



Annual Youth Justice Plan  
Plymouth Youth Justice Service  
2025 - 2026

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## **Introduction by Cate Hearnshaw, Chair of Plymouth Youth Management Justice Board**

Welcome to the Plymouth Youth Justice Plan 2025/26. In the last 12 months we have continued to develop our service, and we are proud of the work we have undertaken with children and their families/carers in the city. We want children in Plymouth to be safe, healthy, and happy and to achieve and aspire as set out in A Bright Future, the city's vision for children and the priorities set out by the Youth Justice Boards Child First Commitment.

In 2022, we set out on a 3-year plan to improve our services and this Youth Justice plan. This plan has now concluded, and we will continue to build on this going forward. We will continue to strive to improve our current practice towards an outstanding service for children.

These outcomes are linked to eight key priorities set by the partnership. These were reviewed at the January board meeting. We have expanded our remit in terms of tackling the disproportionality of children in the criminal justice system to include children in care and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

We will continue to strengthen Strategic & Operational Multi-Agency Leadership by working to the following 8 priorities:

1. Strategic & Operational Multi Agency Leadership.
2. Placing Children at the Centre of Practice
3. Tackling disproportionality in the criminal justice system.
4. Continue to strengthen Prevention & Diversion.
5. Reducing Re-Offending.
6. Protecting the public, recognising
7. Responding to child exploitation and serious youth violence whilst protecting victims.
8. Continue to develop our Case Management, Resettlement & Transitional Safeguarding approaches.

Plymouth Youth Justice Service (PYJS) is strengthening its offer of victim work. Although we had fewer identified victims in the last quarter, all those victims engaged with our offer of support from our victim worker. Our plan is to move towards more direct work with victims, and training staff in Restorative Justice approaches, as well as support parents and carers.

We have Turnaround funding awarded for PYJS to use towards prevention and diversion. This will allow us to up-skill staff in the Child First principles and increase our participation offer which will allow children to better share their voice and engage in the development of future programs and interventions, therefore shaping the service.

There has been a reduction in children being referred to PYJS from Police where diversion is being prioritised, and our continued close working with the Child Centred Policing Team enhances our joined-up approach in providing positive outcomes for children in out-of-court processes. We are also able to report that we have good attendance at our out-of-court panel, from partners.

Going forward, we recognise that we need to continue to work with children who need education, training and employment opportunities. School attendance and aspirations for children who are receiving support from PYJS is an area we plan to develop, also recognising that by supporting their development, it is likely to impact on their ability to desist from offending behaviour and make positive life choices and changes.

We hope to work with our colleagues from HMCTS to improve time frames from charge to court hearing, which can be lengthy, and which leave children without intervention and support for several months. If we can close this gap, this will help us to provide them with the right support in a timely way, and effect change, as we await Court decisions on orders so we can plan interventions.

I would like to thank the staff of the Youth Justice Service and all key partners, on behalf of the Youth Justice Management Board, for their ongoing resilience and passion in delivering child-centred and effective youth justice services across Plymouth and for improving outcomes for the children they support. It is through their commitment, hard work, and achievements that we will achieve our goal of becoming one of the best Youth Justice Services in the country.

## **Plymouth Youth Justice Board Mission Statement**

***To develop a Youth Justice System in Plymouth that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. Diverting Children early will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims in the city***

***We will continue to evolve our practice to ensure every child feels heard, valued, and supported to thrive.***

## Introduction, Vision and Strategy

Welcome to the Youth Justice Plan for Plymouth Youth Justice Service for 2025 – 2026. This plan sets out the vision and priorities for the next year as required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1198 and adheres to the guidance set out by the Youth Justice Board.

The Youth Justice Plan will:

- Give an overview of Plymouth's demographics
- Summarise the Leadership and Governance arrangements, Plymouth Youth Justice Service structure and partnership arrangements.
- Update on the previous year's performance
- Set out our priorities for next year
- Update on National Priorities
- Set out our commitment to the Child First Principles

As the local authority responsible, Plymouth City Council is required, after consultation with partner agencies, to publish a Youth Justice Plan each year outlining the composition of, and funding for, their Youth Justice Service and the functions it is to carry out. This includes the steps taken to encourage children not to commit criminal offences. of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Section 39 of the Act requires the co-operation of named statutory partners, the Local Authority, Police, Health and the Probation Services to form a Youth Justice Service. Section 38 also identifies places upon statutory partners a duty to co-operate to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area. Additional partners are recruited to the joint strategic effort to prevent offending and reoffending.

The Youth Justice Plan in Plymouth aims to sit alongside the key local partnership strategies, the Safer Plymouth Partnership Community Safety Plan (CSP) and the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Plan and the Children Commissioning Strategy. The Youth Justice Plan sets out the governance arrangements and operation of the Plymouth Youth Justice Service (PYJS). This report highlights agreed key developments and key priorities and provides details as to how Plymouth Youth Justice Service intends to deliver services to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

Following the Youth Justice Board Child First Principles, the strategic aims of Plymouth Youth Justice Partnership are:

- ❖ Focused on preventing offending and reducing re-offending by children.
- ❖ The delivery of integrated services that ensures children are safeguarded.
- ❖ The public and victims of crime are protected.
- ❖ Those who enter the criminal justice system are supported with robust risk management arrangements.
- ❖ Children will be supported to reintegrate into their local communities, to reduce their offending and wherever possible with support from their families.

The Youth Justice Service continues to work with partners to ensure that we provide a first-class service to children and communities and maintain the levels of supervision, risk management and safeguarding which will protect the public and support children to stop offending.

We work with the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan (PCP) for Devon and Cornwall and have focused on priority areas from the PCP in respect of victims, Appropriate Adults and reducing reoffending. We will continue to liaise closely with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) around priority areas and work streams over the next year. This plan also works to the plan set out by Plymouth Children's Services known as a Bright Future 2021-26 and the priorities of the Local Criminal Justice Board. Our Service Manager is a member of the Plymouth Safer Executive, as a result, the Youth Justice Service has been involved in the creation of the following plans: City Wide Partnership Plan, DASV/VAWG Plan, the Plymouth Serious Violence Strategy and the City Centre ASB Action Plan.

The Youth Justice Service continues to support Plymouth Children's Services aims of reducing the numbers of looked-after children, reducing the number of children not in education, employment and training and improving school attendance. We will work together with schools, academies, and alternative provisions to ensure that children of statutory school age receive full-time equivalent education. We strive to increase the opportunities to achieve better outcomes for children through earlier intervention and targeted prevention. Over the next year we will continue to work closely with the Edge of Care Team, Be Safe Team (Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care and Home) and Family Help Service in Plymouth.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) are also supporting the Trauma Informed Plymouth Network to develop Plymouth as a trauma informed City; this will provide a new vision for community safety in which preventing the causes of adversity becomes the cornerstone of how we collectively build a safer future for the children of Plymouth. This vision fits well with Youth Justice Services particularly for the more vulnerable cohort such as those children who are looked after or in need of protection.

## Plymouth Local Context

### Children living in Plymouth

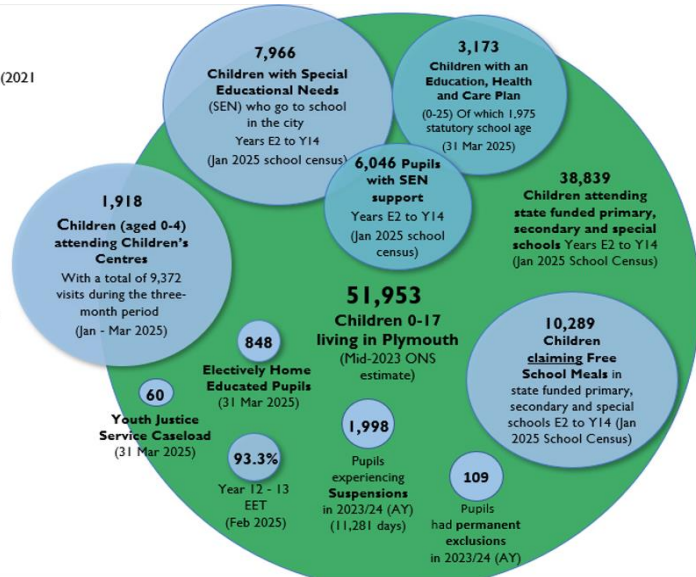
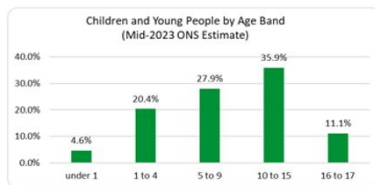
**19.5%** children and young people as a % of total population (2021 Census)



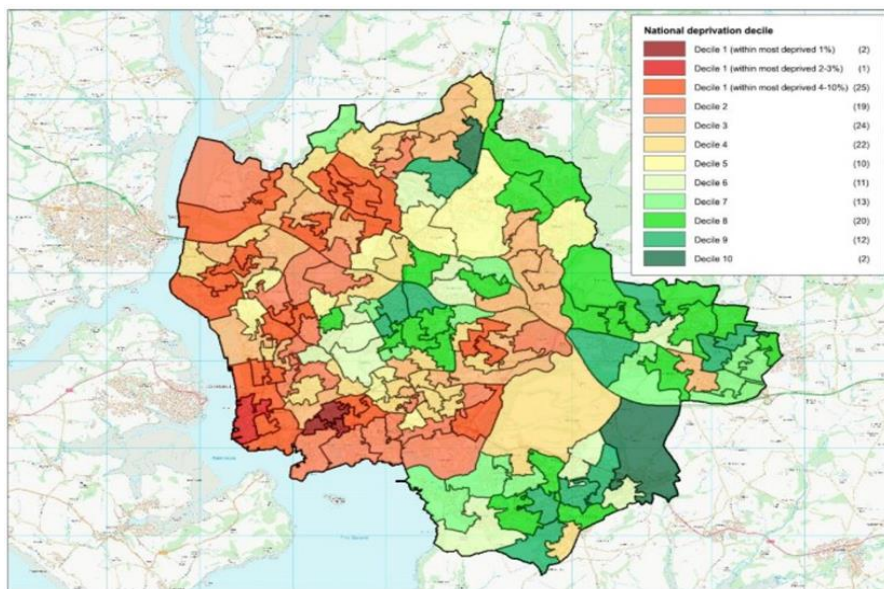
**19.7%** children (under 16s) are living in 'absolute' low-income families and 23.5% are living in 'relative' low-income families (DWP: FYE 2024)



