

# **Bexley Youth Offending Service**

# **Resettlement Policy**

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## Introduction

Children in custody have worse re-offending rates than those sentenced to other disposals. Custody significantly disrupts children's lives, resulting in them being separated from family and friends, education being disrupted and in some cases, a loss of accommodation. The (emotional) impact of this and the custodial environment makes the process of transitioning back into the community more difficult. The return to the community in some cases can be as traumatic as entering custody, for example if the child is moved to accommodation far away from home with little to no preparation. It is not surprising therefore, that children sentenced to custody face worse outcomes. The majority of children in custody have complex needs, having experienced trauma during their formative years, spent periods of their life in local authority care, having speech and language difficulties and/or having had disrupted education histories.

Local authorities (in partnership with the police, health, the National Probation Service and the HMPPS Youth Custody Service) have a statutory responsibility for the resettlement of children from custody under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 38 (4). In light of the complex needs and adverse outcomes discussed earlier, it is crucial that children receive the support they require to help them with the difficult transitions and impact arising from remands or sentences to custody.

Research shows that there are four crucial elements for effective resettlement support:

- 1) A continued focus on resettlement throughout a sentence;
- 2) Early preparation for release;
- 3) Effective communication between institution and community agencies;
- 4) A co-ordinated, holistic response involving multi-agency partnerships.<sup>1</sup>

Research evidence shows that resettlement should be recognised as a journey for the child rather than a single transition event. As such, it can involve relapses. Sustainable resettlement (including sustained desistance) occurs when a child shifts their identity from one that allowed offending to one that encourages a crime-free life, social inclusion and wellbeing, with the child changing the way they see themselves and their place in the world.

This policy sets out the principles of effective resettlement that are to be followed in all cases, irrespective of whether the child is in custody on remand or sentence. This document should be read in conjunction with the YJB guidance 'How to make Resettlement Constructive', National Standards for Children in Custody, YJB Case Management Guidance and the Bexley YOS/CSC Protocol.

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<sup>1</sup> YJB (2018) How to make resettlement constructive

## 1. Constructive Resettlement

The Youth Justice Board's Constructive Resettlement framework<sup>2</sup> guides our work with children in and released from custody, though its principles also apply to the wider work of the YOS.

The framework sets out that to facilitate the child's identity shift, work to support resettlement needs to be organised in a two-stage framework. The first stage should always direct the second:

- 1) Individualised, personal support to guide a shift towards a pro-social identity, such as identifying the pro-offending narrative as well as the child's strengths and goals;
- 2) Individualised structural support to enable the shift, such as ensuring the child has the practical support they require for their personal resettlement route (e.g. in terms of: accommodation, health care or education/training/employment).

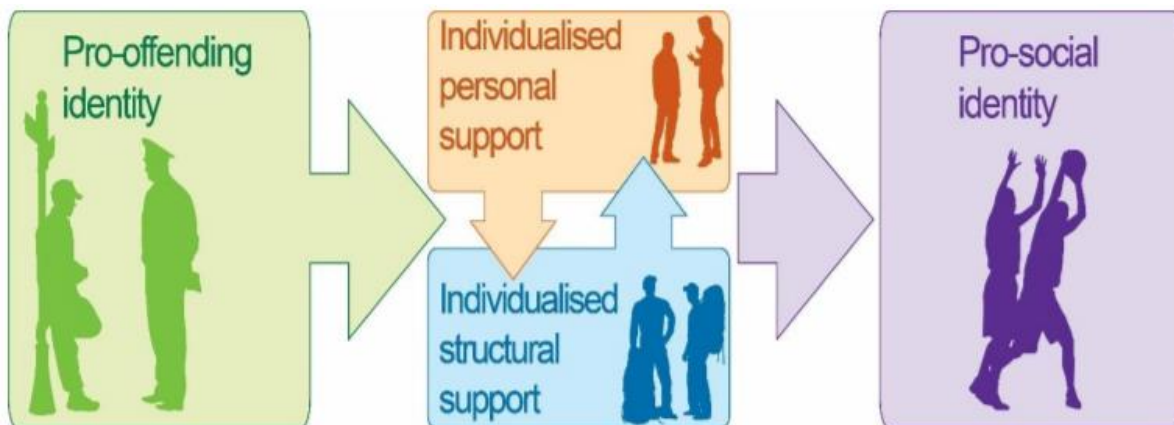


Figure 1 Constructive Resettlement Approach

While Constructive Resettlement is a model for sustainable desistance, it does not preclude using public protection measures in the short term where required. External controls such as restrictions may be necessary to manage the immediate risk of harm and may indeed provide space for work to support a shift in identity required for longer-term public protection.

