

Pre-court arrangements for children who offend

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** The author has produced the paper at the behest of the NAYJ Board of Trustees who have approved and adopted the contents.*

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The NAYJ is a registered charity (no. 1138177) and membership organisation campaigning for the rights of – and justice for – children in trouble with the law.

• Introduction

The NAYJ is in favour of maximum diversion of children from prosecution and from formal criminal justice sanctions. At the same time, the organisation is aware that children in conflict with the law frequently come from the most disadvantaged sections of the community and in that context, it is important that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that such children can access the services that they need and to which they ought to be entitled. The NAYJ considers that such services ought to be provided outside of the criminal justice system wherever possible but recognises that the high thresholds of mainstream provision pose challenges for committed youth justice practitioners.

This briefing examines the way the youth justice system deals with children in trouble before they reach the stage of being formally prosecuted and taken to court. It aims to:

- explore the evolution over the last 20 years of the approach to children who begin to commit offences;
- describe the new arrangements introduced by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act (2012);
- consider the implications of the changes for practitioners.

• Evolution of approaches to early and minor offending

Prior to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Police were responsible for deciding how to respond to offences committed by children. They could do nothing, give an informal warning, administer a formal caution or charge the child and bring the matter to court. Social Services Departments had a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and did provide a range of services suitable for those at risk of offending, such as Intermediate Treatment programmes offering positive activities for teenagers. However, the review of the Youth Justice system undertaken by the Audit Commission in 1996¹ suggested that these were not actively 'tackling' crime but were focused on children's welfare and rights. The authors of the report suggested that the responses by the Police and Social Services represented conflicting approaches to the problem and needed to be reconciled.

They estimated that three out of five children apprehended by the police received a Caution, described as a 'lecture' by a policeman and went on to say that:

Cautioning works well for first offenders, and seven out of 10 are not known to re-offend within two years. But it becomes progressively less effective once a pattern of offending sets in...The evidence suggests that, after three occasions, prosecution is more effective in reducing re-offending than a caution (p22)

This evidence was somewhat thin, drawn from data provided by one police area, and is contradicted by the findings of an evaluation of a diversionary model in Northamptonshire which indicated that prosecution did *not* have a beneficial effect at this point². Nevertheless, it seems to have been accepted as conclusive, as was the report's assertion that young people were no longer 'growing out of crime' as they used to, citing as evidence the fact that the peak age of offending amongst young men had risen to 18 from 15. As Tim Bateman points out³, this was because there had been a fall in offending by the younger age group: not because of an increase in offending by 18 year olds. It cannot therefore be concluded that failures in the youth justice system were responsible. Nevertheless, these assertions were influential in convincing the New Labour government in 1997 that radical reform was needed. Their White Paper announcing the changes was entitled *No More Excuses*⁴ and the section on pre-court disposals referred to 'nipping offending in the bud' and stated that:

Inconsistent, repeated and ineffective cautioning has allowed some children and young people to feel that they can offend with impunity.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 therefore introduced an inflexible response to early offending requiring the Police to apply an escalating tariff consisting of only two options before formal prosecution. This meant that children (defined as between 10 and 17 years inclusive) could be given a Reprimand but only for a first offence. A second offence would result in a Final Warning, which again could not be repeated (other than in exceptional circumstances and not within two years). Any further offending would result in prosecution, regardless of the child's

¹ Audit Commission (1996) *Misspent Youth: Young People and Crime*. London: Audit Commission

² Kemp, V. Sorsby, A. Liddle, M. and Merrington, S. (2002) *Assessing responses to youth offending in Northamptonshire*. London: Nacro

³ Bateman, T (2012) *Children in conflict with the law: an overview of trends and developments – 2010/2011*. London: NAYJ

circumstances or the seriousness of the offence. This system was often referred to as a 'three strikes and you're out' approach and there was little scope for practitioner discretion⁴.

In fact, the recommendations of *Misspent Youth* suggest that the authors were more interested in seeing Cautions be accompanied by a package of support than in replacing them with such an inflexible system. 'Caution Plus' schemes had been operating successfully in a number of areas, often based on the principles of reparation, and were commended in the report. For example, Northamptonshire had set up a multi-agency Diversion Unit whereby staff worked with children committing second or third offences to make good the harm they had done, involving the victim wherever possible. These schemes were not mandatory, however, and the provision of support to prevent further offending was undeniably patchy.

