

Youth Justice Plan 2025 – 2026

Service	Milton Keynes Youth Justice Team
Service Manager/ Lead	Martin Clement, Head of Children’s Quality Assurance, Performance and Youth Justice
Chair of YJS Board	Dr Mac Heath, Director of Children’s Services

Contents

1. Introduction, vision and strategy	3
2. Local Context	4
3. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements	6
4. Partnership Arrangements	7
5. Progress on Priorities in Previous Plan	9
6. Performance Over the Previous Year KPIs:	15
7. Risks and Issues	24
8. Child First	30
9. Resources and Services	33
10. Financial Resources	38
11. Board Development	38
12. Workforce development	39
13. Evidence-based practice and innovation	40
14. Evaluation	42
15. Priorities for coming year	42

16. Service development and National Priority areas	44
17. Policing	46
18. Prevention and Diversion	47
19. Education, Training and Employment	51
20. Restorative Approaches and Victims	52
21. Serious violence and exploitation	52
22. Detention in police custody	54
23. Remands and use of custody and resettlement	54
24. Work with families	56
25. Sign off, submission and approval.....	57
26. Appendices	58

1. Introduction, vision and strategy

In my capacity as the Director of Children's Services for Milton Keynes City Council and Chair of the multi-agency Youth Justice Partnership, I am pleased to present and formally endorse our Strategic Partnership Plan for 2025/26.

Our Commitment and Achievements

Over the past year, we have made significant progress—both in fulfilling our statutory responsibilities and in taking proactive, preventative action. Our work continues to be firmly rooted in a child-centred ethos, guided by trauma-informed principles and aligned with the Child First approach. We remain committed to reducing young people's involvement in the criminal justice system by promoting constructive engagement in positive, developmental activities that broaden their life chances and support them in achieving their full potential.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to developing young people's sense of self, fostering positive identity, and instilling aspiration so they can achieve their goals.

Evidence of Success

This plan highlights the successes and core achievements of the past year. We have supported young people in contact with the criminal justice system—whether as First Time Entrants, repeat contacts with our Youth Justice Service, or through engagement with our statutory and community partners. Additionally, we have worked with young people involved in prevention and diversion services, as well as those affected by crime as victims.

Tackling Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

We recognise the increase in Serious Youth Violence (SYV) and have worked closely with partners to address this challenge. Through Operation Deter, alongside Thames Valley Police we have successfully reduced knife crime in Milton Keynes by 14%. Our collaborative approach ensures that young people receive timely support and intervention, and the success of this initiative has led to its expansion across the Thames Valley.

We have also taken meaningful steps to address disproportionality, and early results show positive progress. Additionally, we have expanded our CAMHS offer, ensuring that young people have access to timely and proportionate mental health services that meet their needs.

Our Vision for 2025/26

This plan articulates the shared vision and strategic direction of the Milton Keynes multi-agency Youth Justice Partnership in delivering high-quality Youth Justice Services. It has been shaped through meaningful collaboration with our partners, including the Youth Justice Strategic Board (YJSB), colleagues from the Youth Justice and Support Service (YJSS), and, most importantly—the children and young people whose voices are central to our work. Together, we are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for young people in Milton Keynes by ensuring they are supported, empowered, and given every opportunity to thrive

2. Local Context

- 2.1 Milton Keynes achieved City status in 2022. There is a mix of urban and rural areas, with the urban element accounting for 20% by area, but 90% by population. The most recent figures identify the population of Milton Keynes as 287,060 (2021), and it has a proportionately young community, with 45.6% of residents under the age of 35 and 26.1% under the age of 19. Milton Keynes is one of the UK's fastest growing cities and is now the size of a large outer London borough. The population of Milton Keynes has expanded by 18% between 2004 and 2014 and this increase has continued, with a 15.3% increase between 2011 and 2021 (the South East average was 7.5%), and a projection that between 2011 and 2026 the population will have increased by 24% (compared to 11% growth in England over the same period). The Office for National Statistics estimate that the population will reach 300,000 within 2025.
- 2.2 The change in demography amongst the young population is captured in both local and national data. Milton Keynes City Council's report in May 2021 on 'Equality and Diversity in Milton Keynes' highlights the changing demographics and growing diversity, outlining that "the proportion of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) school population has increased from 31% in 2010 to 45.51% in 2020". These demographic changes are also reflected in the 2021 National Census data which identified that for the youth population White young people made up 60%; Asian young people 14%; Black young people 15%; Mixed (Dual heritage) young people 8% and 'Other' young people are 2% of the population.

A snapshot of the needs of our population:

a) Starting life:

- In 2021, 6.9% of babies born in Milton Keynes had a **low birth weight**. This is higher than similar local authorities (5.9%) based on deprivation but not significantly different from England overall (6.8%)
- Our **breastfeeding** rates (21/22) in Milton Keynes remain high (60.4% at 6-8 weeks after birth) and we compare well against the England average (49.2%)
- Our **vaccination coverage for MMR** (21/22) in Milton Keynes is 87.9%. This is lower than the England average and target of 90%
- **Good Level of Development (GLD)** outcomes for 2023 in MK were 69.8% (national 65.2%). School readiness in November 2023 was 69.7% (national 67.2%)
- **Uptake of two-year-old education** is 81% against 74% nationally (40% most deprived)

b) School aged children:

- In our recent OxWell survey (2023), 27% of young people in Milton Keynes reported they had experienced a **mental health** issue in the previous 12 months. This compares to 25% of young people from a wider sample across England.

- There is an increasing trend around **obesity** in children (in Year 6) with 24.7% of children deemed to have an unhealthy weight (21/22) which is higher than the England average of 23.4%
- The number of families who are supported into accommodation as they are **homeless** (21/22) equates to 16.1 cases per 100 children in Milton Keynes. This is higher than the national average of 14.4 cases per 100 children across England.
- In 2022/23, there were 368 cases open to the council's Targeted Early Help team where the primary reason was recorded as **domestic abuse**

c) **Young people and transitions into adulthood:**

- Our **teenage pregnancy** rate in Milton Keynes (2021) is 11.9 conceptions per 1000 young people. It has risen slightly compared to 11.2 conceptions the previous year (2020). It remains lower than the England average (13.1)
- The rate of young people who are **first time entrants into the criminal justice system** in Milton Keynes has consistently declined and continues to compare well against the England average. This equates to 132 cases per 100,000 population in the city compared to 161 per 100,000 across England.
- There has been a 12.3% **decrease in violent offences** committed by young people between Jan 2021 and Apr 2024. This reduction is directly linked to good multi-agency link up and disruption activity, the ACT NOW programme and PRRE work carried out by the YJS.
- **Current overall NEET figure** is 3.3% (national 5.2%)
- **Adult unemployment rate** is currently 3.7% (national 3.6%)

2.3 Overall, there is positive school age education provision with outcomes for 96% of schools achieving Ofsted rating of 'Good' or better. Alongside the economic success of Milton Keynes, there are areas of deprivation and disadvantage, with Milton Keynes ranking alongside places such as the Isle of Wight and Medway for child deprivation. There is a strong focus on partnership approaches aimed at closing these inequalities regarding health and prosperity across the city. [Milton Keynes City Council Plan](#) gives a high priority to children and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy ([Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028](#)) (sets the course for further improvement with strong multi-agency ownership.)

2.4 Further details on the population and needs of children and young people in Milton Keynes can be found by visiting our [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment website](#).

3. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

- 3.1 As a local authority, we ensure that the governance of our youth justice arrangements is delivered through a multi-agency partnership, attended by our Chief Executive. At a minimum, this partnership comprises senior representatives from the Police, Health (CCG), Probation, and key Local Authority services, including Children's Services, Public Health, and Education. These agencies not only contribute to the financial resourcing of the Youth Justice Service but also provide staff to support its operations. In Milton Keynes, this governance group is known as the Youth Justice Strategic Board (YJSB), chaired by our Director of Children's Services. The board meets every quarter and receives regular performance reports and budget updates, ensuring transparency and accountability. To strengthen community engagement, we have embedded a greater voice for the wider community by introducing a Community Volunteer representative and including the Chair of the Youth Panel as a core member of the YJSB. (Appendix 1 outlines the board's membership, while Appendix 2 details attendance rates.)
- 3.2 We continue to maintain and expand strong representation at the YJSB, with committed partners who share their knowledge, skills, time, and experience. Their contributions have been instrumental in enhancing the effectiveness of our service. We believe that the quality of leadership, management, and governance demonstrated by the YJSB fosters stronger scrutiny, improved innovation, and increased investment, ensuring the best possible service for young people. Our focus remains on delivering multi-agency, community-based prevention programmes, alongside targeted, highly specialist interventions, which have enabled us to achieve outcomes we are proud of.
- 3.3 Our service is structured under the Head of Service for Quality Assurance, Performance, and Youth Justice, a role that spans across Children's Services, ensuring effective integration of youth justice within broader support systems and quality assurance processes. The current Head of Service is a full member of the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team, is employed by Milton Keynes City Council and operates within the Children's Services Directorate, reporting to the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care, who in turn reports to the Director of Children's Services. Additionally, the Head of Service holds responsibility for Safeguarding and Performance within Milton Keynes Children's Services.
- 3.4 The Youth Justice Service (YJS) consists of a Head of Service, Operational Manager, Deputy Manager, 1 Senior Officer, and 11 Youth Offending Team (YOT) Officers, one of whom leads on victims and family support. The team also includes a seconded Police Officer, a seconded CAMHS worker, two Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) providing five days of service, a Court Officer, two Business Support Officers, and volunteer members who fulfil appropriate adult and panel member roles. (Appendix 3 provides an overview of our current structure, while Appendix 4 details the characteristics and diversity of our team.)
- 3.5 Additionally, the YJS oversees the Milton Keynes Youth Drug and Alcohol Solutions Team which is colocated with the YJS to ensure timely support where needed.

3.6 Over the past year, we have experienced greater staffing changes than in previous years, largely due to fixed-term contracts ending or staff securing other employment before their contracts conclude. A recent restructuring within Children’s Social Care business support resulted in the loss of our Business Support Manager. Despite these changes, we have made significant progress in improving the demographic representation of our staffing team to better reflect the cohort we serve. However, we recognise that our gender breakdown currently reflects a disproportionate number of female employees compared to male employees, and we remain committed to addressing this imbalance through ongoing recruitment efforts. (Appendices 3 and 4 provide further details on our staffing structure and diversity breakdown.)

4. [Partnership Arrangements](#)

- 4.1 The Youth Justice Service has an informal reporting line to the Community Safety Partnership – Safer MK. The Chief Executive and Lead Cabinet Member also receive regular service updates as required, as does the Local Police Area Commander.
- 4.2 The establishment of the MK Together Board, alongside the Health and Care Partnership and Community Safety Partnership, is part of partnership arrangements created to ensure a more streamlined and closer alignment of boards to avoid duplicated work streams.

The table below highlights meetings and Boards attended by the service reflecting the level of scope of the partnership work in place:

Meetings attended by HOS	Meetings attend by managers and other staff of YJS
Advisor Community Safety Partnership Board, (Invite by exception)	Attendance at the Contextual Safeguarding Board (COSB)
A member of the MK Together Delivery Board which identifies new and emerging areas of risk and exploitation and responses. The Board has oversight of case-based panels (Channel, CSB, Vulnerable Adults / Children, MARAC, etc.).	Core member of the regular Joint Decision-Making Panel considering Out of Court Disposals (O OCD).
Attendance at the South-East Region and Thames Valley YJS Head of Meetings	Members of the Association of YOT Managers
Member of the Assurance Board	Attendance at South East Effective Practice Forums
Attend School Attendance Working Group	Co-chairs Contextual Risk Panel which is a multi-agency panel to review all high-risk

	cases across Youth Justice Service and the Contextual Safeguarding Service.
Member of the Channel Panel	Attends the Contextual Safeguarding Panel to review cases which are brought for consideration to be opened to the Contextual Safeguarding Team.
	Standing member of the Schools Behaviour Partnership alternative education panel and can influence discussions on appropriate education provision.
	Attendance at the multi-agency group scrutinizing Part Time Timetables that have been in place for longer than six weeks to ensure appropriate steps are taken to re-engage children in full-time education.
	Attendance at the Serious Violence Operational Group.
	Attendance at the Thames Valley Youth Justice Operational Managers group
	A member of the MKCC Looked After Child Panel
	Member of the Legacy Panel

4.3 In addition to the statutory partners and linkages identified above, the Youth Justice Service has wider partnership arrangements with Primary, Secondary and Special 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 Harm Reduction Unit, YMCA and SOFEA, alongside a range of other partners.

5. Progress on Priorities in Previous Plan

5.1 The Youth Justice Service (YJS) in Milton Keynes continues to explore opportunities for service development to secure positive outcomes for young people. The service is subject to ongoing review to assess progress and evaluate outcomes through the Youth Justice Board (YJSB)

5.2 Below is a summary of the planned targets from our previous plan of 2024/25 and a summary of progress made.

<u>Area of Delivery / Identified Area of Development</u>	<u>Planned Development Activity</u>	<u>Progress Made</u>
Disproportionality	<p>Continue to use YJB Ethnic Disparity Tool and CV data to identify areas of overrepresentation</p> <p>Ensure that all staff undertake training regarding cultural competence and understanding the impact of adultification within YJS.</p> <p>Discuss with partners areas of disproportionality and ensure that all reports and recommendations appropriately consider all diversity characteristics and clearly report impact of these.</p> <p>Continue to offer all young people SLCN assessments and expand the service offered to schools to engage more schools within the project.</p>	<p>We have continued to progress work within this area. During the previous year we have invested in additional staff training to ensure that all members of team are trained to consider the impact of diversity, disproportionality and adultification.</p> <p>We have undertaken Cultural Competence training and Adultification Bias Training. Both trainings were reviewed within team meetings to further embed learning from this and look at how staff members can spot the signs and reflect on how both individually and as a service we can challenge disproportionality.</p> <p>We have reviewed our Pre Sentence and Referral Order report templates and have ensured that consideration of diversity is at the forefront of the reports and a focus throughout to ensure all readers are aware of any diversity and are highlighted to the impact diversity has or may</p>

		<p>have on the individual young person.</p> <p>Our Strategic Board has a regular agenda item focussed on assessing disproportionality. This year board members have shared data from each service to analyse the impact within each area. A working group is being set up to take this work further to look at ways to address disproportionality as a partnership.</p> <p>We continue to offer all young people working with YJS a Speech and Language Assessment. Unfortunately following a period of sickness absence, one member of the team has left the service which has impacted on capacity resulting in some delays in assessments. This has also meant we have been unable to expand our PRRE project to more schools. We continue to work with health colleagues to explore ways to fill this demand.</p>
Girls within YJS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case analysis to look at trends and commonalities amongst the cohort • Undertake training with staff on how to engage girls within YJS and research and review evidence-based interventions for working with girls. 	<p>We have continued to see small increases in the number of girls coming into the service. Whilst there is an increase this appears to stay within the out of court space and most do not continue onto formal outcomes. This is reflected nationally and is also a recognised trend in increase in girls being referred to alternative education provision and girls being referred into the contextual safeguarding space.</p> <p>Our deputy manager is a member of the Youth Justice boards group, looking at girls within youth justice. The latest research and updates are shared amongst the team and</p>

