

Youth Justice Investment Specifications

October 2024

Reviewed annually.

Next review date: July 2025

We respectfully acknowledge the First Nations people in the State of Queensland, we acknowledge the cultural and spiritual connection that First Nations peoples have with the land and sea.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as unique and diverse peoples with their own rich and distinct cultures.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present as well as the existing and emerging leaders who walk together in partnership on this journey.

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1 Introduction

Youth Justice is designated as a Funding Area for services supporting young people in contact, or at risk of contact, with the Youth Justice system. For organisations funded under the Youth Justice Funding Area, this investment specification forms part of a suite of documents under the Service Agreement with the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support.

In the event of any inconsistency between this investment specification and the Service Agreement, the Service Agreement will prevail.

This investment specification should be read in conjunction with relevant procurement documents, Service Agreements, guidelines, and policies.

2 Investment intent

The Queensland Government is focused on restoring safety and making the community safer for all Queenslanders by protecting the community, preventing crime, intervening and rehabilitating.

The Queensland Government protects the community through stronger laws, more enforcement, support to victims, and achieving faster justice. Crime is prevented by steering young people back on track through school, work and community connection; deterrence strategies for communities and businesses; implementing gold standard early intervention; rehabilitation in detention and post-detention supervision of young people.

The Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support is committed to investing in programs and services based on evidence of what is effective in reducing reoffending and increasing community safety, taking an outcomes focused approach to inform ongoing improvement decisions.

The evidence shows:

- young people with a low risk of reoffending should be provided with minimal, “light touch” services because intervening can have counterproductive outcomes through exposing young people to a greater range of risk factors and increases the potential for future offending.
- high risk recidivist offenders should be provided with intensive ongoing support to stop offending and reconnect with positive, prosocial activities including education, training, and employment.

Public safety is paramount and community confidence is essential. We know that when young people have strong, positive connections to family, friends, and community in combination with positive engagement in education, training, and prosocial activities they are less likely to offend – leading to increased community safety and confidence. We invest in a range of integrated, flexible, and adaptable services to support connections and engagement, using place-based approaches informed by local community needs and strengths.

Youth Justice funded responses aim to reduce reoffending and increase community safety by addressing:

- Proven predictors of offending behaviour and risks (criminogenic needs)
- Other welfare and support needs that help young people to improve life outcomes and build positive community connections (such as mental health, disability, general health, housing, culture, and domestic and family violence)

- Disproportionate representation of First Nations young people (and other emerging culturally and linguistically diverse groups) in the youth justice system.

The youth justice service sector offers a unique perspective, working alongside Courts, Police, and other service providers, often at a time of heightened stress and vulnerability for young people and their families amid high community expectations. We engage and collaborate with these partners, as well as other stakeholders in local communities, to identify service delivery gaps and prioritise strategic partnerships to address them.

Partnering with the non-government sector allows us to support increased community safety by targeting services across a continuum of service delivery, from early intervention programs through to high intensity rehabilitation, responding to the individual risk and needs of young people in the youth justice system and continuing past youth justice involvement where possible.

The department invests in non-government service delivery on behalf of the Queensland Government through outsourced service delivery (OSD) budget commitments or grants.

3 Queensland context

Queensland is large and our population is spread over cities, rural towns, and remote communities. Our state is diverse, and a one size fits all approach does not work. Our service provision needs to be flexible and adaptable to provide place-based approaches, based on local community strengths and needs.

While, overall, the number of young people with a proven offence across Queensland has dropped over the past 10 years, there is a small cohort of serious recidivist offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate number of offences.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are over-represented in the youth justice system and experience a number of complex factors. Most significantly are the impacts of intergenerational trauma on families resulting from experiences of colonisation, the Stolen Generations and other discriminatory laws, policies and practices of our society, systems, and institutions. This is of critical concern, as is the limited available evidence on what is most effective in reducing over-representation in a Queensland context.

