

DORSET POLICE & CRIME PANEL – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

REPORT BY THE POLICY AND COMMISSIONING MANAGER

PURPOSE

This paper provides an update on the Police and Crime Commissioner's work to support young people. This paper also seeks to address the following six Key Lines of Enquiry as provided by the Dorset Police and Crime Panel:

- I. What level of engagement has the PCC had with schools and other providers within the school age group? Has there been any early impact on driving down youth crime from this intervention work? What age groups does this intervention cover? How does the PCC monitor success of these initiatives?*
- II. How does the PCC hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that policing of youth ASB/crime is evidence based and focused in the correct areas?*
- III. What interventions does the PCC believe that Dorset Police can make in order to have really positive impact?*
- IV. How has the PCC worked with partner agencies to improve early youth crime intervention, and what future partnership work is intended?*
- V. How has the PCC built on the review of the Dorset Police's Safe Schools and Communities team? How can the PCC be assured that it is efficient, effective, and delivering improvement?*
- VI. What future challenges does the PCC foresee in driving down youth crime and what further improvements does he believe that the Force and partners can deliver in order to provide successful outcomes for the young people of Dorset?*

1. INTRODUCTION

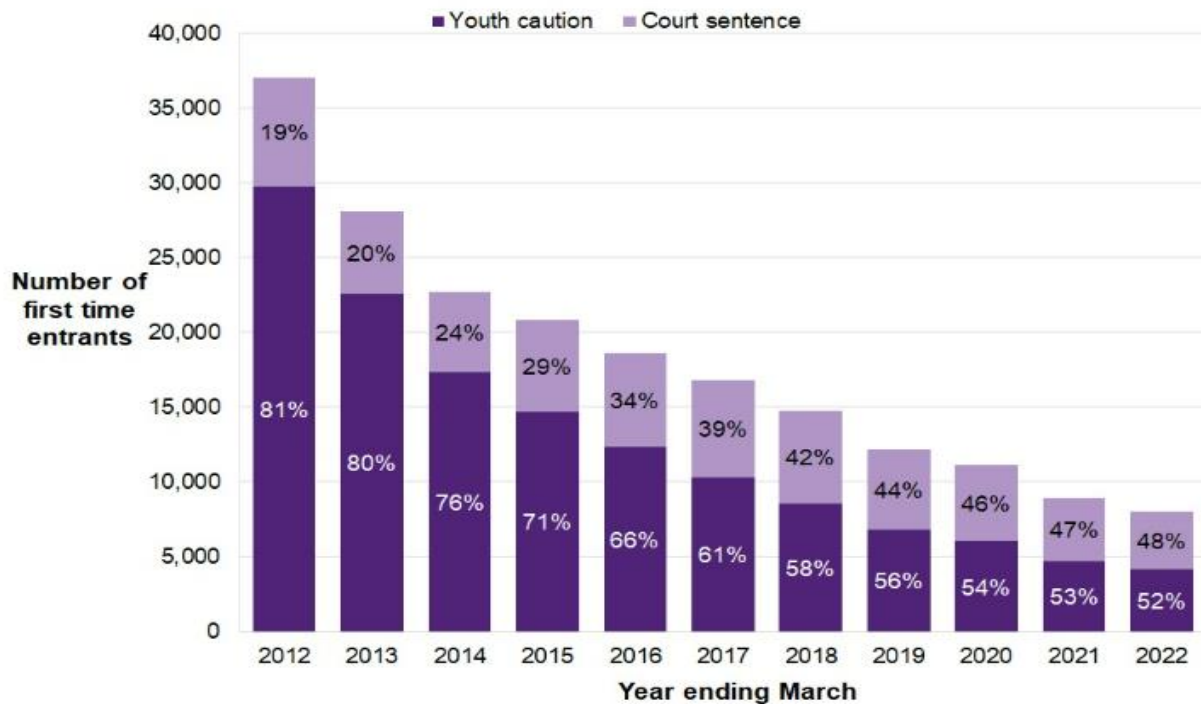
- 1.1 All children deserve the right to thrive and grow up in a safe, protected environment. Such an ambition works in harmony with the Dorset Police and Crime Plan which commits to support young people. That means making sure young people are not left behind and, by working with a wide range of partners, policing can assist in providing support for those who are struggling. The challenge to 'Fix the Future' is considerable, and goes far beyond policing of course, but it is important we work closely with our partners to collectively give young people the right tools to make the right decisions.
- 1.2 While all public services work carefully to achieve this goal, the funding and delivery challenges in recent years have led to a reduction in so-called 'open access' (or 'universal') services, including a range of leisure, cultural, sporting and enrichment activities often based around youth centres at the heart of local communities.

