



Youth Justice
Agency

BUSINESS 2026-2027 PLAN

DoJ Business Plan 2026-27		YJA Theme	YJA Strategic Outcomes	YJA Reporting Lead	YJA Business Activities for 2026-27
Strategic Priority - Reducing Offending	To work with our partners to address issues that contribute to offending behaviours and that help support rehabilitation	Prevention and Earlier Stage Diversion	YJA Outcome 1 Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support	Colleen Heaney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain the success of Earlier Stage Diversion in reducing the number of children in the formal justice system by continuing to further develop and implement it across YJA teams and with partners as far as possible. b) Continue to develop and test in partnership with PSNI and PPS a new diversionary disposal that doesn't attract a criminal record. c) Complete the review of the Sexting Referral scheme.
	Strategic Priority - Supporting Victims of Crime	To work with our partners to address issues that contribute to offending behaviours and that help support rehabilitation	Statutory Interventions	YJA Outcome 2 Improved outcomes for children through statutory interventions	Mary Aughey/ Colleen Heaney
To improve the experience of victims of crime including arrangements for practical support		Service Developments	YJA Outcome 3 Develop effective and responsive services to meet changing needs	Mary Aughey/ Colleen Heaney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Deliver an ongoing refurbishment programme that continues to reflect a child friendly, therapeutic and modern environment for children and young people across YJA. b) Renew and reinvigorate partnerships with Education, Further Education and employers to identify sustainable opportunities for more children who offend to return to Education, Training and Employment. c) (i) Work with the DoJ Policy Team to implement changes in practice resulting from the Justice Bill currently being considered by the NI Assembly. (ii) Help inform the development of further legislation and policy on youth justice services. d) Contribute to the Children's Social Care Services Reform Programme and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. e) Work with partners to develop practice around Child Exploitation (CE) and support staff awareness and response to CE. f) Continue to develop approaches to working with girls in the justice system and maximise opportunities to support care experienced girls in the justice system. g) Further develop the Expert by Experience (EBE) model to support effective co-design and delivery of services and extend the EBE role across all YJS area teams. h) Review YJA exit strategies for children to ensure children are involved in the decision-making process. i) Develop tailored interventions across YJA and in partnership with relevant agencies, for children in the justice system who are neurodivergent.

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Strategic Priority – Empowered People	To support staff across the Department to achieve their potential and the Department's objectives	Resource Management	YJA Outcome 4 YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused	Corporate (All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to deliver on the actions set out in YJA workforce plan for 2025 to 2028. b) Develop and implement a three-year YJA Learning and Development Strategy. c) Ensure effective staffing levels across all services. d) Explore options for the development of a social work degree apprenticeship programme within YJA. e) Maintain effective systems of internal and external communication, staff engagement and well-being support within YJA.
			YJA Outcome 5 YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance	Corporate (All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to seek ways to reduce unit costs while maintaining the quality of service. b) Effectively implement all agreed inspection and audit recommendations. c) Maintain and develop the YJA case management arrangements and MIS database to provide enhanced statistical and management information and use them to monitor workload trends. d) Implement actions in the YJA Equality Action Plan. e) Contribute to the DoJ Sustainability Strategy through planned estate maintenance and works.



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