



WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

2023/24

Preface

Youth Justice Plan Guidance

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the Act) youth offending partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan which is submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State. The purpose of the plan is to outline how statutory youth justice services, as defined in the Act, are structured, funded and delivered in the area.

All statutory youth justice services within West Mercia are delivered directly or commissioned by West Mercia Youth Justice Service.

This plan outlines the vision and priorities for West Mercia Youth Justice Service and outlines key actions to be undertaken during 2023/24.

The directions of the Secretary of State for the Youth Justice Plan (YJP) are delegated to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) who published the guidance and requirements for the 2023/24 Youth Justice Plan in mid-March 2023.

For the second year both the template and contents required under each heading and sub-heading are prescribed in the guidance.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has been completed on the Youth Justice Delivery Plan for 23/24. The EIA has not identified any significant impacts of the action plan on children, staff or victims who are from the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, however the assessment has identified that there is a potential impact for children from BAME backgrounds as nationally children from BAME backgrounds are over-represented in the youth justice system. Although in West Mercia this is not significant with children from BAME backgrounds accounting for 12% of the offending population, and 10% of the general population, this requires regular monitoring, and greater analysis. Supporting, valuing, and addressing diversity is one of the plans priorities for 2023/24.

Youth Justice Plan

West Mercia Youth Justice Service

Service Manager/Lead: Keith Barham

Chair of the Management Board: Tina Russell, DCS Worcestershire.

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Introduction, Vision and Strategy

Forward by the Chair of the Management Board

West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS) is a partnership between the Local Authorities, National Probation Service, West Mercia Police, NHS organisations across West Mercia and the Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. The service is accountable to the WMYJS Management Board, comprised of senior officers from each partner agency. The service is hosted, on behalf of the Local Authorities and the partnership by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

In 2022 the partnership was inspected by HMI Probation, and we welcomed this opportunity for external scrutiny to assist us on our improvement journey. An improvement plan to address the nine inspection recommendations was submitted to and approved by the inspectorate. The actions to be progressed from the inspection improvement plan form the basis for this year's service development plan along with additional actions and priorities identified by the partnership for 2023/24.

As a strategic board we reviewed our structure and operation during 2022/23, and agreed new arrangements, as outlined in the governance, leadership and partnerships section of this plan. We are looking forward to establishing the supporting sub-groups and local fora during the year

The plan was approved by the Youth Justice Service Management Board on 21st June 2023.

Tina Russell

Chair – West Mercia Youth Justice Management Board

Director of Children Services, Worcestershire County Council and Chief Executive of Worcestershire Children First

Executive Summary

The service performance against the three national outcome indicators continues to be good. The performance in relation to the rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence is 0.08 custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population, and this rate is below the national rate of 0.11. The proportion of young people re-offending is 27.3% which is significantly lower the national rate at 31.2%. The first-time entrant (FTE) rate for the annual period ending September 22 is at 93 FTE per 100,000 youth population compared to the national rate of 146.

Although there is not a significant over representation of BAME children in the overall offending population in West Mercia, we recognise that we need to better understand all of those groups of children that may be overrepresented in the youth justice cohort, and to improve our practice in meeting the diverse needs of children in the youth justice system.

The YJB vision is of a Child First youth justice system, and during 23/24 the service will continue to work to further understand and embed a Child First approach in practice.

The main driver for setting this year's priorities and identifying improvement actions is the HMI Probation inspection of the service conducted in 2022. The inspection made nine recommendations:

The West Mercia Youth Justice Service should:

1. strengthen the quality and consistency of management oversight of practice
2. develop a meaningful focus on diversity in its casework
3. make sure that case managers plan for, and respond effectively to, changing circumstances in a case

4. work effectively with partners in post-court work to keep children and other people safe.

The Youth Justice Service management board should:

5. make sure there is capacity at both board and YJS senior management level to fulfil its ambitions for an effective, child-first service

6. take steps to better understand why some groups of children are overrepresented in the YJS and work to reduce this

7. address disparities in service provision between localities and commissioned services, and ensure they are providing a consistent and effective response to identified needs

8. work with partners to ensure out-of-court disposal decisions are proportionate and maximise opportunities for children to receive support without being criminalised

9. work as a partnership to identify and address obstacles to the successful delivery of the YJS resettlement practice.

The board has also included other identified priorities and improvement actions which have been identified by the leadership team, management board and in consultation with the staff group.

The youth justice partnership priorities and key actions for 2023/24 are

People Themes:

- Supporting Staff Development, Wellbeing and Morale
 - *Implement revised staff appraisal process*
 - *Conduct staff survey*
 - *Review supervision policy*

Practice Themes:

- Embedding Child First in Practice
 - *CF champions to share learning*
 - *Child first policy*
 - *Investigate feasibility of implementing enhanced case management*
- Improving intervention and risk planning
 - *Training in planning*
 - *Review planning and risk guidance*
 - *Training in management oversight*
 - *Ensure risk processes include victim safety*
- Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction
 - *Embed "Make it Right"*
 - *Review victim voice and satisfaction in pre-court decision making*
- Improving our diversion and early intervention offer
 - *Full implementation of the Turnaround programme*
 - *Internal scrutiny process for OoCD decision making*
 - *Induction/training for JDMP members*
 - *Establish data set*

Partnership Themes:

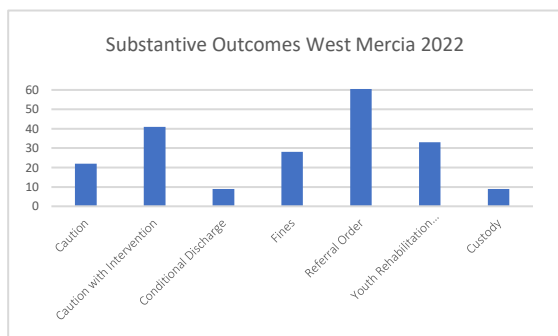
- Improving the health offer in the youth justice service
 - *Review of health resources deployed in WMYJS*
- Improving our work with other agencies
 - *Agree and embed transition protocol*
 - *Review of housing protocols*

Governance, Leadership and Management Themes:

- Addressing the Governance and Leadership Inspection Findings
 - *Agree and implement revised management structure*
 - *Fully implement new governance structure*
 - *Ensure Management Board oversight of resettlement*
 - *Agree process by which Management Board hear the voice of the child*
- Improving the quality and consistency of practice across the service
 - *Implement new QA framework*
 - *Review service model across the four areas to ensure consistency of offer*
- Supporting, valuing and addressing diversity
 - *Introduce mandatory diversity training*
 - *Identify standard data set to ensure scrutiny of children over-represented in the youth justice system*

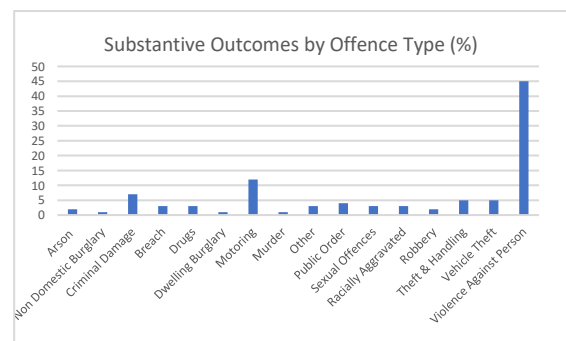
Local Context

The West Mercia Youth Justice Service operates across the four Local Authority areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire, covering a youth population of approximately 115,388 (10 to 17 year olds). The area is large and predominantly rural covering 2,868 square miles.



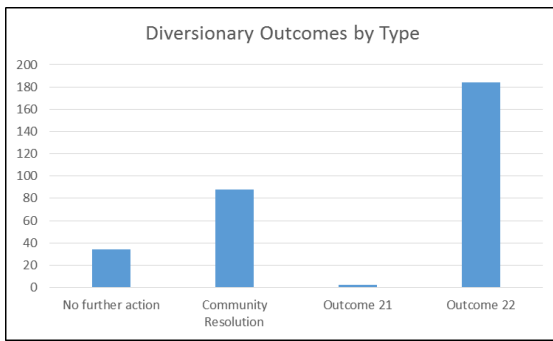
During 2022 there were 239 substantive outcomes (cautions or convictions) made on children in West Mercia, 89 (37%) of these were cautions, (29%) referral orders, 33 (14%) youth rehabilitation orders and 9 (4%) custodial sentences. The other 39 (16%) were compensation, conditional discharges or fines.

