

# BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

## Policy on Working with Girls and Young Women

### Principles of the Policy

BwD YJS has a commitment to developing skills and resources to work with girls in a consistent and gender responsive way in order to improve their outcomes, reduce the use of custody and to protect the public by reducing the risk of re-offending. BwD YJS recognises that girls are also considered vulnerable because of their complex and deep rooted needs.

This policy is based on the findings and recommendations of HMiP Report (2014) welcomed and sanctioned by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

### **The Chair of BwD Youth Justice Team Management Board will ensure that:**

Work is undertaken to understand and identify needs which are specific to girls and that appropriate services are commissioned to meet those needs
The effectiveness of interventions for girls is evaluated in order to support the development and continuous improvement of practice
They regularly review data by gender to understand the trends of offending by girls, and then use data to develop and shape and content of future provision
There is effective liaison and cooperation between youth offending teams and other agencies working to safeguard girls at risk of sexual exploitation and the effectiveness of this co-operation is regularly monitored and evaluated: including any out of area placements for girls

**The Youth Justice Team Manager will ensure that:**

Assessments of likelihood of re-offending and risk of harm take into account the impact of gender
Appropriate interventions are offered to meet the needs of girls
Assessments of vulnerability take the impact of gender into account and for all girls consider the possibility of child sexual exploitation
Health practitioners are sufficiently involved with the work carried out, in particular, in relation to assessment, intervention and information sharing
Exit strategies are developed to ensure that girls have access to appropriate ongoing support when their involvement with the YJS ends.

“Gender responsive programmes provide interventions which take into account the fact that girls or women are different to boys and have different pathways into offending and require a different approach”.

**Blackburn with Darwen Youth Justice Services will:**

Identify and provide identified specialist workers and services to meet Girls' specific needs
Identify risk and protective factors which impact upon girls and young women's specific type and likelihood of offending
Use evidenced based practice in order to improve outcomes for girls in the criminal justice system.
Ensure an inclusive service for marginalised groups of girls

Meet our statutory duty under the Equality Act
Ensure effective practice with girls is sustainable and becomes embedded within the work of BwD's YJS.
Link with other organisations working with girls to ensure holistic and seamless provision
Ensure all staff take responsibility for being gender aware and challenge oppressive views and behaviour.
Review this policy annually and identify trends in female offending
Share good practice between the Services.
Ensure interventions reflect the diverse needs of young women from different communities.

**Implementation in Blackburn with Darwen**

BwD YJS Management Responsibilities:

Ensure BwD YJS have an identified lead Operational Manager as champion for girls and young women in the criminal justice system
Ensure girls and young women entering the services are allocated to a female case manager and have access to gender specific intervention.
Ensure a consistent approach to working with girls and young women
Ensure YJS training plan incorporates specialist training that is gender focused and also incorporates mandatory training covering CSE

Lead Operational Manager responsibilities:

To implement the policy and procedures and review them regularly
To incorporate the voice of the girls' consistently into policy and practice.
To embed the policy and practice into YJS's everyday work so it becomes "the way we do things around here".
To ensure access to specialist training and guidance for staff
To model the value base through non-oppressive practice
To facilitate the resources and support necessary to mainstream the work with girls
To embed effective practice, congruent with the guidance, through the supervision process.

Youth Justice Practitioner's responsibilities:

To be aware of the policy and guidelines and implement them in their practice.
To reflect on their own practice and ensure they are working in a non-oppressive way
To challenge oppressive attitudes and behaviour in others.
To promote equality for girls.
To recognise the link between and help reduce girls vulnerability to sexual exploitation

## **Training and staff awareness**

This Policy will be underpinned by a robust training programme

## **Links to other policies and strategies:**

This document compliments other policies and strategies in BwD and should be read alongside:

- LA Children & Young People's Plan
- Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures.
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Pink Project Gender Responsive Toolkit

## **Additional reading/references:**

Home Office (2007) Corston report. ISBN978 1 84726 177 9 London

YJB (2009) Girls and Offending – patterns, perceptions and interventions. London

United Nations (1991) Convention on the Rights of the Child

Penal Reform International (2014) Neglected Needs: Girls in the Criminal Justice System

Howard League for Penal Reform (2012) Out of Place: Policing and criminalisation of sexually exploited girls and young women.

Beyond Youth Custody (2014) the resettlement needs of girls and young women

All Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System: Inquiry on girls: From Courts to Custody

The Female Voice In Violence (2011) ROTA

Inquiry on Girls: From courts to custody (2012) All Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System in Howard League

Gender Responsive Programmes in Justice System – Oregon's Guidelines for effective programming for girls (Sept 2002) Coalition of advocates for equal access for girls.

Nottingham City YOT Policy for working with girls and young women