

Age of Criminal Responsibility – Operational Implications of Raising Age, Social Work Survey 2023.

This paper focuses on the operational implications for Social Work of a raise in the age of criminal responsibility (ACR) to 14, 16 and 18 years.

1. Background

The Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group was established to review the operation of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act (2019)¹ (the Act) and to consider a possible further raise in the age of criminal responsibility. When Part 1 of the Act commenced in December 2021, children under the age of twelve could not commit an offence and therefore are not be considered criminally responsible.

The ACR Operational Implications Subgroup collaborates with key partners to assess the viability of the provisions in the Act for increasing the age of criminal responsibility.

A paper² written in 2021 outlined the operational implications for local authority social work services of an increase in the age of criminal responsibility to under fourteen. This report was based on twenty-two survey responses received, covering 24 Local Authorities³. The survey was sent in June 2021, at a time when local authorities were at an early stage of their implementation of the 2019 Act and was prior to full commencement of the Act.

Social Work Scotland were asked by the Operational Implication Subgroup to provide an updated paper on the operational implications for an increase to fourteen and consider the implications of other age groups up to under 18. This second report therefore goes further in that it covers additional age groups while asking local areas to reflect on their views for under 14's (as reported in the 2021 paper). Views were sought in October and November 2023, almost 2 years into the commencement of the Act.

2. Methodology

A survey (Appendix 1) was devised that asked Local Authority Social Work Services to consider the implications of a raise in age of criminal responsibility to under 14 (ages 12 and 13), under 16 (ages 14 and 15) and under 18 (ages 16 and 17).

¹ Link to the Age of Criminal Responsibilities (Scotland) Act 2019: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/7/contents/enacted> and [Explanatory Notes](#)

² <https://socialworkscotland.org/guidance/age-of-criminal-responsibility/>

³ One response was received that covered 3 Local authority areas.

To inform responses and provide a possible number of children and young people affected by such a change, data from Justice Analytical Services at the Scottish Government was provided. The data included national data up to seventeen as well as Local Authority area data for under fourteens⁴.

Fifteen of the 32 Local Authorities responded.⁵

The survey referred to children and young people whose behaviour reached the threshold for the use of the powers in the Act as 'above the bar'. (This means behaviour that causes serious physical harm or sexual harm as defined in the Act⁶) and behaviour that does not meet those criteria as 'below the bar'.

3. Key Themes

The responses from the survey were collected, collated, and analysed and several key themes emerged: Resource and Capacity, System Change, Training, Learning and Development, Multi-Agency Working, Response to Serious Harmful Behaviour, Legislation and Policy, Community Confidence, and the role of Scottish Government.

Resource and Capacity

The survey identified implications for resourcing and capacity relating to staffing and workforce within services for children and families and out of hours provision. The number of children and young people impacted by the 'above the bar' threshold for all age groups remains low based on Scottish Government and local Social Work data. However, as the ACR increases, it is anticipated that there will be greater demand for Inter Agency Referral Discussions (IRD)⁷ and ACR Investigative Interviews⁸ which will impact on capacity and resource. It is noted in responses that this would happen at a time when there is no spare capacity and significant recruitment and retention issues in social work nationally⁹.

⁴ The data included non-court disposals by type for under 14's at a national and local authority level. As well as national data for those aged 12-17yrs for prosecutions and convictions by main crime or offence. As well as non-court disposals by main crime or offence and type.

⁵ A summary for each of the fourteen questions which is available on request.

⁶ The Act limits the power of the police to question a child under 12 years of age to circumstances where a constable has reasonable grounds to suspect that the child:

- By behaving in a violent or dangerous way, has caused or risked causing **serious physical harm** to another person, or
- by behaving in a sexually violent or sexually coercive way, has caused or risked causing **harm** (in the case of sexual harm, whether physical or not) to another person.

⁷ An ACRA IRD must be convened as soon as reasonably practicable where there are reasonable grounds to be believed that a child (whilst aged under 12) has caused or risked causing harm (serious physical or otherwise) to another person. An ACRA IRD will coordinate decision-making and planning and will assess whether the provisions of the Act apply,

⁸ The purpose of an investigative interview is to seek information from a child in relation to an incident which is the subject of a police investigation.

