



# West Mercia Youth Justice Service

Together, preventing offending and improving lives

## West Mercia Youth Justice Service

# Annual Plan 2024-25



The annual plan for 2024/25 represents evolution and progress for West Mercia Youth Justice Service, as well as the children and communities it works hard to deliver for.

The service is entering a new chapter. The last year has seen new leadership and ways of working in the YJS, which are bringing a renewed focus, drive and energy to the service. It is exciting to see this progress translated into this new annual plan, which builds on the strong foundations and progress delivered within the service.

At the centre of its work, the service will embed a Child First approach in all of its activity. The lives, opportunities, prospects and views of children must always be central to youth justice. The 2024/25 annual plan recognises this in new ways and ensures the passion, skill and determination of the YJS' workforce are represented and replicated in the strategic aims of the service: Keeping children at the very heart of the service, for the benefit of every community.

The annual plan also takes a simplified approach to organisational priorities, aimed at making the 2024/25 plan more digestible, more straight forward and more relevant for colleagues and partners. Work from previous inspections and plans has been restructured alongside some ambitious new ideas into a simple focus on people, practice and partnerships. All of which are integral to the success of the service.

The Management Board, including the constituent local authorities and wider partners, supports this plan with real optimism for the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Boulton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gareth Boulton  
Chair of West Mercia Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board  
Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

## LOCAL CONTEXT

West Mercia Youth Justice Service is unique. It delivers services for justice-involved children across four local authorities. The 2868 square miles of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin span densely populated urban areas and sparsely populated rural areas. There are areas of both deprivation and affluence.

West Mercia is served by one police force, three unitary authorities (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin) and six district authorities within Worcestershire. There are two Fire and Rescue Services, two Integrated Care Boards, and two Probation Delivery Units spanning the area.

In 23-24 across West Mercia

- First Time Entrants further reduced to a rate of 91 per 100,000; significantly lower than the rates of the YOT family and England and Wales
- Custody rates declined; remaining lower than the YOT family and National average
- Long-term trends of children reoffending continued to decrease
- Most justice-involved children were living in suitable accommodation; and
- Nearly all children successfully completed their Out of Court Disposal intervention

## GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

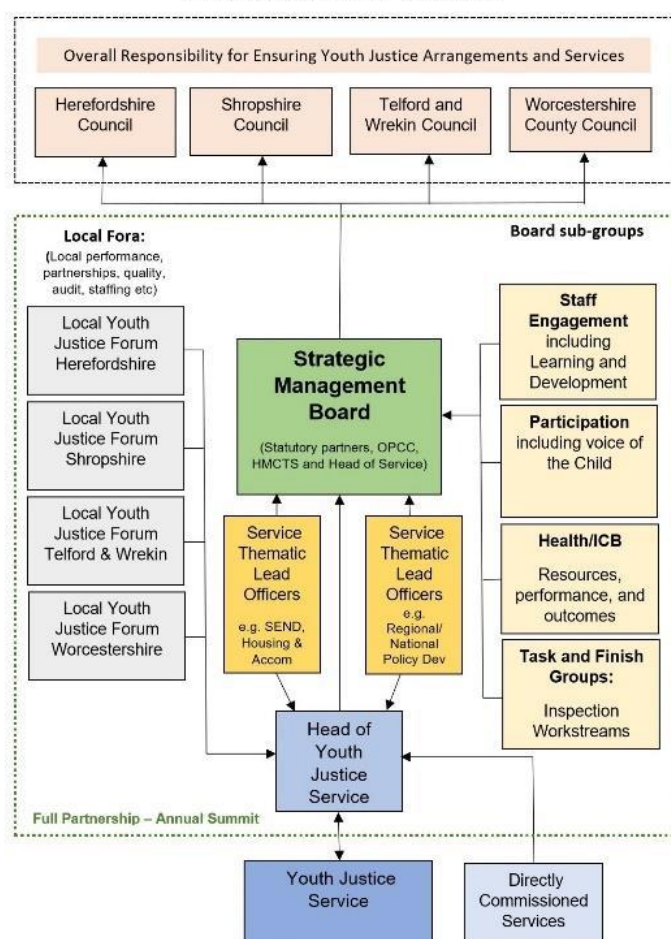
### **Governance**

West Mercia Youth Justice Service has unique governance arrangements. The service is hosted by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on behalf of the four Local Authorities within West Mercia and the WMYJS partnership. The Service is accountable to the WMYJS Strategic Management Board, who, in turn, are accountable to the four Local Authorities for the commissioning and delivery of youth justice services.

In late 2023, the board modified the governance structure to comprise a Strategic Management Board informed by local youth justice fora and themed sub-groups with membership of relevant local stakeholders. The Strategic Management Board has primary membership of senior representatives from the statutory agencies (Local Authorities, Police, Probation and Integrated Care Boards) and the court service.

The Board meets quarterly and monitors the performance and quality of the service through regular reporting, and exception reports from the local fora and sub-groups. The service would benefit from a review of its internal governance arrangements.

**West Mercia Youth Justice Partnership and Service Governance Diagram**  
(Implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023)



**Board development:**

The strategic management board is informed by Local Youth Justice Forum arrangements, which commenced in latter 23/24. In 24/25 the service and its partners will embed this way of working to inform strategic board members. In June 2024, a new Chair of the Management Board will be elected.

**Leadership**

In December 23, WMYJS welcomed a new Head of Service who has a dual accountability to the Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Chair of the Management Board. The Head of Service line managers five Team Managers who are responsible for the delivery of youth justice services. Team Managers lead operational delivery of youth justice services through multi-disciplinary teams including seconded Police Officers, Probation Officers and Health Workers (see Annexure 1)

**Partnerships**



WMYJS is a statutory partner across multiple local justice strategic partnerships as well as partnerships related to vulnerable children and families; the priorities within these partnerships influence service priorities. Locally, the Head of Service and Team Managers seek to maximise partnerships to advocate for justice involved children.

Management Board representatives understand their dual role across other partnerships and governance boards; advocating, where appropriate, on behalf of children in the youth justice system and/or the work undertaken by WMYJS.

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.

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. Team Managers supervise multi-disciplinary teams within their areas, attending other multi-agency meetings according to the needs of children within the local area, for example Corporate Parenting Boards, SEND meetings, MASH partnership groups and reducing re-offending groups.

**Structure**

The West Mercia Youth Justice Service comprises four multi-agency service delivery teams, aligned to the Local Authority areas and a centralised team. In 24/25 the centralised team will expand to include a Restorative Justice Lead, who will lead the restorative offer and an Administration Lead who will supervise all administrators within the service. This will enable a greater focus on management oversight and service development activity.

The service has current health secondees including a Mental Health Worker (0.8) and a Speech and language secondee (0.2) The health partnership contribution is under review, with an aim that future provision meets the health needs of justice-involved children across all areas.

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 in Worcestershire; the Probation Service Officer post remains vacant. Seconded Police Officers are employed in each area.

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.

A structural diagram of the service is provided in Annexure 1.

### **Workforce development:**

The service understands the skills and knowledge required by the workforce to effectively address the needs of justice involved children. WMYJS will continue to work with key partners and other statutory agencies, community organisations, and relevant groups to provide evidence-based training, professional development opportunities, support, and other resources to enhance the skills and knowledge of the youth justice workforce.

In 24/25 we will deliver service-wide training in partnership covering the following topics:

- Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool
- Court Practice Workshop
- Professional Curiosity
- Assessment skills
- Planning
- Responding to Risk
- Contingency planning
- Neurodiversity
- NRM
- Diversity workshops
- Technology Assisted Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- AIM3

Throughout the year, the “Service-Learning Log” will capture service-wide learning from internal reviews, external reviews and learning through our partnership arrangements to inform future planning for workforce development.

### **Financial Resources**

The Youth Justice Service has a complex budget structure comprising partner agency cash, seconded staff and in-kind contributions and the Youth Justice (YOT) Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. Provisional contributions for 2024/25 are provided in Annexure 2.

The YJB Youth Justice (YOT) Grant is used for the provision of youth justice services with the aim of 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 the development plan against the priorities identified for 24/25, to sustain and improve the current performance against the current four national outcome measures and ten Key Performance Indicators.

The provision of Appropriate Adults for children in Police custody is outsourced by WMYJS. Until 30 June 2024, the service is provided by a local voluntary sector organisation Your Support Service (YSS). Quarterly contract monitoring and compliance meetings are held with YSS. A new provider will commence on 1 July 2024. WMYJS will work with Police and the new provider to ensure ongoing provision of high-quality Child-First Appropriate Adult services.

