

# **Evaluation of West Yorkshire Anti-Social Behaviour IJ Approach**

Qualitative Analysis Report

September 2024

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## 1. 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 (IJ) approaches.

The West Yorkshire IJ 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 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. 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

<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.

Each of the key delivery partners may additionally involve community partners in the delivery of their component. For example, a YJS may reach out to a charity with allotments where children can get involved with gardening as a way to pay back the community.

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 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 provides an analysis and summary of the evidence gathered through qualitative research methods: documentary analysis, interviews with delivery partners and other stakeholders, and a stakeholder survey.

As part of the outputs for this evaluation, this qualitative report accompanies:

- A companion quantitative report, which provides an in-depth analysis of the available data pertaining to IJ – which was collected by delivery partners as part of their financial reporting obligations.
- A summary report pulling both qualitative and quantitative findings together with recommendations for stakeholders to get an overarching view of the evaluation.

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions have been adopted throughout the course of this analysis (within this report, and the companion quantitative and summary reports):

### Definitions and Acronyms

<b>48 hours of the referral</b>	Court disposals with IJ conditions issued within 48 hours of the referral being passed to a service providing IJ activities
<b>Adults' IJ condition</b>	Either supervised unpaid work, an ASB Awareness Course, or both.
<b>Anti-social behaviour (ASB)</b>	Behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to persons not of the same household as the person.
<b>Case resolved</b>	Once the ASB course is complete or unpaid work is complete, or where the offender refused or failed to attend the session. No further activity will take place.
<b>Completion rate</b>	Percentage of people who start ASB courses or unpaid work that complete. This excludes refusals, and in theory, failures

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

	to attend, however the latter are not outlined as a unique figure in the data.
<b>Community Resolution (CR)</b>	<p>A method of restorative justice that is an alternative way of dealing with less serious crimes and incidents, allowing officers to use their professional judgement when dealing with offenders.</p> <p>A Community Resolution does not constitute a criminal record.</p>
<b>Conditional Caution (CC)</b>	<p>Allows the police officer or a relevant prosecutor such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to decide to give a caution with one or more conditions attached.</p> <p>A Conditional Caution does constitute a criminal record.</p>
<b>Immediate Justice (IJ)</b>	<p>A government funded pilot of a reparative behaviour change initiative meant to compel individuals engaging in ASB to repair the damage they cause to communities through unpaid work activities. Also in West Yorkshire, IJ includes restorative and preventative elements in the form of ASB awareness courses to educate perpetrators of ASB on the impact their behaviour has on others – as well as bespoke activities to help children engaging in ASB to build pro-social identities. The IJ implementation in West Yorkshire is the subject of this evaluation report.</p>
<b>Outcome 22</b>	<p>A Home Office administration code that the police use to indicate that no further action has been taken in response to an offence, but some form of diversionary or educational activity has taken place.</p> <p>If the agreed actions or activities are not complied with, the person may then be prosecuted for the offence.</p>
<b>Out of Court Disposal (OCD)</b>	<p>A term used to refer to the range of police options available to resolve situations and offences without proceeding through a court process.</p>
<b>Refusal rate</b>	<p>Percentage of people who were given an IJ condition(s) but declined to take part.</p>
<b>Referral pathway</b>	<p>Once an investigation by the police into a crime involving ASB has concluded, a Community Resolution, an Outcome 22, or a Conditional Caution referral may be issued.</p>
<b>Restorative justice</b>	<p>For adults, this is a victim-focused approach that empowers victims of crime by giving them the opportunity to communicate with the person responsible for that crime.</p> <p>For children, it supports each child to develop a ‘pro-social’ identity, and to help them to take a positive place in society. It can help children to see the value of good behaviour,</p>

promote inclusion, and help them to move forwards and recognise their valuable place in their communities.

**Restorative Solutions CIC (RS)**

Restorative Solutions is a not-for-profit CIC that delivers and provides training in Restorative Services for the public, private, and voluntary sectors. Within the IJ programme they are a key delivery partner contracted to provide behaviour change workshops with perpetrators of low level ASB offences.

**Youth Justice Services (YJS)**

Council led organisations that aim to prevent children and young people from entering the youth justice system for the first time, supporting them to move away from offending. They various regional YJS in West Yorkshire are key delivery partners of IJ leading on the pathway for children.

### 3. Summary of Activities

#### Document Analysis

The comprehensive documentation provided to the evaluator at the outset of the programme guided the development of interview and survey methods, and ensured the evaluation could begin immediately with clear understanding of:

- Immediate Justice policy documentation.
- Documentation pertaining to the funding application and agreement, data reporting responsibilities.
- Insight into the background and setup of the programme in West Yorkshire, including the delivery partners and their roles.
- The intended referral pathways and how these differ between adult and child pathways and between different Youth Justice Services (YJS) delivering activities.
- Integration of IJ within existing regional Police and Crime plans.
- Integration within regional trauma informed and child first approaches.
- Other key stakeholders and their consideration.
- Available detail on the concurrent national evaluation of IJ.

Further desk research was undertaken around these key areas through the research period and other sources are cited where relevant.

Following a change in Government in early July 2024 it was acknowledged that the future prospects of funding approval for the continuation of IJ are more uncertain.

Therefore, additional documentation included:

- Labour Manifesto – Take Back Our Streets
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioner’s (APCC) overview of specific Bills related to Policing and Criminal Justice following the King’s speech on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024

An examination of documentation pertaining to the new Labour government’s approach to tackling ASB was undertaken to assess the alignment between IJ as it stands in West Yorkshire and the future policy direction of the government. Overall, a high degree of alignment was found, with common language shared by the original IJ policy documentation and the Labour manifesto. There were also similarities between the purported aspirations concerning reparative activities and building community trust through visibility within IJ documentation, the Labour manifesto, and Bills announced in the King’s Speech on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

## Interviews

In total, 12 interviews were conducted with representatives from delivery partners and other organisations involved in IJ in West Yorkshire. These organisations include:

- West Yorkshire Police
- Probation Service Yorkshire and the Humber (HMPPS)
- Restorative Solutions CIC
- Youth Justice Services
- Leeds City Council, Safer Stronger Communities Team
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Victim Support
- The Home Office

These interviews focused on the process element of the IJ programme in West Yorkshire: how the programme was delivered, the roles of different delivery partners, the practicalities, challenges, enablers, and barriers to effective delivery – as well as how these elements had evolved from the beginning of the pilot to the present day.

Key findings are explored in section 10.

## Survey

A short survey was designed during the interview process. Discussions were conducted during interviews with delivery partners about the design of questions, and the survey approach. These covered questions such as who to share the survey with and when, and the best opportunities to collect vital feedback from participants, victims, and other community stakeholders. The survey was then distributed to delivery partners with the intention that it could be completed by both delivery partners together with also adults and children who had taken part in unpaid work activities,

courses with Restorative Solutions CIC, and/or activities run by YJS – as well as victims, and any other stakeholders with knowledge or sight of the IJ programme.

This was done through a simple system of routing which asked respondents how they were involved with IJ and showed a slightly different question set to each stakeholder category.

Full question set is available in the annexes.

Key findings are available in section 9.

## 4. Key Findings:

There was widespread agreement between stakeholders as to the purpose, ambition, and method of IJ and a shared understanding of how the programme had progressed from the government's 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. While the adult and child pathways presented differently, there was a strong sense of solidarity between partners due to the close working between stakeholders.

### 4.1. Enablers

- **The existing Out of Court Disposal (OCD) framework and other interventions** – Existing partnership working and referral mechanisms in the OCD space within West Yorkshire provided a strong foundation to build upon for both adult and child pathways.
- **Involvement of the Probation Service in the delivery of unpaid work element** – It was noted that not all other IJ pilot areas involve the Probation Service in the delivery of IJ unpaid work activities for adults. The involvement of the Probation Service in West Yorkshire was a large enabler due to the familiarity and ease with which they were uniquely suited to deliver this element.
- **Involvement of Restorative Solutions CIC in the delivery of restorative justice and education elements** – It was noted that Restorative Solutions CIC have widespread and appropriate expertise in the area and that their participation had specifically enabled delivery of the restorative justice elements.
- **The flexibility in the design of the local approach** - Delivery partners in all pathways cited the freedom in the region's approach to delivering IJ as an empowering quality that enabled West Yorkshire to respond to challenges and creatively take advantage of available opportunities.
- **Commitment to a Child First and trauma informed working approach** – the existing and well embedded commitment to trauma informed and Child First working and approaches enabled a widespread and shared understanding that

IJ needs to do more than just be reparative, but preventative and restorative – especially in the child pathway. This integration additionally supports the Youth Justice Board Strategy 2024-27 objectives (policy and practice to advance adoption of child first throughout the youth justice system).

- **Communication and collaboration between delivery partners** - Every delivery partner agreed there had been successful communication between delivery partners and that this was a significant enabler, citing a mixture of well thought out meetings and steering groups. The approach to managing referrals using a series of spreadsheets was the only significant caveat to otherwise widespread praise. The spreadsheet approach was not effective due to a mixture of inefficient design and technical difficulties and the reasons for this, and the responses of the delivery team, are explored at length within the challenges section of this report.
- **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 all pathways.
- **Engagement work undertaken with the wider community beyond the delivery team** - Some delivery partners, especially YJS in the child pathway, 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 in both adult and child pathways discussed the familiarity of IJ conditions under the banner of community service and explained how this had boosted the uptake of IJ among delivery partners and the community. For the restorative element, where this intuitive understanding was not implicit, stakeholders shared their creative approaches to getting the right message across. Overall, the familiarity of the approach was a net enabler, but it bares consideration that this was not universal, and the connotations of IJ had some tension with the child first working approach in West Yorkshire, which YJS had to untangle and confront in different ways.
- **Passion, dedication and specific expertise of individuals involved** – Many stakeholders took time to express how specific individuals had made a difference because of their passion for the programme or their specific expertise and skill.

## 4.2. Barriers and Challenges

- **The Ambition for 48 Hour total turnaround** – the previous government's stated ambition was to have participants engaging in activity within 48 hours of

the offence. This was dismissed as unfeasible, as was the revised goal of 48 hours from referral. However, this remained as a somewhat confusing stretch goal or aspiration, indicating a focus on the swift action element of 'Immediate' Justice. The Home Office recognises the inability of partners to deliver in 48 hours, but the uncertainty among delivery partners demonstrated that the messaging from central government on the specific goals of activity could be clearer. The 48-hour target was a key example of where improvements could be made in terms of the clarity of communication around whether outcomes were achievable within this timescale. Scoping by central government with Mayors / PCCs and Criminal Justice partners may have avoided the setting of the 48 hour 'hard target' that was ultimately not achievable.

- **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 inefficiency and challenge to the project delivery. Ongoing work was underway to minimise this burden.
- **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 of resources therefore left opportunities on the table in West Yorkshire.
- **Workforce challenges and the impact on referral numbers** – Several stakeholders in both pathways had struggled with recruiting staff to deliver the programme, in part due to limited time funding dissuading applicants. Several partners witnessed consequences resulting from workforce shortages, however these were perhaps most significantly felt within the police, as the lack of a dedicated staff member led to referral numbers dropping for a period. There was insufficient resource to be able to complete the various responsibilities assigned to the police – 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, consistent, and meaningful communication. Some of these issues had arisen from systems working and restrictions around how Community Resolutions (CR) are recorded and processed, others around the complexity of victim contact in the programme, with Victim Support, Restorative Solutions CIC, and YJS each having their own victim contact arrangements.

### 4.3. Lessons Learned

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- **The best way to contact participants for compliance and evaluation** – Partners in the adult pathways learned early on that delivery partners should contact participants themselves 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 out of court space, or to this particular way of working and underestimated the resource required. Expectations were adjusted for the second year, and now activity is underway and settled, partners reported greater 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 Out of Court Disposal (OOC) space, and Victim Support getting involved in the delivery of ASB awareness courses with Restorative Solutions CIC. This illustrates clearly the way victims wishes had fed into the educational element of IJ.
- **Best way to get the word out on opportunities and good practice** – A lot of learning was 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:
  - Pinning down alternative funding streams to support IJ or IJ-like activities. There were indications this work had already begun in the child pathway.
  - Collaborating with community partners in order to enable the above.
  - Considering more overtly where IJ sits within the broader scheme of OOC options and system wide support offerings.
    - Can IJ refer into programmes explicitly targeting criminogenic needs and motivators of ASB behaviour, such as substance abuse, mental or physical health, where needs are made apparent? For the adult pathways, are there services available to be referred into if police identify a health vulnerability as part of their vulnerability assessment?
  - Can preventative work be tied into IJ in a way that stakeholders in the adult and child pathways have sight of?
  - Can we build a case study of exactly how this work was developed in each different area of West Yorkshire for sharing best practice?

#### 4.4. Areas for future evaluation

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- **Diving deeper into different local authority areas within West Yorkshire** – Delivery differed due to available resource, area needs, referral numbers, and the specific circumstances of the partners involved – however there is insufficient data collected at this time to discern if this leads to different outcomes. One stakeholder suggested that there were meaningful differences in compliance with regards to gender, but we could not validate this using the available data.
- **Plotting work done by delivery partners including community organisations or actors in delivery** – Producing a clear picture of how delivery partners have interfaced with the wider community may be a valuable exercise to support the future development of the programme and spread the word about how IJ functions. This could be built into a Theory of Change, imbricating the below points.
- **Introducing more long term evaluation methods to gather participant experiences** – Direct contact with participants and victims during this evaluation period was limited due to the logistical challenge of contacting a wide range of participants over a significant enough timeframe. Retrospectively contacting legacy participants/victims was also not possible due to data protection issues. Future evaluations should implement methods to gather evaluation evidence from participating stakeholders over a longer period.
- **Auditing missed opportunities** - In other work in the OOOD space one potential evaluation activity has been working with the police to audit missed opportunities. In other words, to revisit a sample of cases to see if there are occurrences where a 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 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.?

## 5. Recommendations for the IJ programme

- 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

<sup>3</sup> West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. (n.d.). *Adversity, trauma and resilience team: West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership*. [online] Available at: <https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/our-priorities/population-health-management/adversity-trauma-and-resilience>.

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 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 how the delivery has involved a wider range of community partners beyond the immediate delivery team.

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<sup>4</sup> West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2024) *Child First Approach: A pioneering framework for West Yorkshire for placing children at the heart of decision making*. [online] Available at: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/west-yorkshire-violence-reduction-partnership/child-first-approach> [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

It is strongly recommended to consider further evaluation towards the 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> Social Value UK. (n.d.). *Social Value Management Practice*. [online] Available at: <https://socialvalueuk.org/social-value-practice/>. [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

## 6. Document Analysis

### 6.1. Sources pertaining to the development and delivery of IJ

At the outset of the evaluation period, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA) shared a package of documents with the evaluator pertaining to the IJ programme for consideration of the evaluation. This package was updated as additional documentation became available – such as where complementary and synergistic work was occurring in West Yorkshire, or where new central reporting became available. The evaluator additionally undertook desk research to examine available sources in addition to those discussed below. These are cited where relevant.

#### Case Studies

Documents included:

- An April 2024 report produced by Restorative Solutions CIC in collaboration with the team at the combined authority which detailed 5 cases where IJ had been delivered resulting in an offender participating in a course with RS. The cases included offender and victim feedback alongside practitioner learning points.
- An April 2024 report focusing on IJ as a case study of Partnership Working within the region including the project background and the results and benefits of the partnership approach.

These case studies were examined, and the documentary analysis informed the approach to interviews with delivery partners, particularly with Restorative Solutions CIC and discussion of their approach to providing the restorative justice element of IJ.

The case studies were later revisited following the interview process in order to validate interview discussions and inform the design of the survey.

#### Consultation and Engagement

Documents included:

- Documentation pertaining to a community ASB survey carried out in June 2023 as part of the IJ pilot. The survey report provides an overview of ASB in West Yorkshire based on 591~ responses from across the region.

Key findings included “frustration and a lack of confidence in reporting, mostly based on experience regarding the outcome of previously reported incidents”. This indicates the goals of IJ have significant alignment with the perceived issues surrounding previous approaches to tackling ASB.

While establishing reoffending rates or re-assessing community trust in the region’s efforts to tackle ASB is beyond the scope of this evaluation, this survey provides the

basis for future evaluations to replicate the methodology over an appropriate timeframe and provide a measure to evidence impact.

## Funding Proposals

Documents included:

- Initial Funding Proposal
- Initial Delivery Plan

These documents were examined and used as reference materials to chart the development of the approach between the outset of the pilot and the present day. Key changes and learning points have been discussed at length in the interview section.

## Home Office Grants

Documents included:

- Initial grant agreement between the Home Office and the Combined Authority.
- The single amendment to the Grant Agreement, repurposing underspend to fund this evaluation.

## Home Office Reporting

Documents included:

- Monthly data returns – Excel sheets with the agreed delivery metrics.
- Monthly narrative reports – Detailing the progress of delivery and any key developments.
- Quarterly strategic reports – Detailing progress against aims, value for money, social value and any other KPIs

The data returns have been examined and analysed in a dedicated Quantitative Report that sits as a companion to this document.

The Narrative reports and Quarterly Strategic Reports were examined at the outset of the programme and provided important background and context used to inform the design of interviews and later the survey.

## Internal Decision Making

Documents included:

- A series of documents and appendices relating to decision making around the planning of IJ and initial procurement of funding. Including:

- A trauma informed review of the previous governments ASB action plan undertaken by West Yorkshire Adversity Trauma and Resilience at the request of the combined authority.

The review highlights a lack of reference to trauma, or a trauma informed approach in the government's plan and provides a wide array of recommendations focusing on giving greater consideration to harm reduction and prevention as opposed to 'punishment' and 'enforcement'.

Many of the recommendations within this document align with the wider trauma informed approach within West Yorkshire, and no doubt played a part in the modifications made to IJ for the region. As discussed further in the interviews section, IJ originally had no overt preventative or restorative justice elements, and the inclusion of these within West Yorkshire speaks to the region's commitment to better align the programme with trauma informed working, harm reduction, and addressing the root causes of ASB.

Additional documents:

- Breakdown of funding allocation
- 1-page project summary
- Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) screening tool
- Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Proposal documents to seek funding.

The majority of this documentation was not used overtly in the evaluation, but was referenced to validate conclusions expressed in interview discussions.

Notably the funding breakdown would be a valuable asset should a full Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis be undertaken as part of future evaluation activities.

## Ipsos Evaluation

Documentation included:

- A presentation detailing the high level details of the concurrent national evaluation of IJ undertaken by Ipsos Mori.

This documentation was used to inform an interview schedule that was intended to acknowledge and highlight the Ipsos Mori evaluation. Unfortunately, at the time of reporting, this interview had yet to take place owing to conflicting availability.

## Referral Pathways

Documentation included:

- Seven process diagrams outlining the referral pathways for the adult pathway and differing child pathways in Calderdale, Kirklees, and Wakefield.

These diagrams were useful for establishing project background information and informing initial interviews with partners from Youth Justice Services (YJS).

### West Yorkshire ASB Steering Group

Documentation included:

- 10 months of notes from meetings of the West Yorkshire ASB Steering Group backdated from March 2024.

Examination of the notes was used to validate conversations had in interviews regarding the partnership working approach.

### Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

IJ featured as a key strategic element within the Sunak Government's Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan<sup>6</sup> (published March 2023) where it was described as an initiative to "make perpetrators repair the damage they have done" with a key focus on community service activities being completed by perpetrators of ASB "within 48 hours of the offence."

IJ is mentioned recurringly within the report but consistently framed throughout in the following ways:

- Perpetrators of ASB will repair the damage they deal to the community.
- They will do this through activities traditionally recognised as community service, such as being forced to pick up litter, wash police cars or clean up graffiti.
- They will be made to do this "within as little as 48 hours of being caught."
- This will begin in 10 places as a pilot before being expanded across England and Wales.

The only reference to how the above will be delivered is contained within the following quote:

*"Police and Crime Commissioners will take a leading role, commissioning services for IJ to fulfil out of court disposals, working with local authorities, the police, youth offending teams and other agencies to do so."*

No other reference to the delivery of IJ is described or mentioned; detailed guidance on how the above should be delivered is not provided. As a result, the documentation

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<sup>6</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Home Office (2023). *Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anti-social-behaviour-action-plan>. [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

implies that regions allocated funding are left to figure out the details for themselves in the absence of detailed guidance, which would not come until 2024.

This policy paper provides crucial background on the original ambition for IJ which will be referenced heavily within the interviews section.

## IJ Fund - Initial Guidance for 2024/25

In February 2024, after funding had been confirmed for 2024/25, the Home Office released a document providing background information on IJ and guidance based on lessons learned from pilot areas in 2023/24.

The key objectives of IJ within this guidance document are listed as:

1. Deliver swift, visible reparative activity in response to ASB for a visible public benefit.
2. To increase citizens' confidence in reporting ASB and that appropriate action will be taken as a result.

The document additionally affirmed the flexibility implied by the government's ASB Action Plan – noting: *“PCCs will have discretion and flexibility to design the IJ services in line with the demands of their local circumstances and needs of their communities.”* Unlike the ASB action plan, detailed guidance is offered here, but is emphasised as being instructive, not compulsory.

The possibility of using restorative services is highlighted here, though the guidance states these should be “layered” with reparative activities, or used when reparative activities may not be suitable due to vulnerability or ill health. Both possibilities are available referral routes in West Yorkshire.

Within this document, the 48-hour ambition shifts from activity beginning within 48 hours from time of the offence to activity beginning within 48 hours of referral to the Funded Service tasked with delivering the activity. The report states exceptions may occur and provides examples.

The guidance further affirms the second objective, that community visibility of the work being done is a core component of the delivery. It goes on to provide suggestions for how to achieve ‘maximum visibility’ (bright jumpsuits, photographic evidence of the work being done, performing activities in high traffic areas).

The guidance additionally affirms the expectation for PCCs to lean on existing Out of Court Disposal (OCD) frameworks to make referrals into funded services.

This document has been used as a reference in interviews, after many interviewees directed their commentary towards responding to the expectations laid out within this document and the aforementioned ASB action plan.

The Guidance does profess some awareness of issues raised in West Yorkshire<sup>7</sup>, such as challenges in relation to recruitment and procurement, and does raise a handful of other challenges to the delivery, such as the expected timeline of establishing the partnership working arrangements needed to deliver IJ.

A review and update of this document is strongly encouraged following the publication of this evaluation and the national evaluation undertaken by Ipsos Mori.

### **West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024**

The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan has no direct reference to IJ, and this is to be expected as the plan predates the programme's inception.

However, it is worth noting that the IJ approach undertaken does align with the principles of the plan. This demonstrates West Yorkshire's effort to integrate IJ within existing work and existing priorities.

For example, the four priorities of the 2021-2024 plan are:

- Supporting Victims and Witnesses and Improving Criminal Justice Outcomes
- Keeping People Safe and Building Resilience
- Safer Places and Thriving Communities
- Responding to Multiple and Complex Needs

In each case, there is strong evidence that West Yorkshire has taken steps to modify the IJ approach in ways that more strongly align with these priorities, for example:

- The victim's voice is more centrally included within IJ than suggested in the aforementioned guidance documentation and this is demonstrated by the close involvement of Victim Support in the programme (adult pathway), and victim contact activities undertaken by both Restorative Solutions CIC (adult pathway) and YJS (child pathways).
- Because of the short term nature of the funding the long term viability and sustainability of the work has been a key concern and priority raised by delivery partners.
- Engagement with wider community partners and organisations who are frequent victims of anti-social behaviour has worked to start embedding IJ within the wider community consciousness. However, the full scope of this work has not been comprehensively assessed by this evaluation.
- The inclusion of restorative elements within the IJ approach in West Yorkshire has addressed a key gap in the design of the programme. This has improved the ability of IJ to address multiple and complex needs through the involvement

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<sup>7</sup> It is unclear if this is because feedback offered by West Yorkshire had a direct impact on the formation of the guidance, or if areas collectively experienced similar issues, and the similarities of issues raised in the Guidance to the issues experienced in West Yorkshire is more indirect and coincidental.

of organisations deeply embedded in trauma informed working and experienced in undertaking a partnership approach to restorative justice.

All of these points will be discussed further in the interviews section.

Public consultation on the Mayor’s Policing and Crime Plan 2024-2028 is underway at the time of writing.<sup>8</sup> Anti-Social Behaviour is raised as a possible focus area in the public survey under Priority Two - Safer Places and Thriving Communities.

## 6.2. Sources pertaining to the July election and new government

Following the election of a new Labour government in July 2024, a great deal of uncertainty was introduced into the future of the IJ programme. The original vision for IJ was closely aligned with the Conservative government’s vision for crime and policing and IJ was the chief instrument of the 2023 ASB Action Plan.

The following sources were analysed in attempt to gauge the new Labour governments predisposition and intentions towards tackling ASB and to provide an initial examination of the extent to which IJ aligns with the priorities of the new government.

### APCCs overview of specific Bills related to Policing and Criminal Justice

In an attempt to get an early indication of the Labour government’s intentions on ASB, this evaluation has consulted the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC’s) briefing on the King’s Speech on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

*“The King’s Speech is an opportunity for the new Government to set out its priorities and the legislation it intends to pursue in the forthcoming parliamentary session.”*

The primary Bill relevant to IJ is the planned Crime and Policing Bill which aims to “to halve serious violence and increase confidence in policing and the Criminal Justice System.”

Principally there is some alignment between this planned Bill and existing IJ work, with increasing confidence in policing also being a key concern within the Sunak Conservative Government’s literature on the purpose and ambition of IJ.

When looking at the main elements of the Bill, a key feature is the “creation of a duty for local partners to co-operate to tackle antisocial behaviour, with an antisocial behaviour lead in every local authority area.”

Another key Bill is the Victims, Courts and Public Protection Bill which commits to improving systems in place to meet the needs of victims.

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<sup>8</sup> West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2024). *Police and Crime Plan 2024-2028 – Have your say*. [online] Available at: <https://www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/police-and-crime-plan> [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

Within these intentions, there does not appear to be significant ideological or practical departure from existing work to tackle ASB undertaken in part through IJ. The presence of Anti-Social behaviour leads within West Yorkshire local authority areas would be strongly synergistic with existing work based on the well-developed partnership approach already in place. Delivery partners have acknowledged that there could be some improvement in elevating the voice of the victim in IJ, but there was no indication found by the evaluation that the ambitions of this legislation are incompatible with the current mode of delivery of IJ.

### Labour Manifesto – Take Back Our Streets

The section of the Labour Party’s Manifesto on Crime - subtitled “Take Back Our Streets” - had a remarkable degree of alignment with existing IJ principles and priorities.

The section begins with an affirmation akin to one found in the previous Sunak Governments ASB plan:

- Sunak Government in 2023: “...anti-social behaviour is not a low-level crime”<sup>9</sup>
- Labour 2024 Manifesto: “Antisocial behaviour is not merely a ‘low-level’ nuisance”<sup>10</sup>

The similarities continue with a key focus on reparative activities for ASB offences: “Fly-tippers and vandals will also be forced to clean up the mess they have created.”<sup>11</sup>

Further details on tackling anti-social behaviour are light, but there is a consistent focus on building trust in policing and that police action be a visible presence in the community.

While the incoming Labour government appears keen to draw distinctions between itself and the previous government in their pledges – for example, stressing how the Conservatives reduced police powers to address shoplifting. IJ appears to sit quite harmoniously within the stated priorities and strategies geared towards addressing ASB.

At this early stage following the election, the available sources do not suggest significant ideological departure in the Labour government’s intentions towards addressing ASB.

## 7. Survey Findings

<sup>9</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Home Office (2023). *Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anti-social-behaviour-action-plan>. [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

<sup>10</sup> The Labour Party. (2024). *Take back our streets – The Labour Party Manifesto*. [online] Available at: <https://labour.org.uk/change/take-back-our-streets/#antisocial-behaviour> [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

A short survey was distributed to delivery partners with the intention that this survey could be completed by both delivery partners but also children and adults who had taken part in unpaid work activities, courses with RS, and/or activities run by YJS – as well as victims. The text of the survey questions are available in the appendices of this report.

## 7.1. Methodology

The survey received 26 responses from 1st to the 26th of July, averaging one response a day. Responses were clustered around 3 engagement pushes across the period. The survey was distributed to delivery partners with a request to pass it on to participants and other stakeholders who had knowledge of IJ where opportunities to do so arose.

This methodology was decided upon in order to reach the maximum number of respondents during a short evaluation period. It was described in interviews with partners - that many participants are reticent to take part in evaluation activities after the fact.

## 7.2. Limitations

There are a number of weaknesses in the approach - in part, due to the survey design needing to accommodate the short evaluation period - in particular the likelihood in responses not being representative due to the small sample and the heavy burden of trust it places on delivery partners to distribute the survey.

The small number of responses are unlikely to be representative, particularly as there were a number of different groups targeted.

There is also the possibility that delivery partners may select participants who are more likely to reflect the IJ programme positively. It is possible for delivery partners to input responses themselves, and there were 2 instances where responses were received from an unlikely mix of stakeholder groups, within minutes of each other, from the same device (according to IP address returns). This alone is not proof of anything, but it emphasises the weakness of the approach taken here: the methods we have to validate the survey results are insufficient and inconclusive, and this highlights the need to establish a more robust method of validating feedback in future.

## 7.3. Summary Survey Findings

- **Response numbers were low from participants and victims but included many voices from delivery partners.**
- Specific numbers relating to respondent characteristics are **not provided for privacy reasons** resulting from the low number of respondents from certain stakeholder groups, such as participants, children, and victims.

