

Youth Justice Services

Cheshire East, Cheshire West,
Halton and Warrington

Strategic plan 2024-27



Head of Service: Tom Dooks

Chair of the Management Board: Helen Brackenbury

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Abbreviations | 2 |
| Foreword | 3 |
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Vision | 6 |
| Regional and local context | 7 |
| Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements | 10 |
| Board membership and leadership | 11 |
| 1. Update on 2023-2024 | 14 |
| 1.1 Progress on priorities in previous plan | 14 |
| 2. Performance over the previous year | 18 |
| 2.1 National Standards Audit | 21 |
| 3. Risks and issues | 22 |
| 4. Building on our strengths: Plan for 2024-2025 | 24 |
| 4.1 Child First | 24 |
| 5. Resources and services | 27 |
| 6. Board development | 27 |
| 7. Workforce development | 28 |
| 8. Evidence-based practice and innovation | 30 |
| 9. Evaluation | 33 |
| 10. Priorities for the coming year | 34 |
| 10.1 Standards for children | 35 |
| 10.2 New performance framework | 35 |
| 10.3 Service development | 36 |
| 11. National priority areas | 38 |
| 11.1 Children from groups which are over-represented | 38 |
| 11.2 Policing | 41 |
| 11.3 Prevention | 41 |
| 11.4 Diversion | 42 |
| 11.5 Education | 43 |
| 11.6 Restorative approaches and victims | 44 |
| 11.7 Serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding | 45 |
| 11.8 Detention in police custody | 49 |
| 11.9 Remands | 50 |
| 11.10 Use of custody and constructive resettlement | 52 |
| 11.11 Working with families | 54 |
| Appendices | 55 |

List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| AYM | Association of Youth Offending Team Managers |
| CJB | Criminal Justice Board |
| CJS | Criminal Justice System |
| CJI | Centre for Justice Innovation |
| ETE | Education Training and Employment |
| FTE | First Time Entrant |
| GRT | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller |
| HNA | Health Needs Assessment |
| HMCTS | HM Courts and Tribunal service |
| HMIP | HM Inspectorate of Probation |
| ICB | Integrated Care Board |
| LGA | Local Government Association |
| JSNA | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment |
| JTAI | Joint Thematic Area Inspection |
| MOJ | Ministry of Justice |
| NS | National Standards |
| OCG | Organised Crime Group |
| OPCC | Office of the Police Crime Commissioner |
| PACE | Police and Criminal Evidence |
| PNC | Police National Computer |
| SVS | Serious Violence Strategy |
| SEND | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities |
| VRU | Violence Reduction Unit |
| YJAF | Youth Justice Application Framework |
| YJB | Youth Justice Board |
| YJS | Youth Justice Services (Cheshire) |

Foreword

Cheshire has some unique opportunities and challenges, being one of only two youth justice services to operate over multiple local authorities' footprints and an entire policing constabulary area. This 3-year plan sets out a journey and commitment for a service that will be "child first" and evidence-based in its principles, recognising the traumatic impact of children's offending on victims - most of whom are other vulnerable children.

The last 12 months have seen an extended transition to embed a new leadership team following the retirement of a long-standing Head of Service and some significant infrastructure changes. This plan includes a proposal to simplify the operational arrangements by moving to a new fully hosted model for the service - with Cheshire West and Chester Council becoming the lead authority on behalf of the sub-regional partnership.

The murder of Brianna Ghey by two 15-year-olds in Warrington last year was shocking for everyone both in its brutality and pre-meditation. Intense media attention surrounded the trial and sentencing but the bravery and compassion shown by Brianna's mother, Esther Ghey has been inspirational. Youth Justice Services (YJS) is contributing to an independent learning review commissioned by Warrington Children's Safeguarding Partnership due to be published in summer 2024.

While offences such as these by children are incredibly rare in Cheshire, there is an increasing complexity and seriousness to some children's behaviour. Professionals sometimes have a difficult task in building trusted relationships with children to try and help keep them and those around them safe and move forward positively in their lives. Helping some children achieve an identity shift, to desist from offending and see a brighter future is not easy. It requires empathy, compassion and persistence – characteristics we in Cheshire are proud to have in such a skilled, dedicated, multi-disciplinary workforce.

The YJS Management Board is committed to delivering this plan and will oversee its progress, ensuring an annual refresh is produced and published through local channels.

Helen Brackenbury
Chair of YJS Management Board

Executive summary

It is evident from national research and two recently commissioned local needs analyses¹, that children entering the Youth Justice System experience multiple adversities and trauma. Early childhood exposure to violence, abuse, neglect, poverty, school exclusion and poor health among justice-involved-children are all disproportionate to the general 10-17 population. This understanding has influenced the strategic direction of travel for Youth Justice Services (YJS) across Cheshire. The priorities and content included in this plan will align with those relating to children and young people from across the four Cheshire places and with the public health approach to violence prevention as articulated in the Serious Violence Strategy² for the county. There has been a significant decrease in the overall number of children entering the justice system over several years, and the historically low levels have been sustained across Cheshire despite the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis and other societal pressures. Some regions with similar reductions have witnessed an upturn in the last couple of years, so we are proud to see the sustained impact of our pan-Cheshire youth diversion model. We will work with the police to ensure national developments such as the new child gravity matrix for children is incorporated into the decision-making process for out-of-court disposals.

The previous Head of Service retired in the summer of 2023, with a long-standing Senior Manager appointed through an internal promotion. A new and very experienced Senior Manager was subsequently recruited externally and joined the service in February 2024, bringing new insight and fresh perspectives, so the right balance of continuity and change is assured. This is an exciting time for Cheshire and an opportunity to build on existing performance and partnership working, while modernising the service and embracing the latest national and international evidence on youth justice.

Some change has been forced on the service by financial inflationary pressures particularly in relation to the provision of ICT, but some of it is informed by what the latest research, evidence and data tells us about children, the offences they commit and the most effective ways of helping steer them away from crime.

This plan will outline a new “three pillars” vision for the service (Figure 1) which is rooted in the latest evidence and research on what works. But the new leadership team will also be implementing some modest service re-design intended

¹ [Public Health research institute HNA of Cheshire YJ service users July 2023](#)

² [Cheshire Serious Violence Strategy](#)

to retain the economies of scale and equity of service at a sub-regional level, while aligning more effectively with local place-based services for children, victims and caregivers.

YJS has a very good regional and national reputation for delivering positive outcomes for children, victims and caregivers and, in common with all youth justice services across England and Wales, will be reporting against 10 new key performance indicators (KPIs) in addition to the three main outcome measures First Time Entrants (FTE) to the justice system, reoffending and the use of custody.

In 2024-2025, Cheshire YJS will enter a period of substantial infrastructure and organisational change. The current shared service arrangements for youth justice delivery have evolved across the sub-region over two decades and have been through several iterations as Cheshire County Council separated into two unitary authorities and youth justice teams merged incrementally. A comprehensive review of governance arrangements undertaken in 2021, commented on the historical legacy arrangements of a service that had evolved over time with a complicated mix of cash and 'in-kind' contributions. One authority provides the ICT for YJS, another holds the accounts and all four employ the staff, and as local authorities have updated their own ICT systems and security compliance has tightened (and licensing costs increased) it has revealed a degree of organisational fragility.

Consequently, a sub-regional review into the governance arrangements, structure, and future sustainability of YJS as a pan-cheshire partnership, recommended the service should be 'fully hosted' by one local authority. This proposal was agreed by all statutory partners and formerly approved by all four councils in the spring of 2024 and will necessitate multiple workstreams to land the significant infrastructure change needed for a smooth transition by the end of this fiscal year. Cheshire's Youth Justice Plan for 2024-2027 is written against the backdrop of this major organisational change so maintaining service continuity, while in transition to a hosted model is flagged in Section 3 as the principal risk for the partnership.

Service development priorities for the next 12 months include reviewing the pathway and joint decision-making process for out of court disposals, ensuring our offer to victims is fully aligned with the new Victims' Bill, developing participation and designing a new performance management framework, which incorporates the 10 new national KPIs.

Vision

The vision for youth justice across Cheshire is:

‘To be a national leader in Youth Justice, where children and victims are at the heart of everything we do and where children are supported to achieve a positive, offence-free journey into adulthood.’

We will continue to value diversity, challenge social inequality and listen to children while developing trusted relationships that take their views into account. We understand the wider causes of offending behaviour are often rooted in trauma and social inequality, so trauma-informed practice and systemic ideas are at the heart of how we work. We will work in a restorative way and strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children. The YJS will work with partners on diverting children away from the formal Criminal Justice System (CJS) and will seek to detain a minimal number of children in custody, believing they are best supported to make changes in their lives whilst in the community, for all but the most serious of offences.

The latest research and evidence say services working with children who cause harm to others should adhere to Child First principles³ and be Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based in the way they are configured and delivered. Cheshire has taken these tenets and adopted them as our three pillars (Figure 1) to inform the Youth Justice strategy from point of arrest, right through to the resettlement of children following release from custody.

Mission

Supporting children, young people and parents and carers to make positive changes through working collaboratively;

- Promoting safer communities and reducing the likelihood of reoffending and harm caused – by tackling the root causes of children’s offending.
- Listening and responding to the voice of the victim and empowering them to become involved.
- Connecting with children, helping them to understand the impact of their behaviour and achieve improved outcomes.

³ Child First recognises that children have different needs and vulnerabilities to adults and should not be treated in the same way

Regional and local context

The Cheshire footprint covered by YJS comprises the four unitary local authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington (Figure 2). Each local authority area has a Children's Safeguarding and Community Safety Partnership and Cheshire is divided into three Probation delivery units (North, West and East) and has nine local policing units. The workforce of Cheshire YJS has staff employed by Warrington, Cheshire West and Cheshire East Councils and seconded workers from Halton Borough Council, Cheshire Constabulary, the Probation Service, three different NHS Trusts and two private providers. The service also has support in a variety of different roles from over 50 volunteers. This provides a strong partnership base to meet the various complexities and challenges faced by the county's children, caregivers and victims. An organisational structure chart of staff is shown in Appendix A along with ethnicity and gender and whole time equivalent and contract details (Appendix B).

Around 250,000 Cheshire residents are below the age of 18 with 101,077 aged 10-17. Across the four local authorities, there are over 1,000 cared for children. The large geographical area of 905 square miles does present some logistical challenges for the service, which has offices in Crewe, Winsford and Widnes. Staff work on a hybrid basis with additional virtual working areas in Macclesfield, Warrington, Chester, Runcorn, and Ellesmere Port. The children we work with tend to live in these larger more urban locations.

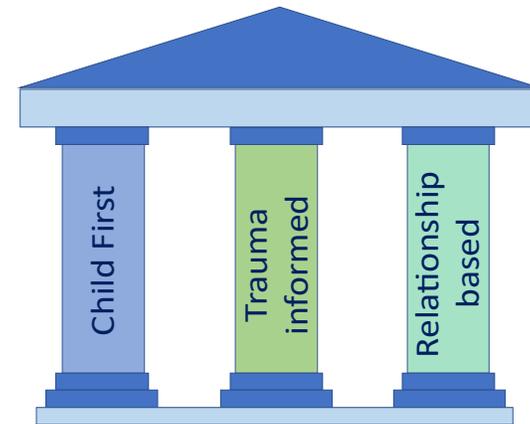


Figure 1. Cheshire YJS Three Pillars Strategic Vision

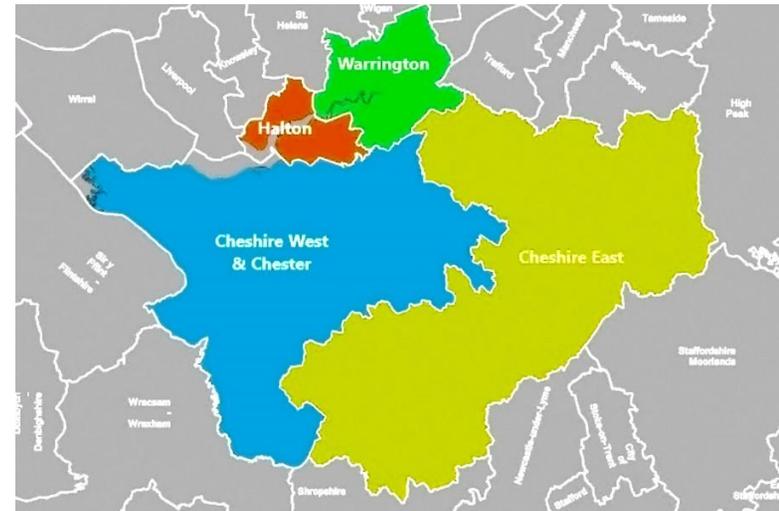


Figure 2. Cheshire and surrounding local authorities

Cheshire can be viewed as an affluent and rural county with pockets of urban deprivation. There is a marked difference in terms of local authority ranking of socio-economic indices and out of 317, Halton is ranked 23, Cheshire West 175, Warrington 183, and Cheshire East 228. Halton also has eight 'Left Behind' neighbourhoods with Cheshire East and Warrington having one each. Although highly diverse in terms of age, the county is not as diverse compared to other areas of England, with around 95% of residents identifying as 'White British'. The Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) community also has a presence in some areas. The region shares borders with 15 other local authority areas (Figure 2) and has excellent road and rail links to the three closest cities of Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham. Although these provide improved economic and lifestyle experiences, they also enable organised criminal activity such as County Lines and other forms of child exploitation. Cheshire Police have implemented a model for tackling County Lines and although the number fluctuates throughout the year, the average number identified has become more consistent, reducing from 44 in 2022-2023 to 38 in 2024 (range 32-63 and 22-68 respectively).

The place-based graphics presented in figure 3 show contextual demographic data provided by local authorities, Public Health England and from the internal YJS case management system. The information is presented for context only and comparisons between areas should be treated with caution because the data is not exactly like for like. The number of '*children with harmful sexual behaviour*' refers to the number of children resident in that local authority area who received specialist Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) assessment and intervention from YJS following a conviction or out of court disposal for a sexual offence.

The volume of children in the justice system fluctuates between local authority areas but is broadly what would be expected based on population size relative to social deprivation. Cheshire East and Cheshire West have the largest populations and Halton the smallest, but levels of social deprivation are significantly higher in Halton. Local authority contributions to the service are made according to a percentage funding formula, calculated following a comprehensive zero-based review exercise into service demand and activity.

