

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Improving People's Lives



Bath and North East Somerset Youth Offending Service Youth Justice Plan 2021 – 2022



Working in partnership to prevent youth offending

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1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

Youth Offending Services (YOSs) and the partners they work with have a statutory responsibility to prevent offending by children aged 10-17 years. This Plan has been written in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 S.40 and national guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to set out how services to prevent youth offending will be provided and funded in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) in 2021-22. It will be submitted to the YJB and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.

Children caught up in the justice system, whether directly or indirectly harmed by others' offending behaviour and/or as a consequence of their own behaviour, are amongst the most vulnerable children in this area. Some of them are already known to wider children's services because of the difficulties they face. Throughout their contact with the YOS, those who have offended are viewed primarily as children rather than as 'offenders' and our work to help them make positive changes takes full account of their individual stories including any adverse childhood experiences, discrimination and/or exploitation by others. The YOS has refreshed its own values (appendix 4) to reflect this approach which is consistent with the national YJB vision for a child first youth justice system:

A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

The local ambition in the Children and Young People's Plan for all children including those in the justice system, and a parallel ambition for all parents/carers that underpins the support offered to parents/carers of those in the justice system, is that:

We will work together to help children enjoy their childhood and be well prepared for adult life including achieving these outcomes:

- *Children and young people are safe.*
- *Children and young people are healthy.*
- *Children and young people have fair life chances.*
- *Children and young people are engaged citizens within their own community.*

(We will support) parents to take responsibility for understanding and meeting their children's needs, enjoying their childhood with them and preparing them for adult life.

The work described in this Plan also makes a significant contribution to the Local Authority's focus on prevention.

The past year, under the Covid-19 pandemic, has been challenging for everyone. Many children in the justice system have had limited access to technology and have experienced difficulties maintaining their social and educational relationships as well as their contact with the YOS – although an offer of face to face contact has remained in place for all those with greatest need. There are likely to have been missed opportunities with others to offer them early help support and prevent them having formal contact with the youth justice system altogether. Although reported crime reduced, the local serious violence problem profile¹ demonstrated that violent crime returned to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2020 and whilst comparatively low in this area, is on a continuing trajectory to increase.

This Plan draws on feedback from children, their parents/carers and those harmed by their offending and our learning in delivering youth justice services through a pandemic lockdown. It has been developed and agreed by partners in the YOS and its Management Board and reflects the local commitment to prevent youth offending and support better outcomes for children. Priorities for the year ahead, discussed below in section 4, include continuing to work in partnership to tackle exploitation and serious violence, addressing trauma, re-visiting the needs of girls and how we best help them, supporting parents/carers, and working to address discrimination in all its forms, including racial disproportionality.

2. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

2.1 Overarching management arrangements

The YOS is situated within the Local Authority, with the Chief Executive holding lead responsibility for delivery of youth justice services and management resting within Children's Services as part of the wider People and Communities Department; the YOS Head of Service reports to the Director of Children and Families and is a member of the Children's Service Management Group.

An annual report is made to the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel and the Youth Justice Plan is presented to Council for authorisation.

2.2 Governance arrangements

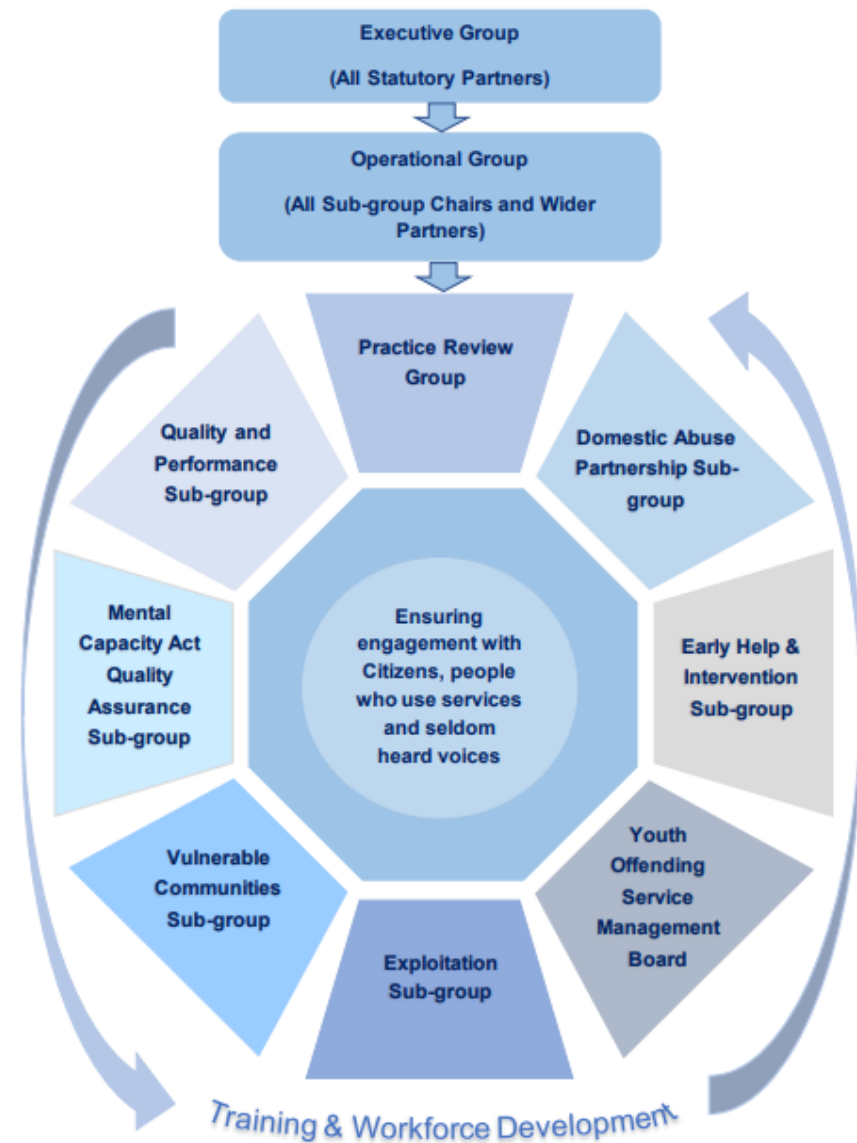
Multi-agency, strategic oversight of youth justice service delivery is provided at several levels. Its dedicated Management Board (see 2.3) operates as a sub-group of the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP).

¹ Available from the B&NES Violence Reduction Unit

The BCSSP embraces the functions of the previous Local Children’s Safeguarding Board, Adult Safeguarding Board and Community Safety Partnership, recognising their shared responsibilities and interfaces. It operates across the age range, being well placed to address the challenges of transition, and encourages a ‘think family, think community’ approach. The chair of the YOS Management Board provides the BCSSP Operational Group with quarterly updates of key achievements, outcomes, challenges and links the work of the YOS with other initiatives and developments. Specific links include:

- Any serious incidents affecting children known to the YOS are referred to the Quality and Performance Sub Group.
- The YOS contributes to and benefits from the work of the Training and Development Sub Group.
- The YOS Head of Service sits on the Early Help and Intervention Sub Group, the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Exploitation Sub Group and helps to integrate their work with the work of the YOS and its Management Board.
- She also chairs the Serious Violence Steering Group (the local Violence Reduction Unit) which formally reports to the Exploitation Sub Group and directly to the BCSSP Operational Group and makes regular briefings to the other groups she attends.