- When asked to **rate their experience** of IJ, stakeholder groups were positive on their experience. **No group offered an average below 4 out of 5 stars.**
- Participants' **comments were mostly negative**, but by contrast their **assessment of the impact of the programme on their life was mostly positive.**
- Delivery partners **rated their own understanding** of IJ relatively **highly**, but believed **more could be done to spread the word** more widely. This was consistent between both adult and child pathways.
- When asked what the biggest enabler of the programme had been, delivery partners highlighted the **partnership working approach**, the **passion and dedication of the delivery partners involved**, as well as **the combined authority's strong and effective management of the programme.**
- Notably, **comments from victims were positive on IJ overall**, but included **one robust example where a victim had been highly dissatisfied** that an offender had been allowed IJ, describing it as "not justice" in consideration of the severity and violence involved in the crime.
- **Almost two thirds** of all survey respondents believed that IJ had **already had an impact on ASB offending** – with half of those suggesting a significant impact, and half suggesting a minor impact.
- **One in five** believed the project would have an impact eventually, but that it was **too early to tell.**
- No respondents selected the option "the programme has not had an impact", but the remaining **one in five had more nuanced and measured feelings**, captured in comments. Some suggested the impacts maybe be only from some activities, pointing to variability in the effectiveness of different activities or pathways, or they expressed that it was too early to tell if the programme had an impact yet.
- In response to suggestions for improvements, respondents offered:
  - Compliments rather than improvements, in some cases.
  - Suggestions for **further streamlining** and refinements to the referral process, data reporting, and overall delivery.
  - Advocacy of undertaking **wider marketing and wider communications efforts** to get the word out about IJ in West Yorkshire.
  - Advocacy of looking at **reoffending data and effectiveness metrics when possible.**
  - A **closer look at who is being given IJ** with regards to age, suitability, health, offence, etc.
  - Some stakeholders believed that with regard to the **Youth Justice space**, IJ funding would be **better spent** in the **preventative arena** rather than reparative/restorative.

- In **further comments**, respondents took the time to offer **compliments and praise** for the programme, or to offer some final concerns, such as: the **administrative burden potentially growing with the programme**, and the **instability of the funding** undermining the long-term stability of the programme.

All these points are covered in depth throughout the remainder of this section.

### Who responded?

The survey asked participants to identify themselves based on their involvement with IJ, and collected them into the following groups:

Taken part in unpaid work run by Probation
Taken part in an anti-social behaviour session with Restorative Solutions CIC
Taken part in a Community Conference
Taken part in an activity run by Youth Justice Services
Delivered IJ activities, such as those above (i.e. as Probation, Restorative Solutions CIC, YJS) or are otherwise involved in the delivery
Member of the police involved in administering and/or diverting into IJ
Taken part in the planning and management of IJ in West Yorkshire
I am the victim of someone who has taken part in IJ
I know of the approach second hand (someone I know has participated or otherwise been involved)

The survey additionally asked participants where in West Yorkshire they had been involved in IJ.

A precise breakdown of the survey responses by area/role/participation is not offered here, due to the low number of responses. The research team feel it is in the best interest of the privacy of respondents to not publish this information.

All participants who had taken part in IJ were from Bradford or Calderdale.

The number of IJ participants who responded to the survey totalled less than ten, as did the number of victims.

It should be noted the responses represent a very low overall proportion of the number of people who have taken part in IJ in West Yorkshire, and any conclusions drawn from a survey such as this **should not be taken as representative of the IJ approach across West Yorkshire**, and certainly not nationally. Rather they should be interpreted only as an indicative impression reflective of the experience of some participants and victims.

The delivery partners took the survey as an opportunity to add further feedback on the IJ approach in West Yorkshire, many building on discussions had within interviews, or

updating the evaluator with more current developments that had occurred in the handful of weeks between the interview period and the survey.

Survey feedback from delivery partners was received in even proportions from all five participating areas of West Yorkshire.

### Rating their experience

The first question asked respondents to rate their experience of the IJ approach in West Yorkshire from 1 to 5 stars – all respondents groups were positive – **across all stakeholder groups the average score was 4.22 out of 5.**

Remarkably, there was low variance between stakeholder groups, with no stakeholder group offering an average score lower than 4.0.

No single participant in IJ activities offered an individual score lower than a 3.

No single respondent overall offered an individual score lower than 2 – and there was only a single 2 response. This came from someone who had taken part in the planning and management of IJ in West Yorkshire. Every other respondent in this category offered a 4 or 5.

### Comments from participants

Participants were asked “What was it like to take part in IJ?”

Most comments from participants were negative on their experience and contained one-two word descriptions of their time, e.g. “not good”, “awful”. The following two were the most developed comments:

- It was not a good time, but I think that’s the point
- Great, [redacted name] is an absolute credit to you guys. [They are] amazing and needs all the support and credit for the amazing attitude [they] project ❤️

Participants were also asked “What’s one thing you’ve learned from taking part in IJ?”

Comments again were largely negative with multiple typing “nothing”, multiple typing something to the effect of “waste of time”, though one was positive and agreed they’d learned “violence” was “not worth it”.

### Impact on participants’ lives

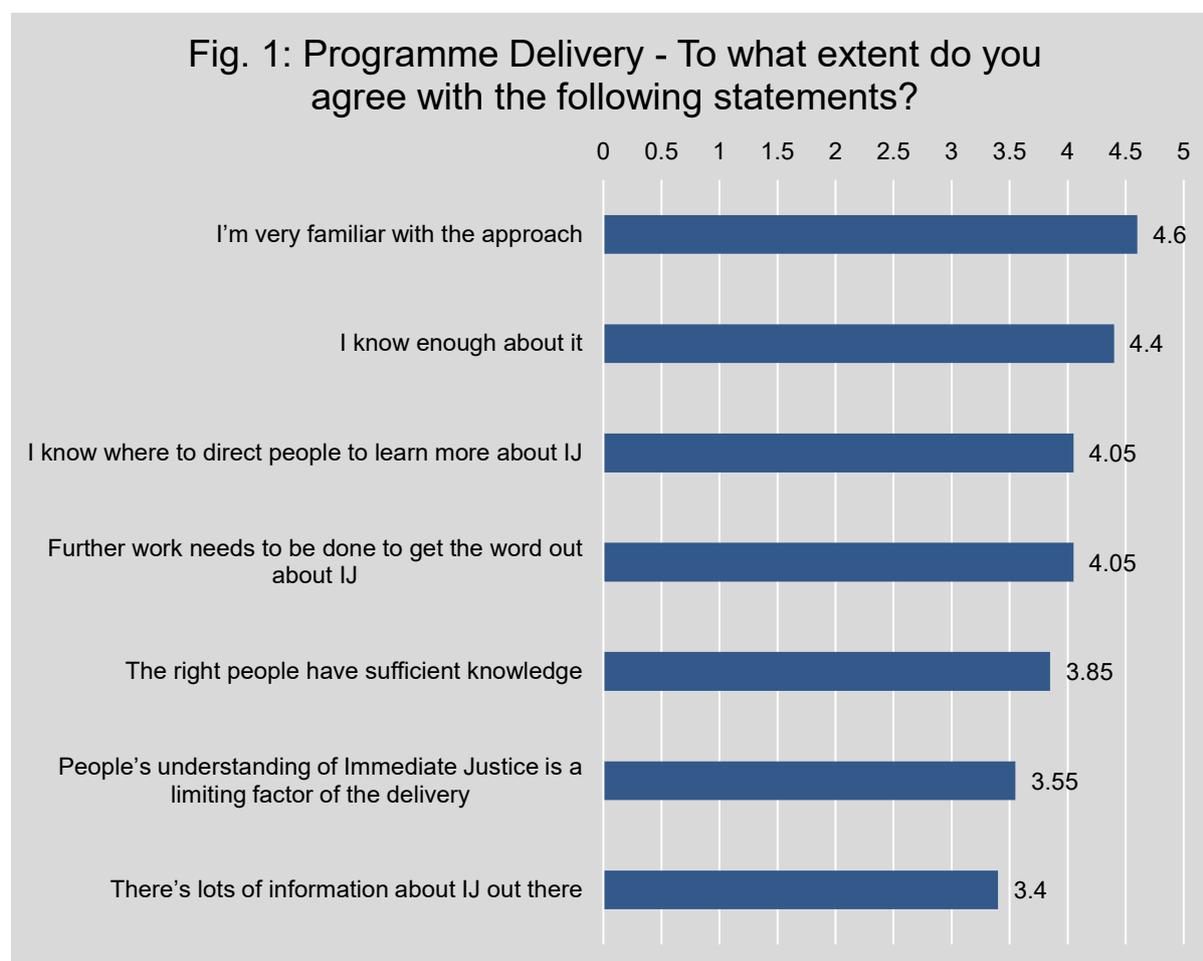
Participants were asked “What kind of impact has taking part in IJ had on your life?” with a 5-point Likert scale response from Very Negative to Very Positive.

In consideration of the above comments, the expectation here would be that participants would tick predominantly “negative” – however this was not the case – **no participant claimed the programme had had a “negative” or “very negative” impact on their life.**

Most selected 4 “Positive”, with an even proportion also selecting 3 “neither positive or negative” and 5 “very positive”.

## Statement agreement questions relating to the delivery

Stakeholders involved in the delivery were asked to what extent they agreed with a collection of short statements relating to the current delivery of IJ, rating each statement between 1 (Strong disagreement) and 5 (Strong agreement). Fig. 1 below shows the average scores for each statement.



These scores imply delivery partners rated their own understanding of IJ relatively highly, but believed more could be done to spread the word more widely.

## Comments on the delivery

Respondents were asked “What has been the most important factor contributing to the success of the IJ approach in West Yorkshire?”

The majority of responses spoke to the **partnership working approach**, the **passion and dedication of the delivery partners** involved, as well as **the combined authority's strong and effective management of the programme**.

The following comments were received, redacted to protect identity where needed:

- Dedicated Staff
- That the combined authority have supported youth justice services to develop a model that is not reliant upon a 48hr delivery of IJ to children, recognising that

a trauma-informed, restorative approach is required in the best interests of children, and to make the work truly preventative.

- [Redacted full name]. [Their] passion and drive about this pilot is commendable. I have worked closely with [them] to promote the pilot across Leeds District. The referral is easy, and she is always on hand to offer help and advice which officers appreciate. I also love the video in the ASB course. So much impact!
- Having a dedicated probation Service Placement Co-ordinator to support the day-to-day unpaid work activity.
- The hard work from project manager, and the supervisor staff
- Good partnership working between all organisation running the scheme. Good confident staff on the group taking groups out for their UPW and positive feedback.
- Strong partnership working across the delivery partners and Combined Authority
- Open communication between the police and probation
- Partnership working. This includes the various steering groups and delivery groups. It also includes the partners taking an active role in assisting with inputs.
- Openness
- We have been able to secure referrals from the out of court decision making panels. We have increase reparation opportunities available.
- Existing strength of the team to support in delivering IJ.
- Multi-Agency Working.
- Partnership working and early coordination by the mayor's office for policing & crime.
- Strong partnership approach from the start and existing arrangements in place

### Comments from victims

Of the small number of comments received from victims around half were positive.

However, the most detailed comment provided by any respondent to the survey was from a victim and was highly negative. They described their experience in great depth, including sensitive details of the crime, and argued the situation should not have been considered appropriate for IJ given the “severe” injuries inflicted, concluding “[their] punishment did not fit the crime (...) a few hours course and unpaid work isn't justice”, “[their] punishment didn't stop [them] doing it again” and “[VICTIM SUPPORT] did [their] job, it was the police who let me down”.

Comments such as this speak to the necessity of considering victims voices in decision making, and in the necessity of robust processes to ensure IJ is used appropriately.

## Feelings on the impact of IJ in West Yorkshire

All respondents were asked “Do you think IJ has had an effect on tackling anti-social behaviour in West Yorkshire?”

Almost all stakeholder groups agreed that IJ had a small or large impact already, with responses split evenly between these two positive options (A quarter said “Yes, a little”, the same for “Yes, a lot” – amounting to over half of responses).

A further one in five believed the programme had yet to see significant results but were confident it would.

The remaining opted to describe their feelings in their own words. The majority of these were positive, but offered caveats or clarifications, for example:

- Yes, a lot. But only to the right person
- Remains to be seen
- Restorative education yes; unpaid work uncertain.

It should be noted, the majority of the small number of victims of responded to the survey were skeptical of the programme’s impacts.

## Improvements

All respondents were asked “How could the IJ approach be improved, if at all?”

The bulk of the comments sit within the following categories:

- Complements rather than improvements.
- Suggestions for further streamlining and refinements to the process.
- Recommendations to market and push wider comms efforts about IJ.
- Recommendations to look at reoffending data and effectiveness metrics when possible.
- Further analysis of who is being given IJ with regards to age, suitability, health, offence, etc.
- Some stakeholders believed in the Youth Justice space, IJ funding would be better spent on prevention rather than reparation/restoration.

The full comments:

- Keep doing what you do!
- Shorter hours.
- I think if the police are not taking it to court victims should have input into how to deal with them.
- More information in the news to promote the benefits.
- Make sure contact details are correct and the right people are being given this action.

- More information could be provided at the time the individual is given IJ.
- I do not believe that IJ is the right approach for children - we need to work in a way that is preventative, that takes stigma away and understands that root cause of children being involved in ASB. I believe that the funding would be better spent by youth justice services bolstering our preventative offers, that encompasses a whole-system approach, and isn't based purely on a single intervention with a child.
- I wish we could refer under 18s to the ASB course.
- I believe that at the youth justice level the money would be better spent enabling us to expand our preventative offer that goes beyond a simple IJ intervention, but one that enables us to work with the whole system around the child, supporting their families/getting them into education etc...
- Suitable referrals from the police i.e. health restrictions taken into account and realistic expectations of completing the unpaid work activity.
- I think it works really well.
- Continued partnership working, projects which support local communities and challenge Anti-Social Behaviour
- Further marketing material in terms of the roles of partners in the delivery of IJ - this is being explored currently. In terms of whether IJ has been effective in preventing future victims of anti-social behaviour, it would be useful to see data (potentially through tracking the cohort that have completed IJ) to identify whether swift, trauma informed and early intervention has been successful in deterring further offending and increasing awareness of the impact of ASB on individuals and communities.
- Reduction in paperwork for the police officers making the referrals and information sharing agreements between all agencies involved.
- I think the entire project will be improved as it becomes more known and becomes an integral part of policing etc. Referrals into the service rely on West Yorkshire Police intelligence of the project and officers putting it to good use. Once this becomes the norm, the project will continue to grow and thrive.
- Spoken about more
- Less time consuming
- More funding to support with creating and implement more tailored activities and interventions for young people, either directly or by funding more staff members to deliver.
- Wider communication of the approach to Public and Agencies
- Clarifying/promoting referral routes for the police - we are certainly missing suitable referrals.

- More input to Police Officers as it is still very underused. More awareness for the public about IJ.

### Further comments

Lastly, respondents were asked: “Is there anything else you’d like to say about IJ?”

Most comments were positive:

- I am a massive fan of this scheme. I am a true believer that subjects don't realise the extent of their behaviour and by taking part in IJ it can make a difference.
- In the main, the IJ scheme works well - it eases some of the pressure off the Court system.
- I hope it continues and is all over the country.
- I have really enjoyed working with the project and working alongside other partners in delivering a good quality service.
- This project has the potential to make a big impact on ASB, from many different angles. I feel the size of West Yorkshire should be taken into account with the funding as the project could be bigger and much busier as it grows.
- The staff are fabulous.
- It needs to be sustained not simply 1/2 year project and discontinued.

There were a few further criticisms primarily surrounding the administrative burden of data returns and the focus of reporting:

- The short-term funding nature of IJ impacts significantly on the ability to deliver a fully established model. It causes recruitment difficulties, does not enable longer-term planning.
- Monthly reporting for IJ is cumbersome and impacts significantly on the capacity of resources within the service. Youth justice case management systems do not capture the data required by the return, and therefore the data return has to be populated manually. As the numbers of children being offered IJ increases, this task increases on a monthly basis.
- Data returns and commentary required by the Home office should be gathering much more about the restorative elements of the work, and about reductions in reoffending, not just focussing on numbers of those doing unpaid work and how quickly.

## 8. Analysis of collected evidence

While most of the evidence gathered during this evaluation period comes from interviews, the following section synthesizes findings from the various research methods used, and presents insights in the following sections:

- **What is IJ?** – A section providing an overview of how partners perceived the project, it's ambitions, and it's methods.
- **Enablers** – what enabled the programme to succeed?
- **Challenges and barriers** – what major difficulties did the programme encounter and how have these difficulties been resolved or responded to?
- **Lessons learned** – where did evidence point to significant lessons coming from the pilot work?
- **Future evaluation goals** – what considerations and research questions should be considered for a future evaluation period?

The key findings from each of these are highlighted above in section 5, while the remainder of this section, and thus, the remainder of the report, detail the evidence supporting these key findings.

Where not explicitly stated otherwise, it is implied there is some alignment between issues experienced by the adult and child pathways. However, the sources of quotations provided below offer a transparent view of where a particular finding originated. Where a quote states Police, Probation Service, Restorative Solutions CIC, or Victim Support, it can be inferred they are speaking predominantly about the adult pathway. Where a quote states YJS, they are speaking predominantly about the child pathways. However, this is not always clear cut given the shared involvement the stakeholders have had in the development of the approach in West Yorkshire, and so clarifications are provided where additional specificity is required.

### 8.1. What is Immediate Justice?

Delivery partners in both the adult and child pathways widely agreed on the purpose of the programme and demonstrated explicit understanding of how the programme in West Yorkshire differed from the government's original intentions. The table below outlines how IJ is described in the original government literature, the Sunak Government's 2023 ASB Action Plan, compared to how West Yorkshire have tweaked the original ambitions in their efforts to make IJ practical to deliver and to improve outcomes.

IJ Government Ambition <sup>12</sup>	IJ in West Yorkshire
Address ASB in the community	Address ASB in the community
Rapid – within 48 hours of offence	Rapid – as feasible
Tangible reparative work as conditions	Tangible reparative work as conditions
Very visible in the community where the offence occurred	Visible in the wider West Yorkshire community
Acknowledging victims	Restorative courses looking to instil behaviour change
	Incorporating victim’s voices into decision making where feasible

As discussed in the document analysis section, the 48-hour ambition was originally an aim to get offenders engaging in reparative work within 48 hours of the offence. This was quickly dismissed as infeasible within West Yorkshire, as the logistical challenge posed would far exceed the budget available and would have required a complete rebuild of many of the supporting structures surrounding OOC work on the police side. However, the 48-hour ambition served as a reminder of the focus on rapid turnaround:

*“Previously we’d have conditional cautions that would be open for quite a long time while the conditions are met, perhaps months. There was a shared sense this would not be **that**. It **wouldn’t be 48 hours**, but it would **not be that either**.”*

*Police 2*

A key focus on reparative work remained as a strong shared throughline of the government’s ambitions and the reality of both adult and child pathways within West Yorkshire.

However, the government had suggested activities such as offenders repairing the damage they personally caused or washing police cars in jumpsuits, and this was largely dismissed due to both the logistical challenge in the child and adult pathways, and a misalignment with the child first and trauma informed work already taking place within West Yorkshire in the child pathway.

Despite this, some evidence was found of bespoke activities occurring wherein participants repaired damage they caused, particularly in the child pathways:

<sup>12</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Home Office (2023). *Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anti-social-behaviour-action-plan>. [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

*“(...) something that was done recently and there were a couple of children at school that set a small fire (...) our restorative practitioner arranged with the school for the children to **repaint the wall that had been damaged.**” YJS Bradford*

Evidence of these activities is relatively scarce. West Yorkshire has focused more on repeatable activities that are practical to deliver and clearly gave back to the community on some level, but not necessarily offenders repairing the damage they caused as part of a bespoke activity. This sometimes meant that activities were not always hosted precisely where the offence occurred as a practical necessity. But it did also mean that delivery partners could take advantage of existing opportunities and build upon them.

*“we're quite lucky in Bradford because we **already have some structures in place in order to deliver it.** We already had an allotment; we already had some recreation projects that we could lean on. We've developed a few extra projects, we've made links with Oxfam, a charity shop in the centre of Bradford, and we've reached out to the women's charity within Bradford as well, so we can have girls go and help serve meals to vulnerable women.” YJS Bradford*

The quote above is from a YJS, however the same phenomena was observed in the adult pathways, with Probation describing how they leaned on their existing activity delivering unpaid work to build their IJ offer for adults.

The involvement of Restorative Solutions CIC was introduced as part of the conversation around aligning IJ with trauma informed working, as a means to deliver rehabilitative behaviour change courses to ASB offenders in addition to the unpaid work element (or instead of, where the unpaid work element may be inappropriate due to special needs, vulnerabilities or other considerations). The original scope for IJ was purely punitive and reparative, but noting an absence of rehabilitation, West Yorkshire made the inclusion by involving Restorative Solutions CIC as a delivery partner. Their 1-1 sessions, group courses, and later Community Conferences<sup>13</sup> all became possible activities to be attached to IJ conditions. The Community Conferences in particular showed great promise as a preventative measure to diffuse ongoing issues by providing an opportunity for groups to resolve issues before escalation that may lead to further ASB or criminal behaviour.

The child first and trauma-informed approach also emphasised the need to include the victim within the process as a respected voice within decision making. As Police interviewees emphasised, at a ‘minimum’: *“We want the victim to understand and be on board with the outcome”* (Police 2).

<sup>13</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.

However, as detailed further in the section labelled Challenges, some evidence suggests including the voice of the victim is an area of the IJ approach in West Yorkshire that could use further development. The communication process places a heavy burden on the limited resources of the police, and there are limitations to the input victims can have on outcomes, something that is unavoidable, but not always effectively communicated to victims.

Notably, when speaking to the Home Office, these many differences from the original plan were highlighted as a strength of the project rather than an area of concern. The flexibility to take advantage of existing local structures and relationships in the OOC space was positioned by the Home Office as a key quality of the programme, which is in line with the Feb 2024 Guidance highlighting the remit of PCCs to exercise *“discretion and flexibility to design the IJ services in line with the demands of their local circumstances and needs of their communities.”*

This was accurately reflected in the interviews with delivery partners from both pathways who likewise pointed to past working in the area as a key foundation that had enabled the IJ programme to get underway quickly. This will be discussed further in alongside other key enablers of the programme in the following section.

## 8.2. Enablers

The following section will draw upon the interview evidence detailing the many factors that have enabled the IJ programme to be successful in West Yorkshire. At a glance these factors are:

- The existing Out of Court Disposal framework and other interventions
- Involvement of the Probation Service in the delivery of unpaid work element.
- Involvement of Restorative Solutions CIC in the delivery of restorative justice and education elements.
- The flexibility in the design of the local approach.
- Commitment to a child first and trauma informed working approach.
- Communication and collaboration between delivery partners.
- Work done engaging with the wider community beyond the delivery team.
- Leadership from the combined authority and local councils.
- Familiarity of community service as an analogous approach.
- Passion, dedication and specific expertise of individuals involved.

Many of the enabling factors had synergistic effects, for example, the great flexibility offered to delivery partners in the design of the approach allowed them to take full advantage of existing structures and working relationships to boost the engagement with IJ in West Yorkshire. The evidence pertaining to each of these key enablers of

the work are examined in detail below, insofar as different enabling factors can be disentangled from one another.

Longer subsections begin with a short **Summary** of the **Evidence** before going into greater detail.

### Existing OOCB framework and other interventions

West Yorkshire's existing work in the OOCB space provided the impetus and means to build IJ into OOCB condition setting and referral mechanisms for adults. This was a key enabler as one interviewee described:

*“it’s limited period funding so you can’t put too much in place around it to support it outside of existing structures, you have to rely on what’s in place already.”* Police

1

The other police interviewee also mentioned building on existing work and relationships, as did two interviewees from YJS, and two interviewees from Probation Services, despite not being previously involved in Out of Court working.

One YJS interview specified the existing relationships from OOCB working kickstarted the relationship and cooperative working needed to deliver IJ:

*“(...) those key relationships with stakeholders and partners are already there in terms of our Out of Court Disposal, our Community Safety work, etc. (...)”* YJS

Calderdale

Without a mechanism, system, and police culture in place to handle OOCB referrals, administrating the IJ programme would have been significantly more difficult. While police forces in England and Wales are expected to use OOCBs in line with the statutory two-tier framework<sup>14</sup> introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022<sup>15</sup> – Skills for Justice undertook research in 2022 that found a significant portion of forces were not in a position to be able to meet that statutory expectation within 1-2 years<sup>16</sup>, and some within 3-4 years. West Yorkshire took part in that research and were found to be among the forces with a functional OOCB system for adults which had at least some restorative justice conditions and referral pathways - which was not typical for forces of West Yorkshire's size at the time the research was

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Justice (2022). *Diversionsary and Community Cautions Draft Code of Practice*. [online] Available at: [https://consult.justice.gov.uk/probation-policy/out-of-court-disposals-consultation/supporting\\_documents/diversionaryandcommunitycautionscodeofpractice.pdf](https://consult.justice.gov.uk/probation-policy/out-of-court-disposals-consultation/supporting_documents/diversionaryandcommunitycautionscodeofpractice.pdf). [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

<sup>15</sup> Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, c.32. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/32/contents> [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Justice (2024). *Police use of OOCBs to support adults with health vulnerabilities*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-use-of-oocbs-to-support-adults-with-health-vulnerabilities> [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

conducted. However, more recent evidence collected during this evaluation suggests investment in West Yorkshire Police's OOC system is currently "in need of improvement" with one Police interviewee stating plainly: *"it's not really had the buy in it needs"* (Police 1).

In the child space, YJS widely professed to the advantages of being able to lean on existing interventions and youth programmes:

*"Another positive has been utilising those internal resources so you know we've been able to link in with some of the youth programmes we do which offer those types of interventions as well as other activities. So being able to sort of refer into and link in with opportunities like that."* YJS Wakefield

### The involvement of the Probation Service

It was noted that probation's involvement at all in the delivery of adult unpaid work was not a guaranteed element of IJ in West Yorkshire - and is notably not a feature of the IJ approach in some other IJ pilot areas due to either "willingness or capacity" of local Probation Services (RS, interview).

*"(...) IJ doesn't naturally sit with us because this is an intervention for people that are not yet in the criminal justice system (...) but kind of echoes and resonates with that kind of whole system approach around criminal justice."* Probation Service 2

The involvement of Probation was described as a key asset due to their existing skillset and contact network enabling them to deliver the unpaid work element with less set up than the ground-up approach that other agencies may have needed to employ. While preventative approaches may be regarded as somewhat unconventional to Probation, the achievability in terms of actually delivering unpaid work made it "a sensible fit":

*"(...) we thought "unpaid work"? Perfect. We can easily do that."* Probation Service

### Restorative Solutions CIC being involved

In a similar way to the Probation Service's involvement, the inclusion of Restorative Solutions CIC was also not a guaranteed element, and the existing expertise that they have brought to the project has helped to enable the work. Their history of working in the restorative justice space has many similarities to the way that the IJ programme runs and operates, in terms of referrals through OOC pathways, and methods and aims in terms of counselling/group courses.

They have existing experience in the OOCN space within West Yorkshire - as well as involvement in IJ specifically in two other force areas, Dorset and Merseyside - which also provides opportunities for shared learning between localities and projects.

Notably, Restorative Solutions CIC were involved in West Yorkshire prior to Dorset and Merseyside – it is known significant learning and resources built for West Yorkshire were passed on to both other regions with West Yorkshire combined authority's knowledge and permission.

As the work progressed in all 3 regions, there was some indication learning was shared back from Dorset and Merseyside in order to develop the work done by Restorative Solutions in West Yorkshire. For example, the idea/approach towards developing and sharing internal videos about IJ originally came from work done in Dorset. A proper and comprehensive mapping of shared learning between pilot areas is outside the scope of this local evaluation, but it is valuable to note that such opportunities have presented themselves to the delivery partners and have been engaged.

### The flexibility of the approach

The freedom in implementation given alongside IJ funding allowed the combined authority to take advantage of existing developments of the local OOCN system, align the work with the child first and trauma informed working approach, and to seek out suitable partners to these ends.

This flexibility also allowed the approach to be adaptable, changing in response to challenges in the delivery and employing the creativity of the partners involved:

*“There wasn't a rule book that came with this. There wasn't a manual that came with it, so we have to be creative around how we put things together and it has been nice to be around people who've got this kind of creative manner.” Probation Service*

This was true of both adult and child pathways and significant evidence from the other enablers demonstrates the utility of the flexible working approach.

### Commitment to a Child First and Trauma informed working approach

#### Summary:

The commitment to a Child First and trauma informed working approach which was already present within West Yorkshire had influenced the design of West Yorkshire's IJ implementation. It shifted the work from purely reparative, to reparative and restorative - with aspirations towards prevention and education. While many of these benefits were born out of work performed by YJS in response to children's specific needs – the work performed by Restorative Solutions CIC and Victim Support with adult participants has similar aspirations towards prevention and education in the adult sphere through Community Conferencing and ASB awareness courses respectively.

**Evidence:**

The child first approach within West Yorkshire stems from the Youth Justice Board's commitment to creating a system that:

- Treats children as children.
- Builds children's pro social identities.
- Collaborates with children.
- Diverts them away from stigma.

In an interview with a Research and Evaluation Specialist from West Yorkshire's Violence Reduction Partnership (WY VRP) (who was involved in the initial setup of IJ) it was emphasised that central to the child first approach is consistency that comes from coordination between all services that interact with children.

The flexibility of the IJ approach in part allowed the design of the programme to align with Child First and Trauma-informed work within West Yorkshire, evidenced in the development of ad hoc activities that respect the principles of the child first approach – especially the fostering of a pro-social identity.

*“there's been a big focus that Child First approach (...) it's not always appropriate to take this sort of immediate measures (...) there's a bit more work going on in terms of making sure activities **fit the child's needs and is appropriate** and is in line with what's happened.” YJS Wakefield*

*“(.) rather than it being, you know, sort of washing police cars, we tried to make sure it was something that was **positive for them to be involved in and can sort of help to develop that pro-social identity.**” West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership, Research and Evaluation*

The interview from YJS Wakefield listed the following questions that may go into putting together an appropriate activity that meets a child's needs:

- Can we repair harm in terms of the incident that's taken place?
- Where that's not possible, can we provide an activity that's still relevant to the offence or incident?
- Is that activity suitable for the child according to their specific needs, e.g. medical or special educational needs (SEN)? Do we need to make adaptations? Can we, or do we need to consider an alternative?
- Is there any kind of positive intervention available that raises their understanding and awareness around the subject of the incident?
- If not, is there another positive intervention available that keeps them out of trouble and serves as a development opportunity?

- Taking 3 hours of activity as a baseline, is that proportionate to the offence that's occurred, or does that need to be adjusted up or down?<sup>17</sup>

The process of designing activities involved collaborating with the case worker on the ASB panel, consulting victims where there were victims, and discussing the possibilities with the child and their parents while assessing their needs.

*“we were really clear that they had to be a real difference between children and adults, and we weren't going to have a kind of a real one-size-fits-all” YJS Calderdale*

There were also key differences between the child pathways, such as the way Calderdale differs from the other areas. Instead of linking their youth pathway within Out of Court Disposals, Calderdale instead processed the referral and decision making through their ASB panel only.

This was done to open up the applicability of IJ and allow for a wider variety of potential participants.

*“we wanted to make sure this could be for children before they get to an Out of Court Disposal, if you like. So that's the reason we've done it that way.” YJS Calderdale*

This shifts a portion of undertaken activities from the reparative to the preventative space as they are occurring before an ASB incident or any related offences.

Shared learning occurred where other YJS had seen Calderdale's approach and consulted with them over the possibility of replicating that approach in their region.

It should be acknowledged, as YJS are council-led they are free within West Yorkshire to formulate an approach that best suits the conditions within the particular locality. Whether it be Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds or Wakefield – there will always be some level of differentiation and it's not possible from a governance perspective to ensure that all areas adopt a single approach.

In that sense the flexibility inherent in the design is not necessarily a key decision, but a consequence of the governance of structures surrounding YJS. Regardless, it has still been a key enabler of the work for the reasons listed.

## Communication and collaboration between delivery partners

### Summary:

All partners praised the communication of delivery partners and cited it as a key enabler of the work, with specific reference made to the willingness for organisations

<sup>17</sup> It was noted 4-8 was the original guidance for children, but YJS Wakefield considered this “disproportionate to other work that was happening in the area” and so reduced the baseline.

to give each other their time, the decision made around which stakeholders should be involved (linking heavily with programme leadership), and the systems of communication that had been established to facilitate contact between delivery partners. Two key caveats included the reliance on inefficient spreadsheets to manage referrals (discussed further in challenges), and communication from central government concerning particulars of the pilot.

### Evidence:

Praise for open and shared communication was almost universal, and this was linked heavily with leadership, with a common feeling that “[we] got the right people in the room from the beginning.” While this particular quote is from Leeds City Council, Safer Stronger Communities Team, near identical wording was used by two YJS interviewees, one interviewee from probation, one from Victim Support, and another one from West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership.

*“Every service has been brilliant. Any emails that I send get a really quick response, the meetings flow smoothly, and **things just get done**. I can’t complain about anything that anybody’s done. It’s just the **swift action** that we had to kind of put in place in such a short time and it’s all come together.”* Leeds City Council, Safer Stronger Communities Team

*“(…) having that the **right people around the table** is what enabled us to be able to be able to get the successes that we have.”* West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership, Research and Evaluation

It was also emphasised that consideration of the Child First approach was responsible for deciding which stakeholders should be involved at the outset (interview, Research and Evaluation Specialist, West Yorkshire VRP).

There were small indications that certain partners had closer relationships with a particular partner than others. Probation and West Yorkshire Police’s in particular noted their strong working relationship with one another and were highly complementary of the other’s work, particularly when it came to communication.

*“I think we’ve been quite fortunate really in West Yorkshire in that we’ve had probation as our partner to do the delivery, they’ve been brilliant”* Police 2

*“(…) the success of this approach in West Yorkshire has been strong partnership working, with the police especially (…)”* Probation Service

There was also an acknowledgement that strong communication depended both on skills and systems and that continual development and fostering those relationships would only lead to smoother and more effective working. For the most part, however,

praise for the communication between partners was universal and given without reservation or caveat.

*“we've got a good relationship with our partners, our relationship with probation, our partnership working with them” Police 1*

There was high praise for the monthly all-delivery partner meetings which had been an essential part of getting all the delivery partners around the same table, figuring out issues, embedding systems and making sure the programme could get underway as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Over time this monthly meeting was reduced in frequency. An interviewee from YJS Wakefield noted that the meeting had “developed into best practice sharing” now that the programme had “found its feet” in terms of day-to-day operation.

Regular ad hoc contact between partners had become a staple of the approach where required, with the close proximity of workplaces making meetings easier.

*“At the start, we had a steering group with Combined Authority. However, we started doing new smaller group, a meeting monthly focused on the delivery partners, that was a response to an identified need, which will continue into the second year.”  
Police 2*

One police interviewee suggested the partnership working approach fostered quality work in the adult pathway by allowing the partners to motivate each other through shared oversight. As one interviewee described *“it's a **closed loop** (...) you've made promises to victims, then it's going to get done because those victims are in contact with Victim Support and **they have sight of the work**, as do Restorative Solutions CIC, and so on.”* (Police 2).

There are two significant caveats on communication: first, the use of spreadsheets to manage the referrals process was a significant barrier, which will be discussed further in the challenges section; second, some delivery partners felt that while communication between delivery partners had been a key enabler, there was room for better communication from central government in the setup and planning of the programme. In particular, consultation around what kind of work would be possible beforehand would have been welcome and beneficial to the delivery:

*“(..) it happens all the time, we just get stuff thrown at us and we've got to do it within about like a month. If we had **input earlier in the process** and we all know **what's feasible and what's not**, those first months would have gone smoother” Leeds City Council, Safer Stronger Communities Team*

## Engaging with the community beyond the delivery team

Recurring evidence has pointed to the willingness of delivery partners to carry forward the original government ambition for IJ to be responsive to the needs of the community – particularly in work done as part of the child pathway.

One interviewee from YJS Calderdale took time to explain how IJ had been factored into their wider approach to reducing ASB and, in particular, their work with local businesses and organisations.

*“We also build relationships with supermarkets, but also the kind of prime spots for ASB, like bus stations, train stations. So, we kind of work with those organisations signpost the IJ pathway, but also make sure they know who to call, **what support they need.** Is there anything we can do? Can we target some group work? You know, direct linking with victims.” YJS Calderdale*

Wider engagement also occurred where delivery partners reached out to community organisations to co-develop activities for children. For example, YJS Wakefield pointed to the following contacts they had worked with:

- Football and rugby clubs looking for volunteers either to assist in coaching or supporting grounds and maintenance work.
- Charities like a community shop in Knottingley which organise events focused on helping people below the poverty line.
- Volunteer groups who help to maintain green spaces in Wakefield.

The communication involved in facilitating these opportunities was described as a “two way street” where YJS Wakefield were reaching out to community partners to share information about IJ so they had awareness of the programme, it’s aims, and it’s methods – but community partners aware of the programme were also asked to get in touch with YJS Wakefield to let them know about potential upcoming activities that might stand as opportunities for the IJ programme. “A bit later on” this comms was formalised through a document this communication process could fill in to provide details of any regular recurring activities. YJS Wakefield could use this information to make risk assessments, plan around requirements such as equipment, and form a “standard weekly offer” that had some element of stability and could inform the development of bespoke or ad hoc activities.

In consideration of the short evaluation period, this evaluation has focused particularly on direct delivery partners with formal responsibility for different elements of the programme. However, this evidence suggests that delivery has involved a wider range of community partners with a smaller role in the delivery of activities. This evaluation does not have the resource or scope to chart these many relationships but given their relative importance within the stories shared by delivery partners, this may be a good consideration for future evaluations.

## Leadership from the combined authority and local councils

There was widespread affirmation that strong and focused leadership had worked to embed the foundation of the cooperative partnership between stakeholders at the outset. This was shared by partners across both adult and child pathways.

*“(..) this work between all of the partners which [the Commissioner] started right at the very beginning, **they got everybody that's involved** into the room so that we can have those open discussions, and that has **made all the difference.**”*

Restorative Solutions CIC

*“(..) the way the organisation of the programme has been done from the Commissioner's perspective has been really good as well. We've had regular meetings keeping us updated on what's going on.” YJS Bradford*

Every interview with delivery partners referred to leadership positively, with many citing leadership as a key reason the IJ programme was able to get up and running quickly in West Yorkshire as quickly as it did.

Furthermore, many stakeholders in adult pathway referred directly to the principles of the Mayor of West Yorkshire's Police and Crime Plan in the first instance when describing the purpose and format of the IJ programme. For example, one interviewee set the stage thus, before discussing IJ:

*“Safer Places, Thriving Communities is one of the key priorities of the Mayor's crime plan and one of the objectives of that is around tackling anti-social behaviour at the earliest opportunity.” Probation Service*

They went on to describe several features of the IJ programme and how they align with priorities, including:

- Providing opportunities for victims to weigh in on justice outcomes.
- Visibility of ASB being addressed in the community.
- Prevention and harm reduction as part of a trauma-informed approach.

IJ was widely described in terms of how it had been integrated within wider working, the child first and trauma informed approach, priorities around crime and policing regionally, and how the specific qualities of IJ would help to achieve existing aims.

*“Within IJ, there's the opportunity to divert people away from the courts and to prevent further reoffending of antisocial behaviour in line with our regional aspirations.” Police 2*

The consistency in understanding of the purpose of IJ and how it factored into West Yorkshire's efforts to tackle ASB spoke to strong messaging from leadership on what the programme aimed to accomplish and how.

## Familiarity of community service as an analogous approach

### Summary:

Unpaid work and/or community service are both widely understood definitions that aided the popularity and uptake of IJ conditions in the adult space. However, this was not necessarily the case for work with children, and the restorative element was less widely understood. Work has been and continues to be required by delivery partners to get the messaging correct.

### Evidence:

There was sentiment (primarily from police and probation) that the familiarity of unpaid work to officers has encouraged the uptake and use of IJ as an OOC referral route.

*“It's not technically unpaid work because it's not attached to probation. But it is a kind of unpaid work project where they give something back to the community.”*  
Probation Service

It may not be “unpaid work” by strict definition, but it has been understood and described as unpaid work and/or community service by stakeholders throughout the evaluation - and this has been widely argued to be a good thing. ‘Unpaid work’ is easily understood by delivery partners, community members, officers, and victims - and that has encouraged independent referrals and cleared up uncertainty around participation.

*“Everyone understands what community service is”* Police 2

However, this seems more complicated in the child pathways than the adults, with some stakeholders, one YJS in particular, raising that “IJ” itself may have negative connotations due to the presentation of the programme nationally:

*“IJ... it has its connotations, it's quick, it's humiliating children, it's jumpsuits and picking litter. That's been a barrier, and we've had to get on top of that messaging.”*  
YJS Calderdale

More widely stakeholders acknowledged the imagery of jumpsuits was something the programme needed to “get past” after it was agreed early on that was not the right direction for IJ in West Yorkshire. This was true in the adult pathway too, although to a lesser extent. Whether or not to have IJ unpaid work groups integrated with other unpaid work was discussed in interviews, and it was said a decision was made to avoid this.

This Enabler of easy recognition of unpaid work is also not applicable to the restorative and preventative aspects because stakeholders do not share the same intuitive understanding of the elements that are not unpaid work. This was argued by police interviewees to potentially be a source of low referrals for the adult ASB courses early in the pilot. It impacted on the nature of delivery too, with RS being given responsibility to decide the specific course offered to an individual, reducing the burden on police:

*“[Officers] understood the unpaid work, but the courses weren’t quite as intuitive. So, we’ve essentially changed the condition to be about the completion of an ASB course, and the details are passed on, and then Restorative Solutions CIC determine what’s the most appropriate course for the for the circumstances.”*  
West Yorkshire Police

Additionally, the idea of children doing unpaid work is less immediately understood and appreciated and might create some tension with the child first working approach. In one YJS, the programme title ‘IJ’ had actually been rebranded, as the connotations of IJ did not seem to meet the methods and aspirations and did not send the right message to children.

*“(…) internally we refer to it as the Making it Right programme or Making it Right Hours, just for our internal literature. And obviously if we speak to young people, because it is more, sort of, child friendly language.”* YJS Wakefield

Significant work has needed to be done, and continues to be required, to build and maintain a shared and easily communicable understanding of the restorative courses, counselling, and positive interventions (for children especially):

*“(…) it’s just getting the message across to staff that this is what it is (…) It’s embedding it within the service teams and the stakeholders (…) We we’ve created a newsletter with some nice positive photographs of children or doing the work.”* YJS Bradford

Notably, as part of an effort to develop a clear soundbite summary of the restorative element, Victims Support have taken to describing the Restorative Solutions CIC course as “like a speed awareness, but for ASB”.

### Passion, dedication, and specific expertise of individuals involved

Thematically in keeping with the idea that “the right people” were involved at the outset, there were many instances of stakeholders taking the time to uplift their colleagues and note contributions that had enabled the programme - particularly among the police.

Firstly, a police interviewee took the time to explain the importance of a programme like IJ having a passionate advocate in the police who really believes in the work and goes above and beyond in expressing that:

*“(...) someone on my team who kind of took it on herself and she was **passionate about it** and she really wanted it to work (...) that’s **good for officers** then because they’ve got a **positive message from somebody**, and somebody who goes out of the way to help them (...) it brings that barrier down, because everything’s full of bureaucracy and red tape and all, but if we can do everything that we can for the officers to make it as easy as possible for them, and they know that, **we’ll get that buy in.**” Police 1*

Linking in with previous similar work, the team overseeing OOCs within West Yorkshire Police were well aware that keeping up referrals required regular reminders for officers in order to motivate them to make the referral and keep the pathway fresh in mind. One interviewee listed the following activities officers had recurrently performed in the face of staff shortages:

- Attended briefings to advocate for IJ.
- Attended team training days to raise awareness about IJ.
- Shared materials to outline what IJ is and how it functions.
- Taken RS to events above to outline the ASB course and share an understanding of what’s involved.
- Visited custody suites, particularly on weekends when there’s a higher chance of ASB occurring to advocate for the pathways and make sure “there’s a voice for IJ in the custody suite”.

Another police interviewee described this same situation as thus:

*“there’s been officers who have had a **passion to make it work in really difficult circumstances** because we haven’t been given those additional staff, we have had **a couple of individuals who have really put in the effort**, whether that be over time on the weekend, the same individuals getting that message across.” Police*

Lastly, the particular difficulties of Victim Support dealing with dissatisfied victims were greatly alleviated by their two dedicated staff being ASB case workers moved from a recently closed service that had lost funding.

*“(...) we were fortunate in that we had people who were already trained, and you know, **experienced and experts** in been able to provide that support that was needed.” Victim Support*

While not necessarily an enabler that can be planned around and replicated, it is still worth acknowledging where coincidences worked to enable the programme, especially where expertise and training being in the right place is such a key workforce challenge in this pilot and many other projects.

### 8.3. Barriers and challenges

In addition to the enablers of the programme, there were also a number of barriers and challenges raised. Many of these had been overcome at the time of the evaluation or were still a factor that partners were working around or towards resolving.

Barriers and challenges include:

- The Ambition for 48 Hour total turnaround
- Spreadsheets and the development of systems for sharing referrals
- Allocation of funding and implications for sustainability and recruitment, and how these have been considered
- Workforce challenges and the impact on referral numbers
- Consistency in inclusive consideration of victims wishes

Many of these challenges are closely entangled, for example staffing issues have been in part exacerbated by funding constraints. Each will be explored in depth below, however the way the challenges have been picked apart for analysis is not necessarily reflective of the way these challenges impact on the work, which is often layered and concomitant.

Longer subsections begin with a short **Summary** of the **Evidence** before going into greater detail.

#### The Ambition for 48 Hour total turnaround

##### Summary:

Original IJ documentation set out a “48 hour” target, meaning reparative activity should begin within 48 hours of the offence. All stakeholders dismissed this as impossible for various reasons, citing barriers at every stage of the referral process. However, when the definition was shifted to 48 hours from referral, stakeholders still struggled to the constraints imposed by OOC systems and processes outside the control of delivery partners. The Home Office has recognised this and expressed that the 48 hour target is not considered a KPI, but an affirmation that IJ is committed to rapid turnaround.

##### Evidence:

Police noted the variability in the disposal issuing process:

*“...we might have some offences that were reported in 2023, but they don't get the given the disposal until 2024. That could be due to staffing, it could be due to it was a higher offence originally - but we can only prove a lesser offence, therefore, an OOC resolution is more appropriate than a charge. There's lots of different variables.” Police 1*

Additionally, the current method of sending referrals through to the Probation Service (at the time of interview) relies on the central team putting referrals into a calendar adapted from previous work between Police and Probation. This calendar allows for limited number of entries on set days, and so introduces a set period of delay usually pushing the time between referral and activity far longer than 48 hours: *“that can never be within the two days because of the way that the system's been set up.”*

The evaluator was made aware of ongoing work to update the referral process that was still in the developmental stages. But it seemed unlikely this work would ever have bearing on the 48 hour ambition:

*“(..) it can never be done in 48 hours, just from a staffing point of view” Police 2*

In this sense, the 48 hour ambition remained a challenge, but not one any stakeholder expected to be addressed in literal terms. This does raise some questions about whether or not clearer guidance around expectations and more realistic timeframes should be the focus of activity recording in future revisions of IJ guidance.

## Spreadsheets and the development of systems for sharing referrals

### Summary:

In West Yorkshire the IJ referral approach has depended on a collection of spreadsheets shared between stakeholders to pass on details of individuals, to arrange unpaid work and course activities, and to report IJ activity to central government. The number of sheets, their complexity, and the data protection concerns requiring only certain spreadsheets to be shared with particular stakeholders had become a key administrative burden and challenge to the work – particularly in the adult pathway. Potential solutions included combining spreadsheets, managing access in a more sophisticated manner, integrating referrals into existing IT systems, and producing new dedicated systems to share the required information. At the time of evaluation such work was ongoing, and a move away from a four spreadsheet system had been made – however some issues remained around technical reliability of the systems (shared sheets crashing), and functionality (certain referral pathways (Community Resolutions) need additional integration into police systems in order to support error checking and improve the reliability of data input.)

**Evidence:**

*“(...) every provider apart from probation have their own spreadsheets. We've got the government one through [the CA], then we have Victim Support spreadsheet, then we have Restorative Solutions CIC spreadsheet. Then we have our own (police) spreadsheet.” Police 2<sup>18</sup>*

While this was framed chiefly as a challenge for the police in the adult pathway, many stakeholders raised the number of spreadsheets as a key difficulty of the work, and noted a variety of consequences:

- Human error risk and lack of data validation methods.
- Time investment and inevitable duplication of work.
- Value for money – Police lamented it was highly trained officers completing spreadsheets, with their specialist expertise and skills often going unused.
- Resilience and access – one police interviewee described a situation where a staff member going on sick leave made a spreadsheet temporarily unusable due to technical issues nobody else understood.

The child pathways may be less vulnerable to these issues due to referrals coming through Out of Court panel or ASB panels, rather than only through spreadsheets, and overall lower referral numbers. However, YJS interviewees still raised it as an issue at a somewhat lower frequency than police, Probation Service, and Restorative Solutions CIC.

Police noted nuanced issues with how the referral approach did not interface neatly with existing police processes. For example, Conditional Cautions and Outcome 22s (another deferred prosecution outcome that may, but as of yet does not, work as a referral into IJ) can be double checked on Niche<sup>19</sup>, so even if an Officer forgot to calendar an IJ referral, the West Yorkshire Police team could catch this. However, Community Resolutions, the other OOCDC pathway in West Yorkshire Police's 2-tier system, cannot be searched until “the crime is finalised, and an outcome is decided.” Therefore, it is not possible to search through Community Resolutions for missed IJ opportunities or mistakes.

To attempt to address some of these issues, one interviewee noted they were in the process of looking at getting Community Resolution onto their Pronto system<sup>20</sup>, so that they can search pending CRs, but this was still work in progress at the time of evaluation.

Further possible solutions were also described on varying timeframes:

<sup>18</sup> Note the above was just being phased out at the time of evaluation, in favour of a single spreadsheet and system of controlling access to satisfy data protection.

<sup>19</sup> A Police records management system

<sup>20</sup> Pronto is the most widely deployed mobile Policing solution in the UK. The software-based service integrates with national and local systems, optimising information management in operational Policing.

- Short term (Completed) - A bespoke single spreadsheet for IJ that can use more advanced features of Excel to determine which provider needs what information and present that to them in the format they need, thereby addressing the previous duplication of work and data protection concerns.

*“...somebody who's much better at these things than me built a spreadsheet where certain things are cloaked. So, the one spreadsheet, but **only certain people can see certain things** when they receive it.” Police 2*

There was some sentiment from YJS this had not resolved issues and further work was required:

*“They haven't quite got rid of some of the annoying things on the spreadsheet, but I know there's certain things that they have to capture. It's quite a lot of data that you have to record on each child, and it's one of those spreadsheets that **if you get too many people using it, it just breaks.**” YJS Bradford*

- Medium term – Deeper integrations of IJ referrals into existing police systems, such as getting CRs on Pronto as described above.
- Long term - A non-spreadsheet-based dedicated system capable of monitoring referrals, lawfulness, appropriateness, victim satisfaction, and data security.

*“We need **corporate systems that anyone can access, that we can't put bugs on.**”  
Police 1*

Work towards these changes was described as ‘ongoing’ and ‘in the pipeline’, with a business case raised for the ‘Long term’ objective. But there was some sense there would not be the long term investment needed:

*“When you get a new OOC pathway such as this, it further exposes what those of us in the department already know. **The buy-in isn't there.**” Police 1*

## Allocation of funding and implications for sustainability and recruitment, and how these have been considered

### Summary:

There were three recurring issues with funding raised by delivery partners:

- Funding had limited recruitment and therefore capacity to make referrals and deliver IJ (which ties heavily to the next section in Challenges where this will be discussed further).

- Each pilot area received the same £1m funding, despite West Yorkshire being larger. As such, the region has needed to stretch the same amount of money over a larger area of responsibility and complexity.
- Noted less frequently; partners felt the police had received less funding than they perhaps should have given the essential position of their role in generating referrals and the difficulties experienced due to staff shortages (which is discussed further in the next section).

### Evidence:

Funding arrangements had impacted on recruitment for some partners due to the unpopularity of fixed-term contracts.

*“(...) the recruitment was quite difficult because it’s only 12 months and people with the skills we need **don’t seem to want to sign up for a fixed term contract like that**”  
YJS Bradford*

The funding arrangements had additionally caused difficulty after getting someone in post:

*“The delay in announcing if it’s going to be extended is not particularly helpful for the member of staff who’s working only because of this funding.” YJS Calderdale*

This discussion was usually bookended by the acknowledgement that the police had suffered with significant issues with recruitment (partly due to funding), and this had potentially suppressed referral numbers.

*“(...) everybody wants to try and reduce the amount of work that the police are having to do because the burden on them is huge considering the resource they have available.” Probation Service*

*“you’ve got the police who are the main conduit (...) nothing can happen without the police getting the information and then bringing in the other players” Victim Support*

This problem was expected to be alleviated soon with the recruitment of a new police IJ coordinator.

*“(...) our portion of the funding that we’re receiving is greater than it was last year. So that’s allowed me to fund an immediate just coordinator within my team who’s going to be wholly dedicated to IJ.” Police 1*

This is discussed further in the following section after ‘Funding’.

However, before discussing that in further depth, it should be acknowledged the dip in referral numbers due to police staffing had created some concern that referral numbers might see a sharp uptick soon, and the overall workload required by all partners would also increase, which may strain capacity.

*“If we open the flood gate so to speak, we won't have the capacity to be able to run that (...) we've identified possible avenues, but I think it would be dependent on increasing, you know, staffing.” YJS Wakefield*

Some partners, such as an interviewee from YJS Wakefield, were keen to emphasise that more could be done with more funding and the programme of could be scaled up:

*“if there was additional income or resource to be able to sort of like I say, almost afford to have a coordinator or manager and a facilitator, I think that would just mean you could do so much more.” YJS Wakefield*

Interviewees across delivery partners and programme management noted the equal and yet disproportionate allocation of funding across IJ pilot areas and noted in particular how this had limited scalability and the scope of potential activity:

*“We're the 4th largest force in the country and a million pounds will stretch is a lot less far than it perhaps does in a smaller force (...) we doubtless have more cases, more people eligible, more we could do with it – but everyone gets the same amount of money. I think that's a bit of a design flaw.” Police 2*

There was also the sense that giving every area the same amount of funding did not account for the different needs of the areas involved. Discounting population and geography, there was discussion that ASB is not necessarily as pressing an issue in some regions as it is in others, and so the money had not been targeted in a way that might achieve greatest impact across the nation.

*“(...) everywhere got a million but then you know the different needs of different areas is completely different.” West Yorkshire VRP*

There was also some sense that the restrictions on spending (in year spend, ring-fenced funding) had limited the possible benefits of the programme and introduced risk in terms of sustainability:

*“we're kind of having such a large amount of money pumped into the area and it being in year spend, and ring fence funding, that makes it really challenging,*

*because at the point the funding stops, you're then ripping away a whole load of provision that's been put in place." West Yorkshire VRP*

The ring-fenced nature of the funding also posed some risk for sustainability and future proofing the work, and highlighted uncertainty around building in resilience.

*"(...) if we put a lot of resource, time, and effort into creating this and then suddenly it drops off next March. Then what? How do we manage that side of it?" YJS  
Bradford*

There was also some concern that West Yorkshire had been disadvantaged, as some other areas participating in IJ had also received early Hotspot Response funding. This was additional money for a coinciding programme launched alongside IJ within the Sunak Government's ASB action plan (2023) meant to provide additional hotspot policing focused on tackling ASB, as the name suggests. There was a sense that areas with this funding and IJ funding had a considerable advantage as the extra focus on this specific area of policing would boost the success of both schemes of work, and the spending would unavoidably have a synergistic impact. West Yorkshire Police did eventually receive Hotspot funding from April 2024 in the national roll out.

Lastly, there was an acknowledgement that the funding came in a wider context of downscaling and workforce reduction in some areas, which was speculated to have a potential impact on delivery:

*"we're working on a reduced workforce. You know we we're continuously making cuts within services, so an unintended consequence of that is that we've probably not got everything in place that we should have. There might not have been quite so significant delays in getting referrals going." Leeds City Council, Safer Stronger Communities Team*

This evaluation can validate this to an extent, as a key enabler raised across the delivery partners was the ability to lean on existing systems and expertise. It stands to reason that having lower quality, less robust systems due to downscaling would have had a negative impact on the quality of the programme, although such an impact is not feasible to quantify in this evaluation.

## Workforce challenges and the impact on referral numbers

### Summary:

The funding allocation and other difficulties securing staff for IJ resulted in a cluster of related challenges stemming from a lack of staff (particularly for police, although YJS were also noted in evidence). Staff shortages contributed to inconsistencies in referral

numbers; slow, patchy internal messaging on IJ; and occasional errors in referral spreadsheets due to the lack of admin support. The bulk of these challenges have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed through the recruitment of a dedicated IJ coordinator in the police, although the specific impacts of this development will not be visible in time for consideration in this evaluation period.

### Evidence:

It was recurrently mentioned that YJS had struggled to recruit staff for posts relating to IJ (and also beyond IJ) both due to difficulties attracting applicants due to fixed-term funding and also pause on recruitment in some local authority areas.

*“it's been challenging for a lot of areas, especially like the Youth Justice Service, they've not been able to kind of recruit to the post, they were already struggling nationally to recruit to any posts.” Leeds City Council, Safer Stronger Communities Team*

Meanwhile, all police interviewees expressed a series of challenges stemming from limited staff available to perform tasks related to IJ, which in turn, partly stemmed from limited funding to recruit dedicated IJ staff and the early decision that a dedicated staff member may not be necessary. In contrast to YJS, there was a need for a dedicated staff member within the police that had not been foreseen as part of programme planning, and so the recruitment needed to be decided and undertaken after the fact.

*“We've not had an IJ coordinator; we've had a pre-existing team that's taken this on as an extra task.” Police 2*

Within this pre-existing team who shared IJ responsibilities with other tasks, there was not sufficient resource to complete all duties optimally.

*“we've had to put people on overtime to do the referrals” Police 1*

This notably led to occasional problems that would be expected with staff working “long and unsociable hours”, such as human error when inputting data to spreadsheets. Although, as noted in the Enablers section, some officers took it upon themselves to go above and beyond advocating for the programme and doing all they could to ensure success in difficult circumstances.

Other stakeholders, such as Probation and Victim Support also expressed understanding of these issues and noted the lower proportion of funding allocated to police as a potential cause. This is discussed further in the above section: Allocation of Funding.

One consequence of the lack of funding was the **need to choose between committing resources to the different activities relating to IJ.**

For example, at the time of interview, the recruitment of a dedicated IJ coordinator was noted to have caused a dip in referral numbers. The mechanism went as follows: in the initial stages of the pilot, budget was being allocated to overtime for the team responsible for IJ referrals (OCR team). This overtime was for those officers to go out and examine custody lists and let Officer in Case (OICs) know if they had a case suitable for the IJ pathway, and to encourage them to make a referral, alongside other engagement activities. This boosted engagement with IJ among officers and overall referral numbers: *“you need that constant reminder, a heads up that IJ is available, because it’s not necessarily going to be at the forefront of their minds”* (Police 1).

However, when it was confirmed a dedicated staff member was required by IJ to manage the data responsibilities, the recruitment for that staff member required the budget that had previously been allocated to the overtime activities. As a result, referrals dipped with the end of these overtime activities that had been boosting engagement. It was stressed that with a dedicated IJ coordinator in post, this engagement work could be undertaken in a way that was more consistent and sustainable in the future.

Other workforce challenges faced by the police were reported to be related to the constraints of the way the OOC system is implemented in West Yorkshire and the subsequent burden placed on individual skills needs. For example, with the responsibility for condition setting resting on OICs, each officer requires personal knowledge in the applicability, legality, and benefits of IJ in order to make an independent referral. This was as a significant barrier to early referrals: *“it took a bit of time for the messaging to get out to officers and then to know that they could use this as a condition”* (Police 2).

This delayed messaging may also have had an impact on the type of referrals issued, as it was noted that the unpaid work delivered by Probation was receiving far more referrals than the course delivered by Restorative Solutions CIC (RS). As for why this might have been, the Police pointed to messaging around the pathways, the familiarity of unpaid work, and the relative novelty of the ASB course delivered by RS: *“we can’t give an exact reason, but I think ultimately it’s probably because the unpaid work sticks out in people’s minds”* (Police 1).

In order to remedy the disparity in referrals between pathways, the police were asked to make a Restorative Solutions course a mandatory condition after the unpaid work was completed. However, this compounded on existing resource constraints, as the central team did not have the capacity to enforce OICs to add both conditions when making a referral.

It was highlighted that this could be done with a central OOC team that makes the condition setting decisions for OOCs - but West Yorkshire currently does not have a central OOC team dedicated for that specific arena of policing. Notably, if West Yorkshire police were to implement a central OOC team at some point in the future, this would likely improve the delivery of IJ due to the centralisation of condition setting, and the inherent benefits to consistency and visibility such approaches enjoy in other

forces with centralised disposal systems<sup>21</sup>. However, as stated by the interviewee: “that's changing the whole process of how we do Out of Courts, and we aren't there yet” (Police 1).

There was also some indication staff shortages may have impacted on the quality of victim contact in the adult pathway:

*“Victims are often asked at the time of the offence, when the police are there, whether they want Victim Support, and it's not explained properly all the time. They don't understand what it is, there's too much else going on (..) the police have got so much else going on.” Victim Support*

While the timescale for this evaluation did not extend far enough to examine any effect on referral numbers and overall programme delivery after the new IJ coordinator entered their new post, the higher referral numbers prior to the recruitment period are encouraging and do indicate the overall approach taken by the police to be a successful strategy for addressing the challenges experienced in their delivery of IJ. However, as previously stated, any uptick in referral numbers may create additional pressure on capacity in other partner organisations.

## Consistency in inclusive consideration of victims wishes

### Summary:

The last key challenge experienced by the programme pertains to how victim support is delivered. There was wide agreement that inclusive consideration for the needs and wishes of the victim was an important element of the work – in particular that the victim understand what IJ is and what will be done - but that the programme overall was perhaps not meeting these aspirations.

Stakeholders pointed to a variety of issues, some are unavoidable and addressable due to structural barriers that prevent victims from having a controlling role in justice outcomes. Other issues stemmed from staff shortages, as alluded to above, or procedures within the design of the programme. It was these latter elements that partners hoped could be addressed.

All of this needs to be considered against the backdrop that, broadly, there aren't a lot of victims in incidents referred into IJ, inevitably, as ASB does not always have a direct victims identified, or a number of victims referral numbers will never match the offender numbers. There is also significant uncertainty in exactly how the work of victim support differs from the victim contact undertaken by Restorative Solutions CIC and YJS in the child pathway.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Justice (2024). *Police use of OOCs to support adults with health vulnerabilities*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-use-of-oocds-to-support-adults-with-health-vulnerabilities> [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

**Evidence:**

Victim support praised how victims were raised up at the outset of the work and were recognised by the combined authority to be an important element, which was then shared by the partnership, including in the child pathway:

*“I think we're very fortunate that we've got Commissioners who value the work with victims very highly, and right from the beginning felt that there should be some element of contact and support for victims within this.” Victim Support*

*“there's a very much a focus on the victim side of things in terms of reparation” YJS Wakefield*

Victim Support additionally shared that they were aware other IJ areas did not prioritise the victim's input in the process to the extent West Yorkshire did.

Within West Yorkshire, Victim Support were tasked as part of IJ to deliver support to victims in the following ways:

- Inform the victim of what IJ is and entails.
- Notify the victim when the condition is complete and gauge their satisfaction.

However, after the project got underway and referrals began: “it became quite clear that there was still an element of support required in there” (Victim Support).

These additional requirements included:

- Answering questions around the possibilities, conditions, and what can be done differently.

Over time the overall approach has improved, with more and more information being passed on and Victim Support being better informed and so able to provide more appropriate advice and support:

*“At the beginning we would get very limited information. So, we were trying to ring somebody up to explain about IJ, with no idea what had happened or why.” Victim Support*

However, there were a number of issues raised:

**1) No recourse for refusal/noncompliance via Community Resolution (CR) route (adult pathway)** – There's no possibility to incentivise or further pursue cases where someone was delivered a condition as part of a Community Resolution and then did not do the work (due to there being no possibility to prosecute in a case of non-compliance for CRs.)

*“We will be better being a bit more robust, i.e. conditional caution instead of a ComRes because if they breach this condition then we can go to CPS or we can report them for summons” Police 2*

**2) Low control over outcomes (adult and child pathways)** - Another early issue was if a victim had low satisfaction, or desired a different condition, or preferred an alternative outcome entirely, then *“you have to explain that that's just not possible. If they're not satisfied, there's nowhere to go with that information apart from feeding it back.”*

Because of the messaging around 'IJ' and the connotations around 'repairing damage dealt to the community', there was misunderstanding among victims that they may be able to have a more tangible input on the exact nature of the conditions attached, and work performed by offenders. Probation discussed the decision making around this, while Victim Support and YJS struggled with the feedback from victims on that decision.

*“(...) that [victims choosing conditions] is never going to work because people will request all kinds of things and abuse it” Probation Service*

*“(...) they can't dictate what happens with IJ, which is a difficulty in itself because I think people assume that they can, that they can ask for the fence to be repaired or whatever it may be.” Victim Support*

There is not a clear development pathway towards being able to act on victim feedback, which limits the ability of Victim Support to commit to change: “all we can do is say that we'll try and feed that back” (Victim Support).

This difficulty is further exacerbated, as some victim feedback is acknowledged to be illegal, immoral, or otherwise impossible on any time scale or with any amount of resource. This makes it unrealistic to ensure victim feedback is always incorporated into the design of conditions. There is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the extent to which victims could ever have a realistic impact on the delivery. The wishes of the victim should be taken into account, but it will always be incumbent on the police and partners to ensure that any condition is just, preserves the safety and dignity of the offender, and is properly risk assessed. Conditions are best when they are selected from within a suite of appropriate activities.

**3) Complexity around the different ways victims might get involved** – YJS and Restorative Solutions CIC also have victim contact as part of their work. E.g. Restorative Solutions CIC consult with victims in the design of some courses, and victims may be included in Community Conferencing, which further adds to the overall complexity of the approach and how victims are included. However, it is acknowledged that Community Conferences are a key success story of the IJ approach, and very much worth developing. The key takeaway being that perhaps this contact needs to be folded into clearer messaging about where and how victims have their say, and

more robust measures to gather and collate victim satisfaction and other feedback should be considered.

**4) Limitations in funding/staffing leading to lower quality communication with victims (adult pathway)** - Other issues stemmed from limitations on the police side in terms of staffing and resource:

*“We’re not there yet in terms of that quality of victim contact and communication.”  
Police*

This relates heavily to the above challenges discussed throughout this section.

**6) Victims wishes and child first approach (child pathway)** - There was some feeling that the child first Approach may be in tension with the wishes of victims, especially when it comes to balancing punishment with developing a pro-social identity.

*“(...) if we can get hold of them [victims], we will always consider their views (...) but there’s that fine balance between what the victim wants and what is suitable for that child.” YJS Bradford*

Victims sometimes want harsher and more visible punishments (and these were a large element of the original government proposal, e.g. the use of jumpsuits, washing police cars, etc.). There was strong sentiment that ‘humiliating punishments’ were strongly antithetical to the child first and trauma informed approach, with one interviewee stating plainly: *“that doesn’t improve behaviour, it stigmatises children”* (YJS Wakefield), while another pointed out how this tension had impacted on programme design: *“we all knew that that [jumpsuits and police cars], that’s never going to happen, because it would mean criminalising children”* (LCC, Safer Stronger Communities Team).

#### **Potential opportunities in the victim support space:**

One area for potential improvement may be **better aligning the work of IJ with Victim Support’s other activities in the adult space**. There had been known cases wherein a victim had been contacted as part of other services because a single crime had been referred to them through their main service earlier than the IJ referral had come through for that same crime. Most ASB incidents involve a primary crime, and that primary crime may trigger the initial contact via an automated text from Victim Support, or a call in a situation involving noted vulnerabilities or children.

This leads to a situation where a victim needs to be contacted twice for two different reasons, about the same incident, increasing the burden on Victim Support’s resources and the victim themselves as this duplicate contact may add additional stress or confusion to the situation.

When accounting for the victim work that Restorative Solutions CIC and YJS undertake as well, there's many different avenues of victim engagement which may lead to issues with consistency, some lack of visibility, and therefore data and recording issues.

Another area may be to expand the scope of Victim Support's activities to **include witnesses where it's decided to be relevant:**

*"(...) because numbers are so low in terms of actual victims, but often there might be witnesses to events... that can be quite difficult and quite traumatic and whether we should be also looking at accepting referrals of witnesses I think should be discussed." Victim Support*

As an addendum to the above, some evidence also calls into question the value of victim satisfaction as a blanket performance metric; victims may have differing feelings on their satisfaction when discussing different elements of their experience with IJ, and there's some indication this is not being picked up from existing work.

The small volume of evidence collected within this evaluation period directly from victims points to the following ways satisfaction can differ for the same victim:

- Satisfaction with their experience in dealing with different stakeholders, e.g. one victim was negative on their experience with police, and highly positive on their experience with victim support.
- Satisfaction with the information provided to them.
- Satisfaction with the available condition options.
- Satisfaction with the proportionality of the punishment.

This may suggest that the approach to collecting victim feedback needs a greater level acuity to pick out where improvements can be made. Consideration must be given as to how this differs from areas where the victims' wishes cannot be more concretely taken on board in decision making as a matter of ethics and legality.

## 8.4. Lessons Learned

This section picks out some of the key lessons learned that have come out of the evidence gathered in this evaluation:

- The best way to contact participants for compliance and evaluation
- Anticipating workload of referral pathways and resource required
- Building new ways of inter-organisational working
- Best way to get the word out on opportunities and good practice
- Embedding IJ into the wider system approach

Many of these build on evidence captured in the barriers and enablers sections above, as inevitably, in any discussion of barriers, there are many implied lessons learned in the response taken in addressing those barriers. However, when survey respondents and interviewees were specifically asked questions pertaining to learning and lessons learned, the following themes emerged.

As a result, this is not a comprehensive list of the learning that had taken place during the project, but rather the learning that stakeholders felt was important to discuss when the topic of learning was raised.

### The best way to contact participants for compliance and evaluation

An early learning point raised by delivery partners was the need for services to contact participants in order to make arrangements and bookings for unpaid work and restorative justice courses.

*“beforehand the offender had to ring the provider, but now the provider rings the offender because we've learned that's the best way of dealing with it in terms of dealing with the referral, the management of the person, and improving compliance.”*  
Police 2

Putting the responsibility on participants to get in touch with services after a referral is a key pitfall that has been successfully avoided. This type of decision may seem obvious in retrospect, but previous evaluations of OOC referral pathways to address criminogenic needs found this was not always the case, especially for adults.

Some learning has also been passed on that is pertinent to future evaluation work; Victim Support were asked by Ipsos Mori as part of the national evaluation to ask victims if they were open to being contacted after the fact for evaluation purposes and all of the victims that were asked said “No” – it’s not known exactly how many victims were asked, only that the negative response was so consistent, victim support decided to stop asking.

This was mirrored in the same interviewee's experience delivering the courses with Restorative Solutions CIC:

*“there's also a consent form for the people who attend the awareness courses, whether they'd be willing to be contacted in the future, they've all said 'no' too - and I think it's probably the general feeling, I get is that most people are like, 'Do you know what? It's done. I want to put it behind me. I don't want to be reminded of it again.’” Restorative Solutions CIC*

When attempting to gather evaluation evidence from programme participants; evaluation evidence should be gathered during other programme contact, during or after courses and unpaid work, on the same day – rather than relying on a separate occasion, such as a telephone interviews, or an after-the-fact survey.

### Anticipating the workload of referral pathways and resource required

Some stakeholders, notably in the adult pathway, initially did not have accurate assessments of the workload required to set up a new referral pathway and the demand this would place on them. Notably, this was the first time the Probation Service had been involved in the out of court space and so the opportunity presented a lot of new learning for them. However, it is unclear if this learning will be put into practice given the rarity of new similar pathways being setup.

*“This is the first time, I guess I've seen a new pathway come in and seen the pressure it's put on people.” Probation Service*

Some police stakeholders were veterans in the OOC space with extensive experience. However, organisationally, initial underestimates of the work involved meant that the police did not initially feel the need for a dedicated member of staff solely for the IJ programme.

*“I guess what this shows is actually those of us that are operational. With it, we need to have a lot more engagement in the development (...) to say, 'actually this is what this will entail.’” Police 2*

Over the first year of the pilot, it was decided otherwise, and at the time of the evaluation a dedicated IJ coordinator was newly appointed.

*“I think there was a misunderstanding though of the work that this entailed... we now know, actually this needs a dedicated worker. It needs a dedicated worker in terms of keeping the information and the data clear and concise.” Police*

The impact of this dedicated staff member should be one consideration for future evaluations.

### Building new ways of inter-organisational working

While stakeholders such as probation and the police had an existing partnership post-court, this programme marked the first time they had worked together pre-court, or out of court. This presented a new way of working which both stakeholders reported as successful and worthwhile.

*“it’s been good, because we’ve established a new type of relationship with [the police] pre court and not post.” Probation Service*

There were also new ways of working going on between Victim Support and Restorative Solutions CIC, with the former having a staff member attend and help to deliver RS courses and Community Conferences. This represented a key pathway in which the voices of victims were incorporated into the design of activities, albeit indirectly. Victim Support, having dealt extensively with the grievances and concerns of victims, came into the partnership hoping to ensure those issues were highlighted in the ASB awareness course. Of particular importance was making sure offenders/participants were aware of the impact ASB had on victims and members of the community, that’s not just “having a laugh”, or “jokes”, and that they could come to see the incident they had created from the victims’ perspectives.