Males accounted for 87% of these outcomes and females 13%.

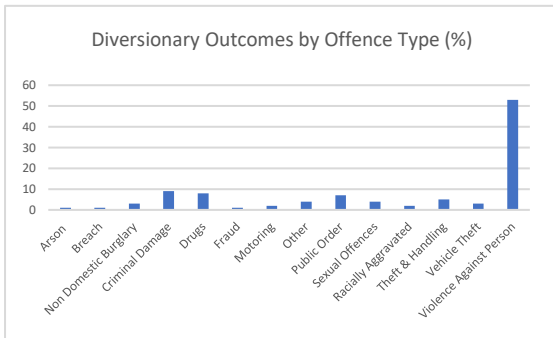


The three main offence types were violence against the person 107 (45%), motoring offences 28 (12%), and criminal damage offences 17 (7%) followed by theft and handling and vehicle theft (each accounting for 5% of outcomes).

The majority of children receiving a substantive outcome were aged between 14 and 17 (92%), with 16 and 17 year olds accounting for 61%, children 14 and 15 years accounting for 32%, children 12 years and under accounting for 2% and 13 year olds accounting for 6% of the outcomes.



A further 190 children who had offended were diverted from substantive outcomes through the joint decision making arrangements for out of court disposals. Of these 190, 156 (82%) received an Outcome 22, an informal disposal where the child participates in an intervention, and as a result the offence is recorded as a no further action, 7 (4%) a community resolution, 26 (14%) received no further action and 1 received an Outcome 21, which is similar to an Outcome 22, but is for specific offences.



Males accounted for 75% of the diversionary outcomes and females for 25%.

The four main offence types were violence against the person (53%), criminal damage (9%), drug offences (8%), and Public Order (7%).

The majority of young people receiving a diversionary outcome were aged between 14 and 17 (79%), with children 12 years and under accounting for 10% of the outcomes.

A further 98 young people were diverted from substantive outcomes, 77 by Police Community Resolutions and 21 given Outcome 22 and referred to the Divert programme by the Police.

Vision

The West Mercia Youth Justice Partnership have agreed a vision statement and underpinning principles for the service following a joint workshop with the service's management team and a staff consultation.

Vision:

Together, preventing offending and improving lives

Underlying Principles:

- *Ensure that we secure best practice, innovation and outstanding quality in all we do*
- *Reducing demand by preventing offending and effectively managing the risks posed by those who have offended*
- *Offer the best value for money by combining resources*
- *Work with victims and communities to repair harm from offending*
- *Recognising the capacity of young people to grow and develop with the right support*
- *Listen to children's and victim's opinions and use them to shape what we do*
- *Building resilience within families and local communities*
- *Recognise the important role families play in preventing children from getting involved in crime*
- *Grow and sustain a positive and stable workforce*

Child First

The YJB's vision of a child first youth justice system is one where services:

- Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children
- Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society
- Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers
- Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system

Activities can be identified which demonstrate the service is adopting a Child First approach, for example the implementation of the joint decision making arrangements for Out of Court Disposals and where appropriate the diversion of children from formal justice system disposals. There is, however, still work to do to before we could claim that a Child First approach has been fully embedded in practice.

Further work to intervene early and work to support children who are on the edge of the justice system and their families outside of formal justice system processes will be developed throughout 23/24 through the implementation of the Ministry of Justice supported Turnaround programme.

The service has supported Child First champions in each of the area teams to undertake the academically accredited Child First Effective Practice Award, and there are actions in the service development plan to further embed a child first approach in service delivery.

Voice of the Child

One method the service uses to elicit the view of children is the self-assessment tool, which opens the discussion for the child's contribution to the assessment and planning process. The self-assessment questionnaires are completed with the child at the start of any intervention, at review stages and case closure. These help to identify the needs, strengths, interventions and exit strategies for the child.

The service invites specific feedback from children through an end of order questionnaire (EoOQ). These are reviewed by the case worker when completed and if they contain imminent concerns, for example the young person not feeling safe, then this is dealt with straight away, informing the management of risk.

The EoOQs are collated at a local level each quarter and compiled into an area report. The report is shared with the area team for feedback / suggestions. All area reports and worker feedback suggestions are then discussed in the service's Participation Group quarterly meetings. The Participation Group Lead reports the outcomes of the feedback into the leadership team, highlighting local and service wide issues and trends, and where negative or good practice has been referenced.

In addition to the EoOQ the service has a child friendly comments, compliments and complaints process called "Tell Us". Every child is advised of the process and given a business card with relevant information about "Tell Us" on it. Responses to "Tell Us" can be made via a form, a dedicated phone number, a dedicated email address or via the service's website. Responses received through "Tell Us" are fed through to the participation group, or if they are a complaint handled under the service's complaints procedure.

Examples of how the service has used the feedback received from children:-

- A child with Autism felt that the staff would benefit from some specific training around his condition, this recommendation was incorporated into the annual appraisal for all grades of staff within the team.
- The Attendance Centre programme was adapted after feedback from children about future careers they were considering; bringing in local employers from the trade they were considering.
- A programme of voluntary contacts was put in place as an exit strategy after we received the feedback from a child in his EoOQ and closure AssetPlus SAQ, saying how important his workers were to him and how much he was going to miss them after his Court order had ended.

During October 2022 to March 2023 the service received end of intervention questionnaires from 85 children, of which 69 (81%) children were satisfied with the service they had received. Of those 85 children 83 (97%) said they felt they were treated fairly by the service and 83 (97%) said they also felt safe during their time with the service.

Quotes from children:-

“Belief in my ability, my workers trusted me and never let me down”.

“Regular appointments and not being let down. I was treated with respect, and I liked my workers”

“My workers were good to me and I am on the right track of things”

“My worker Paul was really good, treated me like an adult, I enjoyed working with him”

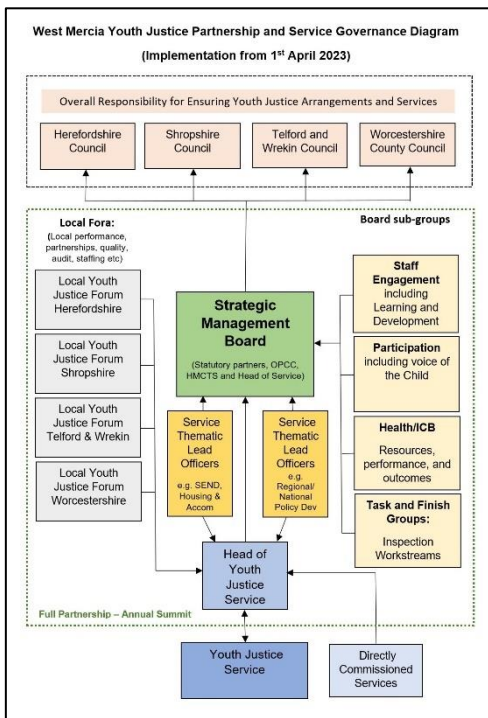
A recommendation from our HMI Probation inspection in 2022 was that the Management Board should take steps to better understand why some groups of children are overrepresented in the YJS and work to reduce this. The service has set up a task and finish group to look at this recommendation, and part of this also includes putting in place a process for the board to hear the voice of the child and their lived experience.

Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Governance

Since 2016, following a review of the hosting arrangements for the Youth Justice Service, the service has been hosted and managed on behalf of the Local Authorities and the WMYJS partnership by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The Youth Justice Service is accountable to the WMYJS Strategic Management Board, and the Strategic Management Board is accountable to each of the Local Authorities for the commissioning and delivery of youth justice services.

As a result of a recommendation of the HMI Probation inspection of the service in 2022, the board has adopted a new structure and operational processes from 1st April 2023. There is a strategic board with a primary membership of senior representatives from the statutory agencies and the court service supported by local youth justice fora and themed sub-groups with a membership of relevant local stakeholders.



