



# Youth Justice Board

## Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination

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This document describes the way in which the YJB's Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination (EPID) framework will support the identification and dissemination of Effective Practice information to the youth justice sector, and outlines how users of the framework, both internal and external to the YJB, will interact with it.

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# Introduction

The YJB has a statutory duty under paragraph 45(5)(f) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ‘...identify, to make known and to promote good practice’. This document outlines how the YJB’s Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination (EPID) framework supports the organisation in discharging this duty. The document also describes the specific roles and responsibilities of YJB colleagues involved in the operation of the EPID framework and the annual Effective Practice Cycle.

This document should be read in conjunction with the relevant blueprints describing the how the YJB discharges its activity in relation to system oversight, monitoring, support and performance improvement. These are:

- YJB Cymru Blueprint version 1.0
- YJB Community Blueprint version 1.0
- Secure Estate Development Plan

## Our Vision

The YJB's vision for Effective Practice in youth justice is for a system in which;

- A high volume of innovation, evaluation and research is generated by the YJB and the sector, working in partnership
- Youth Justice services have access to the information, resources and support they require to deliver high quality programme and evaluation design
- The YJB is a trusted voice in providing advice and guidance to the sector about the most effective methods in youth justice practice on the basis of the latest UK and international research
- The sector's voice is heard when the YJB sets out its strategic priorities for Effective Practice
- The links between the YJB, the practice sector and the academic community are strong, mutually beneficial and of demonstrable value in developing practice advice and setting the strategic direction

## Our role

In delivering its responsibilities in relation to Effective Practice, the YJB will:

- On an annual basis, identify the priorities for the YJB's Effective Practice Framework in collaboration with the sector
- Co-ordinate an annual 'call for practice' from the sector on the basis of the identified priority areas
- Commission research and develop practice materials where there is a clear need and scope for us to do so, providing ongoing advice and guidance as to their proper implementation in local services
- Have in place proper systems for dissemination of Effective Practice materials including an excellent web presence and 'on the ground' support to those implementing these materials
- Clearly define terms such as 'emerging', 'promising' and 'effective', encouraging the sharing and application of these definitions across other central and local agencies
- Communicate the principles underpinning Effective Practice to Youth Justice services (enabling them to build local services, programmes and interventions on the best possible footing) and to other central and local agencies, including third sector
- Assist youth justice services in generating the evidence necessary to move their practice and programmes up the classification scale
- Deepen and strengthen our links to the the academic sector and to ensure that our advice and guidance is based upon the latest UK and international research wherever this exists
- Ensure that learning from the Effective Practice cycle is built into the YJB's own internal processes (for example our commissioning function within the secure estate, and our oversight function in relation to youth justice services)

## Overview of the EPID framework

The Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination (EPID) framework is made up of a number of component parts. It can be represented using the following diagram:

