

# Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024

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## 1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

The Youth Justice Plan for 2023-24 sets out the strategic vision for Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service for the year. It reviews achievements and areas for development from the previous 12 months and sets out priorities for the year ahead. 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 Youth Offending Service continues to play a key role in preventing offending, reoffending, reducing the use of custody where appropriate, and delivering services for victims and safeguarding the most vulnerable. The role of the Partnership Board is to ensure an effective partnership between Children's Services, Health Services, Probation, Police, Community Safety and both third sector and private sector providers, ensuring high quality and effective services are delivered to young people, their families and the victims of offending.

I started as chair of the Youth Offending Service Partnership Board in September 2022, having taken over from Supt Rebecca Mears, whom I thank for her hard work and service to the role. 2022-23 was an eventful year, including an Inspection from His Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). The Inspection outcome was positive, with an overall grading of 'Good'. There are also some very clear areas for improvement, which the Partnership Board and Youth Offending Service have and will continue to work hard to develop.

Since taking over in my role as chair of the Partnership Board, it was quickly apparent to me that the strength of the Youth Offending Service workforce and the commitment and focus of the Board are significant assets in Buckinghamshire, indeed both were recognised by inspectors. The strength of partnership working and focus on early prevention, underpinned by the YOS's innovative schools project, are also particular assets which have contributed to the success of the Youth Offending Service in recent years, measured by performance against key performance indicators (KPIs). This year will see the start of a new set of KPIs, for which the YOS and the partnership are well prepared.

Looking ahead, there are several areas of focus for the Partnership Board, including the successful completion of inspection improvement work, a commitment to working alongside and listening to staff, as well as ensuring that we hear the views of children and young people and involve them more in decision making. Our strategic priorities over recent years have been themed to contribute to systemic change across the wider organisation and within criminal justice as a whole. They will continue to do this, with the inclusion of a specific priority regarding further developing and expanding prevention work, which will involve the implementation locally of the Ministry of Justice funded Turnaround Project. The 3 key strategic priorities for the Partnership Board for 2023-24 are:

1. Addressing disproportionality
2. Addressing exploitation of young people
3. Expanding prevention work

It has been a pleasure to work with colleagues at the Youth Offending Service and on the Partnership Board to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to support young people, families and victims in Buckinghamshire. I look forward to the year ahead with an absolute commitment to not only maintaining this, but to improve outcomes in the areas we know require more work.

***John Macilwraith, Corporate Director, Children's Services***

## **Vision and Strategy**

2022-23 saw the Youth Offending Service continue to expand the scope of prevention delivery, with the volume of non-statutory out of court interventions overtaking statutory work (Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Orders) for the first time. In January 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published their report on the Inspection of Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service. The service was rated as "Good", with a number of areas recognised as "Outstanding", in relation to organisational delivery, court disposal work, and resettlement. There were also some very clear areas for development identified, predominantly in relation to out of court disposals, which saw assessment, planning and policy and provision of out of court disposal work assessed as "Requires Improvement".

Important activity on improving and developing out of court disposals has already begun and will continue in 2023/24. This coincides with direct funding from the Ministry of Justice for all Youth Justice Services to increase the scope of out of court disposal work as part of the 'Turnaround' programme. As a result, there has been a significant amount of developmental work in this space which will see diversionary work offered to more children at risk of entering the youth justice system.

Despite focus on ethnic disproportionality at strategic and operational level for several years, rates of disproportionality are once again high, and this will therefore remain a key strategic focus for the Board, as we continue to explore ways of influencing the key drivers and seeking systemic change through a partnership approach.

There will also be an increased focus on developing child first ways of working at strategic and operational level. This will mean greater involvement of children and young people in key decision making, increasing the scope of feedback and more work on improved outcomes as a result of the feedback received. There will be significant work undertaken to bring an increased child first focus to assessments.

## **Local Context**

Buckinghamshire is widely known as an affluent county with great outcomes. However, we know that this overall picture masks some significant variations in outcomes, with some areas experiencing significant hardship. As partners, we want to come together with these communities and draw upon our collective resources to enhance opportunities and promote community wellbeing.

'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for all' is Buckinghamshire Council's response to the Government's levelling up strategy. It provides a framework for bringing partners together to focus collective resources on tackling those local priorities that will make a difference to residents. It focuses on 5 themes:

- Education and Skills
- Jobs and Career Opportunities
- Quality of our Public Realm
- Standard of Living
- Health and Wellbeing

Initially the programme will be focused on 10 wards in 3 areas – parts of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham. Local action plans will be developed through engagement with communities led by Community Boards.

The ambition for the Opportunity Bucks programme is to improve opportunities for all.

The goal is to make sure the people living in the 10 identified wards can access the same level of opportunity that people in other parts of the county benefit from.

Everyone in Buckinghamshire should have the opportunity to achieve:

- a good quality job, that pays enough money to support a decent quality of life
- good standard of attainment and skills
- learning and career progression
- good mental and physical wellbeing and independent living
- a decent, warm home and good quality food
- involvement in shaping their community, with strong social connections
- a feeling of being safe where they live
- pride in where they live

This is a long-term programme that will involve working with local partners, the voluntary and community sector, businesses and other public sector bodies and organisations within Buckinghamshire.

This will enable collective resources to be coordinated to tackle local priorities that will make a difference to the lives and lifestyles of people living in areas of Aylesbury, Chesham, and High Wycombe.

Working together with local partner organisations, Buckinghamshire Council will look to:

- 1) Create new projects which share the objectives of the Opportunity Bucks programme.
- 2) Develop or enhance existing projects to support people living and working in the identified wards experiencing significant hardship.

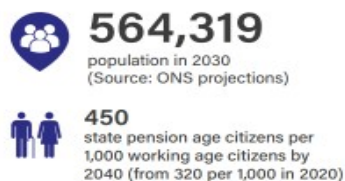
The following infographics provides an overview of Buckinghamshire in numbers.

## Buckinghamshire in Numbers

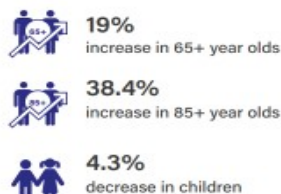
In 2022



On the horizon...

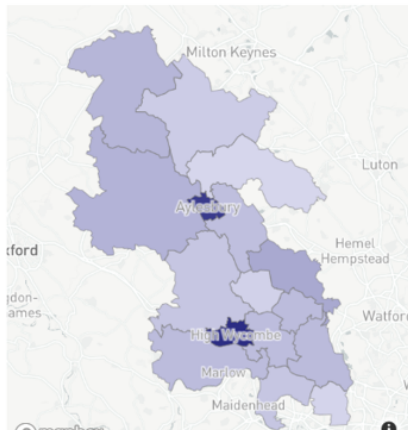
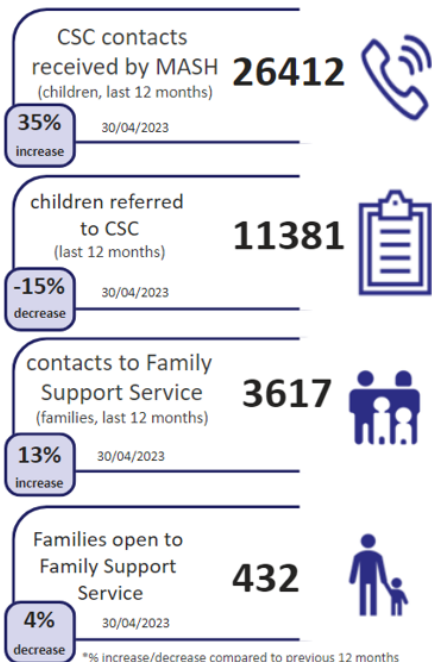


In the next decade (2022-2032):

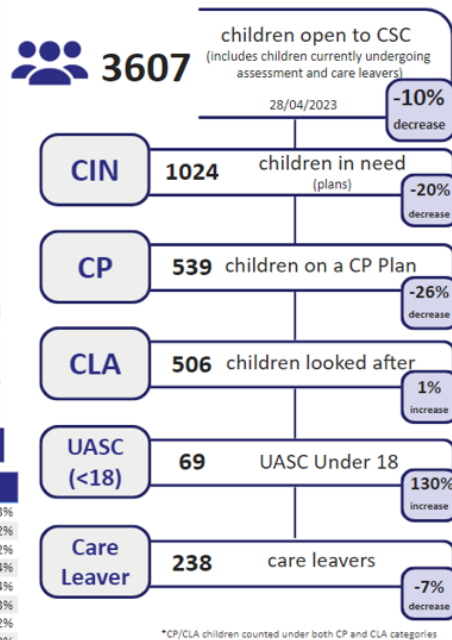


BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

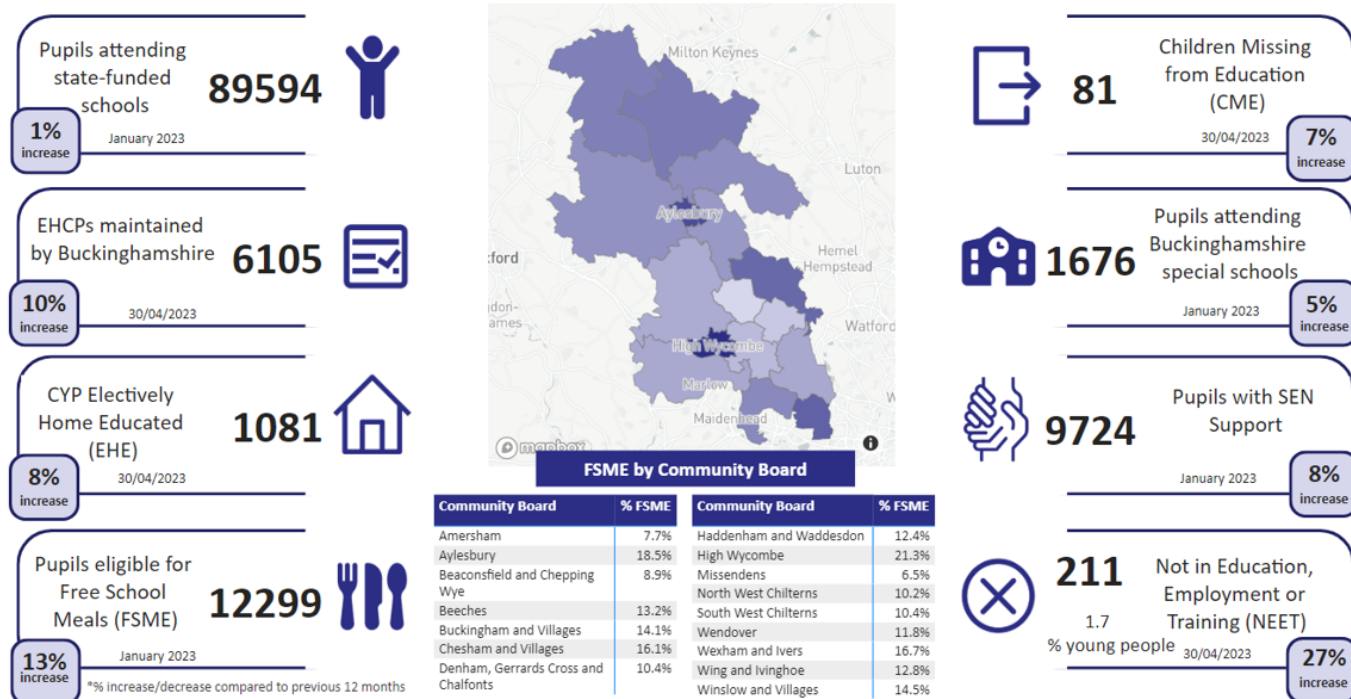
## Our Service in Numbers - Social Care & Early Help



