



# Evaluation of West Yorkshire Anti-Social Behaviour Immediate Justice Approach

Synthesis Report – Key Findings,  
Recommendations, Areas for Future Evaluation

September 2024

# Contents

Contents.....	2
1. Foreword .....	3
2. Acknowledgements .....	4
3. Overview .....	5
4. Key findings.....	6
4.1. Qualitative – Interviews, survey, document analysis.....	6
Enablers .....	6
Barriers and Challenges.....	8
Lessons Learned .....	8
4.2. Quantitative – Data analysis .....	9
Adults.....	9
Youth Justice Service .....	10
5. Recommendations .....	10

## 1. Foreword

As Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, working with the Mayor to oversee policing in West Yorkshire, on behalf of the public I welcomed the opportunity to pilot the Immediate Justice approach in West Yorkshire.

Our communities tell us that tackling place-based crime that damages people's everyday lives, including serious violence, anti-social behaviour, and dangerous driving and speeding is a priority.

Safer Places and Thriving Communities is a key priority of the Mayors Police and Crime Plan. This focuses on the harmful and unacceptable behaviour that targets the different communities of West Yorkshire, through an ongoing commitment to Neighbourhood Policing and partnership working in localities.

Our pilot successfully delivered with partners provides a range of tailored services for adults and children trialled to benefit victims. This includes completing unpaid work, repairing damage caused by their actions, and the option of restorative justice, where the victim can communicate with the person responsible for the crime.

It is essential services are commissioned to support those harmed by crime and reduce reoffending. Our approach in West Yorkshire has ensured the pilot was trauma informed and included the commitment to the Child First approach.

Working in close partnership with West Yorkshire Police, HM Prisons and Probation Service, Youth Justice Services and our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector, the initiative recognises and prevents trauma, responds early, and mitigates harm.

I welcome this evaluation report to help evidence the success of this pilot and how together we can make West Yorkshire a safe, just, and inclusive place.

**Alison Lowe OBE**

**West Yorkshire Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC)**

## 2. Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the following organisations and individuals who contributed their feedback and knowledge to support the evaluation:

- The team at West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- Delivery partners:
  - West Yorkshire Police
  - West Yorkshire Probation Service
  - Youth Justice Services
    - Bradford - Bradford Children and Families Trust
    - Calderdale - Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
    - Kirklees - Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
    - Leeds - Leeds City Council
    - Wakefield - The Council of the City of Wakefield
  - Restorative Solutions CIC
  - Victim Support
- Participants who took part in the unpaid work and restorative justice activities.
- Victims of Anti-Social Behaviour in West Yorkshire.

The author wishes to acknowledge the following individuals for their support in editing the report:

- Cat Smith
- Tam Whipp
- Jo Pike

### 3. Overview

In March 2023 the Government launched a National Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan that set out their approach to working with local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) across England and Wales. West Yorkshire and the region's five local authority areas are taking part in a two year pilot scheme funded by the Home Office to pilot and test Immediate Justice approaches.

The West Yorkshire Immediate Justice approach provides a range of mandated reparatory activities, appropriate both to the needs of the victim, and of the person who has offended. There are distinct options for children and adults that are explored during this report. This includes completing unpaid options of restorative justice, where the victim can communicate with the person responsible for the crime. There is also a focus on preventing re-offending through education, rehabilitation and behaviour change, by encouraging the person responsible for the crime to recognise the impact of their actions on their communities.

In West Yorkshire a number of partners collaborate to deliver the different pathways for children and adults. The roles of these partners are illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1.

Partner	Role
West Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA)	Programme management, reporting, and evaluation
West Yorkshire Police (WYP)	Adult referrals through to Probation, Restorative Solutions CIC
Probation Service Yorkshire and the Humber (HMPPS)	Delivery of unpaid work activities for adults
Youth Justice Services (YJS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bradford</li> <li>• Calderdale</li> <li>• Kirklees</li> <li>• Leeds</li> <li>• Wakefield</li> </ul>	Restorative and reparative elements and support for children 12 to 17 years
Restorative Solutions CIC	Delivery of restorative elements for adults: 1-1, group courses, and Community Conferences <sup>1</sup> Established and support the Practitioners Group, and meetings
Victim support	Adults - support for victims of ASB

In May 2023, Skills for Justice were commissioned by the Mayor of West Yorkshire to provide a local evaluation of the first year of the IJ programme within West

<sup>1</sup> Community conferences are a preventative restorative intervention to tackle an incident/ series of incidents or an on-going anti-social/criminal situation that has affected a wider group of people/community.

Yorkshire only<sup>2</sup>. This evaluation encompasses the rationale for the approach, evidence behind the approach, and progress in implementation. This evaluation is focused on the first year of activity, although where more recent developments have occurred during the evaluation period, these have been noted.

This report pulls together the key findings of the evaluation, recommendations, and areas for future evaluation from two companion reports detailing the quantitative and qualitative methods as part of this evaluation:

### Quantitative

- Data gathered for financial reporting

### Qualitative

- Document analysis
- Interview data
- Survey

For more detail and to see the full methodologies and evidence used to arrive at the conclusions contained in this document, please see the two companion reports.

## 4. Key findings

### 4.1. Qualitative – Interviews, survey, document analysis

There was high agreement between stakeholders as to the purpose, ambition, and method of Immediate Justice and widespread understanding of how the programme had progressed from the governments original strong focus on reparation, to a shared focus on prevention, reparation, restoration and harm reduction in keeping with West Yorkshire's commitment to trauma informed working.

#### Enablers

- **The existing Out of Court Disposal framework and other interventions** – Existing partnership working and referral mechanisms in the O OCD space within West Yorkshire provided a strong foundation to build upon for the adult and child pathways.
- **Involvement of the Probation Service in the delivery of unpaid work element** – it was noted other IJ pilot areas do not have the Probation Service involved in the delivery of IJ unpaid work activities, and this was a large enabler of the adult pathways due to the familiarity and ease with which Probation were unique suited to deliver this element.

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<sup>2</sup> A coinciding national evaluation of IJ was underway during this evaluation period, undertaken by Ipsos Mori.

- **Involvement of Restorative Solutions in the delivery of restorative justice and education elements** – It was noted how Restorative Solutions CIC have widespread and appropriate expertise in the area and how their participation had specifically enabled delivery of the restorative justice elements for the adult pathway.
- **The flexibility in the design of the local approach** - Delivery partners cited the freedom in the region’s approach to delivering IJ as an empowering quality that enabled WY to respond to challenges and creatively take advantage of available opportunities.
- **Commitment to a Child First and Trauma Informed working approach** - Existing partnership working in the OOCDC space, and well embedded commitment to trauma informed and child-first working had enabled a widespread and shared understanding that IJ needed to do more than just be reparative, but preventative and restorative – especially for children.
- **Communication and collaboration between delivery partners** - Every delivery partner cited the successful collaboration, with an approach to referrals requiring the use of multiple overlapping spreadsheets being the only significant caveat, due to the duplication of work involved. Significant steps towards remedying the spreadsheet approach were underway during the evaluation.
- **Leadership from the combined authority and local councils** - coherence and decisiveness stood out as key enablers of the programme’s rapid kickstart, and foundational to the strong communication between stakeholders in both adult and child pathways.
- **Work done engaging with the wider community beyond the delivery team** - Some delivery partners, especially YJS, noted they had engaged with organisations in the community who were repeat victims of ASB in order to embed IJ within community consciousness, communicate options, and develop new activities.
- **Familiarity of community service as an analogous approach** - While not conditional on any specific practice, many stakeholders working in the adult pathways discussed the familiarity of IJ conditions under the banner of community service and explained how this had boosted the perception of IJ among delivery partners and the community. For the restorative element, and in the child pathways, where this intuitive understanding was not implicit, stakeholders shared their creative approaches to getting the right message across and building IJ into coherent messaging that aligns with the child first approach across the region.
- **Passion, dedication and specific expertise of individuals involved** – Many stakeholders in both adult and child pathways took time to express how certain specific individuals had made a difference based on their passion for the programme or their specific expertise and skill.

