

# Hertfordshire Youth Justice Plan

2025-26

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# Contents

<b>1. Introduction, Vision &amp; Strategy</b>	<b>4</b>	Meetings	45
1.1 Foreword by the Chair of Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board (HYJMB)	5	Audits	45
1.2 Vision	6	Champions	45
1.3 Local Context	7	4.5 Evidence-based Practice, Innovation & Evaluation	46
<b>2. Governance, Leadership &amp; Partnership Arrangements</b>	<b>11</b>	Crash Bang Project	46
2.1 Governance	12	City and Guilds	46
2.2 Leadership	14	Work Experience	47
2.3 Partnership Arrangements	15	Reducing Adjournments for Out of Court Consideration	47
<b>3. Reflecting on 2024-25</b>	<b>18</b>	4.6 2025-26 Priorities	48
3.1 Progress Against Priorities	19	4.7 Standards for Children	50
3.2 Summary of Performance 2023-24	27	4.8 Service Development	53
3.3 Risks & Issues	36	4.9 National Priority Areas	58
<b>4. Looking Ahead to 2025-26</b>	<b>36</b>	Children from Groups which are Overrepresented	58
4.1 Child First	38	Policing	58
4.2 Resources & Services	42	Prevention	59
4.3 Board Development	43	Diversion	61
4.4 Workforce Development	44	Education	63
YJ Academy	44	Restorative Approaches & Victims	63
Induction	45	Reparation	64
Performance & Development	45	Serious Violence, Exploitation & Contextual Safeguarding	66
		Detention in Police Custody	66
		Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA)	66
		Use of Custody & Constructive Resettlement	68
		Working with Families	68

**5. Sign off, submission & approval** **69**

**6. Appendices** **70**

Appendix 1 – HYJMB Membership, Staffing Structures  
& Demographics 70

HYJMB Membership List 70

Core Members: 70

Associate Members 71

Staff Structure 72

Summary of ethnicity, sex & known disability of staff 74

WTE Headcount 74

Demographics (inclusive of secondees) 74

Known Disability (inclusive of secondees) 74

Appendix 2 - Budget Costs & Contributions 75







01

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# Introduction, Vision and Strategy

## 1.1 Foreword by the Chair of Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board (HYJMB)

I am delighted to publish the Youth Justice Plan 2025-26 for Hertfordshire. This Plan has been developed in collaboration with our youth justice workforce and key partners, including members of Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board. It provides an overview of Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Service, sets out details of performance over the past year and outlines our priorities for 2025-26.

Working in and across youth justice services demands high quality staff, partners and volunteers. Staff must have resilience, patience and be equipped with the skills, knowledge and resources to support children helping them to achieve positive outcomes and prevent further offending. We are fortunate in Hertfordshire to have strong partnerships with our key statutory partners as well as wider support services.

We have continued to maintain low figures for children in custody and have seen reoffending rates steadily declining. This reflects the strong relationships the youth justice service has with the court service and high local confidence in alternatives to custody. There is consistent local recognition that avoiding custody wherever possible is in the best interests of the young person.

We have seen an increase in the number of serious violence offences committed by under 18s in Hertfordshire when compared to the previous year and, whilst local data shows that weapon carrying offences have decreased in 2024-25, addressing serious violence alongside wider partners remains a core element of service delivery.

The Board is committed to embracing the 'child first' principles. I am strongly committed to this approach and ensuring that the guiding principle of recognising the potential of all children is reflected across all the work that we do. We need to continue to hear the lived experiences of children in Hertfordshire who are at risk of offending and who have encountered the youth justice system and use this to improve the provision of services.

In 2025-26, as this plan articulates, we aim to build on the current foundations to deliver highly effective youth justice services by providing strong operational and Board leadership which evidences our commitment to our children, victims and local communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "El Mayhew".

**El Mayhew**

Chair of the HYJMB

Director of Children & Families,  
Hertfordshire County Council



## 1.2 Vision

In Hertfordshire we aspire to support our children and young people to be happy, loved and thrive in their family and community, as outlined in [Our Way Forward - Plan for Children and Children 2021- 2026](#).

As a Youth Justice Service (YJS), we work together with key partners – police, children's services, health services and probation - to deliver high quality and effective services to children, their families and the victims of offending, helping them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

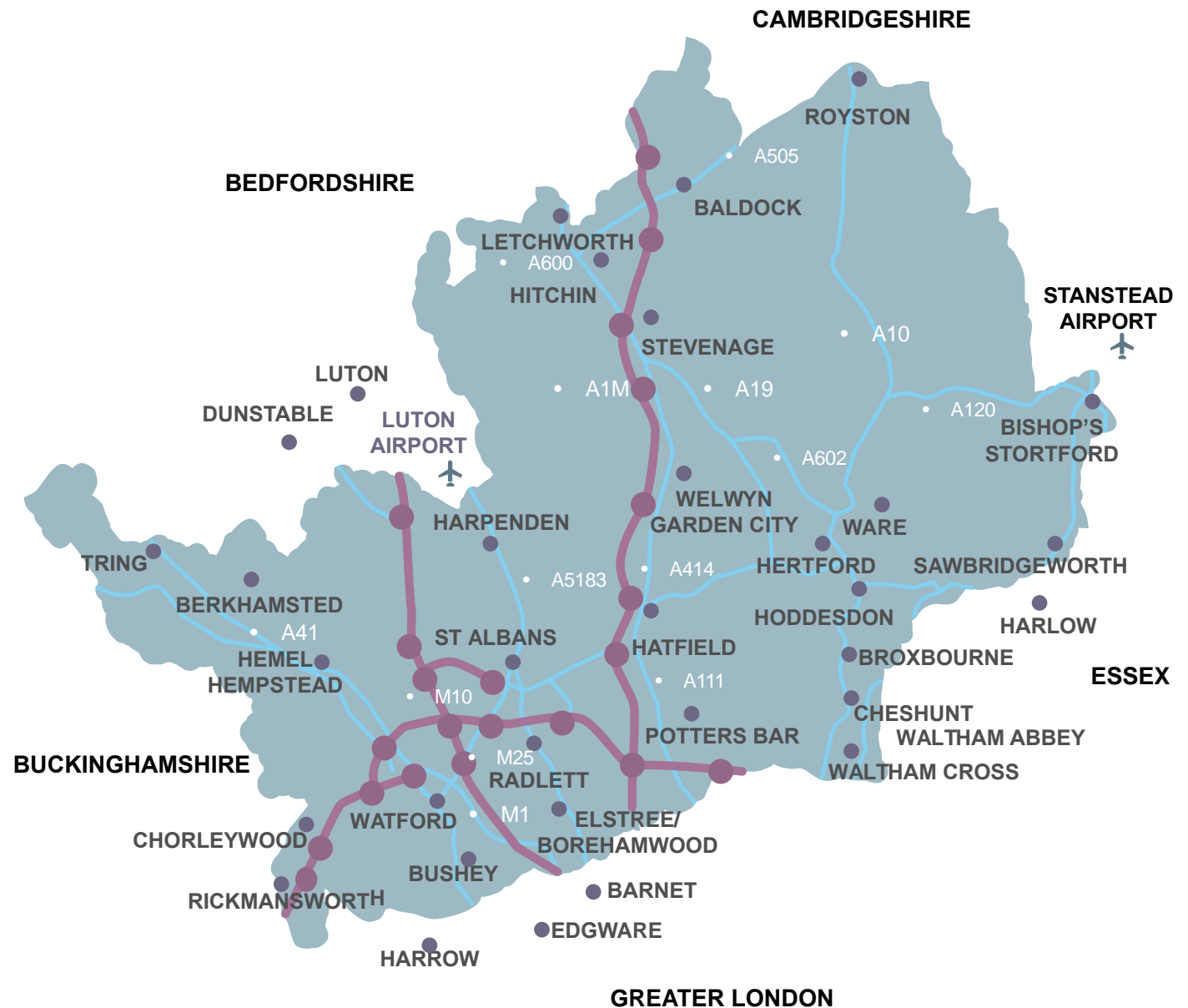


### 1.3 Local Context

Hertfordshire has a population of 1.21 million. Of its population there are 127,959 children between the ages of 10–17, representing 10.6% of the overall population (ONS 2023).

Hertfordshire is a large and varied county, stretching from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in the north to the outskirts of London in the south. It borders Buckinghamshire in the west and Essex in the east. Hertfordshire has ten local authority districts: Broxbourne, Dacorum, East Herts, Hertsmere, North Herts, St Albans, Stevenage, Three Rivers, Welwyn Hatfield and Watford (Herts Insights, 2021)

Image 1 – Map of Hertfordshire



The geographical picture across Hertfordshire is very diverse. Districts such as East Herts and North Herts have larger rural areas, whereas districts such as Welwyn Hatfield, Stevenage, Broxbourne, and Watford are more urbanised with vibrant town centres and a higher population density. These urban areas tend to have more night-time economy hotspots.

As mentioned above, along with the districts who have strong night-time economies and the south of the county bordering the outskirts of London, the county is well served by strong transport links in and out of London. This means that travelling criminality and transference of risk to children moves more readily into Hertfordshire, impacting on our local populations. Furthermore, we see children and their families being moved out of London as part of risk management plans where there is significant risk of violence and gangs.

Hertfordshire has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 12.7 in 2019. This was within the lowest range of deprivation scores in England, where Hertfordshire ranked 135 out of 151 upper-tier local authorities. Hertfordshire has a mix of affluent areas and deprived areas. Districts such as East Hertfordshire, St Albans and Three Rivers are ranked as more affluent areas, whereas districts such as Stevenage, Broxbourne, and Watford are ranked as more deprived areas, with the highest deprivation scores in the county. The more deprived districts also have the highest population density in Hertfordshire. There are 22,427 children under the age of 16 identified as living in relative low-income households (Herts Insights, 2022/23).

The last full year ethnicity data (2023-24) showed that White children are under represented within Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Service (YJS) when comparing the 10-17 aged offending population (72%)

with the 10-17 population (76%). The most over represented group are children of Black ethnicity, they make up 10% of the offending population and only 5% of the 10-17 population. When it comes to the custodial population, global majority groups are over represented making up 67% of custodial sentencing against a general 10-17 population percentage of 24%. However, due to very low numbers of children receiving custodial sentences disparity appears more significant (Youth Justice Board).

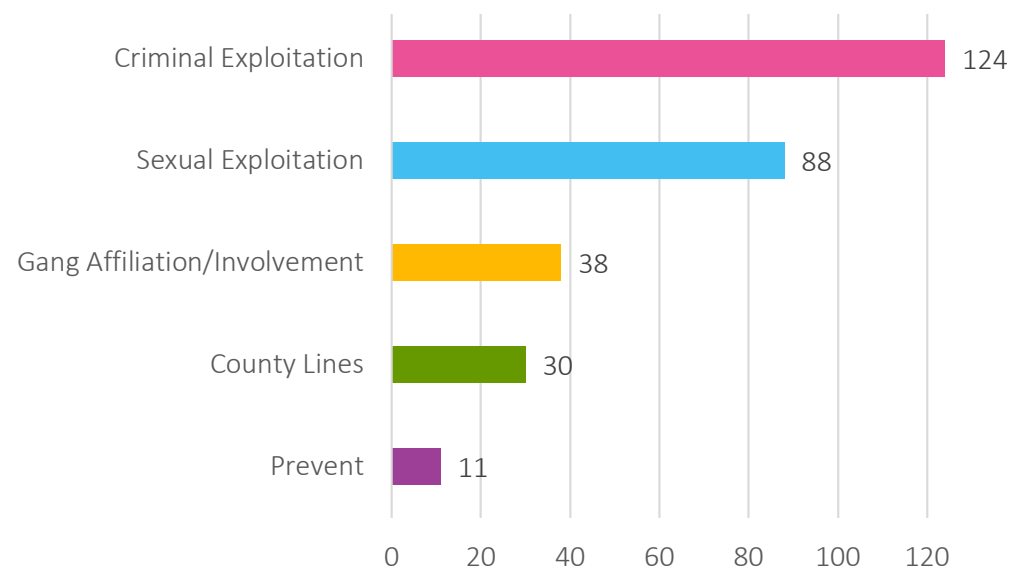
- 3.8% of Hertfordshire children (all schools) have an Education, Health and Care Plan, compared to 4.8% nationally. 13.3% of Hertfordshire children (all schools) have Special Educational Needs Support, compared to 13.6% nationally (Local Authority Interactive Tool).
- 15.1 % of Hertfordshire children were known to be eligible to claim free school meals, compared to 20.1% in the East of England and 24.6% nationally (Schools Census, 2023/24).
- At the end of March 2025 Hertfordshire had 818 Care Leavers aged 16-21, and 997 Children Looked After. When considered as a rate per 10,000 this equates to 36.4 for Children in Care and 29.9 for Care Leavers (Hertfordshire Children's Services).
- In 2024-25, Hertfordshire's Children's Services noted an increase of 6.9% (18,407 in 2024-25 compared to 17,219 in 2023-24) in all contacts into Children's Social Care. As at March 2025, an increase of 62.1% in children subject to child protection plans and a reduction of 12.4% in child in need plans when compared to March 2024. There was also an increase of 12.5% for children coming into care (431 compared to 383 in 2023-24) (Hertfordshire Children's Services).
- In 2024-25, 539 children received interventions (644) from the Youth Justice service. 78.8% of the cohort were male. 41.2% of the cohort were aged under 16 years of age and 58.8% were aged over 16. Whilst the number of unique children has reduced by 2%, the number



of interventions has increased by 4.5% (Hertfordshire Youth Justice Service).

- There were 922 offences committed in 2024-25 which resulted in a substantive outcome. This equates to a 1.5% decrease in comparison to the previous year (936 offences) (Hertfordshire Youth Justice Service).
- The five most common offences by offence type were:
  - 33.4% - Violence Against the Person
  - 14.3% - Theft and Handling Stolen Goods
  - 12.4% - Drugs (increase of 1.8%)
  - 6.3% - Robbery
  - 6.0% - Motoring Offences (decrease of 1.2%)
- As at the end of March 2025, detailed analysis of child exploitation across data held by Children's Social Care, Hertfordshire Youth Justice Service, Services for Children and Specialist Policing Teams shows that 291 Hertfordshire children were identified as being exploited.
  - 25.8% (75/291) of these children are on a current YJ Order (Local CS Data).

**Chart 1 – Breakdown of Exploitation Categories  
(Local CS Data – March 2025)**



**Table 1 – Exploitation Risk Levels by Category  
(all children) (Local CS Data – March 2025)**

This table shows that 66 children (22.7%) are identified as being at Active Risk level (highest), whilst the number of children at Elevated (176) or Recorded (49) risk levels are similar.

Exploitation Risk	Active Risk	Elevated Risk	Recorded Risk	Total	%
Prevent	10	1	-	11	3.8%
Sexual Exploitation	18	46	24	88	30.2%
County Lines	6	24	-	30	10.3%
Gang	9	11	18	38	13.1%
Criminal Exploitation	23	94	7	124	42.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>60.5%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

18.7% (14/75) of children with a current YJ Order fall within the Active Risk category.



02

## Governance, Leadership & Partnership Arrangements



## 2.1 Governance

Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board has undergone significant development in the last twelve months. We have reviewed our membership and implemented a Core Membership and Associate Membership.

Core Members include statutory partners and those who have a key role in the youth justice system locally for example the Crown Prosecution Service.

We also have two youth justice staff representatives, the Deputy Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families and a lay member who serves as a critical friend to the Board as well fulfilling the role of Deputy Chair.

Associate Members are recognised as having specific elements of cross-over with youth justice service delivery but who do not require as greater degree of strategic oversight. [Appendix 1](#) contains the current HYJMB membership list.

