

CS/23/10
Cabinet
13 September 2023

Youth Justice Service (YJS) Annual Plan

Report by John JAMES
Interim Service Manager
Devon Youth Justice Service

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

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1) Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet be asked to note and agree the 2023/2024 Youth Justice Service Plan on the following basis:

(a) To comply with requirement that YJ Plans must be signed off by the full council in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'

(b) To agree to contribute to a pooled budget of £229,200 to part finance Youth Justice Services in Devon (this is in additional to DCC staffing costs of £384,000). Note – no additional financial resource is being requested in this report.

(c) To provide elected member endorsement to maintain an informed dialogue on youth justice matters within our communities to achieve the ambitions of the plan to the greatest effect, for both the benefit of children and society as a whole

2) Background / Introduction

Section 39 (1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the co-operation of the named statutory partners to form a YJS. Section 38 (1, 2) identifies the statutory partners. These statutory partners are:

- local authority
- education
- police
- probation service
- health

The national Youth Justice Board require each Youth Justice Service in England and Wales to submit an annual report to inform the strategic oversight of the service and set out the ambitions for the upcoming year.

1. The YJ Plan must be agreed by the Chair of the local Youth Justice Management Board, pre submission to the YJB for scrutiny (completed 30th June 2023)
2. The 'sign off' by the Chair is an indication that the wider management board have approved the submitted plan and all sections outlined in the [Youth Justice Plan Structure](#) have been covered.
3. The requirement for full council sign off has been in place since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 enabled Youth Offending Services (the national title), but to date Devon YJT was not aware of this requirement. This is in place going forwards.

3) Main Body

The autumn 2022 inspection process by HMI Probation recorded a GOOD rating with several outstanding features (appendix 1)

The work of Devon YJT is driven by the YJ Management Board and its annual objectives (appendix 2)

Objectives and progress are regularly reviewed in quarterly Board meetings. All staff members are involved in various objectives of the plan via their most recent appraisal.

4) Options

Devon YJT is a statutory service with multi partner funding sources together with a national YJB grant. Completion of the sign off process is necessary to ensure the grant is received in a timely fashion, to enable the effective operation of YJ services.

5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

The YJ Plan previously submitted to the national YJB contains performance data for the 2022/2023 year as required. (appendix 3)

Feedback forms an integral part of YJT evaluation:

Children feedback

- 98% of children said they felt supported and safe.
- 94% felt their qualities and strengths were recognised.
- 100% felt spoken to a way they could understand.
- 96% felt DYJS helped them make their own choices.
- 100% felt DYJT worked well with other professionals in their lives.
- 92% felt we helped make their lives better.

Parents/carers feedback

- 97.6% felt part of the planning process though out the intervention.
- 97.6% felt empowered to challenge DYJS at any stage.
- 100% felt empowered to make decisions to protect their own child.
- 97% felt DYJT helped bring all services together to benefit their child.

- 100% said DYJS checked they were receiving all their support entitlements.
- 100% felt comfortable, safe, and understood by DYJS staff.
- 85% felt reassured about who they could turn to for support once DYJS ended their work with the family.
- 97.6% said working with DYJS was a positive experience.

Case Studies

Anonymised case studies and good practice examples are regularly shared with the Board. (appendix 4)

6) Strategic Plan

The strategic plan of Devon Youth Justice system is well aligned with a range of the Council's Strategic plan priorities.

Strategic Plan Priority	Strategic plan action
Be ambitious for children and young people	Children working with YJT can highly achieve if given the right support at the right time by developing prosocial identities and by helping them repair issues with attachment their offending will reduce.
	All services should be held to the highest account to ensure that children's rights under the UN convention of the rights of the child are always upheld. The Board holds responsibility for YJT.
Support sustainable economic recovery	Supporting children's sense of self and pro social identity to develop their interests, hobbies and ambitions to secure and maintain appropriate ETE
	Reducing the use of detention - direct Local Authority costs.
Tackle poverty and inequality	Ensuring families receive the correct financial support, helping tackle the barriers to attaining employment and signposting to community support
Improve health and wellbeing	Helping children develop pro social identity and repair attachment issues.
	Screening for possible Speech and Language issues and providing appropriate intervention.
	Each child in YJS can access fast track CAMHS support to address emotional difficulties.
Health communities be safe, resilient and connected.	Reducing crime and its impact upon persons harmed

7) Financial Considerations

Devon YJS operates under a 5 parts pooled budget – the core membership plus the YJB grant. Budget 2023 – 24:

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Police	151,320	0	0	151,320
Police and Crime Commissioner	0	0	190,266	190,266
Probation	59,670	0	5,000	64,670
Health	188,115	0	66,431	254,546
Local Authority and Education	384,000*	0	299,200 *	683,200
YJB	0	0	£827,910	827,910
Total	783,105	0	1,388,807	2,171,912

8) Legal Considerations

Youth Justice Services are designed and delivered under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The legal framework for council sign off is as stated in Sections 1 and 2.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

Staff travel is minimised and shared where possible - no adverse environmental impact of YJ functioning is envisaged.

10) Equality Considerations

Sadly, children from a range of backgrounds are over-represented in the youth justice system. Nationally it is known that Black and Mixed ethnicity boys are over-represented and the recent [HMIP thematic report](#) made a number of recommendations which Devon is taking in to account in service delivery. Tackling disproportionality in the criminal justice system in Devon will remain an ongoing target for DYJS. Children coming under DYJS supervision are not over presented regarding their race and/or ethnicity.

However, nationally it is not only black and mixed ethnicity children that are over-represented and a move to the full 18+1 range of ethnic identification is in development.

11) Risk Management Considerations

This policy/proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken / included to safeguard the Council's position. (appendix 5)

12) Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

- Cabinet agreement to the annual YJ Plan is necessary for full release of the YJB annual Grant.
- It is a requirement under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000
- Agreement to YJT funding is necessary to continue to run a high performing (HMIP GOOD rated) service and develop further to OUTSTANDING.

Stuart Collins

Director of Children Services

Electoral Divisions: All

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Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Appendix 1

<https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/11/Devon-Youth-Justice-Report-v1.0.pdf>

Appendix 2



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Appendix 3



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Appendix 4



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Appendix 5



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HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of youth justice services in
Devon

HM Inspectorate of Probation, November 2022



Contents

Foreword	3
Ratings	4
Recommendations	5
Background	6
Domain one: Organisational delivery	7
1.1. Governance and leadership	7
1.2. Staff.....	8
1.3. Partnerships and services.....	9
1.4. Information and facilities.....	10
Domain two: Court disposals	13
2.1. Assessment.....	13
2.2. Planning	14
2.3. Implementation and delivery	15
2.4. Reviewing.....	16
Domain three: Out-of-court disposals	16
3.1. Assessment.....	17
3.2. Planning	18
3.3. Implementation and delivery	19
3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision.....	20
4.1. Resettlement	21
4.1. Resettlement policy and provision	21
Further information	21

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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government and speak independently.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Devon YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work.

Overall, Devon YJS was rated as 'Good', with three aspects of court work practice rated as 'Outstanding'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as Good.

The service is child-centred reaching out to children to meet their practical needs and help them to desist from repeat offending. A personalised approach ensures that children's diversity needs are understood, and measures put in place to help children achieve and attain. Staff and volunteers are without doubt the organisation's most significant asset. They are kind, caring and ambassadors for the children they supervise. They show resilience and want to improve the quality of the services they deliver.

The head of service leads the YJS well. He is knowledgeable and skilled, with a desire to drive the service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

The board, although beginning to improve, has been disconnected from the wider YJS for some time. This has left many staff feeling undervalued. The absence of a consistent effective strategic link to operational delivery has meant that critical gaps have remained in the board's understanding of the challenges faced by practitioners. For example, educational outcomes for many YJS children have been poor, but the board has not fully tackled this problem to bring about change. Furthermore, while the board has access to universal YJS data about the profile of children in the cohort, the range is limited and there is a lack of forensic analysis. The board intends to address these deficits. This is reassuring.

Staff have access to a wide range of services to help children and their parents and carers. In particular, the health offer is excellent and making a real difference in improving children's emotional wellbeing. Resources and information used by the YJS have been reviewed by the speech and language therapist and redesigned to make them more child-friendly and accessible.

The YJS can be proud of the way it honours the children it supervises and the effective support it provided to children during the pandemic. It must now focus on bringing together the whole of the partnership. In this report we make six recommendations to further improve the work of Devon YJS. We trust that they will assist the service as it continues its improvement journey.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Devon Youth Justice Service
Fieldwork started September 2022

Score 26/36

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Partnerships and services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Good



2.2 Planning

Outstanding



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Outstanding



2.4 Reviewing

Outstanding



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Good



3.2 Planning

Good



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



4. Resettlement¹

4.1 Resettlement policy and provision

Good



¹ The rating for Resettlement does not influence the overall YOS rating.

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made six recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth offending services in Devon. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Devon Youth Justice Service should:

1. ensure robust contingency plans are in place for all children that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others
2. review and produce quality assurance arrangements that drive improvement across all aspects of case management in court and out-of-court service delivery
3. review management roles and responsibilities to ensure more parity in work distribution.

The Devon Youth Justice Service Management Board should:

4. expand the breadth and depth of management information, forensically analyse segmented data, and use findings to improve outcomes for children
5. ensure that strategic relationships with children's social care translate into positive outcomes for YJS children
6. strengthen connectivity with YJS staff to build closer collaboration that improves outcomes for children.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Devon YJS over a period of a week, beginning on 05 September 2022. We inspected cases where the sentence or licence began between 06 September 2021 and 01 July 2022; out-of-court disposals that were delivered between 06 September 2022 and 01 July 2022; and resettlement cases that were sentenced or released between 06 September 2021 and 01 July 2022. We also conducted 36 interviews with case managers.

Devon County Council serves one of the largest geographical areas in the country, covering 2,600 square miles, with a total population of 795,286². The youth population (10 to 17) comprises 68,691 children. Children and young people represent around 18.3 per cent of the county's total population, a slightly lower proportion than the south west as a whole.

Devon remains a predominantly white population, with 2.5 per cent of the total population reporting as Black, Asian, or minority ethnic. There is significant variation in the size of the Black, Asian or minority ethnic populations between district areas, with just 1.3 per cent in Torrington and up to 7.5 per cent in Exeter, according to the 2011 census. The Devon schools census data shows a Black, Asian or minority ethnic population of 8 per cent.

Devon Youth Offending Team became Devon Youth Justice Service in January 2022 after a consultation process involving children, parents, partners, staff, and others. The geography of the county means that the distances children and their families must cover to access resources are a real challenge. Devon YJS addresses these needs by having several centres where children and families can be seen: two permanent offices in Barnstaple and Exeter, a delivery base in Newton Abbot, and a variety of other premises across the county. This includes running referral panels in a variety of settings.

There are four main police custody centres. Two of these are in Devon and two are in adjoining unitary authorities.

The rate of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system (CJS) continues to remain low compared with Devon's statistical neighbours. In real terms, 94 fewer young people entered the CJS for the first time in Devon in 2021 than in 2019 (154 down to 60). The YJB figures for the April to June 2020 cohort show that Devon children who reoffended committed 1.83 further offences during this period, with a reoffending rate of 32.4 per cent. This is consistent with Devon's statistical neighbours.

Data from the local Live Reoffending Tracker, covering April 2021 to June 2021, shows that 12 children out of a cohort of 122 reoffended (a rate of 9.8 per cent). Each of the 12 children who reoffended committed an average of 2.33 offences. The total number of reoffences was 28.

² All data shown below was provided by the Devon YJS

Domain one: Organisational delivery

To inspect organisational delivery, we reviewed written evidence submitted in advance by the YJS and conducted 12 meetings, including with staff, volunteers, managers, board members, and partnership staff and their managers.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

1.1. Governance and leadership



The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Requires improvement

Strengths:

- The YJS board is well integrated into wider strategic safeguarding arrangements and community safety partnership boards, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Service level agreements and joint working protocols are in place with all providers in the partnership.
- The partnership has established a range of services for YJS children. There are strong links with the third sector, and this has created broader access.
- The head of service is visible, skilled, experienced, knowledgeable, and approachable. The management team has clear lines of accountability, where roles and responsibilities are understood well.
- There is a suitable risk register in place, with appropriate mitigations and controls to support effective service delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- There has been a notable disconnect between the board and operational staff for some time. Many staff do not understand the role of the board and report that direct communication and feedback about their work is limited.
- Until recently, those above head of service level had gaps in their knowledge about youth justice, and this had affected the strategic delivery of effective services. However, new senior leaders have greater experience of YJS, and the Deputy Director (Children's Services) will be chairing the board going forward.
- Management information available to the board is not sufficiently analysed or broad enough. It is not segmented, and gaps in the information mean that board members do not fully understand the needs of all YJS children. The board does not understand disproportionality across all protected characteristics well enough.
- The board needs to better understand why there are a significant number of YJS children aged under 16 in alternative provision.
- The partnership needs to build on its commitment to being 'child first', by creating more opportunities for children and their parents/carers to influence strategy, practice, and service delivery.

1.2. Staff



Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- The YJS provided excellent pastoral and professional support for all staff during Covid-19.
- The YJS leadership team motivates staff to achieve the best for the children they supervise.
- All staff are committed, keen, caring, and willing to go the extra mile to support the children they are working with.
- Staff provide considerable voluntary contact to children and their parents/carers while they are awaiting panel decisions.
- Case managers' workloads are reasonable, and this enables them to deliver individualised and responsive services for children.
- Most staff receive regular supervision, which affirms how much they are valued by their managers. The supervision agreement with practitioners provides an effective tool to ensure consistency across work areas and personal development.
- Cases are allocated in a fair and considered way that maximises the skills of operational staff.
- Induction activity has improved for all, especially board members, in the partnership and new staff joining the organisation.
- Volunteers are supported well, feel valued and receive up-to-date and timely information to carry out their responsibilities as referral order panel members.

Areas for improvement:

- Managers' workloads are not equally distributed and, as a result, management oversight is not effective in keeping children and others safe. There needs to be a review of the management team's roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability.
- There is currently no YJS-specific learning and development plan in place.
- Reward and recognition initiatives need to be strengthened, including affirmation from the board.
- The service has engaged in a peer review and a recent diagnostic review; however, it has been slow to respond to some areas identified for improvement following the peer review.

1.3. Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- Children are consistently asked about their views on the quality of the interventions they have received. Feedback on planning activity resulted in a revised child-friendly 'my plan' document being produced.
- There is excellent access to SALT services to meet children's desistance, safety and wellbeing needs and keep other people safe. Documents and resources are regularly revised so that they are better understood by children and their parents/carers. There is evidence of SALT informing the way practitioners engage with children.
- The wider health offer, which includes Y-SMART (drugs and alcohol service), and the in-house child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) are effective and making a difference to children's quality of life. The education worker is a good advocate for YJS children and attends a number of county-wide meetings to help them achieve positive outcomes.
- The YJS uses an impressive range of services and interventions to support children to desist from offending, support their aspirations and keep them safe. All interventions build on children's strengths.
- In the post court cases that we reviewed, inspectors found that children had access to the services they needed to support desistance and risks to others in 87 per cent of the cases. In out-of-court cases, inspectors found that case managers had access to the services they needed to support desistance in 78 per cent, and to support risks to others in 83 per cent.
- There are a variety of reparation projects, and the restorative justice offer is effective and actively engages with victims to keep them safe.
- Relationships with youth courts are effective, arrangements with the police to keep others safe and support the safety and wellbeing of children work well and the provision of a probation specialism adds value in the YJS.

Areas for improvement:

- The management board does not consistently take a forensic approach to analysing and interrogating the data available to it across a range of areas. This means that it does not fully understand the changing profile of YJS children and cannot always identify the right services to target their needs.
- The board has not fully examined or understood the reasons why 53 per cent of YJS children under 16 are in alternative education provision and 44 per cent of those over 17 are not in education or training.
- The YJS needs to explore and scrutinise children's wider protected characteristics and interrogate the data on disproportionality to equip the service to achieve better outcomes. Some staff reported that relationships with children's social care are strained and not always achieving positive outcomes for YJS children.

1.4. Information and facilities



Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- The YJS has a range of policies that largely describe and guide the work of practitioners.
- The facilities available at the Ivybank office are excellent. Activities are plentiful and tailored to children's specific needs. This office is centrally based and accessible.
- Given the large geographical area covered by the YJS, staff work across sites, youth centres and community spaces to deliver services – this enables children to be seen in locations that suit them and their parent/carers.
- ICT access is good, which enables staff to carry out planning, service delivery and reviewing of work.
- Staff can work effectively from both office bases and remote settings.
- There are effective processes in place to ensure that the YJS learns from things that go wrong.
- The views of children and their parents/carers are sought both formally at key stages of the supervisory process, and on completion of interventions.

Areas for improvement:

- There have been historical slippages in policies not being reviewed regularly. Some are not sufficiently detailed to support effective service delivery.
- Policies need to be reviewed from a disproportionality perspective to ensure that the needs of all children with protected characteristics are met.
- The YJS does not produce information on diversity across a range of needs regularly enough.
- Quality assurance processes are underdeveloped and there is no written assurance policy.
- The YJS does not thoroughly evaluate the impact of services across all provision, and its evaluation is not adequately informing service delivery. The incoming chair of the board and head of service recognise that the quality assurance process and other scrutiny mechanisms require development.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

Devon YJS values, gathers, and intentionally considers the views of children and their parents/carers. It collects and captures their views in different ways, including regular consultation events, surveys, audits, and end of intervention feedback. The service can show how, on several occasions, the contributions of children and their parents/carers have had an impact on informing service delivery. For instance, following requests from children and their families, the service has greatly improved the language it uses in formal documents and planning.

The service employs a participation worker, whose primary role is to obtain feedback on the quality of services received by children and their families. Questions include: 'Do you understand what was in your plan?' 'Do you understand what you need to do to stop offending?' 'Were you listened to by your worker?'

Responses are aggregated and analysed. Results show that there are clear strengths in the service, but that more could be done, especially to involve children and their parents/carers in developing strategic initiatives and plans.

The YJS contacted, on our behalf, children who had open cases at the time of the inspection, to obtain their consent for a text survey. We delivered the survey independently to the 9 children who consented, and one child replied. We also spoke to six children who had accessed the service and one parent/carer.

In the text survey, children were asked to rate the YJS on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 10 fantastic. The one child who responded gave a score of 10.

In the telephone interviews, all children reported that they understood what the YJS is trying to achieve. When asked if they thought the staff had the right skills, they all responded 'yes'. Comments from children included:

"My worker is so skilled. She's amazing. She knows so much. I feel she listens and gets me."

"My worker is very good. She's been with the YJS for a long time. She gets kids and she gets me. She's well clever."

"I'm in care. My PA [personal advisor] is rubbish. Doesn't do anything. Gives me false hope. My YJS worker can't do enough for me. She's always there whenever I'm in crisis. She's got food for me, helped me to not get angry as much and showed me ways of talking to people more decently."

"The workers are all positive, they make time to get to know you, they tell me it's ok to be sad, I trust them, and they respect me, and I respect them."

The parent stated:

"My son has ADHD and can't concentrate very well. The worker used different communication cards and a map thing to help him understand why he had stolen the bike. I can't believe how much he has learnt through the different way they have supported him."

"My son had hardly been to school for years. He had missed out on so much. Today he started college. The YJS helped him. I'm a proud mum."

Diversity

The information below sets out some of the data on staffing and diversity held by the YJS.

Of the staff working in the YJS, 59 per cent are female; 5 per cent are Black, Asian or minority ethnic; and 8 per cent have a declared disability. Of the children on the current caseload, 21 per cent are female; 78 per cent have a learning disability or learning difficulty or are subject to an education, health and care plan (EHCP); and 19 per cent have a child in need plan.³

The collection and analysis of management information and data on disproportionality, diversity and protected characteristics is underdeveloped. Once these have improved, and there is a forensic analysis of the data, the YJS will be better able to understand the comprehensive needs of the children it supervises. YJB data for 2021/2022 shows that 4 per cent of children sentenced or cautioned in Devon are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. However, the local Devon schools' data for the same period shows that the proportion is in fact 8 per cent. To its credit, the YJS routinely monitors disproportionate treatment and outcomes for children at several points in the system, including the scrutiny of stop and search figures from the police. However, it is not clear how this information is being integrated into developing services for children who may be being treated harshly. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of girls coming to the notice of the YJS, including for violent offending, but it is unclear how the YJS is using this knowledge. The YJS needs to explore and scrutinise the diversity factors of children given out-of-court disposals so that all protected characteristics are considered and understood.

The YJS strives to be a child-first, child-centred organisation that delivers personalised services, but there several areas of diversity work that need to be developed. The service has a Diversity Forum, which has the potential to improve performance. However, attendance has historically been poor, and the forum has made little progress following discussions. Additionally, the guidance provided in a range of policies and processes to identify and respond to diversity factors needs to be much more explicit.

Operationally, direct work with children that takes account of diversity needs is strong. We found that, in planning work for court cases, attention to diversity was done well in 14 out of the 15 inspected cases. Similarly, in 19 out of the 22 inspected out-of-court cases, diversity work in planning was also strong. Services provided by the SALT practitioner are excellent. The resources that have been designed to work with children who have specific diversity needs are exceptional. Additionally, practitioners have shown courage in exploring very personal circumstances relating to children's experiences of prejudice and discrimination. This has empowered children and given them the confidence to be bolder and more ambitious.

Staff recognise that there are gaps in their knowledge, skills, and abilities in dealing with all protected characteristics. This is encouraging, as it shows how determined they are to do better. The operational workforce largely reflects the diversity of the local population. There are very few non-white senior leaders in the partnership.

³ The information in this paragraph was supplied by Devon YJS.

Domain two: Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 15 community sentences managed by the YJS.

2.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Good

Our rating⁴ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	87%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	87%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	73%

Assessment work to support children in desisting from further offending is a strength. Practitioners take a forensic approach to understanding a child's offending and make good use of historical and current information. They understand diversity needs and personal circumstances well. We found that practitioners had made some good use of information held by other agencies in their assessment enquiries. Additionally, they had robustly reviewed the child's level of maturity. However, victims' needs must be addressed more consistently.

On occasions, practitioners did not always include the voice of children and that of their parents and carers to inform what they believed were the causes of the child's offending.

Assessment activity sought to identify any risks to the child's safety and wellbeing in most cases. Practitioners appropriately collected relevant information from other agencies and used it well to better understand the risks to children's safety.

Assessments to identify all relevant factors linked to keeping other people safe were weaker. We found that practitioners had not identified all significant factors. In some cases, it was unclear to whom the child presented a risk and what the nature of this risk was. Disappointingly, practitioners did not consistently gather or verify information from other agencies. This included intelligence from the police and children's social care.

We found evidence of under-recording in a number of cases, especially in the assessment of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm. While practitioners were able to articulate a broader understanding of these aspects of casework, they needed prompts to help them to be more precise.

⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating⁵ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	93%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	87%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	87%

Planning to support children so that they do not commit further offences is a strength. We found timely plans in place that clearly identified what work needed to be carried out to achieve positive outcomes for children. The plans included a detailed account of the child's personal circumstances, including their broader familial situation. In addition, plans were informed by the trauma and adverse childhood experiences that children had experienced. This meant that practitioners identified appropriate services. We found some good examples of plans that included statutory and voluntary interventions.

Planning to keep the child safe is mostly done well. We found that practitioners had carefully considered how to keep children safe when they were carrying out their work with the YJS. For instance, they had identified the most suitable locations to meet children, and thoroughly risk-assessed reparation projects. Practitioners avoided meeting children where they might encounter other children with whom they had unhealthy relationships. Plans with other agencies were largely aligned, and each service provider was clear about the actions needed to keep the child safe. Practitioners are aware of and used tailored provision well. They had made referrals to and liaised with services such as speech and language therapy, Y-SMART and CAMHS. Controls to maximise safety had been examined well but contingency planning requires further attention.

Planning to keep other people safe is detailed. The responsibilities of other service providers in managing risk were clear. For example, there are information-sharing arrangements and attendance at a range of multi-agency meetings, including risk management panel meetings. Practitioners had identified external controls to mitigate risks. Interventions to address concerns about harmful behaviours were evident, including peer associations and weapons awareness courses. Practitioners had considered actual and potential victims in most of the required cases, and there was a clear emphasis on victims' safety. However, contingency planning was too often basic. Arrangements need to be much more explicit about the actions required if the level of risk increases.

⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Outstanding

Our rating⁶ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	80%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	93%

Practitioners are competent at developing meaningful working relationships with children and their parents or carers. They use different methods to engage children, including home visits, walk and talk, in-person meetings, virtual sessions, and phone contact. This has allowed regular contact that is accessible for children. Practitioners are imaginative and bold in their work. They tailored work to the children's strengths to encourage them to participate. For example, they helped children to achieve pass grades at GCSE level by arranging one-to-one tutoring and set up personalised reparation projects. Delivery is strengths-based, with a focus on making the best use of community resources. Practitioners are aware of the services available and use them well. Work to meet diversity needs is done well, especially speech and language therapy.

There are well-established multi-agency arrangements in place to support children's safety and wellbeing. However, operational relationships with children's social care are challenging and not leading to positive outcomes for all children. Services were largely well-coordinated, and partners shared the responsibility for managing risk. Practitioners were responsive when risks to the child increased, and made adjustments to keep the child safe, such as securing alternative accommodation. Practitioners understood the risks to children, such as exploitation and the trauma this can cause. They set interventions and support in place, including working with specialist providers. Practitioners were swift in completing referrals and children had timely access to in-house provision from CAMHS, substance misuse services and the SALT worker.

Inspectors found that the partnership actively monitored risks to others. Agencies worked well together to share information, and each had a responsibility for keeping other people safe. Practitioners worked collaboratively with children and their parents/carers to help them to understand external controls and encourage them to see how these were helping to keep victims safe. Practitioners innovatively delivered a range of interventions, including driving offences, eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EDMR) therapy and weapons awareness.

⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers. **Outstanding**

Our rating⁷ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	93%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	87%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	100%

The reviewing of work to judge the impact of interventions on reducing reoffending is impressive. Practitioners carry out both formal and dynamic informal reviews as personal circumstances change. Consideration of protective factors and diversity needs, as well as a robust examination of personal and familial circumstances, appear consistently in casework.

Practitioners consistently reviewed children's motivation and appropriately addressed any barriers that they identified whether structural or individual. Dialogue with children and their parents and carers was facilitated well in all the inspected cases. This helped practitioners to better understand the children's broader lived experiences and empowered parents and carers to become involved in their children's supervision.

The quality of reviewing activity in keeping children safe was mostly positive in the cases inspected. Where necessary, reviewing responded appropriately to changes linked to safety and wellbeing, information was obtained from other agencies that were involved, and plans were revised to support ongoing work. This systematic approach was helping children to understand how their wellbeing needs were changing. Furthermore, this insight was helping them to build on the progress they were making.

When necessary, practitioners responded to changes in factors related to risk of harm and amended plans to better protect others from harm. Again, this applied in all relevant inspected cases. Written reviews were completed in a timely manner in almost all cases, as required. This ensured that other practitioners involved in delivering risk of harm work had full access to all the current information.

In several of the inspected cases, and through conversations with practitioners, we found that when orders/requirements had formally come to an end, practitioners continued to offer voluntary contact to ensure that the child's assessed needs had been fully met. This was appreciated by the children and their parents and carers.

⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 23 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of 14 youth conditional cautions, five youth cautions, three community resolutions and one other disposal. We interviewed the case managers in 19 cases.

3.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Good

Our rating⁸ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	87%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	78%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	65%

Overall, analysis of desistance was done well, and practitioners had sought to understand the responsibility the child took for their behaviour, their attitude towards their offending and their reasons for becoming involved in offending. This approach enabled practitioners to go deeper into understanding how children's adverse childhood experiences may have resulted in their offending.

The attention that practitioners paid to the role that diversity factors had played in the children's offending was impressive. It was clear that time had been invested in building a clearer picture of the child's lived experience. Case managers actively sought information from other agencies. This helped them to consider patterns of previous behaviour and any barriers to engagement.

Assessment work that clearly identifies and analyses risks to the child's safety and wellbeing is weaker. Practitioners did not always make use of information they had gathered from other agencies, especially findings from their assessments. We did not agree with a number of risk classifications made by case managers and this should have been picked up by managers.

Assessment activity did not clearly identify and analyse the risk of harm to others posed by the child in far too many cases. We found several examples where case managers had underestimated the risk of harm to others. This included a failure to identify who is at risk and the nature of that risk. This is concerning, and the YJS needs to improve this area of work. Too often assessments lacked analysis and the context of risk of harm was not understood well enough.

⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

3.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Good

Our rating⁹ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	78%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	65%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	74%

Planning to support the child's desistance was variable. Plans did not always contain the key interventions or identify who would deliver these services and within what timescales. It was encouraging to find that, during the pandemic, interventions had been revised and personalised to meet children's needs. For example, some activity was to be completed at home and offending behaviour work was to be completed through 'walking and talking'. Once again, planning that combined information on diversity and personal circumstances was robust. This ensured that plans were directly relevant to meeting the children's needs.

Given that practitioners had spent considerable and meaningful time with children and their parents and carers, they had access to substantial amounts of information. This helped them to assess how prepared children were to engage with services.

Planning did not adequately promote the safety and wellbeing needs of all children. In these cases, there was insufficient evidence to reassure inspectors that all staff fully understood the need for comprehensive plans that would help to keep children safe. The information included in plans frequently lacked substance. Furthermore, practitioners had not aligned their plans with those prepared by children's social care. Additionally, contingency planning was poor in far too many cases.

Planning activity to promote other people's safety was again variable. Practitioners did not always liaise effectively with the police and the concerns of actual and potential victims did not come through in plans. Furthermore, there were delays in producing plans, and this led to an escalation in risk of harm to others.

Again, contingency planning was poor and the absence of robust arrangements led to the potential for further harm being caused to others. Given the variability in the analysis of assessment work, it is unsurprising that similar deficits were repeated in this area. Comprehensive plans that consider the safety of all actual and potential victims are needed. This will help practitioners to ensure that, in their supervisory work, they remain focused on reducing harm to others.

⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

3.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Good

Our rating¹⁰ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	83%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	74%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	74%

The quality of services delivered to help children to not commit further offences was much better. We found examples where mental health support and speech and language interventions were provided, and these were improving the child's emotional wellbeing and supporting desistance. Reparation work was tailored well to the individual child and focussed on developing life skills. These findings were also evidenced from direct feedback given to us by children with whom we spoke.

Practitioners had regular contact with children and their parents and carers, with high levels of engagement. This was not limited to reviewing personal circumstances and gathering updates, but also involved delivering a range of interventions that supported the child's achievement and progress.

Service delivery to keep children safe was not consistently done well in every case. There were delays in responses from some partners, including children's social care. While these matters were correctly escalated, lengthy delays aggravated the adverse experiences of children. Practitioners made good use of specialist services, such as CAMHS and speech and language therapy. In several cases, case managers used the strategies provided by the speech and language therapist to support work on safety.

Work with partners to keep children safe was limited and coordination of this work was inconsistent. This needs immediate attention. Initial gaps in assessment and planning for this work were having a negative impact on service delivery. The YJS has some assurance and gatekeeping systems in place, but these were not working well enough because managers lacked capacity.

In a number of inspected cases, not enough services were delivered to keep other people safe. There was evidence of risk management meetings taking place, but these did not always lead to activity. The attention paid to the needs of potential and actual victims was particularly weak. However, in some cases, we found evidence of worksheets being completed, individualised knife crime awareness sessions taking place and effective restorative work being delivered.

¹⁰ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annex.](#)

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based out-of-court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance.

Good

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. Our key findings were as follows:

Strengths:

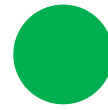
- Devon YJS has an out-of-court disposal policy titled 'Joint Youth Decision Making Process between D&C Constabulary and Devon Youth Offending Service'. The policy is supported by a range of guidance.
- Arrangements for out-of-court disposals are diverting a significant number of children from formal criminal justice processes and reducing the number of first-time entrants.
- The YJS has a well-established panel that supports joint decision-making. This is multi-agency, including partners from the YJS, police, health, CAMHS, speech and language specialists, and education, social care, alcohol and drug services. Partners work together to achieve fair and proportionate outcomes for children.
- There is an escalation process to manage disagreements between partners. It is concise and clear.
- The use of out-of-court disposals is monitored well to avoid overuse or inappropriate use.
- The youth intervention clinic, currently being piloted, is used well by the police to support and refer children to services that will help them to desist from offending. Management information is collected and used well to measure impact and learning.
- Arrangements for supporting victims of crime are strong.

Areas for improvement:

- Internal and external scrutiny arrangements for the out-of-court disposals scheme need to be more robust.
- The newly designed 370 police document does not explicitly include issues relating to safety and wellbeing. While it includes the need to take a trauma-informed approach, it needs to provide clearer guidance to support practitioners to ensure these issues are covered comprehensively.
- Report writers who have completed assessments, following an adjournment, do not attend the panel to present their findings and recommendations. This is a missed opportunity, given that assessments are carried out on these children because they have committed high gravity offences or who have complex needs or both.
- The voice of the child and their parents/carers is not always clearly evident in all cases that come to the decision-making panel.

4.1. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.

Good

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected two cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence. Our key findings were as follows.

Strengths:

- There is a resettlement policy dated 2021. It puts the child first and is understood by those who are responsible for resettlement.
- The policy promotes the need to build on a child's strengths and their protective factors. This was evidenced well in the two cases we reviewed.
- Children in custody receive frequent visits, both in person and through video conferencing.
- YJS staff often provide transport for families, and the YJS contributes towards travel costs.
- Practitioners regularly write to children in custody and inspectors have seen evidence of children writing back.
- Release on temporary licence is used well to support reintegration into the community.
- Victim workers are creative in their work with children while in custody.

Areas for improvement:

- The resettlement policy does not include guidance on how Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement cases are to be dealt with.
- Practitioners are required to produce individualised plans, but they are not given sufficient guidance on what good diversity works in these plans entails.
- The bail and remand guidance policy is not dated and this makes it difficult to know how long it has been issued for.
- Although planned, there has been no specific resettlement training for staff for some time. Staff have largely relied on their own experiences and applied learning from other training they have attended.
- More guidance is needed in the resettlement policy to keep other people safe.

Further information

The following can be found on our website:

- [inspection data, including methodology and contextual facts about the YJS](#)
- [a glossary of terms used in this report.](#)

Board objectives 2023 / 2024

1. The reduction of 1st time entrants into the criminal justice system (national indicator)
2. To strengthen the crossover and oversight of serious violence governance
3. To have a robust workforce development plan for all staff in the YJS
4. To expand the participation offer within DYJS.
5. To ensure robust quality assurance process.
6. To deliver “swifter justice” and avoid unnecessary delays for children and victims of crime.
7. To reduce the use of youth detention for all children
8. To ensure the 10 new KPIs are fully embedded in practice
9. To strength the roles and responsibilities of members of DYJS management board
10. To tackle issues of disproportionality/overrepresentation in the youth justice system in Devon
11. To review all local policy to ensure they are child first and align with national YJB case management guidance.
12. To increase the participation of children and young people open to YJS in Education, Training and Employment (ETE) opportunities.



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023-2024



Contents

1. Introduction, vision and strategy
2. Child First
3. Voice of the child
4. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements
5. Board Development
6. Progress on previous plan
7. Resources and services
8. Performance
 - National Key Performance Indicators:
 - Local Performance
9. Priorities
 - Children from groups which are over-represented
 - Prevention
 - Diversion
 - Education
 - Restorative approaches and victims
 - Serious violence and exploitation
 - Detention in police custody
 - Remands
 - Use of custody
 - Constructive resettlement
10. Standards for children in the justice system
11. Workforce Development
12. Evidence-based practice and innovation

Evaluation

13. Service development plan

Service development

Challenges, risks and issues

14. Sign off, submission and approval

Appendix A: Caseload

Appendix B: Devon Feedback

Appendix C: Devon YJS Management Board Terms of Reference

Appendix D: Devon YJS Structure Chart

Appendix E: Glossary of abbreviations

1. Introduction, vision, and strategy

I am pleased to share with you Devon Youth Justice Service's strategic plan for 2023-24. The plan outlines the accomplishments made over the past year and seeks to build on these successes, by responding to the needs of children in the youth justice system in Devon. We have made great strides in delivering a child first service in Devon which has been recognised by HMIP in the Autumn of 2022, finding the service to be performing at a "good" standard, with many outstanding features.

We remain wholeheartedly committed to this positive momentum and in working closely with our partners, we are presenting a bold and ambitious plan to set out a clear direction for this service over the coming year. The majority of the children in the system experience extremely challenging issues and have complex needs. This plan intends to demonstrate how we can continue to support the prevention and diversion of children away from the criminal justice system, whilst also helping those who are getting stuck within it.

Devon Youth Justice system cannot do this alone and the support from our statutory, and non-statutory, colleagues and partners have a central role to play in reflecting on how the whole system can understand and support these children. In turn we can seek ways to remove the structural barriers which may be hindering their opportunities to develop pro social identities. This plan will set out how we intend to continue to learn about children in the Criminal Justice System by improving our participation offer, by regular sharing, and the subsequent scrutiny, of relevant data and by maintaining a skilled workforce who have the time and ability to work with children and assist them in turning away from crime.

This Youth Justice Plan has been produced following consultation with stakeholders, partners, staff and most importantly the children and their parents and/or carers who are accessing or have lived experience of being in the system. These perspectives are all considered alongside relevant data, comments from our HMIP inspection and an operational self-assessment.

Alongside capturing the information required under the new Key Performance Indicators, our board has identified other areas of focus. This includes the strengthening of the governance and oversight from the board itself, by ensuring board members bring relevant data from their agency to continue our understanding of the children in the criminal justice system and seek to maximize how we respond to these children in a child first manner. We are focused at putting children and their needs at heart of our response in Devon.

I would like to thank everyone who works in Devon Youth Justice Service, as well as our partner colleagues, for all the hard work over the last year. The year has not passed without it challenges nonetheless, the staff have remained committed, dedicated and passionate to seek improvements for children in the system. I thank them for this, and I know in the implementation of this plan will continue to build upon this services' great success.

Jassi Broadmeadow Chair of the Devon YJS Management Board

Local Context

Devon's demographics

Devon YJS serves one of the largest geographic areas in the country, covering 2,600 square miles and a youth-justice aged population (10-18) of 94,957 children (2021 figure, source ONS). The total population of the Devon County Council area is 811,600 (ibid, 2021). Children and young people represent around 11.7% of the county's total population, a slightly lower proportion than the Southwest as a whole.

In the year between mid-2020 and mid-2021, the population in Devon grew by an estimated 3,724 people, and in the ten years prior to mid-2021, the population grew by 61,338. Devon's population growth rate between mid-2020 and mid-2021 was 0.5%, which is 0.4% lower than the average population growth rate in Devon for the ten years prior to mid-2021 (0.9%).

We expect the total population of Devon to expand to 854,142 by 2026, with every district area seeing a rise. Most of this is expected to come from domestic and international migration into the region, with average fertility rates dropping for the ninth year declining to a fertility rate of 1.55 in 2021, lower than England's fertility rate of 1.62. Devon's population is expected to get older over the next two decades, with a 94% increase in those aged 85+, compared with a growth rate of just 2% for those under 65 by 2040. On top of falling fertility rates, this is exacerbated by younger people seeking opportunities in larger urban centres outside of Devon.

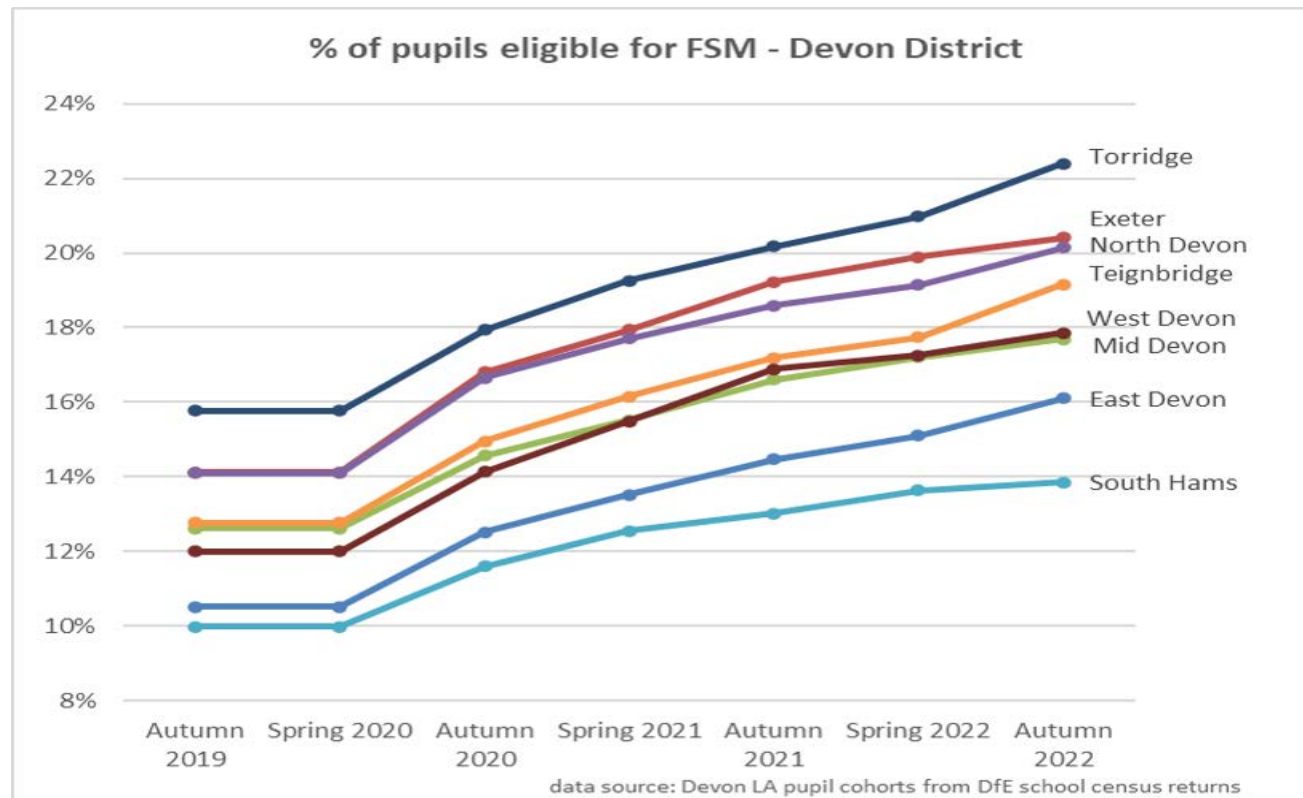
Devon remains a predominantly white population at 96.4%. People identifying as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh make up 1.5% of the population. Those identifying as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African make up 0.3% of the population. Those identifying as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups total 1.4% and 0.5% identify as another ethnic group (not defined by the ONS).

The context of poverty and deprivation in Devon

Devon (within the County Council boundaries) is a large and predominantly rural county with only one city, Exeter, and several coastal and inland towns. As a result, there are significant differences in the experiences and outcomes of children and young people growing up in different neighbourhoods across the county. County-wide statistics hide the wide disparities between urban and rural neighbourhoods, as well as between coastal and inland towns. Some neighbourhoods in Ilfracombe and Barnstaple in North Devon are among the 10% most deprived in the country, with others in Teignmouth and Exeter are in the 20% most deprived and in Exmouth, Dartmouth and Tiverton in the 30% most deprived (ibid, 2021). Household deprivation is largely characterised by insecure and low-quality housing, rising debt burdens, fuel poverty, digital poverty and food poverty. While entrenched poverty and inequality manifests itself in declining access to local public services and community spaces, limited public transport and low-wage and seasonal employment opportunities.

Devon’s economy and labour market are disproportionately structured around seasonal industries, predominantly tourism and hospitality. This seasonality has helped lead to disparities, especially the divides between coastal and inland communities. On top of this, in recent years, the impact of limited suitable and affordable housing in the region, digital poverty, and unreliable transport links have exacerbated inequalities between rural and urban areas and limiting the improvement of livelihoods and opportunities of young people and families.

Since the pandemic, increasing numbers of children are now eligible for free school meals. There are currently over 18,000 pupils, across all types of school, in Devon who are eligible. This is an increase of over 1,000 children since the last YJB plan in 2022.



SEND in Devon

In 2022, there were approximately 108,714 children attending 414 Devon schools. A further 1,519 are known to be home educated. Devon has more children supported at both SEN support level and with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) than seen elsewhere in the country, 12,860 (January 2023) across both state funded schools and school maintained by the local authority. The percentage of Devon children in special schools has risen slightly but is less than that seen than nationally (28.5% compared to 34.8%)

Most children with SEN, including those with an EHCP, are appropriately supported in mainstream school. In December 2022, 8,123 children had an Education Health and Care plan supported by Devon County Council.

The top three categories of need for this cohort of young people, making up two-thirds of the cohort, are:

- social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)
- autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

There is widespread evidence that young people with SEND are disproportionately known to youth justice services across the country, especially where needs relate to speech, language and communication. The charity organisation, Speech and Language UK tells us that the scale of the issues in 2023, is that approximately 10% of children nationally have a speech and language issue. However, the National Institute for Health and Care research (NIHCR) indicates that in the UK “approximately 80% of children who have broken the law have speech and language needs.”

Studies from the NIHCR show that “Young people convicted of a criminal offence are much more likely to have another conviction within 12 months if they have an undiagnosed language problem” and “people with developmental language disorder (DLD) have difficulty expressing themselves verbally or understanding what is said to them. “

There are a higher number of children and young people who have identified special educational needs in Devon schools than national and regional levels. This trend is also replicated in the numbers of pupils who receive SEN support in school or have an EHCP. The higher-than-average proportion of children with SEN is particularly the case for those relating to social, emotional, behavioural, and mental health needs.

Since 2016, the number of children who have an EHCP has more than doubled. This has resulted in increased pressures on local SEND services in Devon to meet this growing need. Most of the rise in EHCPs in recent years is accounted for by the rise of children and young people presenting with needs relating to autism.

Children and young people in care are disproportionately likely to receive SEN support or have an EHCP. In part, this is due to the close scrutiny on their individual health and care needs, however, it is undeniable that this cohort of children and young people are more likely to present with additional needs. Almost two-thirds (64%) of Devon's children in care either receive SEN support or have an EHCP. Of those with an EHCP, the vast majority (63%) have a primary need of SEMH, while SLCN was the most common secondary need.

Exclusions and Suspensions

Data from 2022, indicates that 137 permanent exclusions were issued to pupils attending Devon state funded schools. Of these 137, 10 pupils were reinstated by the school and 9 exclusions were withdrawn. This resulted in 118 permanent exclusions upheld in 2021/22.

2022 data shows 9,385 suspensions were issued to pupils attending Devon primary, secondary and special schools. This is an increase of 63% on the previous year (5,757 suspensions). In addition to this, 608 suspensions were issued to pupils attending alternative provision

Not in Education, Training or Employment

In August 2022, the percentage of young people in Devon in years 12 and 13 (age 16 & 17) who were NEET was lower than that seen in the other Peninsula Local Authorities (4.0% vs 4.6%). When compared to the same period last year, the figures for both cohorts have improved, with fewer levels of NEET. The percentage of young people in years 12 to 13 whose circumstances are Not Known is slightly lower in Devon than in the SW Peninsula (2.2% compared to 2.4%).

Figures from Careers Southwest (April 2023) show that across Exeter, Barnstaple and Newton Abbot there are a total of 1,958 year 12-14's who are not in education, employment or training.

Safety and wellbeing

The needs of young people coming into contact with Devon Youth Justice System are becoming increasingly complex and multi-faceted. Co-existing risks and harms are present in many young people's lives and make recovery and resilience more difficult to achieve without intensive support. Vulnerabilities such as overrepresentation of minority groups, financial hardship, threats of homelessness, rising stress, neurodiversity issues, poor mental health/emotional wellbeing and the lasting impact of adverse childhood and/or traumatic experiences are exacerbating existing community safety issues including increasing the misuse of substances, criminal and sexual exploitation, and more prevalent and widespread possession of weapons.

Child Protection in Devon

The Office Of National Statistics says that between March 2021 and March 2022 (latest data)

- 490 MASH referrals per 10,000 0-17 year-old population (annualised rate covering the last 6 months). This is up from 304 during 2020-2021, and compares to 396 among Devon’s statistical neighbours
- 192 ‘Children in Need’ per 10,000 0-17 population. The national average is 334 per 10,000 children
- 43 children with a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 0-17 population. This is slightly more than the national average of 42 children per 10,000.
- Currently there are nearly 820 children in care in Devon – this is an increase of 18% over the past two years.

Police Data

Devon and Cornwall Police police have confirmed that as of May 2023, 340 children in Devon are released under investigation but at the time of request for information, were unable to provide further detail of what alledged offence type they were being investigated for. 16 children were held overnight in police custody through 2022, but in the first quarter of 2023, only one child was held overnight in police custody. Unfortunately, due to a change in Devon and Cornwall computer systems, no reliable data was available regarding stop and search for children. Devon and Cornwall police have given assurances this data will be shared going forward in future DYJS management board meetings.

2. Child First

DYJS is committed to understanding and promoting the evidence regarding the best outcomes for children who come into contact with the Youth Justice System. This evidence is summarised well here <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/>.

The Youth Justice Board refers to four primarily components (referred to as ‘tenets’) of Child First approaches. These include the system viewing individuals who offend as “children” rather than offenders, promoting the development of pro-social identity, encouraging collaboration with children and seeking ways to divert children away from the stigma of system contact. DYJS believe in this approach in supporting a future of fewer victims and safer communities.

Devon Youth Offending Team became Devon Youth Justice service in January 2022 after a consultation process involving children, parents, partners, staff and others. The geography of the county means that the distances children and their families/carers must covers to access resources are a real challenge. DYJS addresses this by seeing children in their homes, their communities and by having several centres where children and families/carers can be seen.

At the same time, we proudly publicised our Mission statement –

- ***Our aim is for the youth justice system in Devon to see all children as children, to treat them fairly and to help them to build on their strengths so they can make a positive contribution to society.***
- ***Our goal is to keep children safe, to keep other people safe and to repair the harm caused to victims, making Devon a safer place for all.***
- ***Our belief is that, by developing meaningful relationships with children, and working closely with the people closest to them and our partner agencies, we can better succeed at our joint target of diverting children away from harmful behaviour.***
- ***Above all, our aim is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and to promote equality of opportunity***

Devon YJS is a trauma-informed service, with all staff having undertaken Trauma Informed Practice training and with Devon being a very early adopter of the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach. The Service aims to be as strengths-based as possible, seeking to enhance the support that young people get from their families, friends and communities. During the past 12 months the service has expanded on our participation strategy, with children being involved in staff interviews and involving children more feedback on our policy and procedure.

Collaboration with partner agencies across the system is needed to achieve our mission. We are committed to supporting, and where necessary challenging each other in our mission to be a child-first service. This Youth Justice Plan aims to promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention wherever possible. One of the most significant changes in the work of Devon YJS in the past three years has been the growing importance of the Out of Court Decision process. This is now the area of the greatest volume of interventions in Devon, with more children being successfully diverted early and not becoming involved in the formal criminal justice system and growing into the adult criminal justice system.

Significant work has been done to revise the police paperwork used to refer into DYJS, to ensure this prompts a Child First approach, asking officers to look for issues of adversity, complexity and wider context before reporting on an offending incident. This approach is embedded in the culture of any multi-agency meeting chaired by DYJS, where focus is first and foremost put on who the child is (including ethnicity, age, maturity, diversity issues, home context etc) before exploring their behaviours.

Building effective relationships with children is essential if we want to achieve our mission (see - [Relationship-based practice framework \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)). The Building Bridges framework (NHS England, 2020), The Positive Youth Justice Model (2015) and indeed Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) gives us reassurance of the importance of this approach. Contemporary research and evidence-based strategies delivered collaboratively by the NHS, Youth Custody Service and the Department for Education has demonstrated that a foundation of a “positive, child/adult

relationship in an environment that recognises the ‘relational conditions that can manage risk, promote positive behaviour and safety’ is what creates change with the children encountering the youth justice system.

The lead inspector for HMIP stated that on his visit he “found in all staff a deep, unbending desire to make a difference”. DYJS know that it takes the most skilled practitioners to help the cohort of children we work with feel safe enough to be challenged, empowered and fulfil their potential.

