

Youth Justice Plan 2022/23

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1. Introduction, vision and strategy

Foreword

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. We 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, The 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 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 with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

We contact 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
- 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 (DCYJS) for 2022/23. 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 DCYJS Partnership Board after consultation with DCYJS staff and taking into account feedback from DCYJS users. This year's Plan follows more detailed and prescriptive guidance from the Youth Justice Board about the Plan's contents and format.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the DCYJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements
- outlines the resources available to the DCYJS
- reviews achievements and developments during 2021/22
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

Headline Strategic Priorities for 2022/23

We will:

- Continue to reduce the rate of local children entering the justice system
- Widen and deepen local understanding of and response to over-representation in the youth justice system
- Continue to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the local youth justice system
- Make our assessments, plans and interventions more accessible, collaborative and responsive to discrimination
- Clarify and align activities to repair harm, to increase employability and to support pro-social interests and activities, including links to community organisations.

2. Local context

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a partnership working across two local authorities: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Dorset Council covers a large geographical, predominantly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 380,000. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of nearly 400,000.

Other members of the DCYJS Partnership, such as Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset CCG, Dorset HealthCare Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset) also work across both local authorities.

The following tables provide demographic information about young people in both local authorities:

Population and benchmarking data:

Population (Age 10-17)		
	Dorset	BCP
Number of Children	33,133	33,929
Male (%)	51.2	51.4
Female (%) ¹	48.8	48.6
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (%)	18.8	17.1
Pupils with SEN Support (%)	12.9	13.2
Pupils with an EHC Plan (%) ²	4.9	3.8
Pupils from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (%) ³	9.1	11
Children living in Poverty after housing costs (%) ⁴	24.5	24.8

NB: Ethnicity data is only collected at the January School Census, and the January 2022 census figures are not yet available.

2020/21 Benchmarking Data

	Dorset	BCP	SN	Good+ SN	SW	England
Children in Need as at 31 March (rate per 10,000)	326	398	262	276	275	321
Child Protection Plans as at 31 March (rate per 10,000)	44	48.5	37	38	37	41
Children in Care as at 31 March (rate per 10,000)	66	62	59	58	56	67

Data updated for 2020/21.

SN – Statistical Neighbour

Good+ SN – Statistical Neighbour rated Good or

Outstanding by Ofsted: **Cornwall, East Sussex,**

Shropshire, Suffolk and Wiltshire

SW – South West region data

¹ Source: Dorset mid-year 2020 population estimates (published June 2021)¹

² Source: October 2021 School Census (includes all pupils at a Dorset School aged 10-17; ages as at 31 August 2021)

³ January 2021 School Census (all non-white British pupils at a Dorset School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')

⁴ Local child poverty indicators 2019/20. Based on the DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2021).

3. Child First

The national Youth Justice Board (YJB) promotes a vision of a “*Child First youth justice system, defined as a system where all services:*”

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

DCYJS supports these principles and promotes them in its own work and in its interactions with local partners in children’s services and the youth justice system. In 2021 the service changed its name, having previously been called Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service, to reflect the shift away from thinking of children as offenders.

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22 set out strategic priorities which were aligned with the YJB’s Child First principles, reflecting work to improve both the local youth justice and children’s services systems and the quality of practice within DCYJS. The headline priorities were to:

- 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 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.

Evidence of the Partnership’s commitment to Child First principles is embedded throughout this document.

4. Voice of the child

DCYJS works collaboratively with children to elicit their views and to hear their voices. The team’s Speech and Language Therapists complete assessments so that each child’s communication needs can be understood and responded to, not just by other workers in the team but also by the child, their carers and other professionals working with the child.

As well as hearing the child's voice in the team's day to day practice, there are also processes in place to gather the views of children and other service users about their experience of the service's work. A 'Smart Survey' feedback form is used, alongside some of the questions in the self-assessment documents that are completed by children and their carers. Service users also make spontaneous comments about the quality of the service's work with them. These comments are recorded and collated to give a wider, less structured perspective on the service's work.

In 2021/22 the service added a different approach to collecting feedback, focusing on a specific topic and conducting in-depth interviews with a small number of young people. The first topic chosen was young people who had been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past three years. The aim was to understand the child's journey to custody, their individual experiences, whether they experienced discrimination and how they had been affected by their contact with the Youth Justice Service and with other agencies, such as the police, the courts, education and children's services.

Eight young people and one parent have been interviewed for this project. A presentation summarising the young people's views has been shared with the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board, with team members in the Youth Justice Service and with other local partners including Dorset Police and the Care Experienced Young People's service in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

Some of the main findings from this piece of work include:

- The young people experienced permanent exclusion from school as a turning point in their lives
- Most interactions with the Police were 'fair enough' but sometimes young people felt they were targeted more than their peers, with provocative comments from some officers
- Young people did not understand what happened in court and did not feel able to challenge or question it, including when they had doubts about the advice from their solicitor
- The specific resources and interventions used by Youth Justice Service workers were not remembered but the young people did remember the quality of the relationship with individual workers
- Those who were under 18 and in custody found it hard to reflect on their situation and the steps that led to it, perhaps reflecting the instability and lack of safety in their current circumstances
- Young adults in the adult prison estate were better able to reflect. As well as thinking about their journey to custody they also showed insight into their current experiences in custody, describing loneliness, isolation and anxiety about the future.

The learning from this work informs the service's current plans and priorities, reflected in the Service Improvement Plan in section 11 of this document.

5. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

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.

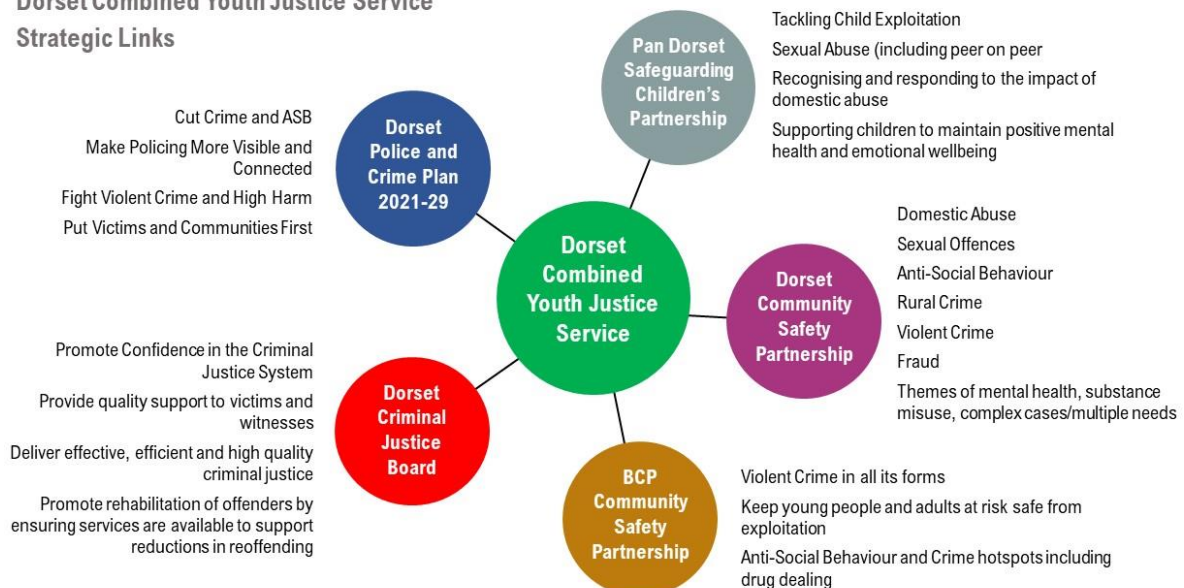
Membership:

- Dorset Council (chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (vice-chair)
- Dorset Police
- The Probation Service (Dorset)
- 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

Full Board membership, including job titles and attendance during 2021/22, is included in Appendix One.

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

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Strategic Links



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

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. Our Personal Information Sharing Agreement underpins local multi-agency work to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending.

