

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD VULNERABILITY, CRIME AND JUSTICE

Guide for Local Authority Colleagues

The problem

- Underlying vulnerabilities, such as school exclusion, are frequently overlooked, pushing disadvantaged young people towards the criminal justice system.
- Siloed systems, leave young people, especially those affected by adverse childhood experiences, without the responsive and supportive networks they need.
- Low investment in community-based programmes and diversion schemes, leave young people without the safe, and constructive spaces that help prevent youth crime.

What you can do at a local level

- Adopt a **holistic and coordinated 'whole-system' approach** by creating partnerships with local health services and community organisations, bringing together a wider range of expertise.
- Support local schools to **collaborate with local organisations** capable of offering extracurricular programmes that build skills, self-worth, and community connection.
- Align approaches to **addressing vulnerability and crime** to the needs and preferences of the community, considering the social and economic circumstances.
- Develop **child-first and restorative approaches in local youth justice practice** that centre on needs, rights, and wellbeing of children at all stages of Youth Justice.

Evidence-based insights

In 2022, children accounted for **10%** of all first-time-entrants to the criminal justice system.

When surveyed, a **quarter** of 13–17-year-olds said they had been either a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Examples of good practice you may wish to explore:

Child first approaches for violence reduction

Adoption of a child-first approach in local youth justice practice, centring the needs, rights, and well-being of children at every stage of Youth Justice.

Safer Parks: Improving access for women and girls

Co-designed parks to address intersectional needs. Guidance provides practical examples of how to implement changes on different budgets and scales and has been incorporated into the Green Flag Award programme which sets the standard for public parks and green spaces in the UK and globally.

Getting out for good

Enhanced sporting and cultural activities for vulnerable young women to contribute towards resilience building, enhancing personal aspirations, facilitating teamwork, and fostering positive peer networks.

Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Pathway

Addressing youth violence through social work in communities – creating relationships with non-statutory and community partners was a common feature of the practice.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your local area/constituency.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

Please share this guide and start a discussion in your organisation about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.