



**West Mercia
Youth Justice
Service**

Our Annual Plan 2026-27



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Introduction from Gareth Boulton, Chair of our Board

2025/26 was a year of continued progress and improvement for the youth justice service in West Mercia, with further progress anticipated in 2026/27.

The service continues to proudly adopt a “Child First”, approach, which drives and guides its activity and provides a consistent focus against a backdrop of continuous change in the wider environment.

Major reforms in the public sector such as police governance and mergers, local government reform, devolution, NHS reorganisation and criminal justice will all impact the youth justice sector. The Government’s new white paper on youth justice reform adds further complexity to this picture, but West Mercia’s youth justice service is well positioned to manage and deliver what is required moving forward.

Confirmation of multi-year financial commitments from Government that arrive earlier are very welcome. Our service lobbied for these changes and we are grateful for their adoption. They do not alleviate the service’s financial challenges, but do serve as an important basis for more effective strategic planning and enable a much more orderly approach to discharging key budget processes. This will, by extension, help enable longer term planning for the service beyond the annual planning cycle.

Along with the “Child First”, approach, the service continues to grow its commitment to prevention, both in its own right and alongside partners, with real progress already delivered for local children and communities. The service can be extremely proud of the progress it has made in support of the Turnaround programme, which has seen West Mercia becoming one of the best performing areas in the country.

Last, but by no means least, the staff within West Mercia’s youth justice service never fail to astound and inspire me with their commitment to trying to achieve the best for young people. They form the right connections, the right way and work incredibly hard to foster a positive, uplifting, progressive service – sometimes in very testing circumstances. Their continued dedication will see the service continue to thrive, no matter what.



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

Who are We?

At West Mercia Youth Justice Service, we believe that every child deserves the chance of a positive future. Our work is about more than systems and processes. It's about people, potential, and positive change. It's about seeing beyond the offence to give everyone affected support, guidance, and opportunities.

We support children, young people and their victims who have encountered the justice system, helping repair the harm and create a positive future for justice-involved children and those affected by their actions.

We take a child-first approach rooted in restorative justice, education, and strong partnerships. We place the needs, rights, and potential of every child and victim at the heart of our work. By building positive identities, empowering families, and promoting early support and diversion, we help young people move away from offending and towards brighter, safer futures.



We See Children as Children: We place the needs, rights, and potential of every child and victim at the heart of what we do. Our work is child-focused, developmentally informed, and responsive to social and structural challenges.



We Build Positive Futures Through Identity: We help children develop a strong, pro-social identity by recognising their strengths and supporting their journey away from offending. Through constructive relationships and future-focused interventions, we empower them to contribute positively to their communities.



We Collaborate with Children and Their Families: Change works best when it's done together. We actively involve children, their family and victims in decision-making, ensuring they are heard, respected, and included every step of the way.



We Promote Diversion and Prevention: We believe childhood should be free from the weight of the justice system. We focus on early support, minimal intervention, and diversion wherever possible - reducing stigma and giving children the best chance to thrive.

We are unique. Our footprint matches our police force; we work across 2868 square miles, with colleagues from four local authorities, two Fire and Rescue Services, and two Probation Delivery Units. Our two Integrated Care Boards are clustered to include our neighbours Stoke and Staffordshire in the North and Coventry and Warwickshire to the East. Our four counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin include populated urban areas and sparsely populated rural areas; there are multiple areas of deprivation and affluence.

Executive Summary

In West Mercia

Most children have access to safe and suitable accommodation.



When school-aged children finish working with us, most are engaged in suitable education, training or employment (ETE).



Around 16% of our children have an identified special educational need or disability and in the last year, they have all had a formal support plan.



More children are getting help and support for their

mental health and substance misuse needs

Most children successfully complete their diversionary work with us.



Nearly all victims (98.5%) of victims are contacted by our service



In the forthcoming year, we will demonstrate our commitment, to rethinking, restoring and restarting; giving every child who works with us a chance. In the forthcoming year, opportunities for a brighter future will be created by focusing on **Child-First, People, Practice** and **Partnerships**. By creating opportunities for a brighter future, we create safer communities with fewer victims.

CHILDFIRST	LEADERSHIP	PEOPLE	PRACTICE	PARTNERSHIP
Championing Child-First	Positioning ourselves for the future	Supporting staff and volunteer development, wellbeing and morale Understanding and addressing disproportionality	Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction Ensuring practice is consistent across the service Strengthening our prevention and diversion and offer	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service Strengthening our work with other agencies Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty

The impact of this will be evidenced by an increase in children participating in up Prevention Interventions; more children receiving Diversionary Outcomes; more children in Education, Training and Employment and more children receiving support for their substance use and

emotional health. This will result in safe our communities being safer communities with fewer victims; which will be measured by less children entering the criminal justice system, less children re-offending and less children committing serious violence offences.

Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Governance

Our governance arrangements reflect our uniqueness. We are 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. We are 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. Our Management Board has primary membership of senior representatives from the statutory agencies including the Local Authorities, Police, Probation and the Integrated Care Boards.



Our Board meets quarterly and monitors our performance and quality through regular reporting.

Board Development

In 25/26 Board meetings have been hosted across West Mercia, supporting connectivity between Board Members and the Practitioners in our service. In the coming year our Board will appoint a Victim's Champion to support our work with Victims.



Leadership



Our Head of Service has dual accountability to the Deputy Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Chair of the Management Board. They line manage six Team Managers who lead operational delivery of youth justice services; Senior Practitioners report to Team Managers and take a lead in the development of practice. In December 2025, West Mercia Police appointed a permanent YJS Police Sergeant who is integrated into our leadership team ([Annexure 2](#)). The YJS Police Sergeant oversees the work of the five seconded Police Officers and works alongside the Prevention and Diversion Manager to maximise opportunities for prevention and diversion.

In 26/27 we will **position ourselves for the future** by:

- * Continuing to work with strategic leaders to position the service in accordance with reforms associated with the Youth Justice White Paper '[Cutting youth crime, changing young lives: The youth justice reform and delivery plan](#)' and the Families First and Young Futures Prevention Partnerships agendas.
- * Developing the strategic vision for the service including a longer-term strategic plan which is financially viable.

Partnerships

We are an active partner across multiple local justice strategic partnerships and partnerships related to vulnerable children and families. We seek to maximise these to improve outcomes for justice-involved children and victims; our service aligns its priorities with partnership strategies and resulting priorities. In 25/26 we have raised the profile of justice-involved children and victims through improved reporting to these partnerships, this includes the provision of in-time data. In some areas this has resulted in our information now being included in multi-agency datasets and corresponding dashboards. This enables greater traction for our children and victims.



The Integrated Care Strategy: Good Health and Wellbeing for Everyone 2023-2033 ([Annexure 3](#)) shows how our work connects to the wider Integrated Care System including improving health outcomes, reducing health inequalities and improving social and economic development. West Mercia Police and the OPCC are members of the partnership that oversees this.

In each of the four local authority areas, we are a member of relevant groups under the Safeguarding Children Partnerships including the children and young peoples' strategic partnerships or equivalent, and the early help partnerships. Connectivity with these groups enables change for justice-involved children. We are members of the Corporate Parenting Boards, SEND meetings and MASH partnership groups.

Our Head of Service attends the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships at the unitary or top tier authority level and their relevant subgroups, including reducing re-offending groups. We are an active member of the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, the West Mercia Crime Reduction Board, the PCCs Victim Services Operational Group (previously the Victims and Witness Board) and the MAPPA Strategic Management Board.

Operationally, we are active participants within the Channel Panels established as part of the Prevent Strategy, the Serious and Organised Crime Joint Agency Groups and the Child Exploitation Operational Groups.

In 26/27 we will **improve the health offer in the youth justice service, strengthen our work with other agencies and support delivery of the Serious Violence Duty** by

- * Working with partners to finalise the single service specification for health resources deployed into YJS teams. Work with partners to secure appropriate health provision for all children within WMYJS
- * Working with Health and Justice Colleagues (MPFHT) to maximise opportunities for joint working to better understand the health needs of children in the YJS

- * Working with Probation to develop our Transition to Adulthood offer.
- * Working with Children's Services to ensure placements are identified early for children coming out of custody
- * Working with education colleagues to collate further contextual information relating regarding children's education
- * Working with Skill Mill, Coram and Bridges Outcome Partnership to secure employment opportunities for children
- * Working with Police to deliver a Focussed Deterrence pilot in accordance with YEF and Home Office Guidance
- * Working with partners to update our response to children who display sexually harmful behaviours

Structure

Our service comprises four teams, aligned to the Local Authority areas, and two centralised teams; one which focuses on Prevention and Diversion and the other which leads on Restorative Justice and our work with victims [\[Annexure 2\]](#). Over the last year we have worked with the OPCC Treasurer to ensure our staffing structure more accurately reflects the profile and needs of our children and victims; this resulted in a management of change process which saw a reduction in administrative staff.



Our health partnership contribution remains under review, with the aim of creating a single service specification. This work has been delayed by the significant changes affecting our Integrated Care Boards. Our Integrated Care Boards are now clustered with Stoke and Staffordshire in the North and Coventry and Warwickshire in the South. In 25/26 we started working more closely with colleagues from the Health and Justice Services delivered by Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) and will build on this partnership in the coming year.

We currently have a Speech and Language secondee (0.2 FTE) and arrangements for priority consultations with psychologists in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. In Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, access to CAMHS is via a named contact.

Under the national allocation formula, the Probation Service are expected to contribute two posts to our service. In November 25, the Probation Service agreed that for 26/27 this contribution would be made via funding direct to our service. With this allocated funding, we will employ two Youth Justice Officers who will work specifically around Transitions to Adulthood (T2A). The development of this work is one of our priority areas.

5 Seconded Police Officers are employed across West Mercia; they are now line managed by a dedicated YJS Police Sergeant who forms part of the YJS Leadership Team. Line Management of the YJS Police Sergeant is undertaken by an Inspector and priorities across

Police and the Youth Justice Service are defined by the Head of Service and Criminal Justice Superintendent.

We are compliant with the minimum staffing requirements outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Workforce Development



We understand the skills and knowledge required by our workforce to effectively address the needs of justice-involved children and victims. We work with our statutory agencies partners as well as specialist organisations, community organisations, and relevant groups to provide evidence-based training, professional development opportunities, support, and other resources to enhance the skills and knowledge of our workforce. In 25-26 we used this to prioritise our training offer which resulted in us delivering training on

- * PREVENT Awareness
- * AIM Assessment
- * AIM Intervention
- * Supervising AIM Intervention
- * Bail and Remand
- * Prevention and Diversion Assessment

Our “Service-Learning Log” captures the learning from internal reviews, external reviews, feedback and learning through partnership arrangements. This enables us to prioritise our development actions and inform future planning for workforce development. As a result, in the coming year we will deliver training on assessment skills, risk management, MAPPA and contingency planning.

Financial Resources



Our service has a complex budget structure comprising partner Youth Justice (YOT) Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. See [Annexure 4](#) for provisional contributions for 2026/27.

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

The funding we receive via the MOJ Turnaround Grant contributes to the costs of our Prevention Offer. The two grants we received from the OPCC fund our specialist substance misuse workers and the MORSE Youth Programme.

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 26-27, to sustain and improve the current performance against the current four national outcome measures and ten Key Performance Indicators.

We outsource the provision of Appropriate Adults for children in Police custody. In September 2024 we commenced a joint contractual arrangement with West Mercia Police resulting in Child Action Northwest (CANW) is the sole provider of Appropriate Adults for children and vulnerable adults across West Mercia. In September 2026, we will extend these contractual arrangements for a further two years. We hold joint quarterly contract monitoring and compliance meetings.



Update on the Previous Year: Progress on priorities in previous plan

In 25/26 we made progress against our priorities; the detail of this is captured in [Annexure 5](#).

Our highlights included

- * Our Child-First Champions leading children's participation in service development activities; our children shaped the updates to the tools which support our assessments.
- * Embedding the use of ICT in capturing the voice of children and victims easier. We now have QR codes for feedback which children and victims can complete independently or with our support if they chose.
- * Co-producing an updated Volunteer Policy and Induction Programme. Our interactive induction programme has been delivered to new and existing volunteers across West Mercia. Feedback from staff who attended suggested we should model our induction for new staff on a similar format and this will shape one of our 26/27 priority actions.
- * Refining the way we present our performance data; including in-time reporting via Metabase which aids management oversight and the profiling of our children through their vulnerabilities. This helps us to understand children from groups which are over-represented.
- * Developing our service-wide policy including creating our own Service Standards for our work with Victims and a Victim Needs Assessment Tool which we have created as an e-Form on Childview. This supports a consistent approach in the way we work with children and victims.
- * Undertaking a practice review to consider our referral order practice, which gave us some insightful feedback from children around the panellists and the process. As a result, we have revised the way we undertake our Making it Right Panels.
- * Embedding West Mercia Learning Centre which has provided 191 certified learning opportunities for 104 children in a range of topics including
- * Embedding the West Mercia Prevention Offer, which resulted in an uplift in our targets for delivery of the Turnaround Programme, which we exceeded.

Performance over the Previous Year

Our annual performance report is contained in [Annexure 6](#). In summation the key performance measures show how well the youth justice system is working for children. In West Mercia:


The rate of children entering the criminal justice system (First Time Entrants, FTE) is below the England and Wales and YOT Family average. The rate has increased from the previous year.

