



Youth Justice  
Agency

# CORPORATE PLAN

2022 - 2025

# FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It's a great privilege to be introducing the first three-year corporate plan for the Youth Justice Agency since 2013-16. Creating a three-year plan was something I have been keen to do since taking up the role in May 2021. It's a great way of giving some certainty to our service users, staff and stakeholders on how we plan to deliver services over a longer-time frame. Importantly, it also helps improve our accountability to the people we serve.



None of that means, though, that planning over a longer-term horizon is easy, especially given continued uncertainty around future year budgets. In preparing this plan, we have made an assumption that our budget for the next three years will remain at the 2021-22 opening baseline level in cash terms (which means a real terms reduction once inflation is taken into account). This situation could, of course, change once budgets are finalised. If our budget was reduced (or inflation grows at a greater rate), we may be unable to deliver on all the actions in this plan. Recognising these and other uncertainties, we are aiming to develop a 'rolling' corporate plan. This will mean updating the forward three-year plan each year.

This plan dovetails well with the Department of Justice's new three-year corporate plan and the Department's Strategic Framework for Youth Justice (published in March 2022).

Importantly, the plan also recognises that the Youth Justice Agency is part of a much wider eco system designed to improve outcomes for young people and help those who are most vulnerable to live better lives. Our contribution is around “making communities safer by helping children to stop offending.” In practice, this involves us working with children and young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending, and their families, the victims of youth crime and the wider community in which those offences take place.

The plan focuses on four priority areas of service delivery but it also recognises that, through our partnerships, we make a valuable contribution to change in the wider youth justice system and also in helping shape broader public services that impact on the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people in Northern Ireland.

All of our work is founded on a Children First ethos that is trauma-informed and underpinned by children’s rights, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These values are at the heart of our new Model of Practice which describes how we do our work.

During my first year in role, I have had an opportunity to see first-hand our staff living these values on a daily basis in their work with children and young people, their families and victims. The feedback we receive through regular surveys highlights the huge positive impact our staff are having on the lives of many people. Just like our service users, I really value the energy, commitment and professionalism of our staff team and their dedicated focus on continuous improvement. Despite the budget challenges over the planning period, I want us to continue to invest in our people.

For that reason, I am currently investing time working with a group of staff, through a task and finish group, to find ways of improving further our approach to learning and development across the organisation.

I want to thank the young people and our staff who have contributed to the development of this plan. I’m also grateful for all the conversations with and feedback from colleagues and partners over the last year that have informed our thinking. Finally, I want to give particular thanks to my Corporate Services colleagues who led the production of this plan, especially to George Lowry who recently retired following 19 years dedicated service.

**STEPHEN MARTIN**

Chief Executive

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## Key outcomes

The Executive is bringing forward an Outcomes-based Programme for Government (PfG) that is focused on achieving outcomes of societal wellbeing and delivering real and positive change in people's lives. To achieve this a PfG draft Outcomes Framework has been developed, which builds on the outcomes-based approach that has defined strategic planning across the public sector since 2016.

The draft Framework contains nine strategic Outcomes which, taken together, will set a clear direction of travel for the NI Executive and provide a vision for the future of all citizens.

The YJA Corporate Plan for the period 2022 to 2025 has been developed with **two specific NI Programme for Government indicators** in mind:

- **reduced crime** - measured by the prevalence rate, which is the % of the population who were victims of any NI Crime Survey crime; and
- **reduced reoffending** - measured by the reoffending rate

The DoJ leads on the PfG Outcome **7 "Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other"**. The Youth Justice Agency also contributes to PfG Outcome **12 "Our children and young people have the best start in life"**

These key outcomes are aligned with the four priority areas around which our services are based and against which our business performance is measured:-

- Earlier stage diversion;
- Community-based interventions;
- Custodial-based interventions; and
- Resource management.

The relationships between these and Departmental / Ministerial priorities are explained in greater detail in Section 2.

## Our statement of purpose

*"Making communities safer by helping children to stop offending."*

## Our mission statement

To reduce offending by supporting children to achieve their full potential.

## Our principles

### We will

- Act in your best interests and promote your rights;
- Advocate on your behalf;
- Involve victims when appropriate;
- Support you to repair harm and relationships;
- Work in partnership with others;
- Focus on your needs not just what you have done; and
- Focus on positive outcomes.

## Our shared values

We will:



Treat you as individuals;



Focus on your strengths and encourage positivity;



Promote safety; and



Listen to everyone and everyone will have a voice.

We:



Are fair, open and honest;



Are kind, compassionate and trauma aware; and



Do not judge.

## 'Expensive Taste'

Painted by a young person in Woodlands, JJC. This painting won a Highly Commended award at the Koestler Awards





**1**

**INTRODUCTION**

## Who we are

The Youth Justice Agency is part of the Department of Justice under the direction and control of the Minister of Justice. We were established in April 2003.

## What we do

We provide a range of services, both within the community and within custody and often delivered in partnership with others, with an emphasis on:-

- diverting children and young people from crime;
- helping children and young people to address their offending behaviour;
- assisting their integration into the community; and
- meeting the needs of the victims of crime.

Our community-based services are delivered by our **Youth Justice Services** directorate through 5 Area Teams located across Northern Ireland (see location map on page 12). Each Area Team is responsible for the delivery of a wide-range of front-line services, often jointly with or on behalf of other partner agencies.

### These include:

- working with children and young people who are on the cusp of the formal youth justice system in order to intervene at the earliest opportunity (Earlier Stage Diversion);
- hosting and delivering Youth Engagement Clinics;
- facilitating and delivering Youth Conferences - both Court ordered and diversionary, ensuring that, where appropriate, victims have an input as to the way forward;
- delivering a range of earlier stage and diversionary initiatives;
- supervising and supporting children and young people, using a Children First model, across the continuum of Earlier Stage Diversion through to working with the most complex children and young people at risk of custody or on leaving custody;

- service provision and attendance at all Youth Court sittings across Northern Ireland, including Magistrates', Crown and High Courts as required; and
- delivering programmes and interventions to children and young people and their parents/carers to prevent reoffending.