### 1.1. The 5 C's of Constructive Resettlement

The individualised personal and structural support to the child must be underpinned by the 5 principles of constructive resettlement, the '5C's of Constructive Resettlement' (Figure 2).

<sup>2</sup> Youth Justice Board (2018). *How to make Resettlement Constructive*. London: YJB. Available at: <https://yjresourcehub.uk/custody-and-resettlement/item/610-how-to-make-resettlement-constructive-yjb-document.html>

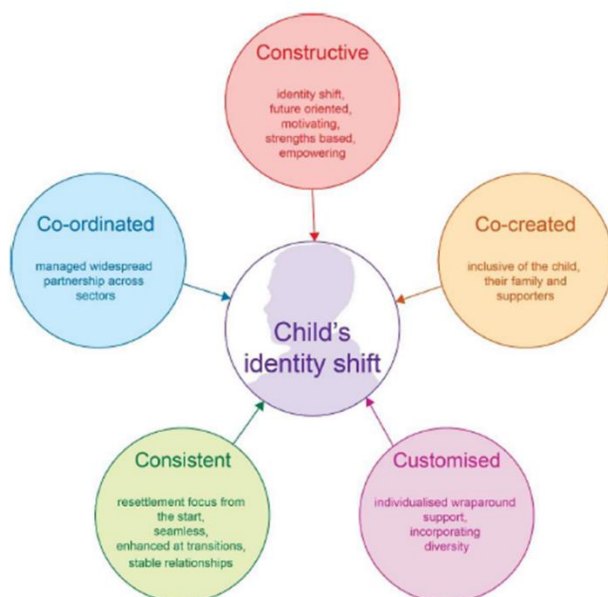


Figure 2 5 C's of Constructive Resettlement

### 1.1.1. Constructive

Focusing on supporting a positive identity shift will help the child build resilience and internal controls that will guard against offending and may also make it less likely for the child to engage in negative behaviours in custody, as they are encouraged to see themselves in a pro-social way. In order to support the child in developing a pro-social identity, you will need to help them identify their strengths, including what supported previous periods of desistance, and think about what a positive future for them could look like. Individualised desistance focused interventions can be limited in the secure estate due to a number of factors including challenges linked to the regime, staffing capacity etc. Any work focusing on desistance should not take place in isolation but include the child's family and/or support system so that the developing pro-social, strengths-based narrative can be encouraged and reinforced by those closest to the child. For Looked After children statutory duties apply – please refer to the YOS/CSC protocol for more information on this.

It is important that all planning and review meetings in the secure estate are guided by a focus on a positive identity shift in the child. This can include, for example:

- 1) Recognizing and giving praise to the child for positive shifts in thinking and/or behaviour, no matter how small (including for instance: a reduction in violent incidents);
- 2) Helping the child reflect on their progress in custody and how this will support them in achieving their longer-term goals (for example: situations where they've managed to step away from conflict; progress they have made in their learning or in settling into a structure and routine; activities they might have developed an interest in such as going to the gym etc.);
- 3) Making sure that the response to any incidents in custody does not reinforce an existing negative narrative the child might have about themselves. Instead, the child should be helped to analyse triggers and contributing factors to the event and to develop strategies to manage future situations differently.

- 4) Where you have, jointly with the child and family, identified that a particular intervention is crucial to supporting the child's desistance journey, you must advocate for this and where not available, bring this to the attention of your manager to explore whether it should be escalated with the secure establishment and/or provided by the YOS as part of visits.

Case managers are expected to visit the child at least monthly in all cases, in addition to planning and review meetings.

