

WEST BERKSHIRE



# Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024

# Youth Justice Plan

<b>Service</b>	West Berkshire Youth Offending Team
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## 1. Introduction

As chair of the YOT Management Group I am both pleased and proud to be able to present this Youth Justice Plan, which articulates the approach the partnership will take, to support children, and their parents to maximise their life chances outside the formal Criminal Justice System. The Youth Offending Team in West Berkshire has embraced a prevention approach locally with a variety of initiatives and approaches. As a partnership we have a strong track record of working collaboratively to address issues in our community and create opportunities for children and young people to thrive. In the last year we were inspected and were pleased that HMIP recognised the excellent work undertaken by the team changing the lives of children in West Berkshire.

The partnership recognise that much of what we do can only be delivered with others, be that our statutory partners such as the Thames Valley Police, Health, Probation or other key organisations in the voluntary and education sectors. The YOT plays a key role in the delivery of the Supporting Families Programme locally building on the partnerships that exist. The Youth Justice Plan is designed to build on the partnerships we already have in place, to develop our joint arrangements further and to ensure that we target our shared efforts and resources into approaches that work and produce real, lasting outcomes for children and families in West Berkshire.

The YOT's prevention and diversion offer in the community and schools dovetails well with the Early Response Hub, designed to provide information, advice and guidance to those who require some support and is recognised as effective, well-structured and accessible. As a partnership we look forward to seeing more children living crime free lives away from the justice system and consider that this plan plays a part in that approach. We recognise the diversity of the communities we serve and impact of discrimination on children and their families. We work in a bespoke way with all children taking account of their individuality whilst also monitoring their protected characteristics and other factors that impact their lives and experiences.

### **Background**

The annual Youth Justice Plan is a requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This plan is owned by the YOT Management Group and has been formulated following discussion and debate with YOT and the YOT Management Group. Consultation and engagement about the contents of the plan has been undertaken with a wide range of different people including; children and young people and their families, staff and volunteers and partner agencies.

### **Vision and Strategy**

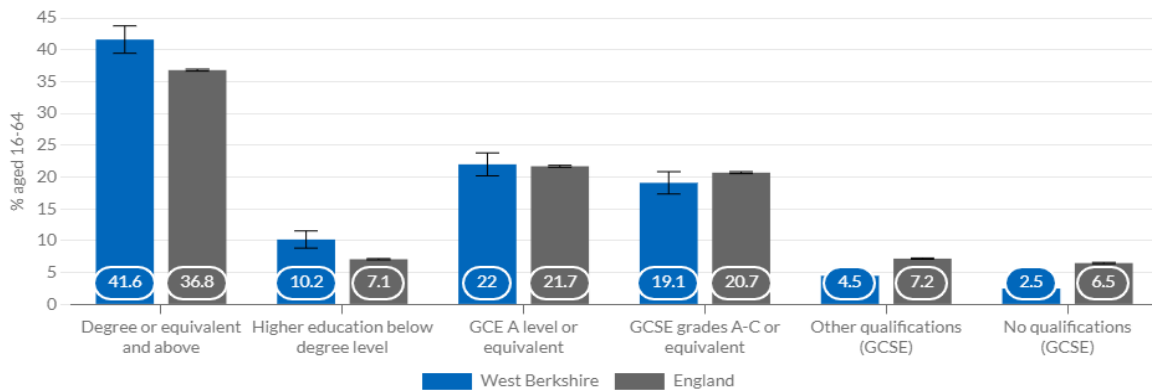
The following sets out the strategic vision for West Berkshire YOT:

- To work with the wider council and Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure risk factors associated with poor outcomes, including offending, are addressed at an early stage, and to ensure services are in place to prevent reoffending
- To prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. Making sure that work is child-focused, trauma informed, developmentally aware, constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society
- Addressing issues of disproportionality, ensuring children are treated fairly
- Promote a childhood away from the justice system, using prevention, diversion intervention, minimising criminogenic stigma from contact with the formal criminal justice system
- To work within the multi-agency partnership to ensure parents receive the support they need to manage relationships with their children, and confidently 'parent' their behaviour

- Encourage children’s active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers
- To work with the Building Communities Together Partnership, Courts, OPCC and the Local Criminal Justice Board, to ensure victims’ needs are met, communities are protected, and confidence increases in the youth justice system
- Promote children’s individual strengths and capacities to develop their prosocial identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims

### Local context – West Berkshire

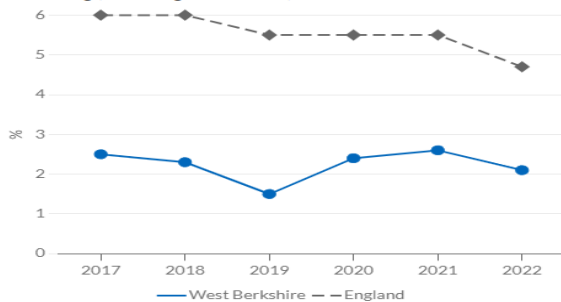
Qualifications - GCSE (2021-12)



Source: APS

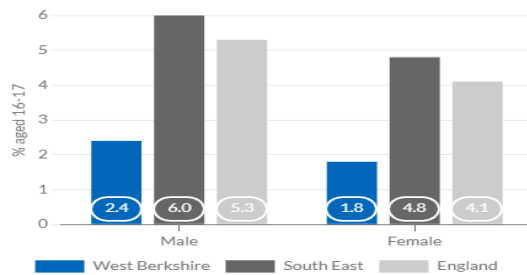
### NEET or not known

Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (including Not Known) - trend



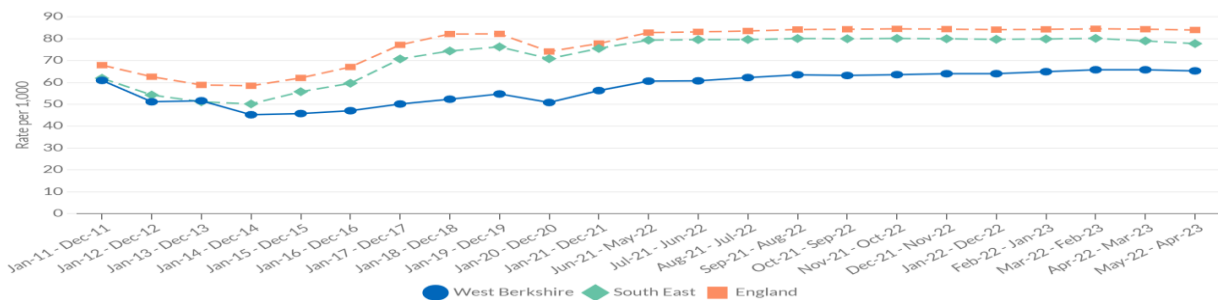
Source: DfE

Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (including Not Known) (2022)



Source: DfE

All crime - 12 month rolling rates



Source: data.police.uk

## Profile of the Community Resolution & Prevention cohort



29% receive OfW benefits



50% child protection plan



21% were in care



62% child in need



29% missing from home/care



54% exclusion from school



37% truancy / poor attendance



37% special educational need



50% speech, language or communication difficulty



37% experienced bullying



71% CAMHS contact



29% self harmed  
25% low mood



29% ASD  
25% ADHD



42% experience anxiety



21% bereavement



29% used drugs



17% problem drinking



21% CSE/CCE



29% victim of crime



46% anti-social behaviour



42% domestic abuse



42% parental substance misuse



71% parental separation/divorce



54% poor parental mental health



4% family in custody



54% parental conflict



37% poor parental supervision



29% housing problems

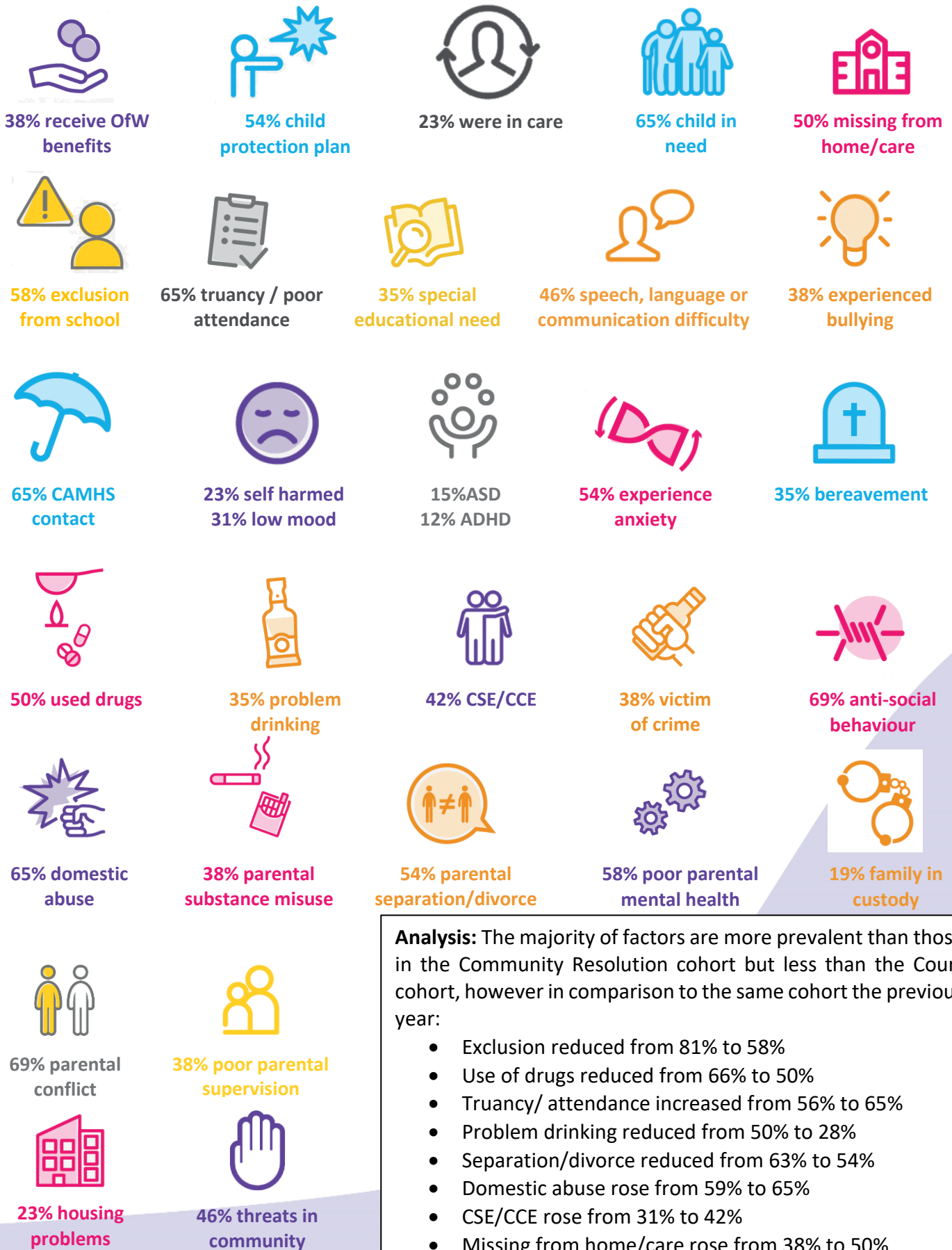


29% threats in community

**Analysis:** The majority of factors are less prevalent than those in the OOC or Court cohort, however in comparison to the same cohort the previous year:

- Truancy/poor attendance reduced from 47% to 37%
- Exclusion reduced from 72% to 54%
- Speech and Language rose from 44% to 50%
- Experiencing anxiety rose from 37% to 42%
- Parental substance misuse rose from 26% to 42%
- Separation/divorce rose from 65% to 71%
- Child protection plan from 26% to 50%
- CAMHS contact from 42% to 71%

## Profile of the Out of Court Disposals cohort



## Profile of the Court cohort



100% receive OfW benefits



100% child protection plan



40% were in care



100% child in need



60% missing from home/care



100% exclusion from school



80% truancy / poor attendance



80% special educational need



60% speech, language or communication difficulty



60% experienced bullying



100% CAMHS contact



40% self harmed  
40% low mood



20% ASD  
60% ADHD



60% experience anxiety



20% bereavement



80% used drugs



20% problem drinking



40% CSE/CCE



80% victim of crime



60% anti-social behaviour



80% domestic abuse



60% parental substance misuse



40% parental separation/divorce



80% poor parental mental health



60% family in custody



80% parental conflict



40% poor parental supervision



60% housing problems



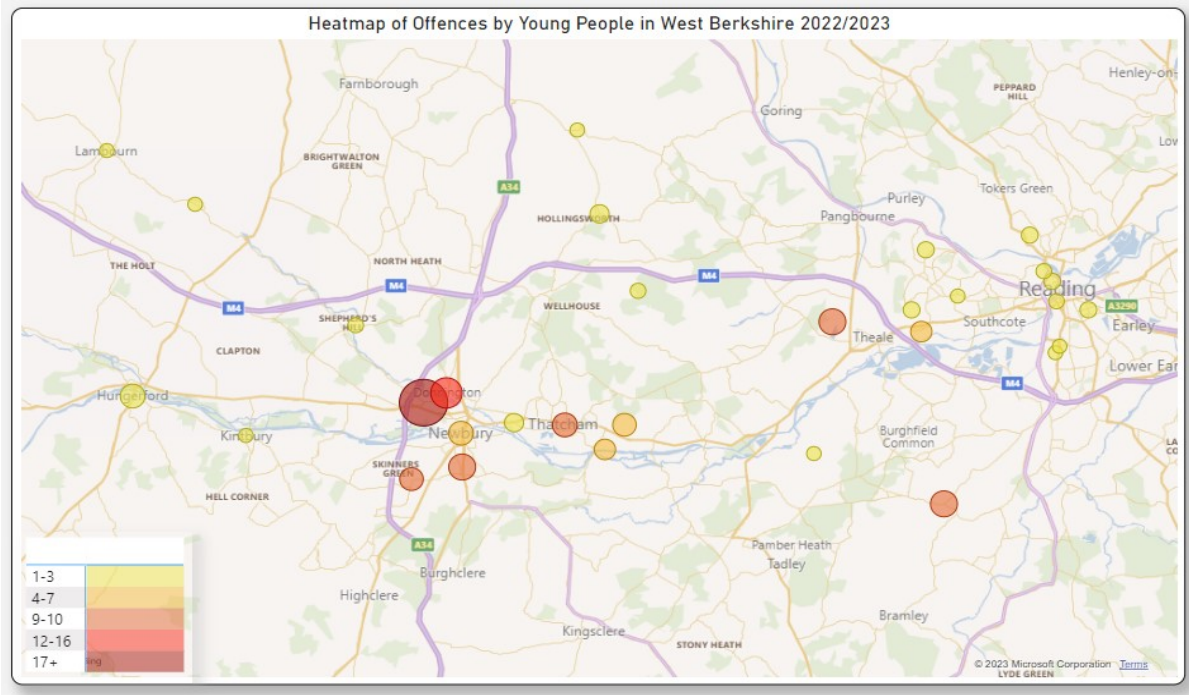
80% threats in community

### Analysis:

This year's court cohort represents five children, therefore offers no statistical comparison to previous years.

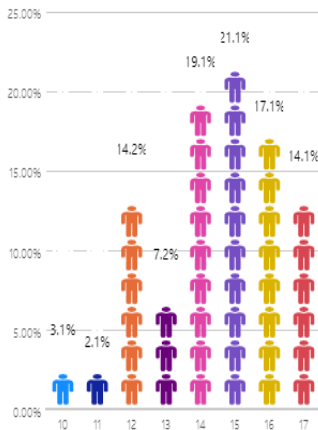


## Heatmap of children who offend in West Berkshire 2022-2023

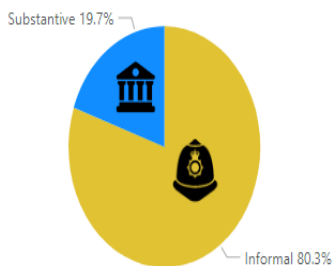


## Number of children and young people offending and offences

Offences by Age (Substantive and Informal Outcomes)



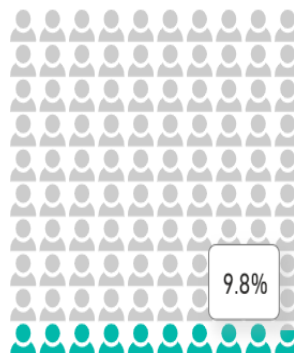
Outcome Type



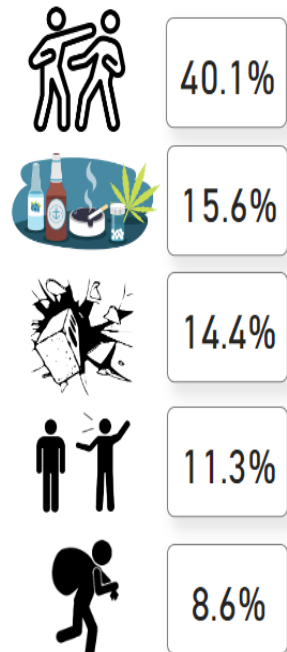
173 Children Committed 257 Offences



17 children from a BME background



% Offences by Offence Type





There has been a 7.5% increase in the number of Young People receiving either a Community Resolution or Substantive outcome, from 161 in 2021 to 173 in 2022. The number of young people receiving a Community Resolutions increases by 15.2% from 132 in 2021 to 152 in 2022. Conversely, the number of young people given a substantive outcome continues to decline by 5.3% from 38 in 2021 to 36 in 2022.

Of the 36 young people receiving a substantive outcome, 29 were First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Formal Youth Justice System, an increase of 7.4% from 2021. Of those FTEs, 21 (72.4%) had previously received a Community Resolution from the police, a significant increase from 2021 (44.4%). The number of young people receiving either a first informal or formal outcome (First Time Offender) remains stable with a 2.5% increase from 120 in 2021 to 123 in 2022.

There has been a 24.4% decrease in the number of offences leading to a substantive outcome from 86 in 2021 to 65 in 2022. Offences leading to a Community Resolution increase by a further 23.9% from 155 in 2021 to 192 in 2022.

### Offence Type

- In 2022, Violence against the person 40.1% (103), Drugs 15.6% (40) and Criminal Damage 14.4% (37) remain the most prevalent offences leading to either a substantive or informal outcome.
- Offences of Violence against the person records a further sharp increase of 24.1% from 83 offences in 2021 to 103 in 2022. Of these, 70 (68%) led to a Community Resolution and 33 (32%) to a formal outcome. All offences have a YJB Gravity level of 3 and the most predominant offence type was Assault by beating (78.6%).
- The level of drugs offences remains stable with 39 young people committing 40 offences, a small decrease of 2.4% from 41 in 2021. 40.5% of offences resulted in a substantive outcome, compared to 47.5% in 2021.
- The number of Theft and Handling offences has increased by 83.3% from 12 in 2021 to 22 in 2022. This follows a decline in the previous period. 72.7% of offences were Theft from a shop.
- Following a spike in 2021, the number of Public Order offences has remained constant at 29. However, an increased proportion of offences now result in a substantive outcome, increasing from 17.2% of all offences in 2021 to 31% in 2022.
- Offences categorised as 'Other' continue to increase. Of note, 14 of the 16 offences committed relate to malicious communications.
- Motoring offences are at the lowest point for 5 years with only one offence committed in 2022 which led to a substantive outcome.
- To summarise, a 15.2% increase in children receiving an informal outcome has led to an overall increase in the number of children entering the youth justice system, up 7.5%. The

number of offences by children has increased by 6.6% to 257 with offences by offender remaining at the same level of 1.5. Please refer to Graphs 1 and 1 A on page 12.

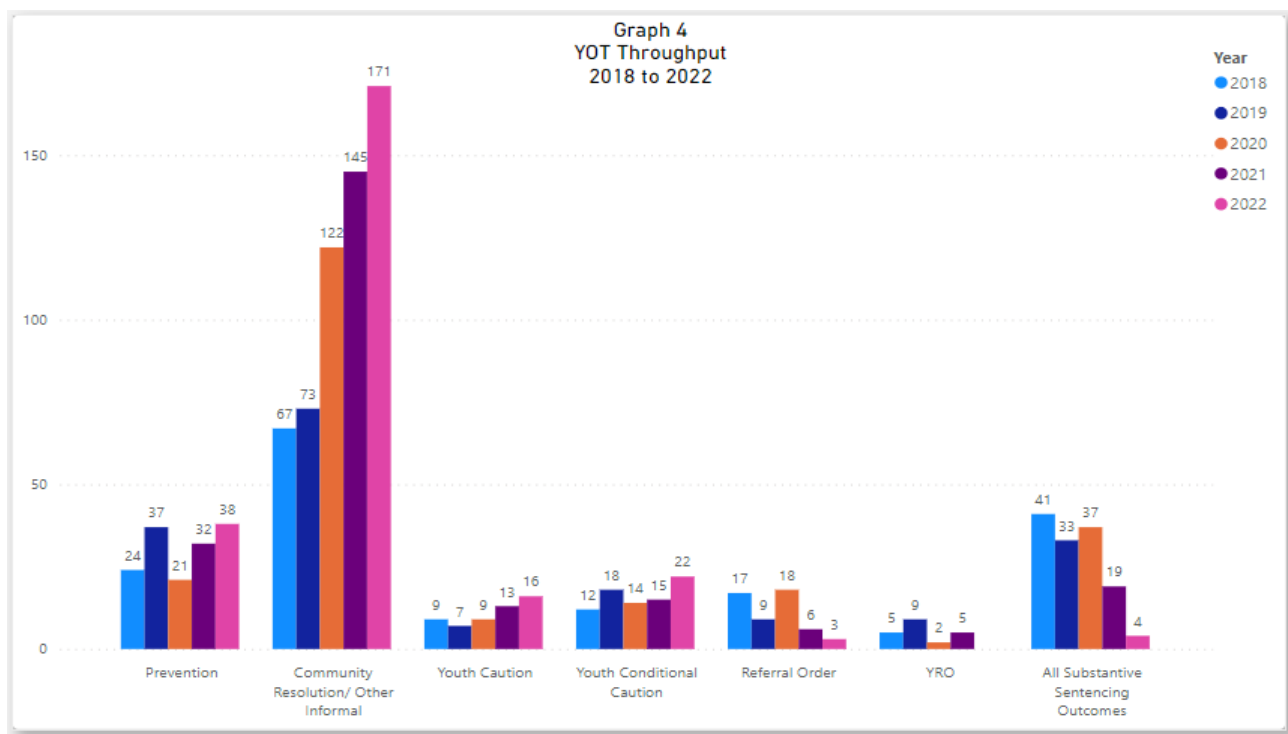
## Children Committing Crime

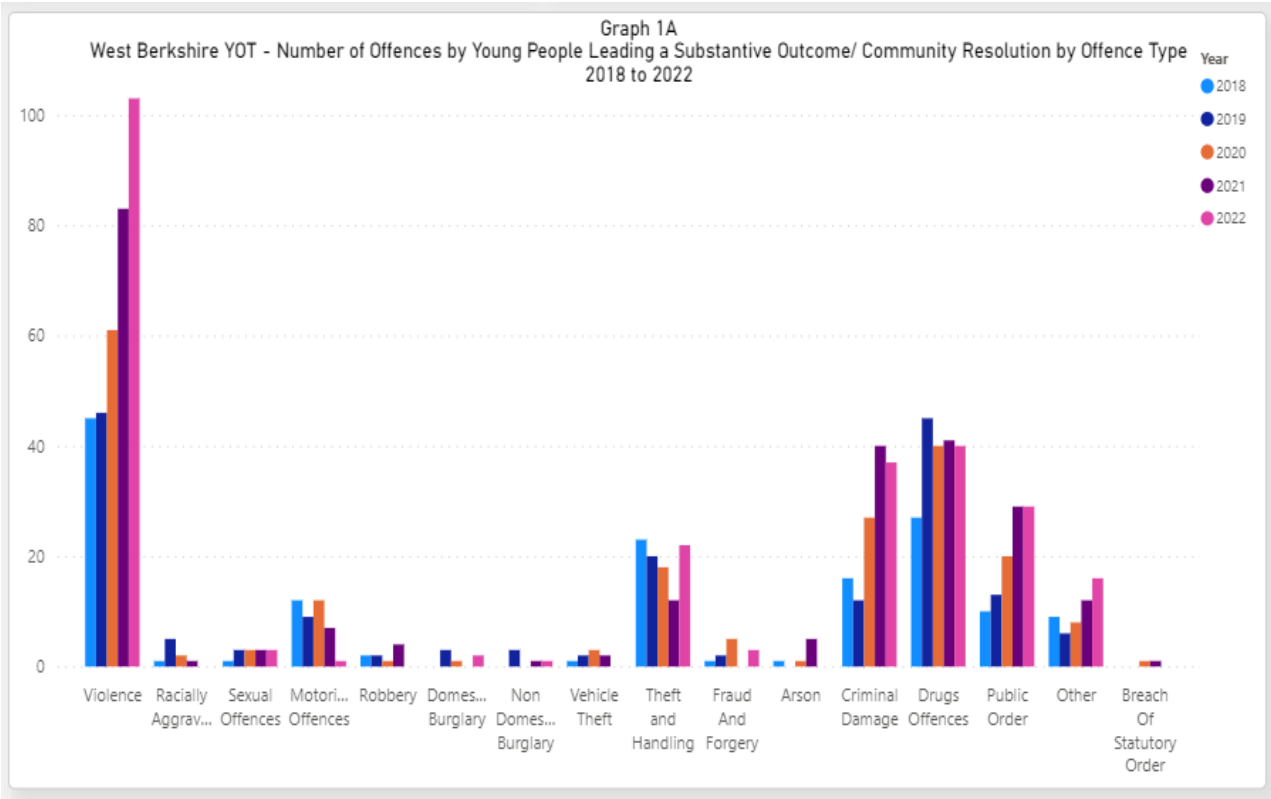
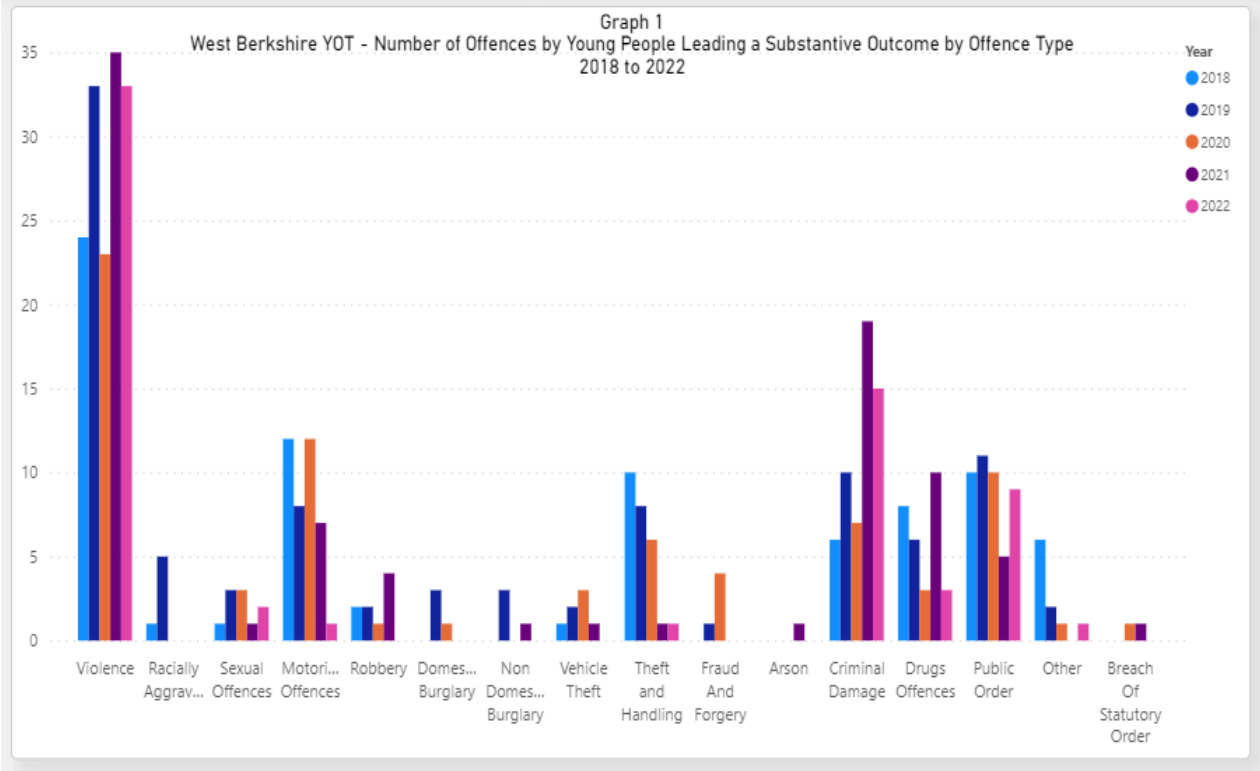
- The number of children entering the youth justice system continues to rise, increasing by 7.5% from 161 in 2021 to 173 in the current period. The proportion of male to female offending remains unchanged with females representing 28.3% of the cohort.
- Boys committed 186 offences in 2022, a small increase of 1.6% from the previous period. The proportion of offences leading to a substantive outcome has declined and is now 28.5% compared with 38.8% in 2021.
- Offences of violence against the person committed by boys (69) continues to increase and now represents 37.1% of all male offending. 63.8% of all violent offences result in an informal outcome compared to 56.4% in 2021.
- 34 drugs offences were committed by 33 boys and represent 18.3% of all male offending. An increased proportion of drugs offences now lead to a Community Resolution, 91.2% compared with 73% in 2021.
- In 2022, 49 girls committed 71 offences, an increase of 22.4% from 58 offences recorded in 2021. The ratio of Informal outcomes to substantive outcomes remains broadly similar with 63 outcomes in total and 19% leading to a substantive outcome compared to 21.1% in 2021.
- 47.9% of all offences committed by girls are violence against the person, an increase of 21.4% from 28 in 2021 to 34 offences in 2022. A greater proportion of offences now lead to a Community Resolution, 76.5% versus 60.7% in 2021.
- Public Order remains the next most frequent offence for females at 15.5% of all offending. However, both the number of offenders and offences have declined from 2021 with 11 offences by 8 young people in the current period.
- Offences of theft and handling by girls increase for the third year in succession, now representing 15.3% of offences by females.
- Drugs offences for girls continue to rise, albeit at a slow rate. In 2022, 6 females committed 6 drugs offences.
- The peak age at which children offend and receive either a Community Resolution or substantive outcome remains at 15 with 32 young people committing 21.4% of all offences. This period also sees a rise in the number of young people in the lower age groups committing offences. Offences by 12 year olds increase for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in succession with 33 young people committing 14.4% of all offences compared to 14 young people committing 8.3% of offences in 2021. All but one offence resulted in a Community Resolution.
- The peak age for girls receiving either a Community Resolution or substantive increases from 14 to 15. The peak age for boys is 14-15 with 39.3% of all offences falling within this bracket.

