

## Executive Summary – Camden Youth Justice Service Plan 2025 – 2028

The 2025 Camden Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan	2024/25 Performance and outcomes for children, families, and communities	2024/25 Key achievements and New YJS priorities
<p>The Plan gives an overview of the work of the Youth Justice Service in Camden and sets out details of performance over the past year.</p> <p>Camden is home to huge opportunities with sector-leading public services, a rich community of voluntary sector organisations and exciting global and local employers. We want our children in the Youth Justice Service to have access to all these opportunities to keep them safe and secure, working in partnership across the borough.</p> <p>The Youth Justice Service has a key role to play by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverting children away from the Criminal Justice System</li> <li>• Prevent offending and reoffending</li> <li>• Reducing the use of custody</li> <li>• Keeping children and communities safe</li> <li>• Achieving positive change</li> </ul> <p>The YJS does this by working together with its key partners – the Police, Children’s Services, Health Services, Probation, Community Safety and both voluntary and private sector providers - to deliver high quality and effective services to children, their families and the victims of offending. The overall effectiveness of the YJS continues to be monitored by the Youth Justice Board against key National Indicators and KPIs which are linked directly to the Service’s core aims.</p>	<p>2024/25 has seen an increase in First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System and 4 children have received custodial sentences. There is still work to be done on reducing re-offending and this remains a YJS priority moving forward. Camden has played a key role in the London Accommodation Pathfinder and had 4 children placed since its inception. In 2024/25 2 children were placed as sentenced children, thus reducing the use of custody.</p> <p>Local data shows that 40 children became first time entrants during April 2024 to March 2025. This is an increase on the previous year, but numbers are still lower than they have been from 2016 – 2022.</p> <p>With zero children receiving a custodial outcome in the past 2 years, we have now had 4 custodial outcomes in the past year. The last year has seen a small reduction in the use of remand, and we have implemented a Remand audit for each time a child is remanded.</p> <p>The most recent local data from 2021/22 shows 50%, 18 of the 36 children re-offended within the time period, an increase on the previous year. There was a decrease in the frequency of re-offending from an average of 5 pp to 2.6.</p> <p>2024/25 YJS KPI data shows that 71% of (47/66) children were in Education, Training or Employment, at the end of their order. Initial findings from our Paid Work Experience evaluation shows only 1/22 children have reoffended to date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding rating in June 2025 from HMIP</li> <li>• Working towards a new Camden-wide victim offer</li> <li>• Low FTEs and low numbers of children in custody</li> <li>• Disproportionality work continues: Annual data presented to the board suggests a reduction of overrepresentation in some areas of practice</li> <li>• Improved and expanded ETE working partnerships, with 9 paid work experience placements including our in-house Employability Project, Honest Grind Coffee</li> <li>• New Peer Advocates in post</li> <li>• New YJS reception space embedded and excellent feedback from HMIP on the space</li> <li>• Feedback on priorities and performance was gained from partners, staff, children and parents through the Stakeholder Engagement Event on 15<sup>th</sup> May</li> </ul> <p>The 2024/25 performance data combined with both local and national drivers have led us to create new priorities for the next 3 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse</li> <li>• Supporting Victims of Youth Crime</li> <li>• Addressing Disproportionality</li> <li>• Enhancing Education, Training and Employment Offer (ETE)</li> <li>• Continue to expand and improve on the YJS Prevention Offer</li> <li>• Enhance transitional safeguarding and reduce the risk of reoffending for children leaving our service</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right;">             Tim Aldridge            YJS Management Board, Chair         </div>

## Introduction, vision and strategy

*Camden YJS has an authentic culture of care and innovation for the children, families and victims they work with. The aspirational and tenacious senior leaders are supported by a highly skilled staff team who are delivering strong work with children, families and victims” HMIP, 2025*

Camden was rated Outstanding by HMIP in June 2025 following an inspection in April. The report praised “comprehensive partnership working, which enables timely sharing of information, clarity in roles and responsibilities and the provision of responsive interventions to address the identified needs of children”. The report also praises the “strong focus on education, training and employment, alongside the voluntary YJS Deferred Exclusion Programme” and the “impressive diversity approaches” and the “consistent high quality... diversity approaches which were impressive”. The inspection result gives us a strong basis to build on strengths and further improve our offer for children.

Camden YJS is part of the Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS), which incorporates the YJS, Youth Service and Youth Early Help, Connexions, FWD (substance misuse service) and Evolve (Reducing Serious Youth Violence & Exploitation). The YJS is closely aligned to its partners in Community Safety and the Police through its strategic governance.

Camden YJS is a forward-thinking service that seeks collaboration with staff, partners, children and families at all key stages to ensure it is focused on the right areas. This Plan has had collaboration from children, parents, staff and the Board through our staff meetings, Priorities review event and feedback survey. Each setting has focused on reviewing priorities and agreeing whether they continue to meet the needs of the service users. Continued priority areas are a product of these consultations and discussions.

We Make Camden is a shared promise to protect what is special about Camden, involve every person in solving the problems we face and to stay optimistic about what we can achieve together. Our journey from Camden 2025 to We Make Camden sees us building on the original five ambitions that drove much of what we have achieved since 2018. We’ve changed the way the ambitions are described to better reflect what Camden says is important now and to acknowledge what has changed, and we’ve added one more. The 4 Missions we want to achieve over the coming years are:

- Diversity: By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow
- Young people: By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure
- Food: By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food
- Estates and neighbourhoods: By 2030, Camden’s estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity

National Reform of Children’s Social Care is an opportunity to focus on prevention and designing a better children’s social care services for families. In Camden, we are looking at our offer for children and families and how services are delivered. We are also expecting reforms to the SEND system. In both of these areas, a flexible and adaptable Youth Justice Service is key.

In Camden, our national reform work is focused on reducing transitions for families, making it easier for them to access the right help quickly and effectively, to improve relationships across the system, and achieve less disproportionate outcomes for our global majority families, and to make better use of resources.

## Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

Tim Aldridge is Camden's Executive Director for Children and Learning and Chairs the YJS Management Board. The YJS and IYSS moved into the Camden's Family Help and Safeguarding Division (CFHS) under Rashida Baig in 2023. This has supported closer working with children's social care services.

The Executive Director also chairs the Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group and the London Accommodation and Resettlement Partnership (LARP) and is the Local Authority representative on the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

The membership of the YJS Management Board consists of partner organisations that contribute to reducing crime, improving safety in Camden and improving long term outcomes for children and families:

Camden's Youth Justice Service Management Board is chaired by Camden's Executive Director, Children and Learning and is regularly attended by all statutory partners. In 2024 the membership arrangements for the Board were reviewed to achieve the right connections across our wider strategic partnership landscape. Well-connected partnership boards align priorities and enable mutual challenge and assurance; where there is no *one voice* but a culture of strong support and high expectation. Partners include Metropolitan Police, Community Safety, Probation Service, Voluntary Sector, Health, Education, Children's Family Help and Safeguarding, and the Integrated Youth Support Service, Magistrates representative, voluntary sector, three Cabinet members: for Jobs, Young People and Culture, Safer Communities and Best Start for Children and Families. Our Peer Advocates attend on a rota basis and we also have a representative with lived experience. The Head of Integrated Youth Support Services is line managed by the Director of Children's, Family Help and Safeguarding.

As an integrated service, the YJS benefits from working alongside the Youth Service and Youth Early Help Offer, Education/Connexions, Evolve, Health (Child Adolescent Mental Health Service), Sexual health, Speech and Language, substance misuse, Police, and the Community and Voluntary Sector. This enables smooth working relationships and easy transfer of cases through and across the teams as appropriate. The YJS works closely with Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, and the Transformation Team.

Camden have also adopted a new Relational Practice framework across Children & Learning; this was launched in 2024. The framework is focused on a number of key values – social justice and empowerment, compassion, collaboration, integrity, learn and adapt, dignity and worth and honesty and accountability. The framework is based on systemic thinking, and includes a range of methods – mentalising, restorative, anti-racist and participation which are key tenants of the work of the Youth Justice Service. HMIP noted that the YJS has an embedded culture of relational practice in place. The enhancement of the framework will support continuous improvement and shared practice across the directorate.

## Update on the previous year:

### Progress on previous plan: 2023 - 2025

Updates on the previous priorities are below:

i. Continue to perform well against National and Local Indicators of performance

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- Whilst we've seen an increase, FTE remains low (full details below)
- Custodial sentences and remands remain low since Covid, despite a small increase in 2024/25
- The OoCD Scrutiny Panel in November 24 scored 4 1s *Appropriate disposal consistent with policy & guidance*, 1 2 *Appropriate but with panel observations* and 1 3 *Inappropriate or inconsistent with policy/guidance*

ii. Maintain and continue the work already started on Disproportionality

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- Updated disparity data has been shared with YJS Management Board
- 23/24 data shows increase in proportion of Black children receiving out of court disposals and reduction in over assessing risk of serious harm for Black and Mixed Heritage children.
- Expansion of the deferred exclusion programme to all schools in Camden
- Improved communication with education and inclusion leads to develop work around managed moves
- Race Equality and Intersectionality Plan within directorate being reviewed
- Ongoing work with other London boroughs to learn and share practice
- Continued to invest in the Ether programme for our global majority boys
- Reduction in use of stop and search in Camden
- Reduction in overrepresentation of black and mixed heritage children subject to suspensions
- Reduction in over-assessing risk for black children
- Increasing numbers of black and mixed heritage children receiving OCD's
- Attending Community Monitoring Group panels
- Social graces embedded and new tool in place for Case Managers

iii. Improve and increase ETE opportunities/interventions

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- Continued work experience bespoke placements across the borough
- 2 children offered full time employment as a result of successful paid work experience
- Success of Honest Grind Coffee now based at the Old Diorama
- Partnership with Employability Team to fund 3 month paid work experience placements
- 3 children successfully completed the Deferred Exclusion Programme, and is now available to all Camden residents attending Camden Secondary schools, 1 is now a Peer Advocate in YJS
- Continuation of the Honest Grind Coffee initiative with some children working for money
- 7 of the Reparation Projects enable children to receive an AQA and 15 AQAs were presented to 13 children during 2024/25
- Advanced Practitioner allocated to be direct link with H3 Federation to improve partnership working, with a partnership agreement in place
- Management Leads on ETE
- Secured funding for an educational psychologist to work in YJS 1 day/week to support team, assess children and approaches to enable engagement.

iv. Continue to invest in the staff teams' development and wellbeing

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- Monthly workshops for all staff continue to take place
- Investment in relational practice
- Investment for training in Restorative Justice, Your Choice approaches, C-Card, Healthy Relationships, Good Lives Model
- Continued access to health and wellbeing through Camden's corporate offer to staff
- Continuation of Practice Forum for front line staff which is a *manager-free* zone to discuss all practice issues
- The *Say Anything* online anonymous 'box' for staff to feedback/make suggestions on anything relating to the Youth Justice Service continues to be used and acted on by management
- Continue to enable staff to work flexibly whilst maintaining the service needs, to ensure a better work-life balance
- Annual staff survey found that 95% of YJS staff agreed Camden IYSS is a good place to work (30% of staff *Strongly Agree* and 65% *Agree*, 5% *Disagree* – 1 person)
- Continuation of regularly utilising Camden's Reward and Recognition scheme and created the employee of the month to appreciate staff
- Introduction of LOLS – *Log off and Learn Something* – monthly protected space to learn as a team independently of the monthly workshops

- Launch of YJS Focus Week
- YJS is now engaged with division wide practice week to support development and growth
- Meetings Amnesty Week launched in recognition of work life balance
- Annual Away Days
- Regular lunch time informal get togethers
- Book share for staff
- Rewards & Recognition embedded into every monthly management meeting to ensure equity and parity discussed at every Management Team Meeting

v. Evaluate and evidence Camden interventions and approaches

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- End of order feedback shows consistently positive impact is made by the YJS
- Feedback from Reparation projects on what works, what could be done better, impact of skills gained
- Feedback from court appearances demonstrates improved understanding and communication approaches are strong from staff team
- Spontaneous positive feedback from parents highlights the impact our relational approaches have with their children
- Co-design of interventions with our peer advocates and feedback from children
- Tablet for feedback at court
- Continue to chair an interventions forum for London Boroughs to discuss and develop interventions
- Participation in Your Choice programme using CBT approaches with children
- Camden YJS staff and children have participated in an YJS and Exclusion study (PhD) for our colleague in Islington. The findings from this study will benefit Camden on its completion
- Internal evaluation of paid work experience placements indicates promising outcomes for participating children.

vi. Continue to use feedback from children and families to improve the service

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- Feedback surveys completed on court, ETE, Referral Orders, reparation, disproportionality, exploitation, specialist workers, and the experiences of girls
- End of order surveys completed with encouraging results
- Peer Advocates offer a voice for children
- Acting on feedback, making changes and being transparent (*You said - We did*)
- Link up with wider participation aims within council
- New peer advocates - attending boards (on rota) and linked in with national policy groups
- Updated victim survey to increase uptake
- Updated parents survey
- New name for CAMHS in consultation with children: *MOTIVE*

vii. Strengthen the Prevention Approach provided within the YJS

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- Improved engagement with Turnaround cases
- IYSS-wide residential took place for 12 children in June 2024
- Reduction in out of court disposals year on year
- Plans to continue the prevention offer post Turnaround
- YEH data/Engage data to support this
- Increase in use of OCD in 24/25
- Developing partnership working around victim support for child victims who live in Camden
- Developing an intervention for child victims of SYV
- Continued investment in prevention offer across IYSS, youth hubs, closer working within IYSS
- Learning from VSO's, linking in with Young Camden Foundation
- Launch of Voluntary Support Programme for high gravity offences

- Exit offer to all children well embedded

viii. Responding to social inequality

**Achievements at end of plan:**

- All children are offered snacks and drink during their YJS appointments
- The Service has invested in a range of vouchers to support families in practical ways, to buy food, household items and essential equipment, e.g. heaters, blankets and furniture. Other ways intended to support financially, such as home improvements have been beneficial
- Enabling families to have day trips/engage with activities to nurture positive relationships and family experiences.
- Signposting and promotion of range of support available in Camden
- Mini Food Share available through reception space
- Book share in place
- New induction pack for children & families to be launched this year

## Performance over the previous year

### Performance

Following low caseloads during and after the pandemic, the number of cases are starting to rise and staff are adjusting to higher and often more complex caseloads.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, 154 offences led to 61 children receiving criminal justice outcomes. This averages 2.5 per child. 11 children received more than one criminal justice outcome. This is similar to the previous annual figures where 113 offences led to 49 children receiving criminal justice outcomes.

Of the 154 offences, 50 (32%) were for Violence against the Person, 20 were for Motoring offences (13%) 15 were for Drugs (10%) and 15 were for Theft and handling (10%). This is very similar to previous years.

A single motoring offence often leads to multiple offences such as no insurance and driving without a license. Whilst there is an increase, 18 of the offences were committed by 6 children across 6 offending episodes.

Violence against the Person and Weapon offences have increased reflecting the national picture; however, they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels. Knife related offences remain static.

4 children committed more than 1 offence in this category, with three committing gravity level 7 violent offences. The majority (90%) of these offences had a gravity rating of 3.

Most of the children in the cohort are 16- and 17-year-olds and make up 72% of the group. 4 of the group are girls, (7%) and 57 are boys (93%).

12 of the 61 children have been a Child Looked After; this represents 20% of the YJS cohort, and an overrepresentation compared to the general population.

### Reducing First Time Entrants

Camden is fortunate that the local authority has consistently invested in prevention work across all ages to enable families to access early help before problems escalate. The change in senior leadership, and the new Children's Safeguarding and Family Help directorate continues to support closer working relationships across the services and family and youth hubs.

Locally Camden has seen an increase in First Time Entrants since last year, but numbers are still lower than they have been prior to the pandemic. In the period April 2024 to March 2025, 40 children became First time Entrants compared with 34 in 2023/24.

Youth Early Help (YEH) sits alongside YJS in the Integrated Youth Support Service to focus on early identification of, and response to, emerging problems for children. YEH is a voluntary service, offering open access youth provision as well as targeted one to one support for children and their families. This work supports the YJS to achieve low numbers of First Time Entrants by diverting children on the periphery of the Youth Justice System. In addition, the Engage service based in the police station continues to offer short term support to children arrested who wish to take up the offer. Engaging children in this 'reachable, teachable moment' to strengthen protective factors is also likely to have positively impacted our low first-time entrants. Data from Engage shows that 89% did not come to notice (rearrested) in 12 months following accessing Engage support and intervention.

The continuation of the MoJ funded Turnaround initiative has seen an increase in caseload numbers in the last financial year. Following refinement on which children are referred to Engage and which would be offered Turnaround we allocated 33 children for assessment in 2024/25. Of those that consented, 15 were engaged through Turnaround. Again, working with these children earlier, to work through difficulties, access ETE and other specialist support such as substance misuse or CAMHS is likely to reduce the likelihood of children entering our service or returning to our service.

## **Reducing Re-offending**

### **Local data**

Camden YJS tracks re-offending using local data in real time. Local live tracking gives the YJS a more current picture of re-offending data compared to PNC data.

Camden's current cohort (October 2022 - September 2023) consists of 36 children tracked for twelve months.

### **Number of offenders:**

The period October 2022 - September 2023 shows 47%, 17 of the 36 children re-offended within the time period, in comparison to 21%, 11 of 52 children in the previous year. This is a decrease in performance on the previous year, although the shrinking cohort impacts the figures.

### **Re-offences:**

Re-offences per reoffender has reduced from 5.27 to 2.61. In real terms that's 17 re-offenders who committed 47 reoffences, compared with 11 re-offenders who committed 58 reoffences, in the previous cohort. More children are re-offending but are committing less re-offences when compared with the previous cohort.

The data shows (page 31) that the number of children in the cohort has consistently reduced over the past 5 years. This cohort is our smallest yet so even a small number of children re-offending can skew the percentages. Although there is an increase, the number of children re-offending is only 6 more than the previous cohort.

Only 2 of the children committed more than 5 reoffences (26%) of further offences, this is in stark contrast to most reoffending cohorts where a small group of prolific reoffenders are responsible for a large proportion of reoffences. In terms of reoccurring themes to help proactively identify which children may become prolific is complex. The groups each year are small and have bespoke needs. However, what we do know is long periods of absence from school, additional learning needs, long periods of social care involvement for neglect and abuse, parental mental health and substance misuse are all commonplace. This correlates closely with our priorities focusing on ETE innovation, responding to social inequality and staff development/wellbeing. It is paramount for all our children that they have a consistent relationship built on trust over time so they can begin to open up about what may help move away from offending.

Data on this cohort tells us the majority of the reoffences were for lower gravity (2&3) level. Of note was that 2 of the boys who reoffended at a low level were for domestic abuse related matters.

Following approval from the Management Board, in December 2024 we introduced a new Voluntary Support Programme for children who are on bail for a Gravity 5+ Offence; have been involved in Serious Violence offences/or at risk of serious youth violence, or Knife offences. This was in response to reflections from learning review and Turnaround and seeking to plug a gap. The intention is that irrespective of previous involvement with the YJS, children who are arrested for serious matters will be offered support from the YJS to start building a trusting relationship through accessing the range of support from the YJS at the earliest opportunity. We are reviewing the criteria for this and considering how we can include this programme within our victims offer.

## **Reducing the use of custody**

### **Local data**

During the period April 2024 – March 2025, there were 4 disposals that resulted in a custodial sentence. This is an increase on the previous year.

Data from 24/25 shows a small decrease in the use of Remand from 9 to 7. Of the 5 Remands into custody 2 resulted in a custodial sentence, 2 remain on remand, although 1 has transferred to probation and 1 received a YRO. Of the 2 Remands in Local Authority Accommodation, both ended with no further immediate order, one was a 22 year old who was assessed to be an adult and subsequently closed.

In August 24, we introduced a joint Remand audit completed by YJS and CFSH for all remand instances; these are shared with the board via the quarterly reports. To date there has been no instances where remand could have been avoided.

The Local Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) offers an alternative to custody with intensive support to 16- & 17-year-old boys across London. It aims to support residents to move from a pro-offending to pro-social identity by delivering bespoke, therapeutic and intensive support within the provision, alongside YJS controls and support. We have a dedicated LAP lead who attends the weekly LAP referral meetings and the Steering Group. In 24/25 5 referrals were made to the LAP two of which were accepted. One child resided there for 6 months and then transitioned into a semi-independent unit within his local area. He successfully completed his Order and has not reoffended to date. The other child left the LAP after 5 months and transitioned to a semi-independent unit out of area, and to probation services. He is not known to have reoffended.

## **Education Training and Employment (ETE) & Partnership working**

New KPI data shows that 66 (71%) children were in some type of ETE by the end of their order. More details on partnership working with Education is outlined on pages 16-17.

## **Risks and issues**

### **Staffing**

Staff development and wellbeing has been and continued to be a priority last year. High retention levels of staff teams enable long lasting relationships to be built with children, families, colleagues and partnership services. The current pay for YJS case managers is lower than a number of neighbouring areas. Whilst we have a strong and experienced team, it is recognised that in these challenging financial times, pay is just as important as working conditions for many. We will review pay scales as part of a wider service review. Our previously seconded PO is our lead for transitions into Probation, so we have an interim measure to support transitioning children whilst we continue to recruit to the permanent post. In addition, we have 5 previous POs in the team ensuring this experience isn't lost.