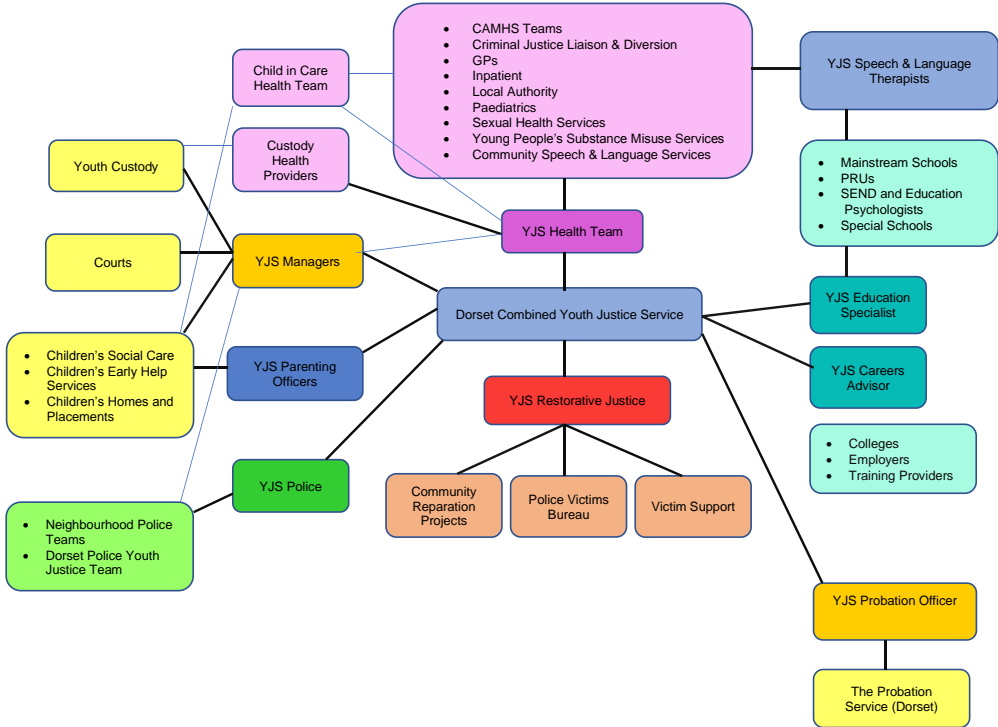
The DCYJS Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

The 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 DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The Head of Service is a Tier 3 Manager, reporting to the Director for Corporate Parenting and Permanence in the Children’s Social Care service and maintaining regular contact with the equivalent post in Dorset Council.

Appendix Two includes the structure chart for DCYJS and structure charts showing where the service is located in each local authority.

DCYJS meets the statutory staffing requirements for youth justice services, set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Its multi-disciplinary team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



6. Resources and services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget are listed below. All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other staff are seconded from Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. Like all public services, DCYJS 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 <i>(excluding recharges)</i>	Staff
Dorset Council	£492,800	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£577,700	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£75,301	2.0 Police Officers
The Probation Service (Dorset)	£5,000	1.0 Probation Officer
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists
Youth Justice Grant	<i>£659,239 (2021/22 figure)</i>	
Total	£1,832,527 <i>(assuming standstill contributions from all partners)</i>	

The Youth Justice Board Grant is paid subject to terms and conditions relating to its use. The Grant may only be used towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

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

The conditions of the Grant also refer to the services that must be provided and the duty to comply with data reporting requirements.

The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the Partnership's resources for employing practitioners who work with children to prevent and reduce offending and to keep children and other members of the community safe from harm. Resources are also used to provide restorative justice and reparative activities, to promote pro-social activities for children building on their strengths and to improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people in the local youth justice system.

In addition to the service outcomes listed above, the Youth Justice Grant and other Partnership resources are used to achieve the strategic priorities set out in this Plan. Progress against those priorities is reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board, with oversight also provided by the respective children's services scrutiny committees of the two local authorities.

In recent years DCYJS has benefitted from one-off grant payments from NHS England to support the introduction of trauma-informed practice. In 2021/22 NHS England provided a payment of £22,800 to provide capacity in the service for a 'Trauma Champion' to develop this area of work over a 12-month period commencing in March 2022.

7. Progress on previous plan

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22 identified strategic priorities under the headings of 'System Improvement' and 'Practice Improvement'.

The System Improvement priorities are listed below with a brief summary of progress made:

Developing work to prevent children entering the justice system:

- Out of Court Disposals protocol between DCYJS and Dorset Police updated to reflect new diversion options and increased commitment to seek diversion outcomes
- Early Help representatives from each local authority now participate in the weekly Out of Court Disposal decision-making meetings
- Options for additional support for children who are subject to informal justice outcomes, such as a Youth Restorative Disposal, to avoid having to enter the justice system in order to access services
- Consolidation of the Youth Diversion Disposal as a response to 'simple' drug possession offences
- Plans for developing the police Youth Diversion Officer role and the availability of the Youth Diversion Disposal for other offence types have been delayed.

Reducing the rate of Black and Minority Ethnic children entering custody:

- View-seeking work with young people in custody has been undertaken to gain better understanding of issues facing black and mixed heritage children in our local justice system
- Review completed of possible disproportionality in first-time entrants and school exclusion rates in the BCP Council area (over-representation of black and mixed heritage children was not identified in these outcomes)
- Meeting held with senior police and CPS colleagues, a DCYJS manager and the mother of a black child who has been sentenced to custody to enable the family's voice to be heard by key decision-makers
- Whole service meeting held in response to the thematic inspection report on the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the justice system to identify relevant team actions (included in the Service Improvement Plan in section 11 of this document)

Developing work with other local services to improve outcomes for children in the justice system:

- Strengthening of joint working arrangements and information sharing between DCYJS and the Harbour project in Dorset Council to reduce offending risks and improve outcomes

- Development of joint working and practitioner relationships between DCYJS and the Complex Safeguarding Team in BCP Council to help safeguard children who are suffering harm from child exploitation
- Pro-active 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
- Ongoing work with CCG and local authority colleagues to develop a more integrated and comprehensive response to children who show harmful sexual behaviour
- Initiating a shared self-assessment process between DCYJS, SEND and Virtual School teams to identify possible improvements in our joint working arrangements
- The YJS has contributed to multi-agency work to improve the strategic and operational responses to children carrying weapons and to the use of the National Referral Mechanism but this remains an area for further development.

Practice Improvement priorities for 2021/22 are listed here, with brief details of actions taken, progress made and work still to do:

Widen the application of trauma-informed practice to all children working with the YJS:

- Work done to embed the trauma perspective in DCYJS assessments and plans
- Standard format established for recording health team consultations with case managers to summarise the impact of past trauma and guide engagement with the child
- Use of resources in work with children guided by trauma perspectives with priority given to engagement and relationship-building when necessary
- More work required on balancing the trauma perspective in work with children and the response to victim requirements

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

- Progress made in embedding the 'standardised approach' for restorative justice responses to offences against emergency workers
- Work with The Harbour project to support their use of restorative approaches
- Some use of restorative approaches to respond to specific issues arising within the team
- Work to develop Unpaid Work and to establish clearer links and differentiation between reparation, victim work, Unpaid Work and positive activities has been delayed by staff sickness and pandemic issues
- Survey completed of staff knowledge, confidence and views on Restorative Justice to guide our plans for 2022/23.

8. Performance and priorities

The three national key performance indicators for youth justice services relate to:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system
- The rate of reoffending by children in the criminal justice system
- The use of custodial sentences

The YJB publish quarterly performance data for youth justice services, compiled nationally, in relation to these three indicators. Since the start of the pandemic there have been some gaps in the publication of the national data. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in February 2022 for the period ending December 2021.

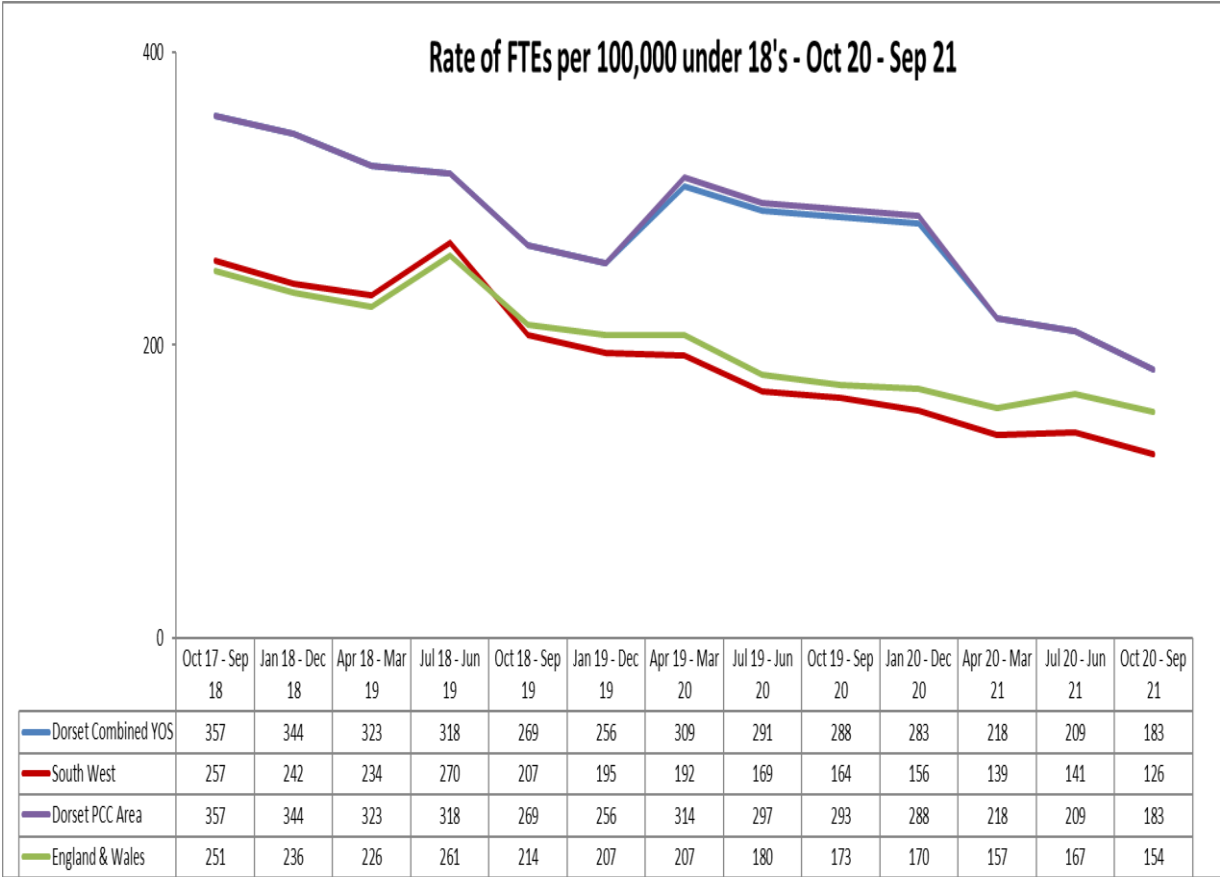
Attention is also paid to the use of custodial remands and to over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system.

