DORSET COMBINED Youth Justice Service

Service	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024/25

Head of Service	David Webb
Chair of YJS Board	Theresa Leavy

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Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

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 118 in 2022/23 to 108 in 2023/24. There was a notable reduction this year in the BCP area (down from 79 to 52).

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 child exploitation: there was a slight reduction in the number of children receiving justice outcomes for violent offences in 2023/24, compared to the previous year. The number of children being arrested locally has dropped in the past two 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 'The YJS worker was really empathic. My son felt heard and listened to…..he's just got an apprenticeship….we wouldn't change anything about the service we received'.

The DCYJS Partnership Strategic Priorities for 2024/25 include:

- 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.
- Developing restorative responses to offences without a direct victim, such as possession of drugs or weapons, to help children understand the impact on the community.

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 2024/25. 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 taking into account 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 2023/24.
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities.
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

Theresa Leavy, 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 380,00.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of 400,000.

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.

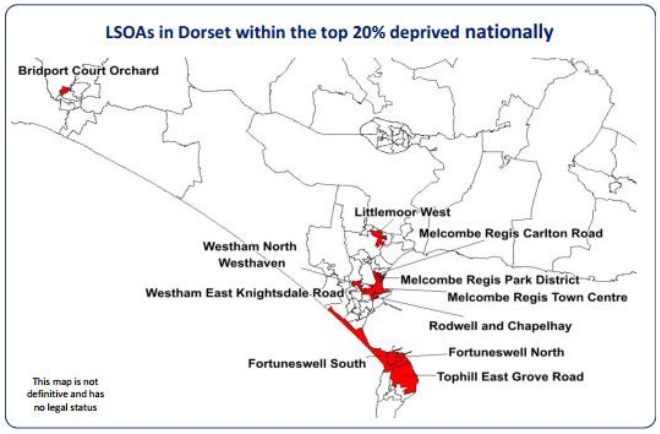
The following tables provide demographic information about young people in both local authorities:

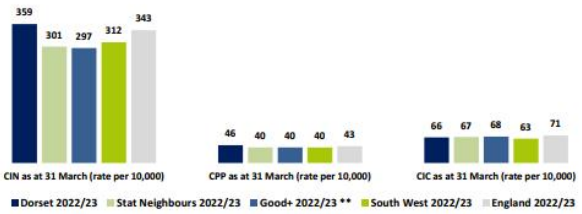
Dorset Council

Population	Age 10-17
Number of Children[1]	33,287
Male[1]	51%
Female[1]	49%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals[2]	21.3%
Pupils with SEN Support[2]	14.4%
Pupils with an EHC Plan[2]	6.2%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups[3]	5.1%
25% children living in Poverty after housing costs[4]	

Safeguarding	Age 10-17
Number of Children in Need[5]	597
Male[5]	51.4%
Female[5]	48.2%
Indeterminate[5]	0.6%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan[7]	111
Number of Children in Care[6]	314
Male[6]	61.9%
Female[6]	38.7%
Indeterminate[5]	0%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation[7]	
Significant	16
Moderate	36

1. Dorset mid-year 2022 population estimates (published November 2023).
2. October 2023 School Census (includes all pupils at a Dorset School aged 10-17: ages as at 31 August 2023).
3. January 2023 School Census (all non-white pupils at a Dorset School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained').
4. Local child poverty indicators 2021/22. Based on the DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2023).
5. From MOSAIC, as at 29 February 2024. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
6. From MOSAIC, as at 29 February 2024. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
7. From MOSAIC as at 29 February 2024.





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

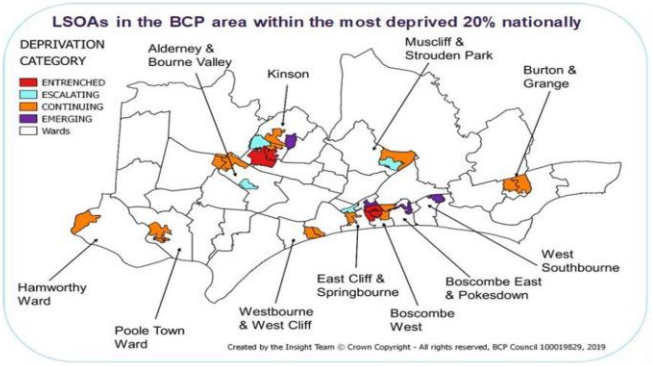
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

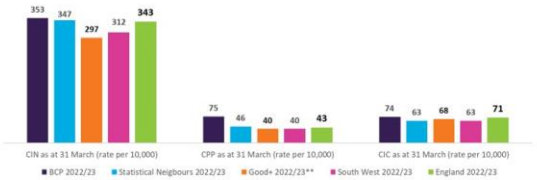
BCP Council

Population[1]:	Age 10-17
Number of Children[1]	34,372
Male[1]	52%
Female[1]	48%
Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals[2]	19.9%
Pupils with SEN Support[2]	14.5%
Pupils with an EHC Plan[2]	4.8%
Pupils from Nonwhite Minority Ethnic groups[3]	15.4%
24% children living in poverty after housing costs[4]	

Safeguarding	Age 10-17
Number of Children in Need[5]	450
Male[5]	56.7%
Female[5]	42.7%
Indeterminate[5]	0.7%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan[6]	203
Number of Children in Care[6]	369
Male[6]	61.5%
Female[6]	38.2%
Indeterminate[6]	0.3%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation	
Suffering	9
Risk of harm	16
Potential concerns	24

1. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole population estimates (published November 2023)
2. January 2024 School Census (includes all pupils at a BCP School aged 10 -17: ages as at 18 January 2024)
3. January 2022 School Census (all non -white pupils at a BCP School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')
4. Local child poverty indicators 2019/20. From DWP/HMRC "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2023).
5. From MOSAIC, as at 29 February 2024. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
6. From MOSAIC, as at 29 February 2024. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
7. From MOSAIC, as at 29 February 2024.





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

Although the two local authorities differ in geographical size and demography, they have very similar population sizes for 10-17 year-olds. Dorset Council has slightly higher numbers of children eligible for free school meals and slightly higher numbers of children identified as having special educational needs and disabilities. Both local authorities have 1,022 children aged 10-17 who have an allocated social worker.

The proportion of 10-17 year-olds identifying as being from non-white ethnicities is higher in BCP Council (15.4%) than in Dorset Council (5.1%).

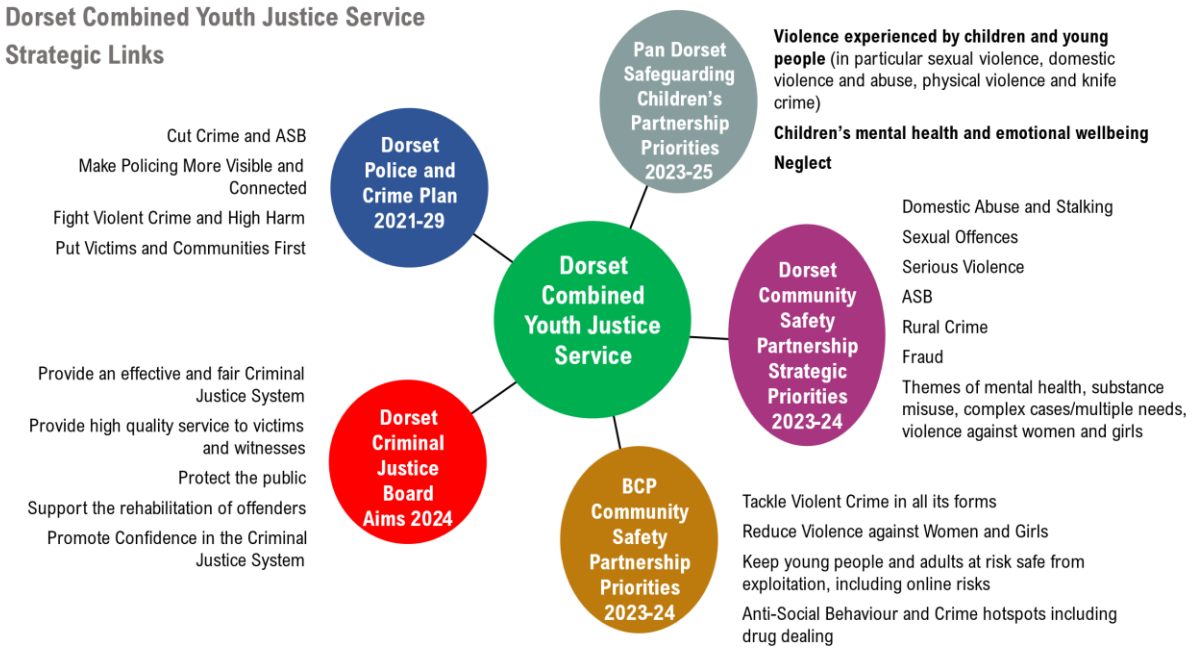
3. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

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, ensuring its links with other local strategic plans. Board members and the DCYJS Head of Service sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that 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:



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 operational levels.

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. The DCYJS Partnership Personal Information 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.

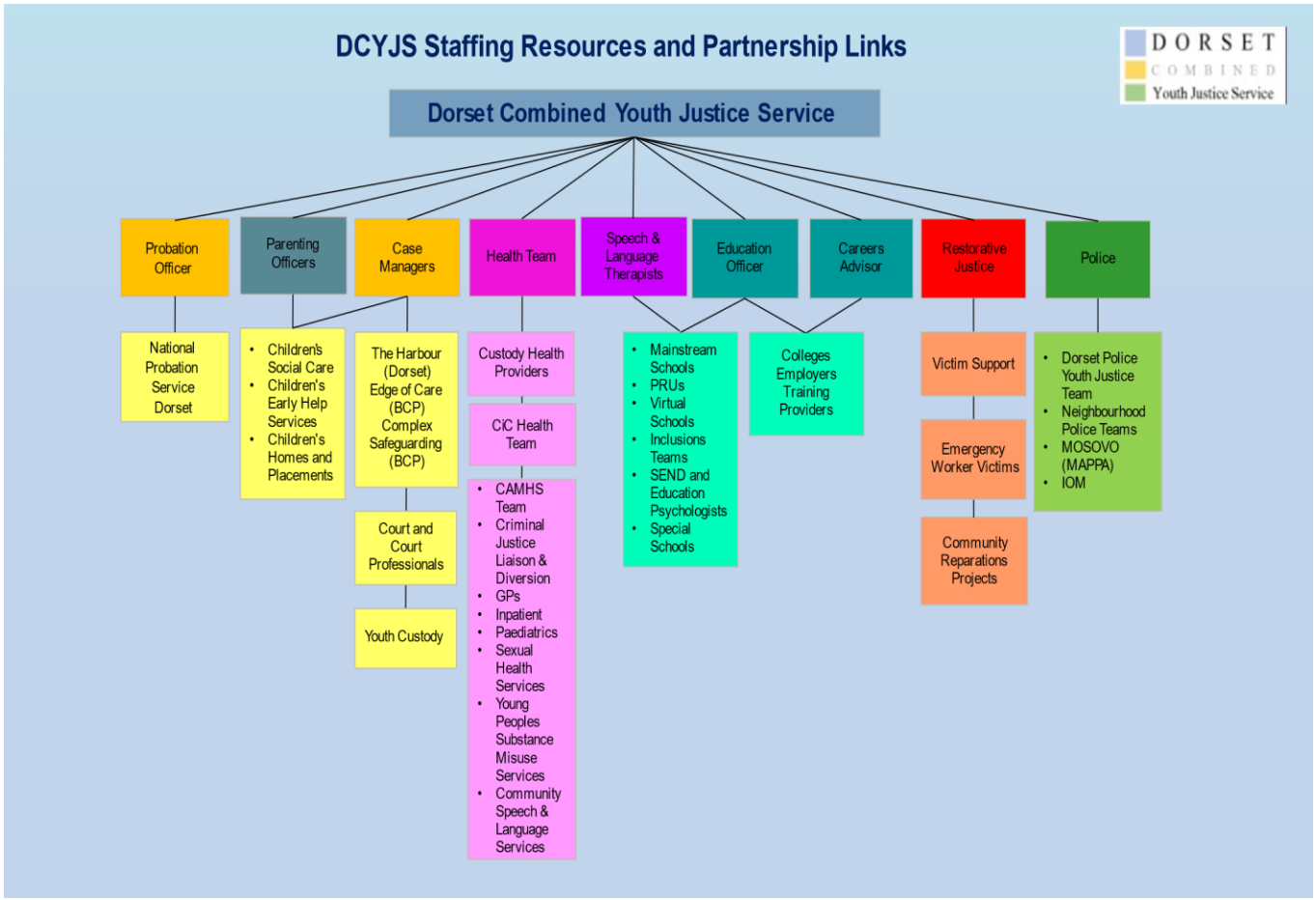
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the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

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24 identified strategic priorities and listed some of the actions that would be taken to support these priorities.

Last year's priorities are listed below with a brief summary of progress made:

<u>Continue to reduce the rate of children entering the justice system:</u>

- There was an 8.5% reduction in the rate of first-time entrants in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, and a 41% reduction compared to 2019/20.
- Recruitment of local authority workers and a Speech and Language Therapist completed for the local implementation of the Ministry of Justice 'Turnaround' programme, to divert children from the justice system.

- Use of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences who receive assessments and interventions through the Turnaround programme.
- Use of Outcome 22, with YJS support, for children who are ineligible for the Turnaround programme criteria, such as children in care and children on a child protection plan.
- Case decision comparison exercise with another south-west YJS to check consistency and share good practice for Out of Court Disposal.
- Agreement from our YJS Board to fund a two-year scheme from 2024 to complete speech and language assessments for children at risk of school exclusion.

A planned action in last year's Youth Justice Plan, to use data analytics to identify children at risk of future offending, has not progressed. A different approach will now be taken, focusing on the speech, language and communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion (more information about this new approach is included later in this document).

