

# Gloucestershire Youth Justice Plan 2023-24

<b>Service</b>	Gloucestershire
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## Contents

1. Foreword by the Chair of Youth Justice Management Board
2. Executive Summary
3. Introduction, vision, and strategy
4. Child First
5. Voice of the child
6. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements
7. Board Development
8. Progress on previous plan
9. Resources and services
10. Performance
11. Priorities
12. Standards for children in the justice system

13. Workforce Development
14. Evidence-based practice and innovation
15. Service development plan
16. Sign off, submission and approval
17. Appendix 1 – Budget Forecast
18. Appendix 2: Staffing Structure

## 1. Foreword

Gloucestershire's Youth Justice System (YJS) has been performing well over recent years in respect of the key measures of first entrants, reoffending, and the use of custody. There had been a question about local reoffending data, which was not aligning with national data, which indicated higher rates of recidivism than understood locally. This has been subject to joint exploration with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to ensure the confidence of local leaders in our data is justified, with a closer alignment between the most recent local and national performance data.

A substantially expanded range of youth justice performance indicators was introduced by the YJB in 2022 and will provide for a holistic picture of service effectiveness over the period of this plan. The change in approach acknowledges that diverting children from the criminal justice system and reducing offending requires a 'whole system' approach, encompassing activity beyond direct provision by the youth justice services.

The challenge for our partnership is to translate this approach into an operational reality by calling upon, rather than departing from the core 'child first' principles that have served us well to date. We will continue to develop our Children First diversionary programme and the newly introduced Turnaround initiative, which will add further capacity for our diversionary and preventative work with children.

The exploitation of children and the links with serious youth violence, the clear evidence of disproportionality across the youth justice system and high proportion of children open to both social care and youth justice are all critical issues for local youth justice partners. The wider contribution of partners around health, education and employment will be key to our success. This plan sets out the response of local partners to the challenges we face and reflects their collective commitment towards doing the very best for children and the wider community.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Andy Dempsey



Chair: Gloucestershire Youth Justice Management Board

## 2. Executive Summary

This year's Youth Justice plan expands on the vision outlined in the 2022/23 plan for Gloucestershire to operationalise the Child First evidence base. The service remains committed to putting Child First principles into practice to support children in the justice system, promote long-term desistance and create fewer victims. It details the Youth Justice Services (YJS) commitment and approach to understanding and addressing the underlying needs of children in the justice system, as well as the progress that has been made since last year. It outlines the following service priorities for 2023/24:

- Continue the implementation of the Child First evidence in all work with children in the justice system in Gloucestershire.
- Work with partners, particularly the Police and CPS, to reduce the FTE rate.
- Address the multiple and complex needs of the children that continue to reoffend to reduce both the binary and reoffences per reoffender rates.
- Focus on exploitation and serious violence to keep children and other people in Gloucestershire safe.
- Ensure that all children in both statutory and diversionary cohorts have access to suitable education, training, or employment.
- Reduce racial overrepresentation in the youth justice cohort in Gloucestershire.
- Continue the development and implementation of a harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) strategy and the commencement of the virtual HSB Team.
- Understand the impact of the current health interventions on the Youth Justice cohort.
- Reduce the use of custody for sentencing and remand, whilst improving outcomes from those released from custody.
- Work with relevant partners to improve victim engagement, satisfaction and public confidence.
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The plan also details the progress made in the last year on the establishment of a targeted prevention team, utilising the funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Turnaround project.

## 3. Introduction, vision and strategy

### Introduction

Gloucestershire is a semi-rural county in Southwest England covering approximately 1,649 square miles. The county has two major population centres in Gloucester and Cheltenham and 4 other districts, Stroud, Tewkesbury, Cotswolds, and the Forest of Dean. Gloucester and then Cheltenham are the most ethnically diverse areas of the county. The overall population is 646,627 with a 0-19 population of 140,459. The 10-17 population of Gloucestershire is 58,978 of which around 12% are children from black and ethnically diverse backgrounds (ONS, 2021 UK Population estimates Mid 2021).

In Gloucestershire, within the offending cohort, white children are underrepresented, and ethnically diverse groups of children are overrepresented in comparison. White children make up 84% of the offending population and 88% of the 10-17 population. Ethnically diverse groups make up 16% of the offending population and 12% of the 10-17 population. The most overrepresented ethnic group are mixed heritage children. They make up 15% of the 10-17 offending population and 5% of the 10-17 population.

Gloucestershire has a slightly smaller proportion of people aged 15 and under compared to England and Wales, 17.4% vs. 18.5%. However, the proportion of 0-15 years olds in Gloucestershire is higher than in the Southwest (16.9%).

At the end of April 2023, Gloucestershire had 858 Children in Care, 568 children subject to Child Protection plans and 1038 children subject to Child in Need plans. Nationally, the Office of the Children's Commissioner estimated that around 2.3 million children in England were living with risk due to vulnerable family backgrounds. This included around 100,000 children where domestic abuse, parental drug and alcohol dependency, and severe mental health problems, were all present. Prior to the pandemic nearly 50,000 children were taken into care because of abuse or neglect at home, with 17% being over-16. Teenagers have become the fastest growing cohort in both child protection and care. They now represent the largest age group (Final report by the Commission on Young Lives Nov 2022).

Gloucestershire is a county with contrasting areas of affluence and deprivation. Areas of Gloucester, Cheltenham and the Forest of Dean are amongst the 10% most deprived areas in the country. Yet there are also areas of the county that are in the 10% least deprived (ONS, 2019 English indices of deprivation).

Within the county, Gloucester has the highest crime rate per 1,000 at 127.36, this has raised from 92.6 at the time of last year's plan. Cheltenham is next and up to 96.5 from 72.1. The remaining 4 districts have rates between 52-61. Overall reported crime in Gloucestershire has increased since the 2019 data included in the last plan. However, we recognise that changes have occurred within the Constabulary on crime recording which is likely to positively contribute to the impact. The rate in Gloucestershire per 1,000 for possession of weapons offences has only seen marginal fluctuations over the past 2 years between 0.10-0.16. In Gloucester these rates are higher with greater flux between 0.16-0.32 (Police.uk, 2022). This difference in crime rate is also reflected in hospital admission data for violent crime, which has Gloucester followed by Cheltenham having significantly higher rates than other areas of the county (Gloucestershire ICS Population Profile, 2019). The same data set also notes that with regard to school readiness, Gloucester has a lower rate than other areas of the county and that this gap widens further for children who access free school meals.

In Gloucestershire, the YJS is incorporated within targeted youth support through the County's Youth Support Team (YST), a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary service, commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council and delivered by Prospects, part of the Shaw Trust Charity. This integrated model enables support to be delivered at a preventive stage or equally sustained beyond the young person's Court Order. This is defined as targeted prevention activity by the Youth Justice Board (2021), working with

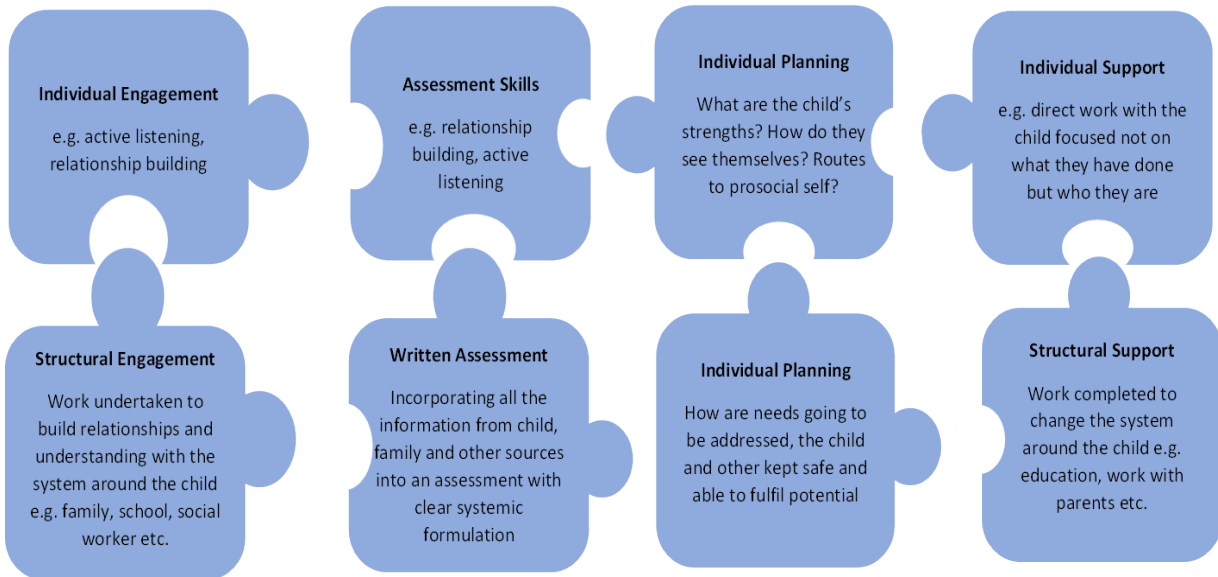
children who have experienced some contact with the justice system but are not otherwise being supported by YJS intervention.

The Gloucestershire YJS is unique in its position as an outsourced provision where it forms part of the local authority's statutory functions. Integration is a key element to the youth justice model across the country with statutory partners being situated together. Within Gloucestershire, integration exists at both an operational and strategic level but the delivery model brings an additional, and unique, level of integration which can have a positive impact on the success of youth justice intervention. The Youth Support Team (YST) includes a variety of specialist services, which can be accessed without delay for the children entering and being diverted from, the criminal justice system. This reduces the negative stigmatisation that can be associated with services that focus primarily on a cohort of children who have offended. At national level, the Youth Justice Board has recognised the importance of this with the linguistic pivot from Youth Offending Teams to the current terminology of Youth Justice Services. In addition, the journey for the child is consistent and timely, with an overarching aim of supporting children to achieve their potential and make a successful transition to adulthood.

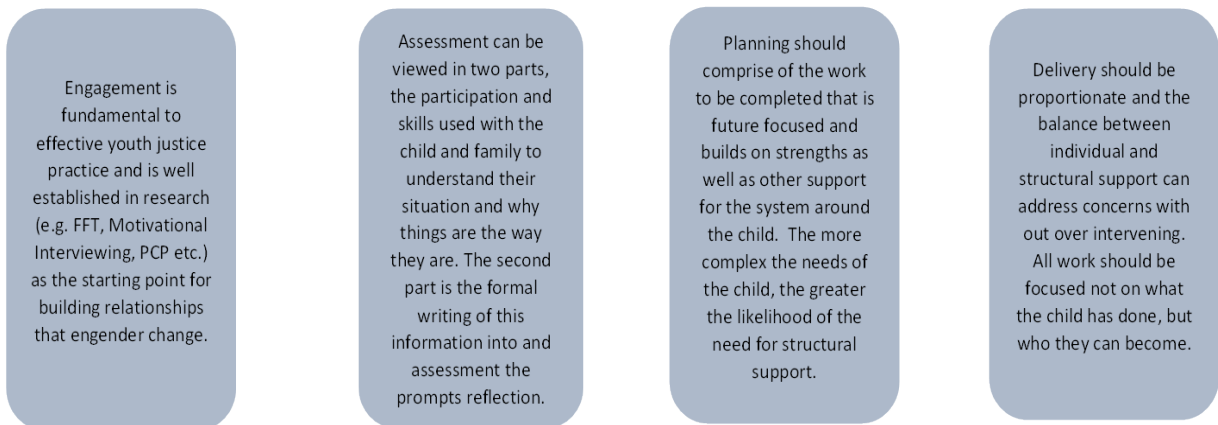
### **Vision and Strategy**

The vision for the Gloucestershire YJS is for child first principles to underpin all aspects of practice. Additionally, we aim to build on the statutory and wider partnerships, across the county, to understand and address the needs of children in the justice system or on the cusp of it. The service endeavours to deliver high quality support to children through the operationalisation of the Child First evidence base (Case & Browning, 2021). We will provide high-quality support to children in the justice system that considers the individual stories, needs and unique strengths of the children we work with and makes appropriate use of delivering offence focused programmes that are sequenced correctly. Discussions with partners to support this are ongoing and the change in focus will ensure that children have holistic interventions that are strength based, future focused and which support long term desistance and positive change. The vision is to avoid excessive 'responsibilisation' (viewing children as primarily responsible for change (Case and Browning, 2021)) through increased work with families and making clear the distinction between individual and structural support for children.

**Overarching vision – A Child First justice system that sees children and children and is grounded in evidence**



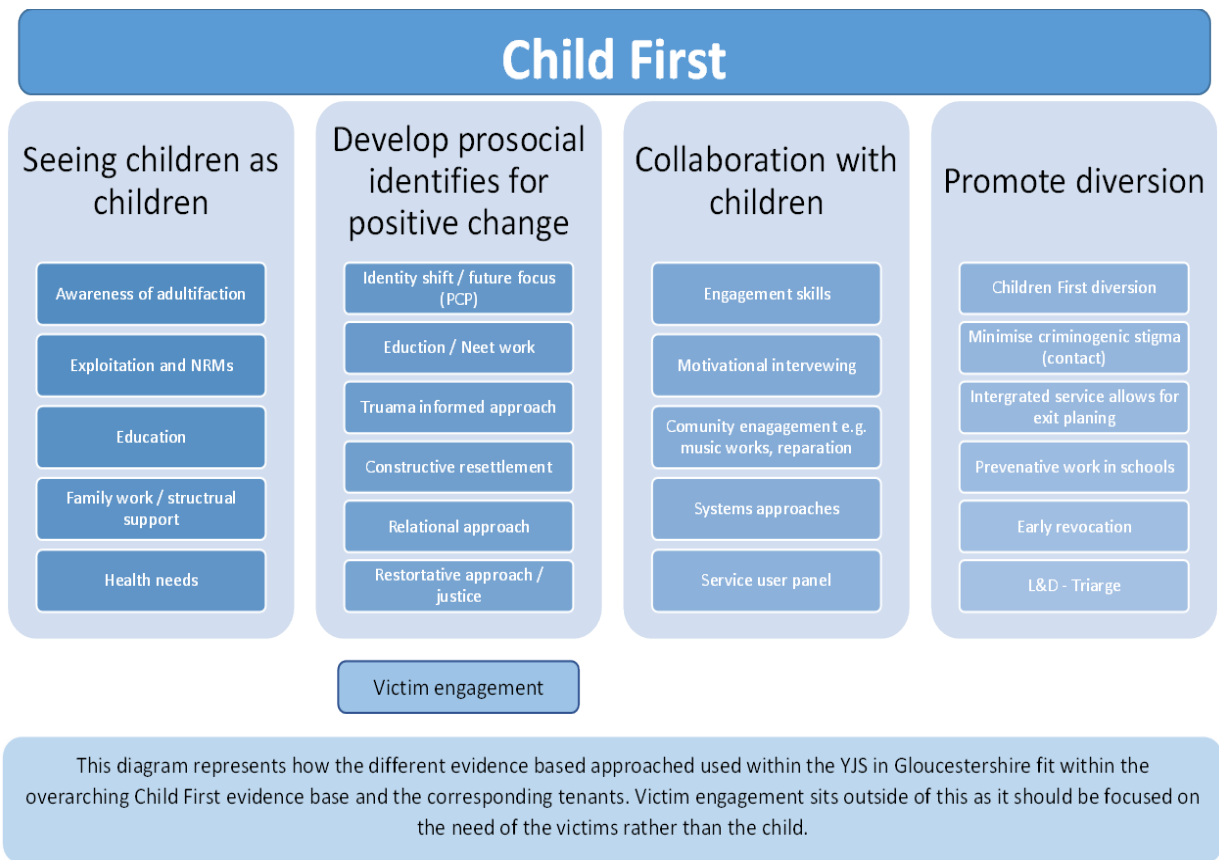
**Victim Engagement** – This could include work with victims to help and support them and may include Restorative Justice were appropriate and in the best interest of both the victim and the child where it would be included in the planning and support phases.



The strategy to achieve this is based around continued development opportunities for both the YJS staff and partners. This will ensure that a greater understanding of how to apply Child First in practice is evident across services. The continued development of Prevention and Diversion provision will also support the delivery of this work, and where possible, avoid the need for criminalising sanction.

## 4. Child First

### *Child First in Practice*



The Child First evidence base is fundamental to the work delivered with children in the justice system in Gloucestershire. The above diagram illustrates how the various approaches utilised in Gloucestershire are linked to and support the Child First Tenets in practice. These are fundamental to the YJB Strategic Plan (2021-2024) and are:

- 1) Seeing children as children.
- 2) Develop prosocial identities for positive change.
- 3) Collaboration with children.
- 4) Promote diversion.

We recognise that children who offend are often themselves vulnerable and that traditional criminalising sanctions can be ineffective, inappropriate, and disproportionate. Gloucestershire's Children First diversion scheme is an example of how we divert children away from the Criminal Justice System. Within this we continue to push boundaries and challenge traditional cultural and systemic responses to children who commit offences in the interests of children, young people, and the wider community. We monitor the effectiveness of Children First using local data to analyse reoffending rates. These have consistently been lower than the national data for Youth



Cautions and all other formal sanctions (see Children First reoffending tracker in the Performance section).

Child First is evident across Youth Justice practice in Gloucestershire. This year has seen the embedding of the term Child in discussions with partner organisations, to continually focus the responsibilities they have to this cohort. This can be forgotten through adultification in the use of terms such as adolescent or young person. (*The concept of adultification is when notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children*' HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2022). The YJS also recognises the concerns around responsabilisation of the child and aims to practice in a systemic way, incorporating families and communities into the support for children. This includes working with education settings and advocating for the rights and needs of children in the justice system.

The YJS has developed, and delivered training on identity shift to its YJ staff and the wider Youth Support Team, as well as some partner agencies. This draws on the identity shift research from Beyond Youth Custody and combines this with the evidence base of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) and Motivational Interviewing (MI), to give practitioners skills they can use with children. The aim is to support children to develop pro-social identities. This has been included in the training for the Referral Order panel volunteers and is also considered in other areas of work such as reparation. The YJS is already exploring with community partners and existing projects how this work can have benefit to the community and be used to support positive pro-social identities. Examples include using the YJS wood-workshop to support children interested in construction skills, or the development of their maths; cooking activities which can support the development of an identity related to those skills/competencies. The decisions about what takes place, or the development of the identities is co-constructed with the child, based on their interests or what they would like to try or explore. In addition, and where appropriate, victim's views are incorporated into decisions around reparative activities. Supporting children to develop prosocial identities will support long term desistance and create fewer victims.

Over the past year Gloucestershire YJS has participated in the Southwest project developing the trauma-informed approach. This is an exciting area of practice being developed in conjunction with other YJS's, the YJB and NHS England Health and Justice, which includes the implementation of the Trauma Recovery Model. Our Trauma Champion has benefitted from an extensive training programme delivered by the Senior SW Enhanced Case Management (ECM) leads and SW ECM Psychologists. The knowledge gained has been disseminated to all YJS staff and some of the wider YST in a series of workshops. A network of trauma practitioners has been established in the Southwest to enable the sharing of best practice. The YJB will support the continuation of such a meeting post project, in line with the existing meeting for the ECM psychologists. NHS funding has been provided to appoint a part time Psychologist into the Southwest (North) Community Forensic CAMHS team which will be a dedicated resource for Gloucestershire.

As a result, Gloucestershire will be able to deliver the Enhanced Case Management Model from July 2023. The YST have agreed to continue funding the Senior Practitioner

Trauma post for a 2year fixed term to match the funding of the psychologist and to mirror the approach across the SW ECM projects.

## **5. Voice of the child**

The voice of the child is integral to the service offered in Gloucestershire; and has been an area of focus over the last 12 months. Feedback is collected and used to inform service development, specialist training and individual interventions. There is a regular, quarterly Feedback Fortnite where additional focus is put in place to encourage children to provide anonymous feedback of their experience of the service. In addition, we have worked with children to develop specific feedback forms to be completed at regular points throughout their intervention.

The feedback from children consistently demonstrates that the workers in the YJS are using relational based practice and that children are benefitting from the relationships that are developed. There is also a strong recognition that the support children receive creates positive change in their lives. However, there are mixed responses around children's understanding / articulation of what needs to happen next in their lives and the pace that this should happen. This has informed our move away from the scaled approach of interventions to co-produced plans, utilising the Child First approach, and considering individual needs and risks to inform bespoke responses.

The YJS have a strong Quality Assurance Framework in place, which includes a minimum of two youth justice cases being audited each month. An independent manager will contact the child and parent/carer to give them an opportunity to provide feedback. This information has been aggregated and demonstrates that children formed positive relationships with their worker, they enjoyed the content of sessions, which led to them feeling better about themselves, with some children reporting feeling safer. Composite audit reports (key themes) are provided to the YJMB on a quarterly basis to support strategic planning. An example of a theme that emerged from these audits was regarding management oversight. Further training was provided to managers and this issue has since improved.

Children supported by the service are reporting that there are a range of issues within their communities which impact upon them. These include exposure to criminal behaviour, the impact of illegal drugs in communities, and poverty. This has been valuable to the development of the service to support practitioners in thinking about the lived experiences of the children they support and how this may impact on behavioural change. This supports the development of realistic plans to build on the strengths and interests of the child. However, this remains an area of work that requires continual development in partnership with children, to further understand the diverse needs and experiences of those supported by the service.

Over the last 12 months, we have established a Youth Board for the whole of the YST comprising of children who have experienced the service, including the YJS. This is a new group, and the first areas for development that they have identified is how to include young people in recruitment, in a meaningful way. Although this group is in its infancy, we will be developing this further in 2023/24. This will include identifying how the group will report into the YJMB.

The YJS also ensures that all victims, including child victims are contacted, and their views considered as part of intervention planning. This has been a recent addition to the YJMB reports.

## **6. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements**

The Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) have oversight of the effectiveness of Gloucestershire YJS and provides strategic direction. It is chaired by the local authority's Director of Partnerships and Strategy and comprises of senior representatives from the National Probation Service, the OPCC, District Councils, Police, Health, Children's Social Care, Restorative Gloucestershire, Education, Courts, Prospects (commissioned as the YST which incorporates the YJS), Commissioning, Early Help and the YJB. The YJMB (See appendix 1 for membership) meets quarterly and oversees the quality of delivery and its success in terms of delivery of key aims and objectives.

The YJS Head of Service reports into the Operations Director of the Youth Support Team who is, in turn, accountable to the GCC's Director of Children's Services. The Chief Executive Officer is ultimately accountable for youth justice in the county and is regularly updated on progress via the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Partnerships as YJMB Chair. The YJMB last revised its Terms of Reference in January 2022 and has experienced some recent changes in its membership. A YJMB development day will be held over the course of 2023/24 to ensure our membership and terms of reference are appropriate and effective.

The YJS is part of an integrated service, and the Head of Service has responsibility for a portfolio of services including all Youth Justice related activity. This includes Turnaround targeted prevention, Children First, youth work and activities, and the Liaison and Diversion service. Delivery is via small multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that a child's journey is seamless (See Appendix 2 structure chart).

This work also sits within the wider YST portfolio, which delivers a variety of services to vulnerable young people. The inclusion of the YJS staff in this integrated model enables the sharing of expertise and transferable skills that allows for a more co-ordinated and timely response to individual young people, who often have multiple and complex needs.

In addition to the YJMB, the YJS Head of Service or Operational Director also sit on the following Boards - Gloucestershire Criminal Justice, Gloucestershire Prevent, Channel Panel, MAPP, Safer Gloucestershire, Serious Organised Crime Prevention, Victims and Witnesses, and Restorative Gloucestershire. Safer Gloucestershire provides the strategic framework for county-wide community safety activity including Youth Justice and provides a forum for discussing issues that cannot be resolved within the YJMB. The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) receives performance information on youth justice as part of its data dashboard.

## 7. Board development

The YJMB have its terms of reference and membership aligned with the YJB Guidance on Youth Justice Leadership and Governance (2021).

There is a need for the board to have oversight of the children with complex needs and racial disparity in the YJS in Gloucestershire. To achieve this, additional oversight, and multi-agency responses in specific areas of work have been developed through the re-establishment of the following subgroups:

- Complex reoffending needs subgroup.
- Custody subgroup.
- Education subgroup.

The board will use the work and feedback from these groups, as well as from the recently established Youth Board, to ensure a high-quality service continues to be provided to all children. The feedback from these groups will be incorporated into the standing agenda for the YJMB.

The YJB KPI on partner attendance at the Youth Justice Management Board, introduced during 2023/24, will provide transparency and accountability on partner commitment. The challenge for the board is to ensure it influences the wider system of services for children in support of YJS outcomes. While the YJS is influenced by the Child First evidence base, maximum impact will be achieved through the understanding and adoption of this approach by other partners.

The involvement of board members in the subgroups in the last twelve months has been positive and they have participated in the development of this plan. This year has seen the appointment of a deputy chair from the OPCC. This is a welcome addition to the board. When new members join the group, we will invite them to visit the YJS to meet members of the team and get an induction into the practice of the team. We plan to have a development day for the board in the coming year.

## 8. Progress on previous plan

**Aim 1: Ensure the use of Child First evidence base is evident in all work completed with children.**

**Actions:**

- Continue to develop a practice model that ensures the Child First evidence base is integral to all work with children who have contact with the YJS. This work will be led by the YJS management team.
- Increase the structural support around children through working with families and family support provision to reduce the responsibilities of children and address the wider systemic factors.
- Ensure that child first principles are evident in planning for children working with the YJS.

**Progress:** Over the last 12 months we have increased awareness within the YJS and partners. We have delivered additional training to all Youth Justice practitioners, panel volunteers, as well as delivering training to voluntary and statutory partners (including Magistrates) on identity shift and trauma informed practice, completing deep dive audits to explore the impact.

As part of this practice development, we have placed a greater focus on practice and structural support away from simply focusing on the child and the offence, which has been reflected in plans and practice. Development of our prevention offer has been informed by this practice, including having a seconded family support worker as part of the new Turnaround Prevention team, and delivering additional awareness in functional family therapy, with a key focus of working with the families, alongside the child.

A Youth Justice development day was held at the beginning of September 2022 for all YJS staff which focused on reviewing and operationalising the YJ plan. We revisited the Child First approach, to identify what was working well and where the operational challenges were. In addition, we explored what a child first approach looks like in assessments, plans and contacts. We have subsequently reviewed our audit tool to ensure that we consider how the Child First approach has been used to inform our work in practice. We also held a similar event with the Children First panel.

The research surrounding the Child First evidence base continues to expand, the most recent update (Case et. al., 2022) articulates the need to widen the measures of success for children in the justice system from binary/quantitative data and include more qualitative/experiential information. In Gloucestershire we have already started to explore this by looking at information around education, social care experience etc. but there continues to be improvements that can be made, and we are committed to doing so.

We have worked with service experienced children, along with speech and language therapists, to revise the feedback process that will be used with children to capture their lived experience. This will provide us with another means of measuring the impact of this practice and inform future service development.

**Barriers:** A Practice framework is in development as we are keen to develop a framework which incorporates all elements of the YJS. However, we have experienced some barriers to completion, in terms of capacity. This remains a focus for next year.

**Aim 2: Reduce the FTE rate for Gloucestershire to below 70 per 100,000.**

**Actions:**

- Increase range of offences which can be diverted in partnership with the police in light of the positive reoffending data that has emerged from Children First.
- Increased and consistent use of diversionary outcomes, increasing understanding of the robust diversionary offer and ensuring that knife offences are eligible for diversion. This will be overseen by the YJMB.
- Increased oversight of diversion by the YJMB to ensure that children who could be diverted have this option and appropriate challenge is in place.
- Utilise the Turnaround funding to create a targeted prevention offer within the YST and work on this area alongside colleagues from Families First and wider partners.

**Progress:** The most recent published data January 2022 – December 2022 reports 47 FTEs which equates to 80 per 100,000. Oct 21-Sept 22 has the FTE rate for Gloucestershire as 67 per 100,000. We appreciate this remains a low FTE rate however, there remains work to do to ensure a consistent system where children are diverted wherever possible.

The Children First Operational Partnership has now extended to include Families First, the LA Family Support Service, in the decision-making panel. This has led to the development of a pathway where, when appropriate, Families First can support those children and families presented in panel. This was combined with the Children First out of court disposal strategic group agreeing to widen the options available to the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDP) including Community Resolutions, Outcome 20 and Outcome 21, all of which do not result in a criminal record. This has resulted in a reduction in Youth Conditional Cautions being issued. No Youth Cautions have been issued since December 2021 within Gloucestershire.