## Barriers and Challenges

- **The Ambition for 48 Hour total turnaround** – the government’s original stated ambition was to have participants engaging in activity within 48 hours of the offence. This was dismissed as infeasible to deliver, as was the revised goal of 48 hours from referral - however the 48 hour ambition remained as a somewhat confusing stretch goal or aspiration, indicating a focus on the swift action element of ‘Immediate’ justice. The Home Office was aware and understanding of this, but the uncertainty among delivery partners stood as evidence that the messaging from central government on the specific goals of programme could be clearer, and the 48 hour target was a key example.
- **Spreadsheets and the development of systems for sharing referrals** - It was widely acknowledged that, despite recent critical improvements to the approach, the initial system of sharing referrals through 4 different partner-specific spreadsheets was a significant administrative burden and challenge to the project delivery. Ongoing work was underway to minimise this burden and move towards more effective ways of working.
- **Allocation of funding and implications for sustainability and recruitment, and how these have been considered** - Partners expressed significant trepidation over the future sustainability of IJ given the inherently insecure funding. Some also noted the purely equal allocation of funding across all force areas involved did not consider size and population of force areas, incidences of ASB, or other factors. This disproportionate allocation therefore left significant opportunities on the table in West Yorkshire.
- **Workforce challenges and the impact on referral numbers** – Several stakeholders had struggled with recruiting, in part due to limited time funding. Most significantly, challenges with the police initially going without a dedicated IJ staff member led to referral numbers dropping for a period – however this had been hopefully corrected during the evaluation period with the recruitment of a new IJ Coordinator.
- **Consistency in inclusive consideration of victims wishes** - Some stakeholders acknowledged that the work with victims needed further development, especially in terms of ensuring high quality meaningful communication, and consistency. Some of these issues had arisen from systems working and restrictions around how Community Resolutions are recorded and processed, others around the complexity of victim contact in the programme, with Victim Support, Restorative Solutions, and YJS having their own victim contact.

## Lessons Learned

- **The best way to contact participants for compliance and evaluation** – Partners learned early on that delivery partners should contact participants and

remove the responsibility from participants in order to improve compliance. This also had significance for evaluation activities.

- **Anticipating workload of referral pathways and resource required** – Some stakeholders were new to the OOCd space, or to this particular way of working and underestimated the resource required. Expectations were corrected for the second year, and now activity is underway and settled, partners report great stability (pending future funding decisions).
- **Building new ways of inter-organisational working** – Some partners were working together for the first time and in new ways. Key examples included Probation working in the OOCd/preventative space, and Victims Support getting involved in the delivery of ASB awareness courses, providing a clear line of interest from victims wishes to the educational element of IJ.
- **Best way to get the word out on opportunities and good practice** – A lot of learning had been shared between partners about how to share activity and good practice, with collaboration towards a full programme newsletter suggested as a potential next step.
- **Embedding IJ into the wider system approach** – Several suggestions were made on how to embed IJ into wider full system working including:
  - Finding alternative funding streams to support IJ or IJ-like activities.
  - Leaning on community partners in order to enable the above.
  - Considering more overtly where IJ sits within the broader scheme of OOCd options and system wide support offerings.
    - Can IJ refer into programmes explicitly targeting criminogenic needs and motivators of ASB behaviour, such as substance abuse and mental health?
  - How can preventative work be tied into IJ in a way that stakeholders have sight of?
  - Can we build a case study of exactly how this work was developed in each different area of WY for education purposes?

## 4.2. Quantitative – Data analysis

### Adults

- Since the start of the pilot the period, 262 ASB in scope offences have been recorded, with the most common offence type being public order offences (29%).
- Local authority areas, ethnic group and age group (excluding the over 55's) have broadly similar patterns of offences. Nearly four in five ASB offences were committed by males.

- There are however, notable differences in the referral pathways used in different local authority areas and between males and females, and some differences between ethnic group. There are no notable differences in referral pathways by age.
- Of those who were assigned an activity, 16% refused to take part. This was notably higher for criminal damage or vandalism, 43%.
- Of those undertaking unpaid work 61% completed. Completion rate by referral pathway was similar, 61% conditional caution and 64% community resolution. Criminal damage or vandalism has the lowest completion rate at 38%.
- Of the those undertaking ASB awareness course work 80% completed. The completion rate by referral pathway differs greatly, 60% conditional caution and 85% community resolution and 100% community conference.

### Youth Justice Service

- Since the start of the pilot period 361 YJS offences have been recorded. The most common offence was assault which accounted for 32% of offences.
- Given the small numbers involved it is difficult to assess meaningful differences by local authority area, although some differences appear to be emerging.
- Nearly four in five ASB offences were committed by males. Over half of ASB offences committed by females were assaults.
- There are similar patterns of offence across the three largest ethnic groups and age groups (with the exception of the small number of 18-24 year olds recorded).

## 5. Recommendations

1. **Sustaining partnership working approaches** – Work should be done to sustain the existing strong collaborative efforts of the delivery partners. A great deal of learning had taken place by partners exposed to new ways of working, such as the Probation Service working in the Out of Court space, and Victim Support working to aid the delivery of ASB awareness courses. Partners pointed to how these novel working arrangements had led to stronger ties with other organisations and had inspired reaching out more widely than they otherwise would have in the performance of their duties. This activity should be encouraged beyond the IJ programme, as building strong interorganisational ties has synergistic implications for building a full system response to justice and health issues beyond IJ and its activities.
2. **Sharing and documenting good practice** - The strong partnership working approach was widely held up as a great success and key enabler of IJ. Sharing this work in a way that highlights the region's good practice should be a key priority. Partners suggested the development of a full-programme newsletter

co-developed by partners, that would serve to keep delivery partners, community partners, and any other stakeholders up to date on the Immediate Justice work within West Yorkshire. This may also provide an opportunity for partners to share new work, good practice, and highlight potential new opportunities to existing community partners or new stakeholders.

- 3. Further embedding Trauma informed work and the Child First approach in wider systems** – The Immediate Justice programme has been a strong example of how to adapt a programme to better meet West Yorkshire’s aspirations towards a becoming a trauma informed and responsive system by 2030<sup>3</sup>. Concerns with the messaging surrounding IJ have been remedied by involving partners best able to bring a trauma informed lens to a programme that was not designed around, and in some cases was in tension with, West Yorkshire’s key aims. Similarly, involving partners committed to a Child First Approach in West Yorkshire has enabled greater reach, with work targeting prevention and restoration as much as the original (exclusively) reparative aims of IJ. Throughout, the evaluation has cited a recurring priority of partners to avoid the criminalisation of children, and to involve children in the co-design of activities that help them build pro-social identities and better futures<sup>4</sup>. Learning from this pilot should be taken on board to further inform and influence this work.

A possible consideration in the adult space may be identifying where IJ might refer into additional services in order to address underlying criminogenic needs, such as substance misuse, housing crises, mental and physical health, and other needs and/or vulnerabilities. The IJ partnership systems lend themselves to wider applications that include referrals into pathways delivered preferably by the VCSE organisations that deal with the whole diversity of need.

Additionally, work with victims was highlighted as in need of some improvement with perhaps a deeper consideration of victim satisfaction required, as satisfaction can become quite a complex metric with as many organisations involved as the IJ programme has, and many possible activities. It was observed victims can be very satisfied with some elements and not with others, and there was observed need to more acutely distinguish where this had been the case.

