[Appointments and reappointments of Youth Justice Board members](#)

The Secretary of State for Justice has announced appointments to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) of Susannah Hancock, Jacob Sakil and Louise Shorter for a period of 3 years who will commence their tenures on 1 December 2020.

The Secretary of State for Justice has also announced the reappointments of Ben Byrne, Sharon Gray, Neal Hazel and Keith Towler who will commence their tenures on 1 January 2021 for a period of 3 years.

YJB is a non-departmental public body, responsible for overseeing the youth justice system in England and Wales. As a non-departmental public body, its primary function is to monitor the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services.

Appointments and reappointments to YJB are made by the Secretary of State for Justice and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. These appointments have been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Biographies

Appointments

Susannah Hancock

Susannah has been, since 2018, Chief Executive of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners which represents PCCs and wider policing governance bodies across England and Wales. She was previously Assistant Chief Executive of the national charity Victim Support, and Chief Executive for the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in Essex. Between 2004-2008, she served as Head of London for the YJB.

Jacob Sakil

Jacob has been, since 2019, Strategic Development Lead for Connecting Conversations Collective where he currently leads on coordinating the Lambeth Youth Council to ensure children and young people have an accessible and transparent avenue to engage in local democracy. He is also a Youth Worker, School Governor, Youth Offending Service representative and a Advisor to the Young Mayor at Lewisham Council.

Louise Shorter

Louise is founder and investigator of Inside Justice, a registered charity which investigates alleged miscarriages of justice on behalf of prisoners who maintain their innocence; a Board Member of Inside Time, a not-for-profit newspaper for prisoners and an Associate Tutor at the School of Law, University of East Anglia.

Reappointments

Ben Byrne

Ben was first appointed as a YJB Member on 1 January 2018. He is strategic lead for improvement and innovation for the London Directors of Children's Services. He was formerly responsible for Early Help, Family Services and Youth Justice at Surrey County Council. He is a qualified social worker who has been a youth justice practitioner. Ben is a trustee of the National Association for Youth Justice.

Sharon Gray

Sharon was first appointed as a YJB Member on 1 January 2018. She is an Education Consultant at Wholehearted Learning. She has worked with the SEND London Leadership Strategy and 'engage in their future' representing special schools (young people experiencing severe SEMH — social, emotional and mental health difficulties) across the country. She has been a member of the MoJ Medway Improvement Board, Ofsted inspector and a successful Head Teacher in special (SEMH) and mainstream schools for 21 years.

Neal Hazel

Neal was first appointed as a YJB Member on 1 January 2018. He is the Chair of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Salford, following posts as Director of the Salford Institute for Public Policy and Director of the Centre for Social Research at the University. Neal is also former HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Probation for England and Wales.

Keith Towler

Keith was first appointed as a YJB Member on 1 January 2018. He was previously the Children's Commissioner for Wales and has acted as an independent consultant for children and young people's rights. Keith is the Chair of the Interim Youth Work Board for Wales which is tasked with developing a sustainable delivery model for youth work services in Wales. He was a member of the International Play Association Working Group which assisted the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Family Justice Review.