Youth Justice Services Plan 2024-2027

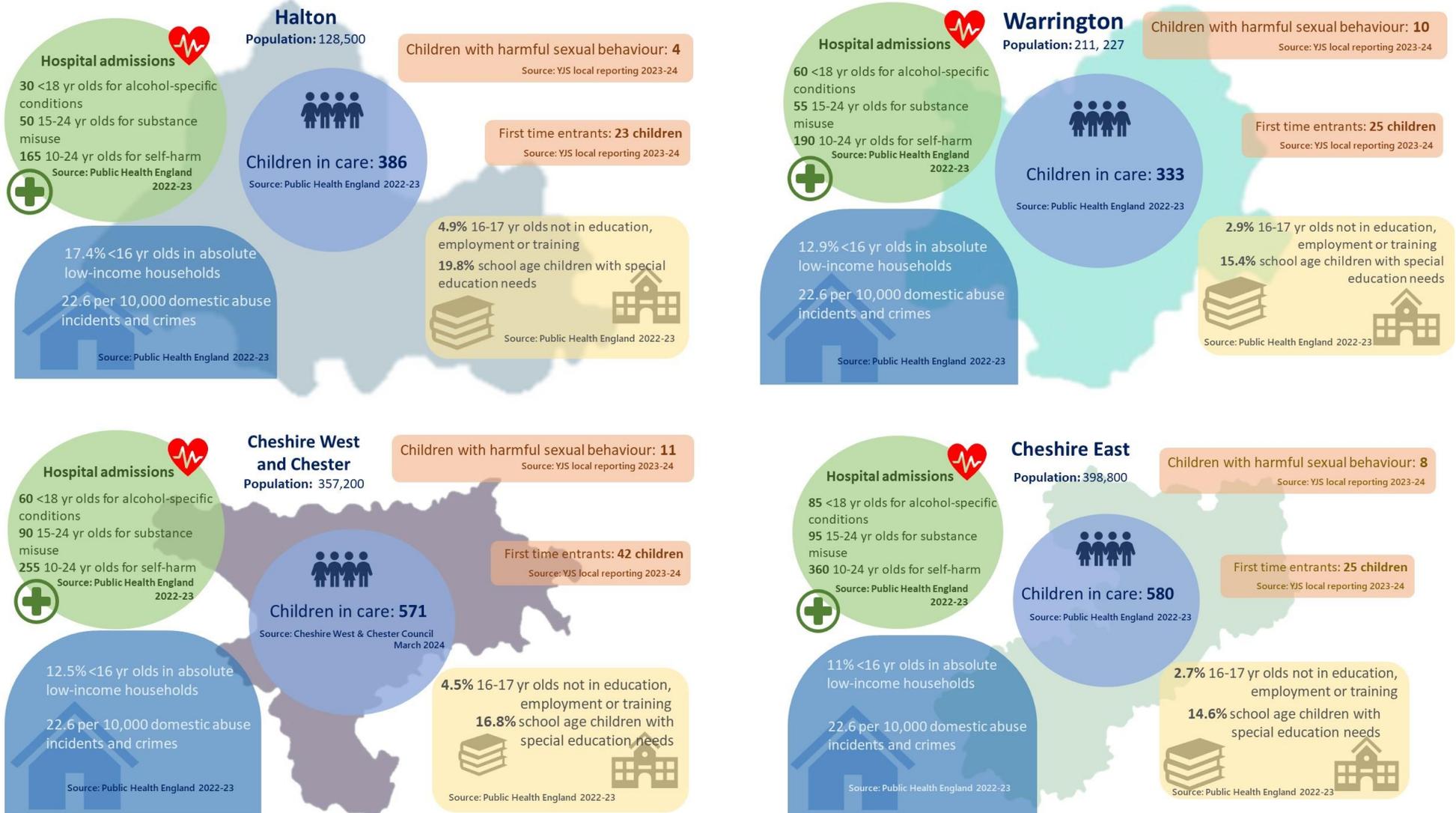
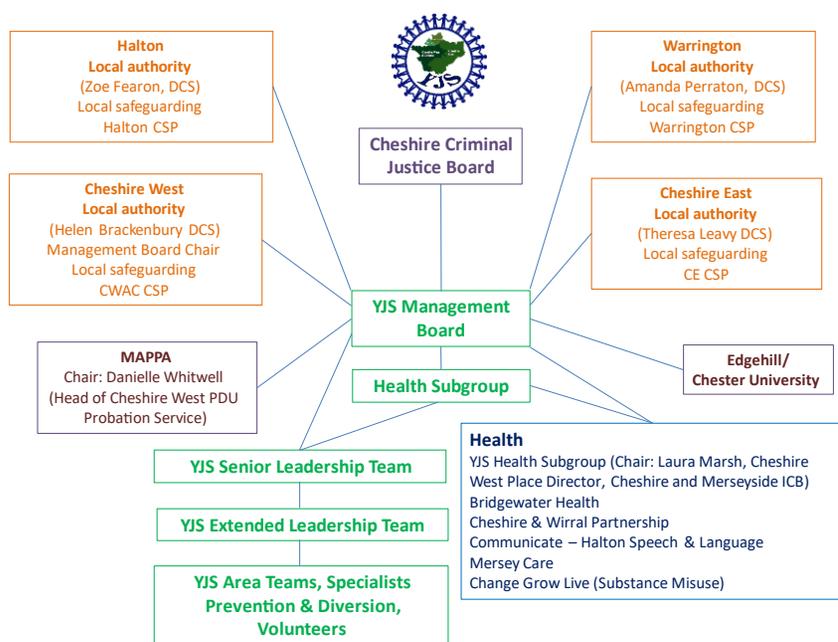


Figure 3. Figure place-based demographics for Halton, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East



DCS Director of Children’s Services. CSP Children’s Safeguarding Partnership, PDU Probation Delivery Unit, ICB Integrated Care Board

Figure 4. Sub-regional Youth Justice System Strategic Partnership

Cheshire YJS is also a core member of the four Children Safeguarding Partnerships, the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and well linked to the Cheshire Integrated Offender Management model. These links have been enhanced by the adoption of a more youth justice-focussed role for the police officers, as recommended by the last HMIP inspection of Cheshire. YJS now has three police officers fully seconded and embedded within the service. A review will take place in 2024-2025, in partnership with Cheshire Constabulary to ensure the role of our seconded officers is in line with recently revised national guidance.

Cheshire does not have a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) so as a sub-region, it does lack some of the investment, infrastructure and collaborative commissioning at scale brought by a VRU to urban metropolitan areas. Cheshire YJS

Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

A strength of Cheshire YJS is the strategic and professional links it has with colleagues at a sub-regional level in the public, private, academic, and voluntary sectors (Figure 4). The YJS Head of Service is a core member of both the pan-Cheshire Criminal Justice Board (CJB) and Serious Violence Duty Partnership Board with senior youth justice management representation at the other CJB sub-groups (Reducing Reoffending, Disproportionality and Victims).

YJS is well placed to influence strategy and decisions at scale despite working in a complex governance landscape comprising four children’s safeguarding partnerships, four community safety partnerships and a plethora of other place-based and subregional strategic groups, where Cheshire YJS has a duty (or need) to cooperate.

is an example of how strong governance and leadership can oversee the delivery of an effective multi-agency / multi-disciplinary service across local authority boundaries. However, the intention to move to a single local authority hosted model reflects the need to simplify the operating environment, solve some of the organisational challenges and improve efficiency, enabling the YJS, to focus more time on delivering a quality service.

Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Exploitation often feature in the lives of justice-involved children and these are the priority thematic areas for all four safeguarding children partnerships. This plan specifically refers to the youth justice system but the strategic vision to improve outcomes for children, victims and communities across Cheshire is shared by the wider pan-Cheshire partnership. Timelines for approval at full council are complicated given the sub-regional arrangement. However, there is commitment from the four Directors of Children's Services to take this Youth Justice Plan (with an annual update) through their respective council governance channels.

Board membership and leadership

The Management Board Chair usually rotates every 2 years, across the four local authorities. Cheshire West and Chester Council's Director of Children's Services took over from Halton in 2022 and was due to handover the chairing to Warrington in April 2024. However, the Chair agreed to stay on to lead the Transitions Board overseeing the multiple project workstreams necessary to transition YJS to Cheshire West and Chester Council as a hosted service.

Board membership is fully constituted with membership at a sufficiently senior level from all statutory partners, supplemented by other key members including a leading academic advisor, an independent safeguarding advisor and a magistrate. Job descriptions and induction processes are in place for new Board members but the over-arching legal partnership agreement, which constitutes the service as a sub-regional arrangement, is due for review and will form one workstream of the Board overseeing transition to the hosted model. The Youth Justice partnership (Board) will utilise the children's committee of Cheshire and Mersey Integrated Care Board (ICB) to highlight service achievements and risks. The Director of Children's Services in Warrington bridges the Youth Justice Management Board and the children's committee of the ICB. Notwithstanding the financial pressures on the ICB, we will be signaling that cash contributions from health to YJS across Cheshire have not increased in line with inflation for several years, so a new funding formula to ensure equitable flow from Cheshire and Merseyside ICB to Place is required.

The YJS Management Health Sub-Group was established as the only explicitly sub-group of the Board because of the complexity of Health commissioning and provider arrangements across the sub-region. The Chair of the Health Sub-Group also acts as Management Board representative for health, while also ensuring connectivity to Place Directors and Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

The subgroup commissioned the Public Health Research Institute at Liverpool John Moores University to undertake a comprehensive Health Needs Analysis (HNA). Published in 2023⁴, the HNA was based on in-depth analysis of 70% of the children Cheshire YJS worked with in 2022. To date, it is one of the most comprehensive and statistically valid studies into the presenting health needs (sometimes undiagnosed, and frequently unmet) of children in/on cusp of the justice system anywhere in the UK. In early 2024, the terms of reference of the health subgroup were reviewed and with the help of public health representation, the group will pivot towards informing the commissioning of services further upstream (at the place level). Since 2017, the Chair of the Health Sub-group has been a long-standing former Chief Clinical Officer and in June 2024, he will hand over this role to the Cheshire West and Chester Director of Place.

Given the multi-authority constitution elected members are not on the Youth Justice Management Board, but to raise their awareness of the service, we held a bespoke open day for them in February 2024. This was an opportunity for elected members to learn more about the child first, trauma-informed and relational way our staff, from different professional disciplines, work together across authorities to support children, caregivers and victims. The event was very positively received by elected members, and YJS staff also welcomed the opportunity to share real examples of how they make a positive difference to the lives of some of the county's most vulnerable people.

This 3-year strategic plan (and subsequent annual updates) will progress through formal local channels for scrutiny, oversight and formal sign off by all four councils in accordance with the legislative requirement after it has been approved by the sub-regional management board. This process will remain in place even after the service has transitioned to a fully

⁴ [Cheshire Youth Justice Services Health Needs Assessment Summary July 2023](#)

hosted model because each authority will retain the statutory requirement for provision, scrutiny and oversight of youth justice delivery in their area.

Under a new senior leadership team in 2024-2025, YJS has undertaken some re-design to mirror the area delivery units of policing and probation and to align more effectively with place-based services for children, caregivers and victims (see Section 10.3 Service Development).

1. Update on 2023-2024

1.1 Progress on priorities in previous plan

| Priority 2023-2024 | Progress, what have the outcomes/outputs been? |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Ensure transitional arrangements are in place following change of Head of Service in summer 2023</p> | <p>The long-standing Senior Manager in YJS was swiftly appointed to take over as Head of Service. This provided a degree of continuity but meant there was only one youth justice strategic manager covering four place-based partnerships until the replacement Senior Manager came into post in February 2024. YJS in Cheshire now has two very experienced senior leaders who will endeavour to build on the current strengths and reputation of the service to become outstanding.</p> |
| <p>Ensure the findings of the HNA are considered by relevant strategic partners to improve access to services for children in and at risk of entering the youth justice system</p> | <p>The completion of the HNA was a major undertaking and represents one of the most comprehensive (validated) analyses of the wider health needs of justice-involved-children undertaken anywhere in the UK in recent years.</p> <p>The Head of Service has presented findings at Health and Wellbeing Boards and several other partnership forums across the sub-region. Data and analysis from the HNA were provided to Crest Consultancy for their collation of a Strategic Needs Assessment to inform the Serious Violence Strategy (SVS) for Cheshire.</p> <p>A newly commissioned provider for Liaison and Diversion (Midland Partnership Foundation Trust [MPFT]) now covers the whole of Cheshire and there is improved provision, communication and a more effective pathway in place following productive meetings between YJS and MPFT.</p> <p>Issues are still being worked through with senior commissioners and Cheshire Wirral Partnership Trust around the dedicated speech and language therapy offer to justice-involved-children across Cheshire East and Cheshire West footprints, which is currently insufficient to meet the volume/demand revealed by the HNA. The Head of Service has written a paper to be tabled at Cheshire and Merseyside’s Integrated Care Board in summer 2024, outlining regional funding discrepancies and requesting a review of cash contributions to youth justice services across the Cheshire and Merseyside region.</p> |
| <p>Explore with an aspiration to move to a single host</p> | <p>A report providing the rationale and clear business case, with costings to deliver YJS as a fully hosted model, was completed in December 2023. This report was presented to corporate</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>arrangement to reduce inefficiency, inequity of employment and clarify partnership responsibilities, whilst also improving local Place based delivery and reporting models</p> | <p>leadership teams across Cheshire with approval to proceed given by cabinets (committee for Cheshire East Council) in spring 2024.</p> <p>This major infrastructure and organisational change project will be overseen by a Transitions Board, chaired by Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Director for Children and Families. Multiple workstreams will be established, a priority for the YJS partnership for 2024-2025 with a go-live date of April 2025.</p> |
| <p>Child-first, trauma-informed and relationship-based practice will continue to be embedded as routine</p> | <p>The new Head of Service has articulated Child First, Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based Practice as the three key pillars upon which the service will continue to develop. The new Senior Manager launched the revised ‘area-based’ service design for 2024-2025.</p> <p>Cheshire YJS have further developed social prescribing through partnerships with the Canal and River Trust (fishing as mindfulness), Rage Fitness (Health and Wellbeing Centre) and other bespoke psychosocial therapeutic activities for children. The Local Government Association (LGA) and Youth Justice Board (YJB) have cited Cheshire’s social prescribing approach as an exemplar of innovative best practice.</p> <p>In 2023, the service rolled out Schwartz⁵ rounds to provide a safe reflective space for staff across all teams and levels (front line practitioners, back-office staff and managers) to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings on topics of their choice. This is an important but sometimes overlooked aspect of Trauma-Informed Service Development because staff can experience trauma vicariously. The Schwartz rounds in Cheshire are facilitated by specially trained in-house therapeutic practitioners and have been well received by staff who have attended them. Schwartz rounds will continue to run quarterly in 2024-2025 and beyond.</p> |
| <p>Embed Turnaround project with an expanding Prevention and Diversion Service to work with more children on the cusp of the youth justice system</p> | <p>Turnaround was embedded within the Prevention and Diversion Team with a c£300k Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Grant. This was used to recruit additional front-line practitioners and build reporting and management capacity to ensure the fulfilment of grant requirements. This opened pathways to work with children referred because of concerns over anti-social behaviour.</p> |