<u>Continue to address over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:</u>

- Local children from minority ethnicities are not over-represented in the youth justice system.
- Analysis of police custody solicitor access by ethnicity shows no bias by ethnicity.
- DCYJS Manager represents DCYJS and other local YJS Managers in the Local Criminal Justice Boards' 'Wessex Disproportionality Group' and has agreed a dataset for youth justice ethnicity monitoring (rates of first-time entrants and numbers in custody, by ethnicity).
- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation.
- Review of the local protocol for reducing the criminalisation of children in care, including continued active multi-agency work to monitor how the protocol is applied in residential settings across Dorset and BCP.
- Use of YJS Speech and Language assessments to help ensure that children's communication needs are understood and responded to in settings like schools and courts.
- Audit of YJS parenting work, focusing on parents of children from ethnic minorities.
- Agreement to focus the 2024 case audits on YJS work with girls and with black and mixed heritage children.

<u>Reduce child exploitation and serious youth violence:</u>

- There was a slight reduction in the number of children receiving justice outcomes for violent offences in 2023/24, compared to 2022/23 (it is recognised though that numerical data does not tell the full story for the harm caused by youth violence).
- 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.
- Case audit of YJS work with children who committed weapon offences, including conversations with children and parents, leading to an action plan for improvements.

- Team workshops to share good practice and agree improvements for assessment and planning for risk of harm to others.
- DCYJS 'Trauma Champion' role extended from service budget after the YJB funding expired.
- Increased number of DCYJS case managers have referred to or observed Enhanced Case Management trauma formulations led by the DCYJS Psychologist.
- DCYJS managers have participated in partnership work in each local authority to develop arrangements for addressing extra-familial harm, including attendance at Dorset Council's new weekly Extra-Familial Harm panels and BCP Council's fortnightly Missing, Exploited and Trafficked panel.

DCYJS partners have not yet resolved the issue of delays to investigations for children suspected of serious violence or sexual offences. DCYJS has offered voluntary interventions to children who are released on bail or under investigation for serious offences. A proposed monthly meeting between DCYJS, Dorset Police and the CPS to track delayed investigations has been delayed and is now due to start in April 2024.

<u>Improve education outcomes for children in the youth justice system:</u>

- Worked with Upton Country Park to jointly develop and run the 'Discover You' project to support young people to become ready for college or employment.
- 17 young people have attended the Discover You project at Upton Country Park, with 10 of them attending more than 5 times. These 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.
- Implemented the use of AQA awards to certificate learning by young people during YJS activities.
- Used the improved DCYJS education data recording to identify children who need support with their education provision and attendance.
- Strengthened links with the local authority Virtual Schools, SEND teams and Inclusion services to resolve child-level issues about suitable education provision and attendance.

<u>Develop the collection and use of performance information:</u>

- Additional work has been undertaken to meet the new YJB Key Performance Indicator reporting requirements.
- Monthly data and performance reports are shared internally among YJS staff to monitor performance and to track relevant changes in the profile and needs of children on the YJS caseload.
- Work has started with the BCP Council Data and Analytics team to enhance the automation and presentation of DCYJS data reports, with promising initial results.
- Joint work with the Dorset Council Business Intelligence team has enabled us to establish a regular method for exchanging caseload information to facilitate services to meet children's needs.

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).

In 2023/24 the YJB added a new set of youth justice Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), joining the three existing performance measures for youth justice services. The three previous measures related to:

- 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 2024 for the period ending December 2023.

Reporting of the new KPIs for youth justice remains a work in progress. Information about the new KPIs is included below.

First Time Entrants

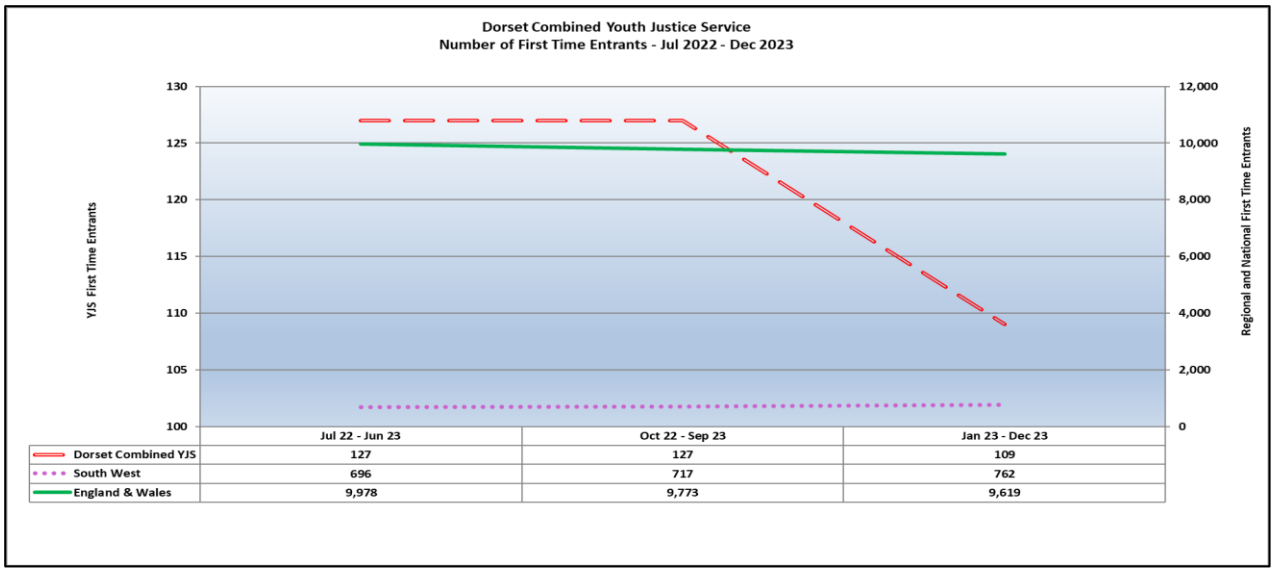
A 'First Time Entrant' is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome count as a formal criminal justice outcome. There are also options for diverting children from the justice system, by using informal justice outcomes.

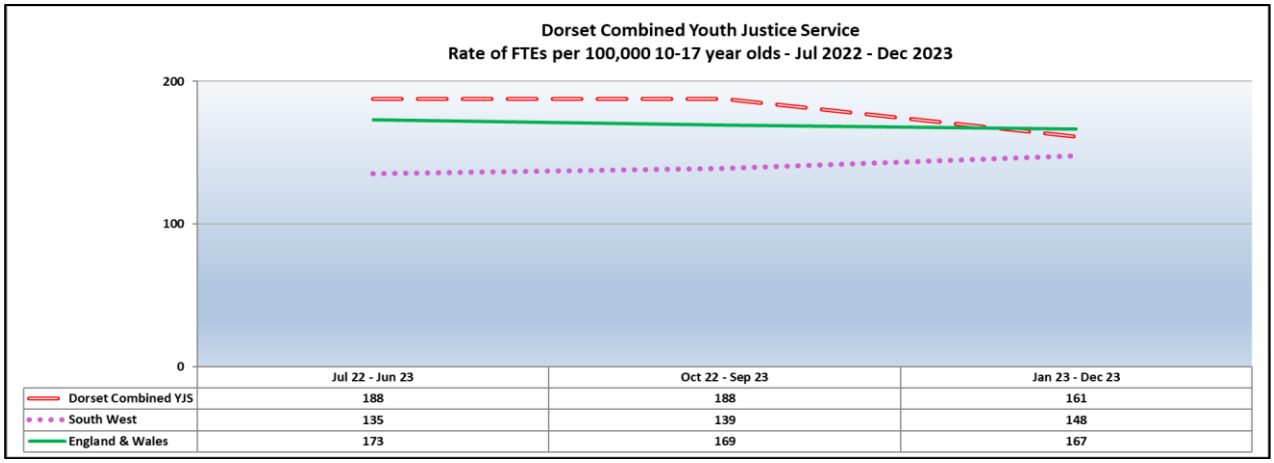
Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children's services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children.

National performance data for First Time Entrants used to be drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) but this changed during 2023. The national data is now drawn from the YJB's uploads of information from YJS case management systems.

In recent years DCYJS has 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 reduction in local First Time Entrants, with DCYJS now having a lower rate than the national average.

The following charts show the last three quarters of national First Time Entrants data. The number and rate of local First Time Entrants has reduced in the most recent quarter. For context, the national data for local First Time Entrants in the previous year, to December 2022, showed a total number of 152 (compared to 109 in 2023) and a rate per 100,000 10-17 year-olds of 229 (compared to 161 in 2023).





DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the extent 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:

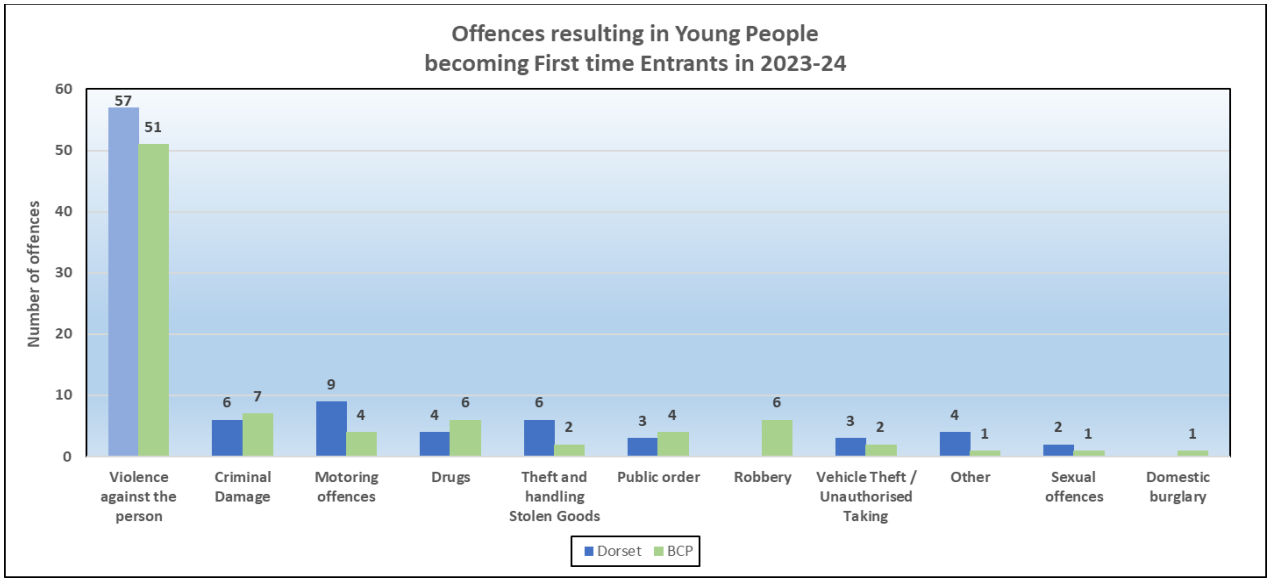
Year	***BCP First-Time Entrants***	***Dorset First-Time Entrants***	***Total DCYJS First-Time Entrants***
2019/20	*104*	*78*	*182*
2020/21	*78*	*48*	*126*
2021/22	*77*	*47*	*124*
2022/23	*79*	*39*	*118*
2023/24	*52*	*56*	*108*

There was a notable reduction in First Time Entrants in BCP this year. Although there was an increase in Dorset, it should be noted that there was a marked increase in April

and May 2023 relating to older offences which could have been dealt with during the previous year.

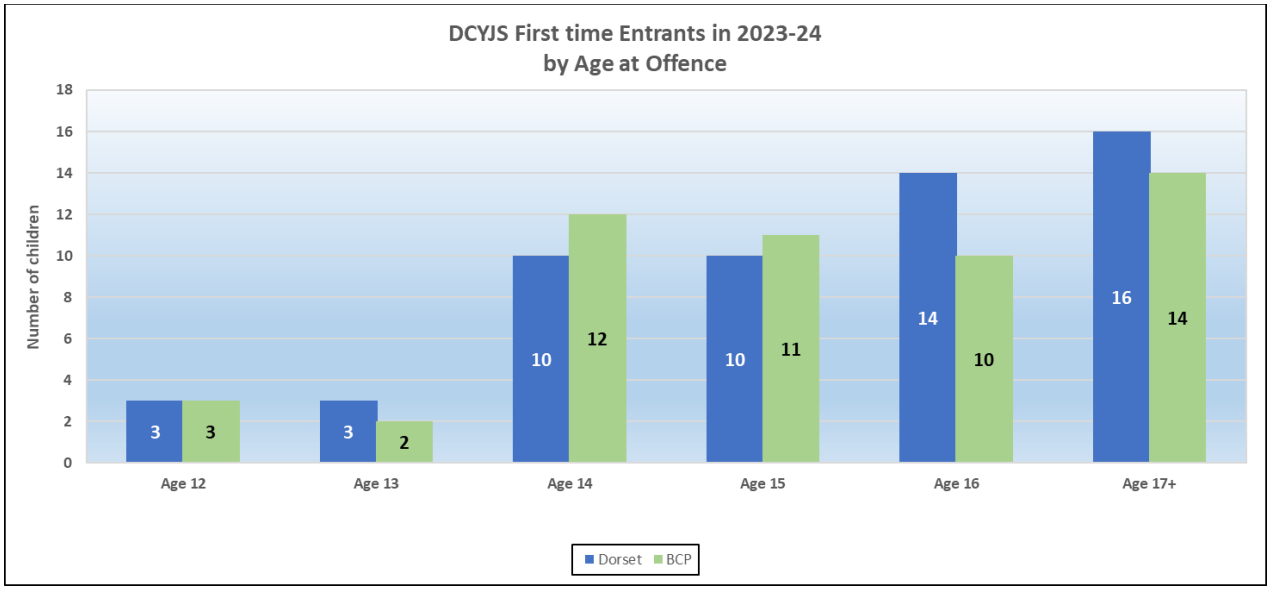
Information about the ethnicity and gender of First Time Entrants is included later in this document, in section 5.1 on 'Over-Representation'.

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 chart shows the offences which led to children 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.

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. Only 6 children under the age of 13 entered the justice system in 2023-24, though a further 22 First Time Entrants were aged 13. The age distribution in the following chart shows that First Time Entrants in BCP tend to be slightly younger than those in Dorset. 32.7% of BCP First Time Entrants were aged 14 or younger when they committed their offence, compared to 28.5% of Dorset's First Time Entrants.

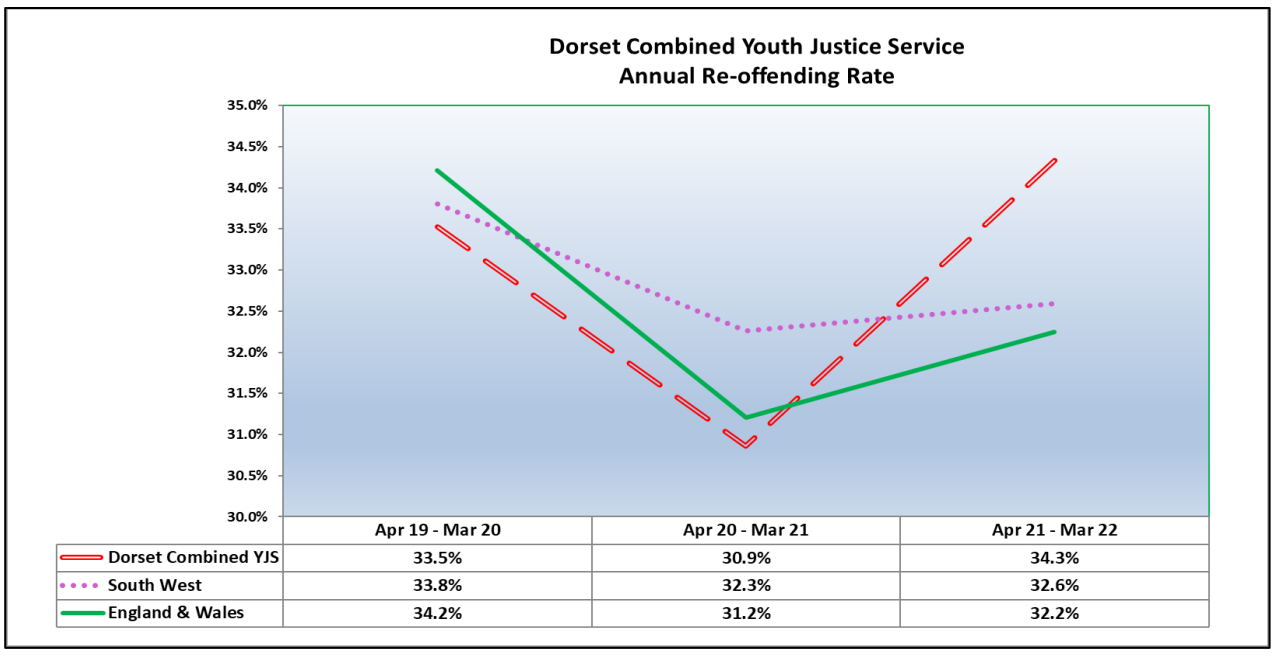


Rate of Proven Reoffending

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.

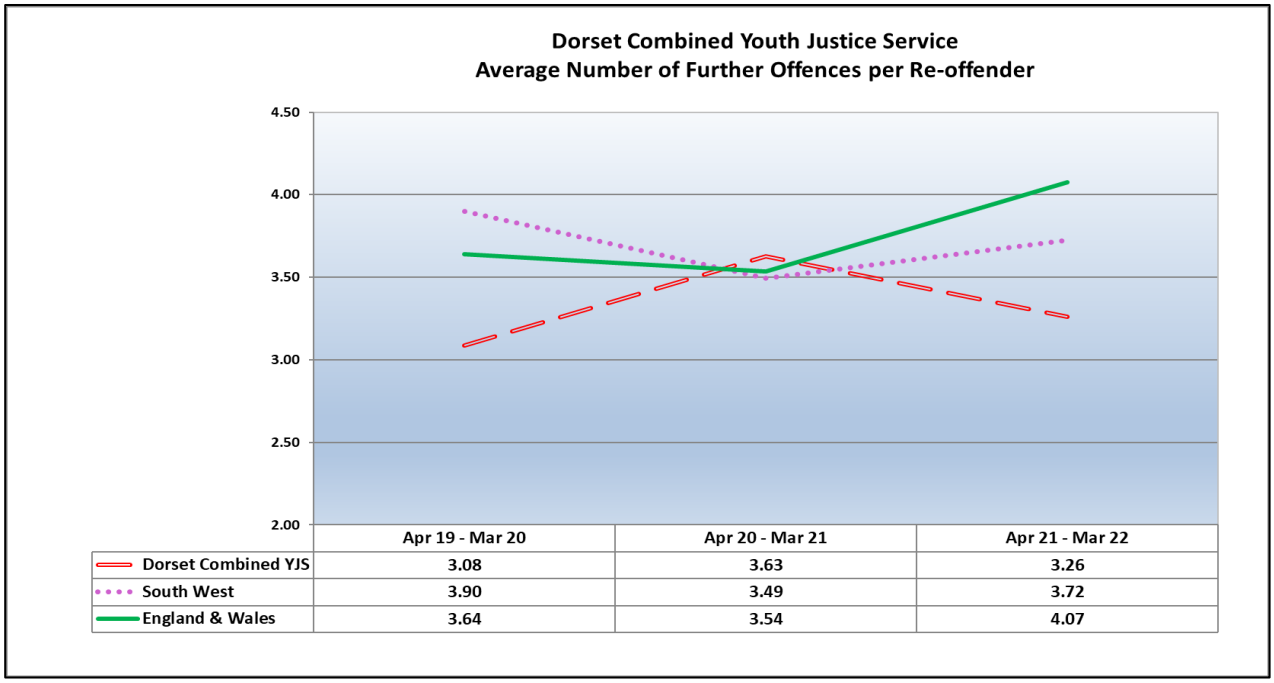
Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2022.

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)



	Apr 19 - Mar 20	Apr 20 - Mar 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22
Dorset Combined YJS	33.5%	30.9%	34.3%
South West	33.8%	32.3%	32.6%
England & Wales	34.2%	31.2%	32.2%

Reoffences/Reoffenders



	Apr 19 - Mar 20	Apr 20 - Mar 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22
Dorset Combined YJS	3.08	3.63	3.26
South West	3.90	3.49	3.72
England & Wales	3.64	3.54	4.07

DCYJS has remained close to the regional and national averages for both measures. The latest data shows a slightly higher rate of reoffending than the national average but a lower number of offences per reoffender.

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 January 2022 and December 2022, giving us a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children:

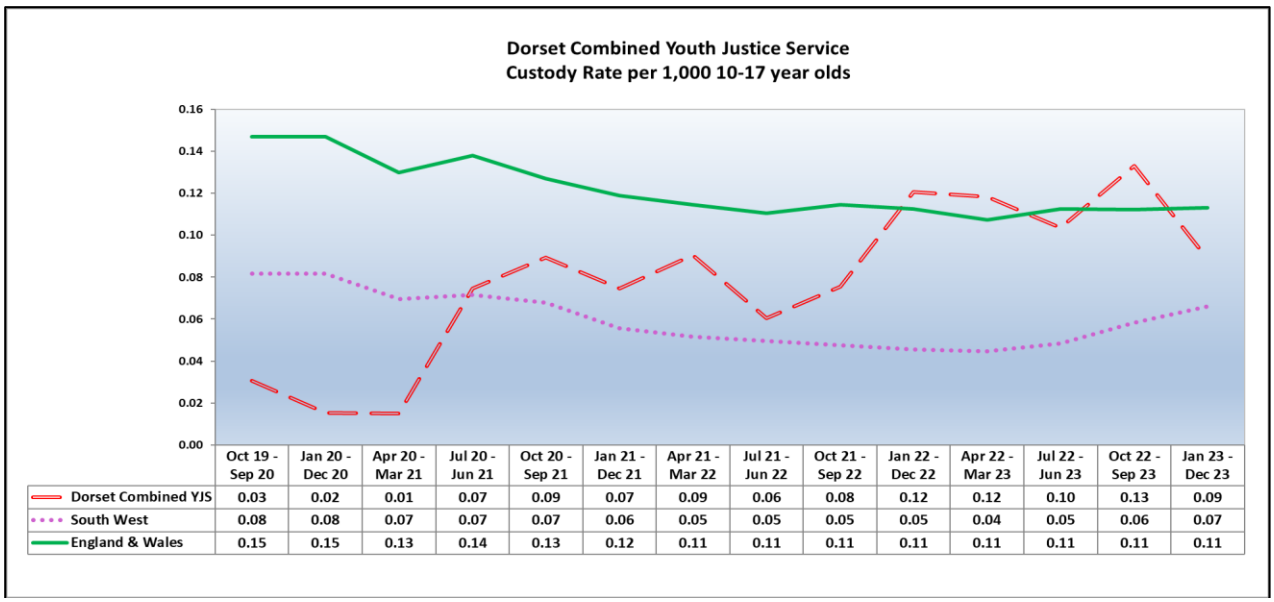
- 14 year-olds are the age group most likely to reoffend.
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls but girls who reoffend tend to commit a higher number of offences.
- Black and mixed heritage children show a higher reoffending rate than white children, but the numbers of black and mixed heritage 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 or previously in care were more likely to reoffend than children who had not been in care.
- Children on court orders were more likely to reoffend than children on out of court disposals.
- Children who committed arson, criminal damage, robbery, motoring offences or vehicle thefts had higher rates of reoffending than children who committed other types of offence.
- 43% of reoffenders committed less serious further offences, 45% committed offences of the same seriousness and 11% 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.



	Oct 19 - Sep 20	Jan 20 - Dec 20	Apr 20 - Mar 21	Jul 20 - Jun 21	Oct 20 - Sep 21	Jan 21 - Dec 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Oct 21 - Sep 22	Jan 22 - Dec 22	Apr 22 - Mar 23	Jul 22 - Jun 23	Oct 22 - Sep 23	Jan 23 - Dec 23
Dorset Combined YJS	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.06	0.08	0.12	0.12	0.10	0.13	0.09
South West	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07
England & Wales	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11

During the most recent period on the above chart, January 2023 – December 2023, a total of 6 children received custodial sentences (3 from each local authority).

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 young people.

Analysis of the 6 children who received custodial sentences in 2023 shows that:

- All 6 were male.
- 5 of the 6 defined their ethnciity as White British, one identifed as Mixed Heritage.
- At the time of sentence, 2 were aged 17, 3 were aged 16 and 1 was aged 15.
- All 6 were previously known to Children's Social Care (4 had been children in care, 1 had been both Child Protection and Child in Need, the other had been a Child in Need).
- All 6 had been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), with 3 having been assessed as showing Conclusive Grounds for exploitation and 3 having an initial finding of Reasonable Grounds while the referral is assessed.
- 5 out of 6 were identifed as having Speech, Language and Communication Needs, following assessment by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapist.
- 5 out of 6 had been permanently excluded from school.
- 2 out of 6 had an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The pattern of being known to Children's Social Care, having experienced child exploitation, having been excluded from school and having speech, language and

communication needs 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.

New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators

Youth Justice Services were required to report on a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from April 2023. The new KPIs record information for children who received diversion outcomes as well as for children on the statutory caseload. The intention is for the new KPIs to show the strength of local partnership working. 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 misuse – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address subtance 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 YJB have started to publish quarterly reports showing the new KPIs for each Youth Justice Service. The consistency, accuracy and usefulness of this data remains a work in progress. The most recent summary KPI tables published by the YJB are copied in Appendix Three, for illustrative purposes.

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, linked to pressures in the wider criminal justice system, make it harder to work effectively with young people to prevent future offending and harder to provide timely support to victims and to engage them in Restorative Justice.	Proactive review of children released under investigation or on bail, to offer voluntary interventions by DCYJS. Work with Dorset Police, as part of their Child Centred Policing Strategy, to reduce investigation delays and to coordinate investigations for children with multiple outstanding offences.
The shortage of suitable placements for children in care, and placement moves, can disrupt key factors such as education, health care and positive peer networks, and can make it harder to propose credible bail packages and community sentences for children at risk of custody.	Work with colleagues in Children's Services to assist in providing information for placement searches. Allocated DCYJS case managers are active in visiting children in care who are placed out of area and in maintaining positive relationships with those children.
Permanent exclusions from school, and difficulties finding suitable alternative provision.	New project to provide Speech and Language assessments and support to schools for children at risk of school exclusion.
Funding and resources – real terms reductions since DCYJS was formed in 2015, uncertainty about future funding and delays each year to the announcement of the YJ Grant (the 2023/24 grant allocations were not announced until July 2023).	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.
YJB directive to replace the local assessment tool used for Out of Court Disposals with a national tool – concerns over quality of the new tool and loss of ability to innovate and adapt to local learning.	Implementation plan for the new assessment tool to include opportunities for sharing good practice within the team and from other services. Additional work to ensure the quality of risk of harm assessments is maintained, building on the work we have done to meet the inspection recommendations for this area of our work.

5. PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

5.1. 'Child First' practice

Under the leadership of the Youth Justice Board, 'Child First' is the guiding principle for the youth justice sector, underpinning the 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
As children: recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support.	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.
Building pro-social identity: 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.	DCYJS have worked with Upton Country Park to provide the 'Discover You' project, aimed at building children's skills, confidence and employability.
Collaborating with children: involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion.	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 now written 'to the child' to be more inclusive and to help shift the worker's perspective.
Diverting from stigma: promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within it, as we know that stigma causes further offending	The 'Turnaround' programme has been used 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.

The strategic priorities in the DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25 are aligned with the YJB's 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. The team's Speech and Language Therapists complete assessments so that each child's communication needs can be understood and responded to, not just by other workers in the team but also by the child, their carers and other professionals working with the child. Case records are addressed to the child and quote their words, to ensure the child's voice is prominent.

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.

The following advice from a young person about how we should respond to weapon offences is a helpful guide for all our work and for other professionals:

- Don't tell us how dangerous knives are. We already know that.
- Pick up on all the good things kids do, there will be things if you look for them.
- Worksheets are a waste of time.
- Listen, including to what's not being said.
- Don't keep asking the same thing if you've already been given the answer.
- Young people need to find a replacement for the activity they are stopping.

Other examples of recent comments from service users include:

The YJS Case Manager "is that all too rare combination of someone who presents as professional, knowledgeable, non-judgemental, warm and helpful yet still able to have those tough conversations, put in the boundaries and maintain them".

The child's Mum was "very happy with the intervention, explained that her son can sometimes be difficult to engage, but he got on well with his YJS worker, described her as friendly and easy to talk to. Mum felt she was kept informed of progress with the intervention and didn't have any concerns. She feels her son is now in a good place - working and got an apprenticeship - is on the right track and both he and his mum think he will maintain this."