		<p>reviewed within team meetings to ensure staff are up to date with understanding the needs of this group.</p> <p>We are currently working with family centres to explore specific groups to support girls in the community.</p>
PRRE – (Promoting Reintegration Reducing Exclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase our reach to new schools and schools not currently engaged in the project • Seek to offer a SLT service to those young people who require additional specialist intervention alongside assessments to increase positive outcomes and opportunities for these young people. 	<p>We have met with the Designated Safeguarding Leads for all secondary schools and presented further information regarding PRRE project.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity within the staffing group of Speech and Language Assessors, we have been unable to expand our offer further to deliver intervention based work. However, we have participated in research into Developmental Language Delay and the impact of interventions around this. The research element has now been completed and we await the results of this.</p>
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use of YP participation in recruitment processes • Ensure feedback from current evaluations are used to inform service delivery and improvement. • Ensure that young people from Black and mixed heritage groups are actively involved in all participation activity. • Ensure victims are given opportunities to feedback 	<p>We have amended our recruitment practices and this year have included young people both directly and indirectly in our recruitment process. Young people have been present for interviews and have also created questions and reviewed and scored answers. The insight of our young people in the recruitment process has been essential and helped to ensure the correct people are employed to support our cohort.</p> <p>Feedback from young people is shared with the YJSB (Youth Justice Strategic Board) and helps to inform service delivery. Feedback from young people is also shared amongst the team and with senior managers to ensure</p>

	<p>on their experience of the service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a parent 'Where to Now' session to ensure parents are signposted to community resources upon closure of interventions and are given the opportunity to give independent feedback regarding their experience. • Increase coproduction and engagement with Youth services within the Local Authority to ensure children and young people within the YJS are granted the same opportunities to participate in activities such as Youth Council and other consultation groups. 	<p>examples of effective practice are recognised and built upon. All young people are offered the opportunity to engage in an exit interview with an independent person to share their views on the service.</p> <p>Young people are also now offered an opportunity to meet with Milton Keynes City Council's Youth Participation and Engagement Lead, this opportunity not only provides young people an opportunity to have their voices heard but also an opportunity to hear about the opportunities open to them in Milton Keynes, including youth council and other consultation groups.</p> <p>A survey monkey has been developed to gain views of victims who have engaged with the service, however, this has not been as successful as we would have liked and we are continuing to review to ensure best practice in this area</p> <p>A parent 'Where to Now' session has been developed, and we are currently exploring introducing this with the use of volunteers to complete these with all parents of children who are exiting the service.</p>
Act: Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the Harm Reduction Unit at TVP to ensure that all schools officers are referring all young people arrested for offences of knives or weapons but aren't taken into custody into the ACT: Now project. • Consider expansion of the project to include young people arrested for other 	<p>Following a successful initial period, the ACT: Now project was expanded to all Youth Justice Services within the Thames Valley. As part of the expansion, where capacity allows, the project has expanded to include the following offences: All knife/bladed/pointed article possession offences, all other weapon offences, All violence with injury offences (Assault by beating, Assault occasioning actual bodily harm,</p>

	<p>offences for example Possession with intent to supply</p>	<p>Grievous bodily harm), Robbery of person and Business robbery.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with Thames Valley Police Harm Reduction Unit and will continue to promote referrals from school officers into the ACT: Now programme.</p> <p>Since the Act-NOW initiative started there have been 219 instances of young people referred in connection with knife offences or offences of violence – involving 168 individuals. Of these young people referred only five have gone on to commit a further knife related offence, demonstrating a significant reduction in risk following referral to the project.</p> <p>Feedback from parents / carers and young people, as demonstrated below, has been positive and shows the importance of early intervention and positive relationships:</p> <p>“Teens need [a] wide range of support to remove the violence culture that has been normalised. The early project is a big part of this”</p> <p>"The project gave my son a different insight than moaning parents."</p> <p>" It helped me see the situation more clearly and quickly. To help reduce knife-crime as it is very problematic in Milton Keynes. (it's silly)"</p> <p>"Gang violence is getting worse. Being on the project gave me more awareness"</p>
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit volunteers for all services including panel members, AA's and volunteers for independent 	<p>Our core team demographic is now more reflective of our young people in terms of ethnicity; however, we still need to address the disproportionality</p>

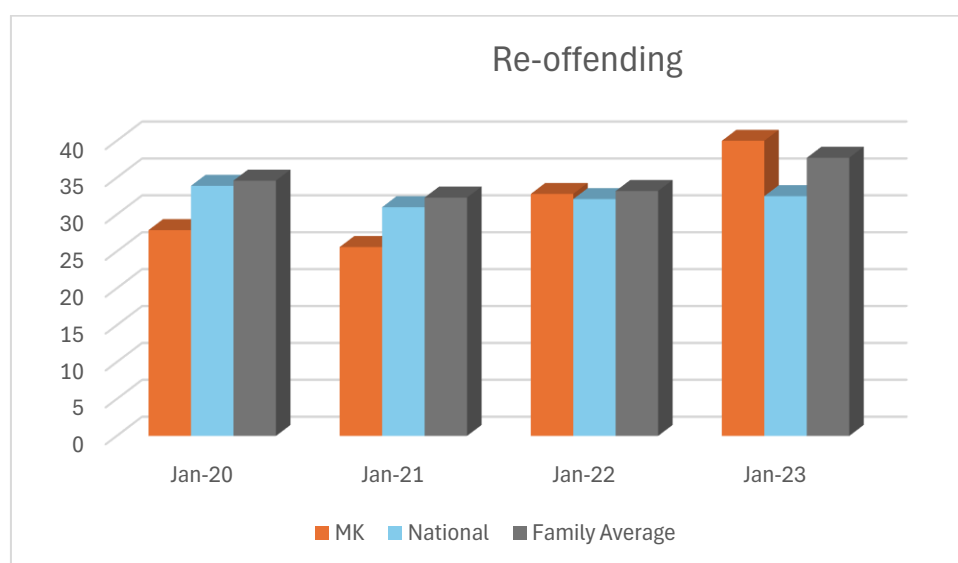
	<p>feedback reviews. Ensure that recruitment is focused and is accessible to diverse groups and communities to increase our demographic to ensure this is reflective of the population who we work with.</p>	<p>of females in the service. Our volunteer group is yet to reflect the demography of our client group.</p> <p>Efforts have been made to try and attract more volunteers from diverse groups including through liaison with Thames Valley Police Community and Diversity Officer and a volunteer recruitment evening. Contact will also be made with local universities to try and attract more volunteers.</p>
Sexual Harmful Behaviour (SHB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the pathway by providing training to staff across Children, Social Care and the Local Authority including schools. Install Panel to review cases and undertake a review of impact of pathway. 	<p>Staff members across Youth Justice and Children's Social Care were trained in Assessment and Intervention AIM3 training.</p> <p>An initial panel was constructed to review cases for consideration of need for an AIM 3 assessment and the multi-agency panel would advise to the appropriateness of additional specialist assessments / interventions.</p> <p>To capture the needs of Young People who are presenting with SHB and its' link to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) the safeguarding partnership reviewed a cross section of CSA / HSB cases to look at how well the service prevents, protects, assesses, plans for and intervenes when a child or YP is impacted by CSA. A multi-agency panel will commence in June 25 that will use the reflecting team model to further support enhanced understanding of this challenging risk indicator.</p>
Prevention and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with TVP and undertake training to identify and agree appropriate young people 	<p>Partnership work has taken place across Thames Valley with Thames Valley Police, Youth Justice Services and the Youth Justice Board to explore the use of Outcome 22. Use of deferred outcomes has been agreed</p>

	to be considered for Outcome 22.	as part of the Joint Decision-Making Process and in Thames Valley Young people will be screened and where appropriate offered voluntary intervention through the Youth Diversion Programme. This is a positive outcome and will help divert young people from the formal criminal justice system and will also address issues of disproportionality.
--	----------------------------------	--

6. Performance Over the Previous Year KPIs:

6.1 Reoffending

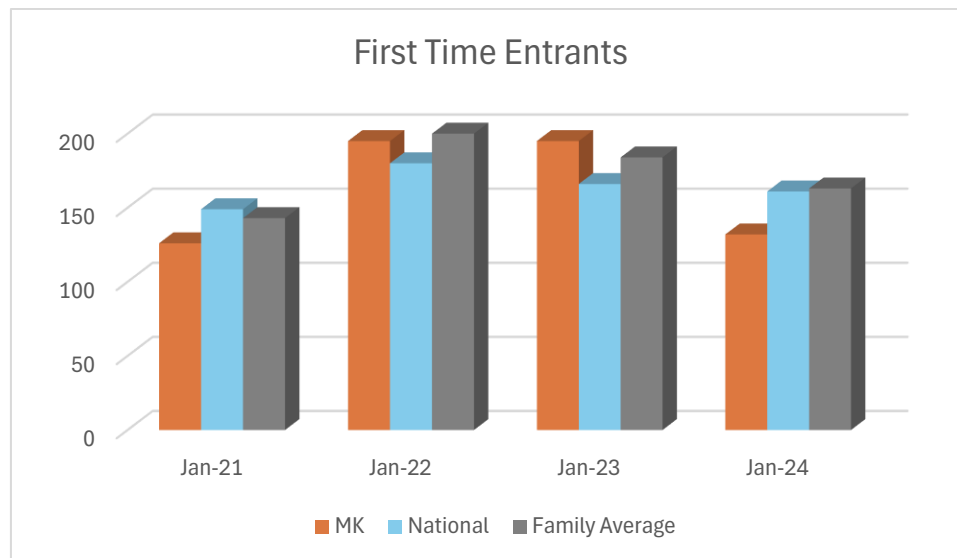
Target Reoffending rate is <30%



Our reoffending rate target will continue to be <30% for 2025/26. As identified in the above chart, our reoffending rate has continued to rise and is slightly above our national and family averages. It is considered that this is likely to be a result of the improved First Time Entrants figure which results in the most complex cases within this cohort. Whilst there has been an increase it is important to note that these figures are for Jan 23. Continuing to use our predictive report; looking at young people who received a substantive outcome between **July – September 2024**, we have a projected reoffending rate of just **8.3%**

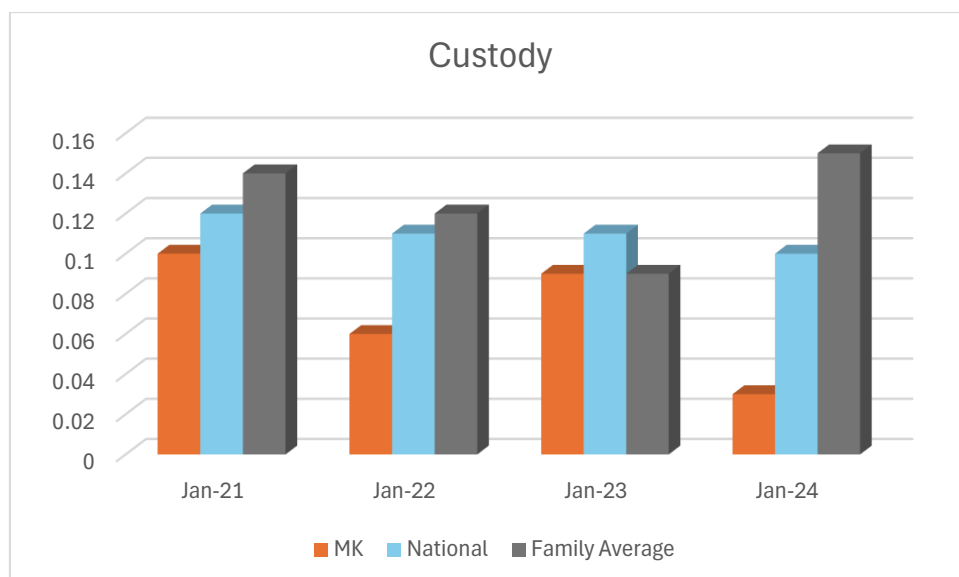
6.2 First Time Entrants (FTE)

Our FTE target continues to be <140. Our data has shown that our numbers have seen a significant reduction and are now below our target rate at 132 per 100,000 compared to last year's figure showing 195 per 100,000. We continue to work closely with police partners to ensure a balance between victim-led policing and child first outcomes and are working with Thames Valley Police with the implementation of the Youth Diversion Programme as a further alternative to formal outcomes where appropriate and predict to see this number fall further.



6.3 Custody

Our custody target continues to be <0.2. within Milton Keynes as we continue to be able to effectively manage young people on community-based interventions with no young people being sentenced to custody in our last quarter. We endeavour to ensure that young people are advocated for appropriately and good quality risk assessment ensures that, where necessary, appropriate bail packages are presented to the Courts as a direct alternative to remands. Our intervention is effective in both our low custody rates and high levels of engagement and successful completion of Orders and bail packages. Our Custody rate is currently in line with the rest of Thames Valley but lower than both the national and family picture.



6.4 The YJB have introduced new KPI's which we currently do not have all the data sets for, however the below shows the KPI's and current draft data for Jan-March 2024 that we review, in line with this new data set based in MK local areas knowledge.

KPI – 1- Accommodation:

- The type of accommodation at the order start, end and (if applicable) release from custody.
- The suitability of the accommodation.

Target:

The target for 2024-25 is for 80% of young people to be in suitable accommodation at the order end.

Accommodation type:

Total interventions ending	Home		Placement or Supported accommodation		Other	
	At start	At end	At start	At end	At start	At end
22	19	19	2	3	1	0

Accommodation suitability

Total interventions ending	Suitable		Not suitable		Unknown	
	At start	At end	At start	At end	At start	At end
22	19	22	2	0	1	0
Percentage in suitable accommodation at intervention end					100%	
Last quarter					91%	

6.5 The current data shows we ensured we were able to suitably assess accommodation suitability by the end of intervention in all cases.

