

Bath and North East Somerset

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

2024 – 2026

Refreshed for 2025 - 2026



Working in Partnership to achieve Child First Justice

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1. Introduction, Vision, Strategy and Local Context

Introduction

Welcome to the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for Bath and North East Somerset Youth Justice Service for 2024 - 2026. The plan was initially written in April 2024 as a two-year plan. To meet the Youth Justice Board requirements regarding Youth Justice Plans, it has been updated and refreshed for 2025 – 2026.

The plan sets out the direction of travel and key priorities for the service and partnership for 2024 to 2026, as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

This Plan adheres to the Youth Justice Board's 'document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

The Plan has been developed under the guidance of the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Youth Justice Service (YJS) Partnership Board, in consultation with YJS Team Members, and considering feedback from B&NES YJS service users. The progress of the plan will be monitored by the YJS Partnership Board throughout the year ahead.

The Youth Justice Plan:

- summarises the YJS structure, governance, and partnership arrangements.
- outlines the resources available to the YJS.
- reviews achievements and developments during 2024 - 2025.
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities.
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes in the next two years.

Vision and Strategy

The Vision and Commitment for B&NES Youth Justice Partnership is:

“Working in Partnership to achieve Child First Justice”

This means that:

- We work together to create a youth justice system that sees children as children.
- We prioritise the best interests and well-being of children and victims of crime.
- We aim to understand the individual needs, vulnerabilities, abilities, rights, and potential of children and victims.
- We work together to build on children's individual strengths and capabilities to help them achieve their full potential.
- We support children to develop an identity away from offending, leading to safer communities with fewer victims.
- We collaborate with children and their parents/carers to hear and learn from their views.
- We recognise that some children are over-represented in the justice system, especially children from minority ethnic backgrounds and children with special educational needs. We work in partnership to reduce this disproportionality.
- We work to prevent children from entering the formal justice system.

B&NES YJS vision also includes a commitment to being an anti-racist service. The vision is:

B&NES Youth Justice Service Anti-Racism Vision

- To commit to being an anti-racist service.
- To uphold social justice and challenge inequality and racism in the actions of individuals, in services and in society.
- To value and celebrate diversity and promote equality of opportunity.

B&NES Council is the lead partner in the multi-agency response to children at risk of offending. Its Corporate Strategy¹ sets out an overarching purpose to **'IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES.'** The joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for BANES² has a vision for 2030 which sets out four priorities to help people have the best start in life, live well in caring, compassionate communities, and make it easier for people to live physically and emotionally healthy lives.

The four priorities are to ensure that children and young people are healthy and ready for learning and education; to improve skills, good work and employment; to strengthen compassionate and healthy communities and to create health promoting places.

The Youth Justice Board's key objectives are in line with local ambitions, and they are to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce re-offending by children in the youth justice system.
- Improve the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system.
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Local Context

B&NES YJS is a statutory partnership between B&NES Council, Avon and Somerset Police, the Probation Service and NHS Bath, Swindon, and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB).

The YJS works in partnership to prevent children entering the youth justice system, through the Compass Service. The YJS also works with children who have come to the attention of the police and are being dealt with for offending behaviour. We work with children and their parents and carers, to understand their needs and risks, and to help them make positive changes in their lives.

We contact all victims of crimes committed by the children we work with to offer them the chance to take part in restorative justice, so we can help repair the harm they have experienced.

B&NES local authority covers the City of Bath and the more rural communities in North East Somerset, including Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Chew Valley and Keynsham.

In mid-2023, the population of B&NES is estimated at **199,818**. The 10-17-year-old resident population estimate for mid-2023 is **17,578** (8.8% of the total population).³

The following information provides demographic information about children aged 10 – 17 years living in B&NES:

¹ <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/corporate-strategy-2023-2027>

² <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy>

³ Population estimates for England and Wales Mid-2023

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationestimatesforenglandandwales/mid2023>

Gender

- Males – 8,964 (51%) Females – 8,614 (49%)

Ethnicity

- White population is c.14,960 for the 10-17 age group as at the time of the 2021 Census (March 2021). This represents 90.7% of the entire 10–17-year-old population (c.16,495). Therefore, the **non-White population percentage is 9.3%**. This includes:

Asian – c.465, Black – c.90, Mixed – c.920, Other – ** ⁴

* All ethnicity figures rounded to 5

** Suppression applied to age 15 figure

Poverty

After Housing Costs, relative poverty for B&NES is **19.3%** 2022/23. In England it is 30.0%.⁵

Free School Meals

The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) has increased in B&NES and nationally. In all state funded schools in B&NES, the number of pupils eligible for FSMs has more than doubled from 2,199 (8%) in 2015/16 to 4,737 (17%) in 2023/24. Nationally the percentage was 14% in 2015/16 and 25% in 2023/24.

The FSM attainment gap is higher in B&NES compared to national at all stages of education and has been for a number of years.⁶

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Since the SEND reforms started to be implemented in 2014/15, there has been a year-on-year increase in the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The annual growth rate is higher in B&NES than regionally and nationally at (12%) between 2014 and 2024 compared to 9% and 10% respectively.

In January 2024, there were 2,230 children and young people with an EHCP maintained by B&NES Council. This is over three times (3.1) the number of Statements in 2014 (718).⁷

⁴ 2021 Census (ONS)

⁵ Local Child Poverty statistics 2024

<https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024/>

⁶ Strategic Evidence base, Educational attainment

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence/document-library/educational-attainment>

⁷ Education, health and care plans

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>

School Exclusions and Persistent Absence

Suspensions have continued to increase locally and nationally with the rate in B&NES being similar to that in England in 2022 - 2023 (9.3%).

Suspensions in the FSM eligible cohort and the SEN with EHCP cohort continue to be higher than national in B&NES (FSM B&NES 28%, FSM England 22%; SEN with EHCP B&NES 36%, SEN with EHCP England 22%). In 2022 - 2023, the highest suspension rates were seen in Mixed and White classified pupils in both B&NES and England.

Permanent exclusions increased notably in B&NES in 2022 - 2023 and are higher than the national rate. The number of permanent exclusions in 2021 - 2022 was 13 and increased to 39 in 2022 - 2023. Thirty-six of the 39 permanent exclusions were in secondary schools. Permanent exclusions also increased in the FSM eligible cohort and SEN Support cohort in B&NES as well as England.⁸

Persistent absence is notably higher since the Covid pandemic in both B&NES and England. However, the rate in B&NES (23.4%) continues to be below national levels, England (26.5%) in secondary schools in 2022 - 2023).⁹

Participation & Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The participation rate in April 2025 in B&NES for 16–17-year-olds is 94.4%, higher than the national rate (91.8%) and the South West (90.4%).

The NEET rate at the end of 2023 for 16–17-year-olds known to be 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' in B&NES is 2.7% and is lower than the national rate (3.7%) and the South West (3.9%).

The rate of 16–17-year-olds whose activity is not known in B&NES is 0.9% which is lower than the national rate (1.7%) and the South West (2.2%).

Social Care

There were 218 Children Looked After by B&NES Local Authority as at the 31st March 2024. This is a rate of 59.8 per 10,000 children aged under 18 years. There were 705 Open Child in Need plans.¹⁰

There were 141 Children on a Child protection plan as at 31st March 2024.¹¹

⁸ Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england-2022-to-2023>

⁹ Pupil absence in England

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england/2022-23>

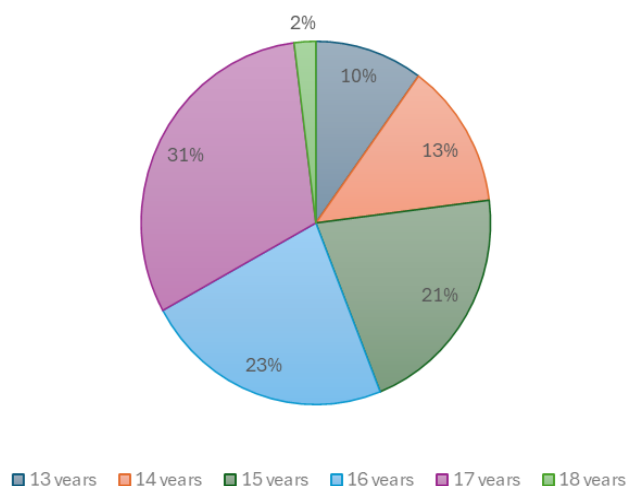
¹⁰ Internal - CYP Directorate Dashboard 31st March 2024

¹¹ Children in need statistics 2024

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-in-need/2024>

The profile of children working with the Youth Justice Service in 2024 - 2025 is as follows:

Age Profile of Children on YJS Interventions

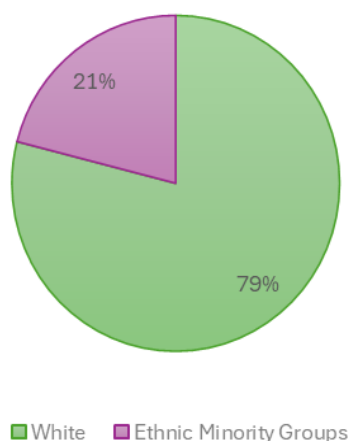


38% had Substance Misuse Needs of either Tier 2 or Tier 3

52% had Emotional and Mental Health needs - all non acute

56% had a disability such as ADHD and Autism

Ethnicity Profile of Children on YJS Interventions



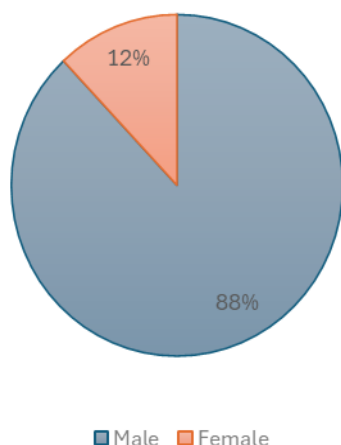
79% had Learning Needs - EHCP, SEND or Individual Development Plan

15% were Children Looked After

25% were Children in Need

6% were on Child Protection Plans

Gender Profile of Children on YJS Interventions



2. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

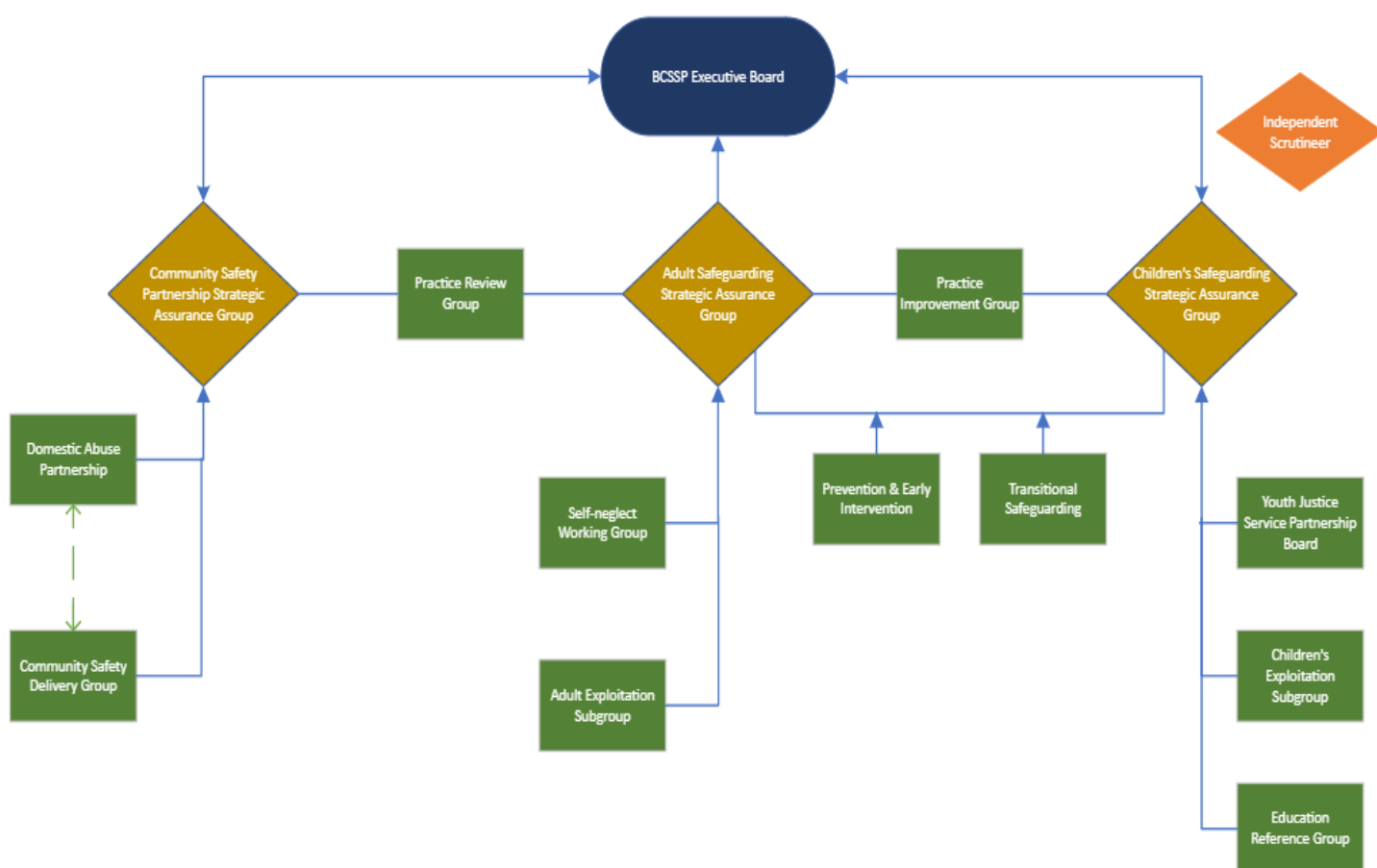
Governance

The Youth Justice Service is based within the Local Authority, with the Chief Executive holding lead responsibility and management resting within Children's Services as part of the wider Operations Directorate.

The Head of Service reports to the Director of Children and Education and is a member of the Children and Young People's Service Management Group. The Head of Service also holds responsibility for the Violence Reduction Partnership and for some aspects of the Local Authority's early help agenda and delivery, including use of Early Help Assessments.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services presents the Plan to the Cabinet and Full Council for their authorisation. The Plan is also presented to the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel. The Youth Justice Partnership Board also reports annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board, contributing to the outcome 'children and young people are safe from crime.'

