

# Notice of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date: Tuesday, 10 June 2025 at 6.00 pm

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY

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## Membership:

### Chairman:

To be elected

### Vice Chairman:

To be elected

Cllr O Brown

Cllr S Bull

Cllr S Carr-Brown

Cllr P Cooper

Cllr B Dove

Cllr E Harman

Cllr B Hitchcock

Cllr S Mackrow

Cllr D Martin

Cllr T Slade

Cllr O Walters

## Parent Governor Co-opted Representatives

P Martin and S Welch

## Diocesan Co-Opted Representatives

M Saxby

## Youth Parliament Representatives

R Cornish and E Prentice

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All Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=6092>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Democratic Services on 01202 096660 or email [democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk)

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office by email at [press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk) or tel: 01202 118686

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at [democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk](http://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk)

GRAHAM FARRANT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2 June 2025

**DEBATE  
NOT HATE**



Available online and  
on the Mod.gov app



## Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

### Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

#### Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

#### Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer  
([janie.berry@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:janie.berry@bcpcouncil.gov.uk))

### Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

### Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

### Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

### Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

### Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

### Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

### Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

# AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

## 1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors.

## 2. Substitute Members

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

## 3. Election of Chair

To elect a Chair for the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

## 4. Election of Vice Chair

To elect a Vice Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year

## 5. Declarations of Interests

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

## 6. Minutes

7 - 18

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2025.

### a) Action Sheet

19 - 22

To consider any outstanding actions.

## 7. Public Issues

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/documents/s2305/Public%20Items%20-%20Meeting%20Procedure%20Rules.pdf>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is 3 clear working days before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday the working day before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 10 working days before the meeting.

## **8. Members of Youth Parliament Update**

Verbal  
Report

To receive a verbal update from the Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs).

## **9. Recommendations from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet or Council**

23 - 30

The Council's constitution provides that Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees may consider requests for work from a range of sources, including requests from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Council.

The O&S Committee is asked to consider a request for scrutiny recently made by Council and one request for scrutiny from a Portfolio Holder, and to determine these requests in line with the associated constitution procedure rules.

# **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

## **10. Youth Justice Service Plan 2025-2026**

31 - 100

To present the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26. There is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.

## **11. Housing for Care Experienced Young People**

101 - 110

The Council provides and commissions a range of housing for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) as part of their transition to independence. A range of social and private rented accommodation provision is offered depending on the assessed needs of the young person:

- Supported accommodation (onsite or visiting support)
- Joint Living Properties (shared houses)
- Self-contained accommodation (dispersed or clustered)

The Council holds a number of powers which act as assurance that the quality of accommodation is of the required standard and has a number of additional measures in place to ensure accommodation quality is maintained alongside housing related support for each and every setting.

A review of the housing needs of Care Experienced Young People has recently been considered within a wider review of specialist and supported housing needs. A housing strategy outlining the future commissioning intentions will be considered by Cabinet later in 2025/26.



## Items for Information

### 12. Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2023-2024

111 - 148

This report serves to provide a detailed overview of the activities and impact of the BCP Virtual School during the academic year 2023-24. The Virtual School operates on behalf of the Local Authority (LA), collaborating with partners to advocate for Children in Care (CIC) in education and ensuring positive and aspirational educational outcomes.

The report outlines the future priorities and development plans for the BCP Virtual School, aiming to improve outcomes and support for a positive transition to adulthood for all Care Experienced young people.

The report is based on the LA held pupil information and results from schools. At the time of publishing, there is no comparative national data available for the academic year 2023-24. Comparative data will be available upon its publication in April 2025. By conducting comparative analysis throughout the year, we aim to identify areas where the Virtual School has significant impact and areas where improvement is needed in relation to national benchmarks. This information will guide our efforts in providing the best possible support for children in care, aligning with broader educational standards.

### 13. Portfolio Holder Update

To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.

### 14. Work Plan

149 - 178

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

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**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Carr-Brown – Chair

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr O Brown, Cllr P Canavan (In place of Cllr P Cooper),  
Cllr E Harman, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Martin, Cllr T Slade and  
Cllr O Walters

Co-Opted Members: R Cornish

58. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Cooper and B Hitchcock.

59. Substitute Members

Cllr P Canavan substituted for Cllr P Cooper.

60. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

61. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

62. Action Sheet

The Committee received an update on the actions outlined in the action sheet.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the Action Sheet and agreed for the items highlighted on the Action Sheet to be removed.**

63. Public Issues

The following questions were heard by the Committee with responses provided at the meeting by the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and the Chair:

The following questions were received from Mr Sofianos:

Q1

The paper rightly highlights concerns around childcare staffing levels. But there's another logistical issue: the vulnerability of nursery and preschool venues.

In my parish, the Mudeford Wood Playgroup is under threat, because the operators of the building unexpectedly gave notice to the group. Officers and local councillors have been working hard to support a resolution, but it's still very possible the Playgroup will disappear in July. This would be disastrous for local families.

Has the council analysed the overall provision across BCP, to identify similar vulnerabilities elsewhere? And what future support will it offer to providers who rent their spaces, to ensure they have long-term security, fair contract terms, and are charged reasonable commercial rates?

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

Thank you, Mr Sofianos, for your question.

I am also worried about the plight of Mudeford Playgroup and I thank him for highlighting the hard work from officers and local councillors to try and find a solution.

The Council has a diverse range of childcare providers, including those who rent privately, those who lease space from a church or other organisation, and those who rent directly from us. While we do not have the power or authority to ensure fair rental rates for privately leased spaces, we do have the ability to influence rents for the providers who lease directly from the council. In these cases, we fully recognise the financial pressures childcare providers face and actively engage with them to understand their income and expenses on a case-by-case basis. Our goal is to set fair and sustainable rent that reflects both their financial situation and the essential role they play in our community. The Council works closely with the sector and is on hand to provide advice and guidance on a range of issues including financial sustainability.

## Q2

The Scorecard at Appendix 1 doesn't share data regarding the Council's SEND workforce. However, delayed workforce data is now available on the Local Offer website.

This data suggests some volatility. In October 2024, 87% of plans saw a change of case officer. The proportion of agency workers was 21%. The staff vacancy rate was 21%. And the number of permanent Educational Psychologists had dropped from 12.4 in March to 8.6 in October.

This is a challenge for staff, and above all for the ultimate stakeholders: the families who depend on the service.



What is the current data for these staffing and vacancy numbers? And what reassurances can the Council provide that the improved service seen leading up to the recent OFSTED review will be retained afterwards?

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

Thank you, Mr Sofianos, for your second question.

October 2024 was the period of time when the SEND Restructure was being implemented and there was a significant amount of reorganisation within the SEND Service as a result. This unfortunately did mean a high number of families will have experienced a change in EHC Co-Ordinator whilst this was implemented. The current data is now:

Monthly percentage of EHCPs that have had a change of worker:

- February 2025 – 3.5%

The percentage of agency workers

- February 2025 – 10%
- This is now the lowest rate it has been across the past 15 months

The staff vacancy rate

- February 2025 – 30.8%
- Recruitment is underway to permanently fill these vacancies

Number of permanent Educational Psychologists (FTE)

- February 2025 – 8.0
- This reflects current national difficulties faced by Local Authorities in recruiting permanent Educational Psychologists.

The SEND restructure has produced a long-term permanent service structure that will remain in place beyond any Ofsted Inspection. The Service and the Council as a whole is committed to continued improvement in this area. Whilst we are in a stronger position than we were 12 months ago, we are fully aware that we are only part through our improvement journey, and the resources and level of service will need to remain in order to continue to support our progress.

### Q3

During January's Work Plan discussion, a question was raised around Permanent Exclusions & Suspensions. This had been scheduled for November 2024, but disappeared. It was suggested this was partly covered under Alternative Provision – but there's much more to this subject, and critically, the data wasn't made available.

I'd encourage the Committee to review this item in the autumn, after publication of the Government's annual data-drop. There's a growing crisis in the use of these sanctions, which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable children, especially those in poverty and with SEND. It deserves fuller analysis, and ideally, contributions from head teachers.

This and other discussions in that session hinted at a struggle to deliver strong scrutiny within the time and resources allotted. Doesn't this show that the group needs more meetings than currently scheduled, and will the Council support more sessions for this vital committee?

Answer from the Chair of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Thank you for your question, Adam. I am going to reply to that as Chair of the Committee.

In November 2024, Children's Services officers confirmed that the item request regarding School Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions would be covered in the wider update on Alternative Provision. As a result, the committee proceeded with scrutiny of the matter on this basis, following the usual arrangements of consultation with the Chair.

I acknowledge the suggestion to review this item further at a later date, and as Chair I am minded to support this request. I will ask for the committee's view on this later in today's meeting when we discuss our work programme. A scrutiny request form has also been supplied to Mr Sofianos to allow him to provide further detail on his suggestion if he should wish to.

Meeting schedules for the Committee are determined by Council, along with all other public meetings. It is Council's responsibility to decide whether to allocate more meeting dates for the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any increase in meetings must be considered against the resources available to support all meetings of the council.

In terms of the total scrutiny time dedicated to this important area of the council's work, I would also like to highlight other work that takes place outside of formal scrutiny committee meetings. In the last year the committee has introduced informal briefings, in line with best practice, to share information to the committee which will enhance our scrutiny. These briefings are timetabled to take place on a regular basis throughout the year and are in addition to any working groups established by the committee which also take place outside of formal committee meetings but form an important part of the committee's work.

64. Members of Youth Parliament Update

The Committee was provided with a verbal update on the work of the Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs), including an update regarding their campaigns.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- In response to a query raised regarding the MYPs sports event, the Committee was advised that they had been in contact with a person

who had communicated with the local schools about the event to ensure its success.

- The Committee was advised that the event was a tag rugby tournament aimed at students in years 8 to 10, specifically targeting males, as that age group had been particularly vulnerable to knife crime.

65. Introduction of Health Representative Pam O'Shea

The Committee received a verbal introduction to the new health representative, Pam O'Shae, the Interim Chief Nursing Officer, which included details about her background and experience.

66. Speech and Language Therapy Update

The Service Manager, Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The service had embedded the largest changes to the delivery model, which were incorporated into the Standard Operating Procedures. Over the following years, we required partners in the wider system to support the implementation of the framework, with an end date for adoption by all set for 2027.

The service continued to evolve however, the main elements of the transformation for the Speech and Language Therapy Provider service were now in place.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- In response to a query raised regarding free training provided to child minders and what was available to families, the Committee was advised that for early years when a family comes to ready, steady, chat there was a variety of different forms of support that would be available to families depending on what would best suit the child.
- The Committee was advised that the Ready Steady Chat programme had no limit on the amount of time a family could access the service. This support also extended to in-school initiatives, where coffee mornings were organised. These events could be for an entire year group or specifically for parents of children registered with the service.
- In response to a query raised regarding the uptake of the services, the Committee was advised that there had been good uptake of the coffee mornings in schools, although the uptake of Ready Steady Chat had decreased.
- The Committee was advised that schools were actively working to support SALT. However, if there were concerns about the level of support a school was providing, the SALT team would meet with the SENDCO at that school. They would review what was currently

being offered and provide guidance on what additional support was necessary. For schools that were consistently struggling, the SALT team would collaborate to identify strategies that could be implemented together for maximum impact.

- In response to a query raised regarding the free SALT training and its contents, the Committee was advised that any early years provider could register for this free training. The programme included a workbook session followed by a two-and-a-half-hour development session.
- In response to a query raised regarding the cost of the support in schools, the Committee was advised that the support offered under the Link SALT Model was completely free in schools however, some more specialised training was part of a package that had a fee.
- In response to a query raised regarding how children with different support needs were addressed, the Committee was advised that when speech therapy needs were identified, the goal of the framework was to differentiate the levels of support required for children who may need access to additional specialised services.

**The Committee noted the report and the update.**

67. Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-2030

The Interim Head of Performance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Having a Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) Plan was a statutory requirement of Children's Services. It was a high-level strategic plan that outlined how to support children and young people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole with the aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people. The current plan had come to an end, and this was the new plan covering 2025-2030.

It was an important statement of the partnership's commitment to BCP's children and young people. Not only did it set out the priorities for services that support children and young people, but it also defined how partners would work with each other to deliver those priorities effectively.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- In response to a query regarding how children and young people were included in the survey, the Committee was advised that children and young people's views were a fundamental part of the engagement process. Which included working with various groups, such as MYPs. Children were involved at all stages, including scoping, identifying priorities, and refining those priorities. These groups provided feedback on the draft plan and designs.
- The Committee was informed that the number of children, groups, and those with protected characteristics that had participated in the survey would be shared with the Committee. **ACTION**



- In response to a query raised regarding the changes in the plan, the Committee was advised that the previous plan was not fit for purpose and did not adequately reflect the wishes and needs of children and young people. Furthermore, there was insufficient governance surrounding that plan, which was a symptom of a failing system.
- The officers agreed to share the finalised Children and Young People's Partnership Plan before it is presented at Cabinet. Additionally, it was agreed that the KPIs for this would be shared with the Committee. **ACTION**

**RESOLVED that Members note the final content and design of the plan.**

Voting: Unanimous

68. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25

The Head of Service Place Planning and Admissions a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Council had a statutory duty to provide working families of children aged 0-14 (18 with SEND) enough childcare places in its area, where reasonably practicable. Each year Research and Children's Services colleagues assess the position of the market, providing parents, councillors, schools and private business ward level information as a planning tool to support access or expansion of places, while highlighting areas of focus for the year ahead.

With significant government expansion of early years childcare and wraparound care currently taking place, this information and data was vital for private businesses seeking to enter the market and help the Council fulfil its statutory duties.

The content of the assessment concludes that the Council was meeting its statutory duties. It was also important to highlight that, at the time of writing, the quality of our providers stands at 99.2% good or outstanding (compared to 97.8% in England).

In addition to a briefing paper (appendix A) the data that helped form the assessment is accessible [here](#).

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- In response to concerns raised regarding the lack of childminder and preschool options in Boscombe West, the Committee was advised that 125 day nursery places were available. However, the area's housing situation had made it challenging for childminders to set up services. While there were limited options in Boscombe West,

suitable alternatives were within walking distance, with Boscombe East offering 326 places and West Southbourne offering 292 places.

- The Committee was informed that the service aimed to promote the value of childminders and the unique environment they provided for families seeking childcare in a home setting. It was a priority for the service to actively encourage, support, and engage with childminders to ensure that their concerns were heard, with the aim of promoting and facilitating childcare provision whenever possible.
- In response to a query regarding the ongoing issues with the Mudeford Wood Playgroup, the Committee noted disputes between the playgroup and the Mudeford Community Trust, which had been raised with BCP Council. While the council did not have a formal legal role, it provided advisory support to ensure parents and families had access to quality childcare. The service was exploring alternative site options with the preschool, though there were no guarantees due to time constraints. BCP Council was concerned about the impact on local children and families and aimed to maintain a child-focused approach in addressing the issues.
- In response to a query regarding the extended provisions for September 2025, the Committee was advised that families with children aged 9 months to 4 years were entitled to 15 hours of free childcare within a 30-hour week, increasing to 30 hours in September 2025. The service acknowledged the late announcement, which resulted in necessary changes being made on short notice but remained confident in meeting the targets for the expanded entitlement.

**RESOLVED that Members note the final content and design of the plan.**

Voting: Unanimous

69. SEND Improvement Update

The Director of Education and Skills presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Improvement programme of work had made significant progress over the past 12 months, including stabilising the workforce, improving plan quality and timeliness, and implementing a new SEND Sufficiency strategy. However, challenges remain in maintaining assessment timeliness and managing the growing caseload. Additional resources were needed to meet statutory delivery targets and improve service efficiency. Key focus areas included recruitment, enhancing the Local Offer website, and addressing the high use of Alternative Provision. The ongoing demand for new assessments and the impact on the Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) budget was also highlighted.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- In response to a query about the two most common issues families raised complaints about, the Committee was advised that historically, most complaints had focused on communication within the SEND provision. This area had since seen improvement. However, more recently, they had begun receiving complaints concerning the provision itself, primarily related to capacity and sufficiency.
- The Committee was advised that complaints about communication in the service arose from a disparity between rising demand and the number of available officers managing cases. Although the new structure had improved workload distribution among staff, further improvements were still needed.
- In response to a query raised regarding a previously submitted growth bid, the Committee was advised that it was declined despite aiming to address a significant increase in service demand. However, the service took steps to reduce reliance on staffing resources by improving processes, utilising technology, and streamlining operations to operate more efficiently with fewer staff members.
- In response to concerns raised regarding the reduced reliance on staff, the Committee was advised that maintaining the human element of the service remained a top priority. It was emphasised that the significance of a multi-agency approach to developing EHCPs. By utilising technology to streamline the planning process, case officers could save time and focus more on providing meaningful one-on-one interactions with families.
- In response to a query raised regarding the most cost-effective way to run the service, the Committee was advised that getting it right the first time was the best approach. However, financial constraints made it necessary for the service to consider other ways to meet its statutory duties. Additionally, early intervention work had the potential to positively impact this area, but it required careful management.
- In response to a query about the gap in the SEND budget and potential solutions to address it, the Committee was informed that the SEND system and landscape did not adequately serve the majority of stakeholders, which was a national issue. The service faced challenges in delivering support due to ongoing budget constraints. However, efforts were made to alleviate these challenges to ensure effective service delivery and to explore ways to reduce costs. Multiple approaches were pursued to manage this pressure as they moved forward.
- In response to a query raised regarding the service used for creating and delivering EHCPs, the Committee was advised that the service had ceased using Enhance. Instead, they had decided to bring the writing of EHCPs in-house, enabling high quality output.
- In response to a query raised regarding mainstream provisions for children and young people with SEND, the Committee was advised that the priority was to integrate children and young people with

SEND into their local mainstream schools, though some might need specialised provisions. The service emphasised the importance of monitoring suspensions and promoting collaboration with schools to ensure that adequate support was provided to those facing challenges in a mainstream setting.

- The officers agreed to share an update on the first free school, including current enrolment figures, and to update the Committee regarding the progress of the second free school. **ACTION**
- The officers agreed to share the full review of the DSG finances as well as the SEND improvement board's response to the review. **ACTION**
- The Committee requested an update on the ongoing work regarding education outside of school and home education and asked that it be shared with the Committee. **ACTION**

**It was Proposed, Seconded and RECOMMENDED to better assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget, the Committee recommends that Cabinet requests a report be provided to Cabinet by June 2025 which outlines:**

- **the likely overspend in the budget**
- **which areas have been identified to overspend**
- **the options to ensure the budget limit is met**
- **an appraisal of the impact on children and families of these factors.**

Voting: Unanimous

70. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People provided a verbal update which included:

- An update on the recent positive OFSTED judgment was provided, with a letter from the Secretary of State expected to remove the DfE advisory role. The Portfolio Holder thanked the Children's Services team for their efforts.
- Information about the forthcoming SEND inspection was shared, with preparations ongoing, including a recent mock inspection to assess readiness.
- An overview of new governance structures that were set to be implemented on 1 April was presented, including the dissolution of the Children's Service Improvement Board and the continued involvement of Chair John Coughlan with the SEND Improvement Board.
- Welcoming Lisa Lynn Croft, the new director, who joined in February.
- An update on data-sharing initiatives among schools was discussed, focusing on exclusions and inclusions, with schools actively seeking insights to enhance inclusion efforts.



- It was acknowledged that children generally performed better in mainstream schools, reinforcing the importance of reintegrating them into mainstream settings whenever possible.
- The Portfolio Holder participated in a Community Safety Roundtable to discuss knife crime and its impact on youth.
- A visit to the newly opened BCP Council-funded facility at Canford Infant and Junior School was positively described, highlighting its support for pupils with speech, language, and communication needs, and emphasising the inclusive model of education that allowed movement between mainstream and special education settings.

71. Work Plan

The Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

The Committee was advised of upcoming training with the Local Government Association and agreed to consider whether to add the Alternative Provision Improvement Plan to the work plan outside of the meeting.

The Committee agreed to add School Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions to the work plan for the meeting in November.

The meeting ended at 8.44 pm

CHAIR

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# ACTION SHEET – BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE CHILDREN’S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Updated – 2 6 2025

Minute number	Item and	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Lead officer	Progress – (when/ where/how update will be provided)	Outcome (where recommendations are made to other bodies)
	<b>19 September 2024</b>				
22	Work plan – CS Budget Working Group  <a href="#">Childrens Services Budget Update.pdf</a>	Decision Made: The Committee was advised that officers would provide a breakdown of agency staff and their positions within the service to the Committee.  <b>Action – Officers aware</b>	Finance Manager	Steve Ellis has agreed to provide data in Jo’s absence for September meeting	
	<b>26 November 2024</b>				
35	SEND Improvement update  <a href="#">SEND Improvement Update.pdf</a>	Decision Made: The officers are to come back with data regarding the rate of EHCP requests that are granted when the original request is submitted by a parent compared to when submitted by the school.  <b>Action – Officers aware</b>	Send Service Manager		
41	Work plan – CS Budget Working Group	Decision Made:			

	<a href="#">Forward Plan cover report CS Nov 2023.pdf</a>	<p><b>That the O&amp;S Board recommends that Children's Services Officers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Increase awareness of school transport options through engagement and co-production with parents and carers, in order to reduce the impact on the school transport budget wherever possible.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Action – recommendation sent to officers and update requested</b></p>	Tanya Smith, Head of Service - School Planning and Admissions		
	<b>28 January 2025</b>				
<b>49</b>	<p><b>Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Report</b></p> <p><a href="#">Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Report.pdf</a></p>	<p>Decision Made: The officers agreed to share the final governance and quality assurance framework with the Committee once agreed and signed off as final.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p> <p>The Committee agreed to continue discussions outside the meeting regarding the best ways to address the barriers identified in the report and to reach an agreement on how the Committee will receive that information.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p>	Head of Children's Commissioning	Officer Update-Governance can be shared now, and QAF will need to be in Sept if going to the Committee or July if sharing outside the committee	

50	<b>Children's Services Capital Strategy 2025/26-2027/28</b>  <a href="#">Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25.pdf</a>	<p>Decision Made: The Committee agreed to discuss the AP improvement plan outside the meeting and decide on the format for its presentation to the Committee. It was suggested that this be covered in one of the Committee's informal briefing sessions.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p>	Head of Service Place Planning and Admissions	Could this come to the Committee in September?	
	11 March 2025				
	<b>Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-2030</b>  <a href="#">Children and Young Peoples Partnership Plan 2025-2030.pdf</a>	<p>Decision Made: The Committee was informed that the number of children, groups, and protected characteristics that had participated in the survey would be shared with the Committee.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p> <p>The officers agreed to share the finalised Children and Young People's Partnership Plan before it is presented at Cabinet. Additionally, it was agreed that the KPIs for this would be shared with the Committee.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p>	<p>Interim Head of Performance</p> <p>Interim Head of Performance</p>	<p>KPIs outstanding as the Board need to agree these. First Board June 2025 and then KPIs will be developed – Sept a probable time for them to go on the Forward Plan.</p>	<p>Shared with the Committee in March</p> <p>Interim Head of Performance sent CYPP Plan on 21/03 which has been shared with the Committee via email</p>

	<p><b>SEND Improvement Update</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>SEND Improvement Update.pdf</u></a></p>	<p>Decision Made: The officers agreed to share an update on the first free school, including current enrolment figures, and to update the Committee regarding the progress of the second free school.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p> <p>The officers agreed to share the full review of the DSG finances as well as the SEND improvement board's response to the review. <b>Action – Officers aware</b></p> <p>The Committee requested an update on the ongoing work regarding education outside of school and home education and asked that it be shared with the Committee.</p> <p><b>Action – Officers aware</b></p>	<p>Director of Education and Skills</p> <p>Interim SEND Improvement Officer</p>		
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# CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Recommendations from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet or Council</b>
Meeting date	10 June 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Council's constitution provides that Overview and Scrutiny (O&amp;S) Committees may consider requests for work from a range of sources, including requests from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Council.</p> <p>The O&amp;S Committee is asked to consider a request for scrutiny recently made by Council and one request for scrutiny from a Portfolio Holder, and to determine these requests in line with the associated constitution procedure rules.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that the O&amp;S committee considers and approves or rejects the request for scrutiny as set out in this report.</b>
Reason for recommendations	To comply with the decision of Council and the requirements of the council's constitution.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable for this decision
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

## Process for consideration of scrutiny requests

1. This report relates to requests for scrutiny made to the O&S committee by a Portfolio Holder, Cabinet or Council. The process for determining requests to O&S Committees from these bodies is set out by the council's constitution procedure rules as follows:

- *Where Portfolio Holders, the Cabinet or Council request that O&S Committees undertake a specified piece of work, the relevant O&S Committee shall respond to the request as soon as it is possible to do so.*
  - *The Committee will assess the value to be added by the work suggested when determining whether to exercise its powers in this respect. Where it chooses to exercise its powers in relation to the request, it will report back its findings and any recommendations to Cabinet and/or Full Council.*
  - *Where the Committee chooses not to exercise its powers in relation to the request, it will provide reasons for this to the body that made the original request.*
2. In addition, the constitution requires that *no item of work shall join the work plan of any O&S Committee without an assessment of:*
    - *detail outlining the background to the issue suggested;*
    - *the proposed method of undertaking the work;*
    - *likely timescale associated with undertaking the work; and*
    - *the anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed.'*
  3. The O&S Committee should follow these processes when determining requests for scrutiny.

## **Requests for consideration**

### Rebirth of Youth Services

4. **Background** - At its 25 March 2025 meeting, the Council was presented with a motion and resolved to ask the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
5. **Scrutiny process and timescale** - this was not set out by Council, although debate at Council included the suggestion that the O&S Committee could assist in this matter by conducting a review of existing current youth provision, identifying gaps and opportunities for investment in professional youth work, detached youth work, and community-based youth services. This matter may therefore be well suited to a working group or series of commissioned evidence sessions to inform the work.
6. **Anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed** - this was not clearly stated by Council and requires further consideration by the Committee.
7. The full decision of Council is set out at Appendix 1.

## **Options Appraisal**

8. The O&S Committee may choose to agree or reject the requests made. This decision should be made in line with the requirements of the constitution as set out above, particularly in relation to the anticipated value and outcome of proposed work and the resources available to undertake work.



9. If requests are agreed, the committee should determine methods and timescales for scrutiny, taking account of other priorities already established within the committee work programme. This may be delegated to the Chair of the Committee to consider with officers and report back.
10. If requests are rejected, the Committee should provide reasons for this to the body making the request.

#### **Summary of financial implications**

11. There are no financial implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

#### **Summary of legal implications**

12. There are no legal implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

#### **Summary of human resources implications**

13. There are no human resources implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests

#### **Summary of sustainability impact**

14. There are no sustainability impacts associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

#### **Summary of public health implications**

15. There are no public health implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

#### **Summary of equality implications**

16. There are no equality implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

#### **Summary of risk assessment**

17. There are no risks associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

#### **Background papers**

Current Children's Services O&S Committee work programme

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Extract Minute, Council 25 March 2025.

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## **Extract Minute of Council meeting held on 25 March 2025.**

### Minute 97, Rebirth of Youth Service

#### Notices of Motions in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

Council was advised that one motion had been received on this occasion.

### **Rebirth of Youth Services**

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor Peter Cooper and seconded by Councillor Patrick Canavan.

#### **This Council Notes That**

1. The Government announced in November 2024 the development of a National Youth Strategy to give young people the opportunity to co-produce the strategy to support services, facilities and opportunities they need outside the school gates to benefit their lives and future.
2. Local Authority spending on youth provision has reduced by 73% since 2010 which equates to £1 billion less being spent on young people each year.
3. A distinction should be made between youth work as a professional relationship-based approach that empowers young people, and simply working with young people, which may not centre their needs, voices, or long-term development.

#### **This Council Believes That:**

1. A strong, strategically funded youth service is essential for the well-being, safety, and future opportunities of young people in BCP.
2. Youth voice must be embedded across all decision-making structures to ensure policies reflect the lived experiences, needs, and aspirations of young people.
3. A clear distinction between youth work and working with young people must be understood and upheld in policy and practice, ensuring that youth work is valued as a professional, developmental process.

#### **This Council Resolves To:**

- (a) **Publicise the Government's national survey which asks young people to respond by 9 April 2025.**
- (b) **Develop a BCP strategic plan for the rebirth of youth services, ensuring that youth work is recognised, funded, and properly resourced.**
- (c) **Establish a Youth Futures Hub, in line with the Government's strategy, to directly engage young people in shaping local policies and decisions, ensuring meaningful representation at all levels of governance.**

- (d) To ask the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to conduct a review of existing current youth provision, identifying gaps and opportunities for investment in professional youth work, detached youth work, and community-based youth services.

Councillor Joe Salmon proposed an amendment to the motion with the following additions to read: -

1. Add to "This Council Notes That":

**New Point 4:**

***"Despite the change in government, funding levels for local authorities remain well below pre 2010 levels, making it challenging for councils to fully fund services for young people."***

2. Add to "This Council Believes That":

**New Point 4:**

***"The council is not adequately funded by central government to deliver the services young people deserve, and further local tax increases would place an unsustainable burden on residents while failing to meet the need."***

3. New Point 5:

***"Given that the recent budget process saw no viable proposals to reprioritise funding towards children's services, additional central government investment is the only way to secure meaningful improvements."***

4. Add to "This Council Resolves To":

**New Point e):**

***"To instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, urging the Government to provide the funding required to meet the needs of young people in our area."***

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Sara Armstrong.

The proposer and seconder of the original motion advised that they accepted an amendment. Council agreement was sought to confirm the amendment as the substantive motion which was subsequently carried without dissent.

Councillor Richard Burton proposed an amendment to the motion with an amendment to recommendation (b) to read: -

***Develop a BCP strategic plan for the rebirth of youth services, ensuring that youth work is recognised, funded, and properly resourced. When the Government National strategy is published and resources clarified.***

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Sandra Moore.

The proposer and seconder of the original motion advised that they accepted an amendment. Council agreement was sought to confirm the amendment as the substantive motion which was subsequently carried without dissent.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the motion with members speaking in support of the motion and of the importance of youth services.

**This Council Resolves To:**

- (a) Publicise the Government's national survey which asks young people to respond by 9 April 2025.**
- (b) Develop a BCP strategic plan for the rebirth of youth services, ensuring that youth work is recognised, funded, and properly resourced. When the Government National strategy is published and resources clarified.**
- (c) Establish a Youth Futures Hub, in line with the Government's strategy, to directly engage young people in shaping local policies and decisions, ensuring meaningful representation at all levels of governance.**
- (d) To ask the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to conduct a review of existing current youth provision, identifying gaps and opportunities for investment in professional youth work, detached youth work, and community-based youth services.**

Voting: Agreed with no dissent

Councillors Sharon Carr-Brown, Brian Chick, David Flagg, Gillian Martin, Simon McCormack, Lisa Northover and Rachel Pattinson-West

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## CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Youth Justice Service Plan 2025-2026</b>
Meeting date	10 June 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	To present the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26. There is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the Youth Justice Plan so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to the Full Council.</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	Youth Justice Services are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is a partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and from Dorset Council.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director, Children's Services
Report Authors	David Webb, Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

## Background

1. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires Youth Offending Teams (now known as Youth Justice Services) to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Board sets out detailed and prescriptive guidance about what must be included in the Plan. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is attached at Appendix One. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report.

## Summary of the Youth Justice Plan 2025/26

2. The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2025/26 and sets out our priorities for this year.
3. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was rated 'Good' in its most recent inspection report, which was published in January 2023. An action plan was produced, in response to the inspection recommendations. All actions have been completed. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service has again been inspected, in February 2025, as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. The national report will be published in the summer. The Youth Justice Plan includes some references to the findings and learning from this inspection.
4. The Youth Justice Board continues to publish data for three 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. National performance data is published as a combined figure for the two local authorities within the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership.
5. The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. Overall local performance in this area, across both local authorities, has improved significantly in recent years. In the year before the pandemic, 2019/20, 104 BCP Council children entered the justice system. In the past year, 2024/25, 57 BCP Council children entered the justice system. Pages 11-16 of the Youth Justice Plan provide more data and analysis of our work to divert children from the justice system.
6. The other two national indicators relate to reducing reoffending and minimising the use of custodial sentences. The reoffending rate fluctuates, partly because of



the current counting rules for this measure. Our local reoffending rate has for the most part remained close to the national rate. Local analysis, summarised on pages 17-19 of the Youth Justice Plan, shows some of the patterns underlying the reoffending data. The Youth Justice Plan sets out some of the actions that are being taken to address these issues.

7. Locally we have low rates of children being sentenced to custody, below the regional and national averages. Young people who are sentenced to custody have often experienced significant trauma in their earlier life, affecting their current behaviour. Analysis on pages 19-20 of the Youth Justice Plan shows some of the common characteristics of the children who have been sentenced to custody.
8. Although the numbers remanded or sentenced to custody are low, these outcomes usually reflect serious offences causing significant harm to victims. Reducing youth violence, and harm to victims, is a priority for the Youth Justice Service and for other local strategic partnerships, such as the Community Safety Partnership and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership. In 2023 the government introduced the Serious Violence Duty, which requires specified local partners, including youth offending teams, to work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. Local implementation of the Serious Violence Duty is coordinated by the Community Safety Partnership.
9. The Youth Justice Board promotes a good practice approach to youth justice work, known as 'Child First'. The Youth Justice Plan includes examples of how the principles of Child First practice underpin the work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service.
10. It is recognised nationally that some groups of children are over-represented in the youth justice system. Locally, we have identified a particular concern about the over-representation of Children in Care. A multi-agency task and finish group is now working on two main themes: earlier identification of Children in Care who may be at risk of entering the justice system and improvements to the joint multi-agency work with Children in Care who have already entered the justice system. This activity is one of the service's priorities for 2025/26.
11. During the past year we have launched a two-year programme, known as 'Re-Engage', aimed at identifying the speech, language and communication needs of children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. The objective is to reduce school exclusions and to prevent future offending. Part of the rationale for this project was the recognition that almost all children who enter the justice system have unidentified communication needs. The Youth Justice Plan also includes data analysing the outcomes of the assessments completed by the YJS Speech and Language Therapists (see pages 43-45). The findings are significant, notably the evidence that 94% of children in the justice system are below the expected level for understanding spoken language. The YJS plans for the coming year include adaptation of our interactions with children to focus more on activities and less on talking-based interventions.
12. The DCYJS Partnership's strategic priorities for 2025/26 are:
  - Continuing to divert children from the formal justice system.
  - Reducing the over-representation of minority groups.

- Improving education outcomes for children in the justice system.
- Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion.
- Increasing public awareness and confidence in work which children are doing with the Youth Justice Service to repair the harm from their offence.

## **Options Appraisal**

13. Councillors are asked to endorse the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26 before it is considered by Cabinet. Cabinet will then decide whether to recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan to the full Council.

## **Summary of financial implications**

14. The Youth Justice Plan reports on the resourcing of the Youth Justice Service. Like all local authority services, the YJS is subject to significant resource pressures. Although there was an increase in the national Youth Justice Grant in 2024/25, taking it to £767,922, this did not restore it to the allocation of £790,000 in 2014/15. At the time of writing this report, in mid-May, the Youth Justice Grant allocation for 2025/26 has not yet been announced.
15. The Youth Justice Service faces budget pressures arising from the additional staffing costs of annual pay awards, with no increase in local authority contributions to the YJS budget since 2022/23. The Youth Justice Service achieved a balanced budget in 2024/25 through a combination of staffing reductions and additional fixed-term funding from the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office.

## **Summary of legal implications**

16. Local authorities are legally required to form a youth offending team with the statutory partners named in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act also stipulates that youth offending partnerships must submit an annual youth justice plan setting out how youth justice services in their area will be provided and funded; and how the youth offending team will be composed and funded, how it will operate and what functions it will carry out. The Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25 meets these legal obligations.
17. The Youth Justice Board guidance states that Youth Justice Plans must be signed off by full council in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

## **Summary of human resources implications**

18. No Human Resources implications have been identified. Local Authority YJS staff members are employees of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council, including those team members who work in the Dorset Council area. The YJS also includes employees of the partner agencies who have been seconded to work in the team and who remain employed by the partner agency. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 contains statutory requirements for the staffing composition of youth offending services. The Youth Justice Plan shows how Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service meets these requirements.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

19. No adverse environmental impact has been identified. The Covid-19 pandemic led to changes in the working arrangements of the Youth Justice Service, with increased working from home and a consequent reduction in staff travel.

### **Summary of public health implications**

20. Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Justice Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services. The Youth Justice Plan includes an update on health provision for children in the justice system (see pages 42-45).

### **Summary of equality implications**

21. The Youth Justice Plan does not relate to a new strategy, policy or function so an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. Some information about equalities issues is included in the report. No adverse equalities impacts have been identified.
22. It is recognised nationally that young people with diverse heritage, and young people in the care of the local authority, are over-represented in the youth justice system and particularly in the youth custodial population. It is also recognised that young people known to the YJS may experience learning difficulties or disabilities, including in respect of speech, language and communication needs. Information from Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service records, summarised in the Youth Justice Plan, shows that some of these issues of over-representation also apply in our area. Actions have been identified in the Youth Justice Plan to address these issues.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

23. The Youth Justice Plan sets out local priorities and actions to prevent and reduce offending by young people. These priorities and actions have been developed in response to identified risks and concerns. The recommendation for councillors to endorse the Youth Justice Plan is intended to support the Youth Justice Service to reduce the risks associated with youth offending. No specific risks have been identified as arising from this recommendation.

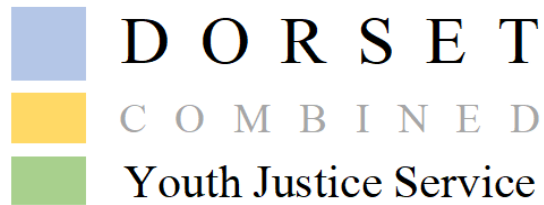
### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Youth Justice Plan 2025/26.

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**DORSET  
POLICE**



<b>Service</b>	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
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# YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2025/26

<b>Head of Service</b>	David Webb
<b>Chair of YJS Board</b>	Paul Dempsey

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  - 6.13. DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2025/26
7. Sign off, submission and approval.
8. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart
9. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions

# Youth Justice Plan 2025/26

## 1. Executive Summary

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) works across the Dorset Council and BCP Council areas in a multi-agency partnership between the local authorities, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and the Probation Service.

DCYJS helps children to make positive changes, keeping them safe, keeping other people safe, and repairing the harm caused to victims. When possible, we do this work outside the formal justice system, to avoid criminalising the child.

During the past year, DCYJS has made progress on our partnership priorities, including:

**Keeping children out of the formal justice system:** the number of children across Dorset and BCP who received a first caution or court order dropped from 108 in 2023/24 to 106 in 2024/25. The 2023/24 figure was a significant reduction on previous years.

**Reducing over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:** local children from ethnic minorities are not over-represented among those entering the justice system but may progress further through the system. Children in Care and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are over-represented locally and nationally. Action is being taken to reduce over-representation of these groups.

**Reducing youth violence and extra-familial harm:** there was a reduction in the number of children entering the justice system for violent offences in 2024/25, compared to the previous year. The number of children being arrested locally has reduced in the past three years.

**Improve education outcomes for children in the justice system:** DCYJS worked with Upton Country Park to provide a project supporting young people to become ready for college or employment.

DCYJS applies the 'Child First' principles that are promoted by the Youth Justice Board. A parent said that *'having YJS involved was at first a worry due to the offence, but it has turned out to be a godsend with all the support'*.

The DCYJS Partnership Strategic Priorities for 2025/26 are:

- Continuing to divert children from the formal justice system.
- Reducing over-representation of minority groups.
- Improving education outcomes.
- Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion.
- Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence.

These priorities sit alongside ongoing commitments to improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system and to repair the harm caused to victims.

## 2. Introduction, vision, strategy, and local context

### Foreword

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) for 2025/26. It sets out the key priorities and targets for the service for the next 12 months as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. This Plan adheres to the Youth Justice Board's document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

This Plan has been developed under the direction and oversight of the DCYJS Partnership Board, alongside consultation with DCYJS staff and feedback from DCYJS users.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the DCYJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements.
- outlines the resources available to the DCYJS.
- reviews achievements and developments during 2024/25.
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities.
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

*Paul Dempsey, Executive Director People – Children, Dorset Council  
Chair, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Partnership Board.*

### Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Statement of Purpose

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works with children in the local youth justice system. Our purpose is to help those children to make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims.

We support the national Youth Justice Board Vision for a 'child first' youth justice system:

*A youth justice system 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. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.*

### Who We Are and What We Do

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a statutory partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, The Probation Service (Dorset) and NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board.

We are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, nurses, speech and language therapists and a psychologist.

More information about the Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership and the members of the YJS team is provided later in this document.



The team works with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to reduce the risks to them and to other people. We also work with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

We contact all victims of crimes committed by the children we work with. We offer those victims the chance to take part in restorative justice processes so we can help to repair the harm they have experienced.

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to prevent children entering the youth justice system, to improve the quality of our local youth justice system and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health and education.

The combination of direct work with children, parents and victims and work to improve our local youth justice and children's services systems enables us to meet our strategic objectives to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system.
- Improve the safety and well-being of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce and repair the harm caused to victims and the community.
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

## Local Context

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a partnership working across two local authorities: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

Dorset Council covers a large geographical, predominantly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 385,000 (Dorset Council 'State of Population' 2023).