### 1.1.2. Co-Created

In order to support an identity shift and the child's desistance journey, it is crucial that plans are not formulaic or resource driven (focused purely on filling the child's time in custody) but are meaningful to the child and contribute to their future. Engaging them in conversations about their future, the areas of their life that have been difficult for them as well as the things that have helped them in the past and/or that they think might help them going forward will support you in gaining the active engagement of the child. Signs of Safety questions as well as some of the other tools we use with children on community disposals might be helpful in engaging the child in co-producing their plan (see resources in the Intervention Planning folder on Shared).

It is also crucial that the child's parents/carers and their support network are actively engaged in producing their plan. You must ensure parents/carers are invited to each planning and review meeting, giving them plenty of notice and making sure you help them understand the importance of these meetings and how they can support their child more effectively through their attendance and contribution. You must explore and seek to resolve any blockages to attendance. Where a parent/carer is unable to attend despite best efforts, you should ascertain if there are alternative means of them joining the meeting, such as through the use of telephone conferencing or video technology. If this is not possible, you must seek their views of what they feel their child needs and feedback to them within 1 working day of the meeting. It is not uncommon for family relationships to have become strained before the custodial sentence. Rebuilding these relationships can take a considerable effort. It is therefore crucial that you work very closely with parents/carers, encourage their ongoing and regular contact with the child and explore and seek to problem solve any worries they might have.

Where there is an allocated social worker, you must also make sure you invite them to any meetings. You should also invite any other key professional involved with the child.

### 1.1.3. Customised

The personal nature of identity highlights the importance of recognising and embracing diversity when working with a child. This is particularly relevant considering the disproportionate representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children in the secure estate.

In planning and providing wrap-around support to the child, you must take into account at all times their diverse needs such as for example: their ethnicity, religion, any learning difficulty or need, mental health concerns, looked after status or speech, language and communication

needs. It is important to remember that the majority of children in the secure estate have experienced trauma during their formative years; for many of them, aspects of their journey into or time in custody will also be traumatic. You must therefore be guided by the principles of trauma-informed practice, recognising and helping the child understand the trauma they have experienced and taking this into account in responding to incidents and planning for their release, such as thinking about how to support the child with change.

Research has highlighted that for many of the children in custody, a focus on surviving has become part of the child's identity and this can be especially pronounced for looked after children who, as a result of lack of familial support and care, might have felt they needed to be self-reliant. Consequently, they might feel additionally isolated in custody and different from the other children and adopt a strategy for surviving custody, fighting to maintain status and avoid victimisation, rather than keeping their head down, resulting in increased restraint and segregation. In supporting these children, it will be important to build on their resilience whilst supporting them to develop trust in others and a sense that they can rely on others also. You will also need to think about additional contact with the child to mitigate against the isolation especially where family visits are not taking place.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.1.4. Consistent

In order to support a child to shift their identity from pro-criminal to pro-social, a trusted relationship is crucial. Where a case manager was already or had previously worked with the child at point of remand/sentence to custody, they will continue to support the child throughout their time in custody and upon their release. As stated earlier in this policy, it is the expectation that the case manager will visit the child, independent of any review meetings, on at least a monthly basis. In addition, you should explore other ways of remaining in contact with the child to complement your visits, such as letters or phone calls. You must also maintain at least monthly contact with the child's parent/carer(s). Some of this should be in the form of home visits and contact should focus on the child's resettlement journey including any worries parents/carers might have in relation to the child returning home. Where concerns arise with respect to the child's ability to return home following their time in custody, you must try and mediate between the child and their parent/carers and explore support that could be put in place, for example through Children's Social Care or the YOS Family Worker.

Resettlement must be the focus from the beginning of the child's time in custody and form part of all planning and review meetings and visits. As discussed in detail earlier, it is important that this focuses on a positive identity shift and considers the 7 pathways to resettlement which will be discussed in more detail later in this policy. The child should be informed and involved in discussions about their licence conditions from the beginning of the sentence; their conditions should not come as a surprise to them at the end of their sentence.

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) for children on custodial sentences can be an important element of effective resettlement practice. It is important that this is discussed from the earliest opportunity, at the initial planning meeting and is kept under review on a regular basis, thinking about how it could be used to help prepare the child for release.

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<sup>3</sup> Day, Anne-Marie; Bateman, T.; Pitts, J. (2020) *Surviving incarceration: the pathways of looked after and non-looked after children into, through and out of custody*. Nuffield Foundation.

