Future Communities Fund scoping study:

Helping young people away from criminal justice to re-engage with communities

Professor Neal Hazel
University of Salford
April 2025

Foundation

Acknowledgements

This report was authored by Professor Neal Hazel. The author and the Co-op Foundation wish to thank the stakeholders who were engaged in this study and provided insights into issues, practices and opportunities who helped shape the scope and breadth of the research and its recommendations.

Citation: Hazel, N. (2025) Future Communities Fund scoping study: Helping young people away from criminal justice to re-engage with communities. Manchester: Co-op Foundation.

Contents

Foreword

In 2022, through a visioning study[1], we asked nearly 100 diverse young people how they envisioned their future fair communities. They told us they wanted communities that were safe and inclusive, where young people feel supported even when they make mistakes. Their vision now guides us as we implement our strategy, Building Communities of the Future Together.

This scoping study reflects our commitment to supporting young people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system, particularly at a time when effective, compassionate intervention is more critical than ever. The statistics are stark. In the year ending March 2024, around 13,700 young people in England and Wales entered the criminal justice system, with a concerning 32.5% reoffending rate within a year[2]. These figures speak to systemic challenges such as poverty, discrimination, and a lack of access to education and support services, which perpetuate cycles of disadvantage.

The introduction of a new government in July 2024 brought a shift in criminal justice policy, with a stronger emphasis on reducing the prison population and moving from punitive to rehabilitative approaches. The appointment of Lord Timpson as Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending signals a renewed focus on rehabilitation and reducing recidivism[3].

At the Co-op Foundation, we believe that listening to young people is key. Our visioning study highlighted their desire to see peers in the criminal justice system receive support and opportunities to rebuild without stigma. This feedback has been pivotal in shaping our funding priorities and our campaigns, including initiatives like the second round of the Future Communities Fund. Also importantly, the fund has been developed with young people, some of whom have experience of the criminal justice system.

Our work aligns with the government's focus on rehabilitation, underscoring the need to support young people rather than punish them for their past. Moreover, the urgency for targeted funding in this area cannot be overstated. Many organisations face challenges securing resources to deliver effective, evidence-based interventions. Short-term funding cycles, lack of unrestricted funding, and high competition for grants create instability, particularly for smaller organisations[4].

This report reinforces the importance of the Child First[5] framework, advocating for a shift from punishment to support. Rehabilitation must be holistic, focused on helping young people build positive identities and engage with their communities. Long-term, unrestricted funding is essential to enable organisations to deliver sustainable, impactful support.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Hazel and all contributors to this report. Together, we can transform the lives of young people, ensuring they are met with understanding, support, and opportunities to thrive. Let us commit to making a lasting difference in their futures.

Nick Crofts
CEO
Co-op Foundation

[1]Vergou, A., Mortimer, A., Sidhu, T. (2022). A vision of future, fair, communities built on co-operative values. Manchester: Co-op Foundation.
[2]Youth Justice Board (2025) Youth justice statistics: 2023 to 2024.
[3]Criminal Justice Alliance (2025) Presentation at the Association of Charitable Foundations Criminal Justice Funder Network, 21st January 2025
[4]Clinks (2025) State of the Sector 2024. The voice of the voluntary sector working in criminal justice. Executive summary. London: Clinks
[5]Youth Justice Board (2022) A Guide to Child First. London: Youth Justice Board.

Executive Summary

This scoping study, commissioned by the Co-op Foundation, examines approaches to supporting young people's (re)engagement with communities following involvement in the criminal justice system. The research, conducted between December 2023 and April 2024, combines desk-based review with stakeholder consultations to inform the second round of the Future Communities Fund and identify effective interventions for supporting young people away from the criminal justice system.

Central to contemporary understanding and practice in youth justice is the Child First framework, which summarises the research evidence base structured around four key tenets (ABCD). This framework emphasises treating young people '**A**s children' first, recognising their developmental needs and the structural inequalities they face. It focuses on '**B**uilding pro-social identity' through strengths-based and future-oriented approaches. The framework promotes '**C**ollaboration' through meaningful engagement with young people and their families and prioritises '**D**iversion from stigma' by keeping young people out of the criminal justice system where possible.

The evidence demonstrates that brain development continues into the mid-twenties, significantly impacting behaviour and decision-making capabilities. Justice system involvement typically creates negative impacts on young people's development, highlighting the critical importance of strength-based diversionary interventions that prioritise positive outcomes. Organisations implementing the Child First framework have shown success in treating young people as children first, rather than defining them by their involvement with the criminal justice system. Successful support programmes consistently demonstrate alignment with Child First principles through several key characteristics:

- A holistic approach, focusing on the whole person rather than isolated issues, while recognising the complex needs and circumstances of young people in transition.
- Relationship-based approaches, delivered through consistent and supportive connections with trusted adults, combined with collaborative engagement with young people and their families.
- Support for pro-social identity formation by adopting models such as the Activities, Interactions and Roles ("fresh AIR"), based on the idea that supporting engagement in constructive activities, having positive interactions and taking on new roles can shape a child's perception of themselves and their place in the world, which then informs behaviour.

Innovation in this field has produced several promising approaches, particularly in social enterprise models. Organisations like The Skill Mill and Honest Grind Coffee demonstrate how structured work experience can provide young people with opportunities to develop practical skills and workplace confidence, building positive employment pathways and forming pro-social identities.

The current funding landscape presents distinct challenges for organisations working in this space. While multiple funding sources exist, accessibility is often limited, particularly for smaller organisations. The funding environment shows a clear preference for prevention work over (re)engagement initiatives, with limited availability of unrestricted funding that would allow organisations to fully implement Child First principles.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that the second round of the Future Communities Fund prioritise organisations demonstrating specific alignment with the Child First framework, including those with established partnerships with youth justice services and evidence of meaningful collaboration with young people and their families. The study particularly emphasises the opportunity to support retail social enterprises with potential Co-op business links. Success requires sustained, flexible funding approaches that recognise the complexity of young people's needs and the importance of long-term, relationship-based interventions. By focusing on strength-based, identity-focused approaches delivered through consistent, supportive relationships, the second round of the Future Communities Fund has the potential to make a significant impact in this crucial area of social need.

1. Introduction

1.1.Context

In 2022, Co-op Foundation as part of developing their strategy 'Building Communities of the Future Together', engaged almost 100 diverse young people across the UK to find out how they envision their future, fair communities, built-in co-operative values in 10 years' time (Co-op Foundation, 2022). Young people's views became Co-op Foundation's strategic priorities outlined in a visioning study (Vergou, Mortimer, and Sidhu, 2022).

One of the strategic priorities focuses on fostering "Safe communities" with specific goals to support organisations that help people feel safe and respected, while also promoting rehabilitation and reintegration for those who have made mistakes. To align with this vision, the Co-op Foundation commissioned this research to scope a new area of work in the criminal justice system through its funding programme, Future Communities Fund.

The Future Communities Fund is part of the Co-op Foundation's commitment to providing long-term, unrestricted funding guided by the principles of Open and Trusting Philanthropy (IVAR, no date). The first round supported organisations fostering diverse young leaders from underserved communities, with a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and youth activism. For the second round, the Foundation continues to seek to address urgent issues where it can make a meaningful impact by funding smaller-scale organisations (annual income under £250K) with unrestricted, long-term grants.

Key insights from this research will inform the development of the second round of the Future Communities Fund Theory of Change and shape its funding criteria in collaboration with the Future Communities Collective. The Collective is a group of 17 diverse young people from across the UK who co-develop and allocate grants, embedding youth perspectives in the Foundation's work, including campaigns and impact evaluation
(Co-op Foundation, no date). We are also working with justice-experienced young people to inform the development of the Theory of Change and shape the funding criteria. This process reflects the Foundation's role as a learning, committed to evidence-based funding decisions made in co-operation with the people the funding will impact.

1.2. Aim and Focus of the Study

This study aims to refine the focus for the second round of the Future Communities Fund, which will target the strategic priority of safety[4]. Young people's vision highlighted rehabilitation as a critical component of creating safe communities:

"In 10 years' time, there would be a greater focus on supporting offenders with their rehabilitation so they can become active members of their communities. They would be given accommodation and opportunities to work, and the Government would create regulations to allow this".