All of the statutory agencies (Local Authorities, Police, Probation and Integrated Care Boards) are represented on the Strategic Management Board and the Board is currently chaired by the Director of Children Services, Worcestershire County Council. The Board meets quarterly and will monitor the performance and quality of the service through regular reporting, and exception reports from the local fora and sub-groups.

During 22/23 the Management Board has considered a number of thematic deep dives, practice presentations and audits including;

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- Resettlement
- Education
- Audit on BAME cases subject to OoCD decision making
- Ethnic minority disproportionality in the youth justice system
- Audit of cases with child exploitation markers

The purpose of which is to either provide assurance or to identify any issues, in particular with regards to provision of services and multi-agency working, and agree actions for the Management Board or individual board members in order to improve services for children in the youth justice system.

The Head of Service is day to day managed by the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and has a dual accountability to both the Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Chair of the Management Board.

Partnerships

The Strategic Management Board representatives understand their dual role when sitting on other partnerships and governance boards, and where appropriate advocate on behalf of children in the youth justice system or the work of the youth justice service in those boards.

WMYJS is a member of relevant groups under the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in each of the four local authority areas, the children and young peoples’ strategic partnerships or equivalent, where these exist, and the early help partnerships. The service is also represented on West Mercia Police’s children and young people strategic board.

WMYJS is represented on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships at the unitary or top tier authority level. WMYJS is an active member of the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, the West Mercia Crime Reduction Board, the PCCs Victim and Witness Board and the MAPPA Strategic Management Board.

At an operational level the service is represented on the Channel Panels established as part of the Prevent Strategy, the Serious and Organised Crime Joint Agency Groups and the Child Exploitation Operational Groups. Depending on the local area the service team managers attend other multi-agency meetings according to the needs of the local area, for example Corporate Parenting Boards, SEND meetings, MASH partnership groups and reducing re-offending groups.

Structure

A structural diagram of the service is provided at Appendix 1 of this plan.

The West Mercia Youth Justice Service comprises four multi-agency service delivery teams, aligned to the Local Authority areas, which deliver the majority of services. The reparation service and volunteer services are co-ordinated centrally across the whole service, as are the finance and data and information functions.

Each area based team comprises the following types of posts:

- Team Manager
- Senior Practitioner
- Youth Justice Officers and Assistant Youth Justice Officers
- Education, Training and Employment Officer
- Substance Misuse Officer
- Victim Liaison Officer
- Police Officer (secondment)
- Mental Health Worker (secondment)

The current partnership contribution from health is under review, with an aim to ensure the provision meets the needs of children worked with by the Youth Justice Service and to provide consistency of provision across the area.

Under the national allocation formula, the Probation Service contribute two posts to the service, a Probation Officer and a Probation Service Officer. The Probation Officer is located in the Worcestershire Team and deals with the transition arrangements for any child transferring from the Youth Justice Service to Probation across Worcestershire and Herefordshire. The Probation Service Officer post, currently vacant, will work across the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin teams.

As a response to a recommendation from the HMI Probation inspection of the service in 2022, the management structure of the service is under review as the inspectorate identified that there was insufficient capacity in the current structure to translate the services vision into practice effectively. It is planned to agree and implement the new structure during 2023/24.

WMYJS is compliant with the minimum staffing requirements outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. There are six social work qualified members of staff within the service.

Board Development

In 2022/23 the Management Board undertook a review of the governance structure and membership, and as a result the new governance arrangements outlined in the last section of this plan are being implemented.

Although the main strategic board will have a similar membership to the previous arrangements, there will be a greater focus in the board on strategy, planning, resources, and quality and performance improvement. The board will be supported by a series of sub-groups, and by local fora, which will provide oversight for and performance improvement planning at the level of each local authority area.

The terms of reference and operating procedures for the revised structure will be put in place during the first quarter of 23/24, and the sub-group structure established during the year. As part of the process the development needs of members of the supporting groups and of the main board will be identified. It is intended to hold an annual summit of the wider partnership, through which, some of those development needs may be addressed.

Progress on the Previous Plan

The following progress has been made against the actions outlined in the Youth Justice Plan 2022/23;

- Team development training was commissioned and delivered to the teams in the service, including the service's leadership team.
- Child First champions were identified in each team, and they completed the Child First Effective Practice Award.
- Training was delivered on constructive resettlement and the service's revised resettlement policy and guidance. A follow up resettlement case audit and deep dive report was undertaken and presented to the service's management board. As part of the inspection improvement plan a resettlement lead in the management board was identified.
- Work on a revised quality assurance framework was commenced.
- As a result of the restorative health check a decision was taken to pilot the "Make it Right" restorative approach in referral order panels.
- The review of health resources for the youth justice service was commenced, and is currently in progress.
- Amendments were made to the out of court disposal assessment tool to better identify diverse needs.
- An inspection improvement plan was developed, which was approved by the inspectorate. The plan is currently being implemented.
- The transitions protocol was revised and is currently subject to agreement.
- A staff conference that had been delayed from 21/22 took place in June 2022.
- The revision of the transitions protocol is in progress.

Some of the actions were reviewed during the year, mainly as a result of the inspection findings and also developing the inspection improvement plan. Due to capacity issues and prioritising some the inspection improvement work the following actions from last years plan were delayed and are being carried forward to 23/24.

- Internal scrutiny process for out of court disposals
- Diversity training
- Identifying a standard data set to ensure adequate scrutiny in respect of groups over-represented in the youth justice system
- Workforce development in respect to intervention and risk planning
- Development of a Child First policy

Resources and Services

The Youth Offending Service has a complex budget structure comprising of partner agency cash, seconded staff and in-kind contributions and the Youth Justice (YOT) Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. A table outlining the agreed contributions for 2023/24 is provided in Appendix 2 of this plan.

The YJB Youth Justice (YOT) Grant is provided for the provision of youth justice services with an aim of achieving the following outcomes; reducing the number of children in the youth justice system, reducing the reoffending of children in the youth justice system, improving the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system and improving the outcomes for children in the youth justice system. The grant forms part of the overall pooled partnership budget for WMYJS.

The grant, partner contributions and available resources will be used to deliver youth justice services across West Mercia, to implement our development plan against the priorities identified for 23/24, to improve or sustain the current performance against the current four national outcome measures, the

new 10 performance indicators being introduced in 2023/24 and improve the compliance with the Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System.

The Youth Justice Service only has one outsourced service, the provision of Appropriate Adults for children in Police custody. The service is provided by a local voluntary sector organisation YSS. Quarterly contract monitoring and compliance meetings are held with YSS. This contract expires at the end of 23/24, and a tendering process for a provider from 1st April 2024 will be initiated during the second quarter of the year.

Performance

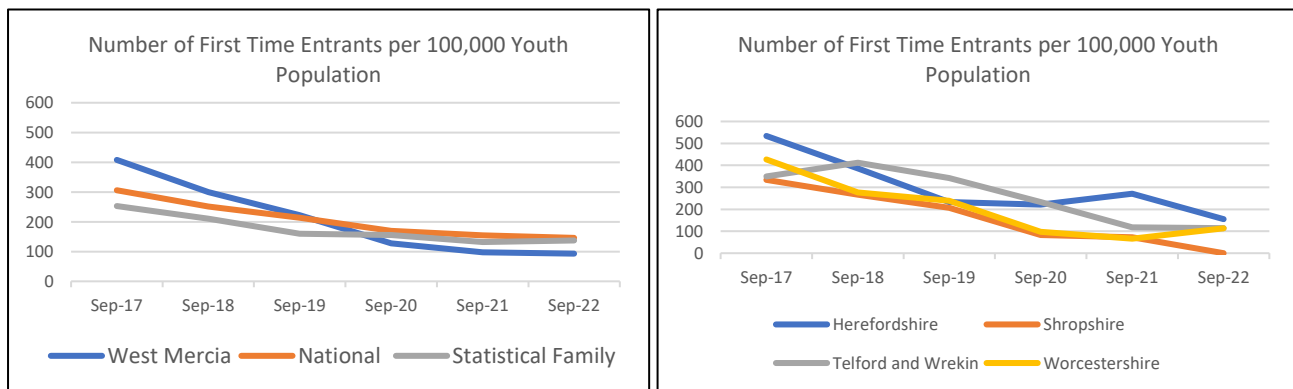
National Key Performance Indicators

There are three national outcome measures, first time entrants to the youth justice system, use of custody and reoffending.

