



Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship (Level 5)



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Foreword

A message from our CEO



JAYNE COWLEY, CEO

I'm proud to lead an organisation committed to supporting the development of practitioners who work with children in the care and criminal justice systems. Since June 2023, Unitas has delivered the Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship - an excellent addition to our wide range of courses, including the highly successful **Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEP C)** and the **BA (Hons) Youth Justice pathway**.

Looking ahead to 2024, my aim is to continue building on the knowledge and experience we've developed since 2012, ensuring all our students are equipped with the skills and understanding they need to become agents of positive change in youth justice.

We're proud to be part of this important training opportunity for the sector, strengthening our relationships with Youth Justice Services and other employers who are committed to supporting their teams and offering meaningful routes for career progression through the Apprenticeship Scheme.

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Introduction

Discover the Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship (YJPA)

Unitas is the largest provider of vocational youth justice distance learning courses and degrees in the UK. Our **Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship (YJPA)** combines academic rigour with practical relevance. All our courses are designed by leading academics working alongside experienced managers and practitioners to ensure they reflect real-world practice.

Unitas works closely with both employers and apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to carry out the role effectively and successfully achieve the YJPA. Apprentices may be entirely new to the Youth Justice Practitioner (YJP) role, or they may already be working within the organisation and use the apprenticeship as a way to develop their practice and build on existing experience.

Employers may appoint a mentor to support the apprentice, and other colleagues may also contribute to the learning journey. This collaborative approach helps apprentices acquire the skills and behaviours needed to carry out their role confidently and competently.

Unitas provides all learning materials, but success relies on close partnership working between the apprentice, employer and Unitas. Through this shared commitment, apprentices will gain a nationally recognised qualification and develop the specialist knowledge and skills that are highly valued across the youth justice sector.

Preparing for the Apprenticeship

What happens before an Apprentice starts the YJPA?

Before the Apprenticeship begins, a meeting takes place between the apprentice, a Learning Coach Assessor (LCA) or Unitas representative, and the employer (typically a manager in the Youth Justice Service). This meeting is used to assess the apprentice's existing skills and knowledge against the Youth Justice Practitioner (YJP) Apprenticeship Standard. It ensures that any relevant prior learning is recognised and that, if necessary, the length of the apprenticeship is adjusted accordingly.

During this discussion, an individual learning plan is developed that takes into account the apprentice's specific needs, preferences, and learning style.

A BKSB initial assessment of English and Maths functional skills will also be required.



An overview of the YJPA

What the Apprentice will gain from the programme

An induction session will commence learning, linking the apprenticeship to the workplace.

Apprentices will complete four knowledge modules, each underpinned by the Child First tenets and aligned with the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship (YJPA) Standard.

Module 1

- Introduction to Youth Justice
- Adolescent Development
- Relationships and Practice
- Rights, responsibilities and the legal framework
- Reflective practice
- Educational engagement

Module 2

- Why children offend
- Working effectively
- Assessment and planning interventions
- Engagement and participation
- Custody and resettlement
- Desistance

Module 3

- Multi-agency working and sharing information
- Children's development in the YJ System
- Assessment
- Engagement and communication

Module 4

- Transitions
- Safety and wellbeing
- Diversion and court practice skills
- Effective practice

Modules 1 and 2 of the YJPA focus on understanding core youth justice principles and policies. Modules 3 and 4 cover the eight areas of the **Youth Justice Skills Matrix**.

Core Learning Objectives

Apprentice Learning Experience

Discover

The apprentice will learn the theory by exploring subjects and topics online, as well as from their organisation.

Practice

The apprentice will practice their new-found knowledge by completing activities directly at work in their role.

Apply

The apprentice will be able to apply what they have learnt at work, and they will actively contribute to their organisation whilst building their portfolio of evidence.

Blended approach to learning

Study

Theoretical knowledge is delivered via Unitas' bespoke digital study materials and resources, which are available online. The materials cover all the important areas of youth justice practice as identified in the **Youth Justice Skills Matrix**.

