

# Preventing Offending by Young People

## A Framework for Action



CROWN OFFICE AND PROCURATOR FISCAL SERVICE



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## **Foreword**

The vast majority of young people in Scotland make a positive contribution to society and are valuable and valued members of their communities. We want to build on the great qualities that young people bring to our society: energy, enthusiasm, creativity, an appetite for learning and huge potential for the future. At the same time, we must remove the barriers that prevent too many of our young people from realising their potential and leading successful, fulfilling lives. The cost for them and their communities of negative outcomes - including educational underachievement, economic disadvantage, social isolation, poor health, substance misuse and involvement in offending - is one that none of us can afford to pay.

This Framework belongs to all the key partners who together are committed to preventing offending by young people. We share a vision of a Scotland where all children and young people pursue their dreams and fulfil their potential in safe, strong and supportive families and communities. We are united in our determination to intervene early, and in partnership with each other and communities, to get it right for every child. Together, we reject the polarisation of children's needs and community safety; we will champion both.

We know what we need to do. We need to prevent the causes of offending by giving every child the best start in life. We need to intervene early with children and families at risk to give them the support they need to thrive. We need to give young people more positive choices and chances, and build their capacity to capitalise on opportunity. For the small number of young people who pose a serious threat to themselves and their communities, we need to intervene quickly and effectively to turn their lives around.

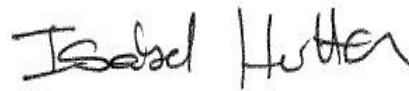
In all of this, we want to reconnect young people and their communities to build an unassailable alliance around the shared goal of a more successful Scotland, now and into the future.

The vision is a familiar one. What is new is our shared commitment, within the context of a new kind of partnership as set out in the Concordat, to making it happen. As equal partners, we will focus on identifying and embedding what works, enabling good practice to spread, and demonstrating impact in improved outcomes for children, young people and communities. At every level, we will get better at partnership, using information, seeing holistically and acting strategically.

We don't underestimate the challenges of delivering this framework, and securing transformational change for our young people and communities. However, we believe that a partnership built around this shared set of principles is a firm foundation on which to build a safer, stronger future for our young people, and for Scotland.



Fergus Ewing MSP  
Minister for Community Safety



Cllr Isabel Hutton  
COSLA Education, Children and  
young people Spokesperson

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Government in Scotland has one overarching purpose: to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Young people, their families and communities are at the heart of this vision for Scotland. That is why we are jointly committed to giving children the best start in life and to improving the life chances of children, young people and families at risk. Tackling the causes and effects of offending by young people is key to building safe and strong communities, within which Scotland's future generation can fulfil its enormous potential.

1.2 As national agencies, we have developed this framework to tell the story – to our communities, our young people and their families, and the people that work with and for them – of what we want to do and how, working alongside them, we want to do it. The Framework is formally owned by the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS), Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), as key delivery agencies. The Framework is also endorsed by the relevant inspectorates and professional organisations: HMIE, Care Commission, SWIA, HMIC; the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and welcomed by a range of third sector organisations. All of these partners will have a part to play in taking the Framework forward through their strategic, operational and regulatory responsibilities. Audit Scotland was also represented on the group developing the framework. Our over-arching shared commitment is to work together as national and local partners to deliver real improvements on the ground.

1.3 There is a wealth of good practice across Scotland in tackling offending by young people. The challenge is to embed this as standard practice, and consistently to drive up our aspirations and performance. In driving forward our work, we will focus on the following areas:

- Prevention
- Early and effective intervention
- Managing high risk
- Victims and community confidence
- Planning and performance improvement

1.4 This framework is broad in its scope, spanning prevention, diversion, intervention and risk management, with reference to the individual, the family and the wider community. It reaches from pre-birth and early years to the transition to adult services. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that delivering this vision is everyone's job. Our organisations are united in our focus on tackling offending by young people, but in delivering under this framework we will be working with the wide range of public, voluntary and independent agencies who contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people, and our communities. Likewise, while concentrating our effort principally on young people between the ages of 8 and 16, we recognise the need to start our preventative work much earlier, and sustain attention on the successful transition to adulthood, particularly the vulnerable period between 16 and 21.

## 2. The Context

### Purpose of Government and the Concordat

**To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Scottish Budget Spending Review 2007**

2.1 This framework is developed and delivered in the context of the Government Economic Strategy, which sets out how government will work collaboratively with the private, public and third sectors in pursuit of increasing sustainable economic growth.

