

Youth Justice Plan 2022-2023

Service	Buckinghamshire YOS
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Chair of YJS Board	Superintendent Rebecca Mears, Area Commander Aylesbury Vale, Thames Valley Police

Contents

- [1. Introduction, vision and strategy](#)
- [2. Local context](#)
- [3. Child First](#)
- [4. Voice of the child](#)
- [5. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements](#)
- [6. Resources and services](#)
- [7. Progress on previous plan](#)
- [8. Performance and priorities](#)
- [9. National standards](#)
- [10. Challenges, risks and issues](#)
- [11. Service improvement](#)
- [12. Evidence-based practice and innovation](#)
- [13. Looking forward](#)
- [14. Sign off, submission and approval](#)
- [15. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart](#)

1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

Foreword

Welcome to the 2022-2023 Youth Justice Plan, which lays out the plans of the Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service (YOS), explains our achievements 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.

Our aim is that Buckinghamshire remains 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 to help prevent offending and reoffending, reducing the use of custody where appropriate and working together to safeguard our most vulnerable. The YOS does this by working together with key partners in particular Children's Services, Health Services, Probation, Police, Community Safety and both third sector and private sector providers to deliver high quality and effective services to young people, their families and the victims of offending.

In my role as chair of the Partnership Board, I have had the privilege of working with a wide ranging and committed group of partners, representing both statutory and voluntary organisations. The Board and YOS have continued to adapt to the ever changing environment due to the developing pandemic and the engagement of all partners has remained strong throughout, demonstrating the resilience to achieve our shared objectives. The Board focuses on supporting and analysing progress to deliver constant improvements to youth justice services across the county. Our strategic priorities for 2020/21 and 2021/22 were themed to contribute to systemic change across the wider organisation and within criminal justice as a whole, and 2022/23 moves beyond recovery planning to achieve the overarching priorities:

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 as well as working towards securing positive outcomes against our three national indicators.

It has been a pleasure to work with Ollie Foxell as the Interim Head of the Youth Offending Service for Buckinghamshire as he has continued to take forward and strengthen the structures, resourcing and processes. 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 Rebecca Mears BA (Hons) MSc,
LPA Commander for Aylesbury Vale, Thames Valley Police***

Vision and Strategy

Whilst 2021/22 saw the YOS still in a phase of recovery from the pandemic, there remained a clear focus on achieving our overarching long-term strategic priorities and maintaining strong performance against national and local indicators. The development of ongoing work with partners to influence systemic change and to increase the targeted secondary prevention offer has contributed to the falling numbers of First Time Entrants. For the first time ever, the YOS now works with more children in a voluntary prevention and diversion capacity than those on a statutory basis (Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Orders). This is a significant shift that demonstrates the effectiveness of recent developments in prevention provision and the intention is to continue on this trajectory.

The following key strategic priorities that have helped to drive this good progress in recent years will remain, and a continued focus on developing the transition towards a predominantly prevention-based model of working will cut across all three.

1. Continuing to address disproportionality.
2. Addressing exploitation of young people.
3. Strengthening an evidence based model of practice / focus on intervening as early as possible.

The long-term vision for the YOS will be to continue to expand the prevention offer, specifically by exploring funding opportunities to grow the existing model of youth work support for schools. These priorities are consistent with other local long term strategic priorities, such as those set by the Safer Bucks Board and the Violence Reduction Unit.

2. Local Context

On 1 April 2020, the former District Council areas of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe and Buckinghamshire County Council came together to form a single Unitary Authority, Buckinghamshire Council.

Buckinghamshire has a fast growing population with a 0.6% annual change (between 2019-2020) according to the 2021 ONS report with a total population of 551,560. The south is densely populated, and the north is more sparse; however, there has been a particularly large population change in Aylesbury Vale which has seen a 10.4% rise since 2011, the highest rate of growth of any local authority in Great Britain. In terms of who make up this population, in recent years the general trend is an increasing amount of residents aged 0-15 as well as residents aged 80 and over. Buckinghamshire has an underrepresentation of people in their 20s and 30s (21.8 and 6.4 per cent below the national level).









Our vision for Buckinghamshire is one where growth will be carefully planned and managed, so that all our residents benefit. This includes well designed, more affordable homes in thriving communities; providing excellent education opportunities for our young people, developing a skilled workforce with access to great job opportunities in highly productive sectors; and a world-class physical and digital infrastructure to support our businesses to flourish. We want our county to be a place everyone can be proud of, with excellent services, thriving businesses and outstanding public spaces for everyone. We

want our residents, regardless of background, to have access to great opportunities, living healthy, successful lives and ageing well with independence. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work and think and presents a number of challenges in ensuring we continue to protect and support people who are vulnerable and in need; whilst meeting the extra service demands produced from the Covid pandemic. While we do this, we will continue to lay the foundations for what is best for Buckinghamshire in the longer term.

The following infographic provides an overview of Buckinghamshire in numbers.



Buckinghamshire in numbers

In 2022




-  **551,560**
population in January 2022
-  **£413,924**
average house price
(December 2021)
-  **£1,310pcm**
average rent for a two-bed property
(January 2022)
-  **171**
parish and town councils
-  **31%**
of the county is designated green belt
(England average 12.5%)
-  **£18.4 billion**
size of Buckinghamshire economy national
output (Buckinghamshire LEP 2019)
-  **One third**
of working residents travels outside of the
county for work
-  **236 schools**



On the horizon...

-  **564,319**
population in 2030
(Source: ONS projections)
-  **450**
state pension age citizens per
1,000 working age citizens by
2040 (from 320 per 1,000 in 2020)

In the next decade (2022-2032):

-  **19%**
increase in 65+ year olds
-  **38.4%**
increase in 85+ year olds
-  **4.3%**
decrease in children

Like all local authorities, we face challenging financial circumstances. There are more people turning to the council for support, but the resources available to help them have not increased to match the demand. We have to be realistic and focus on greater efficiency and value for money. However, we are still ambitious to keep investing in our communities, sustaining the vital services on which our most vulnerable residents rely. The following infographic shows a breakdown of how the Council’s budget is allocated.



During 2021/22, Buckinghamshire Children’s Service was inspected twice. Firstly, in December 2021, Ofsted conducted their Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) reinspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. This inspection found that Buckinghamshire was no longer ‘Inadequate’, and the overall judgement of Children’s Services was ‘requires improvement to be good’. This follows two previous Inadequate inspection ratings and, whilst there is still considerable work needed, is considered a significant achievement, especially in the context of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. This outcome is testament to the hard work, dedication and skill of our colleagues across the Council and partner agencies. The second took place in March 2022 when Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected the services provided for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Buckinghamshire. The inspection found a number of strengths across the local area, despite the ongoing Covid-19 challenges. It recognises the considerable activity that is happening as part of our SEND improvement programme and confirms that our self-evaluation accurately reflects our progress. That said, inspectors also identified 3 area of significant weakness:

- The lack of a cohesive area strategy to identify and meet the needs of those children and young people requiring speech and language, communication and occupational therapy
- Waiting times for assessments on the autism and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder diagnosis pathways and the system-owned plans in place to address this
- Waiting times to see a community paediatrician.