The YOS Management Board also reports annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board, contributing to the outcome ‘children and young people are safe from crime.’



2.3 The YOS Management Board and its Sub Groups

The YOS Management Board includes all required statutory members from the Local Authority (Social Care and Education), Health (through their new integrated care arrangements), Probation (through its newly unified Probation Service) and Police. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services also attends, together with representatives from the Court, the local Further Education College, the local Health provider and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. It is currently chaired by the Director of Children and Education. Attendance is monitored and is generally very good from all agencies, sometimes including named substitutes, with quarterly business meetings and annual development events continuing online throughout the pandemic. New members are offered induction into the YOS and their responsibilities as members of the Board.

The Board receives annual activity and outcome reports on key areas of service delivery including Speech and Language Therapy, Nursing, Education, the Compass prevention service and Referral Order Panels. It also receives annual reports from its three sub groups. These are the multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Board and Custody Review Panel, both chaired by the Head of Service and each working to the relevant performance indicator. The Out of Court Disposal Panel, chaired by the YOS Operational Manager, is now formally linked to the Management Board in a similar fashion. Board members participate periodically in file audits and reports of these are also presented to the wider Board. Members of the YOS attend to present case studies to evidence effective practice – and sometimes to illustrate challenges in the work undertaken and seek support in raising issues at a strategic level. The Board maintains Challenge and Risk Registers and receives an annual Assurance Report.

2.4 Partnership arrangements

In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, professionals from Police, Health, Social Care, Education and the National Probation Service make up the multi-agency YOS and work in an integrated way alongside a dedicated Reparation Worker who facilitates opportunities for children to make amends for their offending and two Assessment and Information Officers. One of these supports the volunteer Referral Order Panel Members and the other co-ordinates return home interviews with children who have returned from a missing episode; they both support use of Early Help Assessments across the Authority, including within the Compass. An organisational chart in the appendices summarises the posts, a number of which are part-time. The smallest post is a Probation Service Officer who supports work in the Courts and seeks feedback from children and parents/carers who have completed their work with the YOS. Case manager staff, including qualified Probation Officers and Social Workers, have key statutory functions, including the assessment and supervision of young people aged 10-17 who are subject to voluntary and conditional Out-of-Court Disposals and community and custodial Court Orders, and supporting parents/carers to strengthen their parenting skills. The Police Constable undertakes a range of tasks including facilitating information sharing but also giving those harmed a voice and an opportunity to become involved in restorative work with children if they wish to do so. This work is supplemented locally by a prevention service, Compass, which works with children aged 8-17 years who are assessed as being at high risk of offending, and with their families.

The YOS works closely with a range of partners. Those most often providing services to children at risk of offending include:

- DHI Project 28 who receive a small annual grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of their Council commission , provide substance misuse services for children subject to Youth Alcohol and Drugs Diversion interventions and programmes for those subject to voluntary and statutory supervision .
- Youth Connect South West, commissioned by the Council provides targeted support and access to universal youth services, together with programmes to support access to training and employment opportunities.
- Social Care's Adolescent and Care Experienced Team which works with children who have been exploited , some of whom are also known to the YOS. Managers in the two services endeavour to co-ordinate their work in the best interests of the children concerned, and usually identify a 'lead' worker who the child best engages with .
- Increasingly, with the Violence Reduction Unit, including a newly appointed Co-ordinator for the Council, a Sergeant and two dedicated Police and Community Support Officers.

3 Resources and Services

The YOS's greatest resource is its staff and all statutory partners play their part in appointing YOS professionals and include the YOS in their recruitment processes. Statutory partners contribute into a pooled budget that pays central running costs and the salary of the Information and Business Manager, responsible for the YOSs case management system, ChildView, and all required reporting and administration. Staff from a range of backgrounds including Police, Health, Social Care, Education , and the Probation Service work in an integrated way alongside other specialists and have key statutory functions. The YJB grant is used in accordance with its terms and conditions and employs staff within the YOS to support statutory colleagues in delivery of the following services:

Prevention - the Youth Offending Service is actively involved in the delivery of the Early Help and Intervention Strategy. Through its Integrated Working staff, it supports the preparation of Early Help Assessments across the workforce and the offer of independent return home interviews to children who have returned from an episode of being missing. This supports identification of those who would benefit from early help, including in prevention of child sexual exploitation or offending. Compass works on a voluntary basis with children aged 8-17 who are assessed as being at high risk of offending, and with their parents/carers, to reduce the risk of individuals offending and entering the youth justice system. Compass is currently reviewing its offer to include some shorter interventions alongside longer-term support for children and families. This work all contributes to the first-time entrants performance indicator.

Diversion - the Youth Alcohol and Drugs (YAAD) diversion scheme is successful in helping to reduce the number of children entering the formal youth justice system. It operates in partnership with Police and Project 28, the local young people's substance misuse service. Children who may have previously been issued with an immediate Youth Caution by the Police are now offered an opportunity to attend a drugs awareness raising workshop with Project 28 and can be dealt with by an informal community resolution. Some then choose to continue working with Project 28. The YOS is also working with YOSs across Avon and Somerset and the Violence Reduction Units to introduce an equivalent diversionary disposal for children under 16 found for the first time in possession of a knife or other weapon in their school or community. This also contributes to the first-time entrants performance indicator.

Out of Court Disposals – for less serious first time offences and where the victim has agreed to this, an immediate Community Resolution can be issued, enabling Police to support restorative activity. Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, young people who have admitted a minor offence can be dealt with outside of the Courts through a Youth Caution or a Youth Conditional Caution – a Community Resolution is available at this stage as well. The YOS facilitates the process by assessing children, sharing decision making at fortnightly 'Out of Court Disposals Panels' and delivering short-term, generally 16-week, interventions to children and parents/carers to reduce the risk of re-offending. This process and its governance have been the subject of a recent review to assure the YO Management Board of governance arrangements and quality of assessment and interventions. Use of Community Resolutions support the first time entrants performance measure and work undertaken under Cautions contributes to the reducing re-offending performance indicator.

Bail and Court - the YOS provides information and advice and formal reports to the fortnightly Youth Court and occasional attendance at Bristol Crown Court and other Courts when children from Bath and North East Somerset are being sentenced. The Service also supports young people to understand the sentences passed and makes assessments of those who have been remanded or sentenced to custody. Whilst decisions are being made by Police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Courts about charging, conviction and sentencing, the Youth Offending Service can provide voluntary or statutory support and/or undertake formal assessments. This may include Bail Support and Supervision for those who need specific support to avoid offending and ensure they attend Court on the next occasion. Courts can order that children who do not have a satisfactory home address are Looked After by the Local Authority. They are entitled to the same level of support as other children in Care.

Supervision of children in the community – most children who are sentenced in the Courts are supervised by the YOS in the community and most remain living with their parents/carers or foster carers although occasionally they may be living in a residential setting. The Service works with them to assess their needs and vulnerability and their likelihood of re-offending and where relevant, of causing serious harm to others. They then work with them, their parents/carers, and other agencies to agree plans to address these concerns. The level of contact with the Service is determined by the assessed level of risk and the

interventions delivered include specific offence-focussed work, raising victim awareness, encouraging positive activities, and supporting engagement in education training or employment.

The Service also supports children subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance requirements made by the Court as an alternative to custody or as part of resettlement arrangements after a custodial sentence. These require children to engage with a 25 hour per week programme of education, training and employment, supervision, and activities and an electronically monitored curfew. The Service also supervises children subject to Reparation and Unpaid Work requirements. A significant offer to children and the Courts is now the Enhanced Case Management programme which takes a trauma-recovery approach to supporting children involved in more serious and/or prolific offending.