⁹ <https://socialworkscotland.org/reports/settingthebar2/>

Whilst recognising the passion and commitment to increasing ACR, there are pressure points on resources which are likely to impact on service delivery. To deliver effectively requires a workforce, equipped with, and confident in the knowledge, use of skills and intervention required to work with children, young people whose behaviour may cause serious harm, and their families.

Out of Hours service currently provided varies across the local authorities, with some having no resource, limited resources and others significantly stretched. To accommodate a 24/7 service would require significant funding and resource investment. This would impact on the current configuration of service delivery and conditions for the workforce.

System Change

Changes to processes and practice are necessary for the systems to continue to function should the ACR increase. Some current processes which are undertaken only by Police Scotland will require a joint response from social work and police in future (such as ACR IRD and investigative interviewing).

In some areas, current processes and systems will require adaptation and adjustment to include older age groups of children. Some areas note a concern about potential delay in the system where non-offence grounds of referral to the Reporter (rather than a referral to COPFS) become more complex and the potential for resource implications if a greater proportion of such grounds were disputed.

Within social work, structures may require revision. For example, some local authorities have a distinct Youth Justice Service that responds when children and young people are in conflict with the law, while others do not. The additional demands generated by any further increase in the ACR would therefore require a review of structures and processes in some areas, to ensure a comprehensive system was in place to effectively respond; these would relate to staffing, child protection and youth justice responses and resource capacity.

An extension of the age of criminal responsibility must be preceded by a thorough analysis, involving social work, of the additional resource requirements that it will entail. The necessary investments must be made *prior* to commencement, to ensure social work systems are ready to implement the changes that possible future legislation will bring.

Early and Effective Intervention (EEI)¹⁰

Local Authorities are committed to Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) and GIRFEC¹¹ and want to support children as early as possible to prevent repeated behaviours and improve outcomes for children. Figures suggest a

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/early-effective-intervention-framework-core-elements/>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

significant rise in EEI referrals. If an ACR increase results in a more timely, proportionate, and effective intervention, then prompt access to supports is critical to support children and reduce risks. The feedback indicates that EEI process would need to be reviewed to ensure that the right children continue to be referred so that the right services can respond to emerging patterns of behaviour.

Local Authorities need to consider if the child/ young person meets the current EEI criteria. In some areas EEI criteria does not cover older age groups, therefore any changes will result in adapted processes and resource implications to meet the increased demand. Enhanced support will be needed for a group of children and young people where their behaviours are more challenging and harmful. Should the ACR increase to under 18, some social work survey responses note a concern that 16- and 17-year-olds could be considered for EEI but there is a potential that they are less likely to engage in the voluntary measures. There is however the potential for further development of restorative justice approaches.

Places of Safety

As the ACR increases it is expected that more situations will arise where a place of safety¹² may be required. The intention would be to identify the most suitable placement that best meets the needs of the specific child or young person. However, maintaining and finding placements for children and young people currently in need is already particularly challenging. Most local authorities have limited available resources no matter what the age and there are increasing pressures on placements for any child in need of care and protection. Some areas have noted a crisis in placements for children in need of foster and residential care. There is also a need to consider the suitability of appropriate places of safety, as an alternative to a police station. This is currently challenging. Assessment is needed of safety and risk management for those that have caused serious harm and in addition the needs of children and young people who may also have experienced harm and trauma. The need for a place of safety particularly for older children, could put significant pressure on an already stretched resource.

Some local areas are developing innovative approaches, in collaboration with partners, to establish wellbeing rooms and safe places for children and young people. There is a commitment to this within social work, but it requires national and local investment as well as creative and collaborative leadership.

¹² Under the 2019 Act, this power can be used if police have reasonable grounds to believe that the child is behaving, or is likely to behave, in a way that is causing, or risks causing, significant harm to another person. The power can only be exercised if this is necessary to protect another person from an immediate risk of significant harm (or further significant harm if they have already been harmed).

As noted in the 2021 report, planning for places of safety will require staffing, finance, and the availability of suitable venues. Consideration must also be on the practical process of making these arrangements, particularly in the anticipated out of hours scenarios. A shared understanding is needed among relevant professional partners about timescales for decision making and the availability of resourcing at these times.

