

Working with other organisations in the criminal justice system

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This section explains why working with other organisations in the criminal justice system can achieve better outcomes for children.

The key is to engage early with other organisations as this will help you understand more about the child you are working with.

Why working with other organisations is important

Local organisations can help you find out important information about the child you are working with. They can often provide you with background information about their medical records, education history and family background.

Knowing more about a child's background and needs can help you consider:

- wider details on their background that can put their actions into context
- their education and history in the youth justice system
- the context of the offence if they are a child defendant, which could help with mitigation
- whether you need to adapt how you communicate and engage with them
- whether communication aids, intermediaries and other adaptations are needed to help them participate effectively in proceedings
- whether the CPS should be asked to review their decision to prosecute or offer an out of court disposal (eg triage, youth caution or youth conditional caution)
- available disposals and support provisions.

Working with other organisations can also help you:

- increase your awareness of options to avoid unnecessary criminalisation
- understand the range of support available for children and young defendants during and after criminal proceedings.

How you can engage with other organisations

A key organisation you can contact is your local Youth Offending Team. They can usually access existing assessments about a young person from social services or prevention teams that can indicate any difficulties that may come up in court. You can contact your local Youth Offending Team directly or arrive early to court to speak to them.

Talking to your local youth court user group can help you better understand protocols for that particular court and help you access other local organisations.

Useful resources

- [Intermediaries For Child Defendants](https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides-and-toolkits/intermediaries-child-defendants) [<https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides-and-toolkits/intermediaries-child-defendants>] and [Instructing an Expert: A toolkit for lawyers and expert witnesses in criminal cases involving children](https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides-and-toolkits/instructing-expert-toolkit-lawyers-and-expert-witnesses) [<https://yjlc.uk/resources/legal-guides-and-toolkits/instructing-expert-toolkit-lawyers-and-expert-witnesses>], by the Youth Justice Legal Centre.
- [Working together to safeguard children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>] ' by HM Government.
- [Youth crime prevention programmes](https://www.gov.uk/youth-crime-prevention-programmes) [<https://www.gov.uk/youth-crime-prevention-programmes>] ' by HM Government.
- ['Youth Cautions - Guidance for Police and Youth Offending Teams'](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354050/yjb-youth-cautions-police-YOTs.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354050/yjb-youth-cautions-police-YOTs.pdf]