

Gloucestershire Youth Justice Strategy 2025-2028

ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

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2025/26

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1. FOREWORD

This Youth Justice Plan sets out our shared ambition for children and young people in Gloucestershire who come, or risk coming, into contact with the youth justice system. It reflects a period of significant transition, as the Youth Justice Service (YJS) has returned to Gloucestershire County Council, enabling stronger alignment with our wider Children's Services, the One Gloucestershire vision for children and families, the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and Safer Gloucestershire.

We are grateful for the resilience and commitment shown by the YJS workforce throughout this change and welcome their deepening relationship with the Youth Justice Management Board. Their dedication has ensured continuity of support for children and minimised any impact on them through a time of structural and cultural shift. The transition has not only brought the service in line with national delivery models but has also created new opportunities to embed a more integrated, trauma-informed, and child-first approach to youth justice in our county.

Gloucestershire's YJS is building on its strengths with a clear and determined focus on continuous improvement. Recognising that the planned priorities in 2024/25 were ambitious, we have agreed that these will form a Youth Justice Plan over the next three years. This three-year plan is rooted in the voices of children, families, and practitioners. It builds on the learning from our recent peer review with North Tyneside and reflects the priorities agreed by our Youth Justice Management Board. These include strengthening the voice and influence of children throughout (service design, delivery and evaluation); reducing disproportionality; and enhancing outcomes for those most entrenched in criminogenic circumstances. We are also committed to ensuring that our response to victims—many of whom are children themselves—is restorative, compassionate, proportionate, and effective.

We know that children in the justice system often face multiple and complex challenges. That is why this plan places such strong emphasis on partnership—across health, education, social care, police, and the voluntary sector. It is only through collective effort that we can deliver the right support, at the right time, and in the right way.

I would like to thank all our partners for their continued commitment, and especially the children and families who have shared their experiences to help shape this plan. Together, we will continue to build a high-quality youth justice system in Gloucestershire that is fair, inclusive, and focused on helping every child to thrive.

Rob England

Chair: Gloucestershire Youth Justice Management Board

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Strategy 2025-2028 embraces the county's ambition to ensure that Gloucestershire is a great place for all children and young people to live lives of choice and opportunity (One Plan for Children & Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030). We know that children entering the youth justice system experience disadvantage at levels that are disproportionate to the general 10-17 population. Within Gloucestershire we have continued to see the overrepresentation of black and mixed heritage children within the YJS, as well as high levels of children experiencing education disruption, SEND, involvement with social care, and poverty. It is also recognised that the youth justice landscape has changed considerably over the last decade, with increased levels of serious youth violence and exploitation. This is reflected in YJS performance during 2024/25. Whilst Gloucestershire YJS is generally performing comparatively well on a regional and national level, we have seen the number of children sentenced to custody fluctuate following offences involving serious youth violence and we continue to see a small cohort of children, with complex needs, re-offend.

Since 2011, Gloucestershire YJS had been integrated within the targeted Youth Support Team, a service that had been commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council and delivered by Prospects, part of the Shaw Trust charity. However, 2024/25 has seen the delivery model change with the successful mobilisation and transition of the service back to the Council. During 2025/26 we will continue to support Gloucestershire YJS workforce integration and alignment with Gloucestershire Children's Services culture and practice as we co-develop and embed a clear identity for the YJS that is understood and owned by staff, partners and stakeholders. It is acknowledged that 2024/25 has been a challenging time for Gloucestershire YJS and the priorities that were set, alongside the mobilisation and transition of the service into GCC, were ambitious. We have agreed that these will form a Youth Justice Strategy over the next three years so that we can continuously build on progress and bring about change for children who are supported by Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Service. The priorities that have been identified include:

- Child First Youth Justice and embedding the meaningful voice of the child and co-production practices across the YJS.
- Promoting inclusion and belonging with the ambition to reduce disproportionality in all its forms within Gloucestershire YJS.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of children within the youth justice system.
- Ensuring an effective response to victims of crime, including children.

Gloucestershire YJS has a commitment to continuously develop the quality of practice and services delivered to children in line with national guidance and the evidence base for effective practice. Following a peer review undertaken by North Tyneside YJS as part of the Department for Education Sector Level Improvement Partnership and other quality assurance activity, the workforce development priorities for 2025/26 will include:

- Systemic Practice training for the YJS workforce
- Development and implementation of a Quality & Performance framework in collaboration with Children's Social Care.
- Training and development in relation to the quality assurance of YJS case management to ensure a consistency of approach in assessing the standard of YJS practice.
- Continued development of the offer to support staff resilience and wellbeing.

The service cannot achieve its ambitions alone and will require a strong partnership approach at a strategic and operational level. Most importantly, we will also need to provide opportunities for children, and their families, to have their say in how services can be continuously improved to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable children

3. Introduction, Vision, and Strategy:

“Gloucestershire: a great place for children and young people to grow up and live lives of choice and opportunity”.

(ONE PLAN for Children and Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030)

Gloucestershire Youth Justice Service (YJS) believes that every child deserves the best possible service so that they can achieve their potential and enjoy a life in which they are healthy, resilient, successful, and connected within communities and environments that support and nurture. We remain ambitious and want to prevent children entering the youth justice system, achieve desistance for children within the system, and stop every child entering custody who doesn't need to be there. Most importantly, we want a system that is fair and inclusive, one that reduces social disadvantage and the continued overrepresentation of black and mixed heritage children within Gloucestershire's youth justice system. We want to involve children at every opportunity to ensure that their voices are heard and that they are empowered to shape the service as it continuously develops to meet the needs of some of Gloucestershire's most vulnerable children.

The service endeavours to deliver high-quality support to children through the operationalisation of the 'Child First' framework, one that recognises the stories, needs and unique strengths of the children we work with, and provides interventions that are constructive, future-focused, empowering children to move forward with a positive identity. To achieve this, we need to maintain a workforce of highly skilled, resilient, people who feel valued and supported to work within a challenging youth justice landscape.

Gloucestershire YJS cannot achieve this vision in isolation and requires the strength of the statutory and wider partnerships, across the county, to understand, advocate for and address the complex needs of children in the justice system. By working together, Gloucestershire can become a county in which children who find themselves on the edge of or within the youth justice system get the right support at the right time, without being stigmatised, so that they can grow up and reach their potential. Equally, we want to ensure that victims of crime, many of whom are children, and the communities of Gloucestershire feel supported and safe.

Local Context:



- Gloucestershire is a diverse county situated in Southwest England, covering an area approximately 1,649 square miles.
- Gloucestershire's major population centres are in Gloucester and Cheltenham with 4 other districts, Stroud, Tewkesbury, Cotswolds, and the Forest of Dean.
- Gloucester and Cheltenham are the most ethnically diverse areas of the county.
- The overall population is 659,276 (*ONS Mid-2023 Population Estimates*).

Our Children

- Children aged 0-17 make up 20% of the Gloucestershire population and a further 7% are aged 18-24 years (*ONE PLAN for Children and Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030*).
- The overall 10-17 population in Gloucestershire is 62,095 - 30,721 are girls and 31,374 are boys (*ONS Mid-2023 Population Estimates*).
- The 10-17 population by ethnicity in Gloucestershire is:
 - White 88%
 - Mixed 5%
 - Asian or Asian British 4%
 - Black or Black British 2%
 - Other 1%

(10-17 mid 2021 population by ethnicity (latest available))

Education

- The education system in Gloucestershire includes:
 - 244 primary schools
 - 41 secondary schools
 - 3 further education colleges
 - 24 special schools (maintained, free school & independent)
 - 3 alternative provision schools
- Rates of Electively Home Educated (EHE) children have been rising in Gloucestershire and have doubled from 13 per 1,000 children & young people aged 5-15 in 2017/18 to 25.6 per 1,000 in 2022/23. The rate of EHE

	<p>in Gloucestershire in 2021/22 was significantly higher than the statistical neighbour, regional and England average.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/23 Gloucestershire reported 14.5% persistent absence, this pattern is similar to that seen nationally. • School suspensions in Gloucestershire have followed a similar trend to England and our Statistical Neighbours, with the most recent data putting us below the national and neighbour rate (6% compared to 7%). • In 2021/22 permanent exclusion across all school phases in Gloucestershire (0.09% of the school population) is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (0.07%) and England (0.08%) • At KS4, the overall average Attainment 8 score in Gloucestershire is 49.9, higher than the average score of 44.6 in England. • The proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 not in education, employment of training (NEET) is lower for Gloucestershire than the England average (2.4% vs. 2.8% in 2023). <p><i>(ONE PLAN for Children and Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030).</i></p>
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In January 2023 there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12,569 children with SEN need supported in schools ▪ 5,295 children with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) ▪ 525 children with a complex disability • Overall, Special Educational Needs are more common in children living in more deprived areas, a pattern seen locally and nationally. <p><i>(ONE PLAN for Children and Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030).</i></p>
Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of children and young people open to children's social care in Gloucestershire has been higher than peers but in recent years has started to reduce and we are becoming more in line with our peers 2022 to 2023 331.9 per 10,000 compared to 303.79 for our statistical neighbours and 311.9 across the South West region. <p><i>(ONE PLAN for Children and Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030).</i></p>
Deprivation & Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas within Gloucester, Cheltenham and the Forest of Dean are amongst the 10% most deprived areas in the country. Yet there are also areas of the county that are in the 10% least deprived <i>(ONS, 2019 English indices of deprivation)</i>. • The proportion of children living in child poverty generally fall below England averages, however rates have been increasing over time in line with the national trend, with a sharp increase observed in 2022 <i>(ONE PLAN for Children and Young People in Gloucestershire 2024-2030).</i>

Crime

- Within the county, Gloucester had the highest overall crime rate per 1000 of the population at 126.26 over a 12-month period, with Cheltenham second at 102.87. The overall crime rate for Gloucestershire was 84.14.
 - The rate per 1000 of the population for police recorded possession of weapons offences in Gloucestershire has shown a slight increase from 0.14 to 0.15. In the year ending December 2023, the possession of weapons offence rate in Gloucester was higher than average for the Gloucestershire force area.
 - In the quarter ending December 2023, violence and sexual offences crime rates were down in Gloucestershire (9.12) compared with the same quarter in 2022 (10.19).
- (Police.uk, 2023)

As a diverse county, with contrasting areas of affluence and deprivation, we recognise that Gloucestershire does not look the same and is not experienced in the same way by all children. Whilst the headline data for children is often good when compared with national data, it does not tell the same story for those who face the greatest disadvantage and barriers, protected characteristics, isolation, and the intersection of these.

Gloucestershire YJS Context:

Between 2011 and 2024, Gloucestershire YJS was integrated within targeted youth support through the County's Youth Support Team (YST), a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary service, commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council and delivered by Prospects, part of the Shaw Trust Charity. Gloucestershire YJS had been unique in its position as an outsourced provision. However, since the 1st October 2024, Gloucestershire YJS, along with countywide specialist services, has been delivered by Gloucestershire County Council. Following the procurement process for the re-commissioning of the county's Youth Support Services, the decision was made by Prospects not to submit a bid and, following evaluation and clarification of bids for the countywide youth support specialist provision, it was determined that there was not a bid that met the Council requirements, and the tender process was therefore abandoned, using the Council's reserved right not to award. The Council undertook a risk assessment of the respective options, and it was determined that, with a view to securing an improving, effective service, including the YJS, the recommended outcome was to in-source to the Council the delivery of the specialist countywide services.

Gloucestershire YJS is now located within Children's Services which is providing opportunities to grow and develop the YJS, as well as enhance the integration with Children's Services at a strategic and operational level. It is recognised that this has been a challenging time for YJS staff due to the period of uncertainty during the Council procurement process and the subsequent TUPE transfer to the Council. Despite this, as a result of the commitment of the YJS workforce, we have seen minimal reduction in YJS performance and the delivery of youth justice services to children within the system. A key focus for 2025/26 will be the harmonisation of staff, the alignment of culture and practice, and the ongoing development of the YJS identity. The level of integration that has been achieved through the Gloucestershire model of integrated youth support will need to be sustained given the positive impact it has had on the youth justice interventions at preventative, diversionary and statutory stages of the youth justice system. This will ensure that the variety of specialist services that have been accessed by children, without delay, can be maintained, and continuously developed to meet the needs of children within a complex youth justice landscape.

In 2024/25, following a period of instability within the YJS leadership, continuity was achieved through the permanent appointment of the Head of Youth Justice & Community following a secondment period that started in June 2023. From an operational perspective, Gloucestershire YJS has continued to experience the impact of change on what has been a very established workforce, with new staff joining the YJS. The procurement process for the re-

commissioning of Gloucestershire's Youth Support Services also saw the Youth Justice Liaison & Diversion contract end with Prospects and return to Gloucestershire Health & Care, with the staff being TUPE transferred under the new arrangements. Despite this, Youth Justice Liaison & Diversion has remained closely aligned with the YJS, ensuring effective joint working within police custody and the community.

