

# *Tackling Youth Crime*

## *Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018*



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY



Irish Youth Justice Service  
Seirbhís na hÉireann um Cheartas i leith an Aosa Óig



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs

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*Tackling Youth Crime*

*Youth Justice Action Plan*  
**2014-2018**

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# Foreword

We welcome the opportunity to present *Tackling Youth Crime – Youth Justice Action Plan, 2014-2018*, which focuses on young people who require targeted, strategic attention because their behaviour has led to their involvement in the youth justice system.

We all want what is best for our young people. We want them to achieve their potential and avoid the risk of throwing their lives away and perhaps progressing from juvenile crime into serious adult crime.

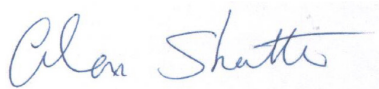
We are pleased to note that since the first *National Youth Justice Strategy* commenced in 2008, the number of children sentenced to detention by the Courts on criminal conviction has consistently dropped; the operational costs of detention have reduced by over 30%; the capital costs and space required in the new national detention facilities being built at Oberstown are approximately 50% of what was estimated in 2008; and youth crime has decreased.

The emphasis of this Action Plan is on changing behaviour and we believe this can be brought about through the implementation of evidence-informed targeted interventions to achieve better outcomes for young people who get into trouble with the law, or who are at risk of getting into trouble with the law. The fact that the voice and experiences of children involved in the youth justice system have influenced the development of these interventions is most welcome.

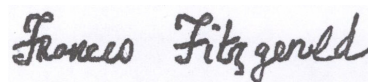
The Action Plan will form part of the *Children and Young People's Policy Framework (CYPPF)* being developed in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, with its focus on better outcomes for children and families. It will also form part of the *National Anti-Crime Strategy* being developed by the Department of Justice and Equality as part of the White Paper on Crime process, with its focus on crime reduction and safer communities.

This Government's commitment to the youngest members of society has been clearly shown through the establishment of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The proactive engagement by the Irish Youth Justice Service and partners in the criminal justice agencies, the services in health, education and welfare systems, the community and voluntary sector, and by us, as Ministers with responsibility for two separate Departments, is testament to the joined-up Government approach to the promotion of integrated policy and service delivery in respect of these vulnerable young people.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this process and also for their continued commitment to delivering on this Action Plan and these services for the young people of Ireland.



Mr. Alan Shatter TD  
Minister for Justice and Equality



Ms. Frances Fitzgerald, TD  
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

## **Mission Statement**

*To create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending through appropriate interventions and linkages to services*

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction**

## Background and context

A small, but significant number of young people in Ireland every year require targeted, strategic attention because their behaviour has led to their involvement in the youth justice system. These young people have been given specific attention through the implementation of the *National Youth Justice Strategy, 2008-2010* and are the focus of this Action Plan.

Twelve years is the age of criminal responsibility (or 10/11 years where a child has committed a serious offence<sup>1</sup>) and a ‘child’ is defined as a person under the age of 18 years under the Children Act 2001. The terms ‘youth’ and ‘young person’ are interchangeably used to describe a person who meets this legal definition. Youth crime constitutes up to 15% of all crime (excluding road traffic offences). The typical offending that young people become involved in (e.g. public order crime, alcohol and drug misuse) is often distressing for members of the public and while we know that youth crime will always be a concern, we also now know from hard data that the vast majority of young people grow out of crime.

Since the first *National Youth Justice Strategy* commenced in 2008, the number of children detained by the Courts annually on criminal conviction has consistently dropped; the operational costs of detention have reduced by over 30%; the capital costs and space required in the new national detention facilities being built at Oberstown are approximately 50% of what was estimated in 2008; and youth crime has decreased.

In order for the public to have confidence in a youth justice system, it needs to be reasonably assured that it is effective in its policies and delivery. The focus for this Action Plan is to continue the downward trends in high volume crime and detention; becoming more adept in understanding and intervening in more serious crime offending patterns; and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of these interventions in addressing the behaviour and needs of these young people. It involves evidence-informed targeted interventions to achieve better outcomes for young people who get into trouble with the law (or who are at risk of getting into trouble) and to reduce crime, leading to safer communities. Importantly, the voice and experiences of young people involved in the youth justice system have influenced the development of these interventions. This Action Plan follows on from the first *National Youth Justice Strategy, 2008-2010* and underpins the principles and policies of diversion and the proportionate interventions envisaged by the Children Act 2001.

While this Action Plan focuses on changing the offending behaviour of young people involved in the youth justice system, it also directly complements the outcomes of the *Children and Young People’s Policy Framework* being developed by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The Action Plan will also be part of the Government’s *National Anti-Crime Strategy* being developed by the Minister for Justice and Equality as part of the White Paper on Crime process.

