

Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026

Youth Justice Plan

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Introduction

The Annual Youth Justice Plan is a strategic blueprint that charts the course for our collective efforts to support children, young people, and their families—ensuring they have every opportunity to realise their full potential. As a committed and experienced partnership, we have a proven history of working collaboratively to tackle the root causes of offending, address systemic inequalities, and create positive, sustainable opportunities for children to thrive within our community.

Guided by the Youth Justice Board’s national commitment to a 'Child First' approach, the West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) has embraced this ethos. This child-centred philosophy places the rights, needs, and aspirations of children and young people at the heart of service delivery.

Our partnership acknowledges that meaningful impact cannot be achieved in isolation. The work we undertake depends on strong, collaborative relationships with statutory agencies such as Thames Valley Police, Health, and Probation, alongside vital contributions from voluntary sector organisations and educational partners. This Youth Justice Plan is designed to strengthen those connections further, enhance joint delivery mechanisms, and align our shared resources towards interventions that are proven to work—delivering measurable, long-lasting change for children, young people, and families in West Berkshire.

Above all, this plan reflects our unwavering commitment to transforming the lives of children in the justice system. We understand that many of these children have faced significant adversity, trauma, and disadvantage—realities that are acknowledged and reflected in the profile data included in this plan. In response, we remain steadfast in our efforts to deliver responsive, trauma-informed services that prioritise prevention, diversion, and relationship-based practice. Through this plan, we set out the progress made over the past year, track key performance indicators, and outline a clear, ambitious pathway for the year ahead—one that aspires to see every child and young person in West Berkshire live a life free from crime and full of possibility.

Vision and strategy

The West Berkshire YJST is committed to delivering an innovative, child-centred approach to youth justice, grounded in prevention, equity, and meaningful partnership. Our strategic vision is to:

- Work proactively with the wider Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership to identify and address risk factors linked to poor outcomes—including children’s offending—at the earliest possible stage. We aim to ensure that high-quality, evidence-informed services are in place to prevent offending and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

- Place the best interests of children at the heart of everything we do, recognising their distinct needs, rights, capacities, and potential. Our approach is child-focused, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and rooted in strong, supportive relationships. We are committed to helping children build positive futures and realise their full potential as active, valued members of society.
- Tackle disproportionality across the youth justice system, ensuring that every child is treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity—regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.
- Champion early intervention, prevention, and diversion, promoting a childhood free from unnecessary involvement in the formal justice system. We actively work to reduce the criminogenic stigma associated with justice system contact and support children to engage with pro-social opportunities instead.
- Strengthen multi-agency support for families, working alongside partners to ensure that parents and carers are equipped with the tools, guidance, and confidence they need to nurture strong, healthy relationships and positively influence their children's behaviour.
- Embed children's voices and lived experiences into all aspects of our work, ensuring that services are shaped by meaningful collaboration with children and their carers. We are committed to fostering active participation and wider social inclusion as core components of our practice.
- Collaborate with the Building Communities Together Partnership, local Courts, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), and the Local Criminal Justice Board, to uphold the rights of victims, protect communities, and build public confidence in a youth justice system that is fair, restorative, and responsive.
- Promote children's individual strengths, interests, and aspirations, supporting the development of a positive, prosocial identity. Our goal is to create the conditions for long-term desistance, safer communities, and fewer victims of crime.

Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements



The YJ Management Board and Community Safety Partnership (CSP) form one Building Communities Together Partnership (BCT) chaired by the Chief Executive of the Local Authority. The grouping of these partnerships in such a way allows the group to take a strategic approach to crime and disorder issues. The partnership has representation from Health, Public Health and Wellbeing, Probation, Police, OPCC, Fire Service, Children and Family Services, Adult Services, Registered Social Landlord, Voluntary Sector and council members amongst others. The Partnership agrees resource priorities including the YJST, agrees responses to relevant national and local policy development, and monitors performance by exception reporting. Since the YJST was formed, the BCT partnership has delegated the operational management to the YJ Management Group.

The YJ Management Group meets quarterly, chaired by the Director of Children's Services. All statutory partners are represented at a senior level and Building Communities Together. The Terms of Reference of the YJ Management Group include overseeing the development and implementation of the Youth Justice Plan; considering resource and workload issues; receiving reports in relation to audits of effective practice; diversity and disproportionality; approving policies and protocols. The group also ensures that Public Protection and Safeguarding issues are addressed at each meeting. In July 2024 the YJ Management Group took part in a development event with input from the Youth Justice Board in addition to workshops to develop and enhance the groups effectiveness.

The YJ Management Group takes responsibility for monitoring overall performance of the YJST with a Performance Management Report taken to each meeting. The YJ Management Group holds the YJST to account regarding the timely submission of data, compliance with

secure estate placement information, completion of standards for children audits and oversight of Critical Learning Reviews following community safeguarding and public protection incidents. Where there are areas of under-performance further multi-agency action plans are developed and agreed by the YJ Management Group with implementation monitored. Any issues that require a strategic response are escalated to the BCT Partnership. The group have benefitted from the attendance of parents, victims and young adults who have worked with the YJST giving their feedback and insight into the work of the team, areas of strength and areas of development. During the last year the YJ Management Group received the following additional reports and presentations by team members:

- Victim Audit Findings
- 'Who's In Charge' Parenting Programme report
- Summer Holiday Activity Review
- Adolescent Female Violence and aggression Report
- Supervision Audit
- Drugs in schools policy
- October Half Term Activity Review
- First Time Entrants Analysis
- Reflective Review
- Audit – APIS Report
- Annual feedback report
- February Half Term Activity Report
- Implementing PDAT Report
- HMIP Inspection Programme presentation

Each of these reports and consequent recommendations are considered by the YJST Management Group, with the YJST Manager held to account for the delivery of the actions. This is also an opportunity for team members to receive direct feedback from the Management Group and strengthen the relationship between both.

Line management of the YJST sits with the Service Director of Children and Family Services, the YJST Manager is a member of the Service Manager Team within Children and Family Service, also being responsible for managing Early Help services, co-chairing EMRAC (Exploitation, Missing Risk Assessment Conference) and the Channel Panel. This positioning, with governance through the Building Communities Together Partnership and line management within Children and Family Services enables the YJST to be strategically positioned in the most appropriate place - straddling welfare and justice. The Director of Children's Services also sits on the overarching boards.

West Berkshire Council Strategy 2023-2027 has five priorities: A Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all – vulnerable children and families supported at early stages to prevent the need for more critical or statutory services, solutions are identified to prevent homelessness, supported to access the mental health services that they need, good education attainment results. **Thriving communities with a strong local voice** – Encourage and support our local



communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them, Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives, Work with partners and the local communities to enhance our main towns and large villages, Help our villages to remain vibrant long term. These elements of the strategy are embedded in the Youth Justice Plan.

The YJST Partnership ensures that the prevention of children offending and re-offending are key to the Youth Justice Plan and are strongly linked to other planning frameworks including the Police and Crime Plan 2024-2029 from the OPCC. The plan focusses on protecting communities, people and property, with specific targets that impact children ranging from early intervention in schools to addressing serious violence. The Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board has a set of objectives and priorities: Improving services for Victims and Witnesses, increasing public confidence in the Criminal Justice System and reducing reoffending with a number of specific actions that are delivered by the partnership affecting children. As noted the YJ Management Group reports to the BCT Partnership and feeds into the development of the partnership strategy. Progress against actions and performance targets is monitored, with exception reporting. The Operational Manager attends the Police partnership TTCCG meetings, Knife Crime and Serious Violence and Mini MAPS meetings to respond to local crime and anti-social behaviour and address emerging problems.



The YJST Service Manager attends the Berkshire Local Criminal Justice Group, reporting to the Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). Thames Valley YJS Managers share the representation at the LCJB sub-groups. The YJST Service Manager chairs the LCJB Children's Board and sits on the LCJB. There is direct representation by the Reading YJS Manager representing the Thames Valley YJS Managers at the MAPPA Strategic Group (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements), Wokingham YJS Manager representing at the Disproportionality Group and West Berkshire YJS Service Manager at the Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel.

Communication with the courts is through the Youth Court User Group with a Youth Panel magistrate a member of the YJST Management Group.

YJST Managers continue to contribute to key groups such as the Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC), Life Chances Team Meetings for Children in Care, Children and Young People Voluntary Sector Meeting and Young Persons Housing Panel. In addition, the YJST Manager is a member of the Children's Prevention and Early Help Partnership, Independent Scrutiny and Impact Group and Child Exploitation Strategic Group.

The YJST Partnership has effectively ensured that the needs of children who offend are on the agenda across criminal justice and children's welfare partnerships and are therefore able to input into relevant planning processes.

In terms of staffing the YJST has the following:

- Service Manager 0.6 fte
- Operational Manager
- Assistant Team Manager
- Two social work posts one at senior level
- Two YJST Officer posts
- Turnaround Worker
- Restorative Justice and Volunteer Coordinator
- Information Analyst 0.6 fte
- Probation Link Officer 0.7 fte
- Teacher 0.6 fte
- Seconded Police officer
- CAMHS Health and Justice Physical Health Nurse 0.27 fte
- CAMHS Health and Justice Advanced Mental Health Professional 0.33 fte
- CAMHS Health and Justice Speech and Language Therapist 0.2 fte
- Apprentice Business Assistant
- Business Support Officer

The YJST comprises of full time and part time staff, 15 female staff and 2 male staff with one post in recruitment phase. All the staff who hold cases have been trained in Universal Safeguarding, Child Exploitation, ACE's, Trauma Informed Practice, Assessment Planning and Intervention (APIS), Prevent and Restorative Justice. A comprehensive and ongoing training programme is in place to ensure continued professional development for the staff group.

Local context – West Berkshire

Profile of the Community Resolution, Turnaround and Prevention Cohort



Profile of the Out of Court Disposals Cohort



Profile of Court Disposals Cohort



Progress on previous plan:

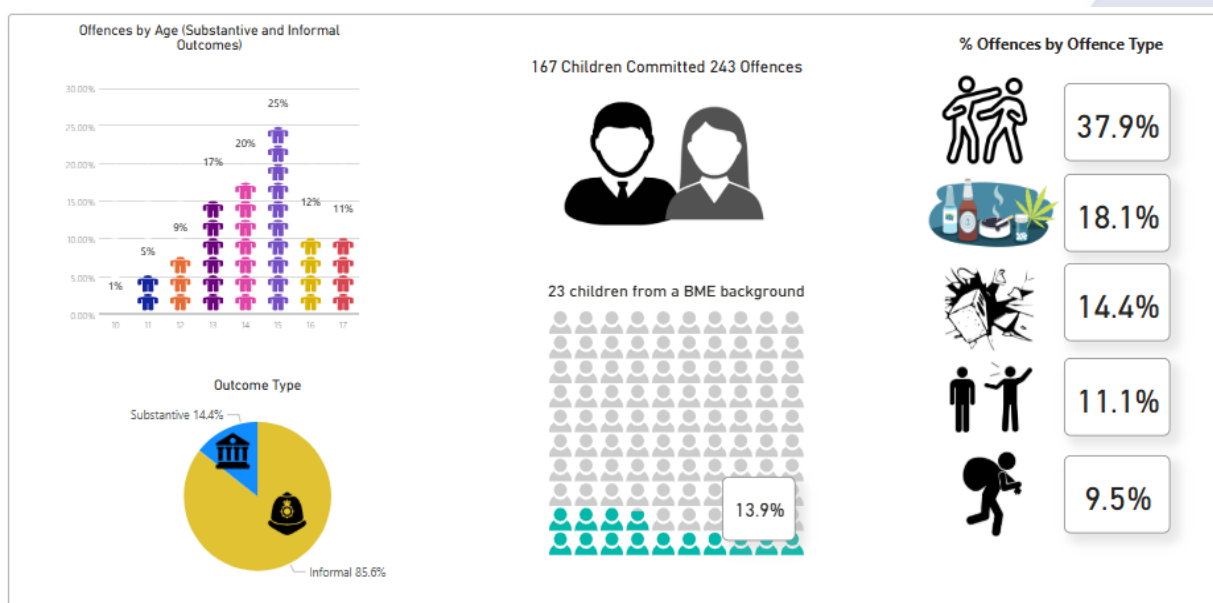
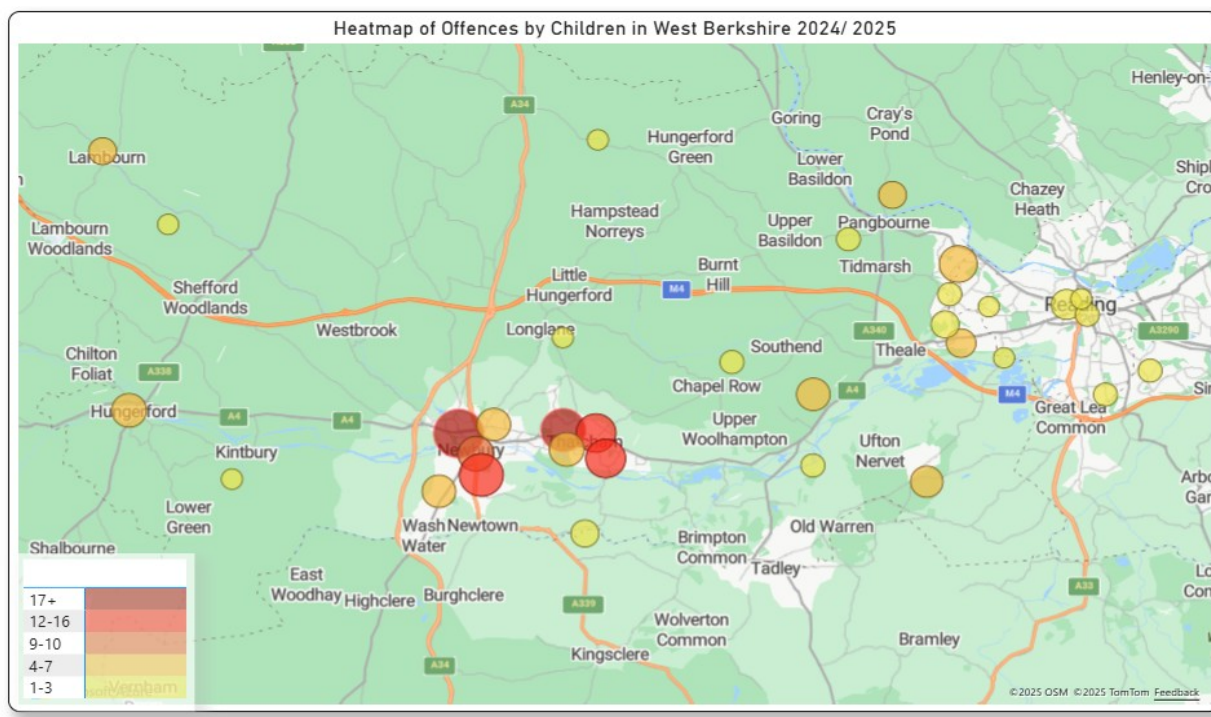
The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 set out a number of targets to be carried out across the partnership, these were pulled together in one action plan. There were 35 targets set out in last year's plan, the Service Manager provides an update on the action plan which is overseen and scrutinised by the Management Group via quarterly reporting. A RAG rated action plan and members of the team attend the Management Group meetings to present their reports of work undertaken. Throughout the year some targets were reprioritised due to staff vacancies and changes within the partnership actions.

