

DORSET COMBINED YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE



Youth Justice Plan

2021/22

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Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Statement of Purpose

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works with children in the local youth justice system. Our purpose is to help those children to make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims.

This means we can support the national Youth Justice Board Vision for a 'child first' youth justice system:

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

Who We Are and What We Do

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a statutory partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, National Probation Service Dorset and NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group.

We are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, nurses, speech and language therapists and a psychologist.

More information about the Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership and the members of the YJS team is provided later in this document.

The team works directly with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to reduce the risks to them and to other people. We also work directly with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

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

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to improve the quality of our local youth justice system, and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health and education.

The combination of direct work with children, parents and victims and work to improve our local youth justice and children's services systems enables us to meet our strategic objectives to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system
- Improve the safety and well-being of children in the youth justice system
- Reduce and repair the harm caused to victims and the community from child offences (I have added this one)
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Introduction

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service for 2021/22. It sets out the key priorities and targets for the service for the next 12 months as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and overseen by the Youth Justice Board. This Plan has been developed under the direction of the YJS Partnership Board after consultation with YJS staff and taking into account feedback from YJS service users.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the YJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements
- outlines the resources available to the YJS
- reviews achievements and developments during 2020/21
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

This document sets out the YJS's strategic plan. A delivery plan underpins this document.

Service Targets

The Dorset Combined YJS target for 2021/22 is to outperform regional and national averages for the three national performance indicators for youth offending which are:

- The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time ('First Time Entrants')
- The rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system
- The use of custodial sentences for young people.

Headline Strategic Priorities for 2021/22

- Continue and develop work to prevent children entering the justice system
- Reduce the rate of Black and Minority Ethnic children entering custody
- Develop joint work with other local services for children to improve outcomes for children in the justice system
- Widen the application of trauma-informed practice to all children working with the Youth Justice Service
- Strengthen the team's work to repair harm and restore relationships

The reasons for identifying these priorities are explained later in this document and are summarised on [pages 25-26](#), with actions to achieve these priorities outlined on [pages 27-28](#).

Structure and Governance: The YJS Partnership Board

The work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is managed strategically by a Partnership Board. The Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

Membership:

- Dorset Council (current chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (current vice-chair)
- Dorset Police
- Dorset Local Delivery Unit Cluster, National Probation Service
- NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust
- Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal service
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Ansbury Guidance

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan, ensuring its links with other local plans.

The YJS Manager reports quarterly to the Partnership Board on progress against agreed performance targets, leading to clear plans for performance improvement. The Board also requests information in response to specific developments and agendas, and monitors the YJS's compliance with data reporting requirements and grant conditions.

Representation by senior leaders from the key partners enables the YJS Manager to resolve any difficulties in multi-agency working at a senior level, and supports effective links at managerial and operational levels.

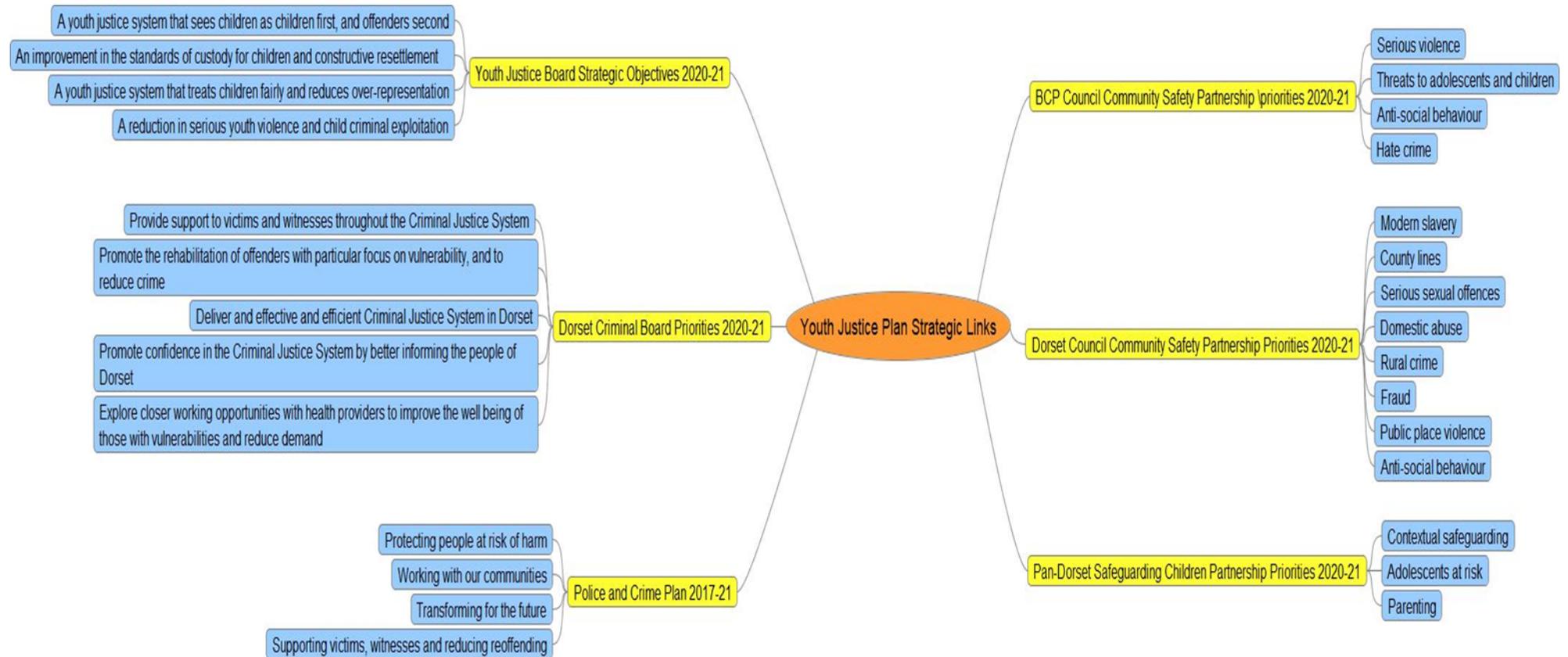
The YJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns.

The Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

The YJS Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of young people in police custody. The YJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the YJS Partnership Board.

The YJS is a statutory partnership working with children in the criminal justice system and the community safety arena. The map on the next page gives an overview of how the YJS fits with other strategic partnerships and plans.

Linking the Youth Justice Service to other Plans and Structures



The membership of the YJS Partnership Board enables the work of the Dorset Combined YJS to be integrated into strategic planning for Safeguarding, Public Protection, Criminal Justice, Community Safety and Health & Well-Being. The YJS Manager sits on the Dorset Criminal Justice Board, attends the two Community Safety Partnerships, the MAPPA Strategic Management Board and the Dorset Council Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People and represents youth offending teams on the 'Wessex' Criminal Justice Board Covid Recovery Group.

Partnership Arrangements

The previous section outlined the strategic links between the YJS and the other strategic groups and partnerships. Similar links exist at operational levels, enabling the YJS to integrate and coordinate its work with the work done by partners such as the two local children's social care services, Special Educational Needs services, other criminal justice agencies, and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services across Dorset.

Safeguarding and Public Protection

As well as participating in Child Protection Conferences and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings in respect of specific individuals and families, YJS managers also attend MARAC meetings, local Community Safety Partnership operational meetings, local complex needs panel meetings and meetings in respect of early help activities in the two local authorities.

Child Exploitation

Children known to the YJS can also be harmed through child exploitation. YJS managers participate actively in the Child Exploitation Tactical Groups for each local authority. The YJS participates in local multi-agency information sharing arrangements and meetings to identify and protect children at risk of exploitation. A YJS Team Manager attends weekly meetings with the Police 'Impact' team to enable effective joint work for children at risk of exploitation.

Reducing Re-Offending

The YJS Manager chairs the pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy Group, reporting to the Dorset Criminal Justice Board and the two Community Safety Partnerships. He also represents south-west youth offending teams on the South West Reducing Reoffending Partnership. Although the group's main focus is on adult offenders, attention is also paid to the youth perspective, particularly for those young people about to transition to adult services, and for the children of adult offenders.