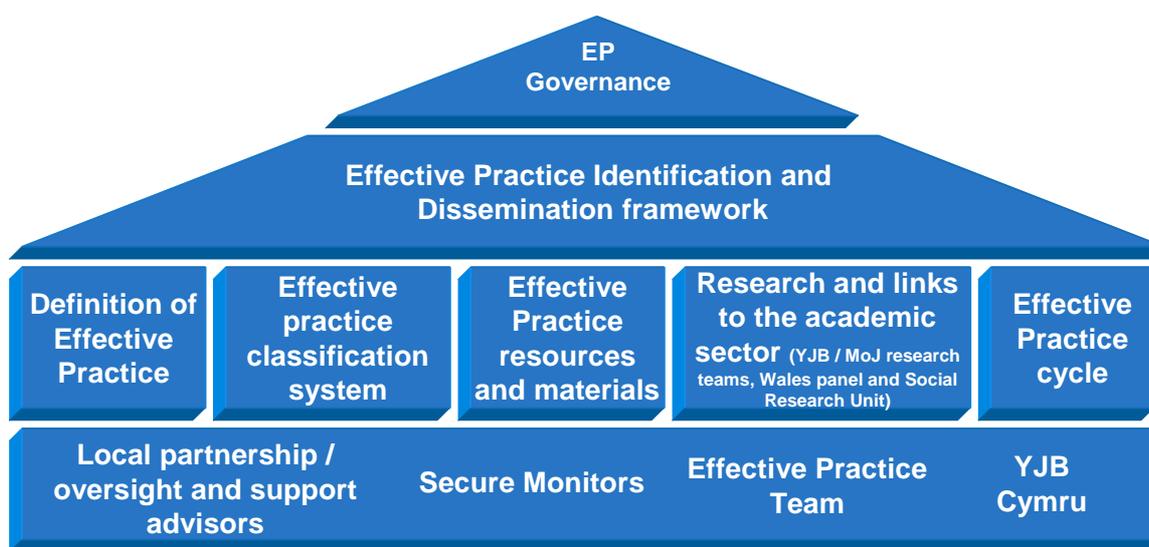


Figure 1: YJB Effective Practice infrastructure

The following sections describe in detail the various components, their purpose and the role they play in the operation of the EPID framework.

### Effective Practice Governance

The Effective Practice Governance Group provides governance to the business-as-usual operation of YJB's Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination framework. Regular updates are provided to the group and key risks and issues impacting the operation of the framework highlighted. The group also provides senior executive decision-making capability.

### Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination Framework

The framework describes the co-ordination of the range of resources, materials and processes which the YJB has at its disposal in order to identify and disseminate Effective Practice. The framework is overseen by the governance group, who is tasked with ensuring it is best deployed to meet the needs of the system as a whole.

## Definition of Effective Practice

The YJB defines Effective Practice as 'practice which produces the intended results' (Chapman and Hough, 1998<sup>1</sup>). With regard to youth justice, any practice or programme that can be proven through evidence to reduce offending in young people would be deemed effective.

However, we know that working with children and young people to reduce offending is not always as neat and tidy as this. It can be a long process that involves meeting a wide range of needs and using a variety of practice methods. In addition, the sheer range of factors at play in young people's lives and the fact that they are moving through a period of rapid physical and emotional development, mean it is difficult to prove with absolute certainty that a particular programme is effective.

## Effective Practice Classification System (see appendix A)

The YJB's Practice Classification System is designed to provide the youth justice sector with greater information about the effectiveness of programmes and practices in use across not just the youth justice system in England and Wales, but also the broader range of children's services (and, where applicable, internationally).

The system is made up of the following two components:

- The Effective Practice Classification Panel
- The Practice Classification Framework

The system classifies practice into one of five categories:

- 'research-proven'
- 'promising evidence'
- 'emerging evidence'
- 'treat with caution'
- 'ineffective'

One of the main functions of the Effective Practice Framework is to provide the youth justice sector with greater information about the programmes and practices in use across not just the youth justice system in England and Wales, but also the broader range of children's services (and, where applicable, internationally). In order to achieve this, the classification framework seeks to classify practice examples in accordance with the quality of the evaluation to which they have been subject and what the evaluation says about whether the practice in question can deliver the intended results for the youth justice system.

In order to inform the judgements leading to a classification, we developed the Practice Classification Framework which provides a framework to appraising the amount and quality of evidence, evaluation and research in existence to prove the effectiveness of a particular practice of programme.

Classification is reflection of the strength of the evaluation evidence and not the practice itself. Therefore, we are not saying that practice appearing in the 'research-proven' category is 'better' than practice in the other categories and the classification framework should not be seen or used as a hierarchy of practice. Rather, it should be used as a guide to what is available and to assist practitioners and managers to make decisions about how to develop their services.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapman, T. and Hough, M. (1998) Evidence Based Practice: A Guide to Effective Practice. London: HM Inspectorate of Probation

### *Ineffective or harmful practice*

As well as providing information about effective practices and methods, it is also the aim of the framework to provide information about practices and programmes which we know not to be effective or have some concerns about, based on the evidence available. The categories of 'ineffective' and 'treat with caution' are the means by which we will inform the sector of programmes or practices that we believe are, or may be, ineffective or harmful to young people.

For further detail regarding the YJB Practice Classification System please see Appendix A.

The classification framework will continue to be reviewed to ensure that it remains up to date with developments in research and remains valid for the broad range of practice in use across the youth justice system.

## Effective Practice resources and materials

The Effective Practice Team is responsible for maintaining the online collection of all Effective Practice materials and resources that are available on the YJB web pages. This collection includes all the YJB's research, guidance, toolkits and other resources, and also includes all examples of practice submitted to the YJB by the sector or other agencies. The team liaise with the Web Content Editors in the MoJ Digital Communications team to ensure that the YJB collection is kept up to date and is made accessible to visitors to the YJB's pages on the Justice website.