2.2 The delivery of the government's Purpose is underpinned by the National Performance Framework. It replaces a proliferation of competing priorities, providing a unified vision centred around five Strategic Objectives – to make Scotland wealthier & fairer, smarter, healthier, safer & stronger and greener.

2.3 What gives this vision real power is the joint commitment by Government in Scotland, reflected in the Concordat published on 14 November 2007, to focus the effort of the public sector on its delivery. This commitment includes an agreement to work together as equal partners on the development of policy. Under the terms of the new relationship, Scottish Government, having set the direction of policy and overarching outcomes, will free up local authorities and their partners to deliver by reducing ring-fencing and bureaucratic burdens. Through the Single Outcome Agreements, each local authority (in time, community planning partnership) will set its own priorities for delivery of the purpose of government.

2.4 This framework reflects the new environment by setting shared objectives within which national bodies will support delivery locally. Ring-fencing of funding for tackling offending by young people was abolished from April 2008, freeing up local authorities and their partners to determine how best to target resources, including those traditionally in other service areas, at this agenda. This does not mean that as national bodies we walk away from the shared responsibility for this work: rather we too are freed up to deliver effective support – including facilitation, research and information, dissemination of best practice, and consultancy – to support delivery partners.

### **Making it relevant**

2.5 We are often asked, in the context of the streamlined performance framework described above, “where’s the target on offending by young people?” In fact, work to tackle offending by young people contributes to all five of the strategic objectives, and many of the 15 national outcomes and basket of national and local indicators that will comprise Single Outcome Agreements. Everyone working in this area knows that the success of our efforts to tackle offending by young people cannot be measured by the number of persistent offenders or Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. It will be shown in the positive outcomes of all our children, families and communities. This framework is particularly relevant to four of the 15 national outcomes:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We have improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.

2.6 The contribution of the work undertaken under this framework is not limited to these outcomes. They will also contribute to all of the other outcomes, in particular:

- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- We live longer, healthier lives.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
- Our public services are of high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

2.7 Taking this broad view of what we are trying to achieve will help to transform how we view work to tackle offending by young people – not in a silo but embedded in our policies for children, families and communities. There is still a need for robust management information that supports the planning, improvement and accountability of services which tackle offending by young people and this is considered later in the document.

### **3. Preventing Offending by Young People**

3.1 The debate around young people who offend is often unhelpfully polarised: needs and deeds; victim and offender; individual and community; prevention and intervention. In reality, the evidence shows the only way to prevent “deeds” is to address needs. Individuals are often both victims and offenders: each aspect needs our attention. Offenders come from communities and usually return to them, and tackling offending needs to happen in that social context. Prevention is the most cost-effective cure, but prevention demands that we intervene to stop the cycle of offending.

3.2 In Scotland we are fortunate to have a system for tackling offending by young people – at the heart of which is the Children’s Hearing System – that is based on a rejection of these polarisations. Through the voluntary interventions with children and families under the Getting it right for every child framework, and the work of the Children’s Panel where compulsory measures are required, the offending behaviour of young people is considered as part of a broader picture of who they are. Interventions are designed to be early, holistic and with a presumption that children stay in their communities.

3.3 With this approach at the heart of what we do, we are committed through this framework to strengthen all aspects of our work, from prevention through to managing high risk. In developing this work, we recognise we have particular challenges including prevention for those at risk, embedding evidence-based interventions, delivering value for money, planning and performance management, meeting the needs of victims and community confidence. We need to ensure that in everything we do, we are protecting and promoting the rights of children, in line with our commitment to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Prevention**

3.4 The earliest years of life are crucial to a child’s development. However, it is increasingly evident that it is in the first years of life that inequalities in health, housing, education, and employment opportunities are passed from one generation to another. To give every child in Scotland the best possible start in life we need to break this cycle through prevention and early intervention. Key to this is work with families, including kinship, foster and adoptive families, as they have the biggest impact, positive or negative, on children’s early experience and resilience going forward. Collectively, we are committed to taking action to identify those children and young people and families at risk of not achieving positive outcomes, or having access to positive opportunities, and taking action to prevent these risks materialising.

3.5 The principles we have established as governing our approach to early intervention across a broad range of social policy areas are set out in the joint statement on Early Years and Early Intervention published by Scottish Government and COSLA on 18<sup>th</sup> March<sup>2</sup>. The four principles are:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/Early-years-framework>



- Our ambitions are universal – we want to reduce inequalities in a variety of policy areas, to have the same outcomes for all and for all to have the same opportunities.
- We take action to identify those at risk of not achieving these outcomes or having these opportunities and take action to prevent that risk materialising.
- We make sustained and effective interventions in cases where these risks have materialised.
- We shift the focus from service provision as the vehicle for delivery of outcomes to building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to secure outcomes, and addressing the external barriers which they may face in seeking to maximise their life chances, making use of high quality, accessible public services as required.

