WEST BERKSHIRE YJST Youth Justice Support Team

Youth Justice Plan 2026-2027

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Youth Justice Plan

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Introduction

The West Berkshire Youth Justice Plan sets out how partners across the district will work collectively to prevent children from entering the justice system, reduce reoffending, and support children and families to achieve positive, sustainable outcomes. It provides a transparent account of our local context, our performance, and our shared priorities for the year ahead, in line with national Youth Justice Board (YJB) guidance and statutory responsibilities.

West Berkshire continues to experience comparatively low volumes of children entering the youth justice system, reflecting the strength of our early identification, diversionary, and relationship-based approaches. However, the data also highlights persistent inequalities in outcomes for certain groups of children and a high level of complexity among those who do come to the attention of the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST). Many have experienced trauma, adversity, unmet health and learning needs, and exclusion from education. This plan therefore focuses not only on numbers, but on impact, equity and quality of practice.

Our work is firmly rooted in the Child First principle promoted by the YJB, which recognises children in the justice system as children first and foremost. In West Berkshire, this means responding to children's behaviour through a trauma-informed, strengths-based lens; building on their capability; and working in partnership with families and communities to address the underlying causes of harm. We are committed to ensuring children are treated with fairness, dignity and respect, and that statutory intervention is a proportionate, last resort.

Delivering effective youth justice outcomes relies on strong, accountable partnership working. The West Berkshire Youth Justice Partnership brings together children's social care, education, health, police, probation and voluntary sector partners, all of whom play a vital role in reducing risk, promoting safety and supporting desistance. This plan reinforces our commitment to shared ownership of outcomes, continuous learning, and effective governance through scrutiny and challenge.

Over the past year, the partnership has continued to prioritise prevention and diversion, improvements in assessment and intervention quality, and reducing disproportionality. We have also focused on strengthening the child and family voice, improving access to education and mental health support. These priorities reflect both local need and national expectations, including preparation for inspection.

Above all, this plan reaffirms our ambition for every child in West Berkshire to feel safe, supported and hopeful about their future. It sets out our progress to date, identifies areas for further development, and outlines deliberate, evidence-informed actions for the year ahead. Through this shared commitment, we will continue to build a youth justice system that responds effectively to harm, tackles inequality, and supports children to build lives free from offending.

Vision and strategy

The West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) is committed to delivering an ambitious, child-centred youth justice system that promotes safety, fairness and positive life chances for all children. Our strategic approach is grounded in prevention, equity and strong partnership working, with a clear focus on reducing harm, addressing inequality and supporting children to thrive within their families and communities.

Our vision is delivered through the following strategic commitments:

- Prevention and early identification
  We work proactively across the wider Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Safeguarding Children Partnership to identify and respond to risk factors associated with poor outcomes, including offending, at the earliest possible stage. By ensuring timely access to high-quality, evidence-informed support, we aim to prevent unnecessary justice system involvement and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

- 'Child First' Approach
  We are committed to placing children at the heart of decisions, recognising them as individuals with unique strengths, needs, and potential, and ensuring their voices are central to shaping the support they receive. Through a consistent focus on relationships, participation, and positive development, we will work collaboratively to promote wellbeing, reduce harm, and enable every child to thrive and achieve their full potential. Our practice is relationship-based, trauma-informed and strengths-focused, supporting children to build resilience, develop confidence and shape positive futures as valued members of society.

- Equity and fairness
  We are committed to addressing and reducing disproportionality at every stage of the youth justice process. We strive to ensure that all children are treated fairly, consistently and with dignity, regardless of their background, identity or lived experience, and that services are responsive to individual need.

- Diversion and minimal intervention
  We champion early intervention, prevention and diversion, promoting a childhood free from unnecessary statutory involvement. Wherever safe and appropriate, we seek to reduce the criminogenic impact of formal justice processes and support children to engage in positive, pro-social opportunities within their communities.

- Family-focused support
  We recognise the vital role that parents and carers play in supporting positive change. Working alongside partner agencies, we aim to strengthen multi-agency support for families, ensuring they are equipped with the tools, guidance and confidence needed to build strong relationships and positively influence their children's behaviour.

- Participation and lived experience
  Children's voices and lived experiences are integral to the design, delivery and evaluation of our services. We are committed to meaningful participation, ensuring children and their carers are actively involved in decisions that affect them and that services promote inclusion, engagement and a sense of belonging.

- Restorative and community-wide responsibility
  We work closely with the Community Safety Partnership, local Courts, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Local Criminal Justice Board to uphold victims' rights, protect communities and build public confidence in a youth justice system that is fair, restorative and proportionate.

- Strengths, desistance and long-term outcomes
  We focus on identifying and nurturing children's strengths, interests and aspirations, supporting the development of a positive, pro-social identity. Our ultimate aim is to support long-term desistance, reduce victimisation and contribute to safer, stronger communities across West Berkshire.

Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

The West Berkshire Youth Justice Management Board provides strategic leadership, governance and accountability for the delivery of youth justice services across the district. It brings together senior representatives from key statutory partners, including children's services, police, health, education, probation and the voluntary sector, ensuring shared ownership of outcomes for children, victims and communities. The Youth Justice

Management Board has strong links with the Community Safety Partnership, giving a formal update to the partnership at each of their meetings on matters relating to children in the justice system and pertinent matters relating to children and community safety. The Board sets the strategic direction of the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST), approves the annual Youth Justice Plan, and ensures local practice is aligned with national policy, statutory guidance and the Youth Justice Board's Child First principles.

Through effective scrutiny and performance oversight, the Management Board monitors outcomes, risks and emerging trends, holding partners to account for the quality and impact of their contributions. It provides challenge and support to drive continuous improvement, address disproportionality, and ensure resources are deployed effectively to meet identified need. The Board also plays a critical role in managing safeguarding responsibilities, responding to inspection findings, and strengthening partnership arrangements. By fostering strong collaboration and shared responsibility, the Youth Justice Management Board ensures that West Berkshire's youth justice system remains proportionate, trauma-informed and focused on achieving positive, sustainable change for children and families.

The Youth Justice Management Board meets quarterly, chaired by the Director of Children's Services with core agenda items that address performance, finances, staffing, action plans, safeguarding and public protection. During the last year the YJ Management Board received the following additional reports and presentations by team members:

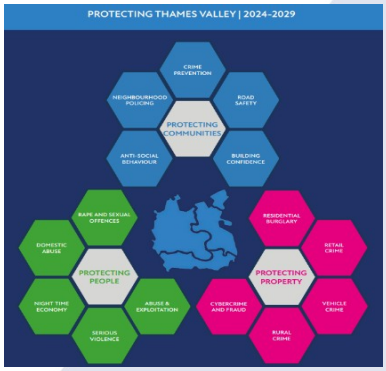
- Youth Survey – implications on crime and safety
- Violence Prevention Partnership Update
- Turnaround Activity Sessions
- Fight for Fitness Report
- Victim learning from inspections
- Victim Information to YJST (YOT1's)
- Focused Diversion Update
- Youth Justice Action Plan 2025/26
- YJST to Probation Transition
- YJ Feedback Report
- Half Term Activity Report
- Prevention letters report
- Effectiveness of Diversion Report
- Probation Secondments
- APIS Audit Report
- Analysis of Drug Diversion Scheme
- HMIP Narrative
- Victim Audit Findings

Each of these reports and consequent recommendations are considered by the YJST Management Board, with the YJST Manager held to account for the delivery of the actions. This is also an opportunity for team members to receive direct feedback from the Management Board and strengthen the relationship between both.

Line management of the YJST sits with the Service Director of Children's Social Care, the YJST Service Lead is a member of the Leadership Team within Children's Service, also being responsible for managing Family Hubs and Early Help partnership services and co-chairing EMRAC (Exploitation, Missing Risk Assessment Conference). The YJST Service Lead is a member of the Community Safety Partnership and with line management in Children's Service enables the YJST to be strategically positioned in the most appropriate place.



The priorities set out in the **West Berkshire Council Strategy 2023–2027** provide a strong foundation for the Youth Justice Plan. In particular, the commitments to creating a fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all and to sustaining thriving communities with a strong local voice directly align with the aims of the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST). These priorities emphasise early support for vulnerable children and families, reducing escalation into statutory services, improving access to mental health support, preventing homelessness, and achieving positive educational outcomes. The Youth Justice Plan is fully embedded within this strategic framework, contributing to community wellbeing, social inclusion and long-term resilience for children, families and neighbourhoods.



Prevention of offending and reoffending remains central to the YJST partnership approach and is closely aligned with wider Thames Valley and criminal justice system priorities. The Youth Justice Plan links directly to the Police and Crime Plan 2024–2029, which focuses on protecting communities, preventing harm and addressing serious violence, with a clear emphasis on early intervention, particularly in education settings. The work of the YJST also supports the objectives of the Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), including improving services for victims and witnesses, increasing public confidence in the criminal justice system, and reducing reoffending. Many of these objectives are delivered through partnership actions that have a direct impact on children and young people.

Governance and accountability are delivered through well-established links with local and regional partnership structures, ensuring that youth justice priorities are fully integrated within wider community safety and criminal justice arrangements. At a local level, the Youth Justice Management Board maintains a formal reporting relationship with the Community Safety Partnership, contributing to the development and delivery of shared strategies. Performance against agreed actions is subject to regular monitoring, with exception reporting used to identify risk, support oversight and drive continuous improvement. Operationally, the YJST maintains strong engagement with Thames Valley Police partnership forums—including Tasking, Tactical Coordination Group (TTCG), Knife Crime and Serious Violence groups, and Mini-MAPS—enabling a coordinated, timely response to safeguarding risks, local crime issues and emerging patterns in anti-social behaviour.

This integrated approach extends across the regional criminal justice landscape. The YJST Service Lead represents West Berkshire at the Berkshire Local Criminal Justice Group, the Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), while Youth Justice Service managers collectively contribute to LCJB sub-groups to ensure consistency and collaboration across the area. West Berkshire provides strategic leadership within this structure, including chairing the LCJB Children's Board alongside wider representation across MAPPA Strategic Groups, Disproportionality Boards and Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panels. Strong links with the judiciary are maintained through the Youth Court User Group and direct magistracy representation on the Youth Justice Management Board, supporting open dialogue and shared understanding across the system.

In addition, YJST managers are active contributors to a wide range of key multi-agency forums, including EMRAC, Life Chances meetings for children in care, the Children and Young People Voluntary Sector network and the Young Persons Housing Panel, as well as the Independent Scrutiny and Impact Group and Child Exploitation Strategic Group. Through this comprehensive partnership engagement, the YJST ensures that the needs of children who offend remain visible and influential within both criminal justice and children's services planning, enabling the partnership to shape and respond effectively to local priorities.

In terms of staffing the YJST has the following:

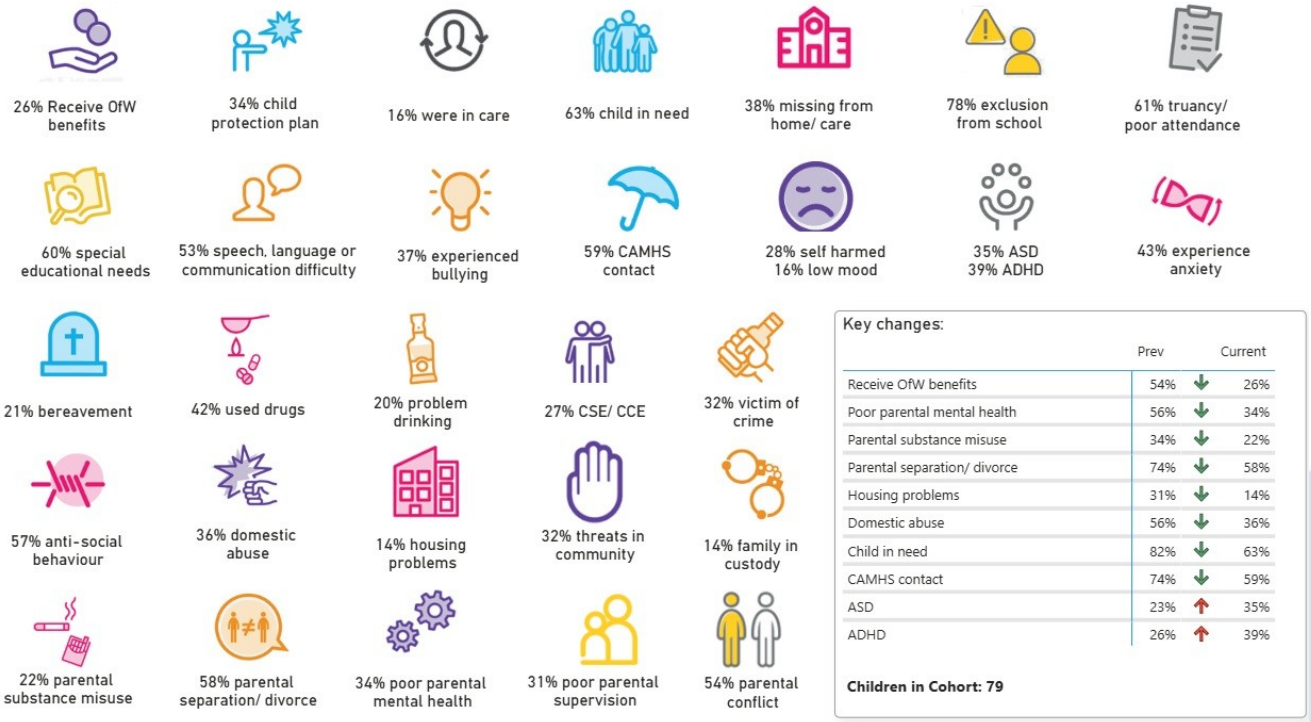
- Service Lead
- Operational Manager
- Assistant Team Manager
- Two social work posts one at senior level
- Two YJ Officer posts
- YJ Focused Diversion Youth Worker (Fixed Term)
- YJ Op Deter Youth Worker (Fixed Term)
- Restorative Justice Officer
- Information Analyst 0.6 fte
- Probation Link Officer 0.7 fte
- YJ Education Officer 0.8 fte
- Seconded Police Officer 0.8 fte
- CAMHS Health and Justice Physical Health Nurse 0.27 fte
- CAMHS Health and Justice Advanced Mental Health Professional 0.33 fte
- CAMHS Health and Justice Speech and Language Therapist 0.2 fte
- Business Support Assistant
- Business Support Officer

The YJST comprises of full time and part time staff, 13 female staff and 5 male staff. All the staff who hold cases have been trained in Universal Safeguarding, Child First principles, Child Exploitation, ACE's, Trauma Informed Practice, Assessment Planning and Intervention (APIS), Prevent and Restorative Justice. A comprehensive and ongoing training programme is in place to ensure continued professional development for the staff group.

WEST BERKSHIRE YJST Youth Justice Support Team

Local context – West Berkshire

Profile of the Community Resolution, Turnaround and Prevention Cohort



Key changes:

	Prev		Current
Receive OfW benefits	54%	↓	26%
Poor parental mental health	56%	↓	34%
Parental substance misuse	34%	↓	22%
Parental separation/ divorce	74%	↓	58%
Housing problems	31%	↓	14%
Domestic abuse	56%	↓	36%
Child in need	82%	↓	63%
CAMHS contact	74%	↓	59%
ASD	23%	↑	35%
ADHD	26%	↑	39%

Children in Cohort: 79

Profile of the Substantive Disposals Cohort



Key changes:

	Prev		Current
CAMHS contact	87%	↓	36%
CSE/ CCE	67%	↓	46%
Experienced bullying	47%	↓	7%
Family in custody	47%	↓	10%
Low mood	47%	↓	14%
Poor parental mental health	67%	↓	42%
Self harmed	53%	↓	31%
Special educational needs	80%	↓	57%
Speech, language or communication difficulty	87%	↓	43%
Were in care	40%	↓	7%

Children in Cohort: 14

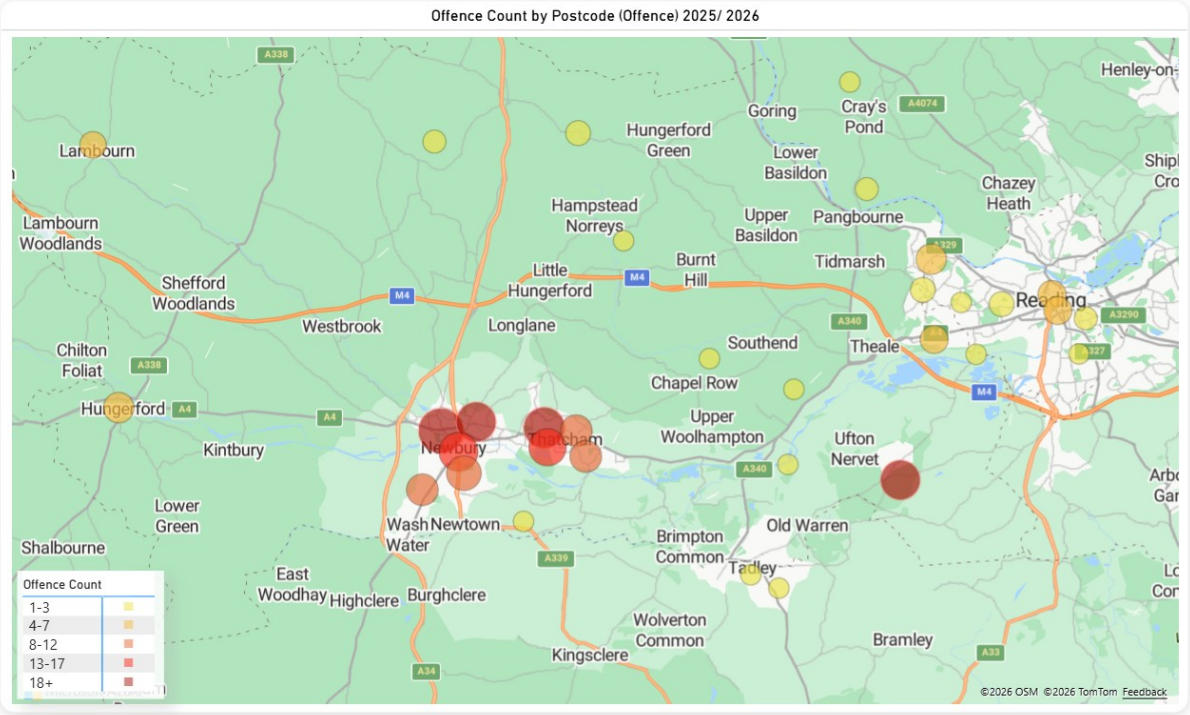
Progress on previous plan:

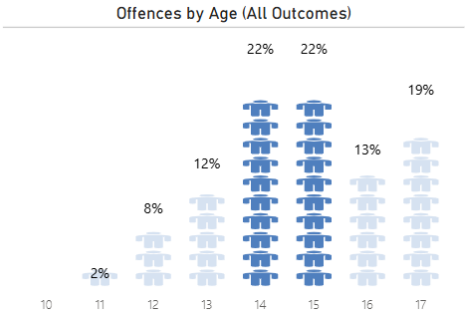
The Youth Justice Plan for last year set out a number of targets to be carried out across the partnership, these were pulled together in one action plan. There were 42 target set in last year's plan. The Service Lead provides an update on the actions which is overseen and scrutinised by the YJ Management Board.

