



Communities
& Justice

Youth Justice NSW

Disability Action Plan 2021-2024



Contents

Foreword	3	4 Consultation and stakeholder engagement	11
A Message from the Executive Director of Youth Justice NSW	3		
1 Overview	4	5 Collaboration	12
Guiding principles	6	Young people's voices	12
Legislative and Policy Frameworks:	6	Involving young people in developing responses	13
2 Young people with disability in Youth Justice	7	6 Monitoring and Evaluation	14
Impact of disabilities on young people in Youth Justice: Communication and language	8	7 Youth Justice NSW Disability Action Plan 2021-2024	15
Mental health and disability	8	1. Strengthening Partnerships	18
The impact of trauma on a person's mental health or disability	9	2. Early Intervention and Diversion	21
Young Aboriginal people and disability	9	3. Workforce Capability	25
		4. Improving the Evidence	28
		5. Service Delivery	31
		6. Rights and Inclusion	34
3 Data and information sources	10		
The Disability Issues Paper	10		



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Youth Justice NSW acknowledges the many Traditional Custodians and language groups of NSW. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Elders past and present, and we acknowledge those of the future, for they will hold the memories, traditions and hopes of Aboriginal Australians. We also pay respect to Aboriginal colleagues, stakeholders and customers. We particularly acknowledge all First Nations people with disability and their carers.



Foreword

A Message from the Executive Director of Youth Justice NSW

I am pleased to present the Youth Justice Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2021-2024. This Plan seeks to put young people with disability at the centre of our service response.

The actions that will be delivered over the next three years are based on what young people, their families, carers, and our staff who work with them have told us, our research and the extensive input that a great number of our partners have provided us. I am grateful to everyone who has had a hand in the development of this Action Plan. Thank you for sharing your skills and expertise to help us continually improve the way we work with young people.

Our goal at Youth Justice is to provide a service that is tailored to the needs of each young person, that is holistic in its understanding of the young person, and genuinely helps young people reach their potential, fully participating in and contributing to social and economic life.

Our young people, their families and carers are some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in the New South Wales community. Many young people that come into contact with Youth Justice face multiple challenges – living with disability, mental illness, and other complex needs – that can have long-term impacts on the trajectory of their lives. Youth Justice is committed to working with young people as individuals; to respond to their needs in ways that uphold their rights to equitable and accessible service delivery. The DAP, together with the Youth Justice Aboriginal Strategic Plan, the Safety and Empowerment Work Program, the Domestic and Family Violence Strategy and the Youth Justice Multicultural strategies, actively seeks to address these challenges for our clients and make sure they receive the service response they have a right to.

We know that one in six of the young people we work with have a disability. Eight in ten have language skills described as 'below average'. More than eight in ten of our young people have at least one mental health disorder and nearly seven in every ten have experienced trauma.

There is significant over-representation of young people in contact with the youth justice system with disability, mental ill health, trauma and other complex needs. This demonstrates a need to keep reflecting on how we are supporting our young people, listening to them and their families or carers, and working together with our service delivery partners to provide holistic care and support to young people. I have great respect for how hard our staff work to help improve outcomes, life circumstances and opportunities for each young person we work with.

Youth Justice understands that timely support and intervention – the right support at the right time – can positively influence the trajectory of a young person's life. We've seen it happen time and again. Youth Justice staff work hard every day to divert young people away from the youth justice system and make sure our young people with disability and/or mental ill health have equitable access and choice to the same opportunities as everyone else. Our staff have helped us identify what they need to provide support to young people with disability or mental ill health; the actions addressing our workforce capability will provide our staff with more focused training and development and the tools they need to support young people.

As I write these words and this Youth Justice NSW Disability Action Plan is released, I am acutely conscious of its place in the broader program of reform and modernisation at Youth Justice. These are exciting and motivating times to be working with our young people and I acknowledge and respect the ongoing commitment to young people our staff show every day.

I look forward to the actions in the Disability Action Plan contributing to young people reaching their potential.

Paul O'Reilly

Executive Director
Youth Justice NSW



Overview

The Youth Justice Disability Action Plan (DAP) is designed to improve the services and supports Youth Justice NSW provide to young people with disability. Young people with disability are particularly vulnerable within the NSW community and a high proportion of young people with disability come into contact with the youth justice system.

The DAP identifies actions that Youth Justice will take to deliver more holistic and tailored services and supports to divert young people with disability from, and to support those already in contact with, the youth justice system.

This Plan demonstrates how Youth Justice will support young people with disability, through engagement that is youth centric, inclusive of diversity and cultural considerations and that considers levels of understanding and comprehension. The voices of young people and their families will be reflected in service delivery and continuous improvement.

The Plan is underpinned by six key themes and identifies outcomes with clear objectives. The Plan will be delivered over a three-year period from 2021 to 2024.

The DAP actions involve an organisation-wide approach and will be led by the existing Disability Working Group with representation from the Operational Development and Training Unit, the Policy and Practice Directorate, the Custodial Services Team, the Strategic Projects Unit and Youth Justice staff who work directly with young people.

Youth Justice will continue to collaborate with key internal and external stakeholders including the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network and many others, who have been instrumental in the development of the DAP to ensure a continuous improvement approach is taken to support young people with disability.

Themes	Outcomes	Objective(s)
 <p>1. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS</p>	A coordinated and collaborative service response.	Youth Justice adopts a co-design approach to the development and implementation of service provision that brings together young people with disability, their families, carers, service providers, peak bodies and advocacy groups including Aboriginal peak bodies and advocates, staff, local community and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
 <p>2. EARLY INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION</p>	Young people with disability are diverted from the criminal justice system through early identification and timely supports.	<p>Early intervention and diversion options identify and support young people with disability.</p> <p>Barriers to equitable service access for young people with disability are identified and removed at the earliest point.</p>
 <p>3. WORKFORCE CAPABILITY</p>	Young people with disability are quickly identified and supported by Youth Justice staff and Justice Health experts.	Youth Justice staff working with young people with disability are supported and equipped to recognise and respond to the individual needs of a young person with disability, including their physical, emotional, communication, cultural, social and therapeutic requirements.
 <p>4. IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE</p>	Streamlined processes for research, recording and reporting.	Information relating to the individual support needs of young people with disability is accurately, respectfully and appropriately collected. Records are accessible to appropriate stakeholders, ensuring implementation of timely and targeted supports.
 <p>5. SERVICE DELIVERY</p>	Effective, evidence-based interventions and programs are delivered to, and tailored for, young people with disability.	<p>Young people with disability receive a service from Youth Justice that is equitable, accessible, responsive to their needs and developed in partnership with the young person with a disability and, where appropriate, their families and carers.</p> <p>A young person's disability is identified, and they receive timely and appropriate supports.</p>
 <p>6. RIGHTS AND INCLUSION</p>	Young people with disability are at the centre of decisions relating to them and they are included, heard, respected, and safe while in contact with Youth Justice.	<p>Youth Justice programs, tools and documents are youth-centric and modified to meet the communication and cognitive needs of young people with disability.</p> <p>Youth Justice service development and delivery is informed by young people with disability.</p> <p>The safety, dignity, rights and voices of young people with disability are upheld and supported.</p>

Guiding principles

All actions of the Youth Justice DAP seek to:

- Recognise and **respond to the complex needs** and experience of young people's disability, mental health and trauma.
- Be **youth-centric** – This recognises that young people with lived experience of Youth Justice and/or disability and mental health issues are central to the service they receive. They are consulted, their voices are heard, they are involved in co-designing a service that focuses on what's important to them.
- Be **culturally sensitive** – The actions will consider and incorporate the experiences and needs of young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Principles of cultural safety and sensitivity underpin the DAP actions.
- Recognise **families and carers** as central to a young person's care needs and support network.
- **Align** with the broader Youth Justice NSW organisational service delivery principles.
- Take a **collaborative** approach with our partners.
- Be **evidence-informed**.