## **UPDATE ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR**

### **Progress on priorities in previous plan**

In 23/24 WMYJS made progress across its people, practice, partnership and governance and leadership priorities and its Inspection Improvement Plan:

- The service completed a review of the staff appraisal process and using feedback from staff, implemented a new appraisal form. A staff survey was completed, and feedback provided via the “You Said, We Did” approach.
- Improvements in management oversight were supported through leadership training in supervision skills and a bespoke session with Child View in how to effectively record Management Oversight.
- Staff were supported to engage in formal training; Four staff commenced the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEPC) and two members of the leadership team completed the AYM Youth Justice Frontline Leaders course
- Team wellbeing events took place across all areas of the service; with each team responsible for the design and delivery of their events. Feedback was positive and staff reported feeling an increased connection and understanding with their colleagues.
- Child-First champions presented to the leadership team and arranged a leadership workshop with Professor Stephen Case.
- Victim satisfaction was scrutinised through Victim Satisfaction surveys with responses provided to the West Mercia Victims Board for additional scrutiny and oversight.
- Work with ICB colleagues to review the health offer in the youth justice service gained momentum.
- The Governance and Leadership Inspection Findings were addressed through the implementation of new governance arrangements; management capacity was created across the service through reprioritisation of work and consideration of working in different ways to enable managers to effectively manage.
- Diversity workshops were delivered to all practitioners. E-learning package for all staff to improve our recording around diversity characteristics.
- The Management Board agreed a disproportionality dataset. The Board now receive twice yearly disproportionality reports.
- The “Making it Right” training was delivered to all volunteer panel members and a refresher training to all staff.

### **Performance over the previous year**

Our annual performance report is contained in Annexure 3. In summation the key performance measures which show how well the youth justice system is working for children in West Mercia illustrates:

- The number of children entering the criminal justice system within West Mercia has continued to fall below the national average and the YOT family rate.
- The number of children from West Mercia who are in custody is lower than the YOT family rate and the England and Wales rate.
- The number of children reoffending within west Merica has increased from 25.1% to 27.9%; this mirrors national trends. The number of children reoffending remains lower than YOT family and national rates.

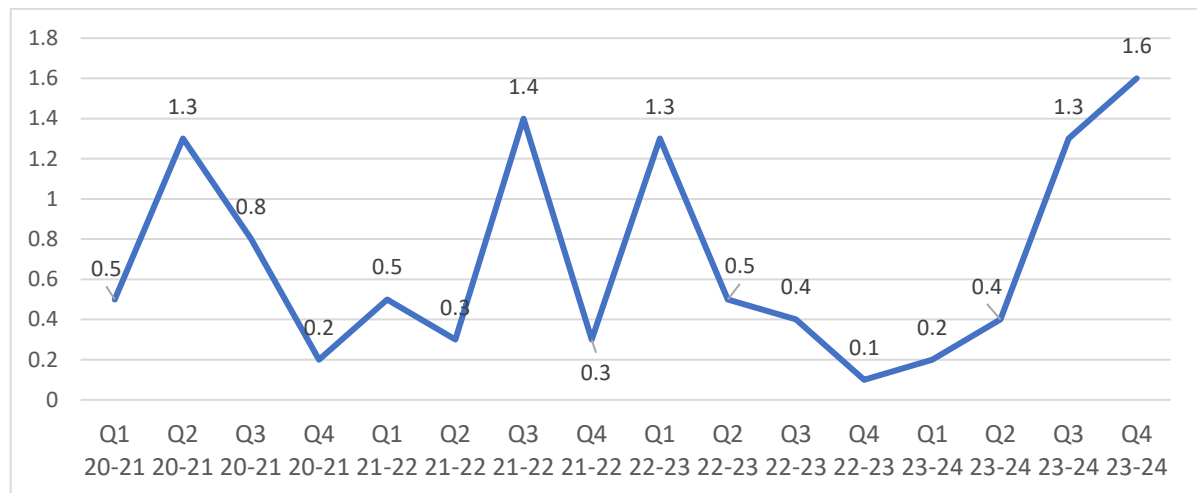
- Binary reoffending rates have increased from 26.9% in 2019 to 27.9% in 2022; in the same period the number of children reoffending has reduced from 79 to 51.

In the later part of 23-24, the service has worked to improve data recording accuracies; there is further improvement required in 24/25. The key performance indicators relating to the needs of justice-involved children in West Mercia and the extent to which their needs have been met shows that:

- Most children in West Mercia have access to safe and suitable accommodation.
- Most school-aged children within West Mercia were engaged in suitable education, training or employment (ETE) provision at the end of their intervention.
- Nearly half of children above school-age were not in suitable education, training or employment at the end of their intervention.
- Approximately 20% of children working with WMYJS have an identified special educational need or disability and most of these children have a formal plan in place to support them.
- Across the year only 4 children received advice, help or support in relation to their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- In 23/24, 24 children received targeted support in relation to their substance misuse needs and 25 children received specialist substance misuse treatment.
- Nearly all children (86 out of 99) successfully completed their diversionary intervention programme.
- On average 17% of children working with WMYJS were identified as Children in Need and 13% of children were care experienced.

### **Rates of serious youth violence**

Since 2020, rates of serious youth violence have fluctuated across West Mercia. There has been an upward trend in the serious violence rate since the end of 22/23.



### **Risks and issues:**

The service holds a centralised risk register which is tabled at quarterly Management Board meetings for oversight, review, and action.

In 23/24 WMYJS mitigated the risks around effective case management being compromised by staff vacancies and the time taking for recruits to be brought into post due to vetting. WMYJS is now benefitting from specialist recruitment support through the West Mercia Police Staff Recruitment Coordinator. The service is utilising external vetting which has significantly reduced the time taken for new recruits to come into post.

The risks and issues for 24/25 are:

<i>Current Risks and Issues</i>	<i>Actions Being Taken to Address Risks and Issues</i>
The emotional and mental health needs of children not adequately met due to no health workers deployed directly in YJS	Arrangements to access CAHMS in all areas Information, Advice and Guidance provided to children by staff Regular supervision of staff to escalate response to individual needs. Review of health provision – looking at the requirement and consistency across WM area
Inability to manage all high-risk cases due to inexperienced YJO	Acting up of suitably qualified AYJOs Vacancies recruited to in a timelier manner now due to extended links with Police Staff Recruitment. Expedited vetting process in place. Needs analysis of children to profile service to establish staffing needs.
Insufficient management capacity impacting on timely implementation of inspection action plan actions	Permission to defer non-priority tasks Reducing need for MB papers and reporting requirement in the short terms Direction for managers to focus on oversight of practice; timeframes given for service development tasks. Reallocation of service development tasks as required Protected Time for Managers and Senior Practitioners to complete service development tasks To bring in temporary/consultancy support for specified projects
Continuing ICT issues impacting on completion of practice tasks and recording	Movement of shared drive and Childview to updated server system due for completion in July 2024.
Inability to meet data reporting requirements due to any unforeseen absence of the information officer.	Utilise the CACI contract to train nominated staff to be able to meet data reporting requirements. Utilise CACI contract technical support for expert system advice

## **PLAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR:**

### **Priorities for the Coming Year**

In the forthcoming year the service will continue its improvement journey; in April 24, the Management Board and Service Leadership Team reviewed the progress to date in the 23/24 Annual Plan and the Inspection Improvement Plan. Our Plan on a Page (Annexure 4) outlines the key actions the service will undertake to address our priorities:

- Childfirst
  - Embedding Child-First
- People
  - Supporting staff development, wellbeing and morale
  - Understanding and addressing disproportionality
- Practice
  - Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance
  - Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction
  - Improving the consistency of practice across the service
  - Improving our diversion and early intervention offer
- Partnership
  - Improving the health offer in the youth justice service
  - Improving our work with other agencies – Probation, Police, Children’s Social Care, Education and the OPCC
  - Addressing disparities in service provision and commissioned services between areas
  - Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty across West Mercia
- Governance and Leadership
  - Ensuring management oversight of practice and leadership of service development
  - Refining internal governance arrangements



## **Child First:**

Child-First West Mercia means that, our Youth Justice Service

1. Sees Children as children
  - a. We prioritise the best interests of children, recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential.
  - b. We make sure that our work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children
2. Develops pro-social identity for positive child outcomes
  - a. We promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims.
  - b. Our work is constructive and future-focused, we build supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.
3. Collaborates with children
  - a. We encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion.
  - b. Our work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.
4. Promotes diversion
  - a. We promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention.
  - b. Our work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system

WMYJS hears the voice of children through the self-assessment tool; End of Order Questionnaire and the "Tell Us" Procedure which captures children's comments, compliments and complaints.

Self-assessment questionnaires are completed with all children at the start, end, and review stages of their intervention. These help to identify their needs, strengths, interventions and exit strategies.

The service invites specific feedback from children through an end of order questionnaire (EoOQ). These are reviewed by their Case Manager when completed who responds if there are any imminent concerns, for example if the child is not feeling safe. The EoOQs are then collated locally into a quarterly report which is shared with the area team for feedback/suggestions. All area reports and worker feedback suggestions are discussed quarterly by the service's Participation Group. The Participation Group lead feedback into the leadership team, highlighting local and service wide issues and trends; where good practice has been referenced and learning from negative feedback provides suggestions for service development. The Management Board receive a quarterly overview report.

In addition to the EoOQ the service has a child friendly comments, compliments and complaints procedure 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.

