

New data sharing agreement to boost partnership working

Sharing the YJB's 'summary disproportionality tool' will allow police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to analyse the cohort of children in their areas and spot if there are any disparities. This will serve to increase their understanding of any local issues or concerns and encourage them to collaborate with the relevant agencies in order to address any disparity. For example, this intelligence could be used to target funding for local initiatives that have a track record of addressing disproportionality. It could also feed into the work of local Crime Reduction Boards as well as the development of local/regional disproportionality action plans.

On using the tool, Norfolk PCC Giles Orpen-Smellie said:

Ensuring that all children are treated fairly by the criminal justice system must without question be a priority for all agencies who work in this area. My team has been able to use the disproportionality tool and data to produce a report on ethnic disproportionality in the youth justice system in Norfolk and shared this report with our local youth offending team (YOT).

In turn, the YOT have used this data to make a series of recommendations for the future, including upskilling staff in identifying and eliminating bias, the establishment of a multi-agency group responsible for developing a local joint disparity protocol and continuing to collect and analyse data to understand where disparity is occurring.

My office will also continue to use the tool and similar data sources when designing future youth interventions.

This data sharing agreement is partly in response to the Young Review and its [audit of Police and Crime Plans](#). Back in 2017 it was noted many Police and Crime Plans made no explicit reference to race equality and improving outcomes for ethnic minorities, though the audit did identify examples of where PCCs were driving progress on equality. Four years later, following the YJB/APCC data sharing agreement and with many new PCCs elected, there is work underway to ensure they are all aware of the tool and are using it.

Merseyside's PCC Emily Spurrell said:

Understanding disparities in the criminal justice system is crucial if we are to ensure we have fair and efficient processes and to help restore confidence and faith in the system. Historically this has been hard to do due to inconsistent recording across all the agencies.

The Youth Justice Board's disproportionality tool is a helpful and effective way to review the data specifically in relation to young people who become involved in our criminal justice system. It will enable us to identify potential issues and ensure we can take action if there are any concerns that young people from specific communities are over-represented.

As Chair of the Merseyside Criminal Justice Board, I am keen that all agencies in our region monitor proportionality in our criminal justice system and this tool will ensure we can do this more effectively, helping to drive improvement and uphold standards.

In April, representatives from PCC areas attended a training session on the summary tool. The tool was also part of the induction for new PCC's at a 'Meet the Partners Event' in July and it will be discussed at the next APCC General Meeting, in October.

Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire – and the APCC Lead on Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights – said:

Following the Lammy Review underlining the importance of data in tackling race disparity in the criminal justice system, I encourage all PCCs and Deputy Mayors to access the data available in the YJB's Summary Disproportionality Tool.

The wealth of data that the Tool contains will greatly help to inform our thinking as we develop our Police and Crime Plans, hold forces to account, and identify what we can do locally to address race disparity in the youth justice system, and ensure fewer children become involved in crime.

Keith Fraser, YJB Chair, said:

I really welcome this new data sharing agreement with the APCC and the exciting possibilities it brings for further partnership working. I believe it will prove to be a huge stride towards improving the life chances for children and preventing them from being drawn into the criminal justice system.

With access to the summary tool, PCCs will now be better able to interrogate the evidence and reveal whether children from ethnic minorities are over-represented in their area. And if the evidence points that way, then there is huge potential for PCCs to forge new alliances with local community-based groups and help to build trust, as they seek to explain 'why it is happening' and 'what can be done about it'.

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