

Significant funding increase for youth justice services

Over the past decade, the numbers of first-time entrants to the youth justice system have fallen by 81%. It would be easy for ministers and the public alike to assume that there wasn't a need for investment. I am so pleased that the government has insightfully delved beyond the headline success of the youth justice system to understand the complexity of the system and has [today announced](#) an uplift in the core youth justice grant alongside additional funding targeted at early intervention.

The reality behind the current small numbers of children in the system is a more complex picture. Youth justice services (YJSs) are working tirelessly to support children without them having to be cautioned or sentenced to receive help. These children may not be counted as 'first time entrants' but there is significant work being done to support them and their families, and to keep communities safe by helping them to not reoffend.

Those children who do receive a sentence will often be those with a longer history of offending, or a child who has committed a serious crime. We know these children have multiple needs, including mental health, communication and substance misuse. These children require more substantial intervention and support.

Alongside the need to intervene early, YJSs are tackling the after-effects of the pandemic: children who have missed out on a full education and other opportunities; children with additional experiences of trauma; and services who provided so much during lockdowns, are very much in need of, and deserving of, our support.

All of this work, of course, cannot happen without investment, which is why I am so pleased that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has announced that central government spending on YJSs will exceed £100m this financial year.

As part of this budget there will be an uplift to the youth justice core grant and ring-fenced funding for early intervention and I am excited to see what YJSs can do with this opportunity.

With additional investment comes additional responsibility and the Youth Justice Board will be working closely with services and the MoJ to drive up performance and ensure this investment results in outcomes for children and communities. This will include updating the terms and conditions of our grant and reviewing the formula we use to distribute funding to ensure we level up the investment across England and Wales.

We will continue to keep youth justice services and forum members updated on our progress against these activities via the usual channels, including the [youth justice bulletin](#).

More information about the funding announcement is on the [MoJ's website](#).