Young people saw rehabilitation as a constructive and positive activity and specifically noted how *"tackling the stigma of this could prevent offending and reduce crime rates"* (Vergou, Mortimer, and Sidhu, 2022, p.12). This scoping study examines both what 'rehabilitates' (or moves children away from crime) and what we know about re-engagement.

The key research questions are:

1. What evidence exists in the UK regarding the rehabilitation of young offenders and its intersection with DEI, youth activism, and youth development?
2. What do other funders support in this area, and where are the gaps or opportunities for impact?
3. Which organisations demonstrate good practice in this space?
4. What challenges and opportunities do these organisations face?
5. What considerations should inform the second round of the Future Communities Fund funding criteria to reach the right organisations?

[4]The study also included looking into what works in tackling violence against young women and girls, which is another sub-theme within the Safety priority area. The insights of that part of the study are presented in a separate report.

By addressing these questions, the Co-op Foundation aims to ensure the second round of the Future Communities Fund meaningfully supports smaller organisations and contributes to building safer, fairer communities.

1.3. Structure of the report

Targeted primarily at the Co-op Foundation team, board of trustees, and stakeholders involved in developing the second round of the Future Communities Fund, the findings will also benefit other funders and organisations supporting criminal justice experienced young people.

The report includes a chapter that explains the study's methodology, followed by three chapters on key findings. The first discusses contemporary understandings and evidence on what works in supporting young people to re-engage with their communities. The second highlights current practices, key players, and innovative approaches. The third examines the funding landscape, detailing available resources, strengths, limitations, and opportunities for the second round of the Future Communities Fund. The report concludes by summarising key findings and recommendations for the second round of the Future Communities Fund focus.

2. Methodology

The research, conducted between December 2023 and April 2024, followed a three-phase methodology to address its aims and key questions. These phases focused on understanding the issues and funding landscape, exploring current practices, and defining parameters for the for the second round of the Future Communities Fund (see Table 1). The process involved ongoing collaboration with the Co-op Foundation to refine the research scope, priorities, and language, ensuring alignment with contemporary frameworks and non-stigmatizing and developmentally appropriate terminology.

2.1. Methods

The research employed two primary methods: a desk-based scoping review and online consultations.

Desk-Based Scoping Review

The scoping review followed methods used in similar studies, including cross-national reviews of youth justice (Waterhouse et el., 1998 and Hazel, 2008) and review of crime and custody solutions for girls and young women (Bateman and Hazel, 2014). The project's aims did not require a full literature review, considering also the limitation of resources (budget and time), but strictly scoping for enough information to answer the questions about the contemporary landscape. The search involved four main sources:

a. Literature database and web searches, including specialist youth-focused repositories

b. Government and third sector reports, including submissions to recent inquiries

c. Reference trails (examining and following up bibliographies from each collected text)

d. Academic contacts of the author seeking advice on 'hidden texts' from collaborators in institutions globally.

Stakeholder consultations

Consultation meetings were held with contacts of the subject areas online or on the phone. They were not intended to be data collection interviews but informal discussions loosely structured around the key questions to increase understanding of issues/support.

Ten stakeholders were consulted, including academics, policy experts, practitioners and funders, in addition to Co-op Foundation representatives. These consultations provided qualitative insights into issues, practices, and opportunities. Recordings or transcripts of the consultation meetings were not taken, and no quotations were used in the report. Nor were attributable data held. Such data were not necessary to fulfil the aims of the scoping study, so it would not be ethical or justifiable. Notes were taken on points made (unattributed and anonymously) to map in analysis or follow-up.

Analysis

The analysis followed an iterative thematic approach, mapping insights against a predefined framework developed in collaboration with the Co-op Foundation. This framework evolved during data collection to incorporate emerging questions and issues. A thematic map was used to organise data, building a comprehensive picture that became the findings section of the report. This iterative thematic approach has been used in several exploratory studies with varying types of qualitative data (beyond academic literature) where the necessary structure is relatively clear from the start (e.g. Hazel 2008).

Table 1: Objectives and Key Questions for each subtheme

Phase	Objectives	Some key questions
1	Understand the focus/issues/ understanding	• What is the existing evidence-base on issues/understanding? • What are contemporary understandings/ directions/sub-issues? • What are relevant contextual issues? • What might be on the horizon?
	Understand current funders/networks	• What is funded in the area? • What is obviously not funded, and why? • What are the funding strengths/limitations/gaps? • Where are the opportunities for FCF2 make a difference?
2	Understand current support practice	• What organisations already operate? • What is recognised good practice? • What is innovative or promising practice? • What opportunities and challenges do organisations face? • Where is positive practice limited?
3	Draw parameters for the second round of the Future Communities Fund	• What are the different options available for focus? • What are the key considerations for funding criteria? • How could we ensure that we reach the relevant organisations? • How can we best fund 'cutting-edge' and evidence-informed work that can make most difference?

3. Contemporary understandings

3.1. What context do we need to know?

Language and culture

Until recently, children and young adults in the youth justice system were referred to as "young offenders". However, this is no longer a term seen positively in the sector, although there are occasional political relapses and legacy policies (e.g. Young Offender Institutions). It is now more common to refer to use **"justice" rather than "offending"** (e.g. most Youth Offending Teams call themselves "Youth Justice Services").

Correspondingly, it is now less common to apply a permanent label (like 'young offender'), but more likely to refer either to what they have done in the past (e.g. 'child who has offended') or preferably describe the situation they find themselves in (e.g. 'in trouble', 'in conflict with the law', 'in the criminal justice system'). For adults, the Probation Service in England similarly refers to 'people on probation'. Likewise, it is now considered preferable to refer to "moving away from the criminal justice system" rather than "away from crime". This is seen as more positive, engaging, and less stigmatising or labelling.

There is a movement away from "youth" to referring to **"children"** or **"young adults"** in policy and practice (e.g. in National Standards, case management guidance and inspections). This is in order to recognise both the legal status and vulnerability of those under 18. Some agencies (e.g. NHS) still refer to under-18s as "children and young people", but this irks many in the system because it implies some under-18s are not children. However, it is still more common to refer to (just) "young people" when child-facing, as it is generally assumed that older children prefer this.

When discussing both under and over-18s, it is usual to either refer to "children and young adults" or just to **"young people"** (as will be the case in this report). Psychologists still refer to "adolescents". Young adults are generally considered in the youth justice system to be up to the age of 24 years (including 25 years in Scotland).

For both research and policy reasons, there has been a distinct movement in the UK away from referring to children's **"risk factors of offending"** (as will be referred to below). This is certainly not universal, and some agencies (particularly those linked to the Home Office) still use the term. However, it is now rarely used in national standards or guidance for practitioners (see Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2022). Reference is still more commonly made to "risk of harm". However, there is a preference for more positive /constructive terminology like "safety and wellbeing of all" (HM Inspectorate of Probation and Youth Justice Board, 2024).

The term **"rehabilitation"** is not generally used in relation to young people in the criminal justice system. That is because it is not typically considered that a young person who offends has something wrong with them that needs rehabilitating. If there is something wrong, it is more likely to be an underlying problem that needs to be helped, with the offending seen as a symptom rather than the issue to be rehabilitated from. In relation to the Co-op Foundation's strategic "Safer Communities" theme, it is more common to consider terms like "supporting young people away from the criminal justice system, towards positive outcomes, reengagement or a positive contribution to society". The Youth Justice Board's (YJB) vision statement refers to helping children in the criminal justice system "make a constructive contribution to society".

Ages for youth justice and young adult justice

Children can be prosecuted and enter the youth justice system from 12 years old in Scotland and 10 years old across the rest of the UK (the 'age of criminal responsibility'). In all UK jurisdictions, there is a distinct youth justice system for young people up to the age of 18 ('age of criminal majority'. After 18, young people are dealt with by adult justice services (e.g. the Probation Service and the Prison Service in England and Wales). However, they may still be treated differently as young adults until the age of 25 (e.g., in different custodial institutions).

Youth justice systems

England and Wales (together), Scotland, and Northern Ireland have separate youth justice systems with distinct differences.

In **England and Wales**, responsibility for youth justice sits with the Ministry of Justice, advised by the Youth Justice Board. The main relevant legislation is the Crime and Disorder Act (Home Office, 1998). The overall aim for the youth justice system is "preventing offending" (and reoffending), although there is an equal statutory requirement "to have regard for the welfare of the child" (Children and Young Person's Act, Home Office, 1933).