First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTE)

The FTE indicator is expressed as the number of first-time entrants per 100,000 youth population for comparison purposes. It should be noted that in two areas with relatively small youth populations in West Mercia, Herefordshire and Telford and Wrekin, small changes in the actual number of first-time entrants have a disproportionate effect on the rate per 100,000 when compared to the areas with larger youth populations.

The most recent data for FTEs is for the year October 2021 – September 2022.



First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 Youth Population						
Period	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22
West Mercia	408	300	222	128	98	93
National	306	251	214	170	154	146
Statistical Family	253	211	160	156	132	137
Herefordshire	534	386	233	221	271	155
Shropshire	334	267	206	82	72	>10
Telford and Wrekin	350	412	343	233	118	114
Worcestershire	427	276	239	97	66	114

FTEs have been reducing since 2009, and since 2017 the West Mercia rate has been reducing more rapidly than the national and statistical neighbour rates, and in 2020, for the first time, the West Mercia rate was lower than both the national and statistical family rates. One area within West Mercia, Herefordshire, has a slightly higher rate than the national rate.

Although the Herefordshire rate increased in 2021 compared to 2020, the overall trend since 2016 is still a reduction and the increase in the rate relates to an additional 12 children becoming FTEs in 2021 compared to 2020. In 2022 FTE rates for Herefordshire have reduced by 43% from 2021.

Nationally the FTE rates range from 38 to 486 (median 148), placing West Mercia in the top quartile of the performance range.

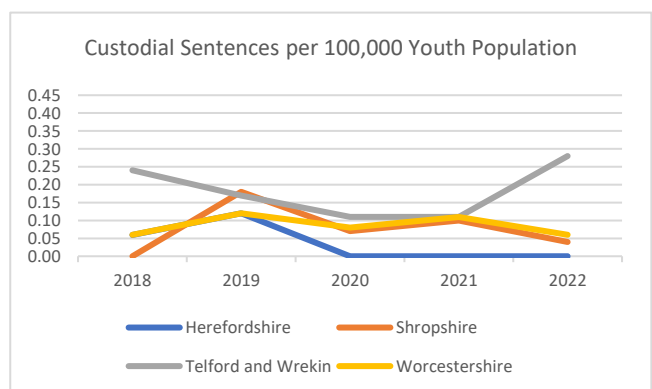
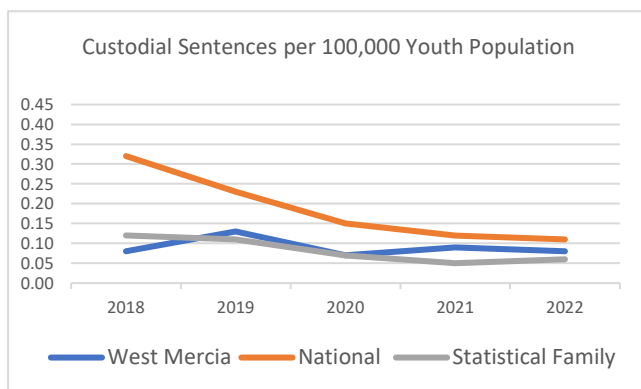
The reduction in the FTE rates since 2019 has been contributed to by the implementation of a revised joint decision making process for out of court disposals across the four local authority areas between June 2019 and March 2020. The new arrangements bring more children into scope for having their behaviour dealt with through informal out of court disposal interventions rather than formal criminal justice system sanctions.

In the year October 2021 to September 2022 there were 321 cases considered by the joint decision making arrangements, and 215 of these, 67%, were diverted from formal justice system outcomes.

In 2023/24 it is planned to establish an internal scrutiny process for out of court disposal decision making to promote consistency of approach in decision making across the service.

Use of Custody

The national outcome indicator for use of custody is the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population. The most recent data for this indicator is for the calendar year 2022.



Custodial Sentences per 100,000 Youth Population					
Period	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
West Mercia	0.08	0.13	0.07	0.09	0.08
National	0.32	0.23	0.15	0.12	0.11
Statistical Family	0.12	0.11	0.07	0.05	0.06
Herefordshire	0.06	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00
Shropshire	0.00	0.18	0.07	0.10	0.04
Telford and Wrekin	0.25	0.17	0.11	0.11	0.28
Worcestershire	0.06	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.06

West Mercia is a low use of custody area, in 2022 the rate of custodial sentences was 0.08, representing 9 custodial sentences across West Mercia. This is a decrease on the previous year where the rate was 0.09 and the number of sentences 11. The current rate compares favourably to the national rate of 0.11 and is slightly higher than the statistical neighbour group rate of 0.06. As the graphs of the West Mercia areas demonstrate the rates are volatile over time due to the very small numbers of custodial sentences made in each area. In 2022 there were no custodial sentences made on Herefordshire children, 1 on a Shropshire child, 5 on Telford and Wrekin children and 3 on Worcestershire children.

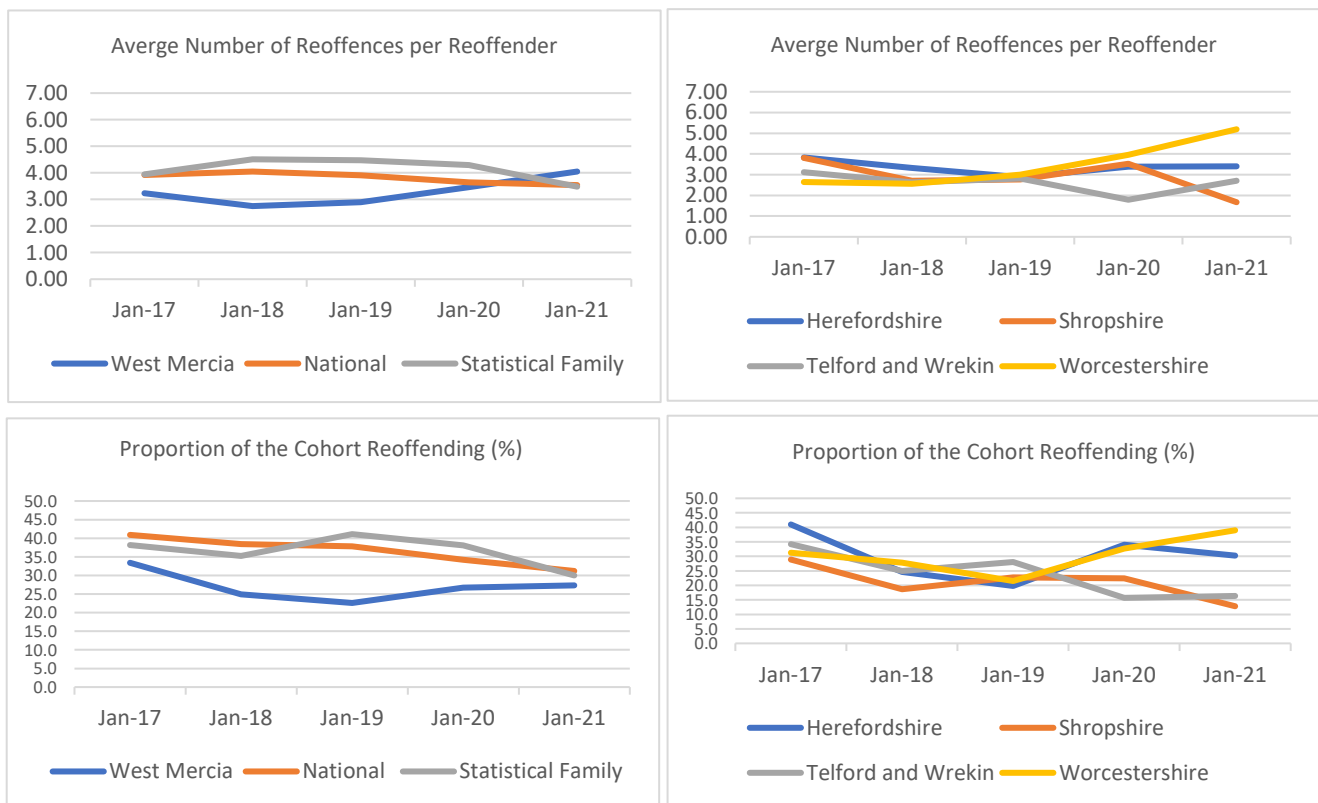
The youth justice service seeks to avoid custodial sentences through the offer of the community based alternative of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance. This programme is a combination of an intensive, up to 25 hours a week, intervention programme and an electronically monitored curfew.

