

 D O R S E T
 C O M B I N E D
 Youth Justice Service



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023/24

Service	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Head of Service	David Webb
Chair of YJS Board	Theresa Leavy

Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

Contents

1. [Introduction, vision, strategy and local context](#)
2. [Child First](#)
3. [Voice of the child](#)
4. [Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements](#)
5. [YJS Partnership Board Development](#)
6. [Progress on previous plan](#)
7. [Resources and services](#)
8. [Performance](#)
9. [Priorities](#)
10. [Standards for children in the youth justice system](#)
11. [Workforce Development](#)
12. [Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation](#)
13. [Service development plan](#)
14. [Challenges, risks and issues](#)
15. [Sign off, submission and approval](#)
16. [Appendix 1 – Staffing Structure and Staffing Information](#)
17. [Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2023/24](#)
18. [Appendix 3 - Smart Survey feedback results](#)

1. Introduction, vision, strategy and local context

Introduction

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) for 2023/24. 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 adheres to the Youth Justice Board's 'document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

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.

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.

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 Integrated Care Board.

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 prevent children entering the youth justice system, 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.

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 380,00. 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:

Dorset Council:

Population

Age 10-17

Number of Children ¹	32,924
Male ¹	51.4%
Female ¹	48.6%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals ²	20.2%
Pupils with SEN Support ²	14.2%
Pupils with an EHC Plan ²	5.4%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups ³	4.7%
22.7% children living in Poverty after housing costs ⁴	

Safeguarding

Age 10-17

Number of Children in Need ⁵	665
Male ⁵	52.5%
Female ⁵	46.9%
Indeterminate ⁵	0.6%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan ⁵	140
Number of Children in Care ⁶	310
Male ⁶	60.3%
Female ⁶	39.4%
Indeterminate ⁵	0.3%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation ⁷	
Significant	24
Moderate	56
Emerging	16

1. Dorset mid-year 2021 population estimates (published June 2022)

2. October 2022 School Census (includes all pupils at a Dorset School aged 10-17: ages as at 31 August 2022)

3. January 2022 School Census (all non-white pupils at a Dorset School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')

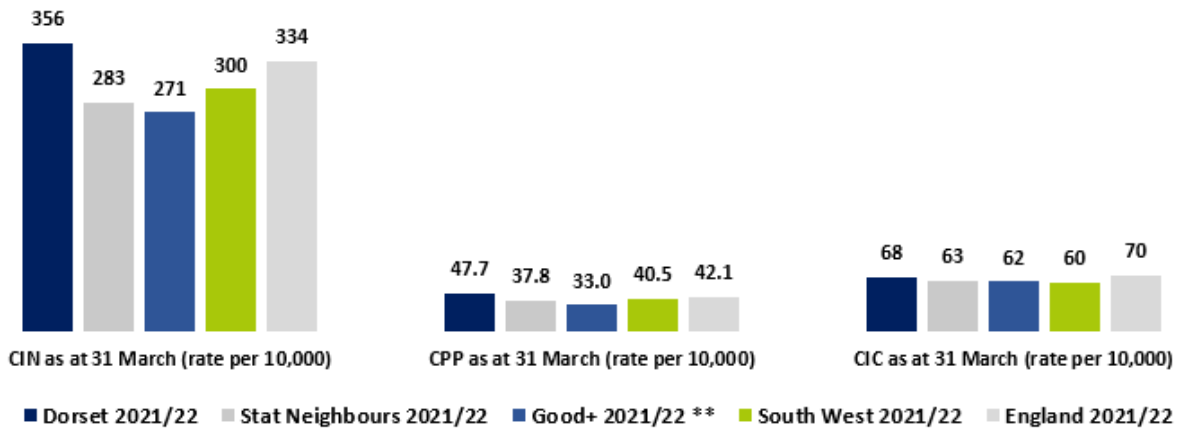
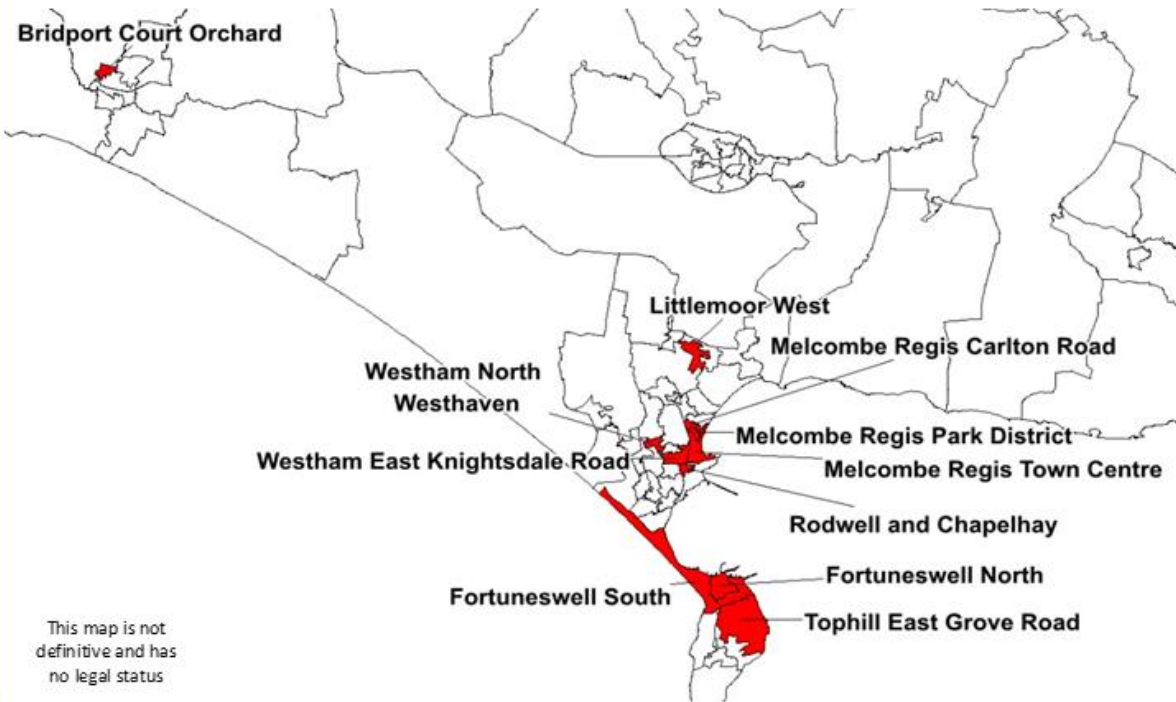
4. Local child poverty indicators 2020/21. Based on the DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2022).

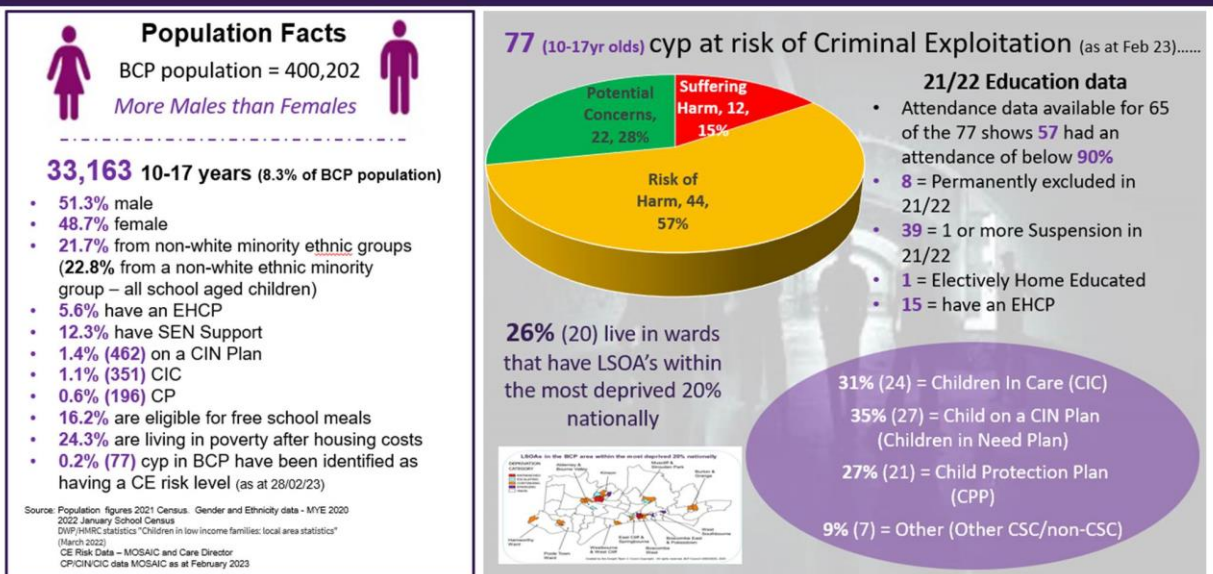
5. From MOSAIC, as at 31 March 2023. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown, Unborn and Indeterminate

6. From MOSAIC, as at 31 March 2023. Gender figures exclude Unknown, Unborn and Indeterminate

7. From MOSAIC as at 31 March 2023

LSOAs in Dorset within the top 20% deprived nationally





DCYJS was inspected in September and October 2022 under the HMI Probation 'Full Joint Inspection' framework. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspection report can be found at this link: [A joint inspection of youth offending services in Dorset \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk).

2. Child First

Under the leadership of the Youth Justice Board, 'Child First' is the guiding principle for the youth justice sector, underpinning their guidance documents 'Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System' and the 2022 revision of 'Case Management Guidance'. These documents direct the work of youth justice services.

The YJB's 'Child First: Overview and Guide' states that 'A Child First approach means putting children at the heart of what we do. The youth justice system should treat children as children, see the whole child, including any structural barriers they face and focus on better outcomes for children. This will also create safer communities with fewer victims'.

The Child First approach has four tenets, summed up as 'ABCD':

- **As children:** recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support
- **Building pro-social identity:** promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending
- **Collaborating with children:** involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion
- **Diverting from stigma:** promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within it, as we know that stigma causes further offending.

The Child First approach is built on evidence demonstrating its effectiveness to reduce offending by the small number of children within the youth justice system and to prevent offending by children who are at risk of entering the justice system. The research evidence is summarised in this document: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/>.

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.

The following feedback from a young person to a YJS manager illustrates how this approach can work in practice:

I had a telephone conversation with P, and she shared with me that she had a good relationship with her YJS worker, T, and she got on really well with her. P didn't have anything she was unhappy about and said that T was clear with her about what was expected from her, and they didn't focus solely on the offence as in P's words "I just used a word I shouldn't have". She said T supported her with liaising with school and supporting her with positive activities. P was clear the offence was a one-off occurrence and T didn't make her focus on the negatives of what had happened.

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2022/23 set out strategic priorities which were aligned with the YJB's Child First principles, reflecting work to strengthen the local implementation of the four tenets of Child First practice.

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

3. 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 towards the end of the child's contact with the service, alongside some of the questions in the self-assessment documents that are completed by children and their carers. Appendix 3 shows the collated Smart Survey responses received in February and March 2023.

The survey includes questions about children having a say in the work that we do with them, about their worker believing the child would make positive changes and the child feeling listened to and being helped to find their own answers. These questions give an indication of the effectiveness of worker relationships with the child. Positive responses indicate worker adherence to the service's practice principles. The survey responses in Appendix 3 show that most children were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with these aspects of our work.

In 2022/23 the service also sought the views of children and parents as part of an audit of YJS work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Seeking the views of service users is now an established part of YJS case audit processes, influencing the service's improvement plans.