Multi-agency strategic oversight of Youth Justice Services is provided at a number of levels. Its dedicated Partnership Board operates as a sub-group of the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP)¹². This partnership 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 all ages, being well placed to address the challenges of transition, and encourages a focus on families and communities. The diagram below represents the BCSSP structure:

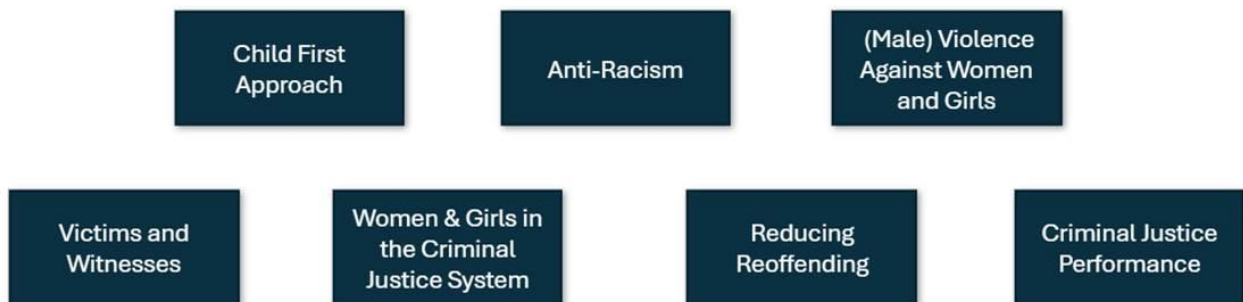


¹² B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership <https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/>

The Youth Justice Service is represented at the Local Criminal Justice Board and Reducing Re-offending Board and the priorities of these partnerships cross reference and overlap with local plans.

The proposed priorities for the Local Criminal Justice Board in 2025 – 2027 are:

Proposed Priorities:



The priority for children on the Reducing Re-offending Board is:

- To maximise alternative sentencing and use of restorative opportunities to build confidence in and educate sentencers to make a meaningful impact on behaviours to reduce reoffending. Recognising the value of Out of Court Resolutions to prevent entering the CJS in the first place, to intervene as required and offer diversions which will protect communities and enhance cohesion.

Leadership

The work of the B&NES YJS is managed strategically by a Partnership Board.

The YJS Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the Statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

Membership:

- » Chair: Director of Children' Services and Education, B&NES Council
- » Deputy Chair: Director of Education and Safeguarding, B&NES Council
- » Health: Director, Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence, Children and Young People and Combined Place Team, BSW ICB, B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB
- » Health: Regional Director, HCRG Care Group
- » Police: Chief Inspector, Avon and Somerset Police
- » Probation: Head of Bath and North Somerset PDU
- » Council: Lead Member for Children and Young People
- » Youth Bench: Chair of Avon and Somerset Youth Panel
- » College: Principal and CEO of Bath College
- » Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service: Service Manager
- » Youth Justice Board for England and Wales: South West Oversight Manager

- » Finance; Group Accountant
- » YJS: Operational Manager and Business and Performance Manager
- » Police: Force Tactical Lead for Out of Court Resolutions
- » Housing: Director of Tenancy Management and Compliance

All new members of the Board attend an induction session to introduce them into the work of the Youth Justice Service and their responsibilities as members of the Board.

The YJS Partnership Board receives regular activity and performance reports on key areas of service delivery including Ethnic Disproportionality, Victims, Out of Court Resolutions, Policing, Speech and Language Therapy, Nursing, Education, the Compass prevention service, Harmful Sexual Behaviour and the Enhanced Case Management initiative. The YJS Partnership Board maintains and reviews Challenge and Risk Registers.

The YJS Partnership Board has four Board Meetings per year and an annual development day. The development day is designed to assess the work of the Board, review progress and impact and set priorities for the year ahead.

There is one multi-agency subgroup to the Youth Justice Partnership Board, which is the Custody Review Panel. This panel is chaired by the Head of Service and reviews children held overnight in Police custody, those sentenced or remanded to custody and children at risk of being sentenced to custody.

All Partnership Board meetings begin with a practitioner's case study, illustrating an aspect of work undertaken, or from time to time, through a practitioner supporting a child working with the Service to attend and tell their story or present an issue. These presentations highlight challenges in the work undertaken and sometimes seek support in raising issues at a strategic level. As a Board, we are keen to hear more of the voice of children, parents / carers and victims and will aim to include this in the coming year. Practitioners also compile and present reports about aspects of the work they are involved in. This gives opportunity to raise awareness and allows for some scrutiny of work undertaken. In turn, Board Members are encouraged to participate in case audits and to meet with individual practitioners to observe or discuss their work, to deepen their understanding.

Partnership Arrangements

In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, we are a multi-disciplinary team which includes Social Workers, a Probation Officer, an Education Worker, a Police Officer, a Nurse, a Speech and Language Therapist, a Reparation and Participation Worker, Prevention Key Workers, Assessment and Information Officers, Administrators, and Managers. We also have a team of Volunteer Panel Members. In 2024, we recruited and trained four new Volunteer Panel Members and Mentors. There is a staffing structure located at [Appendix 2](#) of this document.

Case Manager staff including qualified Probation Officers and Registered Social Workers have key statutory functions, including the assessment and supervision of children aged 10-17 who are subject to voluntary and conditional Out-of-Court Resolutions 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 risk of offending, and with their families. The Turnaround initiative for children on the cusp of the youth justice system, has been rolled out alongside Compass, to work with them to prevent them entering the formal justice system and addressing their needs as soon as possible.

The Youth Justice Service has close working relationships with a range of partners in the voluntary and community sector.

- **Project 28**, which receives a small annual grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of their core Council commission. With this, they provide substance misuse services for children subject to Youth Alcohol and Drugs Diversion (Outcome 22) interventions and programmes for those subject to voluntary and statutory supervision.
- **The Violence Reduction Partnership**, managed by the same Head of Service as the Youth Justice Service, including a Co-ordinator and Development Officer for the Council. The Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) hosts a multi-agency information sharing meeting – the Partnership for Preventing Exploitation and Serious Violence (PREV). Individuals at risk of serious violence, networks and places of concern are all identified, the nature and level of risk is discussed, and actions are agreed to strengthen risk management and the offer of preventative support. The Youth Justice Service plays an active role in this. The VRP commissions lived experience mentoring, detached youth work, and Alternative Routes workshops in schools. The VRP also runs frequent knife awareness events for parents and carers.
- **Youth Connect South West**, provides targeted support and access to universal youth services, together with programmes to support access to education, training and employment (ETE) opportunities.
- Social Care's **Adolescent and Child Exploitation Team** works with children who have been exploited, some of whom are also known to the Youth Justice Service. 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 with whom the child engages best.
- The **Early Intervention Team**, part of the Police contribution to the Violence Reduction Partnership, including an Inspector, a Sergeant, and two Police Constables, undertake early intervention work with children on the fringes of involvement in serious violence.
- **Southside**, a community-led project for supporting those affected by domestic abuse and also commissioned by the Violence Reduction Partnership to offer lived-experience mentoring to those at risk of being involved in serious violence.

3. Update on the Previous Year

3.1 Progress on Priorities in previous Plan

The priorities agreed for 2024 - 2026 are to reduce disproportionality, strengthen participation, embed child first principles, and reduce serious violence.

In 2024 - 2025, progress has been made in the following areas:

Reduce Disproportionality:

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- The approach has been to ensure that children in the justice system with unidentified needs are recognised; that children with SEN identified are appropriately supported and that staff feel well equipped to support children with additional needs.
- An Enhanced Offer was agreed for children in the youth justice system in relation to education and SEN. This includes children involved with the YJS being given a high priority at Placement Panels along with other children in priority groups such as children who are in the care of the local authority and children on Child Protection Plans.
- Building stronger links between the YJS, the Virtual School and SEND Team, including reciprocal training.
- YJS staff received training on neurodiversity from HCRG, and the Speech and Language Therapist offers training to all new staff as part of their induction.

Children from Minority Ethnic Backgrounds

- The approach is to understand and quantify the disproportionality; to analyse instances of disproportionality within the system and apply learning; and to ensure the YJS workforce is well equipped to respond to the diverse needs of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, including understanding and responding to their experiences of racism and discrimination.
- A good practice guide has been completed by staff, in consultation with children and young people who attend the Black Families Education Supplementary School which sets out clear expectations of staff to work with children effectively.
- YJS staff have attended two workshops this year, delivered by SARI, focusing on increasing the confidence of staff to have conversations with children about their identity and about supporting staff to have constructive conversations with children who show discriminatory views.
- Audits have been undertaken to ensure that our work with children is appropriately focussed on ethnicity and diversity. The HMIP inspection report (published February 2025) comments that staff *“utilised the ‘social GRACES’ model well to get a strong grasp of the child’s equity, inclusion and diversity needs, and we saw evidence that factors such as race and neurodiversity were well considered and analysed.”*

- The Business and Performance Manager has produced a local Ethnic Disproportionality Report using 18+1 ethnic categories to analyse offences and outcomes by ethnic groups. This is scrutinised by the Partnership Board twice yearly to monitor levels of disproportionality and to address any specific concerns.

Strengthen Participation:

- The approach has been to build on existing participation arrangements and strengthen our approaches in hearing the voice of the child and parent / carer in our service development and to build community links by recruiting a new group of volunteers.
- The Service is regularly hearing the views of children and parents and carers via the QR code feedback process. Some of the feedback received can be read later in this plan. The feedback is offering assurances that being involved with the YJS is a positive experience for children and parents and carers and that the support they receive is effective in improving their lives. The HMIP Inspection Report (published February 2025) comments that *“Children and parents spoke positively about the work of the YJS, noting that staff often went above and beyond what was required.”*
- We have successfully recruited and trained a small group of volunteer Panel Members and Mentors in 2024 -2025. They are now in the process of shadowing panels to gain more experience before leading panels themselves.

Embed Child First Principles:

- The YJS has made excellent progress over the past 5 years at becoming an organisation that has adopted the Child First principles. This work has continued in 2024 -2025.
- Progress has been made by training staff and rolling out the YJS Prevention and Diversion Assessment tool to be used in Out of Court Resolutions. This new tool is written from a child first approach and prioritises the voice of the child and the co-creation of their support plans.
- The YJS Partnership Board and Custody Review Panel have undertaken work to review times when children have been held in police custody to ensure these are justified and only happen when there are no other alternatives and is absolutely necessary.
- The YJS Partnership Board and the Youth Justice Board have advocated within the wider criminal justice system to improve the timeliness of investigations and disposals for children. The Local Criminal Justice Board has agreed that Child First will be a key priority for them in their three year plan.

Reduce Serious Violence:

- Work has continued to support children at risk of serious violence and intervene around issues of knife crime; using the Street Doctors resources where appropriate.

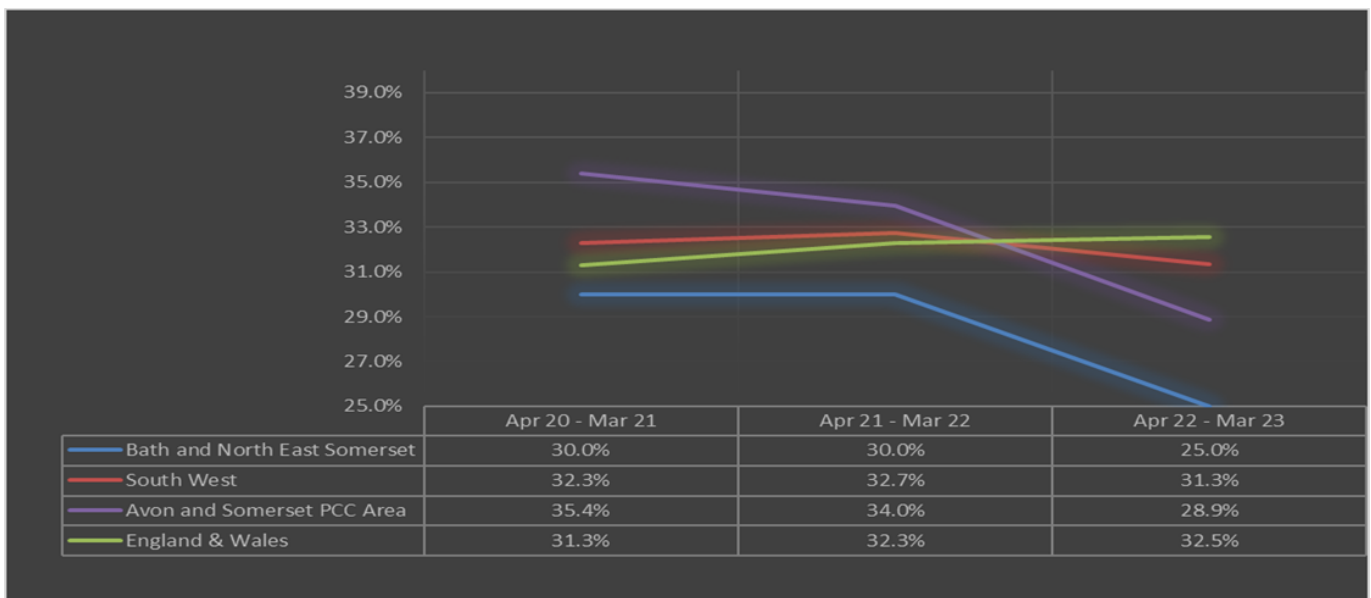
- Evidence suggests that the most effective way of working with children at risk of serious violence is to be child first, future focused and strengths based, and this is the focus of our interventions.
- To support co-ordinated management of children at the highest risk, the YJS and Children's Social Care have agreed to joint procedures when working with the same children, including a structure for risk management meetings.

3.2 Performance over the previous year

Re-Offending

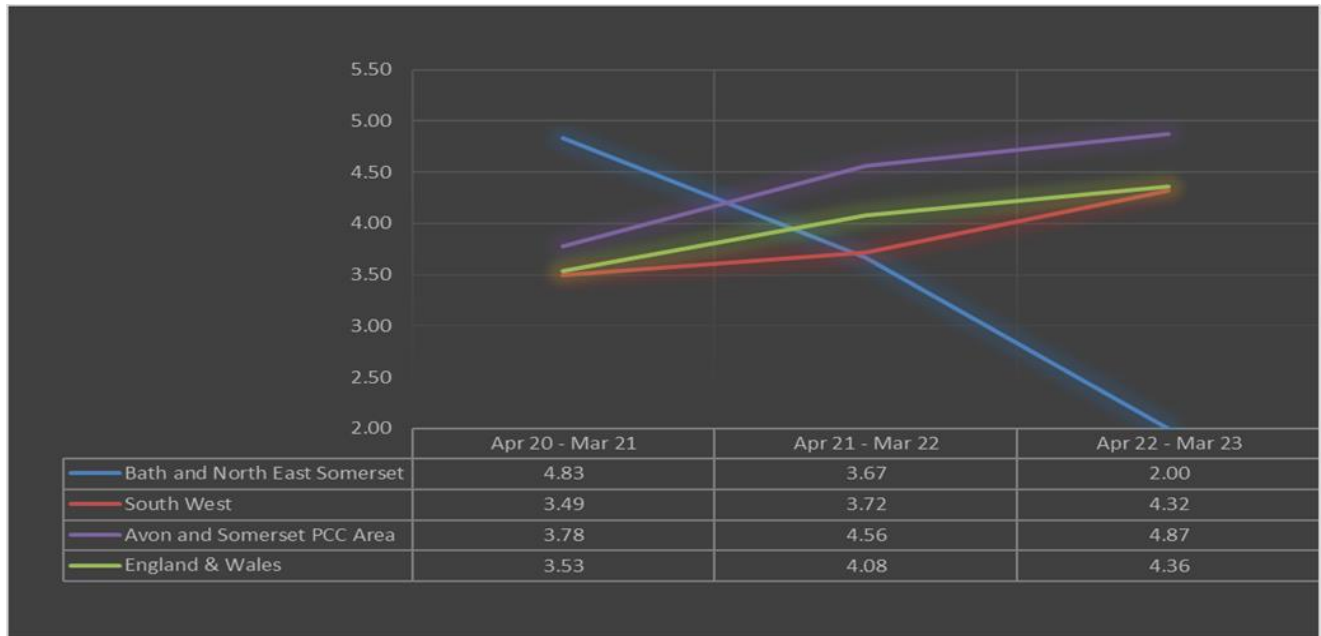
One of the YJB's key measures of effectiveness of the youth justice system is re-offending. The indicator is the rate of re-offending after 12 months by a cohort of children who received substantive outcomes (Cautions, Conditional Cautions or Convictions). It is shown as a binary rate (the overall percentage of children who re-offended) and as the average rate of new offences committed by each child who re-offended. Local cohorts include very low numbers of children. There continues to be a discrepancy between local YJS and the YJB Data due to a number of nationally recognised issues. The data below for B&NES is local data. The data for the South West, Avon and Somerset and England and Wales is YJB data.