As a result of the inspection findings, the local area is required to submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address significant areas of weakness. The local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group (CCG) are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted. We will of course focus our efforts on improving the areas of significant weakness identified, while continuing with our broader improvement journey across organisations to ensure the support children with SEND receive in Buckinghamshire is high quality and effective.

3. Child First

Buckinghamshire YOS is committed to the principles of Child First and can demonstrate this in the following ways.

1. Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.

The YOS has invested in good quality trauma informed practice and psychological formulation training and is continuing to do so, with refresher training this year. Trauma informed practice is overseen and guided by CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) colleagues who provide support in a number of areas, such as chairing of case formulations and delivering group complex case supervision.

There is a strong focus on quality in the work that the YOS do, with a robust quality assurance framework and regular quality reports submitted to the Partnership Board. This ensures strategic oversight of the effectiveness of work delivered with children and young people.

2. Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

There has been a recent focus on developing family work within the YOS. The creation of Restorative Family Meetings, which allow children and families to address conflict within the safety of a restorative process, ensures that the child has the opportunity to share their voice.

3. Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

The YOS uses the LifePath model to seek feedback from children and young people. This has proven an effective way to gain frank, useful feedback which has led to tangible outcomes. Findings are presented to the Partnership Board and appropriate actions taken where needed. An example of this is the constructive feedback given in relation to experiences of children held in police custody. Following discussion at the Partnership Board, trauma informed practice training was delivered by CAMHS to custody staff.

Work is planned in the current period for representatives of the Partnership Board to directly engage with children open to the YOS, seeking their views on how the current strategic priorities would best be delivered.

4. Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

Since 2018, the YOS has pursued a path of very deliberately seeking to grow the prevention and diversion offer available to children and young people. As a result, the YOS now works with more children in a prevention capacity than those in a statutory capacity. This is primarily driven by our innovative school's model, which places Youth Workers across 16 secondary schools (originally 8) across the county, delivering diversionary intervention with children who have not entered the youth justice system. The vision is to seek further opportunities to grow this model.

4. Voice of the Child

Buckinghamshire YOS actively promote the LifePath model as a way of gaining feedback from young people and ensuring their voices play a key role in service development. Every individual is encouraged to complete this activity at the end of their intervention, considering their thoughts and feelings about each step on their path from offending to completion of their work with the YOS. One of the greatest benefits of this is the way it asks service users to reflect on their journey through the whole youth justice system, ensuring invaluable feedback for all the agencies they have had contact with. This information is collated on a 6-monthly basis and shared with the Partnership Board and actions are agreed to address the findings.

A powerful example of the way this has led to tangible change relates to the feedback young people provided on their interaction with the Police. This led to the commission of a more in-depth piece of work specifically around relationships with law enforcement, as documented above in the Child First section. There are indications that experiences of the Police are becoming more positive as a result.

For the first time, young people will be consulted on the strategic priorities of the YOS and how they consider these can be best delivered. This activity will provide direct face to face contact between strategic decision-makers and service users and will play an important role in developing services moving forward.

5. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service is located within Buckinghamshire Council, Children's Services. The YOS Head of Service post is jointly responsible for the Children's Social Care, Missing and Exploitation Hub, reporting to the Service Director for Children's Social Care and part of the Senior Management Team.

Strategic oversight of the Youth Offending Service is provided by the Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Local Area Commander for Aylesbury Vale, Thames Valley Police and attended by all statutory partners, as well as many non-statutory.

At an operational level, the YOS contains the following specialist posts:

- 2 x Social Workers (YOS Officers with social work qualifications).
- 2 x Seconded Police Officers.

- 0.5 Probation Officer (at the time of writing, the National Probation Service have provided funding in lieu of a seconded Probation Officer, but have committed to a secondment in the current period).
- Health input provided via access to CAMHS forensic psychology support 2 days per week as well as 2 x safeguarding nurses, each providing one day per week.
- 1 x Education Officer post funded by the Council, currently occupied by a qualified teacher.
- Statutory youth justice cases are held by generic YOS Officers posts, who can hold a range of qualifications, including Youth Work, Probation and Social Work, as well as those alternative qualifications. There are 3 grades of YOS Officer post and a process that allows them to progress once certain criteria are met in relation to knowledge, skills and experience.
- 1 x full time dedicated Performance Review and Information Manager.

Full details of the staffing structure is provided in Appendix 1.

6. Resources and Services

The following partnership resources contribute towards the aims and expected outcomes in the plan:

Partner Contributions 2022-2023	Staffing Costs (£)	Posts Kind	In	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
Buckinghamshire Council	694,121			65,547	759,668
Thames Valley Police		175,348			175,348
Clinical Commissioning Group		76,285			76,285
National Probation Service		22,680		8,580	31,260
Police Crime Commissioner	134,663			65,000	199,663
Youth Justice Board Grant	454,838				454,838
TOTAL	1,283,622	274,313		139,127	1,697,062

The Youth Justice Grant will be used exclusively to deliver the following outcomes: to reduce numbers of First Time Entrants into the youth justice system; to reduce reoffending; to reduce numbers of children in custody; to protect the public from serious harm; and to ensure effective safeguarding of children in the youth justice system. The following activities will be funded by the grant:

- Delivery of effective assessment, intervention planning and supervision for young people who have offended or are at risk of offending 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.
- Expenses incurred by staff in carrying out core duties.
- Development and training of staff in effective practice.
- Provision of the Core+ database, 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.

Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner will be used to deliver two projects:

- The YOS Multi-Agency school's project - this provides Youth Workers to deliver diversionary support to 16 secondary schools across the county. The aim of this project is to reduce numbers of First Time Entrants to the youth justice system.
- The Community Coaching project - this funds an external provider, Spark2Life, to deliver community coaching to support transition from primary school to secondary school for children from ethnically diverse communities. The project seeks to address structural inequality and provide improved outcomes for students across a range of areas that can sometimes be pathways into the youth justice system.

A more detailed description of these projects is provided in a later section of this plan.

7. Progress on Previous Plan

The following table outlines the actions identified in last year's Youth Justice Strategic Plan and the progress made against these.

Addressing Over-Representation	
ACTION	PROGRESS
Evaluate overall impact of disproportionality work to date	Completed - all of the disproportionality work initiated by the YOS has been pulled together into one report evaluating impact and taken back to the Partnership Board.
Expand the community coaching project to include siblings of YOS clients in addition to supporting young people in Year 8	Completed – the referral process has been successfully rolled out to YOS practitioners and 3 siblings were engaged via the project during 2021/22.
Facilitate a session on Culture, Diversity, Knowledge and Understanding for key strategic partners with a view to developing an action plan for each service	Completed - a session was delivered on Culture, Diversity, Knowledge and Understanding at a YOS Partnership Board meeting. Ongoing work around disproportionality within each agency and plans moving forward were subsequently captured via Partnership Board Focus Groups, which followed this session.

