

Youth Justice Plan 2021/22



The Youth Justice Plan is a description of the strategic priorities for the year set in the context of current and projected performance against the national outcomes

Legal Context

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 40) sets out responsibilities placed upon the local youth justice partnership in relation to the production of an annual Youth Justice Plan. It states that it is the statutory duty for each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan setting out:

- **How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded;**
- **How the Youth Offending Team (YOT) will be composed and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out.**

Guidance issued in 2021 by the Youth Justice Board confirms expectations regarding content based around the following seven themes:



1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

The 2021/22 Youth Justice Plan (YJ Plan) has been prepared in consultation with the Youth Offending Strategic Board (YOSB), the local community safety partnership (SaferMK), staff from the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and children. In developing the YJ Plan we have considered the Community Safety Partnership priorities for Milton Keynes and the focus, direction and detail of the draft Thames Valley Police and Criminal Justice Plan, including the feedback to the draft consultation of that plan. The YJ Plan has also been informed by the outcome of a Quality Assurance Audit of the Youth Offending Team focusing on Operational Practice, Operational Management and Strategic Leadership that took place in April 2021 and a Single Agency Inspection undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in May 2021.

The YOT and its partners have made good progress against the actions and targets set out in the 2020/21 Youth Justice Plan notably:

- In the light of the ongoing Covid pandemic the Youth Offending Team developed a Recovery Plan that was supplemented by regular reviews, briefings and updates to staff to explore creative solutions which were implemented to ensure an effective operating model continued to support the needs of the cohort of vulnerable children either within, or at risk of entering, the Youth Justice System (YJS).
- Increased focus upon addressing the criminal exploitation of children through improved partnership information sharing and coordinated planning and delivery of individual and systemic solutions. This included the outcome of a restructure of the wider Children's Services that brought the Youth Offending Team into a closer partnership alignment alongside Children's Social Care and created a Youth Offending Service that encompassed the Youth Offending Team; The Multi-Agency Missing and Exploitation Hub (ME Hub); the Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (YPDAS) and the Stay Safe Team (specialist Youth Workers/Youth Support Workers and Young People Advice and Guidance Workers) .

This was implemented alongside further developments in partnership approaches with Police, Health, Schools/Education and Children's Social Care at all levels from front line delivery to coordinated strategic planning, ensuring a greater focus on work addressing overlapping needs and risks around child sexual/criminal exploitation, knife crime, serious youth violence, county lines, gangs, trafficking and modern-day slavery.

- Ensured that the additional resources available from the NHS funded Health and Justice 'Early Support Project' (ESP) have continued to enable more targeted work around prevention/early intervention. This has included ongoing evaluation of the ESP's effectiveness and

positive outcomes, and the identification of opportunities to share the effective practice and learning both regionally (YJB South East Regional Practice Development Forum) and locally (HMCTS Youth Panel) as well as with the partnership and across other services.

- Continued improvements with secondary schools and partners addressing the issues related to reduced attendance at school to mitigate the risk of children getting involved in offending behaviour or being criminally exploited. This has resulted in significant improvements in reducing the number of children on part time timetables across both the Out of Court Disposal and Court Disposal cohort and has seen the development of an expanded service linked to the ESP - Promoting Reintegration Reducing Exclusion (PRRE) - extending the bespoke Prevention offer to vulnerable children at risk of becoming involved in offending/exploitation in both Secondary and Primary settings to reduce both permanent exclusions and moves into Alternative Education Placements.
- Strengthened the YOT's work in restorative justice, through collaborative work with the police and Youth:MK to increase the level of victim information and engagement and to ensure direct and indirect restorative approaches are both available and meet the requirements of a service structured around Child First principles and approaches. This work in particular will be further developed in the coming 12 months to ensure that the needs of victims are paramount and the effective approach developed for post court disposals is fully replicated within all elements of the Diversion work of the Youth Offending Team and key partners in the YJS.
- Developed and implemented a solution to effectively capture the voice of children who have offended and their experiences of involvement in the YJS and working with the YOT and its partners. Combined with the effective feedback approaches for both post court and Diversion outcomes over the next 12 months, further development in this area will enable the voice of children and families involved in the YJS, alongside that of staff and volunteers, to more meaningfully contribute to a holistic co-production model of both the vision of the service going forward and also the way, how and where it is delivered.
Feedback from children, volunteers, staff has identified that crucial to the success of developments in this area is greater access to child centred safe and confidential places to enable effective working in particular with those children who pose a high risk of harm to others, including to other children and professionals. This feedback was supported by the findings of the Quality Assurance Audit of the YOT and initial feedback from HMIP.

In the next 12 months we will continue to develop the service in these areas alongside building on the other strengths identified by both the Quality Assurance Audit and the HMIP Single Agency Inspection. Central to this strategy are the opportunities provided by the closer partnership alignment of the Youth Offending Service with Children's Social Care and the recent creation of an expanded broader based Youth Offending Service, further improving coordination and delivery within the service and with partners. The multi-agency work with Children's Social Care in particular reflects the significant overlap between the cohort of children with complex needs who are involved in working with the Youth Offending Team, with a recent analysis identifying that 21% having been looked after at some point, 19% having been subject to a Child Protection Plan and 80% either currently or previously on a Child in Need plan.

The analysis identified similar overlaps around issues of Criminal Exploitation with 51% having been identified as Exploited (7%), Targeted for Exploitation (12%) or Vulnerable to Exploitation (32%). This is in a context in which offences of Violence Against the Person currently represent the most prevalent type of offending and this, coupled with offending related to drugs, provides the wider context of changing behaviour and offending within Milton Keynes. This evolving picture has, as outlined, necessitated greater links and shared approaches across the partnership in developing and delivering interventions aimed at influencing individuals and impacting on systems to address the needs and risks of children identified in the context of serious youth violence, drug dealing and knife offences who may have missing episodes and evidence of gang involvement, but who are also frequently victims of exploitation, youth violence and knife crime and the majority of whom, recent analysis has also demonstrated, have unrecognised unmet speech language and communication needs (2019/2020 – 80%; 2020/2021 – 84%).