3.6 It is important to make clear that prevention and early intervention do not mean early interference by the state at national or local level. A key part of any early intervention policy is building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to secure the best outcomes for themselves. It is about moving from intervening when a crisis happens towards prevention, building resilience and providing the right level of support before problems materialise. Universal services, who cater for all children, must have the capacity and skills to engage all children and young people throughout childhood and as young adults – even those who may be challenging and reject first offers of help.

3.7 The Early Years Framework being developed jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA, will aim to identify the practical steps needed to give children the best start in life and equip them with the resilience and skills to navigate a range of challenges that will face them in adolescence and beyond. The four themes around which the work in the Early Years Framework is built are:

- Building parenting and family capacity pre and post birth.
- Creating communities that provide a supportive environment for children and families.
- Delivering integrated services that meet the holistic needs of children and families.
- Developing a suitable workforce to support the framework.

3.8 Key to supporting prevention is agencies working together to provide support to those families who need extra help, in the form of parenting support and more intensive responses to families in difficulty to address the root causes of offending and other negative behaviour at an early stage. This should focus on helping families to access support, engage positively with relevant agencies, change their own behaviour, improve their parenting skills and in this way be empowered to take responsibility for their children.

3.9 The Health Service, as the only universal service at the critical early stages of life (antenatal and early years), has a key role to play in supporting the best possible start in life, and identifying and addressing risks early. This is recognised in the report

of the Health Inequalities Task Force<sup>3</sup>, and the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2006<sup>4</sup>. Health professionals contribute throughout a child's life to tackling the mental and physical health problems which are both a cause and effect of disadvantage and negative outcomes. A key challenge is ensuring services are accessible for all children and their families, and take a holistic approach to providing support.

3.10 Schools are in key position to develop confidence, emotional literacy, emotional resilience and positive behaviour in children and young people, and to develop positive relationships across whole school communities. The support provided by schools to make sure all pupils are engaged with and benefiting from the curriculum makes a fundamental contribution to developing positive outcomes for all children and young people. Health promotion is also at the centre of school education, with a whole-school approach to promoting the physical, social, mental and emotional well-being of all pupils. Schools also support early intervention and a personalised, approach to additional support needs, in order to address inequality and promote positive outcomes for children and young people.

3.11 Curriculum for Excellence<sup>5</sup> aims to provide exciting, engaging, relevant learning and support for learning in every pre-school centre, school and college or wherever the child or young person is learning. Schools will have the central responsibility but will need to build strong partnerships with a range of organisations including colleges, universities, employers Skills Development Scotland, community learning and development and the voluntary sector to deliver a personalised learning experience for every child and young person.

3.12 Young people and their communities tell us that positive opportunities – “more things to do” – are the key to preventing offending and other negative outcomes. Ensuring that all young people have access to positive alternatives is a priority. Through the Cashback programme, more investment is going in to make sporting and cultural activities available to all. Government is also working with Lloyds TSB Foundation on Inspiring Scotland, an initiative to focus private sector and philanthropic giving on strengthening provision for young people. Local authorities also have an important role to play, working in partnership with local community and third sector bodies, in providing positive cultural opportunities for young people. By linking to Curriculum for Excellence, we will ensure these become a platform for young people to develop the skills for successful and fulfilled adulthood.

3.13 The public should feel that they have a stake in the future of the children and young people who are part of their communities. They should take pride in their role as key influencers and role models and be confident that they are contributing to positive life chances for those who most need them. The public should also be assured that agencies are doing their best to make positive changes in young people's lives and to reduce offending and antisocial behaviour in their area.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/Inequalities/inequalitiestaskforce>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/15135302/0>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE>

### 3.14 What we will do:

- Work together to develop and deliver the Early Years Framework, ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable are addressed.
- Building on the work of the Health Inequalities Task Force, seek to ensure that *all* children and young people get the help they need to be mentally and physically healthy.
- Expand positive opportunities for young people, for example through Curriculum for Excellence, Cashback for Communities and the Government's forthcoming Youth Framework.
- Promote positive messages about young people and support engagement with communities, including opportunities for intergenerational communication.