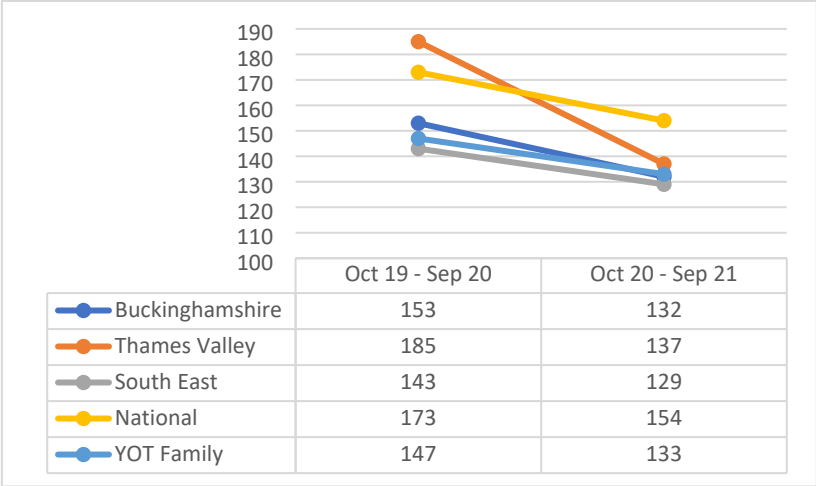
area to positively address disproportionately	
Re-audit identity within assessments to ensure good practice guidance is fully embedded	Completed – a re-audit took place and positive indicators of improving practice were identified. An additional session was delivered for all practitioners on Culture, Diversity, Knowledge and Understanding to further support their understanding and assessment of identity.
Addressing Exploitation of Young People	
Increase knowledge and strength of YOS prevention youth workers on exploitation, so universal services can be supported to understand risk factors	Completed – YOS Prevention Youth Workers have attended training and now participate in a monthly meeting to discuss exploitation concerns for those children they are working with, alongside other professionals.
Implement parenting support through funding secured with third sector provider to create community champions	Completed - parenting groups are now being delivered by the local authority Children's Services department. 3 members of YOS staff have been trained to deliver The Teen Nurture Programme.
Pilot sessions from those with lived experience to support learning across the organisation	Ongoing – this piece of work is being led by wider Children's Services and will carry over into 2022/23.
Actively participate in Serious Violence Task Force meetings in light of revised duty on YOS	Completed – the YOS Head of Service sits on the Serious Violence Task Force group. Work is ongoing to ensure access to the Serious Youth Violence dashboard and contribute data to this as appropriate.
Embedding Evidence Based Practice	
Deliver refresher training on Trauma-Informed Practice in partnership with CAMHS	Completed – training was delivered in July 2021 to all practitioners. Additional training will be delivered in September 2022.
Explore the low level of Liaison and Diversion referrals across Buckinghamshire to ensure appropriate young people are receiving support	Ongoing - this has now been subsumed within a wider piece of work for the whole of Thames Valley. An information sharing agreement has now been made at Thames Valley level.
Support those attending Restorative Justice training in completing case studies to evaluate the impact on their day to day work	Completed – support has now been built into the training programme to ensure all attendees are confident in measuring effectiveness. This has led to an increase in case studies being returned by participants.

8. Performance and Priorities

National Indicator – First Time Entrants

The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time has continued to fall in Buckinghamshire. Data for October 2020 to September 2021 shows

a rate of 132 young people per 100,000 of the local 10-17 year old population, which represents stronger performance than that seen nationally, across Thames Valley and within the YOT family. This also represents a reduction from the 153 young people per 100,000 entering the youth justice system for the first time between October 2019 and September 2020.

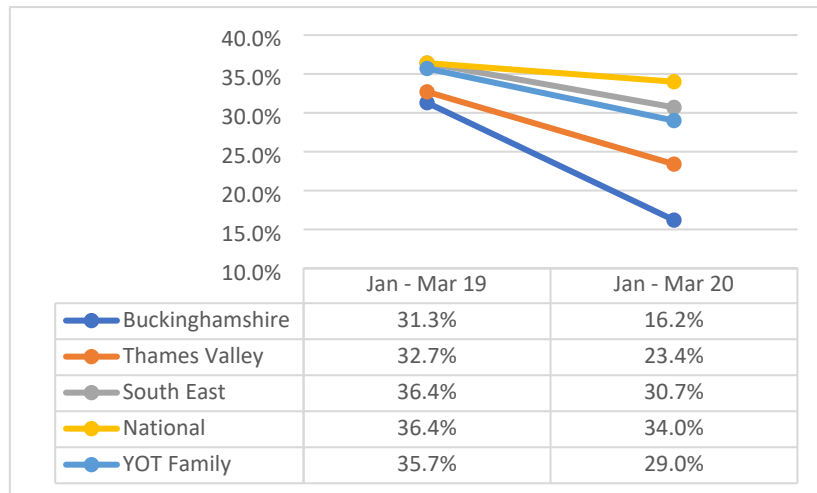


With an ever-increasing focus on prevention and diversion in Buckinghamshire, significant work is taking place to both sustain and improve this performance. Activities include:

- Delivery of the Multi-Agency Schools project (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner).
- Ongoing mentoring project to support black and minority ethnic children in primary school year 6, straddling their transition to year 7 in secondary school (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner).
- Increased support for young people receiving Community Resolutions.
- Delivery of restorative training to those working in a range of settings, such as care homes and schools, to support appropriate management of challenging situations.

National Indicator – Reoffending

The rate of young people reoffending in Buckinghamshire is currently lower than that seen nationally, across the South East, Thames Valley and the YOT family. For the January to March 2020 cohort, only 16.2% of young people went on to reoffend within a 12 month follow up period. This represents a total of 6 reoffenders. This particular tracking period included 2 periods of extended national lockdown which in part explains why the rate is so much lower than the 31.3% figure for the January to March 2019 cohort. However, all of the comparator groups were also affected by the pandemic in the same way. The data therefore shows particularly strong performance in Buckinghamshire.



The YOS continue to attribute this performance to the trauma-informed approach taken to working with young people, which focuses on building an effective relationship with every individual engaged by the service. A stable workforce and closer working relationships with partners have further contributed to the positive diversion of young people from reoffending.

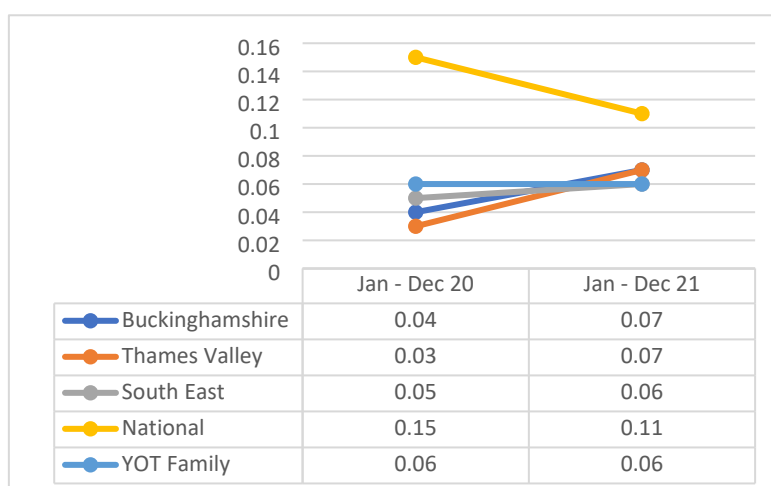
Activities taking place in the next 12 months to sustain this include:

- Significant investment in staff training for 2022/23: further input on trauma informed practice and case formulations; contextual safeguarding; AIM3 (sexually harmful behaviour); and restorative practice.
- Continuing to prioritise staff well-being and recognising the risk of vicarious trauma: reflective supervision; CAMHS group complex case formulation; individual case consultations; and staff feedback activity every 6 months.
- Focus on enhanced recruitment process to diversify workforce.
- Ongoing audit activity on a monthly basis to ensure practice quality is regularly reviewed.

National Indicator – Custody

The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence per 1000 of the local 10-17 year old population has risen slightly to 0.07 from 0.04. This represents an increase from 2 custodial sentences in 2020 to 4 in 2021. Performance is stronger than seen at a national level, is in line with Thames Valley and only slightly above that seen across the South East and within the YOT family.

Due to low numbers, an analysis of gender and ethnicity has not been provided, as there is the potential for individual young people to be identified from this. However the data is reviewed locally on a quarterly basis to identify learning.



In addition to this, the YOS also monitor the number of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights this entails. As the table below shows, there was a significant reduction in the number of new custodial remands and in associated bed nights during 2021-22. The 876 bed nights accrued in 2020-21 was in part due to lengthy remands of almost a year for 2 young people charged with serious violent offences.

	No. of Young People	No. of Bed Nights
2020-21	4	876
2021-22	1	34

Ongoing activity is in place to ensure custody is only used when all community options have been considered. This includes:

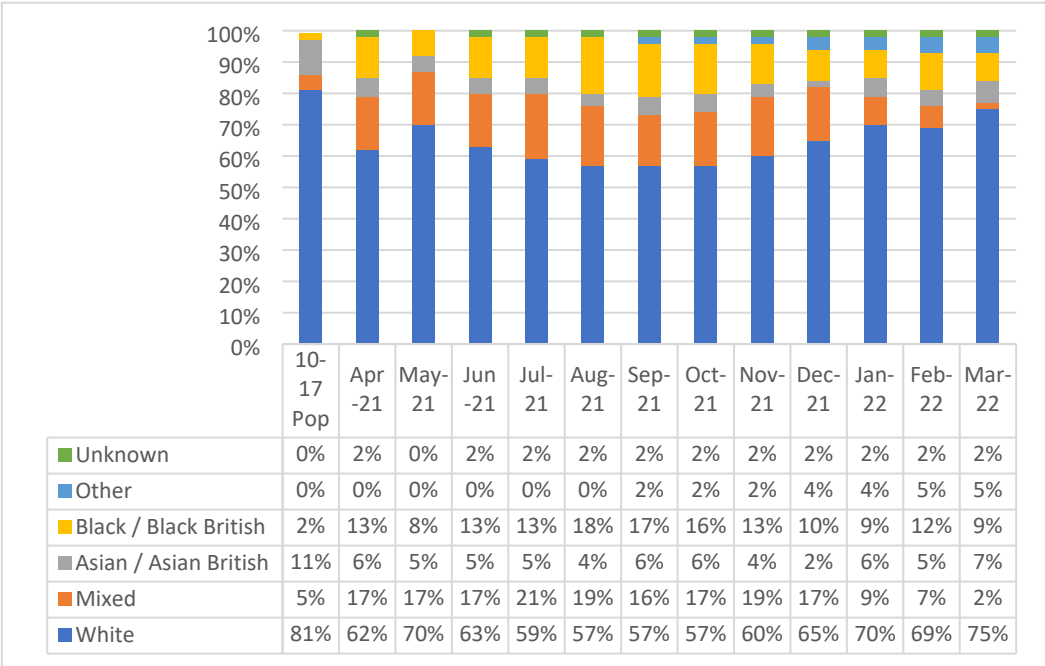
- Taking a trauma-informed approach to assessing and engaging with young people
- Custody panels for all appropriate cases, whereby a manager supports the report author in building their proposal
- A comprehensive quality assurance framework that ensures all assessments and report proposals are subject to robust management oversight.

Over-Representation

Both national and local data clearly shows that young people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are over-represented within the criminal justice system. Local data shows that Black Asian and Minority Ethnic children who have entered the youth justice system also experience disproportionately poor outcomes across school exclusions, exploitation and Social Care involvement. Since 2018, Buckinghamshire YOS have been actively identifying ways to address this inequality.

The YOS caseload is monitored each month by ethnicity, comparing the percentages of each cohort with the overall 10-17 year old population. Whilst the data below shows a positive reduction in the disproportion of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic children and young people open to the service, this relates to a period of time when overall caseload numbers have reduced, meaning percentages can be misleading. It is also important to

note that publication of the new census data (expected in 2022) may have an impact on disproportionality rates nationally and in Buckinghamshire.



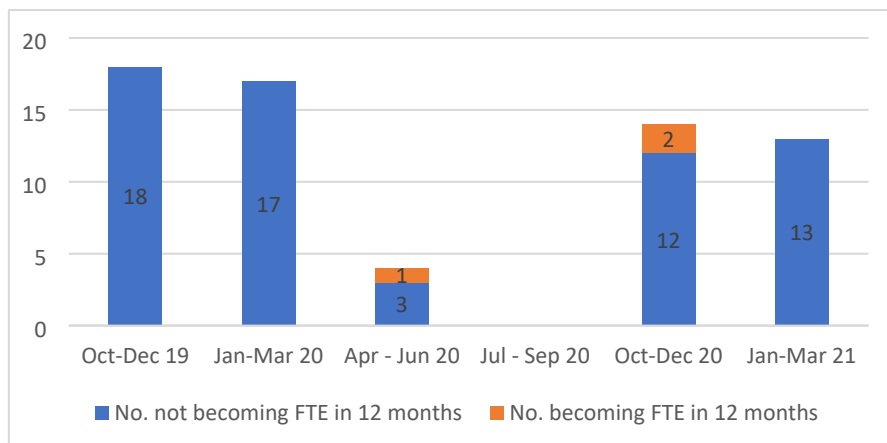
Following the Thematic Inspection into the Experiences of Black and Mixed Heritage Boys in the Youth Justice System, the Partnership Board commissioned more detailed data analysis of a cohort of First Time Entrants to assess the level of disproportionate outcomes for those from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic background. Findings based on this cohort are as follows:

- Whilst the numbers were low, it is of note that no White young people entered the youth justice system with an outcome above a Referral Order.
- There was no clear correlation between ethnicity and offence type, with Violence Against the Person the most common for all ethnic groups aside from the Other category.
- Only young people from a White or Black background had reported missing episodes. Additional data gathered on the number of times each young person had been reported missing did not reveal any patterns in relation to ethnicity.
- Whilst there was no discernible pattern relating ethnicity to type of involvement, it is significant to note that only 1 young person in the whole cohort had not had any previous contact with Social Care. All of the Black young people in the cohort had been subject to a Child Protection Plan or been a Child Looked After.
- Young people from Black, Asian, Mixed and Other backgrounds were more likely to have a recorded disability than White young people.
- Individuals from the Mixed and Other groups had the highest rate of Fixed Term exclusions. There was no clear correlation between the number of Fixed Term Exclusions and ethnicity.
- Those from a Black or Mixed background had the highest rate of Permanent Exclusion.
- White young people were most likely to be receiving either SEN Support or support via an EHCP.
- Asian young people were the least likely to be stopped and searched. There is no clear correlation between the number of stop and searches and ethnicity.

This data has been shared with the Partnership Board and will be taken back to individual agencies for further discussion / action as appropriate.

Local Indicator – Prevention Cases that Become First Time Entrants

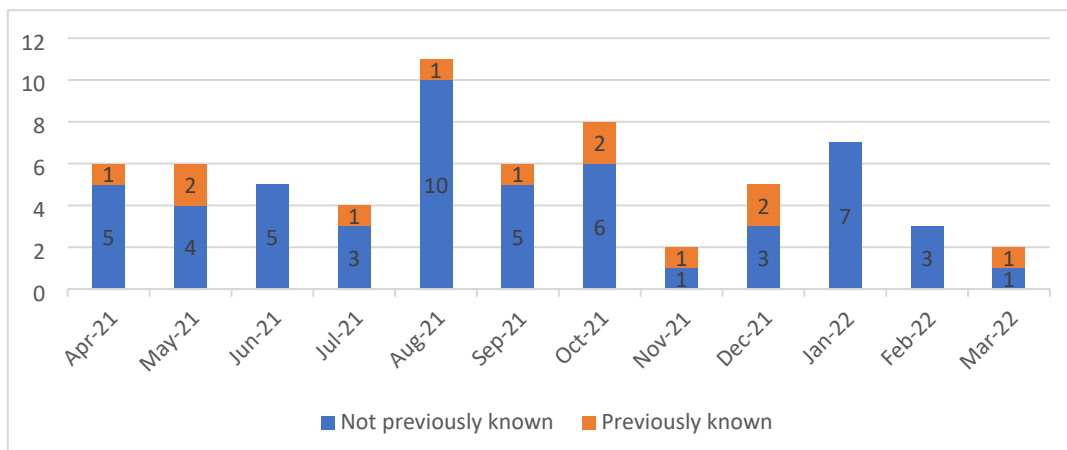
The YOS reports quarterly on Prevention cases that have gone on to become a First Time Entrant within 12 months of beginning their intervention with the service. The chart below shows that of the 66 young people engaged in preventative work between October 2019 and March 2021, only 3 (4.5%) went on to receive a substantive outcome within 12 months.



The strength of this performance reflects the effectiveness of the YOS Youth Worker in Schools project in engaging and diverting individuals from an offending pathway. This provides a robust, evidence-based model for the increased focus on prevention work moving forward, with the aim of sustaining and building further on these positive outcomes.

Local Indicator – First Time Entrants Previously Known to the YOS

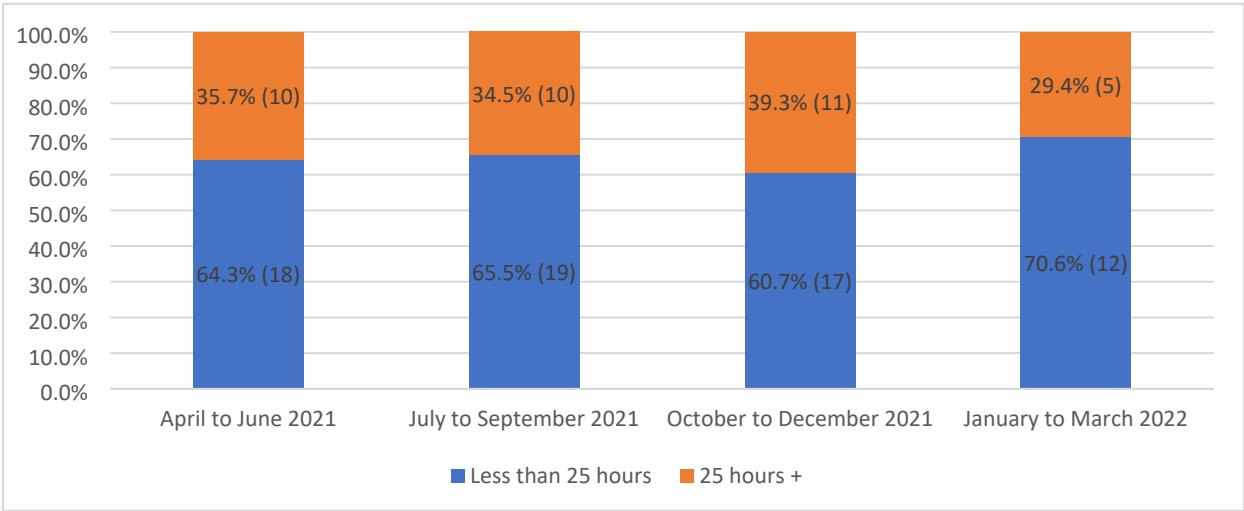
This measure identifies how many young people enter the youth justice system for the first time having been previously engaged by the YOS in a preventative intervention. In the 2021/22 period, there were a total of 65 First Time Entrants, of which 12 (18.5%) had been previously known to the service.