There has also been a recent emergence of other culturally and linguistically diverse groups of young people (Pasifika and African backgrounds) who are disproportionately in contact with the youth justice system, particularly in South East Queensland.

There is a growing number of girls and young women in the youth justice system who not only have complex needs, but different experiences and needs from that of boys and young men. The complex motivation to commit an offence and anti-social behaviours of girls and young women are more closely linked to interpersonal relationships, trauma and abuse, mental health issues and developmental transitions.

Other key factors which are relevant to young offenders in Queensland include:

- Disengagement from education, employment and/or training
- Prevalence of disability
- History of exposure to domestic and family violence
- alcohol and substance misuse
- involvement in the child protection system
- increasing use of violence and motor vehicle offending

4 Investment recipients

In line with community expectations and evidence regarding what works, our investment is primarily directed towards young people who:

- generally aged 10-17 years.
- are at risk of offending/reoffending and,
- have moderate, high, and complex needs.

More broadly, our funded services deliver responses to:

- Young people supervised by youth justice – in community or in custody.
- Families of young people supervised by youth justice – in community or in custody.
- Young people who are displaying anti-social behaviour and/or coming into contact with the broader youth justice system (e.g., police and courts) but are not supervised by Youth Justice.
- Consideration of the impact of youth offending to victims and restorative justice principles.

5 Investment priorities

The objective of the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support is to reduce reoffending behaviours of young people by steering young people back into prosocial activities and keeping them on the right track.

In line with these objectives, our programs and services aim to:

- Intervene early to divert young people from ongoing contact with or involvement in the youth justice system.
- Support young people to be responsible for their behaviour.
- Focus on underlying issues that lead to offending behaviour.
- Deliver evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions and programs for young people who are repeat offenders.
- Support young people to transition back into the community by connecting them to other appropriate and relevant service systems.
- Support young people to re-engage with education, training, or employment.
- Support victims of youth crime to participate in restorative justice processes.
- Develop the capacity, capability and innovation of our funded service providers.

To achieve the department's commitment to reduce the disproportionate representation of First Nations young people in the youth justice system, we are committed to actively seeking out the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and embedding their knowledge, skills, and experiences in responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. This will be actioned through partnership and joint decision-making.

Investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community designed and led programs allows us to contribute to the evidence base of what works to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to stop offending.

Our investment aims to ensure that young people receive integrated and coordinated supports and services across agencies, this is achieved through collaborative and active efforts that

match young people's individual needs, including sharing appropriate information and practice insights.

6 Continuous Improvement

Our investment is complemented by continuous improvement processes, reliant on accurate data collection, including outcomes data. In addition to quality in service provision, we are committed to supporting agile responses that enable ongoing learning and quality service improvement through communities of practice, relationship-based contract management and evaluations.

We will regularly review our investment priorities to ensure they remain in line with community expectations and the broader Queensland Government strategic and policy direction.

We value feedback from our partners, our Youth Justice colleagues, young people, families and communities which informs decision-making about investment, program design and service delivery.

7 Requirements of all services

All service providers must deliver their services in line with the requirements of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, including the charter of youth justice principles that underpin the Act, including:

- the community should be safe, particularly from serious recidivist offenders.
- young people are accountable and encouraged to accept responsibility for what they have done.
- consideration should be given to a child's age, maturity and, where appropriate, cultural, and religious beliefs and practices
- the youth justice system should uphold the rights of children, keep them safe and promote their physical and mental wellbeing.

Further, service providers must develop and maintain policies and procedures to address media enquiries and attention which comply with applicable legislation for information sharing (including the Youth Justice Act 1992) and meet departmental requirements. Service providers must consult with the department in the preparation and approval of any media statements and other publications.

Services must be tailored to reflect the diverse gender, developmental age, physical and mental health, cultural, educational, social, emotional, safety, wellbeing and other needs young people, their families, and the community.

Importantly, all services are required to ensure the cultural safety of First Nations young people and families. When working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, their families and communities, Service providers must be familiar with the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and how they can be applied to supporting young people experiencing vulnerability.