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of 404,500 (ONS 2023 mid-year estimates).

Other members of the DCYJS Partnership, such as Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset CCG, Dorset HealthCare Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset) also work across both local authorities.

The following table provides comparative demographic information about young people in both local authorities at the start of 2025. Fuller versions of this data, including data source information can be found in Appendix 3:

## COMPARATIVE DATA FOR 10–17 YEAR-OLDS

(10-17 yrs.)	BCP	DORSET
Number of Children	35,208	33,694
Male (%) Female (%) <sup>1</sup>	51 49	51 49
Pupils eligible for FSM (%)	20.5	22
Pupils with SEN Support (%)	14.3	14.6
Pupils with an EHCP (%) <sup>2</sup>	5.2	6.7
Pupils from black and ethnic backgrounds (%) <sup>3</sup>	15.9	5.6
Children living in poverty after housing costs (%) <sup>4</sup>	25	25.7

# SAFEGUARDING

(10-17 yrs.)	BCP	DORSET
Number of Children in Need	531	562
Male (%)	58	50.5
Female (%)	42	48.9
Indeterminate(%)	0	0.4
Number of children with a child protection plan	203	100
Number of children in care	376	315
Male (%)	58.7	59.7
Female (%)	41.0	40.3
Indeterminate(%)	0.3	0

## Number of children at risk of exploitation

Significant	18	12
Moderate	41	30
Emerging	35	20

Although the two local authorities differ in geographical size and demography, they have similar population sizes for 10-17 year-olds. Dorset Council has slightly higher rates of children eligible for free school meals and slightly higher rates of children identified as having special educational needs and disabilities. 1,110 children aged 10-17 in the BCP Council area (3.2%) have an allocated social worker, compared to 977 children in the Dorset Council area (2.9%).

The proportion of 10-17 year-olds identifying as being from non-white ethnicities is higher in BCP Council (15.9%) than in Dorset Council (5.6%).

## 3. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

The work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is managed strategically by a Partnership Board. The Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

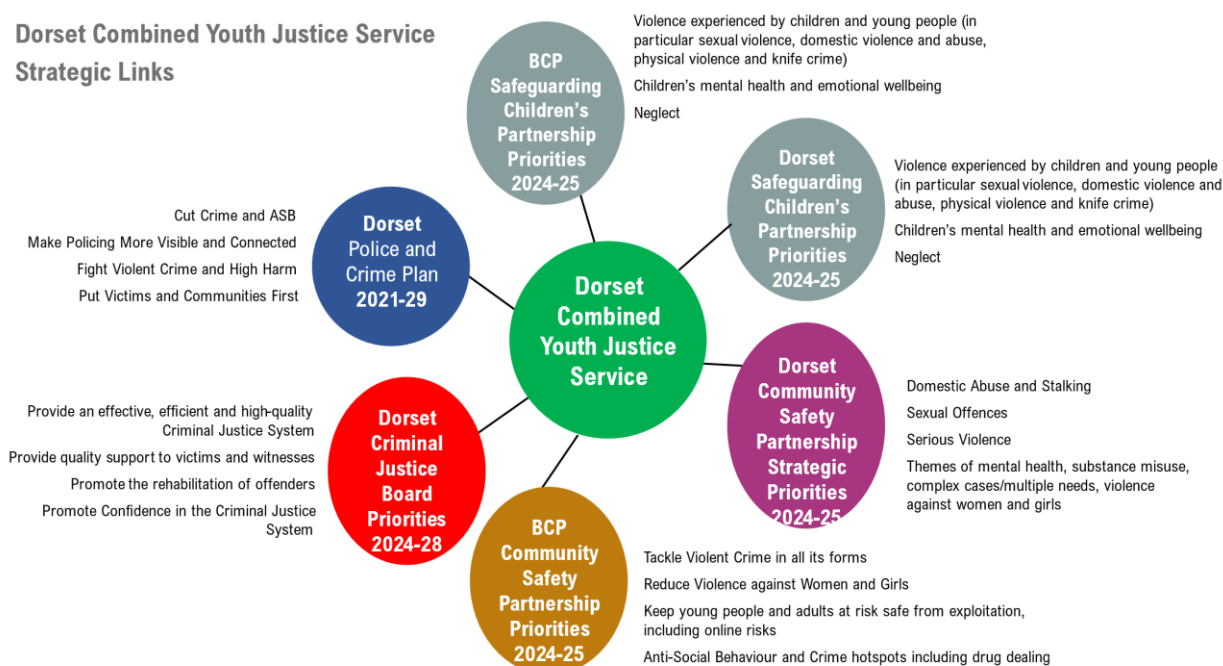
### Membership:

- Dorset Council (chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (vice-chair)
- Dorset Police

- The Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust
- Dorset Magistrates' Youth Panel
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan. Board members and the DCYJS Head of Service sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that the Youth Justice Plan and other local strategic plans and priorities are integrated and consider the needs of children and victims in the local youth justice system. The links between DCYJS and local strategic groups, and their overlapping strategic priorities, are illustrated below:

### Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Strategic Links



Representation by senior leaders from the key partners enables the DCYJS Head of Service to resolve any difficulties in multi-agency working at a senior level and supports effective links at managerial and practitioner levels.

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. The DCYJS Partnership Data Sharing Agreement underpins local multi-agency work to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending.

The DCYJS Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

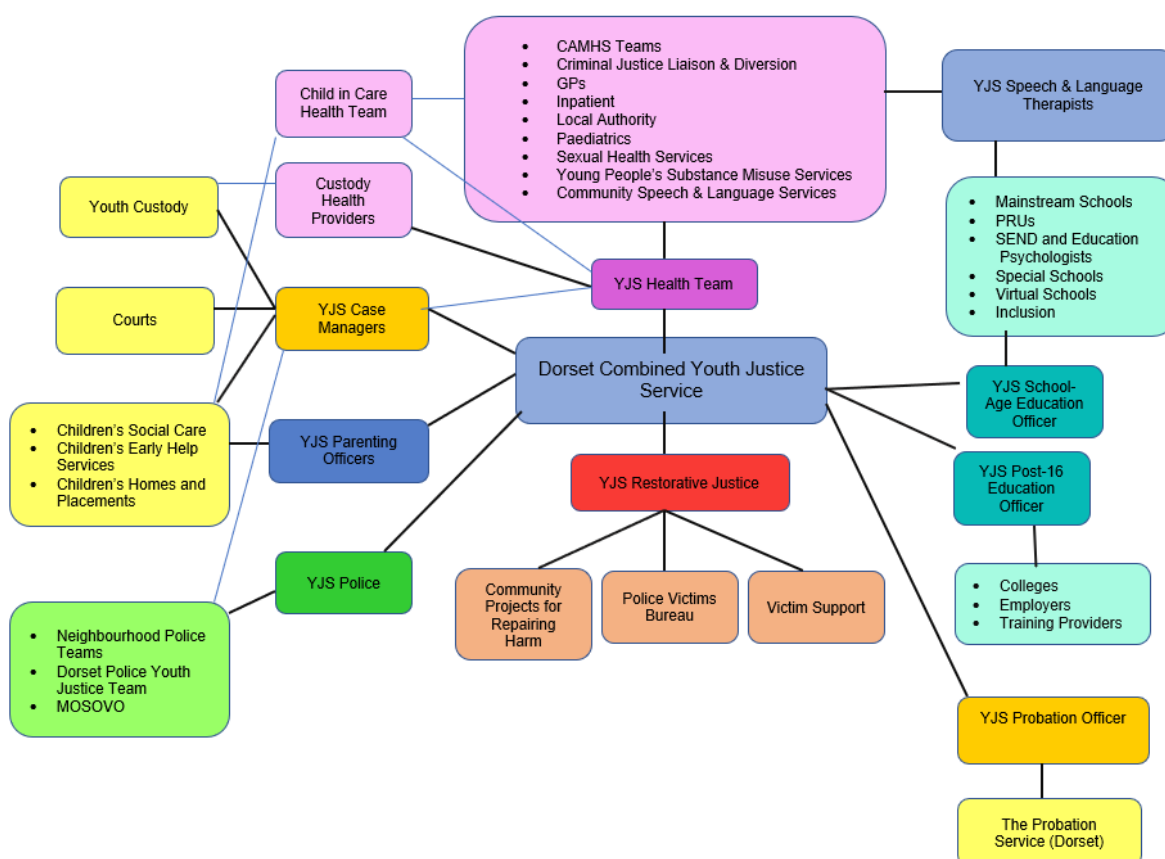
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The Head of Service is a Tier 3 Manager, reporting to the Director of Children's Social Care. The Head of Service also reports to the Corporate Director for Care and Protection in Dorset Council.

Appendix One includes the structure chart for DCYJS and structure charts showing where the YJS sits in each local authority.

DCYJS meets the statutory staffing requirements for youth justice services, set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Specialist staff are seconded into the service by Dorset Police, the Probation Service and Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust. These workers have line managers in both the YJS and their employing organisation. They have direct access to their own organisation's case management systems, to enable the prompt and proportionate sharing of information. More details about the staffing and financial contributions from YJS partners are provided in Appendix Two.

The YJS multi-disciplinary team also includes education specialists, parenting workers and restorative justice practitioners. The team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



## 4. UPDATE ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR

### 4.1. Progress on priorities in last year's plan

Our strategic priorities for 2024-25 are listed below with a brief summary of progress made:

Continue to reduce the rate of children entering the justice system:

- There was a 1.9% reduction in the rate of first-time entrants in 2024/25 compared to the previous year. There has been a 42% reduction in the rate of first-time entrants since 2019/20.
- Use of local authority workers, YJS workers, a Restorative Justice Practitioner and a Speech and Language Therapist to divert children from the justice system, under the Ministry of Justice 'Turnaround' programme.
- Consolidating the use of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences, as an alternative to a formal justice outcome.
- Transition plan implemented into the new Turnaround arrangements for 2025/26.
- Creation and implementation of the 'Re-Engage' programme, a two-year scheme from summer 2024 to offer speech and language assessments and support for children at risk of school exclusion.

Continue to address over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:

- Local children from minority ethnicities are not over-represented in the youth justice system in terms of overall numbers, although there is evidence that children from these groups are more likely to reach the court order stage of the justice system.
- There has been a reduction in recent years in the proportion of black and mixed heritage boys among local children receiving custodial sentences.
- Dorset Police report annually to the YJS Partnership Board on the local use of stop and search and of strip search for children.
- The DCYJS Head of Service represents DCYJS and other local YJS Managers in the Local Criminal Justice Boards' 'Wessex Disproportionality Group'.
- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation.
- Data analysis has shown that children in care are over-represented amongst children in the local youth justice system. The YJS Partnership Board initiated work in 2024 to improve multi-agency support for children in care in the justice system, and to prevent other children in care from entering the justice system.
- Analysis of YJS Speech and Language assessments, explained later in this document, has improved understanding and responses to children's specific communication needs.
- The 2024 thematic case audit focused on YJS work with girls.

Reduce extra-familial harm and serious violence:

- There has been a reduction in both local authorities in the number of children entering the justice system for an offence of violence against the person.
- DCYJS has contributed to Serious Violence Duty activities in both local authorities, including needs assessment and action planning, to support the multi-agency response to youth violence.
- Actions have been implemented from the 2023 case audit of YJS work with children who committed weapon offences.
- A quarterly 'weapon-related offending' group has been established for YJS practitioners and managers, to share good practice and learning, with inputs from colleagues in Dorset Police. A similar group for Harmful Sexual Behaviour continues to operate.
- The YJS health team has provided support to YJS and other colleagues working with children identified as requiring 'risk support', including Enhanced Case Management trauma formulations led by the DCYJS Psychologist and SAVRY assessments (Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth).
- DCYJS managers and practitioners have participated in partnership work in each local authority to develop and consolidate arrangements for addressing extra-familial harm,

including active contributions to Dorset Council's weekly Extra-Familial Harm panels and BCP Council's fortnightly Missing, Exploited and Trafficked panel.

- The YJS Head of Service has met regularly with senior colleagues from Dorset Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to try to speed up outstanding investigations into alleged violent and sexual offences by children. Progress in this important area remains slow.

Improve education outcomes for children in the youth justice system:

- Funding has been secured to continue the Discover You project at Upton Country Park. The project supports children and young people who are not in employment, education or training. Young people have accessed online learning, gained AQA awards, worked with the Ranger on conservation volunteering activities, engaged in career planning, designed and built animal habitats, bird feeders and play resources for younger children.
- The use of AQA awards to certificate learning by young people during YJS activities has been expanded.
- A weekly ETE Allocations meeting has been established, to prioritise work and to help ensure that support is provided to children without suitable education.

Continue to improve the quality of YJS practice:

- The YJB's new 'Prevention and Diversion' assessment tool has been implemented, with a series of team workshops to improve the quality of YJS assessments and plans with children.
- 'Child First' practice has been embedded through the workshops on assessment and planning, and by aligning individuals' appraisal objectives with the 4 tenets of Child First practice.
- Plans to develop the use of feedback from young people who transfer from the YJS to Probation have been delayed by the continuing vacancy for the seconded Probation Officer post in the YJS.
- The team has developed more options for children to repair the harm caused by weapon and drug offences.

## 4.2. Performance

DCYJS was inspected in late 2022 under the HMI Probation 'Full Joint Inspection' framework. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspection report can be found at this link: [A joint inspection of youth offending services in Dorset \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk).

DCYJS was also inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. Informal feedback was provided after the inspection, identifying examples of good practice which may be included in the national report in the summer of 2025.

The three primary key performance indicators for youth justice partnerships are:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- The rate and frequency of reoffending by children in the criminal justice system.
- The use of custodial sentences.

The YJB publish quarterly performance data for youth justice services, compiled nationally, in relation to these three indicators. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in March 2025 for the period ending December 2024.

## First Time Entrants

A 'First Time Entrant' is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome count as a formal criminal justice outcome. There are also options for diverting children from the justice system, by using informal justice outcomes, which do not make the child a First Time Entrant.

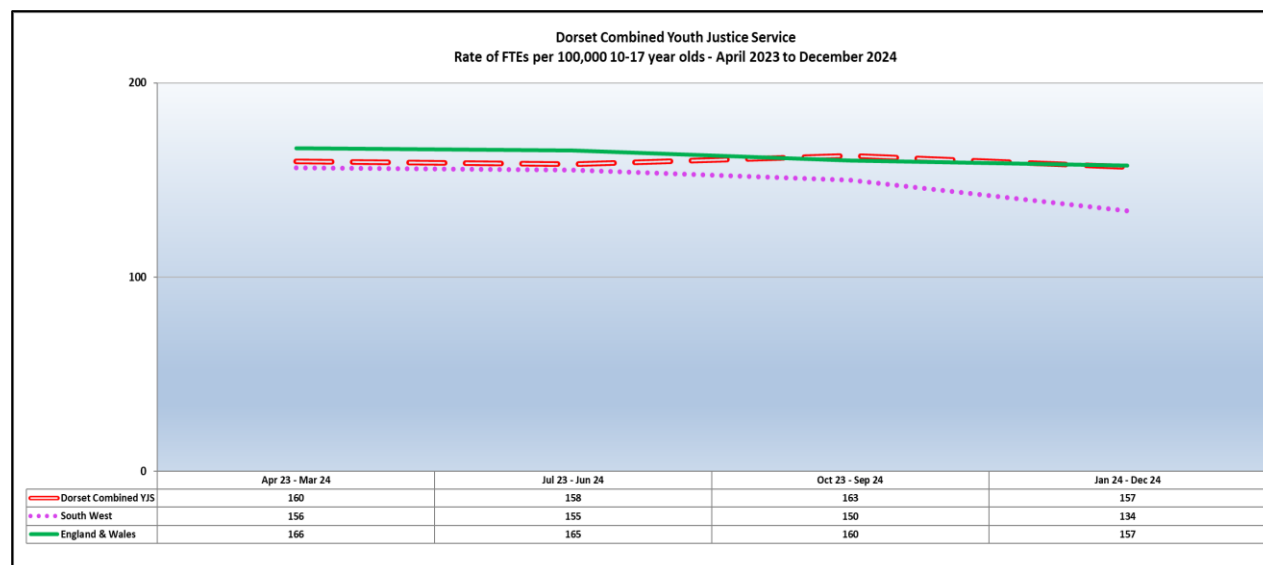
Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children's services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children. Verbal feedback from HMI Probation, after their inspection of our work with children on Out of Court Disposals, noted that *"There is a clear focus and shared commitment across the partnership both strategically and operationally to divert children from the criminal justice system wherever this is possible"*.

## National Performance Data

National performance data for First Time Entrants is drawn from the YJB's uploads of information from YJS case management systems.

In the past, DCYJS consistently had a higher rate of First Time Entrants than the national and regional averages. It is pleasing to note that there has been a consistent and sustained reduction in local First Time Entrants, with DCYJS now having a lower rate than the national average.

The following chart shows the last four quarters of national First Time Entrants data, with a consistent rate of around 160 First Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds. This compares to a rate of 234 First Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds in the year to December 2022.



## Local Performance Data

DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the number and characteristics of children entering the justice system. Local data shows a significant reduction in the number of children entering the justice system compared to the year before the pandemic:



Year	BCP First Time Entrants	Dorset First Time Entrants	Total DCYJS First Time Entrants	% Difference from previous year
2019-20	104	78	182	
2020-21	78	48	126	-30.8%
2021-22	77	47	124	-1.6%
2022-23	79	39	118	-4.8%
2023-24	52	56	108	-8.5%
2024-25	57	49	106	-1.9%

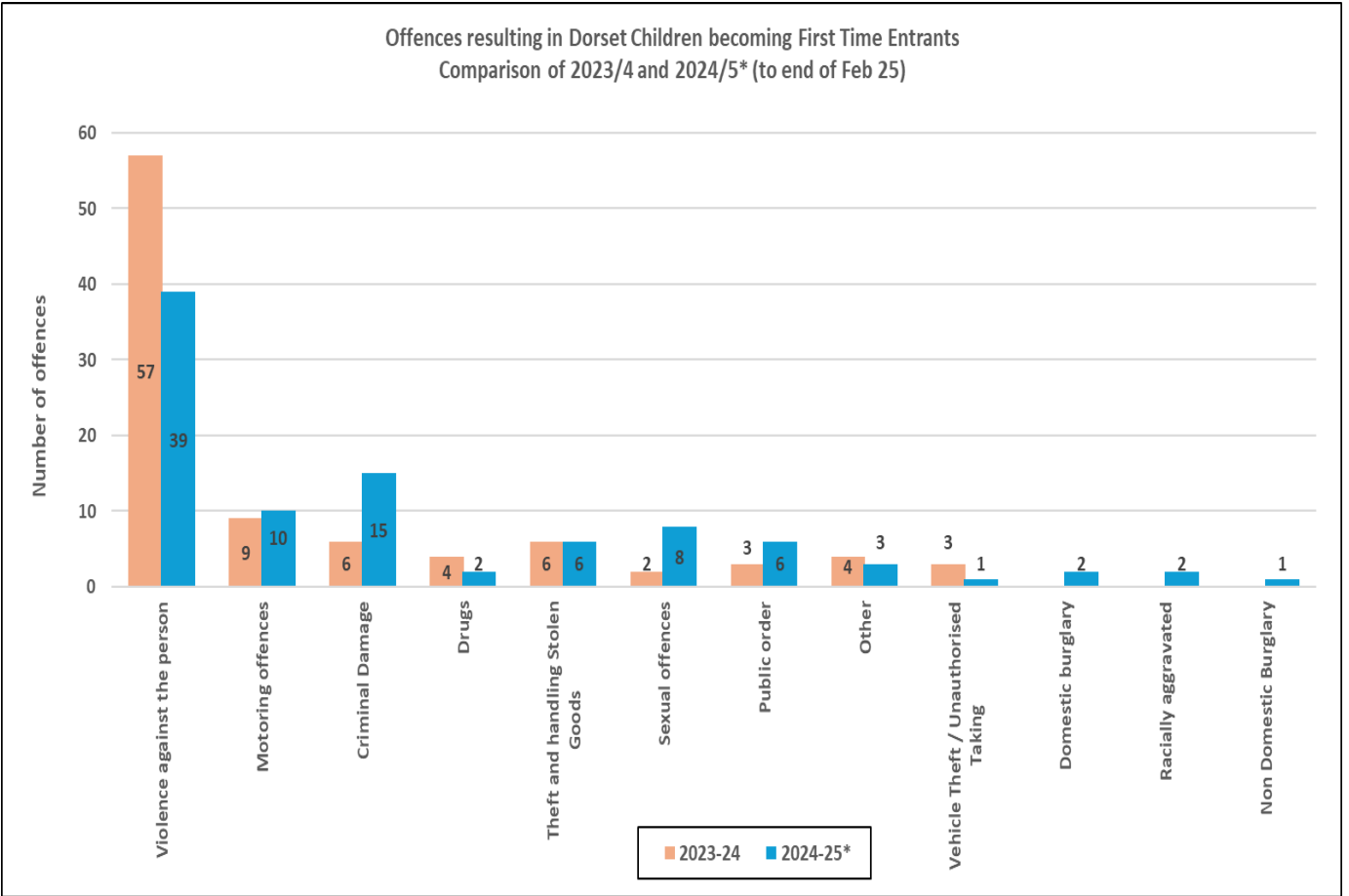
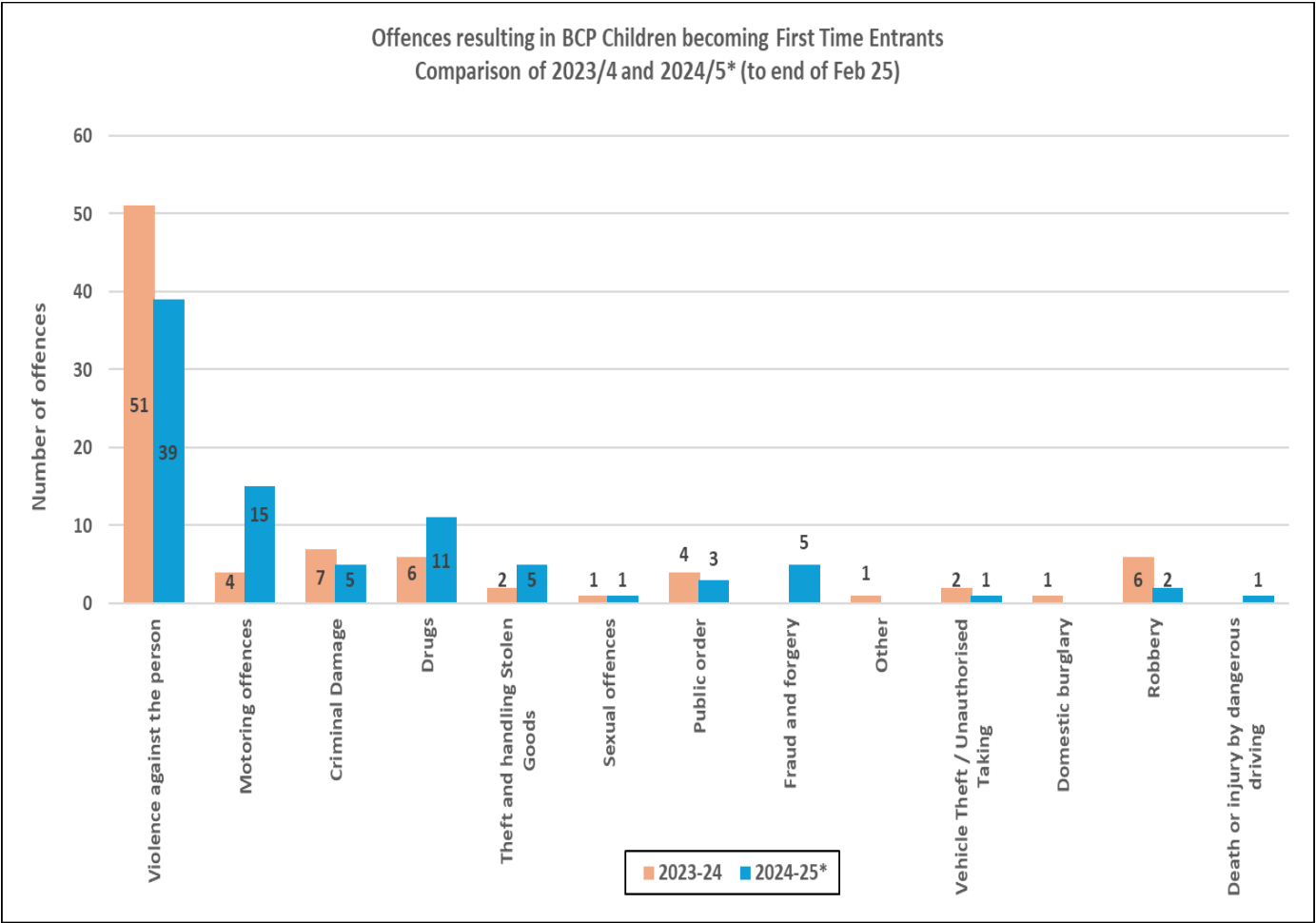
There was a notable reduction in First Time Entrants in BCP in 2023-24, which was sustained in 2024-25.

The increase in Dorset First-Time Entrants in 2023-24 reflected a marked increase in April and May 2023 relating to older offences which could have been dealt with during the previous year. It is pleasing to see the number of Dorset children entering the justice system dropping again in 2024-25.

Information about the ethnicity and gender of First Time Entrants is included later in this document, in section 5.1 on 'Over-Representation'.

#### Offences Leading to Children Entering the Justice System

Decisions about whether to offer a diversion option, instead of a caution or court appearance, depend to some extent on the nature of the offence committed by the child. The following charts shows the offences which led to children in each local authority becoming First Time Entrants during the past year:



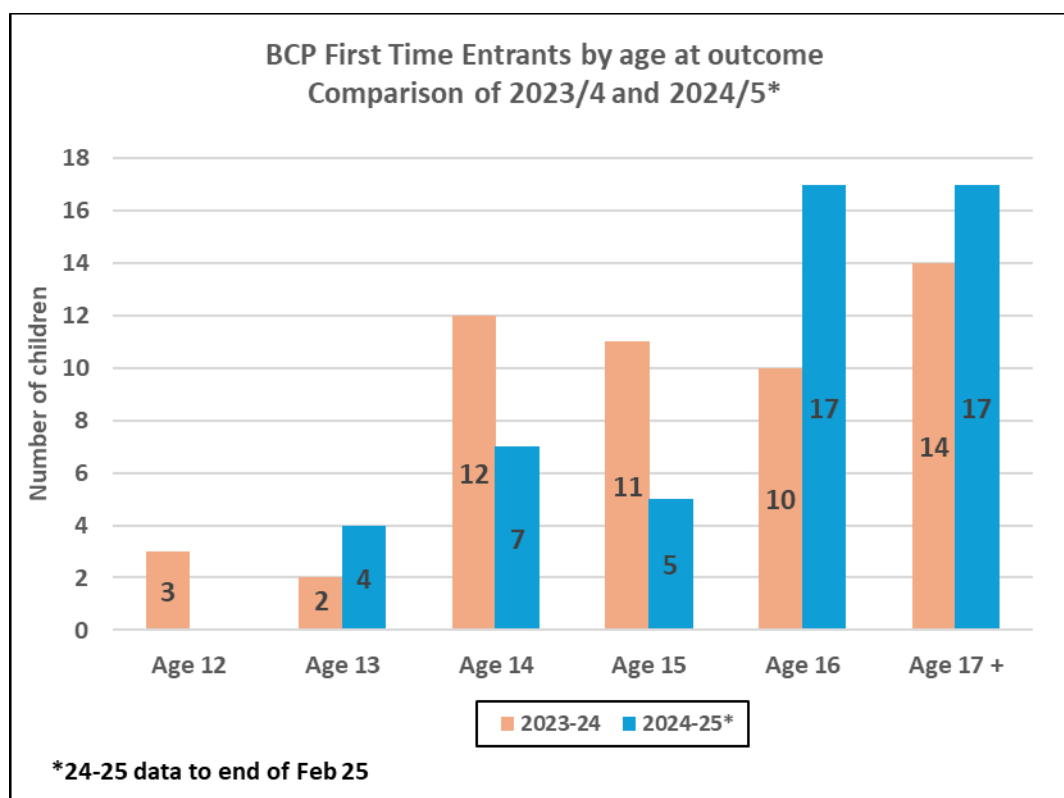
Offences involving possession or use of a weapon, or assaults on emergency workers, are included in the 'Violence against the Person' category and in almost all cases result in a caution or court disposal. Diversion options for these offence types are only considered in exceptional circumstances. There has been a reduction in both local authorities in the number of Violence against the Person resulting in a child entering the justice system.

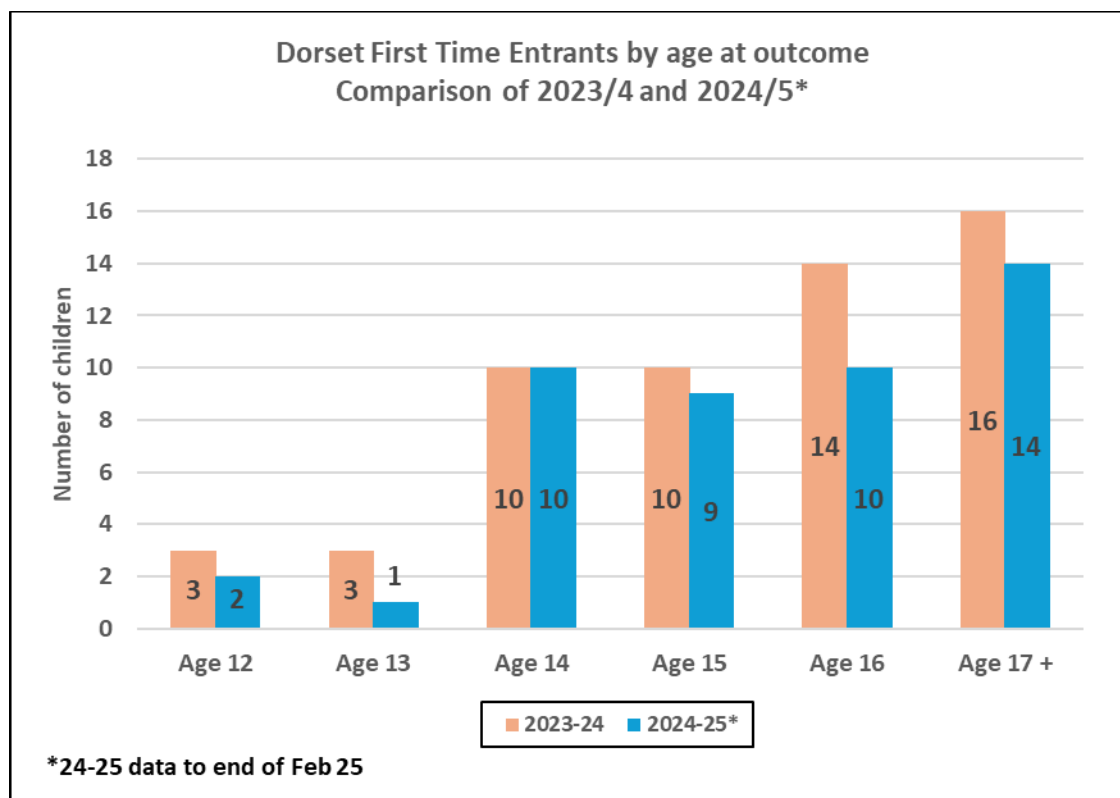
Some children are counted as entering the justice system for motoring offences which result in a court appearance for points to be added to the young person's driver's licence. Speed awareness courses are only available to people aged 18+, which means that a 17 year-old who commits a speeding offence is taken to court to be fined. In our view, such behaviour should not be viewed as criminal activity which counts as entering the justice system. DCYJS and Dorset Police are working locally and regionally, with support from the Youth Justice Board, to agree diversion options for young people with motoring offences.

### Age of Children Entering the Justice System

Previous analysis has shown that children who enter the justice system before the age of 14 are likely to have complex needs and may go on to commit further, more serious offences. During 2023-24, a total of 11 children under the age of 14 entered the justice system across our two local authorities. This year, 2024-25, saw a total of 8 children under the age of 14 who entered the justice system, indicating a reassuring reduction in young First-Time Entrants.

The following charts show the ages of First-Time Entrants in each local authority in the past two years. The age of First-Time Entrants in the BCP Council area has risen in 2024-25:



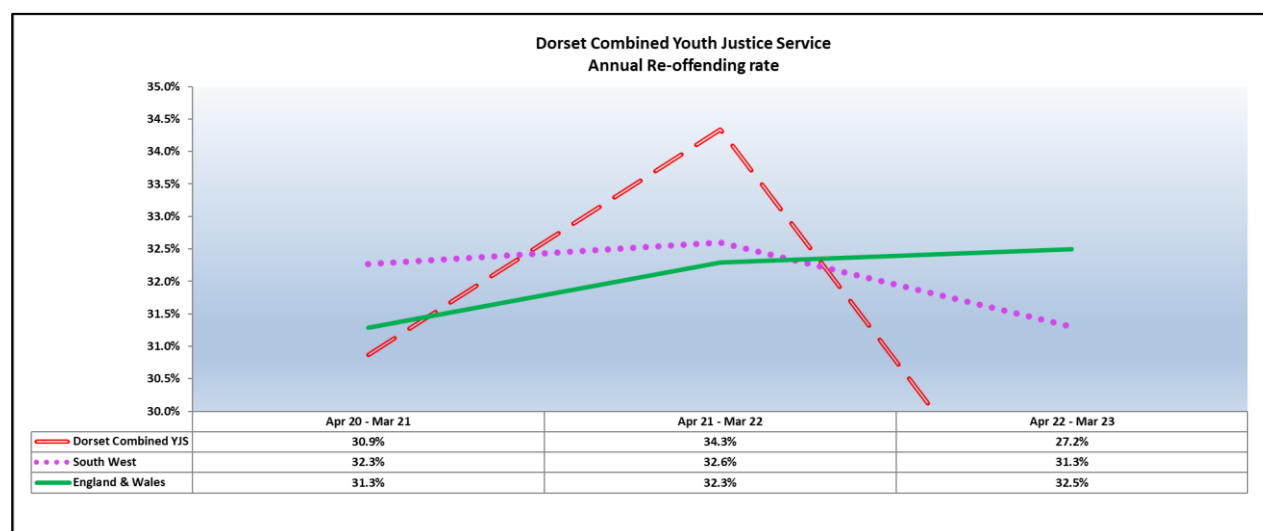


### [Rate of Proven Reoffending](#)

National re-offending data is published in two formats: the 'binary' rate shows the proportion of children in the cohort who go on to be convicted for subsequent offences in the 12 months after their previous justice outcome; the 'frequency' rate shows the average number of offences per reoffender.

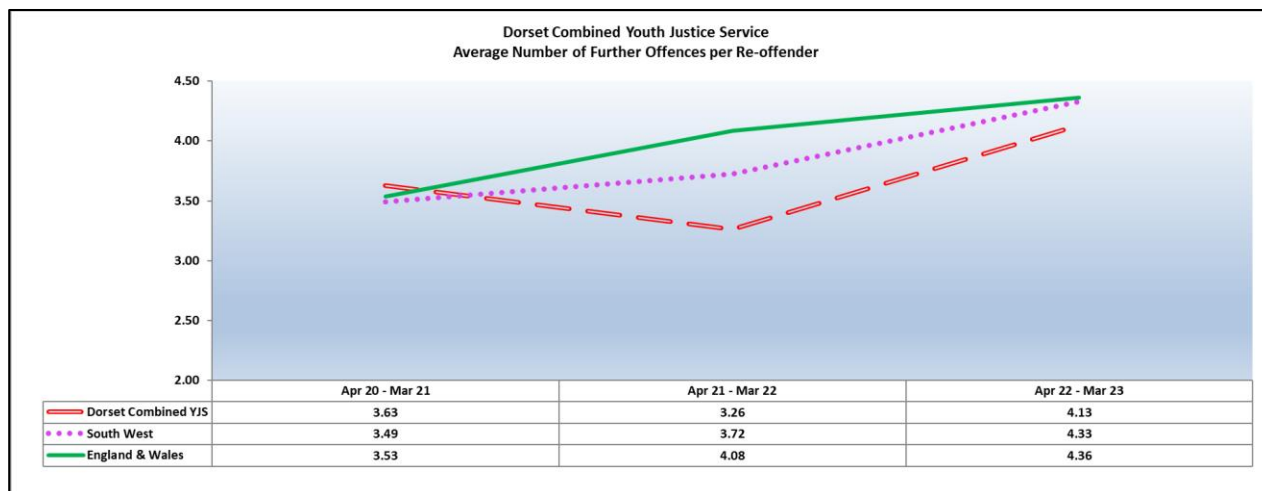
Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2023.

### **Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)**



The binary reoffending rate for the most recent year, to March 2023, shows a significant reduction on previous years, with DCYJS performance exceeding the regional and national averages.

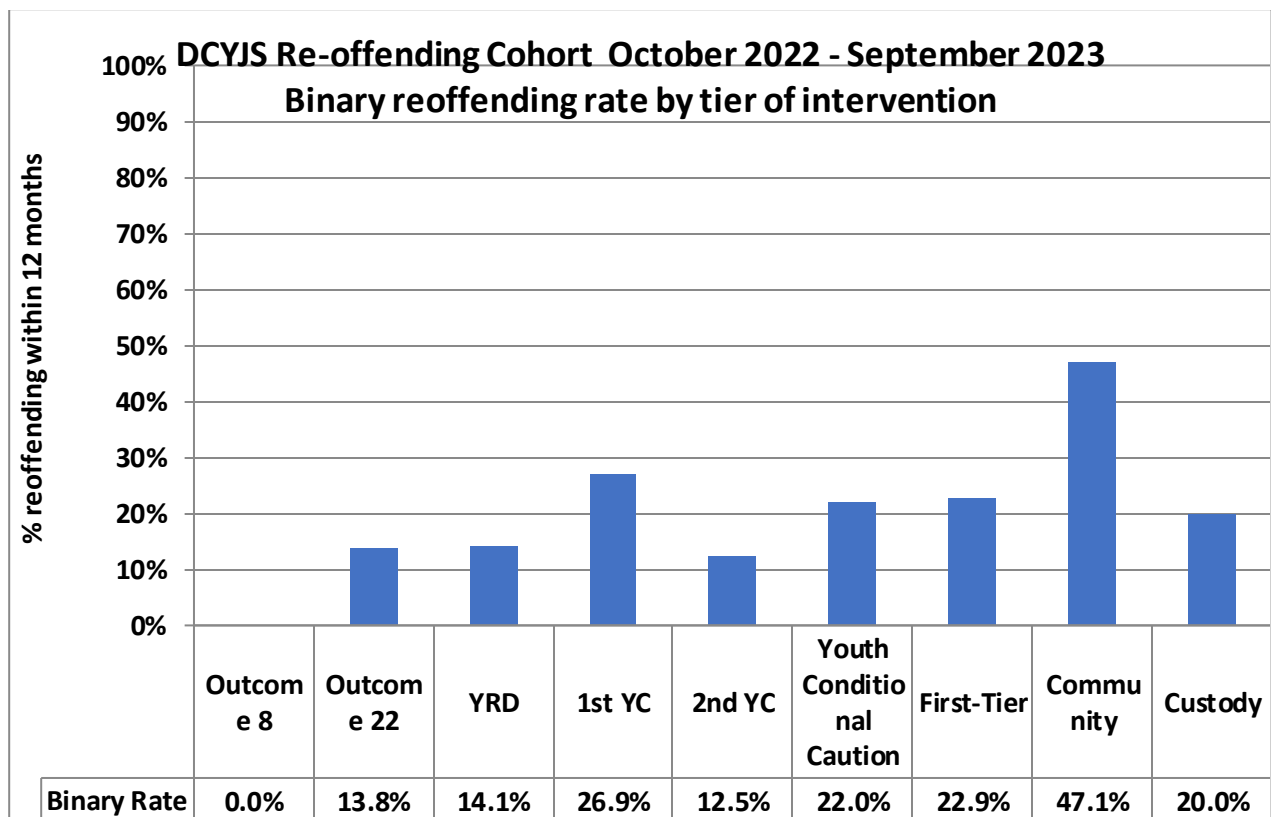
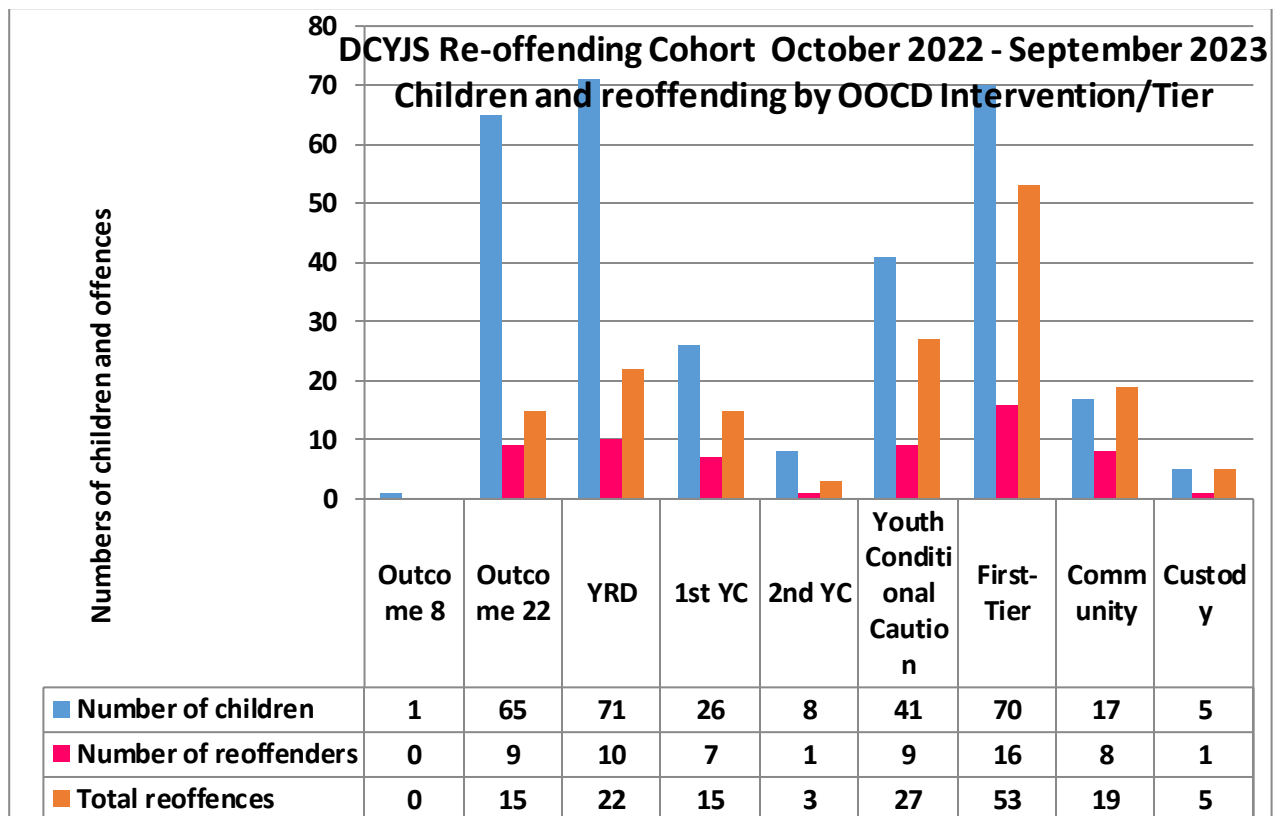
## Reoffences/Reoffenders



There has been an increase in the average number of offences per reoffender, but DCYJS has remained below the regional and national averages for this measure.