KPI-2 – ETE, the requirements for cases ending in the last quarter are;

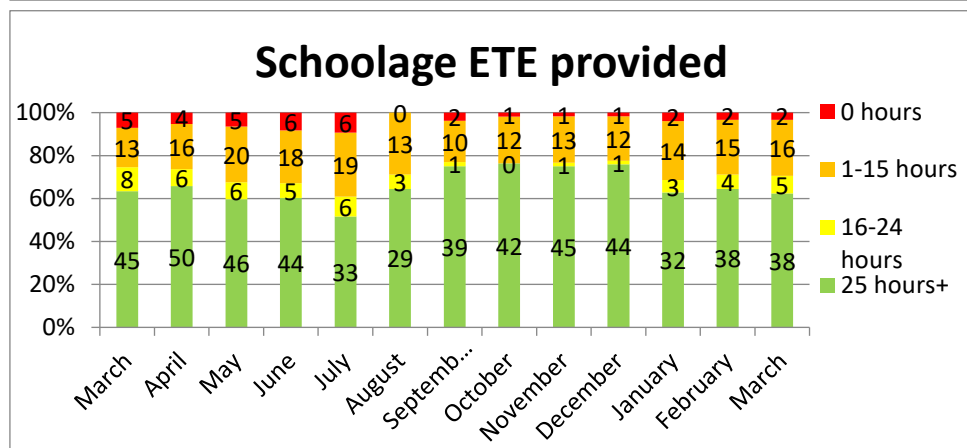
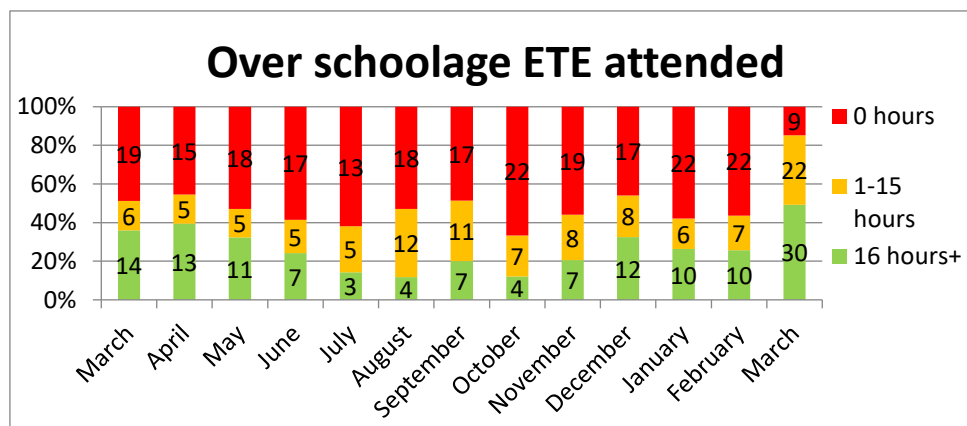
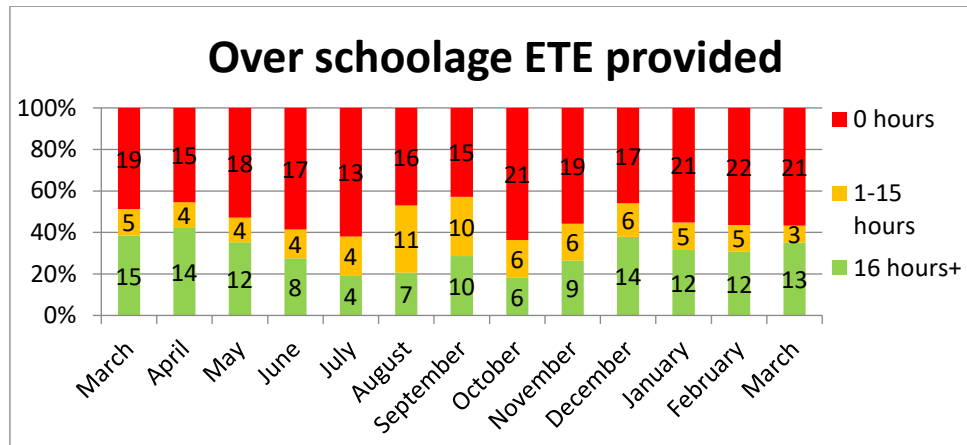
- a. The number of cases in full-time ETE at order start, end and (if applicable) re-release from custody.
- b. The number of cases in part-time ETE at order start, end and (if applicable) re-release from custody.
- c. The number of cases not in ETE at order start, end and (if applicable) release from custody.
- d. The number of cases in suitable ETE at order start, end and (if applicable) re-release from custody.
- e. The type of ETE for the above.

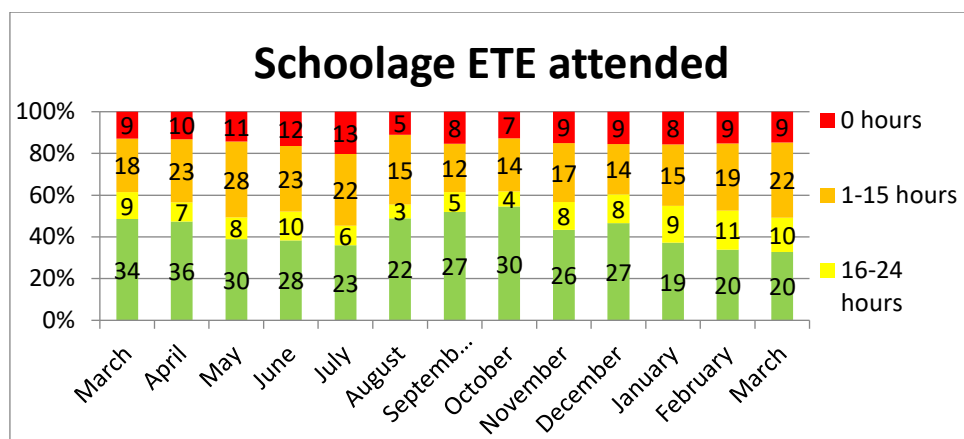
Target:

The target for 2024-25 is for 60% of young people to be in suitable ETE at the intervention end.

<p>The percentage of young people with an intervention that ended in the last quarter and in respect of whom the officer considered their ETE was suitable (even if it wasn't full-time) was:</p> <p>For School-age young people it was82% For over-school-age young people it was36% And overall, it was59% (Last quarter it was 69%)</p> <p>Commentary: We have added a breakdown of suitability by school-age and over school-age categories.</p> <p>For interventions that were active at the end of the month, the proportion of school age young people that were on "part-time" timetables and not attending "full-time"</p>		
Period	Percentage on part-time timetables (monthly numbers)	Percentage not in full-time ETE (monthly numbers)
January – March 2024	41% (25, 26, 27 monthly)	55% (33, 31, 36 monthly)
April – June 2024	44% (30, 36, 33 monthly)	53% (40, 47, 45 monthly)
July – September 2024	39% (28,18,17 monthly)	64% (41, 23, 25 monthly)
October – December 2024	38% (18,25,22 monthly)	45% (25, 34, 31 monthly)
January – March 2025	50% (24,30,32 monthly)	63% (32, 39, 41 monthly)

In respect of ACTIVE interventions, the attendance broken down by 'school-age' and 'over school-age' bands and showing ETE provided and actually attended is shown on the following graphs.





KPI-3 – SEND, the requirements for cases ending in the last quarter are;

- The number of cases identified as having SEND at order end.
- The number of these having a formal plan in place.
- The number of these having suitable ETE at order end.

YPs with identified SEND at intervention end	N° with formal plan	Percentage	N° in suitable ETE	Percentage	N° with formal plan & suitable ETE	Percentage
3	3	100%	1	33%	1	33%

KPI-4 - Mental Health & Wellbeing

- The number of cases receiving treatment before coming on the YJS caseload.
- The number of cases screened as having a need.
- The number of cases offered an intervention (differentiated by level of support).
- The number of cases receiving an intervention (differentiated by level of support).

2- Target:

- The target for 2024-25 is for 60% of young people with orders ending who have an identified need for intervention to improve mental health or emotional well-being, who are offered and receive that support.

For interventions that ended in the last quarter the data is:

Mental Health referrals					
Interventions ending	Identified as having a need	Already receiving treatment	Referred during intervention	Received support	Percentage receiving support
22	8	1	7 (2 withdrawn & 2 refused)	3	50%
				Last quarter	66%

The 2 “withdrawn” referrals refer to the same young person who is a ‘Looked After Child’ who was moved out of area on 2 occasions before they could start work with our CAMHS worker.

KPI -5 - Substance misuse

- The number of cases receiving treatment before coming on the YJS caseload.
- The number of cases screened as having a need.
- The number of cases offered an intervention (differentiated by level of support).
- The number of cases receiving an intervention (differentiated by level of support).

Target:

The target for 2024-25 is for 60% of young people with an identified need for specialist treatment intervention who attend offered support.

For interventions that ended in the last quarter the data is:

Substance Misuse Referrals					
Interven- tions ending	Identified as having a need	Already receiv- ing support	Referred dur- ing interven- tion	Accepted & received sup- port	Percent- age of identified need
22	15	2	13	13	100%
				Last quarter	66%

The above table demonstrates the number of referrals being completed to services whilst young people are open to our service. In regard to both mental health and substance misuse the data shows that a very low number of interventions ending, were already open to appropriate services when they become open to the YJS. Our direct links to inhouse provisions ensures that we are able to access services timely and efficiently and avoids where possible further delays for young people.

KPI – 6 - Out of court disposals

- The number of cases completing an intervention.

The data for the last quarter was:

<u>All</u> O OCD inter- ventions ended	<u>Accepted</u> O OCD interventions ended	Successfully completed	Percent- age	Percent- age of all
32	6	6	100%	19%
		Last quar- ter	91%	43%

KPI-7- Wider services

- The number of cases at order end who are a currently care experienced child.
- The number of cases at order end who are on a Child Protection Plan.

- h. The number of cases at order end who are a current Child In Need.
- i. The number of cases at order end who are on an Early Intervention Plan.
- j. The number of cases who were open to Early Help before coming on the YJS caseload.
- k. The number of cases at order end who were referred to Early Help services.

Interventions ended	Legal status at intervention end			Early Help engagement		
	CIN	CPP	LAC	Open at end	Open before	Referred
22	5	0	4	0	2	0
Last quarter was 32	4	0	10	0	3	0

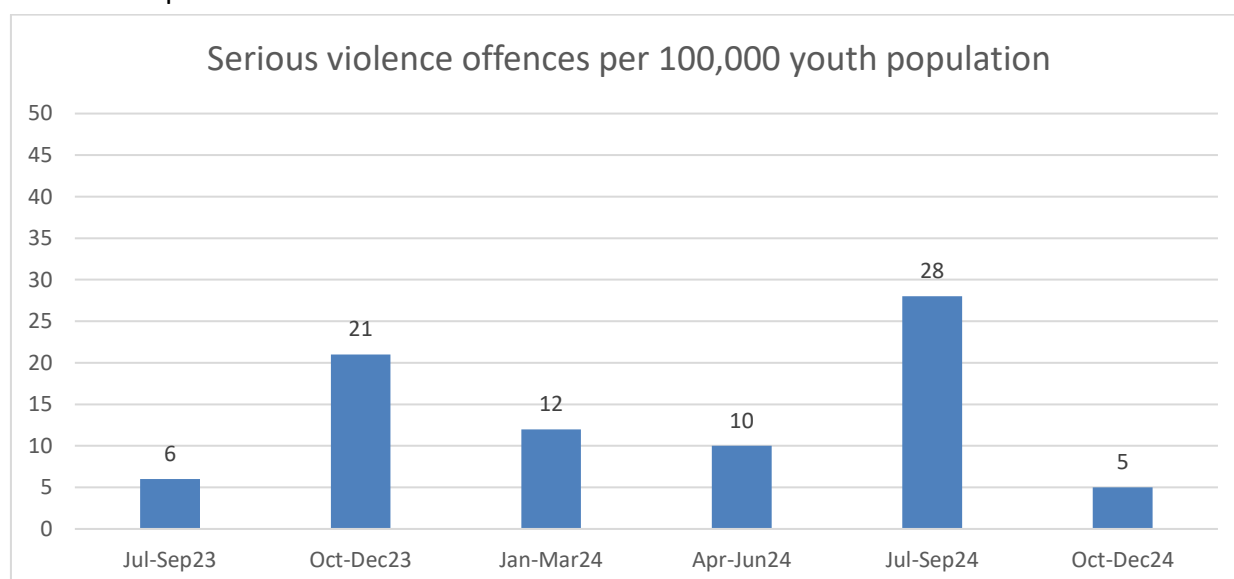
The above KPI helps us to look at the histories of our cohort and working alongside Children's Social Care (CSC) we will continue to review this data and assess ways of ensuring that those open to CSC are receiving appropriate levels of support before coming into the YJS.

KPI- 8 (see Appendix 2)- Management board attendance.

- I. Attendance by senior partner or delegated person for;
 - i. LA children's social care
 - ii. LA education
 - iii. Police
 - iv. Probation
 - v. Health and
 - vi. Other.

KPI – 9 - Serious violence

- m. This data will be provided by YJB from the data we already submit and looks at the number of serious violence offences per 1,000 of the youth population.
- 4- The YJB published data set shows:



- We continue to work to address Serious Youth Violence through our ACT: Now project, Early Support Programme and PRRE work alongside close overview and planning with key partners including Thames Valley Police, Health and Education.

6.5 Victims

- The number of victims who consent to be contacted.
- The number of victims who were engaged.
- The number of victims asked for their views prior to out-of-court-disposal decision making or planning for court-imposed orders.
- The number of victims who request information about the progress of the case.
- The number of these who are given the information.
- The number of victims who ask for additional support.
- The number of these given that support.

No data has been published by the YJB yet.

Victim engagement

The data for the interventions that ended in the last quarter was:

Interventions ending between 1/1/2025 and 31/3/2025						
	No of of- fences with a victim	No of victims noti- fied by police (per- cent- age of cases)	No of vic- tims of- fered repa- ra- tion	No re- ceiv- ing di- rect repa- ra- tion	No re- ceiving indi- rect repa- ration	Percentage of victims receiving reparation
Pre- Court Out- comes	6	5 (83%)	3	0	2	66%
Court Out- comes	16	13 (81%)	12	0	8	66%
All Out- comes	22	18 (82%)	15	0	10	66%
Previ- ous quarter	43	25 (58%)	16	0	9	36%

6.6 Local performance data

The Early Support Project forms part of the wider Youth Justice and Support Service and focuses on Diversion and Prevention work including work completed under Achieving Change Together – Now (ACT-Now), our knife crime pilot in Milton Keynes, and our Speech and Language Therapy Project in primary and secondary schools.

We work towards our local KPI target of not exceeding 5% re-offending rate (over a rolling two-year period) with all children and young people who engage with the Early Support Project. We have not exceeded 4% since the project came online in 2018.

We have continued to maintain a low re-offending rate throughout the entire project, and this is currently at 2.48%. This is reflective of our relationship-based approach ensuring that young people are engaged in their plans and building on areas that they want to work on, alongside ensuring young people have quick access to holistic assessments which identify underlying speech, language, communication and health needs.

Our Early Support Work is imperative in diverting young people away from the YJS and reducing first time entrant numbers. Some long-term and short-term staff absences have meant currently we have had to reduce our offer, however efforts are being made to secure continued funding and resources to address these challenges.

7 Risks and Issues

- 7.1 At Milton Keynes Youth Justice Service (YJS), we regularly review our service challenges and risks through our quarterly Youth Justice Strategic Board (YJSB) meetings. These reviews ensure that we remain responsive to emerging needs and continue to deliver effective interventions for young people.
- 7.2 Milton Keynes is a fast-growing city, and population growth is a key factor in our future planning. As outlined in the local context section of this plan, Milton Keynes has a young population, with 45.6% of residents under the age of 35 and 26.1% under the age of 19. We carefully consider this demographic shift in our strategic planning to ensure that, as the city expands, we have the right resources in place to meet the needs of our young people.
- 7.3 The Milton Keynes Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) identifies several priority actions to improve outcomes for young people. These actions focus on reducing health inequalities, strengthening early intervention, and enhancing multi-agency collaboration. Key priorities include improving young people's mental health, reducing risk-taking behaviors, and increasing school attendance.
- 7.4 Enhancing Mental Health and Education Support - Since December 2024, we have expanded the role of our CAMHS Senior Mental Health Practitioner to include in-house ADHD assessments. This initiative has led to earlier access to assessments and support, resulting in positive outcomes for young people.

7.5 Alongside mental health concerns, we recognise that the young people we work with are at higher risk of school exclusions and poor attendance, which can lead to lower attainment levels. To address this, we have secured funding to employ a full-time Education Officer, who will work alongside partner agencies to tackle these disparities. However, as this funding is fixed term, we are actively exploring ways to sustain this role in the long term, as its continuation is a current risk factor.

7.6 Addressing Serious Youth Violence - Over the past four years, we have observed an increase in incidents of Serious Youth Violence, which remains a key area of concern. In collaboration with partner agencies, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Thames Valley Police, we implemented the Achieving Change Together (ACT: Now) programme. This initiative ensures a swift response to young people brought into custody for knife-related offences, offering targeted interventions to reduce the risk of further serious youth violence and address underlying risk factors. The ACT: Now programme has been highly successful in reducing knife crime, alongside Operation Deter, led by Thames Valley Police in Milton Keynes. Due to its success in Milton Keynes and Slough, the programme has now been rolled out across Thames Valley and expanded to support young people arrested for other violent offences.

7.7 At Milton Keynes YJS, we continue to complete Serious Incident Notifications for all relevant cases and actively contribute to serious case reviews. The learning from these reviews is shared across Children's Social Care, ensuring that best practices are implemented to improve outcomes for young people. In 2024/2025, we reported two Serious Incident Notifications involving young people who acted alone. In both cases, there were significant delays between the incidents occurring and charging decisions—one case experienced a six-month delay, while the other took eleven months.

7.8 We continue to work closely with our partners to address timeliness issues and improve response times. Additionally, we are strengthening collaboration between the Youth Justice Service and Contextual Safeguarding Team to map concerns around locations and peer groups. Our partnership with Thames Valley Police remains critical in implementing disruption measures and ensuring that our ACT: Now programme provides timely interventions to reduce risks associated with knife crime and serious youth violence.

7.9 The table below shows areas of considered risk and responses to these risks by MKYJS:

<u>Key risk to service delivery</u>	<u>Action to be Taken / Actions Undertaken to reduce / prevent risk or issue</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address these issues, we have collected and evaluated data to evidence the benefits of the outlined projects, and this has been utilised consistently in further bids for on-going grant funding to maintain these services. In addition,

<p>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. There are a number of areas within the service that are largely funded through a series of external time limited grants. A considerable proportion of these deliver what has become core components of our work with significant benefits. However, the nature of this model carries several risks around service resilience because of the wider uncertainty of continued funding. These include Early Support Project (ESP); Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusion (PRRE); ACT: Now; Turnaround and Youth Resilience Project (YRP). We are aware that the OPCC are looking to reduce their funding for areas of ongoing work which would result in a loss of £137,000 for the year 26/27, Turnaround funding has continued for the year 25/26 at a reduced amount, it is not clear whether this funding will continue in 26/27. These reductions in funding will specifically impact our ability to continue prevention and diversion work at its current level. The risk of the funding reduction poses relates to the reduction in innovation / use of evidenced based tools to reduce harm / identify need and reduce engagement in crime / exploitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demands across the service due to staff absence. 	<p>we continue to highlight the benefits of the services with the wider Youth Justice Partnership through the Youth Justice Strategic Board, Community Safety Partnership and other multi-agency partnerships to ensure that opportunities for mainstreaming any of the funding arrangements can be considered and implemented where feasible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognised that there has been ongoing concerns re: staff absence and are aware that within this field there is a high level of secondary trauma due to the nature of the work. To support staff, we have group clinical supervision and staff also have access to individual clinical supervision and access to Employee Assist Programme. As a service we are ensuring that Milton Keynes City Council policies are followed regarding absence monitoring and review and support is provided where necessary alongside active absence
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexperienced and unqualified staff: we are aware that nationally there is a shortage of experienced Youth Justice workers or those with recognised qualifications within the field. Unqualified staff may lack the specialist knowledge required to deliver evidence-based interventions, leading to less effective rehabilitation and support for young people. Inadequate training can lead to inconsistent decision-making, potentially increasing the risk of reoffending or harm to young people. A lack of understanding of trauma-informed approaches may result in poor engagement with young people, reducing their willingness to participate in interventions. Public confidence in the youth justice system may be undermined if interventions are perceived as ineffective or inconsistent. • Increased peer conflict: following recognition in the previous year of increased peer conflict / intergroup rivalries which were displayed both within our Court settings and within the City of Milton Keynes there was the necessity for single agency and multi-agency risk management planning in order to ensure both the safety of young people and staff as well as members of the public. One of the challenges of the consistently evolving risk picture was around the dynamic nature of a number of the groupings in Milton Keynes which contrary to normal expectations of gangs / groups appear to shift allegiances in very short time frames, 	<p>management. We are ensuring that where possible team meetings are held in person and that all staff have access to regular case supervision and 1-2-1's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in training and professional development is essential to ensure staff have the skills and expertise needed to support young people effectively. We currently have a full training programme accessible through MKCC Children's Social Care. We currently offer spaces on the Social Work apprenticeship, fund the youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate and have a range of internal and external training. Staff development will continue to be seen as a priority and is a key discussion point within 1-2-1's. We offer an attractive recruitment package to attract the most desirable applicants and experience and expertise are recognised through a grading system. • To address this, we continue to work effectively with our partner agencies alerting them to known risks of conflict and putting in place appropriate risk management arrangements including, moving Court hearings, utilising the support of Thames Valley Police (TVP) colleagues to provide additional safeguarding within the Court environment, along with real time recording of 'non association' flags on Child View to minimise risks around known individuals in conflict. This has been effective in ensuring no incidents occurring within our court settings or within contacts. A key factor in all of these arrangements is the ability to benefit from real time access to police
---	---

<p>meaning that real time intelligence gathering, analysis and response was crucial but challenging to ensure effective risk management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in 1st time entrants. Reductions in funding for prevention and diversion intervention could lead to increased numbers of first-time entrants. With our current Prevention and Diversion Service we have seen our numbers reducing from 167 per 100,000 (Jan-Dec 2023) to 132 per 100,000 (Jan – Dec 2024). Compared to the National picture of 168 per 100,000 in 2023 to 161 per 100,000 in 2024. 	<p>intelligence systems. We have established fast responsive intelligence sharing with the Harm Reduction Team within Thames Valley Police (TVP) through a shared Teams channel. This allows for daily responsive communication between TVP, YJS and the Contextual Safeguarding Team within Children’s Social Care. We have also established a Multi- agency Contextual Risk Panel, where all high-risk cases from both YJS and contextual safeguarding team are reviewed to ensure effective plans are in place. Staff are also present at daily management meetings for TVP so we are aware of any emerging concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Justice Service (YJS) will monitor performance and referral patterns to Out of Court interventions via the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) and will appropriately challenge any decisions that appear to unnecessarily escalate young people through the system. First Time Entrant (FTE) data will be subject to regular review through the Milton Keynes Youth Justice Board (MKYJB) We have implemented the Youth Diversion Programme which will be available for consideration through JDMP, it is hoped that YDP will offer young people early intervention on a voluntary basis without any outcome. Given the concerns that those from black and mixed backgrounds are more likely to receive formal outcomes and one reason for this may be due to mistrust in authorities and therefore likely to not make admissions, it is hoped that YDP will help to tackle this disproportionality as there is not a requirement for admissions to be made at time of delivery.
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education – we continue to see a proportion of young people not in full time education either due to a part time offer or due to poor attendance. We recognise that post Covid attendance is a significant national area of concerns and young people not in ETE are at higher risk of Serious Youth Violence, exploitation and Criminality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have secured funding contribution towards a fixed term education officer post who will work with the pre 16 cohort to support education attendance and transition into post 16 options.
--	--

8 Child First

8.1 The Youth Justice Service has implemented the four tenets of the Child First principles into practical service delivery.

8.2 Child First principles are integrated across all elements of the Youth Justice Service, including statutory case work and within the Youth Diversion and Prevention Service. Child First and Strengths-Based training has been delivered to YJS staff to promote the tenets associated within the approach and to develop staff knowledge, skills, and confidence within this area.

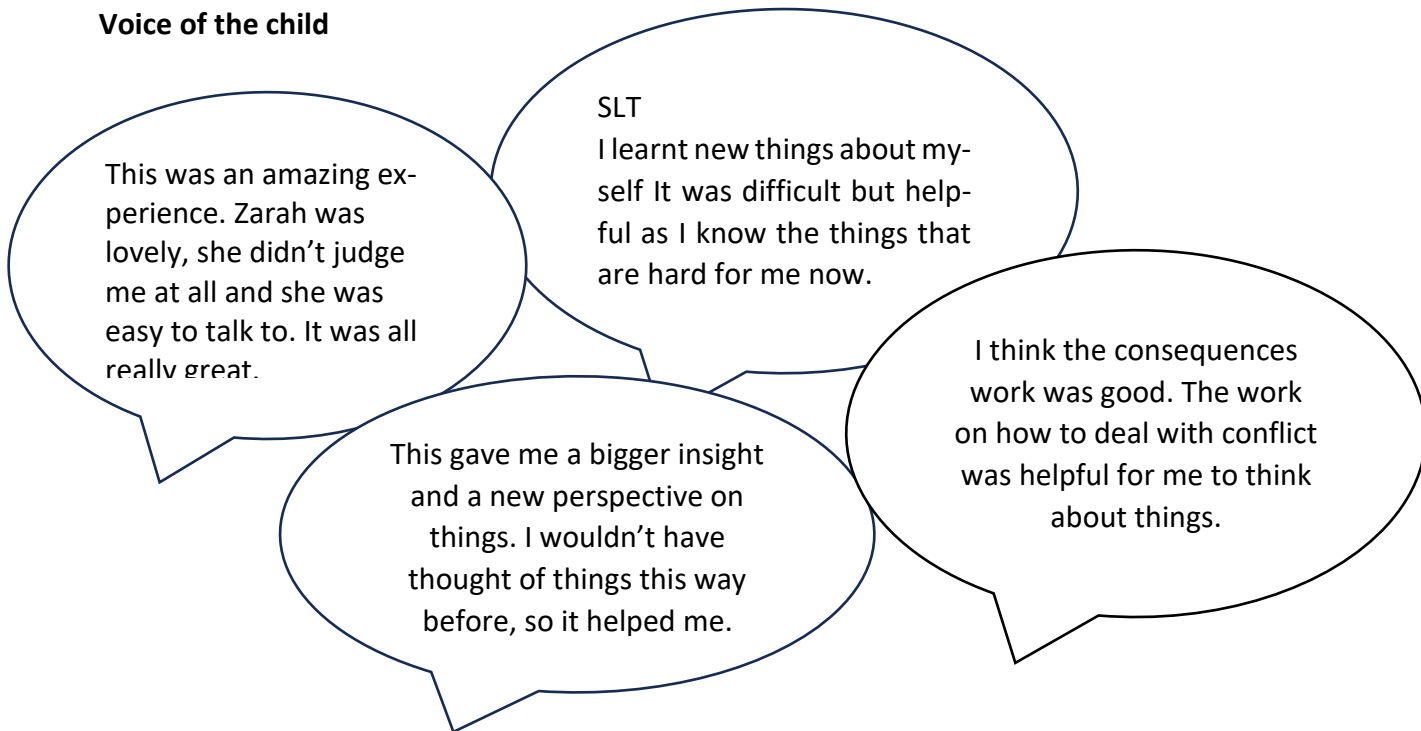
8.3 We have integrated the Child First Principles in the following ways:

- a) Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.
- This is captured within AssetPlus and Prevention and Diversion assessments and plans across all statutory, diversion and prevention work. Assessments are used to ensure that all areas associated with strengths, needs and risks are holistically identified and understood so that interventions are child-focused and developmentally informed. All children and young people are offered a Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessment and this informs the developmental approach adopted by YJS staff to support the child's understanding. Interventions are delivered to children and young people alongside addressing structural barriers (e.g., housing / education / health needs) to ensure that a parallel approach is adopted to addressing the needs and risks of children. ADHD assessments are now completed where appropriate by the in-house CAMHS practitioner which ensures young people get a timely screening, and where appropriate, assessment.
- b) Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

- All work across the service has a focus on supporting children and young people to lead safe, healthy, and pro-social lives. Within this, supporting young people to become stakeholders in their local communities and increased social capital is key. Intervention plans are balanced to reflect the needs, safety concerns, and strengths of young people with a focus on moving young people towards a brighter future where they can get their needs met without involvement in offending or anti-social behaviour.
- c) Encourage children's active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.
- Young people and their parents are encouraged to actively contribute to the creation and review of their intervention plans, and they also provide independent feedback at the end of their interventions so that this can be used to improve practice and service delivery. We use an independent worker to discuss the young person's feedback so that this is unbiased and not completed by a member of the Youth Justice and Service.
 - Within our Out of Court Disposals Policy, we obtain regular feedback from young people, parents, and stakeholders to inform our regular review of policy updates so that it improves the service as a whole and addresses any wider and systematic challenges that need to be addressed.
- d) Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system:
- The Youth Diversion and Prevention Service actively promotes pre-emptive prevention and diversion and seeks to minimise criminogenic stigma from contact across the system. Children and young people can receive an early intervention service from the Diversion and Prevention team via several pathways that have been created to ensure that we are working 'upstream' to identify young people at the earliest point. Within our Prevention service offer, we have developed the Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE) Speech and Language Therapy project with primary and secondary schools. This project enables participating settings to refer children and young people for a Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessment should the child be at greatest risk of school suspension or a move to alternative education. Offering a fast-tracked SLCN assessment with one of our two Speech and Language Therapists works towards identifying previously unidentified needs and supporting the setting to instigate alternative approaches to support the child further. The ACT: Now project offers young people contact within police custody following arrest for knife and weapons related offences and other offences involving violence. A voluntary intervention service is offered which can help young people identify risks and strengths and build upon these to reduce risks of further arrest or incidents which may lead to convictions. Across Thames Valley the Youth Diversion Programme, a deferred outcome to offer voluntary intervention to young people who have been screened by a multi-agency panel. This work is in its infancy having been implemented from

May 2025, but it is hoped that this will work to further divert young people from formal criminal justice systems and tackle disproportionality in outcomes for young people.

Voice of the child



e) Children engaged with the YJS are encouraged to participate by:

- Being actively involved in the creation and reviewing of their intervention plans.
- Providing feedback following initiatives or activities, to inform and steer improvements to the service.
- Within our Speech and Language Therapy project in schools (PRRE), at the end of a completed intervention, our Speech and Language Therapists obtain feedback from children and young people (where they have wanted to contribute), parents / carers (where appropriate) and other stakeholders including school staff. Comments are captured on a short feedback form that is attached to the child / young people's Child View record.
- Involvement with interviews for recruitment of new staff.
- Involvement within research projects.

8.4 In 2021 we introduced independent evaluation. At the end of every intervention, young people are given the opportunity to meet with a participation worker, independent from the Youth Justice Service, to complete a questionnaire on their experience during their time with YJS and also their experience of partner agencies. Latest data shows that the overall feedback from those working with YJS is positive, with 95% of respondents reflecting that their experience was okay, good, or excellent, an improvement of 4% on the previous year, with 71% reporting the experience was excellent, which increased from 58% on the previous year. MKYJS continues to embed a Child First approach, ensuring that officers are responsive to young people and are actively invested in supporting young

people. The service provides young people with consistent adults who they can build trusting relationships with and who provide open and transparent responses to. This approach is shown from feedback from young people to provide positive outcomes.

8.5 The OOC and Custody, Resettlement and Transitions policies also include evaluation feedback forms from both young people and their parent / carer as well as professionals involved. The information from the evaluations is presented to YJSB on a quarterly basis for review and feedback and this provides an opportunity for all members to analyse the data produced and look at good practice examples and areas for improvement. The information received from this feedback is used to inform individual staff / team and service development.

8.6 As well as the voice of young people, parents / carers views are sought through the use of the self-assessments. An exit survey is currently under construction to gain independent feedback from parents / carers.

9 Resources and Services

9.1 At present we have yet to receive our confirmed contribution from all partners.

9.2 Currently the YJS management team directly responsible for the Youth Justice Service consists of the Head of Service, Operational Manager, YJS Deputy Manager and a Senior YOT Officer.