### Early and effective intervention

3.15 Effective responses to offending involve recognition of needs and strengths, as well as attention to risks. In this respect, this agenda is closely connected to Getting it right for every child, the programme which should guide and underpin the principles of work by all relevant agencies. The Getting it right for every child<sup>6</sup> programme is founded on acting on the principles of early intervention, through appropriate, proportionate and timely intervention and provides a framework for putting them into action for all children and young people at the individual level.

3.16 Where the need for intervention has been identified, relevant agencies must act promptly, and in line with what other agencies are doing, to provide responses that are timely, proportionate, effective and that inspire community confidence. It is crucial that all agencies are able to provide early and effective responses based on an appropriate assessment of the individual's circumstances, not least so that children and young people can relate their actions to the impact and consequences and learn from this experience. All agencies, including the third sector, should plan and work together in partnership with children, their families and others, to do everything possible to provide early and effective responses to problematic behaviour that best fits the circumstances of each individual case.

3.17 An early and effective response will support the child or young person to engage with services, including universal services such as education, youth work and healthcare, to address identified needs. In this context responses will:

- Relate directly to the needs and behaviour of the young person.
- Take account of impact on others, and make reparation and restoration where appropriate.
- Support parental and child responsibility.
- Be appropriate, proportionate, timely and fair.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec>

3.18 A small number of children and young people will continue to offend. In these circumstances it is essential that everything possible is done to address the issues in the young person's life that are causing that continued offending behaviour as well as stopping that behaviour. Agencies should be identifying the young people causing the most trouble and those at risk of becoming repeat offenders. At this stage agencies must plan and work together to decide what action they need to take to challenge and change that behaviour and provide the support that will enable these young people to turn their lives around.

3.19 What we will do:

- Embed the principles and practice of Getting It Right For Every Child across our agencies.
- Ensure that all our systems are more effective in sharing information to support identification and intervention for young people at risk.
- Develop an evidence base around what works in early and effective intervention.
- Identify and disseminate good practice, including supporting local learning partners to develop knowledge and understanding around applying the principles and practice of Getting It Right For Every Child to young people who offend .

### **Managing high risk**

3.20 There are a small but significant number of children and young people who present a high risk to themselves and others, and who have complex needs, including mental health and learning disabilities. This includes children and young people involved in sexually harmful behaviour, sexual offences and violence. These children and young people should have their needs met and the risks they pose managed in order to give them the opportunity to change their behaviour and become positive contributors to society. Care for this group should be high quality, and approaches and programmes should be effective. Those who work with them need to have a high level of expertise.

3.21 Agencies should focus on the **identification, assessment, planning and management** of this group of children and young people. Those working with this group of children and young people must take into account both the *needs* and *risks* of a high risk child or young person. Identification, assessment, planning and management should be tailored to the needs, age and stage of development of the individual child or young person.

3.22 We expect local agencies, working in partnership, to support and manage the needs and risks of this group of young people and to protect others in their community. The Children's Hearings System has an important role in relation to managing this balance, and there are a range of measures available including intensive support, with or without tagging and secure care. In the most serious cases, the Children's Hearings System will work with COPFS and the courts to ensure an appropriate response to the most challenging young people. A working group comprised of ACPOS, ADSW, COPFS, SCRA, and the Scottish Government is strengthening the management of cases which transition between systems to ensure

a seamless and effective approach. In all cases we will seek to keep children out of prison, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### 3.23 What we will do:

- Support the development of effective interventions for high risk young people.
- Improve the range, quality and effectiveness of provision of residential services for young people who need them, through a strengthened approach to commissioning.
- Work to ensure that children do not go to prison, including by abolishing the unruly certificate by which under-16s can be remanded to prison, and that appropriate secure accommodation is available where required.
- Develop evidence-based interventions for young people whose offending is linked to substance misuse, building on actions in the Scottish Government's drugs and alcohol strategies.
- Identify and disseminate good practice on multi-agency responses to managing high risk.
- Strengthen transitions into adulthood, including where that requires continued intervention to meet needs and manage risks.

## **Victims and community confidence**

3.24 We have a clear commitment to work towards a safer and stronger Scotland and to achieve this we must strive to remove inequality and injustice from across all our communities. It is a basic human right of everyone to feel safe in their homes and wider communities no matter where they live. We need to ensure we create a feeling of safety and well-being by tackling crime and the associated fear that this has on our communities.

3.25 Communities themselves have an important role to play in achieving this. Working with local partners, supporting community events and acknowledging the many positive contributions that children and young people make can all help communities come together to provide a safer environment to live in.