⁵ [Schwartz Rounds](#)

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>By the end of March 2024, 135 children in Cheshire had been supported through the Turnaround project. Eighty-six of whom have successfully completed the programme, with the remaining 49 continuing to receive YJS support.</p> <p>The MOJ have confirmed Turnaround funding will end in March 2025 so YJS will ensure transition planning is in place prior to Q4. This will ensure children are supported into accessing alternative programmes of intervention, including newly commissioned delivery providers Remedi and Queensberry Alternative Provision.</p> |
| <p>Continue to develop anti-exploitation strategies in partnership with the Police, local authorities, and other partners such as health and education</p> | <p>Cheshire YJS is an active and influential participant in both pan-Cheshire and place-based partnership groups focusing on tackling criminal exploitation. Team Managers and local ‘exploitation champions’ attend contextual safeguarding operational meetings and share intelligence and contribute to ‘mapping’ meetings to help local responses. Exploitation of vulnerable children in/on the cusp of the justice system remains a high concern/high priority for the wider partnership and earlier targeted intervention and support for children to get ‘upstream’ was included in the Cheshire SVS.</p> <p>The YJS leadership team will continue to use our data and insights (e.g. from HNA) to inform and influence the wider partnership. A good example of this is YJS data being instrumental in influencing the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to use Serious Violence Duty funding to commission the Voluntary Community Sector to provide targeted support. Services are now in place to help children identified by education, early help, and social care as being ‘at risk’ of exclusion and exploitation, if left unsupported.</p> <p>Organised criminality is dynamic to emerging markets and opportunities and there were some concerning reports from Merseyside that county lines had evolved to become international. A few Merseyside children were trafficked to distribute drugs for a Dubai-based (but Merseyside linked) organised crime group (OCG). Given the proximity and known lines from Merseyside into Cheshire, the YJS Head of Service raised this at the Youth Justice Management Board and at local Serious Organised Crime Strategic groups. At the start of 2024, Cheshire YJS also participated in Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) benchmarking exercises with partners.</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Disproportionality review to be completed in line with the Cheshire CJB subgroup methodology</p> | <p>A response to the Lammy report was undertaken by the Disproportionality Sub-group to Cheshire CJB. YJS contributed data and insight to this work (see Section 7.1) and remains a member of the sub-group, which has renewed terms of reference under a new chair.</p> |
| <p>Explore potential of an early safeguarding diagnostic tool with CACI</p> | <p>This was explored as a tri-partite “Knowledge Transfer Partnership” with Edge Hill University and CACI (YJS software supplier) and an initial grant application to undertake the research and development necessary was made to Innovate UK. It subsequently transpired however YJS would become liable for two-thirds of the cost of employing research associates and because there was no cash in the budget and no obvious return on investment for the children we work with, it was ruled as unviable. CACI are a private organisation and are exploring other avenues for developing predictive analytics that may deliver them a commercial return on investment.</p> |

Some other notable achievements in 2023-2024 include: -

- YJS were ‘early adopters’ of the new national Prevention and Diversion assessment tool, with Cheshire contributing to the development of a quality assurance tool at national level with the YJB.
- Our social prescribing model has been cited by the LGA, YJB and NHS England as innovative practice for supporting children and young people in or on the cusp of the justice system.
- Several children embraced an opportunity to visit Chester University to work alongside graphics students and professionals in the co-design of a new youth justice planning template (see Section 4). An example of the kind of child first, participatory practice and co-design the service will be developing over the next 3 years.
- Cheshire YJS helped to facilitate some ‘art therapy’ with a cared for child who was struggling with being under a deprivation of liberty order and her painting won a Koestler arts award (see Section 8).

2. Performance over the previous year

Performance against nationally measured targets continues to be strong. Since rolling out the Divert scheme in 2017 across all Cheshire local authorities, we have seen fewer children entering the CJS.

Total volume and rates per 100,000 are significantly below regional and national averages and Section 11.4 contains a longer-term trend of FTE data, disaggregated by local authority. Figure 5 shows initial sharp reductions in FTE with the low base level being sustained again in 2023 (NB the lowest level of FTE in 2021 was due to the impact of covid/lockdowns).

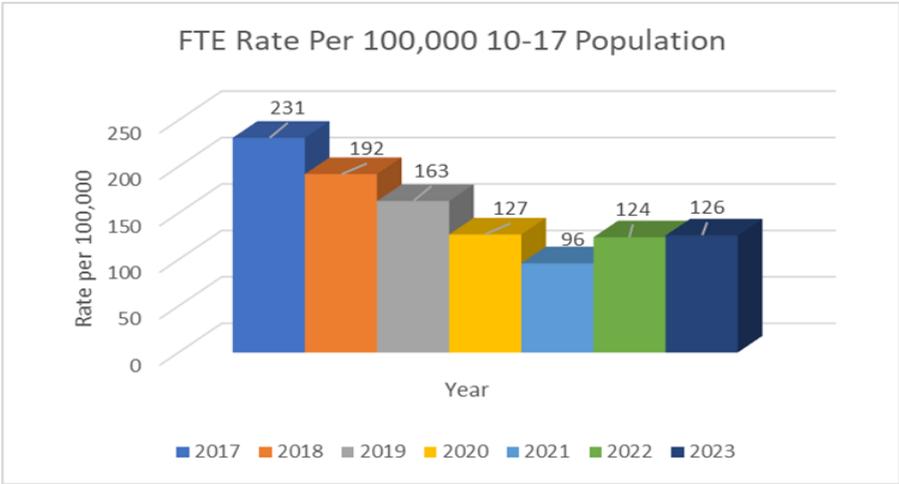


Figure 5. FTEs to the justice system in Cheshire

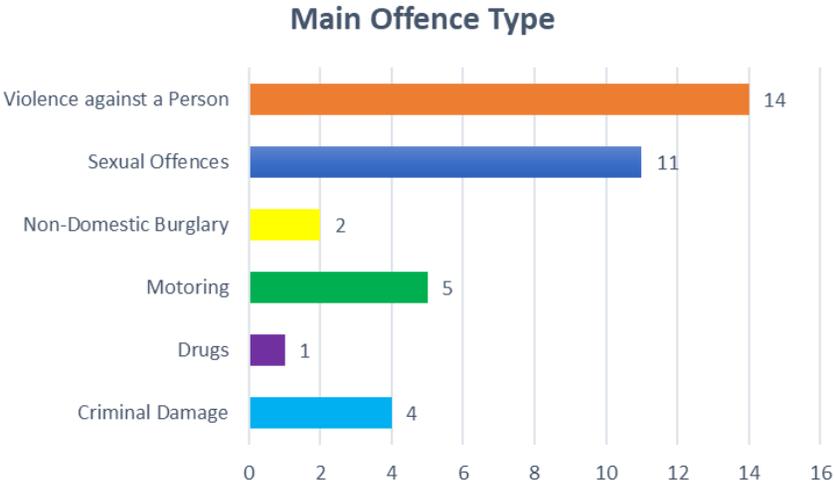


Figure 6. FTE offences in 2023

Figure 6 shows violent or sexual offences represent the bulk of those committed by children entering the justice system for the first time. This is what we would expect and is compatible with ‘Child First’ youth justice principles and an effective youth diversion scheme that ensures children are dealt with according to risk and need.

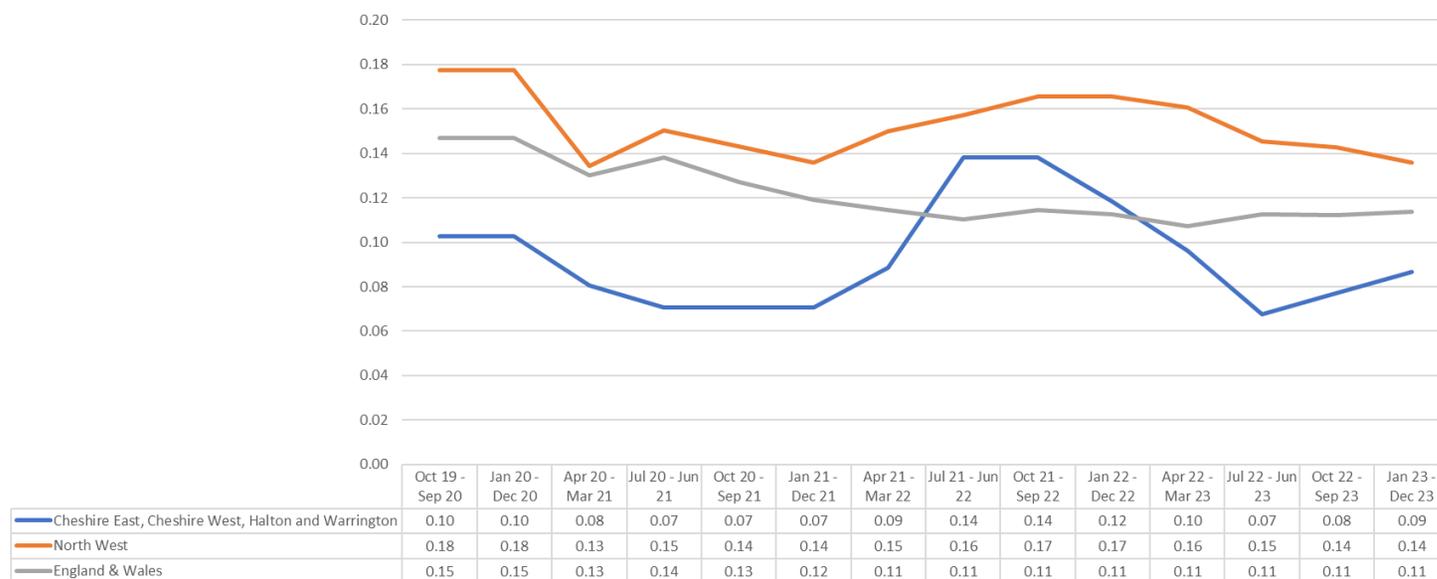


Figure 7. Custody Rate per 1,000 for Cheshire 10-17-Year-olds with regional and national comparisons

Source: National Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF)

Cheshire also has consistently low numbers of children remanded and sentenced to custody (see Sections 11.9 and 11.10 for 2023-2024 place-based detail). Fewer than five children across the whole of Cheshire have been sentenced to custody in any quarterly period going right back to Q2 of 2019.

It is rare for there to be more than 10 children from the four places in Cheshire combined, serving custodial sentences at any one time. While reoffending rates of those children in the system are slightly higher than regional averages, this is attributable to the fact children sentenced by the courts tend to be those with whom we have already exhausted all diversionary options. They are the children who are often more entrenched in criminality and exploitation so require more intensive intervention and support.

We are also seeing consistently reliable results for those children subjected to out of court disposals, in terms of successful completions and reoffending rates, with fewer than one in 10 children diverted away from formal sanctions going on to reoffend.

As a service, we are committed to focusing our efforts on reducing reoffending by our children. However, as we continue to prevent children entering the system and, running parallel have relatively few children in custody, we recognise re-offending rates are understandably our area of greatest challenge. Figure 8 below provides the latest published re-offending data, taken from the Police National Computer (PNC). However, whilst this serves to give us a national picture, it is important to recognise the following limitations of this PNC data:-

- The re-offending of adults who we no longer work with or have been never known to us
- The re-offending of children from outside areas who have offended in Cheshire but are not or have never been open to Cheshire YJS
- PNC re-offending data is published 2-years behind the current quarter.

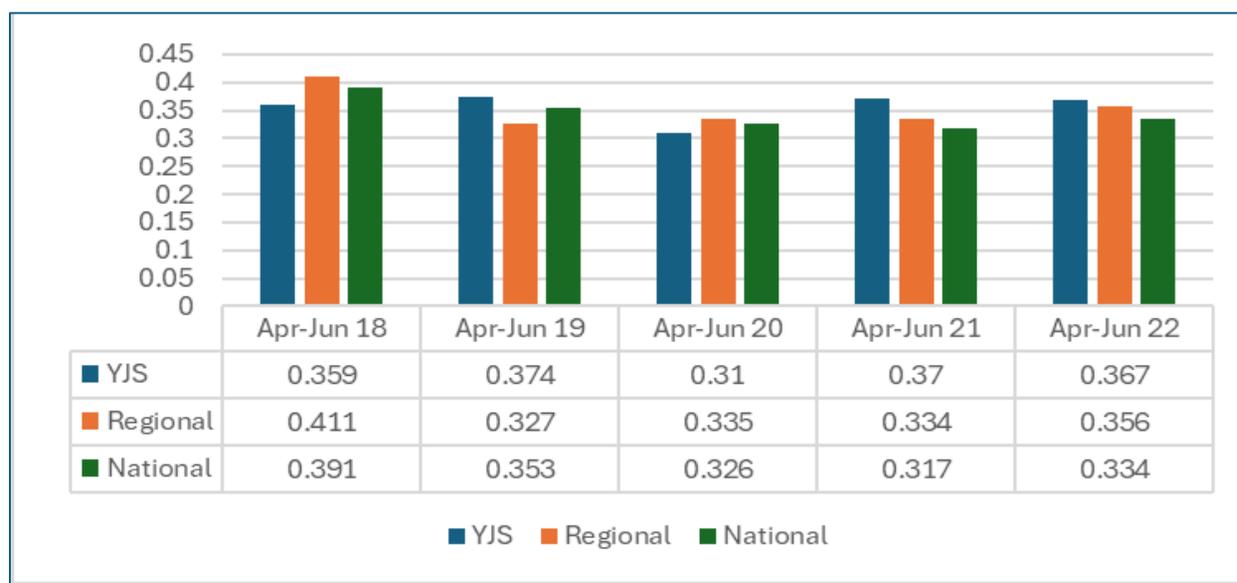


Figure 8. Binary reoffending data for YJS compared with regional and national rates 2018-2022
 Source: YJAF via PNC

Desistance from crime for children who experience significant adversity and trauma is not a linear journey. It requires long-term, trusted, relational support from professionals to try and help children achieve a shift toward a more positive self-identity. This is why the vision for the service is underpinned by the three key pillars of Child First, Trauma-Informed and Relational-Based Practice (Figure 1).