**23.6%** pupils (state funded primary, secondary and special schools) classed as persistent absentees (2023/24 academic year)



### Plymouth by ward – deprivation levels

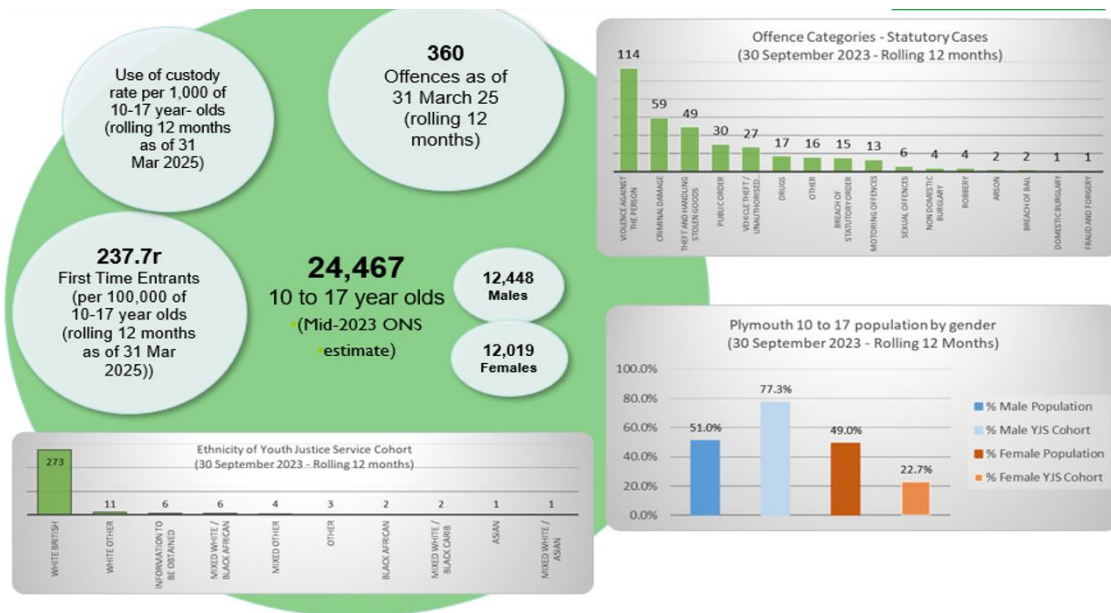


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Plymouth's most deprived LSOA, located in the in the Stonehouse neighbourhood (part of the St Peter and the Waterfront ward) falls within the most deprived 1% nationally both in the IMD 2015 and IMD 2019.

Of the 151 upper-tier local authorities in England, Plymouth ranks the 50<sup>th</sup> most deprived when looking at the average score summary measure. Compared to the other Southwest 11 official upper tier local authorities, Plymouth is the second most deprived authority behind Torbay (37<sup>th</sup>).

## Plymouth Youth Justice Service Demographics





## Governance and Leadership and Partnership Working

Plymouth Youth Justice Service is part of the wider Targeted Help and Youth Justice Service within Children, Young People and Families Services in Plymouth City Council.

The Head of Service for Youth Justice Service is managed by the Service Director of the Children Young People and Families Service and is a member of the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board.

The Service is managed by Sarah Wilson who is also responsible for the management of the Adolescent Team Stronger Families, Be Safe Team, our response to missing children, Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Exploitation/County Lines. The whole service is based at the Frederick Street Centre in Stonehouse Plymouth and are a part of Plymouth City Councils Children, Young People and Families Service.

The Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board meets quarterly and reports into Safer Plymouth. The board scrutinises a broad range of data from the Youth Justice Service and partners including:

- Performance
- Budget
- Issues and themes emerging
- Staffing
- Voice of the child

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) continues to work closely with partners to deliver a high-quality, child-focused service that supports children to stop offending, protects the public, and ensures robust supervision, risk management, and safeguarding. Our approach is rooted in collaboration and continuous improvement, ensuring that children and communities receive the best possible outcomes.

## Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board Membership

The Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board is responsible for Plymouth's strategy for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour by young people aged 18 and under as well as which includes transitions from child to adult services and sentenced to a Referral Order and become an adult during their sentence. The Board oversees and monitors the Plymouth Youth Justice Service and ensures that there is a robust strategy to prevent and address crime and anti-social behaviour before and when it happens. The board delivers a partnership approach to delivering system-wide improvements, achieve better outcomes and ensure that the voice of children, young people and their families is central to planning and decision-making processes.

The board is well represented from partners across our community including:

- Chair: Assistant Chief Officer for Plymouth Probation Service
- Youth Justice Board: Youth Justice Board Head of Region for Southwest & Central

- YJS: Head of Service and Service Manager
- Police: Police & Crime Commissioner, Criminal Justice Representative
- NHS ICB: Senior Commissioner for Women and Children,
- Youth Bench: Chair of Devon Youth Magistrates Panel
- Police: Detective Superintendent, Head of local policing and investigation
- Livewell: Directorate Manager CAMHS
- Housing: Community Connections Strategic Manager
- Education: Head of Service for post 16, EPS
- Finance: PCC Senior Technical Accounting Officer
- Voluntary Sector: Service Manager for Plymouth Substance Use Service, The Children's Society

All new members to the board will attend an induction session to introduce them to the work of the Youth Justice Service.

The Youth Justice Management Board also has strong relationships with other partnership boards where youth justice are areas of common priority including Safer Plymouth and Plymouth Children's Safeguarding Partnership and the newly implemented Early Help and Prevention Board.

### **Plymouth Youth Justice Service – Key Meetings Overview**

The Head of Service, Service Manager and Team Managers' membership of the following groups ensures that the bridge between welfare, crime, public and child protection and safeguarding continues to be effective.

- **Youth Justice Management Board (Quarterly):** Oversees citywide youth justice delivery, reviews performance and budgets, and commissions deep dives into issues like ETE for reoffenders leading to initiatives such as appointing a Careers Southwest worker.
- **Corporate Parenting Operational Managers' Group:** Brings together partners to address issues like housing for 16/17-year-olds and emergency accommodation. Reports to the Corporate Parenting Group, chaired by the Lead Member for Children.
- **Young Person Access to Accommodation Service:** Multi-agency group ensuring suitable housing for children.
- **Court User Group:** Engages with youth sentencers to promote trauma-informed, child-first practices and effective out-of-court disposals.
- **Safer Plymouth Partnership:** Community safety forum monitoring progress and sharing intelligence. YJS submits quarterly reports to the Safer Executive.
- **Strategic MAPPA Board:** Reviews risk management for serious sexual and violent offenders.
- **Southwest YJS Managers' Forum:** Regional forum for sharing best practices and updates from the Youth Justice Board.

- **Devon & Cornwall Youth Justice Forum:** Discusses operational issues with peninsula partners and police.
- **Youth Detention Review Meeting:** Reviews of all overnight youth custody cases.
- **Out of Court Resolution Scrutiny Panel:** Audits youth and adult out-of-court decisions with key stakeholders.
- **Channel Panel:** Supports individuals at risk of radicalisation; YJS attends when children are involved.
- **Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategic Group / MARAC Steering Group:** the Youth Justice Service contributes to strategic responses to domestic abuse and high-risk cases.

## Youth Justice Service Overview

### Structure and staffing

Plymouth's Youth Justice Service comprises of the Youth Justice Team, Be Safe (Exploitation Team) and our Adolescent Edge of Care / 16-17 Homeless Team and sits within the larger umbrella of the Targeted Help Service. This ensures that there is a seamless approach to responding to a child's needs when the need emerges.

In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Youth Justice Service consists of multi-disciplinary staff including:

- 1 Service Manager
- 1 Team Manager
- 1 Practice Manager
- 3 Social Workers
- 1 Youth Justice Practitioner (completing a Youth Justice degree)
- 6 Youth Justice Workers
- 1 Victim Worker
- 1 Business Manager
- 2 Youth Justice Admin Support
- 0.5 Probation Officer
- 1.2 CAMHS workers
- 1 FTE Speech and Language
- 0.6 Forensic Psychologist
- Police

We also have a substance misuse worker and a post 16 education worker due to join the team.

### Caseload overview

The Plymouth Youth Justice Service (PYJS) currently has an active case load of 66 children. Our Court officers are working with 19 children, who are either on statutory

orders or in need of harmful sexual behaviour assessments and intervention. Our YJS practitioners are working with 56 children who are receiving interventions after receiving an out of Court resolution decision made.