Local data, stored on the DCYJS case management system, can also be scrutinised to show information about reoffending. Our most recent analysis looked at children on the DCYJS caseload between October 2022 and September 2023, giving us a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children

Analysis of reoffending by disposal type shows that informal, diversion options have the lowest rate of reoffending (nb 'Outcome 22' is a police recording code, showing that no further action was taken but the child received an intervention to prevent future offending; 'YRD' refers to a Youth Restorative Disposal, the local name for a Community Resolution, which is also known as Outcome 8). It should be noted, however, that diversion options may be more likely for children with a lower risk of reoffending.



The local reoffending data also shows that:

- 15 and 16 year-olds are more likely to reoffend than other age groups.

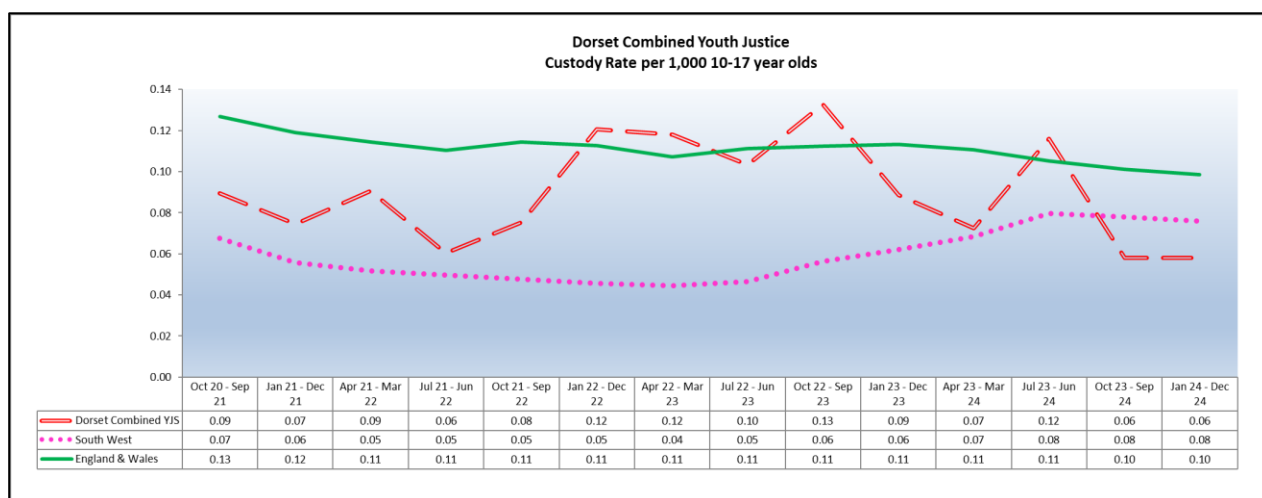
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls.
- Black and mixed heritage children show a higher reoffending rate than white children, but the numbers of black and mixed heritage children are low, meaning each child has a greater impact on the percentage rates.
- Children in the BCP Council area had a higher reoffending rate than children in the Dorset Council area.
- Children who were currently in care were more likely to reoffend than children who had never been in care.
- Children who committed burglary, robbery, thefts or vehicle thefts had higher rates of reoffending than children who committed other types of offence.
- 38% of reoffenders committed less serious further offences, 39% committed offences of the same seriousness and 23% committed more serious offences.

Analysis of local reoffending data helps the YJS to focus its work and to identify groups who may need additional attention.

## Use of Custodial Sentences

DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The context of this data is a large reduction over recent years in the number of children in custody in England and Wales. This means that small changes in numbers can have a noticeable effect on the local and national rates.



During the most recent period on the above chart, January 2024 – December 2024, a total of 6 children and young people received custodial sentences (4 from BCP Council, 2 from Dorset Council).

The trauma-informed approach to youth justice work encourages us to ask “what happened to you?” rather than “what’s wrong with you?”. In this context, it is interesting to look at some of the common experiences of these 6 children and young people.

One of these young people was not known to DCYJS. He entered a Not Guilty plea as a child but was tried, convicted and sentenced after he turned 18. We do not therefore hold information about his past experiences and needs.

Analysis of the other 5 children and young people who received custodial sentences in 2024 shows that:

- All 5 were male.
- 4 of the 5 defined their ethnicity as White British, one identified as Mixed Heritage.
- At the time of sentence, 1 was aged 18, 2 were aged 17, and 2 were aged 16.
- All 5 were a Child in Care or a Care Experienced Young Person.
- All 5 had been identified as being at risk of harm from criminal exploitation. 4 of the 5 had been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and the other was assessed as being at significant risk of extra-familial harm.
- All 5 were identified as having Speech, Language and Communication Needs, following assessment by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapist.
- All 5 had been permanently excluded from school.
- 4 out of 5 had an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- All 5 had had past contact with CAMHS, with a common experience of childhood trauma, and evidence of neurodiversity amongst some of these children.

The pattern of being a Child in Care, having experienced child exploitation, having been excluded from school, having speech, language and communication needs, and health needs related to past trauma and neurodiversity, shows the need for effective multi-agency working. DCYJS works closely with other children's services to provide community sentences which have the confidence of our local courts so that custodial sentences are only used as a last resort, for the most serious or persistent offending.

Section 6.1 of this document provides further analysis of the over-representation of Children in Care in the local youth justice system, and actions being taken.

## [New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators](#)

The Youth Justice Board introduced a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be collected from April 2023. The following measures are reported:

- Accommodation – the percentage of children in suitable accommodation.
- Education, training and employment (ETE) – the percentage of children attending a suitable ETE arrangement.
- SEND – the percentage of children with SEND who are in suitable ETE with a current, formal learning plan in place.
- Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to improve their mental health or emotional wellbeing and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Substance Use – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address substance misuse and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Out of Court Disposals – the percentage of out of court disposals that are completed or not completed.
- Management Board attendance – the attendance of senior representatives from partner agencies and if partners contribute data from their services to identify ethnic and racial disproportionality.
- Wider services – the percentage of YJS children who are currently on an Early Help plan, on a Child Protection Plan, classified as a Child in Need or a Child in Care.
- Serious Violence – the rates of children convicted for a serious violence offence on the YJS caseload.
- Victims – the percentage of victims who consent to be contacted by the YJS; of those, the percentage who are engaged with about restorative justice opportunities, asked their views prior to out of court disposal decision-making and planning for statutory court orders, provided with information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate support services (when requested).



The new KPIs have required significant additional work to adapt recording systems and to adjust recording practices. The consistency, accuracy and usefulness of this data remains a work in progress. The YJB stated in March 2025 that the data collected nationally in 2023/24 and 2024/25 is 'low quality and cannot be used for analysis, reporting, and decision-making'. It is hoped that the extra activity associated with these additional measures will eventually prove to be useful.

### 4.3. Risks and issues

Like other youth justice services, DCYJS operates in a context of system challenges and resource pressures.

Current issues and future risks being faced by DCYJS include the following:

Issue/risk facing DCYJS	Actions being taken in response
Delays in the youth justice system, often arising from prolonged police investigations, make it harder to work effectively with children to prevent future offending and harder to provide timely support to victims and to engage them in Restorative Justice.	Monitoring instances of children released under investigation or on bail, to consider voluntary support options for the child during the investigation period.  Work with Dorset Police and the CPS to prioritise, progress and resolve investigations for children on a case-by-case basis.
Funding and resources – real terms reductions since DCYJS was formed in 2015, no budget uplift to fund annual staff pay awards, uncertainty about future funding.	The combined service, working across two local authorities, provides resilience and savings of scale which has enabled the service to maintain high practice standards in the context of reducing resources. Some staffing reductions were required in 2024-25. Further reductions may be needed in 2025-26 if budgets remain frozen.
Permanent exclusions from school, and difficulties finding suitable alternative provision.	Re-Engage project to provide Speech and Language assessments and support to schools for children at risk of school exclusion before contact with the youth justice system.
Additional data recording and reporting requirements for the YJB KPIs and the Turnaround programme coinciding with a reduction in the YJS staffing resource for performance data.	Revisit staffing capacity for performance data, ensure efficient and accurate data recording procedures.
The YJS is likely to be required to vacate its current office premises in Bournemouth and its reparation/child contact premises in Dorchester during 2025. This could affect the work that can be done with children and the quality of joint work by team members.	YJS managers are seeking assurance from local authority facilities managers in BCP and Dorset that suitable alternative accommodation will be located.

## 5. PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

## 5.1. 'Child First' practice

DCYJS applies 'Child First' practice principles to underpin its work. The Child First approach is embedded in the YJB national guidance documents 'Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System' and 'Case Management Guidance'. These documents direct the work of youth justice services.

The Child First approach is built on evidence demonstrating its effectiveness to prevent offending by children who are at risk of entering the justice system and to reduce offending by the small number of children who do enter the youth justice system. The research evidence is summarised in this document: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/>.

DCYJS supports these principles and promotes them in its own work and in its interactions with local partners in children's services and the youth justice system.

The Child First approach has four tenets, listed below.

The ABCD of Child First practice	Examples of how DCYJS implements this in our work
<b>As children:</b> recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support.	<i>DCYJS uses Speech and Language assessments and trauma formulations to help identify each child's communication needs and developmental stage and the appropriate support for the child.</i>
<b>Building pro-social identity:</b> promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending.	<i>DCYJS work with Upton Country Park to provide the 'Discover You' project, aimed at building children's skills, confidence and employability. Positive outcomes from the project include a child who has become a volunteer with Upton Country Park. A new Youth Justice Activities Coordinator joined us in February 2025 to develop our positive activities and build a stronger child voice into our service design and delivery.</i>
<b>Collaborating with children:</b> involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion.	<i>Children are actively involved in developing the plans for our work with them, as part of the DCYJS commitment to working restoratively. Case records are written 'to the child' to be more inclusive and to help shift the worker's perspective. Training for the team is currently focusing on how to collaborate with children to agree their intervention plan.</i>
<b>Diverting from stigma:</b> promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within it, as we know that stigma causes further offending	<i>The 'Turnaround' programme has helped us to embed the use of Outcome 22 to divert children from formal justice outcomes. YJS Speech and Language assessments are written on Dorset HealthCare documentation, without reference to the YJS, to avoid stigmatising the child.</i>

Appraisals objectives for YJS practitioners and managers for 2025/26 were structured around the four tenets of Child First practice, to help embed these principles in our day-to-day work.

The strategic priorities in the DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26 are aligned with the Child First principles, reflecting work to strengthen the local implementation of the four tenets of Child First practice.

## Voice of the child

DCYJS works collaboratively with children to hear their voice during their contact with our service. Case records are addressed to the child and quote their words, to ensure the child's voice is prominent.

The team's Speech and Language Therapists complete assessments so that we can adapt our work to each child's communication needs. The Speech and Language Therapists also provide advice to colleagues in the YJS about how to work with each child. The following example illustrates how this can work in practice:

*A YJS case manager had been struggling to engage a child who has communication needs. The case manager asked the Speech and Language Therapist for suggestions about alternative ways of working with the child. They agreed to try a session with a video clip and a cartooning exercise, to shift from language-based interventions to something more visual. The new approach was successful, as shown in this extract from the child's case record:*

You watched a TikTok video of an incident where two men were arguing and one man goes to grab a bottle, the video cuts off before the you see the bottle being used. Your mum was present and consented to you watching the video. You drew a comic strip of the video and spoke about the behaviour, why it happened, what was happening, body language and what you think the consequences were of the behaviour.

You engaged well in this session, you previously were not talking to me nor were you showing an interest in the work we were doing, however, this particular style of work seemed to help you engage you in the session, you asked questions and actively took part drawing the comic strip, rewatching the video to make sure you were remembering it correctly and when I said that we were finished, you were surprised. It is positive you took such an active role in your session, you appeared to enjoy this and wanted all your sessions to be like this.

Another child had struggled to express how they experience life as someone with autism. Their case manager asked them to write about it, encouraging them to have confidence in expressing themselves. The child produced a striking and insightful description of their perspective which they read out to their parents and the case manager. Their account was subsequently edited to create this poem:

## I'm Paradoxical

Autism is like a lonely boat at sea, navigating on its own;  
Autism faces challenges in social interactions,  
Communication, and sensory processing.  
Daily routines can be demanding,  
and sensitivity to sensory stimuli may lead to overwhelming experiences.

ADHD is depressing,  
it's a mix of everything.  
You will fit in everywhere, but nowhere.  
You are extremely arrogant, but very much aware of your own faults

Capable of everything, yet not motivated to do a thing  
Witty and charismatic, but have a low tolerance for BS people.  
Great with advice but follow none of it.  
You're most likely a genius but have trouble handling your emotions.

You are an extrovert, who needs a lot of personal space.  
You love being different but hate being misunderstood.  
Have brilliant ideas, but lack the patience to follow through with them.  
You have more interests than anyone you know, but will get bored of every one of them.  
You easily understand the thoughts of others, but find it hard to translate your own.

Surprisingly compassionate, but seemingly very cold.  
We make it look fun, but it's really not.  
People judge me before knowing me  
My disabilities are hidden  
so people just think I'm acting that way  
which makes me more angry.

I'm paradoxical,  
I like to be happy  
But I think about sad things all the time  
I don't really like myself  
But I love the person I have become  
I say I don't care  
But I care too much - Deep into my bones

I crave attention  
Yet, I reject everything that comes my way  
I healed people  
But I broke my own heart trying to fix them  
I love to listen  
But never tell them what's inside me.

Autism is part of who I am,  
not a barrier to who I can become.  
I may be as mysterious as the ocean,  
but within the depths of my mind,  
waves of brilliance and success  
continuously ebb and flow.

As well as hearing the child's voice in the team's day to day practice, there are also processes in place to gather the views of children and other service users about their experience of the service's work.

Spontaneous comments from service users about their experience of our service are recorded and analysed, using a data report from our case management system.

*Examples of recent comments from service users include:*

*Working with C is really helpful and I feel like a weight has been lifted.*

*We have talked about quite a lot, I really like J. She just listens, sometimes when I have had workers before it feels like a job, with J I feel like she actually cares. She calls me to check in on me and she keeps my mum updated too.*

*It has been really eye-opening. My original thought was that social services was a bad thing but it has changed my view because it has been supportive. It has been good for her because her worker is an open-minded person and has not judged her. It has been relaxed and here to help her rather than to make her feel bad*

*I met with you at your panel meeting today, thank you for allowing me to attend, it was good to put a face to your name. You told me that the style of your panel suited you and you felt comfortable with panel members being in the room and you coming in with your parents. You also said that the panel members asked if you would like to write your contract, you said they could but you told them what to write. This is good to hear that your voice has been captured. You and your parents told me that L has been great with you. She has helped you to understand the process, helped you to think about the impact your behaviour had on the victim and your parents too. You said that you liked L and you trusted her.*

Each year the YJS undertakes a case audit on a priority area of YJS work. In 2024 the audit focused on our work with girls. As part of the audit, we talked with some of the children and parents in the audit sample.

One of the themes to emerge from the audit was the impact of delays in the justice system. One girl commented that:

*Work with YJS was good, but it would have been more helpful before when I actually needed it. I had already made loads of changes myself. The gap was too long, it was two years between the offence and the matter going to court.*

## 5.2. Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget are listed in Appendix Two, showing the figures for 2024/25. Indicative budget contributions for 2025/26 from local partners have been agreed. Local authority contributions will remain frozen at the 2022/23 levels, with no uplift to meet the cost of annual pay awards. The Youth Justice Grant allocation for DCYJS in 2025/26 has not yet been announced, although the YJB shared information in late March 2025 to indicate that the national Youth Justice Grant will be increased by 1.46%.

All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other DCYJS staff are employed by Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. A DCYJS Structure Chart is included in Appendix One, showing the posts provided through our partnership resources. DCYJS has a strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary identity, meeting the staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

Like all public services, DCYJS operates in a context of reducing resources. Ensuring value for money and making best use of resources is a high priority for the service. The combined



partnership, working across Dorset's local authorities since 2015, has enabled the service to maintain high practice standards while managing real terms budget reductions over that period.

During 2024/25 short-term funding was also provided through the Ministry of Justice Turnaround programme, to enable additional work with children on the cusp of the youth justice system. Funding was also received from the Home Office Immediate Justice pilot scheme, to augment work with children who received Out of Court Disposals for offences which caused harm to local communities. The Ministry of Justice has announced that funding will be provided in 2025/26 to continue Turnaround work, albeit the funding has been reduced from £182,595 in 2024/25 to £123,184 in 2025/26.

The Youth Justice Board Grant is paid subject to terms and conditions relating to its use. The Grant supports the front-line delivery of essential youth justice services for children. The Grant may only be used towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system;
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system;
- Improve the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system; and
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

The conditions of the Grant also refer to the services that must be provided and the duty to comply with data reporting requirements.

The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the Partnership's resources for employing practitioners who work with children to prevent and reduce offending and to keep children and other members of the community safe from harm. Resources from the Youth Justice Grant are also used to provide restorative justice and reparative activities, to promote pro-social activities for children building on their strengths and to improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people in the local youth justice system. The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the performance achievements described in section 4.2, reducing the number of children entering the justice system, reducing reoffending by those who do enter the justice system, and maintaining low numbers of children being sentenced to custody.

In addition to the service outcomes listed above, the Youth Justice Grant and other Partnership resources are used to achieve the strategic priorities set out later in this Plan. Progress against those priorities is reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board, with oversight also provided by the relevant scrutiny committees of the two local authorities.

### 5.3. YJS Partnership Board Development

HMI Probation's Joint Inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was published in January 2023. The inspection included scrutiny of the Board's work. The inspection report rated the service's Governance and Leadership as 'Good'.

HMI Probation also met with members of the DCYJS Partnership Board in February 2025 as part of their thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Inspectors identified a strategic commitment to diverting children from the justice system wherever possible.

The YJS Partnership Board has an established cycle of performance review, strategic oversight and forward planning. During the past year, the Board's activities have included scrutiny of the local use of stop-search and strip-search of children, decisions on the future delivery of diversion activities after the initial Turnaround programme, and action to address the over-representation of Children in Care in our youth justice system.

The YJS Partnership Board's plans for 2025-26 include increased oversight of our work with victims, to ensure we are compliant with the new youth justice inspection criteria.

## 5.4. Workforce Development

The YJS is committed to good practice, using staff supervision, peer support, team workshops and external training courses to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of our workers. Informal feedback from HMI Probation, after their recent inspection of our work with children on Out of Court Disposals, noted that *“Staff are highly motivated and build strong relationships with children and families, as reflected in the feedback received from children, parents, and carers. YJS staff are skilled, knowledgeable, and feel well supported. There is a strong capacity for reflection at all levels of the service.”*

The DCYJS Workforce Development Policy identifies core training for different roles in the team. As well as refresher training in child safeguarding, extra-familial harm and information governance, team members are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

Team members will continue to attend training and development activities in these approaches in 2025/26. A Motivational Interviewing Development Group was established in 2024, facilitated by an expert external trainer. This will continue in 2025/26.

The team's work with children showing Harmful Sexual Behaviour is supported by a quarterly YJS HSB Practitioner's Group, which sometimes includes contributions from external speakers.

During 2024/25 a quarterly YJS Weapons Offences Practitioner's Group was established. This initiative derived partly from a YJS multi-agency case audit in 2023 of our work with children who have committed offences involving weapons.

The YJB mandated the use, from April 2024, of the 'Prevention and Diversion' assessment tool for children receiving Out of Court Disposals. The YJS has held workshops with line managers and case managers throughout 2024/25 to support the implementation of this new assessment tool. This gave us an opportunity to embed Child First principles in working collaboratively with children during the assessment and planning phase.

Volunteers play an important role in the work of the YJS, especially as Referral Order community panel members. We appreciate their engagement during 2024/25 in several training sessions aimed at aligning our Referral Order panel meetings with Child First practice.

In addition to the core training courses, the service's development plans for 2025/26 require staff training in the following areas:

- Prevention and Diversion Assessment tool – improve the plans that are devised with children, with a focus on collaborative planning and exit planning.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour – train the team's HSB workers in 'Technology-Assisted Harmful Sexual Behaviour'; commission an external consultant to run a session with the team's HSB workers on working with denial.
- Revise the training for new volunteers to emphasise Child First practice.

DCYJS also supports individual career progression plans for team members. Plans for 2025/26 include:

- a Youth Justice Worker continuing with his social work qualification through the Social Work Apprenticeship with BCP Council and Solent University.
- a Youth Justice Worker studying for the Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship.
- a Youth Justice Officer working towards her Practice Educator qualification.

DCYJS also hosts student placements for students studying for social work qualifications and for trainee Speech and Language Therapists.

## 5.5. Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation

Evidence shows that the key determinant for positive change is a pro-social relationship with a trusted adult. The primary focus for effective practice in DCYJS is therefore the quality of workers' relationships with children, alongside positive relationships within the team and with other professionals. The approach also builds on previous feedback from young people on the DCYJS caseload about what was most important to them in their experience of the service. The whole service training in 'Working Restoratively' in January 2024 was aimed at supporting this key aspect of our evidence-based work.

### Employment and training support for 16-17 year-olds

The service has continued to focus on improving young people's employment and training prospects.

DCYJS partners with Upton Country Park to provide the 'Discover You' project. The project aims to improve young people's self-esteem, practical skills and employability, to increase their chances of accessing employment and training.

21 young people attended the project between September 2024 and March 2025. Some of the positive outcomes for these young people included:

- Access to online learning within different subject areas e.g. Food Hygiene, First Aid, Health & Safety in the workplace, Manual Handling, Customer Service, Fire Safety and Barista Training.
- AQA Certificated Learning –most young people complete around 5-10 awards, depending on how long they attend and what they engage in. Awards include Team Building, Employment and Training, Practical Tasks, Communication Skills.
- Work Experience options around Upton Country Park within the Welcome Centre and Café.
- Conservation Volunteering Activities – Working with the Ranger onsite to complete practical activities around the site like planting trees, taking out hedgerows, coppicing, painting, creating woodwork items, putting stag beetle loggery (different things available at different times of the year).
- Team Building – different opportunities like den building and orienteering.
- Life skills – budgeting/managing money, dealing with bills, communication skills.
- ETE and Careers – Careers Information Advice and Guidance – Career Action Planning, CV work, Applications for College and Jobs, Interview Skills.
- Other Support towards qualifications - CSCS Practice, Maths and English Assessments, and working towards exam readiness..
- Completing practical tasks for Upton Country Park, e.g. animal habitat, bird feeders, designing and building play resources for school/nursery groups, redesigning a bird screen and creating art work and bird facts to go on the completed bird screen.
- Raising money for charity by making items to sell at Upton Country Park, eg Halloween items, Christmas items, nature-themed items and outdoor objects such as planters, bird boxes, bug hotels, bird feeders.
- Development into mentoring opportunities for young people who continue to volunteer at Upton Country Park after attending the Discover You project.

The Discover You project received Lottery Heritage funding until March 2024. Other funding was used in 2024/25, including a contribution from the Immediate Justice pilot scheme. We are seeking funding to continue and develop the project in 2025/26.





Animal Habitat built by children on the Discover You project

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner also continued to provide funding for young people to work with training providers to gain their 'CSCS' card to increase their chances of work in the construction sector.

### Early identification of speech and language needs for children at risk of school exclusion

Our local Youth Justice Partnership's strategic priorities include reducing school exclusions, to prevent offending, and meeting the speech, language and communication needs of children who may enter the youth justice system. The DCYJS Partnership Board allocated funding for a two-year project, known as 'Re-Engage', to identify and support the speech, language and communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion.

The Re-Engage project commenced in summer 2024, working with schools to focus on children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion and whose behaviour indicates a risk of future offending. The project is staffed by a Speech and Language Therapist and a Speech and

Language Associate Practitioner. Their roles are to assess the communication needs of children who are at risk of school exclusion and to support schools to respond to the child's specific needs. Training sessions are also offered to schools as part of their staff development.

At the end of February 2025, halfway through the school year, 50 children had been referred to the project, from 18 schools across the Dorset and BCP Council areas. Assessments had been completed for 30 children. The results showed that 76% of these children had communication needs which had not previously been identified. 33% of the assessments indicated that the child had significant communication needs, with a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder.

Evaluation of the project will include 'before and after' data on the child's attendance, behaviour incidents and exclusions, as well as feedback from schools, children and parents/carers.

## 5.6. Standards for work with children in the youth justice system

All Youth Justice Services are required to comply with the Youth Justice Board's 'Standards for work with children in the youth justice system' (2019). The Youth Justice Board oversees a programme of self-assessments to monitor compliance.

The last YJB self-assessment exercise took place in 2023, when all services were directed to audit their work under 'Standard 2: Work in Court'. The YJB provided an audit tool, comprising 22 questions. The DCYJS self-assessment rated our work in court as Good, with most of the audit questions being rated Good or Outstanding.

The positive outcome from our audit of court work reflects the strong partnership between DCYJS and our local youth courts. The chair of the Dorset Magistrates Youth Panel sits on the DCYJS Partnership Board, enabling other partners to hear the views of magistrates.

The YJB did not require Youth Justice Services to complete a National Standards audit in 2024/25 and has stated that there will also be no requirement for a National Standards audit in 2025/26.

## 5.7. Response to inspections, reviews and audits.

Inspection reports, learning reviews and case audits all contribute to our service planning.

The most recent full inspection of our service was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspectors made 6 recommendations, which were followed up through an action plan, overseen by the YJS Partnership Board. Actions have been completed for all of the recommendations.

Dorset Police and DCYJS were jointly inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. This thematic inspection is being conducted by HMI Probation and HMI Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services. The report will be published in summer 2025. Informal feedback from the inspectorates after our inspection visit recognised strong partnership working between Dorset Police and DCYJS. The inspectorates identified examples of good practice in our work and gave us some helpful advice on areas for development which will be included in our plans for 2025/26.

In September 2024, HMI Probation published a national thematic report, 'The quality of services delivered to young adults in the Probation Service'. Although this report focused on the work of the Probation Service, there was some consideration of transition arrangements from youth justice to Probation. One of the report recommendations was for HM Prison and Probation



Service to “ensure that any barriers to staff requesting or accessing information from partner agencies, including youth justice services, are addressed”. Locally, DCYJS and the Probation Service in Dorset put steps in place, in 2023, to support Probation Officers to request relevant information from DCYJS when working with a young adult who was previously known to the YJS.

DCYJS contributed to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review in Dorset, relating to the accidental death of a child on a railway line, which was published in May 2024. Learning from this review was identified and actioned in 2023.

There have been no new local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) involving the YJS in the past year. A local multi-agency learning review took place in BCP Council in 2024 relating to a 20 year-old care experienced young person who took her own life, in the context of domestic abuse. A Domestic Homicide Review is also being completed. This young person had been known to DCYJS before she turned 18. No changes to YJS practice have been identified in these reviews.

YJS learning from local CSPRs and multi-agency learning reviews is included in the team’s development plans, and is reported annually to the YJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS undertakes thematic case audits, linked to the service’s priorities. The focus in 2024 was on our work with girls. Areas for improvement in our practice arising from this audit included work with boys on healthy, safe behaviour in relationships, and work with girls and boys to help them explore their online identity and activity. The theme for our case audit in 2025 has not yet been confirmed but is likely to link to our work on the over-representation of Children in Care.

## 6. Local and National Priorities for 2025/26

*This section of the Plan reviews issues of local and national priority for youth justice which contribute to our service priorities for 2025/26.*

### 6.1. Over-representation

National data shows that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. DCYJS monitors caseload information for children from minority and disadvantaged groups.

#### Ethnic Disparity

Data from the January 2024 School Census shows that 15.9% of 10-17 year-olds at schools in the BCP Council area identify as not having a white ethnicity. The equivalent figure for schools in the Dorset Council area is 5.6%. This data helps us compare the rate of children on our caseload from different ethnicities with proportions in the local population.

The following charts provide information about the children in the youth justice system in each local authority, separating them by children who were diverted and children who were cautioned or sentenced.

#### BCP Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2024/25

### BCP Outcomes from 1st April 2024 to 16th March 2025

**73**

Children

**75**

Diversion Outcomes

**66%**

Boys

**34%**

Girls

**93%**

White

**7%**

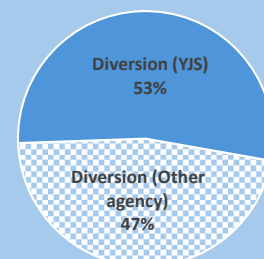
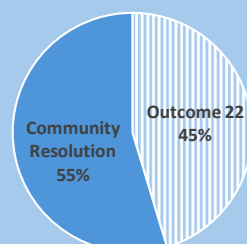
Ethnic Minority Groups

**32%**

10-14 years old

**68%**

15-18 years



### BCP Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2024/25

### BCP Outcomes from 1st April 2024 to 16th March 2025

**78**

Children Cautioned or Sentenced

**90**

Outcomes

**85%**

Boys

**14%**

Girls

**1%**

Transgender/Fluid

**79.5%**

White

**20.5%**

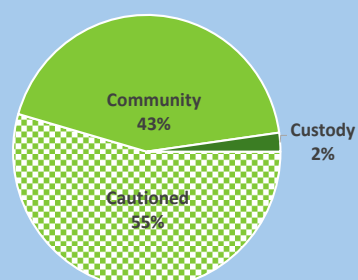
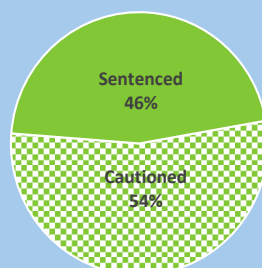
Ethnic Minority Groups

**24%**

10-14 years old

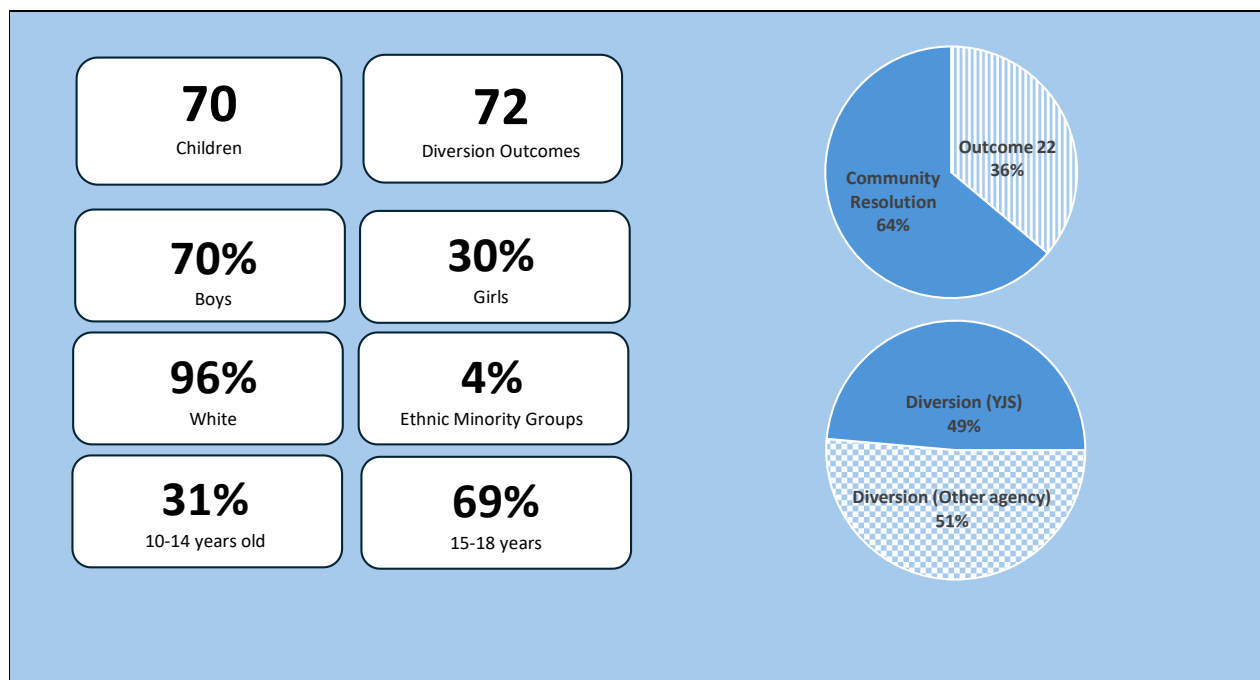
**76%**

15-18 years



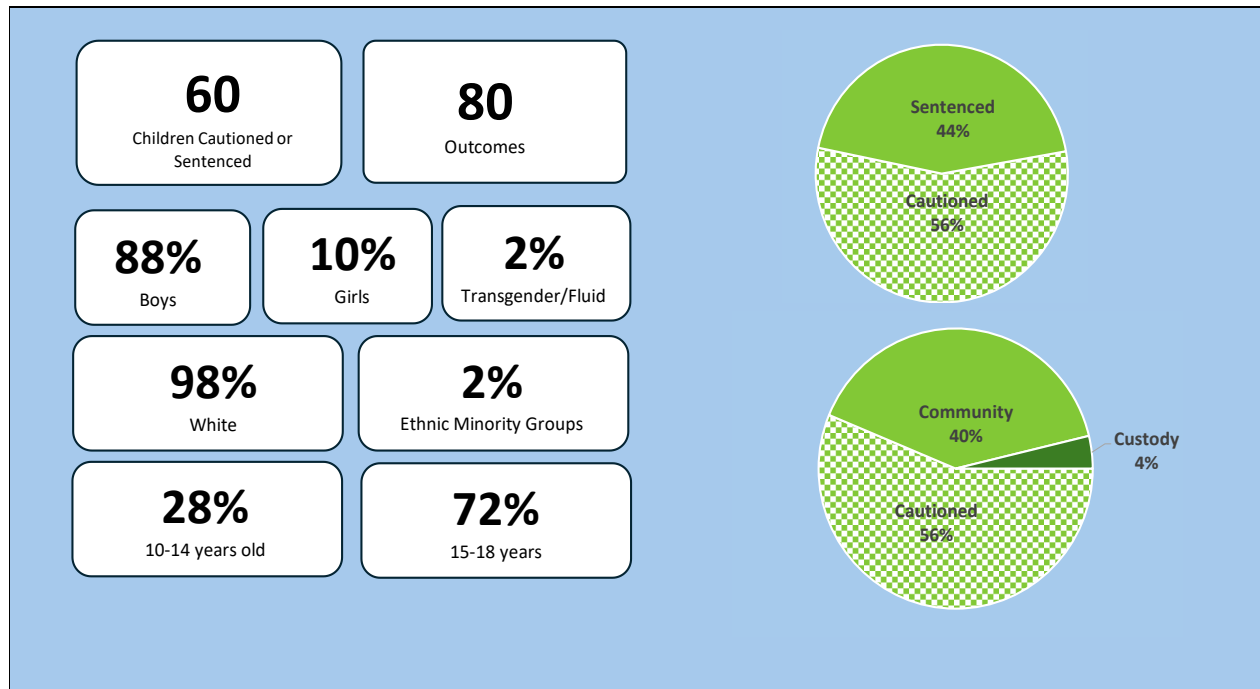
### Dorset Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2024/25

### Dorset Outcomes from 1st April 2024 to 16th March 2025



### Dorset Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2024/25

### Dorset Outcomes from 1st April 2024 to 16th March 2025

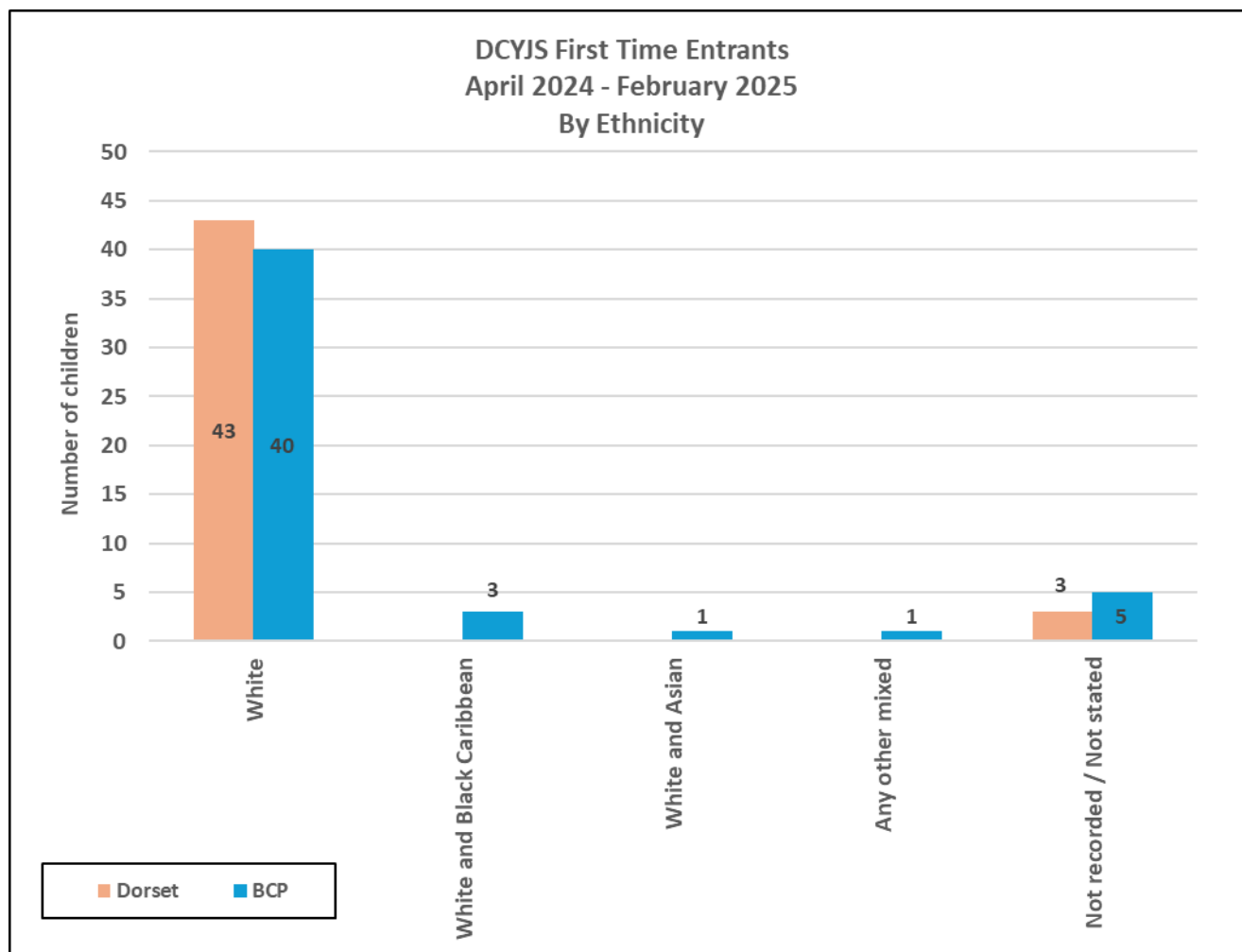


Comparison of these charts shows that:

- There is a notably higher proportion of girls among the children diverted from the justice system compared to the proportion of girls in the groups who were cautioned or sentenced.
- The proportion of children with non-white ethnicity is lower among the children who were diverted than among the children who were cautioned or sentenced.