The KPI charts in Appendix A1 show performance against a range of other key performance metrics, introduced in 2023 by the national YJB, who have rated YJS as being in Performance Quadrant 2 (Satisfactory).

YJS will be developing a new comprehensive performance reporting and quality assurance framework in 2024 so the Management Board, partners and staff can all see the strengths and areas of challenge across the 10 KPIs. We will be data driven, making full use of the management information system to target our improvement activity in the areas where it is most needed.

2.1 National Standards Audit

Submission of a National Standards (NS) audit is a condition of the YJB national grant and the most recent NS audit was undertaken in October 2023, against NS2: Work in Courts. Cheshire YJS received positive feedback from the YJB Regional Oversight Manager on the quality of both the audit process and its findings.

This NS audit was a comprehensive quality assurance audit of the services delivered before, during and after children's appearances before the three magistrate courts and one crown court in Cheshire. Section A looked at Strategy, Section B on Reports and Section C on Process. Sections B and C involved a deep dive practice audit involving 20 cases.

There were nine areas in Section A 'Strategic performance' with four rated **Outstanding** and five rated as **Good**. Cheshire YJS enjoys a strong partnership with HM Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), Magistrates, Police and Crown Prosecution Service. The Head of Service is a member of Cheshire CJB and meets quarterly with youth bench magistrates who sit in Cheshire's three youth courts. A former chair of the Cheshire youth bench and a representative from HMCTS are also members of the Management Board.

For sections B (Reports) and C (Process), the audit revealed the overall quality of work was **Good** or **Outstanding**. One criterion required improvement and this related to the adequate referencing of the impact of the child's offence on their victim, by authors of pre-sentence reports. Improvement action is being addressed through local changes to case management guidance, emphasis on managerial oversight and explicitly evidencing the possible impact on victims (even where victim personal statements are unavailable).

A priority for 2024-2025 will be to review the victim contact and support offer ensuring the service remains fully compliant with the Victims' Code of Practice and the new Victims and Prisoners Act (see Section 11.6).

3. Risks and issues

The main risk to service delivery and the achievement of positive outcomes for children, victims and care givers, relates to the complexity of the pan-Cheshire shared service arrangements. A combination of escalating ICT costs due to national licensing and security compliance issues, as well as inefficiency that comes from having staff employed by authorities other than the one providing their ICT, has rendered the current arrangement unsustainable.

YJS staff currently must navigate four separate systems for corporate information such as finance and human resources. Lack of a sustainable ICT system will inhibit performance management, data collection and case recording and increase costs for each partner authority. In addition, the safety of children and the public could be compromised if these inefficiencies continue to impact on staff time. This results in less time spent with children and young people (and those harmed by children and young people).

The move to a hosted arrangement with Cheshire West and Chester Council as the lead authority, will mean a more productive and efficient organisation. This model will also provide financial transparency and the new legal memorandum of understanding will mitigate the risks associated with provision of ICT that is a cost Halton Borough Council can no longer absorb as a benefit in kind.

Not progressing to a fully hosted model (and agreeing a sustainable funding formula) will, over time, undermine the integrity of the YJS and compromise service delivery for our children, caregivers and victims.

All four councils have now confirmed their support for transitioning to a new hosted model, with each authority paying a management fee. The infrastructure work involved in transitioning the service will be significant and require multiple workstreams overseen by a Transitions Board.

As with any major organisational change and infrastructure project – particularly one involving decommissioning and transfer of ICT systems, there is a risk of service disruption, or the work not being completed within the intended timescale of this fiscal year. The Transitions Board, overseen by the Director for Children and Families in Cheshire West and Chester Council, will be responsible for agreeing any mitigation measures, should they be required.

4. Building on our strengths: Plan for 2024-2025

4.1 Child First

In Cheshire, we are committed to Child First principles. As mentioned earlier, these principles, along with Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based Practice will inform all practice and development activity. We will continue to apply the principle of “*Would this be good enough for my child?*” and prioritise the best interests of children, recognise their needs, capacities, rights, and potential. As well as being child-focused, our work will be developmentally informed, acknowledge structural barriers and done with children rather than done to them.

YJS has made great strides in this direction of travel in the last couple of years but recognises there is more to do, particularly in relation to meaningful and active participation of children in the justice system.

This is why **Participation** is a strategic, operational and practice priority flowing from this Strategic plan.

The new Service Development Hub will be the engine room to drive forward participation across all areas of YJS. This will not be easy as children sentenced by the courts often feel they have no power and no voice and they have usually experienced significant trauma and adversity. Offending for many children is in part symptomatic of their own childhood abuse or neglect. YJS will hold a Service Development Day in July 2024, with **Participation** as the theme and have invited the leading children’s and social justice charity Peer Power to co-facilitate the session. Through the lived experience of their ‘peer leaders’, Peer Power will help YJS to better harness the power and potential of children and young people and be the catalyst for scaling up some of the co-produced (Child First) activity started in 2023-2024 and outlined below.

In summer 2023, a partnership project with a local community enterprise in Crewe ‘Recycle Cycles’, combined children gaining skills in bike maintenance with designing and painting a large outdoor container (Figure 9a). The inspiration for the design came from a child being encouraged to visualise his pathway toward a brighter future having participated in evening sessions on topics such as, healthy relationships and respect for women, substance misuse and self-esteem. A group of our children worked collaboratively with YJS staff and graphic design students at University of Chester to co-produce Figure 9b. This is now the cover of the planning document, *My Change Plan*, used with all YJS children.



Figure 9a. Original artwork created on a container by YJS children working with Recycle Cycles in Crewe



Figure 9b. Adapted artwork for *My Change Plan* made by YJS children in collaboration with YJS staff and graphic design students from University of Chester

The above artwork is one illustration of the kind of participatory practice Cheshire YJS will be seeking to build on over the coming years. It also exemplifies how we can take a strengths-based approach and co-produce with children. By knowing they have a voice in co-producing their own intervention plans, children will be more motivated to achieve the objectives and successfully complete their work with us.

Our relationship-based model also offers a way to improve the interactions children have with police officers. The Cheshire Youth Commission is facilitated by Leaders Unlocked, a social enterprise that delivers the Youth Commission peer-led model and exists to allow young people across the UK to have a stronger voice in their communities on issues that affect them. During October 2023 half term, YJS arranged two bespoke events with Cheshire Youth Commission enabling the voices of children with lived experience of the system, to be heard by the OPCC and other leaders and to inform policing in Cheshire. Five children open to YJS, participated in a bespoke workshop on relationships with the police. The workshops included interactive situational scenario activities, an animation film and quizzes to elicit rich feedback on justice-involved-children’s authentic lived experience.

“It was good to get listened to. I have not had the opportunity of this before in relation to my experiences with the Police. The person running the group seemed to be really interested.”
(Child)

Some children felt the Police should receive training around mental health issues, specifically neurodiversity and officers should have more awareness of how best to engage with neurodiverse children. (Cheshire HNA confirmed neurodivergent children are over-represented in the youth justice system). This was one of several recommendations made in the final report to the OPCC as part of the annual “Big Conversation” and YJS will facilitate a similar bespoke session with Leaders Unlocked later in 2024.

“I used to get regularly stopped and searched if I was stimming and under suspicion of drug use when I am actually just autistic.”
(Child)

“I just want to say a huge thank you to you and the team for giving us an opportunity to speak to the amazing young people you work with. They were my favourite sessions of this year”
(Project Manager, Leaders Unlocked)

Figure 10 shows a young person open to YJS helping a traffic officer wash his motorbike. This example of relationship-based practice was arranged by a Divert Worker who was aware of the young person’s interest in motorbikes.



Figure 10. Young person helps a traffic officer to wash his motorbike

5. Resources and services

The YJS operates as a complex shared service arrangement with pooled funding from four local authorities, statutory partners, Cheshire OPCC and the YJB core grant (see Appendix B Budget). Cheshire YJS will pool the YJB core grant with other funding to:

- Ensure we have a well-trained, supported and motivated team of staff, with the specialist skills to engage children, caregivers and victims;
- Continue to contribute towards funding our relationship-based practice model and further developing participatory work with children, care givers and victims;
- Continue to pool funding to develop social prescribing and other interventions with children to improve self-identity, health and wellbeing and reduce the likelihood of re-offending;
- Continue to develop diversionary and participatory interventions to divert children away from formal sanctions (supported by contributions from the OPCC);
- Ensure YJS can continue to provide robust, intensive supervision to children in the community to maintain public and judicial confidence and minimising the use of custody.

6. Board development

The YJS Management Board will continue to meet quarterly and receive reports from YJS and partners to facilitate scrutiny and discussion around key service delivery and performance areas. The Board's key purposes are:

- To determine strategic direction of YJS, ensuring all statutory partners are fully engaged.
- To oversee and monitor the operational work of YJS.
- To ensure YJS is adequately resourced to carry out its statutory function of preventing offending by children and young people.

The leadership, composition and role of the Management Board are critical to the effective delivery of local youth justice services and Cheshire has senior representation from all statutory partners. The YJS Management Board also has long standing representation from HMCTS, the Magistracy, children's safeguarding, and academia.

The main development area for 2024-2025 will be the overseeing of a parallel Transitions Board by the Chair of the YJS Management Board. This will ensure the smooth transition to the new hosted model with Cheshire West and Chester Council becoming lead authority on behalf of the partnership.

7. Workforce development

As a service, and in line with our three pillars vision, we are committed to learning and development. It is vital all staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge, are effective in their roles and equipped to deliver high-quality services to everyone they work with. We also place high value on relevant opportunities to promote personal growth and professional development.

As a pan-Cheshire partnership, we can maximise opportunities arising in each of the four Safeguarding Children Partnerships and local authority areas. In 2023-2024, in response to our HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) 2021 inspection report and updated case management guidance, we commissioned and facilitated a broad range of learning and development opportunities. Cheshire YJS were also privileged this year to inputs from leading academics, with international reputations, for research on working with children in the justice system. The table below summarises the main staff development events held, highlighting how we have drawn on expertise from many sources.

Our commitment to the workforce will continue into 2024-2025 and we will seek to further strengthen workforce development through:

- Development of a more centralised approach to identifying training needs across the service
- Developing an enhanced training monitoring system and connecting with Cheshire West Learning and Development Team as we move to a single hosted model.
- Revising the Training Plan to be highly relevant, achievable, and accessible to the whole workforce.
- Continued membership of the Youth Justice Legal Centre, which brings timely and specialist legal advice for professionals and managers and access to a range of in-person training events and remote learning.

Table 1. Summary of key work force development activities in 2023-2024

| Title | Course Type | Overview |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Relationship Based Practice by Jackie Dwayne Limerick University | Academic Guest Speaker | Youth justice in Ireland is in a fortunate position as on the back of the research from Limerick, they were awarded funding to 2027 to implement RBP (Relationship Based Practice). Our approach has no additional resources and will come via the new development hub to ensure a more centralised approach but still drawing on what is available in local areas. Once children have finished their time with YJS we will be able to signpost them to groups/activities they have been linked to as part of exit plan to help sustain desistance from crime while avoiding dependency on YJS |
| Presentation on the Lundy Model by Laura Lundy Queen's University Belfast | Academic Guest Speaker | Presentation covering the aspects of the Lundy Model of Child Participation we have adopted within the work of the Service Development Hub (see Section 8). |
| Child Participation in Youth Justice Research Louise Forde Brunel Law School | Academic Guest Speaker | Whole service presentation on participation in youth justice from Louise Forde again to back up work on participation which will be the theme of the Service Development Day. |
| YJLC Gravity Matrix Training | Commissioned | Training from Youth Justice Legal Centre to Prevention and Diversion staff and police officers on the application of revised gravity matrix for youth out of court disposals |
| Case management guidance | In-house | Major internal briefings and training on application of revised case management guidance |
| Equality and Diversity training | Commissioned | Delivered by Wipers Youth social enterprise. Specifically tailored training for youth justice professionals to improve cultural competency and awareness of disproportionality in the justice system |

Having considered the local data analysis and in support of service priorities, the following training is currently planned for 2024-2025:

- Specialist Harmful Sexual Behaviour (AIM3) to broaden the pool of trained practitioners
- Court Skills
- UNITAS courses: Youth Diversion; Child First Effective Practice; Professional Certificate in Effective Practice
- Equality and Diversity for all staff.

8. Evidence-based practice and innovation

YJS will continue to root all intervention and support with children on the evidence base, but Cheshire will also explore new and innovative ways of connecting with children who find it difficult to access mainstream services. Our approach was described recently by an NHS England lead as the best application of social prescribing in a justice context that she had come across. It was also cited by the LGA as one of their *'innovation in local government'* case studies⁶.

Social prescribing in YJS emerged from the recognition that justice-involved-children often arrive with previously unmet health needs and traditional/clinical models of care had failed to reach them. An example being the socially prescribing of fishing as a mindfulness activity in partnership with the Canal and River Trust's 'Let's Go Fishing' programme (Figure 11).



Figure 11. 'Let's Go Fishing' Programme at Winsford

⁶ [Cheshire: Using social prescribing to reduce reoffending among young people | Local Government Association](#)

Adopting a psychosocial therapeutic approach, health workers in YJS are socially prescribing creative and flexible activities to help children improve their health and wellbeing. This has proven particularly effective for males who have experienced intra and/or extra familial violence and are often in a state of hyper-vigilance or hyper-arousal. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is often ineffective with this increasingly large sub-set of our children, so the service has tailored the health offer to become far more psychosocial and adaptable to the needs (and interests) of the children we work with. Our health offer is also supportive towards addressing the impact of trauma.



