

YCS Community Engagement Initiative

**An invite for all community experts in serious youth violence:**

Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Youth Custody Service (YCS) accommodates all children aged under 18 years in custody across three sectors:

1. HM [Under 18] Young Offender Institutes (YOI); children 15 - 18: Feltham (A), Cookham Wood, Werrington, Wetherby & Parc
2. Secure Training Centres (STC); children 12 - 18
3. Secure Children’s Homes (SCH); children 10 - 18

YCS are currently seeking expressions of interest from community providers to join us in the search for effective practice in meeting the needs of boys and girls in custody specifically at risk from harmful group affiliations including county lines and gangs.

**What do we want to find?**

We anticipate selecting between two and four interventions and/or services which aim to address the unmet needs of children in custody associated with harmful group affiliations. We will then guide and support the provider in developing their product to a standard which can be presented for approval by the Youth Custody Assurance Board (YCAB). YCAB approval provides assurance that products and services are evidence-based, effective, ethical and safe for delivery with children in custody and is required when commissioning certain interventions and certain services.

**First the small print:**

Please be aware, YCAB approval, your involvement or that of your organisation, is not an intention to commission. It is, however, an opportunity to gain an assurance of quality for potential commissioners to assist with strategic decision-making and the allocation of restricted resources.

**Why do we need you?**

### YCS aims to safeguard children in custody whilst also enabling healthy development into adulthood through the availability of child-specific services including interventions to address the risks associated with various types of behaviour. YCS currently have a portfolio of interventions and services approved via a stringent effectiveness assurance process i.e. PSO 4350 (Children’s Annex) overseen by the Youth Custody Assurance Board (YCAB).

However, a gap has been identified for services to address the needs associated with children’s engagement in harmful group affiliation, often referred to as ‘Gang Interventions’. An additional gap in services, further highlighted by David Lammy MP, is the need for interventions and services specifically tailored to meet the needs of children of Black ethnicity.

We are therefore aiming to engage community providers in assisting YCS in meeting these current unmet needs associated with this specific population of children in custody. Who better to turn to than the experts?

**What are we looking for?**

### That’s entirely up to you as the experts. If it helps, psychological interventions in custody ordinarily address the attitudes, thinking and behaviour associated with certain problematic behaviours. However, we recognise children affiliated to anti-social peer groups require ongoing support into the community i.e. safe and robust exit strategies. Ordinarily, interventions for children in custody are facilitated by HMPPS staff which limits the through-care available to the child upon release. Whilst a disproportionate amount of children in custody are not white British, this demographic is not observed in the staff group. As a result, access to positive adult role models within the custodial community may not be sufficient for children from a minority background.

### Further, the current population of children in custody have experienced chaotic childhoods resulting in significant yet varied input from various authorities. Not only can ongoing involvement with criminal justice agencies increase the likelihood of behaviour being criminalised, in most cases this support cannot be provided indefinitely, regardless of whether the need remains. Despite best intentions, public authority involvement can also foster suspicion amongst children and families and result in rejection of the support offered.

### *As such, YCS recognises the value of engaging community providers across many levels; increasing access to positive adult male role models from a wider demographic than available in custody whilst also enabling relationships independent of public authority which can continue into the community.*

### YCS Service Approval

The YCAB ensures YCS interventions are specifically designed, delivered and evaluated in accordance with evidence for this population. As the term ‘intervention’ can be applied to many activities, when reviewing interventions and services the YCAB applies the following definition:

**‘…***designed and implemented in accordance with empirical evidence and theory with the primary objective of positively changing children’s attitudes, thinking and behaviour to reduce the likelihood of offending, improve custodial behaviour and resettlement prospects and develop interpersonal skills… including those which make progress toward behavioural change such as developing motivation and raising awareness.’*

### Whilst YCS recognise the value of children in custody accessing community interventions, it is also noted that such providers may face various obstacles when attempting to navigate the YCS PSO 4350 approval process. *This current event has therefore been designed to enable community providers to present their interventions and services regarding harmful group affiliations in accordance with the screening process and then assist the development of the full PSO 4350 application via the YCAB.*

### Please note: For services with faith, spiritual or religious contents, Chaplaincy approval must be obtained and we will therefore involve YCS Chaplaincy in the decision making process.

#### Where is this service required?

#### All services should be available for all children in custody where required and access should not be determined by placement i.e. postcode. However, services should also be responsive to need and therefore those which aim to address harmful group affiliations must also be tailored to the child’s home community to be effective. Whilst there is a national need for such services, it is also recognised one size is not likely to fit all - or it may. We therefore aim to be flexible to your proposals so please specify what area you would be aiming to target.

#### Additionally, there may be interventions/services proposed that individually do not meet need, however if delivered through a collaboration between providers, the need would be met. As such, YCS may make such recommendations.

**What Support will we provide?**

#### Following initial applications and presentations to the working group panel we will select a number of interventions/services that we will support to make applications to YCAB. We will provide support for each intervention/service selected to enable you to develop your offer and support an effective YCAB application.

#### Events structure and Timetable (subject to amendment due to COVID-19):

#### Whilst COVID-19 continues to present challenges, our intention is to follow this plan but may be subject to amendment and your patience is appreciated:

1. **Information Event:** There will be **two** informal online events **on Microsoft Teams** to provide guidance to completing the initial screening document:
	1. **11th July 2022 9.30 to 10.30 and**
	2. **12th of July 2022 14.00 to 15:00.**

Sessions will include a presentation of current YCS direction of strategic travel to assist development of your service offer. The event working group will also be available to answer questions and provide support. **Please let us know which event you would like to attend, and we will send the invite details.**

1. **Initial Proposal:** Providers to submit proposal on the YCS Screening Document by the **28th July.** These will be sifted and scrutinised by the working group and applicants informed whether:
	1. **Declined with reasons, or**
	2. **Request further information, or**
	3. **Invited to present**
2. **Presentations:** Successful applications will be invited to present on the **23rd or 24th August.** Venue TBC.

The panel will inform applicants whether their submission is:

* 1. **Declined with reasons, or**
	2. **Request further information, or**
	3. **Progress**
1. **YCAB Full submission:** those successful at the presentation stage will be supported by YCS Psychology Services in developing a **full submission and presenting this to the YCAB in October.**
2. **YCAB outcomes communicated to Providers and stakeholders by the end of October.**

#### Who will be on the working group/panel?

#### The events will be co-ordinated and applications judged by a panel including stakeholders and partners across YCS and beyond:

#### Service Improvement Group (Mick McNally)

#### YCS Psychology Services (Alisa Purton; Hayley Tingle; Laura Lyons)

#### Subject Matter Experts (Basil Tyson & Annmarie Lewis)

#### Other Youth Justice Professionals as required

We would welcome community providers to assist in the working group. However, those on the working group would not be able to submit a proposal due to a conflict of interest.

**How do I express my interest or that of my organisation?**

If you would like to attend the information event, request a copy of the application form or just have some more information, please contact the following email address:

* youthcustodyassurance@justice.gov.uk

**Further Information:**

The literature provided in the information pack is designed to promote awareness of the evidence base underpinning effective interventions. Providers should consider how the intervention proposed adheres to evidence based and ethical practice.

Community Engagement flyer

