



# County Durham Youth Justice Plan

2024 – 2025

County Durham Youth Justice Service  
Service Manager: Dave Summers  
Chair of Youth Justice Service Board: Martyn Stenton



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*You delivered the work  
brilliantly so that he could  
understand and offered more  
interventions.*

*(Parent of young person -  
Referral Order)*

# **1. Introduction, Context, Vision & Strategy**

On behalf of our Management Board, I am pleased to present the County Durham Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25. This statutory plan reviews the work of the service over the last year and sets out priorities for the next period.

County Durham Youth Justice Service continues to deliver high quality services to young people, both those who offend and victims of offending, local communities and courts. Compared with 10 years ago in 2014 our partnership has achieved a 47% reduction in First Time Entrants to the youth justice system and a 38% reduction in the use of custodial sentences for young people alongside a reduction of 39% in the total number of young people offending.

The landscape over the latest two years, post COVID pandemic restrictions, has presented some significant challenges to us and, despite the progress covered above, we have seen increases in First Time Entrants, Re-offending and use of Custody over this time. National priorities for partner agencies have also led to increasing demand for the services provided by the Youth Justice Service, for example, Durham Constabulary's focus on neighbourhood criminality has had a disproportionate impact on young people and has resulted in a 40% increase in arrests. Better understanding these recent increases and seeking to achieve reductions in all three of these measures is the main priority for our partnership this year.

Ensuring the views of all stakeholders – young people, parents/carers, victims of crime, communities and partner agencies – are integral to the development of our services, is central to our plans. It is therefore very pleasing to note that the Youth Justice Service has, once again, been awarded Investors in Children status for 2024-25 and also Investor in Volunteer status.

The partnership, both through the Management Board and wider partners, continues to provide support, challenge and oversight for the service and we see this as a key strength of how we work in County Durham.

All public services are facing funding challenges and the Youth Justice Service is no different. At the time of agreeing this plan we are also waiting for confirmation of our Government grant for 2024/25. Despite this backdrop we have set out realistic priorities for the future in this plan, building on the firm foundations built over recent years.

In concluding, I would like to express my thanks to Management Board colleagues, managers, all our staff and volunteers for their continued hard work and dedication to the young people and communities with whom they work.

***Martyn Stenton***

*Chair, CDYJS Management Board.*

## **2. Governance, Leadership & Partnership Arrangements**

### **Governance – Management Board**

CDYJS is accountable to a multi-agency Management Board, chaired by the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council. The membership and terms of reference of the Management Board are reviewed annually. Membership is at appropriate Senior Officer level.

The Management Board consists of:

- Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council (DCC) - Chair;
- North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) – Deputy Chair
- Durham Constabulary;
- The Probation Service, County Durham & Darlington
- Progression Team, DCC;
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC);
- Public Health, DCC;
- SEND and Inclusion, Education and Children's Social Care, DCC x 3;
- Equality & Strategy, DCC.
- Head Teacher Representatives x 3.

Membership of the Board is regularly reviewed and each year the Board participates in two development sessions where it analyses its structure and functions, produces development plans for the Board and Service and considers thematic and strategic issues as pertinent.

Members of the management board are also members of a range of other partnerships relevant to the work of CDYJS. Board members are required to ensure that they represent the views of CDYJS in those partnerships as well as their home agency. During development sessions, board members consider how this can best be achieved and what support they require to undertake this role.

The YJS Manager and the Chair of the Management Board provide regular formal reports and updates to many of the partnerships to enable them to monitor performance and contribute to the improvement of services for young people who offend, their families and victims. In addition, Durham County Council's Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Committee also monitor performance and receive annual presentations from both the CDYJS Manager and Chair of the Board on current performance and progress against the Youth Justice Plan.

## Governance – Durham County Council

CDYJS is line-managed, on behalf of the Management Board, by Durham County Council. The Service is part of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children Service (EHIVC), Children and Young Peoples Directorate. The Head of EHIVC is the Chair of CDYJS Management Board and the line manager of CDYJS Manager. The CDYJS Manager is solely responsible for CDYJS and is a Tier 5 Manager in Durham County Council.

EHIVC is comprised of the following services:

- One Point Service (Early Help)
- CDYJS
- Aycliffe Secure Services
- SEND and Inclusion Services.

In addition, the CDYJS Manager attends regular joint meetings with all managers from Children's Social Care and managers from Education. This allows for joined up services, planning and development.

- CDYJS is currently a member of the following strategic partnerships and the sub-groups of these partnerships:
  - Starting Well Partnership
  - Safe Durham Partnership (SDP)
  - Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)
  - Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)
  - Strategic Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Board
  - Children and Young People Mental Health Partnership
  - Care Experienced Steering Group
  - Child Exploitation Group

- Integrated Offender Management Operational Management Group
- County Durham & Darlington Probation/YJS Youth Transitions Board
- Prevention and Early Help Partnership
- Preventing Reoffending Group
- Integrated Community Care Group
- Strategy and Commissioning Group for Housing Offenders

In addition, CDYJS is represented on numerous other partnerships and areas of integrated and joint working by members of the Management Board and they are tasked to represent the service, as covered above. This helps to ensure that the needs of young people who offend and the victims of those offences are therefore included in all relevant strategies and plans.

## **Agency Staffing CDYJS**

The following agencies/services deploy or second staff to CDYJS:

- Durham County Council
- Durham Constabulary
- The Probation Service, County Durham & Darlington
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (Funded by ICB)
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (Funded by Public Health)
- Humankind (Funded by Public Health)
- North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Funded by ICB).

The Service staffing fully complies with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, including:

- Social Workers
- Probation Officer
- Police Officers
- Police staff
- Health staff
- Education Officer.

There is a range of other staff, for example:

- Managers
- 0.25 FTE Probation Service Officer (Vacant)
- Case Managers (Criminal)
- Case Managers (ASB)
- Victim Liaison Officers
- Family Support Officers
- Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) Officer
- Reparation Officer
- Administration staff
- Interventions staff who deliver a range of interventions with young people to reduce re-offending, including ISS, reparation, and out of court disposals.
- Management Information Analysts.

Children and young people who are in contact with the youth justice system are generally a socially excluded population with significant complex health needs. There is evidence showing that children and young people who offend are less likely than their peers to have their health needs recognised and these needs tend to remain unrecognised and unsupported when they enter the youth justice system.

The health outcomes for young people who offend are poor and associated with poorer physical, emotional, and socio-economic wellbeing. Supporting these vulnerable young people is an essential element for the prevention agenda. Tackling the health and wellbeing needs of these young people is a complex issue and depends on many underlying factors such as: low educational attainment; poor attendance at school; non-participation in post-16 learning; unidentified speech, language, and communication problems; mental health issues and increased risk taking behaviour relating to smoking, drug and alcohol use and risky sexual activity.

County Durham Youth Justice Service recognises the health needs of young people who offend and partners of CDYJS Management Board have a clear commitment to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for young people. To ensure positive progress in tackling inequalities and improving outcomes for young people who offend, a multi-agency health team is in place that is reflective of the range of

determinants to support young people within the youth justice system and the range of needs they have when they first encounter the youth justice system.

We have a dedicated, multi-disciplinary health team, comprising:

- 0.6fte Speech and Language Therapist
- 2fte Specialist Public Health Children's Nurse
- 4fte Health & Wellbeing Support Worker
- 2fte Substance Misuse Worker
- 0.8fte Clinical Psychologist.

In total 47 staff are employed by Durham County Council on behalf of the partnership and 12fte are seconded from partners (Durham Constabulary, Probation Service County Durham & Darlington, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT), Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT), Tees Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Foundation Trust (TEWV) and Humankind).

In addition to the staff covered above, there are, on average, 70 volunteers working with the service to deliver:

- Referral Order Panels
- Mentoring
- Work with Victims
- Work with Parents
- Independent visiting for children looked after.

All staff and volunteers are trained in:

- Restorative Approaches/ Restorative Justice
- Safeguarding
- Speech, language, and communication needs.

All staff and managers receive supervision with a line manager each month and an annual Performance and Development Review. From this, their development and training needs are identified and are then provided either through DCC staff development, partner agency staff development or sourced independently. The needs of the service also feed into the wider DCC service workforce development strategy.

All volunteers are assessed annually and have access to the same range of training courses available to staff.

### **3. Update on the Previous Year**

#### **Progress on Priorities in Previous Plan**

##### **Service Improvement Plan 2023 – 2024**

###### **Priority 1: Out of Court Disposals**

- Develop new Out-of-Court Disposal, process, policy and service structure, taking into account the requirements of the Turnaround Programme.
- Establish closer working processes with One Point and other early help services – linking services provided by CDYJS with services delivered through One Point.
- Develop specific data reporting and needs analysis in respect of out-of-court/Turnaround cohort and requirements.
- Develop a written escalation process for out-of-court decision making.
- Re-establish the out-of-court review panel, including the role of volunteer.

###### **Commentary**

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*All actions have been completed. A refreshed process for out-of-court disposals was implemented. Joint processes and staffing have been developed with One Point for the delivery of this process and joint assessments have been developed. To-date this is based on the needs of the Turnaround programme, however, we are now planning to include further disposals in this arrangement with One Point. Discussions with colleagues are on-going to facilitate this.*

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###### **Priority 2: Quality Assurance**

- Review and amend quality assurance framework and agree new framework with Management Board.
- Establish focussed, regular external assurance of quality auditing through link-up with a partner YJS.

- Review and amend quality auditing tools and ensure shared understanding of quality amongst management team.
- Re-audit service (case management and interventions) against the criteria/requirements of HMIP.
- Develop further improvement actions based on the above re-audit.

### **Commentary:**

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*The quality assurance framework has been reviewed and a new framework and reporting process has been developed in conjunction with the Management Board. External (to CDYJS) links have been developed with partner YJS to provide confidence in our quality assurance processes and reporting processes have been developed. Further developments include an, externally facilitated, workshop for all managers on Quality Assurance in practice using HMIP expectations as the basis which was delivered June 2024. The service will be re-audited against HMIP inspection requirements once the new finalised framework is published (expected summer 2024).*

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### **Priority 3: Business Risk/Learning from Inspections/Diversity**

- Develop CDYJS Business Risk Register (separate from DCC Register) and ensure standing agenda item at Board meetings.
- Review current process for collation of service and thematic inspection findings and ensure explicit link to CDYJS improvement plans.
- Review all policies in respect of clarity of commitment to diversity.

### **Commentary:**

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*A specific Risk Register has been established for CDYJS and is reviewed at each Management Board meeting. Each thematic inspection report and other reports in respect of serious incidents etc are considered individually at the Management Board. A lead manager for*

*diversity has been identified and a diversity policy has been created for the service.*

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**“**

*The group has been a big part of my life and I wouldn't be anywhere near the person I am today without it*

*(Young Person - with Youth in Mind)*

**“**

*I have enjoyed every second of being a team leader and hope I have made a difference to others, just like the group has made a difference for me. Thank you for all of your help and support.*

*(Young Person - with Youth in Mind)*

## **Priority 4: Structure of Service/Delivery of Interventions**

- Review Service structure, including Case Management model and Out-of-Court/In-Court split. Report to Management Board for development of implementation plan.
- Review the role of the CDYJS/Education Panel.
- Report provided to Management Board reviewing operation of service after 6 months from implementation of new structure.

- Ensure representation of Head Teachers on Management Board.
- Review, amend and update the Interventions Directory.
- Produce clearer guidance for case managers and intervention staff in respect of the expectations of their roles.

## Commentary

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*Restructure of service approved by Management Board in December 2023 and will be completed July 2024 – this will eliminate the ‘bifurcation’ of the service. The CDYJS/Education Panel was reviewed and refreshed and is now operating fully. Head teacher representatives were identified for the Management Board. The service Interventions Directory was reviewed and updated. Once the service restructure is completed, case management guidance, specific to CDYJS, will be refreshed for all staff to establish and clarify their roles and expectations.*

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### Priority 5: Assessment, Planning and Review (including safeguarding & risk management)

- Identify/develop and deliver training for staff and all managers on diversity.
- Develop and undertake training programme for all Case Managers and Intervention staff for Resettlement.
- Commission an independent audit of safeguarding practice within the service and develop and deliver safeguarding training specific to the role of staff in the YJS.
- Commission an independent audit of risk management within the service and develop and deliver risk of harm assessment and management training specific to the role of staff in the YJS.
- Ensure notes of all meetings, where case decisions are taken, are recorded on the child's casefile.
- Ensure operational managers undertake joint training with staff (as above) in respect of risk of harm assessment and management of risk and safeguarding.

- Include staff supervision and ‘management oversight with remote workers’ as part of the management development programme for CDYJS.

### Commentary:

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*Externally facilitated two days training for case managers on assessment, planning and review (including management of risk and safeguarding) was delivered in June 2024 – this included attendance by all managers. An externally facilitated workshop for managers on quality assurance (in-line with HMIP recommendations) was delivered in June 2024. An external consultant has been commissioned to work with the service during 2024/25 to both audit practice and develop improvement plans. Training for staff in respect of resettlement will be scheduled for a later date.*

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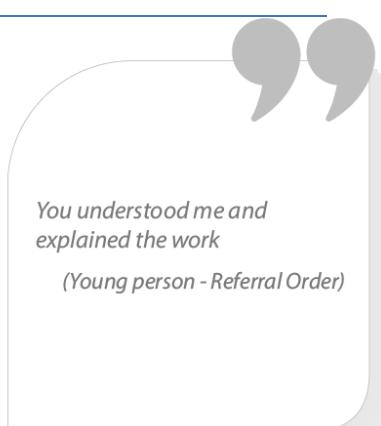
### Priority 6: Management Board/Staff links

- Establish a Management Board newsletter to be published quarterly.
- Management Board members to each lead a section of Improvement Plan.
- Staff to present about their role at each Management Board meeting.

### Commentary

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*Management Board members lead on each section of the improvement plan (2023/24). All board meetings scheduled for 2024-2025 have a theme (in addition to business items) at which staff members will present about the theme and their role.*



You understood me and explained the work  
(Young person - Referral Order)

*Thank you very much for facilitating the meeting with Thomas today. I appreciate your support and professionalism in this matter and hope that Thomas has learned from the interventions you and your team will deliver. He appeared genuine and I feel this will go some way to help deter others from committing similar anti-social behaviour near my home.*

*(Victim – adult after restorative meeting)*

## Priority 7: Needs based data for Management Board

- Develop Reports to Management Board to include analysis of needs/risks identified through assessments.
- Refresh Health Needs Assessment of Young People who Offend.
- Develop education data reported to Management Board for CDYJS cohort.

### Commentary:

*An annual analysis report on findings of case assessments is presented to the Management Board, alongside an analysis of offending. The HNA for young people who offend is currently being refreshed and the final report is scheduled to be presented to the Board for approval at the July 2024 meeting – the draft recommendations and findings were discussed at the March 2024 board development session. Outcomes in respect of education are now presented to the board at each meeting.*

*Thank you for making us feel like someone cares and that there may be some light at the end of the tunnel.*

*(Parent of young victim)*

*I'm sad I won't be working with you anymore, you have helped me and listened to me, thank you.*

*(Youth Rehabilitation Order)*

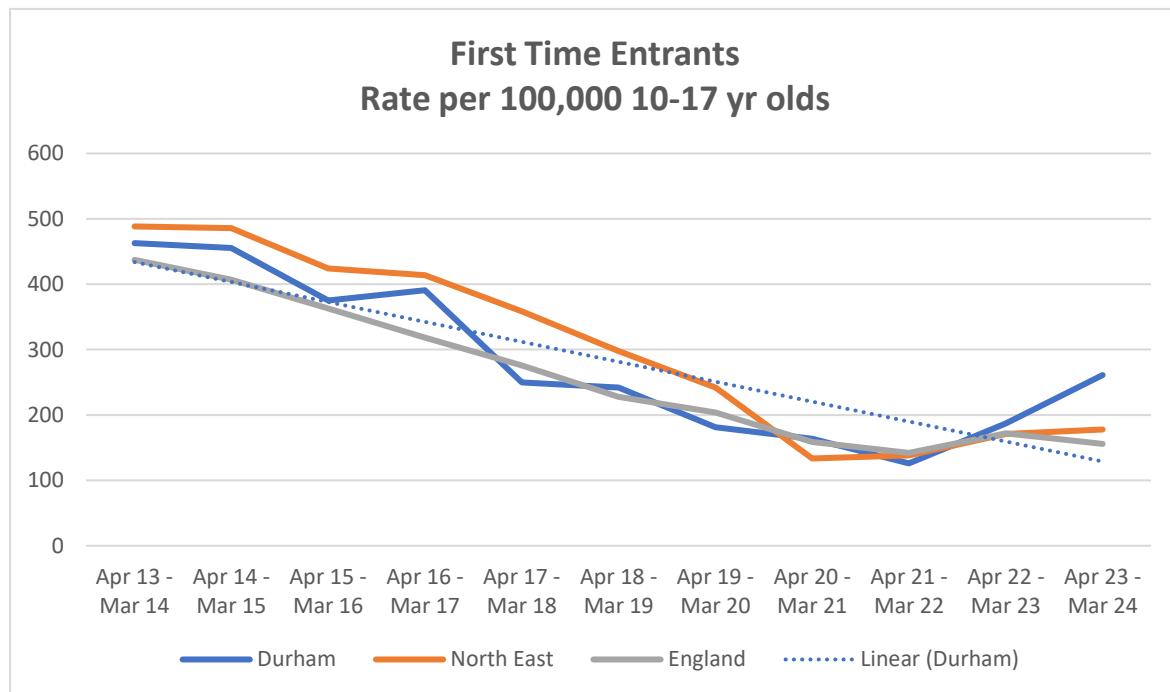
## Challenges, Risks & Issues

| Risk   | Action to Mitigate Risk   |
|--|---|
| Increasing Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation – financial risk to local authority  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing Remand Bed Nights Strategy</li> <li>Management oversight</li> <li>Mid-week and weekend staffed court cover.</li> <li>Remand Court specialists</li> <li>ISS Bail Programme</li> <li>Joint work with Children's Service's colleagues</li> </ul> |
| Future budget efficiencies/reductions in partner contributions   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going review of Service structure</li> <li>Review all vacancies.</li> <li>Review and develop pathways to support young people after statutory supervision.</li> <li>Consider new ways of working.</li> </ul>  |
| Improving performance & outcomes (FTEs, Reoffending, Custody) in face of on-going budget reductions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Improvement Plan 2024/25</li> <li>FTE/Reoffending/Custody Improvement Plan</li> <li>Quality Assurance framework</li> <li>Self-assessment against HMIP framework</li> <li>Innovation</li> <li>Practice Development Forums</li> </ul>            |
| Waiting times for health services (particularly CAMHS and Neurodiversity assessment) impacts on offending.   | ICB to improve support, advice and help available to families while they wait.  |
| Government direction for Criminal Justice Services does not reflect the reality of life in County Durham. Crimes given significant public attention (eg, retail crime) may not be a significant issue locally. | Management Board to monitor this and react accordingly, including providing guidance to Service Manager on priorities.  |
| Increase in serious violence by young people.  | Service leads on Serious Violence Strategy<br>Development of pathways for young people<br>Implement Psychologist led Trauma Informed Care Pathway<br>Multi-agency procedures in-place   |

## Review of Performance against National Indicators

### First Time Entrants

Between April 2013 and Mar 2024, we have achieved a **43.6% reduction** in first time entrants to the youth justice system, from a rate of **463** per 100,000 10-17 year olds to the current rate of **261**.



This compares to a North-East average rate of 177.7 and a National average rate of 155.7 per 100,000 10-17 year olds.

The latest available **locally** sourced data shows **119** young people entering the Youth Justice System in 2023/24 at a rate of **252.5** per 100 000 10-17 year olds, which is slightly lower than the YJB produced figures for 2023/24.

There has been an increase in FTEs in the past two years and the development and implementation of an improvement plan is a priority for the partnership in 2024/25.

### Reducing Re-offending

This measure, provided by the MoJ, provides a rate of reoffending of a cohort of young people who:

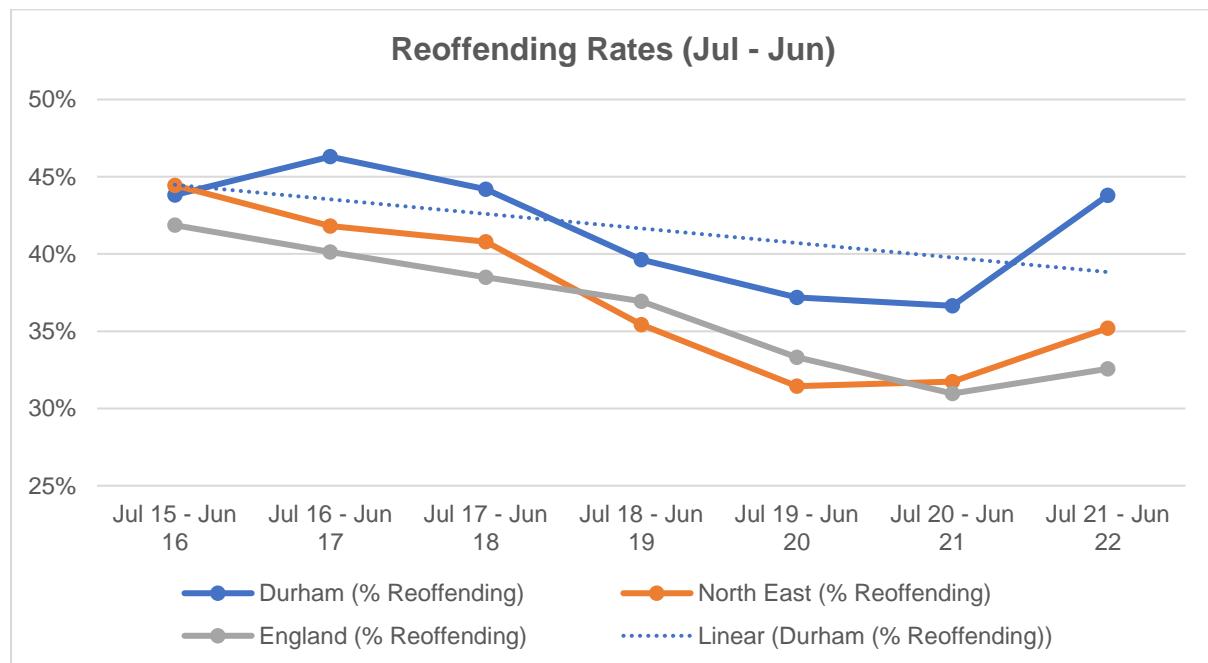
- Receive an out of court disposal (N.B. This does not include the Pre Caution Disposal)
- Receive a court conviction
- Were discharged from custody.

The measure counts any offences committed in a 12 month follow up period, where those offences are proved by a court conviction or out of court disposal in that period or in a further 6 months. This gives a methodologically robust measure of re-offending.

All data is taken from the Police National Computer (PNC) and is summarised before distribution to Youth Justice Services.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data (Jul 21 – Jun 22 cohort) shows a re-offending rate of **43.8%** which is a 16% increase compared to the previous year.

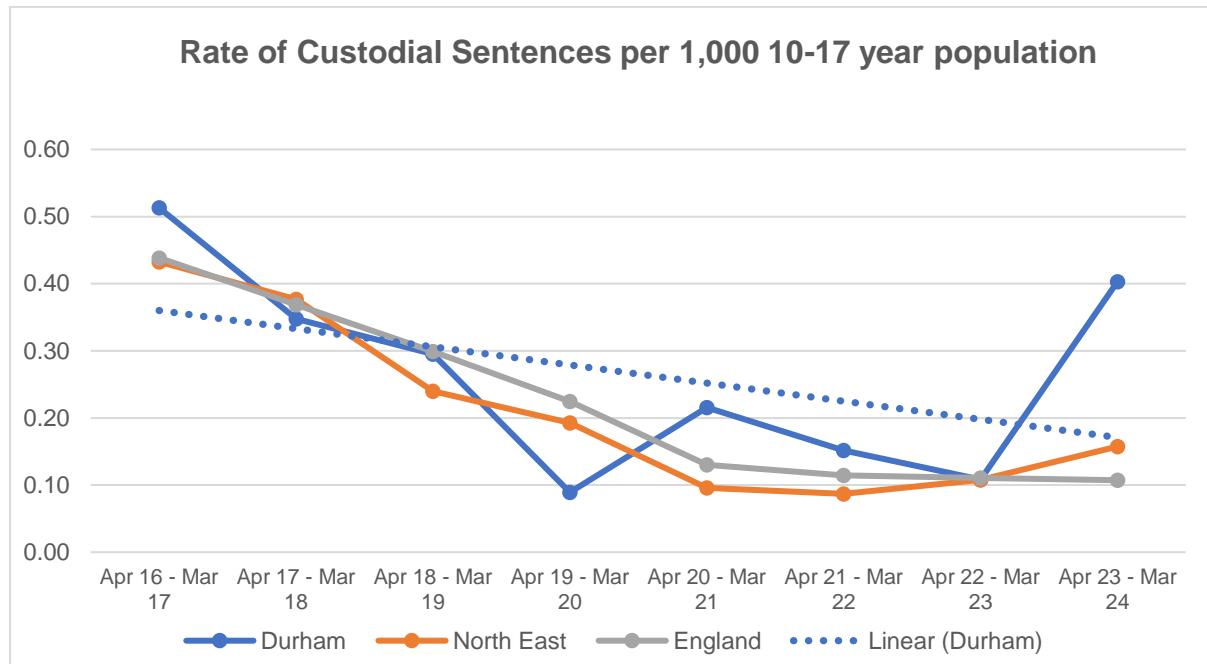
The rate of reoffending can fluctuate due to the significant decreases, year to year, in the size of the cohort of young people. The graph below shows the fluctuating re-offending rates since the July 2015 – June 2016 cohort, but also shows that the trend is a reduction in reoffending rates overtime.



The average reoffending rates for both the North-East (35.2%) and England (32.6%) although lower than Durham, have also seen increases over the last year.

## Reducing the Use of Custody

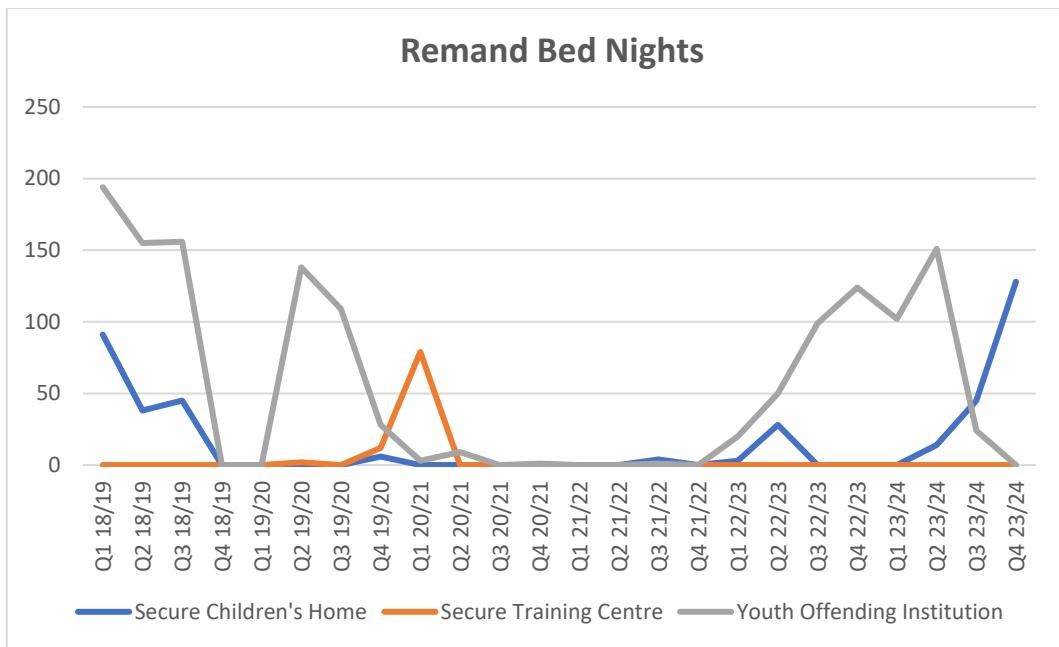
Between April 2016 and March 2024 the rate of custodial sentences has reduced from **0.51** to **0.4** per 1,000 10-17 year olds. This compares with a North-East average rate of 0.16 and an England average rate of 0.11.



Each time a young person receives a custodial sentence, the role of CDYJS is reviewed to ensure that we have undertaken all appropriate measures to ensure that custody is used as a last resort. Given the significant increase in the rate over the past year, the development and implementation of an improvement plan is a priority for our partnership.

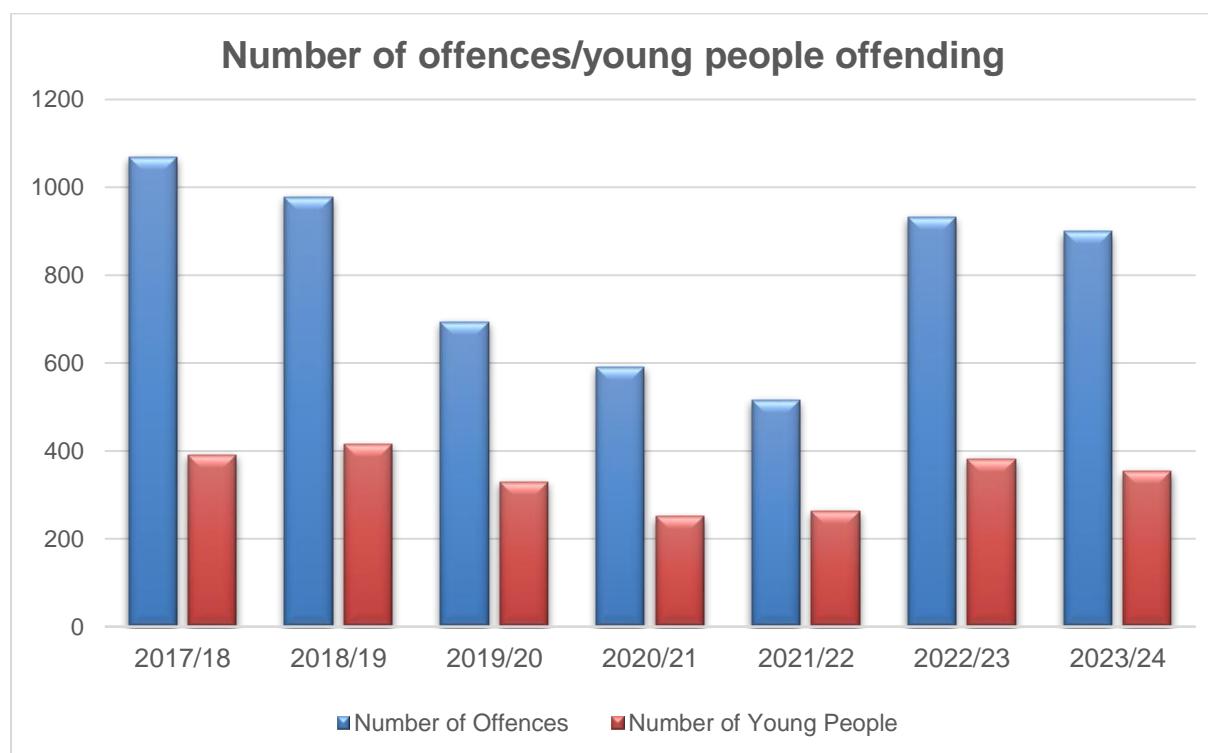
## Remand bed nights (Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation)

There was a total of 464 remand bed nights in 2023/24 (11 episodes, 10 young people). Each case where a young person is remanded to youth detention is reviewed and in all cases during the year, the remand to youth detention was considered appropriate due, mostly, to the seriousness of the offences but also due to the offending history of the young people.



## Number of Young People Offending and Offences Committed

We have achieved a **15.8% reduction** in the number of offences committed, from **1068** in 2017/18 to **899** in 2023/24, and a **9.2% reduction** in the number of young people offending, from **390** in 2017/18 to **354** in 2023/24. This includes **all** offences committed by young people aged 10-17 years, resulting in any out of court disposal or a court conviction.



The work carried out during 2023/24 which has supported the key indicators has been:

➤ **Reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs)**

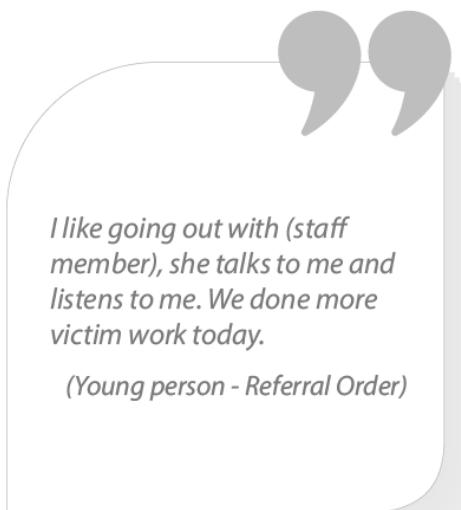
- Reviewed, amended and embedded our out-of-court processes in conjunction with Durham Constabulary and One Point Service (Early Help).
- Developed an escalation process for disagreements in decision making
- Ensured greater coordination between ‘on-street’ restorative approaches by police and CDYJS interventions.
- Implemented a new YJB assessment tool.
- Undertook a review of service structure and produced recommendations for restructure, including greater collaboration with early help colleagues.

➤ **Reducing Re-offending**

- Developed the trauma informed pathway in conjunction with psychology colleagues.
- Re-applied for, and were successful, with Investing in Children status which helps us to ensure we listen to voices of young people and that their opinions influence our decisions
- Developed and published a Harmful Sexual Behaviour traffic light tool
- Developed and improved both the strategic links and delivery of interventions in respect of Harmful Sexual Behaviour.
- Improved the dashboard of performance data available to the service
- Developed our work with Probation/Police colleagues in respect of MAPPA cases and take an active role in MAPPA governance.
- Developed our Youth Transitions Board with Probation Service colleagues for governance and oversight of youth to adult transitions.
- Membership of the Integrated Offender Management, subgroup of the Reducing Reoffending Delivery Group, whose remit is to consider all YJS Transitions cases for IOM Management

## ► Reducing Use of Custody

- Maintained the panel review process for young people who receive custodial sentences
- Maintained a six day per week service, including experienced court officers available for Saturdays and Bank Holiday special courts and interventions staff to deliver interventions with young people across weekends.
- Maintained dedicated management cover for a six days per week service.
- Researched and reviewed the use of breach and resentencing to ensure it provides the highest quality service to courts and to young people.



*I like going out with (staff member), she talks to me and listens to me. We done more victim work today.*

*(Young person - Referral Order)*

## **4. Plan for the Forthcoming Year**

### **Child First**

County Durham Youth Justice Service recognises that transition from a risk-based approach to a ‘child first’ approach is a lengthy journey, the first stage of which is to ensure a change in culture of the service to one where meeting the needs of children is our over-riding priority. Through this approach, management of risk and protection of the public is met. We commissioned an audit and research report into our understanding of ‘child first’ which reported to the Management Board development session in March 2024. This highlighted the need to assist staff in the culture change and to develop practical approaches in order to bring the concept to life. Further development of this is a priority for the service during 2024-2025.

### **‘See Children as Children’**

- We operate a bespoke suit of interventions based upon the level of maturity and understanding of the young person.
- We vary our method of delivery to suit the individual.
- We make allowances for the way young people react to situations, especially stressful situations.
- We make clear that young people are still developing and have capacity to change.
- All our plans are bespoke to the individual.

### **‘Develop Pro-Social Identity’**

- We refer to young people we work with as ‘young people who offend’ NOT ‘young offenders’
- We recognise the stigma of negative, offending ‘labels’
- We reward positive actions by young people.
- We develop plans that identify and build-on the strengths of young people.
- We reiterate to young people that offending does not define their whole personality. Rather it is behaviour that needs to change.

## **'Collaboration with Children'**

- See section 'Voice of the Child' for further information.
- We promote volunteering and community involvement in our work with young people.
- Our work with young victims of crime is led by young people.
- Young people completing reparation choose the charities we will support.
- Feedback from young people is considered at each management board and actions taken based on that feedback.

## **'Promote Diversion'**

- We have a tiered approach to diversion from the criminal justice system.
- We operate the MoJ Turnaround Programme
- We operate a 'Pre-Caution Disposal' (PCD) whereby young people can access the full resources of County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS).
- We developed joint working, assessment and staffing with the One Point (Early Help) Service.

## **Voice of the child**

The views of young people are collected by CDYJS in the following ways:

- We undertake a short survey with young people at the end of every intervention session.
- Ad-hoc surveys with young people on specific themes.
- Manager reviews of cases with young people
- Referral Order panel reviews.
- Re-engagement Panels with young people (for those at risk of breach/non-compliance)
- We undertake an on-going survey with young people who are victims of crime - 'Your Thoughts about Our Work'
- We develop Case Studies with young people to present to partners etc.

- Every group intervention or activity finishes with feedback from the young person.
- All young people undertaking an assessment complete a self-assessment.

The results of feedback and consultation influence service delivery in the following ways:

- The Management Board receive a report at each meeting collating the views of young people and development actions based on the information received are agreed.
- Young people develop programmes of interventions for the WYIM group. This was introduced based on feedback received from young people.
- Interventions for young people who offend were both developed and amended in light of feedback from young people.
- The service has been awarded 'Investing in Children' status.

The active participation of young people in their own assessments and intervention plans is a theme running through all CDYJS quality assurance work and remains a priority in the Service Improvement Plan for 2024-2025.

## **Resources and Services**

CDYJS is committed to the following principles:

- Prioritising front line delivery and core services to young people, families, victims and communities.
- Continuous quality improvement to improve practice with and outcomes for young people, victims, and communities.
- Ensuring we implement a 'Child First' approach.
- Ensuring Value for Money

Robust financial management, within CDYJS and overseen by DCC, is underpinned by regular budget reports to the Management Board, EHIVC Management Team and Finance colleagues, DCC.

## Budget 2024/25

CDYJS budget is comprised of the following contributions:

- Partnership cash funding (DCC, Police, Police and Crime Commissioner, PS, ICB)
- Partnership staff secondments/deployments (Police, PS, TEWV, H&DFT, NTHFT, Humankind)
- Youth Justice Board (YJB) Grant
- Youth Custody Service (YCS) Remand Grant
- Specific Grant Funding – including Turnaround Grant.
- Each year the Management Board considers individual contributions and the budget for the following year is agreed.
- For 2024/25 the total value (staff & cash contribution) of the pooled budget for CDYJS is: **to be confirmed**. The breakdown of contributions is below:

| Agency                        | Staffing Costs | Payment in Kind | Other Delegated Funds | Total            |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Local Authority               |                | (4)             | 1,204,360             | 1,204,360        |
| Police Service                | 204,075        |                 | See PCC               | 204,075          |
| The Probation Service         | 26,699         |                 | 5,000                 | 31,699           |
| Health Provision              | 337,843        |                 | 50,267                | 388,110          |
| Police and Crime Commissioner |                |                 | 581,855 (1)           | 581,855          |
| YJB – Youth Justice Grant     |                |                 | TBC                   | TBC              |
| Miscellaneous                 |                |                 | 431,075 (2)           | 431,075          |
| Totals                        | 568,617        |                 | 2,272,557 (5)         | 2,841,174 (3)(5) |

**Note:**

- The Youth Justice Grant (YJB) is used as part of partnership pooled budget to support delivery of our Service Improvement Plan to support work to reduce re-offending, first time entrants and use of custody.
- (1) Includes Police Service contribution of £108,900, Immediate Justice Fund - £172,356, Parenting Support Officer - £49,160, Victim Interventions Workers - £92,688
- (2) 'Miscellaneous' includes income from Unison (staff secondment), Turnaround Grant (MoJ) & Contribution from Partnership Reserve.
- (3) In addition, there is a ring-fenced YCS Remand Grant (£38,106) and ring-fenced LA Remand Budget (£170,000). As well as funding the placement of young people remanded to youth detention accommodation, this budget also funds the placement of young people transferred to the local authority by the Police under PACE.
- (4) Durham County Council (DCC) also provides in-kind contributions to cover administrative support staff and data provision and analysis, both of which are provided 'corporately' by DCC.
- (5) Additional income to the sub-total will be the YJB Grant.

The Management Board believes this represents good value for money and well-developed use of its collective pooled resources. Since 2014 the service has achieved a significant reduction in first time entrants to the criminal justice system (FTEs); a significant reduction in the number of young people offending and also a significant reduction in the total number of offences committed.

## **Youth Justice Grant (2024-2025): tbc**

This ring-fenced grant is provided by the YJB to local authorities 'for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services. Use of the grant is focussed on improving the quality of frontline delivery and is not used to fund any support staff or accommodation/operating costs – all of which are provided by DCC as an in-kind contribution.'

Specifically, the grant is used to:

- Employ staff in core delivery roles.
- Employ managers.

With the overall aim to improve the quality of services delivered.

## **Management Board Development**

The Management Board undertakes two development sessions each year, in addition to quarterly Board meetings. These development sessions always include consideration of actions to improve the effectiveness of the Management Board and the consideration strategic themes for the service. For example, the development session held March 2024, included consideration of the outcomes and recommendations of the Health Needs Assessment for Young People who Offend in County Durham and the development of a Child First approach in CDYJS.

Priorities for Board development for 2024-2025 include:

- Deliver the Service Improvement Plan 2024-2025
- Each Board meeting to have a theme about which staff will present.
- Develop performance reporting to be more outcomes focussed.
- Ensure Child First impacts on the work of the Board and it's decisions.
- Board members to ensure sharing of information/issues within their agency.
- Review membership of the board, including court representative and school representatives.

## **Workforce Development**

The service has developed:

- A Workforce Development Strategy
- A Workforce Development Plan
- A Workforce Development Pathways document
- A Supervision Policy.

These documents cover the development of staff at all levels of the service from induction to on-going professional development. In addition, the service works with partner agencies who have seconded/deployed staff to CDYJS, to maximise the potential for joint training and access to a full range of training opportunities. In addition, all staff throughout the service, receive monthly supervision as a minimum and an annual Performance, Development Review during which professional development needs are identified and objectives set for each year.

## Priorities for the coming year

### Standards for Children

The self-audit against the standards in respect of 'Work in Court' undertaken in 2023, highlighted generally good practice and in some areas, exceptional practice. Improvements were identified as being required in respect of representation from courts on the Management Board and the need for a body along the lines of the previous 'Court User Group'. This is a priority for Management Board development over the coming year.

### Service Development

The service improvement priorities for 2024-2025 are as follows:

- Review and develop new out-of-court processes, including Early Help services.

Our intention is to create a 'new' outcome for out-of-court disposals of 'Refer to Early Help'. This will ensure young people are not 'criminalised' and receive the support they need. This will reduce the number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time.

- In conjunction with partners, develop and implement specific improvement plans in respect of 'First time Entrants to the YJ system' and 'Use of Custody'.

An improvement plan, developed in conjunction with partners, will be presented to the Management Board at its July 2024 meeting. The Board will then provide oversight of progress at each meeting.

- Ensure service is well-placed to meet the challenges of serious violence, both in respect of working with children and in respect of staff safety.

The Service Manager chairs the young person strand of the Serious Violence Strategy. The service is developing psychologist led, trauma informed pathways within the service and, in conjunction with partners, is developing multi-agency, serious violence pathways countywide.

- Review/audit service against new Inspection Framework (when available) and prepare service for inspection and embed the Quality Assurance Framework developed for the Service.

The service has recently completed an audit, using HMIP inspection framework, of work with victims and is currently developing an improvement plan. An audit of the full service will be completed during this calendar year. The new quality assurance framework will be fully enacted during this year.

- Improve operational processes with Courts and Court representation on the Management Board.

A Youth Court User Group for Durham & Darlington is to be introduced and the Courts will be invited to nominate a representative for the Management Board.

- Implement a 'Child First' ethos and practice throughout CDYJS.

A service-wide implementation group has been established and is currently developing a plan to ensure 'Child First' underpins all our work.

- Review and enhance health provision within CDYJS following on from HNA of young people who offend.

The Health Needs Assessment of young people who offend in County Durham will be approved by the Management Board at its meeting in July. An improvement plan will be developed following the recommendations contained in the HNA.

- Identify support needs for the service and ensure needs are met through partnerships with other DCC services.

An audit of support provided by various services within Durham County Council will be undertaken to ensure the service receives appropriate assistance to support its front-line work.

- Monitor and audit YJS/Probation Service Transitions work for assurance on operational delivery in accordance with national policy.

An audit of transitions cases/work will be undertaken to provide assurance that our local systems are working appropriately. Governance of the audit and any improvement action plan will be through County Durham & Darlington Probation/YJS Transitions Board.

## **5. National Priority Areas**

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

- There appears to be no evidence of over-representation of any group by ethnicity. Nor is there any disparity between the local population by ethnicity and the youth justice cohort.
- The Service has adopted a policy on working with Children who are Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.
- The Service has developed resources for working with girls and delivers interventions in girls only groups.
- Most young people in the cohort of those that have offended are male; however, most identified victims are female.
- The average percentage of looked after children in CDYJS cohort is: 12.6%
- We have undertaken an audit of our processes with colleagues in the Children in Care service to improve our services.

### **Prevention and Diversion**

CDYJS operates a diversion process in conjunction with Durham Constabulary.

