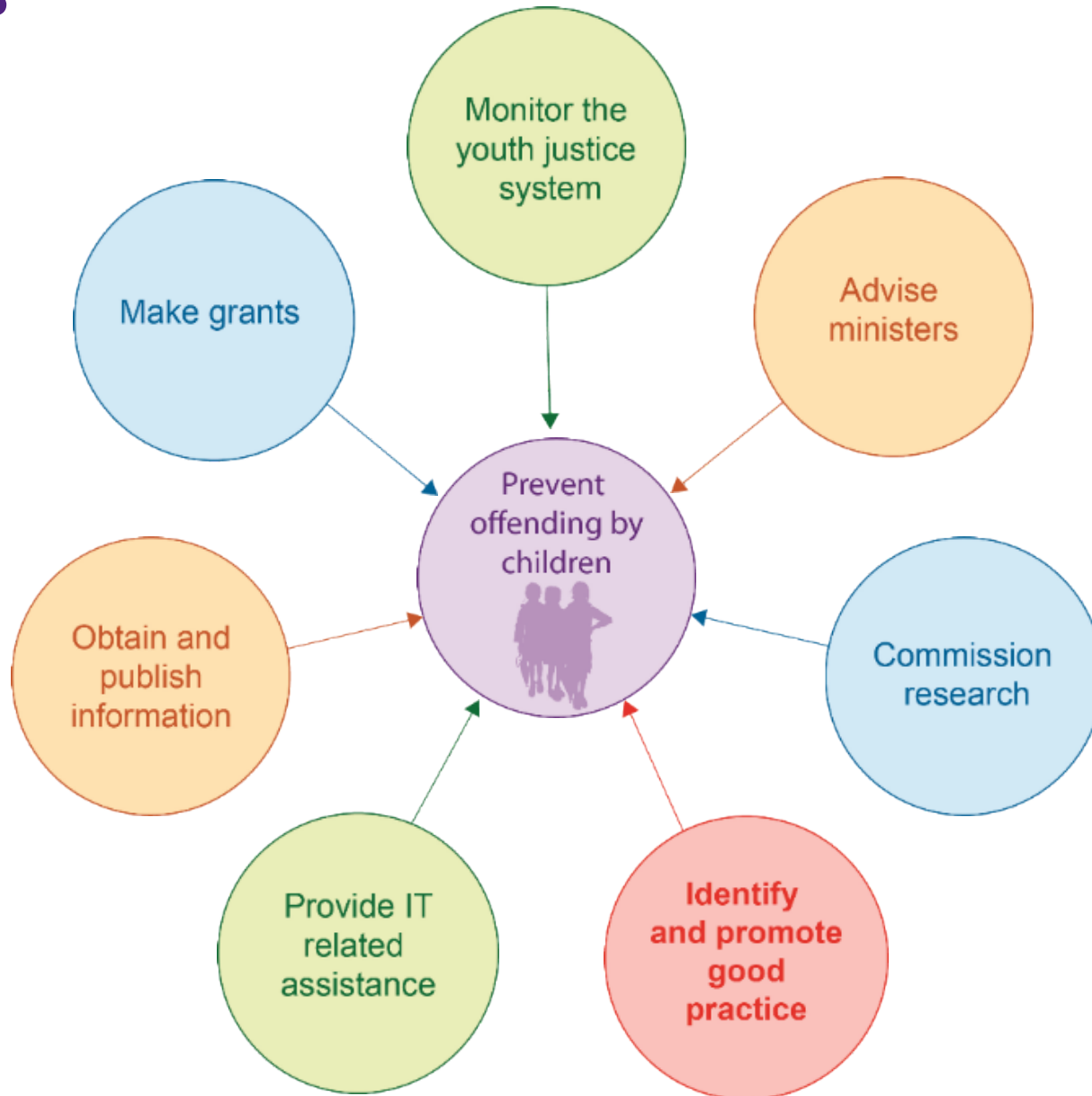
# Who are we and what do we do?



