As you may recall, the previous Justice Committee published a report on the treatment of young adults (aged 18-25) in the criminal justice system in 2016. That Committee concluded that it was unable to determine the impact of the inclusion within guidance of the consideration of maturity for prosecutors in assessing culpability (in the Code for Crown Prosecutors since 2012) and recommended that further research be conducted to examine this. The Committee is currently examining progress on the implementation of our recommendations. We have received an update on this from the Ministry of Justice and would appreciate your clarification on a couple of points please.

In response to our predecessor’s report, the CPS recognised that more could be done to assist prosecutors to deal appropriately and effectively with matters involving young adults and committed to: consider whether specific investigation could be made in relation to prosecutors’ consideration of age and maturity when charging and reviewing cases; assess the impact of mandatory training for youth prosecutors; and provide additional written guidance to assist prosecutors in their consideration of age and maturity.

The Ministry’s letter stated that prosecutors had been reminded that when weighing up whether a prosecution should be brought, age and maturity should be considered; the importance of considering the ‘maturity’ of young adults has also been included in training. Youth prosecutors have also received specific training. Please would you advise us on whether youth prosecutors are involved in cases against young adults aged 18-25?

In relation to our recommendation on research, you told our predecessor Committee that you might consider an evaluation of the impact of guidance in the Code. Please would you let us know whether such research has been conducted, or is planned? We should be grateful if you would also let us know how you are monitoring the impact of the reminder and training on maturity.

Bob Neill MP
Chairman
Justice Committee