3. Voice of the Child

Each child is different and has a unique voice and experience. Devon YJS recognises the rights of children, including their right to have their views respected and their best interests always considered. It is essential that we demonstrate that respect by listening to the children we are currently working with and indeed, those we have worked with in the past.

Devon YJS collects and captures views in different ways, including regular consultation events, surveys, audits, and end of intervention feedback. The service can show how, on several occasions, the contributions of children and their parents/carers have had an impact on informing service delivery. For instance, following requests from children and their families, the service has greatly improved the language it uses in formal documents and planning.

The service employs a participation worker, whose primary role is to obtain feedback on the quality of services received by children and their families. As part of this plan children and their parents have been liaised with and detailed feedback can be found in Annex B.

Over the past year, young people have participated in recruiting staff for the service by acting as full members of the interview panel, resulting in very positive new appointments to the team. But we have ambition to do more and expand on our participation strategy, which includes exploring the possibility of a Young Person shadow Management Board; assertively seeking the views of children we know have a characteristic which is over-represented in the system and involving children in the training of staff and partners.

As part of the DYJS audit strategy, child and their parents/carers views are always sought and discussed in senior management teams to understand views and trends. Children have been consulted over choosing a new name, a new logo and a Mission Statement for Devon YJS. Display boards have been set up in each office to record changes – “*you said, we did*”. Last year young people told us that employment support and training opportunities were their biggest priority and in turn we have secured the support of ETE personal assistant support to enhance children’s chances of gaining better employment or training opportunities.

More recently feedback from children has been that Asset plus assessment can be overly intrusive. This has partially influenced a decision being made for DYJS to become an early adopter of the Short Assessment Tool, to be used with children with lower concerns.

4. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

Devon YJS Management board is the accountable body for issues such as staffing, budgets, the signing off the Youth Justice Plan and resulting protocols and procedures. The objective of the Devon YJS Management Board is to ensure integrated strategic planning and working with clear performance oversight, to ensure the effective delivery of youth justice services in Devon. Historically, Devon YJS Management Board has met every three months. Following the publication of Devon HMIP inspection report in November 2022, the board has met monthly to formulate and enact the resulting improvement plan.

Membership

The core membership of the Devon YJS Management Board comprises the agencies identified within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998:

- The Local Authority (including local Social Care, Education and Serious Violence functions)
- Health
- Police
- The Probation Service

In addition to the above, the chairs of the two Youth Benches of Magistrates (North & East Devon and South & West Devon benches) are members of the Management Board, as are managers from Early Help (in the form of the Devon Youth Inclusion Team Manager), representatives from Devon County Council finance department and representatives from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Agency representatives are sufficiently senior to be able to contribute to board discussions, subject to their own governance and decision-making arrangements on substantive matters.

In terms of agendas for the meetings, a core focus within agendas shall be placed on:

- Performance and Quality Assurance
- Planning, Delivery and Outcomes
- Resources
- Service Development

- Children in custody and/or of high concern in the community
- *Please see Appendix C for more detailed Terms of Reference for the Devon Youth Offending Service Management Board.*

Management board members have an ambition to scrutinise a wider data set on a quarterly basis inclusive of stop and search numbers, children held overnight in custody, children being expelled from schools and to have oversight of children who are in custody or secure institutions or are considered to pose a high-risk concern in the community. In addition, there is an aspiration to develop a “shadow” management board of young people who have lived experience of the youth justice system.

Operational Leadership and Structure

Devon YJS is located within Devon County Council Children’s Services, reflecting the significance of safeguarding and risk management work within the YJS. The location of the YJS within this service enhances links and working relationships with children’s social care teams. The Devon YJS Service Manager reports to the Head of Early Help in Devon’s Children’s Services.

A new restructure is proposed for DYJS going into 2024, inclusive of a 0.3 fte Service Manager, 0.8 fte Operational Manager and 3.6 fte team leaders who will meet as a Management Team monthly to share information from local and regional forums. The Service Manager carries overall responsibility for youth justice strategy within Devon, the operational manager for the writing and implementation of all policy and procedure (inclusive of Quality Assurance and workforce development) and each team leader has responsibility for coordinating services within specific portfolio areas (See Appendix D, Devon YJS structure chart.)

Additionally, Y-Smart Drug and Alcohol services and the Youth Inclusion Team (YIT) are co-located in the service bases in Exeter and Barnstaple and the delivery base in Newton Abbot. This co-location is a real strength for Devon YJS and results in very successful integration between the work of Y-Smart, YIT and Devon YJS. In recognition of the joint work achieved, Devon YJS supports both Y-Smart and the YIT Team financially.

Safeguarding and Public Protection

Through supervision and management oversight of casework, safeguarding issues are identified and YJS staff attend meetings for children in need of help and protection as part of multi-agency working arrangements. They also attend child protection, core group and Adolescent Safety Framework meetings on all open cases. The YJS Operational Manager is responsible for safeguarding and for escalations within the service, and chairs multi-agency meetings for those assessed as having high or very high vulnerability, through public protection panel meetings which are held bi-monthly. YJS has an escalation policy in place with Children’s Social Care, and staff complete relevant Safeguarding Training in line with the requirements of the Devon Children and Families Partnership. YJS duty staff provide information to the MASH hub as required and regularly complete MASH referral forms and take safeguarding action on behalf of the children they work with. In addition, YJS staff are represented at the local Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings and complete National Referral Mechanism (NRM) forms where appropriate. The YJS also plays a full part in all multi-agency safeguarding audits.

Relevant cases are referred to MAPPA, and the YJS works closely with partners in the police to review intelligence and ensure that measures are in place to protect the public, including named and vulnerable victims. In the first instance options are sought to do this via those who have parental responsibility but also use clear boundaries via use of external controls such as licence conditions and prohibitive requirements, if required.

Early Help/Supporting Families

Devon County Council has merged the Supporting Families Agenda into Early Help and as mentioned above, there are strong working links between Devon YJS and Early Help, particularly in terms of links with the Youth Inclusion Teams and the newly established Turnaround team. Devon YJS staff attend Early Help meetings in all parts of the county, with staff attending practitioner forums and managers attending Steering Group meetings. In addition, the weekly OOC panels, which co-ordinate packages of assistance for children at the earliest point of possible offending behaviour, are attended by staff from Early Help, Youth Inclusion Teams, Turnaround, Y-Smart drug and alcohol services, the Devon MASH, Speech and Language Therapists, allocated Social Workers and Victim Workers as well as Devon YJS and the police.

Partnership Arrangements

Partnership arrangements are in place between Devon YJS statutory partners, who have a stake in delivering local youth justice services, and wider partnerships, to generate effective outcomes for children who offend or are at risk of offending.

Devon YJS has both financial and staffing contributions from partner agencies which are detailed further in Section 7 of this document.

The YJS is a partnership which includes, but also extends beyond, the direct delivery of youth justice services. To deliver better outcomes for children and victims, the YJS must function effectively across the two key statutory frameworks, covering criminal justice services and a wide range of health and social care services.

To accomplish this, the YJS is represented on, and makes a significant contribution to, a broad range of partnerships including:

- The Local Criminal Justice Board
- The Devon and Cornwall Youth Justice Forum

- The Devon Youth Crime Prevention Partnership
- Safer Devon Partnership
- Youth Bench meetings with local Youth Magistrates
- Youth Detention Review Forums (to review children detained overnight in police custody)
- MACE meetings
- Devon Children and Family Partnership meetings
- Devon's Channel Panel and Prevent meetings
- Misogyny working group
- Weekly missing panel

The overarching protocol for partnership working for Devon Youth Justice Service is the 'Partnership Financial Agreement' between the statutory partners. This Agreement outlines all the financial arrangements of the partnership, including the level of both financial and staff contributions made by each of the statutory partners.

Resettlement of children leaving custody has always been a very important priority for Devon YJS, with a deliberate strategy in place to visit children in custody over and above the national standards for this and to start the discussion of resettlement from the very outset. Clear protocols have been established with Devon County Council children's services to support their release from custody plan. These protocols will be reviewed and strengthened, so that the experience of children leaving custody continues to improve.

The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on YOTs and key partners to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and extremism. As of September 2021, the Devon YJS' Operational Manager has represented Devon Children's Service in Channel Panel meetings. This has resulted in very much clearer YJS input into the discussions and earlier input from YJS services to children going through the panel process. Most Devon YJS staff have undertaken 'prevent' awareness training. One member of staff has undertaken more specialised training in this area and, when needed, offers advice and assistance to colleagues, or undertakes joint work.

The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence Regulations 2022 were laid on 12 December 2022, which reiterates our duty to co-operate with partner agencies to prevent and tackle serious violence, reduce criminal exploitation and advise on appropriate responses to enable children to move beyond their offending behaviour. Further detail can be found here. [Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/113444/serious-violence-duty-statutory-guidance.pdf)

5. Board Development

The YJB are clear in their guidance that there is an expectation for management boards to take responsibility for all aspects of youth justice governance, to lead strategically across relevant partners and to ensure a high-quality service is provided to all children. Further guidance can be found here [youth justice service governance and leadership](#).

Feedback from HMIP in the Autumn 2022, suggested improvements could be made regarding strengthening the connectivity between the management board and the staff group. Partners in the YJS management board have welcomed this feedback and since then have sought to strengthen its role and level of oversight of children who are in, or at risk of coming into, the youth justice system. Over the past year there have been some changes in the chairing of management board, though soon a new head of early help will be recruited and the chairing for future board meeting will be their responsibility and with it bring some ongoing consistency. Feedback from HMIP stated that if this governance were more consistent, the service would be likely upgraded from the finding of “good” to “outstanding” in any future visits.

A new induction pack was adopted in 2022, and plans are in place to review the experiences and value that partners have taken from this approach. Furthermore, partners have made efforts to be more present in offices to increase “visibility”, observe practice and meet with staff. The management board have been involved in the writing of this plan and shared ongoing ambitions to maintain their visibility within the service by attending quarterly face to face management boards in DYJS offices; by inviting staff into Management Board meetings; by publicising a summary of management board minutes within five working days of having had the meeting; by having greater focus and analysis of data in quarterly meetings; by seeking to establish a shadow board with children discussing the needs of service and by discussing children in custody and those who are presenting a high concern who are “stuck” in the system.

6. [Progress on previous plan](#)

Devon Youth Justice Service set several key targets during 2022/23.

Aim	Progress and/or specific barriers to completion.
<p>Work to establish a multi-agency protocol to reduce delay for children going to Court. This was the biggest concern from partners in Devon YJS's consultation exercise.</p>	<p>Not achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>In reviewing this target with the Management board no members were aware of an established protocol or that any dip sampling has occurred over the past year.</p> <p>Some children working with Devon YJS have produced written information about the experience of going to Court in Devon. Those awaiting Court receives an offer of support and this written information whilst they await the confirmation of their court date. This includes offering to show them around Court prior to their appearance.</p>
<p>Work to establish a multi-agency protocol to reduce overnight detentions in police custody.</p>	<p>Not achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>The most recent protocol in place dates to 2018, this protocol has not been reviewed in the last year. The protocol should include a requirement for data regarding overnight detentions, to be brought to quarterly management board meetings.</p>
<p>Work to increase Participation of children in in Devon YJS</p>	<p>Partially achieved and is an ongoing aim.</p> <p>Young People are routinely invited to interviews for new members of staff in DYJS.</p> <p>Links have been established with the Participation team in Children's Services and a learning event is taking place in June to consider the voice of children and young people regarding transitions.</p> <p>More needs to be done to strengthen and develop the participation offer/strategy from DYJS including more routine and consistent consultation with young people and their families and for them have a voice in the Management Board.</p>
<p>Continue to reduce the number of First Time Entrants in Devon</p>	<p>Not achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>Most recent rates of FTE level are 121/100,000 and last year's figures were 97/100,000, this is an increase of 29%.</p>

	<p>Nonetheless, the OOC panel is well established, well attended and most cases are presented at panel before a decision is made. Those who are not discussed in panel could be collated for discussion in future management board meetings to explore why.</p> <p>Voluntary support is offered in a variety of ways. 1) Under CR's and/or Youth Cautions 2) When children are awaiting court dates 3) post statutory intervention if the child/parent/carer requests this and there is an identified need that cannot be fulfilled by other non-statutory community services.</p> <p>FTE figures should be routinely discussed for future quarterly Management Board meetings and further exploration is needed across the peninsula regarding the improvement of the Outcome 22 offer.</p>
<p>Continue to keep the number of remands and custodial sentences low in Devon</p>	<p>Achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>Most recent level of custody is 0.07/1,000 which is above the southwest rate of 0.04 but below the national average of 0.11.</p> <p>66 days were spent on remand over 2021/22.</p>
<p>Offer continued support to children and their families</p>	<p>Achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>-Family support policy is in place and Family Support Practitioner is in post. Part of their role is to check the family are in receipt to all benefits to which they are entitled and seeks if the family are facing any other structural barriers or require emotional or parental support/guidance.</p>
<p>Work to increase participation by YJS children and young people in Education, Training and Employment (ETE) opportunities</p>	<p>Achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>The current number of school aged children open to DYJS and in full time education is 69%. (May 2023). Steps have been taken to lessen the administrative burden on the current Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) seconded to the team to seek ways to increase this number further. Indeed, more EWO time is being assigned to the team from Autumn 2023.</p> <p>Bimonthly meetings occur to discuss children over school age who are NEET. 44 per cent of those over 16 and open to DYJS are not in education or training. The overall figure of children NEET in Devon is significant and DYJS are committed to close work with Careers Southwest and Devon County Council ETE Personal Assistants to help improve this.</p>

<p>Tackle disproportionality in the criminal justice system in Devon</p>	<p>Partially achieved and ongoing aim</p> <p>YJAF data shows that children from a Black or Mixed heritage background, receiving a Criminal Justice outcome in Devon are not disproportionate sitting at 6% (latest data provided for this in March 2022 – YJAF Summary Ethnic disparity tool)</p> <p>All staff have completed Race Equality training and the HMIP effective practice for working with Black and Mixed Heritage boys is part of induction and well known in service.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to increase the understanding of the 10-point checklist of children in care, which has seen a reduction in the number of incidents of criminal damage within care homes being pursued.</p> <p>Whilst successes and steps have been made, DYJS management board recognises that more can and will be done to consider the wider levels of over representation and disproportionality.</p>
<p>Work with partners to reduce violent offending</p>	<p>Achieved and is an ongoing aim -</p> <p>The figures below are sourced from serious youth violence toolkit 2023 though the format of data capture has altered since the last plan. The toolkit indicates at the year-end 2021 the number of SV offences per 10,000 children in Devon was 1.5. The figure for year-end 2022, has increased to 4.4/10,000.</p> <p>The Serious Violence Group has now been reinstated. Community Safety & Violence Prevention Lead will attend YJS management board on quarterly basis to discuss ongoing strategy regarding the serious violence duty.</p>
<p>Work to strengthen the Devon YJS Management Board</p>	<p>Partially achieved and ongoing aim -</p> <p>The management board induction pack has been created and rolled out to all partners to help clarify roles and aims.</p> <p>Partners have occasionally met face to face in YJS offices, to ensure visibility to the wider team or have visited offices independently to strength relationships with front line staff. Minutes of meetings are now distributed to the wider staff group.</p> <p>There is a strong commitment from the management board to consider data trends and analysis to inform strategic direction of the service.</p>
<p>Workforce development</p>	<p>Achieved and ongoing aim -</p>

<p>1) Trauma Informed Practice training will increase practitioners'/managers' knowledge and understanding. Staff, including volunteers, will be offered various training opportunities</p> <p>2) Child First practice, offering the Effective Practice Award to staff</p>	<p>All staff have been trained in Trauma informed practice and ongoing "bite sized" training is offered to staff regarding trauma informed practice.</p> <p>To date a combination of 7 team leaders and case holding staff have completed the training, though the ambition is for the whole service to have undertaken this training by the Spring 2024.</p>
<p>Speech and Language assessment</p> <p>All children open to the service should be screened to a Speech and Language therapist. This is voluntary, so some young people will decline, but it is planned that all young people will be offered a screening.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>All cases which come are opened or assessed by DYJS have a screening for SAL and this is now considered embedded practice.</p>
<p>Generate 'real time' Live Tracker data</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>The live tracker has now been completed (in May 2023) with the roll out and implementation for the tracker from July 2023. Data from the tracker to be submitted to Quarterly management board meetings to analyse data and consider strategy.</p>

<p>Nine new Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>(NB – last year’s plan referred to the KPI’s before their release in April 2023.)</p>	<p>Achieved and ongoing aim</p> <p>A process is now in place to ensure we are accurately recording this data in Child view with practitioners getting support from Admin and an Information Officer assigned to support the service.</p>
<p>Establish a clear strategy to identify neurodiversity needs in children referred to Devon YJS and create plans to deliver services that take account of these needs.</p>	<p>Partially Achieved and ongoing aim</p> <p>Staff have been advised to update the health section of Child View to record any identified neuro diversity.</p> <p>The necessity to capture information for KPI’s will assist us over the incoming year to ensure we have this data, that it can be analysed in MB and in turn, the strategy reviewed.</p>

7. [Resources and Services](#)

This section references how Devon Youth Justice Service intends deliver effective youth justice services in prevent offending and reoffending, reducing numbers entering the system, in improving the safety and wellbeing of our children and communities and to improve outcomes for all, based on the financial contributions given by the YJB and other partners.

