

# Kent



# Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024

<b>Service</b>	Kent Youth Justice
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## 1. Introduction

Kent's 2023/24 Youth Justice plan has been co-produced with the Youth Justice partnership and KCC's Youth Justice workforce. It describes how the partnership will meet our ambitions to deliver a high-quality service for children, families, and victims of youth crime. Our success will be evidenced in our performance against the new national key performance indicators.

Our plan is both strategic and operational. It describes services that contribute to the prevention of offending, the diversion of children away from the criminal justice system and our efforts to reduce the re-offending of children in Kent.

At the heart of our plan is our commitment to listen to victims and work restoratively to repair harm.

Our plan describes how partners share the responsibility to safeguard children and to manage the risk that some children pose to others.

It describes the operational partnership approaches across Kent, and the strategic links that underpin them. Within this document is our commitment to and arrangements for leadership and governance, including how we will monitor and be accountable for the quality and effectiveness of Kent's Youth Justice Services.

In June 2021, Kent's Youth Justice partnership was inspected by HMIP and received an overall grading of Requires Improvement. This plan reflects our learning from HMIP, and our priorities, progress, and continued improvement journey to provide an excellent service to children, families, partners, communities, and victims.

In May 2023 the Kent Youth Justice partnership participated in the HMIP & Ofsted remand management thematic inspection. Although not a formally graded inspection, the feedback was positive and highlighted areas of effective practice, strengths, and areas for development. The focus of this consolidated and further developed the partnership's thinking about best practice and how we can achieve good outcomes with and for the small but complex cohort of children who end up in the secure estate. Our ambitions and aspirations are influenced by our experience and learning from that thematic inspection.

## 2. Kent Context

Kent is the fifth most populous county in England and the most populous non-metropolitan county. It has 12 district councils and around 300 town and parish councils.

Kent has a mixed economy of large rural agricultural areas and urban towns. Despite areas of affluence, Kent has 901 Lower Super Output Areas: 51 of these are in the 10% most deprived in England. 75% of districts have been increasing in deprivation, relative to other areas in England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2019). 15% of children under 16 are in absolute low-income families.

Large parts of Kent are within the London commuter belt, and it has strong transport connections to London and the continent.



Kent has 336,385 children living here, with an above average percentage of 5–19-year-olds. Between 1200 and 1300 other Local Authority Children are typically placed in Kent at any one time, and around half are aged 13-17 years.

While the exploitation and serious violence landscape is fluid, in Kent there are two active Task Forces: Thanet and Maidstone. Police report that they are aware of 13 Young Street Groups, 2 gangs and 29 County Lines active in Kent.

### **3. Our Vision & Principles**

The Kent Youth Justice partnership considers all under 18's in the Youth Justice system to be children. We very purposefully use the word 'child' rather than 'young person' – to highlight that children should be understood and responded to differently than adults.

The partnership is committed to child-focussed and trauma-informed language. We refer to our statutory delivery mechanism as a 'Youth Justice Service' and avoid using negative labels such as 'youth offending/offender' and 'nominals.' We consider push and pull factors that influence children's behaviour, rather than blaming children.

We believe that custody should be a last resort for children because detention has detrimental consequences on a child's attachments, well-being, and future life chances.

The partnership are committed to best practice; working collaboratively; hearing the voice of children; protecting victims and potential victims; and doing our best to offer individualised supervision and support which meets children's diverse needs.

The partnership invests in services and front-line staff to ensure the availability of timely, robust, quality interventions which seek to understand, address, and manage trauma, and the resultant risk of harm that some children pose to others.

We are open, transparent, and honest, and we take seriously our responsibilities to protect the public from serious harm. The Kent Youth Justice Service does not propose community remands or sentences where they feel unable, at that time, to understand and/or safely manage risk of harm to others. They keep dynamic assessments of risk and our offers to manage those risks, under the scrutiny of the YJ service's senior managers, and under review.

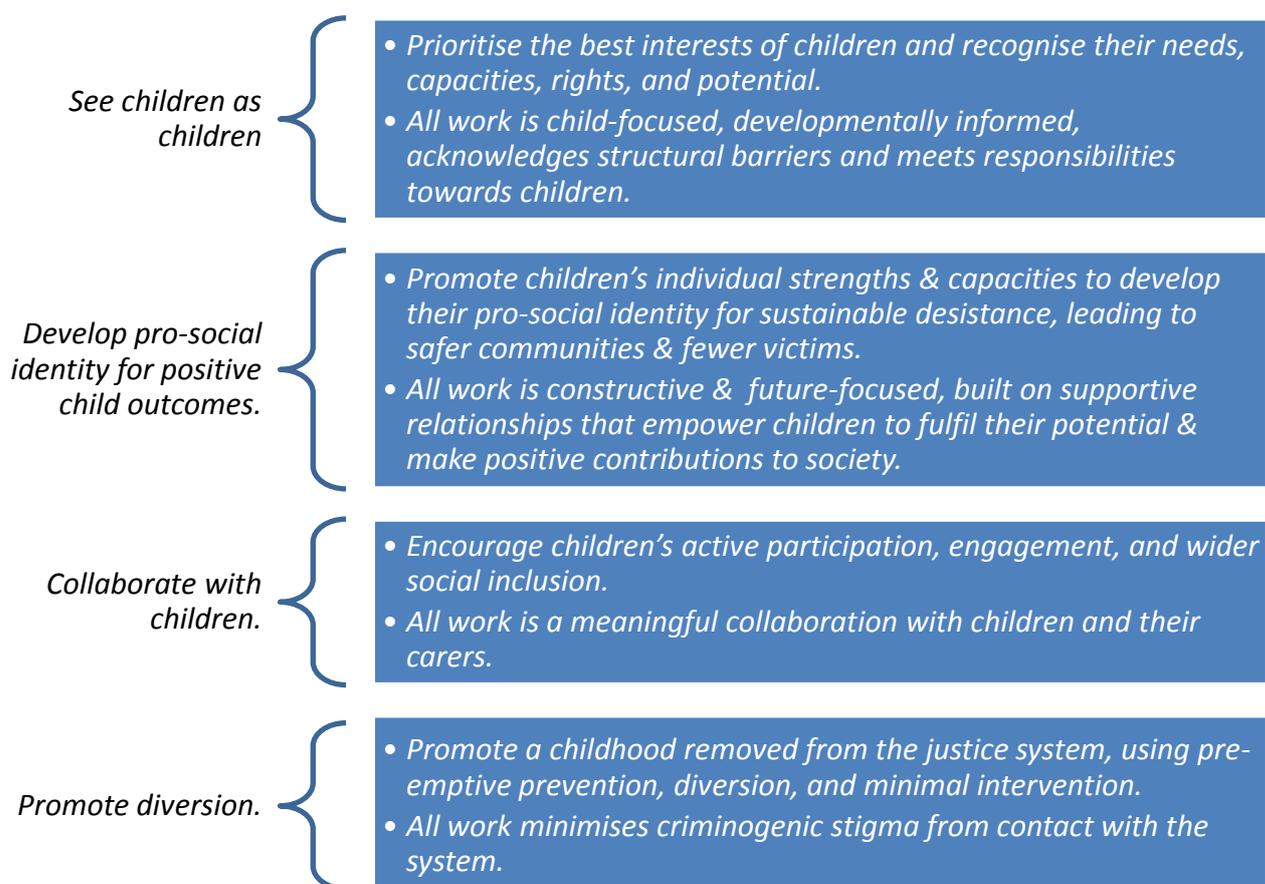
The partnership strives to have a learning culture where we are reflective and open to challenge, where we learn from our experiences, and we constantly seek to improve and develop.

## 4. Child First

Kent's Youth Justice partnership continues to share the national Youth Justice Board's vision of a Child First youth justice system as described in the YJB 2021-24 strategic plan.

In March 2021, 'Child First Justice: The research evidence-base' was published, comprising "the foundation of a progressive approach to how children should be understood, treated and supported after experiencing problems that have led them to commit a crime."

The report advises Youth Justice services to adopt the following four components, all of which resonate with Kent's vision and delivery model:



In Kent, the prevention, diversion, and early intervention offer is deliberately located within Early Help and in the voluntary sector. This avoids labelling children as "offenders" and in line with research of 'what works,' (YEF) responds to their holistic and wider family needs.

Kent's County Youth Justice Board (CYJB) is committed to a child first approach, which is modelled in our language, in our commitment to maximising opportunities for children and in addressing structural inequalities.

In 2023/24, Kent Local Authority (KCC) is learning from "language that cares" and introducing the practice of writing "to the child" in case recording. KCC monitor this through dip sampling.

## 5. Voice of the Child

Our 2022/23 Youth Justice partnership plan set out our intention to increase service user feedback. We achieved this with Youth Participation apprentices who undertook surveys with service users; co – created easy read documents and information packs; played a valuable ‘meet and greet’ role at court and supported Youth Justice to hear the voice of children in the recruitment of staff.

Kent’s 4 apprentices completed their tenures, progressed into other roles, or left the team in 2022/23. KCC have reflected that the qualification (Youth Work) attracts our trainees to move on from Youth Justice and are now exploring Apprenticeships with a potential progression pathway to attract, retain and develop apprentices for a career in Youth Justice.

In 2023/24 a review of Kent Youth Justice role and structures will propose how the service, and the County Youth Justice Board, systematically hears the voice of children and their families; will outline responsibilities about how we respond, and sets expectations and ambitions for how we co-create, and develop our services with children and their families.

In 2022/23 in partnership with Kent’s Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Kent’s Youth Participation team supported a Bystander campaign in Kent’s Pupil Referral Units. This dovetailed with the partnership contextual safeguarding and prevention approaches to hear where children do and do not feel safe. We will continue to collaborate through District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings (DCSMs) in which the multi-agency team devise and implement plans to respond to contextual risks and enhance guardianship and safety. The framework continues to identify key themes about how and why children feel safe and unsafe, and collaboration continues to share children’s views, comments, and ideas.

KCC’s current mechanism for hearing the voice of children includes case audits which require the auditor to contact the child and their parents/carer, to hear their experience of the service. This approach was used in the YJ partnership 2022 BAME deep dive which elicited the feedback below from children about their experiences of services and of partner agencies:

“My family life is chaotic. I think people didn’t always understand that. I’m not sure what else they could have done.”

“There were some people from similar backgrounds to me who understood my culture and family life. Not everyone really understood or took the time to understand.”

This feedback prompts the partnership to ensure in 2023/24 that our collective workforces have the skills and knowledge to have sensitive and meaningful conversations with children and their families about identity and lived experience.

In 2023, Kent’s children open to Youth Justice were invited by HMIP as part of the remand thematic to share their experiences of the secure estate. This will inform HMIP’s national report due for publication in the autumn of 2023, and could influence wider system change.

At an operational level, KCC's Youth Justice engagement strategy reminds practitioners and managers that *"it is critical that children's voices are heard, and their individual circumstances and needs taken into account."* This guides the service to ensure the voice of the child and their lived experience is the foundation of assessment, planning, delivery, and review.

Some of the feedback that the services of the Youth Justice partnership has received in the last year includes:

*brilliant worker....  
built a great  
understanding of  
not only my son  
but us as a family.*

*"I've been arrested about 3 times this year but, last year, it was 15 times.*

*When you have a professional [Salus mentor] who understands everything that's going on in your life and tries to make it right, a lot of stuff changes. Without them, I probably would be banged up right now."*

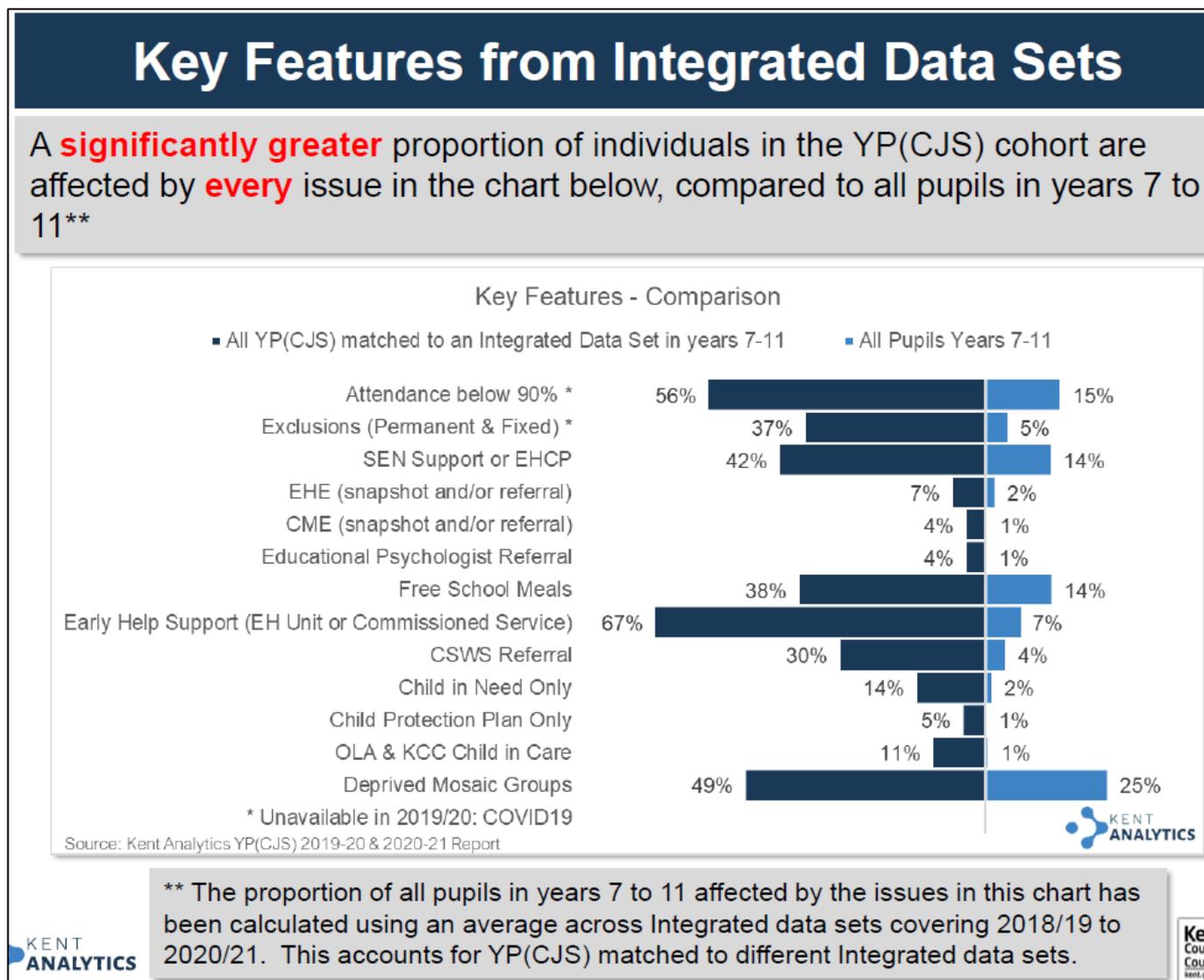
Further enhancing how the partnership hears and responds to the voice of children and their families is a priority for the year ahead. To achieve this, in 2023/24, the Youth Justice partnership will:

- Explore how we can ensure that our children and their families are fully aware of their rights to comment, compliment and complain, how to go about this and that they are supported when needed to do so. We will consider hosting focus groups and maximising digital technology. We have an ambition to elicit the voice of the child consistently throughout their orders.
- Ensure that Kent's County Youth Justice Board hears and responds to the voice of those children who are in receipt of statutory youth Justice intervention. A standing agenda item at the quarterly board will include service user feedback, enabling the board to have a direct line of sight to the views of children, and to scrutinise the Youth Justice service for its responsiveness.
- The partnership will consider how the voice of children and families in respect to commissioned services and other Youth Justice partners are heard.
- KCC Youth Justice will introduce a responsibility for a practitioner within each Youth Justice locality team to lead and champion participation.

## 6.0 Characteristics of Kent Children in the Youth Justice System and their offending

KCC's Analytics Team was commissioned by the County Youth Justice Board to report on the profile of Kent children who had out of court or court disposals ('the Youth Justice cohort') in the period 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2021. Most of the slides in this plan are from that report.

Of the Kent Youth Justice cohort, a significantly greater proportion of them are affected by **all** features in the Children's Integrated Data Set, as illustrated below:



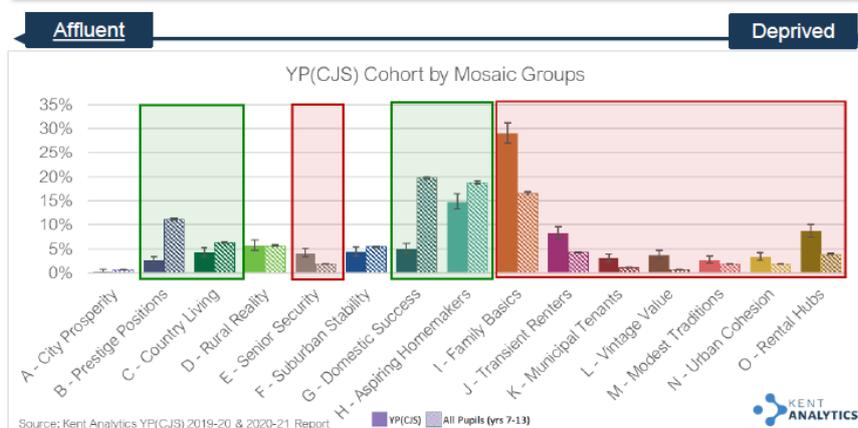
There is a significant over-representation of children resident in Canterbury, Dover, Gravesham, and Thanet, and of pupils at schools in Dover and Thanet districts.

There is a significant over-representation of children from deprived Mosaic Groups, and an under-representation of more affluent groups.

## Characteristics of Individuals – Mosaic Groups

When looking at socio-economic groups using Experian's Mosaic, the YP(CJS) cohort is not particularly representative of all pupils in years 7 to 13 in 2020-21; affluent groups are under-represented (significant difference in green boxes) and deprived groups are over-represented (significant difference in red boxes)

Three groups in the middle order are defined as those containing families: 'G – Domestic Success'; 'H- Aspiring Homemakers'; 'I – Family Basics'. The more affluent groups G and H are under-represented in the YP(CJS) cohort, and more deprived group I is over-represented



**Note:** Experian changed the definition and order of their Mosaic groups in 2021. Further information can be found in the appendix.

Out of Court disposals make up 77% of outcomes for children (rounded figures):

- 81% Community Resolutions
- 14% Youth Cautions
- 6% Youth Conditional Cautions.

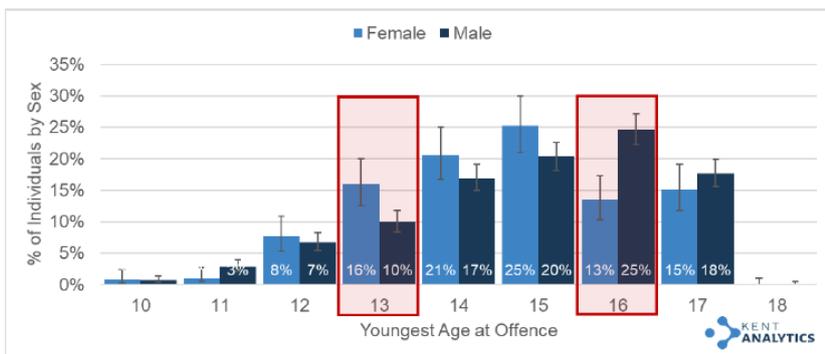
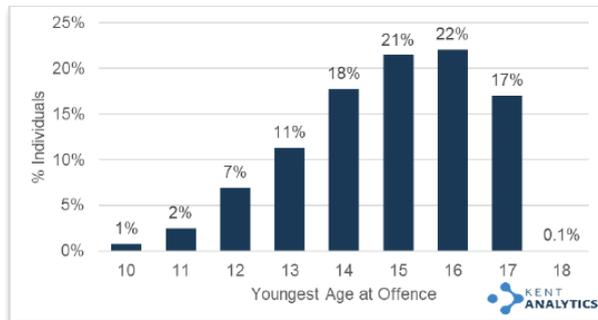
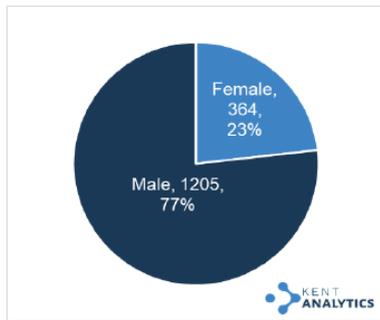
For those children who only have a Court outcome, these are made up of (rounded figures):

- 29% Referral Orders
- 27% Compensation Order
- 14% Youth Rehabilitation Order
- 10% Fine
- 6% Conditional Discharge
- 5% Detention and Training Order/Custody

There are a further 6% of the cohort who receive both an out of court and a court disposal, and their outcomes are proportionately like the two cohorts above.

Of those who are school age, significantly more of them have poor school attendance; exclusions; free school meals; Special Educational Need (SEN) Support or Education & Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and referrals to Early Help or Social Work. 9% have been in Care at some time in the last 4 academic years.

## Characteristics of Individuals – Sex & Age



A greater proportion of females offended at a younger age, compared to males. This is significant at the youngest offence age of 13, and reversed at age 16 when a significantly greater proportion of males offend.

A significantly larger proportion of females were known to have committed offences at the youngest age of 13, compared with males. The most frequently committed offence by females is 'theft from a shop' and a greater proportion of females (than males) had outcomes for assaulting Police.

There is a significantly smaller proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) females compared to white females. The cohort are 77% male, and a significantly larger proportion of males are BAME compared with White.

The most frequently committed offence categories are, in order:

- Violence against the person
- Criminal damage
- Theft & handling stolen goods
- Public Order
- Drugs
- Motoring offences

Most recorded offences by children (90%) have a gravity score of 2 or 3 (on a scale of 1-8 where 1 is low and 8 high). A significantly greater proportion of males were known to have committed offences of possessing a knife/blade/offensive weapon in a public place.

## **7.0 Governance, Leadership & Partnership Arrangements**

### **7.1 County Youth Justice Board**

The YJ Partnership is governed by the County YJ Board with membership from the key strategic partners (the Local Authority, Kent Police, Health, Education, and the National Probation Service). The full membership is at appendix 1.

There is active participation from HMCTS, the Violence Reduction Unit, NHS England Health and Justice, and Kent's Children's Services, both from Corporate Parenting and the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Unit. The Kent Equality Cohesion Council and the Governor of Cookham Wood YOI attend periodically, when appropriate.

The Board meets quarterly and is chaired by the Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services within the Children, Young People and Education Directorate. This strategic leadership helps to ensure that Youth Justice has a voice within wider children's services and strategic partnerships.

The Board receives detailed reports which allow learning from individual and thematic case audits/learning reviews and service user feedback.

The Board has oversight of financial proposals and decisions, KCC Youth Justice forecast and outturn budgets, contributions from partners and opportunities to lever in additional funding and resources.

The Board are aware of the new national performance indicators for 2023/24. Currently they receive reports on service performance against the key indicators, with success and challenges shared and scrutinised, with benchmarking, trends and comparisons where available:

- First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice system,
- rate of re-offending,
- number of children entering custody,
- suitability of accommodation on release from custody,
- engagement in ETE at both statutory and post-statutory school-age,
- disproportionality.

The Board also receive reports on performance against our ambitions for improvement and development, including those arising from our last HMIP inspection, our operational and strategic self-assessments, and our county plan. We report periodically on key messages from HMIP, including both thematic and individual Inspection outcomes and learning.

The Board holds partners to account for their contribution to the Youth Justice service with each statutory partner reporting annually to the Board. These partner reports help Board members to understand the contributions and expectations of each partner, and to share and scrutinise challenges and successes. This helps the Board to set priorities for the partnership.

The Board commissions thematic reports which assist in understanding cross-cutting themes and which provide a greater depth of analysis. In 2022/23 the thematic reports included:

- Analysis of BAME children in the Youth Justice system
- Remand management and the use of the secure estate
- Serious Youth Violence
- Risk management

## 7.2 Key Strategic Partnerships and forums

The Kent Youth Justice Service has strategic partnerships within Kent:

### District Councils

- Community Safety, Contextual Safeguarding, Local Children's Partnership Groups, Youth Councils

### Violence Reduction Unit

-and commissioned services

### NELFT & Forensic CAMHS

-Children and Young People's Mental Health Service

### Local Authority

- Children's & Adolescent's Social Work and Corporate Parenting, Early Help & Adolescent Early Help, Open Access Youth Hubs & Children's Centres

### Health

- Integrated Care Board (ICB), SYMBOL (Speech & Language), We Are With You (Substance Misuse)

### Kent Equality Cohesion Council (KECC)

### Kent County Youth Justice Board

- KCC, Police, Health, Probation, Education, Magistrates, KECC, NHS England Health & Justice, Office of the PCC

### Education

-The Education People, Schools, SEND, 'PRU, Attendance & Inclusion', Virtual Schools Kent

### Voluntary Organisations

- Young Lives Foundation: Appropriate Adult Service

and spanning Medway Authority:

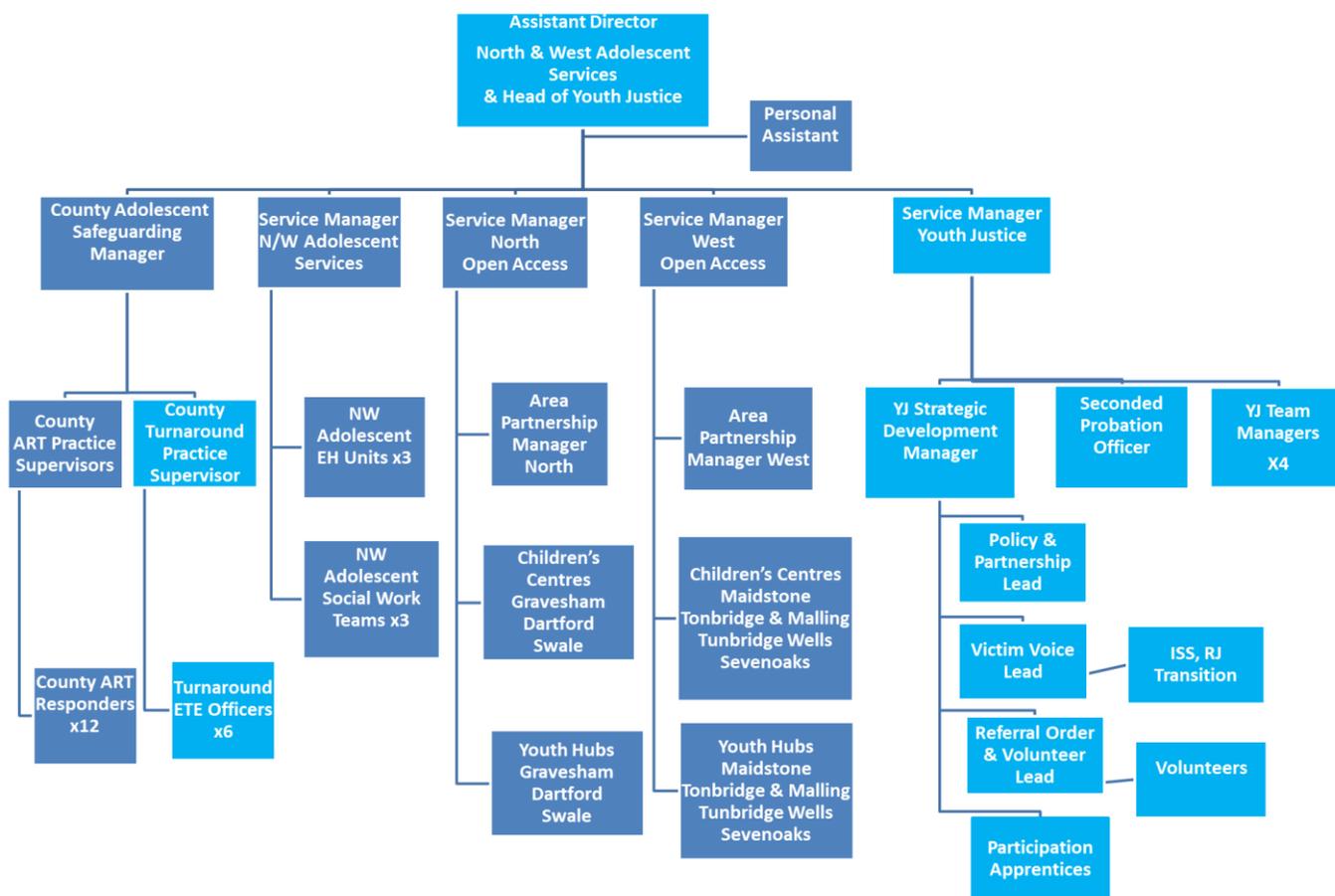
<b>Violence Reduction Unit</b> -and commissioned services
<b>National Probation Service</b> MAPPA, Integrated Offender Management
<b>Kent Police</b> - Police Youth Justice team, Child Centred Policing, Gangs & County Lines team, MCET.
<b>HM Courts &amp; Tribunal Service &amp; Magistrates</b> - Youth Courts, Magistrates Court, Crown Courts
<b>Multi-Agency Partnerships</b> - Kent & Medway Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Joint Exploitation Group, Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership
<b>Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b> Commissioned services including Restorative Solutions & Catch 22
<b>Secure Estate</b> - Cookham Wood YOI, Medway Secure School, Secure Stairs & Transitions
<b>Health</b> - Integrated Care Board, Criminal Justice Liaison & Diversion Service, NELFT & Forensic CAMHS
<b>Voluntary Organisations</b>

Kent Youth Justice are represented on various strategic forums with partners. The most relevant are:

Strategic MAPPA Board	Kent Criminal Justice Board	Kent & Medway Reducing Reoffending Board	Kent & Medway Joint Exploitation Group	Violence Reduction Unit Oversight Board
Protecting Vulnerable People Board	Kent & Medway Youth Justice Scrutiny Panel	KCC's Corporate Parenting Panel	NEET Interdependencies Group	Health Complex & Crisis Care Pathways
South of Thames Youth Justice Heads of Service Group	South-East Region Contextual Safeguarding Forum	Kent & Medway Court Users Group	Southern Region Youth Justice Performance Forum	

### 7.3 Service Structure

The Youth Justice service sits within the Integrated Childrens Services as part of Kent County Council’s Children, Young People and Education Directorate. The statutory head of Youth Justice is the Assistant Director for Adolescent Services and Open Access with strategic responsibility for Contextual Safeguarding and Missing Children.



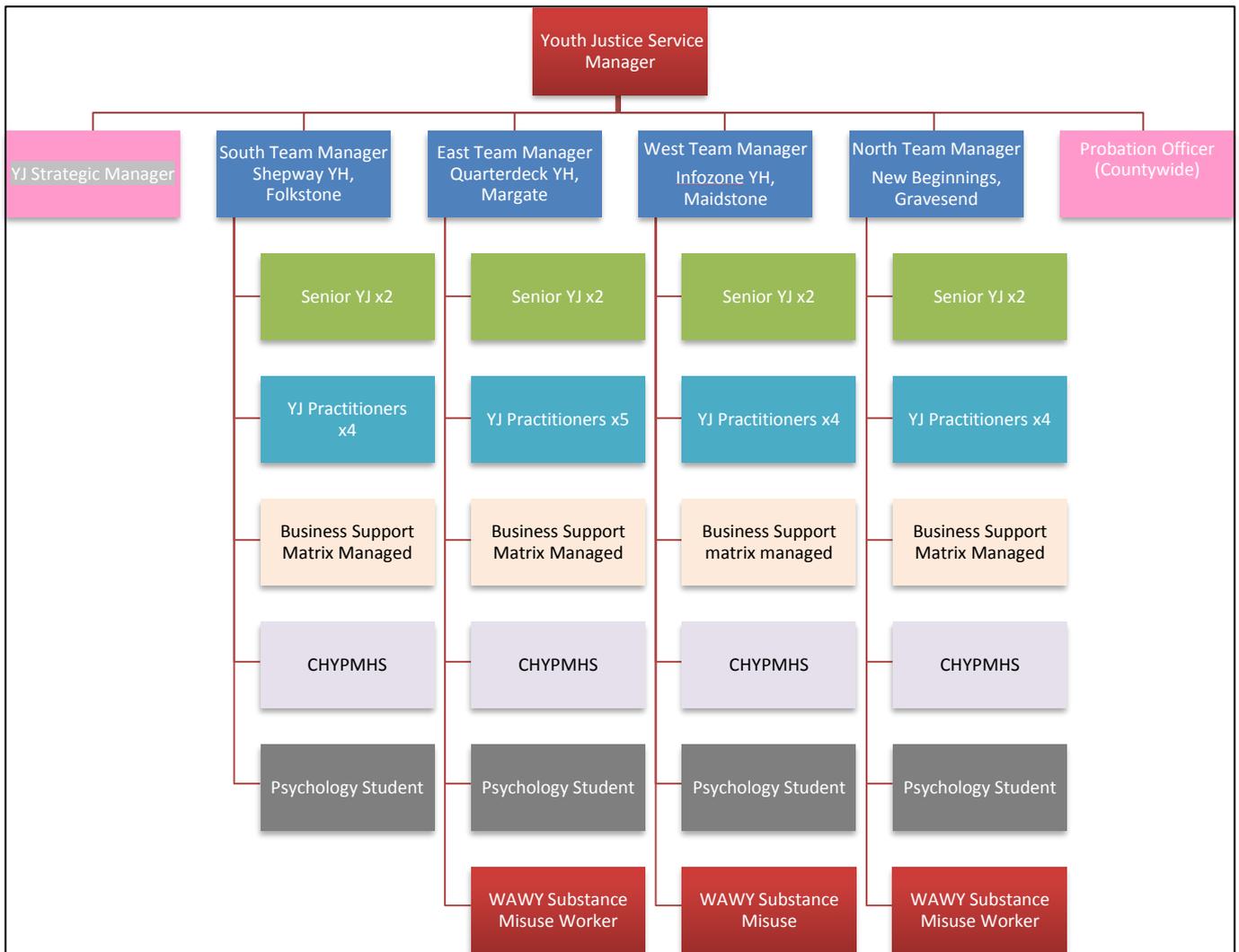
The Strategic Youth Justice Manager oversees a county-wide team including:

- Victim Voice Lead
- Volunteer and Referral Order Lead
- Policy and Partnership Officer
- Non-case holding operational services: Intensive Supervision and Surveillance, Transition and Restorative Justice.

In addition to the roles illustrated in the structure chart above the YJ service is also supported by a YJ central Business Support Team, which has one Senior Business Support Officer, and 2 Business Support Officers.

The service has dedicated time of Management Information Officers and other Management Information and Intelligence functions which support systems, data and reporting.

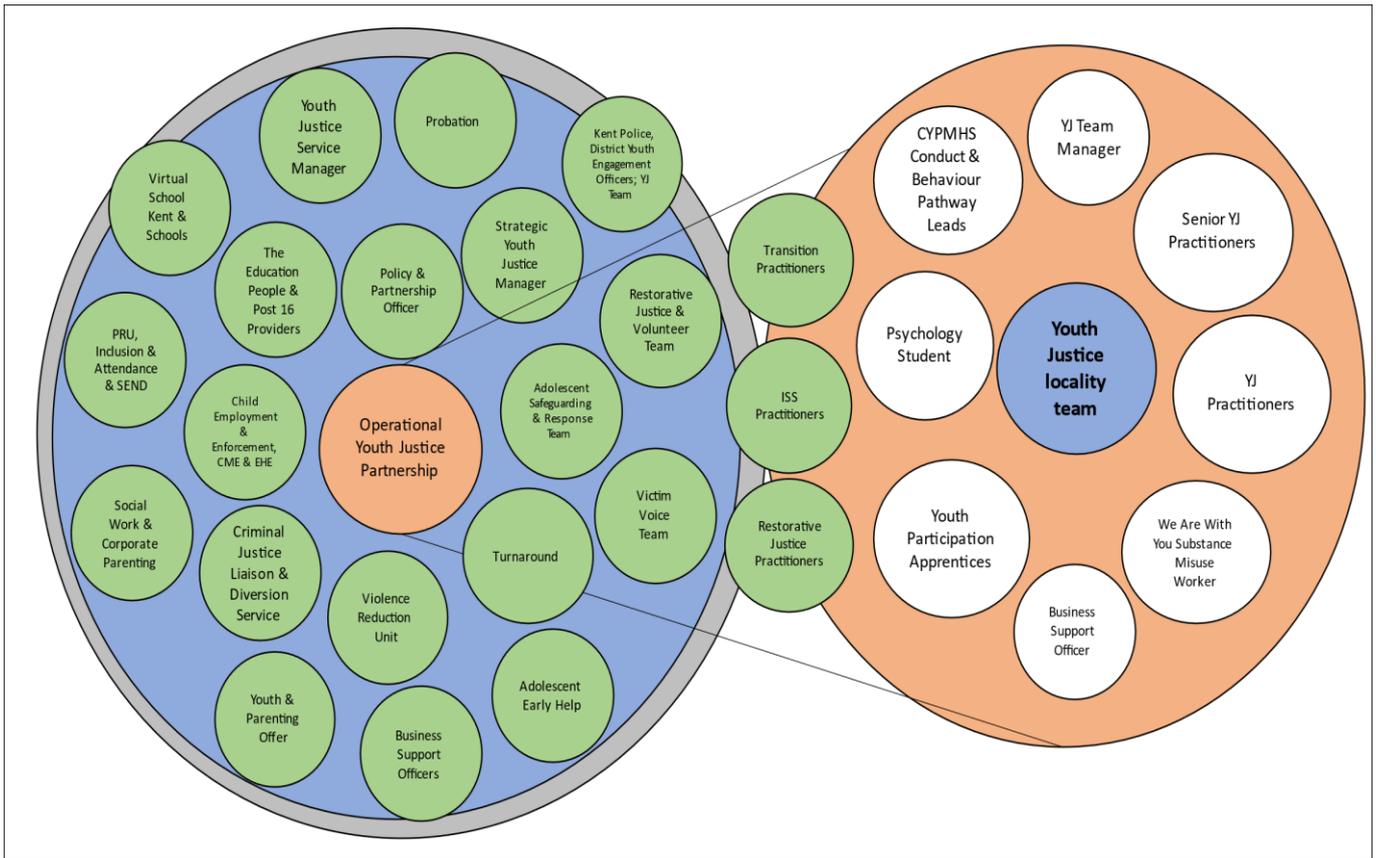
The Youth Justice Service Manager has responsibility for the 4 Youth Justice locality teams which provide statutory services for those children who have entered the Youth Justice System.



The four locality teams provide all statutory functions including case management and court work, including weekend and bank holiday remand Court duties.

The Youth Justice teams work closely with the six Adolescent Early Help units. These focus on prevention, diversion, Out of Court Disposals and holistic, whole-family support. Our Turnaround team works alongside Early Help, promoting engagement in Education, Training or Employment.

The interface of the four youth justice teams with wider services is illustrated below:



YJ Service establishment/seconded/commissioned @ April 2023

	<b>Full time equivalent establishment</b>
County wide and central functions	1x Head of Service, 1x Service Manager 1x Strategic YJ Manager 1x Victim Voice Lead 1x Volunteer Lead, ~20x Referral Order Panel Volunteers 1x Policy and Partnership Officer 2x ISS Practitioners, 2x Restorative Justice Practitioners, 2x Transition Practitioners 1x Probation Officer 1 Senior Business Support Officer, 2 Central Business Support Officers

	<b>Full time equivalent establishment (not actual)</b>
Locality Teams	4x Team Managers 8x Senior YJ Practitioners 17x YJ Practitioners 4x Youth Participation Apprentices 4x Psychology Students on Placement 4x 0.14 (total 0.6FTE) Children & YP Mental Health Practitioners 3 x Substance Misuse Workers 2 x Speech and Language workers 4x Business Support Officers

Outside of Youth Justice but an integral part of service delivery	
Prevention, Diversion	1x Turnaround Practice Supervisor 6x Turnaround ETE Officers 1x Turnaround Data and Business Support Officer Re-Frame- Substance misuse (OOCs) Contribution from 6x Adolescent Early Help Units
Police	New Child Centred Policing structure from 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2023. Police Youth Justice team (manage out of court disposals). 1 x supervisor 6 x YJ officers
Other-	Health -CJLaDS Appropriate Adults commissioned service- Young lives Foundation

In 2023/24 a revised Kent Youth Justice structure will be proposed, within the budget envelope. The aim is to provide a pathway for entry into and progression within the service, and to recruit, develop and retain staff to ensure the required skills and experience meet service demand.

## 8.0 Progress of Previous Plan

Kent's quarterly county Youth Justice Board receives detailed reports (see 7.1). As a result, strategic and operational improvement actions are routinely identified and are formulated into iterative plans.

In June 2021, Kent Youth Justice partnership was inspected by HMIP. Following this, the partnership agreed an improvement plan (appendix 4) which complements the county plan. This continues to be monitored and triangulated with qualitative and quantitative information reported to each County YJ Board.

In 2022/23 the partnership focused on:

## 8.1 Transitions

into, within, and out of Custody, and from YJ to Probation services.

- Piloted 2FTE Transition Practitioners, with NHS funding, across Kent and Medway:
  - to support children within Cookham Wood Young Offenders Institution (YOI), and to provide continuity in respect to healthcare, education and provide intensive out of hours support to them upon their release.
  - To enhance oversight of the experiences of children in the secure estate, ensuring services prioritise their best interests, recognise their needs, capacities, rights, and potential, and address the causes of offending and any unmet social, emotional, health or educational needs.
- Maximised the impact of the seconded Probation resource to monitor and embed good practice in managing transition from YJ to Probation, supported by new operational guidance.

- Co-created resources for children and families about Assisted Prison Visits Schemes; support networks; sentence implications and custodial establishment information.
- Ensured Youth Justice practitioners use the YJ Application Framework (YJAF) as required.
- Ensured that Youth Justice practitioners took a copy of the custodial warrant from Court when a child was remanded to Youth Detention and Accommodation or sentenced to custody and stored this on the child's case records as per YJB guidance.
- Created and launched a bespoke Detention Placement Plan and guidance for social workers and IROs to formulate and record sufficient care plans for children entering the secure estate.

## **8.2 Youth Detention and Accommodation (YDA).**

The last 3 years performance for this measure is reported in section 9.4. In 2022/23 we minimised our rate of YDA by:

- Enhancing the consistent quality of Kent Youth Justice Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) and Asset+ (YJB assessment framework) by improving the guidance and support to both practitioners and Youth Justice Team Managers, including coaching on quality assurance
- Maximising sentencer confidence in Kent Youth Justice credibility to offer robust and effective recommendations about the supervision of children in the community. Kent Youth Justice delivered remand management and 'work in court' training to improve the knowledge and skills of practitioners and managers specifically in proactive remand management. This was complemented with updated and clear remand management guidance. Kent Youth Justice monitored this through feedback from practitioners about their confidence in court, and Magistrate's feedback on practitioner's competence in Court. Magistrates have remarked on staff being proactive, well prepared, and confident in court.
- The partnership monitored and ensured sufficient Intensive Supervision and Surveillance resource to meet demand for robust alternatives to the use of custody. The partnership agreed to maintain 2 FTE ISS Practitioners.

## **8.3 Disproportionality**

- 93.7% of all Kent residents are of white ethnic origin, predominantly White British. 20.5% of 102,447 children (20,981) in school years 7-14 are Black or of a Minority Ethnicity (BAME), which is much higher than the general Kent population at 6.6% (January census 2019).

- Analysis of Kent children with a Court or Out of Court disposal between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2021 indicated the following:

## Ethnicity: BAME Points of Interest

Overall, 228 individuals in the YPC(JS) cohort have a recorded ethnicity which is grouped into BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), making up 13% of the cohort.

### **BAME Summary:**

- When compared to the white cohort, there is a significant over-representation of males in the BAME cohort, and an under-representation of females
- When looking at offences, a significantly greater proportion of BAME individuals committed offences categorised as 'Drugs' and 'Robbery' compared to the white cohort
- A significantly greater proportion of BAME individuals committed offences with a seriousness rating of 6, compared to the white cohort. This is probably linked to offences of 'Robbery', which all attract a seriousness score of 6
- In the Violence Against the Person offence category, a significantly greater proportion of the BAME cohort committed offences 'Possess a knife/sharp blade – in a public place' and 'Grievous bodily harm – without intent' compared to the white cohort
- There is a significant over-representation of BAME individuals in the Serious Youth Violence cohort; 13% of the overall cohort are made up of BAME individual, in the Serious Youth Violence cohort it is 39%

- Children from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, Children in Care (CiC), and children with special education needs are over-represented within the YJ system both nationally and in Kent. The partnership aimed to understand this and to take action to improve the outcomes for these children.

In 2022/23 the partnership:

- Focussed YJ Participation apprentices on engaging over-represented cohorts (BAME, Children known to Social Work, specifically Children in Care) to learn from them how they could have been supported to prevent offending. This is ongoing and will inform our future developments.
- Reported on and scrutinised the over-representation of identified groups (CiC, BAME) within disposal decisions (Out of Court and post court). The partnership, via the County Youth Justice Board, are continuing to explore disparity in Education, Training and Employment including exclusions from school, to better understand and tackle these issues which impact on entry into and escalation through the youth justice system.

- Heard a thematic report from KCC's Quality Assurance unit of some CiC and BAME children to identify if there was anything the partnership could have done differently to avoid their involvement in the YJ system.
- The Kent YJ service continued to upskill our adolescent workforce through engagement in mandatory training which challenges unconscious bias and awareness of disproportionality.
- Actively recruited a diverse workforce and volunteer group to try to attract people who are representative of the child cohort.
- The service promoted YJ practitioners using specialist services including the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) practitioners to support children from minority groups.

The partnership have monitored progress against this priority at each quarterly CYJB.

The following additional Covid-recovery priorities were identified at the CYJB and with the workforce, through performance data; deep dives; feedback, and in anticipation of the post-pandemic needs of the YJ cohort and the workforce.

#### **8.4 Education, Training & Employment (ETE)**

The partnership understands the impact that the response to Covid had on the participation of children in ETE and undertook to support children open to YJ to access full time education, training, or employment.

In 2022/23 the partnership:

- Collaborated with TEP to 'deep dive' the needs of the NEET cohort, and to explore the market for supporting them. We explored potential funding avenues and piloted Kent YJ delivering AQA accreditations within Restorative Justice activity.
- Used trauma-informed approaches to develop meaningful relationships with children to better understand and address the barriers to their engagement in ETE
- Embedded our collaborative arrangements with the Inclusion and Attendance Service; and Virtual School Kent so that these services are aware of children in the criminal justice system and can support them whenever necessary. We have agreed a framework to collaborate with the Special Education Needs service.
- We created a Turn Around project team which complement Early Help activity with a focus on improving the education, training and employment offer and engagement of children at risk of entering the youth justice system.

The success of these actions will be indicated in the longer term by children's increased engagement in ETE, which we monitor at each quarterly CYJB.

## 8.5 Serious Youth Violence & Contextual Safeguarding

### Serious Youth Violence - summary

- Serious Youth Violence has been defined by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) as any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity (seriousness) score of 5 or more
- The most frequently committed offence classed as serious youth violence in the data set is Robbery, which attracts a seriousness score of 6
- There is a significant over representation of males in the serious youth violence cohort when compared to those who did not commit serious youth violence offences
- Individuals with a recorded ethnicity of BAME are over-represented in the serious youth violence cohort compared to those who did not commit serious youth violence offences
- There is an over-representation of the serious youth violence cohort with addresses in Gravesham district, compared to the non-serious cohort

We pioneered and identified good practice to tackle county lines and youth violence in Kent, as well as following the Youth Endowment Fund published guidance of 'what works.'

In 2022/23, working in partnership with Kent and Medway Police, VRU and local authority, we continued delivery of the North Kent and Medway Serious Youth Violence & Prevention Project, which we extended until the end of May 2023. This service was independently evaluated, and the learning will inform our future Serious Youth Violence developments.

In 2022/23 the service:

- Piloted ways of working with children to test, identify and evaluate emerging good practice related to county lines, use of weapons and serious youth violence.
- Offered a knife 1<sup>st</sup> aid course which teaches children the skills to respond to the impact of harm caused by weapons.
- Involved service users and Youth Participation Apprentices in the development of Contextual Safeguarding practice. We have systems in place to understand how un/safe children feel in community locations and buildings (including schools) and we work in partnership to formulate plans to improve safety and feelings of safety in our communities and on-line.

- Collaborated with the Police Missing Child Exploitation Team (MCET), to analyse and understand the data and trends of gangs, modern day slavery, missing and serious youth violence in Kent. We will continue to do this in 2023/24.
- With the Police and VRU, we embedded multi-agency identification and responses to county lines within operational and strategic frameworks, including District Contextual Safeguarding meetings.
- We collaborate with the VRU to scrutinise the effectiveness of the partnership Gangs Strategy, through the monitoring of incidents of serious youth violence and county lines activity, which is reported to the CYJB and other strategic partnerships. This continues in 2023 and is an agreed approach by multi-agency partners.
- We started to develop a strategy and enhance our staff guidance on the use of National Referral Mechanism, to impact on diversion from prosecution where appropriate. However, changes in national contextual safeguarding guidance have influenced this work being deferred until national best practice is better understood.

We will continue in 2023 to develop knowledge and skills in ‘what works’ by engaging in conferences and keeping up to date with research and shared learning.

We also:

- Improved our assessment and management of extra-familial risk and safeguarding by embedding our contextual safeguarding approaches.
- Delivered training to Panel members on trauma informed practice and case formulation.

## **9. Resources & Services**

The YJ Service is funded by a range of grants and partner contributions. This income, together with Kent County Council’s contribution, fund the core service and staff. A finance report at every quarterly CYJB provides actual and forecast expenditure and income. Proposals for service delivery changes are overseen by the Board.

In 2022/23, the Board agreed to invest the remaining £38k from the former Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for Speech and Language, together with a further £100k from the new Integrated Care Board, to extend the YJ contract with the Speech and Language provider, Symbol into 2023/24.

The board also agreed to commit £46k from the CCGs for Trauma informed workforce development from 2022/23 to embedding case formulation in the 4 Youth Justice locality teams in 2023/24.

The NHS Secure Stairs grant, used to fund the 2FTE Transition Practitioners, has now ended. Due to the additionality that these roles provide in achieving positive outcomes for children going into and coming out of the secure estate, the YJ service will propose a model to the Board, and to KCC’s senior management team, to retain sufficiency in this service and keep this under review.

The Police and Crime Commissioner have reduced their contribution to Kent YJ in 2023/24 by £10k, to contribute to the post-11pm access to their Appropriate Adult Service. The PCC grant to Kent YJ provides £265k for restorative justice, tackling high-risk and first-time entrants.

Public Health continue to invest £305k in Youth Justice. In 2023/24 the service level agreement will be refreshed to clarify expectations, outcome, and reporting mechanisms.

We Are With You' seconds specialist substance misuse staff into the 4 Youth Justice locality teams. They also deliver 'Reframe:' the diversion scheme for out of court disposals where the child has committed a low-level drugs possession offence.

Probation contribute £6.5k and remain committed to 1.0FTE seconded staff to the Youth Justice service.

Kent Police are currently restructuring, and the partnership await clarification of resource for Youth Justice. It is expected that Child Centred Police will contribute to ISS delivery, while the Police Youth Justice Team will support intelligence sharing functions and joint decision making for Out of Court Disposals. Police are not currently seconded into the Youth Justice service but collaborative working and co-location with Youth Justice continues to be explored.

The Violence Reduction Unit are a key partner in the contextual safeguarding and risk management approaches, providing both personnel and resources to District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings, Complex Adolescent Harm Meetings and a range of commissioned provision across the continuum of need.

NELFT second 4 CHYPMHS staff to provide consultancy 5 hours per week to each of the 4 locality teams.

At the time of writing the plan, the partnership do not have confirmation of the YJB grant for 2023/24.

## **10. Performance & National Key Performance Indicators**

- The YJ service report on performance against KPIs to the quarterly County Youth Justice Board. Qualitative reports compare performance against national and regional averages and YOT family data. The Board scrutinises the direction of travel, and tackles challenges proactively. The service identifies areas where they are an outlier, providing deep dives and briefings, to elicit CYJB steer on priorities and actions.
- The Youth Justice service reports qualitatively on audits of YJ, OOCs and commissioned partner audits. Key partners bring their own reports annually about their contribution to Youth Justice, including any key changes and challenges.
- Annually, KCC's analytics team produces a profile of children in the system, which helps inform developments. The board considers HMI Probation inspections & thematic reports: learning what we can from these. A self-assessment is undertaken with representatives from across the partnership and the Youth Justice workforce, and through this identify actions, which are reported against to the Board.

## 10.1 Demand

- Currently, KCC's data doesn't distinguish between children given Community Resolutions who accept intervention, and those who don't, nor does it distinguish Community Resolutions issued on the spot by Police, from those agreed jointly with Adolescent Early Help or YJ. Community Resolutions managed by Early Help, and the Re-Frame diversion scheme for drugs possession delivered by 'We Are With You', are therefore not counted in the table below. The Youth Justice service are working with partners to amend processes to facilitate reporting on these in in 2023/24.

	Case load at May 2023	Caseload at May 2022	Caseload at May 2021	Caseload at May 2020
Youth Caution*	0	8	21	35
Youth Conditional Caution	17	22	13	14
Intensive Supervision & Surveillance	3	7	7	5
Community Sentences	104	106	138	101
In Custody	3 YDA 3 DTO 4 S250/254	4 YDA 5 DTO 1 S.90-92	4	4
RLAA	5	3		
Bail Supervision and Support	7	3		
Report stage (outcome outstanding)	12	13		
ASB Injunction Supervision	0	2		
Total YJ caseload excl. OOCDS* held in AEH	158	158	164	138

- Around one-third of the cohort are intensively supervised by Youth Justice (3 times per week); one-third enhanced (4x month); 10% standard, and 20% in the assessment stage at any one time.
- Kent YJ practitioners provide the weekday, weekend and holiday occasional Court duty service, and evening referral order panel duties.
- Kent YJ are reviewing structures and resources in 2023/24 and are confident in achieving a sufficient establishment of practitioners and managers to meet the service demands. The aspiration is to provide pathways from entry level apprentices to progress through to Senior Management opportunities, to attract and retain the right people for the service.

## 10.2 First Time Entrants

- Following an increase in first time entrants in 20/21 (attributable in part to Covid pandemic Court delays) Kent saw an 11% reduction in first time entrants the following year. However, local data records a 30% increase in first time entrants in 22/23 from 21/22. There is more to be done on the accuracy of and congruence between KCC and Police data.

Year & Quarter	Number	Annual Total
2022/23 Q4	85	313
2022/23 Q3	78	
2022/23 Q2	76	
2022/23 Q1	74	
2021/22 Q4	71	241
2021/22 Q3	72	
2021/22 Q2	47	
2021/22 Q1	51	
2020/21 Q4	67	270
2020/21 Q3	79	
2020/21 Q2	68	
2020/21 Q1	56	

- The launch of Outcome 22 by Kent Police is expected to reduce first-time entrants. This has been an action for the partnership since 2021 and its implementation impacted by the restructure of Kent Police. The launch of Outcome 22 is anticipated in August 2023.
- KCC's implementation of the Turnaround programme from January 2023 will reduce first time entrants by enhancing the Early Help offer to those children who come to the attention of the Police but are not in receipt of Youth Justice services.
- Police 'no further action' (NFA) decisions are disproportionately related to incidents of Adolescent to Parent Violence (APV). Kent has an APV intervention which can be offered as part of Outcome 22 as an alternative to NFA. This is expected to break the cycle of APV and reduce future offending and entry into the Youth Justice System.

### 10.3 Reoffending

- Using the CorePlus toolkit, Kent's YJ Service reported, in May 2023, the re-offending rates illustrated in the table below. Police data differs significantly from our local authority data, and we hypothesise that Kent Police figures include children who offend in Kent but are not resident in Kent (particularly in high volume areas such as Bluewater Shopping Centre), include those who are resident in Medway, and include those who are placed in Kent by other authorities. Further work is needed to achieve a data set that the partnership can have confidence in.

	<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Re-offenders</b>	<b>Rate of re-offending</b>	<b>CIC re-offenders</b>
<b>Youth Caution or Conditional Caution</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Referral Order</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>YRO/Supervision</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Female	<b>60</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Male	<b>352</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>33%</b>
BAME	<b>69</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>50%</b>
White	<b>337</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	

### 10.4 Use of the Secure Estate

- The number of children remanded to youth detention or sentenced to custody had significantly reduced year on year, until 2021/22 when several incidents of serious youth violence saw several children charged with murder, attempted murder and GBH s.18. This escalated the number of secure remands as illustrated in the table below and echoed the national increase of children subject to YDA in that year.

- In 2022/23 the number of secure remands reduced by 19% from the year before, and custodial sentences by 11%.

Year and Quarter	Custodial Sentences	Total	YDA	Total
2022/23 Q4	1	8	4	13
2022/23 Q3	2		2	
2022/23 Q2	3		3	
2022/23 Q1	2		4	
2021/22 Q4	2	9	2	16
2021/22 Q3	3		1	
2021/22 Q2	1		7	
2021/22 Q1	3		6	
2020/21 Q4	2	6	2	9
2020/21 Q3	1		4	
2020/21 Q2	1		1	
2020/21 Q1	2		2	

- Coaching of KCC's Youth Justice Team Managers in quality assurance was prioritised for cusp-of custody Pre-Sentence reports. This drove county consistency in quality, ensured robust risk management and maximised community resources to avoid custodial sentences where appropriate.
- The partnership participated in the HMIP & Ofsted remand thematic inspection. 15 children's remand records were inspected by HMIP and 2 were inspected additionally by Ofsted. Partners met with Inspectors in focus groups and provided evidence of policy and practice. The inspection acknowledged strengths in the partnership, and will inform KCC's structural review of Youth Justice, including the commitment to the secure estate Transition resource.

## 10.5 Additional Key Performance Indicators (from April 2023)

- It is a requirement for the partnership to report on new Key Performance Indicators from April 2023, with the first submission in August 2023.
- The Kent YJ case management and information system is being upgraded to facilitate this reporting both locally and nationally.

Key Performance Indicator	Definition	Currently Reportable?	Risks/challenges
<b>Suitable accommodation</b>	The type and suitability of accommodation at the start and end of the order by type of order. Additionally, for those leaving custody, it notes how far in advance accommodation was secured.	<b>Partially</b>	Accommodation is currently reported, but not in advance of release from the secure estate. A new mechanism will be put in place by KCC to record and report this. Kent consistently achieves 100% performance and has processes in place to seek suitable accommodation for this cohort. There is a low risk of not sustaining this performance, although placements, if required for this cohort, are increasingly difficult to identify and are costly. The Board has representation from Social work services which influences the timeliness of searching for accommodation, and the use of trauma informed profiles and placement plans.
<b>Education, Training &amp; Employment (ETE)</b>	The number and proportion of children in ETE by suitability, provision type and type of order for children of school age and children above school age and how many hours were offered and attended.	<b>Yes</b>	Counting rules have changed to reduce “suitable” hours & include education pathway plans.  This KPI (in addition to SEND) will present the biggest challenge for the partnership to achieve. However, counting rules have changed to “suitable” hours and acknowledge an educational pathway plan. This offers a more flexible measure and should see an increase in performance. The Board has representation from SEND and the PRU Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) to support policy and practice against this measure.

Key Performance Indicator	Definition	Currently Reportable?	Risks/challenges
<b>SEND/Additional Learning needs</b>	The number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) for England by type of order, whether the child has a formal plan in place and whether they are in suitable ETE.	<b>Partially</b>	<p>The number of children open to YJ with Education Health &amp; Care Plans (EHCP)s is reported on but not whether they have suitable provision and whether they have a plan in place. A new mechanism will be put in place by KCC to record &amp; report this.</p> <p>Kent SEND is currently on a journey to necessary improvement, and this KPI presents a significant challenge for the partnership to achieve. SEND are represented on the County YJB and YJ are a key partner in supporting the SEND improvements for children in the youth justice system.</p>
<b>Mental Healthcare and Emotional Wellbeing</b>	Children screened or assessed to understand their mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. For children with an arrangement to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing, the measure seeks clarification on whether support is in place.	<b>No</b>	<p>A new mechanism will be put in place with NELFT (children's mental health provider) and KCC to record and report this performance.</p> <p>There are numerous services which contribute to meeting the emotional and mental health needs of children open to Youth Justice, with representation at the County Youth Justice Board and within the partnership.</p>
<b>Substance Misuse</b>	The number of children with a screened or identified need for an intervention or treatment to address substance misuse and of those, the number of planned/offered treatment and the number of children attending intervention/treatment.	<b>No</b>	A new mechanism will be put in place with We Are With You (WAWY) and KCC to record and report this performance.

Key Performance Indicator	Definition	Currently Reportable?	Risks/challenges
<b>Out of Court Disposals</b>	The number of children with interventions ending in the period, broken down into the number of children who completed the intervention programmes in the quarter and the number who did not complete intervention programmes in the quarter.	<b>No</b>	Further work will be done by Kent Police and Kent Youth Justice to ensure all Out of Court Disposals are reported on, and the impact of them understood by the partnership.
<b>Links to wider services</b>	The number of children who are care experienced ('Looked After Child'), a 'Child in Need' or who are on a 'Child Protection Plan', an 'Early Intervention Plan' or who are referred to Early Help services.	<b>Partially</b>	Numbers of children in care are reported but not children in need, child protection or early help. This information is available, and a new mechanism will be put in place by KCC to report this performance.
<b>Management Board (CYJB) attendance</b>	The attendance of senior partners at the quarterly CYJB meetings, and if those partners contribute data from their individual services that identify areas of racial and ethnic disproportionality.	<b>No</b>	A new mechanism will be put in place with key partners and KCC to record and report this performance, and to keep members to account for their active representation.
<b>Serious Youth violence</b>	The numbers of children cautioned or convicted of Serious Violence on the Youth justice caseload (defined as any drug, robbery, or violence against the person offence, with a gravity score of 5 or more	<b>No</b>	A new mechanism will be put in place by KCC to record and report this performance.  Kent has experienced several serious youth violence incidents in the last two years. In 2023/24 the partnership will be implementing a multi-agency serious incident thematic review to identify learning and future actions.

Key Performance Indicator	Definition	Currently Reportable?	Risks/challenges
	resulting in a caution or court sentence).		
<b>Victims</b>	The number of victims resulting from offences committed by children on the Youth Justice caseload. The number contacted, the number engaged in restorative justice, and numbers who requested and were given further information and support.	<b>No</b>	There is more to be done by the Police to ensure that Kent Youth Justice receives victim details in a timely manner for all offences committed by children.  The partnership have the mechanisms to report on this and will amend reporting mechanisms to include this KPI.

## 11. Priorities

### 11.1 Over-represented Children

Black, Mixed, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, and children in care, are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system nationally, and most evidently in custody. Research illustrates that Black children receive harsher sentences for comparable offences than White children. When remanded into custody, Black children are more likely than White children to then receive a custodial sentence.

The Kent Youth Justice partnership have a role in tackling this disproportionality:

- Strategic leaders and practitioners from the partnership to challenge themselves to offer the best possible service to BAME children and those in care; to understand their early life experiences, how their identity and experiences impact them, and to be flexible, resourceful, creative, and responsive to meet their needs.
- Partnership practitioners taking responsibility and being persistent in efforts to engage BAME children, and their families, and developing effective and meaningful professional relationships. The partnership will collaborate with other organisations who can help this, including faith and cultural groups where appropriate.
- Leaders and practitioners committing to ongoing training and development of the workforce, including volunteers, to help us all use appropriate language, to understand diversity, and to challenge unconscious bias.

- Partnership leaders and the County Board to use data to highlight and scrutinise areas of disproportionality, such as assessments of risk, proposals for Out of Court Disposals, community remand and sentencing proposals.
- Leaders and manager developing recruitment processes to attract a diverse and representative cohort of staff and volunteers across the partnership.
- Leaders investing in developing practitioners' skills and confidence to ask children and families about their identity and lived experiences.
- The Board improving how we hear the voice of children to inform our strategic and operational actions to tackle disproportionality. In 2023 Kent YJ will review the role of Participation Apprentices; how services understand lived experience of the justice system and utilise the expertise of our BAME community partners (including the Equality Cohesion Council) to help us in this work.
- The Board hearing disproportionality in the system, keeping partners to account for what is being done about it, and monitoring how effective those actions are.
- All Board members, staff and volunteers proactively tackling discrimination and unconscious bias at every level.
- The Board understanding and learning from Audit and keeping partners to account for what is being done about it and monitoring how effective those actions are.

In 2022/23 Kent Youth Justice and its partners audited the records of our BAME children. The methodology considered the quality and timeliness of intervention for ethnic minority children, informed by Her Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) October 2021 published findings of *"The experiences of Black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system"* and the subsequent (December 2021) HMIP effective practice guidance. The records were selected of 10 children in Kent of ethnic minority who had been convicted of the most serious offences and were subject to either custodial or highly intensive court orders.

An audit was undertaken of both the social work and youth justice records. The parents/carers and the children were also surveyed about their experiences and reflections, and specifically on whether there were any missed opportunities to access support earlier.

The children and their families told us:

"the Youth Justice Worker was the only person he felt able to talk to".

*"There were some people from similar backgrounds to me who understood my culture and family life. Not everyone really understood or took the time to understand."*

The findings of the audit mirrored the HMIP thematic inspection, although most of the BAME children audited had been relocated or displaced from London boroughs to Kent, due to contextual risks. This meant that by the time the children arrived in Kent, they were beyond early intervention and diversion.

The findings of the audit were presented to the County Youth Justice in February 2023. The CYJB agreed that *it is important to hear the voice of the child. The CYJB agreed to hear case histories, specifically the early life experiences and access to services, of BAME children who commit grave crimes resulting in YRO's with ISS and DTO's.* In 2023/24 the partnership will continue to hear analysis of our BAME children to challenge our service provision and to drive improvement.

Additionally, support for Youth Justice Team Managers in the gatekeeping of “so-serious” Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) was identified as a development need and is being met through coaching. In addition to scrutinising risk and safeguarding responsibilities, this process focuses on PSRs for children facing custody, including those who are BAME and CiC. In 2023/24 Kent Youth Justice will introduce additional gatekeeping for BAME and CiC children, to strive to achieve better outcomes for them.

## **11.2 Prevention**

### **11.2.1 Adolescent Early Help**

The key delivery arm of the partnership prevention strategy continues to be KCC's Adolescent Early Help service. This provides an holistic, needs-led, whole family approach to all adolescent early-help referrals, including out of court disposals (except for Youth Conditional Cautions). Referrals to Adolescent Early Help services can be made to Kent's Front Door by any individual (including self-referrals) or partner agency that identifies a child requiring support.

Children and families accessing Early Help have a proportionate assessment of their needs undertaken, and success is measured individually against those. Adolescent Early Help Unit Leads are responsible for quality assurance of assessments and plans. KCC's county-wide integrated children's services audit and moderation programme provides a further layer of scrutiny and opportunities to identify learning and improvement needs.

### **11.2.2 Family Hubs**

Kent offers universal and targeted provision for children and families through open access Youth Hubs and Children's Centres. In 2023, Kent are developing a Family Hubs model with partners, with full implementation in 2025. These will deliver a range of programmes including parenting support to meet local need.

Kent's current open access offer includes universal and targeted detached youth work. Targeted work is directed by partnership information shared within District Contextual safeguarding meetings (DCSM's); responding to places and spaces where children may be at risk of harm, exploitation of behaviour that could lead to entry into the criminal justice system.

### **11.2.3 Partnerships**

Kent's partners contribute significantly to the prevention of children offending. Kent Police lead the multi-agency Concordat and child centred policing plan. In June 2023 Police launched their child centred policing teams which will deliver OSARA problem solving within schools and youth ASB hotspots and provide early intervention- targeting those at risk of entry into the criminal justice system.

### **11.3 Diversion and Out of Court Disposals**

Kent and Medway's Out of Court Disposal panel is led by the Police and enables decision making about children to be shared and informed by the Local Authority. The panel prioritises diversion of Children in Care. The CYJB have asked the Police to consider BAME children a priority group for diversion in 2023/24.

In 2023 KCC will launch a bespoke assessment, planning and reporting tool for Out of Court Disposals. This will focus on the 3 pillars of youth justice, sharing the assessment of risk of harm to others, safety and well-being of the child and factors for and against desistance with the OOC panel. This is intended to improve shared decision making and achieve better outcomes for children, including tackling disproportionality.

#### **11.3.1 Outcome 22**

In 2022/23 KCC and the Police prepared for the implementation of Outcome 22 as a deferred prosecution, and for those who may otherwise have received a 'no further action' but are willing to engage with intervention to reduce the likelihood of future offending. This is intended to 'go-live' in August 2023. Outcome 22 should see a decrease in unilateral on-the-spot community resolutions, in favour of needs-led preventative and diversionary intervention and will reduce Kent's first-time entrants.

In 22/23 Kent saw a rise in first time entrants, against the national downward trend.

In the County Youth Justice Board consultation to inform this plan it was agreed that in 2023/24 the Youth Justice Partnership will:

- Launch Outcome 22
- Implement the revised OOC assessment, planning and reporting tool.
- Develop a framework to monitor and measure the effectiveness of Out of Court disposals.
- Improve confidence in and congruence between Police and local authority data.

#### **11.3.2 Turnaround**

The introduction of the Turnaround program in 2023 is a key strand of Kent's diversion strategy. The principles of Kent's delivery of Turnaround is to enhance the current local authority early help offer, by providing early support to engage children in education, training or employment and ensuring they have a suitable offer of ETE. Engaging in ETE is one of the key protective factors for desistance, and being NEET, excluded or not attending/engaging, being one of the strongest factors against desistance.

Turnaround maintains a non-criminogenic approach, delivering evidence-based interventions, and using a multi-agency assessment and plan, in line with Supporting Families.

Referrals are predominantly but not exclusively from Police. KCC are currently collaborating with Police to create a referral pathway and process, including triage, and recording for effective monitoring and evaluation purposes. The eligible cohort are those children who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- With a first-time Youth Caution,
- Subject to Police No Further Action decisions following arrest (including outcome 22),
- Subject to a Community Resolution,
- Released under investigation or subject to pre-charge bail,
- Fined, discharged (absolutely or conditionally) and/or acquitted at court,
- With Community Protection Orders, Civil Injunctions/Orders as a result of anti-social behaviour (including Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Community Protection Notices) and who have not previously received statutory YJ intervention.

Turnaround offer diversionary support to children, who, because of no comment interviews, would previously have escalated to Court. In the first period of delivery, Jan-March 2023, 23 children were supported by Turnaround. The target for 2023/24 is 113 children.

Turnaround will bring expertise which will to facilitate a cultural shift away from demands in Kent for EHCPs, while challenging and supporting schools and training providers to meet children's needs.

#### Practice Example:

- Police referred a 15-year-old male after imposing a Community Resolution for criminal damage.
- No current or previous access to services.
- Turnaround Officer contacted parents, agreed plan of support.
- Child had been persistently absent from school over a 5-month period.
- Team around the child meeting identified interventions to support academic change for the child. Agreed managed move to an alternative provision for 6 weeks.
- Child was off-rolled at named school. Re-integration meeting held with school, Turnaround Officer, family, Adolescent EH worker to discuss the breakdown of school placement.
- Child accepted an alternative educational provision at another local school.
- Turnaround funding provided uniform & temporary transport, and continued mentoring to support the school placement.
- Outcome: significant improved attendance was sustained.

### **11.3.3 Reframe**

Kent's commissioned substance misuse provider, 'We Are With You,' deliver the Youth Diversion and Intervention Scheme, Reframe. This offers an alternative to Police to give a 'no further action' rather than an out of court disposal for children who have committed a low-level drugs offence, such as possession of cannabis.

We Are With You are committed to referring onwards to Kent's Front Door, should a child or family need, and consent to, more holistic support.

### **11.4 Education**

The Kent County Youth Justice Board considers both the offer to and the engagement of children in Education, Employment or Training, at the time they start and when they end their order. There are continued concerns about the impact of covid on children's engagement, and the reduction in suitable post-16 provision for the YJ cohort.

In response, the Youth Justice service is accrediting reparation and ISS activity through the AQA framework. The activity enhances the skills and employability of the YJ cohort, while giving them real qualifications that have currency. In 2022/23, 71 children achieved at least 1 AQA.

KCC's commissioning ensures providers offer social value, and Kent YJ will promote the opportunity for providers to offer apprenticeships, work experience and employment to the youth justice cohort.

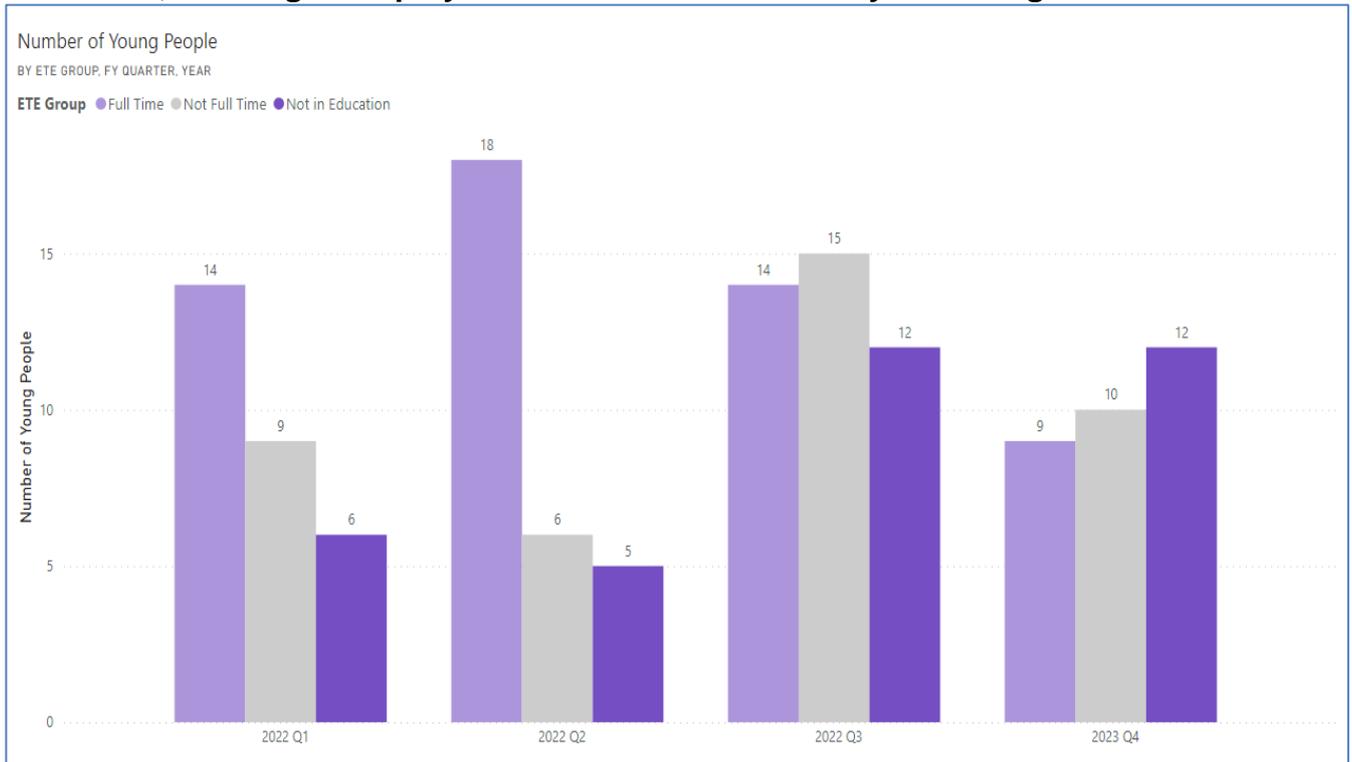
KCC's commissioned provider for NEET monitoring and advisory services, The Education People (TEP), contributes to the CYJB periodically and collaborates with the service outside of the board. TEP don't provide post-16 education, but they work with providers to understand the gaps in post-16 provision, and they help broker sufficient placements to meet identified need.

The partnership will promote an inclusive culture in KCC and partnership buildings, such as libraries and adult education, which reflects our shared roles as corporate parents, to provide a welcoming and safe space for children open to youth justice, and their families.

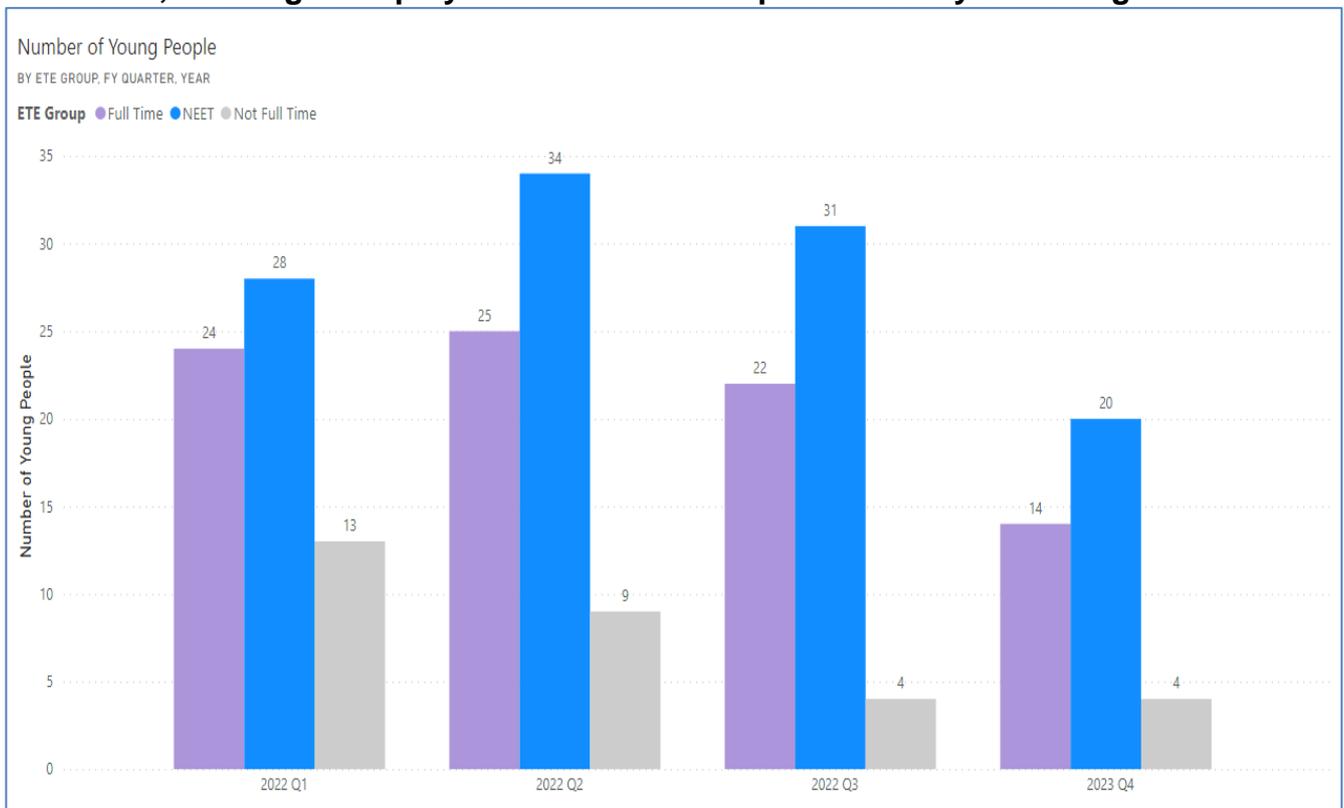
Kent Youth Justice will fully introduce the education and Youth Justice education risk assessment tool. This facilitates a shared risk assessment and management plan which can improve children's access to education provision when a concern about risk of harm to others has been raised.

It is evident, based on current performance data, that engagement in education, training and employment is one of the key challenges for Kent Youth Justice Services and its partners. The counting rules for the new national ETE and SEND key performance indicators gives more flexibility to meet individual needs for children, which reflect realistic and sustainable educational and vocational pathway planning.

## Education, Training & Employment Attendance– statutory school age 2022/23



## Education, Training & Employment Attendance – post statutory school age 2022/23



## 11.5 Restorative Approaches & Victims

Kent Youth Justice service has a dedicated Victim Voice Lead, 2 Restorative Justice (Reparation) practitioners and are currently training 3 further staff in restorative justice and victim contact work to ensure the service can meet demand.

A focus on this work has seen a continuing increase in the quality and quantity of hearing the voice of victims in our assessment, planning and interventions.

Kent YJ has a diverse range of in-direct reparation projects which offer accreditations to children. The Police and Crime Commissioner fund Restorative Solutions to offer direct “victim-offender” restorative conferences. They also provide specialist support to ensure that apology letters created with children are as meaningful and restorative as possible for the victim.

**A restorative meeting was held between a child in custody and a victim. This allowed the child to hear the views of the victim directly, which elicited an apology from the child.**

**Prior to the meeting both parties were prepared by Restorative Solutions. The child was incredibly nervous beforehand but felt proud afterwards to have taken part. The Victim expressed that they felt safe and completely supported throughout the whole process.**

**The meeting helped both the child and victim to put the incident behind them.**

Kent YJ have developed a suite of proxy victim statements to enhance victim empathy intervention when the victim is not identifiable or does not wish to participate in restorative justice. The service has co-created a proxy victim video with Kent Police, aimed at children who have committed an offence against an emergency worker. The partnership are currently developing projects with National Rail for children who offend on the railway.

By implementing Outcome 22, the partnership hopes to reduce the numbers of unilaterally imposed informal Community Resolutions. These disposals, if administered without a genuine restorative element, can disregard the voice of victims, undermining victim confidence in decision making, and in the system.

In 2023 – 24 the Youth Justice partnership will:

- Continue to prioritise Police obtaining and sharing victim contact details with the local authority at the earliest opportunity, by launching an improved E-YOT or alternative Police referral form.
- Ensure Kent YJ case audits and case management quality assurance processes provide oversight of the extent to which the voice of victims is heard in assessment, planning and delivery of work with children.
- Report to CYJB on the new Victim KPI, to share responsibility, drive performance and encourage challenge. This will include monitoring and evaluating Kent YJ’s Victim voice resource for both sufficiency and quality.

## 11.6 Serious Violence & Exploitation

The Youth Justice Board’s definition of serious violence is any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of 5 or more. 45 Kent children received a court outcome for serious violence offences by this definition in the year 2022 – 23.

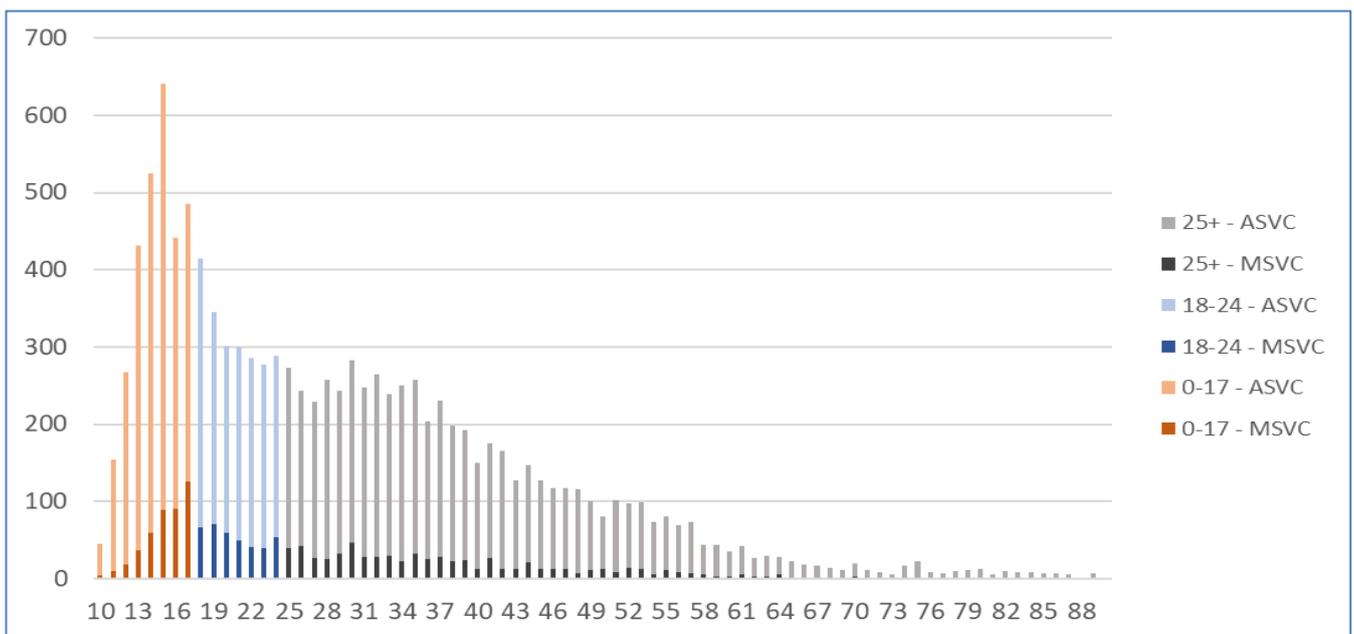
Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit provides analysis of serious violence within the 2022/23 Strategic Needs Assessment, using data from October 2021 – September 2022. The VRU data identifies the main types of serious violence as:

- Violence with injury
- Robbery
- Violence linked to weapons
- Violence linked to drug supply

Children are over-represented in the serious violence data both as suspects and victims. 63% of children open to Kent Youth Justice have been convicted of a violent offence.

		10 – 17 years	18 - 24 years	25+ years
Kent	Proportion of the total suspects	24.9%	19.1%	55.5%
Medway	Proportion of the total suspects	31.9%	20.5%	47%
Kent	Proportion of total victims	28.3%	15.6%	56.1%
Medway	Proportion of total victims	31.7%	16.9%	51.4%

The VRU needs assessment identified that while serious violence remains lower than pre-pandemic levels, there has been a disproportionate increase in the numbers of children involved in offences where injury has been caused and where weapons were involved.



ASVC = All Serious Violent Crime.

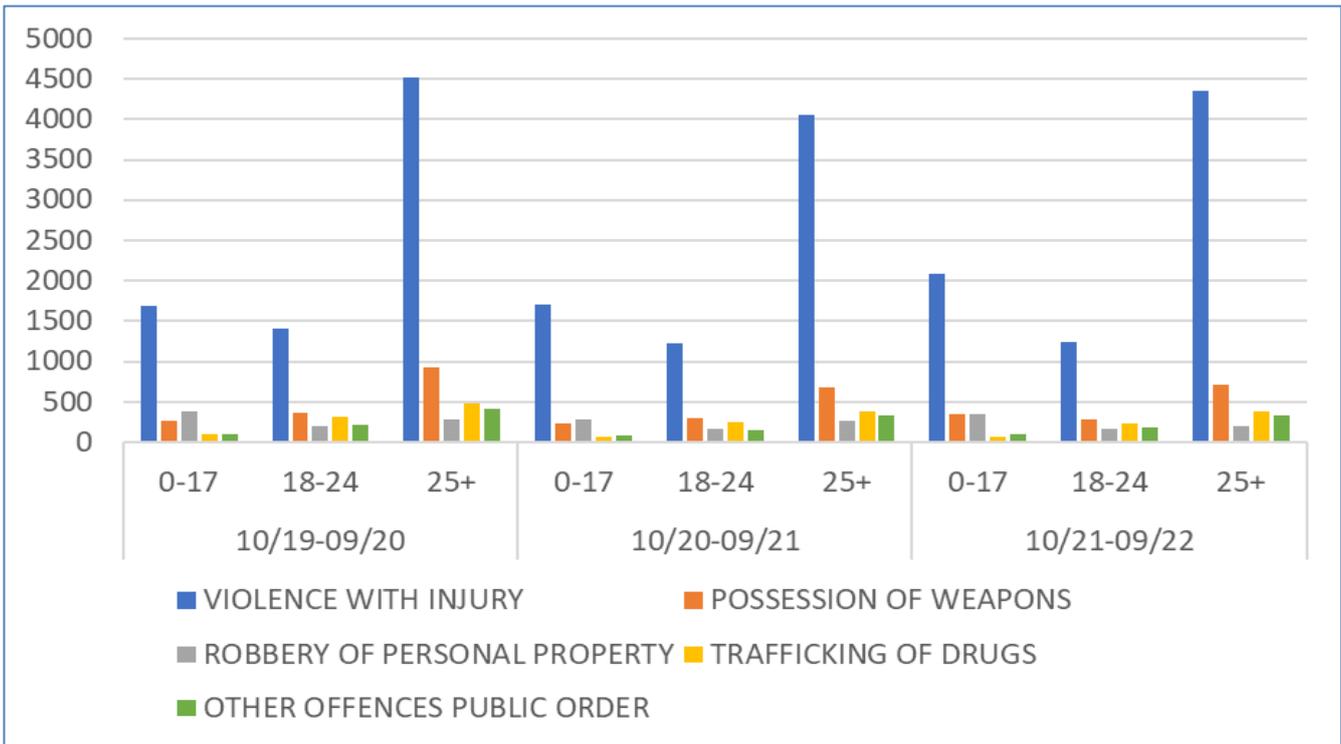
MSVC = Most Serious Violent Crime, includes Homicide, Attempt Murder, Assault with intent to cause serious harm, knife, firearm, corrosive related serious violence, aggravated burglary excluding Domestic Abuse

The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and Kent Youth Justice service work closely together leading multi-agency approaches to reduce or prevent violence from occurring. One of the VRU Directors is seconded from Kent Youth Justice which supports excellent mutual understanding and collaboration.

Kent Police are actively involved in the strategy to tackle serious violence and a new model for neighbourhood policing has created a Child Centred Policing role. This role will increase information sharing and lever in resources for joint working with children and families where there are risks of violence or exploitation.

The Kent Youth Justice partnership through the County Youth Justice board have agreed to follow best practice and guidance from the Youth Endowment Fund, supporting what does work and agreeing not to commission or support intervention with no evidence base or proven to be harmful. In line with this, the partnership commissions, delivers and/or supports those approaches which make high and moderate impact on reducing serious violence including:

- Focussed Deterrence
- Reachable Moments (A&E Navigators)
- Street Games
- Social Skills development
- Dialectical Behavioural Therapy approaches
- Restorative Justice
- Mentoring
- Hot-Spots Policing
- By-stander interventions
- Pre-Court diversion
- Parenting intervention



### The Partnership Activity Includes:

- Information and data sharing. The YJ service and the VRU routinely share intelligence, information, and data. The VRU provides analysis of multi-agency data sets (Police, KCC, Probation) which enhances understanding of serious violence risk related to locations, times, and individuals.
- Kent Police's Youth Justice team provide daily intelligence checks on children in the criminal justice system.
- Multi-agency collaboration in District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings and Complex Adolescent Harm Meetings which are the multi-agency mechanisms to identify, plan and respond to contextual risks.
- Kent's YJ and Adolescent Response Team co-designed the Focussed Deterrence approach with Police and VRU to tackle young street groups and gangs.
- Police, VRU and Youth Justice play a key role in MAPPA processes and work closely with the Integrated Offender Management teams who will focus on serious violence in 2023 – 24.

### In 2023 – 24 the Youth Justice Partnership will:

- be actively represented on the new Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board. The chair of the County Youth Justice Board will represent the partnership on the Board which will set the strategic priorities for the specified authorities to meet the legal requirements of the serious violence duty.
- support the development of a multi-agency data sharing platform that combines data from Police, Local Authorities, Probation and Health. This will enable user generated analysis to inform the strategic and operational response to violence.
- identify children where risks of harm from knives or weapons is high. A Focussed Deterrence and approach will persistently offer of support, coupled with enhanced surveillance and enforcement.
- seek representation from all specified and relevant authorities (Police, Health, Education, Community Safety) to deliver a plan for children where there is a risk of harm linked to violence. informed by and including all relevant agencies.
- collaborate with the VRU to deliver Street Aid training to children where there are risks of harm linked to weapons. The training will equip children with skills to provide first aid should this be required, and the program provides an opportunity for professionals to talk with children about harm from weapons.
- explore with Health the opportunity to develop a fast track CAMHS response for victims and witnesses of serious youth violence.
- develop a strategy and enhance guidance to partners on the use of National Referral Mechanism, to divert children from prosecution where appropriate.

## 11.7 Detention in Police Custody

Kent YJ and Kent Police are a signatory to the national Children in Custody Concordat:

- *To coordinate activity to meet the aims and objectives of the Home Office Children in Custody Concordat ensuring principles and processes are discussed and reviewed to ensure children are only detained where it is absolutely necessary.*
- *To work together to develop best practice to ensure children spend the minimum amount of time necessary in Custody and that when they do, they are cared for with dignity and respect taking in to account their needs in order to reduce trauma.*

In 22/23 The Safeguarding Partnership Independent Scrutineer reviewed Kent Police procedures and outcomes for children detained overnight in Police custody. They noted that some children were unnecessarily detained, and that further partnership work was needed to tackle this. There have been 622 children arrested, brought into custody, and detained by Kent Police from Jan-June 2023. This includes Medway and out of area children. This is comparable with 1,650 child detentions in 2020, 1,202 child detentions in 2021 and 1,440 child detentions in 2022.

The scrutineers report and recommendations are available via the link [Annual Reports - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership \(kscmp.org.uk\)](https://www.kscmp.org.uk)

Kent and Medway YJ services, Kent Front Door and Police meet quarterly to develop a strategy and local concordat. This articulates the expectations of each other in respect to children coming to the attention of Police and going through Police custody. An operational, tactical meeting will be introduced in 2023/24 to facilitate scrutiny of child level custody decisions, including the provision of accommodation by the Local Authority, to drive practice improvement and overcome barriers and challenges in meeting the aims of the national concordat.

## 11.8 Transition Into & Out of the Secure Estate

In 2022/23 the number of children remanded to secure reduced by 19%. Children receiving custodial sentences fell by 11% from the previous year.

In 2021, with NHS England Secure Stairs funding, Kent Youth Justice enhanced transition and resettlement resource and employed two dedicated Transition Practitioners. These work within Cookham Wood YOI to embed trauma-informed approaches and to adopt the framework for integrated care of children with complex needs.

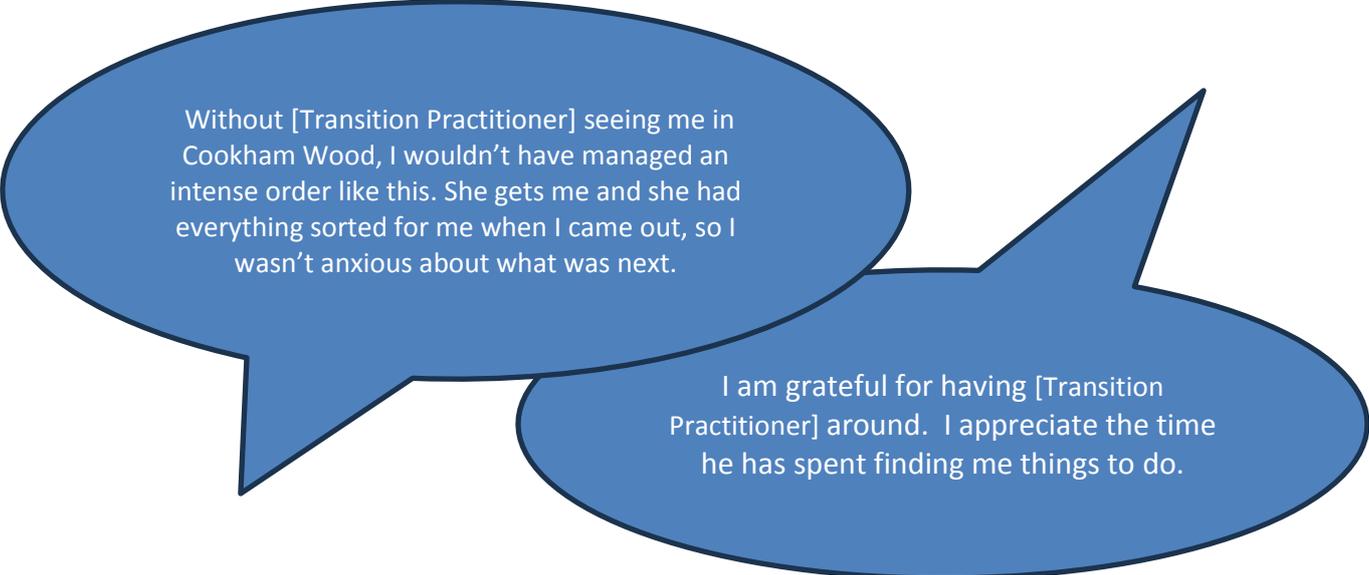
As part of a 2-year pilot, the Transition practitioners have worked with providers to ensure continuity of healthcare and education for children going into and coming out of the secure estate. They directly offer intensive and out of hours support to children upon their release into the community. They have additionally monitored and reported on children's experiences of the secure estate, ensuring services prioritise their best interests, recognise their needs, capacities, rights, potential, and address the causes of offending and any unmet social, emotional, health or educational needs.

Kent Youth Justice have extended the contract of our Transition practitioners while the staffing structure and establishment is reviewed in 2023. Transition are currently part of a county-wide YJ team which includes the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance resource. These practitioners necessarily work closely together with the most high-risk children open to Youth Justice.

### Transition in Practice

Whilst serving a DTO in Cookham Wood YO1 a supported child expressed an interest in pursuing employment in the construction Industry. His Transitions Practitioner arranged for him to attend a Construction Youth Trust course for three days on release on temporary licence (ROTL). The child was supported and encouraged by his Transitions Practitioner for the 3 days of the course. The child learnt new skills relevant to the construction industry, was able to tailor his CV for desired job roles and met professionals in the industry to talk about future employment opportunities.

A 17-year-old child was remanded to youth detention for 12 months and subsequently sentenced to a YRO ISS band 1, at 25 hours/week. The child was seen twice each week in the secure estate by the Transitions Practitioner to prepare them for release into the community. For the first few weeks following release, the child was seen daily by their Transitions Practitioner, including on weekends. The child participated in several training courses and achieved a variety of AQA qualifications. This enabled them to secure employment within 6 months of release.



Without [Transition Practitioner] seeing me in Cookham Wood, I wouldn't have managed an intense order like this. She gets me and she had everything sorted for me when I came out, so I wasn't anxious about what was next.

I am grateful for having [Transition Practitioner] around. I appreciate the time he has spent finding me things to do.

Kent Youth Justice continue to work closely with Social work services to ensure planned access to suitable accommodation upon release from custody. The quality of this collaboration was recognised in the 2023 HMIP and Ofsted remand thematic inspection.

## 12. Standards for Children in the Justice System

Kent's YJ service, Quality Assurance Team, CYPE staff, volunteers, and representatives from the partnership completed a full national standards self-assessment in April 2020. This was scrutinised by KCC's internal audit team, and the following outcomes verified:

Standard	Operational Self-Assessment	Strategic Self-Assessment
NS1 Out of Court Disposals	Outstanding	Good
NS2 At Court	Good	Good
NS3 In the Community	Good	Good
NS4 In Secure Settings	Good	Requires Improvement
NS5 On Transition	Good	Requires Improvement

The self-assessment is different to the HMIP inspection framework. This first self-assessment set a baseline for Youth Offending Teams nationally, from which to devise their own continuous performance improvement plans. Kent's plan was presented to, agreed by, and is routinely monitored by the County Youth Justice Board.

Kent's Youth Justice partnership will complete the required national standards self-assessment of 'work in court' in the autumn of 2023, and implement any actions in response to the findings.

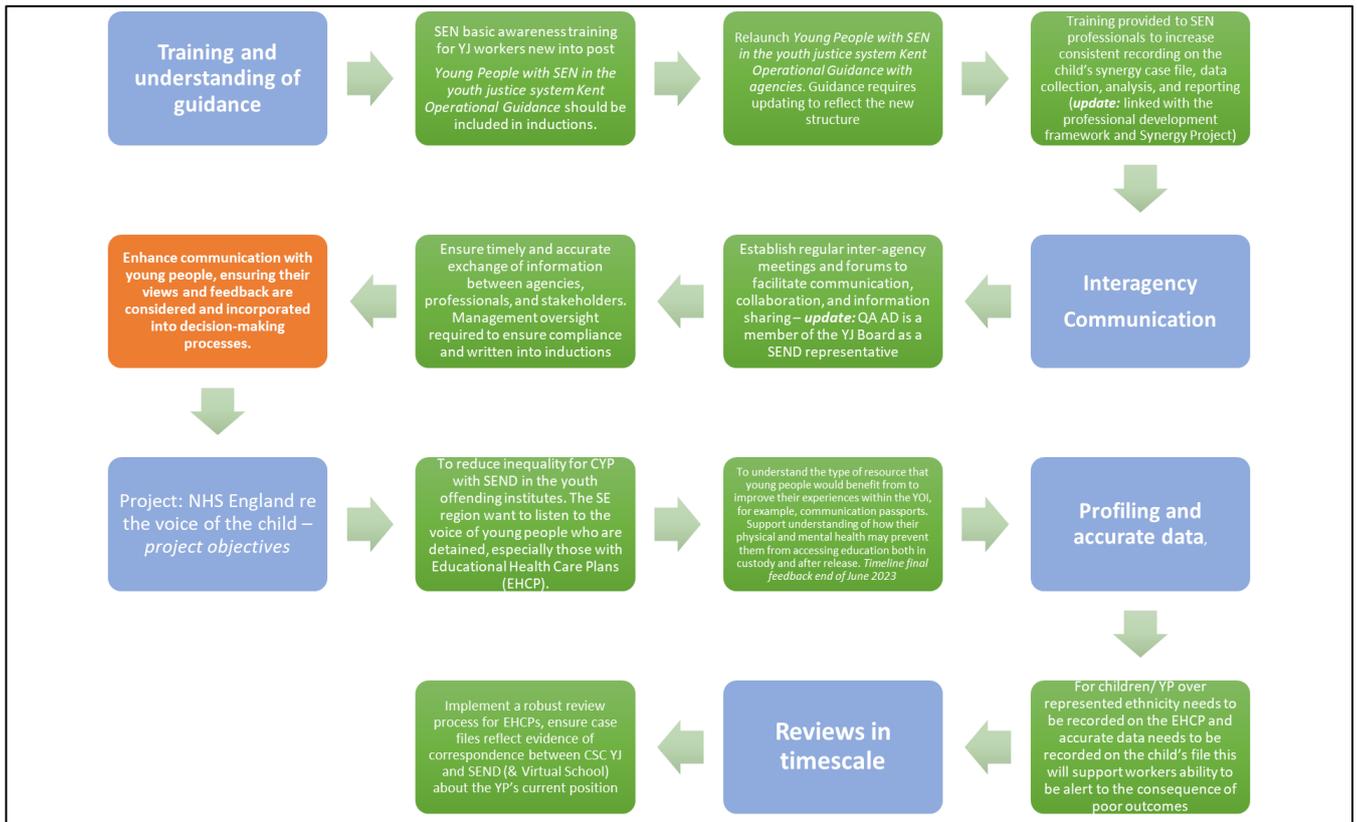
## 13. Workforce Development

A Kent Youth Justice work force skills audit was undertaken in November 22 to inform the 2023/24 workforce development plan. The plan identifies the range of skills and knowledge required by the Youth Justice workforce, which is fulfilled by KCC's Learning and Development framework.

**In 2023, the partnership will ensure the YJ workforce are offered opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge to:**

- Understand Contextual Safeguarding and how Kent's multi-agency approaches fit with YJ risk assessment, planning and delivery.
- Talk with children and families about identity, including ethnicity and culture.
- Intervene with the male cohort to develop violence-free relationships, supporting the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda.
- Understand and tackle technology assisted harmful sexual behaviour.
- Embed case formulation approaches.
- Promote the service and the board hearing the voice of the victim in assessment, planning and delivery.

To provide a more robust ETE offer to children in the youth justice system, including appropriate speech and language and SEN support, Kent YJ and KCC's SEND team have developed an action plan:



Kent YJ will continue to deliver bitesize briefings and short webinars for front line staff in response to identified need; to launch or promote initiatives; to announce legislative or practice guidance changes or to drive improvements in areas of weakness. This will sometimes include the wider partnership.

A priority for the YJ service is the recruitment, retention, and development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to deliver a high-quality service. This will enable operational improvement aspirations to be achieved and improve performance against key performance indicators.

In 2023/24 Kent YJ expect to develop the service structure and introduce Youth Justice Practitioner apprenticeships to 'grow our own' and develop a progression pathway. Staff will continue to access the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (the qualification that is endorsed by the Youth Justice Board and brings together the most up-to-date thinking, knowledge, research, and evidence about what works in Youth Justice).

### 13.1 Staff Wellbeing & Support:

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, KCC continues to adopt a hybrid working approach. KCC facilitate staff to work from home with equipment, training and advice on maximising technologies including MS Teams and have bookable team spaces to promote team connection. The 4 area-based Youth Justice teams have weekly face to face meetings and once or twice weekly access to office space.

Kent Youth Justice introduced a trauma-informed supervision model in 2020. The legacy of this service was to train first line managers to offer trauma-informed supervision to practitioners, and to understand when and where to signpost staff for further individual support when needed.

KCC undertake regular staff surveys to connect and listen to the work force. Flexible working hours are encouraged to enable staff to be productive around child-care and other responsibilities.

KCC Senior Managers produce a staff bulletin to share key messages, service information, and provide light-hearted reports to keep staff connected, and the workforce is encouraged to switch off, to take breaks and to find a good work/life balance. Ideas are shared across the council to encourage this.

KCC have an accessible staff care offer including:

- Corporate mechanisms to recognise contributions.
- Guidance on achieving physical and emotional well-being.
- A health and well-being page, with a new well-being tool, on KCC's intranet (KNET).
- A specialist counselling service.
- Mindfulness and wellbeing webinars.
- Access to coaching.
- Occupational Health advice.
- Integration of wellbeing support throughout professional development for managers.
- Bespoke support for teams for bereavement, stress management.
- Management guidance on inducting and supporting staff with remote working.

Kent also offer several Staff Support Groups:

- Aspire for the Under 30's
- Rainbow for LGBTQ+ Employee
- Staff Ethnic Diversity Forum
- Single Parents Staff Group
- Mental Health Support Group

## **14. Evidence-Based Practice & Innovation**

### **14.1 Trauma Informed Approaches:**

‘The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public’, an Inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation (October 2017) identified that, of cases audited, 81% of children who pose a public protection risk had experienced trauma, and 41% had witnessed or committed domestic abuse. Common experiences of trauma were separation and estrangement from parents, death of a parent or carer, sexual abuse, severe physical chastisement, repeat domestic abuse and parental substance misuse. For some children, their experiences of trauma were multiple and severe. The Inspectorate recommended that all YOTs move to a trauma-informed delivery model.

In 2018/19, Kent YJ secured NHS Children’s Workforce Transformation Funding to develop and embed trauma-informed practice. Until 2022 this was used to deliver Forensic Case Formulation and trauma informed practice training to the adolescent workforce. Development opportunities continue to target new staff and those needing refreshers, to ensure these remain the service’s core practice approaches.

The ‘Punishing Abuse’ report (2021) found “Poverty, disadvantage, and social exclusion, linked with systemic failure to address their needs, creates a conveyor belt which propels vulnerable children towards exploitation and crime. Trauma informed approaches are part of the Kent Practice Framework with a rolling programme of training available: mandated for the adolescent workforce. Together with the Integrated Care Board, KCC YJ are commissioning case formulation coaching to embed this and to progress towards being a fully trauma-informed service.

Kent’s trauma informed approaches include relationship and strength-based approaches, and efforts to reduce transitions for adolescents within and across Kent services. This approach is reflected in the non-blaming language that the partnership uses, including practitioners taking responsibility to engage children (not children responsible for engaging with services), and referring to push and pull factors for children, rather than ‘choices’ they make. In 2023 KCC will start to use ‘language that cares’ and write case records to children rather than about them.

### **14.2 Communication Passports:**

Kent YJ and the Speech and Language provider, Symbol, are developing Communication passports: a mechanism to inform professionals of the best way to communicate with the child, identify any triggers and Speech, language, or communication needs. These Passports are co-created by the YJ practitioner with the child, following training from Symbol, Speech, and language therapy service. These documents are shared with the courts and will be extended in 2023 for passports to be recorded on the local Police system. This may reduce assaults on emergency workers and enable Police to better support children who are detained in their custody.