Legislative and Policy Frameworks:

The DAP aligns with the NSW Government Disability Action Plan and the Department of Communities and Justice Disability Inclusion Action Plan which promote disability inclusion across all services, policies, and programs. The focus of these plans is to create a more inclusive community that supports people with disability to achieve their full potential and removes barriers to services and supports.






Youth Justice has a responsibility to uphold the rights of all young people including young people with disability which are articulated in the:

- Youth Justice Child Safe Policy Framework 2020
- UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Government Sector Employment Act 2013 (NSW)
- Victims' Rights and Support Act 2013 (NSW)
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice 1985 (Beijing Rules)
- United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty
- Social Model of Disability 1990
- Framework for Recovery-orientated mental health Services
- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration
- National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing

2

Young people with disability in Youth Justice

The Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network and Youth Justice **Young People in Custody Health Survey 2015** (YPICHS) provides a snapshot of the of disability and mental health issues experienced by young people in contact with Youth Justice in NSW. In summary:

				
1 in 6	80%	83%	68%	92%
One in six young people surveyed had a potential intellectual disability, which is nearly five times higher than the general population prevalence ¹	80% of young people surveyed had below average language skills	83% of young people surveyed had at least one mental health disorder	68% had experienced abuse or neglect	92% used drugs or alcohol

1 Weschler, D. (2005). Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) - Australian Standardised Edition with Population Norms. Sydney, NSW: Pearson.



Impact of disabilities on young people in Youth Justice: Communication and language

It is common for communication and language difficulties to be masked. People with disabilities can present with avoidant or difficult-to-manage behaviours. This contributes to the under-identification of speech, language and communication needs among young people in contact with Youth Justice.

Unmet speech, language and communication needs can contribute to specific psychological and behavioural consequences including irritability and aggression (in part due to frustration and/or a limited repertoire of appropriate behavioural responses), limited attention, concentration and/or self-regulation, reduced responsiveness/lack of spontaneity, increased risk of anxiety or depression and self-harm, reduced self-esteem and reduced quality of life.² This can increase the likelihood of young people disengaging from school and education and becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. This is a well-documented trajectory, often referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline.³

Unrecognised or unsupported speech, language and communication needs often have negative consequences for young people's ability to engage with others. This also makes it more

challenging for those working in the youth justice system to respond appropriately to the young person's needs, which in turn can have an impact on a young person's interaction with legal and court processes, such as investigative interviews and understanding of legal concepts.

Mental health and disability

The comorbidity of cognitive disability and mental health issues can be difficult to diagnose and can remain undetected. Young people with disability have reported their mental health issues are being ignored or not taken seriously or recognised.⁴ Mental health issues can be misinterpreted as being part of the person's disability, and so are not acknowledged, or the young person is not provided with the necessary treatment or support. Conversely, a mental health diagnosis can mask underlying neurodevelopmental impairments. In recognition of this, Youth Justice will improve the screening for mental health issues and trauma that can be used at different stages of a young person's contact with Youth Justice. Youth Justice will work with NSW Police to have these resources available from the earliest stages of a young person's contact with the youth justice system to ensure an appropriate response.

2 Cohen, N., Vallance, D., Barwick, M., Im, N., Menna, R., Hordezyk, N., & Isaacson, L. (2000). The interface between ADHD and language impairment: An examination of language, achievement, and cognitive processing. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41, 353-362. doi: 10.1111/1469-7610.00619

Botting N., Durkin K., Toseeb U., Pickles A., & Conti-Ramsden G. (2016). Emotional health, support, and self-efficacy in young adults with a history of language impairment. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 34, 538-554. doi: 10.1111/bjdp.12148

3 Christle, C.A., Jolivet, K., & Nelson, C.M. (2005). Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline: Identifying School Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Delinquency, *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, 13(2), 69-88. doi: 10.1207/s15327035ex1302_2

4 Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People external stakeholder feedback: 25 Jan 2021

The impact of trauma on a person's mental health or disability

The impact of complex trauma on the neurological development of young people, which manifests in their behaviour, can be significant. A person's experience of trauma can contribute to the development of mental illness and exacerbate existing disorders. Intervening early in these areas can positively affect a child's life trajectory.⁵

The effects of trauma on the developing brain are well documented and include underdevelopment of empathy, emotion regulation, pro-social skills, communication skills, concentration and executive functioning (the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully). Seemingly maladaptive behaviour may be a young person's (unconscious) response to trauma. In these situations, the assumption should not be that the young person doesn't do the right thing because they choose not to, but that they do not do the right thing because they don't yet have the skills necessary to do so. Interventions need to support the healing of young people and avoid perpetuating their trauma.⁶

Disability, language and communication disorders, and the impact of trauma do not occur in isolation but may be linked to other disabilities or disorders. People with neurodevelopmental disorders, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) are over represented in the youth justice system and they too have associated speech, language and communication needs. The risk of FASD, intellectual disability, cognitive impairments and language disability are increased by the experience of trauma and neglect. The actions in the DAP seek to identify and respond to the complexity of issues faced by young people within Youth Justice and to deliver tailored supports for them.

Young Aboriginal people and disability

Young Aboriginal people are twice as likely to have a disability compared with the general population,⁷ and there is a lack of data about Aboriginal people with disability.⁸ Young Aboriginal people are susceptible to 'double discrimination': they experience racial discrimination and that related to their disability. As a result, Aboriginal people are at a higher risk of harm, and young people even more so. There is a further risk that young people may not disclose a known disability due to fear of discrimination.

Youth Justice seeks to address this kind of discrimination by providing culturally appropriate services to young Aboriginal people. As part of the Action Plan Youth Justice will seek opportunities to engage with Aboriginal-specific organisations to co-design programs and resources that are culturally appropriate and that support young Aboriginal people with disability.

Youth Justice recognises that Aboriginal young people are not being adequately supported if their cultural connections and needs are not being met. One of the key guiding principles of the DAP is that cultural sensitivity must be embedded into every project delivered under the Plan.

The Youth Justice Aboriginal Strategic Coordination Unit will provide strategic cultural expertise through the development of a cultural framework (Action 3.2 of the DAP) to enhance cultural understanding and responsiveness for all Youth Justice staff, as well as informing staff training, resource development, and best practice guidelines. Targeted work will also be done to enhance the responsiveness of Youth Koori Court to young people with disability and their families.

5 Living Well in Focus: 2020-2024, Mental Health Commission of NSW

6 Perry, B. 1997 Incubated in Terror: neurodevelopmental factors in the 'cycle of violence' in Children, youth and violence: the search for solutions, ed. J Osofsky, Guilford Press, NY, pp.124-148.

Perry, B. 2000 Principles of neurodevelopment: an overview; a ChildTrauma Academy Presentation Series 1; No. 2, www.ChildTrauma.org

7 Aboriginal Affairs NSW External Stakeholder feedback 22 Jan 2021

8 Disability Royal Commission findings. Final report due April 2022

3

Data and information sources

Youth Justice analysed a range of data to inform the development of the DAP, including:

- a literature review
- a disability data summary of young people with a supervision plan in 2018-19
- a survey of service delivery staff about their current interactions with young people with disability
- analysis of the results of an NDIA data matching exercise (2019) and follow up exploration of young people with a 'Disability Flag' in the Youth Justice Client Information Management System (CIMS)
- reviewing the policies, procedures, training materials and staff manuals governing current practice at Youth Justice
- consulting the expertise of the Youth Justice Disability Working Group, which includes members external to Youth Justice

These activities led to the development of a Disability Issues Paper which identified and backgrounded the issues faced by young people with disability, including the service gaps, barriers and opportunities they and Youth Justice staff encountered and potential solutions to address these issues. More information about the Disability Issues Paper is provided below and in the context of each of the outcome areas.