The artwork in Figure 12 was created by a cared for child working with the YJS. “L” had experienced a lot of childhood trauma and was struggling with being in care under a deprivation of liberty for her own safety. She was being supported to make sense of her experiences through art therapy and discovered she had a real talent. YJS supported her to enter this piece for a Koestler arts award and it won a commendation award. On winning the award, she told her YJS worker it was the first certificate she had ever received in her life. This is a perfect illustration of the impact that child first, trauma-informed, and relational practice can have on children who have experienced complex trauma.

**Figure 12. ‘Day in the Life of a Deprivation of Liberty Order’
Koestler commendation award winning artwork 2023**

Cheshire YJS has a well-developed “*Research in Practice*” working group that was recognised by HMIP in 2021 as an exemplar of collaboration between academia and the youth justice sector. As mentioned above the group was able to secure several key researchers to speak to the service about their findings.

One such speaker was Professor Laura Lundy, a leading international authority on the meaningful participation of children and author of The Lundy Model (Figure 13). YJS will be adopting the Lundy Model as our frame of reference in developing Participation across all aspects of service delivery in 2024-2027.

The YJS is in a knowledge-transfer partnership arrangement with two local universities (Chester and Edge Hill University) and two senior lecturers in criminology, with a national profile for research on youth justice will co-chair the YJS Research group from 2024-2025. This collaboration will ensure Cheshire YJS retains a national reputation for evidence-based practice and stays at the leading edge of innovation in the sector.

Although YJS has been fortunate to have a number of key speakers talking to staff about the research behind participation, the Service Development Day in July 2024 will be the catalyst for the development of a participatory model across the service with Peer Power Youth facilitating the session.

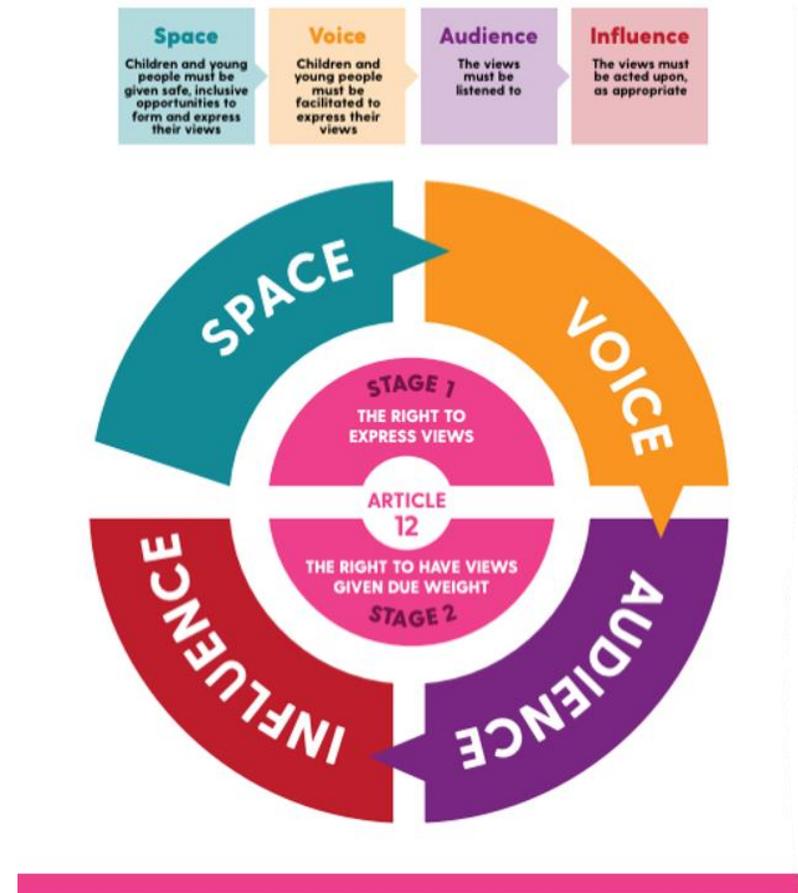


Figure 13. The Lundy Model of Child Participation

We have used previous service development days to launch Trauma-Informed Practice (2019) and Relationship-Based Practice (2022). The Service Development Hub will bring together a range of working groups focusing on various aspects of participation from involving children in staff recruitment to using technology to gain children's views and ideas.

9. Evaluation

The HNA by the Public Health Research Institute at Liverpool John Moores University evaluated and validated the trauma-informed and relationship-based practice approach adopted by Cheshire YJS professionals. The passage below is taken directly from their full technical report, based on a statistically valid research sample of 70% of the children YJS were working with at the time:

“The (Cheshire YJS) offer now provides that key link into mental health, substance use and Speech Language Therapy support, through an equitable healthcare assessment available to all young people entering the YJS. This provided a key opportunity to assess and identify any unmet health needs in these three areas (and wider health and safeguarding needs), which may not have otherwise been identified, and for many was the first time they had access to such healthcare screening. This multi-agency approach not only allowed for quicker identification during the healthcare screening, but it also meant more timely specialist support for families who would have otherwise had long waiting lists to see specialists from CAMHS and SLT. This was identified as an effective way to open the door to this pathway of wider support, recognising that these health needs were associated to the offending behavior and need to be addressed to prevent further re-offendingThe Cheshire YJS model also provides an opportunity for multi-agency working, not only to provide that overarching multi-disciplinary offer for children and young people, but also in terms of how services work together across Cheshire....The HNA highlights the key work from YJS and wider services across Cheshire in support of families to reduce inequalities, improve wellbeing, and reduce offending. This required skilled, experienced staff working in a trauma-informed way, using a child-focused approach.”

10. Priorities for the coming year

Building on what we have achieved in the previous year, a service development plan outlining management activity will sit underneath this higher-level Strategic Youth Justice Plan and will be used to deliver against the new service development priorities for 2024-2025 summarised below:-

We will 'ramp-up' participation in creative ways right across the service and facilitate a culture of collaboration where children, volunteers and community groups are enabled to promote pro-social identity and desistance from crime. This will include co-production or co-design of plans, developing projects to support children to desist from crime and reduce harm to victims/communities.

We will develop a new comprehensive performance reporting and quality assurance framework, ensuring we are data driven and make full use of the management information system to drive practice development

We will refine our internal governance processes to ensure management and back-office functions help facilitate the delivery of high-quality services including enhanced training monitoring and a training needs assessment to inform the staff training plan

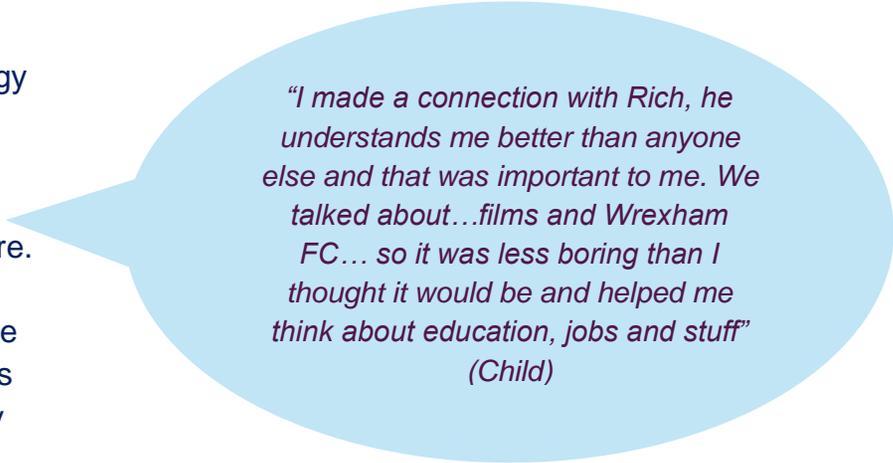
We will benchmark the YJS support offer to victims against the Victims Code of Practice, new Victims' Bill and HMIPs new inspection criteria (refining the role of Restorative Justice workers in YJS if required) identifying and progressing areas for development

In partnership with Cheshire Constabulary, we will review the current joint decision-making arrangements for the use of out of court disposals for our children. We will ensure they incorporate the Child Gravity Matrix and children are diverted to the appropriate service according to their level of risk and need

We will collaborate with partners to deliver against Priority 1 (Prevention) of Cheshire's 2024-2029 SVS by ensuring funding is targeted appropriately to support children at risk of involvement in SV

10.1 Standards for children

Cheshire YJS has developed a “conversational audit” methodology to undertake practice audits where managers visit or speak to children, caregivers and (where appropriate) victims too. This is now a ‘business as usual’ audit methodology for the service and has been adopted by some of our partners in children’s social care. Direct quotes from children, caregivers or partner agency professionals obtained through conversational audit are illustrative of the kind of trauma-informed, relational practice Cheshire YJS is striving to provide to the children we work with. This methodology will feature in this year’s audit on Victims and Restorative Justice. The new participatory model also aims to gather the views and ideas of the children we work with.



*“I made a connection with Rich, he understands me better than anyone else and that was important to me. We talked about...films and Wrexham FC... so it was less boring than I thought it would be and helped me think about education, jobs and stuff”
(Child)*

10.2 New performance framework

Striking the right balance between local place-based and pan-Cheshire performance reporting is a challenge for YJS and disaggregating Cheshire-wide data to place often renders the data invalid because the volumes are so low. But we will be developing a new performance management framework, using a mix of the recently introduced 10 national KPIs (Appendix A1) alongside better use of Child View (YJS case management system) so the Management Board and service really know our children.

10.3 Service development

It is critical for a sub-regional youth justice partnership to work closely with statutory agencies and community organisations at a local level, to properly support children in their own communities. To better facilitate this, YJS have implemented a modest service redesign for 2024-2025 to enable front-line professionals to work more closely and effectively with place-based partners. Figure 14 opposite shows how YJS will remain co-terminus with both police and probation footprints, while aligning closely to the four children’s services and community safety partnerships. The Staff Structure in Appendix A2 shows how our Teams align with place.

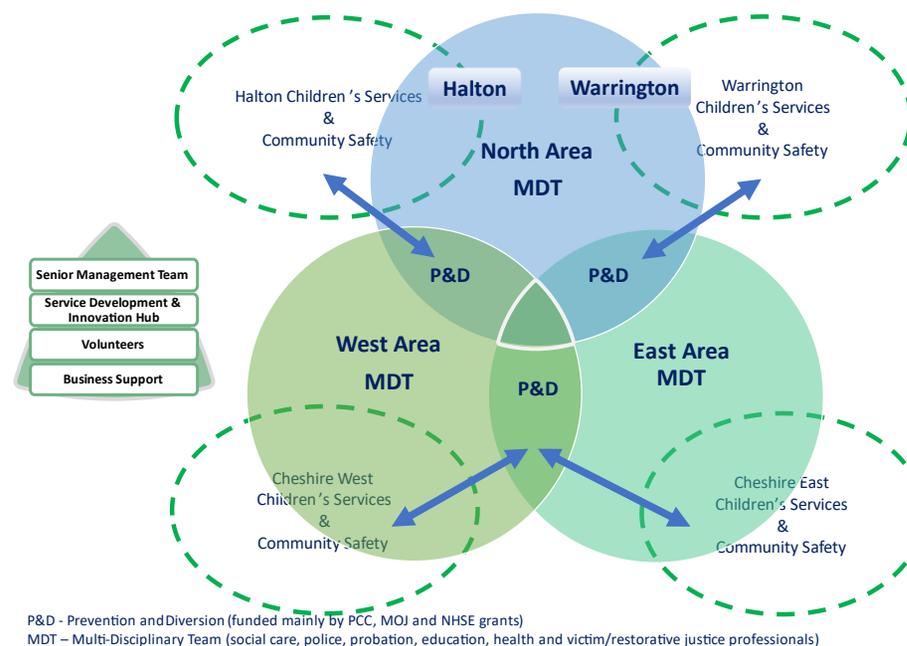


Figure 14. New Area-Based Service Design Model for YJS (from April 2024)

The service redesign aligns with the shift toward restorative and participatory approaches and the importance of supporting children to connect (or reconnect) with their local community. The new structure will empower front-line professionals and locality (area-based) operational managers to develop creative partnerships with the voluntary sector. By harnessing previously untapped human and social capital within communities (such as recruiting more local volunteers and establishing mutually beneficial partnerships with small local charities) we will be better able to help children, and some victims to move on positively beyond an offender (or victim) identity.

The new Service Development Hub will function as the central engine room for innovation within the service and the new leadership team will ensure quality of practice at a pan-Cheshire level, while empowering (through a distributed leadership model) creative area-based partnerships in the places where children, caregivers and victims live.

Cheshire YJS has also begun a review of our internal governance processes to ensure we are as productive as possible with a lean service spanning a large geography and complex network of partners. There are over 100 place-based and sub-regional partnership boards or groups and YJS needs to focus our human resource where it can have the greatest influence and improve outcomes for children in or at risk of entering into the justice system.

11. National priority areas

11.1 Children from groups which are over-represented

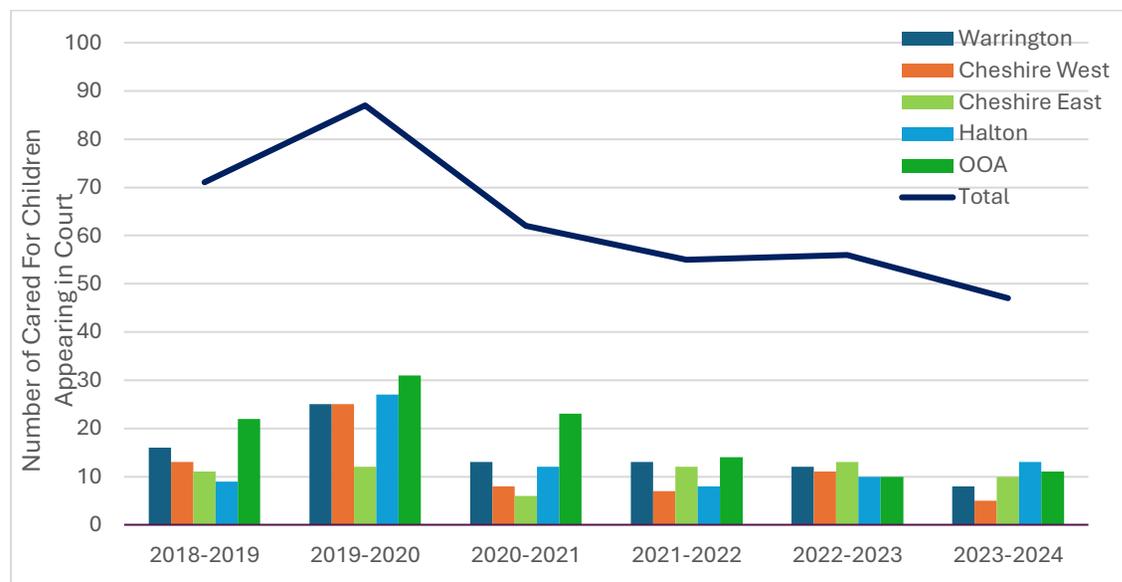


Figure 15. Number of cared for children appearing in Cheshire courts by local authority between April 2018-March 2024

The data above also includes children placed in Cheshire under the care of local authorities outside the county (out of area [OOA]) who receive the same diversionary options.

Sustained lower volumes since the protocol was produced in early 2020 is good evidence of what can be achieved through collective commitment at scale across YJS and Children's services.

A task and finish group are meeting to review the protocol in 2024-2025.

An over-represented group of children in the justice system are cared for children and care leavers. The YJS Management Board's response to data revealing disproportionality in this group was to agree a pan-Cheshire protocol. This aims to minimise the criminalisation of cared for children and care leavers and details a '3D' police and partnership response of *"Discretion, Delay and Diversion"*.

Since the protocol was launched, there has been a clear downward trend of cared for children appearing in court (Figure 15). This shows the impact from a high point in 2019.

The high prevalence of our children struggling with health or neurodevelopmental difficulties prompted the Health Sub-group of the YJS Management Board to commission the Public Health Research Institute at Liverpool John Moore University to look at the health needs of children open to YJS (see Management Board and Leadership).

The HNA revealed a stark over-representation of neurodiversity in our children which has been replicated elsewhere due to wider determinants of health. Public health consultants on the Health Sub-group have used this analysis in a place-based Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and SEND specific Strategic Needs Analysis. The HNA revealed there is a correlated trajectory for children who ‘camouflage’ their SEND through disruptive behavior, experience fixed-term or permanent exclusion and then enter the CJS some time thereafter. In 2024, the Head of Service for YJS will continue to raise awareness at local Health and Wellbeing Boards and be a strong advocate for improved upstream identification and support for children with SEND.

*“Karen understands C’s SEND. The team have been really understanding and flexible around C’s appointments and Karen worked hard to earn his trust. She was approachable and down to earth, and I appreciate the work she is doing with my son”
(Caregiver).*

The alarming racial disparities in the youth justice system nationally are not replicated in Cheshire. Figure 16 and Table 2 below show the most current data available (offences committed in the year ending March 2023 and drawing from 2021 census data). Comparing the youth offending population with Cheshire’s 10-17-year-old population as a whole reveals white children are very slightly overrepresented and ethnic minority groups slightly underrepresented.

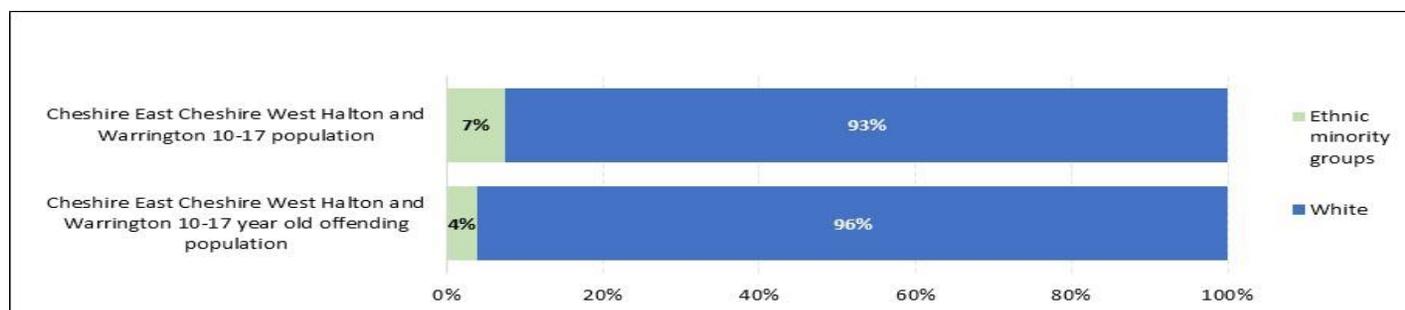


Figure 16. Ethnic minority groups vs white in the 10-17 population and offending population in Cheshire

Table 2. Ethnic minority groups vs white in the 10-17 population in Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington

| Ethnic group | 2022/23 Offending Population | Share of total ⁽¹⁾ | 2021 Census 10-17 pop'n by ethnic group | Share of total % ⁽²⁾ | % Point Difference | Overrepresented, offending pop'n >10 & statistically significant |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Asian | 1 | 0% | 2,563 | 3% | -2% | No |
| Black | 2 | 1% | 561 | 1% | 0% | No |
| Mixed | 6 | 3% | 3,603 | 4% | -1% | No |
| Other | 0 | 0% | 796 | 1% | -1% | No |
| Ethnic minority groups ⁽³⁾ | 9 | 4% | 7,523 | 7% | -3% | No |
| White | 218 | 96% | 93,563 | 93% | 3% | Yes |



One potential area of *‘invisible over-representation’* in Cheshire that YJS has raised with partners at the CJB’s Disproportionality Sub-group, relates to children (or adults) from GRT communities. Anecdotal (and student) research suggests children from these communities are sometimes recorded on police and other criminal justice databases as White British, White Irish or White European.

There is a GRT self-identity classification, but some individuals choose not to identify themselves because of a cultural mistrust of authorities. Therefore, CJS data on arrest, detention, and sentencing in respect of GRT children may not be accurate. The cultural competence of staff is the key aspect here and Cheshire YJS do have an in-service GRT ‘champion’ who is well linked with specialist advocacy and support services. We will ensure our data is as accurate as possible by hearing from the child about their identity.

11.2 Policing

The Chief Superintendent with the portfolio of protecting vulnerable people, sits on the Management Board and all four Children's Safeguarding Partnerships. This valuable connectivity provides useful constructive challenge and support, for example, renewed focus on detention of children overnight in police custody (Section 11.8). Cheshire Constabulary delivered on the recommendations made by HMIP to place fully seconded police officers into YJS and the three officers in Cheshire work well as part of the multi-disciplinary teams. They have participated in both police and YJS-led training and have improved both the flow and response to intelligence in respect of harm to or from children.

The National Police Chief's Council guidance on the role of police officers within youth justice was recently updated⁷ and YJS and Cheshire Constabulary will be reviewing the job descriptions of seconded officers to strengthen focus on victims and prevention and diversion activity. The level of police resources dedicated to (or aligned with) Cheshire YJS will be explored

so the partnership can collectively meet our joint responsibilities for diversion and out of court disposals.

Cheshire Constabulary continue to invest in their Complex-Youths scheme which has dedicated officers delivering targeted prevention and support work with children on the cusp of the justice system. This is a voluntary scheme closely aligned to place-based contextual safeguarding partnership arrangements, with children at risk of criminal exploitation often identified for support. YJS officers and place-based youth officers routinely share intelligence to help safeguard children and disrupt criminal groups.

11.3 Prevention

Unlike many single local authority youth justice teams, YJS is not part of a wider adolescent and family support service providing a broader prevention offer. The funding and delivery model spanning four authorities means we are more of a purist youth justice service that only works with children *after* they have been arrested for an offence. Prevention and targeted youth support forms part of each local authority's early help offer with some sub-regional services commissioned by Cheshire OPCC. YJS will seek to align our diversionary work to continue to divert **away from** formal criminal sanctions when it is safe and appropriate to do so and **into prevention** projects entirely outside the justice

⁷ [NPCC Guidance on Role of Police Officer in Youth Justice Services](#)

system . The principles of avoiding ‘net widening’ and the unintended consequences of ‘labelling’ or entrenching a criminal self-identity for a child are critically important and are evidenced principles underpinning this strategy and continue to apply across Cheshire.

11.4 Diversion

The Head of Service for YJS holds the national portfolio on Diversion for the Association of YOT Managers (AYM) and engages with ministers, national charities and think tanks such as Criminal Justice Innovation in roundtables on best diversionary practice. Cheshire will continue an evidence-based approach to diversion that avoids criminalising children for behaviors symptomatic of trauma, abuse, and unmet need. This not only provides better outcomes and improved prospects for children but because children diverted away from receiving formal sanctions are less likely to re-offend, it also results in fewer victims.

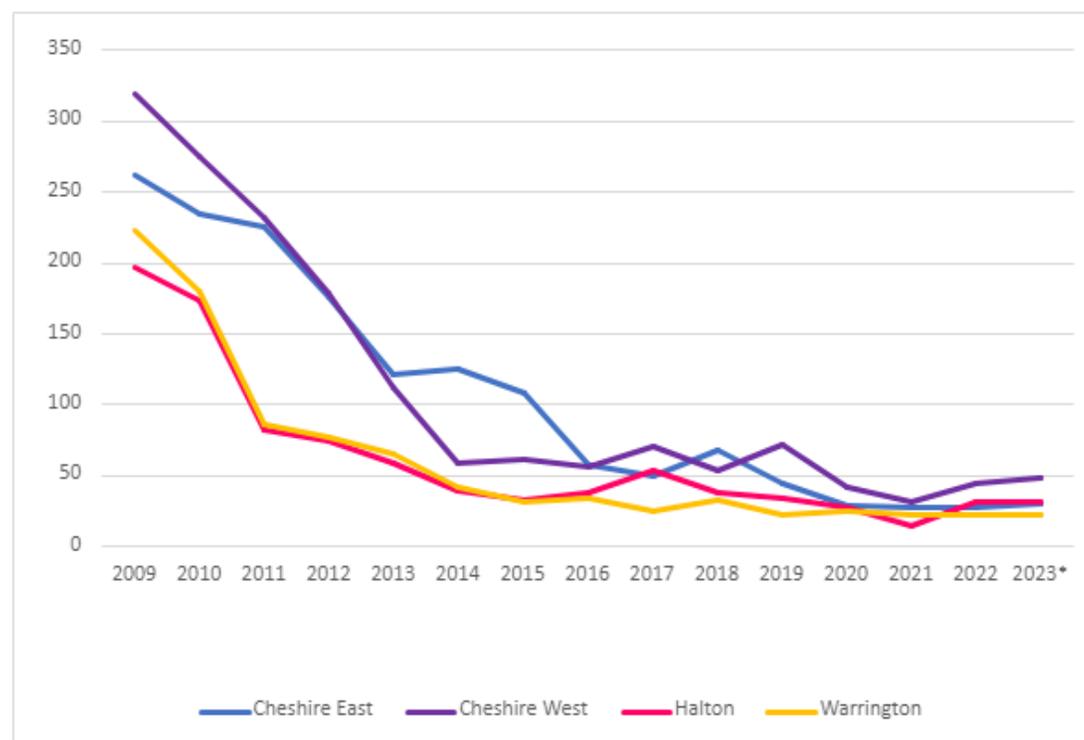


Figure 17. Trends in FTEs in Cheshire by local authority 2009-2023

Figure 17 shows significant reductions in FTEs since the incremental introduction of Divert across Cheshire. The current operating model began in Halton and Warrington in 2010, was introduced into Cheshire West in 2013 and Cheshire East in 2015. FTE numbers have remained low and stable below regional and national averages since 2016 when Cheshire

became a pan-Cheshire shared service, covering the entire policing footprint. This contrasts with many of our geographical and statistical 'Neighbours' that have begun to see an increase in FTEs in recent years.

The helpful 3-year grant investment from the MOJ (Turnaround Programme) will end in March 2025. This investment enabled YJS to get a little further upstream while also enabling us to support children and caregivers who needed longer or more intensive support. We will ensure individual children have transition plans in place where continued support beyond the end of the Turnaround programme is necessary. We will also work with the OPCC as part of the serious violence duty to ensure the new Voluntary and Community Sector providers (Remedi and Queensberry Alternative Provision) are targeting help and support to the right children, in the right ways, at the right time.

11.5 Education

Our HNA chimes with national research in showing a correlation between educational exclusion and subsequent entry to the CJS. Children who get excluded from school tend to be children who have experienced childhood trauma. There is a concerning trajectory (nationally not just in Cheshire) of early childhood exposure to violence and SEND being camouflaged as conduct issues leading to educational exclusion (for some children). Then a sub-set of these excluded children go on to use illicit drugs to self-medicate their trauma and criminal exploitation and criminality follows.

Audits and learning reviews across Cheshire also show the powerful protective effect education can have on children who have suffered childhood trauma. Positive self-identity and belonging are critical to helping children achieve desistance from offending, and the significant role education and training providers play in reducing risk through promoting pro-social identity cannot be overstated. Inclusive, trauma-informed-values-led-educational establishments not only manage risk well within their own environment, but also contribute hugely to reducing risk of harm in their communities.

Most children receiving YJS support are beyond school age, so the emphasis is more on helping them into post-16 training or employment, with flexible and bespoke support offers being most suitable for those children who have typically experienced considerable educational disruption. YJS has dedicated Education, Training and Employment (ETE) specialists for each of the four local authority areas to support children directly or indirectly by brokering tailored support in partnership with the respective local offer. As an inclusive-employment lead for post-16, the educational representative on the Board is a good advocate for justice-involved children and provides both challenge and support to managers in the service.

For a partnership that covers four local authorities, with over 100 high schools and post-16 colleges - the majority of which are academies - YJS and even Directors of Children's Services have limited influence on admissions or exclusions. Promoting inclusion and supporting trauma-informed practice in educational settings is something Children's Trusts have pushed and YJS will continue to advocate for the needs of children. The Head of Service will continue to provide data to inform local joint strategic need analyses and deliver presentations to forums of educational leaders. The KPI data in Appendix A1, shows the percentages of children who are in suitable education or training placements at the end of their intervention with YJS.

11.6 Restorative approaches and victims

Cheshire YJS will continue to work with victims and will deliver the full range of restorative support:

- **Restorative Justice Conferencing** – a structured meeting between the victim and the child
- **Direct Reparation** – repairing any damage caused by the child
- **Shuttle Mediation** – similar to the conferencing model but where both parties do not meet but have someone as the go-between
- **Letter of Apology/explanation** – child is supported to write to the victim
- **Indirect reparation** – work done within the community on placements.



*“Mark ensured my son’s issues were heard and a structure was put in place to ensure his safety”
(Caregiver of Victim)*

In 2023-2024, the YJS contacted and offered the above range of restorative approaches to 201 victims of youth crime. Assault is the most frequent offence type committed by children, but a quarter of all offences in 2023-2024 had no direct victim (e.g. drug and knife possession).

Sixteen direct restorative justice conferences between children and victims took place in 2023-2024. These meetings can be incredibly powerful and are handled sensitively by skilled professionals. We will continue to facilitate restorative meetings between children and their victims when it is appropriate to do so.

Cheshire YJS have a range of community partnership projects enabling children to contribute in practical ways to repair harm and develop a sense of pro-social identity. The photographs in Figure 18 show how a victim who did not want to

meet the children who assaulted him, asked if they could do something to improve the local park. This community reparation was arranged in partnership with the 'Friends of Winsford Town Park' community group.

Reviewing victim processes and ensuring the support offer from Cheshire YJS is in line with the new Victims and Prisoners Act is a priority for 2024-2025.



Figure 18. An example of where the victim suggested reparation by improving the local park

11.7 Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding

This plan draws from and is closely aligned with the Cheshire SVS, which covers a 5-year period from 2024-2029, with annual reviews to reflect on progress against planned outcomes and update delivery plans against emerging trends.

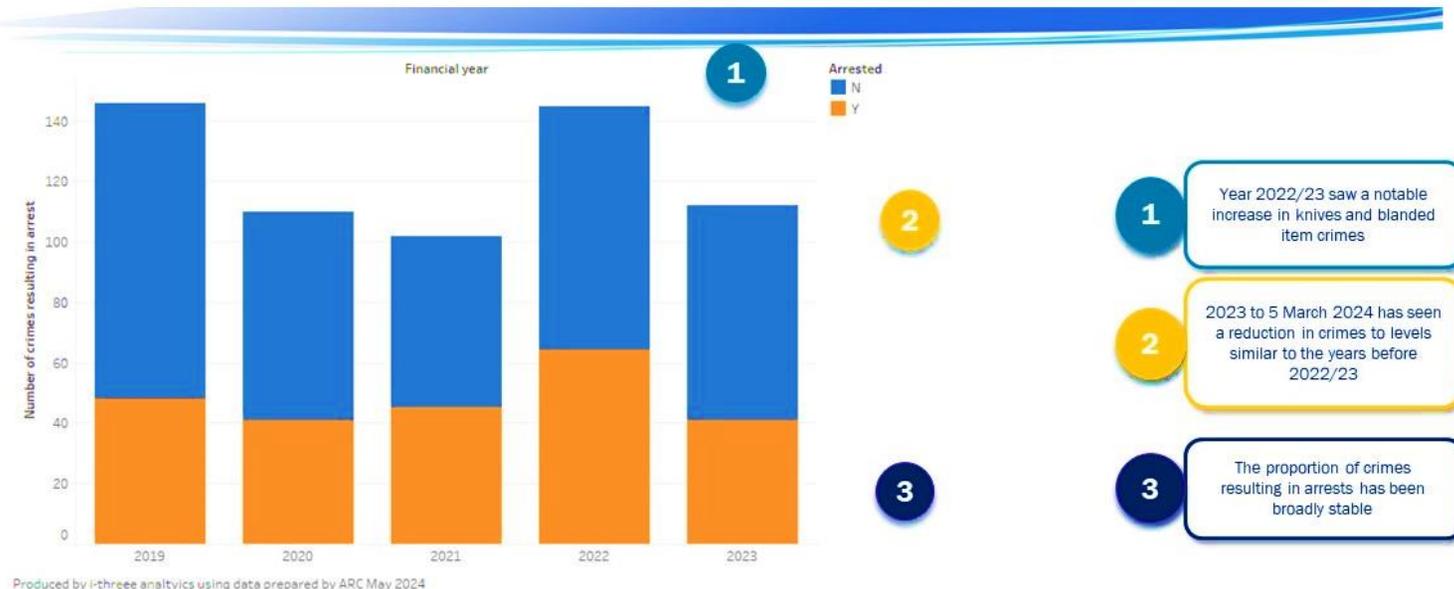
YJS contributed data and insights to the production of a Strategic Needs Analysis (SNA), to inform the SVS and the Head of Service is a core member of the SV Duty Leadership Group. Cheshire has relatively low levels of SV so does not have the infrastructure of a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). Lifting an approach from a large metropolitan city would be unlikely to deliver the same successes here so we have had to think differently about our approach. The SNA highlighted Domestic Abuse and Youth Intervention as two clear priority areas for reducing SV in Cheshire and revealed the extent to which SV affects children and young people. Amongst all forms of SV explored, children under 18 appear prominent amongst the victim and offender cohorts for possession of weapon offences and knife crime incidents.

Understandably, public concern about SV increases when people witness or experience it themselves – or when tragic events such as the murder of Brianna Ghey bring considerable media attention to it. Fear of knife crime and serious youth violence are also amplified by social media, with children being exposed to violent content that can distort their perceptions of safety in public spaces. Table 3 below shows in 2023, 28 serious violent offences were committed in Cheshire by children (convicted by the courts). This is a decrease of 19 from 2022 and the rate of serious youth violence (per 10,000 children) was only 2.7 for Cheshire in 2023 (less than 2022 and below both regional and national averages).

Table 3. Serious violence offences committed by children in Cheshire compared regionally and nationally

| | Year ending December 2023 | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | | 2023 | |
| YJS region | Number of SV offences | Rate of SV offences | Number of SV offences | Rate of SV offences | Number of SV offences | Rate of SV offences | Number of SV offences | Rate of SV offences |
| Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington | 58 | 5.9 | 32 | 3.2 | 47 | 4.5 | 28 | 2.7 |
| North West | 409 | 6.0 | 291 | 4.1 | 302 | 4.2 | 341 | 4.7 |
| East Midlands | 220 | 4.9 | 207 | 4.6 | 193 | 4.2 | 194 | 4.1 |
| Eastern | 327 | 5.5 | 348 | 5.8 | 316 | 5.2 | 369 | 6.0 |
| London | 1,143 | 13.8 | 1,030 | 12.4 | 868 | 10.4 | 859 | 10.5 |
| North East | 65 | 2.7 | 32 | 1.3 | 88 | 3.6 | 114 | 4.6 |
| South East | 366 | 4.5 | 307 | 3.8 | 283 | 3.6 | 321 | 4.1 |
| South West | 151 | 3.0 | 102 | 2.0 | 143 | 2.8 | 170 | 3.3 |
| Wales | 73 | 2.6 | 60 | 2.1 | 64 | 2.2 | 94 | 3.2 |
| West Midlands | 451 | 7.8 | 315 | 5.4 | 386 | 6.5 | 352 | 5.8 |
| Yorkshire | 259 | 5.0 | 250 | 4.8 | 263 | 5.0 | 255 | 4.9 |
| England and Wales | 3,464 | 6.3 | 2,942 | 3.9 | 2,906 | 5.2 | 3,069 | 5.5 |

The data in Figure 19 relates to numbers of arrests for knife crime across Cheshire. It confirms that while the number of children arrested for carrying or using knives increased slightly in 2022, it reduced in 2023 and have remained at broadly low levels for the last 5 years. Apart from two profoundly serious events with tragic outcomes, Cheshire has not seen the significant and sustained increase in knife crime experienced elsewhere in the country.



Volumes of youth knife crime have dropped in the current financial year, following a brief peak in 2022/23

Figure 19. Overall trend of knives and bladed items 2019-March 2024
 Chart reproduced with permission from Cheshire Constabulary

The comprehensive needs analysis that informed the Cheshire SVS showed 73% of youth justice children had convictions for violent offences, but also revealed a similar proportion of these children had themselves experienced violent victimisation *prior* to the onset of their own offending. Violence breeds violence and needs to be ‘treated’ in a similar way to transmittable diseases, which is why the Cheshire SVS has adopted a public health approach.

Contextual safeguarding partnerships are established at place and the YJS is an integral partner of these arrangements in all four areas. Good partnership and intelligence sharing with police (including cross border with Merseyside in particular, which is the major 'exporter' of county lines into Cheshire) ensures the National Referral Mechanism is applied appropriately. There have been several cross-force-operational examples of sensitively managed police investigations to tackle organised crime and protect Cheshire children, who have been exploited to supply drugs for high tier Merseyside OCGs.

YJS managers will continue to contribute to the design and delivery of multi-agency, contextual safeguarding training at place, particularly in relation to child criminal exploitation. Specialist independent experts in county-lines such as St Giles Trust via the joint Cheshire and Merseyside consortium training group have been commissioned. YJS also participates in safeguarding audits, rapid reviews, and independently chaired learning reviews when necessary.

11.8 Detention in police custody

Figure 20 shows the numbers of children detained overnight are extremely low and equates to fewer than five children per month across the three custody suites. This is typically fewer than 4% of children arrested by Cheshire police each month.

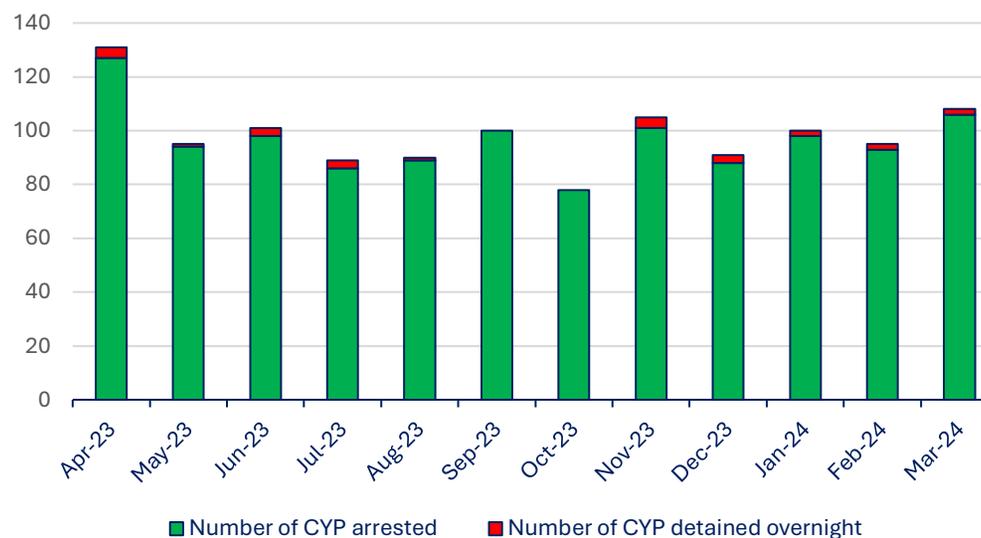


Figure 20. Numbers of children detained overnight in Cheshire compared to number of arrests from April 2023-March 2024

The low and unpredictable demand on local authorities for emergency Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) beds means they have not always been available when required, so occasionally children are detained in police custody as a last resort. Overnight detentions in custody will continue to be a standing agenda item for scrutiny at the YJS Management Board and as a partnership, we are taking decisive action. From 2024, Directors of Children’s Services will receive a notification every time a child from their area is detained overnight due to an alternative PACE bed not being available. The police representative on the YJS Management Board is also the senior accountable officer for police on all four children’s safeguarding partnerships and has formally raised the paucity of PACE beds at executive partnership Boards. Cheshire and Merseyside Commissioners will be exploring shared PACE beds as part of the Commissioning Workstreams for both Fostering and Residential as there is a lack of sufficiency in both areas. Consideration is being given to Residential and other Safe Spaces, but Foster Care is the preferred option. Whilst numbers of children detained

are low for each individual local authority, collectively a solution could be viable. This workstream is led by a commissioning manager in St Helens Council on behalf of the Cheshire and Merseyside local authority Directors of Children's Services.

11.9 Remands

There were only seven children in total across Cheshire remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation in 2023-2024 (Figure 21). All remands were for serious offences where a community alternative to remand was not viable. Four of the seven remanded were charged with murder or attempted murder and the remainder for section 18 wounding with intent and possession with intent to supply class A drugs. The child remanded for drug offences had an extensive history of offending and several periods in secure welfare placements previously. He had offended while remanded into local authority care and presented a significant risk of harm to other cared for children he had 'introduced' to organised crime.

Cheshire YJS retains the confidence of the courts by ensuring children are assessed promptly for robust packages of bail support as an alternative to remand. We have a proactive partnership with local children's social care and policing regarding remands into local authority care, but, as mentioned in Section 11.8, options are constrained by the paucity of safe, suitable accommodation where risk (to victim or wider public) and the child's own complex needs can be adequately managed. Placement sufficiency for local authorities is a national issue that the Association of Directors of Children's Services and others are very vocal on because accommodation for children facing serious criminal charges is an added complexity (and cost).

Through the current national framework for remands, the MOJ provides local authorities with a small financial contribution toward the costs of remands (Table 4). The allocation is based on historical bed night data*. A consultation on the funding of remands to youth detention accommodation was published in early 2024 and Cheshire YJS responded on behalf of the partnership, highlighting Cheshire’s low remand number. Table 4 shows the uncontrollable costs incurred by Cheshire local authorities (particularly for Warrington) due to CJS timescales. Local authorities have no control over length of time from initial charge through to conclusion of trial and a fundamental review and fairer funding formula for remands is required.

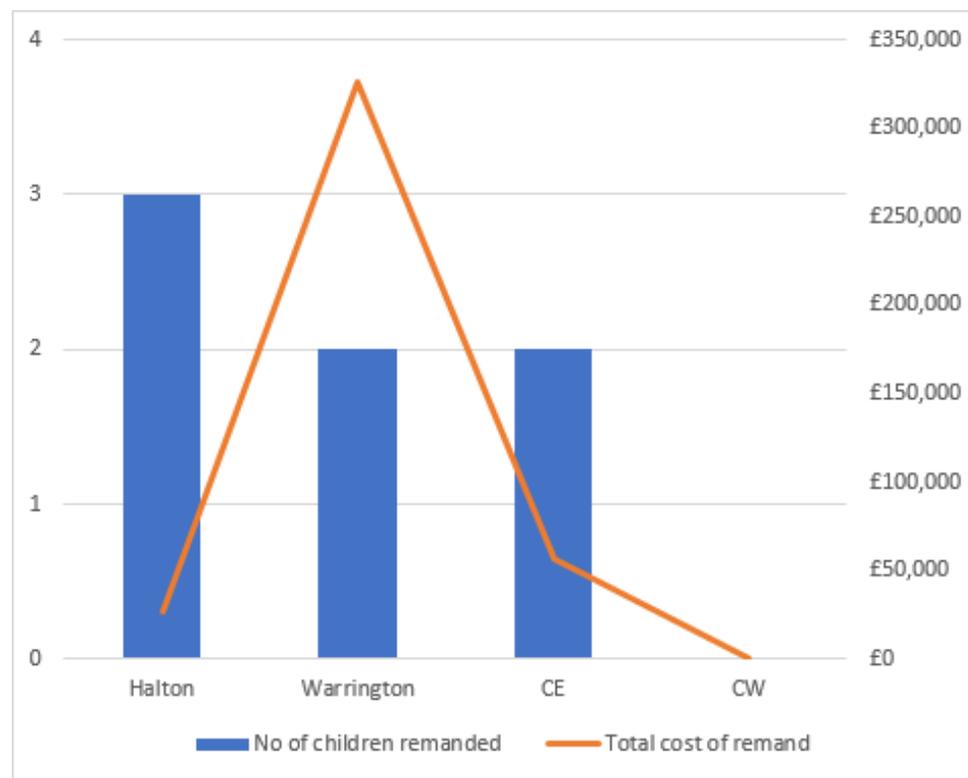


Figure 21. Number of children remanded in Cheshire 2023-2024

Table 4. Remand allocation from the MoJ for Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington 2023-2024

| Local Authority RIC | 2023/24 Budget* | 2023/24 Actual Spend | 2023/24 Remaining/Deficit |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Cheshire East | £107,483 | £56,088 | £51,395 |
| Cheshire West | £18,859 | £0 | £18,859 |
| Halton | £0 | £26,896 | -£26,896 |
| Warrington | £11,740 | £326,230 | -£314,490 |
| Total for YJS | £138,082 | £409,214 | -£271,132 |

Table 5 shows the number of bed nights children were remanded into local authority accommodation as a direct alternative to custody (note this is only for those children who were charged with offences that met the secure remand criteria).

The MOJ has committed to producing a national concordat relating to youth remands and is encouraging local Youth Justice partnerships to sign up to it. When the concordat is published, the Head of Service will ensure it is tabled at the YJS Management Board for consideration.

Table 5. Number of bed nights by local authority 2023/2024

| Remand to local authority accommodation | 2023/24 Bed Nights |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cheshire East | 14 |
| Cheshire West | 0 |
| Halton | 122 |
| Warrington | 0 |
| Total Cheshire wide for YJS | 136 |

11.10 Use of custody and constructive resettlement

The number of children in Cheshire who receive a custodial sentence is low, with typically fewer than 10 children across the whole of the county serving custodial sentences at any one time. Use of custody is rightly reserved for those children who have committed serious crimes, usually for serious violent or sexual offences.

Table 6 shows in 2023-2024, custodial sentences were imposed on nine children from Cheshire ranging from four months to 23 years. The 23-year sentence being imposed on the 16-year-old Warrington child sentenced for murder.

All children released from custody before reaching 18 have individual resettlement plans in line with the principles of constructive resettlement. The low number in Cheshire means we do not have a specialist resettlement team but our children do benefit from the continuity of multi-disciplinary support (YJS worker plus health and education professionals) that follows them from court, through their time in custody and after release.

Table 6. Number and duration of custodial sentences imposed on Cheshire children in 2023-2024

| Local Authority | Young Offenders Institute | Detention Training Order | Section 250 | Section 259 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cheshire East | 0 | 4 Months | 27 Months (2yrs 3m) 50 Months (4yrs 2m) | 0 |
| Cheshire West | 30 Months (2yrs 6m) | 0 | 40 Months (3yrs 3m) | 0 |
| Halton | 0 | 8 Months 12 Months | 0 | 0 |
| Warrington | 0 | 0 | 54 Months (4yrs 6m) | 276 Months (23 yrs) |
| Total for YJS | 30 Months (2yrs 6m) (1 child) | 24 Months (3 children) | 171 Months (14yrs 3m) (4 children) | 276 Months (23 yrs) (1 child) |

11.11 Working with families

Frontline practitioners are encouraged to adopt a whole family approach in their work. Where relevant and appropriate, practitioners work collaboratively with Early Help, Social Care and other locality-based services to ensure that caregivers have access to help and support where this is needed.

As a service, we are committed to promoting this approach within practice and will be reviewing opportunities to strengthen this area over the coming years.

Caregivers are also a key strand in our work to develop participation.

To have such a breakthrough is really empowering and showcases the benefits of joint working with the family!!
 (Social Worker)

“I didn't know what to expect. I felt like we was going to be judged because of what's happened. But that's not what they've been about. Everybody has been fantastic. What's been a really awful experience personally for us, the help and support that's there and things that they've done has been amazing”
 (Parent)

| Sign off, submission and approval | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Helen Brackenbury Chair of YJS Board Director of Children’s Social Care Cheshire West and Chester Council |  | 27 June 2024 |
| Tom Dooks YJS Head of Service |  | 27 June 2024 |

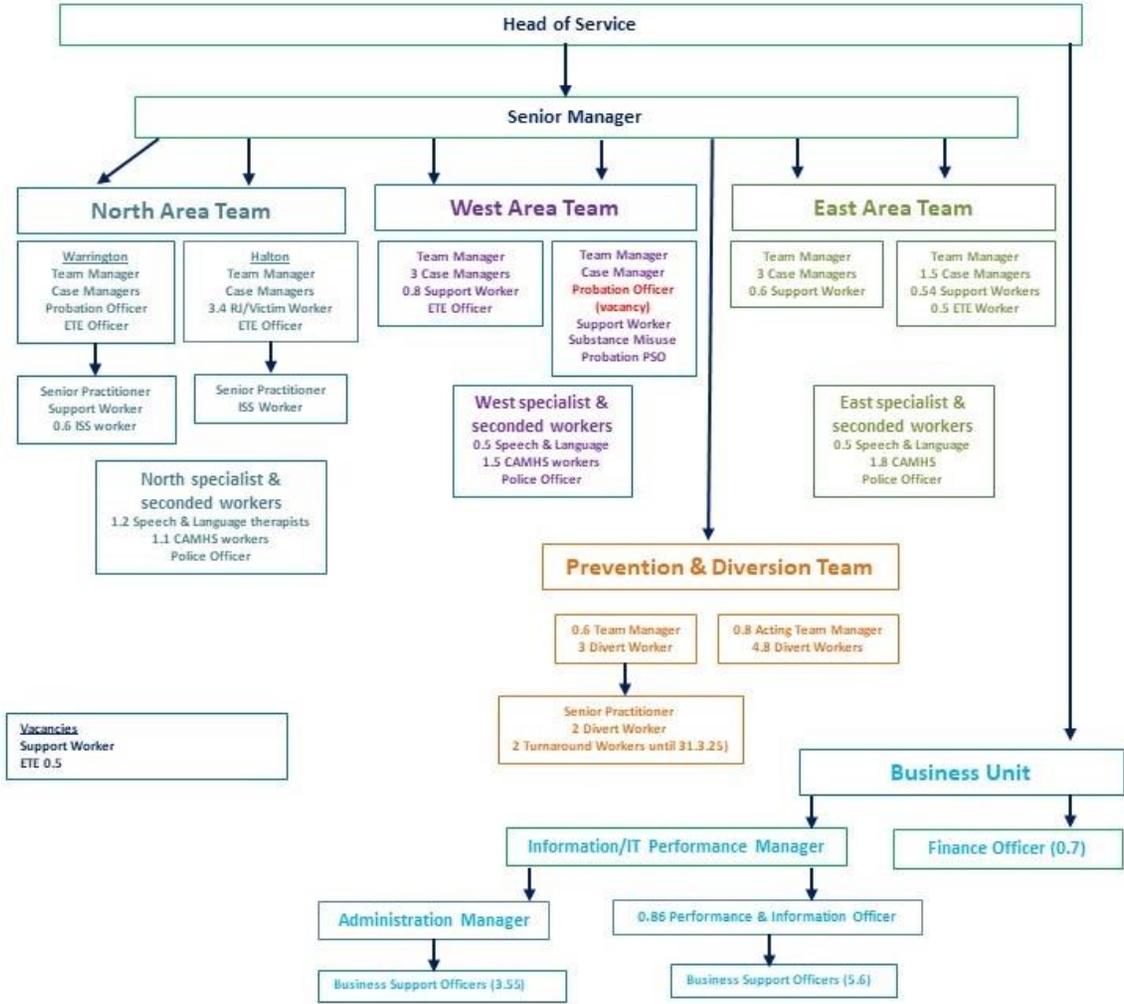
Appendices

Appendix A1: Key Performance Indicators (YJB data)

| KPI | Explanation | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| KPI 1 – Accommodation | % of children in the community and being released from custody with suitable accommodation arrangements | 100% (48/48) | 100% (66/66) | 98.9% (93/94) | 100% (87/87) |
| KPI 2 – Education, Training & Employment | % of children in the community and being released from custody attending a suitable ETE arrangement | 81.3% (39/48) | 75.8% (50/66) | 84% (79/74) | 68.6% (67/87) |
| KPI 3 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities /Additional Learning Needs | % of children who have an identified SEND need (or Additional Learning Need in Wales), are in suitable ETE and have a formal learning plan in place for the current academic year | 100% (8/8) | 90% (9/10) | 92.9% (13/14) | 78.6% (13/14) |
| KPI 4 – Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing | % of children in the community and being released from custody with a screened OR identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing; and of that the % of planned/offered interventions; of that % of children attending interventions. | 81.2% (36/48) Screened 55.5% (20/36) Offered 65% (13/20) Attended | 51.5% (34/60) Screened 67.6% (23/34) Offered 78.2% (18/23) Attended | 48.9% (46/94) Screened 65.2% (30/46) Offered 70% (21/30) Attended | 67.8% (59/87) Screened 72.8% (43/59) Offered 93% (40/43) Attended |
| KPI 5 – Substance misuse | % of children with a screened OR identified need for specialist treatment/intervention to address substance misuse; and of that the % of children with planned or offered intervention/treatment; and of that the % number of children attending intervention/treatment. | 16.6% (8/48) Screened 87.5% (7/8) Offered 100% (7/7) Attended | 27.2% (18/66) Screened 77.7% (14/18) Offered 85.7% (12/14) Attended | 43.1% (14/94) Screened 71.4% (10/14) Offered 100% (10/10) Attended | 22.9% (20/87) Screened 75% (15/20) Offered 100% (15/15) Attended |

| KPI | Explanation | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| KPI 6 – Out of Court Disposals (OOCDS) | % of OOCDS disposal interventions that are completed/not completed. | 91.7% (11/12) | 90.6% (29/32) | 98.2% (56/57) | 95.8% (46/48) |
| KPI 7 – Management board attendance | Monitoring senior partner representation at management boards and monitoring if partners contribute data from their individual services that identify areas of racial and ethnic disproportionality. | 5/5 | 2/5 | 3/5 | 5/5 |
| KPI 8 – Wider services | % children who are currently on either an Early Help (EH) plan; on a child protection (CP) plan or classified as Child in need (CIN) or a looked after child (LAC). | 31.3% (15/48) | 57.6% (38/66) | 48.9% (46/94) | 50.6% (44/87) |
| KPI 9 – Serious youth violence | Proportion of children convicted for SYV on the YOT Children. | 3.4% (7/206) | 7.8% (16/205) | 6% (11/182) | 4.4% (8/181) |
| KPI 10 – Victims | Number of victims who consent to be contact by the YOT, and of those, the number of victims: engaged with about Restorative Justice opportunities; asked their view prior to OOCDS decision-making and planning for statutory court orders; provided information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate services that support victims (when requested). | TBC | TBC | TBC | TBC |

Appendix A2. YJS Organisational Structure



Appendix B1: YJS Budget, Costs and Contributions

| Agency | Staffing Costs | Payments in kind | Other delegated funds | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Youth Justice Board | | | *1,248,480 | 1,248,480 |
| Local Authority | 49,022 | 697,599 | *1,651,138 | 2,397,759 |
| Police | 184,905 | | | 184,905 |
| Police Crime Commissioner | | | 217,928 | 217,928 |
| Probation | 144,638 | | 15,500 | 160,138 |
| Health | 336,689 | | 20,594 | 357,283 |
| Other | | | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| Total | 715,254 | 697,599 | 3,156,140 | 4,568,993 |

* Exact contributions may be subject to change

**Appendix B2: Staffing of the YJS by contract type;
No. of full-time equivalent staff**

| Type of Contract | Strategic Manager | Operational Manager | Practitioner | Admin | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Permanent | 2 | 6.51 | 37.2 | 11.83 | 57.54 |
| Fixed-term | | 0.8 | 3.54 | 1 | 5.34 |
| Vacant | | | 3 | | 3 |
| Seconded Probation | | | 2 | | 2 |
| Seconded Police | | | 3 | | 3 |
| Seconded Health (Substance Misuse) | | | 0.2 | | 0.2 |
| Seconded Health (Mental Health) | | | 3.9 | | 3.9 |
| Seconded Health (Speech/ language) | | | 2.4 | | 2.4 |
| Total | 2 | 7.31 | 55.24 | 12.83 | 77.38 |
| Disabled (self-classified) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Appendix B3: Staffing of the YJS by sex and ethnicity; No. of individual people

| Ethnicity | Managers Strategic | | Managers Operational | | Practitioners | | Administrative | | Referral Order Panel Volunteer | | Total | |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Asian | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Black | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 0 | 1 |
| Mixed | | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 2 |
| White | 1 | | 1 | 7 | 5 | 38 | | 14 | 9 | 35 | 16 | 94 |
| Any other ethnic group | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Not known | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 39 | 0 | 16 | 10 | 35 | 18 | 97 |



**Cheshire
Constabulary**



Dan Price
Police & Crime
Commissioner
for Cheshire

**Probation
Service**



NHS

Cheshire and Merseyside



**Cheshire West
and Chester**



WARRINGTON
Borough Council