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. Examples of recent comments from service users include:

H's mum has thanked me for the work completed to help H. She said he has turned things around and it was a wakeup call for him. He is starting to think about the future.

My feedback for you couldn't be more positive. All I have seen from you is someone who really cares about the well-being of my son. As I said on the call I really did expect this process to be something to be endured for a year but it's been so positive and great for M's self-esteem. Nothing has been too much trouble and you were always there when we needed you.

Just a update on W. The police and others are all really proud of him turning himself around and not being on the radar any more. He was pupil of the week whoop whoop. And has been gold for the last 2 weeks at school. We have the YJS SALT calling round in the morning to do the report for EHCP and to do the autism testing. He had his CAMHS meeting yesterday which went well and he's going to get CBT therapy. I have a meeting at school next Tuesday about his EHCP plan also. So things seem to be moving in the right direction for him. So thank you for all your help steering us in the right direction to receive the help he needed.

In 2022/23 the service also sought the views of children and parents as part of an audit of YJS work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Seeking the views of service users is now an established part of YJS case audit processes, influencing the service's improvement plans.

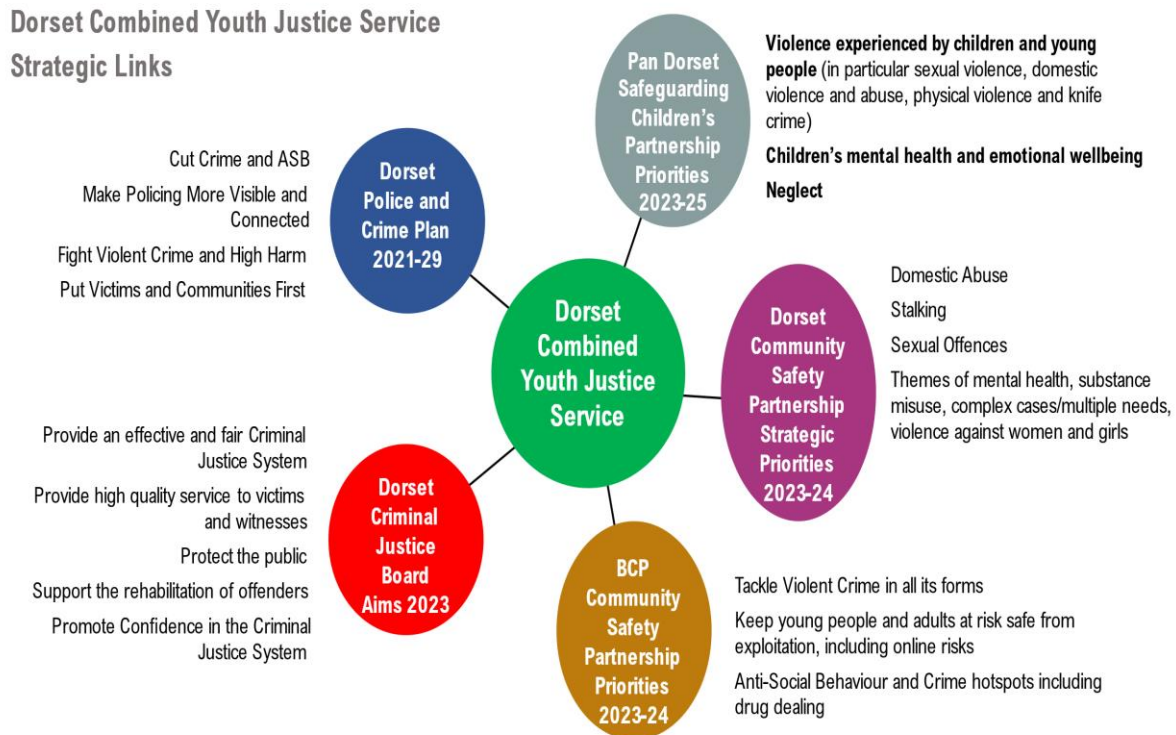
4. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

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 Integrated Care Board
- 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

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan, ensuring its links with other local plans. Board members sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that strategic plans and priorities are integrated and consider the needs of children and victims in the local youth justice system. The following graphic illustrates the links between local strategic groups and their overlapping strategic priorities:



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. The DCYJS Partnership 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.

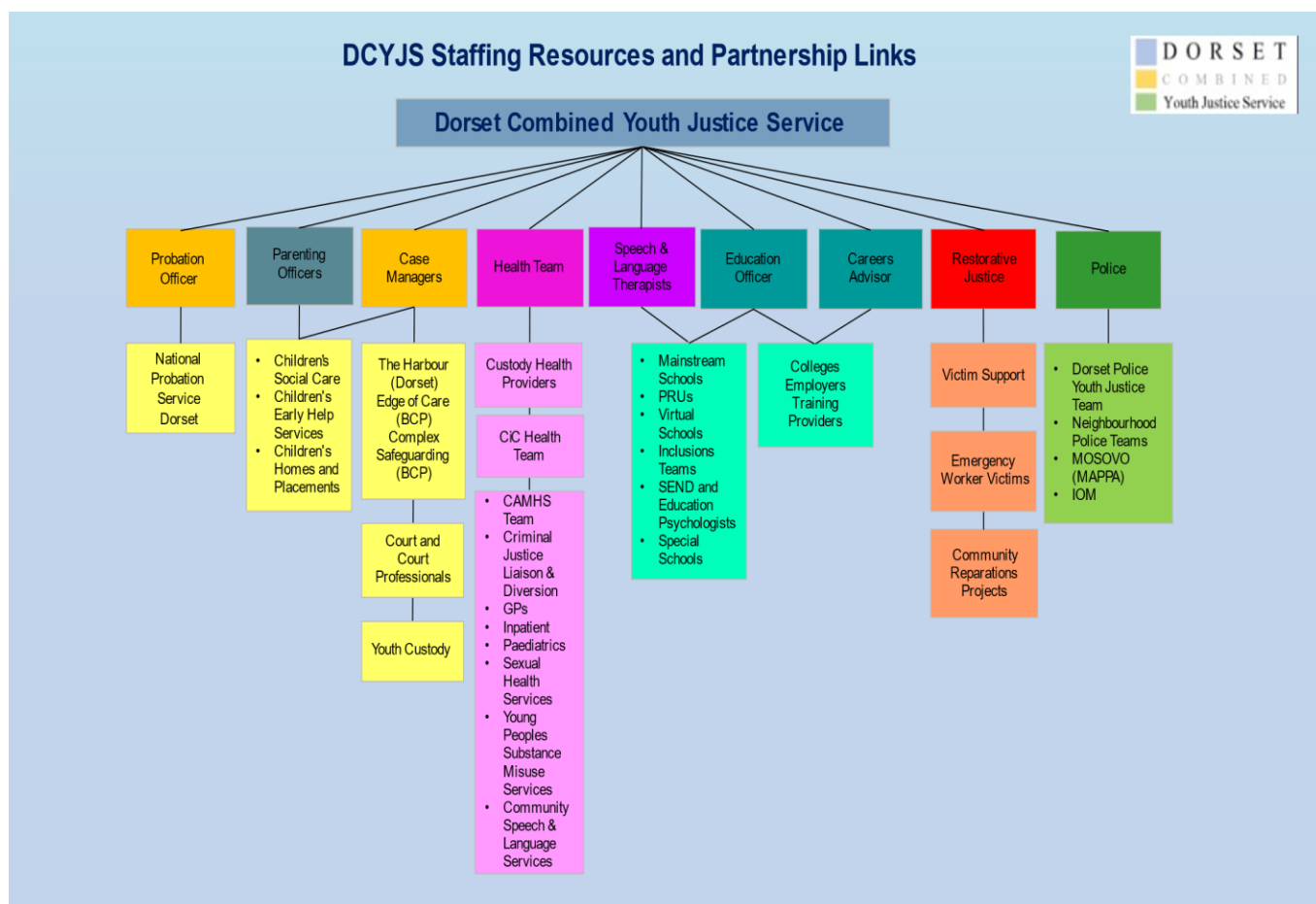
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the 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 Safeguarding and Early Help in the Children's Social Care service. The Head of Service also reports to the Corporate Director for Care and Protection in Dorset Council.

Appendix One 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. Specialist staff are seconded into the service by Dorset Police, the Probation Service and Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust. These workers have line managers in both the YJS and their employing organisation. They have direct access to their own organisation’s case management systems, to enable the prompt and proportionate sharing of information.

The YJS multi-disciplinary team also includes education specialists, parenting workers and restorative justice practitioners. The team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



5. YJS Partnership Board Development

The YJS Partnership Board met for a half-day development session in November 2022. The Board reviewed information from its own self-assessment and from the recent HMI Probation Joint Inspection of the service, which included scrutiny of the Board’s work.

HMI Probation gave a rating of Good for the service’s Governance and Leadership. As well as identifying many strengths, the inspectors suggested possible ‘Areas for improvement’:

- The board chairing arrangements are not rotated. For the partnership board to be challenged in its ambition to drive the performance of the service forward, a level of independence is required that holds all partnership agencies to account.
- While the seniority of the board membership is appropriate, attendance is not consistent.
- Although the youth justice plan references work taking place to look at disproportionality, the service does not have a specific diversity and disproportionality policy. Focus on this area requires a framework that collates the diversity and disproportionality work together, which guides and enables staff to ask appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences.
- Although new board members meet with the YJS service manager and chair of the board as part of their induction, there is no formal induction pack which ensure consistency.

The Board has taken action in response to all these points. The Board is currently reviewing its chairing arrangements. The attendance of Board members is monitored at each meeting and has improved since the inspection. An induction process for new Board members has been agreed and work is underway on a discrete YJS Diversity and Disproportionality Policy.

6. Progress on previous plan

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2022/23 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:

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

- Implementation of the Ministry of Justice 'Turnaround' programme targeted at children who have not yet entered the justice system
- Use of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences who receive assessments and interventions through the Turnaround programme
- Extending the Turnaround approach for children who are excluded from the Turnaround programme criteria, such as children in care and children on a child protection plan
- Developing a Turnaround route for children who are coming to police attention for repeated Anti-Social Behaviour
- Work in Dorset Council to develop a pro-active approach to identifying and supporting children who are at risk of future offending.

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

- Analysis of police custody detention times by ethnicity
- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation

- YJS staff have received training to build their knowledge and confidence in working with sexuality and gender identity issues
- The findings from previous view-seeking work with young people have been shared with other services
- A route has been agreed with Dorset Police for the YJS to help families raise concerns about perceived unfair treatment on grounds of race
- YJS Speech and Language Therapists provide assessment reports to other professionals to help them meet children's communication needs and to assist with assessments for special educational needs and disabilities

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

- YJS staff and Dorset youth panel magistrates have worked together, with advice from children and parents, to create and distribute the booklet "You are going to Youth Court in Dorset"
- Continued joint work with DCYJS and the Dorset Police Youth Justice Team to ensure the timeliness of youth Out of Court Disposals
- Work with defence solicitors to reduce the inappropriate use of 'no comment' interviews which prevent children receiving diversion options or Out of Court Disposals
- The YJS Speech and Language Therapist provided training sessions to detectives in Dorset Police and to Appropriate Adults to help them respond to children's communication needs
- Transition arrangements from YJS to Probation have been strengthened, working with other services such as leaving care and SEND to meet young adults' ongoing needs.

Practice Improvement priorities for 2022/23 are listed here, with brief details of actions taken, progress made and work still to do:

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

- A new format for intervention plans, based on advice from the YJS Speech and Language Therapists, has been trialled with some children and volunteers
- We have changed the format of our reports for Referral Order initial panel meetings so that information about the child comes first, before information about the offence
- YJS practitioners have received training and support from YJS Speech and Language Therapists to promote the use of 'Talking Mats' in their work with children
- Team audits of casework now include contact with the child and their parents to seek their views of our work
- Identification and recording of diversity and identity issues has improved, with diversity statements added to Pre-Sentence Reports.

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

- We have reviewed our approach to 'reparation' activity to switch the focus to 'repairing harm' and making the activities more meaningful for the child and responsive to their victim's wishes
- Recruitment of a new Community Resource Worker has restored our capacity to use these workers for constructive activities and for activities to support employability
- The OPCC has provided funding to support children gaining their 'CSCS' card and to support access to post-16 Maths and English courses
- A budget allocation has been set aside to support children to access positive activities to support pro-social identities and reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

The improvement areas listed above reflect areas of YJS practice which will need continuing attention during 2023/24. Specific issues where more work is needed include:

- Further work to reduce the numbers of local children entering the justice system
- Monitoring the timeliness of cases progressing through the youth court, including the possible need to fast-track priority cases such as those related to weapon offences
- Extend our work with children who have experienced discrimination to help them understand its impact and ways we can respond
- Develop links with community organisations to support children developing a pro-social identity with community support.

7. Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget are listed in Appendix Two.

All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other DCYJS staff are employed by Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. A DCYJS Structure Chart is included in Appendix One, showing the posts provided through our partnership resources DCYJS has a strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary identity, meeting the staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

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. The combined partnership, working across Dorset's local authorities since 2015, has enabled the service to maintain high practice standards while managing real terms budget reductions over that period.

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 from the Youth Justice Grant 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 later 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.

8. Performance

In 2022/23 the three national key performance indicators for youth justice services related to:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system
- The rate and frequency 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. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in February 2023 for the period ending December 2022.

New Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for youth justice are being introduced from April 2023. A summary of the new KPIs is included below.

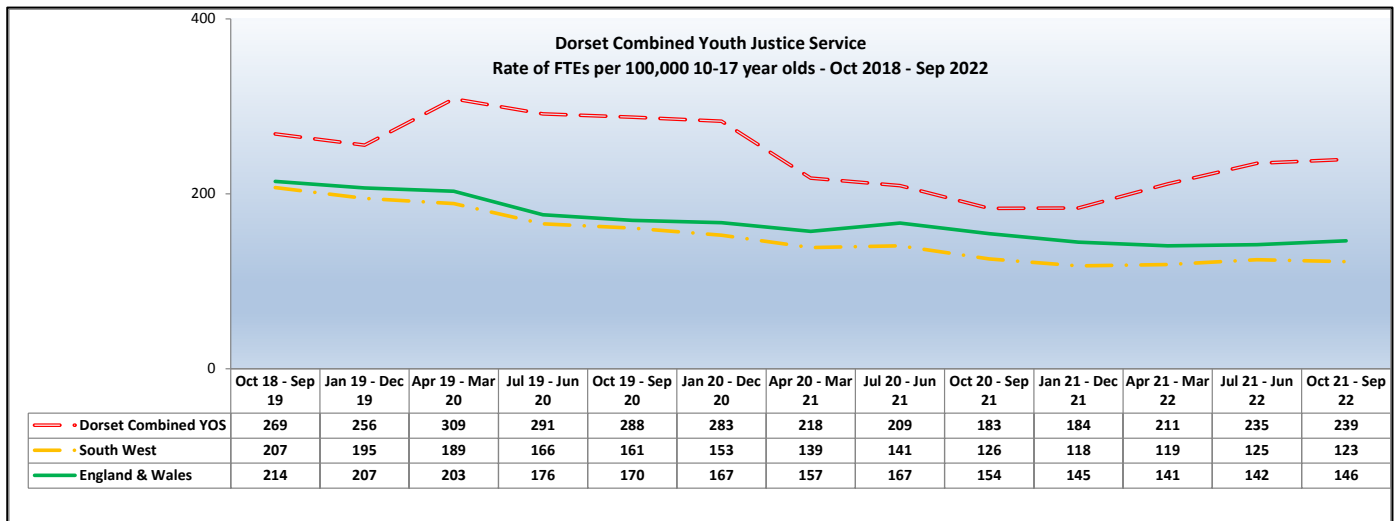
First Time Entrants

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 a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child. 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 how national data allocates children to local areas. 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 saw a reduction in its rate of children entering the justice system in 2020 and 2021, possibly linked to the pandemic and its aftermath. In 2022 the rate has risen, although it has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The combined rate for our two local authorities dropped from 288 per 100,000 under 18s in the year to September 2020 to 183 in the year to September 2021, rising to 239 in the year to September 2022.. Despite local work to divert children from the justice system, DCYJS remains above regional and national averages for this indicator. The ambition is to match or move below rates in other areas.



DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the extent and characteristics of children entering the justice system. Local data shows a reduction in the number of children entering the justice system compared to the year before the pandemic, with the reduction being more marked in the Dorset Council area:

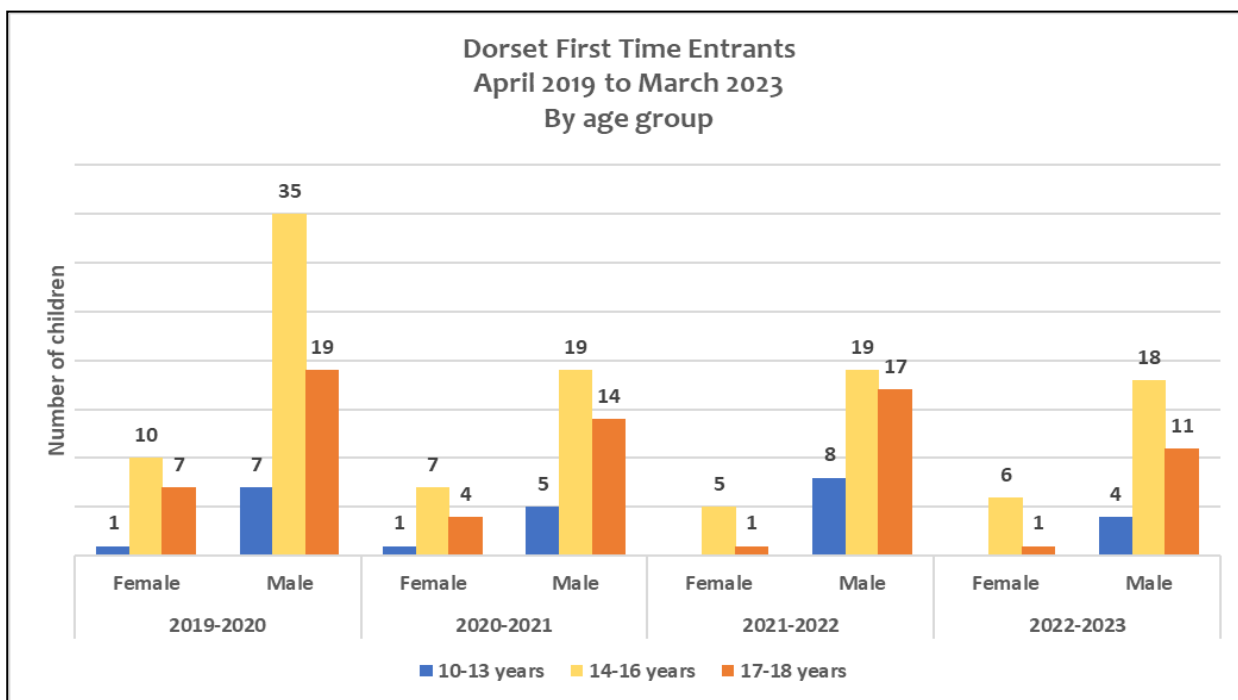
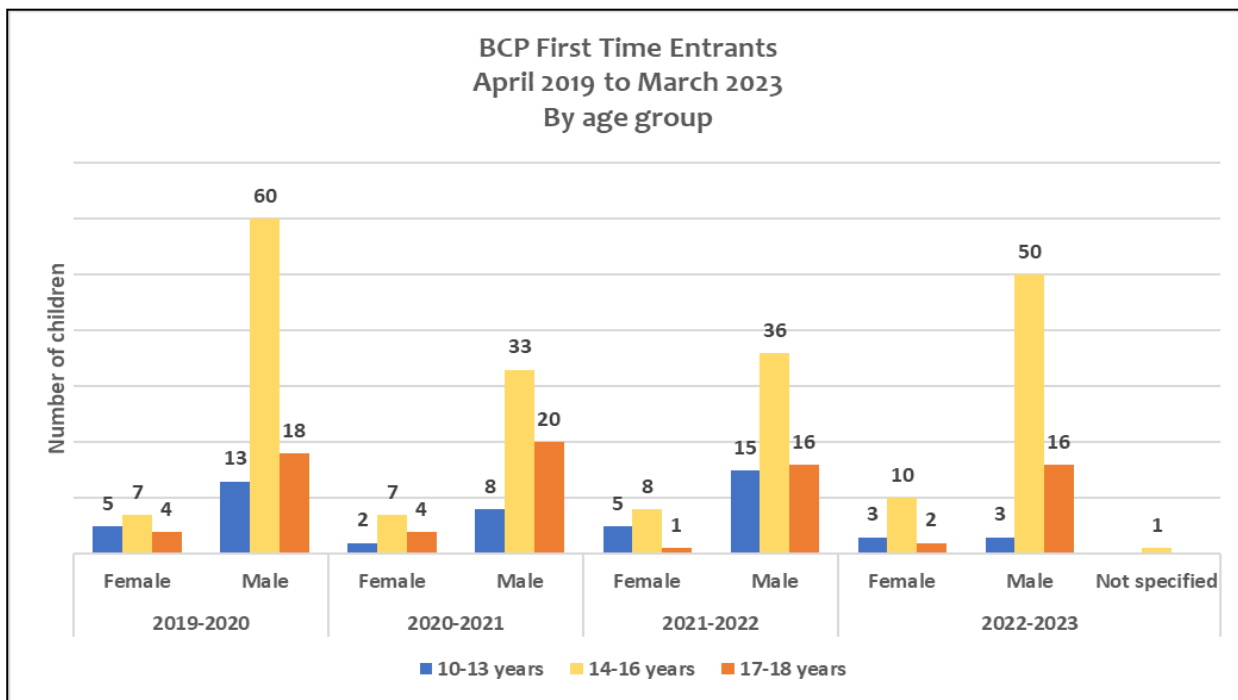
Year	BCP First-Time Entrants	Dorset First-Time Entrants	Total DCYJS First-Time Entrants
2019/20	107	79	186
2020/21	74	50	124
2021/22	81	50	131
2022/23	85	40	125

The gender breakdown of first-time entrants remains fairly consistent, with about 17-18% being female.

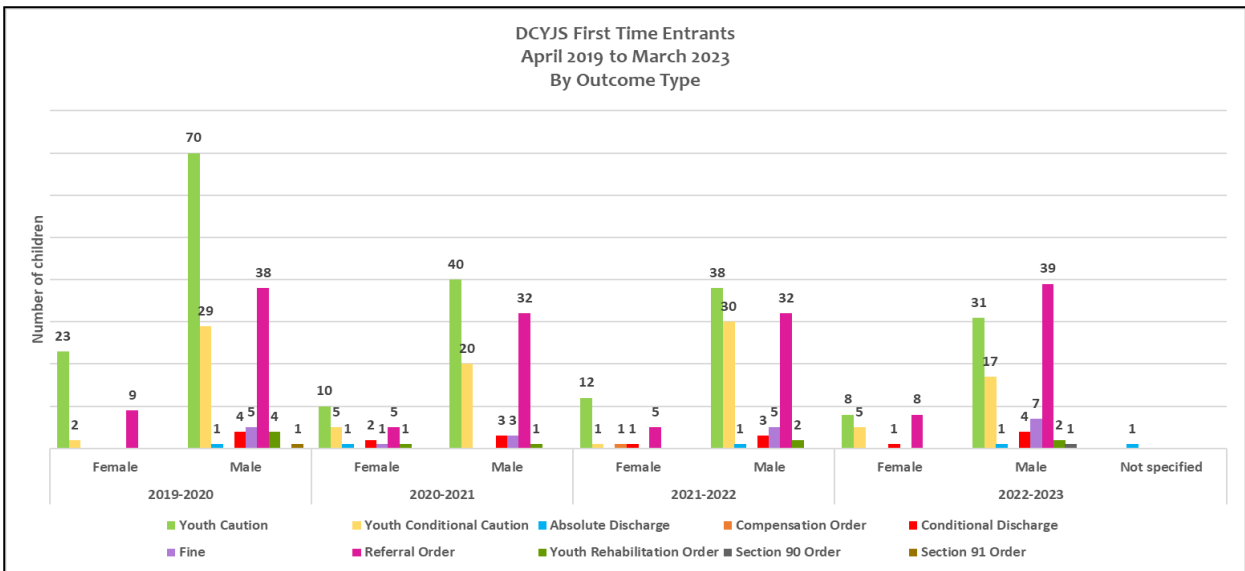
The ethnicity of local first-time entrants does not indicate over-representation of black, mixed heritage or other children of diverse heritage. Over the past two years, local data shows that 10.8% of first-time entrants in the BCP Council area and 3.3% of first-time entrants in the Dorset Council area were from black, mixed heritage or other diverse heritage groups.

Previous analysis of our local first-time entrants indicated that the reduction had been less marked among younger children. Further analysis was undertaken to identify the common factors in this group of younger first-time entrants, with a pattern emerging of these children being first known to the police as a victim or witness of crime, having special educational needs or disabilities, having experienced school exclusions and being known to children's

social care. Data for the past 4 years indicates that 2022/23 saw a reduction in first-time entrants aged 10-13 in both local authority areas:



There was a drop in 2022/23 in the proportion of children receiving out of court disposals when they entered the justice system, down from 60% in 2021/22 to 49% in 2022/23. This is illustrated in the following chart:



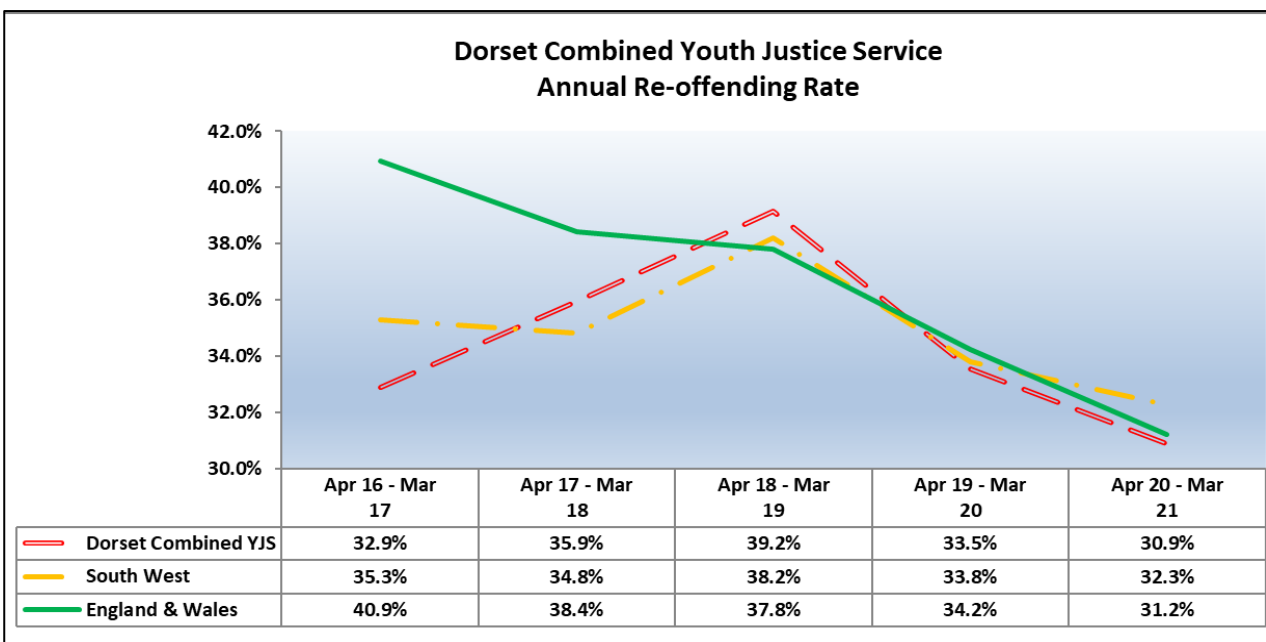
Decision-makers on the local Out of Court Disposal panel have been seeking to divert children from formal outcomes, like Youth Cautions, to informal outcomes like community resolutions.

Local application of the Ministry of Justice ‘Turnaround’ programme is focusing on diverting children from Youth Cautions to an ‘Outcome 22’ disposal, meaning no further police action with the child receiving support from the Turnaround workers.

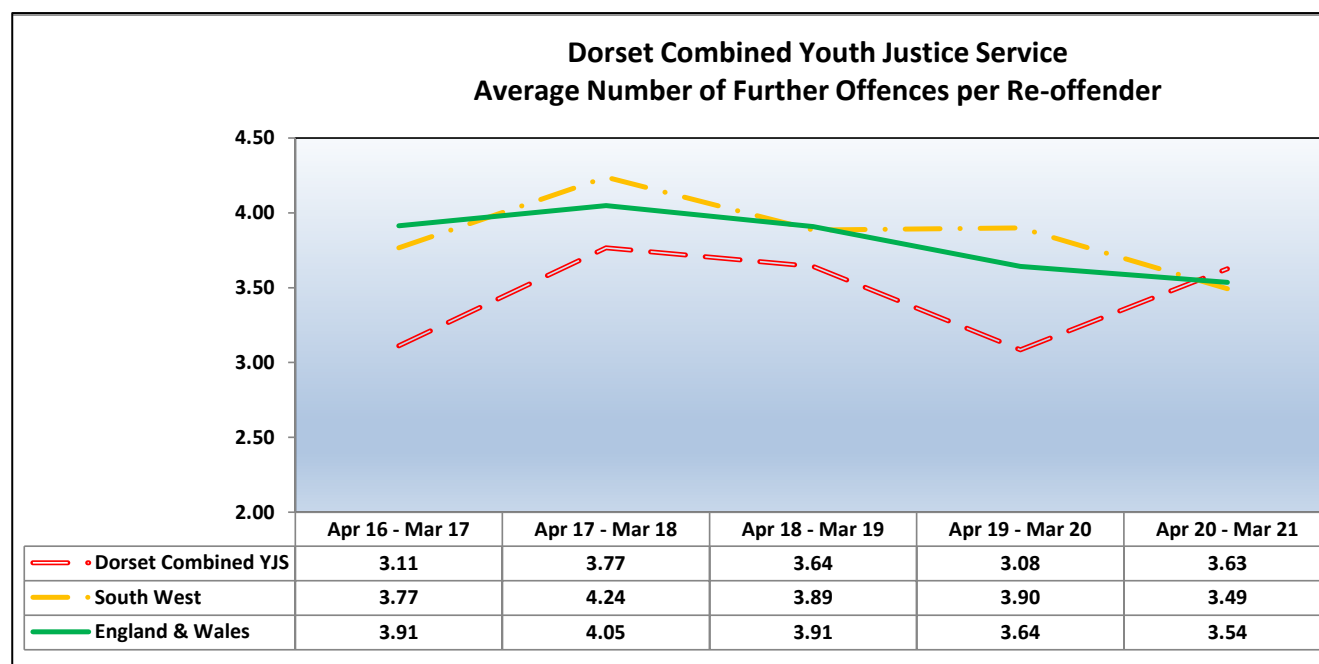
Rate of Proven Reoffending

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 2021.

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)



Reoffences/Reoffenders



DCYJS has remained below or close to the regional and national averages for both measures, showing good performance in both the numbers of children reoffending and the average number of their offences.

Local data, stored on the DCYJS case management system, can also be scrutinised to provide a more specific understanding of reoffending patterns. Analysis of reoffending by children on the DCYJS caseload between April 2020 and March 2021 gives a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children:

- 14-16 year-olds are the age group most likely to reoffend
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls
- Black and mixed heritage children show a higher reoffending rate than white children
- Children in the BCP Council area had a higher reoffending rate than children in the Dorset Council area
- Children who were currently or previously in care were more likely to reoffend than children who had not been in care
- Children on court orders were more likely to reoffend than children on out of court disposals

[Use of Custodial Sentences](#)

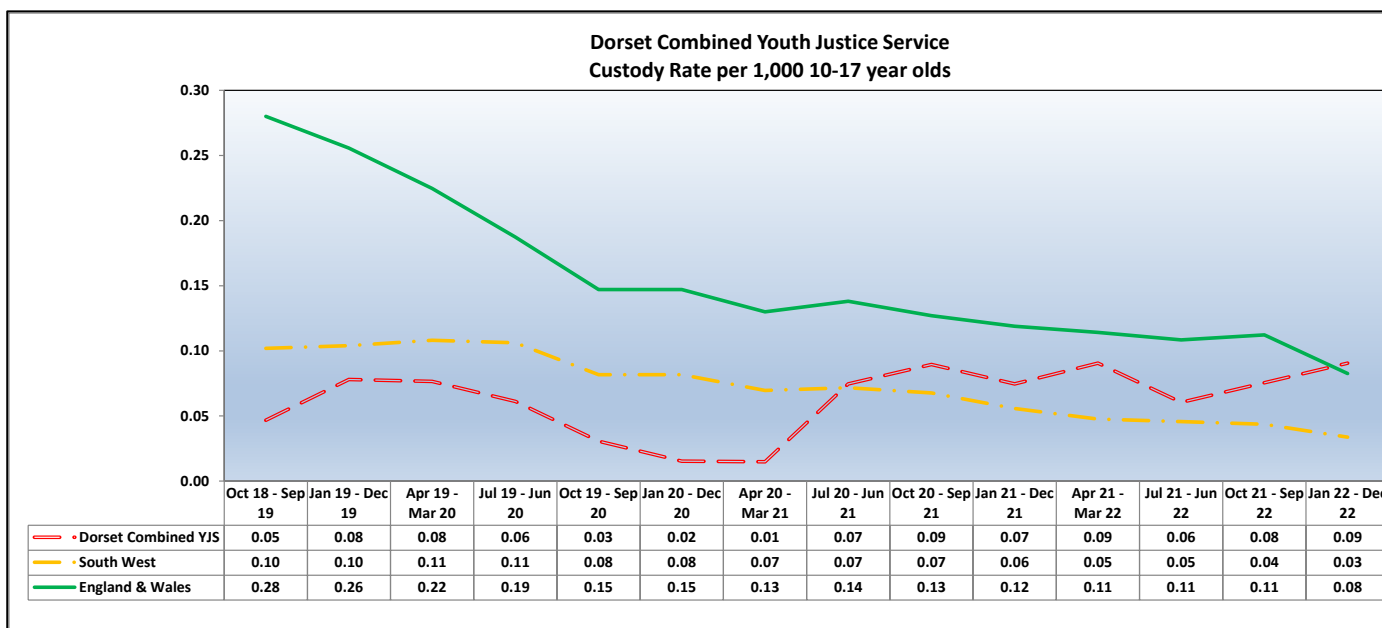
DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The context of this data is a large reduction over recent years in the number of children in custody in England and Wales. This means that small changes in numbers can have a noticeable effect on the local and national rates.

No children from the Dorset Council area have been sentenced to custody since March 2020.

Seven children from the BCP Council area were sentenced to custody in the year to March 2023.

DCYJS works closely with other children’s services to provide community sentences which have the confidence of our local courts so that custodial sentences are only used as a last resort.



[New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators](#)

Youth Justice Services are required to report on a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from April 2023. The new KPIs will add information for children who received diversion outcomes as well as for children on the statutory caseload. The intention is for the new KPIs to show the strength of local partnership working, indicated by the following measures:

- Accommodation – the percentage of children in suitable accommodation
- Education, training and employment (ETE) – the percentage of children attending a suitable ETE arrangement
- SEND – the percentage of children with SEND who are in suitable ETE with a current, formal learning plan in place
- Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to improve their mental health or emotional wellbeing and the percentage being offered and attending interventions
- Substance misuse – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address substance misuse and the percentage being offered and attending interventions
- Out of Court Disposals – the percentage of out of court disposals that are completed or not completed

- Management Board attendance – the attendance of senior representatives from partner agencies and if partners contribute data from their services to identify ethnic and racial disproportionality
- Wider services – the percentage of YJS children who are currently on an Early Help plan, on a Child Protection Plan, classified as a Child in Need or a Child in Care
- Serious Violence – the rates of children convicted for a serious violence offence on the YJS caseload
- Victims – the percentage of victims who consent to be contacted by the YJS; of those, the percentage who are engaged with about restorative justice opportunities, asked their views prior to out of court disposal decision-making and planning for statutory court orders, provided with information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate support services (when requested).

DCYJS has been working with local partners to continue or establish data exchange processes to enable it to meet all of these new reporting requirements. We have also been working with our case management system supplier to agree the necessary changes to our case management system to enable the new recording and reporting.

9. Priorities

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. The YJS reviews custodial sentences to identify learning, including possible indications of over-representation or differential treatment.

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 court orders and custodial sentences. The proportion of children with diverse ethnic heritage on the DCYJS caseload is higher among those who received a court order compared to those who received an out of court disposal. The reoffending rate of children with diverse ethnic heritage is higher than the rate for white children. This may reflect the higher reoffending rate for children on court orders but other explanations and responses are also being explored, such as the point of entry into the justice system and possible differences in the assessment of risk. The YJB have recently published research analysing ethnic disparity in reoffending rates in the youth justice system which gives us a helpful basis on which to address this issue: [Understanding ethnic disparity in reoffending rates in the youth justice system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/understanding-ethnic-disparity-in-reoffending-rates-in-the-youth-justice-system).

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. DCYJS recognises that work to make girls safer, in the context of the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda and concerns about peer on peer sexual abuse, requires work with boys to help them achieve healthy relationships and to reduce the risk they pose to girls.

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. DCYJS commissioned training in this area for its practitioners in March 2023.

During 2022/23 DCYJS made good progress, with local authority colleagues, to improve the accuracy of our information about children's educational needs. DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system may well have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In February 2023 29% of children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 17% had the status of 'SEN Support'. 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.

[Prevention](#)

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 in future if they do not receive additional help. 'Diversion' refers to the response to children who have committed 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. 'The Harbour' is a Dorset Council multi-disciplinary service which works with children who need additional support to prevent negative outcomes such as being taken into care or entering the justice system. DCYJS and The Harbour have close links, including joint work with children who have entered the justice system.

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

[Diversion](#)

Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly as an Out of Court Disposal Panel to decide the appropriate youth justice outcome for children who have committed criminal offences. The panel looks for opportunities to divert children from a formal justice outcome 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 2022/23 the Ministry of Justice announced a new programme, 'Turnaround', aimed at 'children on the cusp of the youth justice system'. Locally we have used this programme to target our high rate of first-time entrants. Instead of receiving a Youth Caution, children are considered for an informal response which is recorded by the Police as 'Outcome 22' (No Further Police Action) on the basis that a Turnaround worker will meet with the child and their family, complete an assessment and commission a suitable intervention. The aim is to build the child's positive identity and reduce the risk of further offending.

The local Turnaround programme is overseen by a multi-agency group of operational managers, reporting to the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board and submitting the necessary quarterly returns to the Ministry of Justice.

[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.

In June 2022 HMI Probation published a thematic inspection report on 'education, training and employment services in youth offending teams in England and Wales': [A joint inspection of education, training and employment services in youth offending teams in England and Wales \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#). DCYJS reviewed its ETE work against this report and took actions in response, including improved recording and reporting of school exclusions and of children's education attainment levels.

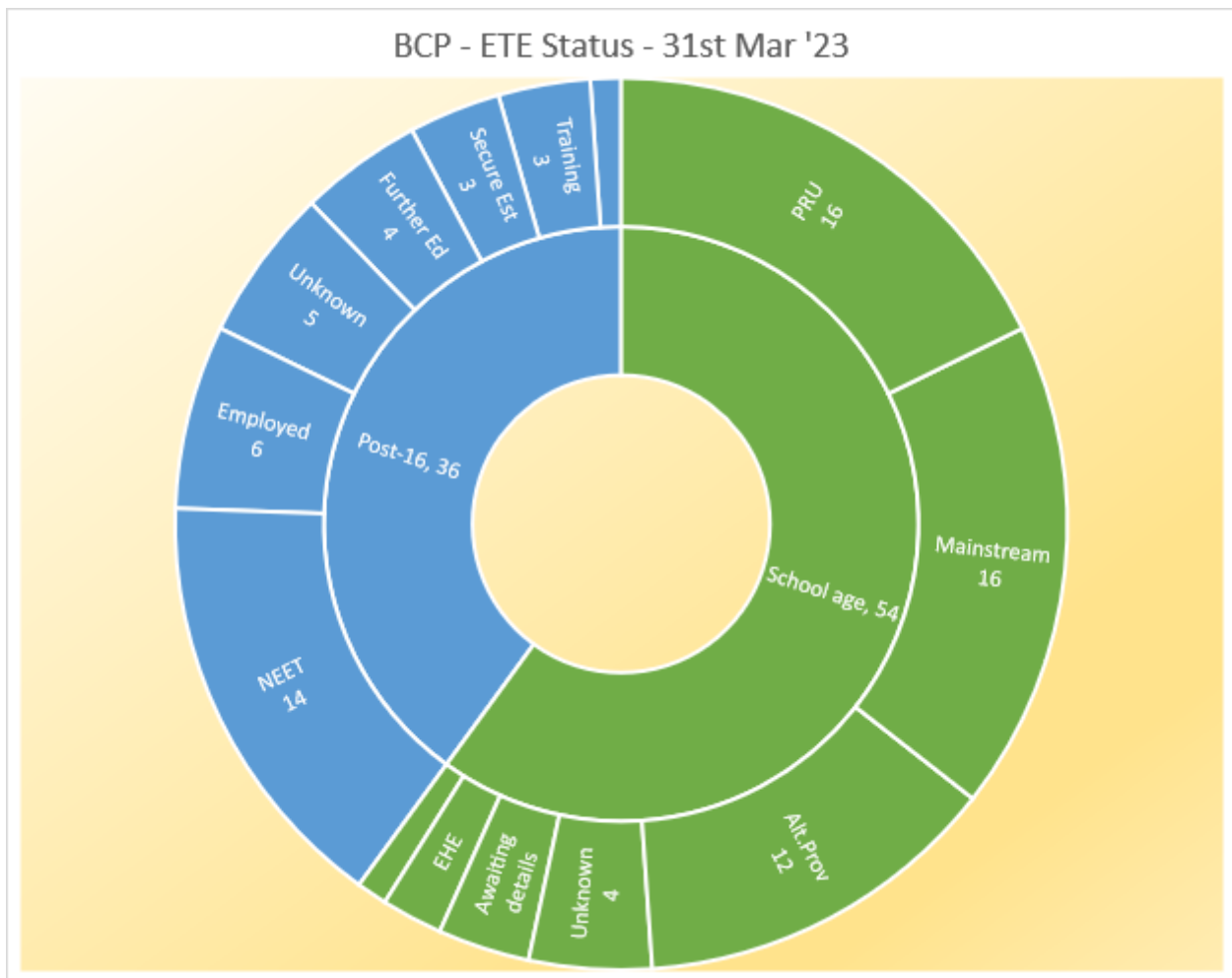
The DCYJS ETE workers maintain strong links with colleagues in the local authority Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services. In 2022/23 DCYJS ETE workers and the local authority Virtual School and SEND teams completed self-assessment documents, modelled on the youth justice SEND quality mark framework, to review our joint working and identify areas for development.

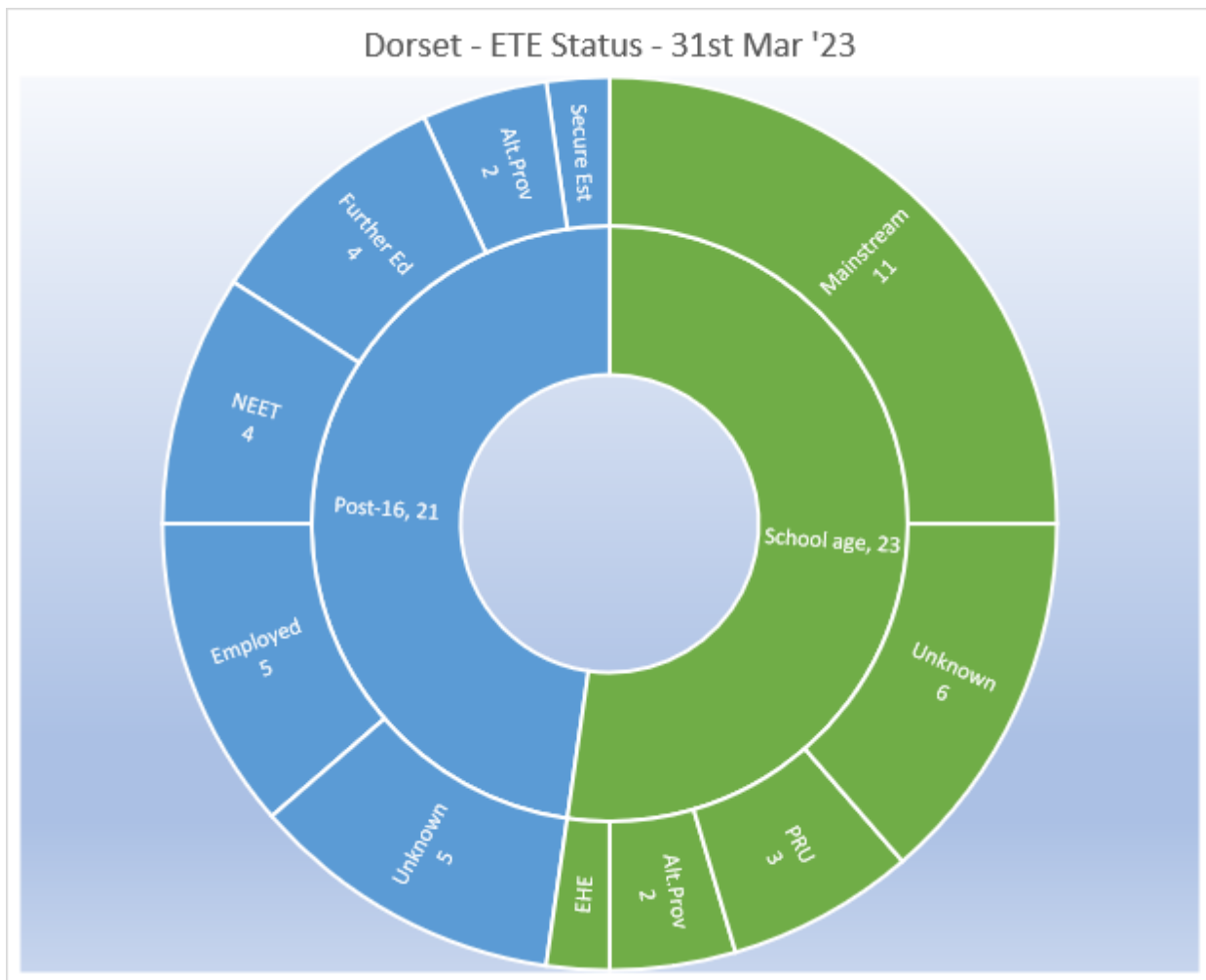
Information reported above, in the section on Over-Representation, showed the frequency of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities among children on the DCYJS caseload. In

February 2023 29% of children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 17% had the status of 'SEN Support'.