This Action Plan has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including Government departments, criminal justice agencies and other appropriate agencies. The views of young people have also informed the development of the plan, in particular those expressed in the national consultation published in the report *Life as a Child and Young Person in Ireland: Report of a National Consultation* (available at [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)).

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<sup>1</sup> Section 52(2) of the Children Act 2001 as amended by section 129 of the Criminal Justice Act 1996.



The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Minister for Justice and Equality are committed to the implementation of this Action Plan. The current Programme for Government, *Toward Recovery: Programme for a National Government, 2011-2016*, makes clear a determination 'to tackle anti-social behaviour and the plague of low level crime that is so destructive of community life'.<sup>2</sup> The Programme includes the following commitments that will impact on youth crime and on anti-social behaviour:

- To build on the existing community policing partnerships and forums to enhance trust between local communities and their Gardaí.
- To give a special emphasis to alternative programmes for young offenders through extensions to the Juvenile Liaison Officer Scheme and the Diversion Programme.
- To examine outcomes-based contracts with community organisations to help reduce re-offending by young people.
- To end the practice of sending 16/17 year-old boys to St. Patrick's Institution.

Since 1st January 2012, the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) operates as an executive office of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). It is staffed by officials from both the DCYA and the Department of Justice and Equality.

The IYJS retains responsibility for leading and driving reform in the youth justice area by focusing on diversion and rehabilitation, including greater use of community-based interventions, promotion of initiatives to deal with young people who offend, providing a safe and secure environment for detained young people and supporting their early re-integration into the community.

The main legislation covering youth justice is the Children Act 2001. Responsibility for this Act is now shared between the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Minister for Justice and Equality:

- The **Minister for Children and Youth Affairs** is responsible for the 3 Children Detention Schools at Oberstown, Lusk, Co. Dublin, which provide detention places to the Courts for girls up to the age of 18 and, with effect from 1st May 2012, boys up to the age of 17 ordered to be remanded or committed on criminal charges. The Minister is also responsible for the child care aspects of the Children Act 2001.
- The **Minister for Justice and Equality** retains responsibility for youth crime policy and law, including crime prevention, crime reduction, criminal proceedings, diversion and community sanctions (including community projects). The Minister also retains responsibility for dealings with An Garda Síochána and the Probation Service, as well as responsibility via the Irish Prison Service for young people in St. Patrick's Institution.

The focus of the *National Youth Justice Strategy, 2008-2010* was on getting key partners to engage, putting the right structures in place and delivering services more effectively. In its report presented to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy on 1st October 2012 on the implementation of the 2008-2010 strategy, the National Youth Justice Oversight Group found that the '*net effect of this combined effort has been to develop a more co-ordinated strategic approach, make better use of existing resources, create positive working relationships amongst stakeholders and deliver better outcomes for young people in trouble with the law and for the community in general*'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.taoiseach.gov.ie](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie)

<sup>3</sup> See [www.iyjs.ie](http://www.iyjs.ie), [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie), [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

Based on the data gathered in recent years, we can now say that:

- we know more about the nature of the youth crime problem, which allows us to be more data-driven and evidence-informed;
- this has corresponded with a falling detected youth crime rate;
- these positive changes have occurred at the same time as Ireland's relatively low level of youth detention has experienced further downward trends;
- this correlates with a more effective use of money and offers the prospect of better outcomes for young people and communities.

This Action Plan identifies a number of goals and sets out how these will be achieved, having regard to the role of the various agencies that are committed to a shared responsibility for its delivery. Success will be measured through better outcomes for young people, a sustained reduction in youth crime and minimal use of detention.

## **CHAPTER 2**

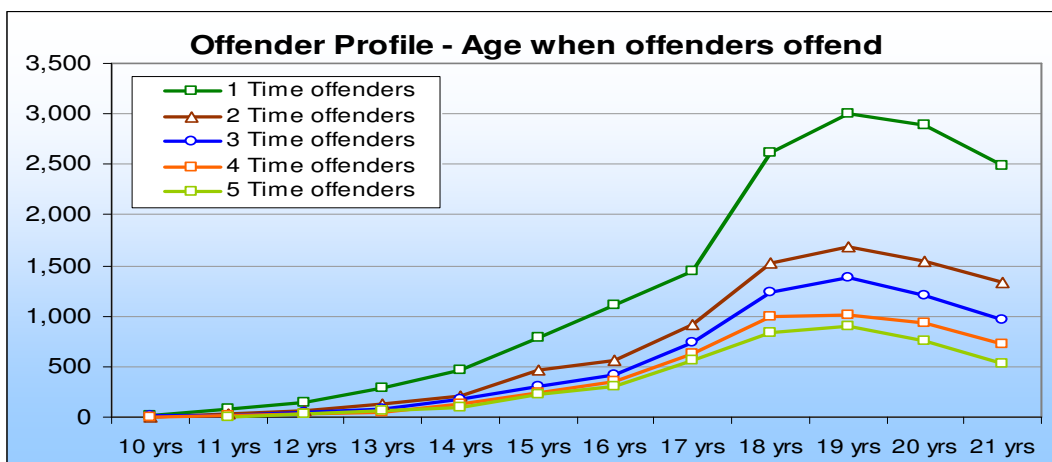
# **A Picture of Youth Crime in Ireland: Engaging with Evidence**

