



How children and young people are changing the family justice system

26th January 2018
Open Board Meeting
London

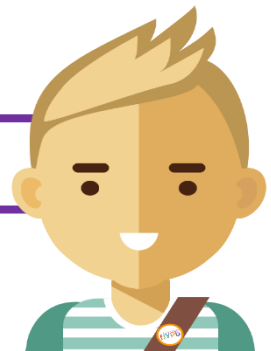
Members of the FJYPB



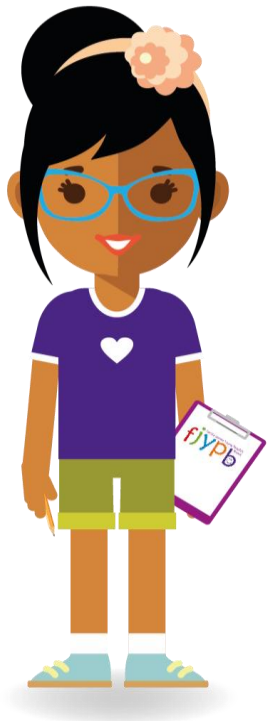
The **FJYPB** members represent the voice of the children and young people across England and Wales who have experience of proceedings.

Having our say!

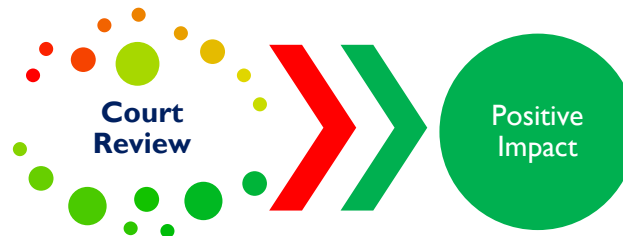
- We have a direct say on the way in which the services within Family Justice are run and on the support they provide to children, young people and their families.
- We are able to represent children and young people's views from across England and Wales to all stakeholders in family justice.
- We share our opinions and experiences in work carried out both within and on behalf of the Family Justice system, including at conferences, training events and responding to Government consultations on request.
- We take part in interviewing new members of staff across the Family Justice system
- Developing a deeper understanding for the diversity and needs of all young people who go through family courts.
- We communicate with Children in Care Councils and support the work of LFJB's and LSCB's
- We undertake inspections of various organisations to ensure that they offer a child inclusive service.



COURT REVIEWS



The FJYPB were commissioned to complete court reviews across 12 areas of England. Due to the success of these reviews the programme was extended to include 4 areas in Wales and a further 9 across England.



KEY FINDINGS FROM COURT REVIEWS

INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The reviews identified that there is a general lack of information for children and young people in court and that while many court buildings do offer some great resources for children and young people, some courts have very little or even none.

The FJYPB have devised a Children and Young People's Notice Board which has been recommended by HMCTS to be displayed in all family courts.

WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Whilst some court did not have a 'Family Room', others did albeit they tended to need updated and resources needed to be replenished.

The FJYPB made a list of suggested toys and resources for all courts to consider and provide.

Our Impact :

Manchester Civil Justice Centre

Following the FJYPB court review undertaken at the Manchester Civil Justice Centre in 2015, the court began offering:

- **Court Access Days** for young people who have been or who are currently subject to Care Proceedings to visit the court and offers the opportunity to speak to a judge and to ask questions. This was intended to show how different a family court is to the way images are portrayed on TV and in the media. This also showed how parents have their say when they are at court.
- **Improved the waiting area for children, young people and families.**

Additionally....for those children and young people who maybe too anxious to visit court but want to visualise the environment, Manchester CJC have worked with the University of Salford and devised a virtual reality experience of the building, court room and includes an introduction by HHJ Newton.

In my capacity as Designated Family Judge for Greater Manchester, I invited the FJYPB to conduct an inspection of our Civil Justice Centre. The inspection team made constructive and helpful suggestions which we have largely adopted in an endeavour to make the building and our processes more “child friendly”.

Members of the Board participated enthusiastically and were very frank and open in discussing what the family justice system could learn about listening to children more effectively.

Her Honour Judge Lesley Newton



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES VOICE IN FAMILY COURTS



We want all children and young people to be given the opportunity when appropriate to meet with the judge/magistrates who will decide on their case.

Members wanted their views as expressed to the judge to be given equal weight and consideration with all the other factors.

