

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN  
2023 - 2024

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# 1 INTRODUCTION, VISION, AND STRATEGY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

'I have sorted my act out and am really different now,  
[worker] has really helped me'.

I am pleased to introduce this year's Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023/2024 on behalf of the Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board (SYJPB), which reflects our ongoing, shared fundamental principle of seeing the child beyond their behaviour. The plan recognises that a child's vulnerabilities, if not addressed, may adversely affect their future, and will affect any future offending patterns.

This plan has been developed alongside our partners, children, their families, and carers, also our staff and volunteers. All have contributed and played their essential part in influencing the shape and direction for effective, future delivery. It will also comment upon our progress over the last year and how this is linked to our SYJPB Strategy 2023 - 2025 and its predecessor 2021 – 2023.

Building on some significant successes, such as improving children's engagement in education, training, and employment; maintaining a low custody rate despite the prevalence of County Line type exploitative activity in Somerset and collaborative work to address serious youth violence, this year's plan reiterates our vision and drive to strengthen services further.

This year's Youth Justice Plan outlines our achievements so far and the ongoing risks and challenges we face considering the complexities of children's lives and how we will work to address them. The plan demonstrates our continued partnership commitment to ensure that a safe and effective youth justice service for children is sufficiently supported and resourced and provides value for money in its service delivery to children.

Superintendent Dickon Turner  
Avon and Somerset Police  
Chair - SYJPB

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023-24** headlines some of our achievements across 2022/2024 and outlines our priorities, opportunities, and challenges for 2023/24. This annual plan sits alongside our **Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board (SYJPB) strategy for 2023/25** (Appendix 1) and our HMIP baseline position statement 2023 (Appendix 14)

The strategy was recently reviewed and refreshed designed by the 5 statutory Board member agencies, the YJT Manager and YJT Operations Manager; and was signed off in June 2023. It sets the ongoing direction for this year's youth justice plan and the **overarching strategic goals** for the 2-year period which are:

Our strategic goals for 2023/2024 are:

1. Continued development of robust multi agency interventions to prevent children and young people involved in offending behaviour escalating in their behaviour severity or frequency, especially in relation to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
2. Build on the Teachable Moment and Turnaround programmes to ensure that the talents and interests of all children and young people working with the YJT are recognised and utilised to raise aspirations and accentuate career pathways and reduce the potential for serious offending through a desistance approach.
3. Utilise our new Pathways case management system to further improve the identification of children and young people at risk of exploitation (including county lines type activity), to best hear child and carer voices and to utilise and link wider partnership information to best understand and prevent the increase in serious youth violence and provide the best opportunity for an effective earlier multi agency response,
4. Ensure appropriate screening of the health vulnerabilities of our YJT cohort and that the necessary pathways are available and have sufficient capacity to meet their needs to reduce the risks of further offending behaviour.
5. Explore the impact of parental factors and support for parents of children in the criminal justice system including identification of an effective intervention methodology.
6. Understanding the impact of Covid 19, including the educational impact, impact upon domestic abuse (including child to parent) and the hidden impact that is only starting to be seen, especially in terms of transition to adult services post 18.

**The work of Somerset YJT** is monitored through SYJPB, which in turn also reports through to the Somerset Council (SC) Children’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Safer Somerset Partnership (SSP), Corporate Parenting Board, Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, Early Help Commissioning Board, MAPPA performance management information group - these bodies receive updates and reports as required.

Somerset YJT sits within Childrens services ‘Prevention’ and includes Local Authority staff and employees seconded from our statutory partners including Police, Probation (NPS) and Health. Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board (SYJPB) and Somerset YJT also have strong operational, strategic links and protocol arrangements with a broad range of partners and key agencies including the third sector – Children’s Social Care, Somerset Integrated Care Board, Somerset Foundation NHS Partnership trust, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Police and Crime Commissioner, British Transport Police, and commissioned projects through third sector organisations that include AIM (harmful sexual behaviour work).

**The purpose of the Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023/24** - Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the responsibilities of Youth Justice Partnerships in producing this annual youth justice plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, which sets out:

- How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded
- How the youth offending team (Somerset YJT) established will be composed and funded
- how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out

Youth Justice Plans must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.

**Headline achievements** for Somerset YJT included in the Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2022/23 include continued success in maintaining good performance in relation to:

- continued high levels of positive and impactful engagement with children.
- Our ongoing work to support Children to remain in Education, training / employment (ETE).
- Ongoing high volume in our out of Court disposals and diversion work – diverting children from the youth justice system.
- Our ongoing low detention rates.
- Our sustained effective partnership work to manage risk within the community.
- Our work to understand and address disproportionality.
- The quality of support to our workforce.
- Our tenacious ‘Child First’ focus.
- Our improved and bolstered restorative justice/reparation offer.

- Sustained low numbers of First Time Entrants.
- Relatively stable re-offending rates.
- Good and outstanding outcomes for individual children.
- Our work to honestly assess ourselves, know our strengths and our improvement gaps.
- Our open and transparent learning culture and commitment to improve.

Whilst contribution, commitment and performance from the partnership continues to strengthen, we will continue target resource to the areas of most need, building upon the improvements already made in youth justice work in Somerset.

Somerset SYJPB and YJT continue to remain fully committed to working collectively with all partners and agencies to reduce the numbers of children and young people entering the criminal justice system and to reduce re-offending – we will continue to strive for the highest standards and improve performance where necessary.

The 2023/24 Somerset Youth Justice Plan sets out how we will achieve these aims and national partnership and local priorities over the coming year.

## **1.2 VISION**

Our ongoing, shared vision in Somerset is that:

“Somerset’s unborn babies, children, and young people grow up in a child-friendly county that supports them to be happy, healthy, and prepared for adulthood”

(Somerset Children and Young People Plan 2023 – 2024)

The Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board is committed to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) We believe all our children should enjoy these rights.

## **1.3 STRATEGY**

The Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024 headlines the achievements of Somerset Youth Justice Team (SYJT) across 2022-2023, highlights further opportunities, risks, and challenges to provide a focus on our priorities for 2023/2024.

This annual plan sits alongside our refreshed Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board (SYJPB) strategy for 2023-2025 (Appendix 1)

As such, our strategic goals for 2023/2024 are:

1. Continued development of robust multi agency interventions to prevent children and young people involved in offending behaviour escalating in their behaviour severity or frequency, especially in relation to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
2. Build on the Teachable Moment and Turnaround programmes to ensure that the talents and interests of all children and young people working with the YJT are

recognised and utilised to raise aspirations and accentuate career pathways and reduce the potential for serious offending through a desistance approach.

3. Utilise our new Pathways case management system to further improve the identification of children and young people at risk of exploitation (including county lines type activity), to best hear child and carer voices and to utilise and link wider partnership information to best understand and prevent the increase in serious youth violence and provide the best opportunity for an effective earlier multi agency response,
4. Ensure appropriate screening of the health vulnerabilities of our YJT cohort and that the necessary pathways are available and have sufficient capacity to meet their needs to reduce the risks of further offending behaviour.
5. Explore the impact of parental factors and support for parents of children in the criminal justice system including identification of an effective intervention methodology.
6. Understanding the impact of Covid 19, including the educational impact, impact upon domestic abuse (including child to parent) and the hidden impact that is only starting to be seen, especially in terms of transition to adult services post 18.

Whilst contribution, commitment and performance from the partnership continues to build and strengthen, we will continue to maximise our collective efforts and align resource to the areas of greatest need, building upon the significant improvements already made in youth justice work in Somerset. All Board members are sighted on the ten new Key Performance Indicators and aware of the need to support the YJT in other strategic arenas.

#### **1.4 HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS**

Included in the Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023/2024 is continued success in maintaining good performance in relation to:

##### Reduction of reoffending

- Continued high levels of engagement with children sustained by all SYJT practitioners and underpinned by strong professional relationships – this has bolstered our Voice of the Child Work, helping Children to shape and influence their own Service provision.
- We continue to take pride in the improvements made in supporting children to remain in education, training, and employment - this area will be subject to sustained and ongoing pressure.

##### Reduction in First Time Entrants

- Our ongoing small number of First Time Entrants remains testament to our multiagency Out of Court disposals and diversion work – the last year saw increased collective action to support children through prevention and targeted prevention initiatives to stop children entering the formal youth justice system.

##### Reduction in use of custody

- Our continued low detention rates due to effective early targeted intervention and prevention together with sentencer's confidence in our assessment and report recommendations resulting in detention being reserved for only the most serious of offences.
- The effective multiagency management of risk for children who have complex needs and challenging behaviours arising from adverse childhood experiences-protecting the public whilst seeing the child as a child first.

#### Reduction of offending episodes in long term CLA

- Collective action to ensure children have the most suitable accommodation and support plans, including safety and risk management - to provide security and stability as a foundation for positive change.
- Our ongoing multi agency work to identify and eradicate disproportionality in the Youth Justice System
- Our partnership work to sustain high quality support for children's physical and emotional health outcomes - the impact of our SYJT health support and delivery, subject to ongoing routine oversight by the SYJPB.

#### Cross cutting achievements

- Sustained, effective service provision and support for all staff and volunteers, including ongoing development opportunities and the implementation of an innovative and dynamic case management system, as the first adopting 'YOT' in England and Wales. The new system is proving valuable in helping us to target resource more efficiently and in a timelier manner.
- Collective support and action with our partners to keep children from entering the youth justice system, have continued to build throughout this last year and was bolstered through implementation of initiatives such as Turnaround and Teachable Moments.
- Ongoing risk management strategies, our contributions to MAPPA, MARAC, Child Protection, and our own multiagency risk management panel (MARP), remain highly regarded by partners in helping to mitigate safety and wellbeing concerns and risk of serious harm to others.
- The work our two practice champions to establish Trauma Informed practice approaches within the team, approaches have bolstered YJT capacity to respond and has been instrumental to preventing some of our most vulnerable children in repeat offending, also helped to reduce identified risk areas present in their lives.
- The establishment of a dedicated Restorative Justice unit within the YJT, has enabled us to improve the quality and breadth of our response to victims of all ages, and to the parents/carers of child victims in Somerset.
- Multiagency action to disrupt, prevent, protect & pilot best practice responses to increasing incidents of youth violence, including specialist mentoring, work with parents, group work, targeted mapping, and risk management.
- Robust multiagency oversight & scrutiny of youth justice work has gone from strength to strength across this last year, including routine review of Children held in Custody (overnight / & or daytime). This has shone a light on the child's experience and identified gaps with partners including YJT, have taken action to address and led to new policy/guidance where it was needed.
- High quality Youth Justice provision for our children was achieved throughout 2022/23 - a very difficult year, following some significant and unexpected changes to our workforce; the team showed ongoing dedication, tenacity and absolute 'child first focus', during a very difficult period in this last year.

- Throughout this year, the SYJPB and the YJT have striven to establish a more robust learning culture – We are proud as a YJT to be consistently subject of ‘Good’ and ‘Outstanding’ feedback from multiagency and Childrens Services Quality Assurance findings.

## **1.5 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN APPROVAL**

The annual Youth Justice Plan prepared by the SYJT Manager and SYJT wider management team colleagues, is approved and signed off by the Board Chair for submission to the YJB. The Somerset County Council Lead Member for Children is an additional SYJPB member and so is sighted on the plan at an early stage.

## **2 LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **2.1 RURALITY and CHALLENGES**

Somerset is one of the most rural counties in England. Its population density of 1.5 people per hectare is well below the England average of 4.1 per hectare. West Somerset's density of 0.5 per hectare is one of the five lowest of any local authority in England. 48 of Somerset's 138 council wards have a population density of under 1 per hectare, including representatives of all five districts.

Challenges faced by young people living in rural Somerset include:

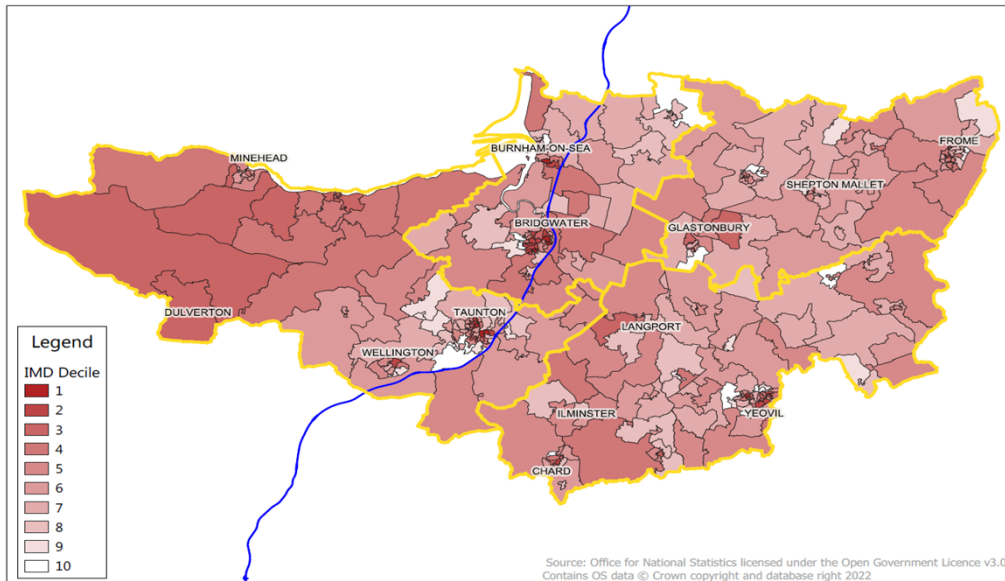
- Social isolation
- Relatively poor mobile signals or broadband speed, lack of connectivity
- Reliance on private or community transport
- Harder for people to access services and for service providers to reach the people.
- Lack of appropriate housing, especially for the young, and concerns about housebuilding
- Fuel poverty, and higher upfront costs for fuel and transport which has a major financial impact on the less well-off.
- Lower expectations of work and further education prospects
- Vulnerable to the effects of shrinking public sector budgets.
- Increasing ratio of economically inactive to economically active populations in rural areas

### **2.2 DEPRIVATION**

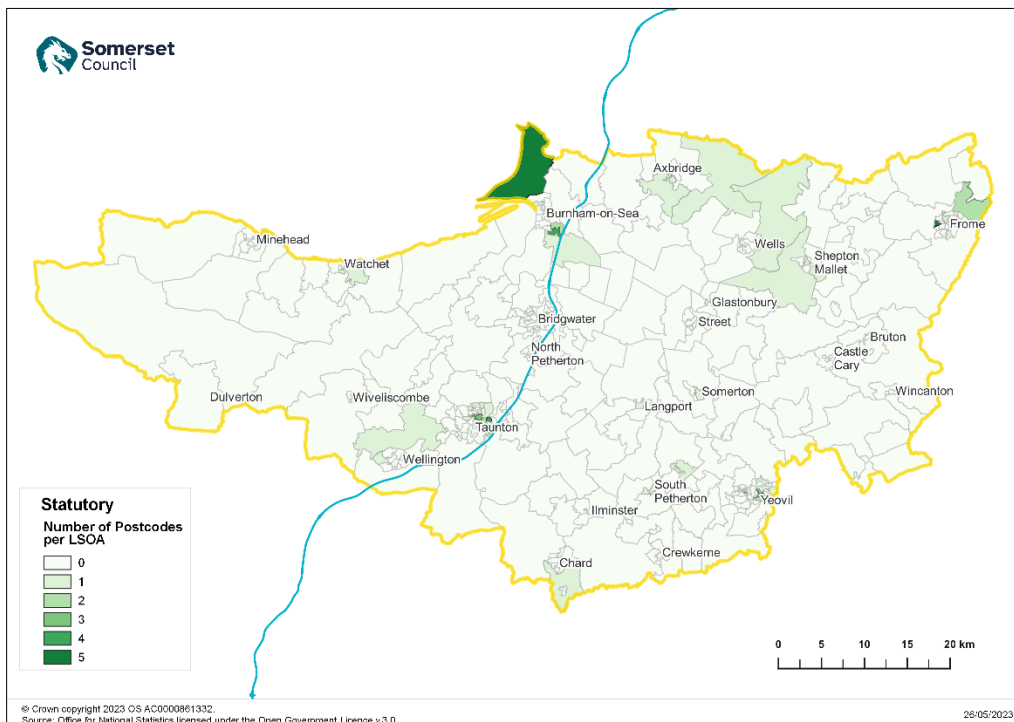
The map below shows the deprivation across Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Somerset, based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The darker colours represent the most deprived neighbourhoods, with those in the darkest red are in the lowest decile meaning they are within the 10% most deprived LSOAs in England.

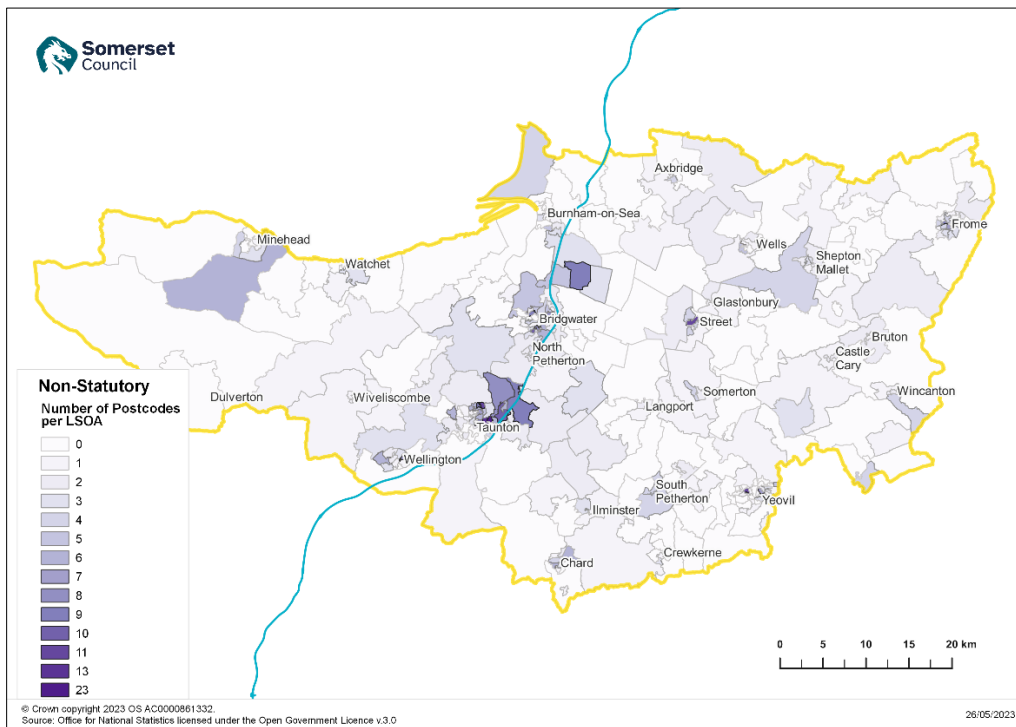


IMD Decile by LSOA



This map can be compared to the following 2 maps, which show the number of statutory and non-statutory programmes starting in the 2022/23 financial year, by the young person’s home address. Only young people with a home address in Somerset are included on the maps. The first map represents 82 statutory programmes and the second represents 683 prevention and other non-statutory programmes. We can see there is more YJT involvement in urban areas, such as Taunton, Yeovil, and Burnham-on-Sea, and many of the hotspots coincide with areas of higher deprivation.