Service providers must form collaborative community partnerships, including with specialised service providers, other youth focused agencies, Youth Justice Service Centres, local community groups and relevant local, state, and federal government agencies to ensure the best outcome for each young person.

Due to the nature of the services and the vulnerability of the service user group, service providers must comply with the Working with Children (Risk Management Screening) Act 2000.

In line with the Queensland Government's commitment to implement child safe standards, service providers should work to embed the National principles for child safe organisations and/or any subsequent Queensland-specific requirements for organisations funded by Youth Justice.

7.1 Data and Reporting Requirements

Service providers must ensure the accurate collection of required data via the use of the provided Service Record System (SRS) client information system.

All service providers have the details of their performance measures within the Service Agreement – Funding Schedule, including the format of the performance measurement report required and the frequency and due dates of performance measurement reporting. Financial reporting requirements are also detailed within the Service Agreement – Funding Schedule.

Both data and financial reports may be used by the department to assess and monitor a service providers' performance. The department may also review re-offending rates using data collected through the SRS as well as data collected through Youth Justice Services, Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) or Unify.

7.2 Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Privacy

All agencies working with young people because of their involvement with the youth justice system and/or child safety system need to comply with the confidentiality obligations of the Youth Justice Act 1992 and Child Protection Act 1999.

Information exchange about young people should occur in a manner that protects the young person's right to confidentiality. In addition to other provisions, the Youth Justice Act 1992 allows the disclosure of confidential information if the young person consents to the disclosure. If a young person does not consent to the release of confidential information, the information may still be released by a party working with the young person, in line with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Additionally, information about a young person may be disclosed to a third party, without the young person's consent, in other situations including, but not limited to:

- To ensure another person's safety (e.g., a young person has made threats to harm a specified person or persons generally).
- To the Queensland Police Service where disclosure is for the purpose of the functions of the police services and is deemed to be in the public interest (e.g., young person discloses involvement in the commission of a serious offence).
- When expressly permitted or required under another Act (e.g., the *Child Protection Act 1999*).

The service provider must ensure young people are informed of the parameters relating to confidentiality at the commencement of the initial interview and intake process.

The Information Privacy Act 2009 governs the collection, management, use and disclosure of personal information. Service providers must have a privacy plan or policy that outlines how they protect the privacy of people whose personal information they collect, use, and disclose.

Where a breach of information privacy has occurred, service providers must take immediate containment action and undertake a risk assessment to ensure any potential harm can be prevented or minimised, and assess whether to notify affected parties.

Service providers must also notify the department as soon as possible about any privacy breach. However, the service provider remains responsible for the breach, including the responsibility to take appropriate remedial action and deal with any complaints.

The department cannot provide advice and service providers should consider seeking independent advice about how to respond in the event of a complaint.

7.3 Governance and Management

Service providers must have sound governance and management systems and frameworks that maximise outcomes for stakeholders and comply with relevant legislation and regulations.

Governance frameworks must include relevant policies and procedures to ensure the safety, wellbeing and rights of clients and staff. These include but are not limited to:

- Records and Information Management
- Conflict of Interest
- Financial Management
- Governance
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Risk Management.

7.4 Ethical Supplier Mandate

All service providers must comply with the relevant sections of the [Ethical Supplier Mandate](#) and [Queensland Government Supplier Code of Conduct](#), noting the particular requirements of services funded under the Social Services Category.

8 Principles for service delivery

Activities are culturally appropriate and safe: All services and supports are culturally safe and appropriate for young people and their families.

Activities that have a cultural focus are delivered in order of preference by: individuals or organisations from the young person's community or language group; another Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person who is compatible with the young person's community or language group; another Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person or a non-Indigenous person who is assessed as appropriate, in consultation with key Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons and/or organisations. This principle is also applied when delivering interventions to young people and their families and communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Place-based and collaborative: Within the overarching program requirements, services are appropriately tailored to meet locational needs and are accountable to the community, meeting community expectations. Service providers proactively collaborate with other service providers, government agencies, community organisations, Traditional Owners, and Elders to ensure services most effectively meet community need.