Delivery of youth justice in the community (including after custody) is through multi-agency 157 Youth Offending Teams, which are generally managed through local authorities. Custodial institutions are the responsibility of the Youth Custody Service (YCS; part of HM Prisons and Probation Service) – with four types of institutions: (1) Young Offender Institutions (like prisons; three publicly managed by the YCS, one privately run in Wales); (2) a Secure Training Centre (private); (3) Secure Children's Homes (mainly local authority run); (4) a Secure School (Oasis Restore).

Services providing youth justice are expected to follow the 2019 national standards (Youth Justice Board, 2019).

In **Wales** specifically, although the responsibility for youth justice is retained by the UK Ministry of Justice, all related responsibilities (e.g. health, families, education) are devolved to the Welsh Government. Both have issued a joint Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales (Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government, 2019). This emphasises a 'whole-system approach' with the guiding principles of 'children first', 'trauma-informed' and children's rights. Implementation of the Blueprint is under the oversight of the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel.

In **Scotland**, the system is built on the principle from the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 that children who offend are treated the same as those in need of care and protection. If they are not diverted away from the youth justice system by the police, they are usually referred to the Children's Reporter, who may arrange a Children's Hearings (under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011). A children's hearing can impose a 'compulsory supervision order' with various conditions. More serious or contested cases can go to court. A child in the system will also have a non-statutory Child's Plan (Scottish Government, no date), including the voice of the child, and a Lead Professional (often a social worker). The support for the child will then be provided by respective agencies. The Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) have produced a useful comprehensive practice guide that describes the youth justice system in Scotland and is renewed every year to ensure the information it provides is relevant and accurate (CYCJ, 2024a).

Recent strategies in Scotland emphasise a rights-based approach to youth justice (Scottish Government, 2021a) and the Whole System Approach (Murray et al., 2015), where offending is treated as a flag for welfare concerns rather than as a substantive issue in its own right. Any agency involved with a child should follow the 2021 standards (Scottish Government, 2021b).

In **Northern Ireland**, the youth justice system operates under the Department of Justice. The Public Prosecution Service will decide whether a case should go to court, a Diversionary Youth Conference (DYC), or receive a diversionary sentence such as an 'Informal Warning' or 'Restorative Caution' (through the police). A DYC is organised by the Youth Justice Agency (Department of Justice, no date) and involves the young person, family and often the victim. Children can be remanded or sentenced to custody at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in Bangor.

3.2. What is the key evidence-base on the issues?

Which young people are involved in youth justice?

In the year ending March 2023, there were 13,723 children cautioned or sentenced in England and Wales. The number of children in the system has fallen steadily since the mid-2000s. Three-quarters of them were aged 15-17 years old, and 86% of them were boys. 72% were White (compared to 74% in the general population) (YJB, 2024). However, this cohort does not include everyone who has been caught doing something against the law – the number (or outcome) of children who are diverted before entering the criminal justice system is not as yet well recorded.

In Scotland in 2022-23, 2,637 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds (Scottish Government, 2024).

In Northern Ireland, in 2022-23, 3,753 cases relating to children came into formal contact with the criminal justice system. 57% were 10-15 years old at the time of the offence (Department of Justice 2023).

What happens to young people in the justice system?

68% of children in the youth justice system in England and Wales are given community or other non-custodial disposals by the court, with another 29% being formally diverted by the police with pre-court disposals. Only 3% of children receive custodial sentences. However, about half of the children in custody in January 2024 (of the 400 total) were on remand (and two-thirds of those will not be sentenced to custody) (YJB, 2024). There are another 11,308 young adults (18-24) in prison (HMPPS, 2024).

In Scotland, there are an average of 9 children in custody at any one time. There are about another 1200 young adults in custody (Scottish Government, 2023b).

How many young people reoffend after leaving the criminal justice system?

About a third (32%) of children in the criminal justice system in England and Wales reoffend within a year of sentence/release, which has been falling long-term. Those who reoffended did so with an average of four offences (YJB, 2024). In Scotland, the latest reconviction rate for under 21s is 26% (although that was during the pandemic) (Scottish Government, 2023a).

About a quarter of young adults (26% of 18-20, 24% of 21-24 year olds) in England and Wales reoffend within a year (Ministry of Justice 2024). In Scotland, the latest reconviction rate for 21 to 25 year olds is 25% (during the pandemic) (Scottish Government, 2023).

There is a substantial body of evidence showing that young people find it difficult to (re)engage with communities and thrive after involvement with the criminal justice system (which in turn makes them more likely to reoffend again). Research (and other evidence) suggests that this is for a variety of reasons, including stigma and labelling from involvement, insufficient support for barriers they face, failure to engage them in activities or roles that shift the way they see themselves in the world, or restrictions/discrimination against them (like criminal record restricting opportunities, structural marginalisation) (see e.g. Bateman et al., 2013).

Child First – what is important for helping children in trouble (and so prevent offending)?

Contemporary research understanding of what is important for preventing children's (re)offending is summed up in the **'Child First'** framework (YJB, 2022b). This is a four-part (called 'tenets') summary that contains several research messages, but can be shortened to an ABCD mnemonic:

As children – being developmentally informed and not treating them as either adults or offenders. This tenet also includes the recognition that many of the problems and solutions to the child's situation are structural (i.e. inequality), in the hands of adults.

Build pro-social identity[5] – being strengths based and future-focused to develop a child's pro-social identity for desistance.

[5]Pro-social identity definition: a young people see themselves as someone who will benefit other people or society as a whole and are less likely to get involved in negative or criminal activity. If a young person has a pro-social identity then they feel empowered to make the right choices in their behaviour and with wider life decisions, including relationships (YJB, 2022).

Collaborate – engaging meaningfully with children and carers rather than trying to do justice to them, which better ensures collaboration and social inclusion.

Divert from stigma – keeping children out of the criminal justice system wherever possible and limiting the negative labelling and stigmatising effects if they are within the system.

All the ideas within Child First would work with what we know from the evidence-base for **young adults**, although that is less well developed.

Key breakthroughs in understanding of offending and desistance

There have been a few key research breakthroughs over the recent years that are particularly important for this contemporary understanding:

1. Positive child outcomes, not risks. It is now recognised that key elements for preventing offending are essentially the same as the positive outcomes we want for any child (e.g. good health, school inclusion, strong sense of self, family and community engagement). Conversely, research (e.g. Haines and Case, 2015) has been very critical of interventions directly targeting offending behaviours (e.g. addressing offending behaviour programmes), or trying to lower 'risk factors' for offending, rather than improving child outcomes (as was the case in the early 2000s).

2. Brain development and trauma. It is now recognised that brains are not fully developed until at least 25 years old, with parts that control decision-making being among the last to fully form. This may lead to poor decision-making in young people. Abuse and other events in the early years of brain development (including in the womb) – known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - can have a lasting effect on behaviour, particularly on the ability to regulate it. It also means that there can be subconscious triggers for behaviour, and that these may cause violent reactions in people (Gray et al., 2021). Conversely, adolescence is a time when some damage to neural pathways can be repaired. This has led to the emergence of Trauma Informed Practice.

3. Negative involvement. Involvement with the criminal justice system tends to have a negative rather than positive effect (McAra and McVie, 2013). The deeper the involvement, the worse the outcome. This is related to the established 'labelling theory' (from Becker, 1963 on) – the way that we can live down to labels placed on us by authority. Nearly all young people do something illegal (but most do not end up in the system), and the large majority will 'grow out of crime' as they mature or develop adult roles and responsibilities. Consequently, it is better to try to keep (or send) children out of the criminal justice whenever possible – known as 'diversion'. Support from non-statutory agencies (i.e. third sector) rather than statutory services may further limit stigma.

4. Identity and desistance. Identity (the way we think about ourselves in the world) is now recognised as a key determinant of behaviour. Events and experiences (e.g. school exclusion, discrimination) can lead us to think of ourselves in ways that allow crime (pro-offending identity) – for instance, thinking of ourselves as a hard-man, fighter, rebel, gangster, or survivor against the system. Avoiding / stopping crime requires us to think of ourselves in ways that encourage us to be constructive – for instance thinking of ourselves as a leader, good person, team player, responsible. This process has been termed 'secondary desistance' in the adult 'desistance theory' literature (e.g. Maruna and Farral, 2004), but has only more recently been shown with young people (Hazel et al., 2017; Oswald, 2022; Copp et al., 2020; Cuevas et al., 2017). Identity shift tends to be linked with changes in Activities, Interactions or Roles (e.g. new job or hobby, new partner, new job).