Training, Learning and Development

The survey identified a need for a comprehensive learning and development programme to be established *before* any future legislation is commenced and on an ongoing basis to ensure sustainability and maintenance of knowledge and expertise in the workforce. The survey indicates that local areas will require additional resources and training of the children and families social work workforce to equip them with knowledge and confidence in the use of skills and intervention to support children/ young people and their families whose behaviour has caused serious harm within the context of changes to legislation. Training is required in; assessment models and interventions, trauma skills, harmful sexual behaviour, risk management and knowledge of ACR legislation and practice.

In addition, social work practitioners need intensive skills-based learning and development focus on best practice in relation to investigative interviewing of children and young people within the context of ACR. This must be interagency training with police colleagues. The older age groups will bring more complexity to interviews. Social work involvement in these types of Investigative Interviews will be a new responsibility for social workers (currently police undertake single agency suspect interviews).

To meet the anticipated increase in demand for ACR investigative interviews, planning for the child's needs, IRD's and the required partnership working with Police and Child Interview Rights Practitioners (ChIRP), joint training and refresher training is required for staff to carry out these roles and responsibilities. Given the complexity and specialism, a national approach is recommended.

Multi-Agency working

Raising the ACR would mean realignment of services across a multi-agency partnership with amendments needed to practice and referral routes and pathways. Alignment across agencies around the ACR practices will be key in ensuring multi-agency partners have the shared understanding of the responses to children who present a risk of harm.

The survey indicates that clarity and guidance is needed on the role and response of the police when services are dealing with situations where a child is not criminally responsible. There are challenges noted regarding a young person's rights including information sharing between partners to inform decision making if ACR is raised beyond 16 years.

Multi-agency responses with intensive interventions are necessary to ensure better outcomes but requires increased resourcing and investments, including within partner organisations such as housing, police, education, health and third sector etc. Most areas have workers who are skilled at assessing harm, managing risk, and providing diversionary activities. However, an increase in numbers of children and young people requiring these interventions would result in the need for additional resources availability within children's services from social work and partner agencies.

An investment in early support and intervention such as universal services within a GIRFEC approach, in line with the intentions of the Promise,¹³ could help support children and young people within communities and reduce the likelihood of them being referred to social work.

Adequately resourced and funded multi-agency partnership working and a collaborative approach to align the principles and practice of ACR, is essential to meet the aspirations of the policy. Multi-agency training would promote consistency across services and structures and offer the proportionate and assessed level of support required by each child/ young person.

Response to Serious Harmful Behaviour

Respondents anticipate the amount of young people meeting the criteria for more serious behaviour, 'above the bar', will increase as the ACR is extended.

Clarity will be needed on the definitions and interpretation of behaviour that would meet a threshold for intervention under ACR legislation. Thresholds may be assessed differently by agencies. The complexity of young people's support needs and level of risk regarding their behaviours is likely to increase as is the types of situations they will be involved in.

Early strategic national and local conversations with partners will be critical for both cases that are above and below the criteria for using ACR duties.

Notwithstanding, consideration may be needed on future legislation that is not the same as the 2019 Act to fully meet the needs and risks of older children and protect victims of harm.

Legislation and Policy

ACR needs to be aligned, prioritised, and sequenced with other related policies and legislation such as the Promise, UNCRC, Children (Care and Justice) Bill and the Children's Hearing System Redesign, and other policy priorities from Government as all are intricately linked in practice. Often these policies affect the same children. Local implementation is led by the same managers and services. There is currently a complex and cluttered landscape that causes significant pressures locally.

¹³ <https://thepromise.scot/>

If the Children (Care and Justice) Bill is enacted, then referral to the Children's Reporter would be an important safeguard for young people.

Ensuring the rights and entitlements for 16- and 17-year-olds within the complex legal definition of childhood for this age group creates practice challenges. The responses note that further consideration may need to be given to 16-17 years old should the ACR be raised to this age group. Some are no longer in education, might not have access to a named person and may also be subject to other legislation, policy, and guidance (both adult and children's).