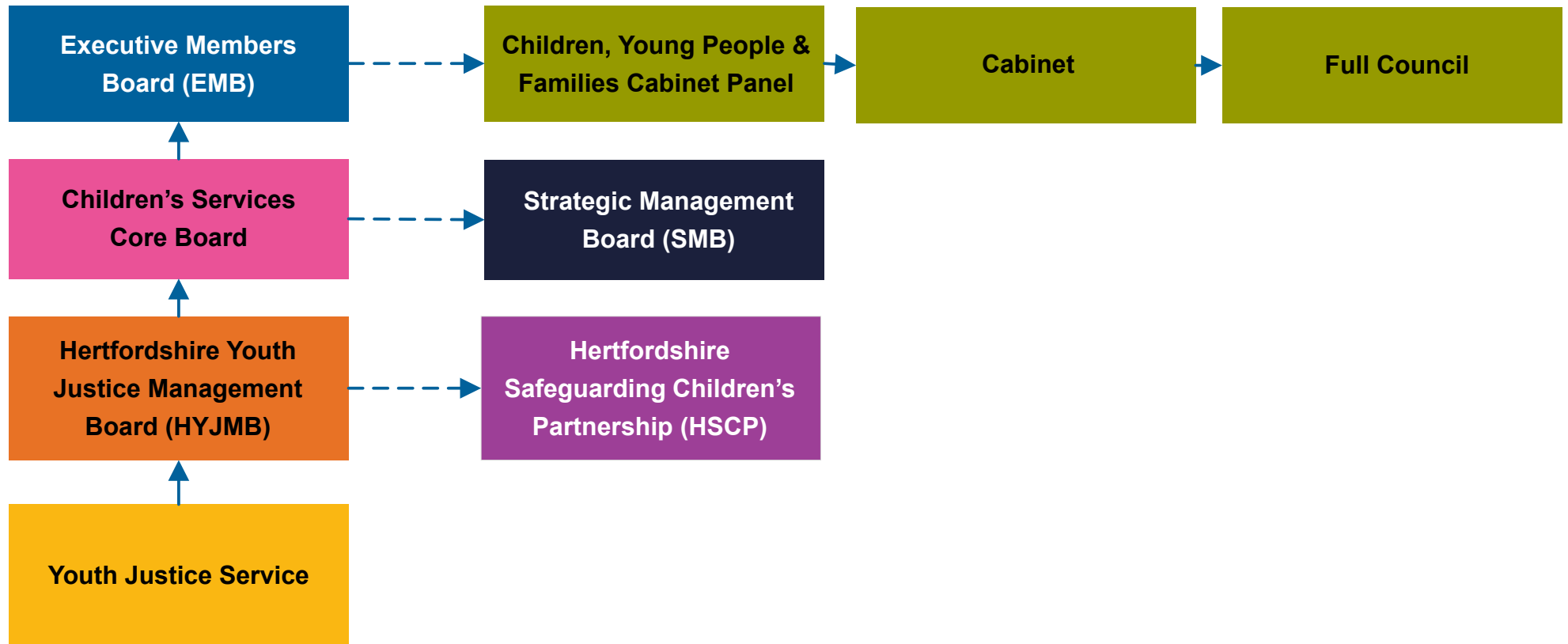
The Board is governed by Terms of Reference (ToR) which are reviewed annually. The ToR outline how the partnership will meet statutory requirements for the oversight of youth justice services.

The Board meet on a quarterly basis and hold other extraordinary meetings outside of the core arrangements to undertake urgent or more in-depth discussions. This includes two Development Days a year.

All Board members undertake at least two observations of youth justice practice or service delivery shadowing within a calendar year to ensure a link to frontline service delivery and engagement with practitioners. This is complemented by a calendar of Lite Bite sessions delivered throughout the year themed on different elements of practice, functions or service.

The YJS is accountable to the Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Panel, chaired by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families. In addition to the HYJMB and Cabinet Panel, the Service reports into Children's Services Core Board (chaired by the Director of Children's Services, Jo Fisher) and Executive Members Board on a minimum of a quarterly basis. The service also reports into the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Executive Board on a quarterly basis. The council's Chief Executive is regularly engaged via Strategic Management Board (SMB).

**Image 2 – Governance Structure**





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## 2.2 Leadership

Hertfordshire's YJS is structurally located in Children's Services within the Children and Families portfolio. This provides close interface with broader parts of Children's Services including social care and early help.

The Head of Service for Specialist Adolescent Services (SASH) leads the delivery of youth justice services and is supported by a dedicated management team that includes two Youth Justice Service Managers who lead on Practice and Policy respectively, and two further SASH Service Managers.

Service delivery is currently undertaken in an integrated model within our Specialist Adolescent Service (SASH) and consists of Senior Practitioners, Social Workers and alternatively qualified Adolescent Practitioners, who primarily lead on supporting children in complying with and completing their order. They are complemented by a range of specialist roles such as Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Practitioners, Reparation Workers, Forensic Adolescent Workers (CAMHS and Resilience Workers (CGL), who provide specific support as appropriate to the child's individual needs. We also have two dedicated Victim Workers who provide services to victims of youth crime, specialist input to YJ case managers and input to various panels to ensure victims are heard. The service also benefits from five seconded Police Officers and two Probation Officers who support with transitions.

[Appendix 1](#) illustrates the YJS structure chart and presents a summary of ethnicity, sex and known disability of staff.

Delivery of services is undertaken from a range of buildings both secure and community based, as appropriate to individual need and health and safety considerations.



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## 2.3 Partnership Arrangements

Hertfordshire's YJS benefits from strong partnership working. There are a range of meetings which enable interface with youth justice both strategically and operationally

**Table 2 - Key Strategic & Operational Partnership Forums**

### Strategic Partnership Working

**Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board** - provides a structure for strategic leaders to meet, discuss and agree measures to improve the criminal justice system in Hertfordshire for victims, witnesses, the public and all those who come into contact with it. This includes a range of sub-groups including Early Intervention and Prevention.

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**Vulnerable Adolescents Strategic Group** – a sub-group of the HSCP to collectively deliver the best protection for missing children, those at risk of exploitation including CSE, children vulnerable to radicalisation and trafficking, and those at risk through gang affiliation and County Lines, through the sharing of best practice, improvement of data and intelligence collection and performance monitoring.

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**Serious Violence Action Group** – brings together representatives of all the boards that own the Serious Violence Strategy and key partners who have a role to play in the Serious Violence Duty to lead on the strategies objectives and oversee the serious violence delivery plan.

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**Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Strategic Board** – this provides opportunity to ensure effective information sharing and the identification of high-risk children who are transitioning to adulthood, therefore adult justice services.

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**Families First Partnership Board** – a sub-group of the HSCP this Board is responsible for delivering an effective and sustainable early help and prevention system in Hertfordshire. It also serves to provide senior strategic oversight of delivery against the government's national policy around early help and prevention services, including those children at high risk of escalating into statutory services.

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**Crime Reduction Through Sport** – led by Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership this is a multi-agency Board with representation from statutory services as well as community and voluntary sector to oversee delivery of objectives relating to using sport as a vehicle for reducing criminal behaviour by children; increase wellbeing of children at risk of being involved in crime through sport; showcase pathways to education and employment in sport; and create new partnership programmes through skills sharing and new ways of collaborative working.

## Operational Partnership Working

**Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel** – operational multi-agency panel to identify and review children at risk or, or actively being exploited, encompassing criminal and sexual, and those individuals identified as vulnerable to exploitation due to missing episode(s) or other behaviours/incidents which identify them as at high risk.

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**Young Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)** – focuses on managing children that commit violent and sexual offences, as defined within the Criminal Justice Act 2003. This panel also incorporates Harmful Sexual Behaviours Panel.

This meeting, comprising of professionals with expertise and understanding of children as well as criminal justice, discuss and agree bespoke arrangements for the small number of children who present a significant risk to the public in the County.

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**Youth Diversion Panel** – this central Panel, held fortnightly, make decisions on Out of Court Resolutions for children referred by Hertfordshire Police Children and Young People's Team or those referred from the Youth Court.

The Panel is Chaired by a Youth Justice Practice Manager and is attended by a diverse core membership including police, Services for Young People, Education Training and Employment Workers, Forensic Adolescent Workers, Resilience Workers and Social Care representation.

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**Scrutiny Panel** – this is an independently chaired group that meets on a quarterly basis to review 20 (5 child, 15 adult) randomly selected OoCR (Community Resolutions, Youth Cautions, Youth Conditional Cautions) cases and assess whether there is agreement with the outcome, in line with legislation and policy.

Panel members provide each case with a grading 1-3 and any organisational learning identified during the scrutiny exercise is shared with the relevant agencies.

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**Risk Management and Safeguarding Panel** – this Panel is in place to support management of complex and high-risk SASH and youth justice children and for escalation where there are difficulties in delivering a risk management plan.

This is Chaired by the Youth Justice Service Manager (Practice) and membership includes representation from education, health and police.

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**Channel Panel** – part of delivery on the Prevent Strategy, this is a multi-agency panel used to assess the nature and extent of the risk with regards to individuals being drawn into terrorism. It provides appropriate support packages to help divert and support the individual at risk. Referrals can come from a wide range of individuals and partners and could include youth justice teams, social services, health, police, education and local communities.

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### **His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service**

YJS managers meet twice a year with Youth Bench Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Legal Advisers.

In addition, the YJS attend the full Youth Court Magistrate Panel Meetings each year, two are held for both the Central and North Youth Courts per annum. At these meetings the YJS provide updates and inputs on different elements of practice such as the Forensic Adolescent Service, reparation projects and education. Attendance and input ensure we continue to maintain strong relationships with the courts.

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## Reflecting on 2024-25

## 3.1 Progress Against Priorities

**Strategic Priority 1:** Provide robust governance and leadership that drives improvement, fosters innovation, and ensures high quality service delivery which supports the reduction of reoffending amongst children and a continued focus on disproportionality.

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
1.1	Build in cycle of Board interaction with operational service delivery i.e. thematic inputs	<p>All Board members have opportunities to undertake shadowing of frontline practice, examples of activities are outlined in our 'Effective YJS Board Member Engagement' guidance. It is an expectation that all members undertake a minimum of 2 opportunities per year and feedback should be provided following attendance/participation.</p> <p>We also regularly share details of any particular events taking place that members of Board may like to attend e.g. Crash Bang, reparation charity stalls.</p> <p>We have developed a programme of Lite Bite session which run throughout the year which are themed on different aspects of service delivery. These are shared with all members and where attendance is not possible we record these sessions and share.</p>	Complete - BAU
1.2	Be sighted on the quality of casework within the service	<p>Performance packs contain summaries of audit activity undertaken within service and action undertaken as a result.</p> <p>The service has also completed a self-evaluation process in light of the new HMIP inspection framework the output of which has also been shared with Board</p>	Complete - BAU

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
1.3	Improve visibility of Board amongst workforce and wider partnerships	<p>We have two staff representatives on the Board who also have a standing item at YJ Staff Meetings to provide space to provide updates on Board discussions and gather feedback from staff to be fed back to Board.</p> <p>The Chair of the Board also attends the YJ Staff Meeting twice a year.</p> <p>A Pen Portrait of all Board members has been produced to support the profile of the Board amongst the workforce and provide insights into individuals' relevant skills and experiences.</p>	Complete - BAU
1.4	Commission and participate in a Peer Review	<p>In September 2024 we took part in a Peer Review via the Youth Justice Sector Improvement Programme (YJSIP). The Board requested three lines of enquiry be explored during the Peer Review along with the golden threads of voice of the child and disproportionality.</p> <p>An action plan was developed in response to the recommendations made within the final report and significant progress has been made against this plan</p>	Complete - BAU
1.5	Develop system of learning from HMIP YJS inspection reports	<p>We have undertaken work to familiarise Board with the new inspection frameworks and used this to inform discussions about their role and responsibilities as members of Board.</p> <p>We share headlines from inspection reports, particularly where we identify a local gap. For example, the Board have been able to successfully progress a case for a dedicated Speech and Language Therapist. This was highlighted in a number of inspection reports as best practice given the prevalence of need amongst children within the criminal justice system.</p>	Complete - BAU



No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
1.6	Oversight of disproportionality action plan as a key focus across court and out of court resolutions, including influencing within own organisations (including links to OPCC Fairness of CJS Project)	<p>A specific Disproportionality Working Group has been established under the HYJMB which has representation from Police, OPCC, CPS and Youth Justice.</p> <p>Fairness in the CJS project continues.</p>	In Progress

**Strategic Priority 2: Continue to deliver effective, prevention and diversion activity.**

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
2.1	Implement use of mandatory use of Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool (PDAT)	PDAT embedded within service and is part of regular audit cycle in addition to usual management oversight/gatekeeping.	Complete
2.2	Continue to develop YDP to ensure it is operating efficiently, members are well engaged and ensure consistency and accuracy of formal recording on CV.	<p>YDP is well established and updated guidance and Terms of Reference was implemented in March 2025.</p> <p>We have secured consistent business support and have seen improvements in formal recording on CV.</p>	Complete - BAU
2.3	Explore use of Outcome 22 for deferred prosecution to further enhance tackling of disproportionality and reducing first time entrants.	<p>Outcome 22 (deferred prosecution) is an available resolution in Hertfordshire and is being used.</p> <p>We would like to increase use of Outcome 22 to divert more children away from the criminal justice system reducing First Time Entrants, but also to ensure that those who have a lack of trust in the police or criminal justice system, who may be fearful of admitting guilt or accepting responsibility, have the opportunity to receive an informal response.</p>	Complete

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
2.4	Maintain oversight of delivery of the Turnaround Programme to ensure targets are being achieved.	We delivered 42 interventions between June 2023 and March 2025.  Delivery was impacted by recruitment challenges and low or unsuitable referrals (in part as other local services offer a similar service without as robust eligibility criteria).	Complete
2.5	Increase understanding of what's available in the community from voluntary and third sector organisations	Developed a directory of services which provides an overview of services available across the county.	Complete

**Strategic Priority 3: Address barriers faced by children in engaging with ETE and accessing appropriate SEND support.**

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
3.1	Improve timely access to resources to YJS re SEND	Challenges with timeliness of SEND support remain locally for all children although significant work has been undertaken over the last year.  Review of SEND and YJ data is underway to identify which SEND teams YJ children currently most represented.  Educational Inclusion (inclusive of SEND) Working Group has been established under HYJMB.	In Progress
3.2	Ensure youth justice is represented and linked in to SEND Improvement Plan	SEND Improvement Plan has completed. YJ managers have been liaising with Inclusion and Skills Managers to explore improved processes and pathways to SEND for YJ children, this sits under the Educational Inclusion Working Group	Complete

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
3.3	Improve the ETE 'offer' for post-16 children	<p>We have continued to develop our City and Guilds for all children open to YJ.</p> <p>Educational Inclusion Working Group is leading on developing the post-16 offer, focusing initially on working with local colleges to understand their concerns in accepting children open to YJ or whom have previously offended.</p>	In Progress
3.4	Continue to refer children supported by YJS to Education Hub for multi-disciplinary support and inclusion in Safer in Schools Board	<p>This is standard practice for YJ practitioners.</p> <p>Data sets from SiS Board are shared with and discussed at Vulnerable Adolescent Strategic Group.</p>	Complete - BAU
3.5	Continue to ensure education, training and employment as well as SEND data recorded on ChildView is accurate to ensure advocacy for these children within wider forums and networks.	<p>Audit undertaken in Jan 2025 which highlighted the prevalence of education and SEND vulnerabilities for children open to YJ and the correlation between children out of education who also had EHCPs.</p> <p>This produced recommendations to progress improved joint working and robust data recording across both YJ and social care. Action plan is in place and currently being progressed.</p>	In Progress

**Strategic Priority 4: Drive practice improvement through workforce development, performance data and quality assurance activity.**

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
4.1	Embed cycle of ongoing audit activity	<p>Audit schedule in place to ensure regular auditing, this is in addition to weekly ad hoc auditing by YJ managers.</p> <p>Performance packs contain summaries of audit activity undertaken within service and action undertaken as a result.</p> <p>The service has also completed a self-evaluation process in light of the new HMIP inspection framework the output of which has also been shared with Board.</p>	Complete
4.2	Continue to develop YJ Academy as part of YJ Workforce Development Plan	<p>We have continued delivery of the YJ Academy with various sessions delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New starter/AYSE 8 week programme</li> <li>• Manager's session</li> <li>• Police Officers</li> </ul>	Completed - BAU
4.3	Review transitions data to identify any over representation in the young adult group on probation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to refine this data to ensure it captures what is required to undertake monitoring.</li> </ul>	In Progress
4.4	Explore introduction of Power BI as standard performance management tool	This is not currently possible due to restrictions in the back-end of Child View and CACI restrictions.	Complete



**Strategic Priority 5: Promote a 'Child First' approach across the youth justice system, increasing participation of children and their families.**

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
5.1	Continue development of feedback cycle for children and their parent/ carers	<p>In-house survey launched June 2024 which has been designed in collaboration with YJ workforce. Further tweaking will be undertaken based on feedback.</p> <p>Responses to survey to be compiled quarterly and shared across service as well as being used to improve service offer.</p> <p>Parental survey introduced April 2025.</p>	In Progress - BAU
5.2	Initiate annual YJ Children's Survey	This was not progressed in 2024-25 but is being explored with CS Participation Team for potential completion 2025-26.	In Progress
5.3	Work in partnership with other agencies, services and professionals to encourage active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion.	<p>Public Health Wellbeing Survey - providing some focus groups as part of testing phase.</p> <p>Advocated for inclusion of children open to SASH as part of police's work around youth Race Inclusion Board.</p> <p>Supported development and promotion of Youth RIB which is now being delivered jointly between Services for Children and Hertfordshire Constabulary.</p> <p>Currently working with OPCC and Leaders Unlocked to support with Youth Commission project planned for 2025-26.</p>	In Progress