The child's parent said that "it worked for us. The YJS worker was really empathic. My son felt heard and listened to. It was scary at the start coming in as we had had no previous contact with services. Will he be judged? But it was not like that at all, would it be harsh? It was not like that. It was sad when it came to an end." I asked what her son was up to now "He's just got an apprenticeship, we are really pleased, he's done so well, he starts in 10 days. The YJS worker backed up the messages that we have tried to give him about using what has happened in a good way….We wouldn't change anything about the service we received".

Each year the YJS undertakes a case audit on a priority area of YJS work. In 2023 the audit focused on our work with children who had committed weapon offences. As part of the audit, we contacted the children and parents in the audit sample. 6 children and 4 parents responded to our request for their views.

All 6 children said they felt safer – not all gave reasons for this – one child said they no longer carry a blade, one said they are no longer offending, one felt it had given them a chance to change.

The 6 children were asked what had gone well:

Working with me looking at my anger. I feel my anger has got better.

Helped me out a lot, not got into trouble for a year – always ask for X as worker as she understands me.

Child feels that worker was really good, that he felt involved, that his views were gained.

I like the meetings I think they are sound.

All 4 parents/ carers said they knew what YJS were suggesting they did to support their child following the offence.

The YJS also seeks the views of victims about their contact with our service. Sometimes victims also offer views about their experience of the justice system prior to the YJS involvement.

As a result of victim feedback about the Out of Court Disposal decision-making process, managers in the YJS and Dorset Police reviewed and amended the process for incorporating victim views into the decision-making arrangements.

5.2. Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget are listed in Appendix Two, showing the figures for 2023/24. Indicative budget contributions for 2024/25 from local partners have been agreed, with no increase on the 2023/24 contributions, but the Youth Justice Grant allocation has not yet been announced.

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.

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.

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 respective children's services 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'.

As well as identifying many strengths, the inspectors suggested possible 'Areas for improvement':

- *The board chairing arrangements are not rotated. For the partnership board to be challenged in its ambition to drive the performance of the service forward, a level of independence is required that holds all partnership agencies to account.*
- *While the seniority of the board membership is appropriate, attendance is not consistent.*
- *Although new board members meet with the YJS service manager and chair of the board as part of their induction, there is no formal induction pack which ensure consistency*.

The Board included all these points in its work in 2023/24:

- The Board reviewed and confirmed its chairing arrangements.
- The attendance of Board members is monitored at each meeting and has improved since the inspection.
- An updated induction process for new Board members has been agreed and has been used with new Board members.

The Board has also allocated extra meeting time each year to review its effectiveness and to agree areas for development. At its meeting in January 2024, the Board agreed to use its meetings in the coming year for thematic discussions, focused on the Partnership's strategic priorities. The Board is also looking to widen its membership to include the voluntary sector and the business community.

5.4. Workforce Development

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 2024/25.

In January 2024 the whole service participated in training for 'Working Restoratively'. The aim of this training was to refresh the team's knowledge, skills and commitment in restorative practice, both for working with our service users and as a way of being with each other. This reflects our commitment to being a restorative organisation and will be a priority for us in 2024/25.

As well as attending external training courses, DCYJS runs internal workshops on relevant practice topics, building on issues identified in quality assurance and learning exercises. The main focus for good practice workshops in 2023/24 was on improving our work in assessing and responding to the risk of harm posed by some young people. This followed our inspection recommendation about risk of harm assessments and our case audit of our work with children who had committed weapon offences.

In addition to the core training courses, which will continue to be attended and updated in 2024/25, the service's development plans require staff training in the following areas:

- Prevention and Diversion Assessment tool – to support the YJB's directive for all Youth Justice Services to use this tool from April 2024.
- Extra-Familial Harm – train with colleagues from other local services to embed the use of new multi-agency assessment and planning processes.
- AQA awards – train additional team members in the provision and certification of activities with children for AQA awards.

DCYJS also supports individual career progression plans for team members. Plans for 2024/25 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 performance analyst studying for the Advanced Data Fellowship.
- a Youth Justice Officer working towards her Practice Educator qualification.

DCYJS 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 on the caseload, 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 has partnered with Upton Country Park to provide the 'Discover You' project. Using Lottery Heritage funding, the project aims to improve young people's self-esteem, practical skills and employability, to increase their chances of accessing employment and training.

17 young people attended the project during 2023/24. 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.
- 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 (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.
- Completing practical tasks for Upton Country Park, e.g. animal habitat, bird feeders, designing and building play resources for school/nursery groups.

The Lottery Heritage funding for the Discover You project expires at the end of March 2024. We are seeking funding to continue and develop the project in 2024/25.

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 chidlren at risk of school exclusion

Our local Youth Justice Partnership has strategic priorities to reduce school exclusions, to prevent offending and to meet the speech, language and communication needs of children who may otherwise enter the youth justice system. The DCYJS Partnership Board has allocated funding for a two-year project to identify and support the speech, language and communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion. The project is

modelled on a successful scheme run by Milton Keynes Youth Justice and Support Service.

Recruitment for an additional Speech and Language Therapist and a Speech and Language Assistant has been successfully completed in March 2024. Their roles will be 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.

The project is expected to commence in June 2024. The project design will include collaboration with schools, local authorities, children and families. Evaluation will be an important part of the project.

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.

In 2023, 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.

Two questions were rated as 'Requires Improvement'. One of these questions related to the need to produce a policy document for our work to minimise the use of custodial remand for children. This action is underway, and also links to the recent thematic inspection by HMI Probation on 'work with children subject to remand in youth detention'.

The other question rated as Requires Improvement related to whether our court processes take all possible steps to promote fair treatment of particular groups of children. Our auditors noted that "the analysis of care status and neurodiversity needs is stronger than the analysis and narrative about ethnicity and gender or other protected characteristics". Team members have worked on this aspect of our practice, adjusting the format of Pre-Sentence Reports to strengthen the analysis of diversity issues and their impact on the young person.

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. This has enabled other partners to hear the views of magistrates, with concerns being raised during 2023/24 about the length of time betweeen offences being committed and the child appearing in court, and about the adequacy of education provision for some children who appear in court.

Youth magistrates worked together with the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapist and a DCYJS court officer to produce a booklet to help prepare young people for attending court. This booklet, 'You are going to Youth Court in Dorset', was featured as an example of good practice in the Magistrates Association magazine in June 2023.

The YJB is yet to decide on National Standards audit requirements for 2024/25.

5.7. Response to inspections, reviews and audits.

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

The most recent inspection of our service was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspectors made 6 recommendations, which we followed up through an action plan, overseen by the YJS Partnership Board. Actions have been completed for all but one of the recommendations. The remaining recommendation relates to strengthening the local partnership work in respect of child exploitation. Both local authorities have been working with their partners to refresh their working arrangements in this area, under the broader heading of 'extra-familial harm'. Implementation of the revised arrangements will include dissemination and training for staff in all relevant agencies, including DCYJS, during 2024/25.

In November 2023, HMI Probation published 'A joint thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention'. The DCYJS Partnership Board reviewed this report, and its recommendations, in January 2024. Actions to support these insepction recommendations are included in our plans for 2024/25. More information about the use of secure remand for local children can be found in section 6.11X.

DCYJS has contributed to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review in Dorset, due for publication in May 2024, and to local learning reviews in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. These reviews relate to incidents of significant harm being experienced by, or caused by, young people who are known to the YJS. Learning from these reviews is included in the team's development plans, and is reported to the YJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS undertakes thematic case audits, linked to the service's priorities. The focus in 2023 was on work with children who have committed weapon offences. Areas for improvement in our practice were addressed in workshops with the team and in adjustments to our working practices. The themes for our case audits in 2024/25 are on DCYJS work with girls and with black or mixed-heritage children.

6. Local and National Priorities for 2024/25

This section of the Plan reviews issues of local and national priority for youth justice which contribute to our service priorities for 2024/25.

6.1. Over-representation

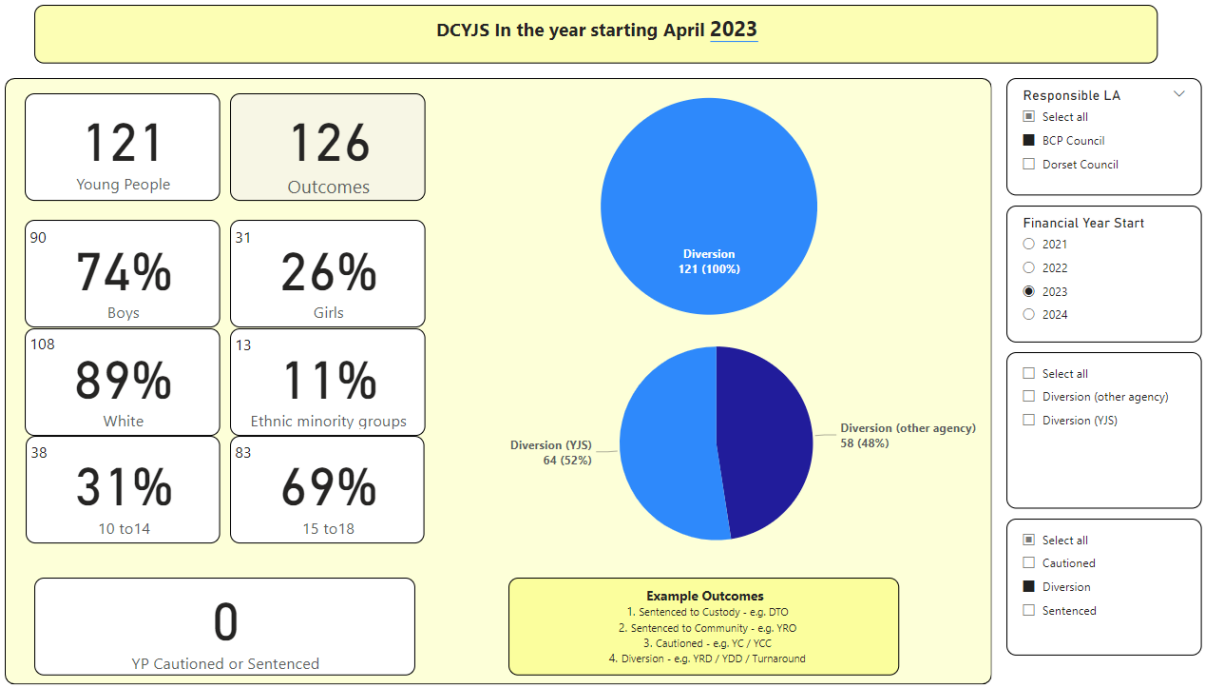
National data shows that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. DCYJS monitors caseload information for children from minority and disadvantaged groups.

Data from the 2021 census shows ethnicity information for 10-17 year-olds in our two local authorities. 12.9% of 10-17 year-olds in the BCP Council area identify as not having a white ethnicity. The equivalent figure for the Dorset Council area is 5.4%. This data

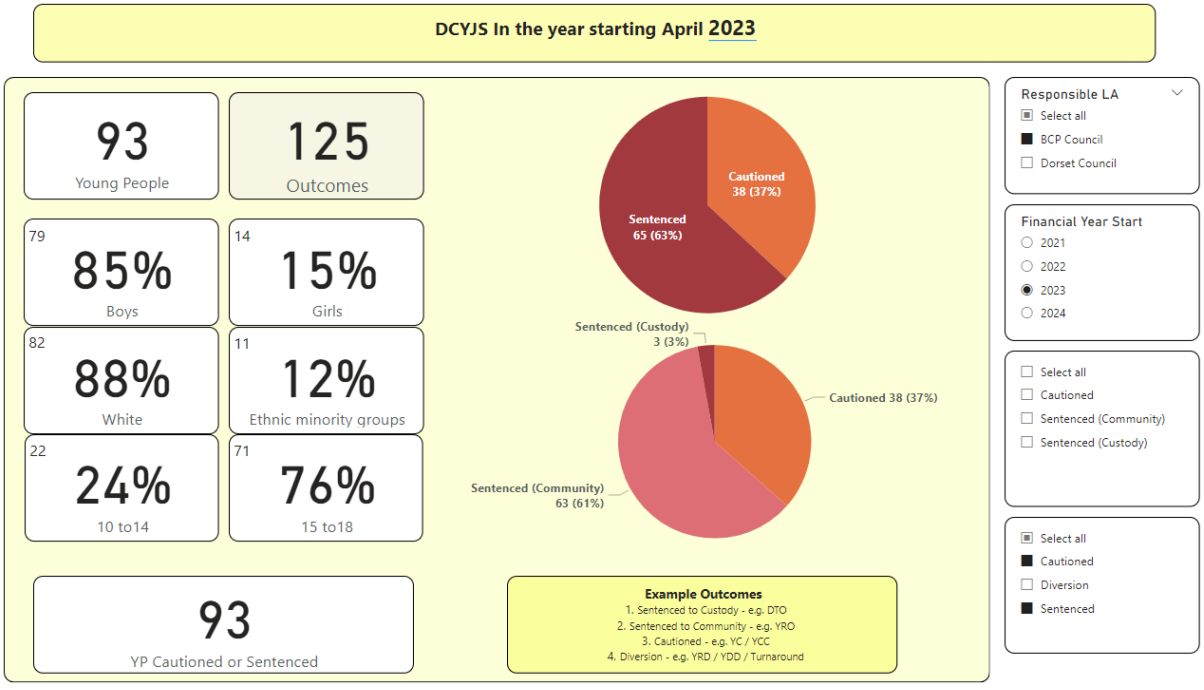
helps us compare the rate of children on our caseload from different ethnicities with proportions in the local population.

One of our development activities in 2023/24, which will continue in the coming year, is to improve our presentation and use of caseload information. 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.