## National statistical profile

The youth justice system in Ireland generally relates to young people aged from 12 to 17 years and accounts for some 9% of the population (approximately 395,000 people).

The analysis of Garda PULSE data over a period of 10 years clearly shows that the vast majority of young people grow out of crime. Figure 1 shows the number of offenders by age (10-21 years) during 2011, broken down into those who are only 1-time offenders to age 21 (*dark green curve*), those who have committed just 2 offences (*brown curve*), those who have committed 3 offences (*blue curve*), those who have committed 4 offences (*red curve*) and those who have committed 5 offences (*light green curve*).

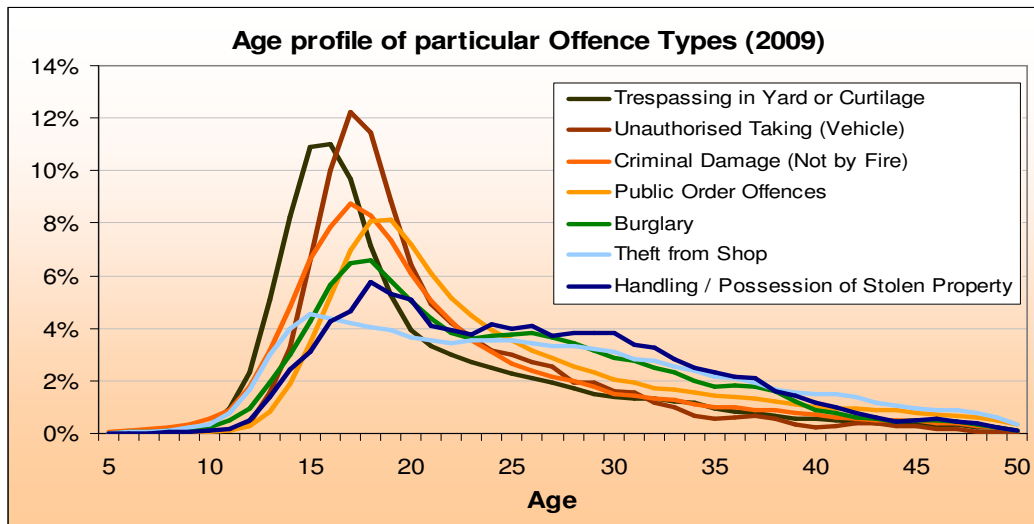
**Figure 1: The age/crime curve, 2011**



Source: An Garda Síochána

Another key understanding disclosed by the data indicates that while most young people grow out of crime, a small number persist. These young people continue to demand our attention in terms of understanding the specific contexts that influence and sustain offending behaviour. Figure 2 represents almost 90,000 persons below the age of 50 in 2009 detected for an offence at any point, identifying the age at which the offence occurred. The graph indicates an age relationship with certain types of offending. Although in reality offending is not as specialised as inferred by this diagram, some behaviours appear to peak and trough steeply between the ages of 15 and 19, compared with others where the decline following the peak is far less pronounced. This suggests some degree of persistence and that not all young people grow out of crime.

Figure 2: Profile of age/offence type, 2009



Source: An Garda Síochána

Data also clearly show that in addition to there being a different pattern in terms of relative persistence of youth crime, there are significant differences in the type of offending behaviour.

National youth crime data show that since 2009 there have been year-on-year reductions in the most frequent types of youth offending (see Table 1).