The number of children in custody, as measured by the rate of custody per 1,000 population is below the England and Wales and YOT Family average, although there has been a marginal increase on the rate from the previous year; and

Reoffending rates in West Mercia are below the England and Wales and YOT Family average. Whilst there has been a marginal increase in the rate of re-offending compare to the previous twelve months; the number of children reoffending has stayed the same.


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 have access to safe and suitable accommodation.

 Most school-aged children are engaged in suitable education, training or employment (ETE) provision at the end of their intervention but around 40% of children above school-age were not in suitable education, training or employment at the end of their intervention. This is an

increase on the previous year.

Approximately 16% of children have an identified special educational need or disability. All these children had a formal plan in place to support them.

 Children's mental health and emotional wellbeing needs are being screened more consistently. This has resulted in some children receiving risk support and others declining support.

There was an increase in the numbers of children who received targeted support in relation to their substance misuse needs including access to specialist treatment.

 Over 94% of children successfully completed their diversionary intervention programme.

Risks and Issues

We hold a centralised risk register which is tabled at quarterly Management Board meetings for oversight, review, and action. The risks and issues for 26/27 are:

Current Risks and Issues	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</i>	<p>There are arrangements to access CAMHS in all areas</p> <p>Information, Advice and Guidance provided to children by staff</p> <p>Regular supervision of staff to escalate response to individual needs.</p> <p>Review of health provision – looking at the requirement and consistency across West Mercia area</p> <p>Improved partnership working with</p>
<i>Inability to meet data reporting requirements due to any unforeseen absence of the information officer.</i>	<p>Implementation of Metabase for YJS Leadership Team to enable “in-time” reporting and oversight</p> <p>Utilisation of the CACI contract to train nominated staff to be able to meet data reporting requirements.</p> <p>Utilisation of the CACI contract technical support for expert system advice</p>

Plan for the Forthcoming Year

We are committed to continuous improvement. Our Plan on a Page ([Annexure 7](#)) outlines how addressing our key priorities **Child-First**, **People**, **Practice** and **Partnership** will create opportunities for a brighter future and our Action Plan on a Page ([Annexure 8](#)) steps out the specific actions we will take.

CHILDFIRST	LEADERSHIP	PEOPLE	PRACTICE	PARTNERSHIP
Championing Child-First	Positioning ourselves for the future	Supporting staff and volunteer development, wellbeing and morale Understanding and addressing disproportionality	Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction Ensuring practice is consistent across the service Strengthening our prevention and diversion and offer	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service Strengthening our work with other agencies Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty

The impact of this will be evidenced by

- ↑ an increase in children participating in up Prevention Interventions;
- ↑ more children receiving Diversionary Outcomes;
- ↑ more children in Education, Training and Employment and
- ↑ more children receiving support for their substance use and emotional health.

This will result in our communities being safer with fewer victims; which will be measured by

- ↓ less children entering the criminal justice system,
- ↓ less children re-offending and
- ↓ less children committing serious violence offences.

Child First

Child-First West Mercia means:

We See Children as Children



We place the needs, rights, and potential of every child and victim at the heart of what we do. Our work is child-focused, developmentally informed, and responsive to social and structural challenges.

We Build Positive Futures Through Identity



We help children develop a strong, pro-social identity by recognising their strengths and supporting their journey away from offending. Through constructive relationships and future-focused interventions, we empower them to contribute positively to their communities.

We Collaborate With Children and Their Families



Change works best when it's done together. We actively involve children, their family and victims in decision-making, ensuring they are heard, respected, and included every step of the way.

We Promote Diversion and Prevention



We believe childhood should be free from the weight of the justice system. We focus on early support, minimal intervention, and diversion wherever possible - reducing stigma and giving children the best chance to thrive.



Development of our Child-First approach is led by our Child-First Champions. Child-First Champions lead our participatory work with children. We have a Child-First Champion in every team and at every level of our service. The roles of Child-First Champions are broad and every Champion drives change within our service, collaborating with children and acting as a conduit between the team, children and the broader service.

In the last year they

★ Responded to feedback from children who had been held in police and court custody and

subsequently released who told us of feeling dirty. This resulted in “wellbeing packs” being issued to all staff to take with them to court enabling children to use the items within them to “freshen up”.

- ★ Standardised the “Take what you need” offer across all offices which includes sanitary items, toothpaste and shower-gel based on items being required by children.
- ★ Worked with children to shape our vision and values; refresh our colour scheme and feedback into their preferred design for our new logo. This resulted in us discounting red and pink colour schemes; as they were not neutral enough and choosing green instead. Our new logo which was based on “Youth + Justice + Moving Forward” hence the YJ and arrow. Children disliked other options which included blocks and stars.
- ★ Took comments made by Lexi and worked with 25 children across West Mercia to redesign our end-of order questionnaires, which are now called our “Working with Us” Questionnaires. They
 - Included the feedback from all the questions in our new Working with Us Questionnaire
 - Made the Questionnaire available online so children scan the code and do it on their own, which is what children wanted. Before they had to complete questionnaires with workers.
 - Made sure that there are paper copies of the questionnaire too, as some children said that they would like their worker or another person in their life to help them. Child-First Champions make sure there are copies available in all our offices.
- ★ Undertook a similar project with parents and carers which used feedback from parents to update the feedback questionnaires distributed to parents when we finish working with them.
- ★ Updated some of the other tools, like our mental health screening tool and our substance misuse screening tool which we use with children; this included reflecting back
- ★ Supported children to tell their story as the “Voice of the child, Child-First” opening agenda item in our Management Board Meetings.
- ★ Supported children to provide critical feedback into our process evaluation of the implementation of VR Headsets. This will support us in contract renewal considerations for the coming year. In their feedback, some children reported that they do not enjoy VR due to feelings of vulnerability or sensory discomfort. Some children reported not liking how vulnerable it made them feel when wearing the headset and some said that some of the options to select in the stories are limited. However, the majority of children reported liking the experience with comments including
 - They really like them
 - It’s the best bit
 - Its good to start chatting after
 - “that was sick”
 - Modern
 - Good way of thinking about it all

As well as hearing the views of children from our Child-First Champions we triangulate their views when we undertake our practice audits. In 2025 we undertook a review of our referral order practice and Making it Right Panels. Children gave direct feedback which has shaped our revised practice guidance.

Children who may not always want to tell us directly about their experiences are able to “Tell Us” via our comments, compliment and complaints procedure. Children can “Tell Us” via

- * a form,
- * a dedicated phone number,
- * a dedicated email address or
- * via our website.



Responses received are fed through to the leadership team, or if they are a complaint handled under our complaints procedure. On a quarterly basis, as a leadership team, we triangulate feedback from children with feedback received from victims, staff, volunteers, magistrates and partners. This helps us shape our service and supports our continuous improvement.

At the end of their time working with us, children can tell us about their experiences via our “Working with Us” questionnaire. They can complete this on their own or with others; in paper copy or via a QR code or MS Forms Link. Responses are analysed on a quarterly basis and form part of the triangulated feedback meeting.

In the forthcoming year, Child-First Champions will be **embedding Child-First** by

- * Continuing to shape service improvement and development by championing the voice of children and seeking feedback
- * Working with children and victims to create a directory of projects, activities and services
- * Working with children and parents to update the service feedback procedure, including responding to Compliments and Complaints with links to Victims Right to Review.
- * Developing a service-wide collaboration strategy incorporating recommendations from the Child First Collaboration Research Report.

Standards for children

In our last National Standard 2 – At Court Self-Assessment, we evidenced our strengths and identified six areas where we were inadequate. Our reporting practice is mostly good; we consistently provide high quality reports, which are child focussed, support desistance and contain the child’s views following an up-to-date YJB approved assessment evidencing engagement with parents and carers.



We have progressed in the six areas which were assessed as inadequate and completed the tasks we set ourselves in the Action Plan.

Service Development

Progress Against Inspection Action Plan

We continue to progress the outstanding actions from our Inspection Action Plan will be completed in 25/26. This includes

- * a simplified QA framework which includes sufficient focus on diversity, inclusion and meeting individual needs;
- * ensuring changing circumstances in planning is effective and the involvement of other agencies and alignment of plans.
- * finalising the review of health resources deployed across the service and work with partners to secure appropriate health provision for all children within WMYJS.

Response to Learning: Serious Incident and Learning Exercises

Learning aids our continuous improvement; we capture our learning and the associated actions in the Service-Learning Log. This central reference point informs our service development activities including our workforce development needs. We benefit from being able to participate in learning activities with partners across four local authority areas. We regularly participate in multi-agency case file audits as part of local safeguarding arrangements.

National Priority Areas

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

Children from groups which are over-represented

We collate and monitor information around children in our area 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. In 25/26 we refined the way we gathered this information and how we presented this to our Management Board. We report quarterly on gender, ethnicity, care status, special education needs and disability.



In 26/27 we will better **understand and address disproportionality** by

- * Implementing a Disproportionality Strategy

- * Working alongside Willowdene and justice-involved women and girls to improve youth justice service provision for girls.

Policing

We have a close working relationship with West Mercia Police. We benefit from in-time sharing of information which enables swift support for justice-involved children. West Mercia Police seconds one Sergeant and five Police Officers to our service; this provides coordination between local policing colleagues and the youth justice service.



In 24/26 we worked with Police colleagues to operationalise the Child-First response to children in custody.

In 26/27 we **will work with Police** to

- * ensure responses to knife offences aligns with Home Office Government guidance for child knife possession offences including implementation of Deferred Prosecution (O23).
- * maximise diversion outcomes for Traffic Offences to include an increase in the number of children accessing MORSE Youth.
- * increase the number of children accessing the "No Comment Pathway".
- * deliver a Focussed Deterrence pilot in accordance with YEF and Home Office Guidance; ensuring Home Office Serious Violence Duty grant requirements are met.

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.

We offer Preventative support via our Proactive, Reactive and Targeted Offers (Annexure 9)

In the last year, we have embedded our proactive and reactive prevention offers, which resulted in us working with MOJ colleagues to receive an uplift in our Turnaround Grant Programme. We exceeded the uplifted targets, successfully meeting all grant requirements. In the forthcoming year, we will use this model and what we have learnt to date as we develop our Targeted Offer in line with the Home Office Serious Violence Duty Funding.



In 26/27 we **strengthen our prevention offer** by

- * Work with partners to improve the response to children who may be at risk of radicalisation (Prevent Duty)
- * Work with Police to deliver a Focussed Deterrence pilot in accordance with YEF and Home Office Guidance; ensuring Home Office Serious Violence Duty grant requirements are met.

Diversion



We deliver diversionary opportunities through our well-established Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) process. The process was updated in 24/25 to be child-first, proportionate and maximise opportunities for diversion; this was further refined in 25/26 through our work with CPS and Police. The Management Board receive a quarterly report relating to diversionary outcomes for children.

In 26/27 we **strengthening our diversion offer** by

- * Working with Police to implement a Triage Decision-Making Process to enable joint decision making at the earliest opportunity.
- * Working with Police to increase the number of children accessing the “No Comment Pathway”
- * Working with Police and the Courts to maximise diversion outcomes for Traffic Offences to include an increase in the number of children accessing MORSE Youth.
- * Work with Police and JDMP members to implement Deferred Prosecution (Outcome 23)

Education

We employ 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 our 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 Need or a Disability; and whether they have an EHCP. In the last year, we started to record more accurately contextual information relating to our children's educational histories. In the coming year we will strengthen this further by looking more closely at those who are not receiving their education entitlement, excluded, on part time timetables or electively home educated. We will analyse this data to identify any disproportionality including the care status of the child. To do this, we will work cross-service to standardise the work undertaken by our Education, Training and Employment Officers. This will ensure practice is consistent across the service.

Our Education, Training and Employment Officers have been integral part of the development of West Merica Learning Centre which has provided a consistent educational offer for all children, measured through the 104 children receiving 191 accredited outcomes over the year.

Restorative Approaches and Victims

We have dedicated Victim Liaison Officers who support the victims of children working with our service across both diversionary and court pathways. Over the year, 98.5% of victims have

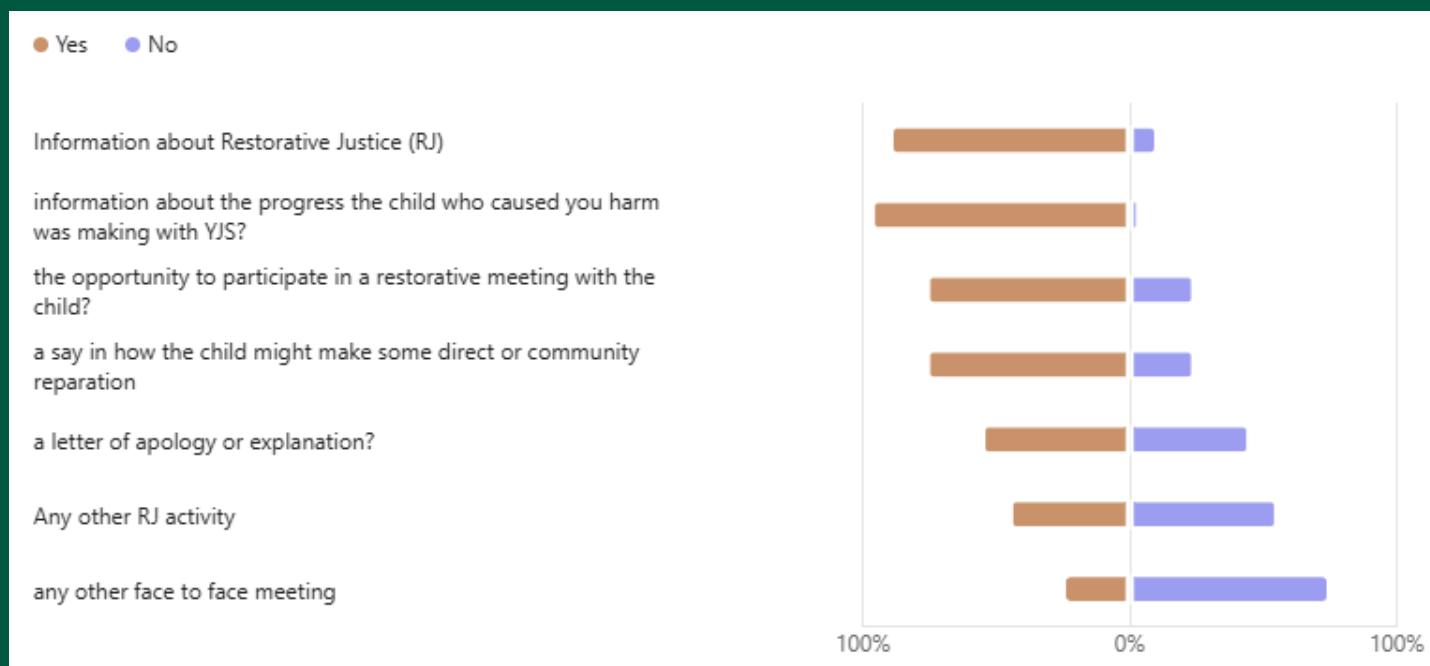


been contacted by a WMYJS representative; either one of our Victim Liaison Officers, the Restorative Justice Lead or the Team Manager.