The B&NES binary percentage of re-offending has reduced by 5% for the period April 2022 to March 2023. There were 20 children in the previous cohort, 6 re-offended, compared with 20 in the current cohort of which 5 have re-offended. The binary percentage of re-offending is showing as 25%, which is lower than all of our Comparators. The percentages for our Comparators are: South West Region (31.3%), PCC Area (28.9%) and England and Wales (32.5%).



Frequency of Reoffending

The rate of re-offending for the period April 2022 to March 2023 is 2.00. This is a reduction from 3.67 (-45.5%). This is due to there being fewer children in the cohort and fewer children re-offending. There were 6 re-offenders in the previous reporting period committing 22 further offences and 5 re-offenders in the current period committing 10 further offences. The rate is considerably lower than all of our Comparators. The rates for our Comparators are: South West Region (4.32), PCC Area (4.87) and England and Wales (4.36).



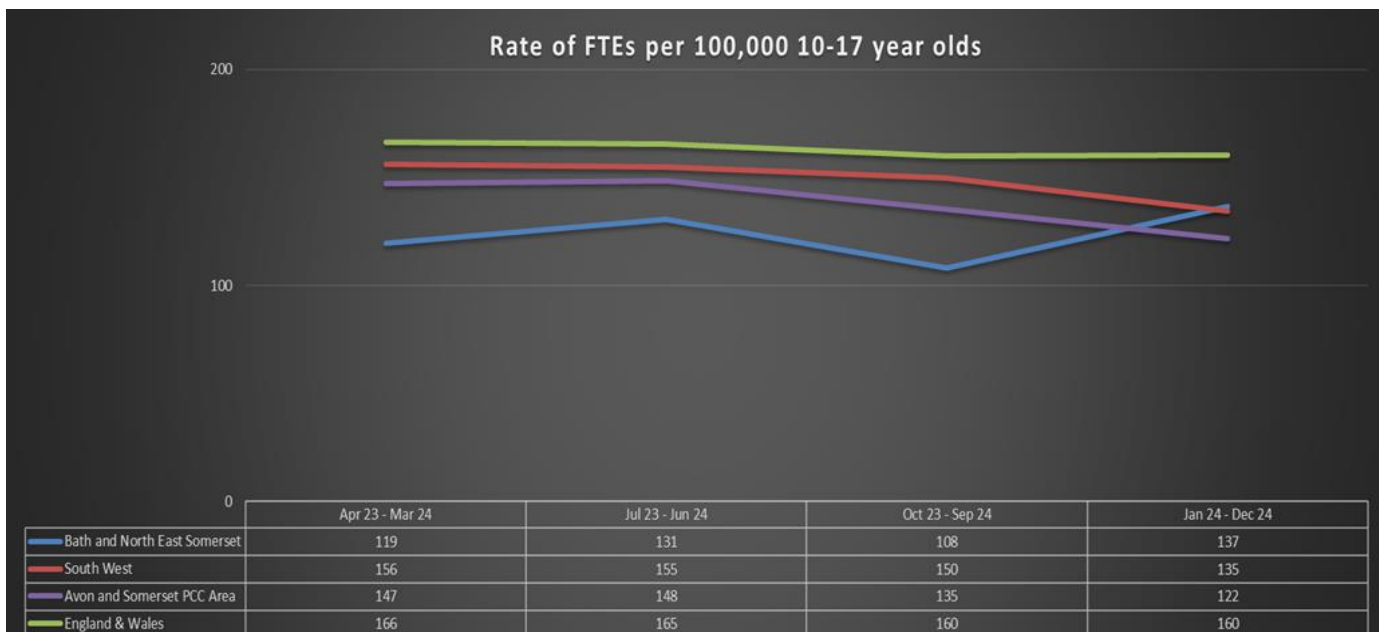
First Time Entrants

First Time Entrants are those children who receive a substantive outcome for the first time. The rate has increased in January 2024 to December 2024 from 108 to 137(46.6%) per 100,000 in the population. This equates to 24 individual children compared with 16 in the previous reporting period (January to December 2023). The data below is local data and as previously stated the YJB Published data does not match local data due to a number of nationally recognised issues. The rates for our comparators are: South West (135), PCC Area, (122) and England and Wales (161).

Scrutiny and a deep dive audit has taken place at the Youth Justice Partnership Board regarding the children who are first time entrants, to understand the increase in FTE's and see if any lessons, can be learned and if all diversion opportunities were maximised.

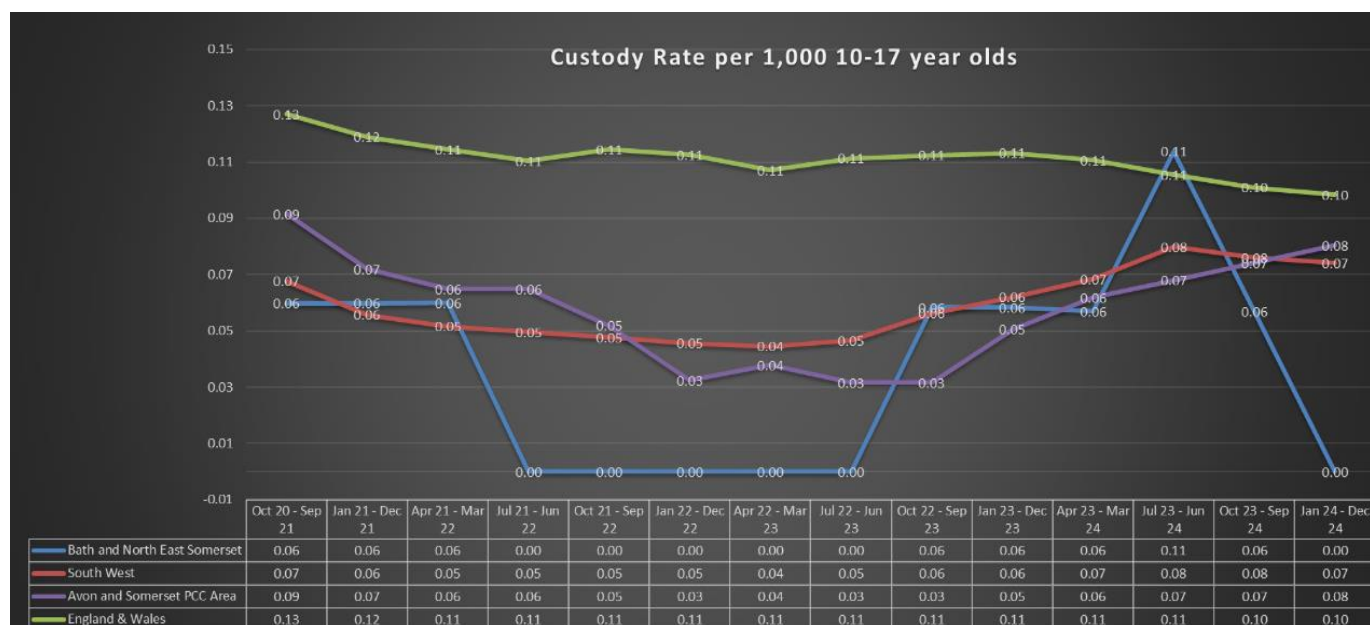
In this cohort, there was a larger than expected number of children who had committed more serious offences as their first offence, thus meaning they were not eligible for diversion.

A number of the children who are FTE's were in the cohort for driving offences. It had been usual practice for these children to be charged to court. There is a change being introduced in the policing and CPS approach to driving offences by children which will mean, looking forward, we can expect to see more of these children diverted from the formal justice system. Other changes in CPS practices when children are charged to court and opportunities for diverting children to the Out of Court Resolution Panel are being widened, so it is hoped that this will be seen in data sets going forward.



Custody

There was one custodial sentence in this reporting period of January 2024 to December 2024, and our rate has reduced to 0.00 per 1,000 in the population. The YJB published data does not match our local data due to a court recording error. The B&NES custodial rate is better than all Comparators. The rates for Comparators are: South West Region (0.07), PCC Area (0.08) and England and Wales (0.10).



Key Performance Indicators

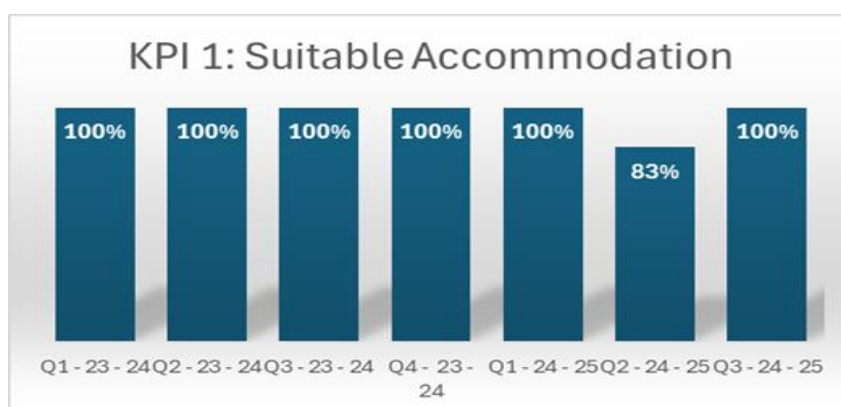
The Ministry of Justice introduced ten additional Key Performance Indicators from April 2023. This data was first reported to the Youth Justice Board in the autumn of 2023. Since then, there have been multiple issues with the production of this data including technical issues at a national level. There has been a huge contribution from the YJS staff to ensure these new data fields are input onto the case management system. Much development is still needed here, and we look forward to the problems with the national data being resolved and us being able to report fully on the KPI's.

The data below for KPI's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 is based on children where their interventions closed in a period. It is important to be aware that the actual number of individuals fluctuate from each quarter and can represent very small numbers. Therefore, changes in percentage rates can sometimes equate to individual children.

We are in a position to report the following information:

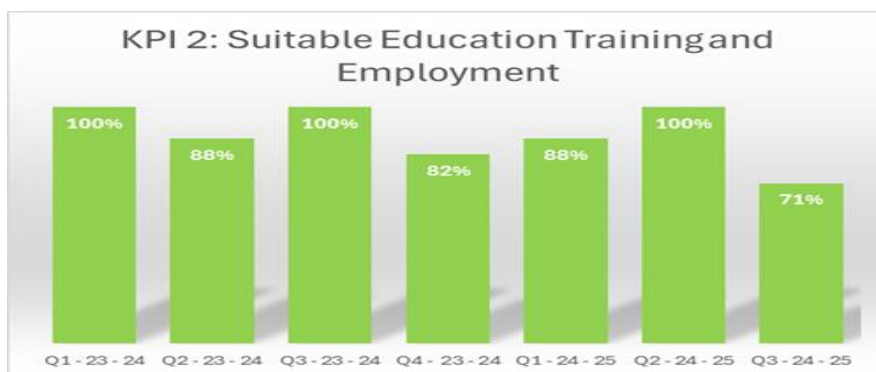
1. Suitable Accommodation

This key performance indicator is the proportion of children in the community and released from custody who have suitable accommodation arrangements at the end of their intervention. In all quarters except one, 100% of the children with relevant interventions closing were assessed as being in suitable accommodation at the end of their intervention.



2. Education, Training and Employment

This key performance indicator is the proportion of children in the community and being released from custody in a suitable Education, Training and Employment arrangement at the end of their intervention. In the most recent quarter, 71% of children with relevant interventions closing were in suitable Education, Training and Employment at the end of their intervention. The reasons for the reduction are Unemployment due to ill Health/Disability and the provision allocated is not suitable.



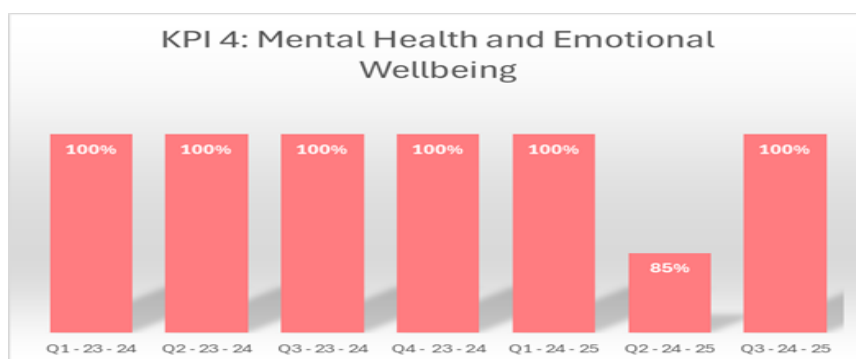
3. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Alternative Learning Provision (ALN)

This key performance indicator is the number of children with SEND and ALN with a formal plan in place as a proportion of children with identified SEND/ALN. 100% of children with relevant interventions closing who had an identified SEND/ALN need, had a Formal Plan in place.



4. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

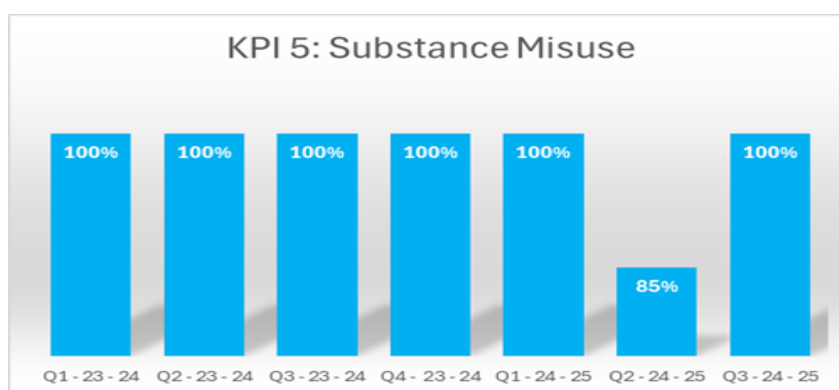
This key performance indicator is the number of children who have been screened for a mental health or emotional wellbeing need at the end of their intervention as a proportion of the number of children with interventions closing in the period. There is consistently good performance here, with 6 out of the 7 quarters seeing 100% of children with relevant interventions ending in the period were screened for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. In the most recent quarter, 29% of these children were assessed as having non-acute mental health needs and were getting advice from the YJS Nurse. 71% of these children had no identified mental health needs.



The Specialist Community Public Health Nurse offers a holistic health screening to all children who come into the service in order to identify any mental health or emotional well-being needs and provide direct support or refer to specialist services including CAMHS. For children who decline the health assessment from the Nurse, their emotional and mental health needs are screened using the relevant assessment tool, either Asset Plus or Prevention and Diversion by their Case Manager. The last annual health report to the Partnership Board identified emotional health as the second most prevalent need (with physical health needs being most prevalent). Support provided includes direct intervention using Brief Solution Focused approaches and supporting practitioners and the wider team around the child.

5. Substance Misuse

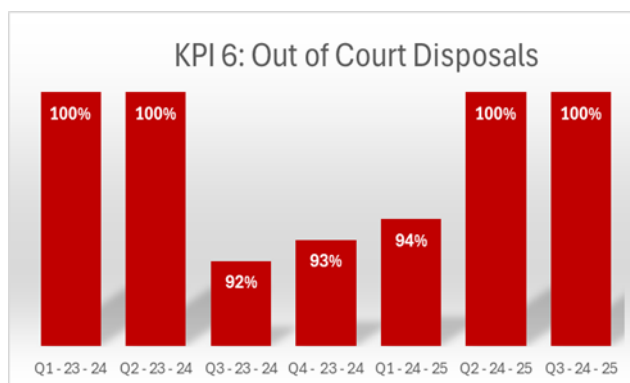
This key performance indicator is the number of children who have been screened for a need for specialist intervention or treatment to address substance misuse at the end of their intervention as a proportion of the number of children with an intervention closing in the period. 100% of the children with relevant interventions ending in 6 of the 7 quarters below were screened for Substance Misuse needs. In the most recent quarter, 29% were referred to and engaging with the Substance Misuse Service (Project 28) on a Tier 3 Intervention. 57% had no substance misuse needs identified and 14% had an identified need but no intervention was required.



The Youth Justice Officer provides a holistic health screen for all children who come into the service and seek to identify any substance misuse needs. In addition to this, the allocated case manager will also screen for any substance misuse needs as part of their assessment. The local substance misuse partner, Project 28, provides specialist intervention for children in the area. In preparation for the introduction of the new measure, the Youth Justice Service has been working with Project 28 to record the data of those who have been accessing support prior to their involvement and those that were screened and offered support via referral to them, including commencement of intervention.

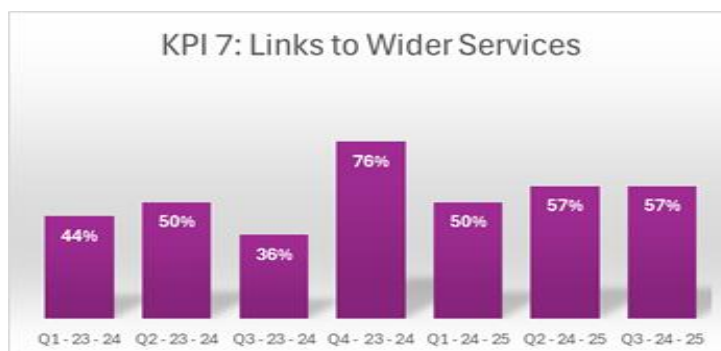
6. Out-of-Court Disposals

This key performance indicator is the number of children who completed an Out of Court Disposal programme as a proportion of the number of children with an Out of Court Disposal intervention ending in the period. 100% of children who had a relevant intervention close in the most recent two quarters, successfully completed their programme. Our completion rates continue to be very high. The reasons for children not completing their programmes in the previous quarters were that the programmes were partially completed, but the children either re-offended or they missed some sessions.



7. Wider Services

This key performance indicator is the proportion of children connected to or supported by wider services at the end of their intervention with the Youth Justice Service. Wider Services are either an Early Help Plan, Child Protection Plan, are classified as a Child in Need or a Child Looked After.



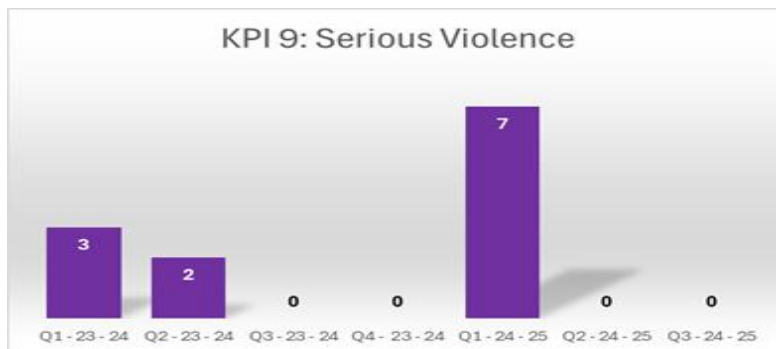
8. Management (Partnership) Board Attendance

This key performance indicator monitors senior (statutory) partner attendance at Partnership Board meetings and whether they contribute data from their individual services that identify areas of racial and ethnic disproportionality. Attendance has been monitored for many years as part of local assurance reporting. There has been a reduction in the last three quarters of attendance at the Partnership Board meetings by our senior Statutory Partners. In some cases, but not all, a representative was sent to the meeting on their behalf.



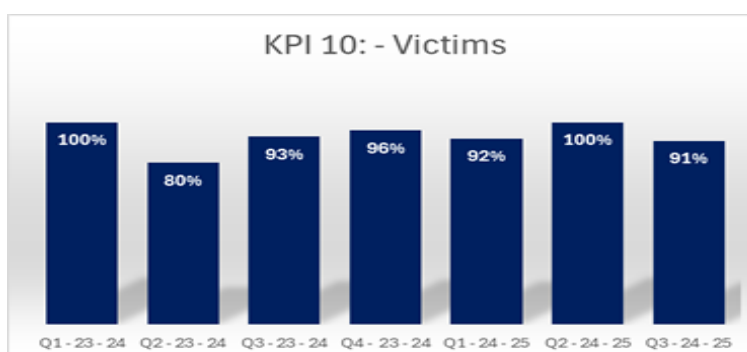
9. Serious Violence

This key performance indicator is the number of proven serious violence offences as a rate per 100,000 of the 10-17 population. The YJB definition for serious violence offences are Robbery offences, Drug offences and Violent offences with a gravity score of 5 or more. Although we had previously seen a spike in children who had been convicted of a serious violence offence in quarter 1 of 2024 - 2025, there have been no children convicted of a serious offence in the last two quarters.



10. Victims

This key performance indicator is the number of victims who engaged in restorative justice opportunities as a proportion of the total number of victims who consent to be contacted by the Youth Justice Service. Victims are asked for their views prior to Out of Court Resolution decision-making and planning for statutory Court Orders, provided with information about the progress of a child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate services that support victims (when requested). 100% of the victims were consulted, asked for their views prior to OOCRD Panel or Court Hearing and were offered Indirect or Direct Reparation. 54% did not want to participate; for 10% of victims, there was no response and 36% accepted either Indirect or Direct Reparation.



3.3. Risks and Issues

A risk in this context is defined as a potential or emerging factor which may impede the delivery of positive outcomes for children in B&NES. An issue is something that has already occurred or is currently happening which is affecting outcomes. B&NES YJS has a full Risk Register that is reviewed quarterly with the Partnership Board.

Risk	Potential Impact	Actions and Proposed Actions
Funding and Resources ➤ Turnaround Funding has been reduced for 2025/26 and may cease in March 2026.	➤ Reduction in the number of children the service can offer prevention and diversion services to.	➤ Contribute to evaluation of Turnaround to evidence effectiveness. ➤ Consider alternative funding streams and how cases are allocated to Compass Service.
Funding and Resources ➤ Funding for Enhanced Case Management project is ending in October 2025.	➤ Reduction in the support provided to practitioners delivering trauma informed work. ➤ Children with the most complex needs not being effectively supported within the multi-agency team. ➤ Skill base of trauma informed practice reducing over time within service.	➤ Consider alternative funding streams and models of deliver of Trauma informed support to the service.
Funding and Resources ➤ Partner contributions to pooled budget not being increased in line with inflation in the coming year.	➤ The pooled budget will become overspent in future years if contributions are not increased.	➤ Present the risks to the Partnership Board and request for a raise in pooled budget contribution. ➤ Plan with the finance team how to mitigate for this risk, in consideration of other YJS budgets.
Funding and Resources ➤ A child or multiple children being remanded to custody when B&NES has not received a grant for remand costs in recent years.	➤ Children's Services will be required to absorb a high, unexpected cost.	➤ Ensure this issue is reflected on the Corporate Risk Register. ➤ Ensure all efforts are made to reduce the risk of a child being remanded to custody and offer comprehensive bail options to the court when required.

Issue / Challenge	Potential Impact	Actions and Proposed Actions
Timeliness of offences being dealt with by Police and CPS ➤ Delays continue to exist in investigations, in particular more complex investigations and through the Police / CPS interface.	➤ Impact on mental health and wellbeing of children and victims. ➤ Children sometimes being sentenced when they are adults for offences they committed as children. ➤ Risks issues not being adequately addressed in the time between offence and charge. ➤ Reduction in effectiveness of delayed interventions.	➤ YJS Partnership Board to ensure the 'Child First' sub group of the Local Criminal Justice Board focuses on this issue and tackles the systemic reasons behind the delays.
Meeting children's complex needs, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) ➤ Many children in the YJS have SEND and meeting their complex needs is a challenge when availability of suitable provision is limited.	➤ Children in the YJS with SEND may not achieve their full potential and be offered appropriate opportunities to meet their needs. ➤ Children in the YJS with SEND remain vulnerable to exploitation and further offending.	➤ B&NES has a strategy in place to increase SEND provision in the coming year, including a new special school in the area. ➤ Work with the Education Psychology team to improve identification of need with children working with the YJS.
Disproportionality in particular children with SEND and children from minority ethnic groups ➤ The children in the formal youth justice system continue to be over-represented by children from the most vulnerable groups.	➤ Children from these vulnerable groups are at risk of receiving the worst outcomes in terms of education engagement, and achievement. ➤ Children from these groups may receive the most significant criminal justice outcomes which means they may spend period of time in custody which will have adverse impact on their short and longer term future.	➤ YJS to work with A&S colleagues in Youth Justice, Police and Education to continue to implement the recommendations in the Tackling Disproportionality Report.

4. Plan for the Forthcoming Year

4.1 Child First

The guiding principle for the youth justice system, including the B&NES Youth Justice Service and its Partnership Board, is 'Child First.' This approach has been promoted by the national Youth Justice Board and means keeping children at the heart of all work undertaken and privileging their needs according to their age and particular circumstances.

There is evidence that a Child First approach is effective in addressing the offending behaviour of the small number of children within the youth justice system today, and in preventing offending by those children who are more likely to enter the system. However, the Youth Justice Service is aware that some of those worked with wish to be regarded individually as young people or young adults rather than as children.

The Youth Justice Board's Child First principles have been adopted in B&NES and some examples are given below:

1. Seeing children as children	
Principle Prioritise the best interests of children and recognise their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.	Examples All children working with B&NES YJS participate in an individually tailored assessment, plan and intervention in their work with us. B&NES YJS has prioritised trauma informed training for practitioners to ensure that our work is developmentally informed and based on building positive, attuned relationships with children. Monthly health clinics, led by the Speech and Language Therapist and School Nurse, ensure that children's health needs are recognised and responded to, and any unmet communication or educational needs are identified. These clinics are being developed in 2025 to also include an Educational Psychologist twice a term.
2. Helping children build a pro-social identity	
Principle Promoting 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.	Examples We achieve this by ensuring that our plans and interventions focus on building strengths and a pro-social identity. We offer support to children to take part in positive activities and use participation work in reparation to utilise their skills and build confidence. Our education and training offer is designed to ensure we raise aspirations for children and have an individually tailored Education Training and Employment (ETE) goal for every child we work with.

3. Collaborating with children

Principle

Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

Examples

Children's involvement in innovative reparation projects enables them to contribute to the wider community. Children take part in the recruitment process for all practitioners – setting questions; being part of the interview panel; and taking part in small group exercises to help select candidates. Children have also helped us to make our office environment a young person friendly space, and their suggestions have been taken on board with art work, getting bean bags and a table football for the space where we have their appointments. We gain feedback from children and their parents / carers to ensure their views on our service delivery are heard and responded to. One of the ways we have responded to this is to vary the offer of reparation placements available.

4. Diverting children from the justice system

Principle

Promote a childhood outside the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

Examples

The Compass service supports children who are at risk of offending with the aim of preventing them entering the justice system in the future. The Turnaround Service supports children on the cusp of the youth justice system. 'Outcome 22 / Deferred Caution' is being readily used in our Out of Court Resolution Panel for children who have committed low level offences. This offers them the opportunity of diversion from a formal outcome, while still offering the appropriate support to meet their needs.

Our child first approach is evidenced by the voices of children and their parents and carers. Here is a small selection from the feedback gathered in the last year:

Voices of Children



As a Service, we have sought to develop the priorities and actions in our plan through hearing the voices of children we work with. We have asked children we work with the following questions:

- As a young person, what are you most concerned about?
- What do you think should be done about it by police / council / schools e.t.c.?

The themes of what children were concerned about included:

- **Concerns about the cost of living and being able to afford to rent somewhere to live – both for their family and when they are older and living independently.**
- **The impact of violence in their lives – a concern about knife crime and experience of being a victim of violence.**
- **If they are a victim of crime, will something be done about it and will they be supported.**
- **The relationships that the Police have with young people – feelings of mistrust that the children felt can go both ways.**

What children wanted to be done about their concerns:

- **For Police to have good training to communicate with young people and to get to know them better**
- **For there to be more Police on the streets and in areas where they feel less safe – this was a common theme.**
- **Lessons about knife crime in schools**

Voices of Parents / Carers

my son is now more aware of feelings, actions, emotions and about doing what's right and also seeking help if needed.

The worker's communication, their general manner but also their ability to empathise with my personal situation without being patronising has been greatly appreciated.

The worker helped my son in communicating or expressing himself better and allowing us (his parents) to be more involved with his social life, knowing where he is and with who. Which has helped in our general relationship with him.

I don't want her to ever leave our lives. Our worker has been super supportive towards me and my son and nothing is too much trouble.

4.2 Resources and Services

All statutory partners contribute staffing resources and a financial contribution.

The Youth Justice core grant is used entirely to support the work of the Youth Justice Service. Expenditure is agreed annually, monitored at monthly finance meetings and overseen quarterly by the Partnership Board. It is used in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Grant, specifically, towards the costs of employing two Administrative Officers, a Deputy Team Manager, a qualified Youth Justice Officer, a Reparation Worker and a contribution to the salary of the Senior Practitioner. The Grant also covers professional subscriptions, travel costs, room hire, equipment and other running costs.

The financial contributions from partners go into the pooled budget to meet the costs of employing the Business and Performance Manager and IT costs. Contributions have not increased for a number of years.

In terms of staffing, Avon and Somerset Police contribute one FTE Police Officer. The Probation Service contributes 0.5 FTE Probation Officer and 0.16 FTE Probation Service Officer, although this post has not been filled for over 3 years. The Health Contribution is 0.4 FTE School Nurse and 0.2 FTE Speech and Language Therapist. B&NES Local Authority is the largest contributor covering costs for the Head of Service, Operational Manager, practitioners in the statutory and prevention service and an administrator.

The full budget costs and contributions can be found at [Appendix 1](#). The Staffing Structure can be found at [Appendix 2](#).

4.3 Board Development

The YJS Partnership Board is continually assessing its own performance and considering ways to improve. The Board met for a development day in May 2025.

The purpose of this day was:

- To re-affirm our Vision: Working in Partnership to Achieve Child First Justice
- To agree the Youth Justice Service and Partnership Board priorities for the year ahead.
- To review our own performance and include any areas for development in the Youth Justice Plan for 2025 - 2026.
- To work together to meet the recommendations in the Inspection Improvement Plan.

The outcomes of the day included:

- The Vision of 'Working in Partnership to achieve Child First Justice' was re-affirmed. The detail of this was reviewed and updated and is written into the first section of this plan.
- A review was completed about what is working well on the Board and what needs to be developed.
- The strategic priorities were discussed. It was agreed that progress had been made in every area of the priorities for 2024 - 2025, but as these are such important areas of our work, and are broad in range, we will continue with the same priorities for 2025 - 2026.
- The priorities are confirmed as:
 - **Reduce Disproportionality**
 - **Strengthen Participation**
 - **Embed Child First Principles**
 - **Reduce Serious Violence**
- The Risk Register was fully reviewed, in particular, ensuring that business as usual risks be captured in the Business Continuity Plan and that the items in the register are risks rather than issues. The Register will be reviewed at each Board meeting going forward.

4.4 Workforce Development

Activity to develop the workforce is essential to meeting the needs of the children, parents / carers and victims and the wider community we serve. This includes a comprehensive induction, regular supervision, informal support, annual performance development conversations and appropriate training to all staff.

The team are supported by the offer of:

- Monthly reflective and case management supervision.

- Monthly group reflective practice meeting – this group can focus on interventions or reflections on specific children and situations or staff wellbeing.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour consultations from CAMHS.
- Monthly case discussions / consultations with specialist workers such as School Nurse, Speech and Language Therapist and Education Officer.
- Clinical Supervision for trauma recovery cases through the Enhanced Case Management service.

The annual Training and Development Plan for 2025 - 2026 has been created in discussion with managers and team members and taking into account what we know about the issues facing the children that we work with and any training needs being identified in Performance Development conversations.

Key training that has taken place in 2024 - 2025 has included trauma informed workshops for practitioners to ensure this approach remains embedded in our work, restorative justice facilitator training for our Deputy Team Manager to ensure we have the capability to offer this intervention, and cultural competence training to support work towards our anti-racism action plan, AIM3 assessment training and systemic practice.

The identified training and development priorities are agreed as:

- Strengthening our approach to Performance Development Conversations, ensuring they take place in a timely way and staff understand the process.
- Ongoing training offer for staff in cultural competence and unconscious bias to support our ongoing work to reduce disproportionality.
- Increasing staff confidence in working with children with SEND and neuro-diversity.
- Ensuring new staff are offered Trauma Informed Practice Training.
- Offering training on specific areas of practice, as required, such as Restorative Justice, Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Child to Parent Violence.

4.5 Evidence-based Practice, Innovation and Evaluation

Systemic Practice Model

As part of Children's Transformation Programme, the Local Authority has adopted a systemic practice model for Children's Services. This is integrated within a trauma informed, relationship aware approach and is attachment focused.

The adoption of a systemic practice model has seen a significant proportion of the Children's Service workforce being trained by the Centre for Systemic Social Work. It is based on the view that human challenges are always embedded within the context of human relationships across family, community and wider society systems. The model provides theory, models and techniques to support practitioners in their support for families to seek a broader and deeper understanding of what could be creating challenges and ideas to change.

The Youth Justice Service has benefited from this training and as part of the wider Children's Service's Workforce will be accessing further training and development in the year to come. Changes have been made through the influence of the systemic model including acknowledgement and consideration of people's personal and social identity in assessments, planning and support plans. Systemic tools including Burnham's Social GRACES¹³, developed

¹³ Burnham J (2012) Developments in the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS in Krause I (ed) *Culture and Reflexivity in systemic Psychotherapy: Mutual Perspectives*. London: Karnac

to address inequality, have been used in training and Supervision to encourage reflection on individual characteristics that inform how the world is seen and experienced. The use of the Systemic model has enabled practitioners to consider wider perspectives when working with children and families and encourage others in the system to do the same.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour 'AIM3' Model

Although not many children in the local area are identified with a risk of harmful sexual behaviour, the Service has staff trained in the Assessment of Adolescents and Harmful Sexual Behaviour model developed by Marcella Leonard and Simon Hackett, otherwise known as 'AIM3.' This is a suite of evidence-based frameworks and guidance to support practitioners to assess risk and develop interventions for use with children, including how to work with their parents/carers as well. The resources are trauma-informed and holistic and are a good fit with other intervention approaches used within the Service. The tools are used alongside standard youth justice assessment tools and plans to support a focus on particular presenting needs. Assessments are generally undertaken in partnership with a Social Worker and interventions are likely to then be co-delivered. The service has two staff who work with the CAMHS Harmful Sexual Behaviour Co-ordinator to deliver awareness raising training to colleagues in preventative services and universal settings such as schools, in support of early identification.

The use of this model has enabled evidenced based assessments and interventions to be undertaken to reduce the risk of harmful sexual behaviour and contribute to better outcomes for these children.

Enhanced Case Management

The Service is delivered in partnership with three other Youth Justice Services and Forensic CAMHS to deliver trauma recovery, Psychology-led support to children in the youth justice system. The model has been developed by Johnny Matthews and Tricia Scuse, based on Maslow's hierarchy of need and a seven-stage trauma recovery model, and builds on work previously undertaken in Wales.

Evaluations have commented on how the flexibility of the Psychologists' approach has been identified as central to the success of the work. The approach is perceived to have contributed to improvements in a range of psycho-social outcomes and re-building of family relationships. There has also been an improvement in children's mental health, coping skills and understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others. Improved relationships with staff in YJS's have also been noted and overall, no negative impacts have been identified for children.

The evaluation has also noted the embedding of trauma informed practice in staff throughout the participating YJS's and beginning within some partner agencies. Staff have an improved knowledge and understanding of recognising and working with children who have experienced trauma and are developing more flexible practices which are very child-focused and individually tailored. These positive outcomes outlined in the evaluation have been seen within B&NES YJS.

4.6 Priorities for the coming year: Standards for Children in the Youth Justice Service

The latest edition of National Standards were published in 2019, entitled 'Standards for Children in Youth Justice Services'¹⁴

The standards support our work in Out of Court Resolutions, at Court, in the Community, in secure settings and on transition and resettlement.

The most recent national standards self-assessment was completed in October 2023 and covered our work in Court. The audits were completed by Team Managers in the YJS and a Partnership Board Member.

B&NES YJS demonstrated adherence to the standards with a few areas requiring further activity in order to strengthen compliance.

Areas of strength identified were:

- Positive steps taken to promote fair treatment in court such as using communication profiles and advocating for children's needs being well evidenced.
- Reports written for court and Referral Order Panels were of a high standard, were child focussed and supported desistance.
- Reports took into account the view from victims and evidenced the impact of the offence on them.
- Good evidence of supporting children to participate effectively in court supporting children to view the court room in advance of the hearing, contacting all children and parents / carers before the day of court to help them prepare and ask any questions and explaining the outcome thoroughly to the child afterwards.

The following areas of activity were identified for further development:

- To collaborate with Avon and Somerset YJS's and CPS to ensure we are all working to the same guidance for diversion.

PROGRESS MADE: The new, national Police Child Gravity Score Matrix¹⁵ has ensured greater consistency here. The A&S Out of Court Tactical group is auditing cases to check for consistency.

- To ensure greater consistency in diversion outcome in relation to driving matter.

PROGRESS MADE: Again, the Police Child Gravity Matrix has assisted with this and this is being used and referenced in Out of Court Decision Making.

- To consider ways to engage with fathers more effectively in the assessment writing process.

PROGRESS MADE: The issue has been discussed in reflective practice meetings and a renewed focus on ensuring both parents are involved if possible and appropriate.

¹⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6363d2328fa8f50570e54222/Standards_for_children_in_youth_justice_services_2019.doc.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/criminal-justice/2023/child-gravity-matrix-v2.2---september-2023.pdf>

Inspection Improvement Plan

The Youth Justice Service and Partnership underwent an HMIP Inspection in October 2024. The inspection process lasted 5 weeks, with the first 4 weeks involving preparation and submission of evidence in advance, including data sets, reports and a presentation. There was one week of field work that included 13 case file audits, interviews with children and parents and carers, 10 focus groups with partner agencies, staff and 13 individual interviews with practitioners.

The report was published on 4th February 2025. The service achieved an overall 'Good' rating. The detailed inspection report gave an 'Outstanding' rating in three areas which were for Staff; Implementation and Delivery of Court Disposals; and Planning for Out of Court Disposals. Nine other areas were rated as 'Good' including Partnerships; Assessment and Reviewing of Court Disposals; and Resettlement. One area was rated as 'Requires Improvement' which was for Assessments for Out of Court Disposals.

Inspectors said children open to the Youth Justice Service can expect to receive a strong offer of support. The service is led effectively by a knowledgeable and meticulous management team and there are appropriate resources in place.

They said staff are skilled and deliver evidence-based interventions. These arrangements are supported by a well-functioning and curious management board and an integrated partnership. Consequently, outcomes for children are positive.

The link to the report is here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/bnesyjs2025/>

The following recommendations have been made:

The Bath and North East Somerset Youth Justice Service should:

- ensure all children given an Out-of-Court Disposal receive high-quality assessment activity that considers all risk factors that impact on the safety of both the child and the community.

The Youth Justice Management Board should:

- develop its understanding of quality victim work practice and implement effective local performance indicators.
- facilitate attendance by all key professionals at the joint decision-making panel in line with the Youth Justice Board's national guidance.
- review the use and application of the formal risk register to ensure it is effective in identifying, prioritising, managing and mitigating risks to the YJS.

An Improvement Plan has been developed and agreed at the Youth Justice Partnership Board and with HMIP and can be seen at [Appendix 3](#).

4.7 Priorities for the coming year: Service Development

A detailed Service Development Action Plan for 2024 - 2026 has been written and is being monitored through the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board. The Partnership Board will also oversee the Inspection Improvement Plan, which will form a significant part of developmental work with the team and Board this year. The below information is a summary of our actions and objectives that are in addition to the inspection improvement plan seen at Appendix 3.

Reduce Disproportionality

This service development priority recognises the issue of over-represented groups in B&NES who are in the Youth Justice System. These groups are children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children from minority ethnic backgrounds. The data evidencing these areas of over-representation can be found in section 5.1 of this Plan.

Ethnicity

The key objective of the plan is to reduce this disproportionality and make progress towards aligning with local demographic and population rates. The plan sets out partnership work with colleagues in education to scrutinise school suspensions and exclusions and proactively offer early help services to children who are represented in this group.

The plan outlines work with the Police to scrutinise out of court data to ensure there is no disproportionality in the offer of diversionary activity for children from minority ethnic groups.

Operational actions include a focus on ethnicity in audits and ensuring that all policies pay sufficient attention to ethnicity, equity, inclusion, and diversity issues.

SEN

The objective of this aspect of the plan is to ensure this most vulnerable group of children are offered sufficient support to access high quality education and training to meet their needs and to reduce the risks to them around exploitation and offending.

For 2025, the YJS will work with the Education Psychology Service to ensure children's needs are fully understood and responded to.

Strengthen Participation

This service development area recognises the importance of participation in the work completed by the Youth Justice Service. Some developments have already been achieved in previous years, but this priority acknowledges there is more that can be done.

Over the coming year, work will focus on:

- Creating a Participation Strategy to draw together work being completed and identify any gaps
- Setting up drop-in support group for parents.
- Improving the information about the YJS on our website.

Embed Child First Principles

B&NES YJS continues to prioritise embedding Child First Principles in our work. This principle is the corner stone of our approach moving forward, so appropriately it remains as a strategic priority for the plan for 2024 - 2026.

The actions for this period aim to ensure that every area of the YJS work is child focussed.

One of the key areas to be targeted this year continues to be working with the Police and CPS at a strategic level to reduce the timeliness of investigations so that criminal justice outcomes that children receive can be more meaningful and responsive to their needs at the time the issues have arisen.

Given the voices of children, referred to in section 4.1, it is essential for the YJS to work with police around developing their child first approach and trauma informed policing. This work will be undertaken through the Criminal Justice Board and the Tackling Disproportionality group across Avon and Somerset.

The YJS will also work with partners in Children's Social Care to ensure our services are aligned with the Concordat for Youth Remands, referred to in section 5.10 of this plan. The purpose of this is to ensure that children are only remanded when absolutely necessary and when this does happen, that the services recognise them as children looked after and prioritise their needs accordingly.

This area of the plan will also ensure that there are stronger links created between the YJS and the Anti-Social Behaviour team in the police so that children who are showing signs of being on the periphery of offending or anti-social behaviour will be offered prevention support as appropriate.

At an Operational level, the YJS will create an up-to-date Service wide Practice Guide that ensures child first practice is at the heart of everything we do.

Reduce Serious Violence

From our participation work and all communication with children, parents and carers throughout the course of the year, it is clear that this is a key issue for them and so it remains a strategic priority for B&NES YJS into 2024 - 2026. Children have shared with their YJS workers that knife crime and the threat of serious violence are utmost in their minds.

The Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) is leading on this area of work across B&NES and the YJS is involved in this work at every level from operational to strategic.

In terms of specific YJS activity, we will continue to build on the progress we made last year in terms of delivering high quality, strengths based, future focussed interventions with children in our service, while also offering some specific interventions around weapons awareness work and the Street Doctors sessions to support them with first aid and safety.

As a partnership, with the VRP, we will work to understand and implement the new national guidance around Young Futures Prevention Partnerships and review the wider offer in B&NES for children and young people at risk of serious violence.