Custody for children and young people is provided by our **Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre** which is located in Bangor and services the needs of all of Northern Ireland. Woodlands has been designed as a centre of excellence within a secure environment, offering a wide range of services and support to help prevent children and young people from re-offending. It provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment for up to 36 boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 17

who have been remanded or sentenced to custody by the courts. It also operates as a place of safety for PACE purposes.

These front-line services are supported by the **Business Support Team** which is based in the Agency's Headquarters and delivers an amalgam of core administrative and executive business services on behalf of the Chief Executive. The services provided include corporate governance, Ministerial/ Assembly business, communications, business performance, records management, information technology and estates management. Other functions, such as financial management and research and statistics, are provided by DoJ on a shared services basis. Personnel services are provided by Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources (NICSHR).

## Where we work

We deliver our services throughout Northern Ireland but our teams are located as follows:

### Youth Justice Services

#### Belfast Area

- Central Belfast

#### Northern Area

- Ballymena

#### Eastern Area

- Newtownards

#### Southern Area

- Banbridge
- Downpatrick

#### Western Area

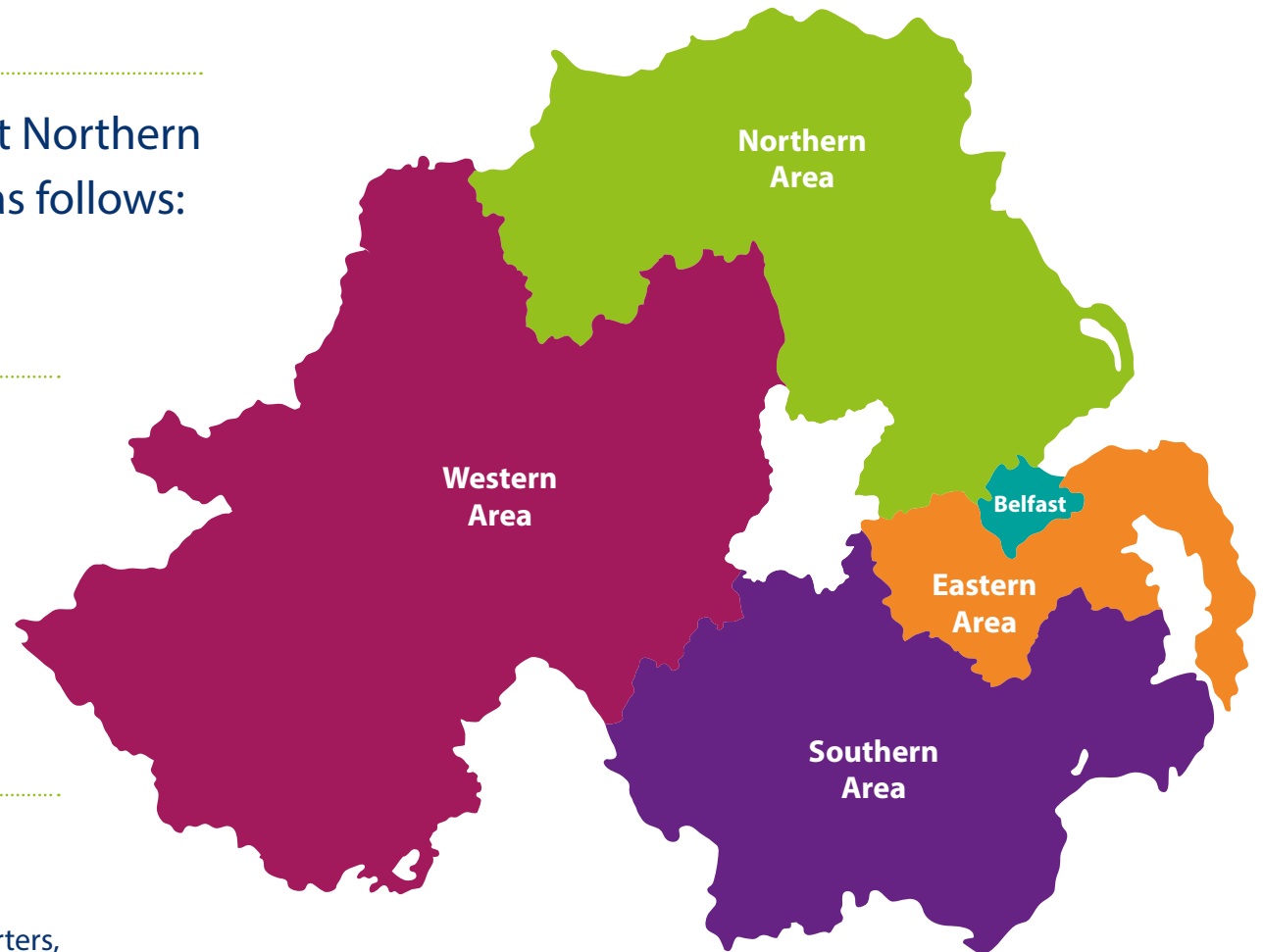
- Foyle
- Omagh
- Dungannon
- Enniskillen

#### Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

- Bangor

#### Business Support Team

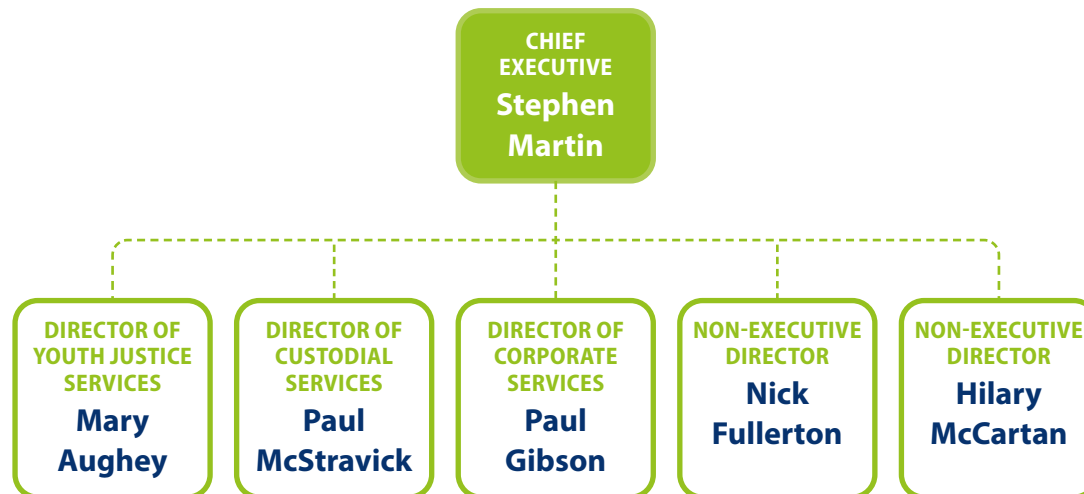
- Corporate Headquarters, Belfast



## Oversight of our work

The Department of Justice is responsible for youth justice policy working with the Agency who provide the operational experience.

We have a Management Board which focuses primarily on operational policy, planning and priority setting, corporate governance and the monitoring of business performance. Current membership is as follows:



The Youth Justice Agency is within the statutory remit of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) and can be subject to independent inspection or review as a single organisation or as part of a thematic inspection. CJI inspect Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in partnership with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) against Expectations for Children in Custody, incorporating the Inspection and Self Evaluation Framework for Education Other Than At School provision, and Quality Standards for Health and Social Care. Services may also be subject to review by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

We have in place **Safeguarding Procedures** which provide robust safeguards for those young people in our care.

We also have a **Complaints Charter** which enables anyone who feels they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately by the Agency to speak out so that concerns can be addressed.



## *'Savouring Natural Beauty'*

Painted by a young person in Woodlands, JJC. This painting won the Special Award at the **Koestler Awards**. The piece has also been accepted in the Royal Academy of Art, from 21,000 applicants for their **Young Artist Summer Show Exhibition 2022**.



**2**

**PLANNING  
CONTEXT**

## Operating environment

Since the devolution of Justice in 2010, much has been achieved to improve the youth justice system in Northern Ireland with a focus on implementing initiatives aimed at keeping children and young people out of the criminal justice system.

The work undertaken by the Agency, and others, to support children and young people in the early stages of offending, and to divert them away from the Courts, has contributed to a significant reduction in the number of children and young people entering the formal justice system.

Our understanding of offending behaviour and how it can be addressed is evolving and the ***Strategic Framework for Youth Justice 2022-2027***, developed by the Department of Justice, will continue to build on progress made, taking a 'Children First' approach to youth justice. In covering the wider youth justice system, its scope is much broader than just the Agency's work. That said, the Agency will play a key role in leading on delivering a number of actions within the strategic framework and in supporting other organisations in delivering others. For example, the

Agency will contribute to multi-agency efforts to address system wide issues such as delay in the youth court system, over-representation of certain groups of children and young people in the youth justice system and in developing a more joined-up approach to supporting vulnerable children and young people to transition into adulthood.

We will also work closely with colleagues in the Department of Justice who are leading on the delivery of policy-focused actions in the Strategic Framework for Youth Justice, such as the development of a flexible order to replace the existing seven community orders and to develop a pilot for child-friendly youth court hearings, informed by problem solving approaches.



Effective partnership working is fundamental to much of the Agency's work. It is supported by the ethos of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the CSCA). This legislation places a statutory duty on children's authorities to co-operate in the planning, provision and delivery of services to children and young people; and a duty on the Northern Ireland Executive to promote co-operation across Departments. It also aims to build further on existing partnerships to ensure that we make better connections between services designed to support our most vulnerable children and young people. Our partnership work includes engagement with and working alongside the Children and Young People's Strategic partnership (CYPSP) and the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI).

An additional requirement of the CSCA was the adoption by the Executive of a Children and Young People's Strategy.

This was published in January 2021 and is rooted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It aims to support the rights, and to improve the well-being, of children and young people and to achieve positive, long-lasting outcomes. The Executive Strategy includes a number of 'areas of greatest focus', which are issues that stakeholders have identified as requiring particular attention, and groups of children and young people they have identified as being in greatest need. One such area is children and young people in contact with the justice system.

Since it was established in 2003, the YJA has delivered interventions, in both the community and in custody, aimed at addressing the needs of those children and young people who have offended. Its services, often delivered in partnership with others, seek to help children and young people to address their offending behaviour and its underlying causes,

divert them from crime, assist their integration into the community and meet the needs of victims of crime.

Many children and young people who enter the criminal justice system have a range of complex educational and health needs. This is particularly true for the smaller cohort who spend time in youth custody, a disproportionate number of whom are care experienced. One way in which we will look to address this is through partnership working with the Department of Health on the development and delivery of the Regional Care and Justice Programme.

While the Agency has worked successfully with those children and young people most at risk of offending, it alone cannot provide the full spectrum of support necessary to address the root causes of youth offending behaviour, typified by absenteeism from school, chaotic family lives, substance use and chronic physical and mental health issues.

For that reason we continue to work in partnership with others who have statutory responsibilities to lead in these areas as well as with the community and voluntary sectors.

On the ground, this will mean that we will continue to work with, and provide broader support for young people by:

- identifying their specific needs and, where the Agency is not best placed to meet those needs, signposting them to other appropriate services,
- encouraging multi-agency / partnership working to address these needs,
- seeking to influence others to develop and deliver appropriate services, and
- supporting families throughout this process.