In 24/25 we will build upon the progress of the Child-First Champions by

- Aligning the workstreams of the Participation Group and Child-First Champions
- Developing Child-First Vision and Values for the service

- Increasing the frequency at which the service captures the voice of children; making it easier for children to give feedback and the service to collate and analyse this through using electronic forms
- Using feedback from children to influence the priority in which policies and procedures are reviewed
- Starting to review service policies and procedures to reflect Child-first principles, new legislation (Working Together 2023) and evidence-based practice

### **Standards for children:**

In October 2023, WMYJS completed the National Standard 2 – At Court Self-Assessment. The self-assessment evidenced the strengths of the service in its court report practice. Reporting practice was mostly good; the service consistently provides high quality reports, which are child focussed, support desistance and contain the child’s views following an up-to-date and YJB approved assessment evidencing engagement with parents and carers. The service’s effective Quality Assurance process underpins court report practice.

The service showed outstanding elements; regarding the use of an up-to-date and relevant YJB approved assessment; the accurate recording of court outcomes and providing information to the Youth Custody Service in a sufficiently timely way.

There were six areas assessed as inadequate this included taking account of the impact on victims; taking sufficient steps to ensure children understand and can participate in court processes; ensuring parents and carers understand court processes and receive support as needed; informing parents/carers of the court outcome and take sufficient steps to ensure children really understand the outcome of court.

An Action Plan was developed, outstanding actions from this plan that will be completed in 24/25 include:

- Implementing a Disproportionality Strategy
- Delivering service-wide court practice workshops which include updated child-first practice guidance
- Improving how the service captures the voice of children within the court
- Centrally collating Magistrates feedback with analysis of the findings reported to Local Youth Justice Fora

### **Service Development**

#### **Progress Against Inspection Action Plan**

In 23/24 the service continued addressing the Inspection Improvement Plan. The outstanding actions will be completed in 24/25, by:

#### *Oversight of Practice and Focus on Diversity in Case Work*

- Implementing the revised management oversight policy; supervision policy and simplified QA framework which includes sufficient focus on diversity, inclusion and meeting individual needs; monitoring that responding to changing circumstances in planning is effective; ensuring the involvement of other agencies and alignment of plans.
- Including performance metrics around Case Supervision and Management Oversight in Management Board reports to evidence impact on revised policies.
- Ensuring sufficient capacity to provide management oversight through recruitment of Restorative Justice Lead, Administration Lead and Additional Manager in Worcestershire and review of the supervision arrangements for Seconded Police Officers.

#### *Planning and responding to changing circumstances*

- Commencing a review of service policies and procedures to reflect Child-first principles, new legislation (Working Together 2023) and evidence-based practice;

aligning policy reviews with learning from quality assurance activity and national policy

#### *Addressing Disparities in Service Provision and Commissioned Services Between Areas*

- Completing a comprehensive and up-to-date Needs Analysis of Children within WMYJS including a focus on SEND, substance misuse and domestic abuse.
- Using the needs analysis to:
  - Review the service model across the areas to identify gaps opportunities to level up and ensure consistency
  - Ensuring the staffing structure of the service reflects the profile and needs of the children
  - Working with the OPCC Treasurer to undertake a financial review to profile the service's costs of meeting the needs of children
  - Working with partners to align our processes and practice with Working Together 2023
  - Shaping service delivery and responses to children (substance misuse, domestic abuse, serious youth violence) through contemporary practice approaches and utilisation of specialist workers where appropriate

#### *Work with partners to ensure OoCD decisions are proportionate and maximise diversion*

- Establishing an internal scrutiny process for OoCD which complements the existing external scrutiny process.
- Utilising the Youth Justice Legal Centre to provide induction process and training for panel members to include child first/child centred policing and trauma informed approaches
- Finalising the review of health resources deployed into YJS teams and work with partners to secure appropriate health provision for all children within WMYJS.

#### *Address obstacles to successful delivery of resettlement practice*

- Work with Probation to finalise the revised transition arrangements into case management

### **Response to Learning: Serious Incident and Learning Exercises**

In response to learning within the Telford Local Youth Justice Area Forum WMYJS and Telford Children's Services have started a joint piece of work to understand and improve case recording for children supported by both services. In June 24, there will be a partnership audit to understand the interface and interconnection between plans held by both services, with; the learning from this activity will further shape practice guidance for WMYJS with respect to risk and intervention planning.

In response to a serious incident notification in Worcestershire, there will be a joint review to inform WMYJS responses to serious youth violence and opportunities for the service to learn where it might target its delivery of prevention and diversion activity.

WMYJS will continue to record learning and actions required in the Service-Learning Log which will aid service development activities and workforce development needs.

### **NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS:**

WMYJS will continue to work within local partnerships to address national priority areas.

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

The service collates and monitors information around children in West Mercia who may be over-represented in the youth justice system, including Black and Mixed heritage children, children known to social care services, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children. To date, the service has not captured information around justice involved children who are excluded from school. In 24/25 the service will work with education partners to collate this information.

In Herefordshire, in the latter part of 23/24 there was an increase in the number of girls coming to the attention of the service. In 24/25 this area team will adapt their services to meet the needs of these girls; learning from this cohort of children will inform service-wide practice guidance.

### **Policing:**

WMYJS has a close working relationship with West Mercia Police and benefits from in-time sharing of information to enable swift support for justice involved children. WM Police second five Police Officers to the Youth Justice Service who provide coordination between local policing colleagues and the youth justice service. In 23/24 joint WM Police and WMYJS undertook joint commissioning activities for Appropriate Adult services for vulnerable adults and children in custody. The new provider for children commences on 1 July 2024.

In 24/25 the service will work with police colleagues to

- Transition, implement, monitor and review the new commissioning arrangements for the Appropriate Adult Service.
- Update JDMP processes to be child-first, proportionate and maximise diversion.
- Establish an internal scrutiny process for OoCD which complements the existing external scrutiny process.
- Develop an early intervention offer which complements existing provision
- Deliver restorative practice in accordance with any changes required through the “Immediate Justice” Approach
- Review the supervision arrangements for Seconded Police Officers
- Develop a remand strategy

### **Prevention**

The preventative landscape across West Mercia is complex; preventative services for children are primarily delivered via Children’s Social Care Early Help and Police via Intervention and Prevention Officers. The service contributes to preventative services via partnership arrangements advocating for justice involved children at children and young peoples’ strategic partnerships or equivalent and, where they exist, the early help partnerships.

### **Diversion**

WMYJS delivers diversionary opportunities through the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) process. Police refer children to the service via a YOT1 Form. The YJS Seconded Police Officer screens the referral to confirm the child meets eligibility for consideration by the panel. A Youth Justice Officer meets with the child, their family and significant others in their life to complete the Out of Court Assessment. The Officer gathers information from other professionals to inform their assessment. Approximately two weeks later, the Officer presents this information at the JDMP meeting. At this meeting there are representatives from West Mercia Police, West Mercia Youth Justice Service, Children’s Services, A Trained Volunteer (local community Member) and other relevant agencies working with the child. Prior to the JDMP a worker from WMYJS will meet the young person, their parents or carers, gather information from any professionals involved to carry out an assessment of the young person to present to the JDMP so a decision can be made about how to proceed.

The Management Board receive a quarterly report relating to Diversionary Outcomes for children.

In 24/25 further enhancements of the diversion offer will include:

- Delivering training to the service in the use of the new YJB mandated Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool.
- Updating JDMP processes to be child-first, proportionate and maximise diversion.

- Establishing an internal scrutiny process for OoCD which complements the existing external scrutiny process.
- Developing and delivering the Youth MORSE Programme in partnership with the OPCC and YSS to improve the diversionary offer for vehicle crime.

### **Education**

In each local authority, WMYJS employs Youth Justice Officers with an Education, Training and Employment specialism. These officers work in partnership with agencies within their local area to ensure all children known to the service are having their educational needs met. The Education, Training and Employment Officers record each child's educational placement; the hours which they attend, whether they have a Special Education Needs or a Disability; and whether they have an EHCP.

In 24/25 the service will

- Work with education colleagues to collate further contextual information relating regarding children's education including
  - school exclusions
  - children who are not receiving their education entitlement,
  - children who are excluded, on part time timetables or electively home educated.
- Analyse this data to identify any disproportionality including the care status of the child.

### **Restorative Approaches and Victims**

In the latter part of 23/24, the service rolled out the "Making it Right" training for volunteer panel members and delivered a refresher training for all staff. In Q3, the service started to provide its Restorative Justice Outcomes and Victim Satisfaction Feedback to the Local Victims Board, providing added scrutiny to practice and additional partnership opportunities for improvement.

In 24/25 the service will

- Utilise ICT to make capturing the voice of victims and analysis of this easier
- Undertake a deep dive to understand how well the approach has been embedded and to what a restorative approach is demonstrated in referral order panels.
- Recruit a Restorative Justice Lead to lead the restorative offer and provide oversight of Victim Liaison Officers and Restorative Officers.
- Work with Police, OPCC and Local Authority Partners to deliver restorative practice in accordance with any changes required through the "Immediate Justice" Approach.
- Develop a service-wide policy and work with partners to develop practice guidance around working with victims who are children, considering existing support services and identifying any gaps in provision for these children.

