

Justice Directorate
Community Justice Services Division

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Dear Colleague

FUTURE OF YOUTH COURTS IN HAMILTON AND AIRDRIE

As you know we recently carried out a review of the youth courts in Hamilton and Airdrie. The review, which we will publish shortly, identified good practice such as inter-agency working and also areas for improvements, for example the high proportion of first offenders prosecuted through the youth courts. Following careful consideration of the findings, I am pleased to tell you that Ministers have decided to continue to fund both courts for a further two years until 31 March 2012.

During that 2-year period it is important that we work together to draw on the experience gained so far to ensure that the youth courts are as effective as they can be and to learn the lessons of problem solving practice in a way which can be applied more widely. Funding will be conditional upon local partners working with us to:

- re-calibrate the youth courts to ensure their focus is narrowed to serious and persistent offenders;
- produce an evidenced breakdown of costs, clearly identifying what interventions add value;
- achieve cost savings where possible, and divert resources into more effective interventions; and
- draw on the best practice and lessons from specialist courts to develop a toolkit for other courts.

Keith Willcock's letter of 15 January advised you that funding for the youth courts had been continued until 30 June 2010. I can now confirm that for 2010-11

£1,587,060 in total will be allocated to Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority for this purpose. In 2010-11 £350,000 has been allocated to Strathclyde Police to assist with the fast tracking process and is paid on receipt of invoice to the Scottish Government. Other funding conditions set out in Keith's letter still apply. We will discuss funding levels for 2011-12 in the context of the work undertaken over the next year and the spending review.

We plan to publish the youth court review and make a formal announcement about continued funding over the next few weeks and will let you know in advance. In the meantime, please contact Dawn Abell on 0131 244 4258 or Dawn.Abell@scotland.gsi.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



MRS WILMA DICKSON CBE
Deputy Director