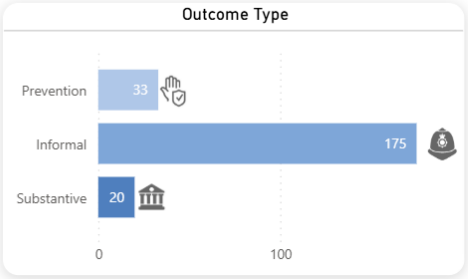
Key achievements of the last year have been;

- Implementation of YDP (Outcome 22) interventions. In addition, the outcomes for children who worked with ACT Now and Turnaround and were reflected in positive outcomes
- Additional resource from OPCC for Focused Diversion – developing early support within schools and developing partnership with the voluntary sector
- Further development and understanding of joint decision-making panels and working in a multi-disciplinary way for better outcomes for children
- Team training/learning events have continued to develop team cohesion - sexual health and sleep, development of language and the influence of parental input on language development, vicarious trauma, AIM3 training
- APIS audit and exit strategies, helping to develop our practice with ensuring that children and families have ongoing support and thinking about this right at the start of interventions
- Partnership working – continues to be a real strength to increase support to children, families and victims
- Parenting provision strengthened with the West Berkshire Parenting coordinator and facilitator observing a group and further training in the team planned. 34 parents attended WIC group and two parents were supported individually
- Continued reflective forums and used time within to explore teams' thoughts around changes in practise, like sharing of PDAT assessments
- YJ nurse administered 15 missing vaccinations to young people of Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio, Meningitis ACWY and MMR
- In addition to these vaccines offered a flu vaccination clinic
- Cooking and games sessions to encourage engagement and pro-social skills
- Screening and health assessment to identify unmet health needs
- Update information board in office on relevant topics e.g. sexual health, vaccinations, summer safety, water safety
- Volunteers evening training on the development of language
- Magistrates Training on the importance of reasonable adjustments and communication profiles
- A number of children has secured future college placement and found apprenticeships
- 21 AQA awards following YJST sessions – first aid, baking, etc to include recognised achievements by children
- Art exhibition – Children engaged with different art to create a 3-day exhibition
- Koestler award – 10 children submitted art work, one child received special recognition and had their art work displayed in London and Oxford.

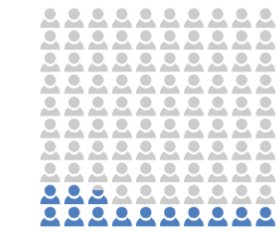
Performance over the previous Year:

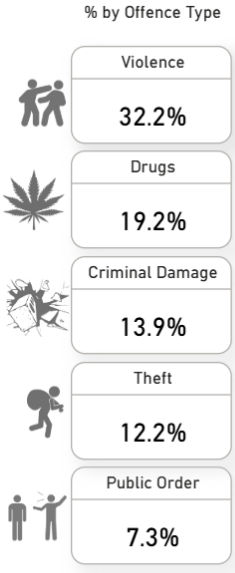












In 2025, the number of children receiving either an informal or substantive outcome increased by 3.6%, from 167 in 2024 to 173. This returns to the level last seen in 2022. The increase reflects a 5.9% rise in children receiving an informal outcome (to 161), while the number receiving substantive outcomes continued to fall, decreasing by 22.7% from 22 in 2024 to 17 in 2025.

Of the 17 children receiving a substantive outcome, 13 were First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system. Of these, 9 had previously received an informal outcome, compared with 6 of 14 in 2024. Overall, the number of children receiving either a first informal or first substantive outcome (First Time Offenders) remained stable at 122, although this represents a slightly lower proportion of the cohort (71% in 2025 compared with 75% in 2024).

The number of offences resulting in a substantive outcome decreased by 14, to 33 in 2025. In contrast, offences leading to a Community Resolution increased by 8.2%, from 196 in 2024 to 212 in 2025.

Offence Type

In 2025, the most prevalent offences leading to either a substantive outcome or a Community Resolution were:

- **Violence against the Person: 32.2% (79 offences)**
- **Drugs: 19.2% (47 offences)**
- **Criminal Damage: 13.9% (34 offences)**
- **Theft and Handling: 12.2% (30 offences)**

Violence Against the Person remains the most prevalent offence category, although the number of offences decreased by 14.1%, from 92 in 2024 to 79 in 2025. Over the same period, the number of children committing violent offences increased slightly, from 68 to 70. As a result, the average number of violent offences per child decreased from 1.4 in 2024 to 1.1 in 2025.

- Of the 79 offences, 77 were assessed at YJB gravity level 3 and 2 at level 5
- Assault by beating and common assault together accounted for 77.2% of all violent offences
- The proportion of offences resulting in a substantive outcome has reduced to 11.4%, compared with 28.0% in 2024 and 33.3% in 2023
- Ten children received an outcome for possession of a knife or sharp pointed article in a public place, with one additional child receiving an outcome for threatening a person with a knife or sharp pointed article. This compares with three similar offences in 2024. Three of these offences occurred on school premises. In terms of outcomes, two resulted in a Community Resolution, five in a Deferred Prosecution Outcome, and four in a substantive out-of-court outcome.

Drug offences continued to represent a significant proportion of offending in 2025, with 47 offences recorded (19.2% of all offences), compared with 44 offences (18.1%) in 2024. Although the number of offences remained similar, there are indications that offence seriousness reduced during the year. Most offences (89.4%) related to possession of a Class B drug (gravity 2), with a further 5 offences (10.6%) involving possession of a Class A drug (gravity 3). All but one offence resulted in an informal outcome. This compares with 2024,

when a higher proportion of offences were assessed at greater severity, including 34.1% at gravity 3 and 6.8% at gravity 6, with 8 offences resulting in a substantive outcome.

Criminal damage remains one of the most frequent offences committed by children, although the number of offences has remained stable, with 29 children committing 34 offences compared to 35 offences in 2024. Three of the offences led to a substantive outcome, 2 of which were linked to more serious offences.

Theft and handling offences increased from 23 in 2024 to 30 in 2025, while the number of children committing these offences has decreased from 22 to 19. One child was responsible for 8 of the 30 offences and received a Community Resolution, followed by a Youth Caution.

To summarise, there is a continued increase in children receiving an informal outcome (5.9%) alongside a more rapid decline in children receiving a substantive outcome (-22.7%). Overall offence levels remained stable. Combined with a small increase in the number of offenders, this resulted in a slight reduction in offences per offender, from 1.5 to 1.4. Please refer to Graphs 1 and 1A.

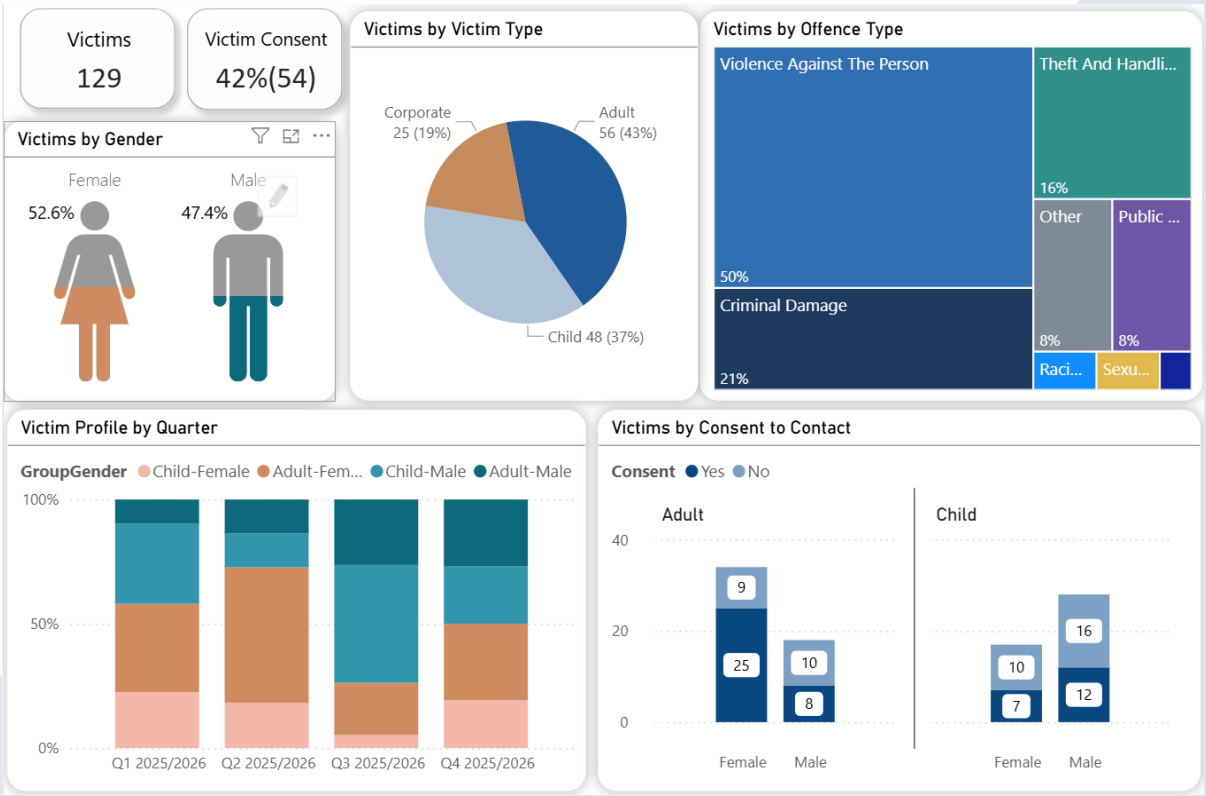
Graph 1 - Number of Offences by Children Leading to a Substantive Outcome by Offence Type
2021 to 2025



Graph 1A - Number of Offences by Children Leading to a Substantive Outcome/ Community Resolution by Offence Type 2021 to 2025



Victims Identified for Child Outcomes in 2025/2026



- 129 victims were identified during 2025/26. Of these, 54 (42%) consented to contact from the Youth Justice Support Team.
- Adult victims accounted for 43% (56) of identified victims, children 37% (48) and corporate victims 19% (25).
- Of individual victims (adults and children), 52.6% were female and 47.4% were male.
- Of those victims were gender and age were identifiable, adult females represented the largest victim group 35% (34), followed by male children 28.9% (28), adult males 18.6% (18) and female children 17.5% (17).
- Adult females had the highest rate of consent to contact (73.5%). Consent rates for other victim groups were lower: adult males 44.4%, male children 42.9% and female children 41.2%. Overall, 63% of adult victims consented to contact compared with 42% of child victims.
- Violence Against the Person was the most common offence category, accounting for 64 victims (49.6%), followed by Criminal Damage 27 (20.9%) and Theft and Handling Stolen Goods 20 (15.5%).

Children Committing Crime

The number of children entering the youth justice system increased from 167 in 2024 to 173 in 2025.

Boys:

In 2025, 124 boys committed 181 offences, representing increases of 6% and 7.1% respectively. This returns to the same peak level seen in 2022. In line with the overall pattern of offending, the proportion of offences leading to a substantive outcome continues to decline, with substantive offences accounting for 13.8% (25 offences) of all offending compared with 19.5% (33 offences) in 2024. The average number of offences by male offender has increased by a small margin to 1.5. A total of 90 boys were first time offenders, including 10 First Time Entrants, of which 6 had previously received a Community Resolution.

- While Violence Against the Person remains the most common offence type for boys, accounting for 26.5% of all offences, the number of offences decreased by 20%, from 60 in 2024 to 48 in 2025. Of these offences, 4 (8.3%) resulted in a substantive outcome, compared with 14 (23.0%) in 2024. All but one offence was assessed at gravity level 3, with one offence at level 5 for possession of an offensive weapon. This offence resulted in a deferred prosecution (Outcome 22).

- The level of drugs offences has remained stable at 40. However, outcome types indicate that the seriousness of offending has declined with only 1 offence resulting in a substantive outcome compared with 8 in 2024.

- There has been an increase in theft and handling offences for boys, rising from 10 offences in 2024 to 23 in 2025 and now accounting for 12.7% of male offending. The

number of boys has increased by a smaller amount, resulting in a higher number of theft offences per child.

Girls:

- The number of female offenders remains stable, decreasing slightly from 50 in 2024 to 49 in 2025. Females account for 28.3% of the overall offending cohort compared to 29.9% in 2024. Of the 64 offences committed by girls, 8 (12.5%) resulted in a substantive outcome compared with 14 (18.9%) in 2024. A lower proportion of females committed multiple offences, contributing to a decline in the average number of offences by girls from 1.5 to 1.3. First Time Entrants remains at 3, all of which had previously received an informal outcome. First Time Offenders decreased marginally from 35 to 32.

- The proportion of violent offences by girls has increased from 43.2% in 2024 to 48.4 in 2025, although the number of offences has remained stable at 31, compared with 32 in the previous year. Alongside an increase in the number of girls committing violent offences from 23 to 28, this suggests that fewer girls are committing multiple violent offences.

- The number of offences across the remaining offence types are small so changes may not indicate trend. There has been a small increase in Drugs offences (7) while Theft and Handling and Public Order have decreased to 7 and 5 respectively. There are now 7 offences categorised as other, 6 of which relate to malicious communications.

Age:

- The peak age for offending (informal or substantive outcome) is 14 to 15. In total, 78 children in this age group committed 110 offences, accounting for 44.8% of all offending. This is broadly similar to 2024 (76 children, 109 offences), although the proportion of 14-year-olds has increased by 14.6%.

- Offending among younger children (10 to 12) has continued to decline, with offences reducing from 36 in 2024 to 26 in 2025. In contrast, both the number of children and offences within the 17-year-old age group have increased, to 34 and 46 respectively, now accounting for 18.8% of all offending compared with 11.1% in 2024.

- The peak age for offences resulting in a substantive outcome is now 14, compared with 15 in the previous year. The distribution of informal outcomes remains broadly consistent, with a peak at age 15 and an increased proportion of 17-year-olds in 2025.

- For boys, the peak age of offending is 14, with 28 boys committing 46 offences, representing 25.4% of male offending. Of the 34 children in the 17-year-old age group, 28 were boys, increasing from 18 in 2024.

- For girls, the peak age of offending is 15, with 16 girls committing 18 offences.

- The youngest age at which offending occurred was 11 for boys (5 children) and 12 for girls (6 children).

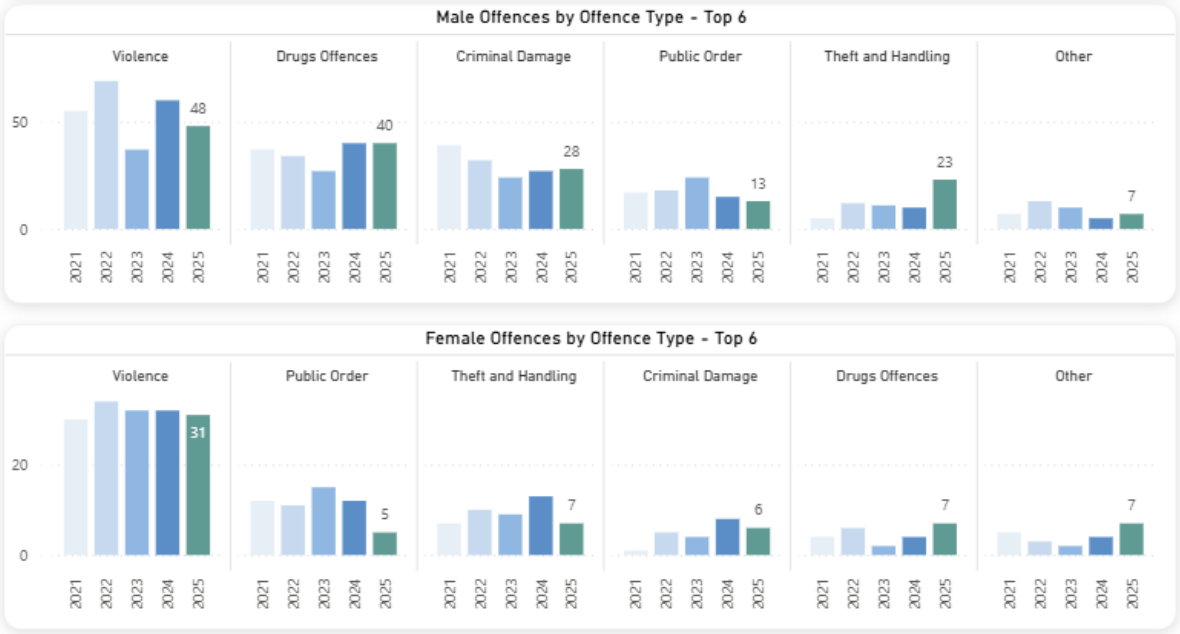
- Violent offences were recorded across all age groups except age 10. Among girls, offending is relatively evenly distributed between ages 12 and 16, with between 5 and 7 offences per age group. In contrast, offending among boys peaks at age 15, with 13 boys committing 17 offences.

