

## **Guiding Principles**

The guiding principles are intended to inform the new Irish Youth Justice Strategy as a whole. This means that they are formulated in such a way that they can run through all the different sections of the new Strategy. These fundamental principles aim to reflect Ireland's international obligations under the UNCRC, and to adopt a rights-based approach to the development of the new youth justice Strategy. They aim to provide a lens through which youth justice policy is to be understood, delivered, assessed and monitored. While still in draft form, it is intended that these guiding principles will underpin the development and implementation of the policy and as such they will also be inserted in the final Strategy.

### **Children and Young People**

- Young people in conflict with the law will be treated as children first, with due respect for their rights, in a way that promotes their reintegration and strengthens their capacities, and that reinforces respect for the human rights and freedoms of others
- The development of policies, programmes and systems will be informed by the voices of children and young people, and children and young people will be supported to participate effectively at all stages of their contact with the youth justice system
- Young people should be diverted from the formal youth justice system to the greatest extent possible

### **Measures**

- Measures, programmes and interventions supported by this Strategy, including universal services, will aim, as far as practicable, to address the underlying causes of offending, taking a collaborative approach to delivery
- Procedures, decisions and measures should be appropriate for young people, and will be carried out and implemented without undue delay and that is appropriate to a young person's sense of time
- Measures and interventions should cause as little interference as possible with the child's legitimate activities and pursuits, should take the form most likely to maintain and promote the development of the child and should take the least restrictive form that is appropriate in the circumstances
- Detention is a measure of last resort.

### **Victims**

- Victims should have an opportunity to have their voices heard, and, where appropriate, should have the opportunity to take part in restorative processes together with young people

### **System**

- A system-wide collaborative approach involving all relevant agencies and community partners will underpin the implementation of this Strategy

- The capacities of professionals working with young people will be developed through promoting and encouraging specialisation and training
- The implementation of all aspects of this Strategy will be delivered in a transparent and accountable manner
- Research, data collection and the best collective use of research capabilities will be strongly supported to ensure an evidence base for the continuing development of Irish youth justice policy and practice

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