

Simcoe County Youth Justice Advisory Group (SCYJAG)

Terms of Reference

March 2016

Background and Context

When the Federal Youth Criminal Justice Act came into effect on April 1, 2003, it introduced significant changes to the Canadian youth justice system. It places:

- More emphasis on rehabilitative programming for serious and chronic offenders
- Stronger reliance on community supports and reintegration programs and
- Greater use of assessment, alternatives to custody and measures other than judicial proceedings
- Special considerations for sentencing options for aboriginal youth (GLADUE)

These changes create an opportunity for local justice organizations to develop creative programs and dynamic organizational relationships that can effectively respond to the needs of their youth and the interests of their communities. Organizations in Simcoe County which are involved in youth justice have responded to this opportunity by forming the Simcoe Youth Justice Advisory Group under the Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) Coalition of Simcoe County. The CYFS Coalition of Simcoe County was formed in 1999 and evolved from a commitment by children's service providers to find ways to establish a **streamlined, unified planning** process that would lead to improved **outcomes** for children. This vision quickly expanded into a strategic, collaborative and integrated planning infrastructure allowing members to work both together and independently to meet the **shared vision** of improving the present and future wellbeing of children, youth and families. Work began on made-in-Simcoe action plans after the official launch of the Coalition in September 2003 and they have been building strong ever since with now over 40 agencies as members. The Coalition felt it necessary to have a continued youth justice presence to help focus efforts around prevention, diversion and community collaboration of resources and funding.

Purpose

The Simcoe Youth Justice Advisory Group acts as a community county-based collaborative advisory group that engages organizations with supports to meet the needs of children, youth and families who come into contact or who are at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system.

Functions

1. Create a more thorough **understanding** of all the services in Simcoe County which deliver or have an impact on youth involved with or at risk of having involvement with Youth Justice.
2. Create working groups guided by work plan or elements of the Logic Model (Logic Model attached). Current Terms of Reference for the Simcoe Logic Model Priority Work Groups from November 2011 attached. These priority working groups will be reviewed and re-developed yearly.
3. **Work together**, with other service providers and the community to identify and discuss issues, trends and gaps in justice services for children and youth in Simcoe County who come into contact or who are at risk of coming into contact with the **youth justice system** and propose effective responses.
4. Advise the Ministry of Children and Youth Services of service **gaps/barriers**; provide recommendations / suggestions to MCYS.
5. Provide a venue for **sharing information, research, best practices**, opportunities and resources when feasible.

6. Utilize a systems approach to Youth Justice in Simcoe County.
7. **Advocate for enhanced services** to support children, youth and families who come into contact or who are at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system.
8. **Provide educational events or information** to enable the broader community to have a more complete and accurate understanding of youth justice issues.
9. **Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of local youth justice initiatives** and the local youth justice system as a whole.
10. **Inform the Coalition.**
11. **Connect with other Coalition advisory groups** to improve services and reduce duplication.

Approach

The Simcoe Youth Justice Advisory Group will **identify specific goals to achieve its objectives**. Each goal will be **supported with a work plan, which outlines activities, assigns responsibilities and sets timelines**. Small working groups may be established to develop the work plans for specific goals, by the Simcoe County Youth Justice Advisory Group prior to implementation.

Accountability

Members of the Simcoe County Youth Justice Advisory Group are accountable to the group in so far as working together for the betterment of service delivery for Youth Justice clients within Simcoe County. The YJAG will **report back to the Coalition via the Planning Table**.

Membership

The Simcoe Youth Justice Advisory Group membership includes representation of:

- The Youth Justice system including Probation Services, Police, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of the Attorney General, Boards of Education (Public/Catholic) and Child Welfare Agencies (CAS). Note: other interested partners, who may not necessarily be full members but will be copied on all correspondence, such as minutes, include representatives from the judiciary, crown and defense counsel
- Community Agencies providing Youth Justice Programs
- Community Agencies and Organizations serving children, youth and their families, including providers of French Language and Aboriginal services
- Other interested groups are welcome to attend YJAG Meetings

Chairperson

The meetings will be Co-Chaired by one Ministry of Youth Justice representative and one community agency representative. Chairs may rotate out every 2 years. The Co-Chairs along with the administrative support (when available) and committee members will organize meeting location, agenda, and preparation of material.

Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of meetings will vary depending on the need of the group and community. They will however, meet a minimum of quarterly as a large group.

Locations for meetings will be determined in advance as space is available.

Conflict of Interest

Group members are required to declare in advance of any meeting (once the agenda has been distributed) for any potential conflict related to specific agenda items.

Review Terms of Reference and Membership

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually along with the membership list and participation of members.