

Children and Young
Persons Policing Strategy

2024 - 2027

CONTENTS

Welcome 3

Our Vision 5

Child Centred Policing 6

Our Portfolio Pillars 7

The Children and Young Persons Policing
Charter 9

Conclusion 10

Endnotes 11

WELCOME

Chief Constable Catherine Roper

NPCC Portfolio Lead for Children and Young Persons



The Children & Young Persons (CYP) portfolio is passionate about improving how policing serves children and young people. We understand that stages in life have different needs and distinguish Children as under 18 and Young People between 18-24 years old. The CYP Portfolio believes in seeing and treating Children as Children.

30%¹ of the population of England & Wales are under 25 and they are a crucial part both now and in the future, of delivering a safe and prosperous society. Unfortunately too many of our children and young people's lives are still blighted by crime whether as victims, offenders or living in communities impacted by the fear of crime.

The NPCC 2030 vision statement sets out the ambition: **“by 2030 to be the most trusted and engaged policing service in the world working together to make communities safer and stronger”**²

Safer communities start with protecting the most vulnerable, preventing crime and diverting children and young people

before offending behaviour escalates and diminishes life chances.

Trust in Policing among children and young people is higher than the Adult population, but we know there remains a deficit in trust, particularly among children from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds³. Disparities are a challenge across the Youth Justice System, which we must all work together to address. We must engage young people, who too often feel they are not heard⁴. We have seen large decreases⁵ in the last decade in the number of children who are in the youth justice system, but we must ensure this progress continues. We know children are more likely to be victims of crime⁶ and that being a victim or offender in the Criminal Justice System can negatively impact future outcomes for CYP⁷.

This strategy sets a clear direction to fully embrace Child Centred Policing by building trust, ensuring our CYP are heard and supporting our CYP into their future.

I look forward to working with you all and I am grateful for your support.

Catherine Roper



OUR VISION

To create a culture of Children Centred Policing across the whole of policing in England & Wales

The portfolio vision is to create a culture of Children Centred Policing across the whole of policing in England & Wales.

To do this we must build trust and confidence with children and young people by delivering excellent Child Centred Policing that protects, respects and reduces harm. Together we will achieve this through the YourTrust pillar.

We must ensure the Voice of the Child is heard by all in policing and make children and young people feel engaged in policing

their communities. Together we will achieve this through the YourVoice pillar.

We want all children and young people to fulfil their potential by preventing children becoming victims of crime, diverting children from committing crime and supporting employment and volunteering. Together we will achieve this through the YourFuture pillar.

We are most effective when we collaborate with our partners, trusted adults and most importantly children and young people themselves.

CHILD CENTRED POLICING

Child Centred Policing principles were developed from the four pillars of Procedural Justice – Voice, Trustworthiness, Fairness and Respect and the views expressed by Children from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These principles helped shape the previous NPCC CYP Portfolio Strategy and in July 2021 NPCC published a Best Practice Framework, guiding how policing makes decisions, provides services and conducts interactions at both the individual and Force level.

In July 2023 a Child Centred Policing definition was developed to provide further clarity and ensure a shared understanding. Child Centred Policing:

- Is seen as legitimate⁸ as it is lawful, effective and fairly applied in line with our values, the Code of Ethics⁹ and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁰
- Reduces trauma¹¹ for Children and Young People when all practice and contact is culturally competent, empowering, collaborative, provides choice, is trustworthy and brings safety.

LAWFUL

- Treats those under 18 years old as children, respecting and recognising their needs, vulnerabilities and diversity, irrespective of presented or assumed levels of maturity and age¹².
- Young people are 18 to 24 years old and whilst adults in law, Child Centred Policing recognises maturity takes time to develop and vulnerability can remain¹³.
- Ensures legal safeguards and obligations to children¹⁴ are met through visible leadership, clear policy, effective collaborative oversight and the adequate resourcing of services.

EFFECTIVE

- Improves the safety of children and young people by reflecting the Right Care - Right

Person¹⁵ approach to ensure children and young people receive the correct specialist support they require, from the appropriate service. CCP ensures the right information is shared to enable the correct support to be given.

- Makes lawful decisions and takes trustworthy evidence based¹⁶ actions that makes our communities safer for all by effectively preventing offending, reducing trauma and improving trust.
- Works collaboratively to understand each person's individual abilities, strengths and circumstances and utilises those assets to deliver the most effective service¹⁷.
- Has a culture of accountability and learning by all, police, partners and the child. This is displayed by acknowledging, understanding and explaining to children and young people why change is required.

FAIR

- Is procedurally just, unbiased, inclusive and anti-racist¹⁸. It actively identifies disparity in the policing of children and young people across a range of often linked factors including care experience, poverty, race, gender, neurodiversity and will explain why disparity exists, or reform practice.
- Is respectful, it hears the voice of the child by actively seeking out the views and wishes of all children, young people and their trusted adults. It collaborates and empowers by providing choices and giving appropriate weight to those views and wishes when making decisions.
- Ensures the voice of the child or young person is heard and considered in consultative, advisory and scrutiny processes.
- Delivers trust and confidence by displaying to children and young people that policing is committed to making them safer and meeting their needs.



OUR PORTFOLIO PILLARS

This Strategy is underpinned by three Portfolio Pillars.

YourTrust

delivers excellent Child Centred Policing that protects and reduces harm to build trust and confidence.

We must be seen as legitimate and trustworthy. Building trust comes primarily from doing a good job, being there when we are needed, providing reassurance and ensuring our actions match our words.

Providing excellent care to victims and survivors is fundamental¹⁹, it is especially important in the context of children. We recognise the victim / offender overlap exists²⁰, especially amongst the vulnerable, such as those with care experience or those living in poverty. We will be mindful that exploitation may sit behind some young people who offend.

We seek to improve encounters with children and young people by adopting a Trauma Informed approach²¹ and adopt a manner appropriate to the child's age. We will be in the spaces where and when children and young people need us the most. This is in both the virtual²² and physical environments as we know that online safety is as much a

concern as feeling safe when outside²³. We will treat children and young people whom are suspected of committing crimes with an open mind and will not make assumptions based on appearance or behaviour. We understand that aggression is often due to feelings of vulnerability or fear and it is our responsibility to defuse and ensure safe interactions.

For those children that come into police custody, we strive to ensure the potential trauma²⁴ that can stem from these encounters is minimised by operating with a Child First approach²⁵, avoiding stigmatisation, using plain language and keeping the time in custody to a minimum and only where necessary²⁶.

We seek to continually improve the service we deliver and welcome the challenge that comes from scrutiny by the Children's Commissioners²⁷ and others.

YourVoice

is ensuring the voices of children and young people are heard throughout all of Policing

Capturing the voice of the child not only refers to what children say directly, but also to how they communicate through their actions. It means seeing their experiences from their point of view²⁸. We will actively seek out the views and wishes of all children, young people and their trusted adults. In order to understand and properly serve children and young people, we need to hear from them, whether that is online²⁹ or in person³⁰. We need to be professionally curious and conscious of differing communication needs. We will be informed by lived experiences³¹.

We must ensure the Voice of Child is heard by both local and strategic police leaders and in our consultative, advisory and scrutiny processes^{32 33}.

We will involve children and young people in decisions that impact them³⁴. We know how important this is at an individual level³⁵ but extends to issues that directly affect children and young people more generally.

Policing must show it has not simply listened, but has heard and responded by either taking tangible action or explaining why it has not.

YourFuture

ensures children and young people fulfil their potential in life by preventing victimisation, diverting offenders and supporting careers.

Policing at its heart is about preventing crime, detecting offences and keeping people safe.

The best place for a child's future is in education³⁶, it improves outcomes both academically and in life generally. It provides a safe and positive environment in which children can flourish alongside their peers. Policing will work with partners in education to promote attendance³⁷, prevent crime, build trust³⁸ and keep children safe³⁹.

Children and young people make mistakes and commit offences, however this should not determine their future. We will work in partnership with the Youth Justice Board and

locally with Youth Justice Services to prevent and divert children from offending, reduce harm and ensure offences are resolved in a proportionate way⁴⁰ reducing criminalisation.

Policing must develop more partnerships to divert⁴¹ and provide positive activities that build pro social identity such as the Kicks programme⁴².

We aim to provide opportunities to support Policing in making communities safer through activities such as Volunteer Police Cadets⁴³ and provide a range of pathways into or to support Policing.

THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS POLICING CHARTER

Following a self-assessment exercise completed in July 2023 and the development of a Child Centred Policing definition, the Best Practice Framework is being used to develop a new Children and Young Persons Policing Charter.

The CYP Policing Charter will bring to life this Strategy by making a number of pledges to children and young people. This will include the sharing of best practice and guidance to Police Forces, to assist in meeting the pledges and deliver the Charter in a way which best suits local needs. To meet new demands

and challenges, every year we will review the pledges to ensure they remain fit for purpose and keeping pace with the developing picture.

Every year Police Forces will have the opportunity to complete a self-assessment to measure delivery against our charter pledges. We will work with the HMICFRS⁴⁴, the independent Police inspectorate to incorporate our Charter pledges into the annual inspection of Police Forces.



CONCLUSION

It takes considerable commitment and investment to embed a culture that is child centred.

By continuing to work in partnership, developing evidence based approaches and focusing on what works, we can all play our

part in building trust and confidence and securing the best outcomes for our children and young people.

ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/2020>
- 2 <https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/policing-vision/policing-vision-2030.pdf>
- 3 <https://www.crestadvisory.com/post/forgotten-voices-policing-stop-and-search-and-the-perspectives-of-black-children>
- 4 <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Youth-Panel-National-Survey-2024.pdf>
- 5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2022-to-2023>
- 6 <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/young-victims-crime/teachers-and-professionals/working-young-victims-crime/#:~:text=Children%20and%20young%20people%20are%20disproportionately%20more%20likely,sometimes%20by%20people%20that%20should%20keep%20them%20safe.>
- 7 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913764/Public_health_approach_to_vulnerability_in_childhood.pdf
- 8 Bottoms, A., & Tankebe, J. (2012). Beyond procedural justice: A dialogic approach to legitimacy in criminal justice. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 102, 119-170.
- 9 https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/2021-02/code_of_ethics.pdf
- 10 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
- 11 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice>
- 12 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/06/Academic-Insights-Adultification-bias-within-child-protection-and-safeguarding.pdf>
- 13 Icenogle, G., et al (2019). Adolescents' cognitive capacity reaches adult levels prior to their psychosocial maturity: Evidence for a "maturity gap" in a multinational, cross-sectional sample. *Law and Human Behavior*, 43(1), 69–85
- 14 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c0ffb40f0b645ba3c6788/uncrc_how_legislation_underpins_implementation_in_england_march_2010.pdf
- 15 <https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/right-care-right-person-toolkit/implementation-principles-incidents-involving-children>
- 16 <https://www.college.police.uk/research>
- 17 Studies have shown a strengths/asset based approach has some success with CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLES & families, (see Seagram 1997, MacLeod & Nelson (2000), Park & Peterson, 2006, Arnold et al 2007, Lounsbury et al, 2009)
- 18 <https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/Police-Race-Action-Plan.pdf>
- 19 <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/>
- 20 <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/document/sowing-the-seeds-childrens-experience-of-domestic-abuse-and-criminality/>
- 21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice>
- 22 <https://www.instagram.com/yourpolice.uk/> | <https://staywise.co.uk/>
- 23 <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/the-big-ask/>
- 24 <https://www.crestadvisory.com/trauma-informed-practices-in-youth-justice>
- 25 https://yjresourcehub.uk/wp-content/uploads/media/Child_First_Overview_and_Guide_April_2022_YJB.pdf
- 26 <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/impact-of-pace-on-the-detention-and-questioning-of-young-suspects> | <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/child-first-children-in-police-custody>
- 27 <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/> | <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/about-us/>
- 28 <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/glossary/voice-of-the-child/>
- 29 <https://www.instagram.com/yourpolice.uk/>
- 30 <https://www.byc.org.uk/uk/uk-youth-parliament> | <https://www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/youth-commission>
- 31 <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-ambition/>
- 32 <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/glossary/voice-of-the-child/>
- 33 https://www.vkpp.org.uk/assets/Files/VKPP-Voice-of-the-Child-Practice-Briefing-Nov-2022.pdf?_sm_pdc=1&_sm_rid=qtqZS6QM0nt0Rt9j7nNQL401ZFpVZpS6fQP9tsQ
- 34 In accordance with Article 12 UNCRC
- 35 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526981/The_voice_of_the_child.pdf
- 36 <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/attendance-alliance-group>
- 37 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- 38 <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/police-in-schools/>
- 39 <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/>
- 40 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-use-out-of-court-disposals>
- 41 Wilson, D. Brennan, I. Olaghery, A, (2018) Police-initiated diversion for youth to prevent future delinquent behavior: a systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, Vol 14 Issue 1 2018
- 42 <https://www.premierleague.com/news/3118805>
- 43 <https://vpc.police.uk/>
- 44 <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/>



Child



CENTRED POLICING

www.npcc.police.uk | X @PoliceChiefs