Risk Assessment Panels

The YJS instigates a Risk Assessment Panel process for children under YJS supervision who have been identified as being at high risk of causing serious harm to others, or of experiencing significant harm themselves. These meetings are attended by workers and managers from the other agencies who are working with the child. The aim is to agree the risk assessment and devise, implement and review plans to reduce the risks posed by and to the child.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The YJS works with the two local authorities, the Police and health providers to agree the best way to respond to children who have committed harmful sexual behaviour. Some of these children are also known to the local authority social care service so it is important that we coordinate our work and, where possible, take a joint approach. The YJS and the local authorities use recognised assessment and intervention approaches for children who commit harmful sexual behaviour. Currently the YJS Manager is part of a multi-agency task and finish group, led by the CCG, to improve local provision for children who show harmful sexual behaviour.

Preventing Violent Extremism

All relevant YJS staff have received training in raising awareness of 'Prevent'. A YJS Team Manager has lead responsibility for this area of work and attends the pan-Dorset Prevent Group to ensure that our work is aligned with local initiatives. The YJS has sight of the local assessment of extremism risks. The seconded YJS police officers act as a link to local police processes for sharing intelligence in respect of possible violent extremism.

Young people convicted of extremism related offences will be managed robustly in line with the YJS Risk Policy, with appropriate referral to the local MAPPA process and clear risk management plans, including paired working arrangements and support from the seconded YJS police officers.

Safe Schools and Communities Team

The Safe Schools and Communities Team (SSCT) is a partnership between Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Dorset Combined YJS. The SSCT plays an important role in preventing offending by young people across Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The team provide education, awareness and advice to students, schools and parents. The work of the team is reported to the YJS Partnership Board as an important element of the YOS Partnership's work to prevent youth offending. The SSCT's School Incidents Policy is an important part of local work to reduce the number of children entering the justice system, helping schools to manage incidents without the need for a criminal outcome.

Restorative Justice and Support for Victims

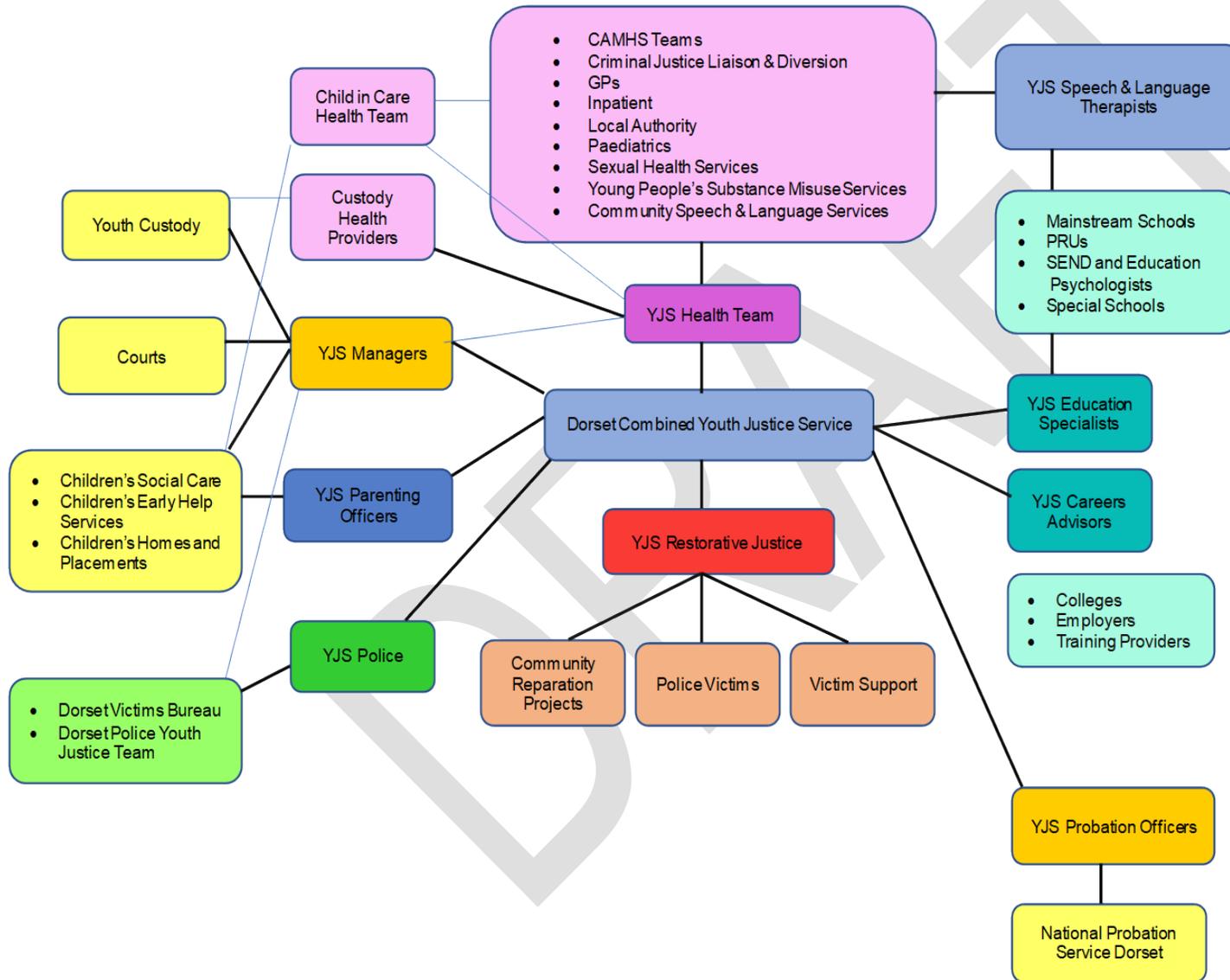
The YJS Restorative Justice Practitioners provide Restorative Justice activities and support for victims of offences committed by young people. The YJS also links with other agencies through the Victims and Witnesses Sub-Group of the Dorset Criminal Justice Board. The YJS plays an important part in delivering the Police and Crime Commissioner's Restorative Justice Strategy for Dorset, taking the lead on offences committed by young people and supporting the development of good practice with other Restorative Justice providers.

Reducing Youth Detentions in Police Custody

The YJS Manager chairs a multi-agency group, reporting to the YJS Partnership Board, which works to ensure that as few young people as possible are detained locally in police custody and to limit the duration of youth custody detentions.

In addition to the team's involvement in these different partnership groups, there is ongoing daily interaction with other local services. These links are illustrated on the following page:

Operational Links between YJS and Partner Agencies



Resources and value for money

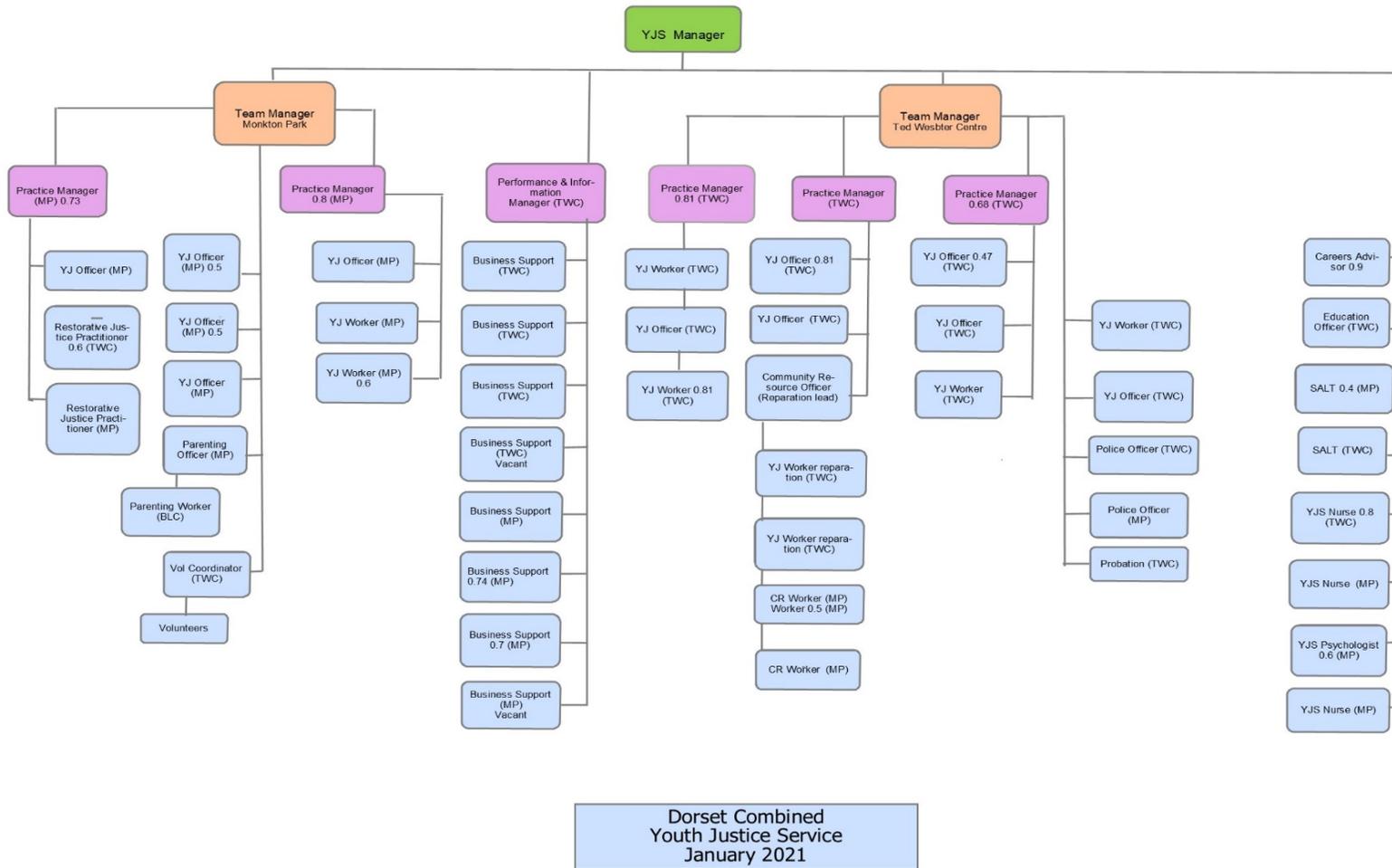
The funding contributions to the YJS partnership budget are listed below. Local authority staff are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other staff are seconded from Dorset Police, the National Probation Service Dorset and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. Like all public services, the YJS operates in a context of reducing resources. Ensuring value for money and making best use of resources is a high priority for the service.

Partner Agency	21/22 Revenue excluding recharges	Movement 14/15 to 21/22 – including disaggregation movements between DC and BCP Councils	Staff
Dorset Council	£492,800	-£39,100	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£577,700	£26,670	
Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset	£75,301	-£78,149	2.0 Police Officers. Funding reduction from 14/15 to 15/16 reflects funding of SSCT directly by the OPCC to the Police, no longer via the YOS
National Probation Service Dorset	£5,000	£1,826	1.0 Probation Officer (reduction from 2.6 to March 2015, from 2.0 to March 2018 and from 1.5 to March 2020, with adjusted funding contribution, after national review)
Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	£0	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapist
Youth Justice Board Good Practice Grant	£607,968	-£182,446	
Total	£1,774,482	-£277,973	

NHS England funding was secured in 2019/20 to support DCYJS becoming a 'trauma-informed service'. Some of this funding has been carried over to support implementation of this model.

Staffing information

This chart shows the YJS structure in January 2021. DCYJS meets the minimum staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.



YOS Staff

	Male	Female
White British	12	40
White Irish	1	0
White Other	0	1
	13	41

YOS Volunteers

	Male	Female
White British	7	13
White Other	0	1
	7	14

DCYJS Achievements and Performance during 2020/21

As part of our commitment to a 'child first' ethos we changed our service's name this year to Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. This reflects our determination to see the young people we work with as children not offenders.

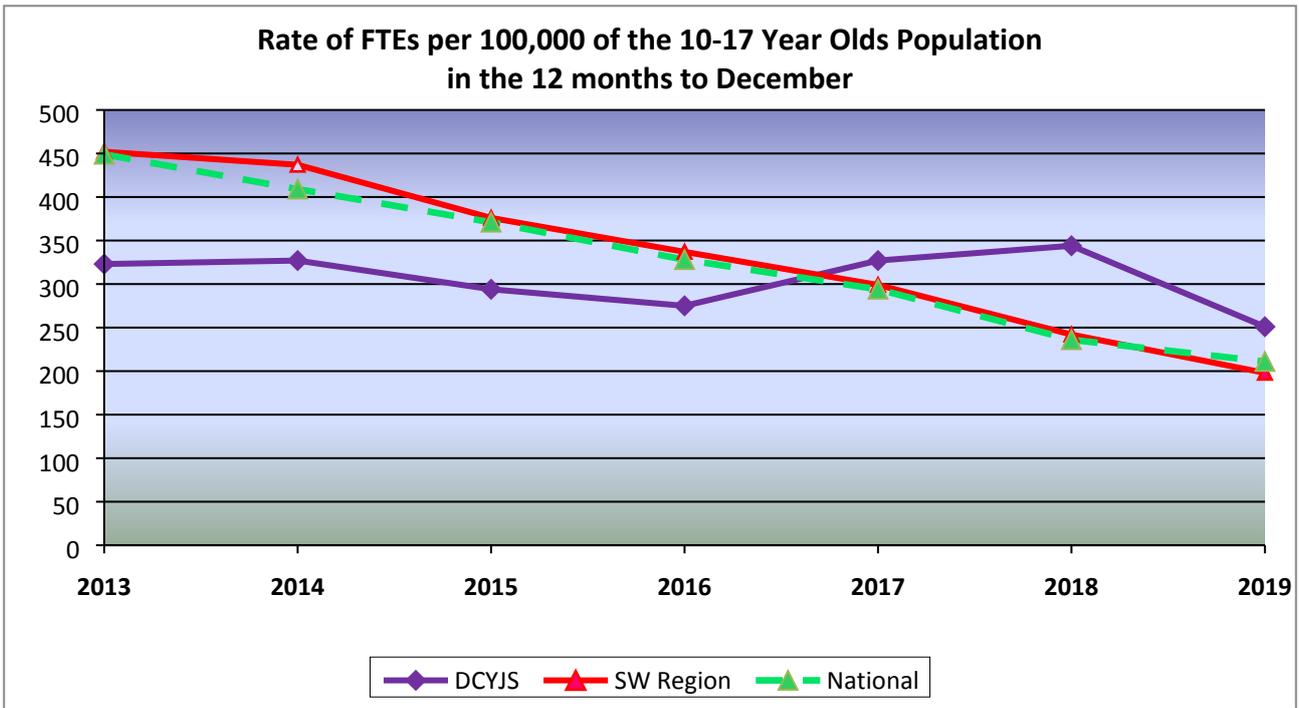
Youth justice work continues to be judged against 3 key performance indicators:

- Reducing First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System;
- Reducing Re-Offending by young people in the Youth Justice System;
- Appropriately Minimising the use of Custodial Sentences.

National performance data is published quarterly by the Youth Justice Board. There is a time lag on this data and it is not possible to verify the accurate allocation of children to local authority areas. During the pandemic there have been gaps in the national data reporting for first-time entrants and for reducing re-offending, due to capacity issues in the Ministry of Justice. The following sections therefore include local data as well as national data, along with commentary on the figures reported.