The trouble with the current cautioning system is that it is too haphazard and that too often a caution does not result in any follow up action, so the opportunity is lost for early intervention to turn youngsters away from crime⁵.

The Crime and Disorder Act was designed to ensure a more consistent approach across the country and required children on a Final Warning to be assessed with a view to offering a community intervention programme if needed, co-ordinated by the Youth Offending Team (YOT).

Following the implementation of these measures, there was concern about the increasing numbers of children ending up in court after one or two minor offences who then risked being 'up-tariffed' through to subsequent community sentences and, ultimately, custody. Nor did the new provisions appear to reduce inconsistency in the use of pre-court outcomes.⁶ This was compounded by the introduction in 2002 of a 'sanction detection' target for the police to increase the proportion of reported crimes that were brought to justice. The resulting criminalisation of children arising from the combination of these factors was recognised to some extent by Government. A number of modifications to the youth justice system were introduced that effectively offered a wider range of pre court disposals than had been envisaged by the rigid Final Warning scheme. For example, the use of penalty notices for disorder (PNDs), whereby the police could impose a financial penalty for certain minor offences rather than bringing criminal proceedings, were extended to children in 2003⁷, having previously only been used with adults. Youth Conditional Cautions were piloted in five areas from 2008⁸ with 16 and 17 year olds. They enabled, subject to Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) approval, criminal proceedings to be halted if the child agreed to fulfil certain conditions, usually related to some reparative measure to the victim or the community. If the child failed to fulfil these conditions, they could be charged with the original offence. Youth Restorative Disposals (YRDs) – a police administered, informal, response to low level offences committed by children who had not previously been in trouble – were introduced on a pilot basis in eight police force

4 The term 'final warning' does not appear in statute which simply refers to a 'warning' but the disposal is frequently described in this way in guidance

5 Home Office (1997) *No More Excuses: A New Approach to Tackling Youth Crime in England and Wales*. London: Home Office

6 Nacro (2008) *Some facts about children and young people who offend – 2006*. London: Nacro

7 Section 87: Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

8 Section 48 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to allow for their use with 10-17 year olds

areas in 2008. The Youth Crime Action Plan, published in 2008 established 'triage' schemes in 69 areas enabling YOTs to assess children at the point of arrest with a view to diverting them from the formal youth justice system⁹. As a separate initiative, Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion schemes (sometimes known as mental health triage schemes) were piloted by the Centre for Mental Health to identify children with mental and emotional health or other vulnerabilities when they first came into contact with the youth justice system and to fast-track them into support services¹⁰. Perhaps the most significant change of all was the government performance indicator introduced in 2008 for local authorities, and still in existence, to reduce the numbers of children entering the criminal justice system for the first-time. This target has led to a dramatic reduction in the number of children subject to pre-court disposals.¹¹

An interesting approach, with echoes of the earlier arrangements in Northamptonshire described above, has been adopted in localities within the South Wales Police Force area. Originating in Swansea, it is known as the 'Bureau'. This is designed to be different from other diversionary schemes based on rapid resolution, minimal intervention and where possible a 'non-criminal' outcome. Consistent with the 'All Wales Youth Offending Strategy'¹², it stresses the ethos of child first, offender second and requires a holistic assessment to identify the causes of offending and tailored interventions to tackle them. The Swansea Bureau has been evaluated and is said to have made a valuable contribution to reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. The authors characterise the principles of the approach as:

... (re-) engaging parents/carers in the behaviour of their children, giving explicit place to hear the voices of young people and decoupling the needs of the victim from the responses to the child¹³.

This is not to say that victims are ignored: their views are elicited, but the plan of action is not dependent on their agreement. Instead, parents and children are encouraged to identify their own solutions to problematic behaviour on the understanding that victims' needs should be addressed separately.

• New arrangements for pre-court disposals

In spite of its 'tough' language, the Green Paper¹⁴ that preceded the LASPO Act confirmed this change in ethos.