% of CSC Caseload by Community Board (exc. Care Leavers)	
Community Board	%
Denham, Gerrards Cross and Chalfonts	5%
Chesham and Villages	6%
Buckingham and Villages	5%
Beeches	3%
Beaconsfield and Chepping Wye	4%
Aylesbury	17%
Amersham	4%
Community Board	%
Winslow and Villages	3%
Wing and Ivinghoe	2%
Wexham and Ivers	2%
Wendover	4%
South West Chilterns	4%
North West Chilterns	3%
Missenden	2%
High Wycombe	19%
Haddenham and Waddesdon	5%



## Our Service in Numbers - Education



There are a number of significant national policy changes that have enabled Children's Service to consider the way in which both social care and education services are designed and delivered to the children and young people of Buckinghamshire. The proposed changes to the way in which the Service operates are in line with national policy direction and are based on ensuring that children receive a consistent, purposeful and child centred approach wherever they are on their journey of need from early help through to being in care. The following key principles have already been agreed and will inform the new delivery model and address some of the barriers that exist currently:

- Multi-disciplinary locality teams
- Fewer hand off points for children and families
- Greater alignment of services
- Introduction of a clear and consistent practice methodology
- Work is led by one trusted professional.
- Workforce development strategy to focus on the continuous professional development of staff.
- A menu of evidenced based interventions will be available.
- Mature and improve the children's system across the county.

## 2. 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.*

Staff are trained in trauma informed practice. 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 complex group case supervision. In February 2023, front line practitioners received training on anti-racism and allyship. This, as part of the wider focus on disproportionality, is designed to assist staff in overcoming structural barriers that exist in relation to race and ethnicity.

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 impact 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.*

The HMIP Inspection, which took place in October 2022, identified increasing the scope and range of reparation projects as an area for development. Following this, a Community Engagement Practitioner post has been created. As well as holding responsibility for increasing the diversity of community reparation projects, this post will also increase community involvement by the YOS.

*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 meaningful, feedback which has enabled the service to ensure children's voices are heard and implemented as part of service delivery. 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. Positive feedback was received by custody staff. Further evaluation of impact will be assessed through the quarterly quality report.

The YOS have sought to increase the level of consultation with children on how the organisation is run. This has involved the setting up of a feedback group to advise on potential changes to ways of working, the decision to rename the YOS as Youth Justice and Support Team which was influenced by feedback from young people, and the priorities for this plan which were informed by feedback from a group of young people, who fed back that feeling safe was important to them.

*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 focus on early prevention will be expanded in 23/24 with the addition of Turnaround funding. The prevention strategy is supported by our innovative schools model, which places Youth Workers across 16 secondary schools (originally 8) within

Buckinghamshire, delivering diversionary intervention with children who have not entered the youth justice system. The vision is to seek further opportunities to grow this model.

### 3. Voice of the Child

Buckinghamshire YOS actively identifies ways for young people to participate in service development to ensure that the voice of the child underpins practice. During 2022/23, the following activities have reinforced this objective:

- The Life Path model continues to be well embedded, allowing every young person the opportunity to feedback on each step of their youth justice journey at the end of their intervention. By sharing collated feedback from this with the Partnership Board, all agencies have an opportunity to reflect on their engagement with those known to the YOS and how this can be improved. For example, information was shared with the Board that young people were often struggling to understand what was happening at Court. This allowed the Magistrate representative to take this learning back to their own organisation and, as a result, more individuals are reporting a positive experience in that environment.
- More creative ways of bringing the voice of the child to the Board have also been explored, and recorded verbal feedback delivered, to help members understand more about the needs of these individuals in their own words.
- Young people have been consulted on the name change for the YOS and the themes from their responses have been used to create a new title for the service.

Feedback from young people and their families cited within the HMIP Inspection Report clearly evidences the way the YOS focuses on both the voice of the child and their individual needs. Example quotations are included below:

*“They have helped my son to learn to be himself and to take ownership of his own career path and take responsibility for his own actions.”*

*“I am not a very open person but with my case workers, I become an open person. I can share my views and thoughts and feelings and not feel judged.”*

*“My YOS officers are amazing and have helped me to improve my life for the better. I came from a really dark place to now being more confident with a full-time job and being happy in general.”*

Work is currently taking place to create a Young People’s Reference Group, who can be called on to participate in a range of activity whenever developmental changes are being proposed.

### 4. 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. The Head of Service post is currently vacant and is being considered as part of the wider children’s services transformation programme. A deputy Head of Service remains in post, and improvements regarding HMIP are being overseen by the Assistant Director for the Quality Standards and Performance Service. The YOS



Performance Review and Information Manager reports directly into this role to ensure some independent oversight of quality.

Strategic oversight of the Youth Offending Service is provided by the Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Corporate Director for Children's Services and attended by all statutory partners, as well as many non-statutory. The governance of the Partnership Board sits under the Safer Bucks Board (see appendix 2 for further detail).

At an operational level, the YOS contains a number of specialist posts. A full structure chart is contained within appendix 1.

## 5. Board Development

In September 2022, the Youth Offending Partnership Board agreed a change of Chair. The position had been held by Thames Valley Police for a number of years and it was timely, with the appointment of a new Corporate Director for Children's Social Care, for the role of chair to change.

The introduction of a new set of Key Performance Indicators in April 2023 brings with it more responsibility for partnership data to be shared via the board. In particular, the board have identified data on ethnic disproportionality as a key focus, to influence the drivers for the levels of disproportionality seen in the youth justice population locally.

Greater interaction between the Partnership Board and operational staff, as well as children and young people are identified as key priorities for 2023/24.

The HMIP Inspection report published in January 2023, identified the two recommendations, and one additional area for improvement which has been incorporated as an action, specifically for the Partnership Board:

***Recommendation 1: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should monitor the reintegration rates of YOS children into mainstream education to make sure that children return to full-time mainstream education in every case where this is appropriate***

***Recommendation 2: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should ensure information within out of court disposal assessments consistently reflects social care input and that the roles and responsibilities for each service area are clearly identified within children's plans.***

***Area for improvement: Managers and the board could do more to consistently recognise and reward good work***

To ensure full strategic ownership of the HMIP improvement plan, all recommendations and actions are overseen by a member of the Partnership Board, who works closely with operational staff to ensure completion and the monitoring of impact.

## 6. 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	IMPACT
Provide Youth Work resource to schools to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children at risk of exclusion	<b>Ongoing</b> – The intention was to offer direct intervention from a Youth Worker with a diverse background. Due to unforeseen absence, it has not been possible to deliver this aspect. However, it was possible to repurpose some of the school's youth work resource to support young people in Pupil Referral Units with low attendance, an area where we know there is a diverse range of young people. In addition, the Community Coaching project continues to provide mentoring support to young people from ethnically diverse communities.	A review will take place in the coming year to agree the best way to progress this action and to evaluate impact.
Deliver mentoring support to children to support transition from year 6 to 7	<b>Completed</b> - During 2022/23, 10 young people were supported through transition from year 6 to year 7.	At of the end of March 2023, none of the young people mentored had come into contact with the youth justice system.  Positive feedback from both parents and young people indicates the effectiveness of this intervention. Case study feedback is provided to the PCC who fund the project.
Deliver mentoring support to parents of children who are transitioning from year 6 to 7	<b>Completed</b> - During 2022/23, 5 parents of children were supported.	Positive feedback from parents who received this support indicates that this intervention is effective. Case study feedback is provided to the PCC who fund this project.
Share regular data on drivers for disproportionality with the YOS Board to guide partnership work	<b>Ongoing</b> – An agreement is now in place with statutory partners regarding regular disproportionality data reports. This will commence from the	Impact will be assessed after this has been embedded.

	June 2023 Partnership Board meeting.	
<b>Addressing Exploitation of Young People</b>		
Commission mentoring support for children and young people at risk of exploitation from those with lived experience	<b>Completed</b> – 5 young people have received mentoring support from Roadlight, aimed at reducing the risks of those being actively exploited.	Impact included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 young person's attendance and behaviour at school improved alongside relationships at home</li> <li>• 1 young person increased their engagement with the YOS after initially refusing to speak to their YOS Officer</li> <li>• The intervention allowed advocacy for 1 young person with their parents in respect of boundary setting and the mentor-maintained contact when they transitioned to living with other family members in Europe</li> <li>• For 1 young person, the mentor was able to contribute to the professional group and their management of a highly complex situation, specifically in how contextual safeguarding risks were managed.</li> </ul>
Increase scope of YOS Prevention work for those at risk of exploitation	<b>Completed</b> – Prevention work has increased significantly during 2022/23 with referrals now accepted from a wider range of sources. This includes young people identified as being at risk of exploitation.	Local monitoring data demonstrates a consistently low rate of children who have received prevention support, going on to offend. This data is contained within section 9 of this document.
Deliver Contextual Safeguarding training for all front-line practitioners	<b>Completed</b> – Contextual Safeguarding training was delivered to all front-line practitioners in May 2022.	An audit of cases subsequently took place to measure the impact on practice.

Deliver additional Youth Work resource to Pupil Referral Units to support children missing education	<b>Ongoing</b> – 4 young people with low attendance have been supported to date. Conversations are ongoing with Pupil Referral Units to agree how this provision can be extended. This is in addition to the support offered to Pupil Referral Units through the Multi-Agency Schools Project.	Impact will be assessed once this has been embedded.
<b>Embedding Evidence Based Practice</b>		
Commission research from Buckinghamshire University on the experience of Black and Mixed heritage children and young people	<b>Ongoing</b> – consent has been gained from a number of young people and work is underway with the university to ensure they are able to gain feedback from a sufficient number to research is meaningful. Research will be completed by October 2023.	Findings from the research will be presented to the Partnership Board and be adopted by the YOS to inform practice.
Deliver refresher training on Psychological Formulations and Trauma-Informed Practice to all front-line practitioners	<b>Completed</b> - Psychological Formulations and Trauma-Informed Practice training was delivered to all front-line practitioners in July 2022.	An audit of cases subsequently took place to measure the impact on practice, identifying areas of strength and impact of this training. The audit demonstrated evidence of learning from the training being adopted in practice. There were also areas identified where learning could have been further embedded. Changes were made to the quality assurance tool as a result.
Deliver refresher Restorative Justice training to all front-line practitioners	<b>Completed</b> – Restorative Justice refresher training was delivered to front-line practitioners in November 2022.	The impact of this on practice is being measured through quality assurance activity. This will be evaluated in the next quarterly quality report.
Continue to provide Youth Work provision in 16 identified schools	<b>Completed</b> – In 2022/23, 168 young people were supported across 16 schools including 3 Pupil Referral Units.	The effectiveness of this project can be evidenced through offending data: of the 128 young people who worked with a Schools Youth Worker in 2021/22, only 10 (7.8%) have gone on to enter the youth justice system within a 12-month tracking period.

<p>Increase numbers of professionals from other agencies trained in Restorative Approaches</p>	<p><b>Completed</b> - Since April 2022, 85 professionals from a range of agencies have received training in Restorative Approaches. This includes 39 social workers, 4 foster carers, 4 residential workers and 4 Police Community Support Officers.</p>	<p>Case study feedback has consistently demonstrated that the training is well-received, has been used in practice and positively impacts service users.</p>
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## 7. Resources and Services

The Youth Justice Grant will be used exclusively to deliver against activities linked to the 14 Key Performance Indicators. The following activities will be funded by the grant:

- Delivery of effective assessment, intervention planning and supervision for young people who have offended or who 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
- 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.

Local authority funding will also be used to contribute towards the delivery of these outcomes.

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

- The YOS Multi-Agency Schools 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 section 11 of this plan.

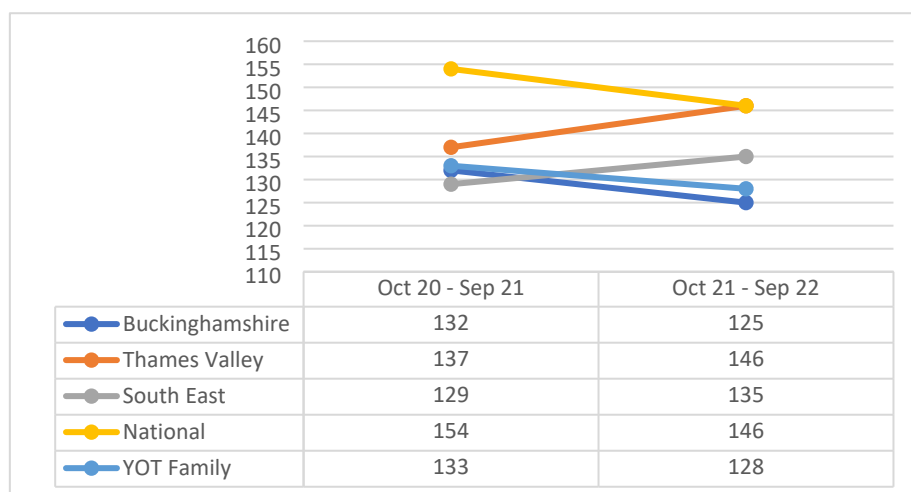
Funding from the Ministry of Justice will be used for the purpose of delivering the following activities as part of the Turnaround project:

- Funding two posts to deliver diversionary activities for children identified as 'on the cusp' of the Youth Justice System
- Funding constructive activities for children eligible for Turnaround support

## 8. Performance - National Key Performance Indicators

### First Time Entrants

The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire has continued to fall, as the chart below illustrates. Data for the October 2021 to September 2022 period shows a rate of 125 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 represents a reduction from the 132 per 100,000 entering the system in Buckinghamshire between October 2020 and September 2021.



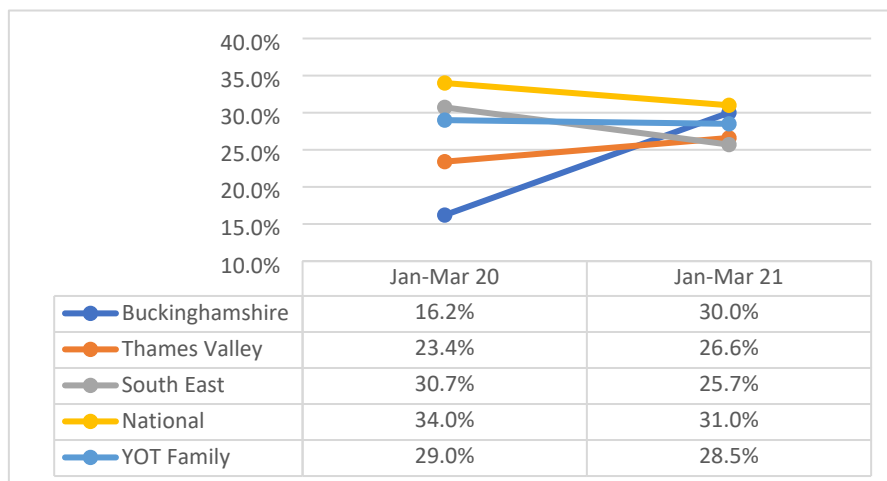
The strength of this data can be contributed to a number of factors, including:

- Ongoing development of the Multi-Agency Schools project (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- A Community Coaching project, supporting black and minority ethnic children in primary school year 6 through their transition to year 7 at secondary school (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- New processes that ensure all young people receiving a Community Resolution are screened and offered intervention where appropriate
- Delivery of restorative justice training to professionals from a range of agencies, including care homes and schools, to support appropriate management of challenging situations.

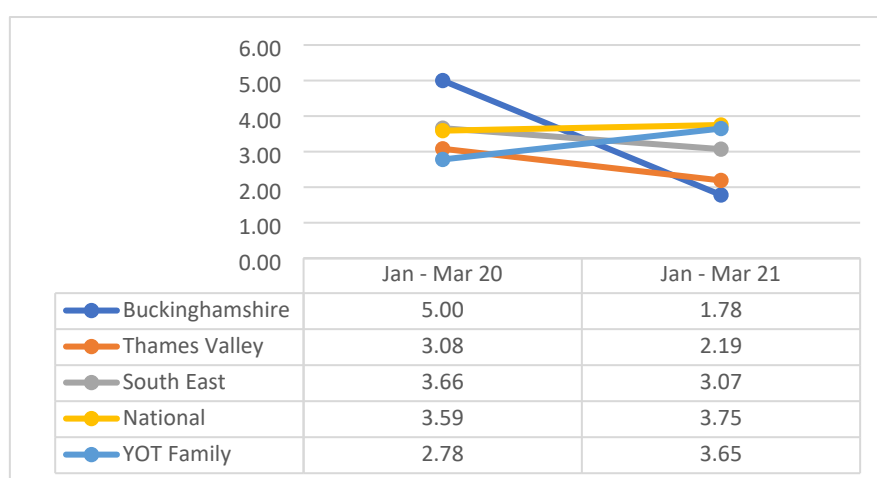
Work will continue to ensure that this strong performance is sustained and improved on wherever possible, including the use of Turnaround funds to increase the scope of diversionary interventions.

### Reoffending

The rate of young people reoffending in Buckinghamshire has risen to 30% for the January to March 2021 cohort, with performance stronger than that seen Nationally but higher than that seen across the Southeast, Thames Valley and YOT family. This is a notable increase during a period when most other comparator groups saw a decrease. In actual numbers, this represents an increase from 6 young people reoffending in the January to March 2020 cohort in comparison with 9 in the January to March 2021 cohort. The overall tracking group reduced from 37 to 30 young people between these two periods which has also had an impact on the percentage increase.



Positively, the rate of re-offences per reoffender has seen a significant decrease across the same 2 periods, with a frequency rate far lower than all comparator groups.

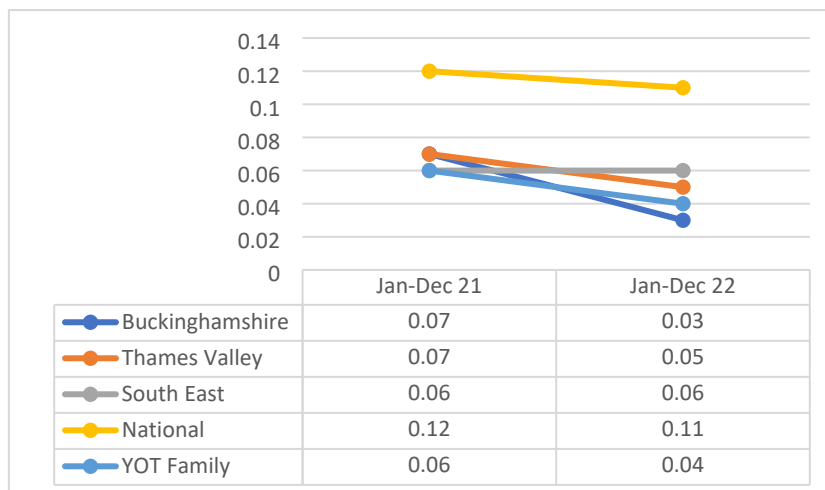


Reducing reoffending remains a key objective and the YOS seek to strengthen their understanding of the factors impacting on this in a number of ways. This includes:

- Data provided by the Police on over-18's reoffending within an identified 12-month cohort, which allowed more detailed analysis to take place. This showed that local data was largely in line with the national figures at that time and where reoffending had taken place, management oversight of the interventions being delivered could have been stronger. As a result of this, and the wider HMIP findings, management oversight training will be delivered in 2023/24.
- Ongoing discussions through the YOS Partnership Board to agree whether more frequent over-18 offending data could be provided therefore increasing the scope of local reoffending data analysis.
- Identification of training for front-line practitioners in 2023/24, to include risk of harm, intervention planning and understanding and supporting neuro-divergent young people.
- 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.
- Ongoing audit activity on a monthly basis to ensure practice quality is regularly reviewed.

## **Custody**

The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence per 1000 of the local 10–17-year-old population has decreased from 0.07 in 2021 to 0.03 in 2022. In actual numbers, this represents a reduction from 4 to 2 young people. Performance is stronger than that seen across the Thames Valley, South East, Nationally and within the YOT family.



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, only 1 young person was remanded in 2022/23 and this represented a reduction in bed nights in comparison with the previous financial year.

	No. of Young People	No. of Bed Nights
2020/21	4	876
2021/22	1	34
2022/23	1	23

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

- Sustaining the trauma-informed approach to assessing and engaging with young people through the delivery of further training on Psychological Formulation
- The use of 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. This includes activity built in to ensure consistency in approach.

## **Additional Key Performance Indicators from 2023**

From April 2023, the following key performance indicators will be reported on. Key risks and potential challenges are identified for each measure below.



- **Suitable Accommodation** – The national pressures around suitable placements for children looked after has the potential to impact on the new accommodation measure. Whilst custody levels are currently low in Buckinghamshire, any increase in the numbers of those coming back into the community from custody could also impact on the timeliness of placement identification. This has been discussed with the Partnership Board and agreement given that contextual narrative will be supplied as needed to clarify any barriers and ensure issues are escalated where appropriate.
- **Education, Training and Employment** – Whilst information on school attendance is routinely gathered by the YOS, the sheer number of educational establishments in Buckinghamshire can mean that verifying the accuracy of this data is challenging. The YOS have escalated concerns around availability of data to the Partnership Board and this is being addressed through a multi-agency working group.
- **Special Educational Need and Disabilities / Additional Learning Needs** – There has been a decrease in the percentage of those on the YOS caseload with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities over the last 12 months. This is at a time when national data has shown an increase in Education, Health and Care Plans. Local processes are in place to monitor numbers closely, alongside strong working relationships with appropriate partners.
- **Mental Health Care and Emotional Well-being** – The YOS do not currently monitor mental health data and reporting for the KPI will therefore provide an opportunity to have more robust oversight of this. Provision from both CAMHS and wider Health services remains strong, including NHS nurses, a Speech and Language Therapist and delivery of the forensic CAMHS model.
- **Substance Misuse** – Partnership arrangements are in place with local substance misuse provider Cranstoun who deliver interventions for the YOS. The Drug Diversion Scheme provides a targeted intervention for those young people who come to the attention of the police for drug possession offences across Thames Valley and is also delivered by Cranstoun on behalf of the YOS. This partnership relationship is well-embedded.
- **Out of Court Disposals** – 2022/23 saw a significant increase in the numbers of Out of Court Disposals being received in Buckinghamshire and the YOS has responded by increasing provision for those receiving Community Resolutions. Out of Court interventions have been the focus of significant developmental work and new practices have been identified to improve engagement. This should be reflected in the data for this measure moving forward.
- **Links to Wider Services** – As evidenced elsewhere in the Youth Justice Plan, data is monitored on Children’s Services involvement with young people known to the YOS. The YOS sits under Children’s Services within the local authority and benefits from strong strategic links with partners. At an operational level, audit activity also takes place to ensure robust oversight of those young people known to multiple services.
- **Management Board Attendance** – Board attendance has remained strong in Buckinghamshire over the last 12 months. Local processes are in place for monitoring attendance and for identifying if agencies do not attend on a regular basis. Concerns are escalated to the Board Chair who follows up with the relevant partner.

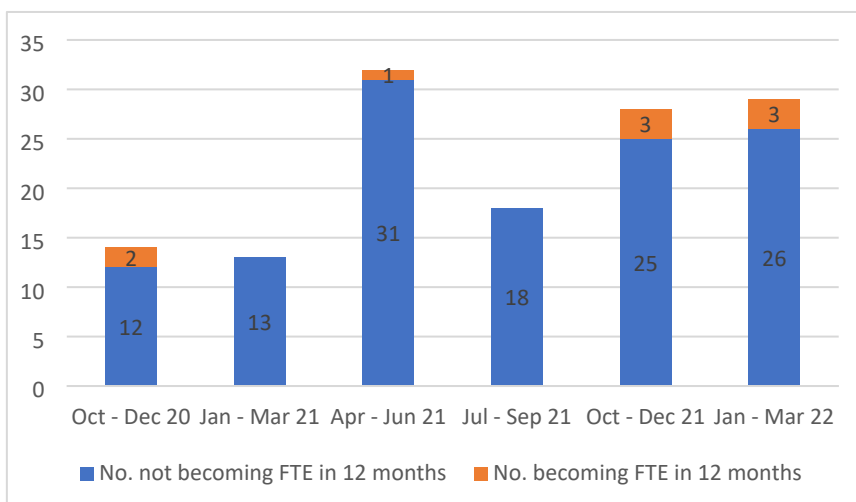
- **Serious Violence** – Serious Violence across Thames Valley fell between 2019 and 2022. This pattern was replicated in Buckinghamshire with a fall in the serious violence crime rate from 0.8 to 0.5 in 2020/21 which held at 0.5 in 2021/22. This measure will provide an opportunity to establish if similar patterns are seen within youth offending data.
- **Victims** – Victim data is monitored across the Thames Valley region and is captured in the Restorative Approaches section of the plan below. The most significant challenge is receiving consent to contact victims, via the Police, to explain the services on offer. Work has taken place across Thames Valley to address this with Police colleagues and to ensure the work the YOS does is actively promoted to these individuals.

Some of these data may provide the opportunity for further analysis of trends and themes within specific areas of the county, alongside the Opportunity Bucks project. This will allow the partnership board to identify gaps in provision within these specific wards.

## 9. Local Performance

### Local Indicator – Prevention Cases that Become First Time Entrants

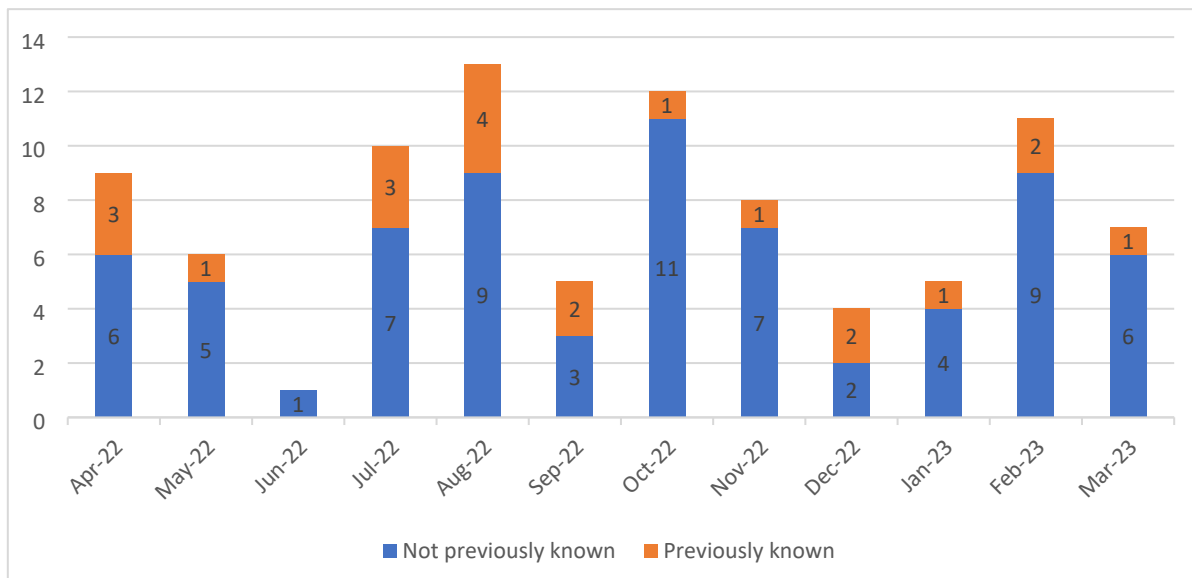
The YOS reports quarterly on Prevention cases that have gone on to become a First Time Entrant within 12 months of starting their intervention. The chart below shows that of the 134 young people engaged in preventative work between October 2020 and March 2022, 9 (6.7%) went on to receive a substantive outcome within 12 months. Whilst this represents a small rise in comparison with the October 2019 to March 2021 cohort, where only 3 (4.5%) went on to receive a substantive outcome within the tracking period, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people engaged on these interventions overall. This increased substantially from 66 young people to 134.



The strength of this performance reflects the effectiveness of the YOS 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

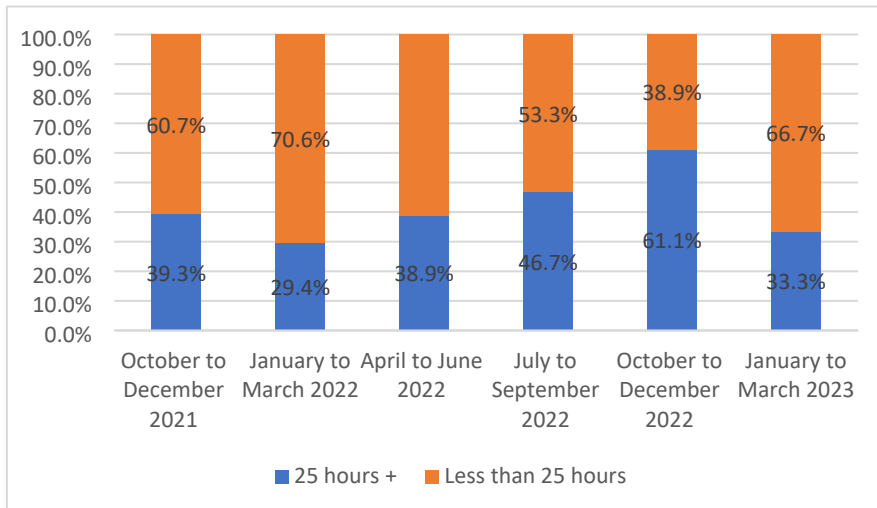
This measure identifies how many young people enter the youth justice system for the first time having been previously engaged by the YOS in a preventative intervention. In the 2022/23 period, there were a total of 91 First Time Entrants, of which 21 (23.1%) had been previously known to the service. This is an increase when compared to 2021/22 where there were 65 First Time Entrants, of which 12 (18.5%) had been previously known to the service. This data reflects both an overall increase in the numbers being engaged at a preventative level and a rise in numbers of First Time Entrants which has yet to translate into the national data, which runs approximately 6 months behind local data.



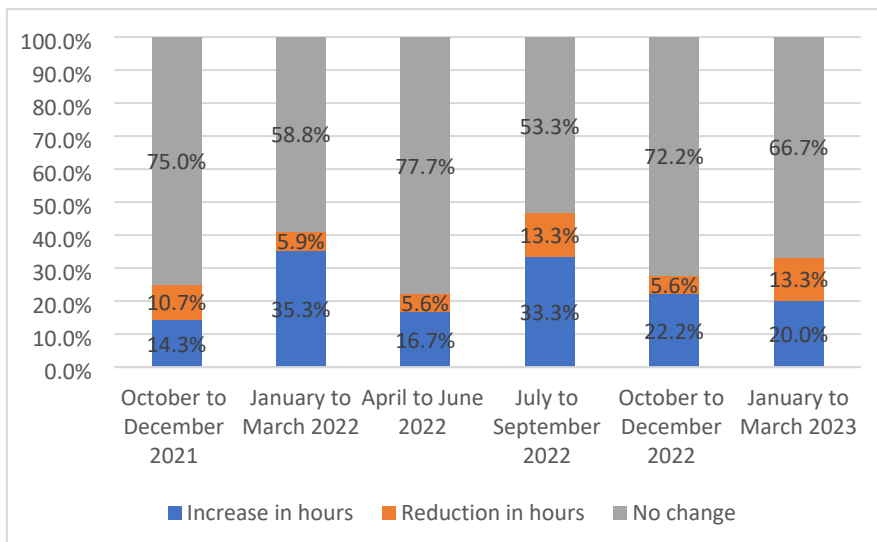
Measuring this particular indicator has 2 key purposes. Firstly, it allows the YOS to monitor the effectiveness of prevention programmes by reviewing individual cases where the young person went on to offend, and secondly, it provides a chance to identify if opportunities were missed to engage those 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 Indicator – Education, Training and Employment**

The YOS monitors the % (and number) of young people receiving 25 hours or more of education, training and employment provision at the end of their intervention. This includes all young people receiving statutory interventions. The data shows that whilst there had been some improvement since October 2021, in the most recent quarter two thirds of those completing YOS programmes were receiving less than 25 hours provision.



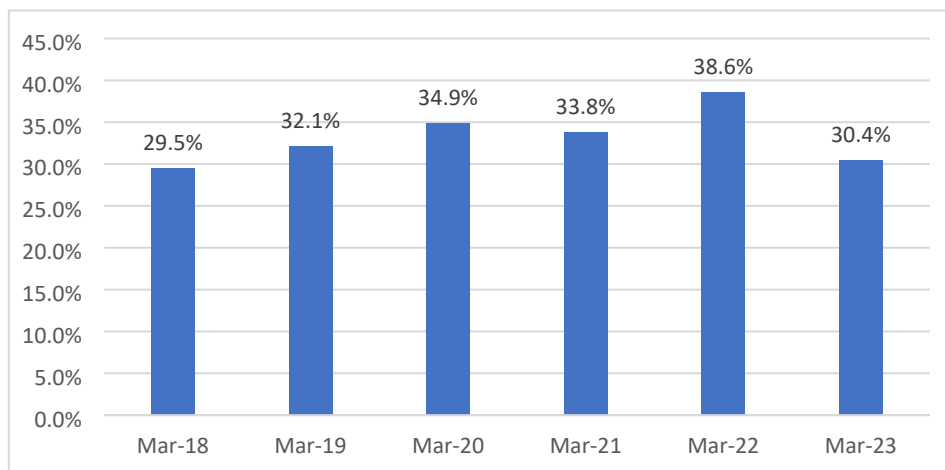
In addition, the YOS also monitor the % (and number) of young people receiving more hours provision at the end of their intervention than at the start. This includes all young people receiving statutory interventions. The data shows a significant fluctuation quarter on quarter.



Both of these measures have raised questions around the individual circumstances of the young people within each cohort. This has driven additional development of the local Education, Training and Employment monitoring process to ensure all open cases are tracked and supported as appropriate.

These measures will be replaced by the new key performance indicator which will further strength the understanding of local education, training and employment challenges for young people known to the YOS.

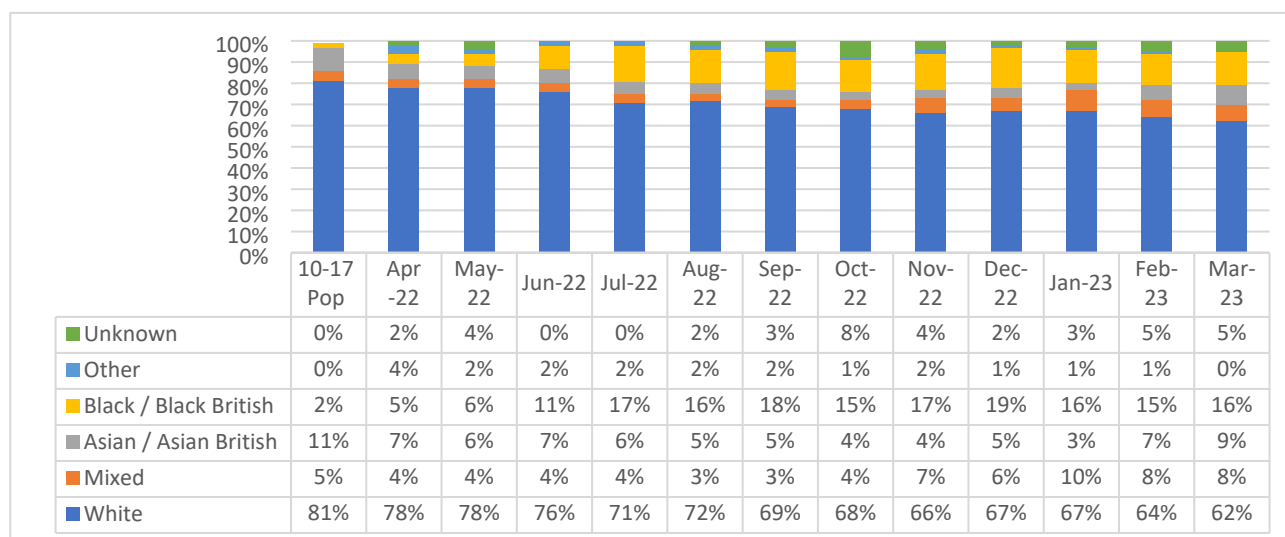
The percentage of young people on the YOS caseload with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is monitored on a monthly basis. The chart below shows a snapshot of this data across the last 6 years, with the reduction in March 2023 going against the general trend of increase across the previous 5 snapshots.



The YOS continue to work closely in partnership with the local authority to address the needs of these young people, as evidenced in the Education section below.

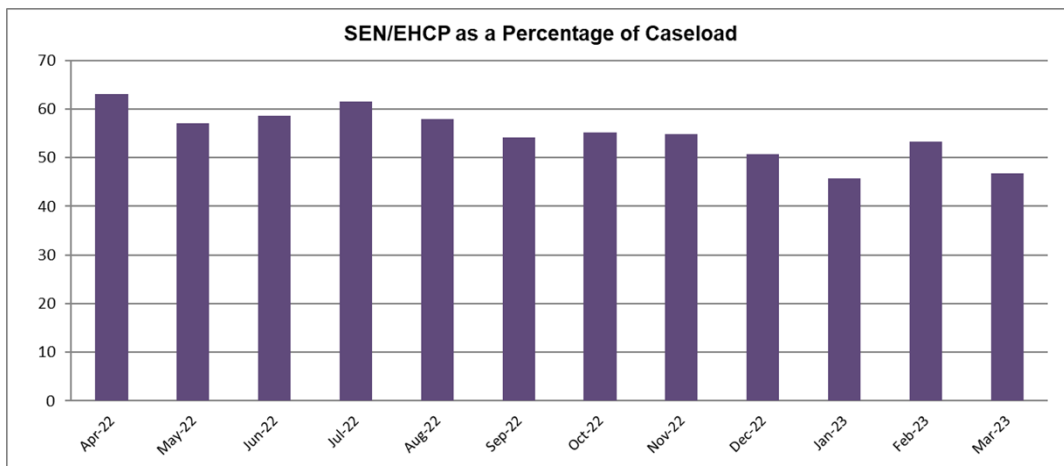
### 10. Children from Groups which are Over-Represented

Work on addressing ethnic disproportionality has been, and continues to be, a key strategic priority and area of particular focus for the YOS. However, despite this there continues to be a disproportionate number of young people from ethnic minority groups on the YOS caseload. This is a similar trend to that seen nationally. This can be seen most significantly for the Black / Black British group, where the local 10 to 17 population is 2% in comparison with the caseload proportion of 16%. Whilst some ethnicity data has now been published from the 2021 census, the YOS have yet to receive the 10–17-year-old breakdown for comparison purposes. The following chart compares the proportion of young people from different ethnic backgrounds from within the 10–17-year-old population and the caseload snapshots from the last 12 months



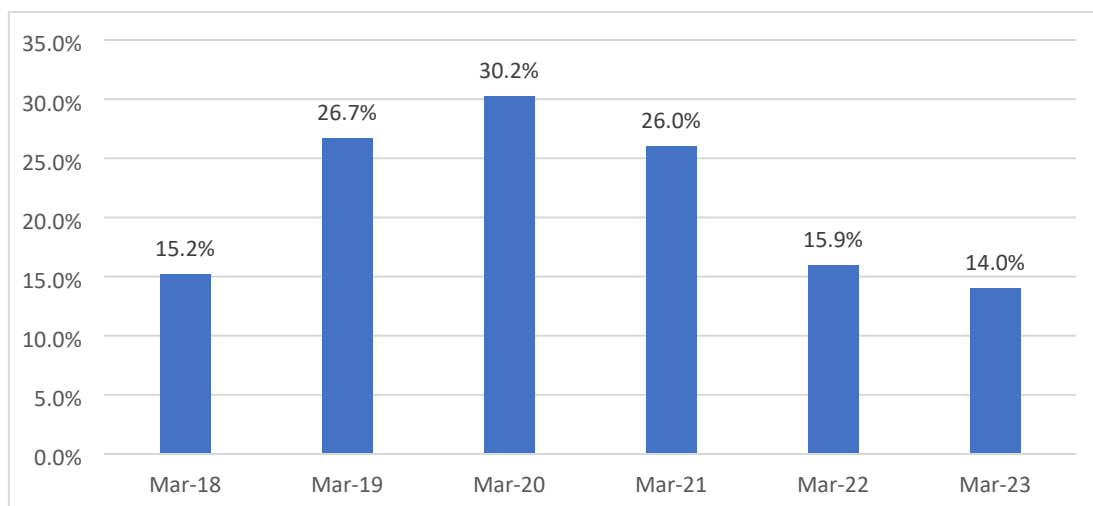
Addressing disproportionality remains one of the 3 key strategic priorities for the YOS. The Partnership Board have committed to regular data sharing as part of the new key performance indicators, and to ensuring that this data is meaningful and drives activity in relation to continuing systemic change. Following the HMIP thematic report on the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys, published in October 2021, the Partnership Board adopted all recommendations. Further information on progress against these recommendations is included within the Service Development section.

In relation to children subject to Education Health and Care plans or with identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, the following caseload data shows that whilst there has been a reduction in the proportion of children supported by the YOS, numbers remain disproportionately high.



This is another priority area for the Partnership Board, supported by the new key performance indicator. Following the HMIP Joint Inspection of Education Training and Employment, published in June 2022, the Partnership Board adopted all recommendations. Further information on progress against these recommendations is included within the Service Development section.

Data indicates that Children Looked After are significantly over-represented within the Youth Justice System. The following chart shows a snapshot of Children Looked After as a proportion of the overall caseload over the past 6 years and shows a significant reduction since 2021. However, this still amounts to over-representation when compared to the general population.



The YOS will continue to work closely with colleagues in Children’s Social Care, to ensure that Children Looked After are not unnecessarily criminalised and benefit from the same opportunities for prevention and diversion as those who are not care experienced. Joint audit work ensures that there is ongoing oversight of the quality of work involving children known to the YOS with Children’s Social Care involvement.

The partnership board maintains strategic oversight of data regarding groups that are over-represented in the Youth Justice System. Strategic links with the Opportunity Bucks project will allow the partnership board to analyse patterns of disproportionality within different geographical areas of the county. This will provide further opportunities to address gaps in provision.

## 11. Prevention

The YOS Multi-Agency Schools Project continues to deliver support across 16 schools in Buckinghamshire. This is a significant increase on the 2 schools originally identified at the start of the project and the increased take-up is a testament to the effectiveness of the interventions being delivered. During 2022/23, 168 young people were offered support by the Schools Youth Workers. Additional support is also now in place in 3 Pupil Referral Units, where work is focusing on addressing low attendance levels. A further 4 individuals are engaged within this setting.

The over-arching 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

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 128 young people who started an intervention with a Schools Youth Worker in 2021/22, 10 (7.8%) have gone on to receive a substantive outcome and enter the youth justice system in this tracking period. Individual case studies are also collated to evidence impact and to aid learning around good practice.

The YOS Community Coaching project is delivered by Spark2Life and is designed to improve outcomes for identified young people, helping them to achieve their potential. Mentors support individuals 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 2022/23, 10 young people benefitted from one-to-one mentoring. In addition, 5 parents / carers were also supported through this period. As of March 2023, none of the young people supported by the project had gone on to enter the youth justice system. Case studies continue to evidence the positive impact mentors have on these young people's lives.

## 12. Diversion

Expanding the scope and breadth of the diversionary work in relation to out of court disposals is identified as one of the 3 key strategic priorities for the YOS. This is an area of work in which there has been, and will continue to be, a significant amount of activity and the Partnership Board retain a high level of oversight. 2022/23 saw the YOS increase the scope of out of court disposal work. This was very clearly identified as an area of improvement in the HMIP Inspection report published in January 2023. The

improvement plan which followed, along with the start of the Ministry of Justice funded Turnaround project, has led to the following specific pieces of work:

- The creation of 2 distinct 'pathways' into early intervention support: route A – children and young people who are eligible for Turnaround support; route B – those who are being discussed at the out of court decision making panel.
- A new process that ensures the views of children, young people and families are sought prior to out of court disposal outcome, where this is possible.
- The recruitment of 2 new posts: a Turnaround coordinator and a Turnaround Youth Worker
- The creation of a new out of court disposal assessment and planning tool
- The creation of a new out of court disposal quality assurance template
- Refresher training for staff in relation to safety and well-being, specifically for out of court disposals
- The commissioning of management oversight training with a specific focus of out of court disposals
- Updated out of court disposal guidance
- Improvements made to quality assurance and performance monitoring process for out of court disposals, ensuring significantly increased oversight in this area.

### 13. Education

In June 2022, Her Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published a joint Inspection of Education Training and Employment services in Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales. One of the published recommendations is for Youth Justice Services to have a clear vision and strategy. The YOS's vision and strategy is contained within the Youth Justice Plan and is informed by the recommendations from the HMIP local area Inspection report, which was published in January 2023, as well as the findings from the Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection of the services provided for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Buckinghamshire from March 2022.

The vision for Buckinghamshire YOS is to ensure that as a result of the support offered by the service, all children regardless of the level of intervention, benefit from improved outcomes in relation to education, training and employment.

The Service Director for Education is a member of the Partnership Board, enabling strong strategic links. The YOS is required to report on Key Performance Indicators, specifically in relation to Education, of which the Partnership Board maintains strong oversight and scrutiny. The local authority provides designated ring-fenced funding to the YOS, which funds a dedicated Education Officer post, which supports the delivery of outcomes in this area.

The HMIP Inspection report, published in January 2023, contained the following recommendations specifically in relation to education:

*“The Youth Offending Service Partnership Board should monitor the reintegration rates of YOS children into mainstream education to make sure that children return to full-time mainstream education in every case where this is appropriate”.*

There are a number of actions contained within the HMIP action plan relating to this recommendation, progress against which is outlined in the Service Development section of this document. Overall oversight of this recommendation and linked actions are held by the Service Director for Education.



The YOS works in partnership with colleagues in Education to achieve the stated vision for education and to address recommendations made in the Joint Inspection of Education, Training and Employment Services in Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales (July 2022), as well as the YOS local area Inspection. To achieve this work, the following responsibilities are undertaken:

**Team Manager:**

- Holds the lead area for Education and both chairs and represents the YOS on a number of key partnership meetings in relation to Education and Special Education needs and Disabilities.

**Education Officer:**

- Represents the YOS at a number of key operational meetings regarding Education
- Ensures a focus on addressing children and young people who are not currently engaged with a suitable education provision.
- Is a qualified teacher and delivers some direct teaching to children.

The YOS receives support from 2 part-time Speech and Language therapists, who deliver screenings and intervention for children identified with potential speech language and communication needs. They also deliver important training for staff and deliver consultations where needed.

The 2 Police and Crime Commissioner funded prevention projects that the YOS run in schools are both central to the education strategy. Both have consistently demonstrated positive outcomes for children, further details of which are contained within the Prevention section of this document. Of the 16 secondary schools who received support as part of the multi-Agency Schools project, 7 are located within the 10 wards identified as priority based on deprivation, as part of the local authority's Opportunity Bucks project.

As part of the multi-Agency schools project, the YOS also delivers a programme of positive activities for children during school holidays, funded by the Holidays Activities and Food Programme. This has been extremely successful and well received by children and parents. It has assisted the YOS in being able to engage young people and provided opportunities for consulting with young people on key decisions around service delivery.

In addition to this work, the YOS also offers some additional resource to support children who attend pupil referral units, where there are concerns around low attendance. This is in recognition of increasing numbers of children affected by the pandemic and the vulnerability associated with low school attendance.

**Snapshot of data**

As of May 2023, the overall number of children and young people open to Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service and not receiving their education entitlement was 13, accounting for 15% of the caseload. This is broken down into the following categories:

- Electively Home Educated – 3 (23%)
- Not in Education, Training or Employment – 7 (54%)
- Education Health and Care Plan No Placement – 2 (15%)
- Admissions Pending – 1 (8)

The ethnic groups of this cohort reflect the disproportionality seen in wider caseload data, with only 62% from a White ethnic background.

Of these children and young people, 6 (46%) have an Education Health and Care Plan or have an identified Special Educational Need and 9 (69%) are known to Children’s Social Care. This represents a disproportionate number of children and young people with identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and who are known to Children’s Social Care that are not receiving their education entitlement. The local authority is aware of this and the presence of a YOS Team Manager and Education Officer in the above forums represents steps being taken to ensure that vulnerable children receive their education entitlement.

The HMIP improvement plan, includes actions specially in relation to improving work to support the reintegration of children from alternative education provision. As such, the delivery of this work is overseen by the Partnership Board. Operationally, the Education Officer meets with all practitioners to ensure there is a focus on supporting these children to reintegrate to mainstream education where appropriate.

#### 14. Restorative Approaches and Victims

Data is collected across Thames Valley for a local performance 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. The table below provides the data for 2022/23. This shows that both the percentage of victims giving consent to be contacted and the percentage accepting an offer of support from the YOS is lower than average in Buckinghamshire.

	<b>Numbers - Bucks</b>	<b>% Bucks</b>	<b>% Thames Valley</b>
Total Number of victims identified in period	230		
a) Number of victims identified in period – Pre-court	206		
b) Number of victims identified in period - Court	24		
Number of victims where consent to contact is given on the YOT1	100	43.5%	56.8%
Victims who accept the service from the YOT (where consent has been given)	34	34%	62.6%
Victims engaged in indirect Restorative Justice / reparation	17	50%	53.4%
Victims engaged in direct Restorative Justice / reparation	2	5.9%	9.6%

Ongoing developments in this area of practice include:

- Delivery of refresher training on Restorative Justice to all front-line staff
- The introduction of regular restorative justice surgeries, where front-line practitioners meet with the RJ Worker to discuss the young people on their caseload and identify opportunities for restorative intervention. This includes the use of Restorative Family Meetings

- The recruitment of a Community Engagement Practitioner who will lead on the development of additional restorative opportunities in the community, specifically targeting those wards identified as priority as part of the Opportunity Bucks project.

All victims who are engaged are asked if they would like to provide feedback on the service they have received. Between January and December 2022, 7 victims responded, with all of them either satisfied or very satisfied with their involvement with the YOS.

The YOS continues to deliver Restorative Justice training to other professionals, helping embed the use of a restorative approach across a range of agencies. During 2022/23, 85 professionals received training, including social workers, foster carers, residential workers, and Police Community Support Officers. Case studies gathered from participants following the training provide tangible evidence of the effectiveness of this in de-escalating conflict.

## 15. Serious Violence and Exploitation

The YOS is represented on the Thames Valley 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 Service Director for Children’s Social Care and attended by partners and stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty. This forum acts as a steering group for the Serious Violence plan and Serious Violence duty actions. Participation with this group ensures that the YOS is fully engaged in ensuring that it meets its obligations as part of the serious violence duty.

As a key partner in the Thames Valley VRU, the YOS is a signatory to the Thames Valley Together (TVT) project, a cloud-based environment where strategic partners can share data and drive analytics in relation to serious violence.

The YOS continues to work closely with colleagues in the Missing and Exploitation Hub. Developments have included:

- Spot purchase of lived experience mentoring for children vulnerable to exploitation and at risk of offending or reoffending
- 2 YOS Officers have exploitation as a lead area and act as the link between services / provide consultation to staff
- Collaboration between the YOS and Exploitation Hub on the delivery of contextual safeguarding and trauma informed practice training.

In response to 2 serious violence incidents involving young people, the YOS set up a new pilot weapons awareness groupwork programme for young people attending Alternative Education Provision in Buckinghamshire. This was delivered across 4 sessions in April and May 2023 and covered the following areas: myth busting, including a session with a young person open to the YOS for a weapon related offence; drugs and weapons, involving local substance misuse providers; ‘street’ first aid, delivered by YOS nurses; police, eventualities and consequences. Both pilots are in the process of being evaluated. Further groupwork is planned for more schools, benefitting children who live in the wards identified as priority based on deprivation, as part of the Opportunity Bucks project.

## 16. Detention in Police Custody

Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service receives Person In Custody information daily from Thames Valley Police, allowing for oversight of children and young people from Buckinghamshire being present in Thames Valley Custody Suites. These are monitored by the duty manager and where appropriate contact is made with partner agencies to address concerns to ensure children and young people and victims are safeguarded. The YOS continues to maintain strong working relationships with neighbouring Youth Justice Services, to ensure children taken to custody suits outside of the county, receive the support to which they are entitled.

The service has volunteers who act as appropriate adults for children and young people in police custody, however, if one cannot be sourced from this resource a duty officer will attend. Outside of working hours, the Emergency Social Work Team provide this service.

An example of our efforts to ensure effective representation for children and young people can be seen in the case of Child A. Child A was arrested for serious offences, and Courts granted Police permission to detain them for an extended time. Considering the best interests of the child, the YOS were concerned that multiple interviews over several days could result in them receiving a service from a number of appropriate adults. Therefore, the agreement was made for the YOS Senior Practitioner to be present for the period of their detention and fulfil the role of appropriate adult throughout. This approach allowed the young person's needs to be fully understood and represented throughout the detention period and for them to receive a consistent level of service.

## 17. Remands

The use of custodial remand for young people in Buckinghamshire remains low. With only 1 young person remanded to youth detention accommodation in 2022/23, numbers are too small to draw conclusions on themes experienced by those within that cohort. The YOS continue to work closely with partner agencies to ensure the needs of those in custody are met on an individual level. Data is monitored at both operational and board level, and any increase in numbers will lead to analysis to understand the drivers behind this.

The number of remands to local authority accommodation has fluctuated over the last 3 years, as the table below illustrates. It is possible that the increase in numbers in 2022/23 may have been affected by recent changes within the external placement market, which have impacted all local authorities nationally. Demand for placements has continued to rise, driven by a combination of factors that include more young people with complex needs, placements for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and more child protection work involving young children. Simultaneously, the supply of placements has reduced, particularly in residential establishments where difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff (related to cost-of-living pressures) and strict Ofsted 'matching' expectations have had a marked impact.

Where potential remands to local authority accommodation are identified, the YOS works closely with Social Care colleagues taking a multi-agency approach to agreeing the best outcome for the young person.

	No. of Young People Remanded to Local Authority Accommodation
2020/21	3
2021/22	0
2022/23	3

## 18. Use of Custody

As the National Indicator data in section 9 of the plan shows, custody levels remain low in Buckinghamshire. With 2 young people receiving a custodial sentence in 2022, numbers are too small to draw conclusions on themes experienced by those within this cohort. The YOS continue to work closely with partner agencies to ensure the needs of those in custody are met on an individual level. Data is monitored at both operational and board level, and any increase in numbers will lead to analysis to understand the drivers behind this.

## 19. Constructive Resettlement

Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service has a clear Resettlement Policy, which is also used by case managers during other transition phases, for example for a placement move for children looked after.

During their Inspection in 2022, HMIP rated the Resettlement Policy and Provision as Outstanding and found the following strengths:

*“The YOS resettlement policy (March 2022) promotes a high-quality, constructive, and personalised resettlement service for all children. The policy sets out a strengths-based approach that considers identity shift, safety and wellbeing, and promotes a personalised resettlement service for all children.”*

*“The policy sets out caretaking requirements for any child who is released to live in another borough. It refers to considering diversity and provides direction and guidance to staff on effective resettlement practice in line with relevant research recommendations.”*

*“The quality of work in the resettlement case we inspected was excellent. The child was fully engaged, kept up to date on plans and multi-agency work was noted as a strength. Effective work was undertaken to manage risk of harm and support the child’s safety and wellbeing, with a consistent focus on diversity.”*

## 20. Standards for Children in the Justice System

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 quarterly 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 2022 and March 2023, 95% 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. At the time of writing, 92% 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 2022 and March 2023, 85% of home visits took place within this timescale.
- **Referral Order Panels** – panels should take place within 20 working days of sentence. Between October 2022 and March 2023, 9% of panels took place within this timescale. A new process has been introduced to ensure any panel that may go out of timescales is authorised by a senior manager to ensure appropriate oversight of this measure and an improvement in performance.

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.

The additional Key Performance Indicators introduced in April 2023, will add another layer of oversight of performance against key standards.

## 21. Workforce Development

The YOS produces a Workforce Development Plan which is reviewed monthly by managers. The following plan has been produced for 2023/24:

<b>What is the training?</b>	<b>Who is the training for?</b>	<b>Who is the provider?</b>	<b>When will this be completed?</b>
Management Oversight Training	Managers	Cordis Bright	By Sept 23
Social Media (risk in assessment)	Front-line practitioners	Internally delivered	Sep-23
Risk of Harm Training	Front-line practitioners	Internally delivered	May 23
Out of Court Disposal Assessment Tool	Front-line practitioners and managers	Internally delivered	May 23
Gender Identity Awareness Training	Identified YOS Officers and a manager	External Provider	TBC

		TBC	
Further service wide training to be identified	All staff	TBC	TBC

The YOS has recently taken steps to proactively increase the diversity of the workforce by following enhanced recruitment processes, which reach a wider and more diverse audience. This has been successful in delivering an increase in numbers applying and a more diverse range of applicants for recent posts.

Following two training events in 2022/23 on Contextual Safeguarding and Psychological Interventions, a management audit was undertaken to review the impact of the training. The outcomes from this audit have informed the development of the local quality assurance tool.

Steps have been taken to increase staff feedback, and there is a YOS Officer identified as well-being and participation champion. A ‘You Said, We Did’ process led to a number of changes to practice. The Partnership Board has identified increasing participation with YOS staff as a priority for the coming year.

**22. Evidence-based Practice, Innovation and Evaluation**

In 2022/23 and previous years, the Youth Justice Plan included evidence-based practice as one of the 3 key strategic priorities. This year the decision has been taken to remove this, reflecting the fact that evidence-based practice is embedded throughout the work that the YOS does. Both prevention projects in schools, funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, deliver strong evidence-based outcomes. These are covered within the Prevention section of this document. Work has commenced with research specialists within the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit on further developing the evidence of the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Schools Project, with a view to strengthening the case for ongoing funding for the project, beyond April 2025.

The YOS also ensure that projects and interventions are evaluated using qualitative outcomes, recognising that not all impact can be assessed quantitatively. An example of this is an evaluation of spot purchased, lived experience mentoring provision, the outcomes of which has been documented in the ‘Progress on Previous Plan’ section.

**23. Service Development Plan**

Following the HMIP Inspection in September 2022 and the subsequent report, which was published in January 2023, an action plan was agreed by the Partnership Board and approved by HMIP. The plan is monitored by the Partnership Board, with individual recommendations and actions held by members to ensure strategic ownership. There were 7 recommendations made by inspectors. An additional 3 priority actions were identified following areas for improvement contained within the inspection report. Below is a breakdown of work undertaken against each recommendation.

**Recommendation 1: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should monitor the reintegration rates of YOS children into mainstream education to make sure that children return to full-time mainstream education in every case where this is appropriate**

- A system has been created to monitor and track children in alternative provisions and to use this to drive YOS practice in respect of reintegration.
- Joint audit work is planned with colleagues in Education, on the quality of work undertaken with children not in mainstream education for over 3 months. The findings from this will inform further work in this area.

**Recommendation 2: Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service Board should ensure information within out of court disposal assessments consistently reflects social care input and that the roles and responsibilities for each service area are clearly identified within children's plans.**

- Joint audit activity is planned with colleagues in children's social care, on the quality of out of court assessment and planning. The findings of this will inform further work in this area.
- The quarterly quality report submitted to the Partnership Board, will now include additional data on the quality of out of court work.
- Workshops are being delivered to social care teams, to increase understanding of out of court disposals.

**Recommendation 3: Buckinghamshire YOS should improve the quality of assessment and planning for Out of Court disposal work to focus on the safety and well-being of children and the management or risk of harm to others**

- A new Out of Court Disposal Assessment tool has been created, using the draft Youth Justice Board tool. The impact of this tool on practice will be monitored and evaluated.
- Quality assurance processes have been amended to ensure QA is distributed across the management team.
- An external provider has been commissioned to deliver management oversight training.
- Changes have been made to the reviewing manager system, to streamline and improve the process for providing management oversight.
- Internal training is planned for staff on assessing and planning in relation to risk and safety and well-being.

**Recommendation 4: Buckinghamshire YOS should review Out of Court disposal guidance so that it sets out explicitly how the service intends to meet all diversity, safety and well-being needs and risk of harm to others**

- The guidance document has been reviewed to include risk, safety and well-being, and diversity and inclusion, linking to other relevant policies.
- The review also includes an overview of the new Out of Court Disposal referral routes.

**Recommendation 5: Buckinghamshire YOS should strengthen the Out of Court Disposal Process so that children and families are engaged at the earliest opportunity**



- A new process has been created which provides 2 clear referral 'routes' into out of court disposal support. Qualitative impact will be assessed as part of the Turnaround programme.
- The views of children and families are now sought prior to outcome decisions being made, for all suitable cases
- Agreement has been made with Police colleagues that Youth Caution outcome decisions will be made via the joint decision-making panel, wherever possible.

***Recommendation 6: Buckinghamshire YOS should consistently ensure that there are suitable supervision arrangements for children completing reparation and expand the number of projects available***

- The job description was amended to create a new Community Coordinator post.
- Recruitment is underway for this post, and this has taken place with assistance from colleagues from the Council's Community Safety Team.
- Once recruitment has been completed this will facilitate an increase in reparation placements available.

***Recommendation 7: Buckinghamshire YOS should seek to proactively diversify the pool of volunteers so that it reflects the children and families the service works with***

- Work has been undertaken to gain feedback from staff and colleagues in other youth justice services, on ideas for diversifying the pool of volunteers.
- The new Community Coordinator post will assist in building links between the community and the YOS.
- A plan will be created setting out how the diversity of volunteers will be increased.

**Priority 1: Managers and the board could do more to consistently recognise and reward good work**

- Opportunities for shadowing of key pieces of YOS work have been provided to the Partnership Board and a rota has been created to ensure this takes place.
- Further opportunities are planned to enable board members to meet with children and young people.
- Staff have been consulted on ways in which the board can provide feedback to the team, and this has been shared with the Partnership Board chair.
- Impact will be assessed via feedback from staff.

**Priority 2: Inspectors noted some delays in interventions starting once disposal decisions had been made**

- A number of improvements have been made to the weekly quality assurance monitoring meeting, to strengthen oversight in this area.
- The allocations process has been strengthened, with a more formalised allocations meeting template used in every case.
- Impact will be assessed through quality monitoring processes.

**Priority 3: Victim issues are considered at the risk management panels and resettlement panels, but the policy could define the role of the YOS Restorative Justice/Victim worker more clearly and set out the support available to victims**

- The policy has been reviewed to ensure the role of the Restorative Justice Officer is more clearly defined.

In addition to this action plan, the following key pieces of work are identified in line with the 3 strategic priorities for the year:

<b>Addressing Disproportionality</b>
Continue to provide mentoring support to children and parents, to support transition from year 6 to 7
Agree set of partnership measures for evaluating the effectiveness of disproportionality work
Develop collaborative data sharing across the partnership, through the new KPI framework, to support in influencing systemic change in this area
Seek further opportunities to increase the diversity of the workforce, to ensure it better reflects the children, young people and families that are supported by the YOS
<b>Addressing Exploitation of Young People</b>
Monitor and report on lived experience mentoring
Deliver a knife crime prevention group and monitor the impact of this on the young people involved
Deliver prevention groupwork in schools, which includes a focus on exploitation, and monitor the impact of this on the young people involved
<b>Expanding Prevention Work</b>
Increase the number of young people engaged in diversionary activity through the Turnaround project, with measures in places to evidence impact
Ensure creative programmes used to engage young people, which deliver impact
Ensure the delivery of consistently high-quality assessments for all prevention and diversion work
Develop additional measures to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention work
<b>Additional Priority Pieces of Work</b>
Increase participation of young people in key service development decisions

Key pieces of work identified in response to the HMIP thematic review of Education, Training and Employment are covered in the Education section of this plan.

There has been one Critical Learning Review carried out in 2022/23, which led to the following actions which were adopted by the Partnership Board in April 2023:

- Learning from the review to be shared with key partners, including a neighbouring Youth Offending Service
- Improvements to be made to information sharing protocols between the MASH and the YOS, in respect of children who move into the county
- The YOS to provide updated risk of serious harm training to practitioners.

#### 24. Challenges, Risks and Issues

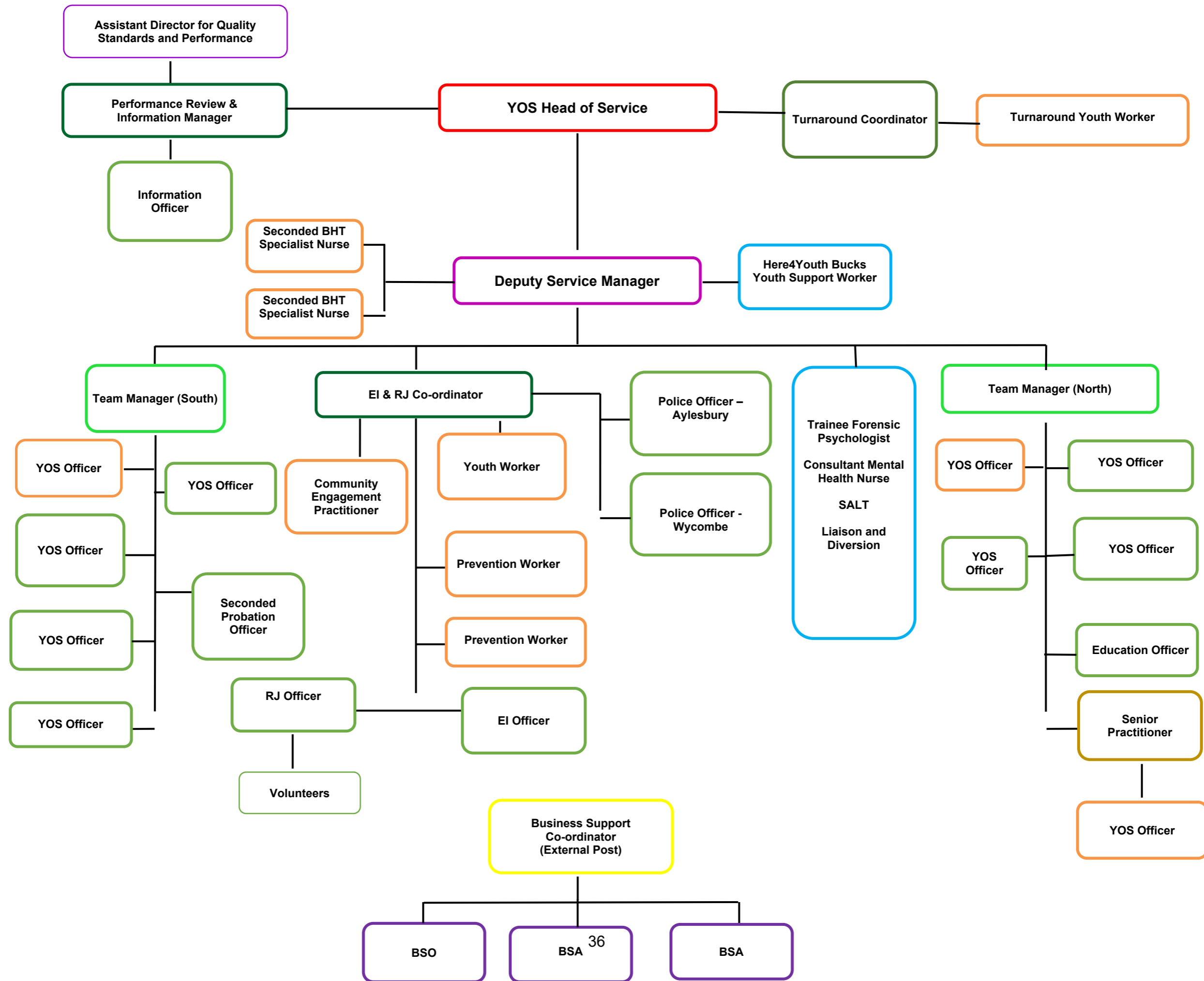
The following are identified as current challenges to delivery:

- The shift towards prevention and diversion presents the challenge of engaging children, sometimes with complex needs, on a voluntary intervention. The Turnaround Project provides a Youth Work resources and intervention projects aimed at increasing levels of engagement.
- The nature of exploitation, crossing over multiple Local Authorities and Police forces, means disruption activities and consistency of practice can be challenging. This can lead to difficulties in embedding a trauma informed model of delivery. The YOS seek to address this by working closely with colleagues in Children’s Social Care and within the specialist Exploitation Hub, who have good links to regional and national networks such as the South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit.
- The systemic over-representation of Black and Mixed heritage children across the criminal justice sector is an ongoing challenge. This is recognised by the Partnership Board as a significant systemic issue and addressing this continues to be a key strategic priority.
- The current national situation with placements for children in care means that the most vulnerable may not have the most suitable environment to support desistance. The YOS work closely in partnership with colleagues across the council to support our most vulnerable to access a stable living environment.

#### 25. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	John Macilwraith
Signature	
Date	30 June 2023

Appendix 1 – Staffing Structure



**Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2023/24**

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

<b>Partner Contributions 2023-2024</b>	<b>Staffing Costs (£)</b>	<b>Posts In Kind</b>	<b>Other Delegated Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire Council</b>	686,051		40,000	726,051
<b>Thames Valley Police</b>		90,657		90,657
<b>Integrated Care Board</b>		76,285		76,285
<b>National Probation Service</b>		29,431	8,580	38,011
<b>Police Crime Commissioner</b>	134,663		65,000	199,663
<b>Youth Justice Board Grant</b>	475,306			475,306
<b>Ministry of Justice (Turnaround)</b>	114,685			114,685
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,410,705</b>	<b>196,373</b>	<b>113,580</b>	<b>1,720,658</b>