Factors statistically associated with offending

Factors that are statistically associated with offending by young people are now very well established in the literature; Rutter et al., 1998; YJB, 2005). They were historically called **'risk factors for offending'** but we now try to reframe these as 'barriers to positive outcomes' and crime-free futures for young people. There are a huge number of factors that have been statistically associated with 'youth offending', commonly grouped into the following:

- Individual factors – like exposure to crime, low IQ, hyperactivity, early misbehaviour
- Family factors – like large family, abuse, family conflict, offending family/peers, poverty
- Community factors – high crime area, availability of drugs, poor school performance
- Society factors – discrimination, social and economic injustices.

Being a member of a **marginalised group** is also statistically linked with offending, including having:

- Black and Minoritised ethnicity
- Special Education Needs
- Care experience ('looked after' by the local authority)
- Received free school meals

Factors that are associated with positive outcomes for young people (historically called **'protective factors'** against offending) include:

- Individual factors – like resilience, wanting to help others, high IQ, positive social skills
- Family factors – stable structure, close relationships, prosperity, healthy and safe friends
- Community factors – safe school, low crime rates, strong sense of community

Although this 'risk factor paradigm' evidence-base has informed youth justice interventions from the 1990s, academics in recent years have increasingly warned against considering these factors as reliable individual predictors/assessments for or against offending or reoffending (e.g. Case, 2007; Prins and Reich, 2021; Raynor and Vanstone, 2016; Hannah-Moffat, 2009). The factors do not tell the story or context for individuals, underplay structural factors, and may not consider diversity.

Engaging marginalised young people

A review of what works in engaging children and young adults after release from custody sees reengagement with the community as a three-step process (Bateman and Hazel, 2013). It highlighted the difference between (step 1) participation (a project engaging with a young person) and (step 2) the young person being and feeling engaged with the service. The latter requires **the young person to identify with** the project staff, service provision and objectives of the intervention (emotional and cognitive engagement). When successfully achieved, this emotional and cognitive engagement contributes (and involves) an identity shift in the young person. That then allows (step 3) the young person becoming engaged a broader range of agencies and wider society, and further relies on the young person having developed the motivation, self-esteem, skills and other necessary means to disengage from the particular support service.

Practitioners have suggested that the most important factor in engaging young people who have offended is the relationship with any worker, and the characteristics of that worker, including: their being a positive role model, flexibility of approach, and consistency of worker (Ipsos, 2010).

3.3. What are the contemporary understandings of 'what works'?

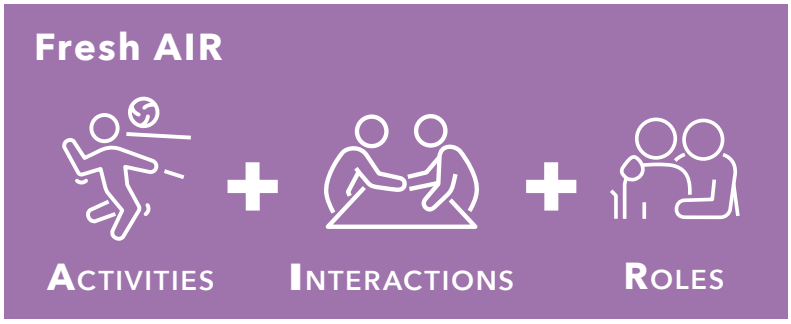
Research tells us that interventions for helping young people move away from crime and criminal justice are most likely to be effective if they are holistic, strengths-based, collaborative, trauma-responsive and involve family and other systems. Interventions within or outside of the criminal justice system should take account of developmental factors, attachment and neurodevelopment. They should recognise and develop existing strengths and build social capital. Conversely, they should avoid stigma or negative labelling (CYCJ, 2024b).

Supporting positive child outcomes

According to the Child First framework, when considering what would work to help young people away from crime and the criminal justice system, it is better to consider in a 'strengths-based' way what we know helps any young person achieve well-being and other positive outcomes (cf. Benson and Scales, 2009). The government has summed these up as: supportive relationships, strong ambitions, and good opportunities (HM Government, 2013). In youth work, understanding of what interventions should try to develop in young people has been summed up in the Positive Youth Development model (popular internationally) as: Confidence, Competence, Caring, Connection and Character (Lerner, 2009).

Supporting children out of the justice system – the fresh AIR model

In a variety of both the custody and the community, the success of interventions with young people in preventing reoffending depends on whether or not they are able to develop pro-social identity (Hazel and Bateman, 2021; Cuevas et al., 2017). Given that this is a relatively new research insight, evidence is still growing in what types of interventions can best develop pro-social identity with young people who have offended specifically. However, positive outcomes have been found in youth offending services that explicitly focus all interventions on developing identity using the Activities, Interactions and Roles ("fresh AIR") model (e.g. Swindon, Youth Justice Service see Centre for Justice Innovation, 2023).



Interventions that 'work' to reduce (re)offending

The Youth Endowment Fund and others (e.g. Manica, 2022; Adler et al., 2016) have attempted to collect evidence of 'what works' in interventions based on quasi-experimental research. While a useful guide, this kind of evidence should be taken as partial because of its restricted scope and methodological flaws (e.g. predominantly US studies, discrete interventions that do not reflect our justice system, decontextualised, not valuing practitioner skills, etc. – see Smith, 2006; Hollin, 2008; Harper and Chitty, 2005; Case et al., 2022). That said…

At the individual level, there is some evidence of the effectiveness of **therapeutic approaches** generally (Lipsey, 2009). These include **cognitive behaviour programmes** (Koehler et al., 2013) and skills training (Farrington et al., 2022). These may cover elements such as anger management, social **skills training**, and social problem-solving skills. The most successful programmes focus on cognitive and social skills, with the least successful focusing on job-related skills (O'Connor and Waddell, 2015; Roberts et al., 2019). However, these tend not to be considered so effective in isolation.

The strongest evidence base is for family-based interventions and systematic interventions (Humayun and Scott, 2015; Moodie et al., 2015), involving **intensive multi-modal support** over a long period of time (Farrington and Welsh, 2003). The least effective interventions are those based in schools.

Counselling programmes, where a supportive and guiding relationship is developed between the young person and a professional, are well established to be effective if the relationship is trusted. These are better when they are intensive and long-term (O'Connor and Wadell, 2015).

Restorative approaches, usually involving mediation, can have some positive outcomes, although the result on reducing offending is less clear for children than for adults. It may be more effective to more serious interventions but not to good community justice (cf. Strang et al., 2013). In addition, it is worth noting that restorative justice overseas was developed more for reengagement with the community than for 'reparation' or crime prevention. There is some evidence that more informal and forward-facing 'restorative approaches' (that avoid responsibilising the young person) can help 'reintegration' (e.g. Payne et al., 2021).

Interventions that do not work to reduce offending (so should be avoided)

Boot camp programmes that emphasise military-style discipline and rigorous physical exercise are proposed or tried every generation or so in the UK and more frequently elsewhere. However, evaluations have consistently found that they are not successful in reducing offending (Meade and Steiner 2010) or may actually slightly raise it (e.g. Wilson et al., 2008)

Deterrence interventions, such as prison visitation programmes, are notorious for increasing offending (Adler et al., 2016). The most infamous prison visitation project is Scared Straight. It has been suggested that the failure may be because of a confrontational style, stigma or poor role modelling (Klenowski et al., 2010).

3.4. What are particular current and anticipated concerns?

Ethnic disproportionality is an ongoing concern in youth justice. The further on the youth justice journey, the sharper the disproportionality, to the extent that 26% of children in youth custody are Black, compared with 6% of 10–17-year-olds in the general population (YJB, 2024). Black young people will face the same disproportionality and structural inequalities when trying to successfully engage with communities after criminal justice. In addition, inspections (HMI Prisons, 2020) recognise that diversity is insufficiently considered in resettlement plans generally for leaving custody.

Girls and young women are a particularly vulnerable group in the criminal justice system. They also have particular criminogenic needs (often linked to abuse and coercive relationships) and complex situations (including single parenthood), which become even more vulnerable with intersectionality (e.g. race or care experience) (Bateman and Hazel, 2014). Furthermore, there is growing concern that policy and practice have consistently failed to prioritise the needs of girls and young women (e.g. Bridge, 2022).