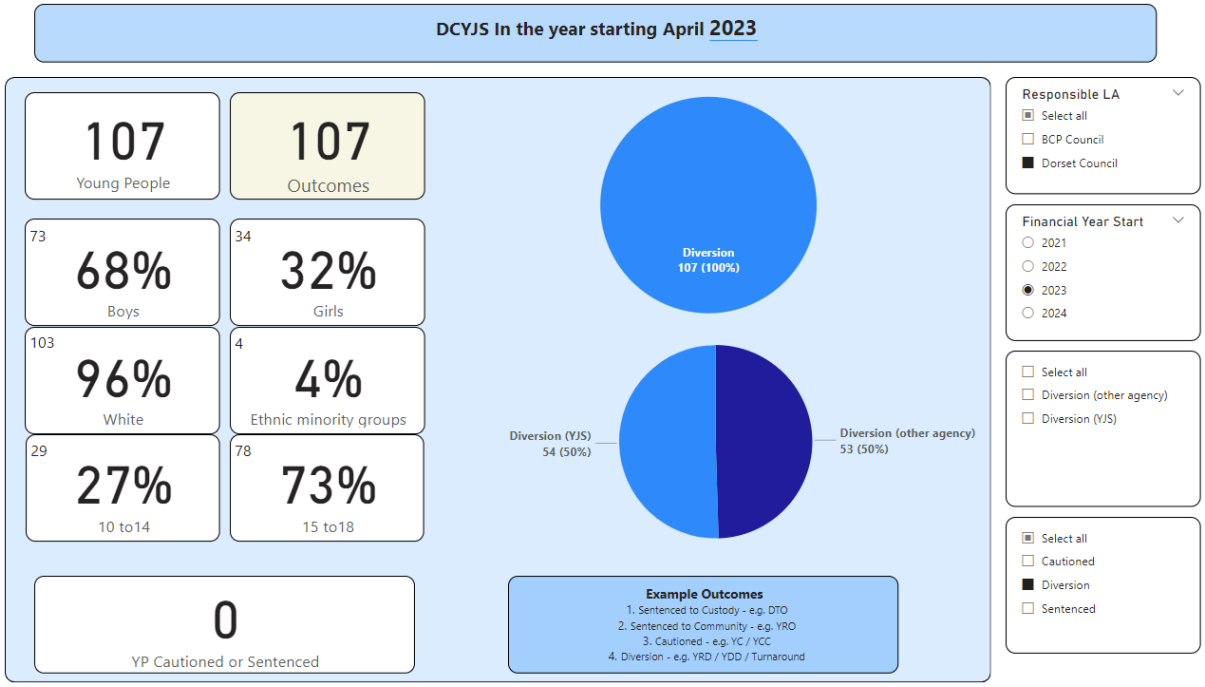
BCP Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2023/24



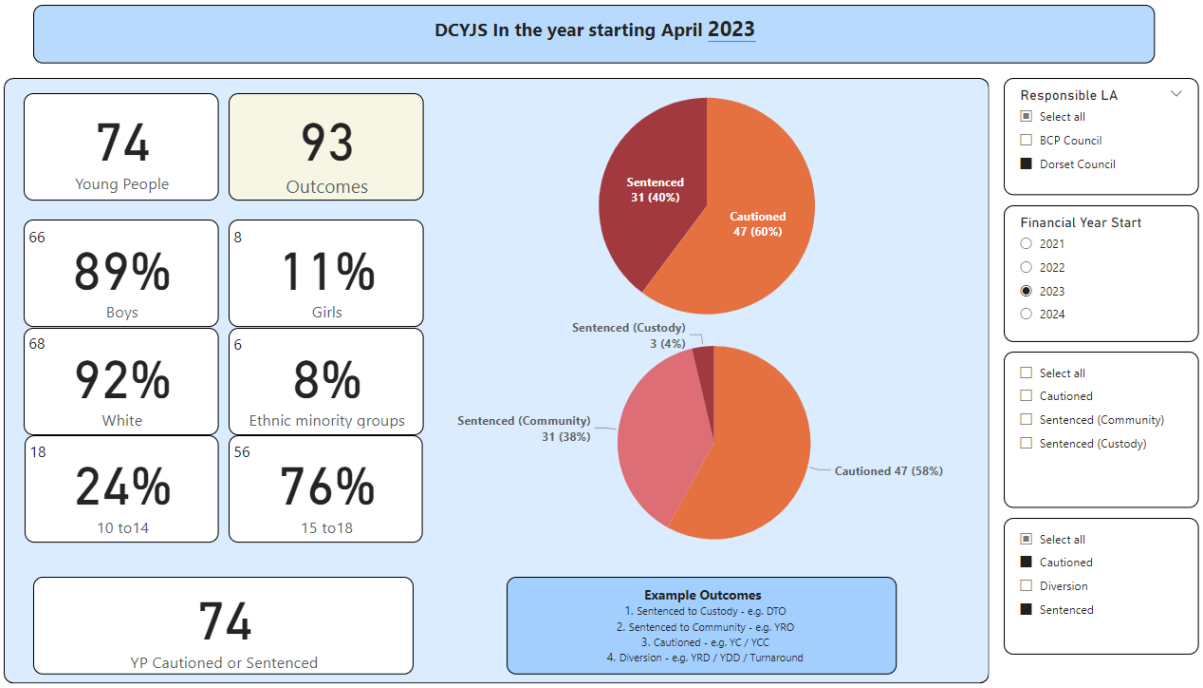
BCP Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2023/24



Dorset Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2023/24



Dorset Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2023/24

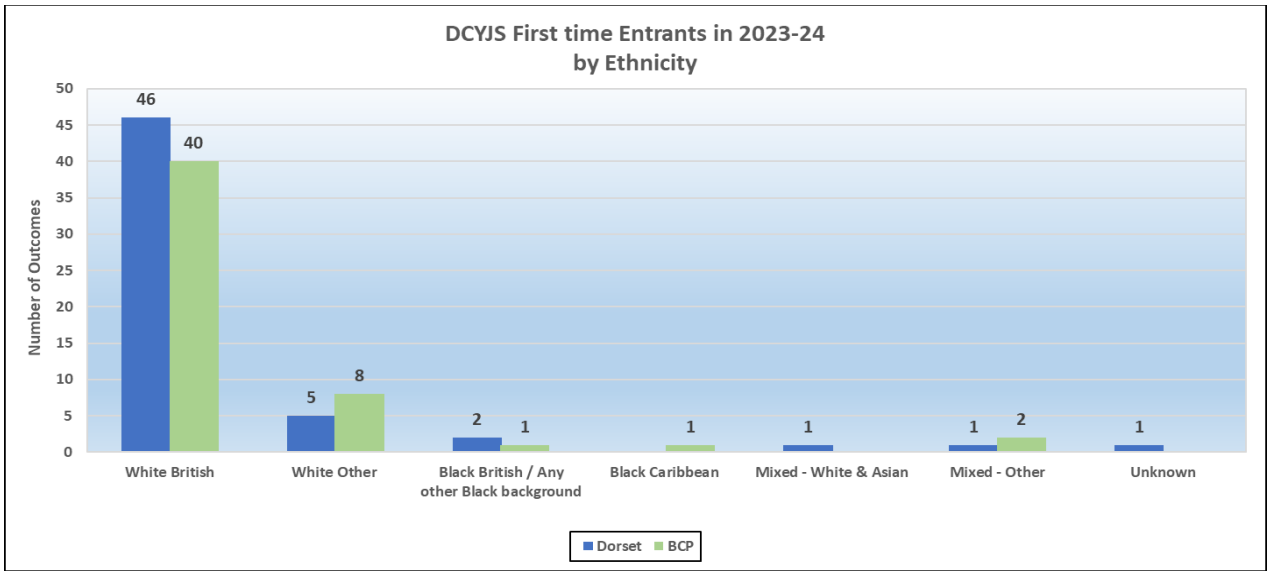


Comparison of these charts shows that:

- 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 BCP, or among children in Dorset who are diverted, but they are over-represented among children sentenced or cautioned in Dorset.
- 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 2023-24 for the overall area, as shown in the following chart:

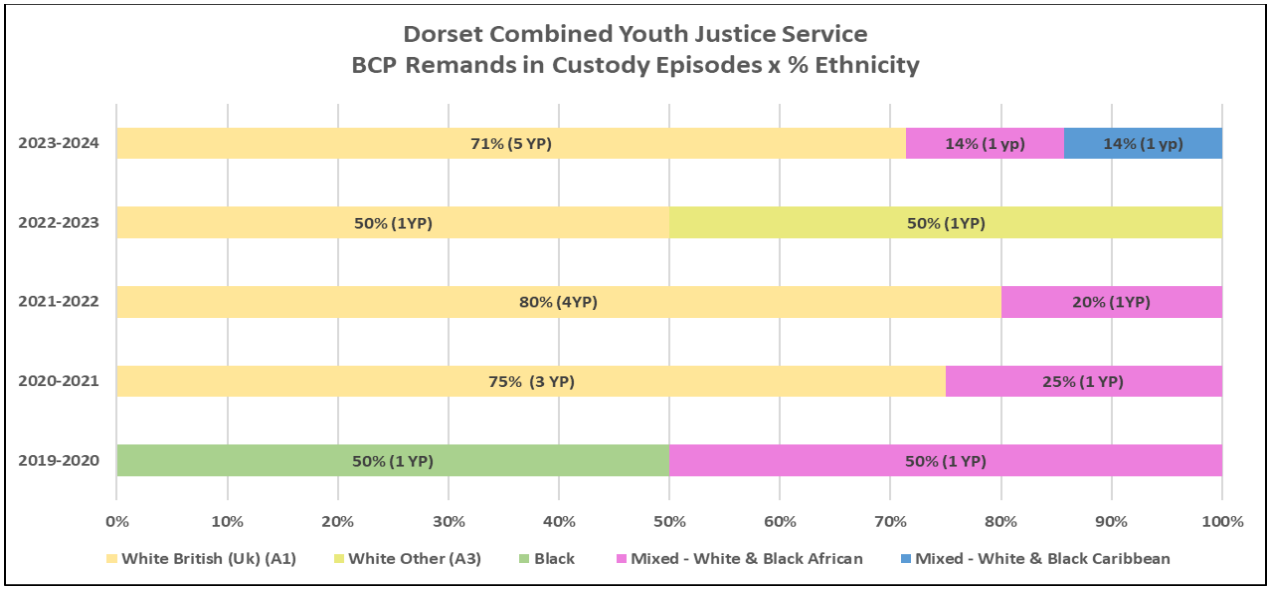


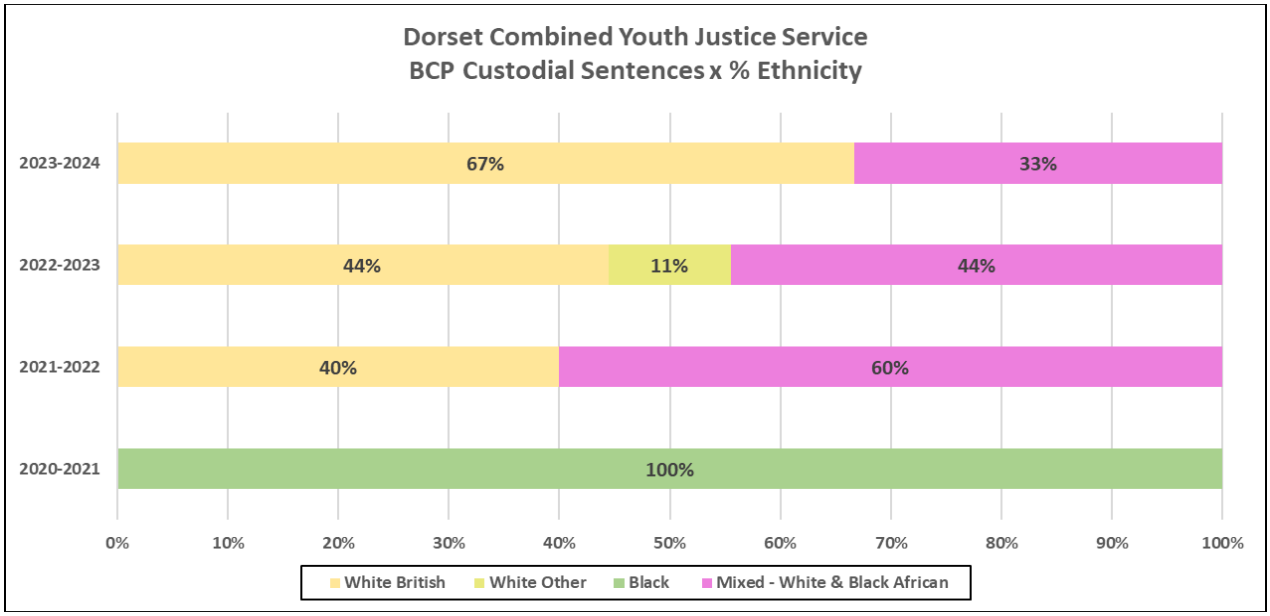
4 out of 56 first-time entrants in Dorset did not define themselves as having white ethnicity. At 7.1% this is slightly above the rate in the overall population, but a decrease of 1 child would have brought the percentage into line with the population rate.

4 out of 52 first-time entrants in BCP did not define themselves as having white ethnicity. At 7.7%, this is below the population rate of 12.9%.

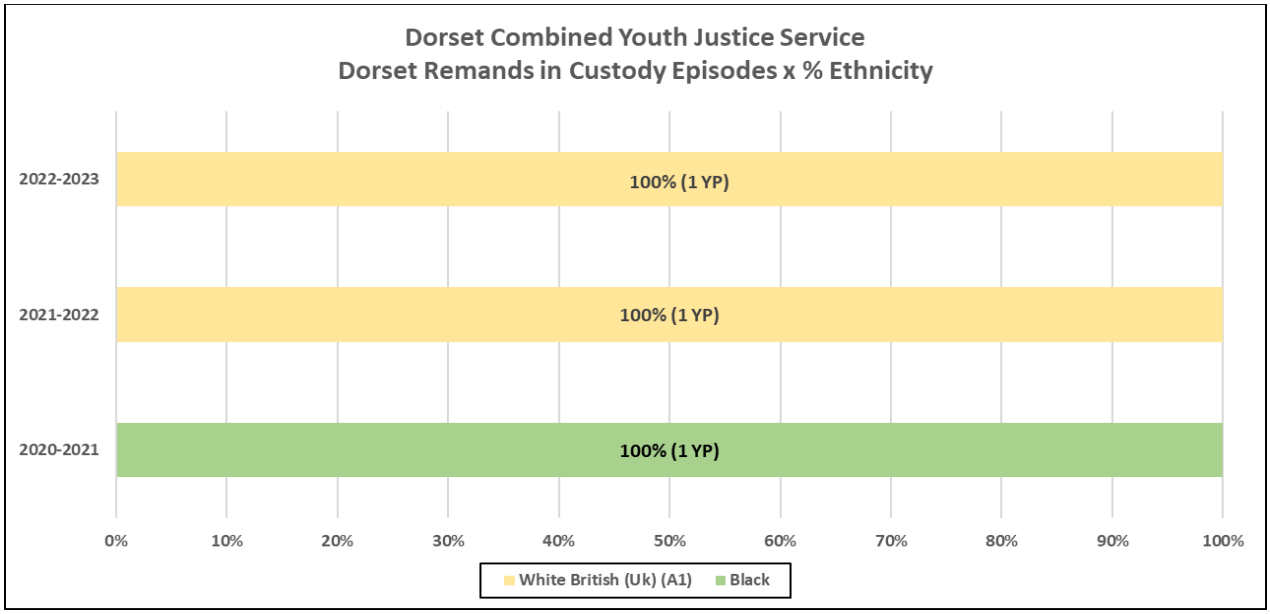
Although we do not see over-representation among first-time entrants, we also track how far children 'progress' into the youth justice system.