## 2.3 SPECIFIC LOCALITY ISSUES

### 2.3.1 COURT MATTERS

Head of Service, the YJT Operations Manager and both operational Team Leaders have maintained good communications with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and relevant stakeholders. Court throughput continues to improve following last year's reported backlog (post Covid 19) concerns, but we continue to see delays at Crown Court especially when co-accused with an adult. Any noted drift in listings is routinely communicated to the SYJPB who monitor risk and impact, alongside the Head of Service now representing the five Avon and Somerset Police area youth justice services on the HMCTS performance group.

A recent 'voice of the child' presentation prepared for the March 2023 Board led to SYPB Chair and Head of Service letters to the Crown Court over delays and contingency plans for the proposed Crown Court 9-month closure (refurbishment September 2023 onwards) - and the time of this plan an outcome is awaited. (Appendix 2 – court delays)

### 2.3.2 VENUES, LGR AND PROPERTY

Access to safe, suitable venues for 'in person' meetings / reparation work / intervention work, including specialist assessments continues to be an ongoing challenge due to lack of appropriate, child-centred space available. However, a recent (March 2023) request for support to the SYJPB has met with several offers of venue which are currently being investigated for suitability. The move to one Somerset Council from a two-tier authority should release more venue opportunities to the YJT.

### 3 CHILD FIRST

#### 3.1 CHILD FIRST ETHOS

SYJPB and SYJT remain fully aligned with the Youth Justice Board's Vision for a Child First Youth Justice system. SYJPB and SYJT planning processes continue to monitor quality and effectiveness both operationally and strategically. The 2020 submission of the National Standards for Children in the Youth Justice system identified gaps in provision through self-assessment process which the SYJPB took steps to address and monitor. The SYJPB continue to routinely review quality reports and data to reflect the needs and diversity of Somerset's child population and devise appropriate service and partnership responses.

The fully multi-partner Out of Court (OOC) Panel process reviews all children referred for any opportunity to promote a childhood removed from the justice system, making use of Outcome 22 where possible to prevent criminalisation and supporting a wide variety of diversionary and prevention programmes provided by the YJT, its core partners and wider voluntary and community sector partners. The YJT aims to minimise intervention, to look at the holistic needs of the child through its fact-finding process, which may lead to a full Asset+ assessment only if needs and risks are such that this approach is deemed necessary to reduce the possibility of an entry into the formal justice system.

Somerset's 'Child first' ethos continues to strengthen and under-pins all elements of the partnership 's work and is evident across the spectrum of strategy and delivery.

The SYJPB regularly reviews children's data and 'What' children tell us, including case study examples, QA and performance data. The Child's Voice is now a central feature to Board life and demonstrate our ambitious expectations for children, how they should be treated, their rights respected, and be supported.

The Voice of the Child Supported by Somerset Youth Justice Services

<https://youtu.be/Cm27QGy5pnA>

Work has been undertaken to develop a user voice and participation group within the SYJT, but this is in its early stages and the user response so far has been challenging. It is envisaged that a Youth Justice Advocates Group (YJAG) will work with the YJT and support its development through meaningful collaboration. Alongside this, the YJT run an annual child and family feedback survey, the outcome of which is analysed to feed into team action plans and up to Board level discussions and development. Case by case interviews with children, led by their own caseworker, have become a more meaningful method of ensuring the child's voice is heard, presented, and acted upon, to shape service delivery. (Appendix 3 - YJAG Poster)

Despite not being part of the former pilot Enhanced Case Management programme, SYJT has invested additional resource to that provided by the CCG in a Forensic (now Clinical) Psychologist to ensure we can accurately assess a child's individual needs, including their emotional and cognitive functioning, to ensure service delivery is developmentally informed. In this way the SYJT can identify and work to overcome any barrier to engagement in intervention or wider structural barrier to a child making their best possible outcomes.

SYJPB and the YJT work together to reduce barriers to engagement across all aspects of the youth justice system in Somerset. Through a relational approach, all children are assessed holistically to gain an understanding of what their own aspirations and hopes are, and then this is built upon in their individual programmes. Through consolidating our working relationship with the all networks available, including wider education and the community, the YJT has advocated for children on a case-by-case basis, allowing a bespoke approach to re-engagement and towards desistance and making a pro-social contribution to society and community.

### **3.2 EXAMPLES**

Evidence of how the SYJPB and SYJT's work fully reflects the 'Child First' 4 tenets include:

- The embedding of the Multi Agency Education and Training Escalation panel (MAETE) with Director level support has enabled children working with the YJT to receive an individualised arrangement with the widest educational and developmental options, to suit their specific needs and circumstances - The panel has a 'let's find a way' ethos.
- The 'Voice of the Child' is central to all SYJPB meetings and shared on our Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) for all board partners to use in their own services. All children and their families are encouraged and supported to participate in our Quality Assurance process and invited to influence the direction of their services. Increasing the breath of our diversion and prevention opportunities in ever closer joint working with our valued partners (such as Somerset Active Sports
- Partnership, ETE providers, alternative education, voluntary and community sector youth provision) allows the widest possible opportunity for children to engage in activities or programmes which promote a pro social outcome.
- Our development of 'Youth Alcohol and Drug Diversion' programme, 'Choice and Consequences' programme, and the establishment of 'Teachable Moments', alongside the successful mobilisation of 'Turnaround', have all significantly enhanced our ability to promote diversion for children in Somerset and prevent them from entering the Criminal Justice system.

### **3.3 CHILD FIRST OUTCOMES THROUGH PREVENTION AND DIVERSION**

SYJT has invested in its diversionary and preventative offer to children.

The Turnaround Project is a voluntary youth early intervention programme led by the YJT and funded through the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The three-year programme aims to improve outcomes and prevent offending for children who are on the cusp of the youth justice system and who do not meet the threshold for statutory support. Funding for this project has led to the employment of two Professional Practitioners, who work with young people to support and redirect to positive engagement within several interventions and holistic approaches to learning. The Turnaround Project has confirmed funding until March 2025 and will continue to work with young people, capturing their voice and aspirations to ensure a positive learning environment.

The Teachable Moments project, which was originally OPCC funded via the VRU and is now funded through a 3-way agreement (VRU, Avon and Somerset Police and Somerset Council) was a one-year project (now extended to a second year), focusing on exclusion rates within the Somerset Area. The project works with young people identified by the secondary schools, who are close to permanent exclusion due to negative behaviours associated with exploitation and potential criminality. The Teachable Moments project delivers bespoke interventions to young people, within their school environment focussing on a trauma informed approach. Intervention staff are delivering sessions with young people, within areas such as knife crime, toxic masculinity, and drugs/alcohol. Teachable Moments staff are also supporting schools by delivering CPD to school staff, focusing on exploitation, bullying and knife crime and include clear reporting procedures when there are areas of concern.

Quote from designated safeguarding lead (DSL) - Crispin school

“Child X came to see me and said “Miss, I really got a lot out of that session, I felt I was listened to, and Lisa is very easy to talk to”.

Teachable Moments is an early intervention project and as such, 10 secondary schools were initially identified as needing early intervention support, using key education data within exclusions and suspensions. The secondary schools contacted, referred young people with numerous suspensions and who were at high risk of permanent exclusion due to negative behaviours in school. The project linked closely with the VRU and PCSOs within communities to establish a joined working structure to support young people using a Trauma Informed approach.

Based on assessment, interventions are individualised and based upon a child’s needs and their specific circumstances - learning plans negotiated with children, informed the individual’s bespoke intervention package delivered on school site. These also helped inform, capture and track intervention of children’s progress whilst demonstrating their awareness in how to report concerns around exploitation, for instance.

Teachable moments – feedback from schools

“This [Teachable moments initiative] must continue, we need this schools cannot do everything for everyone a service like this makes the difference to the young people they work directly with, changes in attitudes and engagement in lessons are clearly impacted by the work of Teachable Moments. Children that are bubbling and have shown dramatic change in risky behaviours and worrying attitudes”.

Taunton Academy

In a short period, the project demonstrated evidence of reduction in exclusions and suspensions, with schools reporting an increase in positive education engagement and reduction in poor behaviour, for those open to the project.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS – Interim impact data August 2022 – Feb 2023:

Initial project data following implementation in August 2022 provides evidence of impact for the August 2022 and February 2023.

School Name	Location	Number of Referrals to Teachable Moments	Number of Students currently receiving interventions	Number of students supported through group work	Interventions on hold, completed or closed e.g., Px or moved away
Bishop Foxes School	Taunton	1	0	0	1
Chilton Trinity School	Bridgwater	24	7	10	5
Court Fields School	Wellington	5	4	0	1
Crispin Academy	Street	15	10	0 (2)	5
Danesfield Middle School	Williton	1	1	0	0
Frome College (inc. Aspire)	Frome	29	7	10 (1)	6
Heathfield School	Taunton	32	9	15	7
Holyrood Academy	Chard	12	7	(2)	4
Minehead Middle School	Minehead	4	2	0	2
Robert Blake Science College	Bridgwater	16	5	10	
Taunton Academy	Taunton	25	8	14 (7)	5
West Somerset College	Minehead	2	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>36</b>

## 4 VOICE OF THE CHILD

### 4.1 CHILDS VOICE and INFLUENCE

“My worker is really amazing, she has been the most helpful person out of any service I have had. I felt like I didn’t need to talk to a mental health person, she thought it would be helpful so I met the psychologist, it was really good/helpful for me. When she comes to see me it’s good, I feel like everything she has done for me has helped me move away from what I was doing (offending)”.

The YJT Operational Manager continues to lead participation and engagement developments with practitioners taking on lead roles for this important service area. Children and young people have a right to be heard and involved in decision which affect them (UN Rights of the Child Article 12).

Our aspiration stands, that all children's voices are acted upon and are used to influence and shape service delivery and this continues to be a priority development area for the forthcoming year.

SYJPB strongly believes that participation is central to the evidence base for desistance as it is strengths based, future focussed, restorative and develops a pro social identity and meaningful participation underpins the six strategic priorities for the board.

In the reporting year the YJT continued to work closely with the Somerset Council participation unit and children to design and launch the Youth Justice Advocates Group (YJAG) initiative to encourage user voice at operation and strategical levels.

SYJT is embedding the breadth and quality of user voice more purposefully in our Quality Assurance process to shape and enhance service delivery. Across the reporting year the Local Authority Service Improvement Team have further helped SYJT develop more robust and systematic QA feedback mechanisms and the range of audit and scrutiny activity we lead ensures ongoing and consistent partnership improvements in key service delivery areas. (Appendix 4 – QA calendar)

We continue to strengthen our user voice approaches to achieve greater consistency and impact upon both desistance and the restorative impact on communities. The meaningful and consistent co-production and co-design with' children and young people at both strategic and operational level remains work in development, but with some significant progress:

- Our trauma informed practice has allowed children to engage and re-engage as children first, at their own time and pace and with reasonable adjustment made to timelines and intervention methods to meet their individual needs.

(Appendix 5 – Trauma Informed case study – April 2023 board)

- The involvement of lived experience mentors in working with a group of children experiencing organised and serious criminal exploitation came from the group request to explore the realities of moving on.
- Learning from reviews and what children tell us informs our improvement plans in response to gaps identified, so that children continue to be empowered to make a positive contribution to society. Further evidence of this is found in quarterly performance reviews of practice, quarterly evaluation outcomes, larger scale panel scrutiny work including custody review panels, harmful sexual behaviour, risk management, assessments which support decision making, referral order feedback mechanisms.
- Larger thematic scrutiny audits are also a key participation feature such as the 21/22 disproportionality audit, fully including children's voice, the outcomes of which are being progressed on going.

- The development of the QA framework alignment between YJT and CSC has allowed us to capture the child's voice, views, and messages to the partnership, such as through the JTAI ('dry run') multi-agency review of 3 children involved in criminal exploitation.

JTAI exercise - findings identified key strengths of the YJT included:

“Quality of planning and support provided by YJT to this young person has been fundamental in supporting positive change, and opportunities for this young person through robust relationship-based practice”.

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, Child exploitation JTAI (dry run),  
Multiagency audit October 2022

(Appendix 6 – JTAI preparation)

## **4.2 EXAMPLES of FEEDBACK**

All SYJT practice evaluations are triangulated and moderated to hear the child and family voice:

“I really like (my worker). She is sound and really funny,  
I get on with her and can talk to her” (child)

“YJT are helping my daughter and her attitude has got better  
since she started working with you.  
I don't think there is anything that can be done better” (father)

“My worker is really amazing, she has been the most helpful person  
out of any service I have had” (child)

‘Nothing negative to say about YOT at all, from start to finish it has  
been great’. (Child - ID 145435)

‘My worker was really decent to me and helped me with my temper and  
helped me with different ways to help me deal with it’. (Child - ID 147266)

## **5 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

### **5.1 PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023/2024 is set out in Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 where the responsibility sits with the local Youth Justice Partnership. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the



partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual Youth Justice Plan, which sets out:

- How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded
- How the youth offending team (Somerset YJT) will be composed and funded
- how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out

SYJPB is a multiagency partnership management board, which fully aligned to other strategic partnership Boards in Somerset. The SYJPB takes responsibility for all aspects of 'Youth Justice Team' governance; it leads strategically across the partnership and ensures a high-quality service is provided to all children.

Our aspiration as a Board and SYJT is to achieve and maintain outstanding performance.

The overarching SYJPB strategic plan 2021/2023 has been reviewed regularly for progress and challenges, the last such multi agency reviews being December 2022 and May 2023. It is shared with all SYJT staff members and volunteers, and regularly reinforced as the core direction of service development in team meetings and workshops. All team members and volunteers have sight of the strategic plan.

The refreshed 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan has been developed by the 5 core agency members of the SYJPB and now contains 6 strategic priorities.

The use of a Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) for all SYJPB members has allowed for both timely and confidential sharing of information and the creation of an archive allowing easy access to past reports, excellent practice examples and so on.

The work of Somerset YJT is monitored through SYJPB, which in turn also reports through to the:

- Somerset County Council (SCC) Children's Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Safer Somerset Partnership Board (SSPB)
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Early Help Commissioning Board
- MAPPA performance management information group

These bodies receive updates and reports as required.

Somerset YJT sits within Childrens Social Care 'Prevention' and includes Local Authority staff and employees seconded from our statutory partners including Police, Probation Service and Health.

SYJPB and Somerset YJT also have strong operational, strategic links and protocol arrangements with a broad range of partners and key agencies including the third sector:

- Childrens Social Care
- Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (Now ICB – Integrated Commissioning Board)
- Somerset Foundation NHS (National Health Service) Partnership Trust
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- British Transport Police
- HMCTS

- Commissioned projects through community and third sector organisations that include child exploitation specialist services.
- District Council partners (up until 31.3.2023 when Somerset became a single tier council)

## **5.2 HEAD of SERVICE**

In Somerset, the Head of Service - Prevention is the nominated YJT Manager and reports to the Deputy Director Children's Services (DDCS)

The management portfolio now includes the Youth Justice Team and Prevention Services including MISPER and 'prevention of exploitation' work, housing mediation to age 26 and Young Carer assessment and community delivery arrangements. Additional areas of responsibility are Reactive and Harmful Sexual Behaviour by children and young people and child / vulnerable young adult exploitation. These services between them span a service user age range of 0 to 25 years inclusive, plus parents/carers, victims, and wider communities.

Between the SYJT Manager role and Deputy DCS, membership of a range of relevant strategic groups is covered:

- Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board
- Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (including sub- groups: Board Quality & Performance and Missing and Exploitation)
- Safer Somerset Partnership
- Prevent and Channel Panel
- Somerset Childrens Services Senior Management Team
- Somerset Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board
- Somerset Complex Cases Panel
- Somerset Quarterly Performance Review Meetings
- MAPPA performance board and SMB (Strategic Management Board)
- HMCTS performance group

The Head of Service is supported by a 0.6 FTE dedicated Operational Manager (SYJT), who is responsible for the day to day running of the service, and who in turn has line manager responsibility for the Team Leaders (x3) within the YJT plus supervision of the psychologist and speech and language therapist.

## **5.3 BOARD STRUCTURE and ATTENDANCE**

(Appendix 7 – SYJP Board membership)

This year – we have revised the SYJPB induction pack to include the new YJB Key Performance Indicators and all Board members are aware of these performance targets.

All new Board members are offered a mentor and are encouraged to attend various YJT activities and events to further the understanding of their Board role and responsibilities. The YJT Head of Service and Operational Manager will offer to meet with new Board members independently to provide an overview of the role and function of the YJT and answer any questions raised.

(Appendix 8 – SYJP Board induction)

Attendance at Board by the 5 core partner agency representatives is monitored and gaps in attendance addressed by the Chair of the Board. Other partner agencies are asked to either become additional Board members or attend on an ad hoc basis, through negotiation and agreement of the Chair. The Lead (Council) Member for Children and Families is an additional Board member.

(Appendix 9 – SYJP Board attendance register)

Where challenges relating to appropriate level representation or agency representation, these are escalated directly to the Chair, partners and noted by the Board with action to address.

#### **5.4 PARTNERSHIP BOARD ACTIVITY**

SYJPB and SYJT governance arrangements have continued virtually this reporting year – tested in Covid 19 the virtual Board has remained in place as a chosen communication method allowing more partners to regularly attend and engage,

The SYJT Head of Service and Operational Manager continue to contribute to relevant strategic multiagency and local authority working groups. The SYJT Head of Service and Operational Manager represent the SYJT on the Avon and Somerset YOS and the South and South-West Regional Head of Service meetings, in the YJB Asset+ working group and in other functional meetings such as the Avon and Somerset out of court development network.

Through the reporting year SYJPB met quarterly. At each meeting it received finance and performance reports covering Youth Justice Grant requirements and performance against National Indicators. As well as reviewing performance against national measures, the Board received detailed reports upon the accommodation and education/employment status of individual young people engaged with the SYJT and acted to support improved engagement.

The Board also received reports and presentations on local and national issues, including the findings of Serious Case Reviews and other learning processes. The establishment of the Virtual Meeting Room for the SYJPB promoted information sharing in a streamlined and confidential manner and has allowed new members easier access to archived information.

The revised membership and minutes now reflect statutory or other partnership members, including a representative of the 3rd sector for young people in Somerset and a member of the YJT Volunteer team to act as a Community Voice.

Following a spike in serious youth violence (SYV) during late 2022 and into February 2023, the Board instigated a multi-agency learning process to review the known information, plans and actions of a range of partners. Jointly led by the YJ Operations Manager and Lead SW for Exploration, this multi partners work is ongoing and is learning from the work and support of 2 South Central and 1 north east YJ Teams who has all seen a similar change in their historical offending pattern.

The online learning workshops which were developed during Covid 19 have continued with a series of 'bite sized' offerings.

## **5.5 PARTNER AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS**

### **POLICE**

Avon and Somerset Constabulary second a full-time police officer and a full-time civilian Youth Intervention Officer to the SYJT. Seconded police staff have access to the secure police network as well as the current YJT case management system. Police staff sit as core members of the SYJT Multi Agency Risk Panel (MARP) where children identified through Asset Plus assessment as being at high or very high risk of harm to others or with safety and welfare issues are discussed with action and contingency plans made and agreed pan profession.

There is an identified link officer / manager with the Police who provides regular professional and welfare support, alongside supervision and day to day support provided by a SYJT Team Leader.

A Police Superintendent is also chair of the SYJPB. Other links to senior officers are made, when necessary, on a thematic or locality basis. The Police also contribute to the Youth Justice pooled budget.

### **PROBATION SERVICE**

The Probation Service allocation of a seconded Probation Officer (PO) to Somerset YJT decreased from 1.5 FTE in 2017/18 to 0.5 in the later part of 2018/19; our current PO works 0.7 FTE.

