

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice
Office of Elliot Colburn MP
By e-mail: **c/o APPG Secretariat**

3rd February 2023

Dear Elliot Colburn MP,

Subject: Recommendations relevant to the Youth Justice Board in the 'APPG on RJ Advisory Board Briefing Paper'

The YJB welcomes the work of the APPG on Restorative Justice (RJ) including the Briefing Paper, recommendations and more broadly the recognition of the achievements of the youth justice system to date. Notably we commend the work of Pete Wallis, member of the APPG and RJ Lead at Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service for his ongoing commitment and in shining a light on restorative practice within the youth justice system.

The briefing makes the following recommendation to the YJB:

'the Youth Justice Board (YJB) should continue to require YOTs to report on RJ provision in their Youth Justice plans, including a requirement for YOT management boards to ensure there is adequate funding for RJ provision.'

Firstly, we are pleased to confirm that [the YJB's YJ Plan guidance 2022-23](#) required services to include information within their performance and priorities sections on RJ. We offer a commitment to you to continue with the requirement into future years to enable an understanding of practice across local areas and our ability to identify good practice.

We will additionally consider how to further strengthen the requirement and anticipate changes we are introducing to our oversight will provide us with more granular intelligence on delivery of services, including RJ. Revised Key Performance Indicators will also support our understanding of RJ practice and outcomes. Meanwhile, we would be happy to share a summary of RJ provision from this year's analysis of youth justice plans, if helpful or to meet with you to outline developments outlined above.

In response to the second part of the recommendation that we require management boards to ensure adequate funding for RJ provision, we believe this is out of the YJB's scope. As part of our statutory duties, set out in section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the YJB administers a core grant to local authorities for the provision of local youth justice services on behalf of the Secretary of State for Justice. However, we do not prescribe how this funding should be spent; instead, the grant allows local flexibility for services to direct financial resources to specific areas of activity or need, in alignment with their youth justice strategic plans. Meanwhile, governance of youth justice services sits locally so outside of the administration of the grant we are unable to mandate how services spend their money or indeed form a view on what may or may not be deemed adequate levels of funding. However, we do monitor and have expectations around the output of funding and would expect to see the use of RJ in youth justice plans.

You may be interested to note, or already be aware that between 2011 and 2016, the YJB administered specific, ring-fenced funding for the development of skills to delivery RJ. However, this grant funding was

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provided by the Ministry of Justice from additional revenue raised through the Victim's Surcharge. This funding is no longer available for us to administer.

Finally, we are pleased to note that many of the recommendations within the paper align with the YJB's own thinking and position on RJ specifically in relation to children who have offended. For example, it has been recommended that there should be an end to blanket bans for the use of RJ in certain cases and an emphasis has been placed on the need for decisions around the use of RJ to be made on an individual basis and following risk assessments. This is very much in alignment with our position around the need for RJ to be used when appropriate and safe to do so for both parties. Should you be interested to learn more about the detailed position of the Board on RJ and the evidence for our conclusions we would be very happy to discuss or present to the group. Meanwhile we are in contact with the RJ lead for HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to share learning around RJ from the youth justice system more broadly.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jamie Bennett

Chief Strategy Officer

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales