**Nottingham City**

**Youth Justice Plan**

**Review**

**2025 – 2026**

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# 1. Introduction, vision, and strategy

Welcome to the Nottingham City Youth Justice Plan Review for 2025-2026. This document reflects on the achievements and activities of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) over the past year and outlines the vision and strategic priorities for the service and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for the forthcoming year. The plan offers a comprehensive evaluation of the opportunities and challenges facing the service. It integrates insights from our current improvement plan, guided by the YJB Performance Oversight Framework. Additionally, it incorporates recent learnings and recommendations from several peer reviews conducted in 2024 across Family Help (formerly Early Help) and the broader Children's Integrated Service (CIS), as well as allied partnership plans.

Our vision is to provide and improve access to services for children, diverting them from offending. We aim to develop and work in effective partnerships to reduce youth crime and protect the public. We are committed to encouraging children to repair the harm to victims and restore relationships with their communities. We value the diversity and identity of children and strive to help them achieve their full potential.

Nottingham as a Core City faces significant challenges, including high levels of deprivation, exclusions and disproportionality. This has necessitated a comprehensive rethink of how we deliver our services and utilise our resources. Consequently, in the coming year, the service will implement significant transformational changes in service delivery, by aligning our service to support those most in need. Our approach will prioritise early intervention, focusing on children at risk of entering the youth justice system and wider statutory support services. We aim to prevent escalation and provide timely, effective support and intervention.

We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation, leveraging data-driven insights, stakeholder feedback, and best practices to refine our approaches and deliver high-quality services to the children and families we serve. This plan sets out our strategic priorities and the actions we will take to achieve our goals, ensuring that we continue to make a positive impact on the lives of children and the wider community in Nottingham.



Sarah Nardone

Corporate Director for Children and Education


# 2. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

The YJS is a key component of the Family Help Adolescence Service within CIS. The service encompasses the Youth Service, two Multi-Systemic Therapy Teams, the Family Network Team, and Missing and Exploitation services. Additionally, it has access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, substance use support and a specialist restorative justice (RJ) service.

As an integral part of the Adolescence Service, the YJS adopts a child-first approach, ensuring that children who offend or are at risk of offending are treated primarily as children, with support tailored to their specific vulnerabilities and needs.

Effective governance, strong leadership, and partnerships work are central to the delivery of this plan. Governance structures are designed to ensure accountability, while partnerships with statutory, voluntary and community partners aim to provide holistic support for children.

The YJS is governed by the Youth Justice Service Management Board (YJSMB), comprising senior representatives from:

* Nottingham City Council (NCC)
* Nottinghamshire Police
* Nottingham City Probation
* Futures
* Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)
* His Majesty’s Court and Tribunal Service
* The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
* Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership (NNVRP)
* Youth Justice Board (YJB)
* Voluntary Sector - Ending Gang and Youth Violence Forum

The YJSMB, chaired by NCC’s Corporate Director for Children and Education, provides oversight and strategic direction, ensuring alignment with relevant local plans. Board members also engage in strategic partnerships across the city and county, aligning plans and priorities to address the needs of children and victims within the youth justice system.

Operational support from management Board partners includes a seconded Probation Officer, seconded Police Officers Police Community Support Officers and administrative support, YJS nurses and other relevant health services.

Joint commissioning with the ICB, OPCC and Nottinghamshire County Council will enable access to additional specialist mental health and speech, language and communication assessment and treatment provision, including support for children displaying harmful sexual behaviour, resources for those with speech, language, and communication needs, and enhanced access to support for children not on statutory orders.

# 3. Progress on the previous year:

Below is an update against the key priorities of Nottingham’s YJS plan 2024 – 2027. Overall, we have made significant progress in some areas, including First Time Entrants (FTEs), but we recognise some areas continue to need attention. There has also been exciting new areas of focus and development during the year. The peer reviews across CIS has been instrumental in identifying further areas and initiatives for development and we have been proactive in restructuring our service delivery, strengthening our early intervention options, and commissioning additional services to strengthen our RJ and victim offer.

**Update on priorities and key performance indicators in previous plan:**

**Priority 1 -** First time entrants / Diversion

Nottingham City’s FTE rate continues to present as a concern. As such, reducing the number of children who become FTEs and promoting diversion continues to be one of our main strategic priorities. Over the last year, we have seen a significant reduction in the numbers of FTEs as we continue to implement solutions to address this area. We have drawn on findings and recommendations from research conducted by the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University in the high numbers of FTEs in Nottinghamshire. A working group has worked extensively to explore options across the YJS sector regionally and nationally to improve our diversionary and Out of Court Disposal (OoCD) process.

**Chart 1:** *FTEs rate per 100,000 of 10-17 population*

The increased use of Outcome 22, the reduced usage of Youth Cautions, the introduction of motoring diversion and deferred cautions schemes, alongside a targeted programme of staff training, have directly contributed to a c.50% reduction in the FTE rate over recent quarters. Between January and December 2024 there were 64 first time entrants in Nottingham.

Although Nottingham’s rate remains in the highest quarter of YJS authorities in England and Wales, there has been a significant reduction in the FTE rate, with the latest rate of 209 per 100,000 10-17’s being less than half the rate of 434 per 100,000 in January – December 2023. The average rate for the YJS family of authorities, plus the average for the Core Cities has remained relatively static over this time, as shown on the chart 2.

**Chart 2:** *FTEs rate comparison*

By looking at a comparison of the different types of interventions children have received over the last 2 years, we can see the trend in reduction of the FTE rate can in large part be shown by the increased use of Outcome 22 disposals since July 2023, the reduction in use of Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Cautions since October 2023 and the reduction in use of Referral Orders since April 2023.

Alongside the transformation of Family Help to include an improved adolescence early intervention offer, this has culminated in collaboration with Police and Crown Prosecution Service partners to reform the Out of Court process to include motoring diversion and a Deferred prosecution scheme. Initially piloted as the use of deferred cautions, this was expanded in April 2025 to include deferred prosecutions to encompass those cases where the child has provided a no-comment interview and otherwise would have been suitable for OOCD. This gives the Police the option to put on hold the prosecution/caution and apply Outcome 22 until diversionary, educational or intervention activity is undertaken within a specified time frame and aims to address the disparity between those being advised to provide no-comment interviews or have a mistrust of the criminal justice system, which Lammy (2017) identifies adversely impacts upon those within the black and mixed-race community. Additionally, a cross-authority working group has been established to explore options of further expanding diversion to include an additional deferred prosecution scheme to bring previously excluded offences into scope.

As noted in relation to priority 4, we now have an established offer for RJ that includes victim voice being heard in relation to all interventions, RJ Practitioner attendance at OoCD panels to represent victim views, and a full RJ offer made to all victims, with a range of options of involvement including indirect and direct communication and direct reparation.

We have worked with the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership Education lead to implement a process to enable education provisions to support children at risk of offending or who have offended to remain in education. Part of this process is designed to ensure that education providers have awareness of our early intervention and OoCD panel process and offers, that information about children is shared in a timely and appropriate manner, and that education providers are equipped with relevant information to provide the necessary safeguards and support and to help manage any risks that arise from a child’s behaviour without the presumption that the child requires a criminal justice response.

Over the coming year we intend to continue to develop our work around FTEs and strengthen our diversionary options.

**Priority 2 -** Children from groups which are over-represented.

For the period ending March 2024, Table 1 and Chart 3 indicate that the mixed ethnicity group is over-represented in the YJS offending cohort. Children of mixed ethnicity constitute 28% of the offending cohort, despite representing only 12% of the 10–17-year-old population.

**Table 1:** *Over-represented ethnic groups in local YJS offending population, year ending March 2024 (YJB Disparity toolkit)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnic group | Children cautioned or sentenced by ethnicity & gender 2023/24 | Share of total  | 2021 Census 10-17 population by ethnic group | Share of total % | % Point Difference | Over-represented, offending pop >10 and statistically significant |
| Asian | 7 | 5% | 5,240 | 18% | -14% | No |
| Black | 20 | 13% | 4,010 | 14% | -1% | No |
| Mixed | 43 | 28% | 3,599 | 12% | 16% | Yes |
| Other | 4 | 3% | 1,254 | 4% | -2% | No |
| Ethnic minority groups | 74 | 49% | 14,103 | 49% | 0% | No |
| White | 78 | 51% | 14,805 | 51% | 0% | No |

**Chart 3:** *Ethnic Group proportions – offending population and census*

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The YJS partnership is committed to providing equitable and inclusive services to all children and the victims of offending. The YJS and Nottinghamshire YJS developed a joint Diversity Strategy and Framework during the past year, supported by a statutory partner delivery group with contributions from the OPCC and NNVRP. A Joint Delivery Group, chaired by the Head of NNVRP, meets bi-monthly and reports to both YJSMBs.

The strategic vision is to:

* Support the delivery of services which promote transparency, accountability, and trust; where disproportionality exists, this will be explored and understood and action taken to address disparities in outcomes.
* Support the delivery of inclusive services which meet diverse needs; including understanding how justice processes impact on and are accessed by children, according to their protected characteristics.
* Outputs will be designed to integrate into operational processes and influence strategic decision-making.

To create focus, initial priorities have been collectively agreed as race; gender and disability, specifically children with special educational and neurodevelopmental needs and those experiencing sustained mental health difficulties.

Findings and outcomes from the subgroup are also reported to the Reducing Reoffending Board and the Local Criminal Justice Board chaired by the Commissioner of the OPCC. Both meetings are also attended by the Head of Family Help - Adolescence.

**Priority 3 -** Strengthening Early Intervention / Prevention

Our 2024-2027 youth justice plan highlighted an increasing need for early intervention to support children and prevent their escalation into statutory services, which is crucial for reducing FTEs and addressing disproportionality. Over the past year, significant changes have been implemented in the YJS structure, Family Help service, and their integration with other children's support services in Nottingham.

As noted in the introduction, a series of peer reviews across CIS in Nottingham have informed the development of the new YJS structure and the broader Adolescence and Family Help service offer. These developments align with the government's emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The restructure aims to position the Family Help service and the Adolescence service to fully embrace new initiatives, including the development of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme and Young Futures Prevention Panels (YFPP).

As part of service restructure, the number of Adolescence Family Help Workers has doubled from 14 to 30. This has enhanced the service's capacity to provide targeted and tailored early interventions for children. Youth Development Workers are also embedded within the Adolescence service structure to support early intervention and prevention efforts and develop partnership work with voluntary and community partners.

Our trauma-aware Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) teams offer intensive support for children needing additional assistance. Their 24/7 approach ensures that those with complex needs and at risk of statutory intervention receive the necessary support to de-escalate initial concerns.

We are also strengthening our processes to better manage cases of exploitation and missing children. A dedicated lead has been appointed specifically for children who are missing and at risk of exploitation. They will spearhead the development of a comprehensive city and county-wide strategy and pathway, collaborating with partners to ensure a unified and coordinated approach to disrupting exploitation activities across the region.

**Priority 4 -** Restorative Approaches and Victims

In 2024, the YJS developed a comprehensive victim policy and established a partnership with Remedi - Restorative Service to enhance RJ and victim engagement. This collaboration has significantly bolstered the YJS's restorative and reparation services by ensuring that victim perspectives are integrated into both pre-court and post-court outcomes. It facilitates the sharing of victim views at OoCD and Referral Order (RO) panels, offers extensive RJ services, and increases the availability of trained volunteers for RO Panels and restorative practices.

To further prioritise the victim's perspective, the YJS will conduct regular reviews of service provision in collaboration with Remedi. Future actions to be implemented include training case managers on restorative approaches and RO Panel procedures, continuously reviewing the victim support offer, implementing quarterly data monitoring, auditing and reporting to assess victim engagement and satisfaction, collaborating with police partners to review shared victim information, and embedding victim considerations into case supervision and practice.

**Priority 5 -** Detention in police and youth custody

In the 12 months leading up to the end of March 2025, ten children were remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) and one child was remanded to Local Authority Accommodation (LAA). As with all custodial outcomes and serious incidents, children remanded to either LAA or YDA are reviewed by a quarterly multi-agency Custodial Outcomes and Serious Incidents evaluation panel. The panel conducts reflective audits on each child, capturing opportunities for learning and practice improvement. These insights are shared through learning briefing notes or short form training with the wider service and partners, including the Police, education, social care, health, and mental health sectors.

During the past year, we have collaborated with Nottinghamshire YJS, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Children's Care, and Nottinghamshire Police to review, update and implement the cross-authority Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) guidance. The review was informed by the Youth Remand Concordat, ‘Working Together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children on remand’. The Concordat brings together learning from the Review of Custodial Remands for Children (2022) and recommendations from the Joint Thematic Inspection of Work with Children Subject to Remand to Youth Detention, conducted by HM Inspectorate of Probation, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, and Ofsted, published on 23rd November 2023.

To support the implementation of the guidance, monthly PACE partnership meetings are convened to review cases of children held in police custody on remand for the courts. This includes monitoring children who have been detained and subsequently granted court bail. The YJS also reviews custody notifications received from the police and provides advice to children's social care on additional support and/or bail conditions that can be implemented to prevent children from being detained overnight. The aim is to achieve a continued reduction in the number of children detained on remand.

Following the implementation of this review a new policy has been implemented to ensure that the officer seeking remand first discusses a bail package with social care. There has been a notable reduction in cases that are remanded to court. In a six-month period, the force has seen 10 children remanded to court for PACE matters.

We have also worked with Nottinghamshire YJS to update the commissioning arrangements for our appropriate adult service. Quarterly meetings are held to review data and ensure the service is used in a timely and appropriate manner, with any concerns raised at the monthly PACE partnership meetings.

We remain committed to supporting children in police custody and will continue to work with Nottinghamshire Police and Nottinghamshire YJS to agree processes and offers to ensure we provide an appropriate service that benefits children.

Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is currently finalising a strategic commissioning arrangement with strategic partners. Following this the recruitment of a Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Nurses will be available to provide consultation and direct work within both city and county YJSs. This initiative is funded through a partnership, with contributions from the ICB, OPCC, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire YJS. This will enable early identification of speech, language, communication needs for children, ensuring they receive effective support, alongside mental health assessment and treatment for children on out of court disposals.

**Performance over the previous year**

This section provides an overview of the data for the YJS KPIs with descriptions of current performance against nationally measured targets. Comparative and local performance data are also presented where relevant in relation to the YJS’s aim to reduce the number of FTEs, reoffending, and in the use of custody (both remand and sentencing).

**Local context:**

* The 2021 Census results for Nottingham City show a total of 65,972 children under the age of 18. Among them, 28,908 are aged between 10-17 years. The ethnic composition of this age group is diverse, with 51% identifying as White, 18% as Asian, 14% as Black, 12% as Mixed, and 4% as Other. This data underscores the multicultural nature of Nottingham City's youth population.
* In 2019, Nottingham was ranked as the 12th most deprived city in England by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Deprivation significantly impacts many families, with 27% of individuals aged 16 and over and 39% of children aged 0-15 living in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This highlights the substantial challenges faced by a large portion of the city's population.

**Additional Key Performance Indicators**

Table 2 below shows the interventions that have resulted in FTEs in the period July 2022 - December 2023, and chart 4 shows some of the main interventions in chart form. The number of Out of Court assessments has also been included – all those shown as receiving an OoCD on the chart below will first have been subject to an assessment. Adding this shows that the reduction in the use of some FTE disposals is not due to a drop off in referrals or assessments.

 **Table 2**: *July 2023 – December 2024 outcomes*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Outcome | Total FTEs |
| Referral Order | 63 |
| Youth Caution | 24 |
| Youth Conditional Caution | 12 |
| Conditional Discharge | 10 |
| Fine | 8 |
| Youth Rehabilitation Order | 6 |
| Section 250 (was Section 91 Order | 2 |
| Absolute Discharge | 1 |
| Detention + Training Order (Custody) | 1 |
| Youth Rehabilitation Order ISS Requirement Band 1 | 1 |
| Youth Rehabilitation Order ISS Requirement Band 2 | 1 |

**Chart 4:** *April 2022 – March 2025 interventions*



The YJS has maintained a well-established process for screening and triaging referrals. The process is overseen by the chair of the OoCD panel, in collaboration with YJS Police and a YJS Adolescence Service Team Manager. Referrals are allocated for comprehensive assessments, which are completed with and their parents or carers prior to the panel meeting.

