

# Electronic Yellow Envelope being introduced across England and Wales

**Case study:** How Eye is helping all parts of the youth justice system improve practice and reduce risk

“Since the launch of Electronic Yellow Envelope, the better quality information being provided to the YJB Placements Team has helped to reduce the risks faced by vulnerable young people. For us to continue to make the most appropriate decisions, youth offending teams must maintain – and look to improve – that performance.”



**Peter Minchin, Head of Placements, YJB**



“Electronic Yellow Envelope is making a major contribution to the work of the secure estate by providing reception staff with crucial information at a time of heightened vulnerability. I view this project as a key element of

our strategy to improve the safeguarding of young people.”

**Paul Bowers, Director of Secure Accommodation, YJB**

**As Electronic Yellow Envelope (Eye) is introduced in more regions of England and Wales and replaces the old paper yellow envelope system, practitioners in youth offending teams (YOTs), the YJB Placements Team and the secure estate are finding that it is making an enormous difference to their work.**

“The great thing for us is the certainty that Eye brings,” explains Alwyn Gunter, Quality and Performance Manager at Kirklees YOT. “In the old days you just couldn’t be sure that the fax had got to YJB Placements. Now we get an automatic receipt of documents, and we have a shared Secure eMail box

so anyone can look in and see if there’s been a reply.”

Implementation first focused on those administrative staff already using Secure eMail, but it was quickly realised that it had to be the workers making the assessments who should send them. “The way we trained was hands-on, on the job – no training suites or classes. The whole thing took less than a couple of weeks.”

Alwyn admits there was some scepticism about Eye at first, particularly among the longer-serving staff. “But there isn’t one person who hasn’t found the system well within their grasp,” he continues. “It is so user-friendly that everyone has taken it on board.”

Alwyn is confident that Eye will help the team to do their job better. “Our gatekeeping procedures have recently been revised, and Eye will free up time that we can spend on checking *Asset* quality,” he says. “The completeness check started this off, and we hope that quality improvement will continue. And when we can populate forms simultaneously with Connectivity, things will move even more quickly.”

## **Better-informed decisions**

As Placements Systems Manager, Katherine Simmons is on the receiving end of information coming from Kirklees and all the other YOTs that are Eye-enabled. She agrees with Alwyn that Eye is already making a difference. ▶

► “Basically it has increased the information that we receive,” she says. “Whereas before we may have only had a placement alert and an *Asset* on a young person, we now frequently also get the *Asset – Risk of Serious Harm* (ROSH), vulnerability plan and pre-sentence report (PSR). Crucially, this enables us to make better-informed decisions.”

Located in central London, the YJB Placements Team has eight placement officers supported by four administrative staff and has been part of the Eye project since May 2007. The team places around 80 young people into custody every day.

“The first priority each morning is to determine where the vacancies are,” Katherine explains. “Establishments send this information by Secure eMail. The support team then monitors the Secure eMail folders through the day, and when a placement alert is received, this information is used to update the Secure Accommodation Clearing House System (SACHS), our in-house database.

“When the young person is remanded or sentenced, the YOT emails or telephones us. A caseworker decides what type of place is most appropriate, and then the placement officer tries to secure a bed. Once a placement is confirmed we issue a placement authorisation to the YOT and the establishment. This also contains a detailed summary of a young person’s risk factors.”

The Placements Team office buzzes with activity, and phones ring constantly. “The majority of a placement officer’s time is actually spent on the phone,” explains Katherine, “as we receive anything up to 1,000 calls a week. But increased use of Secure eMail by YOTs is significantly reducing the length of time that YOT workers have to wait in the call queue on those occasions when they do need to phone.”

Katherine is confident that as Wiring Up Youth Justice gathers pace the improvements will continue to be felt. “Establishments where Eye has been rolled out have already reported

significantly fewer ‘no-docs’ (incidents when secure establishments report that documents have not arrived from the YOT),” she says.

## Real improvements

Clive Wilson, Head of Offender Management at Wetherby YOI, has seen the improvement Eye has made to information being sent to the custodial reception teams.

“Information coming to us needs to be of the highest standard so that the reception and casework teams can start supporting the young person as soon as they enter custody,” he says. “The big advantage of Eye is that the information now arrives here before the young person does. This has been a vital boost in ensuring that vulnerable young people – those who pose a risk to themselves or others – are properly looked after.”

Wetherby has also been using eAsset, the new sentence management system for the young

## From PSR to placement – the process

This chart shows the timescale from PSR to placement in ideal circumstances, where the YJB Placements Team has a good amount of time in which to operate. Of course there are many factors beyond YOTs’ control that can mean the process has to be achieved in shorter time. **YOTs should make every effort to send information as early as possible in all cases**, as this helps the team secure the most appropriate placement for the young person.

