In France, **two types of youth** work have to be distinguished: the socio-educational youth work intended for all young people and the other aimed at **young people in difficulty and aiming to integrate them socially**. This form of youth work is associated to the protection of minors and young people. This chapter focuses on young people facing social difficulties (young offenders, homeless youth, etc).

Protecting young people in danger is a long-standing concern of French public authorities, which, through the **order of 2 February 1945 on juvenile delinquency** [1], stated the need to set up a justice system specifically for children, based in particular on the **primacy of education over repression**. That legislation has undergone many changes since then. Nonetheless, it constituted the basis for the system of justice for minors, for policies on protecting the most vulnerable young people, and for preventing delinquency.

Young people are deemed **vulnerable** and in danger when they are mistreated or when their living conditions prevent their proper physical and psychological development. Young people in danger can benefit from:

- **legal protection**

  **PJJ - Legal Protection of Young People (Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse)** has the task of protecting and educating minors in danger or under legal control. That protection must encourage their educational, social, and professional insertion through **educational actions** that take a variety of forms (support, etc.). In some cases, adults aged under 21 can also come under the competence of the Children’s Judge.

- **administrative protection**

  That is provided by the **département** Council and by the ASE – Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l’Enfance), defined by **article L221-1 of the Social Action and Family Code** (Code de l’Action Sociale et des Familles [2]). The service works to care for children (placements in with foster families or children’s homes) and carries out “specialist” prevention work.

**Specialist prevention** is an educational action aimed at enabling young people undergoing marginalisation to **break away from isolation and to restore social links**. That approach is also used in preventing mistreatment, delinquency, and risky behaviour.
Main social inclusive Youth-work programmes

The 2018 national strategy for preventing and combating poverty

The national strategy for preventing and combating poverty includes a range of measures targeting the most vulnerable young people (See 4.4) [3], such as organisation of joint State/Child Welfare outreach programmes to prevent begging and helping families with children.

The “Action Programme for Young People exposed to Delinquency” (“Programme d’Actions à l’intention des Jeunes exposés à la Délinquance”)

The Secretariat General of the Cross-Ministerial Committee on Preventing Delinquency (Secrétariat Général du Comité Interministériel de Prévention de la Délinquance) [4] sets the guidelines of government policy in matters of preventing delinquency, and ensures that they are implemented. The committee is chaired by the Prime Minister (and, with delegated authority, by the Minister of the Interior (Ministre de l’Intérieur)), and it has drawn up a “2013-2017 National strategy for preventing delinquency (Stratégie nationale de prévention de la délinquance 2013-2017)” whose orientations have been kept up until now (2019-2020).

One of the measures of that strategy is the implementation of a “programme of actions aimed at young people exposed to delinquency” (Priority 1). That programme must avoid having “young people (adolescents and young adults) tipping over into and becoming rooted in” delinquency by using specialist prevention, the fight against dropping out of school, educational action, etc. Its measures respond to two objectives: preventing the initial move into delinquency, and avoiding recidivism. Practical sheets [5] specifying objectives and target groups are made available to youth professionals.

The programme is implemented in partnership with mayors, the Prefect, the State Prosecutor (cf. Glossary [6]), and the departments of justice, national education, and the police.

The programme is financed through the FIPD – Cross-Ministerial Fund for Preventing Delinquency (Fonds Interministériel de Prévention de la Délinquance).

Examples of social-inclusion measures for vulnerable young people

Young people placed with the Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l’Enfance)

Young people placed with the Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l’Enfance) can benefit from the young-adult contract, which extends the help they received whilst minors. That help can take several forms, e.g. accommodation, psychological and educational support, a financial benefit, etc. The facility contributes to making young adults gradually independent. Young people must apply to the Council of the département where they have been placed. The département Council can refuse to extend that help.

One of the measures of the 2018 national strategy for preventing and combating poverty consists of conclusion of contracts between State services and départements with a view to ensuring that young people from 18-21 y/o in the care of ASE - Child Welfare (Aide sociale
à l’enfance) services do not end up without any form of support when they leave the ASE.