First Time Entrants

A ‘First Time Entrant’ is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome count as a formal criminal justice outcome. There are also informal options available for responding to offences by children. Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children’s services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for an offence by a child, seeking an informal option whenever possible. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children.

National performance data for First Time Entrants is drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC). Local data is also recorded on the DCYJS case management system. There is a discrepancy between national and local data for First Time Entrants; it is not possible to compare individual case records to confirm the accuracy of the respective figures. DCYJS has confidence in the accuracy of its case records showing home address information and child in care status.

The following chart shows the most recent published national First Time Entrants data. DCYJS has seen a reduction in its rate of children entering the justice system, reflecting the priorities of the DCYJS partnership and the work undertaken locally to divert children from formal justice outcomes. The combined rate for our two local authorities has dropped from 288 per 100,000 under 18s in the year to September 2020 to 183 in the year to September 2021. DCYJS remains above regional and national averages for this indicator but the gap is narrowing.



Local data for First Time Entrants shows a reduction across both local authority areas in recent years, shown in the following table:

[DCYJS First Time Entrants by Gender and Local Authority past 4 years:](#)

Year	BCP male	BCP female	BCP total	Dorset male	Dorset female	Dorset total	BCP and Dorset total
2018/19	78 (72%)	30 (28%)	108	75 (71%)	31 (29%)	106	214
2019/20	91 (85%)	16 (15%)	107	61 (77%)	18 (23%)	79	186
2020/21	63 (83%)	13 (17%)	76	38 (75%)	13 (25%)	51	127
2021/22 (to end Dec)	47 (87%)	7 (13%)	54	24 (92%)	2 (8%)	26	80
Total	279 (81%)	66 (19%)	345	198 (76%)	64 (24%)	262	607

This table shows that there has been a clear reduction in the number of local children entering the justice system over the past four years. Although there have been reductions in both local authority areas, this is particularly so in Dorset. The reduction applies to both males and females, with a larger proportionate reduction amongst females.

More detailed local data showing information about First Time Entrants over the past four years has been reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board. Some of the key points from this information are that:

- The reduction has not been so marked for the youngest age group with little change to the numbers of 10-13 year-olds entering the justice system
- There does not appear to be over-representation of children with diverse ethnic heritage. Over the past four years, 5% of Dorset's First Time Entrants and 8% of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole's First Time Entrants have been black or mixed heritage children, below the proportions in the population.
- The proportion of First Time Entrants receiving court disposals has increased, from 27% in 2018/19 to 43% in the first 9 months of 2021/22.
- The proportion of First Time Entrants receiving a Youth Caution has dropped from 56% in 2018/19 to 35% in the first 9 months of 2021/22. This suggests that some children are being diverted from Youth Cautions and receiving informal justice outcomes instead.

Following the analysis of local First Time Entrants data for the YJS Partnership Board meeting in January 2022, partners looked in more detail at the local children aged 10-13 who have entered the justice system since April 2020. The following table, drawn from Police, local authority and DCYJS information, shows the level of other needs amongst the BCP children in this group:

[BCP First-Time Entrants aged 13 or younger April 2020 to January 2021](#)

Factor	Yes (out of total 25 children)	Percentage
First contact with police as victim or witness of harm	24	96%
Known to children's social care	19	76%

Fixed Term Exclusions from school	23	92%
Permanent exclusion from school	11	44%
SEN support	14	56%
EHCP	7	28%
Weapons offences	13	52%
Other violence	7	28%
Previous YRD or SSCT input	7	28%
Youth Caution	11	44%
Youth Conditional Caution	10	40%
Referral Order	4	16%

All but one of these children first came to police attention not for their own behaviour but as the victim or witness of harm. In 23 out of 24 such instances the harm took place in the family home, such as witnessing domestic abuse, experiencing physical abuse, having a parent with mental health or substance use problems and/or having parents or older siblings in contact with the police.

The high level of Special Educational Needs in this group, combined with experiencing trauma at home, perhaps helps to explain the high level of fixed term and permanent exclusions from school which these children had experienced, despite their relatively young age.

It is also notable that 13 of these 25 children committed offences involving the possession of a weapon. This raises concern about the risk of harm and perhaps reflects the sense of threat that these children have experienced in their lives to date.

[Prevention and Diversion](#)

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' refers to work with children who have been identified as being at risk of going on to commit offences if they do not receive additional help. 'Diversion' refers to the response to children who have been identified as committing an offence but who can be diverted from the justice system.

DCYJS does not directly undertake prevention work. Each of our local authorities provides early help services, working with other local organisations like schools, the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team and the voluntary sector.

In the Dorset Council area oversight of prevention activities sits with the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, supported by more detailed work at locality level. The DCYJS Manager is a member of the Strategic Alliance and team members participate in locality meetings to identify and respond to children at risk.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area, the Children and Young People's Partnership oversees prevention work.

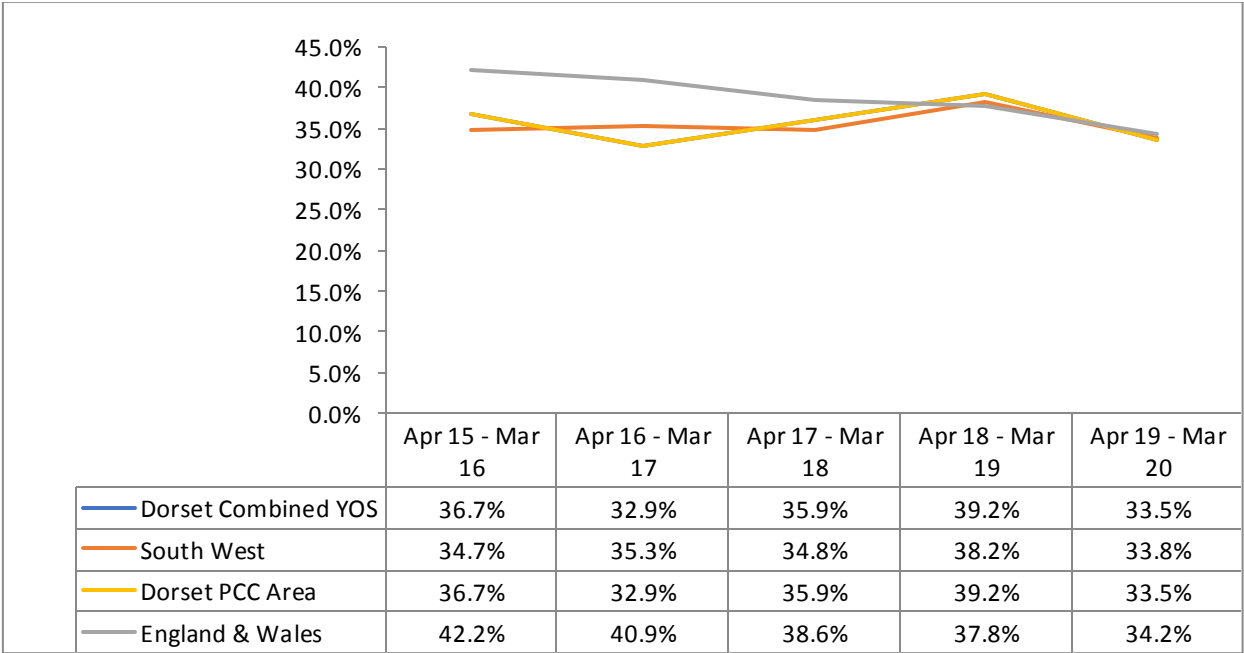
Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly to review children who have come to attention for committing offences. Decisions are taken about the appropriate response, with diversion options being taken when possible. Diversion activities usually involve additional support for the child and, when appropriate, some form of restorative response in respect of the criminal offence. The Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team, Early Help Services, Children’s Social Care Services and DCYJS each provide support at the diversion stage. The appropriate service for each child is decided on the basis of the child’s needs, risks and existing relationships with professionals.