Any barriers to resettlement should be identified at the initial planning meeting though this will need to be kept under review as the child's circumstances might change over the course of their time in custody. Where any barriers are identified, actions must be identified to overcome these and where necessary, the support of the line manager and/or escalation to senior management should be sought.

It is important to ensure that in addition to the child's parent/carer(s) all relevant professionals actively take part in planning and review meetings, so that the child can clearly see who forms part of their support system. Where new professionals are introduced to the child, it is important that you consider how and when this is best done in order not to overwhelm the child. It might be helpful to bring any new professionals, such as specialist workers, along to one of your individual visits initially rather than introducing them at a review/planning meeting, not least as many children find large meetings difficult.

### 1.1.5. Co-ordinated

It is crucial for effective resettlement that all activity to support the child's transition is carefully co-ordinated, to avoid duplication or important tasks being missed or delayed. You must maintain regular contact with all agencies involved in preparing for the child's release on at least a monthly basis. Where there is delay, a lack of or confusing/unsatisfactory response you should follow the YOS Escalation Policy to bring the matter to the attention of managers.

You must make sure that key professionals forming part of the support network of the child are invited to all review meetings and that any assessments undertaken in custody are shared with other agencies as required to inform planning for release.

It is important that there is regular communication between the secure establishment and you as the child's case manager. Where there are incidents in custody, you should ascertain further details from the establishment to inform risk assessment and planning. Where there are events which might impact on the child's wellbeing in custody and/or their desistance journey, such as illness of a family member or a difficult court hearing resulting in a change in the child's presentation, you must inform the establishment so that appropriate measures can be put in place to safeguard and support the child.

## 2. Practical support

In providing structural and practical support to the child, you must be guided by the 5 C's of Constructive Resettlement discussed in the previous chapter.

In 2014, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) launched the Seven Pathways to Resettlement document, which identifies seven key areas of a child's life that ought to be considered and planned for:

- 1) Case management and Transitions
- 2) Accommodation;
- 3) Education/Training/employment
- 4) Health



- 5) Substance misuse
- 6) Families
- 7) Finance, Benefits and Debt

## 2.1. Case Management, Families & Transitions

The key principles of effective case management and how to work with families have been set out in the preceding chapters. Previous HMIP inspection on Resettlement<sup>4</sup> found that the risks the child posed to other people, or the risk to the child, once back in the community were often not sufficiently considered during their time in custody. You need to be mindful of changes whilst in custody in terms of the child's attitude and/or behaviour as well as any incidents which might result in an increase in risk both in custody and upon release and keep the assessment and plan under continuous review to reflect this.

Where a child turns 18 whilst in custody, they will fall under the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 and extended supervision (please refer to the full guidance for more information on this)<sup>5</sup>. Depending on how long before their release the child turns 18 as well as capacity in the adult estate, the child may spend some time in the adult secure estate. Where this is a possibility, the child would normally be allocated to the YOS seconded probation officer to work with them throughout their time in the youth estate, so as to prepare them for their transition into the adult estate as well as to the supervision of probation. Where possible, the YOS seconded probation officer will remain the child's allocated worker upon transition to probation. There might be occasions when the seconded probation officer is not able to take over case management or this is inappropriate, for example to enable continuity. Where this is the case, you must liaise with the seconded probation officer at the earliest opportunity to ensure they can support you to adequately prepare the child and facilitate transfer to probation, either through co-working or providing you with relevant guidance.

There will be other children who are released as children but turn 18 soon thereafter. In these cases, it will be important to consider whether a transfer to Probation would be appropriate and in the interest of the child, depending on their needs. Where the young person will be subject to licence for a relatively short period of time following their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday it will normally not be appropriate to effect transfer. You must also take into account other transitions, such as to adult mental health or substance misuse services in determining the appropriateness and timing of any transfer to probation. Please refer to the YOS Risk Policy for more information on transfers to Probation.

Other children will experience transition in relation to moving to a new area and consequently being supervised by a YOS other than their home or originating YOS. As soon as this transpires, you must make contact with the relevant YOS to discuss care-taking or transfer arrangements including planned licence conditions, resettlement needs and how the local YOS will be able to manage these. Please refer to the YOS risk policy for more information on

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<sup>4</sup> HMIP (2019) *Youth resettlement – final report into work in the community A thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons*

<sup>5</sup> YJB *Extended supervision: practice note for youth offending teams*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/411192/Practice\\_advice\\_extended\\_supervision.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411192/Practice_advice_extended_supervision.pdf)

the management of cases where children move/are moved out of area. Where possible, case management should be maintained to provide continuity for the child. This will normally be the case where a child moves to a neighbouring authority.