Devon YJS is committed to the following principles:

- Maintaining adequate front-line delivery of core YJS services to children and partners
- Ensuring that Devon YJS remains in a position to improve practice and outcomes for children
- Ensuring that children are kept safe, and any concerns to the wellbeing of children or potential victims are well managed
- Working with children to encourage desistance from crime and anti-social behaviour
- Ensuring value for money

These principles underpin all our budgetary management. The budgets are monitored by DCC Finance Department, with quarterly reports presented to the Devon YJS Management Board and partner agencies. Alongside the financial monitoring of these budgets, local area performance is also monitored against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and National Standards. The YJS continues to undertake reviews and analysis of its caseloads and service users' needs, using the outcomes to adapt service delivery and to ensure that there are appropriate levels of resources in each area to meet children's needs.

The YJS budget comprises partnership funding, YJB funding and specific grant funding. The budget allocation is reviewed annually by the Devon Youth Justice Service Management Board (see Appendix 2 for Terms of Reference). All partners (Police, Probation, Health, Local Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner) agree funding contributions for the following year and these arrangements are formalised into a [Partner Financial Agreement](#), which is reviewed annually and signed by all partners. Devon YJS uses the YJB grant and partner contributions to deliver the benefits and outcomes set out later in this report. The partner financial agreement mentioned above ensures that all partners maintain their contributions at the level necessary to deliver effective Youth Justice Services in Devon, as measured against Key Performance Indicators and National Standards and as monitored by Devon YJS Management Board meetings.

There are numerous benefits linked to this agreement, such as:

- Agreement on levels of cash contributions from each agency
- Agreement on levels of staff secondments from each agency

- A clear budget-planning process, including timescales
- The service has a track record of remaining within budget and, over a period of time, has been able to retain balances that enable it to undertake developments or cover unexpected expenditure without the need to seek recourse to the statutory partners.

Budget 2023 – 24

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Police	151,320	0	0	151,320
Police and Crime Commissioner	0	0	190,266	190,266
Probation	59,670	0	5,000	64,670
Health	188,115	0	66,431	254,546
Local Authority*	384,000	0	299,200	683,200
YJB	0	0	775,808	775,808
Junior Attendance Centre (YJB)	0	0	16,450	16,450
Total	783,105	0	1,353,155	2,136,260

The total YJS budget for 2021-22 is **£2,136,260**.

**A restructure of DCC Children's Services is underway and included in the restructure plans are the DCC funded members of staff within the Youth Justice Service. The figures given in this report are therefore subject to change.*

Planned spending for 2022-23 is as follows:

Salaries 69%

Supplies 19%

Premises 10%

Transport 2%

Transport

In addition to the above, Devon YJS receives one-off funding as follows:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner:

£15,000 grant for calendar year 2023/24 to support work of OOC panel (spent enabling partners to provide additional voluntary packages of support).

Devon Youth Justice Grant

The Devon youth justice grant is spent exclusively on the salaries of staff who deliver youth justice services. The youth justice grant does not cover all of these salary costs, so partner agency contributions are used to supplement them.

Table detailing spending of Youth Justice Grant and Junior Attendance Centre (JAC) monies.	Amount	Activities	Youth Justice Service Staff Salaries
Youth Justice Grant	£775,808		£775,808
JAC grant	£16,450	£16,450	

Staffing

The YJS is staffed in line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), including: Social Workers, Probation, Police, Health and Education professionals, plus a range of other staff, e.g., Victim Liaison Officers, Restorative Justice staff, Parenting worker and Speech & Language specialists.

The service currently has X operational staff (full time equivalents) and is supported by a bank of active volunteers. The breakdown of staffing by agency is given below, a detailed structure chart is provided as Appendix D

Partner Agency	Staffing
Devon County Council	31 (26.88 Whole Time Equivalents) *
Probation	2 (1.4 Whole Time Equivalent)
Police	3 (2.6 Whole Time Equivalents)
Health	5 (3.5 Whole Time Equivalents) *
Education	1 (0.46 Whole Time Equivalent)
TOTAL	42 (34.84 Whole Time Equivalent)

Because of the increasing complexity of cases managed, the team operates a relationship-based practice model of case management, enabling staff to work to their expertise and experience and input more resource to children with higher concerns and/or needs. The need to develop trust and working relationships are key to change for this cohort of children, most of whom had had the most adversarial childhood experiences. See - [Relationship-based practice framework \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk).

Key staffing monitoring information

- Devon YJS has 42 members of staff: 22 are female and 15 are male (plus five vacancies).
- We currently have 37 staff trained in restorative justice.
- We have a total of 28 referral panel volunteers, of whom 22 are female and 6 are male. All are trained in restorative justice. 27 self-declare as White British and one as Black African.
- In addition, TAAS (The Appropriate Adult Service) has 28 'outsourced'/'sessional' staff plus one volunteer. Of the sessional staff, 24 are female and 4 are male; the volunteer is female. All TAAS staff (and the volunteer) are White British.
- *See Appendix 3: Devon YJS Structure Chart plus other tables*

8. [Performance](#)

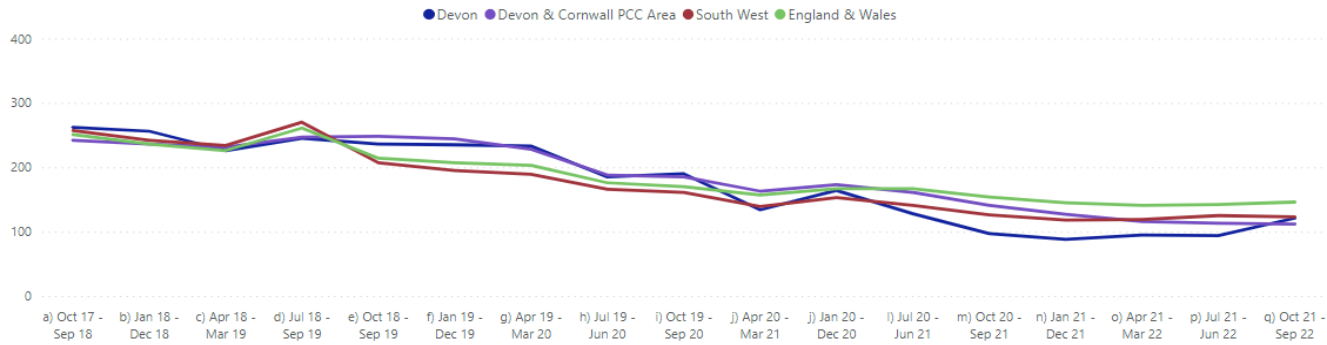
National Key Performance Indicators

Devon Youth Justice service welcome the requirement to report on the [new key performance indicators](#) from April 2023, with the first submission due August 2023. Whilst we do not have this information at the time of submission of this plan, a plan has been established with the wider team, administrative staff, and an information officer to ensure DYJS is capturing this data accurately and will submit this information in a timely fashion. This data will be discussed in each quarterly management board meeting over the incoming year, to note trends and help to inform where resources need to be allocated.

The following data, shows performance against the existing key performance indicators.

First-time entrants FTEs):

Rate of FTEs per 100,000 under 18's Oct 17 - Sep 21



Area	a) Oct 17 - Sep 18	b) Jan 18 - Dec 18	c) Apr 18 - Mar 19	d) Jul 18 - Sep 19	e) Oct 18 - Sep 19	f) Jan 19 - Dec 19	g) Apr 19 - Mar 20	h) Jul 19 - Jun 20	i) Oct 19 - Sep 20	j) Apr 20 - Mar 21	k) Jan 20 - Dec 20	l) Jul 20 - Jun 21	m) Oct 20 - Sep 21	n) Jan 21 - Dec 21	o) Apr 21 - Mar 22	p) Jul 21 - Jun 22	q) Oct 21 - Sep 22
a) Devon	262	256	226	245	236	235	233	185	190	164	134	128	97	88	95	94	121
c) South West	257	242	234	270	207	195	189	166	161	153	139	141	126	118	119	125	123
d) England & Wales	251	236	226	261	214	207	203	176	170	167	157	167	154	145	141	142	146
b) Devon & Cornwall PCC Area	242	236	231	247	248	244	228	188	185	173	163	161	141	127	116	113	112
Total	1012	970	917	1023	905	881	853	715	706	657	593	597	518				

Over the last five years, the number of FTEs has declined by 46%. Last year's figures were the lowest ever recorded by Devon YJS, which in part can be attributed to the multi-agency Out of Court Decision Panel, along with additional funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office but may have also been effected by the impact of the pandemic. However, this years FTE figures are 121 per 100,000 – an increase of nearly 30% on the previous years data.

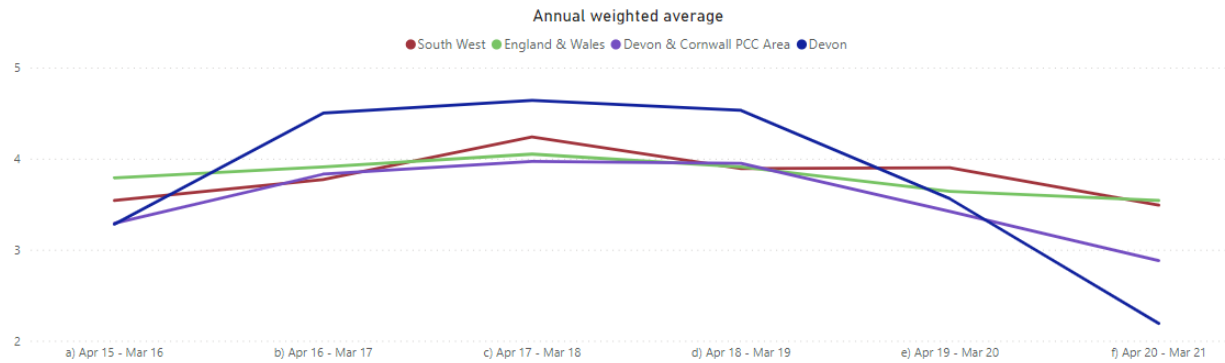
First Time Entrants (April 2022 - March 2023)



a) April 2022	b) May 2022	c) June 2022	d) July 2022	e) August 2022	f) September 2022	g) October 2022	h) November 2022	i) December 2022	j) January 2023	k) February 2023	l) March 2023	Total
7	6	6	12	10	7	7	8	4	16	13	8	104

More locally sourced data (DCC information management) gives us an idea of FTE figures between April 2022 and March 2023 (which is a differing data set/time period to above). This graph is helpful to identify the trends over the last year of when Children first become involved in the CJS. A spike can be seen in June (after many year 11's have finished school) and this spike reduces as a summer break ends. A further spike can be noted over Christmas and the new year.

Reoffending rates:



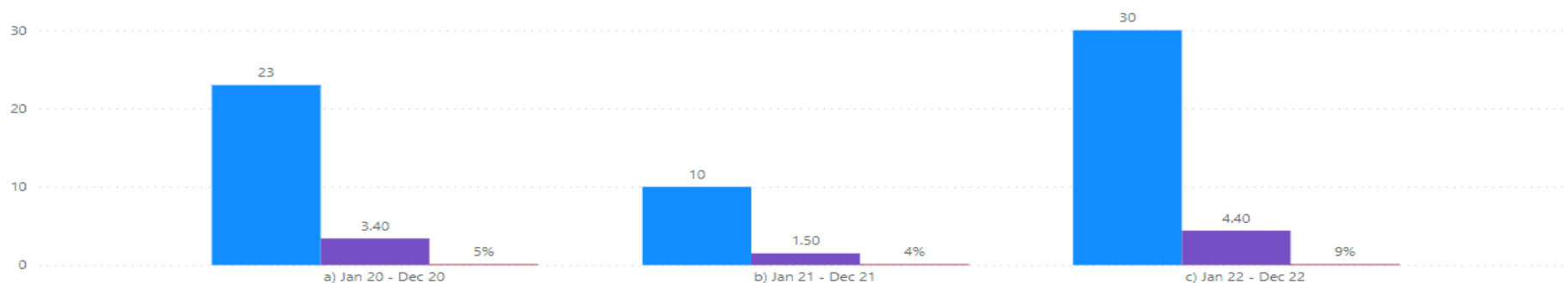
These re-offending rates demonstrate a lower-than-average re-offending rate in Devon in comparison with England and Wales and across Devon and Cornwall PCC area.

Serious Youth Violence Offences:

The data below demonstrates a very concerning increase in trend of serious violence in Devon and this will form part of the planning for 2023/24. Please see refer to the next section re DYJS priorities for SYVO.

Number & Rate of Serious Youth Violence Offences - Devon

● Number of SYV Offences ● Rate per 10,000 of the general 10-17 pop ● % SYV comprise of total offences



Year	a) Jan 20 - Dec 20	b) Jan 21 - Dec 21	c) Jan 22 - Dec 22
% SYV comprise of total offences	5	4	9
Number of SYV Offences	23	10	30
Rate per 10,000 of the general 10-17 pop	3.4	1.5	4.4

Local Performance

Out of Court Decisions	Number of Outcomes
Community Resolution Police Facilitated	190
Community Resolution with YOT Intervention	18
Deferred Prosecution Outcome 22	18
Youth Caution	49
Youth Conditional Caution	71
Total	346

This table shows the Out of Court outcomes for young people in the Devon YJS area in the 12-month period April 2022 to March 2023. This data shows that there have been fewer single agency police facilitated Community Resolutions but an increase in disposals supported by the Youth Justice Service in comparison to the previous year. (2021/22 saw a total of 86 OOCDD disposals involving YJS. 2022/23 saw a total of 156 OOCDD disposals).

The table opposite shows outcomes from Youth and Crown Court in Devon. The main outcomes which have required DYJS input have been those children sentenced to custody, Youth Rehabilitation Orders and Referral Orders. In real terms this figure amounts to 56 Court disposals between April 2022 and March 2023. This is an increase from the previous year's figures of 36.

Of note in this table is of the number of children DYJS currently have recorded as having been "recommended prosecution" i.e. to go to Court, amounts to 67. This indicates there are still either a) delays in children going to Court or b) not robust communication links with Crown Prosecution Service to let DYJS know if prosecutions are not being proceeding with. NB. All children who are awaiting prosecution are offered voluntary support from DYJS.

Offences by Type	Number of Offences
Violence Against The Person	257
Drugs	96
Criminal Damage	93
Public Order	62
Theft And Handling Stolen Goods	51
Other	21
Sexual Offences	21
Motoring Offences	15
Non Domestic Burglary	15
Vehicle Theft / Unauthorised Taking	11
Robbery	9
Racially Aggravated	8
Breach Of Statutory Order	5
Domestic Burglary	5
Arson	4
Fraud And Forgery	4
Total	677

Offences linked to OOC and Court Outcomes.

Offences of violence are the most common but have reduced from last year's figure of 273. Drug offences have increased by 3, whilst criminal damage and public order offences (often linked to violence) have reduced by 78 and 6 accordingly. This is attributed in part to a focus on a strategy of seeking alternatives to criminalisation of children in care via the 10-point checklist [The forgotten 10 point checklist – the decision to prosecute offending in children's homes \(yjlc.uk\)](#). Motoring offences have seen a dramatic reduction from last year's figure of 56 (a reduction of 41) but sexual offences have increased by 8. The rest of the offence types have remained somewhat static on average.

Court Outcomes	Number of Outcomes
Community Punishment Order (CSO)	1
Disqualified from Driving	1
Fine	1
License Endorsed	1
Order to Continue	1
Order Varied	1
Young Offenders Institution (Yoi Custody)	1
Youth Rehabilitation Order ISS Requirement Band 1	1
No Separate Penalty	2
Order Revoked	2
Penalty Points	2
Detention + Training Order (Custody)	4
Conditional Discharge	6
Discontinued/Dismissed/Withdrawn	7
Youth Rehabilitation Order	11
Referral Order	40
Recommend Prosecution	67
Total	149

9. Priorities

Children from groups which are over-represented

Sadly, children from a range of backgrounds are over-represented in the youth justice system. Nationally it is known that Black and Mixed ethnicity boys are over-represented and the recent [HMIP thematic report](#) made a number of recommendations. These have been discussed with the whole staff group and the effective practice document which followed this report is part of the induction package for new staff and volunteers. Tackling disproportionality in the criminal justice system in Devon will remain an ongoing target for DYJS. Children coming under DYJS supervision are not over presented in regard to their race and/or ethnicity, however since last year's report we have seen an *increase of 2%* of children identifying as black or mixed heritage. We cannot be complacent to this issue and continue to review this data across our own and police data sets.

However, nationally it is not only Black and Mixed ethnicity children that are over-represented. DYJS intend to expand the data set for quarterly review in our management board. This will include but is not limited to children known to social care services, children excluded from school and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and children who have a neurodiversity or other health issue.

DYJS and partners have recognised that there has historically been an over-representation of children in Devon's criminal justice system who are in care placements. A number of these children would become "known" to the CJS for offences of Criminal Damage within the home. Work has been done with police, social care and some placement in Devon (often via the OOC panel) to challenge decisions to potentially criminalise these children, referring to the 10-point checklist for children in care. Data above shows a significant reduction in the number of children now being criminalised for criminal damage offences. In part because of this strategy, the number of criminal damage offences have *reduced by 46%*.

Anecdotally, we recognise a pattern of more neurodiversity in the children coming into the criminal justice system. But we need to be better at understanding this locally (data below shows the picture we currently have, but we are not reassured this is as accurate as it needs to be). Nonetheless, training has been delivered and more is planned with both DYJS and Police colleagues about working with children with Neurodiversity issues.

Whilst there are fewer girls in the youth justice system, they do have a specific set of needs. There has been a reduction of the number of female children working with DYJS since last year, *a reduction of 2%*. Staff have said they would welcome further training in how to support girls in the criminal justice system.