During 2021/22 Dorset Police have piloted a Youth Diversion Officer. The remit of the post is to help ensure children who are diverted from the justice system get access to appropriate services and to identify and address any barriers preventing this access. Students from Bournemouth University are currently assisting Dorset Police with analysis of diversion work, including the role of the Youth Diversion Officer but extending back three years to look more widely at how outcomes for children who have contact with the justice system.

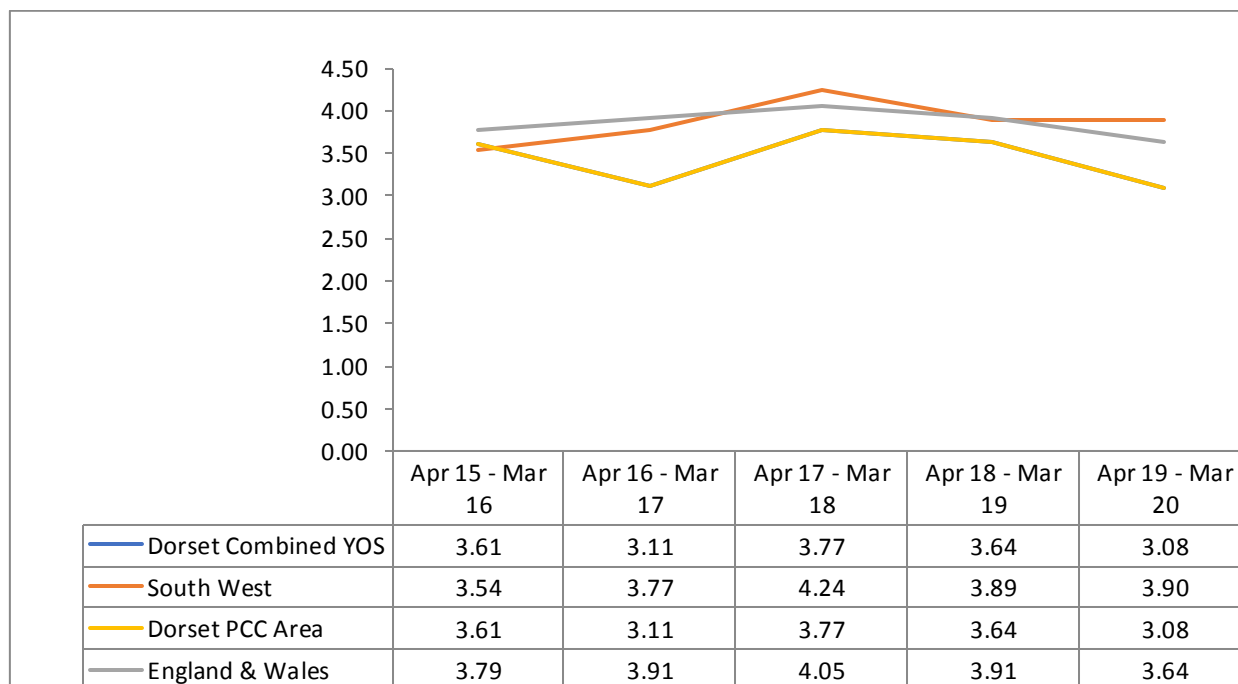
Rate of Proven Reoffending

National re-offending data is published in two formats: the ‘binary’ rate shows the proportion of children in the cohort who go on to be convicted for subsequent offences in the 12 months after their previous justice outcome; the ‘frequency’ rate shows the average number of offences per reoffender. Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2020.

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)



Reoffences/Reoffenders



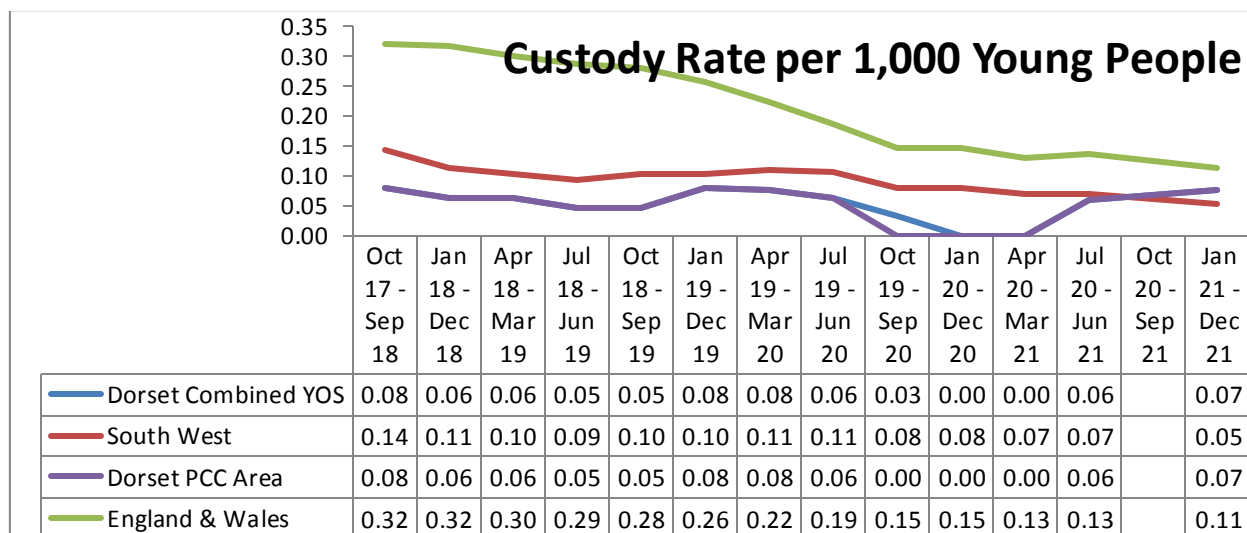
The data shows an improvement in the latest published performance, with Dorset below national and regional averages for both measures.

Local data can also be analysed for a more detailed and specific understanding of reoffending patterns. During 2021/22 the DCYJS Performance and Information Manager has experienced recurring periods of sickness absence, reducing the team's capacity for data analysis. Plans are in place to increase the resilience of the team's data analysis capacity in 2022/23.

[Use of Custodial Sentences](#)

DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The gap in the figures for the year to September 2021 reflects a gap in the national data publication.



[Supporting children in custody](#)

Members of the DCYJS partnership are committed to reducing the use of custody for children. It is recognised that incarceration can have a damaging effect on children's lives, putting pressure on family relationships, disrupting education, reviving or increasing experiences of trauma and damaging the child's living arrangements. Inspection reports for custodial establishments demonstrate ongoing concerns about their safety and about the impact on the children who are detained.

The low numbers of local children entering custody, reported above, is replicated across the south-west, meaning that there are no custodial establishments for children in our region. This means that all children in custody are located a considerable distance from home, making it harder for families to visit. DCYJS supports parents of children in custody, as well as the children themselves, helping them to cope with both the practicalities and the emotional impact of the situation.

DCYJS allocates paired case managers for all children in custody, to ensure resilience and shared reflection in the work with these children. A DCYJS nurse and a DCYJS education specialist are always allocated to children in custody to facilitate liaison with custody health care and education providers to help ensure that the child's specific educational and health needs can be met and to enable continuity of education and health care during and after the custodial period. DCYJS Speech and Language assessments are also shared with the custodial establishment to enable custody staff to communicate more effectively with the child.

Finding suitable accommodation for children leaving custody can be challenging. DCYJS contributes to local authority care planning processes, promoting the early identification of the child's release address. The DCYJS Manager reports to the DCYJS Partnership Board on the timeliness of accommodation being confirmed for children being released from custodial sentences. No children have reached their release date during 2021/22 so there is no current data to report.

While the national performance indicator relates to custodial sentences, there is also concern about the numbers of children being remanded into custody. In January 2022 the Ministry of Justice published a 'Review of Custodial Remand for Children' which noted that in 2021 about 45% of children in custody were on remand. During 2021/22

seven local children have been remanded in custody, an increase on the four custodial remands in the preceding year. Although there are some similarities among these remand cases, such as the seriousness of the alleged offences and in some cases the alleged commission of serious offences while on bail, each case has unique individual circumstances which require review. Of the seven cases, four remain on remand at the end of the year, two received a custodial sentence in excess of 12 months and one received a community sentence. Lack of suitable accommodation was a factor in the remand decision for this final case, concerns which DCYJS raised at the time.

Over-representation

It is recognised nationally that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. Nationally, just over 50% of children in custody identify as having diverse ethnic heritage, significantly more than the proportion in the total population.

The low numbers of local children being sentenced to custody makes it difficult to provide sound statistical analysis of possible over-representation of young people with diverse ethnic heritage. In the year 2021/22 fewer than 5 young people from the BCP Council area were sentenced to custody and no young people from the Dorset Council area received a custodial sentence. DCYJS undertakes an informal review process for each child sentenced or remanded to custody, including attention being paid to possible over-representation of or differential response to minority groups.

First-Time Entrants information referred to above, relating to the analysis of local children entering the justice system, does not show over-representation of children with diverse ethnic heritage at this stage of the justice system. National reviews do show, however, that black children can be more likely to 'progress' through the justice system to receive more onerous sentences, for complex reasons including the point of entry into the justice system and differences in the assessment of risk. Learning from national reviews, such as the thematic inspection published in October 2021 on the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the justice system, is shared within the DCYJS team and applied to our practice.

The proportion of girls on the DCYJS caseload fluctuates but stays within a range of about 15%-20% of the total caseload, consistent with national rates. Worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to each girl's needs. In the context of the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda and concerns about peer on peer sexual abuse, DCYJS managers are currently reviewing good practice and resources used elsewhere to help us improve our work with girls. The emphasis of some of this work will be on work with boys to help them achieve healthy relationships and to reduce the risk they pose to girls. These developments are being undertaken with support from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

DCYJS also works with a small number of young people who are exploring their gender identity and may be in the process of gender reassignment. Given the low numbers and the emerging information and understanding in this area it is hard to assess the extent of possible over-representation of this group in the youth justice system. It is clear though that these young people face potential discrimination and are likely to have specific needs which require an individualised response. This is an area for the service to develop its practice in 2022/23.

The analysis of local First Time Entrants, summarised above, showed the high level of Special Educational Needs and school exclusions amongst younger children entering the justice system. These concerns fit with evidence collected by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, showing high levels of communication needs amongst children in our local youth justice system. In most cases these needs have not been identified or formally assessed until the child meets with the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapist.

Education, Training and Employment

Nationally and locally it is recognised that children in the youth justice system are less likely to stay in mainstream schools, to achieve good educational outcomes and to access education, employment or training after Year 11. Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board. DCYJS employs an Education Officer and a post-16 Careers Adviser who work with schools and local authorities to increase the suitability of provision and with young people to understand their needs and to support their attendance and engagement. The DCYJS ETE workers maintain strong links with colleagues in the Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services.

Information reported above, in the section on First Time Entrants, showed the frequency of Special Educational Needs and school exclusions among younger children entering the justice system. Similar issues prevail on the overall DCYJS caseload. In late 2021 the DCYJS Manager and the BCP Council Director of Education reported to the BCP Council Equalities Action Commission on rates of school exclusions and possible links to over-representation. The following table reflects the BCP Council children on the the DCYJS caseload in November 2021:

BCP YJS cases November 2021

Ethnicity	No. on YJS caseload	Exclusions	Suspensions	Exclusions & Suspensions
White-British	81	16 (20%)	30 (37%)	46 (57%)
White-Other & White-Irish	6	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	4 (67%)
Mix WBA, WBC, Other	4	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	3 (75%)
All	91	18 (20%)	35 (38%)	53 (58%)

These figures indicate a high overall rate of permanent and fixed term exclusions on the YJS caseload, with a higher rate among mixed heritage children. It should though be noted that the low numbers in this group mean that a small change in numbers would have a large impact on the percentages.

Analysis of the DCYJS Dorset Council cases in March 2022 showed the following information about their education/training/employment status and their associated needs:

Dorset YJS cases March 2022

Education, Training, Employment Status	Number	With EHCP	Open to Children's Social Care	Open to Early Help
School age	20	5	9	4
Mainstream school	7	0	1	2
Alternative Provision/PRU	12	4	7	2
Custody	1	1	1	0
Post-16	21	5	4	1
Employed	6	1	0	0
Further Education	5	1	0	0
NEET	10	3	4	1
TOTAL	41	10	13	5

There is a higher rate of EHCPs and of contact with other children's services among those who are not in mainstream school and not in employment or further education. It should though be noted that those young people who are in school may be at risk of exclusion, needing support to avoid this outcome, and those who are in employment or at college may need help to maintain this status.

During the past year there have been low numbers of children receiving Elective Home Education. Successful work at individual case level means that in March 2022 there are no children on the YJS caseload who are designated as receiving Elective Home Education.

During 2021/22 DCYJS has started work to improve its data recording for ETE, to review the quality of joint work with local authority SEND services and with the Virtual Schools and to develop its options for post-16 young people who are NEET. These will continue to be priorities in 2022/23.

Serious Violence and Exploitation

Tackling child exploitation and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in both our local authority areas (as described in section 5 of this Plan).

Most of the violent offences committed by children do not reach the 'serious violence' threshold. Analysis and comparison of youth justice outcomes in the 3-month periods December 2019–February 2020 and December 2021–February 2022 shows a reduction in violent offences being dealt with but a small increase in weapon-related offences.

Analysis of First Time Entrants, summarised earlier in this section, shows that more than half of BCP Council First Time Entrants aged 13 or younger in the last two years had committed offences involving weapons (possession of a knife in most instances). The equivalent data for Dorset Council First Time Entrants showed a lower number and proportion of weapon offences, featuring in 20% of the cases.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduces a Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data

and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. As stated in section 5 above, tackling violence is a current priority for both our Community Safety Partnerships, and for the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner. This Youth Justice Plan contributes to that shared local commitment and endeavour.

Child Exploitation occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing higher rates of exploitation amongst its BCP Council caseload. DCYJS plays an active role in the partnership arrangements in both local authority areas to address child exploitation, participating in the strategic and tactical groups as well as other multi-agency initiatives. At the operational level, DCYJS team members are part of multi-agency child exploitation case meetings and contribute to multi-agency responses to concerns about specific locations or networks.

Dorset Police, Children's Social Care services and DCYJS work together to refer suitable cases to the National Referral Mechanism. Delays in the Home Office response to these referrals can lead to repeated adjournments of court cases involving young people who have had NRM referrals. Such delays exacerbate problems with youth justice timeliness, which were a local focus prior to the pandemic and which were compounded by court closures and restrictions during the pandemic. Long delays in completing cases in the youth court and the crown court mean that children can remain subject to bail conditions for many months. With months passing between the offence and the court outcome there is also a deleterious effect on work to meet the needs of victims and to address a child's offending.

[Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements \(MAPPA\)](#)

DCYJS is an active participant in the local MAPPA Strategic Management Board and has established strong working links with the MAPPA Coordinator. MAPPA status reflects either the young person's offence and sentence or a risk assessment indicating that the young person poses a High Risk of Serious Harm to others and requires multi-agency risk management above that which is provided through the DCYJS Risk Assessment Panel process.

In March 2022 eight DCYJS cases, out of 129 on the caseload, had MAPPA status, with most of them being managed at Level One (ordinary agency risk management).

During 2021/22, in line with the refreshed national MAPPA Guidance, improvements were made to MAPPA transition processes. When MAPPA Level Two or Level Three risk management commences for a young adult who was previously known to DCYJS the MAPPA Coordinator seeks relevant information from DCYJS to aid risk management and a representative of DCYJS attends at least the initial MAPPA meeting.

[Health and Communication Needs](#)

It has long been recognised that young people in the youth justice system have significant and interacting health needs which may not have been adequately identified or addressed. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires youth offending teams to include specialist health staff. The DCYJS health team, funded mostly by NHS Dorset CCG and employed by Dorset HealthCare Trust, comprises a part-time Psychologist, 2.8 Youth Justice Nurses and 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists. The YJS Nurses are employed through CAMHS and combine expertise in child mental health and wellbeing

with wider nursing expertise in respect of physical health, sexual health and substance misuse.

During 2021/22 the DCYJS health team has supported the development of the service's trauma recovery model of working. Young people in the youth justice system have often experienced past trauma, such as witnessing domestic abuse, being the victims of physical abuse, neglect and emotional abuse, which affects their cognitive and emotional development. Understanding a child's trauma history, and its impact on their current presentation, in a context of concerns about child exploitation and serious violence, enables YJS workers to respond to the child's individual needs with the emphasis often being on helping to establish a positive and pro-social relationship. YJS Nurses work directly with young people, sometimes providing treatment for past trauma, as well as providing case consultations to other YJS team members.

The YJS Speech and Language Therapists also play an important role in the individualised response to each child. All children who receive a court order or a second 'Out of Court Disposal' are offered a speech and language assessment. As was noted in the DCYJS 2021/22 Youth Justice Plan, the evidence from these assessments is that about 80% of young people known to DCYJS have additional communication needs, with about 30% having significant needs such as Developmental Language Disorder. In most cases these needs have not been identified until the YJS start working with the child and complete a speech and language assessment.

[Support for parents of children in the youth justice system](#)

The parents and carers of children in the youth justice system have particular needs and challenges. . Although the law holds children individually responsible from the age of 10 for criminal behaviour, parents may feel a sense of responsibility and there is often a family context to a child's behaviour. The difficult, complex emotions that parents feel in this situation require sensitive support. The youth justice system has specialist language and procedures which may be hard for parents to understand and navigate.

DCYJS employs parenting workers to provide support directly to parents, working in partnership with colleagues who support the young person. This work is aimed at helping families to restore and repair relationships and to support children's positive achievements.

The DCYJS parenting workers also provide assistance with the challenges of the youth justice system. Feedback from parents has shown that they may not understand what takes place in the youth court. For the small number who have a child in custody there are numerous practical challenges to face, as well as the emotional impact of the separation from their child and the concern about their child's welfare.