First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System

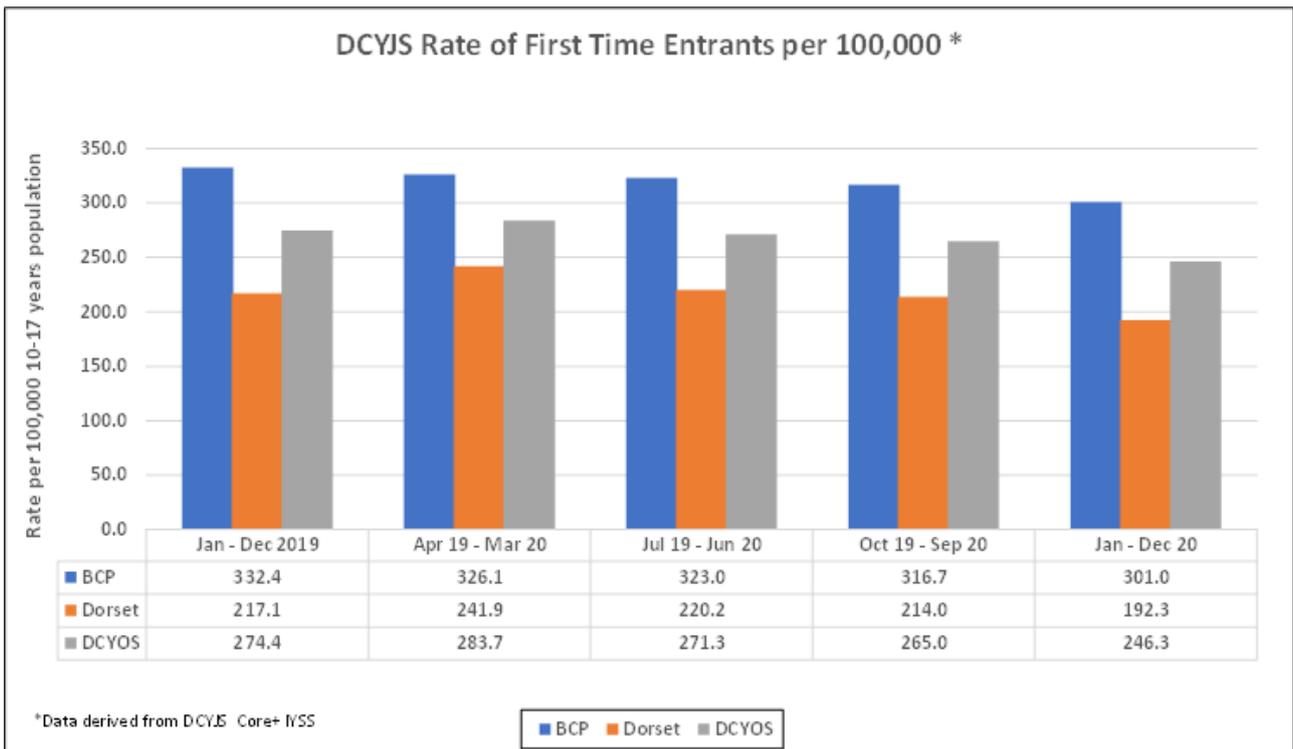
The latest available national performance data shows the following performance for Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service, with the regional and national averages also shown:



The most recent data publication, in March 2021, did not include new figures for first-time entrants meaning that the national data is not as up to date as would be expected.

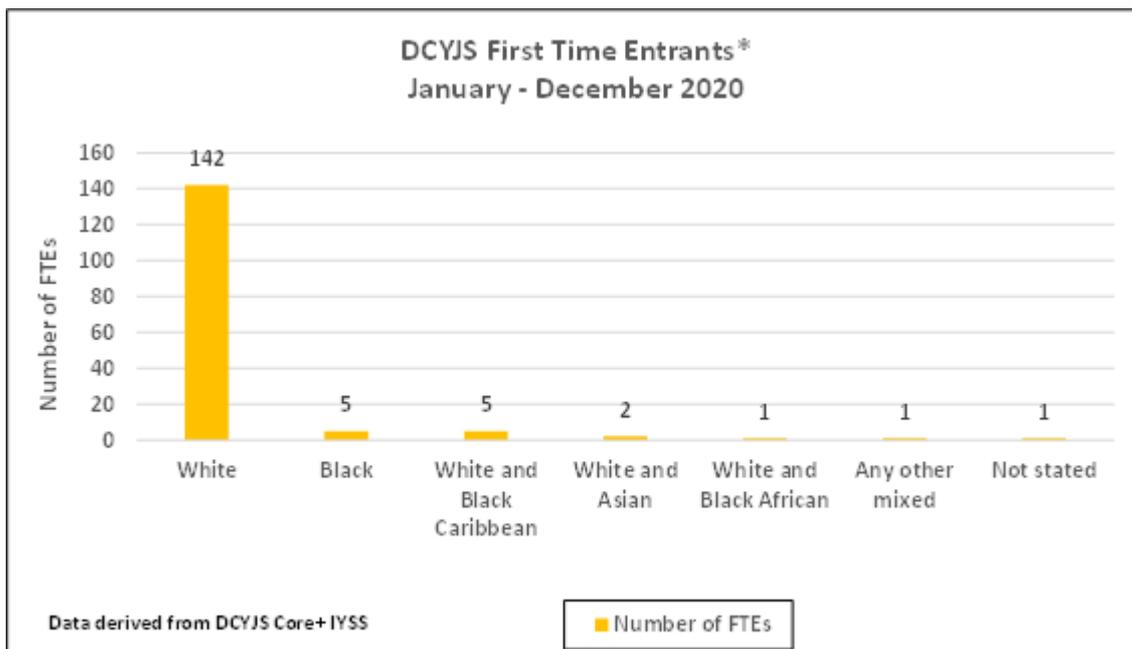
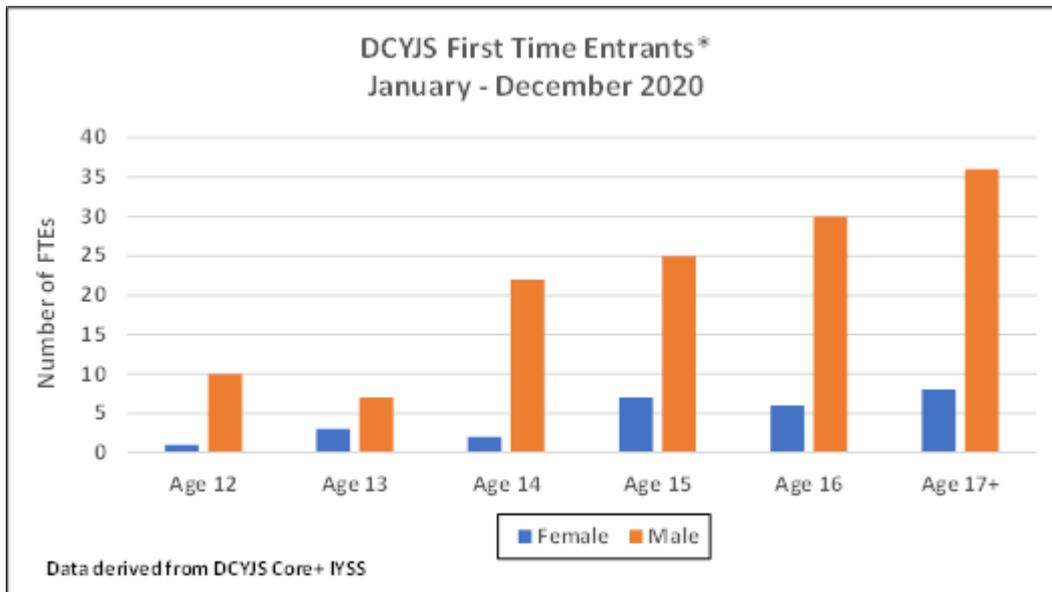
Between late 2016 and late 2018 there was a steady increase in the rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system in Dorset. This coincided with a fall in the regional and national averages for this indicator, meaning that Dorset moved above those benchmark figures.

Information derived from our local case management system shows more recent performance data:



Since late 2018 there has been a downward trend in the rate of first time entrants in Dorset. This trend has continued in the last year with the data derived from our case management system indicating that the rate of first-time entrants is now at its lowest since the merger of our youth offending teams in 2015.

The following tables show the age, gender and ethnicity breakdown of our first-time entrants in the year January to December 2020:



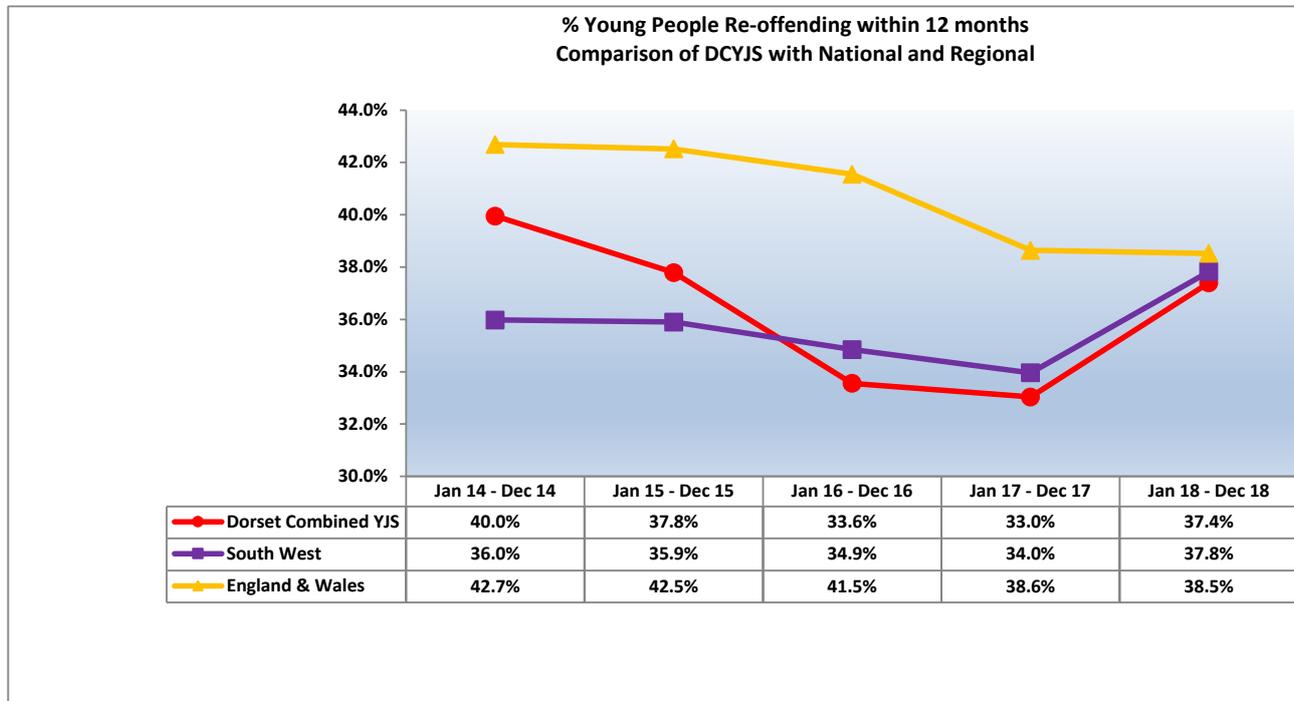
These tables show that 82.8% of the first-time entrants were male, 17.8% were female. 51% of the first-time entrants were aged 16 or 17. In terms of ethnicity, 8.9% were from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds. This is broadly consistent with the proportion of BAME young people in our local population, indicating that BAME children are not over-represented locally at the stage of children entering the justice system.

The following points provide further context for our first-time entrants performance:

- The period from March 2020 was affected by the pandemic, making comparisons with previous years more difficult.
- Arrest rates for children in our local authority areas fell during April 2020 but returned to a more consistent level from May 2020.
- Arrests and 'voluntary attendance' interviews for children in 2020/21 were lower than the previous year.
- In 2019 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and Dorset Police reviewed all 'out of court disposal' decisions taken in the year 2018/19 for children who had not previously entered the justice system and found that decisions were consistent and appropriate.
- In May 2020 a new 'Youth Diversion Disposal' was introduced as an option for simple offences of possession of cannabis, providing an additional diversion option.
- Plans for 2021/22 include adding local authority 'Early Help' managers into our weekly decision-making meetings for youth offences, considering wider application of the Youth Diversion Disposal and the appointment of a police officer to coordinate support for children diverted from the justice system.

Reducing Re-Offending

The national re-offending figures relate to the further re-offending of groups of young people in the 12 months after they received a caution or court conviction. Each quarter a different group of young people is tracked; for example, the most recent data relates to those young people who received a justice outcome in the period January to December 2018.



There is a time lag on the national data, to allow time for reoffending, conviction and police recording, which means that the most recent data relates to young people whose contact with the YJS occurred more than 2 years ago.

Like other youth offending teams, DCYJS also analyses local reoffending data to give us more recent and more nuanced information. This data is reported to the YJS Partnership Board to help inform and shape the partnership's strategic plans.

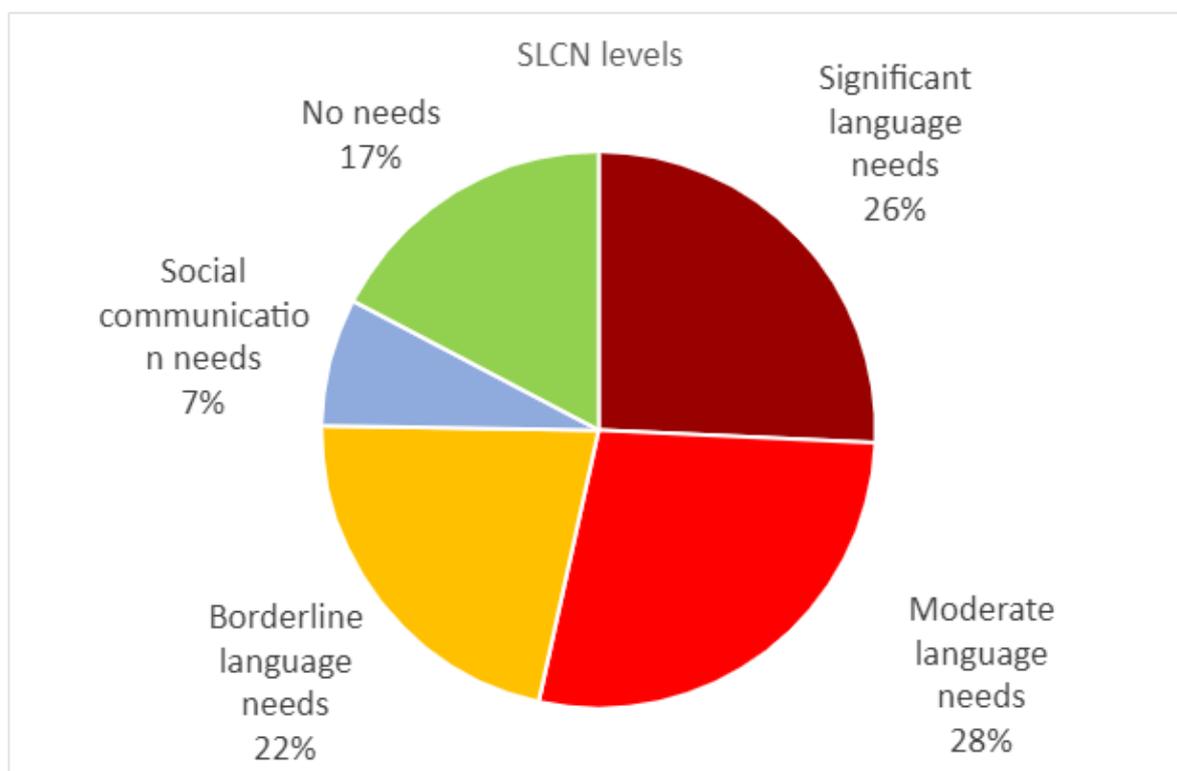
Recent analysis of reoffending information drawn from our local data showed that:

- Same reoffending rate for each gender
- All the reoffenders were aged 14-16
- Most reoffenders lived in Bournemouth or Poole
- Current and previous children in care were more likely to reoffend than children never in care
- Burglary and theft offences together had the highest reoffending rates
- 11/17 reoffenders did so within 3 months

In recent years DCYJS has been developing good practice in responding to the individual needs of each child. Evidence shows that children in the justice system are likely to have speech, language and communication needs and they may well have experienced trauma in their earlier life which affects their current behaviour.

Speech, Language and Communication

The Youth Justice Service Speech and Language Therapist posts have become integral to our work. All young people who receive a court order or a second out of court disposal receive a specialist speech and language assessment. The following chart demonstrates the speech and language needs of the 202 young people assessed over the last two years by the YJS Speech and Language Therapists:



About 80% of children working with the YJS have some level of speech, language and communication needs. Over 50% of the children assessed have a moderate or severe

language impairment which is likely to impact on their access to education and talking interventions.

Practitioners in the YJS use information from the child's speech and language assessment to guide how they communicate with the child. Recommendations from the assessments are also shared with other services working with the child, including education providers, and with the child and their family or carers.

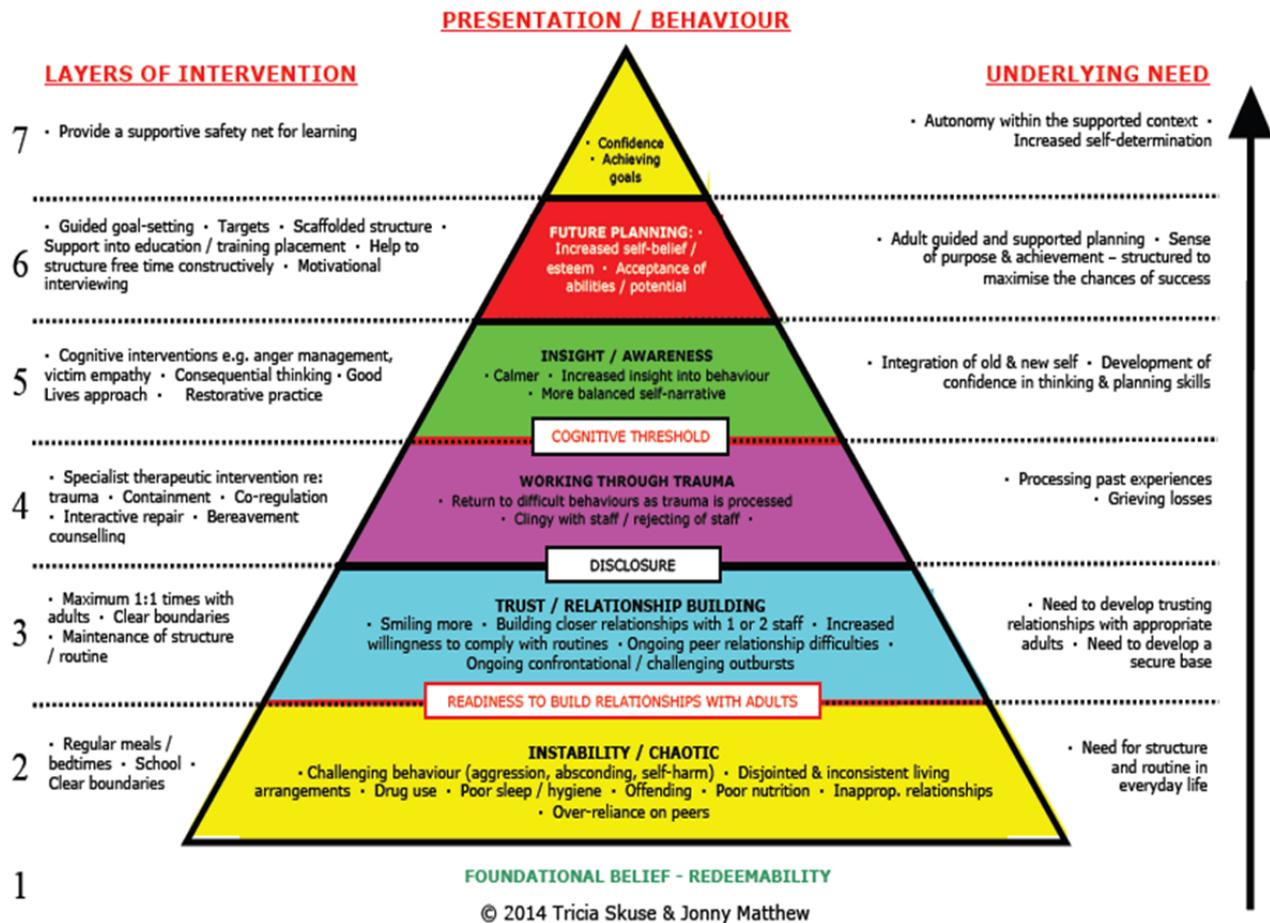
Trauma-Informed Practice

In February 2020 all YJS practitioners were trained in trauma-informed practice, leading to the implementation of the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM). The underlying principle is that children who have experienced trauma in their early lives are likely to experience delay in their emotional and cognitive development. This means that interventions with them should respond to their developmental stage rather than their chronological age. The TRM approach is summarised in the following schematic illustration:

The trauma 'lens' is being applied to all the children we work with. Understanding the child's developmental stage helps to make our work more effective. To support this work we have developed guides for how to work with children at different levels of the 'triangle'. An example of one of these guides is [appended to this report](#).

For a small number of children with significant complexity and risk an 'Enhanced Case Management' formulation meeting is convened, chaired by a YJS Practice Manager, led by the YJS Psychologist and attended by practitioners from a range of services working with the child. This leads to a formulation (a working hypothesis, based on the child's story thus far) written by the Psychologist to guide the work with the child. This formulation is shared with other services working alongside the YJS and taking on work at the end of the YJS intervention. In the first year of applying this model formulations, with review meetings, have been undertaken for five children.

TRAUMA RECOVERY MODEL



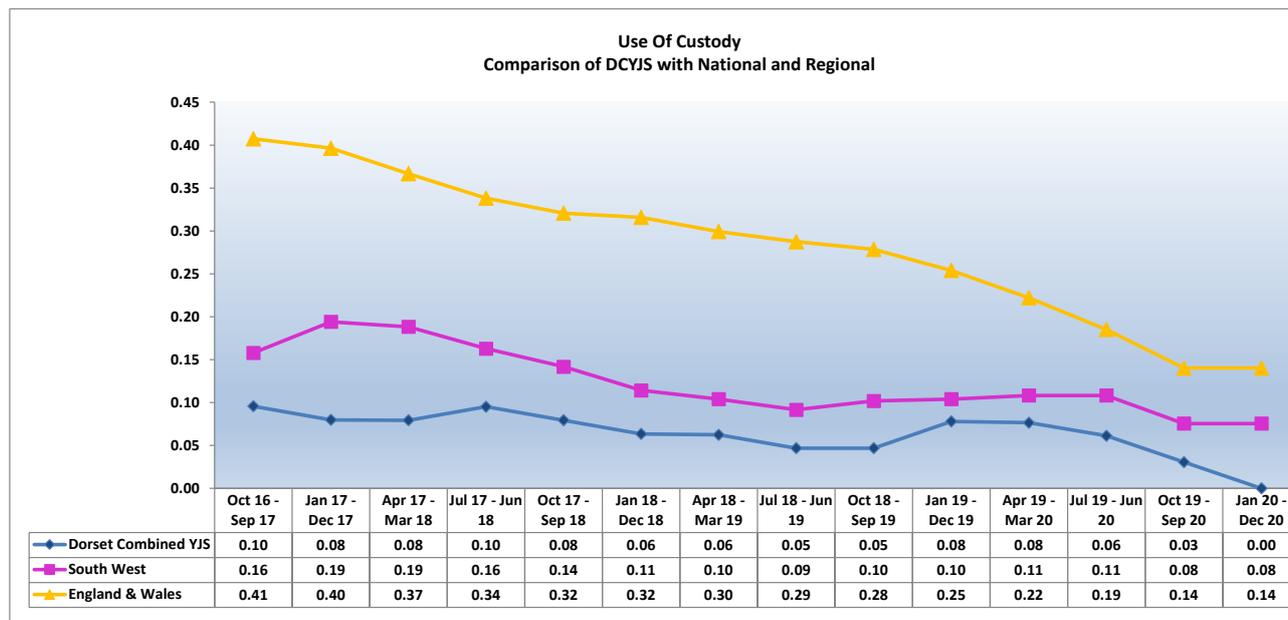
Restorative Justice

The YJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact all victims of offences by children and offer them a choice of restorative justice options, including face to face Restorative Justice Conferences, 'shuttle' restorative justice where the parties relay messages but do not meet, work by the child to repair the harm caused ('reparation') and letters of explanation.

Some offences committed by children take place in the family home, with other family members being the victim of the offence. A recent initiative has been for the YJS parenting workers to complete the Restorative Justice Conference facilitation training. This helps us apply restorative approaches to our work with family conflict to help repair relationships.

A significant proportion of offences by children feature emergency workers, such as police officers, as the victim. A snapshot of the caseload of our Restorative Justice Practitioners showed that about 25% of the victims they work with are emergency workers. It can be difficult to engage police officers and other emergency workers in restorative justice processes so the YJS is developing a 'standardised approach' to increase the restorative justice options for working with children who have committed these offences. There are a number of strands to this approach, including the seconded YJS Police Officers meeting with the child to explain the impact of these offences and the children raising money for a relevant charity, Blue Light Support. We will develop this area of work further in 2021/22.

Custodial Sentences



We continue to see very low rates of custodial sentences locally, with rates declining further in the year to March 2021. The achievement of low custodial sentence rates reflects work to intervene effectively at earlier stages of the justice system, responses to children that are individualised and integrated with partner agencies, and good work in court to build the confidence of magistrates in the community sentences supervised by DCYJS.

Although numbers of children entering custody are low, there are recurring themes among this group which we are addressing.

'Disproportionality'

Looking back over several years it is concerning that about 50% of local children receiving custodial sentences are Black or Minority Ethnicity (BME). Over the last year we have improved our data analysis which has indicated that BME children are not over-represented among first-time entrants but the proportions increase the further children go into our youth justice system. The Lammy Review (2017) found evidence that BME defendants are less likely to admit guilt for an offence, possibly indicating a lack of trust in the justice system, which means they become ineligible for Out of Court Disposals, entering the justice system at a later stage. Working with Dorset Police we monitor such issues and look for opportunities to divert cases from court.