Characteristics of Children Subject to DYJS Assessment/Intervention (April 2023 data)

Of the 120 cases open to DYJS in the month of April (2023) the children had the following characteristics.

Whilst a snapshot, these figures demonstrate very powerfully the level of multiple challenges that this cohort of children are faced with. Children who work with Devon YJS typically face multiple challenges (the average child has almost four characteristics from the below list, one child had nine) which means that a multi-agency plan of work is typically required. Devon YJS benefits from having a wide variety of professionals within the service (from Health, Speech and Language, Education, Police, Probation and Social Services backgrounds) and it also links with a range of agencies across Devon to ensure that the best possible plan is put in place. *(NB health needs, excluding S&L, have only recently been added to this list for data capture so the reliability of this data is uncertain. It is believed the figures for health could be more than is shown below)*

Characteristic	Number of Young People
Child In Need	32
Child Looked After	27
Child Protection Plan	9
EHCP	42
Health Need (Diagnoses of ADHD)	19
Health Need (Diagnoses of Autism & ADHD)	7
Health Need (Diagnoses of Autism)	17
Mental Health	55
S&L	64
SEN or Disability	60
Substance Misuse	72
Vul Criminal Exploitation	65
Vul Sexual Exploitation	20

Breakdown of Age/Gender/Ethnicity/Religion

This data shows us that predominately the ethnicity make up of the children known to DYJS are white, and the percentage of children from black, mixed heritage or Asian background has reduced by 0.1%. This does not demonstrate disproportionality, nonetheless oversight of this is continually needed given the national over representation of black and mixed heritage children in the CJS.

Boys have historically been more represented in the CJS compared to girls, but the figures show that there is a significant number of girls working with DYJS and this has increased in the last year by 4%. In addition, whilst numbers are low some children are not identifying as either male or female when they have contact with the service.

The ages of children being opened to DYJS is more varied than last years figures. 32% of the DYJS cohort were aged 17, whilst this year the figure has reduced by 10%. There is also a sharp increase of children aged between 10-13 becoming open to the service (11% compared to last year).

Data on religion is poor and predominately shows that the service is not sufficiently capturing this data.

Ethnicity	% of Young People
White	95.3%
Mixed	2.9%
Unknown	1.0%
Black or Black British	0.5%
Asian or Asian British	0.3%

Gender	% of Young People
Male	76.4%
Female	23.0%
Indeterminate	0.3%
Other	0.3%

Age at Outcome Date	% of Young People
15	22.0%
17	22.0%
14	16.5%
16	16.0%
13	12.0%
12	8.4%
11	1.8%
10	0.8%
18	0.5%

Religion	% of Young People
No Data for this person	43.2%
Unknown	39.5%
Agnostic	6.0%
Christian	3.7%
Other	3.1%
Non Conformist	2.6%
Atheist	0.8%
Buddhist	0.3%
Church of England	0.3%
No Religion	0.3%
Roman Catholic	0.3%

Prevention

A report published by the YJB in February 2023, ([Final Report: Prevention and Diversion Project – Youth Justice Board for England and Wales \(February 2023\) - Youth Justice Resource Hub \(yjresourcehub.uk\)](#)) shows that nationally on average more than half of a youth justice service caseload are children receiving preventative or diversionary support; there is widespread confusion over definitions of early intervention practices; a significant gap in data and there is “diverse and inconsistent practice owing to a lack of central guidance”.

In Devon the “Turnaround Project” was established in the Spring 2023. This project has 1.0 FTE team leader and 3.0 fte staff. They currently have a caseload of 25, all cases having been referred by the police as children who have been either arrested and NFA’d, received Community resolution or are RUI’d. Staff in DYJS are available and currently do support and advise the police and partners in early discussions regarding the early prevention and possible diversion of children if formal process can be avoided. Devon currently has 340 children RUI’d so further thought could be given to ensure partner are assured all relevant children are offered support when released under investigation.

Devon Management Board recognise the need to consider the overall early help, adolescent offer to help prevent children formally entering the criminal justice system. Further strategy meetings are planned to include all relevant statutory and non-statutory partners to consider pathways for relevant children of concern. The serious violence strategy recommends that such strategy includes consideration for the support of children who have been released under investigation for serious violence.

Diversion

HMIP noted in November 2022, “There is a high-quality, evidence-based out-of-court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance” and DYJS were rated as “good”. Devon YJS has a well-established panel that supports joint decision-making. This is multi-agency, including partners from the YJS, police, health, CAMHS, speech and language specialists, and education, social care, alcohol and drug services and victim representation. Partners work together to achieve fair and proportionate outcomes for children but there is an escalation process to manage disagreements between partners. The panel all adopt a “child first” approach and always speak about who the child is before discussing the behaviour.

The Police run a Youth intervention clinic to issue Community Resolutions by trained Youth Intervention Officers, who support and refer children to services that will help them to desist from offending. Whilst this was noted as being very positive by HMIP, the inspectors strongly recommended the voice of the children, and their parents/carers should be sought from a third party (i.e. other than police) before the decision is made to issue a Community Resolution.

Report writers who have completed assessments, following an adjournment, do not currently attend the panel to present their findings and recommendations. HMIP felt this “is a missed opportunity, given that assessments are carried out on these children because they have committed high gravity offences or who have complex needs or both.”.

There is also an inconsistency of diversionary approaches across the 4 youth justice services in Devon and Cornwall. A Youth OOC improvement group has been established and is chaired by a D&C Inspector who is the lead for youth responses to crime across the peninsula. This group very much is developing the strategy for the consistent use of Out of Court disposals inclusive of ensuring the effective use of Outcome 22 for appropriate children.

Education

As stated above, From April 2023, DYJS will be required to submit performance data on Education, Training and Employment as well as the SEN and disability/additional learning needs data of our cohort. This data will be analysed in quarterly management board meetings to discuss children not receiving their education entitlement, how many are excluded, on part time timetables or elective home educated. This will further help identify any issues of disproportionality and care statuses of these children.

Currently DYJS employ an Education Welfare Officer to support these children in attaining their educational entitlement and lead on providing data to the management board, as is recommended in the following thematic inspection. [‘Major barriers’ to participation in Education, Training and Employment for the most vulnerable children in the youth justice system \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk).

% of School aged pupils (Open to DYJS April 2023)	Total
AP	26%
EOTAS	7%
Mainstream	48%
EHE	2%
Independent special school	15%
Maintained Special School	2%

Most recent data indicates that 44 per cent of those over 17 are not in education or training. DYJS do now have access to specialist ETE personal advisors with whom staff can refer children to or seek specific advice on how to support but more scrutiny and analysis of this data will form part of the ongoing plan.

Restorative approaches and victims

It remains within our mission that victims can never be overlooked or forgotten. The restorative approaches taken by DYJS empowers victims and gives them a voice in the criminal justice process, helping them to move on with their lives. DYJS believe victims should always be considered when planning for their safety and there should also be consideration of the child's experience of being a victim and any potential future concern. Restorative approaches can also help children move forwards and draw a line under past events. The victim officers within the team have a central role in helping those who have been harmed by the behaviours of children known to our service, many of whom may not understand why we may be seeking to divert a child away from a court process. This takes significant skill, time and empathy to do this role well.

At the time of writing, DYJS have 1.2 fte staff who lead on victim support covering 83 open victim cases. From April 2023, 'Victims' will become a key performance indicator and DYJS will need to demonstrate to the YJB how we achieve this aim.

Serious violence and exploitation

The Serious Youth Violence duty came into force in January 2023 - [Home Office Serious Violence Duty](#). Work has begun across the authority to identify the drivers of serious violence committed by children in Devon. Many of these children may be released under investigation following an incident and further planning needs to occur across partners about Devon's preventative offer, how to engage with children released under investigation and how we continue to improve outcomes for those children awaiting a disposal (either by means of an Out of Court or Court Disposal) as well as those subject to police or court-imposed disposals.

Partnership work is underway with the exploitation leads in Devon Local authority to address the concerns regarding child criminal exploitation, the numbers of NRMs in county and the corresponding strategy and to ensure that wider partnership arrangements are in place to learn from any serious incidents which may occur. Data in the previous section shows us that serious violence trends are increasing in Devon.

DYJS head of service currently sits on the county wide Prevent multi-agency meeting to consider concerns regarding the possible radicalisation or extremist activity of children in Devon or under the care of Devon Local Authority.

Overall, the ambition is to continue to strengthen the crossover and oversight of serious violence governance and since May 2023, the lead for Community Safer partnership will join the DYJS management board to consider ways to address this in Devon, such as considering an application to host the knife angel [Official Knife Angel Page | The British Ironwork Centre](#).

The trends of serious violence increasing is of concern, not least in the impact on victims and the public but also the impact on staff dealing with issues of serious violence, the duty of care DYJS to properly support and supervise those staff in dealing with serious violence.

Detention in police custody

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) strategy for Police Custody indicates that using police custody should be a last resort for young people under the age of 18. It is widely recognised that police custody suites are not suitable places for children or young people to be held in overnight. There is a risk that children and young people may be exposed to aggressive and abusive behaviour, or encounter people experiencing mental health episodes or under the influence of alcohol and substances. It is recognised that children or young people are vulnerable in a custody setting and should be treated differently to adults in police custody.

The law recognises that police cells are not a suitable place for children. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 requires the transfer of children who have been charged and denied bail to more appropriate local authority accommodation, with a related duty in the Children Act 1989 for local authorities to accept these transfers. In 1991 the UK ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, agreeing that custody should be used “only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time”.

Devon and Cornwall Police and Devon County Council have developed a PACE beds fostering scheme. A review of the current protocols (latest version dates to 2018 is required in the incoming year). The management board should have quarterly information on the following:

1. The number of under 18s detained in police custody for 4 hours or more, between the hours of midnight and 8.00am
2. The number of under 18s who are charged and detained in police custody overnight with no request for any accommodation made by police to the local authority
3. The number of requests made for secure accommodation
4. The number of transfers to secure accommodation as a result of the requests made in (2)
5. The number of requests made for non-secure accommodation
6. The number of transfers to local authority non-secure accommodation as a result of the requests in (4).

Remands

Nationally, most children held in custody are held on remand. Remand numbers in Devon have traditionally been low; however, 66 days on remand were built up at the end of the 2022/23 year, with this placement continuing. Plans to continue work to keep custody numbers low and reduce remand numbers are detailed in the current Service Improvement Plan. Low custody and remand numbers are proven to have better outcomes for children and indeed save the local authority significant money by having the child managed in the community as opposed to youth detention (as detailed below).

Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation

Year	YOI	SCH	STC	All Settings
2019/20	15	122	0	137
2020/21	0	23	0	23
2021/22	58	0	0	58
2022/23	66	0	0	66
Total	139	145	0	284

Number of nights in remand

Year	YOI	SCH	STC	All Settings
2019/20	1	5	0	6
2020/21	0	1	0	1
2021/22	1	0	0	1
2022/23	1	0	0	1
Total	3	6	0	9

Cost of Remands

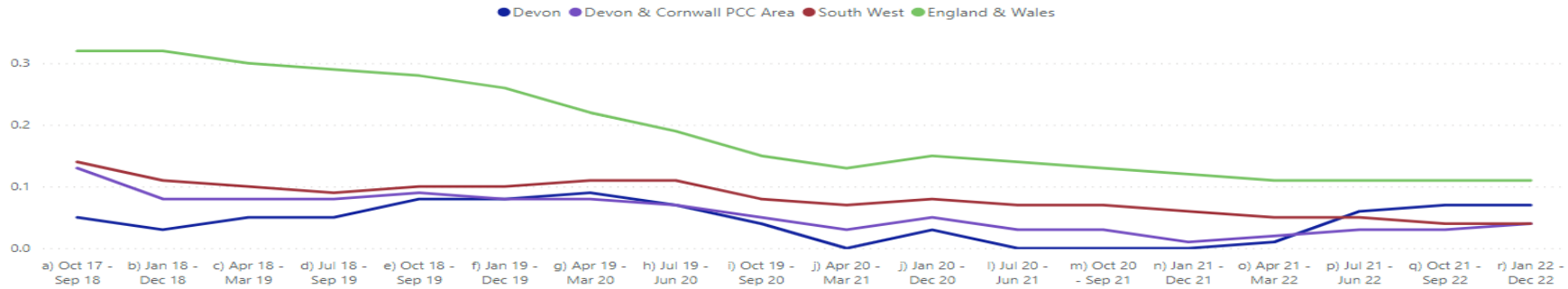
Year	YOI	SCH	STC	All Settings	MoJ Budget	Additional DCC budget	Over/Under budget
2019/20	£3,600.00	£85,278.00	£0.00	£88,878.00	£29,171.00	£0.00	-£59,707.00
2020/21	£0.00	£17,526.00	£0.00	£17,526.00	£41,827.00	£31,000.00	£55,301.00
2021/22	£18,270.00	£0.00	£0.00	£18,270.00	£28,804.00	£31,000.00	£41,534.00
2022/23	£20,262.00	£0.00	£0.00	£20,262.00	£19,883.00	£31,000.00	£30,621.00
Total	£42,132.00	£102,804.00	£0.00	£144,936.00	£119,685.00	£93,000.00	£67,749.00

Use of custody

When children do go to custody it can have a damaging effect on their lives, disrupting education and straining family relationships. Children in custody are likely to be amongst the most complex and vulnerable children in society and the financial burden is high on local authorities who have children in custody.

The rate of custodial sentences in Devon is very low, with 4 custodial sentences being imposed from March 2020 to March 2023. These figures not only reflect the work done by DYJS staff to present the Court with robust alternatives to custody, as well as collaborative multi-agency efforts in possible custodial situations and good working relationships with the Courts; but also, the hard work, effort and time DYJS staff put into keeping these children out of custody by ensuring their compliance with the alternative community sentence.

Custody Rate per 1,000 Young People



Area	a) Oct 17 - Sep 18	b) Jan 18 - Dec 18	c) Apr 18 - Mar 19	d) Jul 18 - Sep 19	e) Oct 18 - Sep 19	f) Jan 19 - Dec 19	g) Apr 19 - Mar 20	h) Jul 19 - Jun 20	i) Oct 19 - Sep 20	j) Apr 20 - Mar 21	jj) Jan 20 - Dec 20	k) Apr 20 - Mar 21	l) Jul 20 - Jun 21	m) Oct 20 - Sep 21	n) Jan 21 - Dec 21	o) Apr 21 - Mar 22	p) Jul 21 - Jun 22	q) Oct 21 - Sep 22	r) Jan 22 - Dec 22
a) Devon	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.07	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.07	0.07
b) Devon & Cornwall PCC Area	0.13	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04
c) South West	0.14	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04
d) England & Wales	0.32	0.32	0.30	0.29	0.28	0.26	0.22	0.19	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Total	0.64	0.54	0.53	0.51	0.55	0.52	0.50	0.44	0.32	0.31	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.19	0.19	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.26

Constructive resettlement

DYJS have adopted the guidance regarding the 7 pathways to resettlement for children - [Pathways to Resettlement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk). HMIP rated the DYJS response to resettlement as “good” stating that the service recognises the need to build on a child’s strengths and their protective factors; the children we have had in custody receive frequent visits, both in person and through video conferencing and that YJS staff often provide transport for families, and/or the YJS contributes towards travel costs for families to maintain contact.

DYJS practitioners regularly write to children in custody and more often than not, children write back, showing evidence of a positive working relationship. Where appropriate we have supported release on temporary licence is used well to support reintegration into the community in going to interviews and spending time with families.

DYJS Victim workers are creative in their work with children while in custody and very much are involved in the formulation of any licence conditions required to keep victims safe.

10. Standards for children in the Youth Justice System

DYJS undertake monthly audits (3 cases per month) and in addition a self-assessment has been carried out to inform this report. In addition to this, HMIP inspected the service in the Autumn of 2022, publishing their report in November 2022. This led to the creation of an additional action plan.

Auditing

Auditing of cases have seen a variety of improvements in practice, including use of a shorter assessment tool for voluntary cases and lower concern cases (high concern cases will still require a full asset plus), offering support to young people awaiting Court and the use of clearer, more child-focused planning processes and paperwork. This led to a change in wording for breach meetings to 'back on track' meetings, with updated contracts of behaviour and leaflets (produced in association with Speech and Language therapists) to explain processes to children. Current audit processes involve the auditor speaking to children and their parents and asking their views. This element of the audit produces valuable feedback on what works and what makes a real difference, and the YJS plans to strengthen it during the coming year.

Audits have also seen an increased use of DYJS Police time in delivering all out of court disposals and all secondee staff accessing partners information on allocation of a new assessment, to feed into the assessment being carried out on the child.

Areas for improvements from internal audits show an ongoing need for consistency from countersigners in their oversight of risk/high concerns; improving response to diversity needs and improving exit planning and contingency planning.

Self-Assessment for the YJB plan

To complement and build on the monthly audits undertaken, DYJS management team have undertaken a further self-assessment of 5 areas of our core work inclusive of Out of Court Disposals, Community Disposals, Court Work, Custody cases and cases who transition to over services (specifically as they turn 18).

The main themes support the ongoing positive approach of DYJS in delivering a child first approach, building effective relationships with children and parents/carers, excellent assessment, planning and implementation of supporting children is excellent. Areas of outstanding practice have been in the support from children awaiting court and helping them to understand what the process will be like, in some cases having taken the child to the Court prior to the Court date to help their understanding and allay some fears.