## 2.2. Accommodation

The timely provision of safe and suitable accommodation is key to effective resettlement. Where an address is not confirmed until close to the child's release date, this is highly unsettling for children, not least when their new address might be in an area previously unknown to them and where they have no connections. Furthermore, many of the children in custody have learning difficulties, Speech, Language and Communication Needs and/or have experienced trauma, making it more difficult for them to manage change. Late confirmation of a release address also hinders effective planning of resettlement support, whether that be supervision by the local YOS, Education/Training/Employment or substance misuse intervention.

Where a child requires accommodation from CSC following release, the YOS/CSC protocol stipulates that the release address is to be confirmed four weeks ahead of release. Where possible, ROTL should be used to support the child in transitioning to a new placement. Where concerns arise in relation to delays in confirming a release address, you must escalate this without delay, in line with the YOS Escalation Procedure. You should maintain regular contact with the allocated social worker and contribute the views from the YOS assessment in relation to what type of placement would be most appropriate, including for example, any concerns in relation to links to gangs and exploitation that need to be taken into account. Once a possible placement has been identified by CSC, you should discuss the proposed release address with the local YOS. If any concerns arise from this, such as in relation to the profiles of other children living at the address, you must immediately discuss these with CSC.

As detailed in section 1.1.2 it is crucial that you work closely with parents/carers throughout a child's time in custody, whether on remand or on sentence. Where it becomes apparent that the child's accommodation upon release might be at risk, you should try and work with the child and family to prevent this, for example by getting the YOS Family Worker involved. Where a child becomes homeless during the custody period, the local authority has the same duties that it would have to a homeless child in the community. Please refer to guidance in relation to homelessness of 16/17 year olds for more information on this. <sup>6</sup>

There will be some cases where a child might have to be moved outside of Bexley to support their resettlement and/or keep them safe. Where this is the case, it will be important to be mindful of the child being able to maintain any positive family or other relationships. Placements at far distance often result in the child feeling lonely and isolated and consequently

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<sup>6</sup> Department of Education, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018) *Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: Guidance to children's services authorities and local housing authorities about their duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure or provide accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year old young people.*

being more vulnerable, for example to exploitation. If possible, for example where the release address is in a neighbouring borough, we will retain case management.

In cases where the address is too far from Bexley to retain case management but we remain the home YOS (even if temporarily), you should complement interventions by the host YOS with regular contact between you and the child, such as using virtual means. Please refer to the YOS Compliance Policy for more detail on this.

As set out in the YOS/CSC Protocol for the Exercise of Joint Responsibilities, where a child is in custody on remand or was accommodated under section 20 prior to sentence, the CSC assessment will need to consider whether the child will need to be accommodated again on release. There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) Parents are able to meet the child's needs whilst in custody and can resume care on release either with YOS input only or with input from YOS as well as CSC under a Child in Need plan
- 2) Parents can meet the child's needs whilst in custody but cannot resume care on release: in this case the child will need to become Looked After on release or, if the child does not want to become Looked After, provided with accommodation by Housing (if 16 years of age or older). If the child is 16/17, does not want to be accommodated under section 20 but is not owed an accommodation duty by Housing (e.g. because they have refused a suitable offer of accommodation or are found to be intentionally homeless), then accommodation should be offered under section 17 (Child in Need). Please refer to the statutory guidance in relation to homelessness of 16/17 year olds for more information on this.
- 3) Parents cannot meet the child's needs whilst in custody or on release: In such cases, the child will need to become looked after on release.

### 2.3. Education, Training and Employment

There is an expectation that the YOS Education Worker will visit the child in custody within the first month and no later than within the first two months. The purpose of this visit will be to:

- 1) Complete a reading screener if one had not already been done whilst the child was in the community. The findings from this will need to be shared with the secure estate so that appropriate support can be put in place as required;
- 2) Inform the child of their right as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 to request an assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and explain to them what this means;<sup>7</sup>
- 3) Explore what education provision the child is involved in in custody and the child's experience of this;
- 4) Explore the child's education/training/employment history (unless already known) prior to going into custody, their interests, dreams and aspirations;
- 5) draw up a preliminary plan towards the child's future goals.