During the last year DCYJS have also joined a new Disproportionality sub-group of the Dorset Criminal Justice Board to contribute to a cross-system approach, working with partner agencies in Hampshire and Wiltshire. We have also initiated work with colleagues in BCP Council's Children's Services to investigate the representation of BME children in related areas like school exclusions, child exploitation and children in care.

We will continue work in the coming year to understand the experience of BME children in our local justice system and to address issues that lead to over-representation.

Child Exploitation

Analysis of local children entering custody in recent years also shows that the majority have been identified as suffering harm from child exploitation. The YJS works closely with partner agencies, including children's social care teams and Dorset Police, to avoid the inappropriate criminalisation of child exploitation victims and to provide the necessary holistic support.

The shifting nature of child exploitation and the complexity of these issues, including judgements about a child's culpability for criminal behaviour associated with their exploitation, means that this is an area of work that we continue to develop.

One element of the response to exploited children in the justice system is the National Referral Mechanism, arising from section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The process is intended to establish if there are grounds to confirm that a child is the victim of exploitation, through an initial provisional decision and then a Conclusive Grounds decision taken by the 'Single Competent Authority' in the Home Office. Case law is still being developed to establish how these findings should influence decisions to continue with a prosecution and, if the prosecution does continue, to be taken into account in sentencing decisions. Currently there are significant delays in the NRM decision-making process which is delaying court cases for long periods, with adverse outcomes for the children affected and for the victims of their alleged offences. Our concerns have been shared with the Youth Justice Board. This issue continues to be a priority for 2021/22.

Covid 19: Youth Justice work during the pandemic

Like all services, our plans for 2020/21 were transformed by the pandemic and its impact on daily life.

All YJS staff members have been working from home since the lockdown of March 2020, with occasional, planned visits to our office bases. Attending to the wellbeing of our team members has been a high priority, recognising the impact of working alone, at home, in a time of collective stress and anxiety.

Contact with children, victims and families has mostly been undertaken remotely, using video or telephone contact. Contacts have also been undertaken in person when necessary, with appropriate risk assessments and safety measures. The switch to remote work has led to some creative responses, including the following:

- YJS case managers using online resources with children they are supervising, providing support remotely
- 'virtual' reparation sessions carried out, including work by children at home to make amends for their offence, such as gardening, cooking, making craft items for sale
- ASDAN short courses and like skills challenge courses adapted and supported by YJS practitioners and completed by children at home
- Speech and Language assessments completed by video calls
- Health interventions by YJS nurses, including trauma treatment using Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, via video calls
- 3 Restorative Justice Conferences completed with the participants taking part virtually.

In the period from May to late July 2020 our local youth courts were closed due to the pandemic, creating a backlog of cases to add to the previous delays in the system. During the autumn we worked with court service colleagues to clear the backlog of cases with youth court timescales improving in early 2021.

Learning Reviews

The YJS adheres to the learning review processes of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership and also applies its own learning review procedures. When a child under YJS supervision experiences significant harm, or causes significant harm to others, a learning review process is instigated.

During 2020/21 the YJS has contributed to a Safeguarding Children's Practice Review relating to the death of a Dorset child in care who was living in Somerset. This review is likely to be completed in mid-2021. DCYJS did not work directly with this child but did identify some learning about liaison with other youth offending teams and support for children in care who are placed out of area.

Learning reviews were instigated within DCYJS or through the Safeguarding Children's Partnership in respect of 5 children (3 females and 2 males) all of whom suffered harm while working with DCYJS. Good practice was identified in respect of work to engage with these children. Learning points included the need for a whole family view when different services are working with different family members; improving the effectiveness of multi-agency planning for the child's safety and well-being; enabling the YJS to contribute to decision-making processes about residential placements for children with whom the YJS is working.

The learning points arising from learning reviews are incorporated into the team's ongoing action plan.

Service User Feedback

In the previous year we identified a need to improve our collection of 'spontaneous' feedback from service users and stakeholders. During 2020-21 we received a number of comments, with some themes emerging.

Service users were grateful for help with specific issues, illustrated by these comments:

B has been meeting virtually with the YJS nurse to complete the health assessment and was really pleased that she was doing this and was finding it helpful. She wants to reduce her anxieties.

T's mum was positive about the input from the YJS Education Officer and commented that it had been the most help she has received in terms of home schooling

Thank you for your speech and language report for C, we received it today. I wanted to personally thank you for such an accurate, sympathetic and positive report. You have totally understood C's strengths and challenges more than any other therapeutic report we have had since her ADHD diagnosis. I wish that we could've had this years ago as I feel she would've got so much more value from school with such understanding. ... and you achieved it all via one video call!

Some service users wanted to carry on working with their YJS worker:

D states that he would like his YJS worker to remain involved despite him having completed his YRO....D's mum told me that she thinks his YJS worker has helped Charlie with confidence and to think about how his behaviour affects others.

E's carer reported that if at appeal E's conviction was overturned he hoped that his YJS worker would continue to work with him. He is very appreciative of the work she is covering with him and is learning from this hence wanting the work to continue.

There was also a theme of service users feeling listened to and understood:

F's carer wanted us to know that it was important to her that the YJS parenting worker also understood her experiences and she had told the worker things about her experiences that she had never talked about before but it made her feel better.

"This has been an opportunity for him to gain access to education and support that he would not have had otherwise, his YJS worker has worked well with him" his parent continued to say..."I have regular contact with his worker and she has been very supportive, I know I can talk to her if I have concerns".

We also continue to use feedback surveys to gather service user views but recognise that the response rate is limited. Of those who have responded, the following information shows responses to questions about the quality and impact of the relationship with the YJS worker:

5. My worker thought I would make positive changes to my life:									Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied								2.27%	1
2	Dissatisfied								2.27%	1
3	Neutral								13.64%	6
4	Satisfied								43.18%	19
5	Very Satisfied								38.64%	17
Statistics	Minimum	1	Mean	4.14	Std. Deviation	0.89	Satisfaction Rate	78.41	answered	44
	Maximum	5	Variance	0.8	Std. Error	0.13			skipped	2

6. My worker listens to my ideas and helps me find my own answers:									Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied								0.00%	0

6. My worker listens to my ideas and helps me find my own answers:

								Response Percent	Response Total	
2	Dissatisfied							4.44%	2	
3	Neutral							8.89%	4	
4	Satisfied							33.33%	15	
5	Very Satisfied							53.33%	24	
Statistics	Minimum	2	Mean	4.36	Std. Deviation	0.82	Satisfaction Rate	83.89	answered	45
	Maximum	5	Variance	0.67	Std. Error	0.12			skipped	1

7. Working with the YJS made things better for me:

								Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Very Dissatisfied							4.44%	2	
2	Dissatisfied							4.44%	2	
3	Neutral							13.33%	6	
4	Satisfied							40.00%	18	
5	Very Satisfied							37.78%	17	
Statistics	Minimum	1	Mean	4.02	Std. Deviation	1.04	Satisfaction Rate	75.56	answered	45
	Maximum	5	Variance	1.09	Std. Error	0.16				

In 2021/22 we plan to develop our approach to gathering service user feedback to gain views linked to specific areas of our work and to our service priorities.

Summary of local and national issues that inform our priorities for 2021/22

National Context

The Youth Justice Board's 'guiding principle' is for a 'child first' approach to underpin all its work. This will enable it to:

"Prioritise the best interests of children, recognising their needs, capacities, rights and potential.

Build on children's individual strengths and capabilities as a means of developing a pro-social identity for sustainable desistance from crime. This leads to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

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

Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system."

To support this work, and to respond to specific current issues, the Youth Justice Board has also appointed 'strategic leads' for

- Over-represented children
- Custody and Resettlement
- Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation

The 'child first' vision and the strategic priorities for over-represented children and reducing youth violence and exploitation have particular resonance for us locally.

Local Context

Both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council have developed strategic plans to improve the effectiveness of their work with children. Although there are some issues which are specific to each local authority, there are common themes including:

- Child first approaches that promote the voice of the child
- Joined up services responding to children and families
- The right support at the right time
- Working restoratively
- Relationship and strengths-based practice
- Improving day to day practice.

Service developments in the two local authorities that relate closely to the work of DCYJS include the creation of the Complex Safeguarding Team in BCP Council (working with children suffering significant harm from exploitation) and the Harbour Project in Dorset Council (providing multi-disciplinary support to adolescents at risk of entering care or

requiring other specialist services). It is a priority in 2021/22 for DCYJS to further develop its joint work with these services.

Other statutory partners also have strategic priorities that are relevant to the work of DCYJS, including:

- Reintegration of the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company, to include effective transitions for youths entering the adult justice system
- Dorset Police and DCYJS continuing work to reduce first-time entrants, including the addition of local authority Early Help managers into the weekly decision-making panel for children receiving Out of Court Disposals
- Reducing the over-representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in our local justice system
- A system-wide partnership approach to meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people in Dorset
- Recovery from the court delays and difficulties caused or exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategic Priorities. for 2021-22

The strategic priorities for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service align with:

- our three main performance indicators
- the strategic priorities of the Youth Justice Board
- the strategic priorities of the DCYJS partnership organisations
- areas identified for YJS improvement, based on outcomes of performance monitoring, learning reviews and feedback from YJS staff and service users.

The DCYJS strategic priorities can be grouped under the following headings:

- System improvement
- Practice improvement

System Improvement

Continue and develop work to prevent children entering the justice system

- Add Early Help representatives to weekly Out of Court Disposal decision-making meetings to strengthen diversion options
- Work with the new police officer role to support children and families after diversion from the justice system
- Consolidate the use of the Youth Diversion Disposal and consider expanding its application to other offence types

Reduce the rate of Black and Minority Children entering custody

- Gather the views of BME children and their families on their experience of the justice system and take appropriate actions to build trust and improve confidence

- Work with partner agencies to monitor outcomes for BME children across children's services systems
- Join with Local Criminal Justice Board partners across Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire to report on and compare outcomes for BME children and adults in the justice system
- Apply the Lammy principle of 'explain or reform' in response to evidence of any disproportionately negative outcomes for BME children

Develop joint work with other local services for children to improve outcomes for children in the justice system

- Strengthen links and multi-disciplinary collaboration with the Harbour project in Dorset for teenagers needing additional support to achieve the best outcomes
- Strengthen links and joint working with the Complex Safeguarding Team in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and with other partners to safeguard children who are suffering harm from exploitation
- Join with agencies in community safety, criminal justice and children's services to understand and develop effective responses to children carrying weapons
- Work with partners to establish a multi-agency strategic approach to the use of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for children suspected of criminal offences in the context of being exploited
- Work with local authority children's social care colleagues to improve joint support for children in care placed out of area and receiving youth justice interventions
- Confirm joint working arrangements with the new SEND teams in each local authority to improve access to suitable education for children in the youth justice system
- Finish work with colleagues in health, education and social care services to develop a more integrated and comprehensive response to children who show harmful sexual behaviour.

Practice Improvement

Widen the application of trauma-informed practice to all children working with the Youth Justice Service

- Develop a consistent approach to the use of trauma perspectives in YJS assessments and plans
- Establish a standard framework for health team consultations with YJS case managers to summarise the impact of past trauma and to guide engagement with the child
- Complete and promote the 'trauma guide' documents for responses to children at different levels of the 'trauma triangle'
- Build practitioner confidence and knowledge about how to adapt interventions to meet the child's emotional and cognitive development.

Strengthen the team's work to repair harm and restore relationships

- Develop and embed the 'standardised approach' for restorative justice responses to offences against emergency workers
- Develop a more robust Unpaid Work option for children on Youth Rehabilitation Orders
- Extend links between reparation, Unpaid Work and positive activities that enhance children's strengths and their education opportunities
- Support other services to apply restorative approaches in their work

These headline priority areas will be supported by a more detailed team action plan, including more specific targets and measures, which will be implemented and developed during the year.

Covid-19

This plan has been written during the third covid-19 'lockdown'. Like all services, DCYJS has radically changed its working arrangements and working practices in response to the pandemic. As we move into the recovery and rebuilding phases, we will review the changes we have made so that we can identify the new ways of working that should be sustained in the longer term. Priority will be given to ensuring effective work with children, carers and victims while taking necessary health precautions and to supporting the well-being and safety of our workers and volunteers.

Approval

Signatures of YJS Board Chair and YJS Manager

Theresa Leavy (YJS Board Chair)
Executive Director People - Children
Dorset Council

Signed:

Date:

David Webb
Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Manager
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

AssetPlus	Nationally Accredited Assessment Tool
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
ETE	Education Training and Employment
FTE	First Time Entrant into the Youth Justice System
ISS	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance
IT	Information Technology
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children’s Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OOCD	Out Of Court Disposals
PCC	Police & Crime Commissioner
RJ	Restorative Justice
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SSCT	Safe Schools and Communities Team
VLO	Victim Liaison Officer
YJ	Youth Justice
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOS/YOT	Youth Offending Service/Team
YRD	Youth Restorative Disposal
YRO	Youth Rehabilitation Order

Appendix B – Example of the YJS ‘trauma level guides’ to help practitioners respond to the young person’s current functioning

Level 2

I need to trust you before I can learn from you.

Core principles of a Trauma-informed approach

- Safety.
- Trustworthiness & transparency.
- Peer support.
- Collaboration & mutuality.
- Empowerment & choice.
- Predictability, reliability and consistency

Activity ideas

I can deal with more variety and novelty. Play is a good way of building our relationship:

- Simple card or board games.
- Ball games.
- “alongside” activities; making something together, watching things together.

Don’t worry about “work” at this stage. Relationship is the work. Remember PACE: Playful, Accepting, Curious, Empathetic. (Hughes, 2006)

Non-verbal communication

Use your non-verbal communication to increase shared emotion (Bomber, 2020):

- Smile and keep your face expressive. Use laughter and silliness in your interaction.
- Use varied intonation. Monotone voices are harder to tune in to.
- Introduce some playful body language using animated gesture.
- Place yourself at the same level as me.
- I might be able to manage being face to face more now.

Verbal communication

I may be able to take in some information from you and offer some more information about myself:

- I might still find it difficult to retain long stretches of information. Keep what you say short.
- If you need to give more information, draw or write the main points. (McLachlan & Elks, 2018)
- Continue to listen actively. Notice what I am telling you, either with my words or behaviour, and respond to it (“you are telling me you don’t want to do that yet”).
- Be curious about what I am telling you and model this out loud; “I wonder if it felt like I was testing you, and that stressed you out a bit?” (Bomber, 2020)
- Introduce humour, but not sarcasm. (Yehuda, 2016)
- “why” and “how” reasoning is probably still hard for me. Ask me to describe things with questions like “what happened?”, “who was there?” (McLachlan & Elks, 2018)
- Show me I am kept in mind when we are not together. You could send a text between appointments or tell me that something reminded you of me (Bomber, 2009).

Level

I need to trust you before I can learn from you.

Responding to emotions

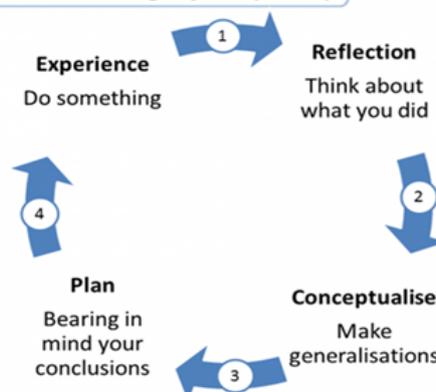
You might be able to start to help me regulate my emotions.

- Acknowledge and accept the emotion. Don't try to distract or persuade me.
- Say less. It is hard for me to process language when I am upset or agitated.
- Show me you understand by matching my affect. You can use some of the same facial expressions and gestures and speak at the same rate as me. If your emotion seems very different to mine, I might think you don't get it (Hughes, 2009).
- Give me space and keep your body language non-threatening.
- Name the emotion; "you're really angry about this". Naming feelings is a step towards regulating them (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2009).
- When I am calm, we might be able to talk about what has happened. You could make suggestions with "I wonder..."

Reflective Questions for practitioners

- What key things did you learn from this appointment?
- How did you address any issues or problems that arose?
- What would you do differently, if anything, next time around?
- How has it impacted on your practice with this young person?
- Are there any changes you can quickly apply to your practice?
- Are you able to support yourself and other colleagues better?
- What can you do to meet any gaps in your knowledge, skills and understanding?

Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb)



Appendix B

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