## Youth Justice Research and links to the academic sector

### *Research*

The EPID framework draws clear links between the work of the YJB's Effective Practice and Research teams. Similarly, the Youth Justice Analysis Programme (YJAP) based at the MoJ is a key partner in the framework. These teams provide resource to commission primary research, and it is the role of the Effective Practice team to feed the priorities identified by the sector into the planning processes of these teams. These teams also provide valuable assistance and advice with regard to research and evaluation techniques, as well as sitting on the Effective Practice Classification Panel.

### *Effective Practice Classification Panel*

The Effective Practice Classification Panel is comprised of independent academics and members of the YJB Effective Practice and Research teams. The role of the panel is to classify practice examples, either submitted by the sector or identified through the work of the Effective Practice team, in accordance with the YJB Practice Classification Framework.

For further details, please see Appendix A.

### *Links to the academic sector*

To ensure that the YJB remains informed about developments in relation to Effective Practice, and delivers the most up to date and relevant information to the youth justice sector, the Effective Practice team is responsible for establishing and maintaining links and partnerships with those in the wider Effective Practice and research communities.

An example of this is the YJB's partnership with the Social Research Unit (SRU). The SRU is an independent charity dedicated to using research to improve the health and development of children, primarily in Europe and North America. They have a pedigree of over 50 years experience in research into child development, children's services and policy and are thus their partnership with the YJB is a valuable component of the EPID framework, providing the YJB with support in guiding services to information about how to develop innovative practice, as well as in identifying and disseminating information about research proven programmes and practices.

In Wales, the relationship with the academic sector is best exemplified by the Wales Practice Development Panel, overseen by the Head of YJB Cymru. This panel provides the YJB Cymru Effective Practice and Innovation Branch with advice, guidance and scrutiny to ensure that the operation of the Effective Practice cycle in Wales is itself effective. The panel meetings are timed to inform the delivery of the Effective Practice Framework, and regular contact is maintained between YJB Cymru and the Effective Practice team.

## The Effective Practice cycle (see appendix B)

The Effective Practice cycle consists of a number of stages designed to identify and respond to the needs of the youth justice sector and current gaps in evidence and knowledge.

The cycle begins with an annual youth justice sector prioritisation exercise which surveys the widest group of practitioners we can reach in order to identify their needs. Next, we analyse and refine the survey results to ensure we understand them. Then we compare this to our knowledge of existing practice and research evidence; including a 'call for practice' which encourages youth justice services to submit examples of innovative work that meets identified needs.

Where there is a sufficient pool of existing knowledge, research and materials to guide practitioners, this will be summarised and made available for use by youth justice services. Where there is insufficient evidence, we will undertake further work to encourage its development. This might include assisting services to build evidence that moves their practice through the classification scale from 'emerging' towards 'research-proven'.

The final stage of the Effective Practice cycle consists of a review of how well work to address practice needs has delivered results on the ground.

## Local Partnership / Oversight and Support Advisors and Secure Monitors

As the personnel with the most direct contact with Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and secure establishments, YJB staff in day to day contact with youth justice services play a crucial role in the identification of Effective Practice and its dissemination to frontline youth justice staff.

On an ongoing basis, these teams have the responsibility to identify Effective Practice in the YOTs and establishments they work with, and facilitate the submission of such practice examples to the YJB's Effective Practice Team. The teams also play a central role in supporting and promoting the annual co-ordinated 'calls for practice' to the sector in relation to YJB corporate priorities.

With regards to the dissemination of Effective Practice, through their work with YOTs and secure establishments, YJB staff in day to day contact with youth justice services disseminate information in various forms, such as promoting the use of the YJB's web pages to find Effective Practice information or using effective materials developed by the YJB (for example, YJB-produced performance-improvement toolkits). These teams also assist in the delivery and implementation of Effective Practice materials developed by YJB projects initiated to deliver against corporate priorities.

## Effective Practice Team

The Effective Practice team have responsibility for the oversight and management of the Effective Practice framework, as well as further development and delivery of the YJB's agenda in relation to Effective Practice. This includes the following specific areas of responsibility<sup>2</sup>:

### *Management of the Effective Practice framework and co-ordination of the annual Effective Practice Cycle, including the prioritisation exercise and the Practice Classification system*

The component parts of the EPID framework and the Effective Practice Cycle are kept under ongoing review. As part of its ongoing activity, the Effective Practice team identify areas within the framework and cycle for further development and are responsible for the process of making the required changes, in collaboration with relevant areas of the organisation and key stakeholders.