Key achievements of the last year have been;

- The introduction of Act Now – OPCC funded one year project to support children in police custody for serious violence and weapon offences
- Introduction of Joint Decision-Making Panels (JDMP), partnership panel to make outcome decision for children
- Outcome 22 and deferred caution – development work continued, and this outcome is available in Thames Valley from April 2025
- Implementation of the National Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool (PDAT)
- Development of child friendly assessment and plans
- AQA awards – 18 children achieved certification for their achievements
- AQA awards have been used to create opportunities for children not in full time education.

- Turnaround funding has been used to create opportunities for children and families to integrate into their local communities, access to half term activities and spending time together
- First Aid – the Nurse and Police Officer delivered basic first aid courses to children, they receive an AQA award upon successful completion
- Arts awards – partnered with City Arts to provide children the opportunity to create and submit art to the Koestler Award
- Youth Café at the local youth centre has been used to meet children in the community and introduce them to universal services
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) forum led by Forensic Physiologist offered reflection and advice to led practitioners and arranged by YJST
- National Girls Forum – over 80 YJS teams across England and led by YJB to learn from research and good practice
- Reflective practice; 7 direct observations, 3 assessment reflections and 6 reflective practice forums throughout 24/25
- Parenting - Increase in parenting referrals and attendance at Who's in Charge (WiC) group
- YJST team members continue to deliver specialist inputs to the parenting group and Volunteers training sessions; such as sleep training, GRT cultural awareness and child first briefing.
- Social Work student successfully undertaking her final year placement.
- Implementation of Communication Tools resource created by Speech and Language Therapist to support communication friendly interventions and practice
- Implementation of communication passports to support the voice of the child in ensuring their needs are known by all professionals who work with them
- The Nurse has delivered 14 vaccinations to children that have missed routine childhood vaccinations
- Health cards – the nurse has introduced these to enable staff to prioritise, be aware and have an understanding of individual children's allergies/health conditions ensuring that children, when in our care, are always supported and safe
- Health screening for all children open to YJST, providing early identification of any unmet needs
- Continued positive professional relationship with the courts

Performance over the previous Year:



In 2024, there was a 14.4% increase in the number of children receiving either an informal or substantive outcome, rising from 146 in 2023 to 167 in 2024. This follows a 15.6% decrease the previous year, with the total number of children in 2024 still lower than in 2022. The increase is due to a 27.7% rise in children receiving informal outcomes, while those receiving substantive outcomes decreased by almost a third (31.3%), from 32 in 2023 to 22 in 2024.

Of the 22 children given a substantive outcome, 14 were First Time Entrants to the youth justice system, a further decrease of 46.2% from 2023. Of these FTEs, 6 (42.9%) had previously received a Community Resolution compared to 65.4% in the previous year. Conversely, the number of young people receiving either a first informal or formal outcome (First Time Offender) increased by 28.9% from 97 in 2023 to 125 in 2024.

Offences leading to a Community Resolution increased by 23.3% from 159 in 2023 to 196 in 2024. This follows a 17.2% decline in the previous reporting period. There has been a decline in the number of offences leading to a substantive outcome from 63 in 2023 to 47 in 2024.

Offence Type

In 2024, the most prevalent offences leading to either a substantive outcome or a Community Resolution were:

- **Violence against the Person: 37.9% (92 offences)**
- **Drugs: 18.1% (44 offences)**
- **Criminal Damage: 14.4% (35 offences)**
- **Public Order: 11.1% (27 offences)**

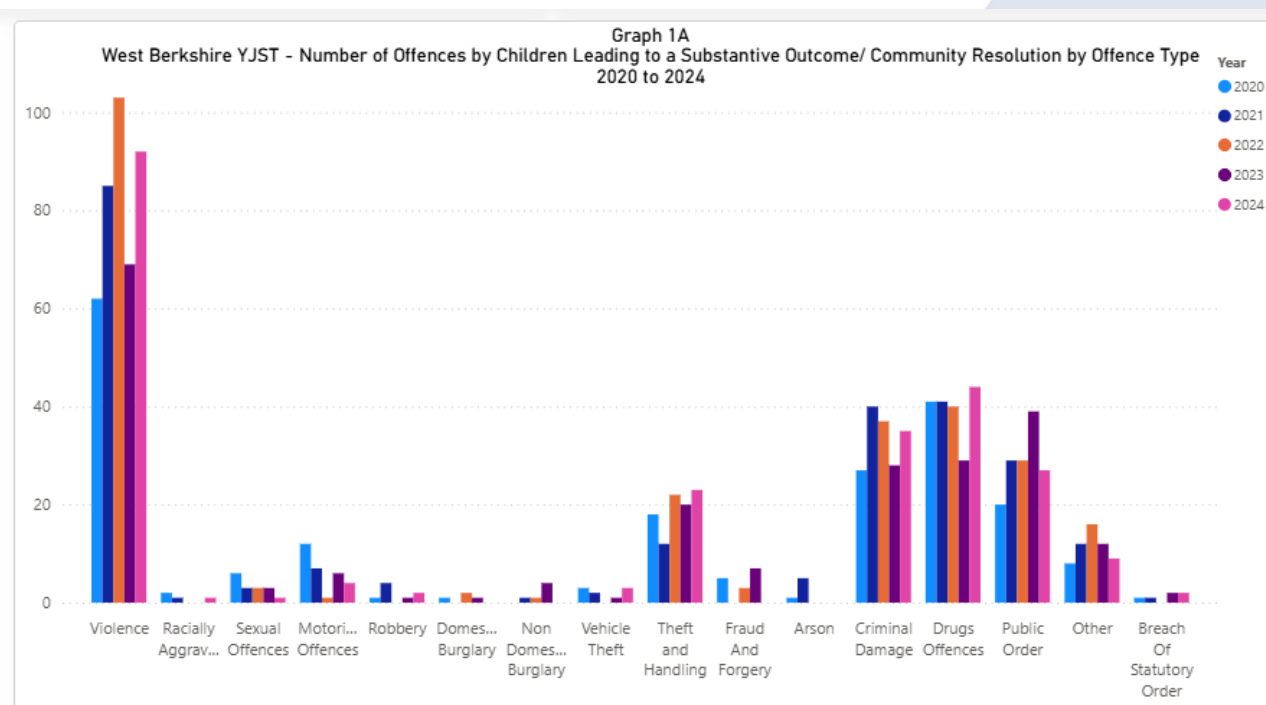
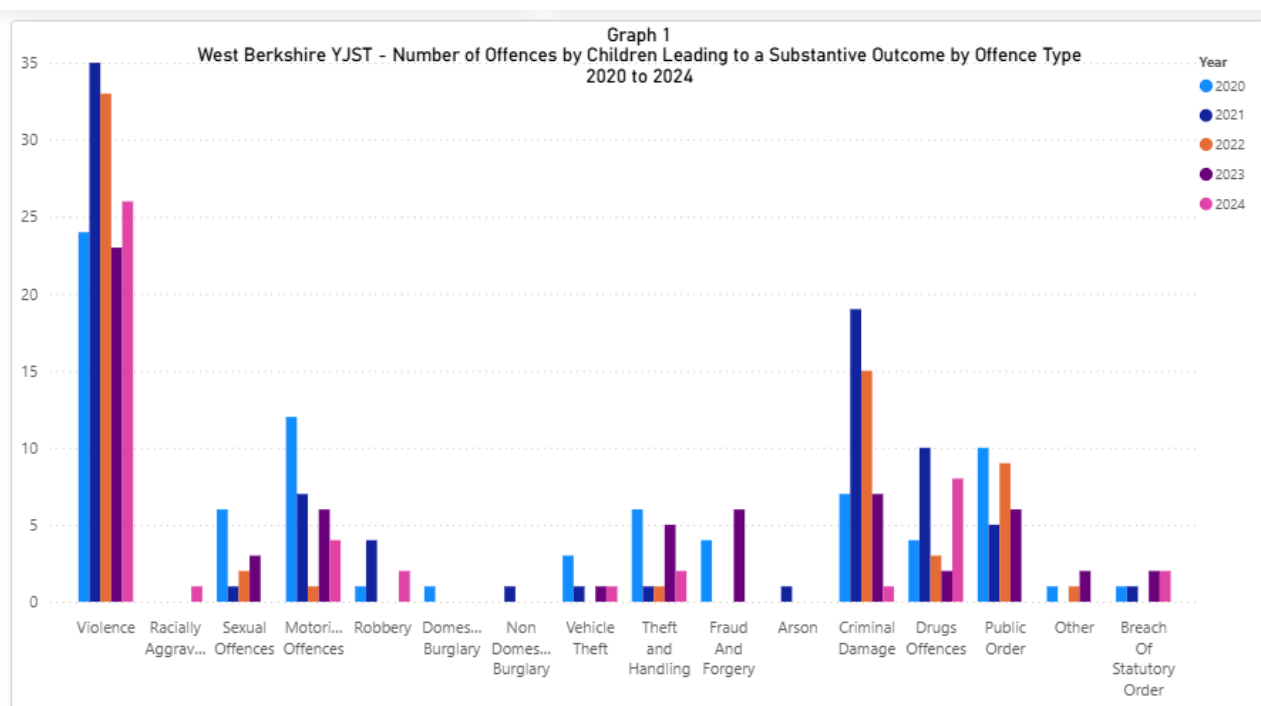
Violence against the Person remains the most prevalent offence category, increasing by 33.3% from 2023 to 2024. This follows a decline of a similar margin in the previous year. The number of children committing violent offences has increased, but by a lower rate (15.3%), indicating that more children are committing multiple violent offences.

- Ninety of the ninety-two offences have a YJB Gravity level of 3, two have a gravity level of 5.
- A lower proportion of offences led to a substantive outcome (28.3%) compared to 33.3% in 2023.
- The most common violent offence remains Assault by Beating (62 offences).
- Four children committed seven offences of violence against an emergency worker.
- Three children received outcomes for possessing a knife blade/sharp pointed article in a public place compared to five in the previous year.

Drug offences recorded a sharp increase of 51.7%, from 29 in 2023 to 44 in 2024, now representing 18.1% of all offences. This follows a decline in the previous reporting year. The number of children committing drug offences increased by a lesser rate of 24.1%. An increased proportion of offences led to a substantive outcome in 2024, rising from 6.9% in 2023 to 18.2% in 2024. Of the 44 offences committed, 40 relate to possession of a class B drug and 4 to the supply of a class B or class A drug.

Following a decline of 24.3% in 2023, the number of **criminal damage** offences committed by children increased by a similar percentage, up 25% from 28 in 2023 to 35 in 2024. The proportion of offences leading to a substantive outcome declined from 25% in 2023 to 2.9%. Notably, one child committed five of the seven offences that led to a substantive outcome in 2023.