The closer the child/ young person is to the age of 18 years the less time the Children's Hearing can impose compulsion to participate in interventions and supports. This means that social work may have limited time to address risk and need with older young people subject to compulsion through a Children's Hearing rather than a Justice system.

A review of funding and structure of services is required to ensure there is a flexible range of resources for young people and families. The funding formula for under eighteen's who may be dealt with out with the justice system would also need to be considered. Currently funding sits within a Justice context and changes will be required to ensure funding arrangements adapt to support the shift to children's services.

Availability of legal representation has been raised with the Children (Care and Justice) Bill team at Scottish Government and similarly has been raised here. In order to uphold the child/ young person's rights, access to a ChIRP is important. Concern is noted about availability of ChIRPs for young people.

Respondents state that raising the ACR is an opportunity to provide a rights based, UNCRC compliant approach to children and young people in conflict with the law. This could meet the challenge of raising the age to be in line with the most progressive countries in the world for children rights.

Some other challenges have been raised:

- Children may be exploited by those who may seek to use the child's status of being under the ACR.
- Conflict between the rights of the individual and the rights of anyone harmed by their behaviours is anticipated. Any changes to future processes must uphold the rights of all.

Community Confidence

Legislation and policy need to support children and young people without resorting to criminalising them through the court but manage to reduce risk whilst retaining public confidence.

Community confidence is critical, and careful consideration is required as to how we build this. So called 'anti-social' behaviour and harmful behaviour can have a significant impact on local areas. Therefore, it is important that

there are robust responses to behaviour which will often be 'low level', and not reach the 'above the bar' threshold, but will be higher volume.

Awareness raising amongst the public and in communities is important to ensure they understand and support any change to ACR and that they continue to feel safe in their communities. Community education is essential to help the public understand the actions of those young people will still be addressed, often in the same way as currently, although young people will not be criminalised. There appears to be a lack of public understanding of the current Children's Hearing system response for most children.

There is a need for positive messages and education to assist the community and partners to understand the distress, adversities and trauma often faced by young people in conflict with the law. Further consideration needs to be given to the key messages to share with the public.

Attention must be paid to the views of victims of such behaviour who might be uncomfortable with a perceived 'soft' response to harmful and/or distressing situations. Therefore, it is important to consider how victims are supported and protected. Social work can be involved with both the victim and the person who has caused harm, sometimes in the same family.

The promotion of Restorative Justice will be important to give victims a voice in the outcome of any response. Victim impact and public confidence will need to be considered in any decision making.

Role of Scottish Government

Respondents have asked for support from Scottish Government to reframe approaches and attitudes to young people in the older age groups to consider them as children first. This includes consideration of conflicting legislation for 16 -17-year-olds; investment in supports for children and young people; investment in social work workforce to support any changes; and learning and development investments for services.

There was also the suggestion of an ACR Steering Group to ensure ACR is implemented effectively, and that robust organisational reform is in place to support the new practice required. Unlike the 2019 Act, the impact of future changes must be fully considered and addressed to ensure readiness in the system *before* legislation is commenced. If this is not undertaken, there may be a significant risk that the required changes, to respond effectively and safely, are not in place to deal with serious harmful behaviour and ensuring the needs of children who cause harm and those who are victims of harm are fully met. There is concern about an implementation gap.

4. Survey Comparison

The analysis of both 2021 and 2023 surveys identified similar if not identical themes. However, the fundamental difference in the 2023 survey is Social

Work Services have a greater depth and understanding of the processes and the duties of the 2019 Act.

There have been incidents of serious harm by children under the age of twelve where Social Work Services have been involved. Locally they have gained some experience in their roles and responsibilities whilst learning about new process and practice. However, the small number of situations where powers have been used for the under 12's does mean that experience is limited. Since commencement of the Act there has been experience in some areas of ACR IRDs, and very small numbers of Investigative Interviews and requests for Places of Safety, (as anticipated by social work in the previous survey). Most local areas have no experience of undertaking ACR investigative interview planning and delivery.

The largest focus for children under twelve is where their behaviour is of a less serious nature and children are generally supported, as they were prior to the Act, via child protection, GIRFEC and EEI processes.