7 of our PYJS children have Child in Need plans, 11 are supported with Child Protections Plans and one is a Care Experienced Young Adult (over 18)

### **Breakdown of Interventions**

<b>Intervention / Order</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>
Community Resolution with YJS Support	17
Prevention work and Out of Court assessment	10
Referral Order	10
Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessment and intervention	8
Youth Conditional Caution	7
Early Help intervention	7
YJS support after no further actions from Police	5
Reparation	5
Diversion from Court	2
In custody	1
Referral Order with Intensive Support	1
Youth Caution with voluntary intervention	1
On remand	1

### **Budget and funding sources**

In total, the Youth Justice Service receives multi agency funding of £1,052,635 per year. The breakdown of the contribution is shown in [Appendix 1](#). This funding has improved outcomes for our children in ways such as a review of the language we use in our literature, and the work of our Psychologist within the Enhanced Case Management delivery which has resulted in a reduction of risk and re-offending by the children who have engaged with us.

### **Turnaround funding from the Ministry of Justice**

We have Turnaround funding awarded for YJS to use towards prevention and diversion. This allows us to upskill staff in Child First principles and increase our participation offer which supports children to better share their voice and engage in the development of future programmes and interventions, therefore shaping our service.

## Review of last year's achievements

Plymouth Youth Justice Service has seen some significant changes over the last year. Most significantly we now have a new Service Manager and Chair of the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board.

Our key achievements over the last year have been the embedding of the new Child First Principles and we continue to work with the Youth Justice Board to ensure that this commitment is central to our practice.

In 2024 – 2025 we have achieved:

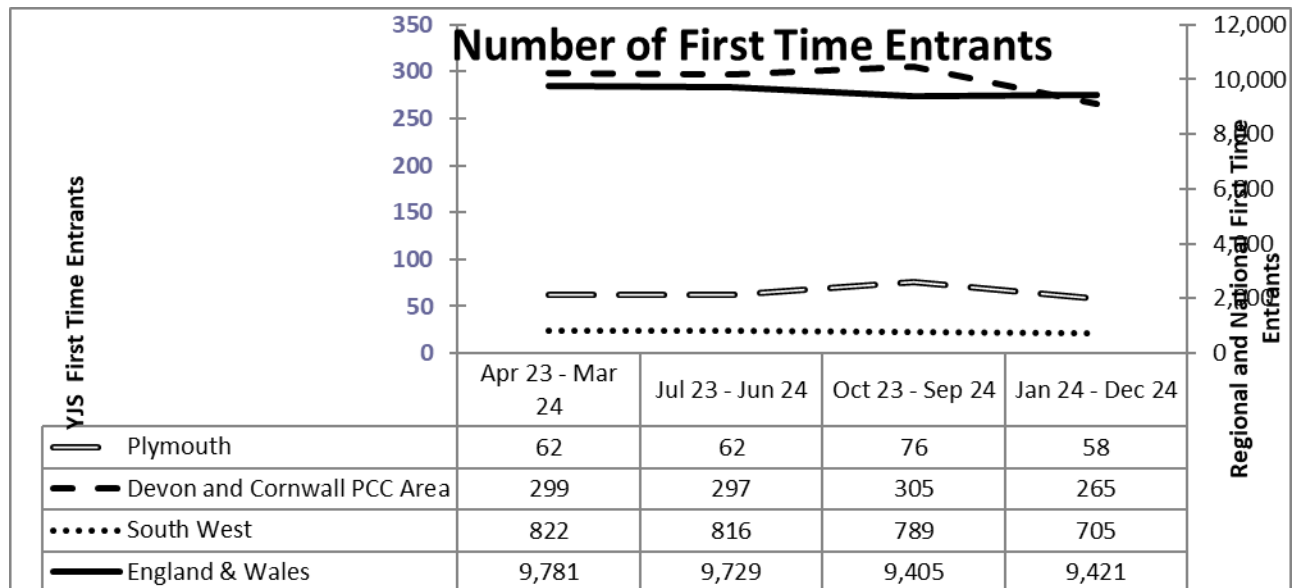
- A reduction of children in the number of children open to the service who are non-white heritage from 14.2% in April 2024 to 3.7% today.
- Built on the strengths in relationship-based practice highlighted at our last inspection and we continue to see strong engagement with our children
- Continued to work effectively with our partners to reduce harm and risk of offending.
- Positive relationships with children and their families to prevent children from entering the criminal justice system
- Low re-offending rates for the children we have supported, our own tracking of our children shows re-offending rates consistently staying at around 15%
- We have developed and improved our offer to victims of crime
- We have successfully transitioned to a new case management system
- We have improved our transitions arrangements to Probation and now have a transition meeting fortnightly to ensure that children approaching 18 years old have a seamless transfer.

## Performance and data

### **First-Time Entrants (FTEs): Trends and interventions**

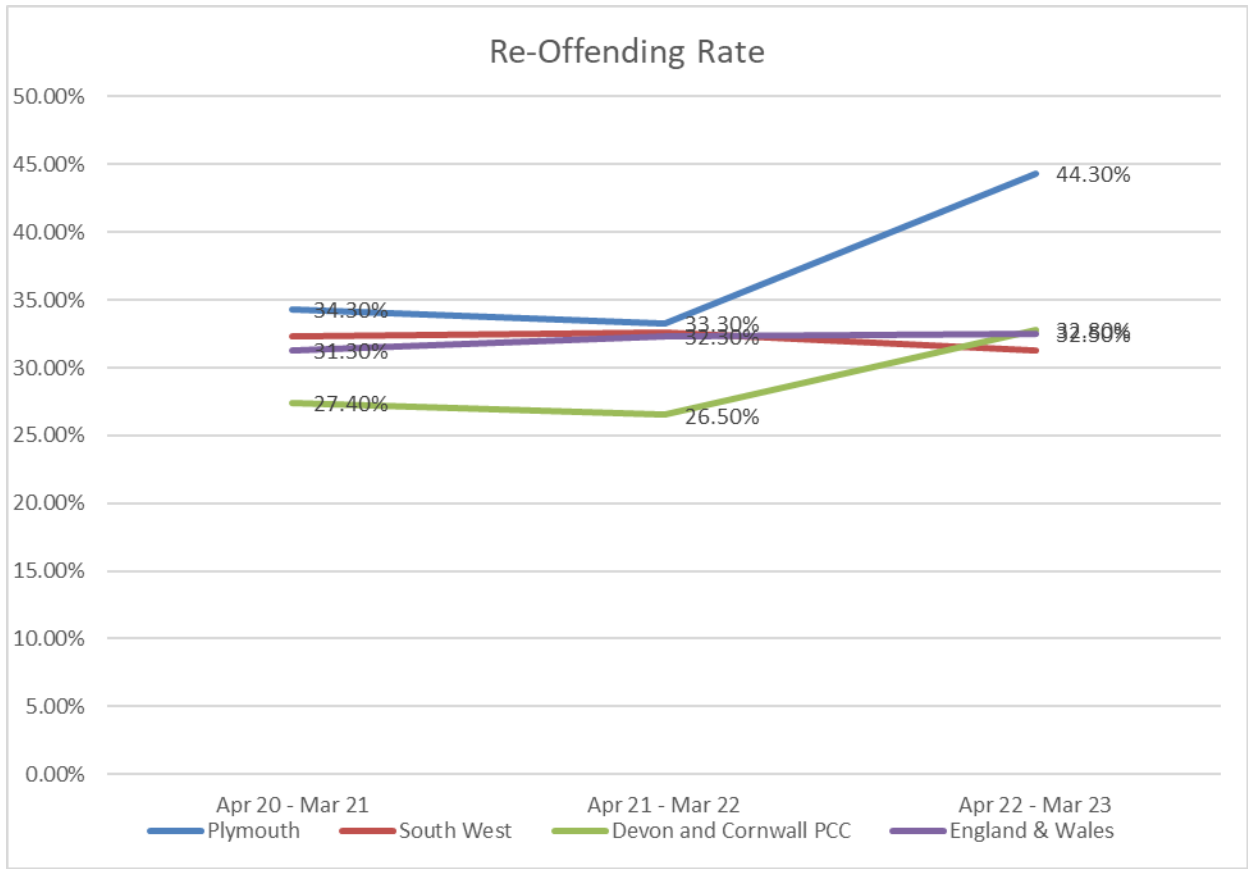
In the financial year covering 2019 - 20, Plymouth had one of the highest rates of FTEs amongst our family groups of Youth Justice Services. This was the picture when also compared locally and nationally. In June 2021 we commenced a multi-agency Out of Court Disposal (OoCD) panel at the same time. As a result, we now have a weekly decision-making meeting with the Child Centred Policing Team Sgt and the Manager of the Impact project to discuss outcomes for children. Should we agree (in this meeting) that a Youth Caution or above is required, an assessment is carried out on that child who is then discussed at a Partnership Panel (OoCD panel) to agree the decision. The Police have allocated a single investigating officer to deal with decision making for children and this is bringing a consistent approach, should a charge be required. As can be seen from the chart above, we continue to build on last year's downward trend in our FTE rate.

As previously mentioned, Plymouth saw several children involved with the immigration protest in August 2024 which led to a spike in the FTE rate in October-Sept 2024, which resulted in 9 new entrants. This was a one-off event, during which our normal charging consultation with the Police were not undertaken due to government directions on how to deal with those involved in the disorder.