The Disability Issues Paper

The Disability Issues Paper helped us develop the six outcome areas, identified in the Plan's overarching priorities, and Youth Justice's need to:

- understand why young people with a recorded disability are significantly less likely to be referred to a Youth Justice Conference
- investigate the services and supports that are available for young people who do not meet the threshold for support through the NDIS (i.e. those who are 'borderline' or those with a condition which may cause impairment, but which is not a permanent disability); and improve referral pathways and access to services these young people
- improve the collection and recording of information about young people with disabilities in CIMS
- uplift Youth Justice staff capability in identifying and working with young people with disability, mental illness and experiences of trauma.
- improve the appropriate sharing of information between agencies so that young people receive faster referrals and better-connected services
- screen young people engaged with Youth Justice more effectively and efficiently for disability, mental illness and the impact of trauma.

4

Consultation and stakeholder engagement

Youth Justice provided an early draft of the DAP to multiple external organisations for their advice and input.

Youth Justice is extremely grateful to those agencies, organisations and individuals who gave their time to participate in the Youth Justice Disability Working Group, the DAP planning workshop and who provided in-depth advice on Plan drafts as they were developed.

Led by the Youth Justice Strategic Projects Unit (SPU), the Disability Working Group provided advice and coordinated the consultation with external parties. The Working Group draws its membership from across Youth Justice, with a strong focus on staff who work directly with young people, and also includes representatives from the NDIA, NSW Justice Health and the University of NSW. The Working Group will continue to monitor the implementation of the DAP over the life of the Plan.

Youth Justice also extends its gratitude to the following organisations for their valuable insights, advice and contributions to the development of the DAP:

- Aboriginal Affairs NSW
- Council for Intellectual Disability
- Department of Education (Inclusion & wellbeing)
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service - Justice Advocacy Service (JAS)

- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
- Law Society of NSW
- Legal Aid
- Mental Health Commission of NSW
- NSW Police
- Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People
- Office of the Children's Guardian
- Office of the Senior Practitioner, Department of Communities & Justice
- Speech Pathology Australia
- Women with Disabilities Australia
- JustReinvest NSW

This consultation with external stakeholders provided valuable information, including targeted recommendations and strategies which have been incorporated into the DAP. The additional information, resources, partnerships and approaches that organisations have provided have been collected and will be made available to project leads as they come to design and implement actions.

5

Collaboration

Many of the DAP's actions require Youth Justice to collaborate with other stakeholders, including other parts of the NSW justice system.

Youth Justice is committed to working collaboratively with agency partners to improve outcomes for young people with disability in contact with Youth Justice. The DAP has provided a platform as to how Youth Justice will work with partner agencies to achieve actions to improve supports for young people with disability.

Young people's voices

To make sure the voices of young people with disability with lived experience of Youth Justice have been included, we have sourced information from the 2020 Department of Customer Service Voice2Action report, which spoke to young people about their experiences of Youth Justice and included young people with disabilities, as well as the draft report prepared for A Place to Go (APTG). Recent publications by the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People including **The Voices of Children and Young People with Disability** report and the 2019 **What Children and Young People in Juvenile Justice Centres Have to Say** report have also helped us shape the outcomes and actions for the DAP.

Youth Justice is incorporating the findings of the Voice2Action project across its operations.



EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

The intent is to empower young people by tailoring their end-to-end experience with Youth Justice to what they need and want. Youth Justice is seeking to embed young people's voices in our everyday practices as well as respond to their feedback.

This work has also highlighted the importance of involving and, where necessary, supporting young people's families and carers to support their children and the work Youth Justice does with them.

Youth Justice use exit surveys and the regular administration (three times per year) of the Child Safe: Young Persons' Safety and Empowerment Questionnaire, and the custodial Feedback and Complaints Triage system to get ongoing feedback from young people in contact with Youth Justice about the services they receive.



Involving young people in developing responses



CLIENT PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

In partnership with the Advocate for Children and Young People, Youth Justice will develop a Client Participation Framework (Framework) to support young people's involvement in the design and development of programs and resources that will arise from the DAP.

The Framework will help Youth Justice achieve its goal of being youth-centric in its operations and involving young people with disability who have been in contact with Youth Justice.

Using the Framework, Youth Justice will seek opportunities to involve young people with disability in projects and initiatives to inform and shape action contained in the DAP. Youth Justice

recognises the importance of a co-design process with young people with disability and the value of their experience in designing responses, projects, resources and other materials to ensure that they are tailored and accessible. Youth Justice will continue to work with other organisations that advocate for young people with disability, by consulting with the following groups.

Our partners in involving young peoples' voices

- People with Disability
- The NSW Disability Council
- Office of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People and the NSW Youth Advisory Council
- Women with Disabilities Australia Youth Advisory Group
- Youth Disability Advocacy Network Inc
- Multicultural Youth Access Network (MYAN)
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Just Reinvest

6

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Youth Justice Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will monitor the implementation of the DAP. Project leads will report six-monthly on the progress of individual projects addressing actions in the Plan and the achievement of action milestones and identify any risks to the effective completion of projects.

The Strategic Projects Unit will compile reports for regular ELT reporting (at April and October ELT meetings).

Each DAP Action includes broad measures of success; however, project leads will develop additional evaluation measures for each project as they are designed. Youth Justice expects project leads to involve young people with disability and/or mental illness in the development of materials and resources and information provided to young people, their families and carers. Project leads should test any new resources with a range of young people from different backgrounds and ages to confirm whether they meet young people's needs. Project leads will support young people to participate meaningfully and provide space for young people to give feedback on their involvement in the project.

Through the regular administration of the Child Safe: Young People's Safety and Empowerment Questionnaire and the completion of new Youth Justice Exit Surveys by young people, Youth Justice will be able to track over time whether young people are telling us they feel safer, feel like they have a say in decisions affecting them and, as a consequence, feel more empowered.

At the commencement of 2024, the Youth Justice Strategy and Engagement Division will design the evaluation of the DAP and evaluate it at the end of 2024 in preparation for developing a new Youth Justice NSW Disability Action Plan commencing 2025. Evaluation results will inform the development of the Youth Justice NSW Disability Action Plan commencing from 2025.



Youth Justice NSW Disability Action Plan 2021-2024





THEMES

1. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

2. EARLY INTERVENTION & DIVERSION

3. WORKFORCE CAPABILITY

Outcomes	A coordinated and collaborative service response.	Young people with disability are diverted from the criminal justice system through early identification and timely supports.	Young people with disability are quickly identified and supported by the Youth Justice staff and Justice Health experts.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Justice adopts a co-design approach to the development and implementation of service provision that brings together young people with disability, their families, carers, service providers, peak bodies and advocacy groups including Aboriginal peak bodies and advocates, staff, local community and the National Disability Insurance Agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early intervention and diversionary options can identify and support young people with disability. Barriers to equitable service access for young people with disability are identified and removed at the earliest point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Justice staff working with young people with disability are supported and equipped to recognise and respond to the individual needs of a young person with disability, including their physical, emotional, communication, cultural, social and therapeutic requirements.
Actions and Projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Improve access to, and understanding of, the NDIS for young people and their family by providing Youth Justice staff with NDIS resources, contact with the Justice Liaison Officer and NDIS related services. 1.2 Continue to advocate for NDIS to be responsive to the needs of young people with disability in Youth Justice. 1.3 Identify and connect with services and supports, including mental health, available for young people who do not meet the NDIS thresholds. Refer and actively support young people to access these. 1.4 Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to support interagency coordinated response for young people with disability. 1.5 Strengthen partnership with Justice Advocacy Service, Justice Health Adolescent Community and Court Team, and other court supports to improve outcomes for young people with disability in contact with Children’s Court and Youth Koori Court. 1.6 Identify and implement information sharing arrangements with stakeholders to improve access to NDIS and other disability services through coordinated responses. 1.7 Partner with Education, DCJ Community Services, Justice Health and Aboriginal organisations to improve information sharing processes and outcomes for young people with disability through collaborative service response. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Change, if required, Youth Justice Conferencing (YJC) processes to provide equitable access for young people with disability. 2.2 Conduct training for Youth Justice Conference Convenors and Youth Koori Court providers to help them facilitate the participation of young people with disability, and their families and carers in YJCs. 2.3 Provide information to assist Courts to make informed decisions regarding diversionary options for young people with disability. 2.4 Continue to support Youth on Track providers to meet the needs of young people with disability with training and enhanced quality assurance. 2.5 Bail Assistance Line (BAL) staff collaborate with NSW Police to identify possible intellectual disability/cognitive impairment, mental health issues prior to, or during, contact with BAL. 2.6 Distribute NDIS resources to Youth Justice funded services, and other service providers, to help them respond to the needs of young people with disability. 2.7 Identify how to improve access to clinical staff in the Children’s Court and Youth Koori Court for assessment and diversionary purposes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Develop a holistic skill set in Youth Justice staff to support best young people with disability, mental illness, a history of trauma, drug and alcohol issues or any combination of these. 3.2 Provide staff with a tool kit of resources to support delivery of services, specific to the needs of young people with disability and their families and carers; including a cultural framework. 3.3 Establish local Disability Champions, including Aboriginal specific Champions, to provide targeted support to staff and resources which meet the individual needs of the young person with disability. These Champions to inform Youth Justice of systemic challenges and staff needs to be addressed. 3.4 Consider the recommendations of the Enhanced Support Unit evaluation to develop a business case supporting increased levels of specialised allied health staff across Youth Justice for young people with complex needs (disability, mental health, trauma). 3.5 Ensure young people with disability are referred to psychologists and other allied health professionals in a timely manner where required. 3.6 Provide supporting resources, developed by DEN and HR, to hiring managers to encourage recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities. 3.7 Train Youth Justice staff in preparing ‘easy read’ format documents and resources.



4. IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE



5. SERVICE DELIVERY



RIGHTS AND INCLUSION

THEMES	4. IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE	5. SERVICE DELIVERY	RIGHTS AND INCLUSION
Outcomes	Enhanced outcomes for young people with disability through streamlined processes for research, recording and reporting.	Effective, evidence-based interventions and programs delivered to, and tailored for, young people with disability.	Young people with disability are at the centre of decisions relating to them and they are included, heard, respected, and safe while in contact with Youth Justice.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information relating to the individual support needs of each young people with disability is accurately, respectfully and appropriately collected. Records are accessible to appropriate stakeholders, ensuring implementation of timely and targeted supports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people with disability receive a service from Youth Justice that is equitable, accessible, responsive to their needs and developed in partnership with the young person with disability and where appropriate their families and carers. A young person's disability is identified, and they receive timely and appropriate supports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Justice programs, tools and documents are youth-centric and modified to meet the communication and cognitive needs of young people with disability. Youth Justice service development and delivery is informed by young people with disability. The safety, dignity, rights and voices of young people with disability are upheld and supported.
Actions and Projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade CIMS to capture information relating to the disability and support needs of each young person fully and accurately. Include in information sharing agreements between Youth Justice, the NDIA, Justice Health Network and other disability services and stakeholders (Action 1.6) the specific data and information that can be shared to benefit research and analysis of the needs and outcomes of mutual clients. Work with YPICHS 2021 to ensure data collection aligns with and meets the needs of Youth Justice. Identify opportunities to enhance available health data regarding young people under community supervision. Identify opportunities to assess the prevalence and impact of FASD on young people in Youth Justice and respond. Monitor the use of feedback and complaints triage (locked box) system by young people with disability in custody to provide feedback on external service delivery. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and implement a culturally appropriate disability, mental health and trauma screening tool and information gathering process for frontline service delivery and standardise the use across Youth Justice. Revise assessment processes following introduction of NDIS independent assessments. Support Youth Justice psychologists in identifying suspected Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) with information and tolls (Youth Justice psychologist toolkit) and professional development opportunities. Review and where necessary, highlight specific areas where Youth Justice practitioners should consider making their interactions responsive to the communication and cognitive needs of young people. Continue to improve transition planning processes, working in partnership with the young person and their family and carer to support re-integration into education and community networks, and planning for continuation of therapeutic supports. Review and update practice guidelines for working with families of young people with disability, mental illness and experience of trauma. Assess existing Youth Justice practices, policies and service delivery against trauma-informed care best practice guidance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Client Participation Framework that supports the inclusion of all young people in contact with Youth Justice in consultation and the co-design of programs, interventions, and resources. Revise all Youth Justice information provision and forms to ensure they are accessible (and consider alternative, more accessible formats e.g. audio, visual, easy read) for young people with disability, their families and carers. Educate young people on their rights, how to exercise them, and how to ensure they give informed consent. Improve the process and the form(s) used to gain young people's consent to ensure young people (including those with a disability) provide informed consent or the appropriate guardian is identified for consent.



1. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

OUTCOME: A coordinated and collaborative service response.

OBJECTIVE: Youth Justice adopts a co-design approach to the development and implementation of service provision that brings together young people with disability, their families, carers, service providers, peak bodies and advocacy groups including Aboriginal peak bodies and advocates, staff, local community and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Why is this important?

Young people with disability are over represented in, and have earlier and more frequent contact with, the youth justice system. Given that young Aboriginal people are also over represented in the youth justice system, it is critical that the support provided to young people with disability is timely, culturally appropriate and individualised.

Young people with disability are also more likely to have contact with child protection or Out of Home Care and may experience homelessness. As a consequence, it is common that a number of agencies have interacted with or have provided services for young people with disability, including the NSW Police, Courts, the Department of Education, the Department of Communities and Justice, Child Protection and Permanency Division (former FACS), Out-of-Home Care providers, NSW Health, and homelessness support services.

Once a young person's disability has been identified or diagnosed the agencies involved in the provision of support extends to the NDIS, non-government disability support agencies, the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, mental health service providers and others.

The DAP 'Strengthening Partnerships' actions will improve consistency across support services by adopting a co-design approach that places the young person at the centre of the service delivery model and brings together all those who have an interest in supporting the needs (including cultural needs) of the young person. This collaboration will provide timely interventions and advocacy, will seek to meet the young person's individual support needs, and will support consistent therapeutic interventions.

The YJNSW Disability Issues Paper identified the need to:

- Share information between agencies to enable better support and referrals: Information sharing between Justice Health, child protection, Youth Justice, and the NDIA needs to be improved to enable a coordinated response, including information needed to make an application for NDIS support.

The actions below outline how Youth Justice will continue to maintain strong partnerships with service providers and agencies to support the needs of young people with disability.

Aligns with:

Youth Justice Child Safe Framework Goals:

- We are young-people centred

National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023:

- Outcome 1.3: Effective partnerships between Primary Health Networks and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services



Youth Justice recognises that strong, effective partnerships with this array of agencies is central to young people with disability receiving the services they need and want.

1. Strengthening Partnerships

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
1.1 Improve access to, and understanding of, the NDIS for young people and their family by providing Youth Justice staff with NDIS resources, contact with the Justice Liaison Officer and NDIS related services.	2021 Q1 and ongoing	<p>a) Promote the work of the Justice Liaison Officer (JLO), NDIS Community Connectors and NDIS Complex Support Needs Team by distributing promotional material to all Youth Justice staff.</p> <p>b) Identify forums and actions for NDIS information, updates, contact details, and good news stories to be made available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth Justice staff - Families and young people. <p>c) JLO to attend meetings with staff in each Youth Justice location to connect with staff, clarify role, educate staff on importance of gaining NDIS support for young people.</p> <p>d) Develop and distribute an accessible and culturally sensitive publicity resource featuring real people getting real outcomes from NDIS.</p>	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Working Group • NDIS Community Engagement Team • Youth Justice Media & Communications <p>Youth Justice will seek input and advice from a range of internal and external stakeholders (partners) in delivering this action, and all actions, in the Disability Action Plan.</p>	<p>a) Escalation pathway is not required due to successful NDIS application/timely liaison with JLO.</p> <p>b) Youth Justice staff surveys report a strong understanding of, and partnership with, NDIA and JLO.</p>
1.2 Continue to advocate for NDIS to be responsive to the needs of young people with disability in Youth Justice.	2021 Q1 and ongoing	<p>a) Monitor issues with NDIS service provision for Youth Justice clients.</p> <p>b) Feed issues to JLO/JAS/NDIS working groups as needed.</p> <p>c) Keep policies and procedures up to date with NDIS information.</p>	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Practice Unit • Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network – Adolescent Court and Community Team 	<p>a) Staff surveys demonstrate staff are confident and happy with NDIS support being provided clients, including JLO and JAS supports.</p> <p>b) CIMS data demonstrates all eligible young people with disability have NDIS supports in place or underway.</p>
1.3 Identify and connect with services and supports, including mental health, available for young people who do not meet the NDIS thresholds. Refer and actively support young people to access these.	2022 Q2	<p>a) Identify and map providers and support services, (and the gaps and challenges of) currently meeting the needs of young people with 'borderline disability'.</p> <p>b) Promote the Disability Gateway resource for use by YJNSW staff (community).</p> <p>c) Establish local Disability Champions.</p>	<p>Lead: Disability Working Group</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU • Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network – Adolescent Court and Community Team • Youth Justice will seek input and advice from Aboriginal communities and service providers. 	<p>a) Staff surveys demonstrate staff are confident in sourcing disability supports, including mental health, for young people who do not meet NDIS threshold.</p>

1. Strengthening Partnerships

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
1.4 Develop Stakeholder Engagement Plan to support interagency coordinated response for young people with disability.	2021 Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify and map key stakeholders. b) Youth Justice secures and maintains operational commitments e.g. MOUs. c) Stakeholder Engagement Plan developed 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Staff surveys demonstrate staff are confident with interagency response. b) Negotiated operational commitments are in place to facilitate connected responses for young clients.
1.5 Strengthen partnership with Justice Advocacy Service, Justice Health – Adolescent Community and Court Team, and other court-based supports to improve outcomes for young people with disability in contact with Children’s Court and Youth Koori Court.	2022 Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to attend and contribute to JAS Working Group. b) Develop meeting schedule for JAS to connect with Youth Justice staff at a local level c) Identify YJ reps who attend (or should attend) Children’s Court User Forums to advocate and build networks. d) Include roles and responsibilities in JH & YJ MOU to ensure referrals for diversion considerations. e) Review resources and procedures to improve Youth Justice client outcomes. 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAS • Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network – Adolescent Court and Community Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase in young people being referred to diversionary options and supported in court.
1.6 Identify and implement information sharing arrangements with stakeholders to improve access to NDIS and other disability services through coordinated responses.	2022 Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Investigate information sharing processes currently used in Youth Justice to collect relevant data and implement a coordinated response, including what consent is used/required. b) Develop a resource outlining best practice, which improves information sharing between Justice Health, Child Protection, Youth Justice, Education and NDIA to enable a coordinated response, including information needed to make an NDIS application. c) Distribute the resources across Youth Justice. 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Community Engagement Team • Justice Health Network • Education • DCJ Community Services/Out of Home Care provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Staff surveys demonstrate staff are confident with information sharing protocol and coordinated support into NDIS.
1.7 Partner with Education, DCJ Community Services, Justice Health and Aboriginal organisations to improve information sharing processes and outcomes for young people with disability through collaborative service response.	2021 Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify potential partners in community and develop localised working partnerships. b) Formalise a commitment to work in partnership in delivering services to improve outcomes for young people. c) Develop a reporting process to identify if local issues are state-wide issues that require a state-wide response. 	<p>Lead: Youth Justice Community Directorates</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU • Disability Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Local working groups providing local solutions. b) Reporting process and template(s) in place.



2. EARLY INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION

OUTCOME: Young people with disability are diverted from the criminal justice system through early identification and timely supports.

OBJECTIVES:

- Early intervention and diversionary options can identify and support young people with disability.
- Barriers to equitable service access for young people with disability are identified and removed at the earliest point.

Why is this important?

A report commissioned by the then NSW Department of Family and Community Services in 2012⁹ analysed the trajectories of people with mental health disorders, cognitive impairment and intellectual disabilities and their contact with the justice system and other NSW service systems.

This analysis found that having a cognitive impairment:

- predisposed people who experience negative social circumstances to earlier and more frequent contact with the criminal justice system
- increased their risk of homelessness
- increased the risk of re-offending in young people and moving into the adult criminal justice system.

It also found that for individuals with complex needs, very few had ever received a disability service. This was particularly the case for Aboriginal people. For many of these young people, it was only through entry to custody that their disability was identified, and the appropriate supports sought.



The report showed that when people do get the right support for their disability, their involvement with the criminal justice system decreases.

The YJNSW Disability Issues Paper identified the need to:

- Investigate further the reason(s) behind why young people with a recorded disability are significantly less likely to be referred to a Youth Justice Conference.
- Conduct better routine screening for disability for all young people coming into contact with Youth Justice.

Aligns with:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 23):

- Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.

9 Baldry, E., Dowse, L., & Clarence, M. (2012). People with intellectual and other cognitive disability in the criminal justice system. University of New South Wales. Sydney, NSW.



Premier's Priorities:

Reducing recidivism in the prison population.

YJNSW Aboriginal Strategic Plan:

- Fewer Aboriginal young people in custody or on community orders.
- More Aboriginal young people participating in early intervention and diversion programs.

Closing the Gap (Outcome 11):

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system. (Target: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent).

National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023:

Outcome 5.3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with psychosocial disability are able to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme and other support services in an equitable way, according to need, and within a social and emotional wellbeing framework

Living Well - A Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW 2014-2024

6.5 Bringing a holistic therapeutic approach to Youth Justice

2. Early Intervention and Diversion

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
2.1 Change, if required, Youth Justice Conferencing (YJC) processes to provide equitable access for young people with disability.	2022 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Liaise with the NSW Police, Courts and Magistrates to identify possible barriers to Police officers recognising a disability in a young person and their being referred to a YJC b) Reinstate the annual training with YLOs and Court staff about Youth Justice Conferencing to address identified barriers c) Review information regularly provided to YJC convenors regarding young person's support needs related to disability and their mental health 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Practice Unit • Disability Working Group • Operational Development and Training Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased number of young people with disability being referred to YJC instead of Court b) Positive responses from staff surveys regarding YJC outcomes for young people with disability
2.2 Conduct training for Youth Justice Conference Convenors and Youth Koori Court providers to help them facilitate the participation of young people with disability, and their families and carers in YJCs.	2021 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) YJC convenors receive training designed for YJNSW staff under Workforce Capability domain and actions b) Work with Aboriginal service providers and community-controlled organisations to make training available for Youth Koori courts 	<p>Lead: Operational Development and Training Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU/ASCU • Aboriginal service providers and community-controlled organisations • Youth Koori Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All YJC convenors receive nominated training
2.3 Provide information to assist Courts to make informed decisions regarding diversionary options for young people with disability.	2022 Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify or develop standard guidelines which provide operational guidance when informing the Court about a young person's disability b) Review Assessment Guide and Background Report policy c) Distribute guidelines and reinforce process 	<p>Lead: Policy and Practice</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological services • Justice Health • Children's Court • WOGIT <p>Youth Justice will involve a range of internal and external stakeholders including those with direct contact with young people with experience of Youth Justice and disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase in referrals to Justice Health for s14 MHCIFP Act consideration for young people with disability.

2. Early Intervention and Diversion

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
2.4 Continue to support Youth on Track (YoT) providers to meet the needs of young people with disability with training and enhanced quality assurance.	Following Action 3.1 2022 Q2	a) Youth on Track providers receive training designed for YJNSW staff under Workforce Capability domain and actions.	Lead: Operational Development and Training Unit Partners: • SPU (YOT)	a) All YOT providers receive nominated training. b) Positive staff survey feedback on training from YOT staff.
2.5 Bail Assistance Line (BAL) staff collaborate with NSW Police to identify possible intellectual disability/ cognitive impairment, mental health issues prior to, or during, contact with, BAL.	2021 Q2	a) Develop standardised questions for BAL staff to ask Police officers during referral of a young person to identify potential disability. b) Develop with Police a screening tool to assist Police to identify potential disability.	Lead: BAL Partners: • NSW Police • SPU	a) Young people with (potential) disability are routinely identified by Police and BAL staff. b) Young people receive timely referrals to support services.
2.6 Distribute NDIS resources to Youth Justice funded services, and other service providers, to help them respond to the needs of young people with disability.	2021 Q2	a) Work with NDIA to identify resources and distribution process targeting NGO providers. b) Support the NDIS Community Connectors to connect with local area Youth Justice staff.	Lead: SPU Partners: • Funded Services (Youth Justice) • NDIA • Aboriginal service providers and community-controlled organisations	a) Youth Justice staff report improved response time for young people receiving services from NGO's. b) Young people report increased satisfaction with services provided by support providers.
2.7 Identify how to improve access to clinical staff in the Children's Courts and Youth Koori Courts for assessment and diversionary purposes.	2022 Q2	a) Conduct research to understand and evaluate referral to, and availability of, assessment processes in Children's Court and Youth Koori Court. b) Align and partner with 'Short Term Remand Project' and 'A Place to Go' in identifying improved early intervention, assessment, and diagnosis strategies. c) Respond to research findings to improve access to Children's Court and Youth Koori Court assessments for young people.	Lead: SPU Partners: • Justice Health • Psychological Services Unit • Research & Information Unit • Whole of Government Initiative Team	a) Research conducted. b) Action taken to respond to research findings.



3. WORKFORCE CAPABILITY

OUTCOME: Young People with disability are identified and supported by Youth Justice staff and Justice Health experts.

OBJECTIVE: Youth Justice staff working with young people with disability are supported and equipped to recognise and respond to the individual needs of a young person with disability, including their physical, emotional, communication, cultural, social and therapeutic requirements.

Why is this important?

The research tells us that the presence of disability, mental health issues, history of trauma, co-morbid diagnosis and psycho-social issues impact significantly on the trajectory of a young person's involvement in the youth justice system.



Young people and their families have told us that they regard their Youth Justice caseworker as their most reliable and accessible source of information and advice.

Youth Justice staff, however, have told us they are not wholly confident to recognise whether a young person has a disability; they are not always sure whose job it is to refer a young person for support; and find navigating the NDIS to be confusing and frustrating.

The YJNSW Disability Issues Paper identified the need to:

- Provide comprehensive training and ongoing support to YJNSW staff to support them to recognise and correctly record information relating to a young person's disability in CIMS.
- Provide additional training to all staff who work with young people to help them respond appropriately to young people with disability when they are in Youth Justice care or accessing Youth Justice interventions.
- Support service partners and non-government service providers to develop their staff's knowledge and understanding of the young people who come into contact with Youth Justice.

The DAP 'Workforce Capability' actions will seek to bridge this gap by:

- Providing the right training and development opportunities for Youth Justice staff
- Developing a suite of targeted resources for staff to help them find interventions and disability support services (through the NDIS where a young person is eligible) which provide a holistic and therapeutic response for a client. That is one that supports a young person's recovery from mental illness, addresses their disability support needs and reduces recidivism.
- Continuing to advocate for greater availability of specialised allied health professionals available to Youth Justice clients.

Aligns with:

Youth Justice Child Safe Framework:

- We are young people-centred.
- Our staff feel safe and supported in keeping children and young people safe.
- We are recognised as a leading 'child safe organisation'.

National Framework for Recovery-Orientated Mental Health Services

- Living Well in Focus:2020-2024

National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023:

- Outcome 1.1: An effective and empowered mental health and social and emotional wellbeing workforce.

3. Workforce Capability

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
3.1 Develop a holistic skill set in Youth Justice staff to support best young people with disability, mental illness, a history of trauma, drug and alcohol issues or any combination of these.	2021 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop a skills uplift strategy (training packages, development opportunities, resources, and ongoing mentoring) for Youth Justice staff, including those in non-clinical roles. b) Training is incorporated in staff Performance & Development Plans. c) Online ITAP/e-learning modules are available for use. d) Plan for all frontline staff to receive baseline and ongoing professional development in working with clients with disability. 	<p>Lead: ODT</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice and Policy • Psychological services • Speech Pathologist • ASCU • Strategic Projects Unit • Research and Information Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Skills uplift strategy delivered. b) Staff report increased confidence and skills in working with young people with disability, mental illness and trauma.
3.2 Provide staff with a tool kit of resources to support delivery of services, specific to the needs of young people with disability and their families and carers; including a cultural framework.	2021 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify tools required in tool kit (e.g. tools and resources to support a person's communication requirements and their cultural needs; being trauma informed; NDIS processes and requirements; mental health support; resources targeting specific disability diagnoses; and behaviour management strategies. b) In close partnership with Aboriginal communities and professionals, develop a cultural framework and culturally responsive approach to supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Align with the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration and the National Strategic framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 	<p>Lead: ODT & ASCU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASAC • NDIS • Psychological Services Unit • Speech Pathologist • SPU <p>Youth Justice will involve a range of internal and external stakeholders, including those with direct contact with young people with experience of Youth Justice and disability and young people themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tool kit is developed and accessible to all staff. b) Young people report improved access to services. c) Aboriginal cultural framework for providing care and support to young Aboriginal clients delivered (ASCU).
3.3 Establish local Disability Champions, including Aboriginal specific Champions, to provide targeted support to staff and resources which meet the individual needs of the young person with disability. These Champions to inform Youth Justice of systemic challenges and staff needs.	2022 Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop description of role, including time commitment and skill set required. b) Select Champions (EOI process). c) Provide training to Champions (under Workforce Capability domain). d) Internal communication campaign to introduce Disability Champions and connect staff. 	<p>Lead: SPU & ASCU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Working Group • Senior Practice Officers • Local Aboriginal staff (and communities as required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Disability Champions are established in each location and received training b) Staff report they know who their local Disability Champion is and that they can access support or advice as required.

3. Workforce Capability

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
3.4 Consider the recommendations of the Enhanced Support Unit (ESU) evaluation to develop a business case supporting increased levels of specialised allied health staff across Youth Justice for young people with complex needs (disability, mental health, trauma).	2023 Q1	a) An in-depth business case to support increased levels of allied health staff developed.	Lead: SPU Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESU evaluation team • ESU clinical manager 	a) Business case.
3.5 Ensure young people with disability are referred to psychologists and other allied health professionals in a timely manner where required.	Ongoing	a) Establish partnerships with local allied health providers where not in place. b) Caseworkers make referrals internally/externally depending on local availability for young people who don't have a current NDIS plan. c) Improve young people's access to psychological services in custody.	Lead: Area Managers Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Services Unit • Justice Health Network • Senior Practice Officers • Centre Managers 	a) Partnerships developed with key community health groups. b) Feasibility of bringing external staff into custody environment is ascertained.
3.6 Provide supporting resources, developed by DEN and HR, to hiring managers to encourage recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities.	2022 Q1	a) Promote Public Service Commission's Manager's Guide To Creating An Inclusive Workplace to hiring managers. b) Align with Diversity and Belonging Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023. c) Promote disability awareness e-learning module. d) Explore opportunities to deliver roundtable conversations with people with lived experience of disability for DCJ Hiring managers.	Lead: SPU Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Employee Network • Human Resources 	a) Improved retention rates of staff with disabilities. b) Staff with disabilities report feeling supported and confident. c) PMES results relating to staff with disability.
3.7 Train relevant Youth Justice staff in preparing 'easy read' format documents and resources.	2021 Q1	a) Identify appropriate Youth Justice staff to undergo easy read format training.	Lead: SPU (in house development)	a) Staff involved in materials and resource development for use by young people receive training and report its usefulness.



4. IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE

OUTCOME: Enhanced outcomes for young people with disability through effective and streamlined research, recording and reporting.

OBJECTIVE: Information relating to the individual support needs of each young person with disability is accurately, respectfully and appropriately collected. Records are accessible to appropriate stakeholders ensuring implementation of timely and targeted supports.

Why is this important?

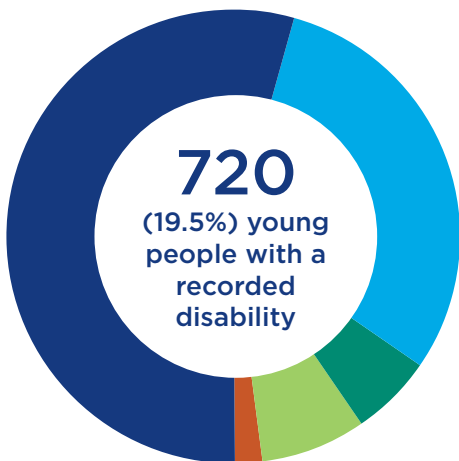
Comparison of CIMS data with YPICHS data, which informed the Disability Issues paper (June 2020), identified an under-recognition and under-recording of information about disability in CIMS.

More recent CIMS data (January 2021) showed that 19.5% of young people in contact with Youth Justice during 2019-2020 had a recorded disability. The recorded disability did not necessarily mean that the young person had a confirmed diagnosis.

There is a need to significantly improve the way in which disability information is recorded in CIMS. Youth Justice clients have disability-related needs that have not been identified in CIMS.

The disability-related information contained in CIMS is inconsistent and disjointed in terms of terminology, location, detail and source.

To assist with early identification of a young person’s potential disability in a consistent manner, Youth Justice needs a record-keeping system which aligns with NDIS data and accurately reflects YPICHS data.



- **29%** had an NDIS **number** recorded in CIMS
- **16%** had a current NDIS plan
- **3%** did not meet the NDIS access criteria
- **4%** had their NDIS applications cancelled or withdrawn
- **1%** were in the process of applying for the NDIS.

Aligns with:

DCJ Disability Inclusion Action Plan:

- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023:

- Outcome 1.2: A strong evidence base, including a social and emotional wellbeing and mental health research agenda, under Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.

4. Improving the Evidence

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
4.1 Upgrade CIMS to capture information relating to the disability and support needs of each young person fully and accurately.	2021 Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) CIMS upgraded. b) Accompanying policy & procedures updated. c) Staff training and development. 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Services Unit • Operations Unit • Research & Information Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New systems and supporting information and training are implemented. b) CIMS data more accurately reflects disability in the Youth Justice custodial population (measured against YPICHS 2021) which is confirmed by YPICHS 2021 findings. c) All consenting young people with disability have been referred to NDIS.
4.2 Include in information sharing agreements between Youth Justice, the NDIA, Justice Health, Education and other disability services and stakeholders (Action 1.6) the specific data and information that can be shared to benefit research and analysis of the needs and outcomes of mutual clients.	2022 Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Memorandum of Understanding and Service Agreements between relevant parties to include data and information sharing arrangements. 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & Information Unit • NDIA • JH&FMHN • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Memoranda of Understanding to include information sharing arrangements.
4.3 Work with YPICHS 2021 to ensure data collection aligns with and meets the needs of Youth Justice.	2021 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Working party including Manager, Youth Justice, Research & Information, Principal Psychologist and JH&FMHN formed to agree the disability-related items to be included in YPICHS 2021. 	<p>Lead: Research & Information Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU • JH&FMHN • Psychological Services Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Disability related data items collected in YPICHS are reviewed and gaps identified.
4.4 Identify opportunities to enhance available health data regarding young people under community supervision.	2022 Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scoping exercise- in house vs external (partnerships). b) Joint research agreement between JH&FMHN and Youth Justice on additional data to be collected. 	<p>Lead: Research & Information Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU • Health • JH&FMHN • Psychological Services Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scoping paper developed. b) Information sharing agreement developed.

4. Improving the Evidence

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
4.5 Identify opportunities to assess the prevalence and impact of FASD on young people in Youth Justice and respond.	2022 Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Advocate with NDIA for FASD to be assessed under independent assessment reforms. b) Feasibility assessment identifying partnership and funding opportunities. c) Consult with Principal Psychologist to understand current methods of identifying/recognising FASD among YJ clients. 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Services Unit • Research & Information Unit • NDIA • Justice Health Network <p>Youth Justice will involve a range of expert stakeholders, including those with direct contact with young people with experience of Youth Justice and disability and young people themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Paper that outlines feasibility of FASD related research and funding opportunities, including partnership with research centre/university.
4.6 Monitor the use of feedback and complaints triage (locked box) system by young people with disability in custody to provide feedback on external service delivery.	2022 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Locked Box monitoring specifically considers issues faced by young people with disability and their equitable access. b) Monitoring identifies whether young people are providing feedback on services external to Youth Justice. 	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodial Support Team • Youth Justice Centres • Official Visitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monitoring reports to Youth Justice Executive make particular mention of young people with disability.



5. SERVICE DELIVERY

OUTCOME: Effective, evidence-based interventions and programs delivered to, and tailored for, young people with disability.

OBJECTIVES:

- Young people with disability receive a service from Youth Justice that is equitable, accessible, responsive to their needs and developed in partnership with the young people with disability and where appropriate their families and carers.
- A young person's disability is identified, and they receive timely and appropriate supports.

Why is this important?

We know that young people in contact with Youth Justice have a higher likelihood of:

- Speech and language disorders
- Comorbid physical and mental health conditions
- A history of trauma.

We know also, that young people with disability have more complex criminogenic needs and that disability, mental illness and experience of trauma will influence a young person's behaviour.

This, in turn, may have a significant impact their justice outcomes. For instance, if a young person does not understand their bail conditions then they are more likely to breach those conditions.

Similarly, a young person with an intellectual disability may struggle with emotion regulation, which presents as challenging behaviour and the impact or effect of a language disorder can be misinterpreted by staff as the young person displaying a 'poor attitude' or as unwilling to engage.

The YJNSW Disability Issues Paper identified the need to:

- Develop and implement better screening for disability for all young people in contact with Youth Justice, followed by referrals for further assessment and support as required.
- Help staff recognise alternative explanations for challenging behaviours.
- Support young people to understand their rights and responsibilities.

- Identify appropriate interventions which focus on capacity building and healing.
- Understand how to improve access to clinical staff in Children's Courts for assessment.
- Understand how improve access for young people to psychologists in both custodial and non-custodial settings.
- Develop a robust, evidence-informed business case to secure funding for Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapist positions for each Youth Justice Centre.

Aligns with:

Youth Justice Child Safe Framework:

- We are young people-centred

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from'. (Article 2 (1)).

National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023:

- Outcome 2.4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people get the services and support they need to thrive and grow into mentally healthy adults.
- Outcome 3.3: Mental health and related problems are detected at early stages and their progression prevented.

5. Service Delivery

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
5.1 Identify and implement a culturally appropriate disability, mental health and trauma screening tool and information gathering process for frontline service delivery and standardise the use across Youth Justice.	2021 Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Feasibility of using the Westernman Aboriginal Symptom Checklist Youth (WASC-Y) as screening tool is established. b) Screening tool. c) Client journey points for deployment of tool identified. d) Youth Justice staff and relevant others trained in using tool. 	<p>Lead: Psychological Services Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASCU • Multicultural Advisory and Working Group (MAWG) • SPU • BAL • NDIS • NSW Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Screening tool in use. b) All young people in contact with Youth Justice undergo screening for disability, mental health and experience of trauma.
5.2 Revise assessment processes following introduction of NDIS independent assessments.	Dependent on Independent Assessments being introduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New assessment process aligned with NDIA independent assessments. 	<p>Lead: Psychological Services Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Youth Justice and NDIS assessment processes are aligned.
5.3 Support Youth Justice psychologists in identifying suspected Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) with information and tools (Youth Justice psychologist toolkit) and professional development opportunities.	2021 Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Refreshed information distributed to Youth Justice psychologists. b) Youth Justice Psychologists' knowledge and skills in working with young people with FASD improved through professional development. 	<p>Lead: Psychological Services Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU • Justice Health Network • Youth Justice Speech Pathologists <p>Youth Justice will involve experts in diagnosing and providing services to young people with FASD in implementing this action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Youth Justice Psychologists feel supported and better equipped in identifying FASD.
5.4 Review and where necessary, highlight specific areas where Youth Justice practitioners should consider making their interactions responsive to the communication and cognitive needs of young people.	2021 Q3 Incorporated in Young people's Safety and Empowerment program of works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Highlight specific potential 'sticking points' in endorsed programs that may hinder accessibility. b) Deliver support resources to assist practitioners to adapt interventions, to increase accessibility of intervention to young people with disability. 	<p>Lead: Practice Unit</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Services Unit • Allied health professional <p>Youth Justice will involve young people with experience of disability and Youth Justice in design of materials they use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Accessible suite of interventions in place. b) Staff report improved confidence using interventions and resources for young people with disability. c) Young people with disability report increased satisfaction with resources and materials used in interventions.

5. Service Delivery

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
5.5 Continue to improve transition planning processes, working in partnership with the young person and their family and carer, to support re-integration into education and community networks, and planning for continuation of therapeutic supports.	2021 Q3 Incorporated in Young people's Safety and Empowerment program of works	a) Improved exit plan and case plan templates (include supported transition of medications and treating health professionals, therapies, education and employment supports and community engagement activities).	Lead: SPU/Policy & Practice Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Directorates • Youth Justice Centres • ASCU 	a) Young people, their families and Youth Justice staff report improved transition processes.
5.6 Review and update practice guidelines for working with families of young people with disability, mental illness and experience of trauma.	2022 Q2	a) Reviewed and updated practice guidelines for working with young people and their families and carers who have a history of trauma. b) Practice guidelines and updated screening tool are aligned.	Lead: Policy & Practice Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Services Unit 	a) Practice guidelines for working with families of young people with disability, mental illness, trauma updated and promoted to staff. b) Staff report confidence that practice guidelines and screening tool are effective.
5.7 Assess existing Youth Justice practices, policies and service delivery against trauma-informed care best practice guidance.	Incorporated in Young people's Safety and Empowerment program of works	a) Review existing Youth Justice practices, policies and service delivery against an appropriate trauma-informed care best practice guidance	Lead: Policy & Practice Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU • Psychological Services Unit • ASCU 	a) Youth Justice practices, policies and service delivery align with trauma-informed care best practice.



6. RIGHTS AND INCLUSION

OUTCOME: Young People with disability are at the centre of decisions relating to them and they feel included, heard, respected, and safe while in contact with Youth Justice.

OBJECTIVES:

- Youth Justice programs, tools and documents are youth-centric and modified to meet the communication and cognitive needs of young people with disability.
- Youth Justice service development and delivery is informed by young people with disability.
- The safety, dignity, rights and voice of young people with disability are upheld and supported.

Why is this important?

Youth Justice acknowledges that every young person is a young person with rights, regardless of whether they are in custody or community; regardless of their offending. Youth Justice is engaged in continuous practice improvement to strengthen the way it supports the safety, rights and dignity of all young people with whom it engages.

Youth Justice is currently investing significant effort in embedding the voices of young people in all aspects of practice to continually improve the way in which they put the young person at the centre of everything they do for them.



While Youth Justice explores how to better engage young people, encourage their participation in services and genuinely embed their voices, skills and expertise in all of their work, Youth Justice will make additional efforts to effectively support the engagement and contribution of young people with disability.

This relies on strong positive connections between young people with disability and staff skilled in recognising and adapting processes to the individual communication needs of each young person with disability. As such, there are strong

connections between the actions detailed under this domain and all others, particularly those relating to staff capability and equitable access to resources and supports.

Aligns with:

Youth Justice Child Safe Framework

- We are young people centred
- Young people trust us
- We seek, acknowledge and respect young people's voices

DCJ Disability Inclusion Action Plan:

- Develop positive community attitudes and beliefs

National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023:

- Outcome 5.1: That the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with severe mental illness are respected.

6. Rights and Inclusion

Action	Commencement	Deliverables	Partners	Measures
6.1 Develop and implement a Client Participation Framework that supports the inclusion of all young people in contact with Youth Justice in consultation and the co-design of programs, interventions, and resources.	2021 Q3	a) Youth Justice Client Participation Framework developed in partnership with Advocate for Children and Young People.	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Advocate for Children and Young People • ASCU <p>Youth Justice will involve a range of expert stakeholders, including those with direct contact with young people with experience of Youth Justice and disability and young people themselves.</p>	<p>a) Youth Justice Client Participation Framework completion and implementation.</p> <p>b) Young people report increased satisfaction with services, and a greater sense of agency in their involvement with Youth Justice.</p>
6.2 Revise all Youth Justice information provision and forms to ensure they are accessible (and consider alternative, more accessible formats e.g. audio, visual, easy read) to young people with disability, their families and carers.	Incorporated in Young people's Safety and Empowerment program of works	<p>a) Existing material is identified and reviewed; and gaps in information or accessibility identified.</p> <p>b) Best format(s) for providing this information is identified (brochure? video?).</p> <p>c) Staff understand the different communication needs of people with differing disabilities</p>	<p>Lead: Policy & Practice</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPU <p>Youth Justice will involve a range of expert stakeholders, including those with direct contact with young people with experience of Youth Justice and disability and young people themselves.</p>	<p>a) Staff working directly with young people receive training in the different impacts that a young person's disability, mental illness or experience of trauma have on their communication styles and ability.</p> <p>b) Young people report increased satisfaction with services provided by Youth Justice.</p>
6.3 Educate young people on their rights, how to exercise them, and how to ensure they give informed consent.	Incorporated in Young people's Safety and Empowerment program of works	a) Resource for young people that explains what their rights are, how to exercise them and what their choices are during supervision.	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACYP • ASCU 	a) 'Your rights and informed consent' resources (available on paper, digitally, and via video) to be offered to all young people at the earliest possible opportunity and again as required.
6.4 Improve the process and the form(s) used to gain young people's consent to ensure young people (including those with a disability) provide informed consent or the appropriate guardian is identified for consent.	Incorporated in Young people's Safety and Empowerment program of works	a) Enhanced consent process	<p>Lead: SPU</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy & Practice <p>Youth Justice will involve a range of expert stakeholders, including those with direct contact with young people with experience of Youth Justice and disability and young people themselves</p>	a) Young people understand what they are consenting to and can reflect back what it means.

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Version 1.0

Policy Reference: Disability Action Plan 2021-2024

Maintained by: Strategic Projects Unit

Document Reference: D21/17099/YJ