- 1.3 Our young people should have safe spaces to gather, and access to support which helps them develop – whether through alternative education provision and opportunities to improve employment skills and training, or through traditional educational routes – all with a forward focus on helping them to become productive and resilient adults.
- 1.4 That said, it is understandable that in recent years, many statutory agencies have not been able to provide universal, protective services for all young people. Instead, agencies have focused on targeted provision for vulnerable young people, including physical health, sexual health and mental health advice and access to specialist services; youth justice services and young offending teams; and educational and training services.
- 1.5 From a Police and Crime Plan perspective, Supporting Young People is a key theme within Priority 1 – Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and contains several commitments with a prevention focus, as follows:
- Build on the review of Dorset Police’s Safe Schools and Communities team to establish a new programme of education, intervention and early diversion aimed at Dorset’s young people.
 - Ensure that the police and partner agencies support primary school age children and seek to divert them away from negative behaviours.
 - Ensure that each school in Dorset has a designated point of contact in Dorset Police when dealing with serious issues.
 - Provide funding for schemes and initiatives proven to prevent young people from committing crimes and, more generally, work to keep young people out of the criminal justice system by promoting a trauma-informed, child-centred policing model that takes account of adverse childhood experiences.
 - Expand the Dorset Police Cadet Scheme and improve engagement between young people and the police.
 - Proactively engage with young people, listening to their views to help shape policing strategy and to help improve operational policing practice.
- 1.6 Progress against these commitments is detailed within this report.
- 1.7 Several further Police and Crime Plan commitments align to the objective of supporting young people, including:
- The PCC chairing the Dorset Criminal Justice Board (DCJB). As Chair, he works closely with the Force and other partners to enhance the work to divert young people from the Criminal Justice System (CJS).
 - Funding the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS), including OPCC being a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board.
 - Funding the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team (SSCT).
- 1.8 As stated, this objective does not fall to policing alone. We have strong partnerships and partners, including with the wider justice system, health, and education, who are all equally committed to keeping children safe and improving their lives. We must continue to challenge one another to be as effective and achieve as much as possible.
- 1.9 It is also helpful to note the statutory responsibilities of partners. Each local authority (through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) and after consultation with partner agencies, is required to formulate and implement an annual [Youth Justice Plan](#), setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 99.6% of young people do not become involved with the criminal justice system. The weight of evidence continues to [indicate](#) that contact with the criminal justice system at a young age increases, not decreases, the likelihood of future criminal behaviour.

2.2 It is for this reason that successive Governments have maintained a focus on reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system, and as a result, these data have been trending downwards for several years. However, it should be noted that the proportion of young people being cautioned is also decreasing year-on-year:



First time entrants to the CJS aged 10 to 17, England and Wales, years ending March 2012 to 2022 (Source: [Youth Justice Board](#))

2.3 Supporting this national steer, policing takes a child-centred approach. Children and young people feature across all aspects of policing and the Dorset Police Child Centred Policing Strategy 2023-2025 (currently in draft) not only further embeds the Force vision of a safe county for everyone, but also aligns to the values as set out in the [National Child Centred Best Practice Framework](#). These values have been created using the four pillars of procedural justice together with views expressed by children and young people themselves.

Procedural Justice

The procedural justice approach sets out that if agencies treat people in a fair manner (**fairness**), engage with them respectfully (**respect**), carefully listen to their views and concerns (**voice**) and consider these before making transparent decisions (**trust**); the agency will be viewed as more legitimate and the public will exhibit greater compliance with its decisions.

