



# Youth Justice & Early Support Service



Vale of Glamorgan

Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024



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## Chair's Foreword



I am pleased to be able to share with you the Youth Justice & Early Support Service Plan for 2023/24. Public sector services remain under significant pressure and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis is being felt in our communities. It is in this difficult societal context that this plan is set. It is important therefore that it is realistic, whilst also aiming to become one of the best of such services in Wales. Following our inspection where we received a 'good' rating we have continued to build on our successes and the actions needed to improve our services even further. This has helped us refocus on the fundamental purposes of the service and how we communicate those within our communities. Most recently this has resulted in a change of name to the service, inspired by the families we work with and our ambition to expand even further our preventative and restorative approaches. This plan is intended to not only consolidate this progress but also push us to build on our young people's strengths and help them fulfil their potential.

Director of Social Services  
Vale of Glamorgan Council

## Introduction, Vision, and Strategy

Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service (YJESS) is a statutory multi-agency partnership with a legal duty to co-operate in order to secure appropriate local Youth Justice Services. The purpose of the YJESS is to ensure that Youth Justice Services are available across the local authority area. The YJESS should be the main vehicle through which youth justice services are coordinated and delivered. Statutory duties to prevent offending are outlined in Criminal Justice and Civil Legislation. The principal aim of Youth Justice Services in England and Wales is to prevent offending and re-offending by young people in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Section 39(1) of this act places a duty on each Local Authority, acting with its statutory partners (Police, Probation and Health) to establish Youth Offending Teams in their local area to deliver Youth Justice Services. Section 38(3) of the Act places a duty on the Local Authority and its statutory partners to make payment towards the expenditure incurred in providing youth justice services. Membership of the Youth Offending Service is prescribed by the legislation. It must include a Probation Officer, Social Worker, Police Officer, Health representative and Education representative.

Local Authorities in Wales also have statutory duties to provide preventative services, contained in Section 15 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Local authorities must provide services to:

- encourage children not to commit offences.
- avoid the need for children to be placed in secure accommodation.
- enable children to live their lives as independently as possible.

The YJESS Management Board, made up of senior representatives from each of the statutory partners and other agencies and authorities, oversees the operation of the service including the functions it undertakes and the funding arrangements. The function and representation on the board is detailed further in the Plan.

The Board is currently chaired by the Director of Social Services. Section 40 of the 1998 Act places a duty on the Local Authority to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan in consultation with its statutory partners. The Youth Justice Plan confirms how Youth Justice Services are to be provided and funded during the period of the plan.

The YJESS has continued to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic both in methods of working and in recognising and supporting the impact on children and their families. For YJESS staff, and staff across the authority, the implications of the pandemic have been vast, all feeling the impact of the pandemic in some way or other. The Service has continued to tirelessly deliver flexible and significant levels of support to vulnerable children and their families as we have re-established face to face support.

Some partnership arrangements were impacted during the pandemic due to practitioners assuming alternative roles and access to children being restricted, as recognised in “The Youth Justice System’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Partnership Working”, by Manchester Metropolitan University in 2022. However, the resulting increased use of technology has allowed for increased partnership working following the ending of restrictions, practitioners resuming their traditional roles, and children again accessing community resources and schools. This is allowing for greater

attendance and information sharing at multi-agency meetings resulting in more cohesive planning and support to help understand and reduce risks and promote safety and wellbeing and positive development.

After a period of challenges in management capacity over an extended period, including the retirement of the long-standing YJESS Operational Manager, Paula Barnett, in October 2021, the YJESS has now benefited from full management capacity since January 2022 with the appointment of the new Operational Manager, Kirsty Davies, in January 2022.

In April 2022 the YJESS was part of an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and received positive feedback and overall rating of '**Good**'. The inspectorate commended the "**stability, passion and experience**" of the service and highlighted areas of strength to ensure the "**right ingredients for success**", citing "**that children have access to what they need to succeed and move away from further offending**". Inspectors praised the knowledge of staff at the YJESS, and their overall delivery of good quality work, emphasising that the service has "**struck the right balance between helping children and protecting the public.**" In line with the honest appraisal provided by the service, the inspection made recommendations in areas for improvement, and these are set out in six recommendations which are welcomed by the YJESS, to assist in driving forward these improvements. The information within this plan will set out the clear direction of the service, including how the YJESS has responded to the recommendations set out by HMIP in their inspection report.

A key recommendation was the need to establish the vision and ambition of the YJESS. A working group led by the Chair of the YJESS Management Board and involving YJESS Practitioners along with consultations with children and their parents/carers have achieved this recommendation and confirmed the new Vision and Ambition of the YJESS. The services also actively promote the Vale of Glamorgan's core values of being: **AMBITIOUS, OPEN, TOGETHER AND PROUD.**

# Ambition

We are committed to working together to improve the lives of young people, their families, victims, and the community through a restorative approach.

# Ambition

We will work with young people to build on their strengths, enhance their opportunities, and encourage better decisions through a person-centred approach.

**Vision**  
Supporting young people to build on their strengths and fulfil their potential.

# Ambition

We value the importance of young people and are driven by fairness, inclusion, and equality.

## Local Context

The Vale of Glamorgan, often referred to as ‘the Vale’, is a county borough on the south-east coast of Wales with a population of 132,165 people. Its eastern neighbour is the Welsh capital, Cardiff. The Vale covers a more rural area of 335 square kilometres made up of small towns, villages, hamlets, farms, coastal walks, holiday parks and beaches. The county headquarters are based in Barry, the Vale’s largest town of 51,502, with the famous beach, family amusements and pleasure park of Barry Island. The diverse area of the Vale comprises of very different communities with different levels of affluence and social deprivation, social structures, aspirations, needs and concerns. In more deprived areas it is estimated that 38% of people are living in income deprivation and 53% of children are living in poverty.

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service is an integral part of the Children and Young People’s Service and works closely with partner statutory agencies, third sector and voluntary organisations. It focuses on prevention and diversion, taking a holistic approach to diverting children and young people from offending and re-offending. Alongside the alignment with local authority services, including education and housing, there is a strong, active set of working relationships with South Wales Police, the probation service, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and the voluntary and community sector.

The Vale of Glamorgan YJESS works with children and young people from the age of 8 to 17 in the following areas:

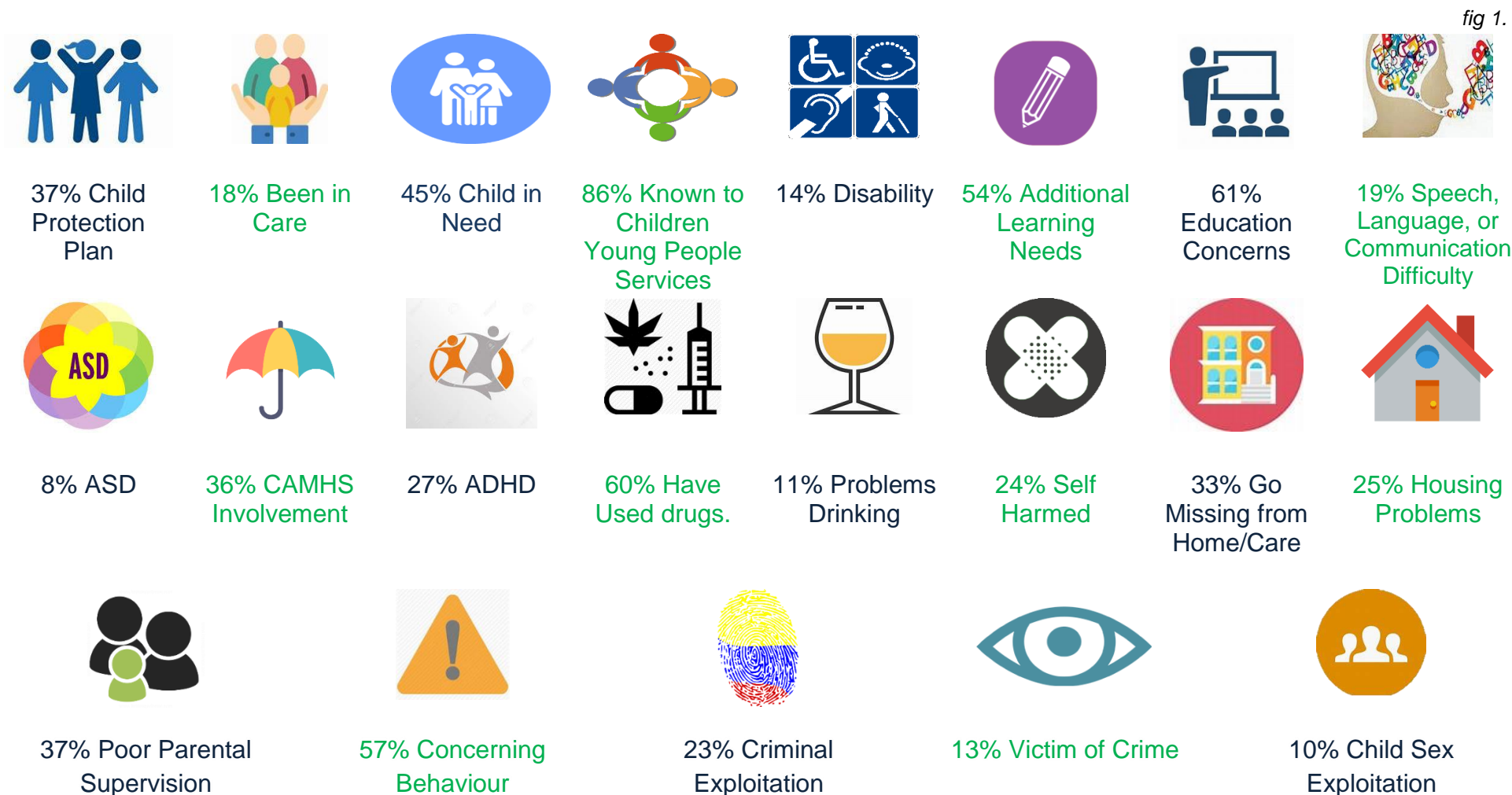
- working with support as part of its Prevention Service and Turnaround project
- undertaking early diversionary support with children who have committed lower-level offences where it is assessed as appropriate and in the public interest not to be charge to court.
- working with children subject to Court orders, both in custody and the community.

The Vale YJESS also works to support the parents and carers of those children, and with the victims of offences or anti-social behaviour within the Victim Code of Practice 2020.

There has been a powerful and positive shift in the focus of YJESS work towards prevention and diversion support, which is evidenced in the reduction in statutory Court Orders. It is significant to note that prevention, diversion, and other voluntary interventions now make up approximately 90% of the YJESS support. This direction of travel is greatly welcomed and has been influenced in Wales with the Welsh Government Youth Justice Blueprint 2019, actively promoting a child first, strengths-based Criminal Justice System for children, with increasing emphasis on prevention and advocating for children through a trauma-informed lens.

In order to safeguard and promote the best possible outcomes for children and to prevent and divert them from criminality and anti-social behaviour, it is critical that the service continues to operate a meaningful child first and strengths-based approach, recognising the impact of their individual experiences and needs. All children have the potential to achieve their aspirations and the YJESS works collaboratively with families, partners, and communities to support access to these opportunities, and for the children to be empowered and supported to achieve their full potential.

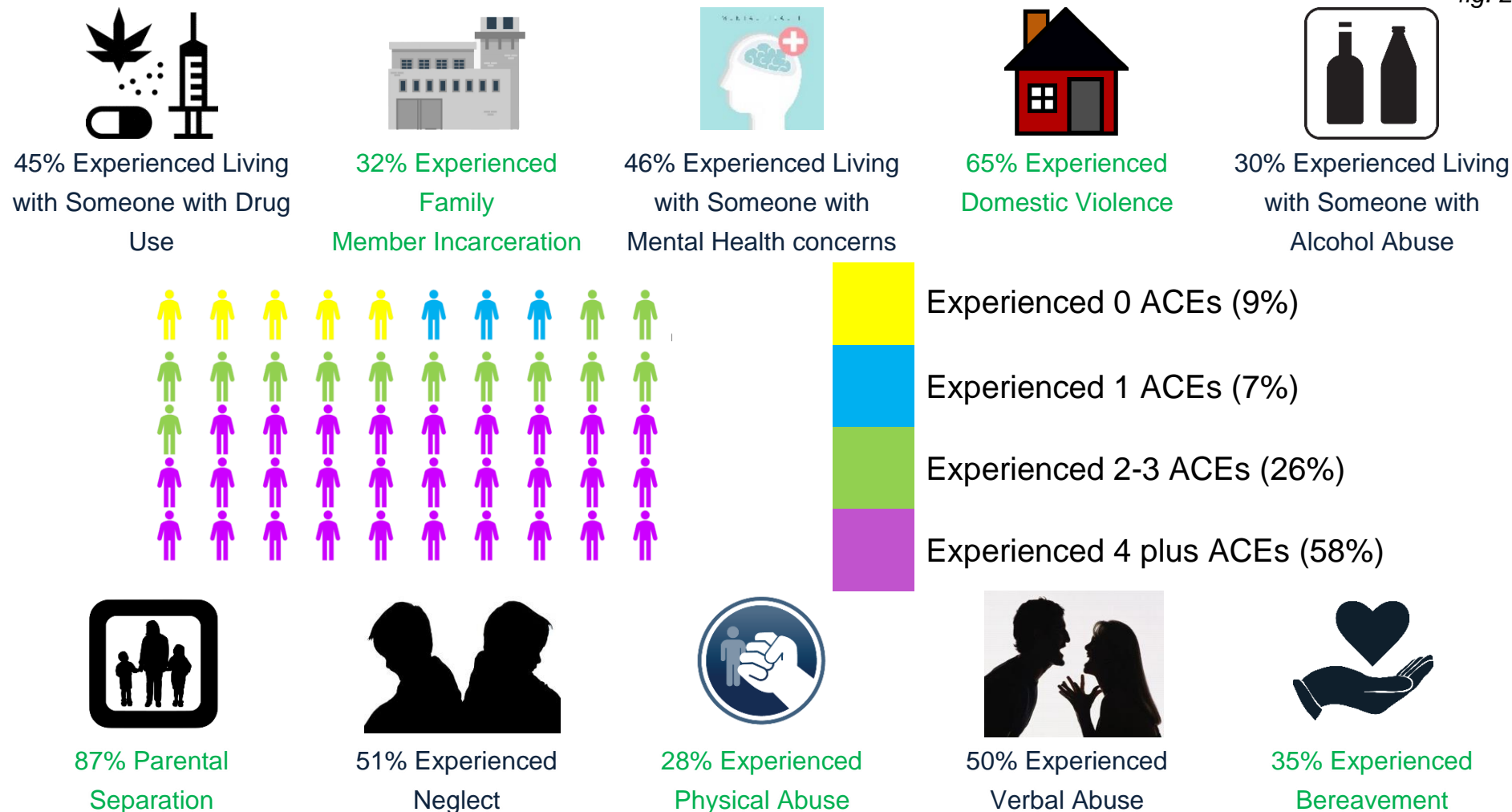
Children supported by the YJESS have a complex set of needs as highlighted within the Vale of Glamorgan profile of children for 2023 (appx. 1) in *fig 1*. It is recognised that children are greatly impacted by their experiences and, sadly, for many children this can mean difficult experiences, poor relationships, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma.





A profile of the ACEs (Appx. 2) experienced by the children supported by the Vale YJESS is included in *fig. 2* and provides a picture of 91% of the children having experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience, with 58% having experienced four or more.