Under the current system of out of court disposals, young offenders are automatically escalated to a more intensive disposal, regardless of the circumstances or severity of their offence. We believe that this rigid approach can needlessly draw young people into the criminal justice system, when an informal intervention could be more effective in making the young person face up to the consequences of their crime, provide reparation for victims and

9 HM Government (2008) *Youth Crime Action Plan*. London: Home Office

10 Centre for Mental Health (undated) *Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion* available at: http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/criminal_justice/youngpeople.aspx

11 Bateman, T (2013) *op cit*

12 Welsh Assembly Government & YJB (2004) *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy* London: WAG & YJB

13 Haines, K, Case, S, Davies, K and Charles, AI (2013) The Swansea Bureau: A model of diversion from the Youth Justice System. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*. pp.1-21

14 Ministry of Justice (2010) *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*. London: Ministry of Justice available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/consultations/breaking-the-cycle.pdf>

prevent further offending. To remedy this we propose to simplify the current framework and allow police and prosecutors greater discretion in dealing with youth crime before it reaches court. We propose to end the current system of automatic escalation and instead put our trust in the professionals who are working with young people on the ground.

This shift in policy direction was welcomed by the NAYJ, whatever the underlying rationale for it may have been. It represented a move away from a system that encouraged the prosecution of children, regardless of whether it could be justified, to a more nuanced approach one where individual circumstances could be taken into account.

The new legislation abolished reprimands, final warnings and PNDs. The options now available to the police as an alternative to prosecution when a young person commits an offence are:

- no further action
- community resolution
- youth caution
- youth conditional caution

These measures are described in guidance¹⁵ and full details will not be repeated here. The diagram below is reproduced from the guidance and summarises the main features of the disposals. An important feature of the new framework is that these disposals can be repeated, although there are prompts for decision-makers to discourage the use of 'inappropriate' repeat cautions. The guidance suggests that YOT assessments should include consideration of: the risk of reoffending; risk to the public and any safeguarding needs; whether an intervention is appropriate and which agency is best placed to meet identified needs; the young person's attitude to interventions, and their motivation to participate and engage with an intervention programme; the extent to which the young person is able and willing to engage with restorative justice interventions, and the likelihood of the young person receiving support from their family/carers. This is a rigorous list of factors given that the offence could be minor and begs the question what should happen where children are *not* particularly motivated or, more worryingly, lack parental support. NAYJ would be opposed to children being prosecuted rather than cautioned due to these considerations: practitioners must guard against the possibility of punishing disadvantage¹⁶.

The guidance encourages the use of restorative approaches across the range of disposals, from an informal apology to formal restorative conferences. Each of the measures is considered in turn below, with comments about the particular opportunities and risks they present.

No further action

The option for the police to do nothing is an important one. Firstly, there may be no evidence to charge the child. Where there is insufficient evidence to ensure a

¹⁵ MoJ & YJB (2013) *Youth out-of-court disposals: guide for police and youth offending services*. London: Ministry of Justice available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/youth-justice/courts-and-orders/laspo/out-court-disposal-guide.pdf>

¹⁶ See Jacobson, J. Bhardwa, B. Gyateng, T. Hunter, G and Hough, M (2010) *Punishing Disadvantage: a profile of children in custody*. London: Prison Reform Trust

realistic chance of conviction then this should be the *only* police option, both as a matter of principle and in law. In their understandable wish to get the matter resolved, children may sometimes accept a disposal when in fact there is no case to answer. Secondly, even where there is sufficient evidence to prosecute, there may be no purpose served by doing so. In an evaluation of YRDs¹⁷, the authors comment that because they tended to be used for the younger age group it was likely that 'YRDs are being used as an alternative for doing nothing'. This is not to say that doing nothing is *always* the best outcome: for some children early offending may be a sign that they are in need of help and this help should be made available regardless of criminal justice decisions. The question may then be what kind of help, and whether it should come from youth justice or other services.



17 Rix, A, Skidmore, K, Self, R, Holt, T and Raybould, S (2011) *Youth restorative disposal process evaluation*. London: Youth Justice Board

Community resolutions

Community resolutions are loosely defined in the guidance as:

...the resolution of a minor offence or anti-social behaviour incident through informal agreement between the parties involved¹⁸.