2.4 Wider public services also take a trauma informed approach to managing young people that, for Dorset Police, recognises the circumstances and context of any offending behaviour. In those circumstances Dorset Police is committed to ensuring

that each child is treated fairly and with dignity and that even though they might be a more serious offender, they are still a child.

- 2.5 This approach recognises the impact that trauma, including but not limited to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), has on individuals and in acknowledging this, accepts that providing appropriate support to that person will not only build their physiological resilience, but also help them better desist from future offending behaviour.
- 2.6 The consistent and compelling evidence around ACEs shows the harm caused by child abuse, neglect, and other adversities, and demonstrates clear links with criminogenic factors (factors that increase the risk of offending) including poor educational outcomes, substance abuse and physical and mental health problems.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

In 2021, the then Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, published [research](#) that assessed 200 young people on the caseloads of youth justice workers using a dedicated ACEs assessment tool.

Two-thirds of the young people (66%) had five or more ACEs, with over a fifth (22%) having eight or more ACEs. Only two of the young people (1%) had no recorded ACEs.

The types of ACEs included experiencing emotional abuse or neglect, physical abuse or neglect and sexual abuse, as well as experiencing parental loss or imprisonment, or witnessing domestic abuse or substance within the family.

- 2.7 Finally, there is often public debate about the age of criminal responsibility in this country and the policing of children. It is therefore relevant to note that, at 10 years old, the minimum age of criminal responsibility in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is one of the youngest in the world.

3. ACTIVITY

A. Partner Agencies

- 3.1 A key factor in supporting young people is the provision of educational, recreational, and cultural activities for them to undertake outside of school. As has previously been reported to the Panel, the Local Government Association has highlighted the [decline in the provision of youth services](#), with around one billion pounds being taken out of youth services from 2010 to 2020.
- 3.2 The recent launch to [transform youth centres](#) by the Government may assist those areas identified with greatest need, but local councils and the voluntary sector play a crucial role in the maintenance of such services.
- 3.3 Extra-curricular activities aside, other agencies and structures also play an important part. For instance, the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) works with young people to help them make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims. The DCYJS supports the national 'child first' vision and, as already mentioned, is required to publish an annual [Youth Justice Plan](#).
- 3.4 Early help provision also has good links with partners in Dorset including working closely with the DCYJS. The support for families exists in both [BCP Council](#) and [Dorset](#)

[Council](#), and multi-agency partnership working to tackle ASB through support and diversion schemes.

- 3.5 Two key workstreams of the Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) are prevention, and treatment and recovery. Partners are focused on working with young people and their families, to identify the challenges they face and support them to move away from addiction and substance misuse.
- 3.6 For those young people who continue to behave in ways that have a negative impact on the community, a referral to the Community Consequences scheme can be made. Dorset Police initially developed this scheme, however the local authority ASB teams in most cases take the lead. There are three stages, as follows:
1. If a young person comes to the attention of the ASB Team or Police for their unacceptable behaviour, a letter is sent to their parents/guardians, highlighting the concerns. If there are no further incidents, the warning lasts six months.
 2. A home visit will be made by the Neighbourhood Policing Team and council ASB team to outline concerns and offer support and guidance in preventing further unacceptable behaviour. This gives the young person and family a chance to make some positive changes to stop the escalation of behaviour. An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) might be used if appropriate.
 3. A referral will be made to the Complex Cases Team. A letter will be sent from the Neighbourhood Policing Team Sergeant outlining the fact that the behaviour has not changed and is still having an impact on the community. Other partners such as social services, education, and housing will come together to see what support can be offered. An ABC process will be initiated if it has not already.

B. Dorset Police

- 3.7 Naturally, police officers and staff across the Force will interact with young people, however there are two teams especially responsible for child-centred policing – the Safer Schools and Communities Team (SSCT) and the Youth Justice Team (YJT). Both teams report into the Dorset Police Prevention Department.
- 3.8 The teams provide a visible, accessible, and familiar presence to young people, working to promote positive engagement, reduce victimisation, and reduce offending. They are focussed on:
- Delivering the Force's informal Youth Out of Court Disposals (OoCDs)
 - Dealing with low level school-based incidents
 - Operating the Policing in Schools model
- 3.9 The last of these, the Policing in Schools model, is a refreshed approach to schools policing, which followed the review into the SSCT undertaken approximately three years ago. The model is delivered following [national guidance](#) and best practice. Every school in Dorset now has a named police contact and all schools are assessed on their levels of risk factors and offered a tiered level of support, according to their needs. Tier 1 is a universal service; Tier 2 is an enhanced service, and Tier 3 is a complex service.
- 3.10 There are currently 80 schools in Dorset (rising from 52 last year) receiving the Tier 3 support from the SSCT. These schools have a named Safe Schools and Communities Officer (SSCO) who provides the following:

Reassurance & responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visible and approachable police presence to provide advice on issues around crime, safety, and the law. • Early identification of risk and vulnerability within the school community
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The offer for young people to meet with a SSCO in a neutral environment to positively influence relationships and behaviour inside and outside of school. • The sharing of innovative and successful new approaches to safeguarding and crime prevention • Improved links to other services
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved information sharing and reaction to safeguarding concerns. • Delivery and facilitation of educational police presentations to prevent crime, improve safety and enhance PSHE / RSE • Improved access to intervention and diversion schemes

3.11 The YJT is responsible for making all OoCD decisions for young people aged 10 to 17 years old. The YJT oversees:

- Consultation with the DCYJS and other partners on all submitted cases so an informed disposal decision can be made.
- Ensuring that young people considered vulnerable or at risk of further offending are signposted into support services at the earliest opportunity.
- Delivery of the disposal by police officers or the DCYJS.

3.12 A joint working Youth OoCD Protocol is in place between the Force, DCYJS and the early help services in both councils. It includes an agreed flowchart mapping the process, responsibilities, and timelines. Available disposals are:

- Informal – Including the Youth Diversion Scheme (now known as the Turnaround scheme), Youth Diversion Disposals, and Youth Restorative Disposals.
- Formal – Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution

3.13 As stated, the directive of the Children’s Commissioner and the national Youth Justice Board is to divert children away from the criminal justice system to prevent them becoming first time entrants and to prevent reoffending.

3.14 Informal disposals are used to divert young people from the CJS while supporting them from reoffending. This requires close working with partner agencies to ensure that wraparound support is provided. Informal interventions are varied and tailored to the individual, and can include training, awareness, and support on:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anger management, • animal cruelty, • antisocial behaviour, • assault, • child exploitation, • child sexual exploitation, • county lines, • consequential thinking, • criminal damage, • disclosure, • diversity, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • driving, • fire setting, • knife crime, • motivational interviewing, • peer pressure, • relationship abuse, • restorative justice, • risk and risky behaviours, • self-esteem, • sexually harmful behaviour, • speech and language, |
|---|---|

- substance use, and
- victim awareness.

Interventions used with young people (Source: Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service)

- 3.15 Reducing criminalisation of children in care is another responsibility the Force has. It is signed up to the joint working protocol, along with the OPCC, both BCP and Dorset Councils, the Crown Prosecution Service and DCYJS.
- 3.16 Aside from the work of the SSCT and YJT, it is also important to note the activity undertaken by the Force's Citizens in Policing Team, which oversees the Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) scheme in Dorset. The scheme is delivered by vetted and trained volunteer cadet leaders who deliver the cadet sessions to young people aged 13 to 17 years old.
- 3.17 Like other national groups such as the Scouts or Girl Guides, the VPC scheme is designed to encourage the spirit of adventure and good citizenship amongst its members. Specifically, though, the VPC is also designed to support local policing priorities through volunteering, to give young people a chance to be heard, and to inspire young people to participate positively in their communities.
- 3.18 Police Cadets in Dorset have recently helped with Force and OPCC stands at several summer engagement events, litter picked at various locations around the county, assisted in bike tagging, and have observed, taken part in and given feedback on a range of appropriate policing training. They have also assisted in carrying out community speed watch activities, and undertaken test purchases on behalf of the Force and the local authorities.
- 3.19 A key principle of the VPC is to have at least 25% of cadets from a vulnerable background, including those at risk of offending or reoffending. There are four schemes running in Bournemouth, Christchurch, Corfe Mullen, and Weymouth, each with capacity for up to thirty young people.