Work with children in custody – very few are remanded or sentenced to custody, usually because of the seriousness of their offending, but sometimes because of repeated failure to co-operate with the requirements of Court Orders. The YOS provides risk assessments to the Youth Justice Board to ensure children are safely placed in the most appropriate establishment and plans support and supervision of children when they return to the community. The most common youth custodial sentence is the Detention and Training Order, lasting for up to two years. Longer sentences apply for more serious offences. B&NES YOS is part of a sub-regional Resettlement Consortium which shares best practice in supporting children whilst they are in custody and when they return to the community. This includes maintaining positive relationships with voluntary sector organisations who support children through the key transition back to the community.

Work with parents/carers and families - this is usually undertaken on a voluntary basis but can sometimes be within a Parenting Order. The interventions include individual parenting skills sessions, family mediation and joint work with the parents/carers and the child. Staff have been trained to deliver the Family Links parenting programme and further training in its programme for parents/carers of teenagers, Talking Teens, is planned for this autumn.

Restorative Justice and Work with Victims - through its Police Constable, the Service endeavours to contact all known victims of children in contact with the YOS to seek their views to reflect in formal assessments and reports and offer an opportunity to be involved in a restorative work. This can be agreement to receive a letter of explanation of apology, facilitating 'shuttle mediation,' where questions and related matters can be answered, or, where the person harmed and the child are willing to do this, supporting a face to face meeting.

Volunteer Panel Members take on a key statutory function in chairing Referral Order meetings with young children and, where they are willing, those harmed by their offence, to agree how they will make amends and what work they need to undertake to reduce their risk of re-offending.

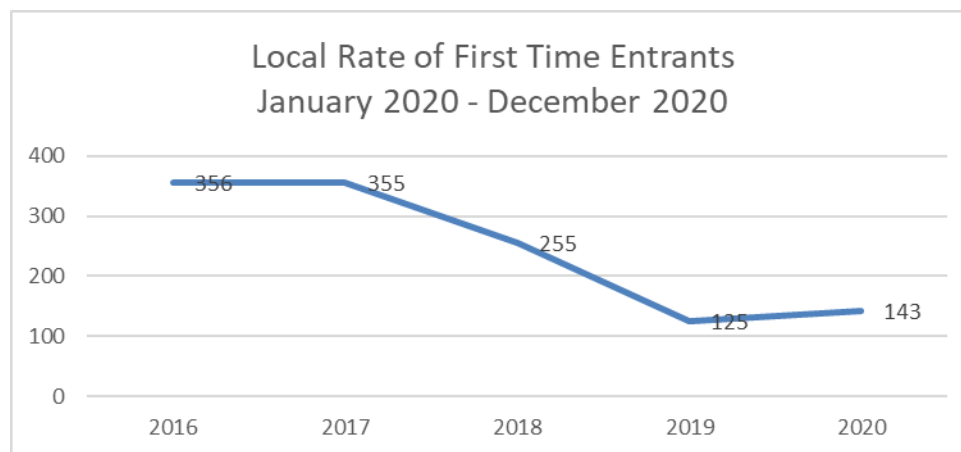
4 Performance and Priorities

National Indicators

There are three national indicators for youth justice. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, local data has continued to be provided to the Youth Justice Board as required but no national comparison data has been published for re-offending and first-time entrants. Therefore, the data provided here is drawn from the YOS database, ChildView, rather than provided by the Police National Computer as in recent years.

a. First Time Entrants

This indicator is the number of children aged 10-17 who received their first substantive outcome following an offence (Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction) shown as a rate per 100,000 children in the general population. In recent years, the number and rate have reduced significantly, reflecting the positive impact of youth crime diversion and prevention and wider early help services which can address children's needs and behaviour before they become problematic. The concern is that during the pandemic, opportunities to offer preventative support may have been missed and more children may enter the formal justice system in the future as a result. That said, the numbers are very low and the increase may not be significant. However, despite the pandemic, there was a slight rise in the number and rate of first-time entrants in 2020 and no data is available to compare with other areas to see whether this is part of a wider pattern

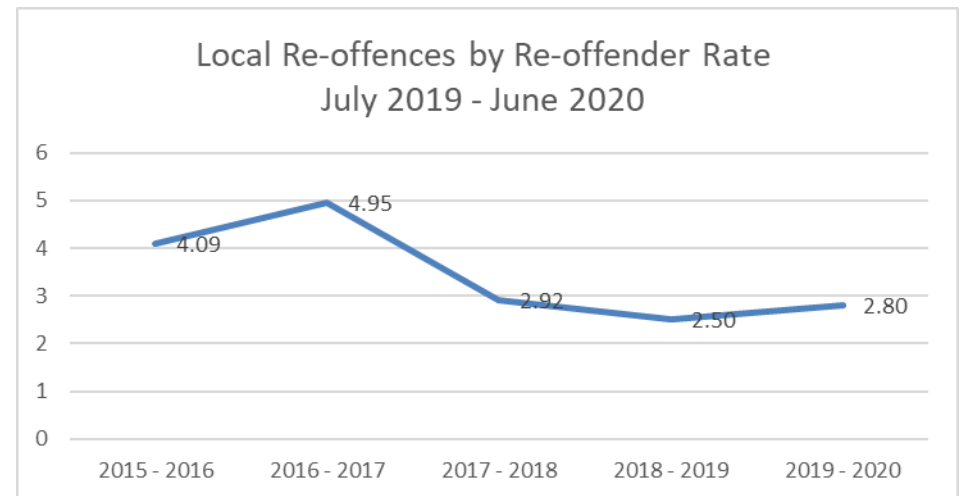
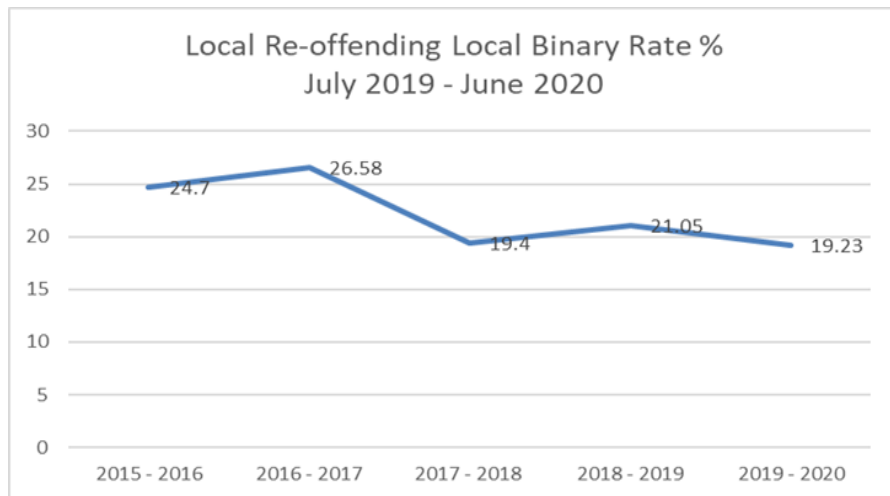


This data is shared with the Youth Crime Prevention Board, together with a commentary on the characteristics of the children who have entered the justice system, to inform planning and targeting. It has been identified that younger children are getting involved in violence, often in the context of groups of children, and it appears that more girls may be becoming involved. Ethnicity is proportionate within this sample, although there is wider disproportionality and participants are reflecting on how they ensure services are always accessible and meet children's individual needs.