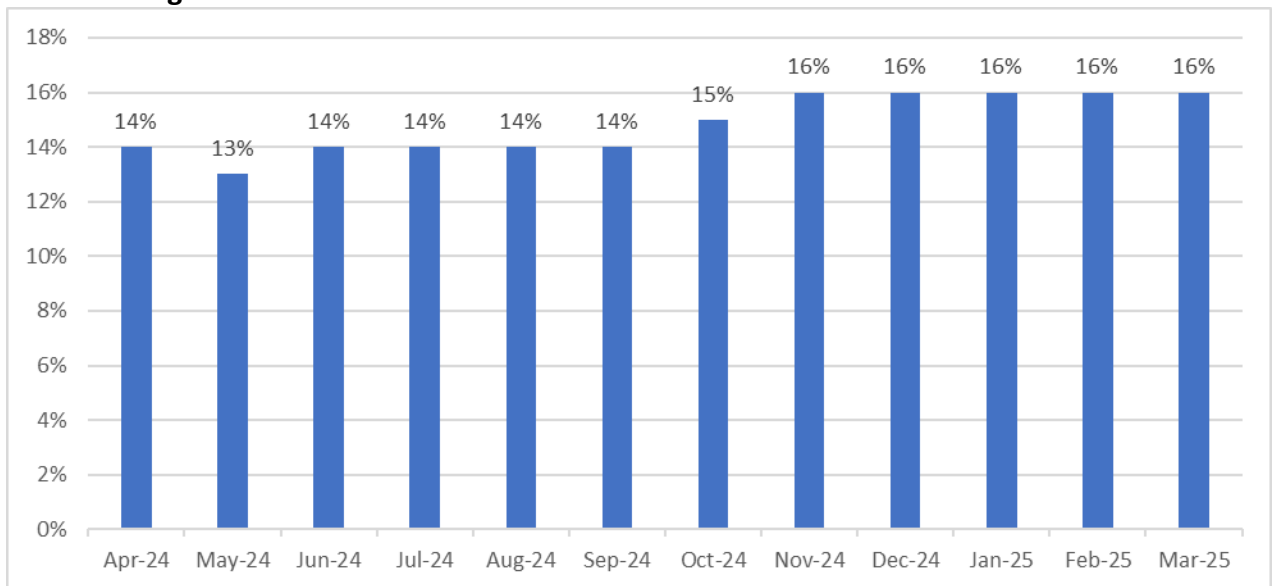


### Reoffending: Rates, analysis, and strategies

The Final YJS Data Summary April 2024 – December 2024 for YJSs in England and Wales published in March 2024 show a re-offending rate of 44.4% (up from 32.3% last year) for Plymouth. However, this should be viewed in the context of the new counting employed by the Youth Justice Board from Q2 2023/24 with case level data used instead of MoJ PNC data and the new Police Charging Matrix. Meetings have been held with the Police and Crime Commissioner looking at how this Matrix has been implemented in Devon and Cornwall. As shown in the chart below, across the area, we have seen an increase in children entering the system since the matrix was introduced, an increase not seen elsewhere. A review has now taken place, and we are confident this figure will be reduced. In Plymouth, we have developed a live tracking tool on the children open to our Youth Justice Service, and we have continued to make good progress of the 138 children on statutory orders from 01 April 2021. On the 01 March 2025 the reoffending rate was 16%. This has been consistent throughout the year, averaging 15%.

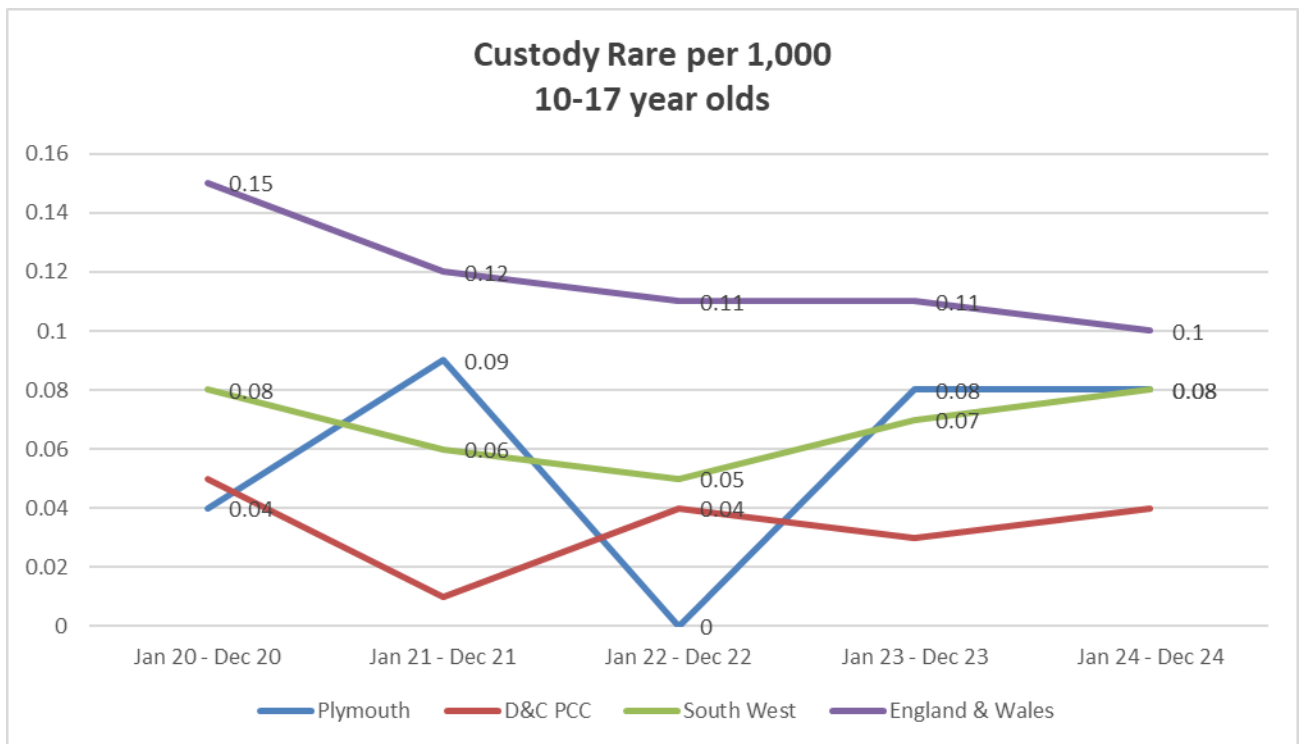


#### Re-Offending Tracker for PYJS:



#### Use of Custody: Numbers, reasons, and alternatives

In the last 12 months, two children received a custodial sentence, both were remanded to custody due to the seriousness of their offending



### **Disproportionality: Ethnicity, gender, and SEND analysis**

We have made great progress on this issue in terms of ethnic disproportionality; however, we cannot rest on our laurels in terms of wider disproportionality. Last year, we have seen the number of children of non-white heritage open to the service reduce from 14.2% in April 2024 to 3.7% at the time of writing this report, which is well below the school role in the city. This shows 9% of children identify as ethnicity other than white British. Gypsy /Roman children remain our largest non-white British ethnic group, and we continue to work hard to engage this community and work with our colleagues in the Child Centred Policing Team to address this. The Board has recognised we have a disproportionately high number of children in the Youth Justice system who are care-experienced or are classed as having a SEND need, therefore, the board has directed this to be a priority in this new plan.

### **Prevention and Early Intervention**

#### **Turnaround and Impact project**

We have continued to develop our diversion service. The Impact Project is a preventative project to divert young people from becoming first time entrants to the YJ system, following initial contact with the police. We now have a member of the YJS working from Devonport Police Station, with our local Child Centred Policing Team, to improve the speed of decision making which is helping to signpost children, families, and carers to support. This year has been challenging due to the Turnaround funding



ending, then recommencing which meant 3 members of staff leaving. In addition, the Immigration protest in the city in the summer of 2024 led to a large increase in the number of children entering the Youth Justice system. This also doubled the rate of first-time entrants; however the figure is now falling, and it is envisaged we will see a return to our usual level of performance this year.

During the period of April 24 – March 25 we have had a total of 7 referrals to our prevention programs, Turnaround, and Impact. This was due to a change in team structure and funding with the Turnaround programme ending in March. Unfortunately, this led to staff leaving and the Police having a reduction in confidence that referrals could be picked up swiftly. This ultimately led to a reduction in referrals. During February 25 plans were made with the Police to look at reinstating the Impact programme and how we can work in partnership to pick up children for early help and support. Whilst this was agreed the MOJ then provided more funding for Turnaround, for one year, so we are now able to continue to offer early help services under the criteria for the project.