To summarise, a 27.7% increase in children receiving an informal outcome has directly contributed to the overall 14.4% increase in the number of children entering the youth justice system which follows a significant decrease in the previous reporting year. Correspondingly, the number of offences committed by children increased by 9.5% to 243 with the average number of offences per offender remaining at 1.5. Please refer to Graphs 1 and 1A.



Children Committing Crime

Following a decline in 2023, the number of children entering the youth justice system has increased by 14.4% from 146 in 2023 to 167 in 2024.

Boys:

- In 2024, 117 boys committed 169 offences, an increase of 18.2% and 9%, respectively. However, the number of male offenders remains lower than 2022 and at a similar level to 2021. The number of offences leading to a substantive outcome continues to decrease and now represent 19.5% of outcomes compared to 29.7% in the previous year. Offences by offender has decreased from 1.6 to 1.4 and is lower than that of the female cohort.
- Offences of violence by boys increased by 62.2% from 37 in 2023 to 60 in 2024. This is lower than the 2022 rate. While the number of offences leading to a substantive outcome remains the same as the previous year at 23, they now represent 23.3% of outcomes compared to 37.8% in 2023.
- Drugs offences committed by boys has increased by 48.1% overall. 20% of male drug offences lead to a substantive outcome compared with 3.7% in 2023, potentially reflecting an increase in seriousness of drugs offending.

Girls:

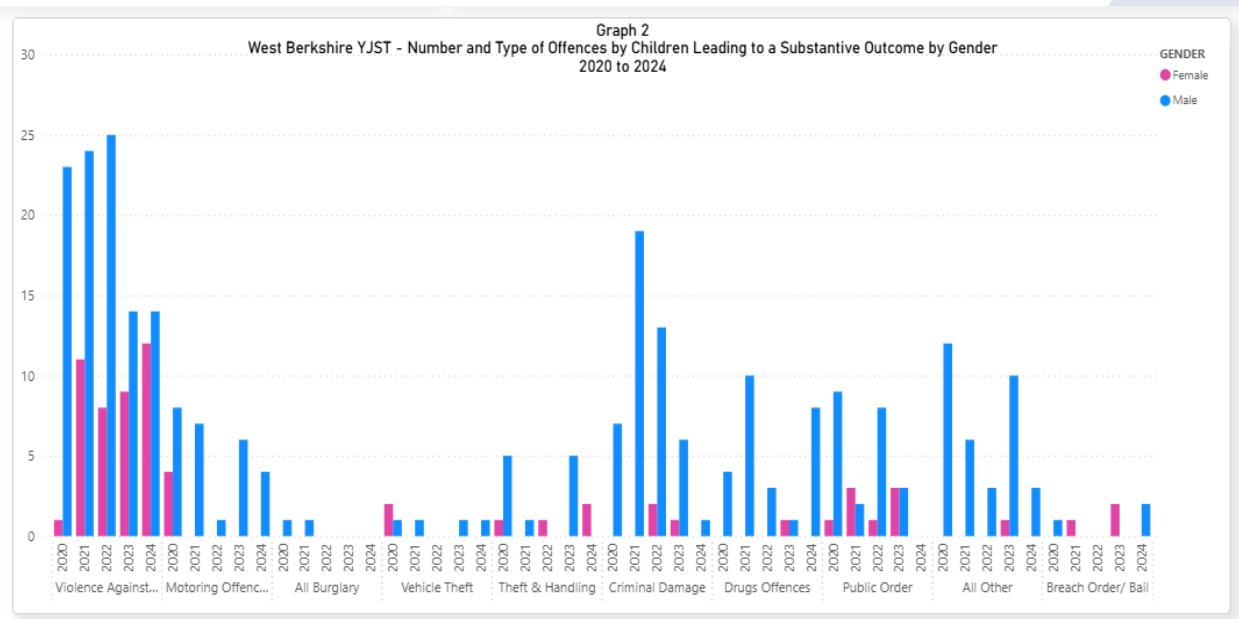
- The number of female offenders has marginally increased by 3 from 47 in 2023 to 50 in the current period. With a higher increase in boys, the proportion of females in the cohort has declined from 32.2% to 29.9% of offenders. Of note, females commit more offences per offender at a rate of 1.5 versus 1.4 for boys.
- The distribution of girls' offences by offence type has not changed significantly with the number of violent offences remaining the same as 2023 (32) and representing 43.2% of all offending. The proportion of the violent offences leading to a substantive outcome has increased from 28.1% in 2023 to 37.5% in 2024. There have been small increases in Theft and Handling (13), Criminal Damage (8) and Drugs offences (4).

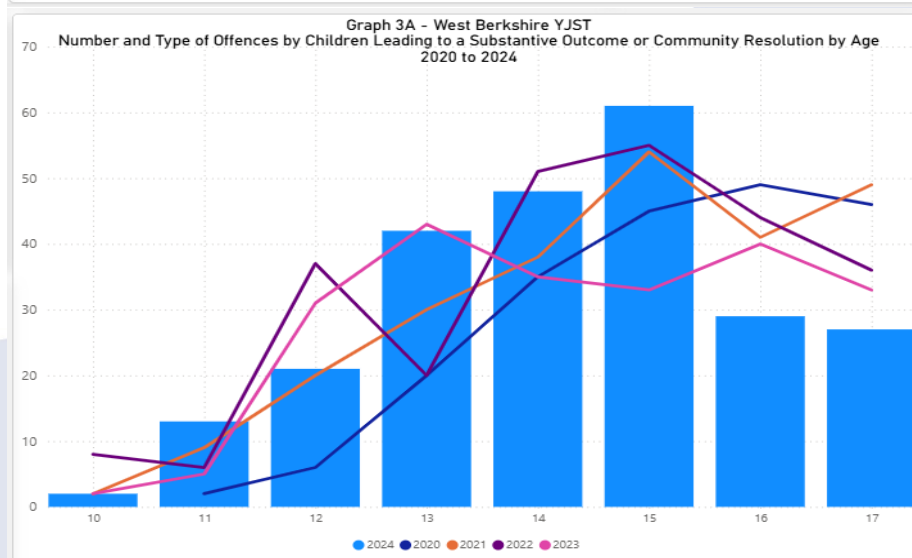
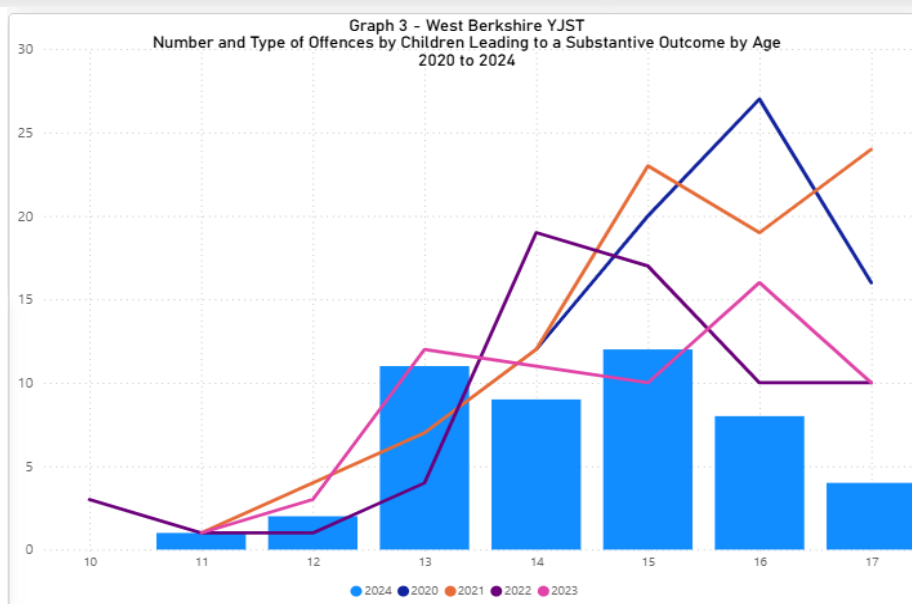
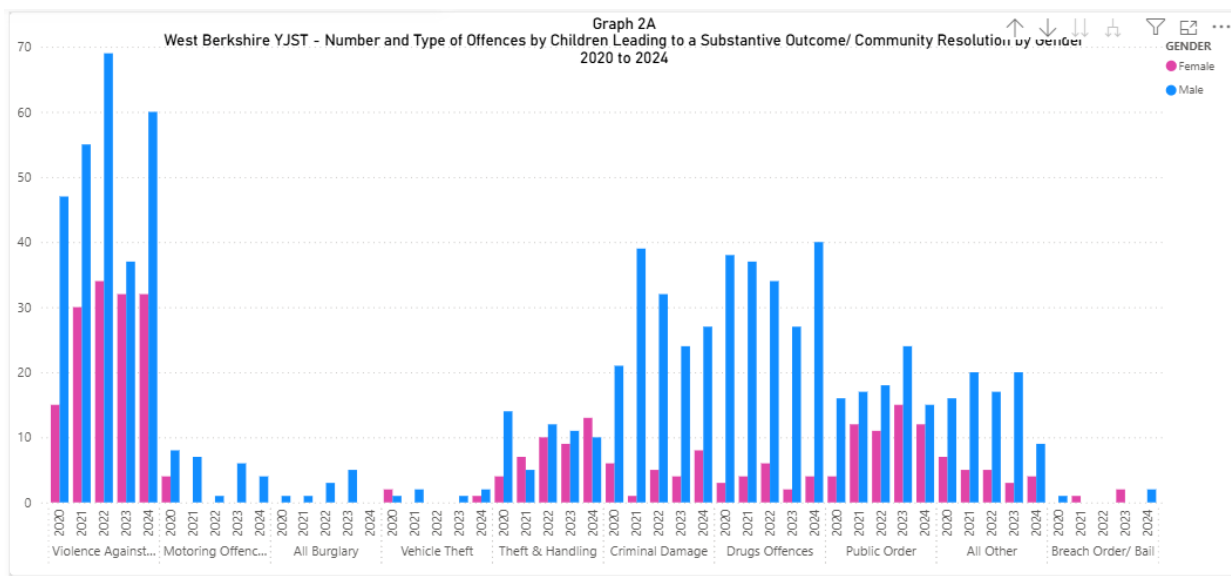
Age:

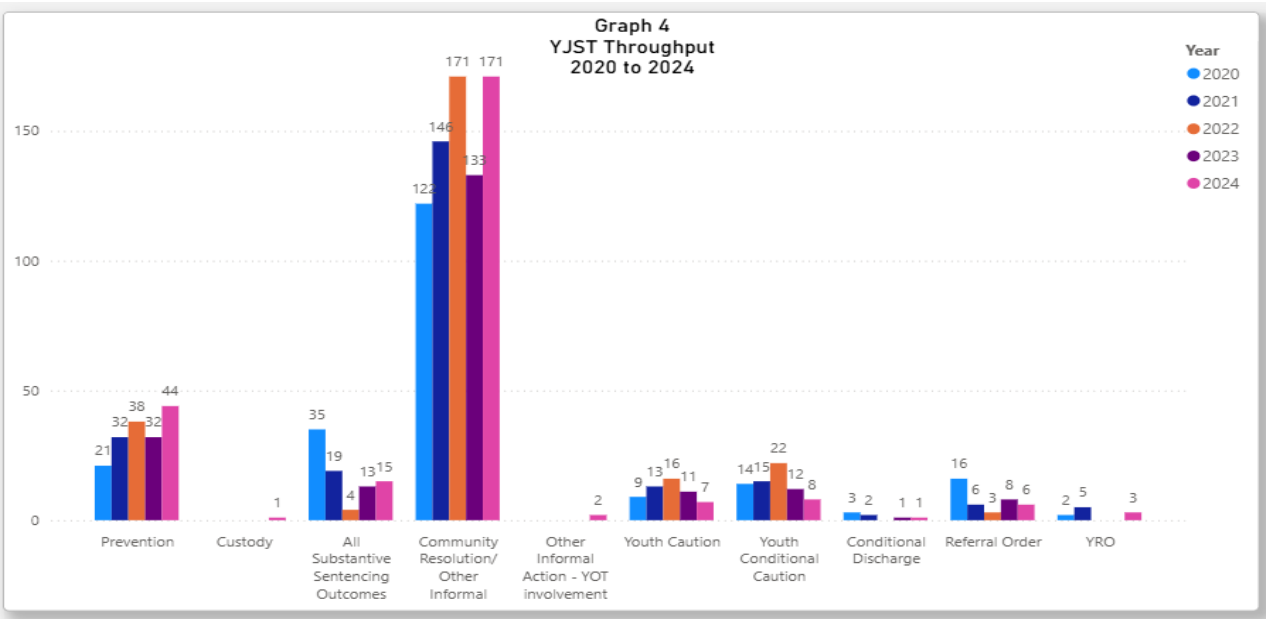
- The peak age for receiving either a formal or informal outcome has increased from 13 in 2023 to 15 in the current reporting period, which is more in keeping with previous years with the peak age sitting at 15/16. In the 15-year-old group, 44 children committed 25.1% (61) of all offences. 2024 has also seen a spike in offences committed by 11-year-olds with 9 children committing 13 offences.