Table 1: Numbers of young people aged 12-17 recorded as Suspected Offender on PULSE

	2011	% Change	2010	% Change	2009
<b>Individuals</b>	<b>13,201</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>16,428</b>	<b>-11%</b>	<b>18,357</b>
<b>Diversion Report</b>			<b>17,986</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>18,519</b>

Offence Types	2011	% of Total	% Change	2010	% Change	2009
Public Order Offences	4,399	18%	-32%	6,425	-19%	7,915
Theft from Shop	3,427	14%	-16%	4,075	1%	4,050
Criminal Damage (Not by Fire)	2,457	10%	-23%	3,195	-18%	3,882
Burglary	1,482	6%	-8%	1,608	-9%	1,771
Trespassing in Yard or Curtilage	1,331	5%	-29%	1,873	-7%	2,004
Assault Minor	1,197	5%	-16%	1,420	-3%	1,469
Simple Possession	1,012	4%	-23%	1,309	-24%	1,731
General Road Offences	1,001	4%	-31%	1,442	-39%	2,349
Drunkenness Offences	932	4%	-24%	1,226	-3%	1,266
Theft (Other)	743	3%	-16%	885	-7%	954
Purchase/Consume Alcohol U18	734	3%	-21%	925	91%	485
Unauthorised Taking (Vehicle)	578	2%	-20%	724	-16%	864
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25,043</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>32,632</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>38,022</b>
<b>Diversion Report</b>				<b>27,257</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>23,952</b>

**Note:**

'Referrals' based on PULSE offence records. Individuals can be counted more than once if involved in more than one offence.

Source: An Garda Síochána

## The value of local profiling

Understanding youth crime in its local context has been a critical factor in terms of progress to date. A national average of 5% of young people is referred to the Garda Diversion Programme<sup>4</sup> each year, although this percentage varies significantly from the overall average in some local communities.

In addition to providing a targeted service to improve the behaviour of offending young people, 100 locally based Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs)<sup>5</sup> conduct an annual youth crime analysis, which provides an in-depth picture of youth crime in Ireland. This analysis, taken together with the views of young people engaged in the projects, enables us to continue our effort to reduce high volume crime and understand and deal with emerging behaviours among young people in the future.

Given the relatively small number of offending young people at a local level, a GYDP is able to provide nuanced profiles of where and when offending behaviour occurs, particularly in relation to high volume 'more visible' offences, the various groupings of young people involved in offending behaviour and patterns of repeat behaviour. GYDPs are also able to report on the personal and social circumstances of young people involved in offending behaviour, such as impulsivity, indifferent attitude to offending, peer group enforcement, poor school attendance, poor supervision and minimising attitude by parents, and alcohol and drug misuse. Critically, this information allows us to make linkages between such circumstances and the offending behaviour, allowing for bespoke interventions.

Strategies and services targeted at improving parenting effectiveness; early attachment and cognitive development for young people; improvements in school performance; reductions in alcohol and drugs misuse; and participation by young people in mainstream youth activities – all have a critical role to play at all stages across the youth justice system in helping young people realise their potential and avoid becoming further involved in offending behaviour. We want to change behaviour by engaging with the young people concerned and addressing their needs. We will use the available evidence in developing interventions with young people in the youth justice system. In addition to diversionary measures, there is a requirement to have a range of community-based sanctions available to the Courts, for intervention with those for whom diversion has not been effective, and detention facilities delivered to the highest standard for the critical few requiring secure care and therapeutic intervention.

The lessons learned from the above statistical data and locally profiled qualitative analysis include:

- **Alcohol and Public Order** crime provides the largest 'cluster' of offending behaviours. For example, public order + criminal damage + assault minor + drunkenness + purchase/consume alcohol = 40% of youth crime and tends to occur in the same offending episodes.
- **Theft from shop** presents as the second most frequent offence and the only offending behaviour where girls offend at near the same rate as boys. Motivations can range from what might be described as dare-related behaviour associated with peer influence to premeditated and targeted theft. Further statistical analysis

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.iyjs.ie](http://www.iyjs.ie), [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie), [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

<sup>5</sup> See [www.iyjs.ie](http://www.iyjs.ie), [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie), [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

indicates that non-premeditative theft is particularly responsive to diversion once it is detected.

- **Burglary** presents as 6% of youth offending. However, this may be understated given the difficulties in detecting burglary or may be associated with other offences such as ‘trespass’, which could relate to unsuccessful burglary attempts.
- **Simple possession** presents as 4% of youth offending, but is likely to be more prevalent given difficulties in detection. In addition, a small number of young people may be in drugs supply chains, either through choice or coercion.
- **Overall, offending and individual offending has reduced.** The data clearly indicate that, overall, youth offending is down across the full range of offence categories.