The digital study materials and resources have been designed to be accessible to everyone, regardless of their level of technical experience. Study for the YJPA is classed as 'off-the-job' (OTJ) training and must amount to a minimum of six hours per week, with all learning time clearly recorded. This is a requirement set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Off-the-job training is calculated based on the apprentice's contracted working hours over the full duration of the YJPA. The ESFA defines it as learning undertaken outside of the apprentice's normal day-to-day duties, which contributes to the achievement of the apprenticeship. While this training can take place at the apprentice's usual place of work, it must not form part of their routine responsibilities.

Off-the-job (OTJ) training is focused on the apprentice's personal development and goes beyond their specific job role and day-to-day operational responsibilities. It is essential that apprentices are able to evidence the time they dedicate to their training and development. The OTJ training record will be reviewed regularly by both the Learning Coach Assessor (LCA) and the employer to ensure this requirement is being met.

Learning methodology

Off-the-job training can include:

- Theory – such as online learning, webinars, seminars, role playing, simulation exercises
- Practical training apprentices wouldn't normally undertake – such as shadowing or mentoring
- Learning support and time spent attending workshops

OTHER LEARNING

As part of the apprenticeship there will be access to additional Unitas materials on other topics as follows:

- Safeguarding
- Prevent duty
- Health & Safety in the workplace
- Mental Health and Well-being
- British Values
- End Point Assessment Information sessions
- Professional discussion planning and practice
- Project planning, report writing and presentation
- Project delivery and outcome analysis

There may be other employer-led workshops and training which also count towards the prescribed number of hours of OTJ training.

Enhancing essential foundations for success

Comprehensive support system

The employer will provide sufficient opportunities for the apprentice to meet the practical requirements of the Apprenticeship Standard. Apprentices cannot progress to the **End Point Assessment (EPA)** unless they have clearly evidenced all of the required knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs).

Unitas will assign each apprentice a dedicated Learning Coach Assessor (LCA) with extensive experience in youth justice. The LCA will support and monitor the apprentice's progress throughout their learning journey, meeting regularly with both the apprentice and employer—either online or in person—and providing developmental feedback on assignments.

Safeguarding

We ensure that our policies and processes promote and protect apprentice well-being whilst on programme. We will teach apprentices about types of risk facing modern British citizens.

Prevent

We teach our staff and apprentices about the four British values: democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and respect and tolerance.

Mental health

Understanding how to protect mental health and promote emotional well-being is part of modern British citizenship.

Monitoring progress

How will Unitas, the Apprentice and the employer know what progress is being made?

It is important that both apprentices and employers are **kept informed of progress** throughout the Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship (YJPA), and that all parties work together to keep the learning journey on track, minimising the need for interventions or time adjustments.

Every 8–12 weeks, a Unitas representative will meet with the apprentice and employer to carry out a Progress Review. This is a requirement under ESFA funding guidelines and must be completed by all parties.

The Progress Review will cover how the apprenticeship is progressing, what has been learned—both through study and in the workplace—and will include a review of the portfolio of evidence and the off-the-job (OTJ) training record. Any necessary changes to the learning programme or pace of learning will be agreed collectively.

Apprentices will also complete assignments and assessments as they progress through the knowledge modules, with regular milestones marking their achievements. Constructive, developmental feedback will be provided to help apprentices continue building their skills and confidence.

Preparation for the End Point Assessment (EPA) begins from **day one of the apprenticeship**. Apprentices will have opportunities throughout the programme to discuss their EPA project, with guidance and support available to help them plan ahead and understand the assessment process.



Assessment methods

Assessment of practice is a core component of the apprenticeship. Apprentices will be assessed across three key areas: their ability to convey knowledge, demonstrate practical skills, and display professional workplace behaviour. These competencies will be developed throughout the learning journey, with the aim of confidently and consistently evidencing all three during the End Point Assessment (EPA).

PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

Throughout the YJPA, the Apprentice is required to compile evidence in a portfolio demonstrating their skills and behaviours in the workplace. The evidence can come from a variety of methods including:

- Case examples
Observation of practice/witness statement
- Review of written materials produced by the apprentice such as reports or client records
- Personal statements
- Identifying key issues in practice
- Reflective journals on practice including understanding of theory to practice and examples of personal/practice development

END POINT ASSESSMENT

To successfully complete the YJPA, the apprentice will need to participate in an End Point Assessment (EPA) carried out by an independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). The EPA is made up of:

- Professional Discussion – underpinned by the portfolio of evidence (60 minutes)
- Project Report and Presentation with questioning (report limit 5,000 words, presentation approximately 20min, Q&A 40min)

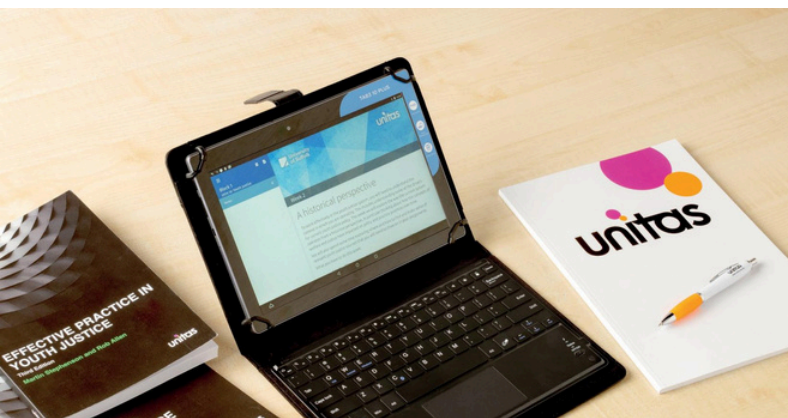
Unitas, the apprentice, and the employer will work together to decide when the apprentice is ready to move on to the End Point Assessment (EPA). This stage is known as passing through the **EPA Gateway**. At this point, an agreed project proposal is submitted to the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) for approval. Once approved, the apprentice will have up to eight weeks to complete the project, write their report, and prepare a presentation based on their work.

The End Point Assessment (EPA) will take place within four months of passing through the EPA Gateway. The overall outcome of the EPA will be graded as either Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Additional support and guidance

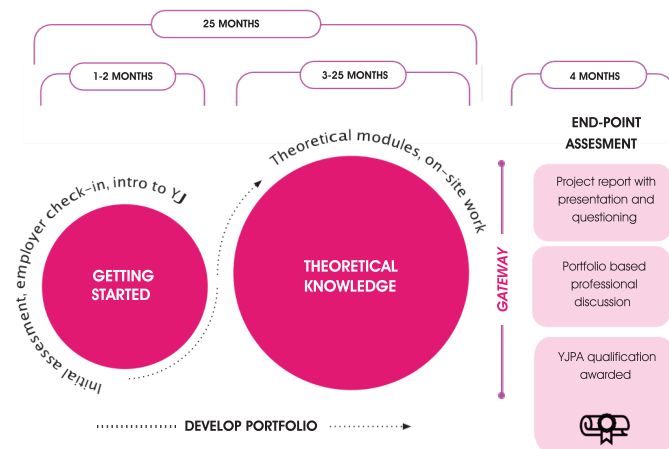
The apprentice will also receive additional support and guidance to help them prepare for their End Point Assessment (EPA), ensuring they feel confident and well-equipped to succeed.

This support will include guidance on the format and content of the project, as well as how to conduct research and write the report. Practical sessions will also be available, where needed, to help apprentices prepare for the presentation and professional discussion elements of the End Point Assessment.



The Apprenticeship Journey

Blended learning approach combining work and study over the apprenticeship delivery period of 25 months (in the case of Recognised Prior Learning, this may be reduced to 21 months)



The skills and knowledge gained provide a strong foundation for continued professional development and future opportunities.

Learning Outcomes: KSBs

Knowledge

K1: Legislation and corresponding guidance relevant to all aspects of work in youth justice, including sentencing, risk of harm, safeguarding, children's rights, and equality and diversity.

K2: Child and adolescent development and the full range of complex needs that can be detrimental to children's physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being.

K3: The range of factors (e.g., substance misuse and adverse childhood experiences) that may lead to offending and anti-social behaviour, and the methods for promoting desistance from these.

K4: The principles of professional judgement, including defensible decision-making, how to guard against conscious or unconscious bias, and how to maintain professional boundaries.

K5: The key components of relationship-based practice and the evidence base for them.

K6: The range and purpose of assessment and planning tools relevant to working with children in the youth justice system.

K7: The range and type of services available for children in the youth justice age group, including adult service providers and how these work in relation to children who are in transition to them.

K8: Protocol and process arrangements in working with multi-agencies, including the sharing and safeguarding of information in line with data protection law.

K9: The emotional and practical needs of specialist groups of children, e.g., Looked After Children, girls, LGBTQ+, and BAME.

K10: The practical, emotional, and psychological impact of key types of life changes and transitions between services affecting children up to the age of 18.

K11: Barriers to children's effective engagement with youth justice interventions.

K12: The contextual aspects of risk (risk of what, to whom, and circumstances in which risk is likely to be higher or lower).

K13: Their own safeguarding responsibilities and those of others within and outside of their organisation.

K14: The principles of effective programme design and implementation for reducing offending and reoffending.

Skills

S1: Communicate effectively face to face and in writing (including digitally) with children who encounter the youth justice system.

S2: Identify the factors that may lead to offending and anti-social behaviour and the methods for promoting desistance, and use these to plan individually tailored interventions.

S3: Promote the physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being of children in the youth justice system by recognising and building on strengths, identifying needs, and taking action to protect children where necessary.

S4: Use a range of engagement skills to promote trust, including clarification of role, purpose of intervention, and boundaries of authority.

S5: Develop relationships that are collaborative, motivating and child-centred using a range of strategies to engage children and families (e.g. motivational interviewing, solution-focused methods, participatory practice, pro-social modelling and problem solving).

S6: Make effective use of assessment and planning tools designed for use in youth justice settings to inform decision making.

S7: Develop, implement and monitor plans which reflect risks and needs, and build on positive human and social capital to promote desistance.

S8: Select interventions and approaches to working with children based on the best available evidence about their effectiveness in promoting desistance from offending.

S9: Broker access to sources of human and social capital appropriate to the needs of children in the youth justice system.

S10: Be an effective social advocate for children and their families.

S11: Share and safeguard information about children and their families in line with data protection law.

S12: Identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people where there are safeguarding concerns.

S13: Reflect on practice within evidence-based frameworks in order to continuously improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

S14: Identify any barriers to children's effective engagement with youth justice interventions and take steps to remove or mitigate these.

S15: Actively protect the rights of children, challenge disproportionality and promote equality of opportunity.

S16: Keep accurate and timely records of all interactions relevant to the assessment, planning, implementation and review cycle.

Behaviours

B1: Show consistency and fairness and be evidence-informed in making decisions.

B2: Model and reward pro-social behaviours, including respect for diversity and being inclusive, and discourage inappropriate language and behaviours.

B3: Be optimistic and hopeful; non-blaming; open and honest; empathetic; and patient and calm in all interactions, including situations that are stressful.

B4: Operate in accordance with the legal, ethical and contractual requirements of youth justice work and maintain professional boundaries.

B5: Commit to teamwork and engage proactively with partner organisations and agencies to maximise the engagement of children in mainstream services and other positive activities.

For more information please contact



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www.unitas.uk.net/courses/youth-justice-apprenticeship