5. National Priority Areas

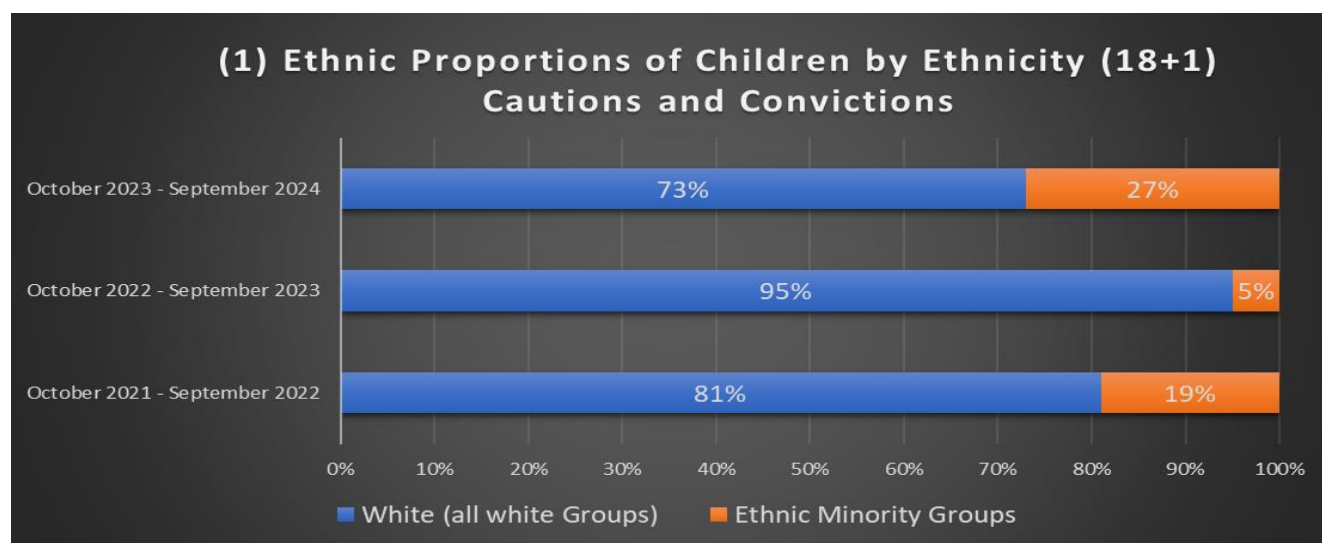
5.1 Children from groups which are over-represented

Children from a range of backgrounds are over-represented in the youth justice system. In B&NES, the most over-represented groups are children with Special Educational Needs and children from certain ethnicities, particularly those with a mixed heritage.

As stated above, reducing this disproportionality is a strategic priority for the service and there are actions in our annual development plan and anti-racism action plan to work towards this aim.

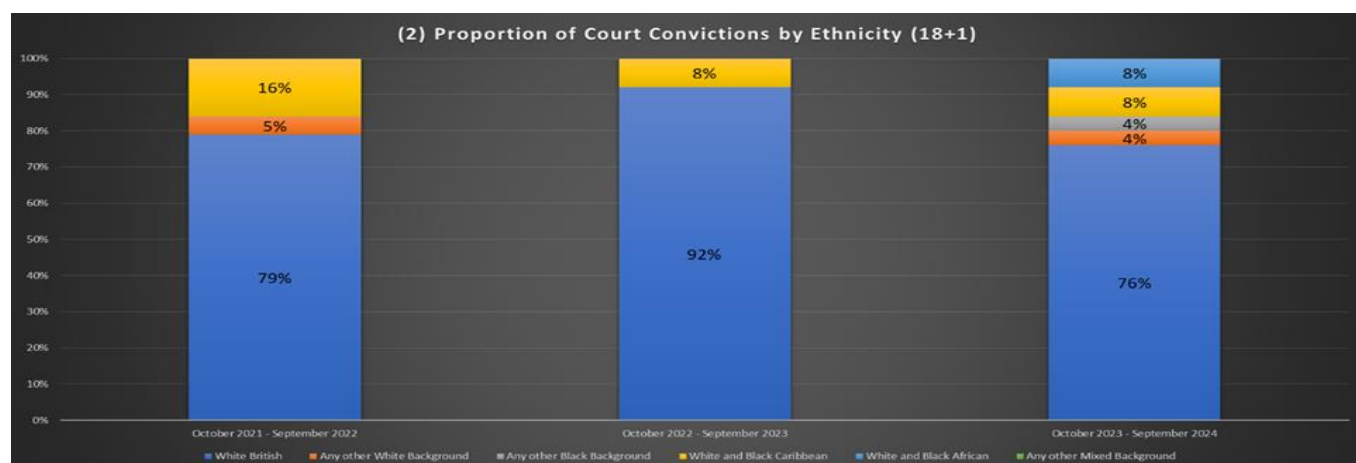
Ethnicity

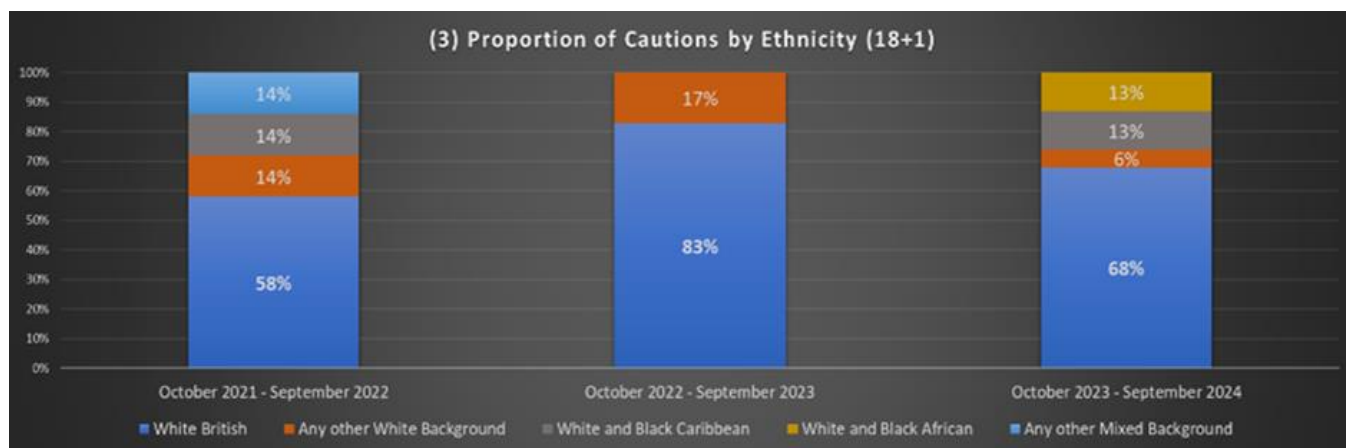
The following charts are taken directly from the latest Youth Justice Service Annual Rolling Ethnic Disproportionality Report and is the latest data available.



For the Period October 2023 – September 2024, of all the children Cautioned or Sentenced, White children accounted for 73% of these children and 27% were from minority ethnic backgrounds. In B&NES YJS White children are under-represented and children from minority ethnic groups are over-represented when comparing the offending population with the 10-17 population. The minority ethnic population in B&NES is 9.3%. See page 5 for more information.

The most over-represented groups are children of White and Black Caribbean or White and Black African origin.





The above two charts show the proportion of children who received a court conviction by ethnicity and the proportion of children who received a caution by ethnicity.

Over-representation of children from minority ethnic backgrounds in both the Court and Out of Court arena can be seen.

Special Educational Needs

- Of all children working with the YJS from April 2024 to March 2025, 79% had Learning Needs - EHCP, SEND or Individual Development Plan.
- These figures are very similar to those reported for the previous year.

Gender

Of the children working with YJS in 2024 - 2025, 12% were girls. This figure does not indicate an over-representation of girls in the YJS in B&NES at this time and is inline with the national average.

5.2 Policing

The Partnership between the YJS and Avon and Somerset (A&S) Constabulary is strong.

The Police Partnership Board member provides quarterly data for the Board to scrutinise a number of areas such as stop and search, strip search, time between arrest and disposal and overnight detention.

The YJS and Police work together to improve outcomes for children in various ways, including:

- **Monthly A&S Tactical Out of Court Resolution Group and Panels**
 - This Tactical group has worked to increase consistency in approach throughout A&S, including creating guidance documents and auditing work to ensure compliance with national and local guidance.
 - The Out of Court Resolution Panels are jointly chaired by a Sergeant from the Police Early Intervention Team (EIT) and a Manager from YJS. We have worked together closely to complete a Practice Guide for staff regarding out of court work. A development in 2025 – 2026 will be members of Children's Social Care and Education joining this panel.

- **Avon and Somerset Police and Youth Justice Collaborative Meeting**
 - The Youth Justice Board have supported the development of a 6 weekly collaborative meeting with Avon and Somerset Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Heads of Service of Youth Justice. The purpose of the meeting is to improve outcomes for children in the force area and to work collaboratively to strengthen systems and share good practice in relation to child first approaches.
- **Quarterly Custody Review Panel**
 - Children's Services, Police, the Emergency Duty Team, the Liaison and Diversion Service and YJS review cases where children have been held overnight in police detention, sentenced or remanded to custody. The purpose is to ensure ongoing compliance with the Concordat on Children in Custody ¹⁶ and to scrutinise occasions when this has not happened and identify learning opportunities for the partnership.
- **Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel**
 - The YJS participates in the PCC led quarterly Scrutiny Panel for Out of Court Disposals to ensure youth matters are a key focus and that decision making is examined and any lessons learned.
- **Violence Reduction Partnership**
 - The Police EIT and YJS are key members of the Violence Reduction Partnership and work together at a strategic and operational level to reduce violence. This includes delivering Parental Knife Crime Awareness sessions, training and an annual conference for staff, and Street Doctors sessions with children.
 - All key partners, including Police and YJS, attend a monthly operational meeting 'Partnership to Reduce Exploitation and Violence' (PREV) where children who are at risk are discussed, information shared and assurances sought about the multi-agency approach to addressing these issues.
 - The Police EIT provide line management to the YJS Police Officer and this helps with information sharing, co-ordination of services and risk management.

5.3 Prevention

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' work involves supporting children to address unmet needs, safeguard, promote positive outcomes and stop children entering the formal youth justice system.

B&NES YJS delivers two targeted prevention services:

Compass

- Compass works with 8 to 17 year-olds who are assessed as being at risk of offending. The model includes using a Key Worker model, an Early Help Assessment to identify need, co-creation of a plan with the child and family, and the use of Team Around the Family or Child Meetings to review plans. The Service monitors individual improvement in the areas of social well-being, emotional well-being, engagement in education, training and employment and child-parent relationships.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82211140f0b6230269afee/Concordat on Children in Custody ISBN Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82211140f0b6230269afee/Concordat_on_Children_in_Custody_ISBN_Accessible.pdf)

- Compass supports parents and carers in areas such as mediation, parenting skills, managing conflict and support in navigating any challenges within education.
- From 2025 – 2026, Compass is solely funded by the Local Authority, having previously been part funded through the Police and Crime Grant from the OPCC.

Turnaround

- Turnaround works with children aged 10 to 17 years who are on the cusp of the youth justice system. To be eligible for Turnaround a child would need to have received a level 3 Anti-Social Behaviour warning, No Further Action, a Police Facilitated Community Resolution, a first time Youth Caution, Interviewed under Caution or been Released Under Investigation or Pre-Charge Bail for an offence.
- Turnaround uses the Youth Justice Board Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool to assess need and develop a support plan. Like the Compass Service, it operates using a Key Worker model and uses Team Around the Child or Family Meetings to review progress.

Case Example

The case example is a 14 year-old girl who was supported by the Compass Service.

Identified Needs	Work Completed	Outcomes
A breakdown in family relationships Involvement in assaults with female peers Involvement in some thefts The child's needs were not fully understood Vulnerable to exploitation and episodes of going missing Not attending education	Parenting support Involvement in a family group conference Emotional regulation and healthy relationship sessions Education around exploitation Support and advice given for Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Support with starting new school – providing some transport.	Child received a diagnosis of Autism and an EHCP and was placed in a school that could meet her needs. Since starting at a new school that has been able to meet her needs, she is thriving there. Family are now spending quality time with together. Child has not been in trouble with the Police or been involved with disputes with her peers. Child has not been missing.

Feedback

Parent reported that she was appreciative of the support from Compass and how much better things have got for them. The feedback from a direct observation was that the Compass Keyworker was welcoming and flexible.

The Compass Keyworker "has built a relationship of trust, care and support with my child. She has had many professionals in her life and none of them have reached out to her like the Compass Keyworker. My child is sometimes more open with her than she is with me and you can see she is relaxed in her company. She listens with compassion and empathy and gives fantastic advice that she takes on board. The Compass Keyworker always comes with tools and resources to support my child if she is fidgety and she always follows up concerns and comes back to me if I need her to. She gives me valuable advice and guidance. If she doesn't know or thinks another agency may have the answers, then she finds this out"

Data

Compass - Between April 2024 and March 2025, 29 children were supported by Compass (26 male, 3 female with an average age range of 9-17 years; 93% were White children. It is recognised that in order to address over-representation in the youth justice system, more children with Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritages need to be offered support through Compass and other preventative services.

The Compass Service works in partnership with the Willow Project as part of their virtual team. Willow is a preventative service to support children at risk of exploitation and is part of the Adolescent and Child Exploitation Team. At any one time, the Compass service is supporting 2 children as part of the Willow service offer.

Turnaround - Between April 2024 and March 2025, 19 children started and were supported with an intervention on the Turnaround programme. 17 (89%) of these children were male, 12 (63%) were White and 7 (37%) were from Minority Ethnic backgrounds. All were aged between 12 and 17 years of age.

5.4 Diversion

Diversion is where children with a linked offence receive an alternative outcome that does not result in a criminal record, avoids escalation into the formal youth justice system and associated stigmatisation.

The types of diversion that are on offer in B&NES follow national guidance and includes:

- **Community Resolution (CR):** This is used when children have accepted responsibility for an offence. It is an outcome commonly delivered through, but not limited to, restorative approaches. The programme of support attached to a CR is voluntary.
- **No Further Action:** Used when Police decide not to pursue an offence because there is not enough evidence, or it is not in the public interest. Voluntary support can be offered to children to address identified needs.
- **Outcome 22 Deferred Caution:** Used when diversionary, educational or intervention activity has taken place or been offered, and it is not in the public interest to take any further action. An admission of guilt or acceptance of responsibility is not required for this outcome to be used.
- **Youth Alcohol and Drug Diversion (YADD):** This is also an Outcome 22, which can be issued specifically for offences of possession of a small quantity of drugs or drunk and disorderly. The diversion offered is a short assessment and tailored workshop intervention that focusses on drug and alcohol education and exploitation where appropriate. The Diversionary activity is delivered in partnership with DHI Project 28, and children accessing this service can be offered ongoing intervention and support after their initial session.

Children are identified for diversion when they have accepted an offence. The Police can make a single agency decision to issue a CR to children who have not had any previous outcomes.

For all other children, the Police refer children to the joint YJS and Police Out of Court Resolution Decision Making Panel. When a child is referred to this panel, they are allocated to a Youth Justice Officer and a Prevention and Diversion Assessment will be completed to inform the decision. The decision will make reference to the Child Gravity Matrix referenced above.

At the YJS, we see the importance of diverting children from the formal justice system where possible. This work has been prioritised in previous years, and continues to be so, and this is evident through the YJS caseloads being predominately made up of Out of Court work.

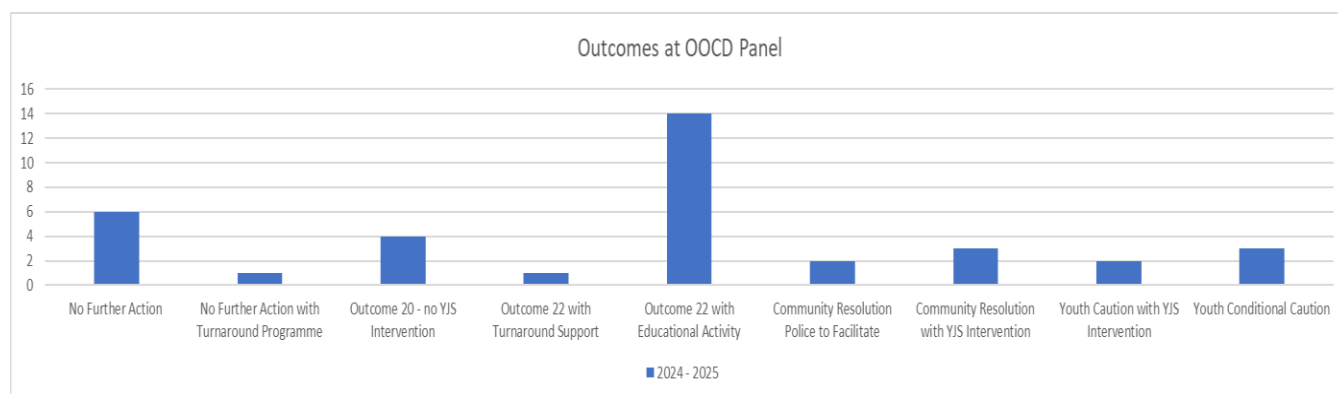
The Out of Court work is scrutinised by the YJS Partnership Board through an annual report. This report looks at a range of data including number and type of diversion, successful completions, gender and ethnicity and re-offending rates. OOCR work is also scrutinised through the Police and Crime Commissioner's OOCR Scrutiny Panel and through the A&S Tactical OOCR group, mentioned above.

It was highlighted in the HMIP Inspection Report that there are good arrangements in place with the Court and children are referred for consideration of an OOCR whenever appropriate. Once referred, the partnership takes a flexible approach to decision-making, demonstrating very strong practice through appropriate use of diversionary outcomes. This prevents children referred back from Court becoming first-time entrants.

Data

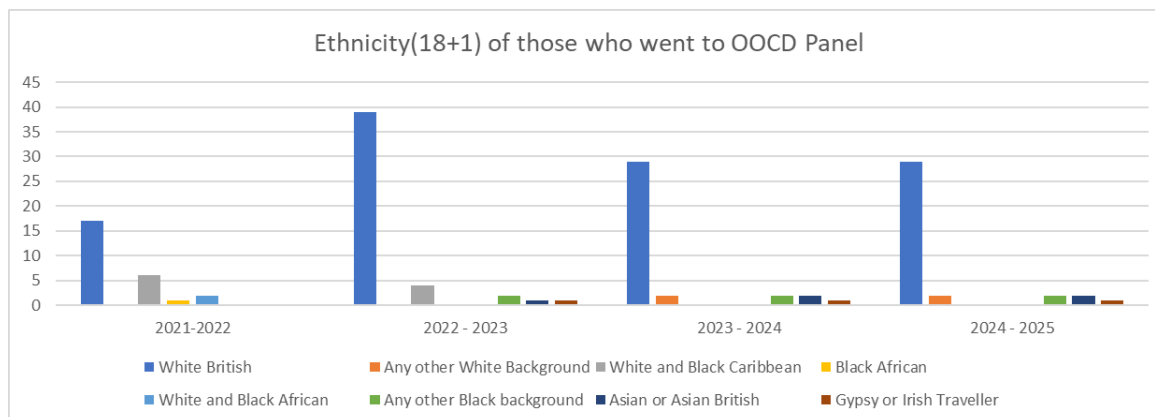
Between April 2024 and March 2025, 38 children received diversionary activity directly from the Police. For this reporting period, there has been a decrease in the number of children diverted to the Out of Court Resolution Panel. There were 36 outcomes from Panel in this reporting period, and a total of 33 individual children. In the previous reporting year, there were 61 outcomes. This can be explained by more children being referred to court in this period.

The most common outcome in 2024 to 2025 was for an Outcome 22 - Deferred Caution with YJS Intervention, 14 in total (39% of the outcomes). In the previous year, the most common outcome was a Community Resolution. In 2024 to 2025, 8% of children received a Youth Conditional Caution (YCC). This is a significant reduction from the previous year where 20% of the children received a YCC.



Of the 33 individual children, 83% were White British and 17% were from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The overall number of children referred to Out of Court Resolution Panel has decreased, compared to the previous year. There has been a decrease of from 25% to 17% of children from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds referred to Out of Court Resolution Panel.

For the majority of these cases, children from Minority Ethnic backgrounds received the same outcome as children who are White where they had committed similar offences. Where this was not their first outcome at panel, they have received a Caution. Most received non-substantive outcomes and some had no programmes offered.



5.5 Education

Attendance and engagement with education, training and employment (ETE) is one of the most significant protective factors for all children in supporting them to live positive lives. B&NES YJS prioritises work with children to support them into suitable ETE. Many of the children that we work with have difficulties with education that include Special Education Needs, lack of suitable provision to meet these needs, and suspension and exclusion from school.

The YJS employs an Education Officer who works closely with colleagues in the Education Inclusion Service, SEND team, Schools, Colleges, the Virtual School and the YJS. The Education Officer works directly with children and parents / carers to help them to consider their career goals, to navigate the complex world of education and advocate on their behalf in a range of forums. Each child who works with the YJS has a monthly ETE review with the Education Officer and their Case Manager to set, record and review related goals.

The Director for Education in B&NES sits on the YJS Partnership Board, and this year has presented reports to the Board on the work taking place to increase SEND provision in B&NES and the School's Race Equality Charter work. Both pieces of work link closely with the issues identified with this plan and are examples of activity to reduce disproportionality in B&NES.

The Education Officer prepares an annual report to the YJS Partnership Board to ensure that Board members are aware of the issues relating to education inclusion for the children in the YJS. Last year, the report was also being presented to the Schools Standards Board to ensure they are well-informed of the poor outcomes for some children in the YJS who experience school exclusion and late identification of SEN.

School Age Children – information from 2023 - 2024 academic year

Continued trend of higher number of school age children in YJS cohort.

- The YJS has worked with **38** school age children on a Youth Justice Service (YJS) programme in the 2023 - 2024 academic year. As in the previous academic year this is two thirds of our total numbers. There is a continued trend of younger children (under 13 years of age) coming on to a YJS programme.

Majority of children have SEND.

- Like last year, the majority of children worked with in the YJS have Special Educational Needs with **55%** having an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and **24%** having an SEN Support Plan so **79%** in total. This overall percentage is the same as last academic year but the numbers with an EHCP are higher and those with an SEN Support Plan are lower.
- The most common special needs for our children are ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder), ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) and SEMH (Social Emotional and Mental Health issues). These presenting needs are nearly always an underlying factor in offending behaviour as well as in children struggling to engage with education.

High numbers who have had a previous Permanent Exclusion, although a reduction in numbers Permanently Excluded in this academic year.

- In the 2023-24 academic year **15** of the children supported by the YJS had had a Permanent Exclusion, compared to **12** in 2022 - 2023, nearly all of them within the previous 2 years.
- However, only **2** children were Permanently Excluded in the 2023 - 2024 academic year, compared to **9** children in 2022 - 2023 academic year.
- Many other children who were worked with were at high risk of an Exclusion and have had their education disrupted due to 'directions off site' to other schools and moves into Alternative Provision to avoid Permanent Exclusion.

High numbers in Alternative Learning Provision/Special schools.

- Again, high numbers of students working with the YJS have attended special schools (**16%**) or been educated in an Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) setting (**64%**). This is a total of **80%** of the school aged children we have supported. The quality and outcomes from ALP placements can vary and some children still spend too long in ALP.
- Just **16%** of the children on YJS programmes were learning in a mainstream school setting.

Education Provision reported as Unsuitable

The YJS is required to report to the Youth Justice Board on children in the Youth Justice system who were in unsuitable education (according to Youth Justice Board criteria). In 2023 - 2024 academic year, B&NES YJS reported **8** children who had a period of unsuitable education. In most cases these children had very few hours education provision for example a child on roll at a Special School receiving 11 hours Alternative Provision a week (including travel time).

Post 16 children (16 - 18 year-olds) – information from 2023 - 2024 academic year

- The YJS has worked with **20** post 16 children this academic year compared to **22** in the 2022 - 2023 academic year.

Fewer children with an EHCP.

- In contrast to the school age cohort fewer post 16 children supported by YJS had an EHCP – **50%** had an EHC Plan (or a ceased EHC Plan) compared to **59%** last academic year.

More children sustaining a Further Education course.

- **13** of our Post 16 children had started a further education programme in September 2023 and 12 were still on their course by the end of their YJS programme or end of their course (the other young person moved into a job). A high number of the children in Further Education were on the Learning4Work (L4W) programme provided by Bath College in partnership with Youth Connect South West, which is a bespoke programme for learners with an EHCP who are not ready for a mainstream college course.

Work, Training and other ETE.

- A small number of children had some kind of work during the academic year but had not been able to sustain this.

Fewer children NEET.

- This academic year, just **25%** of our post 16 children have had a period of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) during their YJS programme. In all these cases living arrangements have been a barrier to them finding or staying in employment. Only **2** children were NEET for the whole duration of their YJS programme.

Examples of work in the YJS to improve ETE outcomes:

- Working in partnership with education providers and other support agencies to improve engagement and attendance – either via CIN or CORE groups or by convening a TAC group where no other multi-agency group is in place.
- Contributing to EHCP processes – supporting parents apply for a needs assessment, providing needs assessment reports, regular liaison and follow ups with SEND colleagues.
- Supporting children to understand their strengths and interests and make plans for the future.

- Supporting Year 11 students in making Post 16 choices and supporting them in making applications and plans for the future and providing transition support over the summer.
- High levels of face-to-face and practical support, for example, taking children to their provision, visiting new provision, supporting children apply for and enrol for post 16 courses.
- Supporting children in compiling CVs and applying for apprenticeships/jobs.
- Transitions support for young people changing schools or starting Post 16 programmes.
- Advocacy and support for children and parents in behaviour and re-integration meetings in schools.
- Improving education and training provision for young people through support and joint working with schools and SEND Team.
- Contributing to the development and extension of ALP programmes, ensuring the child and parents voice is heard.
- Supporting children and parent with understanding and navigating EHCP processes

5.6 Restorative Approaches and Victims

As part of the statutory duty to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims ¹⁷, the Youth Justice Service has a dedicated Victim Worker (Police Officer) who is responsible for contacting victims of crime at both Out of Court Resolution stage and through the Court process. Victims are offered the opportunity to take part in a restorative justice process, either directly (face-to-face meetings) or indirectly (through 'shuttle mediation' where the Youth Justice Service acts as a go-between). In addition, they are consulted on their views of reparation for the harm caused and this may include community reparation or a letter of explanation or responsibility to the person harmed.

Indirect reparation, where children are able to give something back to the community, participate in development of services or design ways of sharing information with others, continues to be a strength in the Service. Children are not always clear what is being asked of them and a significant part of the work involves building confidence. One child helped develop a leaflet explaining reparation to others and this is now used in introductory work, and another developed a leaflet to help explain the Referral Order process. Children can build on strengths and develop new skills through undertaking reparation and that they are often proud of and affirmed by their work.

Below are some case examples of work completed in the past year for restorative approaches and reparation. All names have been altered for confidentiality.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime-in-england-and-wales-victims-code>

Case Example from Restorative Justice Work

- D was on a Referral Order for an Assault GBH against a victim. Whilst in company with his peers, D was photographed by a security guard when he entered some premises as a trespasser. D then punched the security guard several times in the face and ran off. This caused a fractured cheek bone that required emergency surgery and a metal plate to be fitted.
- D wanted to apologise, and said he was sorry for the harm he had caused. The YJS worker and the YJS Police Officer met with both the child and the victim to consider restorative justice. Initially the victim was reluctant to consider RJ but after understanding that the child was regretful about what happened, they agreed to meet. Individual meetings and shuttle mediation were carried out with both parties to prepare for them to meet. D was shocked to learn the extent of the injury to the victim and he became more determined in apologising.
- The face-to-face meeting went well and was an emotional experience for all involved. The ice was broken initially with conversation and both the child and the victim shared things with each other about their lives. They talked about what happened on the day of the offence and they were able to understand each other's perspective better.
- Feedback from the victim has been that this meeting helped them to gain closure on what happened. The child has shared that he also felt a big weight had been lifted from his shoulders and was glad he had the opportunity to apologise in person.

Case Example from Reparation Work

- I have been working with B for 5 months now. We initially met with his case worker to discuss reparation. We discussed possible activities and listened to B's interests and ideas around what he would like to do for reparation. It was clear that he would like to be outdoors in nature as he felt this was 'good for his mental health'. We decided on reparation at a farm, which is a part of the Avon Wildlife Trust, where we would support the maintenance of their allotment which is used in the catering side of the farm.
- From the very first session, B has been enthusiastic about being outside in such a peaceful setting. B has shown maturity in engaging with staff at the farm and is always polite, respectful and keen to complete the tasks given. It has been a positive experience for B to be able to see the progress of the allotment over the time we have worked there. The staff are always on hand to talk to B about the work he is doing and how much it benefits them at the farm, and the clients they serve. B has thanked the staff for letting him work there and giving him a chance, he reflected that he has enjoyed seeing that he is making a difference and helping others.
- We have worked throughout the seasons and B has never complained about the cold, frost, rain and even snow. Now the weather is more settled, we are making the sessions longer and B is keen to carry on working as long as we can to make sure he gets the task done.
- Working together at the farm, we have built a positive relationship, and this has enabled B to open up about his family life and the difficulties he has faced. He reflects on his past and is keen to make positive changes in his life in order to 'stay on the right path' and 'have a good future'
- B has given positive feedback about his reparation experience stating:

- 'Being here is so peaceful, it really helps my mental health being outside in the peace and quiet'
- 'I could see myself doing a job like this in the future, I really enjoy working outside and seeing all the food grow'
- 'This has helped my mental health so much and it's good knowing I am helping others; I actually look forward to coming'

5.7 Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

Tackling child exploitation and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in B&NES.

Most of the violent offences committed by children do not reach the 'serious violence' threshold. However, there were three fatal stabbings of teenagers in 2022 and 2023 and the community have a heightened awareness of the dangers of carrying knives.

Since late 2019, B&NES has participated in the Avon and Somerset 'hub and spoke' Violence Reduction Partnership, utilising Home Office funding to undertake strategic needs assessments and agree partnership plans for addressing the issues identified and procuring some direct services.

From 31 January 2023, under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, specified authorities including Youth Justice Services, have been required to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. The duties include fully engaging with the relevant local partnership, sharing data, supporting the publication of a strategic needs assessment, advising in appropriate responses and assisting in the delivery of prevention and early intervention initiatives.

Locally, there is a Children's Exploitation Subgroup which reports into the Children's Safeguarding Strategic Assurance Group. There is also a Serious Violence Steering Group, chaired by the YJS Head of Service, which reports into the wider Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership and the Community Safety Delivery Group. The work adopts a public health approach to addressing serious violence, prioritising under-25s involved in public space violence with a particular focus on sharing information at a multi-agency level about individuals, networks and places of concern in order that issues can be addressed collaboratively. The Youth Justice Service has been closely involved in this work from the outset as both areas of work are led locally by the same Head of Service.

The B&NES Partnership have completed a strategic needs assessment. The activity to reduce serious violence that the partnership has commissioned and co-ordinated has included detached youth work, lived experience mentors, Street Doctors Training, Alternative Routes Workshops and Belonging Workshops in Schools, Night Time Economy Joint Briefings, Surrender Bins, Bleed Control Kits, Parent Knife Crime Awareness Sessions and staff training.

5.8 Detention in Police Custody

The Youth Justice Partnership works to prevent children from being remanded or sentenced to custody or held overnight in Police custody wherever possible, and to challenge, understand, address and/or learn from the instances when children are detained.

The long established, multi-agency Custody Review Panel meets quarterly and reviews instances of B&NES children being detained. It undertakes multi-agency self-audits against national and local standards and guidance to ensure that legal and other agreed processes have been followed and that no opportunities to influence a different outcome have been missed. The Panel also promotes excellent standards of information sharing, assessment and planning by the Youth Justice Service and Children's Social Care so that Courts receive high quality information on which to base their remand and sentencing decisions.

Membership is drawn from:

- Youth Justice Service
- Police
- Children's Social Care
- Strategy and Commissioning
- Head of Children's Quality Assurance
- Emergency Duty Team
- Liaison and Diversion Service

The Custody Review Panel reviews all episodes where a B&NES child was held overnight in Police custody in Avon and Somerset, whether charged or not. Police review their Custody Records to ensure that local guidance was followed and where a child was charged, they review practice against the national Concordat.¹⁸ The Emergency Duty Team audit against their own guidance to ensure they were proactive in seeking placements where asked and Children's Social Care audit to ensure a detained child received a welfare visit. Identified learning is recorded and actions agreed, often including sharing the learning with colleagues to influence future practice.

5.9 Remands

The Custody Review Panel reviews secure remands to ensure opportunities to influence a community remand were not missed and to understand whether there are grounds for supporting a Bail application. One child was subject to a secure remand in the area during 2023 - 2024 and none during 2024 - 2025. In the remand episode in 2023, the Custody Review Panel agreed that all other options for bail had been considered and extensively used prior to the Court using the Secure Remand option.

In 2024, it was agreed that in cases of any future remands to custody for children, there would be a multi-agency learning review conducted and led by the BCSSP.

In the coming year, the YJS Partnership and Custody Review Panel will review the new Concordat on Youth Remands ¹⁹ to ensure our local practices are meeting the requirements.

¹⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82211140f0b6230269afee/Concordat_on_Children_in_Custody_ISBN_Accessible.pdf

¹⁹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c05398750837d7604dbc44/youth-remand-concordat.pdf>

5.10 Use of Custody and Constructive Resettlement

Historically, and recently, B&NES has had a very small number of children who are sentenced to custody. It is positive that the custody rate is low, however, those children who are sentenced are among the most vulnerable in society and B&NES YJS and strategic partners work to avoid this as an outcome where possible.

As stated above, in 2024, it was agreed that the BCSSP would lead a multi-agency learning review for any children sentenced to custody. This involves taking a look back at the child's journey through services such as health, education, social care and the youth justice service to identify if any opportunities were missed and learning could be applied to future work.

The Custody Review Panel also reviews instances of any children who are at risk of custody. Pro-active cross-agency identification of children considered to be at risk of custody in the foreseeable future leads to seeking assurance that they have a positive relationship with a professional who is supporting them:

- to keep them safe, and particularly to screen them to understand and help address any exploitation.
- to address their likelihood of offending and manage any risk they present to others.
- to retain or access suitable accommodation.
- to retain or access education, employment or training.
- where relevant, to support compliance with Court expectations.

One child received a Detention and Training Order in 2024 - 2025. A multi-agency learning review, led by the BCSSP, was undertaken highlighting the importance good information sharing when a child moves to a different local authority, ensuring that risks inside and outside the home are fully considered for older children, and how adultification can impact professionals' view of a child's resilience. Good practice was identified in relation to support provided to the child while they were in custody, the use of the social graces tool and to support the child to develop their sense of identity.

The service approach to resettlement is adapted to each child's unique situation, led by the allocated YJS Case Manager and Social Worker who prioritises maintaining positive relationships with the child in custody. Planning for resettlement starts at the very beginning of the sentence to ensure that any children leaving custody have access to suitable accommodation and ETE options.

B&NES YJS has an up-to-date Resettlement Policy which references YJB Case Management Guidance²⁰ and the YJB document 'How to Make Resettlement Constructive'²¹. It is essential that resettlement is planned at the outset of the sentence and adheres to the child first principles.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/custody-and-resettlement/custody-and-resettlement-section-7-case-management-guidance>

²¹ <https://yjresourcehub.uk/custody-and-resettlement/item/610-how-to-make-resettlement-constructive-yjb-document.html>

5.11 Working with Families

Youth Justice Service practitioners are experienced and practiced in working with the parents, carers and families of children open to the service and will provide levels of support and communication with care givers so that the child has the most chance of successfully completing their order or programme.

Support is offered through both individual work directly with parents and carers in their homes and through group work parenting programmes that are delivered by the Connecting Families team in the Local Authority. In 2025, a practice guide has been completed, which has included contributions from parents and carers we have worked with in the service, to guide practitioners in their work with families.

There are 5 practitioners in Compass and the statutory YJS who are trained to deliver the accredited Family Links Parenting Programme, and this knowledge is incorporated into the support we provide, as a service, to parents and carers. YJS support to parents can include mediation work, work to strengthen the relationship between care giver and child and education to parents and carers about exploitation and knife crime.

All aspects of the YJS have close links with Early Help as well as services for children open on Child in Need or Child Protection Plans and children who are Looked After. Practitioners work to ensure plans and interventions are coordinated to avoid duplication as well as not overwhelming parents and children with multiple professionals entering their lives at stressful and difficult times.

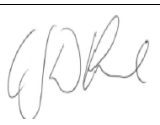
The YJS also provides a wealth of support to parents and carers in relation to education, including advocating to providers to identify and assess for educational needs, and supporting them to navigate the often-complex world of education.

6. Sign off Submission and Approval

This Youth Justice Plan has been shared with the Youth Justice Partnership Board for review and endorsement. The Plan has been signed by the YJS Partnership Board Chair on their behalf and confirms that it covers all sections required by the Youth Justice Board.

In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and responsibilities) England Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of B&NES local authority.

It will be considered for approval by the Council's Cabinet on 10th July 2025 and full Council on 17th July 2025.

Chair of Board	Christopher Wilford, Interim Director of Children and Education Service
Signature	
Date	9 th June 2025

Appendix 1: Budget Costs and Contributions for 2025 - 2026

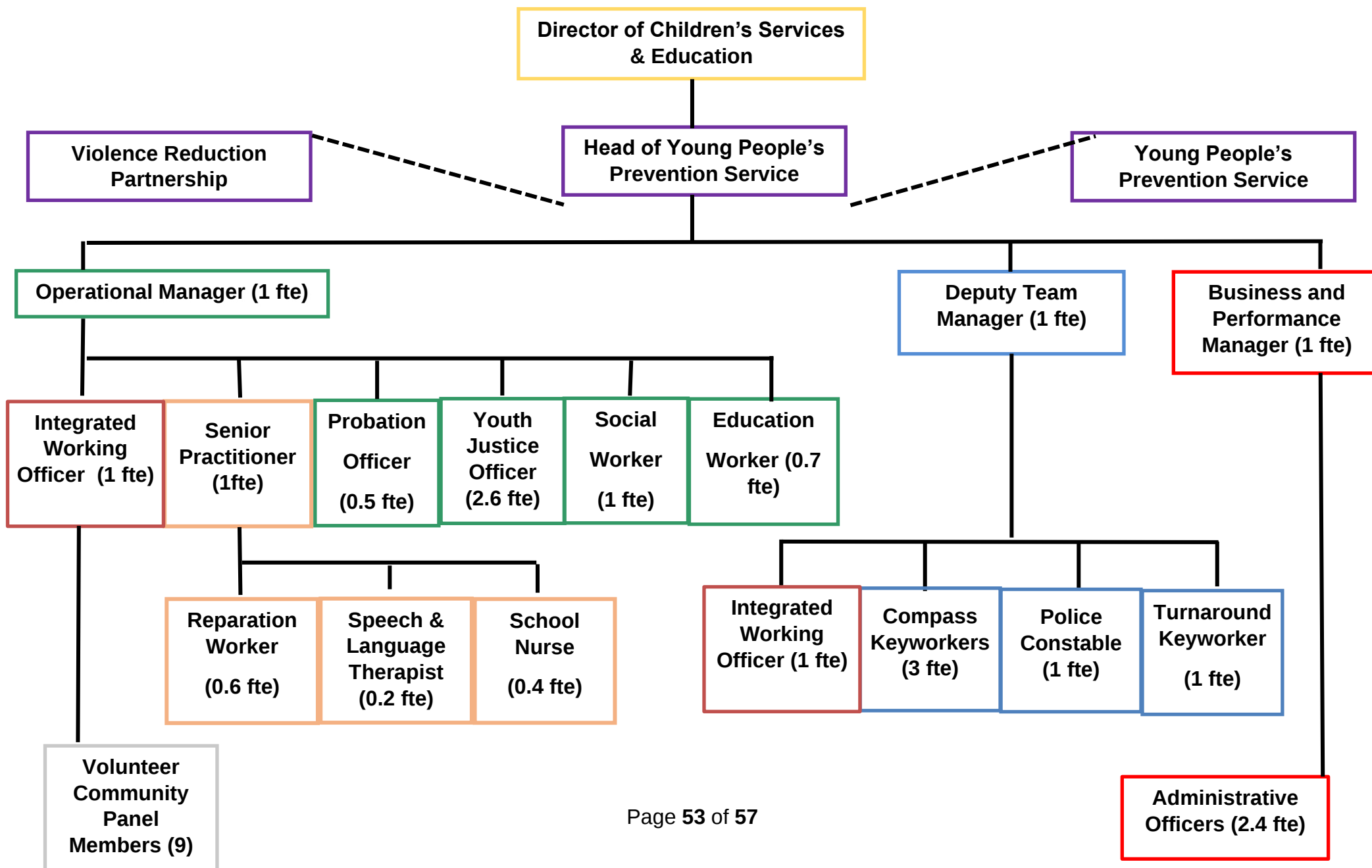
Agency	Staffing costs	Payments in kind	Pooled budget	Total
Police	71,740	1 FTE Police Constable. Access to Police National Computer and Niche	5,000	76,740
Probation	24,090	0.5 FTE Probation Officer and 0.16 FTE Probation Service Officer	5,000	29,090
B&NES ICB (Health)	45,164	0.4 FTE Nurse and 0.2 FTE Speech and Language Therapist	14,885	60,049
B&NES Council (Education and Social Care)	489,896	Keynsham office, HR and finance support (£8906 from EAC05/£9779 from KEA01)	18,685	508,581
Youth Justice Board	£237,728		N/A	£237,728
Ministry of Justice (Turnaround)	37,586		N/A	37,586
Total				949,774

Appendix 2: Staffing Structure

	Strategic Manager			Team Manager			Practitioner			Administrator			Sessional			Student			Volunteers			Total		
	M	F	Other	M	F	Other	M	F	Other	M	F	Other	M	F	Other	M	F	Other	M	F	Other	M	F	Other
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi																								
Asian or Asian British – Indian																			1	1			1	
Asian or Asian British - Other Asian																								
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani																								
Black or Black British – African							1															1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean																			1			1		
Black or Black British - Other Black																								
Chinese																								
Mixed - Other Mixed																								
Mixed - White and Asian																								
Mixed - White and Black African																								
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean																								
Not stated																								
Other Ethnic Group - Any Other																								

Other Ethnic Group - Arab																								
White – British		1			2			14	1		3						1		1	5			24	1
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller																								
White - Irish																								
White - Other White								2															2	
Total		1			2		1	16	1		3						1		3	6		2	27	1

Youth Justice Service Organisational Chart



Appendix 3 Inspection Improvement Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Date to be Achieved	Who
The YJS should ensure all children given an Out-of-Court Resolution receive high-quality assessment activity that considers all risk factors that impact on the safety of both the child and the community.	Deliver a day's training to all practitioners on the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool.	November 2024	OM and SP
	Provide specific guidance to Case Managers around the structure for completion of the sections of the tool around: safety for others and safety and wellbeing for the child.	April 2025	OM
	Deliver a day's refresh training to Case Managers about assessments to keep the child safe and to keep others safe.	June 2025	OM and DTM
	For Managers who quality assure Out of Court assessments to undertake a joint quality assurance exercise to ensure consistency and reflection.	June 2025	OM, DTM and SP
	For YJS Managers to jointly Audit 4 Out of Court Resolutions to ensure consistency and reflection.	April 2025	HoS, OM, DTM and SP
	In Supervision, to ensure that any new behaviours or offences are considered in light of changing assessment of risk of harm or safety and wellbeing.	On going	HoS, OM, DTM and SP

Recommendation	Actions	Date to be Achieved	Who
The Youth Justice Management Board should develop its understanding of quality victim work practice and implement effective local performance indicators.	Review the new HMIP Guidance and YJB Guidance regarding Victim work.	March 2025	HoS, BPM, and DTM
	Agree with the YJS Partnership Bboard what our performance measures will be and frequency of reporting.	March 2025	HoS and the Board
	Ensure the YJS Victim Worker understands the reporting requirements.	April 2025	DTM and BPM
	Create a Victim Reporting spreadsheet	April 2025	BPM
	Ensure all participants in restorative justice have an opportunity to provide feedback on the service.	May 2025	DTM
	Submit an annual report to the Board for oversight of victim work.	April 2026	DTM and BPM

Recommendation	Actions	Date to be Achieved	Who
The Youth Justice Management Board should facilitate attendance by all key professionals at the joint decision-making panel in line with the Youth Justice Board's national guidance.	Partnership Board Members for CSC and Education to nominate an Education and Children's Social Care professional to join the Out of Court Resolution Panel.	April 2025	HoS and the Board
	YJS to provide training and input about OOCR's and their role to the new Panel Members.	June 2025	HoS and OM
	YJS to review OOCR practice guidance in light of panel changes	July 2025	HoS and OM

Recommendation	Actions	Date to be Achieved	Who
The Youth Justice Management Board should review the use and application of the formal risk register to ensure it is effective in identifying, prioritising, managing and mitigating risks to the YJS.	Review the current Risk Register with the B&NES council department for a suggested re-structure.	April 2025	HoS and the Board
	Request two Board Members to contribute to the Review of the Risk Register.	June 2025	HoS and the Board

	Table the revised Risk Register to the YJS Partnership Board in July.	July 2025	HoS
	Review the new risk register on a bi-annual basis	January and July 2026	HoS and the Board

Roles:

HoS = Head of Service

OM = Operational Manager

DTM = Deputy Team Manager

SP = Senior Practitioner

BPM = Business and Performance Manager