**Acronyms used in following tables:**

ACTS	Assessment, Consultation and Therapy Service
AGS	An Garda Síochána
CDS	Children Detention Schools
CFA	Child and Family Agency
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
ETB	Educational Training Board (formerly VEC)
HSE	Health Service Executive
IYJS	Irish Youth Justice Service
NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board
OPW	Office of Public Works
PAS	Public Appointment Service



## **CHAPTER 3**

# **High Level Goals, Outcomes, Objectives and Actions**

## High Level Goal 1: To work together to ensure public confidence in dealing with young people in trouble with the law

### Context

The role of the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) is to coordinate all aspects of the youth justice system and to ensure that it is effective and efficient, resulting in a positive effect on the level of offending behaviour of a young person.

Over the lifetime of this Action Plan, we intend to reduce the necessity for detention, thereby freeing up resources for higher quality work with those who are already in the youth justice system and for more investment in preventative methods. To achieve this aim, we will work with all partners in the criminal justice agencies, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service, and also with the services in the health, education and welfare systems and with the community and voluntary sector.

### Projected outcomes

- Five national outcomes for children in Ireland (Children and Young People’s Policy Framework) at the centre of policy and service delivery.
- Better value for money by using consistent, appropriate, targeted, evidence-based approaches and effective working practices.
- Service providers will focus on the needs of the young person using the service and will be accountable to them.
- Agencies, young people, families and communities will have a greater understanding of how the youth justice system works.
- Effective governance in place, ensuring excellence in delivery of services within allocated budgets and resources.

### Objective 1.1: To enhance collaboration between partners through effective information-sharing and to promote best practice

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Prioritise youth justice policy in strategies, policies and programmes of all relevant agencies (e.g. <i>Children and Young People’s Policy Framework</i> (forthcoming); <i>National Anti-Crime Strategy</i> (forthcoming); <i>AGS Children and Youth Strategy</i> (2012)).	Alignment of strategies of all relevant stakeholders.	All stakeholders
To continually review standards and practices.	Professional standards and practices will guide the work of all agencies involved in tackling youth crime.	All stakeholders

Objective 1.1. continued

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Identify and provide appropriate training for those responsible for delivery of services to young people who offend or who are at serious risk of offending.	<p>Training needs identified/provided (within budgetary constraints) by all relevant agencies on core competencies required to deal with young people who offend or who are at serious risk of offending.</p> <p>Continued focus on improving young people's outcomes as outlined in the <i>Children and Young People's Policy Framework</i> (forthcoming); <i>Children First</i> (2011); and <i>Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse</i> (Ryan Report, 2009).</p>	All stakeholders
Review and amend the Children Act 2001 as required.	Effective and efficient youth justice legislation in place.	IYJS, DCYA, DJE
Support North/South and international cooperation across the range of justice agencies.	Sharing of best practice and information on youth justice services.	IYJS, Probation Service, CFA and all stakeholders, North and South
	Develop protocols to facilitate requests for assessments and transfer of community supervision from other jurisdictions.	IYJS, Probation Service
	Compliance with <i>Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children</i> (2011).	All stakeholders

**Objective 1.2: To ensure that Government investment in the youth justice system yields positive results**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Promote integrated approaches to youth offending through cross-sectoral cooperation and goal-sharing.	Improved consistency of programme objectives; identification of gaps in services; and appropriate assessment and referral of young offenders.	All stakeholders
Develop, strengthen and align policies, legislation and resources in order to achieve better outcomes for young people.	Commitments in Programme for Government 2011-2016 and Public Service Reform met.	All stakeholders
Implement effective governance to ensure that service providers deliver on their mandates within allocated budgets and resources.	<p>Maximised impact of resources through the use of evidence-informed interventions.</p> <p>Effective governance in place to ensure value for money and excellence in delivery of services.</p>	All stakeholders

## High Level Goal 2: To strengthen and develop our evidence base to support more effective policies and services, having regard to the voice of young people

### Context

The lack of relevant data and research on youth offending continues to be a challenge. An evidence-informed approach to policy provides the platform to make smart investments in services for young people, families and communities. Increasingly, data determine how resources are prioritised and will help to identify the internal changes required by State agencies dealing with young people who have offended. Further detailed examination of youth crime patterns and recidivism studies will add considerable value by adding substance to these measures in terms of actual offending reductions.

An ongoing priority is to measure and evaluate the overall performance of the youth justice system as well as its constituent parts. Performance indicators will be the continuing downward crime trends and lower detention rates, alongside an assurance that young people’s rights and dignity are protected by complying with statutory requirements and observance of international obligations.

### Projected outcomes

- Improved understanding relating to youth crime patterns.
- Robust, comprehensive and consistent data on young offenders.
- Tracking of pathways through the youth justice system enabled.
- Outcomes and effectiveness of services measured across the criminal justice services.