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

#### **Serious Violence**

Across West Mercia the Serious Violence duty is delivered locally via the five Community Safety Partnerships (CSP). Governance arrangements exist at the local CSP level to support the delivery of the Duty, and West Mercia Office of the Policing Crime Commissioner (OPCC) oversees the delivery via the Crime Reduction Board (CRB). The CRB brings partners together to reduce offending and reoffending by ensuring that adults and children who offend are challenged and supported to desist from crime. WMYJS is a partner at each CSP and attends and reports on its service delivery to the CRB.

In 23/24, as a specified authority for the serious violence duty the service contributed to the need assessments and strategy and was fully engaged in the governance arrangements for the serious violence duty in each Local Authority area and at the West Mercia level.

In 24/25 the service will

- Continue to advocate for justice involved children within the Serious Violence Duty arrangements across West Mercia
- Use the area-wide and local Serious Violence Needs Assessments to shape internal practice.
- Work with partners to determine a response to children who are released under investigation (RUI) for serious violence related offences.
- Undertake a joint review with Worcestershire colleagues in response to a serious youth violence incident; identifying and opportunities to learn where WMYJS might target its delivery of prevention and diversion services.

### Contextual Safeguarding

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.

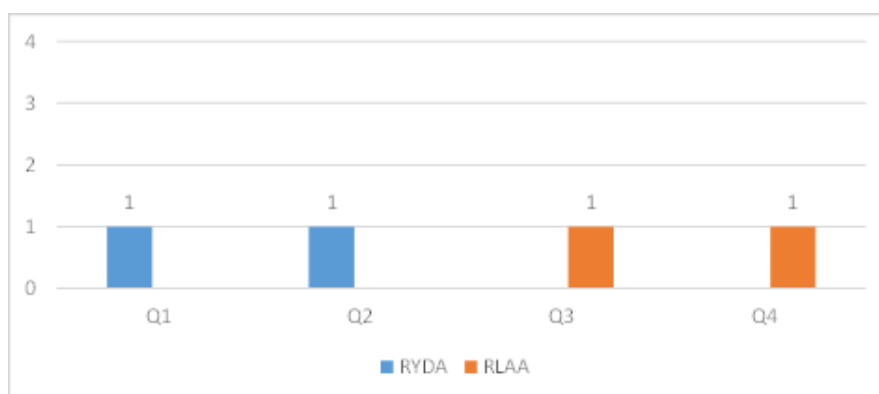
### Detention in police custody

In 23/24 959 children in West Mercia were arrested; of these 649 children (67.7%) were bailed to return to a police station; 41 children (4.3%) were charged and remanded in police custody; and 44 children (4.6%) were detained for court. The length of time that children spend in police custody in West Mercia is lower than the national average. Data relating to children in police custody is regularly scrutinised.

Across West Mercia, in 24/25 WMYJS will receive daily information from Police relating to arrests and children remanded in custody, the service will

- Use the information from police to target timely responses to justice-involved children
- Work with Police to implement, monitor and review the new commissioning arrangements for the Appropriate Adult Service.

### Remands:

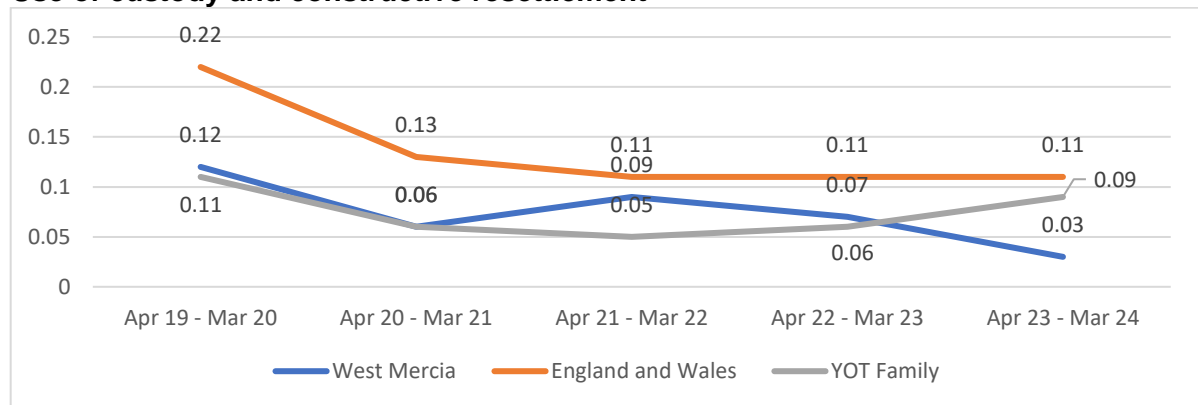


During 23/24, 2 children were remanded to youth detention accommodation and 2 children were remanded to local authority accommodation.

In 24/25 the service will work with

Police, Children's Services and partners to develop a combined West Mercia-wide remand strategy to reduce the use of remands.

### Use of custody and constructive resettlement

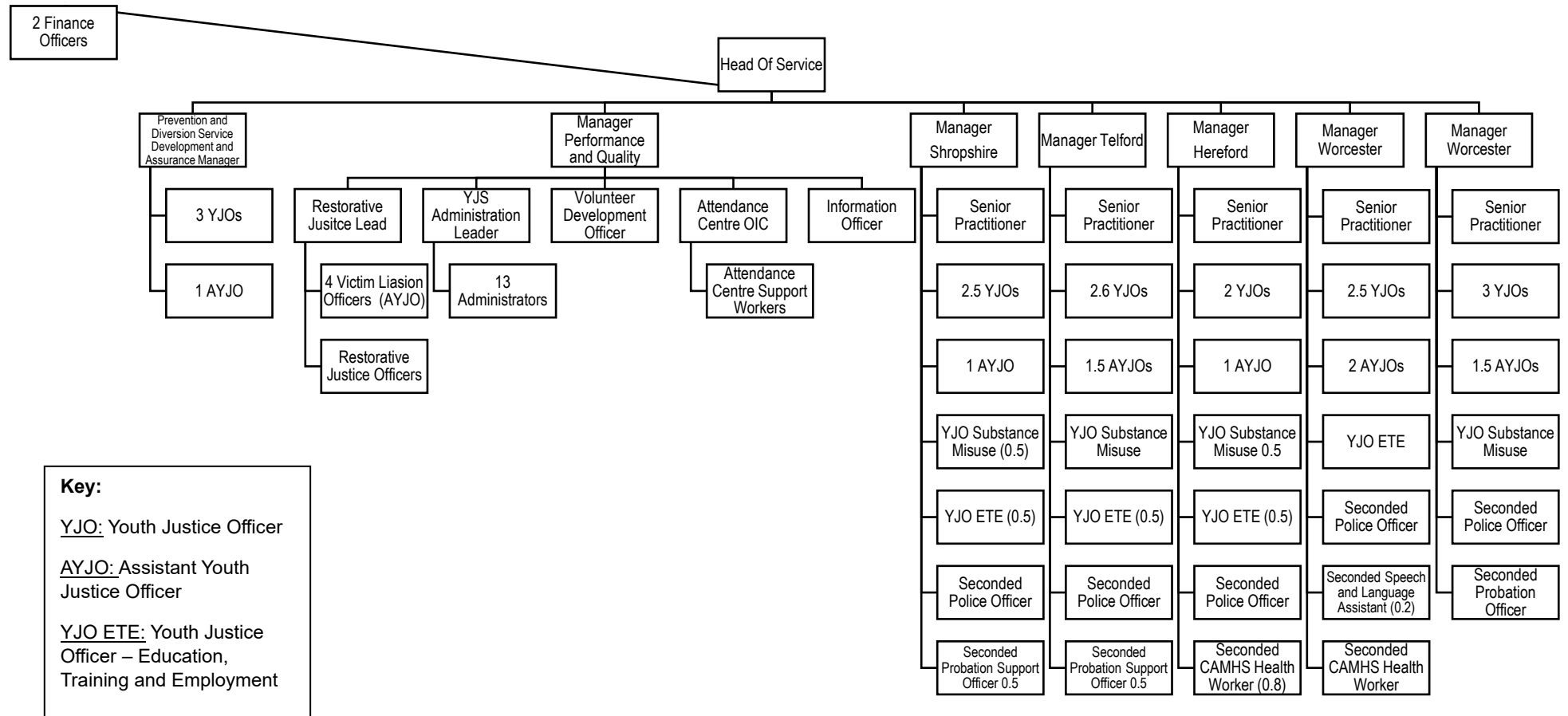


The rate of children in custody from West Mercia remains lower than the YOT family average and the rate across England and Wales.

In 24/25 the service will

- Work with Probation to finalise the revised transition arrangements into case management.

# Annexure One: Staffing Structure





## Annexure Two: Budget Costs and Contributions 2024/25

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 2024/25, as some contributions were still to be confirmed, including some of the seconded staff arrangements, at the point this plan was agreed.

Agency	Staffing Costs – Seconded (£)	Payments in kind (£)	Other Delegated Funds (3)	Total
Local Authorities			1,179,999	1,179,999
Police Service	255,423		63,000	318,423
National Probation Service	67,679		5,000	72,679
Health	139,429		36,894	176,323
Police and Crime Commissioner			180,293	180,293
YJB – Youth Justice Grant			1,522,666	1,522,666
Other – movement from Reserves			66,997	66,997
<b>Total</b>	<b>462,531</b>		<b>3,054,849</b>	<b>3,517,380</b>

Category	Budget (£)
Employee Costs	2,558,327
Other Employee Costs	30,000
Premises	175,158
Supplies and Services	27,458
ICT	107,382
Third Party Payments	104,649
Transport	51,875
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,054,849</b>

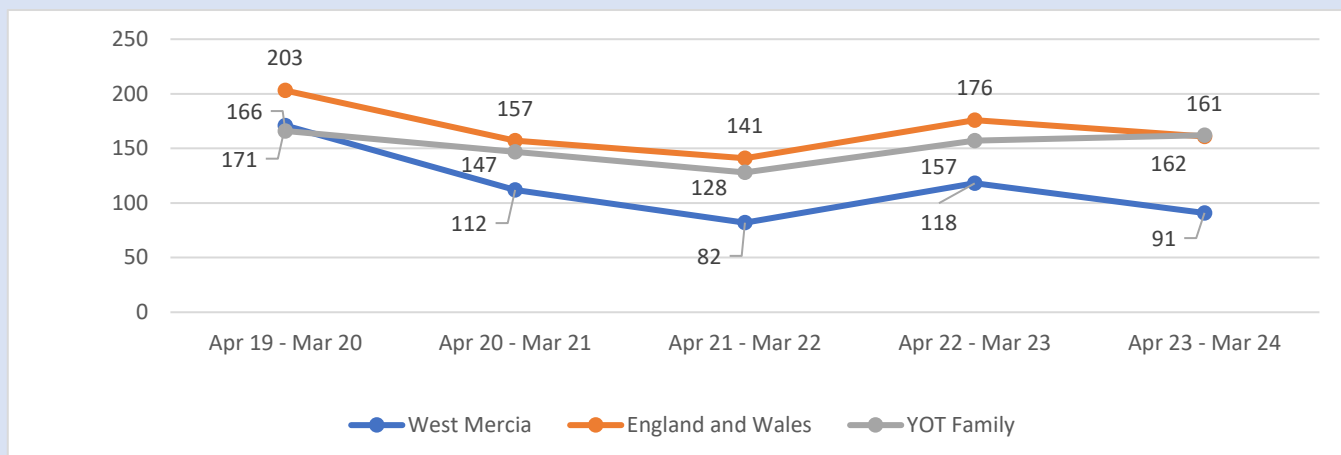
## Annexure Three: Annual Performance Report

### Key Performance Indicators: How well is the system working for children in West Mercia?

#### Number of children entering the criminal justice system (Rate of First Time Entrants per 100,000)

The number of children entering the criminal justice system within West Mercia has continued to fall below the national average and YOT family rate.

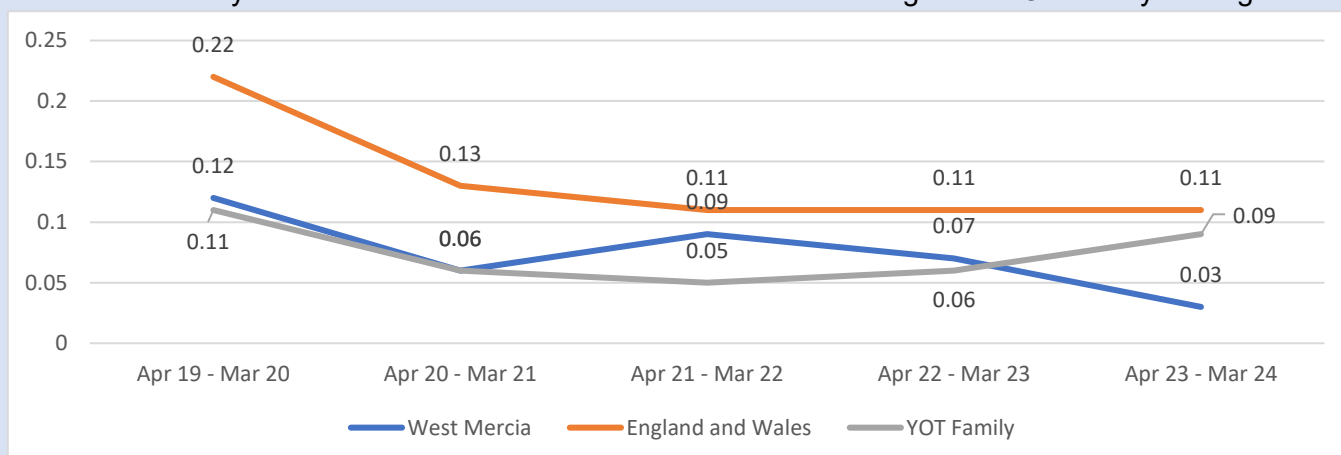
Overall, the rate of First Time Entrants is 91 children per 100,000 which is a reduction from 118 the previous year.



#### Number of children in custody (Rate of Custody per 1,000 Population)

The rate of children in custody in West Mercia is 0.03. This relates to 6 children, from Worcestershire.

The custody rates in West Mercia are below the National Average and YOT Family Average.

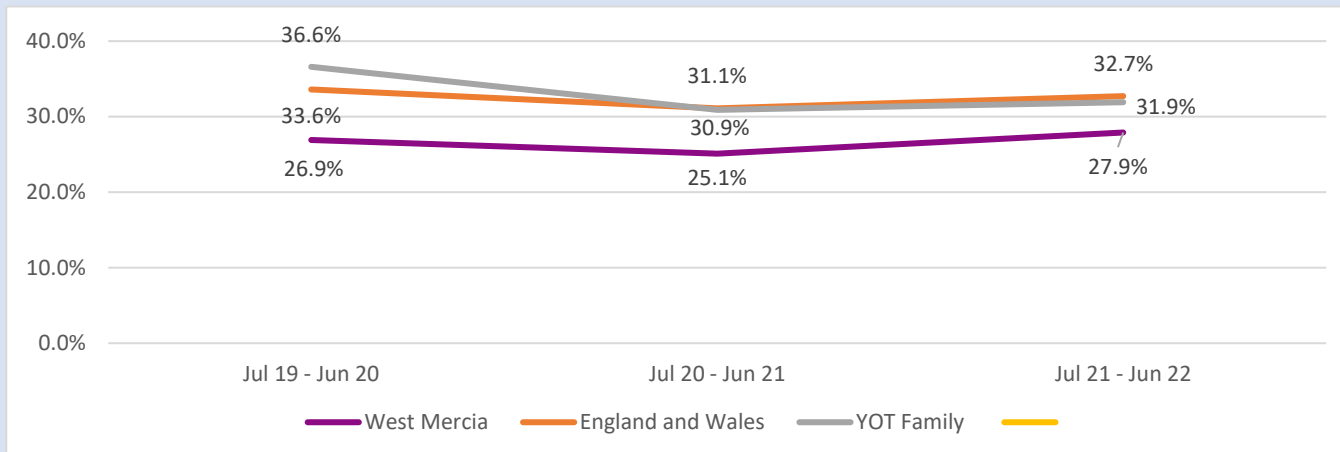


## Annexure Three: Annual Performance Report

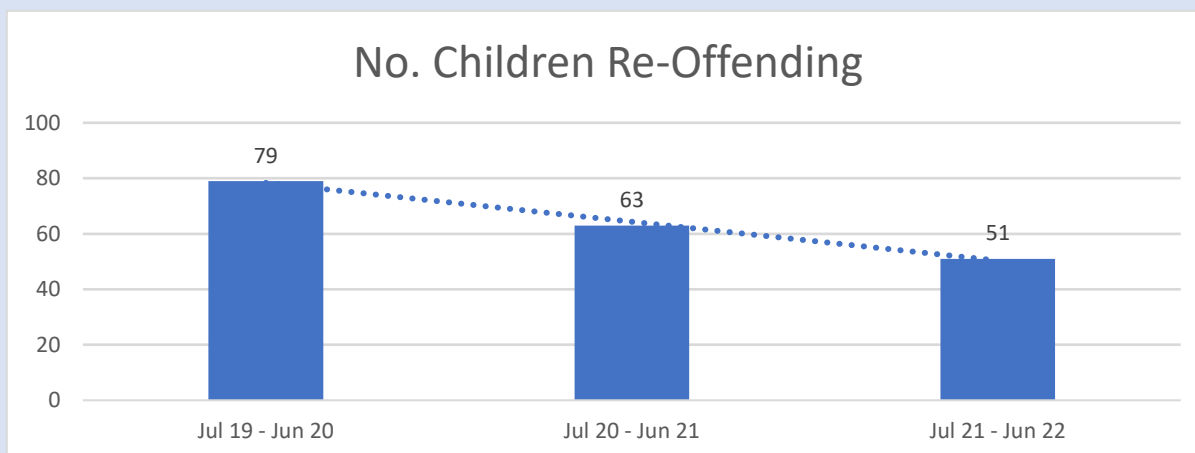
### Proportion of children in West Mercia who are re-offending

The number of children reoffending within West Mercia is below the national average and YOT family rate.