4. Gloucestershire YJS Governance, Leadership and Partnership arrangements:

The Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) has oversight of the effectiveness of Gloucestershire YJS and provides strategic direction. It is now chaired by the local authority's Director of Children's Commissioning and Partnerships, and comprises of senior representatives from:

- Police
- Health
- Children's Social Care
- Education
- National Probation Service
- Courts
- Restorative Gloucestershire
- YJB

The Youth Justice Management Board meets quarterly, is regularly attended by the above representatives, and oversees the quality of YJS delivery and performance. The YJMB Terms of Reference have been reviewed in 2024/25 which resulted in the development of YJMB published arrangements that sets out the arrangements put in place to enable local partner agencies in Gloucestershire to meet their statutory requirements for the delivery of both an effective Youth Justice Service and System.

The YJMB interrelates with a number of other partnerships and local governance arrangements including the Local Criminal Justice and Safer Gloucestershire Boards, as well as the Serious Violence Partnership. Safer Gloucestershire provides the strategic framework for county-wide community safety activity, including Youth Justice, and provides a forum for discussing issues that cannot be resolved within the YJMB. The YJS Head of Service also currently represents the service at the following Boards and Subgroups: Safer Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Criminal Justice, Channel Panel, Serious Violence, MAPPA, Child Criminal Exploitation & Child Sexual Exploitation, Reducing Re-offending, Victims and Witnesses. The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) receives performance information on youth justice as part of its data dashboard.

The YJS Head of Service currently reports into an Assistant Director for Children's Safeguarding and Care who, in turn, is accountable to the Director of Safeguarding and GCC's Executive Director of Children's Services. The Chief Executive Officer is ultimately accountable for the YJS and is regularly updated on progress via the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Children's Commissioning and Partnerships (chair of the YJMB).

Gloucestershire YJS is part of an integrated speciality youth support service, and the Head of Service has responsibility for a portfolio of services including all Youth Justice and Community related activity:



Delivery of youth justice and community work is via a structure comprising small specialist or multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that a child's journey is seamless (Appendix 1). In addition to this, Gloucestershire YJS have developed partnerships with local providers e.g. The Music Works and Restorative Gloucestershire to enhance the offer available to children and victims within the YJS.

Youth justice and community work also sits within the wider countywide specialist services portfolio, which delivers a variety of services to vulnerable young people, including health interventions. The inclusion of the YJS staff in this integrated model enables the sharing of expertise and transferable skills to enable a co-ordinated and timely response to individual young people who often have multiple and complex needs.

5. Update on the previous year (2024/25):

Progress on priorities in previous plan

As previously referenced within the YJ Plan, Gloucestershire YJS has experienced several challenges during 2024/25 in relation to workforce changes and a period of uncertainty and instability during the procurement process for the youth support contract and TUPE transfer to Gloucestershire County Council. On reflection, it is also recognised that the objectives set out in the 2024/25 Youth Justice Plan were ambitious and, whilst important, were difficult to fully achieve within the year and were more conducive to a three-year strategy. Despite this, progress has been made on the priorities that were identified for 2024/25, and this is outlined in the table below:

Aim	Actions	Progress & Achievements	Ongoing
Aim 1: The successful mobilisation and transition of Gloucestershire YJS to Gloucestershire County Council by the 30.09.24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilisation Plan: Effective delivery of the plan that has been developed to transition the YJS to GCC to minimise any disruption to ongoing YJ service delivery and performance during the transition period. • Staff Engagement: Inclusion of YJS staff within the change process to ensure that they are kept up to date and supported as they transition to GCC employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The YJS successfully transitioned to GCC with minimal disruption to service delivery and performance meaning that children continued to receive the required level of service and had their needs met during the change process. ✓ Alignment with Children's Social Care has created more opportunities for a joined-up approach to meeting the needs of the complex cohort of children who are open to both the YJS and wider children's services. ✓ There were regular opportunities for staff to meet with senior leadership within social care on a virtual and face to face basis, which included a whole service induction event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the change process has brought opportunities, it is recognised that it has also been a period of uncertainty and instability for the YJS workforce, which has impacted on morale during the last 12-months. For 2025/26 there will be a focus on the harmonisation of staff, the alignment of culture and practice, and the ongoing development of the YJS identity.
Aim 2: Implementation of the 'Child First Approach' into practical YJ delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Plan: Develop a theory of change and implementation plan that embeds the 'Child First Approach' into all aspects of YJS delivery over the next 18-24 months. • Stakeholder engagement: Facilitate workshops with YJS leaders, staff, the wider partnership, and children to develop a shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Workshops on the 'Child First Approach' have been delivered to a range of stakeholders including the YJS workforce, education colleagues, Reducing Reoffending partnership, Virtual School Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will continue in collaboration with children and youth justice staff, within a 'Child First' framework and interventions working group, to develop interventions. This will include the recording and

	<p>understanding of what being 'Child First' means and what a 'Child First' YJS looks, sounds, and feels like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a programme of interventions that promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a prosocial identity: Begin to develop a programme of projects for children that offer constructive and future-focused activities to support them to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their community. This will begin with reparation projects that enable children to develop key skills, gain qualifications, and interact with local businesses/community organisations to try out new roles away from offending. • Review and address core areas of YJ practice and delivery to ensure that they are consistently being delivered in line with the 'Child First Approach': Working groups will be formed to oversee the child's journey through the YJS and core areas of practice to ensure that we see children as children, we are actively building pro-social identity, we are consistently collaborating with children, and we are diverting children from stigma in every aspect of YJS delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ YJS data has continued to evidence positive outcomes in diverting children from the stigma associated with the criminal justice system - low numbers of First Time Entrants, low levels of re-offending for children who receive out of court disposals and the success of the Turnaround/Prevention Project where there is no record of proven re-offending for 98% of the children who have been involved in the project. ✓ A review of The Music Works 'Making it' programme, delivered in partnership with the YJS, has demonstrated the positive impact that an intervention aimed at promoting strengths and capacities to develop a prosocial identity - data has shown that 85% of children who completed the programme have not gone on to re-offend. ✓ The YJS has developed a pathway to enable children to gain Duke of Edinburgh Sectional Certificate Awards as part of their YJ interventions 	<p>evaluation of the impact of interventions.</p>
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<p>Aim 3: Reduce racial disparity within Gloucestershire YJS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a 6-month project that aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of disproportionality within the Youth Justice System in Gloucestershire, utilising a GCC Graduate deployed full time to the project. • Disproportionality Assessment: Conduct a thorough analysis to develop a comprehensive understanding of disproportionality within the Youth Justice System in Gloucestershire. This assessment will involve collecting and analysing data on the child's journey through the criminal justice system including arrest rates, convictions, sentencing, and reoffending rates among different demographic groups. • Disproportionality Dashboard: Development of a dashboard that visualises key metrics related to disproportionality, providing stakeholders with real-time insights into the representation of various demographic groups within the Youth Justice System. It will serve as a monitoring tool to enable comparison with other similar localities, identify areas of concern and determine the impact of corrective actions. • Performance Management Framework: Design a performance management framework to monitor and evaluate interventions aimed at addressing disproportionality. This framework will include key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the effectiveness of initiatives implemented to reduce disparities within the Criminal Justice System. • Stakeholder Engagement Plan: Develop a plan for engaging stakeholders at various levels, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 6-month project was successfully completed. ✓ A youth justice disparity report, with recommendations, has been completed and shared with the YJMB, and other key stakeholders, providing the partnership with an enhanced understanding of racial disparity at every stage of the justice process, from school exclusions and arrests to statutory interventions and reoffending as a basis for further action, improved performance monitoring, strengthened accountability, and stakeholder engagement ✓ A strategic action plan has been drafted which aims to be a comprehensive strategy focused on addressing the disparities that exist within Gloucestershire's Youth Justice System. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A priority for 2025/26 will be to implement a partnership working group to operationalise the actions set out in the strategic action plan.
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	<p>including policymakers, practitioners, and community representatives. This plan will outline strategies for fostering collaboration, gathering feedback, and ensuring the involvement of diverse perspectives throughout the project lifecycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrective Action Recommendations: Based on the findings of the disproportionality assessment, a set of recommendations will be proposed for corrective action. These recommendations will aim to address any emerging concerns identified within the Youth Justice System and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I) principles. ➤ Reporting: A final report will be prepared and presented to key stakeholders, including Gloucestershire Youth Justice Management Board, Criminal Justice Board, and GCC Corporate Leadership Team detailing the outcomes of the project and outlining next steps for implementation of the findings. 		
Aim 4: Improve the Health & Well-Being of Children within the YJS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a health intervention ‘toolkit’ to respond to basic needs in relation to diet, rest and exercise: The foundation of the trauma recovery model is for children to have structure and routine, alongside trusting relationships. However, many of the children within the YJS experience a lack of sleep, poor diet and are consistently in fight or flight response. An innovative, developmentally informed, ‘tool kit’ with health intervention ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In 2024/25 YJS data showed an increase in children accessing support from the YJ health team, particularly in relation to speech, language and communication needs. ✓ A report on the prevalence of neurodiversity within the YJS was presented to the Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of immunisation clinics within youth support centres to ensure that children within the YJS have access to immunisations they have missed due to not being in education. • Further work on health and well-being interventions as part of the development of

	<p>for practitioners will be developed alongside the YJ Health Team. This will support staff to address basic health and well-being needs of children at all stages within the YJS.</p> <p>➤ Health Dashboard: Development of a dashboard that identifies which children are open to the health team, and what level of support they are receiving. This will support the new YJ Health KPIs as well as future YJS planning and ensuring that the right support is available for children within the YJS.</p>	<p>and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The development of 'Engagement Passports', a one-page profile that tells professionals about the child – their strengths and difficulties, how they might present and how professionals can best respond to the child and help them understand what is happening. This is now accessible on police and health systems, available to the court, and can be shared with the wider professional network. ✓ The development of a Health Intervention Panel that brings together the health team and Youth Justice Case Responsible Officer during a child's assessment period to enable a better understanding of health needs and how best to respond to any unmet needs ensuring that children within the YJS have the right support available to them when they need it. ✓ The development of quarterly Youth Justice & Health meetings to oversee quality and performance of the health support delivered to children 	<p>interventions cited in Aim 2 above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pilot of the Health Intervention Panel will continue and be reviewed through the quarterly Youth Justice & Health meetings. • Implementation of the health dashboard to support oversight of performance, quality, and need.
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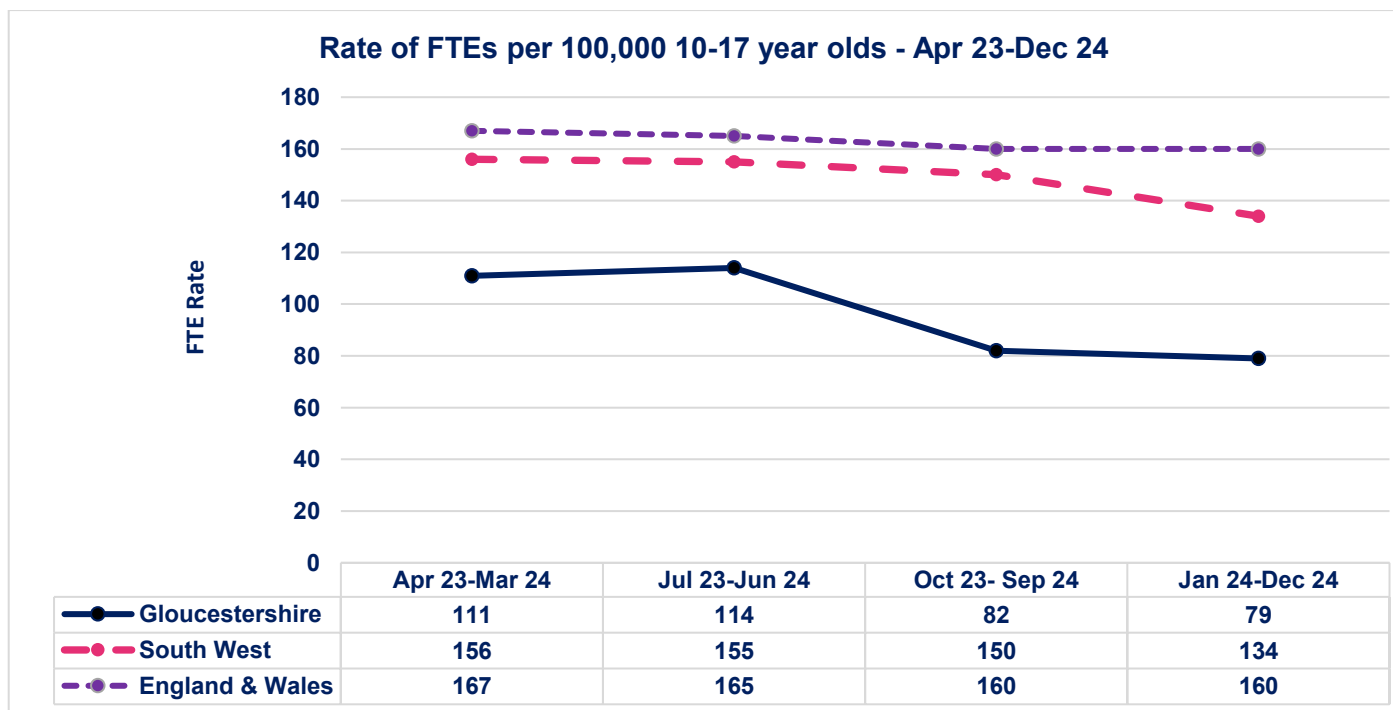
		<p>within the YJS. It also supports the early identification of trends and areas of concerns and enable future planning to make sure children in the YJS have the right health support available to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A dip-sample of health and YJS data was completed to support the development of the health dashboard. 	
<p>Aim 5: Ensuring an effective response to child victims of crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review and develop the response to child victims of crime to ensure equality of access to support: We know that children who offend are disproportionately more likely to be victims of crime, as well as abuse and neglect. We need to work with partners, including services for victims, to ensure that the needs of child victims are being responded to effectively. ➤ Establish oversight of NRMs as a wider partnership to ensure an effective response to children who are being criminally exploited: Development of a partnership strategy for children when NRM referrals are submitted and when a positive NRM decision is made. ➤ Compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales for all victims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A review of the YJS Victim Policy has been undertaken in partnership with Restorative Gloucestershire. ✓ There has been a focus on improving data to fully understand the demographics of the victims of crime. ✓ Partnership working with Restorative Gloucestershire has improved the involvement of victims in restorative interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent review into the response to Harm outside the Home (HOTH) in Gloucestershire is underway and will include oversight of NRMs and the response to children who are being criminally exploited. • Further work needs to be undertaken to respond to gaps in data, particularly in relation to victim demographics. • The current Victim Liaison Officer will be leaving the YJS so there will need to be recruitment to this specialist post and a contingency plan developed in partnership with Restorative Gloucestershire to ensure that the YJS continues to provide an effective response to victims

Gloucestershire YJS Performance over the Previous Year (2024/25):

This section of the plan outlines how Gloucestershire YJS is performing against National Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Youth Justice. It includes the main national indicators and some local measures that have been reported on within the Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB).