Areas of development noted have been

- Delays in process inclusive of inconsistency of how swiftly form 370's are received and how quickly children are listed in Youth Court following a recommendation for prosecution
- DYJS having a consistent way of recording notes to assist in the auditing process and to allow duty officers to access information as swiftly as possible.
- To have a more consistent induction process for children when they become open to the service.
- Speech and Language support is offered to children attending only 1 of the 3 courts who operate in Devon.
- An improvement of the consistency of preparation for children who have diversity needs going to Court
- Opportunity to offer all parents/carers a service for support from the Family support worker (this is currently reliant on referrals from case holders)
- There is a need to discuss areas of detention for all children, in the management board meetings. The self-assessments for children being detained in cells (whether that is police or Court cells) have shown that children have reported poor experiences e.g. One child said he was given a newspaper as a pillow in a Court cell. One child who was due for release from custody, had release accommodation identified a couple of weeks prior to release which had impact on the rest of the resettlement planning.

HMIP Improvement plan

The HMIP report [An inspection of youth justice services in Devon \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk) showed that DYJS is a “good” performing service with a number of outstanding features. There were areas for improvement which are noted below and remain outstanding –

- To update the current risk policy to redefine risk to self, risk others, contingency and safety planning
- To update the Quality Assurance arrangements to drive improvement across the service and serve the management board with qualitative and quantitative data to influence strategy.
- Strengthen connectivity between the Management board and YJS staff to build closer collaboration that improves outcomes for children

11. Workforce Development

Devon YJS undertook full-service training in Trauma Informed Practice in 2019. Staff who have joined the service since that date have also undertaken this training. The Trauma Informed approach in Devon YJS was reflected in the early adoption of the Enhanced Case Management model over the past three years. The service has now appointed a Trauma Champion to further develop the trauma-informed approach of the service. This is part of a South-West regional approach to improve Trauma Informed Practice across the region. A new permanent Psychologist post in Devon YJS has recently been recruited to, to further embed the ECM model and offer further training to the wider staff group.

A target was set to ensure the training of at least 12 members of staff in the Child First Practice Effective Practice Award. We have been able to train 7 members of staff. Some barriers to this have been the focus on inspection, the service being part of an overall restructuring of children services which has seen several changes in senior leadership. The ambition to have a wider number of staff obtaining this award will carry forward into the next year, ensuring that all team leaders are trained and that a summary of this training is delivered to the management board.

Several staff have undertaken the AIM 3 assessment training and work on the 'Good Lives' model of intervention, enabling them to work with young people displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

A skills audit for the staff group would benefit the service to understand the needs of the staff group and in turn formulate a more formal workforce development plan.

12. Evidence based practice and innovation

Below is a summary of some areas of practice innovation seen in DYJS over the past year.

- Children in Care offences of Criminal Damage – DYJS and partners have recognised that there has been an over-representation of CIC receiving formal outcomes for criminal damage offences within their homes. Significant work has taken place with police, social care and placement providers regarding the 10-point checklist for children in care.
- The effectiveness of the multi-agency OOC panel is to be celebrated and significant work has been undertaken to align the consistent offer to children across Devon and Cornwall, which consists of 4 differing Youth Justice Services.
- For the last three and a half years, the service has run an Enhanced Case Management project using a psychologist paid for out of reserves, as agreed with the MB. This has proved to be a very effective method of working for the most traumatised young people, powerfully bringing services together to address the needs of the most complex children. (NB for nine months the service was without a psychologist, but we have since re-recruited).
- Devon YJS has a Trauma Champion who supports the ECM model and works closely with the psychologist to establish and formulate meetings. They support the auditing of this model and gather feedback to allow for oversight and scrutiny. During the past year this post has helped to increase training opportunities and promote practice innovation for staff.
- With regards to Speech and Language assessment, Devon YJS has operated a model that assumes young people will have a Speech and Language need unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise. This leads to a very high proportion of YJS children being offered Speech and Language support, with many deriving great benefits. (One child said *"I was at my last school for five years and they just didn't get me. It only took Gemma three hours, and she got me."*) The latest innovation is that the Speech and Language therapist is based at Court and seeks to assess young people there, with a view to assisting with communication between the child and the Court. This pilot project has had some excellent early results and it is planned to roll

- it out to other Courts in Devon. This project, coupled with training for magistrates from the Speech and Language therapists in Devon YJS, has really raised the profile of children with Speech and Language issues in the Courts.
- One further area of innovation is transitioning children/young people to Probation. Devon Social Care's OFSTED inspection raised some concerns about the services offered to Care Experienced young people (Care Leavers) in Devon, finding a very abrupt difference from youth to adult services. Devon YJS has worked with the Permanence and Transition Service (who support Care Experienced young people) and the police to improve this. Transitions from the YJS to Probation are dealt with very carefully, with a Probation Officer who works part-time in Devon YJS and part-time in Probation often providing continuity to young people and thus avoiding re-allocation. The probation service has now gone further, by establishing 18-25 "pods" ensuring that this group of young people receive the appropriate support based on their age and maturity.

13. Service development plan

Partnership priority is....	In 2023/24 we want to see...	Accountability (inc. Partner and staff providing support)	Benefits	Success indicators
Reducing 1 st time entrants	<p>Ongoing development of the turnaround programme.</p> <p>An expansion of the offer of O22 disposals.</p> <p>A strategy in place regarding the spike in FTE numbers during school leaving time and holiday periods</p> <p>Regular review of data in management board to review FTE figures</p>	<p>Local authority, MB partners, early help, DCC, MOJ, Devon Police, Healthcare,</p> <p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; Turnaround Team Lead; Youth Justice Inspection Devon and Cornwall Police</p>	<p>Child diverted from the YJ system</p> <p>Swifter justice</p> <p>Support for schools</p>	<p>Reduction in FTEs</p> <p>Successful completions of children open to preventative or diversionary support packages</p> <p>A reliable method of sharing data on FTE's in quarterly Management board meetings is established.</p>

<p>To strengthen the crossover and oversight of serious violence governance.</p>	<p>A reduction/sustained low rate in serious youth violence and knife related offences and the rate per 10,000.</p> <p>A reduction in the numbers of substantive outcomes in youth justice relating to serious violence</p> <p>An improved and coordinated approach to youth safety and violence reduction-including contextual safeguarding.</p> <p>Improved supported transitions from youth justice services and targeted support for 18- to 25-year-olds.</p> <p>A greater emphasis on providing services at 'teachable, reachable moments' for adolescents at risk of serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation.</p> <p>An offer of support for children released under investigation and/or awaiting Court for alleged offences of serious violence</p> <p>Innovation strategies such as bidding to host the "Knife angel", to react to emerging</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; Safer Devon Partnership; Devon County Council strategic lead on Exploitation, Missing children and Prevent, Probation Service leads on 18-25 cohort; Police Prevent leads and Counter Terrorism Policing teams; MAPPA and MASH leads</p>	<p>Public Protection</p> <p>Increasing the safety and wellbeing of the children of Devon</p>	<p>Offer given/or assertive outreach to all Children RUI'd or awaiting Court for Serious Violence</p>
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	themes of concern such as concerns linked to misogyny.			
Workforce development plan	<p>A workforce development plan that seeks to increase the skills and understanding of a Child First approach in Youth Justice.</p> <p>An increase in support to CJS partners in their workforce development plans to ensure that there is a cross partnership understanding of child first approaches to justice.</p> <p>To ensure the management board partners are abreast of the current evidence base regarding successful interventions for children in the Criminal Justice system</p>	DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; all partners in Management Board.	Expands the skills, knowledge and expertise of DYJS staff in dealing with the range of issues faced by children entering the CJS.	Evidence of cross partner training having been delivered
Participation offer expansion	<p>A deeper understanding of participation as an evidence-based intervention focused on identity development.</p> <p>To have developed youth participation forums.</p> <p>To have developed parent's participation forums.</p>	DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; all partners in Management Board; DCC participation team; SPACE	<p>Stronger voice of the child and their families/carers in shaping services in our communities</p> <p>Developing stronger links with the community</p>	Emerging signs of the positive impact of participation on reoffending, youth detention and disproportionality rates.

	<p>To learn from Inspections and national best practice</p> <p>An increased number of children and families actively participating in youth justice service design, scrutiny and desistance focused interventions.</p>			
Quality Assurance	<p>A Quality Assurance strategy plan to be in place to provide a comprehensive, and integrated planning process focused on increasing the standard of service received by children, families and carers open to DYJS.</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; all partners in Management Board; DCC Quality Improvement team</p>	<p>Helping to identify where systems and processes are not effective and where improvements can be made</p>	<p>A Quality Assurance process in place by October 2023</p> <p>The YJS team indicate a clear understanding of the QA process</p>
Swifter justice	<p>Delays in dealing with children post incident are kept to a minimum</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; all partners in Management Board; Head of Crown Prosecution Service in Devon; work in Combination with Torbay Youth Justice Service to develop strategy.</p>	<p>Swifter justice is served for victims</p> <p>Rehabilitative support can be offered sooner (particularly relevant for children whose</p>	<p>Evidence and data captured on length of delays to analyse any reasons for this.</p>

			<p>maturity levels develop/change quickly)</p> <p>Diversionary options are considered in every case.</p> <p>Support offered to all children/their families and carers who are awaiting court.</p>	
<p>Reduce the use of youth detention</p>	<p>An ongoing and open challenge to board members on the partnership contribution to addressing risk of youth detention:</p> <p>Establish evidence-based models of practice that build upon the family safeguarding approach, including: constructive resettlement and identity development.</p> <p>Enhance our offer to prevent the unnecessary remand of children to youth</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; all partners in Management Board; Emergency Duty Team Management; Appropriate Adult team children's social care, contextual safeguarding team, education and the post 16 offer.</p>	<p>Improve child first response across county when they encounter CJS</p> <p>Safeguarding of children in Court (keeping them separate from adults awaiting sentence)</p>	<p>Build on internal monitoring mechanisms for children kept overnight in Devon police custody cells.</p> <p>Clear evidence that detention in police custody was the last resort</p>

	<p>detention where they can be managed safely in the community.</p> <p>Ensure disproportionality for children subject to youth detention is proactively monitored and challenged.</p> <p>Work with the Police and Court to support their environments to be as child friendly as possible.</p> <p>Ensuring the voice of the child and their family is present in OOC panel via attendance by the relevant YJS assessors.</p>		<p>Reports from those with the lived experience that their needs/rights as children have been met.</p> <p>Appropriate use of the PACE bed, or alternative safe accommodation and a reduction in children being held in Police Cells.</p>	<p>A reliable method of sharing data on children held overnight in Police custody in quarterly Management board meetings being established</p>
<p>Nine new Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>Live data tracker</p>	<p>DYJS will report to the MOJ and YJB on all nine Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>DYJS will also capture data on the four existing KPI re FTEs, re-offending and frequency rate and the rate of children in Custody.</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; DYJS information officer; all partners in Management Board; Lead for Adolescent framework; Head of Service for MASH in Devon LA</p>	<p>Clear understanding of the cohort</p> <p>Updated and “live” data to inform strategy and application of resources.</p>	<p>Improved outcomes for the lives of the children and their families/carers in Devon.</p> <p>Increase of children removed</p>

	<p>In addition to this DYJS will use a “live tracker” to capture data on reoffending</p> <p>Also seek to have a “dashboard” capturing -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational outcomes, exclusions, type of school place allocated the DYJS children - ETE outcomes for post school age children - Disproportionality/Overrepresented children (including race, ethnicity, health and neurodiversity) - Children held overnight in custody - Children open to Social Care - Children with exploitation concerns - Stop and search data. 		<p>Clear accountability for all partners to hold each other to account.</p> <p>Ensuring the right support is given by the right team, at the right time.</p>	<p>from the Criminal Justice System.</p>
<p>Work to strengthen the Devon YJS Management Board</p>	<p>A strengthening of the links between the Youth Crime and Violence Prevention Partnership and Devon’s Youth Justice Management Board</p> <p>An understanding and full compliance with the Youth Justice Oversight Framework</p>	<p>All partners in Management Board, led by the Chair of the Management board; Safer Devon Partnership</p>	<p>Management Board assertively governing and overseeing process to meet the needs of children,</p>	<p>Management Board being undertaken on a face to face basis, in offices to enable more interaction with staff.</p>

	<p>A quarterly data analysis discussion to define and direct service</p> <p>DYJS operational manager to bring high concern children (those who have been high concern for long periods and are stuck or whom are in custody) to management board for oversight</p> <p>The management board members facilitate opportunities to operational staff to attend and contribute to the management board.</p> <p>Update the Management Board Induction Pack</p>		<p>families and communities.</p> <p>All steps can be taken by those with high seniority to try and remove any structural barriers faced by children “stuck” in the CJS.</p> <p>The strengthening of relationship between the board and operational DYJS staff.</p>	<p>Update from Management Board meeting to become a standing agenda item of Devon YJS Team Meetings</p> <p>A summary of Board minutes to be sent within 5 days after the board sits to all staff.</p> <p>New board members can clearly state they feel supported to carry out their roles most effectively.</p>
<p>Tackle disproportionality/overrepresentation in the criminal justice system in Devon</p>	<p>A completed policy to understand the issue and how to respond; by gathering and capturing data and feedback from overrepresented groups</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; DYJS information officer; all partners in Management Board; Head of Corporate Parenting in Devon LA; Head of MASH in Devon LA</p>	<p>Management board feel reassured they have reliable data on minority groups in our</p>	<p>Disproportionality within the youth justice cohort to reduce and progress towards aligning with local</p>

	<p>That disproportionality is a shared priority across the partnership and wider local authority response.</p> <p>An increased engagement with voluntary and/or third sector organisations who specifically work with Black, Asian or minority ethnic communities</p> <p>Further development of the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) through an Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach with Child and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</p> <p>Ensure a strategy is in place for Children Looked After by the Local Authority or referred to MASH as they are over-represented in the CJS.</p> <p>Offer to all children awaiting court to be shown around the Court before the hearing</p> <p>To expand the offer of S&L for children appearing in Court</p>		<p>communities to identify over-representation in CJS</p> <p>Lived experiences of those from minority groups is gathered to support the ongoing review and implementation of policy</p>	<p>demographic and population.</p> <p>Evidence clear that all children awaiting Court have been offered support whilst they await a Court date</p> <p>All 3 Youth Courts in Devon having access to S&L support</p>
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<p>Review all policy to ensure these are child first and align with new YJB case management guidance</p>	<p>As a minimum -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Adult • Provision for children who are interviewed under PACE • Victim and RJ Policy • Public protection and desistance policy (risk policy) • Case allocation policy • Compliance and Engagement policy • Data Protection policy • Disproportionality Policy • Resettlement • Adolescent Safer Framework and Exploitation 	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; all policies to be signed off by Management Board chair; Lead for Adolescent Safety Framework</p>	<p>Ensuring all policy follows the most recent guidance from YJB, follows child first principles and is based on most recent evidence of what works.</p>	<p>All policy has been reviewed and agreed in Management Board by year commencing 2024.</p> <p>Reports from the staff group of their understanding of all DYJS policy</p>
<p>Work to increase participation by YJS children and young people in Education, Training and Employment (ETE) opportunities</p>	<p>Develop ambitious aims for ETE work in the YJS, including the achievement of Level 2 English and Maths by every child</p> <p>Establish a greater range of occupational training opportunities for those children beyond compulsory school age</p>	<p>DYJS Head of Service; DYJS Operational Manager; DCC 0-25 lead; Education Welfare Officers; ETE PA's</p>	<p>Children being supported to attain good educational or training levels to develop protective factors to</p>	<p>A reduction in the number of children ending criminal justice outcomes Not in Education, Training or Employment</p>

	<p>Monitor and evaluate the levels of educational engagement and attainment in disproportionately represented groups within the YJS caseload to develop improvement, including for: - children with an EHCP; - children with SEN; - children permanently excluded from school; - out of court disposal cases; - children released under investigation.</p> <p>Monitor, alongside the local authority, key aspects of ETE work for children working with the YJS, including: - the extent of school exclusion in the YJS cohort; - the actual level of attendance at school, college, work or training placement; - the extent of additional support provided to children with SEN; - that every child with an ECHP has this reviewed on an annual basis to meet the statutory requirement.</p>		<p>promote desistence.</p> <p>In turn, lowered rates of further offending</p>	<p>A reduction in exclusions of children open to DYJS</p>
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14. Challenges, Risks and Issues

Challenges

- How and who to deliver the teachable/reachable moments at point of arrest?
- How and who to work with children who have been RUI'd for alleged offences of serious violence?
- How can we encourage children to be prioritised quicker by the CPS whilst awaiting Court and what offer of support can be given whilst they await the court date?
- How can we expand the S&L resource to cover both North and South Courts?
- Loss or lack of data from all agencies meaning the overall understanding of children in the CJS is unclear.
- Connecting the Youth Justice Service with Wider Children Services


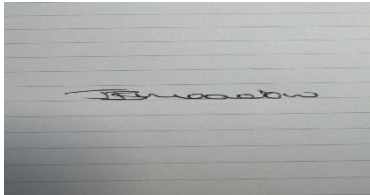
Risks

- Failure to meet the KPIs
- Increase in FTEs
- Increase in use of detention for children of Devon
- Buildings - possible change to Exeter office location may see a loss of resources (such a music area, community gardening, kitchen, wood working, pottery, bike maintenance, computer suites for revision, needlework) used to help them develop pro social identities.
- If staffing became under-resourced which could make a workforce development plan hard to deliver on and re-offending rates increased

Issues

- Financial implication to the LA when/if children are remanded or detained in secure settings
- Possible future funding uncertainties