During 2021/22 the team have developed their focus on working with both parents, including absent parents, recognising the importance of fathers as well as mothers and responding to messages from serious case and learning reviews about the need to include both parents. DCYJS raised concerns this year with the YJB about the AssetPlus self-assessment process only seeking and recording the views of one parent. The team seeks the views of both parents whenever possible and working with both parents will continue to be a focus in 2022/23.

Restorative Justice and Victims

One of the challenges for DCYJS during 2021/22 has been achieving the correct balance between meeting the needs of the child, as described in the previous section, and meeting the needs of the child's victim. The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact every victim of children who work with the service, seeking to find out about the impact of the offence and to seek opportunities for Restorative Justice activities.

Delays in the youth justice system, which are more common in cases that go to court, make it harder to engage victims in activity to repair the harm they have experienced. The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners exercise tact and sensitivity in their contacts with victims, emphasising the victim's choice in whether or how much they engage with our service.

The Covid pandemic has exacerbated court delays and has also restricted the opportunities for face to face Restorative Justice meetings. During 2021/22 some Restorative Justice Conferences have taken place face to face, some have been conducted virtually and in some cases it has not been possible to find a suitable and safe way to hold the meeting.

An area of development in 2021/22 has been the 'standardised approach'. This is the local name given to victim work with emergency workers, following offences such as 'assault emergency worker'. Police officers and other emergency workers make up a high proportion of the YJS victim caseload but may be reluctant to participate in Restorative Justice. As well as seeking ways to increase their participation, the YJS Restorative Justice Practitioners have worked with the YJS Police Officers to develop other ways to help young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on emergency workers and to look for ways for young people to repair the harm caused.

In early 2022 DCYJS's lead manager for Restorative Justice surveyed the views of other team members about their knowledge, confidence and enjoyment of Restorative Justice work. There is a high level of commitment to Restorative Justice in the team. The survey identified some specific areas for development which will form part of our plans for 2022/23.

9. National Standards

Youth justice services are required to comply with minimum national standards. The latest edition of national standards, 'Standards for Children in Youth Justice Services', was published in 2019. The YJB mandates youth justice services to undertake periodic self-assessments of their compliance with national standards.

The last national standards self-assessment was completed in March 2020. DCYJS demonstrated adherence to the standards with a small number of standards requiring further activity in order to strengthen compliance.

The following areas of activity were identified for further development:

- Development of local strategies to prevent children from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Multi-agency analysis of disproportionality in court and out of court contexts for local children

- Evidencing strategic partner confidence in the YJS supervision of children on justice outcomes in the community
- Holding local partners to account for their part in the successful transition and resettlement of children released from custody
- Consistent recording/storage of sentence plans.

These actions were reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board and were added to DCYJS team plans. Progress has been made in all these areas though some of these activities are outside the direct control of DCYJS. Continuing actions are identified for each of the above issues, to develop or audit the progress made.

10. Challenges, risks and issues

Like other youth justice services, DCYJS operates in a context of system challenges and resource pressures. Achievement of the service's priorities in 2022/23 could be affected by a number of risks and issues, including:

- Funding and resources – in cash terms the DCYJS budget was £261K smaller in 2021/22 than it had been in 2014/15, before allowing for inflation and pay increases during that period. Continuing budget pressures and inflation risks make this a continuing challenge.
- Children's Services face a number of challenges, nationally and locally, with the shortage of suitable placements for children in care being of particular relevance to youth justice services. Without suitable placements it is difficult to establish the building blocks to help children build positive futures, such as education, health care and positive peer networks.
- Delays in the youth justice system, linked to pressures in the wider criminal justice system and exacerbated by Covid, make it harder to engage victims in Restorative Justice and to work effectively with young people to prevent future offending.
- The impact of Covid on young people is still emerging, including setbacks to young people's education and their mental health. These issues may contribute to negative effects on children's behaviour, increasing the likelihood of substance misuse, exploitation and offending.

The DCYJS service plan for 2022/23 will continue to address these issues, making best use of resources, working with partners to mitigate the impact of placement shortages, developing plans to improve timeliness in our local youth court system and responding to the education and mental health needs of children following the pandemic.

11. Service improvement plan

The DCYJS service plan and strategic priorities for 2022/23 have been developed in the context of all the information summarised in the preceding sections of this document.

The service's plan and priorities also reflect learning from self-assessments, case audits, learning reviews and inspection reports during 2021/22.

Self-assessment:

DCYJS is currently awaiting inspection. HMI Probation is entering the fifth year of a six-year inspection programme of all youth offending teams in England and Wales. DCYJS has not yet been inspected during this programme.

As part of preparations for inspection, in 2021 DCYJS updated a self-assessment for 'Domain One' of the inspection framework, relating to the arrangements underpinning the service's Organisational Delivery. The service has been working on areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment including:

- Some aspects of the DCYJS Board's work, including Board members advocating for youth justice issues in other parts of their work
- Improving the collection and use of data to inform performance and service improvement
- Improving links with other local children's services electronic case management systems
- Some Equality Act 'protected characteristics' need further work.

Case audit:

DCYJS undertakes a detailed case audit each year, using the youth justice inspection criteria. The audit in 2021 identified good practice in building relationships with young people, despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic. Areas for improvement were identified in:

- More work to be done on making assessments, plans and interventions accessible, collaborative (with young people, parents and with other professionals) and responsive to discrimination
- Work to do on clarifying and aligning reparation activities, unpaid work, employability options and constructive activities, including links to community organisations.

Learning reviews and inspection reports:

DCYJS takes part in local multi-agency learning reviews under both the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the MAPPA Strategic Management Board. During 2021/22 the DCYJS Manager chaired the review panel for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review in the Dorset Council area and the review panel for a MAPPA Serious Case Review in Bournemouth.

Relevant issues identified in local learning reviews this year include:

- High quality transition arrangements for young people moving to adult services
- The importance of persistence in building positive relationships with young people
- Joint work across youth justice services for children in care placed out of area
- Identifying possible needs and risks for younger siblings when working with a child in the justice system
- Safe ways to manage risk within teenage intimate relationships.

HMI Probation published one thematic inspection report relating to youth justice work this year. The report on the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system has been mentioned above. The DCYJS Team Plan for 2021/22 was updated to include the recommendations from this report and work in these areas will continue in 2022/23.

HMI Probation continued to publish inspection reports into individual youth justice services during 2021/22, summarised in their Annual Report in March 2022: [2021 Annual Report: \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/2021-annual-report/).

Views of DCYJS Board members, team members and service users:

Information relating to the service's performance, progress on past plans, learning from local and other case reviews and inspection reports and the priorities of other local strategic partnerships were reported and discussed with the DCYJS Board in January 2022 and with the DCYJS team in February 2022. The views of service users were collected during the year, with particular attention paid to the messages from the view-seeking work with young people in custody. Those conversations identified the following strategic priorities for our youth justice partnership in 2022/23.

Strategic Priorities for 2022-23

The work of the service is underpinned by commitments to repairing harm to victims and children, to helping children to build positive identities and futures and to the 'Child First' ethos of the Youth Justice Board. All of these commitments depend on the team's ability to build positive relationships with children, parents/carers, victims, other professionals and each other.

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

- System improvement
- Practice improvement

System Improvement

Continue to reduce the rate of local children entering the justice system

- Allocate Youth Justice Worker time to support children who are diverted from formal youth justice outcomes
- Develop multi-agency understanding and plans to avoid children aged 10-13 entering the justice system
- Work with Dorset Police on the next steps of their youth diversion work, including the outcome of research into the impact of formal and informal out of court disposals in recent years
- Confirm local multi-agency arrangements to ensure that children identified for early concerns over anti-social behaviour have any additional needs recognised and addressed.

Continue to address over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system

- Implement the recommendations from the thematic inspection into the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the justice system
- Monitor the experiences and outcomes for young people in our youth justice system with diverse heritage and take action to reduce the risk of them entering custody

- Develop data recording and reporting to identify different groups at possible risk of over-representation, such as more specific ethnicity information, disability, care status, SEND
- Cross-reference youth justice disproportionality issues with other relevant outcomes for children, such as school exclusion, experiencing exploitation, contact with social care services
- Develop the YJS response to children with gender identity issues
- Continue to share with partners the findings from DCYJS view-seeking work with young people in custody
- Work with local authority SEND and Virtual School partners to self-assess our joint work and develop action plans as required.

Continue to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the local youth justice system

- Work with HMCTS to shorten the time between charge and first hearing dates for youth cases
- Co-produce with magistrates, young people and parents a guide to the local youth courts so that young people and their parents/carers are better prepared for court and better included in the work of the court
- Work with defence solicitors to share the findings from view-seeking work with young people to improve communication and the effectiveness of legal advice
- Provide police colleagues with training in the communication needs of young people in the justice system and suitable communication techniques
- Strengthen the support for young adults in the justice system by working jointly with local authority leaving care services, SEND services and the Probation Service.