Many children and young people did not want to feel like they had decided their future as this would be too much pressure.

Separately to the possibility of meeting the judge all members felt they wanted to see the court room first


The FJYPB have produced a number of **TOP TIPS** for professionals.

The following have been developed:

- Working with children and young people.
- Keeping children and young people informed and keeping them at the centre of their case.
- Working with children and young people with a disability.
- Working with brothers and sisters.
- Respecting children and young people's diversity.
- Working with children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
- Working with children and young people with autism.


We plan on developing further top tips and to work with other young people's organisations to ensure a range of young people's voices are heard. These include:

- Working with Allsorts to develop top tips for professionals working with LGBT+ children and young people
- Working with The Children's Society to develop top tips for professionals working with migrant and refugee children.



TOP TIPS

For respecting
Children and Young People's Diversity



The FJYPB have devised top tips for respecting diversity and effectively including children and young people within family justice.

1	• Be sensitive to my background, to my family's background and consider the impact of this upon me.
2	• Be considerate of religious festivals and days when arranging meetings with me or other children and young people.
3	• Ask me, get to know me and speak to me not through me.
4	• All people working in family justice should receive training in understanding diversity.
5	• My age, disability, gender, race, religion, beliefs and sexual orientation should not prejudice the decision making.
6	• Be able to identify and respond to my specific and diverse needs.
7	• Write interesting things about me such as my hobbies and favourite music.
8	• Ask me to draw or describe myself to understand how I identify myself.
9	• Communicate with me in a way I can understand you. Use tools and resources to help. Check out that I can understand you.
10	• Be patient with me. Give me enough time to understand and express my view.
11	• Be aware of language barriers. I may have different interpretations of different words. Double check that you and I both understand what is being said.
12	• Don't allow your personal judgements to impact on what you think of me.
13	• Do not underestimate me because of my age.
14	• Get to know me. I am me – I am unique.
15	• Don't expect me to be comfortable the first time we meet.
16	• Be mindful of my mental or physical health.

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FJYPB resources and tools

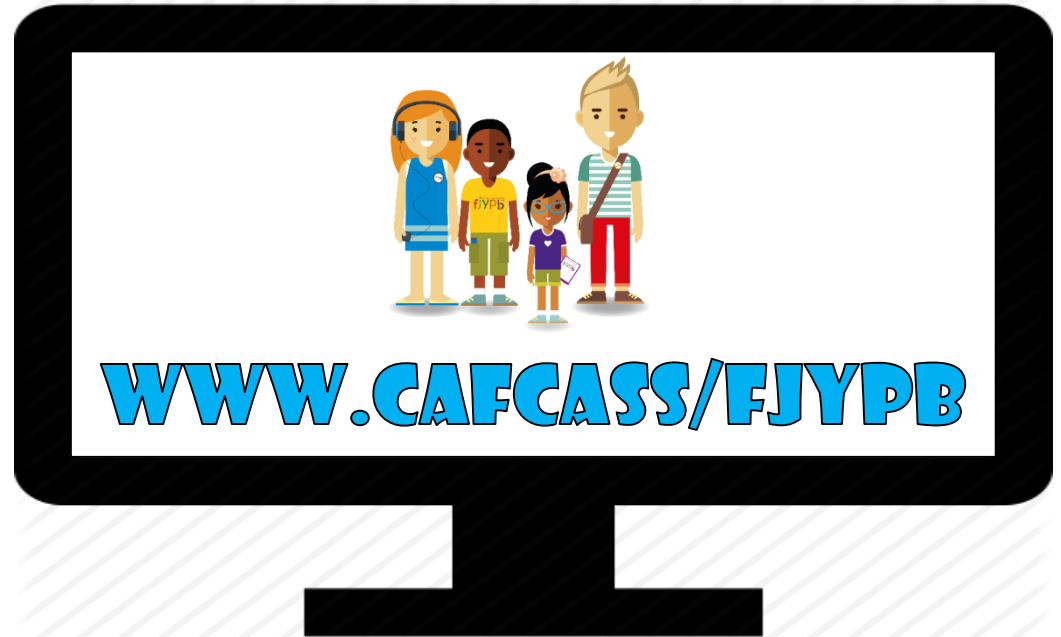
- **National Charter**
- **Glossary of terms**

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Top Tips

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