10 working days before:

### The PSR request

Guilty verdict. Court adjourns for PSR. YOT’s court officer arranges home visit and notifies Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP).

5 working days before:

### The PSR interview

Home visit takes place. ISSP worker makes assessment.

8 working days before:

### Planning the PSR

YOT officer checks response to previous supervision. Opens new section on case record and puts basic details into *Asset*. Posts questionnaire to young person.



The YJB Placements Team receives up to 1,000 calls a week

people's secure estate. Clive believes that sending information electronically from YOTs is making it easier to transfer and use information on the new system, and helping to integrate both community and custodial parts of Detention and Training Orders (DTOs).

“Change can sometimes be for its own sake,” says Clive. “But with these new ways of working we are seeing real improvements in information and fewer instances of ‘no-docs’. And my staff are saving time and resources by being able to plan more effectively.” ■

## Completing Asset forms – getting it right

Because getting full and accurate information is so vital to the work of YJB Placements, the team now checks all *Asset* forms for completeness, so that they can then provide constructive feedback to YOTs. This checking process establishes whether any information is missing or inconsistent, and also covers other problems such as unclear handwriting.

The team has created a checklist to help YOTs when they are completing *Asset* forms. The checklist can be downloaded from [www.wiringupyouthjustice.info/site/library.htm](http://www.wiringupyouthjustice.info/site/library.htm) – click on *Asset* Documentation Checklist. If any YOT would like information, help or advice, please email [wiringup@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:wiringup@yjb.gov.uk).

4 working days before:

### Completing *Asset* and PSR

Information from YOT's education worker used to complete *Asset*. PSR completed.

2 working days before:

### Gatekeeping the PSR

YOT officer discusses PSR with colleague and line manager under gatekeeping policy. Alerts YJB Placements Team about likelihood of custodial sentence.

1 working day before:

### Alerting YJB Placements Team

Placement alert form, *Asset* and PSR sent by Secure eMail to YJB Placements Team.

### Sentencing and placement

Magistrates impose a DTO. YOT officer interviews young person and completes post-court report (PCR). Young person travels to secure establishment. YOT officer sends confirmation of sentence and PCR to YJB Placements Team.

# Delivering Eye to your YOT – the stages we'll work through together

Weeks 1–2	Weeks 3–9		Weeks 10–12 and ongoing
1. Choosing the delivery team and champions, planning, including going live date for region/Wales and planning with YOTs	2. Implementing the new business process for Eye with YOTs, including briefing practitioners and testing to ensure case management and other systems are technically ready	3. Assessing current quality of information in <i>Asset</i>	4. Developing <i>Asset</i> improvement plan; getting YOT managers and YJB head of region/Head of YJB for Wales to sign up to the plan
			5. Going live: YOTs making sure that change is embedded and that the benefits are lasting

## 1. Choosing the delivery team

The delivery team is made up of three people:

- The **Business Change and Benefits Lead** (BCBL) comes from the programme's central Business Change Team. He or she will have carried out the implementation process in at least one other region and have a comprehensive toolkit of training and communications material that have been tested with YOTs.
- The **Regional Implementation Lead** (RIL) is a YOT head of service or equivalent from the region or Wales. In areas with a large number of YOTs there may be two RILs. Their role is to provide leadership, and to act as project champion.
- The **YJB Regional Team's Champion** is normally the YJB head of region/Head of YJB for Wales, supported by other members of the regional team. As well as contributing to the change process, this person is central to the long-term sustainability of Eye's benefits.

## 2. Implementation

This begins with the first meeting of all heads of service. The change

programme is explained and key dates agreed. Arrangements for the *Asset* quality audit are made.

During implementation the BCBL and RIL meet with practitioner groups in all the YOTs. They explain what the new process means and discuss any concerns. They collect some information on existing processes which provides a baseline for measurement of future improvements.

The BCBL works with a nominated individual in each YOT to test that the case management system is able to send *Asset* and ROSH files in the correct electronic format to be uploaded into e*Asset*.

### 3 & 4. Assessing and developing

Nominated YOT senior practitioners and operational managers come together for briefing on the *Asset* quality audit process. They learn how to use the quality assurance tool and consistency of scoring is tested. The team then carry out the audit in one or more local establishments. An independent validation is done, to ensure consistency.

The audit team then meets to discuss their findings. They are

given a template for an *Asset* improvement plan, and they are shown how to produce an improvement plan with their YOT.

The final report is distributed to all the heads of service. When the YOTs' improvement plans are returned the YJB regional/Wales team analyses them for common themes, and decides how the YOTs' requirements for training and support can best be met.

## 5. Going live and embedding change

A week before going live the BCBL checks that all YOTs are ready and confirms the date with the YJB Placements Team. The BCBL remains on hand during the first couple of weeks to provide telephone support and further visits if needed.