They are informal disposals and there is consequently wide discretion and local variation in the way they are implemented. They have many features in common with the YRDs that were piloted in eight police forces in 2008/09 and might be seen as a national roll out of that earlier measure. Community resolutions are intended to divert first time offenders from the criminal justice system. Evaluation showed that a typical YRD involved the child apologising to the victim or making some other reparation and took place 'on the street', usually without the involvement of parents/carers¹⁹. Whilst most participants in the evaluation were positive about the scheme, the researchers were unable to measure its effectiveness.

Decisions to use community resolutions are left to the professional judgement of the police, and can be seen as a return to a 'common sense' response. In many cases this will be valid but there are inherent risks in a disposal that is so reliant on individual and instantaneous decision-making. In a recent Joint Inspection of the use of restorative justice²⁰ the authors said:

We looked at 66 police cases of informal resolution and judged that the resolution was inappropriate in 14. This was usually because the victim had not consented to the action taken (where this was a requirement), or the circumstances did not constitute a criminal offence.

Unfortunately, this conflates two very different objections and it is unclear how these are represented within the total number of 14. The possibility of children receiving a sanction, however informal, in the absence of an offence is particularly worrying and must be challenged where it has occurred. Community resolutions are not entered onto the police national computer but are recorded locally and can influence the response to any subsequent offending. For example, the fact that a child has been given a community resolution may mean that they are more likely to be given a formal disposal if they come to police attention again, or that they are identified as trouble-makers by the community. This is of concern given the vulnerability of this age group and the fact that the resolutions are not subject to any independent scrutiny. The risk of breaching children's human rights is a very real one, and must not be the trade-off for keeping them out of the formal criminal justice system.

The new cautioning system

Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions (YCCs) have replaced the old Reprimands and Final Warnings but a major difference is that they can be used even where the child has previous pre-court disposals or convictions. Both types of Caution can be issued by the police where:

¹⁸ HM Government (2008) *op cit*

¹⁹ Centre for Mental Health (undated) *op cit*

²⁰ Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2012) *Facing up to offending: use of restorative justice in the criminal justice system*

- the child admits the offence
- there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, but
- it would not be in the public interest to prosecute.

If these tests are met additional consideration should be given to the views of the victim, the child's history of offending, the seriousness²¹ and circumstances of the offence, compliance with previous Cautions or orders and the likely effect of a Caution or YCC. For both types of Caution, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) must *always* be involved in decisions about indictable offences.²² The CPS can also decide that, even where a decision to prosecute has been taken, they would like an adjournment for the possibility of a Caution or YCC to be considered instead. Cautions and YCCs are formal disposals and will be taken into consideration in any future criminal proceedings. They will also appear on Disclosure and Barring Service checks.²³

Youth cautions

Specific guidance on the administration of Youth Cautions has been issued for the police and youth offending teams²⁴. This includes a 'step-by-step guide to decision making', presumably in an attempt to ensure that Cautions are used appropriately and consistently. They urge the police to work closely with the YOT, including the use of police bail if a YOT assessment is needed to inform their decision. For a first Youth Caution, they must inform the YOT, who can decide to offer intervention to prevent re-offending. If a Caution is being considered for a second or subsequent offence, the YOT *must* undertake an assessment to determine whether an intervention should be provided. This process is therefore similar to that previously used for final warnings, and should involve YOT contact with the victim unless they have refused consent.

Youth conditional cautions

Youth Conditional Cautions (YCCs) are similar to Youth Cautions but intended for situations where a 'more robust response' is needed. A Code of Practice has been issued to offer guidance about the way YCCs should be operated, including guidance on deciding whether a second YCC can be given²⁵. The criteria are broadly the same as those for Youth Cautions but the Code suggests that a YCC should not be given if the child would be likely to receive a significant community sentence or be imprisoned if convicted.