**Main structures for the social inclusion and the protection of young people**

As part of social work with vulnerable young people, voluntary actors work in close partnership with public authorities, including the Ministry of Justice (Ministère de la Justice), the Ministry of National Education and Youth, and the Ministry of the Interior (Ministère de l’Intérieur), as well as local authorities, especially the Département, which plays a significant role in financing those social-inclusion structures.

The main structures for the social inclusion and the protection of young people are:

**Children’s homes**

*Département children’s homes* offer permanent reception facilities for minors who are in difficulty and who need emergency help. Within those homes, professionals have the task of observing and evaluating children during their stay, in order to start educational work with them. Children are placed there by the département Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l'Enfance) or by the Children’s Judge, as part of administrative protection or legal protection for childhood in danger ([article 375 of the Civil Code](#)) for juvenile delinquency (order of 2 February 1945). Children’s homes are generally managed by the département, either directly or in the form of a public establishment.

**MECS – Social Children’s Homes (Maisons d’Enfants à Caractère Social)**

*MECS – Social Children’s Homes (Maisons d’Enfants à Caractère Social)* offer reception arrangements for stays of variable length to children and young adults whose families are experiencing temporary or long-term difficulties and can no longer take care of their children’s education. Children are also placed there by the département Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l’Enfance) or by the Children’s Judge. MECSs are managed by associations or other private, non-profit bodies.

**Prevention clubs**

Prevention clubs and teams carry out educational action, termed specialist prevention, that aims at facilitating better social insertion and preventing young people from becoming marginalised. They seek out (in the street) young people who are alone or in groups, who are in difficulty or who have broken away from their environment. Their places of intervention are disadvantaged urban areas. Prevention clubs and teams are made up of educators, facilitators, mediators, and volunteers who are competent in prevention matters. The educational action of those bodies is carried out in collaboration with département social services (Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l’Enfance)).

**Reception Centres and Living Areas (Lieux de Vie et d’Accueil)**

*LVA – Reception Centres and Living Areas (Lieux de Vie et d’Accueil)* are non-traditional reception structures that offer family-type care by taking in at least three and at most seven young
people. Through ongoing, educational support, they aim at encouraging the social insertion of the young people accommodated there.

AEMO – Educational Action in an Open Setting (Action Éducative en Milieu Ouvert) and AED – Educational Action at Home (Action Éducative à Domicile) services

The aim of those services is to provide home-based monitoring of minors and their families and to provide them with educational and psychological support, in order to overcome the material or psychological difficulties that they encounter and to support the parents in developing their parenting skills. Monitoring measures are of two types:

- **AEMO – Educational Action in an Open Setting (Action Éducative en Milieu Ouvert)** is a restraint measure ordered by the Children’s Judge if the health and safety of a minor are at risk
- **AED – Educational Action at Home (Action Éducative à Domicile)** takes place on request or agreement from one parent, when so required by the latter’s health, safety, or education.

Adolescent Homes

The département public structures were set up in 1999. Their aim is to “receive, listen to, inform, and guide young people, taking account of the specificities of the special period that is adolescence; guide and support the individuals around those young people; and be a resource centre for professionals who work with young people”. There are adolescent homes in 65 départements (Mainland France / Overseas Départements and Territories). Adolescent homes are grouped into a federation, the National Association of Adolescent Homes (Association Nationale des Maisons des Adolescents. Some of those structures are also places for providing healthcare and consultations to adolescents; that is the case of the Maison de Solen in Paris, which is part of a hospital complex and which has a medical research centre specialising in the problems of adolescence.


Public fundings of these policies

It is not easy to summarise the amount and the modes of public financing of the various actors (structures, bodies, and associations) involved in social work with young people, especially because that financing varies with their legal status (association or public body), and because they mobilise several partners, such as ministries and local authorities, especially the département. The whole set of social-inclusion arrangements does not depend on the same budgets and financial programmes.

As an example, the National Strategies on Preventing Delinquency are financed by the FIPD – Cross-Ministerial Fund for Preventing Delinquency, whilst some measures for the legal protection of young
people come under the Ministry of Justice (Ministère de la Justice). Similarly, the Child Welfare Service (Aide Sociale à l’Enfance) is financed by the départements (local authorities).