

Placing Young People in Custody

Practical guidance for YOTs on making placements in custody and an outline of how the information sharing process is managed by the YJB.

1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1 Reports by the YJB and Prison and Probation Ombudsman into the 16 deaths of young people in custody since 2000, have all highlighted concerns in relation to information transfer: Due to the additional safeguards noted below things rarely go wrong, but when they do the results can be tragic for young people, their families and those involved in supporting them: YOT officers are called to account for their actions in a range of situations, including serious case reviews and inquests.

This document sets out the process which must be followed to ensure *that good quality information is shared with the right people at the right time. It aims to:*

- provide YOT staff with the key information they need to make sure children are kept as safe as possible when they are placed into custody; and;
 - provide early warning to YOT staff if the processes are not being complied with and escalate issues if this happens repeatedly.
- 1.2 Placing a child or young person appropriately is reliant upon an accurate, comprehensive and up to date assessment. This enables the YJB placements service to identify the most appropriate establishment and provides the secure estate provider with vital information with which to manage risk and vulnerability. Without this information:

The child or young person's issues and needs cannot be properly identified, potentially increasing risks to both themselves and others;

Gang affiliations and similar issues may not be identified, potentially leading to increased disruption in establishments;

Additional management safeguards have to be put in place by the secure estate provider, incurring unnecessary cost.

1.3 **YJB Cymru:**

The process is essentially the same in Wales. Any notifications of missing documents in relation to Welsh YOTs will be sent to the YJB Head of Youth Justice Oversight and Support in Wales. The monthly meetings will prioritise any YOTs from England and Wales that present issues with information transfer. This information will then be acted upon by YJB Cymru's Oversight and Support Branch with the relevant YOT. Any escalation of issues will follow the process set out in the [YJB Cymru Blueprint](#).

2. Placing a child or young person in custody

- 2.1 The sections below outline the mandatory documents required to place a young person and provide a step by step guide to providing documentation when young people are being placed in custody.

This process includes direct notifications to YOT managers. These require an up to date secure email address and YOTs must ensure this is provided to the YJB.

The mandatory document set

- 2.2 Children and young people are placed in custody on the basis of the information in a minimum of three mandatory documents below, (along with any other documents that are applicable as listed on page 5):

Mandatory	Where relevant to circumstance(s)
<p>Placement Information Form (PIF)</p> <p><i>This is the document used by the YJB Placement Service to make the initial placement decisions and should be sent at least 24 hours prior to the court appearance and be no older than 7 days</i></p>	<p>Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) <i>if available and recent/relevant</i></p>
<p>Core or Bail Asset</p> <p><i>A full and comprehensive Bail or Core Asset should be completed and sent. This should be no more than 30 days old.</i></p>	<p>Risk Management Plan (RMP) <i>if available and recent/relevant</i></p>
<p>Post-court report (PCR)</p> <p><i>The majority of the information in the PCR can be pre-populated. On the court day the assessment of the child / young person at the point of entering custody is then completed.</i></p>	<p>Vulnerability Management Plan (VMP) <i>if available and recent/relevant</i></p> <p>Pre-sentence report (PSR) <i>if available and recent/relevant</i></p> <p><i>Any other relevant document or report that would help safeguard the young person on admission to custody</i></p>

Pre- court day (or on the court day for late additions)

- 2.3 The YOT should send the PIF and Asset to the YJB placement service via Connectivity for all court hearings with potential custodial outcomes.
- 2.4 The YOT should also create and pre-populate, with as much information as possible, the Post Court Report (PCR). This can then be completed and sent immediately if a child or young person is sent into custody.

If any of the mandatory documents sent are incomplete or inadequate¹, a YJB placement and planning officer will email the YOT manager and the documents will be returned to the YOT for revision.

