



# One minute guide

## Leeds Youth Justice Service

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### 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 and young people aged 10-17 years old. This is achieved through the delivery of child-friendly, integrated services which ensure young people are safeguarded and enabled to reintegrate into their local communities without offending, wherever possible with support from their families.

Leeds YJS consists of practitioners with backgrounds in health, probation, youth justice, youth work, restorative justice, social work, 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 a specialist [restorative justice](#) workers, an interventions 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, 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 young people to change their behaviour by:

- Working with young people to develop **positive relationships, build responsibility and make positive choices**;
- Recognising and developing young people's **individual strengths**, and believing in their **capacity to change**;
- Working with families, communities and other professionals to **build networks of support**; and
- Encouraging young people to **understand the impact** of what they do on victims, families, communities and themselves.

A wide range of interventions and programmes have been developed to help young people move away from offending. Some target young people with particular offence types, e.g. knife crime or domestic violence, while others promote pro-social behaviours such as sports activities or learning about managing strong emotions. We promote positive educational outcomes for young people, work closely with schools and training providers and accredit some of our activities. Young people 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.

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 cluster arrangements.

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

Leeds YJS works with young people 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 young people 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 young people to look at the severity of their offending, and the risks and positive factors in their lifestyle and circumstances. This personalised, child-friendly approach means practitioners are able to tailor their work with young people, engage them in targeted positive activities, manage risks and promote pro-social choices. 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.

## Restorative working

Leeds YJS employs specialist victim liaison officers who make contact with victims of crimes committed by young people. The restorative justice processes enable victims to have their say and receive answers to questions they may want to ask, whilst young people get the chance to put things right.

Many young people 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 young people to make a positive contribution in this way can help reassure victims 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 Offending 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](#).