One of the recommendations from our HMIP Inspection is that the Probation Service should work with the YJS Management Board to improve its involvement in the transitions of children to adult services to ensure they are more effective. This should include the appointment of a YJS seconded probation officer. Meetings have already taken place between the Head of Service and the Probation Camden and Islington Head of Service to seek interim arrangements that are realistic whilst they continue to recruit to their substantive posts within the team. Camden and Islington is a red area, indicating they are below sufficient staffing levels to maintain adequate service delivery.

We have also had interim Service Management arrangements in place since January within the YJS as the Service Manager was successfully seconded to oversee the London Accommodation and Resettlement Partnership as the Strategic Manager. This provided an opportunity for the Quality Improvement Officer to cover the YJS Service Manager role, whilst this could be viewed as a potential risk, we increased the number of Team Managers to provide additional support during this period. Staffing has been stable with minimal changes in the past year, benefitting children and families with consistency in the professionals in their lives.

## **Workload**

Workloads remain low but these have been enhanced by our continued Turnaround programme as well as our Voluntary Support Programme, comprehensive exit plans and the Deferred Exclusion Programme. During 2024/25, 67% of orders were statutory compared to 33% voluntary.

## **CAMHS**

Our Clinical Psychologist left in October 2024 which created a gap in provision, however in April 2025 we welcomed a new systemic therapist into the YJS and clinical consultations are now running again. Throughout the year we have utilised our CAMHS nurse who has consistently seen a high number of the cohort, offering support directly and also supporting the staff team.

## **Resources**

In addition to the difficulties with Probation, likely impending financial efficiencies that need to be made across the partnership and within the council may influence how resources are shared across IYSS in future.

Our Remand budget for 2025-26 is set at £82, 550, a small increase from the previous year. Given the rise in remands, we experienced last year reserves are low. In future LAP costs will be consumed from the remand budget, as it seeks to reduce children entering custody. This will further add financial pressure within this budget. Clearly it is difficult to anticipate spike events that can impact a remand budget; however, the prevention offer and developing victim offer we anticipate will in time, enable children charged for serious matters to be realistically considered for community-based packages of monitoring and support.

## **Plans for the forthcoming year:**

### **Child First**

*“We sat together and looked at what I needed to do and what I wanted to do, I felt listened to and respected.”*

*““They spoke to me about my upbringing, culture and stuff, always felt respected.”*

*““The service has been like a father to my son, who was raised without one”*

Camden is proud of its embedding of Child First practice, and feedback from HMIP said *“Strong assessing, planning, and delivery ensure that achieving positive change is effectively balanced with the safety of the child and the community.”*

The most recent end of order feedback from children over the last year details how strong and influential the relationships built with YJS workers have been; with 90% stating they are doing more positive things since their order ended, and 89% less likely to offend since working with the YJS.

The launch of the new reception space in May 2024 has been incredibly successful with children and parents complimenting the space. Staff are now comfortable and adept at working the new duty system. We are currently asking for feedback from children to see what more we can do to improve the space now that we've been live for twelve months.

The new reception space is all about children feeling safe and welcomed when they arrive. There are five meeting rooms, including a CAMHS room, and a spacious waiting area with a wide range of information about other services available. Everyone who arrives for their appointment has access to food, snacks, and a drink before their session to ensure they feel comfortable and relaxed before their session.

We are working on ways to increase access to our modest food share; we have found that children do not want to carry a bag of food around the borough for their parents so we are launching a welcome pack for families in 2025. The bags will contain leaflets, signposting, toiletries, household essentials, biscuits and a voucher so families can do a weekly shop. We plan to give these out at initial home visit appointments as a 'welcome' to the service to avoid any embarrassment.

We also have a wellbeing box for children, this includes various items such as face masks, colouring sets and fidget toys. These are given to children as a pick me up. We also have a small book share where children can borrow books. We have also recently relaunched our photography competition for children. Shortlisted photos will get a voucher, and winners will be enlarged and added to the walls in our reception space alongside previous winners.

Whilst these are small initiatives, we hope that they can make our children feel welcome, safe and considered.

## **Voice of the child**

Feedback is gathered in a variety of ways including end of order surveys (facilitated by Peer Advocates); Reparation Evaluation Forms; Regular Focus Groups/Feedback Topics; ad hoc feedback projects (such as court experiences, disproportionality). Feedback is also gathered from Peer Advocates; they review interventions, policies and have been involved in developing new reparation projects. In 2023/24 feedback has been collected on court experiences, ETE, Referral Orders, reparation, disproportionality, exploitation, specialist workers, and the experiences of girls.

Feedback gathered from reparation projects is shared with project facilitators and sessional staff for each project. All projects are receptive to feedback and are keen to implement changes based on this. Focus group/one-to-one feedback can inform relevant areas; once collated it is shared with the lead staff in that area to consider what changes may need to be made. Feedback is also used to create better materials and interventions for children, such as using feedback to inform the promotional videos, for creating leaflets and posters, and how to shape new interventions.

Feedback is most often gathered in person with the child. It is largely qualitative information to allow for more in-depth description and understanding of their experiences. There are some scaled rating questions for how children experience each reparation project (how they found the venue, quality of staff, how organised the session was), but the most helpful feedback tends to come from open questions. Due to Camden's small cohort, feedback has more recently been gathered on a one-to-one basis and has taken place online if that better suits the child, or if they are unable to attend the office due to safety/risk issues.

Exit surveys once children finish their orders, are completed by the child with a Peer Advocate where possible, either in person or on the phone with a child, to allow for some impartiality, and hopefully encourages children to be more honest in their responses.

A new *You Said, We Did* notice board has been created in the reception space so children can physically see responses to their feedback. This is also regularly updated on our Camden Rise website. <https://www.camdenrise.co.uk/documents/d/camden-rise/camden-yjs-you-said-we-did-2025>

## **Resources and services**

Camden YJS use the YJB grant, partner contributions and available resources to deliver these services and believe they produce the following benefits and outcomes. Please see page 39 for Budget Costs and

Contributions 2024/25. As outlined in risks and issues, the political and financial climate means uncertainty over future budgeting of IYSS services.

## **Board development**

With new strategic management in place, the Board now meets quarterly with the addition of a priorities review event each May, to look at and review priorities aligned to the Plan. New members joined the Board in June 2024 including representatives from Community Safety, Youth Early Help, Progress and Participation, Employment Services, Inclusive Economy and a VCS representative with lived experience of the YJS and CJS. These representatives have strategic and operational oversight to support efforts to achieve our priorities. A refresh and introduction of board responsibilities, in addition to feedback from our oversight manager in June has supported continued reflection and improvement to how the board operates and delivers its responsibilities effectively. A series of 1:1's and induction session(s) have taken place to enable confidence across the board membership. We have a strong and committed board; we are focussing on how partners share presentation spaces moving forwards to thread together how broader priorities in other services feed into the YJS priorities. This is particularly important in our prevention and disproportionality work. With a change in priorities for 2025 – 2028 further additions and changes may be made to the make-up.

## **Workforce Development**

Established during lockdown, regular monthly workshops for all staff continue to take place. During 2024/25 the YJS have internally delivered workshops on Learning Reviews, Remand and Resettlement, Good Lives Refresher, SENDIASS and an AssetPlus refresher for APs. The YJS has also benefitted from External training on C-Card, Restorative Justice, Healthy Relationships, StopWatch, Teenagers and Domestic Abuse and ADHD). Staff delivering Your Choice have also benefitted from this CBT training and the clinical support offer. Staff have also benefitted from Inset training, and a wide range of internal training offered by Camden's Children and Learning.

The YJS ran its first Focus Week in February 2024 which was in response to the full case audit carried out in December 24. This week included an Introduction to the New HMIP Framework, Disproportionality, Diversity and Identity, Assessments and Reviews, Interventions planning, Victims. YJS Team Managers and the Service Manager have also taken part in 5 Leading and Managing within our Relational Practice Framework workshops.

The YJS continue to run the buddy system for new appointees to be paired with a member of staff, outside of line management arrangements, to provide an alternative route for support and help to new staff. Anecdotally this has provided new starters with an informal support system which has been welcomed.

External training planned for 2025/26 to date alongside the YJB Inset offer includes RJ: Sensitive and Complex Case Training (alongside other London boroughs) for selected staff, Child First training, SEND and Leading and Managing within our Relational Practice Framework for Team Managers and Service Manager.

Clinical consultations are held monthly by the YJS Systemic Therapist and is also available for clinical support on an ongoing basis. Staff receive supervision monthly which includes personal development, training needs; diversity and reasonable adjustments and positives of the months and things to pay attention to. Staff are expected to fully contribute to these sessions.

Staff are supported to take up professional development opportunities as they arise.

We have a dedicated health and wellbeing zone in the office, complete with herbal teas, personal care items and phone chargers amongst other things; we ensure staff have lunch away from their desks by not allowing any meetings in our meeting space during 12 and 2pm, so it can be used by everyone; and we continue to encourage staff to use the [Say Anything](#) online anonymous 'box' for staff to feedback/make suggestions on anything relating to the Youth Justice Service acted on by management.

## Evidence-based practice and innovation

Launched in 2024, alongside the appointment of a Director of Relational Practice, Camden have adopted a Relational Practice framework across Children & Learning. The framework is focused on a number of key values – social justice and empowerment, compassion, collaboration, integrity, learn and adapt, dignity and worth and honesty and accountability. The framework is based on systemic thinking, and includes a range of methods – mentalising, restorative, anti-racist and participation which are key tenants of the work of the Youth Justice Service.

The main pillars to the Services approach to work are underpinned by evidence based and emerging practice. Trauma Informed Practice, Restorative Approaches, Psychologically Informed and the Relational Practice Framework support the teams' professional development, offers consistency in skillset/understanding whilst retaining a truly responsive service that retains a focus on the child's needs.

The YJS short videos created to support children to understand elements of youth justice and ask questions to help them make informed decisions on how they engage access the support available. The Service continues to get feedback from children to determine how to continue to engage them in a way they can relate to easily.

The Deferred Exclusion Programme is available for all secondary schools to refer into for Camden residents, it is hoped this will lead to an increase in referrals whereby all children will be tracked to determine if they return to YJS and/or if they are able to retain their placement in education. To date we have had 11 referrals to the DEP and all have successfully completed. One child was engaging but was permanently excluded for another incident. Small numbers mean it is difficult to confidently say the intervention works, but simply by retaining their educational placement this is strong positive outcome based on the considerable research around being NEET and offending.

