



# Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan

2020 - 2021



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.

Having attended my first Partnership Board meeting in March 2019, I have been delighted to see such a wide ranging, committed and engaged group of attendees, representing both statutory and voluntary organisations. 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 'paint a positive picture'. Notably, there are low numbers of young people entering the justice system for the first time, lower levels of reoffending than comparative averages and there continues to be reduction in the use of custody, in line with the national trend. Our strategic priorities for 2019/20 were themed to contribute to systematic change across the wider organisation and within the Criminal Justice as a whole.

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

The specific goals we set for 2019/20 were:

- Raise awareness of and aim to reduce the exploitation of children and young people within organised criminal groups and in the supply of drugs (county lines).
- Aim to reduce repeat offending and serious youth violence by way of delivering trauma informed models of intervention.
- Strengthen engagement and intervention delivery with partners to reduce children becoming involved in violence through early intervention.

This plan provides a summary of how we have made progress against the specific goals set under these themes during the past year. Setting specific goals for 2020/21 have been impacted by Covid-19 and the need to shift priorities to respond to the crisis faced by the whole country. The intention for this year is therefore to focus on recovery planning whilst continuing to emphasise continual progress towards last year's overarching priorities. Over the coming year, we will continue to embed the adopted enhanced case management model, with trauma informed practice at its core, progress ongoing work to further address disproportionality and seek a system wide approach to address exploitation of young people.

I am delighted that Aman Sekhon-Gill continues as Head of YOS for Buckinghamshire, taking forward the structures and processes she has embedded with energy, drive and determination. I know that the YOS, with the support of our Partnership Board, is striving for high quality services to continue to be available to support young people, families and victims even through this challenging 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*

<b>Covid-19 Response</b>	The response to Covid-19 meant the YOS had to consider alternative ways of working. It is positive to note cases that were dip sampled demonstrated evidence of staff and young people adapting to virtual visits and maintaining contact with all but one child (this child was missing prior to Covid-19).
<b>Outcome Indicators</b> <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"> <li>1) First Time Entrants: 94 young people entered the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire between October 2018 and September 2019. This is a 16.8% decrease on the 113 first time entrants between October 2017 and September 2018.</li> <li>2) Reoffending: The proportion of young people reoffending within a 12 month follow up period has continued to fluctuate. At 29.4% for January to March 2018, the rate of reoffending in Buckinghamshire is lower than the National average (39.3%), the South East (38.7%) and Thames Valley (35.6%).</li> <li>3) Use of Custody: There were 0.16 custodial sentences per 1000 of the 10 to 17 year old population in Buckinghamshire during 2019. This is lower than the National average (0.25) and higher than the South East (0.14) and the Thames Valley figure (0.11).</li> </ol>
<b>Innovative Practice</b>	In 2019/20, YOS secured further funding to continue projects into 2020/21 such as the youth workers being based in schools, as well as continuing to offer intervention to young people who are released under investigation. Due to the pandemic, resources were creatively redeployed in partnership with Thames Valley Police (TVP), and the offer of virtual contact / intervention was given to those children who were stopped by the police for breaking Covid-19 regulations. The YOS also secured additional funds to develop a community mentoring project targeted at dual heritage and black primary school children.
<b>Funding</b>	Although funding remained relatively stable, there was a considerable amount of work required to ensure the YOS budget was in line with forecasted spend. Initially the projected forecast demonstrated a significant overspend. The YOS have been creative in how this has been managed, by way of not appointing agency workers to cover maternity leave and flexible working arrangements. There is further work to be done to ensure budgets are in line with the forecast spend which may lead to a structural review.

**Our Priorities for the Coming Year**

In 2019/20, the YOS set overarching strategic priorities to assist in influencing systematic change across the wider organisation and within different sectors within the Criminal Justice sector locally. It recognised the journey of a child into the criminal justice system starts in their formative years, meaning that to create meaningful and sustainable change there is a need to influence systemic change. The YOS were keen, and continue to be keen, to influence change across the organisation to not only prevent young people entering the Criminal Justice System but also to secure more positive outcomes for those that have already entered. Covid-19 has significantly impacted the ability to set priorities for the service and as a result, due to the need to prioritise recovery planning, the YOS will continue in 20/21 to focus on the previous priorities set. These overarching priorities are:

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

For 2020/21, the YOS will continue to make progress towards the above strategic priorities, but unlike 2019/20 will be unable to set specific targets against these for the forthcoming year. Instead the focus will be on Covid-19 recovery planning, continuing to identify, develop and progress work streams against our overarching priorities and working towards securing positive outcomes against our three national indicators:

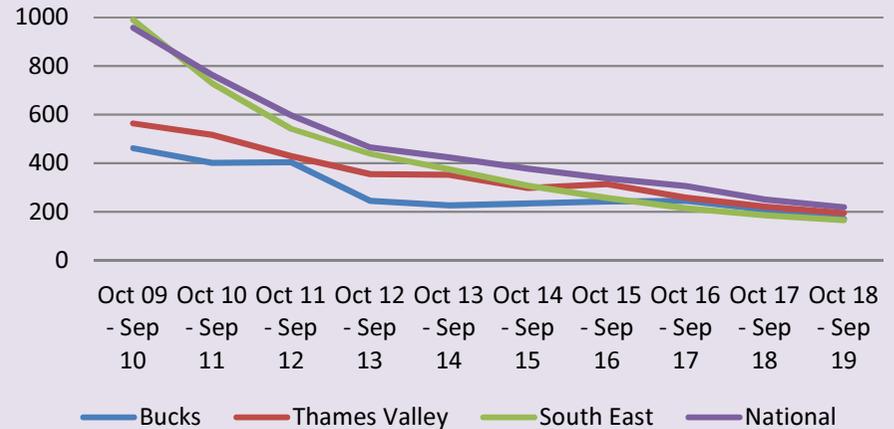
- Reducing First Time Entrants
- Reducing Repeat Offending
- Reducing the Use of Custody