- Children who do not identify as white are not over-represented in Dorset, or among children in BCP who are diverted, but they are over-represented among children sentenced or cautioned in BCP.
- In both local authorities, there is a higher proportion of younger children among those who were diverted.

Last year's Youth Justice Plan noted that we had not seen over-representation of minority ethnicities among children entering the justice system. This has remained the case in 2024-25 for the overall area, as shown in the following chart:



The explanation for no ethnicity being recorded for 8 of the total 96 first-time entrants is that some children are fined or discharged at court, for offences such as motoring, and have no contact with DCYJS.

43 of the 46 first-time entrants in Dorset defined themselves as having white ethnicity. The other 3 have no ethnicity recorded.

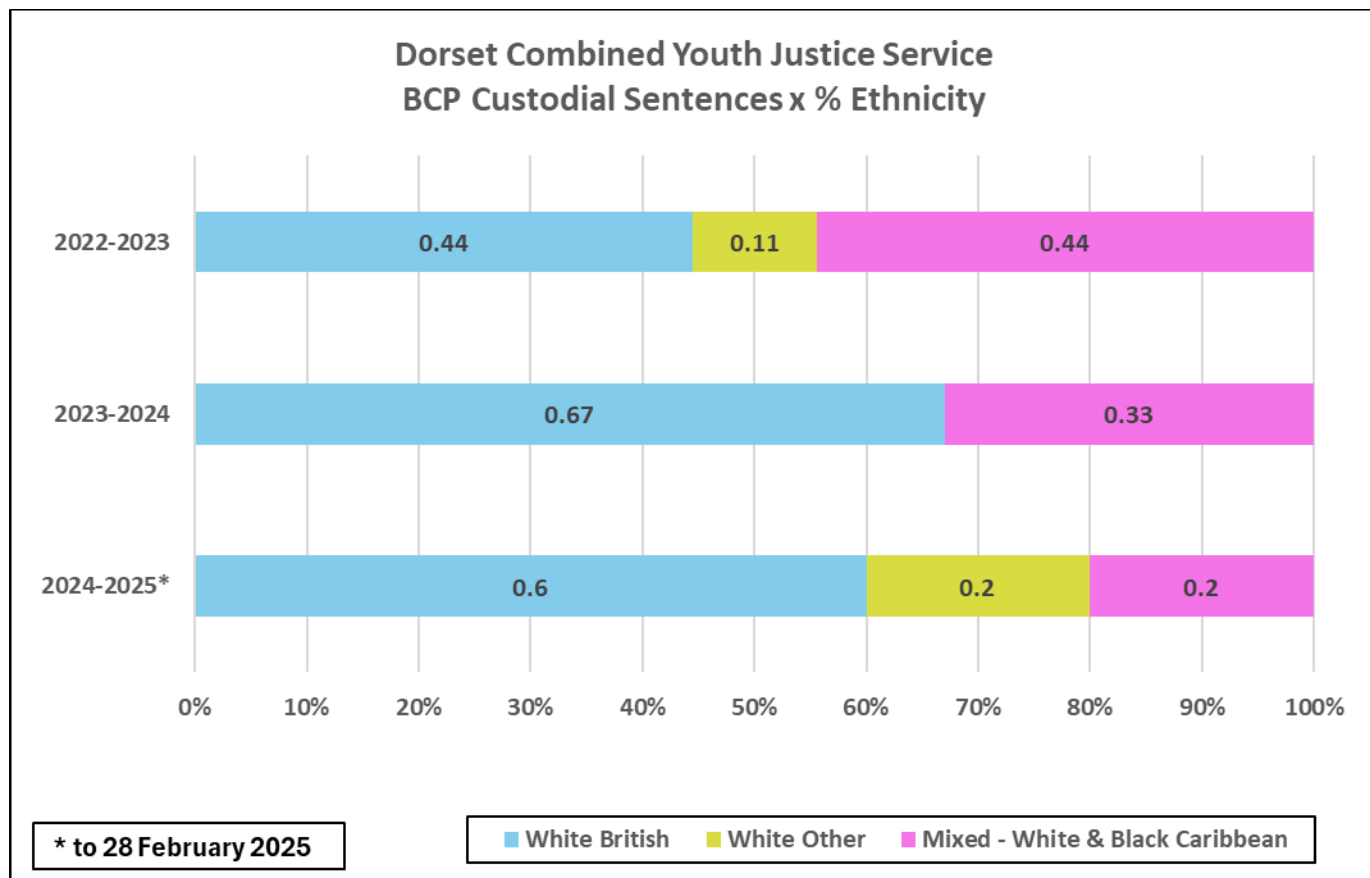
5 out of 50 first-time entrants in BCP did not define themselves as having white ethnicity. At 10%, this is below the School Census rate of 15.9%.

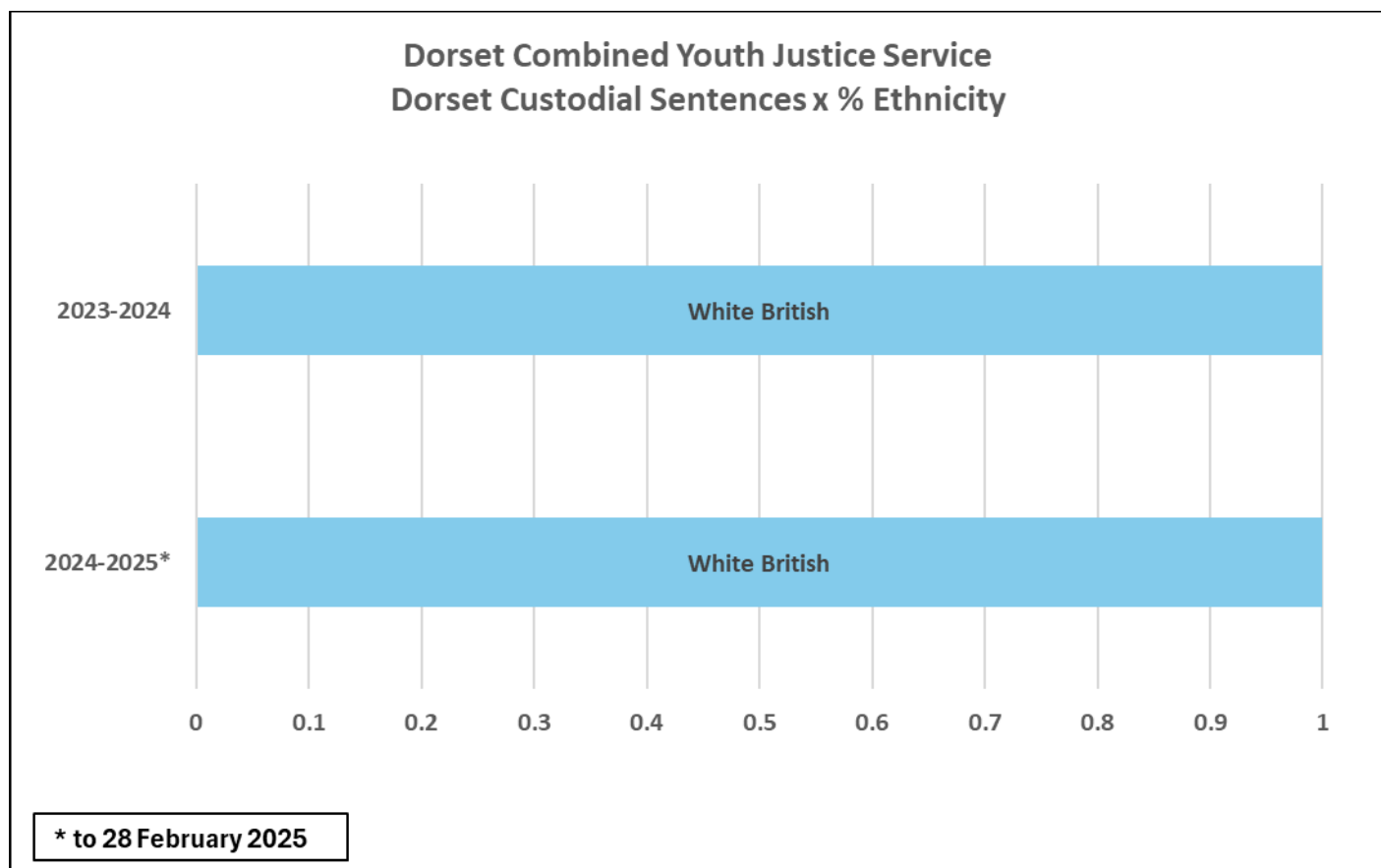
Although we do not see over-representation among first-time entrants, we also track how far children 'progress' into the youth justice system.

The charts showing the numbers of children cautioned or sentenced in 2024/25 indicate that children from ethnic minority groups in the BCP Council area are over-represented amongst

those receiving a caution or court order. More analysis is needed to understand the reasons for this over-representation, noting that DCYJS and Dorset Police also work with Dorset Council children, where children from ethnic minority groups are not over-represented.

At a national level there are enduring concerns about the over-representation of Black and mixed heritage boys amongst children in custody. Low numbers of local children being sentenced to custody make it hard to analyse data based on percentages. The following charts show custodial sentences by ethnicity in each local authority in recent years.





Amongst the BCP Council children who have been sentenced to custody, there has been previous evidence of over-representation of children who do not identify as white, although this has been reducing in recent years.

In summary, there is a nuanced and varied picture locally for over-representation by ethnicity. Overall, local children from global majority ethnicities are not more likely to be criminalised and are not over-represented. There are some subtleties to the data though, such as how children from different groups progress through the justice system, which require further attention.

### Gender

We also monitor the gender breakdown of our caseload and the distribution by gender at different stages of the youth justice system. There tends to be a higher proportion of girls among children who are diverted from a formal outcome, with lower proportions of girls amongst those who receive a community or custodial sentence.

At a national and local level there is evidence that boys are significantly over-represented among children in custody. Locally, no girls have been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past 8 years.

The proportion of girls on the DCYJS caseload fluctuates but usually stays within a range of about 15%-20% of the total caseload, consistent with national rates. Girls accounted for 17% of our First Time Entrants in 2024/25, the same percentage as in 2023/24.

It is recognised that girls can have different needs and experiences from boys, requiring differentiated responses from YJS workers. Worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to each girl's needs. During 2024-25 a thematic case audit was undertaken to review our work with girls and to identify areas for improvement, as mentioned in section 5.7.



## Children in Care

Local data shows that Children in Care are over-represented in our youth justice system. Analysis commissioned by the YJS Partnership Board for its meeting in October 2024 included the following observations and findings:

- In the previous 2.5 years, approximately 11% of children on the YJS caseload were or had been Children in Care.
- 13.75% of 'First-Time Entrants' over that period were Children in Care.
- The proportion of Children in Care on the YJS caseload between April 2024 and September 2024 was higher amongst children who had received court orders (29.6%), compared to children who had received a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution (14%) and children who had received a diversion outcome (7%).
- 'Violence against the person' offences were more common for Children in Care than for children who had never been in care.
- There were 20 Children in Care on the DCYJS caseload in September 2024. All 20 were born male and identified as male.
- 15 of the 20 had been placed out of their home area at some point.
- 20 out of 20 had experienced school exclusions and multiple education placements.
- 15 out of 20 had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 20 out of 20 had had contact with CAMHS and/or paediatric services, though these services struggled to sustain their engagement with the child.
- 5 out of 20 had significant physical health conditions or injuries.
- 19 out of 20 were reported as using drugs and/or alcohol. The average age of first use of cannabis was 11 in BCP and 12 in Dorset.
- 14 out of 20 had been assessed as being at risk of experiencing Extra-Familial Harm.

The YJS Partnership Board has requested actions in response to these findings, to look for opportunities for earlier intervention with Children in Care who are at risk of entering the justice system and to review the effectiveness of current multi-agency work with Children in Care who are known to the YJS. A multi-agency 'task and finish' group is working on these issues. This activity will be one of the YJS Partnership's priorities for 2025/26.

## SEND

DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system are likely to have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In February 2025, 24.6% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 10.8% had the status of 'SEN Support'. This means that 35% of school-age children were identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, compared to about 20% in the local populations for their age group. It should be noted that the YJS was still collecting SEND information for some of these children, and there are others who are likely to have unidentified needs, meaning that the figure of 35% is probably an under-estimate of the level of SEND. These concerns fit with evidence collected by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, showing high levels of communication needs amongst children in our local youth justice system and indicating the need for YJS workers to adapt their work to the needs of each child.

## 6.2. Prevention

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' refers to work with children who have been identified as being at risk of going on to commit offences in future if they do not receive additional help. 'Diversion' describes the response to children who have committed an offence but who can be diverted from the justice system.

DCYJS does not directly undertake prevention work, focusing its activities on children who have committed a criminal offence. As described in section 5.5, however, the YJS is currently providing a two-year prevention project to identify the speech, language and communication needs of children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school.

Each of our local authorities provides early help services, working with other local organisations like schools, the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team and the voluntary sector.

In the Dorset Council area oversight of prevention activities sits with the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, supported by more detailed work at locality level. The DCYJS Manager is a member of the Strategic Alliance and team members participate in locality meetings to identify and respond to children at risk. 'The Harbour' is a Dorset Council multi-disciplinary service which works with children who need additional support to prevent negative outcomes such as being taken into care or entering the justice system. DCYJS and The Harbour have close links, including joint work with children who have entered the justice system.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area, preventative work occurs within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Early Help. Both services use local data to determine the needs in the area and to then provide preventative services to meet those needs. Governance for the Community Safety work sits with the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board. The Board's role includes scrutiny of the work undertaken. It can also agree to commission further services. The YJS Head of Service sits on the CSP Executive board. Targeted early help services are overseen by the Early Help Partnership Board (a multi-agency partnership which also incorporates Family Hubs). The Board agrees what services may be needed and which to provide/ commission. Services are provided based on the *Continuum of need*, with clear pathways in relation to how to access the support and services. Performance monitoring for the Early Help Partnership Board includes data on the rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

### 6.3. Diversion

As mentioned above, DCYJS and Dorset Police were inspected in February 2025 as part of a joint national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. The inspectors noted, in their informal inspection feedback, that *"There is a clear focus and shared commitment across the partnership both strategically and operationally to divert children from the criminal justice system wherever this is possible."*

Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly as an Out of Court Disposal Panel to decide the appropriate youth justice outcome for children who have committed criminal offences. The panel looks for opportunities to divert children from a formal justice outcome when possible. This fits with the local priority to reduce First Time Entrants, described above in section 4.2.

Diversion activities usually involve additional support for the child and, when appropriate, some form of restorative response in respect of the criminal offence. The Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team, Early Help Services, Children's Social Care Services and DCYJS each provide support at the diversion stage. The appropriate service for each child is decided on the basis of the child's needs, risks and existing relationships with professionals.

During 2024/25 a total of 146 children received diversion options for a criminal offence, instead of a formal justice outcome. 74 of them received interventions from the Youth Justice Service. 72 received interventions from other services, principally the police Safer Schools and Communities Team or the local authority Turnaround workers.

During 2022/23 the Ministry of Justice announced a new programme, 'Turnaround', aimed at 'children on the cusp of the youth justice system'. Locally we used this programme to divert children from the justice system and to reduce our rate of First Time Entrants. Instead of potentially receiving a Youth Caution, children are considered for an informal response which is recorded by the Police as 'Outcome 22' (No Further Police Action but with support provided to the child).

Turnaround funding was used to employ targeted youth workers in each local authority and a part-time Speech and Language Therapist. Each child on the Turnaround programme was allocated to one of the local authority Turnaround workers who worked with the child and their family to agree a support plan to help them avoid further offending. Since Christmas 2024, this work has transferred to the YJS. The Turnaround Speech and Language Therapist assesses the child's communication needs and provides advice for the child, their family and professionals about the child's individual needs and how best to respond to them.

The local Turnaround programme is overseen by the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board. The Ministry of Justice require Youth Justice Services to submit quarterly data returns. Data up to the end of December 2024 showed that a total of 101 children had completed a Turnaround intervention, with another 21 currently receiving support through the Turnaround programme.

Funding for the Turnaround programme has been confirmed for 2025/26, albeit at a reduced level. The Turnaround eligibility criteria will be amended for 2025/26, to include Children in Care and children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan. Up till March 2025 children in these categories had been excluded from the Turnaround programme; these children were still given access to diversion outcomes, working with the YJS, but this activity could not be included in the Turnaround data returns.

## 6.4. Education, Training and Employment

Children in the youth justice system are less likely to stay in mainstream schools, to achieve good educational outcomes and to access education, employment or training after Year 11.

In February 2025, 24.6% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 11% had the status of 'SEN Support'. There are also likely to be other children whose additional needs have not been identified or who would have been categorised as needing SEN Support if they were on roll at a mainstream school.

In recent years DCYJS has worked with local authority colleagues to improve the accuracy of the recording and reporting of school exclusions experienced by children on the caseload. In February 2025, 13 out of 65 school-age children on the caseload had been permanently excluded from school in the past 2.5 academic years, and another 26 children had experienced at least one fixed-term exclusion during that period. In total, 60% of school-age children had experienced a permanent or fixed-term exclusion during the past 2.5 academic years, with some of them experiencing multiple exclusions.

Improving education provision and outcomes for children in the youth justice system remains one of our strategic priorities.

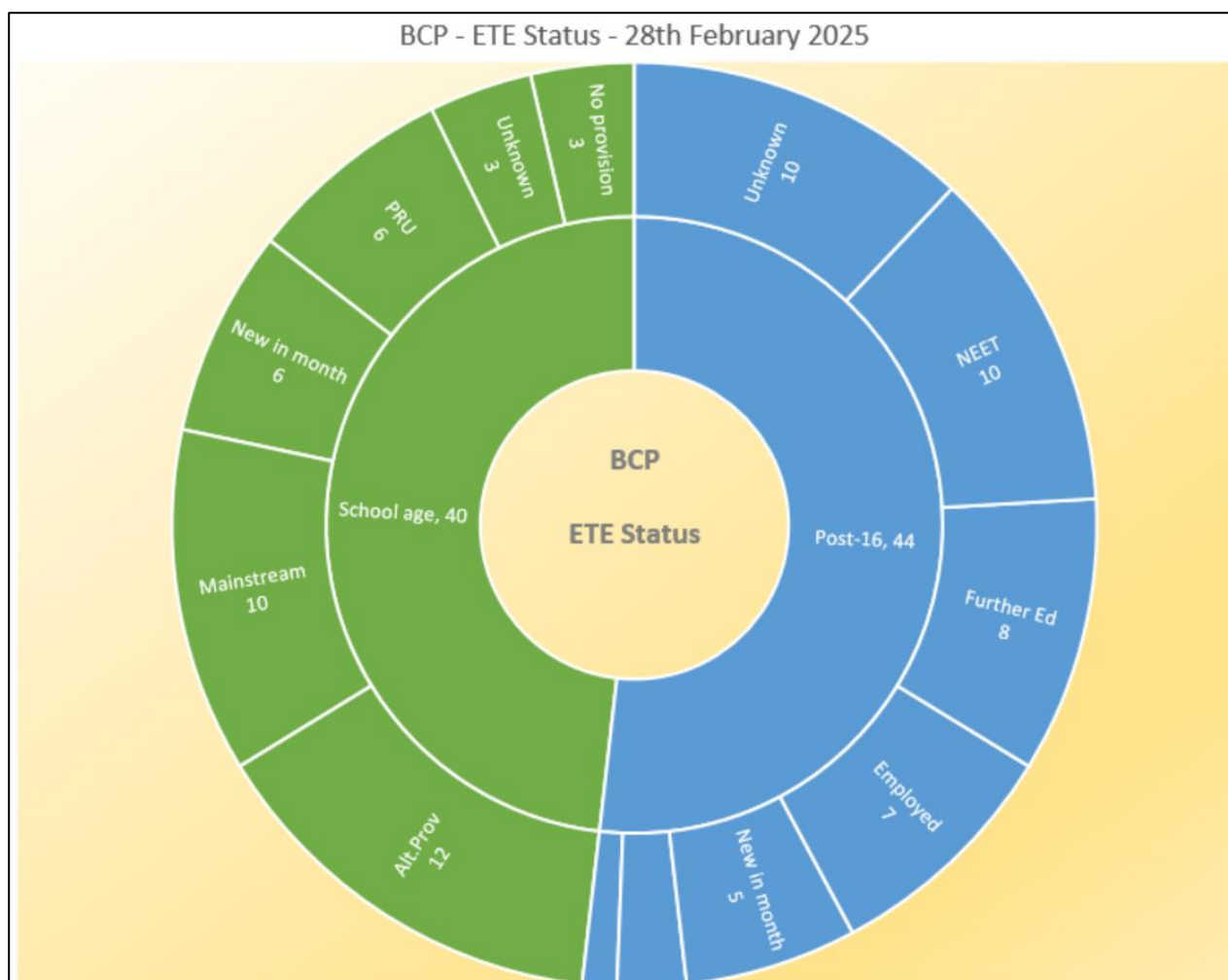
Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board. The headteacher of the BCP Council Virtual School and College is also a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board.

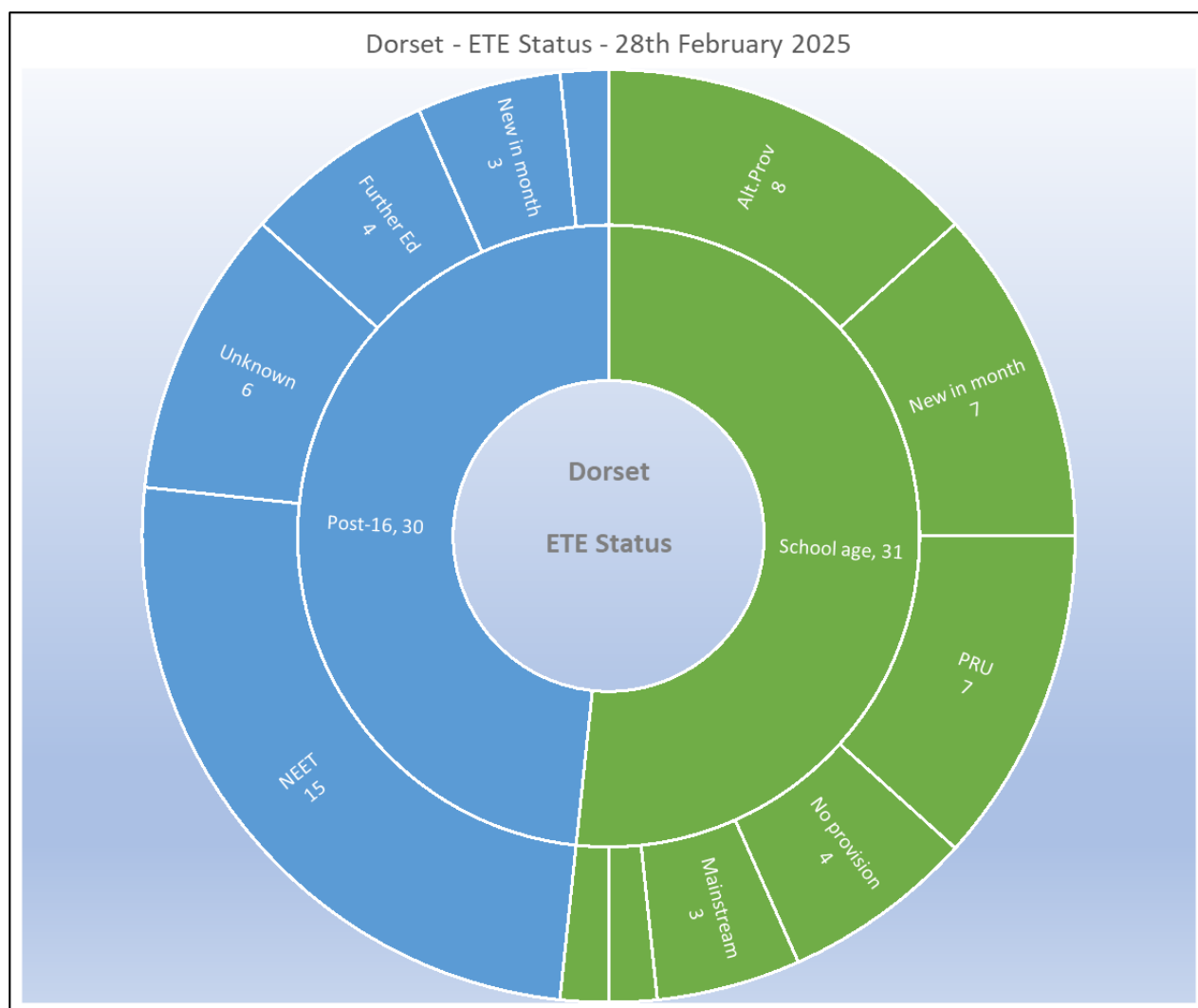
DCYJS employs two Education Officers, one focusing on school-age children and one supporting the post-16 age group. They provide advice to DCYJS case managers and work directly with young people to understand their needs and to support their attendance and engagement. They

also work with schools and local authorities to increase the suitability of provision, maintaining strong links with colleagues in the local authority Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services.

When a child is remanded or sentenced to custody, the appropriate YJS Education Officer is allocated to work on ensuring that the child's education needs are understood and met during and after the period in custody. It is a requirement of the SEND Code of Practice, for children in custody with an EHCP, that an up to date EHCP is shared with the custody education provider to enable the child's specific educational needs to be met. The YJS Education Officers liaise with custody education providers and local authority colleagues to ensure that all relevant information is shared.

The following charts show the education status of BCP and Dorset children on the YJS caseload at the end of February 2025:





These charts show the high numbers of school-age children who are not in mainstream school, and of those in the post-16 age group who are not in suitable employment or training. The service also monitors more detailed information, such as the number of hours offered and attended for each child, the social care and SEND status of these young people, to enable a focused response by our education specialists, working alongside relevant local authority colleagues.

Each local authority has a multi-agency group which monitors and acts on inclusion in education for the school-age children causing most concern in respect of their access to education. The DCYJS Education Officer attends these groups and represents the needs of children who are open to the YJS.

DCYJS occasionally works with children who are receiving Elective Home Education. The YJS Education Officer follows up each case where a child receives Elective Home Education to review the adequacy and safety of the arrangement and to offer more support if needed.

The numbers of young people who not in employment, education or training (NEET) or in employment without training reflects the limited opportunities for YJS young people, who can lack the necessary attainment levels to access the available provision. Actions taken in 2024/25 to address this gap include:

- The 'Discover You' project, run jointly with Upton Country Park, to increase young people's readiness for post-16 training and employment options.

- Funding provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for young people to train for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS card).
- Increased use of AQA awards to certificate learning from activities undertaken during young people's contact with DCYJS.

Securing the funding to continue the Discover You project will be a priority for 2025-26.

## 6.5. Health and Communication Needs of Children in the youth justice system

Evidence shows that children who have contact with the justice system are likely to have significant health needs, including difficulties with mental health, physical health and substance use. DCYJS has a strong health team, reflecting the commitment of NHS Dorset and Dorset HealthCare to meeting the health needs of children in the youth justice system. The DCYJS health team is comprised of 2.8 full-time equivalent CAMHS nurses, a 0.8 Clinical Psychologist and 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists.

The health professionals in the YJS work directly with children and provide consultation and advice to YJS colleagues and other professionals. The YJS nurses meet regularly with colleagues in the Child in Care health team and the Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service to ensure the integration of healthcare support for children in the youth justice system.

The specialist skills and knowledge of the YJS nurses and psychologist underpin the DCYJS commitment to trauma-informed practice through the Trauma Recovery Model. Children who will be under YJS supervision for more than 6 months are considered for the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) multi-agency formulation model, led by the YJS Psychologist.

A YJS nurse is allocated to all children who are remanded or sentenced to custody. The aim is to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of health care for the child as they move into custody, during the custodial period and as part of their post-release planning. The YJS nurses liaise with the healthcare provider in the custodial establishment. There have been some instances over the past year of delays in accessing prescribed medication for children in custody. The YJS nurses are tenacious and proactive in ensuring that the custody healthcare provider has all the necessary information to prescribe the correct medication for the child. The YJS health team will continue to strengthen links with custody healthcare providers in 2025/26.

Access to ADHD assessments continue to vary according to the child's home area. If a child also has mental health needs requiring CAMHS support, an ADHD assessment can be accessed via CAMHS throughout the county. Paediatricians can provide ADHD assessments for children who are not open to CAMHS. In the west of the county paediatricians provide ADHD assessments for all children, but paediatricians in the east of the county only provide ADHD assessments for children under the age of 16. Children who are 16 or 17 in the east of the county, and not open to CAMHS, are therefore unable to access an ADHD assessment. YJS Nurses and managers have continued to flag this issue with NHS managers and commissioners. Although this service gap remains, the NHS Dorset representative on the YJS Partnership Board has given assurance that plans are being developed to resolve this issue.

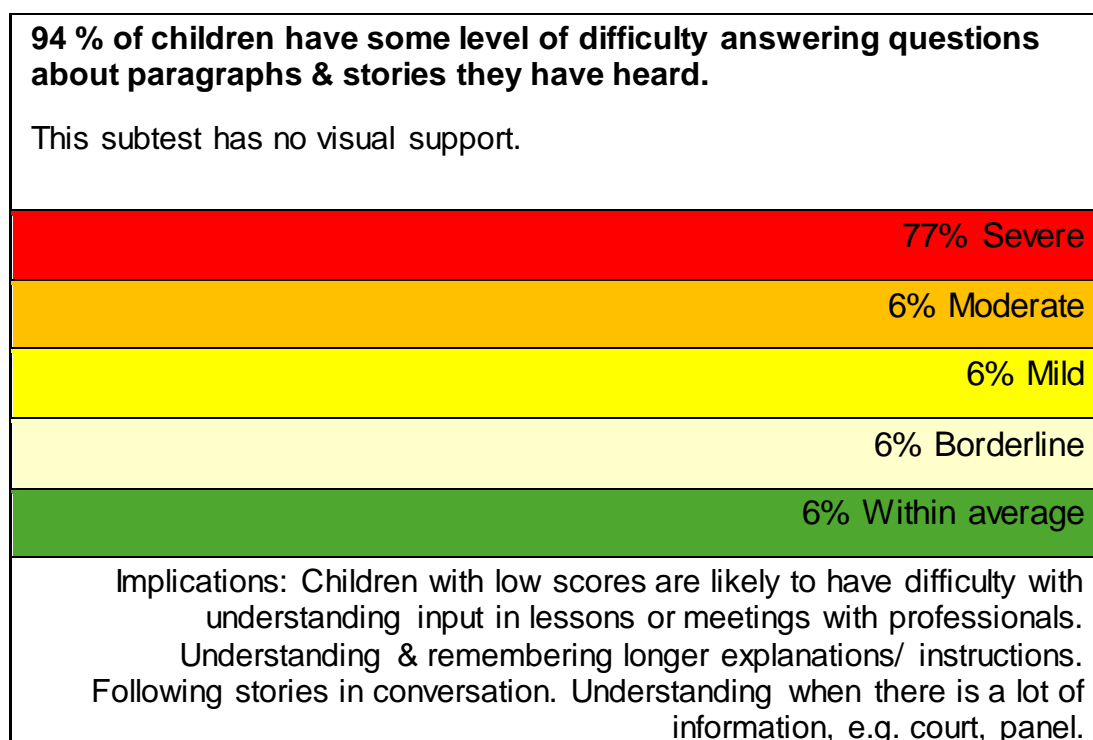
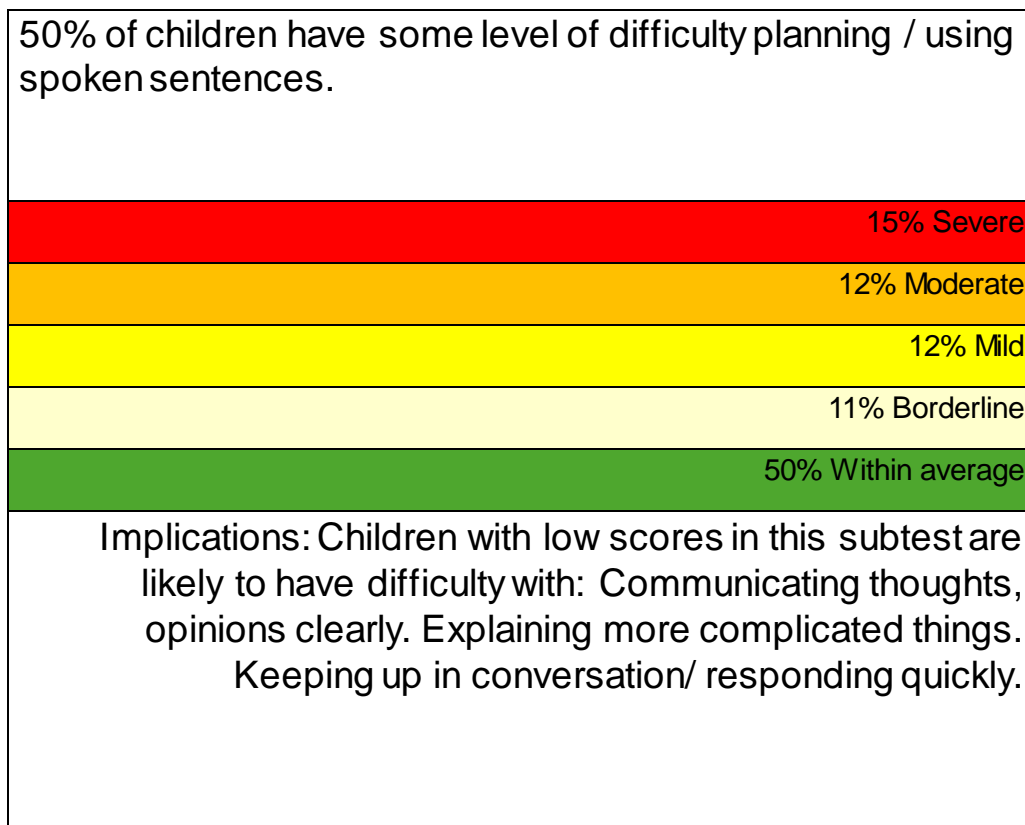
Speech and Language Therapists have been based in the YJS since 2018. Data has been reported in previous Youth Justice Plans to show that over 80% of children in contact with the justice system locally have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

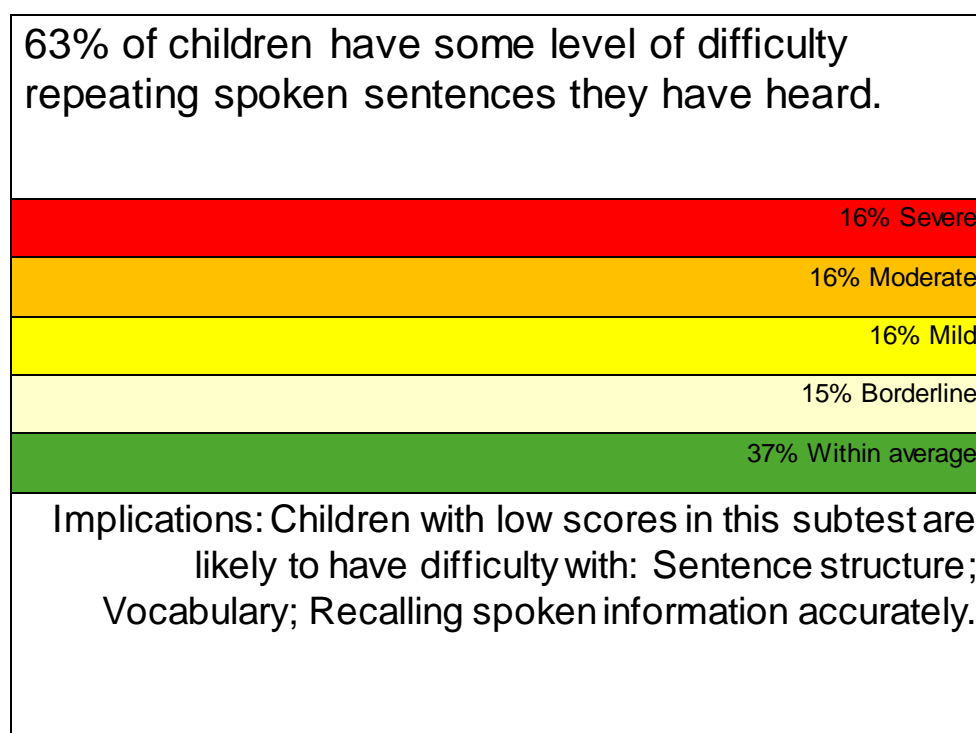
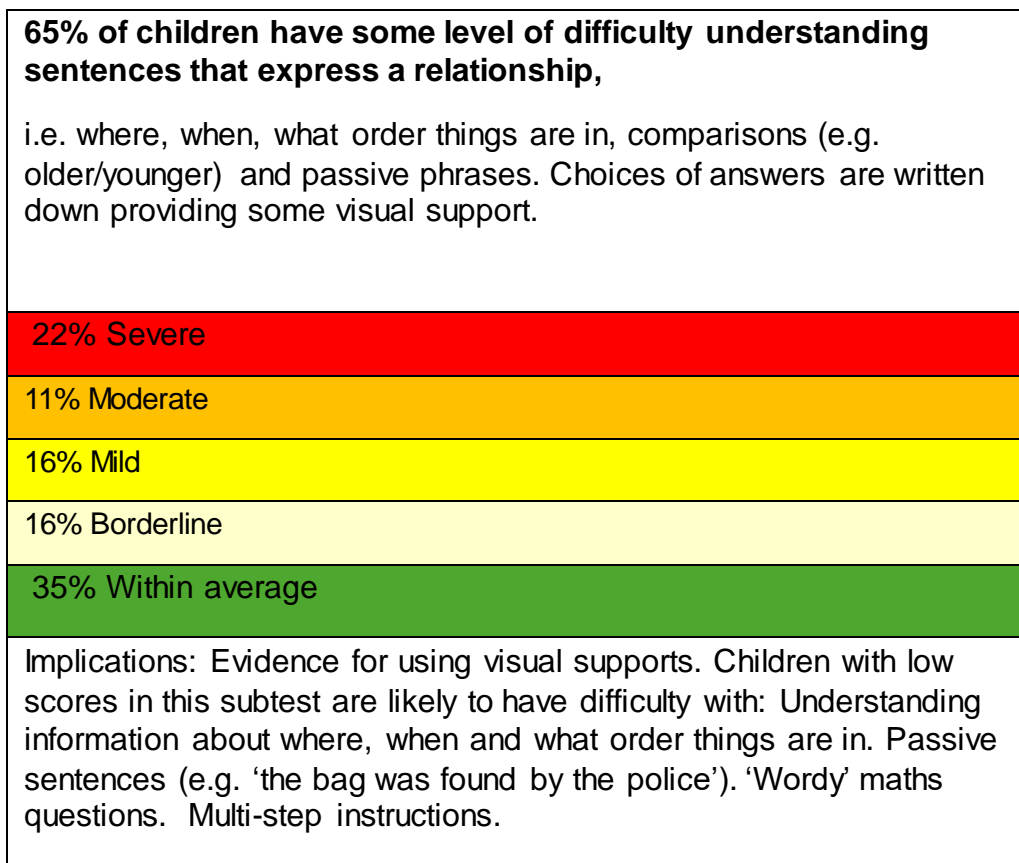
The YJS Speech and Language Therapists use the formal language assessment 'Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – v5' (CELF) as part of their assessments, alongside assessment of Language for Behaviour and Emotions. Each assessment involves several sub-tests, to investigate different aspects of communication.



During 2024/25, the YJS Speech and Language team collated and analysed the results of all assessments of children known to the YJS in recent years.

A total of 202 assessments had been completed by February 2025, providing a robust sample size. The following charts show the aggregated results for each sub-test in the CELF assessment:





The data shows that children who are open to the YJS have particular difficulties in understanding spoken language. 94% did not reach the expected level in the 'Understanding Spoken Paragraphs' sub-test (it is worth noting that this test is carried out in a safe environment by a skilled practitioner. A child's communication abilities will deteriorate in more stressful situations).



The receptive language skills of children in the justice system tend not to be as strong as their expressive language skills. Adults may not realise that the child does not understand or cannot retain what the adult is talking about. These children may have the ability to mask their language difficulties and to use behaviour to prevent adults from finding things hard partially explains why it is so rare for a child's communication needs to have been identified before they enter the youth justice system. Other systemic factors such as services finding it difficult to engage families, disrupted education and reduction in early identification strategies will also have contributed to the difficulties in children having their SLCN identified in a timely manner.

There are important implications from this data analysis for the YJS and for other professionals about how they communicate and interact with children in the justice system. Workers in the YJS are shifting their practice to make greater use of visuals and activities, reducing the use of language-based interventions. It will be a YJS priority in 2025/26 to extend and consolidate these changes, and to support other services in the justice system to consider adjusting their communication styles.

## 6.6. Restorative Justice and Victims

Alongside the 'Child First' approach, Restorative Justice is a core principle underpinning the work of DCYJS. In January 2024 all YJS team members participated in training in 'Working Restoratively'. The course included a focus on how restorative work fits with and supports a trauma-informed, child first approach.