The post links with a local Senior Probation Officer (SPO) for liaison, professional development, and support purposes whilst the Head of Somerset Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) sits on the SYJPB. The Probation Service also contributes the nationally agreed amount to the Youth Justice Pooled budget.

An additional 0.16 FTE of seconded Probation Service Officer (PSO - non-probation qualified) time has been available since February 2022. The purpose of this additional time is to support the transition meetings and offer cross county delivery of intervention for children 17.5 years onwards and at assessed risk of continued involvement in the criminal justice system or who will be transferring to probation on their current Order. The PSO also acts as a SPOC alongside the substantive seconded Probation Officer for appropriate information sharing between agencies. We are pleased to report that a changeover of personnel in this role was achieved swiftly with a minimal gap.

The seconded probation officer is also a core member of the MARP.

### **CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE (CSC)**

Somerset YJT has a guidance policy on working with social care colleagues which is reviewed annually (last review April 2023) and signed off by the Deputy DCS and Head of Service – Prevention / SYJT Manager.

The working relationships and co-working between CSC (both social work and prevention teams) and the SYJT has grown and matured over the last 2 to 3 years, to the extent that SYJT are regarded as competent professional partners whose experience

is regularly sought on offending and other relevant issues for children working with a CSC colleague.

(Appendix 10 - CSC/YJT Protocol)

Prior to his retirement in February 2022, the CSC contribution (staff wise) to the SYJT was the specialist Child Sexual Abuse Assessment and Treatment worker, an Advanced Social Work position. This position has not been filled but the development of the SYJT led Reactive and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Forum has provided a consultation route for the partnership.

The SYJT has a social work qualified Team Leader and has also now filled a Professional Practitioner role with another qualified Social Worker. The Head of Service / SYJT Manager also holds the relevant social work qualification, and another worker is being supported through the Graduate Apprentice scheme and will qualify as a Social Worker in late 2024, when she will be able to stay in the SYJT following a negotiated agreement to retain one student in YJT from each running of the apprenticeship programme.

The Director for Childrens Services is vice chair of the SYJPB.

## EDUCATION

Following redesign of county education structures, the Head of Vulnerable Learners is the SYJPB education member.

As a strategic partner, education part fund the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service for SYJT and have done this for a 3-year period, reducing anxiety over the continuance of the role.

The Education Inclusion Team Leader and project workers target, reduce and aim to remove blocks and barriers to education, training, and employment for all children in contact with the YJT. This has been seen through the assertion and tenacity with which overly highly exclusion rates (either fixed or permanent) have been tackled; of 10 schools initially identified and targeted as high-volume excluding schools, 8 are no longer active target establishments. The YJT firmly views appropriate, accessible, happy, and positive ETE as a prime desistence factor which promotes best outcomes for all children who work with us.

To mirror this aspiration, the education function within SYJT is led by a Level 6 qualified education specialist, who works full time (so enabling the focus on education, training, and employment to be maintained during school holiday periods). As Education Inclusion Team Leader across prevention and YJ services, the post holder has strong links to the Virtual School and Vulnerable Learners team. The role also acts as a lead manager for the Teachable Moment and Turnaround early intervention and diversion programmes, overseeing the programme functioning and providing professional supervision to the programme officers.

## HEALTH

Health is represented on the Partnership Board by the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) Group Manager for Service Development and Clinical Engagement, Children.

Until May 2022, ICB commissioned Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, a local health provider, to employ and second a Forensic Psychologist (FP) from the CAMHS (Children & Adolescents Mental Health Services) service to the SYJT for four days per week, with the pooled budget contributing a further one day of resource plus travel and other on-costs. The FP gained a promotion within forensic CAMHS and left the YJT in May 2022. Difficulties in attracting a suitable candidate for the relinquished role left us without a staff member until May 2023, which required contingency plans to be mobilised.

A Clinical Psychologist (CP) (a former doctorate student in the YJT in 2019) joined the YJT in May 2023 and is now completing her induction into the role. For personal reasons the new postholder was unable to start with the YJT for about an 8-month period. Efforts were made to recruit to a fix term contract so the YJT could continue to provide staff with psychological supervision and formulation discussions in understanding the aetiology and mental health presentations that the young people may have been challenged with.

The YJT worked very closely with partners in Somerset Foundation Trust (SFT) in monitoring the situation and seeking appropriate support in the absence of the fixed term contract being filled. The YJT and SFT were able to secure support from the CAMHS Single point of Access and Early Intervention Clinical Operations Manager, who has a wealth of knowledge and experience with supporting clinical staff and partner agencies staff with case discussions and determining whether young people were presenting with the onset of serious mental health presentation or in need of lower level emotional and well-being support.

The staff in the YJT worked with the MH manager on a weekly basis and more frequently as required case by case - any time if they required a case discussion or general advice and support with regards to a young person's mental and emotional health. This arrangement was well received by the YJT team members and further strengthened the relationship that the 2 agencies had already established. The clinical psychologist has now returned and taken up her post and the links with SFT CAMHS and Forensic CAMHS will be continued.

The new incoming CP receives clinical supervision and support from CAMHS with operational supervision from the SYJT Operations Manager. As with our previous FP, it is hoped the new CP will be able to offer placements to Doctorate students from the University of Exeter, which extend the reach of the health offer during placement periods.

In addition to the ICB contribution funding approximately 80% of the salary costs for the SYJT Clinical Psychologist, SYJPB negotiations following the provision of data and several excellent case studies have resulted in the Virtual School and ICB joint funding the SYJT seconded Speech and Language Communication Therapist (0.4 FTE), for a further period – the Virtual School until end 2024/25 and the ICB on a year by year basis but with a board stated commitment to continuing the role.

A bid was made at the latter end of the last reporting year to the ICB to fund a general nurse practitioner, for one day per week to extend the SYJT health offer further and this had been added to the ICB funding plan for 2022/2023 onwards but is not (at the time of writing) confirmed as available to the YJT. Recruitment to this role in public health remains a national challenge.

## SUPPORTING FAMILIES

In Somerset, the Supporting Families Programme (SF) is embedded in the Local Authority Prevention and Early Help offer. The SYJT provides information about children known to the YJT and their offending under YJB data sharing arrangements. This is used to help identify eligible families and to assess project impact in terms of reduced offending.

The Supporting Families coordinator has been supportive of the YJT and wider prevention in funding resources for an extended parenting offer with training provided in the 2022/23 reporting year. A rolling training programme for all prevention and YJ staff in the Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) parenting programme for adolescent destructive behaviours is ongoing, with approximately 30% of YJ staff trained to date. The Solihull Parenting Approach is also available as a training programme for YJ staff, with the 2-day foundation programme (ages 0 – 18) being provided by an accredited trainer in the prevention service FIS with resource packs funded through the SF framework.

#### POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC)

Up until end March 2023, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) jointly funded the commissioned exploitation services of Routes and BASE from Barnardos, to which Somerset YJT had access. This contract has now ended but procurement is open currently for a redesigned service – The YJT Head of Service was part of the redesign team and led on the user voice perspective.

The SYJT management team decided not to renew its long-term annual contract with the OPCC to train, provide and support Appropriate Adults for vulnerable adults presenting at Somerset custody suites (now limited to Express Park, Bridgewater Police Centre) and across Somerset for voluntary attendee interviews. This was a business decision based upon the funding available and the increase in volunteering opportunities in house for the SYJT volunteer base.

The OPCC oversaw the 'Teachable Moments' programme in Somerset, which completed an initial pilot phase at end March 2022, and which aimed to prevent school exclusions where youth violence and exploitation issues were present. Following an in house review the programme, hosted by the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) but with staff largely seconded from SYJT and / or the prevention service FIS, was further developed and rolled out again with some revision in early Summer 2022, running until August 2023. Although ring fenced OPCC funding is no longer available to continue this programme, its impact has been such that funding has been found from a variety of sources (VRU core budget, Avon and Somerset Police Innovation Grant and an apprenticeship levy) to keep the programme running for another year until summer holidays 2024.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

The SYJT Head of Service is a member of the Safer Somerset Partnership, which oversees operational planning for Community Safety and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). This includes PREVENT and Channel Panel activities within the counter terrorism strategy and information sharing related to serious and organised crime and the county wide One Team initiative.

#### INTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

SYJT has in the reporting year strengthened well-established day to day links with the Lead Social Worker for Child Exploitation and the broader network of specialist child exploitation support, prevention, and disruption services through the multiagency network. A grant application supported by the YJT Head of Service was successful in

employing girls, young women and gang worker in Somerset, to further broaden the reach of exploitation services.

Locality team leaders have excellent working knowledge of their geographical areas and have well established working relationships with a wide range of partners, including statutory, community and voluntary sector based. Team Leaders attend police locality tasking meetings to gain the best understanding of locality-based issues and pressure points, to allow for early multi-agency planning and action where necessary.

The purchase and roll out of a new case management system (which successful went live with current cases in November 2022 followed by incremental roll out of historic data and reporting functions) allows a far greater opportunity in the use of data to support service development, as for the first time a menu of reports is available plus the ability for all management grades to build custom enquiries and essentially, support the functions of SYJPB. As the first users of a new system (NEC Pathways) in England and Wales, 'glitches' are to be expected but the strong and mutually respectful relationship built between Somerset and the providers has led to swift rectification and a continuing developmental path for the system.



## 6 RESOURCES AND SERVICES

### 6.1 YOUTH JUSTICE GRANT AND PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Youth Justice Grant adheres to the terms and conditions of the grant. Partner contributions both in financial terms and human resource are as detailed below and this collective resource enables the SYJPB and Somerset YJT to deliver youth justice services which are cost effective and address the aims of the strategic Somerset YJT Youth Justice Plan April 2021 – 2023.

The overarching financial position is as detailed below:

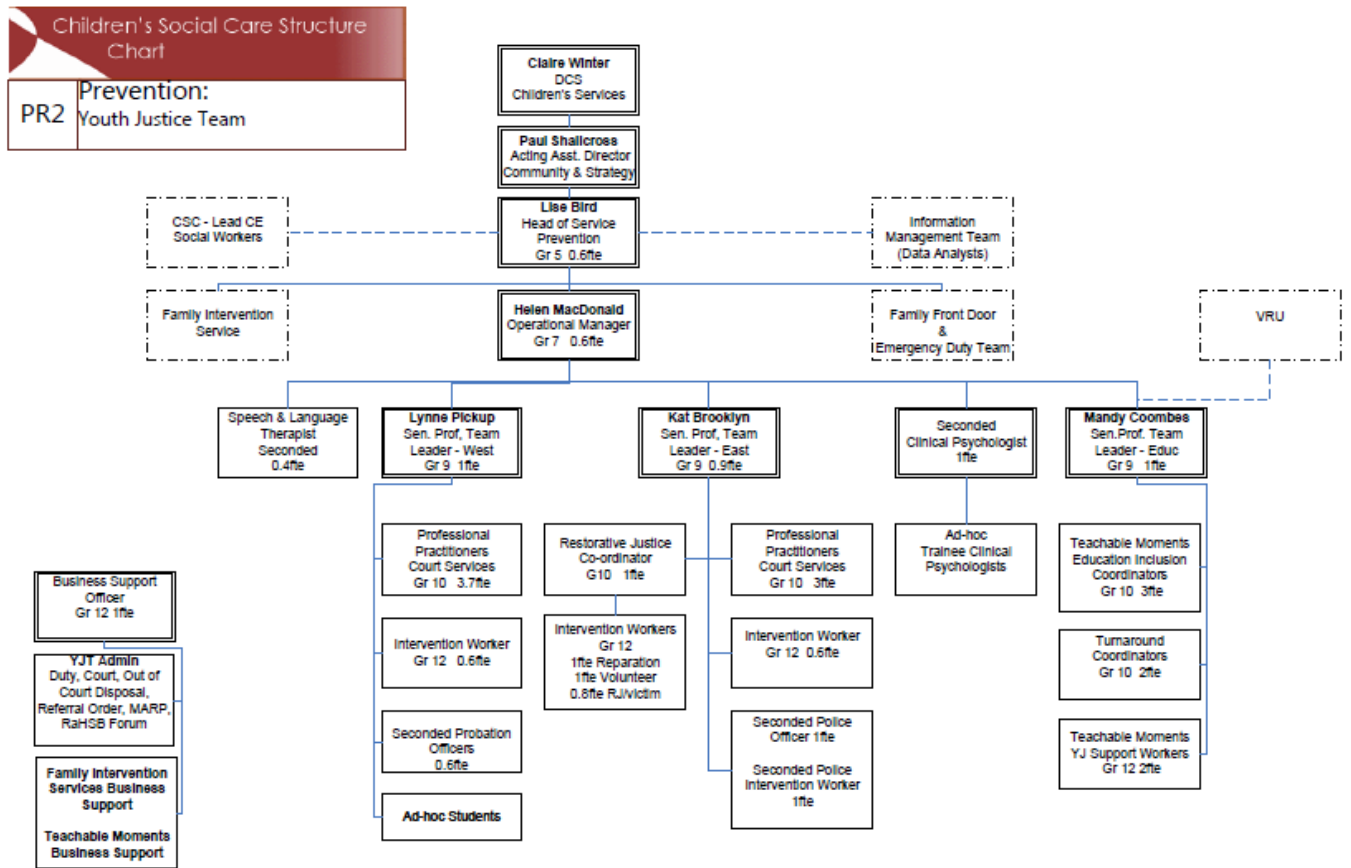
#### YOUTH JUSTICE TEAM INCOME 2022/2023

INCOME	YJB	Somerset Council	Police	OPCC (AA)	Probation	Health	SYV / OPCC
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cash	563,242	391,600	10,175	25,700	5,000	50,875	20,000
In-kind		185,100		0	0	0	0
<b>Total income</b>	<b>563,242</b>	<b>576,700</b>	<b>10,175</b>	<b>25,700</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>50,875</b>	<b>20,000</b>

Somerset YJT management and business support team applied sound financial planning to come in slightly over £400 underspent overall in this reporting year (equates to 0.033%)

### 6.2 STAFF

The YJT staffing profile has been expanded to include a dedicated RJ unit, which can work across all of prevention services (the Family Intervention Service and YJT) in Somerset. Plans for 2023/2024 include appointing an Education Inclusion Worker to add capacity, as the Team Leader role now extends across wider prevention services.



May 30, 2023

As a service, the YJT recognises its staff largely self-identity as white European without disability issues. We are working with our recruitment colleagues on advertising and recruitment strategies to broaden the reach and attractiveness of our employment opportunities.

The YJT Operations Manager is currently investigating the potential of YJ specific apprenticeships with the Human Resources and Training and Development teams with the Council and potential, credible national providers.

**6.3 PARTNER SECONDED STAFF**

Somerset YJPB is a fully multi agency partnership with strong working relationships at strategic and operational manager levels meaning that gaps in provision (staff change over) are quickly addressed to minimise impact upon child and service outcomes.

This year we have had a change in probation officer and probation service officer, neither with any unacceptable gap in provision. The loss of our FP to a promotion role was addressed through a bespoke case by case consultation arrangement, which was negotiated by the Operation Manager in the YJT and counterpart in CAMHS.

Probation officer (qualified)	0.7 FTE
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Probation service officer (non-qualified)	0.16 FTE
Police Officer	1.0 FTE
Police Youth Intervention Worker	1.0 FTE
Psychologist	1.0 FTE
Speech & Language Therapist	0.4 FTE

As an additional partner (and non-funded) contribution the thanks of the YJT go to our CAMHS colleagues who acted swiftly, sensitively and over an extended period in supporting the team in the sad loss of a staff member. As part of this the CAMHS team brokered the correct services for the family members within a 24-hour window and continue to offer ongoing support.

## 6.4 VOLUNTEERS

SYJT has an exceptionally committed and experienced volunteer workforce who undertake a wide variety of roles for the Service – as Appropriate Adults for children in custody, as advocates in Family Group Conference work, as Referral Order Panel Members, as reparation support and in ad hoc ways on a bespoke basis. A planned development is to include volunteers in our response to children missing from home or placement, as an independent voice for children who don't want to speak with a staff member in prevention or social care.

As the SYJT restorative approach develops further, a new Restorative Justice volunteer has been trained and will support the Restorative Justice Worker in gaining victim feedback and insight from lower level / lower impact offences that are dealt with via the Out of Court Panel system.

A long-standing volunteer has been an additional member of the SYJPB through the reporting period, offering a community member perspective.

The volunteer base in Somerset has been stable over many years and is in many ways reflective of Somerset's population. At the end of 2021/22, approximately 38% of our volunteers were under 61 – this figure had increased from 32% following targeted recruitment.

At the end of 2022/23 the profile is as below, with volunteers under their 60s now representing 42% of the total. 1/3rd of our volunteers identify as female, 2/3rds as male, as opposed to more males in the service users' group.

Volunteers in their 20s	8%
Volunteers in their 30s	12%
Volunteers in their 40s	10%
Volunteers in their 50s	12%
Volunteers in their 60s	24%
Volunteers in their 70s	32%
Volunteers in their 80s	2%

97.7% of our volunteers identify as White – British and 2.3% as Polish so work remains necessary on the ethnic diversity of our volunteer team. Comparisons on disability are complex as we do not routinely ask our volunteers about wider disabilities (neuro diversity, emotional, social as examples). However, one commonality found is that (as an April 2023 snapshot) 0.8% of the children working with YJT have a hearing disability, as opposed to 4.76% of the volunteers with a similar sensory disability.

Recruiting volunteers from younger and diverse backgrounds remains a challenge as they often have limited availability due to family and work commitments. More volunteers are required to cover the same roles and hours that our older volunteers have historically been able to cover. This is particularly prevalent in relation to Appropriate Adults as we need to be able to respond during daytime hours to the needs of custody, meaning that our volunteers for this specific role tend to be retired or working part time with fewer family commitments.

Targeted volunteer recruitment remains an ongoing priority for the forthcoming year, with plans in place to target local college access schemes, large employers, and Armed Service bases, as well as those who may have attended a Referral Order or other process as a victim.

Volunteer Support and Training Workshops are held on a regular basis with various members of the YJ team attending in support.

## **7 PROGRESS ON PREVIOUS PLAN**

### **7.1 PROGRESS ON SYJPB STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (2021-23)**

SYJPB Priority 1 - Develop multi agency interventions to prevent children and young people involved in offending behaviour escalating in their behaviour severity or frequency.

Over the last year, SYJT's increased co-ordination of support and guidance to partners and, joint work with the police anti-social behaviour (ASB) team has been instrumental in facilitating improved multiagency responses to mitigate further escalation in offending behaviours. Work in the coming year will be an ongoing focus to achieving greater consistency in approach across the county.

As YJT sits within Somerset Council 'Prevention Services' footprint, an overarching targeted Prevention strategy is in design by the responsible Operations managers.

As serious youth violence is gaining a foothold in Somerset, the YJT has been fully involved in multi-agency mapping, planning and delivery of intervention and in ongoing audit review and research into this vital area of harm to both victims, child perpetrators and the wider community. A robust partnership approach, including outreach to neighbouring and further afield YJTs has been central to furthering our understanding of the picture in Somerset and strategies at the partnership's disposal.

Embedding the quarterly custody review panel has ensured only those children whose offending requires a hold for public safety are held over. This resulted in a significant drop off in overnight holds and time in daytime custody with a more measured police approach to arrest and detention. We have also seen the issue of overnight holds on non-imprisonable offences (notably criminal damage summary only) end.