The 'decision-maker', usually a police officer, should seek the views of the YOT when considering the suitability of a YCC, although they are not bound by its recommendations. They should also seek advice about suitable conditions to impose, which must be appropriate, proportionate and achievable. Preference should be given to conditions that are rehabilitative or restorative but, where these are unavailable, a fine or unpaid work/activity requirement can be given. Whatever the conditions, the child should be able to complete them within 16 or, exceptionally and for more serious offences, 20 weeks of the date of the offence.

21 Based on the ACPO Youth Gravity Factor Matrix

22 Indictable offences are more serious matters that can, in the case of an adult, be heard in the Crown Court

23 The Disclosure and Barring Service has replaced Criminal Records Bureau

24 MoJ & YJB (2013) *Youth Cautions: guidance for police and youth offending teams*. London: Ministry of Justice

25 MoJ (2013) *Code of Practice for Youth Conditional Cautions*. London: Ministry of Justice

The difference from an ordinary Youth Caution is that the child is expected to comply with the conditions of the YCC, monitored by the YOT who must refer cases of non-compliance back to the decision-maker. This will usually, but not inevitably, lead to prosecution for the original offence. If there has been partial compliance or there is a reasonable excuse, the decision-maker may vary the conditions or set a new time limit for their completion. Alternatively, they may decide that enough of the conditions have been complied with to consider them completed or that it is not in the public interest to prosecute.

• Implications for practice

The NAYJ welcomes the recent increases in diversionary alternatives to prosecution and formal sanctions and considers that the new arrangements for cautioning represent a significant advance over the previous statutory provisions. Practitioners must remain vigilant, however, over the way in which they are implemented.

An effective system for dealing with children who are beginning to offend, or who commit minor offences, has a difficult balance to strike. It must:

- be fair and consistent, whilst allowing consideration of each child's individual circumstances
- support the child to desist from offending without being disproportionately punitive

Prior to the Crime and Disorder Act there was a perception that not enough was being done to tackle offending, and it is true that there was no systematic approach towards providing help to the children who needed it. The Final Warning scheme introduced to replace it, however, swung too far in the other direction and resulted in unnecessary criminalisation. Does this new system achieve the necessary balance? It certainly has the potential to do so but will require practitioners to be vigilant to make it work in children's best interests. Some of the implications described below were also a feature of the last system: some are new.

Potential for confusion

As previously mentioned, and with the aim of making police decision making for pre-court options more flexible, the Youth Crime Action Plan promoted 'triage' schemes which have been running in varying forms in a number of areas. Such schemes have clearly contributed to meeting the first time entrant target. Triage schemes involve the YOT assessing children at the point of or shortly after arrest and recommending possible diversionary solutions as an alternative to a formal disposal. Evaluation of the scheme was unable to demonstrate effectiveness but did report positively on its impact on the working relationship between police and the YOTs²⁶. Similarly, the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) also worked in police stations to identify children who were vulnerable as a consequence of emotional issues or mental ill health, and aimed to divert them from the youth justice system towards other services or, if this was not possible, to ensure that

²⁶ Institute for Criminal Policy Research (2012) *Assessing young people in police custody: an examination of the operation of Triage schemes*. London: Home Office

their needs were addressed within the system. Again, evaluation showed some positive effects in reducing the children's difficulties²⁷. Both schemes provided a proactive role for other agencies to support the police in their decision-making, which have not been formally incorporated in the new pre-court system. The status of the schemes which are still operating is unclear although the guidance suggests that there is no reason why they should not continue²⁸, and cites an example of how this could work. There will need to be clear arrangements at a local level to determine how these schemes, where they exist, fit into the new system. Consideration will also need to be given at a national level to ensure consistency: decisions to divert from the youth justice system taken through Triage have been recorded as 'no further action' whereas the new community resolutions will be recorded as a disposal.

Potential for unfairness

Increased scope for discretion also means increased scope for unfairness. Even within the rigidity of the Final Warning Scheme, there were local differences in application. A recent inspection of casework by the CPS inspectorate²⁹ reported that:

Inspectors were concerned at the proportion of police charged cases which should have initially been dealt with by way of a pre-court disposal.

They also found the opposite: cases where Inspectors considered that the decision to prosecute had been correct but the CPS referred it back for consideration of a pre-court disposal. The cases spanned the previous and new system and there was an acknowledgement that the implementation of the new arrangements must be monitored. The recently established Area Youth Justice Co-ordinators within the CPS could play a vital part in this but the inspectors found that the role was not yet well developed.

Fairness may also be a concern in terms of children's admissions of guilt. Although all the guidance refers to the need to stress to children that they should not admit guilt just to avoid prosecution, we know that this can happen. Although children receiving a Caution are entitled to free legal advice and the presence of an appropriate adult, this does not apply to community resolutions. The drive to have the matter resolved quickly may result in children admitting to things they did not do, or that would not have resulted in prosecution anyway. This is something that practitioners, including appropriate adults, must be aware of. Such independent voices may not be available, however. Although the guidance says that it is good practice for a YOT worker to be present when a Caution is given, it is not a requirement and in most cases parents fulfil the role of appropriate adult. Parents may also feel that an admission of guilt and a caution is the best outcome without understanding the full implications for the child's future. Local consideration should be given to building additional safeguards into the system.

Desistance relies on individuals starting to redefine themselves as a non-offender, yet this system is based on children admitting that they have done wrong.

²⁷ Haines, A. Goldson, B. Haycox, A. Houten, R. Lane, S. McGuire, J. Nathan, T. Perkins, E. Richards, S. and Whittington, R. (2012) *Evaluation of the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) Pilot Scheme: Executive Summary to Final Report*. Liverpool: University of Liverpool

²⁸ MoJ & YJB (2013) *Youth out-of-court disposals: guide for police and youth offending services*. London: Ministry of Justice

²⁹ HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (2013) *Thematic review of youth offender casework follow-up inspection report October 2013*. London: HMCPSI

Access to the 'right' help

For children who need help or support, the question of whether this system will provide it remains. Children subject to community disposals and a first Youth Caution will be dealt with by the police and, although they are urged to consider the child's background, it is difficult to see how they will know about it. Ideally, all the children who come to the attention of police should have access to a holistic but non-stigmatising assessment of their needs, but this is unlikely to happen under the new system as the old. The South Wales Bureau model, described above, could serve as a model for areas that recognise the value of tackling the causes of offending at an early stage with multi-agency intervention rather than relying on a criminal justice response.

There is also a question about where help should come from. Given the increasing pressures on social care services, many children come to the attention of the police or YOT with unmet welfare needs. There is a real dilemma in how to offer support without the child acquiring a criminal label. The findings of the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime suggest just how unhelpful this can be, with children rapidly becoming the 'usual suspects'³⁰. The amended system, in common with the previous one, does nothing to improve children's access to the range of non-offending based services that could benefit them. Restorative approaches can unintentionally compound this negative identity. Although children do need to take responsibility for their actions, we must be mindful of the fact that many are also victims - and that the people who have harmed them may not themselves be held to account. Research on restorative justice has tended to focus on victim satisfaction and re-offending rather than the psychological impact on the offender.

Criminalisation

This is linked to the risk of unnecessary criminalisation. Whilst the new measures do avoid the inevitable 'up-tariffing' of the Final Warning scheme, it could still happen in practice. Previous disposals will always be taken into account and practitioners will need to challenge any old 'escalator' attitudes. This is not only a risk once children have stepped over the formal threshold of Cautioning. Even the informal measure of a community resolution 'counts' when deciding on what action to take if there is further offending. This is a particular worry given the lack of transparency and scrutiny of these disposals. It is important that children, and the adults whose job it is to support them, fully understand the implications of having received a pre-court disposal. The option of the police taking 'no further action' may often be the best.

• What needs to happen?

The guidance stresses the importance of the police and YOTs working closely together and urges the development of local protocols. This makes sense if the potential pitfalls described above are to be avoided. The changes do, however, provide a real opportunity to reduce the numbers of children being prosecuted and the challenge for practitioners is to make sure that this is realised. They must also be vigilant to ensure the system is operated in a fair and consistent way, and that those children who need help do not slip through the net.

³⁰ McAra L and McVie S (2007) Youth justice? The impact of system contact on patterns of desistance from offending. *European Journal of Criminology* 4(3): pp.315-345