b. Re-offending

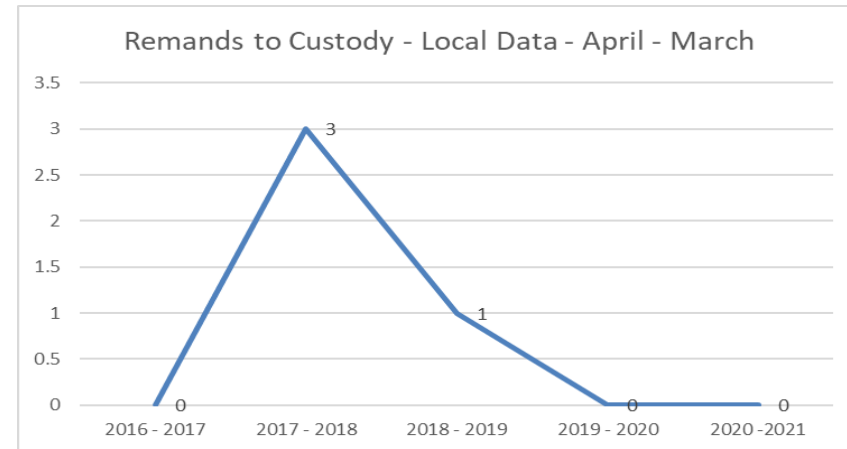
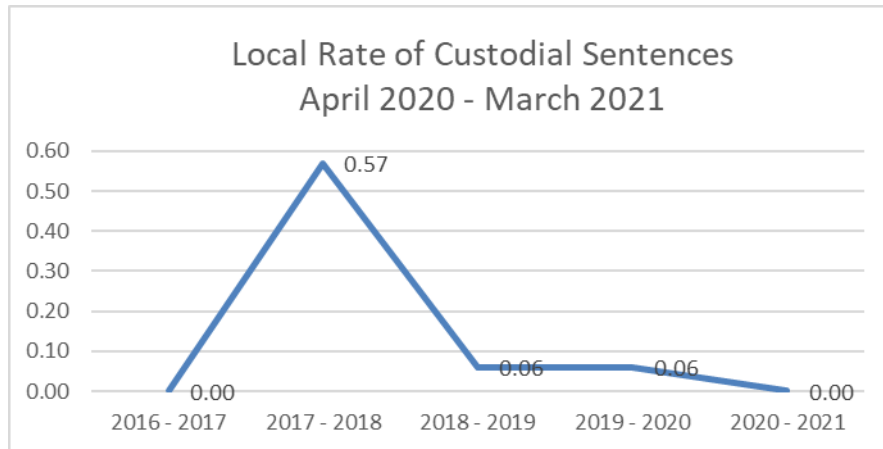
This indicator is the rate of re-offending after 12 months of a cohort of children who received a substantive outcome (Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction). This is shown as a binary rate (the overall percentage of children who re-offended) and as the average rate of new offences committed by each child who re-offended. The latest local data shows a slight overall reduction in re-offending and an increase in the rate of re-offending amongst those who did re-offend. Again, the numbers are now low and small changes may not be significant.

A high proportion of this cohort have experienced adverse childhood experiences and suffer a level of trauma as a result. There is also increasing recognition of the experience of exploitation by adults or older children into drug dealing and other illegal activity, often related to being harmed by and harming others. It is a complex picture and they benefit from continuity of worker and programmes tailored to their individual needs including intensive supervision and inclusion in a trauma recovery initiative (the Enhanced Case Management approach). Increasingly, children are being notified to the National Referral Mechanism when there is evidence of exploitation and if they are registered, this is shared with the Crown Prosecution Service and Courts to consider when reviewing and hearing cases and in sentencing. This is an important aspect of recognising their status as a child who has been groomed into offending, at the same time as understanding the impact of their behaviour on others.



c. Custody

This indicator is the number of custodial sentences passed by the Courts, presented as a rate per 1000 children aged 10-17 in the general population. The local ambition remains to keep children out of custody wherever it is safe to the public to do so because outcomes for children in custody tend to be poorer than for those sentenced within the community. The multi-agency Custody Review Panel monitors outcomes, identifies learning and recommends actions in respect of children at risk of custody as part of its standard agenda. The YOS works closely with other children’s services to develop community proposals wherever it is considered safe to do so. There were no custodial sentences in the period April 2020 – March 2021 and the last custodial sentence passed on a child in B&NES was in July 2019. This means the local rate of custodial sentencing is amongst the lowest in England and Wales.



d. Training and employment

Particular attention is paid to education, training, and employment because poor engagement is a considerable risk factor for offending and re-offending – and re-engagement can provide stability and a route out of offending. At the time of preparing this Plan, there were 12 post-16 children known to the YOS of whom 9 were in education, training, and employment. Some were on roll at Bath College and their attendance had been impacted by the lock down; also, some programmes remained part-time. The YOS has offered a significant level of support to these children, including providing (Covid-19 secure) lifts to College. Those not in training or employment face significant barriers and will require longer-term support to access training and employment.

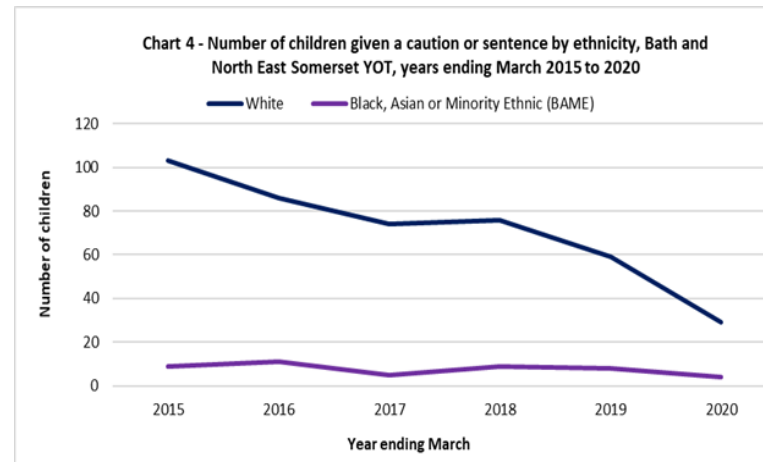
Post 16 status YOS Cases Open on 31.03.2021 - ETE and NEET



e. Ethnic Disproportionality

The latest population data available is from the 2011 census, which showed there were 15,764 children in B&NES, 1,047 (7%) of whom were from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Of the 33 cautioned or sentenced in the latest period to be analysed by the YJB, 88% were from a White background and 12% were from a BAME background, an over-representation, although numbers are low. Analysis shows White children are most likely to commit serious offences (gravity score 5-8) and to be sentenced at Court.

Since 2015, the number of White children receiving a caution or conviction has reduced by 72%. Due to the low ethnicity population, percentage change for BAME children in the same period cannot be calculated, but it does not appear to have changed so markedly.



Although the numbers are too low for data about BAME children to be statistically significant, it is presented against a wider backdrop of BAME children being over-represented in the youth justice system in England and Wales (particularly in the custodial population) and therefore, we cannot be complacent about the experiences of children living in B&NES. The YOS has participated in the Avon and Somerset Lammy Review, considering the data and experiences of BAME people across the justice system, but with particular work streams about children's experiences. This has included a review of fixed term and permanent exclusions from school, in recognition of how this can render children vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and offending, including to being groomed into county lines drug dealing and other illegal activity. This is considered primarily as a safeguarding concern but directly contributes to offending as well. The Review is due to report in July and its recommendations will be considered by the YOS Management Board as well as by the wider BCSSP to identify learning and respond to recommendations. Timescales mean it has not been possible to include specific recommendations in this Business and Improvement Plan below and so the Management Board intends to review it in a development event in the autumn.