### Objective 2.1: To put in place mechanisms to produce management information and performance-focused data for young people across the criminal justice system

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Facilitate the collation of youth justice data and information on a regular basis in conjunction with internal and external stakeholders.	Data available and accessible for management, stakeholders, statisticians and academics.	CSO, AGS, Prison Service, Probation Service, DJE, DCYA

**Objective 2.2: To improve and increase the availability of reliable and relevant research on youth crime and the youth justice system in order to inform and focus policy and service development**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Promote the sharing and dissemination of data within the youth justice sector.	Improved sharing of data and statistics between criminal justice agencies, partners and stakeholders, while adhering to data protection legislation.	All stakeholders
Conduct joint research to identify the progression routes for certain young people into serious adult crime.	More effective interventions designed to impede the progress from juvenile crime into serious adult crime.	IYJS, AGS
	Research will inform future strategy in this area.	IYJS, AGS
Research project on levels of compliance with community sanctions/evolvment of youth justice service systems conducted.	Profile of the full range of supports and services available to existing young offenders, their families and young people.	IYJS, Probation Service
Research project on a study of young people’s journey into detention.	Tracking of services provided to young people through the youth justice system.	IYJS

**Objective 2.3: To examine new and emerging patterns of persistent offending, including serious and violent behaviour, and design the best interventions**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Track the level and nature of recidivism through all stages of the youth justice system.	The development of more effective interventions for young people involved in more serious and persistent crime.  Behavioural patterns in young people and related outcomes investigated.	IYJS, DJE, AGS, Probation Service
Review data holdings on supports and services provided by the youth justice system.	Full range of supports and services to existing young offenders profiled.	IYJS, AGS, DCYA Research Unit
Generate a national profile of participants in the Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) using standard measures of risk and service need.	Analysis of behavioural patterns and related outcomes in young people.	IYJS
Profile substance misuse among young people subject to community sanctions/probation service supervision.	Analysis will further influence the development of more effective interventions.	Probation Service

**Objective 2.4: To explore active means by which the views of young people can inform policy and improve performance of the youth justice system**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Actively seek the views of young people involved in the youth justice system and of young people generally with regard to youth crime, policy and practice.	Development of policy to inform best practice where young people have a right to be heard, to be informed of their rights and to participate effectively in policy and practice on issues which affect them.	All stakeholders

## High Level Goal 3: To review and strengthen targeted interventions to reduce offending and divert young people from the criminal justice system

### Context

The purpose of youth crime intervention work is to engage young people in a process of learning and development that will enable them to make positive lifestyle choices. The youth justice system, through its community-based projects, will use early interventions to target those at risk of offending behaviour through the Garda Youth Diversion Programme and Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs), and will link with other service providers in encouraging young people to engage in pro-social behaviour.

A challenge going forward is to encourage a wider range of partners to cultivate pro-social attitudes and behaviours before a young person reaches the age of criminal responsibility, i.e. aged 12 (or 10/11 years where a child has committed a serious offence<sup>6</sup>).

### Projected outcomes

- Downward trend in crime and reduced recidivism.
- Downward trend in detention.
- Strategies and interventions to combat crime based on sound data and evidence of what has been found to work well.
- Young people at serious risk of offending will be identified at the earliest opportunity and their risks and needs adequately assessed.
- Greater provision and support of evidence-based interventions for young people and young people at risk.
- Positive change and learning outcomes for young people.

### Objective 3.1: To promote focused and effective interventions through our GYDPs to challenge and divert young people from offending behaviour

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Guide the GYDPs' service delivery in line with youth justice operational requirements.	Clear youth outcomes set for (a) interventions with young people in terms of reduced offending and behavioural changes supported by annual planning and output monitoring; (b) use of standard risk assessment; and (c) use of appropriate outcome measures.	AGS, IYJS, DJE

<sup>6</sup> Section 52(2) of the Children Act 2001 as amended by section 129 of the Criminal Justice Act 1996.



**Objective 3.2: To utilise our GYDP resources in areas of greatest need and to establish effective crime prevention supports in cooperation with other youth service providers nationwide**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Identify priority locations for resource needs, based on crime incidence and evidence of need.	Maximum use of GYDP resources in areas of greatest need.	AGS, IYJS, DJE
Engage with other youth service providers to promote the use of crime prevention supports and a standardised working ethos in delivery of youth services.	Protocols developed to ensure a solid platform for shared objectives in the promotion of integrated crime prevention supports and service delivery in respect of vulnerable young people.	AGS, IYJS, DCYA, DJE, HSE, CFA

**Objective 3.3: To actively promote crime prevention policy through focused educational interventions influencing positive development of young people towards becoming responsible citizens**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Embed pro-social development strategies towards preventing any young person from becoming involved in offending behaviour.	Clear link in relevant Departmental and Agency strategies between educational interventions (particularly school completion and retention), crime prevention and responsible citizen participation	AGS, IYJS, DCYA, DES, NEWB
	The needs of those involved and/or at serious risk of involvement in serious, prolific and persistent crime addressed.	AGS, Probation Service, HSE, CFA
Strengthen anti-crime policy framework and implementation arrangements to support a reduction in youth crime and reduced demands for detention.	Clear youth crime outcomes set for interventions with young people in terms of reduced offending and behavioural changes.	IYJS, DCYA, DJE
	Effective public communications tools developed on issues regarding youth offending and IYJS performance to key stakeholders.	
	Voice of young people heard.	