- The peak age for offences leading to a substantive is 15. The age at which children receive an informal outcome increases with each age group, peaking at 15 and falling sharply at the ages of 16/17.
- The peak age of offending for girls is within the 13-15 years age group with 56 offences committed and representing 75.7% of all offending. All female substantive outcomes fall within this group. The peak age for boys is 15, up from 13 in the previous period with this age group now committing 24.9% of all male offences.
- The youngest offenders were 11 years old for boys (6) and 10 years old for girls (2).
- Violent offences were committed by children in all except the 10-year-old age group with girls more likely to commit offences between the ages of 13-15 and boys peaking at a similar age but represented across the age ranges.

The detailed demographic information combined with the offence type data and the profile date enables the youth Justice Support Team to target intervention and support in a more effective manner understanding the cohort better.







Risks and Issues:

Challenges, issues and risks are monitored via the quarterly YJST Management Group. These include;

- Financial pressures: there remains pressures across all budgets both within the Local Authority and in the wider partnership. There have been changes in the bidding process that the Youth Justice Service can utilise.
- Education for children: there is a high level of suspension and exclusion from school within West Berkshire. Poor attendance of children in education remains a significant risk factor to offending.
- Turnaround project funded by the MoJ will end in March 2026, this creates less resources for supporting children at the point of arrest and when the police take no further action. Consideration throughout this year will be required to seek to absorb this type of work into the work of the team.
- There continues to be significant increase in girls who offend, 31% is above the national average of 14% (2023-24)
- HMIP inspection of West Berkshire YJST in December 2022 recommended the partnership works together to secure a seconded Probation Officer, this continues to be a challenge, however there have been significant mitigations in place to address the identified needs.
- Thames Valley Police has changed the model of policing from one that is co-terminus with the Local Authority to one that covers three Local Authorities – there is a risk that there will be a reduction of resources or dilution of focus on West Berkshire.
- Local Authority devolution is on the horizon and will affect how and where services are delivered in the future.

- There is significant change in wider Children's Services with the implementation of Family Help reforms – this is both a risk and opportunity to ensure that vulnerable children receive the right support at the right time by the right person.
- There are changes taking place with the development of the Violence Prevention Partnerships and Young Futures Panels – the timeframe for the implementation creates a risk for the delivery of this duty.

Child First:

The work of the YJST is unpinned by the national Youth Justice Board (YJB) Child First Principles which are set out below:

As children	Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.
Building pro-social identity	Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.
Collaborating with children	Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.
Diverting from stigma	Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

Source: [PowerPoint Presentation \(yresourcehub.uk\)](#)

Voice of the child/feedback:

The YJST sought the views of children and volunteers in the production of the YJ plan. Children receiving an intervention and volunteers were asked their views using a 'what should the YJST focus on in 2025/26 survey. They picked their top four priorities and there was a box to add additional suggestions.

Children said -

The top three areas that were most important were:

1. Preventing children from committing crime
2. Helping Children stay in education and do well
3. Supporting children with positive activities / community events

Volunteers said –

The top three areas that were most important were:

1. Helping Parents to support their children
2. Address serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding
3. Helping children stay in Education and do well.

Volunteers added additional suggestions which included access to substance misuse support.

In addition to those areas the YJ Management Group recognised the following areas would also benefit from attention:

1. Supporting children from groups which are over represented
2. Diverting children to outcomes that don't damage their future
3. Work with families, particularly younger siblings

The YJST seeks ways to support children to provide feedback about the service they receive at the YJST and we support children working with the YJST to engage in wider forums/opportunities to have their voices heard. These include:

- Children and their parents are invited to provide feedback in reviews of their intervention, their views on the service lead to changes in the intervention delivery and any themes are considered to change wider service delivery
- All children who work with the YJST, and their parents are invited to complete a confidential questionnaire at the end of their intervention and the Service Manager reviews all of these and makes amendments to services if required – last year a total of 37 questionnaire's (21 children and 16 parent) were received. An annual report is written for the Management Group that captures that feedback
- Groups take place on an occasional basis focusing on specific topics, these allow in-depth exploration of a topic with a group of young people and subsequent actions taken
- All young people are informed of the complaints process at the start of the intervention, and sign to say that this has occurred
- All parents completing parenting courses with the YJST provide feedback on their experience of the group work
- All victims of crime involving children in the YJST are asked for feedback on services provided by the YJST, particularly restorative interventions.

Resources and services

The YJST is funded from a variety of sources, as outlined in the table below, The Secretary of State under their power in section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has the power to make grants to local authorities for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services. There are certain grant conditions attached to this funding, West Berkshire YJST complies with all the conditions as set out in the grant conditions documents.

The YJST uses the Local Authority funding, Youth Justice Grant, partner contributions and available additional grants to deliver youth justice services with the aim of reducing the number of children in the youth justice system and preventing further offending.

The YJST is active in seeking to use other funding beyond the core funding to extend the opportunities to support and engage with children at an appropriate time. These opportunities include:

Turnaround – funding from the Ministry of Justice is secure until March 2026, during this year decisions will be made about any future funding of the project. The YJ Information officer is part of a national evaluation of the scheme which will inform any future funding arrangements.

Act Now – the initial funding is in place until November 2024, however, through careful use of resources and collaboration with Turnaround, the reach has been extended until March 2026. West Berkshire YJST will work with other YJS and the OPCC to look at future funding opportunities for this scheme.

Violence Prevention Partnership – Thames Valley is a Violence Reduction area and as such has funding directed towards this area of work. Under the auspices of the OPCC there is funding being directed to each Local Authority to develop and implement initiatives to prevent offences of violence, as such the YJST is involved with the Building Communities Together Partnership to utilise this funding in the ongoing prevention of serious violence.

YJ Management Group Development:

New members of the YJ Management Group liaise with the either the Service Manager or Chair of the Management Group to receive an induction into the role of group member. A comprehensive induction pack is provided to each of the members of the group detailing their roles, responsibilities and contribution. The YJ Management Group has the responsibility for the YJST governance, strategically leading across relevant partners to ensure a high-quality service is provided to all children and victims. During the past year the management group have received reports and presentations on a range of work undertaken by the team, alongside partnership updates and performance reports. The YJB has provided input on their Oversight Framework to support the understanding of the group members.

During 2024 there were changes in the membership of the Youth Justice Management group, with a number of long-standing participants finishing their partnership roles. Therefore, in July 2024 a development session took place to provide training, deepen understanding and contextualise the functions of the Youth Justice Management Group as a foundation for the group to further develop its governance function for the Youth Justice System locally.

Workforce Development:

The YJST recognises that our most important asset is our staff therefore we place a very high importance on recruiting, inducting, training and retaining our staff. The YJST take an individual, operational and strategic approach to workforce development. Individual level – annual appraisals take place identifying individual professional development, ensuring any professional registration requirements are met, such as social work registration. Operational level – There is a range of learning activities and events that take place throughout the year to ensure the team reflects on practice and new guidance. These include reflective forums, learning from audits and benchmarking of national reports to improve the work with children, families and victims. Strategic level – National and Partnership updates provide us an

opportunity to continue to develop our approach and services. Such as, the introduction of the Prevention and Diversion Assessment tool. The continued focus on Child First and integration in policy.

The training plan for 2025/26 builds on the training delivered over the previous years and professional backgrounds of the team. In the past year bespoke training was delivered – implementing the prevention and diversion assessment tool and follow up quality assurance work, social work practice education development, neurodiversity, child first in practice, speech and language resources and case specific reflective learning. One team member completed their Assessed and Support Year in Employment (ASYE) and one business administration apprenticeship was completed. Training and development that is planned for 2025/26 includes, Appropriate Adult and MAPPA refresher training, health led training, AIM3 intervention, Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate, cognitive bias and police leadership training. Development activities will also include learning from HMIP inspection reports and any National publications. The team offer development and training opportunities to partners and agencies to deepen their understanding and approach to children in the justice system.

Evidence-based practice and innovation:

West Berkshire YJST is a small team therefore doesn't usually attract wider services to undertake evaluation and randomised control samples as required by academics. However, there are a number of areas of emerging practice and innovation that have been piloted in the locality.

- Health packs – The Nurse created health packs following research about health inequalities in oral health and her own findings from health assessments with children. These include dental care with information on how to brush your teeth as evidence shows that poor dental hygiene affects physical and mental health.
- Food hampers – following a number of children attending sessions hungry the Nurse suggested food be readily available to children. Food hampers are now in both rooms where children attend, they can help themselves and there are bags to take food away with them. YJ Officers can also take food hampers to children at home or in the community.
- First aid – The YJ Police Officer and Nurse have partnered to deliver basic first aid training with children. This is open to all children, and they gained AQA award recognising their completion and achievement.
- Communication passports and a range of resources – the Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) regularly delivers training to the team. This year a SLC pack is available to all workers with a range of resources to support their work with children. Communication Passport training has taken place so YJ Officers can create passports and these are overseen but the SaLT, creating more time for direct intervention by the SaLT.



- Positive activities for children – A booklet has been updated providing children with information on a range of community clubs and organisations. This is provided to all children open to YJST at their initial session to support community integration.

Standards for children

There has been no national requirement to complete a formal self-assessment against the Standards for Youth Justice Services, the last being in 2023 against Standard 2: work in court. In February 2025 the YJB published a report with the findings of the national audit submission. The report underscores the importance of ensuring that children receive fair treatment and appropriate support during court proceedings and provides valuable insights into areas where improvements can be made to improve the experiences of children at court. The Assistant Team Manager has undertaken observations of court staff throughout this year as a commitment to ensuring good quality practice is undertaken.

Each year the YJST sets out a number of internal audits to assess the work of the YJST against standards for children, HMIP standards and codes of practices. All audits are written into a report and presented for scrutiny at the Management Group meetings, all actions are overseen by the Group.

The action plan enclosed with the YJ Plan sets out the planned internal auditing for the coming year.

Service Development

There are not any recent HMIP inspections or critical learning reviews that require service development. However, during the last year we completed an internal reflective learning review following a child being sentenced to custody following several breaches of a Community Order.

Reflective learning review: The first section of the reflective review was specifically for YJST staff who worked directly with the child and allowed the participants to talk through their involvement across the timeline. The second part included additional external partners and reflected on what went well, what was a challenge and what steps needed to be taken next. The review highlighted a range of positive, learning/reflective/questions along with some areas of development. The learning review and seven action points was presented to the Management Group for scrutiny in January 2025.



There are a number of themes that our action plan will focus on; these include:

1. Enhance Early Intervention and Prevention

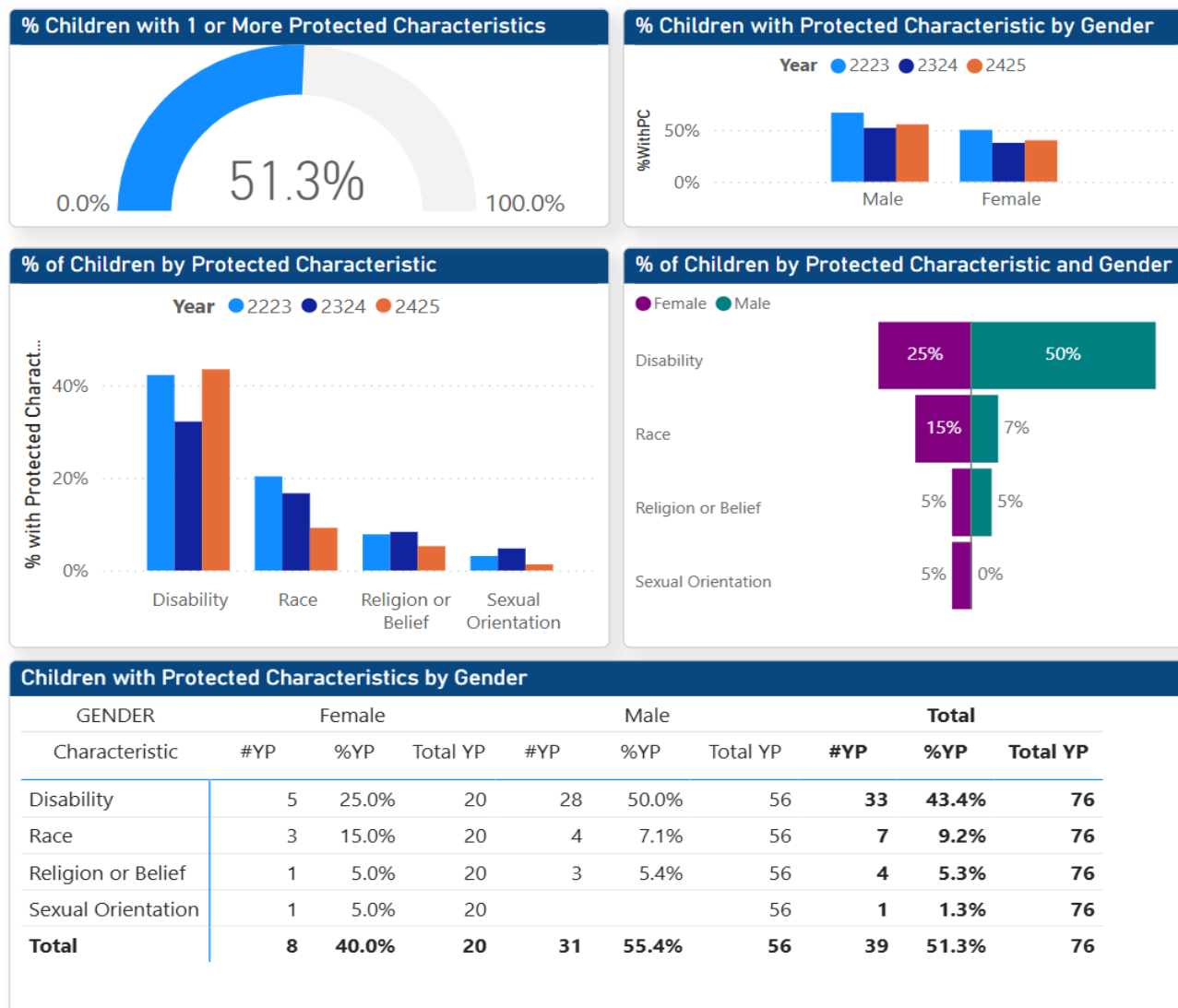
- Expand and evaluate the use of prevention letters through Mini-Maps, and targeted education (e.g., E-bike misuse).
- Increase school-based interventions through the Positive Intervention Programme (PIP).