The work of the YOT will continue to be guided by the following principles:

- We adopt a child-first approach across prevention, diversion and statutory work. In order to achieve this, we strive to work in the best interests of children, we recognise potential, needs and capacities and we identify strengths and build on the positive factors within a child's world.
- Through strong case work and multi-agency working, we support and encourage children to build pro-social identities to support their desistance from crime and reducing victims of crime and we work hard to offer victims of crime a voice.
- Through continued staff support and supervision, we strive to ensure that interventions are constructive and meaningful, and that we remain future-focused and support children to make positive contributions to wider society.

- We aim to work in partnership with children and their parents/carers/families, and whilst doing this, have a strong commitment to addressing social exclusion, marginalisation, social injustices and structural barriers.
- We recognise the need to address structural inequalities in tandem with interventions to support children's desistance from crime.
- We seek to minimise stigma. Within the diversion and prevention elements of the service, we have our own personalised branding, 'The Early Support Project' to reduce the stigma that can be attached to children working with a Youth Offending Team.

2. Governance, Leadership and Partnership arrangements

Governance of local youth justice arrangements is delivered through a multi-agency partnership convened by the Chief Executive of the Local Authority and, at a minimum, comprising senior representation from the Police, Health (CCG and Public Health), Probation, Local Authority (principally children's social care and education services); with these agencies additionally being charged with financially resourcing the Youth Offending Team and providing staff. In Milton Keynes the local governance group is known as the Youth Offending Strategic Board (YOSB).

Historically the quality of the governance arrangements has been independently assessed as strong, however the Quality Assurance Audit in April 2021 and the HMIP Single Agency Inspection in May 2021 have both identified areas that could be strengthened further, and these are outlined in the YOT Action Plan. The creation of the MK Together Board combining the Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership as part of wider changes to partnership arrangements have created a more streamlined and closer alignment of boards avoiding duplicated work streams.

The YOSB is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. The board receive regular performance reports and budget information.

The Board also receives highlight reports and analysis from the YOT Manager and papers, presentations and other contributions from staff, partners and service users. The forward plan for the Board ensures that sufficient space is given to monitoring the implementation of the Youth Justice Plan, discussing and analysing risks and challenges and planning for the future. Opportunities are ensured to discuss items that from a youth offending perspective are required by national standards and/or conditions of grant.

The YOT also has an informal reporting line to the Community Safety Partnership – Safer MK. The Chief Executive and lead cabinet member are also briefed as required, as is the Local Police Area Commander. Milton Keynes YOT is one of nine YOTs in the Thames Valley who share a Police and Crime Commissioner and reporting lines are in place with that office through the Local Criminal Justice Board on which the Milton Keynes YOT Manager is also the representative for the Thames Valley YOTs.

The current YOT Manager is employed by Milton Keynes Council and is managed within the Children's Services Directorate by the Group Head of Children and Families who in turn reports to the Director of Children's Services.

The YOT Manager has a wide range of responsibilities encompassed within the expanded Youth Offending Service including both strategic and operational lead responsibility for the Multi-Agency Missing and Exploitation Hub (ME Hub), the Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (YPDAS) and the Stay Safe Team (specialist Youth Workers/Youth Support Workers and Young People Advice and Guidance Workers).

Partnership Arrangements

The YOT has, over many years, developed and maintained strong links with a range of multi-agency groups:

- The YOT Manager is one of the advisers to the Safer MK (community safety) Partnership Board.
- The YOT Manager is also the Strategic Lead for Exploitation responsible for developing and delivering the local approach to tackling child exploitation and co-chairs the Strategic Exploitation Panel along with a Detective Chief Inspector from Thames Valley Police.
- The YOT Manager is a member of the MK Together Risk Board which identifies new and emerging areas of risk and exploitation and responses. The Risk Board has oversight of case-based panels (Channel, Strategic Exploitation Panel, Vulnerable Adults/Children, MARAC, etc.).
- The YOT Manager attends the South East Region and Thames Valley YOT Managers meetings focusing on Youth Justice Services and issues impacting Youth Offending Teams across the respective regions of the South-East/Thames Valley.
- One of the team members is a core member of the regular Joint Decision Panel with the Police, CAMHS and the Professional Lead for Missing and Exploitation considering Out of Court Disposals (OOC).
- The YOT Manager attends the Local Criminal Justice Board, representing the 9 Thames Valley YOT managers.
- The YOT Manager has made a significant contribution to the development of professional practice in the YJS around Speech, Language and Communication Needs and SEND including direct advice to Government Departments at Director level in the Department of Education and Department of Health as a member of the Communication Council. The developments in these key areas has informed and been informed by local, national and international research in these areas. The YOT Manager draws on experience gained at a national level, including as a member of the Executive of the Association of YOT Managers (AYM) and as the AYM lead for SEND and Speech and Language.
- The YOT Manager is a member of the Channel Panel providing information and specialist advice to assist in the preparation of risk and threat assessments to help support and manage risks posed by children involved in extremism behaviour.

- The YOT Deputy Manager co-ordinates the MK Harmful Sexual Behaviour (AIM2) Programme which is delivered via a virtual multi-agency team.
- YOT is a standing member of the Schools Behaviour Partnership alternative education panel and is able to influence discussions on appropriate education provision.
- The YOT Family Support and Intervention Coordinator is responsible for partnership working with Strengthening Families, Children and Family Practices and Social Work Teams in identifying and working with parents who would benefit from the specialist parenting courses delivered by the YOT.
- The YOT Manager and a Senior YOT Officer are both members of the multi-agency MK Youth Risk Meeting which aims to reduce serious youth violence, knife crime and exploitation through drug related crimes in line with the national public health approach of early identification, engagement, intervention and diversion. The meeting provides a forum to discuss children where there are concerns around: -
 - Gang activity participation or gang associations
 - ASB group associations where there is a risk of serious youth violence and/or increase in criminality
 - Concerns of local or county drug line exploitation.
 - Weapon carriers
 - Any other risky behaviours, which increase the risk of youth violence to that child or any other person or groups
- One of the Senior YOT Officers is on the Missing and Exploitation Panel ensuring that plans to address missing and exploitation concerns are robust and reflect a multi-agency approach.
- The YOT Manager is a member of the Legacy Panel, a multi-agency group scrutinising Part Time Timetables that have been in place for longer than 6 weeks to ensure appropriate steps are taken to re-engage children in full time education.
- In addition to the statutory partners and linkages identified above the Youth Offending Service has wider partnership arrangements with - Youth Information Service (YIS); Primary and Secondary Schools; HMCTS Youth and Crown Court; Speech and Language Therapy

(SLT); Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND); Education, Sufficiency, Access and Attendance; Youth Information Advice and Guidance; NHS England Health and Justice; Thames Valley Police Violence Reduction Unit, Problem Solving Team and SOFEA.

3. Resources and Services

Structure of MK YOT – (for a full breakdown of the YOT staff see **Appendix 1**)

Currently the YOT management team consists of the YOT Manager/Strategic Lead for Exploitation, a YOT Deputy Manager, two Senior YOT Officers and a Business Support and Information Manager.

In total there are 24 practitioner and administrative staff (21.62 FTE).

As well as generic YOT officers, a number of whom are qualified social workers, the team includes a seconded police officer, a mental health worker, a family support worker, 2 speech and language therapists and an education training and employment coordinator.

Recruitment issues with the National Probation Service resulted in an agreement to transfer financial resources to the YOT to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced colleague is available to support children approaching adulthood in the transition to the probation service. Additionally, physical health provision is provided through an off-site screening process situated within the School Nursing Team.

Volunteer Youth Offender Panel members and Appropriate Adults are recruited, trained and supported by the YOT; the Appropriate Adults also provide support to vulnerable adults.

The team base in Bletchley was closed during the pandemic and was moved to the main Civic office in Central Milton Keynes with until recently staff mainly working from home; a permanent solution for accommodation to enable greater co-location of multi-agency staff and a child centred safe environment in which to work directly with children is being sought. Additionally, other locations around the borough managed by the Council and partners are available to use for contact with children and their families, with colleagues adopting the Council's policy for flexible working.

A summary of activities provided for and on behalf of the YOT are:

- **Youth Diversion and Prevention** offer including Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE) SLT project in primary and secondary schools. Our offending rate is 3.67% and our last published First Time Entrants (FTE) rate is 157 per 100,00 (with the proxy data up to 31/3/2021 indicating 138 per 100,000). This compares to the national average of 208 per 100,000; Thames Valley 179; YOT Family 185.
- **Appropriate Adult (AA) services** are provided to the Police Station: A volunteer scheme, maintained by the YOT, is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This service is offered to vulnerable adults as well as children.
- **Out of Court Disposals:** Arrangements are in place with Thames Valley Police and Thames Valley YOTs to provide the range of disposals (Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions). A Joint Decision Panel is held which includes representatives from YOT, Police, Missing and Exploitation Hub and CAMHS.
- **Court Services:** YOT staff advise the Youth Court regarding available sentences. YOT staff prepare pre-sentence reports and operate a duty system to address remand issues and ensure bail packages are available when necessary. A protocol exists with children's social care regarding management of remands to local authority accommodation and Youth Detention Accommodation.
- **Court Orders including Intensive Supervision and Surveillance:** The YOT provides case holders for children made subject to Court Orders and manages these in accordance with National Standards. This will include managing children subject to custodial sentences and planning and supervising for their release.
- **Victims:** A member of the team contacts victims of children working with YOT offering support, including being kept informed of case progression, support to attend Youth Offender Panels and meeting the child face-to-face for a restorative conference. YOT staff are trained to YJB/Restorative Justice Council standards for the facilitation of restorative conversations.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteers are recruited to be Youth Offender Panel members - people from the community who meet with the child, parents and victim to agree a contract which will prevent further offending and repair harm.

- **Youth:MK** are commissioned to undertake our Reparation Service. They meet with children and their YOT Officers as part of the induction process and seek to match children's interests with the projects available. Children can achieve awards through the work they complete with Youth:MK.
- **Youth:MK** are also commissioned to provide a worker to assist children in finding Education, Training and Employment opportunities amongst our post-16 cohort, as part of their Information, Advice and Guidance Service. This service has established links with training and education providers within Milton Keynes and surrounding areas and also services to monitor those post 16 out of ETE allowing for continued monitoring and support to be offered both during intervention with YOT and post intervention.
- **Education, Training and Employment Coordinator:** We have a Coordinator who has links with schools and alternative education provisions, they support children who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance including advocating for children, challenging part-time timetables and providing support with core subjects such as English and Maths. The Coordinator is also a core member of the Alternative Education Panel and promotes the offer of Speech and Language assessments to children at the greatest risk of a move to an alternative provision.
- **Milton Keynes Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (YPDAS)** – The YOT work closely with YPDAS who provide specialist interventions for children who misuse alcohol or substances. The nature of the partnership work going forward will be much more incorporated into the Youth Offending Team. The ESP Service Lead has a close working relationship with the Team Leader at YPDAS as part of the TVP Drugs Diversion Scheme (DDS). The Thames Valley wide partnership approach to joint delivery of the DDS by Thames Valley Police and Thames Valley YOTs is the subject of a joint bid for further development funding from the Youth Endowment Fund as part of the Violence Reduction Strategy.
- **Probation** – due to recruitment challenges for Probation Officers we do not currently have a Seconded Officer inhouse. However, we have an experienced YOT Officer, who was previously the Probation secondee, and has continued to fulfil the lead role for Probation transfers. They liaise directly with Probation and monitor and support the transition process.
- **Health** – the YOT continue to have access to the School Nursing Service. This service reviews health screenings and offers access to specific services within their remit. The level of service is under current review and challenge as it has been recognised that many of our

children who have identified health needs do not fit the remit of school nursing and require a different focus of support due to the complex needs identified. Progression of this has been delayed due to complications and pressures on health provision as a result of Covid.