(During the early part of the change process, agreement will have been reached about when use of the manual yellow envelope process is to be ended – the recommended timescale is one month after going live.)

With Eye now business as usual, the team work with YOTs to identify the benefits and how they can use the time saved.



“Eye presents us with a tremendous opportunity to improve practice and reduce risk right across the youth justice system. But we will only get out what we put in, which is why *Asset* quality is so vital. We are already seeing significant improvements in the way *Asset* forms are being completed as a result of Eye. I have no doubt that YOTs will want to make every effort to improve the quality and completeness of *Asset* forms still further. The YJB is committed to monitoring these improvements”

**Lucy Dawes,**  
Director of Performance, YJB

## How to prepare for Eye

### YOTs

- Try to ensure the head of service attends the regional/Wales first meeting.
- Complete the readiness assessment form (YOTs will be sent this).
- Be ready to nominate a senior practitioner or operations manager to take part in the regional/Wales audit of *Asset* quality (this will take approximately four days over a month).
- Nominate an ‘Eye champion’ to help the Regional Implementation Team with the new processes and technology.
- Ensure that relevant staff attend practitioner briefings by the Regional Implementation Team.

### Secure estate

- Ensure that reception staff understand the changes that Eye will mean for them; discuss any questions with the Regional Implementation Team or Secure Estate Business Change Team.
- If asked, nominate a staff member to be part of the regional/Wales audit of *Asset* quality.
- If asked, provide the Regional Implementation Team with *Asset* forms, also a space in the establishment where part of the regional/Wales audit of *Asset* quality can be carried out.

## YJB Placements Team: key facts

- The team has been in existence since April 2000.
- They exchange an average of 6,000 Secure eMails with the secure estate every month.
- They exchange an average of 4,000 Secure eMails with YOTs every month.
- They operate 24/7. From this autumn they will have access to Secure eMail and their case management system at weekends and bank holidays.
- The team can be contacted on **0845 363 6363**.

## Eye regional implementation leads

Each region has one or two RILs who are seconded from YOTs for three months, part-time, to act as project champions. Wales has one implementation lead.

North East

**Colin Wilson**, South Tees

Yorkshire and the Humber

**Simon Page**, York

North West

**Joyce Boyd**, Tameside

**Steve Pimblett**, Wirral

Wales

**Ron Boden**, Caerphilly

East

**Peter Kay**, Thurrock

South West

**Marie Edmonds**, Somerset

London

**Peter Sutlieff**, Brent

South East

**John Hawkins**, East Sussex

**Pauline Camilleri**,

Buckinghamshire

West Midlands

To be confirmed

East Midlands

**Tim O’Neill**, Derby City

## FAQs about Eye

**Q: When will Eye completely replace the old system so I won't have to send information in both electronic and hard copy?**

**A:** The old system will stop as each area completes transition to Eye. The precise time is up to each YOT, in discussion with the YJB head of region or the Head of YJB for Wales, but the aim is to discontinue the old manual process four weeks after going live.

**Q: Will the YJB Placements Team work out of office hours?**

**A:** Staff at the team are available 24/7 on **0845 363 6363**. We are working to make sure that outside core hours (09.00–18.00) on weekdays they have access to their systems and Secure eMail. As soon as they have this capability it will be announced.

**Q: I don't have access to my case management system from Crown Court and sometimes the court ends after my YOT staff have gone home. How do I get essential information to the YJB Placements Team in these situations?**

**A:** YOTs should have a contingency plan for this. The YJB Placements Team can still receive hard copy

documents via fax. However, if a custodial sentence is a possible outcome, the documents should have been sent to the team 24 hours beforehand. Then all that is required is the PCR, which can be faxed.

**Q: Risk of serious harm currently relates to the risk posed by the young person to other people. Where is their own vulnerability recorded?**

**A:** Vulnerability should first be detailed within the relevant section of *Asset*. If this then needs to be updated then it should be done in the PCR before Secure eMailing it to the YJB Placements Team. Risk of harm should still be recorded in the *Asset* – *Risk of Serious Harm*.

**Q: How are escort drivers notified of young people's vulnerabilities? Eye does not send documents to them.**

**A:** The new placements confirmation form identifies risk and vulnerability issues, combining the first night alert and vulnerability reports. The form will be sent to the YOT worker at court who will pass it to the escort driver. If no YOT worker is present then it will be sent to the person requesting the placement at court, or direct to the escort driver.



Photo posed by models

For further information about the Wiring Up Youth Justice programme go to [www.wiringupyouthjustice.info](http://www.wiringupyouthjustice.info) or email [wiringup@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:wiringup@yjb.gov.uk).

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