The 2021 survey asked for a response to a potential increase to under fourteen. The 2023 survey asks respondents to consider and identify operational issues arising from a move to a higher age of criminal responsibility, up to under eighteen. The responses contain significantly more detail, with a lot more consideration around the implications.

It is anticipated that the rise will see an increase in numbers and seriousness of behaviour. This will require more resource and capacity with significant focus on IRD's, ACR investigative interviews, EEI, places of safety within a more complex legislative landscape to navigate.

The 2023 survey highlights the additional demands on a service that is at capacity. There is a significant recruitment and retention issue across all social work services nationally and any additionality to duties will add to the current pressures.

5. Summary Points¹⁴

- All local authorities are still in support of raising in the age of criminal responsibility to ensure that children are removed from the criminal justice system. Increasing ACR allows for a more supportive, nurturing and less stigmatising approach for children and young people. ACR legislation must prevent those critical few children being criminalised through involvement in the court system. This approach is consistent with the values of social work.
- There is support for the current Children's Hearing, welfare based system, to consider and respond to the 'needs and deeds' of young people up to eighteen.

¹⁴ The key points cover those identified in the 2023 survey and also points that remain relevant from the 2021 survey.

- There is a significant recruitment and retention issue across social work nationally that must be addressed to support future changes and additional responsibilities for the sector.
- Implementation must be robustly planned and resourced, with levels of capacity (people, skills, places) delivered before changes in the law are commenced.
- Future change must be seen within a wider context of the current complex policy and legislative landscape. There is a strong view that a focus is needed on alignment and sequencing of significant change for social work children and families' services.
- Intensive and specialist interventions are needed for a small but significant group of children/ young people where there may be a risk to others and/ or themselves. Current provision is stretched and there needs to be a recognition that a preventative approach for children involved in harmful behaviour must include the provision of adequate specialist resourcing.
- The provision of learning and development, training, clear practice guidance and implementation support are required for specific duties such as places of safety, inter-agency referral discussions and risk management.
- Investment is needed in learning and skills-based training for police and social workers undertaking ACR investigative interviews. This should also link to the role of the ChIRP. This must be established before commencement of legislation. A national consistent approach is important to support local partnership working practice and alignment to the principles and practice of ACR.
- Any future legislation must provide clarity around the role and responsibilities of all agencies, in particular that of police and social work in relation to the most serious behaviour.
- Places of safety bring specific and significant challenges and some areas have very limited options. Data indicates that there will be a greater demand for places of safety with an increase in ACR. An exploration is urgently needed of current provision, resourcing and processes required for this. Consideration is needed on the investment in resources to meet the intentions of the current and any future ACR legislation.
- Out of hours services vary across the country, therefore there is not a universal, consistent approach or practice nationally. The current configuration of social work provides basic service requirements out of hours, so additional provision required to meet the intentions of the Act are a challenge within current resources and structures. The current rarity and uncertainty of when these events occur causes additional complexity in relation to resource and workforce planning. It is anticipated that future demand will increase significantly.
- There needs to be clear pathways between agencies to ensure early identification and effective supports for children. These pathways currently exist but may require review to ensure that intervention remain effective and proportionate. For example, where there is a lower level of concern about the child's behaviour, local single agency and multi-agency processes will require review and adaptation.

- The safety and wellbeing of any victim must be fully considered, and future changes must take cognisance of the needs and rights of victims.
- Community confidence is critical. Careful consideration is required as to how ACR can be raised whilst building confidence within communities.

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Appendix 1

Social Work survey on the operational implications for Local Authority social work services of raising the age of criminal responsibility (ACR)

This survey will cover questions on increased ACR to 14; 16 and 18

Purpose

This survey asks you to consider the implications for local authority social work service of a raise in the age of criminal responsibility (ACR) to 14, 16 and 18.

You may also want to analyse your own local data and available SCRA data¹⁵ when considering your responses.

The survey also refers to 'above the bar' cases. This means behaviour that causes serious physical harm or sexual harm as defined in the Act.¹⁶

Q1. You may have previously completed a survey for raising the ACR to 14, if you did, is there anything you want to add to your previous response in terms of implications?