The **transition to adulthood** at 18 for young people in the criminal justice system has long been a focus of concern but has not yet been solved. The young people switch systems, and suddenly receive less support, from different professionals.
In addition, young adults' services are often not as evidence-led or informed as youth justice – despite the young people having the similar issues and, arguably, needing similar solutions (see Harris and Edwards, 2023).

4. Current practice

4.1. Who are the key players in this area?

The key umbrella association specifically for third sector (mainly) organisations working in youth justice is the Alliance for Youth Justice (AUJ). The organisation itself mainly provides lobbying for evidence-informed and progressive youth justice and research. They have 75 member organisations (see AUJ, no date).

The key umbrella 'alliance' specifically for third sector organisations working in the area of young adults is T2A (Transition to Adulthood). Funded, convened and managed by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, T2A is also recognised as the authoritative voice on young adults in the criminal justice system. The alliance lobbies, researches, and has arranged for pilot interventions, and (through the Barrow Cadbury Trust) funds research. T2A is particularly keen to stress the need for a distinctive approach with young adults, separate from both children and older adults. Its members are criminall and social justice organisations which have collaborated on many of the T2A's reports and resources (see T2A, no date for the list of its members).

The key umbrella organisation for supporting the third sector organisations working in the criminal justice system (more generally) is Clinks, with an extensive membership (see Clinks, no date).

There are a small number of very well-established charities operating in this area (for example Catch 22 has a history of more than 200 years, under various guises). These tend to not be restricted to young people, and also depend more on legacies and service contracts. In particular:

- Catch 22
- Nacro
- St Giles Trust

4.2. What is recognised as established good practice?

The Youth Justice Board, whose role it is to advise on good practice with young people, are clear that good practice would be work that is aligned to the Child First evidence base (see section 1.2). There are now tools available for organisations to reflect on how their practice is aligned.

However, it is worth considering other specific lists of good practice principles that exist. There is a great deal of consistency between them. They tend to emphasise the need to be strengths-based, future-focused, relevant and personalised, collaborative with the young person, and focused on developing pro-social identity and other positive outcomes (rather than just managing/avoiding deficits).

Inspection standards of good practice in interventions with young people in youth justice

The guardians of standards of good practice for interventions with young people in the criminal justice system are the Inspectorates. **HM Inspectorate of Probation** focus their judgements of 'good practice' on criteria (HMIP, 2021:13) determining whether interventions are:

1. High quality – in line with the evidence base
2. Well focused – with clear aims and objectives
3. Personalised – bespoke to the individual's needs, including diversity
4. Coordinated – efficiently involving necessary agencies
5. Engaging – relevant and collaborative with the individual
6. Assisting – supportive to the individual

For out-of-court (non-statutory) support away from crime/criminal justice, inspection criteria (HMIP, 2021:14 and D1 guidance- HMIP, 2022) consider in particular whether the interventions are:

1. Strengths-based
2. Future focused
3. Promote positive child outcomes
4. Tailored to the needs of the young person
5. Engaging

National standards and guidance of good practice in youth justice

The national standards for youth justice (2019, written by the YJB, signed off by the Ministry of Justice) stipulate the minimum expectation for all agencies, and are aligned to the Child First evidence base. It states (p.13) that any plan for **any intervention in the community** (court disposal), should focus on:

1. Enabling a pro-social identity and desistance from offending
2. Public protection
3. Mitigating any prevailing issues relating to safety and wellbeing
4. Building on the positive elements of a child's life.

The case management guidance (CMG) (YJBa, 2022) provides more details on what **'out-of-court' interventions** should do to be in line with its expectations of good practice. It states that interventions should:

1. Be delivered in line with the Child First principle – seeing children as children, enabling the child to develop a pro-social identity, delivered in collaboration with the child, minimising stigma from contact with the system.
2. Be proportionate to the child's needs and to any offence.
3. Focus on causes of offending behaviour rather than any offence itself
4. Consider the safety of the child and others
5. Consider the views of any victim
6. Be timely and regularly reviewed

Good practice on how we should work with young people who have offended

The CMG on how work should be undertaken with children who offend suggests that youth justice service should take a **'constructive working' approach**, which emphasises the key role of all agencies working to achieve positive child outcomes should be "supporting the child to develop their pro-social identity" in line with Child First tenet 2 (the CMG links to Hazel et al., 2020). Constructive Working lists five key characteristics of effective support to do this (the #5Cs):

1. Constructive – centred on identity development, future-oriented, motivating, strengths-based, empowering to make the right decisions
2. Co-created – inclusive of the young person and their supporters
3. Customised – individualised wraparound service, embracing diversity as central to identity
4. Consistent – focused from the start, seamless, with stable relationships
5. Coordinated – managed partnerships with consistent messages

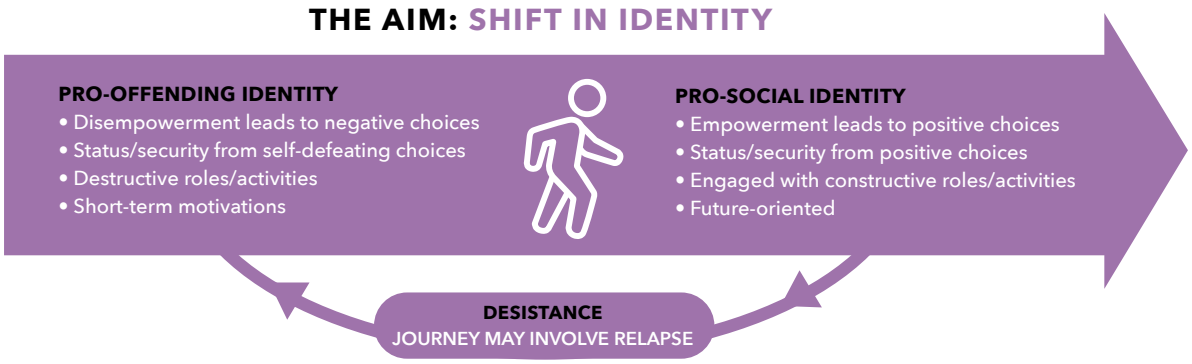
The Skill Mill is perhaps the best (and most established) example of established good practice in this area by a third sector organisation. It is a social enterprise that 'employs' 16-18-year-olds who have offended, working on environmental projects in nine locations across England. Children are offered 6-month paid work placements in environmental maintenance within local communities, given opportunities to gain AQA qualifications, mentored and counselled. The organisation works

with local Youth Offending Teams (YOT) to identify young people. The Skill Mill's theory of change (TOC) (The Skill Mill, no date) is in line with the evidence base on developing pro-social identity, aiming to improve identity and sense of purpose, and challenging the children's and others' negative perceptions of them. Over more than 10 years, the enterprise has worked with over 450 children. It claims a low reoffending rate of 7.3%, with a promising interim evaluation (Baines and Armitage, 2022), and research showing that children develop a coherent pro-social identity (Oswald, 2022). The Skill Mill is currently supported by a Social Outcomes Contract (Social Impact Bond) with central and local governments, although this runs out in June 2024, and leadership is searching for funding (see Parks, 2024).

Good practice principles in engaging young people

Research has established a number of principles for **engaging children and young adults who have been in criminal justice**, particularly when trying to promote pro-social identity and reconnect them with communities. These have been identified as (see Bateman and Hazel, 2013):

- Reach out to young people in environments where they feel comfortable
- Interventions should be flexible, delivered in response to users' interest and needs
- Progress, however small, should be acknowledged, reaffirmed and rewarded.
- Promote a sense of agency
- Staff need to be persistent and patient, and show they care about well-being
- Focus on developing relationships (rather than participation)



More established messages exist for what works in (**re)engaging marginalised or disaffected young people**, whether or not they are in the youth justice system, drawn from multiple disciplines (including youth work and education). The overall message is of the importance for the intervention agency of partnerships – with other agencies and with the young person. The key partnership principles have been listed (Hazel, 2004) as:

1) Strong partnerships with other agencies:

- Network to ensure referrals from other agencies in contact with young people
- Holistic support to ensure wraparound care and a tailored solution
- Mainstreaming network to ensure ongoing support

2) Strong partnership with users:

- Active outreach, such as detached youth work
- Supportive relationship emphasising rapport, reliability and security
- Negotiated provision and activities, with user participation in planning/delivery, flexibility, negotiated goals, individualised provision, feedback on provision
- Motivational intervention, building on strengths (not focused on deficits) and personal development, peer support, enjoyable and relevant activities, regular recognition

4.3. What is innovative or promising practice?

There have been two particular areas of recent innovations and promising practice in line with the evidence base (above).

Social enterprise

There have been a number of innovations that are focused on giving young people experience of roles (to develop their pro-social identity). For instance, it allows them to try on roles like entrepreneur, salesperson, businessperson, manager, hard worker, or chef. While some of these have been developed by Youth Justice Services (e.g. Swindon YJS's mobile pizza business), there have been a number of social enterprises – typically in retail. These build on a history of the legacy of more established adult social enterprises – perhaps the best known being The Clink (The Clink Charity, no date), which 15 years ago saw prisoners open restaurants to public visitors. A recent review of literature and consultation suggested that this was a model that could be more utilised with Black prison leavers (Felix et al., 2023).

One or two notable social enterprises for young people, like the award-winning Cracked It (which fixed mobile phone screens), folded during the pandemic. However, others have started up:

Honest Grind Coffee (no date) is a social enterprise based in Camden, London. It provides vulnerable children in trouble with training and paid employment in producing coffee. Children are referred through Camden YJS. It is funded by Camden Council's Integrated Youth Support Service.

Youth PWR Charity (no date) is a youth development charity in Croydon working with 13-24-year-olds who are vulnerable or have offended. It provides skills development programmes, mentoring, work experience opportunities, workshops, and social action projects, and a magazine. One particular feature is its PWR Lines project, which trains young people in the production, sales and distribution of its PWR magazines. Another is its 'Space Project' creative media programme, supporting young people to creatively express their life. Its social action projects have included mental health campaigns and sports programmes. They are supported mainly by The Grace Trust, Arnold Clark Community Fund, and the National Lottery Community Fund. They are looking to diversify their funding.

The Dusty Knuckle Bakery (no date) is a bakery and cafe social enterprise (Community Interest Company) and training programme, working with 18-25-year-olds who have offended and who face significant barriers to employment. The enterprise has been operating in Dalston and Harringay, London for twelve years. Their theory of change focuses on developing 'work readiness and professional belonging'. Funding comes mainly from Crowdfunding and its self-funding.

Resettlement support for young men

Reoffending after custody has the highest reoffending rates, and support for the resettlement journey of the young person is consistently poor from statutory services (see HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2019). However, third sector agencies have started to enter the space and provide more individualised and consistent support (going beyond the end of the statutory sentence), that is in line with good practice.

Switchback offers a programme of support for 18-30 year olds leaving custody and returning to London. Its theory of change speaks very much to evidence around facilitating identity-shift, specifically to providing 'a safe space to try out being a new person' and allowing them to develop 'a new narrative' for themselves (Switchback, no date). A three-step process is based around mentoring before and after release, including supported training and work experience. Switchback collaborate with the The Dusty Knuckle social enterprise.

5. Support funding

5.1. What funding is available in this area?

Both **Youth Offending Teams** (for children) and **Probation Services** (for young adults) can commission third sector organisations to deliver services. However, these are usually specified through invitations to tender for particular delivery needs.

The Youth Endowment Fund is a key funder for youth justice interventions. However, the funding (while generous) is very restricted, according to grant rounds. For example, one of their 2024 grant rounds focused on "psychological therapies delivered or supervised by a clinically qualified practitioner." It also prioritises projects that reach a large enough group to be evaluated (a minimum of 350 young people) (see Youth Endowment Fund, 2024).

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) are major funders locally in this area, although there is no longer a requirement to fund non-police activity. PCCs can commission or fund activities to support the priorities in their Police and Crime Plans. This can include a variety of community-based voluntary organisations. However, they typically offer small grants of up to £10,000 and many are for prevention programmes rather than community re-engagement out of the criminal justice system. An example is the Wiltshire and Swindon PCC's (2023) Community Action Fund.

Violence Reduction Units (VRU), operating under Mayors and local authorities, also commission services and projects aligned to their violence reduction and prevention plans. An example is the Greater Manchester VRU (2024) funded initiatives.

A number of **charitable foundations** fund in this area. Notable foundations include:

The Triangle Trust looked to fund charities and social enterprises that help young women and girls who have been in the criminal justice system in its two funding rounds in 2024. Funding is restricted to organisations led by and for this cohort. It is particularly looking for new and untested approaches. Grants of up to £40k per year are available for up to two years. For the previous round of funding, six grants (totalling £463,018) were made from 72 applications (see The Triangle Trust, 2024).

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's (no date) "A fairer future: children and young people's rights" funding stream offers grants to practice supporting young people, particularly those in contact with the youth justice system. It is intended to support young people (aged 14-25) "who have known injustice in their lives to drive change, reimagine and create a fairer future". Grants are available from £30k (or social investments from £100k), with the majority from three to five years, and cover organisations' core or project costs, including unrestricted funding for charities. Organisations must have a turnover of at least £100k.

The Charles Hayward Foundation (no date) funds charities that support young people or adults to move on and rebuild their lives after being in the justice system. Grants are from £15k to £25k per annum for up to three years. The Foundation stipulates that programmes should be 'properly monitored and evaluated', with an 'exit strategy'. They do not fund short-term interventions or generic youth programmes. Charities must have an annual income of £350k-£4million.

The Youth Social Action Fund (BBC Children in Need, 2022) was a £3 million partnership between BBC Children in Need, the #iwill Fund (National Lottery Community Fund and DCMS) and The Hunter Foundation. It was particularly focused on organisations that address issues of disadvantage, with projects led by children and motivated by empowerment. Grants of up to £15k for unregistered organisations and £50k for registered bodies could be for up to 18 months.

The Weavers Company (2025) are currently offering charities (and in exceptional circumstances Community Interest Companies) working to support young people who have offended can apply for grants with no maximum.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation (2022) Youth Fund supports charities that "empower young people (up to 25 years) to shape their lives". It welcomes organisations that help young people who are facing complex transitions, particularly if marginalised. Not-for-profit organisations can apply if they have a strengths-based and young people-led approach. The fund makes around 25 awards per year of up to £150k spread over three years, to cover core funding.

In Northern Ireland, the National Lottery Community Fund's (2024) Empowering Young People funding scheme funds organisations for up to £500,000. This can include projects for young people up to 25 years old to face and overcome challenges, including having better relationships with their communities.

5.2. What are the funding strengths, limitations, and gaps?

Funds are currently short in the youth justice sector, and service providers (including charities and social enterprises) are struggling. It was noted earlier that the Skill Mill, one of the most established and respected interventions, is desperately looking for funding. Commentators (during this scoping study) noted that grant funding in this area was becoming harder and harder to find, with charities increasingly reliant on commissioning. Key funding routes in this area can be **limited to specific services** or interventions through invitations to tender. Unrestricted funding will be particularly welcomed. Currently, about two-thirds of voluntary agencies in criminal justice (more generally) deliver services under contract, which is a greater proportion than is average for all charities (Clinks 2023).

The situation has been made worse by the recent sudden withdrawal of the Ministry of Justice's Turnaround Programme, which was marketed as being long-term. While itself for early intervention initiatives rather than re-engagement after involvement with youth justice, its withdrawal has left Youth Offending Teams prioritising looking for funds to cover those projects (or YOT staffing if not externally commissioned). Furthermore, this follows a pattern of cancelled funding affecting criminal justice voluntary organisations in recent years, and four in five organisations have reported rising running costs (Clinks, 2023).

As noted above, it is more common for funders to encourage early intervention or prevention work to reduce the risk of involvement in criminal justice rather than provision for re-engaging young people in communities after contact with the criminal justice system.

Commentators working within the youth justice field have expressed concern (during this scoping study) that any funding should be **accessible to very small local charities**. Key funding routes (VRUs, Youth Endowment Fund, PCCs) typically have criteria or application processes that are inaccessible for small charity teams. Clinks (2023) have asked grant-makers specifically at this time to consider:

(a) how they can fund to avoid placing additional burdens on already stretched stuff

(b) to provide realistic timeframes for applicants and timely decisions, and access to funds

(c) how to be open to small organisations

(d) multi-year unrestricted grants

(e) working together to ensure the most effective funding and learn best practice

(f) minimise complex paperwork.

5.3. Where are the opportunities for FCF2 to make a difference?

Overall assessment

It is well established that young people find it difficult to (re)engage with communities and thrive after involvement with the criminal justice system, for a variety of reasons. Effectively, they are all marginalised – some more deeply than others. However, there is strong research understanding of what is important to help young people to move out of trouble, including the Child First framework. In particular, we understand the need for non-stigmatising support that addresses barriers and support that constructively develops the way their 'pro-social identity'.

The importance of helping young people to find Activities, Interactions and Roles that help them to recognise and find their place in the world (and so also effectively mature out of crime) of fers a particularly valuable purpose for third-sector organisations (without statutory stigma). As this understanding (plus some others) is still relatively new, there is good scope for innovation and impact.

Particular areas of need or interest

- Support for **girls and young women**, particularly when there is intersectionality (although there is another funding call specifically about this currently).
- Interventions that focus on **developing roles** for young people to try out. This can include organised leisure or education/training/employment. It's about helping the young person find their niche/place (and so develop identity).
- There is a particular opportunity to support **retail social enterprises** that allow young people to try on roles, perhaps linking with Co-op businesses for support with: branding, training, mentoring, and/or career pathways.
- **Resettlement** after custody, particularly if the support spans custody-community-end of sentence transitions.

Key considerations for funding criteria

- Prioritise organisations that can demonstrate that they are able to form referral partnerships with statutory criminal justice providers (a point also made repeatedly by commentators in this study to ensure the right children are reached).
- Prioritise strengths-based 'constructive' work that is future-facing and focused on achieving positive outcomes (NOT to deter from crime, managing deficits, or offence-focused).
- Prioritise work that is demonstrably 'co-created', 'customised' (including embracing diversity), 'consistent', and 'co-ordinated' with other agencies.
- Prioritise support that specifically looks to develop pro-social identity (ideally in a clear theory of change) through activities, interactions or roles.
- Prioritise interventions with children that are committed to being aligned to the Child First framework.
- Prioritise interventions that emphasise the importance of ongoing supportive relationships.
- Prioritise interventions that promote a sense of agency and where progress is reaffirmed and rewarded.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

There is clear evidence base for what will help young people from criminal justice to (re)engage with communities. Marginalised young people in the criminal justice system looking to reengage with communities need 'constructive' support with activities, interactions, and roles (fresh AIR) to develop pro-social identity – this leads to positive outcomes, including desistance. As this understanding is still relatively new, there is promising practice, but it is an underdeveloped area. Furthermore, third sector organisations are particularly beneficial to deliver such support because, unlike public sector agencies, they do not carry the stigma that both prevents engagement and is criminogenic.

Some of the most impressive interventions for providing fresh AIR are in the form of social enterprises. Given that these often focus on the retail sector, this may provide a unique opportunity for the Co-op movement. Added value to any funding would be brought by a 'Dragon's Den' type of support package with the Co-operative Group that may include mentoring (maybe planning), branding, training, and onward career pathways. Indeed, this opportunity may speak directly to the observation from the young people who shaped Co-op Foundation's vision:

'*Rehabilitation will see criminals integrated into a working community rather than thrown out of it. Perhaps having high street shops employing former low-level criminals would be a good option.*'" (Vergou, Mortimer, and Sidhu, 2022, p.12)

Recommendations

The evidence-led recommendation from this scoping study is to focus the second round of the Future Communities Fund on:

- Organisations supporting young people who are currently or previously in the criminal justice system that work 'constructively' to support the development of pro-social identity (through offering fresh AIR). Organisations should be able to show that they have the partnership support of either the local Youth Justice Service or Probation Service to ensure appropriate referrals.
- Within the above (and addressing the tackling gender-based violence theme which was also included in the visioning study), the Foundation could welcome particular interest from organisations that work to develop either (a) pro-social masculine identities in boys/men, or (b) empowering identities for positive relationships in girls/women/transgender.

In addition, either as a particular 'welcome' or as a further funding stream:

- Social enterprises in the retail or wholesale sector working with young people who are currently or previously in the criminal justice system that look to develop pro-social identity (through offering fresh AIR). In addition to funding, a support package would be developed with the Co-operative Group to include branding where appropriate, mentoring, training, and opportunities for onward career pathways.

7. References

Adler, J.R., Edwards, S.K., Scally, M., Gill, D., Puniskis, M.J., Gekoski, A. and Horath, M.A.H. (2016) *What works in managing young people who offend? A summary of the international evidence*. London: Ministry of Justice.

AUJ, (no date) Our members.

Baines, S. and Armitage, H. (2022) *Interim evaluation of The Skill Mill SIB*. Manchester: MMU PERU

Bateman, T. and Hazel, N. (2013) *Engaging young people in resettlement. Research report*. London: Beyond Youth Custody.

Bateman T, Hazel, N. and Wright, S. (2013) *Resettlement of young people leaving custody: Lessons from the literature*. London: Beyond Youth Custody/Nacro

Bateman, T., and Hazel, N., (2014) *Resettlement of girls and young women: research report*. London: Beyond Youth Custody, London: Beyond Youth Custody/Nacro

BBC Children in Need (2022) Youth Social Action Fund.

Becker, H.S. (1963) *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: FreePress.

Benson, P.L. and Scales, P.C. (2009) Positive development and the prevention of youth aggression and violence. *International Journal of Developmental Science*, 3(3), pp. 218-234

Bridge, M. (2022) '*We've not given up' Young women surviving the criminal justice system*. London: Agenda and Alliance for Youth Justice

Case S (2007) Questioning the 'evidence' of risk that underpins evidence-led youth justice interventions. *Youth Justice*, 7(2), pp. 91-105

Case, S., Sutton, C., Greenhalgh, J., Monaghan, M. and Wright, J. (2022) Searching for context: a review of 'what works' reviews of interventions to prevent youth offending using the EMMIE framework. *Safer Communities*, 21(4), pp. 272-289

Centre for Justice Innovation (2023) Swindon Youth Justice Service's Child First Approach.

Charles Hayward Foundation (no date) Main grant programme, social and criminal justice.

Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, asp 1. (Scotland).

Clinks (no date) Membership List.

Clinks (2023) *State of the sector 2023*.

Co-op Foundation (2022) *Building communities of the future together, Co-op Foundation strategy 2022-2027*. Manchester: Co-op Foundation.

Copp, J.E., Giordano, P.C., Longmore, M.A., and Manning, W.D. (2020) Desistance from crime during the transition to adulthood: The influence of parents, peers, and shifts in identity. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 57(3), pp. 294-332

Cuevas, C., Wolff, K.T., and Baglivio, M.T. (2017) Self-efficacy, aspirations and residential placement outcomes: Why belief in a prosocial self matters. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 52, pp. 1-11

CYCJ (2024a) *Children and young people in conflict with the law: Policy, practice and legislation. Practice Guide.*

CYCJ (2024b) *Children and young people in conflict with the law: Policy, practice and legislation. Section 9 Theory and Methods.* June 2024. Glasgow: Children and Young People's Centre for Justice.

Department of Justice (no date) *About Youth Justice Agency.*

Department of Justice (2023). *Youth engagement statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23*.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (no date) A fairer future: children and young people's rights.

Farrington, D.P., and Welsh, B.C. (2003) Family-based prevention of offending: A meta-analysis. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 36, pp.127-151

Farrington, D.P., Gaffney, H. and White, H. (2022) Effectiveness of 12 types of interventions in reducing juvenile offending and antisocial behaviour. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 64(4), pp. 47–68.

Felix, A., Robinson, N. and Tamale, S. (2023) *Social entrepreneurship as a reintegrative solution for ex-prison residents.* ANS Research.

Gray, P., Smithson, H. and Jump, D. (2021) Serious youth violence and its relationship with adverse childhood experiences. *HMIP Academic Insights* 2021/13, Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation

Greater Manchester VRU (2024) Our initiatives.

Haines, K. and Case, S. (2015) *Positive youth justice: Children first, offenders second*. Bristol University Press

Hannah-Moffat, K. (2009) Gridlock or mutability: Reconsidering "gender" and risk assessment. *Criminology & Public Policy,* 8(1), pp. 209-219.

Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (eds) (2005) The Impact of Corrections on Re-offending: A Review of 'What Works', 2nd Edition, *Home Office Research Study* 291. London: Home Office.

Harris, M. and Edwards, M. (2023) *Young people in transition in the criminal justice system.* Evidence review. London: Alliance for Youth Justice

Hazel, N. (2004) *Engaging disaffected young people: lessons from the literature*. London: Rainer

Hazel, N. (2008) *Cross-National Comparison of Youth Justice,* London: Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

Hazel, N. and Bateman, T. (2021) Supporting children's resettlement ('reentry') after custody: Beyond the risk paradigm *Youth Justice,* 21(1), pp. 71–89

Hazel, N., Drummond, C., Welsh, M. and Joseph, K. (2020) *Using an identity lens: Constructive working with children in the criminal justice system,* London: Nacro

Hazel, N., Goodfellow, P., Liddle, M., Bateman, T., and Pitts, J. (2017) *'Now all I care about is my future'. Supporting the shift: framework for the resettlement of young people leaving custody.* London: Nacro

HM Government (2013) *Positive for Youth, Progress since December 2011.* London: HM Government

HM Inspectorate of Probation (2019) *Youth resettlement – final report into work in the community.* Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation (2024) *2023 Annual Report: Inspection of youth justice services.* Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation.

HMI Prisons (2020) *Minority ethnic prisoners' experiences of rehabilitation and release planning.* London: HMI Prisons.

HMIP (2021) *Inspection standards for youth offending services.* Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation

HMIP (2022) *Youth Offending inspection Domain three Case assessment rules and guidance.* Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation.

HMPPS (2024) *Prison population: 31 December 2023.* London: HMPPS.

Hollin, C.R. (2008) Evaluating offending behaviour programmes: Does randomization glitter? *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 8(1), pp. 89-106

Home Office (1933) *Children and Young Persons Act.* London: HMSO.

Home Office (1998) Crime and Disorder Act. Home Office: London.

Honest Grind Coffee (no date). Honest Grind Coffee.

Humayun, S. and Scott, S. (2015) Evidence-Based Interventions for Violent Behavior in Children and Adolescents. In *Violence and Mental Health* (pp. 391-419): Springer.

Ipsos (2010) *A review of techniques for effective engagement and participation.* London: Youth Justice Board

IVAR (no date) Open and Trusting grant-making in trusts and foundations.

Klenowski, P.M., Bell, K.J., and Dodson, K.D. (2010) An empirical evaluation of juvenile awareness programs in the United States: Can juveniles be "scared straight"? *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 49, pp. 254-272.

Koehler, J.A., Lösel, F., Akoensi, T.D., and Humphreys, D.K. (2013) A systematic review and meta-analysis on the effects of young offender treatment programs in Europe. *Journal of Experimental Criminology,* 9(1), pp. 19-43.

Lerner, R.M. (2009) The positive youth development perspective: Theoretical and empirical bases of a strengths-based approach to adolescent development. In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*; Lopez, S.J., Snyder, C.R., Eds.; Oxford University Press: Cary, NC, USA

Lipsey, M.W. (2009) The primary factors that characterise effective interventions with juvenile offenders: A meta-analytic overview. *Victims and Offenders,* 4, pp. 124–47.

Manica, M. (2022) *Effectiveness of approaches to prevent re-offending in young people*. Scottish Violence Reduction unit.

Maruna, S. and Farrall, S. (2004) Desistance From Crime: A Theoretical Reformulation. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 43, pp. 171–194.

McAra, L. and McVie, S. (2013) Delivering Justice for Children and Young People: Key Messages from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime. In A Dockley (ed.), *Justice for Young People: Papers by Winners of the Research Medal 2013.* Howard League for Penal Reform, pp. 3-14.

Meade, B. and Steiner, B. (2010) The total effects of boot camps that house juveniles: A systematic review of the evidence. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38 (5),
pp. 841 – 53

Ministry of Justice (2024) *Proven reoffending statistics: January to March 2022.* Published 25 January 2024.

Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government (2019) Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales, London and Cardiff: Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government.

Moodie, K., Vaswani, N., Shaw, J., Morton, P., Orr, D., Allardyce, S., and Connelly, G. (2015). *Working with young people who offend: An examination of the literature regarding violence, substance misuse and harmful sexual behaviour.* Glasgow: Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice

Murray, K., McGuinness, P., Burman, M. and McVie, S. (2015) *Evaluation of the Whole System Approach to Young People Who Offend in Scotland.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

National Lottery Community Fund (2024) *Empowering Young People.*

O'Connor, R.M. and Waddell, S. (2015) *What works to prevent gang involvement, youth violence and crime. A rapid review of interventions delivered in the UK and abroad.* The Early Intervention Foundation, Home Office.

Oswald, R.J. (2022) *The impact of employment upon young offenders' identities.* *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 61, pp. 221-239

Parks, D. (2024) *The next chapter*: *Building on the success of the Skill Mill Life Chances Fund SIB, The Skill Mill,* 2nd April, 2024.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation (2022) *Youth Fund.*

Payne, B., Hobson, J. and Lynch, K. (2021) 'We just want to be treated with respect!': Using restorative approaches and the dramatic arts to build positive relationships between the police and young people. *Youth Justice*, 21(3), pp.255-274

Prins SJ and Reich A (2021) Criminogenic risk assessment: A meta-review and critical analysis. *Punishment & Society*, 23(4), pp. 578-604

Raynor P and Vanstone M (2016) Moving away from social work and half way back again: New research on skills in probation. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 46(4), pp. 1131-1147

Roberts, S., Abudu, L., Ibbotson, S. and Arulrajah, J. (2019) *Approaches to prevent or reduce violence with a focus on youth, knife and gang-related violence. Literature review.* Public Health England.

Rutter, M., Giller, H. and Hagell, A. (1998) *Antisocial behavior by young people*. Cambridge University Press.

Scottish Government (no date) Child's plan - Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

Scottish Government (2021a) *A Rights-Respecting Approach to Justice for Children and Young People: Scotland's Vision and Priorities.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2021b) Working with children in conflict with the law 2021: standards. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2023a) *Reconviction rates in Scotland: 2019-20 offender cohort.*

Scottish Government (2023b) *Scottish prison population statistics, 2022-23*.

Scottish Government (2024) *Safer Communities and Justice Statistics, Monthly Data Report:* March 2024

Smith, D. (2006) Youth crime and justice: Research, evaluation and 'evidence'. In: Goldson B and Muncie J (eds) *Youth Crime and Justice*. London: SAGE.

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 c.49

Strang, H., Sherman, L.W., Mayo-Wilson, E., Woods, D. and Ariel, B. (2013) Restorative Justice Conferencing using face to face meetings of offenders and victims: Effects on offender recidivism and victim satisfaction: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 2013:12

Switchback (no date). Theory of Change.

The Dusty Knuckle (no date) *Dusty Knuckle*.

The Clink Charity (no date) The Clink Our Story.

The Skill Mill (n.d.) Skill Mill Theory of Change.

The Triangle Trust (2024) Young offenders.

The Weavers Company (2025) Charitable grants Guidelines.

T2A (no date) T2A Alliance Members.

Vergou, A., Mortimer, A., Sidhu, T. (2022). *A vision of future, fair communities built on co-operative values. Manchester: Co-op Foundation*.

Waterhouse, L., Hazel, N., Murray, C., & Hallett, C.E. (1998). *The evaluation of children's hearings in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Office Central Research Unit

Wilson, D.B., MacKenzie, D.L. and Mitchell, F.N. (2008) Effects of correctional boot camps on offending. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 2003:1

Wiltshire and Swindon PCC (2023) Community Groups tackling major issues selected for PCC funding.

Youth Endowment Fund (2024) Theme Grant Round: Psychological Therapies.

Youth Justice Board (YJB) (2005) Risk and protective factors. London: Youth Justice Board

YJB (2019) Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System. London: YJB.

YJB (2022) Case management guidance. Definitions. London: YJB

YJB (2022a) Case management guidance. London: YJB

YJB (2022b) A Guide to Child First. London: Youth Justice Board.

YJB (2024) *Youth Justice Statistics 2022 to 2023* London: YJB/MoJ

Youth PWR Charity (no date) Youth PWR Charity.

Foundation

Let's build communities of the future together

We're the Co-op's charity and we're co-operating for a fairer world. We believe co-operation is at the heart of strong communities and this makes us a different kind of funder. We work closely with communities, we listen and we learn. We unlock communities' power by focusing on those who have most at stake.

Follow us on Linkedin and Instagram – search 'Co-op Foundation'

www.coopfoundation.org.uk