First Time Entrants:

The ambition for Gloucestershire YJS is to criminalise the fewest number of children possible. A first-time entrant (FTE) to the criminal justice system is a child aged 10 -17 who has been recorded in the Police National Computer (PNC) as having received their first conviction, youth caution or youth conditional caution. The most recently published data can be seen below:



The total number of actual children who became FTEs during the period above is 237 and, whilst we continue to have a lower FTE rate than the South West region and national average, we had begun to see an increase in the Gloucester YJS FTE rate over the 2023/24 reporting period. However, the data for October 2023-September 2024 shows a significant reduction in Gloucestershire's FTE rate as it went from 114 to 82 per 100,000 of the 10-17 year of the population. Gloucestershire's early adoption of a successful diversionary scheme, the Children First Pathway, in 2018, has contributed to consistently maintaining lower FTE rates. The Child First Pathway offers a robust diversion scheme and, consequently, it only takes a small number of children to receive Youth Conditional Cautions and Referral Orders for the low FTE rate to be impacted.

The Children First partnership has oversight of quarterly FTE rates and outcomes to support the scrutiny and oversight of the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDP) and ensure that diversion is the outcome for as many children as possible. Analysis of the data over 2024/25 shows that offence seriousness has been a significant factor in children entering the youth justice system. Offences involving violence led to the most FTE outcomes and, when scrutinised, they evidence aggravating features such as the level of violence, use of a weapon, or the vulnerability of the victim, all of which mean that diversion was not a suitable outcome when considered by the multi-agency JDP or the Crown Prosecution Service at the decision-making stage. However, it is important to recognise that Gloucestershire YJS continue to maintain a good track record of FTE rates remaining low, and most children that are eligible have been through the out of court panel process and received a diversionary outcome, therefore reducing the criminalisation of children but ensuring that any unmet needs are responded to so that any further involvement in criminality is reduced.

Re-offending:

Reoffending within youth justice is measured in two ways. Firstly, the binary rate, the percentage of children who offended, from those that entered the system in a three-month period, who reoffended within 12 months. Secondly, the reoffences per reoffender rate takes all the further offences during these 12 months and divides these by the number of children who reoffended. The lower this number the less reoffending.

Gloucestershire YJS have continued to experience, and report to the YJB, discrepancies in the published re-offending data when compared with locally produced data. The data below therefore includes local and national data.

	Reoffending rates per cohort – STATUTORY OUTCOMES						
YJS and Cohort	No. of Children in cohort	No. of children who have reoffended in cohort	No. of Reoffences committed	Reoffences per child who reoffended	National Reoffences per child who reoffended	Gloucestershire Binary Reoffending %	National Binary Reoffending %

<i>Gloucestershire: Jan-Mar 23 (local data)</i>	16	8	29	3.60	–	50%	–
<i>Gloucestershire: Jan-Mar 23 (published data)</i>	21	11	57	5.18	4.53	52.4%	33.1%
<i>Gloucestershire: Oct – Dec 22 (local data)</i>	14	4	14	3.50	–	28.5%	–
<i>Gloucestershire: Oct – Dec 22 (published data)</i>	26	8	35	4.38	4.18	30.8%	31.5%
<i>Gloucestershire: July – Sept 22 (local data)</i>	21	7	27	3.85	–	33.3%	–
<i>Gloucestershire: July – Sept 22 (published data)</i>	21	10	47	4.70	4.27	47.6%	31.9%
<i>Gloucestershire: Apr-Jun 22 (local data)</i>	16	6	21	3.50	–	37.5%	–
<i>Gloucestershire: Apr-Jun 22 (published data)</i>	21	4	8	2.0	4.43	19%	33.4%

In 2024/25, the analyses of children who re-offend in Gloucestershire has continued to evidence the complexity of this group. This reinforces the picture of a service where only a few children reoffend, but the complexity of the challenges they face is significant. The YJS consistently sees significant concerns around criminal exploitation and harms outside the home for most of the children who re-offend, which highlights the challenges around a partnership response to exploitation and the multiple complexities and challenges that all of these children were dealing with. There also continues to be evidence of continued intersectionality of vulnerability and challenges that the partnership must navigate with children having experienced trauma and complex histories of abuse and neglect. Gloucestershire YJS continue to work towards reducing re-offending by children through enhancing the interventions offered and learning from the success of diversion and prevention support. In addition to this, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) have commissioned a diagnostic review of the Gloucestershire response to harms outside the home. This will support the improvement and development of services to meet the needs of vulnerable children, including those within the YJS.

The Children First Diversion scheme in Gloucestershire continues to demonstrate a low reoffending rate for those children supported through Children First Pathways (Out of Court Disposals) (see table below):

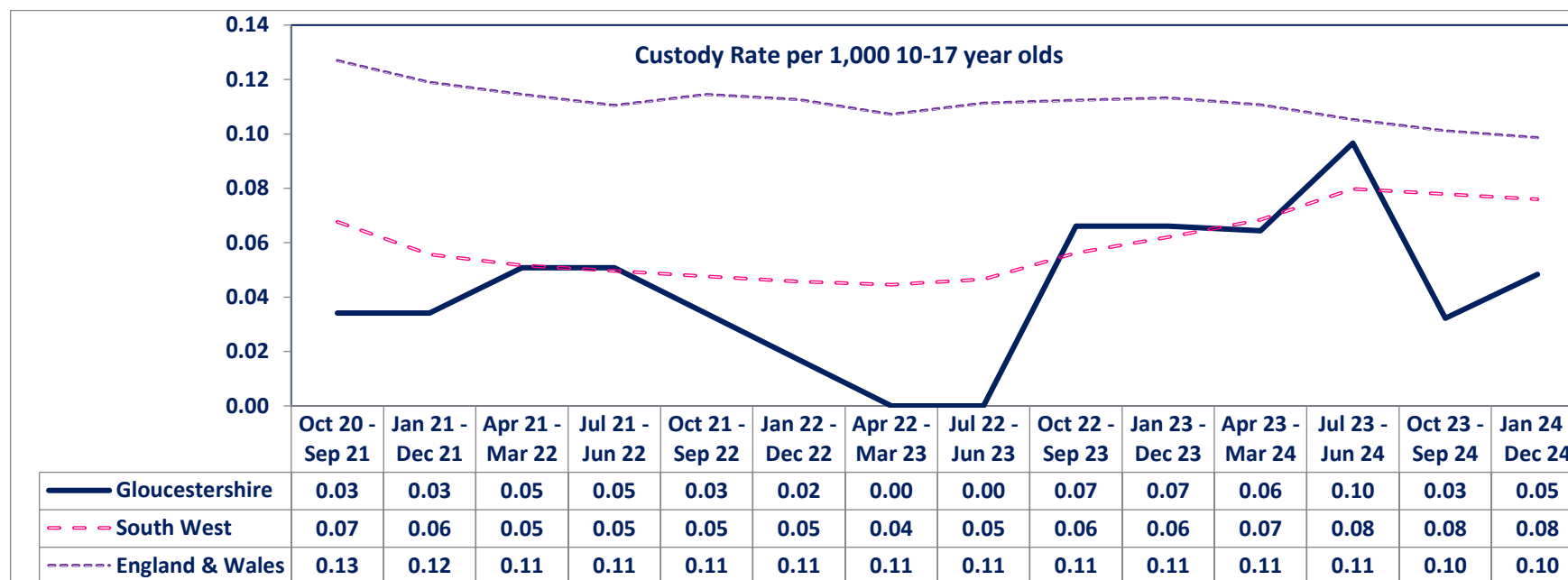
Gloucestershire <i>CHILDREN FIRST</i> PATHWAY - Reoffending					
YJS and Cohort	No. of children in cohort	No. of children who have reoffended in cohort	No. of Reoffences committed	Reoffences per child who reoffended	Binary Reoffending %
<i>Gloucestershire (local data Q4) January – March 23</i>	28	4	9	2.2	14.2%
<i>Gloucestershire (local data Q3) October – December 22</i>	26	4	8	2.0	15.3%
<i>Gloucestershire (local data Q2) July – September 22</i>	24	4	6	1.5	11.7%
<i>Gloucestershire (local data Q1) April – June 22</i>	25	1	1	1.0	4%

When looking at the Children First Pathway (CFP) reoffending data over the last year, Gloucestershire YJS continues to have low numbers of children re-offending with the numbers of offences per child who re-offends also remaining low. In contrast to this, the national re-offending data for Youth Cautions and overall re-offending remaining fairly static, and significantly higher. This demonstrates the continued positive impact of the Children First Pathway in diverting children from the youth justice system, and a robust alternative to formal out of court disposals and charge.

A similar picture has emerged from Gloucestershire's Turnaround (Prevention) Project as the outcomes reported show, to date, that for 98% of the children there is no record of proven re-offending following their involvement in the project.

Children in Youth Custody:

Whilst the number of children in Gloucestershire sentenced to youth custody has consistently been low, there had been a significant increase in the custody rate because of serious youth violence relating to two high profile court cases, one of which involved multiple co-defendants. However, in Quarter 2 (2024/25), the custody rate for Gloucestershire significantly decreased and the graph below shows that the custody rate per 1,000 of the 10-17-year-old population in Gloucestershire is lower than the South West and National custody rates.



The Youth Justice Annual Statistics: 2023 to 2024, published by the Youth Justice Board in January 2025, show that 96% of the youth custody population are between 15-17 years of age, and 98% are boys. This is reflected in the Gloucestershire YJS cohort of children in custody, with all of the children being male and within this age range.

In terms of ethnicity, the ethnic breakdown of custodial sentences (April-December 2024) shows that 33% of Gloucestershire children serving custodial sentences identify as black. The Youth Justice Annual Statistics: 2023 to 2024 identify that the proportion of black children within the youth custody population is 24%, emphasising the racial disparity that Gloucestershire YJS, along with the wider partnership, has a strong commitment to address.

The children are serving custodial sentences for offences that meet the YJB serious youth violence criteria and, the oversight and analysis of this cohort of children highlights complex needs as well as exploitation and involvement in organised criminality coordinated by adults.

Remand

Remand data has continued to be an area of focus for Gloucestershire YJS as we endeavour to keep all children out of custody who do not need to be there, recognising that any amount of time spent in custody can have a damaging impact on children's lives, disrupting education and straining family relationships. The table below shows the 2024/25 remand data for Gloucestershire YJS and demonstrates that the number of children remanded has remained low. When compared with the 2024/25 remand data for Gloucestershire YJS, it shows a 71% decrease in the number of children remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation (Secure Children's Home, Secure Training Centre or YOI) and local authority care.

Gloucestershire Children Remanded 2024-25		
	Number of children remanded to youth detention accommodation	Number of children remanded to care of the local authority
Jan – March 25	0	0
Oct-Dec 24	1	0
Jul – Sep 24	0	1
Apr – Jun 24	0	0
Total	1	1

The Youth Justice Annual Statistics (YJB, 2025) identified that 62% of children remanded to youth detention accommodation did not go on to receive a custodial sentence. An analysis of the Gloucestershire children remanded during 2024/25 shows that 50% went on to receive custodial sentences. The child who had been remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation received a custodial sentence and the child who been remanded to the care of the local authority received a community sentence.