A new resettlement policy in relation to the service provided to children transitioning from custody back into the community became operational in 2022. A resettlement audit was carried out in November 2022 and recommendations are currently being implemented.

Reoffending

There are two measures used for the reoffending indicator both for the same cohort of children, which is all children receiving a substantive youth justice disposal (caution or conviction) within a 12 month period. The members of the cohort are tracked for twelve months, even if they become an adult during that period, for any proven reoffending. The two measures are the average number of reoffences per reoffender and the proportion (percentage) of the cohort who reoffend.

The most recent data is for the cohort identified in the period April 2020 to March 2021 and tracked until March 2022.



Average Number of Reoffences per Reoffender					
Period	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20	Mar-21
West Mercia	3.23	2.75	2.90	3.46	4.05
National	3.92	4.05	3.91	3.64	3.54
Statistical Family	3.95	4.51	4.48	4.29	3.48
Herefordshire	3.83	3.33	2.88	3.39	3.40
Shropshire	3.81	2.70	2.77	3.53	1.67
Telford and Wrekin	3.12	2.63	2.81	1.79	2.71
Worcestershire	2.65	2.56	3.00	3.96	5.19

Proportion of the Cohort Reoffending (%)					
Period	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20	Mar-21
West Mercia	33.4	24.9	22.6	26.7	27.3
National	40.9	38.4	37.8	34.2	31.2
Statistical Family	38.2	35.2	41.1	38.1	30.0
Herefordshire	41.0	24.6	19.8	34.0	30.3
Shropshire	28.9	18.7	22.7	22.4	12.8
Telford and Wrekin	34.2	25.0	28.1	15.7	16.3
Worcestershire	31.2	27.8	21.5	32.7	39.0

The frequency rate (average number of reoffences per reoffender) for West Mercia for the April 20 to March 21 cohort, 4.05 is higher than both the national rate, 3.54 and the statistical neighbour rate of 3.48. The frequency rate in West Mercia has increased since 2019. The rates for April 20 to March 21 across three areas, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin are lower than both the national rate and the statistical neighbour rate. The graph outlining the rates for the four West Mercia areas demonstrate how volatile this particular measure is over time. Part of the reason for this is that the actual number of reoffenders are quite small, so a few individuals who are persistently reoffending within these cohorts significantly affect the overall average of reoffences per reoffender.

The proportion of children reoffending in West Mercia, 27.3%, is significantly lower than both England at 31.2% and the statistical family group at 30%. The proportion of children reoffending in three local authority areas are also equal to or lower than the national and statistical neighbour group; Herefordshire at 30.3%, Shropshire at 12.8%, Telford and Wrekin at 16.3% however Worcestershire is higher than both at 39%.

Promoting desistance from offending is the aim of the service's work with children, interventions delivered to individual children are based on a comprehensive assessment of risks and needs using the national AssetPlus assessment and planning framework. Training has been provided to staff during 2022/23 on Restorative Justice and resettlement.

New performance measures

Ten new performance measures are being introduced for 2023/24;

- suitable accommodation
- education, training and employment
- special educational needs and disabilities
- mental health care and emotional wellbeing
- substance misuse
- out-of-court disposals
- links to wider services
- management board attendance
- serious violence
- victims

Some of these measures build on work already prioritised and recorded, for example education, training and employment, and others require changes to recording practices or information from partner agencies in order to be able to report the data required. The service has been working on recording guidance for staff, and has been liaising with partner agencies to put in place information sharing arrangements where these are required.

Despite the work undertaken thus far there is still a small risk of not being able to fully report on all the measures, in line with the national counting guidance, however the service is confident that by the time the first data return is required, everything will be in place to make a full data return.

Priorities

Children from groups which are over-represented

Within West Mercia the proportion of Black and ethnic minority children in the offending population, in the year ending March 2022, at 12% is higher, but not statistically significant, when compared to the local Black and ethnic minority population in the general population at 10%. The most over-represented group are Black children, accounting for 5% of the offending population and 1% of the general population. Overall there needs to be caution interpreting the ethnicity data, as the numbers are low in the offending cohort, for example there were only 10 Black children in the overall cohort of 201.

During 2022 there were 279 cases referred to the joint decision making arrangements for Out of Court Disposals, of whom 18 were children from ethnic minority backgrounds (6%). This is 4 percentage points less than the proportion of ethnic minority children in the general population. Diversion from formal justice system disposals through the use of informal interventions (Outcome 22) was 56% for the White cohort and 50% for the ethnic minority cohort. There was a slight difference in the overall diversion rate, including straight no further action decisions, of 4 percentage points, where White children were diverted in 68% of cases compared with 72% for ethnic minority children.

During the same period as above, there were 9 custodial sentences, none of these were children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Looked after children accounted for 14% of children receiving a substantive outcome, a caution or conviction, in 2022. Through the joint decision-making arrangements for out of court disposals, where at all possible, looked after children are diverted from formal justice system disposals. In the period Jan – Dec 2022, 76% of the looked after children referred to the joint decision-making arrangements were diverted from formal justice system disposals. There is a draft protocol in place to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of looked after children.

The management board and service will be taking steps in 23/24 to better understand why some groups of children are over-represented in the youth justice system and take steps to reduce this over-representation.

Diversion

All children committing and admitting an offence are referred to the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) for out of court disposals, unless they are excluded either due to the seriousness of the offence or other factors identified in the joint West Mercia Police and Youth Justice Service protocol and guidelines. One of the aims of the JDMP is to ensure that where possible those children who have committed low level offences are diverted away from the justice system and receive support for their desistance through informal disposals.

The JDMPs consist of representatives from the Police, Youth Justice Service, Community Panel Members and Social Care, and make the decisions based on an assessment of the child conducted by a Youth Justice Officer and information from the victim.

The informal disposals, which, although may be delivered or part delivered by other agencies, are mainly delivered by the Youth Justice Service and are tailored to address the needs and risks identified in the assessment of the child.

In the period Jan – Dec 2022, there were 279 cases referred to the JDMPs across West Mercia and 190 (68%) of these cases were diverted from the formal justice system disposals through the use of no further action, Community Resolution or Outcome 22, 89 (32%) of cases received a Caution or Conditional Caution.

Data on the throughput and decisions of the JDMPs by gender, offence type and ethnicity is collated quarterly and provided to the management board and West Mercia Police’s children and young people’s board.

There is an out of court scrutiny panel for all ages, at which a sample of youth cases are considered. The panel is chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner and has representatives from the magistrates, CPS, Police and Youth Justice.

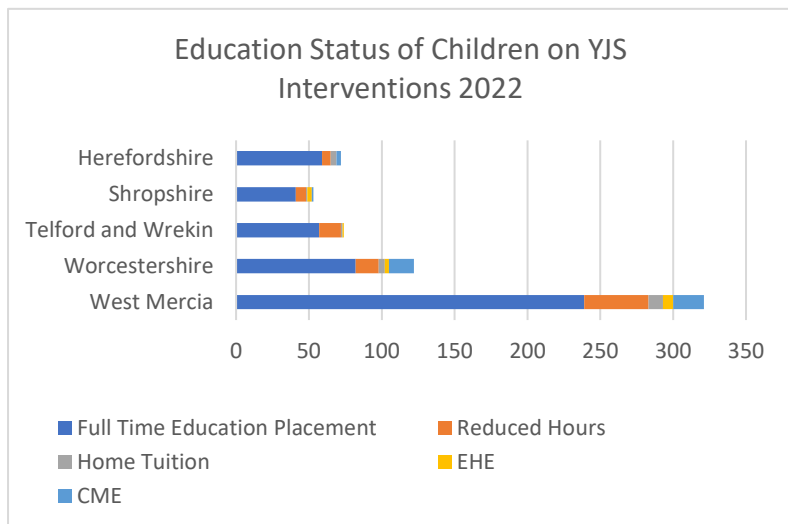
There is an action in the delivery plan for 2023/24 to develop an internal scrutiny process to ensure better consistency of decision making between the four area JDMPs.

Education

The service has 2.5 full time equivalent Education, Training and Employment Officers. These officers work to secure suitable ETE placements for children on intervention programmes with the service.

In 2022 the Youth Justice Service worked with 321 children of school age, and 290 (90%) were in an education placement, however 49 of these cases were on reduced timetables, meaning the number receiving a full-time education was 241 (75%), 21 children (7%) were children missing education (CME).

The proportion receiving a full-time education in each local authority area is as follows;



Herefordshire	85%
Shropshire	85%
Telford and Wrekin	80%
Worcestershire	62%

There were 31 children (10%) subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan (Herefordshire 9, Shropshire 5, Telford and Wrekin 2 and Worcestershire 15), 7 children (2%) were being electively home educated and 10 (3%) in receipt of home tuition.

80 (25%) of the children were receiving education in an alternative provision. Of the 80 children not in full time education (those in alternative provision, home tuition and CME) 18% are looked after children and 9% are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Data from the 166 open cases in December 2022, showed that 32 (19%) of the cases were identified as having special education needs or disabilities (SEND). As a result of a recommendation in a deep dive report on children with SEND in the youth justice system, the youth justice service is represented on the SEND partnership or improvement boards in each area.

The management board receives regular reports on the ETE status of children open to the service and advised of any barriers or challenges to securing appropriate placements. There are meetings in each area between the Youth Justice Service and the Education Services, to cross reference information and ensure plans are in place to secure provision when necessary.

Restorative Approaches and Victims

The service has a Victim Policy and RJ Strategy. The service has 2.5 FTE Victim Liaison Officers (VLO), and victim contact for referrals to the joint decision arrangements for out of court disposals are undertaken by the service's Police Officers.

In the period Jul – Sept 2022 139 victims were contacted and invited to participate in a restorative process, of those 56 (40%) accepted, the majority opting for a letter of apology, 29 (52%).

	Number of Victims Contacted	Number receiving a restorative outcome	Type of Restorative Outcome			
			Letter of Apology	Direct Reparation	Indirect Reparation	Face to Face Meeting
Herefordshire	36	4	2			2
Shropshire	16	4	3			1
Telford	19	10	4		6	
Worcestershire	68	38	20	6	9	3
West Mercia	139	56	29	6	15	6

In all cases where there is no victim, children are expected to take part in generic victim awareness work as part of their intervention to understand the impact of offending on themselves and others, in most cases there is also an expectation they will undertake community reparation, but this is decided on a case by case basis.

The service has developed a victim awareness course which is accredited by the Open College Network (ONC), and children completing it can attain an ONC award.

The service is currently piloting the "Make it Right" restorative approach in Referral Order panels in one area, with the intention of rolling this out across the service during 23/24, following a restorative health check commissioned from an independent organisation in 22/23.

Victims are invited to complete a victim satisfaction form following the end of the intervention. There is additionally a separate feedback form for victims involved in restorative justice conferences.

Serious Violence and Exploitation

Serious youth violent crime is not a significant issue in West Mercia. Using the YJB definition of violence against the person offences, robbery and drug offences which have a gravity score of 5 or above, there were 34 serious violence offences involving 20 children in West Mercia in 2022, representing 5% of all offences. This compares to 27 offences in 2021, involving 25 children and representing 5% of all offences. The children involved in serious violence offences in 2022 represent 2.9 per 10,000 youth population, this compares to rates of 7.8 for the West Midlands region and 6.3 nationally.

We recognise, however, that this may become an emerging issue associated with serious organised crime and with the increase in knife and offensive weapon offences with a gravity factor less than 5 from 41 in 2021 to 70 in 2022.

As a specified authority for the serious violence duty the service is contributing to the need assessments, strategy and delivery plan development and fully engaged in the governance arrangements for the serious violence duty in each Local Authority area and at the West Mercia level.

In 2022 of 558 children subject to YJS interventions, there was child exploitation identified in 19, participation in county lines in 14, 120 were assessed as being at risk of exploitation and 13 where

there was either suspected gang involvement or risk of gang involvement. The service will, through the pre-court joint decision-making arrangements, seek to avoid the criminalisation of young people criminally exploited or on the edges of these activities.

The service works as part of the child exploitation strategy and operational groups and the Serious Organised Crime Joint Agency Groups (SOCJAG) across the area to address the issues of county lines type activity, organised crime group and gang activities. Exploitation is a priority across all four local authority areas and the service contributes to the partnership work in each of local authority areas, including Get Safe Strategic and Operational Groups in Worcestershire and the Child Exploitation Strategic and Operational Groups in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

Detention in Police Custody

During the period October 2022 to March 2023 there were 432 incidents of children aged 10 to 17 arrested in West Mercia, of those only 6 were refused bail. During the same period of time there were 132 requests for Appropriate Adults for children in Police custody.

The provision of Appropriate Adults is commissioned by the Youth Justice Service to a third sector organisation, who respond to requests made between 06:00 and 22:00. Outside of these times requests may be made to the social care emergency duty teams. The contract for the Appropriate Adult service expires in March 2024, and a tendering process for a contract from April 2024 will be commenced in July 2023.

There is work in progress between the youth justice service, police and the local authorities to agree a local protocol covering the release of detained children who are refused police bail to the local authority under the provisions of section 36(6) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The local protocol will be in support of the National Concordat on Children in Custody.

Remands

During 2022 there were 4 remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) involving 4 individual children.

All 4 of the children made subject to YDA were White British. Three of the remands resulted in Youth Rehabilitation Orders on sentence and the other a custodial sentence.

During 2023/24 it is intended to revise the remand protocols with each of the four local authorities, with an intention of further reducing the number of remands to YDA.

Custody

The use of custodial sentences is reported on in the section on the national outcome measures above.

Constructive Resettlement

The service and management board agreed a new resettlement policy, which is based on the principles of constructive resettlement at the end of 2021. Staff training on resettlement continued into 22/23. A further audit on resettlement was presented to the service management board in January 2023, which showed that there had been improvements in resettlement practice, in all areas audited, but particularly in hearing the child's voice in resettlement planning, compared to the audit conducted in 2021.

There is still work to be undertaken, particularly at the strategic level, to ensure that some barriers to the successful delivery of resettlement practice are addressed, particularly in respect to the timely identification of suitable accommodation for release. There are actions in the delivery plan for 23/24 to address the improvements required.

Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System

The Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System were published in 2019, these marked a departure from the previous set of standards in that they were not process standards, and were more qualitative in nature, and they contained, for the first time, standards for youth justice service management boards (strategic standards) in addition to standards relating to service delivery (operational standards).

The standards “define the minimum expectation for all agencies that provide statutory services to ensure good outcomes for children in the youth justice system” and “are intended to guide strategic and operational services’ understanding of *what* is expected, but do not prescribe how services should be designed and delivered.”

There are five standards; NS1 – Out of Court Disposals, NS2 – At Court, NS3 – In the Community, NS4 – In Secure and NS5 – Transitions and Resettlement. A self-assessment was undertaken against the standards and submitted to the Youth Justice Board in May 2020. The self-assessment identified improvements were required for the service and management board to fully comply with the five strategic standards and for two of the operational standards for NS1 and NS2. Additional work has been identified and planned for 2023/24, which will contribute to National Standard compliance in relation to;

- Revising the remand protocols with the local authorities
- Embedding the service’s diversity statement and diversity assessment tools
- Understanding those groups of children who are over-represented in the youth justice system
- Recruiting to the vacant probation post
- Agreeing and embedding a revised case transition protocol for children moving between youth and adult criminal justice agencies.

In 23/24, thematic case audits will continue to assess compliance with the relevant national standard. A further self-assessment will be required during 23/24.