Whenever DCYJS work with a child whose offence harmed a victim, the DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact the victim to find out about the impact of the offence and to explain the opportunities for Restorative Justice activities. These contacts help us to meet our obligations under the Victims Code.

Delays in the youth justice system, which are more common in cases that go to court, make it harder to engage victims in activity to repair the harm they have experienced. Contacting the victim many months after the offence requires tact and sensitivity, emphasising the victim's choice in whether or how much they engage with our service.

The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners previously received occasional negative feedback from victims about the decision-making process and outcomes for children who receive Out of Court Disposals (OOCs). Managers from DCYJS and Dorset Police met in March 2024 to review these concerns and to amend the processes for keeping victims informed and considering their views in the decision-making process.

HMI Probation and HMI Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services reviewed victim engagement in February 2025 as part of their inspection of local work with children who received OOCs. The inspectors responded positively to our new arrangements, commenting in their informal feedback that *"The capturing of the victims' wishes by police officers is a strength and inspectors noted the quality of this practice. This also ensures that opportunities for restorative justice can be considered at the earliest stage supporting the overall approach of the YJS in terms of its commitment to restorative justice. The victim agreed to contact from the YJS in almost every case"*.

During the past year the YJS Restorative Justice Practitioners have facilitated successful Restorative Justice Conferences, bringing together the child with the person harmed by the child's offence. The following example illustrates the positive impact that participants can experience from Restorative Justice.

*A Restorative Justice Conference was held at a local library. Both parties wanted to explain their actions. The child felt the school had not understood the reason he had been carrying a knife (for self-harm). The headteacher wanted the child to understand the reasons why he had received a permanent exclusion. He also wanted to pass on good wishes from a number of staff members who remembered the child fondly and wanted to know that he was settled and had been able to 'move on'.*

*At the end of the Restorative Justice Conference, the team's RJ Practitioner spoke with the headteacher to check if the process was what he had expected and if it had achieved what he had wanted. The headteacher said that 'I will take back to the school and the Trust that if the opportunity arises to do an RJ conference it should be grabbed at with both hands. It was everything I hoped for. I feel we should not have to do this through the Youth Justice Service but should set up a way of doing this ourselves for all pupils who have been excluded'.*

Another aspect of the team's Restorative Justice work is undertaking 'repairing the harm' activities with children, to help them make amends for their offence. Examples include making wooden planters or bird boxes to be sold for charities chosen by the victim. Other children work on community projects supported by the service or on conservation activities.

During 2024/25 the YJS reparation team successfully held stalls, to sell items made by children, at venues including County Hall in Dorchester, a BCP Council Children's Services event and Moordown Community Centre. The stalls help us both to raise money for charities chosen by victims and to raise the profile of the good work being completed by children working with the YJS.



Stall at County Hall in Dorchester

Over the past two years, the service has strengthened joint work between case managers, restorative justice workers and our reparation supervisor, to tailor each activity to the needs of the child and the wishes of the victim. The aim is to increase the child's sense of doing something constructive and meaningful to repair the harm caused.

Not all offences have a direct victim. During 2024/25 the YJS worked to develop restorative responses for offences like weapon possession and drugs possession.

Recent Youth Justice Plans have reported on progress in developing a restorative response for children who commit offences against police officers and other emergency workers. This approach was extended in 2024/25 to include a reparation project at Bournemouth Hospital, alongside ongoing work with the YJS Police Officers who can meet with young people to help them understand the human impact of offences against emergency workers.

Priorities for 2025/26 will include strengthening links with local communities for restorative and reparative activities, establishing reparative activities at Dorset County Hospital and preparing for the new Youth Justice inspection standards for work with victims.

## 6.7. Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm

Tackling extra-familial harm and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in both our local authority areas (as described in section 2 of this Plan).

During 2023 the YJS completed a case audit to review its work with children who commit offences with weapons. The focus on weapon offences reflected evidence of an increase in these offences in both local authority areas. The audit included the views of children, parents and YJS practitioners and led to changes in our risk planning and interventions for children who committed weapon offences. Work in response to the findings from that audit continued in 2024/25.

DCYJS uses the 'Trauma Recovery Model' in its work. One of the benefits of this approach is to understand and respond to the issues which may underlie a child's exploitation or their use of violent behaviour. As described in section 6.5, the YJS Psychologist leads multi-agency formulations under the 'Enhanced Case Management' approach for children showing the highest levels of trauma and concerns for the safety of them and others.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced a Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. The specified authorities in Dorset and BCP agreed to use our two Community Safety Partnerships to lead this work. DCYJS contributed to the Serious Violence Needs Assessment in each local authority, and to the subsequent action planning. In 2024 the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner appointed a 'Head of Violence Reduction and Prevention'. The post holder has joined the YJS Partnership Board and works actively with YJS managers and practitioners to ensure that the YJS is integrated into local initiatives to reduce and prevent violence.

One of the obstacles to effective work with children who have committed serious violence offences is the length of time that can elapse between the offence and the child appearing in court. This is a priority area for the DCYJS Partnership Board, with the aim of reducing delays and of mitigating their impact by offering voluntary YJS contact with young people while their alleged offences are under investigation. The YJS Head of Service has also raised this issue with the Dorset Criminal Justice Board, to add performance monitoring for the time between the offence and the charging decision to the Board's performance information.

The YJS Head of Service is also working with the local MAPPA Responsible Authorities to review MAPPA involvement and risk management while a MAPPA-eligible child or adult is under investigation or going through an extended court process.

Extra-familial harm occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing instances of exploitation and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals for children in both local authorities. DCYJS plays an active role in the partnership arrangements in both local authority areas to address child exploitation, participating in strategic and tactical groups as well as other multi-agency initiatives such as the 'Missing, Exploited, Trafficked' (MET) Panel in BCP Council and the Dorset Council Extra-Familial Harm (EFH) panels and the EFH Champions group.

Although it is rare for children to become radicalised or involved in violent extremism, the harms from such behaviours are significant for individuals and for the community. The YJS Head of

Service is a standing member of the 'Channel Panel' in each local authority. The YJS also engages actively as a member of the local Prevent Partnership.

## 6.8. Policing and Detention of children in police custody

DCYJS and Dorset Police work together closely on issues affecting children in the justice system. As well as the seconded police officers in the YJS, there is active police representation on the DCYJS Partnership Board. At an operational level there is daily contact between YJS Team Managers and the Sergeant in the police Youth Justice team.

In 2023 Dorset Police published its 'Child Centred Policing Strategy 2023-25' which "sets out Dorset Police's commitment to provide children and young people with a first-class policing response that is child-centred and part of an integrated and effective partnership approach. This means we will put the voices and needs of children and young people at the heart of the services we deliver to make them safer".

A 'Voice of the Child Scrutiny Panel' oversees the operational implementation of the strategy. The YJS Head of Service is a member of this panel, along with police leads from across the force.

Dorset Police is committed to reducing the numbers of children who are detained in police custody, as part of its Child-Centred Policing Strategy. A multi-agency 'Child Custody Detentions' group, led by the DCYJS Head of Service, monitors and addresses the use of police custody for children. The aim of the group is to reduce the number of children being arrested and, when an arrest is appropriate, to reduce the time the child stays in custody.

Data on child arrests is also reported to the YJS Partnership Board. The following table shows the child arrests in Bournemouth, Weymouth and Poole during 2024/25.

2024/25	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Auth Detention</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Det Not Auth</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>10-13 Y/O</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Overnight</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Strip searches / Clothing Changes</b>	<b>3/0</b>	<b>1 / 0</b>	<b>3 / 1</b>	<b>4 / 5</b>	<b>4 / 3</b>	<b>2/3</b>	<b>2 / 0</b>	<b>3 / 3</b>	<b>1 / 2</b>	<b>0 / 1</b>	<b>5 / 0</b>	<b>2 / 1</b>
<b>Remand/warrant</b>	<b>0/4</b>	<b>0 / 0</b>	<b>0 / 0</b>	<b>0 / 0</b>	<b>2 / 2</b>	<b>1/4</b>	<b>0 / 1</b>	<b>0 / 2</b>	<b>0 / 0</b>	<b>0 / 0</b>	<b>5 / 0</b>	<b>0 / 1</b>
<b>C114 requested</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

These figures show the success of Dorset Police's active work to reduce the numbers of children being arrested locally. Custody managers have strengthened the challenge on whether the detention is justified, evidenced by the monthly figures showing the number of 'Detentions not Authorised'. This means a child has been brought to the custody suite but the custody sergeant has refused to authorise the detention.

The number of child arrests in Dorset has declined in the past 4 years, from a total of 501 arrests in 2021/22 to a total of 306 arrests in the past 12 months.

Although there has been less progress in reducing the duration of child detentions, the overall reduction in arrest numbers means that arrests tend to reflect more complex cases, potentially requiring longer detention periods.

Dorset Police have changed their approach to custody arrivals during the evening to reduce the numbers that are detained overnight. The following table shows both the reduction in child

arrests and the significant reduction in the numbers being detained overnight (a 47% reduction over the past 4 years):

Year	Average number of child arrests per month	Total annual overnight detentions
2021/22	42	242
2022/23	36	182
2023/24	32	150
2024/25	26	128

The Child Custody Detentions group previously identified a number of factors which can prolong a child's detention in police custody, including the availability of Appropriate Adults (AAs) and the time of day when the child arrives in the custody suite. The timeliness of Appropriate Adult attendance has improved since 2021, when the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS). The average response time for an AA from TAAS for a child in a Dorset custody suite was 57 minutes in the period July 2024-December 2024. This is a deterioration from past performance by TAAS, reflecting intermittent shortages of available Appropriate Adults. TAAS have committed to recruiting additional AAs to reduce the average arrival times.

When the police remand a child, ie charge them with an offence and refuse to grant the child bail, there is a legal requirement (under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) to transfer the child to local authority accommodation until their appearance at the next available court. A child arrested on a warrant or for breaching bail must remain in police custody. In recent years, BCP Council and Dorset Council operated a joint arrangement whereby a foster carer was on standby each night to accommodate a child in this situation. Usage of this foster placement was very low, partly reflecting the very few remands of children in police custody. The standby foster carer arrangement was ended in April 2024, with each local authority making alternative arrangements.

The Child Custody Detentions group reviews every instance of a child being remanded, to check that the procedures and decision-making were correctly applied. The table on the previous page shows that there were only 8 instances of a child being remanded in 2024/25.

## 6.9. Transitions to Probation

The seconded Probation Officer post in DCYJS has been vacant since September 2024. The Probation Officer plays an important role in supporting transitions for young people who are moving from the YJS to Probation. In the period up to September 2024 we made progress to improve the transition arrangements, including the following changes:

- New process for Probation to request YJS information for young adults committing new offences who were previously known to YJS. 125 requests for information were made under this process during 2023.
- Extending the transition process for young people transferring from YJS to Probation, with additional joint meetings.
- Training session delivered by the YJS Speech and Language Therapist to Probation staff to help them respond to the communication needs of young adults.
- YJS attendance at MAPPA Level 2 or 3 meetings for new cases aged 18-21 when the YJS previously supervised the young person.

While the Probation Officer post has been vacant, there has been regular dialogue between the lead managers in the YJS and Probation for transition arrangements. Recruitment to the vacant post was delayed by staffing problems in the Probation Service, but the recruitment process commenced in March 2025.



The planned activity for 2024/25, to develop our methods for gathering feedback from young people about their experience of the transition process, has been delayed until the new Probation Officer has joined the YJS. We will also seek the views of practitioners in the YJS and Probation, to identify further opportunities for improvement.

## 6.10. Remands

There were 7 episodes of children being remanded in custody during 2024/25, the same number as the previous year.

Children who are remanded in custody gain 'child in care' status if they are not already a child in care. 3 of the 7 children were already a child in care before being remanded into custody.

One of the children was remanded in custody for one night, before being bailed the next day.

Another child was remanded into custody for 7 weeks, before making a successful bail application, supported by the YJS. This child was later convicted at trial and sentenced to custody.

Three children were remanded in custody for 5 weeks as co-defendants for the same offences before the CPS discontinued the charges against them due to insufficient evidence. The YJS is making enquiries about whether there is any review process in the CPS or police when a child is remanded into custody without sufficient evidence to go to trial.

The remaining two children are both care experienced young people who were remanded into custody shortly before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and remained on remand as young adults at the end of March 2025.

There were also 3 instances of children being remanded into the care of the local authority during 2024/25. Two of these children were already a child in care; the other child remained living at home with family during the remand period.

Each remand in custody is reviewed in team meetings to consider if alternative options could have been taken. In most cases the remand decision reflects the seriousness of the alleged offence, and may also reflect patterns of offending and previous non-compliance with bail conditions.

In November 2023, HMI Probation published a thematic inspection report on work with children subject to remand in youth detention. One of the recommendations from this report was for the YJS to help colleagues in Children's Social Care to understand the practice and procedure requirements for children who are remanded in custody. A YJS Practice Manager produced written guidance in 2024 about remand procedures to help social workers and social work managers when they work with children on remand.

## 6.11. Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Six local children received custodial sentences during 2024/25 (the same number as the previous year). Information about custodial sentences and analysis of the young people is included in section 4.2 of this document. Information about the support for the health needs and education needs of children in custody is included in sections 6.4 and 6.5.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. With low numbers going into custody, and some not being released before becoming adults, the approach to resettlement for each child is planned individually.

Finding suitable accommodation for children leaving custody can be challenging. DCYJS contributes to local authority care planning processes, promoting the early identification of the child's release address. The DCYJS Manager reports to the DCYJS Partnership Board on the timeliness of accommodation being confirmed for children being released from custodial sentences. This measure is also now included in the new youth justice Key Performance Indicators. The release address for children leaving custody is sometimes not confirmed until the last few days before release. As well as causing the child a lot of anxiety and distress, this makes it difficult to plan the child's resettlement, affecting access to education, health care and constructive activities.

'Release on Temporary Licence' (ROTL) is an option for children nearing the end of their time in custody. Day releases for specific purposes are agreed, for children with good behaviour records in custody, to help prepare them for release. DCYJS worked with a secure establishment in 2024 to confirm ROTL plans for a child who was approaching his release date. DCYJS managers attended briefings in March 2025 about new ROTL arrangements which are being piloted in 5 child custodial establishments.

## 6.12. Working with Families

DCYJS Parenting staff provide support to the parents and carers of children on the YJS caseload. Support can be provided under a Parenting Order but in practice it is always achievable on a voluntary basis. Most contact is provided on a one to one basis, focusing on communications, relationships, setting boundaries and applying consequences. The workers remain alert to risk and safeguarding issues, attending multi-agency meetings and supporting parents in their interactions with other services.

When appropriate, separate parenting workers can be allocated to a child's father and mother, in order to enable engagement with both parents.

Plans for 2025/26 include development of the YJS Parent Forums and building links with other services and provisions in the local authorities, such as the Family Hubs.

## 6.13. DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2025/26

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2025/26. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

<b>DCYJS Partnership Priority</b>	<b>Area for Development</b>	<b>Partners and Staff Providing Support</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion	Continue to provide and develop the Re-Engage project to identify and support the communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion	Dorset HealthCare BCP Council and Dorset Council education services Schools and PRUs DCYJS SALTs and Head of Service	Reduction in school exclusions and future offending
Diverting children from the formal justice	Work with Dorset Police to develop	Dorset Police DCYJS HoS and Team	Avoid first-time entrants for motoring

system	alternative non-court options for motoring offences	Managers	offences such as speeding
Diverting children from the formal justice system	Take action in response to the 'areas for improvement' identified in the thematic inspection of work in Dorset with children on OOCs	DCYJS practitioners and managers Dorset Police BCP Council Dorset Council Dorset HealthCare Trust	Improved practice to strengthen confidence in diversion options
Reducing Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm	Regular dialogue and scrutiny meetings between Police CPS and YJS to track and progress delayed investigations	Dorset Police CPS DCYJS managers	Improved timeliness for offences reaching court.
Reducing Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm	YJS Nurses to provide one-to-one First Aid sessions to children for responses to weapon injuries	YJS health team Dorset HealthCare Trust	Children are better able to respond in an emergency, and they have increased awareness of the potential harm from weapons.
Reducing over-representation	Investigate and agree actions in response to black or mixed heritage children being over-represented amongst children on court orders	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Reduce the proportions of black or mixed heritage children amongst children on court orders
Reducing over-representation	Multi-agency task and finish group to agree and implement actions to reduce the over-representation of children in care in the justice system and to report on progress to the YJS Board	DCYJS managers and practitioners BCP Council Child in Care services Dorset Council Child in Care services Dorset HealthCare and NHS Dorset Child in Care health leads Dorset Police	Earlier identification to prevent children in care entering the justice system. Improved multi-agency support for children in care who are in the justice system.
Improving education outcomes	Secure funding to continue the Discover You programme	DCYJS funding partners DCYJS HoS DCYJS Education Officers	Improving young people's readiness for post-16 ETE options
Improving health outcomes – mental health	Improve YJS data recording and analysis of children's mental health needs and access to suitable support	DCYJS Dorset HealthCare	Assurance that children with mental health needs are receiving suitable support
Improving health outcomes – substance use	Review and develop joint working between YJS and young people's substance use treatment services	DCYJS With You Reach Public Health commissioners	Assurance that children with substance use needs are receiving suitable support



DCYJS practice improvement	Develop the team's use of collaborative planning, including exit planning, with children and families	DCYJS managers and practitioners	Working in partnership with children and families will strengthen their capacity to sustain positive changes without professional support
DCYJS practice improvement	Increase feedback from young people and practitioners about the transition from YJS to Probation	Probation DCYJS managers and practitioners	Identify and apply improvements to the transition process
DCYJS practice improvement	Develop the use of activities and visual resources for work with children in response to the evidence about difficulty processing and retaining spoken language	DCYJS practitioners and managers, supported by the DCYJS SALTs	Workers are better able to engage children in YJS interventions
DCYJS practice improvement	Build team members' knowledge and confidence to work with children on the impact of their online experiences and identity	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Better understanding of and support for children's online safety and reduced harm arising from online activity.
Child voice	Establish new methods to hear from children and engage them in our service development	DCYJS managers and DCYJS Activity Coordinator	Improved experiences and outcomes for children working with the YJS
Restorative Justice	Review current RJ and victim work in context of the new inspection criteria, including increased Board oversight of this activity	DCYJS Head of Service and the RJ manager	Meeting the new inspection standards for victim work will help to ensure the quality of our work with victims
Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence	Increase the number of community projects, stalls and donations to charities	DCYJS RJ manager and RJ team	Enhanced victim satisfaction and increased public confidence
Custody and remand	Strengthen joint working with custody health and education providers, and community health and education services	Dorset Council and BCP Council Children's Social Care and Virtual School Dorset HealthCare DCYJS managers and practitioners	Improved health and education support and outcomes for children in custody and on release

## 7. Sign off, submission and approval

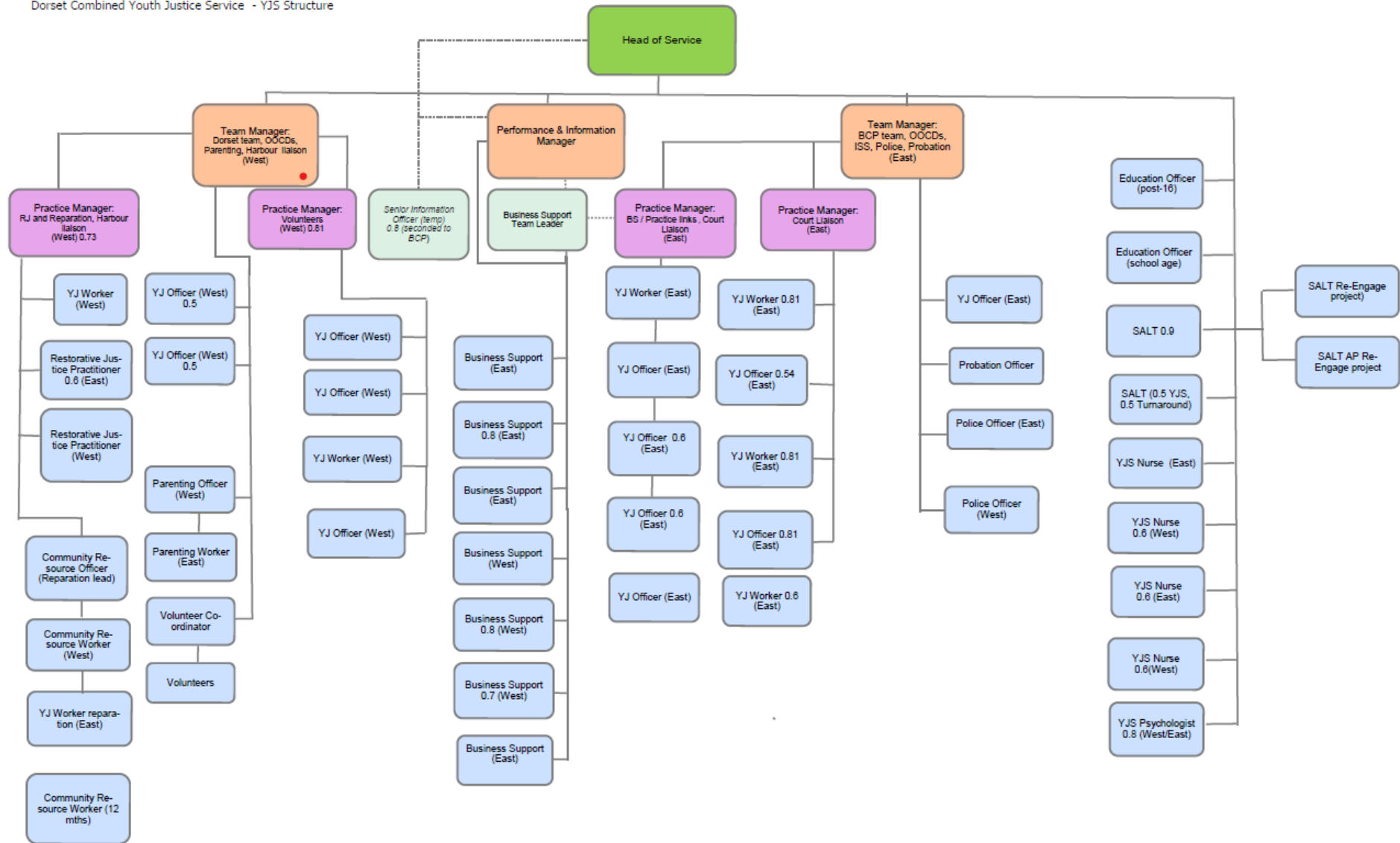
This Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YJS Partnership Board in April 2023.

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 our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council on 10/07/2025 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on 22/07/2025.

Chair of YJS Board - name	Paul Dempsey
Signature	
Date	

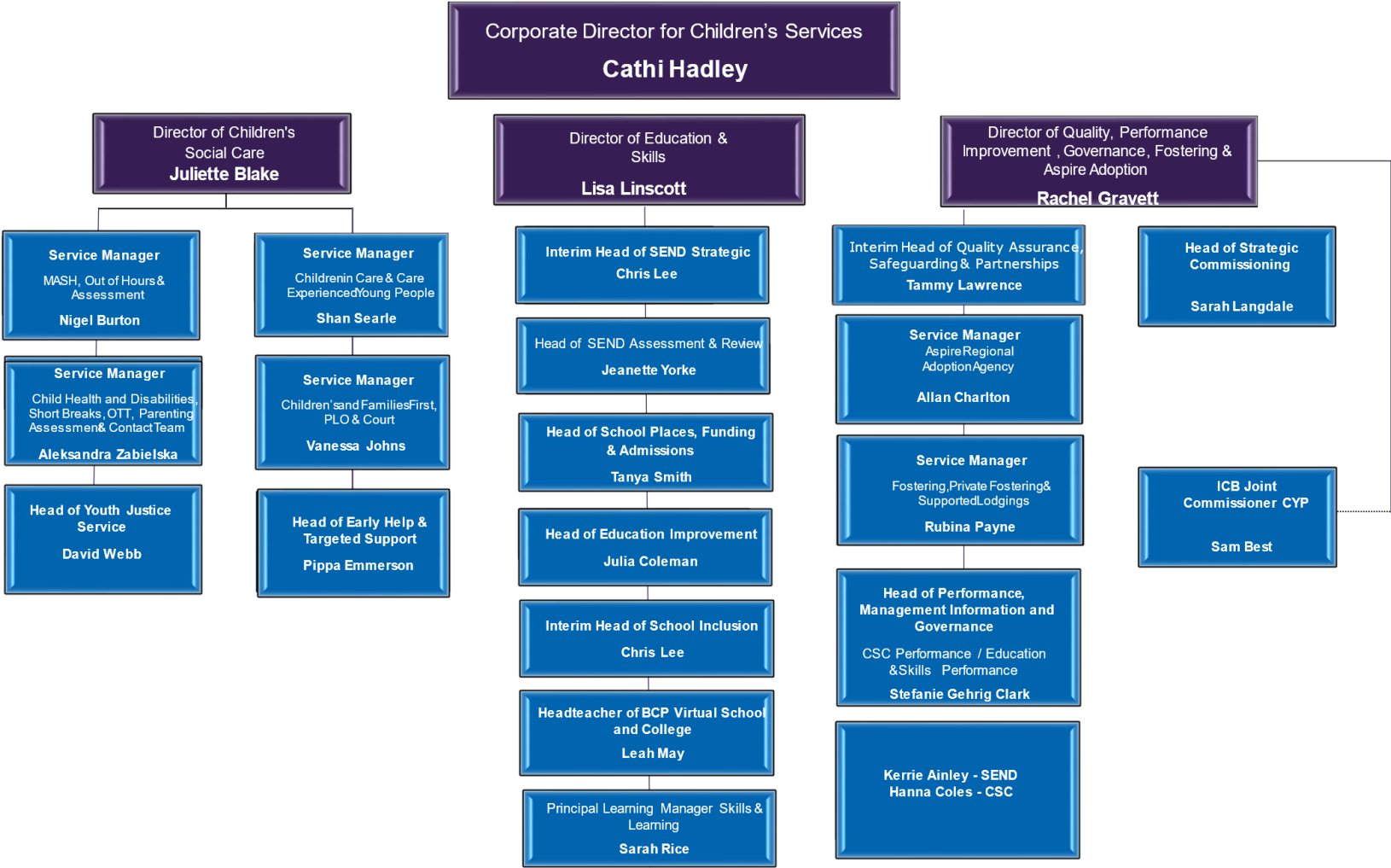
## 8. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.

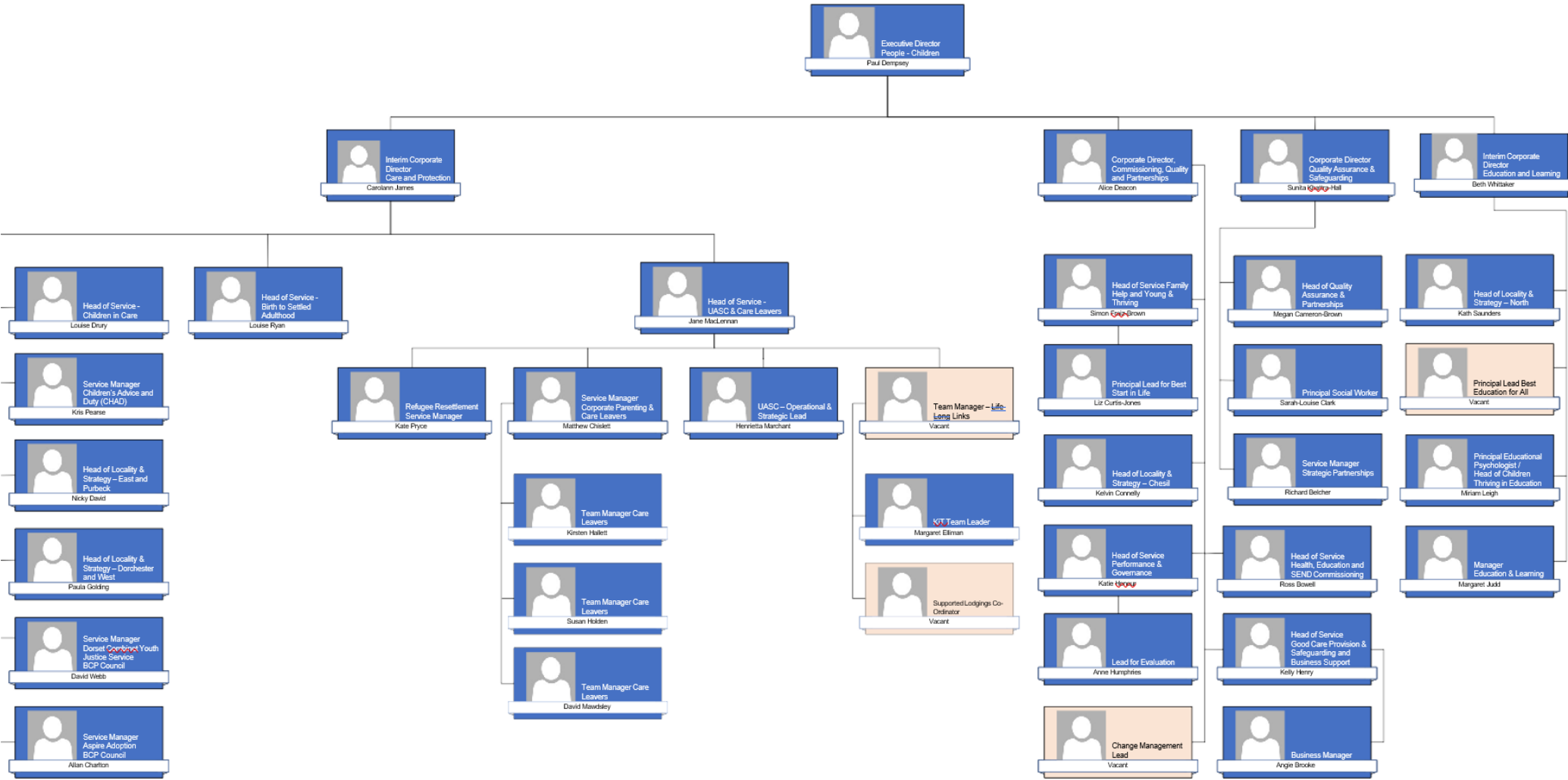


Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service  
January 2025

BCP Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



Dorset Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



### DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

The following table shows the gender, ethnicity and disability status of DCYJS staff members and volunteers:

#### **YJS Staff at 3 March 2025**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
White British	9	42
White Irish	1	0
White Other	0	1
Mixed	0	1
Prefer not to say	0	2
	10	46

#### **YJS Volunteers at 3 March 2025**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
White British	7	12
White Other	1	1
	8	13

Four staff members in DCYJS are recorded as having a disability.

## 9. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2024/25

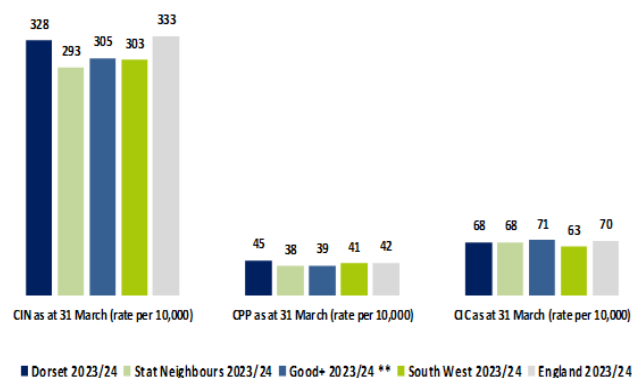
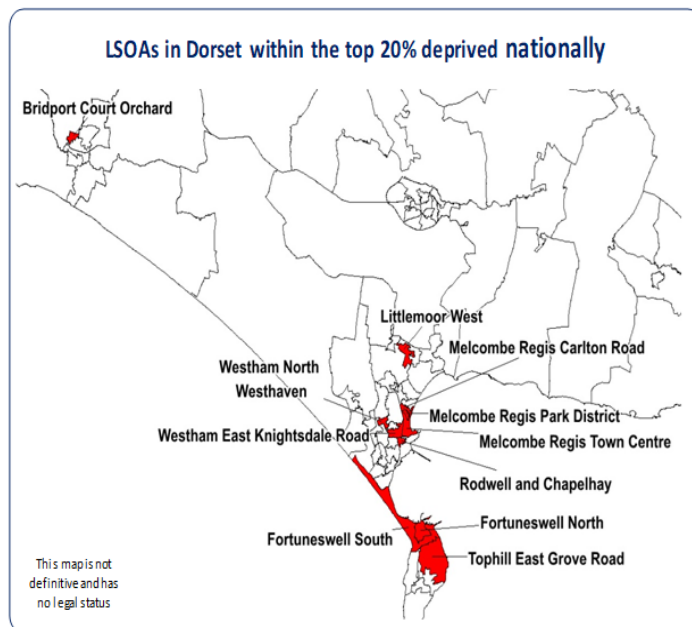
<b>Partner Agency</b>	<b>24/25 Revenue (excluding recharges)</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,622	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£81,927	2.0 Police Officers
The Probation Service (Dorset)	£5,000	1.0 Probation Officer
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists
Youth Justice Grant	£767,922	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,042,122</b>	

## Appendix 3 – Local Authority Demographic Information



Population	Age 10-17
Number of Children <sup>1</sup>	33,694
Male <sup>1</sup>	51%
Female <sup>1</sup>	49%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals <sup>2</sup>	22.0%
Pupils with SEN Support <sup>2</sup>	14.6%
Pupils with an EHC Plan <sup>2</sup>	6.7%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups <sup>3</sup>	5.6%
25.7% children living in Poverty after housing costs <sup>4</sup>	
Safeguarding	Age 10-17
Number of Children in Need <sup>5</sup>	562
Male <sup>5</sup>	50.5%
Female <sup>5</sup>	48.9%
Indeterminate <sup>5</sup>	0.4%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan <sup>7</sup>	100
Number of Children in Care <sup>6</sup>	315
Male <sup>6</sup>	59.7%
Female <sup>6</sup>	40.3%
Indeterminate <sup>5</sup>	0%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation <sup>7</sup>	
Significant	12
Moderate	30
Emerging	20

1. Dorset mid-year 2023 population estimates (published July 2024).
2. October 2024 School Census (includes all pupils at a Dorset School aged 10-17: ages as at 31 August 2024).
3. January 2024 School Census (all non-white pupils at a Dorset School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained').
4. Based on the DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2024).
5. From MOSAIC, as at 31 December 2024. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
6. From MOSAIC, as at 31 December 2024. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
7. From MOSAIC as at 31 December 2024.



\*\* Good+ Local Authorities are: Cornwall, East Sussex, Norfolk, Shropshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Worcestershire

# Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole



Population<sup>1</sup>: Age 10-17

Number of Children<sup>1</sup> 35,208  
Male<sup>1</sup> 51%  
Female<sup>1</sup> 49%

Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals<sup>2</sup> 20.5%  
Pupils with SEN Support<sup>3</sup> 14.3%  
Pupils with an EHC Plan<sup>4</sup> 5.2%

Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups<sup>5</sup> 15.9%

25% children living in poverty after housing costs<sup>4</sup>

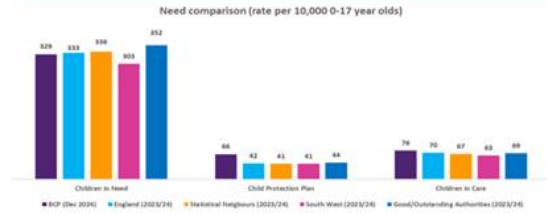
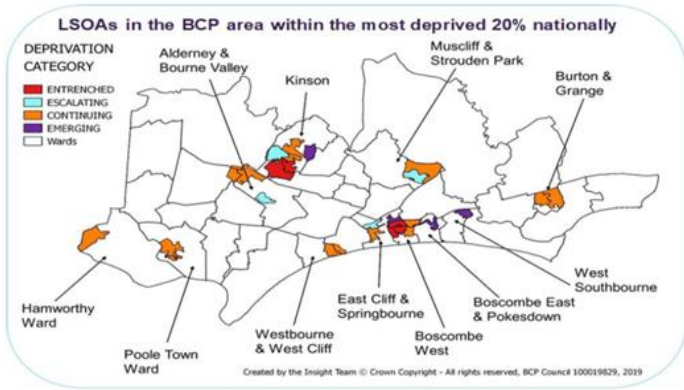
Safeguarding Age 10-17

Number of Children in Need<sup>5</sup> 531  
Male<sup>5</sup> 58.0%  
Female<sup>5</sup> 42.0%

Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan<sup>7</sup> 203

Number of Children in Care<sup>6</sup> 376  
Male<sup>6</sup> 58.7%  
Female<sup>6</sup> 41.0%  
Indeterminate<sup>6</sup> 0.3%

Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation<sup>8</sup>  
Suffering<sup>8</sup> 18  
Risk of harm<sup>8</sup> 41  
Potential concerns<sup>8</sup> 35



1. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole population estimates (published July 2024)
2. October 2024 School Census (includes all pupils at a BCP School aged 10-17. Ages as at 31st August 2024)
3. January 2024 School Census (all non-white pupils at a BCP School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')
4. Local Child Poverty Statistics - <https://findchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024> (June 2024)
5. From MOSAC, as at 3 February 2023, including CP and CIP. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unknown
6. From MOSAC, as at 3 February 2023. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unknown
7. From MOSAC, as at 3 February 2023.
8. From MOSAC, as at 31 December 2024.

\*\* Good+ Local Authorities are: Cornwall, East Sussex, Norfolk, Shropshire, Somerset, Suffolk, Wiltshire and Worcestershire



## Common youth justice terms – national glossary

<b>ACE</b>	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
<b>AIM 2 and 3</b>	Assessment, Intervention and Moving on; an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
<b>ASB</b>	Anti-social behaviour
<b>AssetPlus</b>	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and adolescent mental health services
<b>CCE</b>	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
<b>Children</b>	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
<b>Child First</b>	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenets to this approach which should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion

<b>Child looked-after, also Child in Care</b>	Child Looked After/Child in Care; where a child is looked after by the local authority
<b>CME</b>	Child Missing Education
<b>Constructive resettlement</b>	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
<b>Contextual safeguarding</b>	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
<b>Community resolution</b>	Community resolution; an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
<b>EHCP</b>	Education and health care plan; a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
<b>ETE</b>	Education, training or employment
<b>EHE</b>	Electively home educated; children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
<b>EOTAS</b>	Education other than at school; children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
<b>FTE</b>	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
<b>HMIP</b>	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
<b>HSB</b>	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
<b>JAC</b>	Junior Attendance Centre
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi agency public protection arrangements
<b>MFH</b>	Missing from Home
<b>NRM</b>	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
<b>OOCD</b>	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not

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

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## CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Housing for Care Experienced Young People</b>
Meeting date	10 June 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Council provides and commissions a range of housing for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) as part of their transition to independence. A range of social and private rented accommodation provision is offered depending on the assessed needs of the young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported accommodation (onsite or visiting support)</li> <li>• Joint Living Properties (shared houses)</li> <li>• Self-contained accommodation (dispersed or clustered)</li> </ul> <p>The Council holds a number of powers which act as assurance that the quality of accommodation is of the required standard and has a number of additional measures in place to ensure accommodation quality is maintained alongside housing related support for each and every setting.</p> <p>A review of the housing needs of Care Experienced Young People has recently been considered within a wider review of specialist and supported housing needs. A housing strategy outlining the future commissioning intentions will be considered by Cabinet later in 2025/26.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p>Members are asked to note the content of the report.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested further information on the provision of accommodation, its quality and the housing options available for Care Experienced Young People. This report responds to that request.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Kieron Wilson - Portfolio Holder for Homes &amp; Regulation</li> <li>• Councillor Richard Burton - Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People</li> </ul>
Service Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kelly Deane - Director of Housing and Communities</li> <li>• Juliette Blake - Director of Children's Social Care</li> <li>• Rachel Gravett - Director for Commissioning, Resources and Quality</li> </ul>
Report Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shan Searle - Head of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People</li> <li>• Ben Tomlin - Head of Strategic Housing &amp; Partnerships</li> <li>• Sarah Langdale - Head of Children's Commissioning</li> </ul>
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For information.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny requested further information on the provision of accommodation, its quality and the housing options available for Care Experienced Young People. This report responds to that request.
- 1.2 The Council both provides and commissions a range of housing for young people as part of their transition to independence. Accommodation is typically provided with either on-site or visiting support. Some accommodation is in shared houses, Joint Living Properties, some is self-contained dispersed housing, or clustered self-contained accommodation. Private and social rented housing are possible housing solutions depending on need.
- 1.3 The landlord of the accommodation may be the Council, Housing Association, or Specialist Independent Living or Supported Housing Provider. The oversight of compliance to housing standards will vary depending upon landlord and often configuration of accommodation.
- 1.4 This report provides an oversight of the powers of the Council in respect to compliance against said Housing Standards. For the purposes of the report, Housing Standards is recognised as compliance against Condition & Amenity requirements, Gas, Asbestos, Fire, Electrical, Water Hygiene, Lifts and Licensing.
- 1.5 Housing related support is provided to young people separately to the housing management and compliance requirements, this can be externally commissioned or delivered by in-house Council housing teams.

- 1.6 By way of background context, the table below illustrates the number of Care Experienced Young People 18-25 yrs currently accommodated in provision commissioned by Children's Social Care and Housing. There is a range of supported or independent accommodation provision which is pending move-on to greater independence.

Accommodation Type	Provider	CEYP Accommodated
Joint Living Properties (temporary accommodation)	BCP Council	0
Commissioned Supported Housing	Various Housing Association Providers	16
Joint Living Properties with support	Seascope Homes & Property	10
Independent Living (UAS CEYP) (HMO's or Joint Living Properties commissioned by CSC)	Various Private Sector Providers	56
Supported Accommodation Provision (UAS CEYP) Commissioned by CSC)	Various Private Sector Providers	21
Independent Living (CEYP) Commissioned by CSC)	BCP Council / Housing Association Provider	18
Supported Lodgings or Staying Put Arrangements (CEYP) Commissioned by CSC)	BCP Council and Private Sector	67
Independent Flats (commissioned Housing 1 <sup>st</sup> support)	BCP Homes & Seascope Homes & Property	10

## 2. Housing Options

- 2.1 A Joint housing protocol for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People sets out how operational arrangements between Council departments work with young people to ensure their needs are assessed and accommodation options are matched and planned in a timely manner to avoid housing crisis.
- 2.2 Housing pathways are needs led and can include a number of planned housing settings on a pathway to independence. Recommended housing options may vary from house shares, private rented sector, social sector, supported or specialist housing. There is no current bespoke pathway to access (low cost) home ownership.
- 2.3 A range of support is provided by the Council or commissioned providers to enable the delivery of the desired housing option. This could be through accessing specific financial support, or navigator support to access accommodation.
- 2.4 As is the case with other housing needs groups, the supply of all housing types often does not meet demand, with affordability a particular challenge in identifying a home in the private sector. To ensure Care Experience Young People do have a reasonable prospect of accessing suitable housing, additional priority is awarded to this group when considering the allocation of social and supported housing. These market and

supply challenges mean that the private sector has critical role locally in meeting the housing needs of our Care Experience Young People.

### **3. Council and BCP Homes**

- 3.1 The Council, either directly or via Seascope Homes & Property and BCP Homes provides housing for Care Experienced Young People in long term accommodation, temporary training flats and transitional accommodation as well as shared housing. Building safety compliance standards for social housing have been significantly strengthened in recent years to ensure the safety and well-being of tenants.
- a) Safety and Quality Standards: Social housing providers must ensure that homes are safe and of good quality. This includes regular inspections, risk assessments, and the implementation of safety measures such as fire safety systems.
  - b) Transparency and Accountability: Social Landlords are required to be transparent with tenants, treating them with fairness and respect. A new set of consumer standards for tenants has been established where the new standards are measured. The most recent published standards for BCP Homes can be found here. [BCP Homes performance | BCP \(bcpcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://www.bcp-council.gov.uk/bcp-homes-performance)
  - c) Regulatory Oversight: The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) actively inspects landlords to ensure compliance with the above standards. They scrutinise data on satisfaction, repairs performance and other issues and will soon programme a visit to BCP Homes for formal inspection. The Regulator will use enforcement powers when necessary.
  - d) Tenant Engagement: The standards emphasize the importance of engaging with tenants and considering their feedback in decision-making processes.
- 3.2 These measures aim to protect tenants and improve the overall quality of social housing. The BCP Homes Advisory Board provides oversight of the compliance these arrangements.
- 3.3 Young people can expect to be safe in their homes, and this can be demonstrated through annual gas safety tests where there is a gas supply, electrical safety testing every five years, fire risk assessments of any internal communal areas and management of any communal water supplies and asbestos.
- 3.4 Their home should be free from hazards, for example damp and mould, and all tenants have access to an effective and timely repairs service including planned improvements.
- 3.5 While these are required outcomes for all tenants, the council also aims to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for young people, ensuring that we understand and meet their diverse needs. Their views are considered, and they are supported to sustain their tenancies.
- 3.6 Young people have access to information regarding landlord services and opportunities to become involved in decision making. There is a fair and accessible complaints process for when things go wrong.



- 3.7 Where the Council needs to provide Temporary Accommodation to a Care Experienced Young Person, the condition of the accommodation is subject to the same Safety and Quality Standards as longer-term lettings. Additional regard is also given to the provision of soft furnishings and the internal environment to ensure the provision is as appropriate as possible when required as an emergency or crisis placement.

#### **4. Supported Housing**

- 4.1 Where the provision of Housing and Support for Young People is commissioned from a specialist third party provider, such as a Housing Association, the Council have contract monitoring arrangements in place with Providers to ensure adherence to contract specification within a planned cycle of inspections covering key areas of assurance including health and safety, risk management, safeguarding, and building compliance. There are currently 3 different commissioned Providers of Supported Housing for Young People operating in the BCP area, each providing a range of intensities of Housing Related Support for Young People between 16-21 years. Older Care Experienced Young People who require specialist supported housing as part of their pathway to independence can access provision for Adults, of which there is a range of provision.
- 4.2 Each service specification reflects expectations of housing standards, the quality of support provision, general housing management performance and personal outcomes tailored to individuals housing support needs. Insight gained from reporting provides a performance baseline on key aspects of delivery including individual support outcomes, complaints & compliments, void management, rent arrears and building compliance.
- 4.3 A Housing Compliance Health Check covers the 'big 6' areas of compliance (Gas, Asbestos, Fire, Electrical, Water Hygiene, and Lifts). Where Registered Social Housing Providers are commissioned, each is obliged to adhere to regulations set out by the Regulator or Social Housing (RSH) in the same way as described above for BCP Homes.
- 4.4 Services are visited for review by the Councils Contracts team on an annual basis and more frequently where compliance issues are identified. Quarterly contract review meetings are held, and monthly operations meetings ensure oversight of practice.
- 4.5 There have been no breaches in service quality or building compliance issues raised for Young Persons Supported Housing Services in the past 3 years.
- 4.6 There are currently 69 units of supported accommodation commissioned for young people, with a further 5 homes in the pipeline for delivery this financial year.
- 4.7 In October 2023, all providers in England offering housing and support (supported accommodation) to 16 and 17-year-old Children in Care (CiC) and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) must now legally register with Ofsted. The change addresses long-standing concerns over the sector's lack of regulation, aiming to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable young people. The Council's Children's Commissioning Team has worked in partnership with local supported accommodation providers to ensure compliance to the Ofsted registration standards. There are currently 7 Providers offering a total of 55 beds. The process of registering an in-house

Supported Lodgings Provision via Children's Services in-house Fostering Service to improve sufficiency of registered provision.

- 4.8 Children and Young People are visited regularly, once every 8 weeks between the agreed ages of 18-21 and up to the age of 25 years by a named professional such as a Social Worker or Personal Advisor. These regular visits further support the quality assurance of the properties our young people reside in.

## **5. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced Young People Housing**

- 5.1 Children's Social Care (CSC) commission 38 units of independent living units specifically for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced Young People, regardless of their legal status. This accommodation is provided by private local landlords; Children's Social Care hold the tenancies and fund the accommodation. The majority of the accommodation offered is in Joint Living Properties or single occupancy independent accommodation. The quality of this accommodation is subject to compliance standards.
- 5.2 When Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced Young People receive leave to remain in the UK, their housing pathways are considered in the same way as any other young person, via joint housing assessment needs assessment. This group are eligible to access the housing option that best meets their needs.

## **6. Private Sector Housing Standards & Enforcement**

- 6.1 The Council has several statutory powers to maintain housing conditions and standards in the private rented sector; these powers are also applicable to homes provided by Registered Housing Providers or other Charities operating companies which deliver housing for vulnerable Adults and Young People.
- 6.2 Notably landlords are obliged by the Homes Act 2018 and Housing Act 2004 to ensure their properties are fit for human habitation at the start and throughout a tenancy. Councils have various enforcement powers, including improvement notices, prohibition orders and emergency remedial action to address hazardous conditions in rented homes.
- 6.3 These powers enable councils to ensure that rented properties meet safety and habitability standards, protecting tenants and promoting a fair rental market.
- 6.4 The Council holds a statutory responsibility for licensing some Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). This allows the council to ensure that the licence holder is a fit and proper person, requires the property to meet prescribed fire and safety requirements. Amenity Standards and management regulations define the requirements for the minimum standards in HMO's. The BCP amenity standards can be found here; <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/documents/business/Amenity-Standards.pdf>. Every effort is made to ensure that our young people are not placed in to HMO accommodation, however there may be circumstances where this is a suitable option.
- 6.5 Any property condition complaints are inspected by our trained housing standards team. They will ensure a property complies with relevant standards and the management regulations and enforce accordingly if they do not.

- 6.6 The housing condition standards described remain applicable for all accommodation commissioned by the Council for Care Experienced Young People. There have been no significant housing standard complaints recorded for these properties in recent years.

## **7. Young People's Views**

- 7.1 The Children's Rights and Engagement team ran a project to record the experience of care experienced young people from BCP council and their experience of housing when moving into independence. Their findings can be found at Appendix X.

## **8. Youth Homelessness Board**

- 8.1 In recognition of the housing challenges facing young people in BCP and in response to rising rates of youth homelessness it is acknowledged that more needs to be done to support young people struggling with housing and any related issues. To develop a coordinated response, funding was secured through HRH Prince of Wales Homewards programme to engage Every Youth to support the re-development of a Youth Homelessness Board that will have strategic oversight of activities that aim to prevent, and respond to, the challenges young people are experiencing in the BCP area.
- 8.2 A working group of senior officers are currently working together to define the composition, scope and priorities of the board. To further inform the Board's development the lived experiences of young people are being sought.
- 8.3 The new board is expected to launch in September 2025, with additional strategic oversight of housing needs and experiences of care experienced young people which shall ensure that a Specialist and Supported Housing Strategy delivers a longer term aspirations to meet local housing needs. A new strategy is expected to be considered by Cabinet later in the 2025/26 year.
- 8.2 The board shall ensure the needs of Care Experienced Young People and young people who maybe at risk of housing insecurity receive appropriate advice, support, care and guidance to improve opportunities for sustainable independent living.

## **9. Current Issues/Challenges and Opportunities**

- 9.1 There are currently 59 Care Experienced Young People (most of which are former unaccompanied asylum seeking children with leave to remain in the UK) who have reached the age of 18 and who require move-on accommodation from their commissioned accommodation settings. This presents a challenge in establishing suitable move on requirements and represents a backlog which has increased more significantly over the course of the past year. Robust plans are in place to ensure that all young people receive assessments including housing plans and that resources are targeted at securing move-on accommodation with support. Given the high demand for suitable and affordable accommodation within BCP, it is anticipated that working through the backlog of move on will take up to 12 months. This is a priority programme of work for the housing and childrens services teams.

10. The number of Care Experienced Young People facing homelessness increased in the past year to 58. At time of writing one young person was staying with a family in temporary accommodation awaiting a move. The increase in homelessness has also been attributed to issues regarding the timeliness of joint assessments and specifically in insufficient time to plan for suitable housing to be available at 18 years.
11. Housing & Children's services have undertaken to carry out a review of the joint working protocols and provide training refreshers to staff teams which will ensure the quality and timeliness of assessments carried out with young people is improved. As part of this process, the review will use insight from care experienced young people's recent experiences of their housing journeys to inform practice. Oversight and assurance of the review, including the monitoring of progress to address the issues identified, will be overseen at Children's Services Quality Board. It is expected the Youth Homelessness Board will consider the wider systemic local issues which present risks of homelessness for BCP young people. The aim of this work will be to prevent occurrences and ensure support is accessible when and where a young person requires it.
12. To ensure sufficiency of the accommodation offers available to young people when they turn 18, a specialist and supported housing strategy is in final development following a specialist housing needs assessment exercise which has identified requirements for future housing for this group over the next 10 years. Further engagement of the strategy and future accommodation commissioning plans is scheduled for later this year, with updated governance in place via the Housing Strategy Delivery Board.

### **13. Summary of financial implications**

- 13.1 Due to the variety of arrangements by which accommodation for Care Experienced Young People is provided, the housing quality assurance standards described are delivered in accordance the legislative framework and associated contractual requirements.
- 13.2 The quality assurance standards are not impacted by the financial resources available to procure the accommodation. The Council ensures it has sufficient resources to discharge its statutory powers with the Housing & Communities service directorate.

### **14. Summary of legal implications**

- 14.1 The Council has powers under a range of different housing related legislation to ensure the quality of accommodation provided to Care Experienced Young People is good. There is little evidence to suggest the quality of accommodation provided is not of an acceptable standard requiring enforcement.
- 14.2 Teams are trained to identify and respond to any complaints relating to housing quality.

### **15. Summary of human resources implications**

Not applicable

## **16. Summary of environmental impact**

- 16.1 Poor quality housing can lead to increased energy consumption due to inadequate heating or insulation. It also often results in impacts on someone's mental and or physical health and safety.

## **17. Summary of public health implications**

- 17.1 Research reveals that care-experienced young people encounter higher rates of mental health issues and poorer overall health outcomes compared to their peers. This encompasses elevated risks of mental health disorders, substandard physical health, and greater involvement in crime and unemployment. While many challenges may arise from the circumstances leading to their becoming looked after or during their time in care, the transition to independent living is identified as a critical juncture with significant implications for their overall well-being. Many care-experienced young people lack robust personal support networks, resulting in feelings of isolation and loneliness. Consequently, securing and maintaining stable accommodation can be more challenging due to limited financial or social support. Homelessness or residing in unsuitable accommodations poses a risk to mental health and elevates the likelihood of poor health outcomes.

## **18. Summary of equality implications**

- 18.1 Care Experienced Young People are more likely to face significant equality implications if accommodated in poor quality housing. Specifically experiencing health inequalities, including mental health or chronic illness if standards are not adequate. Poor housing will exacerbate feelings of instability and stress, making it harder to achieve educational and or employment success.

## **19. Summary of risk assessment**

- 19.1 The environmental, health and equality implications discussed above require specific mitigation for care experienced young people when in resettling into accommodation. The provision of housing related support to manage the risks and help navigate and access bespoke support available for people is embedded within joint working housing plans agreed with a young person at the joint housing assessment.

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# CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2023-2024</b>
Meeting date	17 March 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report serves to provide a detailed overview of the activities and impact of the BCP Virtual School during the academic year 2023-24. The Virtual School operates on behalf of the Local Authority (LA), collaborating with partners to advocate for Children in Care (CIC) in education and ensuring positive and aspirational educational outcomes.</p> <p>The report outlines the future priorities and development plans for the BCP Virtual School, aiming to improve outcomes and support for a positive transition to adulthood for all Care Experienced young people.</p> <p>The report is based on the LA held pupil information and results from schools. At the time of publishing, there is no comparative national data available for the academic year 2023-24. Comparative data will be available upon its publication in April 2025. By conducting comparative analysis throughout the year, we aim to identify areas where the Virtual School has significant impact and areas where improvement is needed in relation to national benchmarks. This information will guide our efforts in providing the best possible support for children in care, aligning with broader educational standards.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p>The successes of the young people in care and Care Leavers, the work undertaken by the Virtual School and the priorities for the next academic year are to be noted by the Committee.</p>
Reason for recommendations	Update of the work undertaken by the Virtual School during the academic year 2023-24.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Richard Burton Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Director for Children's Services
Report Authors	Leah May, Headteacher of the Virtual School and College
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For information

## Background

1. The Children and Families act 2014 mandates local authorities in England to designate at least one individual to fulfil the responsibility of promoting the educational achievement of Children in Care. The appointed Virtual School Head is required to be an officer employed by the local authority. The Virtual School Head assumes the lead role in ensuring the establishment of effective arrangements to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of the authority's Children in Care including those placed outside the home authority's boundaries.
2. The educational specialists within the Virtual School collaborate with partners to champion the educational achievement of Children in Care to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) regardless of their location and educational setting. The Virtual School's responsibilities extend to offering advice and guidance to parents and professionals regarding Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) including those under Special Guardianship Orders (SGO), adopted or subject to child arrangement orders. Since September 2021, the duties of the Virtual School Head have been expanded to strategically promote the education of children who have had a social worker encompassing Children in Need (CIN) and those subject Child Protection (CP) plans. From September 2024 this has extended to all children in Kinship care.
3. In collaboration with early years settings, schools, post-16 colleges and social care leaders, the Virtual School team concentrates on fostering a culture of high aspirations for all children with a social worker. This involves both direct collaboration with education provisions for Children in Care and strategic engagement for children with a social worker and those in kinship care. The emphasis lies in enhancing the skill set of professionals working with this cohort, ensuring the presence of mechanisms for offering advice and support to narrow the attainment gap, promote school attendance, identify intervention needs and promote aspirational outcomes.

## Options Appraisal

4. None.

## Summary of financial implications

5. None.



**Summary of legal implications**

6. None.

**Summary of human resources implications**

7. None.

**Summary of sustainability impact**

8. None.

**Summary of public health implications**

9. None.

**Summary of equality implications**

10. None.

**Background papers**

None.

**Appendices**

1. Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2023-24.
2. Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2023-24 (Summary version for young people).

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## Virtual School Head's Report 2023-24 Summary

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# Virtual School

## Supporting Children in Care and Care Leavers

Working in partnership with young people, educational settings, carers and wider professionals to ensure care experienced young people fulfil their educational potential.

- Changing the narrative
- Unlocking potential
- Nurturing futures

[virtual.school@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.school@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)



## Purpose of the Report

This report is all about celebrating your achievements and understanding the challenges Care Experienced young people experience in education. The Virtual School team and your Education Officers are here to make sure you have the best chance to succeed in both education and work. We believe that by working together, schools and services can support you to have every opportunity to do well and succeed, both in your studies and in life. We want to make sure more of you are in school or have jobs, and that you do well in your studies.

We want every child in care and those who have left care to have the same chances to succeed as everyone else. Together, we'll help you become strong and confident individuals, ready to face the future, make a positive difference in the world, and achieve your dreams.



## Successes

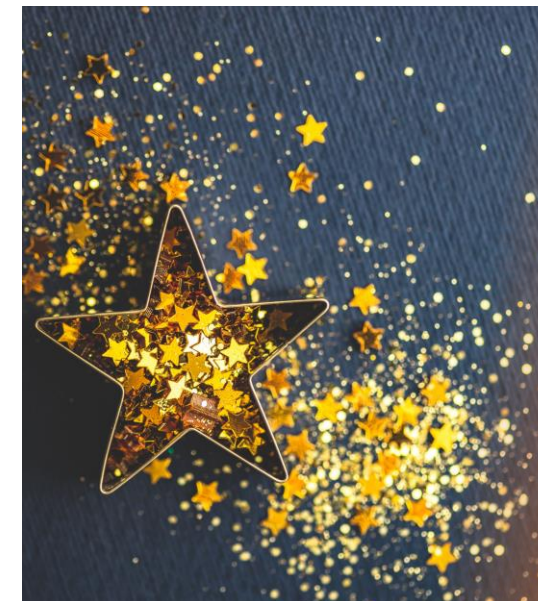
- ✓ The attendance at school of Care Experienced young people has improved significantly, and fewer children are missing a lot of school. This is excellent because it means young people are accessing more opportunities to learn and achieve.
- ✓ Most of you are now attending schools that are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. We have a plan to support those who are not receiving full-time education, and we monitor this every week to ensure you are doing well.
- ✓ We also value your input about your education and use your ideas to set goals. A larger number of you are attending your PEP meetings and sharing your views about education with your schools and Virtual School Education Officers.
- ✓ An increasing number of you are taking important exams like GCSEs, and many of you are achieving higher grades in English and Maths.
- ✓ We keep track of your progress so we can help you set ambitious goals and achieve them.
- ✓ Many of you are moving on to further education, jobs, or training after school, and many of you are continuing with these paths.
- ✓ For those of you in Years 12 and 13, more of you are now in education, jobs, or training, which is fantastic! Some of you who were not in school or working before are now reengaging.
- ✓ Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Care Leavers are also making great progress, with a large proportion of you in education, jobs, or training.
- ✓ Finally, the teachers who help you with your Personal Education Plans are doing an excellent job, and the majority of these plans are being completed to a high standard.





## Here's what we are working on to help you succeed:

- **Attendance and Success in School:** We are continuing to focus on improving attendance and making sure you do well in school because regular attendance helps you learn effectively and achieve more.
- **Providing Timely Support:** We are enhancing how we monitor your progression and attendance to provide schools and colleges with the right help at the right time to ensure you get the support you need.
- **Timetables and Engagement:** We are working with schools to lessen the use of reduced timetables, removal from college roll and suspensions to support you to continue your education or training without interruptions.
- **Access to Learning:** We are working to reduce the number of children not enrolled in school and those missing out on education by collaborating with schools, colleges and education teams to ensure everyone has access to learning.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** We are working with our SEND team to ensure that young people with SEND are prioritised for assessments, transition planning and consultations. This will prevent delays to securing education for you when you move care placement or transition to a new school.
- **Effective use of Alternative Provision (AP):** We will focus on ensuring you are accessing the most appropriate education to support you. We want all alternative education to be delivered in or alongside schools so you can benefit from a supportive school environment.
- **Empowering Care Leavers:** We are developing more programmes to create pathways to education and jobs, helping you find opportunities that match your interests and skills. We're developing more opportunities such as drop-in sessions and direct contact from the Virtual School Education Officers to provide consistent and positive support directly to young people to ensure you have someone to guide and encourage you.
- **Training for Education Professionals:** We are expanding training for schools to support them to better meet your needs, ensuring teachers are equipped to help you succeed.
- **Changing the Narrative:** We are making sure all language used in documents and records is trauma-informed and young person-centred. We're training schools and professionals to write directly to you in a supportive way, so you feel understood and valued.
- **Reducing Involvement with Youth Justice:** We are implementing targeted educational interventions and support systems to reduce the likelihood of children in care becoming involved with the Youth Justice System, helping you stay on a positive path.



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## Virtual School Head's Report 2023-24

### Supporting Children in Care and Care Leavers

Working in partnership with young people, educational settings, carers and wider professionals to ensure care experienced young people fulfil their educational potential.

- Changing the narrative
- Unlocking potential
- Nurturing futures

[virtual.school@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.school@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)





## Purpose of the Report

The aim of this report is to celebrate the children under our care and provide context regarding the challenges and barriers that can affect their education. It will showcase the educational outcomes and achievements of these children during the 2023/2024 academic year.

The report also examines their accomplishments and the support provided by the Virtual School to ensure they have the best opportunities. Our Virtual School team is fully dedicated to giving every Child in our Care and Care Leavers the best possible educational experience, aiming for the best results to support their success in adulthood. The Virtual School emphasises that schools must ensure our most vulnerable learners are given every chance to succeed, focusing not only on equality of opportunity but also on equality of outcome.

Additionally, the report outlines the Virtual School's responsibilities in raising awareness and providing guidance for previously looked-after children, care leavers, and children known to Social Care.





## Our Vision

At BCP Virtual School for Children in Care (CIC) and Care Leavers (CL), our purpose is to create a future where every young person, regardless of their background, can thrive academically and personally. Our mission is to foster a collaborative environment that prioritises the unique needs of each child, ensuring they have access to high-quality education, comprehensive support services, and enriched life experiences. We aim to achieve this through:

- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Strengthening links with other Virtual Schools, educational provisions, and multi-agency partners to provide a comprehensive support network.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Using data to inform planning and continuously improve outcomes for our young people.
- **High Aspirations and Stable Education:** Providing stable, full-time education with a broad curriculum, encouraging all young people to reach their potential.
- **Personalised Education Plans:** Enhancing Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Education, Employment, and Training (EET) plans to support personalised learning and maximise Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) impact.
- **Skilled Professionals:** Ensuring that all staff are equipped with the skills and strategies to effectively support CIC and Care Leavers.
- **Robust Tracking and Planning:** Embedding tracking systems to monitor progress and drive strategic planning that enhances academic outcomes and engagement.
- **Removing Barriers:** Identifying and addressing barriers to learning and mental health, fostering a positive environment for academic and social growth.
- **Community Engagement:** Developing local community activities to enhance well-being and resilience.
- **Cultural Understanding:** Promoting inclusion and cultural awareness within schools and communities.



Through these commitments, we aim to reduce the number of young people who are not in full time education or employment and improve attainment outcomes to ensure Children in Care and Care Leavers experience success and life chances in line with their peers. Together, we will nurture a generation of empowered individuals ready to take on the challenges of tomorrow, contributing positively to society and achieving their dreams.

## Contextual Information 2023-2024

## The Virtual School and College Population

EYFS (eligible  
for education)

**55**

Virtual School

**358**

Virtual College  
(Year 12 and 13)

**173**

In BCP

**40**

Outside  
of BCP

**15**

In BCP

**227**

Outside  
of BCP

**131**

In BCP

**119**

Outside  
of BCP

**54**



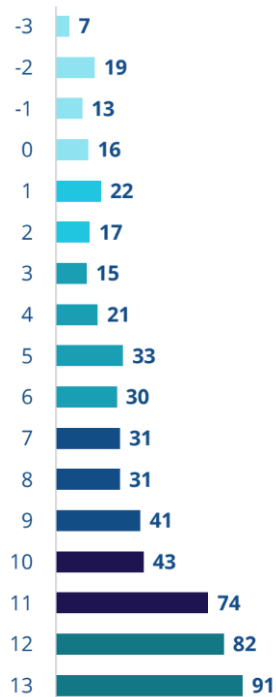
We worked  
with two  
young  
people  
who were  
pregnant  
last year

## Number of CIC in each year group

EYFS

SSA

Post 16 –  
Yr.12 & 13



	No. of males	%	No. of females	%
EYFS	29	53%	26	47%
SSA	195	54%	163	46%
Post 16 (Years 12 and 13)	131	76%	42	24%
Totals	355	61%	231	39%

Year group	No. of UASC
10	6
11	10
12	29
13	37
Total	82

## Our Journey (Data) – 2023/24

- ✓ Attendance has consistently improved year on year, increasing from 88.6% in 2021/22 to 91.4% currently (93.33% for 12mths+).
- ✓ Persistent absence for all children has decreased from 23.2% in 2022/23 to 17.72% (14.52% for 12mths+) in 2023/24, below national averages. Severe absence has also decreased, from 8.1% in 22/23 to 6.65% (3.32% 12mths+) in 23/24, aligning with national figures.
- ✓ 93% of our children are now attending 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools; 96% in BCP schools.
- ✓ There is a clear 'plan, do, review' approach, with weekly monitoring and tracking of children who are not receiving full-time provision in the 'usual way' in an Ofsted registered school.
- ✓ Pupil voice is more consistently integrated into Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and used to set goals. In 2021/22, pupil voice was recorded in 87% of PEPs, and this has risen to 97% in 2023/24.
- ✓ The percentage of Year 11 students taking GCSEs has consistently increased, rising from 49% in 2021/22 to 63% in 2023/24. In BCP schools, 86% of Year 11 children sat GCSEs in 2023/24.
- ✓ A greater number of children are achieving grade 4+ in English and Maths at GCSE.
- ✓ All prior attainment information is now available on PEPs for all children and Care Leavers, allowing for more aspirational goal setting and outcomes at all levels.
- ✓ 95% of Year 11s successfully progressed into Post-16 EET destinations in September 2024, compared to 79% in September 2023. Additionally, 86% are in sustained EET destinations, compared to 82% last year in Dec 24.
- ✓ Year 12 and 13 in EET was 64% in 2021/22 and has consistently improved to 82% in 2023/24. Between September and December 2024, 19 children and Care Leavers in Years 12 and 13 have transitioned from NEET to EET.
- ✓ The percentage of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs) and Care Leavers in EET (Years 12 to 14) has increased from 55% in April 2023 to 82% in April 2024.
- ✓ Care Leavers who are in EET has improved in Years 13 and 14 from 67% in 2022/23 to 79% in Year 13 and 72% in Year 14 in 2023/24.
- ✓ PEPs completed to a good or better standard by Designated Teachers (DTs) has increased from 83% in 2021/22 to 97% at the end of 2023/24.



- ❖ A high number of children enter care in Year 11 (39% of Year 11 entered care during Key Stage 4 (KS4)). Many of these children are already involved in complex lifestyles or situations by the time they enter care, which makes it challenging for Virtual School staff to encourage them to engage with education, achieve outcomes and reduce their Risk of becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (RON).
- ❖ The percentage of Children in Care with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) residing outside of BCP requiring specialist provision. There is a need for specialist provision for children with SEND, and delays in consulting with specialist settings in other local authorities.
- ❖ While the situation has improved in BCP, access to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in both other local authorities and BCP remains limited, with restrictions on entry points throughout the academic year. This hinders their educational engagement and increases funding demand.
- ❖ For Key Stage 4 children, at RON or facing challenges with engaging with a mainstream offer, there is a requirement for more funded and bespoke vocational options and support through local colleges to help re-engage students and support their KS4 outcomes and transitions to Post-16 education.
- ❖ There has been a higher incidence of suspensions among secondary girls, with schools requiring significant support and funding to address the SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health) needs of this cohort and mitigate the risk of permanent exclusions (PEX).
- ❖ Following introducing processes to gather Post-16 outcomes, we now need to refine these processes to ensure efficient data collection and rigorous data analysis to promptly inform our priorities.

## **Attendance and impact on attainment: Continuation of positive 5-year trend**

- Enhancing tracking for CIC and Children known to social care and improving reporting pathways to enable focused and joint support from other services.
- Enhancing responsiveness to reduced timetables/suspensions and tracking of Post-16 engagement before Day 43.
- Reducing the number of children who are Not on Roll (NOR) and Missing out on Education (PMOE) through collaboration with the Special Educational Need and Disabilities (SEND), Inclusion, Admissions, School Improvement and Sufficiency teams.

## **Alternative Provision (AP):**

- Streamlining tracking across services to address overlaps, with a focus on review, attendance, and specific actionable outcomes to ensure all are accessing appropriate education. Focus for all AP to be delivered in/ alongside schools.

## **Reducing the number of Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET):**

- Leveraging existing programmes like SPEAR, Skills and Learning and employability initiatives to develop pathways.
- Develop capacity for Direct Work with young people to provide consistent and positive support and engagement.

## **Supporting young people with SEND:**

- Securing offers early in the academic year before transition points, with a focus on Year 11/Post-16 transitions evidencing closer collaboration with care and education planning.

## **Training and Capacity Building:**

- Expanding training offerings for schools and enhancing their capacity to meet the needs of children, particularly in secondary settings where support models change.

## **Baseline Expectations:**

- Establishing baseline expectations in collaboration with other services to meet children's needs within school.
- Continuing to enhance contributions and communication between education, care planning, and social care engagement.

## **Changing the Narrative:**

- Ensuring that all language used in documents and records is trauma-informed and child-centred. Through training, develop focus of all schools and professionals on writing directly to the child in line with relational practice.

## **Over Representation of Children in Care in Youth Justice Service**

- To implement targeted educational interventions and support systems that reduce the likelihood of Children in Care becoming involved with the Youth Justice System.



# Our Team

Virtual School Headteacher – Leah May

Assistant Headteacher for CWSW, PLAC, those living in kinship  
Wayne Chappell

Assistant Headteacher for CIC and CEYP–  
Ed England (secondment to Oct 31<sup>st</sup>)

Lead for Educational Interventions, Assurance and safeguarding  
Luana Girling

Lead Teacher for Careers, KS5+ Education, Employment and Training  
Jodie Berry

Lead Advisory Teacher  
Laura Small

Lead Advisory Teacher  
Edward England

Early Education Lead  
Claire Thurgood

VSEO supporting all out of borough children with EHCPs  
Jane Cooper

VSEO KS5+ Chris Dovey

Advisory Teacher - Lisa McGaw

VSEO KS5+ Tom Trenowden

Advisory Teacher Jennifer Keappock

VSEO KS5+ Eleanor Douglas

Advisory Teacher Richard Heard

VSEO KS5+ Karen Garcia

Data and Systems officer  
vacancy

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The aim is for all children and Care Leavers to experience stable, long-term, and meaningful relationships with Education Officers who support them in sharing their views, engaging with education, and successfully transitioning between educational phases.

There is clear oversight by Education Officers and Management of all children's educational needs, attainment, progress, and attendance. This includes collaboration with wider education, health, and social care services to identify and reduce risks, and to implement timely interventions and support for those not accessing education in the usual way.

The Virtual School, in collaboration with other services, acts as a parental figure, maintaining a committed focus on developing services to ensure that Children in Care, Care Leavers. Post Looked after Children and Children with a Social Worker receive positive educational experiences and provisions.

# Attendance

**National data**  
**2022/23 for all CIC:**  
**Attendance – 89.8%**  
**PA– 25.7%**  
**SA – 6.5%**



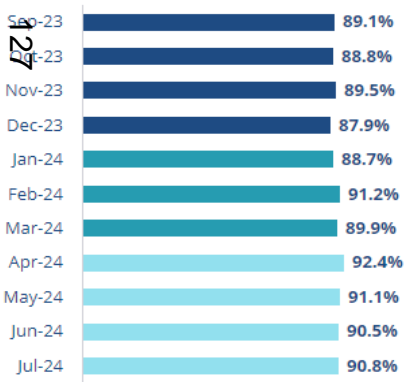
## How we support:

- ✓ Weekly attendance collection for all Children in our care.
- ✓ Regular data review to identify trends and areas of concern for timely intervention.
- ✓ Weekly tracking and plan updates for children not on roll, not in full-time education, severely absent, or attending Alternative Provision.
- ✓ Fortnightly analysis of Persistent Absence causes and support strategies.
- ✓ Termly PEP discussions focusing on attendance barriers and providing targeted support for those below 95%.
- ✓ Feedback and training for Designated Teachers (DTs) at termly network meetings, covering attendance updates, relational policies, coding, and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) support.

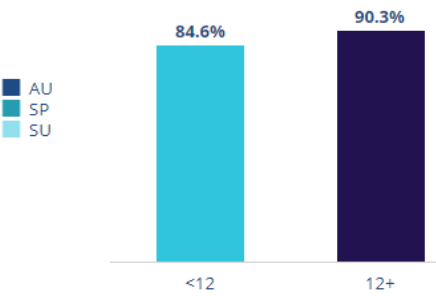
## Impact:

- ❖ 93% of children attend good or outstanding schools, with 96% in BCP schools.
- ❖ There is a three-year trend of improved attendance and reduced Persistent Absence and Severe Absence.
- ❖ Attendance for CIC who have been in care for over 12 months is 10% higher than for those in care for less than 12 months.
- ❖ Clear 'plan, do, review' weekly monitoring has improved attendance.
- ❖ Post-16 attendance has stabilised at 80%, up from 78% in the Autumn term of 2023/24.

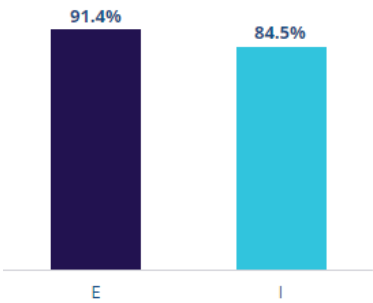
Month



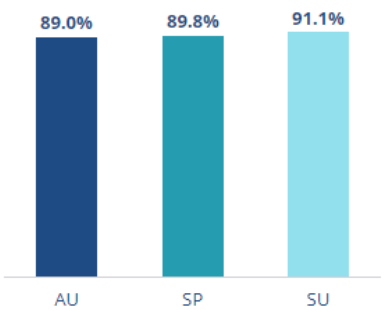
Months in Care



DfE Eligible 2023-24



Term



## Comparison of BCP Persistent Absence and Severe Absence Data

	Persistent Absence		Severe Absence	
	Number	%	Number	%
2022-23	104	33.12%	32	10.19%
2023-24	96	27.83%	20	5.8%

## Next steps:

- Monitor trends identified in the Impact Ed report, particularly Year 7 attendance and the extended transition into Year 8.
- Continue joint working with SEND, especially for children placed in care in Other Local Authorities (OLA), to ensure timely education access and address SEND sufficiency in BCP.
- Collaborate with social care to expedite age assessments for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children to ensure appropriate education settings.
- Maintain focus on improving attendance and reducing the use and duration of reduced timetables and Alternative Provision.
- Address KS4 attendance prior to entering care as a key concern, focusing on supporting Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) to improve engagement.

# Suspensions and Exclusion

**National % of all CIC with at least 1 suspension (21/22 latest available):**

2019/20 – 9.6%  
2020/21 – 10%  
2021/22 – 12.7%

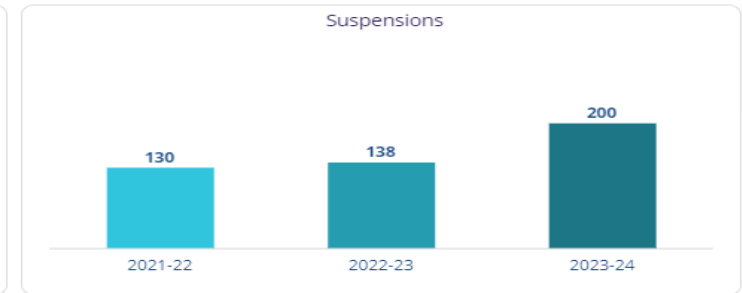
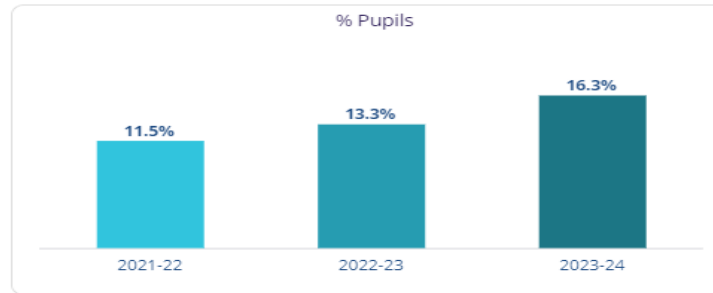
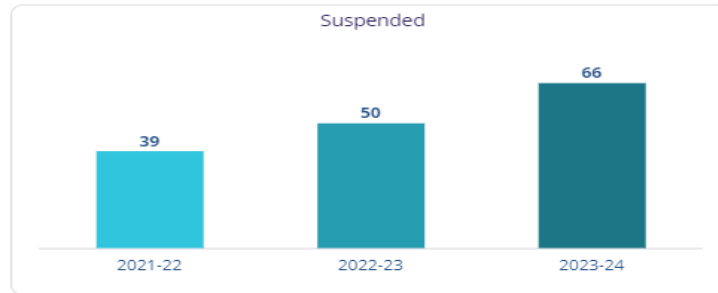
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## How we support:

- ✓ Proactively address suspension risks as soon as identified.
- ✓ Use Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) to support trauma-informed interventions and planning in schools.
- ✓ Provide additional funding to schools with high suspension rates to reduce and sustain improvements, with reviews due in January 2025.
- ✓ Prioritise students' well-being and sense of belonging in every PEP discussion.
- ✓ Encourage schools to adopt relational policies to promote positive regulation.
- ✓ Offer trauma and attachment-based training, including the 'Excluded to Included' conference, EBSA, Attachment & Trauma training day, and relational policy development, to better understand the needs of CIC, Post Looked After Children (PLAC), Kinship, and CWSW.

## Impact:

- ❖ Increased suspensions were a concerning trend prior to this academic year, reflecting a wider national issue.
- ❖ The Thrive Project, Kingston Maurward College, and in-school interventions with last year's KS4 students have helped reduce repeat suspensions.
- ❖ Schools now consult the Virtual School (VS) regarding suspension or permanent exclusion risks and strategies, leading to more informed decisions.
- ❖ The use of in-school Alternative Provision has increased to meet needs, maintain attendance, and prevent suspensions and exclusions.
- ❖ Suspensions are concentrated in a few schools of concern, where we are working closely to improve practices and reduce repeat suspensions.
- ❖ There have been no permanent exclusions in the past 4 years, indicating successful intervention strategies.



## Next steps:

- Continue working with schools of concern, identifying issues in School Monthly Meetings and collaborating with professionals, especially considering leadership changes affecting communication and stability for CIC. Develop a multi-service support plan with schools.
- Offer proactive training to schools to create a culture where suspensions are rare, empowering teachers to build belonging and community. This includes the 'Excluded to Included' conference, DT networks, Relational Policy development, and Motivational Interviewing.
- Establish processes within BCP LA to provide funding for schools to proactively plan support and interventions onsite, improving engagement and preventing suspensions.



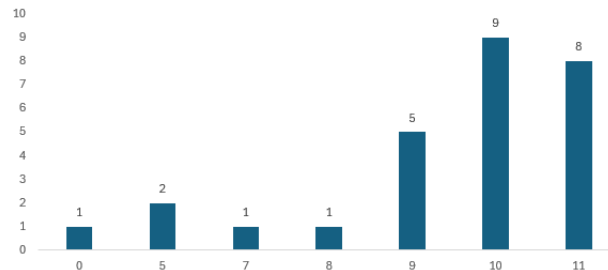
## How we support:

- ✓ Monitor and assess all children not in full-time education or those with AP as part of their education package through a weekly Assess, Plan, Do, Review tracking process.
- ✓ Work closely with the Inclusion team to arrange education and wider services, ensuring provision for children not on roll or on reduced timetables, while focusing on reintegration into formal education to prevent missed learning.
- ✓ Ensure all AP occurs within schools, with a focus on reintegration into full-time education.
- ✓ VSEOs are involved in planning additional education away from the standard offer and assess the associated risks for those with higher needs.
- ✓ Local AP is accessed via an accredited AP list. For AP outside BCP, SEND teams in other LAs, local schools, and Virtual Schools are consulted on quality and reliability.
- ✓ AP is arranged through schools, often funded with PPG+, unless a young person has moved and is temporarily without education, in which case the Virtual School supports implementation.

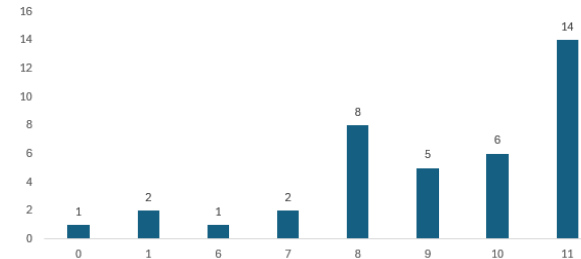
## Impact:

- ❖ The Virtual School understands the needs of all children and Care Leavers accessing AP, their objectives, and ensures progress in engagement, reintegration, and academic achievement.
- ❖ There is a stronger emphasis on collaboration between education and wider services, including SEND and Inclusion, through weekly tracking and Children of Concern meetings, focusing on reintegration, reengagement, and academic progress to reduce risk.
- ❖ There is a clearer focus on delivering AP in schools where possible, with accredited outcomes and reintegration into Ofsted-registered provision where appropriate.
- ❖ The PEP process and document have been developed to monitor and assess AP and reduced timetables, concentrating on reintegration and outcomes.
- ❖ PPG+ is used to address the specific needs of children and Care Leavers, based on clearly identified outcomes and a needs-driven funding model.
- ❖ BCP AP providers are included in the training offer and collaborate with the VS to build positive relationships and are invited to attend PEPs.

NOR by Year Group



PMOE by Year Group



## Next steps:

- Increase number of school's successfully developing 'in house' AP & support AP taking place in the school environment
- Attendance tracking of AP engagement continues refinement through Welfare Call
- Work with colleagues on sufficiency in SEND to develop Specialist education places in areas of concern

## How we support:

- ✓ Rigorous data collection in every PEP tracks attainment targets, progress, strengths, and areas of underachievement.
- ✓ An 'on track / not on track' system has been developed for quick identification of concerns and timely intervention.
- ✓ Termly data analysis identifies trends in core subjects by Key Stage and year group for individuals and groups.
- ✓ Weekly reviews of children not receiving full-time education use the APDR cycle to assess academic objectives and impact on attainment.
- ✓ Virtual School Education Officers (VSEO), phase meetings, and SLT reflections focus on children and cohorts identified as 'not on track' to target interventions and development.
- ✓ Learning and attainment priorities for the upcoming term are shared with the team and DTs for discussion in PEPs.
- ✓ Intervention ideas are explored and shared in Team Meetings and DT Networks.
- ✓ Previous assessment data informs the setting of aspirational outcomes and supports intervention, aiding VS data outcome setting for assessment year groups.

## Impact:

- ❖ Cohort overview of attainment for each year group, starting from the earliest data point, supports a focus on aspirational outcomes.
- ❖ Improved GCSE and KS2 outcomes compared to predictions.
- ❖ Enhanced accuracy of predicted outcomes, enabling timely, targeted support.
- ❖ Significant increase in the number of CIC taking GCSEs.
- ❖ Priority given to maintaining attendance in registered provisions, with a focus on in-school AP, not offsite.
- ❖ Secure exam centres for those in AP to ensure they can sit qualifications.
- ❖ Improved access to college and reduced risk of NEET, supporting Post-16 engagement and outcomes.
- ❖ Reduction in time missed from education following placement moves requiring a school change.

## Accelerated Progress Example: Current Year 7 – in care for 4 years

- Child did not meet Early Learning Goals (ELG) /Word reading ELG before entering care
- Passed phonics (32/40) with minimum pass mark
- 114 – working at Greater Depth attainment (GDS) reading in KS2 SATs
- Provision: Weekly and regular ReadingPlus, Lexia and Third Space Learning (maths), spelling interventions in small groups, weekly art therapy and rigorous data collection by school (termly evidenced in PEP), attuned adults in school, sensory tools to support focus in classroom

## Next steps:

- Develop a system for full oversight at the whole case level, enabling VSEOs to easily track progress term by term and identify timely intervention needs.
- Use the Get Information About a Pupil (GIAP) system to backfill prior attainment data for new to care children, supporting aspirational goals, appropriate challenge, and improved progress tracking.
- Continue developing the use of current attainment and contextual information in termly PEPs to better inform understanding of predictions.
- Develop a methodology for more accurate outcome predictions, allowing rigorous challenge to schools where a child may be underperforming relative to their potential.

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Phonics



## How we support:

- ✓ First PEPs are held in the term following a child's second birthday.
- ✓ Support and guidance are provided to Children's Social Care (CSC) and Foster Carers to secure high-quality early years provision.
- ✓ Assistance is offered with funding queries and eligibility.
- ✓ PPG+ is used to fund additional hours for children in the academic year before starting school when foster carers are not eligible for 30-hour funding.
- ✓ A multi-agency approach ensures strong links between the VS, Early Years Team, Portage, Health, and SEND teams.
- ✓ VSEO attends Early Years (EY) Forums and South East VS networks.
- ✓ Support is provided during transitions to new settings or school, with enhanced transition plans.
- ✓ Oversight is given to school applications for all children starting reception.
- ✓ Phonics PPG funds recommended strategies, including daily focus readers, catch-up phonics interventions, small group or 1:1 teaching, Letter Box Club, and Lexia.
- ✓ Phonics is a focus in PEPs for children in reception/Year 1, with specific goals.
- ✓ The EYFS PEP has been reviewed and amended to align with Statutory School Age (SSA) to ensure consistency and Reception cohort now use the SSA PEP as this template was more appropriate for teachers to add specific reading, writing and maths feedback, with an added EYFS attainment section.

## Impact:

- ❖ Early identification of need is effective, with three children currently being considered for EHCPs after early years provisions and a graduated response.
- ❖ Strong communication between multi-agency teams ensures regular sharing of information, practices, and guidance.
- ❖ Access to 30 hours of high-quality early years provision in the year before starting school has led to positive transitions, with schools noting successful outcomes like "child X transitioned to school brilliantly and is on track to meet Good Level of Development (GLD)."
- ❖ PEPs are of high quality, ensuring comprehensive support for children.
- ❖ Children access education at the earliest opportunity, promoting timely engagement and development

**Outcomes  
2023/24**

**5 out of 9 (56%) eligible  
children met Good  
Levels of Development**

**2 out of 6 children in  
Year 2 achieved the pass  
mark in Phonics retake.**

**9 out of 12 (75%) eligible children and 13 out of  
18 (75%) all CIC in Year 1 achieved the Phonics  
pass mark.**

**This is above the national average (59%), South  
West (51%), and BCP (50%).**

## Next steps:

- All VS and school staff receive training on the importance of early Speech, Communication and Language Needs (SCLN) identification and intervention.
- Implement the SCLN action plan and VS EYFS/Primary Team complete WellComm training on SkillGate
- Writing to the child using strengths-based language and avoiding stereotypes and labels to focus professionals on strengths-based support and outcomes

## How we support:

- ✓ Work closely with schools and hold them accountable (via PEP and Quality Assurance (QA) feedback) for reporting attainment and progress, particularly for children undergoing transitions.
- ✓ Ensure new schools are aware of prior attainment and the support needed.
- ✓ Rigorous data collection in every PEP to review progress and attainment for timely support .
- ✓ Use PPG in a targeted way to enhance intervention opportunities.
- ✓ Track prior attainment to focus on both factual and aspirational outcomes, understanding underlying ability, and challenging schools if targets are reduced.
- ✓ Increase focus on specific learning and teacher feedback to ensure PEP goals are meaningful and drive progress.
- ✓ Use data outcomes to inform support during the transition to Year 7, holding early PEPs to discuss all data from the child's education journey.
- ✓ Maintain focus on access arrangements within schools and advocate for when required.
- ✓ For children disappplied from SATs, attainment and progress data is still collected, analysed, and used to inform support.
- ✓ Understand the context of our cohorts, including SEN, In Borough (IB)/Out of Borough (OB) and placement moves.
- ✓ In 23/24, data-driven focus on Maths interventions for the Year 6 cohort.

## Impact:

- ❖ Early PEPs (within 20 days) have facilitated shared understanding and quick interventions, such as fast-tracking students into support for SATs and KS3 readiness, even if they don't meet the school's usual thresholds.
- ❖ Improved access arrangements and identification of SEND have better supported individual children's needs.
- ❖ A wider understanding across the multi-agency team has maximised children's academic potential.
- ❖ Data is used to inform future support and maintain an aspirational focus on outcomes.
- ❖ Data-driven identification of opportunities for accelerated learning, considering placement stability and cognitive aptitude, has enhanced educational progress.
- ❖ A planned focus on Maths intervention for the cohort has significantly increased attainment in the 2023/24 outcomes.

**Lower outcomes in 23-24, compared to 22-23, are in line with predictions for the 23-24 cohort based on prior attainment.**

## % Children who achieved their expected outcome:

Reading 69% Writing 65%, Maths 69%

- No. of children who **exceeded expectations**: 6 – children Reading (18%), 2 children Maths (6%), 2 children Writing (6%)
- No. of children who **did not meet Age Related Expectations (ARE)** when predicted to: 3 (9%) children in each core area.

2022/23

2023/24

% met Reading	% met Writing	% met Maths	% met GPS	% met Science	% met RWM	% met Reading	% met Writing	% met Maths	% met GPS	% met Science	% met RWM
65%	55%	40%	45%	63%	35%	40%	30%	50%	40%	50%	23%
75%	63%	44%	56%	67%	38%	50%	35%	50%	46%	46%	27%

## Next steps:

- Use the GIAP system to backfill prior attainment data for new-to-care children, enabling aspirational support, appropriate challenge, and better tracking of progress.
- Systematically use KS2 outcomes to provide context for progress and attainment through to GCSEs.
- Further develop understanding of the cohort's context earlier, recognising the impact of Early Learning Goals (ELG)/GLD and phonics on subsequent attainment outcomes, to enable early intervention.
- Continue to develop the use of current attainment and contextual information (on a termly basis) in PEPs to inform understanding of predictions.
- Develop a methodology for predicting outcomes more accurately, leading to timely intervention and support for individual children and cohorts.

# GCSE

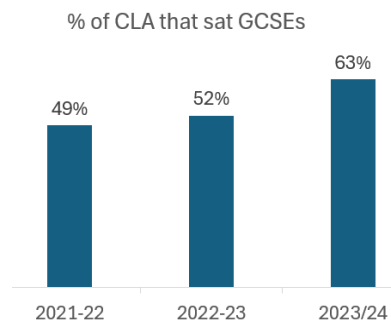
## How we support:

- ✓ Hold schools accountable for reporting student achievement and progress, particularly for children transferring schools or entering care during Key Stage 4.
- ✓ Collect rigorous data in every PEP to track progress.
- ✓ Use PPG for interventions like tuition to address learning gaps and accelerate progress.
- ✓ Track and utilise prior attainment to effectively target and challenge schools.
- ✓ Focus on specific academic feedback to ensure PEP goals are meaningful and drive progress.
- ✓ Start post-16 transition work early to reduce the risk of NEET.
- ✓ Maintain focus on access arrangements within schools and advocate for them when necessary.
- ✓ For children not in registered provision, collect, analyse, and use attainment and progress data to inform support and access to assessment.
- ✓ Advocate for access to Functional Skills qualifications for those not in school to ensure post-16 educational opportunities.
- ✓ Understand the context (EHCP, placement moves) of each Year 10/11 cohort to provide proactive support.

## Impact:

- ❖ There has been a year-on-year increase in the number and percentage of children taking GCSEs, reflecting improved academic engagement.
- ❖ A sharp focus on keeping children in registered provisions and AP has ensured better access to GCSEs.
- ❖ A wider understanding across the multi-agency team has effectively supported children's educational aspirations.
- ❖ The commissioned mentoring programme has led to a reduction in RON.
- ❖ Data-driven support for children entering care in KS4, with prior attainment information shared with new provisions/APs, has enhanced their educational continuity.
- ❖ Improved access arrangements have better accommodated individual needs.

GCSE comparisons for eligible CIC:	BCP 2023/24	National 2022/23 (latest available)
4+ Eng & Maths	24%	20%
5+ Eng & Maths	15%	9.5%



86% of Year 11 CIC in BCP schools sat GCSEs in English and Maths

## Next steps:

- Systematically use GIAP to backfill prior attainment data, enabling aspirational support, appropriate challenge, and better tracking of progress.
- Systematically use KS2 outcomes to provide context for progress and attainment through to GCSEs.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the cohort's context year on year to inform support and interventions.
- Continue to incorporate current attainment and contextual information (on a termly basis) in PEPs to enhance predictions.
- Develop a methodology for predicting outcomes with greater accuracy to guide intervention and support.

	2021/22			2022/23			2023/24		
	All LAC	Eligible	Not Eligible	All LAC	Eligible	Not Eligible	All LAC	Eligible	Not Eligible
No of pupils	45	25	20	62	44	18	73	48	25
% that took GCSEs	49%	60%	35%	52%	59%	42%	63.0%	72.9%	44.0%
4+ Eng OR Maths	27%	44%	5%	28%	37%	11%	27.4%	31.3%	20.0%
4+ Eng AND Maths	11%	20%	0%	18%	24%	5%	17.8%	20.8%	12.0%
5+ Eng OR Maths	16%	28%	0%	17%	22%	11%	20.5%	22.9%	16.0%
5+ Eng AND Maths	7%	12%	0%	10%	15%	5%	11.0%	12.5%	8.0%
National 4+ Eng AND Maths	20.9%	22.1%	15.6%	18.7%	20.0%	12.1%			
National 5+ Eng AND Maths	10.4%	11.0%	7.5%	9.1%	9.5%	6.6%			



# Post 16 Outcomes

## How we support:

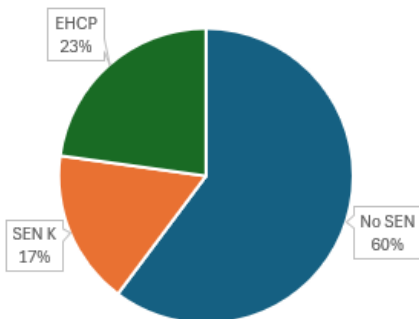
- ✓ Monitor children and Care Leavers at risk of withdrawal and poor attendance in Post-16 settings.
- ✓ Develop processes with local colleges to ensure that any decisions to withdraw or warnings provided to children are communicated to the VS and PA, enabling collaborative planning and support.
- ✓ Reengage students through direct work.
- ✓ Ensure Post-16 CIC and Care Leavers have stable relationships with Education Officers to improve access to information and guidance over time.
- ✓ Use PPG+ funding for Maths/English tuition, alternative courses, and addressing EET barriers to maintain engagement and confidence.
- ✓ Provide transition support from SSA to Post-16, attend Year 11 PEPs, and support the Risk of NEET programme, ensuring continuity of engagement and progress during the transition between Year 12/13 and 14.

## Impact:

- ❖ In 2023/24, 63 young people (58%) passed from Entry Level to Level 3/A Level, up from 10 in 2022/23. Additionally, 11 young people (10%) are continuing their studies, and 32% withdrew.
- ❖ 19 young people are studying at university, reflecting increased higher education engagement.
- ❖ 95% of Year 11 students progressed into Post 16 EET destinations for 2023/24, showing effective transition support.
- ❖ Promptly addressing weekly attendance concerns has reduced college withdrawals.
- ❖ Transition support starting in Year 11 has fostered positive, stable relationships with Education Officers, aiding smoother transitions.
- ❖ Enhanced tracking processes ensure accurate destination data and reduce unknown statuses.
- ❖ PPG+ funding enabled 12 UASC young people placed out of borough to attend ESOL provision when college courses were full, ensuring continued education.
- ❖ Clear distinction between NEET, EET, and meeting the Duty to Participate provides accurate status data, improving support and planning.

134

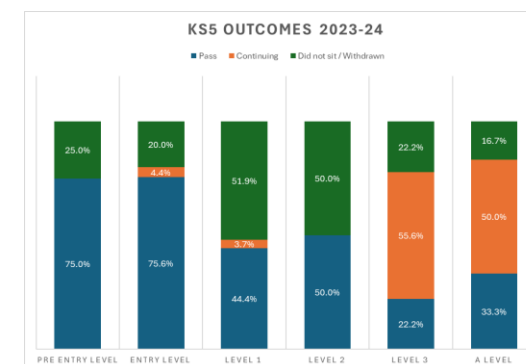
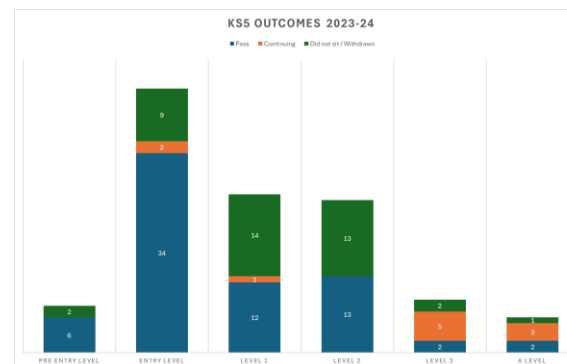
Year 12 and 13 SEND



## Year 12 and 13 NEETs

- 20/47 have SEND
- 12 EHCP
- 8 SEN K

Support in collaboration with SEND, attend annual reviews and ensure needs are met in provisions through PEP/ EET meetings



## Next steps:

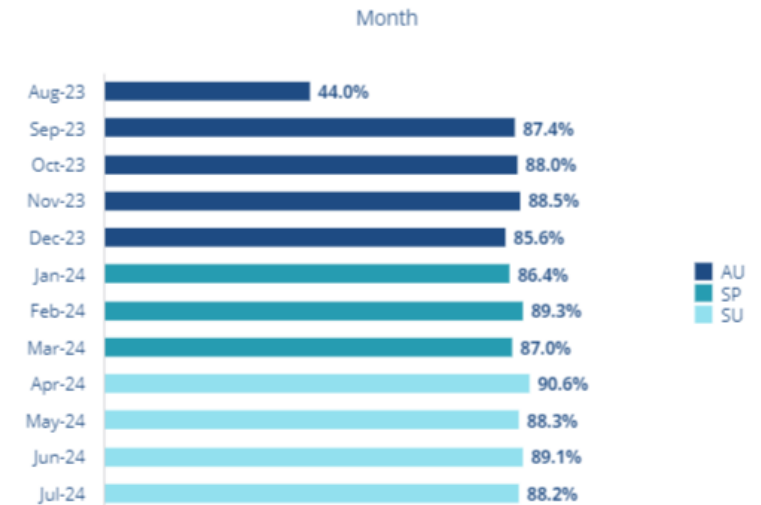
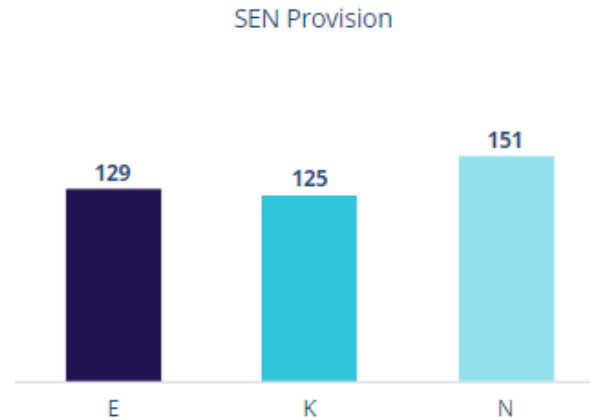
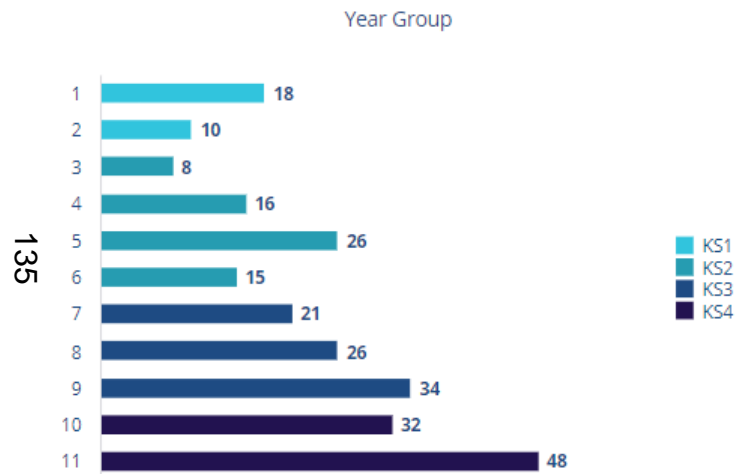
- Work with children, Care Leavers, and colleges to address challenges around the collection of attendance and achievement data, considering Data Protection regulations and information-sharing agreements.
- Focus on access to Level 3 and Higher Education aspiration and experience from an earlier age
- Embed termly tracking of 'on track/not on track' outcomes at an individual child level to identify concerns and intervene promptly.
- Utilise the GIAP system to backfill prior attainment data, enabling aspirational support, appropriate challenge, and better tracking of progress.

# SEND Overview

- ✓ There are 316 children in our care who have SEND.
- ✓ 177 children and Care Leavers have EHCPs in Reception to Year 14 (107 Statutory School Age (SSA) and 70 Post 16/18).
- ✓ This is a similar percentage of SEND compared to previous years

## SSA (R to Year 11) with EHCPs = 129

- 66% of SSA with an EHCP have Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs (SEMH) identified as the primary need
- 34% have complex needs - Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), SLCN, physical and profound/ severe).



### For CIC with an EHCPs not in full time education:

- 20 NOR with SEND - 18 EHCP, 2 SEN Support
  - 16 were attending Alternative Provision (14 EHCP and 2 SEN Support)
  - 14 living in OLAs
- The 2 children with EHCPs and no provision, both had consultations for AP / school place at July 24.

### For CIC with an EHCP at SSA:

- 78% have been in care for 12mths+
- 49% live in OLA vs 51% live in BCP
- 43 Female and 86 Male
- 66% list SEMH as primary need

### For CIC with EHCP in Schools with a Requires Improvement (RI) rating =10 children

- 1 in Primary, 9 in Secondary
- 6 in specialist provision
- 3 in BCP provisions, 7 in OLA provisions
- For 9 placements, either schools were not RI when placed or child was attending school before entering care

### How we support:

- ✓ The Virtual School collaborates with BCP SEND and other LA SEND colleagues to ensure timely provision for CIC with EHCPs.
- ✓ A dedicated SEND VS Officer oversees support and acts as the central contact for CIC moving or living in OLA.
- ✓ PPG+ funds additional educational support, including timely alternative provision following care placement changes, to minimise time out of education during consultation periods.
- ✓ Carers receive advice on EHCP and SEND support from the VS
- ✓ Educational Psychologists (EPs) work with the VS to provide online support for carers and DTs.
- ✓ Additional transition support is offered at Year 6 and Year 11, focusing on early transition reviews.
- ✓ The Virtual School attends SEND EHCP, Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA, and post-16 panels to advise on CIC matters and contribute to statutory advice for EHCNA and quality assurance alongside SEND.

### Progress across all year groups from Years 1 to 10 for children with an EHCP:

- 66% made expected or better progress across all areas in Summer 24.
- 61.2% made expected or better progress in core subjects (English, Reading, Writing, Maths) in Summer 24
- 26.5% made ARE/ Grade 4 GCSE above across all areas in Summer 24
- 12.72% were ARE/ Grade 4 GCSE or above in core subjects (English, Reading, Writing, Maths) in Summer 24

### Impact:

- ❖ Schools contacting the Virtual School outside PEP meetings for EHCP support has led to early barrier resolution, reducing exclusions and meeting children's needs.
- ❖ Retaining SEND files until plans are finalized has minimized delays in securing school places, ensuring educational continuity, especially for children moving across boroughs.
- ❖ Supporting schools in meeting statutory duties, applying the Graduated Response, and identifying needs early has resulted in timely and effective interventions.
- ❖ The Virtual School and social workers' focus on addressing unconscious bias has ensured accurate identification of SEND needs in CIC, leading to appropriate support.
- ❖ Collaboration between education and social care professionals has provided consistent support for CIC, reducing absences and suspensions.
- ❖ Considering the educational impact of placement moves for CIC with EHCPs has ensured smoother transitions, especially for out-of-area placements, leading to better stability and continuity.
- ❖ Improved SEND knowledge among Social Workers, Personal Advisors (PA), and DT teams has facilitated early identification and support for CIC, enhancing their educational experiences and outcomes.

- Students did not make expected progress for a variety of reasons including placement and school moves, missing episodes and delay in finding education to be able to meet needs of our more complex cohort.
- Tuition and mentoring schemes are implemented to support our cohort achieve a well-balanced curriculum when there are delays in sourcing new education provisions.

### Next Steps:

- **Embed Processes:** Integrate Inclusion, SEND, and VS processes for identifying and providing AP for children and Care Leavers under EHCNA, especially when schools cannot meet needs or in cases of school avoidance.
- **Clarify Roles:** Create an overview of roles within social care, VS, and SEND for children and Care Leavers moving out of the LA to ensure clarity and avoid delays.
- **Review Support:** Assess VS support for children and Care Leavers with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), supporting the Child Health and Disability (CHAD) team and those in specialist residential settings or living with parents, to ensure the PEP process adds value.
- **Prioritise CIC:** Ensure CIC are prioritised for EHCNA, assessments, and consultations to prevent delays and loss of information during care placement moves.



## How we support:

- ✓ A dedicated VSEO works with provisions and social care to support UASC in and out of education.
- ✓ Online and face-to-face tuition is provided for UASC unable to access provision due to college entry points.
- ✓ Training for educational provisions is offered through International Rescue/Healing Classrooms.
- ✓ Twice-monthly 333 Drop-in sessions (Club Class) assist with accessing EET opportunities and cultural induction.
- ✓ Cultural and group activities foster community and relationships - FTY Lab, Durdle Door, cricket, Jamie's Farm residential, and the UASC football team
- ✓ UASC are invited to university visits to promote aspiration.
- ✓ The VSEO attends Further Education Colleges weekly for drop-in sessions and to collaborate on engagement, attendance, progress, and support.
- ✓ The Seed to Plate programme aids wellbeing and cultural induction.
- ✓ PPG+ focuses on ESOL needs and college support when places are available.
- ✓ We work with schools and colleges to support religious/cultural festivals.

## Impact:

- ❖ At SSA, all current UASCs are enrolled in school full-time.
- ❖ The percentage of UASC who are NEET has significantly decreased from 45% in April 2023 to 18% in November 2024 for Year 12 and 13. Currently, only 2% of 16-17-year-old UASC are NEET, though this number fluctuates as they enter care.
- ❖ 90% of all UASC enrolled in ESOL courses have achieved 2 or more qualifications in functional skills and/or personal development, highlighting their academic progress and skill development.
- ❖ 93% of UASC and Care Leavers enrolled in ESOL courses were retained in their education settings and are either continuing or progressing to the next level of study, indicating strong retention and progression rates.
- ❖ BCP College now offers continuous entry up to the February half-term, providing greater flexibility and access to education for UASC.
- ❖ The time taken to apply for and access college has improved significantly: in 2022, the average time after entering care until enrolment was over 60 days; by 2024, this was reduced to 15.4 days, ensuring quicker access to education.
- ❖ Upon entering care, all UASC are provided with access to an online learning programme and app, facilitating immediate educational engagement..

83% passed  
GCSE/ FS Maths  
90% passed ESOL  
English course

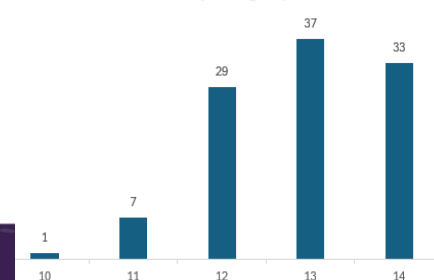
Reduction in  
UASCs (age 16-17)  
who are NEET from  
17% to 10% from  
end of Nov 23 to  
24.



## Next steps:

- Continue to expand partnerships with local organisations to provide additional resources and support services for UASC.
- Develop ESOL programmes with alternative providers to offer accredited outcomes for UASC outside the normal entry points for local colleges.
- Continue to create and implement enrichment projects and activities to enhance ESOL learning.
- Create a film for UASCs explaining their entitlements and introduce support.
- In collaboration with Children's Social Care, design a UASC induction programme to offer cultural orientation support for all UASCs entering care.
- Explore options with colleges for access to vocational courses alongside ESOL.

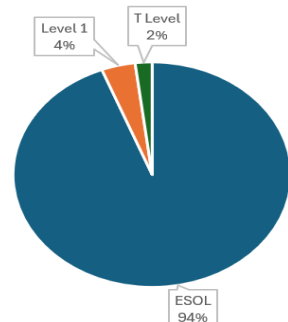
UASCs by Year group



107 UASCs by year group



UASC course entries 23-24



## Post 16 - Years 12 and 13

### How we support:

- ✓ Termly PEP meetings support EET progression, NEET reengagement, needs assessment, and ensure children and Care Leavers' views are central to planning with social care and education providers.
- ✓ Reengagement through direct work: Education Officers engage with children, Care Leavers, carers, and housing providers, offering Impartial Advice and Guidance (IAG) for NEET and tailored reengagement projects.
- ✓ Collaborative partnerships: Use Post-16 funding to create bespoke offers with local providers.
- ✓ Attendance monitoring: Track Years 12 and 13 attendance for timely intervention and course completion.
- ✓ College-based support: Weekly staff presence in key colleges for CPD, student support, and drop-in sessions.
- ✓ Enhanced access: Use PPG funding for Maths/English tuition, alternative courses, and EET barrier solutions (e.g., mentoring, work experience).
- ✓ Transition support: SSA to Post-16 summer transition, attendance at Year 11 PEPs, and Risk of NEET programme.
- ✓ Network engagement: Engage in professional networks and collaborate with the Participation Team to integrate youth perspectives.

**95% sustained destinations past Day 43 compared to 89% in 2022/23.**

### Impact:

- ❖ Exclusions and withdrawals by Day 43 decreased from 16 in 2021-22 to 6 in 2023-24, indicating improved retention and behaviour.
- ❖ Education planning and support on PEPs have enhanced Pathway Plans, leading to more effective educational strategies.
- ❖ Increased participation in drop-in sessions at the Hub has provided greater support and resources, contributing to well-being and academic success.
- ❖ Enhanced communication with DTs, social workers, colleges, providers, and carers has resulted in tailored support for Years 12, 13, and 14, improving outcomes and personal development.
- ❖ Trauma-Informed Practice training has increased awareness in colleges, fostering collaborative support and reducing dropout rates.
- ❖ The RON Programme, starting in Years 10, 11, and Autumn Term Year 12, has resulted in lower dropout and NEET rates, ensuring smoother transitions and continued engagement.
- ❖ Direct work has reduced the NEET figure demonstrating effective interventions.
- ❖ More children and Care Leavers have reengaged and are progressing to course enrolment, showing improved engagement and prospects.

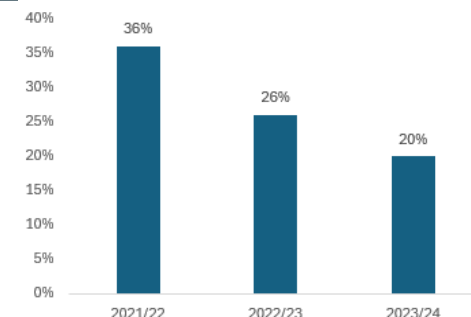
**NEETs age 16/17 –  
reduced from 22%  
in September 24 to  
18% currently**

**Average post-16  
attendance for  
2023-24**

**78.55%**

**12 children and CL in Years 12  
and 13 transitioned into EET  
since September this academic  
year.**

NEETs in Years 12 and 13



### Next Steps:

- Further develop the NEET reduction strategy as part of the LA's local offer and VS contributions.
- Create tailored programmes for NEETs and UASCs to prepare for reengagement and EET with neighbouring VS.
- Identify CIC and CLs with higher education aspirations early, offering personalised plans with academic and wider support.
- Conduct weekly reviews to track AP engagement, progress, and EET involvement.
- Partner with local providers (e.g., B&P College, Kingston Maurwood College, Seed to Plate) to create flexible programmes for NEET youth, including vocational pathways.
- Work with education providers to design tailored programmes for NEET children and Care Leavers, including alternative and vocational training with rolling enrollment opportunities.

## How we support:

- ✓ Recruitment of KS5, Care Leavers and Careers Lead
- ✓ Extended Care Leaver offer to age 21/25 with bi-annual EET meetings for Year 14 and annual contact for Year 15, regardless of location.
- ✓ Joint tracking with Personal Advisors (PA) on Mosaic for a unified data source.
- ✓ Increased partnerships for EET access, including work experience and employment opportunities.
- ✓ Weekly drop-in sessions at 333 for Care Leavers to support EET engagement and ambition.
- ✓ Weekly/fortnightly college visits with attendance review meetings.
- ✓ Training programme for PAs on employability, funding, and higher education support.
- ✓ PPG used to support EET, NEET opportunities, work experience, apprenticeships, and further/higher education.



## Impact :

- ❖ PAs attend PEP and EET meetings for all Care Leavers in Years 13 and 14.
- ❖ Joint work with the Participation Team ensures authentic young person input to develop services, offers, and individual support.
- ❖ Education/employment planning in Pathway Plans identifies and supports needs, views, and goals.
- ❖ NEET rates for Care Leavers in Years 13 and 14 have reduced.
- ❖ Increased engagement for Year 15, with better response to contact and drop-in sessions at 333.
- ❖ Engagement with John Lewis partnership Happier Futures led to work experience provision and interview success.

**Currently there are 19 Care Leavers studying at University at Undergraduate and Masters level**

**“ ...is a truly exceptional student who is currently completing a Masters in Nuclear Physics as the University of Manchester which he started in September 2023. ... achieved a 1<sup>st</sup> class honours degree (highest in his year) for his undergraduate degree in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Hull.**

**Continued support throughout HE by consistent Education Officer to advocate for securing additional financial support from PPG funding.”**

## Next steps:

- Encourage CIC and CLs to aspire to Higher Education pathways early, offering exposure through visits, careers advice, and personalised plans with academic and wider support (finance, housing). Aim for 7% of CLs in Higher Education by 2026.
- Consistent presence at Insight and Care Leaver events to build relationships and maintain visibility with children and Care Leavers.
- Develop partnerships and employment opportunities with organisations like Waitrose and within Local Authority Services.

## How we support:

- ✓ Use an online PEP/EET system with Welfare Call.
- ✓ PEPs/EETs are held termly for CIC from 2.5 to 17 years and Care Leavers in Years 13 and 14, with VS attendance at all PEPs/EETs for Years R to 14.
- ✓ All PEPs focus on attendance, attainment, progress, academic reviews, targets, and PPG allocation.
- ✓ Post-18 EETs focus on training, employability, and reducing NEETs.
- ✓ Termly reviews at DT Networks and social care team meetings focus on improving PEP completion and development.
- ✓ Regular PEP training for new SWs and DTs.
- ✓ All PEPs are quality assured by an independent Virtual School Officer, with feedback for improvements.
- ✓ PEP/EET reviews PPG impact using the EEF Menu of Approaches to inform future spending for Statutory School Age and Post-16, both in (EET) and out of (NEET) education, employment, or training.
- ✓ PEPs are developed and reviewed based on data requirements and DT feedback.

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## Impact:

- ❖ Improvements in social care contributions on PEPs, especially within the CIC team.
- ❖ 98% of PEPs were completed on time in the Summer, and 99% in the Autumn term.
- ❖ 97% of PEPs completed by DTs are of 'good' quality.
- ❖ All PEPs include attainment and teacher feedback to inform targets.
- ❖ PEPs are independently Quality Assured with additional QA from SLT and other VS Heads.
- ❖ The DT mentor identifies and supports schools with PEP quality issues, leading to improved DT contributions.
- ❖ Colleges now complete PEPs for Post-16, with positive improvements in tutor feedback and target focus.
- ❖ Pupil Premium is showing improved impact.
- ❖ The PEP has evolved to provide precise attainment, progress, attendance, and SEMH information, ensuring PPG+ is ringfenced and needs-driven.

At the end of 2021-22, 83% of PEP contributions by DTs were rated good or better. This has consistently improved year on year, reaching 97% by the end of 2023-24.

Supporting DTs to improve teacher feedback has led to SMART targets based on student progress and needs, incorporating child feedback and effectively using PPG+.

	Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term
	% total PEPs red at final QA	% total PEPs red at final QA	% total PEPs red at final QA
Total % of PEPs rated as red	25%	22.9%	17%
Social Worker contribution is reason for red rating	22%	15%	14%
DT contribution is reason for red rating	8%	8%	3%

## Next steps:

- Implement an escalation system for non-completion of PEPs/EETs by social care.
- Increase management oversight to 20% of QA to identify moderation and training needs.
- The VS will meet with Heads of Education and Social Care to focus on improving PEP completion standards.
- Use evidence-based approaches to track and assess the impact of PPG+ for individual children.
- PEP completion and QA will prioritise the focus on Writing to the Child.



**Pupil Voice: We have a focus on hearing the voices of our children and Care Leavers and supporting other professionals to do the same.**

**How we support:**

- ✓ DT training for gaining Pupil Voice – mainstream and specialist.
- ✓ Working alongside schools to use strategies such as PATH, Draw and Talk, rating scales, sorting activities and building day-to-day conversation to gather pupil voice
- ✓ Reviewed the Pupil Voice section of PEP to ensure broader scope and authenticity when gathering ideas and views – based on feedback from children.
- ✓ Children attend their PEPs and share their views, school achievements and aspirations – we record their thinking and expect to see evidence of their views in target-setting/provision
- ✓ Invite children to Virtual School events to share their voices in a safe environment to develop understanding among professionals

**Impact:**

- ❖ Positive feedback and evidence of use of strategies in Pupil Voice responses and methods for collation from schools.
- ❖ Only seven schools were responsible for the absence of Pupil Voice in PEPs
- ❖ Children and Care Leavers were confident to share their views at the annual conference and participate in the panel and in the audience
- ❖ 43% children and Care Leavers attended their PEPs this term so far (end Oct 24)

**Next Steps:**

- Schools identified will receive targeted feedback and training for PV collection in the 2024/25 academic year as part of the RI programme for schools.
- Training and focus on social care collation of PV for children and Care Leavers NOR or NEET.

## Pupil Premium Grant+

### How we support:

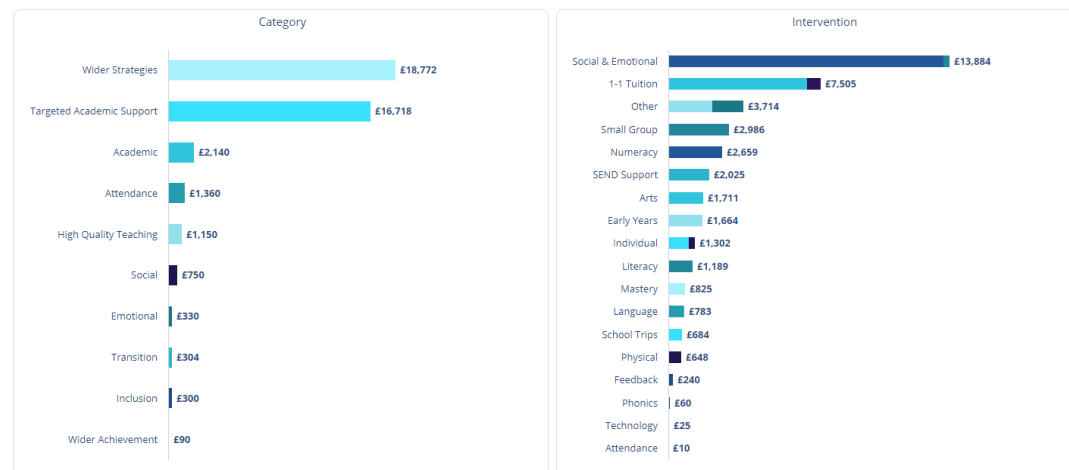
- ✓ Only £570 of the £2570 funding per child is retained, with the rest allocated to support CIC in making progress within schools.
- ✓ Centrally retained funds are used to quickly distribute PPG funding after emergency relocations, ensuring access to suitable AP and supporting transitions back to full-time education.
- ✓ Funds also support outcome-based group activities for those not in education or at risk of NEET.
- ✓ The impact of PPG is reviewed in each PEP to analyse spending and improve engagement, achievement, and attainment.
- ✓ Evidence-based approaches (e.g., Education Endowment Fund (EEF) Menu of Approaches) and regular PEP/EET reviews track the use and impact of PPG+, focusing on individual needs and strategic spending for cohort needs.
- ✓ PPG funds are used for programmes like BCHA, ESOL, Risk of NEET, Thrive, and Jamie's Farm.

### Next Steps:

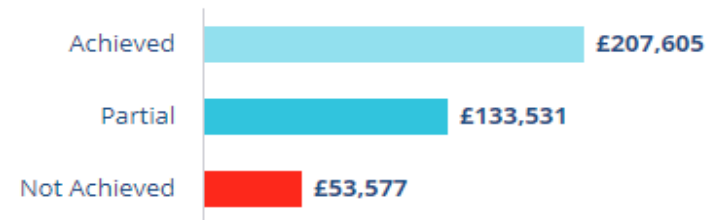
- Allocate PPG within PEPs for interventions to help CIC process and release emotions, manage low mood, anxiety, or trauma responses that may impact their ability to engage in learning.
- Further analyse data on spend in relation to the EEF menu of approaches to identify the most impactful strategies for our CIC.

### Impact:

- ❖ In 2023-24, 86.4% of funded goals that were impact-reviewed were either 'Achieved' or 'Partially achieved'.
- ❖ The main areas of need this academic year are SEMH and 1-1 tuition.
- ❖ PPG funds have been used effectively to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- ❖ Resources are allocated for maximum impact, leading to improved outcomes for those needing additional support.
- ❖ The positive impact of PPG supports continued funding at Post-16 following the pilot review and enhances future planning for identifying key areas that drive engagement and outcomes.



### Review of funded goals 2023-24



# Transition and Educational Stability



## How we support:

- ✓ Education planning is central to care planning, involving CEG, placement approval forms, Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) focus in CIC meetings, and team meeting attendance (SEND, Social Worker (SW), IRO).
- ✓ Carer training focuses on careers and transitions.
- ✓ For all school changes, a PEP is completed within the first 20 days.
- ✓ Strong challenge to the Corporate Parenting Board is maintained.
- ✓ There is challenge and support for phased entry into specialist provisions.
- ✓ Reception starters: Summer PEP collaboration, transition meetings, and links to early years SEND colleagues.
- ✓ Primary transition: Yr6 Summer meetings with new and current schools, providing secondary-ready equipment and supporting Yr7 PEPs, with carers checked over the summer.
- ✓ Risk Of NEET programme and Year 11 transition support.
- ✓ Extended EETs for Care Leavers, including Year 14.
- ✓ Enhanced transition packages for all school changes (in-year), including visits, opportunities to ask questions, meeting key adults, transition meetings, transfer of interventions, and mentoring support where needed.
- ✓ Educational stability is ensured through regular reviews, multi-agency meetings, and responsive VS support during transition phases, with close monitoring of attendance.
- ✓ Support and advise social care on timely school applications, with tracking and monitoring in place.

## Impact:

- ❖ There has been improved stability in education and employment for Post 16 students and Care Leavers, with reduced NEET at the start of Post 16 and at transition to Year 14.
- ❖ For SSA, required provision is in place upon arrival at new schools, with early identification of needed adjustments, ensuring the child feels prepared and continues therapeutic intervention where possible.
- ❖ Clear communication is established between schools and professionals before, during, and after transition.
- ❖ Phased entries into specialist provisions are monitored weekly, with time limits and persistent encouragement towards full-time education.
- ❖ Confidence for carers and parents has improved, with opportunities for feedback, questions, and familiar contact in new schools.

## The Risk of NEET Programme supports Year 11 students facing challenges with SEND, attendance, and readiness for Post 16 transitions through direct work.

- The programme helped 9 students with no provision and significant absence, achieving an average attendance of 63% at sessions.
- Of the 9 students, 8 secured Post 16 placements, with 6 (67%) remaining in sustained education or training.
- The programme will be expanded in 2024/25.

## Next steps:

- To support Year 7/8 and 8/9 transitions, a focus on understanding risk factors will help improve attendance and reduce suspensions, as highlighted in the Impact Ed review.
- A new Lead Teacher has been appointed with a transition focus. Data will drive an understanding of prior attainment, assisting receiving schools in setting aspirational targets and expectations for progress.
- Additionally, lessons will be drawn from other local authorities regarding successful transition planning.

	2023/24 BCP	2024/25 BCP	National comparison
<b>Year 11 transition to EET</b>	79%	94%	Not available
<b>Sustained destinations at 30<sup>th</sup> October</b>	81%	86%	75%

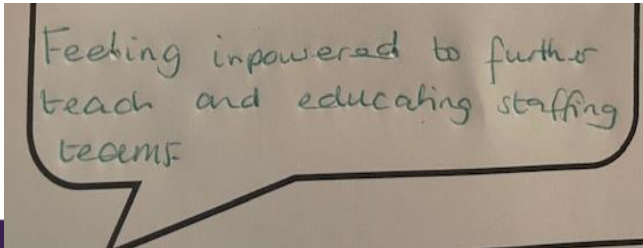
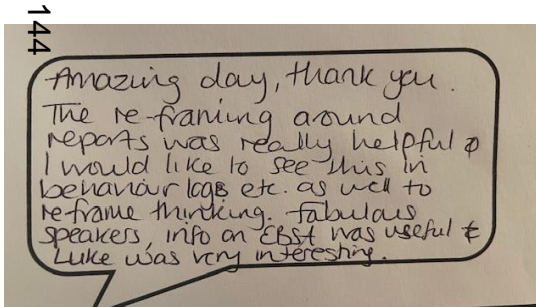
# School Development

## How we support:

- ✓ Development of a 2-year training programme and VS Annual Conference.
- ✓ Pupil voice and Graduated Response training/resources for schools.
- ✓ Restructure Lead roles to include Transition and School Development Lead.
- ✓ Provide training on "Writing to the Child" within PEPs.
- ✓ Commission Whole School Inset video and short clips.
- ✓ Governor Training.
- ✓ Support provisions in developing Relational and Trauma-Informed practices and policies and reduce suspensions through 'Excluded to Included' training, reintegration meetings, and planning.

## Impact:

- DT attendance at VS training has increased: Conference attendance rose from 65 in 2023 to 87 in 2024, and New to Role/Autumn Network attendance increased from 67 in 2023 to 97 in 2024.
- DTs are incorporating strengths-based language in PEP paperwork, writing "to the child," which has improved the personalisation and positivity of the documents.
- DTs are planning and delivering whole school training following VS events, enhancing overall school practices and knowledge.
- Link governors have a better understanding of their role, with positive feedback such as: "Thank you, some useful questions to ask when I get back. Very informative."
- DTs are using the audit tool and reporting system for governors to enhance understanding and improve school provision, support, and outcomes.



## Next steps:

- Provide half-termly VS newsletters, presentations at HT briefings, and develop an intranet facility for DTs and Headteachers.
- Embed the use of the audit tool and reporting system for Governors by DTs.
- Collaborate with Bournemouth University to provide VS training for Social Work degree programme.
- Audit the impact of the training programme and identify further school needs.
- Ensure all VS and school staff receive training on the importance of early SLCN identification and intervention.



# Careers and Activities

## How we support:

- ✓ Organise CIC attendance and engagement at careers fairs, university visits, and vocational workshops.
- ✓ Provide tailored information and support for all children with an EHCP to map their Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Pathway.
- ✓ Facilitate early SEND phase transfer reviews and consultations to ensure timely placement and support.
- ✓ Ensure access to BKSb assessments to identify learning needs and support progression for those NOR/NEET.
- ✓ Build strong partnerships with organisations to replicate opportunities offered by Health Services University (HSU), Military Preparation College Totton (MPCT), Waitrose, and Seed to Plate in other areas.
- ✓ Foster engagement and develop experiences and aspirations through residential and day activities.

## 45 Impact:

- Better-informed decisions and enhanced motivation have led to an increase in Year 11 students sustaining EET after transitioning to Year 12.
- Children with an EHCP have clear, structured plans for their future, boosting independence, employability, and successful transitions to adulthood.
- Improved access to valuable opportunities, including vocational and real-world experiences, has aligned with children's aspirations.
- Children report that these experiences build self-confidence, foster teamwork skills, and create clearer goals, leading to improved academic and vocational outcomes.

## Next steps:

- Provide training to professionals and carers on carer development pathways by March 2025
- Plan early career engagement opportunities for Key Stage 1 and 2 students
- Collaborate with Southeast Virtual Schools and Youth Sports to co-create a Youth Led sports programme
- Submit a bid for Boys Impact funding to develop further opportunities
- Develop an activity programme to enhance SEMH and life experiences support opportunities



University visits  
 Jamie's Farm  
 Seed to plate  
 UASC football team  
 Conference  
 Online Cooking  
 Courses - Leith Kitchen  
 AUB fun days  
 Boys Impact day

MPCT visits  
 Quay Riders  
 Celebration events  
 Storm break  
 EID Iftar  
 KMC  
 Absolute Music  
 Horse Course  
 Waitrose Project  
 BCHA

"When I play football with the team, I forget about other things, I enjoy playing together. When we do not have football, I miss it, I am bored and then have too much time to think about things, so football is good!"

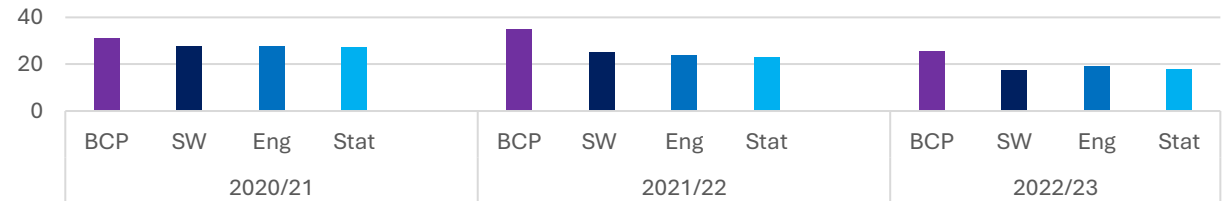
## How we are raising the profile of Children with a Social Worker (CWSW):

- ✓ Monitoring of attendance via Inclusion Dashboard
- ✓ Monthly reporting of attendance trends
- ✓ Monthly monitoring of Key Performance Indicators for CWSW across SEND and School Inclusion Teams via Education and Skills Performance Action Group Scorecard
- ✓ Monthly Children of Concern Meeting to highlight where additional oversight or intervention is required
- ✓ Directly linking with Elective Home Education (EHE), Children Missing from Education (CME), Alternative Provision, Attendance and SEND Teams to maintain oversight of CWSW cohort

## Impact:

- ❖ Improved multi-agency coordination has strengthened support for CWSW who are educationally vulnerable.
- ❖ Persistent absenteeism in the Child Protection (CP) cohort has decreased.
- ❖ Permanent exclusions for CWSW have been reduced.
- ❖ Suspensions for children on CP plans have decreased.
- ❖ KS4 outcomes consistently outperform comparator groups.

CWSW KS4 English + Maths at L2 (4+)



Child in Need (CiN) achieving 4+ in English and Maths 2022/23:

**BCP: 25.6%**

South West: 17.5%

Statistical Neighbours: 17.68%

England: 19.1%

CiN achieving 5+ in English and Maths 2022/23:

**BCP: 12.2%**

South West: 8.6%

Statistical Neighbours: 10%

England: 10.63%

CiN EBacc Entry 2022/23:

**BCP: 14.6%**

South West: 7.1%

Statistical Neighbours: 10.95%

England: 11.7%

## Next steps:

- Build on existing successes at KS4 and focus on narrowing the attainment gap between CWSW and their peers
- Investigate causes of variable outcomes for CWSW at KS2
- Improve oversight of Ever-6 CWSW cohort
- Increase numbers of CWSW attending mainstream settings and improve monitoring of CWSW who are in unregulated provision
- Develop suite of resources to enhance and support parental engagement with education
- Attendance, suspensions and exclusions to be a focus on the QA of CIN and CP plans





### How we support:

- ✓ The BCP Virtual School provides advice, guidance and information to schools, parents, guardians, and professionals around improving the educational outcomes of Previously Looked-After Children who are attending BCP Schools, irrespective of where they live.
- ✓ The Virtual School also to provide advice, guidance and information, on request, to *all* kinship carers with special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders, regardless of whether their child was previously in the care of the local authority.

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**“Thank you for all you have done. We owe you so much.”**

Feedback from SGO Carer who had been struggling to secure suitable education for their grandson

### Impact:

- ❖ Successfully applied to RNCSF for a Previously Looked-After Child
- ❖ Close collaboration with Aspire Adoption has expanded access to a wider network through Adoption and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) support groups and facilitated applications to the Adoption/SGO Support Fund.
- ❖ Developing links with Kinship.org and the South-West Kinship network has strengthened support and resources for kinship carers.

### Next steps:

- Further develop links with local kinship carer network
- Link SGO support offer with internal offer once responsibility is transferred across from Aspire
- Strengthen links to Royal National Children's Springboard Foundation (RNCSF)
- Work with fostering team to develop training offer for kinship carers



# Acronyms



- AP – Alternative Provision
- ARE – Age Related Expectations
- ASC - Autistic Spectrum Condition
- CEYP – Care Experienced Young People/ Person
- CHAD - Child Health and Disability
- CIC – Child/ Children in our Care
- CiN – Child in Need
- CL – Care Leaver
- CME - Children Missing from Education
- CP – Child Protection
- CWSW – Children with a Social Worker
- DT – Designated Teacher
- EEF - Education Endowment Fund
- EET – Education, Employment and Training
- EBSA – Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- EHE - Elective Home Education
- ELG – Early Learning Goals
- ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

- EHCP – Education and Health Care Plan
- EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage
- GDS – Greater Depth attainment
- GIAP – Get Information About Pupil service
- GLD – Good Level of Development
- HSU - Health Services University
- IAG – Impartial Advice and Guidance
- IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer
- KS – Key Stage
- LA – Local Authorities
- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulties
- MPCT - Military Preparation College Totton
- NEET – Not in Education, Employment and Training
- NOR – Not On Roll
- OLA – Other Local Authority
- PAs – Personal Advisors
- PEP – Personal Education Plan

- PEx – Permanent Exclusion
- PfA – Preparation for Adulthood
- PLAC – Post Looked After Child
- PMOE – Pupil Missing Out on Education
- PPG – Pupil Premium Grant
- PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
- QA – Quality Assurance
- RI – Requires Improvement (Ofsted Rating)
- RON – Risk of NEET
- RNCSEF – Royal National Children’s Springboard Foundation
- SCLN - Speech, Communication and Language Needs
- SEMH – Social Emotional and Mental Health
- SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- SGO – Special Guardianship Order
- SSA – Statutory School Age
- UASC - Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
- VSEO – Virtual School Education Officer

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Work Plan</b>
Meeting date	10 June 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review, update and confirm its Work Plan.</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	The Council's Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda

Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – O&S is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

### **Background –**

1. All Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) bodies are required by the Constitution to consider work priorities and set these out in a Work Plan. When approved, this should be published with each agenda.
2. It is good practice for the Work Plan to be kept under regular review by the Committee. Between meetings O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs, in consultation with officers, suggest updates to the Work Plan to ensure proposed topics remain timely, fit for purpose and allow sufficient time for report preparation as appropriate. The Committee is now asked to review, update and/ or confirm the latest Work Plan update. See the Work Plan attached at Appendix B to this report.

### **Principles of Good Scrutiny**

3. The Constitution requires that the Work Plan of O&S committees shall consist of work aligned to the principles of the function. The BCP Council O&S function is based upon six principles:
  - Contributes to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend';
  - A member led and owned function – seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development;
  - Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process;
  - Engages in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence;
  - Contributes to and reflects the vision and priorities of the Council;
  - Agility – able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.

### **Process for agreeing Work Plan items**

4. An O&S committee may take suggestions from a variety of sources to form its Work Plan. This may include suggestions from members of the public, officers of the Council, Portfolio Holders, the Cabinet and Council, members of the O&S Committee, and other Councillors who are not on the Committee.
5. The Constitution requires that all suggestions for O&S work will be accompanied by detail outlining the background to the issue suggested, the proposed method of undertaking the work and likely timescale associated, and the anticipated

outcome and value to be added by the work proposed. No item of work shall join the Work Plan of the O&S Committee without an assessment of this information.

6. Any councillor may request that an item of business be considered by an O&S Committee. Councillors are asked to complete a form outlining the request, which is appended to this report at Appendix C. The same process will apply to requests for scrutiny from members of the public.
7. A copy of the most recent Cabinet Forward Plan will be supplied to O&S Committees at each meeting for reference when determining items of pre-decision scrutiny. The latest version is supplied as Appendix D to this report.

### **Resources to support O&S work**

8. The Constitution requires that the O&S Committees take into account the resources available to support their proposals for O&S work. This includes consideration of councillor availability, officer time and financial resources. Careful and regular assessment of resources will ensure that there is appropriate resource available to support work across the whole O&S function, and that any work established can be carried out in sufficient depth and completed in a timely way to enable effective outcomes.
9. It is good practice for O&S Committees to agree a maximum of two/ three substantive agenda items per meeting. This will provide sufficient time for Committees to take a 'deep dive' approach to scrutiny work, which is likely to provide more valuable outcomes. A large amount of agenda items can lead to a 'light touch' approach to all items of business, and also limit the officer and councillor resource available to plan for effective scrutiny of selected items.
10. O&S Committees are advised to carefully select their working methods to ensure that O&S resource is maximised. A variety of methods are available for O&S Committees to undertake work and are not limited to the receipt of reports at Committee meetings. These may include:
  - Working Groups;
  - Sub-Committees;
  - Tak and finish groups;
  - Inquiry Days;
  - Rapporteurs (scrutiny member champions);
  - Consideration of information outside of meetings – including report circulation/ briefing workshops/ briefing notes.

Further detail on O&S working methods are set out in the Constitution and in Appendix A – Terms of Reference for O&S Committees.

### **Options Appraisal**

11. The O&S Committee is asked to review, update and confirm its Work Plan, taking account of the supporting documents provided and including the determination of any new requests for scrutiny. This will ensure member ownership of the Work Plan and that reports can be prepared in a timely way. Should the Committee not confirm its forthcoming priorities, reports may not be able to be prepared in a timely way and best use of the meeting resource may not be made.

### **Summary of financial implications**

12. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The Committee should note that when establishing a Work Plan, the Constitution

requires that account be taken of the resources available to support proposals for O&S work. Advice on maximising the resource available to O&S Committees is set out in paragraphs 9 to 11 above.

### **Summary of legal implications**

13. The Council's Constitution requires that all O&S bodies set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda. The recommendation proposed in this report will fulfil this requirement.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

14. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

15. There are no sustainability resources implications arising from this report.

### **Summary of public health implications**

16. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

### **Summary of equality implications**

17. There are no equality implications arising from this report. Any councillor and any member of the public may make suggestions for overview and scrutiny work. Further detail on this process is included within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

18. There is a risk of challenge to the Council if the Constitutional requirement to establish and publish a Work Plan is not met.

### **Background papers**

None.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference

Appendix B - Current Children's Services O&S Committee Work Plan

Appendix C – Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny

Appendix D – Current Cabinet Forward Plan



## **BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD / COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a statutory role fulfilled by Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet in an authority operating a Leader and Cabinet model. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of Council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account.

#### **PRINCIPLES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Overview and Scrutiny function is based upon six principles:

1. Contributes to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend'.
2. A member led and owned function – seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development.
3. Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process.
4. Engages in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence.
5. Contributes to and reflects the vision and priorities of the Council.
6. Agile – able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.

#### **MEETINGS**

There are four Overview and Scrutiny bodies at BCP Council:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Each Committee meets 5 times during the municipal year, except for the Overview and Scrutiny Board which meets monthly to enable the Board to make recommendations to Cabinet. The date and time of meetings will be set by full Council and may only be changed by the Chairman of the relevant Committee in consultation with the Monitoring Officer. Members will adhere to the agreed principles of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Decisions shall be taken by consensus. Where it is not possible to reach consensus, a decision will be reached by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. Where there are equal votes the Chair of the meeting will have the casting vote.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees are appointed by full Council. Each Committee has 11 members and the Board has 13 members. No member of the Cabinet may be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Board, or any group established by them. Lead Members of the Cabinet may not be a member of Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Board. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee may not be a member of any Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Board.

The quorum of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Board shall be one third of the total membership (excluding voting and non-voting co-optees).

No member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they been directly involved. If a member is unable to attend a meeting their Group may arrange for a substitute to attend in their place in accordance with the procedures as set out in the Council's Constitution.

Members of the public can be invited to attend and contribute to meetings as required, to provide insight to a matter under discussion. This may include but is not limited to subject experts with relevant specialist knowledge or expertise, representatives of stakeholder groups or service users. Members of the public will not have voting rights.

**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee** - The Committee must statutorily include two church and two parent governor representatives as voting members (on matters related to education) in addition to Councillor members. Parent governor membership shall extend to a maximum period of four years and no less than two years. The Committee may also co-opt one representative from the Academy Trusts within the local authority area, to attend meetings and vote on matters relating to education.

The Committee may also co-opt two representatives of The Youth Parliament and, although they will not be entitled to vote, will ensure that their significant contribution to the work of the Committee is recognised and valued.

**Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee** - The Committee may co-opt two independent non-voting members. The selection and recruitment process shall be determined by the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE O&S COMMITTEES AND O&S BOARD

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including the Overview and Scrutiny Board) has responsibility for:

- Scrutinising decisions of the Cabinet, offering advice or making recommendations
- Offering any views or advice to the Cabinet or Council in relation to any matter referred to the Committee for consideration
- General policy reviews, and making recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet to assist in the development of future policies and strategies
- Assisting the Council in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
- Monitoring the implementation of decisions to examine their effect and outcomes
- Referring to full Council, the Cabinet or appropriate Committee/Sub-Committee any matter which, following scrutiny a Committee determines should be brought to the attention of the Council, Cabinet or other appropriate Committee
- Preparation, review and monitoring of a work programme
- Establishing such commissioned work as appropriate after taking into account the availability of resources, the work programme and the matter under review

In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Board has responsibility for:

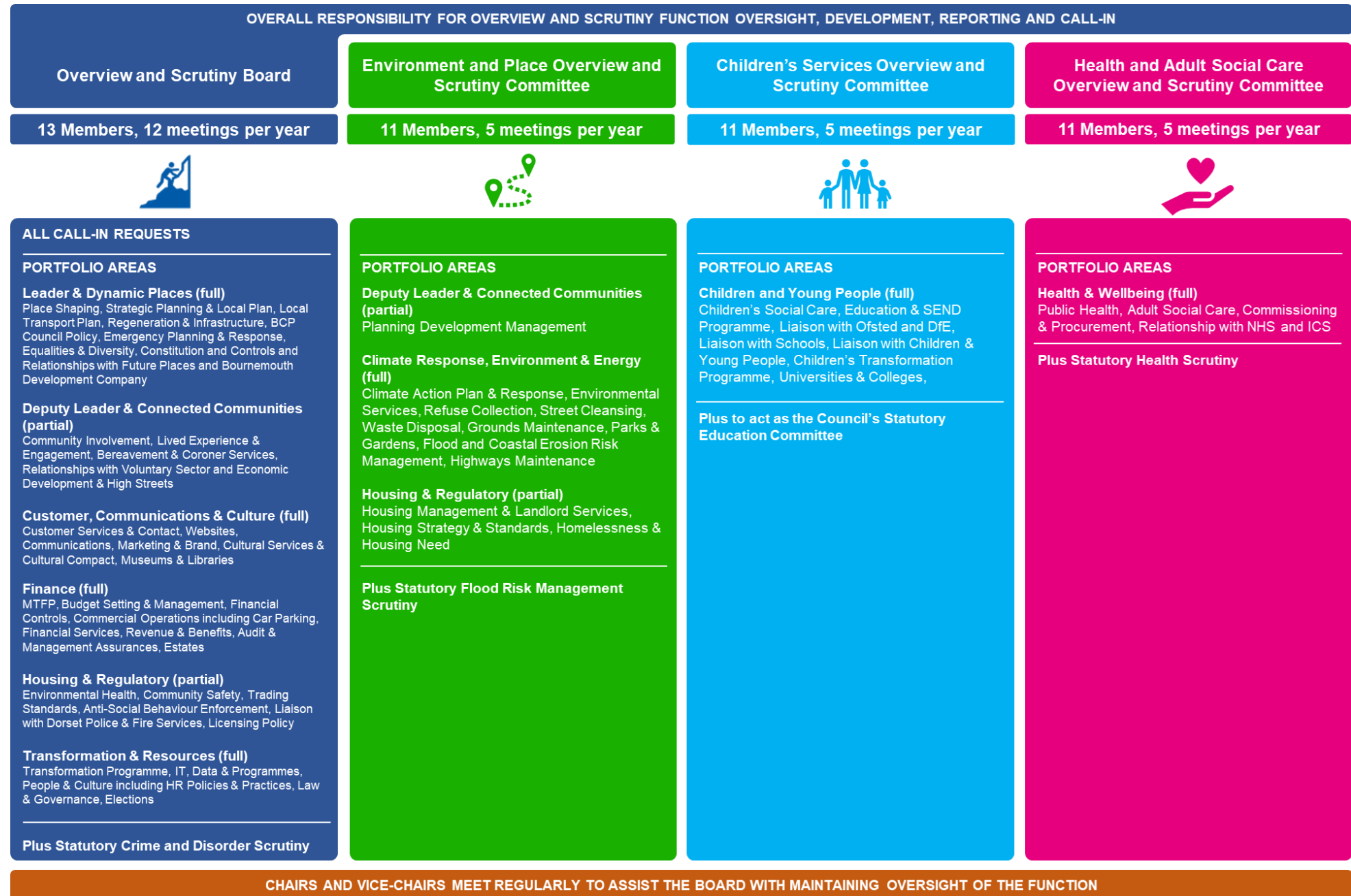
- Considering decisions that have been called-in
- Undertaking scrutiny of the Council's budget processes
- Carrying out the Council's scrutiny functions relating to crime and disorder, and discharging any other statutory duty for which the O&S function is responsible, other than those that relate to Flood Risk Management, Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education
- Overseeing the Council's overall O&S function including oversight of the work plans and use of resource across all O&S bodies
- Keeping the O&S function under review, suggesting changes as appropriate to ensure that it remains fit for purpose
- Reporting annually to Full Council on the output of the O&S function
- Maintaining oversight of the training needs of the whole O&S function.

**Figure 1 below provides an outline of the responsibilities of each Committee.**

The remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees is based on the division of Portfolio Holder responsibilities. Portfolio Holders may report to more than one Overview and Scrutiny body.

Portfolio Holder responsibilities are changeable and from time to time it may be necessary to modify the designation of functions across the four Overview and Scrutiny bodies.

Figure One –Overview and Scrutiny Structure



## COMMISSIONED WORK

In addition to Committee meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees may commission work to be undertaken as they consider necessary after taking into account the availability of resources, the work programme and the matter under review.

Each O&S body is limited to one commission at a time to ensure availability of resources.

a) **Working Groups** – a small group of Councillors and Officers gathered to consider a specific issue and report back to the full Board/ Committee, or make recommendations to Cabinet or Council within a limited timescale. Working Groups usually meet once or twice, and are often non-public;

b) **Sub-Committees** – a group of Councillors delegated a specific aspect of the main Board/ Committee's work for ongoing, in-depth monitoring. May be time limited or be required as a long-standing Committee. Sub-Committees are often well suited to considering performance-based matters that require scrutiny oversight. Sub-Committees usually meet in public;

c) **Task and finish groups** – a small group of Councillors tasked with investigating a particular issue and making recommendations on this issue, with the aim of influencing wider Council policy. The area of investigation will be carefully scoped and will culminate in a final report, usually with recommendations to Cabinet or Council. Task and finish groups may work over the course of a number of months and take account of a wide variety of evidence, which can be resource intensive. For this reason, the number of these groups must be carefully prioritised by scrutiny members to ensure the work can progress at an appropriate pace for the final outcome to have influence;

d) **Inquiry Days** – with a similar purpose to task and finish groups, inquiry days seek to understand and make recommendations on an issue by talking to a wide range of stakeholders and considering evidence relating to that issue, within one or two days. Inquiry days have similarities to the work of Government Select Committees. Inquiry days are highly resource intensive but can lead to swift, meaningful outcomes and recommendations that can make a difference to Council policy; and

e) **Rapporteurs or scrutiny member champions** - individual Councillors or pairs of Councillors tasked with investigating or maintaining oversight of a particular issue and reporting back to the main Board/ Committee on its findings. A main Committee can use these reports to facilitate its work prioritisation. Rapporteurs will undertake informal work to understand an issue – such as discussions with Officers and Portfolio Holders, research and data analysis. Rapporteur work enables scrutiny members to collectively stay informed of a wide range of Council activity. This approach to the provision of information to scrutiny members also avoids valuable

Committee time being taken up with briefings in favour of more outcome-based scrutiny taking place at Committee.

**These terms of reference should be read in conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules outlined in Part 4C of the Council's Constitution.**



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## BCP Council Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Plan. Updated 01.05.25

### Guidance notes:

- 2/3 items per committee meeting is the recommended maximum for effective scrutiny.
- The Children's Services O&S Committee will approach work through a lens of **TBC**
- Items requiring further scoping are identified and should be scoped using the Key Lines of Enquiry tool.

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report Information
Meeting Date: 10 June 2025				
1.	<b>Youth Justice Service Plan 2025/2026</b>	Committee Report	David Webb, Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service	Officer report going to Cabinet in July
2.	<b>Environmental Health Service Powers</b> - To advise the Committee of the extent of environmental health services powers to ensure the remit of housing is of good quality and fit for purpose for care experienced young people.	TBC	Director of Housing and Corporate Director for Children's Services Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	Officer report requested by Committee. Delayed from December meeting due to resources.
3.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
	<b>Virtual School HT Annual Report</b>	For information only	Headteacher of BCP Virtual School and College	Information only item as Committee can add no value

Key:  Pre-Decision Scrutiny  Pro-active Scrutiny

Meeting Date: 15 September 2025				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny <a href="#">consult Cabinet Forward Plan</a>			
2.	<b>CAMHS Transformation Update</b>	Committee Report	TBC	Was the second proactive priority chosen by the Committee  Deferred from March and June meeting
3.	<b>SEND Budget Pressures</b>	Committee Report	Director of Education and Skills	Agreed at Cabinet - April meeting for this item to come back to Children's O&S
	<b>Compliments and Complaints Report</b>	Information only		
	<b>BCP Safeguarding Children Annual Report</b>	Information only		
Meeting Date: 25 November 2025				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny <a href="#">consult Cabinet Forward Plan</a>			
2.	<b>Permanent Exclusions &amp; Suspensions</b>	Committee Report	TBC	Was agreed to come as Committee report in March 2025 meeting

Key:  Pre-Decision Scrutiny  Pro-active Scrutiny

3.	HOLD - Budget Scrutiny – to be agreed			
	<b>Safeguarding Annual Report</b>	Information only		
Meeting Date: 27 January 2026				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny <a href="#">consult Cabinet Forward Plan</a>			
2.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
3.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
	<b>Safeguarding Annual Report</b>	Information only		
Items with Dates to be allocated				
	<b>Annual report from Corporate Parenting Board to include information on Children in Care</b> To include details of any protected characteristics detailed within the Equalities Act	Committee Report	TBC	Enable the Committee to maintain oversight of this issue and target scrutiny as required.
	<b>Children's Services Data Toolkit</b>	TBC	TBC	To enable the Committee to have a toolkit to consider data relating to CS
	<b>Strengthening Families, Supporting Communities Update (New Service Delivery Model)</b>	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not

Key:  Pre-Decision Scrutiny  Pro-active Scrutiny

				chosen as a priority by the Committee
	<b>Post 16 Provision</b>	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee
	<b>CS Budget Updates</b>	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee
<b>Working Groups</b>				
	<b>Budget Development 2025/26</b>	2 working group sessions.	Completed in w/c 11/11/24.	Agreed for inclusion of the workplan at the 24th July 24 meeting
	<b>Family Hubs across BCP</b>	Proposed outline of working group included in scrutiny request	TBC	Requires full scoping <a href="#">Appendix E - Request for consideration of an issue by OS Family Hubs - Cllr Brown 003.pdf (bcpcouncil.gov.uk)</a>
	<b>Transition of mental health services from children to adults</b>			<a href="#">CS O&amp;S CAMHS.docx</a> Was chosen by the Committee as their top priority after conclusion of Family Hubs working group
	<b>The increased use of and funding for TAs in schools to support SEND and increase inclusion</b>			<a href="#">Scrutiny request form TAs.docx</a> Was chosen as second priority

	<b>Child Exploitation inc knife crime</b> – To consider and track Cabinet's response to the recommendations and how they could potentially be furthered by the Committee and whether this topic should be revisited by a working group			Discussed at the meeting of 24 July 2024. Was chosen as third priority
	<b>Parent / Carer Forums and wider family engagement channels used by BCP Children's Services and health colleagues</b>			<a href="#">Scrutiny request form</a> Was chosen as fourth priority
	<b>Review of the quality of food served to children at our schools</b>			<a href="#">Scrutiny request form</a> <a href="#">School meals.docx</a> Was chosen as fifth priority
Item Suggestions for Briefing Sessions				
	<b>POTENTIAL BRIEFING SESSIONS</b>	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Update Items</b> The following items of information have been requested as updates to the Committee. The Committee may wish to receive these in an alternative to format to Committee updates (e.g. by emailed briefing note outside of the Committee) to reserve capacity in Committee meetings for items of value-added scrutiny.				
	<b>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</b> To receive KPIs to include updates on CMOEs and NEETs	Committee Report	Head of Performance for Children and Young People  Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	Consideration being given to include in data tool kit

<b>Annual Report</b>				
•	<b>Virtual School Head Annual Report</b>	Committee Report	Headteacher of Virtual School and College Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	To be received annually in January as an annual update.
•	<b>School Admissions Arrangements for community and maintained schools</b>	Committee Report	Director of Education	To be received annually in September/November as an annual update.
•	<b>Youth Offending Service Annual Youth Justice Plan</b>	Committee Report	Service Manager, Dorset YJS	To be received annually in June as an annual update.
•	<b>Annual Report from CPB to include info on CIC</b>	Committee Report	TBC	TBC
•	<b>Annual Report – Complaints and Compliments</b>	Committee Report		To note the information only report – in March



# CABINET FORWARD PLAN – 1 MAY 2025 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

(PUBLICATION DATE – 02 June 202525)



What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update	To present the latest medium-term financial plan (MTFP) of the council	No	Cabinet 13 May 2025	All Wards			Adam Richens	Open
BCP Local Plan next steps, updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	To consider the next steps for the draft BCP Local Plan following receipt of the post examination hearing Stage 1 Inspectors' letter. Also to consider a proposed revised timetable for the Local Plan (LDS).	Yes	Cabinet 13 May 2025	All Wards	No public consultation required. Internal only.	n/a	Caroline Peach	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Our Place and Environment: Consolidated Active Travel Fund 2025/26	The Council has been allocated and accepted £1.459m Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) grant. This report recommends how the grant award should be invested and seeks delegation to facilitate delivery.	Yes	Transportation Advisory Group 7 May 2025  Cabinet 13 May 2025	Alderney & Bourne Valley; Christchurch Town; Commons; Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe; Poole Town; Queen's Park			Wendy Lane, Richard Pincroft	Open
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Estate and Development (MEND) Grant	To accept the grant of £1,500,817 from ACE MEND Fund for the urgent repair of the Russell-Cotes	No	Cabinet 13 May 2025	All Wards			Sarah Newman	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
BCP Complaints Policy	To agree the updated policy, that reflects the latest guidance from the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code	No	Cabinet 13 May 2025		National Ombudsman policy, no stakeholder consultation required at this stage, will be published on BCP website following approval.	National policy.	Jane Potter	Open
Bournemouth Air Festival	This report provides an update on the progress of the agreed options from the report presented to Cabinet on 2 October 2024, to seek external support to deliver and fund an Air Festival from 2026 onwards and recommends a way forward in relation to the future delivery of the Air Festival.	Yes	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards			Amanda Barrie, Helen Wildman	Open

<b>What is the subject?</b>	<b>What is the purpose of the issue?</b>	<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	<b>Decision Maker and Due Date</b>	<b>Wards</b>	<b>Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?</b>	<b>What is the consultation process and period</b>	<b>Officer writing the report</b>	<b>Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?</b>
Corporate Performance Report - Q4	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	Open
Investment & Development Directorate - Regeneration Programme	To provide a bi-annual update on the progress of the Council's regeneration programme	No	Overview and Scrutiny Board 9 Jun 2025  Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards			Amena Matin, Jonathan Thornton	Open
Bournemouth Development Company - Winter Gardens project	To provide Cabinet with an assessment of the options for funding the pre-construction work on a new Winter Gardens development project through the Bournemouth Development Company joint venture.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 9 Jun 2025  Cabinet 18 Jun 2025  Council 22 Jul 2025	Bournemouth Central	s151 Officer Cabinet Member for Finance BCP members of BDC board		Rob Dunford, Amena Matin	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
BCP Homes Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance Update	To ensure that Cabinet has assurance that the outcomes of the Regulatory Consumer Standards are being delivered.	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards			Kelly Deane	Open
Our Place and Environment: Safer Roads Fund – 20mph Boscombe and Pokesdown	Present Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation outputs for proposed 20mph speed limits in Boscombe and Pokesdown as part of Safer Roads Fund Programme. For decision.	No	Transportation Advisory Group 7 May 2025  Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; Bournemouth Central; East Cliff & Springbourn; Littledown & Iford			Richard Pincroft	Open

<b>What is the subject?</b>	<b>What is the purpose of the issue?</b>	<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	<b>Decision Maker and Due Date</b>	<b>Wards</b>	<b>Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?</b>	<b>What is the consultation process and period</b>	<b>Officer writing the report</b>	<b>Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?</b>
Our Place and Environment: Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – Pokesdown and Southbourne	To inform Councillors of the outputs of public consultation regarding proposed measures to improve journey times on public transport through Pokesdown and Southbourne. Cabinet decision required following advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders.	No	Transportation Advisory Group 7 May 2025  Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; West Southbourne			John McVey, Richard Pincroft	Open
Change of Age Range Highcliffe St Mark Primary School	The school seeks approval to lower their admission age range so that they may introduce an onsite school nursery class from September 2025	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Highcliffe & Walkford			Tanya Smith	Open
Change of Age Range Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	The school seeks approval to lower their admission age range so that they may introduce an onsite school nursery class from September 2025.	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Boscombe East & Pokesdown			Tanya Smith	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Poole Civic Centre - Soft Market Testing	To consider Poole Civic Centre - Soft Market Testing	No	Cabinet 16 Jul 2025	Poole Town			Sarah Culwick	Open
Fulfilled Lives programme		No	Cabinet 16 Jul 2025				Jillian Kay	
Designation of Neighbourhood Forum and Area	Cabinet to assess options, considering feedback from the consultation, and take the decision on the most appropriate forum and area to be formally designated.	No	Cabinet 16 Jul 2025	Bournemouth Central; East Cliff & Springbourne	Planning and Transport, Legal		Rebecca Landman	Open



What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
SEND Budget Pressures	To better assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10 Jun 2025  Cabinet 16 Jul 2025	All Wards			Kerrie Ainley, Tanya England, Rachel Gravett, Cathi Hadley, Lisa Linscott, Shirley McGillick	Open
Corporate Performance Report - Q1	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 3 Sep 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	Open
BCP Council Libraries – Proposed Library Strategy	To present the key elements of the new draft Library Strategy ahead of a second stage consultation process.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 26 Aug 2025  Cabinet 3 Sep 2025	All Wards			Lynda Anderson, Matti Raudsepp	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Community Governance Review - Final Recommendations	To consider the proposals of the Task and Finish Group and to recommend to Council the final recommendations for the review of community governance for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Yes	Cabinet 1 Oct 2025  Council 14 Oct 2025	All Wards	Existing parish and town councils, local representatives, local community and residents' groups, residents within the areas proposed for any new local councils	This is defined as stage 3 of the process and will include a 12 week consultation period for any interested party to respond using both online and paper forms.	Janie Berry, Richard Jones	Open
BCP Homes Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report	To provide an overview of complaint handling performance, lessons learned and compliance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.	No	Cabinet 1 Oct 2025	All Wards	BCP Homes residents will have been provided with regular information on complaint handling performance through published information and resident panels.		Seamus Doran	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)	To present outputs from Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) consultation and to present proposed LTP4 Policy Document complete with Implementation Plan for approval/adoption.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 17 Nov 2025  Cabinet 26 Nov 2025  Council 9 Dec 2025	All Wards	Residents (BCP and neighbouring authorities), partners, organisations and businesses that operate/exist in BCP area and are impacted by transport.	Exact dates tbc, but 6 to 8 week public consultation required, note: LTP4 engagement was facilitated in Spring 2024.	Wendy Lane, Richard Pincroft	Open
Corporate Performance Report - Q2	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 26 Nov 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	To approve the ambitions, principles and a delivery framework to manage waste produced from homes and businesses across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole for the next 10 years.	Yes	Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19 Nov 2025  Cabinet 26 Nov 2025  Council 9 Dec 2025	All Wards	Residents, businesses, special interest groups,		Georgina Fry	Open
Corporate Performance Report - Q3	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 4 Mar 2026	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Junction Road Development	To seek approval to develop a section of green space and garage area to provide 4 new affordable rent homes as part of BCP Homes housing stock	Yes	Cabinet Date to be confirmed  Council Date to be confirmed	Hamworthy			Jonathan Thornton	Open
DfE SEND review next steps	To consider the DfE review next steps	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed				Rachel Gravett, Shirley McGillick, Sharon Muldoon	Fully exempt
Children's Services Early Help Offer	Summary of findings and recommendations from an ongoing review of our current Early Help services	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards			Zafer Yilkan	Open