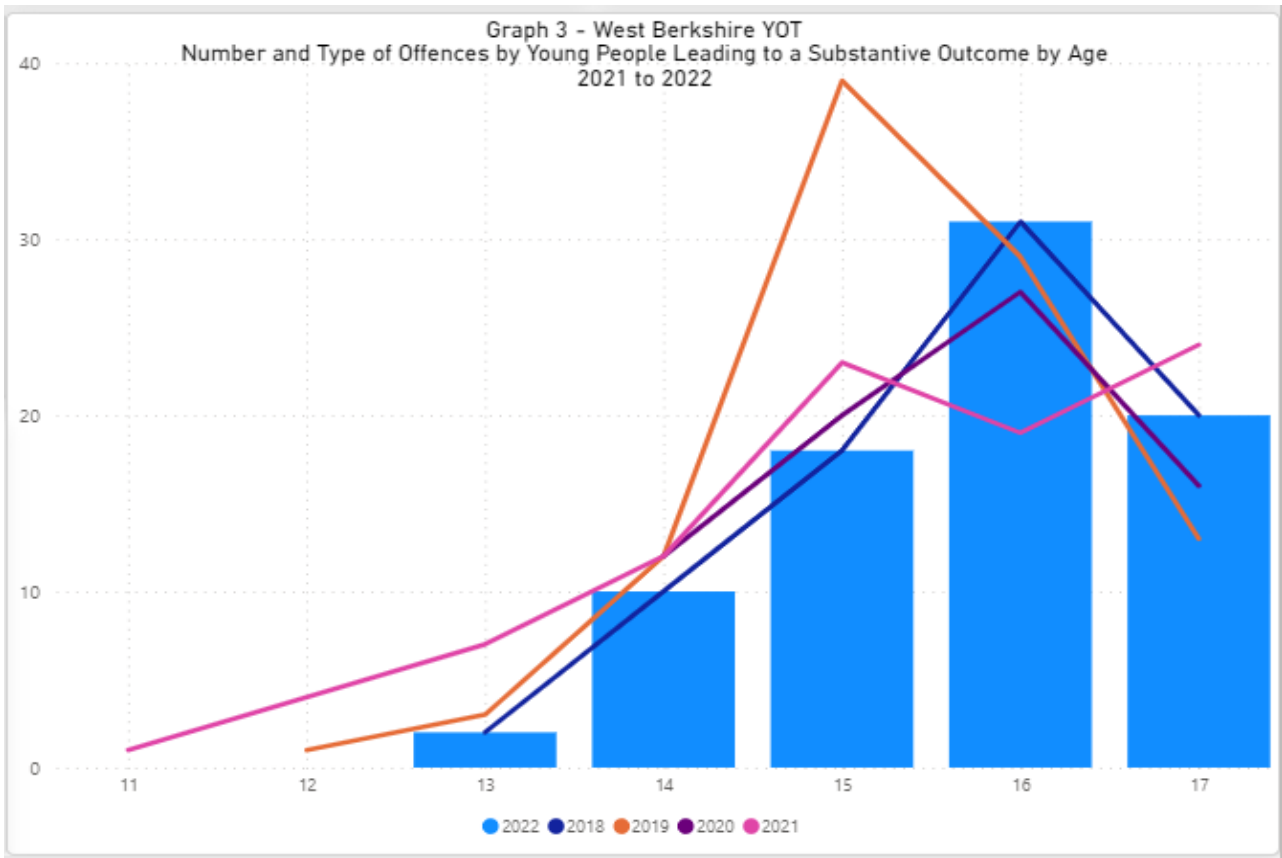
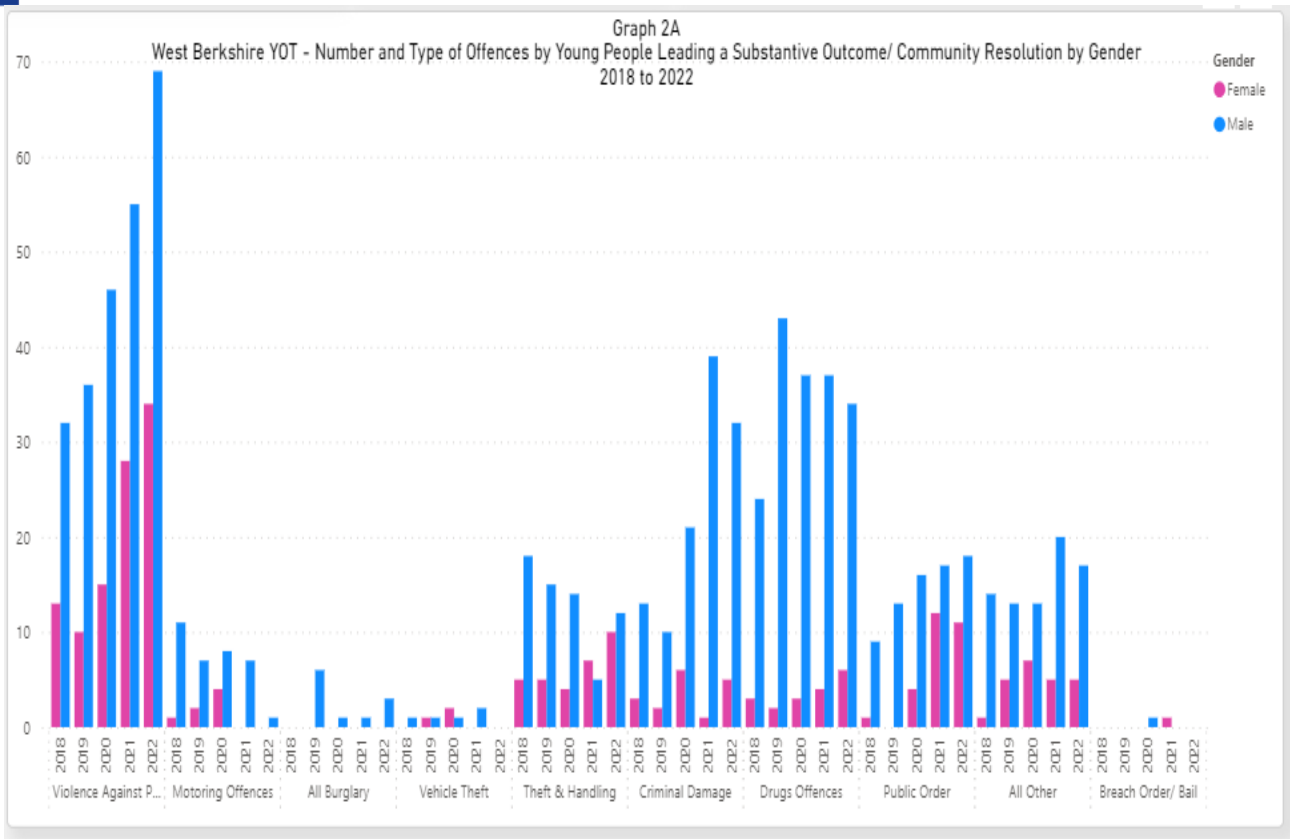
- The lowest age at which an offence was committed is 10 for boys and 11 for girls.
- 23.5% of violent offences by girls were committed by 13 year olds. For boys the peak age is 15 (30.4%). There has been a sharp increase in the number of violent offences committed by 12 years olds, now representing 17.5% of all violent offending.
- The peak age for drugs offences remains at 17 with 75% of all drugs offences committed by 16-17 year olds.

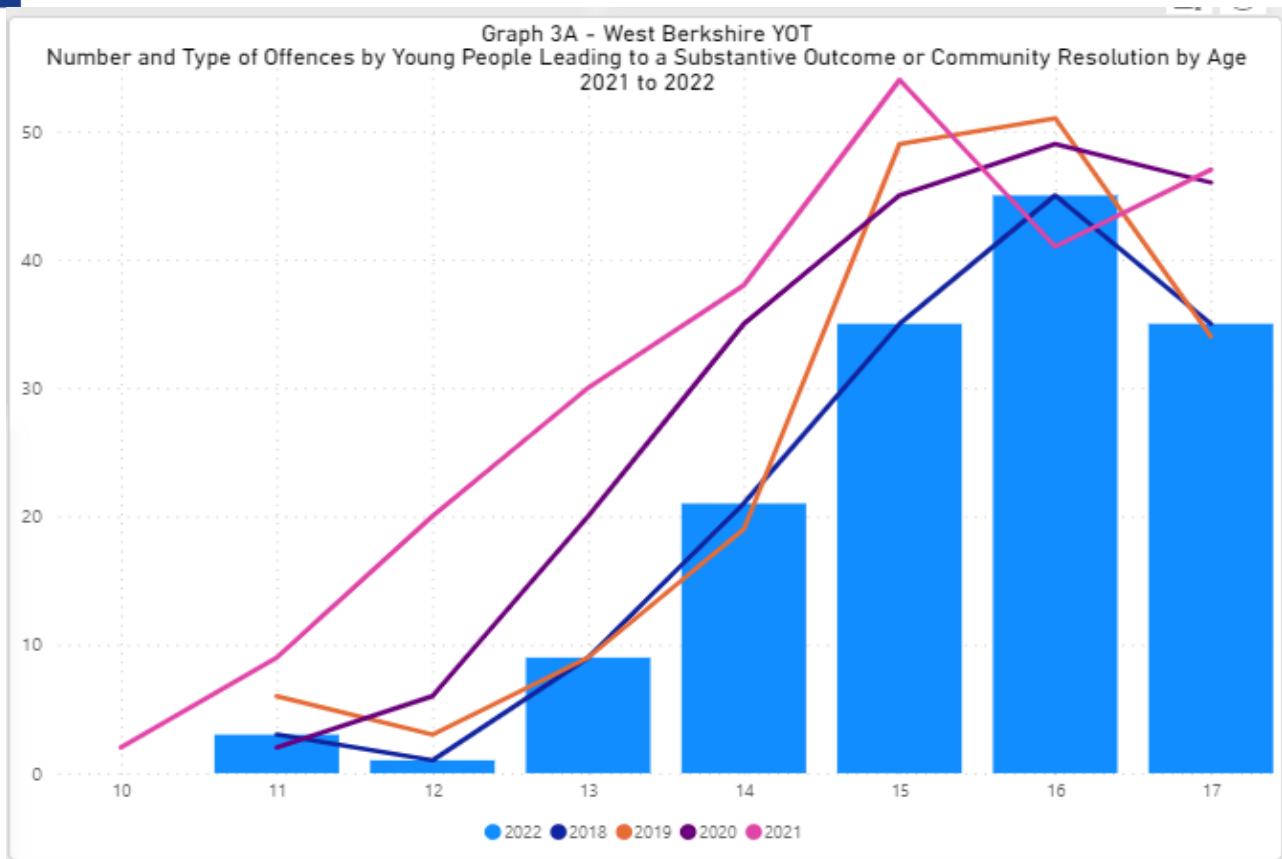
## Disposals

Graph 4 shows the changes in YOT throughput over the years, and the impact of the introduction by the police of the informal sanction, the Community Resolution (CR) on both formal out of court disposals and court orders. The YOT continues to assess and intervene with young people who receive a CR, if a screening evidences that they have risk factors associated with future offending.









## 2 Child First

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) promotes the vision of a ‘Child First youth justice system’, defined as a system where all services:

**See children as children:** prioritising their best interests, recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. The West Berkshire partnership recognise that all those under 18 years of age are legally defined as children and as such prioritise their best interests through the development and implementation of services, policies and practices. Previously the YOT have canvassed the view of those undertaking interventions about how they would like to be referred to in person and in documentation, all children who were asked indicated that they wanted to be referred to as young people rather than children. This year West Berkshire YOT want further develop the child first agenda and recognise within our external policies that children are children, but recognising in our documents to children, such as letters, reports and leaflets they are referred to as young people. We want to ensure all our partners are focussed on children and the differences from adults. The YOT ensures that all interventions are bespoke and child focused, with individually tailored plans. CAMHs colleagues support the continued development of trauma informed practice and are active members within the case planning forums.

**Develop pro-social identity for positive child outcomes:** for positive child outcomes, promoting children’s individual strengths and capacities in order to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, helping to keep communities safer and see fewer people harmed. The partnership in West Berkshire has sought to promote children’s individual strengths and capacities,



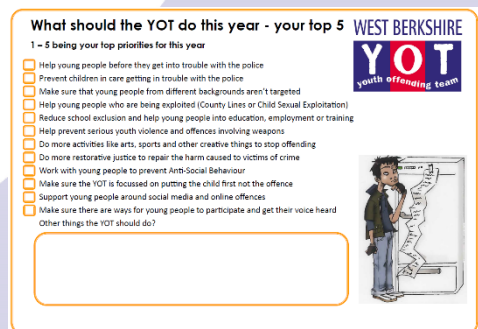
seeking to develop their pro-social identity through access to positive, inclusive, mainstream activities for all children. This approach leads to safer communities and fewer victims. The YOT's work with children is constructive and future focused, built on supportive relationships that empower them to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society. The work undertaken by team members during the last year has provided targeted activity days with children and also developed community links to engage children in universal activities. For example a day learning about child exploitation and grooming alongside positive activities, children have also attended a range of universal youth activities at the local Youth Centre.

**Collaboration with children:** encouraging their active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. The variety of partnerships in West Berkshire encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. Annually we report to the YOT Management Group how feedback from young people has shaped service delivery. We continue to be committed to ensuring children's voices are heard and responded to. We acknowledge our work with children is often short term on voluntary interventions and continue to be creative in our approach to gaining an understanding of current issues and themes through positive activity day focusing on topical issues such as exploitation. We encourage children to participate in wider consultations, over the past year six children who have worked with the YOT were supported to meet senior leaders from across the partnership in a Youth Engagement Event alongside other local children.