- 4. Taking action to ensure sustainability of IJ elements** – The value of IJ was widely recognised among stakeholders contacted as part of evaluation and a shared anxiety was reported from all corners should the funding end abruptly - how would activities continue and what would be the impact on communities be if a sudden end to the programme were to happen? The insecurity of funding had also been reported as a key challenge to building up the IJ workforce, with applicants with the requisite skill hesitating to apply for limited term roles. It is

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/our-priorities/population-health-management/adversity-trauma-and-resilience>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/west-yorkshire-violence-reduction-partnership/child-first-approach>

clear work should be done, by the West Yorkshire ASB Steering Group, to review and agree sustainability of the successful IJ pilot elements and investigate opportunities to tie, link, and align worthwhile IJ activities into other programmes and funding streams, such as the concurrent Hotspot approaches in West Yorkshire.

- 5. Planning future evaluation activities/periods** – There have been a number of factors this three month evaluation period has been too short to conclusively investigate, such as: determining impact, mapping differences between local authority areas in the delivery of IJ, and fully assessing the how the delivery has involved a wider range of community partners beyond the immediate delivery team.

It is strongly recommended to consider further evaluation towards end of year 2 to capture impact, and revisit referral numbers and overall programme learning, as well as how progress has been made from Year 1.

**Other activities future evaluations may consider include:**

- Consideration of other data, such as:

In the Adult pathway:

- Referral pathway by local authority area
- Referral pathway by sex
- Referral pathway by gender
- Referral pathway by ethnic group
- Differences in completion rates by referral route
- Differences in completion rates by offence type
- Differences in completion rates by ethnic group
- Differences in completion rates by age group

In the child pathways:

- Offence type by local authority area

It is also recommended that in order to understand what variables are the most important in determining completion ASB courses or unpaid work, at the end of the pilot, logistic regressions are carried out using data from all pilot areas with completion of unpaid work as one outcome variable and completion of ASB course as another outcome variable.

- Auditing missed opportunities – Supporting West Yorkshire Police to revisit a sample of cases to see if there are occurrences where an IJ disposal option may have been appropriate, but was not used, for whatever reason. This might identify potential areas where more referrals could have occurred, and therefore

where additional work may be done to improve awareness of the IJ condition among officers making referrals or anticipate demand and allocate resources.

- Putting in the groundwork to examine reoffending data – Preparation needs to be made to ensure reoffending data can be examined when the programme has had sufficient time in operation to produce meaningful data on this point.
- Considering interim outcomes for the short and medium term in order to evidence impact – in the short and medium term, other indicators beyond reoffending data could be considered, such as:
  - Offender/Participant experience – How did the offender/participant/child find the support/intervention/work? Did they feel satisfied? Did they enjoy it?
  - Witness/community satisfaction – How did any witness or the community find the support/intervention/work? Did they feel satisfied? Did they feel justice had been done?
  - Improvements in criminogenic need – Have the factors known to contribute to criminal (or anti-social behaviour) been improved? For example, do participants have an improved understanding of anti-social behaviour and its effects, improved mental or physical health, reductions in substance misuse, or evidence of a greater pro-social identity, etc.?
- Considering specific social value evaluation methodologies such as Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis<sup>5</sup>.

**Lastly, when undertaking future evaluation activities, where possible these should be integrated within programme activity** – This evaluation uncovered evidence that emphasised the need to collect information from participants for evaluation purposes during their other contact with the programme, e.g. on the day of unpaid work activities, courses, or other contact – rather than with a discrete occasion, interview, or an after-the-fact survey. A short survey on the day of activity may be the best way to achieve this in future evaluation periods, however, evaluation evidence will be strongest if it is collected routinely and habitually throughout the programme duration so that it is available when required and longitudinal analyses can be performed over longer periods.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://socialvalueuk.org/social-value-practice/>

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