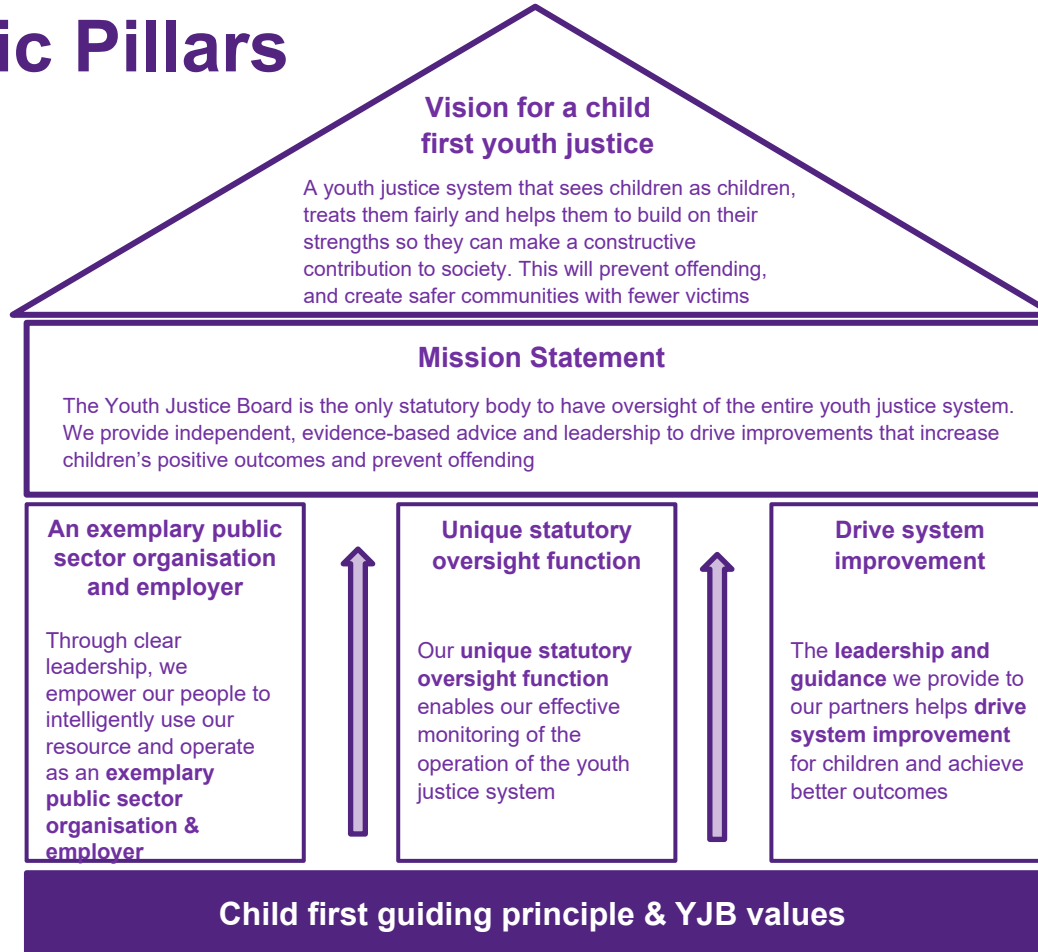
The Youth Justice Board, for England and Wales is:

- a non-departmental public body created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to oversee the youth justice system for England and Wales
- sponsored by the Ministry of Justice
- Board members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice
- independent from government and parliament
- the only official body to have oversight of the whole youth justice system and so is uniquely placed to guide and advise on the provision of youth justice services
- promotes a 'Child First' youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims

# Statutory duties as set out in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998



# Strategic Pillars



# Areas of concern across the Youth Justice Sector

Evidence tells us that the following are the key concerns across the youth justice system. We are actively working with local services and across the youth justice system to address these areas and drive improvement.

- **Early intervention & prevention in the system**

There is a clear role for youth justice services (YJS) to support children at an earlier stage to prevent future offending behaviour and help children to reach their full potential. This approach is informed by evidence of what works in cutting crime and supporting children to live crime free lives.

- **Over representation**

Key evidence and data shows that children from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are over-represented at all areas of the youth justice system and other children's services. This often intersects with other factors such as care experience, poverty and vulnerability.

Cont.....

- **Exploitation**

Children are more likely than adults to be victims of crime, particularly serious crime. There is a need for a more sophisticated approach that recognises that children can be both victims and perpetrators, for example through county lines, gangs and organised crime.

- **Custody, resettlement & transitions**

Children should be sent to custody only when this is absolutely necessary and held in conditions of safety, where their wellbeing is safeguarded, and they are prepared for their return to the community. The number of children in custody has reduced and those that remain often have complex needs and vulnerabilities.