**Strategic Priority 6: Focus on prevention of serious youth violence and exploitation.**

No.	Deliverable/Action	Progress Update	Status
6.1	Ensure delivery of Children @ Risk project as funded by Serious Violence Duty Funding	Clear differentiation of differences between Panels which has been communicated to staff and those attending Panels.	Complete
6.2	Ensure delivery of More Mentoring project as funded by Serious Violence Duty Funding		Complete
6.3	Complete analysis of children who have reoffended since the end of their Order and how many had exploitation identified, the link (if any) to new offences and any contact points with CS in the interim period.	No analyst capacity to complete.  Other analytical products needed have since been identified.	Dismissed
6.4	Maintain focus on local partnership working to address Serious Youth Violence	YJ Manager sits on the Crime Reduction Through Sport Board locally which is in its infancy but seeking to reduced crime through provision of meaningful sport provision.  Close linkage with YJ police officers to ensure joined up planning around safety of child and community, as well as interventions.	In Progress

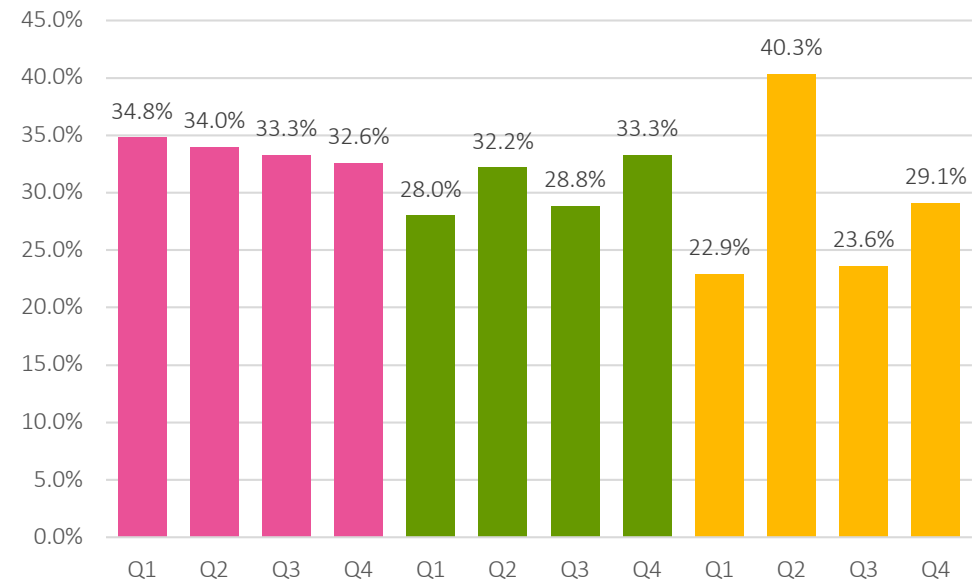
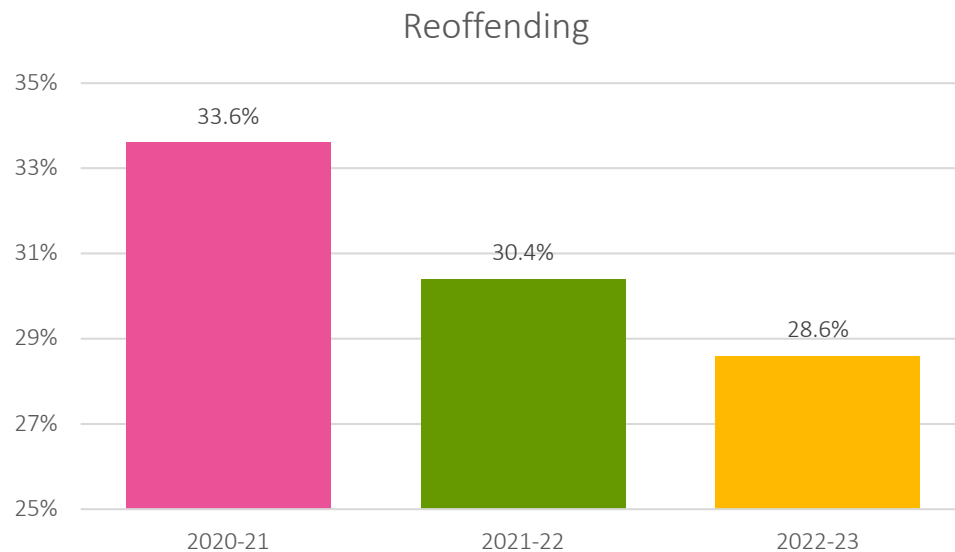
## 3.2 Summary of Performance for 2023 - 24

### a) Reoffending

The YJB data identifies children convicted within a specific cohort, if these children committed an offence within 12 months of their original conviction which results in a conviction 18 months from original conviction, then they will be included within the re-offending cohort.

Whilst reoffending rates vary quarter to quarter, annualised data shows a continued reduction in reoffending rates year on year. For the latest tracked cohort data, 2022-23, reoffending reduced by 1.8% when compared to the 2021-22 tracked cohort (YJB Data Summary 121 April-December 2024).

**Chart 2 – Reoffending for Hertfordshire (Youth Justice Board)**



#### Key

2020/21    2021/22    2022/23

**Table 3 – Percentage of Reoffending  
(Youth Justice Board )(2022-23)**

<b>Hertfordshire</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
YJS Family Average	29.4%
Eastern Region	32.7%
National (England and Wales)	32.3%

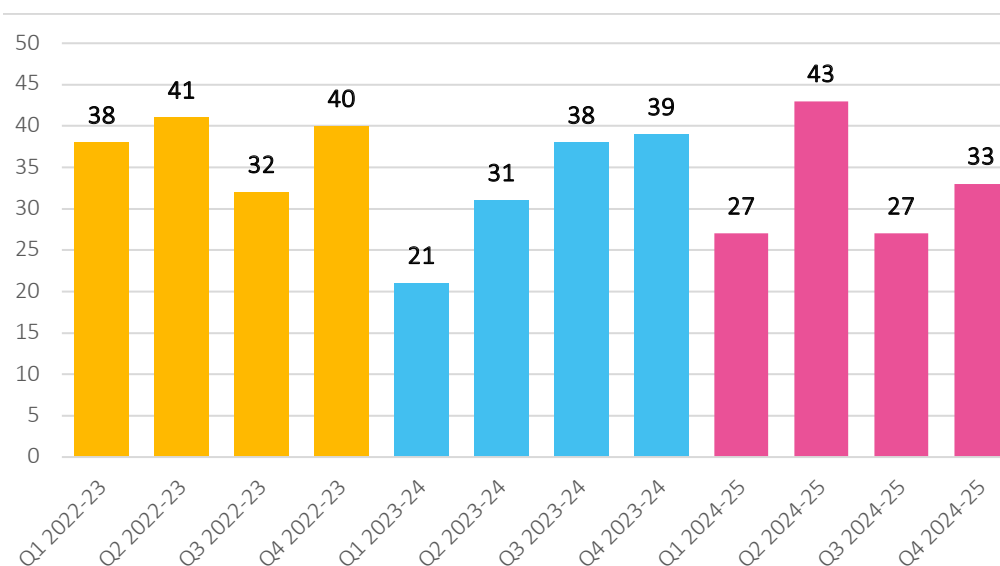
Benchmarking data for reoffending highlights Hertfordshire as having a lower reoffending rate than the Eastern Region, ‘YJS Family Average’ and the national average. It also has a lower rate than 3 of YJS in its ‘YJS Family Group’. This is an encouraging performance trajectory and reflects the positive impact that the interventions provided to children by Hertfordshire YJS are having in terms of preventing further offending. (YJB Data Summary 121 April-December 2024)

## b) First Time Entrants

First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the criminal justice are children (aged 10-17), resident in England and Wales, who received their first caution or conviction.

Local data shows the cumulative figure for first time entrants in 2024-25 is 130. This is a 0.8% increase from the previous year of 129.

**Chart 3 – First Time Entrants (Local Data)**





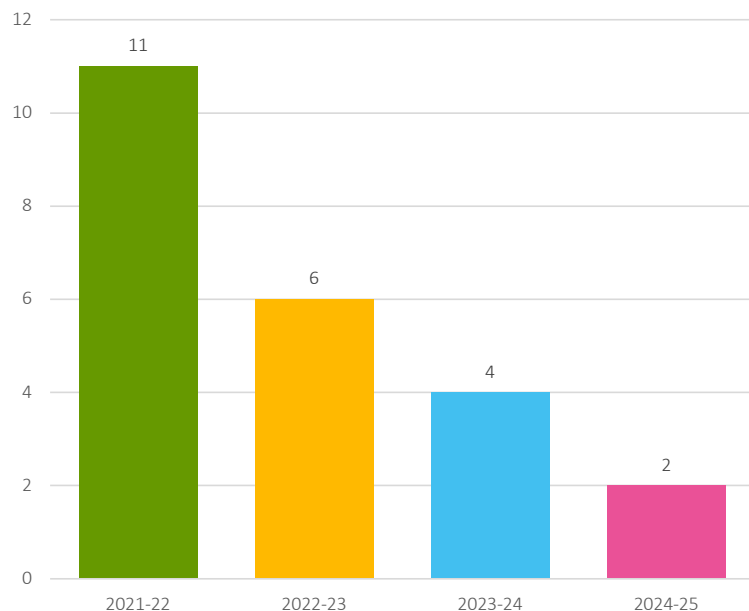
## c) Custody

Custody is reserved for children who have committed the most serious offences or those that wilfully and persistently fail to comply with community orders. A custodial sentence consists of a mandatory custody period and then a licence programme within the community.

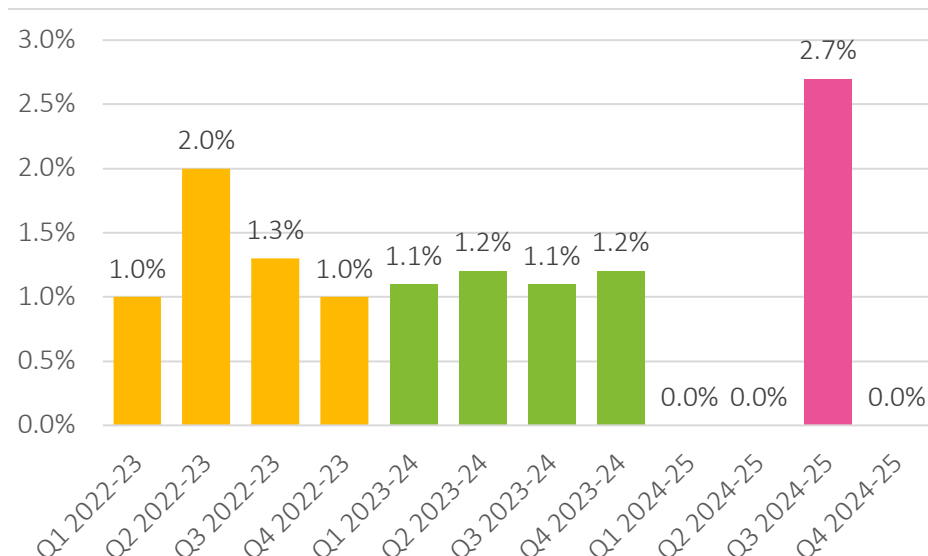
There were 2 children that received a custodial sentence in 2024-25 in comparison to 4 children in 2023-24. This is attributed to the following factors:

- strong relationships with the courts which enables the service to influence sentencing decisions positively for most children.
- quality Pre-Sentence Reports which demonstrate how children can be safely managed in the community.

**Chart 4 – Number of Children Sentenced at Court that Receive a Custodial Sentence (Local Data)**



**Chart 5 – Percentage of Children Sentenced at Court that Receive a Custodial Sentence out of all Disposals (Local Data)**



Benchmarking data for custody rates per population highlights Hertfordshire as having a lower custody rate per 1,000 of 10-17 population when compared with the Eastern Region, 5 of its 'YJ Family' group and the national average. (YJB Data Summary 121 April-December 2024)

**Table 4 – Rate per 1,000 of 10-17 Population given a Custodial Sentence at Court (Youth Justice Board) (Q3 2023-24)**

<b>Hertfordshire</b>	<b>0.04</b>
YJS Family Average	0.04
Eastern Region	0.07
National (England and Wales)	0.10

#### **d) Accommodation**

For the 210 Court Orders which ended during 2024-25, 99% (208) of children were recorded as being in suitable accommodation.

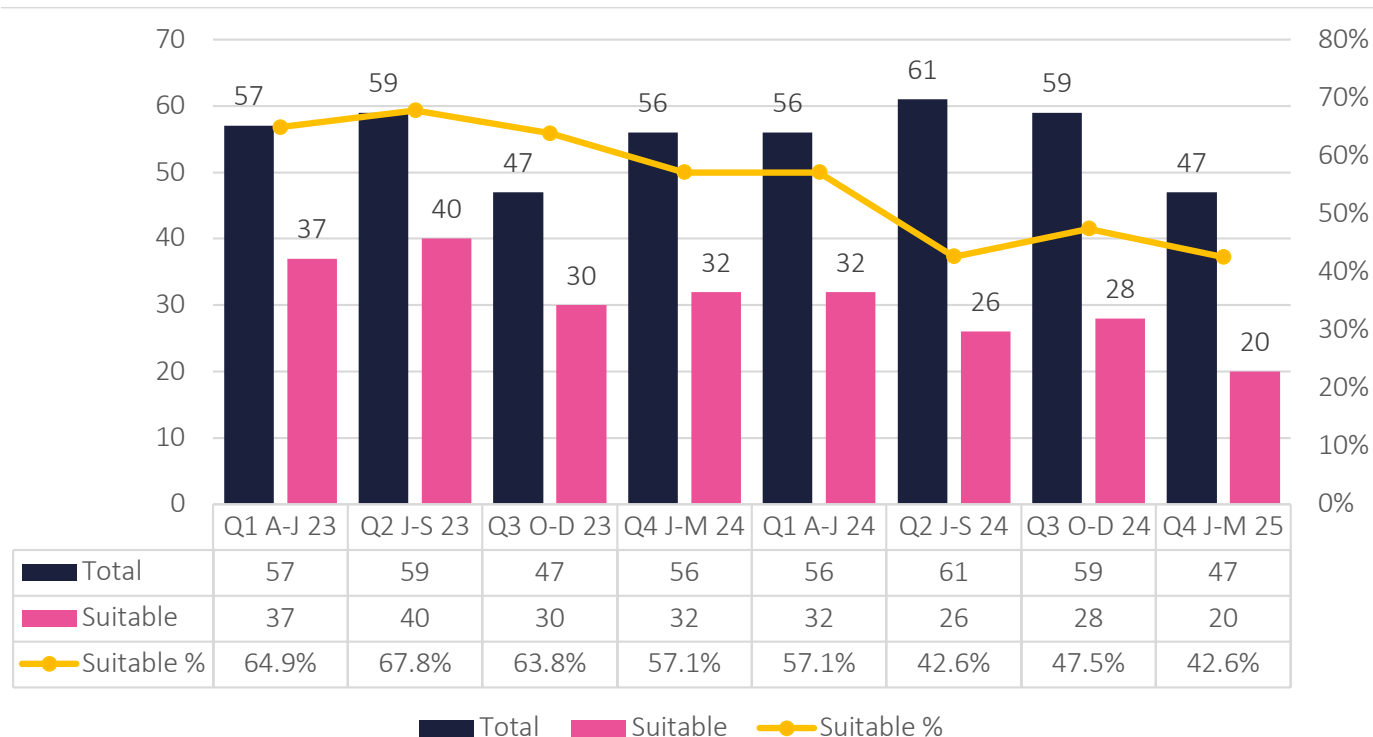
#### **e) Education, Employment and Training**

Education, Training and Employment (ETE) is divided into two categories: School Age children (those below 16 years) and Above School Age (those above 16 years) depending on their birthday and school term. Calculations are made on the basis that all school age children should be receiving 25 hours of education and those above school age should be receiving / or participating in 16+ hours of education, training or employment.

The percentage of children in suitable ETE varies each quarter but 47.5% (106/223) of children were in suitable ETE at the end of their Court Order in 2024-25.

The majority of children without suitable ETE provision are those above statutory school age. This is primarily due to a lack of post-16 pathways, particularly for children who have a criminal record or are considered by providers to be too risky to accept onto college courses.

## Chart 6 – Suitability of ETE Provision for Children (Local Data)



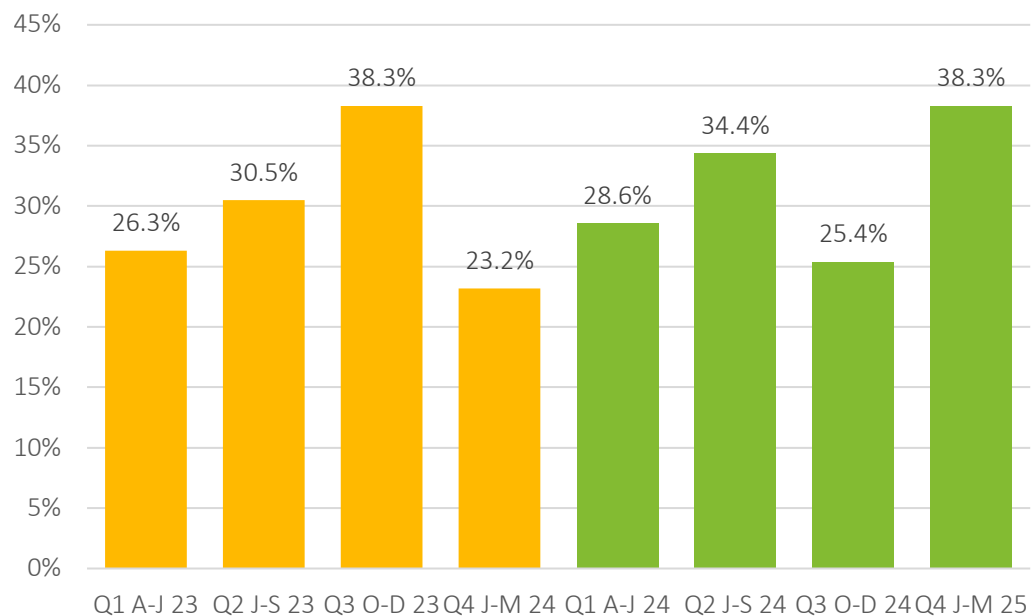
Access to and engagement with ETE remains a key priority for Hertfordshire YJS, the links to SEND are well known and we are seeking to influence how children open to youth justice can be better supported in these two areas to ensure they have the best possible chance to thrive and succeed. This is being progressed by our Educational Inclusion Working Group which is led by Board members from Health and Education.



## f) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities / Additional Learning Needs

70 children (31%) were recorded as having a Special Educational Need or Disability at the end of their Order for 2024-25. (Local Data)

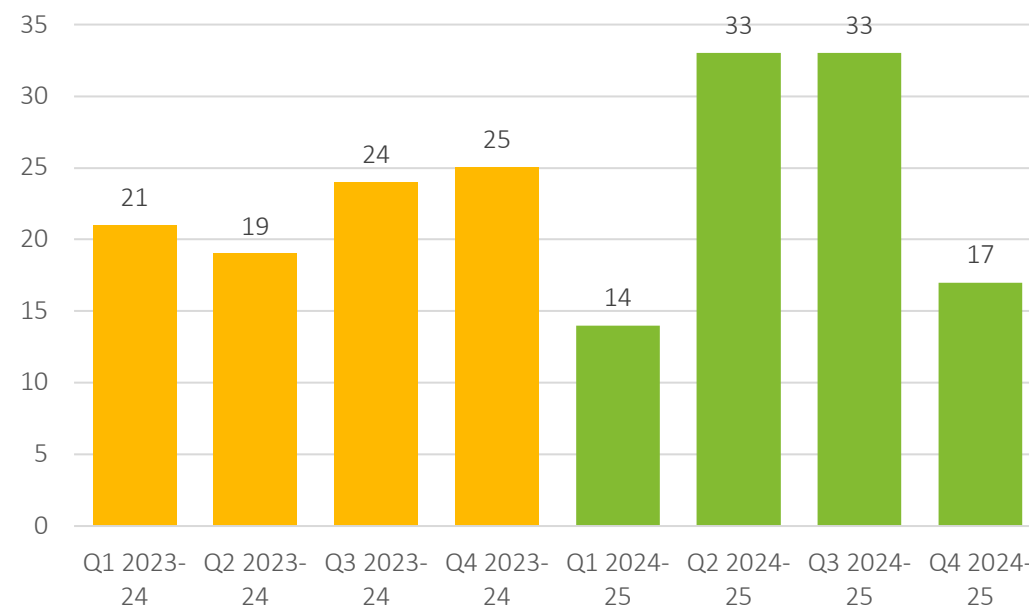
**Chart 7 – Children with SEND (Local Data)**



## g) Substance Misuse

For 2024-25 there were a total of 97 children (14 females and 83 males) that were recorded as being referred for Substance Misuse support. This is an increase of 9% when compared to 2023-24. (Local Data)

**Chart 8 – Referrals to CGL Resilience Workers for Substance Misuse Support**





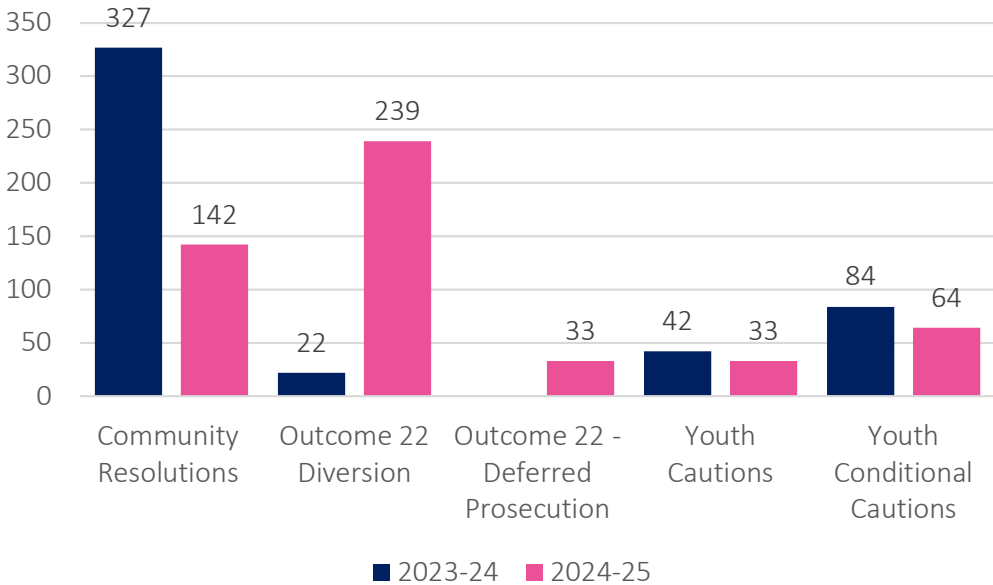
### h) Out of Court Resolutions

Most Community Resolutions (CRs) and Outcome 22 (O22) (diversion) are delivered by the police outside of joint decision-making processes. However, Youth Diversion Panel can still request a child be reconsidered for a CR or O22 (diversion) if it is felt appropriate.

Outcome 22 (deferred prosecution) was introduced in 2024-25 and has been utilised on 33 occasions in 2024-25. We hope to advocate for more use of this resolution to divert more children away from the formal court system through delivery of interventions appropriate to individual need.

A total of 511 Out of Court Resolutions were delivered over 2024-25 this is a 7.6% increase on 2023-24. Combined, the number of Youth Conditional Cautions and Youth Cautions have reduced by 23% compared to 2023-24 from 126 to 97.

Chart 9 – Out of Court Resolutions & Reoffending



### i) Management Board Attendance

We have adapted our membership structure in 2024-25 to create a Core and Associate Membership ([see Appendix 1](#)). We have had some fluctuations in attendance from Probation and Education representatives, but this has been addressed locally.

Table 5 – Management Board Attendance at Quarterly Board Meetings

	Q1 2024-25  13 May 2024	Q2 2024-25  09 Sept 2024	Q3 2024-25  18 Dec 2024	Q4 2024-25  24 Feb 2025
Children’s Social Care	X	X	X	X
Education		X	X	X
Police	X	X	X	X
Probation		X		X
Health	X	X		X
Other	X	X	X	X

j) Serious Violence, Exploitation & Contextual Safeguarding

There has been a significant amount of work undertaken focusing on serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding. As mentioned in section 1.3 we have improved our identification of children at risk of exploitation through improve multi-agency data sets which are now combined to provide a more robust and complete picture of exploitation within Hertfordshire. Latest data shows that children with a current YJ Order make up 25.8% of all children identified as being exploited.

We have seen a 7% decrease in the number of blade related offences when compared to 2023-24. Primarily these offences are for possession of a bladed/sharp article in a public place. The Police’s Child Criminal Exploitation Prevention & Diversion (CCE P&D) Team seek to engage children known as ‘habitual knife carriers ’ through voluntary interventions.

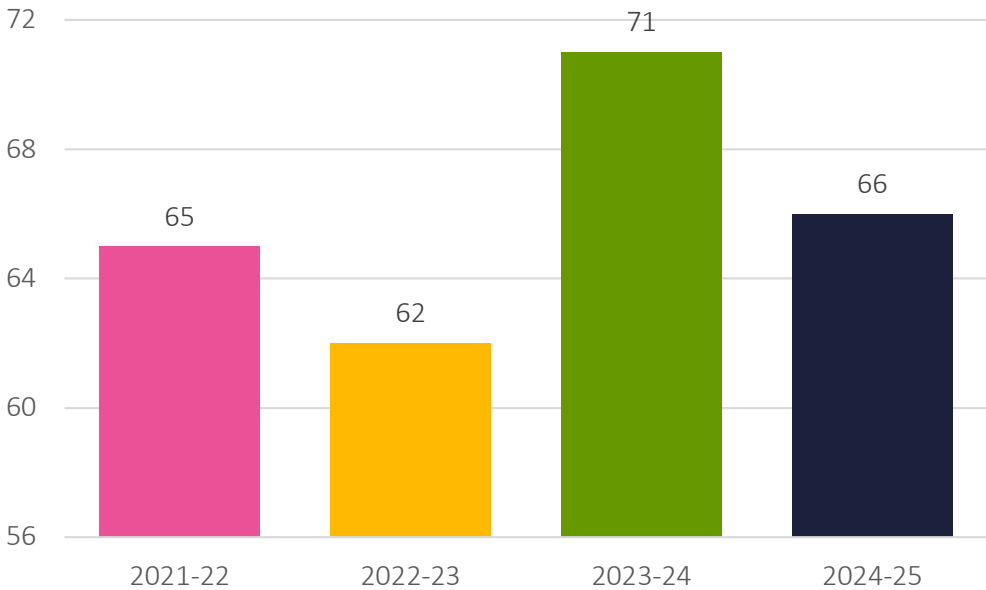
Hertfordshire Definition (April 2024)

The criteria for entry onto the matrix is:

‘A suspect who has been linked to 3 or more investigations or intelligence reports containing a knife crime flag, recorded on Athena, over a 12-month rolling period’; or

‘Any individual deemed a risk to others or themselves due to the use or carrying of a knife or sharp instrument based on robust professional judgement and risk assessment’.

Chart 10 – Blade Offences (Local Data)



Latest data available from the YJB’s Serious Violence Tool shows there were 73 serious violence offences committed by children from Hertfordshire in the year ending December 2024. This is an increase of 21 when compared with the same period 2023-24. This equates to a rate of 5.7 per 10,000 children aged 10-17years old (YJB Serious Violence Tool Q3 2024-25). The YJB’s operational definition of Serious Violence is any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of five or more.

Hertfordshire YJS secured two grants (totalling £85,084) via the Home Office Serious Violence Duty Fund which were delivered over 2024-25.

The two projects were:

**Children @ Risk (C@R)** – this project had two separate strands:

- Mentoring – we commissioned Safe Space to recruit additional volunteer mentors to support any children open to SASH or with a YJ Order who is were risk of exploitation.

A total of 6 children received community-based mentoring through this strand.

- Boys Group Programme – this was a 6-week group specifically for males who had a drug, violence against the person or robbery offence for which they are on a Referral Order. The development of the sessions and delivery of the programme was led by youth justice practitioners with additional input from external facilitators at different points.

A group was delivered in 3 of our 4 quadrants, collectively delivering to 15 children. We are looking to continue to delivery of this as part of our core offer moving forward given the positive feedback received from children who attended the sessions.

**More Mentoring** – this provided funding for our most high risk and complex children or children transitioning into SASH/YJ from the Police's Child Criminal Exploitation Prevention and Diversion (CCE P&D) Team where we needed to try something different to try and break a cycle when other interventions were not having the impact we had hoped.

A total of 6 children received intensive mentoring through this strand. Mentoring packages included bespoke education timetables for children who were NEET.

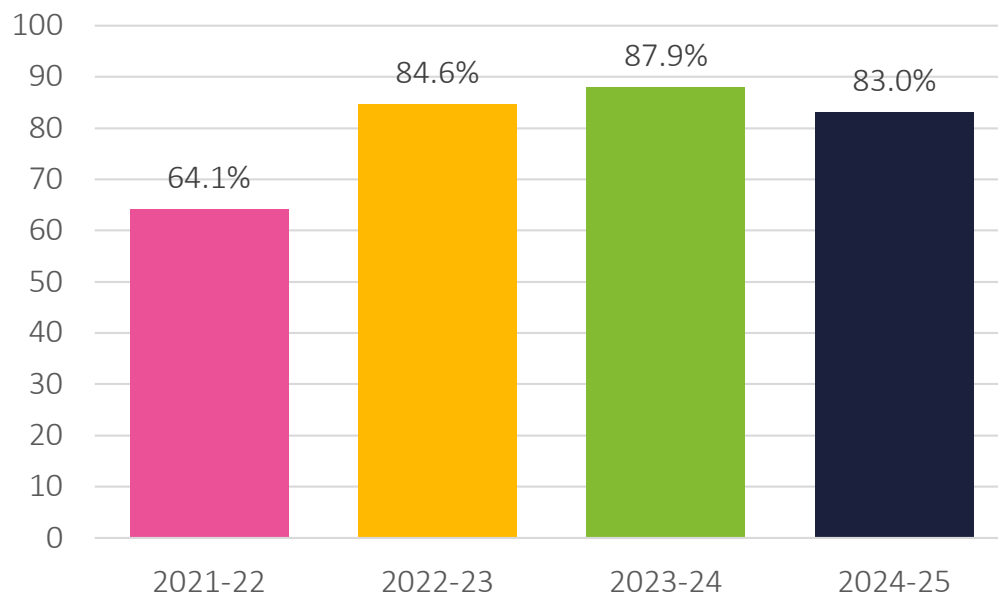
'I feel that the mentor has greatly helped me in a wide range of aspects. He has enabled me to express any concerns I have had about my circumstances and given me a lot of solid advice for life skills, attitude and mindset. I feel I have learned a lot from my mentor, and it has helped me to approach aspects of my life that I may have previously had issues with more positively and confidently, i.e. socialising, peace of mind and health. I have never felt pressured by my mentor, and I have enjoyed and looked forward to every meeting with him. I am confident that I have improved my outlook and overall mindset with the help of my mentor and have learnt many new techniques that will help with my attitude to things I come across in life.'

## k) Victims

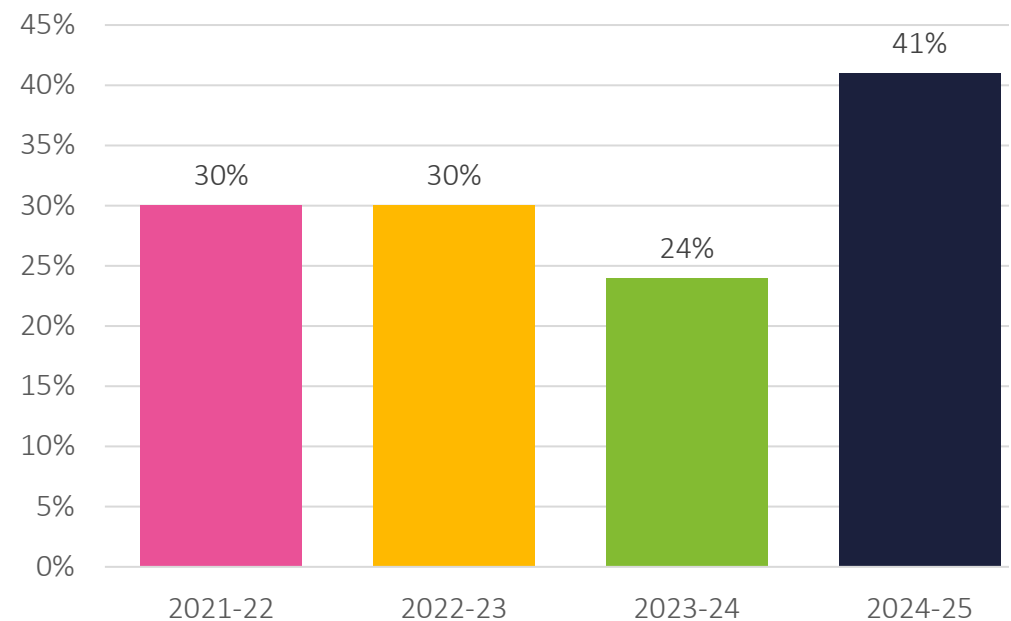
Where we have consent, victims of youth crime are contacted by dedicated Victim Workers and are offered the chance to take part in restorative justice opportunities and interventions, as well as receive individualised support identified through a Victim Assessment Form.

83% (161/194) of victims identified in 2024-25 were offered the opportunity to participate in either direct or indirect reparation. Of those offered 41% (66) went on to receive reparation.

**Chart 11 – Percentage of Victims Offered Reparation**



**Chart 12 – Percentage of Victims Receiving Reparation (all types)**





### 3.3 Risks & Issues

A Risk Register is maintained by HYJMB and is subject to regular review. The Chair of the Board acts as the Partnership Risk Lead, ensuring there is an effective risk management strategy in place, co-produced and owned by the HYJMB.

A Risk Management Protocol is in place to act as a communication tool as to how risks are to be managed.

The Board is also accountable to the Corporate Resources Management Board.



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## Looking Ahead to 2025-26

## 4.1 Child First

**Table 6 – How child first principles are implemented within service delivery**

<b>Deliverable/Action</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Prioritise the best interests of children</b>	<p>Service delivery is child-focused, tailored to individual needs using a range of different resources as appropriate. Resources and documents available are free from professional and legal jargon.</p> <p>Case managers continually advocate on behalf of their children influencing other services to take a child-first approach.</p> <p>Youth justice staff have received training in relationship-based and trauma-informed approaches, motivational interviewing and reflective supervision all of which seek to ensure the child's interests are prioritised and individual needs and capabilities are recognised and used to inform the work undertaken.</p> <p>We have delivered sessions on adultification to the Board, youth justice staff and our volunteers to ensure that adultification is understood and considered within all of our work.</p>
<b>Promoting individual strengths and capacities to develop pro-social identity for sustainable desistance</b>	<p>Good Lives Model, premised on the idea that we need to build capabilities and strengths in people to reduce their risk of reoffending, is embedded within the service.</p> <p>Training in the AssetPlus structured assessment provides a holistic framework promoting pro-social identity, strengths and desistance factors, and involves children's active participation in plans and interventions.</p>

Deliverable/Action	Progress Update
<p><b>Encouraging active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion</b></p>	<p>The Voice of the Child is a golden thread throughout Children's Services, including youth justice. It is incorporated into assessments, plans and contracts undertaken with children as part of their court or pre-court intervention. The relationship-based approach applied across all aspects of service delivery supports this.</p> <p>Service adopts the CS 'This is Me' approach coproduced with children around language and engagement. This video highlights how our use of language and what we record is experienced by the children, children and families we support: <a href="#">Hertfordshire Social Care Round Table video - Herts CC</a>. As a result of this, and based on their wishes, we have committed to changes in the way in which we refer to children (e.g. don't say 'case') and way in which we record within systems.</p> <p>We have begun roll-out of recording to the child within our Prevention, Diversion and Assessment Tool, as well as write ups of direct work contacts and management oversight. Further work is needed to ensure consistency across all staff and broader roll out which is phased over 2025-26 though provision of guidance and training sessions.</p> <p>In 2023 we joined up with Hertfordshire Constabulary to contribute to a research project exploring the challenges, threats, risks, and harms to which children from Hertfordshire's Black communities are exposed for the police to consider how it can best adapt or change its policing to address these challenges. In 2024, this enabled the establishment of the Youth Race Inclusion Board which is supported by Services for Young People who remain well connected to the Youth Justice Service.</p> <p>The AssetPlus, a structured assessment and planning tool, includes a child self-assessment and parent self-assessment both of which are integral to informing the subsequent intervention with children and their personalised plan. These are regularly revisited at various stages of the intervention.</p>

Deliverable/Action	Progress Update
<b>All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system</b>	<p>Increased use of Out of Court Resolutions, particularly Outcome 22 which enables delivery of interventions which seek to divert children through educational activities, reducing the number of children entering the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Turnaround is being delivered until end of March 2026 which seeks to support children 10-17 years of age on the cusp of the criminal justice system.</p> <p>There is a strong focus on prevention and diversion in Children's Services through both our Specialist Adolescent Service (SASH) as well as our well-established Families First early help model, both of which seek to minimise contact with the criminal justice system through early intervention by providing support and information early to prevent issues from escalating.</p>
<b>Voice of the Child, Young Person &amp; Family</b>	<p>We have replaced a previously commissioned survey with one that is hosted in-house. This provides greater flexibility in adapting questions as required. This was introduced in June 2024. At the end of their intervention children are asked to complete a short survey to capture their feedback on what's helped or changed for them as well as any ideas for how the service could improve. This feedback is collated quarterly, disseminated across the service and partnership and used to improve services.</p> <p><b>When asked about what things have got better for them or how the YJS has helped them children said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'I have managed to completely stop all substance use apart from cannabis which is a big step. I am also having a better relationship with people at home.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'My way of thinking and reading situations has improved'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Helped me with school (wasn't in for a few years now I am)'</i></li> <li>• <i>'It's helped me realise how much my offence and cause and have an impact on others around me.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'I have found it fun; I have been able to leave the house to attend the sessions and I normally never leave the house. I think this is good as I don't just stay in my house being bored. I have been able to join onto the Kings trust programme.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Better ways to deal with my anger.'</i></li> </ul>



Deliverable/Action	Progress Update
<p><b>Voice of the Child, Young Person &amp; Family</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'It had taught me thing about my actions such as the consequences and anger management and victim awareness.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Rep has been helpful. I have been able to get out of the house more. I have learned about consequences and now I will not let my anger get in the way. I will remove myself from situations where I could get into trouble.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'They were understanding and had my best interests first.'</i></li> </ul> <p><b>When asked for ideas about how the service could be improved or what they think would be of benefit to others in a similar situation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'I feel like everything went well and there is nothing that could've been done better.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Shorter appointments.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'If I didn't have so many appointments.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Not changed workers so much.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Boys Group.'</i></li> <li>• <i>'Trying different clubs / support groups.'</i></li> </ul> <p>We have recently (March 2025) implemented a survey for parent/carers which will provide additional insight into their experiences to help inform service development.</p> <p>In addition to the above we are currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Analysing responses to a survey called 'Language Matters' from which we will be developing a position statement on use of language.</i></li> <li>• <i>Exploring using our Panel Members to undertake some reflective feedback with children and parent/carers at their Final Panel.</i></li> <li>• <i>Liaising with colleagues in the Children's Services Participation Team to establish an annual survey or similar</i></li> <li>• <i>Exploring mechanisms and resource requirements for a YJ Coproduction Board.</i></li> </ul>

## 4.2 Resources & Services

Hertfordshire's YJS retained its in-kind contributions in 2024-25 and have secured these into 2025-26. This includes 4 WTE Forensic Adolescent Practitioners (CAMHS), 2 WTE Resilience Workers (CGL), 0.4 WTE Probation Officers and 5 WTE Police Officers.

We have also secured 1 WTE Speech and Language Therapist for the service who it is expected will be in post later this year.

The overall resourcing envelope of youth justice services for 2025-26 is forecast to be £3,726,874. This is inclusive of all sources of income. We have not been able to confirm financial contributions from the Police and Crime Commissioner at the point of writing. Furthermore, Hertfordshire Constabulary reduced their funding contribution by £50,000 in 2024-25, negotiations continue. The overall envelope figures excludes Turnaround funding.

The budget structure for the delivery of services in 2025-26 includes contributions from a range of sources:

- Youth Justice Board Grant
- Hertfordshire Children's Services
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Hertfordshire Probation Service
- Public Health
- In-kind contributions from Police, Probation, Public Health and Health

- Spend for 2024-25 went outside of the financial envelope provided, showing an overspend of 168k. This was primarily due to the reduction in funding by £50,000 from Police, which was incorporated into the budget at £118k for the service as in previous years. Additionally, multiple staff sit on the highest pay grade while the budget is set at midpoint, while a high-cost SW vacancy was being covered by a high-cost agency staff member until August 2024. Additionally, budget was taken for posts which were removed due to Hertfordshire County Council's Organisational Resourcing accounting for circa £70k of the overspend.

[Appendix 2](#) provides an overview of the budget for the delivery of youth justice services in Hertfordshire for 2025-26.

We use our grant, partner contributions and available resources to deliver our youth justice services and believe they support the below benefits and outcomes:

- Two dedicated Resilience Workers provide 1:1 support to children with substance misuse issues. These workers also provide: specialist consultations and bite-size training to staff around substance misuse; for those children receiving structured treatment the Resilience Workers will support them to complete a Drug & Alcohol Awareness City and Guilds module; transitional support for children entering and exiting custody; specialist input to various Panels including Risk & Safeguarding, MACE and Youth Diversion Panel; issuing Naloxone spray to reverse effects of opioids; support a needle and syringe programme to ensure children are using clean equipment and staying safe.
- Forensic Adolescent Workers participate in health screening as part of the AssetPlus assessment, provide consultations to case

managers and offer direct work to individual children experiencing mental health issues and those suffering the impact of trauma. They also contribute to AIM3 assessments regarding Sexually Harmful Behaviour for those charged with sexual offences.

- We have close working relationships with our police officers who deliver diversionary work arising from the Youth Diversion Panel. Feedback from children has been positive, challenging their perceptions of police officers and improving community relations.
- We have 1.4 Probation staff in post: one of these supervises offenders aged 16-18 in the community on court Orders, post custody licence and custody throughcare. In addition, they write Pre-Sentence Reports and are part of the court duty rota. A further two Probation Officers manage the transition of children to the adult probation service.
- Our Victim Workers contact all victims, where identified and there is consent to do so. They will ensure the victim's voice is heard throughout, from Prevention, Diversion and Assessment Tools and Pre-Sentence Reports to Panel Meetings. They will also offer victims the chance to be involved in restorative justice as well as signposting to other support services as required.
- We continue to recruit, train and support a number of volunteers from the community to serve as members on our Referral Order Panels, to help meet the requirements of Referral Orders, and as Appropriate Adults at police stations.
- We continue to deliver Turnaround, the Ministry of Justice's early intervention programme to divert children aged 10-17 years old from the criminal justice system, for the extended funded period until March 2026.

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## 4.3 Board Development

We continue to identify opportunities to develop our Board ensuring our membership is diverse, engaged and committed to supporting delivery of our youth justice priorities.

We have a Core and Associate Membership list. Core members include statutory partners, along with representatives whose service or work is closely aligned with the YJS priorities. Core members are expected to attend all quarterly Board meetings and development sessions. Associate members are recognised as having specific elements of cross-over with youth justice service delivery but whom it is sufficient to have invited to Board development sessions. Associate members are not required to attend quarterly Board meetings

All Board members are expected to undertake at least two youth justice service delivery shadowing or lite bite learning opportunities within a calendar year to ensure link to frontline service delivery and engagement with practitioners. Lite Bite sessions on various elements of youth justice service delivery planned for delivery over 2025-26. This includes: Overview of Hertfordshire's Appropriate Adult Scheme, What is a Referral Order? The Role of a Panel Member, Out of Court Resolutions; Hertfordshire Prevention & Diversion Offer and Work with Victims.

In addition to our formal meeting schedule, we remain flexible to the provision of additional meetings as required and undertake two development days a year.

## 4.4 Workforce Development

Youth Justice Specialist Managers, Practice Managers and Senior Practitioners working within youth justice are registered Social Workers whilst Adolescent Practitioners have a range of relevant alternative qualifications and / or experience.

Our Workforce Development Plan aims to expand the knowledge base and help us to:

- Improve our practice and performance within the YJS.
- Improve satisfaction and morale of staff.
- Address the identified training gaps through individual Performance and Development arrangements, case file audits, HMIP Inspection and National Standards self-assessment findings.
- Achieve consistency of practice.
- Grow experience and knowledge base of our staff.
- Provide up to date knowledge of changes and amendments to any new legislation and/or policies.
- Offer development opportunities to further career prospects.
- Identify joint training opportunities with partners.

All staff also benefit from access to learning and development opportunities delivered by Children's Services and training hosted by Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

### YJ Academy

We have continued to deliver a range of training opportunities under the YJ Academy.

Our 8-week programme for new starters (including secondees) has been designed to provide a supportive space for practitioners to explore theory, practice and evidence relating to working effectively with children in the youth justice system. This is led by our Practice Manager, Audit and Review with specific inputs from wider experienced and specialist members of youth justice staff delivered as appropriate.

#### Image 3 – Aims of YJ Academy



Sessions are also delivered to YJ managers focusing on quality management oversight and YJ police officers received a Child First refresher session early in 2025.

## **Induction**

New starters continue to receive a comprehensive induction package including corporate, Children's Services and youth justice activities. All staff receive formal supervision with their manager on a regular basis. Supervision incorporates case management, providing opportunity to review current caseloads, discuss specific cases in more depth and ensures management oversight is in place and recorded appropriately.

## **Performance & Development**

Hertfordshire's corporate Performance and Development (P&D) process (performance management process) is designed to focus on good quality, continuous conversations, and less paperwork as part of supervision arrangements between practitioners and their managers. It supports with setting individual performance objectives, helps identify professional development needs and manage personal wellbeing.

We have produced some standard objectives for youth justice practitioners at various levels for 2025-26 to support consistency in expectations and practice across the county. These will be complemented by additional personalised objectives, including consideration of professional development activity.

## **Meetings**

Bi-monthly YJ staff meetings provide an opportunity to share new/ updated legislation, best practice and any other local practice changes. They also provide space for discussion on specific topics including diversity and inclusion as well as inputs on specific aspects

of practice such as working with Gypsy, Romany and Traveller communities and Family Group Conferences, as well as sharing headlines from conferences or training.

## **Audits**

We have established an audit schedule which ensures alongside case management supervision, countersigning and gatekeeping we have a formal audit process in place for both Court, Out of Court and, more recently Victim work. These enable a full review of a child/victim's case across the areas of assessment, planning, implementation and delivery, resettlement (where relevant), management oversight, impact and outcomes.

Learning from these audits is disseminated across the service and individualised feedback is provided to case managers and their line manager. Summaries are also shared with Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board as well as fed into Children's Services Practice Leaders Forum for centralised oversight.

## **Champions**

Our ETE Workers are SEND Champions and as such receive regular training and access to workshops to support them in fulfilling this role. They also provide a local point of contact within the teams for advice and input.



## 4.5 Evidence-based Practice, Innovation & Evaluation

### Crash Bang Project

We have continued to deliver our Crash Bang project in collaboration with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The project, developed by Hertfordshire YJS, is for children who are subject to a court order for vehicle offences including dangerous driving, taking without consent and driving whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This hard-hitting two-part programme provides an opportunity to demonstrate to children that the choices they make can have serious consequences.

Session one involves a static simulation of a multi-vehicle, multi-casualty road traffic collision where the children, wearing protective clothing, play the part of casualties. Fire fighters use cutting equipment to extract the children from the vehicles.

In session two, the children view film footage with narration from victims of collisions, input from medical staff and families of victims who share their experience of how they have been affected by car crime. Children are encouraged to participate in discussions reflecting on the experience and take part in follow up meetings to explore the impact of the programme and their learning.

The programme is an example of effective partnership work to help prevent children re-offending and promote greater awareness of choices and consequences to children; it also provides a training opportunity for Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.



### City and Guilds

Our City & Guilds Employability Qualification offers the opportunity for children to engage in accredited learning as a part of their youth justice intervention. A City & Guilds vocational qualification demonstrates to employers that the child wants to gain further skills and confidence to become more employable and/or continue in education.

The Hertfordshire youth justice City & Guilds offer is available to all children over the age of 14, on a youth justice intervention of 6 months or more. For many children open to youth justice, completion of a City & Guilds is the first time they have gained a qualification or received a certificate. This gives them a sense of achievement and pride in their work and boosts their confidence to continue onto further study.

& Guilds workbooks are accessible to everyone regardless of ability or risk. They are accessible to children who cannot read or write well. This helps to fill the education gap and lack of resources available to children in the youth justice system.