Proactive efforts and tenacious engagement: A range of evidence-based engagement approaches and repeated efforts engage young people in activities and services throughout service provision.

Service capability: service staff have the skills and experience to engage with young people who are in contact with the youth justice system. This includes skills in managing the level of risk associated with these young people, as well as the complex behaviours and motivation to commit offences they may display.

Trauma informed: services are delivered through a trauma-informed lens, ensuring young people have access to safe and inclusive support.

Strengths-based: service staff work in collaboration with young people, identifying and valuing the capacity, skills, knowledge, and connections they have while still addressing challenges and promoting pro-social lives.

Young people and families participate in decisions and planning: young people are enabled to participate in decision making so services are relevant to their needs. Participation enables young people to develop valuable skills in identifying their needs and what services or activities could help them into the future.

Services and activities are responsive to the needs of a young person: young people have different levels of need and differing circumstances. Service responses are tailored to the individual needs and strengths of young people and promote a non-judgmental, positive, and unconditional positive regard for young people always.

Evidence-based services: Services are based on theory and contemporary evidence about what works to reduce offending behaviour in young people and build on young people's inherent strengths and where relevant contribute to achieving targeted behaviour change.

Services connect young people with their family, school, training, culture, and community: young people are assisted to engage in a positive and sustainable way with their families, peers, schools, and community networks.

Quality, child safe services: Service providers recruit, supervise and support suitably qualified staff with the skills required in a youth justice context and child safe practices are implemented throughout the organisation.

Service delivery is monitored and evaluated: Services and activities are delivered for the purpose of achieving the desired goals of the young person and the initiative. Service delivery and activities are monitored and data collection reporting on outcome measures is a priority.

Service delivery is flexible and responsive to local needs and emerging issues: Service delivery and activities need to be adapted to suit the needs of local communities, while the integrity of the service is maintained. Service providers are integrated and connected to their local community and understand the service mix available to young people and families.

9. Service requirements

Services may be aligned with one or more of the following service types.

9.1 Service type: Personalised support

Service Type Description: Delivers practical or therapeutic supports that is individualised to the young person and/or their family. Build relationships to assess needs, build motivation to

change and proactively connect young people (and their families where appropriate) to programs and services to meet identified needs.

Service Type Features:

Provide initial and ongoing assessment of young people's (and family where appropriate) needs ensuring responsiveness to individual factors such as age, gender, and culture to establish risk assessments and safety planning as needed.

Assist young people to achieve their goals by providing individual, practical, and well-planned intervention, often through case planning processes, focused on the factors that are contributing most to offending behaviour, including facilitating positive connections to family, friends, and community in addition to their engagement with education, employment, and prosocial activities.

Provide practical support including convening case panels with relevant stakeholders to plan, monitor and review case plans at required periodic intervals.

Collaborate with other service providers and Youth Justice to support young people to address the identified need and achieve positive outcomes.

Integrated, needs based, developmentally appropriate and multi-systemic wrap around services for young people most likely to re-offend (and their families where appropriate). This includes practical and behavioural support which is personalised and focused.

Assist young people with disability, challenging and harmful behaviours, and/or mental health and substance misuse issues, including referral for eligible young people to access National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) packages.

9.2 Service type: Therapeutic and specialised

Service Type Description: Explores and challenges young people's thinking and behaviours, assisting them to build skills to better manage these behaviours. Uses proven effective delivery approach (for example Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, mentoring, counselling), focused on criminogenic needs or specific offence types.

Service Type Features:

Provide initial and ongoing assessment (including clinical specialist or therapeutic assessment where appropriate) of young people's needs ensuring responsiveness to individual factors to deliver targeted and individualised interventions.

Hold young people to account for offending behaviours and support them to understand the impact on victims and the community, including identifying opportunities to repair the harm caused.

Deliver offense-focused interventions to change the negative patterns of behaviour and reduce rates of re-offending.

Support young people to develop new skills, such as problem-solving and changing their thinking patterns which might lead them into trouble.

Assist young people to achieve their goals by providing individual, practical, and well-planned interventions focused on the factors that are contributing most to offending behaviour, including facilitating positive connections to family, friends, and community in addition to their engagement with education, employment, and prosocial activities.

9.3 Service type: Diversion and engagement

Service Type Description: programs and services that seek to positively engage and connect young people, and/or build readiness to change, and/or connect young people up to education and employment or, other case management or change oriented services.

Service Type Features:

Capacity to effectively engage with young people in particular settings to address problematic and anti-social behaviours.

Support the pro-social engagement of young people with their community.

Actively collaborate to integrate with existing services and networks to ensure young people are linked to any required ongoing support services to respond to identified need.

Ability to collaborate with community stakeholders to assess situations, the needs of young people and respond appropriately.

Highly skilled staff with the ability to identify and de-escalate high risk behaviours that may be influenced by several factors including but not limited to triggered trauma, mental health, behaviour diagnosis and substance use.

Engage and collaborate with families and other people of significance to the young person to enable young people's immediate safety and to focus on reducing at risk behaviour.

Provide updates to Youth Justice, police and other relevant stakeholders on trends and outcomes of the young people's needs, the support provided to the young person and the follow up required.

9.4 Service type: Sector development

Service Type Description: Activity that support service delivery of funded services and/or builds the capacity of funded organisations and practitioners to support young people, family members, improve practice, enhance community safety, and contribute to implementing reform of the youth justice services sector in collaboration with the department. Sector development promotes innovation, accountability and new ways of working with young people. Does not include individual advocacy.

Service Type Features:

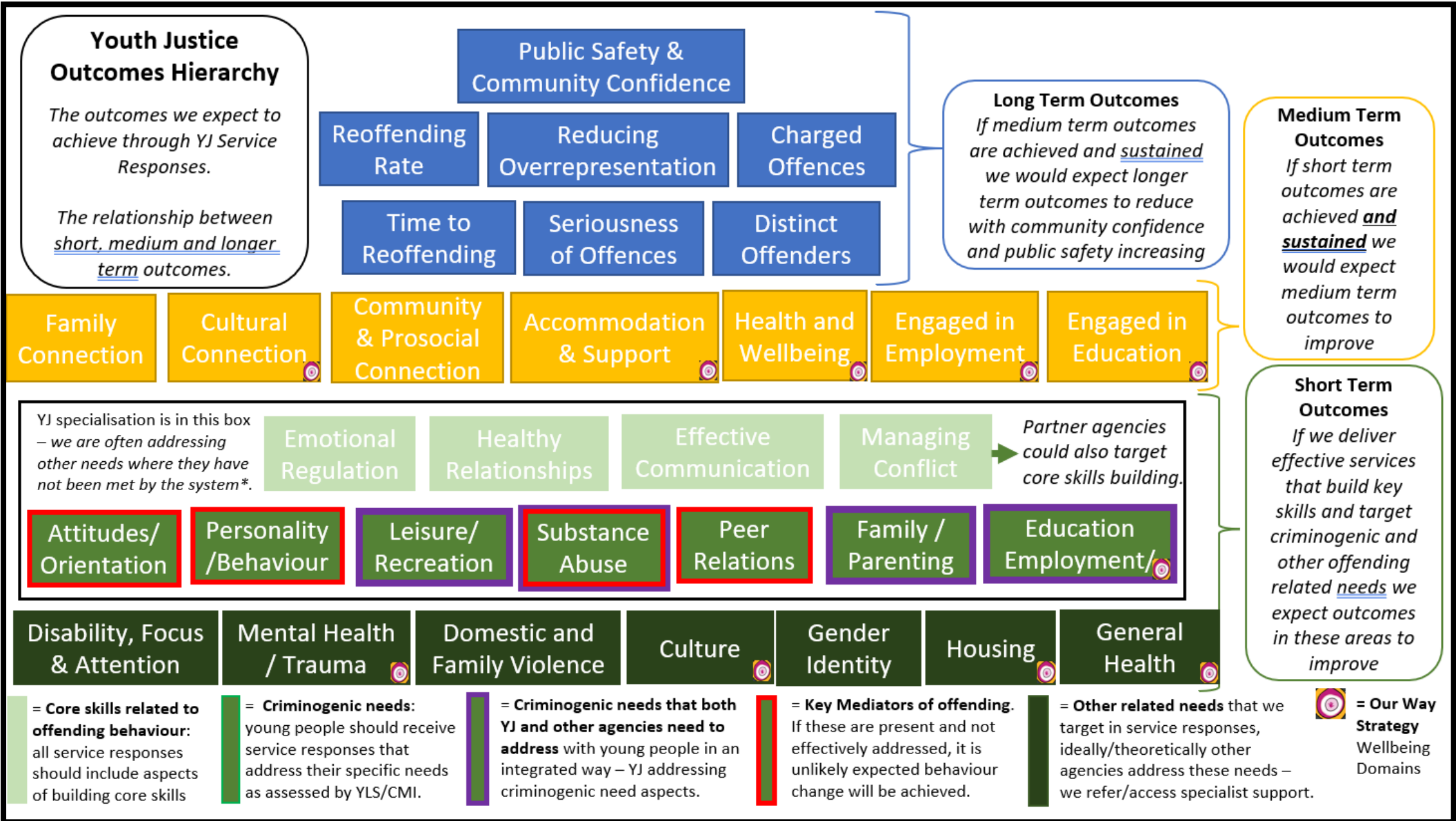
Products, events, and resources to upskill the non-government sector workforce, volunteers, young people, carers, and family members.

Deliverables may include expert and technical advice to the sector and government regarding service integration; gap and demand analysis; planning and implementation of projects and OSD programs and service delivery models (including consultative services regarding practice and services delivered by the department); cultural advice to ensure safe practices and targeted program and practice responses to First Nations peoples and other cultural communities; strategies to improve sector cost efficiency; and promotional activities of best practice in sector work with people and communities experiencing vulnerability. Training may be accredited or non-accredited with the qualifications and experience of trainers established to ensure quality and purposefulness.

10 Youth Justice Service Types by funded program

Personalised Support	Therapeutic and Specialised	Diversion and Engagement	Sector Development
Young Offender Support Service	Specialist Counselling Service	Queensland Youth Partnership Initiative	Youth Justice Peak Body
Bail Support Service	Youth Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service	Community Youth Response and Diversion – Diversion	Family Led Decision Making practice support
Community Youth Response and Diversion – Bridging to Education, Training and Employment	Youth Justice Crime Prevention Grants	Bail Diversion	
Community Youth Response and Diversion – Cultural Mentoring	Serious Violence Youth Treatment Service	Street University	
Community Youth Response and Diversion – Case Management	Therapeutic Disability Assessment Service	Townsville Engagement and Integrated Diversion Service	
Cultural Family Partnership		Mount Isa Transitional Youth Hub	
Intensive Bail Initiative – Bail Support		Diversion – Sports	
Intensive Bail Initiative – Family Partnership		Intensive Bail Initiative – Community Connector	
Family Led Decision Making		Watchhouse Support	
On Country		Youth Justice Crime Prevention Grants	
Intensive On Country		After Hours Youth Engagement Service	
Youth Justice Crime Prevention Grants			
Mount Isa Transitional Youth Hub			
Street University			
Neuro Ability Support Service			
Diversion – Sports			
Intensive Case Management			
Youth Detention Centre Transition (Transport & Accommodation)			

11 Expected outcomes from our investment



Youth Justice Investment Specifications

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Office: YJ Commissioning & Investment

Help Contact: yicommissioning@youthjustice.qld.gov.au

Links:

[Queensland Procurement Policy](#)

[Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy](#)