We aim to build on existing partnerships in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors to ensure that those children and families in greatest need are able to

access support through effective pathways to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity.

While dealing with the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic was a difficult time for all, it spurred us on to find new and innovative ways of delivering our business. We intend to “hold the gains” achieved in having to adapt to the challenges we faced. We will continue to use our upgraded IT to “work smarter” and the fact that staff in two of our directorates have been working in a hybrid way since March 2020, the transition to New Ways of Working should be a seamless one. We had always strived to focus on quality, productive working and tangible outcomes and this is especially relevant given our service user profile. We have better tools and a changed culture which will better serve our business as we go forward.

## Alignment with Department of Justice priorities

### We have identified four priority areas around which our services are based:

- Earlier stage diversion;
- Community-based interventions;
- Custodial-based interventions; and
- Resource management.

These align with Ministerial priorities within the Department of Justice which in turn evolve from commitments made within the new draft NI Programme for Government.

The DoJ mission is to work in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other.

The Department's key priorities are to:

- Support Safe and Resilient Communities
- Address Harm and Vulnerability
- Challenge Offending Behaviours and Support Rehabilitation
- Deliver an Effective Justice System

While the Youth Justice Agency contributes in some way to the achievement of all these priorities, we are most closely aligned with **'Challenge Offending Behaviours and Support Rehabilitation'**.

The DoJ actions to which we directly contribute are:

- To improve the outcomes for those in contact with the justice system by enhancing opportunities to address the needs of individuals, helping them address the root cause of their offending behaviour and reduce the rate of offending
- To put in place arrangements for the care of children in a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment supported by a youth justice policy and legislative framework with a coherent approach to early intervention

## *'Taste of Peace'*

Painted by a young person in Woodlands, JJC. This painting was the winning entry to the NI100 ART Competition for 2021-22.



**3**

**WHAT WE PLAN  
TO DELIVER**

## Measuring performance

The core functions which are the direct responsibility of the Agency to deliver have been sub-divided into four priority areas which align with Ministerial priorities within the Department of Justice:

- 1 **Earlier stage diversion**
- 2 **Community-based interventions**
- 3 **Custodial-based interventions**
- 4 **Resource management**

Each priority area has a strategic outcome as follows:

Priority Area	Strategic Outcome
<b>Earlier stage diversion</b>	Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support
<b>Community-based interventions</b>	Positive outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities affected by offending
<b>Custodial interventions</b>	Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment
<b>Resource management</b>	YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused, and  YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance

Each priority area also has a set of Business Activities against which performance can be measured. These are set out in our separate Business Plan for 2022-2023 which can be accessed [here](#).

# PRIORITY AREA 1: EARLIER STAGE DIVERSION

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	CHILDREN ARE EXITED FROM THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM AT THE EARLIEST POINT, WITH APPROPRIATE SUPPORT		
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>We will further develop Earlier Stage Diversion Services (ESDS) for children and young people at the early stages of coming into conflict with the law</p>	<p>We will assess children and young people at the early stages of coming into conflict with the law to help determine the most proportionate/effective intervention. Multi agency collaboration will inform joint decision making in assigning service pathways</p>	<p>We will target our ringfenced Earlier Stage Diversion (ESD) funding where it is most impactful</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will deliver Earlier Stage Diversion interventions, including through the Community Resolution Notice (CRN) Referral Scheme, and other topical/thematic awareness sessions for children and young people, to include their families where appropriate. These interventions will not attract a criminal record</p>	<p>We will undertake a needs led Earlier Stage Diversion Assessment (ESDA) on each child to determine a proportionate plan of intervention</p>	<p>We will provide funding to individual children and young people and their families to assist with education/training/employment, play and leisure, counselling and other activities in order to improve opportunities and outcomes</p>
	<p>We will co-ordinate with PSNI and PPS the development of a new Earlier Stage Diversion disposal, to include format and timing, for children and young people whose needs have exceeded the remit of a CRN or Awareness Session but are less complex than would require moving into the formal justice system. This intervention will not attract a criminal record</p>	<p>All children and young people availing of our range of Earlier Stage Diversion Services (ESDS) will be considered at their local Children's Diversion Forum (CDF) in order to agree the most appropriate plan of work and service pathway(s). Multi agency input will ensure holistic decision making and shared responsibility (where appropriate)</p>	<p>We will provide funding to local community groups in order that they can deliver programmes/interventions for children and young people to help promote community reintegration</p>
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>	<p>Fewer children and young people reaching the formal stages of the youth justice system Fewer children attaining a criminal record</p>		

# PRIORITY AREA 2: COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, VICTIMS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY OFFENDING		
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>We will ensure a “Children First” approach across our engagement/ interventions. We recognise the centrality of working in a Trauma Informed way and the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Our interventions are participative, strengths based/future focused, informed by evidence and are outcomes based</p>	<p>Parents, carers and families will be central to our assessments, service delivery and interventions. Working systemically with a child’s family is central to improving outcomes</p>	<p>We will strive to ensure that the victims voice is heard by delivering quality, meaningful Youth Conferences. We will support victims in telling their story and will listen to their views about how the harm caused can be repaired</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>Children and young people who come to us via the formal youth justice system will benefit from a Youth Justice Agency Needs Assessment (YJANA). This robust assessment will inform how we engage and what we deliver in order to support and challenge children and young people. The YJANA includes the views of children and young people in formulating a work programme</p>	<p>Parents, carers and families will be involved in all aspects of our YJANA and in the subsequent delivery of the programme of work</p>	<p>Where there is an identifiable victim in a child’s offence they will be invited to attend or participate in a Youth Conference in order to ensure their voice is heard. Their views as to what should happen in order to repair some/all of the harm caused will inform any plan of action going forward</p>
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>	<p>Restorative Practices, including the delivery of diversionary and court ordered Youth Conferences remain at the centre of our processes with children and young people in the formal system</p> <p>We will continue the CAMHS/YJA Co-Located Worker pilot in the two designated area teams and explore the possibility of further regional roll-out in order to improve access to and engagement with Mental Health services (subject to budget availability)</p> <p>The Participation Officer will liaise with families on a regular basis to ensure their voices are heard</p> <p>We will help the victim through the process and maximize direct victim attendance (where appropriate) as these conferences are the most impactful both for the victim and the child</p> <p>We will advocate for children to ensure their Education, Training or Employment status improves during their time with us</p> <p>We will assess and address drug and alcohol issues and advocate for appropriate help and intervention to be made available</p> <p>Interventions with girls and young women will be delivered in a gender specific way to take account of their differing needs from boys and young men</p> <p>All of our work will be underpinned by robust Safeguarding policies, procedures and practices</p> <p>Improvement in family relationships Improvement in ETE status and engagement The child is more connected in their community and has access to support systems Substance Misuse issues have been addressed either by YJA or via referral to appropriate services Health and Wellbeing needs have been identified and addressed either by YJA or by referral to appropriate services</p>		
<p><b>We have a dedicated Participation Officer in order to ensure the meaningful involvement of children and young people, families, victims and communities in the design and delivery of services and practices</b></p>		<p>Parent/Carer Support Groups will be available in each of our 5 area teams</p>	<p>We will source and facilitate meaningful reparative activities (Service in the Community) where children and young people can demonstratively make amends to victims and communities</p>



# PRIORITY AREA 2: COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, VICTIMS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY OFFENDING		
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>We will work in and with communities to help increase confidence in the criminal justice system, to contribute to wider/joint solutions to youth crime, rehabilitation, reintegration and restoration</p>	<p>We will develop and deliver Enhanced Case Management (ECM) in order to work intensively with our most complex children and young people. These children and young people require high levels of wrap around services to address their needs and to manage the risk they may pose to others and themselves</p>	<p>In order to ensure custody is used as a last resort we will ensure seamless services and collaboration across our Youth Justice Services and Custodial Services directorates</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will deliver our Schools Programme to increase knowledge of the consequences of anti-community/offending behaviour and to deliver thematic workshops</p>	<p>We will identify those children and young people requiring higher levels of supervision and support via the YJANA and other targeted assessment tools</p>	<p>We will enhance our Bail Support and Supervision Scheme (BSSS) to provide community support as an alternative to remand or to ensure remand is for the shortest possible time, particularly for those children and young people in over-represented groups</p>
	<p>We will participate in PCSPs and other local community forums to deliver on joint projects/solutions and to promote collaborative working</p>	<p>We will design intervention plans to ensure that the requisite time and expertise are allocated to these children and young people and their parents/carers/families</p>	<p>We will contribute to the development of Health and Social Care Trust Bail Fostering Schemes</p>
	<p>We will continue to engage with the voluntary/community sector to share ideas and improve service pathways to services already funded by Health, Education and others</p>	<p>We will work with multi disciplinary partners to maximize co-ordinated and responsive wrap around service</p>	<p>Where a child is remanded or committed we will continue our work with them in a seamless way if already known to us or if not already known we will explore the appropriateness of a referral</p>
	<p>We will support DoJ colleagues in developing practical solutions to deliver on the policy-focused actions in the Strategic Framework for Youth Justice</p>	<p>We will contribute to work undertaken by DfC, NI Housing Executive and the Trusts to address homelessness among children and young people in the community</p>	<p>We will participate in all discharge planning meetings and provide a clear outline of how we will contribute to working with the child in the community on release</p>
			<p>We will contribute to the design and delivery of services in relation to community provision as part of the Regional Care &amp; Justice Programme</p>
			<p>We will work with Health and other partners to prevent unnecessary PACE and remand admissions</p>
			<p>We will support children and young people's family / extended family throughout care planning to promote positive return to community</p>
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>	<p>Improvement in family relationships            Improvement in ETE status and engagement            The child is more connected in their community and has access to support systems            Substance Misuse issues have been addressed either by YJA or via referral to appropriate services            Health and Wellbeing needs have been identified and addressed either by YJA or by referral to appropriate services</p>		

# PRIORITY AREA 3: CUSTODIAL-BASED INTERVENTIONS

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF A SAFE, SECURE, THERAPEUTIC, CHILD-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT		
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>Maintain a safe, secure and therapeutic environment for children in custody using a 'Children First' approach</p>	<p>Promote emotional health and well being</p>	<p>Enhance learning opportunities for all young people through collaboration with education partners</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will protect the rights and promote the well-being of young people through the application of safeguarding principles and robust governance arrangements</p>	<p>We will complete individual health screening for every young person admitted to the Centre for more than 24 hours</p>	<p>We will assess the learning needs of children and young people to identify their individual learning plan</p>
	<p>We will assess and manage the needs of all young people, to improve their well-being and help promote positive life choices and opportunities</p>	<p>We will take a multi-disciplinary approach to meet the physical and mental health needs of each young person and improve their emotional well-being, supported by external agencies and services when needed</p>	<p>We will deliver learning plans through personal tutor support to each young person</p>
	<p>Experienced and qualified staff will utilise their skills to develop positive relationships to enable young people to achieve their full potential</p>	<p>We will provide appropriate support to children and young people to address any substance misuse issues</p>	<p>We will work with education colleagues to implement EOTAS curriculum</p>
	<p>A multi-disciplinary approach will be taken to develop individual needs based care plans for young people</p>	<p>We will maintain and continue to develop a range of leisure activities that meet the specific needs of children and young people</p>	<p>We will address offending behaviours which impact on learning pathways and placement opportunities through a multi-disciplinary approach which aligns to care plan</p>
	<p>From the care plans a range of individual and groupwork programmes will be delivered to address the needs of the young person</p>		<p>We will provide children and young people and their family with end of term progress reports that recognise and celebrate achievements</p>
	<p>We will establish and develop working relationships with young people's family/ extended family, promoting the benefits of involvement while in custody</p>		
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>	<p>Improvement in family relationships                      Health and Wellbeing needs have been identified and addressed either by Woodlands or by referral to appropriate services                      Attainment of qualifications and improvement in education, training and employment status                      Improved services within Woodlands resulting from young person feedback                      The young person is more connected in their community and understands the plans in place for their release</p>		

# PRIORITY AREA 3: CUSTODIAL-BASED INTERVENTIONS

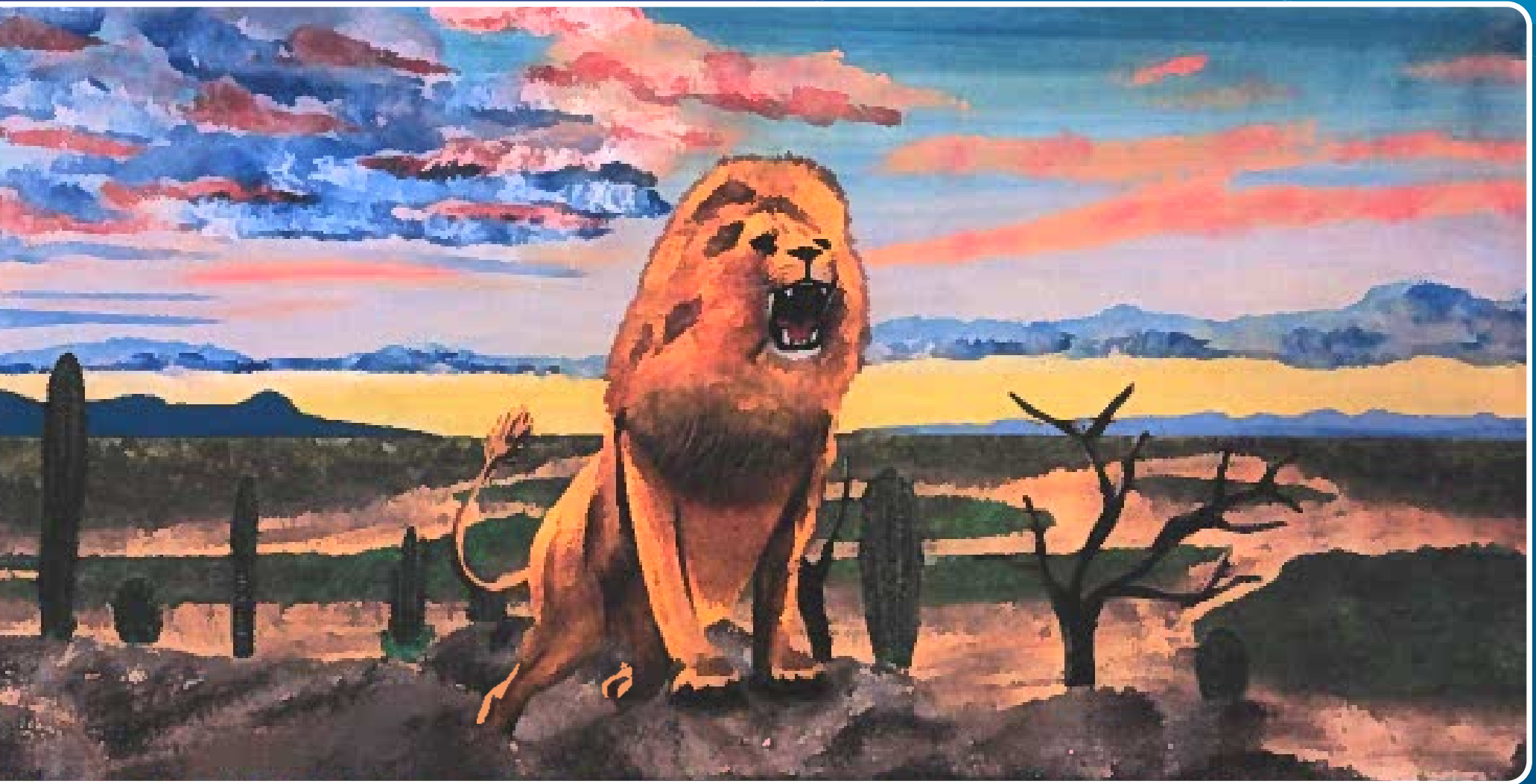
STRATEGIC OUTCOME	IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF A SAFE, SECURE, THERAPEUTIC, CHILD-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT		
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>Promote quality improvement in service delivery</p>	<p>Preparation for Leaving Custody</p>	<p>Work in partnership with Health to deliver the Regional Care &amp; Justice programme to improve support to vulnerable children and young people, including in the justice system</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will develop an action plan to enable the implementation of recommendations from the CJNI Announced Inspection (Jan 2022) Report</p>	<p>We will plan in advance for the supervision of children and young people immediately following their release from custody through YJS or other identified statutory bodies</p>	<p>We will implement Ministerial decisions by developing a harmonised approach with Lakewood that builds on existing good practice across both sites. This will include developing a range of shared services, such as education and health and therapeutic care</p>
	<p>We will review on an on-going basis policy and practice through engagement with external organisations / stakeholders</p>	<p>We will support children and young people to make the transition into adult services as needed</p>	<p>We will work with Health and other partners to develop detailed proposals to support the reintegration of children and young people to the community from custody, including on-site step-down and community provision within the Regional Care &amp; Justice programme</p>
	<p>We will review and deliver an on-going refurbishment programme that continues to reflect a child-friendly, therapeutic and modern environment for children and young people in custody</p>	<p>We will identify education and employment opportunities for children and young people</p>	<p>We will work with Health and other partners in developing common standards for secure care, including facilitating opportunities for children and young people with experience of custodial care to contribute and feedback to inform and develop future proposals</p>
	<p>We will incorporate children and young people and stakeholder feedback to inform and develop future service delivery</p>	<p>We will support, influence and assist in the delivery of effective community-based programmes</p>	<p>We will work with partners to develop alternatives to remand with a focus on reducing the number of children and young people from over-represented groups in custody</p>
		<p>We will support children and young people's family / extended family throughout care planning to promote positive return to community</p>	
		<p>We will ensure children and young people have access to suitable and appropriate accommodation on release to prevent homelessness by multi-agency working, joint planning and ensuring children and young people have access to services and supports as required</p>	
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>	<p>Improvement in family relationships            Health and Wellbeing needs have been identified and addressed either by Woodlands or by referral to appropriate services            Attainment of qualifications and improvement in education, training and employment status            Improved services within Woodlands resulting from young person feedback            The young person is more connected in their community and understands the plans in place for their release</p>		<p>Reduced number of children and young people from over-represented groups in custody            Greater commonality of approach between Woodlands JJC and Lakewood Secure Care Centre</p>