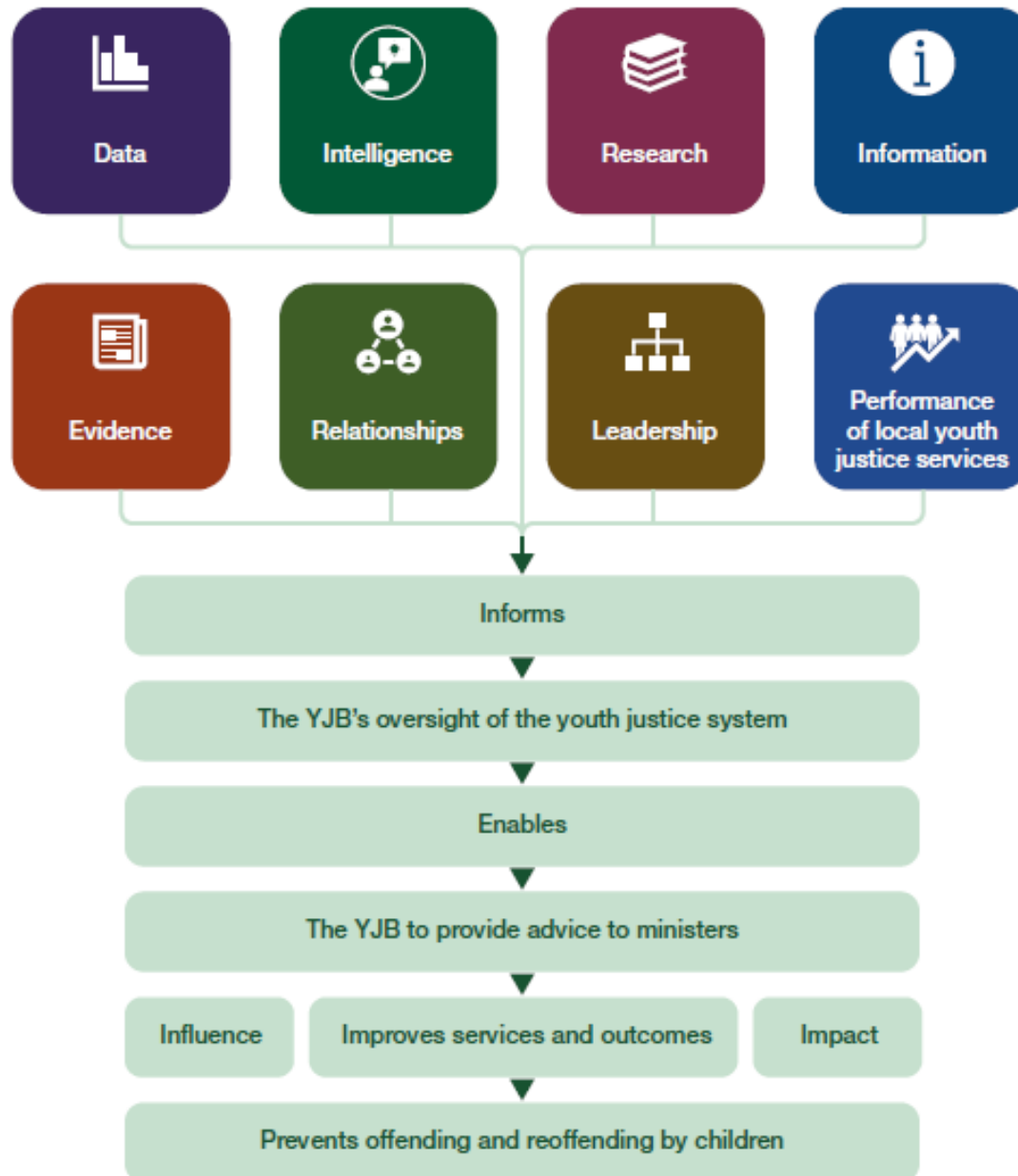


## Risk, Vulnerability & Desistance

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime is a major longitudinal study of a single cohort of around 4,300 young people who started secondary school in the City of Edinburgh in the autumn of 1998. The overarching purpose of the study is to examine the causes and consequences of young people's involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour. Participants now 35 years of age.

The key messages are:

- Holistic approaches targeting community risk factors achieve more than focus on risky individuals
- Contact with Criminal Justice System (CJS) does not strengthen desistance
- Skilled supportive key workers or mentors create and sustain desistance by helping individuals navigate their life
- Children who are excluded or absent from school will have poorer life chances including more CJS contact



# Current YOT performance oversight

## Observation Stage

- Performance Oversight Board (POB) assessments to consider position of services and inform escalation decisions
- Includes engagement with watchlist services and any one-off areas of work/advice which could help improve service

## Stage 1 – Diagnostics and light touch engagement

- In escalation - Investigation and analysis of the cause or nature of concerns impacting on performance outcomes for children; to identify where the service may need assistance; offering advice and guidance and brokering support.
- In de-escalation - Reducing engagement with the service due to confidence in their improvement journey and expected trajectory out of priority status.

## Stage 2 - Escalated improvement support

- In escalation - Concerns regarding progress against improvement, allocation of YJB resource for increased engagement, potentially including delivery of improvement support.
- In de-escalation - recognition that progress has been made and there are reduced concerns on the service's ability to deliver their improvement plan but requirement for YJB improvement support remains.

## Stage 3 - Performance Notification to Ministers

- Significant concerns regarding services ability to improve triggers Ministerial notification. YJB improvement support remains; with increased focus.

*Information relating to YJ services in priority status may be shared between the YJB and HMI Probation and other relevant Inspectorates*

## Key data (published 22/07/22)

**15,800 children were cautioned or sentenced**



Down 17%  
in the last  
year



82% decrease  
over the last ten  
years

**8,800 first time entrants to the youth justice system**



Down  
20% since  
the previous  
year



81% fall from  
the year ending  
March 2011

**Almost three quarters of children remanded to custody received a non-custodial outcome**



Increase of 8% compared with the previous year in outcomes which did not result in a custodial sentence

**The average number of children in custody has fallen to its lowest level**



Down 28% from the previous year to 560

**Reoffending decreased to its lowest level**

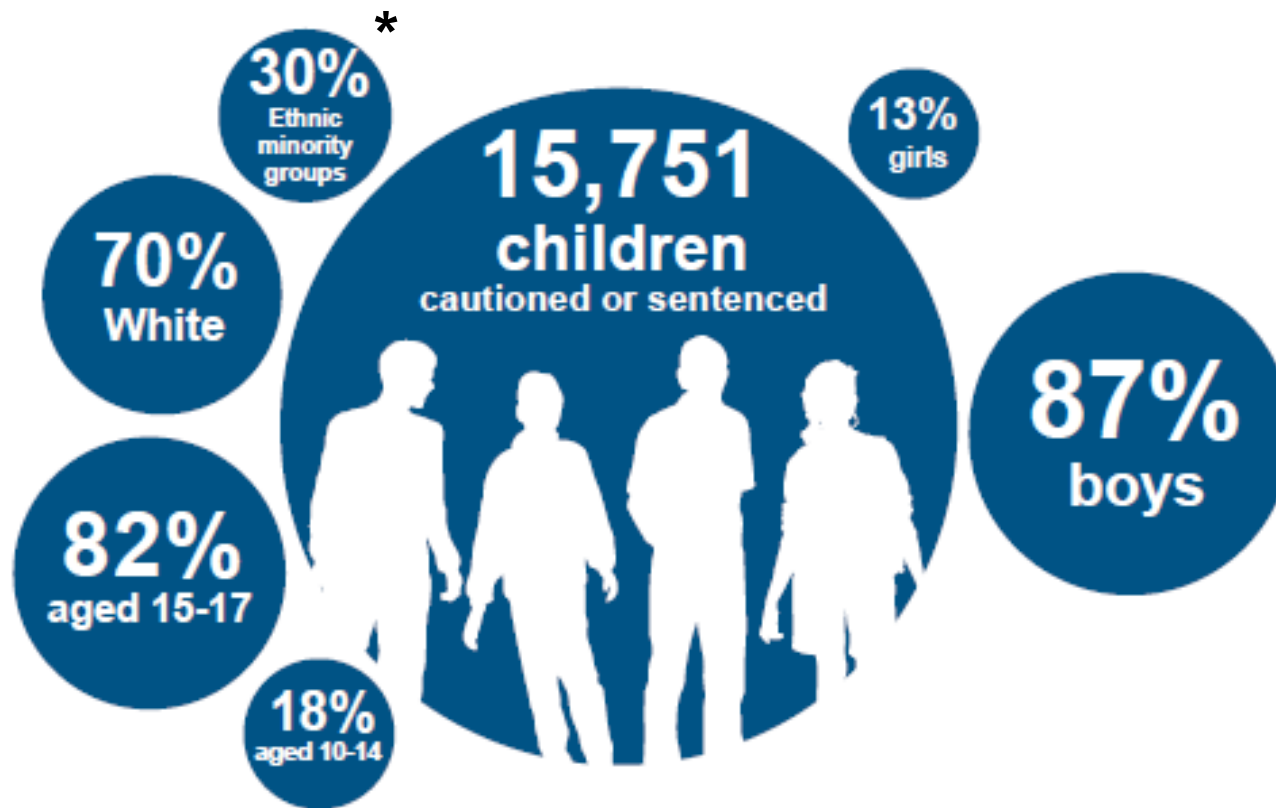


Down 3.6 % points in  
the last year



Down 4.1 %  
points since  
2010

## Demographics of children in the justice system



\* Compared to 19% of children in society (2011 census)

## Useful links

[YJB Business Plan 2022/2023](#)

[YJB Strategic plan](#)

[Annual statistics 2020/2021](#)

[HMI Probation Annual inspection of youth justice report](#)

[Youth Justice Resource Hub](#)