Education, Training & Employment (ETE):

There are links between low educational engagement and attainment and the risk of childhood offending, and Gloucestershire YJS recognise the significance of ETE in supporting children to build resilience, achieve their potential, and develop a pro-social identity. Suitability of ETE is considered through a needs led approach, recognising, for example, that a number of children within the YJS have been out of ETE for a considerable period and would require support to reengage rather than focusing on prescribed engagement hours (25 hours for statutory school age children / 16 hours for children above statutory school age). However, Gloucestershire YJS recognise that every child has a right to ETE and will continue to focus on ensuring that ETE opportunities are available to all children within the YJS. The table below shows the ETE data that has, to date, been reported to the YJMB in 2024/25:

	School Age children					Above School Age children					Total children				
	Orders ending	In full time ETE (25hrs +)	In ETE but not full time (<25 hrs)	Not in ETE or ETE status not known	% YP Supervised in suitable ETE	Orders ending	In full time ETE (16hrs +)	In ETE but not full time (<16 hrs)	Not in ETE or ETE status not known	% YP Supervised in suitable ETE	Orders ending	In full time ETE	In ETE but not full time	Not in ETE or ETE status not known	% YP Supervised in suitable ETE
Gloucestershire Oct-Dec 24 (local data)				0	100%	11				36%	14				57%
Gloucestershire Jul-Sept 24 (local data)	4	3	1	0	100%	10	2	4	4	60%	14	5	5	4	73%
Gloucestershire Apr – June 24 (local data)	3	2	1	0	100%	15	8	1	6	60%	18	10	2	6	67%
Gloucestershire Jan – Mar 24 (Local data)	1	1	0	0	100%	10	3	1	6	40%	11	4	1	6	45%

Where children within the Gloucestershire YJS cohort are not in suitable ETE, data reporting over 2024/25 has shown that they face additional challenges around education disruption through suspensions, permanent exclusion, and managed moves. In addition to this, there are higher numbers of children with SEND within the cohort. With Gloucestershire YJS now being part of GCC Children's Services again, there has been collaboration with the education department to consider how we can become more proactive over the coming year in supporting the education needs of children within the YJS cohort.

Racial Disparity within Gloucestershire YJS:

Oversight and scrutiny of racial disparity within the YJS has been a focus for 2024/25 and will continue to be a priority for 2025/26 as Gloucestershire YJS has continued to show an over representation of children from ethnically diverse backgrounds within the offending cohort. The latest data reported to the YJMB continued to see children from Black and mixed backgrounds significantly overrepresented within

Gloucestershire when compared with the South-West region, and England & Wales, as well as the latest 10-17 mid 2021 Gloucestershire population by ethnicity (below):

April-December 2024 Offending Population:

	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese or Other	Ethnic Minorities (excluding white minorities)
Gloucestershire	75%	13%	2%	9%	2%	25%
South-West	85%	9%	1%	4%	1%	15%
England & Wales	69%	11%	6%	12%	3%	31%
10-17 mid 2021 Gloucestershire population by ethnicity (latest available)	88%	5%	4%	2%	1%	12%

Gloucestershire YJS, with the support of the YJMB, are committed to a shared vision, along with clear objectives, that are sufficiently focused on improving outcomes for children from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Risks and issues

Risk is defined as a potential or emerging factor which may impede the delivery of positive outcomes for children in Gloucestershire and an issue is something which has already occurred or is currently happening which is affecting outcomes.

The following table sets out the identified key risks/issues that could have an impact on Gloucestershire YJS delivery and performance in 2024/25:

Risk/Issue	Action taken to address existing risk or proposed action to address potential risks should they emerge
Workforce stability, morale and culture during organisational change process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A core priority for 2025/26 is to support YJS workforce integration and alignment with Gloucestershire Children's Services vision, values and behaviours to support connection along with a shared sense of identity, purpose and direction (see 2025/26 Priorities for more details). ✓ Harmonisation of staff within the YJS has started.
The over representation of black and mixed heritage children within Gloucestershire YJS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The operationalisation of the recommendations and actions following a 6-month project that provided an assessment of racial disparity within the youth justice system and recommended actions to address the emerging concerns and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. A partnership working group has been set up to focus on this and will report back to the YJMB on a quarterly basis (see 2025/26 Priorities for more details).
Serious Youth Violence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children coming to the attention of the youth justice system for serious violence having not previously been known to services. • Increase in FTEs due to serious youth violence/knife crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As part of the Gloucestershire Serious Violence Prevention 5 Year Strategic Approach, the focus for 2025/26 is youth violence. The development of a pilot programme is underway in partnership with the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Constabulary and GCC that offers a secondary youth prevention pathway aimed at boys, aged 14-16, who are identified as being 'at risk' having been involved in violence and/or the possession of weapons. ✓ The oversight and scrutiny of decision-making for out of court disposals will continue during 2025/26 to ensure that the fewest number of children as possible are criminalised.
Criminal Exploitation – The increasing challenge to effectively intervene and safeguard children who are being harmed by criminal exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership have commissioned a diagnostic review of the Gloucestershire response to harms outside the home. This will support the improvement and development of services to meet the needs of vulnerable children, including those within the YJS. ✓ Gloucestershire YJS have been a partner in the pilot and review of daily 'harm outside the home' meetings which have been successful in overseeing the safety of children exposed to exploitation. ✓ As part of its National Child Protection Inspection Programme, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Services (HMICFRS) rated Gloucestershire as Inadequate. Keeping children and young people safe is a priority in the constabulary's new Gloucestershire Rapid Improvement Plan (GRIP) which has been implemented and is already responding to identified improvements.

Education challenges for children in the YJS cohort around education disruption, SEND and additional Needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ With Gloucestershire YJS now being part of GCC Children's Services, there has been collaboration with the Education department to consider how we can become more proactive, and effective, in supporting the education needs of children within the YJS cohort. ✓ Development of a shared data set is underway to ensure that children within the YJS cohort are clearly identifiable within education data on vulnerable children in Gloucestershire.
Loss of Forensic Child & Adolescent Mental Health (FCAMHS) Psychologist following the end of the South West ECM project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The impact has been raised with the YJMB and work is underway to look at options to retain psychologist support within the YJS. This includes looking at contingency planning around maintaining clinical supervision.

6. Plan for the forthcoming year (2025/26):

The Annual Youth Justice Plan has already identified how 2025/26 will involve a further period of transition for the Gloucestershire YJS as the service continues to integrate and align with Gloucestershire Children's Services and the harmonisation process progresses. This has been taken into consideration when setting out the priorities within the following sections of the plan.

Child First Youth Justice:

Gloucestershire YJS is committed to ensuring that partners have a shared understanding of and work collectively to promote 'Child First' youth justice across the system, ensuring that practice is based on evidence that tells us what works best with children. It is also important that the Youth Justice Management Board is underpinned by 'Child First' youth justice. The focus on the principles of Child First is routed in this commitment. The priorities within the 2025/26 YJ Plan have been considered with the implementation of the four tenets of the Child First principles into practical service delivery in mind:

- **Prioritise the best interests of children and recognise their needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.**
- **Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their prosocial identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.**
- **Encourage children's active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.**

- **Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.**

Listening to our Children, Parent(s)/Carer(s), and Partners:

The continuous improvement and development of Gloucestershire YJS requires collaboration with children, their families, and the partnership, to understand what is working and what needs to change. It is acknowledged that this is an ongoing area of development for the service that will improve as the service continues to embed the 'Child First' framework. In 2024/25, feedback from children, parent(s)/carer(s) and partners has been collated through a variety of means as part of the Youth Support Young People's Engagement Framework e.g. audit feedback, compliments & complaints, surveys, and general feedback questionnaires. In 2024/25 we worked with the Youth Support Young People's Board, which includes children and young people who have had experiences of YST services, including the YJS, to improve Referral Order panel feedback tools

Active Participation Priorities for 2025/26 will include:

Developing ways to support children and families to contribute to the quarterly YJMB Meetings so that they are actively involved in influencing service design, delivery, and evaluation.

Developing ways to collaborate more effectively with children and families who are marginalised within the community

Informing children and families what we have done in response to their collaboration and feedback

The following are direct quotes from children, parent(s), and Partners received through feedback activity in 2024/25:



Gloucestershire YJS Resources and Services:

The staffing resource available to the YJS to meet the requirements set out in the Crime and Disorder act 1998 are:

Role	FTE
Head of Service	1.0
Team Manager	2.0
Assistant Team Manager (inc. 1.0 FTE social worker)	3.0
Senior Practitioner (Inc. 0.8 FTE social worker)	3.42
Case responsible officer (Youth Justice) 7.0 FTE (Inc. Inc. 3.0 FTE Social workers and 0.8 FTE vacancy)	7.8

Case Responsible Officer (Targeted Prevention)	1.0
Trainee Case Responsible Officer (Youth Justice)	1.0
Probation Officer	0.6
YJ Education Specialist	1.0
ECM FCAMHS Psychologist (shared with South Glos YJS)	0.6
Police Officer	2.0
Senior Programme Officer Youth Justice	3.0
Programme Officer Youth Justice	1.0
Programme Officer Restorative Justice and Conference Facilitator	0.8
Volunteer Co-ordinator	0.67
Total:	28.09

Within a multi-disciplinary specialist Youth Support Service, Gloucestershire YJS has access to the wider YST resources, including:

4.2 FTE CAMHS workers
0.6 FTE Physical Health Nurse
1.2 FTE Speech and Language Therapist
5.0 FTE Substance Misuse Workers
2.0 FTE Outdoor Education Instructors

In addition, the YJS also has access to further specialist roles, including teenage pregnancy specialist, exploitation and missing support, housing advisors and NEET practitioners alongside relevant management support.

We use our grant, partner contributions and available resources to deliver Gloucestershire YJS and this Annual YJ Plan (2025/26) evidences the benefits and outcomes achieved over 2024/25. The following tables set out the financial data related to the YJ Grant – it is based on 2024/25 info as the YJS awaits the 2025/26 grant:

The following partners contributed the below to the operations of the YJS in 2024/25:

INCOME	Youth Justice Board	Local Authority	Police	Police and Crime Commissioner	Probation	Health	Total
Cash	£644,072	£1,033,208	£0	£117,500	£5,000	£135,622	£1,935,402
In-kind		£0	£104,000	£0	£30,479	£481,968	£616,477
Total income	£644,072	£1,033,208	£104,000	£117,500	£35,479	£617,590	£2,551,849

Additional detail of this and the expenditure that was included in the YJB return for 2024/25 is set out below:

EXPENDITURE	Youth Justice Board	All Other Funders	Total
Salaries	£562,577	£1,736,137	£2,298,714
All other costs	£81,495	£171,640	£253,135
Total expenditure	£644,072	£1,907,777	£2,551,849

The focus for 2025/26 will be continuing to establish Gloucestershire YJS resources and services within Gloucestershire County Council.

Gloucestershire Youth Justice Management Board Development:

In 2024/25, Gloucestershire Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) appointed a new chair following the retirement of the previous chair. The new chair of the board is the Director of Children's Commissioning & Partnerships within Gloucestershire County Council. The YJMB has also benefited from greater logistical/administrative support from an enhanced Safeguarding Business Unit, an outcome of which has been the development of YJMB published arrangements that sets out the arrangements put in place to enable local partner agencies in Gloucestershire to meet their statutory requirements for the delivery of both an effective Youth Justice Service and System.

In April 2025, the YJMB convened a development day with board members. The purpose of the session was to review progress, undertake an evaluation of the board against expectations in relation to the governance and oversight of Gloucestershire YJS, and to set the YJS priorities for 2025/26. In addition to this, the development day also offered an opportunity to connect board members with the YJS workforce. YJS staff joined the afternoon session of the development day to share their experiences, challenges and identify how they would like to engage with the YJMB.

In 2025/26 the YJMB will strengthen the connection and collaboration with the YJS workforce by having staff representation at the quarterly YJMB meetings to provide the voice of the workforce. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure the regular contribution of children at YJMB meetings and consideration is being given to the development of a 'shadow board' to enable children with experience of the youth justice system to provide insight, feedback and ideas to the YJMB. There is also going to be a review of the board induction programme and consideration of how to integrate the feedback from the development day into a localized development plan for the YJMB.

Gloucestershire YJMB has good attendance from key statutory partners, but there needs to be continued improvement in relation to the consistency of board member attendance, at the right senior level, from some key partners. There also needs to be a focus on the contribution that board members make in continuously improving children and families' experience of the youth justice system within Gloucestershire.

The current financial context for public services means that the partnership needs to work together effectively to achieve the best outcomes for children. To achieve this, the YJMB has a key role in ensuring that the partnership is attuned to how services intersect and collectively contribute towards shared aims and ambitions.