**Promote diversion:** promoting a childhood outside the justice system using pre-emptive prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention. To achieve this, work needs to minimise the stigma of contact with the youth justice system which can in itself be a risk factor for becoming further involved. The partnership in West Berkshire has continued to emphasise the importance of prevention and continued to deliver prevention services through the Drugs Diversion work that promotes harm reduction and education rather than formal criminal sanction for those children found in possession of drugs. The YOT work in partnership with Thames Valley Police to identify children through the local Mini MAPS partnership where concerns are raised about a child's behaviour is escalating but not crossed a criminal threshold are referred to the YOT to undertake some preventative work diverting them away from the criminal justice system, using 'YOT Prevention letters'. This approach is becoming embedded within the neighbourhood teams with 32 letters being sent this past year. The YOT in conjunction with the TVP Safeguarding Team started a Positive Intervention Programme for pupils in secondary schools whose behaviours if committed in the community would amount to a criminal offence but can be effectively supported in school to support behaviour change and reduce exclusions. We are developing further preventative services using the Turnaround funding provided by the MoJ and engagement with Detached Youth Workers to provide early help support.

### 3. Voice of the child

The YOT sought to engage children in the development of the Youth Justice Plan, following discussion with those open to the YOT a list of 12 areas of focus was developed and a survey (see adjacent image) was conducted among YOT children to elicit their views on the top priorities. Their views have been used to shape the Youth Justice Plan and the priorities for the team in the coming year.



The top three areas that children have suggested are;

1. Help young people before they get into trouble with the police
2. Reduce school exclusion and help young people into ETE
3. Make sure the YOT is focussed on putting the child first not the offence

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

- Children and their parents are invited to provide feedback in reviews of their intervention, their views on the service lead to changes in the intervention delivery and any themes are considered to change wider service delivery
- All children who work with the YOT, and their parents are invited to complete a confidential questionnaire at the end of their intervention and the YOT Manager reviews all of these and makes amendments to services if required – last year a total of 71 questionnaire's (40 children and 31 parent) were received
- Children were invited to undertake a survey prior to the HMIP inspection and 11 were completed, these children were contacted by inspectors to provide direct feedback
- Groups take place on an occasional basis focusing on specific topics, these allow in-depth exploration of a topic with a group of young people and subsequent actions taken
- All young people are informed of the complaints process at the start of the intervention, and sign to say that this has occurred
- All parents completing parenting courses with the YOT provide feedback on their experience of the group work
- All victims of crime involving children in the YOT are asked for feedback on services provided by the YOT, particularly restorative interventions
- 6 children working with the YOT attended a Youth Engagement Event with senior leaders from West Berkshire Council (CEO), Thames Valley Police (superintendent), Head of Children and Family Service and Head of Education, along with Council Members – providing direct feedback to these senior leaders regarding their experience of local services

#### Schools survey -

In 2023, West Berkshire Council conducted a survey of children at local secondary schools to find areas of concern and to help identify where improved resources can be provided. A total of 12783 children were surveyed, with 6353 (49.7%) responses.

- In terms of safety, over 95% of children felt safe in the area they live and the areas they spend time with 90.3 % feeling safe at school
- Children were asked their perception of how much of a problem they consider various issues in the area they live. Of those responding, 45.2% considered violent behaviour a very big or fairly big problem, taking illegal drugs 37.7% and carrying a weapon 26.4%. A further question about their personal experiences of these issues or know someone personally affected, the survey results were much lower with only 15% of those responding being impacted by violent behaviour, 9.3% by taking illegal drugs and 4.5% carrying a weapon – it is very noticeable the difference between perception of an issue and experience
- In terms of the support services young people would turn to regarding these issues, 78.1% of those responding would choose to speak to a parent or carer, 41.2% to a teacher, 28.3% to the police, 7.5% to a social worker and 6% to a youth worker, with this in mind the YOT continue to provide parenting intervention supporting parents effectively.

The YOT Manager takes an active role receiving feedback, reading all the questionnaires and following up any negative comments to understand what could be done to improve their experience. All compliments or complaints are responded to by a YOT Manager to develop learning and promote continuous development. An aggregate feedback report is prepared for the YOT Management Group on an annual basis that contains collates information from the sources highlighted above, this report provides the YOT Management Group a clear insight into the views and experiences of children and their parents when working with the YOT.

West Berkshire Council published the HMIP inspection outcome on their Facebook page (29<sup>th</sup> March) and some service users said: -

- (parent) – I know from experience the YOT has some amazing case workers regardless of circumstances the amount of effort put to changing a young person’s life is a massive credit to the community
- (previous YP) – Great work. Really helped me when I was a naughty little boy
- (parent) Amazing team really helped my daughter
- (public) Such a brilliant outcome for an excellent team. The work you do is invaluable and I’m so pleased for you and the kids you care for.

#### 4. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

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

The YOT Management Group meets quarterly, chaired by the Head of Children and Family Services. All statutory partners are represented at a senior or Head of Service level, plus magistracy and Building Communities Together. The Terms of Reference of the YOT Management Group include overseeing the development and implementation of the Youth Justice Plan; considering resource and workload issues; receiving reports in relation to audits of effective practice; diversity and disproportionality; approving policies and protocols. The group also ensures that Public Protection and Safeguarding issues are addressed at each meeting.

The YOT Management Group takes responsibility for monitoring overall performance of the YOT with a Performance Management Report taken to each meeting. The YOT Management Group holds the YOT to account regarding the timely submission of data, compliance with secure estate placement information, completion of national standards audits and oversight of Critical Learning Reviews following community safeguarding and public protection incidents. Where there are areas of under-performance further multi-agency action plans are developed and agreed by the YOT Management Group with implementation monitored. Any issues that require a strategic response are escalated to the BCT Partnership. During the last year the YOT the YOT Management Group received the following additional reports and presentations by team members:

- Photography engagement project
- Serious violence and ACEs report
- Trauma recovery model
- AQA education report
- ETE benchmarking report
- Apprentice Youth Justice Worker presentation about post 16 ETE options and positive activities
- Physical Health service
- Out of Court Disposals presentation
- Annual YOT feedback report
- Girls action plan
- APIS audit report
- Serious incident report.

Each of these reports and consequent recommendations are considered by the YOT Management Group, with the YOT Manager held to account for the delivery of the actions.

Line-management of the YOT sits with the Head of Children and Family Services, who also chairs the YOT Management Group, with the YOT Manager a member of the Service Manager Team within Children and Family Service, also being responsible for managing Supporting Families and co-Charing EMRAC operational meeting. This positioning, with governance through the Building Communities Together Partnership and line-management within Children and Family Services enables the YOT to be strategically positioned in the most appropriate place - straddling welfare and justice. The Head of Children and Family Services also sits on the overarching boards.

[West Berkshire Council Strategy 2019 - 2023](#) has six priorities one being to 'Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes'. In practical terms this means: 1 supporting children and young people at an earlier stage, ensuring they are safe through prevention and early intervention services; 2 Improve outcomes for our children in care and other vulnerable children; 3 Ensure better outcomes for social care users and improved satisfaction; 4 Safeguard against new and emerging risks. Each of these elements of the strategy are embedded in the Youth Justice Plan.



The YOT Partnership ensures that the prevention of children offending and re-offending are key to the Youth Justice Plan and are strongly linked to other planning frameworks including the Police and Crime Plan from the OPCC. As noted the YOT Management Group reports to the BCT Partnership and feeds into the development of the partnerships strategy. Progress against actions and performance targets is monitored, with exception reporting. The Operational Manager attends the Partnership Forum and Mini MAPS meetings to respond to local crime and anti-social behaviour and address emerging problems.

The YOT Service Manager sits on the Berkshire Local Criminal Justice Group, reporting to the Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), with representation on the LCJB and sub-groups shared between the Thames Valley YOT Managers, with the West Berkshire YOT Service Manager the Thames Valley representative on the Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel and Children in Custody Vulnerability Panel. Whilst the Buckinghamshire YOS Manager represents other YOTs on the Thames Valley MAPPA Strategic Group (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements), locally the

YOT Operational Manager prioritises attendance at MAPPA meetings when required, and also attends the Offender Management Group with responsibility for local strategic and service development in relation to Integrated Offender Management.

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

YOT Managers continue to contribute to key groups such as the Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC), Life Chances Team Meetings for Children in Care, Young People's Substance Misuse Group and Young Persons Housing Panel. In addition, the YOT Manager is a member of the Children's Prevention and Early Help Partnership, vulnerable children meeting, Supporting Families Operational Group and Child Exploitation Strategic Group.

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

In terms of staffing the YOT has the following:

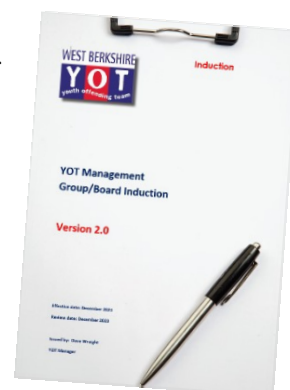
- A Service Manager
- A Operational Manager
- A Assistant Team Manager
- Two social work posts one at senior level
- Two YOT Officer posts
- A Restorative Justice and Volunteer Coordinator
- A Apprentice Youth Justice Worker
- A Information Officer 0.6 fte
- A Probation Link Officer 0.7 fte
- A Teacher 0.6 fte
- A seconded Police officer
- A seconded Health worker 0.4 fte
- A seconded mental health 0.4 fte
- A seconded Speech and Language Therapist 0.2 fte
- 1 Apprentice Business Assistant and 1 Senior Business Support Officer

The YOT comprises of full time and part time staff, 16 female staff and 1 male staff. All the staff who hold cases have been trained in Safeguarding, Child Exploitation, ACE's, Trauma Informed Practice, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Assessment Planning and Intervention (APIS), Prevent and Restorative Justice. A comprehensive and ongoing training programme is in place to ensure continued professional development for the staff group.



## 5. YOT Management Group Development

New members of the YOT Management Group meet with the YOT Manager or chair of the Management Group to undertake an induction into the role of group member. In the last year the terms of reference have also been revised and refreshed. The YOT Management Board and Group has the responsibility for YOT governance, strategically leading across relevant partners to ensure a high-quality service is provided to all children.



In the coming year the YOT Management Group will continue to be presented with learning from the YOT staff team and wider services to increase their oversight, this will include details of the Youth Justice Oversight Framework led by the YJB. There are also a few newer members of the Group who are in acting positions, once these positions are confirmed we will plan a focus workshop to secure the development of the board.

## 6. Progress on previous plan

The Youth Justice Plan 2022/2023 set a number of targets to be carried out across the partnership, these were pulled together in one plan and is overseen and scrutinised by the Management Group via quarterly reporting. Alongside the action plan a number of YOT team members attend the management group meetings to present their reports of work undertaken. There were 39 targets set of the YOT and wider partnership which contained a range of areas to be addressed including: First time entrants, Reducing reoffending, Assessment, planning interventions and supervision, Public protection and violence prevention, Safeguarding and vulnerabilities, Education, Training and employment, health strengths based approaches and responding to the cohort.

Key achievements of the last year have been:

- HMIP graded the YOT as outstanding, recognising YOT staff are determined to enable every child to thrive and they go the extra mile for children.
- The annual feedback report where 40 children and 31 parents responded, the responses to the service they had received were positive
- Partnership working with the CSP and LPA to develop a preventative approach to children receiving warnings under the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and addressing any breaches with the lowest level of penalty
- Completion of three successful parenting groups using 'who's in charge' and delivery of individual parenting support totalling support for 25 parents
- Delivered 19 successful prevention interventions
- Turnaround – additional funding by the MoJ to deliver earlier intervention to children at risk of entering the formal justice system: developing a referral system to support children with early help style services
- Delivered three training courses 'acting as Appropriate Adult' to the out of hours services and two local Children Home networks to support the safeguarding of children in police custody
- A number of audits, observations and benchmarking exercises confirmed the high standards of the interventions undertaken
- Maintained the professional development of staff through a comprehensive training and development programme
- 11 children gained AQA awards for education they undertook with the YOT
- Continued to have no children sentenced to Youth Detention



- Developed strong partnership engagement to commence the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty
- Commenced partnership task and finish group to develop Outcome 22 – deferred prosecution within Thames Valley
- Responding to cohort profile – developing a girls action plan
- Reflective practice – eight reflective forums, two AssetPlus reflections and seven direct observations took place this year.
- Case study published by Local Government Association regarding the positive education support offered - [been published on the LGA website.](#)

## 7. Resources and Services

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

The YOT uses the Local Authority funding, Youth Justice Grant, partner contributions and available resources to deliver youth justice services with the aim of reducing the number of children in the youth justice system, reducing reoffending and risk of harm to others by children, improving the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system and improving their outcomes.

The following sets out total staffing costs and cash contributions agreed for 2023-2024:

Agency	Staffing costs (£)	Payments in kind – revenue (£)	Other delegated funds (£)	Total (£)
Local authority	£419,007	£0	£52,953	£471,960
Police Service	£55,778	£0	£0	£55,778
Probation Service	£35,038	£0	£5,000	£40,038
Health Service	£43,547	£0	£0	£43,547
Police and Crime Commissioner	£71,260	£0	£0	£71,260
MOJ -Turnaround	£31,970	£0	£13,577	£45,547
YJB Practice Grant	*£156,373	£0	*£24,266	*£180,639
<b>Total</b>	<b>*£812,973</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>*£95,796</b>	<b>*£908,769</b>

\*As of 29/06/2023 the Youth Justice Board Practice Grant for 2023/2024 had not been confirmed, therefore the funding settlement for 2023/2024 has been used as a projection for the current year's budget.