### DEP Good Practice Example

M was Referred to YJS for DEP for incident where students have been involved in a physical altercation with students from another Camden school and potential weapons. YJS identified speech and language concerns, and referral made to SALT therapist. A communication summary and recommendations were shared with his school to create a SEN profile so teachers can implement the recommendations in class. This also promoted the school to look into access arrangements for exams and he was granted additional time and a smaller room to take his GCSEs in. When exploring positive activities M attended YMCA gym induction and membership was paid for by the YJS. M was supported to apply for the Peer Advocate role by and was successful. Following successful completion of DEP and upon finding out about his new job school headteacher said: We have seen considerable progress in M this year at school; it's brilliant to hear he is taking up opportunities outside school also. This news has made my day. We were in a very different place back in February – I am thrilled.

We are planning to make further changes to both the name of the programme to *the Exclusion Prevention Programme* and to widen the criteria to include persistent suspensions and behaviour that could be deemed an offence, so we can capture children prior to being at risk of permanent exclusion. This new criterion is being shared with schools prior to the end of term and again in September so the information remains fresh for school staff.

In last year's plan we talked about a new partnership with <https://www.khadysdream.com/>. Khadys Dream has been established by a young adult who previously accessed our service as a child. Since his release from custody as an adult he accessed support from Evolve (our 17-25 service) and has turned his life around. He now delivers talks to groups of children about the cycle of crime and his own experiences to shine a light on trajectories if proactive action is not taken.

In the past year Kevin has delivered a session to a small group of children on the DEP, talking about his lived experience, and talking through the consequences of their actions. All the children at the session gave encouraging feedback and found the experience positive, useful and relatable. Kevin has also delivered some work within our Somers Town Youth Centre as part of our ongoing work to build positive relationships between young people and the police. Training was delivered on the stop and search process and one of the sessions was delivered by Kevin, whose input brought depth and authenticity. He covered key areas such as the rising

statistics around stop and search, practical advice on how to act when being stopped and how to avoid escalation, and helped children to understand that, in many cases, stop and search is based on intelligence-led policing. Kevin also shared a powerful personal testimony of being stopped with his mum by armed police at King's Cross, an experience that had a profound impact on them both. He also showed a video of a stop and search he experienced himself, which could have gone very differently had he not remained calm. His session included engaging scenario-based activities to help the group think critically about their responses. What made it especially impactful was his deep connection to the area – having grown up in Camden, attended Somers Town Youth Centre, and spent time in familiar local spots. That authenticity helped build trust and allowed them to truly connect with the content.

## Evaluation

Applying a responsive approach to how we engage children also has challenges with formal evaluations on our interventions. Our small numbers of children further compound this with aggregating quantitative data. The board review in May has led to linking in with colleagues in policy to help us understand how the breadth of qualitative feedback we have gathered can be harnessed to inform our developing evidence base in future. Steps have been taken to capture progression and growth of all children who access paid work experience placements. At this time the small numbers make it difficult to draw conclusions, however we do know that following the work experience, 2 have secured long term employment, 1 continued his placement beyond his YJS order, 1 has secured an apprenticeship, 2 returned to full time education, 1 has been offered a contract, and none of the children completing Honest Grind Coffee project have re-offended to date. From the Paid Work Experience programme, only 1/22 children have reoffended to date and soft outcomes, and feedback evidences the positive impact on confidence, readiness for work and developing a pro-social identity. We are currently taking a deeper look into the Paid Work Experience placements and hope to share the findings of that with both our Management Board and the YJB. We also plan to do some inhouse evaluation on the DEP this year.

The YJS has been focusing on how we track and evaluate the impact of the work carried out. As said earlier, feedback from end of order feedback questionnaires tell us that we are having a positive impact. 79% of children who completed it in 2024/25 said they were *a lot less likely to offend*, and 10% said they were *a bit less likely to offend*, with 11% stating *it would make no difference* as a result of the support they accessed.

## Priorities for the coming year

Following consultation with staff, children, parents, and board members, the following priorities will be in place for the next 2 years, whilst retaining some flexibility around changes from the Social Work National Reform. Previous priorities will continue to be embedded and become *business as usual*.

- Continue to perform well against National and Local Indicators of performance:
  - a. Reducing FTE
  - b. Reducing re-offending
  - c. Reducing use of custody
- 1. Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)** - (Reducing first time entrants, re-offending, reducing custody): Our objective is to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic violence and abuse on children through early intervention and education. 2 of our remands in 2024/25 were for domestic related charges. Camden's Youth Justice Service will contribute to the delivery of Camden's borough-wide partnership Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) which is due to be launched in the spring 2026.
- 2. Supporting Victims of Youth Crime** - (Reducing re-offending, reducing custody, reducing disproportionality, reducing FTE): Our objective is to ensure victims are supported and their voices are central to the youth justice offer and to interventions
- 3. Addressing Disproportionality** - (Reducing re-offending, reducing custody, increasing ETE): Our objective is to reduce racial and other forms of disproportionality across all areas of youth justice

4. **Enhancing Education, Training and Employment Offer (ETE)** - (Reducing re-offending, reducing custody, increasing ETE). Our objective is to improve opportunities for positive outcomes through access to education, training and employment
  5. **Continue to expand and improve on the YJS Prevention Offer** – (Reducing FTE). Our objective is to prevent children from entering the criminal justice system through early intervention
  6. **Enhance transitional safeguarding and reduce the risk of reoffending for children leaving our service** - (Reducing re-offending, reducing custody, increasing ETE, reduces disproportionality)
- Business as usual/embed the following:
    - Investment in the staff teams’ development and wellbeing
    - Using feedback from children and families to improve the service
    - Responding to social inequality
    - Embed the 3-month re-offending tool to look at patterns and trends as they emerge
    - We will also look at how best to use our own data alongside wider data collated throughout the directorate

More in-depth information can be found on pages 14-15

#### **Continue to perform well against National and Local Indicators of performance.**

As highlighted above in the performance section Camden has seen a slight increase in first time entrants. The increase is reflective of pre-pandemic levels.

The main offence types for FTE are for violence against the person (29/70) of the 29,16 were for knife offences. 27 children that became First Time Entrants, came in on Referral Orders. These were for knife related matters or multiple offences that meant out of court disposals were not available. Camden has a strong prevention offer (outlined elsewhere in this report) to identify children who may benefit from earlier support.

Reducing re-offending is tricky to respond to in real time when offence trends vary from one year to the next and our cohort is small. Following advice from the YJB we will start using the 3-month re-offending tool so we can scrutinise trends as they emerge.

Camden YJS is well equipped to respond to children with additional needs with our range of specialists and resources for interventions. This is particularly so with our strengthened work with educational providers and development of our paid work experience programme. The difficulty can often be supporting children with their wider environmental challenges, e.g. feeling safe in their community, having a stable, comfortable home with consistent and present parents. It is often very difficult to expect a child to effect meaningful change if they do not feel contained in their day-to-day world. Fortunately, the number of children who persistently re-offend is consistently small. There are discussions that our Evolve service may broaden its reach to support 16-year-olds in future. This additional support could benefit a number of our persistent offending children in future in offering a wraparound support that complements existing statutory services.

**Custody** has increased to 4 after remaining at zero for the past two years. Camden is fortunate to be part of the London Accommodation Pathfinder, and this has influenced the continued strong performance. 2 children received a placement in the last year. All 4 custodial outcomes are Global Majority children, and all committed high gravity offences, which meant custodial outcomes were inevitable.

Two children on **remand** for attempted murder are currently on trial. It is likely that any finding of guilt will lead to a custodial outcome for these children. It is anticipated that by broadening our voluntary support offer to children who are arrested for serious offences, they will have increased stability and will have worked on protective factors by the time any charge and appearance at court unfolds. If sentencers have confidence of a child’s ability to engage on a voluntary basis, it is hoped this will strengthen support for bail support packages and community based sentences where proportionate. We also have an external reviewer completing a review of our SYV incidents and boys coming to attention for high gravity offences and going straight to custody which will also inform and strengthen our prevention offer.

### Maintain and continue the work on tackling Disproportionality

Census data for Camden (2021) shows a decrease in the Black and Mixed population but an increase in the Other groups. Analysis of the YJS cohort shows that Global Majority children make up 70% of the cohort and are overrepresented in the Youth Justice Service.

	2011		2021		Camden YJS cohort 2024/25	
	10 - 17 yrs		10 - 17 yrs		10 - 17 yrs	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Asian	2,773	19%	3,367	20%	3	5%
Black	2,593	17%	2,503	15%	17	28%
Mixed	2,593	17%	1,987	12%	10	16%
Other	592	4%	1,304	8%	13	21%
White	7,198	48%	7,444	45%	18	30%
Total	15,749		16,605		<b>61</b>	

Black and Mixed heritage children remain disproportionately represented in the YJS cohort with Asian and White underrepresented. The ‘other’ category continues to increase and is also overrepresented, the group consisted of Afghan x 1, Arab x 8, Iraqi x 1, Lebanese x 1 and 1 Moroccan. Black and Mixed children make up 27% of Camden’s youth population (10–17-year-olds) but represent 44% of the YJS cohort. 71% of the YJS cohort are Global Majority children, an increase from 2024 which was 55%.

Over the last 5 years Camden YJS have been reporting disproportionality data to the YJS management board. Of note, the most current data tells us the proportion of White children in the YJS has reduced significantly from 41% to 30% in the last year. Positively, the overrepresentation of Black children receiving suspensions has reduced from 1.8 to 1.5 times than White children, though clearly there remains work to be done. Also, since we last reported to the board in March 2024, we have seen an increase in children being referred into the YJS through the Deferred Exclusion Programme, 89% of whom were Global Majority children. Another shift from the previous cohort is the increase in Black children committing more serious offences. In the 2024 the data showed us 0% of the Black children committed offences of 5-8 gravity, whereas in this report, they have committed 38% of serious offences. The small YJS cohort means that percentages must be viewed with some caution, however it remains important to understand and analyse this to understand the trends and what impact the work of the YJS, and more widely the partnership may be having on the overrepresentation of Black and Mixed children in Camden.

A cross-directorate Race Equality and Justice Plan is being launched in Camden in July. This is a bold step in our commitment to tackling racism, disproportionality, and injustice. The development of this work was sparked by honest reflections on racism in our services and a shared determination to do better — for each other and for the children, families, and communities we serve. Built around Practice, People, and Leadership, it sets out clear, actionable goals supported by a detailed plan for change.