*Objective 3.3 continued*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Through the GYDPs, support An Garda Síochána in the delivery of a service that engages with young people and their families to establish their needs and priorities.	Strengthened relationships with vulnerable young people and families.	AGS, IYJS
Ensure that young people identified at risk of offending receive appropriate and adequate care.	<p>Appropriate interventions for young people showing tendency towards criminal behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ before reaching the age of criminal responsibility and</li> <li>▪ young people with a late onset of offending in early adulthood in line with international evidence on desistence, acknowledging the limitations of looking solely at 12-17 year-olds.</li> </ul>	HSE, CFA, IYJS, AGS

## **High Level Goal 4: To promote and increase the use of community measures, including restorative justice, for young people who offend**

### **Context**

The requirement to have a range of community-based sanctions available to the Courts is an essential component of the Children Act 2001 if effect is to be given to the policy of detention being an absolute last resort. The Act makes provision for 10 community sanctions. These sanctions offer a menu of options to the Court and range in tariff from low to high. Many of the community sanctions seek to maintain an educational ethos and to empower young people, their parents and families by giving them a role and responsibility in the Court process.

The community sanctions are primarily delivered by the Probation Service through its dedicated unit, Young Persons Probation. The work is supported by a network of community-based resources and programmes funded directly through the Irish Youth Justice Service, in addition to a range of well-established collaborative initiatives and arrangements with the criminal justice sector, child welfare services, and the community and voluntary sector.

Working together, we will continue to develop initiatives to break the cycle of offending, provide alternatives to detention and enable better integration of young people subject to community sanctions. We are also committed to further developing services to victims through the expansion of restorative justice initiatives and interventions for young people.

### **Projected outcomes**

- Better understanding in relation to young people and serious/repeat crime, and the circumstances that support their behaviour.
- Agencies strategically aligned to deliver consistent, appropriate and high-quality services to young people.
- More appropriate outcomes for young people before the Courts, particularly where the primary issue is one of the care and welfare of the young person.

**Objective 4.1: To continue to support the Probation Service in the promotion of optimum non-custodial interventions for young people who have offended**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Further develop programmes in cooperation with the the Probation Service based on the recommendations of the Young Persons Probation report, <i>Working in partnership with communities to reduce youth crime</i> (2011)	Profile of the full range of supports and services available to young offenders and their families.	IYJS, Probation Service
	<i>Young Offenders Recidivism</i> study completed, in partnership with European Probation colleagues.	Probation Service
Improve interagency coordination of community sanctions.	Enhanced re-integration of offenders into communities.	IYJS, Probation Service
	Increased community input into restorative practices.	

**Objective 4.2: To continue to support the Courts Service to ensure the use of detention as a last resort**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Continue to liaise on appropriate methods of informing the judiciary of developments in the area of youth justice and the efficient operation of the Children Court.	Optimum use of non-custodial interventions.	Courts Service, IYJS, Probation Service
	Consistency of approach, speedy resolution of issues and avoidance of delays in the best interests of the child.	
Provide facilities for pre-Court consultation.	Venues to be updated under the Capital Building Programme.	Courts Service
	Adequate number of consultation rooms available.	

Objective 4.2 continued

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Examine the feasibility of Social Impact Investment (SII) to help reduce re-offending by young people.	<p>New alternative for the Court resulting in a reduction in the need for remands to detention and delivery of better outcomes for an extremely vulnerable group of young people.</p> <p>Innovation and practice excellence encouraged, resulting in improved social outcomes through a significant and systemic change in the youth justice system.</p> <p>Potential reduction in demands for remand/recidivism and numbers in custody.</p>	DCYA