Victim Satisfaction Surveys are completed at the end of support, across the year

- * 86% of victims were very satisfied with the service they received from our service
- * 100% of victims felt their views were heard and listened to
- * 100% of victims felt safe and supported during the time they were working with our service

Feedback from victims illustrated the range of restorative opportunities our service has provided.



In 26/27 we will **strengthen our restorative offer and victim satisfaction** by

- * Working with RJ4All and partners in the Phase 2: Delivery and Evaluation of the [Restorative Justice the Evidence: A pilot for the youth justice system of England and Wales](#).
- * Upskilling all Practitioners to improve their confidence and ability to deliver restorative approaches across all work with children and victims.
- * Working with children and victims to more closely match reparation placements with children's interests and victim's needs.
- * Completing a Needs Analysis of Victims working with WMYJS using the same methodology as the Needs Analysis for children.

Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

Serious Youth Violence

Across West Mercia the Serious Violence duty is delivered 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. We are a partner at each CSP and we attends and report on our service delivery to the CRB.

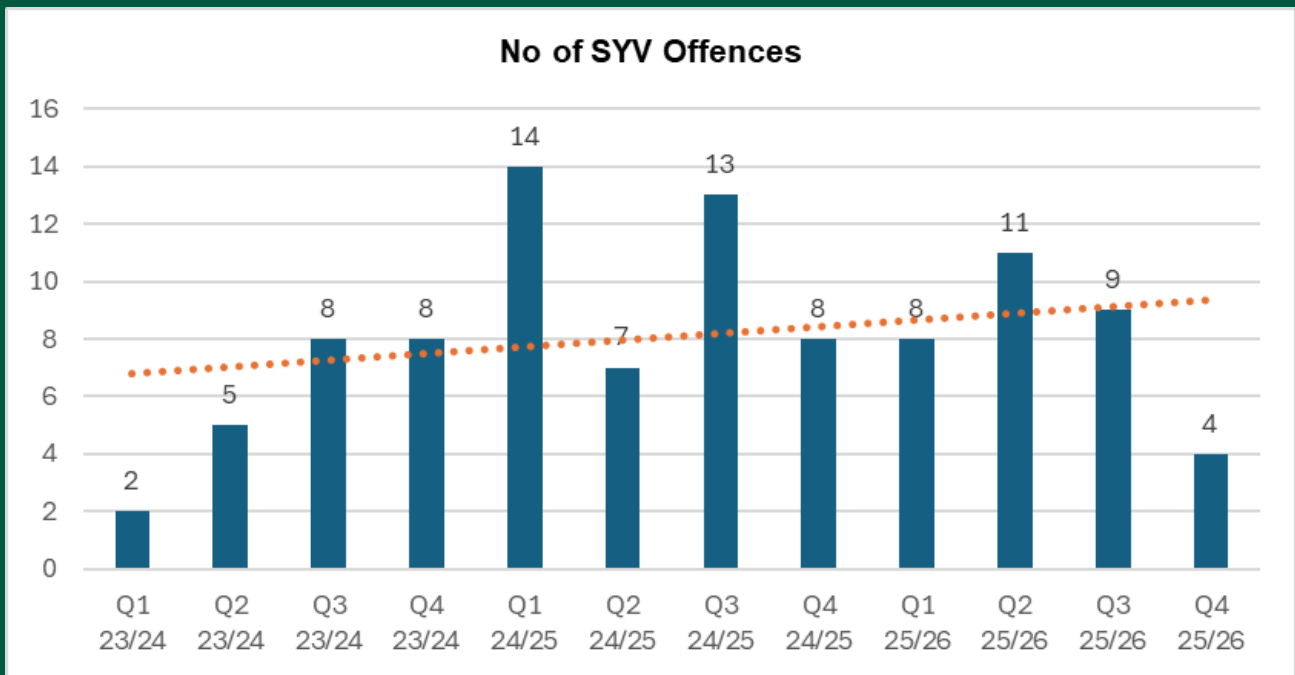


In 24/25, as a specified authority for the serious violence duty we contributed to the need assessments and strategy and have remained fully engaged in the governance arrangements for the duty in each Local Authority area and at the West Mercia level to date; continuing to advocate for justice-involved children across West Mercia through.

In 25/26 we responded to serious violence with the introduction of VR headsets as a tool to work with children connected to serious violence and commencement of a contract with St Giles for the provision of lived experience mentors to work with children connected to serious violence. At the close of our contract with St Giles, we received feedback outlining the strength of our relational practice. St Giles noted that many of our children were actively engaged with their WMYJS worker, which was different to other areas they had experienced working in.

We completed a process evaluation on our VR Headset Implementation which concluded that overall, the implementation of the VR Headsets Programme has been positive, with evidence of purposeful, targeted, and sustained use across West Mercia. The programme has been successfully embedded as a practical tool to explore self-identity, influences, and risk-related behaviours with children and young people. While geographical variability and limited outcome data remain, the delivery model shows strong potential for continued development and scale.

In 25/26 there were 32 serious youth violence offences recorded in accordance with YJB guidelines. The rate of serious youth violence has fluctuated throughout the year. This is a reduction from 44 offences in 24/25. Locally, we monitor serious youth violence in accordance with the West Mercia definition, this results in us monitoring and reporting on two datasets and supports targeted partnership activity.



To support the delivery of the serious violence duty in 26/27 we will:

- * Work with partners to update our response to children who display sexually harmful behaviours, including work with Police around MAPPA eligible children
- * Work with Police to deliver a Focussed Deterrence pilot in accordance with YEF and Home Office Guidance; ensuring Home Office Serious Violence Duty grant requirements are met.
- * Work with Police to increase the number of children accessing the “No Comment Pathway”

Knife Possession Guidance

In February 2026, the Home Office provided updated expectations around responses to child knife possession. As of April 2026, the Home Office expects responses to children in possession of knives to be swift, robust, evidence based and thorough. The close partnership working between West Mercia Police and West Mercia Youth Justice Service well positions us to respond to child knife position and our WMYJS Management Board is well-position to provide localised scrutiny of the response.

The specific staged process requires:

The Police to notify us of every child knife possession offence case within one working day, and our interventions with children should start no later than four weeks after referral.

We have

- * an automated notification process from Police to WMYJS via Athena of child suspects and daily arrests.
- * established a daily triage from 1 April to support a Police policy change which enables joint decision making at the earliest opportunity. West Mercia Police has been made in respect to any investigation requiring an outcome (positive or negative) should be referred to WMYJS. This includes any consideration for an out of court resolution, any

outcomes whereby the suspect is noted as being under 18, and any other incident if the specialist knowledge of the YJS would be beneficial for the child.

- * A Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) meeting within 3 weeks of referral and a suitable intervention plan is started within four weeks. Prior to the Joint Decision-Making Panel WMYJS undertake a Prevention and Diversion Assessment (PDAT) and a Victim's Needs and Safety Assessment.

The YJS must make a judgement of the child's needs on a case-by-case basis, considering their circumstances, risks and any safeguarding concerns (including extra-familial harm such as trafficking, criminal exploitation and serious violence).

- * For all referrals to triage we complete a screening assessment via the Child Triage Form this includes key information around the child's current circumstances including
 - o Service involvement (current or previous)
 - o Known risks or concerns
 - o Child's strengths and protective factors
 - o Relevant intelligence from ChildView, Social Care, Health & Justice, and substance misuse services.
- * This information is supplemented by information gathered by the YJS Police Officer who plays a critical role in Triage. The YJS Police Officer interrogates police systems to identify any history of involvement in the justice system or relevant intelligence that can support assessment and decision making. This includes information about the family and considers factors such as parental offending and domestic abuse.
- * Where triage refers the child onward to JDMP, a full assessment is undertaken by WMYJS using the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool (PDAT). The PDAT draws together information from a range of sources and involves children and families throughout, providing a consistent, ChildFirst framework for understanding each child's circumstances including the child's life and current circumstances including family context, diversity needs, education, health, vulnerabilities or exploitation concerns; the behaviour linked to the offence, explored after understanding the child's wider situation; the child's strengths and goals, including what they feel they need help with and who supports them. The assessment considers safety and wellbeing of the child and others including risk of harm.
- * With consent, the needs of victims are identified by WMYJS via completion of the Victims Needs and Safety Assessment. Where appropriate, information from this assessment is shared at JDMP. When risk is identified, Police and WMYJS will take appropriate action to safeguard victims.

Where an Out of Court Resolution is deemed to be appropriate, the child must be offered a Deferred Prosecution or Youth Conditional Caution.

- * Youth Conditional Caution and Deferred Prosecution are outcomes available from JMDP

Police and YJS should establish Scrutiny Panels for knife possession offences, these should meet quarterly. The scrutiny panels should review the outcomes agreed upon and identify and monitor improvements.

- * A joint approach, from Police and WMYJS, was made to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who holds a quarterly OoCR scrutiny panel to update the Terms of Reference for this form to include children and knife crime. The PCC has endorsed the approach and has requested his office to undertake the update to the Terms of Reference ahead of the next scrutiny panel meeting.

Youth Justice Service Management Boards should ensure oversight of the quality and effectiveness of interventions delivered.

- * In the coming year knife crime will be an added standing item on the WMYJS Management Board.

We will **ensure compliance with new legislation and guidance** by

- * Working with police and partners to ensure responses to knife offences aligns with Home Office Government guidance for child knife possession offences including implementation of Deferred Prosecution (O23).

Contextual Safeguarding

We are 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 local authority areas and we contribute to the partnership work across West Mercia, including Get Safe Strategic and Operational Groups in Worcestershire and the Child Exploitation Strategic and Operational Groups in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

In 26/27 we will **position ourselves for the future** by

- * Continuing to work with strategic leaders to position the service in accordance with reforms associated with Families First Programme.

Detention in Police Custody



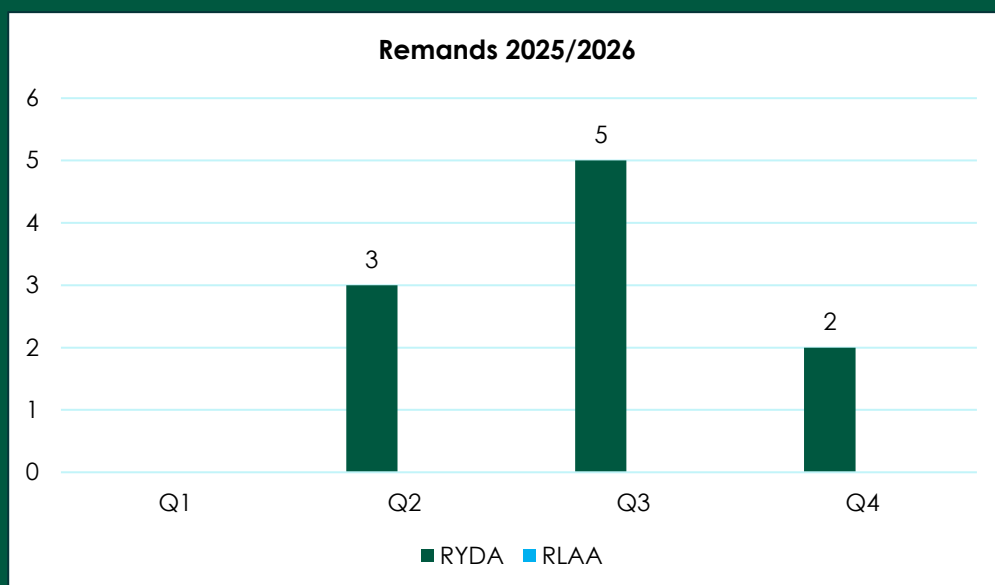
In 25/26 863 children from West Mercia were arrested within West Mercia, this is a reduction from 769 children from the previous year. Most children who are taken into custody are bailed to return to the police station.

In May 25 the Child-First Children in Custody Procedure, which we helped to develop was implemented; this has resulted in less children spending less time in custody and children's needs more closely considered whilst in custody. 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.

