

Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan

2021 - 2022



Buckinghamshire
Youth Offending Service

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This Youth Justice Plan provides an overview of the work of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) in Buckinghamshire, setting out details of performance during the last twelve months and our priorities for the coming year. The plan aligns to the Community Safety Partnership's 'Safer Buckinghamshire Plan' and its priorities, as part of our aim that Buckinghamshire should continue to be one of the safest places to grow up, raise a family, live, work and do business.

The YOS plays a key role within the Partnership by helping prevent offending and reoffending, reducing the use of custody and contributing to multi agency public protection and safeguarding. The YOS does this by working together with its key partners to deliver high quality and effective services to young people, their families and the victims of offending. These partners include: the police, children's services, health services, probation, community safety and both voluntary and private sector providers.

Since first attending the Partnership Board meeting in March 2019, over the past two years I have been delighted to see such a wide ranging, committed and engaged group of attendees, representing both statutory and voluntary organisations. The Board and YOS adapted quickly to the global pandemic, making use of technology to continue discharging responsibilities effectively, and I was particularly pleased that the engagement of our partners has remained so strong throughout demonstrating their commitment to our shared objectives. The Board has a real focus on supporting, scrutinising and ultimately delivering effective and efficient Youth Justice services across the county. With this level of engagement, I am pleased that we can report outcome indicators in terms of youth offending in Buckinghamshire that continue to 'paint a positive picture', acknowledging some of the data difficulties the pandemic has presented. Our strategic priorities for 2019/20 were themed to contribute to systematic change across the wider organisation and within Criminal Justice as a whole, and these were carried through into 2020/21 and now into 2021/22 as we ensure recovery planning and delivery throughout the pandemic – the overarching priorities therefore remain:

1. Continuing to address disproportionality
2. Addressing exploitation of young people
3. Embedding an evidence based model of practice

This plan provides a summary of how we have made progress against the specific goals set under these themes. For 2021/22 the YOS will continue to make progress towards the above strategic priorities, alongside Covid-19 recovery planning and working towards securing positive outcomes against our three national indicators.

I am delighted that Aman Sekhon-Gill has been able to lead the Youth Offending Service for Buckinghamshire over the past few years, and in particular through 2020/21 as we have worked through the conditions and implications of the pandemic. Whilst Aman will be departing her role shortly, I look forward to working with a new post holder to continue to take forward the structures and processes now embedded. I know that the YOS, with the support of our Partnership Board, continues to strive for high quality services to support young people, families and victims irrespective of the challenges of the health crisis. As always, the Partnership Board is extremely grateful for the skill and dedication of those working in this arena. On behalf of the Partnership Board, I am pleased to present this updated Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

Superintendent Michael Loebenberg BSc(Hons) MSc, LPA Commander for Aylesbury Vale, Thames Valley Police

Covid-19 Response	The need to respond to the pandemic has led to working in creative ways with children whilst continuing to deliver a mixture of virtual and physical interventions. As services reopen, the focus will be to continue to deliver high quality services to children and retain some of the learning from the pandemic.
Outcome Indicators <i>NB – data for 1 and 2 is provided by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) who are unable to provide more recent figures due to the impact of Covid-19.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) First Time Entrants: 88 young people entered the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire between January and December 2019. At a rate of 160 per 100,000 10 to 17 year olds, the Buckinghamshire figure is lower than the National average (207) and Thames Valley (179) but above that seen across the South East (141). 2) Reoffending: The proportion of young people reoffending within a 12 month follow up period has continued to fluctuate. At 30.2% for October to December 2018, the rate of reoffending in Buckinghamshire is lower than the National average (37.3%), the South East (36.4%) and Thames Valley (30.4%). 3) Use of Custody: There were 0.04 custodial sentences per 1000 of the 10 to 17 year old population in Buckinghamshire during 2020. This is lower than the National average (0.14), the South East figure (0.05) and slightly higher than the Thames Valley figure (0.03).
Innovative Practice	The YOS continues to use data to seek additional funding for projects to tackle issues which can lead to involvement in criminal justice at an earlier stage. This included mobilising the BAME project for children transitioning from primary to secondary schools and supporting them through trained community volunteers. In addition delivery of Restorative Justice training was quickly mobilised to be virtual in response to the pandemic, which expanded reach and enabled the YOS to continue to influence partners to use restorative approaches.
Funding	Overall, the YOS budget for 2021-22 demonstrates a reduction in funding of approx. £42,000 (3.%) compared to 2020/21. In addition the national recruitment issues for the National Probation Service has remained a risk area and led to a gap in provision which, although managed within the service, has created additional pressure for the team. Staffing remained stable, and as per previous years, the YOS ensured monies were saved by way of not appointing agency cover for maternity leave and distributing the workload amongst existing staff. Creative solutions to funding continue to be sought in year.

Our Priorities for the Coming Year

In 2020/21, the YOS set overarching strategic priorities aiming to influence systemic change across the wider organisation and within different sectors of the Criminal Justice community locally. It recognised the journey of a child into the criminal justice system starts in their formative years, meaning that to have meaningful and sustainable impact there is a need to influence systemic change. The YOS were, and continue to be, keen to influence change within partner agencies to not only prevent young people entering the Criminal Justice System but also to secure more positive outcomes for those that have already entered. The ongoing pandemic has meant although the YOS were able to deliver against the over-arching targets, specific targets remained focused on delivery of services throughout Covid-19.

Moving forward the YOS will continue to focus on Covid-19 recovery planning and evidencing delivery against overarching priorities that have been fundamental to influencing change for children and families. These over-arching priorities are:

1. Continuing to address disproportionality
2. Addressing exploitation of young people - *this priority will also consider focussing on serious youth violence given the introduction of the new statutory duty*
3. Embedding an evidence based model of practice

For 2021/22 the YOS will continue to make progress towards the above strategic priorities, alongside Covid-19 recovery planning and working towards securing positive outcomes against our three national indicators:

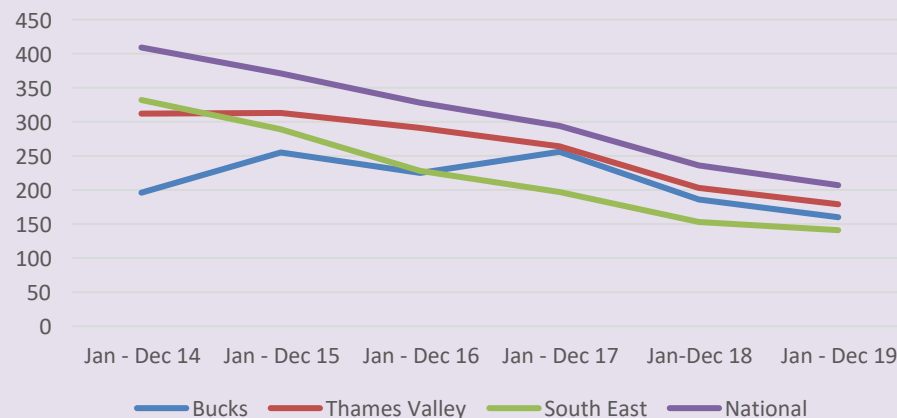
- Reducing First Time Entrants
- Reducing Repeat Offending
- Reducing the Use of Custody

First Time Entrants

The latest available data shows that 88 young people entered the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire between January and December 2019. This is a 12% decrease on the 100 first time entrants between January and December 2018 and a 13.7% reduction on the 102 young people entering the system between January and December 2014.

At a rate of 160 per 100,000 10 to 17 year olds, the Buckinghamshire figure for 2019 is lower than the National average (207) and Thames Valley (179) but above that seen across the South East (141).

Trends in First Time Entrants per 100,000 10 to 17 Year Population January 2014 - December 2019



Risks to YOS Effectiveness

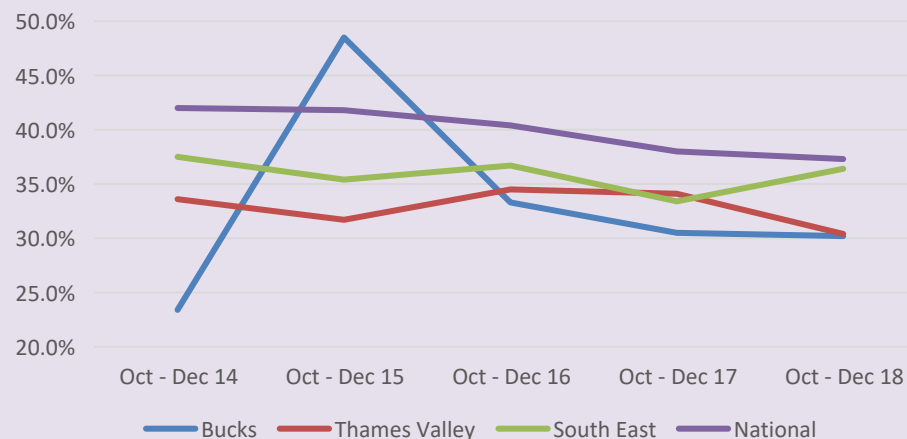
- The focus on prevention from the YOS is demonstrating a strong foundation of improved services, however resources are time limited (i.e. year on year funding). Should funding not continue - and if it cannot be secured from another source - the YOS will not have the resources within its own budget to continue this work.

Reducing Repeat Offending

The proportion of young people reoffending within a 12 month follow up period has continued to fluctuate. At 30.2% for October to December 2018, the rate of reoffending in Buckinghamshire is lower than the National average (37.3%), the South East (36.4%) and Thames Valley (30.4%).

There were 13 reoffenders within this most recent cohort in comparison with 11 reoffenders in October to December 2014, representing a 18.2% increase in the number of young people reoffending.

Proportion of Young People Reoffending Comparative Cohorts 2014 - 2018



Risks to YOS Effectiveness

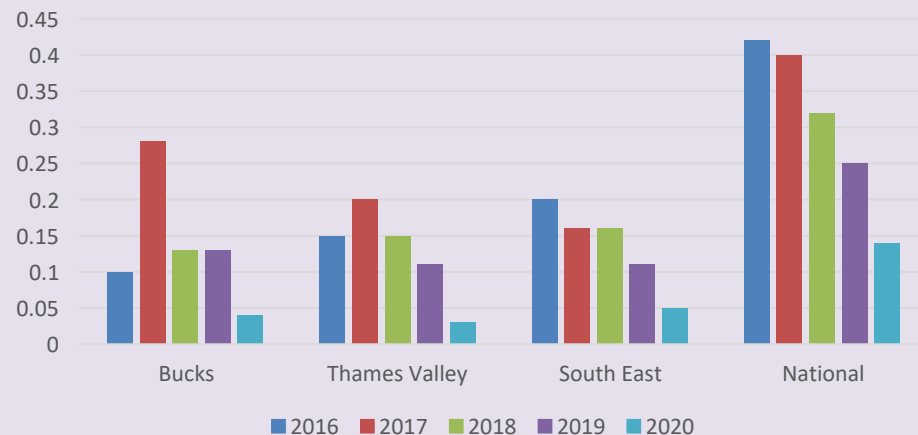
- The number of young people involved in repeat offending remains low which is positive; however, the nature and complexity of offending continues to require a more intensive approach to managing risks and protecting the public from harm. This often means that children are seen more frequently and statutory contacts can be up to 3 times a week at a minimum. Should caseload numbers increase, this complexity will continue to cause additional pressure on frontline staff who are responsible for the delivery of services.

Reducing The Use of Custody

There were 0.04 custodial sentences per 1000 of the 10 to 17 year old population in Buckinghamshire during 2020. This is lower than the National average (0.14), the South East figure (0.05) and slightly higher than the Thames Valley figure (0.03). This represents 2 young people receiving custodial sentences in comparison with 5 in 2016.

Resettlement training for all practitioners will be delivered by the Youth Custody Service in 2021/22 and an audit will take place to assess current practice. This will identify the appropriate actions required to support the aims of constructive resettlement.

Trends in Custodial Sentences per 1000 10 to 17 Year Population 2016 - 2020



Risks to YOS Effectiveness

- Serious Youth Violence continues to be a challenge on both a national and local basis, which substantiates the need to ensure the partnership tackle signs of trauma in children at an earlier stage, recognising that unresolved trauma (alongside other factors) can cause children to commit serious offences which cross the custody threshold. The Serious Violence Duty is a key part of the Government's programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence, taking a multi-agency approach to understanding the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and being informed by evidence. The YOS will be an integral part of supporting the implementation of this duty in Buckinghamshire.

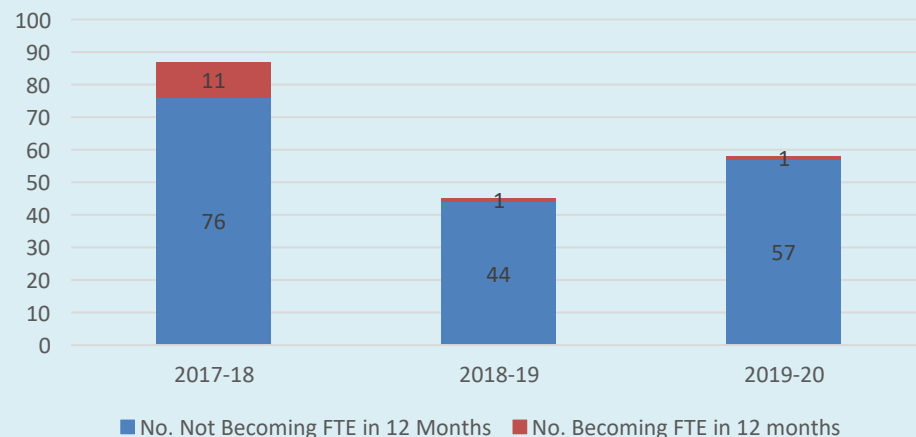
Local Indicators

Effectiveness of Prevention Programmes

All young people offered a Prevention programme by Buckinghamshire YOS are tracked for 12 months to monitor whether they commit any offences and subsequently become a first time entrant.

Of the 58 young people offered a voluntary programme in 2019-20, 1 (1.7%) went on to commit offences and become a first time entrant within 12 months. The 1 young person was engaged via the Schools Early Intervention programme. This compares positively with the 11 out of 87 young people who went on to offend from the 2017-18 cohort and is in line with the 1 out of 44 young people who became a first time entrant in the 2018-19 cohort (2.3%).

Young People Offered Prevention Programmes Going On to Become First Time Entrants

**What Does This Mean?**

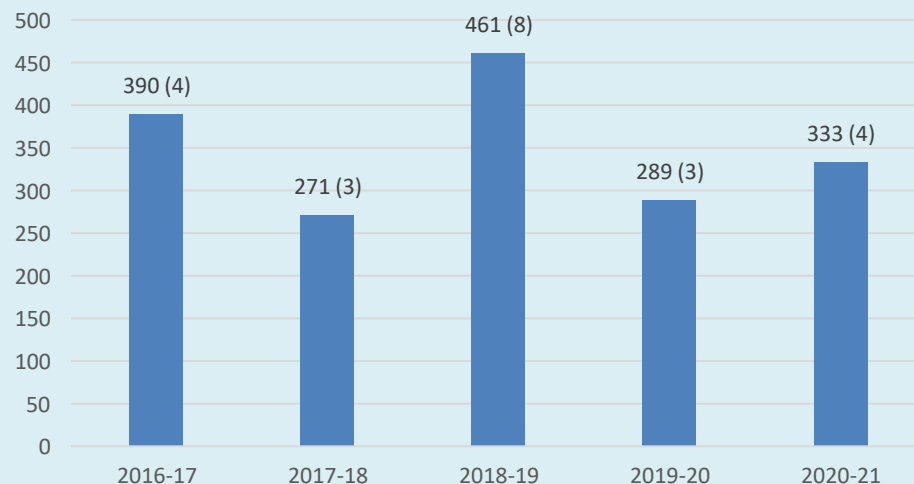
- The realignment of prevention workers within schools has supported improved engagement with voluntary programmes at an earlier stage in comparison to previous years. The positive impact of this is reflected in the high and sustained numbers of young people who have not gone on to enter the youth justice system following their involvement in this project. The key aim for realigning resources from the YOS within schools was to improve engagement at an earlier stage and it is therefore positive to see the intended impact become reality.

Local Indicators

Remand Bed Nights

Following a significant decrease in both the number of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights accrued in 2019-20, there was an increase in both figures for 2020-21. This represents a 15.2% increase in bed nights from 2019-20 and a 14.6% decrease in comparison to 2016-17.

No. of Remand Bed Nights (No. of Young People)



What Does This Mean?

- Whilst only 4 young people were remanded during the 2020-21 period, the seriousness of the offences has led to long periods in custody and a significant number of bed nights.
- This has significant financial implications, as all remand bed nights are paid for by the Local Authority with the Youth Custody Service providing a grant to support costs.

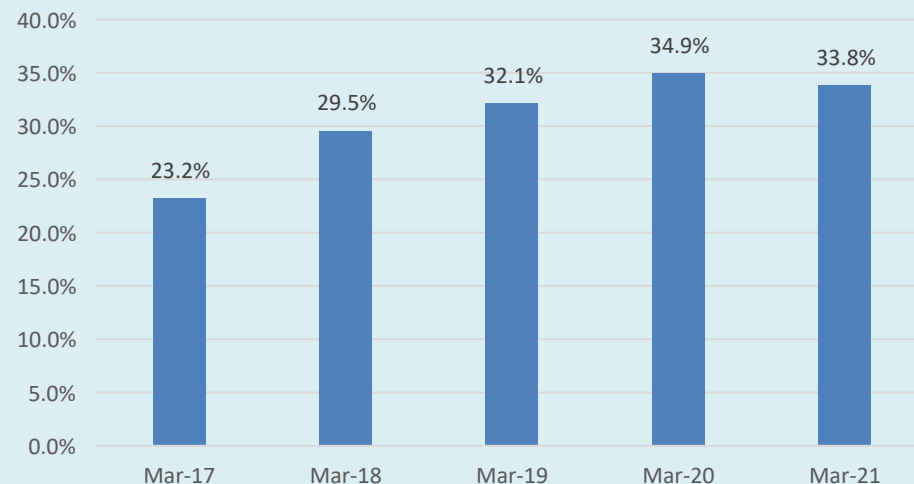
Local Indicators

Education, Health and Care Plans

The following chart provides a snapshot from 4 comparative periods of the percentage of young people on the YOS caseload with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

There has been a small decrease in the overall percentage of young people open to the YOS with an EHCP in the latest snapshot, following a gradual increase over the last 4 years. In March 2021 there were 26 young people in this category, which is a 13.3% decrease from 30 in March 2020 and an increase of 13% from 23 in March 2017.

Snapshot of YOS Caseload with EHCP

**What Does This Mean?**

- This data shows that around a third of all young people working with the YOS have an Education, Health and Care Plan. This will continue to be monitored alongside education colleagues to ensure there is an understanding of the educational needs of those within the Criminal Justice System.
- The existing audit framework will be used to engage partners in reviewing cases where young people have an EHCP and are known to the YOS, with the learning applied from this as appropriate.
- Further work will also need to be explored at an earlier stage to support preventing these young people from entering the Criminal Justice System, recognising that those with an EHCP are vulnerable to offending.

Local Indicators

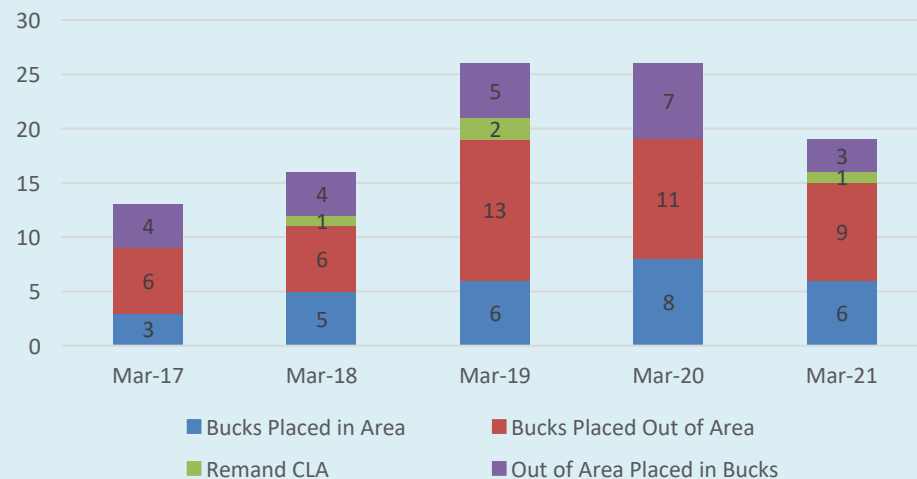
Children Looked After

The following chart shows a snapshot of the YOS caseload by Children Looked After (CLA) over 5 comparative periods, broken down by their CLA status.

Between March 2017 and March 2021 there has been an increase in the number of young people on the YOS caseload who are Looked After. In actual numbers, this is an increase from 13 young people in March 2017 to 19 in March 2021 (46.2% increase) but a decrease from the 26 individuals in March 2020.

More detailed analysis of the March 2021 cohort shows that 15 of the 19 CLA offended first, prior to becoming Looked After (78.9%). However, of the 15 young people who offended first, 13 were known to Social Care prior to committing their first offence. Therefore, 17 out of 19 (89.5%) were known to Social Care prior to committing their first offence.

Snapshot of YOS Caseload by CLA



What Does This Mean?

- CLA known to Youth Offending Teams is a national trend and it is recognised that those within the looked after cohort are at risk of offending. This data shows that a large proportion of the children who eventually enter the Criminal Justice System are known to Social Care services beforehand. There is a clear need to consider how adolescents and those who have experienced trauma in their lives are being worked with to support an alternative path out of criminal justice at an earlier stage. Some of this is being explored through training, contextual audit work and reflective workshops to support Social Care colleagues in their understanding of adolescent behaviours.

The table shows that between 2019-20 and 2020-21 there has been a:

- decrease in the number of Buckinghamshire young people who have offended (18.5% reduction);
- a more significant decrease in the number of offences being committed (25.6% reduction);
- a decrease in the average number of offences per offender (0.2 decrease); and
- a decrease in the number of disposals (26.3% reduction).

	2019-20	2020-21	Level of change
No. of Young People who Offend	162	132	18.5% decrease
No. of Offences Committed	418	311	25.6% decrease
Average No. of Offences Per Offender	2.6	2.4	0.2 decrease
Number of Disposals	194	143	26.3% decrease

What Does This Mean?

- The significant decrease in both the number of young people offending and the number of offences being committed can be attributed to a number of factors, including the strength of adopting a trauma informed approach and the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns on opportunities to offend.
- Frontline staff focus on building a strong foundation with their children and thus can influence change by building trusting relationships which has been evidenced through feedback gained from young people.

Buckinghamshire YOS 2021-22 Budget

Partner Contributions 2021-2022	Staffing Costs (£)	Posts In Kind	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
Buckinghamshire Council	619,041		89,365	708,406
Thames Valley Police		119,511		119,511
Clinical Commissioning Group		76,285		76,285
National Probation Service		48,019	468	48,487
Police Crime Commissioner	131,819		3,867	135,686
Youth Justice Board Grant	398,404		17,056	415,460
TOTAL	1,149,264	243,185	110,756	1,503,835

Budget Summary

- Overall, the YOS budget for 2021-22 has reduced in funding of approximately £42,000 (3%) compared to 2020/21, despite an 8.8% one-off uplift in YJB funding.
- 2020-21 included carry forward funding from the Police Crime Commissioner and one-off income for probation support activities.
- 2020-21 also included ¾ of the Sparks to Life BAME project income with the final ¼ in 2021-22.
- There was no post in kind adjustment in 2020-21 or in the budget for 2021-22, with the exception of the recent lack of NPS resource available to second over to YOS.
- Covid-19 resulted in much lower travel costs in 2020-21 but, with plans to accelerate programmes, we have budgeted for similar levels of travel spend to 2019-20.
- We continue to look at the staffing structure for both optimal service delivery and cost control.

The Partnership Board is the strategic partnership body within Buckinghamshire that oversees the local delivery of responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for youth justice services and the Youth Offending Service .

**Safer Stronger Bucks Partnership Board
(Crime & Disorder Partnership)**

**Youth Offending Service Partnership Board
(Strategic Overview)**

**Youth Offending
Service**

Thames Valley Wide Meetings

- Local Criminal Justice Board
- Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel
- Victims - Witnesses - Restorative Justice
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- Digital Working
- Reducing Reoffending
- Criminal Justice Liaison & Diversion

- Fair Access Board
- Multi Agency Child Exploitation meeting
- Channel - Prevent
- Youth Panel - court

Health and Wellbeing Board

**Buckinghamshire
Safeguarding Children Board**

Corporate Parenting Panel

Serious Violence Task Force

What Have We Done?

- Secured ongoing funding to deliver a community based coaching project for children of a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. Training has been delivered to 12 community volunteers to facilitate this and 4 schools have been identified to take part.
- Delivered Culture, Diversity, Knowledge and Understanding training to frontline youth justice practitioners.
- Provided good practice guidance to practitioners on assessing identity based on an internal management audit of assessments.
- Developed data reporting for the YOS Partnership Board to ensure bi-monthly oversight of disproportionality data.

**What Has the Impact Been?**

- 5 young people have been engaged by a community volunteer to support with transition to secondary school and to achieve individual goals.
- Following on from the training, recruitment processes are being reviewed to support the service in becoming more representative of the community it works with.
- More comprehensive assessments of identity leading to more targeted and effective intervention plans.
- Strategic partners have oversight and scrutiny of disproportionality within the YOS caseload.

What Will We Do Next?

- Evaluate overall impact of disproportionality work through collating one Quality Report to present to YOS board.
- Expand the community coaching project to include siblings of YOS clients in addition to supporting young people in Year 8.
- Facilitate a session on Culture, Diversity, Knowledge and Understanding for key strategic partners with a view to developing an action plan for each service area to positively address disproportionality.
- Re-audit identity within assessments to ensure good practice guidance is fully embedded.

What Have We Done?

- Reviewed YOS champion roles within the Missing and Exploitation Hub
- Reviewed strategic leadership of the Missing and Exploitation hub and re-located under YOS Head of Service.
- Completed an audit which focused on contextual safeguarding work.
- Delivered reflective workshops to staff on casework which focused on importance of trauma informed language.
- Completed training for Magistrates on exploitation.
- Revised Exploitation Protocol with practice guidance for staff when considering case work.

**What Has the Impact Been?**

- Increased awareness in Crown Prosecution Service and courts, recognising the importance of seeing exploited children as victims.
- Increased awareness across Children's Social Care on how to work with children who are at risk of or are being exploited.
- Corporate ownership of issues which link to exploitation: audit activity will now also include contextual work across Children's Social Care to support improved outcomes.

What Will We Do Next?

- Increase knowledge and strength of YOS prevention youth workers on exploitation, so universal services can be supported to understand risk factors.
- Implement parenting support through funding secured with third sector provider to create community champions.
- Pilot sessions from those with lived experience to support learning across the organisation.
- Actively participate in Serious Violence Task Force meetings in light of revised duty on YOS.

What Have We Done?

- Continued to deliver essential front-line services in a trauma-informed way despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by working both virtually and face to face with young people dependent on individual need.
- Development of virtual Restorative Justice training to support other professionals to work in a restorative way.
- Reviewed policies to ensure these are trauma-informed, including the staff supervision policy.

**What Has the Impact Been?**

- Young people have continued to receive a service that seeks to ensure the best possible outcomes for them.
- Positive engagement with young people has been sustained, with feedback reflecting their appreciation of flexibility in virtual and face to face appointments.
- Other agencies involved in Restorative Justice training report greater confidence in resolving conflict utilising these skills.
- The Service continues to embed trauma-informed practice across all elements of service delivery.

What Will We Do Next?

- Deliver refresher training on Trauma-Informed Practice in partnership with CAMHS.
- Explore the low level of Liaison and Diversion referrals across Buckinghamshire to ensure appropriate young people are receiving support.
- Support those attending Restorative Justice training in completing case studies to evaluate the impact on their day to day work.

Feedback from Young People

What have we done?

The YOS aims to complete a LifePath evaluation with every young person at the end of their intervention. They are asked to identify the key points on their journey through the youth justice system (e.g. being arrested, going to court, taking part in a YOS assessment) and feeding back on their experiences. 40 young people took part in this activity between January and December 2020.

What did we find out?

Some of the key themes included:

- Young people felt they could trust their YOS worker and felt listened to / supported
- They felt they could contribute to their plan and found sessions useful / enjoyable
- Some had negative experiences of the Police
- Some had concerns about being able to understand the language used at Court

"Nothing the YOS can improve on. Very approachable. Never felt I couldn't share anything. Caring and non-judgemental"

"Made me realise impact of doing anything else"

"I got a lot of help and encouragement to stay on the right path"

How have we responded?

- Feedback has been shared with all partners including the Police and the Court who have shared this within their own agencies to identify further actions.
- A bespoke evaluation seeking young people's views on the Police was completed by 45 individuals open to the YOS. The findings have led to work exploring how Early Intervention links in schools can be used to improve relationships between young people and the Police.
- Having proven the effectiveness of gathering feedback via the LifePath model, this will be trialed with parents and carers to broaden evaluation activity with service users.

Michael Loebenberg – Superintendent – LPA Commander – Thames Valley Police – Chair

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Nash – Service Director - Children’s Social Care, Buckinghamshire Council • Errol Albert – Head of Safeguarding - Children’s Services, Buckinghamshire Council / Amanda Andrews – Head of First Response - Children’s Services, Buckinghamshire Council (rotate to represent Social Care) • Aman Sekhon-Gill – Head of Service - Youth Offending Service • Ollie Foxell – Operational Manager – Youth Offending Service • Becky Beer – Performance Review & Information Manager - Youth Offending Service • Darren Frost – Youth Justice Unit - Thames Valley Police • Jim Holmes – Youth Justice Unit – Thames Valley Police • Cath Marriott - Policy Development Partnerships & Performance – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner • Debbie Johnson – Senior Operational Support Manager - National Probation Service • Gaelle Nzaba – Senior Probation Officer – National Probation Service • Jas Pejatta – Joint Head of Operations North / Katie Hunter – SPO TV - Community Rehabilitation Company (on rotation) • Caroline Shorten-Conn – Magistrate - Youth Court Magistrates • Chloe Purcell – Director of SAFE! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Edmonds – Education Strategy Manager - Buckinghamshire Council • Simon James – Service Director, Education - Buckinghamshire Council • Yvette Thomas – Equality and School Improvement Manager, Buckinghamshire Council • Emily Davis – Programmes Director – Action4Youth • Sandra Aaronson – Team Manager - Barnardo’s • Chris Geen – Manager - Community Safety, Buckinghamshire Council • Gideon Springer - Community Safety & Engagement Manager, Buckinghamshire Council • Gareth Morgan – Head of Early Help, Buckinghamshire Council • Sabrina Miller-Cummings - Service Manager - Switch Bucks, Young People Substance Misuse Service • Matt Lister – Consultant Forensic Psychologist – CAMHS • Joseph Franks – Service Manager – Liaison and Diversion • Marie Mickiewicz – Specialist Commissioning Manager - Commissioning, Buckinghamshire Council • Gillian Attree - Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children |
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Total grant to be used exclusively for the delivery of youth justice services and for the purposes of the following outcomes:

Reduction in youth reoffending, reduction in the numbers of first time entrants to the youth justice system, reduction in the use of youth custody, effective public protection and effective safeguarding.

Expenditure Category	Description	£
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of effective assessment, intervention planning and supervision for young people at risk of offending or reoffending in Buckinghamshire. • Delivery of services to the victims of youth offending. • Development of key areas of practice such as SEND, Liaison and Diversion and Restorative Justice. • Analysis of performance information to inform practice development across all areas. • Delivery and development of Community Reparation and Unpaid Work. 	398,404
Overheads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenses incurred by staff in carrying out core duties. • Development and training of staff in effective practice. 	3,041
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Core+ to support effective case management, timely submission of statutory data. and the use of connectivity to ensure mandatory documentation is shared securely with the Youth Custody Service. 	14,014
Total		£415,459

TYPE OF ROLE	NO. OF STAFF	GENDER	ETHNICITY
Strategic Manager	1	F	Asian
Operational Manager	1	M	White
Team Manager	3	F – 2 M – 1	White - 3
Performance and Information	2	F – 2	White - 2
Early Intervention and RJ Co-ordinator	1	F	White
YOS Officer	10	F – 10	White – 8
			Mixed – 1
			Asian - 1
Early Intervention Officer	1	F	White
RJ Support Worker	1	F	White
Education Officer	1	M	White
Youth Worker	3	M – 3	White – 1
			Black - 2
Police Officer (seconded)	2	F – 2	White - 2
Linked Specialists: Addaction Worker (1) SALT Worker (1) Specialist Nurse (1) CAMHS Mental Health Worker (1)	4	F – 3 M - 1	White - 2 Asian - 2
Business Support (3) Reparation - Unpaid Work Officer (1)	4	F – 2 M – 2	White – 2
			Mixed – 1
			Asian - 1
Volunteers	16	F – 13 M – 3	White – 14
			Black – 1
			Asian - 1

Summary

Covid-19 led to significant challenges in delivery of services to both partners and children and families, however Buckinghamshire YOS was able to adapt to these and quickly adopted a virtual delivery model with appropriate quality checks to ensure workers were supported and risk was being managed as well as possible given the circumstances. Despite initially moving to a completely virtual service, the YOS over a period of time moved to a mix of virtual and physical contact with children and families. As of April 2021, all children have been seen physically and continue to be seen as per their statutory contacts. During the pandemic, updates were provided to the YOS Partnership Board to assure members that the YOS had effectively adjusted to new working practices, as well as ensuring the Board maintained oversight of quality.

Despite moving to a mix of face to face and virtual intervention delivery, young people are still not being seen within the YOS building. It was agreed to keep offices open for a limited number of staff only for staff wellbeing purposes. The next significant challenge for the service will be the move to seeing young people within the office environment whilst trying to continue to reduce the spread of the virus.

In addition, it is recognised that the full impact of Covid-19 on young people's mental health, wellbeing and stability is yet to be felt, meaning this could lead to an increase in those who enter the criminal justice system.

Staff have continued to work flexibly in a hybrid model which has been positive, and it has been anticipated that this way of working will continue.

Lessons Learned Since March 2020 and Response to HMIP Learning

A number of interventions included “walk and talk” sessions for young people which proved hugely successful in maintaining engagement. This was made possible due to the trusting relationships the YOS practitioners have with their children, meaning children felt safe and comfortable to be seen with their workers. This will be retained moving forward.

Staff welcomed flexible working and working from home, however given the nature of the work, they also welcomed the offices being opened which enabled them to deal with what can be considered vicarious trauma through their work in an environment that was not their home. In addition, many reported the significance of being able to have some sense of “normality” in supporting their own mental health and wellbeing.

Appropriate Adult provision proved difficult as a number of volunteers fell into the “vulnerable” category, meaning options were often limited. The YOS recognised the need to improve this and relaunched recruitment of Appropriate Adults with a view to increasing diversity across the volunteer cohort.

Review of the 2020 Recovery Plan

Staff wellbeing was a significant focus of the recovery plan in 2020 and continues to be a focus in 2021/22. Covid-19 has had long lasting impact on staff, their own families and their working practices, and thus requires commitment of longer term investment in their wellbeing. Staff can continue to access:

- Flexible working hours, including evening hours to support family commitments
- Regular supervisory group touchdowns
- Daily touchdowns with all staff
- Varied resources offered by HR regarding staff wellbeing, including access to online CBT, Mindfulness and various therapies

Staff feedback will be regularly sought to continue to improve the services they receive as employees.

It is expected all children will now be seen face to face over and above sole virtual contact. Staff have been informed that where in exceptional circumstances a child can only be seen virtually, Head of Service approval is required.

The YOS Partnership Board will continue to meet every 2 months as it has done during the pandemic and will be provided with any updates that are significant to service delivery in light of the pandemic.

BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnic
BC	Buckinghamshire Council
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CLA	Child Looked After
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
FAB	Fair Access Board
BSCP	Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
MACE	Multi Agency Child Exploitation meeting
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
PCC	Police Crime Commissioner
STEM	Strategic Exploitation and Missing meeting
YJB	Youth Justice Board