The Board has on record its welcome for the strengthened multiagency oversight of Children's experience and impact of interventions which is now a business-as-usual element of Board functioning.

OOC decision making panels continue to function effectively with decision making and impact which we consider a significant improvement since their review as part of the National Standards audit in 2020 (a view supported by the regional YJ scrutiny panel). Due to the success of the panels running virtually through Covid 19, the panels will continue to be held virtually to expedite decision making and ensure robust representation. Full multi partner attendance is now established as BAU, with strong links to diversion and prevention programmes such as Turnaround, Teachable Moments, YADD and the Choices and Consequences programme run by the YJT Police Intervention Worker.

Somerset YJT and the multi partner panel always seek to work proportionally and not over intervene in a child or young person's life and development.

The SYJT Restorative Justice service has been significantly developed with enhanced resource, training for SYJT staff and the victim voice is now firmly embedded in all aspects of the work including reparation and out of court decision making, to ensure victim impact is considered in all YJT work.

Multiagency intervention panels including Out of Court decision making, reactive and harmful sexual behaviour forum, Multi Agency Education, Training and Employment (MAETE) panel, custody review panel and the Multi Agency Risk Management Panel (MARP) have been embedded with firm multiagency partnership contribution and accountability to prevent escalating behaviours and to ensure children have the appropriate support they need. Refinement of the multiagency risk management panel (MARP) was moved to business as usual to ensure stronger alignment of planning and risk management alongside children social care colleagues.

“QUOTE “

“I felt like I didn’t need to talk to a mental health person, she thought it would be helpful, so I met the psychologist, it was really good/helpful for me, when she comes to see me it’s good, I feel like everything she has done for me has helped me move away from what I was doing (offending)’ (ID 146670)”

SYJPB Priority 2 - Develop multi agency interventions to ensure we build on the talents and interests of all children and young people working with the YJT to raise aspirations and accentuate career pathways.

Mainstreaming of the multiagency escalation panel (MAETE) has taken place with a continued positive impact upon ETE for children working with SYJT, for both those young people with an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (monthly meeting) and those without (also once a month).

The aim of MAETE meetings is to re-engage young people into education or training by either extending hours or seeking bespoke programmes to fulfil need and interest. Each professional and service plays a key part in supporting the reintegration for these young people, with a clear and defined escalation route should difficulties arise. Additional escalation routes are also in place at strategic level, with the Somerset Director of Childrens Services, as necessary. The MAETE panel will agree a personalised plan where a learner may be disadvantaged due to their protective features.

All recognise the importance of education and inclusion for the SYJT cohort of young people and its critical role as a desistence factor. The panel now operates as BAU and is proving to be effective in expediting support for Children where barriers persist.

SYJT is the presenting agency, and partners contribute on a case-by-case basis, as part of multi-professional decision making, agree actions and share accountability for managing and working together to address barriers. Responsibility and accountability for carrying out actions remains solely with the delegated lead agency.

SYJPB has continued to provide ongoing scrutiny of reports and data on the key vulnerabilities of the cohort to enable the partnership to target resource and collective action more effectively. The effectiveness of analysis and tracking of children and young people with an EHCP who become NEET post statutory education has been strengthened.

The YJT Education Inclusion Team Leader has been the coordinator for two projects which are now established within Somerset Youth Justice focussing on prevention and early intervention for young people aged 10 – 18. (TM and Turnaround)

From Jan 2023, Somerset Education service has undertaken a significant reorganisation to ensure that it understands and builds relationships with its communities more. The strategic aim is to reduce the number of children who leave education early for whatever reason.

A new Vulnerable Learners service was formed and from September 2023 there will be multi – professional area inclusion teams which will oversee all vulnerable learners, including children working with the YJT.

Going forward each Area Inclusion Partnership will have data about those young people at risk of leaving school early, (attendance, part time timetables, suspensions, and exclusions) this data will also consider protected characteristics and highlight disproportionality and will be reported to our internal management teams (QPRM) quarterly, and to our joint Area Inclusion Boards on a termly basis.

#### Youth Justice Support Work - Education Inclusion - Case Study

“A young male presenting with lack of thought around his actions had recently been excluded from school for inappropriate behaviour. He showed signs of social anxiety and lack of confidence leading to vulnerability to peer pressure. A Youth Justice Worker offered a short-term intervention that involved grounding techniques using sensory items to try and prevent heightened behaviour in class and advocated for the young person as part of a SENCO review. At the same time the Education Inclusion Coordinator organised some alternative provision on a Bike Mechanics course to help gain confidence.

Impact - The program of support resulted in a spotless report card, increased confidence leading to obtainment of a Saturday job and aspirations to become a mechanic. A referral was made to Young Somerset for ongoing support with wellbeing and mental health. (Schools Inclusion)”

(Appendix 11 – Teachable Moments – bike project case study)

SYJPB Priority 3 - Improve the identification of children and young people at risk of exploitation including county lines type activity and provide an effective early multi agency response.

The SYJPB drive for greater identification and understanding of need and scope will be significantly improved by the purchase and mobilisation of an up-to-date case management system (CMS) - NEC Pathways. Whilst operational use of Pathways commenced in November 2022, reporting was delayed by developmental work and went live in late April 2023. Given that Somerset YJT is the first service nationally to utilise Pathways, delay has been noted by the SYJPB as a potential business risk; the YJB have been sighted on the new system and its roll out form an early stage.

Pathways has exploitation markers built into the system, in a way which our previous and outdated system did not. All YJ practitioners can also access the social work and early help case management systems plus the county side Transform database to triangulate information received in relation to potential exploitation.

Other progress against this strategic priority includes improved and embedded joint working across the partnership and strengthened links with the Social Care CE leads. Our ability to identify those at risk of or already subject to exploitation has improved with closer working relationships across the piece and the use of data analytics provided by the Police 'Clicksight' app.

“Good for [child] to be able to chat to adults in a group setting that have been through the same thing as he is going through at the minute.”

“Groupwork, one to one, activities, education etc.) Activities e.g., being in a group and having the chance to speak to adults in an open setting.  
More activities but not sure what.”

[In response to question: What type of intervention do you think would benefit your child going forward?]

“Good to speak to ex-gang members, some more helpful than others”

“Yes, it's a good idea [for child to speak to a mentor with lived experiences] it shows the boys that actually what they're doing isn't cool...they've [mentors] been through it.”

[in response to being asked if their child found group work helpful]

Multiagency targeted work to prevent and disrupt exploitation at community level in identified priority areas has shown significant progress, with serious activity in Taunton disrupted through a creative multi agency package including group work with lived experience mentors, additional police activity in dedicated neighbourhoods and swift enforcement action where indicated. A further multi agency working group is meeting currently (May 2023) to review a recent spike in serious youth violence, much but not all of which is identified as exploitation related, to jointly review agency actions and decisions made with the cohort of children and young adults involved.

The Voice of the Child Supported by Somerset Youth Justice Services

SYJPB Priority 4 - Ensure appropriate screening of the health vulnerabilities of our YJT cohort and that the necessary pathways are available and have sufficient capacity to meet their needs to reduce the risks of further offending behaviour.

The vacancy for a psychologist for much of the reporting year has significantly hampered progress against this priority. Contingency plans were developed, enabling YJT staff to access support, guidance, and consultation on a case-by-case basis, which ensured that emotional wellbeing and mental health issues were routinely considered.

2 x Youth Justice trauma informed champions completed their training and now act as points of reference and increased knowledge for the team – this was invaluable during the gap in psychology provision. Their drive to keep a TI focus to the forefront of YJ planning enabled the YJT to embed Trauma Informed practice into service delivery by



supporting (all) practitioners to apply trauma-informed approaches, to increase awareness and provide access to learning & materials. They have helped colleagues and partners to understand the impact of attachment and trauma and shared the techniques learned through the Champions network and training to embed psychological safety for children, staff, and family / carers. This approach has been developed at Somerset was the only one of the 5 Avon and Somerset Police area YJTs not involved in the Enhanced Case Management 3-year pilot programme.

The new NEC Pathways system and now its reporting functions (go live date was late April 2023) will increase Somerset YJT's analysis and effectiveness of referral pathways to ensure appropriate service responses. The SYJPB has an extended action to source enhanced resource for dedicated health resource to support and expedite referral pathways that help children and young people get prompt access health care and have their full health needs met.

The priority to secure an early general health resource remains outstanding. The purpose of this would be to:

- Provide comprehensive health (general) assessments for all YJT CYP, including general physical health, sexual health, Mental Health, substance use, (use of evidence-based tools, planning)
- Co-ordinate health care planning & facilitation of treatment
- Liaise (as health specialist) with custody environment / secure estate.
- Contribute to multi agency risk management, MARP, MAPPA, Child Protection, MARAC
- Coordinate onward specialist referrals and act as a SPOC for consultation and advice to caseworkers.
- Be involved in Trauma informed formulations alongside YJT Clinical Psychologist
- Provide training for YJT on YP health and development.
- Co-ordinate information gathering from health information systems and
- To provide YJT input to acute health care joint approaches when they arise

SYJPB Priority 5 - Explore the impact of parental factors and support for parents of children in the criminal justice system including identification of an effective intervention methodology.

A parents' survey was established in Spring 2022 to help address this priority, but capacity has meant that this action will roll over into the 2023 – 2025 strategy. A carry forward action is to work with partners to scope and understand impact of parental factors and work with parents to understand support needs.

The support group for parents of children potentially and / or at risk from exploitation was established in early autumn 2022 and is now BAU. Coordinated by the Lead SW for Exploitation.

Impact - A father who took part in the Parents of children thought to be criminally exploited, was asked:

“Did you find the groupwork was useful or beneficial for your child in any way?”

Responded:

“It really opened his eyes up to exploitation and he would come home and talk about it.”

Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) training has been commissioned and is rolling out currently, with 30% of the YJT trained so far. Feedback from staff citing impact on work with parents:

Impact – The work with parents remains a key area for further development but specialist training delivered to staff cited:

From a Teachable Moments Professional Practitioner:

“This [Trauma based model for children showing aggressive behaviours towards parents] has enabled me to offer a way of supporting parents to address the issue within the family setting while showing the child that they are still loved and supported through contracting and consistent messages given by the parents regarding the behaviours shown.

With this approach consistency is key, providing the parents support to remain resilient throughout the process is equally as important as the contract setting with the child from the beginning.”

From Turnaround and Teachable Moments Professional Practitioner:

“In my experience I have found some of the methodology and resources Such as the basket techniques useful in practice. Regarding working directly with parents to encourage non punitive and confrontational behaviours with their children this is something that takes many weeks and months of building trust and belief in the principles of the NVR. In my experience these long-time frames of working practice are not often available to us a practitioners, and it is my understanding from the training that unless this is adopted as a long-term piece of work (examples given at the time were 12-18 months) it is not truly NVR delivery”.

The Solihull Parenting Approach foundation training remains available to YJT staff, and it is planned for diversion and prevention workers to attend this in 2023/2024

## **7.2 AUDITS OF SYJT CASEWORK PRACTICE THIS NEEDS TO BE DONE**

The Board is routinely sighted on practice, case studies, practice concerns & successes. (Evidence: OM manager reports, board papers). The SYJPB's 2020 submission of National Standards Audit for Children in the Youth Justice System (2019), identified gaps in data and SYJPB's understanding of key parts of the system. This directed the partnership to review and scrutinise some aspects (for instance children held in custody overnight), which overtime have become part of the partnerships quality assurance reporting expectation - Findings and learning from QA activity including scrutiny of key parts of the system is an important feature of Board life.

The Board maintains keen oversight of progress and improvements relating to all aspects of delivery, through operational reports in, commissioned reports, case studies and information manager reports - (Evidence: Custody review annual report; A&S Out of court developments; Disproportionality audit engagement; National Standards engagement; CE work, SYV multiagency audit; CSC QA support to the YJT and SYJPB; CCE multiagency audit work and engagement). (Appendix 12 – Custody Review report)

Operationally, the YJT are proud of their approach and use of Quality Assurance (QA) to strengthen their support to Children and Young People. QA is a strong feature of YJT life and continues to support a well embedded culture of learning and Continuous improvement (Evidence: PEs and moderation feedback, JTAI preparation CCE; survey findings, feedback into workshops; team day presentations)

Audits are conducted as routine, quarterly, and are moderated. Their analysis helps us steer improvement and challenge across the service and where relevant across the wider Childrens support and justice systems. YJT alongside the service improvement team have developed a 'Good Practice' bank of folders in which examples of anonymised work that has been assessed and nominated by others as Good/Outstanding. This evidence is collated and also supports service and staff development.

These include for instance Court Reports and Childrens assessments, a YJT Professional Practitioner from the team has the lead to develop this further. YJT operational practice is routinely audited and evaluated both in house and by our partners. In house operational QA processes are built into practice, with consistency of QA oversight of all assessments and reports being completed by the YJT team leaders. Mechanisms have been improved to align with CSC QA cycle and a process which involves all members of the team as well as external colleagues in evaluation and moderation of practice. This promotes shared responsibility and agreed, collective practice improvement.

#### Summer 2022 Practice Evaluations – 'Identity'

100% of young people, and parents/carers spoken to agreed that they:

1. Feel listened to
2. Know why the service is involved.
3. Feel that the service is helping.

## Feedback from families

'Jo is really amazing, she has been the most helpful person out of any service I have had. I felt like I didn't need to talk to a mental health person, Jo thought it would be helpful so I met the psychologist, it was really good/helpful for me When Jo comes to see me it's good I feel like everything Jo has done for me has helped me move away from what I was doing (offending)' (ID 146670)

A mother identified that their child's practitioner helped manage stigma at School (ID 149169)

'Lara was really decent to me and helped me with my temper and helped me with different ways to help me deal with it' (ID 147266)

'Nothing negative to say about YOT at all, from start to finish it has been great' (ID 145435)



Autumn 2022 practice Evaluations – ‘addressing identified needs’ (Sept) ‘formal reports to court (Nov).

- 2 Requires Improvement (September)
- 1 Outstanding (November)

Priority themes for improvement from the autumn 2022 audits included SMART Planning, Feedback, Management oversight, support and challenge. Plans to address via feedback, support and challenge to the team and further dip sampling of 20 cases, to evidence improvement in these areas took place in June 2023.

Spring 2023 - Practice Evaluation audits – Education, Health and Care Plans  
4 Evaluation completed, 3 x graded good, 1 graded outstanding.

## Feedback

*Case holder clearly has a positive working relationship with C, which is of particular importance given his family background and lack of positive attachments with adults/ caregivers 147093*

*Excellent relationship building which has led to trust and engagement  
Action plan is not just about offending packages, but also includes a trauma informed approach 146195*

*I liked how the positive relationship has been documented between the young person and the intervention worker. In particular how relaxed the young person is with engagement 146314*

*Multi agency working / consideration of past trauma and its impact on offending behaviour. Clear case recording Good management oversight Good honest open communication and relationship building based on the small amount of time she has held the case 149249*

The Spring 2023 evaluations evidenced key Strengths / Good practice

## Strengths/good practice

**100% of evaluators agreed that (where appropriate):**

- the views of both parents/carers were clear
- views had been represented in key meetings and decision making
- views had informed intervention and planning
- appropriate support had been given to support parents/carers to express their views

**100% of evaluators found evidence that the plan had been shared with the child/young person**

**100% of PEs evidenced multi-agency involvement in discussions and reviews relating to the child/young persons education training and/or employment**

**100% of plans evidence contribution from all relevant agencies to support education, training and/or employment**

**100% of evaluators agreed (3 strongly agreed, 1 agreed) that supervision is happening at an appropriate frequency and is supporting clear effective planning**

**100% of PEs identified there is evidence of the partnership working supporting the risk, safety and wellbeing of the child/young person**

**100% of evaluators strongly agreed, that.**

1. Managers have oversight of interventions and assessments
2. Managers are aware of the young persons risk, safety and wellbeing
3. Managers have offered appropriate support and challenge to the worker

**What do our PEs tell us?**

For the 1 young person who had been 'missing in the last 6 months' the evaluator agreed that there was evidence of partnership working in response to the missing episode

**100% of moderators agreed (3 agreed, 1 strongly agreed) that the action plan supports the child/young person and family to..**

1. reduce re-offending
2. manage risk to others in the community

Further to Practice Evaluations, the Local authority with the SSCP conduct the Multiagency Practice Evaluations (MAPE). Two MAPEs were held in the reporting year One in October 2022 with a focus upon the multiagency response to Child Criminal exploitation a JTAI style preparation audit during which the YJT were acknowledged for highly effective contribution to practice, and a second MAPE focused on resettlement, which highlighted several areas for improvement by partners and an action plan implemented to address areas of concern.

### **7.3 STAFF TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

This year the team were supported by Trauma Informed Champions, 2 YJT practitioners who were involved and trained on behalf of Somerset as part of a Southwest Trauma Informed Practice (TiP) champions initiative. The 2 staff were trained to use a Trauma recover model to support children and promote desistance, the staff and managers concur that the impact of the approaches have been far reaching for the children worked with.

A YJT practitioner trained in Trauma Informed Practice states:

"Attempting to address children's offending behaviour without understanding the context of trauma can result in unsuccessful and sometimes detrimental interventions that may do nothing to reduce recidivism. By completing TrACE assessments this can identify vulnerable children and make interventions and effective behaviour management decisions. Whilst we will continue to assess risk and provide robust plans to manage risk, what we are now trying to do is to determine what is misbehaviour and what could be stress related/trauma response behaviour. We are no longer working from a model that merely imposes interventions on a child and expects the child to become accountable for their behaviour, we are trying to understand what has happened to them, rather than just focusing on what they did. For example, a child who has been the victim of trauma maybe unable to empathise with the victims of their behaviour until their own trauma and feelings/emotions/experiences are validated. The TrACE and intervention plan is formulated using the Trauma Recovery Model as a guide, the model that underpins the Enhanced Case Management way of working. It has patience, attempts to understand, relationship building, social role modelling at its heart. Having engaged in a yearlong trauma training programme, I am now using the TRM as my guide and have in that time, not experienced one child breaching their order, and the relationships I have made have been significant. I feel my interventions are more informed and bespoke for that individual child".

Moving forward, the YJT OM has purchased 20 places of YJB UNITAS Trauma Informed approaches training, the investment aims to build on the evidence-based strengths.

(Appendix 6 – Trauma Informed case study – April 2023 board)

### **7.4 IMPROVEMENTS IN ETE ENGAGEMENT**

The ETE quality data (quarterly), is 'moment in time', and may not reflect YJB ETE data which is limited to court ordered interventions. The table data in section 8.4 is the YJT cohort open to YJT subject to statutory outcomes from Youth Cautions, Youth Conditional Cautions and Coon diversionary and preventative support or out of court

disposals as well as those who are court ordered to reflect the full breadth of intervention provided by YJT. The table data in section 8.4 is the YJT cohort open to YJT subject to statutory outcomes from Youth Cautions, Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Outcomes to reflect the full breadth of intervention provided by YJT.

Since 2020, there has been the development of a specific role and then an appointment of an Education Inclusion Worker (later made up to a team leader post to reflect the breadth of role and the increased capacity through Teachable Moments and Turnaround) which has undoubtedly enabled the partnership to continue to make significant and sustained progress in reducing the number of children with no or insufficient education offer or engagement.

The Education Inclusion Team Leader maintains oversight of all casework where barriers to education are evident and continues to facilitate transition work for rising year 11 students, providing comprehensive support and guidance to children and young people and their families and practitioners.

Since Dec 2020 through to the present (June 2023), this targeted role has helped to reduce the number of YJT young people who are NEET from 8% in Dec 2020 to 8% in April 2023 (having peaked at 18.2% in September 2021) and continues to support the successful transitions of individual young people into education, training, or employment. To note – given the small cohort, 1 child in or out of ETE has a significant impact upon the rolling figures.

As of June 2023, 91.7% of our school age children on statutory programmes are in full time or part time provision and 95% above school age children on statutory programmes are in full or part time work/training/education.

Although good progress has been made in the reporting year, this area of work remains a continued priority and we will ensure sustained and ongoing focus in addressing barriers where they do exist for YJT children, recognising the importance of appropriate and engaging education, training, and employment as desistence factors.

## **7.5 HIGH INTEREST AND CSPPI REPORTING**

During the reporting year, Somerset SYJT continued to report CSPPIs in line with YJB expectations. Towards the latter end of 2022, we experienced an exponential spike in certain serious violent offences (attempted murder; Section 18/20 GBH)

Local tactical meetings involving Childrens Services, Police and YJT which map, determine local plans and implement interventions in response to already active individuals and emerging community concerns have been a regular feature of our multi partner work. Wider multiagency partnership and strategic approaches including the courts & community, are to be developed further.

Across the reporting year a total of 10 children were involved in 6 separate incident notifications involving serious violence offences, (3) x attempted murder (co-accused), (3) x grievous bodily harm / or wounding with/without intent – (section 18/20). In comparison to only 2 notifications in 2021.

Serious Youth Violence is a key priority for the SYJPB to address in the forthcoming year, in line with the Serious Violence Duty 2023, with a sustained multi-agency effort to

improve data sharing and assessment to better identify drivers and inform resource targeting ongoing.

It is believed that County Lines is a feature in some but not all serious incidents reported – others include features of postcode hostility, and one incident is believed to be more an isolated act of violence towards unknown victims.

Children and Young people talked to us about their experience of 'street life' and community life in parts of Somerset and their feelings of fear and anxiety around being harmed by others, the need to be in a group for safety and to prevent them being targeted for exploitation – children who have subsequently been charged with serious offences expressed the desire to keep out of trouble, to be protected by adults and the police and to have constructive activity to engage them and help keep them safe from harm, exploitation and from 'getting into trouble'. Some children tell us they do not feel safe in their communities and feel labelled, also that they worry for younger children, siblings, and friends as they get older.

Action in progress at the time of writing include learning from national YJ counterparts and using evidence-based practice to build on the effectiveness of our strategic and operational response here in Somerset. Multiagency practice and case reviews planned for Summer Autumn 2023 will also strengthen the partnership capacity and response.

## **7.6 IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR OUT OF COURT DISPOSAL DECISION MAKING**

The expanded multiagency representation on the East and West Out of Court panels continues to provide robust oversight of all cases, as demonstrated through Avon and Somerset scrutiny feedback. Consideration of Outcome 22 deferred prosecution as an outcome has increased the depth and breadth of the panel as more children can be diverted through the panel under this outcome. The use of this outcome is in its infancy in Somerset, and we continue to link with the force wide tactical group to ensure cohesion across the 5-force area Youth Justice Teams and to identify under which circumstances this outcome will be considered.

National Standards self-assessment findings in 2020 led to improvement in 'end of intervention' paperwork which is now embedded into practice and captures evidence of work completed with young people on out of court disposals, their engagement in the process and future targets.

Going forwards in to 2023/2024 we will:

- Utilise the Fact-Finding Assessment Tool for assessments for all children at Out of Court Panel. Case workers will complete full Asset Plus assessments for any cases resulting in either a Youth Conditional Caution or where there is an assessment of high/very-high ROSH (risk of serious harm) and/or Safety and Well Being concerns.
- Maintain oversight within the Multiagency Risk Panel of OOC cases where High ROSH and/or Safety and Well Being concerns become evident.
- Continue to use the diversion focused interventions, Choices and Consequences or Youth Alcohol and Drug Diversion, as intervention options for the panel, alongside TM and Turnaround options.
- Continue to have available a range of support and interventions responsive to the individual needs of the child, resulting in a bespoke package of interventions as

necessary which can be agreed under the range of outcomes available through the multiagency Out of Court Process.

- Continue to ensure children understand the requirements of out of court outcomes and have access to specialist staff where there are communication difficulties which could hinder this understanding.
- Contact all victims including corporate victims and ensure they are offered the opportunity to feed their views into the process and offer the opportunity of restorative responses which can include participation in a Restorative Justice Conference.

## **7.7 REACTIVE and HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

SYJT established and lead a multiagency Reactive and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (RaHSB) forum which was introduced in July 2021 as part of the update of the Somerset Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol (refreshed May 2022).

(Appendix 13 – Reactive and Harmful Sexual Behaviour protocol)

The forum is multi-agency and aims to address the needs of children and young people aged 10 to 18 who have/are displaying reactive and/or harmful sexual behaviour. The forum reviews and considers referrals and makes recommendations for appropriate assessment and interventions. The forum is held via Microsoft Teams to enable as full attendance as possible over a large geographical area.

The forum supports the SYJT strategic action plan and SYJPB priorities of:

- Develop multi agency interventions to prevent children and young people involved in offending behaviour escalating in their behaviour severity or frequency.
- Ensure appropriate screening of the health vulnerabilities of our YJT cohort and that the necessary pathways are available and have sufficient capacity to meet their needs to reduce the risks of further offending behaviour.
- Explore the impact of parental factors and support for parents of children in the criminal justice system including identification of an effective intervention methodology.

R&HSB forum core membership includes Somerset YJT, Avon and Somerset Police - Operation Ruby, Children's Social Care, Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Family Intervention Service and Education Safeguarding Service.

From July 2021 to December 2022 31 young people have been discussed at the forum and support plans implemented. In total 53 discussions have been held regarding these children; some have been reviewed at forum due to the complexity of their behaviours and to follow up actions.

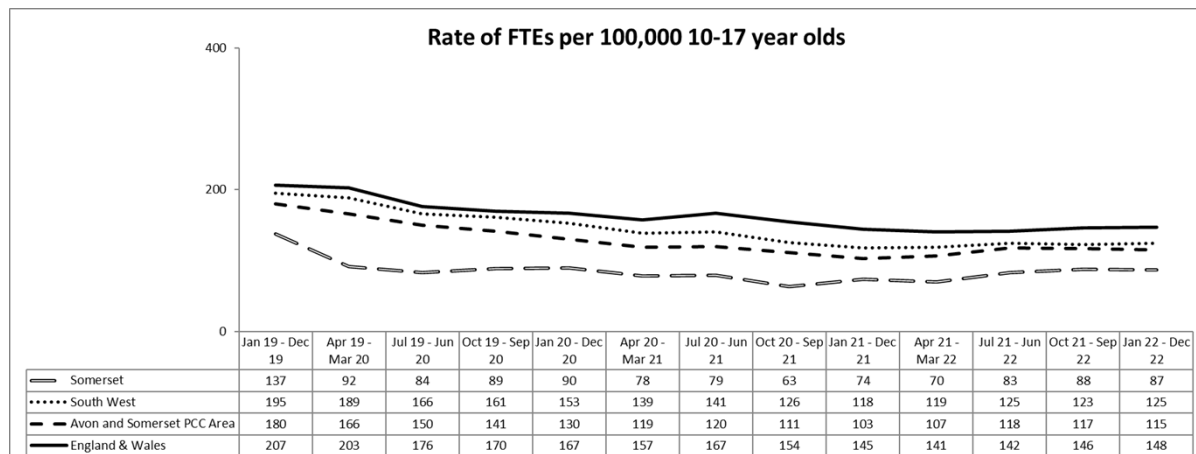
This work has also been supported by the targeted multi professional training for practitioners from SYJT, CSC and Prevention partners, in AIM 3 assessment and intervention practice, and AIM 3 supervisors training (for the multi-agency group of managers). This capacity and expertise building across the partnership has enabled the partnership to improve consistency in support and achieve proportionate responses for children involved in R&HSB.



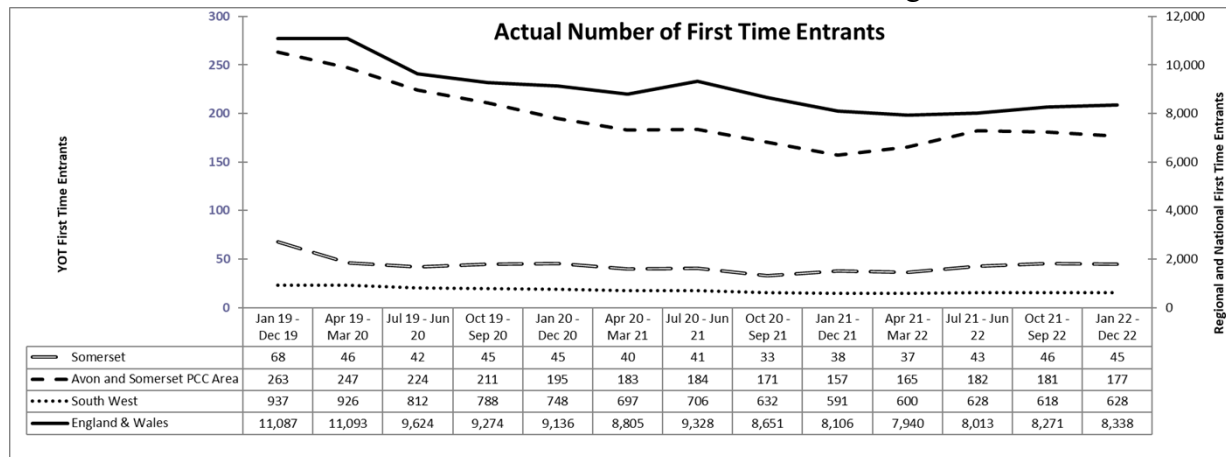
## 8.PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES (outlined in service improvements section)

### 8.1 FIRST TIME ENTRANTS (FTEs) TO THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

The annual number of FTEs in Somerset is very small but has risen by 17.2% since 2021. In the 2021 calendar year, the First Time Entrants PNC rate in Somerset (MOJ Published data), was 38 and for 2022 it was 45. The graph below shows this increase in the FTE PNC Rate and compares it with England and Wales, and other areas. However, the First Time Entrants PNC rate in Somerset is lower than the southwest rate, the local Police Crime Commissioner area (Avon and Somerset) and England and Wales.



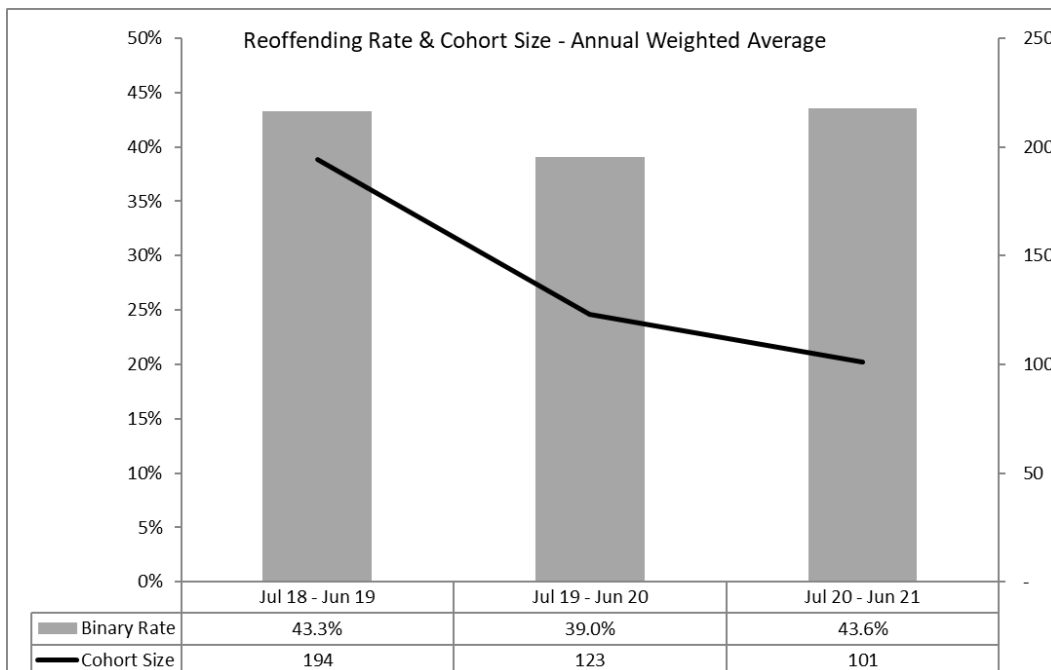
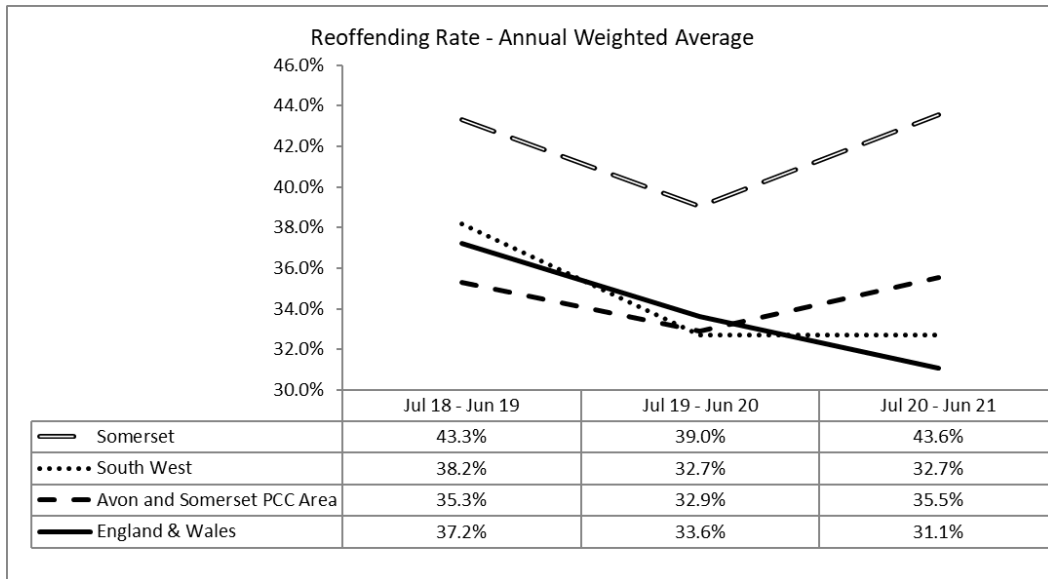
The actual numbers of First Time Entrants can be seen in the following chart.



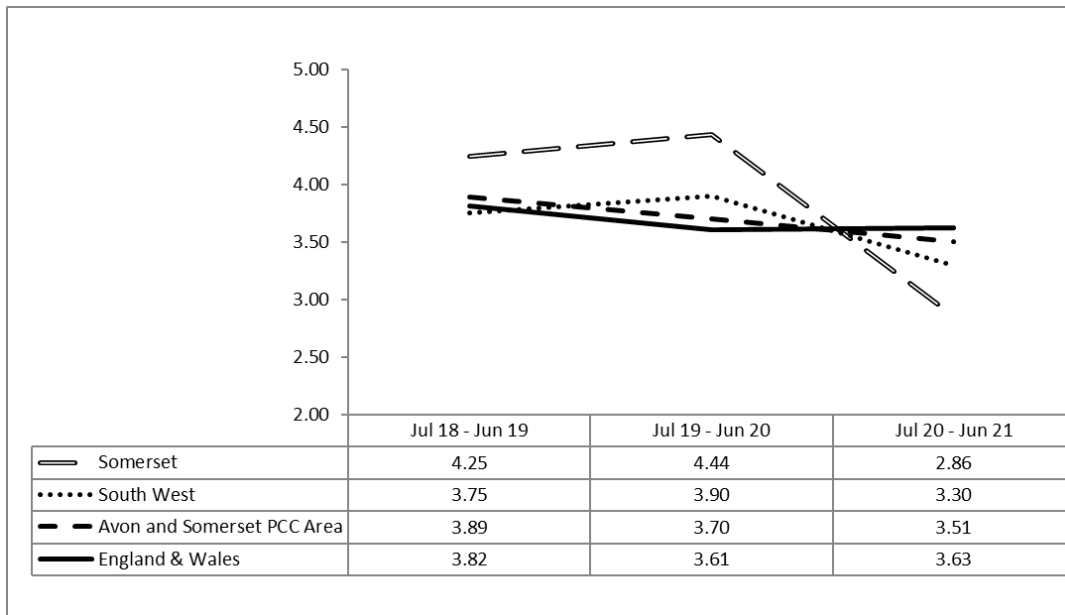
### 8.2 REOFFENDING RATES

The reoffending rate in Somerset is 43.6% for the period of July 2020 to June 2021, it is of some concern, as it is higher than the Southwest, England and Wales and the Avon and Somerset PCC for the same period. This is shown in the first graph below. There has been a lot of thought, reflection and analysis of our reoffending patterns and it is considered that one of the factors for this higher rate, is because of a historic low rate of First Time Entrant and this is also mirrored in the 2nd graph showing the reduction in the

cohort size from 194 in 2018/19 to 101 in 2020/21. The hypothesis stands that Somerset continue to have a very small, complex, and challenging cohort with the majority of offenders receiving preventative outcomes instead of criminal ones.



What is heartening however is the number of reoffences committed by this small group of young people, the graph below shows that the number of reoffences committed has reduced in Somerset over the past three years and is now lower than all our comparators.



The cohort of young people captured within this data were those who entered the youth justice system, either due to ongoing patterns of offending following previous diversionary measures through SYJT led Multiagency ‘Out of Court’ panel or, due to the seriousness of the offences committed. SYJT’s use of individualised diversionary responses is effective in identifying and responding to young people through targeted, appropriate intervention and this does correlate with data for first time entrants (FTE).

The remaining critical few young people are those who are more likely to be at higher risk of reoffending, as reflected in this data – this area remains an ongoing concern for the partnership and the cohort of children and young people will continue to receive ongoing focused attention with continued targeted and individualised intervention support, alongside focused ETE work with individuals which has a critical role in desistance. Monthly tracking of reoffending has been established with the business intelligence team.

Going forwards, the SYJPB are sighted on the 10 new / reframed Key Performance Indicators and our system providers (NEC Pathways) have worked to ensure reporting will be in line with the new requirements for June 2023 onwards.

### 8.3 DIVERSION WORK

Multi-agency diversion work to avoid escalation into the formal youth justice system is considered frequently through the multiagency Out of Court (OOC) decision making panel.

Diversions and disposal options increased by 22.2% from 2021 to 2022, and the first quarter of 2023 has seen the upwards trend continue.

To ensure continued effective work the Multiagency OOC panel has refreshed its protocol and expanded panel membership, now including an RJ worker as a core

member, to ensure all effective support for children are considered and decision making is consistent.

The frequency of the OOC decision making panels doubled within the previous reporting year to accommodate increase in volume and panels have remained at this level in 2022/2023.

Other non-statutory intervention options (linked to non-statutory disposal methods i.e., community resolutions) decided through the panel, namely, SYJT led diversion programme 'choice and consequences' (C&C), evidenced that over a subsequent 7-month period since their engagement in the programme 97% children did not go on to commit further offences. (March 2023). The actual figures of completion follow:

April 2022 to March 2023

**Choices and Consequences**

- 376 children referred and attended.
- 10 have gone on to become suspects but none charged.