### **Outcomes and impact**

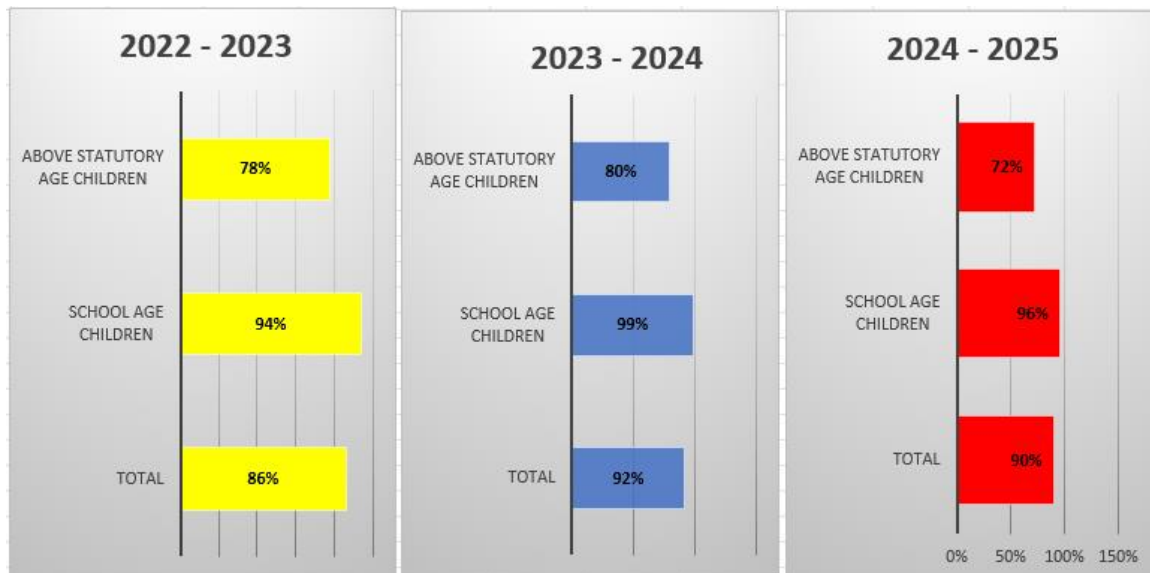
There has been a reduction in children being referred to YJS from Police where diversion is being prioritised, and our continued close working with the Child Centred Policing Team enhances our joined-up approach in providing positive outcomes for children in out-of-court processes. We are also able to report that we have good out of court attendance in panel, from our multi agency partners.

## **Education, Training & Employment (ETE)**

### **Access to education and training**

Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board holds a quarterly meeting to oversee the delivery of the Youth Justice Plan across the city through scrutiny and discussion of performance reports and budget discussions. The Board also requests 'deep dives' into specific areas of concern, for instance, ETE (Education Training and Employment) issues for the re-offender cohort which has provided evidence to enable the appointment of a Careers Southwest worker into YJS and regular meetings with colleagues from education including home schooling.

We have progressed membership of the Plymouth NEET Taskforce who aim to find suitable training and employment for young people above the statutory school age. The Head of the local authorities 16+ Education, Participation and Skills Service has now joined our board and is actively recruiting a member of staff to work with the service to address this.



We have engaged well with schools to ensure children are offered a full-time education. We are ambitious for all our young people and this year we have created a wide range of opportunities:

- Skills launchpad Plymouth provides online and face to face personalised support for young people to access ambitious employment opportunities or pathways
- Careers Plymouth can provide free impartial, advice personalised guidance for all young people from year 7
- From the 1 September 2025 (contract start date) an employment specialist will be focused on young people in the youth justice system
- Personalised employment pathways and training can be developed and co-designed with our in-house adult education provider, such as our award winning 'Your Future programme', linked to our Turing trips with over 12 international trips planned, and
- Supported Internships or other innovative employment pathways

*'Darren' was sentenced to a community order following escalating concerns of offending and risk of re-offending as well as risks to his safety and wellbeing. Through relationship-based working 'Darren', overtime reported to have felt heard and listened to. In turn 'Darren' was able to build positive relationships with his worker who understood how best to support him. After many failed attempts, the worker was able to advocate for 'Darren', helping the college understand the court order in context and work with them to develop a safe plan that led to the college accepting him on the course he wanted.*

## Risks and Issues

Risks	Potential Impact	Actions and Proposed Actions
Engaging children with SEND and Care Experienced Children	<p>Children with special education needs require additional support with learning and development, as well as understanding the Youth Justice System.</p> <p>We have a disproportionately high number of children in the Youth Justice system who are care experienced or are classed as having a SEND need.</p> <p>These children are more vulnerable and at risk of exclusion from school, being exploited, and drawn into conflict with the law.</p>	<p>Stronger links will be made with the SEND team, to enhance our approaches to access to education and training, and develop stronger links between YJS, SEND</p> <p>The Board will invite a strategic lead for SEND to be a member and contribute to the Youth Justice Plan, this will seek to improve outcomes for SEND children.</p> <p>YJS Service Manager and Plymouth's Corporate Parenting Board will carry out QA work of children's assessments and interventions, to learn what we can do better to support our SEND and Care Experienced children.</p>
Governance, Leadership and accountability	<p>Many Board representatives have recently changed, and members are not fully inducted to their responsibilities as members.</p> <p>Consistent data reporting allows partners and stakeholders to challenge and support service delivery and holds service providers to account. This needs to be strengthened to continue to develop good quality services and outcomes for children.</p>	<p>PYJB meetings will include induction, training, and supervision quality.</p> <p>PYJS will have dedicated data staff to collate and present data to the Board, and stakeholders.</p> <p>Board members will be requested to present and be accountable for trends and themes affecting our children.</p>
Youth Violence	Many offences by children open to PYJS are violence	PYJS will promote a Youth Violence Champion who will

	against the person.	link directly with Plymouth Community Safety Partnership to influence and deliver programs in schools, addressing attitudes to violence and victims of serious harm.
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### Areas of good practice

Following a self-evaluation of working with children, using the new HMIP Inspection framework we found the following areas of good practice:

- Partners have reported that *'The YJS staff are very highly skilled and supportive toward external agencies. Communication between operational staff and partners is strong'*
- There is good partnership representation based within the Youth Justice Service and holistic assessments of children are carried out, identifying the needs of the young person to keep them safe in the community, including any mental health, education need and substance misuse difficulties.
- The voice of the child is often understood and captured using the self-assessment tool.
- Assessments draw on children's early experiences and staff use this to think about why the child has displayed patterns of behaviours
- Assessments overall are holistic, drawing on multi agency reports, knowledge, and expertise to inform interventions
- Most assessments include historical factors and experiences in the home, family, and education, as well as access to health, such as CAMHS and Speech and Language.
- Most assessments address the child's capacity to change and what factors would influence this, including education, training, employment, access to mental health support and relationships with family. Children's engagement with assessment and factors to assist with change are also considered.
- Most assessments outline children's strengths and protective factors
- Most assessments explore diversity and how these impact on change, behaviour and support needs

## Priorities for Next Year

### Priority 1: Strategic & Operational Multi-Agency Leadership

The Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board will continue to set the direction and strategy for Plymouth Youth Justice Service by overseeing the implementation of the Youth Justice Plan and ensuring the services provided are of good quality, utilising data and feedback from children, their parents/carers and the professional agencies that support them.

Key Outcomes	Our commitment
The safety of children is prioritised across the entire council including partner agencies, as well as political and community leaders and this is reflected in their respective strategic ambitions and plans that influence strong strategic commitment to reducing offending and re-offending.	<p>Ensure the YJS Management Board functions effectively with active involvement, contributions, and participation from all members.</p> <p>Using the Youth Justice Board Guidance, we will refresh and update our Board Induction</p>
Children are invited to meaningfully participate, contribute and influence our strategic priorities, plans and activities to ensure their voices are heard, listened to and acted upon	<p>Involve children in monitoring the effectiveness of youth justice provision and shaping the future delivery of services.</p> <p>We will recruit a Participation worker to strengthen how we engage and participate our children and their families.</p>
Risks to children are considered in the systems and contexts in which they live, learn and grow and which recognise the valuable contributions their families, schools, neighbourhoods and communities make towards achieving successful outcomes.	<p>Take a whole system approach to problem solving and driving innovation.</p> <p>Continue to strengthen our integration and collaboration with the wider system including Early Help and the new Families First Front Door.</p>
Effective practice is recognised and evaluated, leading to cross-sector learning, innovation, and development.	The Board will take active participation in the quarterly QA activity to ensure that practice is consistently of a high standard.

### Priority 2: Placing Children at the centre of practice

This strategic priority sets out our commitment to see children involved in the Youth Justice System as children and ensure that children's voices are heard and included in all our decision-making processes.

Key Outcomes	Our commitment
Intervention approaches recognise that children who have offended are seen as children first and interventions and plans will be developed with them, for them and focus on their strengths.	<p>We will be open and honest with children and their families in a language that children and their families understand.</p> <p>We will develop trusted relationships with children to empower them and engage them in their assessments, plans, and outcomes.</p>
Children are, through interventions with the Youth Justice Service, provided with opportunities to aspire and achieve and we listen to and respond to their individual needs.	<p>We will ensure children access education commensurate with their learning needs and advocate robustly when they are not provided with the appropriate support</p> <p>We will encourage children's engagement and participation in positive activities aimed at building their resilience and strengths.</p>
Children are empowered to define and guide how they engage with Plymouth Youth Justice Service.	<p>Ensure that children's views, wishes, experiences and aspirations are heard and embedded in their AssetPlus assessments, reports, and intervention plans.</p> <p>We will listen to children's stories and feedback to improve our practice and match service provisions based on their expressed needs within the 'youth offer.'</p>
Children are safeguarded and equipped with the skills to thrive in critical social contexts such as school, family, and their community.	We will be alongside children from arrest until the end of their youth justice journey, advocating their views and working effectively and collaboratively to safeguard them from harm.

### Priority 3: Tackling disproportionality in the criminal justice system.

This strategic priority recognises the issue of over-represented groups in Plymouth who are in the Youth Justice System. These groups are children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), children who are care-experienced and children from minority ethnic backgrounds

Key Outcomes	Our commitment
Plymouth Youth Justice Service will ensure we create opportunities for all children which include those children who are from ethnically diverse communities, those who are care	<p>We will recognise unconscious bias and challenge discrimination within agencies involved in the Youth Justice System.</p> <p>We will ensure children receive fair</p>

experienced and those who may have additional needs, to promote a strong sense of self, and build their self-esteem through access and inclusion in education, employment, training, and positive activities.	<p>treatment at all stages of the youth justice system and their rights are promoted using Quality Assurance and feedback from the children and their families/carers.</p> <p>We will always be actively recruiting a workforce which includes volunteers reflective of the communities we serve.</p>
Children and their families/carers will benefit from relationships with informed and culturally competent and confident professionals, who are operating in a policy and practice context that promotes diversity and inclusion.	We will ensure our staff have appropriate training and champion good practice when working with marginalized communities.
<p>Children from ethnically diverse communities, those children who are care experienced and children who have additional needs will have the appropriate support and interventions they need if they are at risk of contextual harm.</p> <p>Professionals will have a strong understanding of the risks that marginalized communities face and be active in tackling disadvantage</p>	<p>We will continue to ensure that we work alongside our colleagues in Be Safe and our partners to ensure we understand the risks and issues that children face.</p> <p>We will ensure our staff have a strong understanding of contextual safeguarding risks that our children face.</p> <p>We will continue to be active participants in the Safeguarding Adolescent Working Group.</p>

#### Priority 4: Strengthening our Prevention and Diversion Offer

Using the Impact Project, we will continue to ensure that multiagency information and intelligence is gathered and shared to identify those children at the greatest risk of entering the Youth Justice system at the earliest opportunity. Our focus is to ensure that early intervention is targeted at children at risk of entry into the Youth Justice system by building resilience and preventing vulnerabilities from escalating into offending, social or educational exclusion, neglect, and abuse.

Key Outcomes	Our commitment
Children will be diverted from entering the Youth Justice System through good multi-agency working and identification of those children at risk	<p>We will work closely with our colleagues in the Child Centred Policing Team and Children's Services to identify children who would most benefit from early help and prevention.</p> <p>We will ensure that children at risk of</p>

	<p>entering the Youth Justice System are provided with support at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>We will ensure that we provide approaches and interventions that reduce the risk of offending.</p> <p>We will equip staff to build resilience, promote healthy relationships, and prevent escalation.</p>
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### Priority 5: Reducing Re-offending

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 section 5 states that it is the responsibility of the local authority to have a strategy in place to reduce offending and anti-social behaviour.

We believe the best way to reduce the levels of youth crime is to intervene early to prevent children from committing offences in the first place and will continue to utilise the Impact Project to achieve this.

Key Outcomes	Our commitment
Children are provided with good quality relationship-based interventions that support behaviour change and an improved sense of belonging	<p>Staff training, development, and support to work towards a fully integrated trauma-informed model of practice. Our Trauma Champion will be attending regional events and training, and this learning will be cascaded down to the team.</p> <p>We will use data from a range of sources to measure local activity as it relates to crime, violence, poverty, health inequalities, school exclusions and access to preventative services to understand the causal and secondary factors that influence re-offending.</p> <p>We will further develop our Enhanced Case Management approach.</p>
Children involved in offending behaviour are supported to re-engage, re-integrate, or attend school and reduce their risk of exclusion.	We will work closely with Education providers to reduce the risk of children being excluded from school and improve their opportunities and access to higher/further education.



Children's conditions are improved by recognising and addressing parental mental health, domestic abuse, poverty, substance misuse, criminality and the quality of relationships parents have with their children which can affect their outcomes.	<p>We will always adopt a whole systems approach to re-offending by working closely with children and their families and wider partners to address risk and need at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>The Impact Project is a multi-agency partnership that includes substance misuse, domestic abuse, housing, and welfare advice services to ensure parents have access to support that improves their capacity to support children in their care</p> <p>We will continue to work closely with our Adolescent Team to provide specialist support</p>
Parents and communities are involved in finding solutions.	<p>We will engage parents in children's plans and interventions.</p> <p>We will utilize Family Group Conferencing and Family Network meetings to ensure children have the support they need</p>
Children are provided with appropriate housing and appropriate support on release from custody.	<p>We will ensure early planning is in place for children leaving custody.</p> <p>We will continue to attend the Youth Housing Hub to ensure that any child being released from custody will be considered</p>

**Priority 6: Protecting the Public, recognising and responding to child exploitation and serious youth violence.**

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Cornwall Police launched the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership in January 2024 and is focused on Breaking the Cycle of violence in under 25-year-olds. Safer Plymouth and the Plymouth Youth Justice Service are at the forefront of this partnership and seek to reduce violence in the city.

<b>Key Outcomes</b>	<b>Our commitment</b>
Serious violence incidents will reduce and children, their families and the communities will feel safer.	We will work closely with our partners to share resources enabling us to effectively intervene with children involved in complex

	<p>criminal exploitation/ abuse networks and assist children in disclosing harm and accessing support for physical and psychological recovery.</p> <p>We will coordinate and respond with intelligence-led disruption in the community, utilising available Youth Orders to protect children (i.e. Referral Order Contracts / Youth Rehabilitation Order requirements, etc.)</p> <p>We will support children demonstrating harmful sexual behaviour and address their behaviour using evidence-based approaches and interventions.</p> <p>We will seek to address intergenerational violence and exploitation by intervening at the earliest opportunity to work with families to divert children away from violence and crime, whilst reducing their risk of exploitation.</p> <p>We will continue to ensure children subject to early release, Detention and Training Order License and post-conviction have effective intervention strategies to reduce the risk presented to the public and victims.</p>
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**Priority 7: Promote the rights of victims to help them recover from any trauma they have suffered because of others' behaviour**

The Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner chairs the Local Criminal Justice Board; their current plan states victims of offending behaviour must be offered the best service possible to help them overcome any trauma they have suffered as victims of crime. We have recognised we offer a better service to a child who has offended, than we do to their victims. Therefore, we will offer any children who are the victims of crime an improved service to address their needs.

<b>Key Outcomes</b>	<b>Our commitment</b>
Victims receive a comprehensive range of support and intervention.	We will work closely with our partners to share resources and effectively intervene with children who have been victims of

	<p>crime.</p> <p>We will work with the Office of the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner. We are building a directory of 3rd sector agencies commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner to work with victims to prioritise the intervention we offer these children.</p> <p>We will work with Victim Support (Devon and Cornwall) to share information and reduce the need for victims to tell their story numerous times.</p> <p>We will continue to work with services to provide an enhanced service to the victims we work with, including commissioned services that provide restorative justice approaches</p> <p>We will continue to develop our transitions pathway with the Probation Service to ensure child victims views are heard and understood.</p>
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### Priority 8: Workforce development

Plymouth Youth Justice Service is committed to delivering high-quality, trauma-informed, and child-centred services through continuous workforce development, strong transition planning, and robust quality assurance.

Key Outcomes	Our commitment
All staff working with children are provided with the necessary training and development opportunities required to work meaningfully with children and their families. Children and their families receive effective interventions that meet need and reduce risk of re-offending	<p>We will ensure all staff attend the Child First Principles training.</p> <p>We have committed to providing HSB Assessment and Intervention Training for key staff.</p> <p>We will encourage our second practitioner to undertake the new Youth Justice Apprenticeship.</p>

	<p>We will continue to deliver the core rolling training programme</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring training and development is a key part of our work.</p>
There is evidence of positive outcomes for children through our data.	<p>We will further develop our quality assurance framework to ensure that good practice is highlighted and learning opportunities are identified and addressed.</p> <p>We will ensure that we capture children's and families feedback monthly as part of our framework.</p> <p>We will actively seek opportunities to engage in peer reviews with our colleagues in other areas of the country.</p>

## Resources and services

Plymouth's Youth Justice Service comprises of the Youth Justice Team, Be Safe (Exploitation Team) and our Adolescent Edge of Care Team and sits within the larger umbrella of the Targeted Help and Prevention Service. This ensures that there is a seamless approach to responding to a child's needs when the need emerges.

The Youth Justice Service includes Social Workers and Youth Justice Practitioners as well as a Probation Officer (0.5FTE), CAMHs workers, Substance use worker, Speech and Language workers, Victim worker and a Police Officer, we will also be joined by an education worker from the Participation and Skills service by July 2025.

This enables the service to make a significant contribution towards partnership activity that extends beyond the direct delivery of youth justice service functions. In total, the service receives multi agency funding of £1,052,635 per year. The breakdown of the contribution is shown in [Appendix 2](#) This funding has improved the outcome for our children in ways such as a review of the language we use in our literature and the work of our Psychologist within the Enhanced Case Management delivery which has resulted in a reduction of risk and re-offending by the children who have engaged with us.

Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board have developed a Partnership Agreement that formalises our working arrangements and agreements and sets a clear expectation on how each agency will work preventing children offending and re-offending in the city.

Previously, Plymouth Youth Justice Service utilised the Capita case management system. Capita gave notice that they are withdrawing from the Youth Justice sector from April 2025. As a result, in February 2025, we moved over to the Child View case management system at a cost (at the time of writing this plan) of £86,000, this funding has been taken from our reserve after the Youth Justice Board raised a concern that our reserve was too high.

### **Service development**

This year's plan is the first year of our new 3-year plan to improve the outcomes for the children we work with in Plymouth and the wider community we serve, and over the coming twelve months this plan has set out our priorities over this period. As well as these, the continued improvement of the transition between the YJS and Probation Service remains a priority. As the Probation Service develops their Young People team over the next twelve months, we will prioritise our procedures during this change and work closely with our colleagues there.

We have produced a Resettlement policy and procedures document; however, these are yet to be utilised as we have not had any children sentenced to custody and then released as a child. Should a child be released from a custodial sentence in the next twelve months, we will closely scrutinise these procedures to ensure they are suitable. We want any child in custody to know that; 3 months prior to their release, or at the midpoint of any short sentence, where they will live when they are released, what educational provision will be offered, that they will have continuous medical treatment, and they will be financially secure. Therefore, we will work with the secure estate when a child is sentenced to custody to ensure they have the best opportunities whilst serving their sentence, to help them achieve a successful, crime free, resettlement.

Exit planning continues to be prioritised this year, as stated previously, the 'drop ins' at Frederick Street are designed to offer support to children no longer open to us, we will be expanding this offer this year once the refurbishment of the centre is completed. Whilst we have trained staff to ensure practitioners have current and relevant training, we now have a regular manager meeting where we focus on continued practice development to ensure we utilise evidence-based research to respond to emerging practice, again, part of a 3-year plan.

We have received funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to enhance our diversion and prevention offer as part of the Turnaround project to support children believed to be at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

We have received £1.4M from the Youth Investment Fund to significantly improve the facilities at Frederick Street and make the centre accessible to children outside of traditional office hours. At the time of writing this plan, we are awaiting a move in date for the team to work from the centre. As well as improving security, we have developed

an education suite, gym, sensory room, child friendly waiting area, appointment rooms and a training kitchen.

### **Training and workforce development**

All staff within the Plymouth Youth Justice Service have a development plan. This is reviewed according to identified delivery needs, as well as on a yearly basis to ensure training remains in line with current best practice. In addition, there is a proportion of the annual budget dedicated to training and staff are asked to identify any learning areas to improve their development. This is reviewed in annual appraisals.

We are very proud to announce that our first Youth Justice Apprentice passed her Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship with distinction and has now started the new Degree in Youth Justice. She is due to complete it in January 2026.

We have also dedicated part of the training budget for staff to complete the specialised AIM 3 (Harmful Sexual Behaviour Assessment), AIM Supervisor, Harmful Sexual Behaviour Intervention training, and Sibling Sexual Abuse training (Victim focused work). Plymouth Youth Justice Service has a structured 12 month rolling programme of training and development. The development plan is led by a Team Manager and made up as follows:

- Underpinning Legislation and Policies that inform good practice – ‘Why do we do what we do.’
- Case Management – What’s New ‘How do we do good practice.’
- Record Keeping
- Assessing/Planning/Reviewing – how to be child’s needs outcomes focused.
- Understanding the relations between adversities and crime – so what do we do? ‘So, what difference can we make.’
- Risk of Harm and Managing Risk for the child and in the community ‘How do we keep children and the community safe?’
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Transitions: Supporting effective transitions of children in the YJS (including resettlement)
- Compliance and Engagement
- Court and Custody
- Victim work

In line with the new Social Work reforms and new HMIP inspection criteria, published in March 2025, we are developing new workshops for staff in the Youth Justice Service to continue to focus on Child First Principles, and children’s experiences of access to the Youth Justice Service.

As a service, although we have an experienced workforce, we continue to strive to ensure practice is of a high standard to improve the outcomes for children open to our service.

We want to further improve our offer by ensuring that we are consistent in our approach to encouraging children who we work with to have aspirations for the future. The recruitment of a dedicated education, employment, and training (EET) advisor, to offer support to children who are experiencing barriers to accessing services, will provide additional resources and expertise to ensure we can achieve this. Additionally, stronger links will be made with our SEND team, to enhance our approaches to access to education and training, and ensure all children have opportunities to thrive.

Finally, we want to ensure that we offer improved outcomes for victims of crime, therefore we are working with the other Youth Justice Service's within the Devon and Cornwall peninsula and the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop a directory of victim services in the region to help ensure the victims receive the support they need from commissioned services.

### **Developing Trauma-Informed Practice**

We are deepening our trauma-informed approach through the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) model:

- A trauma champion has been appointed—our Harmful Sexual Behaviour Lead and Team Manager for Be Safe and the Daily Intelligence Briefing.
- The trauma champion and our Forensic Psychologist will complete Enhanced Case Management training via the Trauma Recovery Network.
- This work will support staff in producing trauma-informed supervision, court reports, assessments, and intervention plans, with a strong focus on child development, trauma, and neurodiversity.

### **Speech, language, and communication needs**

In the last 12 months, the board has helped our partners to identify ways we can better collaborate to ensure good outcomes for our children. The fall within our disproportionality figures evidence what can be achieved and, notably, we increased our Speech and Language provision by 1 worker to address a waiting list of children in need of accessing this service.

### **Evidence-based practice and innovation**

Child criminal exploitation continues to be a concern. In 2024-25, 22% of the children who had received a statutory intervention reported being exploited or had missing episodes. As a result, we created the Daily Intelligence Briefing (DIB) with the Police. The briefing discusses all children who have been reported missing in the last 24 hours, those who have been arrested, and children presenting as homeless (we recognise this increases the chances of a child being exploited). Partners in attendance are expected to discuss any child for whom we are concerned about exploitation. The meeting is

attended by 7 partner agencies/teams, each child discussed is given an action plan to reduce their risk and was recognised by OFSTED as good practice.

A weekly decision-making meeting with the Child Centred Policing Team Sgt and a Youth Justice Manager discusses outcomes for children. Should we agree (in this meeting) that a Youth Caution or above is a likely outcome, an assessment is carried out on that child who is then discussed at a Partnership Panel (OOC panel) to agree the decision, the Police have allocated a single investigating officer to deal with decision making for children and this is bringing consistency in approach should a charge be required. All children are offered voluntary contact, and two additional staff members have been recruited to undertake this work with one member of staff seconded to the child centred policing team to offer instant advice/consolations on children.

Our trauma informed practice will continue to develop. We have identified a trauma champion; our Harmful Sexual Behaviour Lead and Team Manager for Be Safe and the Daily Intelligence Briefing. The champion role will involve accessing Enhanced Case Management training through the Trauma Recovery Network, alongside our Forensic Psychologist, and both will support each other with our Enhanced Case Management approach over the next 12 months to build upon the support for our children in the Youth Justice System. The ECM work includes support for supervision, Court reports, assessments and formulating plans, whilst using an in-depth understanding of child development, trauma and neurodiversity support needs.



## Child First Service

At the heart of Plymouth Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a commitment to the **Child First** approach, aligning with the Youth Justice Board's vision to treat children as children. We adopt the four core principles from the YJB's *Child First* guidance (2022):

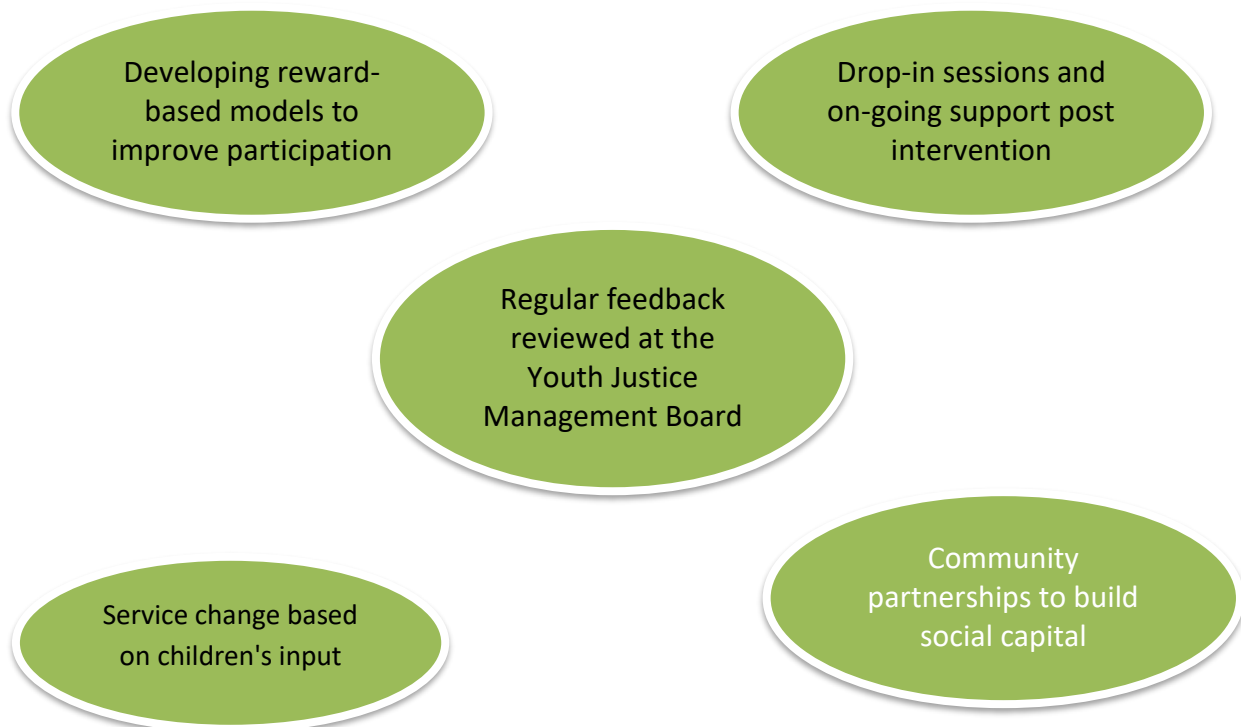


### Over the next year we are committed to:

- Prioritise children's best interests and development
- Promote strengths and resilience
- Involving children and families in planning and decision-making
- Designing services based on lived experiences
- Ensure accountability through "You Said, We Did" reporting

## Support and Participation

We are committed to ensuring children's voices shape both their individual plans and our wider service delivery. This includes:



## Children and Families Voice

I'm thinking about  
doing what you do  
when I finish school

Excellent support through a  
difficult process, good advice and  
support throughout. Keeping  
promises and communicates  
throughout

Just wanted to say thanks  
for your help with \* you  
are amazing at what you do

M Engaged which isn't  
something she does easily, you  
had a positive impact and  
made her feel comfortable

Totally appreciate the support  
and time you have given us,  
made a really difficult situation  
seem easier to handle

## National Priority areas

### **Children from groups which are over-represented**

The issue of disproportionality has now been raised with Safer Plymouth, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Youth Justice Board. Going forward, a participation group has been formed to seek the views and experiences of these children to feedback to partners in the Youth Justice System. We will continue to utilise the Youth Justice Board Disproportionality tool as well as the local authorities' school role to monitor disproportionality in the city and report this quarterly to the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board. We recognise we have seen an emerging pattern of children open to Children Social Care also being open to the Youth Justice Service. At its peak, these children represented 41% of all of the children we worked with. Of these, Children in Care make up 24.6% of our work. We meet daily to look at children at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System, Social Workers regularly attend our Daily Intelligence Briefings to discuss child open to them.