The detailed demographic information combined with the offence type data and the profile date enables the youth Justice Support Team to target intervention and support in a more effective manner understanding the cohort better.



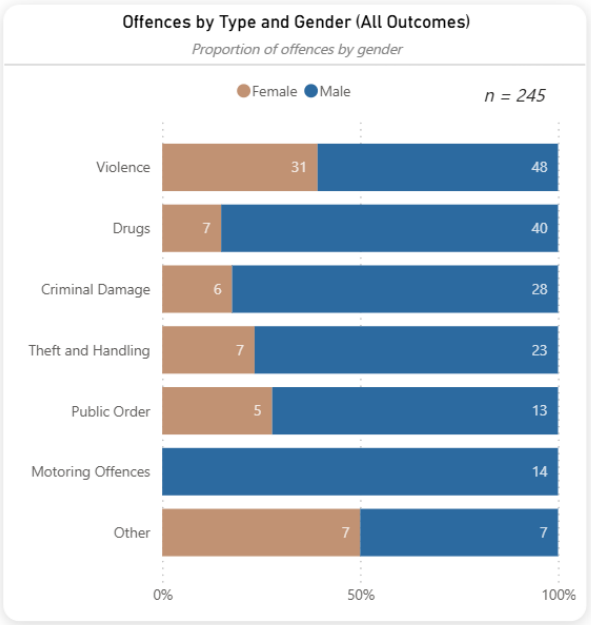
Work with girls has been developed in response to a clear rise in violent offences by adolescent females, with a focus on improving understanding and tailoring interventions to their specific needs. This work centres on adopting gender-responsive and trauma-informed approaches, including staff training on female pathways to violence, sharing learning with police and partner agencies, and embedding reflective case discussions. There is also a commitment to analysing local cohort data to better understand risk factors, strengthening risk assessment and case formulation processes, and improving safety planning. In addition, the service has expanded targeted interventions and resources for girls—drawing on national best practice forums—while maintaining ongoing collaboration across services to ensure responses remain evidence-based and effective.

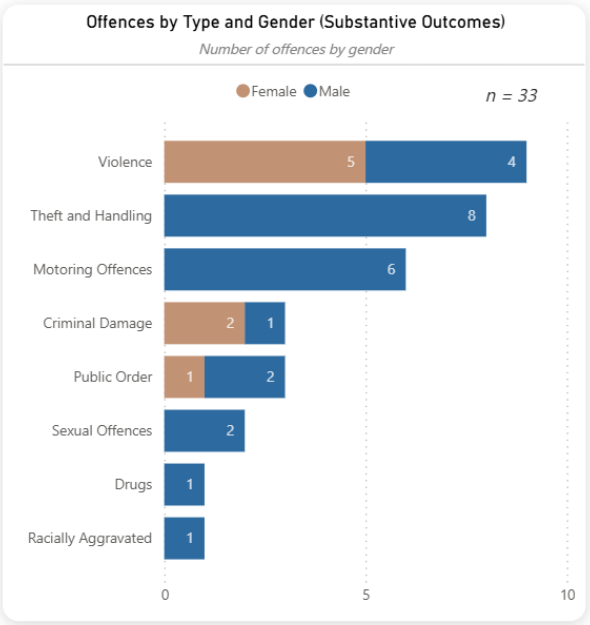
Graph 2A - Offence Counts by Type and Gender (Substantive Outcome/ Community Resolution) 2021 to 2025



Offence Count by Type and Gender (All Outcomes) 2025

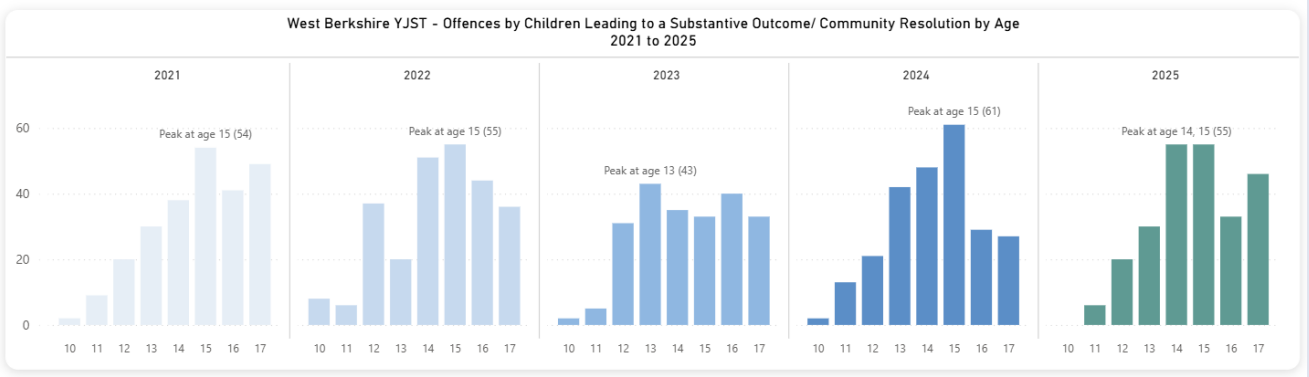
Gender / YJB Category - Chart	Female Previous Year	Female Current Year	Female Change	Male Previous Year	Male Current Year	Male Change	Total Previous Year	Total Current Year	Total Change
Violence	32	31	▼ 1	60	48	▼ 12	92	79	▼ 13
Drugs	4	7	▲ 3	40	40		44	47	▲ 3
Criminal Damage	8	6	▼ 2	27	28	▲ 1	35	34	▼ 1
Theft and Handling	13	7	▼ 6	10	23	▲ 13	23	30	▲ 7
Public Order	12	5	▼ 7	15	13	▼ 2	27	18	▼ 9
Motoring Offences				4	14	▲ 10	4	14	▲ 10
Other	4	7	▲ 3	5	7	▲ 2	9	14	▲ 5
Sexual Offences				1	3	▲ 2	1	3	▲ 2
Racially Aggravated				1	2	▲ 1	1	2	▲ 1
Vehicle Theft	1		▼ 1	2	2		3	2	▼ 1
Arson					1	▲ 1		1	▲ 1
Fraud And Forgery		1	▲ 1					1	▲ 1

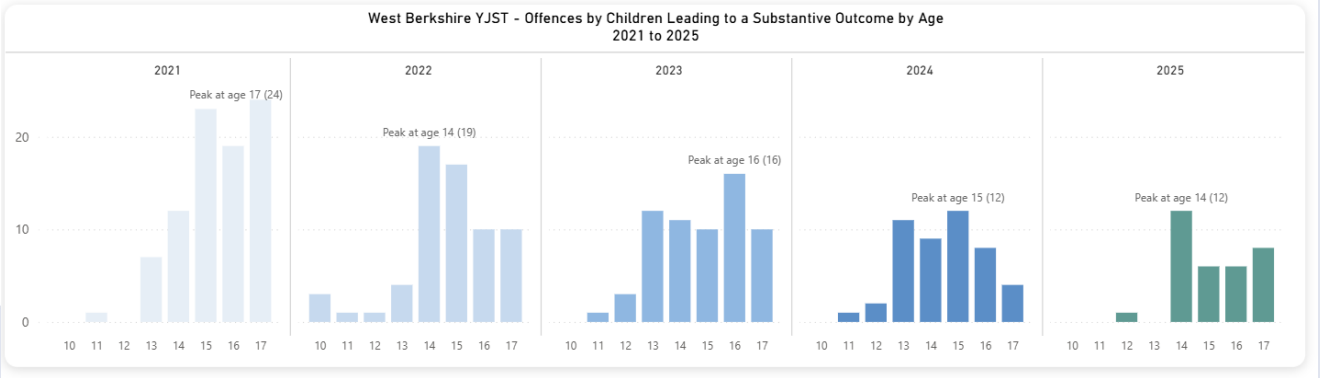




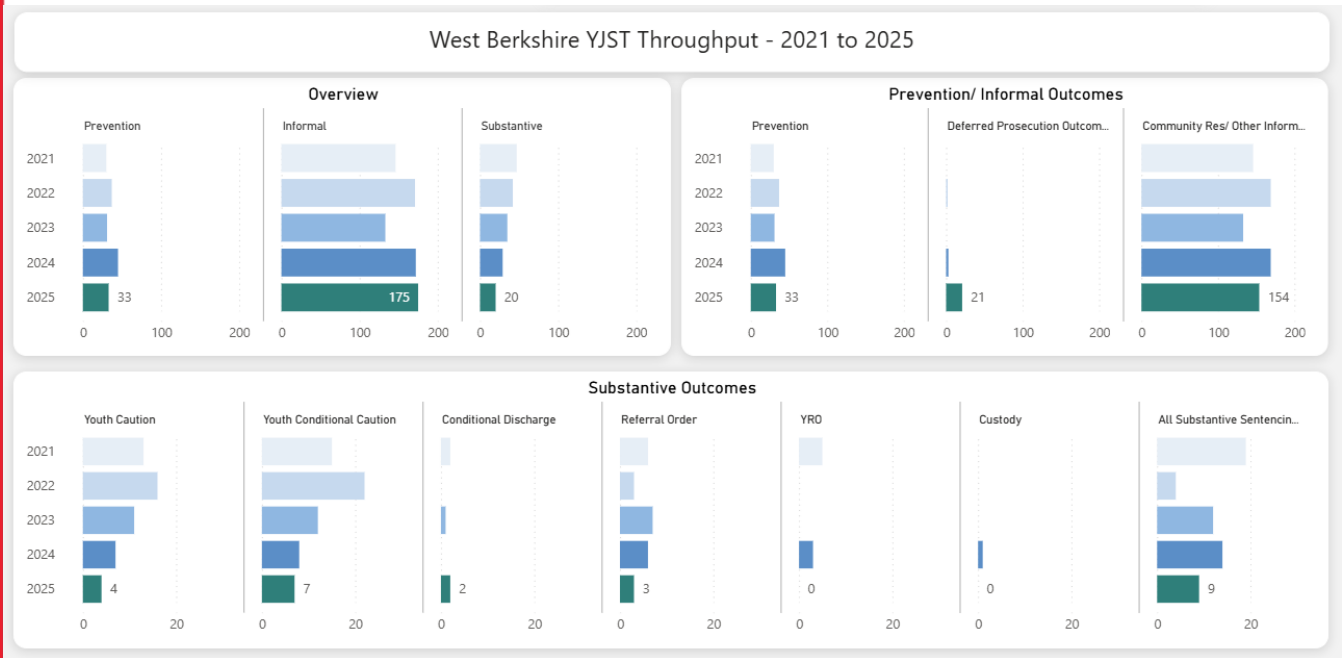
N.B. Categories with low volumes should be interpreted with caution.

Offence Count by Age 2021-2025:





Throughput 2021-2025:



Risks and Issues 2026–2027

Challenges, risks and emerging issues will continue to be monitored through the quarterly Youth Justice Management Board, with mitigation actions tracked and reviewed throughout the year. Key risks for 2026–2027 include:

- Education, attendance and inclusion

High levels of school suspension, exclusion, persistent non-attendance and the lack of 16+ options remain a factor linked to offending and reoffending. Children known to the YJST are disproportionately affected by unmet SEND, mental health needs and disrupted educational placements. Continued pressure on education inclusion services may limit timely access to suitable provision, increasing the risk of criminal exploitation, escalation and poorer long-term outcomes.

- Complexity of need and safeguarding risk

Children entering or known to the youth justice system continue to present with high levels of complexity, including trauma, adverse childhood experiences, neurodiversity, mental health needs and exposure to exploitation. There is a risk that universal and specialist services may not always be able to respond at pace, particularly during periods of transition, requiring robust multi-agency coordination and escalation routes.

- Disproportionality and changing cohort profile

The proportion of girls entering the youth justice system in West Berkshire remains above national averages, presenting risks if services are not sufficiently tailored to gender-specific pathways, harm experienced and safeguarding needs. There is also an ongoing risk of

disproportionality for children with SEND or from marginalised backgrounds if assessment, diversion and intervention pathways are not consistently equitable.

- Workforce capacity and professional expertise

Recruitment and retention challenges across the partnership including probation, health and education continue to pose a risk to service continuity and specialist input. The HMIP recommendation to secure a seconded Probation Officer remains a challenge with increasing reliance on mitigations, however the YJST has directly employed a qualified Probation Officer. Any loss of experienced staff or specialist skills could impact assessment quality and risk management.

- System reform and structural change

Proposed local government reorganisation, regional devolution, health reorganisation, Youth Justice reforms and ongoing Children's Services reforms present both opportunity and risk. Clear governance, role clarity and shared thresholds will be essential to ensure children known to or at risk of entering the youth justice system receive the right support at the right time without service gaps or duplication.

Child First:

The work of the YJST is unpinned by the national Youth Justice Board (YJB) Child First Principles which are set out below:

As children	Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.
Building pro-social identity	Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.
Collaborating with children	Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.
Diverting from stigma	Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

Source: PowerPoint Presentation (yjresourcehub.uk)

Voice of the child/feedback:

The YJST seeks ways to support children to provide feedback about the service they receive at the YJST and we support children working with the YJST to engage in wider forums/opportunities to have their voices heard. These include:

- Children and their parents are invited to provide feedback in reviews of their intervention, their views on the service lead to changes in the intervention delivery and any themes are considered to change wider service delivery.

- All children who work with the YJST, and their parents are invited to complete a confidential questionnaire at the end of their intervention and the Service Lead reviews all of these and makes changes to services if required – last year a total of 67 questionnaire's (40 children and 27 parent) were received. An annual report is written for the YJ Management Board that captures that feedback. Feedback from children and parents highlights consistent themes of strong relationships with workers, feeling listened to and respected, improved emotional regulation, better understanding of consequences, and positive changes in behaviour, school engagement and family relationships. In response, the service has reinforced its relational and trauma-informed practice, maintained and strengthened multi-agency specialist input, continued to provide practical support such as transport and flexible arrangements, reviewed feedback tools to ensure they are meaningful, and committed to further improving access to complaints and expanding opportunities (including for victims) to share feedback to inform ongoing service development
- Activity groups take place on a regular basis with the opportunity for in-depth exploration of topics with a group of children and subsequent actions taken
- All children are informed of the complaints process at the start of the intervention, and sign to say that this has occurred
- All parents completing parenting courses with the YJST provide feedback on their experience of the group work
- All victims of crime involving children in the YJST are asked for feedback on services provided by the YJST, particularly restorative interventions
- A biannual Youth Survey was conducted in 2025 with over 5000 responses from children attending West Berkshire secondary schools – questions about crime, community safety and areas of priority were highlighted in that survey, these have been used to shape priorities, perspectives and provision.

Resources and Services

The YJST is funded from a variety of sources, the Secretary of State under their power in section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has the power to make grants to local authorities for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services. There are certain grant conditions attached to this funding, West Berkshire YJST complies with all the conditions as set out in the grant conditions documents.

The YJST uses the Local Authority funding, Youth Justice Grant, partner contributions and available additional grants to deliver youth justice services with the aim of reducing the number of children in the youth justice system and preventing further offending.

The YJST is active in seeking to use other funding beyond the core funding to extend the opportunities to support and engage with children at an appropriate time. These opportunities include:

Turnaround – funding from the Ministry of Justice is secure until March 2029 and aims to provide early intervention and support to children at risk of entering the criminal justice system, helping them address underlying issues and prevent future offending.

Operation Deter Youth (Act Now) – has funding in place from the Home Office via the OPCC until March 2028. Operation Deter Youth is designed to reduce serious youth violence by providing rapid, targeted support to children aged 10–17 who are arrested for eligible offences. The initiative focuses on swift engagement—often within 90 minutes of custody notification—followed by timely home visits and a voluntary, strengths-based intervention plan tailored to each young person's needs, with services delivered seven days a week. By offering coordinated support across areas such as emotional wellbeing, education, family relationships, and awareness of crime and its consequences, the programme aims to divert children away from further offending and minimise their involvement in the criminal justice system through proactive, preventative action.

Focused Diversion - funding is in place from the Violence Prevention Partnership until March 2027. Focused Diversion is a voluntary early-intervention programme for children aged 10–15 who are at risk of involvement in serious violence, with a strong emphasis on improving education outcomes. It brings together a coordinated multi-agency approach—linking education, police, youth justice, health, and children's services—to identify risk early and provide tailored support. Referrals are triaged through a single pathway and reviewed by JDMP, which oversees eligibility and monitors' progress. Children receive a mentoring programme focused on improving attendance, behaviour, emotional wellbeing, and engagement in positive activities, alongside support for families. The model aims to reduce suspensions, police contact, and risk-taking behaviours while strengthening resilience and long-term engagement in education and community life.

Prevention Programme – funding is in place through the OPCC until March 2028. Prevention letters create a route for Thames Valley Police to notify the YJST of low-level anti-social and nuisance behaviour among children aged 10–17 before it escalates into criminal activity. Working in partnership with Thames Valley Police, the programme uses "prevention letters" to identify children whose behaviour is causing concern but has not reached a criminal threshold, triggering timely support from the Youth Justice Support Team. Through home visits, tailored assessments, one-to-one sessions, and parenting support, the programme works collaboratively with children and their families to understand underlying causes, build resilience, and promote positive behaviour. By diverting children away from formal justice processes and strengthening family support systems, the programme aims to reduce first-time offending, improve community confidence, and create safer neighbourhoods through sustained, preventative action.

YJ Management Board Development:

The governance arrangements for youth justice in West Berkshire have evolved to strengthen clarity, focus and accountability. Historically, the Youth Justice Management Board and the Community Safety Partnership operated as a single Building Communities Together

Partnership, enabling a coordinated strategic approach to crime and disorder, with the Youth Justice Management Group functioning as an operational sub-group. Following a governance review in 2025, this structure was revised, and the formal grouping was dissolved. In its place, a dedicated Youth Justice Management Board was established, chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services and comprising senior representation from key partners. Despite this separation, strong alignment has been maintained: both the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Youth Justice Service Lead remain members of the Community Safety Partnership, with a standing agenda item to ensure ongoing connectivity and shared oversight of youth justice matters.

The Youth Justice Management Board holds responsibility for the strategic governance of the Youth Justice Support Team, ensuring effective partnership leadership and the delivery of high-quality services for children and victims. New Board members receive a structured induction led by the Service Lead, supported by a comprehensive induction pack outlining roles, responsibilities and expectations. Over the past year, the Board has maintained oversight through regular performance, partnership and activity reports, supported by briefings from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) on the national Oversight Framework and forthcoming policy developments. This has enabled members to build their understanding of both local performance and the wider national context. During the Youth Justice Management Board meetings time has been created to enable board members to deepen their understanding of the cohort of children in the Youth Justice system, explore the performance data with the analyst and extend their understand of the work of the YJST.

Recognising the importance of strong and active system leadership, a dedicated Board development session was held in 2026. This focused on strengthening members' confidence and effectiveness by moving beyond passive engagement to a more active, impact-driven approach. The session supported members to better understand their individual and organisational roles, exercise influence appropriately and provide constructive challenge in line with YJB and HMIP expectations. Through reflective discussion, members explored their agency strengths, decision-making authority and any internal barriers affecting outcomes for children. Further development work is planned for 2026/27, with input from the YJB regional advisor to provide tailored support and continue to strengthen the Board's role, function and effectiveness.

Workforce Development:

Workforce development is recognised as a critical priority within the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST), reflecting the principle that staff are its most valuable asset. As such, a strong emphasis is placed on recruitment, induction, ongoing training and retention. The YJST adopts a holistic approach to workforce development across individual, operational and strategic levels. At an individual level, annual appraisals support the identification of professional development needs and ensure compliance with registration requirements, such as those for social workers. Operationally, a structured programme of learning activities is in place throughout the year to support reflective practice and continuous improvement. This includes reflective forums, learning from audits and the benchmarking of national reports, enabling

the team to enhance practice and outcomes for children, families and victims. At a strategic level, engagement with national and partnership developments supports service evolution, including the continued embedding of Child First principles and alignment with emerging policy.

The training programme for 2026/27 builds on the knowledge, experience and development activity of previous years. Over the past year, staff have accessed a range of bespoke training designed to strengthen practice, including development of the prevention and diversion assessment tool and associated quality assurance processes, Appropriate Adult and MAPPA refresher training, health-led learning, AIM3 intervention training, the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate, as well as training in cognitive bias and police leadership. Looking ahead, the training plan will focus on key areas including parenting support, improving the quality and consistency of pre-decision assessments, restorative justice, and responding to changes within the youth justice system. This will be complemented by learning drawn from HMIP inspections and national publications to ensure practice remains current and evidence informed. In addition, the YJST actively contributes to workforce development beyond the service by offering training and development opportunities to partner agencies, supporting a shared understanding and consistent approach to working with children across the youth justice system.

Knife Possession Response

Knife crime remains a national and local priority, with over 50,000 recorded knife offences nationally and locally there has been an increase in knife possession offences. The Government have a commitment to halve knife crime over the coming decade. The Government's 2026 guidance requires a step-change in how agencies respond to children found in possession of knives, emphasising a response that is: swift, robust, evidence-based and thorough

The Youth Justice Plan sets out how West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team and partners will deliver against these expectations and comply with the national expectations, within a Child First framework, prioritising prevention, safeguarding, and desistance. West Berkshire YJST identifies knife crime and serious youth violence as a strategic priority due to: The significant safeguarding risks posed to children (both victims and those involved) Links to exploitation, trauma, and extra-familial harm and the ongoing opportunity to offer early intervention and prevention.

We will deliver a multi-agency, child-centred response, aligned to statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements. Our key partners in this endeavour include Thames Valley Police, Children's Social Care, Education providers and schools, Health services (including Liaison and Diversion and CAMHS), Community Safety Partnership, EMRAC, Voluntary and community sector organisations. All partners contribute to a shared responsibility for prevention, early identification and intervention, consistent with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Swift Response: Police will notify YJST of all knife possession offences within one working day. This takes place through Operation Deter Youth and the PIC sheets which detail all children arrested in the previous 24 hours. There is a daily spreadsheet of voluntary interviews by TVP which is examined to identify any weapon offences and the YJST contact all children within one day to offer support.

YJST will prioritise assessment and ensure intervention begins within a maximum of four weeks. Locally, due to Operation Deter, the first home visit aims to take place within 48 hours with the assessment and intervention commencing at that point. Joint decision-making panels will ensure timely and consistent outcomes for all decision making involving children and knife offences.

Robust Decision-Making: We will ensure all knife possession cases receive an intervention plan, as required by Government guidance. The outcomes will include; Youth Conditional Caution (the default expectation), Youth Deferred Prosecution (in certain circumstances, where appropriate to avoid criminalisation), Charge (for gravity 5 offences or repeat offending).

We will not use community resolutions or simple cautions, in line with national expectations. Decision-making will use the NPCC Child Gravity Matrix, be informed by full multi-agency information sharing and explicitly consider disproportionality and equality impacts.

Evidence-Based Interventions: All interventions will be based on a holistic assessment of the child's needs and risks, address underlying drivers such as trauma, exploitation, peer influence, school exclusion, mental health etc. The guidance is explicit that generic knife awareness programmes alone are not effective and should not be used. Our approach is bespoke to each child and their unique circumstances and using a child first lens, trauma-informed practice, cognitive and behavioural interventions, family-based work, education and re-engagement support, safety planning and harm minimisation.

Thorough Oversight and Compliance: All intervention plans will include clear expectations, non-compliance will result in immediate review and opportunity to reengage, escalation, including potential prosecution if required. The Thame Valley Scrutiny panels will have oversight of the decision making appropriateness of knife crime decisions.

The Youth Justice Management Board will provide strategic oversight of knife crime response, ensure partnership accountability, receive performance and qualitative data on compliance with national knife crime guidance and maintain a record of any departures from national guidance, with clear rationale.

We recognise that children involved in knife possession are often victims of exploitation, experiencing trauma or adversity and at risk of serious harm themselves. Our approach will recognise the safeguarding concerns, assess for extra-familial harm, including criminal exploitation and ensure access to specialist support. This aligns with the Child First principle

of prioritising children's needs, strengths and rights, while promoting positive identity and desistance.

We will continue to strengthen prevention through targeted interventions using local data to identify children at risk of violence, partnership with schools, early help and social care services to keep children safe and use diversion where appropriate. We will work with partners to ensure earlier identification of vulnerability and community-based support.

We will ensure our staff are equipped to respond effectively through training and briefings on knife crime legislation and guidance, trauma-informed practice, exploitation and contextual safeguarding. In addition, we provide reflective supervision to support complex casework.

We will monitor the timeliness of referrals and interventions, the type and appropriateness of outcomes, the reoffending rates for knife-related cases and the engagement and completion of intervention plans. The Youth Justice Management Board will provide strategic oversight of knife crime response, monitor compliance with national guidance, ensure partnership accountability and maintain a record of any departures from national guidance, with clear rationale.

Evidence-based practice, Evaluation and Innovation:

West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) is a relatively small service and, as such, does not routinely attract large-scale external evaluations or randomised control trials typically associated with academic research. Despite this, the service remains committed to embedding evidence-based practice and has actively contributed to a range of local and regional pilots, alongside developing innovative approaches grounded in practice insight and emerging research.

A key example is the **Focused Diversion Youth Navigator Mentorship programme**, in which the YJST participated as part of a wider study. The findings demonstrated that the model is both feasible and acceptable, successfully engaging children aged 10–15 who are at risk of disengagement from education, exploitation or offending but who do not meet thresholds for specialist intervention. The evaluation highlighted that unmet emotional and mental health needs are often underlying drivers of behaviour, and that early, relational mentoring can positively influence school engagement and reduce the likelihood of involvement in crime.

Alongside this, the YJST has developed a number of practical, needs-led innovations to address health inequalities and improve engagement. The introduction and refinement of health packs, led by the YJST nurse, responded to both research on oral health inequalities and direct findings from health assessments. These packs include dental care resources and guidance, recognising the wider impact of oral health on overall physical and emotional wellbeing. Complementing this, the introduction of food hampers ensures that children attending sessions have access to basic nutrition, with provision available both on site and in

the community. This initiative reflects an understanding of the barriers some children face and supports consistent engagement with interventions.

The team has also strengthened its focus on life skills and positive development through first aid training, delivered collaboratively by the YJ Police Officer and nurse. This offer is available to all children and is formally recognised through AQA accreditation, supporting both skill development and achievement.

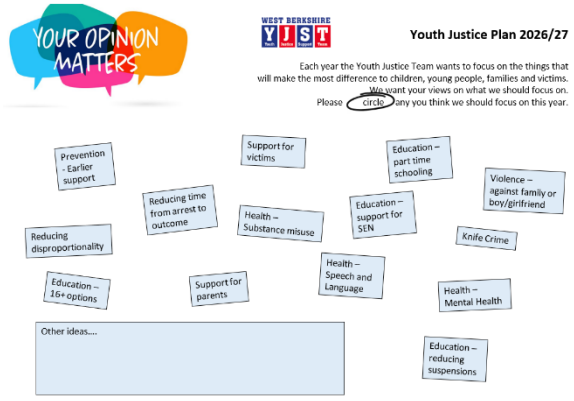
In response to identified communication needs, the Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) has led the development of communication passports and associated resources. Staff have received training to produce and utilise these tools, supported by a speech, language and communication (SLC) resource pack available to all practitioners. This approach enhances the team's ability to tailor interventions to individual communication needs while enabling the SaLT to focus more directly on specialist interventions.

Collectively, these areas of practice demonstrate the YJST's commitment to innovation, continuous learning and the application of evidence in a way that is proportionate to the size of the service, while remaining responsive to the needs of children and families.

Strategic Priorities for the coming year

The Youth Justice Management Board undertook a review of strategic priorities through a dedicated workshop, recognising that outcomes for children in the youth justice system are shaped by a wide range of factors extending beyond the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST). This includes developments across education, health, social care and wider safeguarding systems, such as SEND reforms, the Attendance is Everyone's Business agenda, Family Help reforms and the development of Risk Outside the Home Conferences. While these areas sit outside direct youth justice governance, their impact on children within the system is significant. In response, the Board considered performance data, intelligence, stakeholder feedback and emerging risks to establish a clear and coherent set of priorities, creating a strong 'golden thread' linking strategic intent, delivery and outcomes.

Through this process, three key areas were identified for focused improvement. Firstly, education was highlighted as a critical priority, with an emphasis on improving access, strengthening pathways into appropriate education, training and employment, addressing barriers to inclusion and ensuring earlier identification and support for children with SEND. Secondly, the Board prioritised early identification, prevention and intervention, recognising the importance of timely responses, reducing delays within the justice process and ensuring clear, consistent pathways to support services. Thirdly, there was a clear focus on victim support, including strengthening engagement and consent processes, improving awareness of victims' rights and widening access to consistent, high-quality support.



The development of these priorities was informed not only by strategic analysis but also by the voices of children and volunteers. Children engaged with the YJST, alongside volunteers supporting delivery, were invited to identify their own priorities for the coming year. There was strong alignment between these perspectives and those of the Management Board, with education and timeliness—particularly reducing the time from arrest to sentence—emerging as shared priorities. Children also identified knife crime as a key concern, reflecting local data showing an increase in possession offences. Volunteers reinforced these themes and, drawing on their experience as Referral Order Panel members, highlighted additional areas of importance including parental support, the impact of social media and substance misuse.

Taking account of this combined insight, the YJST has identified a set of locally driven priorities, aligned with national Youth Justice Board expectations but tailored to local need.

These partnership priorities are:

- **Education and Inclusion:** Ensuring all children have timely access to appropriate education or training through inclusive pathways, early identification and support for SEND, and proactive removal of barriers to engagement and participation.
- **Prevention and Diversion:** Strengthening early identification of need, delivering timely interventions to prevent escalation, improving the timeliness of investigations and ensuring clear, consistent access to support services.
- **Knife Possession and Serious Violence:** Delivering a swift, robust, evidence-based and child-centred multi-agency response, prioritising prevention, safeguarding and early intervention, while maintaining consistent decision-making and strong oversight in line with national guidance.
- **Victims and Restorative Justice:** Ensuring victims are fully informed of their rights, able to provide informed consent and supported through accessible, consistent and high-quality services delivered through clear and well-publicised pathways.

Together, these priorities reflect a coherent, partnership-led approach, grounded in evidence, shaped by lived experience and focused on improving outcomes for children, victims and communities.

Standards for children

There has been no recent national requirement to complete a formal self-assessment against the Standards for Youth Justice Services, the most recent assessment having focused on Standard 2: work in court. However, the publication of the Youth Justice Board's national audit report in February 2025 has provided valuable insight into practice in this area. The findings emphasise the importance of ensuring children experience fair treatment and receive appropriate support throughout court proceedings, while also identifying areas for improvement in the quality of their experience. In response, the Assistant Team Manager has undertaken regular observations of court practice over the past year, reinforcing a commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of delivery.

Alongside this, the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) maintains a robust programme of internal audit activity. Each year, a series of audits is undertaken to assess practice against the Standards for Children, HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) expectations and relevant codes of practice. Findings from these audits are formally reported and presented to the Youth Justice Management Board, where they are subject to scrutiny and oversight, with agreed actions monitored through to completion.

The Youth Justice Plan action plan sets out the programme of internal audits for the coming year, ensuring a continued focus on quality assurance, accountability and ongoing service improvement.

Service Development

There have been no recent HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspections or critical learning reviews requiring specific service development. However, the Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) has continued to proactively strengthen practice through partnership innovation and contribution to wider system improvements.

Over the past year, the YJST has worked closely with Thames Valley Police to pilot the Youth Diversionary Programme (YDP), a child-centred deferred prosecution model designed to test a structured diversion approach prior to potential wider adoption. The model enables appropriate cases to be managed through targeted intervention while retaining the option of prosecution where conditions are not met, aligning with emerging national guidance (Outcome 23). The pilot has been evaluated positively, with no reported victim complaints, and reflects the broader national direction toward deferred prosecution approaches. Learning from the pilot has emphasised the importance of consistent decision-making through the application of the gravity matrix, clearer use of terminology and alignment with evolving national policy. The findings are currently being considered by the Chief Officer group, with a shared expectation among partners that the model will transition into business-as-usual delivery.

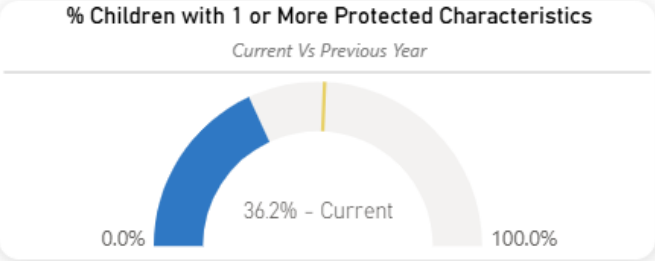
In parallel, the YJST has contributed to the refresh of the Thames Valley Police Safer Schools Partnership Framework, working alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

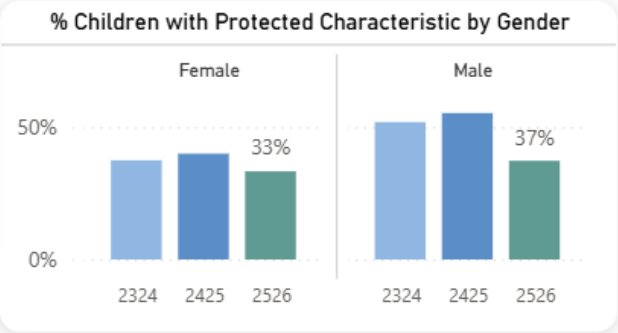
(OPCC) and Thames Valley Police. The framework establishes a collaborative approach between policing, schools and partners to improve safety, prevent crime and support children and young people. It promotes early intervention, diversion and education, while strengthening relationships between schools and local policing. Dedicated Schools Officers provide a visible and consistent presence, supporting schools while maintaining clear boundaries around safeguarding and disciplinary responsibilities. The framework emphasises prevention, effective information sharing and age-appropriate education, supported by OPCC initiatives such as the Crime Education Hub, alongside clear and proportionate processes for managing incidents and safeguarding concerns.

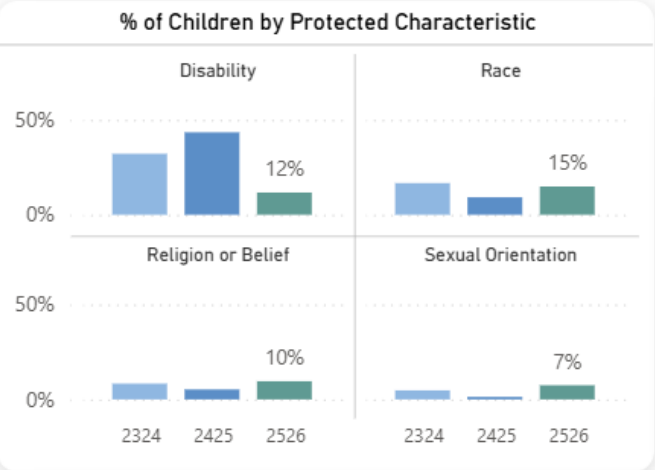
The YJST has also worked with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to address delays within the youth justice system, recognising that timeliness is critical to achieving effective outcomes for children. Reducing the time from offence to outcome strengthens the link between behaviour and consequence, improves engagement and increases the effectiveness of interventions. Conversely, delays can contribute to anxiety, disengagement and an increased risk of reoffending, while disrupting education, family stability and support networks. Timely processes also benefit victims and enhance the quality of professional assessments by ensuring that circumstances remain current. As part of this work, improvements have included the development of police data dashboards to increase visibility of child investigations, work on statutory time limits, pilot activity to accelerate early investigative stages, and ongoing regional monitoring of timeliness. Collectively, these developments demonstrate a continued commitment to system improvement, partnership working and delivering more effective outcomes for children and communities.

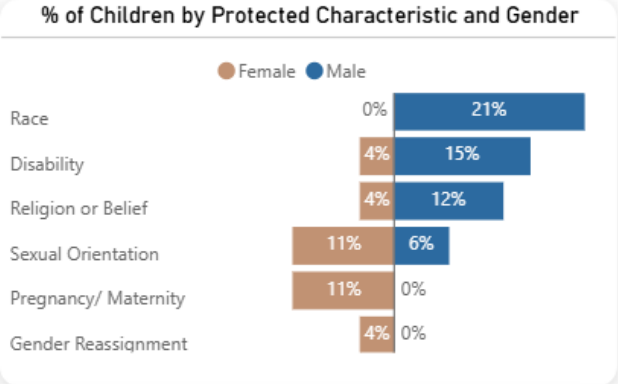
National Priority areas and KPIs:

Children from group which are over- represented:









Children with Protected Characteristics by Gender

GENDER	Female			Male			Total		
Characteristic	#	%	Total	#	%	Total	#	%	Total
Disability	1	3.7%	27	10	14.9%	67	**11**	**11.7%**	**94**
Gender Reassignment	1	3.7%	27			67	**1**	**1.1%**	**94**
Pregnancy/ Maternity	3	11.1%	27			67	**3**	**3.2%**	**94**
Race			27	14	20.9%	67	**14**	**14.9%**	**94**
Religion or Belief	1	3.7%	27	8	11.9%	67	**9**	**9.6%**	**94**
Sexual Orientation	3	11.1%	27	4	6.0%	67	**7**	**7.4%**	**94**
Total	**9**	**33.3%**	**27**	**25**	**37.3%**	**67**	**34**	**36.2%**	**94**

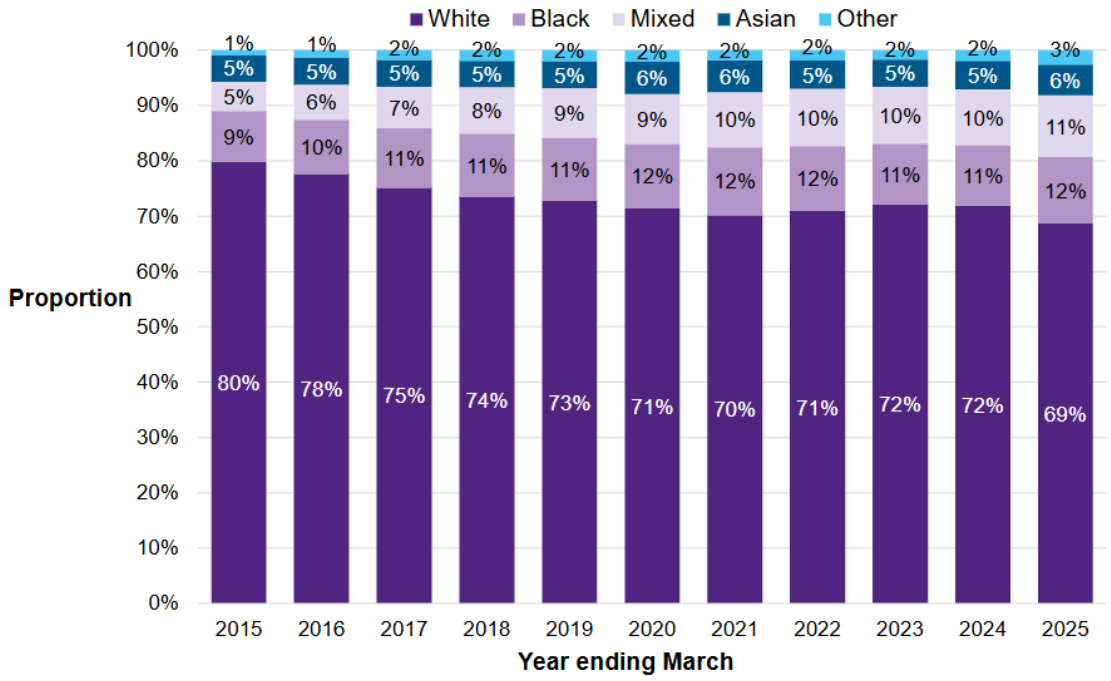
The YJST monitor the caseload of children involved with the YJST in addition to those who have come into contact with the police through other reasons for example stop and search or children who are excluded. Where areas of over representation or disproportionality are identified, the YJST partnership seeks to understand the drivers for this over representation and address those with those who have the power to make changes.

There were 22 children from a GRT/ethnic minority background who committed 37 offences representing 12.7% of the offending population and 15.1% of all offences committed respectively. Of the 37 offences committed, 24.3% resulted in a substantive outcome,

compared with 11.5% of offences committed by children from a white background. In terms of seriousness of offending, 64.9% of offences committed by children from a GRT/ethnic minority background are categorised with gravity 3 or above compared with 54.3% for children from a white background. The annual school census for secondary schools showed that the proportion of GRT/ethnic minority pupils in the general West Berkshire secondary population was 15.7% in 2024. The GRT/ethnic minority population is therefore marginally underrepresented in the youth justice system in West Berkshire.

Statistics produced by the Youth Justice Board show that 32% of **children receiving a caution or sentence** in England and Wales in 2025 were of ethnic minority. This compares to 11.8% of children in West Berkshire in 2025. Of note this uses the Ethnicity 5+1 groupings which classifies children from a GRT background as white. See graph below.

Proportion of children receiving a caution or sentence by ethnicity, England and Wales, years ending March 2015 to 2025



In 2025, there was a small decrease in the proportion of females receiving either an informal or substantive outcome, from 29.9% to 28.3%. Of these, a slightly higher proportion received a caution or sentence compared with 2024 (23.5% compared with 22.7%). This remains above the national average of 14% in 2025, which has decreased from 15% in 2024.

- In 2025/26, 94 children engaged with an intervention with the Youth Justice Service (YJST). Of these, 34 children (36.2%) were identified as having one or more protected characteristics. This is lower than in previous years (51.3% in 2024/25 and 46.4% in 2022/23).

- Males were slightly more likely to be identified as having a protected characteristic than females (37% compared with 33%), although the gap has narrowed from the previous year, when 55.4% of males and 40.0% of females were identified.

- Race is now the most commonly recorded protected characteristic (14.9%), increasing from 9.2% in 2024/25. All identified children were male, representing just over one in five males (20.9%).

- Almost one in ten children (9.6%) are identified as having religion or belief as a protected characteristic.

- The proportion of children identified with disability has decreased significantly, from 43.4% in 2024/25 to 11.7% in 2025/26. Boys remain more likely than girls to be identified with disability (15% compared with 4%).

- Among girls, 11.1% are identified with sexual orientation as a protected characteristic, increasing from 5% in 2024/25. There are now also boys identified within this group (6%), although numbers remain small and may not indicate a trend.

- For the first time since monitoring of protected characteristics commenced, children with pregnancy or maternity needs have been identified (11.1%).

Policing

The West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team operates within the Berkshire West Local Command Unit (LCU), with the seconded Youth Justice Police Officer managed through the Harm Reduction Unit (HRU). Strong and well-established relationships exist with police colleagues across all ranks within Newbury and the wider LCU, supporting effective joint working across a range of priorities. This includes close collaboration with HRU officers overseeing children at risk of exploitation, Neighbourhood Policing Team sergeants contributing to anti-social behaviour forums, and inspectors and chief inspectors providing leadership across knife crime and wider partnership activity.

Partnership working has continued to strengthen over the past year, particularly through the development of the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP), which now includes wider representation from children's services and education. The panel is chaired and recorded by a Thames Valley Police decision-maker, supporting consistency and accountability within out-of-court decision-making. In addition, the Criminal Justice Sergeant has played an active role on the Youth Justice Management Board, leading improvements in the early identification of victims and strengthening processes to ensure that victim consent is clearly recorded. Changes to YOT1 documentation, requiring the Officer in Charge to formally capture this information, are already demonstrating positive early impact.

Strategic links between policing and youth justice are further reinforced through the involvement of senior police leaders. The Service Lead maintains direct engagement with the LCU Chief Inspector and Superintendent, both of whom are invited to participate in the

Management Board. The Service Lead also contributes at a wider strategic level through the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), including chairing the LCJB Children's Board and participating in the Out of Court Resolution (OOCR) Scrutiny Panel, ensuring that West Berkshire is well-represented across the regional landscape.

This partnership approach is characterised by a number of key strengths. There is strong engagement at a local level, underpinned by a shared commitment to joint problem-solving for both individual children and wider community issues. Additional support has been secured through OPCC grant funding to address anti-social behaviour and prevent offending, while the continued development of joint OOCR decision-making panels has strengthened partnership working and contributed to improved outcomes for children.

However, there are emerging challenges that require careful management. The capacity of the seconded Youth Justice Police Officer has reduced under the LCU structure, with their placement within the HRU impacting direct communication with traditional supervisory lines. In addition, the transition from a Safeguarding Officer role to a School's Officer model has reduced the level of support available for the Positive Intervention Programme (PiP) within schools. These factors present risks to delivery and will require ongoing partnership attention to ensure that strong operational links and preventative activity are maintained.

FTEs per 100,000 10–17-year-olds: Outturn Jan 24 – Dec 24 = 79, Outturn Jan 25 – Dec 25 (latest figures) = 78

A first-time entrant (FTE) is a child receiving a formal police or court disposal for the first time, thus entering the youth justice system. A First Time Offender (FTO) is a child who receives either a first informal or substantive outcome within the period.

The YJST in conjunction with the Thames Valley Police introduced a prevention scheme in September 2018 enabling the police to identify children who displayed behaviour below a criminal threshold but that without support may become a first-time entrant. In addition, a Drug Diversion Scheme was launched in West Berkshire to direct children caught in possession of illegal drugs to a substance misuse service that can educate, treat and support those children rather than use the formal criminal justice system.

At a national level, the FTE measure is expressed as a rate per 100,000 10–17-year-olds. The most recent measure for January 2025 to December 2025 is 78, a small decrease from 79 in the previous year. This is significantly lower than the national (155) and regional (126) although these have declined at a higher rate. There has been a small increase in First time Offenders, rising by 5% from 120 in 2024/25 to 126 in 2025/26.

Quarterly data (including four-quarter moving averages) indicates that FTE volumes remain low, with no significant spikes. The FTO moving average has remained relatively stable from Q3 2024/25 to the latest quarter.

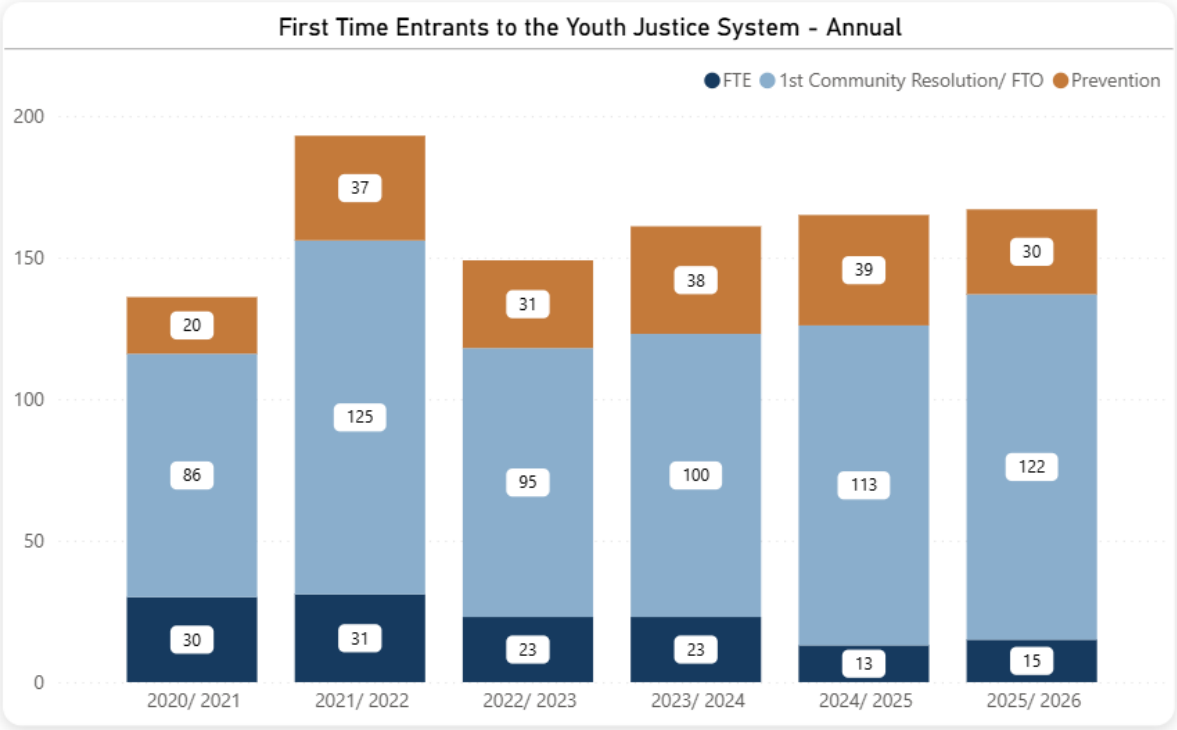
FTE (First Time Entrants)

- In 2025/26 there were 15 FTEs, a small increase from 13 in 2024/25.
- 73.3% (11 of 15) had previously received an informal outcome, compared to 46.2% (6 of 13) in 2024/25.
- 53.3% (8 of 15) received a court outcome, compared to 15.4% (2 of 13) in the previous year.
    - Out-of-court disposals: 7 (2 Youth Cautions, 5 Youth Conditional Cautions)
    - Court outcomes: 5 Referral Orders and 3 Conditional Discharges
- The peak age for becoming an FTE is 16 compared to 14 in the previous year.
- The number of girls increased from 1 to 3, which is more in line with previous reporting years
- 3 children are from a GRT/ethnic minority background, which is consistent with the previous period.
- Violence continues to be the most common offence type, accounting for 35.7 % of all FTE offences.
- Two children committed 6 sexual offences receiving a Youth Conditional Caution and a Referral Order. Motoring offences accounted for 6 offences committed by 2 children, both resulting in Conditional Discharges.

FTO (First Time Offenders)

- In 2025/26, there were 126 FTOs, an increase of 5% from 120 in the previous period.
- 27.8% (35) of children receiving a first outcome are girls compared to 26.7% (32) in 2024/25.
- The peak age for becoming a FTO is 15 (23%). This is representative of boys (23.1%) For girls, offending is more evenly distributed, with between 7 and 9 children in each age group between 13 and 15.
- The proportion of children from a GRT/ethnic minority background has declined from 17.5% (21 children) in 2024/25 to 11.1% (14 children) in the current period.
- Violence (42.7%), Criminal Damage (15.3%) and drugs (14.7%) are the most common offence types. Among girls, 60% of first offences relate to violence, compared to 36.4% for boys. This compares with 41.2% and 33.9% respectively in 2024/25.

First Time Entrant and First Time Offender Analysis:

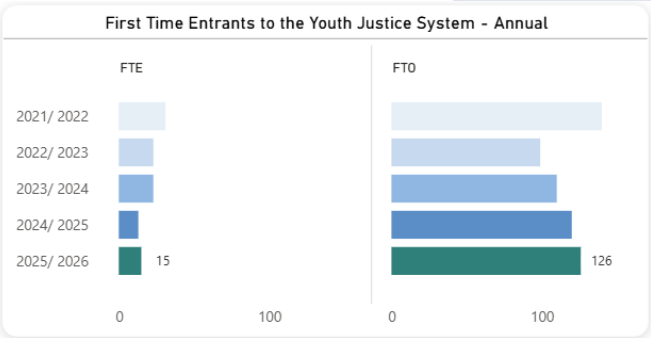


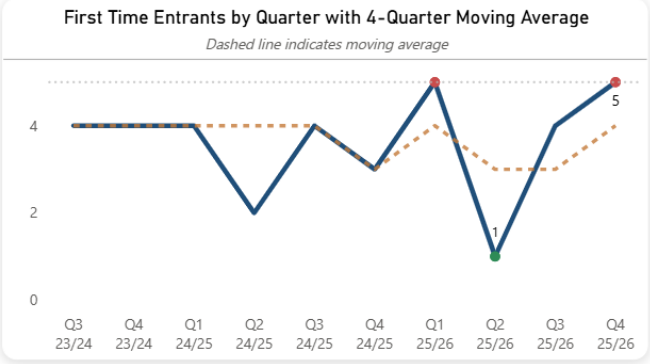
Definitions and coverage

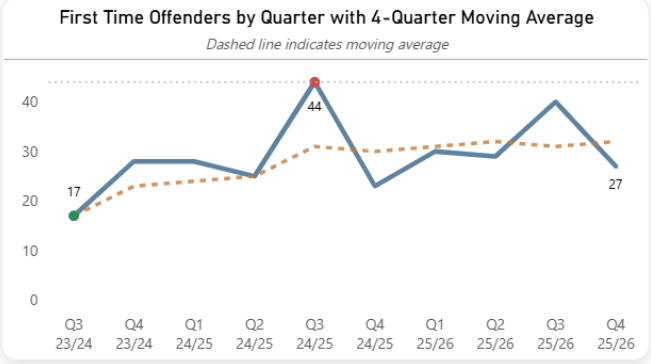
First Time Entrants (FTE)
Children who receive their **first substantive outcome** within the period.

First Time Offenders (FTO)
Children who receive a **first informal or substantive outcome** within the period.

Measure coverage
Counts the first informal outcome, caution or court sentence given to children aged **10–17 (inclusive)**, based on the **date of arrest** or **date of first court hearing**, depending on outcome type.



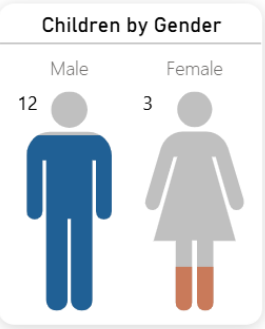




WEST BERKSHIRE YJST Youth Justice Support Team

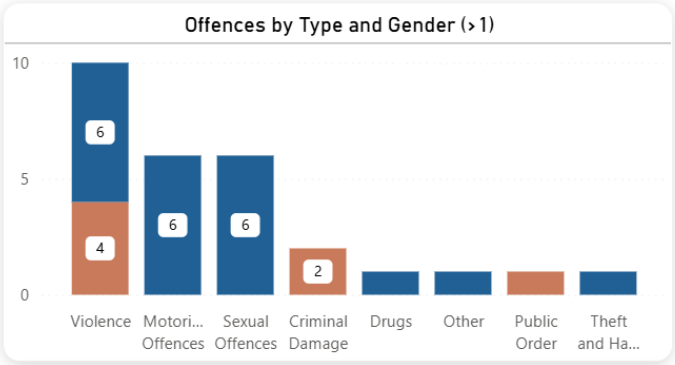
First Time Entrants Summary 2025:

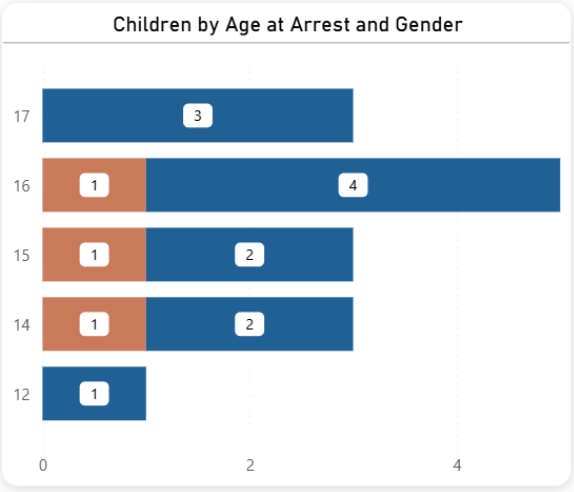
#Children	#Outcomes	Previous CR	#Offences
15	15	11	28

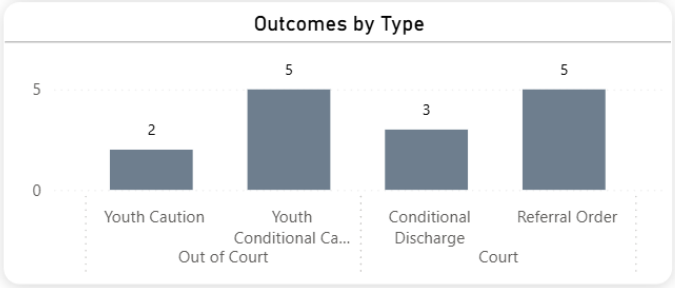


Ethnicity:

White: 10
BAME: 3

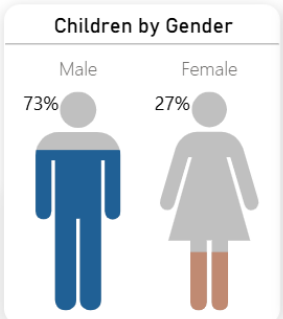




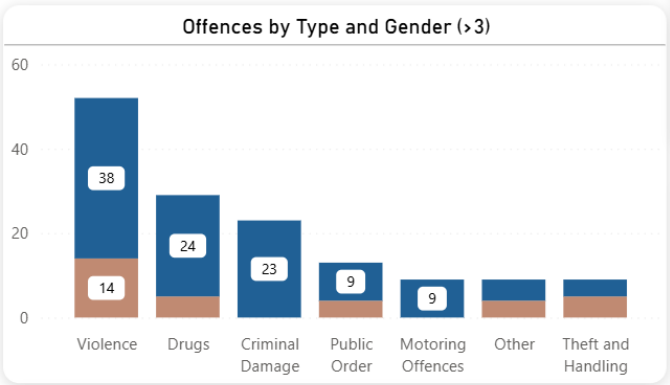


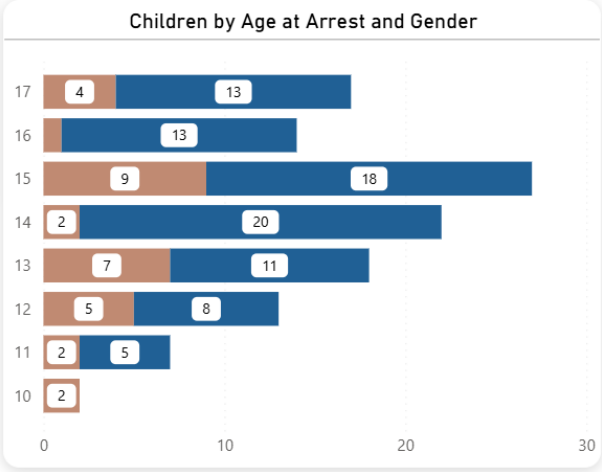
First Time Offenders Summary 2025:

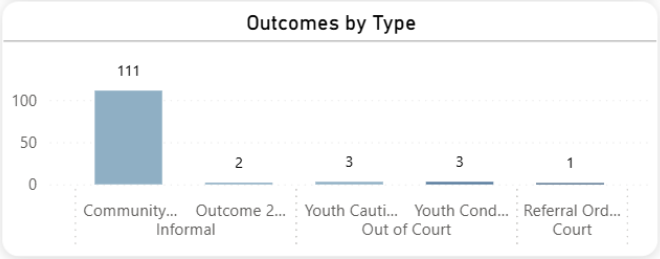
#Children	#Outcomes	#Offences
120	120	147



Ethnicity 5+1	#Children
White	106
Black or Black British	5
Asian or Asian British	4
Mixed	3
Other ethnic group	2







Reoffending

The Ministry of Justice publishes reoffending data at both local and national levels. The data is derived from Police National Computer (PNC) data and includes children in care from other local authorities who are placed within our area. A reduction in the number of First Time Entrants has led to a smaller reoffending cohort, which can result in greater year-on-year volatility in reported rates.

Reoffending is measured and published in two ways:

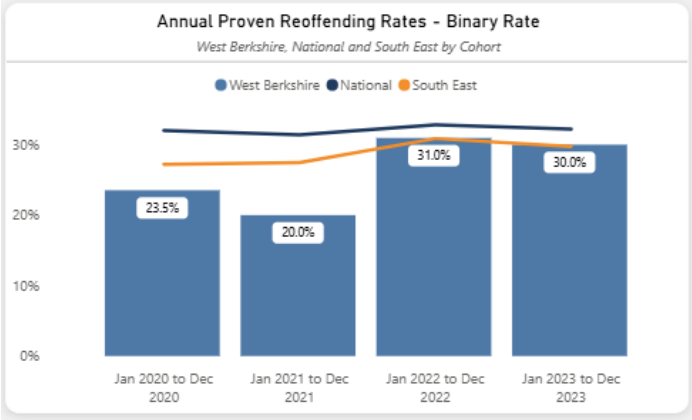
- **Binary rate**: the proportion of young people in the cohort who commit a further offence within 12 months.
- **Frequency rate:** the average number of reoffences committed by the cohort within 12 months.

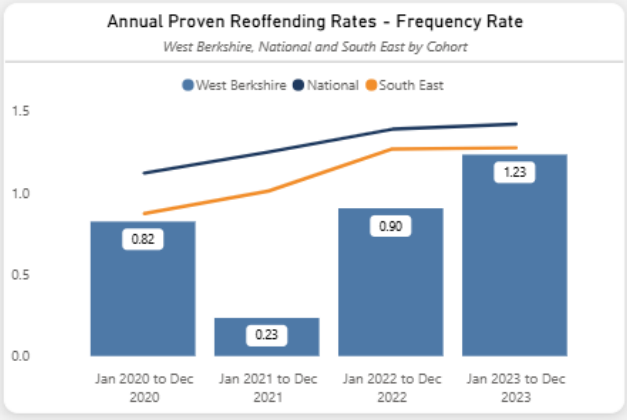
The annual measure is calculated using a weighted average, dividing the total number of reoffenders across four quarters by the total number of offenders in the same four-quarter period.

Reoffending Outturn

The binary reoffending rate decreased from 31.0% for the January 2022 to December 2022 cohort to 30.0% for the January 2023 to December 2023 cohort. This is lower than the national rate of 32.2% and broadly in line with the South East rate of 29.7%.

The frequency rate increased slightly in the January 2023 to December 2023 cohort, with reoffences per reoffender rising from 0.90 to 1.23. Despite this increase, the local figure remains below both the national rate of 1.42 and the South East rate of 1.28.





Prevention

The Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) continues to work collaboratively with partner agencies to prevent children from entering the youth justice system, with a strong emphasis on early intervention and proportionate responses to low-level concerns. One key mechanism is the use of Prevention letters issued by Thames Valley Police. These are triggered by behaviours such as anti-social or nuisance activity, or incidents that do not meet the evidential threshold for formal action but may, cumulatively, impact on communities. When identified, a Prevention letter is hand-delivered to parents, outlining concerns and advising that the YJST will make contact. A referral is simultaneously made to the YJST, where a worker is allocated to undertake a home visit and assess the need for support and intervention.

During the reporting period, 30 Prevention letters were issued. Of these, 10 children engaged with a prevention programme, while 34 parents accessed parenting support, demonstrating a positive level of family engagement and reinforcing the importance of working with parents and carers to address emerging behaviours at an early stage.

Prevention activity is further strengthened through partnership work with secondary schools and the Thames Valley Police safeguarding team via the Positive Intervention Programme (PiP). This programme targets children who have committed offences within a school setting but are not subject to formal criminal justice proceedings, or where behavioural concerns risk escalation, including potential exclusion. Children referred to PiP are allocated a worker, either from the Schools Officer role or the YJST, who delivers one-to-one interventions within the school environment to address behaviour and support continued engagement in education.

Between April 2025 and the end of the 2025/26 period, 14 children were referred to PiP, alongside a group session focused on sexually harmful behaviour and relevant legislation. Engagement levels varied, with two children not engaging and five partially engaging with the intervention. Two children went on to reoffend within three months of involvement. In relation to educational outcomes, one child was permanently excluded prior to intervention commencing; however, no further exclusions have occurred following PiP involvement. A small number of cases were unable to progress due to factors such as out-of-area transfer or school refusal.

While PiP continues to demonstrate value as a preventative approach, capacity constraints have impacted delivery during the year. As a result, further work is planned to strengthen this area, ensuring that early intervention within schools remains a key component of the partnership's broader prevention strategy.

Turnaround:

The Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) has been delivering the Turnaround programme since receiving Ministry of Justice funding in December 2022. Initially established as a three-year initiative, the programme provides a voluntary, early help offer based on assessment and intervention, focusing on children's individual needs and family context. Its aim is to de-escalate behaviour at the earliest opportunity and support children to move away from

pathways into the youth justice system. Due to its success at a national level, the programme has been extended for an additional year, albeit with reduced funding.

Since its introduction, Turnaround has enabled the YJST to engage children at a much earlier stage, including at the point of arrest where they may have been released under investigation or on conditional bail. It also provides a referral pathway from children's services in cases where police have attended an incident but taken no further formal action. This has strengthened the ability of the partnership to intervene proactively and provide timely, preventative support.

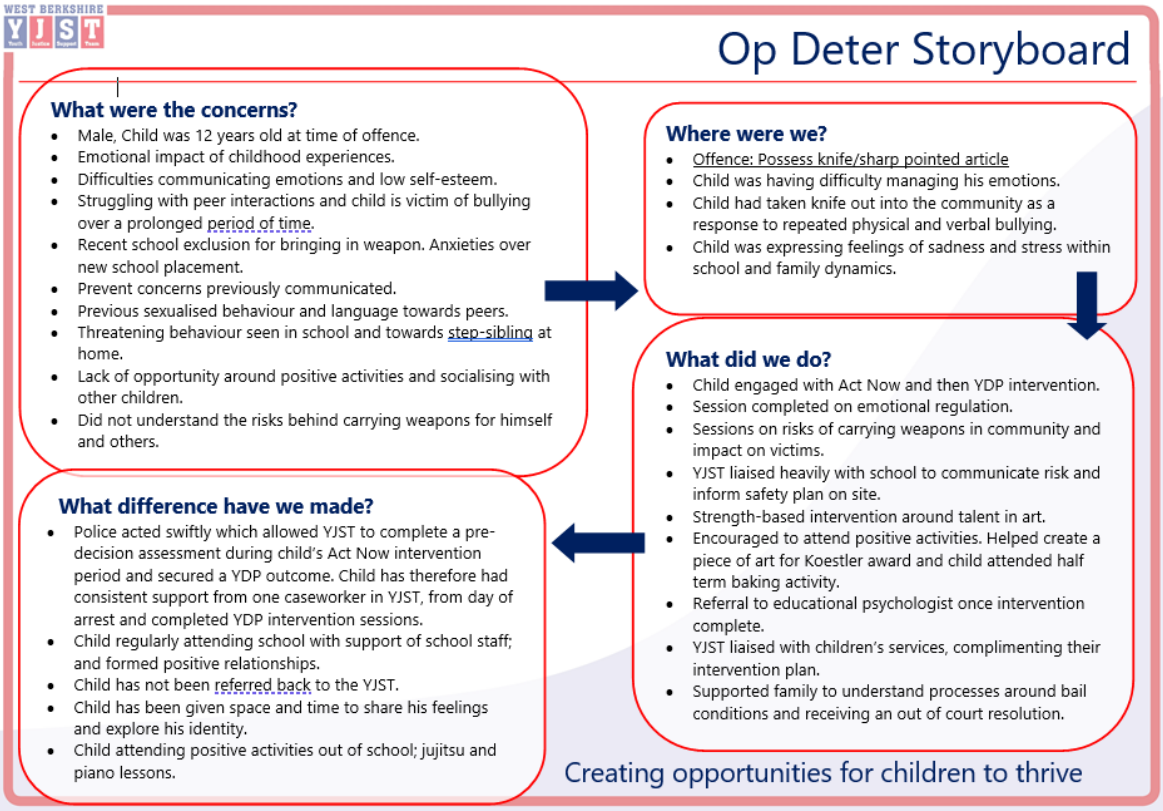
To date, 62 children have fully engaged with Turnaround interventions at this early stage. Outcomes indicate a positive impact, with only four children committing a further offence within 12 months of closure. This suggests that the programme is effective in supporting early desistance and reducing the likelihood of progression into further offending.

Operation Deter Youth:

Operation Deter Youth (formerly Act Now) was initially introduced as a one-year pilot, funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), to address serious youth violence across the Thames Valley. Following its success, the programme has secured continued funding for a further year, reflecting its positive impact and value as an early intervention model.

During 2025/26, the programme enabled the deployment of a dedicated Youth Worker to respond rapidly to children in police custody, with a target response time of within 90 minutes. This provision operated seven days a week, between 9am and 10pm, ensuring timely engagement at a critical point of contact. Over the course of the year, the service engaged with 68 children at the point of arrest, providing immediate support and facilitating early assessment and intervention.

Early engagement through Operation Deter Youth has demonstrated clear benefits in improving outcomes for children. By intervening at the earliest stage, the programme strengthens the opportunity to divert children away from further involvement in the criminal justice system. Evidence from case tracking, including individual case studies, highlights that this approach has supported positive outcomes, with some children successfully diverted through pathways such as the Youth Diversionary Programme (Outcome 22).



Diversion:

Diversion remains a key component of the partnership approach, ensuring that children are supported to avoid unnecessary entry into the formal criminal justice system wherever appropriate. Thames Valley Police utilise Community Resolutions as an informal disposal for low-level offending, typically issued by frontline officers. These are intended for children and young people with no previous formal disposals, with officers checking police systems to confirm eligibility. Where a child has previously received a Community Resolution, decision-making is escalated and determined jointly between the Thames Valley Police Youth Justice Unit and the YJST through the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP). Between April 2024 and March 2025, a total of 152 Community Resolutions were issued, reflecting continued use of informal outcomes to divert children away from formal processes.

In addition to Community Resolutions, Thames Valley Police and Youth Justice partners have been piloting the use of deferred cautions under Outcome code 22, delivered locally through the Youth Diversionary Programme (YDP). This 12-month pilot has enabled children to engage in structured, assessment-led interventions as an alternative to immediate formal prosecution, with all decisions overseen through the JDMP following YJST assessment and recommendation. During the year, 24 YDP outcomes were issued, successfully diverting these children from becoming First Time Entrants to the youth justice system. While the programme continues to operate, Youth Justice Services across the Thames Valley are awaiting the final evaluation report to determine its longer-term future and potential for wider implementation.

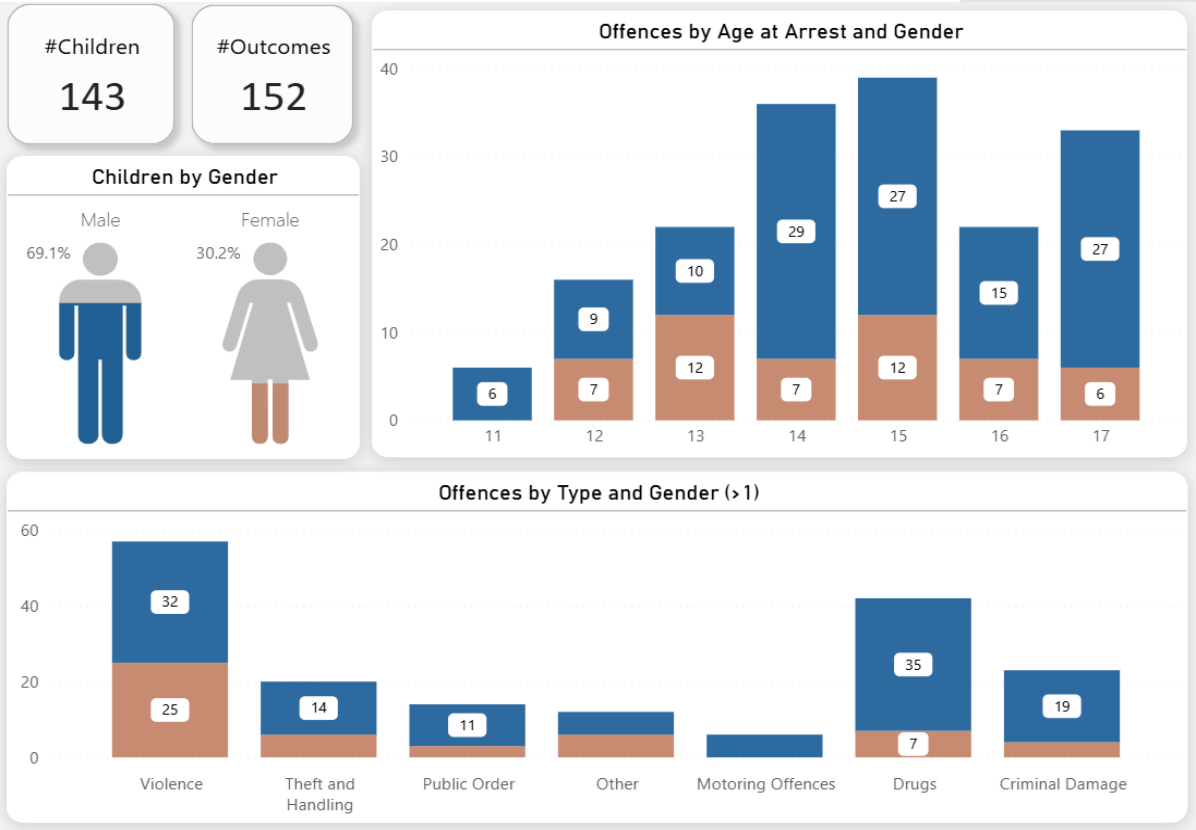
Robust governance and oversight of out-of-court decisions are maintained through regional scrutiny arrangements. The YJST Service Lead represents West Berkshire on the Thames Valley Out of Court Scrutiny Panel, which reviews the appropriateness and consistency of disposal decisions. The YJST Senior Social Worker acts as the local decision-maker and has presented West Berkshire cases to the panel, including in April 2026. All outcomes reviewed through this process were endorsed, providing assurance regarding the quality and consistency of decision-making within West Berkshire and reinforcing confidence in the effectiveness of the JDMP.

Focused Diversion

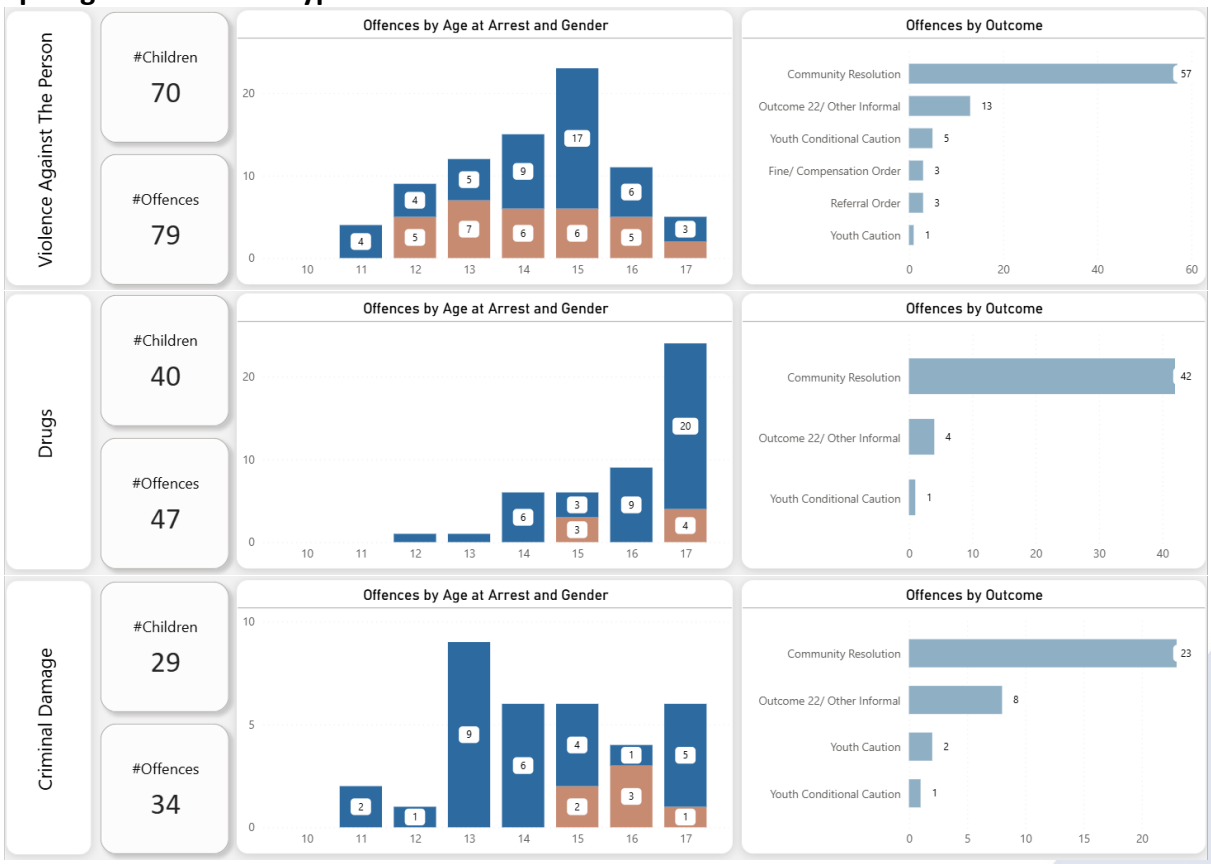
The Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) has been actively involved in the delivery and evaluation of the Focused Diversion Youth Navigator Mentorship programme. Findings from this study demonstrate that the model is both feasible and acceptable, successfully engaging children aged 10–15 who are at risk of school disengagement, exploitation or offending but who do not meet thresholds for specialist intervention. The evaluation highlights that unmet emotional and mental health needs are often key drivers of behavioural difficulties, and that early, relationship-based mentoring can play a significant role in improving school engagement and reducing the risk of involvement in crime.

Building on these positive findings, the programme has secured funding for a further year. During this period, the YJST will continue to embed and develop the model locally, with a particular focus on strengthening links with education. This will include enhancing the Positive Intervention Programme (PiP), further integrating early intervention support within school settings and ensuring that children at risk receive timely, coordinated and effective support.

Spotlight on Community Resolutions

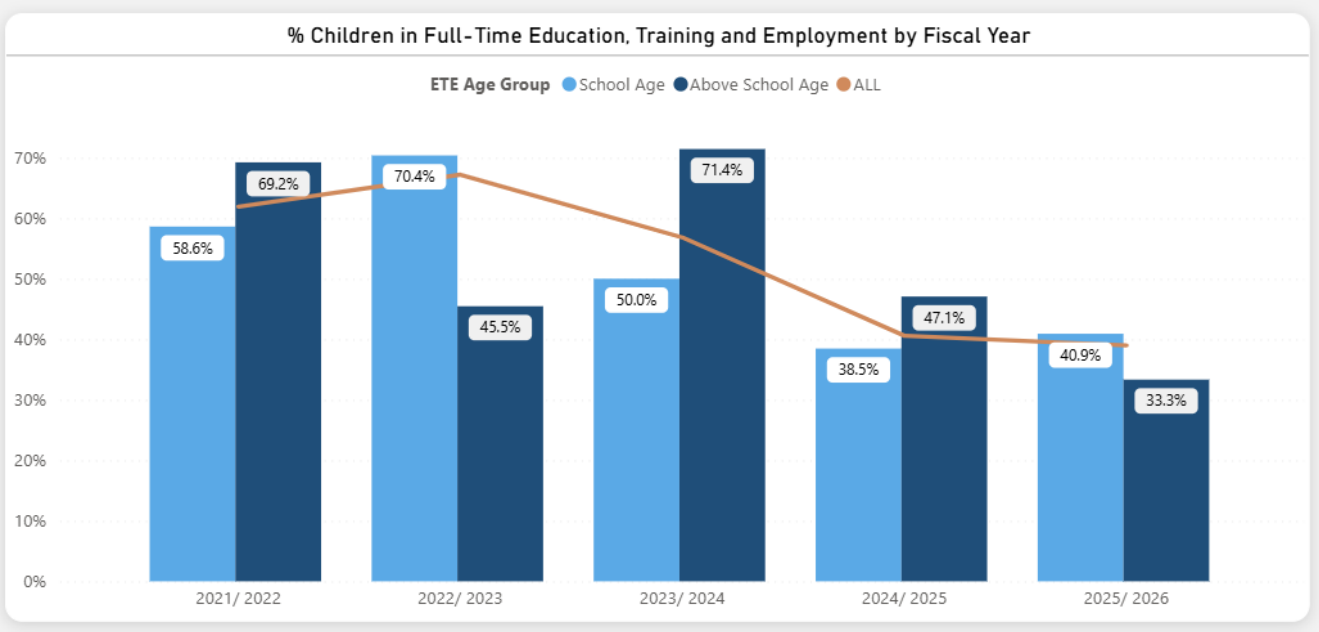


Spotlight on Offence Types:



Education:

Children in Full-Time Education, Training and Employment (All Outcomes):



33.3% of children completing a substantive intervention were in full time education or employment at the end of their order. This increases to 39% when including informal interventions.

The Prevention Intervention Programme (PIP) is now embedded within schools. There have been good links made with key leaders within schools to promote this approach and information is sent regularly to ensure schools remain aware of the support on offer. However, due to recent capacity issues there have been a reduction in promoting PiP with schools so there has been a reduction in service. The Newly appointed YJ Education Officer will be focusing on developing this offer with schools.

The YJST is a centre for AQAs, providing the opportunity for children to gain certificate of achievements where relevant and beneficial. This year Twenty-one children were awarded AQA awards.

Restorative Justice and Victims:

West Berkshire Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) is committed to delivering a high-quality, victim-focused service that aligns with HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) standards. These standards emphasise the importance of timely contact, clear communication, meaningful opportunities for engagement and ensuring that the victim's voice is central to assessment and intervention planning.

The Restorative Justice Officer plays a key role in achieving this by leading the delivery of restorative interventions and reparation activity. This ensures that victims are offered appropriate opportunities to engage in processes that promote accountability, reparation and emotional resolution. Restorative justice is fully embedded within the service and is a standing agenda item at fortnightly team meetings, supporting ongoing reflection, shared learning and the consistent application of victim-centred practice.

A structured two-stage approach to victim contact is in place to ensure timely and effective engagement. Initial contact is made by letter, which includes information about the service and the Victims' Code of Practice, followed by a telephone call approximately one week later. This approach has improved engagement, with increased response rates following the telephone follow-up.

The YJST provides a flexible and responsive range of support tailored to individual need. This includes facilitating victim impact statements to inform work with children who have caused harm, offering letters of explanation, and enabling participation in shuttle mediation or face-to-face restorative meetings where appropriate. These processes are carefully prepared and managed to ensure that participation is safe and constructive. For victims under 18, additional one-to-one interventions are available, focusing on protective behaviours and personal safety. Throughout all stages of involvement, victims receive regular updates to ensure they remain informed and supported. Upon case closure, victims are provided with information about local support services to ensure continuity of care, alongside a closing letter and feedback form to capture their experience and inform service development.

Quality assurance is maintained through a robust programme of audit activity. In addition to routine case audits, a dedicated victim-focused audit was undertaken in February 2026. This reviewed 16 cases drawn from 144 YOT1s where a victim had been identified between January 2025 and January 2026. Of these, 52 victims consented to contact, and all were approached by the Restorative Justice Officer. Seventeen victims engaged with the service. The audit examined ten cases where victims received support and six cases where victims initially consented but later disengaged, providing valuable insight into engagement and practice.

To further strengthen quality and consistency, a monthly victim audit process has been introduced, with two assessments reviewed to ensure that victim-related information is accurately recorded and that the victim's voice, impact and opportunities for restorative engagement are clearly reflected within assessments.

An important aspect of delivery is the contribution of trained volunteers. The Restorative Justice Officer coordinates, trains and supports a cohort of nine volunteers who play an active role in service delivery, including participation in Referral Order panels. This is supported through quarterly volunteer evenings, providing opportunities for training, service updates and reflective discussion. This structured approach supports the sustainability and development of restorative practice, while ensuring high-quality outcomes for both victims and children.

Referral Orders:

Referral Orders in West Berkshire are delivered through a well-established volunteer model, with trained community volunteers chairing panels in a restorative and child-focused manner. The YJST currently benefits from a stable cohort of nine experienced volunteers, all of whom have contributed to this work over a number of years, bringing consistency, knowledge and strong community engagement to the process.

In line with a Child First approach, panels are designed to actively involve the child, ensuring their voice is central to discussions. There is a clear emphasis on recognising strengths, encouraging participation and supporting children to take meaningful ownership of their actions and future plans when agreeing their Referral Order contract. This approach promotes accountability while also supporting positive identity development and engagement.

Total number of RO starting April 2025				
Initial Panels	Review	Breach	Extension	Final
6	4	0	0	2

Following each panel, feedback is routinely gathered from both panel members and the child. This reflective process enables the service to continuously review and improve practice, informing ongoing volunteer development and enhancing the quality of delivery. It also ensures that the experience for children and their families remains responsive, constructive and focused on achieving positive outcomes.

Feedback from children –

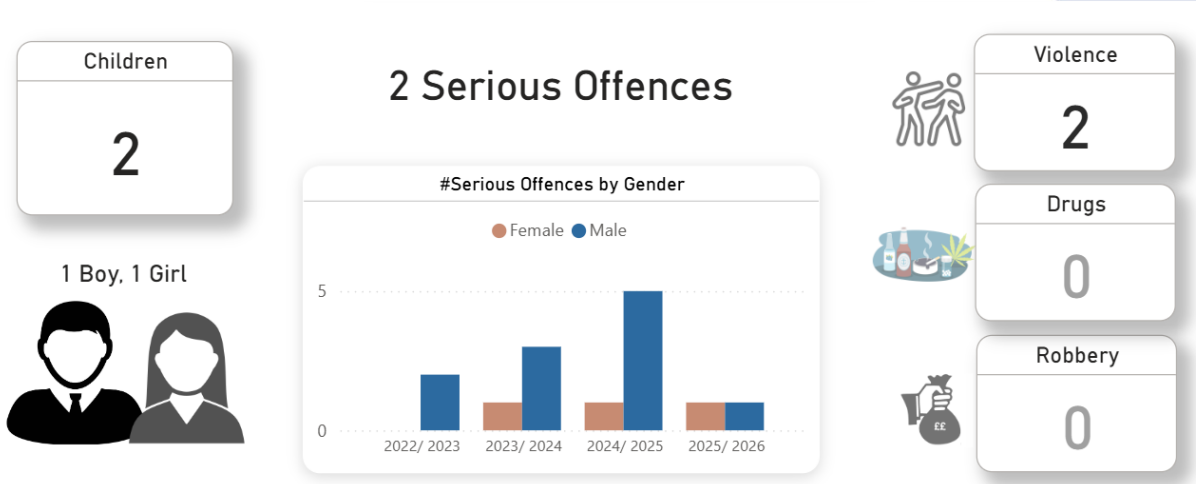
- The panel members were friendly / made me feel more comfortable
- They listened to me
- They didn't ask too many questions – which was better for me
- I got the opportunity to talk about what happened
- I didn't have to go into too much detail – which was good.

Feedback from Panel members –

- We have plenty of time in the premeeting – so can ask the case worker questions
- The red folder helps us to know what support is available for the young people
- The recent GRT training really helped us to understand the young person's needs
- The young person engaged well – mum was supportive

Serious Youth Violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding:

It is important to recognise that the national KPI measure for serious youth violence differs from the Thames Valley Police locally agreed definition and data collection approach, and therefore comparisons should be interpreted with caution. Within West Berkshire, the overall incidence of serious youth violence remains low. During 2025/26, two children were responsible for two violent offences, both resulting in community outcomes. This represents a reduction from 2024/25; however, given the small cohort size, figures are likely to fluctuate year on year.



Outcome Type by Gender

Outcome for Reporting	Female	Male	Total
Deferred Prosecution Outcome 22	0	1	1
Youth Caution	1	0	1
Total	**1**	**1**	**2**

Serious Offences by Fiscal Year

FY	Serious Violence	All Offences	% All Offences
2020/ 2021	4	216	1.9%
2021/ 2022	0	272	0.0%
2022/ 2023	2	215	0.9%
2023/ 2024	4	224	1.8%
2024/ 2025	6	246	2.4%
2025/ 2026	2	248	0.8%

During the same period, one child was sentenced for serious sexual offending and received a Community Order. In response to the level of risk and need identified, Children's Services secured a specialist long-term therapeutic placement to support rehabilitation and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. This child is managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Level 1, Category 1, ensuring appropriate multi-agency oversight.

Assessment and risk management are central to the YJST's approach. AssetPlus/PDAT is used to assess both the risk that children present to others and their own vulnerability. Managing and reducing risk to others is a core focus of partnership work, with all children assessed as presenting high or very high safety concerns reviewed through monthly multi-agency case planning forums, chaired by the Operational Manager. This ensures coordinated oversight, effective information sharing and consistent risk management across agencies.

The Safety and Wellbeing element of AssetPlus/PDAT also assesses vulnerability, including exposure to sexual and criminal exploitation. Where concerns are identified, a screening tool is completed and submitted to the Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC) via the Operational Manager, enabling a timely and coordinated safeguarding response.

The YJST complies with the mandatory requirement to report serious incidents in line with Youth Justice Board criteria. Following a serious incident notification during 2025/26, consideration was given to undertaking a critical learning review. As the child involved was not previously known to the service, it was determined that a local review was not required.

The Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) is committed to playing an active and integral role in delivering the Serious Violence Duty, working collaboratively across the partnership to prevent and respond to harm. The team is an active member of the Serious Violence Reduction Steering Group and works closely with the Community Safety Partnership to implement local requirements. Strong operational links are maintained with Thames Valley Police and wider partners through regular engagement in key forums, including the Local Command Unit (LCU) Knife Crime Meeting and the Tactical Partnership for Serious Organised Crime.