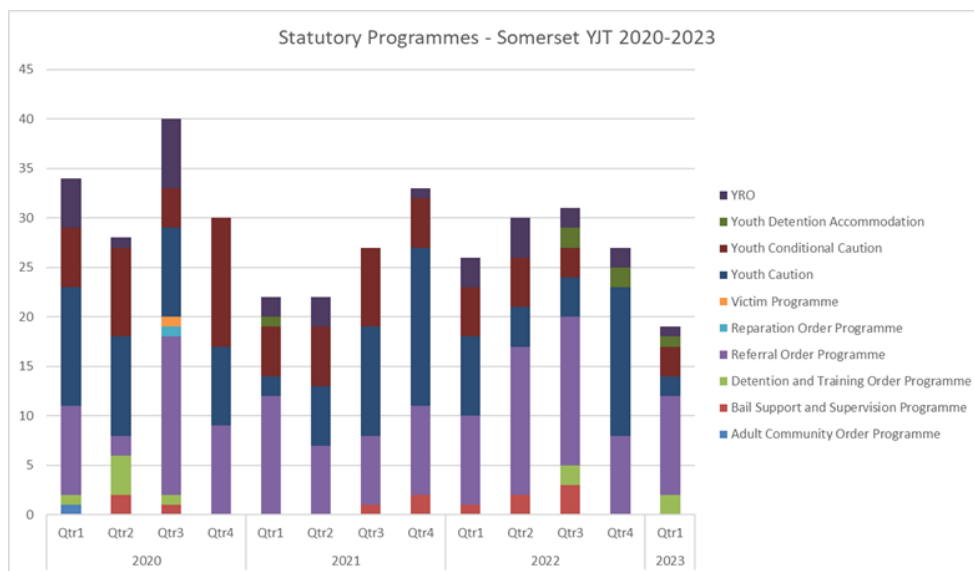
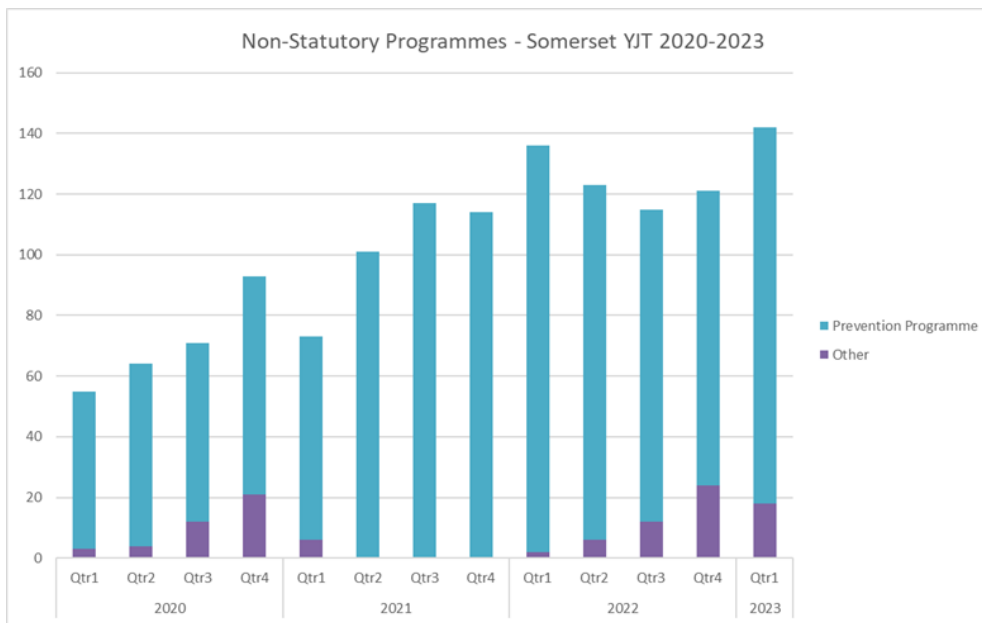
**Youth Alcohol and Drug Diversion (YADD)**

- 57 children referred and attended.
- 1 child progressed to show as a suspect.

Of 15 children referred back to the OOC Panel in the reporting year, all bar one received an out of court disposal:

Youth Caution with Intervention	6	
Youth Caution	2	
Community Resolution	1	
Outcome 22 options	4	
Discontinued (by CPS)	1	
OOO Panel referred back to court	1	(Final outcome Conditional Discharge)

Teachable Moment and Turnaround programmes are both mobilised in Somerset and are reported upon in the education sections of this document.



Unfortunately, we are unable to report the full breadth of diversion options, outcomes, and methods from the OOC panels on our previous CMS (which was in use until November 2022). The reporting functionality is currently under development within the new CMS system.

#### 8.4 ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION, TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT (ETE) (see also 7.4)

In the disproportionality audit completed in 2022, it was noted that there was a prevalence of suspension and permanent exclusions in the YJT cohort of children, therefore, several education priorities were identified: -

- scrutiny of local school exclusion data to include managed moves, internal exclusions, 'off-rolling' and informal exclusions; analysis and publication to quantify and tackle disproportionality.

- collate and analyse accurate linked school exclusion and offending data [for all vulnerable/overrepresented cohorts] to develop understanding as to whether BAME children and young people are more likely to be excluded from school, and whether that exclusion increases the likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system.

As a result of this, discussions with the Education SYJPB representative (Head of Vulnerable Learners, Somerset Council) have resulted in the agreement to provide personalised plans via the MAETE panel for any child where protected characteristics, suggest potential educational discrimination. (See also Section 7.4). Individual plans for disproportionately will focus across a range of issues:

- Attendance
  - Suspension
  - Exclusion
  - Part time timetables
  - SEN (Special Educational Needs) support
  - EHCP
- Plus:
- Racial incidents in schools

The table below shows a comparison of ETE figures with previous data presented at the SYJPB meetings since 2020. It demonstrates improvement in performance in this area particularly for young people sixteen-plus, since the appointment of the education inclusion worker in December 2020. The percentage of this age-range being NEET has improved from 57.7% in September 2020 to 5% (June 2023).

For school age children, the number of those children not engaging in education or have fluctuating engagement has remained comparatively lower than since prior to 2020. Over the last year however, there is an increase in the numbers of those reported who are not engaging. The work of the MAETE panel ensures that all YJT children are secured an education package and an offer, in line with their entitlement. Work by partners to align and verify data is underway at the time of writing to understand and address this emerging pattern. More recent data also demonstrated a concerning increase in the use of part time timetables – the Education Inclusion Team leader is currently working with partners from vulnerable learners to gather and scrutinise case data to determine contributory factors for the apparent increase.

The initial review of these cases found that the data related to children with SEN needs and those who had either dual enrolment or were subject to transfer to a pupil referral unit, whereby the use of a part time timetable was considered a measure to keep young people within a school setting and engaged, reduce exclusions and support re-engagement incrementally, from a child first position. Within the YJT we follow the YJB definition of a full-time school place being 25 hours per week, therefore any provision less than this, is considered to be part-time. This definition could differ from other local authority sources of education data.

Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023 - 2024

Metric (%)	Jun 2023 %	Apr 2023 %	Sep 2022 %	Jun 2022 %	Mar 2022 %	Jan 2022 %	Sep 2021 %	Jun 2021 %	Mar 2021 %	Dec 2020 %
School Age Full Time	20.8	13.3	52.9	70.6	70	73	36.4	61	54	49
School Age Part Time	70.9	80	41.4	29.4	30	18	45.5	39	43	43
School Age not in ETE	*8.3	6.7	5.9	0	0	9	18.2	0	2.7	8
Post-16 Full Time	65	50	68	69.6	62.5	58	63.9	54	47	53
Post-16 Part Time	30	22.2	12	17.4	20.8	23	16.7	20	25	3.9
Post-16 not in ETE	5	27.8	20	13.0	16.7	19	19.4	26	28	43.1

*(The above data reflects only YJT children subject to statutory outcomes including court outcomes and Youth Cautions, or Youth Conditional Cautions. The \*8.3% of school age children not in education equates to two children who were not engaging in education at the time of writing. Both children had an education package available to them. In these instances, and those where other barriers might exist, the MAETE panel meet fortnightly to remove barriers, track YJT children's progress and provide a targeted and stepped response to re-engage children back into full time education)*

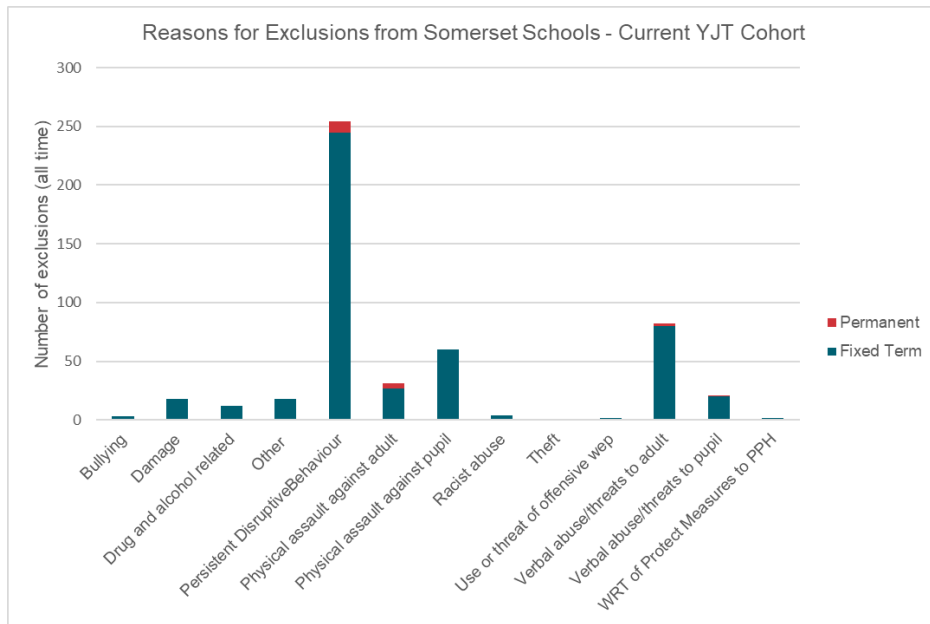
The following few paragraphs summarise the current situation (at the time of writing) for this cohort with regards to education.

#### Exclusions

Of the current cohort of 44 young people:

- 39 have had at least 1 exclusion from a Somerset school in their history, totalling 508 exclusions.
- 12 have had at least 1 permanent exclusion, totalling 16 permanent exclusions.
- 1 has been excluded once since the start of their current programme.

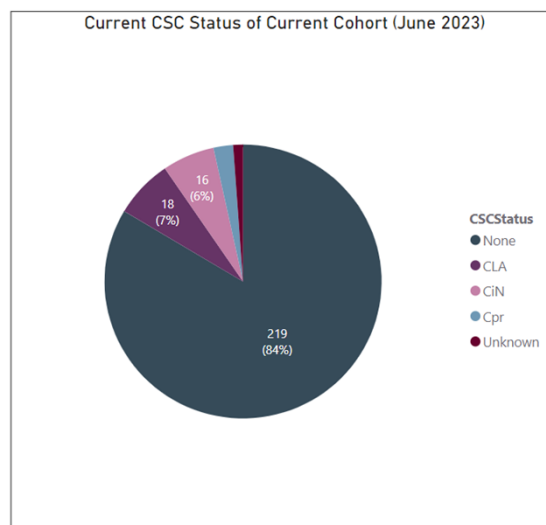
The reasons for the 508 exclusions are detailed in the graph below.



- Part-time Timetables - 7 young people are on a part-time timetable.
- Electively Home Educated - 1 young person is recorded as being electively home educated.
- Education & Health Care Plans - 16 young people have an EHCP (36.4%). An additional 17 have SEN support (38.6%).

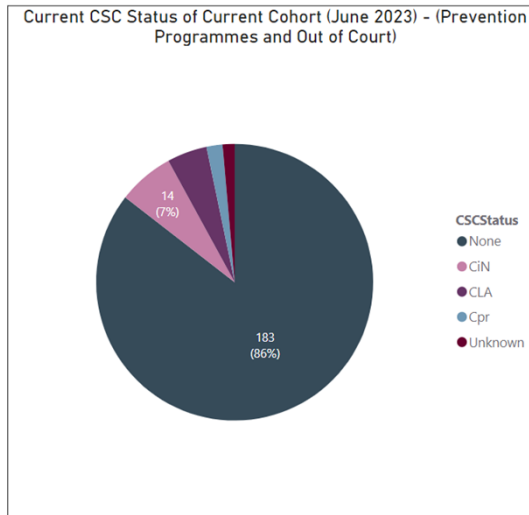
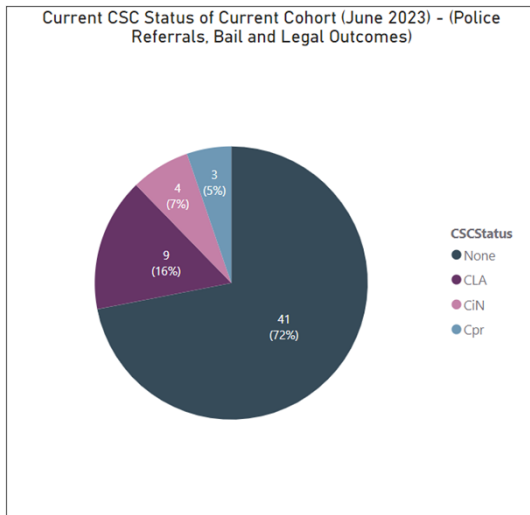
**8.6 OVER-REPRESENTED CHILDREN**

It is known that there is a disproportionate number of children in the Somerset youth justice system who are either looked after or known to children social care and those with special education needs or those who belong to ethnic minority groups. All these young people are highlighted at the quarterly board meetings. The present statuses of the current cohort are seen in the pie charts below.



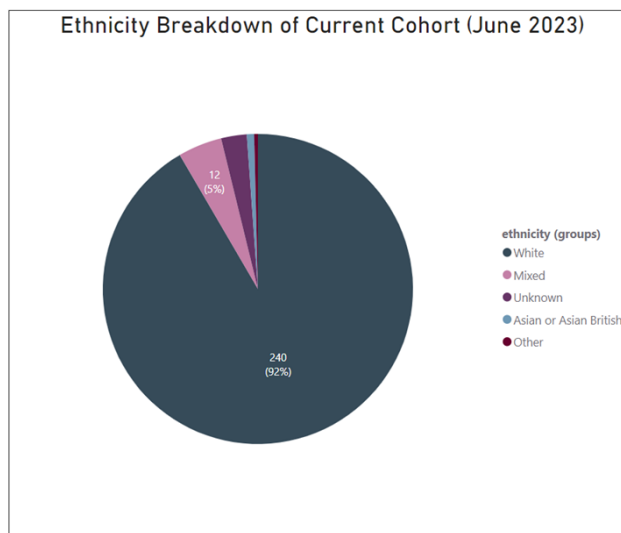


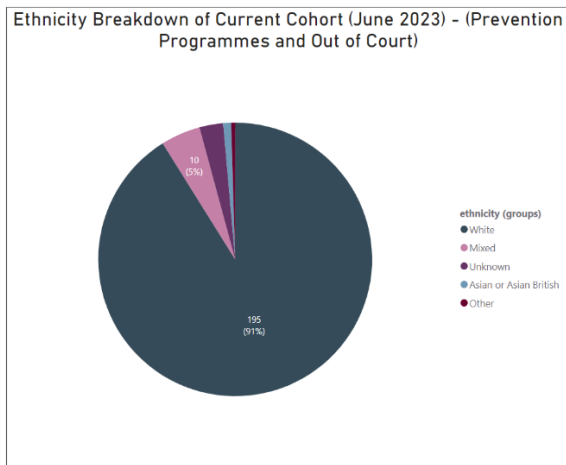
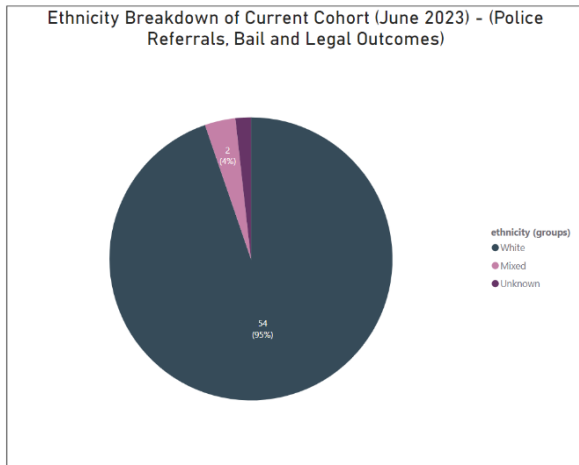
## Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023 - 2024



Of the 262 children currently working with the SYJT, 7% are Looked After and 2% have a Child Protection status. Looking at those specifically with Police Referrals, Bail, or Legal Outcomes, however, this rises significantly to 16% Looked After and 5% with a Child Protection status.

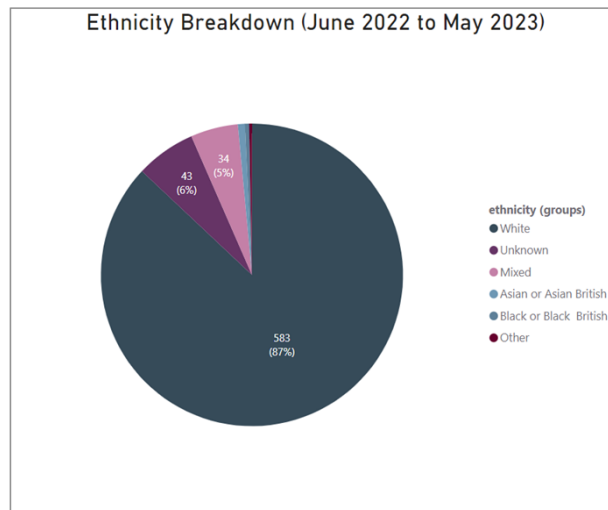
Analysis of the ethnic minority children cohort within Somerset has continued to be frustrating due to past inaccurate re-coding from our Careworks system to the national Youth Justice System. According to the YJB Ethnic Disproportionality Tool for 2021-2022, Asian children are significantly overrepresented at 13% of the offending population, however we know this is not the case and stems from other ethnicities being incorrectly converted when sent electronically to the Youth Justice Board.

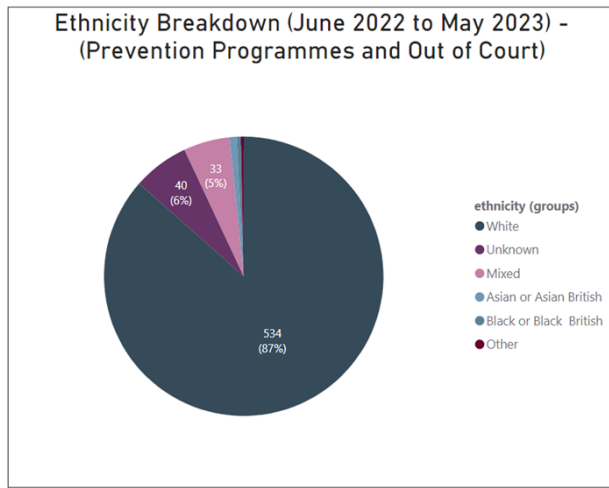
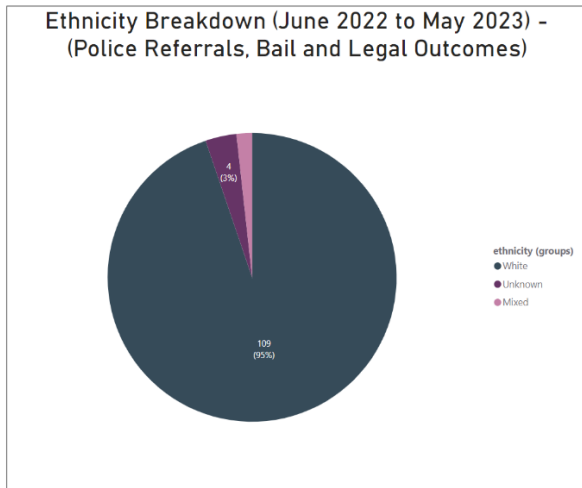




In Somerset, of the 57 children that currently have a Police Referral, Bail, or Legal Outcome, only 3.5 % are known to be of ethnic minority origin (although there are a further 1.8% of children that are of unknown ethnicity). In all, this is below to the total ethnic minority figure for Somerset (ages 10-17) of 6.45% (2021 Census).

Similarly, of the 262 children currently open to SYJT, 5.7% are of ethnic minority with a further 2.7% of unknown ethnicity. At these levels, this cannot be said to be an over-representation.

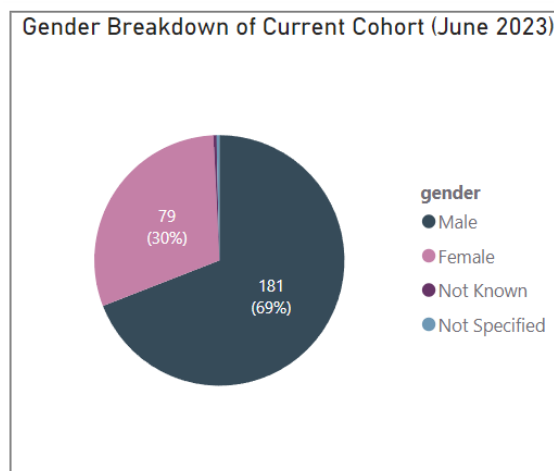




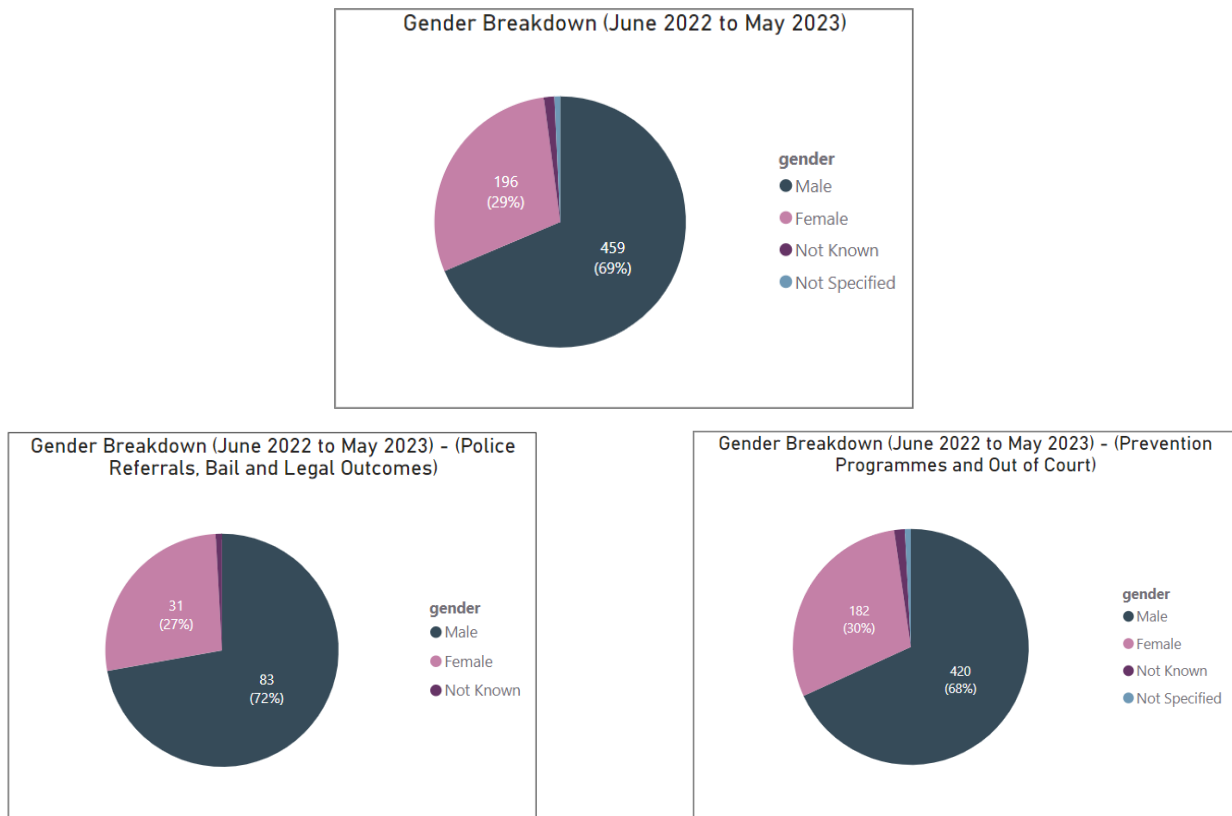
With such a small cohort, care should be taken when considering the percentages, as each individual child has a greater impact on the total. Looking at the larger cohort of children starting programmes within the last 12 months, the percentage of ethnic minority children increases to 6.6%, which is still in line with the 6.45% total figure of ethnic minority children in Somerset.

A multiagency report, 'Disproportionality in Somerset Youth Justice System' was commissioned in March 2022 by the SYJP to investigate the over-representation of ethnic minority children in the Somerset Youth Justice System. There were 7(97) ethnic minority children starting a statutory programme between 2021(Q2) and 2022(Q1) out of a total of 97, which equated to 7.22%. Since then, however, the number of ethnic minority children working with the SYJT has decreased and the number of ethnic minority children (aged 10-17) in Somerset has increased.

Male children are still significantly over-represented, however. Within the current cohort, 69% are male, as seen below.



Looking at the larger cohort of children starting programmes within the 12-month period of June 2022 to May 2023, the proportion of male children is still 69%, rising to 72% when looking at Police Referrals, Bail, and Legal Outcomes only.



### 8.7 WORK with GIRLS and YOUNG WOMEN

The SYJT police intervention worker has worked with local PCSOs from Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) to deliver work in schools focused on children, specifically girls, at risk of exploitation and violence. The link with the NPT allows relationship-based community work to continue after the group work finishes.

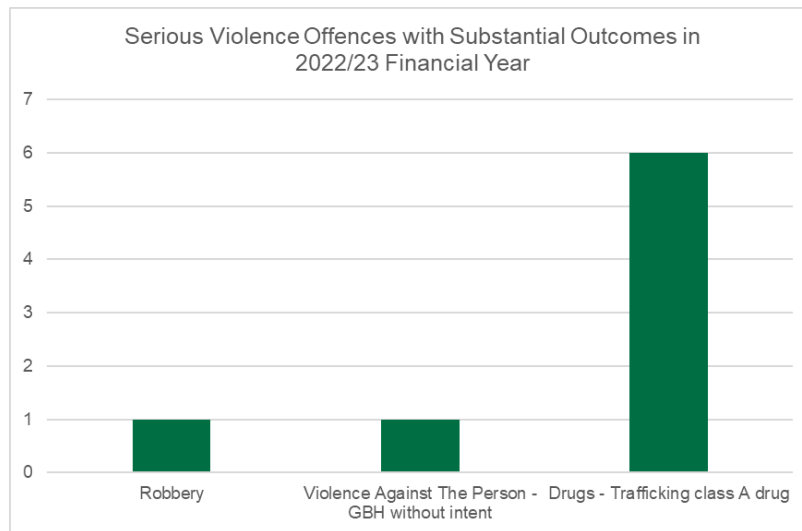
This approach has been supplemented by key intervention delivery with vulnerable groups of girls by the Teachable Moments staff. These interventions have included positive relationships and using IT/social media safely to reduce the potential for exploitation. These interventions have taken place within the school environment as part of the PSHE timetable, to encourage girls to stay in school and be active learners who feel valued in the school community.

A successful bid was made to the Home Office fund for 'girls, young women, and gangs' for an additional child exploitation support worker to provide robust support to girls and young women who are at risk of exploitation or actively being exploited either sexually or criminally (or both) and associated behaviours. This has allowed us to employ a Project Worker to provide outreach services to this vulnerable group. The post is overseen by the Lead SW for Exploitation.

### 8.8 SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE and EXPLOITATION

Following good progress through the previous reporting year (2021 when we saw a reduction in SYV offences), concerns throughout the last 12 months have escalated in the gravity and increased frequency in serious violence offences. In response, local tactical meetings involving Children's social care, Police and YJT were convened to

map and determine local plans and interventions in response to already active individuals and emerging community concerns. Multiagency partnership and strategic approaches to include including courts & community will be developed further. In the 2022/23 financial year, 5 young people received outcomes for 8 serious violence offences. The types of offences are shown in the graph below – all offences had a gravity score of 6.



Of the 5 young people who received outcomes for serious violence:

- 2 were aged 14 at the time of their offences, 3 were aged 17.
- All are from a White background – 2 are White British and 3 are from other White backgrounds.
- All are male.
- 4 are local, Somerset young people, 1 is from another local authority.

## 8.9 CONSTRUCTIVE RESETTLEMENT and USE OF CUSTODY (inc. remands) RESETTLEMENT

Somerset continues to have an extremely low rate of use of custody and thus arrangements for resettlement of children and young people post-release are made on an individual, bespoke basis.

The SYJT resettlement policy is in use, underpinned by the concept of resettlement as a journey for the child, rather than a single transition event, the policy and guidance provided to SYJT staff, and all partners has enabled robust and proactive resettlement arrangements for individuals in line with the four key principles and the '7 Pathways of Resettlement' (see below):

- 4 Principles of resettlement: -
- A continued focus on resettlement throughout a sentence
  - Early preparation for release
  - Effective communication between institution and community agencies
  - A co-ordinated holistic response involving multi-agency partnerships.

7 Resettlement Pathways – main objectives: – Effective case management & transitions through end-to-end service and support is provided around accommodation; education, training, and employment (ETE); Health; Substance Misuse; Families; Finance.

For children who are being integrated back into community (2023) there is evidence of robust, practice and tenacious leadership and challenge to partners to plan/co-ordinate resettlement, however, more needs to be done to improve timeliness and consistency of approach.

Whilst YJT has access to all relevant partners to support resettlement planning and is clear on the balance good resettlement needs to achieve for the child, there is more work required across the partnership to achieve this more consistently and effectively for children and their families/carers.

It is an improving picture, and a recent local MAPE learning review (Spring 2023) aimed to identify best practice and learning for partners to improve our multiagency response and approach to resettlement.

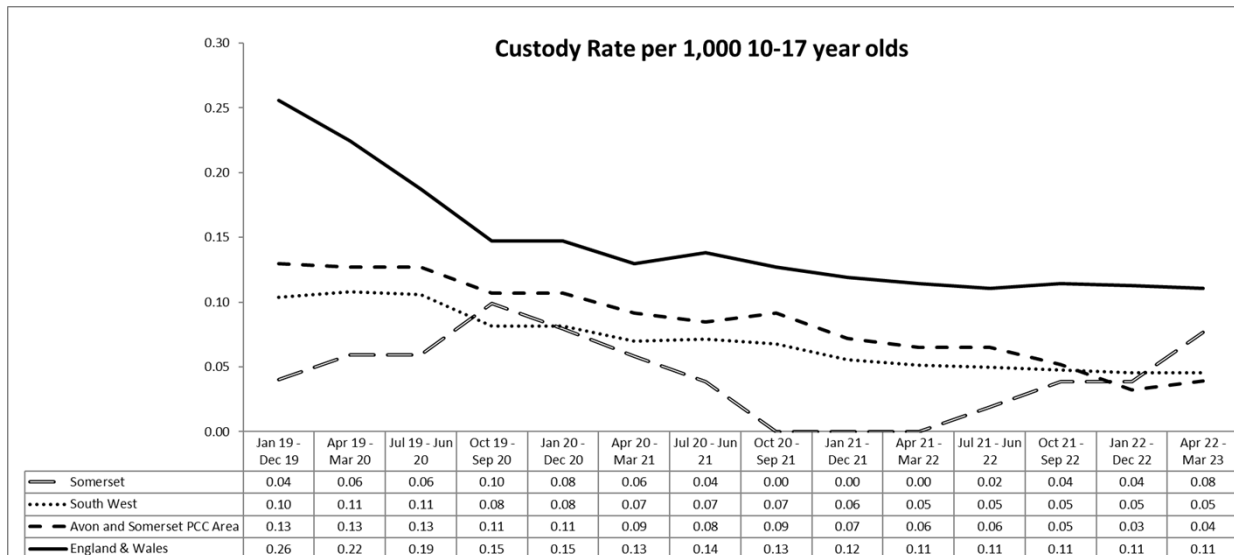
A joint YJT/CSC review of the CSC protocol is planned for 2023 would be advisable to embed a refreshed resettlement policy to specify mutual expectations in support of all required pathways.

Casework joint practice (early 2023) evidenced strong resettlement planning, (including welfare, took into account diversity needs and work to prevent reoffending), delivery and review – however the standard and expectations for such needs to be strengthened in the strategic policy and not reliant on the expertise of the individual casework or multiagency partners involved.

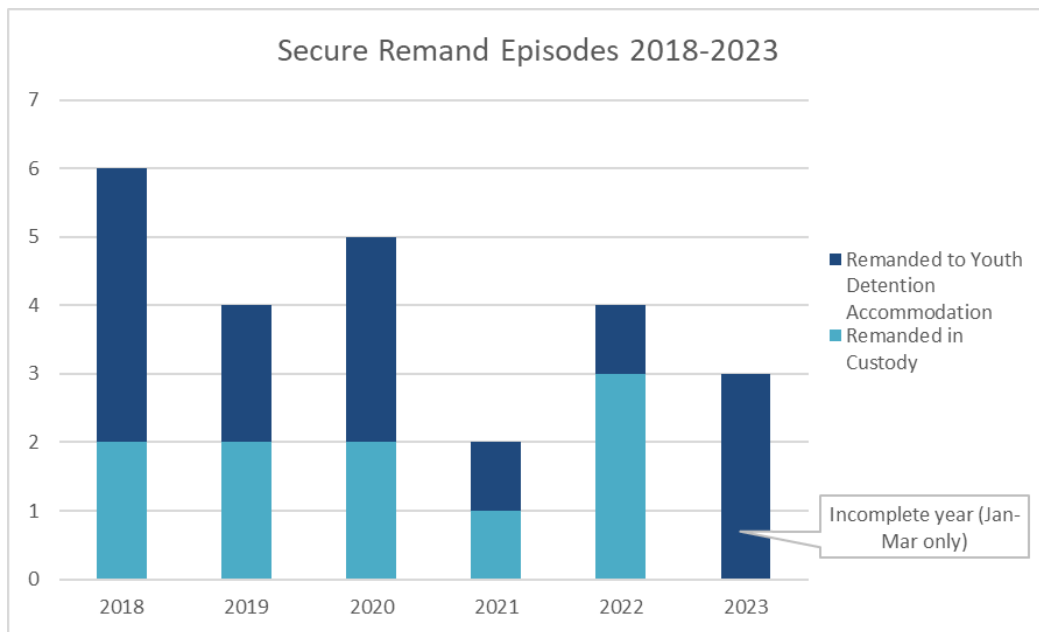
Individual young people aged 16-25 inclusive, continue to have access to a range of accommodation and support services through the Support & Accommodation Allocation and Review Panel for 16+ chaired by Local Authority's Head of Service for CLA and Leaving Care (East). This includes P2i (Pathway to Independence) accommodation and floating support and support for children and young people with complex needs through Prevention's Family Intervention Service (FIS), which may enable a child or young person leaving detention to return home or find alternative accommodation. Where this is not possible, P2i enables advance booking of places for young people leaving custody to support resettlement plans.

For children 16/17 years olds seeking help because of homelessness, Somerset YJT works closely with CSC colleagues through P2i Plus, in line with the Southwark judgement to ensure their needs are specifically assessed and pro-actively supported to resolve issues or to provide safe appropriate accommodation. This could involve family support such as family mediation or family group conferences.

The following graph is produced by the Youth Justice Board, and it shows the Custody rate per 1,000 populations, for Somerset, National and Regional. The graph illustrates that the national custody rate for young people has continued to reduce, although at a slower rate since 2020.



The use of custody is historically very low in Somerset, however, there has been four custodial outcomes in the past financial year, which has increased our rate from zero in April 2021/22 to 0.08 in the past financial year 2022/23. This increase means that although we are still below the England and Wales custody rate of 0.11, we are higher than the South-West average and the Avon and Somerset PCC Area. As the numbers involved are very small, notable fluctuations in the percentage rate can be expected from time to time as one child makes a significant numerical impact. Somerset maintains focus on custody being used as a sentence of last resort, when all other sentencing options considered are deemed unsuitable for the SYJT and partners to safely manage the young person within the community. All SYJT Pre-Sentence Reports, where custody is identified as a sentencing option, evidence thorough exploration with our partners and accommodation providers to provide robust alternatives to custody where possible. There have been three secure remands since the start of 2023 and four for the whole of 2022. This is shown in the graph below. Remands were highest in 2018 due to serious offences being committed. This data does not include young people from other areas placed in Somerset.



## 8.10 RESTORATIVE JUSTICE and VICTIMS

Prior to 2021, Somerset had a very small Restorative Justice (RJ) offer, which was limited to one half time worker sourcing victim views for Referral Order Panel reports. Since then, significant resources have been deployed to build an RJ Unit, comprising one full time Coordinator and 3 full time RJ workers. Tragically, we lost a driving member of the RJ Unit to ill health, so the team has seen some unsettling staff changes in the reporting period.

In April 2022, a Restorative Justice Policy was introduced to ensure best practice and to inform colleagues of procedure in the absence of the RJ worker. This was reviewed in April 2023.

Work to improve consistency in recording of victim contact data has been a focus for the past year and has led to a greater ability to interrogate data in relation to victims. The new Case Management System (CMS) will record victim data (including the victim support questionnaire launched in 2021) which relates to the Youth Justice Board's Key Performance Indicators for victims - this feature will be available in version 2 NEC Pathways due for release in Summer 2023. The CMS will record victim data within the system (rather than on Excel as our previous and antiquated system required) and will allow for greater oversight and interrogation of victim data - the victim section of CMS is locked down to relevant users.

Due to an increase in offences relating to assaultive behaviour on emergency workers during the global pandemic our seconded police officer and police intervention worker have developed an intervention with restorative justice elements to deliver with young people who have committed offences of this nature.

Due to an increase in cases going through the out of court panel, the Restorative Justice Worker remains part of the multi-professional team to ensure that the victim's voice is considered in the process.



In term of initial data (and acknowledging the loss of our previous RJ worker to us and the new CMS still in its infancy) we can confirm the following:

- 70 identifiable victims have had YJT (formal) contact in 2022/2023.
- Corporate victims and those representing bodies such as the police or other public services could not be separately identified but will be going forwards on Pathways
- Post contact outcomes included shuttle mediation, restorative letters of explanation and apology, compensation agreements, restorative justice conference.
- Our target of contact within 5 days of referral to the RJ team is being built into our CMS currently.
- Similarly, our non-engagement in the offer of RJ rate is also being built in the Pathways as a reportable item.

The Somerset YJT has a variety of community projects available across the County, which can be used when restorative justice intervention is not appropriate and/ or as a means to prepare a child to undertake more direct reparation at a later stage.

The Lighthouse victim support service' contact all vulnerable victims and victims of serious crime. All under 18-year-old victims are considered vulnerable. The SYJT is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the basis for collaboration with Lighthouse, the Avon and Somerset Police victim support service. Lighthouse signposts and refers victims to support agencies and keep them updated of case progress.

Where a child working with the YJT is convicted of an offence in scope for the Probation Service Victim Liaison Officer to become involved, links are well established, and information is shared in a transparent manner.

## **9. NATIONAL STANDARDS**

Work has continued regarding the findings of the full multi agency audit in 2020 with business as usual aligned to service improvement and practice evaluation as part of our embedded quality assurance cycle.

Routine audits, QA and reviews led by Team Leaders are embedded into the QA cycle and findings are used to ensure compliance with baseline standards of delivery and to drive improvements to our SYJT practice. This activity includes practice evaluations, specific case dip sampling (using standards / criteria), for example quarterly external scrutiny of children subject to police custody/overnight custody, & scrutiny of OOC panel decisions which is moderated at regional level.

All Asset Plus assessments continue to be signed off by Team Leaders with QA of all reports used for courts and referral order panels. Local working practice document which is pertinent to Somerset YJT continues to reflect local approaches which include clear guidance on referring to other service provision, relevant to individual child need.

The next NS Audit will again be completed as a multi-agency, SYJPB operation and we are investigating the use of child / young person user voices in this work through the Somerset Council partnership team.

Practice Evaluations in this reporting year have not evidenced any NS concerns and have supported a position that practitioners are adhering to the required delivery standards.

## **10. CHALLENGES RISKS AND ISSUES**

### **10.1 DEMAND**

The levels of demand for Youth Justice Services in Somerset (and nationally) continue to remain at a relatively low level compared with a decade ago. We have seen marginal fluctuation throughout the year but do not expect significant increase in throughput change throughout this next year. We do not expect an ongoing increase in the current planning year, although other areas (such as family intervention services) have sustained increased and complex work volume.

We will continue our quarterly monitoring of Appropriate Adult demand and first-time entrant numbers, as early indicators of potential changes in demand. We also monitor the numbers of cases assessed as high and very high risk of harm to others and/or high and very high vulnerability, as County Lines activity and other forms of exploitation/serious youth violence are a major and developing issue for the SYJPB.

The stable proportion of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice system has run in parallel with an increase in the caseload of the proportion of children with more complex needs, including those with multiple vulnerabilities and ACEs overlaid with a high proportion of children with EHCPs or SEN support needs identified.

These complex and vulnerable children place higher demands upon staff time, particularly where they become cases subject to MAPPA (statutory Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) and/or are subject to Intensive Supervision & Surveillance requirements. With regards to demand as a result of 'children looked after' being placed in Somerset, it is notable that since COVID children are being placed closer to home, we have since seen a decline in these numbers of children which stands at zero currently, June 2023.

### **10.2 RESOURCING**

Partner financial contributions have remained steady in the last 3 years, but this does not mitigate the impact of financial inflation. Police and Probation cash contributions are reflective of overhead costs for seconded staff only and do not provide any additional training element. In recent years, the SYJT diversified its management structure, deleted vacancies, and reduced its SYJT premises portfolio through co-location. A consequence of the reduction in premises has created pressure on travel costs for staff and the service, and suitable venue hire to see young people. As of April 2023, the Board has been active in identifying their own agency premises which the YJT can now investigate and, if suitable, access

Rurality and the decrease of public transport in Somerset has an impact on staff time and / or finances as children often require transportation. We will always look to families first, but for some there is simply no public transport or private transport available.

The autumn 2020 addition of the full time and permanent Education Inclusion Worker (now a team leader post to reflect increasing complexity and breadth of responsibility) was a significant increase in specialist resource and the continuing direct impact upon NEET figures is evidence of the success of this role. We are now looking to add an Education Inclusion Officer role back in to the YJT to further support ETE capacity and to work alongside the Local Authority in its Education for Life strategy. YJT involvement in the Teachable Moments and Turnaround programmes has added capacity and the ability to flex and provide the best worker / child fit possible.

The ability to release staff to attend social work training placements is an area of significant challenge, especially since social work training candidates are habitually our most experienced practitioners who hold high volume and more complex caseloads, but also a positive step in increasing the professional qualifications in the team. We now hold an agreement that one Social Worker graduate apprenticeship scheme candidate per year can, upon successful completion, remain in the SYJT and not be required to join front line CSC for a 2-year period as has previously been the case.

As a geographically large and significantly rural authority, there is always a concern that those resources being made available through national and regional initiatives will be diverted away from rural areas to support YJTs in metropolitan higher crime areas. This negates proper reflection of the costs of operating in rural areas with dispersed services and at significant distances from custodial and childcare community placements. This said, Somerset was successful in its Girls, Young Women and Gangs grant application, and with Avon and Somerset innovation grant money so we will continue to seek out and apply to suitable additional funding streams.

### **10.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS**

The current cost of living crisis may lead to a rise in acquisitive and street crime. There appears to be an increased level of involvement and exploitation of young people in organised drug dealing, including County Lines criminal operations.

## **11 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

### **11.1 STAFF TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Several new team members in addition to 'Turnaround staff, and Teachable Moments staff' joined the SYJT over the reporting year, this prompted the need for a further refresh of training and workforce planning. Ongoing investment in staff development remains a priority for the YJT. A renewed training needs audit is in the process of being finalised as part of the Training Plan from June 2023/25.

Priorities addressed in the reporting year and which we will continue to address included:

- Workshops - SYJT casework staff meet every fortnight for short workshops facilitated by in-house and external trainers/providers. The formalised elements of

these workshops are recorded in the minutes. Youth Justice specific training is delivered every 3 months, now in person, focusing on areas of identified need, facilitated by the YJT team leaders, OM and YJT seconded psychologist. Themed in person days enable the team to focus upon key priorities of development, updates and training and are well regarded by all staff including the YJT, Turnaround and Teachable Moments.

- SYJT Clinical Psychologist role will continue to deliver training to staff in Trauma Informed Practices.
- In early 2022 two SYJT Trauma Informed champions were identified from within the staffing team as part of a regional NHS / Youth Justice Board development. This initiative strengthened the practitioners' knowledge and application of trauma-informed approaches, helped increase awareness across the spectrum, providing access to learning & materials, helping colleagues and partners to understand the impact of attachment and trauma and learn techniques to embed psychological safety for children, staff, and family / carers.
- The champions were instrumental in shining a light on the hugely positive impact of trauma informed practice through case study feedback directly to the Board and to YJT staff.
- Reactive & sexually harmful behaviour training AIM will be rolled out again this coming year to secure a proportionate and skilled multiagency cohort of AIM supervisors and assessors from across the Childrens Services footprint.
- SYJT staff will also be included in the multi professional training opportunity Solihull Parenting Approach, to extend practitioners' skill around working with parents.
- Restorative Justice training was delivered in 2022 with most frontline workers completing this 3-day training. Further training is planned for 2023 to ensure new staff the achieve the 3-day Restorative Justice skill-based training.
- A Youth Justice Apprenticeship opportunity is currently being explored to enhance the workforce development offer to new staff keen to progress through the YJ pathway. it is envisaged this will be offered from September 2023.
- Trauma Informed practice and Child First practice has been sourced via UNITAS and has been made available (as essential training) to all YJT staff in the coming year.

## **11.2 PARTICIPATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)**

The SYJT Operational Manager continues to lead on participation and engagement developments with support now from the central Participation unit. Although this area has developed significantly over the last year with an increased focus Voice of the Child delivery around specific areas of concern and the development of a Youth Justice Action Group (YJAG), this component requires ongoing focus and possible further resource to enhance meaningful engagement and participation moving forwards. The OM and members of the YJT reached out to other outstanding Youth Justice services to learn about best practice and approaches, some of which have been implemented in Somerset.

Quality assurance has been significantly bolstered by the resource and support from CSC partners along with closer alignment to CSC QA practices – QA has very much become an important part of team life and learning culture, which continues to impact on improving our work in important priority areas such as Child criminal Exploitation and areas where we believe improvements are needed or have been identified.

Quality data is now very evident across all our quality and performance reports, feedback reports, updates presented to each board, case study examples and VOC are now consistent features of Board meetings for consideration and action.

Multiagency findings from learning reviews, audits, are a quarterly and routine feature which continue to build partnership challenge, mutual accountability, and continued improvement across the system.

Audits of Somerset YJT casework practice are conducted quarterly, evaluated, and moderated, and their analysis helps us steer improvement and challenge across the service and where relevant across the wider Childrens support and justice systems. SYJT alongside the service improvement team have developed a 'Good Practice' bank of folders in which examples of anonymised work that has been assessed and nominated by others as Good/Outstanding. This evidence is collated and supports service and staff development. These include for instance Court Reports and Childrens assessments.

SYJT operational practice is routinely audited and evaluated both in house and by our partners. In house operational QA processes are built into practice, with consistency of QA oversight of all assessments and reports being completed by the SYJT team leaders. Mechanisms have been improved to align with CSC QA cycle and a process which involves all members of the team as well as external colleagues in evaluation and moderation of practice. This promotes shared responsibility and agreed, collective practice improvement.

HMI/YJB themed audits and reports – Learning from the Lammy review (2017) and subsequent reports (Identifying disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice system (2022), learning from the HMIP reports 'The experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the Youth Justice System' (2021); continue to inform our approach to addressing disproportionality in Somerset – the findings and learning from the Somerset Youth Justice Multiagency disproportionality audit continue to remain under review and the SYJPB remain committed to understanding and improving the outcomes and experience of all children disproportionately represented within the Somerset Youth Justice System. Actions from recommendations within the Somerset review are ongoing and in progress, particularly examining how exclusion (and part timetables) from Education influences a child's journey towards offending.

Learning reviews:

There have been no contributions made or requested with regards to a formal SCPR, in the reporting year. At the latter end of the reporting year a local learning review was requested by the YJT to examine the quality of multiagency resettlement planning in the case of a child released from custody. Findings are yet to be finalised.

A preparatory Joint Targeted Area Inspection exercise into partners work around CCE reviewed a case involving a YJT child. Findings included: YJT Contribution to JTAI (CE) – CCE (Graded good) ‘Child B’.

“Quality of planning and support provided by YJT to this young person has been fundamental in supporting positive change, and opportunities for this young person through robust relationship-based practice”.

Somerset YJT improvement actions 23/24 include:

- Implement revised Youth Justice Team workforce and learning & development plan (June 2024)
- Improve and further develop Children voice work and participation.
- Increase targeted work by the RJ/Volunteers team to continue to improve the range and representative mix and demography of volunteer support, to reflect the experience and background of children and young people in the youth justice system in Somerset, particularly those who are supported in police custody. This work is in progress and has strengthened in early 2023, however much more needs to be done.
- Increase consistency of both tactical and strategic joint work with multiagency partners to respond effectively to concerns around serious youth violence, applying learning around what does/doesn't work, from elsewhere.
- Continue to work with Police, YJU and CPS colleagues to monitor cases pending, i.e., those subject to ongoing investigation / waiting for charge decisions.
- Implement learning from local audits, learning reviews and SCPRs.
- Strengthen links with sentencers around QA /work, OOC panel decision making, joint training and communications, improve consistency of sentencer QA feedback to YJT with regards to quality of reports, representations.
- Work with Board partners to address outstanding gaps/ recommendations of the 2022 disproportionality audit.
- Improve agility of data reporting and embed CMS.
- Improve use of the CMS to track and report priority areas as specified in the contract.

SYJPB Improvement actions 23/24

Further areas for improvement following Leadership and governance baseline exercise (June 2023):

HMIP Domain 1- 1.1 Leadership and Governance

Areas for improvement:

- Greater input into the Board by partners to demonstrate quality and effectiveness of the contribution its agency makes.
- Engagement by Board members with frontline staff, reward, and recognition to be strengthened.
- The need for a wider vulnerable adolescent strategy; broader prevention strategy.
- Strengthen use of data from across the partnership.
- Strengthen equality objectives as part of the strategy (1.1.1 ©)
- Incorporate views proactively from CYP.

- The Strategy would benefit from 6 monthly review scheduled into meetings.
- Impact of strategy to be more systematically reviewed at each meeting, covered in the Head of Service report.
- Strengthen SYJPB approach in response to CYP with diverse needs.
- Ensure other partnerships (SSP; SSCP, CPB, MAPPA) work across and support for priorities to support desistance and prevent harm.
- Strengthen how the strategy is communicated to all stakeholders and systematic review by YJT operational staff.

#### HMIP Domain 1- 1.2 Staff

##### Areas for improvement:

- Workload management – differentiate from personal, find out how staff ‘feel’ about their caseloads and how they are managed.
- reward and recognition schemes
- Strengthen oversight of supervision and policy application, to enhance quality.
- Improve consistency and frequency, prevent interruption due to external demands.
- Increase f2f options – ensure staff are seen in person for all, if not most of supervision
- Ethnicity of YJT staff and volunteers is not fully representative of the YJT cohort.
- Joint supervision of complex casework with CSC/FIS partners needs to be encouraged further.
- Ensure consistency of consideration of safety and wellbeing/RoSH in all OOC work.
- Management oversight of workload management to be recorded (CMS system)
- Take steps to ensure workforce adequately reflects diversity of the cohort / local population.
- Ensure induction pathway is clear for staff in the YJT training plan.
- Planning for training needs to be strengthened, systematically reviewed, and evaluated.
- Increase attention to staff wellbeing/support - virtual check ins to be reinstated and consult with staff on what works.

#### HMIP Domain 1- 1.3 Partnerships and services

##### Areas for improvement:

- Capture sentencer feedback (seek feedback, analyse, and apply adjustments)
- Education analysis around disproportionality (exclusions)
- Maintain pressure to improve ETE attendance, support, engagement.
- SYJPB to review outcomes from QA and effectiveness of services / CE support / Mentoring / SASP / SDAS / SIDAS / CAMHS / ETE provision / accommodation.
- Progress recommendations by ETE lead linked to disproportionality report.
- Embed and strengthen the CSC / YOT protocol.
- Joint supervision between CSC/YJT and joint assessment, planning, review needs to be strengthened.
- CWD team had access to some training on neurodiversity.
- Contact to be made with parish councils to bolster reparation offer.

#### HMIP Domain 1- 1.4 Information and facilities

##### Areas for improvement:

- Central tracking and update of key policies

- CMS data reporting to be finessed.
- Trauma informed spaces to be broadly circulated / used.

#### HMIP Domain 1- Involvement of Children

##### Areas for development:

greater focus to co-ordinate and evidence VOC impact on service delivery.

#### HMIP Domain 1- Diversity

##### Areas for development:

- Greater impetus by Board around disproportionality.
- Refresh of SEND QA lead and Mark status.
- Work to expand Identification of support groups in relation to protected characteristics.

#### HMIP Domain 1 - Leadership and Governance of Out of Court Policy and Provision

##### **Areas for development:**

- Provide simulation training to magistrate colleagues.
- Update, refresh OOC policy and terms of reference.
- QA of assessments to be carried out to baseline current practice against new YJB guidance due out August/September 2023.
- Enhance data to demonstrate 'pushbacks' & throughput.
- Evaluate and review with partners (include analysis of diversity) and action plan following baseline evaluation.

#### HMIP Domain 1 - Leadership and governance – resettlement policy and practice

##### **Areas for development:**

- Learning from audit exercise with partners of 2023 case to be finalised and disseminated.
- Good practice case to be written up by seconded Probation officer.
- Resettlement policy to be refreshed with partners (CSC/Education, Health) to ensure standards and expectations based on good practice are aligned and supported and reflect consideration of child's broader diversity and welfare needs, risk of harm to others and impact on victims/community.

## **12 EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND INNOVATION**

Enabling the partnership to be respond to incidents of Serious Youth Violence, Research in Practice (RIP) are in the process of being commissioned to provide training to Somerset.

Evidence-based innovations such as the development Non-Violent Resistance work (NVR), commenced in the reporting year to help strengthen the support we provide for parents (procured July 2022). Some of the team have been trained with several newer staff to be trained in the forthcoming year.

Targeted Community based Prevention work, (based on national examples of good practice), including a Parenting group for parents whose children are vulnerable to or actively involved with Child Exploitation, progressed throughout Autumn 2022, led by the



Child exploitation lead for Children Social care, this was in response to community concerns in the West.


### 13 LOOKING FORWARD

The SYJPB strategic plan together with the YJ Team’s quarterly action plans and our overall improvement themes identified from our significant quality assurance programme provide the forward direction for the SYJT over the forthcoming year.

Workforce succession and planning will also feature for the Head of Service role over the next quarter, as will embedding the new staff team post the recent changes.

The Board will continue to meet virtually on a quarterly basis and drive the performance and direction for the YJT. Board representation will be reviewed regularly, to ensure that locality identified issues are represented at a strategic level through additional board membership.

### 14 SIGN OFF, SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Chair of YJT Board - name	Superintendent Dickon Turner
Signature	
Date	29/06/2023

## 15 APPENDICES

### Appendix 1- SYJP Board Strategy 2023 – 2025



2023 2025 Strategy  
SYJPB signed.pdf

### Appendix 2 - PPT delivered to SYJPB on court delays



Youth Justice Team -  
Unfair Delays - APR2:

### Appendix 3 – YJAG Poster



Participation and  
Engagement - Somer:

### Appendix 4 – QA calendar



QA Calendar.pdf

### Appendix 5 – Trauma Informed Case study - April 2023 Board



Case Study Child Y -  
Trauma Informed Pra

### Appendix 6 – JTAI preparation



Bite-Size Briefing -  
JTAI - Child Exploitati

### Appendix 7 – SYJP Board structure



SYJPB Structure or  
membership.pdf

### Appendix 8 – SYJP Board induction



Induction Pack SYJPB  
Sept 2022 V1.1 signed

### Appendix 9 – SYJP Board attendance register



SYJPB meeting dates  
and attendance.pdf

### Appendix 10 – CSC/YJT protocol (currently under review)



Joint working  
protocol YJTCSC May

### Appendix 11 – Teachable Moments – bike project case study



Teachable Moments  
- The Bike Project.pdf

### Appendix 12 – Custody review panel report



Police custody  
annual review 2022.pdf

### Appendix 13 – RaHSB protocol



Somerset Harmful  
Sexual Behaviour Protocol

### Appendix 14 – SYJPB Domain 1 position statement



SYJPB Dom 1  
Position statement Ju

**Common youth justice terms**

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long-lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and intervention framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Antisocial behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child looked-after, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social

Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health, and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training, or employment
EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
R&HSB (or HSB)	Reactive and harmful sexual behaviour (or harmful sexual behaviour), developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MAETE	Multi Agency ETE escalation panel
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery to gain help to support and protect them

OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return Home Interviews. These are independent interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication needs
SOA	Super Output Area
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJT	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a Child First approach
YOI	Young offender institution

Definitions of diversion and prevention (YJB)  
 YJB interim style guide ([yjresourcehub.uk](http://yjresourcehub.uk))