### *Identifying examples of Effective Practice, both nationally and internationally, and considering their potential for application to the youth justice sector in England and Wales*

In collaboration with other agencies and departments involved in Effective Practice, the Effective Practice team will keep up-to-date with the latest research and information regarding Effective Practice and programmes, considering how these, or aspects of these, could be effectively implemented to benefit the youth justice system in England and Wales.

### *Developing and delivering the YJB's workforce development strategy*

The Effective Practice team is responsible for ensuring that the YJB's Workforce Development strategy accurately reflects the needs of the youth justice sector and fits with the EPID framework in that, at the relevant stages of the Effective Practice Cycle (for example, prioritisation and product delivery), workforce development requirements are identified and accounted for.

The Senior Workforce Development Adviser within the Effective Practice team also provides advice on workforce development requirements for projects across the organisation, assisting and facilitating the production of these products, including the procurement of suppliers, and ensuring that workforce development products delivered by the organisation meet established quality criteria.

### *Model ownership and quality assurance for Effective Practice resources and materials*

While ownership of the project products themselves remains with the sponsor of the specific product, including responsibility for future review and development, the Effective Practice team own and control the models for Effective Practice resources, for example:

- YJB toolkits
- Workforce development Professional Development Resources (PDRs)
- Research summaries

Where such resources or materials are produced, the Effective Practice team have a role in ensuring that they meet established quality criteria. It is recommended that the team be involved in the scoping and governance of any relevant projects.

### *Providing project assurance and support to Effective Practice projects*

Following from its co-ordination of the annual Effective Practice Prioritisation Exercise (Stages 1a and 1b of the Effective Practice Cycle), the Effective Practice team provide assurance to projects

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that these areas of responsibility are not undertaken in isolation, and will involve working across the organisation with other teams that form part of the YJB's Effective Practice infrastructure

initiated in response to identified priorities to ensure that they ultimately deliver to the scope identified during the prioritisation exercise. As above, it is recommended that a member of the Effective Practice team be involved in the formal governance arrangements of relevant projects.

The Effective Practice team is also available to provide support to such projects managed elsewhere in the organisation which are producing Effective Practice materials or resources.

# Appendix A – The YJB Practice Classification System

## Introduction

The YJB's Practice Classification System is designed to provide the youth justice sector with greater information about the effectiveness of programmes and practices in use across not just the youth justice system in England and Wales, but also the broader range of children's services (and, where applicable, internationally).

The system is made up of the following two components:

- The Effective Practice Classification Panel
- The Practice Classification Framework

This document describes how the system operates and the information it provides for use by youth justice practitioners and commissioners.

## Effective Practice Classification Panel

The Effective Practice Classification Panel is comprised of independent academics and members of the YJB Effective Practice and Research teams. The role of the panel is to classify practice examples in accordance with the Practice Classification Framework, following a thorough consideration of the evidence in support of them.

With reference to the categories on the following page, using their expertise and knowledge of the methods involved in evaluation, the panel will be classifying examples that appear to fall close to the threshold for the 'promising evidence' category and recommending any which appear close to the 'research-proven' threshold for consideration by the Social Research Unit<sup>3</sup>.

The academic representation on the panel is decided through a process of open procurement and academic representatives serve the panel for a period of one year.

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<sup>3</sup> The YJB has an existing partnership with the Social Research Unit (Dartington) whose own [standards of evidence](#) we use to govern classification in the 'research-proven' category. The YJB Effective Practice Team will classify those examples of practice that are clearly 'emerging' examples (i.e. those not suitable for evaluation or where there is no evaluation information available).

## The Practice Classification Framework

In order to inform the judgements of the Effective Practice Classification Panel, we developed the Practice Classification Framework to assist with categorising practice examples according to the quality of evaluation evidence in support of their effectiveness. A classification is given to every example of practice in the YJB's [Effective Practice Library](#).

### YJB Categories

Examples of practice are placed into one of the following five categories. The gatekeepers for each category are listed adjacent to each.