*“So, there were a lot of modifying and modification made to the presentations. And then we were asked to assist, really.” Victim Support*

This learning point is less relevant for the child pathways, possibly as much of the ad hoc support work undertaken by YJS does not differ from other available youth programmes in the restorative space as starkly as IJ differs from Probation’s normal remit – in terms of administration and referrals.

### Best way to get the word out on opportunities and good practice

Delivery partners have undertaken significant work to share the word on how their IJ work is progressing (between the adult and child pathways too). The key example of this work is the regular delivery partner meetings which were set up by the delivery partners to stay in touch and regularly come together to share learning.

An example of less well-known contact is discussed in the ‘Enablers’ section, wherein one YJS had reached out to community partners such as schools, supermarkets, and bus/train stations to highlight the purpose of IJ and the opportunities, while trying to set up new relationships to facilitate the development of IJ activities.

There had also been the development of internal and external documentation; Restorative Solutions CIC had developed a leaflet and had readily shared this with YJS Wakefield who was attempting to do the same.

*“[YJS Wakefield] wanted to do a leaflet and basically to get out to people, but [they] was like, I don't even know where to begin, so Restorative Solutions CIC had said, well, you can have a look at ours. Ours were complete. So, it's sent that over to him. So, do you know if there's any information you need? So, it's more about information sharing, but also seeing what does and doesn't work for each individual. Not just the individual members of staff, but obviously the different roles within the IJ project.”*

YJS Bradford

This is one of the many examples of strong communication and collaboration between partners, which also provides evidence of the learning that had occurred in developing project materials and using those materials to support the wider engagement of the community and relevant stakeholders. Some stakeholders in both adult and child pathways suggested the development of a full programme newsletter would keep the community informed on recent developments, activities and opportunities.

### Embedding IJ into the wider approach

Programme leads emphasised the need continually to embed IJ into wider working, with a key risk of the project being the sudden closure of activities following a cessation of funding. One solution would be the integration of IJ into other schemes of work within the region, as without this work the potential cessation of IJ activities presents a serious risk:

*“(..) the impact will be dire if the pilot just stops. We've started this piece of work there's been a lot of work on into it, there's been so much good practise, and you look at all the knife crime it's clear we really need to be putting more funding in and around the early intervention and prevention stage (...) this is important work (...) anything we can do to prevent disordered and criminal behaviour from escalating at the beginning is a hugely beneficial for all services.”*

Leeds City Council, Safer  
Stronger Communities Team

Partners widely recognised the need for integrating criminal justice working into a full system approach, and also highlighted how they were pursuing wider collaborations for the purpose of expanding the IJ scheme of work. There was a sense that, with organisational relationships and activities in place, the substance of the IJ programme (similar activities with similar aims and aspirations) could take place through other means, in other forms, and by other names.

*“I've moved over to the service and not just for IJ, but almost as sort of like a programme lead for youth diversion opportunities. So, it's sort of, thinking, will this be the beginnings of a wider project (...) what opportunities are there within Wakefield for young people in our service, whether that's stuff that we can deliver internally, whether that sort of externally funded programmes, or whether that sort of opportunities that other Community Partners and providers offer.” YJS Wakefield*

There was also wide consideration of where there are gaps in the IJ programme in terms of mission – such as the question of how IJ may be adapted to better provide support to offenders/participants with health vulnerabilities. Victim support dedicated a large portion of their interview considering:

- Where does IJ sit within the broader scheme of out of court outcomes? (Are alternatives being displaced by IJ within the broader scheme of referral pathways that could be better suited to address vulnerabilities?)
- Are there additional conditions that could be attached in situations wherein offending is linked to health vulnerabilities?
- Is it possible to set up referral pathways to other partners in health and social care?

The discussion referenced West Yorkshire’s mission to put forward trauma-informed service, and a full-system approach to justice challenges.

*“(...) we're seeing a lot come in with substance misuse attached, it makes you wonder, so and so gets IJ, OK, what else is done? (...) If they've got an alcohol problem that's motivating their ASB, they might do the 20 hours, but they'll soon be back on that.”*

*“It's, what's the wider holistic offer, and referring into extra services.”*

*“Exactly.”*

*“A little input from IJ just as isn't going to totally turn that person around, if they've got serious health vulnerabilities and need long term support.”*

*Probation Service, 2 interviewees discussing*

There are risks in introducing that additional complexity under the banner of IJ:

- Additional administrative burden, especially on the police.
- Potentially diluting the messaging around the programme if vulnerabilities become a key focus in place of reparation for the community.
- Additional conditions or requirements may reduce compliance.

However, addressing health vulnerabilities is a feature of a trauma informed approach and does have a significant impact on reoffending<sup>2223</sup>. This would indicate the potential for IJ to develop in a direction that links with other referral pathways or otherwise overtly acknowledges secondary referrals to appropriate services for specific health vulnerabilities.

There was also discussion raised about potential opportunities to address ASB at different stages of disorder – several YJS notably had emphasised that IJ was not doing enough in the preventative space, and took steps to try and rectify this, with YJS Calderdale notably not taking referrals through OOCN pathways, but through their ASB panel in order to make sure children could be involved prior to criminal offences taking place.

However, other stakeholders wondered if this was enough, for example one Probation Service interview called attention to the potential lack of an ‘entry level’ intervention:

*“we talk around early intervention and prevention for those that are committing Antisocial Behaviour, do we need to be focusing on something more entry level because we need to stop that behaviour escalating” Probation Service*

Victim support pointed to the ongoing need to level up education around anti-social behaviour:

*“(..) from our point of view they needed to be some more information regarding what anti-social behaviour it is (...) making it easy to understand because a lot of people either didn't understand how their crime fitted into it or even they'd been antisocial, as daft as it sounds.” Victim Support*

It's possible this is not a significant gap, but rather the full system approach to ASB within West Yorkshire could benefit slightly better articulation and communication to some stakeholders of the different pockets of work occurring.

Lastly, there was some thought given to the information required for setting up IJ and what would potentially benefit new areas, regions, or services in setting up similar work, namely a framework or template for them to take on board and modify as needed:

*“I do believe that having some sort of framework for the services to use to then be able to localise, it's quite important (...) Even just to give the services a bit of*

<sup>22</sup> Kane, E., Evans, E., Shokraneh, F. (2017), Effectiveness of current policing-related mental health interventions in England and Wales and Crisis Intervention Teams as a future potential model: a systematic review. *Systematic Reviews*, 6, 85, 108-119. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-017-0478-7>

<sup>23</sup> Forrester, A., Samele, C., Slade, K., Craig, T., Valmaggia, L. (2016), Demographic and clinical characteristics of 1092 consecutive police custody mental health referrals. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 28(3), 295–312. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2016.1269357>

*structure and you know. 'This is the way we'd like you to operate, you know, these are the types of things we'd like you to do.' And then I suppose again, consistency in terms of resource materials, types of activities and you know if there was any sort of like benchmark or example of providers and activities." YJS Wakefield*

While the evaluation acknowledges a best-practice-sharing exercise such as this described above would certainly be helpful, it is important to recognise that a lot of the enablers of IJ in West Yorkshire have come about due to the flexibility of the remit, and the creativity of the organisations involved. Providing a 'framework' may serve to stifle some of that flexibility and creativity, however sharing case studies and stories from the development of IJ in West Yorkshire without the risk of them feeling prescriptive or leading would certainly be a worthwhile task for future evaluation activity.

## 8.5. Future evaluation goals

The following section describes possible future evaluation goals for IJ within West Yorkshire based on worthwhile evidence that was not able to be collected as part of this evaluation period, or research questions raised by this evidence:

- Diving deeper into different local authority areas within West Yorkshire
- Introducing more long term evaluation methods to gather participant experiences
- Auditing missed opportunities
- Putting in the groundwork to examine reoffending data
- Considering interim outcomes for the short and medium term

### Diving deeper into different local authority areas within West Yorkshire

Given the flexibility of the programme, the different approaches undertaken within areas of West Yorkshire will have employed different community partners, been delivered through different staffing arrangements, in different locations, using different activities. While not confirmed in this evaluation period, it seems possible that these differences will result in some different outcomes, which will be - to some extent, unavoidable. However, understanding these differences and any potential implications for outcomes would be highly desirable for picking out learning points and sharing best practices.

The mapping of referral pathways undertaken as part of the implementation of the pilot were found to be out of date in some cases. Updating these maps and incorporating them into a possible Theory of Change for IJ in West Yorkshire may aid efforts to understand the shape of the work across the region, and aid work to better integrate IJ into the wider system approach.

## Plotting work undertaken by delivery partners including community organisations or other actors in delivery

Evidence was uncovered that some delivery partners, particularly YJS, had begun fostering a network of community partners to spread the word about IJ and also collaborating with those community partners in the development of interventions and activities.

There was some indication that this work was not neatly ring-fenced within IJ, but instead IJ had become an integrated part of the wider approach of YJS to provide good opportunities for children through whatever means were available across the system.

Plotting the extent of these collaborations would be a significant asset in understanding how IJ can be integrated into the wider system approach, which would in turn aid future sustainability and resilience building efforts.

## Introducing more long term evaluation methods to gather participant experiences

This evaluation has relied on second hand data and convenience sampling in order to get some feedback from participants. Delivery partners have expressed second hand feedback, for example:

*“They did some group work, and we’ve got some feedback directly from children and parents and it was positive” YJS Bradford*

Future evaluations should look to implement long term measures to collect participant, victim, and community feedback – in a way that such feedback can be validated. For example, through similar research methods, but using the collection of personal data to validate, or through other primary research methods and direct contact between evaluators and the above stakeholder groups.

It was repeatedly identified that evidence for the evaluation should be captured as close to the point where IJ activities take place, as victims typically do not want to be reminded of the programme after the fact. Furthermore, adults are less likely to be re-engaged following the programme, and YJS noted children responded well to the finality of their participation:

*“it’s not prolonged. It’s kind of OK we know you’ve made a mistake. Let’s not go on about it. Let’s do this. Let’s look at what we what we, how we can support you. And that’s the end.” YJS Calderdale*

When it was suggested in discussions that YJS could help with the outreach to children and families, it was noted that bringing up the incidents again a significant time after the fact may feel like “unfair punishment.”

There were also significant GDPR and data protection concerns during this evaluation period, and this is why legacy participants or victims were not contacted directly by the evaluator (their contact details were not explicitly collected for that purpose, so there was no informed consent, or way to establish informed consent after the fact). Future evaluations should seek to establish informed consent for evaluation purposes.

### Auditing missed opportunities

In the OOC space, the initial referral has a significant impact on outcomes. The decisions made about which offender is provided which opportunity is very significant, but also often opaque. Some stakeholders expressed a little anxiety about this unknown element of the work:

*“I suppose the question, and I can't, I can't put a figure on this. I don't suppose anyone ever could. The question is what you know? What haven't we done? (...) Have we stopped them doing something else, another condition that may have been more effective?” YJS Calderdale*

However, this problem is understood more widely in the OOC space, and there are activities that can be done to uncover referral decisions and improve the consistency and applicability of referrals.

In other work in the OOC space (not related to IJ) one potential evaluation activity has been working with the police to audit missed opportunities, or in other words, to revisit a sample of cases to see if there are occurrences where a disposal option may have been appropriate, but was not used, for whatever reason. This can be an indicator to pinpoint potential areas where more referrals could have occurred, but have not, 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.

This can also inform work done on integrating IJ into the wider system approach, as it can be deduced not only where IJ referrals were potentially missed, but also where other conditions may have been more appropriate.

### Putting in the groundwork to examine reoffending data

The IJ programme in West Yorkshire is not currently able to examine reoffending data as the programme has not operated for a sufficient length of time to be able to chart reoffending incidences. Examining reoffending data eventually would be highly desirable as an indicator of the impact of IJ on ASB incidences within the region, and so laying the groundwork to ensure the necessary data are collected and available when such a time arrives to perform the analysis.

In order for this to be possible, police data will need to be examined, unique identifiers will need to be applied to IJ activity recording data, and it is suggested here, data should be able to pinpoint:

- Arrest and voluntary attendance rates
  - % of offenders within 12 months of the OOCd disposal date
  - Breakdown offence type (new offence by old), new incidences of ASB offences vs. other offending types
  - Length of time between initial offence/incident and re-arrest or second incident (mean days)
- Conviction
  - % offenders with a conviction within 18 months of the OOCd disposal date, for an offence committed within 12 months
  - Breakdown offence type (new offence by old)
  - How long to conviction or reconviction (mean days)

The above could be used to predict how likely someone is to offend or engage in ASB based on previous behaviour and demographics<sup>24</sup>, using a predictor (such as OGRS4, etc).<sup>25</sup>

Notably some YJS were in a position to offer reoffending data and predictive analysis based on requirements of other programmes they were involved in due to their reporting obligations to the Youth Justice Board.

*“If we were asked for reoffending data, we could provide that quite easily. But it's not something we routinely do, but we could provide if someone asked us, next year, how many who had IJ would we expect to re-offend, we could provide that quite easily, because we do it for other Out of Courts in our reporting for the Youth Justice Board.” YJS Calderdale*

### Considering interim outcomes for the short and medium term

Available data gathered as part of financial reporting has been examined in the companion report looking at the available quantitative data regarding IJ in West Yorkshire.

However, other evaluative measures should be considered, and given that long term reoffending data is not available, it is worth including short and medium term outcomes in the interim, for future evaluation periods.

<sup>24</sup> There are already indications of this in the existing data (see quant report), implying there are strong possibilities for this work.

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Justice (2019) *Guide to Proven Reoffending Statistics*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5cc099c440f0b64033920e26/guide-to-proven-reoffending-statistics-Apr19.pdf>.

Two such outcomes are already available for consideration:

- Short term: Compliance data
- Medium term: Victim satisfaction

However, evidence from this evaluation has suggested victim satisfaction has key weaknesses, as there are not always victims in ASB incidents, and where there are victims, those victims do not necessarily wish to be involved in the disposal, decision making, or evaluation activity, and victims have complex feelings about the situation due to the wide variety of stakeholders involved and multiple conditions (unpaid work and education courses).

This suggests future work is needed to develop victim satisfaction as a metric as it pertains to IJ.

Meanwhile, other medium term outcomes could be considered for future evaluations, 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, improved substance use, or evidence of a greater pro-social identity, etc.?

Future evaluations should decide upon medium term outcomes, sources, and metrics in order to measure them, and put in place research methods in order to track these outcomes longitudinally.

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## Appendices:

1. Survey questions
2. Interview questions

Skills for  
**Justice**

Head office  
Vertigo, Cheese Lane,  
Bristol, BS2 0JJ  
Tel: 0117 922 1155  
[skillsforjustice.org.uk](http://skillsforjustice.org.uk)