*fig. 2*



## Child First and Voice of the Child

The Vale YJESS strives to ensure it takes a Child First approach to every child receiving support and is committed to embedding the Welsh Government's Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales 2019.

The Child First principles are:

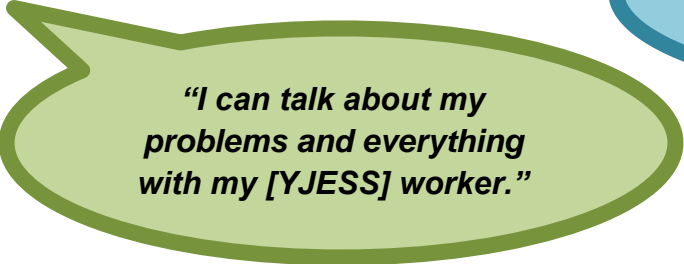
- Seeing Children as Children Developing Pro-Social Identity for positive child outcomes
- Collaborating with children
- Promoting Diversion

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service has embedded these Child First principles into its practice. In demonstrating this, the YJESS takes a trauma informed approach to reflect the impact of children's experiences, with a focus on building trusting relationships through stable and consistent support as a foundation for intervention work to be undertaken. We have identified and supported practitioners as 'Trauma Champions' who have received training in the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) system. Where appropriate, children will be referred to the ECM system. A series of development sessions and whole team training has taken place to support trauma informed assessment, planning and intervention as an in-house model of practice, with team members trained in implementing time-lining and formulation discussion. This remains a priority area for ongoing service development, and practitioners will be undertaking the three-day TRM Practitioner training in December 2023 to further embed this into practice.


This also includes a strengths-based focus to identify, encourage and support interest of children and young people in positive activities, and to reach their potential as a positive contributor to the community. This includes links with the local sports centre, boxing activities with Empire Fighting Chance, using the cooking and gardening facilities at the YJESS as part of facilitating engagement and discussion, and bike maintenance soon to become a part of these positive activities with training arranged for practitioners to facilitate this.

We know through research that "learning takes place in the context of relationships and is critically affected by the quality of those relationships". Therefore, our service is centred around relationship-based practices and focused on seeing the child/young person as that and addressing their individual needs, rather than solely delivering generic, offence specific intervention plans.

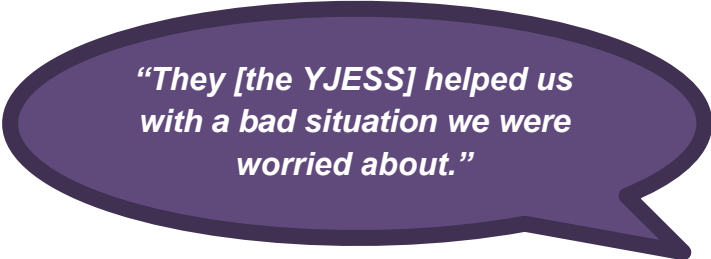
The importance of this is shown from feedback from the children supported by the YJESS:




***"I can talk about my problems and everything with my [YJESS] worker."***



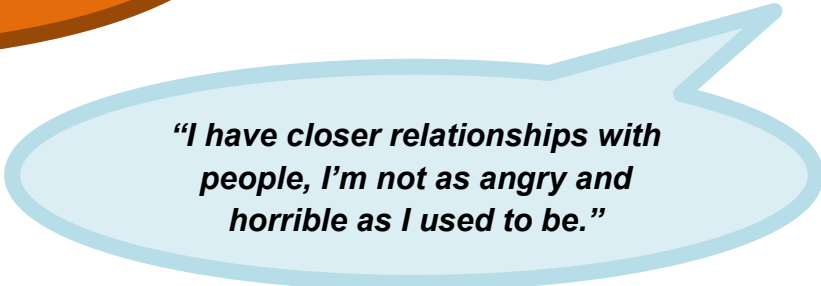
***"The [YJESS] helped with my behaviour and focusing on my life and future more."***



*“They [the YJESS] helped us with a bad situation we were worried about.”*



*“The fact that [the practitioner] always listened and I could unload all the information and [them] had all the advice to help.”*



*“I have closer relationships with people, I’m not as angry and horrible as I used to be.”*

The principle of advocating for prevention and diversion is a strong focus at the YJESS, as illustrated throughout this plan, to minimise children’s involvement with the Criminal Justice System, reduce the number of children becoming involved more formally with the Youth Justice Service as First Time Entrants, and support children to remain free from harm and exploitation.

Through including young people in discussions over time and analysing the demographic of young people we support we have built a comprehensive resource library; utilising practitioner skill sets and offering targeted training and development opportunities in order to have wide ranging response to the needs identified. The multi-agency nature of Youth Justice within Wales provides further prospects of specific support from partners such as CAVDAS (substance use), CAMHS (mental and emotional health), Local education authorities, Youth and Well-Being services as well as NSPCC, Sexual Health Outreach Teams and Careers Wales. This enables us to apply flexibility when creating unique support plans and interventions with the children who are referred into the service, or required to receive support, as a result of behaviours displayed.

### **Child Centred Practice within the Prevention Model**

This model focuses on a child centred and strength-based way of working with children and families. Along with their support networks, the children/young people and their families complete a report with a Prevention Officer as part of an assessment and planning process, and agree a plan together based on their views of their needs. It is the Prevention Officer's role, as part of the collaborative assessment and planning process, to ensure the child is aware of factors such as concerns shared by practitioners, positive reinforcement, and praise, and of the YJESS Practitioner’s own assessment views. The assessment and proposed plan agreed with the child and family is discussed within a Prevention Meeting, which includes the YJESS and partner agencies, to explore how the child and their family can best be supported to achieve their goals.

## **Service Development**

Children are involved in service development at the Vale YJESS through participating in the interview and selection process of practitioners through a children's panel. It is recognised that more has needed to be done to increase the participation of children in service provision, as recognised by the Inspectorate, and there is a workstream in place led by a member of the Board to develop this process and the voice of the child within the YJESS.

The YJESS are reviewing how young people are able to share their views and how these can be reflected within the service, and in the development of the service, and a Participation Strategy is being finalised as one of the workstreams from the Inspection recommendations. Feedback and views have begun to be obtained through the use of Microsoft Word based feedback forms, verbal feedback through intervention sessions and self-assessment tools, and the service has developed feedback utilising the ever-changing technology available and now uses QR codes, tablets and web-based feedback forms. These methods are being taken forward as part of the currently developing participation strategy.

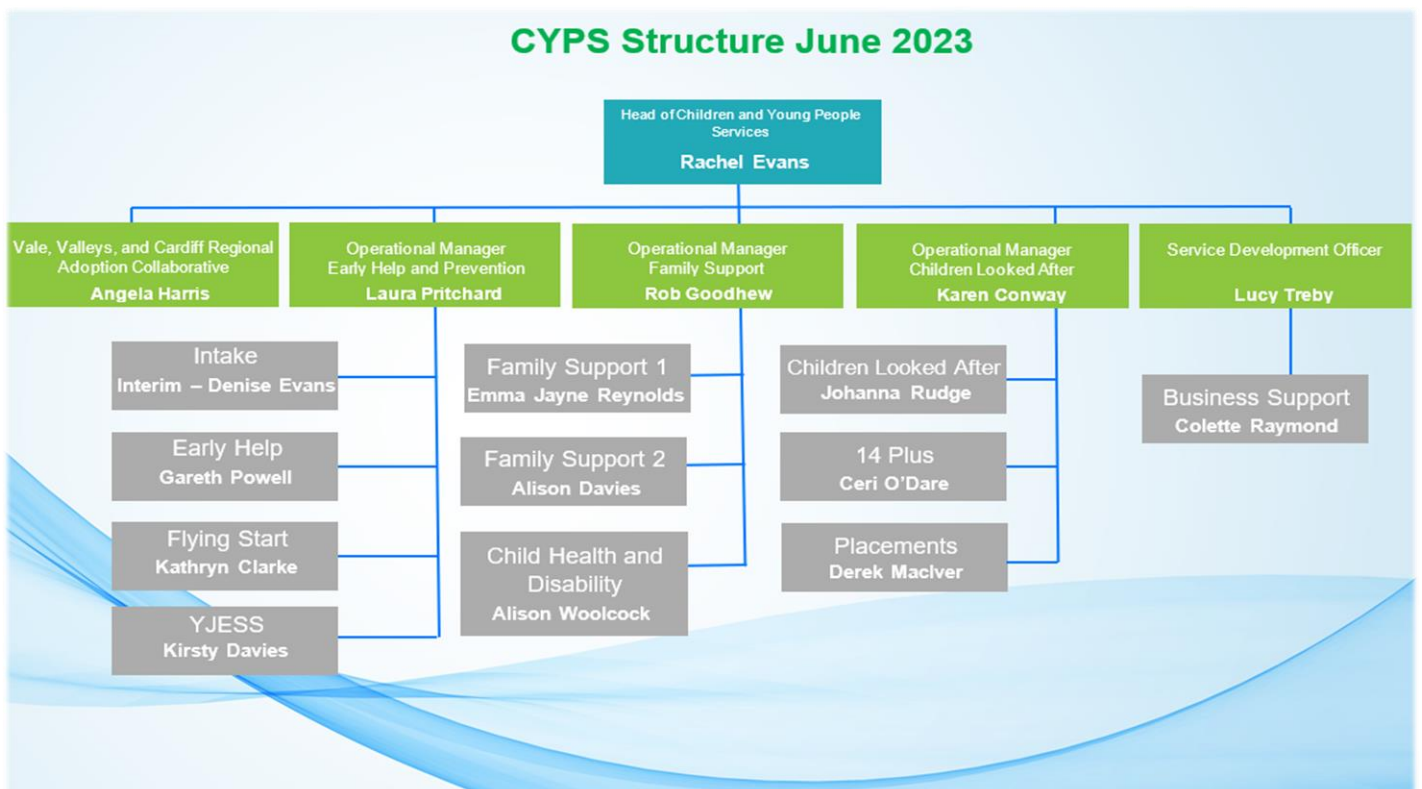
A critical area of shortfall in services available to the YJESS which is directly relevant to the voice of the child, is the "limited access to timely assessments of children's speech and language needs and input from therapists" as reinforced by the Inspectorate. Specialist provision in the form of a Speech Language and Communication Needs Therapist (SLCN) are integrated within many YJESS Services and is something that is on the agenda for future discussion as a gap in service provision.

## Governance, Leadership, Partner Arrangements and Board Development

The YJESS is located within Children and Young People Services, one of three divisions within the Social Services Directorate. The Directorate benefits from a stable senior management team and the Director of Social Services is a longstanding Chair of the YJESS Management Board. The Director sits on the Senior Leadership team of the Local Authority and chairs the Regional Safeguarding Board, and the YJESS Operational Manager sits on local and regional boards and panels, including the Regional Safeguarding Board and MAPPA Operational Group, ensuring that the YJESS is well-connected to the local and regional strategic agencies through which services are commissioned and developed, and giving a voice to the YJESS and the children and families with whom we work.

Positively, the Youth Justice & Early Support Service sits within Children and Young People Services, recognising its primary role in working in the interests of children; focused on the achievement of outcomes. Following recent investment into Children and Young People Services and a need to respond to increased levels of demand and complexity, a proportionate level of restructuring has taken place, to create a dedicated Intake Team, two Family Support Teams and a 14-Plus Team. Additional posts have been added across all of the core teams to add capacity and resilience. Investment has also enabled the addition of a third Operational Manager and the positive realignment of teams according to their primary area of focus.

The Youth Justice & Early Support Service has moved from being directly line managed by the Head of Children and Young Peoples Service, to being integrated as part of services for Early Help and Prevention, including our Intake Team, our Early Help service and Flying Start. This alignment recognises the role and significant commitment the Youth Justice & Early Support Service has in the prevention of offending/re-offending. The alignment also recognises the key partnerships



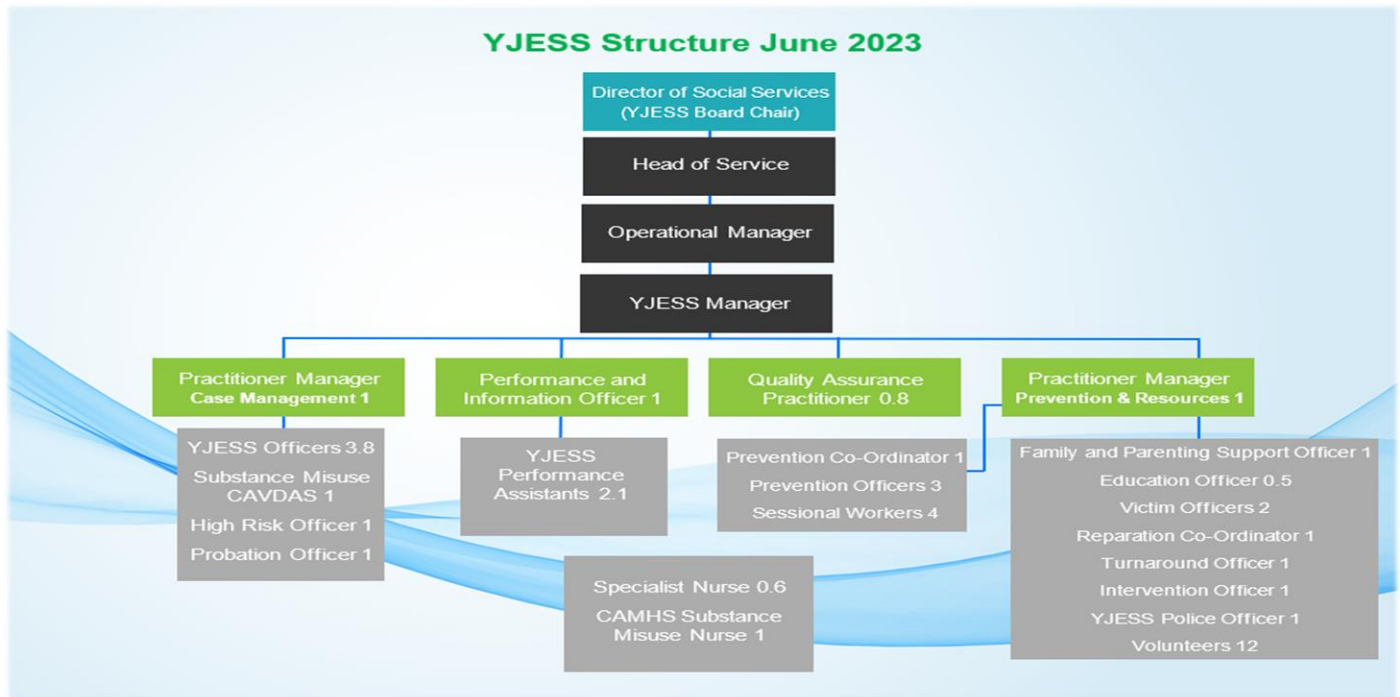
between statutory and non-statutory services and the value placed on working together in the best interests of children.

The YJESS Management Board is made up of the statutory partnership agencies in addition to locally agreed agency representatives are illustrated in the organisational chart below. Representatives have the appropriate seniority and authority to make strategic decisions related to financial and staffing resources and for the purpose of escalation and development of gaps in service provision. Board attendance is now provided within the quarterly returns.

### YJESS Management Board

Name	Position	Agency
Lance Carver	Director of Social Services	Vale
Cllr Eddie Williams	Cabinet Member	Social Care & Health
Rachel Evans	Head of Children & Young People Services	Vale
Debbie Gibbs	Community Safety & Partnership Team Manager	Vale
Eirian Evans	Head of Probation	C&V
DCI Matt Cox	Cardiff & Vale BCU Organised Crime, Intelligence & Exploitation	Police
Lisa Morgan	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Officer	South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner
Morwen Hudson	Head of Standards & Provision in Education – Learning & Skills	Vale
Martin Dacey	Lead Officer for Social Inclusion & Wellbeing in Education	Vale
Becci Ingram	General Manager for Children, Young People and Family Health Services	C&V
Katie Simpson	Deputy General Manager for Children, Young People and Family Health Services	C&V
Mark Davies	Prevention and Partnership Manager	Vale
Mike Ingram	Head of Housing & Building Services	Vale
Laura Pritchard	Operational Manager – Early Help & Prevention	Vale
Kirsty Davies	Service Manager	YJESS
Carys Davies	Practitioner Manager – Prevention and Resources	YJESS
Andrew Stephens-Collins	Practitioner Manager – Case Management	YJESS
Gemma Williams	Performance & Information Officer	YJESS
Chris Carroll	Quality Assurance Officer	YJESS

The staffing structure of the YJESS, including the specialist provision, is illustrated in the chart below:



The YJESS Management Board reviews the performance of the service, including levels of first-time entrants, rates of re-offending, the use of custody, access to education, training and employment, substance misuse, emotional wellbeing issues and accommodation. There has been significant development to widen the information presented to the Board. This now seeks to encompass wider information relating to the health of the organisation including areas relating to staffing, sickness, financial consideration. In addition to key information on children receiving YJESS support to allow a continual analysis of YJESS activities and to provide information on local performance measures, includes the nature of current interventions, offences, timeliness of assessments and findings of quality assurance audits.

The nature of information provided to the Board will remain an area for continuing progression. The use of data from partnership organisations, such as information from the police representative on the Board is currently utilised to enhance the depth and accuracy of information to underpin planning and provide scrutiny. In addition to performance reports, there will continue to be updates from YJESS practitioners to appraise the Board on their roles and responsibilities and the outcomes generated from their support. This ensures that Board members have a full and rich understanding of the YJESS and how each role contributes to reductions and prevention in offending behaviour.

In 2022 the Board undertook a development session guided by the Youth Justice Board Management guidance, facilitated by YJB Cymru, including updating knowledge on the role and responsibilities of the board. Following the Inspection in 2022, there has been continued development and partnership working between the board and YJESS practitioners, as part of the work-streams to support delivery of the Vale YJESS Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP). This is enabling the Board member and staff team to develop positive relationships and understand each other's roles and how they both influence service improvements.

## Progress on the Youth Justice Plan 2022/2023

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service Plan 2022/2023 (appx. 3). The main focus of the Plan for 2022-2023 was undertaking the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) following the 2022 Inspection recommendations. The six recommendations which the inspectorate believed would have a positive impact on the quality of Youth Justice & Early Support Service in the Vale of Glamorgan, were:

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service team should:

- 1. Establish the vision and ambition of the organisation within the next 12 months.*
- 2. Ratify and effectively implement a resettlement policy within the next 12 months.*
- 3. Adopt a disproportionality policy with attendant action plans within the next 12 months.*
- 4. Develop methods of incorporating the perspectives of children and their parents or carers into the board's development of the YJESS's work over the next 12 months.*
- 5. Develop methods of engaging staff members in the development of policy and services within the next 12 months.*
- 6. Improve the quality of management oversight of cases to address shortcomings in the management of the safety and wellbeing of the children and the risk of harm to others.*

A Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was developed to undertake these recommendations and submitted to the HMIP in August 2022. Working groups led by representatives of the YJESS Management Board and including YJESS Practitioners undertook each recommendation within this PIAP.

The progress on the actions within each recommendation in the PIAP is detailed in the PIAP Review document (appx. 4). Some of the recommendations have been completed, such as establishing the Vision, and some have been incorporated into the operations of the YJESS, such as improving the quality of management oversight, as detailed in the review document. Recommendations which continue to be in progress are reflected in the relevant areas of this Youth Justice Plan, and where there are risks identified these continue to be monitored within weekly YJESS Management Meetings and the PIAP progress remains a focus of the YMB agenda.



## Resources and Services

The tables below illustrate how the core grant contributes to providing YJESS practitioners and support for the work of the YJESS, as well as how partner agencies provide equivalent contributions to staffing.

As of 20/06/2023 the Youth Justice Board Practice Grant for 2023/2024 has not been confirmed, therefore the funding settlement for 2022/2023 has been used as a projection for the current year's budget, as advised by the Youth Justice Board. This is set out in the table below.

### B5: YOT budget Costs and Contributions

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board	174,675			174,675
Local Authority	566,310		120,544	686,854
Police	3,445	59,722	6,925	70,092
Police and Crime Commissioner	17,461		5,739	23,200
Probation		24,699	5,000	29,699
Health		91,317		91,317
* Welsh Government	195,026			195,026
Other	33,642		15,834	49,476
<b>Total</b>	<b>990,559</b>	<b>175,738</b>	<b>154,042</b>	<b>1,320,339</b>

\* Welsh YOTs only

These contributions have helped in the increased focus on Prevention and Diversion to promote the reduction of First Time Entrants, including through local authority practitioners undertaking core prevention support as an addition to the diversion and statutory court work to help prevent re-offending. The core grant and additional contributions also contribute to the trauma informed training, specialist training such as AIM3 for assessing and working with sexually harmful behaviour, the training of practitioners and volunteers to facilitate Restorative Justice meetings, and in the support of facilitating positive activities.

Further training scheduled for 2023/2024 to increase the knowledge base and practices of YJESS practitioners to help reduce offending, reoffending, exploitation and to increase children's safety and wellbeing and positive life chances, include three-day intensive trauma informed training in December 2023, Restorative Justice training in July 2023. The provision of the YJESS will be further enhanced for 2023/24 through the current recruitment process being undertaken to fill the vacant family support and parenting officer post. This will further develop the important support provided to parents and carers and so help increase positive outcomes for the children. The recent Turnaround

funding resulting in an additional Turnaround post and resources also allows the YJESS to work with an increased number of children who are identified as at risk of becoming involved in offending and anti-social behaviour.

The evolving health contribution provides an increased focus on emotional and mental health support for children supported by the YJESS. This involves the part time provision of a CAMHS Specialist, and access to Young People’s Drug and Alcohol Service (YPDAS) Tier 3 support. The emotional health support includes consultation with practitioners and direct work with the children, supporting both the Child First and trauma informed approach through advising practitioners, external agencies and parents/carers of the best approaches for supporting the child, and supporting the child to develop an understanding of their own emotional needs and techniques to support these.

The partnership contributors to the provision of YJESS practitioners are shown below based on full time equivalents:

**Vale of Glamorgan YJESS Staffing (as of 30/06/2023)**

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager (FT)	Operational Manager (PT)	Operational Manager (FT)	Practitioners (PT)	Practitioners (FT)	Administration (PT)	Administration (FT)	Sessional	Total
Permanent	1		3	0.8	6	1.1	2	4	21.9
Fixed-term		0.8			4				0
Temporary									0
Vacant					2				0
Seconded Children's Services									0
Seconded Probation				0.4					0.4
Seconded Police					1				1
Seconded Health (Substance misuse)									0
Seconded Health (Mental health)				0.5					0.5
Seconded Health (Physical health)									0
Seconded Tier 2 Substance Misuse (currently recruiting)				1					
Seconded Education				0.5					0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28.3</b>

Staffing of the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service by gender, ethnicity, and Welsh language:

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian												1	0	1
Black													0	0
Mixed						1							0	1
White		1	3	1	6	8		4		4	3	8	11	26
Any other ethnic group													0	0
Not known													0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>
Welsh Speakers	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Disabled (self-Classified)	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2

## Performance and National Key Performance Indicators

Quarterly Performance reports are submitted to the Vale Management Board and comparisons are made against South Wales, Wales and the YJB YJESS Family for both the National and the Welsh indicators. Reporting is also completed quarterly for the Out of Court Scrutiny Board panels and Bi-annually for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and CCG funding.

Performance data is a static agenda item for the board and for internal YJESS Team Meetings.

As well as the national and Welsh indicators, local information sharing has been increased over the last 12 months with South Wales police, specifically relating to police stop and search data. This is to be included within the breakdown of future YJESS cohorts to assist in the analysis of disproportionality and over representation in youth justice to inform and support responses to this.

An area of current development is the capturing the Additional Learning Needs information for children supported by the YJESS, including ensuring that the YJESS are aware of IDPs and recording these as a key performance indicator from April 2023. The YJESS are in the process of developing increased links with the relevant education authority partners to support this, as well as identifying training support for YJESS practitioners.

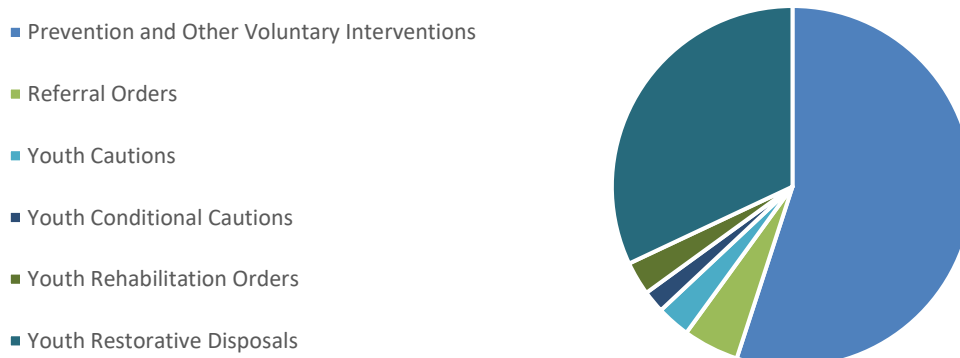
### Interventions and Performance Data

The Vale YJESS supported 122 children who commenced 156 interventions between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (including prevention support through to statutory court orders). This is an increase of 20% from the previous year when the YJESS supported 102 children who commenced 124 interventions.

Of the 156 interventions which commenced in 2022/23, 75 (48%) were for Prevention and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) support. Five (3%) children commenced support with the new Turnaround programme, six (4%) commenced an alternative voluntary support intervention. 58 (37%) children received an Out of Court Disposal and related intervention support in the period. 12 (8%) children were supported through a statutory court order.

13% of interventions in 2022/23 were for a Youth Caution or higher tariff intervention, which are Substantive Outcomes.

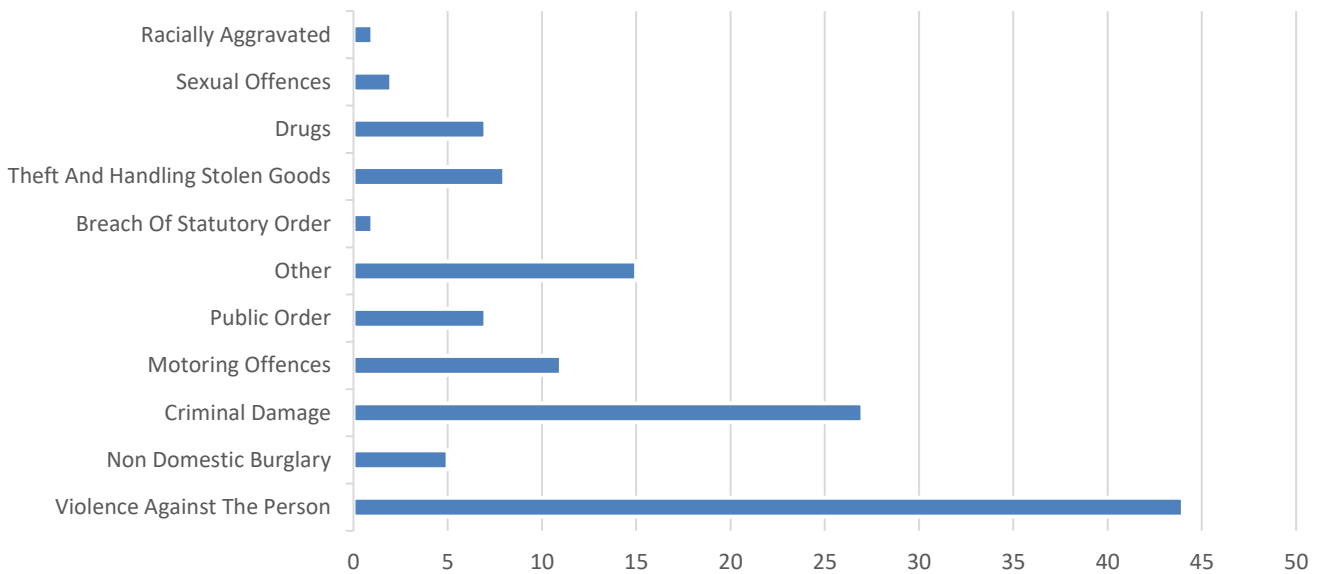
Interventions Starting 2022-2023



73 of the 156 (47%) Interventions commencing in 2022/23 involved offences being linked to the interventions. The total number of offences linked was 129 and these were committed by 63 children.

35% (44) of all offences were for violence against the Person. 27 of these were for Assault by Beating or Common Assault including against an emergency worker. 21% were for Criminal Damage, Motoring Offences accounted for 9%. Theft and Handling 6%.

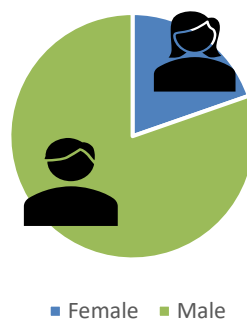
### Offence Types



Analysis on types of offence is provided to the Management Board, and intervention audits presented where further context is required, to allow for scrutiny, identifying trends and specific additional resources where required. Analysis of offences committed by girls during a specific period in 2022, for example, identified a need for resources relating to social media and understanding and managing conflict within that cohort.

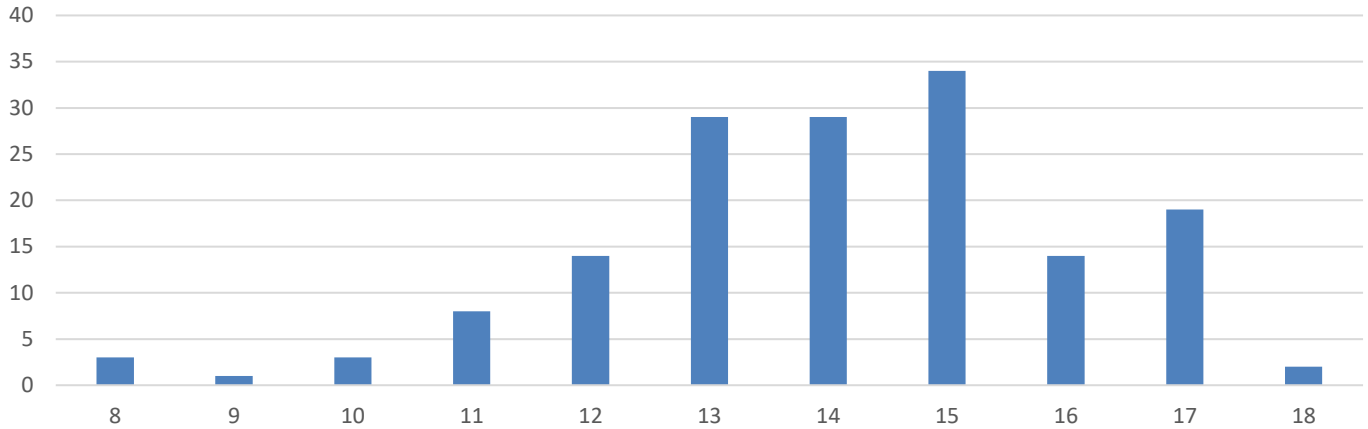
98 Children supported by the YJESS out of the 122 (80%) identified as Male and 24 (20%) identified as Female. This is the same as the previous year.