2. Strengthen Evidence-Based and Reflective Practice

- Support staff in using evidence-based tools (YEF Toolkit, What Works Centre).
 - Promote reflective practice through structured discussions and learning from inspections.
3. Improve Out-of-Court Disposals and Diversion
 - Fully implement and evaluate Youth Deferred Prosecution (YDP).
 - Maintain and strengthen Joint Decision-Making Panels (JDMP) for consistency.
 4. Advance Public Protection and Risk Management
 - Deliver and evaluate responses to violent offences (e.g., “Act Now”).
 - Conduct audits and training to improve risk assessment and MAPPA engagement.
 5. Promote Inclusion, Equity, and Cultural Competence
 - Conduct disproportionality audits and monitor protected characteristics.
 - Deliver culturally competent training to staff and support to underrepresented communities.
 6. Support Education, Training, and Employment Outcomes
 - Strengthen multi-agency approach to reduce exclusions and improve attendance.
 - Broaden engagement through AQA awards and revised safer schools policy.
 7. Embed Health and Wellbeing Support
 - Train staff on trauma, communication needs, and first aid.
 - Evaluate and roll out communication passports.
 8. Elevate Victim Engagement and Restorative Practices
 - Benchmark and audit victim-related practices.
 - Increase feedback from victims and improve initial contact processes.

National Priority areas and KPIs:

Children from group which are over- represented:



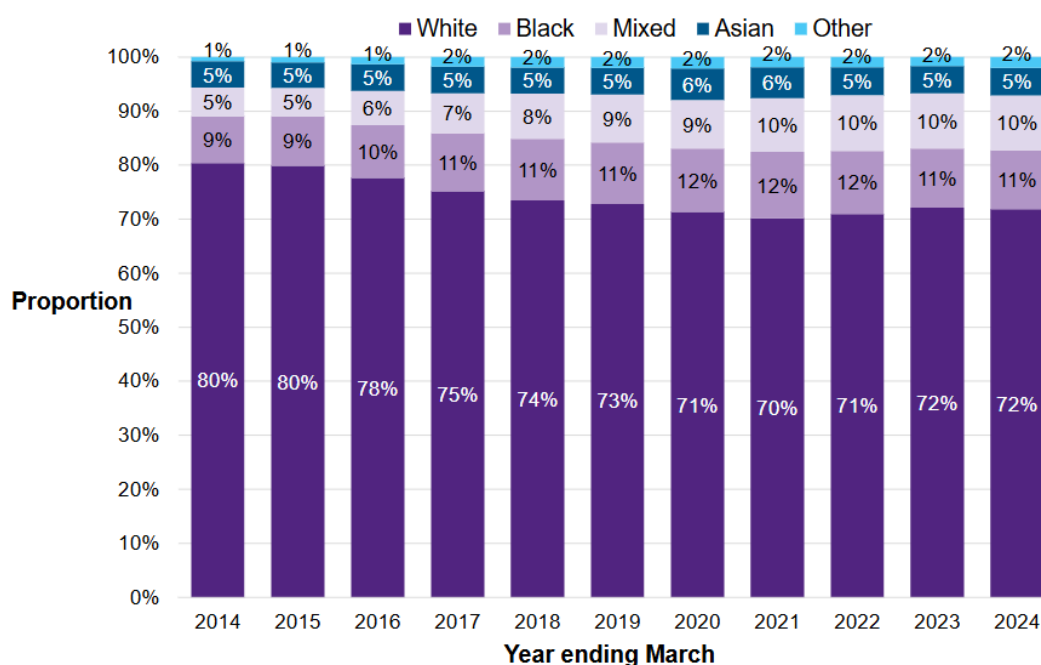
The YJST monitor the caseload of children involved with the YJST in addition to those who have come into contact with the police through other reasons for example stop and search or children who are excluded. Where areas of over representation or disproportionality are identified, the YJST partnership seeks to understand the drivers for this over representation and address those with those who have the power to make changes.

There were 23 children from a GRT/ethnic minority background who committed 32 offences representing 13.8% of the offending population and 13.2% of all offences committed respectively. Of the 32 offences committed, 15.6% resulted in a substantive outcome, compared with 19.9% of offences committed by young people from a white background. In terms of seriousness of offending, 50% of offences committed by children from a GRT/ethnic minority background are categorised with gravity 3 or above compared with 53% for children

from a white background. The annual school census for secondary schools showed that the proportion of GRT/ethnic minority pupils in the general West Berkshire secondary population was 14.6% in 2023. The GRT/ethnic minority population is therefore marginally underrepresented in the youth justice system in West Berkshire.

Statistics produced by the Youth Justice Board show that 28% of **children receiving a caution or sentence** in England and Wales in 2024 were of ethnic minority. This compares to 4.5% of children in West Berkshire in 2024. Of note this uses the Ethnicity 5+1 groupings which classifies children from a GRT background as white. See graph below.

Proportion of children receiving a caution or sentence by ethnicity, England and Wales, years ending March 2014 to 2024



In 2024, 29.9% of children receiving either an informal or substantive outcome locally were female. Of these, 22.7% received a caution or sentence. This is higher than the national average of 15% in 2024, which itself has risen from 14% in 2023—suggesting a national trend of increasing female involvement in the youth justice system.

- In 2024/25, 76 children engaged with an intervention with the Youth Justice Service (YJST). Of these, 39 children (51.3%) were identified as having 1 or more Protected Characteristics. This compares to 46.4% in 2022/23 and 60.9% in 2021/22.
- Males are more likely to be identified as having a Protected Characteristic than females – 55.4% versus 40%
- Disability is the most common Protected Characteristic (43.4%). This has increased from 32.1% in 2022/23 but is a similar level to 2021/22 (42.2%). Boys were twice as

likely as girls to have disability as a Protected Characteristic (50% vs. 25%).

- The proportion of children with race as a protected characteristic has declined from 16.7% to 9.2%. In the current cohort, 15% of girls were identified with this characteristic, compared to 7.1% of boys, reversing the trend of the previous two years.
- 5% of girls were identified with sexual orientation as a Protected Characteristic. No boys in the 2024/25 cohort were identified with this characteristic.

Policing:

West Berkshire YJST sits within the Thames Valley Police (TVP) area, from 7th May 2025 the West Berkshire Local Policing Area (LPA) moved to a Berkshire West Local Command Unit (LCU). The YJ Police Officer will be managed under the newly formed Harm Reduction Unit.

Previously there have been strong links with officers of all ranks within the LPA, such as schools officer, safeguarding police officers with children who are at risk of exploitation, police sergeant within the anti-social behaviour meetings, police inspectors overseeing knife crime and neighbourhood problem solving.

There have been strong partnerships with the Criminal Justice Team which include the Youth Justice Unit – OOCR decision makers and the YJ Police Officer was managed through the CJT and there are regular joint supervisions.

The YJST Service Manager has links with the LCU Chief Inspector and Superintendent who sit as part of the Management Group and Management Board. The Service Manager has wider links through the local criminal justice board and partnership meetings such as OOCR scrutiny panel and Children's Board.

Strengths:

- Strong engagement at LCU and TVP level
- Joint problem-solving approach to individual children and wider issues
- Grant funding by the OPCC to address ASB and prevention of offending
- The Service Manager sits on the LCJB and chairs the LCJB children's board and sits as a YJS manager on the OOCR Scrutiny panel, placing them at a strategic level within the partnership
- Joint OOCR decision making panels have commenced this year creating a robust oversight for decisions

Challenges/risks:

- TVP restructure and moving away from LPA to Local Command Units model – this could impact on the strong local partnership approach with resources covering a larger area, dilution of West Berkshire within a larger policing area
- There is a proposal to reduce the capacity of the YJST full time seconded Police Officer under the LCU arrangement

FTEs per 100,000 10-17 year olds: Outturn Jan 23 – Dec 23 = 146, Outturn Jan 24 – Dec 24 (latest figures) = 79

A first-time entrant (FTE) is a child receiving a formal police or court disposal for the first time, thus entering the youth justice system. A First Time Offender (FTO) is a child who receives either a first informal or substantive outcome within the period.

The YJST in conjunction with the Thames Valley Police introduced a prevention scheme in September 2018 enabling the police to identify young people who displayed behaviour below a criminal threshold but that without support may become a first-time entrant. In addition, a Drug Diversion Scheme was launched in West Berkshire to direct young people caught in possession of illegal drugs to a substance misuse service that can educate, treat and support those young people rather than use the formal criminal justice system.

In terms of national reporting the measure in relation to FTEs is per 100,000 10–17-year-olds. From Q1 2023/24 the MoJ are no longer providing quarterly data updates from PNC. The YJB now derives the FTE data from quarterly case level data YJS submissions.

The most recent measure for January 2024 to December 2024 is 79, a 45.9% decrease from the previous year's outturn. This is significantly lower than the national (160) and regional (142) outturns. There has been a further rise in First time Offenders, increasing by 9.1% from 110 in 2023/2024 to 120 in 2024/2025.

The YJST has undertaken further local analysis of FTEs and FTOs during 2024.

In addition to the key FTE and FTO measures, the quarterly graphs also show a four-quarter moving average. For FTE, this shows no significant spikes over recent quarters with a gradual decline. Conversely, The FTO moving average shows more fluctuation over time, stabilising in recent quarters, although with a gradual upturn.

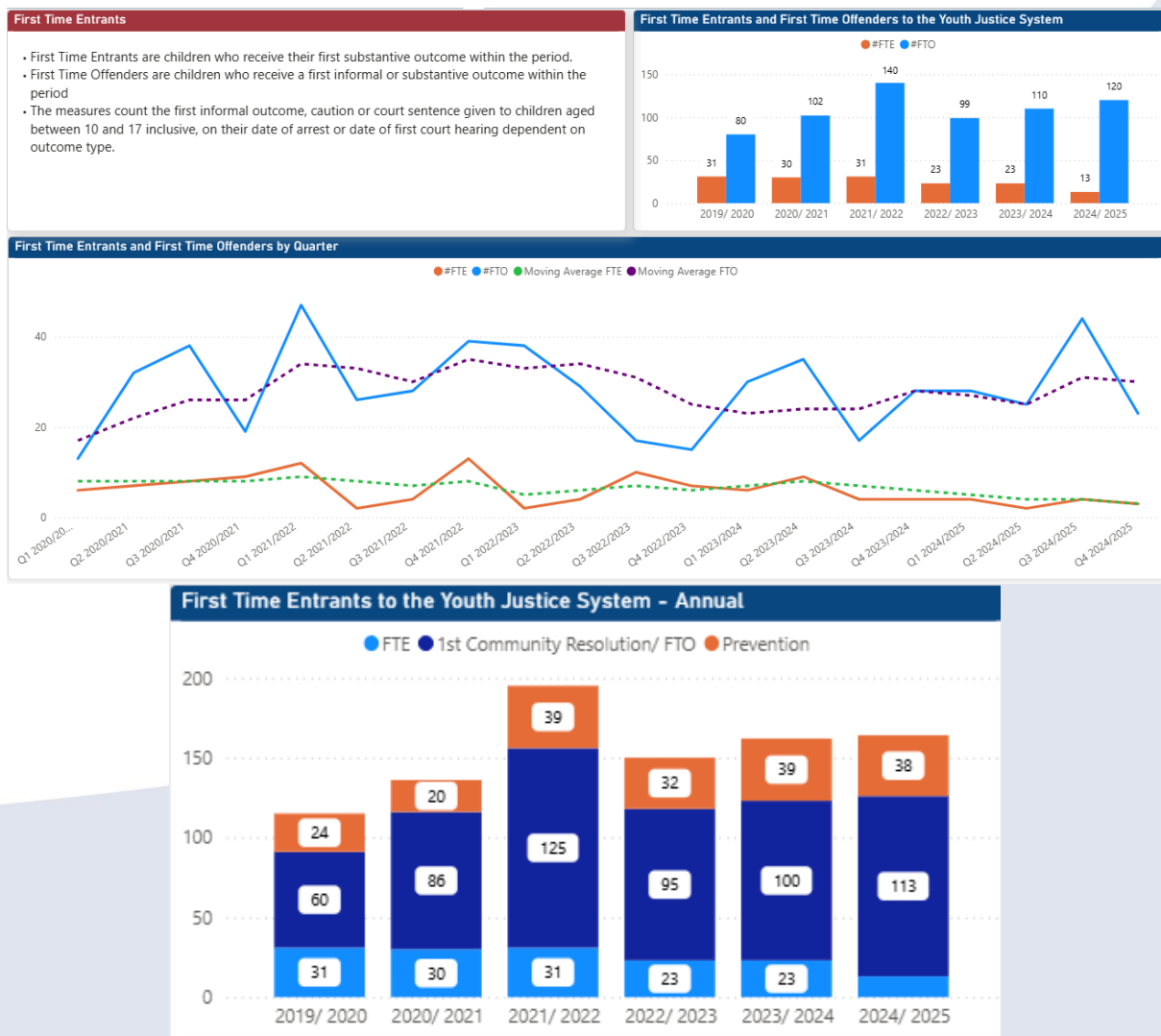
FTE (First Time Entrants)