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<sup>7</sup> Council for Disabled Children. *Young offenders with special educational needs: a new legal framework*

The YOS education worker will follow up on the initial meeting with the child as required, including exploring possible Education/Training/Employment opportunities to access upon release and what education provision is available in the secure establishment that would support the child towards this.

The YOS education worker will obtain the education assessment undertaken with the child on entry to the secure establishment to inform ongoing planning and support.

Where possible, the YOS education worker will attend review meetings in the secure estate alongside the case manager, or where this is not possible, will ensure that the case manager is suitably informed of any education-related developments or queries, working closely alongside one another throughout the child's time in custody. ROTL should be used where possible to support the arrangement and/or preparation for education/training/employment upon release. It will be important to have contingency plans in place should the provision hoped for (unexpectedly) not be available.

Where there are concerns that the child's education needs are not met in custody, the case manager should challenge this at the review meetings in the secure estate and if it remains unresolved, escalate to their line manager.

### **2.3.1. SEND**

As discussed earlier, the YOS education worker will advise the child and parent of their right to request an EHC Needs assessment, should they feel their child's special educational needs warrant an Education Health and Care Plan to have these needs met. Where this is applied for and a statutory assessment is agreed by the Local Authority, the same 20-week statutory time frame for completion of the EHC Needs Assessment applies as does in the community. Where the education worker identifies concerns related to the child's special educational needs from meeting the child and/or completing an education screening with them, they will bring the child to the attention of the link Educational Psychologist for YOS in the Early Intervention Team.

The parent and/or the YOS Education Worker could subsequently submit an EHC Needs Assessment request and it would then be for the statutory SEN Service to determine whether an EHC needs assessment is required or whether the young person's SEN should be met at 'SEN Support' level. The decision on this will be communicated to the family within six weeks of the request having been made. Should an EHC Needs Assessment be agreed and commence, the assessment reports commissioned will inform whether an EHCP is required to meet the assessed special educational needs. If this is agreed, the LA will also recommend type of education setting/provision required and will consult with the child and/or their parent and the person in charge of the secure establishment over the type of provision required with the aim to secure this via the young person's Education, Health and Care Plan .

If a child already has an existing EHCP in place, the home authority (which for SEN means the authority which, prior to the child going to custody, was responsible for the EHCP) must not cease the plan but keep it active and ensure the special educational provision is secured and delivered whilst the young person is in custody (this may mean that the youth offending institute commissions the provision required, such as speech & language therapy).

Annual reviews of the EHCP should continue to take place and an emergency annual review should be initiated ahead of the release of the young person so that suitable education provision can be planned for and secured in the community.

While the child is in custody, the YOS education worker will liaise with the allocated SEN Case Officer. The home authority must arrange special education provision for them and monitor that this is delivered. The home authority's SEN team/SEN Case Officer would liaise with all relevant parties to ensure appropriate provision is in place. This provision must be as close as possible to what is set out in the EHCP, e.g. reasonable endeavours must be applied (some aspects might not be practicable due to restrictions in the secure estate, such as in relation to computer software).

The YOS education worker will inform the SEN team within 1 working day of the court outcome of the child now being in custody and keep oversight of the above. The YOS Education Worker will provide timely notifications of planned release dates for the child to the local network and specialists so that provision planning and preparation can start as required for the young person with SEND. When the child is released, the EHCP must be reviewed as soon as possible.

### **2.3.2. Post-release support**

The child may need additional support to transition into Education/Training/Employment in the community, taking into account the time they may have been out of education prior to entering custody as well as the emotional impact of having been in a secure environment. Where the child is a school-leaver, education/training/employment support would ordinarily be provided by Prospects, however, in some cases, additional support by the education worker or a learning mentor will be required. The YOS education worker and the case manager should work closely together to identify and put in place appropriate support, including for example, agreeing, who will accompany the child to their first days at often new and unfamiliar provision, where this would be helpful. The YOS case manager will be responsible for monitoring the child's attendance and progress. This should normally be at least weekly during the initial 4 to 6 weeks of release, to reduce to at least monthly thereafter, having put in place open lines of communication with the provider. This will allow for any issues to be picked up at the earliest opportunity to be able to intervene if required. Where concerns arise, the case manager will seek support from the YOS education worker or Prospects as required.