- **CAMHS** – A positive and strong relationship has been built with our local CAMHS team. Whilst there has been a vacant Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) post for some time this post has now been filled by a practitioner who has significant experience of our children and children, and whose work has previously been recognised positively in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the provision for Mental Health. We have access to regular (6 weekly) consultation appointments with a Consultant Clinical Psychologist for complex case discussion and support. Additional telephone consultations are also provided. The MHP offers assessments and interventions to children and their families and provides training to staff.
- **Parents and Families** – the Family Support and Intervention Coordinator (FSIC) at the YOT provides 1-2-1 support to the parents of the children working with the service. This is frequently focused on helping parents/carers with the issues relating to their child, such as, tension in the family home, boundary setting and rebuilding relationships.
The role also provides support to parents and carers to help address wider structural barriers affecting the family e.g., debt, benefits, housing and the FSIC can apply for funding for items that are needed through the Strengthening Families fund. The FSIC is both, the coordinator and main facilitator, for the Who's in Charge Programme; a 10-week programme for parents/carers who are experiencing violent or abusive behaviour from their children aged between 10-18. This programme takes place 6 times a year, with afternoon and evening sessions available to maximise parental attendance.
- **Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)** – we have two Speech and Language Therapists and all children are offered a Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessment. From 2020 – 2021, we identified, following assessment that 84% had SLCN needs that were not identified by others prior to ESP/YOT involvement. SLCN assessments have also been useful in focusing in and identifying co-existing conditions and underlying life events and experiences that have an impact on the child. We also have a SEND Link Senior Specialist Educational Psychologist that can provide individual case consultation and supports the training we offer to schools under our PRRE SLT project.
- **Missing and Exploitation Hub** – The Missing and Exploitation Hub is now part of the wider Youth Offending Service (YOS) and strengthens the links with close partnership working between the YOT, Children's Social Care, Police and Health, for children being

exploited, as well as joint working approaches to identify and address issues relating to gangs, county lines, modern day slavery, serious youth violence and knife crime.

- **YOT Police Officer** – This role is used creatively across the service including direct involvement with delivering OOCs, undertaking interventions with children to strengthen relationships between children and Police, provide key information around risks using PNC and Police intel. The role of Thames Valley Police in the YOT is also enhanced by our close partnership working with TVP Problem Solving Team and Violence Reduction Unit.

Financial Resources – (for a full breakdown of the YOT budget **see Appendix 2**)

The budget for 2021/22 has been established at **£1,367,410**. Each of the statutory partners is required to contribute, with additional resources coming from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) (via the Community Safety Partnership) and the Ministry of Justice (via the Youth Justice Board).

For 2021/22 the YJB grant has been increased and the contribution from the PCC has remained unchanged.

Additionally, in late 2020, the YOT was successful in securing NHS funding of £92k for the 2021/22 year for the Early Support Project prevention work with further funding agreed for future years. This will enable us to continue our early intervention/prevention work and expand into direct work with schools.

As in previous years the resources will be prioritised on court ordered interventions especially at the intensive level. Maintaining a low level of re-offending and custodial sentences as well as significant reductions in Youth Detention Accommodation would seem to suggest that the strategy is having a positive impact and represents a good rate of return on the investment made.

All grants from the YJB are controlled within the YOT budget arrangements and are used exclusively for the delivery of youth justice services. The only exception is the grant paid to support remands to Youth Detention Accommodation, which is held within the placements budgets of children's social care.

Contributing to the pooled budget for staffing, premises and delivery of interventions.

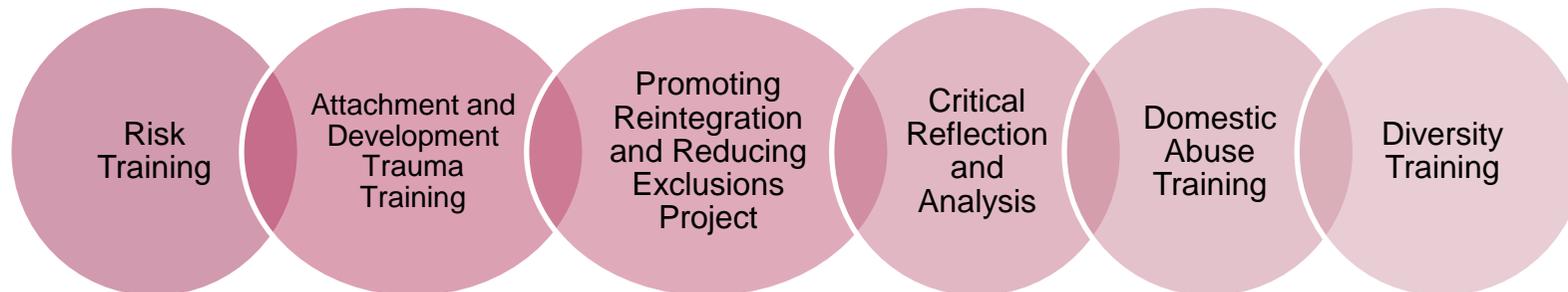
Supporting training and development of staff and volunteers.

Ensuring compliance with data recording and information exchange expectations.

Supporting delivery of Unpaid Work and Junior Attendance Centre.

Training

During 2020/2021, training opportunities were heavily impacted by the Covid pandemic, however the YOT were able to continue to offer inhouse training in key areas of service, as well as having access to multiple webinar's provided by the YJB and access to internal training specifically aimed at children services staff provided through Milton Keynes Council. Staff therefore received training in a range of topics including:



The YOT are supported by a team of trained and experienced volunteers acting as Youth Offender Panel Members and Appropriate Adults. Both groups have access to statutory and non-statutory training as well as regular support and consultation meetings.

All YOT Officers are trained in the full remit of the service from Diversion and Prevention to Post-Court, including custody and transitions.

Continued Professional Development is a key component of the Youth Offending Team's approach with staff. We have an inhouse Practice Educator who regularly takes student placements and utilises a similar methodology with supporting the professional development of staff members. The wider team currently contains two members of staff who in addition to their substantive role are also Social Work Apprentices.

We have a well-established internal progression model that has enabled practitioners to progress and take advantage of development opportunities. This is attractive to staff and is reflected within our excellent retention rates.

The funding available for training is kept under scrutiny, in line with pressures on the overall budget. Priority areas for training this year will be:

- Child First Approach
- Further training in both AssetPlus and ChildView will continue throughout the year as part of the regular team meeting slots and through any further training offered by YJB.
- AIM 3 Training (was planned for early 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic).
- All volunteers and staff will receive safeguarding training in line with Milton Keynes Council guidelines and as individual circumstances require.

The Voice of Children

The users of youth justice services are considered a 'hard to reach' group as far as participation is concerned. Most do not volunteer, or choose, to be service users, but are supervised by the service as a result of a criminal sanction or OOCd. Despite these challenges, the YOT is committed to ensuring that children and their parents/carers have the same opportunity to contribute to service developments and have their voice heard.

Children are encouraged to participate by:

- Being actively involved in the creation of, and reviewing of, their intervention plans.
- Providing feedback following initiatives or activities, in order to inform and steer improvements to the service.

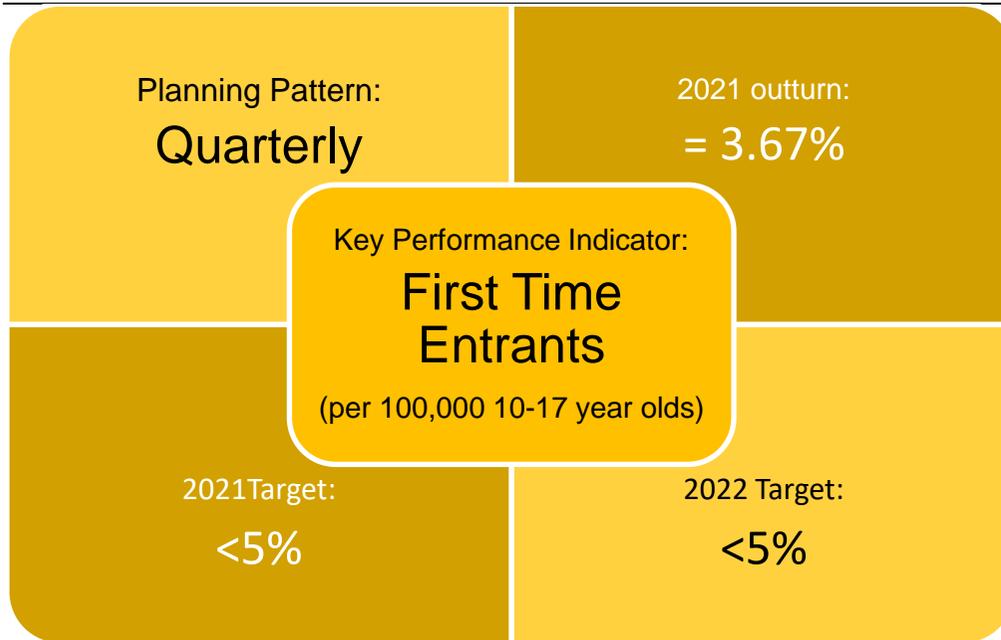
This has recently been enhanced with the introduction of independent evaluation provided by the Participation Team based within Youth:MK. At the end of every Order or formal OOCd, children are given the opportunity to meet with an independent Participation Worker to provide feedback about their experiences with YOT and partner agencies.

The OOCd and Custody, Resettlement and Transitions policies also include evaluation feedback from both young people and their parent/carer as well as obtaining feedback from other professionals involved with the child.

The information received from this feedback is used to inform individual staff and team development, and also to inform partner agencies of areas of strength and those requiring improvement.

The views obtained will continue to inform policy developments and the Youth Justice Plan going forward.

4. Performance and Priorities



Prevention (ESP and PRRE)

There is no formal target for these 2 projects – ESP (Early Support Project) and PRRE (Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions) – which aim to support young people at risk of becoming First Time Entrants (see next performance measure) – and so the performance monitored is the percentage of cases who engage with the offered support who go on to commit an offence.

Risks to Delivery

- Pressures on YOT budgets require redeployment of resources away from early intervention which may ultimately lead to more young people appearing in Court.
- Inability to agree outcomes within the partnership with respect to joint decision making.
- Primary and Secondary schools and further education providers not engaging with the Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE) project to identify SLCN and reduce exclusions and managed moves to alternative provisions.
- Inadequate and inappropriate education, training or employment provision for young people aged over 16. Lack of opportunities can increase vulnerability to offending and exploitation.

Mitigations/Actions

- Improved YOT and TVP collaboration to address issues with respect to decision making in the management of the Out of Court Disposals.
- Joint work with the Stay Safe Team (Youth:MK) and single lines of senior management align preventative and Out of Court Disposal work.
- Work with local partners to enhance access to education and training provision that is responsive to the needs of the YOT client group.
- Additional resources potentially available from the OPCC to support more targeted work around prevention / early intervention in relation to both exploitation and offending.



First Time Entrants

This target was met for 2019/20 following joint YOT and TVP action leading to improvement in the management of out of court disposals and this has been continued.

The 2020/21 outturn is not yet available (the latest data available is the year to December 2019) but local 'proxy' data indicates the outturn will be less than 150.

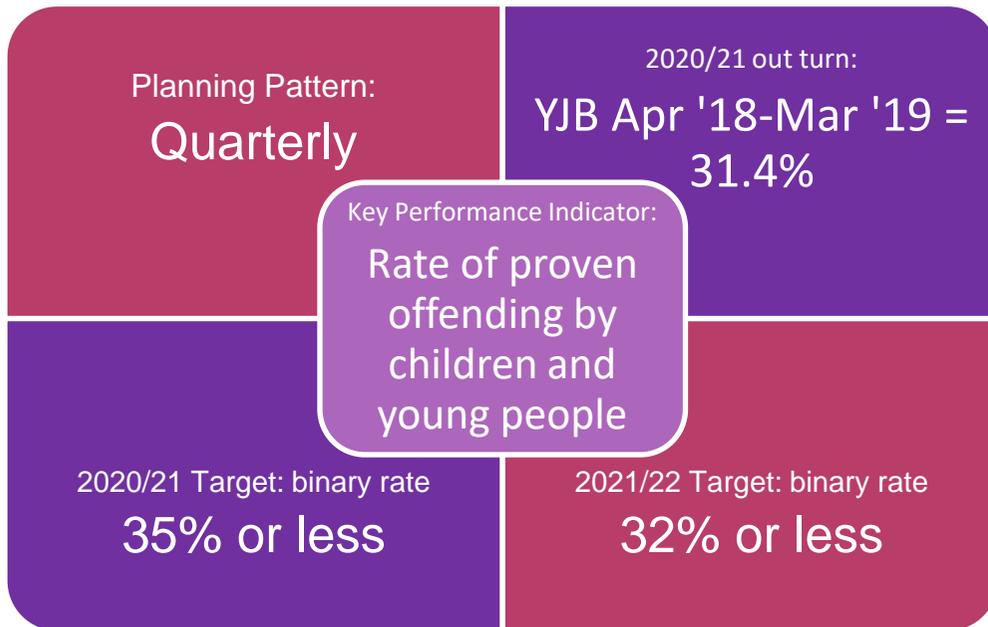
MK performance is now better than regional and national comparators.

Risks to Delivery

- Pressures on YOT budgets require redeployment of resources away from early intervention which may ultimately lead to more young people appearing in Court.
- Inability to agree outcomes within the partnership with respect to joint decision making.
- Young people who receive Community Resolutions choose not to engage with Early Support Project.
- Inadequate and inappropriate education, training or employment provision for young people aged over 16. Lack of opportunities can increase vulnerability to offending and exploitation.

Mitigations/Actions

- Improved YOT and TVP collaboration to address issues with respect to decision making in the management of the Out of Court Disposals.
- Joint work with the Stay Safe Team (Youth:MK) and single lines of senior management align preventative and Out of Court Disposal work.
- Work with local partners to enhance access to education and training provision that is responsive to the needs of the YOT client group.
- Additional resources potentially available from the OPCC to support more targeted work around prevention / early intervention in relation to both exploitation and offending.



Rate of proven offending by children and young people

The outturn for 2020/21 has not yet been reported but the latest available data met the target set at that time and local 'proxy' data indicates we should meet the target set.

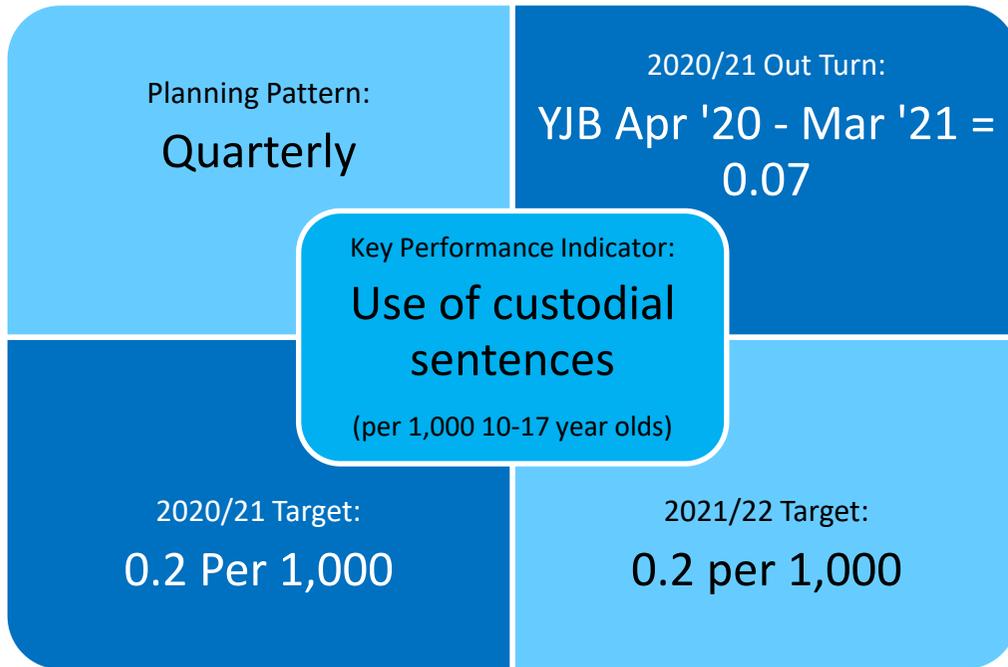
Performance in the year to Mar 2018 was 40.9% so there was a substantial reduction during the year.

Risks to Delivery

- Inadequate resourcing for training could result in staff not being able to apply the most recent research and evidence-based practice.
- Lack of clarity on local and national priority areas for YOTs may result in confusion and competing demands for reducing resources, which could result in diluting the core focus of the YOT in preventing offending and protecting the public from harm.
- Lack of access to education training and employment opportunities, appropriate accommodation and services to meet health and well-being needs present significant risks.
- Increasing trends in child exploitation, including county lines, serious youth violence, gang membership, knife crime and victims of modern-day slavery.
- Lack of timely access to mental health support.

Mitigations/Actions:

- Closer working with Children's Social Care improves coordinated partnership working, leading to better outcomes for children and young people.
- Closer links between YOT and Stay Safe Team provide opportunity for the further development of restorative justice approaches tailored to be victim focused and to take account of young people's complex SLCN.
- Improving links with the Stay Safe Team (Youth:MK) will also provide a focus on accessing and maintaining education, training and employment for post-16s, and providing child-focused reparation opportunities.
- Embedding timely mental health provision within the YOT provides appropriate therapeutic assessment and response to the complex needs of our young people.
- Improved coordination and response around child exploitation through improved strategic oversight, information sharing and forward planning.



Use of custodial sentences

The final outturn for 2020/21 was 0.07 which translates to less than one custodial sentence in each quarter.

In the light of current serious offences being committed by youths – it has been agreed that the target should remain at 1 custody case per quarter. Custodial sentences are avoided through the provision of high quality pre-sentence reports and imaginative use of intensive community orders.

Risks to Delivery

- Significant increase in First-Time Entrants for serious offending.
- Insufficient staff cover for weekday and weekend / bank holiday Remand Courts.
- Insufficient resourcing of credible alternatives to custody.
- Insufficient resources to provide appropriate resettlement for those returning from custody could increase reoffending.
- Unable to access suitable placements for Remands to Local Authority Accommodation (RLAA).

Mitigations/Actions:

- The continued use of the Early Support Project to prevent and divert young people from the YJS.
- Local direction and expectations for custody and resettlement are based on the 7 resettlement pathways.
- Scrutiny of the quality of Pre-Sentence Reports to ensure that proposals are both realistic and commensurate.
- Continue to develop alternatives to custody, building on success in providing the Courts with proportionate intensive YROs / Referral Order options.
- Contribute to placement sufficiency reviews to ensure the needs of the client group are fully taken into account including those requiring accommodation following charge in line with the national Concordat.

5. Responding to the Pandemic and Recovery from Covid

In response to the global pandemic, the YOT adjusted practices to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and their families as well as staff were prioritised.

All cases open to the YOT, both in a statutory and voluntary capacity were RAG rated and contact levels were reflective of this. During the height of the pandemic and during times of lockdown all cases assessed as high risk were continued to be seen face to face. All other cases were offered either face to face or a combination of face to face and virtual visits to manage risks and wellbeing concerns.

The YOT has a Covid Recovery Plan supplemented by regular reviews, briefings and updates to staff including issuing guidance on working practices to all staff. This is regularly reviewed and updated following Government announcements and takes into consideration changes to local/national arrangements.

As a YOT, we have used creative ways of engaging and working with our children and their families as well as partner agencies.

This has included using technology such as video calls and Microsoft Teams, supported by using online work to assist with interventions.

This next year we will continue to explore innovative ways of working with our children, families and partner agencies, taking into account feedback and updates in technology.

6. Challenges, Risks and Issues

1. In line with our identified offending profile, there is a need to further develop the focus upon addressing the criminal exploitation of children, and the overlap with serious youth violence, through improved partnership information sharing and forward planning; embedding approaches to address child exploitation, knife crime, serious youth violence, county lines, gangs, trafficking and modern day slavery.
2. The high number of children continuing to enter the YJS in Milton Keynes with unrecognised and unmet Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) evidences the requirement to continue to develop the proactive outreach work, in collaboration with the Education Psychology Service, to highlight the specific risks around children being drawn into offending and criminal exploitation linked to unrecognised SLCN and SEND.
3. Through evaluation and data analysis, we ensure that the additional resources available from the NHS funded Health and Justice ESP continue to support and enhance the targeted work around diversion, prevention and early intervention. This includes exploring the opportunities to share the learning and effective practice across other services, within the partnership.
Consideration should be given to explore opportunities to build on the evidenced model by upscaling as part of the Serious Violence Reduction Strategy, enabling support to other areas of Thames Valley.
4. With secondary schools and partners; there is a need to continue to address the issues related to attendance at school to reduce the risk of children getting involved in offending behaviour or being exploited.
5. We need to continue the work on strengthening the YOT's work in restorative justice, through collaborative work with the Police and Youth:MK, to increase the level of victim information and engagement and to ensure direct and indirect restorative approaches are both available and meet the requirements of a service structured around Child First principles and approaches.
This work will ensure that the needs of victims are paramount, and the effective approach developed for post-court disposals is fully replicated within all elements of the Diversion work of the YOT and key partners in the YJS.
6. Continue development work in capturing the voice of children who have offended, and their lived experiences of involvement in the YJS, and working with the YOT and its partners. This development will enable the voice of children and families involved in the YJS, alongside that of staff and volunteers, to more meaningfully contribute to a holistic coproduction model of the vision of the service going forward and

also the way, how and where it is delivered.

As outlined earlier, feedback from children, volunteers and staff has identified that crucial to the success of developments in this area is greater access to child-centred safe and confidential places, to enable effective working in particular with those children who pose a high risk of harm to others, including to other children and professionals.

7. Continue to address the national difficulties surrounding securing opportunities for children aged over 16 including the need to explore greater access to employment, training and education opportunities for children who have offended through collaborative work with relevant partners including Youth:MK, Milton Keynes College, other local providers and employers.
8. We need to continue to identify and address the impact of the Covid pandemic on our work with children and their families including exploring the opportunities for innovative approaches adaptable to changing cycles of infection/lockdowns.
9. As outlined earlier, feedback from children, volunteers and staff has identified that crucial to the success of intervention is greater access to child centred safe and confidential places to enable effective working, in particular with those children who pose a high risk of harm to others.
Following changes to Council buildings, we are continuing to explore more appropriate venues and places for children, families and victims to have effective face-to-face contact with YOT staff.
10. Develop the local physical health offer as this does not fully meet the needs of our client group at the present time. Discussions have been ongoing; however, progress was impacted by pressures on the local health provisions as a result of Covid.
11. Continue to work with Probation colleagues to ensure that a Seconded Probation Officer or equivalent resource is provided so that we can continue to strengthen and support children transitioning to the Adult Criminal Justice System. We currently have arrangements in place to fulfil this role effectively, however, recognise the value of a seconded member of Probation staff being based within the team.
12. We have identified an increase in serious youth violence within Milton Keynes and tackling and addressing this, with our partners remains a key priority. This has been, and will continue to be, an ongoing challenge, but is highlighted as a Council and partnership priority. We have established close links with the Thames Valley Police Problem Solving Team and the Violence Reduction Unit. The Missing and Exploitation Hub and Stay Safe Team are now part of the Youth Offending Service and will allow for a closer focus on coordinated working.

13. Milton Keynes is a fast-growing city, with known areas of poverty and deprivation. It is important for us to fully understand the social challenges and structural barriers facing our children and families, and the long-lasting impact of deprivations and associated risk factors (e.g. domestic violence/poor health/poor education).
14. Future budget settlements, including changes in national funding arrangements, will have a significant impact on the ability to provide the range of services and intervention required in Milton Keynes to meet national standards and reduce first-time entrants, re-offending and use of custody. Funding may also be reduced if youth justice is not considered a priority by local partners including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
15. The contribution from the national Troubled Families Programme (known locally as Strengthening Families) with the uncertainty around longer term funding of the programme.

7. Service, Business and Improvement Plan

The Quality Assurance Audit in April 2021 and the Single Agency Inspection by HMIP in May 2021 have helped inform and shape our delivery and improvement plan for the coming year with key areas of development and focus including;

1. Work to develop the YOSB Membership for inclusion of a representative from the Court (e.g. Chair of the Youth Panel)
2. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the YOSB in its internal and external facing roles, we are introducing a specific partner feedback slot at each YOSB Meeting to encourage greater reflection, participation and dialogue
3. Sharing the work and focus of the YOT/Youth Justice Plan across key partners to increase insight and understanding of the work of the service
4. Exploring access to further safe places so that staff can work safely and effectively with children and victims.
5. Exploring targeted recruitment approaches to increase the diversity of the staff team in order to better reflect the demography of Milton Keynes and the children and families who work with the service
6. Establishing succession planning for key roles
7. Developing a single document Desistance and Unmet Needs Profile reflecting identified specific desistance needs and evidence around gaps in services reflecting and quantifying unmet needs
8. Resolving lack of access to appropriate Physical Health provision
9. Establishing a regular audit methodology to continue to drive forward and monitor professional practice
10. Introducing inhouse learning review process for swift learning to identify early lessons in relevant cases
11. Enhancing the connection between the YOSB and the front-line service delivery to improve effectiveness and coordination
12. Strengthening our services to victims of crime
13. Developing mechanisms to capture the voice of children, parents/carers, victims and our partners

Milton Keynes Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022

Sign Off

This plan has been approved by the Youth Offending Strategic Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mac Heath', written in a cursive style.

Dr Mac Heath

Chair of the Milton Keynes Youth Offending Strategic Board

Date: 23 June 2021

Appendix 1 – Staffing

By gender/ethnicity

Ethnicity	Strategic Managers		Operational Managers		Practitioners		Administrative		Referral Order Panel Volunteers		Other Volunteers		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
White	1			1	4	11	1	2	2	8	3	9	11	31
Asian												1		1
Black					1			1				1	1	2
TOTAL	1			1	5	11	1	3	2	8	3	11	12	34

No other ethnicities were represented.

By contract type (fulltime equivalents)

Contract type	Strategic Managers		Operational Managers		Practitioners		Administration		Sessional	Students	TOTAL
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time			
Permanent		1		1	3.68	8	0.54	3			17.22
Seconded Police						1					1
Seconded Probation											0
Seconded Health Mental Health					0.8						0.8
Seconded Health Physical Health											0
Seconded Health Speech & Language					1.2						1.2
Vacant					0.6	1					1.6
TOTAL		1		1	6.28	10	0.54	3			21.82

Appendix 2

Financial Summary 2021/22

Income	Staff (£)	Delegated funds (£)	Total (£)
Police	57,137		57,137
Police and Crime Commissioner		116,900	116,900
Probation		33,808	33,808
Health	39,080	31,502	70,582
Local Authority		690,180	691,180
YJB		297,803	297,803
Other (for breakdown see below)	25,000	76,000	101,000
TOTAL	121,217	1,246,193	1,367,410

'Other' Income	
DSG for SLT provision – seconded worker	£25,000
Strengthening Families – Contribution to core costs	£70,000
Adult Social Care – Contribution to Appropriate Adult service costs	£6,000
	£101,000