During 2022/23 DCYJS has allocated additional staffing resources to improve the collection and recording of education information for each child. More accurate and more detailed information enables a more targeted approach to improve education provision and outcomes for children in our local youth justice system.

The following charts show the education status of BCP and Dorset children on the YJS caseload in March 2023:





These charts show the numbers of children who are not in mainstream school or in suitable employment or training. The service monitors more detailed information, such as the social care and SEND status of these young people, to enable a focused response by our education specialists, working alongside relevant local authority colleagues.

DCYJS occasionally works with children who are receiving Elective Home Education. The YJS Education Officer follows up each case where a child receives Elective Home Education to review the adequacy and safety of the arrangement and to offer more support if needed.

The numbers of young people who not in employment, education or training (NEET) or in employment without training reflects the limited opportunities for YJS young people, who can lack the necessary attainment levels. Actions taken in 2022/23 to address this gap include:

- funding provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for young people to train for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS card)
- DCYJS registered with AQA to enable young people's learning from activities with DCYJS to be certificated
- DCYJS ETE and reparation staff trained as AQA award facilitators, to support team colleagues in this work.

Implementing the new AQA awards will be a priority for 2023/24.

Restorative Justice and Victims

Whenever DCYJS work with a child whose offence harmed a victim, the DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact the victim to find out about the impact of the offence and to seek opportunities for Restorative Justice activities.

One element of the team's Restorative Justice work is undertaking 'reparation' activities with young people, to help them make amends for their offence. Examples include making wooden planters or bird boxes to be sold for charities chosen by the victim or supported by the service or conservation activities. During 2022/23 the service has been developing its approach to reparation so that it is tied more closely to meaningful work to repair the harm caused, directed by the victim if possible, rather than setting a fixed number of sessions for a young person to complete.

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.

During 2022/23 DCYJS has increased its restorative justice work and victim support in complex and sensitive cases. Examples of this work include:

- facilitation of a restorative justice conference in a case of domestic abuse;
- careful, sensitive long-term support for a victim in a high risk public protection case;
- helping a young person raise money for a charity nominated by a bereaved family.

The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners are experienced, skilled facilitators of Restorative Justice Conferences, illustrated in the following case example.

The victim in this case had been assaulted and humiliated, with the incident filmed and shared on social media. Each time the incident was viewed and commented on, the child was revictimized.

The victim wanted a Restorative Justice Conference but his father was sceptical, feeling disappointed that the offender had received an out of court disposal which he felt did not represent sufficient consequences for him. The YJS workers decided to go ahead with the Restorative Justice Conference because both young people wanted to meet. The workers completed a risk assessment in case difficulties arose during the meeting and gave clear guidance to all participants about the rules and expectations for the meeting.

Having answered the initial scripted questions around the offence and his thoughts and feelings towards his actions the young person stood up, apologised, and shook the hand of his victim. It was clear to all present that he was genuinely sorry for his behaviour. The victim willingly accepted this apology. The victim's father visibly relaxed back into his chair. At the point he was asked to contribute to the meeting all his answers reflected his appreciation of the apology made to his son. All the anger he had displayed during the preparation session had dissipated.

Following the conference, while the boys chatted together, the YJS Restorative Justice Practitioner accompanied the father outside and asked him his views on the meeting. He said, "I understand it now. I get it".

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 4 of this Plan).

Most of the violent offences committed by children do not reach the 'serious violence' threshold. Youth Justice Service and Community Safety Partnership data analysis shows that there has been a reduction in the total number of violent offences in recent years but an increase in weapon-related offences.

In May 2023 the YJS will complete a case audit to review its work with children who commit offences with weapons. The audit will include the views of children, parents and YJS practitioners and will inform our service priorities in 2023/24.

DCYJS uses the 'Trauma Recovery Model' in its work. One of the benefits of this approach is to understand and respond to the issues which may underlie a child's exploitation or their use of violent behaviour. DCYJS appointed a 'Trauma Champion' to participate in the YJB's South West network of trauma champions and to lead the service's work in this area, working with the service's Psychologist. Although the NHS England funding for the Trauma Champion post ended in March 2023, the service will continue to resource this important role.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced 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. The Duty came into effect at the end of January 2023. 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. It is a priority of the DCYJS Partnership to accelerate the response to children with weapon offences, including faster progress through the justice system so that less time passes between the offence and the criminal justice outcome.

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 such as the 'Missing, Exploited, Trafficked' (MET) Panel in BCP Council and the Dorset Council CE Champions group. 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. 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. Delays between the offence and the court outcome also have a negative effect on work to meet the needs of victims and to address a child's offending.

Detention of children in police custody

A multi-agency group, led by the DCYJS Head of Service, monitors and addresses the use of police custody for children. The aim of the group is to avoid the unnecessary detention of children and to reduce the duration of detentions that do take place.

Data on child arrests is also reported to the YJS Partnership Board. The following table shows the child arrests in Bournemouth, Weymouth and Poole during 2022/23.

2022/23	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	42	40	38	51	43	34	29	24	22	32	35	38
Detention Not Auth	5	4	2	9	8	1	2	2	3	1	2	2
10-13 Y/O	1	1	3	9	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	2
Overnight	17	21	14	25	20	8	9	10	9	16	23	10
Remand/warrant	2/3	0/0	1/0	1/2	0/2	2/2	0/3	3/1	0/2	3/2	2/1	0/0
Average detention length	10.88	12.2	10.81	12.12	11.74	9.12	12.6	15.1	11.3	13.8	16.1	10.5

Child arrest numbers reduced from September, reflecting active efforts to avoid using arrest for children. Dorset Police have also been working to reduce the length of detentions in police custody, reflected in the overnight detention and average detention length figures. The figures for 'Detention Not Authorised' show that custody sergeants actively review each child that is brought to the custody suite, refusing detention in some cases.

The multi-agency group has previously identified a number of factors which can prolong a child's detention in police custody, including the availability of Appropriate Adults and the time of day when the child arrives in the custody suite. The timeliness of Appropriate Adult attendance has improved since the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS) with average arrival times in 2022/23 of 31 minutes at Bournemouth and 34 minutes at Weymouth. Dorset Police have changed their approach to custody arrivals during the evening to reduce the numbers that are detained overnight.

When the police charge a child with an offence and refuse to grant the child bail, there is a legal requirement to transfer the child to local authority accommodation until their appearance at the next available court. Locally a foster carer is on standby each night to accommodate a child in this situation. Usage of this foster placement is lower than expected so the local authorities and Dorset Police are working together to ensure that opportunities are not missed to use the foster bed.

Supporting children in custody

There are no child custody establishments in the south-west. This means that all children in custody are located at 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 so that the child's specific educational and health needs can be met. This also enables 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.

Remands

While the national performance indicator relates to custodial sentences, there is also concern about the numbers of children being remanded into custody. Information from the Ministry of Justice showed that in 2021 about 45% of children in custody were on remand. During 2022/23 five local children were remanded in custody, a reduction on the seven custodial remands in the preceding year. Of the five children remanded in custody, three received a custodial sentence in excess of 12 months, one has now been released on bail and the other 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.

Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Seven local children received custodial sentences during 2022/23. Most of these young people will turn 18 during their time in custody, with case responsibility being transferred to the Probation Service prior to their release. The seconded DCYJS Probation Officer facilitates the transition of cases to ensure the appropriate transfer of information and a careful handover from the YJS worker to the Probation worker.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18th birthday. The service approach to resettlement is therefore adapted to each child's unique situation, led by the allocated YJS case manager who prioritises maintaining positive relationships with the young person. 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. Only two children reached their release dates during 2022. Their release addresses were not confirmed until 11 days or less before release.

10. Standards for children in the youth justice system

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.

Although the joint inspection of DCYJS in 2022 did not explicitly focus on compliance with national standards, the inspectors were satisfied that DCYJS provides the required activities and meets its duties, rating the service as 'Good'.

The Youth Justice Board requires youth justice services to undertake an updated self-assessment of compliance with national standards during 2023/24. Actions arising from this self-assessment will be added to the service's priorities for the year.

11. 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 are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

In 2022/23 team members also attended:

- training courses to build their knowledge, skills and confidence in working with young people's sexuality and gender identity
- a workshop led by a YJS Nurse on self-harm and suicide
- a workshop led by the YJS Education Officer on education and SEND issues for children in the youth justice system
- a workshop led by the YJS Trauma Champion on trauma informed practice
- training sessions with the YJS Speech and Language Therapists on using 'Talking Mats'
- a training session led by the MAPPA Coordinator on MAPPA in youth justice
- a regional conference on Prevent and radicalisation in the youth justice context.

In addition to the core training courses, which will continue to be attended and updated in 2023/24, the service's development plans require staff training in the following areas:

- Identity Lens – develop the team's understanding and application of this model
- Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harm – train with colleagues from other local services to embed the use of new multi-agency assessment and planning processes

- Assessments – continue to develop the quality of YJS Risk of Harm assessments, using learning from the case audit of weapon offences
- Assessments - implement the new national assessment tool for children on Out of Court Disposals
- AQA awards – train team members in the provision and certification of activities with children for AQA awards

Working in youth justice is both demanding and rewarding. Team members work closely with children who experience significant harm and who sometimes cause significant harm to others. Our parenting workers and our Restorative Justice practitioners support parents and victims at times of distress and challenge. DCYJS team members are also affected by the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Supporting the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers will continue to be a priority in 2023/24, attending to relationships within the team as well as with children, parents/carers, victims and other professionals.

12. Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation

The primary focus for effective practice in DCYJS is the quality of workers' relationships with children on the caseload, alongside positive relationships within the team and with other professionals. This focus reflects evidence showing that the key determinant for positive change is a pro-social relationship with a trusted adult. The approach also builds on previous feedback from young people on the DCYJS caseload about what was most important to them in their experience of the service.

The team continues to focus on understanding children's communications needs, through speech and language assessments, and responding to children's history of trauma, understanding its impact on their current behaviour and on their interactions with other people.

Risk Factors for Speech and Language Assessments

In 2022-23 the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists developed a 'risk factor' methodology to assist their prioritisation of children to assess. Although the preference is to assess the communication needs of all children on the team's caseload, this presents issues for the therapists' workload capacity. Assessing all children also means that the children with the most acute need are not prioritised. The risk factor approach enabled the therapists to identify those children with pre-disposing factors for communication needs. A subsequent review confirmed that the level of communication need did correlate with the number of risk factors identified before the assessment. Alongside the risk factor approach, the therapists developed screening tools for YJS case managers to use with other children and provided advice on communication-friendly working practices which would assist all children with communication needs.

