

Bristol Youth Justice Service Partnership Board

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Bristol Youth Justice Service (YJS) Partnership Board provides **strategic leadership, oversight and accountability** for the local youth justice system.

Its core purpose is to:

- Prevent offending and reoffending by children
- Improve outcomes and life chances for children in contact with the justice system
- Ensure the service operates in line with **Child First principles** and statutory duties

The Board brings together senior leaders from partner agencies to ensure a **co-ordinated, whole-system response** to youth justice.

2. Statutory Context

The Partnership Board operates within the framework of the **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**, which requires local authorities and partners to:

- Establish and support a youth justice service
 - Work jointly to prevent offending
 - Produce and deliver a Youth Justice Plan
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3. Key Responsibilities

The Partnership Board will:

3.1 Strategic Leadership

- Set the **strategic direction and priorities** for Bristol YJS
- Approve and oversee delivery of the **Youth Justice Plan**
- Ensure alignment with wider local partnership priorities (e.g. safeguarding, community safety)

3.2 Performance and Quality

- Scrutinise performance data and outcomes

- Monitor delivery against national standards and local targets
- Provide **constructive challenge** to improve performance and reduce reoffending
- Ensure learning from inspection and audit is implemented

3.3 Partnership and System Leadership

- Promote strong **multi-agency working** across the youth justice system
- Ensure partners contribute effectively to delivery (including staffing and resources)
- Support integration with children's services, health, education, police and probation

Effective governance requires a clearly identifiable board that **sets direction, oversees performance and ensures resources are in place.**

3.4 Resources and Sustainability

- Ensure Bristol YJS is **appropriately resourced**
- Oversee partner contributions (financial and staffing)
- Monitor demand, capacity and workforce issues

3.5 Safeguarding and Disproportionality

- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met
- Challenge and address **disproportionality**, including ethnicity and vulnerability
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion

3.6 Voice of Children and Victims

- Ensure the views of children, parents/carers and victims are heard and used
- Promote participation and co-production in service design

3.7 Risk Management

- Identify and manage strategic risks
- Ensure appropriate escalation to other strategic partnerships where required

4. Membership

Membership should include **senior representatives (decision-makers)** from key statutory partners, typically:

- Local Authority (Children's Services)
- Police
- Probation
- Health (e.g. Integrated Care Board)
- Education

Additional members may include:

- Housing
- Substance misuse services
- Voluntary/community sector
- Courts / Legal representatives (where appropriate)

Partnership Board members must:

- Have sufficient authority to commit resources
- Act on behalf of their organisation
- Champion youth justice within their agency

Senior multi-agency membership is essential to ensure partners can **contribute resources and influence delivery**.

5. Chairing Arrangements

- The Partnership Board will be chaired by a **senior strategic leader** (e.g. Director of Children's Services or equivalent)
- The Chair is responsible for:
 - Providing leadership and direction
 - Ensuring effective challenge and accountability
 - Promoting partnership engagement

6. Meetings

- Meetings will be held **quarterly** (minimum)
- Additional development or deep-dive sessions may be scheduled as required
- A forward plan of agenda items will be maintained

7. Governance and Accountability

The Partnership Board will:

- Report into relevant local strategic partnerships (e.g. Safeguarding Children Partnership, Community Safety Partnership)
- Provide assurance to councillors, chief officers and statutory bodies
- Receive regular reports from the YJS Head of Service

The Partnership Board should act as the **lead governance body for the local youth justice system**, not just the service.

8. Quorum

A meeting will be quorate when:

- The Chair (or nominated deputy) is present; and
 - At least **three statutory partners** are represented at an appropriate senior level
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9. Decision Making

- Decisions will normally be made by **consensus**
 - Where agreement cannot be reached, the Chair will determine the outcome
 - Key decisions (e.g. approval of the Youth Justice Plan) must be formally recorded
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10. Information Sharing

- Partners agree to share relevant data and intelligence to support:
 - Performance management
 - Risk identification
 - Service improvement
 - Information sharing will comply with **data protection legislation**
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11. Review of Effectiveness

- The Partnership Board will undertake an **annual self-assessment** of effectiveness
 - This will include:
 - Membership and attendance
 - Impact on outcomes
 - Quality of challenge and oversight
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12. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed **annually** to ensure they remain fit for purpose.