

Child-First Diversion in LCYJS



What is Child-First?

Seeing children as an individual child and promoting their individual needs, capabilities, rights and potential. By doing this we promote diversion from the Criminal Justice System. We encourage collaboration with children to be active participants and engage. We develop supportive relationships to create pro-social outcomes for the child, their family, and their community.

What is Diversion?

Diversion seeks to divert children away from the formal criminal justice system through tailored support and interventions from the right services at the right time.

What is Restorative?

Recognising the needs of the victim. We aim to try and repair the harm caused through personalised and tailored interventions.

Why use Child-First Diversion?

Formally processing children through the formal criminal justice system can extend and deepen a child's criminal career. The evidence suggests that if we can stop a child from entering the Youth Justice System it maximises their positive outcomes and supports desistance long-term.

The evidence suggests it is cost effective both in the immediate (avert formal court, police, and prosecution time) and long term (avoidance of repeat offences, facilitate earlier access to health, mental health, and other social services.)

Does it work?

Since October 2019 90% of the children who were referred into our Diversion service have stayed out of formal criminal justice processing and do not go on to become a first-time entrant.

We are currently undertaking in-depth research into the Diversion service alongside partners at the University of Central Lancashire.

Want to know more?

Please see the next page for the full diversion process and how you can help

You can help us to gather as much relevant information as possible about a child to ensure their screening has the best outcome for them

You can help us to continue to support a child once they leave our diversion service to ensure desistance long term

Refer to Diversion

CYJ PC will make a decision to refer into Diversion service and will notify the CYJS Manager

Screening

Manager will assign CYJ Worker to complete screening:

- access information from agencies (police, education, children's social care and health)
- speak to parents/carers/ child (if they live independently)
- recommendations made to manager to support the child and family and who is best placed to deliver this

Assessment

CYJS will meet with the child and parent/carer to obtain agreement to engage with the Diversion Service
CYJS will complete an assessment and create a plan in collaboration with the child and parent/carer

Exit Plan

Identify any support from other services to continue to work with the family where appropriate.

Refer to CYJS

When an offence involving a young person has been committed the police will refer to CYJS if a child requires additional specialist support or the offence is of a higher gravity/frequency.

Restorative Work

CYJS will contact the victim to discuss any restorative work that may be needed between the victim and the child.

Screening outcome

Divert for support from other services **or** CYJS input agreed – the child will be allocated for CYJS assessment

Diversion Programme

Work with the child, family and other agencies for approximately 3 months

- appropriate offence focused work
- improve the child's safety and well-being
- support community integration for the child and family
- restorative work - victim contact and reparation activities
- ensure the child has access to health and education provisions
- provide appropriate help and support to parents/carers

Continued Tracking

Continue to check if a child has entered CYJS as a first-time entrant following Diversion