Employment and training support for 16-17 year-olds

Another area of development has been to improve the employment and training prospects of young people aged 16 and 17 on the DCYJS caseload. Training options for this group have reduced in recent years, making it harder to find suitable courses or to find alternatives if a young person does not maintain a place on a course. In 2022/23 DCYJS has registered with AQA and relevant team members have completed the necessary

training to enable us to provide the AQA award scheme. This means that YJS workers will be able to structure their activities with young people so that the young person achieves an AQA certificated learning award. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner also agreed to provide funding for young people to work with training providers to gain their 'CSCS' card to increase their chances of work in the construction sector.

Early identification of children at risk of future offending

Last year's Youth Justice Plan included analysis of common factors among children who entered the youth justice system under the age of 14. Almost all these children were first known to the police as a victim or witness (often in a domestic abuse situation), most of them had special educational needs or disabilities, were known to Children's Social Care and had experienced exclusions from school. During 2022/23 DCYJS and Dorset Council have built on this evidence to develop a methodology for pro-actively identifying younger children with these risk factors so that additional support needs can be identified.

13. Service development plan

All the information summarised in the preceding sections have contributed to the service's plan and strategic priorities for 2023/24.

The service's priorities and development plan for 2023/24 are based on the information contained in the preceding sections of this document, including:

- Local partnership priorities
- Strategic direction from the DCYJS Partnership Board
- National initiatives and priorities
- DCYJS performance information
- HMI Probation's full joint inspection of DCYJS in autumn 2022
- Needs and views of children, families and victims
- Views of DCYJS team members
- Learning from self-assessments, case audits, learning reviews and thematic inspection reports during 2022/23.

HMI Probation inspection recommendations:

HMI Probation published the report 'An inspection of youth offending services in Dorset' in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The report included the following six recommendations:

The Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership board should:

1. review the board arrangements to ensure effective strategic partnerships across the combined area and consider whether additional independent chairing arrangements could enhance these
2. develop a shared approach across the partnership to addressing child exploitation and county lines and put a framework in place which promotes effective practice
3. continue to support and challenge all schools to ensure that YJS children receive their full entitlement to education

4. improve partnership working with children’s social care by ensuring YJS case manager involvement in all statutory multi-agency meetings and improve their direct access to children’s social care records.

The YJS service manager should:

5. analyse the reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposals and monitor the effectiveness of the disposals given

6. improve the analysis and quality of assessments to ensure there is effective and robust understanding regarding the risk of harm a child can pose to others

DCYJS’s action plan in response to these recommendations was accepted by HMI Probation in February 2023. The inspection report also identified ‘areas for improvement’ which are addressed in a more detailed action plan, with progress monitored by the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2023/24

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2023/24. Actions which link to our inspection report are marked ‘HMIP’. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

DCYJS Partnership Priority	Area for Development	Partners and Staff Providing Support	Benefits	Success Indicators
Reducing First-Time Entrants	Develop the implementation of the ‘Turnaround’ programme	Local Authority Early Help Services Dorset Police Dorset HealthCare Ministry of Justice	Children diverted from the justice system	Reduction in FTEs Successful Turnaround completions
Reducing First-Time Entrants	Early identification of children at risk of offending	Local Authority Business Intelligence Local Authority Early Help Services	Prevention of future offending	Reduction in FTEs Children at risk of offending receiving support
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Contribute to Serious Violence Duty needs assessments and action plans	Local Authority Community Safety Partnerships	Strategic, coordinated response to serious youth violence	Needs assessment completed Action Plan agreed and implemented
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Case audit of DCYJS work on weapon offences	DCYJS team members Children and families	Improved DCYJS work with children who carry weapons	Case audit completed Action Plan agreed and implemented
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Extension of DCYJS Trauma Champion role	DCYJS Trauma Champion DCYJS Psychologist	Development of trauma informed practice with children	Actions agreed and implemented to show trauma informed work

		DCYJS team members		with wider caseload
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Local partnerships agree new CE tools, processes and training (HMIP)	Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership	Clear and effective processes for identifying and responding to CE	New CE documents and processes being used by YJS staff
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Improve the analysis and quality of DCYJS risk of harm assessments (HMIP)	DCYJS operational managers and case managers	Improved risk assessments leading to better risk management for harm to others	Case audits evidence good quality risk of harm assessments, addressing HMIP findings
Reducing over-representation	YJS Partners share disproportionality data from their services	BCP Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, Probation Service, NHS Dorset	Improved understanding of and response to over-representation	YJS Board receiving and reviewing disproportionality data from partners
Reducing over-representation	Create a DCYJS diversity and disproportionality policy (HMIP)	YJS Head of Service	Clarity about YJS work on diversity issues	New Diversity Policy completed and shared with YJS staff
Improving education outcomes	Allocate additional YJS resources to improve education for children with EHCPs, SEN Support	YJS Head of Service Local authority education services	Timely, suitable placements for children with EHCPs, SEN Support and other specific needs	Better education outcomes Reduction in fixed term and permanent exclusions on YJS caseload
DCYJS practice improvement	Use the Identity Lens approach to underpin DCYJS work with children	YJS managers and practitioners; YJB and other Youth Justice Services	Improved outcomes for children focusing on their positive identity	Evidence on assessments, plans and case records of the Identity Lens model being applied
DCYJS practice improvement	Implement the use of AQA awards for children doing YJS activities	DCYJS ETE and reparation workers; BCP and Dorset EET and Virtual School teams	Improved access to ETE options for YJS children	Completed AQA awards
DCYJS practice improvement	Use the HMIP ETE thematic report and the new KPI ETE information to continue to improve work on education outcomes	DCYJS ETE and information staff. BCP and Dorset ETE and information staff. Schools.	Improved knowledge and targeting of specific ETE issues leading to better ETE outcomes for YJS children	Accurate, up to date, detailed ETE case records on YJS system

Board development	Develop partnership effectiveness and confirm future chairing arrangements (HMIP)	YJS Board Partners, BCP and Dorset Chief Executives	Improved local YJS strategic and operational partnership	Decision taken on future Board chairing. Board partners actively contributing to Board meetings and work
Develop the collection and use of performance information	Implement the new national youth justice Key Performance Indicators	YJS head of service and management information staff. Partner information staff. YJB	Improved understanding of local YJ partnership performance and actions needed	Successful quarterly reporting of new KPIs
Develop the collection and use of performance information	Analyse the reoffending of children subject to out of court disposals (HMIP)	YJS Performance and Information Manager. Dorset Police	Better understanding of OOCDC impact to guide decision-making	Report to YJS Board of reoffending by different out of court disposal types
Compliance with YJB requirements	Audit compliance with national standards and implement the new national OOCDC assessment tool when directed	YJS managers. YJB	YJS meeting national standards for youth justice work	Audit of national standard compliance submitted on time to YJB. YJS using new assessment tool for OOCDC work.

14. 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 –the DCYJS partnership budget has seen little growth in cash terms since the service formed in 2015, without allowing for inflation and pay increases during that period. In 2022/23 the national Youth Justice Grant increased, returning to 2014/15 levels, and local partners increased their contributions. Continuing budget pressures on all partners and inflation risks make resources an ongoing 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, and to propose credible bail packages and community sentences for children at risk of custody.
- Children's Services are also responding to the independent review of children's social care

- Delays in the youth justice system, linked to pressures in the wider criminal justice system, make it harder to work effectively with young people to prevent future offending to engage victims in Restorative Justice.
- The impact of Covid on young people is still emerging, including setbacks to young people's education and their mental health.

DCYJS will continue to address these issues on a partnership basis in 2023/24, 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.

15. Sign off, submission and approval

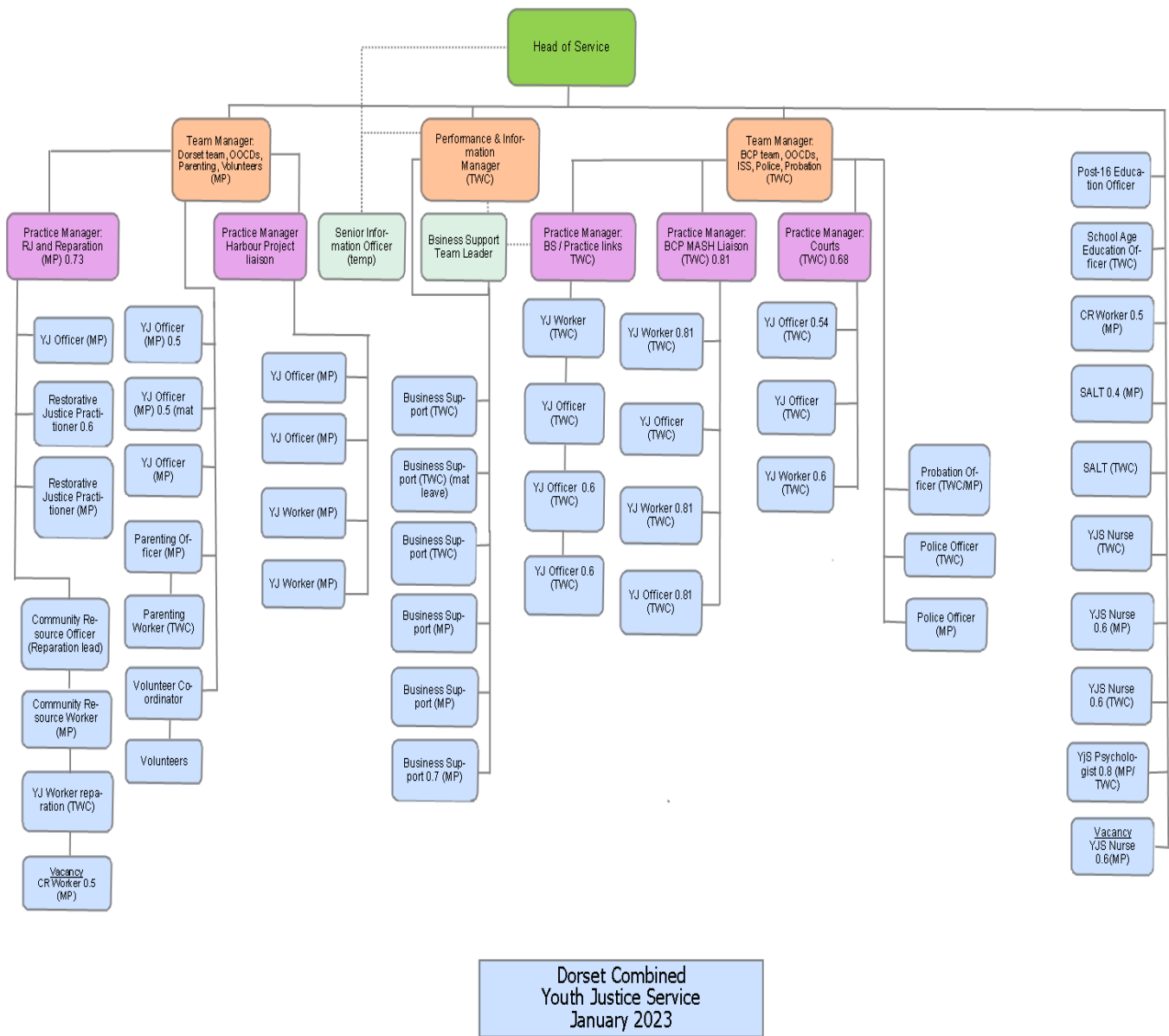
This Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YJS Partnership Board in April 2023.

In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council on 13/07/2023 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on YYYY.

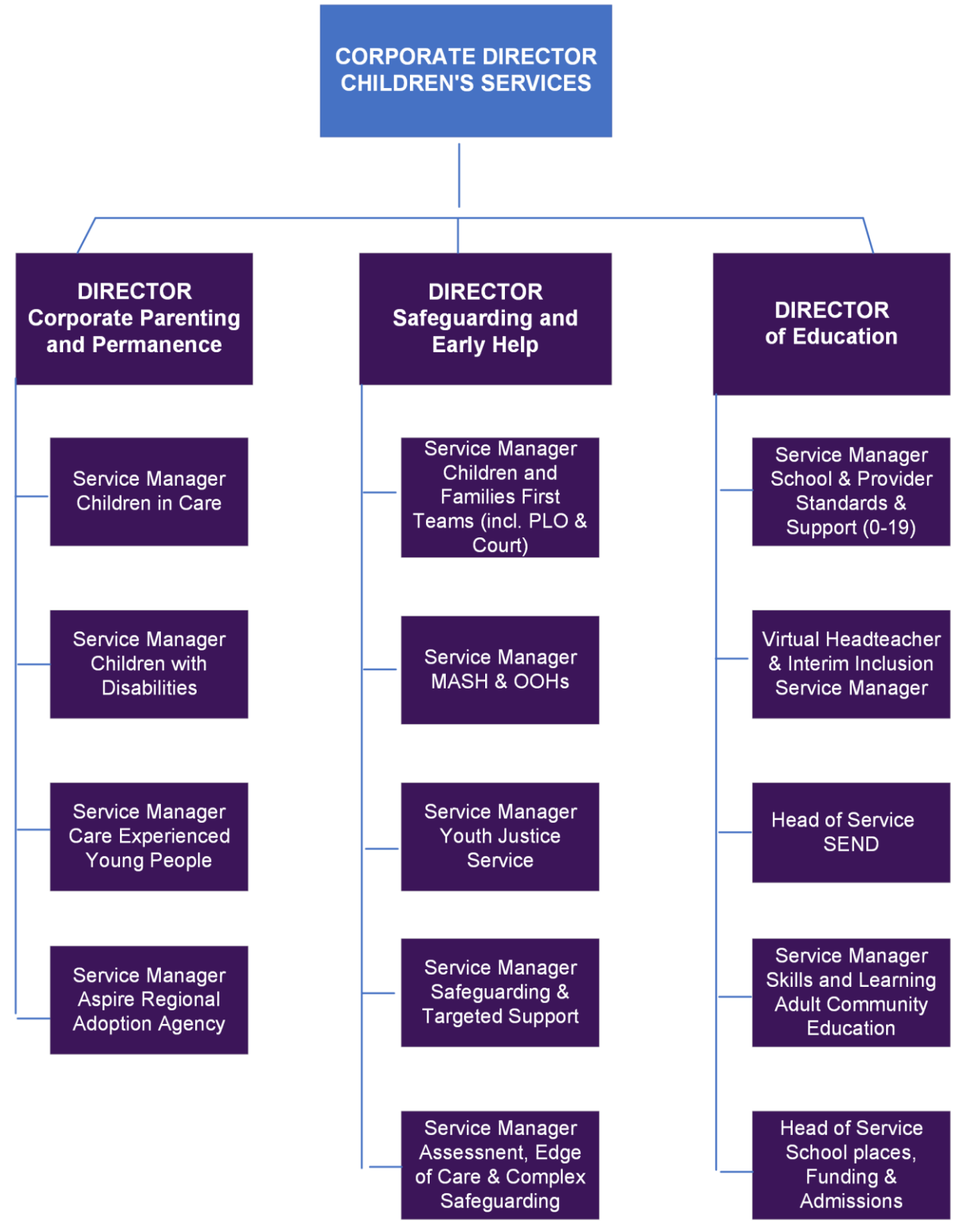
Chair of YJS Board - name	Theresa Leavy
Signature	
Date	

16. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

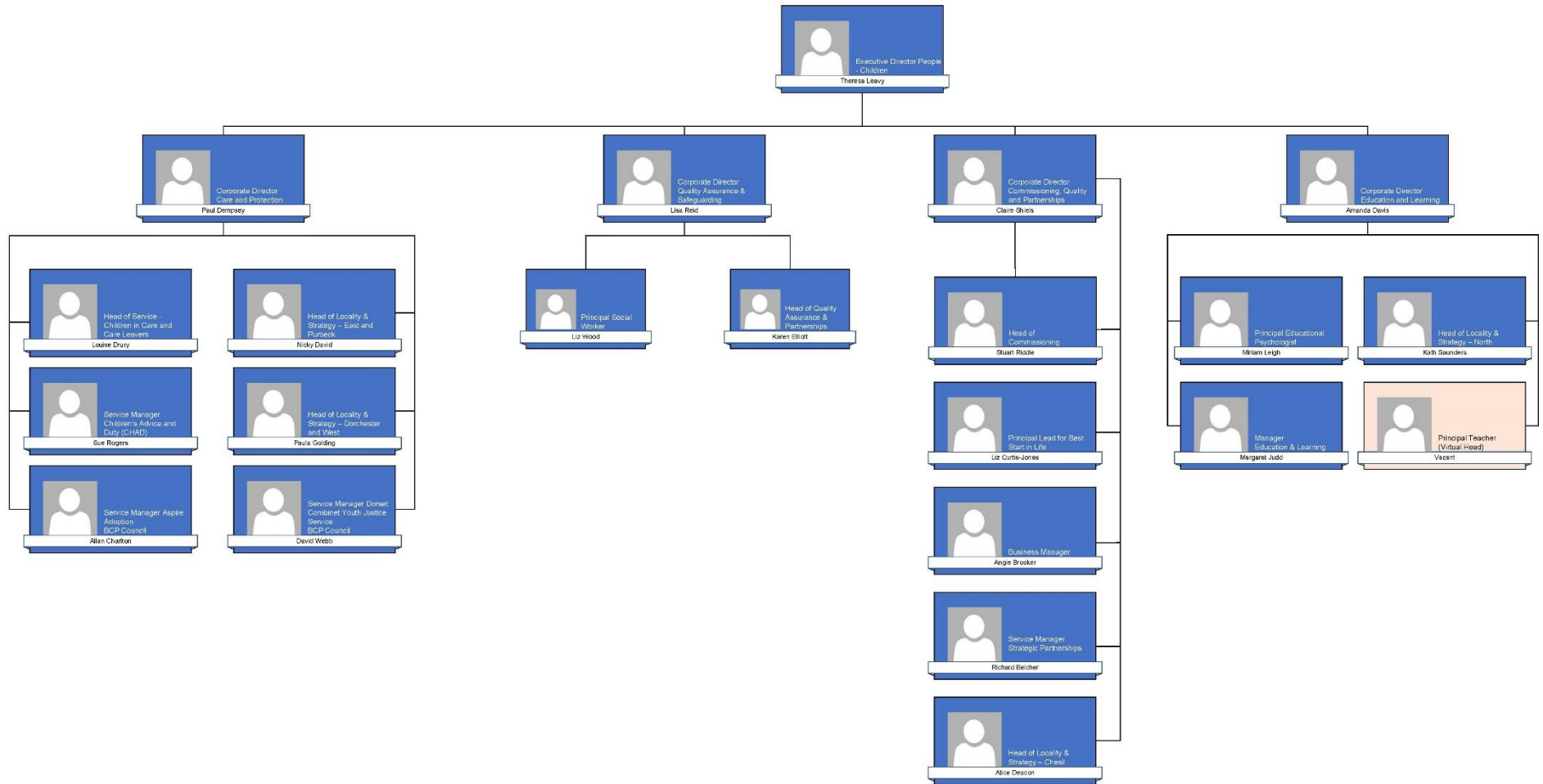
The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.



BCP Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



Dorset Council Extended Leadership Team



DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

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






Ethnicity	Female staff members	Male staff members	Female volunteers	Male volunteers	Total
White British	42	10	10	6	68
White Other	1		3	1	5
Mixed Heritage	1		0	0	1
Disability	4				4






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









17. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2023/24

Partner Agency	22/23 Revenue (excluding recharges)	Staff
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,529	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£81,927	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	£794,915 (2022/23 figure)	
Total	£2,069,022 (assuming standstill contributions from all partners)	



18. Appendix 3 – Smart Survey feedback results

1. I had a say in what work the YJS planned with me:				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.55%	1
2	Dissatisfied		4.55%	1
3	Neutral		13.64%	3
4	Satisfied		50.00%	11
5	Very Satisfied		27.27%	6
			answered	22
			skipped	0







2. The good things about the YJS are:				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	My worker		65.00%	13
2	Learnt new things		50.00%	10
3	Interesting		30.00%	6
4	Reparation		30.00%	6
5	Did something different		25.00%	5
			answered	20
			skipped	2

3. I had help with:				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Friends		4.55%	1
2	Money		4.55%	1
3	Alcohol		9.09%	2
4	Drugs		18.18%	4
5	Anger		45.45%	10
6	Boredom		18.18%	4
7	Health		13.64%	3
8	Education		45.45%	10

3. I had help with:

9	Family		36.36%	8
10	Other (please specify):		36.36%	8
			answered	22
			skipped	0
Other (please specify): (8)				
1	10/03/2023 11:50 AM ID: 212818667	Housing		
2	14/03/2023 07:30 AM ID: 213018384	Nothing		
3	14/03/2023 09:57 AM ID: 213028493	Nothing		
4	21/03/2023 17:23 PM ID: 213610283	CSCS Card qualification		
5	30/03/2023 16:29 PM ID: 214313048	Head injuries Consequences of violence		
6	31/03/2023 14:25 PM ID: 214376662	Head injuries Assaults Consequences		
7	03/04/2023 11:28 AM ID: 214472216	They listen and give good feedback		
8	03/04/2023 11:31 AM ID: 214472521	Got me back in to school.		





4. The things I would change about the YJS are:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Boring		14.29%	3
2	Time of appointments		23.81%	5
3	Worker		4.76%	1
4	Length of appointments		14.29%	3
5	Nothing		52.38%	11
6	Other (please specify):		19.05%	4
			answered	21
			skipped	1
Other (please specify): (4)				





4. The things I would change about the YJS are:

1	28/02/2023 10:56 AM ID: 212017304	Sometimes not long enough I like to work with my worker as much as I can as find it really helps me
2	10/03/2023 11:50 AM ID: 212818667	Later appointments
3	21/03/2023 17:23 PM ID: 213610283	Not sure what I would change. I like my worker The reparation sessions are long not sure if they help with not offending. If I could choose I wouldn't of done them. CSCS card sessions were good and I have learnt something.
4	31/03/2023 14:25 PM ID: 214376662	Shorter appts





5. My worker thought I would make positive changes to my life:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.76%	1
2	Dissatisfied		0.00%	0
3	Neutral		14.29%	3
4	Satisfied		42.86%	9
5	Very Satisfied		38.10%	8
			answered	21
			skipped	1

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

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.76%	1
2	Dissatisfied		0.00%	0
3	Neutral		9.52%	2
4	Satisfied		42.86%	9
5	Very Satisfied		42.86%	9
			answered	21
			skipped	1

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

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.76%	1
2	Dissatisfied		0.00%	0
3	Neutral		19.05%	4
4	Satisfied		42.86%	9
5	Very Satisfied		33.33%	7
			answered	21
			skipped	1

Common youth justice terms – national glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
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 tenets to this approach which should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after, also Child in Care	Child Looked After/Child in Care; 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
MAPPAs	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