Camden staff have attended social graces training as a strand to becoming more culturally competent, curious and mindful in how we understand our children’s identity. Another area of focus over the next year will be on how our practice adapts. A new resource to engage children on social graces has been developed by our advanced practitioner to support staff. HMIP noted, *A social GRRRAACCEEESSS tool was introduced to support assessing, planning, and delivery with children and families. All this activity has resulted in highly skilled staff who identify, consider, and respond to the specific and individual needs of children, families, and victims. Diversity practice was seen at two levels. Firstly, physical adaptations to contacts or interventions to enable engagement, and, secondly, a deeper, more nuanced, and sensitive approach to practice. This saw practitioners developing meaningful relationships and a genuine understanding of how ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, age, neurodiversity, and individual living environments impacted behaviour and lived experience.*

There have only been 3 referrals to the Deferred Exclusion Programme in 2024/25, all were for Global Majority boys. All 3 completed the programme and stayed in school. Two referrals came from a new school that hasn't previously used the programme.

In January 2024, Camden awarded 'protected characteristic' status to people who have experience of being in care living in the borough. This means that those who are in care, who are care leavers, or who have had a past experience of care, will have a similar protection from discrimination as other characteristics under the Equality Act after a motion to treat care experience as a locally protected characteristic. The motion recognises that many care leavers nationally face ongoing stigma, challenges, and discrimination across housing, health, education, and employment. Camden has many policies in place to support care leavers and help combat discrimination such as, exempting young adults aged 18 to 25 who have left the care system from Council Tax, care leavers receiving priority social housing, a range of grants to support care-experienced young people going into higher education, free Wi-Fi and free access to gyms and leisure centres. There is also a range of internships ring-fenced for care leavers aged 16 to 24. There is a new revised version due to be launched in Autumn of the Reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of Children Looked After, so we will need to ensure internal working arrangements that support this are in place.

Children Looked After remain overrepresented in the criminal justice system nationally. Our latest data shows 16% of our cohort are looked after, representing a considerable overrepresentation. Excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers, 50% of the CLA cohort are Black and mixed heritage. The breakdown of CLA cases by ethnicity is as follows: Asian 0, Black 5, Mixed 4, Other 4, and White 5. Hence providing additional support and rights to these children and young people should also seek to support the reduction of those children entering the criminal justice system in future. The YJS paid work experience placements have been extended to Camden Children Looked After.

Data from other areas such as Children Looked After, Educational exclusions and Exploitation Analyst indicate that Black and Mixed heritage children are also overrepresented in their respective cohorts. This reflects the culminating vulnerability factors that can interplay before a child reaches the Youth Justice Service. Camden has a Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group (which is chaired by the YJS Board Chair) with their updated policy and strategy. Progress has been made to bring together data from across Children and Learning Directorate, with all services striving to work towards the anti-racist service plans.

### **Improve and increase ETE opportunities/interventions**

We continue to place great emphasis on getting children paid work experience and have 3 placements available with additional placements available on an ad hoc basis. These bespoke placements are child centred and tailored specifically to the child's needs. We know that some of our children are not ready for 'normal' work hours and shifts so flexibility is key to engagement and success. It is well documented that children receiving an income or have employability skills and qualifications will reduce the likelihood of re-offending so this priority is key to successfully reducing re-offending. We are now working closely with Camden's Inclusive Economy Team who not only provide funding for placements but have opportunities we can tap into. We hope that we will be able to raise placements within council contractors. We would also like to look at options for our Peer Advocates as part of their exit from YJS.

Questionnaires are in place for all children on paid work experience placements to complete after the placement finishes and, 6 months on from the placement. Even if the child is unable to obtain a long-term placement within the duration of the YJS intervention, there is scope to track the impact of the paid work experience 6 months afterwards. In time with more work placements this will offer a rich insight into the medium-term impact of the placement and what, if any, changes may be needed. There remains a small group of children that remain uninterested in paid work experience options. Their voices need to be properly understood to determine what more could be done to persuade them to try something new. Often it could be the location, going somewhere new that can be off putting for children, though occasionally our children maybe earning a regular income through exploitation/crime and so the incentive of a London living wage remains unattractive. It is also anticipated that over the coming months all placements will have AQA's or other recognised qualifications attached to the placements. Whilst it is recognised that not all children will immediately be happy about this, each child will have responsive support in place to manage those conversations without overwhelming them and that not all children need to complete the qualifications if this is a barrier for some.

7 of our Reparation projects also offer AQAs ensuring that not only are children giving back to communities but are also benefiting and improving their outcomes and employment prospects.

### **Paid Work Experience Good Practice Example**

B has been with the YJS since early 2024 on a Referral Order and more recently voluntarily. While working with his Case Manager it was evident his main motivation for his offending was financial gain and we began working towards a paid work experience placement. B started his work placement with *Your Bike Project* in May 2025 and has since achieved 2 qualifications, one in Bike maintenance and a Level 3 First Aid. He has also come to realise that English and Maths are necessary and volunteered to engage with Functional skills courses on offer. B has overcome many obstacles mostly without the support of his parent/carers but has embraced the support YJS have given him to get to where he is today. B was referred to Euston Skills Centre, practised and passed his CSCS card, and with our support passed his theory driving test. With Support from Connexions, B applied for a E-Bike mechanic role with Lime Bike and was successful and is thrilled to have started his new job.

### **Strengthen the Prevention Approach provided within the YJS**

The increased focus on short term voluntary interventions has required staff to think differently about engagement and outcomes. Success will see children being identified earlier to engage in support that will divert them from Youth Justice Services. Confident and skilled staff teams will be able to engage children meaningfully in both voluntary and statutory interventions. Camden's robust Early Help offer has meant YJS staff haven't needed to engage children on a voluntary basis. MoJ Turnaround funding changed that, and staff initially found working in this new way challenging. We established a robust and comprehensive offer for Turnaround but on reflection after a low 'successfully completed' rate we have reviewed this. We have learnt that an inflexible statutory style offer does not work with voluntary cases. 2024/25 saw 33 children engaged and only 6 children successfully complete their Turnaround programme by year end. We are now offering a more flexible approach and ensuring we are adding value to the children's lives through a more bespoke child centred offer. We have already gained consent from 9 children this year, so our target set by MoJ of 20 children should be reached. Ultimately, successful engagement at point of arrest is likely to support reduction in remands or custody if assurances can be made that the child can and will continue to engage with support as part of a bail package or sentence.

Themes from previous local learning reviews highlighted the need to think about a family's journey rather than just the current presenting issues when making threshold decisions. There was also learning about changes in Case Managers/Social Workers in a child's journey as a reoccurring theme. YJS Case Manager job descriptions were reviewed in 2024 to broaden their scope to work with Youth Early Help cases and even support Evolve based work (in particular circumstances) where children would benefit from retaining one worker. It is hoped this will lead to increased integrated ways of working across IYSS and staff confidence to engage children and families voluntarily in future.

### **Standards for children in the justice system**

Camden YJS has robust Quality Assurance (QA) processes in place. We have invested in a Quality Improvement Officer who leads on themed and full case file audits; co-ordinating the QA work for the management team in a sequenced way that aligns with service priorities and feedback from staff. The YJS receives feedback from service users through child end of order surveys and victim surveys. As part of Camden's Quality Assurance Framework, the YJS also attend the monthly Quality Assurance Leads meeting across the directorate.

All auditing is overseen by the Quality and Performance Group (Q&P). This group produces an annual audit schedule, reviews QA templates and materials, monitors diversity within assessments, reports, breaches and sentencing; consider sentencing outcomes and congruence rates. In addition, the focus is to assure that assessments are completed in line with national standards, to oversee data reporting processes (Stat Monday) and monitor themes to monitor and drive all action/improvement plans.

Results from audits are analysed and shared with the Quality and Performance Group in the first instance, and then with the whole YJS staff team. This includes areas for improvement, actions and areas of good practice. Audits and results are taken to the YJS Management Board for oversight, challenge and recommendations. Audits carried out are either full case audits or thematic audits and workshops are then developed and delivered to the staff team to share any areas which are highlighted for improvement and guidance. These audits are then re-visited 6 months following the workshop, to check learning has been embedded into practice.

#### **Activity in the last 12 months:**

- Two full case audits every year (March and Dec)
- Safety and wellbeing and ROSH (Thematic)
- Court (Thematic)
- Case Diary entries (Thematic)
- Exit Audit
- Turnaround Programme
- Peer audit - completed with Islington YJS in May 2024 to review assessment ratings and diversity considerations
- Joint audit with Children Family Help & Safeguarding
- Victim Audit
- Introduction of Peer Observations
- Remand audits (ongoing, HMIP remand thematic recommendation) - a new audit which looks at remand cases. An auditor from each service reviews the work undertaken to understand whether everything had been done to avoid that child being remanded. This enhances the peer audit with CFHS which had already been undertaken and looked at cases which were known to each service
- YJS Focus Week

#### **Learning:**

- The most recent full case audit highlighted that AssetPlus reviews could be strengthened, with a stronger focus on disproportionality within assessments. A workshop was designed as part of Focus week, whereby Case Managers were taken through the guidance. There was an opportunity for Case Managers to QA a practice case, utilising the information that had been garnered. Managers continue to monitor this learning through our QA of assessments and an audit will be completed in August (6 months after) to check learning has been embedded
- The safety and wellbeing and risk of serious harm audit (ROSH) allowed us to analyse how consistent we are in determining risk. A workshop was designed and delivered around this to discuss audit findings and clarify any questions and misconceptions
- From the exit audit new processes were developed and a 'exit checklist' was reviewed and shared. This was to ensure that all Case Managers were following the same procedures. The YJS also developed a new exit plan and follow up meeting with the child three months after closure of the case. This has been embedded in practice to support children leaving the service and provide further support when the need is identified
- The Court audit allowed us to see where recording needed to be improved to capture the voices of the child and parent. It also highlighted where improvements could be made on the Court outcome sheet. These improvements have been made and there was a positive change in the data when this was looked at as part of the full case audit
- The peer audit with Islington served both as a moderation exercise but also highlighted some areas for improvement for both services. From this audit, guidance was given around where to include identity and diversity information in assessments
- Peer observations have recently been introduced with the aim of providing feedback and learning from shared experiences

The following themed audits are planned for Bail & Remands, Identity & Diversity, National Standards Court Audit follow up, Moderation exercise, Victims, Adulthood/Diversity/Identity, as well as a full case audit.

## Service development

Our new priorities for 2025 – 28 as agreed by the Board, children, families, staff, and partners:

### 1. Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)

(Reduces first time entrants, re-offending, and use of custody)

**Objective:** Prevent and reduce the impact of domestic violence and abuse on children through early intervention and education

- Engaging key partners to deliver early education on healthy relationships and DVA in schools and youth settings and consider how to engage children not attending schools (detached, VCS, YEH, VAWG) (strategic action)
- Embed and improve relationships with VAWG and link in with VAWG wider strategy (operational action)
- Develop targeted interventions for victims and harmers, explore mentoring programmes (operational action)
- Promote positive masculinity through interventions and mentoring programmes (operational action)
- Training for staff around healthy relationships including interventions available to deliver with children, MARAC and IDVA roles (operational action)
- Improve data collection on DV related offences and report to Board (operational action)

### 2. Supporting Victims of Youth Crime

(Reduces re-offending, reduces custody, reducing disproportionality, reduce FTE)

**Objective:** Ensure victims are supported and their voices are central to the youth justice offer and to interventions

- Implement a comprehensive victim support and engagement strategy within YJS, linking in with services already in the borough and work with relevant partners to roll out victim strategy across the partnership (strategic action)
- Identify a victim champion at the board to oversee progress of the strategy
- Monitor and address disproportionality in victim engagement and outcomes through audits and surveys (operational action)
- Use data to analyse victim demographics and uptake (operational action)
- Research and develop interventions to support child victims of Serious Youth Violence to prevent future offending (operational action)

### 3. Addressing Disproportionality

(Reduces first time entrants, re-offending, custody, increases ETE)

**Objective:** To reduce racial and other forms of disproportionality across all areas of youth justice

- Expand the criteria and promote further the Deferred Exclusion Programme to reduce school-based exclusions and prevent first time entrants (incl further education placements) (operational action)
- Measure the impact of DEP and share with schools as a promotional tool (operational action)
- Ensure disproportionality is explicitly addressed in all YJS priorities and strategies (strategic action)
- Align YJS efforts with the wider race equality work across the Camden Children's Directorate to underline the need to take action further upstream (strategic action)
- Continue to produce an Annual report on racial disparity and take this to the YJS Management Board (operational action)
- Link disproportionality data with victim data and learning reviews and YJB Racial Disparity report (strategic action)
- Continue funding commitment to LAP

#### **4. Enhancing Education, Training and Employment Offer (ETE)**

(Reduces re-offending, reduces custody, increases ETE)

**Objective:** Improve opportunities for positive outcomes through access to education, training, and employment

- Increase access to apprenticeships and vocational training for children (operational action)
- Increase the range of bespoke placements for YJS children (operational action)
- Create a longer-term plan to work with Inclusive Economy Team for transitions into permanent suitable employment (operational action)
- Support transitions for children aged 18+ into sustainable ETE pathways (operational action)
- Strengthen partnerships with the Euston Skills Centre and other local providers (operational action)
- Internally evaluate the paid placements scheme and establish and secure longer term funding (internally and externally) (strategic and operational action)
- Review and enhance the AQA/qualification opportunities available for reparation and paid work experience placements.

#### **5. Continue to expand and improve on the YJS Prevention Offer**

(Reduces FTE)

**Objective:** Prevent children from entering the criminal justice system through early intervention

- Work across IYSS and VCS to create and deliver a robust prevention offer through schools and community partners (YJS/Detached?) (strategic & operational action)
- Expand the criteria for the Voluntary Support Programme for at-risk children to include victims and refine the front door offer so that victims can be identified and referred proactively (strategic & operational action)
- Explore options to continue the Turnaround Programme to support early intervention once funding ends in March 26 (strategic action)
- Collaborate with Voluntary and Community Services to provide holistic support (operational action)
- Identify VCS where our work overlaps and agree Information Sharing Agreements across IYSS with VCS where we are working with the same children. Improve ways to share learning/risks etc. and share training and resources, providing an offer to children that is complimentary (strategic & operational action)
- Aligning with National Reform of Social Work changes to provide prevention work with partners and Camden locality working (strategic action)
- Explore transitions from Primary to Secondary schools and contribute to schools work through the Detached Team

#### **6. Enhance transitional safeguarding and reduce the risk of reoffending for children leaving our service -**

(Reducing re-offending, reducing custody, increasing ETE, reduces disproportionality)

- Ensure timely referrals to the Evolve Serious Youth Violence service to provide early intervention and continued support
- Explore the criteria for Evolve and potential for expansion
- Coordinate support with community safety partners to ensure a holistic and consistent approach to reintegration and risk management
- Continue to build understanding of 18-25 offending cohort themes and how these may be influencing children in YJS in terms of exploitation and offending.
- Build on the learning of transitional safeguarding panels to support holistic and bespoke support for children and young people.
- As within ETE priority- establish longer term arrangement with inclusive economy and transitional support for children and young people.

## National Priorities

### Children from groups which are over-represented

Please refer to local Priority continue to tackle disproportionality on page 15.

### Policing

The Met's Children Strategy, introduced in September 2024, is a new strategy for children and means Police Officers in all their encounters with children, see them as children first. The strategy recognises that children are different to adults, they have different need and vulnerabilities and need to be treated differently. This aligns with our ways of working. The YJS recently received Child First training, and our Police Officer attended this. This new strategy reinforces the importance of close partnership working and supports us to work effectively together.

Camden and Islington were the first boroughs to merge into a BCU and also have the Engage pilot established. The Engage initiative is well managed with good communication and high-performance rates in terms of children not returning after a period of engagement. The challenges faced by the Met in recent years have been widely published within the media. We have had a stable Police team, with two Police Officers, who although are not collocated with us permanently, attend Big Team Meetings, and training and regularly spend time in our office and with the team. This enables an excellent working relationship.

Our police board representative has been stable, and this has helped harness good working relationships and establishing new connections with new officers in roles. The IYSS Head of Service and YJS Team Manager attend the MACE meeting, the vulnerable adolescent strategy group which bring partners together to consider specific issues for our adolescent population with vulnerabilities. The outcome of the recent HMCTs inspection of the Met police found regional failures by the police in how they responded to children missing, exploited children and also using adultifying language. There has been an openness within these spaces as to how the Met intend to work differently in future and learn from their failings. Current leaders within the police appear committed to challenging the cultural and often systemic issues that pervade within policing to achieve better outcomes for Camden residents.

Camden children have previously run stop and search training sessions for new recruits/serving police officers. This phased out due to policing changes, but progress has been made to restart this, having observed work with Islington YJS and how we can take part in this in future to reach as many new police recruits as possible. There is a plan to restart this as a reparation project alongside Islington YJS alternating in venues. YJS Team Managers and one of our Peer Advocates are now on the Community Monitoring Panel to review stop and search body worn footage and participate in the panel to consider, with partners, what actions may support better relationships between children, communities and policing. This group meets quarterly, and the redacted stop and search statements sessions take place prior to each meeting, findings are shared with the wider community group.

The new police database systems 'connect' continues to impact children. The Police Officer in the case lists a child to court, without knowing where that child's local court is or on what day it sits. This has led to children being listed on a day different to their borough. This raises challenges with swiftly accessing information on the child's needs, risks, support network and them being able to see a familiar face if accessing services. Camden has a policy for Case Managers to attend court wherever possible and particularly if remand is an option. However, we have experienced delays, children often being adjourned to their day which comes at a cost for families and taxpayers. The Police now have a transformation team who aim to improve the Connect system.

Conversations have been initiated between the BCU custody sergeant and court leads around future child custody suites and what changes may be needed. The aim is to learn from other regional areas and operate a 12 hour clock for children to be processed in custody. To make this achievable, police custody suites would need defence solicitors specially trained in youth matters and Appropriate Adults on hand to be immediately available and support children in a responsive way.

Camden is due to go live with Youth Deferred Prosecutions and Youth Deferred Cautions on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Our OOC Panel will be updated on the new processes to ensure we are ready for the roll out. We expect it may take a while to adjust to the new processes but have guidance in place for staff.

IYSS took part in the Stop and Search Safeguarding Pilot audit. Key findings showed, all (10) children had previously had at least one prior stop and search with police; none of the children had been subject to Youth Justice Orders or had any convictions; only one parent had knowledge of their child being stopped and searched and the children also did not identify positive interactions with police outside of stop and search. The common theme for children spoken to as part of the audit was distrust of police, feeling targeted by police and that they had not violated the law in anyway which would have led to them being stopped and searched. This shows the importance of the YJS attending the Community Monitoring Panel mentioned above.

## **Prevention**

As outlined elsewhere in the report Camden has continued to invest in prevention services across all age groups to support families early on, before problems become insurmountable. Within the IYSS structure there is the Progression and Participation service, the Youth Service and the Reducing Youth Violence and Exploitation Service, which includes the detached team.

The Progression and Participation service offer a range of bespoke services for children in Camden to help them reach their full potential and engage in positive activities. In addition to the Connexions service, we have the Duke of Edinburgh award programme, Camden summer university programme, services for learning disabilities, Avalon project and the Honest Grind Coffee.

Camden's Youth Early Help (YEH) is a voluntary service that offers open access/universal youth provision as well as targeted one to one support via casework for children and their families. The Service aims to ensure children stay safe and be healthy, remain in education, training or employment, become resilient and play a positive role in their communities. In addition, the service offers one to one intervention, group sessions and training and workshop for professionals and parents to raise awareness and reduce harm caused by substance misuse. YEH offers challenge as well as support to children and their families in order to address issues and develop resilience so that they are better equipped to cope and because the service has intervened early, less likely to escalate to higher levels of need and higher cost services.

Camden has 3 youth hubs located in the north, central and south of the borough. These offer a range of support to children and in future will see more multi-disciplinary team models operating from these locations. YJS children can have appointments in these locations with a view to supporting them access the support longer term.

Our Detached Team deliver the Choices weapons awareness programme in secondary schools and age-appropriate intervention in primary schools. As part of the teams street-based presence a bespoke and responsive intervention can be offered by the detached team to groups of children 'hanging around' on estates and in parks to develop relationships and offer support. Over a number of sessions trust can be built and children can be supported in different areas. For example, writing CV's, apply for courses linked to areas of interest and increasing skills in areas such as first aid and food hygiene.

The Regents Park Guardianship Programme, funded through various means, including the VRU has received considerable attention which was developed and supported by the Detached Team. This organic, grass roots collective of residents, children, businesses and community leaders has led to a visible community culture, co-designing with children and residents to make their community welcoming for all, work for all, accessible for all and build relationships across generations and cultures to thrive. This project has now been funded to be rolled out in the Somers Town area.

## **Diversion**

Within Youth Early Help, Camden has an Engage service based within custody suites designed to build on relationships formed in custody with youth workers and continue into the community, to divert children away from further offending and into education, employment, or training; to *hand hold* into services to encourage positive contributions to the community and to understand consequential thinking. Children who access this service can get up to 8 weeks support from their worker.

The Turnaround initiative has entered its fourth year and has adapted over time. The real impact of this will be better understood in time to see what children return to YJS. To date, there have been a number of cases who appear to have done well as a result of engaging with Turnaround.

### **Turnaround Good Practice Example**

A child turning 18, was referred to the YJS Turnaround programme after being arrested for an alleged phone theft. He disclosed during the police interview that he was coerced. It was his first offence, and he was in full-time education with plans to study law or politics at university.

After engaging with him and his mother, the Case Manager worked with the police to advocate for his case to be reviewed by the Out of Court Disposal panel. Despite initial resistance from his solicitor, the Case Manager liaised with the CPS, highlighting the long-term impact a conviction could have on his future. Following an NRM referral and a Reasonable Grounds decision, the CPS agreed to take no further action.

Thanks to the Turnaround programme, he was recognised as a victim of modern slavery rather than being criminalised. He used his Turnaround funding to pay for tutoring, helping him pursue his university goals.

The Camden Deferred Exclusion Programme (DEP) mentioned above in the evidence-based practice section continues to be offered to children at risk of exclusion from school.

## **Education**

When reviewing the YJ Plan priorities, with partners, staff and parents/carers; Education, Training and Employment was the priority most people agreed was the most important (alongside reducing re-offending), which has led to us retaining that priority and not just embedding as business as usual. This also links to Camden's Youth Mission, that all children have access to economic opportunity to keep them safe and secure. Children in the Youth Justice system are one of the priority cohorts within the Youth Mission.

The Headteacher of the H3 is invited to our Management Board. H3 is made up of Haverstock Secondary and 2 Pupil Referral Unit sites, (Harmood and Heath). Within this there is the Community Reintegration Base, CRiB, that supports children on site who cannot remain in mainstream school with a view to supporting them return. A partnership agreement is in place between the YJS and H3 to support clarity and best practice in terms of how we work proactively with children. Other services within IYSS also work closely with H3 that supports the prevention strand of work.

HMIP praised Camden's *“strong focus on education, training, and employment (ETE), alongside the voluntary YJS deferred exclusion programme, enables children to sustain mainstream placements or access engaging alternative provisions. The extensive post-16 offer includes paid work experience and innovative employability projects as credible alternatives for children”*.

The YJS has a Team Manager representative on the CLA Health Panel and the CLA Working Group re. early diagnosis of children and young people with learning disabilities/difficulties and other additional needs. The same Team Manager oversees the educational partnerships, paid work experience, SaLT and Connexions provision.

Strengthening partnership working in Education, Training and Employment has been a priority for the last 4 years, having recognised a small group of 16+ children were not able to obtain or sustain educational placements. The Board continue to have oversight and be supportive of the Honest Grind Coffee initiative that is now mobilised. Underspend from previous remand budgets have been used to provide a paid work experience placement for

16+ NEET children at a pace they can manage. The aim is to be able to be completely responsive to individual child needs and support their learning one small step at a time. So far 2 children have engaged in the initiative. Camden YJS has a Team Manager who leads on building partnerships with educational providers and oversees management of the 16+ Connexions Advisor.

## **Restorative approaches and victims**

Ensuring that victims are provided with support and advice is a long-established part of our offer. We take a broad view of work with victims in our service. Whilst we get to know victims through the referrals to our VLO, we also recognise there is a victim for every child we work with, who may not be in contact with us but who has rights under the Victim Code. The YJS Management Board has a strategic role in understanding the profile and characteristics of victims in Camden to help inform our victim work and our wider crime prevention agenda.

Over the last 6 months, the Board committed to an accelerated programme of work to further strengthen our offer in line with the Victim Code. This has supported progress to ensure that all victims in contact with YJS have:

- A justice journey that is timely, effective, inclusive, and transparent
- A positive start to a healing journey that gives the support they need to process what has happened, and begin to recover

This aim mirrors the national Victims' Commissioner's ambitions. The development of our work with victims has been led by three principles that we continually embed and champion across YJS and the wider partnership:

- support for victims is everybody's business
- victims' physical and emotional safety is paramount
- we should all defend children's rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and victims' rights

Our operational focus on victim work has been to ensure that the basics are right and building a secure foundation for our ambitious longer-term agenda (see section 3). Key operational service developments achieved so far include:

- Refresh of our Victim Policy: This is a comprehensive set of operational procedures to ensure everyone is aware of best practice, how we work with victims, and a clear understanding of the process we follow.
- Improved recording: We have developed a recording template specific for victims' files. This helps ensure the cases flow smoothly from point of referral, are recorded succinctly and accurately, and supports improved insight on victims. This is further strengthened by our refreshed victim assessment template that enables consistent recording and seamless uploading to ChildView.
- Improved management oversight: This has included increasing supervision of the victim coordinator and amending the supervision template to ensure all aspects of their work were covered at each session. This has helped to ensure a consistent management footprint and grip on these cases and that standards of work remain high.

Restorative Justice/Facilitation training was delivered to Camden YJS and other colleagues in IYSS in June 2024. This supports consistency across the team and revisits how our approaches and work are restorative and what can be improved. Our Victim Liaison Worker, her line manager and our Reparation Co-ordinator also attended RJ complex and sensitive training run across London YJS'. The VLC has also attended Working with Victims, Inset training provided via the YJB. This means our staff are able to offer mediation/RJ to foster parents/staff to support reducing reporting children to police during placement breakdowns.

Camden YJS has a Victim Liaison Worker who is Restorative Justice trained. They meet with children and complete Restorative Justice assessments as well as victim awareness work. The worker also completes victim impact statements with victims and ascertains if they have preference over reparation projects the children should go to, keeps them up to date with outcomes and signposts to supportive services where required. The worker also attends panels to represent victims (including reading out statements) and undertakes Restorative Justice where possible including conferences, and shuttle mediation, though these instances are less common.

KPI data from 2024/25 outlines that 38 of 43 (88%) victims consented to the YJS contacting them. Of those 38, 28 opted to engage with the victim worker and asked for updates on the child's progress and all of the victims received this. Victims will often have their say on the kind of reparation they would like the child to complete, in addition to providing statements on how the offence has impacted them. 21 of the 28 victims asked for, and received support on follow up services they were able to access.

Referral Order Panels have increased recently with our cohort size and first-time entrants coming in on Referral Orders. An Advanced Practitioner leads on Referral Order's and has been overseeing the improvement work in this area. Last year we recruited and trained 18 new panel members and they are now shadowing and coming onboard facilitate panels. We also recruited one of our parents to become a panel member which we are pleased about, showing a real reflection of the community.

## **Serious violence and exploitation and contextual safeguarding**

Camden's Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group (VASG) meets quarterly. This is a broad partnership space that seeks to bring services together to understand all key areas (and work being undertaken) that link to adolescents being vulnerable. [The Vulnerable Adolescents, Tackling Risk and Exploitation Strategy 2023-2025](#) holds partners to account to strive to do more in a co-ordinated way, to support the most vulnerable children.

Camden recognises the overlapping risks and vulnerabilities associated with youth violence, gangs and child criminal exploitation. Early interventions services, such as Youth Early Help, Turnaround and the Engage programme aim to divert children from the criminal justice system, while the Evolve service can offer transitional support to young adults affected by youth violence or exploitation.

The Reducing Youth Violence & Exploitation (RYVE) Service is part of the Camden Gangs Partnership and forms an important link between the Police and YJS for children impacted by serious youth violence. The daily Gangs Risk Briefing improves information sharing for gang-affected children and compliments the YJS Police's daily risk briefing.

Camden and Islington remain part of the NRM local pilot, with panels taking place monthly to review referrals to determine if there are reasonable or conclusive grounds of modern slavery. The chairs of the MACE panel also represent the NRM panel. Camden services utilise a Child Criminal Exploitation risk assessment, which has recently been revised, to classify the concerns with clear procedures on next steps dependent on the score/rating. This practice is well embedded across children's services.

The RYVE Service Manager is the single point of contact for any Prevent or extremism related concerns and links in with the YJS. They also attend the monthly multi-agency Channel Panel and contribute to case discussions and support packages where appropriate. Where a member of the YJS team is the key worker for an individual who is on Channel, they can attend meetings to add their perspective on what kind of support may be most effective. The team also responds to regular information sharing requests with relevant information about any individuals known to the Service. The YJS works closely with the Prevent Team in Camden and are keen to contribute to further developments of Prevent and any changes as a result of the Independent Review or policy change.

Camden's Youth Safety Outcomes Framework, 2022-2025, aims to reduce violence involving Camden's young people; increase young people feeling safe in Camden; and increase trust between young people and those in positions of authority. The Partnership believes that by taking a Public Health approach to youth safety it will achieve these outcomes. Keeping our young people safe remains a key priority. Our work to implement the recommendations of the Youth Safety Taskforce continues and in the last year we have developed a Youth Safety Outcomes Framework and Action Plan, which has been refreshed and aligned with the outcomes framework for 'Good Life Camden'. The work focuses on the key overarching outcomes of a reduction in violence involving Camden's young people, an increase in young people feeling safe in Camden and an increase in trust between young people and those in positions of authority.

Camden Transitional Safeguarding forum is a structured, multidisciplinary approach to managing and supporting the transition of young people with social care needs from children to adult services. The forum will

ensure that the transition process is seamless, person-centred, and meets the needs of each young person as they prepare for adulthood, promoting independence, well-being, and inclusion.

The Transitional Safeguarding Forum is a strategic, multi-agency case decision making forum for young people with complex needs that sit outside the children with disabilities pathway. The purpose of the forum is to ensure that multi-agency communication and information sharing takes place on a regular basis and to support professionals and their managers in managing the most challenging and concerning needs of young people.

### **Detention in police custody**

Camden's Engage service based within custody suites is designed to build on relationships formed in custody with youth workers to continue into the community, to divert children away from further offending and into education, employment, or training; to "hand hold" into services to encourage positive contributions to the community and to understand consequential thinking.

Following the recommendations from the Remand Thematic, YJS Police and management will be periodically reviewing time spent in police custody. The last audit of 10 children in police custody spent an average of 11.5 hours before being released which is positive. As outlined in the section working with police, some initial discussions have been had and we hope, will continue, to support a better experience for children in police custody

In Camden, in the first instance, Police will ask a parent/carer or social worker to be an Appropriate Adult following a child-centred approach. Camden outsources to a voluntary Appropriate Adult service for children in need of an Appropriate Adult in Camden police cells in cases where parents are not present. A YJS worker will act as Appropriate Adult where the child has been arrested for a serious offence or if YJS feel this is in the child's best interests. However, if the child is looked after, their social worker or foster carer may be asked carry out this role. If this is not possible YJS will arrange for this service to be provided. Out of office hours, the Emergency Duty worker will make arrangements for someone from the Appropriate Adult service to attend at the police station with a child on request by the police.

Camden and Islington have a new shared contract with Appropriate Adult service and we now receive quarterly data enabling us to monitor age, gender, ethnicity, outcomes etc.

### **Remands**

2024/25 saw a decrease in the use of remand compared to last year. 7 children were remanded into Custody or Local Authority Accommodation (RILAA), some children received multiple remands. There were 5 remand instances into custody in 2024/25, (5 children), a decrease on 2023/24. There were 2 instances of Remand into Local Authority Accommodation (2 children), the same as in the previous year. 2 of the children remanded into custody remain on remand, however one has now transferred to Probation and will be sentenced as an adult if found guilty. Of the children remanded, 2 are White, 5 are Global Majority children.