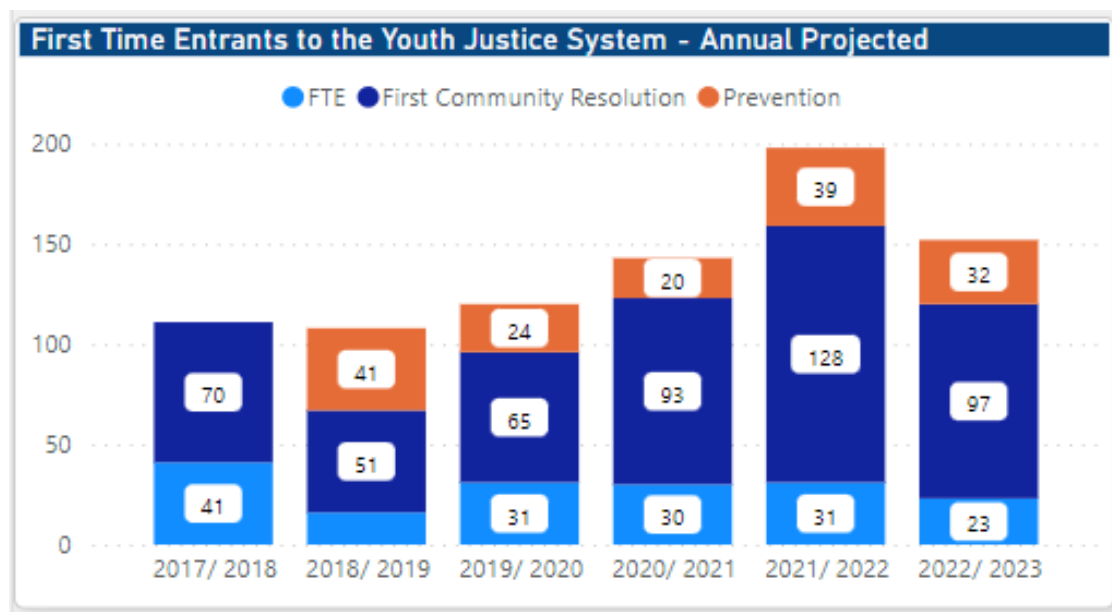
## 8. Performance and Priorities

### Reducing First Time Entrants

**FTEs per 100,000 10-17 year olds: Outturn Jan 21 – Dec 21 (latest figures) = 150, Outturn Jan 22 – Dec 22 (latest figures) = 180**

A first time entrant (FTE) is a child receiving a formal police or court disposal for the first time, thus entering the youth justice system. The YOT in conjunction with the Thames Valley Police introduced a prevention scheme in September 2018 enabling the police to identify young people who displayed behaviour below a criminal threshold but that without support may become a first time entrant. In addition a Drug Diversion Scheme was launched in West Berkshire to direct young people caught in possession of illegal drugs to a substance misuse service that can educate, treat and support those young people rather than use the formal criminal justice system.

In terms of national reporting the measure in relation to FTEs is per 100,000 10-17 year olds. The most recent measure for January 2022 to December 2022 is 180, a 20% increase from the previous year's outturn. This is now higher than both the national (148) and regional (135) outturns. Conversely, there has been a decline in First time Offenders, decreasing by 30.7% from 140 in 2021/202 to 97 in 2022/2023.



### Prevention

The YOT have worked in partnership with other agencies to prevent children entering the youth justice system. Where Thames Valley Police identify children behaving in an anti-social manner which has the potential to escalate into the criminal space, they write a 'prevention letter' to the parents outlining the specific behaviour that is causing concern, which is hand delivered and explaining that they will be notifying the YOT who will be in contact. The letter is also sent to the YOT who allocate a worker to undertake a home visit. During the visit the YOT worker undertakes a brief assessment with the view to delivering an intervention. In 2022/2023 there were 32 prevention letters issued, with 19 successful interventions taking place. In the coming year the YOT

will work with partners to establish the Detached Youth Workers within the local area and directing them via Mini MAPS to areas where children spent more time, looking to provide early preventative support.

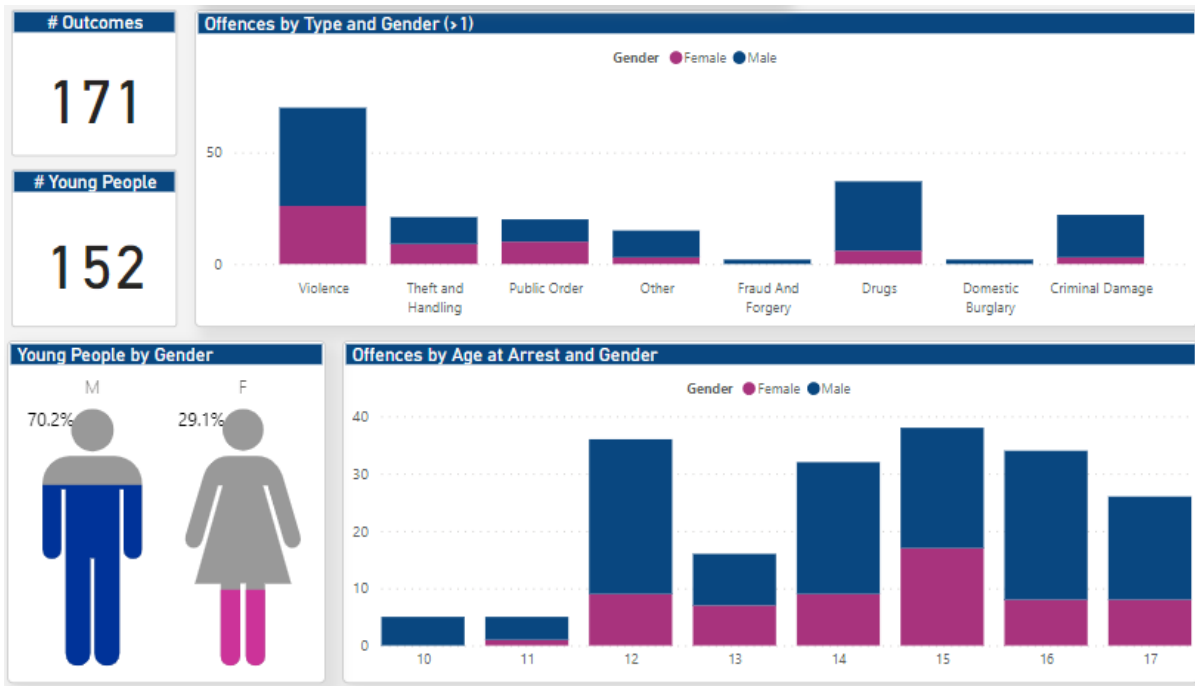
The YOT also work in partnership with secondary schools and the TVP safeguarding team delivering the Positive Intervention Programme (PIP) aimed at working with students who have committed offences in school but are not being formally processed through the criminal justice system. When a pupil is referred they are allocated a worker either in the Police Safeguarding Team or YOT who will undertake one to one work within the school setting to address the presenting behaviour and support them with their education. In 2022/2023 there were 44 children were referred to PIP and 37 successfully engaged with the intervention offered and have not gone on to offend to date, one did receive an exclusion from school.

Turnaround: The Government recognise that certain life experiences can make it more likely a child will start offending, and that early intervention is essential to break the cycle. The MoJ released funding to YOTs in December 2022 for a three year project to provide early help style voluntary assessments and intervention to children - offering voluntary, needs-driven, family-focused support to children to de-escalate their behaviour and get their lives back on track. The YOT Senior Social Worker, alongside the YOT Manager was tasked with leading on the mobilisation and introduction of Turnaround at West Berkshire YOT. Some funding has been spent on ensuring that the YOT has a safe, informal and comfortable space to work with children and their families. It has also involved promoting the service with partners in the Police and Children and Family Services, exploring referral pathways and how best to generate referrals based on the criteria for Turnaround.

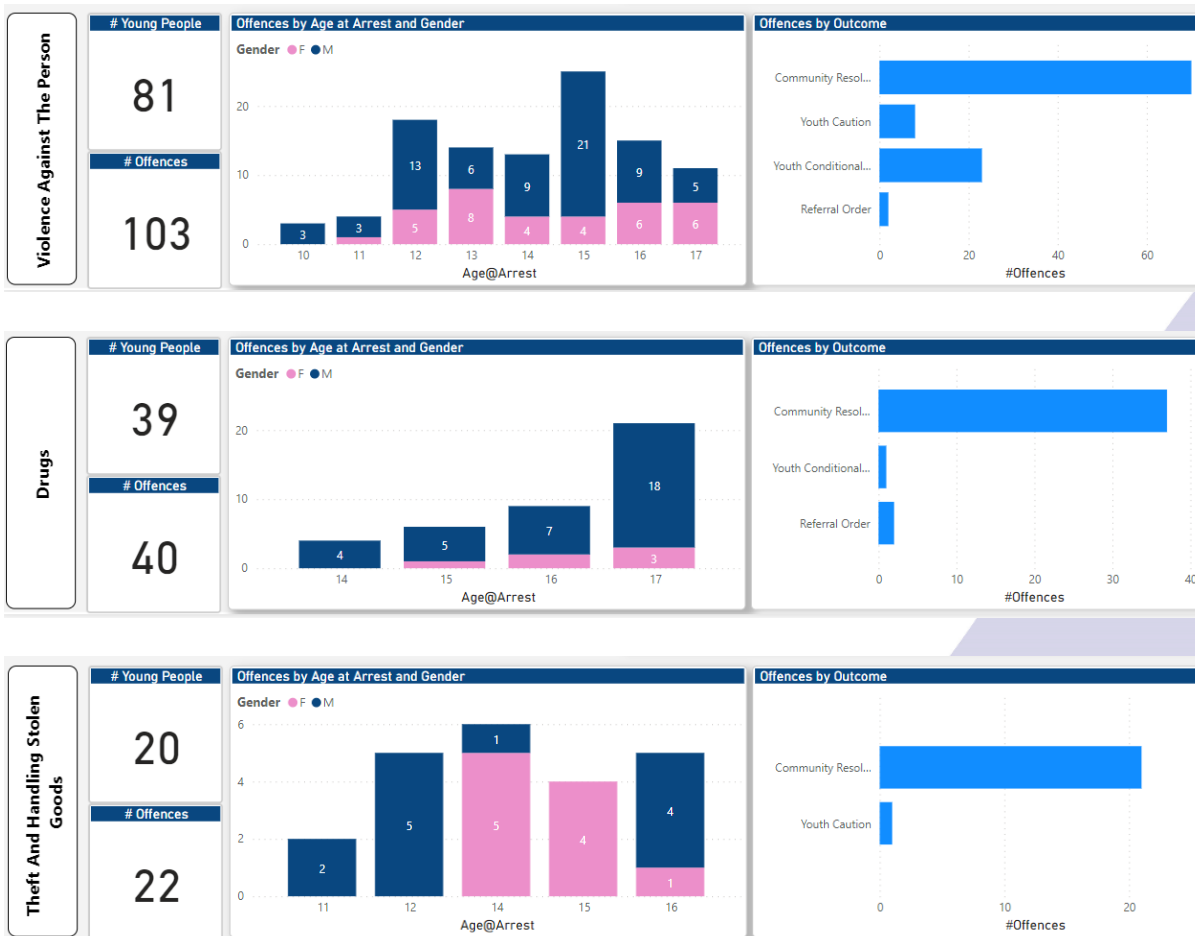
### **Diversion**

Thames Valley Police use Community Resolutions as an informal disposal diverting children away from the formal criminal justice system. It is primarily used by officers on the street dealing with low level offending. Officers check their data systems to ascertain if a child has been subject to a previous disposal, it can be given to children and young people who have had no previous contact with the criminal justice system. If a previous Community Resolution has been given then the decision is deferred to be made between the TVP Youth Justice Unit and the YOT. It is of note that West Berkshire Local Police Area use Community Resolutions most of all the LPA's in Thames Valley. West Berkshire YOT are notified of all Community Resolutions and triage them all, 138 Community Resolutions (CR) and 31 Drugs Diversion were issued between April 2022 and March 2023. 90 children receiving CRs were offered intervention with 34% accepting. Children receiving a drugs diversion are referred to the Edge, substance misuse service for six sessions of education and harm minimisation, 50% engaged in this intervention. The YOT Manager sits on the Thames Valley Out of Court Scrutiny Panel which has oversight of all the out of court disposals including Community Resolutions. The YOT Senior Social Worker acts as YOT decision maker and she has attended two Thames Valley wide moderation exercises with Youth Justice Unit decision makers and TV YOT decision makers, to provide consistency across all areas on the decisions made.

## Spotlight on Community Resolutions



## Spotlight on Offences



## Reducing Reoffending

This measure is nationally reported from PNC data and includes Children in Care from other authorities, placed in our area. With the reduction in the number of First Time Entrants to the formal system the number in the formal cohort is far smaller and more complex as most first time entrants are less likely to offend, consequently an unintended consequence of the reduction in FTE is pressure on reoffending rates. The complexity of the formal cohort is graphically displayed on pages 5-7. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) methodology for measuring reoffending involves a 3 month cohort tracked over a 12 month period, this results in a greater proportion of prolific offenders and hence higher reoffending rates, though both measures show similar trends over time at a national level. There is greater variance at local level due to smaller cohort sizes.

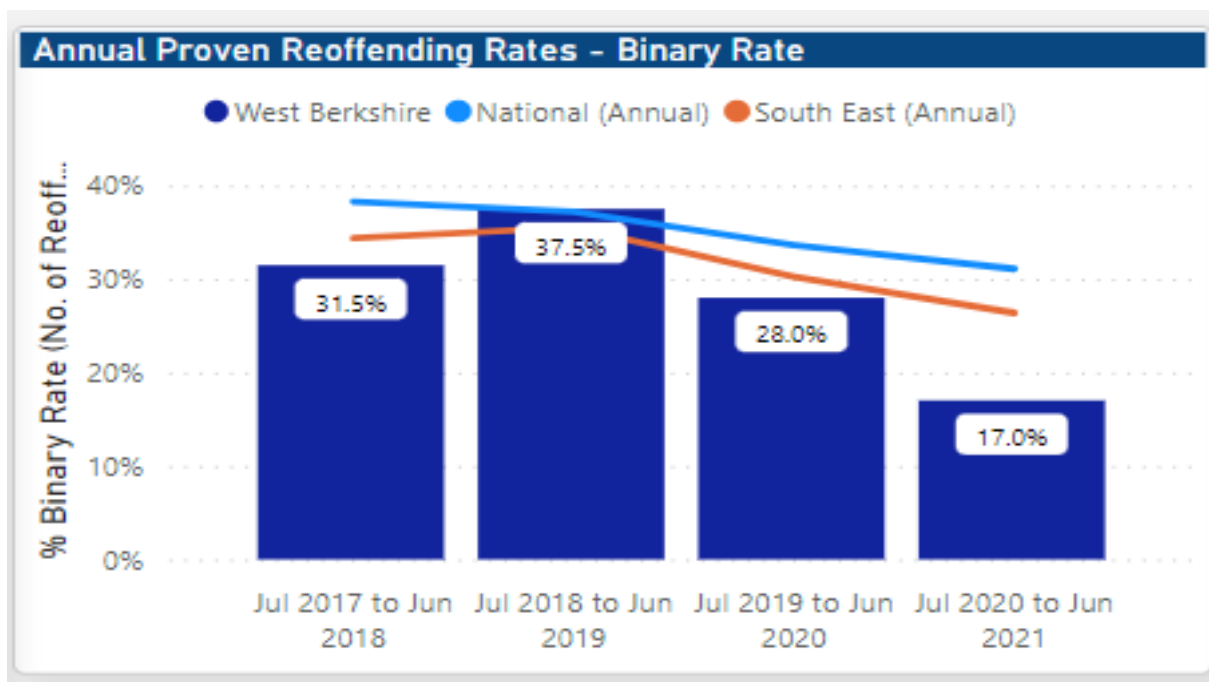
The reoffending rate is published in two ways: as a frequency rate (the average number of offences the cohort commits after 12 months) and as a binary rate (the proportion of the cohort who reoffend within 12 months). The MOJ also publish an annual measure using a weighted average. The annual reoffending rate is calculated by dividing the sum of reoffenders over four quarters by the sum of offenders over the same four quarters:

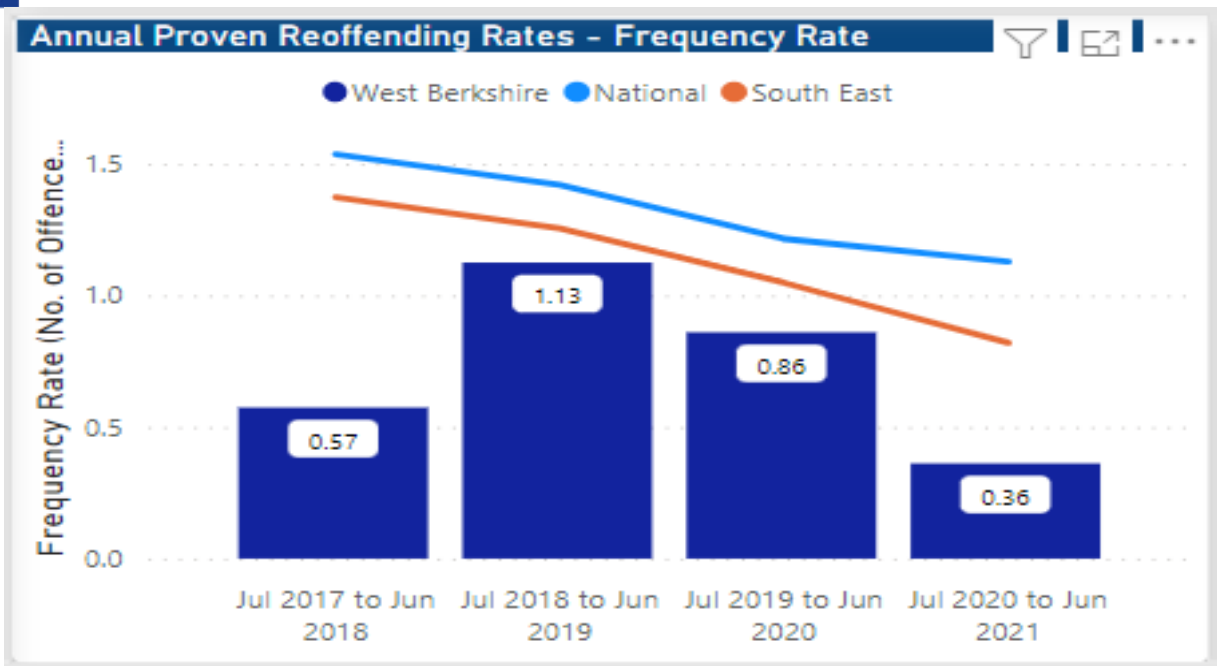
### Outturn: Most recent data Jul 20 – Jun 21 (National data)

The binary rate has decreased from 28% of the Jul 19 – Jun 20 cohort reoffending to 17% of the Jul 20 – Jun 21 cohort reoffending. It is lower than both the national rate of 31.1% and the rate for the South East Region (26.4%).

There were 0.36 reoffences per young person in the Jul 20 – Jun 21 cohort, down from 0.86 in the previous period and lower than both the national figure (1.13) and regional (0.82).

The Jul 20 – Jun 21 cohort sees a decrease in reoffences per reoffender from 3.07 to 2.13. This remains lower than both the national (3.63) and South East Region (3.11).





**Constructive resettlement and the use of custody (including remands)**

There have been no custodial sentences or remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) during this past year. The data published by the Youth Justice Board uses a custody rate per 1,000 10-17 year olds in West Berkshire. With no custodial sentences given during the period the outturn for Apr 2022 – Mar 2023 is 0.05. This compares to a regional rate of 0.06 and a national rate of 0.11. In the last ten years the number of custodial sentences in West Berkshire has fallen as low as it can, with the last custodial sentence being five years ago.

	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023
Total number of custodial sentences	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

During this past year the YOT have delivered Bail Supervision and Support for a period of six months as a direct alternative of a Remand to Youth Detention. During the past year the court have considered custody but imposed alternative community options in all cases following the recommendations in the Pre-Sentence Reports. West Berkshire YOT develop bespoke intensive interventions either as part of Referral Orders or Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) interventions. There is not a dedicated ISS team to facilitate or manage these interventions and this falls to the YOT Officers with support from the whole team to ensure up to 25 hours per week, including weekend contacts, are covered. The YOT are currently delivering a Referral Order with an intensive contract over 7 days per week, the sentencing Judge commented that custody was the only thing she could think of, but the work done by the YOT had changed her mind.

There has been no child in custody since 2018 who was resettled in to the community in 2019, as such no cases were inspected in the recent HMIP inspection of the YOT. Commentary was received regarding the Resettlement policy which highlighted positive comments about the policy being refreshed regularly and the direction it gives to YOT Officers. Pathways and the five principles of constructive resettlement are embedded well. HMIP recognise the work the YOT do to developing



pro-social identity and personalised services, meet the needs of victims and approach to public protection is clear. HMIP also commented positively that staff maintain their knowledge and understanding by attending relevant learning opportunities.

One area of improvement noted by HMIP was the policy needs to be more explicit about how the needs of minority ethnic children and, specifically, girls will be addressed. This will be addressed this year.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been introduced within YOTs, the implementation was delayed from October 2022 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Work is currently underway to address the recording of this information, we are awaiting the upgrade to CVYJ data system and we are meeting with practitioners to train them on the new recording requirements. The YOT Management Group are aware of the requirements and are supportive of all agencies working together to ensure existing arrangements for sharing and recording data meets the requirements. The Information Officer is working on developing the new performance reporting of these KPI’s that will be overseen by the Management Group.

West Berkshire YOT used the previous KPIs reporting to form our quarterly data performance report for the YOT Management group. Therefore we do not currently project concerns with gathering, recording and reporting on the new additional KPIs.

Existing KPIs	New KPIs
➤ Binary re-offending data	➤ Suitable accommodation
➤ Frequency of offending	➤ Education training and employment
➤ First time entrants	➤ Special educational needs and disabilities
➤ Use of custody	➤ Mental health care and emotional well being
	➤ Substance misuse
	➤ Out-of-court disposals
	➤ Links to wider services
	➤ Management board attendance
	➤ Serious violence
	➤ Victims

**Priorities:**

**Over Represented Children:**

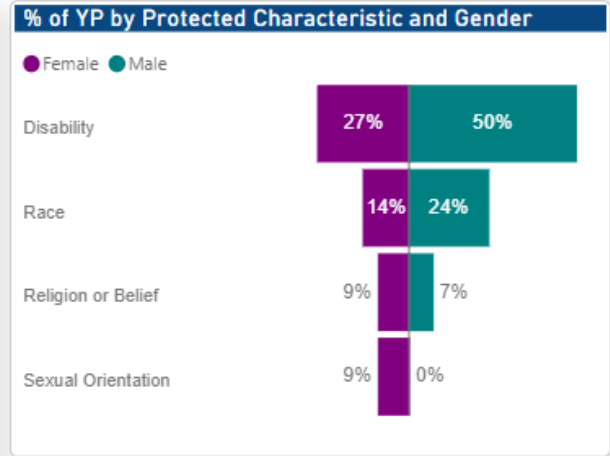
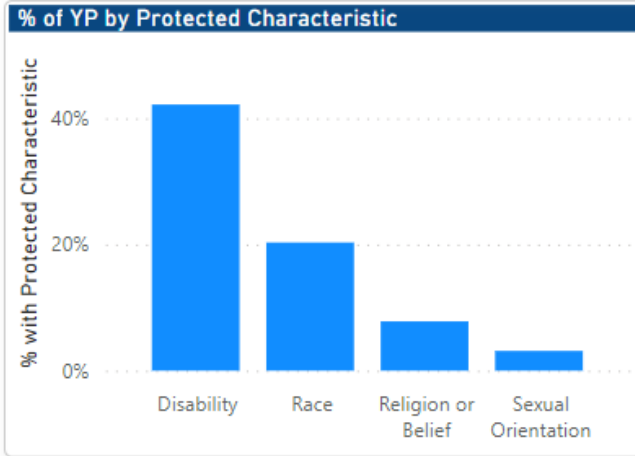
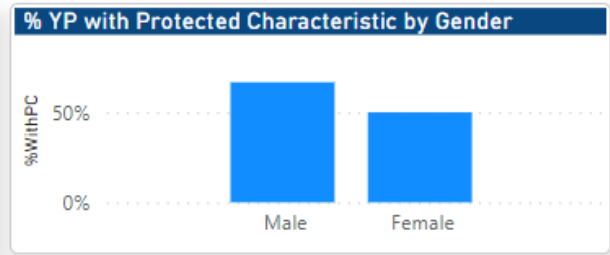
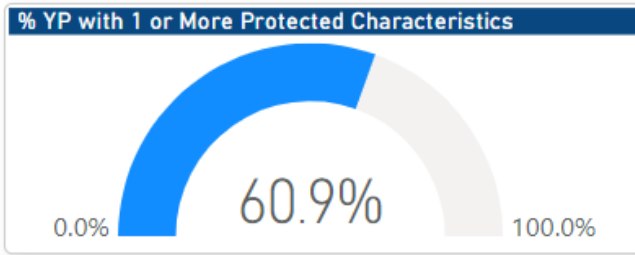
The YOT monitor the caseload of children involved with the YOT in addition to those who have come in contact with the police through other reasons for example stop and search or children who are excluded. Where areas of over representation or disproportionailty are identified, the YOT partnership seeks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

There were 17 children from a minority/non-white background who committed 25 offences representing 9.8% of the offending population and 9.7% of all offences committed respectively. Of the 25 offences committed, 24% resulted in a substantive outcome, compared with 25.4% of offences committed by young people from a white background. In terms of seriousness of offending, 80% of BAME offences are categorised with gravity 3 or above compared with 54.1% for children

from a white background. The annual school census for secondary schools showed that the proportion of minority/ non-white pupils in the general West Berkshire secondary population was 12.9% in 2022. The BAME population is therefore underrepresented in the youth justice system in West Berkshire.

29% of the children working with the YOT are female, this percentage is higher than the national comparison at 15% (21-22). Liaison with others YOTs across the country is also highlighting an increase in girls known to YOTs. The Operational Manager has been involved in creating a girls national network, a recent meeting highlighted the lack of professional training providers offering this focus work. The YJB are taking this agenda forward. We have sought to develop additional bespoke resources that are tailored to their needs. In addition the YOT has run specific events that are aimed solely at girls, creating a safe space for them to grow and develop.

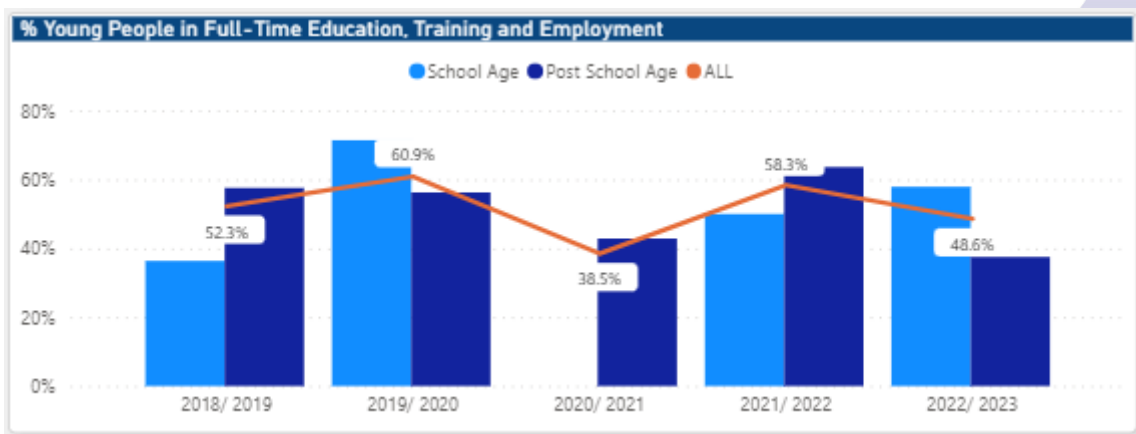
- In 2022/23, 64 children engaged with an intervention with the Youth Offending Team (YOT). Of these, 39 children (60.9%) were identified as having 1 or more Protected Characteristics.
- Males are more likely to be identified as having a Protected Characteristic than females – 66.7% versus 50%
- Disability is the most common Protected Characteristic (42.2%) with 50% of boys recognised as having a disability versus 27% of girls.
- Nearly 1 in 4 boys (24%) working with YOT were identified as having race as a protected characteristic compared to 14% of Girls.
- 7.8% of the complete cohort have a protected characteristic in the Religion or Belief Category.



**Young People with Protected Characteristics by Gender**

Characteristic	Female			Male			Total		
	Count YP	% YP	Total YP	Count YP	% YP	Total YP	Count YP	% YP	Total YP
Disability	6	27.3%	22	21	50.0%	42	27	42.2%	64
Race	3	13.6%	22	10	23.8%	42	13	20.3%	64
Religion or Belief	2	9.1%	22	3	7.1%	42	5	7.8%	64
Sexual Orientation	2	9.1%	22			42	2	3.1%	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>64</b>

## Education



48.6% of Young People completing a substantive intervention were in full time education or employment at the end of their order. This increases to 66.7% when including informal interventions.

Schools have experienced less disruption during the last year following the impact from Covid. However there are a minority of children who continue to struggle to re-engage with school, which is reflected in their attendance, exclusion rates and reduced timetables. YOT have continued to promote the work of the Therapeutic Thinking Team to encourage schools to address these issues through personalised plans and bespoke packages. The YOT continues to maintain a priority focus on supporting these children to access and maintain fulltime ETE. Information for these children is collated on a monthly basis to identify where support is needed and termly problem solving meetings are held with colleagues from different educational establishments and those with oversight of the system. The YOT works closely with the Education Welfare Officers and Exclusions Officer to identify early intervention support if necessary. YOT Officers have also supported parents/ advocated for children expressing concerns around schooling, attending meetings where relevant and bringing professionals together, including YOT SALT practitioner, Physical health nurse and Mental health nurse, to support where necessary. The YOT has also benefitted from an Apprentice Youth Justice Worker who has given support to older children with further education applications and applying for jobs.

YOT report on the number of hours offered and accessed, as well as whether there has been any improvement or deterioration during the course of the intervention, this enables the YOT Management Group to have an informed overview of YOT performance and address any strategic issues or blockages. The YOT are sighted on trends and patterns of exclusion and the use of Elective Home Education to enable advocacy and challenge as required.

The Prevention Intervention Programme (PIP) is now embedded within schools. To date only one child has gone on receive an exclusion within three months of a referral. There have been good links made with key leaders within schools to promote this approach and as time has gone on schools are referring young people who are more suited to the programme. YOT also works closely with school based Youth Workers to ensure that the relevant support is offered, meeting on a termly basis. Of those who have worked as part of the PIP programme during this academic year have not been excluded.

This year YOT became a centre for AQAs, providing the opportunity for young people to gain certificate of achievements where relevant and beneficial. So far we have had 11 young people achieve awards since March 2022.

### **Restorative Justice and Victims**

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team recognises the importance of providing a high quality service to victims of youth crime. The YOT has a Restorative Justice and Volunteer Coordinator (RJVC) who leads on work with victims, the delivery of restorative justice practices and reparation. There are regular briefings and updates provided to all staff about restorative justice and victim work. Part of the RJVC role is to co-ordinate the volunteers, offering support and training opportunities, ensuring continued involvement with the YOT and participation in Referral Order panel meetings.

The YOT continues to offer direct support to victims of youth crime, this may include taking an impact statement to be used during victim awareness sessions with the young person, an apology letter (where appropriate), shuttle mediation between the victim and young person, participation in face-to-face restorative meetings, one-to-one intervention sessions on protective behaviours and keeping safe (when under the age of 18) and regularly updating the victim on the progress of the young person. After the victim case has been closed they may be referred to other services for

example; SAFE- who support young victims of crime and Thames Valley Partnership- for all victims of crime. The previous RJROC and ATM completed staff training and mentoring around Restorative Justice and victim work. We have reviewed the process of initial contact as there was a low number of take-ups and high number of no responses. An initial contact letter, which includes a YOT victim leaflet and the victim codes of practice handout, is sent to all consenting victims. The victim is then contacted via the telephone a week after the letter has been sent. This change of practice seems to have so far been successful as a higher number of victims are more responsive to telephone calls. An audit of victim cases will be undertaken in the latter part of 2023 to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication.

Out of the 176 offences with identified victims the YOT delivered, 82 had no consent leaving 94 identified victims compared to 104 victims last year. 25 victims accepted a service, including updates, Restorative Justice processes, direct victim support through protective behaviours or keeping safe work. 36 did not accept a service and 33 victims did not respond or are still awaiting outcomes for the offences committed against them.

### **Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation**

AssetPlus assessments are used to assess the risk of harm that children present to others, reducing this risk is a focus of the work the YOT undertakes with children. Interventions are bespoke and tailored to individual children, considering their Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and using the Trauma Recovery Model where appropriate to inform delivery. In the past year four children were assessed as posing a high risk of harm to others, these were overseen by the Operational Manager at monthly multi-agency case planning forums. One child assessed as high risk of harm to others has turned 18 years old but still engaging in a court order is also overseen at MAPPA, he is a cat 3 level 2 discussion. There were eighteen children assessed as posing a medium risk.

There has been two serious incident notification this year following a charge of GBH section 18. One learning review was completed as the YOT had worked with the child the previous year, delivering a voluntary Community Resolution intervention. The manager who undertook the review stated that it was unlikely that YOT Intervention had any significant impact on the alleged behaviour displayed. It was recommended that for cases being transferred where YOT Officers are unable to undertake a formal handover meeting, a brief audit is undertaken by a manager where outstanding actions can be shared with the receiving YOT Officer.

The YOT is represented on the Thames Valley wide Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) Board by the Head of Youth Offending Service for Oxfordshire, who represents all Thames Valley YOTs at this forum. The YOT is committed to being active partners in the delivery of the Serious Violence duty alongside the Violence Reduction Unit in Thames Valley, participating in four events with the URV and OPCC. The YOT is an active member of the Serious Violence Steering group working with the Community Safety Partnership to implement the local requirements of the SV Duty. The YOT remains engaged with TVP and partners to address knife crime and serious violence attending the weekly meetings to ensure services are provided early.

The YOT remains an active member in a number of partnership meetings, the Operational Manager attends EMRAC (exploitation, missing and risk assessment conference), Partnership Forum (multi-agency problem solving) and Mini-Maps, Knife Crime and serious violence meeting, with attendance at all meetings. This enables the YOT to share intelligence with colleagues and direct resources at emerging issues that impact on public safety. The YOT Police Officer continues to support the

provision of a high volume of intelligence and attends local CID meetings providing timely information to allow the LPA to disrupt activities and detect offences. The YOT Police Officer reviews any notifications triggered by an alert system set up for all open YOT children and the LPA daily briefing, he alerts the Operational Manager so issues can be addressed in a timely fashion. The Probation YOT Link Worker attends the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) meetings and ensures information is shared regarding young people turning 18 years old.

Children involved in the Youth Justice System have experienced higher levels of childhood trauma and adversity than many other in the community, see profile on pages 5-7. Research around the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) supports a relationship based trauma informed approach to the work undertaken with them. Safeguarding children is a crucial role of the YOT and this is assessed through AssetPlus. There was not anyone assessed as very high vulnerability during this period. There were fourteen young people assessed as having high safety and wellbeing concerns and twenty-six assessed with medium concerns. Those assessed as High vulnerability; two young people were Children in Care and eleven young people were supported with Child Protection Plans and these were overseen by the Operational Manager at monthly multi agency case planning forums.

There remains a focus from the YOT Operational Manager to ensure all members of the team are trained in safeguarding, Child Exploitation, Prevent and County Lines. The YOT Manager is the co-chair of Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC) panel and the YOT Operational manager attends to facilitate the information sharing in relation to young people working with YOT. There were no children open to the YOT who were subject to an NRM referral in the last year. The YOT are members of the Channel Panel, with no children known to the YOT currently being monitored. The YOT check the MARAC agenda to determine if any children known to the YOT are to be discussed either as perpetrators or victims. If this is the case then the YOT will be represented at the meeting. Over the past year the YOT has attended all the relevant Child Protection Initial and Review conferences.

### **Detention in Police Custody**

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

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



### **In the coming year: -**

A number of activities have taken place to determine the priorities for the YOT in the coming year, questionnaires' were returned from children currently receiving a service, discussion with the YOT Volunteers to consider their views, consultation with staff and the YOT Management Group along with analysis of the data. HMIP inspection report provided the YOT with a focus of two recommendations along with a number of areas of suggested improvements. The plan has benefitted from engagement from partner agencies and the wider YOT workforce. The priorities are split into those areas for development and those areas of sustaining practice.

Priorities for improving practice the coming year will include:

- Reduce school exclusion and help children into education , employment or training
- Help children before they get into trouble with the police by embedding Turnaround early help intervention
- Help prevent serious youth violence and offences involving weapons
- Work with children to prevent anti-social behaviour
- Make sure that YOT is focussed on putting the child first not the offence

Priorities for sustaining practice the coming year will include:

- Continue to prioritise responses to earlier intervention and prevention of offending as a wider partnership (Drug Diversion, Prevention Letters and Schools Prevention Work PIP)
- Monitor disproportionality and respond to any over-representation strategically and operationally; deliver a service for girls
- Be active partners in the delivery of the Serious Violence duty in conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership and Violence Reduction Unit, leading the work among children
- Continue to promote physical activities for children supporting desistance
- Prevent the over criminalisation of children in care and support their life chances
- Embed learning from inspection and other research/learning
- Build capacity and expertise when responding to different forms of Child Exploitation
- Continue engaging and encouraging victims and children to engage in Restorative Justice approaches

### **9. Standards for children in the justice system**

There has been no self-assessment against the Standards for children in the justice system since 2019, last year's Youth Justice Plan set out the work undertaken in 2019. West Berkshire YOT give high priority to ensuring effective services are delivered in line with or exceeding these Standards. The YOT has a range of mechanisms to ensure the quality of the service provided including; arrangements for management monitoring, how staff are supported through induction, supervision, appraisal and training, the oversight of practice and recording and the feedback mechanisms that are in place. The ongoing quality assurance and management monitoring enables the YOT Management Group a confidence in the work undertaken within the YOT is of sufficiently high quality to make an impact on the lives of children and young people. The Management Group received the APIS audit in January 2023 and further reports and presentations as detailed in section 5 of the plan.

In addition the Senior Social worker undertakes observed practice sessions with all the YOT staff, providing written feedback and highlights areas for further reflection. All files of interventions closing in a quarter are passed to the YOT Operational Manager for signing off. The YOT Officer is expected to have quality assured their own file using the closed file checklist, and it will be checked that this has been completed. The YOT will carry out at least one APIS audit (Assessment, Planning, Intervention and Supervision) per year. There may be a number of others; thematic audits identified as part of the annual planning process, Critical Learning Reviews and BWSP – child safeguarding practice Review or multi-agency case audits. Outcomes of audits are reported to the YOT Management Group.

The YOT benchmarks against HMIP Thematic Inspection Reports, and the resultant reports and action plans are agreed at the YOT Management Group, and when relevant the BWSP. If necessary, they will be escalated to the Building Communities Together Partnership. HMIP Inspection reports and thematic reports are scrutinised for points for local learning.

## 10. Workforce Development

The YOT recognises that our most important asset is our staff therefore we place a very high importance on recruiting, inducting, training and retaining our staff. The YOT has a complement of staff from all the statutory partners, with a training and development programme created over the course of the year to further develop and enhance their skill base. The training plan for 2023/24 builds on the training delivered over previous years and the professional backgrounds of the team. In the last year bespoke training was delivered to individual staff on: Poverty and neglect workshop, diversion and OoCD work, Child First, AIM3 assessment and refresher training, GRT awareness training and champion training, working with girls, ADHD/ASD workshop, AssetPlus workshops to focus on specific sections to increase quality. A number of staff undertook individual continual professional development, including two team members undertaking the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate, one manager completed the Pathways 1 programme, and one staff member is undertaking the Youth Support Worker apprenticeship and four members of the team undertook effective practice awards.

## 11. Evidence-based practice and innovation

West Berkshire YOT is a relatively small YOT therefore usually do not have a sufficiently sized cohort to undertake evaluations and randomised control samples as required by academics. However there are a number of areas of emerging practice and innovation that have been piloted in the locality.

- Turnaround early help intervention will be delivered in a bespoke style to ensure timely early support is offered to children and families. This work will be developed so it does not duplicate services already available but add additionality to provision
- Drug diversion – the approach to deal with all simple possession drugs through the delivery of six sessions focussed on education and harm reduction, this intervention has been refreshed and reporting of outcomes will take place in March 2024
- Detached Youth Workers – working with the Community Safety Partnership via Mini MAPS we applied for OPCC funding to have two youth workers offering 10 hours of detached youth work who will respond to the changing need; this work will commence in June 2023 and is funded for 3 years. The aim of the project is to provide early support and signposting of children before them become known to the Police and increase the number of prevention letters sent

- Prevention letters – working with the police to help and support children and their families who are involved in anti-social behaviour and on the cusp of offending. This approach is preventing children coming into the criminal justice system and has been used in a group format for those when their behaviour has been committed in the same group.
- Positive Intervention Programme – a school based partnership between the YOT and Police engaging with pupils and diverting them away from the formal criminal justice system whilst engaging them in work to reshape their thinking and approach to situations that may escalate. We are working with the violence reduction officer to see if we can identify children younger who could be a risk of serious violence and offer a PIP intervention
- ETE and positive activities – the apprentice youth justice worker will continue to offer creative and innovative opportunities to children out of education. Positive activities are promoted and supported during school holidays providing structure for children. There are updated guides to applying for colleges, jobs and apprenticeships alongside a directory of youth activities in the local area.
- Bespoke projects – during half terms and holidays one or two day projects have been created around a theme, bringing together a group of children and young people to engage in a programme/activities that explore that theme and bring learning and knowledge to all the participants. Usually these projects are accredited through an AQA award. This summer there will be a consultation with children and partners about the YOTs Child First approaches.
- Complex Case Clinics (CCC) – these clinics are being developed by the three health workers; mental health worker, physical health nurse and speech and language therapist to consult with YOT Officers for children with complex needs. The clinic offers support and advice and also develops a plan to intervene using the most appropriate health response as sometimes the needs can be met by one of the workers rather than all three, reducing professional overload.

## 12. Service Improvement Plan

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team (YOT) has received an overall rating of ‘Outstanding’ following an inspection by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. The inspection was carried out 12th -16th December 2022 and the full report was published on 28th March 2023.

Chief Inspector of Probation Justin Russell said: “The children supervised by West Berkshire Youth Offending Team are thriving. This much-deserved ‘Outstanding’ rating is the result of hard work, dedication, and determination to support each child equally and deter them from reoffending – the service is a credit to the local community.”

There were a number of areas noted as strengths within the report including; strong and effective partnerships, continually looking for ways to improve, good quality often specialist services to help prevent reoffending, YOT Staff are determined to enable every child to thrive, going the extra mile for children and outstanding assessments, planning and delivery of Out of Court Disposal work.

### Recommendation One

The Building Communities Together Partnership should:

Address its statutory responsibility to include a probation officer in the YOT partnership, so that the expertise and specialist knowledge this role brings will enhance public protection.

Action plan:

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
YOT Management Board (BCT) to secure a Probation Officer within the YOT	YOT inspection report and improvement plan to be an agenda item at the next BCT meeting	BCT chair	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Probation Officer to be seconded to the YOT	Probation Service to review resource and report to the BCT meeting in July	Jacqui Markie - SPO	June 2023 (review) 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2023 (BCT)
Specialist Probation advice and support to be available within the YOT	Probation Officer to be co-located within the YOT - fortnightly	Anna Galliers - SPO	April 2023

Recommendation Two

The YOT Management Group should:

Ensure that there is a comprehensive review of the Thames Valley Police Youth Offending Teams out-of-court disposal partnership agreement and guidance that effectively covers issues of disproportionality across all protected characteristics and firmly embeds trauma, risk of harm and safety and wellbeing.

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
An Out of Court Disposal guidance that effectively covers issues of disproportionality across all protected characteristics and firmly embeds trauma, risk and safety and wellbeing.	Engage with the Policing Strategy Unit in line with our TVP Race Action plan to ensure the agreement and guidance is updated.	Operational Lead, DI Krista Thompson,	May 23
	Consultation with nine Thames Valley YOT partnerships	Strategic lead, DCI Rachel Taylor (board member)	July 2023

**13. Service Development Plan**

The action plan outlined below has been developed in light of the other strategic plans, including for the YJB Strategic Plan, Thames Valley Police and Crime Plan, NHS Local Transformation Plan, West Berkshire Council Strategy, Prevention Strategy.

**First time entrants – Prevention**

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Reduced numbers of children coming into the criminal justice system	Promote the use of prevention letter approach through briefings with TVP	YOT Operational Manager	Ongoing

through effective use of Prevention Letters	neighbourhood teams and the TVP safeguarding team		
Reduce the number of children entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily by delivering Schools Prevention Work (PIP)	Offer intervention to children in schools who are on the edge of criminality, promoting the offer to schools with a new leaflet and meetings with all secondary schools	YOT Teacher & TVP	Ongoing
Increase the consistency and embed the approach of out of court decision making	YOT decision maker to participate in the Thames Valley decision maker moderation events	Senior Social Worker	April 2024
Reduce the number of children at risk of exclusion and involvement in crime	Annual report on the youth work provision within every secondary school.	Supporting Families Manager/ Berkshire Youth	September 2023
Help children and their families before they get into trouble with the police	Deliver a localised approach to 'Turnaround' with a family offer where offending is a future risk and concern	YOT Manager	March 2024
Work with children to prevent anti-social behaviour	Support the development of detached Youth Workers within West Berkshire alongside Mini MAPS	YOT Operational Manager	April 2024
Reduce the number of children entering the criminal justice system by promoting a childhood away from the justice system	Engage with the Task and Finish group to develop and implement Outcome 22.	YOT Manager & TVP	December 2023

### Reducing reoffending by improving assessment, planning interventions and supervision

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
YOT practice is continually developing and improving	Review and benchmark YOT Practice against recently published research and thematic inspection findings	YOT Managers	Ongoing
Assessments are of a high quality and shape the delivery of intervention and plans	YOT Officers to actively reflect on assessments and decision making through reflective learning forum and thereby improving practice	Senior Social Worker	Quarterly
Reoffending is reduced as children participate in restorative justice processes	Promote and encourage victims and children to engage in Restorative Justice approaches by recording and	RJVC	Ongoing

	evaluating the approaches taken.  Carry out an audit and produce a report on outcomes	RJVC	January 24
Utilise the introduction of key performance indicators as a mechanism to focus the partnership on practice that improves outcomes	Embed the key performance indicators (KPI) as measures of effective practice using them to improve outcomes	YOT Manager & Information Officer	October 2023
Ensure that high quality assessment and interventions are undertaken with children	Undertake an APIS audit to ensure the quality of assessment, planning and intervention	YOT Operational Manager	November 2023
Ensure all assessments are of high quality	Management moderation exercise to ensure consistency	YOT Operational Manager	September 2023
A national assessment tool for prevention and diversion cases is developed and implemented	Embed the new national OoCD assessment tool in polices	YOT Manager & YJB	March 2024
	All YOT Officers to be trained to use the assessment tool	YOT Operational Manager	March 2024

### Public protection and violence prevention

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Maintain low levels of serious youth violence and offences involving weapons	Ensure intelligence is shared with the Police about knife possession through briefing to staff on the role and value of intelligence	YOT Police Officer	July 2023
Offer early intervention for children highlighted as offending with weapons	To attend weekly knife crime and serious violence meetings and identify children to offer diversion support	YOT Police Officer	Weekly
Maintain low levels of serious youth violence through partnership work locally and regionally	Be active partners in the delivery and implementation of the Serious Violence duty	YOT Manager	January 2024
Ensure that the assessment and management of risk is of high quality and protects the public	Undertake an audit addressing the assessment and management of risk, reporting findings to the YOT Management Group	YOT Operational Manager	November 2023



### Safeguarding and vulnerabilities

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Build capacity and expertise when responding to different forms of Child Exploitation	Undertake team training and coaching to support staff development in the identification and work with those at risk of child exploitation	YOT Manager	May 2023
Vulnerabilities and ACE's associated with poor outcomes are addressed earlier preventing them becoming acute	To support the adoption and implementation of the early help and prevention strategy that seeks to deliver an upstream public health approach	YOT Manager	Ongoing
Parents are supported to manage relationships with their children, and confidently 'parent' their children	Work with the Supporting Families parenting worker to develop a universal parenting offer within West Berkshire	YOT Manager	October 2023
Parents of exploited children are supported to be safeguarding partners	Work with the Supporting Families parenting worker to review parenting offer and review national practice. Report back on findings with an action plan.	YOT Senior Social Worker	Sept 2023  January 2024

### Education, training and employment

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Reduce the numbers of children excluded from school	Promote the use of the Positive Intervention Programme (PIP) as a means of reducing exclusion and for pupils at risk at the various West Berkshire education forums	YOT Teacher and TVP Safeguarding Team	Ongoing
Help children into employment or training	Provide a bespoke coaching / mentoring approach to working NEET young people into employment or training	Apprentice Youth Justice Worker	Ongoing
Increase the recognition of children on their achievements	Extend the use AQA awards for children participating in accredited work in the YOT	YOT Teacher	March 2024
Children receive less exclusions and reduced timetables	To hold quarterly education meetings to scrutinise educational packages	YOT Teacher/YOT Manager	Quarterly
	Attendance at the multi-agency Vulnerable Group	YOT Manager	Termly



## Health

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Understand the effectiveness of the Drug Diversion scheme on drug use and recidivism	Undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the drug diversion scheme and report to the YOT Management Group	Edge (WDP) Manager	April 24
Children with undiagnosed speech and language needs are identified and supported	Increase the identification and diagnosis of speech and language issues through staff briefings and awareness raising activities	YOT Speech and Language Therapist	September 2023 and March 2024
	SLT to develop a clear communication pathway with Liaison and Diversion SLT service to avoid duplication	YOT Speech and Language Therapist	September 2024
Physical health needs of the children are identified and they are supported	Staff briefing on emerging concerns such as sleep, diet	YOT Nurse	Quarterly
	Health education through information board updates	YOT Nurse	Quarterly
Ensure children with complex needs receive a structured plan of support from the health workers	Embed the Complex Case Clinic with consistent recording of plans	All health workers	Monthly

## Strengths based approaches

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
The YOT is focussed on putting the child first not the offence	Team training morning to promote child first approach	YOT Manager	June 2023
	Update policies to reflect child first – (2 year project to update all polices)	YOT Managers	2 year project
Children's case notes are child friendly	Workshop to change the recording of case notes so they are reflective and written to the child	Senior Social Worker	June 2023
	Dip sample case notes		September 2023/January 2024
Physical activities for young people are used well to support desistance	YOT Officers to share the positive activity booklet and refer all children to the	YOT Officers	Ongoing

	Apprentice to explore opportunities		
Pro-social identities are promoted for children involved with the YOT	Undertake group work activities during half terms and holidays promoting self-expression and positive self-identity	Apprentice Youth Justice Worker	March 2024
Children are actively participating and engaging in the YOT	Children and parents are actively approached for their views and experiences while working with the YOT and they are approached for reflections at the point of closure	YOT workers	Ongoing

### Responding to cohort

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Children from different communities are not over represented	Undertake an annual profile of service users	Information Officer	May 22
	Increase awareness and recognition of diverse groups – using the reception information board and staff briefings	YOT Operational Manager	Monthly
Children from different communities are not over represented	YOT management group to monitor disproportionality and respond to any over-representation strategically and operationally	Information Officer	Quarterly
The YOT understands and mitigates the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Undertake an annual profile exercise to shape the provision of resources addressing issues including ACE's and other vulnerabilities	YOT Manager	May 2023
Children from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community avoid over criminalisation and do well in West Berkshire	The YOT GRT champion attends EMTAS meetings and supports the partnership to take appropriate preventative and supportive actions.	GRT champion	Quarterly
	To engage with families by visiting sites on the bus of Hope.	GRT champion	November 23 / April 24

Resettlement policy that is reflective of children’s diverse needs	To review and update the resettlement policy	YOT Manager	September 2023
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#### 14. Challenges, risks and issues

These include;

- There continues to be significant increase in girls who offend, 29% is significantly above the national average of 15% (2021-22)
- The YOT has seen increases in prevention and diversion work, one of the risk factors for offending is being known to justice services therefore this presents a risk of increasing FTE figures and more children labelled as offenders
- The National Audit Office predicts a doubling of the number of children in custody by 2024
- At the time of writing this plan the YOT Grant has not been confirmed leaving us unable to fully plan services for the coming year
- Serious Violence Duty to be implemented by January 2024 – we need to ensure all partners are focused on Child First and not escalating children through the criminal justice system
- Ensuring the Serious Violence Duty doesn’t negatively impact on the development of the Outcome 22 deferred prosecution development
- The continued cost of living crisis is likely to increase the number of people involved in acquisitive crime
- Changes to provision of partner agency services and recruitment challenges of key services may be problematic
- Introduction of increased KPI data recording and reporting requirement could create increase pressure on Information Officer time

The YOT are well embedded in both Children and Family Services and Criminal Justice agencies, this position enables the YOT to take a pre-emptive approach to issues and challenges, working with partners to develop mitigations and responses that will avoid negative outcomes for children. In each of the areas outlined above the YOT is working collaboratively with other partners to address the issue.

#### 15. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Group	Dave Wraight
Signature	
Date	29/06/23

## Appendix 1

### YOT Management Board Roles and Attendance

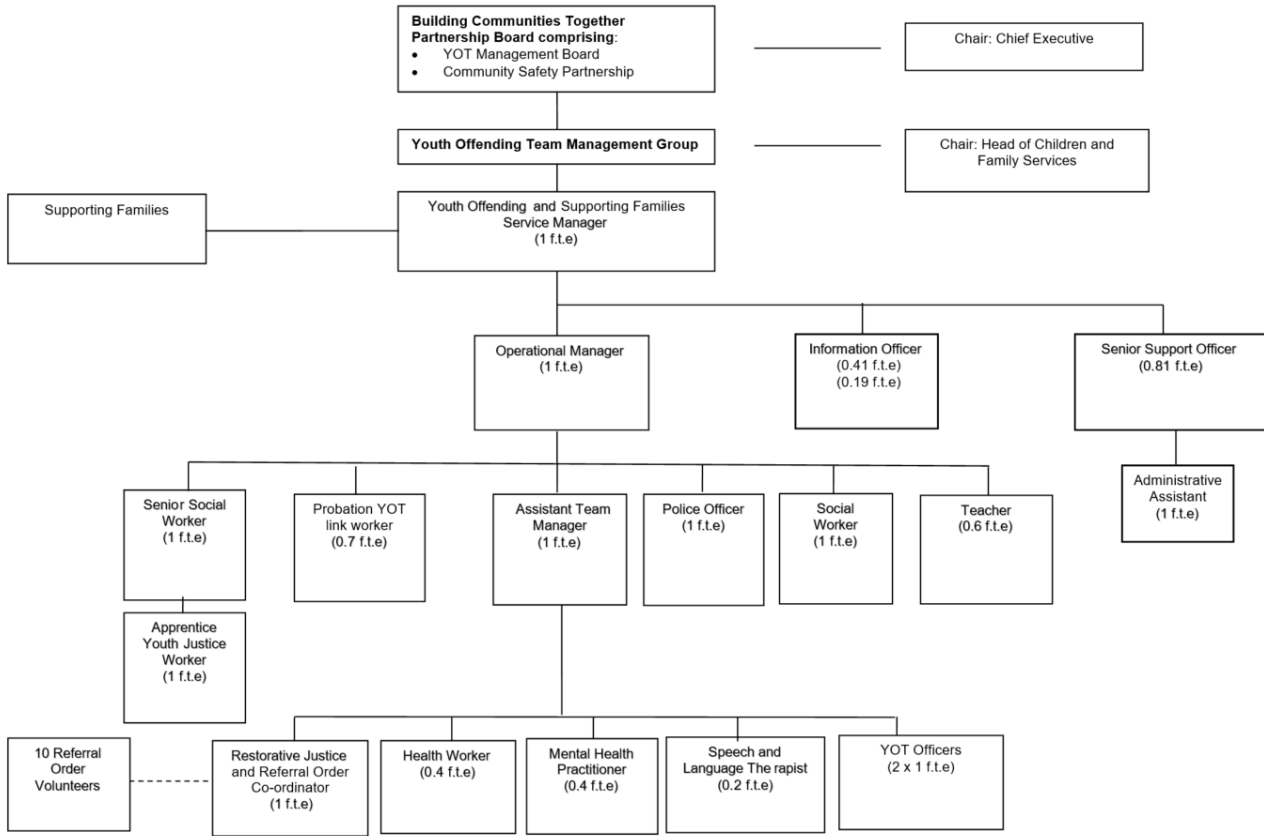
Title of the local management board:		Building Communities Together Partnership including the YOT Management Board			
Agency	Role	05/07/22	18/10/22	24/01/22	25/4/23
West Berkshire Council	Chief Executive	X	X	X	X
Thames Valley Police	Area Commander	X	X	X	X
National Probation Service	Area Manager	X	X	X	X
Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group	Head of Safeguarding	X			X
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner	Partnerships Manager	X	X Deputy	X	X
HMCTS	Magistrate	X			
Sovereign Housing	Regional Housing Manager	X		X	
People Directorate (Education & C&FS)	Executive Director				
Health Watch West Berkshire	Development Officer			X	X
Building Communities Together Team	Service Manager	X	X	X	X
WB Volunteers Centre	Director	X	X		X
Public Health and Wellbeing	Head of Service		X	X	X
West Berkshire YOT	Service Manager	X	X	X	X
West Berkshire Council	Member	X	X	X	
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	Community Safety Manager	X		X	X

The governance arrangements have a YOT Management Group as an operational group that gives leadership and oversight to the YOT.

## YOT Management Group Roles and Attendance

Agency	Role	20/7/22	19/10/22	18/01/23	19/4/23
West Berkshire Children and Family Services	Head of Service and Group Chair	X	X	X	X
Thames Valley Police	Deputy Area Commander		X	X Deputy	X
Thames Valley Police	Youth Justice Sergeant/ Detective Inspector				X
West Berkshire Education Service	Head of Service	X	X	X	X
National Probation Service	Senior Probation Officer		X	X	X
Berkshire Health Foundation Trust	Service Manager	X	X	X	
Building Communities Together Team (CSP)	Service Manager		X		X
Berkshire Youth Bench	Youth Magistrate	X	X		X
Public Health and Wellbeing	Senior Programme Officer	X	X	X Deputy	
West Berkshire Council	Lead Member for Children's Services		X	X	
West Berkshire YOT	YOT Manager	X	X	X	X
Office of the Police Crime Commissioner	Partnership Manager	X	X		X
Youth Justice Board	Regional Advisor/ Oversight Manager		X	X	X

## Appendix 2 – Service Structure Chart



The YOT consists of 17 female staff and 1 male staff who are all White British with two people with recorded disabilities.



## Common youth justice terms

<b>ACE</b>	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
<b>AIM 2 and 3</b>	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
<b>ASB</b>	Anti social behaviour
<b>AssetPlus</b>	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and adolescent mental health services
<b>CCE</b>	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
<b>Children</b>	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
<b>Child First</b>	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
<b>Child looked-after</b>	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
<b>CME</b>	Child Missing Education
<b>Constructive resettlement</b>	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
<b>Contextual safeguarding</b>	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
<b>Community resolution</b>	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt

<b>EHCP</b>	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
<b>ETE</b>	Education, training or employment
<b>EHE</b>	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
<b>EOTAS</b>	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
<b>FTE</b>	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
<b>HMIP</b>	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
<b>HSB</b>	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
<b>JAC</b>	Junior Attendance Centre
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi agency public protection arrangements
<b>MFH</b>	Missing from Home
<b>NRM</b>	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
<b>OOCD</b>	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
<b>Outcome 22/21</b>	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
<b>Over-represented children</b>	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
<b>RHI</b>	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
<b>SLCN</b>	Speech, Language and communication needs
<b>STC</b>	Secure training centre
<b>SCH</b>	Secure children's home
<b>SYV</b>	Serious Youth Violence

<b>Young adult</b>	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
<b>YJS</b>	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
<b>YOI</b>	Young offender institution
<b>YOT</b>	Youth Offending Team