This partnership approach is reinforced through consistent participation in a wide range of multi-agency meetings. The Operational Manager attends EMRAC, Tactical Coordination Group (TTCG) meetings, Mini-MAPS (anti-social behaviour), LCU Knife Crime forums and Serious Organised Crime meetings. This ensures effective intelligence sharing across agencies and enables the YJST to proactively direct resources towards emerging risks and issues impacting community safety. At an operational level, the YJ Police Officer plays a key role in monitoring real-time information, reviewing alert system notifications for all open YJST cases alongside daily LCU briefings, and escalating concerns promptly to the Operational Manager to ensure timely and coordinated responses.

Safeguarding and the identification of exploitation risks remain central to the team's practice. The Operational Manager ensures that all staff receive regular and up-to-date training in

safeguarding, child exploitation, Prevent and County Lines, maintaining a high level of professional awareness and capability. The Service Lead co-chairs the Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC), with the Operational Manager also attending to support effective information sharing for children known to the YJST. In addition, the team contributes to the multi-agency Channel Panel where required. Over the past year, the YJST has maintained full engagement with statutory safeguarding processes, attending all relevant Child Protection Initial and Review Conferences to ensure that children's risks are appropriately identified, managed and reviewed within a multi-agency framework.

Detention in Police Custody:

Detention arrangements for children in police custody are subject to robust multi-agency oversight across Thames Valley. A bi-monthly Children in Custody meeting, facilitated by Thames Valley Police and chaired by the Chief Inspector responsible for custody suites, brings together partners including Youth Justice Services, Emergency Duty Services, Children's Social Care, information officers and the Appropriate Adult coordinator. This forum reviews all cases involving children entering custody, including decisions relating to detention, remand or release, with a focus on identifying trends, ensuring consistency and promoting good practice. Particular attention is given to compliance with Section 38(6) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, alongside oversight of the availability and effectiveness of Appropriate Adult provision across the region.

At a local level, West Berkshire YJST maintains a duty system of trained staff to provide Appropriate Adult support during office hours, with additional coverage provided by the Emergency Duty Team outside of these times. The Service Lead and seconded Police Officer also play a key role in workforce development, delivering training to both internal staff and external providers, including independent children's homes, to ensure a consistent understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and best practice when supporting children in custody. Refresher training for Appropriate Adults has been delivered over the past year, and local guidance is reviewed and updated every three years, or sooner where there are changes in policy, to ensure practice remains current and compliant.

Use of custody and constructive resettlement (including remand):

The data published by the Youth Justice Board uses a custody rate per 1,000 10–17-year-olds in West Berkshire. With no custodial sentences given during the period, the outturn for Jan 2025 – Dec 2025 is 0. This compares to a regional rate of 0.03 and a national rate of 0.09, both decreasing from the previous period.

Custodial sentences	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

The remand grant allocation for 2025/26 was £0. Costs per bednight for the same period are as follows:

Secure Children's Homes – £968
Secure Training Centres – £941
Young Offender Institutions - £353
Secure School - £859

One child was remanded to a Secure Training Centre for 18 nights for sexual offences. The child was moved to specialist Residential Care unit and received a 12-month Referral Order alongside a Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

A further child was remanded to Local Authority Accommodation with Conditions. The child received a 12-month Referral Order.

Working with families:

Engagement with parents and carers is a central element of the Youth Justice Support Team's (YJST) approach. All case-holding practitioners make early contact with parents, either during police custody visits or through home visits, ensuring that support is offered from the outset. During these initial interactions, parents are provided with information, guidance and reassurance to help them better understand how to support their child and respond to emerging behaviours.

All parents are offered access to targeted parenting support, primarily through the "Who's in Charge" (WIC) eight-week programme, which is designed to strengthen parenting skills, improve relationships and build confidence in managing challenging behaviour. In addition to group provision, there are opportunities for parents to receive tailored one-to-one support from parenting workers where this is more appropriate to their needs.

During 2025/26, 34 parents engaged with the WIC programme, with a further two parents receiving individual support. This reflects a strong level of engagement and demonstrates the value placed on working alongside families to achieve sustainable outcomes for children.

WEST BERKSHIRE YJST Youth Justice Support Team

Action Plan for 2026-27

The team's priorities are outlined in the following action plan.

Education and Inclusion:

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Reduce the numbers of children suspended from school and improve re-engagement pathways	• Develop a clear route for Focused Diversion and Positive intervention Programme (PIP) • Create a referral form and processes for the service • Promote the new service with school leaders • Review process and amend • Report on service to YJ Management Board	YJ Education Officer and Operational Manager YJ Education Officer	June 2026 June 2026 November 2026 April 26
Children to have improved access to education, training or employment and action taken for those children who are unable to access full time provision	• Clear KPI recording of all children open to YJST • Overview of the ETE figures at the YJST/Education meeting • Partnership plan/actions to meet individual children's needs progressed	YJ Education Officer YJ Education Officer YJST/ETE group	monthly data cleaning Termly Termly
All children to receive recognition for their achievements	• Transfer AQA Award assessor to new YJ Education Officer • Monthly reviews and submission of children's evidence	Operational Manager YJ Education Officer	June 2026 Monthly
Children's attendance improves and the number of children on partial timetables reduces.	• Strengthen the multi-agency education panel to address persistent absence, educational packages and inclusion among YJST involved children	YJ Education Officer / Operational Manager / Service Lead Inclusion	Termly
Children with SEND are identified early and receive appropriate, tailored support to avoid	• Utilise routine screening for SEND at the earliest contact point and strengthen joint working with education, health, and SEND services to ensure timely assessments and provision	SEND reform workstream	September 2026

Barriers to participation in post school education are reduced, leading to improved engagement and attendance in post 16 education	• Develop and support multi-agency plans to address individual barriers and provide targeted support to sustain access, engagement and retention at post 16 education/training options	Post 16 advisor / YJ Education Officer	Quarterly
Increase attendance at school thus reducing the likelihood of children offending	• Support the Education Attendance working group in seeking to increase attendance of severely absent pupils	Education Attendance working Group	Quarterly

Prevention and Diversion:

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
The YJST to present pre-decision assessments that are accurate and consistent to improve outcomes for children	• Review and update the pre-decision assessment form. • Deliver a workshop with all pre-decision authors	Senior Social Worker	July 2026 Sept 2026
A reduction in the number of children coming to the attention of the police for offending at school.	• Increase school-based interventions through the Positive Intervention Programme (PIP) for children in a school setting	YJ Education Officer / YJ Police Officer	October 2026
Support the reduction in criminalisation of children by reducing first time entrants	• Maintain and strengthen the Joint Decision-Making Panels (JDMP) using the gravity matrix to ensure fair and consistent out-of-court decisions through embedding new guidance and facilitating practice observation and reflection.	Operational Manager/ Senior Social Worker	December 2026
Children are prevented from entering the criminal justice system	• Enhance the Focused Diversion mentoring opportunities for children in school who can be prevented from entering the criminal justice system	YJ Youth Worker	October 2026
Anti-social behaviour and nuisance behaviour is reduced in West Berkshire	• Prevention letters are promoted to frontline TVP police officers	YJ Police Officer	Quarterly

	• Support for staff to increase voluntary engagement in prevention opportunities	Operational Manager	November 2026

Knife Possession and Serious Violence:

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty and reduce serious violence among children	• Collaborate with the BCT Team and OPCC in the development of Prevention partnership and Young Futures Prevention Hub	BCT Team, YJ Managers and SV Coordinator	January 2027
Ensure that the assessment and management of risk is of high quality and protects the public	• Undertake an audit addressing the assessment and management of risk, reporting findings to the YJST Management Group	Operational Manager	December 2026
YJST is compliant with the knife crime guidance 2026	• Police notification to YJST within 1 working day • YJST deliver Op Deter Program • First home visit within - 48 hours delivered through Op Deter processes • Intervention begins within four weeks delivered through Op Deter processes • Mandatory intervention plans for all knife offences • JDMP to ensure that only appropriate outcomes are used	TVP YJ Youth Worker YJST Operational Manager	May 2026
Strengthen practice and understanding of risk management within the Youth Justice Service context	• Review the recommendations of the Southport review • Incorporate learning from the Southport enquiry and other relevant case reviews into risk management practice	Operational Manager/ Probation Link Worker	July 2026 September 2026

Victims and Restorative Justice:

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Victims of Youth Crime will receive excellent services	• Benchmark YJST victim work against HMIP inspection findings and report to the management meetings	ATM	Throughout 2026/2027
Victim of crime work is of the highest quality	• Undertake and audit of restorative justice practices to identify quality and victim satisfaction	ATM/RJO	January 2026
Increased number of YOT1 notifications with completed victim consent	• Provide briefing to TVP front line officers highlighting the importance of YOT1 victim completion • Monitor the YOT1 victim completion rates across Thames Valley	LCJB Victim and Witness subgroup	Termly
The views, needs and concerns of victims of crime are appropriately captured in PDAT assessments	• Undertake a Dip Audit on victim elements of PDAT assessments to address any quality issues.	Victim Worker	February 2027

Reducing reoffending - enhancing life choices

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Interventions with children are effective and make a difference.	• Two intervention sharing workshops • Refresh intervention resource list • match resources against the YEF toolkit and report the impact	ATM	July 2026 and January 2027 August 2026 and February 2027 March 2027
Reduced time from offence to disposal thus increasing engagement and capacity for positive change	• Support the work of the LCJB Childrens group to address the timeliness issue across the system • Support the work of TVP in piloting enhanced	LCJB Childrens Group TVP YJ Unit	Termly

	investigation processes and dashboards		
Interventions with children are effective and make a difference.	• Support YJ staff to use evaluated evidence based practice through the YEF toolkit, YJB Resources Hub and What Works Centre.	Operational Manager & ATM	July 2026
Bespoke offence specific interventions are effective at changing behaviour	• Monitor and evaluate the use the Virtual Reality Headsets when addressing specific behaviours.	SYV Coordinator	March 2027
Turnaround scheme is effective at reducing reoffending	• YJ Information Officer to be involved in the national impact evaluation of Turnaround	Information officer and MOJ	Quarterly
YJS requirement for the provision of Appropriate Adults is suitable and meets high standards	• Monitor and report on the use of Appropriate Adults and any use of PACE 1984 Section 38(6) transfers	Children in Custody meeting / Service Lead	Quarterly

Safeguarding, vulnerabilities and well being

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
All children to have access and information about leisure activities and support services to increase wellbeing.	• Update the positive activities booklet and promote those activities among young people.	YJST Case managers	Termly
Ensure that the assessment and management of safety and wellbeing is of high quality and protects the public	• Undertake an audit addressing the assessment and management of safety and wellbeing, reporting findings to the YJST Management Board	Operational Manager	December 2026
Children and parents are aware of risks associated with criminal and sexual exploitation and where help is available	• Promote the 'Risking it all' performances in schools and for parents, enhancing knowledge and pathways for support	Wellbeing coordinator in schools	February 2027
Children are screened for any concerns of exploitation or grooming	• Maintain the professional development of staff regarding child exploitation, use of the	Operational Manager	October 2026 / February 2027

	indicator tool and EMRAC pathways through briefings		

Health

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
Communication passports are used effectively to support children's engagement and participation	• Continue to embed and evaluate the use of communication passports and tools for children with speech and language needs	Speech and Language Therapist	September 2026
Health needs of children are identified and responded to in a timely and clinically informed manner	• Health and Justice staff to operate a clinic model enabling YJST staff to highlight children who need assessment and intervention from a health worker	Health and Justice Staff	Weekly
Children are equipped to respond when first aid is required	• Deliver basic First Aid training as a first responder to children	YJST Nurse/ YJ Police Officer	Termly
YJST to work with children in a trauma informed manner	• Staff refresher training on the Trauma Recovery Model to be delivered	Mental Health Worker	January 2027

Strengths based approach

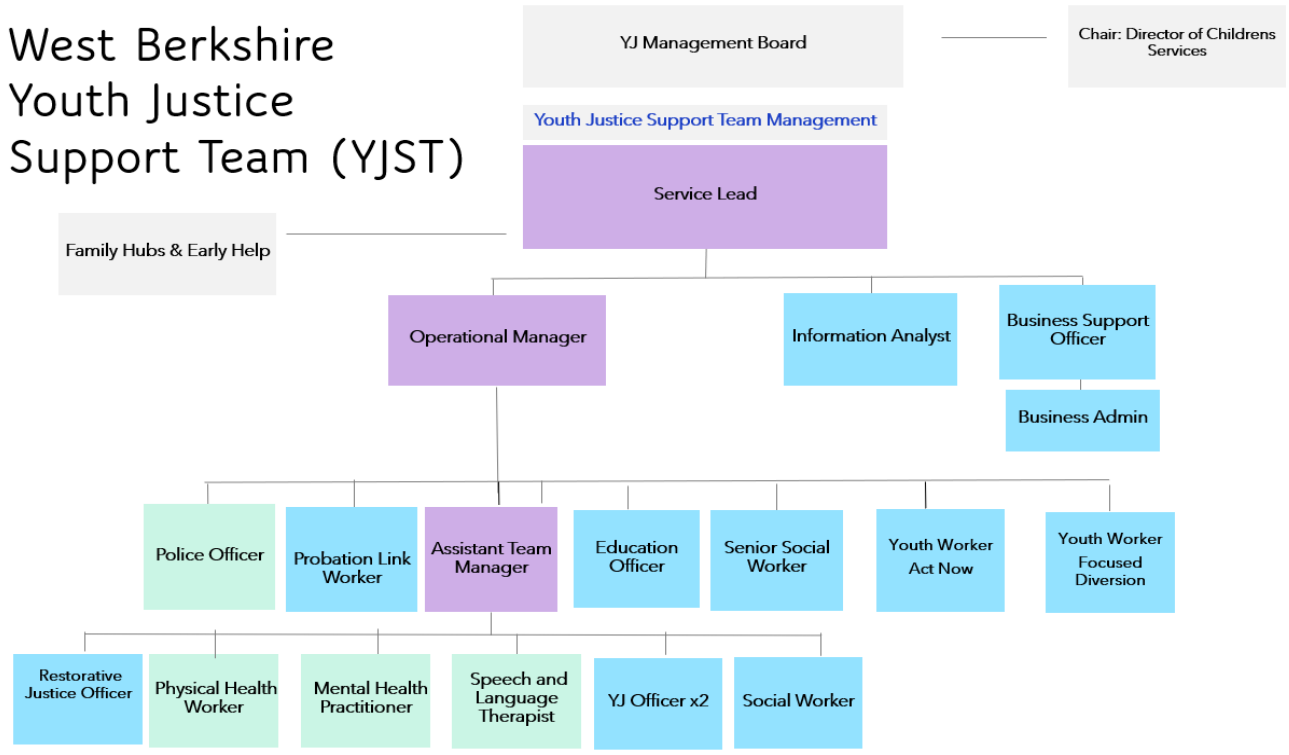
Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
The YJST will have specific champion and specialist roles to strengthen support and services to Children, parents and victims	• Review and refresh to role descriptions • Every team member has the opportunity to promote/champion an	ATM	October 2026 November 2026

	area of practice within the team meetings		
Parents to receive parenting guidance and support from the initial contact with YJST	• Review parenting information and resources • Deliver a workshop with all practitioners' intervening with families to increase their skills	Senior Social Worker	August 2026 October 2026
YJST practice is continually developing and improving	• Review and benchmark YJST Practice against recently published research and thematic HMIP inspection findings	YJST Managers	Quarterly
YJST practice is continually developing and improving through the use of feedback	• Annual feedback report to the Management Group to consider changes to service provision.	Service Lead	January 2027
Parents are supported and equipped to parent their children	• Expand access to parenting programmes like "Who's in Charge", STOP parenting through promotion on the digital platform	Parenting coordinator / Senior Social worker	September 2026

Responding to cohort – diversity and disproportionality

Outcome sought	Action	By Whom	By When
YJST staff are culturally competent when working with children from diverse communities	• Deliver culturally competent briefings for staff to better support children from GRT and ethnic minority backgrounds	Diversity Champion/ Operational Manager	November 2026
YJST delivers targeted work in light of the cohort of children that are open.	• Conduct regular disproportionality monitoring to identify over-represented groups and inform targeted interventions	Information Officer	Quarterly
Understand the experiences and views of children in West Berkshire including issues of crime and safety	• Undertake the a Youth Survey among secondary schools to elicit their views	Health and Wellbeing coordinator in schools and Service Lead	February 2027

Appendix One:



The YJST consists of 14 female staff and 5 male staff. 18 White British, 1 Black Caribbean, 2 members of staff have disabilities.

Appendix two

Acronyms

AIM3 – Assessment model for harmful sexual behaviour
APIS – Assessment, Planning, Intervention and Supervision
ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour
ASSET Plus – Youth Justice Assessment Tool
CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
EMRAC – Exploitation, Missing Risk Assessment Conference
ETE – Education, Training and Employment
FTE – First Time Entrant
FTO – First Time Offender
GRT – Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
HMIP – HM Inspectorate of Probation
HRU – Harm Reduction Unit
JDMP – Joint Decision-Making Panel
KPI / KPIs – Key Performance Indicator(s)
LCJB – Local Criminal Justice Board
LCU – Local Command Unit
MAPPA – Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MiniMAPS – Multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour and problem-solving meeting
MOJ – Ministry of Justice
OOCR – Out of Court Resolution
OPCC – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PACE – Police and Criminal Evidence Act
PDAT – Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool
PiP / PIP – Positive Intervention Programme
PNC – Police National Computer
SaLT – Speech and Language Therapist
SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SLC – Speech, Language and Communication
TTCG – Tactical Coordination Group
TVP – Thames Valley Police
WIC – "Who's in Charge" parenting programme
YDP – Youth Diversionary Programme
YEF – Youth Endowment Fund
YJ – Youth Justice
YJS – Youth Justice Service
YJST – Youth Justice Support Team
YJB – Youth Justice Board
YOT1 – Youth Offending notification document