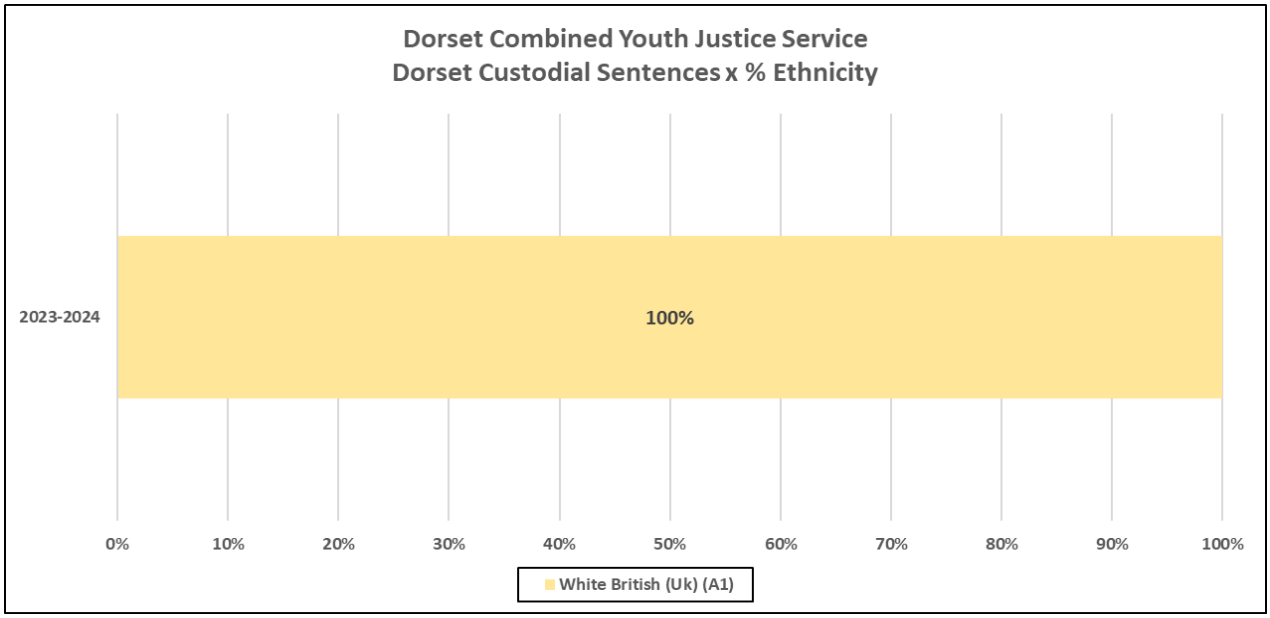
The following charts show ethnicity for children remanded or sentenced to custody in each local authority in recent years.





The low numbers of local children being remanded or sentenced to custody makes it difficult to provide sound statistical analysis of possible over-representation of young people with diverse ethnic heritage. Amongst the BCP Council children who have been remanded or sentenced to custody, there is evidence of over-representation of children who do not identify as white, although this appears to be reducing in recent years.





For Dorset Council, there is no evidence of over-representation of children from minority ethnicities among those who were remanded or sentenced to custody 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. During 2024/25 we will review our work with black and mixed heritage children and we will explore examples of anti-racist youth justice practice.

Access to Out of Court Disposals, including diversion options, requires the child to admit the offence. One hypothesis for black and mixed heritage children progressing further into the justice system is that they may miss out on Out of Court Disposals due to not being willing to admit the offence in police interviews. In 2022 Dorset Police changed its approach to the provision of solicitors for children in police custody, to an 'opt out' approach. Analysis by Dorset Police of legal advice to children in custody in 2023 shows that ethnicity does not affect the likelihood of the child receiving legal advice:

01/01/2023 - 31/12/2023	Solicitor Required?		Total
Under 18's	**No**	**Yes**	
A2. Asian - Pakistani	-	1	1
A9. Any other Asian background	-	1	1
B1. Black Caribbean	-	5	5
B2. Black African	-	2	2
I1. Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-	2	2
M1. White & Black Caribbean	-	9	9
M2. White & Black African	-	8	8
M3. White & Asian	-	1	1
M9. Any other mixed background	1	4	5
O1. Chinese	-	2	2
O9. Any other ethnic group	1	1	2
W1. White British	22	302	324
W2. White Irish	-	3	3
W9. Any other white background	1	7	8
NS. Not Stated	2	30	32
Total	**27**	**387**	**414**

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 girils 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 over-represented among children in custody. There are around 400 children in custody in England and Wales but the number of girls is less than 10. Locally, no girls have been remanded or sentenced to custody in recent 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 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 will be undertaken to review our work with girls and to identify areas for improvement.

DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system are likely to have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In February 2024, 37% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 25% had the status of 'SEN Support'. This means that 62% 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. 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. 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 Strategic 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.

The YJS Partnership Board has agreed funding for an additional prevention project in 2024-25. Money has been allocated to pay for a Speech and Language Therapist and a Speech and Language Assistant. Their work will focus on children who are at risk of school exclusion, using a model which has been developed successfully in Milton Keynes.

6.3. Diversion

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 activiites 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 2023/24 a total of 228 children received diversion options for a criminal offence, instead of a formal justice outcome. 118 of them received interventions from the Youth Justice Service. 110 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 have 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 has been used to recruit targeted youth workers in each local authority and a part-time Speech and Language Therapist. Each child on the Turnaround programme is allocated to one of the local authority Turnaround workers who works with the child and their family to agree a support plan to help them avoid further offending. The aim is to build the child's positive identity and reduce the risk of further offending.The 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 a multi-agency group of operational managers, reporting to the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board and submitting the necessary quarterly returns to the Ministry of Justice. Data up to the end of December 2023 shows a total of 73 children have worked with the Turnaround programme (28 in Dorset and 45 in BCP).

The Ministry of Justice exclude Children in Care and children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan from the Turnaround programme. It is important that these children are not denied the opportunity to be diverted from the justice system. Our local commitment is to ensure that these children also receive the Outcome 22 diversion option, receiving support from the Youth Justice Service instead of the local authority Turnaround workers.

Funding for the Turnaround programme will end in March 2025. The YJS Partnership Board is starting consider plans for taking forward diversion work when the Turnaround programme ends.

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 2024, 37% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 25% had the status of 'SEN Support'. There are also likely to be other children whose additional needs have not been identified.

During 2023/24, DCYJS worked with local authority colleagues to establish accurate recording and reporting of school exclusions experienced by children on the caseload. In February 2024, 20 out of 96 school-age children on the caseload had been permanently excluded from school in the past 2.5 academic years, and 50 out of 96 had experienced a fixed-term exclusion during that period. In total, 54% 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.

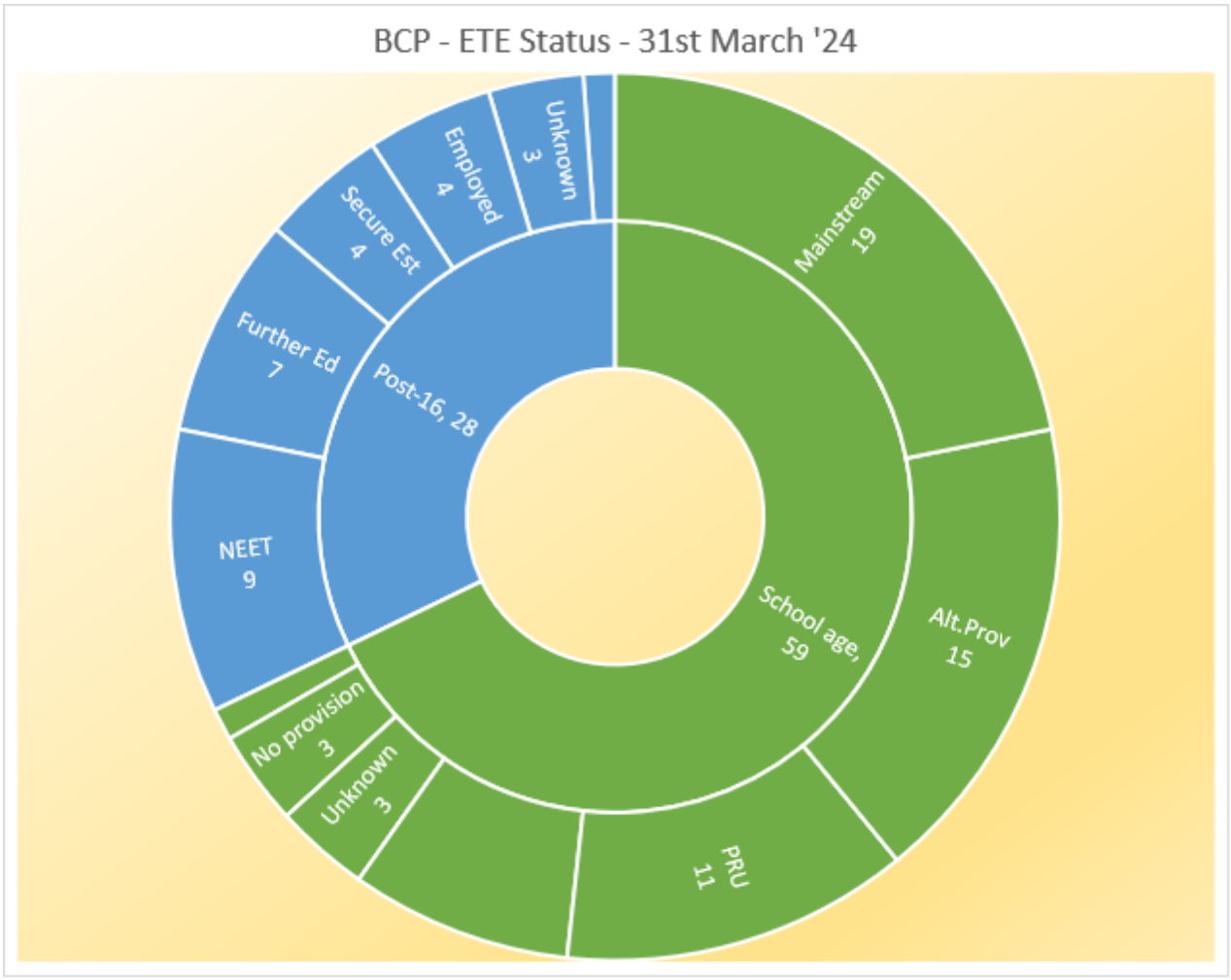
Improving education provision and outcomes for children in the youth justice system is one of our strategic priorities.

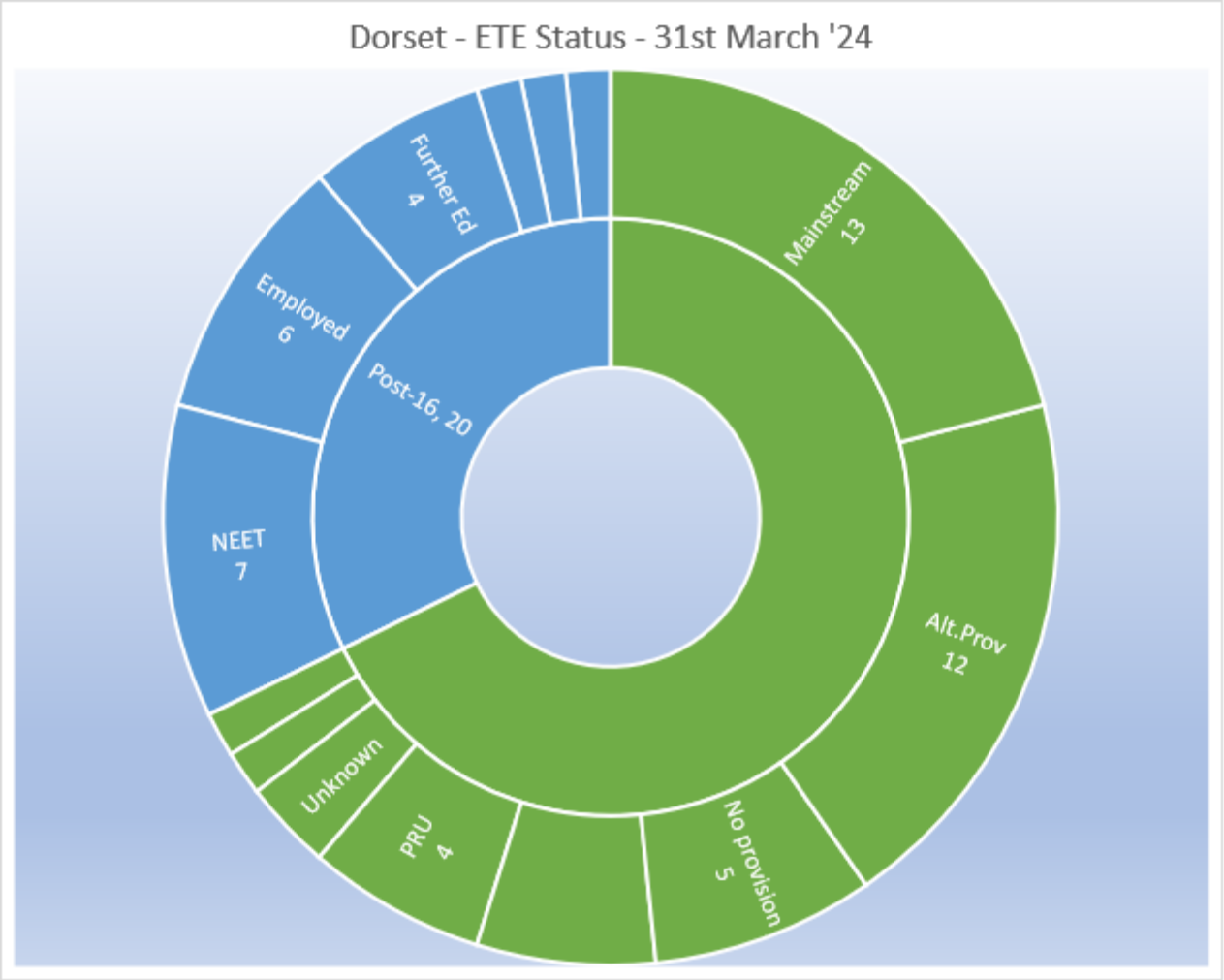
Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS employs an Education Officer and a post-16 Careers Adviser. 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.