	Category	Classification route
Proof of effectiveness ↑	<b>Research-proven</b> These practices and programmes have been proven, through the highest standards of research and evaluation, to be effective at achieving the intended results for the youth justice system.	Social Research Unit
	<b>Promising evidence</b> These practices and programmes show promising evidence of their ability to achieve the intended results, but do not meet the highest standards of evidence required to be categorised as 'research-proven'.	Effective Practice Classification Panel
	<b>Emerging evidence</b> These practices and programmes have limited or no evaluation information available, but are nevertheless regarded as examples of successful innovation or robust design by the sector or other stakeholders.	YJB Effective Practice Team
↓ Proof of ineffectiveness	<b>Treat with caution</b> These practices and programmes show some evidence of ineffectiveness but have been evaluated to a lesser extent than those in the ineffective category. In some cases, they may contain features of known ineffective methods (see below), or contravene core legal or moral principles and values that the YJB consider fundamental to maintaining an ethical and legal youth justice system.	YJB Effective Practice Governance Group
	<b>Ineffective</b> These practices and programmes have been found, on the basis of rigorous evaluation evidence, to have no effect with regard to their intended outcomes, or to be harmful to young people.	Social Research Unit

The categories are arranged above to demonstrate the link with the evidence in relation to either their effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

The first three categories are what the YJB refers to as 'effective practice'<sup>4</sup>. The lower two categories are used to classify practice which we believe to be either ineffective or have concerns about for other reasons (see below for further details).

The thresholds between classification categories are deliberately loosely defined in order to reflect the Effective Practice Classification Panel's role in judging individual practice examples on the basis of a combination of their **theoretical basis**, the **quality of the evaluation design**, and the **findings of the evaluation**.

### *Ineffective or harmful practice*

As well as providing information about effective practices and methods, it is also the aim of this framework to provide information about practices and programmes which we know not to be effective or have some concerns about, based on the evidence available.

In some cases, evaluation evidence will demonstrate that certain practices are not effective or even harmful to young people<sup>5</sup>. In such cases **we will classify this practice as 'ineffective'** as per the definition above, and clearly state that a programme or practice should not be used. Given that a judgement such as this by the YJB carries considerable implications, **we will only do so on the basis of the most rigorous evaluation evidence** (i.e. that which would meet the criteria for the 'research-proven' category) and once the evidence has been considered by the Effective Practice Classification Panel.

There may also be cases where we have concerns about a certain practice or programme (for example, if it uses methods drawn from known ineffective models) but it has not yet been evaluated to the extent required to provide a greater level of confidence in its ineffectiveness. In these cases, **we will classify the practice as 'treat with caution' until further evidence is available** to either support either its effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Examples of practice that the YJB believe contravene the core legal or moral principles and values fundamental to maintaining a legal and ethical youth justice system will also be placed in this category. The YJB's Effective Practice Governance Group, which oversees the YJB's Effective Practice Framework, identifies contraventions to such legal and ethical principles and assigns practices to this category on that basis.

The following two sections of the document outline the factors that the Effective Practice Classification Panel consider in relation to the quantitative and qualitative evaluation evidence supplied with practice examples.

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<sup>4</sup> The YJB defines effective practice as 'practice which produces the intended results' (Chapman and Hough, 1998: chapter 1/para1.9)

<sup>5</sup> For example, repeated evaluations have shown that 'Scared Straight' programmes are not only ineffective but in fact likely to *increase* young people's likelihood of re-offending (Petrosino et al. (2003)

## Quantitative methods

The version of the Scientific Methods Scale (Farrington et al, 2002) seen in Figure 1 below, and adapted by the Home Office for reconviction studies, currently forms the basis for appraising the quality of evidence from impact evaluations in government social research in criminal justice.

This scale is used by the YJB's Effective Practice Classification Panel when considering the quality of *quantitative* evidence contained within evaluations of youth justice practice and programmes.

### Quantitative research evidence<sup>6</sup>

#### Level 1

A relationship between the intervention and intended outcome. Compares the difference between outcome measure before and after the intervention (*intervention group with no comparison group*)

#### Level 2

Expected outcome compared to actual outcome for intervention group (*e.g. risk predictor with no comparison group*)

#### Level 3

Comparison group present without demonstrated comparability to intervention group (*unmatched comparison group*)

#### Level 4

Comparison group matched to intervention group on theoretically relevant factors e.g. risk of reconviction (*well-matched comparison group*)

#### Level 5

Random assignment of offenders to the intervention and control conditions (Randomised Controlled Trial)

Figure 2: The Scientific Methods Scale (adapted for reconviction studies)

<sup>6</sup> Home Office Research Study 291: 'The impact of corrections on re-offending: a review of 'what works' (Home Office, 2005) (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors291.pdf>)

## Qualitative methods

Qualitative research methods differ from quantitative approaches in many important respects, not the least of which is the latter's emphasis on numbers. Quantitative research often involves capturing a shallow band of information from a wide range of people and objectively using correlations to understand the data. Qualitative research, on the other hand, generally involves many fewer people but delving more deeply into the individuals, settings, subcultures and scenes, hoping to generate a subjective understanding of the 'how' and 'why'. Both research strategies offer possibilities for generalization, but about different things, and both approaches are theoretically valuable (Adler and Adler, 2012).

Quantitative and qualitative methods should not be considered as mutually exclusive. Indeed, when used together to answer a single research question, the respective strengths of the two approaches can combine to offer a more robust methodology.

As qualitative methods involve a very different approach to data collection and analysis and must therefore be considered in a different way, and looking at different characteristics, in order to ascertain its quality and potential for factors such as generalizability etc.

The following areas of consideration (adapted from Spencer et al, 2003), exploring the various stages of evaluation design, data collection and analysis, provide a framework for examining the quality of qualitative research evidence. Please note that, depending on the focus and nature of the research in question, some of the quality indicators may not be applicable.

### **FINDINGS**

- How credible are the findings?
- How well does the evaluation address its original aims and purpose?
- Is there scope for generalisation?

### **DESIGN**

- How defensible is the research design?

### **SAMPLE**

- Sample selection / composition – how well is the eventual coverage described?

### **DATA COLLECTION**

- How well was the data collection carried out?

### **ANALYSIS**

- How well has the detail, depth and complexity of the data been conveyed?
- How clear are the links between data, interpretation and conclusions – i.e. how well can the route to the conclusion be seen?

### **REPORTING**

- How clear and coherent is the reporting?

## Factors to consider when using practice classifications

When considering the classifications that have been ascribed to examples of practice, attention must be given to certain factors to ensure that claims regarding the effectiveness of the practice in question are not wrongly assumed. As discussed previously, both quantitative and qualitative methods have their respective strengths and limitations when applied in certain ways. A general awareness of these is useful when using this classification framework to look for practice or programmes that could be used in your local context.

### *Using the YJB categories*

Firstly, it is very important to state that the categories on page 4 (and this document in general) are about the *evaluation evidence* and not the practice itself - we are not saying that practice appearing in the 'research-proven' category is 'better' than practice in the other categories. Classification is reflection of the strength of the evaluation evidence. The categories should be used as a guide to what is available and to assist practitioners and managers to make decisions about how to develop their services.

### *The strengths and limitations of a quantitative methodology*

Quantitative data can provide a rigorous statistical measure of to what extent a specific intervention has achieved (or not achieved) its intended outcomes. Information is gathered from a large number of sources, meaning that the size and representativeness of the sample allow generalisations to be made (although this also depends on the scale of the evaluation). However, in order to maximise sample size, the information gathered is often 'shallow', meaning that little is understood about the participants' experiences or the local contexts and processes involved.

Experimental and quasi-experimental methods quantitative methods (those at levels 4 and 5 of the scale on page 5) are also strong at controlling for variables (known as 'internal validity') in order to increase certainty that it was the practice or programme being tested that produced the results seen. This scientific method produces a rigorous evaluation, but arguably decreases the extent to which results can be generalised (known as 'external validity'), as the environment created is a highly constructed one, and not always typical of the social context in which we work.

### *The strengths and limitations of a qualitative methodology*

Qualitative data is typically captured from a smaller sample, due to the greater depth and level of detail involved. This means that the ability of these methods to offer generalizable results is reduced, as they are often specific to a few local contexts. However, they are more useful at understanding these specific local contexts and processes in detail, and how they may have played a part in the success (or otherwise) of the practice or programme being evaluated.

Qualitative methods do not offer the same scientifically rigorous certainty that it was the practice or programme being evaluated that produced the results seen, or to what extent those results were achieved. They are, however, useful in understanding *why* or *how* a particular practice or programme may have been successful, due to the emphasis placed on capturing the local context and the experiences of the participants involved.

### *Does this mean that 'practice x' will definitely produce the intended results for me?*

The million-dollar question! Here are some key factors to bear in mind when considering the use of a programme that has evidence of effectiveness.

**Context** – The role played by the context in which an intervention takes place should not be underestimated. Such things as local service delivery structures and the culture of the organisation in which the intervention is delivered can play a vital role in the effectiveness of a programme (depending on its scale).

**Fidelity** – ‘Programme fidelity’ refers to the extent to which a programme is delivered as it was originally intended. Deviating from the original template risks tampering with aspects of the programme vital to its success.

**The practitioner!** – Another factor that should never be underestimated is the role of high quality staff, skilled in the delivery of a programme or intervention. A frequent obstacle to the ‘scaling up’ of interventions (implementing them on a large scale) is often how to maintain the quality of the staff who deliver them – a key ‘ingredient’ in the success of the intervention.

**The evaluation** - Different evaluation methods can offer more certainty than others in terms of the potential to replicate results across wider populations. For example, the evaluation of a programme conducted in several different geographical areas can claim greater potential for generalisation across the wider population than one conducted in a single location (even if it is a rigorous design, such as a Randomised Controlled Trial).

However, the context must always be considered; although findings from the most rigorous evaluations may be highly capable of generalisation across the wider population, this does not guarantee they automatically apply to your particular context, and the unique systems and processes you may have in your local area. This caveat applies equally to evaluations using qualitative methods, including those using large representative samples.

**In summary**...the category applied to an example of practice reflects the view of the panel based on the information that was provided to them about evaluations completed *up to that point*. Therefore, **it should not be taken as a guarantee that the practice in question will always deliver the same results in the future**; it is more a reflection of the effectiveness of the practice or programme to date.

## Appendix B - The Effective Practice Cycle

The Effective Practice Cycle describes the annual cycle of activity by which the YJB, in collaboration with the sector, identifies priority areas for Effective Practice, responds to the needs identified in these areas by gathering examples of related practice or initiating projects to produce materials that meet these needs, and disseminating this information to the sector.

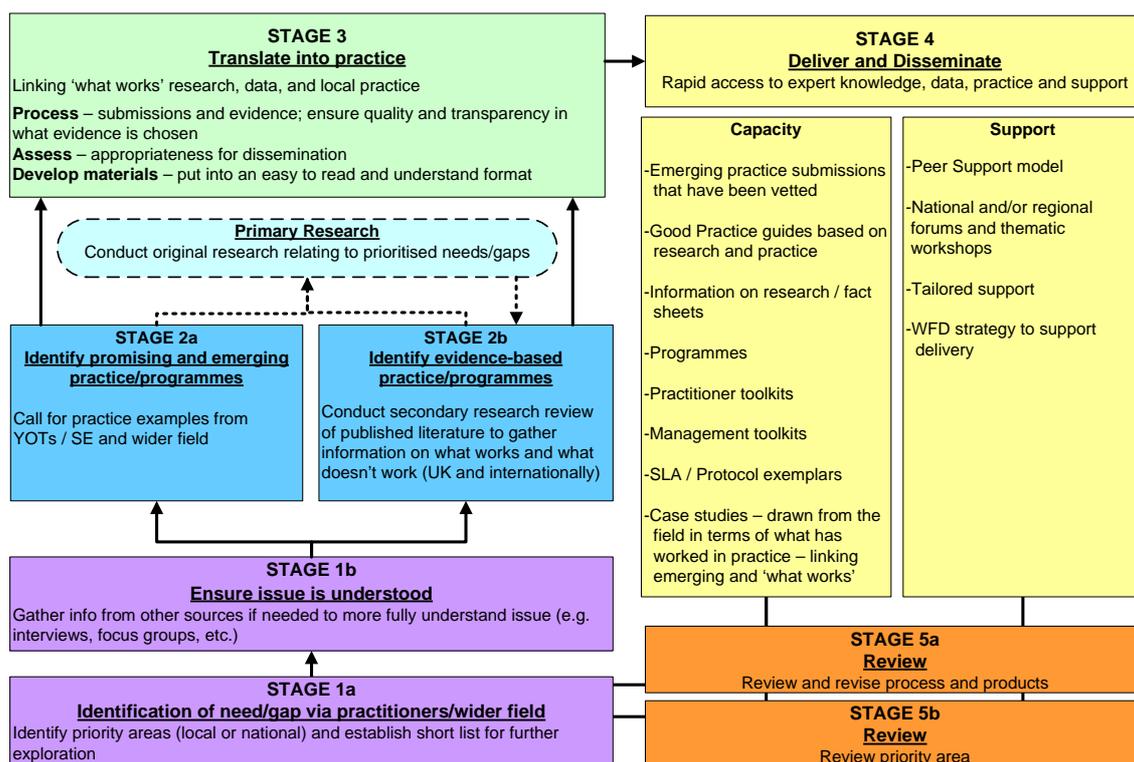


Figure 3: The Effective Practice Cycle

The stages of the cycle are explained in more detail below.

### Stage 1: Identification of a need or gap and ensuring it is understood

**Activity:** On an annual basis, a wide online stakeholder consultation identifies gaps in the sector knowledge base (**Stage 1a**).

In order to ensure the needs or gaps are fully understood, and the root causes identified, more information is gathered through interviews or focus groups with relevant stakeholders (**Stage 1b**).

**Output:** A defined list of prioritised needs that contribute to setting YJB corporate priorities for programme/practice development and research for the subsequent twelve months

## Stage 2: Identify 'promising', 'emerging' and 'research-proven' practice

**Input:** YJB corporate priorities for the next twelve months.

**Activity:** An annual 'call for practice' to the sector gathers examples of practice in relation to the priority areas (**Stage 2a**).

A secondary research review is conducted of what has been evaluated and evidenced to work (and not work) (**Stage 2b**). This may include reviewing a range of national and international, academic and practice-based literature, including evidence from other sectors, using existing structures and products where possible. These findings will be categorised according to the Effective Practice classification framework (see Appendix A).

On the basis of agreed arrangements with the MoJ research function, primary research is commissioned where necessary to build the evidence base.

**Output:** A range of practice examples and research information, clearly categorised according to the classification framework, made available to the sector.

## Primary research

**Input:** YJB corporate priorities for the next twelve months.

**Activity:** Where a need is identified as a priority by practitioners, and there is little or no published evidence relevant to that particular need, primary research may be required in order to;

- Verify or robustly evaluate emerging or promising practice from the field (e.g. smaller-scale evaluations carried out that wouldn't meet the required standards for 'research-proven' practice) from **Stage 2a**.
- Carry out explorative research to fully understand the issues and needs, and to draw conclusions about inter-dependencies with other needs and issues
- Evaluate hitherto unevaluated programmes and interventions with a view to establishing Effective Practice in the area identified as a need

The research may be commissioned or carried out by Government Social Research, academia, think tanks, consultancies, and other groups.

**Output:** New research and evidence relevant to Effective Practice in the Youth Justice arena, feeding into **Stage 2b** and subsequently **Stage 3**.

## Stage 3: Translate to practice

**Input:** A range of practice examples and research information, clearly categorised according to the classification framework, made available to the sector.

**Activity:** Using what is known to work from the evidence and examples of practice, develop or commission development of materials required to meet the identified needs, e.g. programmes, practice guides, research summaries etc.

**Output:** A range of Effective Practice resources produced to clearly defined standards in conjunction with the sector, and capable of versatile practical application.

### Stage 4: Deliver and disseminate

**Input:** A range of Effective Practice resources produced to clearly defined standards in conjunction with the sector, and capable of versatile practical application.

**Activity:** Disseminate Effective Practice materials to the sector via the YJB's online presence and through the work of YJB staff in day to day contact with youth justice services. Provide tailored implementation support, guidance and advice where required, and ensure that the YJB workforce development strategy supports the delivery of the materials.

**Output:** The sector has better access to a wide range of Effective Practice resources and materials, with support available from staff skilled in their implementation.

### Stage 5: Review

**Input:** The sector has better access to a wide range of Effective Practice resources and materials, with support available from staff skilled in their implementation.

**Activity:** Based on feedback, review and revise the products that have been delivered, including the dissemination process where necessary (**Stage 5a**). Following delivery of the materials, review progress against each of the agreed priority areas to identify any further gaps (**Stage 5b**).

**Output:** Areas of improvement within the process and the products, and plans for addressing these.