C. OPCC

- 3.20 The PCC and his office commission activity to support young people and undertake regular and robust scrutiny of the Force's approach to working with young people, as well as that of wider relevant partnerships.

Commissioning

- 3.21 The review of the SSCT has been built on, and the Force has implemented several changes to deliver on this, most significantly the new Policing in Schools model as outlined above (starts paragraph 3.8). As part of this change, the PCC also met his commitment to ensure that each school in Dorset has a dedicated point of contact in Dorset Police.

Aside from providing funding directly to the SSCT, the OPCC has also been establishing a new programme of education, intervention, and early diversion to support the aforementioned new model. All these schemes will be fully evaluated as part of the commissioning process to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, and include to date, the funding of:

- The Alcohol Education Trust to develop and evaluate with schools an Alcohol and Drugs Education pilot.
- AFC Bournemouth to support vulnerable young people and divert them away from the risks of County Lines; and

- Future Roots to deliver practical non-classroom employment specific courses to provide young people with an applied approach to achieving skills.
- 3.22 Through the work of the Combatting Drugs Partnership, the PCC, as the Senior Responsible Officer, has ensured that the Force and partner agencies support primary school age children and seek to divert them away from negative behaviours.
- 3.23 This is undertaken through the Prevention Sub-Group and the establishment of the working groups focussed on supporting young people and families at most risk of substance misuse. This includes working with key stages 1 and 2 around relationships and wellbeing. The OPCC funds Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to deliver drug and alcohol diversions to young people as part of an informal disposal and/or out of court disposal.
- 3.24 Additionally, Circles SW are commissioned to work with young people, and with professionals working with young people to reduce the risks of sex offending.
- 3.25 In addition to directly funding the DCYJS to reduce the risks of reoffending, the OPCC has established two funds for schemes and initiatives to prevent young people from committing crimes and, more generally, work to keep young people out of the criminal justice system by promoting a trauma-informed, child-centred policing model that takes account of adverse childhood experiences.
- 3.26 Firstly, the Op Relentless Community Fund was established in 2021/22 and enables community and voluntary organisations to apply for funding to reduce ASB. So far, three rounds have taken place and twenty-nine initiatives have been supported ranging from youth outreach to security improvements in local communities.
- 3.27 Secondly, the Fix the Future Fund was established in 2022/23 to support local initiatives which engaged with young people to divert them away from criminal behaviour. Nine initiatives were supported through the first round of funding. These include: the provision of a weekly dance session as a tool to engage and positively influence young males who are disengaged with education, are at risk of displaying anti-social behaviours and/or entering the criminal justice system; and workshops and assemblies in primary schools, secondary schools and colleges, for all young people aged 9-18, raising awareness of child exploitation and grooming, and teaching protective strategies. A further round of funding will be launched this autumn.
- 3.28 The OPCC has also worked with the Force to expand the Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) scheme and to improve engagement between young people and the police. As mentioned above (paragraph 3.15) this has now expanded to four schemes, with plans to expand by a further two units. This would result in a total of around 180 cadets and 60 volunteer cadet leaders.
- 3.29 National research and best practice evidence shows that VPC units provide an especially good opportunity to engage with a wide spectrum of young people from across the county. During Summer 2023, the OPCC attended the four cadet schemes and held interactive sessions to seek their views on policing in Dorset. This work is part of a wider suite of youth engagement activity designed to better understand young people's views of crime, offending and policing and what might be done to help improve operational policing practice for those at greater risk of contact with the CJS. The first round of findings are currently being reviewed by OPCC.

Scrutiny

- 3.30 From a partnership perspective, the OPCC is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board and as a commissioning agency scrutinises and supports this work. Of note, the

OPCC participated in the Joint Inspection of DCYJS by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, HMICFRS and the Care Quality Commission. The [report](#) published in January 2023 rated the service overall as good.

- 3.31 The OPCC also meets quarterly with the regional lead for the Government's YJB to keep up to date with their expectations of the local YJS and is an attendee at the Community Safety Partnership meetings for Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council areas.
- 3.32 As already articulated, the PCC personally chairs the Combatting Drugs Partnership, as senior responsible officer, and chairs the Dorset Criminal Justice Board. The latter provides him with an ongoing overview of the youth justice work in Dorset.
- 3.33 Furthermore, the OPCC attends several Dorset Police boards which have either a focus on supporting young people, or cover strategic activities which are aligned to that objective, these include:
- Child Centred Policing Board: designed to ensure that the Force's Child Centred Policing strategy is delivered in line with national best practice and guidelines.
 - Citizens in Policing Board: which considers the strategy, performance and governance relating to volunteering with Dorset Police. A key component of this is, of course, the Dorset Police Volunteer Police Cadet scheme.
 - Strategic Performance Board: the Force's primary performance meeting, at which key trends and issues are explored and scrutinised.
 - Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel: the PCC's independent panel, which considers the use of youth OoCDs to ensure that they are reasonable and proportionate, and provides strategic feedback to Dorset Police, as well as tactical feedback to officers and staff following the panel's findings.
- 3.34 The OPCC also regularly liaises with and receives update reports about the work of the Force's Child Centred Policing Team within the Prevention Department to ensure that the service is efficient and effective.

4. OUTCOMES

A. Partner Agencies

- 4.1 The data on outcomes achieved by partner agencies is not held by OPCC, but by way of insight, a case study has kindly been provided by DCYJS.

R is 16 years old; he was 15 at the time of our intervention and was 14 at the time of the offence. At the time of the offence R was at home with his adoptive mother and her partner, however, the family environment was breaking down. R was spending a lot of time in the community and relationships were very strained.

R worked with us under a Youth Caution. When he came to work with us R was in a foster placement, on the whole he was more settled but understandably there were still some difficulties following the break down in family relationships. His adoptive mother had moved abroad by this time and there was limited contact.

R had committed burglary of a dwelling, where he had broken into a room of an elderly lady who lived in a care home and had stolen her bank card. He had then used her

bank card in shops local to the area. The victim had dementia and therefore was not able to provide a full victim statement when our restorative practitioners contacted her. However, her daughter was able to provide this on her behalf. Whilst she did not want to meet with R directly, she did want a letter read to him about the impact of the actions he had taken. This formed a restorative piece of work we were able to complete.

Intervention

In terms of the intervention, our Youth Justice Worker sat with R and took him through the content of the letter. This was a very powerful session. What we and R were not aware of, was that the victim had unfortunately already been financially taken advantage of and had had a lot of money stolen, therefore the further theft had significantly impacted the family again and caused a lot of distress.

R was able to reflect and really take this on board, his reactions indicated that he was remorseful and had not understood the full weight of the actions he had taken. He was described to be a bit teary and shocked. He said he was in a very different place then and a lot has changed for him since this time. He shared that he had not known what to do at that time, he felt alone and did not know where to go for help He did offer to write an apology letter to the victim and wanted her to know he was sorry.

Outcome

R did not miss any appointments and engaged in all sessions well. R had five sessions in total but was also seeing professionals through social care and had commenced tutoring following being out of school for some time. At the end of the intervention R had been in his foster placement for a year and had some stability. He had not come to attention for any further offences.

B. Dorset Police and OPCC

4.2 As Members will appreciate, it is challenging to quantify the benefit of preventative work as is it not possible to accurately quantify the numbers of, for example, offences prevented from happening through specific interventions.

4.3 Therefore, qualitative data can be useful, and a range of feedback is provided below outlining the benefit of the Dorset Police SSCT work, as espoused by teachers over the previous 12 months:

"I met with [name redacted] recently and he spoke very highly of the work you are delivering to the [redacted] Academy, so I wanted to write to you to thank you and make the Prevention Command Team aware. [He] outlined how proactive you are in your approach and relationship with the academy, and how helpful and supportive you are to the Senior Leadership Team. It is wonderful to hear of the positive impact you are having with one of the largest schools in [place redacted], and that both pupils, teaching staff, and parents/carers are benefiting from your work. All too often this feedback is not shared and [he] was keen for Dorset Police to be aware of the contribution you are making to the school and what an asset you are to Dorset Police."

"Please can you send our heartfelt thanks to [name redacted] for yesterday. She did an amazing job, and we feel so grateful to her for the time she spent with the children yesterday and the messages she put across in a friendly, but firm way. Perfect!"

"We had OFSTED in this week and one area they praised was our work with external agencies such as yourself and how proactive we are about it. So, I wanted to say thank you for the big role you play in supporting these comments."

“I just wanted to email and say a huge thank you for your patience and understanding yesterday afternoon, it was a very difficult situation with our pupil and your support was invaluable. I know it meant that you spent most of your day with us and I very much appreciate your time.”

“Just wanted to say how impressed I am with the updated knife and weapons video that SSCT have produced. From my perspective its pitched really well and something that we’ll definitely promote the use of in the YJS.”

Note: This is ‘Click & Play’ education created by the SSCT which the Youth Justice Service use when working with children on youth OoCDs.

“Thank you to [name redacted] for attending the Anti bullying forum last week. Your input was very valuable and helped us to think through the links to bullying, being vulnerable and county lines. We were also able to reflect on encouraging children to talk to adults and not feel that they are ‘snitching’.”

“Thank you very much for attending both of the [redacted] forums last week. Your presentations were really good, very relevant material and a good up-date of your services. It was fast paced which was good for us with so much to get through each time! We always appreciate the SSCT joining us as schools value your work greatly as we do.”

- 4.4 As has previously been presented to the Panel, Dorset Police and OPCC have funded – through the internal Innovation Board – the development of an artificial intelligence system, in partnership with BAE Systems. The platform analyses data records for emerging and persistent patterns, and can identify links within large, administrative datasets that humans are simply incapable of discerning.

Intelligent Lead Assessment Service

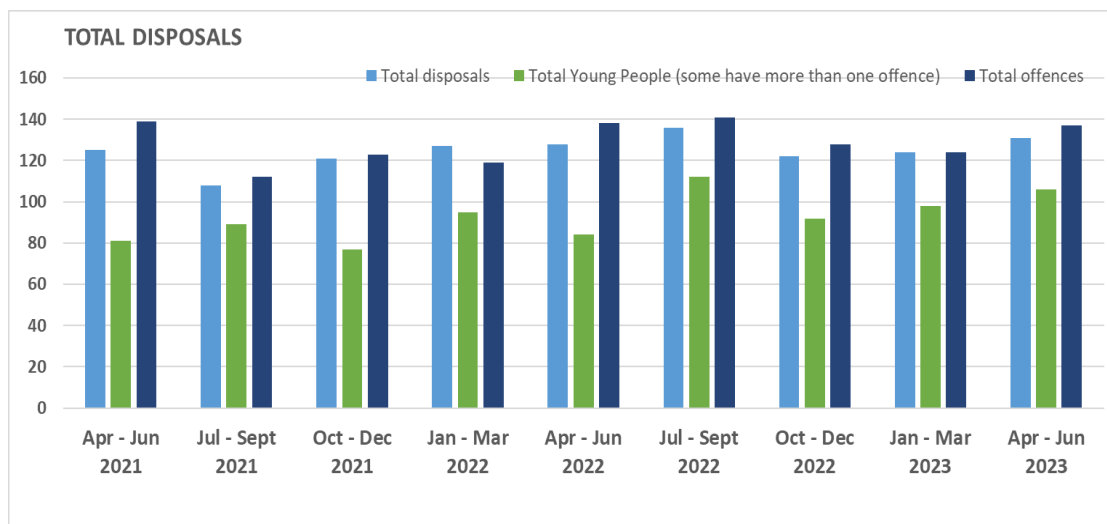
ILAS, or the [Intelligent Lead Assessment Service](#), within Dorset Police is used to identify the vulnerability of young people to exploitation through the assessment of multiple data points held in its administrative datasets.

For example, a young person might be vulnerable to exploitation through previously being involved in anti-social behaviour, having difficulties at school and/or periods of truancy or exclusion, and having an association with a known drug user or street dealer.

ILAS will scan information held in the dataset in the background and highlight any potential areas or individuals for further consideration by police analysts. These analysts having reviewed the data highlighted by ILAS, can make referrals to the Dorset Police Prevention Team, who can undertake action as necessary, including carrying out protective or safeguarding home visits.

- 4.5 It is not uncommon to read reports which conclude that the police, social services, or local authorities had failed to identify emerging issues, over a period of years, despite having had access to telling information. ILAS is incredibly helpful here. While humans find it difficult to highlight anomalies amongst large and complex datasets, systems do not, and can identify new information as part of a typical pattern, or something different.
- 4.6 In addition to the qualitative information provided around prevention outcomes, a range of quantitative data is held about crime and offending outcomes.

- 4.7 The table below shows the number of offences committed by young people from 2021/22 to present, by quarter, in dark blue. The total number of disposals is shown in lighter blue, and the total number of young people involved in green. These last two numbers are different as some young people commit more than one offence, and a single disposal can be used to deal with more than one offence by the same young person:



- 4.8 In 2021/22 there were 493 offences committed by 135 young people with 481 disposals; in 2022/23 there were 531 offences committed by 135 young people with 510 disposals; and in the first quarter 2023/24 there were 137 offences committed by 106 young people with 131 disposals.
- 4.9 Therefore, there was a slight increase in offences of 7.2% between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. Dorset Police advise that it is highly likely that the improved relationships with schools, through the work highlighted above, resulted in more incidents and offences being reported. For example, there were increases in the reporting of sex offences from schools following targeted awareness on violence against women and girls being provided. This increase is therefore seen as positive.

5. NEXT STEPS AND CHALLENGES

- 5.1 With the sustained and long-term reduction in the provision of services and activities for young people, allied with the current cost-of-living challenges, it is to be anticipated that additional demand has been, and will continue to be, placed upon police youth justice teams.
- 5.2 The PCC, and his office, will continue to work with partners to explore further opportunities around prevention and diversion activity along with continued monitoring and support for existing work. However, policing cannot sufficiently bridge gaps left by the withdrawal of other services – indeed, given the need for impactful education and diversionary work to be undertaken at a very early stage, the police service is also not the appropriate agency to undertake much of this work.
- 5.3 Despite this overarching challenge, there remain positive opportunities. The work of the Combatting Drugs Partnership, chaired by the PCC, has been a key chance to address some of the needs to support young people and their families. The recent Serious Violence Duty will likewise offer opportunities, and will no doubt be further reported on to the Panel in due course.

- 5.4 The PCC continues to lobby for funding across the prevention strand of the Government's 10-year drugs strategy [From Harm to Hope](#), and has received good support from local Parliamentarians on this matter. The PCC would also welcome the support and influence of local elected representatives in highlighting the need for further prevention and diversionary activity across all statutory partners, and in identifying opportunities for partners to progress this accordingly. Some of this can be achieved via the work of the DCYJS Partnership Board.
- 5.5 In particular, the PCC continues to lobby for funding for a Violence Reduction Unit in Dorset. A core aim of any such unit is to reduce the risk of young people committing violent crime. Central government has not allocated this funding to the county, but the PCC remains convinced that partner agencies could help to make up this shortfall.
- 5.6 The PCC is committed to supporting young people and he, along with his office, will continue to deliver the commitments made within his Police and Crime Plan.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the report.

POLICY AND COMMISSIONING MANAGER

Members' Enquiries to: Adam Harrold, Director of Operations (01202) 229084

Media Enquiries to: Susan Bloss, Head of Communications & Engagement (01202) 229095