# Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027

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| **Committee considering report:** | Council |
| **Date of Committee:** | 15 October 2026 |
| **Portfolio Member:** | Councillor Heather Codling |
| **Report Author:** | Dave Wraight |
| **Forward Plan Ref:** | CCIL |

## 1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide Council with oversight of the annual Youth Justice Plan for 2026/2027 which is submitted to the Youth Justice Board. The Youth Justice Support Team is a statutory service with contributions from partners including Police, Probation and Health, as such the plan has been formed in conjunction with those partners and been through a consultation process with the Youth Justice Management Board.

## 2 Recommendation

2.1 Council is requested to agree and formally endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
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| **Financial:** | The Youth Justice Support Team has funding from a number of sources including the Local Authority (£477,872), Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (£81,443), Probation (£44,040), Youth Justice Board (£194,346) and payments in kind through seconded staff from Police (£63,146) and Health (£75,739). |
| **Human Resource:** | The Youth Justice Support Team contains employees of the Local Authority alongside seconded staff from other agencies all co-located forming a multi-agency team to provide youth justice services as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, a staffing chart is found in the appendices of the Youth Justice Plan. |
| **Legal:** | Section 40 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides a duty on the local authority after consultation with relevant person and |

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| | bodies to formulate and implement a plan setting out how youth justice services are to be provided and funding and how the youth offending teams are to be composed and funded, how they operate and what functions they are to carry out. In addition, there is statutory guidance Youth Justice Plans: guidance for Youth Justice services dated March 2026. This sets out the minimum information required in our plan. |
| **Risk Management:** | The Youth Justice Support Team have responsibilities to supervise and manage children who pose a risk of causing serious harm and risk of reoffending in the community. The team work in partnership with Thames Valley Police and other partners to manage and mitigate those risks utilising risk management frameworks including Risk Management Forum and MAPPA. |
| **Property:** | The Youth Justice Support Team is based at Merchant House. |
| **Policy:** | The Youth Justice Plan outline is determined by the Youth Justice Board in their guidance to provide national consistency. |

| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
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| **Equalities Impact:** | | | | |
| **A** Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | X | | | The Youth Justice Plan explores disproportionality in the youth justice system and proposes measures that seek to monitor and address those areas of over representation. |
| **B** Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | X | | | The Youth Justice Plan explores disproportionality in the youth justice system and proposes measures that seek to monitor and address those areas of over representation. |
| **Environmental Impact:** | | X | | No specific environmental impact |
| | | | | |
| **Health Impact:** | X | | | The seconded health staff provide a service to children who often do not access health care, therefore this approach enhances their access to health services and improved health outcomes |
| **ICT Impact:** | | X | | No specific ICT impact |
| **Digital Services Impact:** | | X | | No specific Digital Services Impact |
| **Council Strategy Priorities:** | X | | | The Youth Justice plan supports two of the Councils strategic priorities: A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all and Thriving communities with a strong local voice. |

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| **Core Business:** | X | | | The Youth Justice Plan interfaces with a number of council focuses as contained in the Prevention Approach, Building Communities Together plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan and Serious Violence Plan |
| **Data Impact:** | | X | | No specific data impact |

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| **Consultation and Engagement:** | The Youth Justice Plan has been created in consultation with children, young people and parents who use Youth Justice services. Staff and volunteers at the YJST have contributed to the plan. The Youth Justice Management Board have been involved I shaping the priorities – the partnership includes the statutory partners Police, Health, Probation and others including the voluntary sector. |

## 4 Executive Summary

4.1 Local authority partnerships have a statutory duty to submit a youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, in consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in the area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out. The plan should address how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.

4.2 The Youth Justice Plan is attached as Appendix B. The plan has been produced in consultation with a wide number of stakeholders and with the partnership oversight groups Youth Justice Management Board. It has been formulated using the Youth Justice Board guidance 2026/2027 to ensure compliance.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

5.1 The Annual Youth Justice Plan serves as a roadmap, guiding the efforts of the partnership to support children, young people and their parents to maximise their life chances away from the criminal justice system. The Youth Justice partnership have a strong track record of working collaboratively to address issues in the community and create opportunities for children and young people to thrive.

### Background

5.2 West Berkshire's Youth Justice Support Team (YJST) has reported another year of strong performance, innovation and partnership working, delivering positive outcomes for children, families, victims and communities while maintaining some of the lowest

levels of youth offending and custody in the region. The latest annual Youth Justice Plan highlights a service that continues to place children and families at the heart of its work, successfully preventing many young people from entering the formal justice system and supporting those who do to build safer, more positive futures.