We have extended availability of the C&G to children in custody and those receiving out of court resolutions to ensure all children open to youth justice have the opportunity to complete City & Guilds qualifications. Additionally, adaptations have been made to the assessment to allow children who cannot write or struggle with their handwriting to still get accredited for their City& Guilds through creation of a form that the child signs to reassure assessors the City and Guilds is their own work.

### **Work Experience**

When children are not ready for employment or are unsure what career path to go down, ETE workers have been supporting to secure work experience. This is offered to most children in year 10 of mainstream secondary school, however some children open to youth justice miss out on this opportunity due to permanent exclusions or other educational barriers.

ETE workers work closely with partner agencies including Services for Young People and employers in local communities. We support children to sign up to Services for Young People's 'Pathway to Success' programme where they source work experience for children and can support with uniform costs. We have also sourced work experience in the local community and are creating our own contacts which we will continue to build upon.

### **Reducing Adjournments for Out of Court Consideration**

We have set up bi-monthly meetings between YJS, Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to oversee and improve the delivery of Out of Court Resolutions (OoCR). As a result of these discussions, we have formalised the scrutiny of potential OoCR cases going to court and introduced measures to allow them to be returned for OoCR consideration. Having recognised that these are usually a result of 'no comment' interviews we have also produced a briefing, now circulated to all defence law firms used by Hertfordshire courts making clear the benefits of making admissions at the outset when arrested for low level offences.

## 4.6 2025-26 Priorities

In collaboration with our workforce and Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board, Hertfordshire's youth justice service has five priorities for 2025-26. Alongside these priorities are two golden threads which run through all priority areas and the way in which we deliver services:

- **Voice of Children, Families and Victims.** This incorporates promotion of a 'child first' approach across the youth justice system and increasing participation from those who receive our services. Services should be delivered in a way that is responsive to and considerate of individual need including due regard for age.
- **Disproportionality and Anti-Racist Practice.** This is about working in partnership to seek to reduce disproportionality within the youth justice system, particularly of global majority groups. In terms of practice this is ensuring that the individual equity and diversity factors of each child and victim are considered, and interventions are tailored appropriately.

**1. Maintain and strengthen local Youth Justice Management Board governance and leadership structures to ensure strategic alignment, effective management and evidence impact.**

- Maintain Board's links to frontline service delivery through exposure to aspects of frontline practice and greater visibility of Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board amongst the youth justice workforce.
- Revising the current delivery model to ensure there is a clear service identity, understood by wider services with sufficient resources to achieve positive change for children.
- Exploration of current resource levels to increase greater use of shared funding streams across partners.
- Ensure that HYJMB Working Groups are operating effectively and achieve their established objectives.
- Identify a greater range of delivery spaces to meet with children that are accessible, safe and enable appropriate work to be undertaken.

**2. Continue to develop early intervention and diversion through a proactive, partnership-led model that enables timely identification and support for children at risk of offending, ensuring they receive the suitable interventions at the earliest opportunity. This will enable children to be diverted away from the formal justice system towards more positive, sustainable outcomes.**

- Maintain oversight of the delivery of [Turnaround](#), an early intervention programme for children and children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system
- Increase the use of Out of Court Resolutions, particularly Outcome 22 (a diversionary outcome which sees children voluntarily engage with an intervention designed to prevent offending and change behaviour, without formal police action being taken) to reduce First Time Entrants, disproportionality within the system and improve outcomes for children.

- Increase collaboration between YJS, early help services, local community safety partnerships and wider agencies to identify and support children at risk of offending at the earliest point using data to identify hotspots.
- Evaluate the resources allocated for implementing Out of Court and diversionary measures to ensure compliance with national standards and best practice.

**3. Increase the number of children participating in appropriate education, especially where it is a statutory requirement; training and employment by addressing barriers to participation and ensuring all children have opportunities to achieve positive change and thrive.**

- Ensure provision of opportunities to support children to engage with education or further education.
- Develop 16+ education pathways through joint working with further education providers.
- Ensure all children receiving YJ services are screened for speech, communication and language needs and supported appropriately by embedding a dedicated Speech and Language Therapist in the service.
- Develop specific SEND pathways for children in the YJS to ensure timely support
- Establish clear escalations processes in relation to children open to YJ where professionals have concerns in relation to unmet SEND, CME and EHE and ETE provision.

**4. Strengthen and develop the service's support to victims of crime, ensuring individualised support is delivered. Additionally, provide children who cause harm with the necessary understanding of the impact of their actions and opportunities to repair the harm caused.**

- Update victim policies to ensure they align with HMIP framework, best practice and Victims Code.
- Increase understanding of victim profile to better understand the needs of victims, trends and patterns.
- Continue to develop victim processes to ensure all victims have the chance to have their voice heard and receive individualised support services.
- Ensure that all practitioners and partners demonstrate victim awareness, integrating it consistently throughout all interventions with children.

## **5. Drive practice and service improvement through workforce development, performance data and quality assurance activity.**

- Increase audit activity to ensure robust quality assurance processes in place across work with children and victims which drives practice improvement and service development
- Undertake a staff survey to assess training needs and wellbeing to inform a refresh of the Workforce Development Plan and strengthened staff wellbeing offer.
- Enhance range of analytical products to enable a timely and clear understanding of children's profile of need.

## 4.7 Standards for Children

In 2023 we undertook a self-assessment of ourselves against National Standard 2: Work at Court. The records of 20 children were reviewed during this self-assessment activity. We assessed ourselves as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' against all questions with the exception of the below:

Does your youth justice service take all possible steps* to divert children from court?	Requires Improvement
Does your service have an effective strategy to minimise unnecessary* use of remands?	Requires Improvement
Does your management board have an action plan to tackle disproportionality, with regular analysis and reviews of progress?	Requires Improvement

As a response to the standards for children and as part of general improvement activity we agreed the actions outlined in the following table:

Action	Status	Work Completed
1. Police CYP Team to review all instances where CYP have gone no comment and not had legal advice and making contact with family to discuss OOC option, where appropriate	Completed - BAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review undertaken over period of time, minimal numbers where this is an option.</li><li>Part of business as usual</li></ul>
2. Engage Herts Criminal Defence Community re our diversionary options and importance of robust advice being given to CYP at police interview	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Presentation on Prevention and Diversion given to Herts Criminal Justice Board 10 Oct</li><li>Presentation shared with Herts Criminal Defence Community rep for broader circulation</li><li>Briefing agreed between police and CS and circulated to Herts Criminal Def Comm Rep for circulation to all Herts Duty Solicitors.</li><li>Single-sided A4 poster re advice for defence briefs provided within custody settings</li></ul>



Action	Status	Work Completed
<b>3.</b> Implement review process of adjournments at court to assess any trends and take action to reduce adjournments	Completed - BAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three review sessions have taken place to date. No trends found but actions undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Handout explaining what adjournment means for children has been provided to all CDOs and CPS to hand out in court</li> <li>o Conflict in CPS advice given was reason for one return from work: MA to consider CPS training on change in stance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>4.</b> Review YDP, including use of Outcome 22 to see whether having an impact on number of children being diverted from court	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, inclusive of adjournment data to be presented to HYJMB May 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b> Implement new Prevention & Diversion Assessment Tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Explore PDAT gatekeeping process</li> <li>o Audit of PDAT to provide quality assurance</li> </ul>	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All relevant staff appropriately trained, gatekeeping undertaken by YJ Specialist Services Manager prior to submission to Youth Diversion Panel for consideration.</li> <li>Audits of PDATs routine part of audit schedule.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b> Remand process and offer to be reviewed, to include improved join up with Brokerage & Commissioning	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete</li> </ul>

Action	Status	Work Completed
7. Implement a disproportionality action plan, owned by the HYJMB	Completed - BAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed with input from SASH Leadership, HYJMB and YJ Management Forum. Circulated to all members and wider SASH / YJ service.</li> <li>Subject to regular review in various forums</li> </ul>
8. Update PSR template to better highlight VoCYP, supportive desistance factors and name of gatekeeper	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulated to all staff 13 November 2023</li> </ul>

A range of quality assurance activities have been undertaken through 2024-25 both routine audits of work with victims and children through reviewing of Prevention and Diversion Assessments and AssetPlus assessments. We also received some support from a centralised audit team in relation to dip-sampling across children's service and youth justice systems to ensure accuracy of recording on both sides.

All of the above activity has been collated into summary reports which are shared with HYJMB supported by action plans and dissemination of learning.

In January 2025 we participated in a Multi-Agency Case Discussion (MACD) pilot looking at two children subject to bail or remand. Feedback from staff involved was positive, they found it a useful and positive experience. Reflections included that it would be useful to carry out a similar exercise for complex children as part of reflective practice, but it was felt much of the value came from them being externally facilitated.

Through the MACD, alongside child-level specific comments, the inspector found:

- Good evidence of YJ practitioners working alongside social care
- Clear management oversight – managers in the sessions (representing social workers) demonstrated a clear and in-depth knowledge of the child

## 4.8 Service Development

No.	Deliverable / Action	Measure – how will we know this has been achieved?
<b>1. Maintain and strengthen local Youth Justice Management Board governance and leadership structures to ensure strategic alignment, effective management and evidence impact.</b>		
1.1	Maintain Board's links to frontline service delivery through exposure to aspects of frontline practice and greater visibility of Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board amongst the youth justice workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members self-report increased knowledge and understanding of frontline service delivery.</li> <li>• Record of attendance / activities undertaken.</li> <li>• Minutes of Board evidence reflection and taking action, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Feedback from staff.</li> </ul>
1.2	Revising the current delivery model to ensure there is a clear service identity, understood by wider services with sufficient resources to achieve positive change for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear YJS structure chart</li> <li>• Evidence of comms and engagement activity with wider services</li> </ul>
1.3	Exploration of current resource levels to increase greater use of shared funding streams across partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of exploration and discussion at Board</li> <li>• Sustainable funding model for YJS</li> <li>• Examples of joint-funded programmes and projects</li> </ul>

No.	Deliverable / Action	Measure – how will we know this has been achieved?
1.4	Ensure that HYJMB Working Groups are operating effectively and achieve their established objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work plans for each Working Group in place and have clear objectives</li> <li>• Evidence of progress against work plan and achievement of objectives</li> </ul>
1.5	Identify a greater range of delivery spaces to meet with children that are accessible, safe and enable appropriate work to be undertaken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive list of delivery venues</li> <li>• Feedback from staff, children and families</li> </ul>
<b>2. Continue to develop early intervention and diversion through a proactive, partnership-led model that enables timely identification and support for children at risk of offending, ensuring they receive the suitable interventions at the earliest opportunity. This will enable children to be diverted away from the formal justice system towards more positive, sustainable outcomes.</b>		
2.1	Maintain oversight of the delivery of Turnaround, an early intervention programme for children and children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking results of Turnaround programme</li> <li>• Case studies to show impact</li> <li>• Evidence of the prevention of offending/further offending</li> </ul>
2.2	Increase the use of Out of Court Resolutions, particularly Outcome 22 (a diversionary outcome which sees children voluntarily engage with an intervention designed to prevent offending and change behaviour, without formal police action being taken) to reduce First Time Entrants, disproportionality within the system and improve outcomes for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in Outcome 22 resolutions</li> <li>• Reduction in Youth Cautions (YCs) and Youth Conditional Cautions (YCCs)</li> <li>• Reduction in First Time Entrants</li> </ul>

No.	Deliverable / Action	Measure – how will we know this has been achieved?
2.3	Increase collaboration between YJS, police, early help services, local community safety partnerships and wider agencies to identify and support children at risk of offending at the earliest point using data to identify hotspots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process in place whereby YJS and CS are notified and provided with details of all children who have come into contact with the police</li> <li>• Greater understanding of hotspots shown through analytical products</li> <li>• Evidence of multi-agency review and action setting to respond to data</li> </ul>
2.4	Evaluate the resources allocated for implementing Out of Court and diversionary measures to ensure compliance with national standards and best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of Court work is resourced appropriately and delivered in accordance with national standards</li> </ul>
<b>3. Increase the number of children participating in appropriate education, especially where it is a statutory requirement; training and employment by addressing barriers to participation and ensuring all children have opportunities to achieve positive change and thrive.</b>		
3.1	Ensure provision of opportunities to support children to engage with education or further education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved ETE data</li> </ul>
3.2	Develop 16+ education pathways through joint working with further education providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved ETE performance for children above statutory school age</li> </ul>
3.3	Ensure all children receiving YJ services are screened for speech, communication and language needs and supported appropriately by embedding a dedicated Speech and Language Therapist in the service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and Language Therapist in post</li> <li>• Number of children screened and outcomes of screening</li> <li>• Feedback from children and families</li> </ul>

No.	Deliverable / Action	Measure – how will we know this has been achieved?
3.4	Develop specific SEND pathways for children in the YJS to ensure timely support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented SEND pathways that are clearly understood and followed</li> <li>• Evidence of how pathways have achieved positive outcomes for children</li> </ul>
3.5	Establish clear escalations processes in relation to children open to YJ where professionals have concerns in relation to unmet SEND, CME and EHE and ETE provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalation process in place and evidence of how it has been used to overcome concerns and achieve positive outcomes for children</li> </ul>
<b>4. Strengthen and develop the service's support to victims of crime, ensuring individualised support is delivered. Additionally, provide children who cause harm with the necessary understanding of the impact of their actions and opportunities to repair the harm caused.</b>		
4.1	Update victim policies to ensure they align with HMIP framework, best practice and Victims Code.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy in place and audits evidence policy being embedded and followed</li> </ul>
4.2	Increase understanding of victim profile to better understand the needs of victims, trends and patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim profile analysis</li> <li>• Evidence of action taken as a result of profile data to ensure services</li> </ul>
4.3	Continue to develop victim processes to ensure all victims have the chance to have their voice heard and receive individualised support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase feedback from victims</li> <li>• Feedback used to inform service development and evidenced through action plans and published 'You Said, We Did' type outputs</li> </ul>



No.	Deliverable / Action	Measure – how will we know this has been achieved?
4.4	Ensure that all practitioners and partners demonstrate victim awareness, integrating it consistently throughout all interventions with children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of regular workshops and awareness sessions about victim services shared with all practitioners</li> <li>• Audits – will see evidence of victim awareness and appropriate support being provided.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Drive practice and service improvement through workforce development, performance data and quality assurance activity.</b>		
5.1	Increase audit activity to ensure robust quality assurance processes in place across work with children and victims which drives practice improvement and service development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of audits completed across all work with children and victims</li> </ul>
5.2	Undertake a staff survey to assess training needs and wellbeing to inform a refresh of the Workforce Development Plan and strengthened staff wellbeing offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey results and corresponding action plan</li> <li>• Refreshed Workforce Development Plan</li> <li>• Staff Wellbeing Offer in place</li> </ul>
5.3	Enhance range of analytical products to enable a timely and clear understanding of children's profile of need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report into what this would entail shared with Board.</li> </ul>
5.4	Work in partnership with other agencies, services and professionals to encourage active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of products produced and evidence of they have been used to inform strategic partnerships and local service delivery</li> </ul>

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## 4.9 National Priority Areas

### Children from Groups which are Over represented

Children from the global majority are over represented within Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Service when comparing the 10-17 aged offending population with the 10-17 population.

Latest data published by the Youth Justice Board (2023-24) shows that children of Black ethnicity are over represented, they make up 10% of the offending population and only 5% of the 10-17 population. When it comes to the custodial population, global majority groups are over represented making up 67% of custodial sentencing against a general 10-17 population percentage of 24%. However, due to very low numbers of children receiving custodial sentences disparity appears more significant. White ethnicity children are under represented within Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Service (YJS) when comparing the 10-17 aged offending population (72%) with the 10-17 population (76%).

11 Children Looked After (2.3%) were open to Youth Justice in 2024-25, with 34 offences between them whilst in care. This is a reduction on 2023-24 (14), and the number of offences committed in 2024-25 saw a decrease of 59.5% on the previous year (84). (Hertfordshire Youth Justice). The low numbers of CLA in the YJS continues to demonstrate effective partnerships between police and children services to divert CLA children from the YJS where possible.

Hertfordshire YJS are engaged in a piece of work commissioned by the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner focused on Fairness in the Criminal Justice System. This is an independent research project aimed at identifying and tackling disparity across the criminal justice system, all ages.

### Policing

Hertfordshire Constabulary are well engaged in the delivery of outcomes for children in the criminal justice system. We have consistent representation from the Children and Young People's Team within the HYJMB, regular meetings and ad hoc contact is had between senior officers and YJ managers to provide regular opportunities to touch base, discuss service delivery and any issues which need addressing.

Our Youth Diversion Panel has been developed in collaboration with police colleagues and the move to introduce the use of Outcome 22 has enabled a more child-first approach to out of court resolutions to be progressed.

