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**LAC in the Justice System –
Challenges and Issues**

Issues

- LAC are disproportionately represented amongst YP who offend.
 - Prison Reform Trust reports that LAC are around 5 times more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system than those outside the care system.
 - LAC represent less than 1% of the under 18 population but between 9-17% of referrals to PSNI between 2009-2014
 - One third of admittances to JJC are LAC
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LAC (in care)

- Complex needs
 - Significant trauma
 - Multiple placements
 - Substance misuse
 - Offending in Care Homes
 - Closure of training schools
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LAC and Diversion

- ***“Looked after children have not benefited from the shift towards a more informal approach to minor offending to the same extent as other children. While serious misdemeanours must be dealt with in a serious manner, it is completely disproportionate for police officers to be called to a children's home to investigate trivial incidents such as the broken crockery”***

Youth Justice Committee, westminster, London 2013

Way forward?

- Cross Departmental Issue?
 - New Strategy?
 - Local initiatives – SET/PSNI/YJA forum
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A Youth Conference is



- Safe, facilitated meeting
 - Participative
 - Enables the young person to make amends
 - Enables the victim to seek redress
 - Addresses the young person's offending
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LEGISLATION JUSTICE {NI}ACT 2002



PPS

COURT

**YCS co-ordinator, young person,
Appropriate adult, police officer,
lawyer, victim, victim
supporter, appropriate others**

To date: approximately 18000 referrals for all areas

On completion of a Conference a young person will be subject to a Youth Conference Plan (PPS) or a Youth Conference Order (Court).



Conference Process: Legislative Powers



- The young person may be required to:
 - Apologise
 - Make reparation to the victim, any person affected, or to the community
 - Make a payment to the victim not exceeding cost of replacing or repairing any damage
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Continued

- Submit to the supervision of an adult
 - Perform unpaid work or service in or for the community
 - Participate in activities to address her/his offending
 - Submit to restrictions on conduct or whereabouts
 - Submit to treatment for a mental condition or for alcohol/drugs dependency
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What makes a good conference

- Robust Preparation
 - Flexible model
 - Range of options to engage victims
 - Young Person feels supported
 - Those effected by the crime are the owners of remorse
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Challenges

- Article 3 UNCRC
 - Delay
 - Proportionality
 - Victim Attendance
 - Appropriateness
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