5.3 The achievements outlined in this year's plan are a reflection of the dedication, skill and commitment of the staff, volunteers and partners across education, health, police, probation, social care and the voluntary sector. West Berkshire YJST continues to demonstrate that early intervention, strong relationships and a Child First approach can deliver real and lasting change for children, families and communities.

5.4 West Berkshire continues to maintain exceptionally low levels of children entering the formal youth justice system. The First Time Entrant rate remains significantly below both national and regional averages, demonstrating the success of prevention and diversionary initiatives designed to intervene early and avoid unnecessary criminalisation of children. The service has also maintained excellent outcomes in relation to custody, with no custodial sentences imposed during the reporting period. This achievement reflects the partnership's commitment to delivering effective community-based interventions and supporting children to remain connected to their families, education and communities wherever possible. Importantly, local reoffending rates remain below national figures, with fewer children going on to commit further offences and those who do generally committing fewer offences than seen nationally.

5.5 A key success of the past year has been the expansion of prevention and diversion programmes that intervene before offending behaviour becomes entrenched. The Ministry of Justice funded Turnaround programme has supported children at an earlier stage of need, with 62 children fully engaging in interventions. Of those supported, only four subsequently committed a further offence within twelve months of programme completion, demonstrating the effectiveness of early help and preventative support. Similarly, Operation Deter Youth enabled rapid engagement with 68 children following arrest, providing immediate support and helping divert children away from further involvement in the justice system. The innovative Youth Diversionary Programme also successfully diverted 24 children away from becoming first-time entrants to the youth justice system through structured intervention and deferred prosecution arrangements.

5.6 The YJST has continued to focus on helping children develop confidence, skills and aspirations beyond offending behaviour. During the year:

- 21 AQA awards were achieved by children participating in YJST activities.
- Several young people secured college placements and apprenticeships.
- Children participated in art exhibitions and nationally recognised creative programmes.
- Ten children submitted work to the Koestler Awards, with one receiving special recognition and having their work displayed in London and Oxford.
- Children benefited from first aid training, life skills development, cooking sessions and positive activities designed to strengthen resilience and social skills.

5.7 These achievements demonstrate the service's commitment to building strengths, developing positive identities and creating opportunities for children to succeed.

5.8 The report identifies partnership working as one of West Berkshire's greatest strengths. Close collaboration between children's social care, education, health services, Thames Valley Police, probation, schools, safeguarding partnerships and voluntary sector organisations has enabled more coordinated support for children and families. The Youth Justice Management Board has also strengthened its governance arrangements, increasing scrutiny, challenge and strategic leadership while ensuring youth justice remains connected to wider safeguarding and community safety priorities.

5.9 Feedback from children and parents remains overwhelmingly positive. Children consistently report feeling listened to, respected and supported, while parents highlight improvements in family relationships, communication and behaviour. The service received 67 formal feedback questionnaires during the year, helping to shape ongoing service improvements and ensuring that children's voices remain central to decision-making.

5.10 While celebrating significant success, the Youth Justice Partnership recognises that some challenges remain. The Youth Justice Management Board has identified several priority areas for development during 2026/27:

5.11 Education and Inclusion - Too many children involved in youth justice continue to experience disrupted education, poor attendance, exclusion and barriers linked to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The partnership will strengthen school-based interventions, improve access to education, training and employment, and develop earlier identification and support pathways for children with SEND.

5.12 Prevention and Early Intervention - Building on successful programmes such as Turnaround, Focused Diversion and Operation Deter Youth, the service will further strengthen early intervention pathways and continue reducing the number of children entering the formal justice system.

5.13 Knife Possession and Serious Violence - Although overall serious youth violence remains low, the service has seen an increase in knife possession offences. In response, West Berkshire is implementing a robust multi-agency strategy focused on swift intervention, safeguarding, education and evidence-based support, fully aligned with new national guidance.

5.14 Victims and Restorative Justice - The partnership aims to increase victim engagement, strengthen restorative approaches and ensure all victims receive timely, high-quality support and information about their rights.

5.15 The Youth Justice Support Team enters 2026/27 from a position of strength, supported by committed staff, dedicated volunteers and strong multi-agency partnerships. By maintaining a clear focus on prevention, education, safeguarding and inclusion, the service remains determined to improve outcomes for children while keeping communities safe.