**Objective 4.3: To ensure that restorative practices are used to the greatest extent**

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility
Drive a restorative practice ethos in the delivery of services, where appropriate, across the youth justice system to challenge offending behaviour.	<p>Trainer network in restorative justice practices established.</p> <p>Cross-agency training in restorative practices promoted and facilitated.</p> <p>Victims of youth crime, and in particular victims who are children or young people, supported through the use of restorative justice.</p>	IYJS, AGS, Probation Service, Courts Service, DJE
Maximise opportunities for Court-ordered conferencing.	Protocol to divert young people from conviction agreed and implemented.	Probation Service, AGS
Strengthen and extend restorative justice practices for young people subject to community sanctions.	Restorative justice practices form an integral element of assessment and supervision of those appearing before the Courts and/or subject to community sanctions.	Probation Service

## **High Level Goal 5: To provide a safe, secure environment and necessary support for detained young people to assist their re-integration into the community**

### **Context**

In 2012, capital funding of approximately €50 million over 3 years was secured to develop new and expanded National Children Detention facilities at the Children Detention Schools on the Oberstown campus to ensure that, by Quarter 3 2014, all those under 18 who need to be detained will be sent to dedicated child-specific facilities. The detention school model is one of individualised care, education and rehabilitation to reduce the risk of re-offending and promote the positive re-integration of each young person into his or her family and community, where they will observe the law and are capable of making a positive and productive contribution to society.

The new national specialist team established by the Health Service Executive (HSE) will provide in-reach therapeutic services for children in special care and detention, and also a community service for children at risk of special care and detention. Skills of team members will include social work, psychology, speech and language therapy, social care and addiction. This should reduce the need to remand children for the purpose of assessment. Development of a forensic child and adolescent mental health service is also planned.

### **Projected outcomes**

- Young people detained will be provided with safe and secure accommodation.
- Young people detained will receive appropriate care and opportunities for rehabilitation and re-integration into their family and community on release.
- Young people detained will be provided with appropriate educational opportunities to assist them in remaining outside the criminal justice system throughout their lives.
- Meet the requirements in the Programme for Government to end the practice of sending young people to St. Patrick's Institution.
- Centralised facilities to support the integration of policies and procedures, and the centralisation of services in the Children Detention Schools.
- Delivery of all services at a single location to eliminate duplication and maximise opportunities for economies of scale.

**Objective 5.1: To provide evidence-based care and developmental opportunities to young people in detention and prepare them to take their place in the community as persons who observe the law and are capable of making a positive and productive contribution to society**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Specialist therapeutic services available to young people in detention schools.	Improved service provision, including education, health, mental health and social needs, for young people in detention with a view to enhancing their personal development and life outcomes; reducing re-offending; and addressing the needs of those involved in persistent, serious and prolific crime.	ACTS, HSE, CFA, IYJS, Probation Service, ETB
Develop and review protocols to provide for the continued care of young people on release from detention, as well as relevant social service needs.	<p>Protocols developed to enhance rehabilitation and re-integration into families and communities.</p> <p>Challenges arising from transition to adulthood (e.g. physical, mental health, housing, poverty, education needs) recognised and addressed.</p> <p>Cross-campus restorative justice practices consistent with other phases of the youth justice system and in conjunction with agencies concerned.</p>	IYJS, CDS, Probation Service, HSE, CFA, ETB, NEWB

<b>Objective 5.2: To complete the development of integrated services in the Children Detention Schools</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Continue to integrate services, management, practices, procedures and policies in Children Detention Schools (CDS).	Commitments in Public Service Reform and Programme for Government, 2011-2016 met.	IYJS, CDS
Amend the Children Act 2001 if/as required to support integrated model.	Single campus management structure, with consistent and coherent cross-campus approach.  Greater efficiencies in the delivery of services to children detained.	IYJS
Continue to meet and enhance the agreed <i>Standards and Criteria for Children Detention Schools</i> (2008) and all other relevant legislation, policies and standards.	Implementation of operational plan for Children Detention Schools in accordance with <i>The Agenda for Children's Services</i> (2007)  Staff equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge of legislation, regulations, policies, procedures and protocols.  Compliance with <i>Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children</i> (2011).	IYJS, CDS
Review appropriate governance structure for integration of schools.	Achievement of greater efficiencies in the delivery of all services to children in detention.	All stakeholders



<b>Objective 5.3: To complete the new national children detention facilities in Oberstown by 2015</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Progress capital project to complete the national children detention facilities in Oberstown.	Young people under 18 years no longer detained in St. Patrick's Institution, in line with commitments in Programme for Government, 2011-2016.	IYJS, OPW, DPER, PAS
Recruit and train sufficient staff required to manage the expanded facilities.	<p>National Children Detention Facility, which delivers accommodation and services in line with best international practice.</p> <p>All young people under 18 detained by the Courts accommodated on the Oberstown campus by Quarter 3 2014.</p> <p>All outdated buildings replaced by 2015.</p>	IYJS, OPW, DPER, PAS

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