### 122 Children Supported By The Service



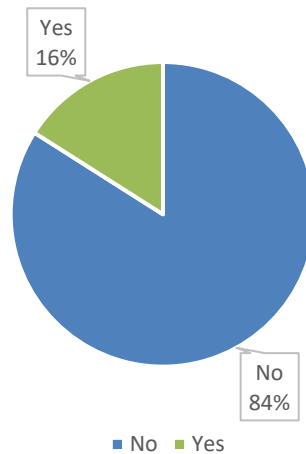
49% of the children were aged between 14 years and 16 years.

Age of Children Starting an Intervention In 2022/23

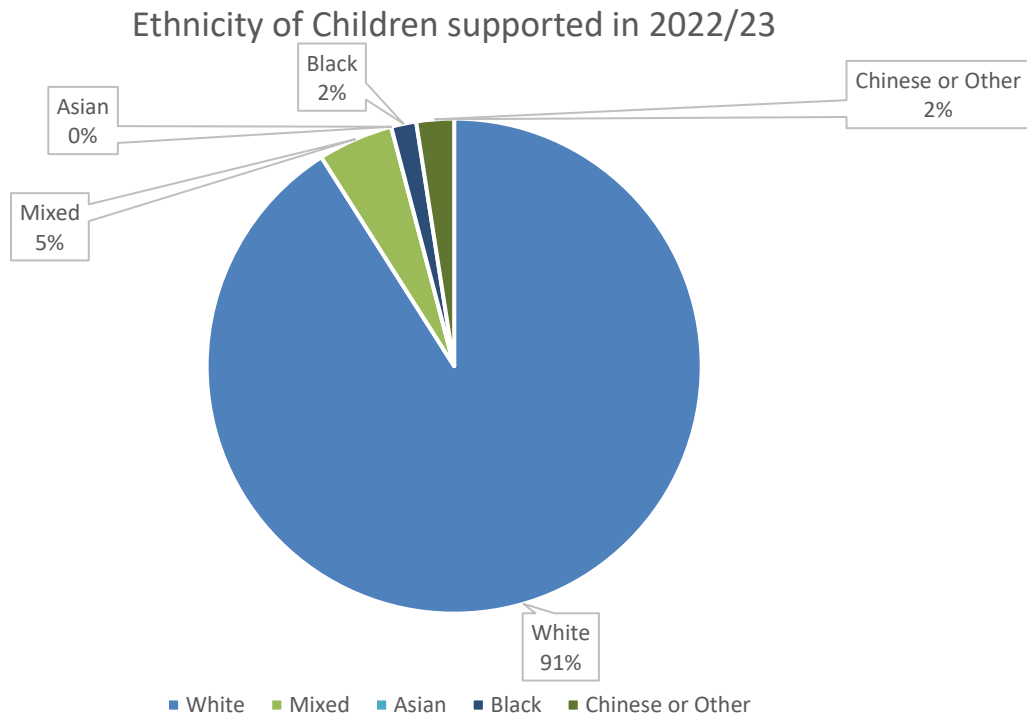


16% of the children supported by the YJESS in 2022/23 were Child Looked after.

Child Looked After



91% of children supported by the YJESS identified as white (9% identifying as non-white) which is representative of the Vale population for children aged 10-17 years. This is not representative the population of children in the Vale being supported as a result of committing offences in 2022/23 however, with 29% (8 of 23) of children who committed offences in the Vale aged 10 -17 identifying as black or other ethnic minority. This is below the Vale general representation and is an increase from the previous year's 11% figure. This over representation will be analysed as part of the disproportionality policy and ongoing work and is addressed within the Over-Represented Groups section of this plan.

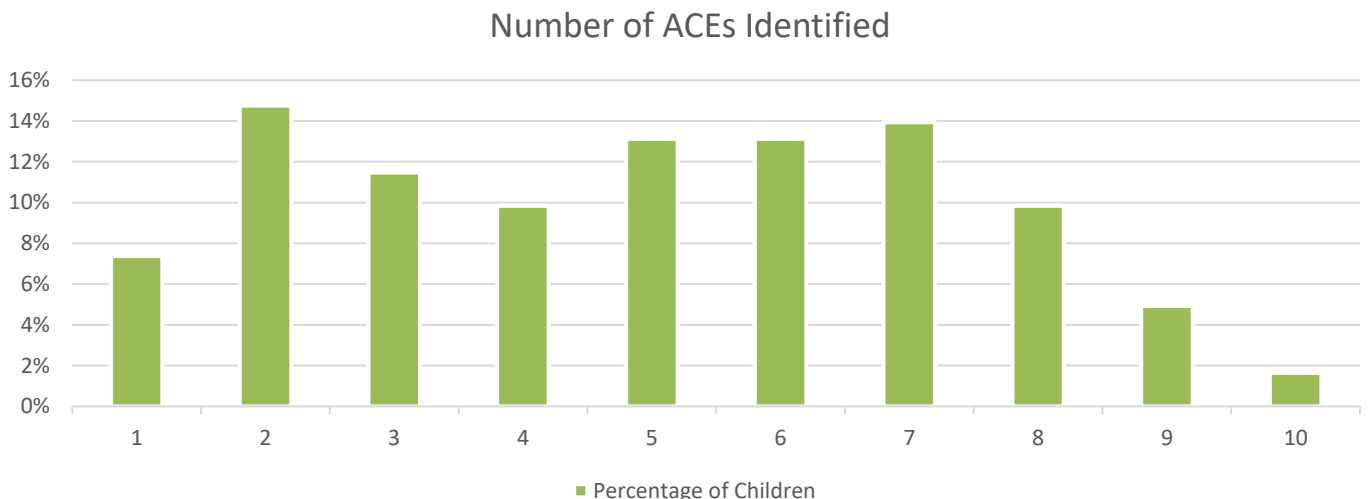


Using data from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, we are able to analyse more of the complex needs of our cohort. The data is used to target resources and where it is best delivered in a small area or at community level.

43 (35%) children supported by the Vale Youth Justice & Early Support Service reside in the bottom 20% most deprived areas in Wales. In contrast 32 (26%) of children supported reside in the top 20% least deprived areas of the Vale identifying some of the potential diverse needs of children living in the Vale.

From Assessment data provided by practitioners, analysis identifies that 58% of children supported by the YJESS in 2022/23 experienced four or more ACEs, and 43% experienced seven or more.

Below is a breakdown of the percentage of children and the number of ACEs identified, at the time of assessment.

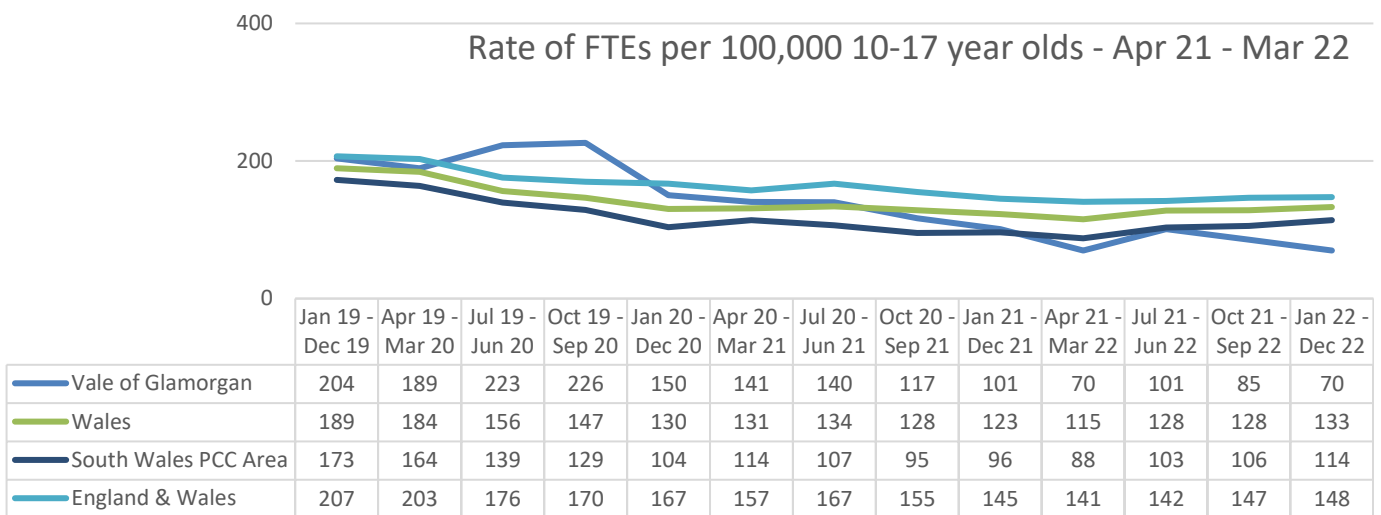


## First Time Entrants

First-time entrants (FTEs) are defined as children (aged 10-17 years) who receive their first substantive outcome (a youth caution, youth conditional caution or court conviction) for the first time. Each YJESS has an overarching target to reduce the number of FTEs on a quarterly basis within its locality. The rate of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10 -17 years is per 100,000.

Due to discrepancies between the published data supplied by the Ministry of Justice to calculate First Time Entrants for local areas, and our local data, the Vale of Glamorgan have supplied local data below. Between January and December 2022 there were nine children who were FTE compared to thirteen the previous year. The graph below indicates that the rate of First Time Entrants continues to be maintained at around the same low level, however, slight variances over the 4-year period are shown.

Rate of FTEs per 100,000 10-17 year olds - Apr 21 - Mar 22



## Reduction of First Time Entrants

The YJESS Management Team continually scrutinise the FTE figures and inform the Management Board to allow them to provide oversight and scrutiny and so ensure that children are being supported appropriately by the agreed processes within South Wales.

Whilst the FTE numbers in the Vale have been consistently low for children, the board requested an audit in early 2023 for the children who became FTEs in the previous period. They were interested in partnership working and opportunities where earlier support may have been beneficial in order to identify areas for development of earlier opportunities for support by agencies working with children.

The outcomes were clear in identifying such opportunities, and in highlighting the trauma experienced by the majority of children who enter the youth justice system. These outcomes have been presented to the Board, and more widely with the local authority senior leadership team, to raise awareness of early identification of need and promote preventative support. The YJESS are briefing Heads of schools on the findings in July, which will continue to be shared with partners. Routine auditing for First Time Entrants will continue to be undertaken and shared with the Board and more widely to identify and promote earlier support opportunities for children.



Further work being undertaken to reduce FTEs includes raising awareness of the Prevention Service, continuing links with the Community Safety Partnership which has now resulted in earlier YJESS support for children involved in Anti-Social Behaviour, the use of the new Turnaround provision, and a focus within the Out of Court Disposal multi-agency decision making process for considering appropriate alternative support; specifically considering over-represented children. Training for children’s homes and foster carers in Restorative Approaches with their children also continues to be offered.

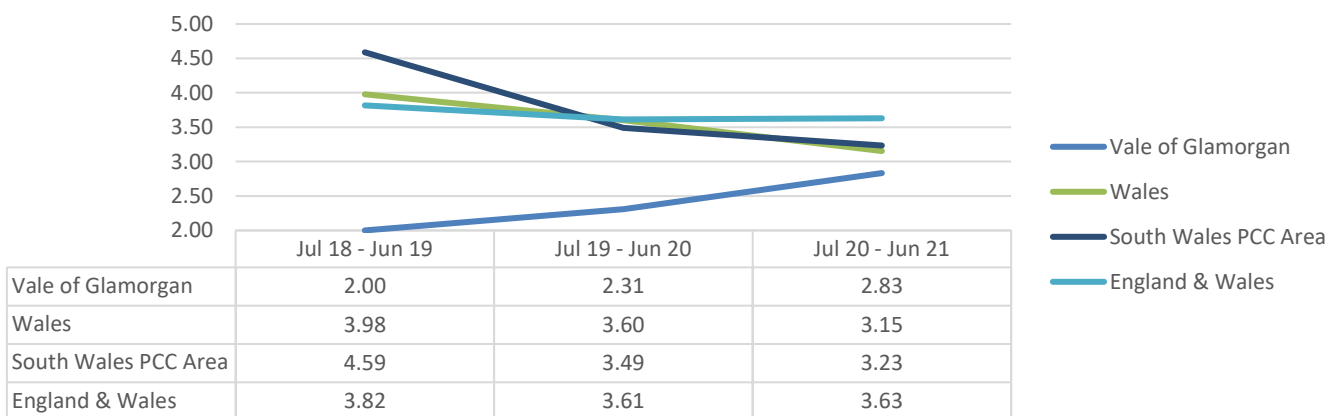
## Reoffending Rate

The data for this indicator comes from the Police National Computer and is published by the MoJ. The cohort consists of all young people who received a pre-court or court disposal, or were released from custody, within a 12-month period. The YJESS has an overarching target to reduce the number of children re-entering the criminal justice system year on year.

Due to the timescales for tracking of the cohort, the measure is always approximately 18 months behind ‘real time’. The most recent data below for June 2020 – July 2021 shows that there were 22 children in the cohort, six reoffended, committing a total of 17 reoffences. 2.83 reoffences per offender with a 27.3% reoffending rate.

This is compared to the previous year of 44 children in the cohort, with 13 reoffending, committing a total of 30 offences, giving a figure of 2.31 re-offences per reoffender with a 29.5% reoffending rate.

Re-offending rate comparisons per 10,000  
Annual Weighted Average

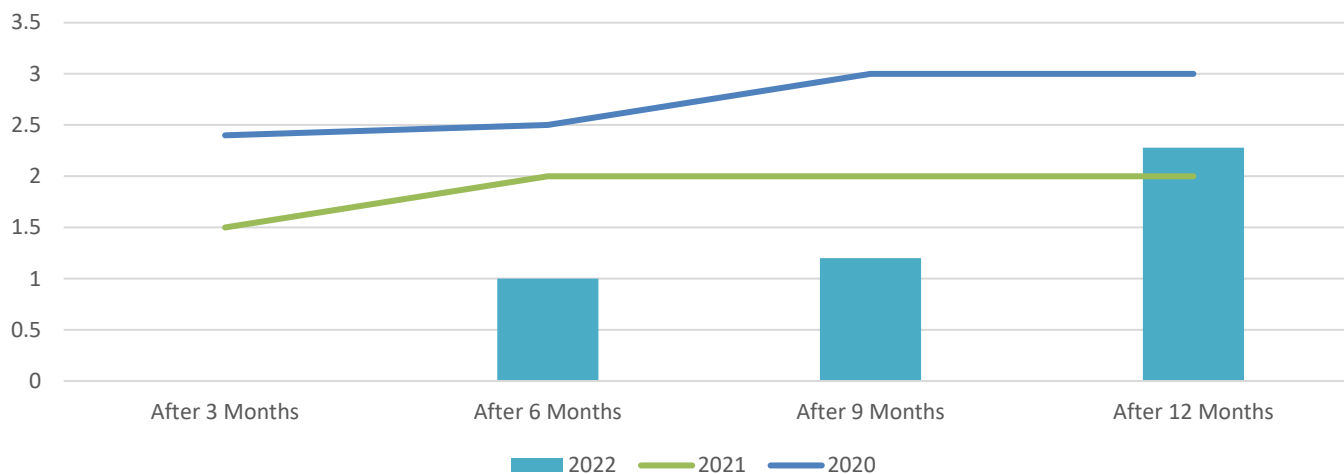


## Local Offending/Reoffending

The Vale YJESS provide the Management board with more up-to-date and contextualised data. The most recent data available is 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 38 children were analysed as a part of the live reoffending tracker and data presented to the board quarterly. These were children who had started a prevention intervention or received an out of court disposal, pre court or community disposal. As part of the YJESS Re-offending Action Plan, it was agreed that the YJESS will complete file audits on children who are being supported by the YJESS who have offended (while receiving prevention support) or reoffended, to ensure that the support being provided does assist with reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

Of the 38 children in the cohort, seven children offended or reoffended, committing 16 offences, with 2.28 offences per child who committed an offence and an 18.4% offending/reoffending rate.

Local Performance - Reoffences by Reoffender



### Reducing Re-Offending

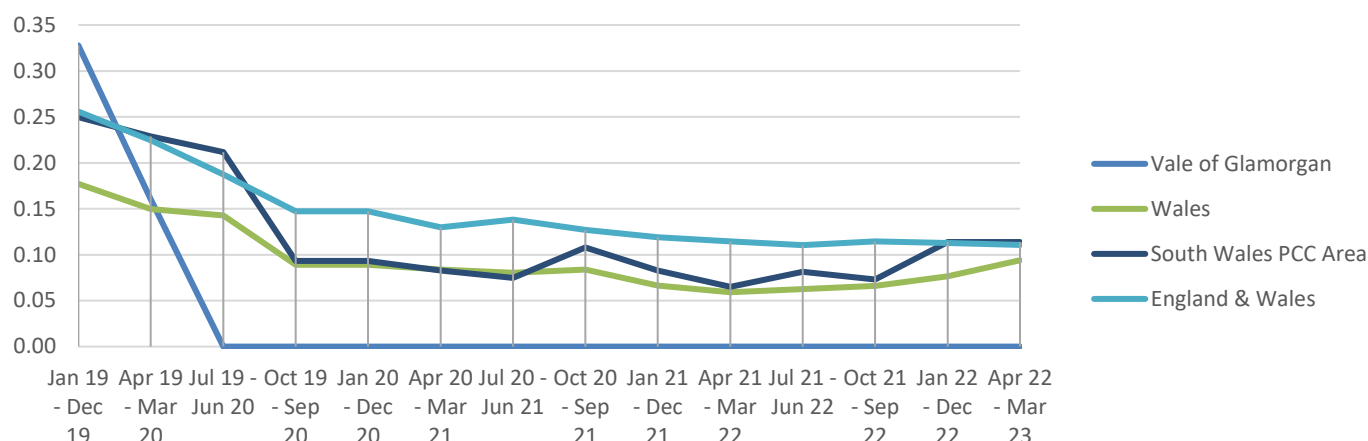
A primary focus of the support provided to the children who have committed offences is to prevent reoffending. In addition to the individual support, re-offending audits have now started to take place when re-offending is identified, as identified above. The audits include practitioners undertaking group reviews of the interventions and the circumstances of the offences, and feedback provided from these to individual practitioners and the team. Areas for development identified have included a greater emphasis on establishing and maintaining oversight of early consistent communication with the child and their family. Areas of strength and good practice have included the very positive multi-agency relationships, and the positive and adaptive methods of working with children.

### Custody

Use of custody rate per 1,000 of 10-17 population for the period April 22 – March 23. It is highly positive that the service had no children sentenced to custody within this period. This replicates the previous year April 21 – March 2022.

During this period there were five Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) requested by the court requiring consideration of ‘all options’ which includes consideration of custody. YJESS recommendations for a community based intervention within four of the PSRs were agreed by the court. The fifth outcome resulted in a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) ‘Conclusive Grounds’ decision being made following the YJESS submitting the referral, and charges being dropped.

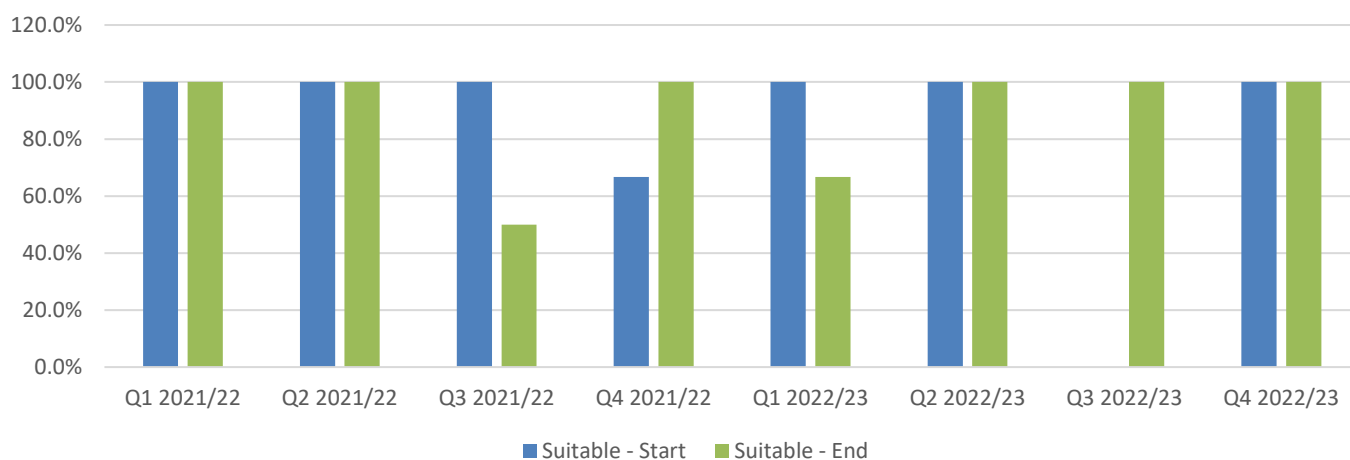
### Custody Rate per 1,000 - 10-17 year olds



### Access to Suitable Accommodation

This measures the percentage point change in the proportion of children with suitable accommodation whilst undertaking a YJESS intervention. It also looks at suitability upon release from custody compared with immediately prior to commencement.

### Accommodation Community - Children Suitable Start v End



The data above represents 10 children who completed a statutory intervention in 202/23 and all 10 were in suitable accommodation at the end of their interventions. The Board is provided with data for all children supported by the YJESS and this encourages discussion on suitability of provision for all children not just the small numbers in the cohort above.

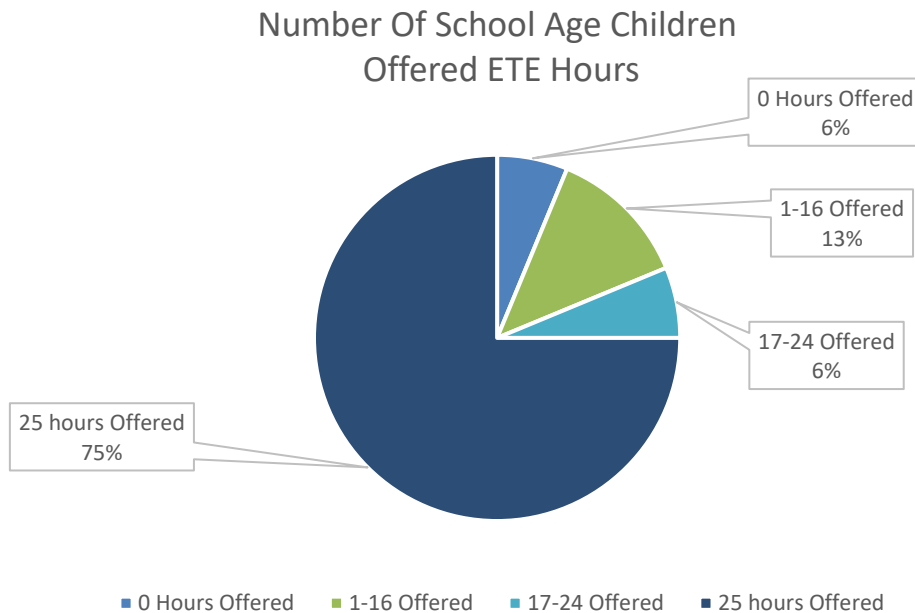
There is currently one child supported by YJESS who is assessed as living in unsuitable accommodation, related to conditions of police bail. The reasons for these concerns are shared by the Children and Young People’s Service and the suitability continues to be raised with relevant partner agencies.

### Education, Training and Employment (ETE)

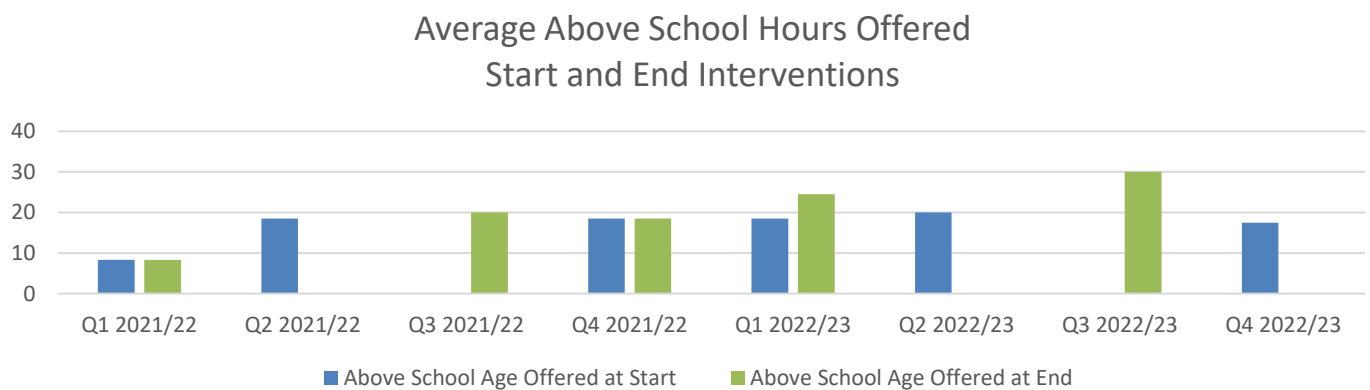
This data is a count of the number of court orders closing in the period, and the number and proportion of these disposals where the child was in suitable ETE. The measure looks at those of

Statutory School Age (who should receive at least 25 hours per week) and those above Statutory School Age (who should receive at least 16 hours per week).

During 2022/2023 three children completed a statutory intervention of school age.



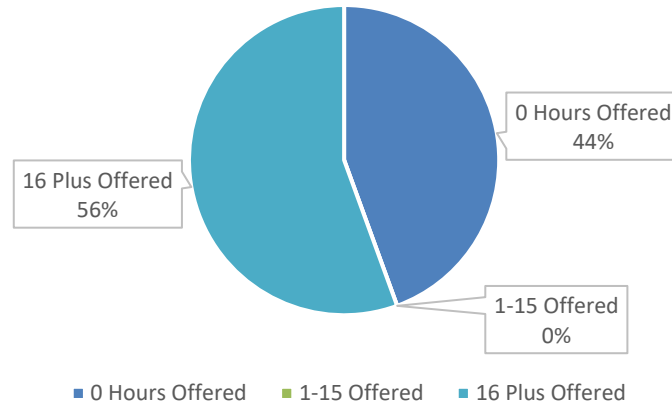
During 2022/2023 six children completed a statutory intervention of above school age.



As the graphs above only relate to children who have completed a statutory court intervention with the Vale YJESS, it is not representative of the educational partnership work which is evident in the YJESS. It was agreed that all children who are currently supported by YJESS will be discussed at Board level, including information provided on the number of hours of education being received and the suitability of the provisions. Access has been provided to education databases and links to workers to support this information at multiple levels.

Of the current cohort of children being supported by the YJESS of school age, 23% are supported with a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), which includes those not being offered 25 hours in order to promote re-engagement into education.

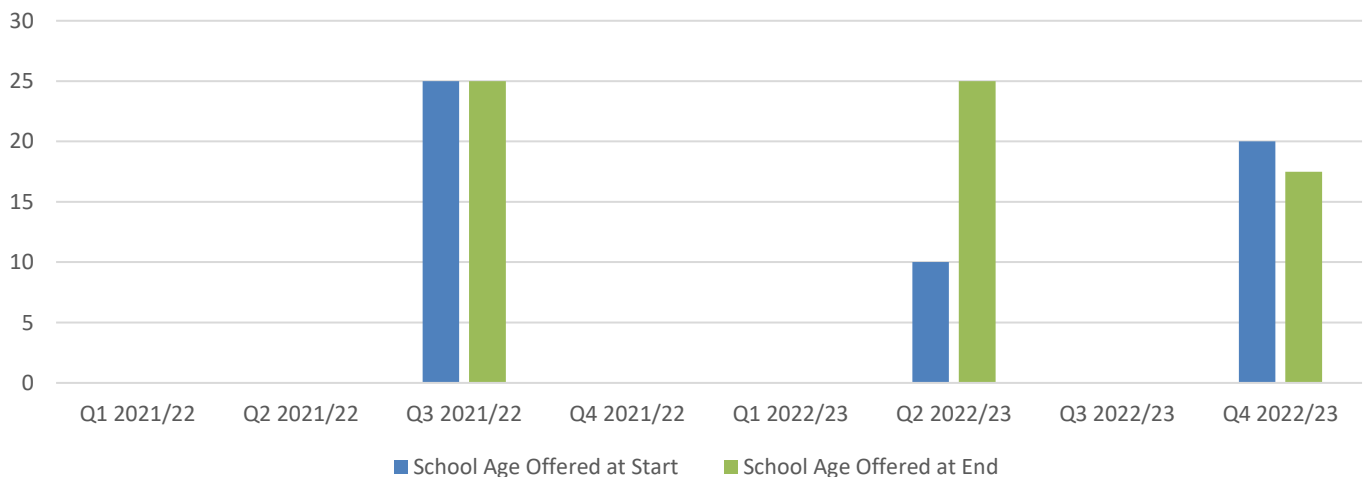
## Number Of Above-School Age Children Offered ETE Hours



### Increasing Suitable Education Provision

There are very positive links between the YJESS and the Vale Learning and Skills Directorate. All Children not receiving the full 25 hours are discussed and supported by the YJESS and Education, including within forums attended by a member of YJESS Management team on 'Exclusion Meetings' for children at risk of exclusion, 'Education/YJESS Interface Meetings' and Education's 'Social Emotional and Mental Health Panel' (SEMHP). All continued concerns are escalated to the Board.

### Average School Hours Offered Start and End Interventions



The chart below shows the number of children above school age offered ETE. All children who are not in education or employment and are supported by the YJESS have been referred to Careers Wales or support to engage with Communities 4 Work to increase employability skills. There is ongoing discussion about the objectiveness of an assessment of suitability undertaken by a YJESS practitioner compared to a Learning and Skills Practitioner, however outcomes require management oversight and discrepancies are discussed within meetings with Learning and Skills and escalated where appropriate.

## Access to Substance Misuse Support

This indicator relates to children subject to court orders identified as requiring a substance misuse assessment. Of those identified, a substance misuse assessment must be completed within five days. If the child has been identified as requiring ongoing substance misuse support treatment, this must commence within 10 days.