Overall, 27.9% of children within West Mercia reoffended within a 12-month period; this is a 2.8% increase in year-on-year figures.



### Long Term Trends in the Number of Children Re-Offending



The primary aim of the YJS is to reduce levels of re-offending by children in West Mercia. The chart shows longer term trends in re-offending rates within the context of the number of children re-offending in West Mercia.

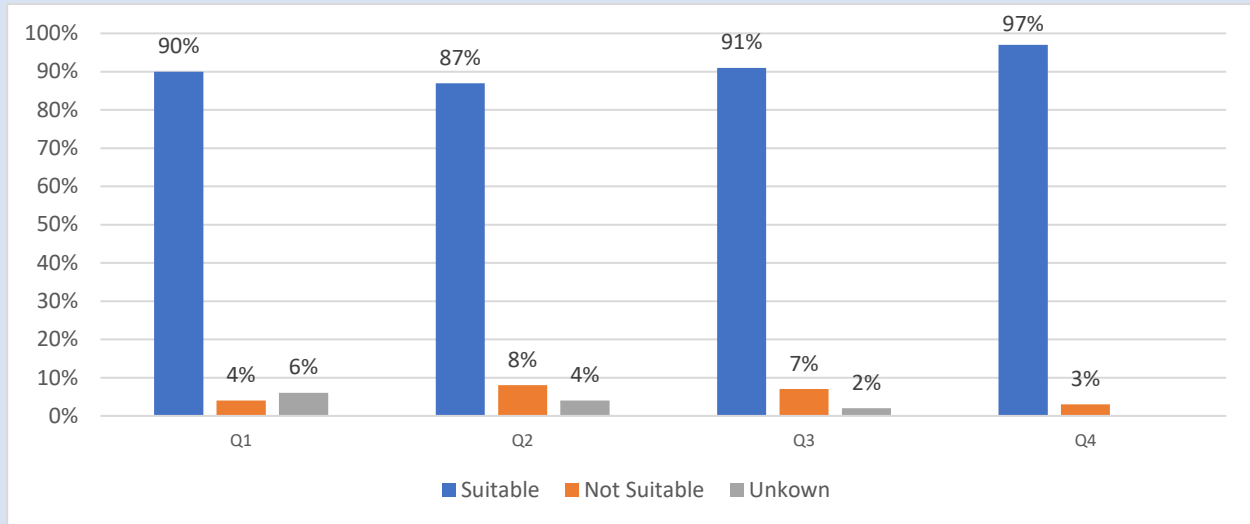
Binary re-offending rates in West Mercia between 2019 and 2022 have shown an increase from 26.9% to 27.9%. In the same period the number of children re-offending has reduced from 79 to 51 children. The difference in these two sets of figures is accounted for by a significantly declining offending cohort over the same period. These findings demonstrate the way the YJS partnership have worked effectively together to implement a strategy of intervening at an early point to prevent further offending and this appears to have contributed positively to the long-term reduction in the size of the offending cohort.

## Annexure Three: Annual Performance Report

### Key Performance Indicators: What are the needs of children the service has worked with? To what extent have these been met?

#### Accommodation Suitability: Children's access to safe and suitable accommodation

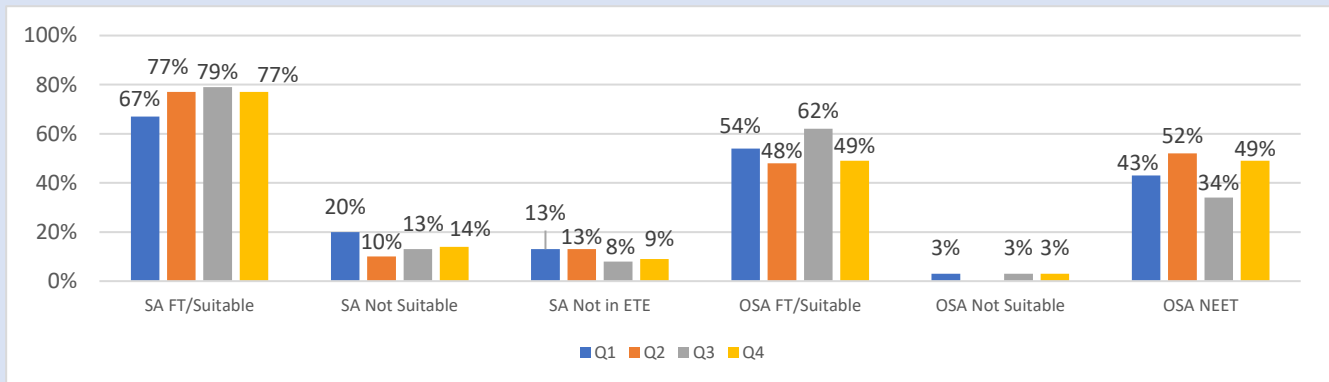
Most children in West Mercia have access to safe and suitable accommodation.



#### Education, Training and Employment (ETE): The number and proportion of children in suitable ETE by ETE provision type

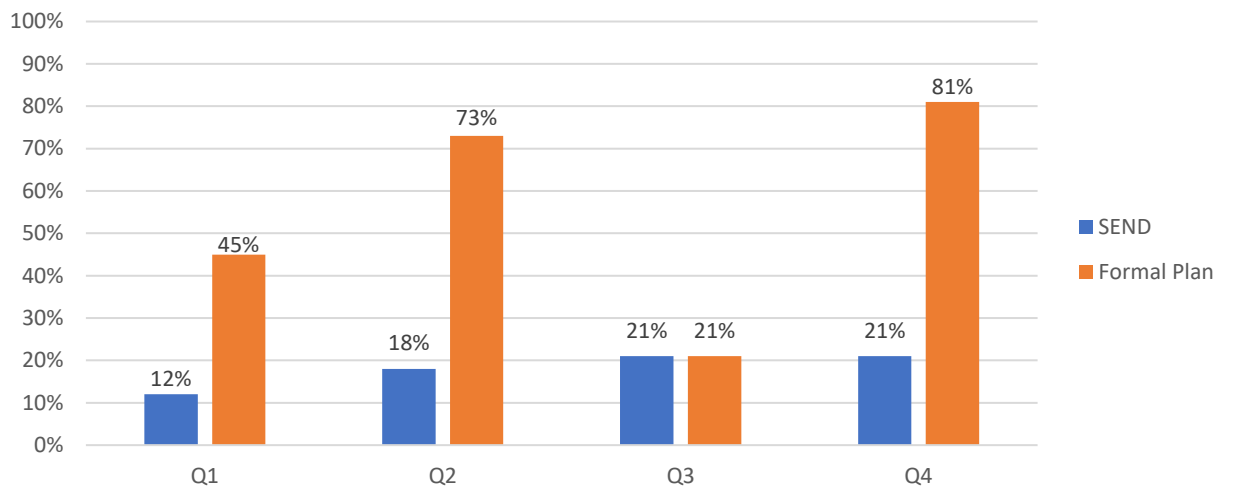
Most school-aged children within West Mercia were engaged in suitable education, training or employment (ETE) provision at the end of their intervention.

Nearly half of children above school-age were not in suitable education, training or employment.