“...defendants list any special needs & explain what they might find difficult (e.g. attention for any length of time) ... very helpful. We used these for 3 cases yesterday – at least one of the youths was potentially tricky to question but in the event it was fine & he gave us a lot of very relevant information.

This is a good innovation I think.”

Magistrate Feb 2023

### 14.3 Street Aid:

The VRU and Kent YJ will continue to collaborate in 2023 to deliver Street Aid training where there are risks of harm from weapons. This will equip children with skills to provide first aid in the event of a weapon wound. The program gives professionals an opportunity to talk with children about harm from weapons. 38 KCC staff from Youth Justice, Adolescent Early Help and the Open Access Youth service have completed the training so they can deliver the programme with children in groups or 1:1.

### 14.4 Focussed Deterrence:

Focussed Deterrence is an evidence-based approach which the Youth Endowment Fund identify as having a high impact on Serious Violence. Focused deterrence attempts to identify the people most likely to be involved in violence, such as through gangs and young street groups.

In Kent these individuals and groups are identified within the multi-agency adolescent risk management DCSM & CAHM structures. Response plans and support offered are based on the focused deterrence approach.

Focussed Deterrence combines several core strategies:

- **Support**  
Help for people involved in violence to access positive support and social services. The support is delivered by multiagency partnership including YJ practitioners. This enables intensive support including outside of office hours.
- **Community engagement**  
Engaging the wider community to communicate that they want violence to stop and those involved to be safe, provide support, and encourage reintegration in the community. In Kent the VRU fund the KCC community conferencing services to work with local communities affected by violence.
- **Deterrence**  
Clear communication of the consequences of violence and swift and certain enforcement if violence occurs. Kent Police and YJS work together to ensure children are aware of the consequences of violence and Police provide timely enforcement where required.

## 15. Service Development Plan

### 15.1 Previous development plan

In June 2021 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook a full inspection of Kent Youth Justice Services and the partnership. The summary of HMIP's Ratings of Kent YJ Against the 12 Standards is in the improvement plan at appendix 1.

The Youth Justice partnership co-produced an Improvement Plan with key delivery partners, the KCC Directors Management Team, County Youth Justice Board, the senior KCC Youth Justice leadership team, Quality Assurance Professional Standards and Safeguarding, and Information & Intelligence. This was submitted (appendix 1) to HMIP on 19.10.2021. This addressed HMIP's 6 recommendations and each of the areas for improvement identified in the body of the report.

Since 2021, most actions have been completed in a timely way and achieved the required standards and expectations. This includes overwhelmingly positive workforce engagement, quality staff appraisals and bespoke Youth Justice development to meet service needs.

There are three targets which remain ongoing into 2023:

1. The implementation of Outcome 22

Work continues with Police and both Kent and Medway local authorities to implement Outcome 22. Kent systems and processes are in place. Thresholds have been agreed and written guidance on these is awaited from Kent Police for anticipated go-live in August 2023.

2. A bespoke Communities of Practice in Contextual Safeguarding was to be prioritised to be delivered to Youth Justice, by KCC's Quality Assurance Team, to include how the framework fits with Youth Justice risk assessment, planning and delivery.

In 2023 the Youth Justice Senior Management Team will take responsibility for the design and delivery of the Communities of Practice Session, and this will be embedded in work force development planning and delivering.

3. A bespoke audit by Kent's Quality Assurance Team of Kent YJ's assessment and planning of risk.

In 2023 YJ will return to undertaking HMIP-style case audits, with the results of these reported to the CYJB. This includes a judgement of the quality of assessment and planning of risk and all aspects of the 3 domains of HMIP inspection. This provides a transparent and realistic assessment of HMIP inspection outcome, and helps the partnership understand the areas of strength and the focuses for improvement.

In 2023, Kent Youth Justice will also participate in the CYPE audit framework, which will be reported to the County YJB by the Quality Assurance Team representative.

To obtain an independent view of the quality of case work and management oversight in 2022, Kent Youth Justice commissioned an external independent ‘deep dive’ of those records which had not been through the Kent Youth Justice risk panel. This highlighted that Team Managers have the appropriate knowledge to quality assure assessments and plans to the required standards, but that there is some continued inconsistency by them to do so.

The Service Manager and Head of Service have been consulting with staff and scrutinising the YJ structure, staffing capacity and pathways for staff progression. In August 2023 a proposal will be presented to KCC’s Directors Management Team for an improved structure to attract, develop and retain the necessary capacity, skills, and knowledge that the services needs in order to improve. Job descriptions and a commensurate work force development plan will align with these proposals, within the financial envelope.

A summary of all outstanding 2022/23 and new actions have been collated to form the Kent Youth Justice partnership plan for 2023/24.

## 15.2 Kent Youth Justice partnership service 2023/24 development plan

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
Child first	Introduce the practice of “writing to the child” in local authority case notes	Case record is free of any blaming / labelling language. Records are child focused	Audits and dip sampling	Start Oct 2023. Ongoing monitoring	KCC YJ Strategic Development Manager
	The partnership to co-create a shared child first vision and statement of principles	Partners language and approaches are genuinely child first and blame free; professionals are curious about the lived experience of children; and the partnership are increasing informed by the voice of children	Self-reflection	Start Sept 2023	KCC YJ Strategic Development Manager

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
Voice of the Child	All partners to bring voice of the child information as a standing agenda item to CYJB meetings	User voice is heard by the service and partnership and reflected in decisions about service design.	Actions arising from the meeting discussion. Audits.	Launch Sep 2023	YJ Strategic Development Manager and all board members
	Ensure each YJ team has a lead with responsibility for participation	Maintained focus on participation and voice of child actions	Increase participation and feedback	Launch Oct 2024	YJ Service Manager
Voice of the Child / Child first	Develop focus groups with children open to YJ to hear feedback and ideas on specific issues or co produce new resources.	Regular input from children. Empower children to make positive contributions, encourage wider social inclusion	Number of focus groups, attendance, engagement. Outputs and outcomes.	Launch Dec 2023	YJ Policy & Partnership Officer & KCC Participation Team, Police, PCC, VRU, Magistrates, Health, Education, Social Work
	Kent YJ to develop a process for obtaining voice of the child and their carers at beginning and end of Court orders.	Voice of the child and family consistently obtained, reported, and considered in operational decision making	Increase service user voice – and records of 'you said we did' showing the difference it has made	Launch Dec 2024	Kent YJ Policy & Partnership Officer & KCC Participation Team

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
New KPI's	Upgrade the Kent YJ case management and information system	Accurate reporting on new KPI's enabling understanding and constructive challenge and support by CYJB	Successful system upgrade, KPIs can be accurately reported on to CYJB	Sep 2023	MIU with testing support from YJ Teams

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
	Amend County Youth Justice Board performance report to include new KPIs	CYJ board have oversight of performance on all indicators, and can understand and offer constructive challenge and support	Amended agenda	Sep 2023	YJ Service Manager

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
Children from groups which are over-represented.	YJ to introduce additional gatekeeping of PSR's for BAME and CIC Children	Achieving better outcomes for BAME and CIC children	Sentencing outcomes for over-represented children	Launch Jul 2023	YJ Service Manager
	CYJB to consider criteria for O OCD panel to include BAME children	Outcomes for BAME children will have multi agency decision making	Reduce BAME children entering YJ system	Sep 2023	YJ Police Team
	Thematic audit exploring case histories of BAME children who commit grave crimes resulting in YRO's with ISS and DTO's.	Board will understand children's early life experiences & their access to services. Missed opportunities identified & learning applied.	Completion of audit, learning identified, and actions created and followed up.	Start August 2023	Youth Justice Strategic Manager and VRU

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
Diversion/ Child First	Implement outcome 22	Reduction in FTEs. More children will receive diversionary intervention to prevent entry into the YJS	Outcome 22 successfully delivered. Reduced FTEs.	Launch August 2023	Police & YJS

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
	Thematic audit of FTE's	Understand the journey of children who became FTE. Identify and follow actions to make future change.	Completion of audit	Cohort Oct-Dec 2023 for Feb 2024 CYJB	Youth Justice and Kent Police
Diversion	Test and launch new O OCD referral, assessment, planning and reporting tool	Police referrals will have victim information to improve victim voice. Assessments & plans will record desistence, safety & wellbeing & risk of serious harm to improve joint decision making.	Audit	August 2023	Kent Youth Justice, Kent Management Information and Kent Police

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
Restorative Justice/ Victim Voice	Launch new Police referral form with mandatory victim details section	YJ will have victim details to contact and hear victim views. Increase Victim voice.	Power BI reports & audits will evidence increased victim voice, restorative justice & victim satisfaction	Sep 2023	Police & Victim Voice Lead
	Report on new victim KPI	CYJB will understand the proportion of victims identified, supported, & any gaps in processes that need to be remedied. CYJB oversight of victim satisfaction.	Quarterly Performance reports- including that data and victim qualitative satisfaction feedback.	July 2023 onwards	Kent Police, KCC MIU & YJ Victim Voice Lead
	Create and implement mechanism to measure victim satisfaction.	CYJB to have oversight of victim satisfaction & if improvements to processes or services are required.	Victim feedback	Jan 2024	Kent Police, Kent YJ Victim Voice Lead, Restorative Solutions (PCC)

<b>_Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Measured by</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>
Serious violence and exploitation	The chair of the CYJB to represent the partnership on the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board	Partnership will have a voice in setting strategic priorities for the specified authorities to meet the legal requirements of the serious violence duty.	Attendance at Board	Immediate	CYJB Chair, VRU
	Support the development of a multi-agency data sharing platform that combines data from Police, Local Authorities, Probation & Health	successful, will allow user generated analysis to inform the strategic and operational response to violence.	Development and launch of the platform	To be confirmed by project team	Kent YJ, Kent MIU, & VRU
	Delivery of Street aid courses	Equip children to provide first aid & enable professionals to talk with children about weapon harm	Attendance at training and delivery of intervention to Children (monitored by VRU), and reduction in serious youth violence	Throughout 2023/24	VRU
	VRU to seek Health to develop a fast track CAMHS response for victims and witnesses of Serious Youth Violence	Children who experience Serious youth violence will have timely access to emotional well-being support	Children who experience Serious youth violence will have timely access to emotional well-being support		VRU

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
	Develop a partnership strategy and enhance knowledge of the use of National Referral Mechanism, with the intended impact on diversion from prosecution where appropriate.	Appropriate NRM referrals made by first responders, with prosecution not pursued where unnecessary.	Dip-sampling case records of relevant offences to measure if exploitation is identified; NRM referrals made and prosecutions avoided. Reporting numbers of NRM referrals and impact.	Dec 2023	YJ Strategic Development Manager  KCC Adolescent Safeguarding Manager  Kent Police

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
Service standards for children in YJS are upheld.	Audits of youth justice case work	CYJB will have oversight of the quality of casework with children open to YJ.	Audits against service standards	From Sept 2023	Kent YJ KCC Quality Assurance Team
	Audit moderation	CYJB can have confidence in the accuracy of audit outcomes	Audit and moderation against service standards	From Sept 2023	Kent YJ KCC Quality Assurance Team
	Kent YJ to present evidence-based proposal for structure to KCC Directors Management Team, within budget, & with a work force development plan.	The YJ service will have a practitioner and management structure that can meet service demand and quality standards.		August 2023	Kent YJ Head of Service YJ Service Manager

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility
	Complete the National standards self-assessment, implement any actions based on the findings	Assessment will identify actions	Completion of self-assessment and follow up of actions	Autumn of 2023	CYJB Partners YJ Service Manager YJ Strategic Development Manager
	Implement thematic serious incident audit process & present findings to CYJB	All serious incidents will be reviewed & learning shared at CYJB	Completion of reviews, reports to CYJB, learning shared & embedded	Launch August 2023	YJ Head of Service & YJ Service Manager

Priority	Action	Outcome	Measured by	Time frame	Lead Responsibility
Workforce Development	Identify and provide learning opportunities that meet identified work force need. This will include partnership developments.	Work force is confident & suitably skilled	Participation in learning opportunities. Evidence in case audits & partnership reflections & feedback of learning embedded.	Starting Sept 2023	Strategic Development Manager  KCC Learning & development.  CYJB partners
	KCC to deliver SEND action Plan	Improvement in service for SEND Children open to YJ	Dip samples & audit	Implement from Jul 2023, audit Oct-Dec 2023	YJ Strategic Development Manager KCC Assistant Director SEN
	YJ staff progression pathways including apprenticeships	Progression pathway for YJ to recruit & retain a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.	Staff feel skilled, reflected in good case audits, inspection, feedback & outcomes. Vacancies filled in a timely way & staff retained & progressing.	Dependent on provision of Apprentice-ships; on agreement to proposal and on recruitment	YJ Service Manager  Strategic Development Manager

## 16. Challenges, Risks & Issues

Risk	Mitigating Factors
<p><b>Missed Opportunities</b></p> <p>There is a risk that a lack of early assessment (through the use of on-the-spot community resolutions) misses opportunities to identify needs and intervene early to prevent offending and re-offending by children.</p>	<p>The implementation of Outcome 22 is expected to reduce informal CRs and No Further Actions and replace these with holistic early intervention.</p>
<p><b>First Time Entrants</b></p> <p>The population census in 2021 has identified that the Kent population aged 5 -9 and 10 – 14 is higher than that of those aged 15 – 19. The increase in the numbers of those reaching adolescence creates a risk that there will be an increase in children who will require support from the Youth Justice partnership.</p>	<p>The Youth Justice service will drive the delivery of Outcome 22 so that it is available to all children where an alternative to prosecution is appropriate. The service will closely monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of Outcome 22 and re-referrals into the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Review continues, with Kent YJ, Kent Police and VRU, of the effectiveness of prevention and diversion programmes and arrangements. Reframe will refer to EH when appropriate for holistic prevention services.</p>
<p><b>County Lines:</b></p> <p>are resourceful and evolve quickly. It is a challenge for professionals to remain up to date with their methodologies and activities.</p>	<p>Partnerships are strong and proactive about understanding and sharing information and intelligence about county lines, particularly with the Police and the VRU.</p> <p>The partnership will actively seek opportunities to learn from research and best practice about how to respond most effectively to county lines; will continue to embed the multi-agency adolescent risk management and contextual safeguarding framework; and publish the learning from the Serious youth Violence Prevention Project.</p> <p>In 2023/24 the partnership will create practice guidance and expectations for the meaningful use of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and create a strategy for understanding and working with girls in a way which responds to the different role they play in county lines.</p>
<p><b>Children involved in knife crime.</b></p> <p>The VRU's Strategic Needs</p>	<p>The County Youth Justice Board will be represented on the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board. Kent YJ and the VRU will</p>

Risk	Mitigating Factors
<p>Assessment published in March 2023 noted a disproportionate increase in the numbers of children involved in violence linked to knives and weapons (as victims or suspects) when compared to other groups in the County in the previous 12-month period.</p> <p>This suggests a risk to the Youth Justice service of an increase in the number of children requiring intensive community supervision or to be placed in the secure estate. It also identifies an increased safeguarding concern for children as the potential victims of weapon harm.</p>	<p>work closely together to identify children where risks of involvement in knife crime are emerging. They will ensure that support is available to the identified cohort of children and will promote opportunities to involve them in alternative positive activities.</p>
<p><b>Contextual safeguarding</b></p> <p>The response to harm occurring outside the home, including harm linked to offending, requires a shared understanding of what the harm is and where it happens using all available data and the views of children, adults and communities.</p> <p>The current arrangements for sharing data risk missing information from organisations who do not attend any contextual safeguarding meetings, and there is not a consistent approach to gathering the qualitative data from children, adults, and communities.</p>	<p>The Youth Justice Head of Service chairs the Contextual Safeguarding steering group under which any work to improve the data sharing and understanding of places and spaces sits. Youth Justice will ensure that the Contextual Safeguarding plan for 2023 – 24 includes a focus on capturing the voices of children.</p>
<p><b>Reducing Re-offending:</b></p> <p>Performance according to the CorePlus toolkit is good, but national data from PNC reports differently. Accurate data is needed to understand this.</p>	<p>Kent YJ &amp; Police will work to improve data accuracy between systems, to better understand reoffending rates.</p> <p>Kent YJ monitor &amp; report reoffending data to the CYJB. Kent MIU produce an annual analytical report on patterns and trends of the YJ cohort.</p> <p>Kent YJ will offer robust evidence-based interventions based on case formulation which considers the sequencing of trauma, desistance, relationships, skills &amp; strengths-based approaches. Kent YJ will continue to embed these workforce skills &amp; knowledge.</p>

Risk	Mitigating Factors
<p><b>Diversity:</b> National research identifies groups who are over-represented in the criminal justice system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Eastern European communities</li> <li>(ii) BAME young men</li> <li>(iii) Young women</li> <li>(iv) Gypsy / Roma / Travellers</li> <li>(v) Children in Care</li> <li>(vi) with Speech, Language, Communication Needs</li> <li>(vii) with Special Education Needs</li> </ul>	<p>Audits will identify practice &amp; resource implications for over-represented groups. Engagement activity to hear the voice of service users from over-represented groups will assist CYJB to understand what the partnership can do better to improve outcomes for this cohort. Workforce development will support front line staff from across the partnership to develop cultural competence. Improved recruitment methodologies will support an increasing diversity of the YJ workforce. Kent YJ collaboration with PIAS will maximise the impact of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller outreach practitioners.</p>
<p><b>Education, Training &amp; Employment:</b> Ongoing challenge to achieve full time engagement of children in ETE. This is related to the high proportion of children with specific needs in the criminal justice system and an absence of suitable provision and opportunities.</p>	<p>The partnership aims to implement the HMIP ETE thematic recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure all children have a comprehensive ETE assessment and speech and language screening.</li> <li>2. Monitor key aspects of ETE work for children open to YJ at every county board meeting, and with operational managers and partners, including TEP.</li> <li>3. Develop ambitious aims for ETE work in YJ, including the achievement of Level 2 English and Maths by every child.</li> <li>4. Refresh ETE training for YJ and AEH practitioners, to understand how they can support children, and what services they can access to achieve this.</li> <li>5. Establish a greater range of occupational training opportunities for those children beyond compulsory school age working with TEP and by accrediting reparation and unpaid work activities where possible to increase the skills and employability of our cohort.</li> </ol> <p>Kent YJB will monitor and evaluate the educational engagement and attainment in disproportionately represented groups within the YJ caseload.</p>
<p><b>Recruiting &amp; Retaining Staff:</b> With the right skills, knowledge and experience is becoming increasingly challenging since Covid and Brexit.</p>	<p>Kent YJ hope to secure agreement to create a progression pathway to 'grow our own' staff, which should aid recruitment and retention. Kent YJ will present a proposal to KCC's DMT for a</p>

Risk	Mitigating Factors
Kent YJ staff vacancy impacts on capacity.	new YJ structure to meet demand for capacity, knowledge, skills, and experience. A robust work force development plan aims to support staff from across the YJ partnership to develop the necessary skills and knowledge.

### 17. Sign off, Submission & Approval

The plan has been co-produced with the Kent YJ workforce, key partners and members of the County Youth Justice Board.

Chair of YJS Board - Name	Stuart Collins Director - Social Work Lead
Signature	
Date	June 2023

The plan is being presented to KCC's cabinet and full Council meetings in September 2023.

### 18.0 Appendices

## 18.1 County Youth Justice Board Membership at April 2023

Stuart Collins	Director of Integrated Children's Services, West Kent, KCC
Dan Bride	Assistant Director, Adolescents, Open Access & Head of Youth Justice, KCC
Jason Read	Youth Justice Service Manager, KCC
Katy Batt	Strategic Development Manager - Youth Justice, KCC
Sam Matthews	Kent Police, Child Centred Policing Manager
Peter Gates	Children & Young Peoples Lead, Health & Justice NHS England
Mark Powell	Police Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) Director
Sue Mullin	Interim Associate Director, Children's Commissioning Team, Integrated Care Board
Caroline Smith	Assistant Director, Corporate Parenting, KCC
Craig Heskett	Deputy Head of Service, National Probation Service
Elise McQueen	Assistant Director, SEND, KCC
Dylan Jeffrey	Deputy Cabinet Member, Integrated Children's Services KCC
Gurvindar Sandher	CEO Kent Equality Cohesion Council
Jackie Hamilton	Chair, West Kent Youth Panel (Magistrate)
Christina Rowberry	Legal Advisor, North & Central Kent Court Administration, HMCTS
Simon Smith	Lead Officer for PRU, Inclusion & Attendance, KCC
Dunston Patterson	Oversight Manager for national Youth Justice Board
Sam Jones	Partnerships and Commissioning Officer, Office of the Police, Crime & Commissioner
Leemya McKeown	Interim Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Quality Assurance & Professional Standards, KCC

## Kent Youth Justice Services Inspection – June 2021 Judgement, response, and action plan

### Foreword

Our commitment to ensuring Kent's Youth Justice services achieve the best outcomes for young people across the county is unwavering.

The judgement of our services as “requires improvement” has been a tough message to hear, however we welcome the constructive findings of the inspection report and have put together this action plan in response. We know that the legacy of the pandemic is being felt across our communities and, in particular the challenges our children and young people face. Making sure that our practitioners, services and partners have the right expertise and capacity to respond to this complex environment is at the heart of the actions we have set out to meet the challenges highlighted by the inspectorate.

The inspection report has given us a clear path. We have demonstrated in some aspects of our work that we can deliver outstanding outcomes. Our challenge now is to make sure that outstanding work is consistently delivered in every aspect of our work for all children and young people who are involved with our Youth Justice services. This improvement plan is a contract. We commit to delivering it to the highest standard to give our practitioners the support they need, and in return we ask all our staff to engage with the improvements and hold ourselves and each other to the highest standards.

Together we know that we can rise to the challenges placed upon us, and together we will make sure all children and young people in Kent can feel safe, valued and able to thrive no matter the challenges they face.

**Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education**

**Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services**

**Dan Bride, Assistant Director - Adolescent and Open Access – West**

## Introduction

In June 2021 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook a full, virtual, 2-week inspection of Kent Youth Justice Services. Week 1 scrutinised 'evidence in advance' and week 2 (21-25 June), was fieldwork, comprising case work interviews, file reads and stakeholder engagement.

The result of this inspection is that HMIP have judged our services as “**requires improvement**”. We understand and accept this judgement, including the reflections and recommendations set out in [the inspection report](#)<sup>1</sup>. This document sets out how we intend to respond to these findings and ensure that Kent's youth justice services are outstanding both in terms of delivery and impact for young people across the county.

## What the Inspectorate said

This has been a **difficult period for practitioners at Kent Youth Justice Service**. The pressures of their workload, caused by Covid-19, have been considerable – particularly the impact of the Kent variant of the virus.

Inspectors praised Kent YJS for its work during the Covid-19 pandemic and noted that it had continued to provide children with consistent access to essential services, such as in-person group sessions and educational and health support. However, **where the service may have excelled in supporting desistance, in too many cases its planning to keep children and other people safe did not meeting the standards expected.**

We found **inconsistencies in the level of management oversight and in the support offered to new staff**. Improvements were also required in the quality of assessments, to identify the risk of harm posed by children under their supervision. However, **they have strong leadership** and where we have made recommendations to strengthen the service, **we have every confidence these will be implemented quickly and effectively.**

The inspection noted the **success of (youth) justice participation apprentices**, who speak to children supervised by the YJS – the aim is to channel the voice of children into strategic and operation decisions. This was seen to boost the already solid work of the service in including children, and their families, in a positive and supportive way.

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<sup>1</sup> The full report can be accessed online here <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/kent-yjs/>

**The accomplishment of the service in their work with children and understanding their needs, is countered with discrepancies in the quality of assessment and planning**, and the priority given to protecting victims. A successful balance is required to move the service into an overall rating of 'Good'. Service leaders demonstrated their determination to progress, so this should result in the improvements required.

**There is a lot for Kent YJS to be proud of** – it demonstrates outstanding commitment to integrated services, partnerships and to ensuring children under its supervision have access to appropriate facilities. **The inconsistencies should be relatively straightforward to solve.**

## Our reflections

Kent Youth Justice is a strong partnership which achieves its principle aim of reducing the offending and re-offending of children. HMIP noted our work to support the desistance of offending amongst children as “excellent”, and this is reflected in Kent’s rate of re-offending (34%) being lower than the national average (38%). **We are proud that, despite the challenges of the pandemic, our child-focussed approaches kept the public safe from harm during this exceptional time.**

However, as reflected in the overall grading of ‘requires improvement’, **Kent Youth Justice acknowledges that our articulation of assessments and plans were inadequate during the period inspected.**

**The global pandemic is not the sole reason for the weaknesses identified** by HMIP, and the key findings resonate with our own findings (although not consistently with the ratings) of our case audits. That said, **the impact of the pandemic does provide some context to the operational challenges**, both at that time and the legacy of this, which will help inform what we need to do differently to achieve our ambitions.

- **During the pandemic many partner agencies stopped face to face delivery**, and many had no alternatives (for example Unpaid Work). This made Youth Justice practitioners busier with the full burden of implementation falling to them, but this pressure should be relieved now that most agencies are working ‘normally.’
- **The virtual court exceptional delivery model increased the Youth Justice daily duty demands** from 2 Courts to 5 Police stations and, as the Courts opened, this increased to 7 potential daily duty sites. This made practitioners busier, and while courts are now sitting in-person, the processing of the back-log is seeing an increase in referrals to Youth Justice.
- **New staff have been unable to shadow Court work due to limited numbers of staff allowed to sit in court** under Covid measures. This remains a problem and creative ways of training staff outside of the Court room (such as role plays and videos) will be developed
- Operational Youth Justice **staff teams were depleted with staff isolating, shielding, off sick (some with covid) and/or experiencing bereavement**, and one team member died in December 2020. While Covid remains prevalent in our communities, there remains some risk of staff being off sick or isolating. With most staff vaccinated, the impact should not be as severe as it was during the height of the pandemic.

## Recommendations for improvement

In order for Kent Youth Justice Services to respond to the findings of the inspection, HMIP recommend that we implement an action plan that delivers on achieving the following objectives:

1. Practitioners have the time, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of their cases
2. Assessment and planning to keep the child and others safe are thorough and give sufficient focus to protecting victims
3. Oversight of case management is applied consistently
4. Staff appraisals are timely and add personal and professional value
5. Staff at all levels understand the activities of the Board (invite observation)
6. Assures itself that out-of-court disposal decisions are proportionate, and that voluntary outcomes maximise opportunities for support without children being criminalised.

In response, our improvement plan will focus on the following four key strategic objectives:

- Creating the capacity and functionality to lead, drive, monitor and assure Senior Managers and the CYJB of operational service improvements, with a particular focus on case management oversight and compliance with KCC and YJB policy, guidance, and standards
- Ensuring that the capacity and development needs of the workforce are understood, and that quality opportunities achieve the development and embedding of appropriate and improved (practitioner and manager) confidence, skills, and knowledge
- Enhancing communication and engagement between the workforce, Managers, Senior Leaders and the CYJB
- Developing a proportionate early intervention offer, with joint decision making between the Police and the Local Authority, as an alternative to the imposition of informal and unilateral Out of Court Disposals (informal Community Resolutions)

All actions and progress will be overseen by the Corporate Director, the Director with responsibility for Youth Justice, and the Youth Justice partnership, via the County Youth Justice Board.

## Improvement Plan

**Creating the capacity and functionality to lead, drive, monitor and assure Senior Managers and the CYJB of operational service improvements, with a particular focus on case management oversight and compliance with KCC and YJB policy, guidance, and standards**

**HMIP Recommendations:**

2. Assessment and planning to keep the child and others safe are thorough and give sufficient focus to protecting victims
3. Oversight of case management is applied consistently

**Outcomes:**

- Consistent high quality of case management across all teams
- More effective and consistent management oversight of casework
- Consistent and robust assessment and planning that prioritises keeping victims safe
- Youth justice workers have the capacity and expertise to prioritise planning, assessment and analysis of all factors to better support child safety and the wellbeing and protection of victims

Ref:	Action	Timeframe	Responsible officer
1.1	Create a new YJ Service Manager role to lead and line-manage the YJ Team Managers	Oct 21	Dan Bride
1.2	Set the new Service Manager ambitious but realistic improvement targets in line with the HMIP action plan, line managed directly by the YJ HoS, and reporting to the CYJB, specifically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Team Manager oversight of YJ staff in line with KCC standards, policy and approaches, including the appraisal, development and supervision of practitioners (recommendations 1, 2 and 4)</li> <li>b) Team Manager oversight of practice and performance, in line with YJB standards, policy and approaches</li> </ol>	Dec 21	Dan Bride
1.3	Re-launch the YJ allocations policy - check compliance through audit.	Oct 21 May 22	Dan Bride Kevin Kasaven
1.4	Set expectations re maximising use of partnerships and support services (e.g., TEP, RJ, ISS,	Oct 21	Dan Bride

	Transition)		
1.5	Develop Core+ reports and templates (including caseload and a service specific supervision template and report)	Dec 21	Katherine Atkinson
1.6	Deliver training and support to staff to utilise above reports	Dec 21	Katherine Atkinson
1.7	YJ engagement in the CSWS Director's review of Team Manager responsibilities and capacity, to understand any barriers to YJ TM effective oversight, and consider workforce succession planning and progression opportunities	Dec 21	Dan Bride
1.8	Service Manager will set expectations of Team Managers re case management oversight responsibilities and accountabilities to KCC and YJB standards.	Dec 21	Dan Bride
	An ICS-aligned but YJ specific supervision template will be created on Core+ to drive consistent quality of supervision, and facilitate reporting/oversight by the YJ Service Manager to the HoS	Dec 21	Katherine Atkinson
1.9	Create and launch with partners (Probation, Police), an Expert Risk Panel to quality assure ROSH and SWb assessments and plans, and to coach improvements by Practitioners and Team Managers – with a feedback loop to monitor progress.	Sept 21	Dan Bride
1.10	Enhance the impact of audit of YJ cases by: a) re-launching the YJ audit tool b) additionally using the CYPE audit tool on YJ cases b) QA moderation using the YJ tool c) appreciative enquiry implementation d) QA audit of YJ in May 2022 to provide reassurance and a clear line of sight of practice to the CYJB	Nov 21 – May 22	Kevin Kasaven
1.11	Review and dovetail the KCC alert and KMSCP serious incident review process a) to adopt the national YJB reporting process and criteria b) to include incidents of serious harm to others perpetrated by children b) ensure learning from case reviews is shared with CYJB, DivMT and ICS workforce	Nov 21	Kevin Kasaven
1.12	Current cases brought up to the expected standard of RoH and SWb assessment and plans	Nov 21	Dan Bride
1.13	Produce, enhance and rollout a bespoke Adolescent and YJ scorecard, a suite of reports and	Dec 21	Katherine Atkinson

	a service KPI page, including the levels of RoH identified in assessments; supervision RAGS; quality and activity metrics.		
1.14	a) Host a victim voice roadshow (or communities of practice) to re-launch the victim voice processes and the reflection of the impact, wishes and needs of victims in assessments (of RoH) and plans, and the identification of how to keep victims and potential victims safe b) Measure improvements through audit.	Dec 21 –  May 22	Dan Bride  Kevin Kasaven
1.15	Target YJ staff to attend a Communities of Practice on contextual safeguarding approaches to manage harm, exploring coordination with others, including parents.	Dec 21	Kevin Kasaven

**Ensuring that the capacity and development needs of the workforce are understood, and that quality opportunities achieve the development and embedding of appropriate and improved (practitioner and manager) confidence, skills, and knowledge**

**HMIP Recommendations:**

1. Practitioners have the time, knowledge and skills to meet the needs of their cases
4. Staff appraisals are timely and add personal and professional value

**Outcomes:**

- All staff have sufficient knowledge and skills to manage cases allocated to them
- Practitioners have appropriate and manageable workloads
- Case allocation consistently takes into account diversity of children

Ref:	Action	Timeframe	Responsible officer
2.1	Deliver a 'bitesize bootcamp' to YJ Team Managers re the appraisal framework and People Strategy	Dec 21	Dan Bride
2.2	YJ Service Manager will role model the TCP/PDP good conversation process with Team Managers and hold Team Managers to account for implementation of the standards	Dec 21	Dan Bride
2.3	Alignment of YJ workforce development with CYPE's workforce development workstream/CFKC and the Kent Academy	Oct 21	Dan Bride
2.4	Conduct a knowledge, skills, and development needs analysis of YJ and AEH practitioners	Nov 21	Dan Bride

	and managers (reflecting audit findings, experience and training)		
2.5	Launch a refreshed YJ and AEH workforce development plan, based on the analysis, reporting to the Kent Academy, which addresses the full range of skills and knowledge, commissioning/procuring bespoke opportunities from the YJ budget, if necessary, in addition to CYPE core development opportunities (assessment skills, professional curiosity, trauma-informed language, and management training including appraisals, HR processes, and Kent Manager)	Dec 21	Dan Bride
2.6	YJ Service Manager oversight of the quality of appraisals, PDPs and supervision, in line with ICS policy, and engagement with learning and development	Dec 21	Dan Bride
2.7	Review of YJ service structure, responsibilities, and progression/ succession planning (Apprenticeships) with WFD strategy officer, reporting to Kent Academy	Jan 22	Dan Bride
2.8	Service manager will evidence that Team Managers have appropriate appraisal/PDPs in line with KCC guidance, which reflect their individual needs for knowledge and skills development, and utilises CYPE management and supervision training including Kent Manager, HR appraisal training and supervision.	Dec 21	Dan Bride

**Enhancing communication and engagement between the workforce, Managers, Senior Leaders and the CYJB**

**HMIP Recommendations:**

5. Staff at all levels understand the activities of the Board (invite observation)

**Outcomes:**

- Information consistently and clearly cascades effectively from senior leaders to practitioners

Ref:	Action	Timeframe	Responsible officer
3.1	A YJ communication strategy will be launched within the <b>workforce engagement and development roadshow</b> to maximise opportunities for ongoing and meaningful	Dec '21	Dan Bride

	communication between practitioners, managers, senior managers and CYJB members		
3.2	Team managers, represented at each CYJB, will feedback key messages and decisions to teams	Nov '21	Dan Bride
3.3	Practitioners and Managers (and CYJB Members) will complete the CYJB induction module	Dec '21	Dan Bride
3.4	CYJB to consider inviting observation of CYJB meetings by practitioners and/or sharing recorded meetings	Dec '21	Matt Dunkley (chair)
3.5	Launch a YJ engagement and development campaign, using a suite of in-house (communities of practice, 'Space to Think') and innovative approaches ('Bitesize Bootcamp Bulletins') to drive key ICS and YJ policy & practice messages including supervision, appraisal, and Asset Plus risk assessment, planning and review. This campaign will also enhance communication between senior managers, the CYJB and practitioners	Dec 21	Dan Bride

**Developing a proportionate early intervention offer, with joint decision making between the Police and the Local Authority, as an alternative to the imposition of informal and unilateral Out of Court Disposals (informal Community Resolutions)**

**HMIP Recommendations:**

6. Assures itself that out-of-court disposal decisions are proportionate, and that voluntary outcomes maximise opportunities for support without children being criminalised.

**Outcomes:**

- Better and more consistent opportunities identified and acted upon that divert children away from the criminal justice system and into service better able to meet their needs
- More wide-ranging assessments that better incorporate the level and nature of need relating to safety and wellbeing, as well as the risk of harm that children pose to others
- Better and more consistent planning for contingency measures to protect the child and others where circumstances change

Ref:	Action	Timeframe	Responsible
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			<b>officer</b>
4.1	Outcome 22 will be implemented and launched	Dec 2021	Sam Matthews
4.2	KCC will offer a triage (via Front Door) and preventative offer (via AEH) to Outcome 22 where appropriate.	Dec 2021	Susannah Beasley-Murray
4.3	Systems guidance will be updated for Front Door and Business Support re triage and inputting Outcome 22.	Dec 2021	Katherine Atkinson
4.4	Operational guidance re Outcome 22 will be available to the YJ workforce.	Dec 2021	Dan Bride
4.5	Front Door data quality will be improved to enable data linkage between EHM and Core+	Dec 2021	Susannah Beasley-Murray