3.26 The victims of crime by young people are most likely to be other young people. In addition, there is strong evidence that many young people who commit crimes have, before they became offenders, been victims themselves. This of course includes all the children who come to the attention of services, and some to children's hearings, on welfare grounds as victims of neglect and abuse, many as a result of domestic violence or parental substance misuse. Strengthening the response to young victims is therefore imperative, in its own right and to prevent offending and other negative outcomes. This means taking appropriate, proportionate and timely action to identify and support young victims. There is a close link here to the work of schools to combat bullying and problem behaviour.

3.27 All victims of crime by young people deserve to be informed and supported. The work of the Children's Hearings in engaging victims is an important part of a general strengthening of the response to victims of crime.

3.28 Where young people are involved in crime or antisocial behaviour it is important that they are aware of the impact they have on others and make reparation and restoration where appropriate. Restorative justice can play an important role in addressing the harm caused by the behaviour of children and young people, whether on its own or as part of a range of services.

3.29 Research suggests that perceptions of the prevalence of youth crime and disorder tend to far outstrip direct impact. To address this, communities need to receive regular and appropriate feedback from local agencies as part of general information on how they are tackling local issues, including antisocial behaviour and crime. The public should also be reassured that agencies are doing their best to manage and mitigate risks posed by the small number of children and young people who pose a risk of harming others. This involvement and ongoing communication will help communities understand what action agencies are taking and the reasons why.

3.30 At a national and local level we need to challenge and change the misrepresentation of young people and offending, especially through the media.

3.31 What we will do:

- Develop practice on promoting positive relationships and behaviour in schools, including dealing with serious indiscipline.
- Develop an evidence base around effective interventions with young victims and strengthen support to all victims of youth crime.
- Continue to work as partners to demonstrate the potential benefits that can be achieved in certain circumstances by adopting a restorative approach to youth offending.
- Address issues around media perceptions of young people through the Government's Youth Framework.

## **Planning and Performance Improvement**

3.32 Section 2 sets out how work to address offending by young people will now be planned in the context of the development of Single Outcome Agreements. While it is important that work on this agenda links ultimately to the Purpose of government and the five strategic objectives, all partners will continue to need access to high-quality management information which tells them about the efficiency and effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness) of relevant activities. Audit Scotland's report – Dealing with offending by young people – identified a paucity in the availability and use of such management information which presents a serious barrier to the effective planning and accountability of services and hampers sharing of good practice.

3.33 Since the publication of Audit Scotland's report, the change in the relationship between Scottish Government and local government has signalled a major shift in the role of performance information. No longer will Scottish Government set detailed targets linked to demands for performance reports. Local authorities and their partners will determine through the Single Outcome Agreements, subject to the

commitments in the Concordat, what information will be reported to communities about achievement against outcomes. It is important to stress that local authorities will not be held to account for performance unless it is part of the SOAs, or a statutory requirement (which includes the requirement to demonstrate best value). This is an important condition of the empowering relationship reflected in the Concordat.

3.34 However, there is still a role for national bodies in supporting local areas both to report against their SOAs and to meet any other information needs they identify to manage services locally. We believe there are specific ways which we collectively can support effective local information management, and begin to address the shortfalls identified in Audit Scotland's report, as follows:

- Developing a voluntary framework for management information to support work to tackle offending by young people, populated by national and local information. This will set out the kind of information that local areas might want to consider in planning, commissioning and managing services.
- Improving the quality and availability of national management information relevant to this agenda. This includes developing police data on offending by young people, and strengthening SCRA data.
- Supporting the dissemination and analysis of comparative performance information. This is not about league tables, but helping local areas to identify their strengths and areas for improvement and access good practice.
- Supporting the development and dissemination of the evidence base for work to tackle offending by young people through the effective use of national analytical resource, in consultation with stakeholders.
- Ensuring that the inspection regime for relevant services reflects the objectives set out in this framework, while minimising the bureaucratic burden on agencies, linking to the follow-up to the Crerar review as appropriate.