### **Policing**

In Plymouth, we are fortunate to have a Child Centred Policing Team consisting of a Sargent and 7 Police Officers and a Youth Charging Decisions Officer, to ensure consistency of decision making when dealing with children. To aid this, a Youth Justice worker is based in the Police station with the team.

As previously stated, 22% of the children open to the Youth Justice Service in the last 12 months also had missing episodes. The Daily Intelligence Briefing is a multi-agency approach to address this at the earliest opportunity, its purpose is to ensure that agencies and commissioned services work together effectively and consistently to identify risk, prevent harm, disrupt the exploitation of children and reduce the risks faced by those who go missing from home, care, or education. This briefing also includes seeking assurance from agencies and commissioned services in relation to the quality of service, risk assessments and service thresholds.

All children discussed are tracked utilising the DIB tracking tool to ensure we are aware of any ongoing interventions, Once the chair is content a plan is in place, the risk is reduced, or the multi-agency partners have mitigated risk the child is closed on the tracker.

### **Membership of the DIB**

- ❖ Chair – Team Manager Be Safe
- ❖ Stronger Families (Adolescent Service)
- ❖ Youth Justice Service
- ❖ Child Centred Policing Team
- ❖ The Children's Society (Drug and Alcohol Service)
- ❖ CAMHS
- ❖ Families First Children's Service (Integrated Front Door)
- ❖ Designated Safeguarding Lead – ACE

- ❖ Community Connections (Community Youth)
- ❖ Livewell (Health)
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Permanence and Care Leavers

### **Diversion**

During the period of April 24 – March 25 we had a total of 187 children come to the partnership panel following the point of arrest. This is a lower number than the previous 12 months however the complexity of the cases has increased as have the number of children receiving a substantive outcome or being charged to court. This was mainly due to an increase in the number of more serious offences coming through and no comment interviews.

There has been a significant improvement in the process and handling of children involved in low level offences. This is due to the Child Centred Policing Team now having 2 criminal investigators who actively work through the cases of children who have been arrested each day. This in turn allows more timely access to the Youth Justice Service with cases being allocated within a matter of weeks and not months. We continue to experience many challenges in more serious offences where forensics and investigations take a lot longer and sometimes it is felt that opportunities are missed to work with children released under investigation.

### **Restorative approaches and victims**

Following a recommendation during the 2022 inspection, a review of work with victims has resulted in the delivery of victim specific interventions by a newly appointed, full time Victim Worker to ensure a clearer focus on victim safety. We continue to develop this offer, especially in the area of restorative conferences. We have undertaken a themed audit in February 2024 to look at 10% of our victim work, which showed 80% of the victims we work with were very satisfied with the service they have received. As stated in Priority No 7, we will expand this offer of our work this year.

### **Use of Custody Services**

The Youth Justice Service has had two children receiving custodial sentences. There is a process in place to report all custodial remands and sentences to both the Youth Justice Board and Director of Children's Services for One Children's Service. There are also clear processes in place with the Youth Custody Service to ensure appropriate exchanges of information to enable suitable placement of vulnerable children. The Youth Justice Service is represented on the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Board by the Service Director. However, it also reports to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Quality Assurance and Performance group with regard to performance and areas of specific concern. As a member of the Strategic MAPPA Board the Youth Justice Service focusses on protecting people within our community from harm in terms of serious crime. Reformed in December 2020, the Management of Risk Panel has the authority to

amend Risk Management plans and escalate to other agencies at senior level were deemed necessary.

### **Remands**

Last year, we had 2 children remanded in custody due to the seriousness of their offending and continued risk to their current and potential victims. We continue to work with the courts and police to produce alternatives to remand which have worked well. If we believe the risks posed by the child's behaviour can be safely managed in the community, we will offer robust alternatives to custody such as Bail, Intensive Supervision Surveillance (ISS), Intensive Referral Orders, or a Youth Rehabilitation Order. The requirements with an ISS, will include curfews, exclusion areas, or non-associations to manage the risk posed.

We meet with the local magistrates six monthly to discuss procedures and custody rates (including remands), report quarterly to the Safer Plymouth Executive and the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board.

### **Use of custody and constructive resettlement**

In December 2020, the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board requested a specific Resettlement Policy so agencies can be confident of their respective responsibilities in respect of resettlement and the procedures involved. This policy was praised in our inspection and, following feedback, reviewed in February 2023 and 2024. Since the inspection we have not had any child released from custody, however we are confident this is a robust policy.

Last year, we had one child sentenced to a custodial sentence. At the time of sentencing, he was 18 and transferred the Probation Service to plan his release.

### **Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding**

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 set out a Serious Violence Duty in which 'specified authorities' are required to collaborate in local efforts to reduce and prevent serious violence, the Youth Justice Service is named as a specified Authority. As a result, a Youth Justice Manager now sits on the Safer Plymouth Serious Violence Group.

The Serious Violence Duty, as outlined in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 places a new statutory duty on designated public sector agencies to tackle and prevent violence, by developing a multi-agency approach to violence prevention. Furthermore, the duty requires agencies to consult with young people across their region in order to understand perceptions and experiences of violence.

The group will provide strategic leadership and oversight to reducing and preventing serious violence in Plymouth. They will lead the local implementation of the Serious Violence Duty as defined in the forthcoming Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act.

This will be within a public health model that recognises the wider determinants of violence and prioritises prevention.

The group functions of the group include:

- ✓ Taking a whole system view to violence prevention
- ✓ Being responsible for developing performance measures against the agreed delivery priorities and monitoring their effectiveness
- ✓ Having an overview of workforce development relevant to the group's priorities
- ✓ Being responsive to emerging issues, for example; from national policy developments, local safeguarding reviews, domestic homicide reviews and national inspectorates. Reports and findings are shared to ensure learning arises and good practice is effectively shared across the partnership.
- ✓ Providing an environment in which effective multi-agency practice can flourish
- ✓ Implementing communication priorities in line with the Safer Plymouth Communication Plan
- ✓ Continuing to identify and maximise funding and investment opportunities for serious violence prevention work

The Youth Justice Service have developed a preventative project to divert young people from becoming first time entrants to the Youth Justice system, following initial contact with the police known as the Impact Project and children who commit violence are a primary focus of this project. A key concept of this is our response to Contextual safeguarding. Within our Daily Intelligence Briefing, any child reported missing in the previous 24 hours or over a weekend, any child missing over 24 hours, any child arrested over night, and any child reported as homeless is discussed and their relationship with the Youth Justice Service and Police is considered to understand how best to intervene and safeguard them. Other themes are also raised, such as; adults of concern, places and spaces where harm takes place, peer groups and substance misuse concerns across the city.

We will now work with our Community Safety Partnership to bring themes and concerns linked with exploitation to our Safer Communities Forum, where our partners can become involved with safeguarding our children within the context of Risk Outside the Home. This will be a priority for 2025 and will raise awareness of child criminal and child sexual exploitation in Plymouth and across the peninsula.

### **Working with families**

The Plymouth Youth Justice Service offers a whole family approach when working with children to offer the carers and parents support with housing, benefits, and parenting which can be seen throughout this plan.

The Youth Justice Service Manager also holds responsibility for the Adolescent Team and the Be Safe Team, all work together to provide wrap around support for children at

risk of contextual harm. The Service sits within the Targeted Help and Prevention Service in Children, Young People and Families.

Plymouth is also proud to offer **11 Family Hubs** across the city, providing welcoming, one-stop spaces where families with children and young people aged 0–19 (or up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities) can access a wide range of support, including parenting, help with school attendance, guidance on housing and benefits or simply a place to connect with others and reduce isolation. Each hub offers access to health services, education and development programs, social support, and community activities tailored to local needs.



**Family Hubs are located throughout Plymouth**, including North Prospect, Morice Town, The Barn (Barne Barton), Four Woods (West Park), Manor Street (Stonehouse), Southway, Green Ark (Devonport), Four Greens (Whitleigh), Rees (Plympton), Nomony (Cattedown), and Efford (opening September 2025).

In addition, Plymouth is developing a network of Satellite Hubs to bring services even closer to the communities that need them most.

## Sign off: Submission and Approval

This Youth Justice Plan has been shared with the Youth Justice Partnership Board for review and endorsement. The Plan has been signed by the YJS Partnership Board Chair on their behalf and confirms that it covers all sections required by the Youth Justice Board.

In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and responsibilities) England Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of Plymouth local authority.

Plymouth Youth Justice Plan signatories		
Chair of the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board:  <b>Cate Hearnshaw</b>		Date: 30/06/25
Head of Service – Targeted Help and Youth Justice Service:  <b>Martine Aquilina</b>		Date: 28.06.25