### Proposals

5.16 The Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027 has been discussed and endorsed by the Youth Justice Management Board. It is proposed that members agree the Youth Justice Plan.

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 The youth justice plan could be rejected and rewritten, however, this course of action is not recommended given the wide consultation and engagement that has already taken place in the development and creation of the attached plan.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 It is recommended that Council agree and formally endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027.

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

8.2 Appendix B —– Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027

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**Subject to Call-In:.**

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval ☒

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council ☐

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position: ☐

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months ☐

Item is Urgent Key Decision ☐

Report is to note only ☐

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**Appendix A**

# West Berkshire Council
# Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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**Equity Impact Assessment**

## Section 1: Summary details

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| **Directorate and Service Area** | People Directorate, Childrens Services, Youth Justice Support Team |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Members are requested to agree and formally endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | It is a new plan, replacing the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/2026 |
| **Summary of assessment**<br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br>(following completion of the assessment). | Each Local Authority area partnership has a duty to produce an annual youth Justice plan that will identify how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.<br>The Youth Justice plan does not seek to bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage groups or individuals. The plan recognises where there is over representation of certain groups in the youth justice system and seeks to address that disproportionality and over representation. |
| **Completed By** | Dave Wraight |
| **Authorised By** | |
| **Date of Assessment** | 06/07/2026 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

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| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | Local authority partnerships have a statutory duty to submit a youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services (YJSs). Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, in consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how YJSs in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out. The plan should address the functions assigned to a YJS, including how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | It is proposed members agree and endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2026/27 alongside the existing agreement of the Youth Justice Management Board. The Youth Justice Plan sets out in detail the specific actions that will be taken during the course of the year. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our | The Youth Justice Support Team sought the views of children, volunteers, staff, Youth Justice Management Board and partner agencies in the production of the YJ plan. Each child receiving an intervention and every volunteer were asked their views using a 'what should the team be doing in 2026/27' questionnaire. They rated their top 5 areas and there was a box to add additional suggestions.<br><br>The comments, feedback and priorities have been incorporated into the plan to give it shape and direction.<br><br>There is a large amount of data used to shape the plan including demographic information, cohort profile information and data relating to offending all of which have been used to form the basis of the plan. |

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| ability to deliver our climate commitments. | |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | The plan has been through a number of iterations and been refined following feedback from the different partners and stakeholders. The option of not doing a plan would place the Local Authority Partnership in breach of its duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and therefore has not been considered. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| **Protected Characteristic** | **No Impact** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Description of Impact** | **Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts** | **Action owner*** (*Job Title, Organisation) | **Timescale and monitoring arrangements** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | The plan seeks to appropriately divert children aged 10-17 years old away from the criminal justice system. | | Service Lead, YJST | Quarterly Performance Monitoring at YJ Management Board |
| **Disability** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Race** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | The plan outlines the work to monitor and address racial disproportionality in the justice system | | Service Lead, YJST | Quarterly Performance Monitoring at YJ Management Board |

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| **Sex** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | The plan recognises proportionately more female children in the YJ system locally than nationally and seeks to tailor responses accordingly | | Service Lead, YJST | Quarterly Performance Monitoring at YJ Management Board |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| **Additional community impacts** | **No Impact** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Description of impact** | **Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts** | **Action owner** (*Job Title, Organisation) | **Timescale and monitoring arrangements** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | It is recognised that proportionately more children in the justice system come from areas of deprivation therefore the plan | | Service Lead, YJST | Quarterly Performance Monitoring at YJ |

| **Additional community impacts** | **No Impact** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Description of impact** | **Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts** | **Action owner** (*Job Title, Organisation) | **Timescale and monitoring arrangements** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | seeks to address issues of poverty, education and employment | | | Management Board |
| **Displaced communities** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | There are more children from the GRT community than others therefore specific work is undertaken to address this overrepresentation | | Service Lead, YJST | Quarterly Performance Monitoring at YJ Management Board |
| **Care experienced people** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | Children in care are over represented In the Justice system, protocols and practices are in place to divert them and reduce the impact. Children in care go on to become Care Leavers. | | Service Lead, YJST | Quarterly Performance Monitoring at YJ Management Board |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

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| **Review Date** | |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | |
| **Authorised By** | |

**EDI employee related EQiA's should now be sent to Human Resources hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk**