



# One minute guide

## Leeds Youth Justice Service

No. 112, January 2025

### What is Leeds Youth Justice Service?

[Leeds Youth Justice Service \(YJS\)](#) was formed in 2000, in line with the [Crime and Disorder Act \(1998\)](#) to provide a multi-agency approach to preventing offending and re-offending by children aged 10-17 years old. This is achieved through the delivery of child-first, integrated services which ensure children are safeguarded and enabled to reintegrate into their local communities without offending, wherever possible with support from their families as protective partners.

Leeds YJS consists of practitioners with backgrounds in health, speech and language, probation, youth justice, youth work, restorative justice, social work, family support, education, housing, substance misuse and policing. The YJS also trains and works with a large number of [volunteers](#). There are three multi-agency YJS area based teams covering the three wedges of the city, as well as specialist [restorative justice](#) workers, an interventions team, a preventative Turnaround Team and a court team covering youth court work from Leeds, Wakefield and Kirklees.

The YJS sits within the local authority, but works closely with statutory partners (police, health, probation), the third sector, and partners from the secure estate (secure children's homes, secure training centres and young offender institutions). The service is overseen by the YJS Strategic Partnership Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services which in turn is accountable to the [Youth Justice Board](#); a national, non-departmental public body.

### What support does the Youth Justice Service offer?

Leeds YJS supports children to change their behaviour by offering them positive Activities, Interactions and Roles in line with the four tenets of Child First practice:

- **As Children**—Prioritising the best interests of children, recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. Work is child-focused, developmentally informed and acknowledges structural barriers.
- **Building pro-social identity**—Promoting children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.
- **Collaborating with children**—Encouraging children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.
- **Diverting from stigma**—Promoting a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

We promote positive educational outcomes for children, work closely with schools/ training providers and accredit some of our activities. Children are able to access support with substance use, education, mental and physical health and communication difficulties through seconded specialist workers. We have an enhanced offer for Children Looked After within the youth justice system and for those in custody and resettling back into the community.

## What is the approach of the Youth Justice Service?

Leeds YJS works with children at risk of formal involvement in the youth justice system and those receiving out of court disposals from the police, as well as those subject to court orders. This means the service works with children on both a voluntary and a statutory basis, from the point they come to police attention through to youth custody and release.

YJS practitioners assess children to look at the severity of their offending, and the risks and positive factors in their lifestyle and circumstances. This personalised, child-first approach means practitioners are able to tailor their work with children, engage them in targeted positive activities, manage safety concerns and promote the development of pro-social identities. The YJS values statement was developed in order to align the work of the service with the ambitions of Leeds as a [Child Friendly City](#).

YJS workers are often part of a wider 'team around the child/ family', delivering aspects of a broader safeguarding or family support plan, and are well integrated into local family support arrangements.

## Restorative working

Leeds YJS employs specialist victim liaison officers who make contact with victims of crimes committed by children. The restorative justice processes enable victims to have their say and receive answers to questions they may want to ask, whilst children get the chance to put things right. They also recognize that many children are themselves victims of crime.

Many children engage in reparation work, which can range from gardening to designing cards to sell for charity or supporting local community projects. Providing the opportunity for children to make a positive contribution in this way can help reassure victims, communities and the general public, and can reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

## Key contacts and for further information

The YJS general enquiries telephone number is (0113) 3782055 or you can email the teams via [leeds.yos@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leeds.yos@leeds.gov.uk).

You can find further information about the Youth Justice Service through the Leeds City Council [website](#).

If you are interested in volunteer roles with the YJS, please see this [webpage](#) for further information.

For further information about the Youth Justice Board, please visit their [website](#).