In 25/26 we further developed our proactive prevention offer ([Annexure 9](#)) following our close working relationship with Police to automate information relating to children arrested, bailed and remanded.

Remands

During the year, 2025-26 10 children were remanded to youth detention accommodation. No children were remanded to local authority accommodation. This is a decrease from the previous year where 11 children were remanded to youth detention accommodation and 2 children were remanded to local authority accommodation.



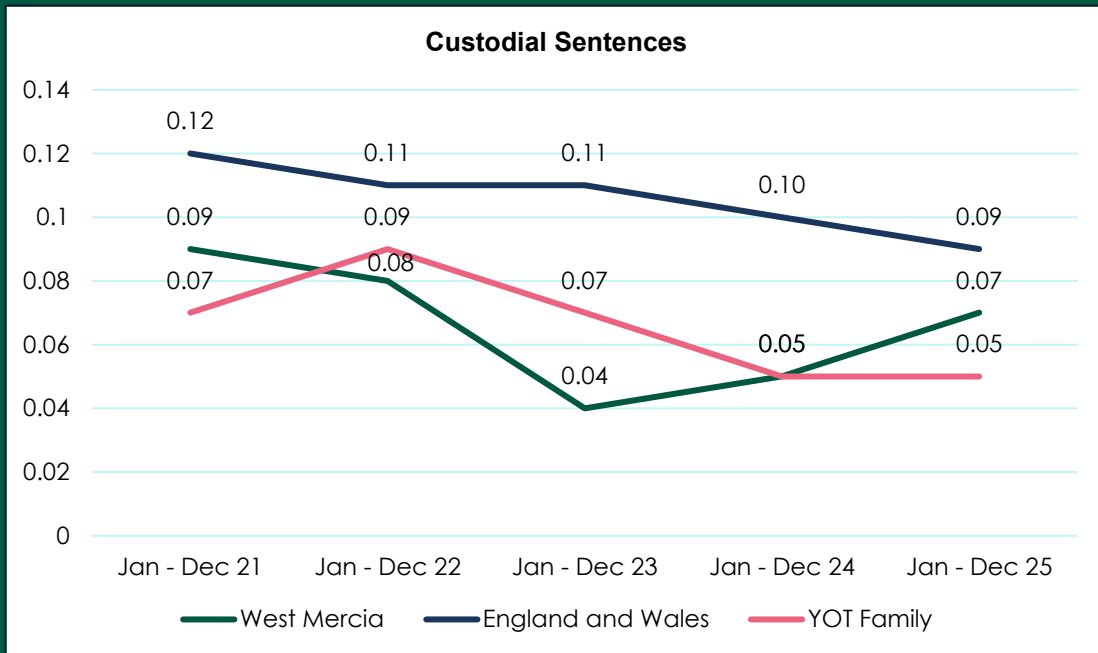
In the coming year we will

- * Work with Police, Children's Services and partners in accordance with reforms associated with the Youth Justice White Paper 'Cutting youth crime, changing young lives: The youth justice reform and delivery plan'.
- * Work with regional partners to develop local and scale credible community-based alternatives to custodial remand for children, where risks can be safely managed in the community.

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.

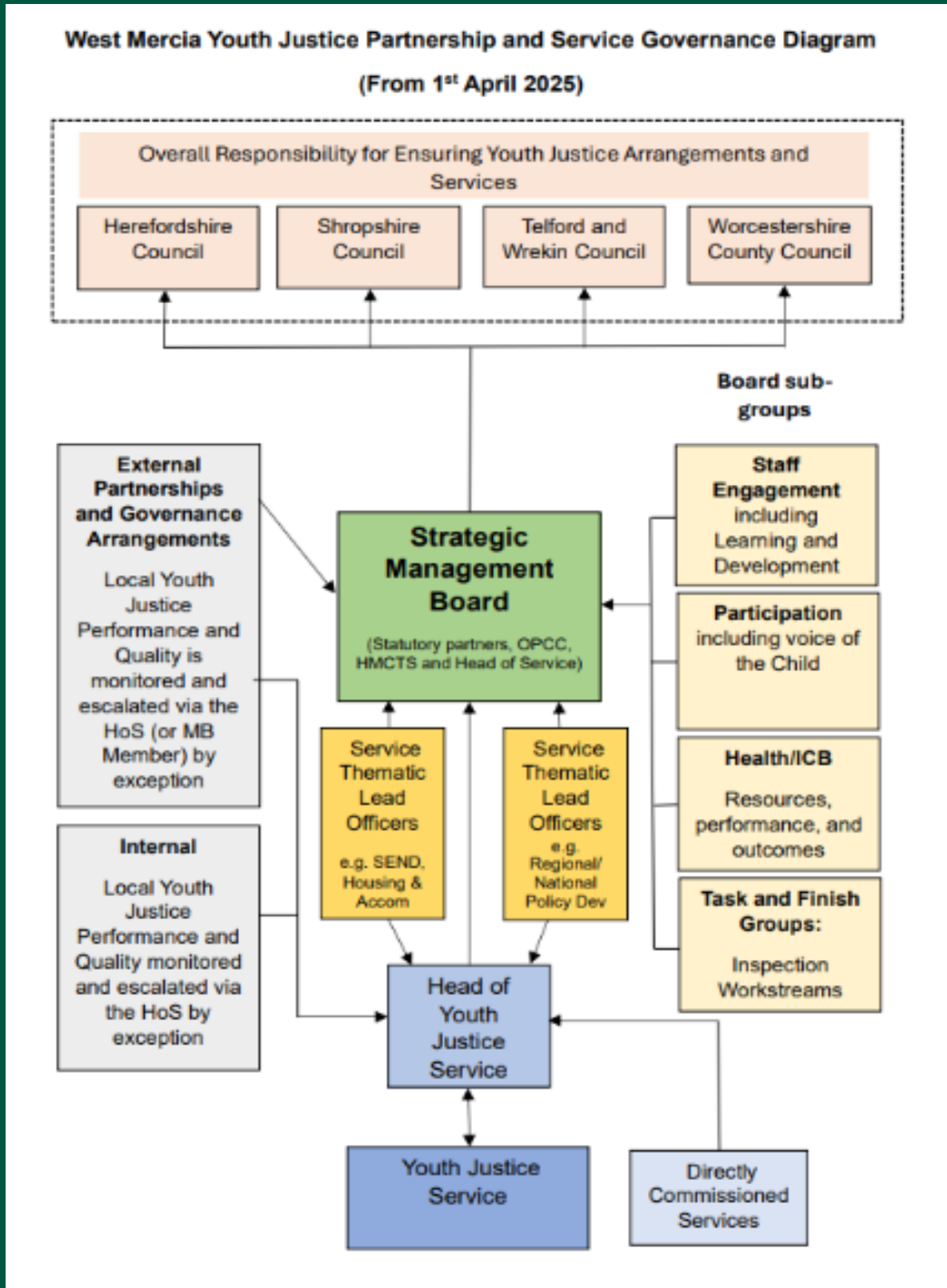
Over the year, seven children have left custody; this is an increase on the previous year. Of these 4 children returned home, 2 children were transferred to Probation and one child went to live in a residential care placement.



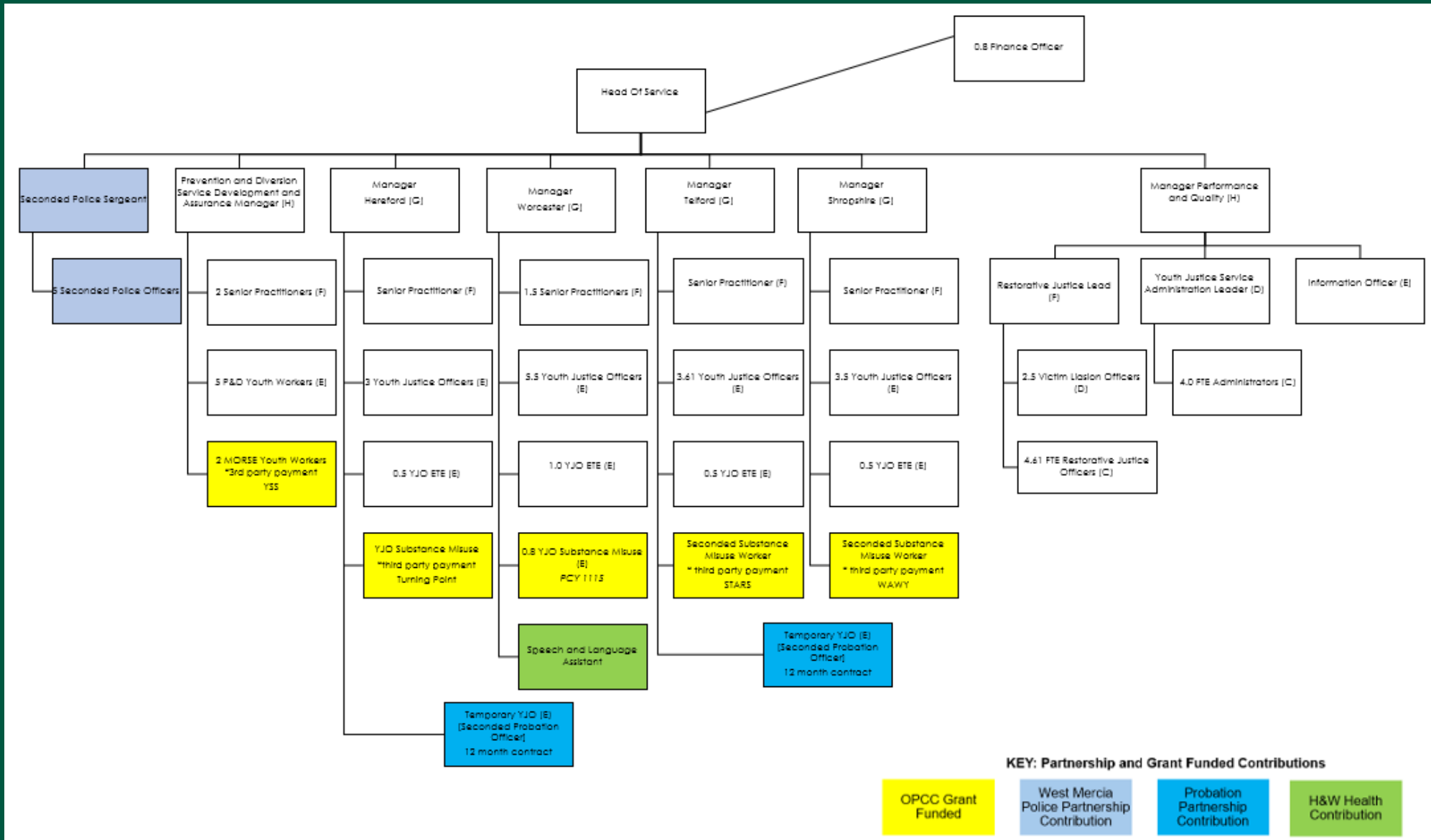
In 26/27 we will **strengthen our work with partner agencies** by

- * Working with Children's Services to ensure placements are prioritised for children coming out of custody

Annexure 1: Our Governance Structure



Annexure 2: Our Staffing Structure



Annexure 3: Strategy on a Page: Good Health and Wellbeing for Everyone 2023 - 2033



Annexure 4: Budget Costs and Contributions 2026/27

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 2026/27, 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 – Secondees (£)	Payments in kind (£)	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
Local Authorities			1,179,999	1,179,999
Police Service	272,032		63,000	335,032
National Probation Service			112,272	112,272
Health	148,496		36,894	185,390
Police and Crime Commissioner			167,397	167,397
YJB – Youth Justice Grant			1,567,459	1,567,459
Other - MOJ Grant (Turnaround) & movement from Reserves			272,589	272,589
Total	420,528		3,399,610	3,820,138

Category	Budget (£)
Employee Costs	2,741,863
Other Employee Costs	15,000
Premises	167,839
Supplies and Services	25,605
ICT	137,551
Third Party Payments	253,871
Transport	57,881
TOTAL	3,399,610

Annexure 5: Our Progress Against 25/26 Priorities

KEY: ■ Completed (22) ■ In Progress (15) ■ Not Yet Started (7)

Theme	Priority	Inspection Action	Actions	Year End of Year Update
CHILD FIRST	Embedding Child-First		Continue to use the Child-First Champion group to lead children's participation in service development activities.	Completed. This is now well-established way of working for WMYJS. Senior Practitioners are all Child-First Champions and this group will continue to grow.
			Embed the use of ICT in capturing the voice of children and victims to make capturing and analysis easier.	Completed MS Forms and QR codes are in place with reports completed quarterly and discussed across the leadership team.
			Work with children and parents to update the service feedback procedure, including responding to Compliments and Complaints.	In Progress The forms have been updated to include revised questions based on child and parent feedback. The procedure is to be finalised and the complaints procedure needs updating in accordance with Victims Right to Review.
			Develop a service-wide collaboration strategy incorporating recommendations from the Child First Collaboration Research Report.	In Progress A concept mapping for this has been drafted by the Child-First Lead.
PEOPLE	Supporting staff and volunteer development, wellbeing and morale		Work with staff and partners to update the WMYJS Induction Policy and Procedure, including links to lone working, mandatory training and role specific guidance for seconded staff (Police and Probation).	In Progress A Mandatory training list has been established and compliance against this has been established. The policy and procedure needs to be updated.
			Co-produce an updated Volunteer Policy, Handbook and Induction Programme.	Completed Volunteer Policy has been completed and induction programme has been revised and delivered to new volunteers.
			Complete a dip sample of staff supervision/appraisals to ensure there is a consistent approach. Provide a summation report to the Management Board evidencing quality of staff performance and identifying any service-wide development needs.	Not Completed Staff supervision is now consistent and monitored. A template is in place and all supervision is recorded. The action is no longer required; replace with appraisal action.
PEOPLE	Understanding and addressing disproportionality within West Mercia	2.1	Further refine performance data to help understand children from groups which are over-represented.	Completed WMYJS Dataset now in place and reported to Board quarterly.
			Implement a Disproportionality Strategy	Not Started
PRACTICE	Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance	3.1 4.2	Continue to review service policies and procedures reflecting Child-first principles, new legislation (Working Together 2023) and evidence-based practice; aligning and prioritising policy reviews with learning from quality assurance activity and national policy.	In Progress Further updates are required in accordance with updates from Working Together 2026.
	Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction		Develop a service-wide policy and work with partners to develop practice guidance around working with victims who are children including development of a Victim Needs Assessment Tool.	Completed Policy and Procedure has been written inclusive of Practice standards. The

			Victims Needs and Safety Assessment Tool is operational via Childview E-Form.
		Work with OPCC, Victim Support and Police in linking the YJS Offer with the development of the West Mercia Victims Hub.	Completed WMYJS are members of the West Mercia Victim Services Operational Group (VSOG)
		Undertake a practice review to consider referral order practice, including the Making it Right Approach to panels.	Completed Practice Review completed and recommendations added to Service Learning Log.
		Upskill all Practitioners to improve their confidence and ability to deliver restorative approaches across all work with children and victims.	In Progress Further feedback from staff is required to target training and development activities for 2026/7.
		Work with children and victims to more closely match reparation placements with children's interests and victim's needs.	In Progress Children's reparation placements are being more closely matched and further work is required to match with victim needs/preferences.
		Standardise the Restorative Justice Officer roles.	Completed Standard Job Profiles have been completed and Management of Change has occurred.
Improving the consistency of practice across the service	1.2 2.1	Implement the simplified Quality Assurance Framework.	In Progress The Management Oversight component has been implemented. The external QA needs to be updated in accordance with Working Together 2026.
		Finalise the outstanding actions from the National Standards 2 – At Court Action Plan.	Completed Actions completed.
		Embed West Mercia Learning Centre to provide a consistent educational offer for all children.	Completed 181 AQA skills development Certifications were awarded to 87 children for.
	3.1 3.3	Update assessment, planning and risk guidance to ensure assessment and plans are future focussed and consider how to keep the child, victim and community safe including work with Police around the role of Seconded Officers as Offender Managers.	In Progress Guidance has been updated, training is required for all front0line staff. Further work is required with Police around Offender Managers and MAPPA Children (delayed due to Op Franklin)
		Establish and deliver cross-service development workshops building on the Senior Practitioner practice focus sessions (at least quarterly)	Completed Workshops are in place and led by Senior Practitioners with support from lead Managers
Improving our diversion and early intervention offer		Embed the West Mercia Prevention Offer, ensuring Turnaround Grant Funding requirements are met.	Completed Grant requirements were exceeded. 107 assessments were completed and 75 cases closed.
	8.2	Embed the internal scrutiny process for OoCD which complements the existing external scrutiny process.	Completed Quarterly audit arrangements are in place and the learnings are reported to the Leadership Team for discussion and action.
	8.3	Roll out the updated induction and training for OocD panel members to include child first/child centred policing and trauma informed approaches	Completed There is a standardised induction presentation in place which is delivered by the P&D Manager with support as required.
		Work with partners to improve the response to children who may be at risk of radicalisation (Prevent Duty)	In Progress Mandatory training has been defined and completed. The draft policy requires review and roll-out.
		Work with CPS and Police to pilot an updated OoCD process to inform CPS work on National Protocol/Guidance; ensuring the YJS response to	Completed The updated process in place including updates to CPS via centralised email address. WMYJS

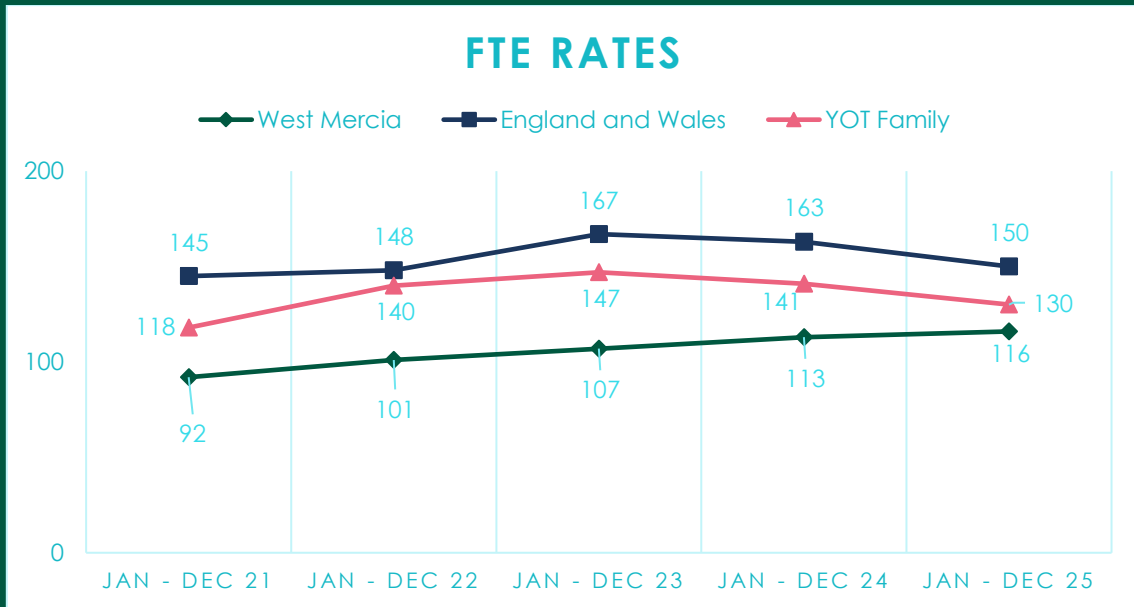
			children in court is more proactive and provides additional opportunities to maximise diversion.	are awaiting CPS updated protocol for 26/27.
			Work with strategic leaders to position the service in accordance with reforms associated with the Families First and Young Futures Prevention Partnerships agendas.	In Progress WMYJS is attending relevant strategic boards for reform agenda. There is a clear position for WMYJS across West Mercia as to how it can interface with MACPT and Prevention Offers.
	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service	7.3	Work with partners to finalise the single service specification for health resources deployed into YJS teams. Work with partners to secure appropriate health provision for all children within WMYJS.	In Progress The Task and Finish Group continue to meet; progress has been impacted by ICB restructures and clustering arrangements. Contributions from Health and Justice (MFPHT) are to be explored.
	Improving our work with other agencies		Probation: Finalise the revised transition arrangements into case management. (18 year old cohort).	Not Started This action needs to be reframed to align with T2A Funding to evidence specialist roles.
		9.1	Housing: Review of housing policies/protocols for vulnerable children in each area to ensure they identify and prioritise children coming out of custody	Not Started This action was incorrectly assigned to Housing and relates to work with Children's Services around release from custody. This is now in place.
			Police: Work with Police, Children's Services and partners to develop the West Mercia response to the Bail and Remand Concordat	Not Started
			Children's Services: Continue to Work with Children's Services to align information sharing and recording to improve the interconnectedness of plans for children supported by WMYJS and Children's Social Care.	Completed WMYJS have access to Children's Services case management systems for timely information sharing.
			Education: 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.	In Progress Based upon 25/26 data reporting this action needs to be reframed and prioritised for 26/27.
			Third Sector: Increase awareness of the work of the YJS with third sector partners and improve relationships with local providers.	Completed Partnership working with third sector partners occurs on a localised level. Strategic relationships exist with YSS, Catch 22 and Children's Society.
	Addressing disparities in service provision and commissioned services between areas		Work with partners to create a directory of projects, activities and services available for children and victims; including awareness of third sector organisations working in local communities.	In Progress Draft completed; this requires publishing and feedback from children in relation to content and layout.
			Complete a Needs Analysis of Victims working with WMYJS using the same methodology as the Needs Analysis for children.	Not Started Awaiting VLO recruitment to enable more staff to complete more Victim Safety Needs Assessments to draw data for analysis.
			Work with the OPCC Treasurer to ensure the staffing structure of the service reflects the profile and needs of children and victims.	Completed Management of Change Process complete and budget set in accordance with multi-year settlement.
PARTNERSHIP	Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty across West Mercia		Use the area-wide and local Serious Violence needs assessments to shape internal practice and delivery of a localised response.	Completed Delivered VR Headset Intervention and completed evaluation of this. Remain key partner in delivery.
			Implement the learnings and recommendations from the serious violence MACFA.	Completed Actions relevant to WMYJS have been implemented. WMYJS

				continues to work with partners in broader learning.
			Work with partners to update our response to children who display sexually harmful behaviours, including work with Police around MAPPA eligible children.	In Progress HSB Training part of mandatory training. Supervision of HSB Practice delivered to Managers. Early YJS attendance at strategy meetings. Update required for Policy and Procedure to align with Working Together and MACPT.
GOVERNANCE / LEADERSHIP	Ensuring management oversight of practice and leadership of service development		Embed in-time data reporting using metabase to more efficiently further improve management oversight of practice.	Completed Metabase has been built and training delivered. Tool being used by Head of Service and Managers.
			Establish quarterly performance meetings which triangulates performance reporting with the voice of children and victims to further inform service development.	Completed Quarterly meetings established.
			Develop the strategic vision for the service including a longer-term strategic plan which is financially viable.	Not Started

Annexure 6: Our Key Performance Indicators

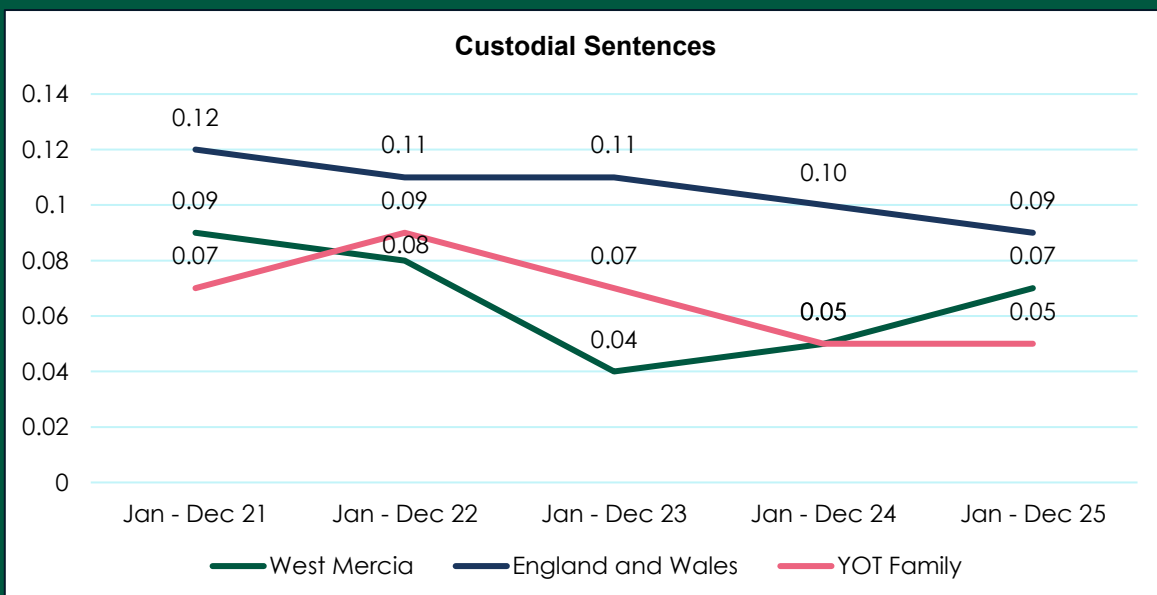
Key Performance Indicators: How well is the system working for children in West Mercia?

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



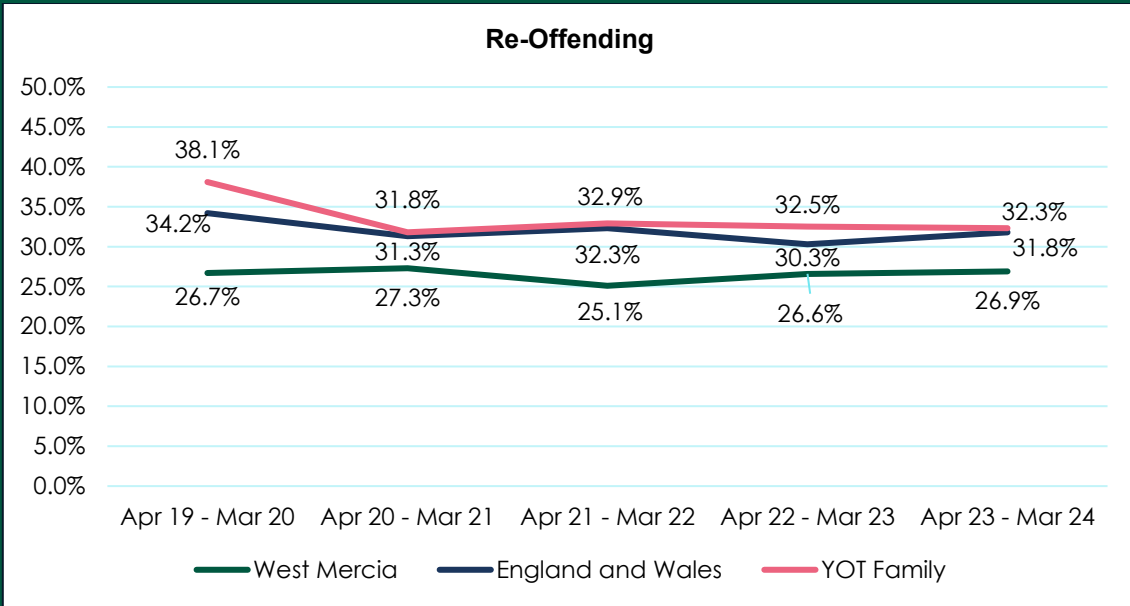
The rate of children entering the criminal justice system within West Mercia is below the England and Wales and YOT Family average. The rate has increased from the previous year.

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



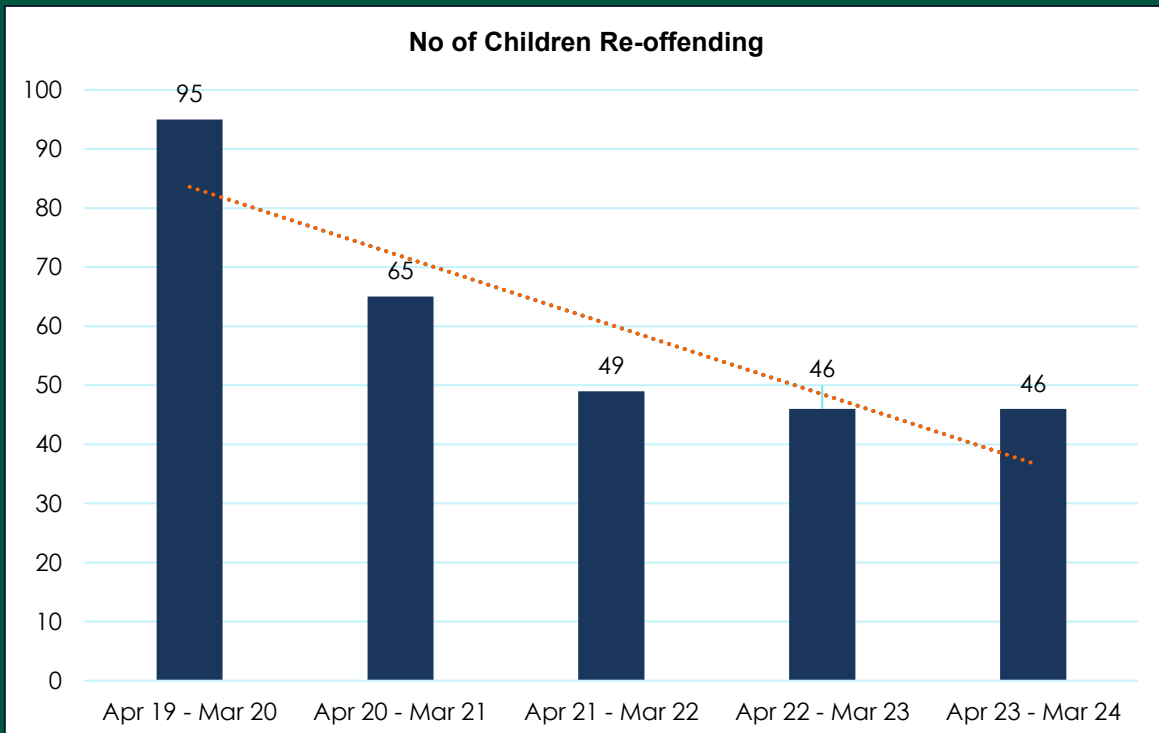
The rate of children in custody in West Mercia is below the England and Wales rate, but above the YOT Family

Proportion of children in West Mercia who are re-offending



The proportion of children reoffending in West Mercia is 26.9%. This is below the YOT Family and the England and Wales rates

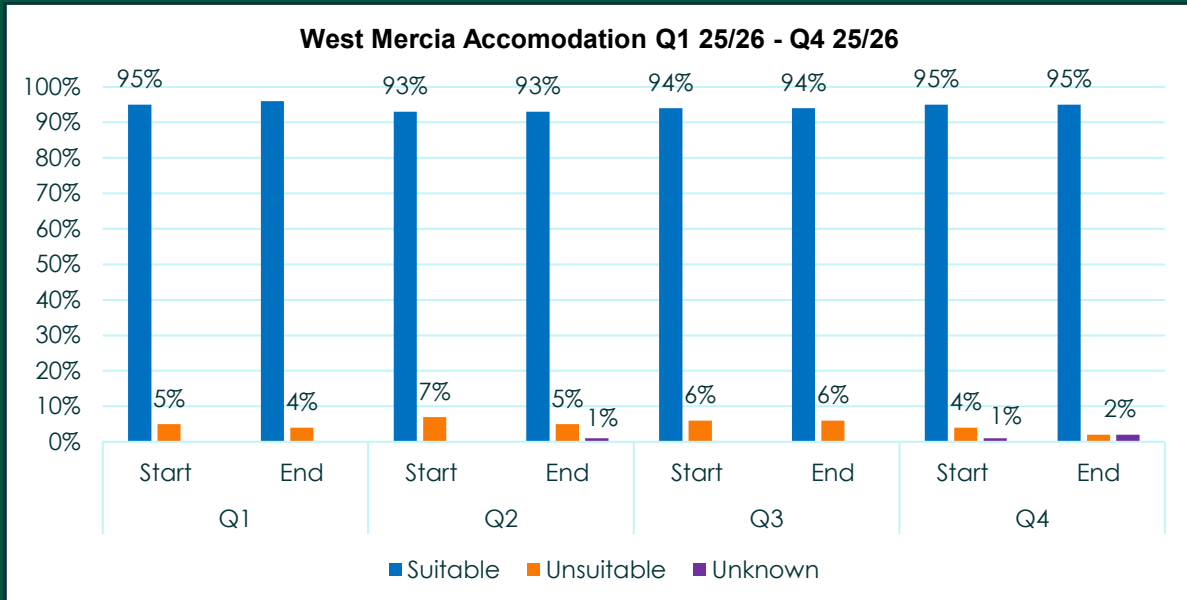
Long Term Trends in the Number of Children Re-Offending



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.

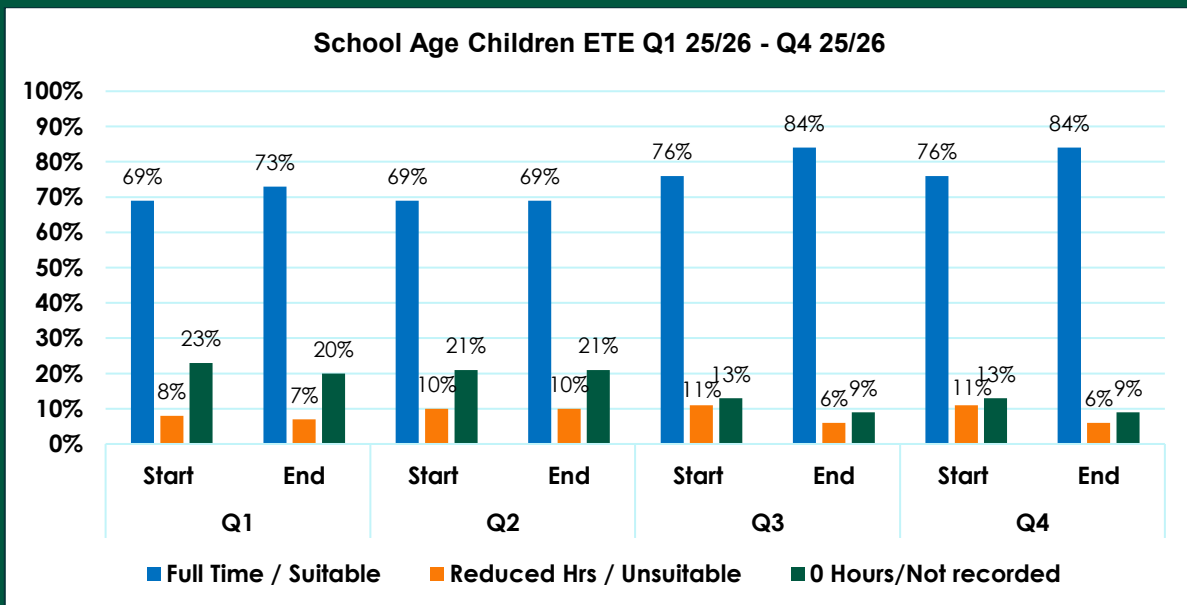
Key Performance Indicators: What are the needs of children the service has worked with? To what extent have these been met?

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

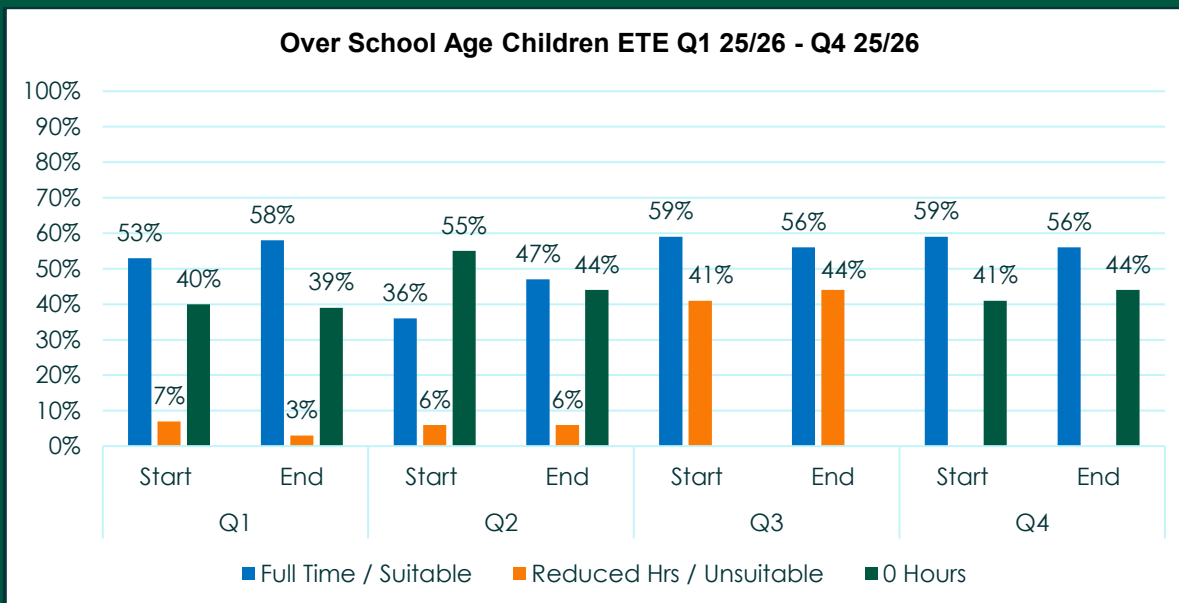


in West Mercia most children have access to safe and suitable accommodation.

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

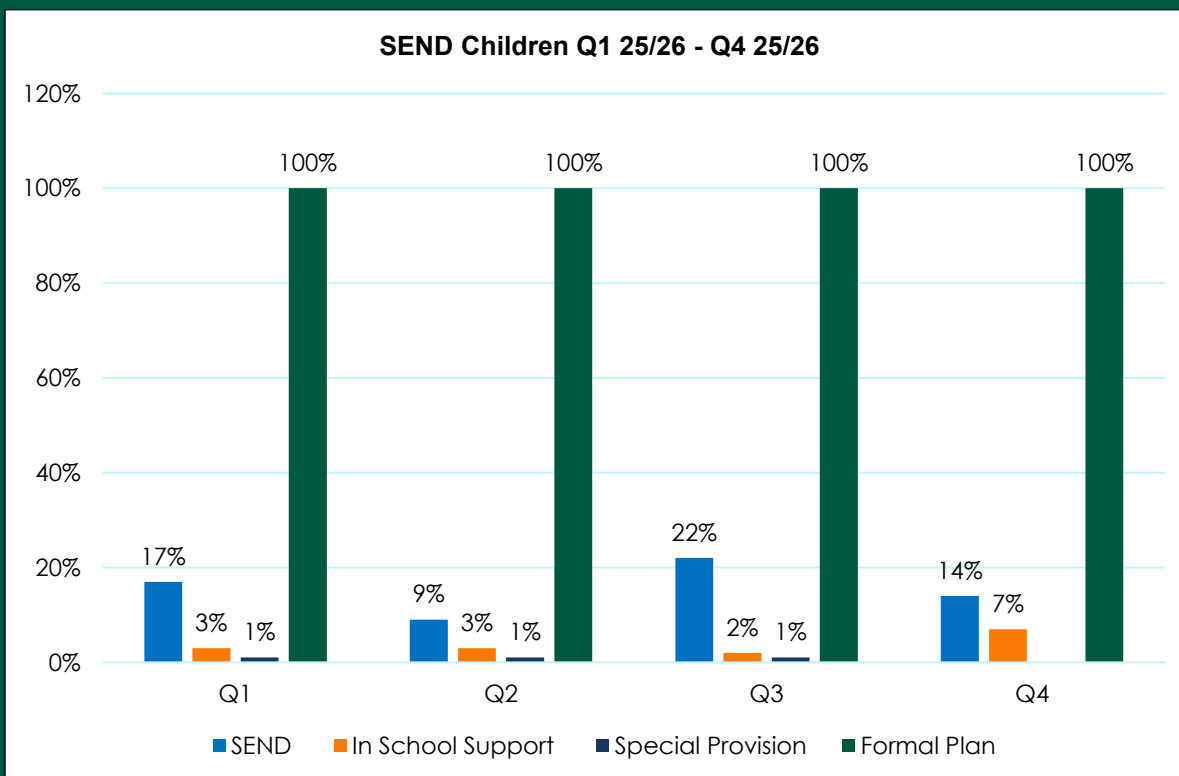


Most school-aged children within West Mercia were engaged in suitable education, training or employment (ETE) provision at the end of their intervention. More children were in suitable education after they had finished working with WMYJS.



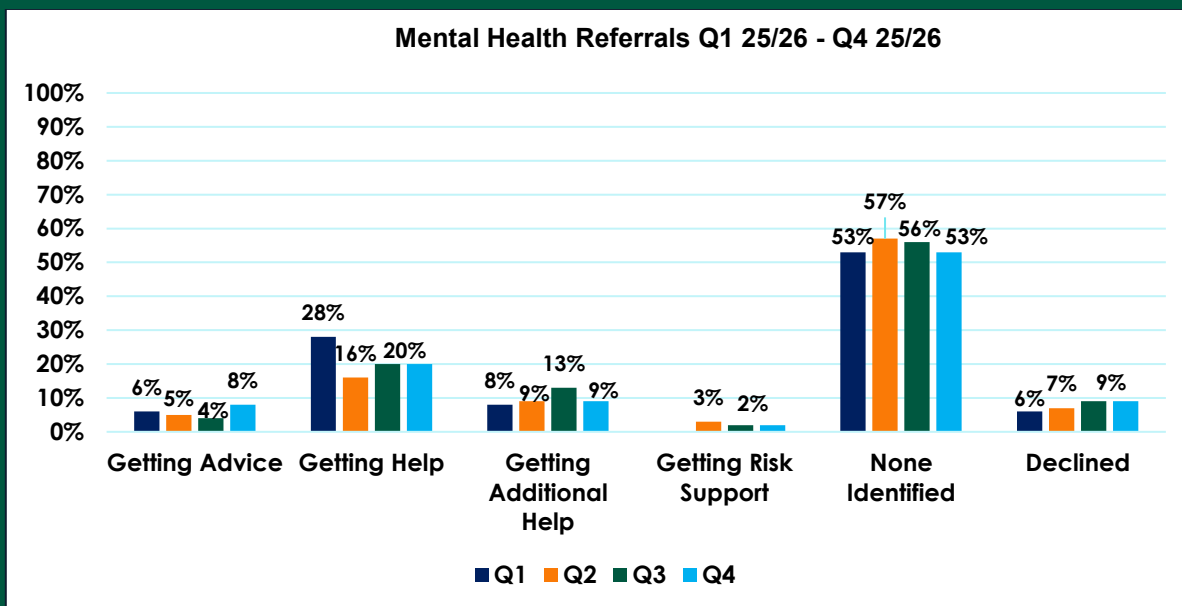
Around 40% of children above school-age were not in suitable education, training or employment. This is a slight increase from 25/26.

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].



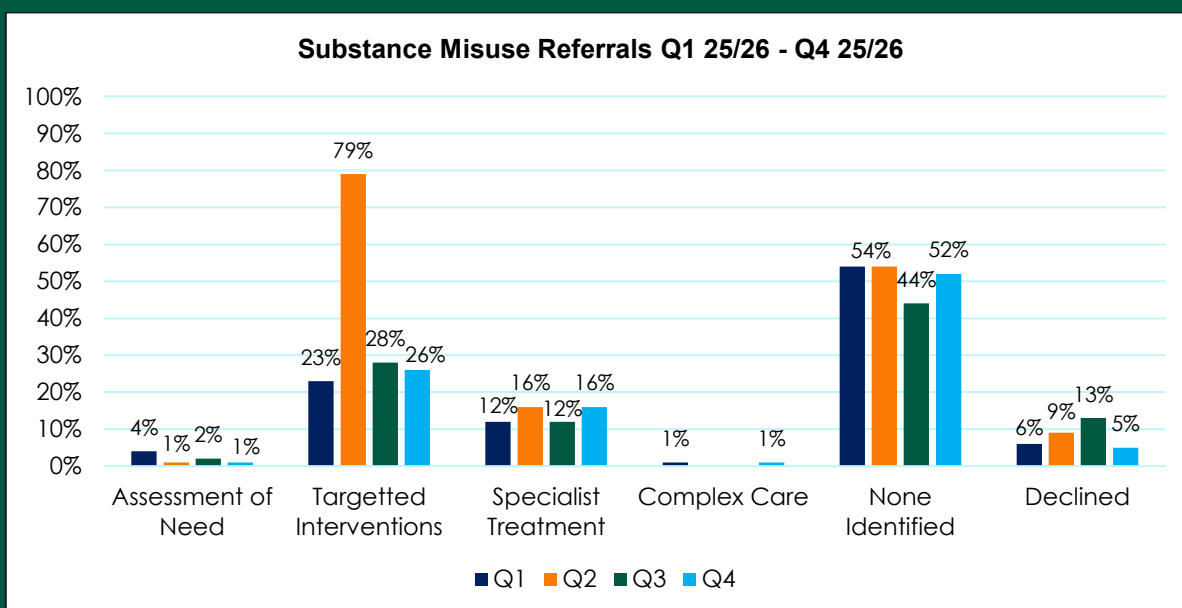
Around 16% of children working with WMYJS have an identified Special Educational Need or Disability; all these children have a formal plan in place.

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



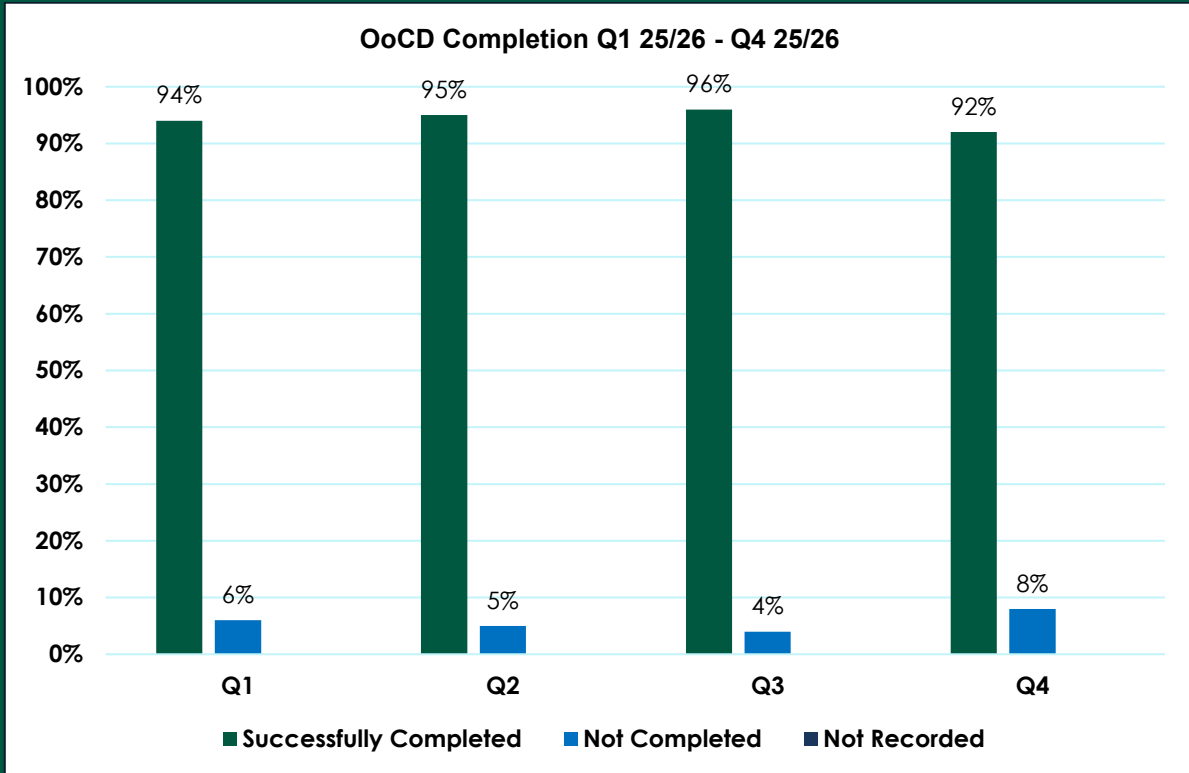
Children's mental health and emotional wellbeing needs are being screened more consistently. This has resulted in some children receiving risk support and others declining support.

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.



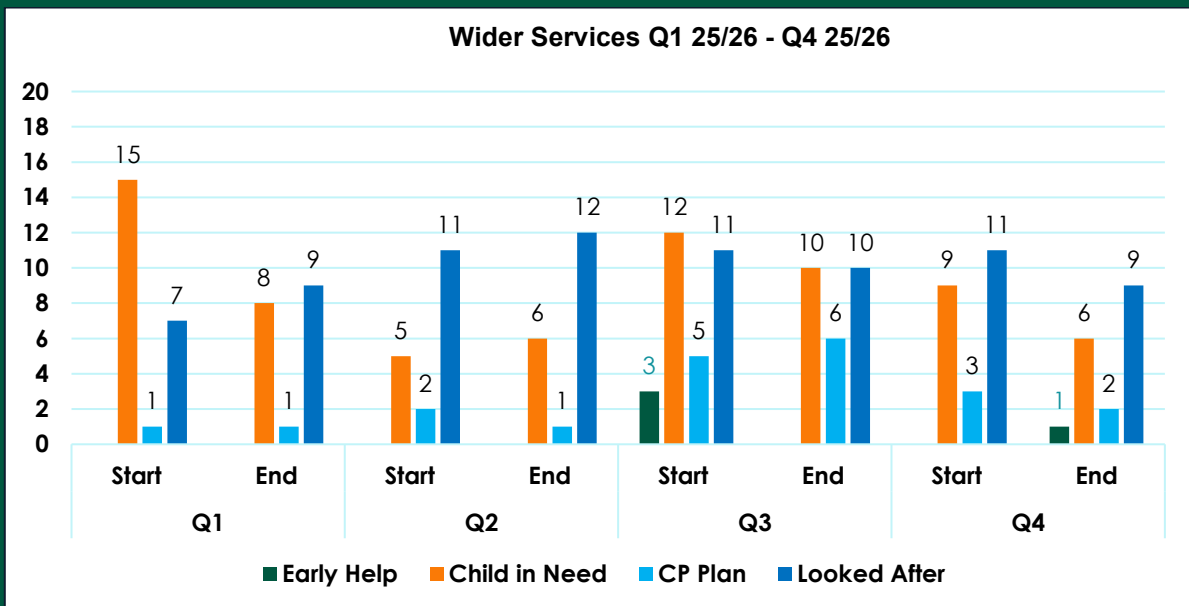
More children are getting support for their substance misuse. There has been an increase in children receiving targeted interventions, specialist treatment and complex care.

Out of Court Disposals: Children completing diversionary interventions with WMYJS



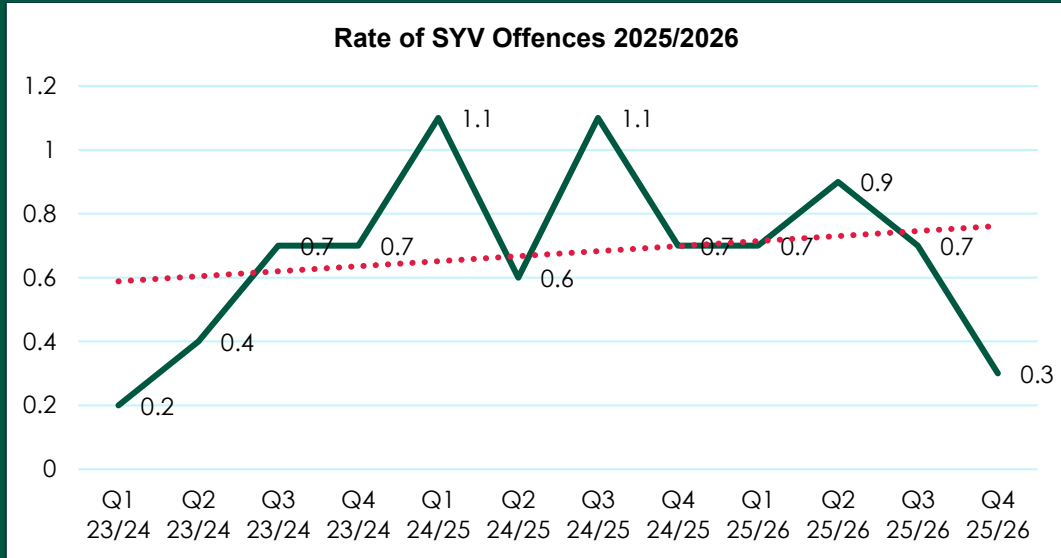
Most children in West Mercia successfully completed their diversionary interventions with WMYJS.

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



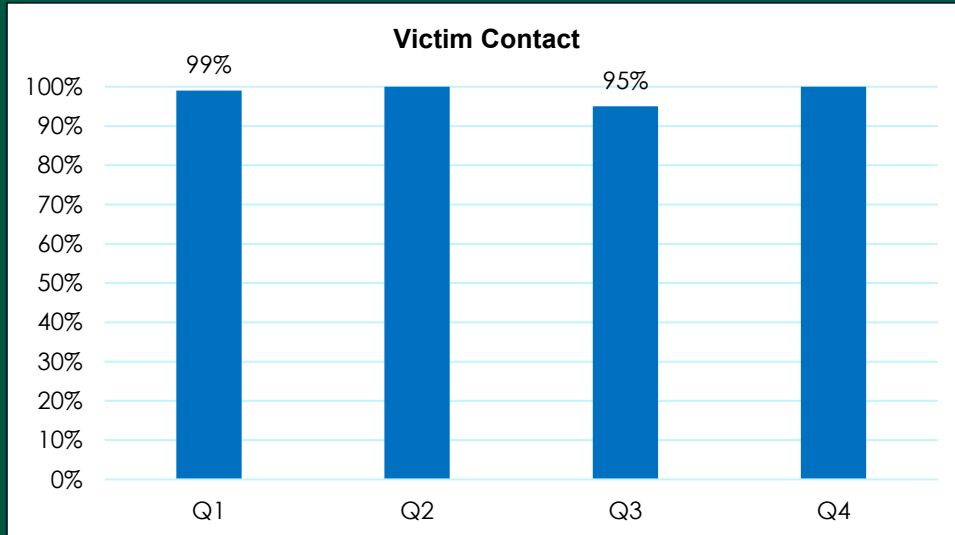
Children remain connected to wider services at the end of their intervention with WMYJS

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



There were 32 serious violence offences in 25/26; this is a reduction from 44 in 24/25. Serious violence rates have fluctuated in the year, with a marginal increase since 2022.

Victims: The number of Victims Contacted by WMYJS



On average, nearly all victims (98.5%) who gave consent to be contacted by West Mercia Youth Justice Service were contacted by the service.

Annexure 7: Our 26/27 Priorities on a Page

“By creating opportunities for a brighter future, we create safer communities with fewer victims”



Opportunities for a brighter future are created by **Child-First, People, Practice and Partnerships**

CHILDFIRST	LEADERSHIP	PEOPLE	PRACTICE	PARTNERSHIP
Championing Child-First	Positioning ourselves for the future	Supporting staff and volunteer development, wellbeing and morale Understanding and addressing disproportionality	Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction Ensuring practice is consistent across the service Strengthening our prevention and diversion and offer	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service Strengthening our work with other agencies Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty

The impact of this is evidenced by **MORE**

- ↑ Prevention and Diversion
- ↑ Restorative Outcomes
- ↑ Education, Training and Employment
- ↑ Support for Substance Use and Emotional Health
- ↑ Connection to Wider Services

This results in **safer communities with fewer victims** which is measured by **LESS**

- ↓ First Time Entrants
- ↓ Reoffending
- ↓ Serious Violence

Annexure 8: Our 26/27 Plan on a Page

THEME	PRIORITY	INSPECTION ACTION	ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURES
CHILD FIRST	Championing Child-First		Work with children and victims to create a directory of projects, activities and services.	Audits evidence voice of the child
			Work with children and parents to update the service feedback procedure, including responding to Compliments and Complaints with links to Victims Right to Review.	Children's Feedback informs service development.
			Develop a service-wide collaboration strategy incorporating recommendations from the Child First Collaboration Research Report.	Evidence of You Said, We Did Feedback and Implementation
LEADERSHIP	Positioning ourselves for the future		Continue to work with strategic leaders to position the service in accordance with reforms associated with the Youth Justice White Paper ' Cutting youth crime, changing young lives: The youth justice reform and delivery plan ' and the Families First and Young Futures Prevention Partnerships agendas.	Reduction in FTE Reduction in reoffending Reduction in custodial remands
			Work with regional partners to develop local and scale credible community-based alternatives to custodial remand for children, where risks can be safely managed in the community.	Proportion of annual plan and inspection improvement plan tasks completed within timescale
			Develop the strategic vision for the service including a longer-term strategic plan which is financially viable.	
PEOPLE	Supporting staff and volunteer development, wellbeing and morale		Work with staff and partners to update the WMYJS Induction Policy and Procedure, including links to lone working, mandatory training and role specific guidance for seconded staff (Police and Probation).	Proportion of appraisals completed and % of staff making progress % Positive Feedback from staff following training Annual Staff survey results
			Update the Personal Development Planning Template, Policy and Procedure. Ensure completion aligns with Police myMAX cycles. Use identified developmental needs to enhance the service training and development plan.	
	Understanding and addressing disproportionality		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
			Work alongside Willowdene and justice-involved women and girls to improve youth justice service provision for girls.	
PRACTICE	Ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance	3.1	Update service policies and procedures in accordance with Working Together 2026 and the Victims Bill 2026; reflecting Child-first principles and evidence-based practice. Work with Police and partners to ensure responses to knife offences aligns with Home Office Government guidance for child knife possession offences including implementation of Deferred Prosecution (O23).	Audits evidence greater consistency in decision making across the service West Mercia Knife Crime Data Set Increase in Diversion Outcomes
		4.2		
	Strengthening our restorative offer and victim satisfaction		Upskill all Practitioners to improve their confidence and ability to deliver restorative approaches across all work with children and victims. Work with children and victims to more closely match reparation placements with children's interests and victim's needs.	Service user feedback shows improved victim satisfaction Increase in Restorative Justice Outcomes
			Work with RJ4All and partners in the Phase 2: Delivery and Evaluation of the Restorative Justice the Evidence: A pilot for the youth justice system of England and Wales . Complete a Needs Analysis of Victims working with WMYJS using the same methodology as the Needs Analysis for children.	Reduction in FTE Reduction in reoffending

	Ensuring practice is consistent across the service	1.2 2.1	Implement the simplified Quality Assurance Framework.	% of children with Management Oversight on file Audits evidence greater consistency in decision making across the service Increase in Diversion Outcomes
		3.1 3.3	Update assessment, planning and risk guidance to ensure assessment and plans are future focussed and consider how to keep the child, victim and community safe including work with Police around the role of Offender Managers.	
			Work with Police to implement a Triage Decision-Making Process to enable joint decision making at the earliest opportunity.	
			Work cross-service to standardise the work undertaken by ETE Officers.	
	Strengthening our prevention and diversion and offer		Work with partners to improve the response to children who may be at risk of radicalisation (Prevent Duty)	Increase in Prevention Outcomes Increase in Diversion Outcomes Reduction in FTE
			Work with Police and the Courts to maximise diversion outcomes for Traffic Offences to include an increase in the number of children accessing MORSE Youth.	
		Work with Police to increase the number of children accessing the "No Comment Pathway"		
		Work with Police and JDMP members to implement Deferred Prosecution (Outcome 23)		
PARTNERSHIP	Improving the health offer in the youth justice service	7.3	Work with partners to finalise the single service specification for health resources deployed into YJS teams. Work with partners to secure appropriate health provision for all children within WMYJS	Increase in support for substance use, emotional health and SEN
			Work with Health and Justice Colleagues (MPFHT) to maximise opportunities for joint working to better understand the health needs of children in the YJS.	
	Strengthening our work with other agencies		Probation: Develop our Transition to Adulthood offer including delivery of the "Next Steps" Programme, utilising allocated resources from Probation.	Increase in number of children accessing T2A support
			Children's Services: Ensure placements are prioritised for children coming out of custody Education: 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.	Increase in children in Education, Training and Employment Increase in number of children connected to Wider Services
			Skill Mill: Work with Skill Mill, Coram and Bridges Outcome Partnership to secure employment opportunities for children.	
	Supporting delivery of the Serious Violence Duty		Work with Police to deliver a Focused Deterrence pilot in accordance with YEF and Home Office Guidance; ensuring Home Office Serious Violence Duty grant requirements are met.	Reduction in Serious Violence Offences committed by children
			Work with partners to update our response to children who display sexually harmful behaviours, including work with Police around MAPPA eligible children.	Home Office SV Duty Grant Fund Requirements are met

Annexure 9: Our Prevention Offer

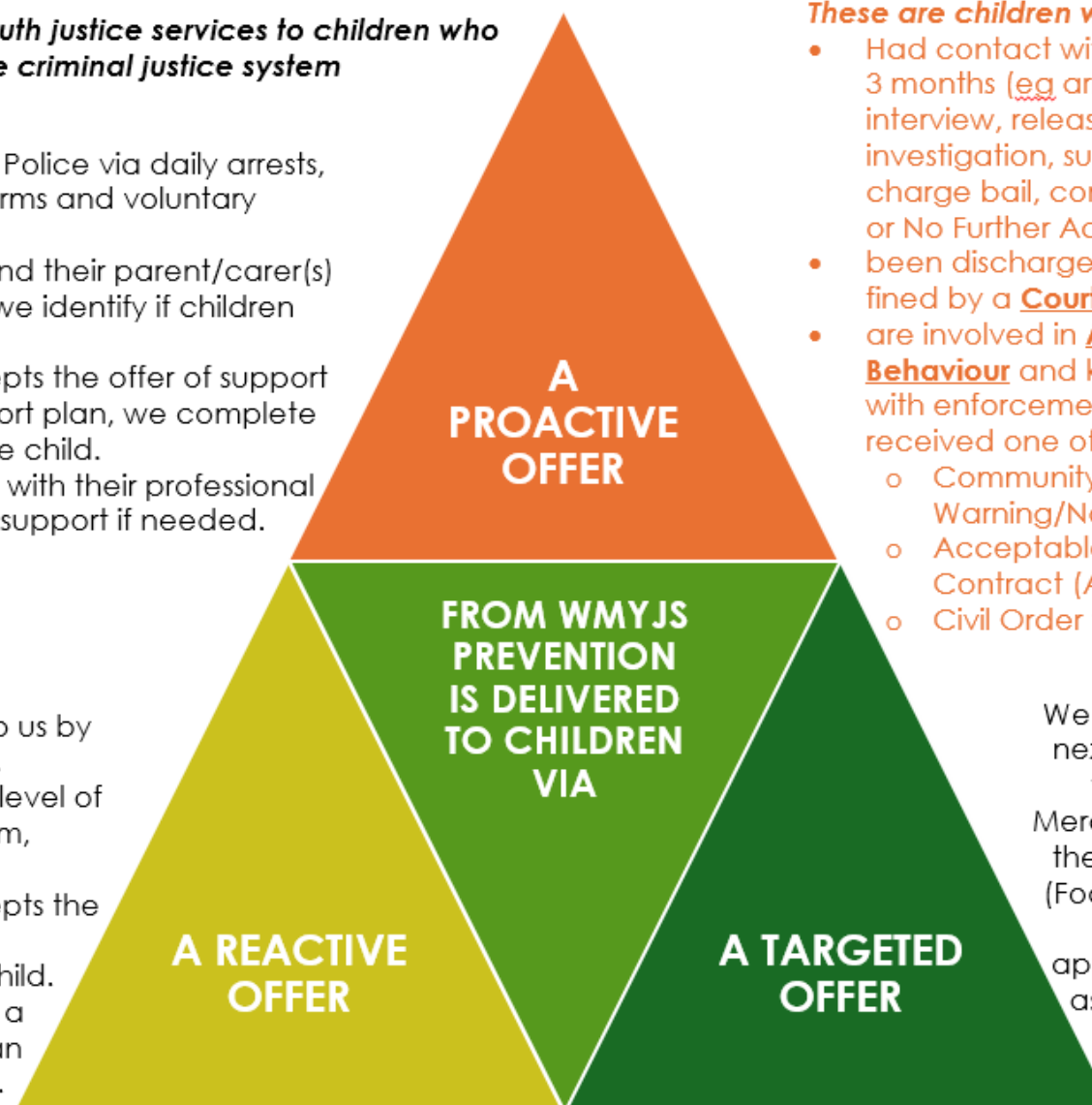
In West Mercia, we deliver preventative youth justice services to children who have had some contact with the criminal justice system

PROACTIVE OFFER

- We receive automated referrals from Police via daily arrests, custody checks, Appropriate Adult forms and voluntary interview data.
- We proactively contact all children and their parent/carer(s) to offer them support. As part of this, we identify if children are already receiving support.
- If a child and their parent/carer accepts the offer of support and they do not have a current support plan, we complete an assessment, plan and work with the child.
- If a child already has a plan, we work with their professional network to offer any complementary support if needed.

REACTIVE OFFER

- Children are identified and referred to us by someone in their connected network.
- We identify if the child has had some level of contact with the criminal justice system, and, if so, we offer them support.
- If a child and their parent/carer accepts the offer of support we complete an assessment, plan and work with the child.
- Sometimes, we might be asked to do a specific piece of work as part of a plan which is already in place for the child.



These are children who have

- Had contact with **Police** in the last 3 months (eg arrest, voluntary interview, released under investigation, subject to pre-charge bail, community resolution, or No Further Action); or
- been discharged, or acquitted or fined by a **Court**; or
- are involved in **Anti-Social Behaviour** and known to agencies with enforcement powers or have received one of the following
 - Community Protection Warning/Notice (CPW/N)
 - Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)
 - Civil Order for ASB

TARGETED OFFER

We know that over the next 12 months we will work with with West Mercia Police to deliver the DETER Programme (Focussed Deterrence) pilot. We will apply similar principles as our proactive and reactive offers