Practice Improvement

Make our assessments, plans and interventions more accessible, collaborative and responsive to discrimination

- Agree with young people a better format for intervention plans, with advice from the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, to be used across all DCYJS work
- Change the format of DCYJS Referral Order Initial Panel reports to present the information about the child before the information about the offence
- Support DCYJS staff to write assessments, plans and reports in 'Easy Read' style
- Work with young people to understand their experiences of discrimination and its impact on their identity
- Meet with young people and their parents/carers to go through reports and seek their views before court appearances or Referral Order panel meetings
- Include the views of young people and their parents/carers in team case audit activities.

Clarify and align activities to repair harm, increase employability and to support pro-social interests and activities, including links to community organisations

- Review the team's approach to our work with young people to help them repair the harm from their offence
- Clarify the overlaps and distinctions between work to repair harm, Unpaid Work, employability courses and constructive activities
- Agree a budget to support children to access positive pro-social activities, building on their strengths and interests, that can be continued after DCYJS involvement ends
- Build links with a wider range of community organisations to increase the service's ability to find the right activities for children's varying interests and skills.

Workforce Development

The DCYJS Workforce Development Policy identifies core training for different roles in the team. As well as refresher training in child safeguarding, child exploitation and information governance, team members have also completed training in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

In addition to these core training courses, which will continue to be attended and updated in 2022/23, the service's development plans require staff training in the following areas:

- Trauma-informed practice – refresher training for all practitioner staff, initial training for new staff
- MAPPA and the management of risk – refresher training for all practitioner staff
- 'Easy Read' – support from the team's Speech and Language Therapists to help team members write assessments, plans and reports in an 'easy read' style
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – use our joint self-assessment process with local authority colleagues to identify training needs in respect of SEND
- Self-harm and suicide risk – DCYJS health team to support colleagues in their assessment and response to self-harm and suicide risks.

Working in youth justice has perhaps never been as demanding as in the last two years, with the Covid pandemic not only affecting our service users but also our team members. Supporting the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers will continue to be a priority in 2022/23, attending to relationships within the team as well as with children, parents/carers, victims and other professionals.

Board Development

As mentioned above, the DCYJS inspection self-assessment identified some areas where the work of the Partnership Board could be strengthened. In December 2021 the Youth Justice Board published updated guidance for YJS Partnership Boards, 'Youth Justice Service Governance and Leadership'.

In addition to its quarterly meetings, the DCYJS Partnership Board will hold a development session in June 2022 to review the key messages from the national

guidance and from the local self-assessment, as well as taking time to consider the service's priorities and arrangements for the coming years.

Details of the current membership and attendance of the DCYJS Partnership Board are included in Appendix One.

12. Evidence-based practice and innovation

DCYJS service developments in recent years have included the addition of Speech and Language expertise to the team in 2018 and the implementation of the Trauma Recovery Model in 2020. Both these developments reflected growing evidence about the specific needs of children in the youth justice system.

One of the messages from our conversations with local young people who have been sentenced or remanded to custody was that the crucial and memorable element for them was their relationship with their YJS worker, not the interventions and resources used by the worker. This echoes evidence that has accrued over the years, in a number of settings, that the quality of the relationship is the most important factor in supporting positive change. Building a balanced, trusting and consistent working relationship with a child in the youth justice system is not innovative but it is skilled, difficult and evidence-based work. Understanding a child's communication needs and the impact of their past experiences increases the chances of success in this work.

During 2021/22, working in the context of the Covid pandemic, DCYJS have introduced practice improvements to increase the effectiveness of our work including:

- Semi-structured interviews with young people who have been in custody to gain their views about how DCYJS and other local services could improve our work
- Use of virtual working to strengthen links between DCYJS practitioners and children in care placed out of our area
- Improved transition arrangements for young people entering adult services, supported by the DCYJS Probation Officer
- Increasing and diversifying DCYJS Police Officers' contacts with young people and parents to build trust
- Development of a DCYJS approach to improve restorative work for offences against emergency workers
- Increased use and consistent format for trauma-informed case consultations with the DCYJS health team
- Changing DCYJS practice to hold multi-agency Risk Assessment Panels for all weapons offences, not just those where the child is assessed as posing a High Risk of Serious Harm to others.

13. Looking forward

The strategic priorities and plans for the DCYJS partnership are set out in section 11. A more detailed action plan is used within the service to support this work.

While noting the concerns, risks and issues described in section 10 of this document, the intention of the DCYJS Partnership Board and the DCYJS staff group is that the coming year will see further improvements in the number of children entering the justice system, in how young people from over-represented groups are treated in our local youth justice system and in the efficiency and quality of our partnership work. For those young people

who do require support from DCYJS we will work collaboratively with them, making it easier for them to engage with our service and supporting them to access activities that will enable them to repair harm, enhance their education and skills and develop their strengths and abilities.

14. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	Theresa Leavy
Signature	
Date	

15. Appendix 1

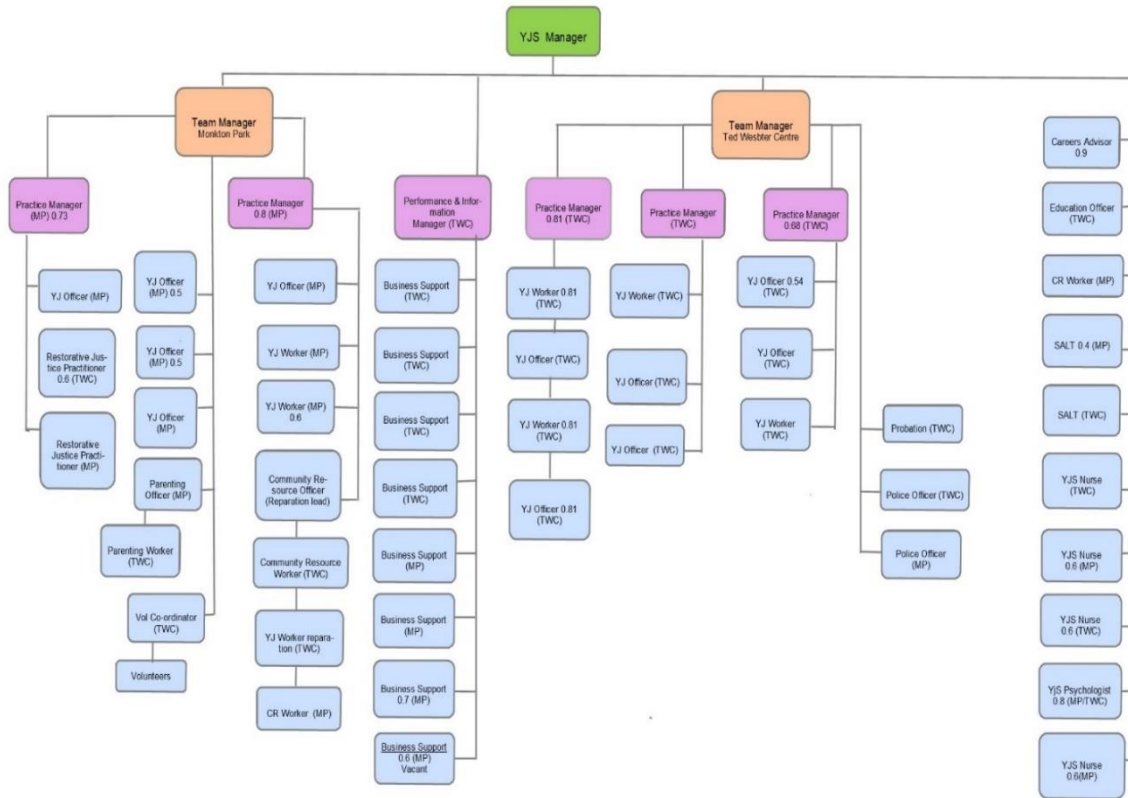
The following table shows the membership and attendance of the DCYJS Partnership Board:

Organisation	Current Post Holder	Board Member	Title	23/04/2021	16/07/2021	05/11/2021	21/01/2022	Key
Ansbury	Nicola Newman	Y	Chief Executive, Ansbury Guidance	Attendance	Non attendance	N/A	N/A	Membership ceased in July 2021
BCP Council DCS	Elaine Redding	Y	Corporate Director Children's Services	Attendance	Attendance	Non attendance	Deputy sent	
BCP Council CSC	Brian Relph/Jane White	Y	Head of Children & Young People Social Care	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
BCP Council Education	Sarah Rempel	Y	Director, Family and Inclusion Services, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	N/A	N/A	Attendance	Deputy sent	
BCP Council Finance	Stephen MacDonald/Jo Collis-Heavens	Y	Senior Accountant, Children's Services	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
Clinical Commissioning Group	Elaine Hurl	Y	Senior Commissioning Manager, Mental Health	Non attendance	Attendance	Non attendance	Non attendance	
Dorset Council DCS	Theresa Leavy (Chair)	Y	Executive Director for People - Children	Attendance	Attendance	Deputy sent	Attendance	
Dorset Council CSC	Sarah-Jane Smedmor	Y	Corporate Director Care and Protection	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
Dorset Council Education	Mark Blackman/Vik Verma	N	Corporate Director, Education and Learning	Attendance	Non attendance	Attendance	Non attendance	
Dorset Healthcare Trust	Lisa White/Clare Hurley	Y	Clinical Services Manager, Bournemouth & Christchurch CAMHS	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
Dorset Magistrates Youth Panel chair	Caroline Foster	Y	Chair, Dorset Magistrates Youth Panel	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
Dorset Police	Jan Steadman	Y	Head of Criminal Justice and Custody	Attendance	Attendance	Non attendance	Attendance	
Dorset Police	Kerry Shelley	Y	Head of Youth Services / Acting Inspector, Dorset Police Youth Justice Team	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
HM Court Services	Jane Dunmall	Y	Legal Advisor	Non attendance	Attendance	N/A	N/A	Membership cased July 2021
National Probation Service	Toni Shepherd	Y	National Probation Service Dorset	Non attendance	Attendance	Deputy sent	Attendance	
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	Lewis Gool/Helen Fletcher	Y	Grants and Commissioning Officer	Attendance	Non attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
Public Health Dorset	Nicky Cleave	Y	Assistant Director for Public Health	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
YJS BCP Council	David Webb	Y	Service Manager, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	Attendance	
Youth Justice Board	Kate Langley	Y	Head of Innovation and Engagement YJB and Head of South-West and South-Central regions	Attendance	Attendance	Non attendance	Non attendance	