As discussed in earlier sections, the case manager will need to make sure they regularly review progress with the child and consider building in milestones for celebration if the child has for example, maintained good attendance, having previously struggled with this.

Where certificates for achievements whilst in custody are achieved, it is important that these are given to the child and used to help the child reflect on their journey. In cases where, by the time certificates are received, YOS intervention has ended, it is important that they are sent to the child, with an accompanying letter tailored to the child's journey.

## 2.4. Health & Substance Misuse

Many of the children in custody will have some identified health and/or substance use need. In a previous thematic inspection by HMIP this was found to be the case in more than 60% of cases reviewed<sup>8</sup> Many of these children will be receiving some support whilst in custody and it is important that this, any progress made during this time and their support needs upon release are considered. The YOS nurse will be responsible for obtaining the assessment undertaken by health upon entry in custody and to oversee the child's health needs whilst in custody and plan for their release. The YOS nurse will work alongside the YOS case manager to ensure the child's needs in custody are met and where this is not the case, that this is escalated to the line manager to follow up with the secure establishment in line with their process for raising concerns. Where the response received following this is not considered sufficient, the matter of concern process will be followed by emailing [YCS\\_Matters\\_of\\_con@justice.gov.uk](mailto:YCS_Matters_of_con@justice.gov.uk).

If a child has an EHCP and this specifies health provision, NHS England must arrange health provision for the child or where this is not practicable, put in place provision as closely as possible to what is set out in the plan, or if it appears that the health provision set out in the plan is no longer appropriate, NHS England should review the child's needs and must arrange appropriate provision in custody.

The YOS nurse will liaise closely with the case manager to prepare for health provision for the child's release. This will be incumbent on accommodation being confirmed in good time if the child is not going to return to where they lived prior to entering custody. The YOS nurse will be responsible for liaising with health providers in the local area to which the child is moving/returning, making sure health intervention is available upon release where required. The YOS nurse will also ensure information is obtained from the secure estate about treatment whilst in custody and any recommendations for continued intervention.

You must be mindful of the possible trauma caused by the child's time in custody and explore with the child, how this has affected them and explore how best they are supported in response. The emotional impact on any child who is sent to new accommodation where they do not know anyone and potentially in an area they have never been to also needs to be explored. The plan should consider how to mitigate against possible loneliness, including the need for additional YOS contact, using virtual means where the child is placed out of area.

## 2.5. Finance, Benefits and Debt

There will be a small number of cases where the young person will be 18 upon release or just before but continues to work with the YOS (for a period of time). There might be some children who will require support around benefits. Where the young person was previously looked after and is open to the Leaving Care service, you must liaise closely with the allocated Personal Advisor who would normally lead on this.

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<sup>8</sup> HMIP (2019) *Youth resettlement – final report into work in the community A thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons*

Where the young person is not open to any other services, it is important that you seek support and guidance from others who are more experienced in relation to the benefits system, such as the YOS Family worker.

Equally, where you become aware of financial pressures, for example around debt, in a family – which could have a significant impact on the child upon release, you should discuss with the family if they would like to have some support around these areas, which could be provided by the YOS Family worker, helping parents/carers with debt, benefits and budgeting.

### **3. Governance**

All children subject to intervention by the YOS complete a feedback form, Bexley Your Voice, on Viewpoint at the end of their intervention. Analysis on this is reviewed at Bexley's YOS Management Board on a quarterly basis and can be broken down by type of disposal. Additionally, all children complete self-assessments on Viewpoint on a regular basis which can be used to better understand the journeys of children including differences between groups and disposals.

Audits are regularly done in the service. Cases of children who have been subject to custodial sentences will be reviewed as part of this on at least an annual basis so that we are able to learn from successes as well as where we could have done better. The numbers of children sentenced to or remanded to custody have consistently been low for Bexley, generally no more than 6 children, often less. Consequently, it is expected that audit activity will look at most if not all of these cases. A summary report of any audit activity will be presented to YOS Management Board.