(Should you require a copy of your response please contact: Sharon.Glasgow@socialworkscotland.org)

If you did not previously complete a survey for raising the ACR to 14 please complete the boxes below for ACR 14 as well as the other age groups.

Q1a. Focusing on children in the 'below the bar' category¹⁷ (likely to go through early and effective intervention processes), what do you anticipate the implications of raising the ACR are for the processes or practice locally?

Please comment specifically about raising the ACR to the following ages:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13 no longer held criminally responsible)

¹⁵ [Online Statistical Dashboard - SCRA](#)

¹⁶ The Act limits the power of the police to question a child under 12 years of age to circumstances where a constable has reasonable grounds to suspect that the child:

- By behaving in a violent or dangerous way, has caused or risked causing **serious physical harm** to another person, or
- by behaving in a sexually violent or sexually coercive way, has caused or risked causing **harm** (in the case of sexual harm, whether physical or not) to another person.

¹⁷ Behaviour that **does not** cause serious harm or sexual harm.

ACR 16 (Age 14-15 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17 no longer held criminally responsible)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q2. Considering children in the 'above the bar'¹⁸ category, what does your local data indicate about children in this group in your area?

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q3. What processes and/ or arrangements are currently in place in your local area should an above the bar¹⁹ situation caused by a child occur?

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17)

¹⁸ i.e. behaviour that causes serious harm or sexual harm

¹⁹ i.e. behaviour that causes serious harm or sexual harm

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q4. What changes may be required in social work if the ACR is increased?

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17 no longer held criminally responsible)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q5. What changes and/or support will be needed from other organisations to ensure an effective response to meet the children's needs and mitigate any risks? (e.g., SCRA, support services, Police Scotland, Scottish Government, other local authority services etc)

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17 no longer held criminally responsible)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

For the next questions, please answer assuming there would be comparable duties in any new legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility to the duties in the ACR Act 2019: [ACR Operational Guidance for Police and Social Work \(2023\)](#)

Q6. What implication would the duties in relation to places of safety²⁰ have for social work. Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17 no longer held criminally responsible)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q7. What implications would the duties in relation to investigative interviews²¹ including inter agency referral discussions (IRD) ²² have for social work services?

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17 no longer held criminally responsible)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

²⁰ This power can be used if police have reasonable grounds to believe that the child is behaving, or is likely to behave, in a way that is causing, or risks causing, significant harm to another person. The power can only be exercised if this is necessary to protect another person from an immediate risk of significant harm (or further significant harm if they have already been harmed).

²¹ Investigative interviews are only for **the most serious cases** involving concerns about the behaviour of a child and, only when it is considered **necessary** to properly investigate the child's behaviour and the circumstances surrounding it.

²² Where it is believed that a child is suspected of causing serious harmful behaviour that meets the behaviour criteria, then an IRD must be instigated at the earliest opportunity.

Q8. What would be the implications for training and development of staff in your local area?

Q9. What would be the implications for resourcing, structures, governance etc in your local area to ensure effective practice and processes (including out of hours arrangements)?

Q10. What are the implications of raising ACR for services and/or interventions to support children and families to meet children's wellbeing needs, ensure safety and reduce risk of harm?

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15 no longer held criminally responsible)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17 no longer held criminally responsible)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q11. What resources, interventions or approaches would make practice more effective that are not currently available or there is not sufficient provision?

Q12. What are the barriers, risks, and opportunities to implementing ACR at an increased age?

Q13. With reference to your local data what would you consider to be the likely numbers of children that meet the 'above the bar'²³ threshold in your area?

Please comment specifically about these age groups:

ACR 14 (Age 12-13)

ACR 16 (Age 14-15)

ACR 18 (Age 16-17)

Any other relevant points (for any of the above age groups):

Q14. Are there any other issues you want to raise in relation to operational implications of an increased ACR? Such as factors that may impact on implementation; implications of other policy areas; what needs to be done to be ready for increases to each of these ages groups noted above; any other relevant issues.

Q15. Are you willing to be involved in further discussion about this topic? If so, please provide contact details:

²³ i.e. behaviour that causes serious harm or sexual harm