We reviewed our internal processes to ensure that discussions held in court with CPS and any decisions not to return to panel are recorded against every child and is embedded in the return from court process. This has enabled scrutiny of every decision made that has resulted in an FTE by the YJS, YJMB and the strategic and operational scrutiny group for Children First. The impact of this has been more robust challenge and review of decision making between partners, thereby improving systems to ensure children are always considered for diversion where suitable.

The Turnaround funding has enabled the recruitment of a small, targeted prevention team. This team started in May 2023 so any impact from this has not yet been evidenced.

**Barriers:** As the numbers of children in this cohort are low, opportunities to make further reductions are limited. Consistency of decision making and continued senior

level buy-in from all partners to enable the continuation of positive, informed risk taking will be key factors in making further progress. We will consult with CPS to enable further offences to be diverted to the Children First pathway, as per the legal framework. This will be undertaken as part of the updated gravity matrix which is due to be published imminently.

**Aim 3: Assess and address the multiple and complex needs that are evident in the small number of children who reoffend, to reduce the binary and offences per reoffender rate in line with the national picture.**

**Actions:**

- All staff to have undertaken training around trauma and identity shift. Staff to have an understanding of the Trauma Recovery Model and be able to implement it into their practice. This will be monitored through case file audits, reflective supervision and performance surgeries.
- Increase use of identity concepts in assessment and planning with the aim of supporting positive identity shift monitored through case audits and quality assurance process.
- Systemic issues impacting these children e.g. housing, education etc. will be raised with the YJMB through both the complex needs subgroup and through case studies and thematic data. In this way ensuring all partners address these issues through their own organisations.

**Progress:** Offending data is illustrating that our offences per offender (reoffences rate) is reducing, following a period of high rates, which peaked approximately 18 months ago. This is likely to have been impacted by a number of factors, including the pandemic, and a discrepancy in data between our local data and published data. However, our local data continued to reflect a high level of reoffences per reoffender, albeit recent published reporting is evidencing a decline and greater congruence between local and national data. In Gloucestershire, while there are discrepancies between the published and local data the picture is of a service where fewer children reoffend, but the complexity of the challenges they face is significant.

We have worked with partners to develop a more in-depth data set to help us gain a greater understanding of the systemic issues which impact on this cohort of children. Some of the standout observations are of children who are predominantly care experienced, the majority of whom have experienced significant disruption in their education and have received reduced levels of provision. Children with additional educational needs are disproportionately overrepresented within this cohort, alongside children from non-white British backgrounds and females.

We have refreshed the reoffending subgroup to consider and address the systemic issues for individual children in real time, whilst improving the oversight of the children currently offending through the utilisation of the live tracker. This is in its early stages and continues to be a key area for focus in 2023/24.

The Phase 3 2022-23 South-West Trauma Informed Project, of which Gloucestershire was a part, has been very successful and benefited from the support and co-ordination

of the YJB Project Lead. The focus of the project was to ensure that there were individuals within each of the remaining nine YJS's in the SW region who could become trauma champions and become skilled in supporting others to develop trauma-informed practice.

Additionally, each Trauma Champion completed the YJB Trauma Toolkit, which is a checklist developed to help them identify their service needs, to develop a trauma-informed service or if they are delivering one to help them to review progress. This considered areas such as Leadership and Governance, Training and Development, Environment, Practice Development and Monitoring and Planning. The Trauma Champions completed an Action Plan for their Youth Justice service as a result, progress against which was reviewed in the final quarter of the project, and which we continue to monitor.

Due to funding secured by SW Forensic CAMHS, through NHS England, we are able to provide psychological input for Enhanced Case Management (ECM) in our region. This will support Gloucestershire with the roll out of the ECM model, alongside ongoing development of trauma informed practice. This will enable us to further understand and support some of our most complex children.

**Aim 4: Focusing on understanding and addressing the causal factors of exploitation and serious violence in Gloucestershire.**

**Actions:**

- Working with Board Members to provide support to partner organisations to understand and address exploitation.
- Wider YST (inc. YJS) involvement in developing the countywide exploitation strategy.
- Continue to develop the preventative offer to provide support to schools utilising the Youth Work provision within the YST, identifying and supporting the minimisation of exploitation and risks of exploitation.
- Consideration of context in assessment and exploration of identity evidenced through gatekeeping and audit.
- Review of High-Risk Planning Meetings in line with the exploitation strategy and complex needs subgroup.
- Continued development of violence prevention panel which draws together partners to identify needs for children considered at risk of violent offences.

**Progress:** We have worked alongside our strategic partners in developing and implementing the exploitation strategy in Gloucestershire, developing a shared definition of exploitation and extra familial harm, and clear pathways and practice. This has included contributing to the development and roll out of the locality Missing and Child Exploitation meetings, and the pilot of 'My Safety meetings', the mechanism for the coproduction of safety planning.



As part of Violence Duty, we have worked with partners to prevent and reduce serious violence through contributing to an understanding of our current practice and challenges, completing the Joint readiness assessment and contributing to the development of the initial strategic priorities. This will be an ongoing priority for the coming year, contributing to the strategic needs assessment and Serious Violence Strategy.

Through the YST Early help offer, we have continued to offer 1:1 support for children identified as being at risk of exploitation, alongside the YST Exploitation and Complex Engagement team. We have also, to date, delivered the Safer Communities Schools Group Work Programme in schools as part of our 6-week prevention offer to 7 senior schools and an Islamic evening school across the county.

As a key partner on the violence prevention panel, we have continued the development of this panel, bringing in additional partners to ensure that there is a more consistent approach to identifying appropriate prevention interventions in a timely manner. There continues to be more work needed around earlier identification of vulnerable children, and mapping third sector provision to enable a wider offer of services to children. This will be a focus within the partnership over the next year.

**Barriers:** As part of the Exploitation Strategy implementation, we had intended to undertake a review of our high-risk planning meetings, to bring them in line with 'My Safety meetings'. However, as part of the YJS statutory responsibility in public protection, and managing the risk of harm to others, we have not yet been able to resolve this issue satisfactorily. We are however, continuing to work with Childrens Services to develop this area of practice to ensure that we have a consistent approach, whilst incorporating our statutory responsibilities.

**Aim 5: Ensuring that all children in both statutory and diversionary cohorts have access to suitable education, training, or employment.**

**Actions:**

- The YJS and YJMB to develop further understanding of the children not in suitable education training or employment and joint action is taken to address this.
- Re-establish the education subgroup which will have strategic oversight of the education of children in the justice system and contribute to the shared responsibility to meet the needs of these children. Particular attention needs to be given to ensure that children with EHCP's have suitable education. This will be a clear focus.
- YST youth work to develop a programme during the summer holiday period, with the virtual school to deliver activities for year 6 moving into year 7 to reduce the risks associated with this period of transition.

**Progress:** The Education subgroup was refreshed to ensure we have strategic oversight of the education outcomes for children open to the YJS. This is chaired by GCC's Director for Education with key representation from all elements of education in attendance. There is a particular focus on children with EHCPs, and we provide quarterly data regarding the education outcomes for this group. Our YJS education lead meets with a

Youth Justice lead from the SEN team monthly to plan and progress the education pathways for children with EHCPs. In addition, they regularly meet with partners in Education Inclusion and Elected Home Education to ensure that children are receiving appropriate and suitable offers, and any barriers are identified and addressed.

We have worked with schools to raise awareness of the challenges that exist for this cohort of children. We are looking at ways to support education establishments to retain students following offences, with professional networks around the child to help schools manage the risks whilst ensuring that children continue to receive an education. For our most complex children, education is also a key focus as part of the Reoffending subgroup.

We have further developed our data set around the education outcomes for this cohort of children. We ensure that we understand the systemic factors which create barriers to their education and work with partners to strategically identify and address these underlying causal factors. The Virtual School is a key partner in this work.

We have established a Southwest Education group, which brings together the education workers from Youth Justice Services across the Southwest, to look at the challenges faced by this group of children, share good practice, and identify and raise issues with the YJB which are common across the Southwest.

**Barriers:** The Youth Work Summer programme was unable to take place, due to the lack of numbers of children recruited through the Virtual school. However, we worked with the Virtual School to identify other options to support these children.

## **Aim 6: Understanding and address racial disparity in the youth justice system in Gloucestershire.**

### **Actions:**

- Using data from the YDS 110 evidence's racial disparity, the YJMB will work together to develop a comprehensive action plan to fully understand and address this issue across all partners. The plan will then be monitored within the YJMB.
- Work to increase trust and positive experiences of services by children to encourage engagement at an earlier stage in support processes. Feedback from young people through out feedback processes will inform any developments.
- Increase the number of children from Black and minority backgrounds receiving diversion through return from court and the availability of a second diversionary offer and the reduction in use of YCC's.
- The complex needs and education subgroups will explore how the wider services decisions and practices impact on overrepresentation of children from minority groups in the YJS. The aim will be to ensure that multi-disciplinary changes impact positively on the numbers, e.g. exclusion numbers.

- There is ambition to undertake a research project with the local university to explore the early experiences children from black and minority groups have with children's services which can feed into the YJMB led action plan.

**Progress:** There is clear evidence of racial over representation in the youth justice system in Gloucestershire. The ability to address these issues can only be done through robust partnerships and an openness to exploring organisational bias. Oversight of this area has increased and the service can now consistently:

- Monitoring the number and ethnicity of children returned to JDP from court.
- Monitoring the number, ethnicity and rationale for children returned for charge from JDP.
- Monitoring the ethnicity of all first-time entrants and rationales for the decisions.
- Highlighting and tackling issues identified whenever possible, including challenging partners to consider disproportionality.
- Ensuring a child's ethnicity is known as part of decision making for the Diversion panel.

To enable us to do this we have improved our reporting of ethnicity across all domains into the board. As a result, we have a clearer understanding of the children we are working with, and decisions made against them. We have also developed a shared dataset with the Children First Diversionary panel which will capture a broad range of information regarding children and the outcomes for them. This will support analysis in key areas and allow for appropriate but robust challenge when needed. For the last two datasets reported into the board ending Dec 22, children from ethnically diverse backgrounds had received the same or more diversionary outcomes than statutory outcomes. Nevertheless, we remain focused on our long-term trend which is to the contrary.

We have ensured that the racial disparity within the YJS is a key area of focus for all of the subgroups, continuing to remain cognisant of disproportionality, and considering how decisions and practice may impact on this.

Children from minority ethnic groups are a key target for our recently Established Turnaround prevention project, enabling them to receive early support to try and avoid these children's escalation through the CJS.

**Barriers:** The research project has not been undertaken, for a variety of reasons. For this to be impactful and meaningful it requires a significant commitment of time and resource. It requires a clear rationale and plan in regard to how it will be used to ensure that the shared experiences inform changes to practice, policy and strategy across the partnership.

**Aim 7: Continue with the development and implementation of a harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) strategy and the commencement of the virtual HSB Team.**

**Actions:**

- Strategic conversations about oversight of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) strategy take place to ensure that there is clear identification for reporting, be this YJMB, CAMHS or Gloucestershire Children's Safeguarding Board.
- A HSB strategy is produced and agreed to by all partners to ensure that children receive the support that they require.
- The virtual HSB is established and works with the YJS practitioners and the wider YST and Children's services.

**Progress:** The YJS continue to work closely with the HSB team within CAMHS to ensure that children receive the support that they require. We will report the HSB data as relating to Youth Justice in the quarterly reports to the YJMB, starting from quarter 1 (2023-24), enabling strategic partners to have oversight of this area of work.

We are working with the HSB team to clearly capture the existing pathway for children open to the YJS, and our staff work well together to ensure that children are appropriately supported. We have increased the number of Aim 3 trained practitioners across the YJS and wider YST, enabling us to have capacity to pick up this complex area of work.

There is a clearly defined approach to working in this area, and a virtual network which exists between the YJS and the HSB team. This ensures that children receive a consistent service. However, there continues to be a varied picture across the LA outside of these arrangements, and without a HSB Strategy for Gloucestershire, the approach and practice across the county will continue to remain inconsistent. By reporting the Youth Justice data to the YJMB this will help to move the agenda on, enabling more scrutiny of this area.

**Aim 8: Development of a young person's board to provide the perspective of YJS experienced children to strategic decisions.**

**Actions:**

- YJS to offer children who have experienced the service the opportunity to work with the service and management team to scope and plan what a youth board would constitute and develop the terms of reference.
- The outcome of this scoping exercise to be presented to the YJMB by the children supported by practitioners.

**Progress:** A young person's board has been established within the YST, which has representatives with Youth Justice experience. It held its inaugural meeting in May 2023 and are in the early stages of defining and establishing their remit. It is early days for this group, but we are confident of the benefit that this group will bring to both the YJS, and the wider partnership, in terms of shaping and influencing services based on lived

experience. We will be working with the YJMB to establish how the young person's board will effectively link in to the YJMB.

**Aim 9: Reduce the number of children in the secure estate, both sentenced and remanded and improved outcomes for those released from custody.**

**Actions:**

- The YJS have taken the approaches advocated for in the Beyond Youth Custody literature and applied this with children to help encourage identity shift. The aim is to reduce reoffending and the number of children subject to custody. This approach will also be applied to support constructive resettlement for children when released from custody.
- Issues impacting release such as accommodation or education training or employment will be escalated through the relevant subgroup to the YJMB with the aim of a multi-agency response to the issue.
- Monitor concordance in sentencing and bail recommendations at both youth and emergency court. Issues of difference will be escalated to the YJMB to ensure that there is oversight of any emerging issues and plans to address identified.
- Case studies of children sentenced or remanded to custody to be shared with the YJMB to provide strategic oversight of decision making.

**Progress:** We have seen an increase in the use of remand to the care of the local authority rather than youth detention accommodation. We have also seen fewer children sentenced to short custodial sentences and the overall use of custody as a sentence is low. The impact of the identity shift training and overall child first approach has seen improvements in planning for children's resettlement. Long term, it is hoped this will reduce reoffending for children released from custody. Several case studies have been shared with the YJMB across this year and these included both a custodial case and a child remanded to the local authority. Trauma informed approach training has been undertaken with the Youth Magistrates.

**Barriers:** The number of children in custody on remand has remained high due to a high-profile Murder trial in Gloucestershire which has been subject to significant delay due to the initial trial collapsing and a second trial not being rescheduled until April 2023. However, the majority of the children presenting in remand situations are due to their exploitation, in the sale of class A drugs. This remains a nationally complex picture in how authorities respond and keep children and communities safe. A briefing paper is jointly being produced between Children's Social Care Commissioning, Children Social Care casework teams and the YJS to present within the YJMB to explore these barriers further.