Note: This process includes direct notification to YOT managers. This can only be done where an up to date secure email address is available

On the court day

- 2.5 The YOT officer should ring the YJB placements planning officer and inform them if a custodial outcome has been given. They should also make the YJB aware of any known risks to the young person's safety and wellbeing and any other relevant information about their reaction to going into custody.

If mandatory documents (PIF, Asset or PCR) are missing or of inadequate quality, the YJB placement planning officer will return them to the YOT and request new copies during this telephone conversation

- 2.6 Once an appropriate placement is identified the placement planning officer will issue the Placement Confirmation Form (PCF) via email and notify the YOT, secure establishment and transport adviser. This provides the authority to book a secure placement.

This email will also request that any documents still outstanding or inadequate from the YOT at the time of placement are made available.

- 2.7 Once the assessment of the child or young person is complete the YOT should send the PCR via Connectivity.

If any of the mandatory documents (PIF, Asset, PCR) are not received by the close of play on the court day they will be classified as missing. This will then be used to create performance data in relation to YOT missing documents. As noted above, the secure estate will need to put additional resources in to the oversight and support of young people until they are received.

The next working day

At the start of the next working day any mandatory documents that remain missing or are viewed as inadequate will trigger a YJB notification email to be sent to the YOT secure inbox, YOT manager, secure establishment and relevant YJB Head of Business area / Head of Youth Justice Oversight and Support Wales.

- 2.8 The YOT has a responsibility to respond to this email by sending the missing documents to the YJB placements service.

Connectivity

- 2.9 Documents should be sent to the YJB Placement Service using Connectivity, as this is the most accountable and secure method for information transfer. It enables the YJB Placement Service to immediately create a record in eAsset and automatically upload documents. The allocated establishment is then able view all of the documentation in eAsset.

Other guidance and documents which may be needed during or after the placement process include:

- Transfer guidance
- What to do if you want a review of a placement decision
- Case Responsibility Protocol
- Keppel Unit referral
- Connectivity guidance
- Case Management Guidance
- YJB published Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEPs).
- National Standards for Youth Justice

3. Managing Missing Documentation

- 3.1 The monitoring and escalation processes outlined below are designed to provide an early warning system for Youth Justice Partnerships. Where issues are raised, we strongly advise that they are addressed promptly.

Monitoring information

- 3.2 The YJB publishes information relating to YOT missing documentation and Connectivity use at the point of custody, on a monthly basis on YJMIS. Youth Justice Partnerships should review this information in order to effectively manage delivery in this area.

Monthly follow-up

- 3.3 The YJB will review all data in relation to missing documents, Connectivity use and any placement issues on a monthly basis: YOTs who appear to have repeated or serious issues will be identified and followed up by the relevant YJB business area in order to identify the reasons for the omissions.
- 3.4 Where these cannot be resolved immediately an action plan should be agreed (see appendix 1) and signed off by the YOT Management Board. This will be monitored by the Local Partnership Advisor (LPA) in English Business Areas and Senior Adviser for Oversight and Support (SAOS) in Wales. They will report progress to the monthly meeting above. This information will also be recorded in the YOTs quarterly review.

Quarterly follow-up

- 3.5 The monthly YJB Youth Justice Oversight and Commissioning Group (YCOG) meeting is chaired by the YJB Director of Operations and attended by all Heads of Business Areas, the YJB Cymru Head of Youth Justice Oversight and Support and the YJB Head of Operations. YCOG will review the information relating to YOT missing documents, Connectivity use and any placement issues as part overall performance. It will decide if any issues need to be escalated, through YJB business areas, the Head of YJB Cymru or a Local Authority's CEO.

YJB Support

- 3.6 Where services are having difficulties with their information transfer processes we are keen to work with them to help find resolutions. We would encourage YOTs to be proactive in informing their LPAs / SAOS Wales of any such issues.

Appendix 1: Example of ‘Missing Doc’s/Connectivity Action Plan Template coordinated by a designated contact in YJB Central Business Unit (CBU).

Reason for missing documentation	Action required	Person responsible	Completion date
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