There are a number of reasons why a child has an identified need but did not commence a substance misuse assessment. These range from having already received an assessment, to the complexity of the child's circumstances resulting in the referral not being the highest priority or beneficial for the child at that specific time.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	total
Number identified by screening requiring SM service	2	2	1	4	9
Number of children commencing a SM assessment	1	1	0	0	2
Number of children commencing a SM assessment within 5 days	1	1	0	0	2
Number of children identified through assessment requiring treatment	1	1	0	0	2
Number of children receiving a service within 10 days	1	1	0	0	2

The data above is not reflective of all the children the YJESS supports, or of their needs and substance misuse support they may have received. The new Key Performance Indicators to be reported in August 2023 will look to capture advice and guidance, including harm reduction and awareness, provided as part of lower-level general support, not only by the specialist substance misuse officer, and will also include children not subject to court orders.

## Access to Mental Health Services

The YJESS reports on the percentage of children subject to court orders identified as requiring a mental health assessment. All children take part in an assessment by the YJESS within 10 working days of sentence, and those identified as requiring a referral on mental health services should be referred within 10 working days. The YJESS then reports the percentage of these children a) receiving a mental health assessment within 28 days and, b) if the child referred has been identified as receiving mental health treatment within 28 days of assessment.

The table below shows the information for children subject to court orders as reported as part of the old KPIs:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	total
Number identified Via Screening Requiring a MH Assessment	0	2	0	4	6
Number commencing MH Assessment	0	2	0	0	2
Number commencing a MH assessment within 28 days of referral	0	0	0	0	0
Number of children identified through assessment requiring treatment	0	0	0	0	0
Number receiving a Tier 2,3 or 4 Service within 28 days of MH assessment	0	0	0	0	0

However, the data in this table is not reflective of practice. It does not capture children who have been referred prior to sentence, and awaiting assessment, usually for significant lengths of time, and it does not reflect the support provided through the YJESS Specialist CAMHS Nurse who provides consultation and direct support.

The new Key Performance Indicators seeks to capture this more localised information and will be reflected in future reporting.

## Priorities for Continued Service Development

Key Priorities for the Vale Youth Justice & Early Support Service for 2023-2024 are highlighted at the end of this plan. However, the specific areas of focus for continued development within the work of the YJESS to support children, their families, and victims, and reduce offending, are detailed below:

### **1. Disproportionality and Children from Over-Represented Groups**

The Youth Justice & Early Support Service undertakes annual analysis of data to identify factors relevant to the children with whom we work. This helps identify trends and factors which may require further support and partnership working, including representation of black and mixed ethnicity children, children who are known to children's services, children who have experienced specific adverse childhood experiences, girls, those who have experienced school exclusion and those who have additional learning needs.

#### **1.1 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) Children**

Nationally it is known that BAME boys are over-represented within youth justice services. The Vale as a local authority has a population of 91% who identified themselves as white in the 2021 census. The Vale YJESS data for 2022/23, by offence resulting in a Youth Caution or higher, shows 29% of children identified as BAME, which is a significantly higher percentage compared to the general Vale population. This represents a significant increase from the previous two years of 11% (2022/23) and 14% (2021/22).

South Wales Police have recently begun providing data on stop and searches, community resolutions and there is now agreement to begin providing data on searches in police custody, broken down into areas including ethnicity. This police data, and the internal YJESS data detailed in the KPI section of this plan, will be routinely analysed, and reported to the Board to identify areas for development relating to decision making and support both within the YJESS and partner agencies. Ethnicity is also one of the factors recognised within the internal First time Entrant and Re-Offending audit processes.

Decision-making processes such as within the multi-agency forum for Out-of-Court Disposals, discussed in this plan, have also been adapted to ensure consideration of factors relevant to over-represented children within this process, to identify where alternative outcomes would be more appropriate.

#### **1.2 Girls**

An analysis of the data from 1<sup>st</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021 identified that there had been an increase in the percentage of girls receiving support for offences within the Vale YJESS, the cohort comprised of 13.75% (11/69) girls compared to 27% (13/35) of girls for the same period in 2021. Analysis was undertaken to identify whether this was a trend, or specific only to that timeframe, the reasons for this, and how we could best meet the needs of the girls and reduce the number of girls entering the Criminal Justice System.



Following further analysis and audit, a pattern of violence against peers stoked by social media and interactions within education were identified as prominent factors within the relevant offences. This resulted in increased efforts to communicate with education settings, specifically around educational support on social media use, and awareness of prevention services. Following this there has been an increase in the number of girls receiving prevention support, from six girls receiving YJESS prevention support in 2021/22 to 13 for the same period in 2022/23.

To help prevent girls entering the Criminal Justice System and reduce the chances of girls re-entering the Criminal Justice System, the analysis also identified the requirement for assessing and responding to individual needs, rather than a generalised intervention approach to working with girls - while also maintaining an understanding of the relationship between the experiences of girls and impact on behaviour. In ensuring oversight for this group, QA tools have been adapted to ensure oversight of the assessment and planning to take into account the needs of girls.

As an additional response, the Vale YJESS has developed and undertaken a Girls Group programme (which can easily be modified to meet young boys' needs). This will continue to be considered as part of a wider intervention package for children we support, if deemed appropriate following assessment.

As an ongoing commitment to meet the needs of both boys and girls accessing the YJESS for support, hygiene packs and period packs have been created to provide essentials to young people who may need them.

### **1.3 Speech and Language Concerns**

The quality of local youth justice data is not believed to be accurate, with 9% of the current cohort in the Vale YJESS identified as having Speech and Language difficulties. The Welsh Government figure is reported as 60% nationally for young people involved in the Youth Justice system. This identifies a need for more specialist provision within the Vale YJESS, with one of seven recommendations that the Welsh Government should work with local authorities to develop plans to embed speech and language therapists within every YJESS by December 2023. All Vale YJESS practitioners have received ELKLAN Training from the SPLD Team, however a designated resource and swift pathway for targeted additional support is not currently in place. A designated resource, such as a Speech and Language therapist for the YJESS is being explored with the health service.

### **1.4 Additional Learning Needs**

With the recent change in Youth Justice Board KPI's, we have looked at how the YJESS Management Board can ensure appropriate representation for young people's needs and have appropriate means of escalation if there are concerns around service provision. One area of current development for exploration is the benefit of an ALN specialist from the Learning and Skills Directorate to sit on the Board, in acknowledgement that the additional learning needs of children in the youth justice system can be extensive, so requiring specific, targeted, and timely intervention to help reduce the risk of further involvement with youth justice.

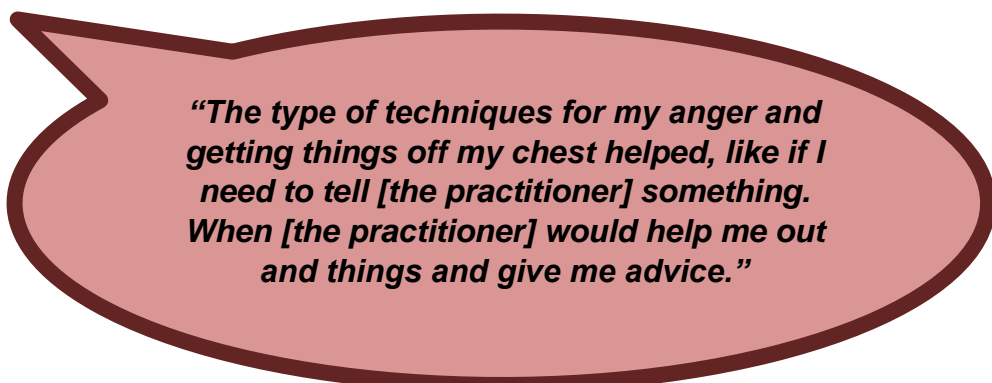
## 1.5 Care Experienced Children

The All-Wales Protocol for Reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults (2022) reflects the protocol already in place in the Vale of Glamorgan since February 2019, aiming to set out 'best practice' to avoid children/young people who are care experienced from entering the Youth Justice System. As part of our commitment, we continue to offer support and training to the residential children's homes and foster carers within the Vale of Glamorgan, which includes Restorative Approaches and support in facilitating restorative conversations and conferences. Forty-five children's home staff are currently booked onto this coming year's training, displaying their commitment to the national protocol, and the YJESS will continue to work with partners. In addition to this, foster carers have previously been offered Take 3 training and support through our Parenting Officer, with a plan to re-visit this following the current recruitment process for this vacancy to be filled.


## 1.5 Staff Training

Ongoing data analysis in areas of over-representation will continue to be examined in line with workforce development and will inform the service's ongoing training in the coming year, in partnership with Social Care Workforce Development.

## 2. Prevention



***“The type of techniques for my anger and getting things off my chest helped, like if I need to tell [the practitioner] something. When [the practitioner] would help me out and things and give me advice.”***



***“The YOT helped with my behaviour and focusing on my life and future more.”***

The purpose of the Prevention Strategy (appx. 5) at the Vale YJESS is to prevent children and young people from entering the Criminal Justice System by identifying those at risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour. The Prevention Service provides evidence-based interventions designed to reduce the likelihood of offending and involvement in ASB. In line with this, the service aims to inform and educate children and young people; increasing their resilience and empowering them to make better decisions.

Referrals can be made through partner agencies, or by the family. The YJESS Prevention Service has already adopted a tiered support system based on the needs identified from the referral and the risk level indicated through a verification process. This includes educational work around Anti-Social and Criminal Behaviour for children assessed as at a lower level of likelihood of becoming involved

in offending or ASB, to a full Prevention assessment and unique intervention for those assessed as at higher need.

ASB Programmes are offered as part of the close working partnership with the Community Safety Team, identifying children involved in ASB at earlier stages in order to provide support. This includes undertaking restorative-focused work facilitated by community volunteers.

The Prevention Service has helped develop and maintain a positive rapport with fellow early intervention services in the Vale of Glamorgan, such as FACT, Families First Advice Line and Youth Wellbeing services. It is important to ensure that services are referring children and young people to the correct agency for additional support based on their identified needs. The YJESS will ensure information and advice in a variety of formats is available to practitioners within the Vale of Glamorgan to ensure that they meet their responsibilities as a Tier 1 preventative service but are also aware of the additional support service provided by the YJESS.

Each intervention plan in the Vale YJESS is developed by using the ASSET Plus model which is unique to the child and their family. Using the Child First and trauma informed approaches, the Prevention Model (detailed earlier in this report within the Voice of the Child section) and the YJESS practitioner the child and their parents/carers identify their needs and strengths and a plan to support these.

This enables the child to receive the appropriate support, either 1:1 or in group settings, with the same specialist resources available within prevention support as children involved in other YJESS support.

Evaluations take place through feedback from the child and family at the end of intervention support, and the prevention service is part of the First Time Entrant and Offending/Reoffending audits now taking place if the child commits an offence.

Prevention practice examples (Appx. 6) including initial concerns, support undertaken, and outcomes.

### **3. Diversion**

Many partnerships are delivering diversion work with children (together with their families/carers) who have committed an offence, to support them to avoid a criminal record and escalation into the justice system.

The Vale YJESS continues to operate a bespoke Out of Court Disposal (OOC) model as part of its diversion activity, rather than utilising the Youth Bureau model predominantly in operation across Wales. The outcomes from the OOC process include the child receiving a Youth Restorative Disposal, a Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution, referral back to the custody sergeant to consider No Further Action, or for a referral to Court.

The OOC model received positive feedback from the HMIP Inspectorate in 2022, who stated that the “out-of-court disposal policy and practice are well documented, with clarity about the contributions of the relevant partners”.

Children are referred for consideration of an OOC by the custody sergeant at the police station following interview, or via the court, based on qualifying seriousness of the offence. All children

referred are allocated a YJESS practitioner who undertakes a comprehensive assessment with the child and their family/carers, including the support they may wish to receive, to inform discussion at a multi-agency decision-making panel within 15 working days of the referral. The multi-agency panel routinely includes YJESS, South Wales Police, Victim Officer and education, and a decision is made based on eligibility, suitability and on all the information shared at the meeting. If a decision for a YRD, YC or YCC is reached, the panel recommends a provisional plan after consideration of the practitioner's assessment and provisional planning with the child and their family/carers. The YJESS Practitioner will confirm an agreed plan with the child and their family, and the child will receive their disposal from the YJESS seconded police officer, as part of a restorative meeting facilitated by restoratively trained community volunteers. This takes place within five working days of the decision-making meeting.

If an agreed decision is not able to be reached by the practitioners at the panel, the information is escalated to the YJESS Sergeant for a review and further decision making to take place.

All children receiving an OOC are offered an opportunity to engage in an intervention plan supported by their YJESS practitioner.

The HMIP inspectorate cited a number of strengths of the Vale OOC process:

- An appropriate assessment tool (Asset Plus) is used with each child before a decision-making panel takes place.
- The multi-agency panel makes decisions jointly.
- There is an escalation process if the panel does not reach a consensus.
- The YJESS's out-of-court policy has driven a diversionary approach, and there has been a marked decline in first-time entrants to the system.

### **3.1 Scrutiny of the OOC Process**

The YJESS has partnered with Cardiff Youth Justice Service to scrutinise OOCs to examine decision making, identify areas of good practice and areas for development. Since 2020 a scrutiny panel occurs every two months including Cardiff YJS, Vale YJESS, Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, and Police representatives of the YJESS Boards. Three children's interventions from each service are randomly selected by PCC as part of the scrutiny, and additional data is also provided on a quarterly basis.

### **3.2 Diversity within OOC Decision-Making**

As discussed within the section of this plan relating to over-represented groups, an area of current development is diversity considerations being incorporated into the decision-making process for Out of Court Disposals in order to identify if there are other support mechanisms which would be more appropriate for over-represented groups.

### **3.3 Increasing the OOC Offer**

As a part of the ongoing development of the OOC offer, and in line with developments across the South Wales Policing area, the Vale YJESS will now deliver a bespoke driving offence package to

children referred by the police for OOCDD relating to driving offences, as an alternative to these children being charged to court.

### **3.4 Other Diversion Support**

In addition to this new driving programme, the Vale YJESS have been offering a variety of newly developed programmes of support in the past year, and this will continue in 2023/24. A recent cohort of girls have accessed the Girls Group provision, in addition to children accessing the ASB Awareness Programme. The YJESS also undertake ASB group work with children where there are increases in concerns related to identified groups of children and following liaison with the Community Safety Partnership. As part of an interventions audit, and through consultation with children, it was identified that our current cohort have an interest in bikes, with a number of the children utilising the 'bikes for hire' scheme in the area. As a result, four practitioners are being trained to support bike maintenance in the coming year and will be able to offer maintenance workshops to children for their own and YJESS bikes.

### **3.5 Turnaround**

In December 2022, the Ministry of Justice offered all YJESS' additional funding to deliver the Turnaround Project, with the aim of reducing the number of children entering the youth justice system. The Vale YJESS applied for and received this funding, completing an intervention audit and purchasing relevant additional resources to support the project, and appointing a new Turnaround Support Practitioner.

## **4. Education**

The Local Authority's Education Department provide 0.5 of a full-time equivalent Inclusion Officer post as a secondment to the YJESS. This officer is responsible for education checks when a child begins to receive support from the YJESS, providing updated information as appropriate, attending internal YJESS meetings to provide an education perspective such as the Prevention Meetings, OOCDD Decision Making meetings and Case Planning Forums relating to supporting high levels of risk and safety and wellbeing concern. The Inclusion Officer also provides a link to identify the relevant Additional Learning Need practitioners within each educational provision for children receiving support from the YJESS.

