



The Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (AYM) response to the Ministry of Justice proposed changes to Youth Justice Performance Indicators

About the AYM

The AYM is a professional association representing the majority of youth offending teams (YOT) and their managers in England.

Section 39 (1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the co-operation of the named statutory partners to form a YOT. Section 38 (1, 2) identifies the statutory partners and places upon them a duty to co-operate in order to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area. These statutory partners are the local authority, police, the probation service, and health. To support the YOT, additional partners may also be recruited to the joint strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people.

The Association is able to draw on the wealth of knowledge and the breadth of members' experience to promote public understanding of youth crime issues and to play its part in shaping the youth crime agenda.

Our members run services providing community-based supervision for children and young people who offend. We also work with children in custody and work closely with staff in secure units and young offender institutions to ensure that young people receiving custody experience as smooth a transition as possible into custody and back in to the community.

The AYM welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to this Ministry of Justice consultation on performance indicators for youth justice. The AYM also welcomes the fact that the indicators are focussed not solely on youth justice services (statutory youth offending teams) but on the local youth justice partnership. We would like to be assured that the Ministry of Justice has consulted with relevant representative organisations, such as the Association of Directors of Children's Services regarding their view on resources and management issues for specific proposed KPIs, and the Magistrates Association and HMCTS on Indicator 7.

As a membership organisation, our response is an amalgamation of considerations from a diverse range of youth justice services, as such the comments we provide may be more relevant to some services than others.

AYM Response

The AYM consider that the changes will have significant impact on data and analysis undertaken by youth justice services; some of the 9 KPIs have subsections which in reality means a total of 15 new performance indicators. Members are also concerned about the ability of IT suppliers to effectively implement the necessary changes to the systems used by youth justice services to report on the KPIs.

The intention to commence the new measures by the 22nd October 2022 is problematic in relation to planning and reporting; Youth Justice Plans were due for submission by the 30th June 2022 and will therefore not reflect the proposed performance indicators. Commencing the new measure in April 2023 would enable youth justice services to ensure YJ Plans take account of the new KPIs when setting reporting requirements for their management boards.

Some of the KPIs are binary in nature and as argued by youth justice services previously when such KPIs were current, do not reflect the amount of work undertaken influencing other agencies/services in a bid to improve outcomes for children. Whilst the commentary states that 'the revised KPIs will provide transparency on the strength of YOT partnerships', our members would be keen to understand how this will impact on the youth justice services being measured, particularly where such provision is provided by private/voluntary service providers. In particular, feedback at the recent consultation workshops called for further consideration regarding the ETE measure, including consultation with youth justice 'subject matter experts' to ensure that reporting is consistent.

There is concern that YOTs with small caseloads will be very vulnerable to volatility in measures reported quarterly; annual reporting would perhaps make this less of an issue.

In relation to the proposed KPIs, the AYM would also like to propose additional KPIs which we feel could inform best practice:

- % of victims contacted;
- Number of court orders successfully completed;
- Number of orders revoked early because of good progress;
- Number of children diagnosed with mental health condition as a result of an assessment;
- Number of children with an identified Special Educational Need as a result of an assessment;
- Number of children who have completed YJ early intervention and prevention projects;
- Outcomes of community resolutions delivered as part of a YJS intervention;

The following KPIs are also suggested for inclusion with the requirement that the police report against each:

- Outcomes of community resolutions delivered as a 'street police intervention';
- Number of children released under investigation and duration (police KPI);
- Number of children arrested and their profile (police KPI).

The AYM also makes the following observations:

- The health KPI only considers mental health, the AYM would propose this is extended to include physical and sexual health.
- In terms of serious youth violence (SYV), the AYM feel it would be helpful to have a definition and guidance on what is considered as SYV for the purposes

of consistent reporting i.e. offence categories. Will this KPI be linked to VRU data? If not, extraction of data will be difficult.

- The remand measure and subsequent court outcome needs further consideration. Congruence between YOT recommendations is not necessarily a positive factor - the YOT is responsible for supporting decision makers (sentencers) in making decisions, sentencers are responsible for considering all information available to make a sentencing decision. Measuring congruence could mean an over reliance on the YOT for information, or the YOT anticipating a recommendation the court would find acceptable – neither is beneficial or in the best interests of justice.
- Management Board attendance needs to be measured by agency and if necessary, seniority; it also needs to be balanced in terms of how effective that attendance is.
- The AYM is concerned that indicator 9 will not support youth justice services in addressing disproportionality. Analysis of a cohort, rather than reporting the rate, would be more beneficial in understanding disproportionality. An indicator that shows the rate, and level of reduction in relation to local comparisons, such as that of the YJBs Relative Rate Index, would be more useful and informative in terms of partnership working to address disproportionality.

If you have any questions regarding this response please contact:

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Kind regards

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On behalf of the AYM