Gloucestershire Youth Justice Workforce Development:

In 2024/25, workforce development activity undertaken with staff and partners working with children in the YJS has included:

Theme	Development Activity	Impact
Social Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following successful completion of their social work apprenticeship, a YJ CRO is in the process of completing their Assessed & Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) through the Social Work Academy to consolidate learning and support ongoing practice development. A second YJ CRO started their social work apprenticeship in September 2024 and is progressing well. A Youth Justice Assistant Team Manager has started their Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) training through the Social Work Academy which will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloucestershire YJS offers a learning environment to support the achievement of qualifications that enhance career development and progression. This enables the continued development of a skilled workforce who can work effectively with children with complex needs. A positive working relationship has been developed with the University of Gloucestershire and the Children's Social Work Academy, which means that there is the opportunity for the YJS to also offer

	<p>increase practice educator capacity within the YJS for student placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A social work masters student successfully completed their placement with the Turnaround (Prevention) Team. 	<p>student placements, with students contributing latest ideas and learning to the service.</p>
Trauma Recovery Model (TRM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new YJS Senior Practitioner with a lead for trauma informed practice successfully completed the TRM training. • An introduction to working with trauma was completed for all new YJ practitioners as part of their induction. Further training will be offered to build on the introduction and how learning is being applied to practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has supported Enhanced Case Management (ECM) within Gloucestershire YJS as part of the South-West ECM project. It has offered a model of practice to understand and address the complex underlying needs of children involved in offending, particularly when the YJS, along with partner agencies, have been struggling to bring about change with children and their families.
Vicarious (Secondary) Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training has been developed and delivered to staff by the ECM FCAMHS Psychologist and YJS Senior Practitioner on recognising, preventing, and managing secondary trauma using the ABC Approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has supported staff to understand and recognise the symptoms of secondary trauma as well as develop techniques to prevent and manage the impact.
Positive Identity Shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training has been delivered to all new YJ practitioners around identity shift, drawing on Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) to support this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has supported a 'Child First' approach and enabled practitioners to work in a way that promotes children's individual strengths and ability to develop a pro-social identity away from offending. • Feedback from the Sector Level Improvement Partnership review by North Tyneside YJS identified that identity was assessed well within the small sample of Asset Plus assessments they reviewed.
Induction for new YJ Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New YJ practitioners and managers have completed induction programmes relevant to their YJS role and experience. This has enabled the YJS to review the induction process for staff and utilize the Youth Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The YJS induction process enables integration into the YJS, provides support, knowledge and development in local practice and procedures, as well as a structured plan in which the application of

	Skills & Knowledge matrices to ensure that it is fit for purpose.	<p>knowledge and skills to practice is regularly reviewed and evaluated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the induction process and feedback from YJ staff has highlighted where the YJS induction can be improved.
Substance Misuse (SMU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YJ Substance Misuse practitioners delivered SMU refresher training to YJS staff as part of a rolling training programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has supported the YJS to remain up to date in relation to substance misuse and any changes in practice and development to better address the needs of children. This is particularly important given the changing landscape around substance use and children.
Relationships & Sexual Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-Card training has been delivered to a number of YJ practitioners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This supports YJ practitioners to be able to offer appropriate sexual health advice, register children onto the C-Card scheme and provide condoms.
Referral Order Panel Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for the current Referral Order panel volunteers has included sessions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victim Voice – the lived experience and voice of victims within Referral Order panels. - Safeguarding. - Confidentiality. - Maintaining professional boundaries. • Quarterly group supervisions have provided a reflective space to share experiences of practice and receive YJS updates. • A cohort of new volunteers have recently been recruited and are currently undergoing Referral Order panel training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has supported the continuous development of volunteers to ensure that panels meet the required standards for children and victims. • The recent recruitment of volunteers has widened the pool of panel volunteers ensuring that they are representative of the communities within which children and families involved with the YJS live.
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 child protection refresher training to all YJS staff who required an update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has supported the YJS to remain up to date in relation to any changes in

		practice and development to better safeguard children.
Systemic Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 YJ practitioners have completed the Certificate in Systemic Social Work Practice with Children & Families delivered by the Centre for Systemic Social Work, alongside colleagues from Gloucestershire Children's Services. • 3 YJ managers are currently undertaking the Systemic Practice Supervision training which is also delivered by the Centre for Systemic Social Work, alongside managers from Gloucestershire Children's Services. • Moving forwards, all YJ staff will have access to online systemic practice training, followed by a 4-day course that is delivered by the Social Work Academy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has enabled the YJ practitioners to develop their practice and create change by focusing on relationships and the interconnectivity between various parts of a child's life and the systems around them. The children and their family are empowered to see things from different perspectives and identify opportunities for change. • This opportunity has also developed relationships with Children's Services where systemic practice is being implemented. This means that where YJ practitioners work jointly with children and families, they can adopt a shared practice approach.
Prevention & Diversion Assessment Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 YJ managers completed the YJB Train the trainer course with YJS colleagues from other areas. • Training has been delivered to all YJ practitioners to enable implementation of the new assessment tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prevention & Diversion Assessment tool has been implemented into YJS delivery. • Having 2 managers trained to deliver the Prevention & Diversion assessment training means that we have an ongoing training offer as well as support to oversee quality and consistency as the assessment tool continues to be embedded in practice. This has involved additional workshops with YJ practitioners and managers.
YJS Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Reality Headsets – YJ staff and managers have completed a training session, delivered by YJ seconded police officers, on how to effectively use virtual reality programmes as part of a YJS intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The virtual reality headsets have supported the engagement of children with YJS interventions as they have enjoyed using immersive technology in a safe space.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities - Turnaround and YJ Practitioners have undertaken training with the Youth Support Activities Team to widen the intervention opportunities for children in the YJS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has supported the development of YJS interventions that offer children within the YJS an opportunity to undertake activities, interventions and roles that support a positive identity shift away from crime. It has supported an increase in capacity for constructive activities to be delivered safely with children within the YJS.
Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YJ practitioners have received refresher training on representing the YJS in Court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has supported the consistency of practice in court and contributed towards developing the confidence of newer YJ practitioners.
Speech, Language & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech, Language & Communication Therapists delivered communication training as a refresher to the YJ workforce. They have also offered short training sessions on specific conditions e.g., Developmental Language Disorder to the wider youth support service, which can be accessed by YJ staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has supported the YJS in ensuring that communication with children responds to their individual needs. There have been developments to written communication e.g., contracts and plans to make them easier to understand, as well as the use of 'Engagement Passports' to enable children's behaviour and needs to be better understood within the criminal justice system.
Extremism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YJ practitioners and managers have completed Prevent update training where required. YJ Head of Service has completed Home Office approved Channel Panel training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has supported the YJS to remain up to date in relation to any changes in practice and development to better understand how to support individuals who are identified as vulnerable to radicalisation move away from extremism.

During 2024/25, Gloucestershire YJS has continued to experience several changes within a workforce that has been stable for a considerable period. This, coupled with challenges in recruiting new staff with YJ experience, has impacted on the level of management oversight and development required in the induction of new practitioners to the YJS. This has resulted in a further review of the YJS induction process for staff, which includes the utilisation of the Youth Justice Skills & Knowledge Matrix at a Foundation Level, as well as consideration to how we enhance

the development offer for all staff to ensure that they have the cores skills to support children within a changing youth justice landscape, as well as have opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge, and experience that will support progression.

In the wider YJS workforce, quality assurance activity has shown some inconsistencies in practice across the service. To address this, Gloucestershire YJS is drawing on the success of Gloucestershire Children's Social Care in continuously improving practice, by developing a series of "Essentials into Practice" training and resources that will demonstrate the minimum standard for YJ practice. This started in 2024/25 with a focus on Child First – SMART planning, a key area of development following improvements to analysis within assessments.

In addition to supervision, the YJS workforce are offered opportunities for reflective space. Bi-monthly leadership and management development sessions have continued over the last 12-months. Facilitated by the Head of YJ, the sessions focus on key areas of leadership and, to date, have included culture, applying a child first approach in decision making, auditing, and coaching skills. There are also monthly practice forums for YJ staff which have a timetable of topics focusing on areas of development that emerge from changes to practice or performance and quality assurance activity. In 2025/26, to support the implementation of systemic practice, reflective circles are being introduced to discuss case work through a systemic lens.

It is recognised that the YJ landscape has changed considerably over the last decade, with YJ staff working with increased levels of complex needs, racial disparity, poverty, serious youth violence and child exploitation. This brings challenges on an individual level with the risk of vicarious trauma, as well challenges around how to bring about positive changes for children and families with complex needs. YJ staff receive monthly reflective supervision, as well as clinical supervision facilitated by an FCAMHS psychologist for children within the Enhanced Case Management framework. In 2024/25, the YJS have had access to training on vicarious trauma but there needs to be a continued focus on promoting the resilience and well-being of staff. Within Gloucestershire County Council, YJ staff have access to a health and well-being hub that provides resources and support in relation to physical and mental health and well-being, this includes the development of individual and team well-being plans that the YJS can consider developing for 2025/26.

Workforce development priorities for 2025/26 will include:

Systemic Practice training (online and face to face) through the Social Work Academy.

"Essentials into Practice" development sessions on management oversight.

Development and implementation of a Quality Assurance framework in collaboration with Children's Social Care.

Training & development opportunities for volunteers will include: Speech, Language & Communication Needs, Neurodiversity, Substance Misuse, Trauma Informed Practice and Language that Cares.

Continued development of offer to support staff resilience and wellbeing.

Evidence-based practice and innovation:

The **Enhanced Case Management (ECM) Model** was formally launched within Gloucestershire YJS in September 2023, with a Senior Youth Justice Case Responsible Officer and Forensic CAMHS Psychologist leading on this area of practice. ECM enables a joined-up, trauma-informed approach, further supporting professionals to move beyond behaviour management and address the child's underlying needs. Through trauma-informed formulation, structured risk planning, and consistent clinical input, ECM has provided essential support to multi-agency professional networks navigating high levels of complexity, ensuring that each child's emotional, psychological, and safety needs remain at the centre of planning. As a result of the project, 16 children have benefitted from consultation or formulation through the ECM framework which identifies where a child is on the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM), informs the professional network of why things are the way they are for the child, as well as identifying how best to sequence interventions from a trauma informed approach (See Appendix 3 for ECM Case Study)

ECM have been collecting feedback from professionals who have

Feedback from ECM review meeting:

What did you find most helpful? – **The meeting was short and insightful**

Was there anything you like the ECM team to change in the future - **No**

I find it easy to communicate with the ECM team - **Strongly Agree**

Overall, (on a scale 1-10) I am satisfied from the ECM service – **10**

Feedback from full ECM formulation meeting:

What did you find most helpful? – **Creating the child's timeline with the multi-disciplinary network**

Was there anything you like the ECM team to change in the future? – **No**

The ECM service has led to a better understanding of the child's needs – **Agree**

Overall, (on a scale 1-10) I am satisfied from the ECM service – **10**

Feedback from ECM consultation:

What did you find most helpful? - **Time and space to reflect and consider different approaches.**

The ECM input has led to more confidence/improvements in the child's plan – **Strongly Agree**

I feel supported by the ECM team - **Strongly Agree**

In addition to offering ECM formulations and consultations, in Gloucestershire, we have been able to offer post-incident psychological support sessions for staff, clinical group supervision and training on trauma informed practice and secondary trauma.

2024/25 continued to see the success of the **Turnaround/Prevention project** within Gloucestershire YJS, a targeted prevention programme in line with the YJB definitions of prevention and diversion. The plan for the MoJ funded prevention project in Gloucestershire has been to enhance the existing offer and provide targeted support for children on the edge of the youth justice system. These are children who would previously not have been supported. The approach has been to draw on the principles of early help and support for children and families. To maximise impact, the aim has been to target the turnaround prevention resource to benefit children with characteristics that are currently overrepresented in the main YJS cohort, and the subsequent reoffending cohort. In meeting the MoJ defined criteria for eligibility those children from ethnically diverse communities, females and those experiencing education disruption or have SEND are being prioritised. However, it has been important that the support offered by Turnaround/Prevention does not increase criminogenic stigma which can be associated with mainstream Youth Justice Services. A holistic assessment is undertaken with the child and family, making use of child first principles, to understand the current situation and needs, as well as drawing on systemic skills to identify and understand the interconnectedness of issues for the child. The model of practice is based on practitioners delivering the intervention themselves, drawing on relational based approaches. In 2024/25 the project included the delivery of a 12-week mentoring programme for younger children, aged 10-14, in partnership with Chance is Change. The programme has focused on relationships, health, and wellbeing, staying safe. At the end of year 3, Quarter 4 (2024/25), 120 children had completed interventions through the Turnaround/Prevention project and, to date, for 98% of the children there is no record of proven re-offending following their involvement in the project.

Gloucestershire YJS continue to have a partnership with **The Music Works**, a Gloucestershire based charity whose mission is to transform children and young people's lives through music. Children within the YJS have access to Key Changes, designed as a mental health and wellbeing programme to support children to express themselves through music ([Key changes - TheMusicWorks](#)). The main YJS intervention is

the 'Making It' programme, an award-winning programme for children aged 16-18 ([Making It Programme – TheMusicWorks](#)). It makes use of The Music Works theory of changes which is about self-determination, control, confidence and connections. The aim is to build confidence and increase future aspirations for these children over 20hrs of support which are arranged to meet the needs of the child. One of the challenges that can be faced when working with children in the justice system is the way in which lyrics can be seen to incite violence and criminality. The Music Works mentors approach this by seeking to understand what a child is trying to communicate and exploring alternative language. The aim is to maintain expression and creativity, but help children understand their thoughts and feelings and express this in a different format. The theory of change is about reframing and understanding the feelings behind the lyrics which helps the child to better understand themselves whilst also working to keep the community and child safe. The programme focuses on more than music and is supporting children and young people to develop wider creative entrepreneurial skills to support them into education, training and employment. In addition to this, the partnership between The Music Works and the YJS also enables children to gain a Duke of Edinburgh Sectional Certificate Award. The qualitative feedback from children on the impact of the programme is that they value the opportunities they have had through the Music Works. One child talked about his desistance journey, leaving behind a previous identity as someone who got into trouble and messed around to becoming an artist, someone who uses music to bring people together. The data has also shown that 85% of children who completed the 'Making It' programme have not gone on to re-offend (See Appendix 4 for Case Study)

As part of Gloucestershire's Serious Violence Prevention Strategy, the focus for 2025/26 is youth violence. The development of a pilot programme is underway in partnership with the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire Constabulary that offers a secondary youth prevention pathway aimed at boys, aged 14-16, who are 'at risk' having been involved in violence and/or the possession of weapons. The 4-5 week programme will be based at SkillZONE ([SkillZONE - Gloucestershire SkillZONE](#)), an interactive life skills village where children can learn how to keep themselves safe within their community, but will also have involvement from other statutory and non-statutory partners. With a strong focus on offering activities, interventions and roles that will support the development of a pro-social identity, the programme aligns with the Child First framework. Consultation and collaboration with children has identified that sport, physical activity and outdoor education will be key to ensuring the interest and engagement of children on the programme, trade and labour employment opportunities could be the most beneficial to the cohort of children on the programme, and the skills of the programme facilitators will be important to programme success. The aim is for the pilot programme to commence in September/October 2025 and an evaluation framework is in place to measure impact.

Priorities for the coming year:

2025/26 will continue to see the YJS embed within Gloucestershire County Council following the successful transition in October 2024, and this will continue to form a key part of the YJ plan. However, several other priorities have been identified to build on the progress achieved during 2024/25. These are set out below:

YJ Plan Aims	Actions	Impact
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<p>Aim 1: Support YJS workforce integration and alignment with Gloucestershire Children's Services vision, values and behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonisation of Staff: completing the harmonisation of the YJS workforce (employment terms, policies and operational practices) ensuring equity, legal compliance and service continuity. • Staff Engagement: Inclusion of YJS staff within the harmonisation process to ensure that they are kept up to date and supported. • Alignment of culture and practice: Embed a unified organisational culture and systemic practice approach to ensure the YJS workforce understands and demonstrates shared values, expectations and service principles. • YJS Identity: Co-develop and embed a clear identity for the YJS that is understood and owned by staff, partners and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will continue to receive the required level of service and have their needs met during the integration process and service delivery model within GCC. • Staff will feel confident, supported, and morale will be maintained during the change process. • YJS performance will be maintained during the change process. • The YJS service delivery model will enable the YJS workforce to align more closely with Children's Social Care creating opportunities for a joined-up approach to meeting the needs of the complex cohort of children who are open to both the YJS and wider children's services. • The YJS workforce will feel connected by a shared sense of purpose and direction • Continued reinforcement of the YJS identity, vision and ambition within Gloucestershire, with the service identity reflected in documentation, plans and communication.
<p>Aim 2: Implementation of the 'Child First' Framework into YJS delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of effective, evidence-based, interventions that promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a prosocial identity: Deliver a programme of projects for children that offer constructive and future-focused activities to support them to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their community. This will begin with cooking and wood workshop reparation projects that enable children to develop key skills, gain qualifications, and interact with local businesses/community organisations to try out new roles away from offending. • Review and revise practice templates to ensure that they are aligned with the 'Child First' framework: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who experience Gloucestershire YJS will be treated according to their age, development, maturity, and abilities. • Gloucestershire YJS will continue to move away from using deficit focused interventions and begin to deliver interventions/provide opportunities that change how a child sees themselves and the world around them so that they can see a future away from offending. Evidence of this will be seen through quality assurance activity.

	<p>The harmonisation of policies and operational practices will ensure alignment with the 'Child First' framework throughout a child's pathway in the YJS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the meaningful voice of the child and co-production practices across the YJS: Establish a youth voice panel and develop a Youth Justice & Co-Production plan to ensure that children are influencing service design, delivery, and evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will develop skills and gain qualifications that will help them with education, training, and employment. • Children will have an active voice in influencing service design, delivery and evaluation to ensure that the youth justice partnership is effective in meeting the needs of children and families within the youth justice system
Aim 3: Promote inclusion and belonging with the ambition to reduce disproportionality in all its forms within Gloucestershire YJS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the racial disparity action plan: Establish a partnership subgroup to create and deliver an action plan informed by the disproportionality report commissioned by the YJMB in 2024/25. • Improve YJ partnership data monitoring and analysis: Youth Justice Management Board members to enhance YJS information by reporting on ethnicity data from their agency and providing an analysis to maintain oversight and analysis of racial disparity within the youth justice system. • Development of Ethnicity Impact Assessment (EIA) at key decision points in the YJS to examine how decisions may affect children differently based on their ethnic background. Key decision-making points might include diversion or formal charge, bail or remand, enforcement decisions, referral to intervention or support services, early revocation. • Improve the partnership between the YJS and education to ensure an effective, proactive response, to support the education needs of children within the YJS cohort. This will include the development of a shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and delivery of the racial disparity action plan via the partnership subgroup will support shared ownership and accountability for reducing racial disparity within the youth justice system. • Improvements to data monitoring and analysis will support an enhanced understanding of trends and areas of concern, enabling a proactive response and timely intervention and adjustment of strategies to address disproportionality where needed. • An Ethnicity Impact Assessment will ensure fairness, accountability and supports a reduction in racial disparity by identifying potential bias – whether unconscious, systemic or procedural. • Children within the YJS will have their education needs met to give them the best chance of achieving their aspirations and goals in life.

	data set to ensure that children within the YJS cohort are clearly identifiable within education data on vulnerable children in Gloucestershire.	
Aim 4: Improve the Health & Well-Being of Children within the YJS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further development of health and well-being interventions as part of the development of interventions cited in Aim 2 above: The foundation of the trauma recovery model is for children to have structure and routine, alongside trusting relationships. However, many of the children within the YJS experience a lack of sleep, poor diet and are consistently in fight or flight response. An innovative, developmentally informed, 'tool kit' with health intervention ideas for practitioners will be developed alongside the YJ Health Team to address basic health and well-being needs of children at all stages within the YJS. This will include the ➤ Health Dashboard: Implementation of a dashboard that identifies which children are open to the health team, and what level of support they are receiving. This will support the oversight of performance, quality and need, as well as future YJS planning, and ensure that the right health support, at the right time, is available for children within the YJS. ➤ Health Intervention Panel: Development and implementation that brings together the health team and Youth Justice Case Responsible Officer during a child's assessment period to enable a better understanding of health needs and how best to respond to any unmet needs ensuring that children within the YJS have the right support available to them when they need it. ➤ Development of immunisation clinics within youth support centres to ensure that children within the YJS have access to immunisations they have missed due to not being in education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children who experience Gloucestershire YJS will have their basic health needs met, which will support the development of structure and routine within their lives. ➤ With structure and routine, professionals are more likely to be able engage children in support that enables them to reach their potential through education, training, or employment. ➤ Children are more likely to feel better through increased rest, better diet, and exercise. ➤ A health dashboard will support the early identification of trends and areas of concern and enable future planning to make sure children involved in the YJS have the right health support available to them. ➤ A joint panel will reduce the need for referrals and expedite the pathway for health support for children in the YJS.

Aim 5: Ensuring an effective response to victims of crime, including children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review and develop the response to victims of crime, including children, to ensure equality of access to support: We know that children who offend are disproportionately more likely to be victims of crime, as well as abuse and neglect. We need to work with partners, including services for victims, to ensure that the needs of victims are being responded to effectively. ➤ Improve data quality to fully understand the demographics of the victims of crime: We need to understand and address any gaps in victim data so that we have a full understanding of victim demographics and can respond effectively to need. ➤ Compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales for all victims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Victims who have been harmed will have access to appropriate support that meets their individual needs. ➤ Children who are victims of criminal exploitation are more likely to receive the appropriate support at the right time. ➤ Children will feel safer and are less likely to commit crimes that help them feel safe e.g. carry weapons meaning that the safety of communities is likely to increase.
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Quality & Standards for Children in the YJS:

Gloucestershire YJS continues to ensure that practice aligns with the framework set out within the *Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System (2019)* and YJB Case Management Guidance. In 2024/25, there has been a variety of quality assurance work undertaken which has included the following:

Sector Level Improvement Partner Review (SLIP) by North Tyneside YJS:

In 2024/25, following the return of Gloucestershire YJS to the local authority in October 2024, Gloucestershire County Council requested a diagnostic peer review of the service through the Department for Education Sector Level Improvement Partnership. It was viewed as a positive opportunity to develop the YJS in line with wider improvement activity across children's social care. There has been significant and ongoing investment in a strength-based, relationship focused, systemic approach which will underpin the Youth Justice Service. The review focused on the following areas:

- Quality of Practice
- Performance
- Management and leadership
- Links to contextual safeguarding

Some of the key findings from the review include:

What is Working Well within Gloucestershire YJS	Areas of Opportunity for Gloucestershire YJS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gloucestershire YJS is committed to children and there is a strong sense of advocacy for children. YJ Case Responsible Officers (CROs) knew their children well and clearly want the best outcomes for them. There appears to be strong relationships between children and their CRO with evidence of CRO's going above and beyond through direct work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are inconsistencies in the understanding of the Child First framework across the system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There was evidence of good quality analysis in the assessments that were reviewed, with a strong consideration of identity. The voice of the child is evident in assessments and some plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/carer voice is not consistent within YJ assessments. • Information in the assessment wasn't always evident within the plan. • Contingency planning where there is a higher risk was often about further referral rather than relating directly to the child and their circumstances. • The link to other plans e.g. social care plans is not always clearly recorded. • Wording of plans isn't always relatable for children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gloucestershire YJS is open to change, and staff articulated the benefits of being back within GCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current structure of the YJS has the potential to create silo working and a disconnected culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gloucestershire YJS has access to a wealth of resources to meet the needs of children within the youth justice system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst having a broad multi-disciplinary resource is positive, the case management practice observed and reported can lead to fragmentation, and children being involved with many people. Current referral processes can also delay a timely response to the needs of children within the youth justice system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Head of YJS is focused on outcomes for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of managers are not fully understood by those they manage. • Current QA and audit process was experienced as being inconsistent – could get different feedback from different managers on the same child.

✓ Performance reports for Youth Justice are of a good standard and the YJS is performing well in terms of compliance/KPIs	• There is a disconnect between the YJMB and the YJS.
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In response to the findings and recommendations of the review, a development plan has been implemented alongside the YJ Annual Plan 2025/26. This includes the following strategic and operational objectives:

• Ensure that the practice model across the whole of children's services includes the Youth Justice Service
• Develop a YJS structure that builds the whole service as a team working collaboratively together with minimal divides, ensuring that the identity of the YJS is explicit.
• Identify ways to make the YJS more visible across Children's Social Care. - Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home are clear areas of crossover.
• Review communication pathways to ensure that all staff are fully sighted and included in developments – winning hearts and minds.
• Review of the Children First Pathway following implementation of the Prevention & Diversion Assessment Tool.
• Review the QA of YJ case management to ensure a consistency of approach in assessing the standard of practice.
• Develop practice in relation to improving consistency in assessment and planning – voice of the parent/carers, child friendly language, assessments informing plan, contingency planning, co-production.

During 2025/26, North Tyneside will provide some ongoing support to Gloucestershire YJS which will include a further visit to look at what developments and improvements have been undertaken in response to the diagnostic review.

Learning from YJB Serious Incident Notifications:

During 2024/25, Gloucestershire YJS submitted two Serious Incident Notifications to the YJB. The YJS is required to complete a Serious Incident Notification if a child is charged with committing a notifiable incident which includes: attempted murder, murder/manslaughter, rape, grievous bodily harm or wounding with or without intent – section 18/20, a terrorism related offence; or a child dies on the YJS caseload, or up to 20 calendar days following the end of YJS supervision.

To strengthen the learning when serious incidents occur, and because children within the youth justice system are also usually involved with the wider statutory partnership, the notification process has been aligned with the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Serious Incident Notification Process as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). As a result, for one of the Serious Incident Notifications, a Rapid Review was undertaken to consider the practice and systems in Gloucestershire when there are extra-familial harms, including child exploitation and serious youth violence. The multi-agency partners agreed a focus upon how agencies understood and considered

the early life experiences whilst offering support to the child and his siblings, specifically, over the last two years whilst trying to keep the children safe in their local community (due to increasing concerns of serious youth violence and harms outside the home). A unanimous view was heard that there were “*many missed opportunities*” to keep the boys safe and understand the parents’ abilities to make and sustain changes at key periods of their lives by Children’s Social Care, the Police and Education Services. This is seen within the context of external inspectorate reviews for both the Local Authority and the Constabulary in 2017.

Key learning identified in the review included:

- Good multi-agency work led by the YJS, Police and Children’s Social Care to ensure regular reviews of the child’s safety plan.
- The cumulative impact of harms on the child and his younger siblings.
- The impact of intergenerational patterns of offending and family reputation can result in children being labelled within the local area and by local services offering support and protection.
- Good relationship-based work by the YJS Case Responsible Officer who demonstrated an understanding of the impact of early childhood trauma and advocated a trauma informed response.
- Drift in assessing the child’s educational, social and emotional needs and ensuring an EHCP was put in place and suitable educational provision being identified to meet the child’s needs.
- The importance of a co-ordinated response involving all key safeguarding partners – it was identified that the housing service had not been involved in multi-agency discussions.
- The response by professionals was often reactive to ‘crisis’ situations which meant that there wasn’t space to understand the child’s behaviours.
- The impact of potential adultification bias due to the family reputation and the child being the eldest sibling in a family where there was a predominant absence of a father figure. This risked the professional network misunderstanding the child’s capacity to understand what was being communicated to them.

The following recommendations were identified for the Gloucestershire Children Safeguarding Partnership as part of the review:

Recommendation 1	The learning from this Rapid Review forms part of the already commissioned GSCP Harm outside the Home (HOTH) Review. The Review’s timescale for completion and implementation of system and practice changes is currently agreed as the end of 2025.
Recommendation 2	Each statutory agency (Police, CSC, CAMHS and Local Education Authority) provides details and assurances to the GSCP regarding how they are developing services and strengthening practice to ensure trauma informed response when working with children and their families.

The recommendations were also assessed as applicable to the second YJB Serious Incident Notification that was submitted by the YJS as there were similar themes in relation to harm outside the home, exploitation, and serious youth violence.

YJS Performance & Quality:

In 2024/25, the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework has included monthly performance surgeries to provide oversight of quantitative data and monthly audits, along with the regular quality assurance of case management, to provide oversight of the quality of YJ service delivery. In addition to this, the YJS has undertaken dip-samples on education, health and planning which have informed the YJS priorities for 2025/26. The transition to GCC has also provided an opportunity to review and refresh the Performance & Quality framework for Gloucestershire YJS so that it aligns with Gloucestershire Children's Services and responds to the findings from the diagnostic peer review by North Tyneside YJS.

Planned Performance & Quality Assurance development for 2025/26 includes:

Review of Performance & QA Framework to align with Children's Services following the YJS transition to GCC
Review of the QA of YJ case management to ensure a consistency of approach in assessing the standard of practice
Harm outside the Home (HOTH) Review commissioned by the GSCP
Follow up peer review by North Tyneside YJS as part of the Sector Level Improvement Partnership.

Service Development:

In addition to the activity set out above, the 2025/26 YJ Plan sets out how we will develop Gloucestershire YJS through the priorities for the coming year and sets out a commitment to address the national priorities as set out in the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan.

YJS National Priority Areas:

Gloucestershire YJS has a commitment to continue addressing the following priorities through the 2025/26 YJ Plan:

Children from Groups which are Over-represented:

Tackling over-representation in the youth justice system is a key priority for Gloucestershire YJS and the wider partnership. The long-term strategy is to promote inclusion and belonging, and to reduce disproportionality in all its forms within Gloucestershire YJS. For 2025/26, there will continue to be a focus on reducing racial disparity within Gloucestershire YJS with a priority to operationalise the recommendations from the youth justice disparity report and strategic action plan. On an operational level, the YJ Plan references how, to maximise impact, the continued aim of the Turnaround/Prevention project is to direct resource to benefit children with characteristics that are currently overrepresented in the main youth justice cohort, and the subsequent reoffending cohort.

Policing:

Policing plays an important role in the delivery of outcomes for children in the justice system in Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire YJS have two Police Officers seconded into the service who undertake duties in line with the Joint National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) and Youth Justice Board (YJB) guidance on the role of a YJS Police Officer. As already outlined in the plan, there are strengths in the partnership in relation to police custody and diversion, with the Gloucestershire Children First diversion scheme demonstrating continued success in diverting children from the justice system since it was launched in 2018. However, Gloucestershire Constabulary have faced significant challenges over the last 12-months which has resulted in the reduction of PCSOs and police staff and the implementation of the Constabulary's new Gloucestershire Rapid Improvement Plan (GRIP) in response to the National Child Protection Inspection. There have also been changes in senior leadership roles within the constabulary and the newly formed leadership team has a very strong public and child protection background and is committed to delivering swift and lasting improvements

Prevention:

Gloucestershire YJS is delivering targeted prevention work with children (together with their families/carers) through the 12-month extension of the Turnaround Project (pg. 38). In addition to this, the specialist youth support offer includes an Exploitation and Complex Engagement (ECET) Team who work alongside children's social care to provide support to children on Child in Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CP) Plans and being exploited. The ECET practitioners provide a holistic intervention, according to the child and their families' assessed needs, that can include disruption, safety planning, family work, education support, health interventions, positive activities. The aim is to safeguard the children and reduce the likelihood of them entering the justice system.

Diversion:

The ambition for Gloucestershire YJS is to criminalise the fewest number of children by keeping them out of the formal criminal justice system and diverting them into informal interventions wherever appropriate. Gloucestershire's Children First diversion scheme is an example of how we have consistently achieved this by continuing to push boundaries and challenge traditional cultural and systemic responses to children who commit offences in the interests of children, young people, and the wider community. Delivered in partnership with Gloucestershire Constabulary, Restorative Gloucestershire, Victim Support and Gloucestershire Health and Care, a joint decision-making panel will review the offence, alongside the child's individual history and needs, as well as the needs of the victim, and decide upon the most appropriate outcome. The Children First

diversion system has also developed a return from court process for children who may have provided a no comment interview to the police and been charged to court. This option allows the YJS duty officer, CPS and defence to collaborate in the best interests of the child. Page 20 of the YJ Plan 2025/26 shows how the effectiveness of Children First Pathways are monitored using local data to analyse reoffending rates. These have consistently been lower than the national data for Youth Cautions and all other formal sanctions.

Education

Gloucestershire YJS has a dedicated 1.0FTE YJ Education Specialist who works closely with the Local Authority Education department to champion the needs of children who are not receiving their educational entitlement. In addition to this, due to the integrated nature of the YST, within which the YJS is located, children above statutory school age have access to NEET Case Workers. There have been some challenges with a reduction in Post 16 provision for children in Gloucestershire which has impacted on children within the YJS. Closer working and collaboration with the education department now that the YJS is within Children's Services will ensure a good level of oversight of access to ETE for children involved in the YJS, particularly in relation to local data on education disruption and disproportionality.

Restorative Approaches and Victims:

Gloucestershire YJS continue to provide a robust service to the victims of crime. Delivered in line with the Victims Code, Restorative justice work is co-ordinated and co-allocated between the YJS Victim Liaison Officer and Restorative Gloucestershire, a local restorative organisation funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This partnership provides the YJS Victim Liaison Officer with training, group supervision and a co-worker for restorative justice cases. The YJS aims to contact all victims of crime and local data for 2024/25 shows that this is consistently being achieved. Restorative approaches are important in empowering victims as well as supporting children to develop a 'pro-social' identity and make a positive contribution to their community. Gloucestershire YJS is able to support and engage victims in restorative approaches, including face to face mediation and shuttle mediation, through both diversionary and statutory YJ interventions. Where victims don't wish to engage in restorative approaches, they are often provided with advice and guidance or referred/signposted to support to meet their needs (see Appendix 2 Restorative Justice Case Study).

Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding:

Gloucestershire YJS continues to fulfil its duty as a specified authority, contributing to the implementation of the Gloucestershire Serious Violence Prevention 5 Year Strategic Approach. Serious violence and exploitation continue to pose a challenge to the YJS and wider partnership. The focus of the Serious Violence Prevention Approach for 2025/26 is youth violence. The development of a pilot programme is underway in partnership with the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Constabulary and GCC that offers a secondary youth prevention pathway aimed at boys, aged 14-16, who are identified as being 'at risk' having been involved in violence and/or the possession of weapons. The Youth Support Team includes the Exploitation and Complex Engagement Team, which works collaboratively with children's social care to provide support to children involved in exploitation, as well as working alongside the YJS when children come to the attention of criminal justice agencies. Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership have commissioned a diagnostic review of the Gloucestershire

response to harms outside the home. This will support the improvement and development of services to meet the needs of vulnerable children, including those within the YJS.

Detention in Police Custody:

The YJ partnership maintains effective oversight of children who are detained in police custody and decision-making, raising concerns at the earliest opportunity and undertaking reviews where needed, particularly where there are questions around the appropriate use of PACE protocol. In 2024/25, the Youth Justice Liaison & Diversion contract ended with Prospects and returned to Gloucestershire Health & Care, with the staff being TUPE transferred under the new arrangements. Despite this, Youth Justice Liaison & Diversion has remained closely aligned with the YJS, ensuring effective joint working within police custody and the community. An example of this is the collaboration on and implementation of 'Engagement Passports', a one-page profile that tells professionals about the child – their strengths and difficulties, how they might present and how professionals can best respond to the child and help them understand what is happening. These are now accessible on police and health systems, available to the court, and can be shared with the wider professional network. Appropriate Adult services in Gloucestershire are delivered by Caring for Communities and People (CCP).

Remands:

Children subject to 'Remands to Local Authority Accommodation' and children subject to remands to 'Youth Detention Accommodation' are covered on page 22 of the 2025/26 YJ Plan, including available data which shows a significant reduction of remands in 2024/25.


Use of Custody and Constructive Resettlement:

The use of custody has decreased in Gloucestershire over the last 12-months (2024/25) following the increase that was seen in 2023/24. This is covered on page 21 of the 2025/26 YJ Plan.

Working with Families:

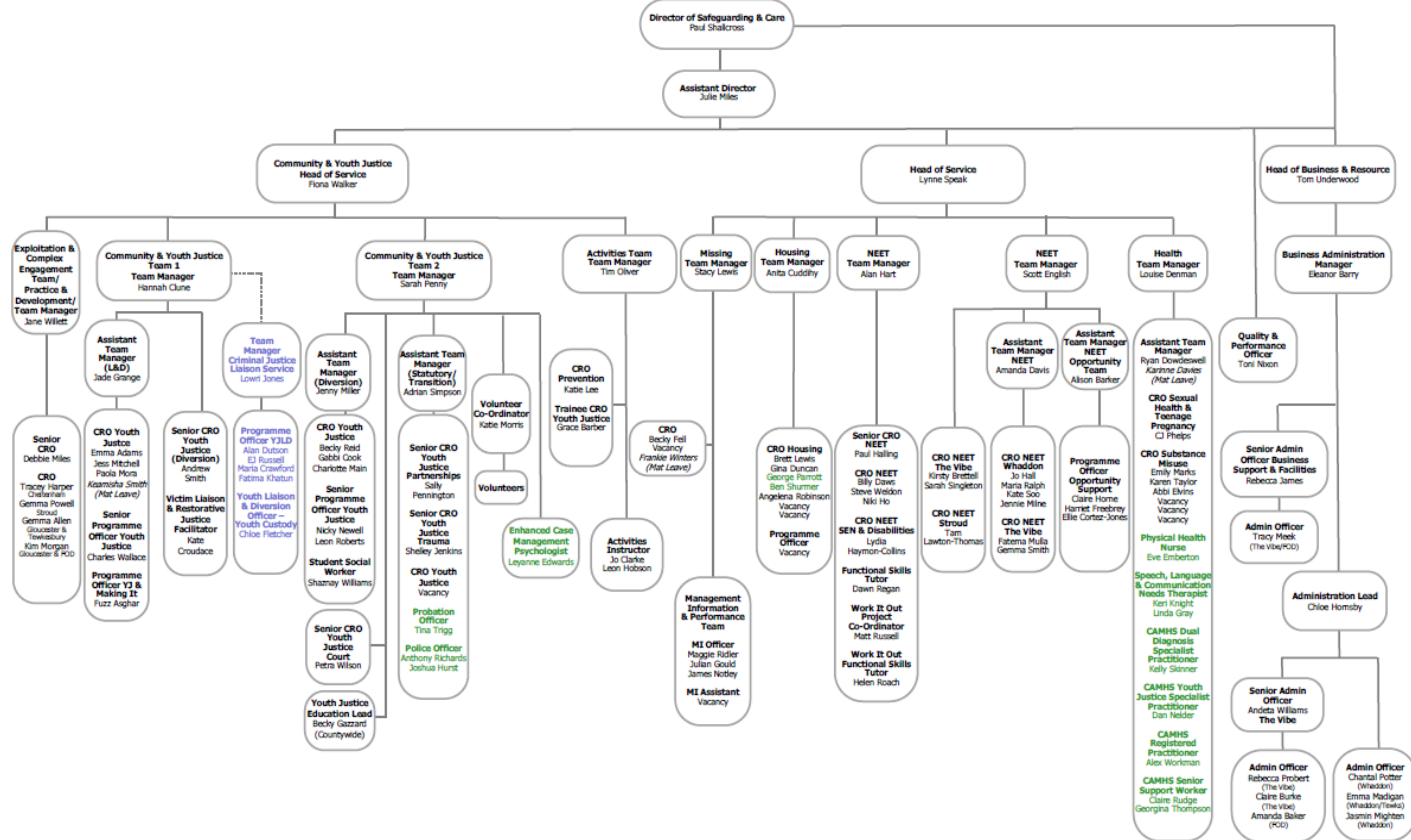
Gloucestershire YJS recognises the importance of working with the whole family or support network of children in the justice system. At a prevention level, the Turnaround/Prevention Project focuses on a whole family approach and has established connections with Early Help and Targeted Support Services, as well as pathways into family support services. In addition to this, four YJ practitioners have undertaken their Certificate in Systemic Social Work Practice with Children and Families. This is enabling them to develop their practice and create change by focusing on relationships and the interconnectivity between different parts of a child's life and the systems around them. In 2024/25, 3 YJ managers commenced the Systemic Practice Supervision training. Moving forwards, all YJ staff will have access to online systemic practice training, followed by a 4-day course that is delivered by the Social Work Academy. This will support the alignment of practice with children's social care where a systemic practice approach has been embedded.

YJ Plan Sign off:

Chair of Youth Justice Management Board:	Rob England
Signature:	
Date:	11/06/2025

Appendix 1:

Structure Chart June 2025



Appendix 2: Restorative Justice Case Study

Introduction:

In March 2025, during a visit to Gloucestershire YJS, Steph Roberts-Bibby, Chief Executive of the YJB, met W, an 82-year-old victim, to hear her story. This case study summarises the experiences that Wendy described and the significant impact that a restorative justice intervention can have on both the victim and the child.

What happened:

On the day the offence took place W was volunteering at a church hall and preparing for a games evening. Several children had arrived early and wanted to come in but as the other helpers had not arrived, they were told that they would have to wait. W had noticed one child behaving a bit aggressively towards other children. Some of the children waiting outside reported being fearful of the child so, as other helpers had arrived, W let these children in to keep them safe. She told the child who had been behaving aggressively that he would not be able to use the centre on this occasion. The child did not accept this, pushing past the door and pushing W, causing her to fall backwards. Fortunately, another helper caught W preventing her from sustaining any physical injury. The police were called and whilst W was not physically injured the incident resulted in emotional harm.

What did we do:

The offence was dealt with through an out of court disposal, both to reduce the stigmatisation of the child who offended and provide an efficient response to the victim. Gloucestershire has consistently seen much lower levels of recidivism from children diverted when compared with those processed through the formal system. The child was allocated to a YJS Case Responsible Officer who explained the diversion process and completed the assessment alongside a worker from Restorative Gloucestershire. The child agreed to answer some questions from the victim but said they did not really have much they wanted to say. It was identified that the family were experiencing financial difficulties, and the child was sleeping in the living room as the family did not have enough bedrooms.

At this stage, the plan was for shuttle mediation to try and give W answers to any questions she had. On visiting W, the worker from Restorative Gloucestershire found that she was much more concerned with how the child was. She reflected on how traumatising it was for her, as a victim, to watch the boy being arrested and put in a police car. She said that this whole experience had left her feeling sad. When this was shared with the child his approach changed and any defensiveness disappeared. The child wanted to meet with the victim to say sorry and shared a story about how he had a friend he would help at the gym of a similar age to W, and he would not want anything to happen to them. A restorative conference was arranged and took place in the church hall with the child supported by his mother and W by a friend from the church.

What was the impact:

The child arrived at the conference with a bunch of tulips for W by way of an apology and his Mum explained that this was his idea, paid for with his own money. He had also been to see the church pastor prior to the meeting to apologise. The conference went well and gave the child an opportunity to be re-integrated into his community.

As a result of this the child now helps at the church. He does some cooking for them and helps with the youth group. He has an interest in construction and has been doing some work experience with the church maintenance team. He has also enrolled on an Alpha course through the church.

Summary:

- The YJS reported that whilst the approach of having a Restorative Gloucestershire practitioner attend initial visits with YJS case managers was new, they were finding that the greater exploration increased the take up of restorative opportunities when compared with having YJS case managers make referrals.
- The child had someone who believed in them and saw them as a person which reduced the barriers to restorative work and provided an opportunity for reintegration into the community.
- The church provided the child with opportunities for pro-social identity development and helped him to think about who he wanted to be in the future.

Appendix 3: Enhanced Case Management Case Study**Background overview:**

The child was a 17-year-old male, referred to ECM following a Youth Justice Safety Planning Meeting. From in-utero he was exposed to parental substance misuse and domestic violence, resulting in neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) and had complications at birth. Throughout his childhood he had experienced significant trauma, and was exposed to domestic violence, parental substance misuse, and inconsistent, neglectful care. The child witnessed multiple incidents of harm and was placed on a Child Protection Plan from birth. There were numerous referrals for

social care involvement during childhood. The family were known to police and had frequent involvement due to drug use and parental offending. The child started heavily using drugs and became involved in a wider network of exploitation. Even at the point of coming into care, the child continued to experience trauma where he was exploited, as well as experiencing multiple placement breakdowns and ongoing educational disruption, mirroring the instability in his home life.

At the time of his ECM referral, the child was subject to a 12-month Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) with tag and curfew conditions, following a pattern of repeated offending. YJS staff struggled to engage with the child as there were frequent missing episodes and limited placement stability. An ECM formulation was initiated to explore the child's needs through a trauma-informed lens and develop a creative support plan. The ECM timeline mapping really highlighted the above experiences and the extent of the early and ongoing trauma, even pre-birth.

Assessment and Key Planning:

Through the initial ECM formulation meeting, it was recognised that the child presents with an ambivalent attachment style, shaped by early relational trauma. He struggles to trust when care will be available, often seeking it intensely but then rejecting, sabotaging, or clinging to it, which can overwhelm relationships and reinforce cycles of rejection. The impact of developmental trauma has left his nervous system primed for threat, leading to frequent states of hypervigilance and fight-or-flight. This significantly affects his ability to regulate emotions, think clearly, plan, and sustain attention, with even minor stressors triggering overwhelming responses. The chaotic nature of his early environment is often mirrored in his interaction with services, where shifting needs and goals can leave professionals feeling as though they are constantly chasing him and struggling to maintain consistent boundaries.

Using the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM), the child was assessed as functioning between Levels 1 (instability & inconsistency) and 2 (trust & relationship building), indicating a need for structure, routine, and emotionally attuned relationships.

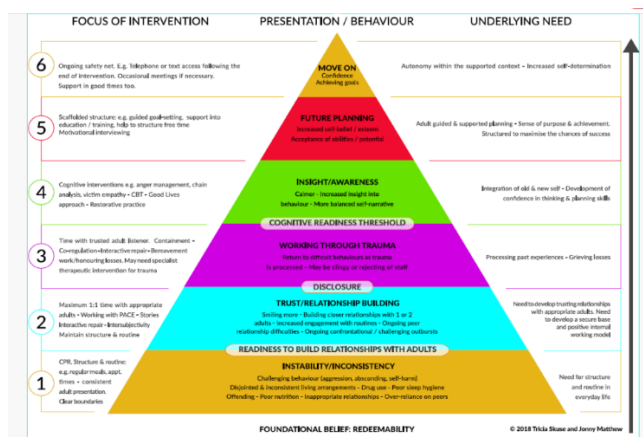
Key recommendations included:

- Prioritising **Consistency, Predictability, and Reliability (CPR)** and **the Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy (PACE)** approach.
- Providing **1:1 attuned support**, consistent boundaries, and relational strategies.
- Considering a **SALT assessment** to support learning.
- Development of a **court passport document** to inform professionals of the child's needs and strategies.
- Further recommendations were made to maintain stability through consistent, clear boundaries, to reduce the ongoing sense of chaos in his environment.

Ongoing Support and Outcomes:

- ECM supported the professional network throughout the duration of the YRO. Following the initial formulation, the child had a notable period of stability, settling well in a new placement. Although later re-sentenced for historic burglary offences (resulting in an 18-month

To support positive routine, funding was secured for the child's CSCS Card training, weekly mentoring, and gym access. These interventions encouraged pro-social activity and helped fill unstructured time. The child began disclosing past incidents and recognised potential grooming within the aforementioned relationship, even expressing willingness to speak with police. While engagement remained inconsistent, the network continued to adapt its approach, leading to gradual improvement over time. ECM played a key role in supporting a trauma-informed transition to probation, ensuring that the new worker was fully briefed on the formulation, the child's history, and the impact of their experiences. This was achieved through the ECM review process and additional consultation, facilitating a more contained and thoughtful handover. The aim was to ensure that the child's needs would continue to be met into adulthood in a way that was both informed and developmentally appropriate.



Appendix 4: The Music Works Case Study

Background:

S was 15 years old when he first started working with the YJS – he had been sentenced to an 8mth Referral Order for Affray. He identifies as a Black Caribbean male. The family had previously received support from social care via a Child in Need plan, but professionals had struggled to engage with the family. S had not experienced a relationship with his father but always wanted one. However, this opportunity was taken from S following his father's death. The family were unable to attend the funeral and, at the start of the YJS intervention, S did not know where he was buried.

S attended a local secondary school and had experienced multiple education disruptions, including suspensions, an unsuccessful managed move and permanent exclusion for taking a knife onto school grounds. As a result, he attended alternative provision. Staff commented that S was a complex character, who had educational ability, but he found it difficult to remain on task and not get involved in problematic behaviours with other students.

S was identified as a member of an Urban Street Gang and there were multiple reports linking him to drug possession and supply as well as being involved in violence and threatening behaviour towards others whilst also being a victim of violence himself. At the start of YJS involvement, almost all of S's friendship group were also known to be Urban Street Gang members as S sought out safety and belonging. During the period of his Referral Order, S was arrested and charged on two further occasions for serious youth violence offences. The escalation in offending meant that S was at risk of a custodial sentence, but he received a 15-month Youth Rehabilitation Order.

What did we do:

- As part of his YJ intervention, S was referred to The Music Works to undertake the 'Making It' Programme. S is a talented and creative MC who had been accessing the community drop-in sessions at The Music Works, and he agreed that having regular one to one space with a mentor over a 20-week programme would support the development of his skills. Over the course of the programme, staff at Music Works were able to see a significant emotional and physical change. S started to feel able to challenge his peers in a group setting when writing lyrics. Questioning their use of language and the potential impact that this could have on them individually as well as the community. He also gradually changed his friendship circle and spent more time with those that he felt were also trying to move away from the 'gang' lifestyle. S was able to create music in a safe and supportive setting, that will remain available to him beyond YJ intervention and is a space where he knows he can access support and assistance in the future.
- S was also provided opportunities to undertake new activities, interventions and roles away from criminality. As part of his reparation during his Referral Order, S was matched with a request from the local Black Elders group to complete some basic maintenance and decorating in their hall. This initially took place before the members came into the building and as S became more confident in the setting, he started to be introduced to some of the Elders. The progression enabled the initiation of conversations around family and relations, allowing S to hear stories about his father and family that he would not have previously had access to, in a safe and supportive environment. S was then

encouraged to increase his practical support with the service users through cooking and activities. This increased his confidence further, enabling him to learn new skills and building a link with the community that he had previously felt cut off from.

- As part of his Youth Rehabilitation Order, S was required to complete 80 hours of unpaid work. A link had been developed with the All-Nations Caribbean Community Centre where they cook and deliver meals to those in need. S had already got to know the volunteers running the project through his previous reparation. S was required to attend the centre each week for 4 hrs. This was initially a challenge for S, and he received warnings for non-attendance, resulting in a meeting to explore barriers to engagement. S was able to suggest strategies to bring things back on track and was able to understand the importance of attending on time and being reliable; he recognised the impact of the provision of meals to those who needed them and didn't want to let down the volunteers or the service users.
- When S left education there was a risk of him becoming NEET without support and he was allocated to a NEET CRO. S wanted to go to college to learn a trade. Due to the significant issues within education and the offences that he had been charged with and was on bail for at that time the YJS & NEET CROs worked together to complete an individual risk assessment for S and initially approached the college to gauge their views and opinions. Following this, the college agreed to meet with S for an interview. This process enabled S to understand that, despite what had taken place in the past, he had the opportunity for a fresh start. S attended and he was able to talk about why he wanted to attend college and how the work he was completing with the YJS had supported him to understand how to manage situations differently. He was offered a place at college. However, he subsequently shared that he didn't feel college was right for him and that he would like to find paid employment instead. Leaving college on his own terms and the possibility of a return in the future should he wish was empowering for S.
- S continued to access ETE support. He created a CV, applied for jobs online and distributed CVs to businesses within the local community. He has completed sessions looking at interview skills and was put forward for funding to undertake his CSCS card, which he successfully passed. He is continuing to search for job with training or an apprenticeship.

Feedback:

- S was filmed in a video talking about the impact of the 'Making it' Programme. He described it as an opportunity in which he was able to change his lifestyle and language – he said that there had been things going on for him that he thought were 'normal', but he doesn't see them as normal now. He talked about how the programme supported him to change his lyrics as his music had been "running people down" (using negative and derogatory language to antagonise others within his drill music).
- In a review of his Youth Rehabilitation Order, it was acknowledged that there had been a period of 6 months without any police intelligence, no further offending, and he had been able to sustain a better relationship with his family. S reflected on his journey over the last two years and how interventions have helped him to learn more about the family that he has never known and build a secure base within his community as well as develop a greater understanding of his cultural & personal identity. He has built a network of supportive adults outside of the family home, should he need help in the future. He has been able to say when things aren't working for him and start something else; without it being seen as failure. He has also distanced himself from his former peer group linked to gangs and offending.