16. Appendix 2 – Service Structure Chart

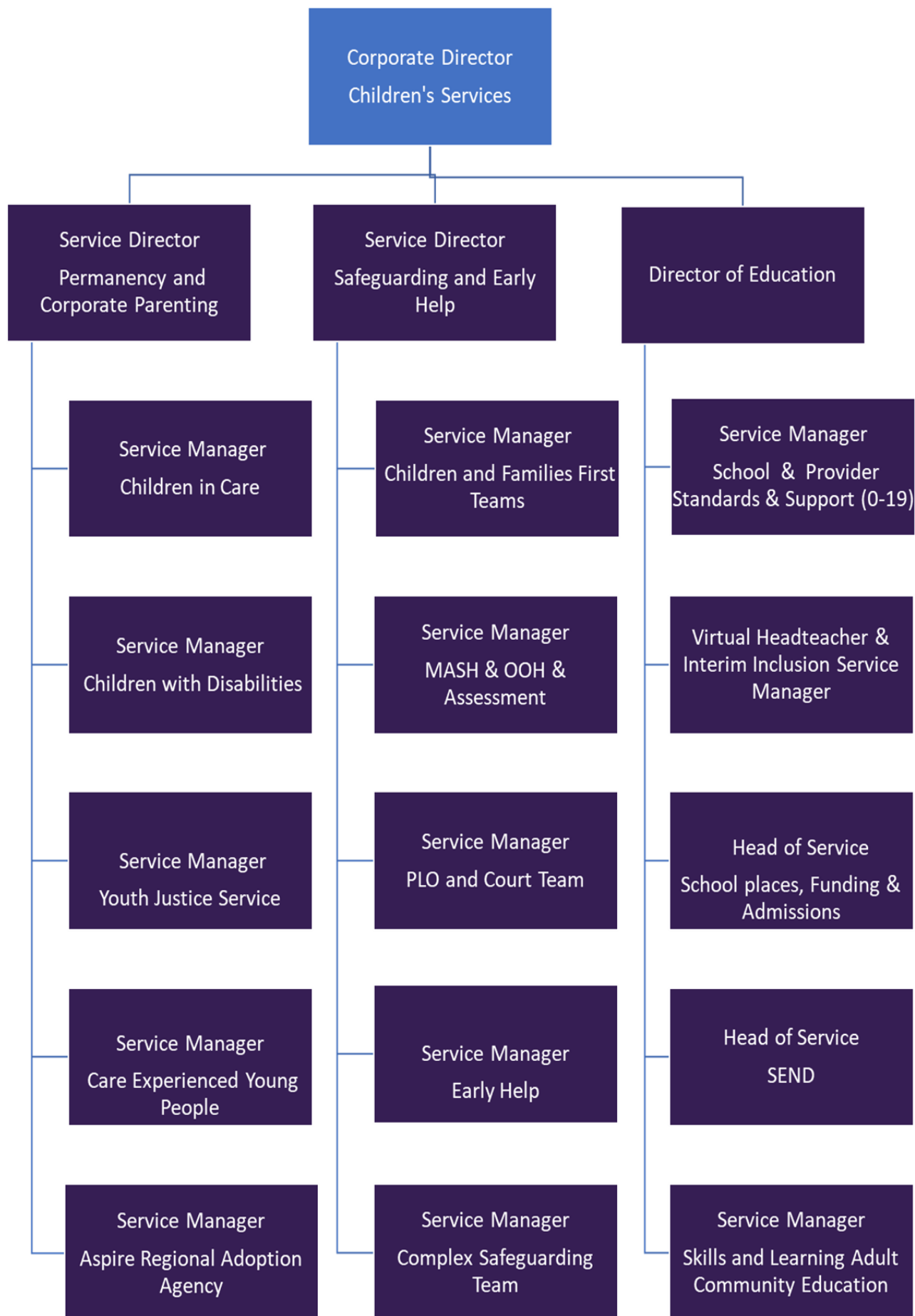
The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service - YJS Structure



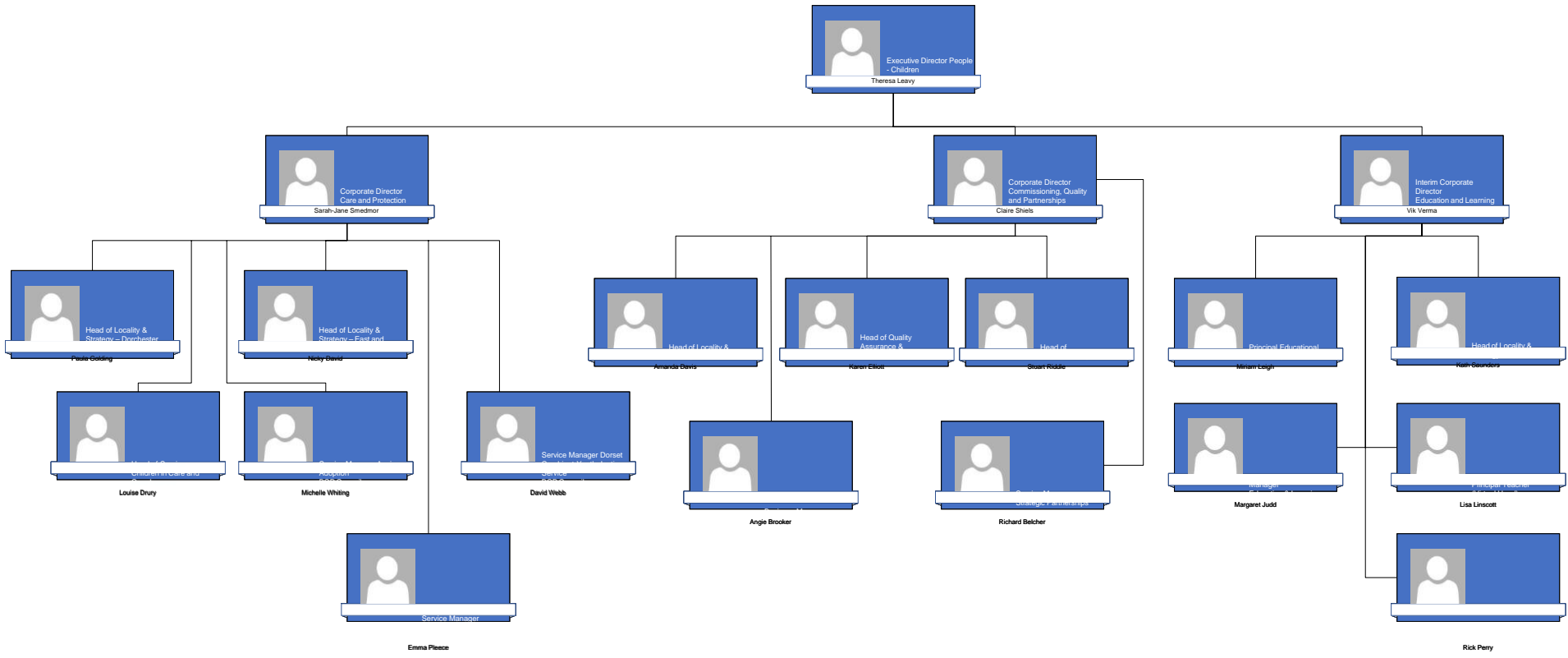
Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service January 2022

BCP Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team:



Dorset Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team:

Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

The following table shows the gender and ethnicity of DCYJS staff members and volunteers:

Ethnicity	Female staff members	Male staff members	Female volunteers	Male volunteers	Total
White British	38	11	13	6	68
White Other	1	1	1	1	4
Mixed Heritage	1	0	0	0	1

Five staff members in DCYJS are recorded as having a disability.

Common youth justice terms
Please add any locally used terminology

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	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.
Child First	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
Child looked-after	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for

	low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	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
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	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
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre

SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	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.
YJS	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
YOI	Young offender institution