Workforce Development

The service has commissioned, an online training company to provide the safeguarding training for the service and has made specific training courses from this provider mandatory, the mandatory courses being specific to each job role. In 22/23 the service has ensured that this mandatory training, along with training on data protection and unconscious bias, has been completed by all staff and volunteers. The Service has introduced training records; both service wide and individual, to evidence this.

Seven practitioners across the service successfully completed the Uitas Effective Practice Award in a Child First approach and they have become our service champions for the implementation of a service Child First strategy.

The service continues to use the Youth Justice Qualification Framework awards, allowing staff to undertake the certificate in Effective Youth Justice Practice, and as part the service’s progression pathway for Assistant Youth Justice Officers who do not hold a relevant qualification to allow promotion to the Youth Justice Officer post.

Other training in 22/23 included Restorative Justice – “Make it Right” panels, both training the trainer courses and courses for practitioners and volunteers. Make it Right panels are now being piloted in one of the service teams with a view to full roll out in 23/24. The service has also delivered resettlement training, professional curiosity training for managers and practitioners, and AIM 3 renewal training. The service has also held team development training during 22/23, including for the leadership team.

The service is adopting a Workforce Development Strategy for 2023/2024. The priorities for 23/24 include training on management oversight, training in planning and reviewing which will include contingency planning, responding to changes in circumstances and sequencing and diversity training.

The service plans to introduce mandatory diversity training using the on-line provider and this will be supported by diversity workshops delivered internally across the service looking at protected characteristics, identity, neurodiversity and inclusion.

The Child First champion working group are planning to prepare a presentation to the leadership team around implementing a Child First approach and workshops will be delivered to practitioners pulling out key themes appropriate to practice.

Make it Right panel training will continue to be implemented across the service and additional scheduled training includes Harmful Sexual Behaviour – Technology Assisted (HSB-TA), first aid training and internal workshops to support the implementation of the revised key performance indicators. The service has also carried forward some training postponed from 22/23 on gang culture, knife crime, responding to risk and NRM.

All staff have access to regular supervision with their line manager which is recorded, and shared with the individual, using the services supervision template. Supervision allows for a period of reflection to consider the ways in which staff work, how effective this is in terms of outcomes and where practice could have been different or improved. For practitioner staff regular supervision with their line manager provides space for them to discuss their work with the children, their families and victims. Staff receive support to resolve difficulties, discuss performance, and raise learning and development needs to enhance their professional practice.

The service, following feedback from staff, has revised the format for staff appraisals for 2023/24. All staff will have an appraisal that will involve them in the process of assessing their successes, skills and competencies as well as areas for development.

Evidence-Based Practice and Innovation

During 2022/23 the service has provided training to practitioners on AIM3 an evidence based intervention for children who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviour. The service additionally has staff trained to deliver the Respect Young People's Programme, for children who are abusive or violent towards their parents, and in Brief Emotional Regulation Therapy.

As referenced in the section on restorative justice the service has developed an OCN accredited victim awareness programme, and is currently rolling out the "Making it Right" restorative approach in referral order panels.

The service has contributed to the delivery of the Police led "Steer Clear" knife crime prevention programme. This is due to be funded and commissioned out by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Service development plan

Inspection

The service was subject to an HMI Probation inspection in 2022, and the service was rated as requires improvement overall. There were nine recommendations.

The West Mercia Youth Justice Service should:

1. strengthen the quality and consistency of management oversight of practice
2. develop a meaningful focus on diversity in its casework
3. make sure that case managers plan for, and respond effectively to, changing circumstances in a case
4. work effectively with partners in post-court work to keep children and other people safe.

The Youth Justice Service management board should:

5. make sure there is capacity at both board and YJS senior management level to fulfil its ambitions for an effective, child-first service
6. take steps to better understand why some groups of children are overrepresented in the YJS and work to reduce this
7. address disparities in service provision between localities and commissioned services, and ensure they are providing a consistent and effective response to identified needs
8. work with partners to ensure out-of-court disposal decisions are proportionate and maximise opportunities for children to receive support without being criminalised
9. work as a partnership to identify and address obstacles to the successful delivery of the YJS resettlement practice.

An improvement plan addressing the nine recommendations was submitted to and approved by the Inspectorate and is being progressed through nine task and finish inspection improvement workstream groups. The outstanding actions from the improvement plan form the basis for the priorities and actions in the 2023/24 service development plan, along with other identified priorities and improvement areas identified by the leadership team, management board and consultation with the staff group.

The management board additionally considered the thematic inspections on black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system and on education training and employment.

The recommendations from the black and mixed heritage boys inspection are being considered in the two inspection improvement groups working on recommendations 2 and 6 from the service inspection. There has already been work in relation to education, training and employment undertaken as part of the regular education, training and employment report to the management board. Education, training and employment will become one of the focus areas for the local youth justice fora once established.

Links to the YJB Strategic Plan

The vision identified in the YJB strategic plan for 2021 – 24 is for a child first youth justice system which sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. We will continue to work during 23/24 to ensure we understand the child first approach and that it is translated into practice and move towards further embedding a trauma informed approach to practice.

We have actions planned to improve the quality of practice in respect to identifying and responding to diverse needs and also in understanding better and responding to those groups of children who are overrepresented in the youth justice system.

Service Priorities

The start point for identifying the priorities for 2023/24 has been the findings from the HMI Probation inspection of the service, these have been supplemented with priorities carried forward from 2022/23 and other priorities identified by the board and service.

The priorities for 2023/24 are: -

People Theme

- Supporting staff development, wellbeing and morale

Practice Theme

- Embedding child first in practice
- Improving intervention and risk planning
- Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction
- Improving our diversion and early intervention

Partnership Theme

- Improving the health offer in the youth justice service
- Improving our work with other agencies

Governance and Leadership Theme

- Addressing the governance and leadership inspection findings
- Improving the consistency of practice across the service
- Supporting and addressing diversity

The development plan (plan on a page) 2023/24

Where actions are directly contributing to addressing the nine recommendations from the HMI Probation inspection, the relevant recommendation numbers are included in brackets following the action.

Theme	People			
Priority	Supporting staff development, wellbeing and morale			
Planned Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement revised staff appraisal process alongside practice standards to promote high support and high challenge Ensure staff's equality and diverse needs are identified and addressed through the appraisal Conduct regular staff surveys to hear the voice of the workforce and measure impact of developments Review supervision policy to ensure consistency of timeliness and quality 			
Impact Measures	Proportion of appraisals completed and % of staff making progress Improved and sustained proportion of positive responses to relevant questions in the staff survey			
Theme	Practice			
Priority	Embedding child first in practice	Improving the quality of intervention and risk planning	Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction	Improving our diversion and early intervention offer
Planned Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child First champions to share learning Child first policy and practice standards Investigate feasibility of implementing enhanced case management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in risk and intervention planning (3,4) Review planning and risk guidance (3) Training in management oversight (1) Ensure risk processes include victim safety (9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed "Make it Right" Review victim voice and satisfaction in pre-court decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full implementation of Turnaround programme Internal scrutiny process for OoCD decision making (8) Induction/training for JDMP members (8) Establish data set (8)
Impact Measures	Audit and evidence staff awareness and application of a child first approach Audits identify Improved quality in intervention and risk planning Service user feedback shows Improved victim satisfaction Audits evidence greater consistency in OoCD decision making across the service			
Theme	Partnership			
Priority	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service		Improving our work with other agencies	
Planned Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of health resources deployed in WMYJS (7) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree and embed transition protocol Review of housing protocols (9) 	
Impact	Service offer evidences a consistent health offer to children across the area Children and young people feel their emotional and mental health needs are met Children leaving custody are released to suitable accommodation			
Theme	Governance and Leadership			
Priority	Addressing the governance and leadership inspection findings	Improving the consistency of practice across the service		Supporting, valuing, and addressing diversity
Planned Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree and implement revised management structure (1,5) Fully implement new governance structure (5) Ensure MB oversight of resettlement (9) Agree process by which MB hear the voice of the child (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new QA framework (1,2,3) Implement management oversight policy (1,4) Review service model across the four areas to ensure consistency of offer (7) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce mandatory diversity training (2) Identify standard data set to ensure scrutiny of children over-represented in the youth justice system (6)
Impact	Management board and leadership team have capacity to fulfil service's vision and ambitions through completion of the YJ plan Audit/KPI and Service User feedback evidences learning and progress to achieving a consistent quality of practice across service teams Data reports and analysis evidence an understanding of experience and outcomes for those groups of children over-represented in the youth justice system and a plan for how this can be improved Data evidences increased focus on diversity in case work leads to a reduction in children entering the courts and youth justice system			

The Youth Justice Partnership recognises that actions and associated work, although identified under one priority will, in some cases, contribute to other priorities, and development in our work with other agencies and partnership working will contribute to the successful realisation of the improvements required and their impact.