Since April 2023, most children eligible for OoCD interventions have been referred to the OoCD panel process for full assessment and intervention delivery. The panel includes relevant partners to ensure robust decision-making and optimal outcomes for children. The panel members include:

* YJS
* Social Care
* Police
* Education Welfare Services
* Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
* Drug and Alcohol Services
* Family Help Services

In 2024, we collaborated with academic partners to research and better understand the FTE picture in the region. The findings led to the establishment of a cross-authority working group to review the OoCD process. The group explored various models used across the country before finalising the pathway and approaches enshrined in an updated OoCD protocol.

Colleagues from Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire YJS, and other partners reviewed and updated the joint OoCD protocol. Changes have been made to emphasise Child First, trauma-aware, and neurodevelopmentally aware approaches. The updated protocol promotes the use of the Child Gravity Matrix and increases opportunities for effective, swift, and proportionate diversion. Additionally, the scope of the triage process has been widened to ensure that decisions regarding the range of support and interventions for children referred to the OoCD process can be made promptly and based on individual needs.

**Children sentenced to custody**

The YJS prioritises maintaining children in the community, using custody only as a last resort. When custody is imposed, a full multi-agency case review ensures:

* Avoidance of unnecessarily negative outcomes for children.
* Exploration of all local community-based alternatives.
* Non-discriminatory presentation of bail packages and sentencing proposals.
* Focus on successful resettlement from the outset and throughout the sentence.

The YJS co-chairs the quarterly multi-agency Custodial Outcomes and Serious Incidents evaluation panel. As previously noted, insight and learning is shared across partner agencies.

 **Chart 5:** *Custodial sentences quarterly data 2022/2023 to 2024/2025*

Between April 2024 and March 2025, there have been 14 new custodial outcomes involving 11 children. This represents a slight decrease compared to the previous year. The latest data published by the YJB for January 2024 to December 2024 indicates a slight reduction in the custodial rate, from 0.4 per 1,000 children aged 10-17 to 0.39 (Chart 5 below).

 **Chart 6:** *Use of custody rates 2022/2023 to 2024/2025*

**Reoffending**

Table 3 provides a summary of the Reoffending Frequency Rate and Binary Rate sourced from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Police National Computer (PNC).

**Table 3:** *Re-offending after 12 months - 3 months cohort*

For the latest period available from the Youth Justice Board (January 2023 – March 2023), there were 43 children in the offending cohort. Of these, 11 children re-offended, committing a total of 53 re-offences. This results in a binary rate of 25.6% and a frequency rate of 4.82.

Comparatively, during the same period last year, there was a slightly larger cohort of 48 offenders and 12 re-offenders. Although the binary rate remained similar, the frequency rate was higher due to the increased number of re-offences (43 re-offences).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Outcome dates** | **Reoffences/ offender** | **Reoffences/ reoffender** | **%Reoffending (reoffenders/ offenders)** |
| **Latest Nottingham**  | Jan - Mar 23 | 1.23 | 4.82 | 25.6 |
| **YJS family Average** | Jan - Mar 23 | 1.61 | 4.79 | 33.6 |
| **Core City Average** | Jan - Mar 23 | 1.61 | 4.49 | 35.9 |
| **National average** | Jan - Mar 23 | 1.5 | 4.53 | 33.1 |
| **Nottingham (2022)** | Jan - Mar 22 | 0.85 | 3.42 | 25 |
| **Nottingham (2021)** | Jan - Mar 21 | 0.65 | 2.17 | 30 |

Nottingham's reoffending rates are notably lower than the YJS Family Average and Core City Average, which indicates the effectiveness of the current measures in place. The stable binary rate and comparative successes are positive signs that the interventions and strategies implemented are proving to be effective in reducing reoffending.

**Key Performance Indicators**

Currently, we continue to face challenges in seamlessly capturing the necessary information to efficiently inform all the required KPIs. To address the operational need for enhanced information sharing across the partnership, we have implemented data solutions.

Our processes are designed to obtain critical information about children referred to the YJS shortly after the referral is received. This includes details on the child's experience with Family Help and CIS, special educational needs and disabilities, education provision, Education and Health Care plans, substance use, and health provision. However, obtaining the relevant information/data from partners for some KPIs remains resource-intensive and problematic.

While we await the YJB development of Tableau dashboards for cross-region comparative analysis of data supplied by YJSs, we have conducted our own local analysis of the Nottingham City YJS cohort using our data and available business intelligence tools.

Chart 7 is an extract from our local analysis of the Nottingham City YJS cohort, covering children open to the YJS between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

**Chart 7:** *YJS Cohort*



Between April 2024 and March 2025, the YJS engaged with 540 unique children. The demographic breakdown was as follows: 48% White, 25% Mixed Heritage, 14% Black/Black British, and 5% Asian/Asian British. This contrasts with the Nottingham 10–17-year-old population, which is 51% White, 12% Mixed, 14% Black, and 18% Asian, highlighting an over-representation of children of mixed ethnicity.

During this period, 15% of the children had an open child protection plan, and 14% were looked after. Notably, 105 children were under 14 at the time of their YJS intervention.

Regarding special educational needs (SEN), 17% of the children had identified SEN, with 10% having an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). This is significantly higher compared to 2% of Nottingham pupils and 3.7% nationally.

Additionally, 25% of the children were identified as not in education, employment, or training at the start of their intervention. Among these, 22% were looked after children, 27% had either child protection or child in need plans, and 12% had an EHCP.

**Standards for children**

**Findings from most recent standards for children in justice self-assessments**

 All YJS are expected to comply with the requirements of ‘National standards for Children in Youth Justice Services’ published in 2019. There is also a requirement to undertake periodic self-assessments when requested by the YJB, to evidence the YJS is compliant with national standards. In 2023, the self-assessment was against National Standard 2: Work in Court.

Findings from that self-assessment identified the need to strengthen our work with victims. We have since instigated our relationship with Remedi Restorative Service to address that concern. We are also continuing our own internal programme of audits and developing this side of our service area as part of the transformation to a Family Help Adolescence Service.

**Learning from QA**

**Internal audits**

The YJS has been collaborating with its YJB regional oversight manager to enhance the service's internal auditing process. Following a quality assurance benchmarking exercise on OoCD assessments, all team managers participated in one-on-one sessions with the regional oversight manager to review the management oversight of cases.

These sessions identified both areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Strengths included effective information sharing between community and custody stakeholders, persistent efforts to engage children in comfortable spaces, clear documentation of risk meetings and decisions, referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to safeguard siblings, well-planned transitions to Probation, and the use of police flags for high-risk cases.

Areas for development included ensuring all new information, especially from custodial establishments, is incorporated into AssetPlus and its implications for the child are considered. The importance of recognising the impact of trauma and analysing children's diversity needs was highlighted. It was noted that high-risk panels would benefit from being more multidisciplinary, with greater input from social care and exploitation leads.

These observations have provided valuable insights to refine our processes and improve outcomes for children. Our next steps include continuing to work with our YJB regional oversight manager and facilitating additional PDAT training for all Adolescence Family Help staff, both experienced and new. Practice guidance had been issued to reinforce expectations for the quality and timeliness of statutory processes, including OoCD and court work. The creation of an Adolescence Service has necessitated a re-issue and to emphasise QA expectations and thresholds for AssetPlus and PDAT completion, addressing diversity, trauma, plain English, and strength-based approaches.

Four Adolescence supervisors have also been added to the workforce to lead the QA of OoCD work using established frameworks and tools.

Additionally, high-risk panel membership is being reviewed to ensure appropriate representation for children open to social care and those at risk of exploitation.

**Risks and Issues**

During the 2024-25 period, we made significant progress in addressing the critical challenges outlined in our youth justice plan 2024 - 2027. Collaborating with our partners, we reduced the number of FTEs entering the youth justice system. This priority will remain at the forefront of our efforts in the coming year, alongside our ongoing initiatives to tackle disproportionality within the system.

The review of the YJS staffing structure and the necessity for closer collaboration with the youth service and broader early help service led to an extensive staff consultation process, culminating in the development and implementation of the city's Family Help and Adolescence service. Embedding the new service and new ways of working is our main challenge for the coming year. As we embed the new structure, we are acutely aware of the additional challenges that lie ahead.

The high numbers of school exclusions and the persistent lack of engagement in education remain significant risk factors for the service. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including targeted interventions, enhanced support mechanisms, and collaborative efforts with education and wider partners. Furthermore, we recognise the critical need for substantial time, investment, and partnership engagement to develop a coordinated and robust framework and strategy to combat exploitation across the city and county.

While implementing our new way of working, we acknowledge it is imperative that we enhance QA activities, to ensure we are effectively monitoring practice, evaluating outcomes, and driving service reform.

We will also have to embed several new recruits and roll out a robust induction and training package that reflects the new service ways and ambition for children.

Our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation remains unwavering. We will continue to leverage data-driven insights, stakeholder feedback, and best practices to refine our approaches and deliver high-quality services to the young people and families we serve.

# 4. Plans for the coming year:

**Child first**

In Nottingham, we adhere to the four tenets of the Child First principles: seeing children as children, developing pro-social identities for positive outcomes, collaborating with children, and promoting diversion.

YJS staff prioritise building trusted relationships with children and families, focusing on trauma awareness, restorative practice, neurodiversity, identity, mental health, and emotional well-being. They engage and empower children, incorporating their experiences, views, wishes, and aspirations into assessments, reports, and intervention plans. The relational model recognises staff working alongside children as experts in their own lives, allowing space for relationship-building to facilitate sustainable change. The strength-based approach aims to enhance what works well and tailor interventions to support desistance.

The YJS is also working with partners to implement a Child First approach across the adolescence system. Currently, the Police representative on the YJSMB is developing a Child First strategy for Nottinghamshire Police. The child first approach is also embedded in the NNVRP Strategy 2025/26, a multi-agency public health initiative focused on understanding the drivers and impacts of serious violence, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention.

To support the adoption of Child First practices across the adolescence system, all partners are committed to undertaking self-assessments against the Child First Framework to identify areas for improvement. This includes colleagues from Police, Education, Health, and Community Safety Partnerships. The self-assessment responses will form a system-wide improvement plan for delivery during the remainder of 2025/26, embedding the Child First approach as positive practice across the system, aligned with the seven principles of the Child Rights-Based approach.

**Resources and services**

The YJS is compliant with the YJB grant conditions. To ensure budgetary balance, the YJS receives financial contributions from local authority core funding and the MoJ/YJB grant. These contributions are supplemented by partner contributions, either in kind or cash, in accordance with their statutory responsibilities as outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. These contributions reflect the partners' commitment to the YJS.

Additionally, the YJS actively seeks further grant funding opportunities through collaborative efforts with relevant partners. Our primary focus remains on ensuring that all funds are utilised to deliver comprehensive Youth Justice Services, ensuring that children and families receive the appropriate support.

***Financial contributions of YJS partners as of 1st April 2025***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Partner | 23/24 | 24/25 | 25/26 |
| Notts Police | 53,180 | 53,180 | 53,180 |
| Notts ICB  | 32,225 | 32,225 | 32,225 |
| National Probation  | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 |
| YJB | 1,016,783 | 1,078,221 | 1,093,939 |
| NCC | 1,043,024 | 1,080,271 | 1,231,803 |
| Notts YJS  | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| TOTAL (£) | **2,152,712** | **2,256,397** | **2,423,647** |

**Board development**

The Chair of the YJSMB was recently appointed, following their new role as Corporate Director for Children and Education in February. The Vice Chair also recently appointed is Head of NNVRP. This leadership change has introduced a renewed focus and commitment to guiding the YJS in a new direction. The aim is to enhance service delivery and more effectively recognise and respond to the complex needs of children, ultimately achieving better outcomes.

The recent peer review of the YJSMB, championed by the Chair, highlighted the board members' commitment to collaboration and the richness of data presented at meetings. It also noted how board members have integrated YJS priorities into their own agencies. This can be attributed to board members having clearly defined portfolio leads for key areas of YJS business, which enhances both operational and strategic interactions with board members regarding their service offerings and portfolio areas.

However, the review also noted several areas that would enhance board development. Over the coming year, the YJS will continue to address those areas and facilitate development workshops for board members, focusing on the following recommendations from the peer review:

* Shifting focus from the 'YJS Cohort' to a 'one child' vision.
* Reviewing the YJSMB's terms of reference to reflect a wider adolescent cohort remit.
* Conducting further development sessions to set priorities and roles.
* Increasing integration into the service through enhanced visibility and connection.
* Implementing measures to ensure the board's effectiveness in driving improvements.

**Workforce development**

Our workforce development plan focuses on enhancing the skills and capabilities of our team to better serve the community. Following the service restructure, ongoing transformation work and a recruitment drive, we are investing in a comprehensive staff training program that emphasises continuous professional development. The program will promote effective assessments, trauma-aware interventions, early intervention strategies, restorative approaches, and effective communication techniques. Additionally, we aim to foster a collaborative working environment by encouraging cross-departmental partnerships both internally and externally with statutory and community partners.

We are committed to building a resilient and knowledgeable workforce by equipping our staff with the necessary tools, ongoing training, and support. By prioritising workforce development, we aim to adapt to the evolving needs of our children and improve service delivery and outcomes. Our goal is to create a sustainable and effective service that responds proactively to the challenges faced by children, ensuring they receive timely and appropriate support.

**Evidence Based Practice and Innovation**

During 2025/26, the YJS will support the NNVRP in trialling the YFPP. At the Home Office's request, 20 police force areas with Violence Reduction Units in England and Wales will participate.

Prevention Partnerships will form strategic local partnerships to enhance systems for identifying and supporting at-risk youth (aged 10-17) to prevent crime involvement. Initially, YFPPs will establish multi-agency panels at the local authority level to identify, assess, and refer vulnerable children not engaged with statutory services.

**Education**

The YJSMB representative for education services is actively working to enhance data sharing between education, the YJS, and the wider ClS. The goal is to ensure that the educational provisions for all YJS children are easily identifiable, thereby mitigating additional risks associated with part-time timetables, low attendance, exclusion, and home education wherever possible. Currently, the YJS has access to data for all newly permanently excluded children and the cohort for every Fair Access meeting in the city.

Prior to establishing improved information sharing, an analysis was conducted on the YJS cohort in 2024. Of the 174 school-aged pupils open to the service, 141 had been permanently excluded from school. This highlights the significant overlap between these two cohorts of children and underscores the necessity for closer collaboration between both areas.

An experienced Education Welfare Officer is a regular member of the OoCD Panel. The officer provides information about the educational arrangements in place for all school-aged pupils who are part of the panel, as well as any other relevant information.

The YJS is also working with the Education Division’s Inclusion Manager, to support the development of an Inclusion Strategy, aimed at reducing permanent exclusions and enhancing inclusive practice in schools. They will also seek to integrate services for children, particularly in behaviour and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities with the adolescence service offer. Additionally, the Education Division will map all available interventions for children and outline how these can be accessed to improve the use of interventions in supporting young people at risk of exclusion and criminality.

**Serious Youth Violence**

The NNVRP has introduced the Beyond Violence Strategy for 2025-2029, focusing on preventing and reducing serious violence, particularly among children and young people. The strategy is informed by the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) 2025, which provides a detailed analysis of serious violence in Nottinghamshire.

With the Serious Violence Duty effective from January 31, 2023, the NNVRP, under the OPCC, is leading the implementation of this duty. The Strategic Violence Reduction Board, attended by the Chair of the YJSMB, governs these initiatives. The YJS collaborates with specified authorities to develop and implement the city's Serious Violence Local Response Plan for 2025/26, ensuring responsiveness to local needs. Oversight is provided by the city's Strategic Serious Violence Group, attended by the YJS Service Manager.

The Beyond Violence Strategy, informed by the Serious Violence SNA and engagement with partners, children, and communities, aims to strengthen multi-agency responses to ensure positive outcomes for children and communities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

**Beyond Violence Strategy Priorities:**

* **Supporting Girls and Young Women:** Strengthening gender-informed prevention and early intervention, acknowledging their unique needs and pathways into offending.
* **Addressing Over-Representation:** Implementing the YJS Diversity and Disproportionality Strategy to understand and address the journey of Black and mixed heritage boys into the justice system.
* **Tackling Drug Supply and Exploitation:** Focusing on county lines and supporting children exploited by individuals or groups through child-first approaches.
* **Collaborating with Education:** Ensuring inclusive, evidence-informed interventions and safe environments to prevent serious violence.

In approaching these priority areas, and wider work outlined in the Strategy, the NNVRP will focus attention on delivering child first, trauma informed and shame sensitive approaches in the development of policy, practice, services, and interventions.

As well as strategic leadership and coordination of the response to serious violence at a systemic level, the NNVRP continue to commission evidence informed interventions to support children and young people, who are impacted by serious violence. This includes the Another Way Programme in conjunction with the YJS, a focused deterrence model aimed at supporting children and young people who are involved in group offending.

# 5. Service development priorities

Our primary focus for the upcoming year will be the enhancement of our adolescent service offer. Whilst we have successfully implemented our new structure, we recognise that substantial efforts are still required to fully integrate and develop the service.

In parallel, we will continue our efforts on FTEs to sustain the current trend of reducing the number of FTEs entering the youth justice system. Addressing disproportionality will also remain a priority, guided by our joint Diversity Strategy and Framework. Additionally, we have prioritised work with our education colleagues, acknowledging that exclusions are a significant factor for children becoming known to the Youth Justice System.

Regarding exploitation, we will address actions outlined in our peer review to strengthen our work in this area.

Our approach to these areas is detailed in the five key priority areas outlined below and can also be referenced in the YJS improvement plan and peer review.

**Key Priorities for the coming year:**

1. **Developing the Adolescence Youth Justice Offer**

Developing the adolescence offer will be the services main priority for 2025 – 2026.

**To achieve this, we will:**

1. **Re-branding:** Re-brand the service to reflect its ethos and practice. This will involve co-production work with children and families to choose the service name and logo that resonates with them.
2. **Profile of Need:** Implement a Profile of Need to outline the specific criteria for children to be referred to the Adolescence service.
3. **Pathways:** Establish clear pathways for adolescents to access services, ensuring seamless transitions when alternative support is required.
4. **Service Offer:** Expand the range of services available to adolescents, including mental health support, educational assistance, and access to voluntary and community services.
5. **Partnership Work:** Strengthen partnerships with local schools, healthcare providers, and community organisations to create a cohesive support network for adolescents.
6. **Training Plan:** Implement a robust training plan for staff, which emphasises continuous professional development and includes training on adolescent development, trauma-informed care, effective intervention strategies, restorative approaches, and effective communication techniques.
7. **Peer review:** Take forward actions from the peer review and YJS improvement plan.

**Required outcome:**

1. Enhanced Engagement and increased involvement and satisfaction of children and families with the service. A stronger Identity, service name and logo that resonates with children and families and reflects the service.
2. Accurate identification and targeted referral of children who meet the adolescence criteria, ensuring they receive the right support at the right time from the right person.

Improved Outcomes, more effective interventions tailored to the needs of children referred to the service.

1. Seamless access, clear and efficient pathways for adolescents to access services. Smooth transitions/access to different types of support, minimising service gaps.
2. Comprehensive holistic support, a broader range of services available to address mental health, educational needs, and community engagement.
3. Enhanced Service Delivery, with more cohesive and coordinated support for adolescents. Integrated Support Network - Stronger collaboration with schools, Police, community organisations, healthcare providers.
4. Skilled workforce, with staff equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills to work with children. Improvement in service delivery, leading to better outcomes.

These outcomes aim to create a more responsive, inclusive, and effective service for adolescents, ultimately helping them achieve their full potential.

1. **Strengthening Work Around Exploitation**

The need to strengthen this area of work is an action identified as a result of our peer review and wider peer reviews across CIS. This work will be multi-faceted and require the engagement of all relevant partners. We have already recruited a lead for Exploitation and Missing, but acknowledge we have a substantial piece of work ahead.

**To achieve this, we will:**

1. **Develop Processes and Pathways**: Develop comprehensive processes and pathways to address exploitation, aligning with partnership work across the city and county.
2. **Collaboration with Partners**: Work closely with partners to develop and implement a city and county-wide strategy to combat exploitation. Review the current range of exploitation meetings and initiatives, with a view to moving to a single monthly meeting that provides strategic oversight and oversees, disruption, hotspots, information sharing and a single monthly meeting that provides information for case oversight and risk management.
3. **Interagency Coordination:** review and establish terms of reference and protocols for information sharing and coordinated response among agencies to exploitation concerns.
4. **Dedicated Lead**: A dedicated lead for children who are missing and at risk of exploitation, ensuring a coordinated approach to disrupting exploitation activities.
5. **Utilise Technology and Data:** Analyse data to identify trends and hotspots, allowing for targeted prevention efforts. Monitor and track cases of exploitation, ensuring timely interventions.
6. **Enhance Awareness:** Implement training, workshops or seminars for staff, partners, educators, and community members to increase awareness and understanding of exploitation.
7. **Preventive Measures:** Collaborate with schools and partners to integrate exploitation awareness and prevention into their service delivery.

**Required outcome:**

1. **Develop Processes and Pathways**: streamlined procedures**,** clear and efficient processes, and pathways for addressing exploitation, ensuring alignment with city and county partnership work. Consistent implementation,uniform application of these processes across all relevant agencies and organisations.
2. **Collaboration with Partners**: Unified Strategy, a comprehensive city and county-wide strategy to combat exploitation, developed and implemented in collaboration with partners. Effective oversight, a single monthly meeting providing strategic oversight, disruption management, hotspot identification and information sharing. Separate meeting forcase oversight.
3. **Interagency Coordination**: Established terms of reference and protocols for information sharing and coordinated responses among agencies. Improved Communication and collaboration between agencies to address exploitation concerns effectively.
4. **Dedicated Lead**: Focused onchildren who are missing and at risk of exploitation, ensuring a coordinated and focused strategic approach to disrupting exploitation activities.
5. **Utilise Technology and Data**: Effective use of data to identify trends and hotspots, enabling targeted prevention efforts. Improved monitoring and tracking of exploitation cases, ensuring timely and appropriate interventions.
6. **Enhance Awareness**: Greaterlevels of awareness and understanding of exploitation among staff, partners, educators, and community members through training, workshops, and seminars. Greater community involvement in recognising and preventing exploitation.
7. **Preventive Measures**: Increased identification and support for at-risk children, reducing the likelihood of exploitation. Successful integration of exploitation awareness and prevention into school and partner service delivery.

By achieving these outcomes, we can create a more robust framework to combat child exploitation and support affected children and families.

1. **Education**

As previously noted, exclusions and its links to entering the youth justice system is well evidenced. The YJS is committed to working with our education colleagues and partners to address this concern.

**To achieve this, we will:**

1. **Enhance Data Sharing:** Continue to actively work to improve data sharing mechanisms between education services, YJS, and ClS.
2. **Inclusion Strategy:** Support the development of an Inclusion strategy to reduce permanent exclusions and promote inclusive practices and explore with Education colleagues’ closer integration of the adolescence service offer with the behaviour and SEND team.
3. **Map Interventions:** Support the mapping of available interventions for children and outline access methods to enhance support for those at risk.
4. **Conduct Analysis**: Ensure regular analysis of the YJS cohort to identify overlaps and inform collaboration strategies.

**Required outcome:**

1. **Enhance Data Sharing:** Improved information flow, more efficient and accurate sharing of data between education service, YJS, and ClS, leading to better-informed decision-making.Risk mitigation, by early identification of risks associated with part-time timetables, low attendance, exclusion, and home education, allowing for timely interventions.
2. **Inclusion Strategy:** A decrease in the number of permanent exclusions through the promotion of inclusive practices in schools. Closer integration of the adolescence service offer with the behaviour and SEND teams, providing a more holistic approach to supporting children.
3. **Map Interventions:** A detailed map of available interventions for children, ensuring that those at risk have access to appropriate support. Clear pathways for accessing interventions, improving the utilisation of resources to support children.
4. **Conduct Analysis:** Regular analysis of the YJS cohort to identify overlaps and inform collaboration strategies, leading to more targeted and effective interventions.Use of data insights to guide strategic planning and resource allocation, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the service.
5. **Children from Over-Represented Groups**

This remains ongoing from our 2024 – 2027 plan. Over the coming year we intend to continue to develop our work around disproportionality.

**To achieve this, we will:**

1. **Diversity Strategy**: Continue to implement the joint Diversity Strategy and Framework developed with Nottinghamshire YJS, focusing on transparency, accountability, and trust.
2. **Inclusive Services**: Ensure services are inclusive and meet the diverse needs of children, taking into account their protected characteristics.
3. **Addressing Disproportionality**: Take action to address disparities in outcomes for over-represented groups, ensuring that justice processes are fair and equitable.
4. **Workforce:** Ensure ongoing workforce development and training to empower staff to discuss/challenge/address racial bias.
5. **Data** Strengthen data collection on Childview and data sharing with partners and make effective use of the disproportionality toolkit to support the YJS to address racial disparity and monitor and review congruence of OoCD decisions.

**Required outcome:**

1. Reduction in numbers of Black, mixed heritage and minority ethnic groups receiving statutory outcomes.
2. **First-Time Entrants / Diversion**

This remains ongoing from our 2024 – 2027 plan. Over the coming year we intend to continue to develop our work around FTEs and strengthen our diversionary options.

1. **Diversion Programs**: Expand and enhance diversion programs to reduce the number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system. This includes developing new initiatives and improving existing ones.
2. **Collaboration with Police and CPS**: Work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to reform the Out of Court Disposal process, ensuring it is fair and effective.
3. **Education and Awareness**: Increase awareness among education providers and partners about early intervention and diversion options, ensuring they are equipped to support at-risk children.
4. **Deferred Prosecution:** Explore the options of further expanding diversion to include a deferred prosecution scheme to bring previously excluded offences into scope.
5. **Partnership:** Strengthen links and referral pathways to statutory and community partners who support children at risk as an alternative to bringing the child into the Youth Justice System.
6. **Youth Development workers:** Strengthen collaborative work with the Youth Development workers to explore alternative interventions and access to voluntary and community resources community.
7. **Adolescence Family help workers:** Induct and train the additional Adolescence Family help workers on delivering early intervention strategies effectively, ensuring they are equipped to identify and address issues before they escalate.
8. **YFPP**: Support the implement the YFPP to enhance systems for identifying and supporting at-risk children and young people, preventing their involvement in crime and escalation to statutory services.

**Required outcome:**

Continued reduction in FTEs and an increased use of diversionary outcomes with the relevant assessed level of support.

# Appendix