Hertfordshire Constabulary are leading the way nationally in terms of local progress in line with the Police Race Action Plan which sets out changes across policing to improve outcomes for Black people who work within or interact with policing.

We supported the establishment of a Youth Race Inclusion Board which is now in place to ensure the voices and lived experiences of children from black and black heritage backgrounds are heard and acted upon. This is jointly delivered by Services for Young People and Hertfordshire Constabulary.

More of the Constabulary's work in relation to prevention and diversion are outlined in subsequent sections below.

## **Prevention**

### **Families First**

Families First is the umbrella term used to describe all services that provide early help in Hertfordshire. The Families First approach focuses on providing assistance as needs emerge, so that resources are used to their best advantage, families are supported to become resilient and the challenges they face do not escalate. Depending on the type and level of need, support may be provided by universal or single agency services, or for more complex needs, targeted or intensive support may be provided by SASH or Intensive Family Support teams. In 2024-25, 664 families, which included 1,526 children and young people were collectively supported by Intensive, Family Support Teams, Schools and Local School Partnerships, Family Centres and other partners through our multi-agency early help assessment and support plan process (Families First Assessments (FFAs)). These were all new assessments undertaken during the year and is a drop from the previous year. The proportion of children and young people being supported at an intensive support level rose from 56% to 62%. 1,239 children and children were supported by short term work.

486 children received early help support from SASH teams in 2024-25. Children aged 14-15 account for 46.7% of the cases open to SASH, followed by the 16-17 age group who make up 39.7% of the open cases this year and 11-13-year-olds who accounted for 13.6%. 51% of the children open this year were male. 34.5% of children supported by SASH were from the global majority. Behaviour (28%), family breakdown (18.1%), mental health (14.2%), family relationships (9.9%) and involvement in offending or antisocial behaviour including gang activity (6.8%) account for the largest proportion of cases open to SASH.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation Prevention & Diversion Team**

This team of ten police officers provides an early intervention and preventative approach for children at risk of gang affiliation, criminal exploitation (county lines) and knife crime across the County, to include safeguarding work. The team work closely with local policing resources and partner agencies to co-ordinate a bespoke response for each child referred as well as creating and delivering events and activities as a targeted approach to diversion.

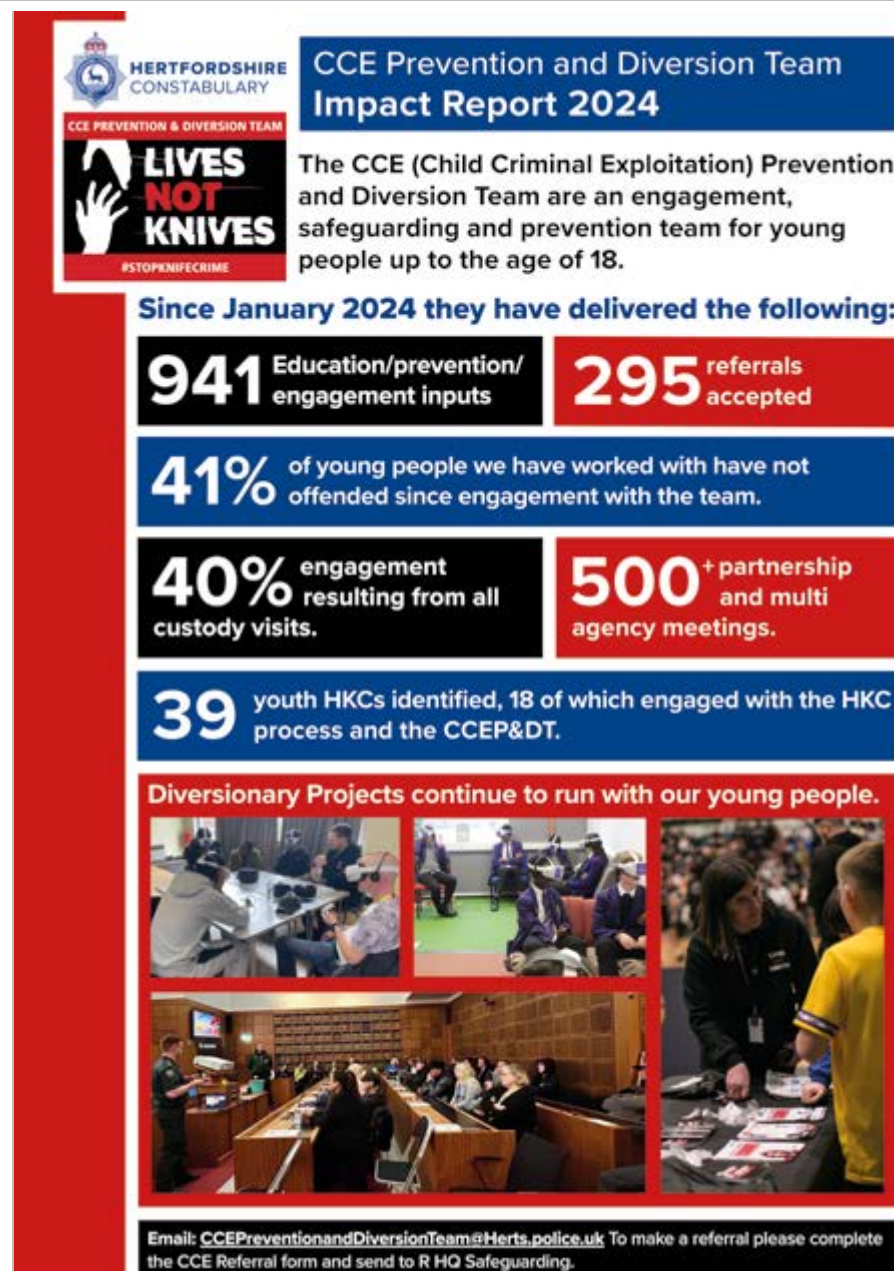
Referrals are identified by frontline officers and staff, officers and staff from the Safeguarding Command and by Child Exploitation (CE) Safeguarding. Child criminal exploitation (CCE) referrals are sent to the Safeguarding Referral Hub where they are triaged before being allocated to the appropriate unit.

Where Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is identified as the primary concern an onward referral will be made to the HALO team.

General CCE concerns and risk of serious violence are referred internally to the CYP Prevention & Diversion Team. If the referral is accepted, the case is allocated to the officer within the relevant jurisdiction. If the child and their family are willing to engage, the officer will visit and undertake a needs assessment from which an aspiration plan is developed. Support and diversionary activities are then offered based on the needs and aspirations of the child. Regular case reviews are conducted, and success is measured against the goals set out in the original aspiration plan. For example, if the child is not in education, work will be done to with the relevant Inclusion Officer to ensure that a placement can be found. Other examples include identifying funding to support enrolment in sporting activities, onward referral to mentoring services, drug and alcohol support services or mental health and well-being services.

The team also delivers universal educational packages to educational establishments designed to raise awareness of the dangers of knife crime, gang affiliation and criminal exploitation (County Lines) and is involved in the management of Habitual Knife Carriers under the age of 18.

## Image 4 – Impact Report for CCE Prevention & Diversion Team, Jan – Dec 2024





# Diversion

## Turnaround

Hertfordshire is delivering Turnaround, a Ministry of Justice program, running until March 2026. Turnaround seeks to improve outcomes for children aged 10-17 years old on the cusp of entering the youth justice system by delivering holistic support to reduce the likelihood of further offending.

Whilst there have been challenges with recruitment and meeting delivery targets, we have had some excellent pieces of work completed which have had a real impact on children, particularly with educational reintegration.

## Image 5 – Turnaround Case Study



Lewis\* was a 12 year old male who lives in Hertfordshire with his mother following his parents separating six years ago. He is an avid football supporter and his favourite team is Arsenal. He has good relationship with his family, especially his father who he "adores".

Lewis was referred to Turnaround by Hertfordshire Police following Lewis' repeated involvement in Anti-Social Behaviour on his housing estate.

At the time of the referral, Lewis had not been in Education for 12 months as his mother did not feel his school was providing the necessary support for Lewis' additional needs and the family were awaiting for an alternative education provision.

\* Lewis is a pseudonym

### Interventions Delivered

**Education support** - Liaising with Education to identify an appropriate specialist Education provision and supporting Lewis with the transition back into a school environment.

**Offending Behaviour** - Direct work with Lewis around the consequences of offending, positive peer relationships and managing difficult feelings.

**Mentorship** - A successful referral to Caudwell Youth was made providing Lewis with a mentor to provide additional support during and after Turnaround's involvement. Mentor will enrol him at the gym and deliver a 12 week programme on relationships, friendship groups and peer influences incorporating sport.

**Hardship** - Turnaround funding used to purchase Lewis school shoes, new bedding and a skipping rope as Lewis had identified fitness as something he was passionate about and that he enjoyed.

**Self-Esteem** - Cooking sessions were completed with Lewis as he has an interest in food. Recipes were chosen by Lewis and made by himself and his Turnaround worker.

### Progress at point of closure

- Despite a slow start there was positive engagement throughout Turnaround's involvement.
- After being NEET for 12 months Lewis is now in a specialist provision that meets his needs.
- Lewis was diagnosed with ADHD and is now medicated which appears to have stabilised his behaviour at school.
- Lewis formed a positive relationship with the Turnaround worker and his mentor from Caudwell Youth.
- Lewis had no subsequent contact with the police.
- Lewis' relationship with his mother has been strengthened.
- Lewis has resumed contact with his father which appears to have helped settle him.

## Police – Youth Justice and Early Intervention (YJ & EI)

The Police's YJ and EI Team engage with children under 18 who are living and offending in Hertfordshire and have committed a criminal offence that requires an Out of Court Resolution (OoCR). The team includes six Police Community Support Officers who administer all the Community Resolutions and participate in Families First Panels, five police officers seconded to Hertfordshire's YJS and two Sergeants.

The YJ & EI Team have also worked with partners to provide educational inputs to children as part of youth engagement events with schools including Mini Police which is an eight-week programme conducted in primary schools, mainly with Year 5 students, to learn about community safety in a fun and engaging way which gives children a voice.

[See section 3.2 h](#) for more detail re OOCRs.

Image 6 - Impact Report for YJ and Early Intervention Team, Jan – Dec 2024





## Education

Our dedicated Education, Training and Employment (ETE) workers provide ongoing support to children and their families including securing accredited learning opportunities to increase employability, liaison with schools, colleges and ETE providers to enhance the local offer and increase engagement of these children in ETE. They also liaise with wider departments and educational providers to capture accurate data about current provision and whether it is being accessed. There are four ETE workers in total.

ETE practitioners represent the service at key local forums in schools/colleges/ETE provision/Courts and custodial establishments to prevent exclusion and promote the needs of children who have offended and other children to develop effective partnership, action plans and information sharing.

They attend various panels and meetings to advocate on behalf of children, some of these include Youth Diversion Panel, Inclusion Panel and Risk & Safeguarding Panel.

Practitioners also work with Services for Young People (SfYP) to share and access careers guidance, information on progression options and opportunities for participation in youth work or employability programmes.

As previously mentioned, we also have a City & Guilds programme is in place for children open to youth justice and are developing our work experience offer.

Children's Services has a Safer in School (SiS) Board which provides an effective forum for the sharing of practice and combining intelligence

held across multiple teams in relation to school attendance. The Board facilitates effective sharing from individual team's, intended activities as well as being an open forum to reflect and challenge the impact of our collective work. Its purpose is to ensure that the Local Authority has robust and joined up systems in place to optimise children's attendance at school and that, where the most vulnerable children are not attending school, Local Authority monitoring, and activity is in place to sufficiently reduce the risk this creates.

[See section 3.2 e](#) for more detail re ETE.

## Restorative Approaches & Victims

Hertfordshire Youth Justice service recognises the importance of delivering a high-quality service to victims of youth crime. Victims of youth crime are contacted within timescales, by dedicated YJ Victim Workers and are offered restorative justice opportunities and interventions to help repair harm to victims and communities.

The service benefits from two dedicated Victim Workers both of whom have significant experience of working within the Criminal Justice system. One of the Victim Workers is a trained Restorative Justice facilitator and also has enhanced experience in supporting victims of domestic abuse.

Our Victim Workers make regular presentations to the YJ workforce ensuring that changes in legislation, resources and best practice in relation to victim work is shared across the service. All new staff joining YJS are inducted in restorative justice and the role of the Victim Workers to raise the profile and importance of our statutory responsibilities to work with victims.

Victim Workers attend Risk & Safeguarding Panel and our Youth Diversion Panel to ensure that victim's voice is heard and any requests for restorative justice are explored.

Management of risk to victims and communities through effective assessment of all children, effective information sharing and monitoring of risk and safeguarding through established forums including Young MAPPA, Risk & Safeguarding Panel and MACE arrangements.

## Reparation

Complementing the individualised support and restorative justice services offered to victims, we have a well-established and high-quality programme of reparation projects. Reparation projects are delivered by dedicated Reparation Workers who work with children on a 1:1 basis or in small groups. Projects include landscaping and ground maintenance, painting and decorating, woodwork, pottery and community allotments. Reparation encompasses the wishes of victims as well as the appropriateness of project based on the individual child and their needs as well as risk.

All children are encouraged to complete a City & Guilds qualification alongside completion of their reparation hours, such as Site Carpentry, Environmental Awareness and Health & Safety in the Workplace.

## Examples of tailored Reparation

Activities that can be completed at home - we recently introduced a project to produce "inspiration bracelets" which are donated to the children's ward at St Albans hospital. The bracelets are given to children when they have to blood tests.

Another example arose at a Review Panel in relation to a child that was transferred into Herts from another YJS. This was a complex situation whereby the child had had a 12-month Referral Order (RO) imposed last year, however during that time he had been on remand for almost 8 months for other matters in two separate secure units. The periods in the community were very chaotic and he was regularly missing. With only 6 weeks on the RO remaining and with his move to Hertfordshire having taken place, this panel meeting was always going to be a bit challenging when assessing what realistic work could be completed. The child had 36 hours of reparation imposed as part of their Order, none of which had been completed for the reasons above.

To complete his reparation, one of our Panel members suggested the child could write a brief overview of his time on remand. Panel members encouraged the child to give a real insight into this with both positive and negative aspects. The primary reason was for this to be shared at the final panel, but potentially it was suggested that it could be used in intervention work with other children moving forward. The child agreed to this approach.

## Random Café, Watford

In the South of the county we have recently established a relationship with a community café in Watford. Random Café operates with the mission of reducing food waste and promoting sustainability in the community. The café achieves this by collecting surplus food from local supermarkets that would otherwise go to landfill, transforming these ingredients into meals and products served in their café and sold in their pay as you feel shop.

Beyond the café, Random Café manages community gardens where volunteers cultivate fruits and vegetables, contributing fresh produce to their offerings. They also host plant and produce sales to further support their sustainability initiatives.

Our children help maintain the community café with a variety of roles, including tasks like sanding down and painting wooden plant pots, painting and sanding community shed doors, as well as planting and general maintenance on site. These activities provide them with valuable skills while contributing to the upkeep of the café, which is a vital part of the local community in Watford. Through this work, they also gain a sense of responsibility and accomplishment, supporting the café's sustainability efforts and fostering a positive environment for all involved.

Many items produced via reparation projects are sold on stalls at community events or donated to local charities or schools for them to sell on. £2,404 has been raised in 2024-25 for various charities including Herts and Essex Ambulance, Helping Herts and Teenage Cancer Trust.



Due to the strong, trusted relationships formed, Reparation Workers in some instances have continued to work with children beyond completion of required reparation hours to provide mentoring type support and help get children engaged in positive activities or develop a sense of identity which can sustain beyond the length of their Order.

[See section 3.2 k](#) for more detail about our work with victims.

## Serious Violence, Exploitation & Contextual Safeguarding

Hertfordshire youth justice service acknowledges there is political interest in serious violence and exploitation and therefore this section seeks to outline some of work underway. Serious violence cannot be addressed in isolation and requires a whole-system, partnership approach.

A partnership strategy is in place in relation to Serious Violence. This strategy sits under the responsibility of the following countywide boards:

- Community Safety Board
- Domestic Abuse Executive Board
- Drug and Alcohol Strategic Board
- Integrated Offender Management Board
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Board
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP)

The Chairs of each Board provide overall governance for the progress on delivery against the strategy. The youth justice service is one of the services sitting under the HSCP's remit and attend the Serious Violence Action Group.

A youth justice Service Manager chairs the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel – a multi-agency forum which discusses children at the greatest risk of or involved in children exploitation. The aim is to provide a robust professional network to support lead professionals with the management of children through:

- Improve inter-agency accountability by agreeing actions required to safeguard the child
- Consider any additional support or services required
- Improve support to professionals working with high-risk children
- Work together to reduce repeat missing episodes
- Promote and safeguarding the welfare of children.

The youth justice service delivers tailored interventions to children relevant to their individual needs and offences. Where relevant, this may be a session of weapon carrying, using videos and worksheets, or collaborating with police colleagues to deliver virtual reality simulations, for others it is participating in a group work programme.

We remain committed to contributing to partnership activities to reduce serious violence amongst children whilst also ensuring our own interventions cover the range of factors which can contribute to serious violence such as trauma or exploitation.

[See section 3.2 j](#) for more detail about our work on Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding.



## Detention in Police Custody

Hertfordshire's YJS, Out Of Hours Service (OOHS), along with Hertfordshire Constabulary have established a partnership approach to reducing the overnight detention of children in police detention based on the Concordat. This has enabled a significant reduction in the number of children being refused bail and improved communication between the police and the OOHS. This is monitored by a PACE Delivery Group that reviews the overnight detentions and will feedback to services where there is required learning from the decision process.

Our in-house Appropriate Adult scheme recruits, trains and supports volunteers from the community to act as Appropriate Adults. We currently have 41 in-house Appropriate Adults. The scheme is a member of NAAN (National Appropriate Adult Network) and works to the NAAN National Standards for Appropriate Adults and delivers training, in partnership with Hertfordshire Constabulary, using NAAN training materials. Appropriate Adults are provided for children at the Police stations up to 2300. In addition, we commission The Appropriate Adult Service (TAAS) to provide out of hours AA services to children between the hours of 2300 and 0800. Combined, this provides a 24- hour, 7 days a week provision across Hertfordshire.



## Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA)

RYDA episodes have remained stable during 2024-25. Cumulatively, there were 10 RYDA episodes during 2024-25, the same as 2023-24. Out of the 8 remands that ended during 2024-25, 1 resulted in a custody sentence, 6 resulted in community sentences. At the time of writing 2 children remain remanded due to the 'Seriousness of the Charge' one in a Young Offender Institution and one is Secure Training Centre.

**Table 7 – Hertfordshire Remands**

	2022-23				2023-24				2024-25			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
018 Number of young people in remand – Secure Children's Home	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
019 Number of young people in remand – Secure Training Centre	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
020 Number of young people in remand – Young Offender Institution	7	5	4	4	2	3	0	0	1	1	2	0
039 Number of young people in remand – Local Authority Accommodation	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	2	1	0
023 Number of Remand Periods Ended	7	2	3	1	5	3	2	0	1	3	3	1
024 Remands Ended in Custodial Sentences	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
025 Remands Ended in Community Sentences	2	0	0	1	3	1	2	0	0	3	2	1
026 Remands Ended – Other Outcomes	4	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Whilst this table presents Hertfordshire's remand data, this is a complex area of practice and there are individual case intricacies which are more complex than can be meaningfully shown through the above dataset.*



## Use of Custody & Constructive Resettlement

Hertfordshire's YJS adopt the 'child first' principle and work hard to divert children away from the criminal justice system and there is consistent local recognition that avoiding custody wherever possible is in the best interests of the child, advocating strongly to ensure custody is only utilised as a last resort.

Strong relationships with the court service and high confidence in alternatives to custody have enabled us to reduce and sustain low levels of use of custody, as evidenced in our performance. Section 3.2c provides some performance headline for custody.

We have updated our Custody and Resettlement Guidance which outlines the processes and principles that underpin good practice for the management and resettlement of children from point of sentence; their time in custody; release on licence and after care at the end of their sentence. We have also introduced the 7 Pathways Plan to be used for children sentenced to custody.



## Working with Families

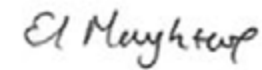
Parents/carers and the wider support network of children supported by the YJS are engaged at all stages to gain their input into reports, inform planning and deliver interventions. Parent/carers are asked to complete a self-assessment as part of their child's Order to understand their perspective on their child's offending, gain insight about their concerns and worries, any key life events and identify their child's strengths and interests.

Through this whole family working model practitioners can identify any family needs and seek to provide support as appropriate, this can include signposting to sources of information, making suitable referrals, supporting access to services such as parenting programmes and support networks. We also work alongside other teams in Children's Services that the family may be open to during the child's Order, or where they need ongoing support beyond the length of the Order, this includes Families First, our umbrella term for early help in Hertfordshire.

In March 2025 we introduced a short survey for parent/carers which is designed to gather feedback to help us improve our services. Responses will help us to shape a more effective and supportive youth justice service.

# Sign off, submission & approval

This plan is endorsed by Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Management Board and approved by El Mayhew, Chair of Hertfordshire Youth Justice Management Board.

**El Mayhew**

Chair of the Hertfordshire Youth Justice Board

12 May 2025

*In accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, this plan is scheduled to be presented to Full council for final sign off.*

**Document Status:** Draft Subject to approval by the County Council at its meeting on 21 July 2025.

# 6. Appendices

## Appendix 1 – HYJMB Membership, Staffing Structures & Demographics

### HYJMB Membership List

Membership of the Board comprises of Core members and Associate members.

Core members include statutory partners, indicated below by asterisks. Core members are expected to attend all quarterly Board meetings and development sessions

#### Core Members:

HCC, Director for Children & Families** (Chair)	El Mayhew
Lay member (Deputy Chair)	Nicholas Moss
Hertfordshire Constabulary, Children & Children**	Inspector Anna Borella
Hertfordshire Probation Service, Head**	Neeve Bishop
HCC County Lead, Educational Attendance**	Richard Woodard
Deputy Director of Nursing & Quality, Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB**	Carolanne Brannan
HCC Head of Service Specialist Adolescent Service	Jason Beaumont
HCC Head of Service Children Looked After	Sarah Baker
HCC Head of Service Supporting Families	Karen Dorney
HCC Public Health, Children & Children**	Shelley Taylor
Representative from Office of Police and Crime Commissioner	Caitlin Blumgart
HCC Youth Justice Practice Service Manager	Robert Samuel

### Core Members:

HCC Youth Justice Policy Service Manager	Lydia Phillips
Crown Prosecution Service, Youth Lead	Mutahir Ahmed
Youth Justice Service, Staff Representatives	Madeline Smith & Jim Mills-Baker
Deputy Executive Member, Children, Young People and Families	TBC

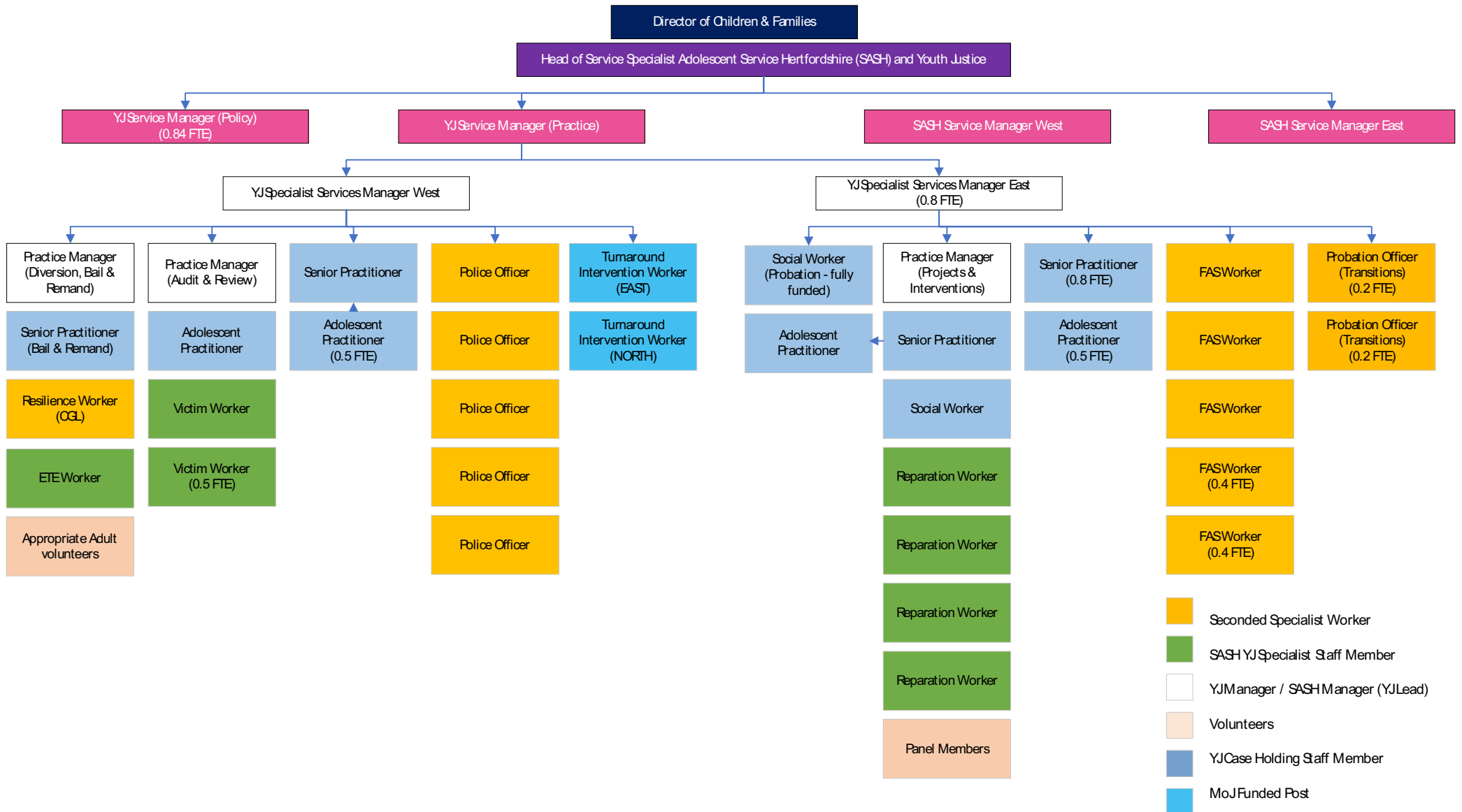
### Associate Members

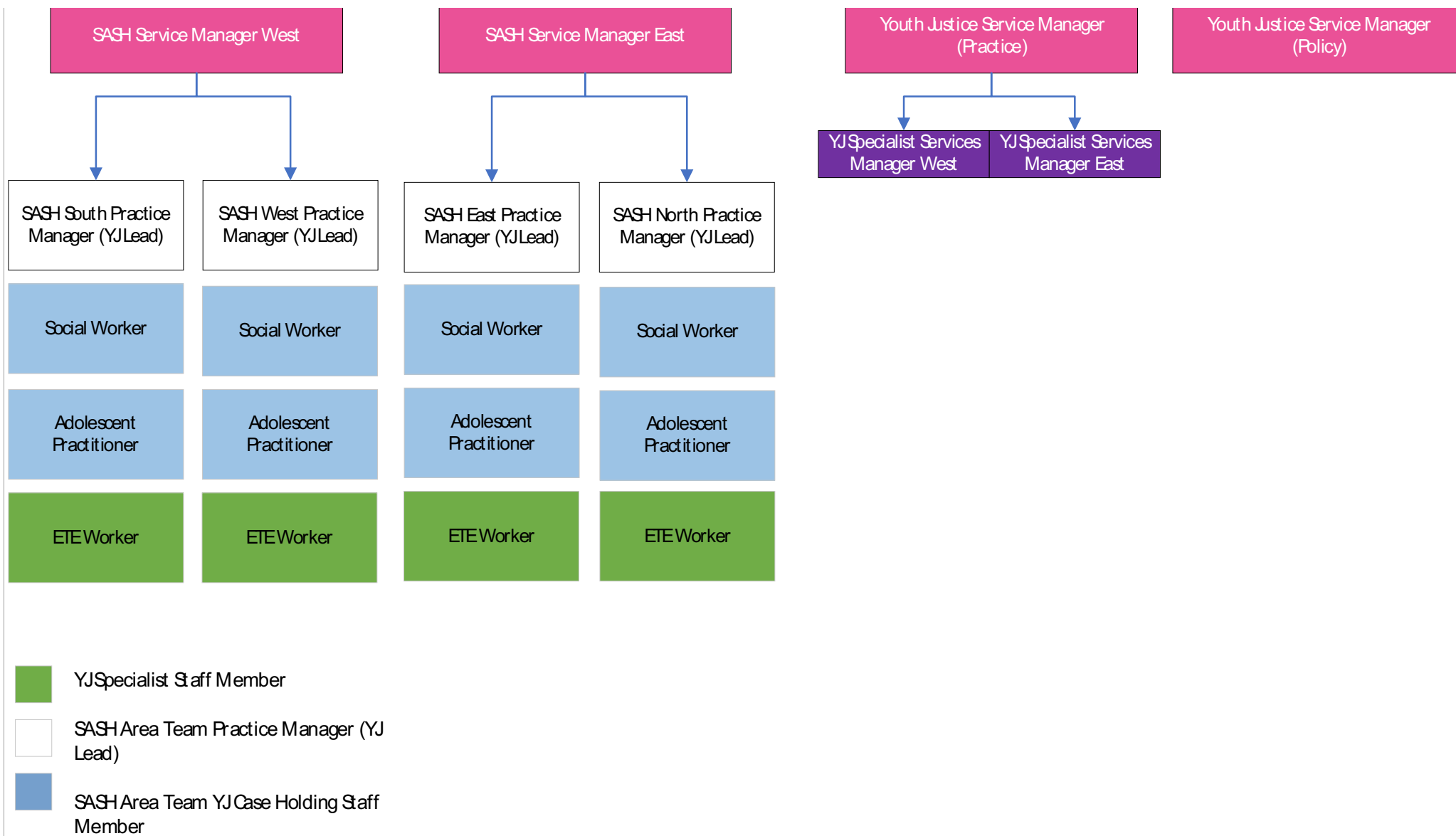
Associate members are recognised as having specific elements of cross-over with youth justice service delivery but whom it is sufficient to have invited to Board development sessions. Associate members are not required to attend quarterly Board meetings.

HCC Head of Service Assessment	Caroline Ash
HCC Head of Service Quality Assurance & Practice	Olga Staicu
HCC County Community Safety Unit	Kate Moore
Service Manager, Services for Young People	Deborah Barker
Strategic Lead for People, Places, Programmes, Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership	Matt Rayner
Executive Headteacher, Links Academy	David Allen
School Effectiveness Adviser, HFL Education	Justine McDonald
Senior Commissioning Manager, SEND	Julie Reddish

The Board recognises a duty to encourage and support representation and views from other organisations that have a role in preventing and reducing offending by children. Considering this, other representatives from related organisations or stakeholders may be invited as co-opted members to attend as appropriate.

# Staff Structure







## Summary of ethnicity, sex & known disability of staff

There are currently 57 posts delivering youth justice services this includes permanent (40), fixed term contract (3) and seconded staff (14).

### WTE Headcount

Organisational Unit	Strategic Manager	Operational Manager	Practitioners	Administration	Total
Youth Justice Service (inclusive of secondees)	1.96	8.8	38.1	2.6	51.46
Youth Justice Service (excluding secondees)	1.96	8.8	26.9	2.6	40.26

### Known Disability (inclusive of secondees)

Disability	
Yes	0
No	5
Prefer not to disclose	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>

**NB.** Staff data as of 24 April 2025.

### Demographics (inclusive of secondees)

Ethnicity	Strategic Manager		Operational Manager		Practitioners		Administration		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Black	1	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	5	4
Mixed	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
White	0	1	3	5	12	21	1	2	16	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>

## Appendix 2 - Budget Costs & Contributions

	Budget Allocation 2024/25	Forecast Contributions 2025/26
<b>Direct Contribution</b>		
Hertfordshire County Council	£2,546,344	£2,648,198
Youth Justice Board Core Grant	£926,685	£940,215
Police	£68,000*	£68,000*
Police and Crime Commissioner	£57,147	-
Probation	£15,000	£15,000
Health	£55,461	£55,461
<b>Additional Income</b>		
Turnaround Grant	£181,835	£148,651.52
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>3,850,472</b>	<b>3,875,526</b>
<b>In-Kind Contributions</b>		
Police (5.00 FTE)	298,250	310,180
Health (4.00 WTE)	216,367	225,022
Probation (1.4 FTE)	128,528	133,670
<b>Total In-Kind Contributions (10.4 FTE)</b>	<b>643,146</b>	<b>668,871</b>

\* denotes that police reduced contributions by £50,000 in 2024-25. Negotiations continue to get this reinstated at expected levels.



Creating a cleaner, greener,  
healthier Hertfordshire