During 2023/24 DCYJS developed its collection, recording and use of education information for each child. We have established consistent monthly processes with our local authority business intelligence colleagues for cross-referencing information about the child's education offer, attendance, history of school exclusions and special educational needs and disability. This enables us to target our interventions and resources for individual children while also providing the overview of education needs for our caseload.

The following charts show the education status of BCP and Dorset children on the YJS caseload in March 2024:


BCP - ETE Status - 31st March '24
Post-16, 28
School age, 59
Unknown 3
Employed 4
Secure Est 4
Further Ed 7
NEET 9
Mainstream 19
Alt.Prov 15
PRU 11
Unknown 3
No provision 3



These charts show the numbers of children who are not in mainstream school or 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 2023/24 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 for the Discover You project will be a priority for 2024-25.

6.5. Health 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 misuse. 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. Their specialist skills and knowledge underpin the DCYJS commitment to trauma-informed practice and our application of the Trauma Recovery Model.

There is increasing recognition of the neuro-diversity of children in the youth justice system. Two YJS nurses have been undertaking additional training in issues relating to ADHD, including the potential overlap between indications of ADHD and responses to past trauma.

Access to ADHD assessments varies 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 have been working with several children in this position, flagging the issue with NHS managers and commissioners. This will continue to be a priority in 2024/25.

During 2023/24, Dorset HealthCare and NHS Dorset have been reviewing the provision of services to meet the needs of young people in respect of both speech and language needs and mental health and emotional wellbeing. The DCYJS health team is actively participating in these transformation plans and will continue to do so during 2024/25.

6.6. Restorative Justice and Victims

Alongside the 'Child First' approach, Restorative Justice is a core principle underpinning the work of DCYJS. Our whole service training in 'Working Restoratively' in January 2024 included a focus on how restorative work fits with and supports a trauma-informed, child first approach.

In the words of Jo Berry, a restorative justice practitioner whose father, Sir Anthony Berry MP, was killed in the IRA Brighton bombing, “when people use violence, they often don’t see the humanity of the person, which is what allows them to do it. What often happens with restorative justice is that it rehumanises each side”.

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 sometimes receive negative feedback from victims about the decision-making process and outcomes for children who receive Out of Court Disposals. 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.

One element of the team’s Restorative Justice work is undertaking ‘reparation’ activities with young people, 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 young people work on community projects supported by the service or on conservation activities. During 2023/24 the service strengthened its joint work between case managers 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. We began work in 2023/24, which will continue in the coming year, to develop restorative responses for offences like weapon possession and drugs possession. Linked to this, we have partnered with the Red Cross to provide First Aid awareness sessions for young people.

Last year’s Plan reported on progress in developing a restorative response for children who commit offences against police officers and other emergency workers. This approach will be 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.

6.7. Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

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.

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 exploitaiton or their use of violent behaviour. DCYJS appointed a 'Trauma Champion' to participate in the YJB's South West network of trauma champions and to lead the service's work in this area, working with the DCYJS Psychologist. Although the NHS England funding for the Trauma Champion post ended in March 2023, the service has continued to resource this important role.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced a Serious Violence Duty for specifed authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. The Duty came into effect at the end of January 2023. 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.

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.

Extra-familial harm occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing higher rates of exploitation and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals amongst its BCP Council caseload. 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. The EFH Strategy has been reviewed in each local authority during 2023/24, with some amendments to documentation and procedures. YJS practitioners and managers will participate in multi-agency training as part of the implementation of the new arrangements.

6.8. Policing and Detention of children in police custody

DCYJS and Dorset Police work actively in partnership. 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.

One area of mutual priority is the need to speed up investigations of alleged offences by children. This is particularly the case for more serious offences which are likely to go to court and which may include public protection risks. Agreeing a joint approach to this issue is a priority for 2024-25.

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 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 2023/24.

2023/24	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	30	40	44	29	37	25	42	31	33	30	21	17
Det Not Auth	7	4	2	5	2	3	2	5	1	4	8	12
10-13 Y/O	5	1	4	0	0	1	3	1	2	1	3	0
Overnight	15	12	18	8	13	14	16	14	15	10	10	5
Strip searches / Clothing Changes	0	0	1	3	0	3	0	0	4/3	3/1	0/2	1/0
Remand/warrant	1/2	1/1	0/2	1/1	1/1	1/0	0/2	0/2	2/1	0/2	1/1	1/2

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Ave time 2023/24	12.47	11.63	10.73	11.7	12.1	10.6	12.5	11.8	13.8	11.1	13.0	9.2

The number of child arrests in Dorset has declined in the past 3 years, with an average of 42 child arrests per month in 2021/22, 36 per month in 2022/23 and 32 in 2023/24. The reduction in child arrests is particularly positive in comparison to the increase in adult arrests.

Custody managers have strengthened the challenge on whether the detention is justified, with a notable increase in 'Detentions not Authorised' in the February and March 2024. This means a child has been brought to the custody suite but the custody sergeant has refused to authorise the detention. In February and March 2024, custody sergeants refused to authorise 20 of a possible 58 detentions.

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 multi-agency group has 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 the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS), though average arrival times in 2023/24 dropped to 39 minutes at Bournemouth, 39 minutes at Poole and 58 minutes at Weymouth. The longer times at Weymouth reflect intermittent shortages of available Appropriate Adults. TAAS have recruited additional Weymouth AAs in March 2024, which should 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 have operated a joint arrangement whereby a foster carer is on standby each night to accommodate a child in this situation. Usage of this foster placement has been very low, partly reflecting the very few remands of children in police custody (9 instances in 2023/24 across both local authorities). The standby foster carer arrangement is currently under review, with alternative options being considered.

6.9. Transitions to Probation

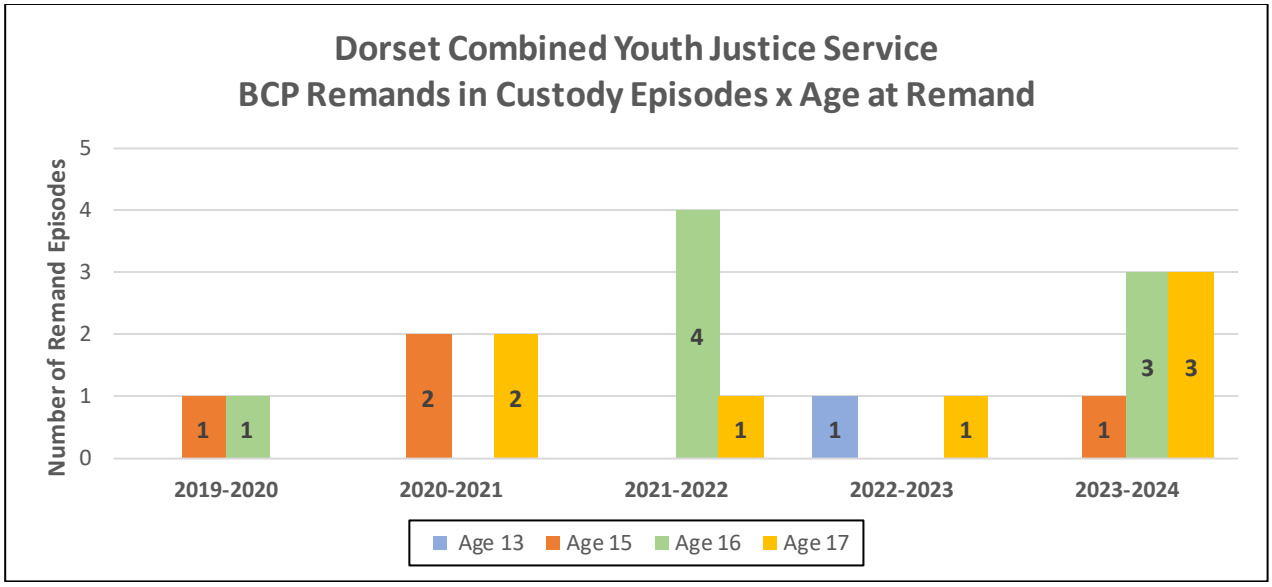
The seconded Probation Officer in DCYJS plays an important role in supporting transitions for young people who are moving from the YJS to Probation. In the last two years we have been working to improve the transition arrangements. Progress in 2023/24 included:

- 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.

During 2024-25 we plan to develop our methods for gathering feedback from young people about their experience of the transition process. We will also seek the views of practitioners in the YJS and Probation, to identify further opportunities for improvement.

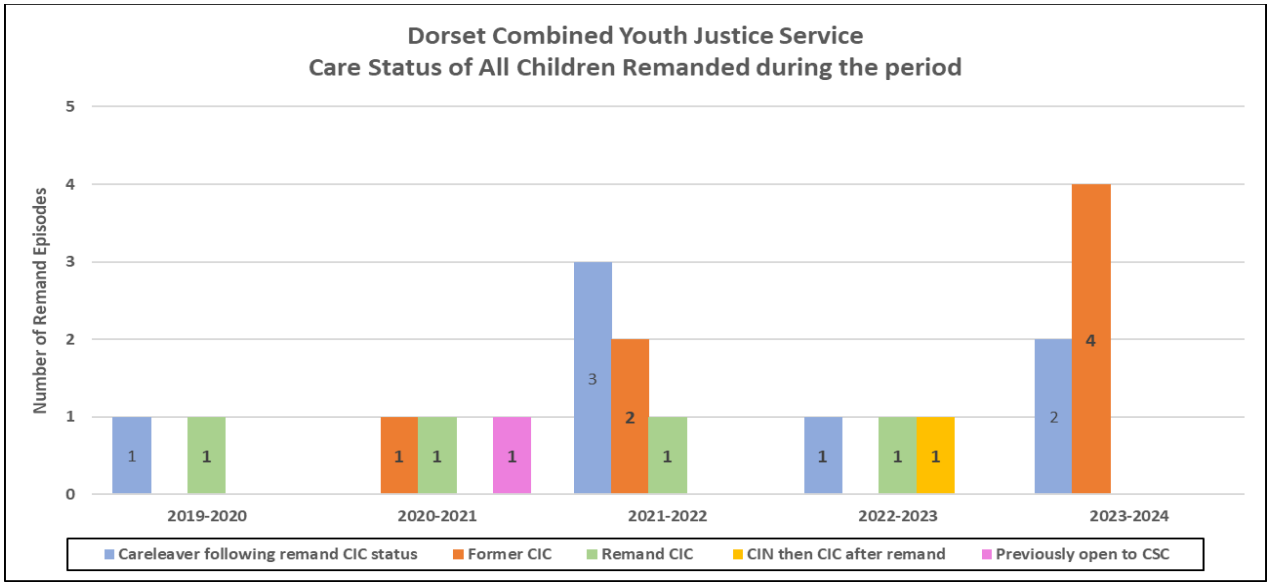
6.10. Remands

There were 7 episodes of children being remanded in custody during 2023-24, up from 5 in 2022-23 and matching the 7 episodes in 2021-22. There were also 5 instances of children being remanded into the care of the local authority in 2023-24. The following charts show the age of children remanded to custody from each local authority in recent years:



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. Although it can be difficult to find suitable accommodation for children at risk of custodial remand, this was not identified as a factor in the remand decisions in 2023-24.

Children who are remanded in custody gain 'child in care' status if they are not already a child in care. In many cases the child is already known to Children's Social Care in some capacity, as shown in the following chart:



In November 2023, HMI Probation published a thematic inspection report on work with children subject to remand in youth detention. Recommendations from this report will be included in the DCYJS plans for 2024-25.

6.11. Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Six local children received custodial sentences during 2023/4 (compared to 7 during 2022-23). Information about custodial sentences and analysis of the young people is included in section 4.2 of this document.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18th 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 have worked with a secure establishment in 2024 to confirm ROTL plans for a child who is approaching his release date.

In September 2023 some young people in custody raised concerns with their YJS case managers about the safety and adequacy of the arrangements for their detention. They reported spending 23 hours a day, or more, alone in their rooms, without access to social interaction or normal education provision. The YJS Head of Service followed up these

concerns with the Youth Custody Service (YCS) and with the Governors of the establishments. The YJS Partnership Board and the local Safeguarding Children's Partnership also sought assurances from the YCS and from YOI Governors. Improved scrutiny and joint working with the YCS and secure establishments has been developed and will continue to be monitored in 2024-25.

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 remains alert to risk and safeguarding issues, attending multi-agency meetings and supporting parents in their interactions with other services.

Parenting workers, and other YJS practitioners, remain alert to the needs of other children in the household, making referrals for support from other services when necessary.

DCYJS parenting staff also run Parent Forums which enable parents to meet others experiencing similar issues and to share ideas and experiences. Guest speakers, such as the YJS Speech and Language Therapist, sometimes attend in response to requests from parents.

Plans for 2024/25 include development of the Parent Forums and increased attendance by parenting workers at court hearings and panel meetings to support parents.