## 4. Delivering on this Framework

### Building on progress

4.1 In setting out how we will drive forward this agenda, it is important to acknowledge and build on the significant progress that has been made in recent years by local and national agencies, including the third sector, and communities. This is recognised in the Auditor General for Scotland's report – Dealing with offending by young people (August 2007)<sup>7</sup>:

*“More services for young people who offend are now in place.”*

*“Significant improvements have been made in the timeliness of police reporting and children's reporter decision-making.”*

*“National standards are in place and provide a focus for improved inter-agency working.”*

A number of areas of work, already completed or underway, will collectively support implementation of this Framework:

- Getting it right for every child provides the framework within which all services will deliver a personalised, effective response to young people. In bringing together Getting it right for every child and Curriculum for Excellence we are working to improve the delivery of opportunities and support to all young people, identify priorities and gaps and working to fill them; promote awareness and understanding of the rights of children and young people; encourage and support professionals to take individual responsibility for ensuring the best outcomes for all young people; and ensure young people at risk can access the support and opportunities they need.
- Through our Early Years Framework (pre-birth to 8 years old) we aim to give children the best start in life and equip them with the resilience and skills to navigate a range of challenges that will face them in adolescence and beyond.
- We are implementing Curriculum for Excellence, which aims to provide a seamless package of learning activities in or out of school to enable children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We are committed to improving outcomes for all looked after children of all ages. The work being undertaken through the actions outlined in Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better<sup>8</sup> will support reducing youth offending in the looked after population.
- We are working towards all young people being able to benefit from positive opportunities which make a real difference to their lives through, for example, Cashback for Communities, the Youth Framework, and our investment in the national Youth Music Initiative and the Bookstart scheme for pre-school children and their carers.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2007/nr\\_070823\\_youth\\_justice\\_update.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2007/nr_070823_youth_justice_update.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/01/15084446/0>



- We are reforming the Children’s Hearings System to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its work in protecting and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people
- We have developed a set of national guidelines that can be adopted by agencies who work with children and young people on the principles, protocols and criteria for the use of Restorative Justice Services in Scotland.
- We are deploying Intensive Support and Monitoring (ISM) to meet the needs of high-risk young people safely within their communities, with the powers now available across Scotland.
- We are implementing guidance and training to tackle high risk young people.
- We are improving the sharing of information about young people between the children’s hearing and adult justice system to improve outcomes for individuals and communities.
- We will continue to prioritise More Choices, More Chances; supporting the momentum generated by local partnerships - operating in every local authority in Scotland and comprising representatives from a wide range of public agencies, together with the third and private sectors - that are delivering it.
- Through Skills for Scotland we will deliver effective, integrated, learning, skills and employment provision for young people who are in or leaving the justice system.
- We are supporting a thriving and effective third sector, as set out in Scottish Government’s Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan.

## **Moving forward**

4.2 This framework sets a shared direction for driving forward work to tackle offending by young people. This will ensure that our collective effort is focused on the agreed objectives. Achieving these will require a clear focus on joint working, consistent decision making and improved effectiveness and availability of provision. As national bodies, we will seek to support local agencies to improve practice and act as enablers to ensure consistent delivery of this agenda across the country.

4.3 The third sector brings particular skills and experience to this agenda in terms of engaging with and championing children, young people, families and communities. It is a key partner, at a national and local level, in shaping and delivering services. The new arrangements under the Concordat present new challenges and opportunities for third sector organisations. We are committed as statutory organisations to supporting a strong role for the third sector in implementing this framework going forward.

4.4 We need a governance structure for delivery against the framework which ensures drive, consistency and accountability without diverting effort onto process rather than action. Accordingly, we propose that responsibility at a national level for taking delivery of the framework forward will be rest with a group comprising representation from of all of the partners. The group will be responsible for:

- Ensuring progress in delivery of the framework.
- Identifying and managing risks and issues.
- Proactive and joint problem solving.

- Committing resources to support delivery.
- Making appropriate links to other national policies and agendas.
- Monitoring progress against the National Performance Framework as it relates to this agenda.
- Being accountable.

### **What will success look like?**

4.5 This Framework encourages new ways of working that aim to ensure agencies can provide children and young people who offend or behave badly with the help they need to turn their lives around and ensure long term benefits for these children and young people and the communities in which they live. We are asking that everyone who comes into contact with children and young people in Scotland, as a parent, a family member, a community member or in a professional capacity takes personal responsibility to act as a positive role model and to help and support young people to develop into adults who make a positive contribution to society.

4.6 The success of our efforts to tackle offending by young people will be shown in the positive outcomes of all our children, families and communities, contributing in turn to a more successful country. In particular, our success will be measured in the achievement of the following four outcomes from the National Performance Framework:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We have improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.

4.7 Ultimately, we all know what success looks like. We will see it in the faces of Scotland's children and young people, when each one of them is enjoying realising their full potential, supported by nurturing families within safe and friendly communities. Our ambition is no less than that, and with this framework we are committing together to do our part to ensure that vision is realised.