- In 2024/25 there were 13 FTEs, a reduction of 43.5% from the previous reporting period. Of these, 46.2% had previously received an informal outcome, compared to 56.5% in 2023
- 11 of the 13 FTEs (84.6%) received an out-of-court disposal in the form of a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution and 2 children received a Referral Order.
- The peak age for becoming an FTE has declined from 15-16 to 14 for the current cohort and this is representative of both boys and girls.
- 23.1% of children are from a GRT/ethnic minority background, compared with 17.4% in 2023. However, the number of children has decreased from 4 to 3.
- The cohort records the lowest number of girls (1) in recent reporting years with boys now representing 92% of the cohort.

- Violence continues to be the main offence type for which a young person becomes an FTE representing 47.6% of all FTE offences. There has been an increase in children becoming an FTE due to drugs offences, with 3 children committing 6 offences and all receiving an out-of-court disposal.

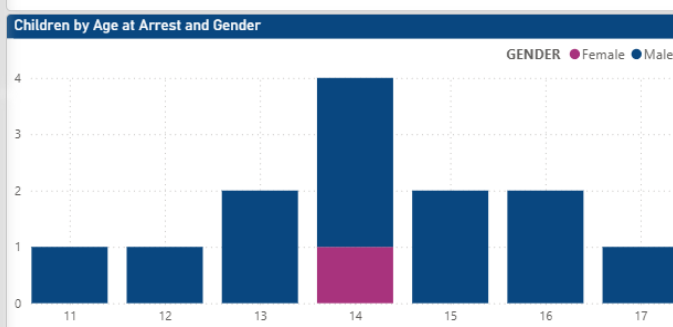
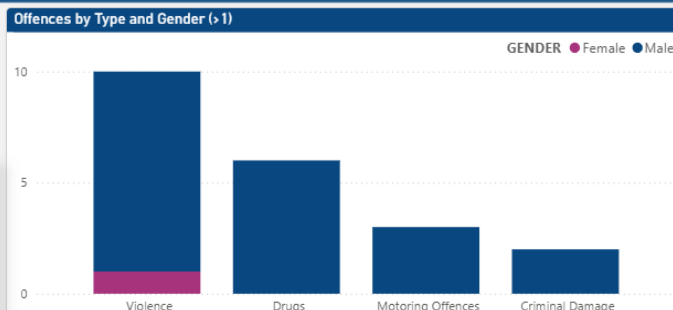
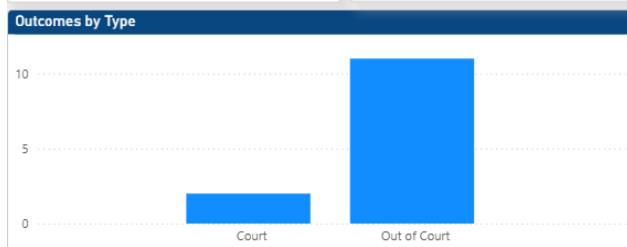
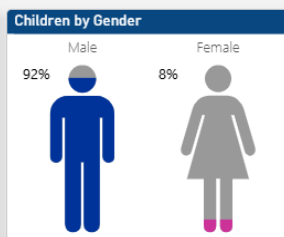
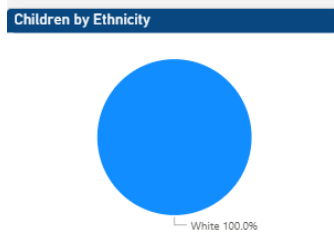
FTO (First Time Offenders)

- In 2024/25, there were 120 FTOs, an increase of 9.1% from the previous period.
- Compared to FTEs, a higher proportion of young people receiving a first outcome are girls (26.7%) although this has declined from 37.3% in 2023/24.
- The highest proportion of FTOs are in the 14/15 age band (40.8%). For girls, the peak age is 15 (28.1%) and for boys the peak is 14 (22.7%)
- The FTO cohort sees an increase in the proportion of children from a GRT/ethnic minority background from 6.4% in 2023/2024 to 16.7% in the current period
- Violence and drugs are the most prevalent offences overall and for boys while girls are more likely to become an FTO for offences of violence, drugs and theft and handling.



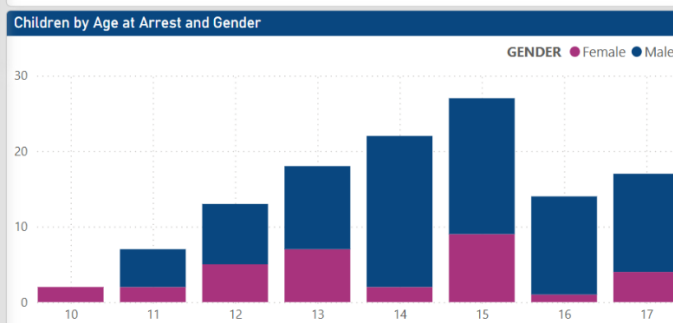
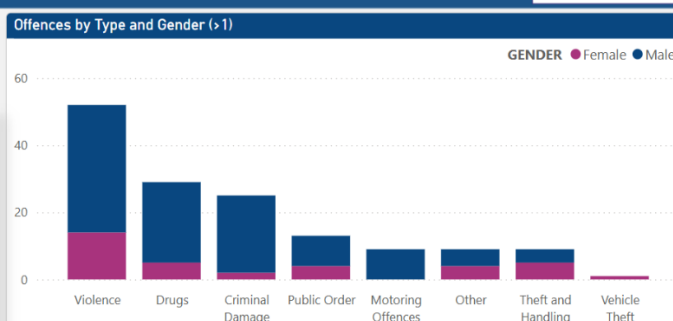
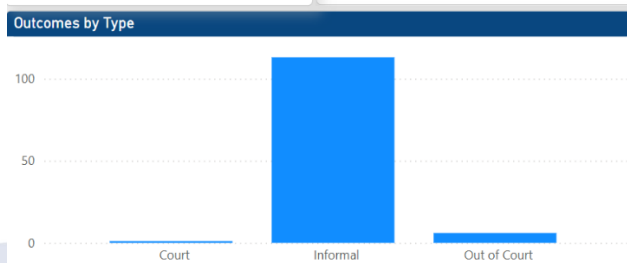
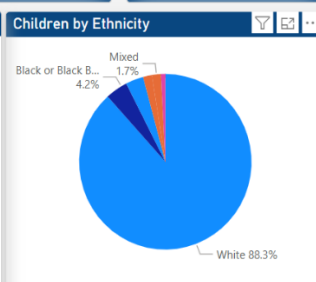
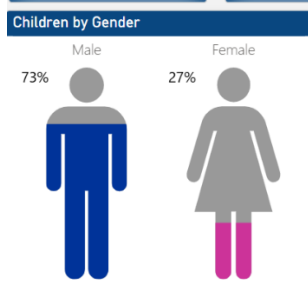
FTE Overview - 2024/25

# Children	# Outcomes	Prev CR	# Offences
13	13	6	21



FTO Overview - 2024/25

# Children	# Outcomes	# Offences
120	120	147



Prevention:

The YJST have worked in partnership with other agencies to prevent children entering the youth justice system. Where Thames Valley Police identify children behaving in an anti-social manner which and has the potential to escalate into the criminal space, they write a

‘prevention letter’ to the parents outlining the specific behaviour that is causing concern, which is hand delivered and explaining that they will be notifying the YJST who will be in contact. The letter is also sent to the YJST who allocate a worker to undertake a home visit. During the visit the YJST worker undertakes a brief assessment with the view to delivering an intervention. In 2024/2025 there were 40 prevention letters issued, with 8 successful interventions taking place and 3 open at the time of this plan.

The YJST also work in partnership with secondary schools and the TVP safeguarding team delivering the Positive intervention Programme (PiP) aimed at working with students who have committed offences in school but are not being formally processed through the criminal justice system, or there are behavioural concerns identified, and exclusion maybe considered. When a pupil is referred, they are allocated a worker either in the Police Safeguarding Team or YJST who will undertake one to one work within the school setting to address the presenting behaviour and support them with their education. In 2024/2025 there were 44 children referred to PIP along with a group work session. 3 children did not engage, and 2 children were not offered a service following review of the information. 84.5% did not go on to offend. In relation to exclusions one child was permanently excluded and one child moved to another after PiP involvement.

Turnaround:

The YJST received Turnaround grant funding from the MoJ in December 2022 for a three-year project to provide early help style voluntary assessments and intervention to children - offering voluntary, needs driven, family focused support to children to de-escalate their behaviour and get their lives back on track. Since the commencement of this grant we have offered children early engagement with support at the point of arrest, having been released under investigation or released on conditional bail. There is a referral route from children service when police have attended the home and taken no further action. Our target number of children to successfully complete interventions were 36; we completed 41 interventions with 3 children going on to reoffend receiving formal outcomes within 12 months of closure.

Act Now:

Act Now is a one year PCC funded project to address serious violence. A Youth Worker will response to children in police custody within 90 minutes of the call and the service runs 7 days per week from 9am-10pm. It has been recognised that intensive and speedy intervention can help children to move away from / address problematic areas of their lives. Act Now will offer earlier intervention to children, providing an opportunity for them to reduce or avoid involvement in the criminal justice system. YJST will supply data to the OPCC and support the evaluation of the pilot.

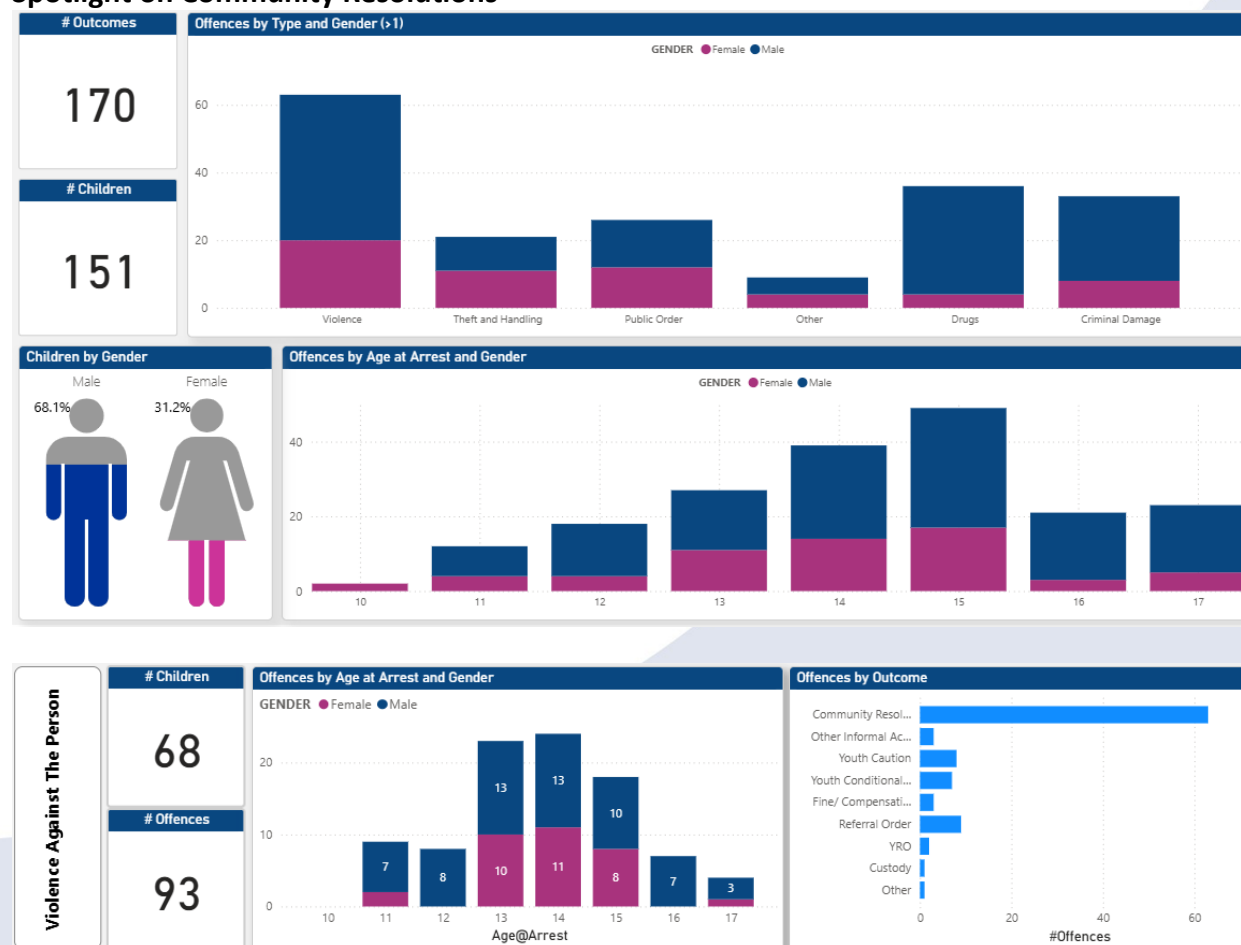
Diversion:

Thames Valley Police use Community Resolutions as an informal disposal diverting children away from the formal criminal justice system. It is primarily used by officers on the street dealing with low level offending. Officers check their data systems to ascertain if a child has

been subject to a previous disposal, it can be given to children and young people who have had no previous contact with the criminal justice system. If a previous Community Resolution has been given, then the decision is deferred to be made between the TVP Youth Justice Unit and the YJST through joint decision-making panel. West Berkshire YJST should be notified of all Community Resolutions and triage them all to consider voluntary intervention. 172 Community Resolutions (CR) and 35 Drugs Diversion were issued between April 2024 and March 2025. 111 offered YJST intervention of which 55 (50%) accepted the service, this is a slight increase since last year. Children receiving a drugs diversion are referred to the Edge, substance misuse service for six sessions of education and harm minimisation, 43% engaged in this intervention.

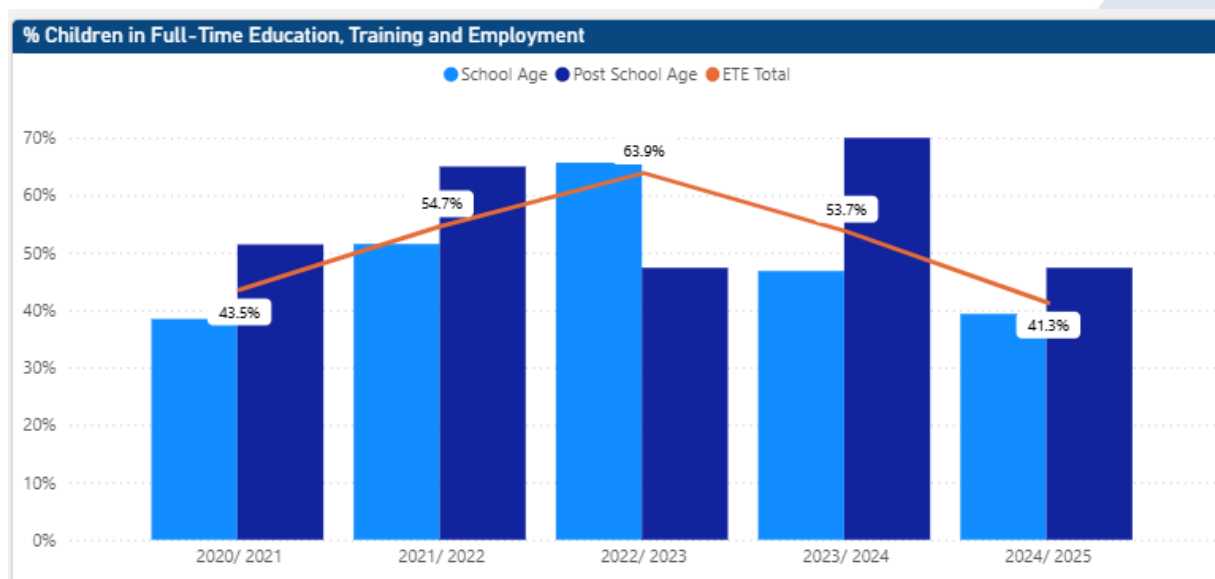
The YJST Manager sits on the Thames Valley Out of Court Scrutiny Panel which has oversight of all the out of court resolutions. The YJST Senior Social Worker acts as YJST decision maker and she has presented examples of West Berkshire joint decisions at the scrutiny panel.

Spotlight on Community Resolutions





Education:



29.2% of children completing a substantive intervention were in full time education or employment at the end of their order. This increases to 41.3% when including informal interventions.

The YJST continues to maintain a priority focus on supporting children to access and maintain fulltime ETE. Termly problem-solving meetings are held with colleagues from different educational establishments and those with oversight of the system, identifying solutions to increase attendance and attachment with education. The YJ Teacher receives daily exclusions

reports and works closely with the Education Attendance Officers and Exclusions Officer to identify early support if necessary.

YJST report on the number of hours offered and accessed, as well as whether there has been any improvement or deterioration during the course of the intervention, this enables the YJ Management Group to have an informed overview of YJST performance and address strategic issues or blockages.

The Prevention Intervention Programme (PIP) is now embedded within schools. There have been good links made with key leaders within schools to promote this approach and information is sent regularly to ensure schools remain aware of the support on offer. The teacher has positive partnership links with a range of professionals offering support in schools including, Youth Workers, virtual school, targeted sports and mental health support workers. There is good communication to ensure there is not duplication in services being offered to children within schools.

The YJST is a centre for AQAs, providing the opportunity for children to gain certificate of achievements where relevant and beneficial. This year five children were awarded AQA awards.

Restorative Justice and Victims:

West Berkshire YJST recognises the importance of providing a high-quality service to victims of youth crime. The YJST Restorative Justice and Volunteer Coordinator (RJVC) strives to achieve this by working with victims delivering restorative justice practices and reparation. Restorative Justice is a standard agenda item on the fortnightly team meeting; this allows for regular briefings and updates to all staff about RJ and victim work. Part of the RJVC role is to co-ordinate the volunteers, offering support and training opportunities, ensuring continued involvement with the YJST and participation in Referral Order panel meetings process.

The YJST will continue to offer direct support to victims of youth crime. This may include gaining an impact statement which can be incorporated during victim awareness sessions with children that have caused the harm, a letter of explanation (where appropriate), shuttle mediation between the victim and children, preparing and facilitating face-to-face restorative meetings, one-to-one intervention sessions covering protective behaviours and keeping safe (when under the age of 18) and regular updates to the victim on the progress of the children. After the victim's case has been closed they may be sign posted or referred to other services for example; SAFE- who support young victims of crime and Help After Harm- for all victims of crime. A closing letter summarising the support offered / received is also sent, along with a feedback form. After annually reviewing the process of initial contact, we are continuing initial contact via letter, which includes a YJST victim leaflet and the victim codes of practice handout. The victim will then be contacted via the telephone a week after the letter has been sent. This continued practice seems to have so far been successful as a higher number of victims are more responsive to telephone calls. An audit of victim cases is undertaken annually to evaluate the effectiveness of communication.

This annual audit focused on the period of January 2024 to January 2025. During this period the YJST received 163 YOT1's with an offence that had an identified victim, 59 provided consent for the YJST to make contact. The VLO attempted contact with all victims. Despite numerous attempts 26 victims did not respond to the initial letter or subsequent telephone calls so their cases were closed. 13 victims were happy with the contact made by YJST but did not want any ongoing support. 2 received letters of explanation only. These figures show an increased number of YOT1's were received, however the police received a decreased number of victims providing consent.

Referral Orders:

Referral Orders are supported by trained volunteers who chair the panels in a restorative manner. Two panel members work together with the child and parent/carer and the YJST Officer to get to know the child and agree a contract of intervention to be carried out during the length of the Referral Order. At each panel meeting feedback is gained from the panel members and the child, this feedback is used to inform future panel member training events and improve services to children, collated feedback is detailed below.

Total number of RO starting April 2024	5			
Initial Panels	Review	Breach	Extension	Final
5	4	0	2	0

Panel members:

- All feel they have enough time during the pre-meet to discuss actions and are confident to ask for more if needed.
- All feel their interactions with the other panel members, child and parents were good. One parent did require support to understand the panel process and the work that will be carried out with their child.
- All feel they are now adopting a more child first approach.
- All feel they are getting to know the child better and have noticed their engagement improve during the review panels.

Children:

- All panel members introduced themselves and explained the expectations of the meeting.
- All children felt they were given the opportunity to speak.
- All children felt they were listened to and heard by the panel members

Serious Youth Violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding:

It is important to recognise that the national KPI measure is different from the Thames Valley Police area agreed definition and data collection. During 2024-25 there were four children who committed six offences of Robbery, Violence against the person and Drugs supply. There

were a range of outcomes from Community Resolution, Youth Condition Caution and Court Orders. One child breached their Court Order several times and was resentenced for the original offence to a Detention and Training Order. No child was overseen by MAPPA for these offences.



The AssetPlus/PDAT assessments are used to assess the risk of that children present to others reducing this risk is a focus of the work the YJST undertakes with partners and children. For all children who present high or very high risk safety concern for others are overseen by the Operational Manager at monthly multi-agency case planning forums.

The AssetPlus/PDAT also assesses for vulnerability to the child through the Safety and Wellbeing assessment. As part of the assessment sexual and criminal exploitation is assessed. For all children where concerns are highlighted a screening tool is completed with them and submitted to EMRAC (Exploitation, Missing Risk Assessment Conference) via the Operational Manager.

There is mandatory requirement to report all serious incidents to the YJB who meet the specific requirements, YJS are then required to consider critical learning reviews to examine the circumstances surrounding the offence and any opportunities that the YJS had to intervene earlier. West Berkshire have not had any children meet this threshold and no reviews took place this year.

Children involved in the Youth Justice System have experienced higher levels of childhood trauma and adversity than many other in the community, see profile on pages 5-7. Research around the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) supports a relationship-based trauma informed approach to the work undertaken with them. Safeguarding children is a crucial role of the YJST and this is assessed through AssetPlus/PDAT assessments.

The YJST is represented on the Thames Valley wide Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) Board by the Head of Youth Offending Service for Oxfordshire, who represents all Thames Valley YJS's at this forum. The YJST is committed to being active partners in the delivery of the

Serious Violence duty alongside the VPP in Thames Valley. The YJST is an active member of the Serious Violence Steering group working with the Community Safety Partnership to implement the local requirements of the SV Duty. The YJST remains engaged with TVP and partners to address knife crime and serious violence attending the fortnightly meetings to ensure services are provided early.

The YJST remains an active member in a number of partnership meetings, the Operational Manager attends EMRAC (exploitation, missing and risk assessment conference), TTCG (police led) and Mini-Maps (ASB), Knife crime and serious violence meeting, with attendance at all meetings. This enables the YJST to share intelligence with colleagues and direct resources at emerging issues that impact on public safety. The YJ Police Officer continues to support the provision of a high volume of intelligence. The YJ Police Officer reviews any notifications triggered by an alert system set up for all open YJST children and the LPA daily briefing, he alerts the Operational Manager so issues can be addressed in a timely fashion. The Operational Manager attends the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) meetings and ensures information is shared regarding children turning 18 years old.

There remains a focus from the YJST Operational Manager to ensure all members of the team are trained in safeguarding, Child Exploitation, Prevent and County Lines. The Service Manager is the co-chair of Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC) panel and the YJST Operational manager attends to facilitate the information sharing in relation to children working with YJST. The YJST are members of the Channel Panel, one child has been overseen by Channel and one child is currently being assessed. Over the past year the YJST has attended all the relevant Child Protection Initial and Review conferences.

Detention in Police Custody:

Thames Valley Police lead on Children in Custody meeting and chaired by the Chief Inspector responsible for the TVP custody suite and is undertaken bi-monthly. Membership includes a Milton Keynes YJ data lead, Youth Justice Manager, Chief Inspection Crime Manager, Custody Inspector, Criminal Justice and Custody Strategy Sergeant, out of hours (EDT) team managers from across TV, and the appropriate adult coordinator for Berkshire. This meeting sets out to review all children who have entered one of the custody suites, reviews individual decisions on detention, remand or release and sets to identify any patterns. This also has a focus for reviewing section 38(6) of PACE 1984 to ensure the procedure is followed. Actions are set and follow up for individual cases and learning is disseminated and use to improve practice and outcomes.