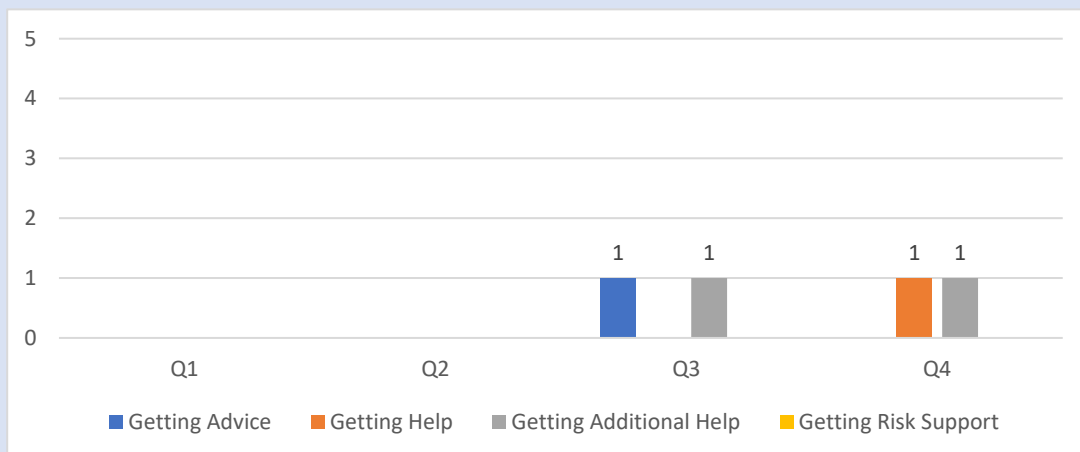


### Annexure Three: Annual Performance Report

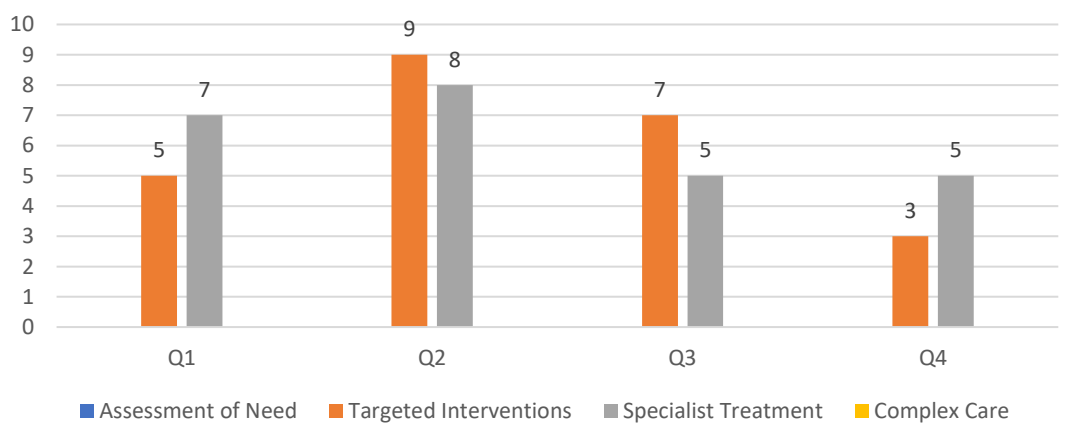
**SEND:** The number of children with an identified SEND and whether they have a formal plan in place. [A formal plan includes an EHCP and an individual learning/education plan].



**Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing:** The number of children screened or assessed to understand their mental health and emotional wellbeing needs.



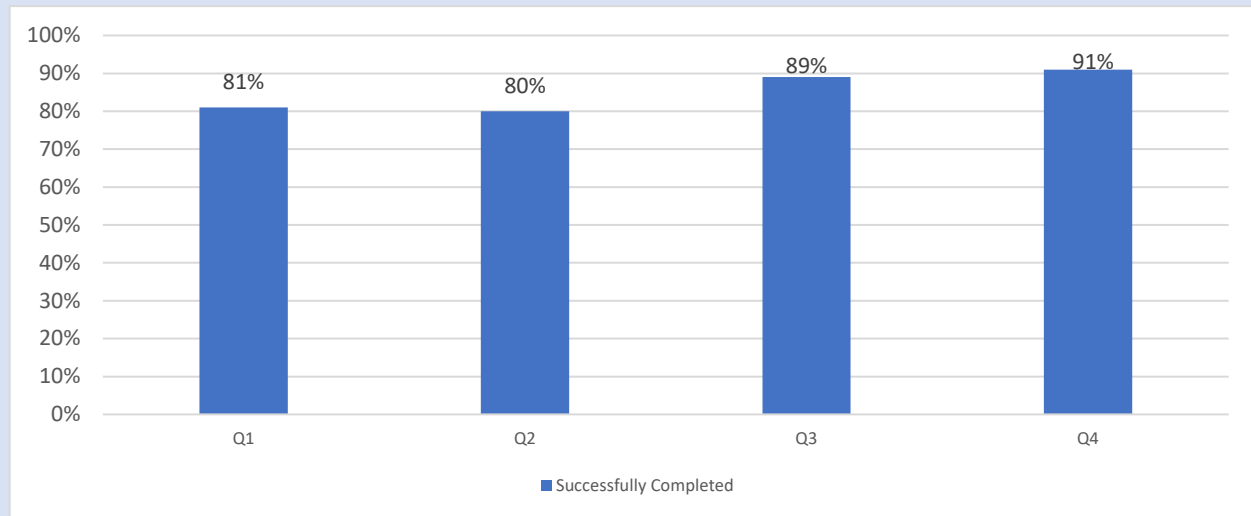
**Substance Misuse:** The number of children with a screened or identified need for an intervention or treatment to address substance misuse and of that, the number of planned/offered treatment and the number of children attending intervention/treatment.



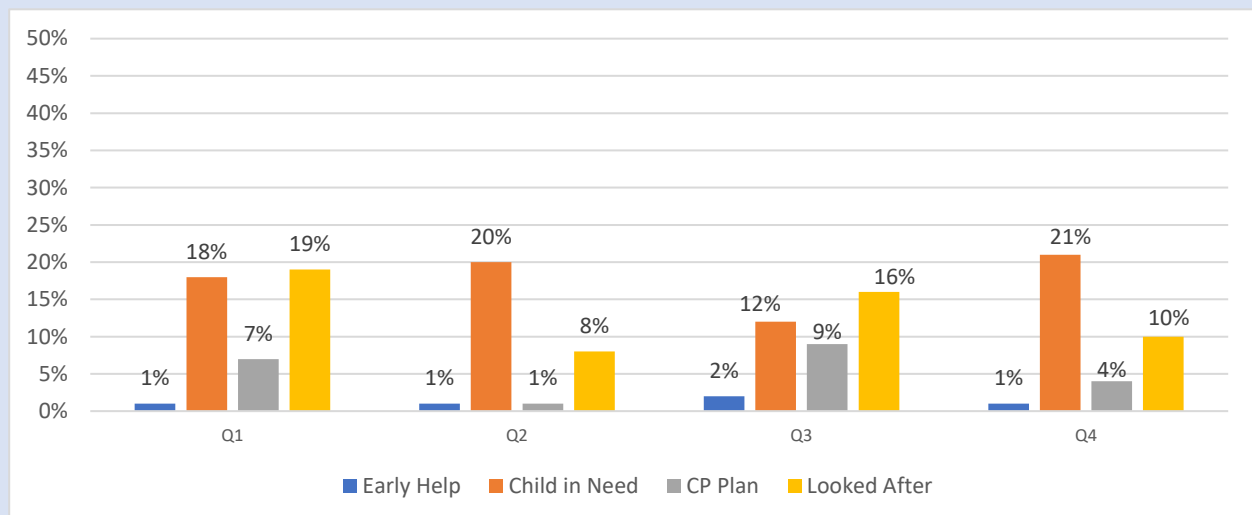
## Annexure Three: Annual Performance Report

### Out of Court Disposals: Children completing diversionary interventions with WMYJS

Across the year 86 out of 99 children (87%) were successfully completed their diversionary intervention.



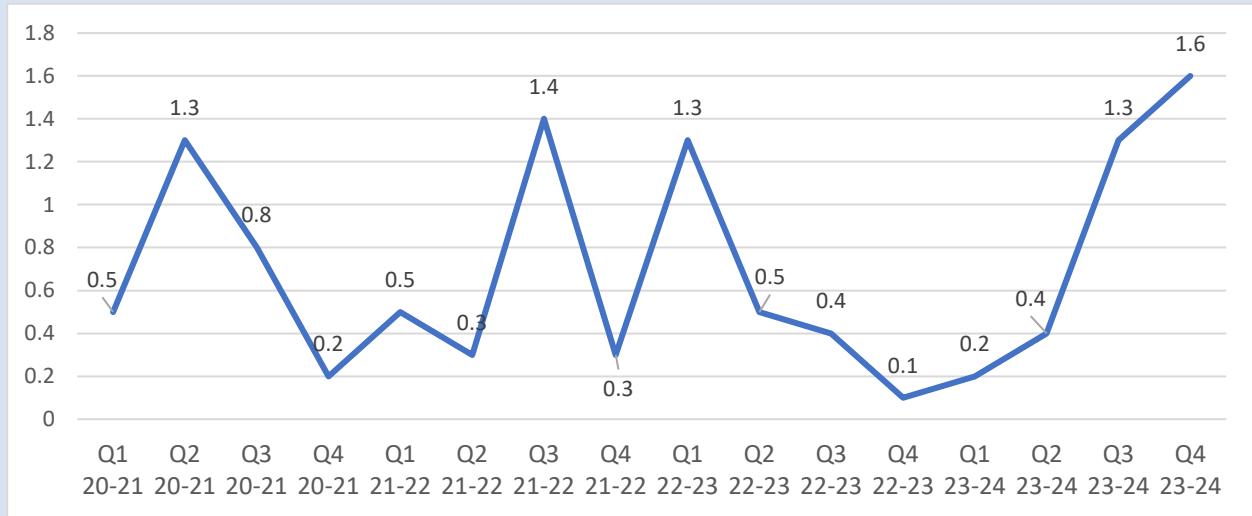
### Wider Services: Wider services which children were linked to at the end of their intervention



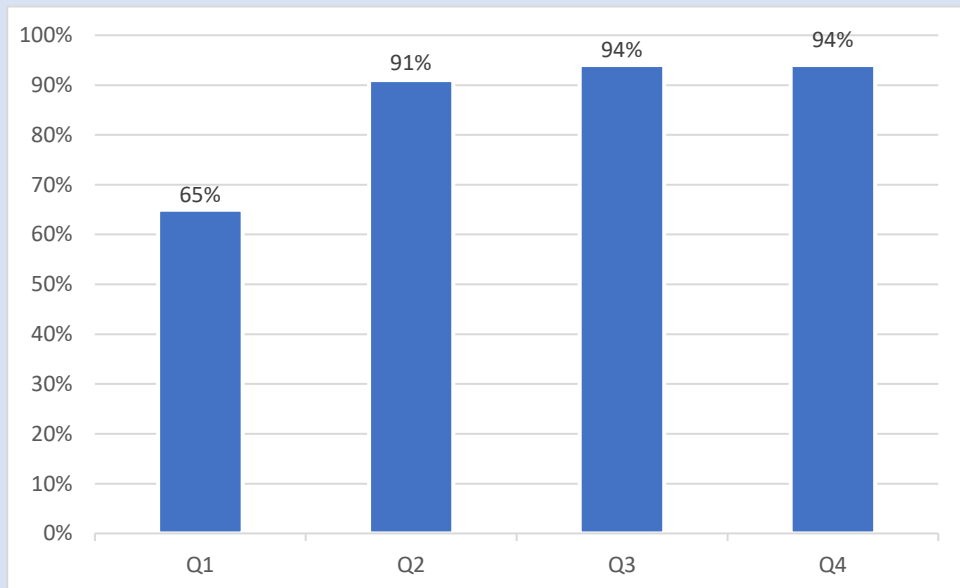
Across the year there were 4 children receiving Early Help Services, 39 children were identified as Children in Need, 11 children were on Child Protection Plans and there were 25 children looked after.

### Annexure Three: Annual Performance Report

**West Mercia Serious Youth Violence Rate per 10,000:** The number of children cautioned or convicted of Serious Violence offences



**The number of Victims Contacted by WMYJS**



## Annexure Four: Annual Plan on a Page

Theme	Priority	Inspecti on Action (where applica ble)	Actions	Impact Measures
CHILD FIRST	Embedding Child-First		Work with children and staff to develop the service's Child First vision and values.	Audits evidence voice of the child Children's Feedback informs service development.  Evidence of You Said, We Did Feedback and Implementation
			Increase the frequency at which the service captures the voice of children and responds to this; utilise ICT to make capturing and analysis easier.	
PEOPLE	Supporting staff development, wellbeing and morale		Implement the revised staff supervision policy.	Proportion of staff receiving monthly supervision. Proportion of appraisals completed and % of staff making progress % Positive Feedback from staff following training Annual Staff survey results
			Complete a dip sample of staff supervision/appraisals; providing a summation report to the Management Board evidencing quality of staff performance and identifying service-wide development needs.	
			Link the Service-Wide Learning Log with the Workforce Training and Development Plan; review our progress and actions quarterly.	
	Understanding and addressing disproportionality within West Merica	2.1	Revise the performance data to capture disproportionality to help understand children from groups which are over-represented to include revised educational data and work with girls.  Implement a Disproportionality Strategy	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
PRACTICE	Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance	3.1 4.2	Commence review of service policies and procedures to reflect Child-first principles, new legislation (Working Together 2023) and evidence-based practice; aligning policy reviews with learning from quality assurance activity and national policy.	Audits evidence greater consistency in decision making across the service
	Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction		Recruit a Restorative Justice Lead to lead our restorative offer and provide oversight of Victim Liaison Officers and Restorative Officers.	Service user feedback shows improved victim satisfaction  Reduction in FTE  Reduction in reoffending
			Work with Police, OPCC and Local Authority Partners to deliver restorative practice in accordance with any changes required through the "Immediate Justice" Approach.	
			Develop a service-wide policy and work with partners to develop practice guidance around working with victims who are children	
			Undertake a deep dive audit focussed on the Making it Right Approach to understand the successful implementation of this.	
	Improving the consistency of practice across the service	1.1, 4.3 1.2, 2.1 3.3	Implement the revised management oversight policy; supervision policy and simplified QA framework which includes sufficient focus on diversity, inclusion and meeting individual needs; monitoring that responding to changing circumstances in planning is effective; ensuring the involvement of other agencies and alignment of plans	Audit/KPI and Service User feedback evidence learning and progress to achieving a consistent quality of practice across service teams
Implement the outstanding actions from the National Standards 2 – At Court Action Plan.				
			Deliver training to the service in the use of the new YJB mandated Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool.	



## Annexure Four: Annual Plan on a Page

	Improving our diversion and early intervention offer		Work with partners (Police, Children's Social Care) to update JDMP processes to be child-first, proportionate and maximise diversion.	Audits evidence greater consistency in OoCD decision making across the service  Data evidences increased Prevention and Diversion outcomes for children and a reduction in children entering the youth justice system
		8.2	Establish an internal scrutiny process for OoCD which complements the existing external scrutiny process.	
		8.3	Utilise the Youth Justice Legal Centre to provide induction process and training for panel members to include child first/child centred policing and trauma informed approaches	
			Develop and deliver the Youth MORSE Programme in partnership with the OPCC and YSS to improve the diversionary offer for vehicle crime. Develop an early intervention offer which complements existing provision (Children' Social Early Help Offer and Police ASB and Intervention and Prevention Offer)	
	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service	7.3	Finalise the review of health resources deployed into YJS teams and work with partners to secure appropriate health provision for all children within WMYJS.	Service offer evidences a consistent health offer to children across West Mercia
PARTNERSHIP	Improving our work with other agencies	9.1	<p><b>Probation:</b> Finalise the revised transition arrangements into case management. (18 year old cohort)</p> <p><b>Police:</b> Work with Police, Children's Services and partners to develop a combined West Mercia-wide remand strategy. Work with Police to implement, monitor and review the new commissioning arrangements for the Appropriate Adult Service.</p> <p><b>Children's Social Care:</b> Work with Children's Services to align information sharing and recording to improve the interconnectedness of plans for children support by WMYJS and Children's Social Care.</p> <p><b>Education:</b> Work with education colleagues to collate further contextual information relating regarding children's education including school exclusions children who are not receiving their education entitlement, excluded, on part time timetables or electively home educated. Analyse this data to identify any disproportionality including the care status of the child.</p> <p><b>OPCC:</b> Work with OPCC colleagues to share analysis, data, needs assessments and commissioning intentions.</p>	<p>Children leaving custody are released to suitable accommodation</p> <p>Reduction in number of children remanded</p> <p>Audits evidence connectedness of plans between agencies</p> <p>Increase in children with educational needs being met</p>
	Addressing disparities in service provision and commissioned services between areas	7.1 7.2	<p>Complete a comprehensive and up-to-date Needs Analysis of Children within WMYJS including a focus on SEND, substance misuse and domestic abuse. Use the needs analysis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the service model across the areas to identify gaps opportunities to level up and ensure consistency;</li> <li>Ensure the staffing structure of the service reflects the profile and needs of the children;</li> <li>Work with the OPCC Treasurer to undertake a financial review to profile the service's costs of meeting the needs of children;</li> <li>Work with partners to align our processes and practice with Working Together 2023 including better information sharing, closer relationships and joined up approaches with partners;</li> <li>Shape WMYJS service delivery and response to children (substance misuse, domestic abuse, serious youth violence) through contemporary practice approaches, utilisation of specialist workers where appropriate and work with partners</li> </ul>	<p>Service offer evidences consistency across West Mercia</p> <p>Audit/KPI and Service User feedback evidences consistency across the area</p>
	Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty across West Mercia		<p>Work with CSPs and the CRB to deliver the Serious Violence Duty.</p> <p>Use the area-wide and local Serious Violence needs assessments to shape internal practice.</p>	Reduction in Serious Violence Offences committed by children

## Annexure Four: Annual Plan on a Page

			Work with partners to determine a response to children who are released under investigation (RUI) for serious violence related offences.	Improved provision for children at risk of serious violence
			Undertake a joint review with Worcestershire colleagues in response to a serious youth violence incident; identifying and opportunities for the service learning and development.	
GOVERNANCE / LEADERSHIP	Ensuring management oversight of practice and leadership of service development	1.4 5.3	Ensure sufficient capacity to provide management oversight through recruitment of Restorative Justice Lead, Administration Lead and Additional Manager in Worcestershire; Limited Term Prevention and Diversion Manager and review of the supervision arrangements for Seconded Police Officers.	Proportion of children with management oversight evidenced on their record Proportion of annual plan and inspection improvement plan tasks completed within timescale
	Refining internal governance arrangements		Review governance arrangements of WMYJS inclusive of internal reporting procedures and delegations.	Evidence of clear decisions made in accordance with corporate governance arrangements and delegation. Corporate governance arrangements are fit for purpose and support effective and efficient discharge of YJS business.