YJESS interface meetings with the education department (pre and post 16) take place on a six-weekly basis. Attendance at these meetings includes the Local Authority Inclusion Manager, YJESS Inclusion Officer, Careers Wales, the Communities4Work representative and a YJESS Management Team representative. A discussion takes place around the YJESS cohort of children, including whether they are receiving education, and the suitability of this education provision in line with the new Key Performance Indicators. Where referrals for support are appropriate, these are also discussed and prioritised. Concerns around provision are also discussed at this forum as part of the escalation process.

A member of the YJESS Management Team attends monthly exclusion meetings and the monthly education department SEMHP (Social, Emotional, Mental Health Panel) to share information and advocate on behalf of children supported by the YJESS in relation to provision. In addition,

recommendations for YJESS Prevention support to be offered to children who are on the cusp of exclusion can also be made at this meeting.

There is an expectation from both the Learning and Skills Directorate and the YJESS that when a child is on a reduced timetable or receiving other specific education support, as part of a Personal Support Plan (PSP), the YJESS practitioner will be invited to the reviews as an active part of this process. This expectation is monitored within the YJESS oversight and QA process.

The Management Board is represented by the local Authority Inclusion manager, who attends SEMHP, interface and Inclusion meetings, and by the Head of standards and Provision for the Learning and Skills Directorate. This allows for a good level of knowledge within the education department of the needs of the children with whom we work, allowing for identification of resources and gaps in services, and an escalation process when required.

As part of the increased focus on Additional Learning needs including IDPs, and the related new KPIs for education, the Learning and Skills Directorate have offered training on new legislation and on ALN and IDPs.

Reporting data and other information relating to education is provided within the KPI section of this plan and is used to inform discussion within the regular meetings with Learning and Skills to support a focus on disproportionality.

## 5. Restorative Approaches and Victims

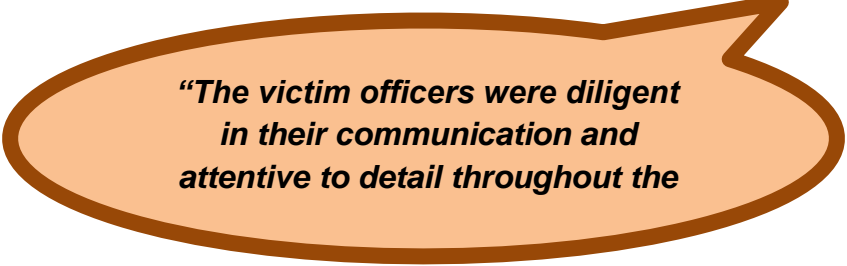
It is extremely important to recognise the impact on victims of crime, with victims supported by the YJESS being provided with an opportunity to express this impact and for this to be portrayed to the children who have committed the offences. Statements from victims have included:



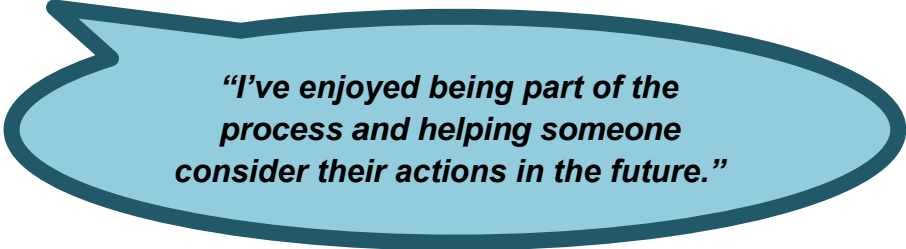
Following the introduction of the Victim Code of Practice 2020, the Vale of Glamorgan YJESS conducted a baseline audit of the offer provided to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, and produced a report for the Local Management Board, including recommendations for improving a victim's journey. These recommendations included a regular audit of the offer provided to victims,

and regular case studies to the YJESS Management Board to display good practice and areas for improvement, with a focus on identifying actions to improve the volume of feedback received from victims to help improve the victim's journey.

Some of the feedback received from victims following the support provided by the YJESS victim officers shows the importance of the work being undertaken with them. This feedback has included:



***“The victim officers were diligent in their communication and attentive to detail throughout the***



***“I’ve enjoyed being part of the process and helping someone consider their actions in the future.”***

Following the audit, the Vale YJESS began working with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, to discuss how they could support our endeavour to improve a victim's journey, and as a result the Vale YJESS will now be piloting regular audits with the PCC's office in 2023/24. The PCC's office will compile a report of the findings which will be presented to the South Wales Criminal Justice and IOM Board as well as the Victims and Witness Taskforce as part of a work-stream for Criminal Justice in Wales. This will also be presented to the Local Management Board. The aim of these audits locally will be to highlight areas of good practice but also areas of development, and result in action planning so that a victim's journey is the best it can possibly be in difficult circumstances.

In addition to the victim service provided by the YJESS, if the Vale YJESS identify concerns about a victim's journey prior to referral for YJESS support, the PCC's office will aim to support with a request for a review if appropriate.

### **5.1 Use of Restorative Approaches**

The YJESS aims to offer restorative approaches facilitated by community volunteers during our support with young people. This includes within the formulation of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) with the children and their parents/carers, during the administering of Out of Court Disposals (OOCs), and during Referral Order panels. Direct restorative work including face-to-face meetings between the children and victims is also something which is available and offered in all areas of support where a victim is identified.

One volunteer who undertook the YJESS training programme to facilitate restorative meetings commented:

***“The training process was informative and engaging. I’d expected for it to get a little draining as they were long days, however, I found it really interesting because we had lots of discussions and chance to practice rather than just sitting down the whole time. Everyone was really friendly and after the first one I looked forward to the training sessions each week.”***

***“I was nervous to start the restorative meetings as there is an element to them that will always be unpredictable, but I was excited after all of the training. I have found them all interesting regardless of outcome, and the training and guides were good preparation. It gets a little less scary each time, and there is enough support that I feel comfortable at all times.”***

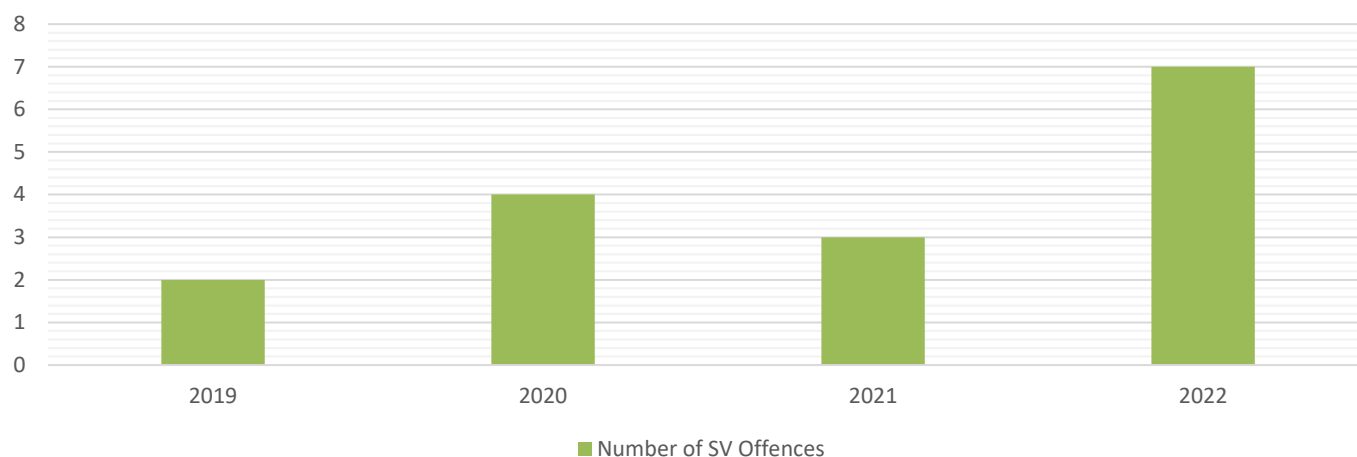
The Vale YJESS is committed to providing all members of the service, including performance team members, training to understand and be able to use restorative language via restorative conversations and/or more formal restorative meetings. This training is part of the ongoing training offer to the staff team and wider partners across the Vale, including the Community Safety Partnership who support children participating in anti-social behaviour and the victims of this behaviour.



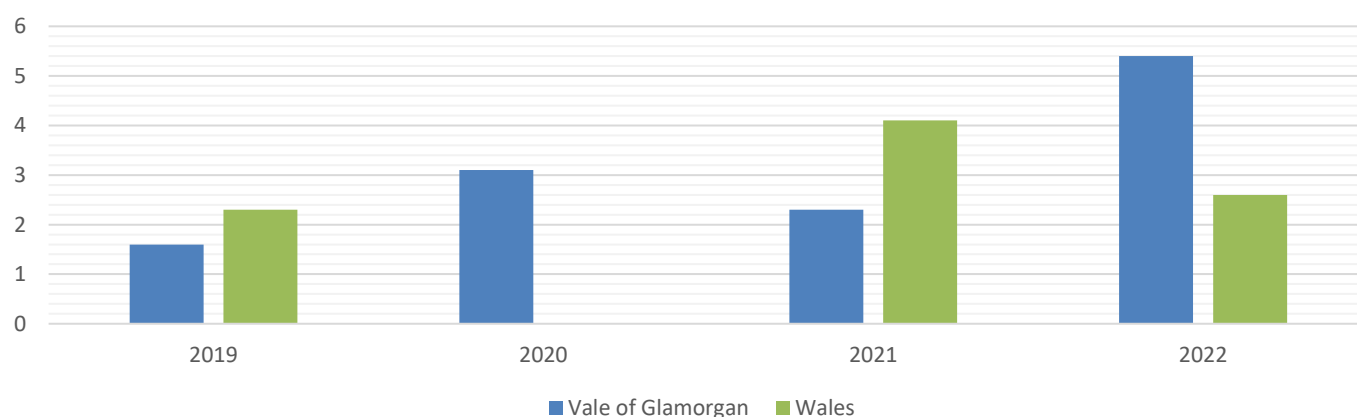
## 6. Serious Violence

The Vale YJESS has seen an increase in the number of offences defined as serious violence between 2021 and 2022, from three in 2021 to seven offences in 2022. These seven offences were committed by six children. As the charts below show, the 2022 increase is a significant increase from the trend over the last few years.

Number of SV Offences In  
The Vale Of Glamorgan By Year



Rate (per 10,000) of SV Offences In  
Wales and The Vale of Glamorgan



From analysis of the offences, there are a wide range of factors influencing these, from an offence resulting in injury being significantly related to the child's circumstances as a victim of child criminal exploitation, to an offence of a threat being made over social media by a child not previously known to the police.

Specific reference to offences of serious violence are now identified within the audits/reviews for First Time Entrants, and in reoffending reviews to help identify areas for development and strengthen good practice internally and with partners.

The Vale YJESS has engaged with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Community Safety Partnership in the development of a strategy to combat serious violence. A Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan strategic needs assessment is currently underway (as defined by the Home Office Serious Violence Duty for England and Wales 2022) to highlight the areas of development. This is due to be completed imminently (end of June 2023) and will result in the commencement of work for a Delivery Plan to deliver against the identified areas of development. YJESS data and concerns have been included in the strategic needs assessment and the YJESS remains involved in this process.

All children subject to Police Bail and Released Under Investigation are monitored and highlighted by the YJESS seconded police officer. Vale YJESS receives a Daily Flag report on all children from the Vale who are arrested. The Daily flag also includes a report on any incident coming to police attention for children who are already receiving YJESS support. This has resulted in discussion for YJESS voluntary support, including through the new Turnaround provision.

## **7. Child Exploitation**

The Vale YJESS strongly advocates for Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation multi-agency forums including strategy meetings relating to specific incidents of concern. We are currently liaising with the Vale Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) who are undertaking further development of the Local Authority exploitation responses. This includes revisiting the Regional Safeguarding Board exploitation strategy and developing a delivery plan that sits behind this. There is also an ongoing training needs analysis for CYPS staff as a whole (which includes the YJESS), and the current development of an identification toolkit. On a strategic level the local authority are engaging regionally with a police task force group and practitioner support forums.

The YJESS staff are proactive in recognising exploitation, and this is embedded in the oversight processes at the YJESS. Practitioners are fully aware of, and utilise, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process for children who are identified as being exploited, alongside the referrals to CYPS and advocating for strategy meetings, in line with the All Wales Procedures. All identified children, and those identified as at risk, are also referred internally to the (high risk/safety & wellbeing) Case Planning Forum ensuring multi-agency sharing of information and planning to manage and reduce concern.

YJESS have strong local links with St. Giles Trust and Media Academy Cymru for specialist individual support for children being exploited, or at risk of being exploited, and refer to Barnados alongside the NRM referrals for advocacy and consultation support.

Vale YJESS have made a significant number of NRM referrals, often in conjunction with Vale C&YPs workers and the police, which have resulted in positive reasonable grounds and conclusive grounds decisions. This in turn has been of influence in discussions with decision makers and magistrates when considering outcomes for these children who have become involved with the criminal courts as a result of being exploited. Notwithstanding, the length of time that it takes to reach conclusive grounds decisions exceeds the guidelines in most cases, and this is a risk that has led to delayed decision and sentencing outcomes. The delays have also resulted in some extended periods on police bail/RUI.

While not a significant risk factor for children in the Vale historically, the YJESS is represented at managerial level on the local Channel Panel where referrals can be made if there are concerns of potential radicalisation and extremism. This can open up access to specialist intervention providers with expertise and detailed knowledge.

## **8. Detention in Police Custody and Remands**

As detailed under the Serious Violence section of the Plan, the YJESS seconded police officer provides a Daily Flag for children arrested from the Vale.

The Vale YJESS provides an Appropriate Adult duty service involving practitioners and volunteers during office hours, evenings and weekends up to 10pm. All practitioners and volunteers are trained including the need for compliance with PACE.

During office hours and weekends/bank holidays, the YJESS duty or on-call practitioner maintains contact with the local custody suites in order to anticipate the need for appropriate adult provision or accommodation arrangements, and also provides court duty functions. While YJESS does not have access to accommodation provision, where there are concerns about accommodation arrangements, or risks of remand, the YJESS duty practitioner will liaise with the Children and Young People's Service to help support accommodation provision. C&YPs managers are aware of their responsibilities relating to children receiving remand and their status as Child Looked After. During evenings and weekends the police also liaise with the Emergency Duty Team and the Vale's Children and Young People's Service provide an on-call senior Manager (OM) who can be contacted around decisions relating to police detention and/or secure remand. No children from the Vale of Glamorgan have been remanded to local authority or youth detention accommodation for a considerable period of time. However, these arrangements are also aimed at decreasing the risk of a child being detained in police custody overnight.

If a child is at risk of being remanded from court, the Vale YJESS court officers offer de-escalation proposals to court such as the use of bail support packages and alternative provision of accommodation through liaison with C&YPs and the family support networks.

All court officers are trained in, and aware of, their responsibilities in notification of YJB placements, ASSET+ and preparing post court reports where required, and liaise with C&YPs to ensure that Children Looked After (CLA) processes take place if a child does receive remand.

It is recognised that becoming subject to any form of remand is a stressful and traumatic event. Children in such circumstances may also have experienced previous trauma and ACEs and staff involved in the management of remand events are all trained in identifying trauma and trauma informed practice. Children and families will be kept informed, updated, and offered support throughout.

## **9. The Use of Custody**

There have been no children from the Vale of Glamorgan sentenced to custody for a number of years. As detailed in this plan, the past four sentencing options where custody has been considered by the court have resulted in the recommended community sentencing options being agreed.

YJESS Practitioners are very experienced in preparing comprehensive assessments, Pre-Sentence Reports and intervention plans as alternatives to custody with robust yet realistic plans specific to each child, including consideration of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance and Intensive Referral Orders. Trained court practitioners have a good working relationship with magistrates and the youth court clerk, and feedback about reports has been excellent, demonstrating the court's confidence in the Vale YJESS.

Staff working closely with this most vulnerable cohort of young people are acutely aware of the impact of their life experiences and apply the principles of trauma recovery within plans presented to court. The risk and impact of exploitation is also addressed, and NRM referrals are undertaken when appropriate to ensure that magistrates have all the information needed to make informed decisions when they are considering custody for a child.

In the event of a young person receiving a custodial sentence, the nature of the known impact of custody on children results in the child being referred for discussion at the YJESS multi-agency high risk Case Planning Forum, including invites to relevant staff in the custodial setting. This allows for additional oversight and multi-agency planning and supports a cohesive resettlement process from the start of the sentence.

A recommendation from the Inspection in 2022 was for the Vale YJESS to ratify and effectively implement a Resettlement Policy. This has been led by a member of the management board, with details on progress included in the PIAP in the Appendix, and it is anticipated that the policy will be ratified in August 2023. HMIP were satisfied with the resettlement readiness of the Vale YJESS and the draft policy in place, with practitioners able to relay a comprehensive understanding of resettlement processes. All relevant staff have received constructive resettlement training and the Practitioner Manager has attended HMP YOI Parc for very constructive dialogue with the case management team there around resettlement and their input into the resettlement policy.

## **10. Standards for Children in the Justice System**

National Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System are a framework for supporting the work with children involved with youth justice services. Their purpose is to ensure the quality of support for children, and to encourage innovation and good practice.

The overall aim of the National Standards is to:

- improve outcomes for children who commit offences.
- ensure that every child lives a safe and crime-free life.
- support the children to make a positive contribution to society.

These standards align with the Youth Justice Board's 'Child First' principle.

Introduced in 2019, the current National Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System required an initial baseline self-assessment by the YJESS followed by a comparison self-assessment undertaken in 2020. The Vale Youth Justice & Early Support Service followed these with a further self-assessment in 2022.

Areas of good practice and areas for development were identified within the self-assessment audits. The comparison between the 2020 and 2022 self-assessments included the following outcomes:

### **10.1 Good Practice**

- A significant improvement in initial assessments being completed within 20 working days of a court order.
- A significant improvement in assessments being reviewed within three months, or if there were significant changes in circumstances.
- Improved evidence of follow-up by practitioners if appointments were not attended by the child.

### **10.2 Areas for Continued Development**

- To evidence the involvement of the child and their parent or carer in the assessment and planning, including increasing self-assessments and parent/carer-assessments
- To continue to increase the percentage of the initial assessments starting within 10 working days.
- To specifically evidence the child and parent/carer's understanding of expectations when sentenced to a court order.
- For all initial appointments to take place within five working days of referral.

Updating of the tools used to guide the oversight of assessments and planning aims to help support these areas of development. Those responsible for oversight at the YJESS undertake regular 'consistency' exercises to help maintain consistency of expectations and oversight across the YJESS. Discussions with practitioners around expectations continue and 'Expectation' forms for court orders are now specifically provided to court officers before each court appearance for a child (as took place pre-pandemic) to ensure and evidence that children who are sentenced, and their parents/carers, understand the requirements and expectations of the court order.

The outcomes of the National Standards self-assessments, including the comparison information, is reported to the YJESS Management Board, who were also involved in the baseline and follow-up self-assessments.

The Vale Youth Justice & Early Support Service will be undertaking its next Self-Assessment against National Standards in 2023/24. As requested by the Youth Justice Board, this will have a focus on National Standard 2: "At Court", in order to tie in with the YJB Business Plan of working towards operationalising Child First practice in court.

### **10.3 Internal Audits**

The YJESS undertakes internal audits of interventions. These audits aim to look at areas including:

- Whether the contact and support for the child and their family has been timely.
- Whether the child's needs and strengths have been appropriately assessed and identified.
- Whether the resulting plan have been produced with the child and their family, and that these plans support the identified needs and strengths.

- Whether relevant external agencies have been involved in this process
- Whether the support offered was regular and consistent in order to best support relationship building and the child's involvement, and so meet the identified needs and strengths.
- Whether the risks and safety & wellbeing concerns have been identified and appropriately supported through the quality and consistency of supervision and oversight.

The outcomes of these audits have identified areas for development and areas of good practice including relating to National Standards, feedback is provided to practitioners, and adjustments made to oversight expectations as required.

## **11. Workforce Development**

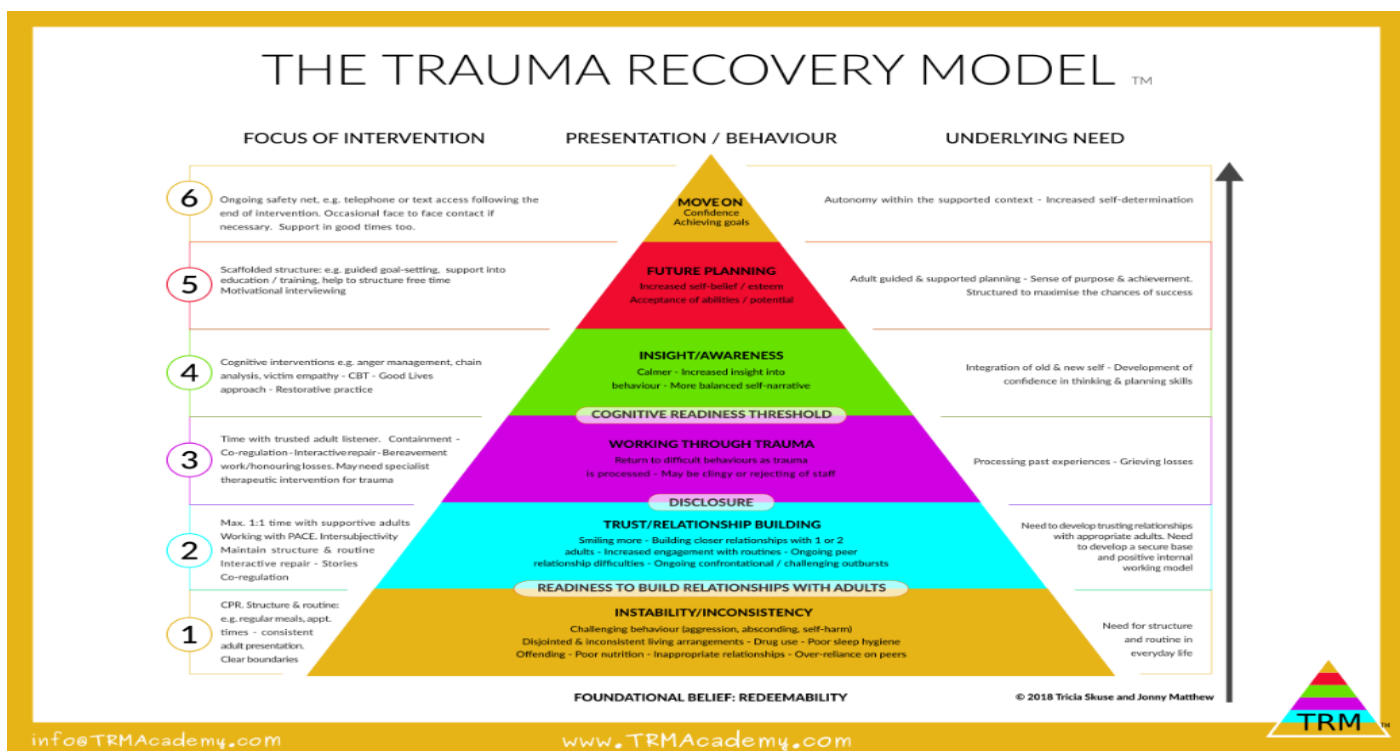
Training for practitioners in 2022/23 included formulation and time-lining relating to the Enhanced Case Management provision, allowing for implementation of this model at YJESS, internal training on assessment and planning for risk of harm, and safety and wellbeing, which has aided consistency of these assessments and plans across the YJESS, and training aimed at increased understanding of factors influencing boys, expectations of masculinity and how this impacts on boys' behaviour and development, identified through practitioner feedback.

Practitioner's individual development and training needs is identified during monthly 1:1 supervision, and through auditing and review of interventions, and the Local Authority 'It's About Me' personal development programme. Identifying whole-workforce development requirements is informed through analysis of information such as infographics of the YJESS cohort, identifying trends with partners, and through practitioner feedback.

Individual development has included supporting practitioners on the Youth Justice Effective Practice qualification, supporting practitioners to undertake the social work degree through the Local Authority, and supporting members of the Performance Team to train as volunteers and to undertake Youth Justice training which has resulted in them being recruited to positions in the YJESS working directly with children or victims. Support is also provided to managers to undertake qualifications such as Leadership and Management.

## **12. Evidence-based Practice, Innovation and Evaluation**

The Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) is a framework for those working with children and young people who have experienced trauma, to help guide them through stages of change based on establishing structure and routine, positive and consistent relationships. The Vale of Glamorgan YJESS use this approach as the basis of support for children, specifically focussing on this approach with those who have experienced trauma.



Professor Stephen Case, an expert in criminology at Loughborough University, has published a summary report “Child First Justice” setting out the evidence-base for the ‘Child First’ principle – the foundation of a progressive approach to how children should be understood, treated, and supported after experiencing problems that have led them to commit a crime. Working within the Child First principles as detailed within this plan, and incorporating the TRM approach, illustrates the YJESS commitment to effective practice.

This is also illustrated by the YJESS use of the Enhanced Case Management process, a reviewed and evaluated way of working with children and young people who are being significantly affected by experiences of trauma, including very close multi-agency working and consultation with child psychology.

In working with validated and evaluated best practice, the Vale YJESS uses validated assessments and interventions to support specialist work such as AIM3 for working with harmful sexual behaviour.

There is also a strong offer of reparative work at the Vale YJESS endorsed by the Inspectorate. This involves practical work that can also be supplemented by support to achieve a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) qualification. The Reparation Officer is highly skilled in engaging children and is creative in his approach. This includes using cooking and gardening facilities within the YJESS building, and delivering sessions on environmental awareness issue which he links in practically with ‘beach clean’ reparation other community projects.

The Youth Justice & Early Support Service undertakes regular reviews of the cohort supported by the YJESS to identify specific factors and trends requiring support. As highlighted within this plan, it has resulted in the development of group-work practice for working with girls, establishing groups to reduce anti-social behaviour, and increased liaison, consultation, and support between the YJESS and the health service around emotional and mental health support, through the CAMHS Specialist Nurse.

Other service improvements detailed in this plan, such as the Turnaround programme, ASB Programmes, bike maintenance opportunities, and other innovative preventative and diversionary interventions, are based on the growing evidence that early intervention can provide a successful route to divert children from criminal justice intervention.

Due to an understanding of the established research links between educational engagement, development and offending/ASB in addition to learning from regular reviewing of educational provisions and support, the already positive links between the YJESS and the Vale Learning and Skills Directorate continue to grow. This has included increased formal liaison and information sharing relating to those at risk of exclusion or requiring other alternative provisions and processes for concerns to be raised and discussed. These close links are also illustrated by children supported by the YJESS using the services building and facilities for alternative education provision to help support educational engagement.

Reviews of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System this year has identified areas for the development of earlier multi-agency communication and availability of support prior to formal YJESS involvement to help reduce the likelihood of children and young people committing offences. These outcomes have been shared with the YJESS Management Board and other partner agencies including the local authority senior leadership team, and the Vale Head Teachers to support this process. Continued reviews, the sharing of outcomes with partner agencies, and working together to raise awareness of earlier communication and support will continue to take place.

### **13. Challenges, Risks, and Issues**

The main priorities for the development of priorities set by the YJESS are detailed above. However, there are continued challenges effecting YJESS services which can impact on these priorities and the support available to children and victims.

There are continued financial and resource risks related to the timing for confirmation of the Core Grant. The nature of short-term funding and grant arrangements also has an impact on the recruitment and retention of staff and the types of contracts available. This can cause risk to the consistency and continuity of support for the children. Retention of staff is a focus through supporting staff involvement within the development of the service and providing internal development opportunities.

Local challenges have also included vacancies in practitioner positions due to long-term sickness. The YJESS are currently recruiting to the Parenting and Family Support Practitioner post following a long-term vacancy in this crucial role.

The changing role of some third sector partnership arrangements can also present risk to the support available to the children. The timely recruitment to the specialist Substance Misuse Practitioner post (Tier 2), and retention within this role, has been a concern following a change to commissioning arrangements regionally for drug and alcohol services. Through working together to address this risk, an agreement was made with the new provider, CAVDAS, for a dedicated officer from within their core service to support YJESS referrals during the current recruitment process for this vacancy.



The Probation provision to the YJESS is a crucial element of the support available to children and supports the vital link between children and adult services. The changing nature of the YJESS, with an increased focus on prevention and diversion work, means that the traditional model of the seconded Probation Officer role would benefit from discussion and review, and this is something which YJESS are keen to support.

There is an increased awareness of challenges faced by children as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic including the impact on confidence, social skills, self-esteem and emotional and mental health. These challenges are evident in areas such as educational engagement and attendance, participation in community activities, impacts on family relationships and an increased need for wellbeing resources and family support. The emotional and mental health provision at the YJESS provides support in this area, however there is an awareness of increased demand within community provision which impacts on the support available. The increased liaison with Learning and Skills including the developing partnership working around additional learning needs also aims to support this. However, the full future impact may not yet be known, and the Vale YJESS will continue to maintain awareness and work with partners around emerging trends. It is already recognised that access to a specialist Speech and Language resources within YJESS is an important area for development which would also support the merging concerns related to the pandemic.

## **14. Looking Forward and Service Development**

Key Priorities for the Vale Youth Justice & Early Support Service, identified for continued development in 2023-2024, are:

- Increasing the participation of children in the work and development of the YJESS.
- Continuing to develop trauma informed knowledge, understanding and support for the children supported by the YJESS.
- Increasing our understanding, analysis, and responses to disproportionality, including working with partners as part of this process.
- Continued focus on the challenges of increasing the engagement of victims of crime in restorative interventions.

These main priorities are impacted by all areas of the work undertaken by the YJESS, and the details of the specific areas of focus to achieve these priorities are detailed in this Plan. These fit in with the Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan 2021-2024 through their need to:

- Work collaboratively at all levels with children and their families, the board and other partner organisations, victims, volunteers and YJESS practitioners.
- Continue to focus on the development of oversight and scrutiny both within the YJESS and between partnerships.
- Ensure the correct focus of resources and improvements in the outcomes for children and young people. This includes identifying gaps in service provision using innovative methods of support, locally, regionally, and nationally, through YOT Managers' Cymru (YMC) and Hwb Doeth

# Sign Off

Chair of YJESS Board

Lance Carver

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Signature

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Date

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# Appendices

## 1. VOG YJESS Cohort Profile 2023



PDF YJESS  
infographic 23.pdf

## 2. VOG YJESS ACEs 2023



YJESS ACEs 23.pdf

## 3. The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice & Early Support Service Plan 2022/2023



S23 18747 YOS plan  
2022 KD final.PDF

## 4. PIAP Review Document



4HMIP- PIAP VoG  
August 2002 reviewex

## 5. Prevention Strategy



VoG YJESS  
Prevention Strategy.d

## 6. Prevention Practice Examples



VoG YJESS  
Prevention Practice Ex