First Time Entrants

94 young people entered the Youth Justice System for the first time in Buckinghamshire between October 2018 and September 2019. This is a 16.8% decrease on the 113 first time entrants between October 2017 and September 2018 and a 79.7% reduction on the 462 young people entering the system between October 2009 and September 2010.

At 171 per 100,000 10 to 17 year olds, the Buckinghamshire rate between October 2018 and September 2019 is lower than the National average (219) and Thames Valley (195) but slightly above the rate seen in the South East (166).

Trends in First Time Entrants per 100,000 10 to 17 Year Population October 2009 - September 2019



Risks to YOS Effectiveness

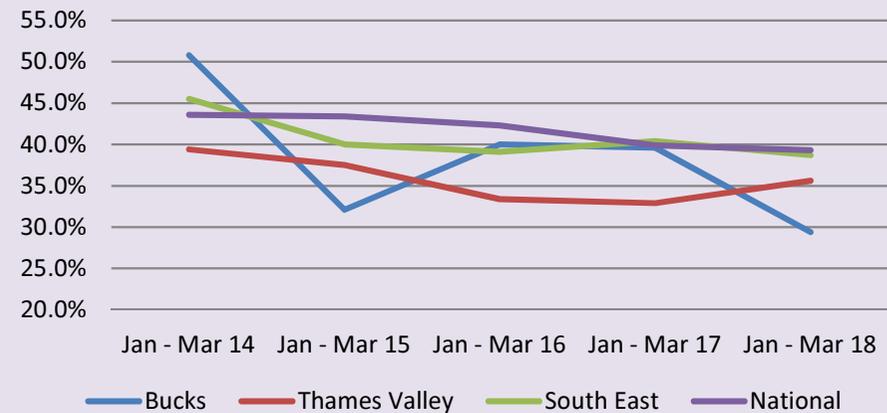
- The focus on prevention from YOS is demonstrating a strong foundation of improved services, however resources are time limited (i.e. year on year funding). Should funding not continue and if it cannot be secured from another source, the YOS will not have the resources within its own budget to continue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

**Reducing Repeat Offending**

The proportion of young people reoffending within a 12 month follow up period has continued to fluctuate. At 29.4% for January to March 2018, the rate of reoffending in Buckinghamshire is lower than the National average (39.3%), the South East (38.7%) and Thames Valley (35.6%). There were 15 reoffenders in Buckinghamshire within this most recent cohort in comparison with 30 reoffenders in April to June 2014, representing a 50% decrease in the number of young people reoffending.

*N.B the national picture is similar in terms of a fluctuation due to a change in the way repeat offending is reported.*

**Proportion of Young People Reoffending Comparative Cohorts 2014 - 2018**



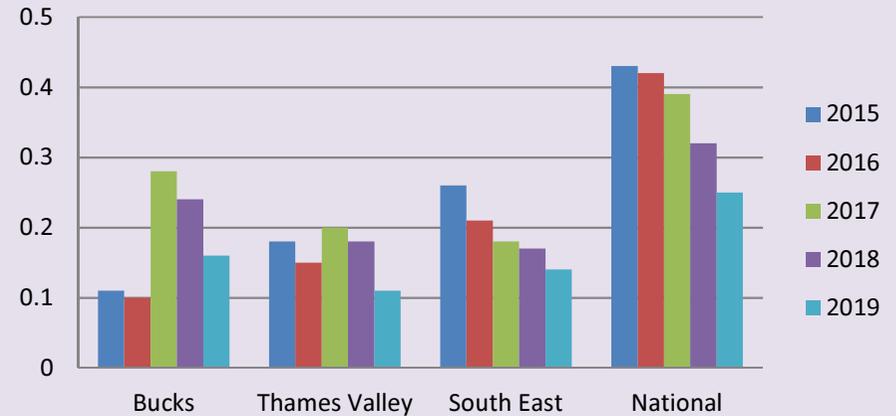
**Risks to YOS Effectiveness**

- The number of young people involved in repeat offending continues to drop 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 0.16 custodial sentences per 1000 of the 10 to 17 year old population in Buckinghamshire during 2019. This is lower than the National average (0.25) and higher than the South East (0.14) and the Thames Valley figure (0.11). This represents 7 young people receiving custodial sentences in comparison with 6 in 2015.

Custodial Rate per 1000 10 to 17 Year Old Population, 2015 - 2019



Risks to YOS Effectiveness

- An increase in the seriousness of offending which is being experienced nationally has led to an increase in custodial sentences, this does however only represent one young person.
- Serious Youth Violence continues to be a challenge and indicates the need to ensure the partnership tackle signs of trauma in children at an earlier stage, recognising unresolved trauma (alongside other factors) can cause children to commit serious offences which cross the custody threshold.

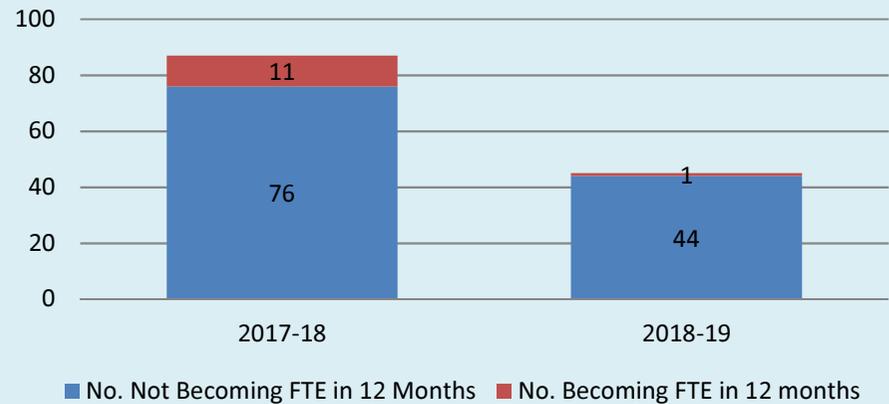
Local Indicators

**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 45 young people offered a voluntary programme in 2018-19, 1 (2.2%) went on to commit offences and become a first time entrant within 12 months. The 1 young person did not complete their intervention as they left the country to attend school abroad. This compares positively with the 11 out of 87 young people who went on to offend from the 2017-18 cohort (12.6%).

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



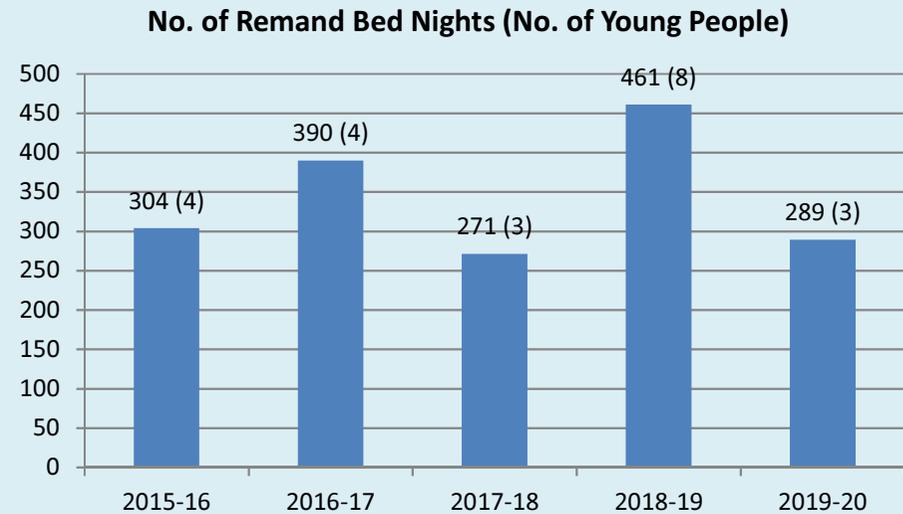
**What Does This Mean?**

- The realignment of prevention workers within schools has supported improved engagement with voluntary programmes at an earlier stage in comparison to previous years. The evidence gathered from the prevention work also demonstrates an impact on exclusion rates meaning factors contributing to offending have reduced. The reduction in the number of children worked with was impacted by the shift in resource allocation as well as recruitment. Should funding continue, it is anticipated that future numbers of children worked with will increase.

Local Indicators

**Remand Bed Nights**

Following a significant increase in both the number of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights accrued in 2018-19, there was a drop in both figures for 2019-20. This represents a 37.3% decrease in bed nights from 2018-19 and a 4.9% decrease in comparison to 2015-16.



What Does This Mean?

- The decrease in both bed nights and numbers of young people being remanded into custody can be attributed to the strength of alternatives options offered to courts by the YOS . However, given the increase in seriousness of offending which is a national picture, there is a risk this figure could again fluctuate.
- Given remand rates are relatively low, any change could have a significant impact on the data presented.
- This has significant financial implications, as all remand bed nights are paid for by the Local Authority with the Youth Justice Board providing a grant to support costs.

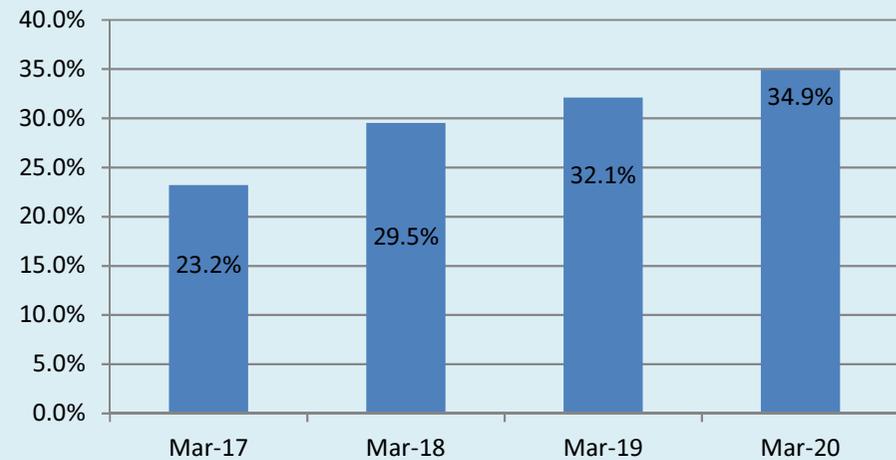
Local Indicators

**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 an increase in the overall percentage of young people open to the YOS with an EHCP over the last 4 years. In March 2020, there were 30 young people in this category, which is a 30.4% increase from 23 in March 2017 and an 11.1% increase from 27 in March 2019.

Snapshot of YOS Caseload with EHCP



What Does This Mean?

- There continues to be an increase in the number of children with an EHCP over the last four years. Some of this can be attributed to increased awareness of those needing EHCP and the improvement experienced in other parts of Children's Services, such as education.
- This will continue to be monitored alongside education colleagues to ensure there is an understanding of educational needs of those within the Criminal Justice System.
- Further work will 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

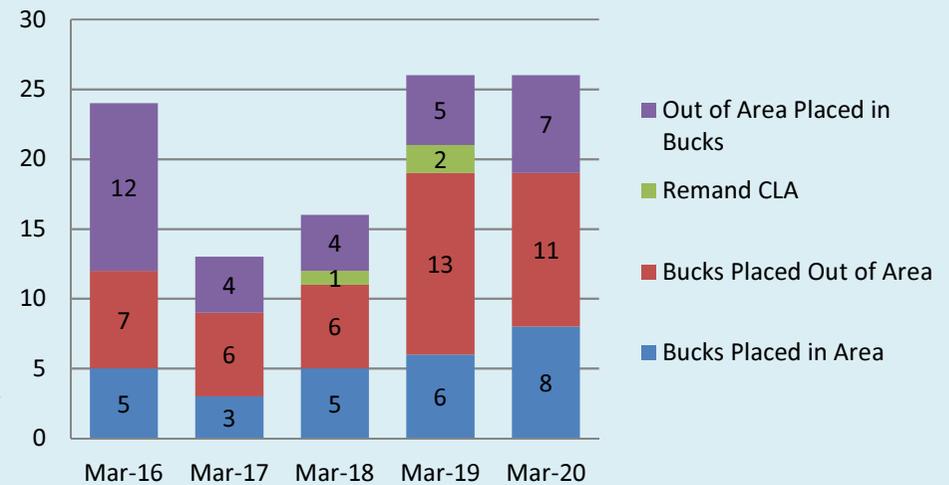
**Children Looked After**

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 2016 and March 2020, there has been a small increase in the number of young people on the YOS caseload who are Looked After. In actual numbers, this is an increase from 24 young people in March 2016 to 26 in March 2020, an 8.3% increase.

More detailed analysis of the March 2020 cohort shows that 18 of the 26 CLA offended first, prior to becoming Looked After (69.2%). However, of the 18 young people who offended first, 17 were known to Social Care prior to committing their first offence. Therefore, 25 out of 26 (96.2%) were known to Social Care prior to committing their first offence.

Snapshot of YOS Caseload by CLA



What Does This Mean?

- The pattern for Buckinghamshire is not distinctive in that there has not been a significant shift with numbers of CLA in YOS. 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.
- What is clear from the above data is 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.

The table shows that between 2018-19 and 2019-20 there has been a decrease:

- in the number of Buckinghamshire young people who have offended (3.6% reduction);
- in the number of offences being committed (28.2% reduction);
- in the average number of offences per offender (0.9 decrease); and
- in the number of disposals (12.6% reduction).

	2018-19	2019-20	Level of change
No. of Young People who Offend	168	162	3.6% decrease
No. of Offences Committed	582	418	28.2% decrease
Average No. of Offences Per Offender	3.5	2.6	0.9 decrease
Number of Disposals	222	194	12.6% decrease

#### What Does This Mean?

- Although nationally the numbers of young people offending are reducing, there is a significant decrease in the number of offences being committed. This can possibly be attributed to the strength of adopting a trauma informed approach.
- Frontline staff focus on building a strong foundation with their children and thus can influence change in their young people by building trusting relationships.

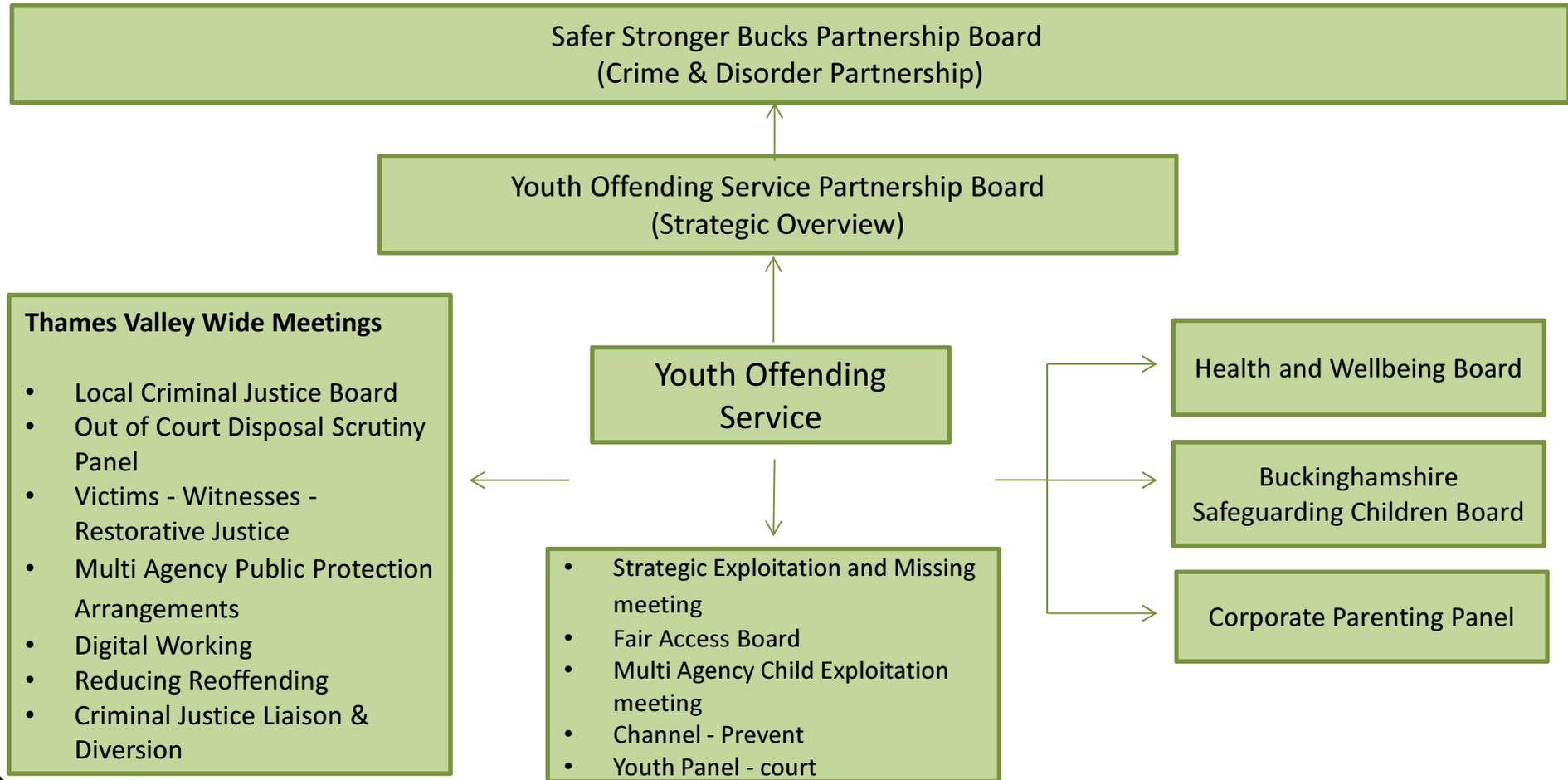
**Buckinghamshire YOS 2020-21 Budget**

Partner Contributions 2020-2021	Staffing Costs (£)	Payments in Kind (£)	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
<b>Buckinghamshire Council</b>	537,389	-	155,378	<b>692,767</b>
<b>Thames Valley Police</b>	-	119,511	-	<b>119,511</b>
<b>Clinical Commissioning Group</b>	-	76,285	-	<b>76,285</b>
<b>National Probation Service</b>	-	24,010	5,000	<b>29,010</b>
<b>Police Crime Commissioner</b>	157,518	-	17,587	<b>175,105</b>
<b>Youth Justice Board Grant</b>	353,454	-	23,700	<b>377,154</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,048,361</b>	<b>219,806</b>	<b>210,083</b>	<b>1,469,832</b>

**Budget Summary**

- The total allocated budget does account for £17,587 of funding allocated via Police Crime Commissioner that has been carried over from 2019/20 for specific projects which commenced in 2019/20 and will continue through to 2020/21. It is not guaranteed that this funding will be received again.
- Overall, the YOS budget for 2020-21 demonstrates a reduction in funding of approx. £51,000 (3.4%) compared to 2019/20 (removing the £17,587 as described above).
- The YOS has continued to receive posts in kind from Police, Probation, Clinical Commissioning Groups (Health Nurse, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).
- There has, however, been a reduction in the allocation of the Probation Officer post from 1x full time Equivalent to 0.5x part time post. Due to Covid-19 this post has not yet been reduced and an effective transition plan will be needed. This will impact caseload numbers for remaining staff as the Probation Officer does carry an equivalent number of cases to other YOS practitioners, however, retains those that are turning 18 to support with their transition into adult services.
- The budget position although improved in terms of forecast overspend through the reduction of spend in previous years, still requires work to ensure the service is delivered within existing budgetary constraints or a potential overspend of £11,000 is currently being projected.

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.



**What Have We Done?**

- Gathered data from across the organisation to understand local drivers of disproportionality.
- Utilised YOS Partnership Board to gain collective commitment and responsibility to influence change.
- Secured funding to deliver community based mentoring project for children of a Black, Asian and dual heritage background.
- Secured funding to deliver Unconscious Bias training to frontline and senior staff to help influence organisational change.



**What Has the Impact Been?**

- Diversity statement added to all Pre Sentence Reports recognising over representation of BAME groups which has now been shared with neighbouring YOS' as good practice.
- Increased understanding of cohort of children in Buckinghamshire who are over-represented in other parts of the organisation to enable targeted work streams to develop.
- Increased dialogue and recognition of local leaders' responsibility in reducing disproportionality.

**What Will We Do Next?**

- Deliver alongside a third sector organisation bespoke Unconscious Bias training to senior leaders with the aim of developing actions to help influence systematic change within their service areas.
- Set up a mentoring / coaching programme targeted at primary schools for children of a Black, Asian and dual heritage background.
- Evaluate overall impact of disproportionality work through collating one quality report to present to YOS board.

**What Have We Done?**

- Introduced monitoring of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) submitted.
- Ensured court reports are more explicit in naming exploitation.
- Co-located two YOS practitioners as champions within the newly developed Exploitation Hub to work alongside hub workers and assist in sharing intel / data to improve outcomes for children.
- Audited casework to assist in identifying areas of practice development in exploitation.



**What Has the Impact Been?**

- Increased knowledge and number of referrals accepted to National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
- Increased awareness in Crown Prosecution Service and courts, recognising the importance of seeing exploited children as victims.
- Increased intel reports being submitted to police by YOS practitioners.
- YOS champions have attended “mapping” meetings meaning intel is shared more widely across Children's Social Care teams and YOS.

**What Will We Do Next?**

- Increase knowledge of geographical “hot spots” and consider supporting youth work engagement in these areas.
- Support the Exploitation Hub in increasing understanding of patterns and trends locally to enable proactive approaches can be considered to disrupt activity.
- Support recognition of identifying exploitation at an earlier stage through YOS youth workers within schools.

### What Have We Done?

- Continued to work towards being a trauma informed service.
- Reviewed aspects of service provision and policies to ensure they are more trauma informed.
- Audited case work to assess impact of trauma informed training on intervention plans.
- Gathered feedback from young people via “Life Path” model to inform future service delivery.
- Reviewed the physical environment in which staff work and that young people access to ensure it aligns with trauma led practice (This includes identifying a “work free zone” for staff to support the impact of secondary traumatic stress).



### What Has the Impact Been?

- Evidence through feedback from young people of improved relationships with professionals.
- Increase in numbers of schools accessing Restorative Approaches and Facilitator training.
- Sharing best practice in trauma informed approaches at Forensic Community Adolescent Mental Health Service conference.
- Consideration to secondary traumatic stress has led to staff being more open about their needs leading to reduced sickness and stability within staff group.

### What Will We Do Next?

- Commit to ensuring all policies are trauma informed.
- Collate evidence to demonstrate impact of restorative approaches within earlier settings such as schools.
- Pilot a programme to train young people in restorative approaches to become champions within their education setting (this was delayed due to Covid-19).
- Continue to adopt trauma informed practice to become a fully trauma informed service.
- Develop and introduce a Life Path model for parent / carer evaluation.

## National Standards Audit Submission

The YOS Partnership Board were requested to commission a self-assessment into the revised [National Standards](#) in September 2019, which allowed services 6 months to embed them. These standards for children in the youth justice system define the minimum expectation for all agencies that provide statutory services to ensure good outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

There were 3 elements of the self-assessments: Operational Audits, Strategic Audits and Review of Policies. Outcomes submitted are below:

Standard	Strategic self-assessed results	Operational self-assessed results
Standard 1: out of court disposals	Good	Good
Standard 2: at court	Good	Good
Standard 3: in the community	Good	Good
Standard 4: in secure settings	Good	Requires Improvement
Standard 5: on transition and resettlement	Good	Good

An action plan to address learning arising from this self assessment is currently being implemented and will be shared with YOS Partnership Board members.

**Thematic Serious Case Review – Serious Youth Violence**

There was a violent crime in Buckinghamshire in June 2018 involving three teenagers. Intervention from the Youth Offending Service outside the building in Aylesbury saved the life of one of the young people who was seriously injured. All three young people were currently or previously known to the Youth Offending Service or Children's Social Care at the time that the incident occurred.

A thematic review was commissioned taking into account the wider context of a growing number of serious knife crimes in the Thames Valley Police area in 2018. The Safeguarding Partnership decided that greater benefit would be derived from a wider thematic review of the response of agencies to the emerging problem of serious youth violence in Buckinghamshire, building on the review of the services provided for the young people whose circumstances were judged to meet the criteria for a serious case review.

The report details 11 recommendations that reflect the changes needed locally to improve services. The Safeguarding Children Partnership held an event in September 2019 to share the learning from this serious incident with a wide multi agency audience so that action could be taken swiftly by individual agencies where improvement was needed.

The partnership, alongside input from the Youth Offending Service, has developed a detailed action plan to track the progress in achieving all of the recommendations set out in the report. The work to achieve these improvements will be carried out collaboratively with agencies across the partnership and progress will be regularly monitored.

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richard Nash – Service Director - Children’s Social Care, Buckinghamshire Council</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Aman Sekhon-Gill – Head of Service - Youth Offending Service</li> <li>• Ollie Foxell – Operational Manager – Youth Offending Service</li> <li>• Becky Beer – Performance Review &amp; Information Manager - Youth Offending Service</li> <li>• Darren Frost – YJU Unit Police Officer - Thames Valley Police</li> <li>• Debbie Johnson – Senior Operational Support Manager - National Probation Service</li> <li>• Lou Everatt – Head of Operations North - Community Rehabilitation Company / Katie Hunter – SPO TV - Community Rehabilitation Company (on rotation)</li> <li>• Caroline Shorten-Conn – Magistrate - Youth Court Magistrates</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maria Edmonds – Education Strategy Manager - Buckinghamshire Council / Viv Trundell – Education Entitlement Manager, Buckinghamshire Council (Rotate attendance)</li> <li>• Iain Watson (Aspire) – Deputy Head Teacher Aspire (PRU)</li> <li>• Yvette Thomas – Equality and School Improvement Manager, Buckinghamshire Council</li> <li>• Jenifer Cameron – CEO – Action4Youth (VCS)</li> <li>• Simon Barnett – Operations Director - Action4Youth</li> <li>• Helen Fortgang – Service Manager - Barnardo’s</li> <li>• Sandra Aaronson – Team Manager - Barnardo’s</li> <li>• Chris Geen – Manager - Community Safety, Buckinghamshire Council</li> <li>• Rebecca Carley - Community Safety &amp; Engagement Manager, Buckinghamshire Council</li> <li>• Gareth Morgan – Head of Early Help, Buckinghamshire Council</li> <li>• Sabrina Miller-Cummings - Service Manager - Switch Bucks, Young People Substance Misuse Service</li> <li>• Matt Lister – Consultant Forensic Psychologist - CAMHS</li> <li>• Marie Mickiewicz – Specialist Commissioning Manager - Commissioning, Buckinghamshire Council</li> </ul> |
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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"> <li>• Delivery of effective assessment, intervention planning and supervision for young people at risk of offending or reoffending in Buckinghamshire.</li> <li>• Delivery of services to the victims of youth offending.</li> <li>• Development of key areas of practice such as SEND, Liaison and Diversion and restorative justice.</li> <li>• Analysis of performance information to inform practice development across all areas.</li> <li>• Delivery and development of Community Reparation and Unpaid Work.</li> </ul>	352,059
Overheads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenses incurred by staff in carrying out core duties.</li> <li>• Development and training of staff in effective practice.</li> </ul>	10,595
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	14,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£377,154</b>

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
Probation Officer (seconded)	1	F	White
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) Connexions Worker (1) Clinical Psychologist (1) SALT Worker (1)	4	F – 3 M – 1	White - 4
Business Support (4) Reparation - Unpaid Work Officer (1)	5	F – 2 M – 3	White – 3 Mixed – 1 Asian - 1
Volunteers	18	F – 15 M – 3	White – 16 Black – 1 Asian - 1

### Introduction

Covid-19 has caused a significant impact on the ability to deliver services to children, services to partners such as courts, police and schools as well as impacting the wellbeing of the workforce responsible for this very service delivery. The YOS, along with the other Children's Services departments found it challenging to determine how best to manage public protection, safeguarding of children and delivery of court orders in the context of a national pandemic. The following plan outlines difficulties and successes of the partnership in rising to this unique challenge. This summary is broken down into the following main sections:

- Overview of the impact on governance and service delivery
- Delivery of services to young people
- Delivery of services to partners
- Wellbeing of workforce
- Oversight of quality

This recovery plan is in conjunction with the local authority's Business Continuity Plan.

#### **Overview of the Impact on Governance and Service Delivery**

The Youth Offending Partnership Board were due to meet in March 2020; however, this meeting was cancelled. It was felt it was imperative to hold a virtual board in April to ensure key agenda items were discussed. This included the submission of the National Standards audit, the YOS finance position as well as the YOS' response to Covid-19. The partnership meeting was still well attended, and it was agreed meetings would continue but virtually with key agenda items scheduled over and above what would have been scheduled in the forward planner. During lockdown there have been two virtual YOS boards which have primarily focused on Covid-19 service delivery and recovery. Some advice was also sought from neighbouring and London YOTs in the early days of lockdown to try and gain an understanding of what other YOS were doing to maintain some consistency of service delivery.

### Delivery of Services to Young People

Staff were all communicated with in terms of expectations and all visits to young people were suspended, including those assessed as high risk of harm to others and high in terms of vulnerability. It was agreed by the partnership that although some YOS retained doorstep visits this would not be conducive or purposeful. However, where staff suspected a significant risk or safeguarding issue, visits were authorised, but only by Head of Service. Virtual contact was the agreed form of communication. This alone presented a challenge for some young people who did not wish to complete virtual visits. Staff were encouraged to maintain telephone contact whilst encouraging young people to understand that virtual visits were the expected standard. Staff were asked to ensure first and foremost that young people understood what was expected of them during lockdown, as well as ensuring their mental health and wellbeing was explored. As time has gone on, the number of physical visits to children has increased, and this has been led by staff recognising the risk of disengagement virtually, and increased frustration as lockdown eases.

To attempt to mitigate against some of the risks presented, all staff were asked to increase their contacts with children and see this as “check ins” rather than delivery of a court order. Staff were also encouraged to make contact more frequently with parents / carers. Some creative methods of engagement were used to support young people including structuring workout and cooking sessions with young people. Positively, most young people have engaged with virtual visits and where needed physical visits have supported the re-engagement of individuals. Given the YOS were trained in trauma informed approaches, staff were encouraged to bring this training to the forefront of their practice.

During an already challenging time, the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum as did more information regarding the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the BAME community. Staff were encouraged to proactively seek out discussions with young people to assess the additional impact this was having on them and their families.

Children and families were and continue to be supported by way of increased contact and physical visits where there was a clear rationale. Some families have also been supported financially where YOS practitioners have been able to apply for and access funding for families in need, either via Social Care or third sector providers within Buckinghamshire. Any additional support needed from the YOS CAMHS worker / nurse is also available virtually.

Young people and parents / carers will be formally written to prior to any transition back to face to face contact, to ensure they are supported in understanding how the YOS will consider their health and safety needs.

### Delivery of Services to Partners

**Courts** - Courts were initially closed and aimed to move to virtual hearings; however, despite several attempts virtual hearings have not been consistent and the YOS was required to provide courts with physical staff despite a commitment to majority virtual hearings. The support from existing court champions meant effective liaison with court partners, which supported staff in communicating changes to their young people. There is some concern regarding the backlog of court throughput and a possible spike in offending. This has been shared with the YOS Board and is an anticipated risk. It is expected that local timeframes for completing assessments may be impacted. Although there is no additional resource available, it has been factored into duty rotas ensuring two YOS Officers are available for busier days and recognising that this may be time limited. Courts have been alerted that we may need to request adjournments, but this will be as a last resort recognising the impact this can have on children and families waiting to be progressed through court.

**Police Station** - Throughout Covid-19 there was an expectation that Appropriate Adults (AA) were still provided in person. This was difficult because most volunteers were and still are shielding. Several meetings took place with TVP colleagues to work through some of these complexities and direct meetings with senior officials responsible for custody suites were welcomed. Efforts are being made to explore recruitment of volunteers, although this remains a challenge. In the interim, YOS staff are attending as AAs where no suitable option is available such as extended family member, Social Care etc.

**Professionals Meetings** - Meetings such as MACE and MAPPA continued to be attended by relevant staff virtually and dialogue regarding alternative risk and safety planning in the context of Covid-19 ensued.

**Prevention Resources** - Youth Workers who were allocated to work in schools and work with young people Released Under Investigation (RUI) were unable to continue in their ordinary environments. As a result, an initiative was set up alongside TVP to have all young people who were stopped in breach of Covid-19 regulations contacted with an offer of support. In addition, some children at risk of entering criminal activity who were known to Social Care were also supported by these workers. RUI work has now picked up again, and it is hoped that schools will also open in September.

### Delivery of Services to Staff

It was recognised very early on that in order to continue to deliver services, staff wellbeing was priority. The narrative from the YOS has always been to ensure staff are well looked after, who then in return take good care of their children and families. The need to look after staff was more important than ever, and staff were offered some of the following as additional support:

- Flexible hours, including evening hours to support around family commitments
- A well-being session accessed through corporate HR and run by a counsellor
- Regular supervisory group touchdowns
- Recognition from managers that there is no expectation on staff to deliver what they ordinarily would given virtual contact
- Daily touchdowns that would have occurred in the office were held virtually for all staff
- Resources offered from CAMHS regarding effective virtual contacts
- Dip sample of virtual contacts on a sample of children to support reflective discussions

Staff have been keen to resume normal service delivery and see their young people in person, which demonstrates their relentless commitment to the work they do. To continue to support staff in preparation for any recovery all staff have met with individual line managers and completed a bespoke return to work form devised by the Youth Offending Service. This explores any underlying health needs, the issue of BAME, what aspects of work they are most worried about, solutions they feel can support a transition back to work and most importantly what, if any, additional emotional support they may need. This has been well received and information collated from this has allowed the YOS to ascertain that 81% of the frontline can return to work with minimal adjustments. It has also supported the service in gathering some themes which have been shared with the corporate centre such as frequency of deep cleaning of YOS buildings.

To follow up on this a staff well-being survey is being developed so the YOS can continue to be a learning organisation and utilise this information to reflect on what could be done differently, as well as identify the strengths in this area.

### Oversight of Quality

The need to move to virtual visits presented its own challenge around how we could continue to assess quality of practice during Covid-19. It was also crucial to support staff in having reflective conversations, given their approach to relationship building, safety and well-being planning, and risk management had significantly changed overnight. A quality assurance process was implemented where there was a clear focus on ensuring young people understood the Covid-19 restrictions, were challenged where there was evidence of non-compliance, that communication was in place with parents / carers and that any specific risks relating to staying at home were addressed for that individual. In addition, it provided a mechanism for staff to create some space to reflect on their interactions. Over a 10 week period, YOS management carried out quality assurance checks on contact delivery for 47 cases. The data was collated and analysed to identify both strengths as well as areas for development. This was later presented to the YOS Board.

Data collated showed 71 young people had virtual contact, 7 were seen face to face and 1 young person had been missing prior to Covid-19 and had a warrant out for his arrest throughout the lockdown period so was not seen. Positively, every single young person open to YOS was seen virtually or otherwise, with the exception of 1 young person that was missing.

Feedback was also in the process of being gathered from young people and two commented on their experiences of YOS delivery in the context of Covid-19:

*“Enjoyed virtual contacts”*

*“Virtual panel due to coronavirus but was good”.*

As part of the Covid-19 recovery plan, young people will be asked to reflect on the support given by the YOS during lockdown and their experiences of virtual contacts to ensure their feedback is central to any lessons learned.

BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnic
BCC	Buckinghamshire County 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
BSCB	Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board
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