Challenges, risks and issues

The following risks to service delivery and development have been identified for 2023/24:-

1. Effective case management is compromised due to staff vacancies

There is a normal level of staff turnover, however timely recruitment to posts has been affected by delays in the vetting process, this is further compounded when there are other medium/long term staff absences. One strategy adopted to assist is the acting up of Assistant Youth Justice Officers as Youth Justice Officers, where they meet the person specification requirements, allowing them to case manage high and medium risk cases.

2. Limited management capacity affecting the ability of the management team to pursue development work in a timely manner and potentially affect their wellbeing

The role of the team manager is extensive, as noted by the HMI Probation inspection. The management structure is currently under review with a purpose to increase capacity. It is planned for this to be agreed and implemented in 2023/24.

3. Effective case management compromised due to lack of consistency and quality of management oversight

The HMI Probation inspection indicated that oversight of practice was not making enough difference to the quality of practice. There are actions in the development plan under the priority to improve the consistency of practice across the service that will address this issue.

4. Significant proportion of other Local Authorities Children managed by the service

There are a significant number of independent sector children homes within the West Mercia area particularly in Shropshire and Herefordshire. The placement of children with criminal court orders by other authorities in these homes is outside of the control and influence of the service, therefore the service is unable to manage the volume of this additional workload demand. A connected risk is children being placed within the area who are either particularly at risk of exploitation, or who have a profile of committing very serious offences.

5. Information not available to report fully on some of the new performance indicators

Some of the new performance indicators depend on information from other agencies. The service has been working with partner agencies to put in place the information sharing arrangements that will be required to report fully on those measures.

Sign off:

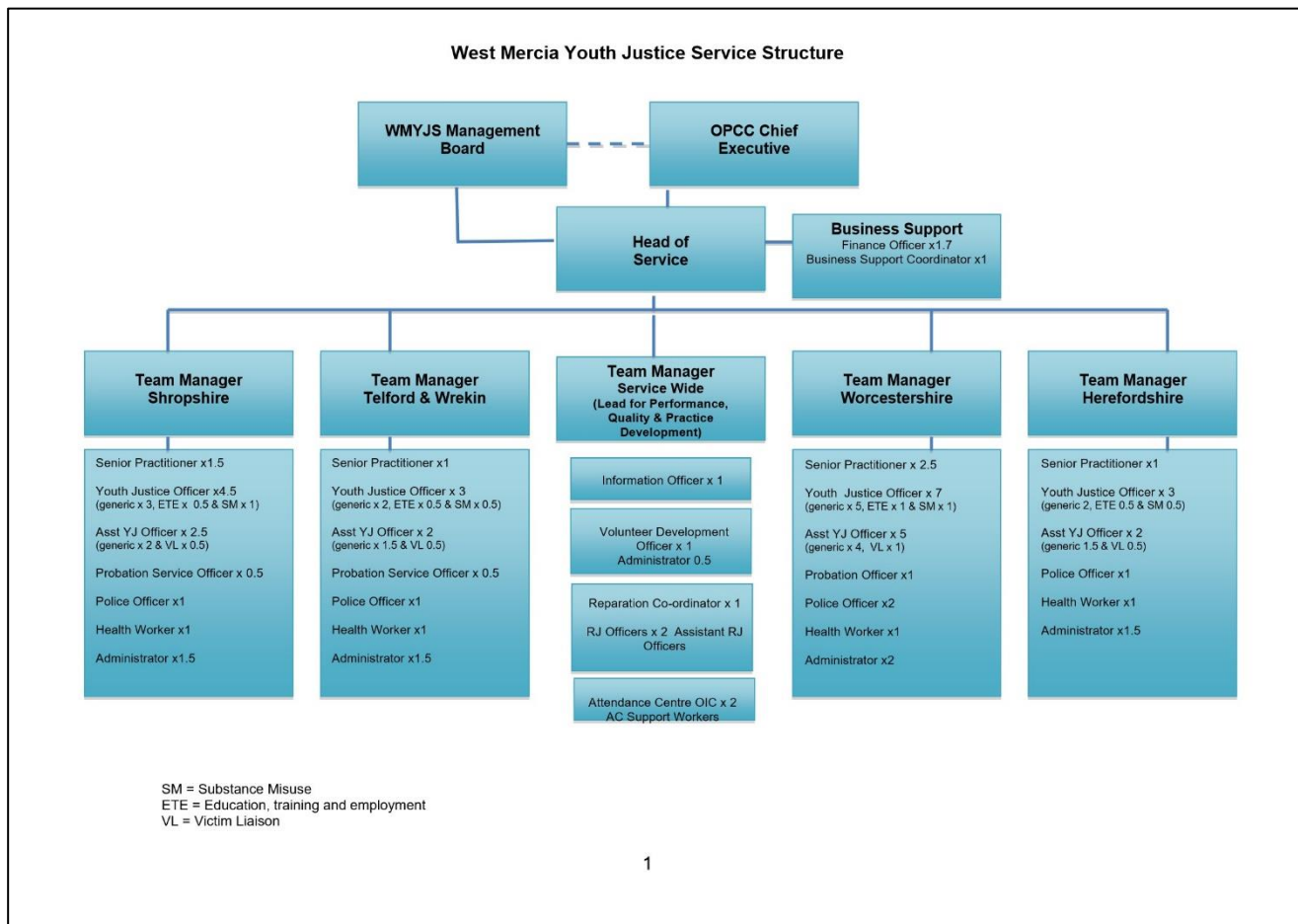
I confirm that this plan was approved at the West Mercia Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board meeting held on 21st June 2023.



Tina Russell

Chair, West Mercia Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board,
DCS, Worcestershire County Council and Chief Executive, Worcestershire Children First

Appendix 1 – Staffing structure



An explanation of the service structure is provided in the governance, leadership and partnership section of this plan. The Head of Service has a dual accountability to the Chief Executive of the OPCC, who provides the day-to-day management for the Head of Service, and to the Chair of the Management Board, particularly in regard to practice issues.

Staff by ethnicity and gender (number of individual people):

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian								1						2		1	0	4
Black			1														1	0
Mixed																	0	0
White	1			4	18	31	1	10					9	20	1	3	30	68
Any other ethnic group						2								1			0	3
Not known																	0	0
Total	1	0	1	4	18	33	1	11	0	0	0	0	9	23	1	4	31	75

Staff by known disability (number of full time equivalent):

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager (FT)	Operational Manager (PT)	Operational Manager (FT)	Practitioners (PT)	Practitioners (FT)	Administration (PT)	Administration (FT)	Total
Disabled (self-classified)	0	0	0	0.5	1	1.3	0	2.8

Appendix 2 – Budget costs and contributions

The Youth Justice Service has a complex budget structure comprising of partner agency cash, seconded staff and the Youth Justice (YOT) Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The table below outlines the provisional contributions for 2023/24, as some contributions were still to be confirmed, including some of the seconded staff arrangements, at the point this youth justice plan was agreed.

Agency	Staffing Costs – Secondees (£)	Payments in kind (£)	Other Delegated Funds (3)	Total
Local Authorities			1,179,999	1,179,999
Police Service	247,503		63,000	310,503
National Probation Service	65,580		5,000	70,580
Health	135,106		36,894	172,000
Police and Crime Commissioner			180,293	180,293
YJB – Youth Justice Grant			1,457,097	1,457,097
Total	448,189		2,922,283	3,370,472