The process is:

- Community Resolution (Maximum of 2 in 12 months) – ‘Triage’ (CDYJS) – Turnaround (CDYJS/Early Help) - Pre-Caution Disposal (CDYJS) – Youth Caution (CDYJS) – Youth Conditional Caution (CDYJS).
- Durham Constabulary refer young people to CDYJS from Triage onwards. For those young people for whom ‘Triage’ is appropriate, a standard intervention based around understanding consequences of offending is offered, along with ‘sign-posting’ for any other identified issues. Young people who are eligible for the Turnaround programme will receive an assessment undertaken jointly with an Early Help Advisor (One Point) and a programme of intervention will be delivered based on that assessment. Young People receiving a Pre-Caution Disposal will be assessed using the newly developed YJB assessment and an intervention programme developed, using all of the service’s resources as required. Young people receiving a Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution will, on a temporary basis, be assessed using AssetPlus and an intervention plan developed accordingly. During the forthcoming year, the

assessment used for young people subject to Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution will be the newly developed YJB Assessment.

- Decision making in respect of which intervention is appropriate is undertaken by a multi-agency panel, including representatives from Police, CDYJS, One Point Service (Early Help) and Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
- Reviews of decision making is undertaken by a multi-agency panel, including a community representative.
- Reporting of performance is included in the performance reports presented to the Management Board each meeting.
- Referral processes were developed for young people engaging in anti-social behaviour (without any ‘criminal’ involvement) and additional staff (2FTE Case Managers, 2FTE Interventions Workers and 1FTE Family Support Officer) were appointed to undertake this work as a result of funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner.

## Education

- The DCC Education Service, SEND Service, Virtual Head, Durham Works are all represented on CDYJS Management Board
- There are also Head Teacher representatives on the Management Board for Secondary Schools across the County.
- We operate a joint panel between CDYJS Managers, Virtual Head, Durham Works, SEND Casework, Education Safeguarding Lead, Alternative Provision Coordinator. The panel meets monthly and reviews individual cases experiencing education issues and develops joint plans
- The dashboard of performance information considered by the Management Board now includes relevant education data.
- CDYJS has input to all education behaviour panels across County Durham.
- The service employs and 1 FTE Education Officer to work with schools and other providers specifically in respect of the YJS cohort of young people.
- The Strategic Manager for SEND and Inclusion is a member of the EHIVC Management Team which also includes the YJS Manager.

## Restorative Approaches and Victims

Our work with adults and young people who are victims of youth crime in 2023-2024 has engaged a further **157** people in restorative approaches. Our work with young people who are the victims of youth crime has provided dedicated support and an opportunity to re-build and restore confidence. The support group for young people who are victims of all crime ('**With Youth in Mind**') has continued to develop and is now working with an average of around 35 young people at any one time throughout the year. Young people who offend have also engaged in **2,125** hours of unpaid work (reparation) in and across communities in County Durham as a means of reparation.

The table, below, provides an outline of our processes for working with victims:

## Victims Programmes

### Tier 1: Case Managers include

- Coordinating victim awareness work;
- Apology letters;
- Use of victim report or info provided by VLO in victim awareness work;
- Updates to victim.

### Tier 2: VLOs include

All of Tier 1 interventions for complex and sensitive cases plus:

- Gathering information from victims for victim awareness work;
- Representing victims' views at Referral Order panels;
- Direct reparation;
- RJ conferences / face-to-face meetings.

WYIM:

- Activity-based peer support group for young people who have been victims (direct or indirect) of crime.

## **Serious Violence and Exploitation**

- Violence offences, as a proportion of all offences committed by the CDYJS Cohort, are increasing.
- Within the category of violent offences, the most common offence is Section 39 Assault (common assault), followed by Assault Emergency Worker and then Section 47 Assault (actual bodily harm).
- Whilst 'serious violence' represents only a small proportion of violent offences, given the increasing proportion of violent offences overall, the service considers violent offending as a priority issue and an improvement plan is being developed.
- County Durham does not have a gang culture like some other areas of the UK. However, exploitation of young people for various reasons remains an issue. The service has initiated the acceptance of three young people under the National Referral Mechanism.
- The service is an active partner in the analysis and development of the Serious Violence Strategy for County Durham. The Service Manager chairs the young person group overseeing this strand of the strategy.
- The service obtained the funding for a Clinical Psychologist to work with case managers and young people to deliver a trauma care pathway for young people committing violent crime.
- The service is leading on research into girls who commit violent offences as the proportion of girls committing violent offences in County Durham has increased significantly.
- The Service is represented on the Child Exploitation Group and attends the weekly case planning forums. The Service makes regular case referrals to these meetings.
- All young people under the supervision of CDYJS receive an intervention on healthy relationships.
- All staff are trained in recognising and working with young people at risk of exploitation.
- All staff in CDYJS are trained in recognising and working with young people at risk of radicalisation. The service is represented on relevant partnerships and works with partners to supervise young people convicted of Terrorist Act offences and/or under the Prevent strand.

## Use of Custody/Remands/Detention in Police Custody

The rate of custodial sentence (rate per 1,000 10-17 years old) is **0.4**

On each occasion a young person is sentenced to custody, the work of CDYJS is reviewed to ensure all appropriate work was undertaken.

- The service has adopted a Resettlement Policy and delivers constructive resettlement through our Health Team, Education Panel, Joint Homelessness Protocol (16-18 years) (Housing, CYPS and others), Durham Works (Post 16 Training).
- The service is developing an improvement plan to reduce the rate.
- All young people are released from custody with appropriate accommodation.
- All young people receiving a custodial sentence are reviewed, each month, throughout their sentence by a panel chaired by the Service Manager.
- The total number of Remand Bed Nights for 2023-2024 is **464**
- The service operates six days a week service for remand courts and operates a joint process for remands with colleagues in DCC Children's Social Care.
- There is a joint process in-place for transfers from Police custody (under PACE) in conjunction with Police, Children's Social Care (Looked After & EDT), CDYJS and Aycliffe Secure Centre. A separate budget is also available to meet this responsibility. The HMIP thematic report on Remands identified CDYJS as the service with the largest number of transfers from Police custody. This is as a result of the commitment given to this cohort of young people by the partnership.

## Working with Families

- The service employs 2FTE Family Support Officers to work with parents/carers of young people in our cohort.
- Guidance is provided for Case Managers on expectations of their work with families.
- Our standards audit identified good practice in respect of involvement of families in court proceedings and Pre-sentence reports.
- The service works in conjunction with One Point (Early Help) colleagues in the delivery of Turnaround and funds 2FTE posts to undertake joint assessments

- We are working to further develop this partnership to include other young people identified as suitable for diversion and/or prevention.

## Sign off, submission and approval

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Name:      | Martyn Stenton,<br>Chair CDYJS Management Board |
| Signature: | Added to version submitted to YJB               |
| Date:      | 27 June 2024                                    |

# County Durham Youth Justice Service Structure 2024