9.3 In total there are 27 Practitioner and administrative staff (23.32 FTE).

9.4 As part of the YJS staffing team some members of staff are qualified Social Workers. In addition to 10 YOT Officers, the service also includes a seconded Police Officer, a CAMHS senior mental health practitioner, a Family Support and Intervention Co-Ordinator, victim liaison officer and 2 Speech and Language Therapists. In addition, we have a full time PhD Student Speech and Language Therapist, placed with the team, undertaking research on effective interventions with children with Developmental Language Disorder in the Youth Justice System

9.5 The above includes YOT Officers delivering the Achieving Change Together – Now (ACT-Now) knife crime pilot that was launched on 3rd January 2023 in partnership with Thames Valley Police to address knife-crime across Milton Keynes. We can engage within 90 minutes, 7 days a week, with children in Police Custody arrested for the following offences: All knife/bladed/pointed article possession offences; All other weapon offences; All violence with injury offences (Assault by beating, Assault occasioning actual bodily harm, Grievous bodily harm); Robbery of person and Business robbery. The pilot has been funded by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). This was initially funded for 12 months but was extended and due to success of the project has been rolled out across Thames Valley. The project is coordinated by an Acting Up Senior YOT Officer.

9.6 A physical health provision is provided through an off-site screening process situated within the School Nursing Team. This is currently subject to review and the identification and

implementation of a more effective replacement arrangement remains a key component of the YJ Plan for the coming year.

9.7 Volunteer Youth Offender Panel members and Appropriate Adults are recruited, trained, and supported by the YJS; the Appropriate Adults also provide support to vulnerable adults for which we receive a nominal amount from Adult Social Care to provide this service.

9.8 The team is based within the Civic Offices in Central Milton Keynes. This enables co-location of multi-agency staff particularly alongside Children's Social Care, SEND and Virtual School. Child-centered safe environments in which to work directly with children have been identified and a number of these are fully in place at key locations around the city.

9.9 The Youth Justice Grant, alongside partner contributions, both in staffing and financial contributions enable us to deliver the activities and services that contribute to the aims and outcomes of the plan. The benefits and impact of these services are evidenced by the KPI outcomes achieved and documented, alongside further commentary around these services and their direct and indirect benefits that are referenced and illustrated throughout this plan.

9.10 A summary of activities provided for and on behalf of the YJSS are documented below:

- **Youth Diversion and Prevention** – Our “Early Support Project” ESP offers children and young people early support and intervention including prevention work to reduce the likelihood of the child or young person becoming known to the formal Youth Justice System, targeted prevention for children and young people that have accessed the formal Youth Justice System previously, yet require further support, and diversionary work for young people who had some low-level and informal Police contact. The ESP service offer includes the Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE) Speech and Language Therapy project in primary and secondary schools. Our reoffending rate for this service is 2.48%. From March 2025 the CCMT (Chief Constables Management Team) agreed to the use of deferred Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions, as an available disposal option for a child who have offended. To avoid confusion with other outcomes or schemes, deferred cautions will be referred to as the Youth Diversion Programme (YDP). This is distinct from Outcome 22 (NFA) Not in the Public interest. The YDP can be used instead of a YC (Youth Caution) or YCC (Youth Conditional Caution). It allows the opportunity for diversion and intervention to be completed by the child without a formal outcome being recorded in local police systems or the Police National Computer (PNC). If the child successfully completes the programme, there will be no formal criminal record or outcome. However, if the programme is not completed, the child will be offered a standard outcome (YC/YCC). If the standard outcome is not accepted, the usual escalation routes will be followed.
- **Turnaround** - We have identified ‘Turnaround’ eligible young people that have been offered the Early Support Project (ESP) or Achieving Change Together-Now (ACT-Now) since the launch of Turnaround at the beginning of December 2022. There are specific criteria that must be met for eligibility. We have submitted our data, and we have met our expected engagement target. We remain on track to be able to meet the engagement target for children eligible for Turnaround this financial year. The Milton Keynes Early

Support Project (ESP) has been cited as a model of effective practice and commended as a model for other youth justice teams to follow by the Ministry of Justice in their updated guidance around the use of Turnaround funding.

- **Achieving Change Together – Now (ACT-Now)** - The youth element (Phase 3) of the multi-agency Operation Deter approach to tackle knife-related violence and homicides in Milton Keynes commenced on 3rd January 2023. Since that time, the commitment for us to respond to young people within Police custody for knife-enabled offending within 90 minutes and to offer these young people the opportunity to engage with the ACT-Now project, with a follow-up appointment within 48 hours has been broadly met. ACT-Now comes under the broader scope of our Early Support Project (ESP) and since its launch has now expanded to include contact for young people brought into police custody for the following offences: all knife/bladed/pointed article possession offences; all other weapon offences; all violence with injury offences (Assault by beating, Assault occasioning actual bodily harm, Grievous bodily harm); Robbery of person and Business robbery. 516 young people have been referred to the project since its inception. As a service we have also recognised a gap where young people are not brought into custody. We have worked with TVP and now also receive referrals direct from schools' Officers for incidents at school where a young person has not been arrested but is questioned regarding a knife-related incident.
- **Appropriate Adult (AA)** services are provided to the Police Station: A volunteer scheme, maintained by the YJS, is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This service is offered to vulnerable adults as well as children with a nominal contribution from Adult Social Care.
- **Out of Court Disposals:** Arrangements are in place with Thames Valley Police and Thames Valley Youth Justice Teams to provide the range of disposals (Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions). A Joint Decision-Making Panel is held which includes representatives from the Youth Justice Service, Police, Professional Lead for Missing and Exploitation, Liaison and Diversion Services and CAMHS.
- **Court Services:** YJS staff advise the Youth Court regarding available sentences. YJS staff prepare Pre-Sentence Reports and operate a duty system to address remand issues and ensure bail packages are available when necessary. Speech Language and Communication Needs assessment reports are also provided alongside pre-sentence reports to both Youth Court and Crown Court so that Courts are fully aware of children's additional needs given the disproportionality high prevalence of SLCN in the Youth Justice System (86% last data for Milton Keynes) compared to the general population (5-8%). A protocol exists with children's social care regarding management of remands to local authority accommodation and Youth Detention Accommodation. YJS staff also liaise with Thames Valley Police directly to ensure additional support is in place where significant risks are identified due to opposing Youths being present within the Court at the same time, Thames Valley Police have been responding providing additional officer support where needed.
- **Court Orders** including Intensive Supervision and Surveillance: The YJS provides YOT Officers for children 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 YJS 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. YJS staff are trained to YJB/Restorative Justice Council standards for the facilitation of restorative conversations. Victims who are under 18 are also able to access the same services of young people referred to the service and therefore have access to Speech and Language assessments and CAMHS assessments and interventions, as well as support to engage in ETE, positive activities and safety planning.
- **Volunteers:** There are currently two volunteer projects to support young people. Volunteers are recruited to be Youth Offender Panel members - people from the community who meet with the child, parents, and victims to agree a contract which will prevent further offending and repair harm. The YJS also manage the Appropriate adult scheme, supporting young people and vulnerable adults in custody. The YJS continue to encourage volunteers from diverse backgrounds in order to offer a diverse pool of volunteers to meet the needs of the young people.
- **Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers** provide support to children working with the YJS and are responsible for delivery of our Reparation / Community Enrichment Service. They meet with children and their YOT Officers as part of the induction process and seek to either develop new bespoke projects or appropriately match children's interests with the projects available.
- **Young People's Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)** Team 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 services to monitor those post 16 out of ETE allowing for continued monitoring and support to be offered both during intervention with YJS and post intervention. In January 2023, we introduced a new element of support within this area, centred around voluntary Criminal Convictions Disclosure sessions to support young people in entering the workplace and transitioning into further Education, Training and Employment.
- **Milton Keynes Young People's Drug and Alcohol Solutions (YPDAS)** work with anyone up to the age of 18 but will work with people up to the age of 25 if they have additional needs. YPDAS team offer advice and support for anyone who would like to learn more about drugs and alcohol, whether they use substances or not. The team also supports anyone who is or has been affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use, referred to as Hidden Harm. The YPDAS team work closely with other professionals to ensure safeguarding, effective partnership working, and information sharing where appropriate. Additionally, the YPDAS team develops and delivers personalised drug and alcohol awareness training sessions for professionals, schools and young people throughout Milton Keynes. The YJS works closely with the YPDAS team who provide specialist interventions, support and advice, for children in relation to substance use. The nature of the partnership work has been greatly strengthened by the incorporation of the YPDAS team as part of the wider YJS. The Thames Valley wide partnership approach to joint delivery of the Thames Valley Police Drugs

Diversion Scheme (DDS) and Thames Valley YOTs is a key part of the Violence Reduction Strategy. Additionally, as part of YPDAS team focuses on education / prevention and harm minimisation, we offer all ESP clients drug / alcohol awareness sessions, whether substances are identified as risk or not. The YPDAS team also work in collaboration with Thames Valley Police regarding Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) for under 18's relating to alcohol and antisocial behaviour.

- **Health** – YJS continue to have limited access to Physical Health provision, and it is recognised that this remains an area of challenge for the YJSB. The School Nursing Service previously reviewed health screenings and offered access to specific services within their remit. The level of service is under current review and challenge as it is 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.
- **CAMHS** – An improved relationship has been built with our local CAMHS team. This role is filled by a senior practitioner who has significant experience of the complex needs of our children, and whose work has previously been recognised positively in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the provision for Mental Health. We have, in agreement with CAMHS colleagues, extended the provision by a day a week and now have 5 days a week service to enable our CAMHS worker to complete ADHD assessments in-house. This has resulted in young people having access to a much timelier ADHD assessment. Since December 2023, 19 young people from 31 referrals have already been assessed in-house for ADHD. 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 Senior Mental Health Practitioner offers assessments and interventions to children and their families and provides training to staff.
- **Parents and Families** – the Family Support and Intervention Co-ordinator (FSIC) at the YJS provides 1-2-1 support to the parents of the children working with the service. This is frequently focused on helping parents/carers with 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.
- **Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)** – we have two part-time Speech and Language Therapists which equates to 5 days of dedicated Speech and Language Therapy per week. We also have a PhD on placement within the Youth Justice and Support Service, and all children are offered a Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessment at the point of entry into the service, including our Youth Diversion and Prevention work. This includes our PRRE (Promoting Reintegration Reducing Exclusions) programme where SLCN assessments are offered to referring to schools for young people at risk of exclusion. 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.
- **Seconded Police Officer** – This role is used creatively across the service including direct involvement with delivering OOCDS, undertaking interventions with children to strengthen relationships between children and Police, provide key information around risks using PNC

and Police intelligence. The role of Thames Valley Police in the YJS is also enhanced by our close partnership working with TVP Harm Reduction Unit.

10 Financial Resources

- 10.1 The final budget for 2025/26 has yet to be established but is not expected to be less than 2024/25 (which was £1,317, 452).
- 10.2 The YJSS has received £100,000 from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley to continue the funding of the Early Support Project (Knife Carrier Project): ACT-Now. This implementation has expanded our work pre-OOCD / Court with children arrested for knife carrying offences. Reports from ACT-Now are available to the JDMP / Court to positively influence disposals and increase opportunities to divert more children towards deferred outcomes, YCC (rather than Court Disposal) and reduce the risk of custodial sentences / longer community-based sentences, recognising the positive benefits for longer term outcomes for children when contact with the formal Youth Justice System is minimised. The project is currently funded until Nov 2025 and within the last year we have expanded our reach under the project to also include the following offences: All knife/bladed/pointed article possession offences, All other weapon offences, All violence with injury offences (Assault by beating, Assault occasioning actual bodily harm, Grievous bodily harm), Robbery of person and Business robbery.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 All grants from the YJB are controlled within the YJS 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 placement budgets of children's social care.

11 Board Development

- 11.1 We have made changes and improvements to ensure that the Youth Justice Strategic Board (YJSB) has a clearer focus on the key priorities as outlined in 'Youth Justice Service Governance and Leadership.' The main changes implemented have been around ensuring that the way meetings are conducted provide an opportunity to explore the range of development and delivery of youth justice services and approaches encompassing both the direct work of the Youth Justice and Support Service, and the key contributions of the wider partnership. This has helped to create an environment in which there is a positive degree of peer challenge, ensuring that the wider partnership has greater ownership of its contribution to, involvement in and advocacy for the services provided.

11.2 This year the Board has a focus on disproportionality and all members have presented their data in board meetings for us to be able to identify themes and areas for development. Following on from this we are keen to continue to develop work within this area and a working group of board members will be taking forward the collation of this data and looking at steps to ensure disproportionality is continually recognised and challenged across all services.

11.3 Whilst we have seen more involvement of YJSB members engaging directly with front line staff and managers through their involvement in YJSB Meetings, there are still further benefits that can be realised through more direct links between the YJSB Members, staff and children who have had experience of youth justice provision, including diversion and prevention. Likewise, there are greater opportunities for YJSB Members to build upon their advocacy and championing role for YJ Services, utilising their position to strengthen two-way links by inviting in YJ Staff, Managers, and specialist professionals more regularly into their parent organisation to help foster a culture of greater understanding. These areas will be further explored to build on and enhance the positive benefits of the Board members' role beyond the regular YJSB meetings.

12 Workforce development

13.1 Looking forward to 2025 / 2026, we have a comprehensive plan for further workforce development, covering the following areas.

- Milton Keynes Children's Social Care are implementing a ROTH (Risk Outside of The Home) pathway for children at significant risk of harm. MKYJS have been actively involved in the development and implementation of the pathway which will support young people open to the service who have met child protection thresholds.
- MKYJS has undertaken training for the new Prevention and Diversion assessments tool, continued workshops are planned to assist with fully embedding the tool within the service.
- The MK Together Safeguarding Partnership is carrying out a Strategic Needs Assessment regarding Serious Youth Violence. This work has commenced and will be reviewed by the Partnership Assurance Group
- We have recognised an increase in the number of girls entering the YJS and therefore are seeking training to upskill workers on understanding the needs of girls within the youth justice system and best practice in terms of engagement and interventions.
- All YJS staff will undertake regular Safeguarding Training in line with Milton Keynes City Council guidelines.
- We have continued to deliver further Diversion and Prevention training to Youth Justice Service staff to promote an assertive outreach methodology, which has enabled us to effectively work with voluntary service users and address the complexity of children and young people with emerging needs and risks. The

effectiveness of which is evidenced by our engagement rates and low level of re-offending for this cohort.

- Staff have access to clinical supervision both on a 1-2-1 basis and the new expanded offer of group clinical supervision which is undertaken with the team on a quarterly basis. Staff also have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) alongside regular one-to-one personal supervision and case supervision. We hold regular team meetings and team development days to ensure that staff feel supported, and we continue to promote their resilience and wellbeing within the workplace. As a management team, we have an 'open door' approach and managers and seniors are available outside of core working hours for advice and support where required.
- YJS are supported by a team of trained and experienced volunteers acting as Youth Offender Panel Members, Youth Resilience Project Mentors and Appropriate Adults. These groups have ongoing access to statutory and non-statutory training as well as regular support and consultation meetings.
- All YJS Officers are trained in the full remit of the service from Diversion and Prevention, Out of Court Disposals (OOCd) and Post-Court, including custody and transitions.
- Continued Professional Development is a key component of the Youth Justice Service's approach with staff. The YJS has an established practice learning curriculum for students, including more specifically, Student Social Workers who undertake both 70 days and 100-day placements. YJS staff also have access to undertake social work apprenticeships and we currently have one member of staff on this programme, with a further two due to start in the autumn.
- 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.

13 Evidence-based practice and innovation

13.2 Milton Keynes Youth Justice and Support Service are keen to use the latest research and development of effective practice guidance to continue to improve services for young people and their families. The areas below demonstrate some of the key areas of evidence-based practice and innovation currently in place.

13.3 Speech and Language Assessments are offered to all young people open to the service. These assessments inform our developmental approach to support young people's understanding of their interventions. This approach, which has been informed by, local, national and international research, and frequently evaluated since its introduction, has

proved effective in identifying those with SLCN, (a hidden disability), whether present as a primary need, as a coexisting condition with other needs such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) ; Dyslexia etc., or as a consequence of other factors such as Attachment Disorder; Adverse Childhood Experiences; Trauma and Loss ; Domestic Abuse ; Family breakdown ; Sexual Abuse ; Criminal or Sexual Exploitation etc. Central to this approach is the recognition that most children in the Youth Justice System (60%-90% Based on research; 65% - 93% based on local data; 71% YJB AssetPlus data) have SLCN but, as this is a hidden disability, for the majority of children this is not accurately recognised prior to them being assessed by the YJS.

- 13.4 The Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team during the past year completed 111 Speech, and Language Communication Needs (SLCN) assessments from 128 referrals, 17 young people did not engage. Of the 128 children referred, 36 were accessing statutory interventions, 36 were accessing the Early Support Project and 56 were accessing our Speech and Language Therapy in primary and secondary schools. 16 children were assessed as having no SLCN, 14% of the number of children assessed. In comparison, 95 children were assessed as having a SLCN and this equates to 86% of the children and young people assessed. It is useful to reflect that out of the 56 children who were assessed under our SLT project in schools, only 8 young people were identified as having no SLCN. This suggests that the prevalence of children and young people who are accessing our SLT project in schools have considerable SLCN and reflects that the children and young people being identified by the school settings in need of additional support. In terms of severity of SLCN being identified, out of the entire cohort assessed between April 2024 – March 2025, 25 of the children and young people had a Mild need identified, 27 had a Mild-Moderate need, 26 had a Moderate need and 16 had a Moderate-Severe need. This demonstrates that most of the young people assessed had a Moderate need identified, and this equates to their needs being greater than 94% of their peers. Our PRRE project continues to expand with new schools joining the project.
- 13.5 Our Custody and Resettlement Policy takes into consideration research developed by Beyond Youth Custody in 2014 and 2017 in regard to the resettlement of females and the 5 Cs of effective resettlement, (constructive, co-created, customised, consistent, and coordinated). It is also underpinned by the YJB guidance on resettlement pathways and National Standards 2019 and has been reviewed in line with the updated guidance for custody and resettlement in January 2025.
- 13.6 The Early Support Project is a short-term intervention underpinned by a case management model, focused on strength based and future focused working. It is underpinned by a strong health and education focus given the emerging research around school exclusions, SLCN, home education, SEND and social inequalities. Within the ESP there is a systems theory / contextual safeguarding approach to case management, highlighted by the Taylor Review in 2019 as an example of good practice.
- 13.7 Our Speech and Language Project in schools is a promising initiative in partnership with our local education partners. The project is 'Pre-Prevention' as we want to work upstream to identify and address SLCN at the earliest opportunity to support children and young people's futures in a positive way.

13.8 The Achieving Change Together – Now (ACT: Now) is an exciting initiative where Youth Justice and Police have joined up to address knife-related offending. We have developed a voluntary support service to young people when a ‘reachable and teachable moment’ presents itself, such as being arrested for a knife offence. We respond to young people within 90 minutes of notification from the Police and complete a home visit within 48 hours to encourage young people to work voluntarily with the Early Support Project pending Police outcome. The initiative has now been rolled out across Thames Valley due to its success and within Milton Keynes we have expanded its reach to also include other weapons based and violent offences and receive referrals from school Officers so that young people who are not taken into police custody can also get a responsive service and be offered the same opportunities.

14 Evaluation

- Research has been undertaken by a researcher within the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridgeshire looking at professional relationships between young people and staff. The research team has included a university researcher and peer researchers at charity Peer Power. The aim of the study is to understand professional relationships between young people and staff, and their impact. The research has included 42 interviews with 28 practitioners and managers across the YJS, 20 interviews with 14 children, collection of background data from 14 children’s case files, 1000+ hours of observation in and around the YJS – from Sept 2022 – August 2023, one lyric-writing workshop with five children, co-analysis of children’s interviews with two peer researchers, five co-analysis workshops with practitioners and managers, findings feedback sessions with children (in progress). Initial findings have looked at the impact of care (caring), boundaries, and young people’s views of what is important for them. The full findings are due to be shared later this year.

15 Priorities for coming year

15.1 Standards for Children

- In October 2023 we undertook a Self-Assessment against the National Standards for Court work, overall, we were rated as Good. The audit showed many strengths, including our accurate recording of court results being rated as outstanding. We acknowledge some areas that require improvement. We have implemented a second officer at Court to ensure capacity to meet directly after court Hearings with all young people and their families to ensure they fully understand the outcomes and expectations following the Hearing. A young person and parents’ leaflet is also being produced to ensure that parents and young people are informed of what is expected of them before and at Court.

15.2 Internal Audits

- The sample included 15% of cases open to the Youth Offending Team in both a statutory and voluntary capacity. This totaled 16 young people subject to the following interventions: Referral Order, Youth Conditional Caution, Bail Support Programme, Youth Rehabilitation Order and Remand to Local Authority Accommodation.

15.3 What's working well?

- Pre-Sentence Reports are being completed within timescales.
- Referral Order initial panels are mostly being held within 20 working days of sentencing.
- There were examples of cases where AssetPlus Assessments were completed promptly within timescales, in accordance with their risk level.
- All assessments used a wide range of sources with evidence of information being validated with multi agency professionals.
- In most cases safety concerns for the young person and others is assessed well and at the correct level.
- Appropriate referrals were made to other agencies to complete relevant interventions.
- Assessments were responsive to changes in circumstances.
- There is clear evidence of management oversight on most cases.

15.4 What are we worried about?

- It was found that there was a lack of consistency in ensuring both parents / carers are consulted and engaged throughout the young person's journey with YJS. This has now been raised in team meetings and training and further monitoring will take place as an area of focus during supervision to ensure where possible and appropriate all parents / carers are engaged.
- Parents are not always involved in safety planning. There has been a focus on the child and other agencies when safety planning and parents can be utilised better in understanding how they can play a role in safeguarding their child.
- Whilst there is good assessment of the diversity factors for the child, it is not always evident how this is accounted for in the delivery of interventions. Upon speaking with cases officers it is clear this is considered and work is underway to look at how we better evidence this within our case records.
- Planning for the exit is not always evident. Supervisors and managers will ensure that initial case supervisions explore the plan for exit and this is reviewed throughout the intervention to plan for key transitions from the service.
- The YJSS participates in the Thames Valley scrutiny panels for OOC. Following on from the latest scrutiny panel work is currently being completed with Milton Keynes Police to ensure that our outcomes are proportionate to the rest of Thames Valley.
- The Resettlement and Transitions policy has taken account of current research and evidence of good practice.
- Over the coming year MKYJS will continue to work with the Local Authorities Professional Development Leads to complete audit rounds across the service and we will carry out internal audits based on National Standards

16 Service development and National Priority areas

Children from groups which are over-represented

- 16.1 Children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) are over-represented within Milton Keynes Youth Justice Service (MKYJS) and this fits in with the national picture in terms of SLCN and children and young people who offend. In terms of prevalence, our local data collected between April 2024 – March 2025 identified that out of 111 children and young people assessed for SLCN, 86% of young people assessed had an identified need. Locally SLCN data is monitored and what can be deduced from our data since 2020 is that year on year, there is a percentage increase in terms of the prevalence of SLCN within Milton Keynes and young people and needs being identified in terms of those that access our service via Diversion, Prevention, Out of Court Disposals and Post-Court youth justice support. It can be concluded from our local data that children and young people with SLCN, are significantly overrepresented within the Youth Justice System.
- 16.2 One of the factors we aim to explore in the coming months through analysis of data and individual case studies is whether there is any evidence of 'Adultification' (Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding) as a factor with any of the overrepresented groups of children, with needs not being recognised because challenging behaviours are viewed as 'deliberate' or 'expected' rather than seen as potential indicators of an unidentified and unmet need. Such approaches can result in enforcement and suspension action being pursued by schools, rather than explorative supportive approaches to assess unmet needs and adjust provision accordingly. Our Speech and Language data shows that of our 128 referrals, only 16% of children were black or, mixed whereas 64% of children were white. Over the coming year we will explore this data further to look at comparisons with data for those excluded from education compared to those referred for assessment. This data will be used to further support partners to consider how groups which are disproportionality accounted for within the criminal justice system are supported. This approach reflects the expectations outlined in the HMIP Thematic Report on Understanding Racial Disparity to "ensure that black and mixed heritage boys are receiving their legal entitlement to education, including alternative provision when this is deemed necessary, and that the placements are suitable to meet their needs" To achieve this we will look at further training for schools looking at the impact of Adultification, we will also look to expand our PRRE offer to more schools to ensure that young people at risk of exclusion are having their needs assessed and taken into consideration.
- 16.3 As outlined in the commentary above, the YJSB regularly reviews the data on disproportionality at each meeting, and this is kept under constant review. Using the YJB Ethnic Disparity toolkit 2023-2024 and comparing this to the census data of 2021 for general population figures for youths we are able to determine that young people who define themselves as mixed heritage are overrepresented in community orders compared to the percentage of the population, with 50% of the cases being given to those of mixed heritage, compared to the population figure of just 8%. We also see that young people of mixed heritage are overrepresented in the categories of violence and drugs. Further work is needed to look at the needs of these young people and consider

what systematic barriers are impacting them and how we tackle structural barriers / inequalities which may result in these young people being more vulnerable to being drawn into the YJS. To address this, we have undertaken further training for staff around cultural competence and adultification. Our strategic board has been sharing data for each organisation analysing levels of disproportionality in each service and following this a working group will be set up to explore how we tackle this as a collective group. We will consider further training for staff in how we engage black and mixed heritage groups and ensure our interventions and responses to non-compliance are proportionate and consider the experiences of young people. Our recruitment has led to an increase in the workforce that is more reflective of the diversity of the young people we work with; however, we need to continue to look at how our staffing and volunteers continue to be reflective of our young people in terms of diversity of age and gender. We have changed our Court reports to ensure that the impact of a young person's diversity and lived experience is at the forefront of the report and we will look at continued joint training for magistrates and judges to ensure they are fully informed and challenged in this area.

- 16.4 We have recognised in the last two quarters an increase in girls coming into the Youth Justice System, whilst it does not appear that the majority of these girls go on to enter formal YJS, we aim to review both data and case studies to look at commonalities within this cohort to identify particular risk factors for girls and evaluate how best to address these. We are also going to upskill staff working with girls in youth justice by delivering training on ways to best engage and deliver evidence-based interventions. We are also working with our family centres to ensure girls have access to appropriate community support and considering the development of group sessions which can be aimed at supporting girls and women.
- 16.5 Building on the work undertaken to capture and reflect the voice of children in shaping the services provided by both the Youth Justice Service and its partners, we will explore whether further changes are needed to ensure that processes for gaining feedback from over represented groups, such as black and mixed heritage boys, and girls about the services they receive are effective and inform our collective ability to assess, review and improve the quality and suitability of those services. What we have continued to see through our feedback from young people is positive experiences of young people feeling supported and able to feel they are able to speak to their case officer due to the relationships which are developed with 71% of children rating their experience as excellent and 22% as good.
- 16.6 The Youth Justice Service Management and Seniors will ensure thorough management oversight, induction programmes, training and supervision and support that staff fully understand what is expected of them in exploring and adjusting their practice to reflect the individual needs and diversity of children, and to enable them to work effectively with all children with particular consideration of additional barriers faced by overrepresented groups of children. Staff are made fully aware of how to escalate concerns both within the Youth Justice Service and with partner organisations seeking to address identified barriers that are preventing access to required services.

16.7 To tackle over-representation, Milton Keynes Youth Justice and Support Service has considered and implemented the following:

- Staff within Youth Justice Service attend Cultural Diversity Training. Training around specific disproportionate groups will continue and issues such as adultification and SLCN will be regularly discussed and reviewed within team meetings.
- Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) – continued Speech and Language Provision offer to all young people regardless of intervention including PRRE, ESP and both community and Court Orders.
- Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) – the Youth Justice representation at JDMP provides a multi-agency approach to consider diversity and learning needs prior to decision being made about action, including input from CAMHS and Liaison and Diversion. The implementation of the Youth Diversion Programme will help to ensure young people have access to deferred outcomes, giving those young people who may not make admissions due to their experience of professionals an opportunity to access out of court disposals, this tackling the over representation of certain groups within statutory orders.
- Within Milton Keynes we have an effective data sharing process which enables a young person's vulnerabilities and diverse needs to be shared with Police, who in turn share with CPS to fully inform charging decisions.
- Diversity needs are incorporated into a young person's child friendly plan following ASSETPLUS and Prevention and Diversion assessments being completed so that intervention is informed and delivered around diversity needs.
- When young people are open to other services / provisions such as Children's Social Care; SEND; Pupil Referral Unit the Youth Justice and Support Service ensure co-ordinated partnership working to achieve best outcomes.
- In all Pre-Sentence Reports, Breach, and other Court reports particularly for sentencing the Youth Justice Service include within the report when a young person is part of an overrepresented group so that the Court acknowledge and take this into account during sentencing. Copies of SLCN assessments are also supplied to ensure that the impact of a child's SLCN can also be considered by the Court to inform sentencing, National Referral Mechanisms are also highlighted where appropriate.
- Young people complete 'Where to Now' reflective feedback at the end of all Youth Justice Service interventions with an impartial staff member.
- We have access to interpreting facilities for all aspects of work across the YJS and this is regularly used to ensure young people and their families / carers and victims are able to fully engage and participate with the services offered.

17 Policing

17.1 Thames Valley Police (TVP) are active partners with YJS and MKYJS foster positive relationships with the local police force. MKYJS has a seconded police officer in post. Our Police Officer is active in the delivery of Out of Court Disposals to young people and is a member of the contextual risk panel where all young people assessed as high safety concerns to others are discussed. Our police officer completes intelligence checks, shares relevant intelligence, acts as a conduit between YJS and TVP, completes 1-2-1 work with young people specifically around ensuring young people are aware of the laws regarding

weapons and building relationships between police and communities. TVP Harm Reduction Unit work closely with the team engaging priority young people to reduce both concerns for future offending and concerns for safety to others as well as supporting young people through multi agency planning to ensure the safety of young people is paramount. MK YJS are active participants in the Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG) ensuring that we are aware and responsive to TVP priority areas within Milton Keynes. There is a shared Teams communication channel between TVP Harm Reduction Unit, Contextual Safeguarding Team and YJS, this method of open communication has ensured that all parties work closely together and are responsive and reactive on a daily basis with quick real time intelligence and information sharing taking place.

18 Prevention and Diversion

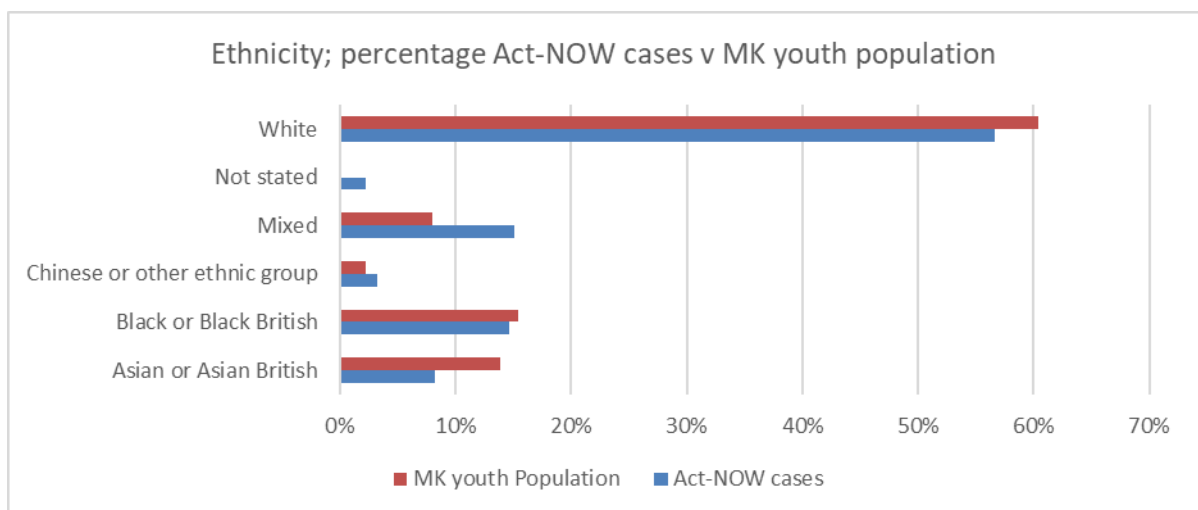
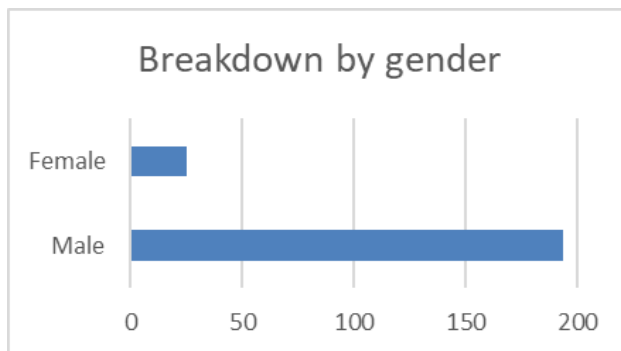
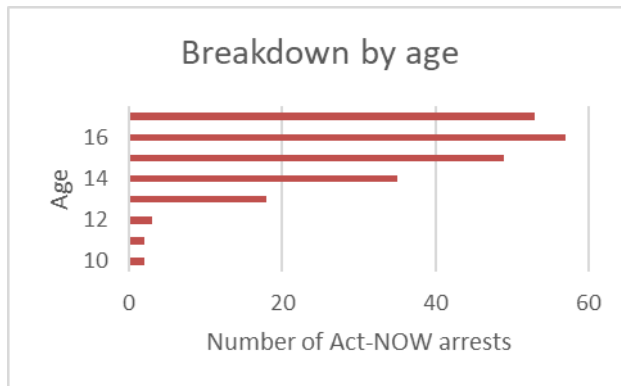
- 18.1 Milton Keynes Youth Justice Service have a well-established Youth Diversion and Prevention Service that is known locally as the Early Support Project (ESP). ESP offers support to children and young people who require early prevention, targeted prevention and diversion from the formal youth justice system. Within the Prevention service offer, we have a Speech and Language Therapy project that works with primary and secondary schools, known locally as PRRE (Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions). The project enables primary and secondary schools and further education settings to refer children and young people to the project where it has been identified that they are at the greatest risk of school exclusions and / or a move to an alternative provision. The Prevention element of ESP works with children and young people who are displaying behaviours associated with offending behaviour and / or child exploitation in order to safeguard and reduce vulnerabilities that could be associated with them being at risk of entering the formal youth justice system.
- 18.2 There are several referral pathways for agencies to refer children and young people to the Prevention element of the service (including PRRE). These are:
- Missing and Exploitation Panel (MEP)
 - Contextual Safeguarding Board (CSB)
 - Contextual Safeguarding Group chaired by Thames Valley Police
 - Primary and Secondary schools and Further Education settings
 - Alternative Education Panel (a multi-agency panel where children and young people at risk of being moved to alternative education are discussed)
 - PREVENT Channel Panel (a multi-agency panel where children at risk of radicalisation and / or extremism are discussed)
 - Joint Decision Making Panel (JDMP)
- 18.3 Within the Diversion aspect of the service, we have a local service level agreement with Thames Valley Police whereby we received all YOT1 notifications for young people who have received Community Resolutions in the Milton Keynes area. We then complete an initial screening assessment for the ESP and if the young person is considered suitable and eligible for the project, we make a service offer and complete an assessment and

plan to address young people's risks and needs and build on identified positive factors and strengths.

- 18.4 As part of our Out-of-Court-Disposal (OOC) service area, we have a Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) that meets weekly to discuss young people referred to the panel by the Youth Justice Unit for an OOC to be assessed. The JDMP has representatives present from the Youth Justice Service, CS Team, Youth Justice Unit at Thames Valley Police, Liaison and Diversion colleagues and CAMHS. We have trained members of staff to complete the OOC Initial Screening Assessment (ISA) for young people being discussed at the panel, with a full Assessment being completed for serious violent or sexual offending, including those offences involving weapons and / or knives. Young people will now also be considered for deferred outcomes in Thames Valley this is referred to as a Youth Diversion Programme. This outcome offers young people the opportunity to engage in voluntary intervention in place of a formal OOC. The programme is monitored by JDMP members and reviewed should a young person not engage they will then be offered the appropriate OOC.
- 18.5 In terms of processes, the ESP offers children and young people a 12 – 24 week period of intervention in order to address structural barriers that may have an impact on the individual being at risk of offending or further offending, as well as delivering interventions to address problematic behaviour. ESP is a strengths-based and future-focused service in that we support young people and their families to build on their strengths and move towards building a safe, healthy, and pro-social future. We offer an 'opt out' service. We contact all young people who are considered appropriate for the service. We use a consistent screening, triage, and case management approach within the Early Support Project whereby we; screen, triage, assess, plan, review and signpost all young people.
- 18.6 Keeping others safe, keeping the young person safe and supporting young people to build on the factors that will support them to avoid crime is key within our work, to ultimately enable young people to have successful and positive futures. We use our understanding of trauma and adverse childhood experiences to explore behaviour and how it impacts on the young person, their desistance, risk to others and their own safety and wellbeing. Understanding attachment behaviour helps us explore how young people meet their needs (which may include offending to meet these needs). We also identify and explore the links between school absence, serious youth violence, exploitation, and the persistence of offending into later life. We have a strong emphasis on Speech and Language Therapy within the Prevention and Diversion Service, and more specifically, how unrecognised Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) can have a significant impact on a young person's education and future life opportunities if not recognised early. We understand that to safeguard children and young people, a contextual safeguarding approach with adolescents is often needed and we work alongside the Contextual Safeguarding Team (CS Team) and Children's Social Care in protecting and promoting the safety of children and young people in Milton Keynes.

- 18.7 The service is evaluated on an annual basis and has been independently evaluated by an external researcher. We provide quarterly reports to the Police and Crime Commissioner, one of our funding partners to identify our received referrals, working data surrounding the age, gender and ethnicity of the young people accessing the service, and providing case studies to demonstrate how the service promotes better outcomes for children and young people.
- 18.8 Diversion data (Community Resolution, Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions): Between 1/4/2024 and 31/3/2025 shows 64 cases were referred to YJS and of these 40 completed a programme of work. 9 young people are still open and 9 declined the offer of support, 6 young people did not complete due to changes in circumstances and being referred elsewhere.
- 18.9 Prevention data (young people at risk of becoming involved in crime): During the same period 59 referrals were accepted under the PRRE project, 37 successfully completed, 15 remain open and 7 referrals were closed due to young people not engaging or that the service was no longer appropriate. Regarding ACT-Now between 01/04/2024 and 31/03/2025, 115 referrals were received; 11 children successfully completed, 3 partially completed intervention, 15 remain open undertaking intervention. 21 children were already open to the service on an alternative intervention, 48 children declined and 17 the service was not appropriate for either due to living out of area or other support in place.
- Offending by these two groups is monitored for 2 years following their engagement and just 2.48%
- 18.9 Under the ACT: Now project Milton Keynes Youth Justice Service attend Milton Keynes Police station within 90 minutes of notification from Police to inform us that a young person has been arrested for a knife or weapons related crime, offences involving violence or Robbery. This allows us opportunities to engage young people before any informal and formal outcome is given and offer interventions at the earliest opportunity to reduce harm to communities and to improve the lives of young people. In order to build on our Child First approach, we have expanded our ACT: Now project to include referrals from school Officers for children who are arrested for knife and weapon-related offences but are not brought into police custody.
- 18.10 Since the Act-NOW initiative started there have been 219 instances of young people referred in connection with knife offences or offences of violence – involving 168 individuals. 28 young people have been arrested more than once (1 YP 8 times). Of the 219 young people referred, 24 have offended (13 being given out of court disposals and 13 going to court) since first being seen under Act--NOW. Just 5 have been convicted of a knife related offence; 3 received Referral Orders and 2 received Youth Rehabilitation Orders.

18.11 The graphs below represent breakdowns of young people who have been referred by age, ethnicity and gender.



19 Education, Training and Employment

- 19.1 The Youth Justice Service recognises that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to Education, Training and Employment (ETE) have evolved and we have processes in place to ensure that we are able to monitor how many children are not receiving their education entitlement, how many children are excluded from school, how many children are educated on reduced school timetables, how many children / parents elect for home education and the number of children on SEN Support or who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place. The percentage of young people on part-time timetables or not in full-time ETE has been improving over the last year.
- 19.2 We are currently seeking to recruit a full-time Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Co-ordinator who will be responsible for ensuring that children of school-age receive appropriate education, and our link Young People's Personal Advisor is responsible for offering support to young people over the age of 16 who are not in education, training, or employment (NEET).
- 19.3 The Education, Training and Employment Co-ordinator will be actively involved where children and young people are identified as being on a reduced school timetable, home educated, school refusing or having a complex relationship with school. We have introduced a process whereby the ETE Co-ordinator will have regular 1-2-1 meetings with YOT Officers to ensure that there is a ETE plan for every child working with the Youth Justice Service, and that complex circumstances have intervention from the Co-ordinator to support the YOT Officer in addressing these difficulties successfully.
- 19.4 If a setting participates with our PRRE Speech and Language Therapy project, they are afforded free Speech and Language Training to develop the knowledge and skills of school staff and to upskill staff within the Speech and Language Therapy arena to feel confident in employing strategies within the classroom to specifically address identified SLCN. In 25/26 we will be exploring how we can ensure this training is delivered to more provisions with limited resources, one consideration is delivery to all SENCO's rather than to individual schools, who will in turn be able to share the learning within their own establishments.
- 19.5 We have strengthened our links with the Virtual School to expand the opportunities for young people receiving Youth Justice intervention to be better supported by the local authority. The Virtual School now offer Youth Justice members of staff consultation sessions to discuss individual cases with a view to increasing the support afforded to them.
- 19.6 Simon Sims, Head of Access to Education, Employment, and Training, is a core member of the Youth Justice Strategic Board.

20 Restorative Approaches and Victims

- 20.1 Through strong case work and multi-agency work, 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.
- 20.2 We have strengthened the YJS's work in Restorative Justice, through collaborative work with the Police 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 was further developed to ensure that the needs of victims are paramount, and the effective approach developed for post court disposals was fully replicated within all elements of the Diversion work of the Youth Justice Service and key partners in the YJS.
- 20.3 The Victim Liaison Officer contacts victims of children working with YJS 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. YJS staff are trained to YJB/Restorative Justice Council standards for the facilitation of restorative conversations. Current data shows that of the victims who we were given details by the police, 66% engaged with the YJS.
- 20.4 We have focused on expanding the opportunities available for Reparation / Community Enrichment to enable young people not only to repair the harm they have caused but also to provide opportunities for community engagement, and development of key skills.
- 20.5 In reviewing our offer to victims, we have expanded links with community organisations such as Safe and we are also able to offer youth victims access to all services offered by YJS including Speech and language assessments and CAMHS support.

21 Serious violence and exploitation

- 21.1 In response to increasing concerns regarding serious youth violence and exploitation highlighted earlier in this Youth Justice Plan, Milton Keynes Youth Justice Service have taken the following steps:
- As highlighted above the multi-agency / multi-disciplinary Contextual Safeguarding Team (CS Team), was launched in February 2023 to focus on extra familial harm in relation to the criminal exploitation of children, and the overlap with serious youth violence. The specialist team and improved partnership working, information sharing and forward planning has helped to embed partnership and individual service approaches to address child exploitation, knife crime, serious youth violence, county lines, gangs, trafficking and modern-day slavery as the CS Team have established very positive information sharing and multi-agency working with the wider partnership with particular focus on joint working with Thames Valley Police who have specialist police officers based within the Contextual Safeguarding Team. This enables a proactive approach to managing contextual risks of children and young people open to both the CS Team and YJS and results in more robust

coordinated partnership response to safeguarding concerns and targeting adult perpetrators who are exploiting children or engaging them in acts of serious youth violence.

- The multi-agency Contextual Risk Panel has been established and considers all high-risk cases across both the YJS and CS team. This ensures all plans have multi-agency oversight and planning to ensure risks are managed robustly.
- A joint National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Policy has been created to ensure consistency across all key services within Children and Families (Youth Justice and Support Service; Children's Social Care etc.) and to assist with capturing accurate data and recording of NRM outcomes across the wider partnership.
- Given the significant increase in the young people in Milton Keynes being the victims of exploitation, specialist training has been developed for delivery across Milton Keynes Children and Families Services to upskill practitioners understanding of Exploitation including the frequent potential for overlap with other key elements including Serious Youth Violence / County Lines / Gangs / Knife Crime and Missing episodes.
- The Contextual Safeguarding team provide an Exploitation Bulletin sharing key information, updates, trends, and emerging themes around exploitation issues to support Contextual Safeguarding approaches within Milton Keynes to safeguard young people. The Exploitation Bulletin is circulated every 4-6 weeks to Children and Families Services (including the YJS).
- A Deputy Manager has been accepted as a SCA Multi Agency Assurance Panel (MAAP) member, which will significantly support our NRM referrals and enhance our ability to challenge NRM Decisions where these appear incongruous based upon the evidence available.
- All young people working with the YJS on statutory interventions or referred to ESP must have an up-to-date Exploitation Screening Tool completed and referred to the Contextual Safeguarding Team for consideration, ensuring a more holistic multi-agency assessment, scrutiny and advice is available to address the needs and risks of that young person.
- As highlighted earlier we are funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to provide a joint response to knife or bladed article carrying / possession, weapons and other violent offences along with Thames Valley Police. The ACT-Now (Achieving Change Together – Now) project is being funded Until November 25 whereby the YJS provide a pro-active and timely response (within 90 minutes) to young people in Police custody. This enables YJS staff to reach out and offer timely intervention and support to young people, therefore capitalising on reachable and teachable moments within a child and young person's life. The success of this approach has resulted in the initiative being rolled out across Thames Valley.
- All staff have up to date Prevent training and are competent in completing referrals to Prevent. The Head of Service sits on Channel Panel and is an active member of the panel to review cases to ensure plans are robust and multiagency held.
- Milton Keynes City Council are undertaking a strategic needs assessment for Serious Violence and MKYJS are a member of the Serious Violence Operational group.

22 Detention in police custody

22.1 Appropriate Adult services are provided by a team of volunteers who operate a '24/7' service and they attended custody on 674 instances in the last year (363 (54%) were for adults). The service is coordinated by our former Business Support & Information Manager who is now our volunteer coordinator. He also participates in the 'Thames Valley Children in Custody' meetings where all overnight detentions and remands are reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate. During the year progress has been made in ensuring custody sergeants correctly apply the provisions of PACE and only request secure accommodation in relevant cases. The availability of such accommodation on the very rare occasion it is required remains a challenge. The meetings also monitor the actions of Children's Service to meet requests for both secure and non-secure accommodation. The issue of suitable accommodation for overnight remands is a national issue and will continue to be explored at YJSB to seek appropriate solutions.

23 Remands and use of custody and resettlement

23.1 Milton Keynes Youth Justice Strategic Board (YJSB) are responsible for ensuring that the approach to custody, resettlement and transitions is evidenced-based as well as ensuring that suitable and timely accommodation provision is available for all children leaving custody along with young people having equitable access to services. The YJSB are able to identify, challenge and address any structural barriers that exist with regard to the resettlement of young people into the community (e.g., poor access to education, training, and employment for NEET young people over 16, and a lack of suitable accommodation provision for young people in care/ care leavers).

23.2 Milton Keynes YJS 'Custody, Resettlement and Transitions Policy' provides the detailed framework for this area of work, outlining the service expectations in relation to children and young people serving custodial sentences, remanded to youth detention accommodation and for those leaving custody and resettling back into their communities, including clear guidance and expectations around:

- Evidence-based research underpinning the practice model.
- Resettlement
- Structural barriers to resettlement
- Transitions
- Role of Children's Social Care
- Remand to Youth Detention Accommodation
- Custodial sentences
- SEND Code of Practice: Legal Duty (Chapter 10)
- Transitions
- Extended Sentences
- Use of Youth Justice Assessment Framework (YJAF)
- Additional Contact with Young People in Custody
- Policy Evaluation

- 23.3 We recognise that the Resettlement of females requires a different approach to when addressing the needs of males (Beyond Youth Custody, 2014). An interpersonal approach to Resettlement with high levels of support is required for females. Developing a pro-social identity, forming positive supportive networks, and addressing relationships are key in terms of supporting an effective Resettlement (Beyond Youth Custody, 2014).
- 23.4 The approach adopted by Milton Keynes YJS wholly supports the perspective that young people serving custodial sentences must receive an effective, end-to-end service provision based on a thorough assessment of need and risk, to reintegrate them into the community. In order to achieve this, partnership working, alongside the participation and engagement of young people and their families, is essential for Resettlement (Beyond Youth Custody, 2014).
- 23.5 Milton Keynes YJS has an approach that reflects the findings of research that young people who offend (but especially young people serving custodial sentences) are likely to have considerable Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), along with additional needs as a result of being in the care of the local authority, being a care leaver, having complex family backgrounds, problematic substance misuse, significant health needs, trauma and several adverse childhood experiences. This list of anticipated needs is not exhaustive; however, it outlines how resettlement must be approached on an individual basis as it is different for every young person and how an accurate assessment of needs and risks is essential to ensuring that barriers are identified, addressed, and overcome.
- 23.6 It is a service expectation, and reflected in National Standards 2019, that allocated Social Workers are actively involved in all aspects of remand and sentence planning. Responsible YOT Officers ensure that Social Workers are invited to all planning meetings held within the secure estate and liaise regularly outside of these meetings to ensure effective and timely information sharing and joint planning.
- 23.7 We also recognise that structural barriers, such as a lack of suitable and timely accommodation for young people in care and care leavers need to be addressed at the earliest opportunity and at a national level within remand/ sentence planning. One of the most important Resettlement Pathways is 'Accommodation' as feeling safe and stable lends itself well to young people being able to effectively engage in other positive activities including education, training, and employment. We are realistic in that finding suitable and appropriate accommodation for young people who offend can be challenging. To ensure that this is addressed in a timely way in line with the YJS and CSC Partnership Working Agreement (Jan 2020, reviewed Jan 2025), where a young person is identified during the custodial period as being likely to require accommodation on release the YJS will complete a referral to MASH at least 3 months prior to the release date.
- 23.8 To ensure that young people are sufficiently prepared to make the transition from custody to the community, CSC (where appropriate) ensure that accommodation for children is confirmed no later than one week prior to the Final Planning Meeting to enable the young person to have an opportunity to plan, prepare, share their views, and discuss any concerns at the Final Planning Meeting. YJS encourage identification of a

placement at the earliest point within the custodial phase of a sentence, however, also recognising that this can be a significant challenge to achieve so far in advance.

23.9 We have developed evaluation tools to capture the views of young people, parents / carers, and key professionals in relation to their experiences in order to ensure these inform the development of the service and policy reviews.

23.10 YJS have a Resettlement Champion to support practitioners with custody, remand, and resettlement. The Champion is responsible for monitoring and liaising with responsible YOT Officers so that evaluation forms are completed in a timely manner, and that practitioners can obtain specific support around Resettlement throughout the entirety of the sentence.

23.11 Milton Keynes is a pilot area for the ROTL (Release on Temporary License) pilot led by Youth Custody Services. The purpose is to ensure that young people in custody have early opportunities to be able to access experiences within the community which will help support their rehabilitation and transition back into the community. This Pilot is in its infancy having come into effect from 1st May 2025 and we will continue to work with Oakhill Secure Establishment to explore how we support this project.

23.12 Working in conjunction with Oakhill STC we also have the opportunity to prepare young people at risk of custody by way of a joint meeting with staff from Oakhill. Those young people identified at risk of custody are able to have some time before their court hearing to learn about what to expect within a custodial facility and this gives the young people and families an opportunity to have any questions answered that they may have to try and reduce anxieties and support those at risk of custody to have a more established and supportive transition.

24 Work with families

24.1 MKYJS has a YOT Officer who specialises in family support and intervention. Families are offered support with relationships and resolving conflict using a restorative approach as well as practical support for parents and carers such as support with financial difficulties, access to health services and housing and support with periods of transitions, including supporting parents of young people who are sentenced to custody. The family support worker is able to deliver the accredited programme 'Who's In Charge', supporting parents to instill appropriate boundaries and respond appropriately to areas of conflict with their young person. This work was led by YJS on a group work programme; this has now transferred to the Healthy relationships Programme within the Local Authority; however, 1-2-1 programs will continue to be delivered by our family support worker where appropriate.

24.2 Over the coming year we would like to expand our involvement of parents in the development of the service, we are currently engaging with parents in order to produce a leaflet for Court which will help inform other parents of what to expect, we want to develop this level of engagement further by developing a 'Where to Now' session for parents which will signpost parents at the end of the child's intervention to community

based resources whilst also gaining independent feedback using a group of volunteers to gain insight into their experience of the service.

- 24.3 For a summary of the areas of development identified above, see Appendix 5, Service Development Plan.

25 Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board – name	Dr Mac Heath Director of Children’s Services Milton Keynes City Council
Signature	
Date	30 June 2025

26 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Board Membership

Local Authority (Milton Keynes Council)

- Director of Children’s Services
- Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care
- Head of Partnerships and Resilience
- Head of Service – Access to Education, Employment & Training

Central Bedfordshire Council Shared Services

- Head of Public Health Programmes

Probation

- Head of Probation Delivery Unit – Milton Keynes & Buckinghamshire

Police

- Deputy Local Police Area Commander

CAMHS

- Service Manager

NHS CCG (Central and North-West London)

- Associate Director, Children’s and Maternity Commissioning

Buckinghamshire Magistrates Court

- Chair of Youth Magistrates Panel

Youth Justice Service

- Head of Children’s Quality Assurance, Youth Justice and Performance
- Youth Justice Team Operational Manager
- Volunteers’ representative

In addition to the core board members, we also have the following advisors / invitees;

- Youth Justice Board
- Police and Crime Commissioner representative
- Police – Strategic Lead for Youth Justice

Court

- Senior Legal Advisor

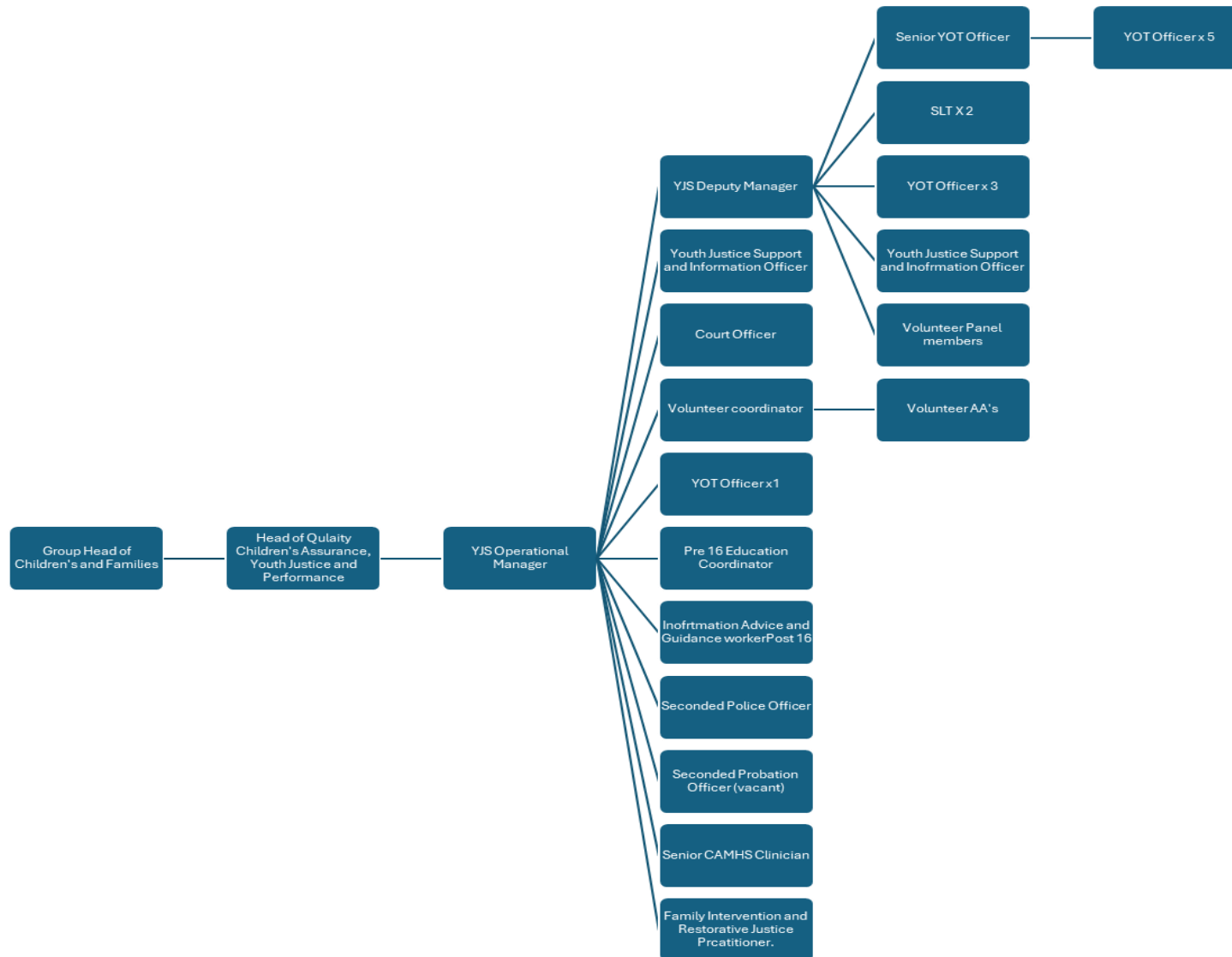
YJS

- Deputy Youth Justice Team Manager

Appendix 2 – Attendance at Board

Member's role	Meeting 25/04/24	Meeting 25/07/24	Meeting 24/10/24	Meeting 23/01/25
Director of Children's Services	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Assistant Director – Children's Social Care		Represented		
Head of Partnerships and Delivery	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Head of Service – Access to Education, Employment & Training	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Head of Public Health Programmes	Attended	Attended	Attended	
Head of Probation Delivery Unit	Attended	Attended	Attended	Represented
Deputy Police Area Commander		Attended	Attended	
CAMHS Service Manager	Represented	Attended	Represented	
Associate Director – Children's and Maternity Commissioning	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Chair of Youth Magistrates panel	Attended	Represented	Represented	
Head of Children's Quality Assurance, Youth Justice and Performance	Attended	Represented	Represented	Represented
Youth Justice Team Operational Manager	Attended	Represented	Attended	Attended
Volunteers' representative	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended

Appendix 3



Appendix 4 – Diversity and characteristics of staffing group

Ethnicity Group	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Referral Order volunteers		Other volunteers		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian or Asian British						2												2
Black or Black British	1					2											1	2
Mixed																		
Chinese or Other																		0
White or White British				1	3	20	1	3				1	2	6	2	8	8	39
TOTAL	1			1	3	24	1	3				1	2	6	2	8	9	43

2 members of staff have reported a recognised disability.

Appendix 5 – Development Plan

<u>Area of Delivery / Identified Area of Development</u>	<u>Development Activity</u>
Disproportionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Youth Justice Strategic Board to complete analysis of group data and explore group strategies for addressing areas of identified disproportionality. • Ensure that all staff, including new recruits, undertake training regarding cultural competence and understanding the impact of adultification within YJS. • Work with health partners to explore expanding SLCN resource. • Continue to offer all young people SLCN assessments and expand the service offered to schools to engage more schools within the project. • Work with family centres to explore groups to support girls within the community • Volunteers – continue to reach out to diverse groups to increase the diversity of our volunteers.
PRRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase our reach to new schools and schools not currently engaged in the project • Seek to offer a SLT service to those young people who require additional specialist intervention alongside assessments to increase positive outcomes and opportunities for these young people.

Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue use of YP participation in recruitment processes • Ensure feedback from current evaluations are used to inform service delivery and improvement. • Ensure that young people from Black and mixed heritage groups are actively involved in all participation activity. • Explore the use of volunteers to meet with parents / carers and victims to gain independent feedback on their experience of the service • Increase coproduction and engagement with Youth services within the Local Authority to ensure children and young people within the YJS are granted the same opportunities to participate in activities such as Youth Council and other consultation groups.
Prevention and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and evaluate the effectiveness of the Youth Diversion Programme (YDP) in reducing Firs Time Entrants and evaluate the impact of addressing disproportionality of black and mixed boys in formal outcomes.
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explore with Health Partners, access to physical health provision to support the physical health needs of our cohort.
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete staff training focused on upskilling staff around Trauma Informed Practice, use of the Prevention and Diversion Tool, Working with Girls in the CJ system, and addressing Serious Youth Violence.

Common youth justice terms,

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Antisocial behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child looked-after, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment

EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home

NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.

YJS	Youth justice service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a Child First approach
YOI	Young offender institution