5 Responding to the Pandemic and Recovery from COVID-19

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the year began and ended with offices open to restricted numbers of frontline staff only and most staff working from home. The key challenge was to maintain a statutory service that met the expectations of the Courts and played a part in wider community safety, whilst ensuring that children and staff were kept safe from Covid-19. Initially, the priority was to maintain contact with children at greatest risk and to understand and support them with any safeguarding and mental health needs. The Service took early steps to 'RAG'-rate its statutory and voluntary caseloads in order to also identify those with the greatest likelihood of offending and/or with welfare or safeguarding need. In practice, the most vulnerable children have continued to receive a consistent and responsive service throughout this period. This has meant practitioners have been able to assess and respond to the emerging needs of children and their families as lockdown continued and more recently, has eased. This has been a frightening time for children and their families and many engaged well with different ways of working and particularly appreciated the contact and someone outside their immediate families to talk to about what was happening.

A few families were 'shielding' and their children were reluctant to meet and so they, and those rated lower risk, together with some parents / carers, were contacted and supported by telephone. This means of communicating had mixed responses and practitioners reported that some children felt anxious and uncomfortable talking on the telephone and so it was difficult to gain an accurate understanding of how well they were coping. For most children, especially where there was already a good relationship established with their worker, weekly sessions were usually conducted through socially distanced walks in their local neighbourhood or parks. Some meetings took place on doorsteps or within young people's gardens and although this was considered adequate, it raised difficulties with privacy and so limited the scope of conversation and children's engagement. Where practitioners were able to have frank discussions with young people about the challenges they had been facing in the lockdown, they could provide support and understanding and assess their overall wellbeing. It was also an opportunity to discuss how they had been engaging in home schooling and seek to address the difficulties they encountered with this. Having face-to-face contact and an ability to have confidential conversations has been invaluable in supporting children and has, in many instances, strengthened relationships with their worker. Practical support was offered to families across the RAG-rating, sharing information and signposting on to other support and some food and medical deliveries.

For the first few weeks, children appear to have remained indoors and there were reports of pressure on families and concern about an increase in domestic abuse. As they started to venture outdoors again, there were reports of anti-social behaviour and some violent and vehicle-related offending. The YOS has worked alongside wider partnership initiatives to tackle domestic abuse and serious violence and has also tailored its contact with individual children. Several common issues have been identified with children including access to education, employment and training, social isolation, mental health issues, difficulties in adhering to lockdown restrictions and access to information technology.

Volunteers, administrative staff, managers and practitioners alike have remained committed to the task in hand and have overcome many individual challenges to ensure the YOS has remained fully functioning throughout the pandemic. There have been excellent examples of the staff team adapting to the new working environment to meet the requirements of Out of Court Disposals and Court Orders. They have supported children's access to school and post-16 provision, used technology to deliver interventions, addressed social isolation, and supported parents/carers. New reparation opportunities have been developed including letter-writing (and continued correspondence in some instances) with people living in care homes and with refugees.

Much continues to be learned about how to deliver this service during the pandemic and some innovative practice will remain into the future. The wider network of YOSs and partner agencies as well as internal colleagues within Children's Services provide ideas and learning and strengthen the Service's ability to continue to work with children even if there are further restrictions on people's movements. The Violence Reduction Unit has also been collecting examples of innovative practice and is planning a multi-agency event to share what has been learned.

6 Challenges, Risks, and Issues

The following risks have been identified for delivery of the Youth Justice Plan and the statutory purpose of preventing youth offending; many of these are ongoing risks.

| Challenges, Risks and Issues | Likelihood | Impact | Actions to reduce/manage the risk |
|---|---|---------------|--|
| 1. Longer-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown on staff, including 'long Covid,' and staff emotional and physical wellbeing | Medium across the YOS but High for some individuals | High | The YOS is actively involved in Public Health briefings and Recovery Planning within the Council. All staff have had individual risk assessments undertaken in order that needs can be identified and addressed and the Occupational Health Service is available to advise. Additional support is available to staff and some have made an early return to office-based working. Face to face supervision is offered to all staff and small meetings are encouraged where they can be Covid-19 secure. The YOS has a Health and Wellbeing Champion who keeps colleagues abreast of information and resources through team meeting briefings and email. |
| 2. Changes to use of office buildings and possible continued social distancing leading to loss of the co-located, multi-agency way of working that is a feature of YOSs | Medium | Medium | The main YOS office base is being re-designed and refurbished in 2021. The Head of Service is a member of the staff consultation group and designs and proposals have been circulated for feedback. The YOS has fed back the importance of co-located working to uphold the YOS model and provide oversight and support for staff undertaking challenging work. |

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| 3. Exploitation of children, including into offending | High | High | YOS staff have all received relevant training and understand indicators to look out for in their assessments. The Service participates in the Exploitation Operational Group, giving opportunity to raise concern about individuals and work with colleagues to address risks and seek assurance about how the partnership is working together to keep people safe. The YOS was actively involved in the first complex (contextual) strategy on a group of 5 children and their peers and a local contextual safeguarding audit is being undertaken to help take practice forward. Reflective groups and individual supervision provide opportunity for debrief and support to staff working with distressing situations. |
| More serious youth offending, including serious violence | Medium/ High | High | A small number of children, often those who are being exploited, are at risk of committing violent and drug dealing offences. Those who carry knives are at heightened risk of committing serious violent offences. The Service has reviewed the interventions it uses and is working with the wider partnership through the Serious Violence Operational and Steering Groups, to ensure that support to young people is 'joined up,' with a key focus on prevention. Continued participation in the enhanced case management pilot also presents opportunities for more structured, trauma recovery, work. |
| Increase in girls involved in serious violence | Medium | High | This was flagged by practitioners across the Local Authority as part of the Violence Reduction Unit's needs assessment. It is not yet borne out by the data on substantive outcomes but there are children under investigation for serious violence. A piece of work is underway to quantify issues, needs and responses. |
| Increase in Looked After Children offending | Medium | High | Looked after children are generally over-represented in the justice system and the YOS monitors this and utilises a local protocol to prevent their unnecessary criminalisation. There is an interest in extending the use of restorative responses and the YOS is participating in a local initiative with the Head of the Virtual School to introduce trauma-informed and restorative responses and practices in several local schools. |
| Increase in ethnic minority background disproportionality | Medium | High | Young people from BAME backgrounds are often over-represented in the population of children offending in this area but the number remains low. The Service draws on a national toolkit to improve understanding of this issue and is working with the Avon and Somerset Lammy Review to understand how best to tackle this. Staff access support from local services including Stand against Racist Incidents (SARI) and the Black Families Education Service attends the |

