



Justice for Children in Trouble  
[www.thenayj.org.uk](http://www.thenayj.org.uk)

NAYJ is a registered charity: Number 1138177

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## **Press release: 12/12/2016 – Re. Ministry of Justice proposal for Secure Schools**

We welcome the publication of the Taylor report and the acknowledgement that the current custodial estate is failing troubled and troublesome children. NAYJ has long advocated that children in custody should be cared for in units based on welfare principles and not ones where the focus is primarily on control and containment. While NAYJ understands the importance of good educational provision, we await more detail on the newly proposed secure schools. We know that many of the children are not able to respond to traditional teaching methods, requiring an innovative and broad approach to their learning. We would also welcome more information about how the provision will address all the other complex needs of children who have experienced neglect, abuse and other deprivations.

Rather than propose a new type of custodial establishment for children, we consider that resources would be better spent by the government on increasing the proportion of spaces available in the most appropriate custodial provision for children, Secure Children's Homes (SCHs). As highlighted in our most recent report, *The State of Youth Custody 2016*, the staff-to-child ratios and education levels are much higher in SCHs than both other forms of custodial institution for children. Perhaps most importantly, SCHs are characterised by a child care, rather than a custodial, ethos."

Ross Little, Chair of NAYJ, said "While we applaud the ambition of Taylor's proposals and agree with him that most of the current secure estate is not fit for purpose, we believe that investing in secure children's homes would be a better and simpler idea. It is unclear how the new secure schools will be different to the secure training centres they would presumably replace".

### **Notes for editors:**

1. Ministry of Justice press release 'Justice secretary plans to put education at the heart of youth justice' <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/justice-secretary-plans-to-put-education-at-the-heart-of-youth-justice>
2. *The State of Youth Custody 2016* report by Dr. Tim Bateman (published October 2016) appears on the home webpage of the National Association for Youth Justice <http://thenayj.org.uk>
3. For further details about the National Association for Youth Justice please see <http://thenayj.org.uk>
4. For any further information please contact Dr. Tim Bateman 0207 340 8004 or Ross Little 0116 207 8763