15. Sign Off, Submission and approval

Version	Date	Reviewed by
V1	15.06.2023	Discussed with Devon YJS management team
V3 FINAL	30.06.2023	Final version submitted to the YJB
<p>Approved by:</p> <p>John James</p> <p>Acting Head of Devon Youth Justice Service</p> <p>Signature:</p>  <p>Date: 30.06.23</p> <p>Jassi Broadmeadow</p> <p>Chair of Devon YJS Management Board</p> <p>Signature:</p> 		

Date: 30.06.2023		
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Appendix A - Caseload

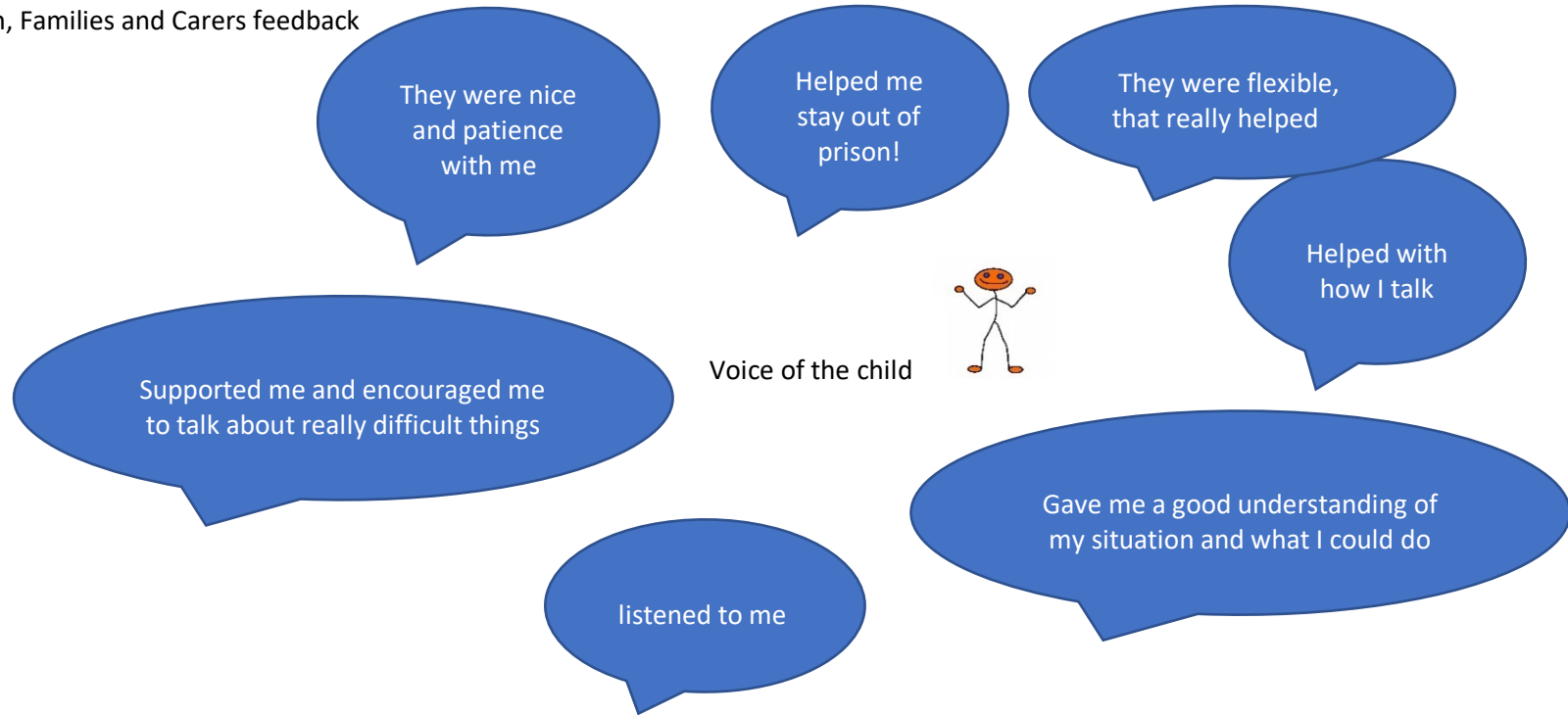
The data provided here covers the work done by DYJS between 1st April 2022 to the 31st of March 2023.

A total of 177 initial assessments has been undertaken in this time, reviews are required of these assessments as circumstances change for children, or at least every 6 months.



A total of 268 interventions have been opened in the service in this time. The breakdown of these cases are as follows:

Intervention type	No of cases opened	No of cases of low concern (remained low throughout intervention)	No of cases of medium concern	No of cases of high concern	No of cases of very high concern
Anti-Social Behaviour contract/Civil Order	5	2	3	0	0
Bail Support Programme	3	0	0	0	3
Community Resolution with YJS intervention	27	3	22	2	0
Outcome 22 (with YJS involvement)	1	0	1	0	0
Youth caution with YJS intervention	43	2	35	5	1
Youth Conditional Caution	64	4	47	12	1
Referral Order	48	4	31	13	
Youth Rehabilitation Order	13	0	6	7	0
ISS programme	2	0	0	2	0
DTO post custody	4	0	0	4	0
DTO (custody programme)	4	0	0	4	0
Non statutory preventative	55	15	26	13	1
Total	269	30	171	62	6

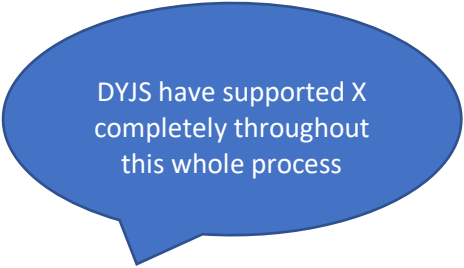
Appendix B - Children, Families and Carers feedback



- 98% of children said they felt supported and safe
- 94% felt their qualities and strengths were recognised
- 100% felt spoken to a way they could understand
- 96% felt DYJS helped them make their own choices not just told them what to do
- 100% felt we worked well with other professionals in their lives
- 92% felt we helped make their lives better



The team have
been AMAZING



DYJS have supported X
completely throughout
this whole process

97.6% said they felt part of the planning process
through out the intervention

97.6% felt empowered to challenge DYJS at any
stage

100% felt we helped them feel empowered to make
decisions to protect their own child


97% felt we helped bring all services together to
benefit their child

100% said DYJS checked they were receiving all their
support entitlements

100% Felt comfortable, safe and understood by DYJS
staff

85% felt reassured about who they could turn to for
support once DYJS ended their work with the family

97.6% Said working with DYJS was a positive
experience.





Parent/carer feedback

I am so grateful
for the time you
have given to us

You are A1!

Stay! Don't
close!

Appendix C – Management Board terms of reference

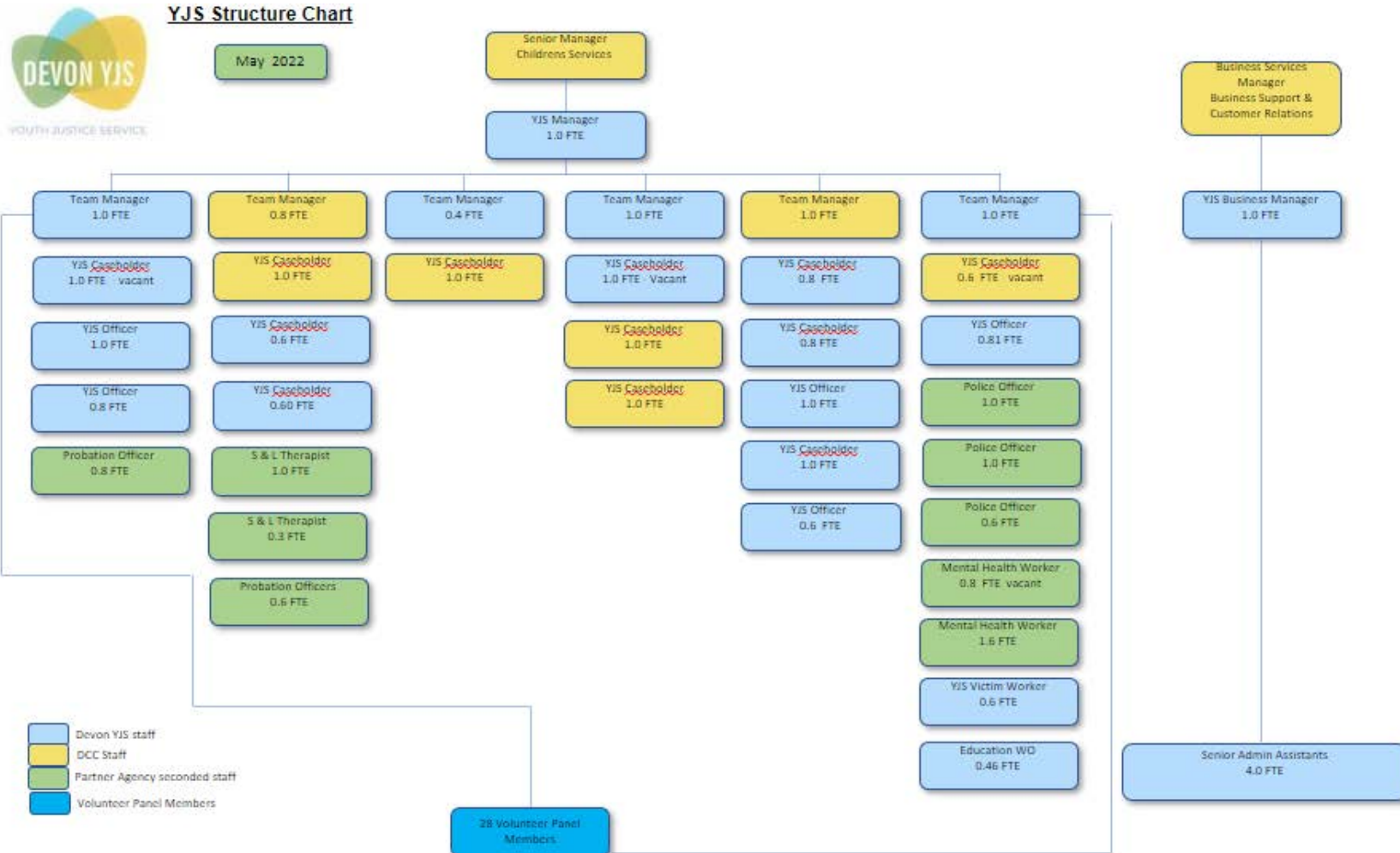
The Devon YJS Management Board should ensure effective delivery of services to prevent youth crime by:

- Securing the appropriate financial, estates, personnel, strategic planning and data management in accordance with national and local legislative and policies/procedures.
- Monitoring the performance of the Devon YJS against key elements of effective practice, local targets, and inspections to ensure continuous improvement.
- Ensuring that the work of the YJS is integrated into relevant local partnerships and there are clear lines of communication.
- Contributing to and approval of the Youth Justice Plan for recommendation to partner agencies prior to final submission to the Youth Justice Board.
- Determining the overall financial and human resources of the YJS to meet the requirements of the Youth Justice Plan.
- Ensuring that core staffing is retained from the statutory agencies, and systems are in place to maintain continuous staff secondment.
- Ensuring that the work and development of the YJS is given a high profile within all partner agencies and within Devon, through effective marketing to improve public confidence in the Youth Justice System.

The Devon YJS Management Board will receive reports (to be circulated prior to the meeting) covering key areas of performance data. These will include the areas listed below; however, it is anticipated that this list will be added to in future meetings, depending upon the current areas of interest to the board.

- 1) Financial report (detailing budgets and current and projected spending)
- 2) Appropriate Adults (are AAs being provided in a timely manner and how well is the AA scheme working)
- 3) Children being held overnight in Police custody
- 4) Key Performance Indicators (to cover KPIs reported by the Youth Justice Board but also other areas of interest to the Devon Board)
- 5) Offending by Children in Care in Devon

Appendix D – Staff Structure chart



Appendix E - Glossary of Abbreviations:

Anti-Social Behaviour	ASB	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation	HMIP	Police & Crime Commissioner	PCC
Adolescent Safety Framework	ASF	Junior Attendance Centre	JAC	Quality Assurance	QA
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	BAME	Key Performance Indicators	KPIs	Restorative Disposal	RD
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	CAMHS	Missing and Child Exploitation	MACE	Restorative Justice	RJ
Child Sexual Exploitation	CSE	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements	MAPPA	Remand to Local Authority Accommodation	RLAA
Devon County Council	DCC	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	MASH	The Appropriate Adult Service	TAAS
Detention and Training Order	DTO	National Standards	NS	Youth Inclusion Team	YIT
Enhanced Case Management	ECM	National Referral Mechanism	NRM	Youth Justice Board	YJB
Education, Training and Employment	ETE	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	OPCC	Youth Justice Service	YJS
First-time entrants	FTEs	Out of Court Disposal	O OCD		

Case Study 1

Simon assaulted another boy his age by punching him in the face. Historically, this matter would have proceeded immediately to Court. Often with a significant delay before it was heard and in turn would have left Simon with a criminal record and the lifelong impact of such upon a child.

Following an assessment by YJS, it was discovered that Simon's mother was struggling at home, suffering from PTSD and self-harming. Simon was caring for her and his twin brother who had his own disability from a head injury when he was a baby. The victim of Simon's offence had disagreed with Simon about a football result. This was enough to trigger Simon's sense of pent up frustration and anger and he lashed out at the victim. We felt we could work with Simon on an Out of Court disposal. The police and, with some reassurance, victim and his family agreed with this proposal.

We worked with Simon, his family, the victim and the school to ensure the victim felt safe and secure and following support being given to his mum, twin brother and Simon himself – we arranged some restorative justice meetings.

Simon's YJT worker spent a lot of time building a trusted relationship with him by carrying out activities Simon enjoyed. As they were undertaking these activities, they would talk about the problems Simon was experienced. A screening for Speech and Language discovered a development Language disorder in Simon and all partners and the school have been given support on how best to communicate with him. Simon was introduced to martial arts groups and now has a stable relationship within these groups. Mum is now supported via her GP for her own mental health issues, through JS parenting support and social care early help support. Mum is also coming to the martial arts groups and developing her own relationships with other parents there. Simon completed his work with us but remains in contact with YJS and helps us by sharing his thoughts on new policy and process at the point of review.

Case Study 2

D was heavily involved in an organised crime group and being exploited under a County Line to deal drugs and get involved in serious violence. The police had known about D for some while and felt the only way legitimate to address this was for D to be placed in custody. He was being labelled as an "offender" and as "dangerous". Assessment uncovered that D had experienced a lifetime of trauma, abuse, rejection, punishment and expulsion. D felt he did not have a place in "normal" society or indeed within his own family. The organised crime group offered him purpose, money and a sense of belonging. They exploited this child's negative experiences to benefit the overall crime group.

In working with D, the YJS has worked hard to understand what has happened to D, rather than what is wrong with him and assign him with any further negative labels. YJS prioritised the view that behaviour stems from any child's identity and the way in which they perceive themselves, their relationship to others and the world around

them. We knew any work we did with D needed to focus heavily on how to develop his pro social identity and in develop a new sense of purpose and a sense of belonging. His history led to him having an identity to perceive the world around him to be unsafe and dangerous and himself to be unlovable, not worthy of trusting and nurturing relationships. His early experiences led to him being hypervigilant and sensitive responses regarding his fight, flight and freeze responses. This made him more vulnerable to exploitation and a propensity to be violent as a result. There was very little opportunity for identity shift and YJS knew custody is more likely to increase his sense of a future life involved in the criminal justice system. What was there to lose?

YJS devised an intensive package of support around D and convinced the Court to allow him to remain in the community. The package of support needed the full involvement of social care, the police, health and probation services. A lot of monitoring was required at first and D was prevented from having contact with certain others. At the same time the hard work began to develop a trusting relationship with him. It hard task given his experiences. But this was achieved. A kind, funny and generous boy was discovered. He had a love of cars. He was trusted to help learn more about cars and supported to get his driving licence. In doing this he was taught about the value in failing in order to succeed and in turn develop his resilience.

D continues to work with us and has not re-offending to date. We are realistic there could always be times were he “relapses” and will always have some vulnerability to exploitation. But viat eh resources we hold we expose him to more and more positive activities via our centre in Exeter. He tried cooking and woodwork; he did not enjoy it but tried! He has though, wanted to get into fitness too and we are now starting in this journey to develop a sense of belonging in this group. Environment of intervention and interaction is crucial. It impacts on the child’s sense of self and self-worth. It needs to be safe to explore new things. To get things wrong and learn from it. Having areas were staff know their names, remembering what they like to drink and taking interest in their lives – whether this is an allocated work or not, or indeed admin or reception staff – makes the world of difference to helping a child like D move away from a life in the criminal justice system.

Below is a summary of the main challenges, risks and issues faced by Devon Youth Justice Service for the upcoming year 23/24.

Challenges

- How and who to work with children who have been Released Under Investigation for alleged offences of serious violence?
- How can we encourage children to be prioritised quicker by the Crown Prosecution Service whilst awaiting Court.
- How can we expand the Speech and Language resource to cover both North and South Courts?
- How can we ensure we receive data from all agencies meaning the overall understanding of children in the Criminal Justice System is clear.
- How can we connect the Youth Justice Service with Wider Children Services

Risks

- If we fail to meet the KPIs return deadlines
- An Increase in child FTEs
- If we see an increase in use of detention for children of Devon
- Buildings - possible change to Exeter office location may see a loss of resources (such a music area, community gardening, kitchen, wood working, pottery, bike maintenance, computer suites for revision, needlework) used to help them develop pro social identifies.
- If staffing became under-resourced which could make a workforce development plan hard to deliver on and re-offending rates increased

Issues

- Financial implication to the LA when/if children are remanded or detained in secure settings
- Possible future funding uncertainties