6.13. DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2024/25

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2024/25. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

DCYJS Partnership Priority	***Area for Development***	***Partners and Staff Providing Support***	***Benefits***
Reducing First-Time Entrants	Plan and implement the project to meet 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
Reducing First-Time Entrants	Agree plans for diversion options after the Turnaround programme ends	Dorset Police BCP Council and Dorset Council Children's Services	Maintain the success in diverting children from formal justice outcomes

		DCYJS HoS and Team Managers	
Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm	Regular scrutiny meetings between Police CPS and YJS to track and progress delayed investigations	Dorset Police CPS DCYJS managers	Improved timeliness for offences reaching court.
Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm	YJS staff to attend multi-agency training for new EFH documentation and processes	Safeguarding Children Partnership All DCYJS practitioners and managers	YJS staff understand and use the amended EFH procedures to reduce EFH to children
Reducing over-representation	Undertake case audits of YJS work with girls and with black or mixed heritage children	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Identify strengths and areas for improvement to better meet the needs of minority groups on the YJS caseload
Reducing over-representation	Find out about anti-racist practice in youth justice and apply the learning	DCYJS Board members, managers and practitioners	Anti-racist practice leading to better work with children from minority ethnicities
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
DCYJS practice improvement	Implement the new Prevention and Diversion assessment tool	DCYJS managers and practitioners	Compliance with YJB directive
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
Restorative Practice	Develop reparation options for drug possession and knife possession offences	DCYJS Reparation manager and staff DCYJS case managers	Improving children's insight into the harm caused by weapon and drug offences
Custody and remand	Implement relevant recommendations from the thematic inspection of work with children on remand	Dorset Council and BCP Council Children's Social Care Dorset Police Courts Dorset HealthCare DCYJS managers and case managers	Avoidance of unnecessary secure remands. Improved outcomes for children who are remanded in custody.
Custody and remand	Active monitoring, and reporting to YJS Board, of safety of children in custody	Dorset Council and BCP Council Children's Social Care Dorset HealthCare DCYJS managers and practitioners	Improved outcomes for children in custody
Health needs of children in the YJ	Seek solutions to the issue with ADHD	NHS Dorset Dorset Healthcare	Equal access to ADHD assessments and

system	assessments for 16+17 year-olds I east of the county		response to neuro-diversity needs
Develop the collection and use of performance information.	Continue to improve data accuracy, presentation, analysis and use	BCP Council and Dorset Council business intelligence teams DCYJS Performance and Information Manager, HoS and Performance Analyst	Earlier and more accurate identification and response to child-level and system-level improvement needs.

7. Sign off, submission and approval

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

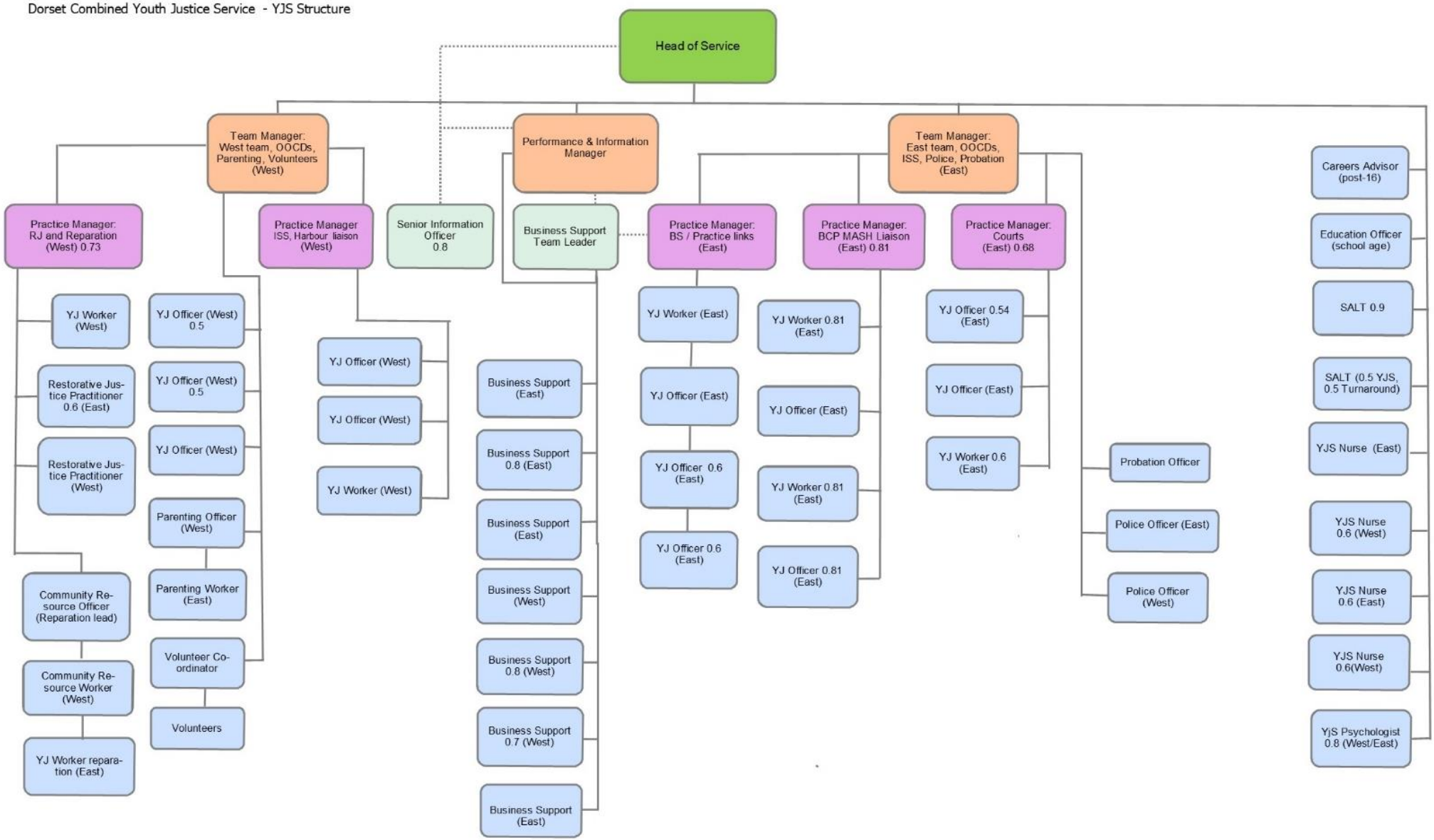
In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council on 13/07/2023 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on YYYY.

Chair of YJS Board - name	Theresa Leavy
Signature	
Date	

8. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

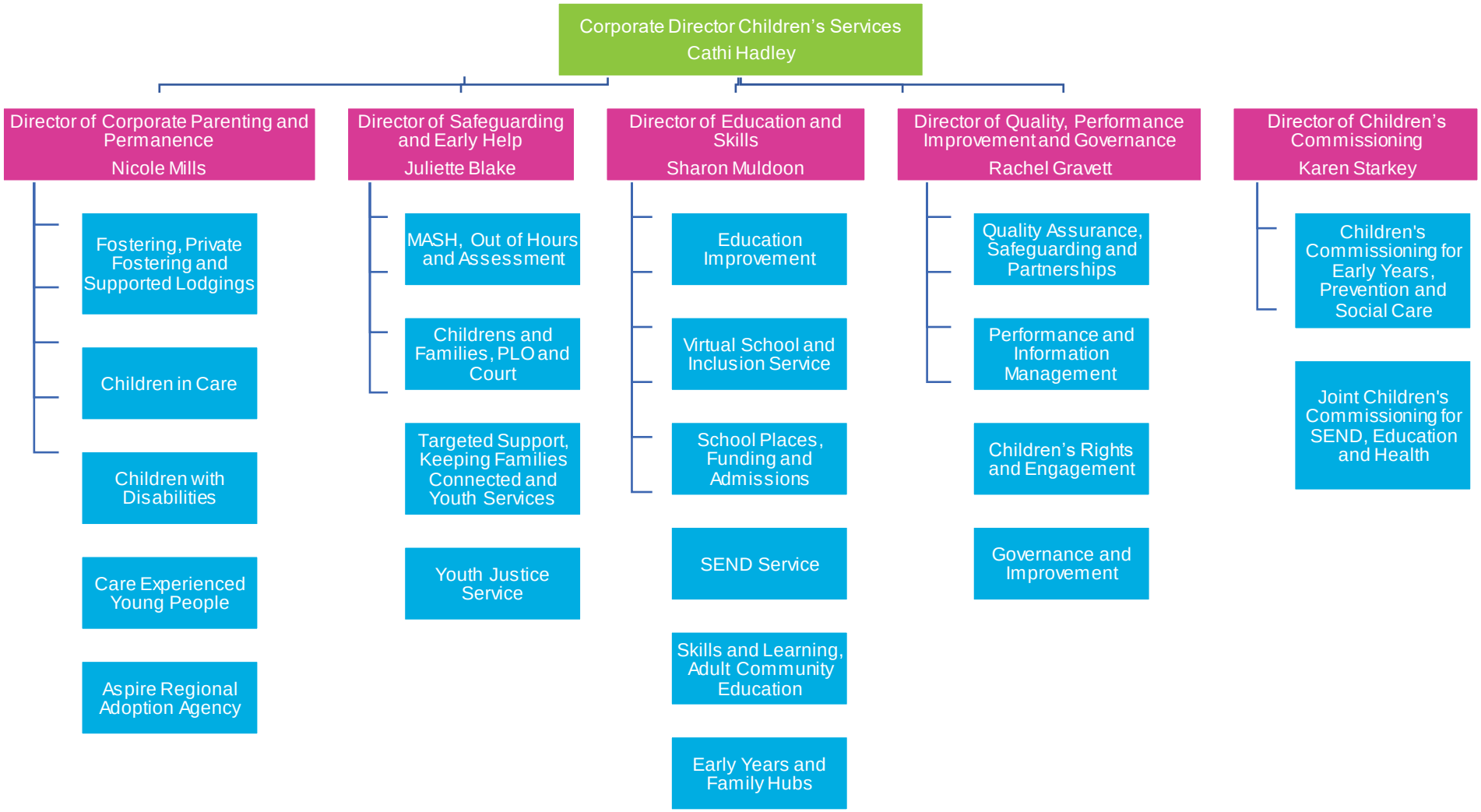
The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service - YJS Structure

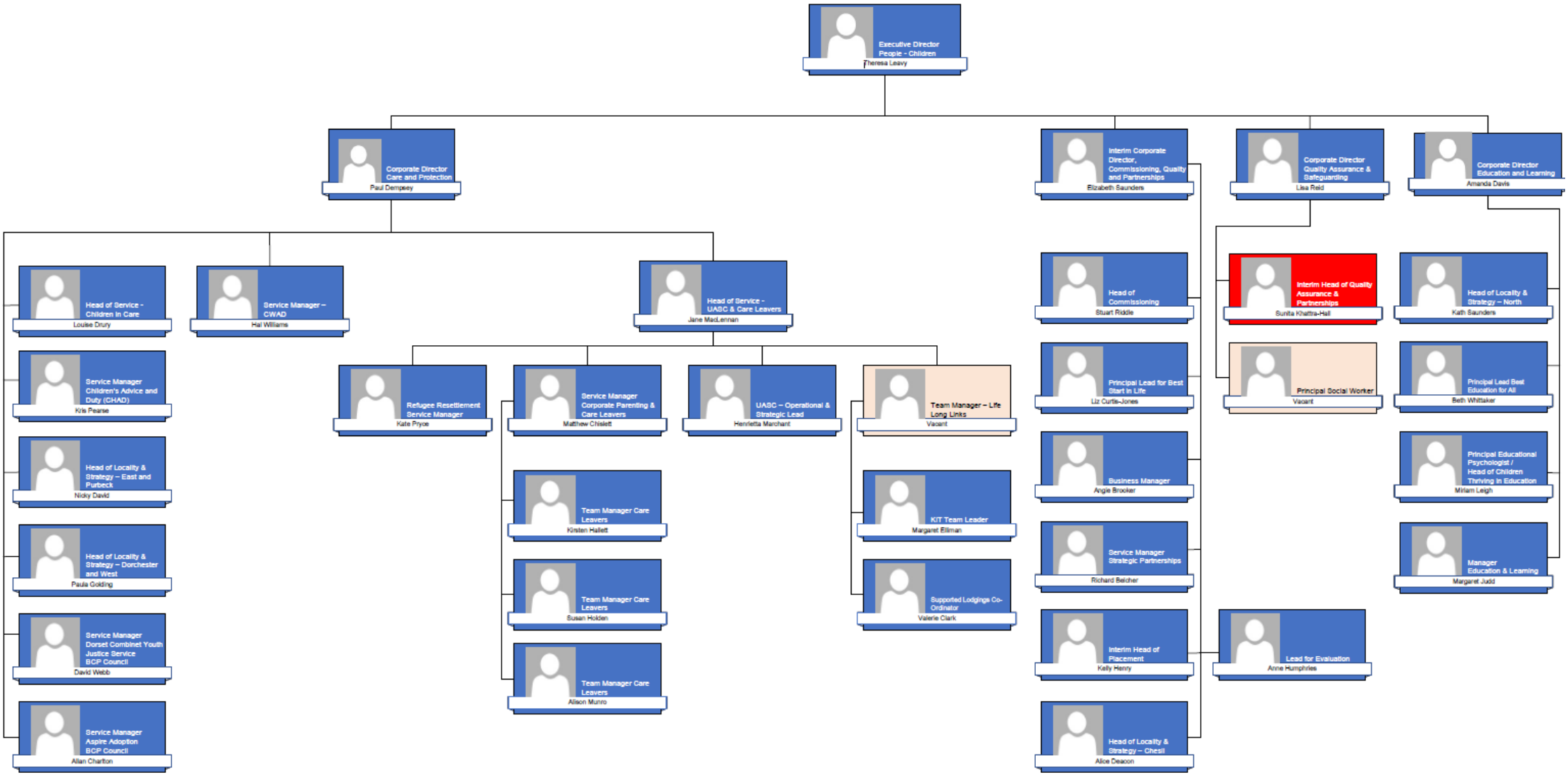


Dorset Combined
Youth Justice Service
January 2024

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 13th March 2024

	Male	Female
White British	10	43
White Irish	1	0
White Other	0	1
Mixed	0	1
Prefer not to say	0	1
	11	46

YJS Volunteers at 13th March 2024

	Male	Female
White British	8	15
White Other	1	1
	9	16

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

9. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2023/24

Partner Agency	**23/24 Revenue** (excluding recharges)	**Staff**
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,529	
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	£756,753 + additional £7,965 top-up	
Total	**£2,038,825**	

10. Appendix 3 – New Youth Justice 'Key Performance Indicators' – Indicative YJB Dashboard

Common youth justice terms – national glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, Intervention and Moving on; an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenets to this approach which should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after, also Child in Care	Child Looked After/Child in Care; where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution; an informal disposal, administered by the police, for

	low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan; a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated; children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school; children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs

STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution