



Juvenile Justice Panel website: additional information

Criminal justice system

The term criminal justice system is used to describe the process or processes for those who commit an offence or fail to comply with the criminal law. The criminal justice system can range from the first contact with the police to release from custody after serving a prison or custodial sentence. Even after release from a prison or custodial sentence there may be a period of probation or supervision during which the person is still part of the criminal justice system.

The purpose of the criminal justice system is to:

- Set and maintain standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the community;
- Allow for a peaceful or law abiding society;
- Protect society from harm, especially society's most vulnerable members;
- Prevent crime;
- Uphold / enforce the law;
- Have an authority (police or prosecutors) to investigate crimes/offences in an independent and impartial manner;
- Deal with those who commit or are accused of committing acts against individuals and society that have been deemed to be crimes;
- Have a independent and impartial judiciary established by law to hear evidence against accused persons and to impose a sentence / punishment as prescribed by law;
- Provide the accused person the opportunity for due process such as to be legally represented; to be heard by an independent and impartial person or persons; to challenge the witness/evidence presented against them; to appeal against any finding or sentence in due time.