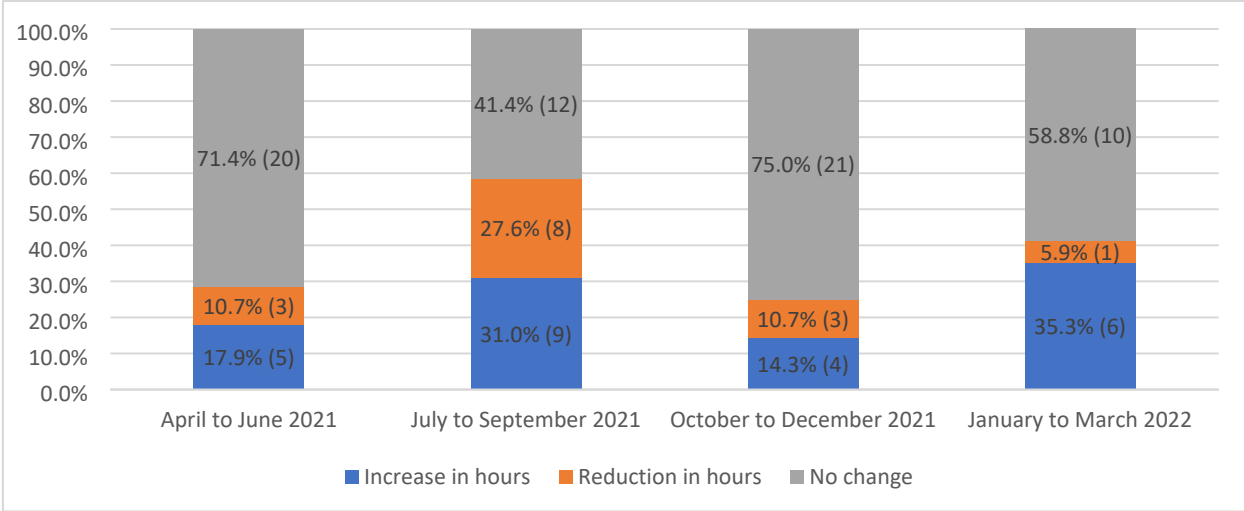
Measuring this particular indicator has 2 key purposes. Firstly, it allows the YOS to monitor the effectiveness of prevention programmes by reviewing individual cases where the young person went on to offend, and secondly, it provides a chance to identify if opportunities were missed to engage those who have not been worked with. The aim of this data analysis is to ultimately reduce the number of those entering the system both previously known and not known to the YOS.

Local Indicators – Education, Training and Employment (new measures introduced in 2021/22)

The YOS monitors the % (number) of young people receiving 25 hours or more of provision at the end of their intervention. This includes all young people receiving statutory interventions. The data shows that whilst there has been some fluctuation throughout 2021/22, approximately one third of those open to the YOS were receiving 25 hours or more at the end of working with the service.

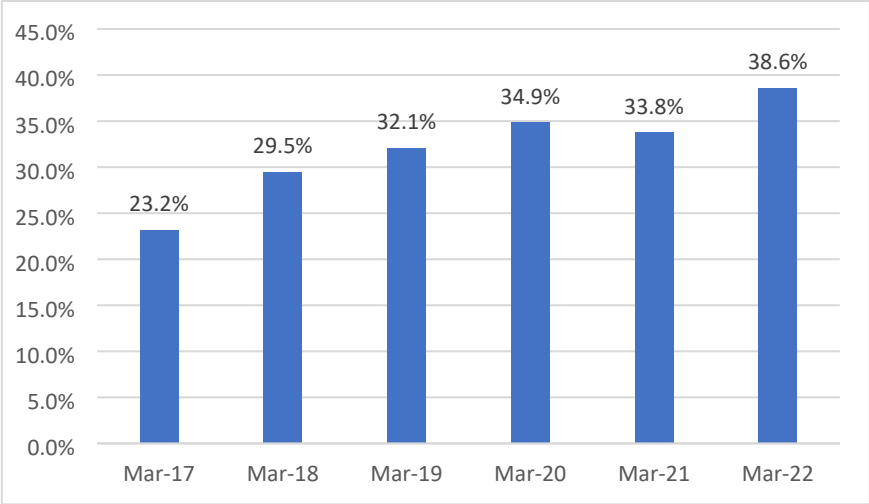


In addition, the YOS also monitor the % (number) of young people receiving more hours provision at the end of their intervention than at the start. This includes all young people receiving statutory interventions. The data shows a significant fluctuation quarter on quarter.



With both of these measures introduced in 2021/22, this information is intended to provide a benchmark for Education, Training and Employment measures moving forward. Having been provided with a detailed breakdown of the young people behind these statistics, the Partnership Board have requested that this data be presented by age moving forward (pre and post 16) to gain a better understanding of the barriers and focus on improving outcomes. This will continue to be a key area of focus in 2022/23.

The percentage of young people on the YOS caseload with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is monitored on a monthly basis. The chart below shows a snapshot of this data across the last 6 years, with a clear increase evidenced over that period.



Part of this increase can be attributed to work that has taken place to improve the accuracy of EHCP recording within this period, however significant steps have also been taken to improve YOS engagement with the Integrated Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) teams within the Council.

Joint working practices have been strengthened in partnership with SEND and the focus in 2022/23 will be to embed these. This will form a benchmark for proposed quarterly inter-agency audit activity to ensure those known to the YOS with an EHCP are receiving the most effective service.

Prevention

The YOS Multi-Agency Schools project has now received a further 3 years of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, reflecting the effectiveness of the project to date. The programme aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- 1. Enhancing school achievement & engagement (including at risk of exclusion)
- 2. Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour
- 3. Preventing exploitation
- 4. Improving relationships within the school, peer or professionals
- 5. Improving attendance
- 6. Preventing risky teenage behaviour – including drugs

177 young people were referred to this programme during 2021/22 across 16 schools. This is a significant increase on throughput from previous years, achieved through an increase in the number of schools taking part and in resourcing.

One of the key measures of effectiveness is whether the individuals engaged go on to enter the youth justice system within 12 months. Of the 64 young people who started an intervention in 2020-21, 7 went on to offend (10.9%). Of the previous year's cohort, only 1 out of 79 young people went on to offend (1.3%). Individual case studies are also collated to evidence impact and to aid learning around good practice. This represents an increase in the number of those going on to offend and the reasons behind this are currently being explored.

The YOS Community Coaching project is designed to improve outcomes for these children, helping them to achieve their potential. Mentors support individual young people through the transition to secondary school and seek to engage them in positive activities in their communities. This project has now been extended to include referrals for siblings of those engaged by the YOS on statutory interventions.

During 2021/22, 11 young people were successfully supported through this transition. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from both the individuals supported and their parents / carers, with 100% of those providing feedback stating they rated the support as 5 out of 5. All of the young people said the support had helped them identify different life choices and that they have confidence in sustaining that progress after the mentoring draws to a close.

Diversion

The Police have ultimate responsibility for making decisions on the suitability of Out of Court Disposals, however local arrangements are in place to assist the decision-making process, known as the Joint Decision-making Panel (JDP). The YOS Early Intervention and Restorative Justice Coordinator, Police Decision Maker, YOS Youth Worker, representative from Liaison and Diversion and a representative from the Family Support Service make up this panel. If a child is already known to YOS, the current / previous case holder will also be invited to attend or provide feedback on the young person's current/previous disposal. If they are known to Social Care, their Social Worker will attend the panel, when appropriate.

There are a number of layers of oversight that ensure the quality of this decision-making. A Consistency Event takes place every 6 months with all Thames Valley Police decision-makers and those who are involved from each YOT. In addition, an Out of Court Scrutiny Panel is held every 4 months with the Police, YOS and Magistrates to examine decisions taken across the force. Buckinghamshire YOS have also been taking part in disproportionality scrutiny activity with Oxfordshire YOS to ensure that outcomes are consistent regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.

All young people receiving Community Resolutions are reviewed by YOS Team Managers to agree if support should be offered, with the exception of those given a Drug Diversion Scheme outcome, where young people are referred directly to Switch Bucks for substance misuse provision. If support is deemed appropriate from the YOS, the worker will complete a locally devised Out of Court assessment to identify the risks and needs to be addressed through a bespoke intervention plan. This is a process that has

been expanded during the last 6 months due to the reduction in statutory work and the subsequent increased capacity to offer more diversionary programmes.

During 2021/22 there were 225 Community Resolutions issued to young people in Buckinghamshire. Of these, 60 young people were referred to Switch Bucks and 6 were engaged by the YOS. This reflects a period of time where voluntary interventions were offered only where a second Community Resolution had been received. In response to reducing statutory outcomes and increased capacity, the YOS has recently expanded the early intervention offer to include all Community Resolutions and the percentage engaged will increase as a result.

Serious Youth Violence

The YOS is represented on the Thames Valley wide Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) Board by the Head of Youth Offending Service for Oxfordshire, who represents Thames Valley YOTs at this forum.

Locally, the YOS is part of the Serious Violence Task Force, which is a forum chaired by the Corporate Director of Children's Services and attended by partners key to ensuring adherence to the Serious Violence Duty. As such, the YOS is a key partner in delivering the Serious Violence Reduction plan for 2022-23.

The Head of Service has joint responsibility for the Missing and Exploitation Hub, and the two services work increasingly closely together to ensure children at risk from exploitation and serious violence are safeguarded. Recent developments have included:

- Spot purchasing of lived experience mentoring for children open to the Missing and Exploitation Hub and identified as at risk of entering the youth justice system.
- Identification of YOS Officers with lead responsibility for exploitation, who act as the link between services and provide consultation to staff.
- Expansion of YOS prevention offer to include referrals from the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel for children at risk of entering the Youth Justice System.

Constructive Resettlement

With custody levels remaining low in Buckinghamshire, the number of young people subject to the resettlement process is also low. Of the 3 young people released from custodial sentences in 2021/22:

- 1 was immediately arrested and remanded for new offences.
- 1 was released to a placement outside of Buckinghamshire overseen by another YOT.
- 1 turned 18 whilst in custody and was transferred to adults' services.

Of the 3 young people completing a period of remand whilst open to the YOS in the same period:

- 1 was transferred to Probation.
- 1 was released to a placement outside of Buckinghamshire overseen by another YOT.
- 1 was sentenced to custody.

Please note that due to low numbers, an analysis of gender and ethnicity has not been possible, as there is the potential for individual young people to be identified from this.

Despite these low numbers – and in anticipation of potential future resettlement needs – the YOS has recently developed a comprehensive Resettlement Policy, which clearly outlines the expectations for managing any young person released from custody.

Restorative Justice

Data is collected across Thames Valley for a local indicator relating to victim engagement. This is collated by the Buckinghamshire YOS Performance Review and Information Manager and discussed at the Thames Valley YOT Manager’s Meeting. Significant work has taken place during 2021/22 to ensure all YOTs are collecting data according to the same counting rules and to identify learning from areas that are performing particularly well with regard to victim engagement.

	Numbers - Bucks	% Bucks	% Thames Valley
Total Number of victims identified in period	121		
a) Number of victims identified in period - Precourt	67		
b) Number of victims identified in period - Court	54		
Number of victims where consent to contact is given on the YOT1	42	34.7%	49.9%
Number of victims who accept the service from the YOT (where consent has been given)	24	57.1%	65.1%
Number of victims engaged in indirect Restorative Justice / reparation	8	33.3%	50.4%
Number of victims engaged in direct Restorative Justice / reparation	3	12.5%	15.6%

Buckinghamshire YOS are not performing as well as the Thames Valley average across all of these areas and work is taking place to address this. This has included:

- Discussions with the Police regarding the levels of consent received to contact victims and what the barriers to this may be
- Plans to deliver refresher training on Restorative Justice to front line staff as part of the 2022/23 training plan
- A Thames Valley wide meeting to consider how “other” victim work is captured, including those who receive significant support but do not engage specifically in indirect or direct restorative activity.

All victims who are engaged are asked if they would like to provide feedback on the service they have received. Between January and December 2021, 18 victims responded, with all of them either satisfied or very satisfied with their involvement with the YOS.

Significant resource has been dedicated to delivering Restorative Justice training to other professionals within the local area, to help embed the use of a restorative approach across a range of agencies. During 2021/22, 70 professionals were trained in RJ approaches including social workers / student social workers, residential workers from Buckinghamshire care homes, members of Thames Valley Police, staff from Blueprint (Pupil Referral Unit), YOS workers, specialists in Child Sexual Exploitation, members of staff from Spark2Life, Newly Qualified Social Workers and a Child and Family worker. Case studies received following the training have provided tangible evidence of the effectiveness of this in de-escalating conflict.

The YOS has also delivered an innovative Peer Mediator training programme in a local primary school to 8 young people. The feedback from this has been exceptionally positive and the intention is to use this model to spread the restorative approach throughout other local schools.

9. National Standards

Buckinghamshire YOS carried out a thorough review of National Standards (NS) in March 2020, in line with Youth Justice Board guidance. All areas were self-assessed as Good with the exception of the operational element of NS4, which relates specifically to secure settings. This was rated as Requires Improvement due to issues in receiving assessment stages from the secure estate, which is beyond the control of the YOS. However, the service has continued to proactively challenge this process where it has not been followed and has sought ways to support improvements, with the aim of providing a more cohesive and effective transition for young people between custody and the community.

Following the audit, an action plan was developed. This plan focused on sustaining the positive practice identified through the audit and building on it further to ensure young people's needs are effectively met in line with National Standards. Some example actions are included below:

- Developing a tracking system to identify whether young people open to the School's Youth Work programme go on to become First Time Entrants within 12 months of their involvement (NS1).
- Producing a 6 monthly Quality Report for the YOS Partnership Board to ensure full strategic oversight and scrutiny of practice (NS2).
- Delivery of training for practitioners on Working with Racial/Ethnic Diversity to increase their skills in understanding identity and what this means for young people (NS3).
- Escalation to the YJB and Partnership Board where assessments from the secure estate are not being received (NS4).
- Seeking ways to sustain and improve on good practice around transitions to Probation in light of the NPS staffing review (NS5).

All of these actions have been completed.

Whilst the Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System 2019 removed many of the prescriptive timescales of previous guidance, locally the YOS have developed standards that are reported to the Partnership Board via the Performance Report on a bi-monthly basis. These include:

- **Assessment timescales** – all assessments should be quality assured and countersigned within 35 days of report request / sentence / review being opened. Between October 2021 and March 2022, 93% of assessments took place within this timescale.
- **Frequency of assessment** – all statutory interventions should be reviewed at a minimum of every 6 months. This measure is taken as a snapshot at the start of each month. As of 6.4.22, 85% of open cases had been reviewed within these timescales.
- **Home Visits** – home visits should take place within either 14 days before or after a start or review assessment being opened. Between October 2021 and March 2022, 85% of home visits took place within this timescale.
- **Referral Order Panels** – panels should take place within 20 working days of sentence. Between October 2021 and March 2022, 50% of panels took place within this timescale.

In conjunction with the bi-annual Quality Report, this gives strategic assurance of both quantitative and qualitative performance and a key opportunity for challenge if there are concerns with operational practice.

10. Challenges, Risks and Issues

The growing risk to children and young people from criminal exploitation associated with organised crime groups involved in drug supply (often referred to as county lines) is now well known. Those becoming involved are at increased risk of being both victims and perpetrators of serious violence, directly linked to this model of drug supply. These children and young people frequently present with multiple, complex vulnerabilities, often with a history of trauma and loss, and including exposure to domestic abuse.

Increasing diversion from statutory services means that often children who receive informal out of court disposals, or those referred for prevention, present with increasingly complex needs. Adapting to this changing landscape presents some challenges to the ways in which the YOS works, with a greater focus on proactively seeking ways to offer voluntary support, rather than relying on 'referrals' from the Police and Courts. For staff, this means being flexible enough to be able to work with children at all stages of the youth justice system, as well as those not formally in the system. To support this, the service has commissioned refresher training on Psychological Formulation and Trauma Informed Practice for all staff who occupy front line roles.

The significant over-representation of Black and Mixed heritage children in the youth justice system in Buckinghamshire is a significant challenge and is being actively addressed as a key strategic priority.

The challenges of adapting to a hybrid model of working following recovery from the pandemic are common to all public services. We believe that in Buckinghamshire the flexibility and focus on staff well-being - from the Council and within Children's Social Care - have helped to respond to this challenge.

11. Service Improvement

The Workforce Development plan for 2022/23 illustrates how the YOS plans to invest significantly in staff development. This includes refresher training in Restorative Justice, AIM 3 Sexually Harmful Behaviour training, refresher training on Psychological Formulations and Trauma-Informed Practice, and Contextual Safeguarding training. Places have been offered to staff in the Missing and Exploitation Hub on the latter 3 events to reflect increasing collaboration between the two teams.

It is recognised that the changing nature of the work can present challenges to staff in regard to how to work holistically, with a shift away from the focus on statutory interventions towards a range of prevention interventions and with increasing complexity at an earlier stage. Increasing knowledge and skills in regard to trauma informed practice, psychological formulations and contextual safeguarding is designed to increase confidence and effectiveness in working holistically.

Following the HMIP thematic review of the Experience of Black and Mixed Heritage Boys, published in October 2021, the following pieces of work are planned for delivery in 2022/23:

- Board members to share data on key areas identified as being disproportionately experienced by Black and Mixed heritage boys.
- Provision of youth work resource to work with Black and Mixed heritage boys at risk of exclusion.
- Work with Buckinghamshire University to carry out research into the experiences of Black and Mixed Heritage children who have accessed service from the YOS.

During 2021/22 there was a Critical Learning Review undertaken. Although this was triggered prior to the reintroduction of mandatory reporting to the YJB, a full report and action plan was produced. Learning was shared with the Partnership Board. The specific details are not included within this plan due to potential identifiable information.

In December 2021, OFSTED carried out an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services for Buckinghamshire. The overall rating was Requires Improvement, having previously been rated as Inadequate. Following publication of the report, Buckinghamshire Children's Social Care have produced a comprehensive Improvement Plan. The following actions are contained within that plan and are directly relevant to the Youth Offending Service:

- Recruit a detached youth worker able to work out of hours, primarily with children at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Develop the MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) meeting to collate data on the specific locations where exploitation takes place, so data on themes and trends can be shared across partners in Early Help and Community Safety, in order to increase prevention and disruption activity.

- Undertake a review with Children in Care, YOS and Exploitation Hub to consider whether any targeted work can be identified based on the profile of young people to identify the early signs and indicators that might reduce the risks.
- Conduct a Contextual Safeguarding pilot to evaluate the effectiveness of using an Extra Familial Harm category of child protection.

12. Evidence-based Practice and Innovation

Following the findings of the HMIP thematic review of the Experiences of Black and Mixed Heritage Boys, the YOS are in the planning phase of commissioning Buckinghamshire University to undertake research on the experiences of Black and Mixed Heritage children and young people who have worked with the YOS. The findings of this will be delivered to the Partnership Board and used to improve services, both within the YOS and partner agencies.

In 2021/22 the YOS hosted a post graduate University placement for a student studying towards an MSc in Applied Forensic Psychology and Counselling. The dissertation involved the creation of a parenting assessment for use with parents of children open to youth justice services. This is being launched for use with parents of children who have received Court Orders and will be evaluated for impact after a 6 month trial period.

Both projects funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner – the YOS Multi-Agency Schools project and the YOS Community Coaching Project – require robust data returns and evidence of impact. Both are funded to continue until 2025. Section 7 of this plan provides a detailed outline of the impact of each project.

The YOS has also invested in delivering Restorative Justice training to partners as well as peer mediator training in schools. This is also outlined in more detail in section 7.

13. Looking forward

The following table captures key areas of development over the next 12 months, which will feed into the wider, more detailed operational plan for the service:

Addressing Over-Representation
Provide Youth Work resource to schools to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children at risk of exclusion
Deliver mentoring support to children to support transition from year 6 to 7
Deliver mentoring support to parents of children who are transitioning from year 6 to 7
Share regular data on drivers for disproportionality with the YOS Board to guide partnership work
Addressing Exploitation of Young People
Commission mentoring support for children and young people at risk of exploitation from those with lived experience

Increase scope of YOS Prevention work for those at risk of exploitation
Deliver Contextual Safeguarding training for all front line practitioners
Deliver additional Youth Work resource to Pupil Referral Units to support children missing education
Embedding Evidence Based Practice
Commission research from Buckinghamshire University on the experience of Black and Mixed heritage children and young people
Deliver refresher training on Psychological Formulations and Trauma-Informed Practice to all front line practitioners
Deliver refresher Restorative Justice training to all front line practitioners
Continue to provide Youth Work provision in 16 identified schools
Increase numbers of professionals from other agencies trained in Restorative Approaches

14. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	Superintendent Rebecca Mears, Area Commander Aylesbury Vale, Thames Valley Police
Signature	
Date	30 th June 2022

15. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