West Berkshire YJST has a duty system of trained staff to provide appropriate adult services during office hours and has support from the Emergency Duty Team out of hours. The YJST Manager and Police Officer provides training for both internal and external staff (including independent children's homes in the area) to ensure there is consistent knowledge to keep children safe in custody. The YJST appropriate adult guidance is updated every three years or when there is a policy change.

Use of custody and constructive resettlement (including remand):

There has been one custodial sentence to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) during this past year and no remands. The data published by the Youth Justice Board uses a custody rate per 1,000 10-17 year olds in West Berkshire. With one custodial sentence given during the period the outturn for Jan 2024 – Dec 2024 is 0.06. This compares to a regional rate of 0.06 and a national rate of 0.10.

	2014 - 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	2024- 2025
Total number of custodial sentences	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

One child received a Youth Rehabilitation Order with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance requirement. There is not a dedicated ISS team to facilitate or manage these interventions and this falls to the YJ Officers with support from the whole team to ensure up to 25 hours per week, including weekend contacts, are covered. This child had a significant amount of breaches and received a stand-alone Court Order, however after 7 months there was no other option than a Detention and Training Order. He was resentenced for previous serious violent offences and breach of Community Orders, serving the first three months in custody. During this period there was good engagement in education achieving English and Maths qualifications, interventions took place with the YJST which supported an identity shift. This child successfully completed his DTO without any further breach or offending.

Working with families:

All YJST team members receive a wider range of training opportunities, this includes child to parent violence. We have professionals with additional parenting training, STOP and Who's in Charge (WiC) enabling us to support parents individually and in groups. During this year 29 parents successfully engaged with the WiC group, which is an 8 week programme run during each school term.

The Supporting Families service was within the YJST Service Managers portfolio, therefore providing a good link across services. The Supporting Families Parenting Worker was hosted at the YJST enabling joint work with families. The YJST Assistant Team Manager also sat within the virtual Supporting Families team and has access to the range of professionals who support families, such as the DWP employment advisor and housing officers. The Supporting Families programme ended in March 2024 and we look forward to working alongside colleagues as new provision is created.

Priorities for 2025-26

The team's priorities are outlined in the following action plan.

First Time Entrants – Prevention and Diversion

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
A reduction in the number of children causing ASB through their use of E-scooters and E-bikes	YJ Police officer to deliver targeted information and education to children who are identified as using E-bike and E-scooters antisocially with the Thatcham area.	YJ Police Officer	July 2025
An effective and evidence based scheme for reducing ASB and offending among children	Evaluate the effectiveness of the prevention letter scheme and refine the approach based on outcomes and feedback.	Operational Manager	October 2025
A reduction in the number of children coming to the attention of the police for offending at school.	Increase school-based interventions through the Positive Intervention Programme (PIP) for children offending in a school setting	YJ Teacher/ YJ Police Officer	December 2025
Reduce the number of children entering the criminal justice system by promoting a childhood away from the justice system	Fully implement and evaluate the use of Youth Deferred Prosecution YDP (Outcome 22) including data collection and feedback loops.	TVP and YJ Manager	March 2026
Support the reduction in criminalisation of children by reducing first time entrants	Maintain and strengthen the Joint Decision-Making Panels (JDMP) to ensure fair and consistent out-of-court decisions through embedding new guidance and facilitating practice observation and reflection.	Operational Manager/ Senior Social Worker	July 2025 February 2026
Drug diversion work delivered is effective at engaging with children	Undertake an evaluation of the drug diversion work presented to the YJ Management Group	The Edge	December 2025

Reducing reoffending - enhancing life choices

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Interventions with children are effective and make a difference.	Support YJ staff to use evaluated evidence based practice through the YEF toolkit, YJB Resources Hub and What Works Centre.	Operational Manager & ATM	6 monthly review
Bespoke offence specific interventions are effective at changing behaviour	Pilot and evaluate the use of the Virtual Reality Headsets when addressing specific behaviours.	SYV Coordinator	March 2026
PDAT are effective assessments leading to greater insight for children and parents into their behaviour	Evaluate the learning from HMIP inspections covering PDAT and the learning derived from sharing assessments with any learning shaping practice development	Operational Manager and ATM	As reports are published
Turnaround scheme is effective at reducing reoffending	YJ Information Officer to be involved in the national impact evaluation of Turnaround	Information officer and MOJ	October 2025
YJS requirement for the provision of Appropriate Adults is suitable and meets high standards	Monitor and report on the use of Appropriate Adults and any use of PACE 1984 Section 38(6) transfers	Service Manager	March 2026

Public Protection and violence prevention

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty and reduce serious violence among children	Collaborate with the BCT and OPCC in the development of Prevention partnership and Young Futures Prevention Hub	BCT, YJ Managers and SV Coordinator	Review each quarter
Ensure that the assessment and management of risk is of high quality and protects the public	Undertake an audit addressing the assessment and management of risk, reporting findings to the YJST Management Group	Operational Manager	December 2025
MAPPA arrangements locally provide effective oversight of MAPPA nominals	YJ Case managers to attend bespoke MAPPA training addressing children and MAPPA	YJST Staff	July 25

Safeguarding, vulnerabilities and well being

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
All children to have access and information about leisure activities and support services to increase wellbeing.	Update the positive activities booklet and promote those activities among young people.	YJST Case managers	May 2025
Children on the cusp of the justice system are supported through an Early Help offer	YJST to be involved in the development of the Early Help and Family Help offer to ensure that children in the justice system are supported	Service Manager	October 2025
Ensure that the assessment and management of safety and wellbeing is of high quality and protects the public	Undertake an audit addressing the assessment and management of safety and wellbeing, reporting findings to the YJST Management Group	Operational Manager	December 2025

Education, training and employment

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Reduce the numbers of children suspended from school	Promote the use of the Positive Intervention Programme (PIP) as a means of reducing suspension and for pupils at risk at the various West Berkshire education forums	YJST Teacher and TVP Schools P Officer	Bi-monthly
Increase attendance at school thus reducing the likelihood of offending	Support Education Attendance Team in seeking to increase attendance of severely absent pupils	YJ Officers	Throughout year
Increase the recognition of children on their achievements.	Broaden the use of AQA and creative awards to engage children not in full-time education and promote prosocial identity.	YJST Teacher	Termly
Children receive fewer suspensions and reduced timetables.	Strengthen the multi-agency education panel to address persistent absence, educational packages and	YJST Teacher/ Operational Manager	Termly

	exclusions among YJST involved children		
Children engage with learning opportunities	Collaborate with Berkshire Youth to identify and support children struggling in a school setting reducing suspension and increasing engagement	Operational Manager, YJST Teacher, Berkshire Youth	Termly

Health

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Children are better able to engage in verbally mediated interventions.	Staff training on specific techniques to support children in sessions with particular focus on speech, language and communication	Speech and Language Therapist	September 2025
Volunteers have increased understanding of the use of communication passports	Communication passports training is delivered to all YJ volunteers	Speech and Language Therapist	December 2025
Communication passports are used effectively to support children's engagement and participation	Continue to roll out and evaluate the use of communication passports and tools for children with speech and language needs	Speech and Language Therapist	July 2025
Children are equipped to respond when first aid is required	Deliver basic First Aid training as a first responder to children	YJST Nurse/ YJ Police Officer	School holidays and quarterly term time
YJST to work with children in a trauma informed manner	Staff refresher training on the Trauma Recovery Model to be delivered	Mental Health Worker	January 2026

Strengths based approach

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
YJST practice is continually developing and improving	Review and benchmark YJST Practice against recently published research and thematic inspection findings	YJST Managers	When reports are published

YJ Volunteers understanding and knowledge of Child first principles are enhanced	Child first training is delivered for volunteers	Assistant Team Manager	July 2025
YJST practice is continually developing and improving through the use of feedback	Annual feedback report to the Management Group to consider changes to service provision.	Service Manager	January 2026
Parents are supported and equipped to parent their children	Expand access to parenting programmes like “Who’s in Charge” and STOP parenting.	Parenting workers	April 2025 September 2025 January 2026
Children engage in prosocial activities reducing the likelihood of offending	Promote community-based diversion activities during school holidays to reduce idle time and risk of offending.	YJ Officers	School holidays
Children in the justice system receive recognition for their achievements	Create an exhibition of children’s work in collaboration with local arts space	YJST Teacher and victim worker	March 2026

Responding to cohort – diversity and disproportionality

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Female children avoid over criminalisation and do well in West Berkshire.	Deliver training for Thames Valley Police around responding to female aggression and violence	Assistant Team Manager/YJ Police Officer	October 2025
YJST staff are culturally competent when working with children from diverse communities	Develop culturally competent training for staff to better support children from GRT and ethnic minority backgrounds	Diversity Champion/ Operational Manager	January 2026
YJST delivers targeted work in light of the cohort of children that are open.	Conduct regular disproportionality audits to identify over-represented groups and inform targeted interventions	Information Officer	6 monthly
Building on and maintaining positive relationships with our Gypsy Roma Traveller	Provide support and outreach to Gypsy Roma Traveller communities via EMTAS which includes	Assistant Team Manager	November 2025

families so they can access support	appropriate adult information		
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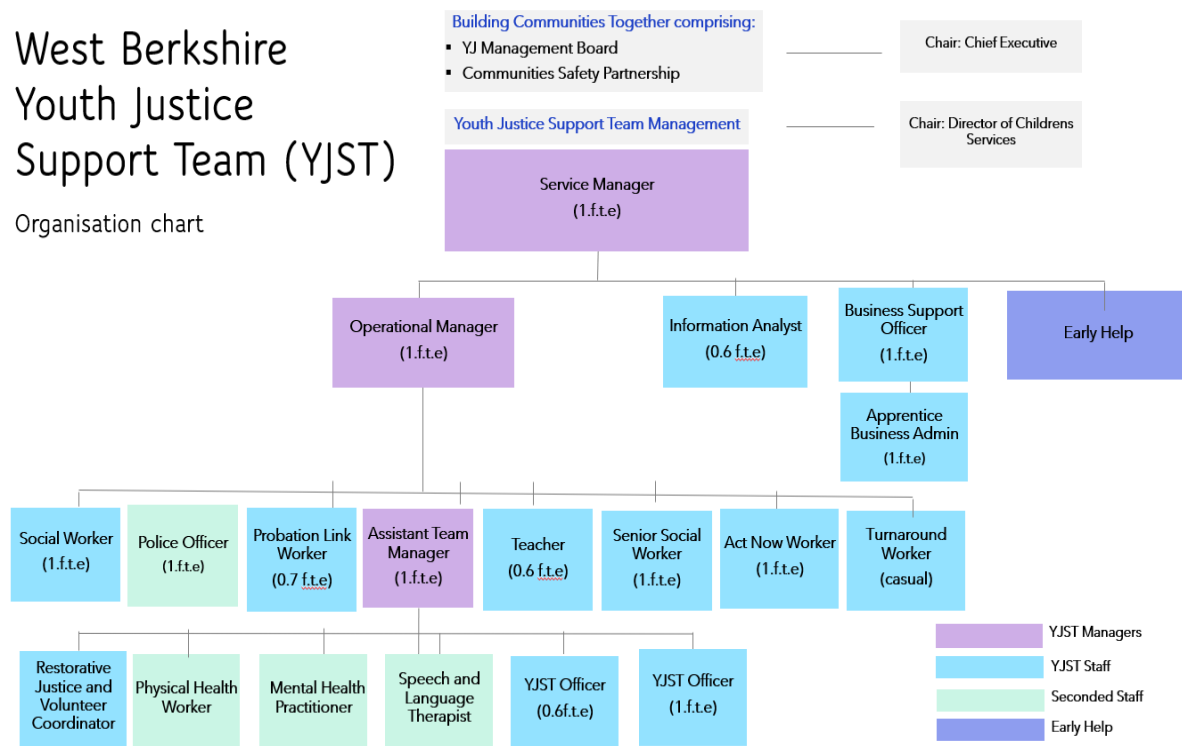
Victims and restorative approaches

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Victim of crime work is of the highest quality	Benchmark YJST victim practice against national HMIP inspection findings	Victim Worker and ATM	As reports are published
The views, needs and concerns of victims of crime are appropriately captured in PDAT assessments	Undertake a Dip Audit on victim elements of PDAT assessments to address any quality issues.	Victim Worker	Monthly
Increase victim engagement from initial contact	Work with TVP to review initial victim contact prior to decision making to increase victim engagement and satisfaction with the support on offer.	Victim Worker, JDMP and Assistant Team Manager	February 2026
Support offered to victim of crime is of a high quality	Undertake and audit of restorative justice practices to identify quality and victim satisfaction.	Assistant Team Manager	January 2026
The YJ Management Group have clear oversight of victim work and drive the agenda for victim support	Increase the awareness, scrutiny and oversight of the YJ Management Group through greater visibility of victim work and relevant issues.	Service Manager and Victim Worker	October 2025

Appendix One:

West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team (YJST)

Organisation chart



The YJST consists of 15 female staff and 2 male staff. 16 White British, 3 members of staff have disabilities.