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| | | | Youth Crime Prevention Board. |
| Insufficient readiness for Inspection | Low | High | The Youth Offending Service management and team are actively preparing for Inspection, using the national framework, and identifying learning from published area and thematic inspection reports. It is a standing item at Management Board meetings. |
| Inability to deliver the Business and Improvement Plan | Low | High | Regular review in management meetings and Management Board oversight together the Council's Scrutiny arrangements hold everyone to account and provide support. Quarterly reporting through the BCSSP provides another opportunity to escalate issues that need a more strategic response. |
| Maintaining staff and business continuity | Medium | Medium | The relatively small Service is vulnerable to fluctuations in staffing levels when people leave or are Sick, exacerbated under the current pandemic when people sometimes need to self-isolate with no notice. The Service has reviewed its business continuity plan, risk assessments and operating models and is keeping these under careful review in light of the latest government, Public Health and Council advice. Commitment to staff well-being and provision of good quality Supervision and training support staff in this difficult time as well as maintaining its reputation and ability to attract good candidates. Delays in partner agency recruitment are reported to the Management Board. |
| Maintaining two office bases | Medium | Medium | Use of the central Bath reporting office depends on having additional staff available for cover and is linked with staffing levels as above. This is kept under careful review. |
| Securing funding for continuation of the Enhanced Case Management pilot beyond March 2022 | Medium | Medium/ High | Loss of this trauma recovery initiative would diminish the quality of work undertaken with some of the most traumatised and prolifically re-offending children. Current staff are trained in these approaches but the model depends on also having access to a Clinical Psychologist. The Head of Service is on the Steering Group for this pan-Authority work and is working with them to identify future funding streams. |

7 Feedback from Children and their Parents/Carers



What has been good about working with the YOS? What has been most helpful?

It was someone to talk to who wouldn't judge me.

I was happy that they explained the consequences of what would happen if I went down the wrong path. They were always available to me.

They seem to be able to calm my son down. She was a lovely lady. Really good to talk to.



The people I worked with were good and professional and realistic. I felt that this gave my son a chance to get back on the straight and narrow and also gave him a second chance.

I was there for every appointment and I built up a good relationship with F and A. They supported the whole family and made referrals for us. I feel that they have given me hope.



What has been good about working with the YOS? What has been most helpful? (Continued)

They were great. They listened and were friendly and understanding. Also, I didn't feel like I was being patronised.

They helped me a lot. They made me understand my mistakes and where I went wrong and pointed me in the right direction.



The contact seems to have stopped my daughter from offending. I thought it would be just for my daughter but it is really good that I was included as well. I feel like I was kept in the loop of what was happening.

They let me get a lot of stuff off my chest.

I said I didn't want to meet them and they asked me what I would like them to bring and I said a trifle so they bought me a trifle when they saw me. Also they were good at listening.



How could the YOS improve their services in the future? E.g. was there something you wanted to do that the YOS did not provide?

Nothing.

It would be good if they could teach people how to calm down.

Not really.



They did everything they could.

I think that they did everything that they could to help. I am really pleased with the support I was given.

Not really except quarterly follow ups would be helpful afterwards. I know that this would probably not be practical because of funding but maybe some kind of safety net that could be used on a voluntary basis.

It would have been good to have had more group activities for my son that could be enforced so he was made to do them.

I feel that maybe there could be better communication around appointments with maybe written appointments on a calendar.



Is there anything else you would like to add?

Police were also really good with us and I have nothing but praise and thanks for the YOS team.

Just to say that the work has had an impact on my daughter's offending and behaviour.



I liked that they just worked with my grandson. He was the one who needed the help.

I think that they have taught my son the consequences of his actions and taught him right from wrong. Also I am more aware of the warning signs now and I am grateful that he didn't have to go to court. Also he seems more confident now.

8 Service Business and Improvement Plan

| 1. Prevention and Diversion - remember the 'children first' principle and provide support outside the formal justice system wherever possible | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------|
| Links with BCSSP Commitment 3: Recognising the importance of prevention and early intervention | | | |
| Action | Key Links | Owner | Target date |
| a. Complete work on membership, process, and governance of the Out of Court Disposal Panel | National Standard 1: Out of Court Disposals Avon and Somerset Lammy Review | Head of Service | June 2021 |
| b. Introduce Outcome 22 diversion with intervention for first time, low level knife and other weapon offences | National Standard 1: Out of Court Disposals Violence Reduction Unit | Head of Service (with Heads of Service across Avon and Somerset) and Police | September 2021 |
| c. Complete pathway to show integration of youth crime preventative activity with a focus on serious violence | Youth Crime Prevention Board, Early Help and Intervention Board and Violence Reduction Unit | Head of Service | September 2021 |
| d. Review how we measure effectiveness of all local youth crime prevention activity | Youth Crime Prevention Board and Early Help and Intervention Board | Head of Service | September 2021 |
| 2. Tackle exploitation and support the Violence Reduction Unit's ambition that children lead lives free of serious violence at home and in their communities | | | |
| Links with BCSSP Commitments 2: Learning from experience to improve how we work and 3: Recognising the importance of prevention and early intervention | | | |
| Action | Key Links | Owner | Target date |
| a. Clarify practice re use of National Referral Mechanism registration | Exploitation Sub Group | Operational Manager | September 2022 |

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|------------|
| b. Support the development of multi-agency information sharing arrangements in order to identify and address individual children's vulnerability | VRU and Exploitation Operational Groups | Head of Service | March 2022 |
| c. Support readiness for YOS compliance with the anticipated new 'serious violence duty' | Violence Reduction Unit Policy and Development Scrutiny Panel | Head of Service | March 2022 |
| d. Participate in developing responses to children's contextual safeguarding needs | Exploitation Sub Group Violence Reduction Unit | Head of Service | March 2022 |

3. Support children not to re-offend

Links with BCSSP Commitment 2: Learning from experience to improve how we work

| Action | Key Links | Owner | Target date |
|--|---|----------------------------------|----------------|
| a. Clarify the interface between the YOS and the Violence Reduction Unit in the work undertaken with individual children | Violence Reduction Unit | Head of Service | September 2022 |
| b. Continue to develop use of the re-offending toolkit including the live tracker to inform work with children | YJB | Business and Performance Manager | March 2022 |
| c. Support developments in service delivery arising from learning under the pandemic e.g. addressing digital poverty | HMI Report | Operational Manager | March 2022 |
| d. Continue to participate in the Enhanced Case Management pilot | Pan Authority Steering and Operational Groups | Operational Manager | March 2022 |
| e. Strengthen the offer of parenting support | Early Help and Intervention Strategy | Operational Manager | March 2022 |

4. Work towards the elimination of disproportionate outcomes and meet individual need

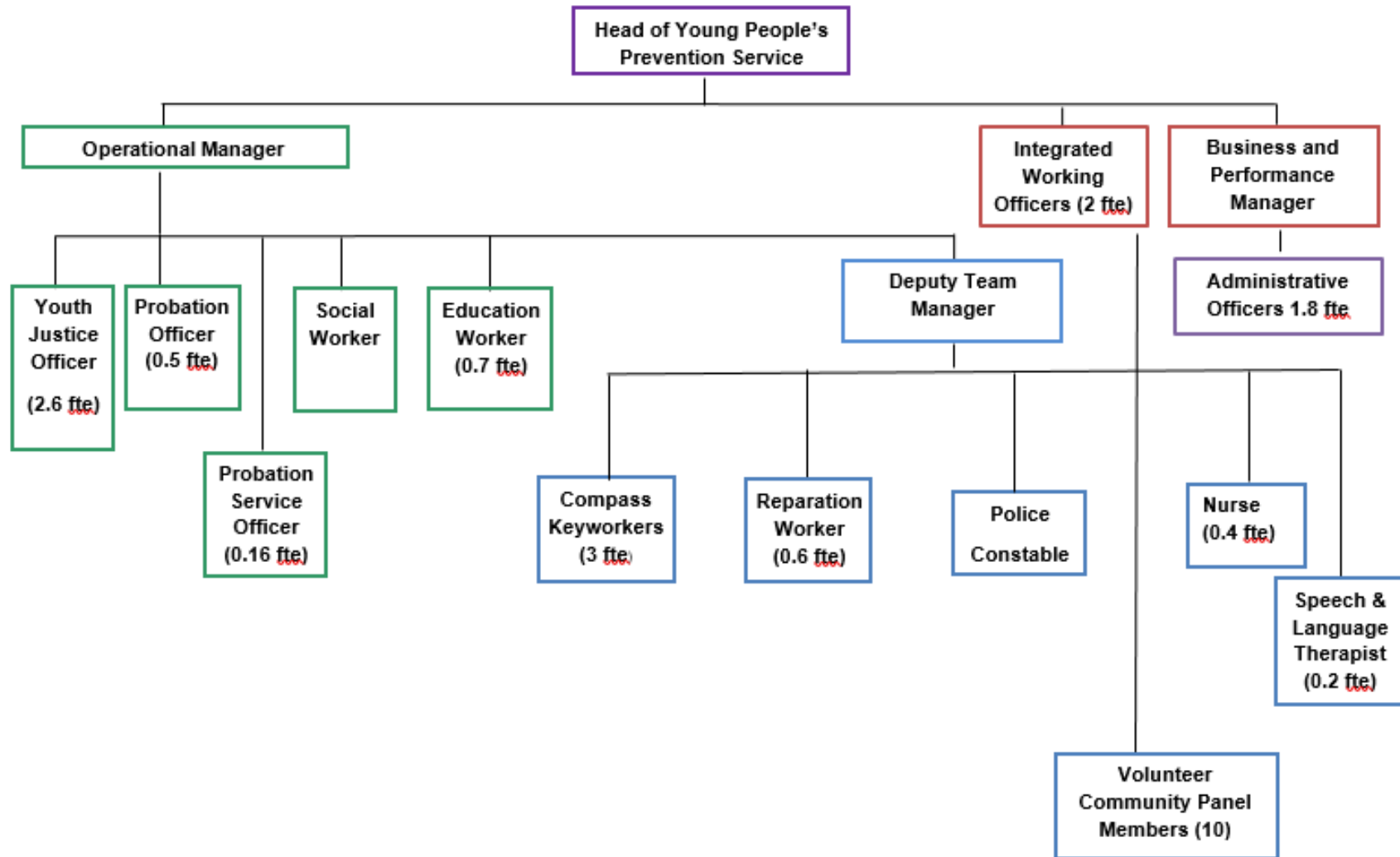
| Links with BCSSP Commitment 4: Providing executive leadership for an effective partnership | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| Action | Key Links | Owner | Target date |
| a. Improve understanding of disproportionality in the youth justice system and identify opportunities to address it | Feedback from children YJB Disproportionality Toolkit | Head of Service | December 2022 |
| b. Share learning from and respond to the recommendations of the Avon and Somerset Lammy Review due to be published in July 2021. | Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board | Chair of Management Board and Head of Service | December 2022 |
| c. Review available data and the experience of girls in the youth justice system and ensure their individual needs can be met | Violence Reduction Unit | Head of Service | December 2022 |
| 5. Support children to successfully negotiate individual and organisational changes and transitions | | | |
| Links with BCSSP Commitment 1: Develop a 'Think Family, Think Community' approach | | | |
| Action | Key Links | Owner | Target date |
| a. Review wellbeing and re-offending of children who have transferred to the National Probation Service, incorporating their feedback on the experience of transition, and identify how practice can be improved to reduce the number of young adults who are sentenced to custody shortly after their transition. | National Standards | National Probation Service Board member with Operational Manager | December 2022 |
| b. Scope other key transitions for children working with the Youth Offending Service | National Standards | Operational Manager | March 2022 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------|
| and identify with partner agencies how to strengthen support | | | |
| c. Work with regional Health and other partners to address access to support for 16-25 year olds | Violence Reduction Unit | Head of Service | March 2022 |
| 6. Equip the Youth Offending Service to meet its statutory purpose of preventing offending | | | |
| Action | Key Links | Owner | Target date |
| a. Review operation of the Management Board to ensure it reflects the revised Youth Justice Board guidance and expectations of the local Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership | Revised YJB Guidance BCSSP Commitment 4: Providing executive leadership for an effective partnership | Chair of Youth Offending Service Management Board | September 2021 |
| b. Support staff to adjust to changes as the pandemic lockdown comes to an end and ensure their access to suitable and safe working conditions and a return to as much co-located working as possible. | Recovery Plan | Head of Service | March 2022 |
| c. Continue to access training and development opportunities for staff to strengthen their use of AMBIT, incorporate systemic and trauma recovery practice into their work, increase the pool of staff trained to address harmful sexual behaviour (AIM3) and address parenting needs. Ensure training is also available for volunteer Panel Members, including through the TRM | Initiatives within CAMHS Roll out of systemic practice across Children's Services Enhanced Case Management pilot Early Help and Intervention Strategy YOS Training Plan | Head of Service | March 2022 |
| d. Incorporate systemic practices into staff Supervision | Roll out of systemic practice across Children's Services | Operational Manager | March 2022 |

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|------------|
| d. Refresh working practices and meetings arrangements in light of learning from the pandemic lockdown | YOS Recovery Plan | Operational Manager | March 2022 |
| d. Revisit recruitment practices to promote appointment of staff from a more diverse range of backgrounds | Anticipated findings of the Lammy Review | Head of Service | March 2022 |

Appendix 1: YOS Organisational Chart

At the time of preparing this Plan, the YOS was carrying a Speech and Language Therapist vacancy and one of its Social Workers was newly recruited, but there was a stable group of volunteer Referral Order Panel Members. The overall staff make-up of the YOS was 79% female; 5.9% were from ethnic minority backgrounds but this did not include any frontline practitioners.



Appendix 2 - YOS Staff by Gender and Ethnicity as of 1st April 2021

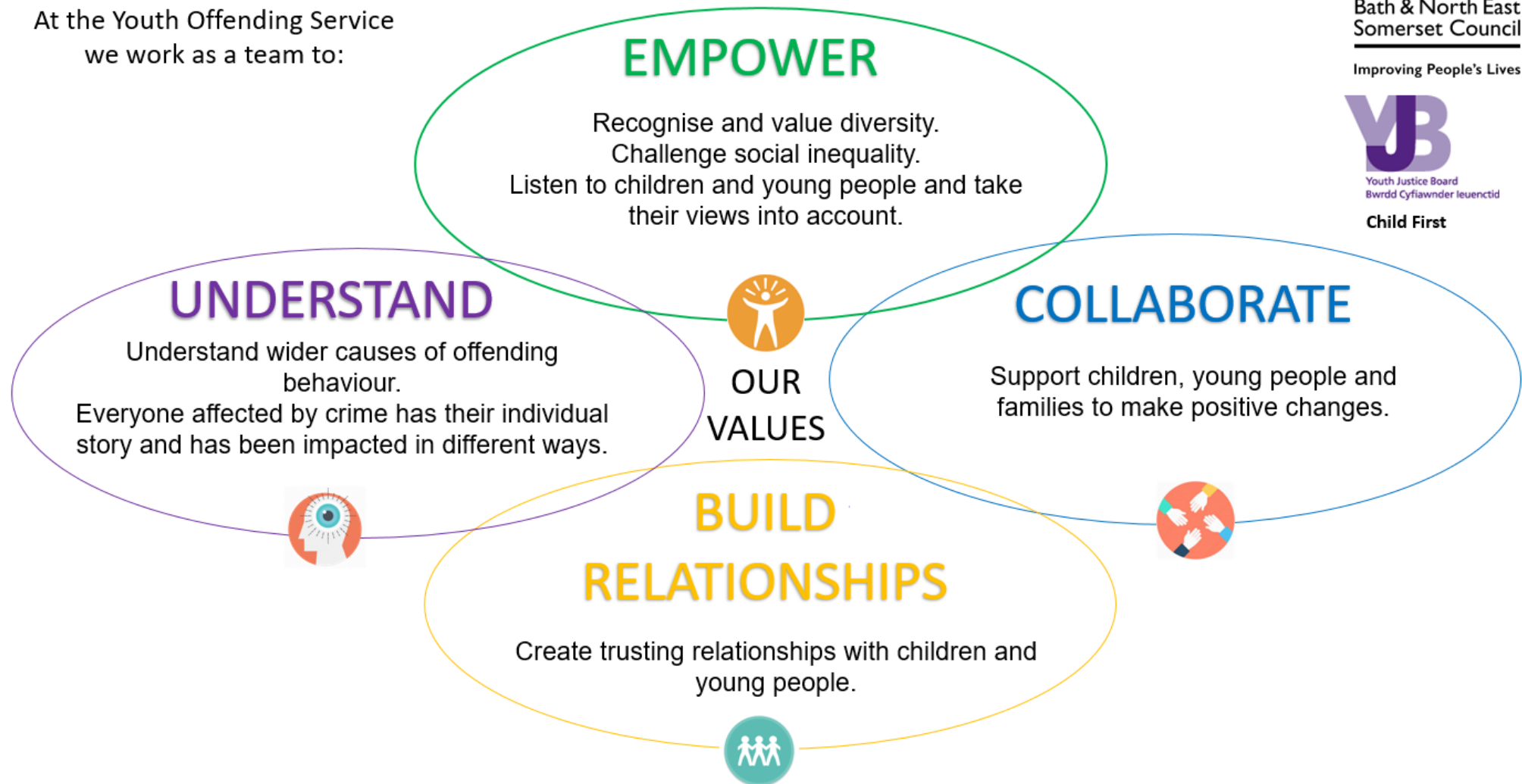
| | Strategic Manager | | Team Manager | | Practitioner | | Administrator | | Student | | Volunteers | | Total | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------|---|--------------|----|---------------|---|---------|---|------------|---|-------|----|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Asian or Asian British | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Black or Black British | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | |
| Mixed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chinese or Other | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White or White British | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 14 | | 4 | | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 26 |
| Preferred not to say | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 14 | | 4 | | 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 27 |

Appendix 3 - Budget summary

| Source | Pooled budget £ | Staffing costs £ | Other costs £ | Comments | Total £ |
|--|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---|----------------|
| Avon and Somerset Police | 5,000 | 58,345 | 0 | Full-time Police Constable plus in-kind use of Police National Computer | 63,345 |
| National Probation Service | 5,000 | 24,007 | 0 | 0.5 fte Probation Officer plus 0.16 of PSO time | 29,007 |
| Bath and North East Somerset Council | 18,685 | 387,525 | 20,231 | Uncosted office accommodation, Financial, IT and Human Resources | 426,441 |
| Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group | 14,885 | 31,109 | 0 | 0.4 fte Nurse. Speech and Language Therapy is delivered separately | 45,994 |
| Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner | N/A | 10,217 | 0 | Contributes to Compass. Another £7,902 goes towards substance misuse services | 10,217 |
| Youth Justice Board for England and Wales | N/A | 155,712 | 43,662 | Core grant goes directly to the Youth Offending Service | 199,374 |
| Youth Custody Service | N/A | 0 | 23,446 | Remand bed grant goes directly to the Youth Offending Service | 23,446 |
| Total | 43,570 | 666,915 | 87,339 | | 797,824 |

Appendix 4 - YOS Values

At the Youth Offending Service
we work as a team to:



Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| AMBIT | Adaptive Mentalisation-Based Integrative Treatment was developed by the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families. It is used locally as a framework for learning and development, to support staff working with young people who have experienced trauma. |
| CAMHS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service |
| 'Child first' approach | A principle endorsed in the National Standards for Youth Justice that clarifies that young people who offend are to be treated as children first and offenders second |
| Compass | A local youth crime prevention initiative for 8-17-year olds, managed within the Youth Offending Service and working with children and their families on a voluntary basis to address risks of offending |
| Contextualised safeguarding | Emerging practice that takes full account of the nature of risk to young people outside their family environment and seeks to keep them safe from exploitation |
| Custody Review Panel | A sub group of the Youth Offending Service Management Board that meets quarterly to address the local custody rate by undertaking multi-agency audits and promoting awareness of the use of custody for young people as a safeguarding issue. (a sub group of the Youth Offending Service Management Board) |
| Enhanced Case Management pilot | A YJB funded initiative across B&NES, North Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire and building on a previous pilot in Wales, to incorporate trauma-informed approaches into statutory youth justice work. A Clinical Psychologist will oversee the development of interventions that take full account of what has happened to young people. |
| Early Help | Support for young people and their families before difficulties become entrenched |
| Harmful Sexual Behaviour | Sexual behaviours expressed by children that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, and/or be abusive towards another child, adult, or animal |
| National Standards | Minimum standards for the youth justice system, published by the YJB |
| Out of Court Disposal Panel | Decision-making process for children whose behaviour warrants a more serious response than a Police-only community resolution but which may not be serious enough for a charge to Court. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Reparation | Making amends to someone harmed. This can be doing something of direct benefit to the victim of an offence or could be undertaking work that benefits the wider community, ideally suggested by the victim. Examples include working for Bath City Farm, the National Trust, Bath Cat and Dogs' Home and the Swallow Café in Radstock. |
| Restorative Justice | A range of approaches to resolving a situation where harm, often an offence, has been caused. It focuses on victim satisfaction, offering a range of services by which the victim can gain an understanding of the offence, have a chance to be fully heard, and agree to or even participate in any suitable reparation. |
| Serious Youth Violence | Drawing on the national Serious Violence Strategy (April 2018), this is youth violence caused through the spread of exploitation linked to drug dealing through 'county lines.' Children can be groomed into this activity and sometimes go on to groom and exploit others. Serious youth violence can include homicide, robbery, violence against the person and possession of drugs and/or weapons, particularly knives. |
| Trauma informed practice | Factors in some young people's lives that combine to reduce the likelihood of life turning out well for them (including experience of abuse, neglect, parental mental health, domestic violence, parental imprisonment etc.). Children with four or more of these factors may benefit from work to address the trauma they have experienced |
| Violence Reduction Unit | Local response to the national Serious Violence Strategy, delivered in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner and local partner agencies, with the ambition that residents can lead lives free of serious violence at home and in their community. |
| Youth Crime Prevention Board | A sub group of the Youth Offending Service Management Board that meets twice each year to oversee work to reduce the rate of first-time entrants by analysing first time entrants' data, identifying areas of concern, and sharing good practice. |
| Youth Justice Board or YJB | The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales is responsible for overseeing the youth justice system, including performance monitoring, providing advice, and disseminating good practice. It receives and endorses Youth Justice Plans and issues the Youth Justice Grant on behalf of the Ministry of Justice. |