# PRIORITY AREA 4: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	YJA HAS A MULTI-SKILLED, FLEXIBLE AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE WHICH IS WELL-LED, HIGHLY PERFORMING AND OUTCOMES FOCUSED		
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>Innovation and continuous professional development</p>	<p>Promote staff well-being and a safe, healthy workplace</p>	<p>Ensure business continuity through an effective partnership with NICSHR</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will value and invest in our people by continuously improving our approach to learning and development across the Agency</p>	<p>We will provide appropriate, tailored well-being support to staff</p>	<p>We will effectively manage staff retention and succession planning</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will build upon progress made and lessons learned from innovative working throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and implement the NICS New Ways of Working arrangements</p>	<p>We will train staff to deal effectively with difficult and challenging behaviour</p>	<p>We will recruit staff on a timely basis</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will train staff in equality and diversity issues</p>	<p>We will comply with Agency Health &amp; Safety policy</p>	<p>We will effectively manage staff performance</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will continue to invest in the social and youth work professions by offering placements to students from local universities</p>		<p>We will effectively manage sick absence</p>
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>	<p>Reduced sick absence Improved retention of staff Improvements in staff satisfaction levels</p>		

# PRIORITY AREA 4: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	YJA RESOURCES ARE USED EFFECTIVELY, COMPLYING WITH CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE			
<p><b>What we will do to make a difference</b></p>	<p>Deliver value for money through effective use of financial resources</p>	<p>Maintain an effective system of financial controls</p>	<p>Provide good quality information to promote transparency and effective public accountability</p>	<p>Maintain effective internal information / data management systems and controls</p>
<p><b>How we will do this (including examples of actions required)</b></p>	<p>We will effectively manage business planning and performance monitoring</p>	<p>We will effectively manage our budgets</p>	<p>We will publish an annual update on the impact of the Agency's work</p>	<p>We will ensure the secure management of all YJA paper and electronic records in line with DoJ standards</p>
	<p>We will ensure support contracts are in place and effectively managed</p>	<p>We will comply with procurement procedures</p>	<p>We will publish annual workload statistics and carry out regular satisfaction surveys in relation to our services</p>	<p>We will ensure IT systems across the Agency remain fit for purpose</p>
	<p>We will seek ways to reduce unit costs while maintaining the quality of services</p>	<p>We will ensure effective corporate governance</p>	<p>We will operate effective child protection and complaints procedures</p>	<p>We will maintain and develop the MIS database to provide enhanced statistical and management information</p>
	<p>We will complete the move of the Corporate Services and Belfast Area Teams to new accommodation</p>	<p>We will ensure targeted internal audit assignments</p>	<p>We will provide information within statutory time limits in relation to pre-YJA historic case files in support of the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Scheme</p>	<p>We will further develop YJA data to help improve understanding of the factors contributing to over-representation of certain groups in the youth justice system and encourage other justice agencies to do likewise</p>
	<p>We will produce accurate and audited accounts</p>	<p>We will produce accurate and audited accounts</p>	<p>We will work with young people to produce child friendly versions of key YJA documents</p>	<p>We will provide effective internal communications (including Ministerial support)</p>
	<p>We will effectively implement and monitor all agreed inspection recommendations</p>	<p>We will effectively implement and monitor all agreed inspection recommendations</p>		
	<p>Continue to deliver positive impacts for our service users within reduced budgets</p>			
<p><b>How we will know if this has been achieved</b></p>				



### *'King of his Land'*

Painted by a young person in Woodlands, JJC. This painting won a Highly Commended award at the **Koestler Awards**.

**4**

**HOW WE PLAN  
TO DELIVER  
OUR SERVICES**

## Model of Practice

**Positive and Progressive Youth Justice: Children First** is the YJA Model of Practice (MOP) and is a framework which sets out the principles, theories and models which inform how the Youth Justice Agency delivers services to children, families and victims. This framework is a shared vision across community based and custodial based services and has an overarching “Children First” philosophy. This Children First approach encompasses all that we do and reflects the importance we place on achieving better outcomes for children, families and victims.

### “Children First”

- ✓ We ensure that the rights of children are respected and that children are treated as children
- ✓ We deliver services in a child-friendly and child-appropriate manner
- ✓ We recognise, build on and celebrate children’s positive behaviours, strengths, resilience and their positive contribution to society
- ✓ We consider the needs and developmental stage of children
- ✓ We consider, assess and address the broader context and underlying causes of offending by children
- ✓ We recognise the responsibility of society and adults to help children to avoid conflict with the law
- ✓ We promote Earlier Stage Intervention in maximising opportunities for prevention and diversion ensuring the minimal necessary intervention



## Our Approach

### Systemic

This means Children's offending behaviour is understood from within its broader social context; work is undertaken by YJA and its partners to address both offending behaviour and its underlying causes.

### Restorative

Children are encouraged to make amends for the harm caused by their offending behaviour. Restorative processes are used to "restore" children, families and victims and to promote the inclusive reintegration of children within their communities and wider society.

### Relationship-Based

YJA interventions are delivered within the context of positive working relationships. These relationships are based on meaningful engagement, empowerment, respect, honesty, trust and optimism.

### Strengths-Based and Future-Focused

YJA focus is on recognising and celebrating the existing strengths and resilience of children and their families/carers. We aim to nurture and sustain hope, personal agency and to strengthen social networks. Our interventions promote and support positive change.

### Trauma-Informed

Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma may contribute to offending behaviour by children and/or make it more difficult for them to address it. All YJA staff are ACE-aware and practice in a trauma-informed way.

### Participation and Engagement

YJA is committed to continuing to develop and deliver services in partnership with service users. Children and family engagement in service design is crucial.

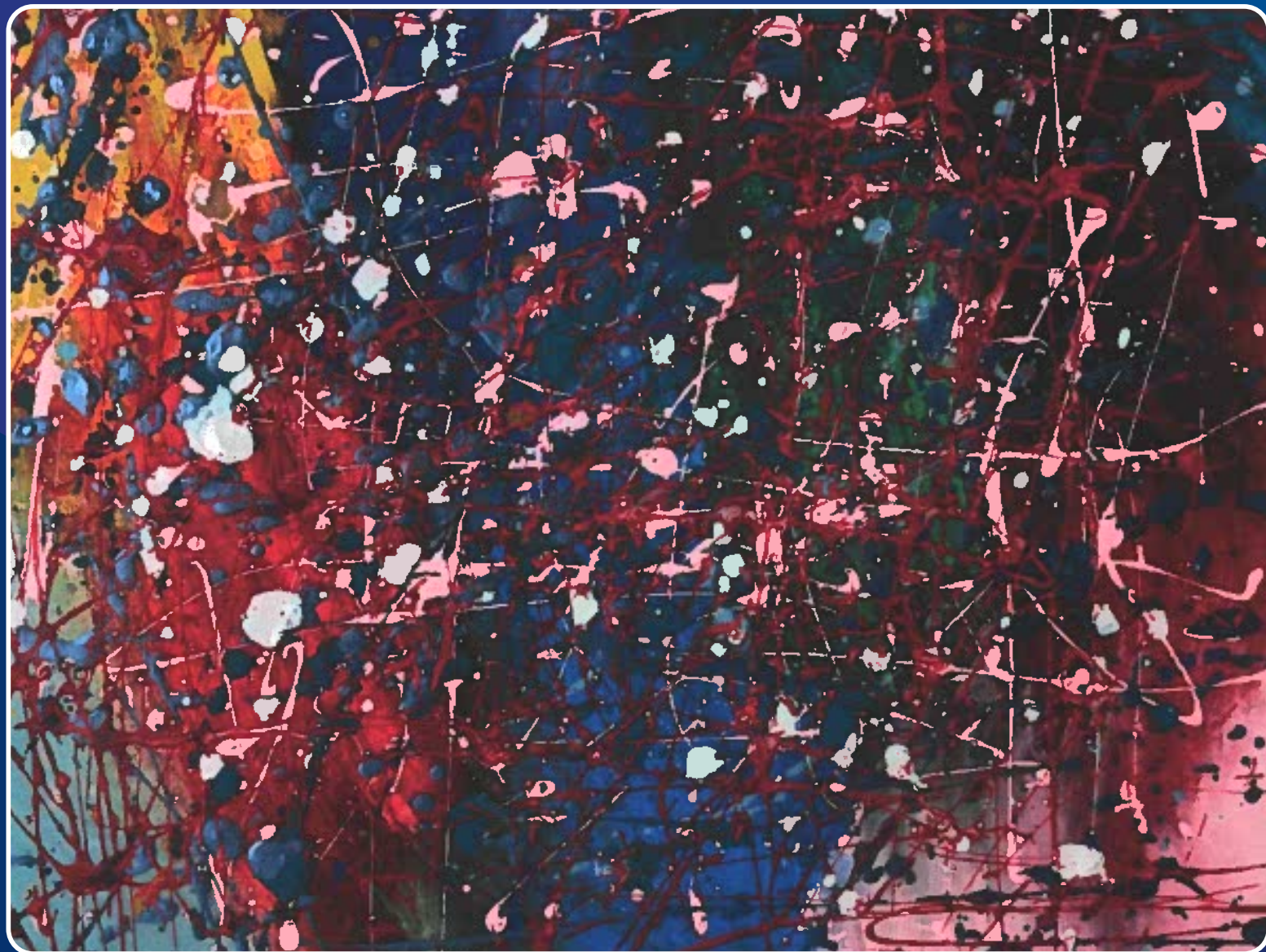
### Evidence and Positive Outcomes-Based

YJA practice is informed by holistic research and is evidence based. YJA measures the impact of its services both on a population and individual basis.

The implementation of **Positive and Progressive Youth Justice: Children First** will be an on-going process aimed at continuous improvement in the delivery and impact of our services. The actions necessary to ensure this improvement are reflected in our Corporate and Business Plans.

*'Freedom  
of Splatter'*

Painted by a  
young person in  
Woodlands, JJC.  
This painting won  
a Commended  
award at the  
**Koestler Awards.**



# 5

## IMPACT OF OUR WORK

The Agency published its first ever Performance Impact Report in December 2021 covering the 2020-21 business year. This was designed to paint a clear picture of who we are, what we do and the impact of our work through a mixture of data, graphics and case studies.

The Minister approved the Performance Impact Report for publication and it was shared with the Justice Committee. It was published on the Departmental website and brought to the attention of our partners, stakeholders and service users through direct mailing and Twitter. **It can be accessed here.**

We intend to publish performance impact information every year either in this, or a different, format. Completing this report has helped us highlight some gaps in the information we collect and we will be working to fill those gaps over time.



# Youth Justice Agency

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