

CONNECTED



Youth Justice Agency Stakeholder Newsletter

What We Do

The aim of the YJA is to make communities safer by helping children to stop offending. We work with young people who have offended, or are at serious risk of offending, between the ages of 10-17.

We deliver a range of services, often in partnership with others, to:

- help children address their behaviour
- support them to make amends for the harm caused by their behaviour
- divert them from crime
- assist their integration into the community
- meet the needs of victims of crime

Volunteers Awarded

The YJA has recently recruited and trained 34 eager volunteers and we are keen to enhance this community representation in our work with young people. The Agency is also very proud that the work and commitment of two volunteers has been recognised at separate award ceremonies. Well done to them.



YJA Chief Executive Declan McGeown and Justice Minister David Ford

Children in the Justice System

In March, the Justice Minister David Ford has announced proposals resulting from a comprehensive Scoping Study which examined how children are dealt with in the youth justice system. The community and voluntary sector's role in this Study was specifically noted. The Study's proposals fall into three categories;

- putting the welfare of the child at the heart of the system;
- maximising community involvement and increasing exit points from the justice system; and
- developing the disposals available to the judiciary and reducing the use of custody.

The Minister further announced that an Implementation Group of officials from all relevant organisations and departments will now develop a programme of action. The YJA will be at the heart of this work and we look forward to working with a broad range of stakeholders.

Stakeholder Survey

Many thanks everyone who responded to our 2015 survey. Of over 120 responses from a broad range of stakeholders, 75% expressed confidence that the YJA is effective at reducing offending by young people. Further feedback from the survey will be provided in future editions of Connected.



Mary Aughey
Director
Youth Justice
Services



Brian Ingram
Director
Custodial
Services



Stakeholders play different but complementary and valuable roles within our community based and custodial services. We take the opportunity to discuss how the Directors of each view the importance of working alongside our community, voluntary and public sector colleagues.

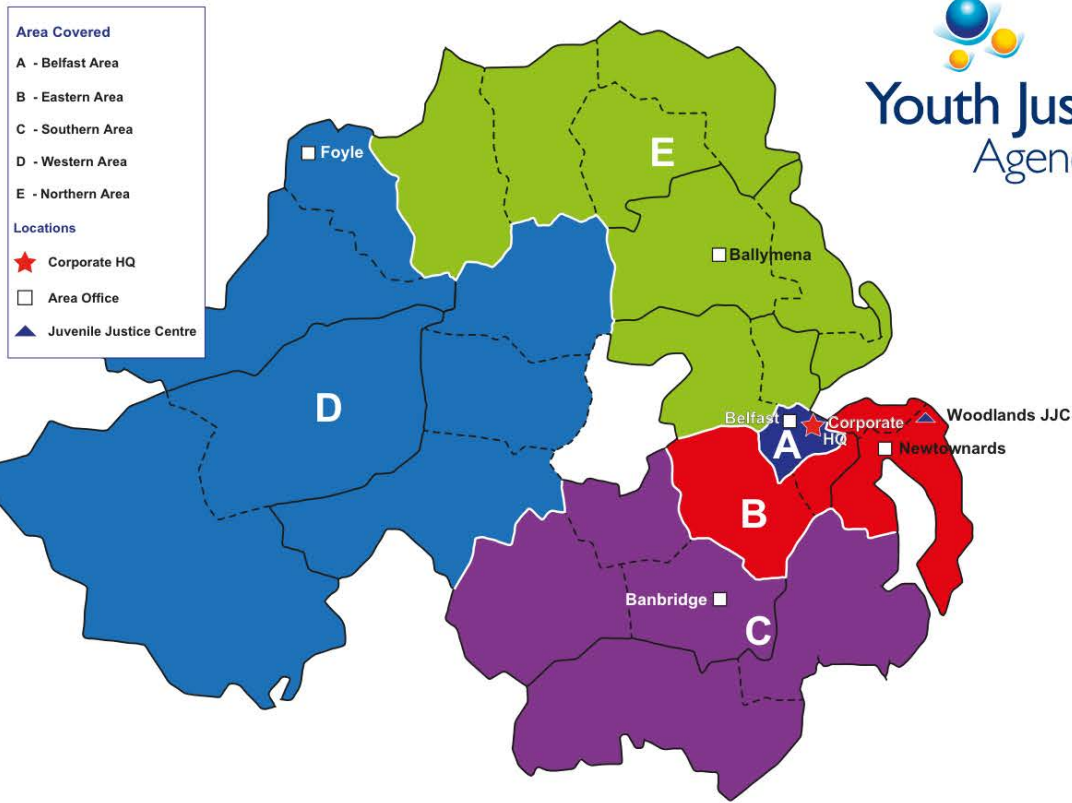
Mary and the staff of Youth Justice Services are very much focussed on working with young people in their own communities. The alignment of local teams with Council areas reinforces this joined up approach in delivering relevant and meaningful services to young people who offend, to communities, and to victims. Local knowledge and local relationships mean that reparation and restorative solutions can bring benefit to the community as well as those directly involved. Youth Justice Services also work with public sector partners in delivering key services such as Youth Engagement Clinics - where we work with the PPS and PSNI in diverting young people from offending and speeding up justice. With children's welfare and maximising community involvement already at the heart of our practice we are well placed to help shape the future of youth justice in Northern Ireland. As key stakeholders themselves, our staff will play a vital role in underpinning the values and dedication needed to make a difference in helping young people stop offending.

Brian and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre staff value the vital contribution of community partners in delivering key interventions to young people and helping them rejoin and integrate back into their communities. Strategic partners such as Reducing Offending in Partnership demonstrate the importance of working together to achieve shared goals. As a residential establishment Woodlands promotes the integration and synergy of services delivered by community partners into the fabric of daily life in the Centre. The future development of Woodlands will involve public sector partners including the Education Authority. Indeed when Woodlands becomes an EOTAS centre in May a whole new network of community based education partners will help to better connect our young people with learning, training or employment opportunities after release. The Centre promotes the role of advocacy groups in recognising the particular environment Woodlands represents and the high profile standards to which it must aspire in delivering positive outcomes for children in its care.

Giving Back To The Community

As part of their involvement with YJA, young people often agree to 'give back' to their local communities as a way of repairing the harm they have caused. They do this through reparative activities. Currently young people are carrying out reparation in such places as charity shops, animal sanctuaries, allotments and within community organisations - for example, being involved in area clean ups. Other young people have taken part in fundraising for local charities or have been supported to run these events themselves. If you are aware of, or could offer new reparation opportunities, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Contacting the Youth Justice Agency



The Agency has undergone some restructuring recently with the reconfiguration of Youth Justice Services into five teams. The map above shows the geographic areas covered by each team. Contact details for each team is as follows;

Belfast Area, 171-179 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GE, 02890351983.

Eastern Area, 36 Frances Street, Newtonards, BT23 7DN, 02891820611.

Southern Area, 15 Castlewellan Road, Banbridge, BT32 4AX, 02840629158.

Western Area, 4th Floor Embassy Building, 3 Strand Road, Derry/Londonderry, BT48 7BH, 02871365593.

Northern Area, 7 Springwell Street, Ballymena, BT43 6AT, 02825639900.

Agency Headquarters is at 41 Waring Street, Belfast, BT1 2DY, 02890316473.

Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre is at 1 Mosswood Close, Mosswood Avenue, Rathgael Road, Bangor, BT19 1TA, 02891854600.