## 9. Resources and services

In Gloucestershire, the case holding YJS specialist practitioners are outlined below:

Role	FTE	Additional responsibilities / comments
<b>All CROs participate in the court duty rota for weekdays and Saturdays</b>		
Senior CRO	0.6	Court and Custody lead - Court duty 3 days a week, Oversees Police Custody daily. Case holder equivalent 2days a week. (Due to commence flexible retirement July 23 – reduce to 0.6)
Senior CRO	0.8	Social worker - Children First and Joint Decision Panel representative, in and out of county cases. Case holder equivalent 2days a week.
Senior CRO	1	Trauma lead - ECM
Senior CRO	1	Partnerships (Music works). Case holder equivalent 4 days a week.
CRO	0.8	
CRO	1	
CRO	1	Social Worker – completing ASYE year.
Probation Officer	0.5	Secondment ended November 22. New secondment to start July 23.
CRO	1	
CRO	1	
CRO	1	
CRO	1	
Trainee CRO	1	Due to commence July 23 – Currently completing social work apprenticeship 1 day a week.
Trainee CRO	1	Recruitment under way will complete training 1day a week.
<b>Total YJ CROs</b>	<b>12.7</b>	

Although we have 12.7 Case responsible officers, due to other responsibilities, the case holding FTE will be 10.4 following commencement of secondments.

The gap between recruitment is being met by the YST's Exploitation Complex Engagement Team working with additional children in the interim. The Exploitation and Complex engagement team support with diversion particularly, if children are already working with this team or if exploitation is a feature. They are also able to provide support around sexually harmful behaviour.

Additional pathways, based on identified need, have been created to support delivery for Children First Out of Court Disposals and are held in the Liaison & Diversion team and the YST health team where, for example, there are possession of cannabis offences.

Within a multi-disciplinary Youth Support Team, the YJS has access to the wider YST resources, including:

2.8 FTE CAMHS workers

0.6 FTE Physical Health Nurse

0.8 (+0.4 temporary) FTE Speech and Language Therapist

4.0 FTE Substance misuse workers

3.0 FTE Youth workers

2.0 FTE Outdoor Education Instructors

5.6 FTE Liaison & Diversion workers

In addition, we also have access to further specialist roles, including teenage pregnancy specialists, exploitation and missing support, housing advisors and NEET workers, alongside relevant management support.

The following partners contributed the below to the operations of the YJS in 2022-23

<b>Partner Contribution 2022-23</b>				
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Staff Costs £</b>	<b>Payments in kind - revenue £</b>	<b>Other delegated funds £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
Local Authority	793,126		240,083	1,033,209
Police Service		222,904		222,904
National Probation Service		10,333	5,000	15,333
Health Service	216,813	235,793	63,392	515,998
Police & Crime Commissioner	150,752		24,748	175,500
YJB	479,283		128,088	607,371
Other				
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,639,974</b>	<b>469,030</b>	<b>461,311</b>	<b>2,570,315</b>

<b>Gloucestershire YOT Return 2022-23</b>							
<b>Income</b>	<b>YJB Grant</b>	<b>GCC</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>Probation</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>PCC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cash	607,371	1,033,209	0	5,000	280,205	175,500	2,101,285
In Kind			222,904	10,333	235,793	0	469,030
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>607,371</b>	<b>1,033,209</b>	<b>222,904</b>	<b>15,333</b>	<b>515,998</b>	<b>175,500</b>	<b>2,570,315</b>
<b>Expenditure Details</b>							
Salaries	479,283	793,126	222,904	10,333	452,607	150,752	2,109,005
Activity Costs	2,140	471	0	0	152	95	2,858
Accommodation	2,917	5,077	0	0	1,633	1,020	10,647
Overheads	115,143	220,808	0	5,000	57,193	20,877	419,021
Equipment	7,887	13,727	0	0	4,414	2,757	28,785
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>607,371</b>	<b>1,033,209</b>	<b>222,904</b>	<b>15,333</b>	<b>515,998</b>	<b>175,500</b>	<b>2,570,315</b>

Additional detail of this and the expenditure is included in the YJS return 2022-23 below

Gloucestershire YJS used the Youth Justice Grant for the following:

<b>Expenditure 2022/23</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>£</b>
YJB Grant	607,371
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>607,371</b>

Staff Costs	479,283
Equipment Costs	7,887
Support & Infrastructure Costs	120,201
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>607,371</b>

<b>Staff Employed by YJB Grant 2022-23</b>	
<b>Job Title</b>	<b>FTE</b>

	Jan– Dec 2015	Jan– Dec 2016	Jan– Dec 2017	Jan -Dec 2018	Jan -Dec 2019	Jan–Dec 2020	Jan– Dec 2021	Jan-Dec 2022
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	294	295	263	72	67	66	74	80
<b>South-West</b>	376	337	299	242	195	126	133	125
<b>Nationally</b>	371	328	294	236	207	154	145	148

Service Manager – Youth Justice	1
Team Manager	0.89
Senior CRO – Youth Justice	1
Senior Programme Officer	1
CRO – Youth Justice	3.21
Programme Officer	1
Admin Officer	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.9</b>

## 10. Performance

### Existing key performance indicators

#### First time Entrants

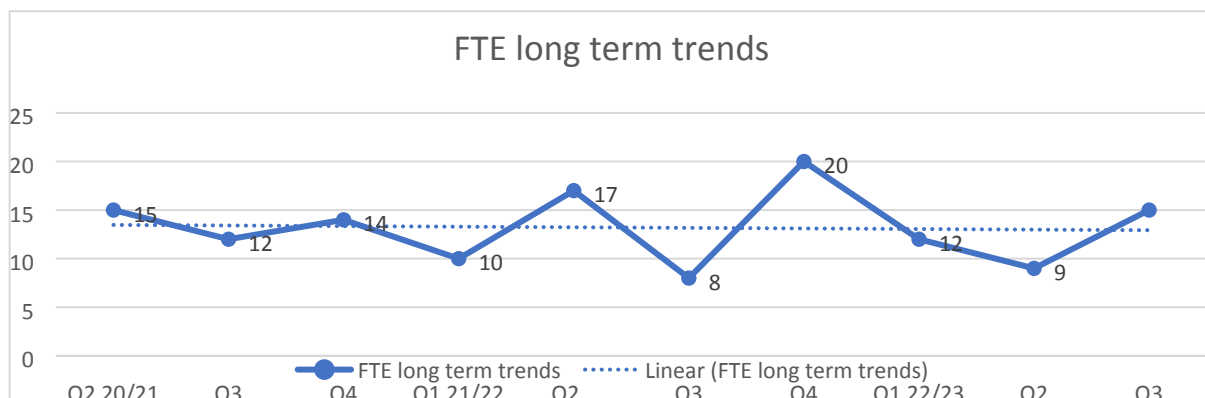
The ambition for Gloucestershire YJS continues to be to criminalise the fewest number of children possible. Our target is to maintain a rate of under 70 per 100,000, however we are currently exceeding this rate - January 2022 – December 2022:47 FTEs which equates to 80 per 100,000.

#### First Time Entrants – rate per 100,000

Gloucestershire continue to have a lower FTE rate than the Southwest, national and family average. However, we have seen an increase in ours whilst other areas are seeing a decrease.



We have explored contributory issues to this increase and recognize that, as a county, we were an early adopter of a successful diversionary scheme, with other areas only now instigating similar schemes, and this is positively impacting on their FTE numbers. In addition to this, it is more challenging to maintain these positive rates when you have a robust diversion scheme such as Gloucestershire and, as a result of this, even small numbers of Youth Conditional Cautions and Referral Orders can have a significant impact on the maintenance of a lower rate.



**Graph 1 – FTE Trend over Quarters (Rate per 100,000)**

Current reporting exceeds our target and ends this year having the highest rate of FTE’s since Children First began; it is important to note however that the pandemic is likely to have kept the 2020 and 2021 years artificially low. The agreement to divert knife offences on a case-by-case basis being back in place and the review of the child gravity matrix should support local diversion.

Robust, honest and challenging conversations are needed to ensure partner decision making remains focused. This includes ensuring that outcome data is interrogated to be clear that “what works” informs any decision making locally. The increased rhetoric at national level around Antisocial Behaviour could also have a local impact in the use of Antisocial Behaviour Injunctions, the breach of which could increase the number of FTE’s. With the strategic Children First group now meeting regularly, we are in a stronger position to maintain our low FTE rate in the county, to address any challenges the partnership faces and to work towards our ambition to lower the rate in 2023.

Note: Children First was implemented in January 2018 and by using this timeframe we can directly relate nationally published data that aligns with the commencement of the Children First diversion system.

**First Time Entrants (actual numbers):**

	Jan – Dec 2016	Jan – Dec 2017	Jan– Dec 2018	Jan– Dec 2019	Jan– Dec 2020	Jan– Dec 2021	Jan-Dec 2022
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	162	145	40	38	38	43	<b>47</b>

**Reoffending**

Reoffending is measured in two ways. Firstly the binary rate, the percentage of children who offended, from those that entered the system in a three-month period, who reoffended within 12 months. Secondly, the reoffences per reoffender rate take all the further offences during these 12 months and divides these by the number of children who reoffended. The lower this number the less reoffending.

**Reoffending by quarter (National Published Data)**

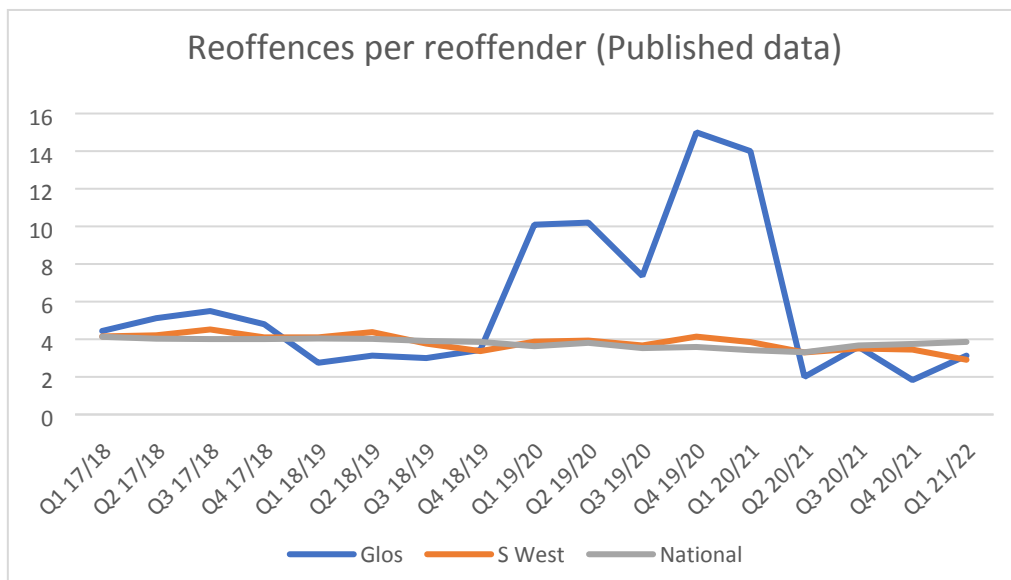
	No. of Young People in Cohort	No. of Reoffenders	No. of Reoffences	Reoffences per Reoffender	% Binary Reoffending rate
Apr 21 - Jun 21	17	8	24	3.13	47.1%
Jan 21 - Mar 21	25	6	11	1.80	24.0%
Oct 20- Dec 20	17	5	18	3.60	29.4%
Jul 20 -Sep 20	32	4	8	2.00	12.5%
Apr 20 - Jun 20	10	5	70	14.0	50.0%
Jan 20 - Mar 20	21	8	120	15.0	38.1%
Oct 19 - Dec 19	30	11	81	7.36	36.7%
Jul 19 - Sep 19	21	10	102	10.2	47.6%
Apr 19 - Jun 19	26	11	111	10.09	42.3%
Jan 19 - Mar 19	19	14	48	3.43	48.3%

The reoffending picture in Gloucestershire is complex due to the number of children who are diverted through Children First. This results in small numbers of children receiving

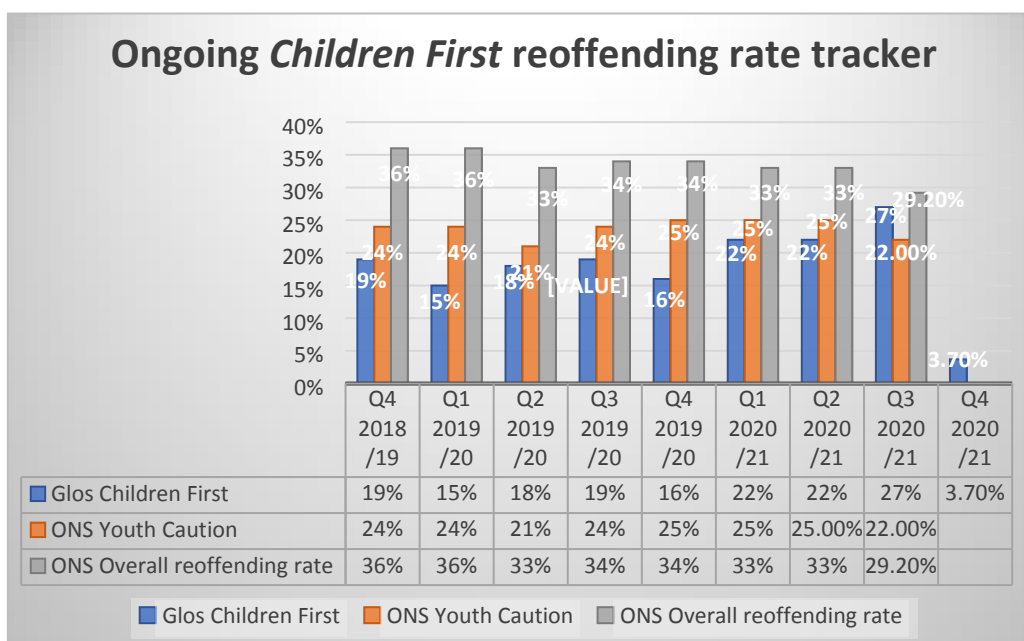
criminalising outcomes, which is positive for these children. However, it also results in those children with the most complex needs entering the statutory cohort. When looking at the above table, the number of children committing further offences each quarter has been below 10 since the start of 2020. The number of children who have reoffended per quarter has remained largely stable, but the cohort size has varied which in turn impacts on the binary reoffending rate.

When examining the data pre-dating the implementation of Children First, there were around 300 children a year in this cohort. Children First has prevented circa 200 children a year from receiving a criminalising sanction. However, the reduction in the number of children who reoffend from this group has not decreased at the same rate. This has resulted in a binary reoffending rate which is higher than the YJS family average but a notably lower FTE rate than the family average. Whilst this is positive in some regard; it also demonstrates that there are challenges with a small number of children with complex needs who have continued to commit further offences. Understanding and addressing the needs of these children remains one of the priorities for the coming year and an area of focus for the YJMB. A reoffending subgroup from the YJMB has been set up with the express purpose of understanding and addressing the issues this small cohort face.

When looking at the frequency of reoffending (reoffences per reoffender) the YJS queried a number of data points in the published data (between Q1 19/20 and Q1 20/21). However, during the exploration of this with the MoJ it became apparent that, whilst clearly anomalous, the subsequent data produced was more in line with our locally produced data. This can be seen in the below chart where we evidence more variation in the Gloucestershire data compared to the larger cohorts in the Southwest and nationally.



## Ongoing Children First reoffending rate tracker



The chart above shows the reoffending by quarter for Children First (including second or subsequent CFP) in blue compared with national reoffending data for Youth Cautions (orange) and the overall national reoffending rate (grey).

Gloucestershire’s commitment to the Children First Diversion scheme is producing a consistently low reoffending rate for those children accessing the scheme.

### Children First reoffending by quarter

Quarter	Cohort size	Number of children reoffending
Q4 2019/20	45	7
Q1 2020/21	32	7
Q2 2020/21	23	5
Q3 2020/21	26	7
Q4 2020/21	27	1

### Use of custody

The custody rate table below shows national custody rates as reported in the last five quarters. Custody rates use case level data from the Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF) measuring the number of custodial sentences in the period given to young people with a local residence and aged under 18 years on the date of the first hearing. Successfully appealed sentences are discounted and if a young person was awarded more than one custodial sentence on the same day, this will only be counted once.

Rate per 1,000 of 10-17 Population	Gloucestershire	South West	YJS Family	National
Oct 21 – Sept 22	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.11
Jul 21 – Jun 22	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.11
Apr 21 – Mar 22	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.12
Apr 22 – Mar 23	0.00	0.04	0.06	0.11

Gloucestershire's custody rates have continued to be low this year and sentences have been reserved for the most serious crimes. No custodial sentences have been used since April 2022.

Nationally, 640 children received custodial sentences between April 21 – March 22, of which 45% of children identified from an ethnic minority community, with another 3% where the ethnicity was unknown. Gloucestershire's children in custody to date also mirrors this concerning trend of disproportionality.

### **Additional key performance indicators (from April 2023)**

We are working with our management information system provider to update our systems to enable us to capture and report the new KPIs. This is a work in progress and they are liaising with the YJB to ensure that any changes reflect the new requirements. Changes are expected by the end of June 2023, in time to complete the returns for the first quarter. We have also worked with our key partners to share the new requirements, identify any potential barriers and consider possible solutions to these. Locally, over the last 12 months, we have developed a broad data set which we share with the YJMB and which encompasses many of the new indicators, so we are in a good position to begin the new reporting.

### **Suitable accommodation**

Locally we already capture the suitability of accommodation and are in the process of expanding the recording options to enable us to provide the required detail. We are able to provide the percentage of children in the community and children being released from custody with suitable accommodation arrangements. We currently report against this information and Gloucestershire has a consistently high rate of compliance in this area.

### **Education, training and employment**

Education, training and employment information is currently incorporated into the quarterly YJMB reports. In Oct-Dec 2022, 45% of children supervised by the YJS in Gloucestershire were in ETE. However, the new KPI's will require a different approach to measurement. This is not anticipated to be an issue but will make comparisons with previous years more challenging. We have arranged to have access to the WAND system, which is the live attendance tracker, to enable us to be able to report against the specific attendance details at the specified points of a YJS intervention.

### **Special educational needs and disabilities/additional learning needs**

Our Youth Justice Education lead works closely with the SEN team to ensure that there are suitable plans in place for children in Gloucestershire with EHCPs, and that timely reviews of these take place. We have worked with the data team at GCC to ensure that our MI system is updated to accurately record children with SEN. We also have access to the Education MI system to enable us to cross reference our data, assisting us to ensure that our data is as accurate as possible. At any given point, approximately 20% of children open to the YJS have EHCPs.

## **Mental health care and emotional wellbeing**

We have regularly met with our CAMHS colleagues to explore how we can capture the provision of mental health and wellbeing support that is offered outside of the CAMHS provision in Gloucestershire. This indicator requires us to report on children receiving mental health and emotional support from an early point, prior to any intervention starting, in addition to more formal interventions. This does create a challenge for us, as this is reliant on the child or family to share this information, as it is not centrally recorded across any MI system that we or our partners have access to. However, we remain optimistic regarding our ability to report on this area.

## **Substance misuse**

We have had a series of meetings with YST health team colleagues to consider this requirement. We are in the process of finalising details with our management information team. The substance misuse team have a recording module within our integrated system, and it will be possible to produce this information. We have started to capture some of this more in-depth information in our quarterly YJMB reports. Similar challenges exist to those around recording access to mental health services, as the new KPI incorporates children receiving support from services outside of the main providers and will be reliant on children sharing this information.

## **Out-of-court disposals**

In Gloucestershire we monitor the types of out of court disposals issued, which are mainly diversionary Children First Pathways (CFP's - Outcome 22) or Youth Conditional Cautions (YCC's). CFP's make up between 50-70% of the overall Youth Justice interventions opened. The service also tracks the reoffending rate of CFP's which can be seen on page 26.

## **Links to wider services**

We can currently identify the percentage of children on a child protection (CP) plan or classified as child in need (CiN) or have child looked after (CLA) status. The percentage of children who are currently on an Early Help (EH) plan remains in development, but we do not foresee any significant barriers to this, and it is an area of development as part of our prevention project.

## **Management board attendance**

Senior partner representation at management boards is currently recorded and monitored. Parameters for partners to contribute data from their individual services that identify areas of racial and ethnic disproportionality is still to be agreed.

## **Serious violence**

We do not foresee any barriers to producing the rates of children convicted for a serious violent offence on the YJS caseload.

## **Victims**

Gloucestershire are already reporting information into the board and has existing datasets to capture demographic information. This will enhance the understanding of the needs and the support we are currently providing to victims in Gloucestershire when this reporting commences.

## 11. Priorities

### Children from groups which are over-represented

While girls are overrepresented in both the statutory and diversionary cohorts (based on the national perception of gender in the criminal justice system), they are more likely to receive a diversionary intervention. We have delivered targeted prevention work to girls groups in schools throughout 2022/23 and this has been well received by these girls and the schools they attend. We are currently evaluating the impact of this project. We recognise that most of the children we work with are boys and this may impact on our ability to remain cognizant of the needs of girls and the individual and societal systems they exist within. As part of our Child First approach, we will continue to develop our consideration, advocacy and ability to meet the needs of the girls we work alongside.

Children from ethnically diverse communities, whilst overrepresented in both cohorts, are more likely to be in the statutory cohort. This suggests that we are criminalising children unnecessarily when they may be suitable for a diversionary intervention and/or those children’s needs are not being suitably addressed earlier via the partnership resulting in a subsequent escalation in behaviours. This is particularly poignant when the number and percentage of children who are care experienced is also considered in both cohorts.

Local data - Youth Justice statutory interventions (Including Youth Conditional Cautions, Referral Orders etc.)				
Quarter	No. in cohort	No. and % of females	No. and % ethnically diverse	No. and % care experienced
Q3 2022/23	22	0 (0%)	5 (23%)	20 (91%)
Q2 2022/23	18	2 (11%)	6 (33%)	17 (94%)
Q1 2022/23	28	2 (7%)	9 (32%)	
Q4 2021/22	42	4 (9.5%)	14 (34%)	

<b>Q3 2021/2 2</b>	20	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	
<b>Q2 2021/2 2</b>	19	2 (10.5%)	6 (31.6%)	
<b>Q1 2021/2 2</b>	23	5 (21.7%)	6 (26%)	
<b>Q4 2020/2 1</b>	25	7 (28%)	9 (36%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>24 (12%)</b>	<b>63 (32%)</b>	

<b>Local data – Children First Pathways (CFPs)</b>				
<b>Quarter</b>	<b>No. in cohort</b>	<b>No. and % of females</b>	<b>No. and % ethnically diverse</b>	<b>No. and % care experienced</b>
<b>Q3 2022/23</b>	36	5 (14%)	10 (28%)	26 (72%)
<b>Q2 2022/23</b>	42	8 (20%)	14 (33%)	37 (88%)
<b>Q1 2022/23</b>	31	5 (16%)	6 (20%)	
<b>Q4 2021/22</b>	33	5 (15%)	10 (30%)	
<b>Q3 2021/22</b>	30	8 (27%)	4 (13%)	
<b>Q2 2021/22</b>	34	12 (35.3%)	7 (20.6%)	
<b>Q1 2021/22</b>	39	12 (31%)	5 (13%)	
<b>Q4 2020/21</b>	38	5 (13%)	6 (16%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>60 (20%)</b>	<b>62 (21%)</b>	

This data has been shared and discussed with the Childrens First decision-making panel and as a result a child's ethnicity is now shared in all decision making. For the last two quarters of reporting this has seen more Diversion outcomes than statutory outcomes for these children. However, we are still cognisant of the long-term trend.

A shared data set has been agreed that will give the partnership easy access to oversee all children present in panel, including demographic information, social care status and education information.

There is clear evidence of racial over representation in the youth justice system in Gloucestershire. The ability to address these issues can only be done through robust



partnerships and an openness to exploring organisational bias. To increase oversight of this area, a small group of YJ managers are leading on the implementation of the following measures:

- Reporting on concordance with sentence proposals for pre-sentence reports.
- Monitoring the number and ethnicity of children returned to JDP from court.
- Monitoring the number, ethnicity and rationale for children returned for charge from JDP.
- Monitoring and reporting on concordance with bail proposals at court.
- Monitoring the ethnicity of all first-time entrants and rationales for the decisions.
- Highlighting and tackling issues identified whenever possible, including challenging partners to consider disproportionality.

**Children’s Social Care**

As illustrated by the table below, children with experience of social care have consistently made up over 50% of the Youth Justice cohort. The disproportionate representation of care-experienced children in the youth justice system remains a significant and persistent challenge for all partners. These figures are a snapshot which are taken at the same time each month. The figures fluctuate as new children come in, and as interventions close, but it does capture the trends:

**Number of young people open to Youth Justice Teams who are open to Children’s Social Care (CLA, CP, CIN, Care Leavers)**

Apr - 22	May - 22		Jun - 22		Jul - 22		Aug - 22		
58/122	48%	64/128	50%	67/133	50%	75/134	56%	65/132	49%
Sept - 22	Oct - 22		Nov - 22		Dec - 22				
67/139	48%	76/135	56%	78/143	55%	72/144	50%		

We

have also drilled down into each cohort to try and capture the extent that children who are open to Youth Justice may have social care experience prior to entering the YJS. This data includes not only those that are currently open to Children’s Social Care, as illustrated by the table above, but also those who have been historically open to children’s services. We have also included children who have open referrals. When we consider these parameters, the levels rise significantly. Whilst it is important to recognise that some of these children have come into the remit of Children’s Social Care due to their offence, this does not sufficiently explain the high levels.

This is not a unique problem for Gloucestershire, and the factors which contribute to the over-representation of care-experienced children are complex. In a paper published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in 2021 ('Experiences and Pathways of Children in Care in the Youth Justice System,' *HM Inspectorate of Probation Academic Insights 2021* [Experiences and pathways of children in care in the youth justice system \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)) identified a number of features of the Care and Youth Justice systems which contribute to this. These include placement instability, the challenge of residential care, the tension between care and control, and up-tariffing through the Youth Justice System. It is argued that, *'Once within the youth justice system, care-experienced children can be subjected to a relatively rapid escalation in responses.*

*Recent research found that care-experienced children tended to be assessed as a higher risk of reoffending than their non-care peers, and had longer criminal records containing many 'minor' offences linked to their care placement at the point of entering custody'* (Day, A., Bateman, T. and Pitts, J. (2020). *Surviving Incarceration: The pathways of looked after and non-looked after children into, through and out of custody*, University of Bedfordshire Repository).

We need to continue to focus on this area, and the actions that we will take within the YJS include:

- Monitoring breaches and assessments of children in youth justice services.
- Fully utilising all liaison and diversion opportunities for care-experienced children.
- Involving care-experienced children in our Young Person's board to ensure their experiences and voices are used to shape provision and delivery.
- Highlighting the data and issues with partners at every level.

We continue to work with our partners in social care to monitor and address the potential impact of placements on children escalating within the criminal justice system, supported by the reoffending subgroup for the most complex of children. This is a continuing area of focus for the partnership.

## **Prevention**

GCC recently received funding from the MoJ for Turnaround and a Prevention team within the YJS has been established to lead on delivery. The team will take a family-based approach to working with children on the periphery of the justice system. These will be children who have not received a diversionary intervention or statutory outcome. As part of the funding criteria these children cannot be open to Families First (Early Help) or be on a Child Protection plan.

The team is made up of 2.5 FTE practitioners, one of whom is a seconded family support worker from Families First, and a part time Assistant Team Manager. The criterion for the service is children who:

- Have 2 or more NFA's in the past 3 months.
- Have been released on bail / under investigation.
- Have an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC).
- Are 15 or under.

The project will also make efforts to reach out and offer support to children from ethnically diverse populations who are over-represented in the wider Youth Justice cohort. It will also make effort to work with girls who are also overrepresented in the cohort in Gloucestershire.

The funding is initially for 2 years with the aim of collecting data to evidence the benefits of preventative work. The team are now established and working with children and families. They are currently working with a cohort of 20 young people and have identified a further 9 young people to offer the service to. At this stage, it is, to date, too early to evidence the impact of the project for these children.

### **Safer Communities Schools Group Work Programme**

This year the YJS have led on the delivery of a group work programme within numerous schools across Gloucestershire. They have done so with the support of their wider YST colleagues who support specific sessions with their specialist knowledge i.e., substance misuse. The programme aim is to provide an interactive series of focused group work sessions that will increase safety in the community through reducing risky behaviour and vulnerability often identified with engaging in anti-social behaviour and offending.

Most schools have provided both a boys and girls group who they had concerns about. The concerns were mainly, due to them displaying anti-social behaviour in the community, presenting with casual and concerning attitudes towards drug and alcohol use, and criminal lifestyle and identity. They may have been known to have witnessed domestic abuse, experienced unhealthy relationships, or had been a victim of crime and were at risk of permanent exclusion from school.

The programme focused on developing an awareness of crime and sentencing, the impact of illegal and reckless behaviour, safety, vulnerability, healthy relationships and drug and alcohol awareness. Each session provided a safe and non-judgemental space where the group could openly talk about issues important to them. In addition to this, they could explore their experiences and difficult situations that they may have found themselves in. The aim was to create an awareness of the choices the children have in their lives and to empower them to be able to make informed decisions, to stay safe, and to make positive steps towards achieving their goals.

The impact of the programme is measured in a variety of ways. This includes measures such as the About You Outcome Indicator, which quantifies a young person's movement over a range of indicators. We will also commence tracking these children over 3,6,9,12 months in relation to school exclusion and offending following completion of the project.

### **Diversion**

Children First is Gloucestershire's youth diversion scheme, that deals with certain crimes committed by children without them having to go to court. In Gloucestershire we want to give children the opportunity to avoid having a criminal record where possible. This is because we want young people to have the best possible chance of achieving their full potential and becoming productive adults. We recognise that

children make mistakes and do not want these to have an adverse impact on their future. Decisions to divert are made at a multi-agency panel comprising of representation from:

- The Police
- Youth Justice Service
- Childrens Social Care
- Family Support Service
- CAMHS
- Victim Support
- Restorative Gloucestershire

The efficacy of this approach is detailed in the key performance section.

Education From April 2023, YJSs will be required to submit performance data on:

- education, training and employment
- special educational needs and disabilities/additional learning needs

Locality	School Age children					Above School Age children					Total children				
	Orders ending	In full time ETE (25hrs +)	In ETE but not full time (<25 hrs)	Not in ETE or ETE status not known	% YP Supervised in full time ETE	Orders ending	In full time ETE (16hrs +)	In ETE but not full time (<16 hrs)	Not in ETE or ETE status not known	% YP Supervised in full time ETE	Orders ending	In full time ETE	In ETE but not full time	Not in ETE or ETE status not known	% YP Supervised in full time ETE
<b>Gloucestershire</b> <b>Jan – Mar 23 (Q4)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43%</b>
Gloucestershire Apr 22 – Mar 23	26	9	11	6	35%	37	19	5	13	51%	63	28	16	19	44%
South-West Apr 22 – Mar 23	147	45	45	57	31%	347	121	32	194	35%	494	166	77	251	34%
YOT Family Apr 22 – Mar 23	130	33	46	51	25%	326	131	25	170	41%	456	164	71	221	36%
National Apr 22 – Mar 23	2,132	876	490	766	41%	5,391	2,010	382	2,999	37%	7,523	2,886	872	3,765	38%

The ETE measure looks at how many children are in suitable education, training, or employment by the end of their intervention with Youth Justice. The Information is collated from the case management system IYSS and Capita. The YJB includes this information in the YDS on a cumulative 12-month basis. Prior to April 2023, suitability was defined by the number of hours, which was 25 hours for statutory

school aged children and 16 hours for children above statutory school age. This definition has changed as part of the new KPIs, which uses a needs led approach to determine suitability.

As can be seen in the table above, over the last 12 months, by using the previous definition of suitability, 44% of children were in 'suitable' education, employment, or training at the end of their interventions. However, of the children who would have been seen as not in suitable ETE due to hours, 25% of them were engaging in education. Many of these were on reduced timetables, and/or in alternative provision. This reflects the challenges and complexities around these children and may well have been suitable to the individual child as part of phased returns to education, but would not have been recognised as such, when assessing the data against the previous definitions. If we apply the new KPI definition, this could mean that potentially up to 70% of children were in suitable education.

Education, training, and employment is an area that we continue to focus on throughout the duration of a child's time with the YJS. We have a dedicated Education Lead who continually liaises with schools and colleges to support children into an appropriate education provision, or transition on to training or employment. In addition to this, the interconnected nature of the YST ensures that the NEET team can provide bespoke support to those children over the age of 16 and the Work it Out project can support re-engagement.

The Education Subgroup of the YJMB is chaired by the Director of Education, who also sits on the YJMB, is meeting regularly and is well attended. This meeting is attended by Education Inclusion leads, YST Youth Justice, NEET Leads, SEN Commissioning, and post 16 Leads. The group explores the current education landscape and data dashboard, examine the current barriers for children within the YJS in Gloucestershire and identifies actions that can be taken to improve the situation.

### **Children of statutory school age**

The Youth Justice Education Lead continues to work collaboratively with the Education Inclusion Team, informing them of children coming through YST who have poor attendance at school; who are on part-time timetables; and who have off site provision.

The Youth Justice Education lead has good links with the Elective Home Education Lead within the Education Inclusion Team and has regular communication regarding Individual children. They attend the EHE multi-agency working group and meet the Youth Justice Lead in the Education Inclusion service monthly.

There continues to be a high number of children with EHCP's in the youth justice system and there is collaboration with the SEND Team, informing them of any children open to YST and requesting a copy of their Plan. The Youth Justice Education Lead attends at individual EHCP annual reviews, ensuring the child's voice and supporting parents/carers and the child to attend.

For children in Year 11, the Youth Justice Education Lead collaborates with the individual Case Coordinator's to support with post 16 options and with the phased transfer to Post 16 Provision. They can arrange visits on advice from the Case Coordinator and to talk to the parents/carers about post 16 options and how the system works. They advise parents on post 16 Education SEN transport policy as this is a significant change for some of our children who receive SEN Transport pre-16.

There is a Youth Justice Lead in the GCC SEND Team and the Youth Justice Education Lead meets regularly with them. The Youth Justice Education lead attends the Intervention circle fortnightly. This is a multi-agency professional group where social workers are able to refer in children, where there are significant barriers to their education and, as a, action points are agreed for agencies/teams to take forward.

### **Restorative approaches and victims**

As part of the Diversionary Children First panel process, all victims of crime are offered the opportunity to support and input into the process. This is done in collaboration with Victim Support. This year has seen between 60-75% of victims harmed by crime, that has been dealt with through our diversion panel, engage with our victim liaison officer and explore a restorative intervention. The percentage has been lower in our statutory cohort (a very small cohort of victims) . All victims have been identified for both out of court work and statutory orders. They have been provided both the opportunity to have information regarding the outcome for the child who has committed a crime against them and the opportunity to explore restorative options if they so wish. There is also a role provided to support victims with any needs they may have arising from the crime. This might involve sign posting, referring to other agencies or supporting victims in multi-agency meetings.

Following an external review and subsequent internal oversight of the ongoing development of restorative practice in service, we have seen an increase in face-to-face mediation. In the last two quarters we have concluded 4 face-to-face mediations and a further 3 shuttle mediations. We conducted a full review of victim representation in all Referral Order cases and, as such, we should see an improvement in how victims' views are consistently represented in panels. Our Referral Order Panel Volunteers have been updated on practice expectations around victims' involvement.

The YJS works in partnership with Restorative Gloucestershire. Our Victim Liaison Officer has benefited from training, receives case supervision and group development sessions provided by them. All mediations cases are co-allocated between the services.

We recognise that Children who offend are often themselves victims and that traditional criminalising sanctions can be ineffective, inappropriate, and disproportionate and hence the service focus on the timely use of Diversionary options. The YJS, along with the full Youth Support Team that it sits within, are trained in restorative approaches. The use of restorative language and theory encourages young people to understand the wider context and effect of behaviour

on themselves and others. In addition, it can assist them to learn to deal with conflict more positively. This approach will continue to have a focus in the coming year.

## **Serious violence and exploitation**

In the year ending December 2022, there were 33 serious violent offences committed by children in Gloucestershire. This is an increase of 21 compared with the previous year with the rate increasing since 2020. The rate of serious violence per 100,000 children aged 10-17 was 5.6, this is an increase of 3.6 compared with the previous year. Serious violent offences comprised 13% of all offences for Gloucestershire.

In 2019 and 2020 we were on par with our family group and lower than the southwest for serious youth violence (SYV) (rate per 10,000). However, in 2022 we were higher than both – over the same period, England and Wales rate has been reducing. This is unlikely to be related to our diversion scheme as these will be gravity 5 offences and above.

The offences involving knives (gravity less than 5) have been consistently increasing since April 2021 and is now at the highest level recorded since the start of 2016/17. Offensive weapons offences are also increasing but at a slower pace. Considering we have had a period in county where possession of knife offences could not be diverted via Children First this will be a contributory factor to the figures rising.

Since April 2020, drug offences with a gravity score of more than 5 receiving a substantive outcome presents in low numbers in Gloucestershire. However, the actual numbers of children presenting for these crimes is higher and the impact of the approach to discontinue offences due to conclusive grounds National Referral Mechanism's (NRMs) means they are not receiving formal outcomes and the figures are not representative of the full picture in Gloucestershire. Our remand data captures this more accurately.

Due to the number of SYV being relatively small, the reliability of the demographic data is limited, but it is clear when looking at SYV since 2018, that children from ethnically diverse populations are more likely to receive an outcome for an SYV offence.

We have worked alongside our strategic partners in developing and implementing the exploitation strategy in Gloucestershire, developing a shared definition of exploitation and extra familial harm, and creating clear pathways and practice. This has included contributing to the development and roll out of the locality MACE meetings, and the pilot of 'My Safety meetings'. This work is ongoing.

Gloucestershire is continuing to develop the process for identifying concerns around exploitation and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) submissions. These referrals are made in conjunction with key partners from the police and social care. The YJS has a strong working relationship with the courts ensuring that children who have been exploited are given the support they need with minimal criminogenic stigma. This can include offences being discontinued by CPS where it is in the public interest

to support a vulnerable child outside of the youth justice system. It is necessary that the exploitation practice of the authority continues to develop to meet the need of individual children and the community so that the planning and support is not over reliant on the outcome of pending charges. Currently there is not partnership oversight of the NRM data for the county.

As part of our Serious Violence Duty, we have worked together with partners to plan to prevent and reduce serious violence through contributing to an understanding of our current practice and challenges. We have explored the incidents of children who have received a number of NFA's and then gone on to commit serious violence. From this we have developed the Turnaround referral criteria to include children who have received two or more NFA's within a three-month period. We will continue to evaluate and learn from the data to ensure that learning shared with partners and is incorporated into service developments. We have been involved in completing the Joint readiness assessment and contributing to the development of the initial strategic priorities. This will be an ongoing priority for the coming year, contributing to the strategic needs assessment and Serious Violence Strategy.

## **Detention in police custody**

### **PACE**

The Custody Subgroup in Gloucestershire continues to monitor remand cases, PACE decisions alongside the PACE protocol, and other custody issues.

Other areas scrutinised by this group include:

- Police Custody data regarding children
- Appropriate adult service (provided by a voluntary sector organisation)
- Disproportionality
- Usage and availability of PACE beds
- Intimate searches

This group have also been instrumental in embedding and rolling out the updated PACE protocol completed this year, which has been jointly reviewed and delivered by Police, YJS and Children's Social Care (EDT).

We have recently reviewed the Wales and Southwest Remand Mapping Exercise and reviewed the key findings against practice in Gloucestershire. Some of the key findings present wider challenges for our colleagues in the police and courts, as well as wider challenges for the network.

Challenges that exist in Gloucestershire:

- Only 5% of young people detained by police appeared in court on the same day.
- 95% were detained at police stations overnight, some for two days.
- Only 1 in 7 young people detained by the police appeared at weekend or bank holiday courts.

There is a theme regarding charging decisions not being made until the early hours.

Positive practice

- Police decision to detain reviewed by the Custody subgroup.



- Review of all remand and custody cases.

#### PACE Protocol improvements

- In only a third of cases, the police consulted with the local authority or the Youth Justice Service before deciding to detain.
- In only 1 in 10 cases, a secure accommodation order was requested and in only two cases a secure accommodation order was obtained.
- In 90% of cases an overnight certificate was not shared with the local authority or youth justice team. Also, there is no suggestion that the certificate was shared with court.

However, we were also able to identify some of the positive practice that already exists within Gloucestershire, and areas where the updated PACE protocol will improve practice.

#### Key feedback from Custody Subgroup to YJMB:

- Availability of PACE beds.
- Intimate searches – ensuring scrutiny and oversight.
- Recognising and building on good practice.

### Remands

We are continuing to focus on our remand cases, given the national data (year ending March 2021) which calculates that 74% of children remanded to custody do not go on to receive custodial sentences. This is also an area of focus, given the new legislation which came into force on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts act 2022. Due to this we anticipated a reduction in children being remanded to custody, and an increase in remand to the care of the local authority.

<b>Children Remanded 2021-22</b>		
	<b>Number of children remanded to youth detention accommodation</b>	<b>Number of children remanded to care of the local authority</b>
<b>Oct – Dec 22</b>	0	1
<b>July-Sept 22</b>	0	2
<b>Apr-Jun 22</b>	0	2
<b>Jan 22 – Mar 22</b>	5	0
<b>Oct 21 – Dec 21</b>	3	0
<b>Jul 21 – Sept 21</b>	1	0
<b>Total</b>	9	5

Between July 2021 – Dec 2022, nine children were remanded in custody. Seven of the children remanded were for the same murder charge, one for a separate murder charge and one for attempted murder. All children were male. Two (22%) of these children identified as White British with seven (77%) children from ethnically diverse communities, five (56%) of which were of dual heritage. Four

were aged 15 at the point of remand to custody (44%), four were aged 16 at point of remand (44%) and one was aged 17 (11%).

Two of the children remanded to custody went on to receive custodial sentences, one child was released following all charges being withdrawn. Subsequently one further child has become an adult and moved to the adult estate whilst on remand, and one child has had their status changed from remand in custody to remand to the LA. 4 children remained on remand in custody at the end of Dec 22 and all for the offence of murder.

From January 2021 to present, 6 children have been remanded to the care of the local authority, all 6 were excluded from Gloucestershire. There are a further 8 children in this time that received Bail packages that resulted in them entering the care of the local authority. We have a clear pattern in Gloucestershire regarding the children and the offences appearing in court in emergency situations. They are those presenting due to the supply of Class A Drugs where there is evidence of exploitation and acts of serious violence.

All of the children appearing for drug offences had NRM's submitted.

There is significant ethnicity disparity present in those children present here. Many have extensive histories with children's social care and/or education disruption, EHCP's and SEN.

Section 157 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduces new statutory duties to consider the best interests and welfare of the child in a remand decision and to record the reasons for a custodial remand. The provisions are designed to reduce the number of children and young people remanded into custody, which is welcome, and should lead to only the most serious offences ending in a custodial remand. It is hoped that these changes will ensure children and young people are only remanded into custody as a last resort.

However, these reforms will undoubtedly put even more pressure on under-resourced local authorities, who are already struggling to find placements for children in care. The Final report by the Commission on Young Lives in November 2022, tells us that there are children in custodial remand because bail applications were refused when local authorities could not find them a safe place to live. Some young people on remand are living in unsuitable and inappropriate local authority accommodation. The report states that, investment in local authority community-based remand provision needs to happen if the changes to sentencing provisions are to work in practice. Gloucestershire is subject to the same market challenges as the rest of the UK. However, there is a clear commitment and focus to ensure that children are accommodated appropriately. GCC children's social care is working to increase placement availability.

### **Use of custody**

There is a strong relationship between the Courts and YJS in Gloucestershire, with the Youth Magistrates actively engaged in the Child First Approach and Trauma Informed Practice. Recently, training has been delivered following our

participation in the Southwest Trauma informed Project. We anticipate that the implementation of Enhanced Case Management this year will support those children with complex needs who most often make up the custody cohorts.

A reoffending subgroup from the YJMB has been set up with the express purpose of understanding and addressing the issues that this small cohort receiving custodial sentences face.

### **Constructive resettlement**

The YJS in Gloucestershire has small numbers of children sentenced to custody. However, we have noted an increase in the number of children in custody on remand. This has presented different challenges due to the uncertain timescales regarding when they will return to the community or be sentenced to custody. This makes sorting out practical arrangements such as accommodation, education etc. challenging. However, the focus within the service on Child First and Identity shift supports good practice. These approaches are utilised in Gloucestershire, not just when children are released from custody but also when working with children accommodated by social care when considering / planning for placement moves. The practitioners in Gloucestershire build effective relationships with both children and Social Workers and advocate in the best interest of the child when transition planning, thinking about what this should look like for the child and how it would support a pro-social identity shift.

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

As part of an agreed 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan, the operation of systems and controls within the Youth Justice Service have been reviewed by the local authority. The aim was to assess whether the YJS are operating in accordance with the 'Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System 2019' (the Standards).

Internal Audit also reviewed progress with the implementation of the Improvement Plan that was developed by the YJS and is overseen by Gloucestershire's YJMB This was in response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection report, published in January 2020.

Audit Opinion is based on the documentation examined, and the evaluation and sample testing of the system and processes in place. It concluded that, overall, the existing procedures and controls provide an Acceptable Assurance level in meeting the control objectives for the area under review.

It was agreed that any outstanding actions on the Improvement Plan should be incorporated into the annual Youth Justice Plan going forward and submitted to the Youth Justice Board for approval. It was also agreed that Standard Operating Procedures should be developed for all relevant areas where the Standards do not detail specific process requirements and, as such, this action will be captured in the current development of Gloucestershire YJS's practice guidance to complement the national guidance.

The most recent internal National Standards audit was completed by the YJS in 2020 which identified that the YJS was good or outstanding at both strategic and operational level (standards 1-4). Standard 5 (transition) required improvement both strategically and operationally. The creation of Probation's new 18-25's POD aims to cement the crossover from Youth Justice to Adult Services and continuity of oversight. The National Standards Audit utilised the well-established case audit process to evaluate the quality of work delivered with children.

When reviewing the out of court work (standard 1) strengths for the service were identified such as, being one of the few areas with the children's Liaison and Diversion (L and D) workers integrated into the YJS. This was found to be positive as it removes the barriers to sharing information and provides children with the opportunity to have access to support at the first point of contact with the justice system. The L and D team have continued to develop over the last year. They have revised the timescales in which they contact children in the community and the hours they are situated within the custody suite, all of which have contributed to improved performance.

The Children's First diversion system was also seen as a particular strength in Gloucestershire. During the last twelve months membership of the JDP has been reviewed and added to, for example the GCC Families First team are now represented. This has increased the support offers available to young people coming through CF. It has been recognised that this service ensures that children have the option of a diversionary intervention, focused on support instead of criminalising sanctions. The evaluation of the system is continuous, but to date has evidenced consistently lower levels of reoffending when compared with children issued with Youth Cautions. The casework for diversion is subject to the same internal audit as statutory work and 71% of cases were considered good at the time of the national standards audit. This is an improvement from the time of the HMIP inspection and is attributed to more robust processes being implemented. A review of the joint decision-making guidelines will be completed in the coming year.

The review of work in the community (standard 3) recognised strengths in how practitioners worked to communicate and engage with children and their families. There was also strong evidence of the consideration of desistance factors in assessments and planning. In 96% of cases and 84% of cases reviewed there was evidence of strong work to keep children safe. On average 87% of interventions inspected by HMIP were assessed as outstanding. It was acknowledged that the referral order contract was no longer in line with the child first evidence and a new contract has recently been introduced that has been supported by the service speech and language therapists to ensure that children are able to understand what is written.

Standard 4 (secure settings) identified that although the YJS have a small number of children in custody, release planning is considered good. However, it is noted

that there is a not always a suitable address for the child 10 days before release. This is a wider systemic issue for the YJMB to consider, particularly for children in care.

Regarding the development around standard 5 (transition), the most notable strategic concern was the imminent reduction in probation officer time from full time to 0.5 FTE. This did take place and impacted on the availability of the service to access dedicated probation resource. However, in recent months this has been addressed and we are confident that the replacement of the probation officer time within the service will address any impact moving forward. In addition, there were issues identified around the transition between children and adult health services. It was also noted that the YJS staff did not have access to the children's services recording system and the lack of social care representation at the joint-decision making panel – both issues have been resolved. Operationally, while there was evidence of strong multiagency working this was impacted in some cases by workload and availability of resources. There was also a lack of involvement of parents / careers in this planning which was an area for further development. The development of the Child First approach detailed in section 1 is improving this and involvement of parents is a strong feature in the majority of audits to date. The approach of considering the individual (with the child) and structural (family and wider system) when planning and delivering services for children will encourage wider engagement around the child. However, this will need to be monitored to ensure that the anticipated outcomes are realised.

### **13. Workforce Development**

A year ago, Shaw Trust introduced a quarterly appraisal process for individual staff which incorporates targets and training objectives. Staff are given both formal training as well as opportunities for informal learning such as shadowing opportunities or coaching. In the year 2022/23 the YJS accessed a range of training for staff. These included but are not limited to:

- Unitas – Trauma informed module
- 2 Practitioners completed the Unitas Child First module
- Child First practice
- Trauma training
- Forensic risk assessment training
- Identity Shift / PCP training
- Court Duty training for 2 new Case Responsible Officers
- AIM3 including update training for online harm
- Safeguarding
- Substance misuse training

- ASYE training from GCC for one newly qualified social worker
- Revised Referral Order panel volunteer training – incorporating Child First

Additionally, it is expected that there will be 2 new trainee YJ case responsible officers joining the service in the coming year which will require that induction and training is reviewed to incorporate the Child First evidence base, how to apply this in practice, and how we support their development.

The YJS has also reached out to partners and has delivered training to the Functional Family Therapy Team on identity shift and child first practice. In addition, the YJS has continued to support the University by offering placements to student social workers. This year we have also built on this offer and have delivered session on Youth Justice and Child First practice to a cohort of 3<sup>rd</sup> year Social Work students at the university.

The Shaw Trust understand the need to support the staff to support the children. They recognise that this area of work can be emotive. They therefore offer a 24/7 health and wellbeing service to staff. This includes debriefing sessions after a particularly traumatic incident. The integrated nature of the YST, means that practitioners can access the health team and in particular the CAMHS worker that is assigned to it. They can seek advice and guidance in relation to particular children should they need to. This means that staff report feeling supported and that children receive an informed and resilient service.

## **14. Evidence-based practice and innovation**

During the past year the service has continued to develop and operationalise the Child First evidence base and how this is applied in practice. Progress has been made on developing a practice framework that will support and guide practice within the service and is concordant with Child First. Training for practitioners and partners around understanding identity and identity shift has been delivered to support this practice. This has given practitioners skills to develop a better understanding of identity in assessment and planning alongside practical skills that can be used with children and families to support them on their identity shift journey. The implementation of this approach is now being evidenced in both intervention plans and through case audits. The long-term aim of this approach to reduce offending through the deeper understanding of the interplay between identity and presenting behaviour.

The Turnaround funding allocated this year has allowed the service to invest in a targeted prevention offer. This has included a commitment to taking a family based (structural) approach to practice. This is evident in the secondment of a family support worker into this team. The team have also had the opportunity to receive training from the local Functional Family Therapy team, improving the range of engagement and motivational approaches available to work with families.

In the statutory cohort, the focus remains Child First. Examples of this include a revised approach to Referral Order paperwork, and training developed and delivered to volunteer panel members during the year. This is evident in contracts

that are written in a more child friendly way, are proportional, minimise criminogenic stigma and are future focused. In practice, the service has been working on using reparative activities as an opportunity for identity shift, helping children to see themselves differently, as a chef, carpenter etc. Making use of these activities, children are supported to develop new skills for their future while contributing to repairing harm.

Gloucestershire's well-established diversion system, Children First, has continued to evidence low levels of recidivism. There are innovative links between this element of the service and the wider YST, in particular the liaison and diversion practitioners. The L&D screening is used to support diversionary decisions and, where work to address needs has been undertaken prior to the joint decision-making panel, matters can be discontinued at this stage. There is a concerted effort within the service to take a proportionate response to children who are diverted with a range of pathways available depending on their level of need, for example the direct support of the health team within the YST and particularly the substance misuse specialists for young people who come through Children First with issues of substance use, which affect their offending behaviour.

Gloucestershire is unique as it is an integrated service that is commissioned from a charity, the Shaw Trust, which provides scope and opportunities to draw on experience from outside of the county. The integrated nature of the service allows for exit planning and links with other professionals in the service for example NEET specialists who can support children into employment or further training, aiding their long-term desistance away from the justice system; youth work and an activities team that can support ongoing positive activity; substance misuse specialists who can support desistance of use and therefore the impact of that use on positive outcomes.

The YJS have established a partnership with a community project, Music Works, who support and mentor children who have experienced challenging circumstances using music. The YJS have access to a specialist programme that has been designed around the needs of children in the justice system. This continues to be a developing area of practice and the two parties are exploring how to track and evaluate the longer-term outcomes of children who participate in the project.

## **Evaluation**

In October 2022, we had an internal audit undertaken by GCC which reviewed the procedures and controls in place locally, with regards to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) (PACE). This audit reviewed the 2019 PACE protocol that sets out the relationship and responsibilities of GCC, the Police and the YST. The audit concluded that overall, the existing procedures and controls provided an Acceptable Assurance level in meeting the control objectives for the area under review. Regarding the recommendations, we are confident that these have been captured in the updated PACE protocol and in the Custody subgroup.

In the past year the service has delivered preventative group work in schools, this has been to small groups and drew upon the wider expertise in the service such as

substance misuse and sexual health. While there were changes to the programme used to cater for different groups around age, gender etc. the ethos of the programme remained largely consistent and future focused. The work drew on research around violent crime being linked to feelings of safety for the child (Bateman, 2020). This work is being evaluated and while there is a notable amount of positive accumulated qualitative feedback from both the children and schools that took part, there is a need for quantitative data around the impact on exclusions and entry to the Youth Justice system. This will be completed during the coming year to allow sufficient time to evidence any change.

## **15. Service development plan**

### **Service development**

**Aim 1: Ensure the use of Child First evidence base is evident in all work completed with children.**

#### **Actions:**

- Continue to develop a practice framework that ensures the Child First evidence base is integral to all work with children who have contact with the YJS. This work will be led by the YJS management team. This will be completed in the coming year and then regularly reviewed and updated moving forward.
- Continue to increase the structural support around children through working with families and family support provision, including fathers, to reduce the responsibilities of children and address the wider systemic factors.
- Further develop our community-based offer through local partners to support children and families to develop links with their communities and create sustainable networks of support and positive sense of self.
- Through coproduction, ensure that the voice of the child informs and shapes our assessments, plans and interventions, whilst ensuring that any feedback and consultation with children and families is reported to the YJMB and used to shape and inform services.

**Expected Impact:** This work is expected to improve the outcomes for children and impact reoffending rates in both the statutory and diversion cohorts. Increased understanding and families participating in interventions, leading to incremental and sustained change outside of involvement. Plans and assessments are coproduced with children and families, and service development is informed by children with lived experience of our service.

**Measure:** This will be evidenced through quality assurance processes but is also expected to have an impact on the other key priorities for the coming year. We are able to evidence changes made as a result of feedback.

**Aim 2: Reduce the FTE rate for Gloucestershire to below 70 per 100,000.**

#### **Actions:**



- Consider the range of offences which can be diverted in partnership with the police and CPS following the updated gravity matrix and review the joint decision-making protocol via the Children First Strategic group.
- Further develop the Children First partnership shared data set and agree enhanced reporting against this, to support both the reviewing of panel activity and operational and strategic developments.
- Utilise the Turnaround project to provide a targeted prevention offer within the YST and further develop this area of work alongside colleagues from Families First and wider partners to prevent children from becoming first time entrants, with prioritisation of overrepresented groups.
- Align the allocation of Turnaround prevention with Liaison & Diversion to enhance the offer available, with prioritisation of overrepresented groups.
- Reporting against decision making against overrepresented groups in diversion and FTE groups.



**Expected Impact:** To reduce the number of children who receive criminalising sanctions in Gloucestershire with a focus on disproportionality.

**Measure:** The evidence of this will be evident in the quarterly FTE data and local accountability to the YJMB on FTE numbers and disproportionality data

**Aim 3: Assess and address the multiple and complex needs that are evident in the small number for children who reoffend to reduce the binary and offences per reoffender rate in line with the national picture.**

**Actions:**

- Establish the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) offer and ensure that trauma informed approaches are embedded within the YJS.
- Further develop the CAMHS & FCAMHS offer to children outside of ECM
- Embed the Reoffending subgroup, developing remit and efficacy and reporting into the YJMB.
- Systemic issues impacting these children e.g. housing, education etc. will be monitored and reported on by the relevant subgroup into the YJMB.
- Monitor and respond to barriers for those children overrepresented in the YJS such as care experienced. Working in partnership with GCC social care colleagues to address wider issues.

**Expected Impact:** It is expected that this work will contribute to the earlier identification and addressing of the unmet needs of these children, and this will subsequently be evident in reduced reoffending data.

**Measure:** Reduced binary and reoffences per reoffender evident in live tracker over the next 12 months.

**Aim 4: Focusing on understanding and addressing the causal factors of exploitation and serious violence in Gloucestershire.**

**Actions:**

- Work with other specified authorities to contribute to the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment, prepare and implement the Serious Violence Strategy and evaluate the impact.
- Incorporate reporting of serious violence and exploitation in the YJMB quarterly report, utilizing the SYV toolkit.
- YJS and partners to establish reporting mechanisms and oversight of NRM's.
- Review of High-Risk Planning Meetings in line with 'My Safety plans' as part of the exploitation strategy.
- Focus on young women and girls – both as victims of violence and perpetrators – ensuring that practitioners acknowledge and consider history of violence against young women and girls when assessing risk and monitor the equality of outcomes for young women and girls when charged with violent offences.
- Work with partners to develop a consistent joint response to NRMs.
- Contribute to mapping third sector provision to enable a wider offer of prevention services to vulnerable children as part of the Serious Violence duty.

**Expected Impact:** By addressing both exploitation and serious violence the service can minimise the number of children entering the secure estate, whilst identifying earlier provision for vulnerable children, reducing the incidence of serious violence and child exploitation in Gloucestershire.

**Measure:** A reduction in serious violence would be evidenced through the SYV toolkit. Custodial sentences are also a proxy measure and a reduction in the use of custody would evidence effective work with these children.

**Aim 5: Ensuring that all children in both statutory and diversionary cohorts have access to suitable education, training, or employment.**

**Actions:**

- The YJS and Education subgroup to develop further understanding of the children not in suitable education training or employment and take joint action to address this, reporting this into the YJMB.
- The Education subgroup to continue to focus on children with EHCP's having suitable education, identifying and addressing barriers to provision.

- Work with Education providers to maintain education placements following children being charged, supporting the school to manage the risks effectively.
- Develop our reporting mechanisms to respond to the new education KPI.

**Expected Impact:** These measures are expected to increase the number of children who are in suitable education, training or employment and provide strategic oversight for those where this is not the case.

**Measure:** While it is our ambition for all children to have a suitable educational placement the anticipated measure will be for 75% of children to be in suitable education, training or employment (ETE) at the end of either diversionary or statutory work with the YJS. The ETE will be measured through data reported to the YJMB.

**Aim 6: Understanding and address racial disparity in the youth justice system in Gloucestershire.**

**Actions:**

- The YJMB to develop and coordinate partners contribution of disproportionality data within the board – e.g. Education (exclusion data), Police (stop and search, arrest) etc. for analysis and to support strategic planning. The use of the YJB summary and local tool will inform progress against the plan.
- YJS to undertake an internal disproportionality review to see how systems and processes can improve and undertake work to increase trust and positive experiences of services by children, encouraging engagement at the earliest stage to support prevention. Feedback from children experiencing the system is ongoing, with participation events and the established feedback processes. Information gained is then used to develop or challenge practice.
- Increase the number of children from ethnically diverse backgrounds receiving diversion through return from court and the availability of a second diversionary offer and the reduction in use of YCC's.
- The complex needs, custody and education subgroups will explore how the wider services decisions and practices support children from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- Capturing of ethnicity in internal health data to aid further development.
- Undertake targeted feedback activity to ensure a clear understanding of individuals experience of the YJS is incorporated into any developments and plans.

**Expected Impact:** Increase the number of children from ethnically diverse backgrounds that we can identify and offer preventative support or divert. There

would be evidence of a continued reduction of ethnic minority children in the FTE cohort. Reduce disparity in the reoffending cohort and evidence successful outcomes for these children. Longer term reduction in racial disparity in the youth justice system in Gloucestershire.

**Measure:** When measuring the effectiveness of this approach it will likely result in an increase in the use of diversionary interventions and preventative offers for children from black and minority backgrounds – reducing the number in the statutory cohort.

**Aim 7: The development and implementation of a harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) strategy and virtual HSB Team.**

**Actions:**

- A HSB pathway is produced to reflect the existing practice and arrangements.
- Build on the current virtual HSB team to continue to share and develop areas of good practice, with the YJS practitioners and the wider YST and Children’s services, whilst working with wider partners to join. This will involve collaboration with the GSCP.
- Enable strategic oversight of HSB by reporting HSB data relating to Youth Justice in the quarterly reports to the YJMB, this will include the length of investigations in relation to HSB

**Expected Impact:** Children involved in HSB, be this diverted or dealt with via statutory orders, are able to access specialist assessment and support. The YJMB will have oversight of the ongoing strategic development of HSB across the county.

**Measure:** Publication of pathway and increased membership of the virtual team. Fewer HSB cases in the YJS statutory caseload ( as children’s needs would be met earlier in system).

**Aim 8. Improve health outcomes for those children in the Youth Justice system, understand the barriers and analyse the impact of the current health interventions on the Youth Justice cohort.**

**Actions:**

- Develop a shared dataset between the YJS & internal YST health team which will support reporting of new KPI’s.
- Increase understanding of appropriate identification of health needs, barriers to acceptance of referrals, type of interventions delivered, and outcomes achieved following referrals.

- Explore the impact of the current interventions on Youth Justice KPIs. (e.g. Does a health intervention prevent a child becoming a First time entrant, or reoffending?)
- Further health training for Liaison and Diversion staff to increase appropriate referrals.
- Participate in the National L&D research project with Manchester University.

**Expected impact:** The health needs of the children open to Youth Justice are improved and evidenced. Explore whether the health interventions contribute to reduced offending and desistance.

**Measure:** A more detailed data set that can be scrutinised to inform future service development.

**Aim 9: Reduce the number of children in the secure estate, both sentenced and remanded and improve outcomes for those released from custody.**

**Actions:**

- Utilise the approaches advocated in Beyond Youth Custody literature to further develop and deliver constructive resettlement workshops and continue development of the transition process and contribution to the 18-25 Probation Service team.
- Work with key partners to embed the updated PACE protocol in practice through joint training and regular review through the Custody subgroup.
- Liaise with colleagues from FCAMHS to develop our psychological offer to children transitioning into custody and transitioning out of custody.
- Monitor concordance in sentencing and bail recommendations at both youth and emergency court. Issues of difference will be escalated to the YJMB to ensure that there is oversight of any emerging issues and plans to address identified.
- Work with partners to develop a Remand strategy.

**Expected Impact:** Increase in the use of remand to the care of the local authority rather than youth detention accommodation, which will create resourcing implications for placements. Reduced reoffending for children released from custody. Fewer children sentenced to short custodial sentences.

**Measure:** While it is anticipated that the number of children in custody will increase due to several children currently remanded for serious offences, the impact of this work will be seen in the longer term by limiting the increase in custody numbers and the reoffending for those released from custody.

## **Future aims**

These 9 aims are the focus for the service for 2023/24. However, Gloucestershire YJS and the YJMB aspire to provide the best support to the children in the justice system in Gloucestershire in the long term. As such, the following are areas of development that whilst, not a key priority for the next year, we will plan to further develop and build upon in the 2023/24 plan.

- Analyse the impact of the targeted prevention offer.
- Work with relevant partners to improve victim engagement and satisfaction.
- Continued community offer for work with schools to address areas of concern in a preventative and non-stigmatising way.
- Increased participation by key stakeholders through the YJMB and other forums and suitable development sessions.
- As part of our Child First approach, we will continue to develop our consideration, advocacy and ability to meet the needs of the girls we work alongside.

## **Challenges, risks and issues**

There are several emerging issues that could prove to be problematic for the YJS and children in the justice system in Gloucestershire. The most apparent now is a continual increase in serious violence offences in the past year and the need to work with partners to understand underlying causal factors, address the needs of these groups, and reassure and support the wider community.

The high profile of some of the offences locally and the conclusion of a Murder trial will continue to elicit strong feelings in the community and for those found guilty, significant sentences will be expected.

We know from our work within service that children are reporting that there are a range of issues within their communities which impact upon them. These include exposure to criminal behaviour, the impact of illegal drugs in communities, and poverty. This often impacts on their perceived sense of safety and subsequent decisions, on occasion, as to how to keep themselves 'safe'. Nationally, given research which suggests that children often carry knives for their own protection (Smith and Hughes, 2019), the relationship with perceived levels of safety is of note. Children who said that they had carried a weapon were more than twice as likely to report that their area of residence was not safe (16.7% against 7.2%). They were also much more likely to have experienced various forms of victimisation. 81.3% of children who carried weapons reported that they had experienced victimisation compared to 48.8% of children who did not.

We have a clear pattern in Gloucestershire regarding the offences which result in remand. They involve children presenting due to the Supply of Class A Drug charges where there is evidence of exploitation and acts of serious violence. The

Government's decision to tackle serious violence as a public health issue is a positive shift in the form of Serious Violence Duty. Locally, the operationalising of the exploitation strategy is positive, however it is in its early stages and further developments are needed to ensure the scope of practice and provision is in place to support these children who may also be victims.

Whilst it is positive that our use of local authority remands has increased opposed to youth detention remands, this is not without implications to services. Nationally, it is known that there are children in custodial remand because bail applications were refused when local authorities could not find them a safe place to live, and some young people on remand are living in unsuitable and inappropriate local authority accommodation. Locally, it is evident that a strain has been placed on such arrangements. A briefing paper is jointly being produced between Children's Social Care Commissioning, Children Social Care, and the YJS to present within the YJMB to explore the barriers in remand situations further. This should allow more work to be undertaken at a strategic level to find viable solutions to these operational issues. In addition, it will help with developing and sharing our understanding of what is effective practice for children who have offended and the wider Child First evidence base. The proposed revisions to the MOJ KPI's will help monitor concordance with recommendations made in magistrate's court.

In the Final report by the Commission on Young Lives Nov 2022 it is plainly put "when it all goes badly wrong, a new set of parents, friends, schools, and communities are left to come to terms with the senseless and avoidable death of child"; something our community has sadly experienced.

When we get our interventions right, we are seeing success, and this is evidenced for example in the fantastic results from our diversionary scheme and has shaped our development of the targeted Turnaround prevention offer, where we will focus our resources on overrepresented groups. This resource is small, we will aim to counteract this by working alongside our YST colleagues, Early Help teams and Children's Social Care front door.

How the YJS continues to support the shaping of practice across the Authority for this age group remains necessary, so that children do not need to receive a youth justice response to meet their needs. Consideration is needed for how we continue to share the child first practice inclusive of the identity shift and trauma informed practice.

The service is also aware of the challenges for children with complex needs, including increasing numbers with education health and care plans, the lack of readiness for school data, speech and language development problems, emotional and mental health conditions, and increased poverty. The combination of Covid and a cost-of-living crisis has had a significant impact upon the cohort of children currently within the system and the impact on those that will enter the

system in the future is still to be seen. There is a mixed economy of education provision in Gloucestershire. The Local Authority council retains most of its current key statutory duties around Education. However, the main levers through which the council delivers these duties, and would look to deliver the new duties, are transferring to the Regional Director and Multi Academy Trust CEOs which could impact on the delivery of these. From a youth justice perspective, there is YJS data that shows educational placements are not always available for children who have EHCPs, and these changes could impact on these children. The closure of a local provider offering level 1 motor mechanics and construction courses to both pre and post 16's, will limit the options to meet the needs of this age group, and prepare and create positive pathways into employment.

Locally, the commitment from the Police and Crime Commissioner to increase the numbers of police officers, whilst welcome, could result in an increase in the number of children entering the justice system. We have already experienced an increased response to those children identified as behaving anti socially. We have however reviewed the joint protocol we share with the police, and this supports a consistent use of practice in relation to these children. There are policing commitments that would help children, such as the pursuit of adults who are criminally exploiting children. This could support addressing some of the systemic factors that lead children into offending behaviour. This needs further integration in the exploitation strategy for the county. When this work is delivered as a single agency response to a child who offends and/or is the victims of exploitation it has the potential to depart from a Child First focus.

It is also important to consider the impact of wider societal issues such as increasing levels of inflation and the threat of national recession. These macro-economic factors could have a direct impact for the YJS by impacting on the families that the service supports through increased poverty but the resource availability of the service through increased operational costs. Additional operational costs could impact on staffing resource and therefore increase caseloads. High caseloads have the potential to impact the quality of work delivered by the YJS. This could be compounded by having unfilled vacancies for a period should staff leave the service. However, the integrated nature of the YST allows for some redistribution of staff to support the youth justice teams.

## **16. Sign off, submission and approval**

Youth justice plans can be submitted to the YJB at any point, but we request that approved plans are submitted by 30 June 2023 at the latest.

Youth justice plans, in England only, must be signed off by the full council in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'. This regulation does not apply to Wales.



If you have not been able to achieve full sign off by the 30 June 2023, your plan can be submitted with the approval of the Board Chair with confirmation of full sign off submitted at a later date. The 'sign off' by the Chair is an indication that the wider management board have approved the submitted plan and all sections outlined in the [Youth Justice Plan Structure](#) have been covered.

To submit your youth justice plan you should e-mail [CBU@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:CBU@yjb.gov.uk) and copy in your YJB lead.

The YJB lead covering your region/Wales are available to review and consult on locally approved plans. Should feedback from them be sought, we advise consultation on a draft version take place as early as possible and before formal submission.

While the YJB provides grant to local areas, it is neither a signatory to the plan nor directly responsible for its contents. Consequently, neither the YJB nor the Ministry of Justice logo should appear on the document.

**Appendix 1.**

**Partner contributions to the youth offending partnership pooled budget  
2023-24**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Staff Costs £</b>	<b>Payments in kind - revenue £</b>	<b>Other delegated funds £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
Local Authority	957,930	0	75,279	<b>1,033,209</b>
<b>Police Service</b>	0	104,000	0	<b>104,000</b>
National Probation Service	0	7,750	5,000	<b>12,750</b>
Health Service	229,289	235,793	17,416	<b>482,498</b>
<b>Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	135,000	0	222,904	<b>357,904</b>
<b>YJB</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>607,371</b>
Other	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,765,640</b>	<b>466,447</b>	<b>131,911</b>	<b>2,493,836</b>

**Note: The YJB Grant figure 2023/24 has not yet been confirmed – figure above is 2022/23 grant.**

# Appendix 2. Staffing Structure

Structure Chart  
June 2023