The recent Remand Concordat has been circulated with key partners.

3 of our recent remands for serious matters have been for children not previously open to the YJS. We have asked an external consultant to review our recent serious incidents, which in turn will support a better understanding of the needs and learning for those children that were not known to YJS at the point of being remanded. An enhanced understanding of their circumstances we anticipate will support proactive responses with key partners and voluntary sector organisations to share learning and better information sharing to adapt as necessary. This ties into our new DVA priority as 2 of these children had been remanded for domestic violence related offences.

The work of Turnaround, future voluntary support offer from YJS and Evolve support we anticipate, will see continued low number of remands. Children who engage voluntarily and make measurable progress with structure and monitoring are more likely to be granted bail by courts at charging stage.

Camden has a comprehensive accommodation pathways provision for its' care experienced children. KPMS have 2 provisions in Camden that offers therapeutic and holistic support. Whilst the resources are local and

good, the location can often be challenging if Courts require distance between the victim and perpetrator. Camden has continued to invest in the London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) to support children avoiding custody wherever appropriate to do so. Since its inception Camden has referred 10 children to the LAP, with 4 endorsed and accessed the provision, 5 not able to access (due to matching or court decision) and 1 remains live. Remand audits are completed alongside social care colleagues where children do enter youth detention to consider learning and ensuring only those critical few children are remanded where needed.

Budgetary pressures for high-cost placements continue to affect Camden, with YJS children often factoring into this cohort. The need to source appropriate placements, alongside robust bail support plans remain a priority to reducing the use of remand in custody wherever possible. The cost of LAP placements will soon be sourced from the YJS remand budget. This, alongside the increase in the use of remand in the last 2 years have impacted the remand reserves. The ongoing review on the remand grant will further instil a sense of uncertainty regarding future budgetary allocations to meet the unpredictable nature of remand costs.

## **Use of custody**

As detailed above, Camden is proud of its low levels of custody.

Camden has various processes in place to ensure the utmost is being done to prevent custodial outcomes. Joint supervision between YJS staff and Social Work colleagues is embedded, the High Risk and Vulnerability Panel meets monthly to oversee risk and check on actions and changes that may lead to risk of Custody. Clinical Consultations takes place monthly allowing Case Managers to discuss cases with our Systemic Therapist. Case Managers also work closely with Evolve Case Managers regarding older children, particularly those transitioning in the custodial estate. 3 of the 4 children who have entered the LAP did so on a sentenced basis, thereby reducing the use of custody. Camden children serving custodial sentences are seen in excess of national standards from their network and maintain close communications with YCS colleagues to ensure they are receiving the best possible support in what can often be a challenging environment.

## **Constructive resettlement**

Camden has a constructive resettlement policy which clearly outlines the expectations on the YJS and its partners to ensure resettlement planning is considered from the start of sentence. As outlined in the remand and custody section, the YJS has strong links with the Children Looked After service and Placements Team to support timely identification of addresses for children who cannot return to their family. The YJS works closely with Evolve and New Horizons who can support children as they enter adult services and also support them whilst in custody. The Evolve team hold a monthly resettlement panel focusing on constructive resettlement principles to support successful transition into the community for our 18-25 cohort. All resettlement cases have access to specialist services including CAMHs, Parenting, Substance Misuse, SaLT, Connexions and more. The aim is that wherever possible work is completed with the child and their family whilst in custody to enable a stable environment on release. All 16+ NEET children are offered an opportunity to engage in paid work experience placements if they are willing. Whilst our custody levels are low it is essential we continue to run training and refreshers to staff to ensure they are not deskilled in working with custodial cases. The new YCS Resettlement Practitioners Guidance has been circulated to staff to ensure we are up to date.

The London Resettlement Partnership has seen some tangible outcomes in terms of the Accommodation protocol, referenced in our joint working protocol with children's services, and the recent Further Education and YJS protocol. These policies will support a better shared understanding of expectations and commitments for this cohort of children and enhance consistency of best practices that is taking place across the region.

As part of our new priority on transitional safeguarding we hope that Evolve will be able to offer monthly visits to children in custody to build positive relationships prior to release. Once we have a seconded probation officer in post we hope they will support this and the resettlement forum as standard to improve the understanding of need and connections across the cohorts.

## **Working with families**

The YJS sits within the directorate of Children's Family Help and Safeguarding. This has brought together Early Help services (from integrated early years up to Transformation Team) the MASH service, and all Safeguarding family services under one leader. This directorate, alongside Education and Inclusion is evolving and Camden's framework of relational practice is embedding across the directorate. Camden is getting ready for the changes that are coming through the National Reform.

## **Sign off, submission and approval**

The plan has been agreed by:



Tim Aldridge  
Children & Learning, Executive Director  
YJS Management Board, Chair

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Throughput Data 2023/24

Appendix 2 – Re-offending data

Appendix 3 - Disproportionality Infograph

Appendix 4 - End of Intervention questionnaire findings 2023/24

Appendix 5 - YJS structure chart

Appendix 6 – YJS staff by Ethnicity, Gender and Disability

Appendix 7 - IYSS structure chart

Appendix 8 – Governance structure chart

Appendix 9 - Budget Costs and Contributions 2024/25

Appendix 10 - Feedback from Priorities Event

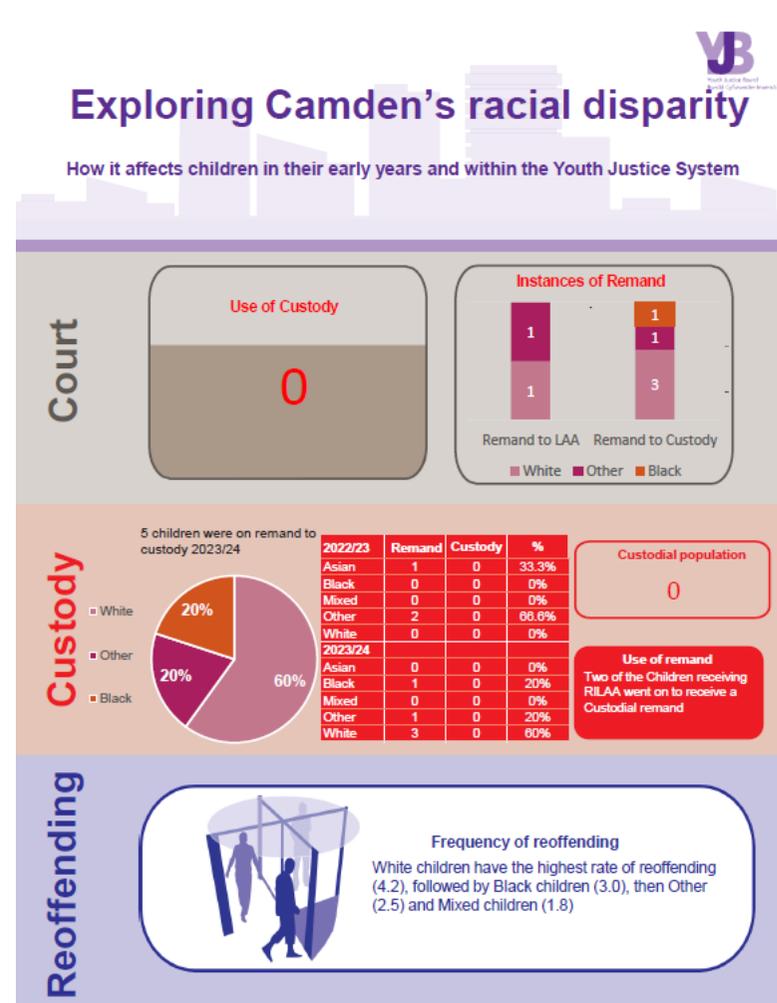
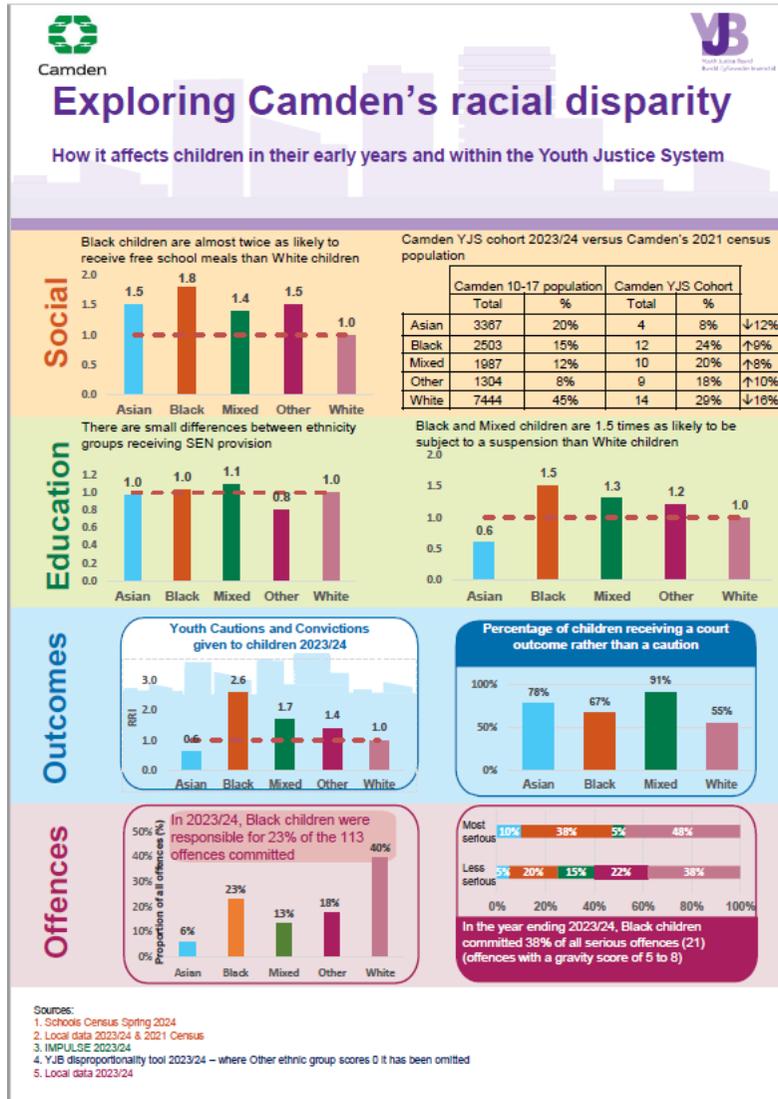
## Appendix 1 - Throughput Data 2024/25

Offence	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		Offence
	No. of offences	%	Number of offences	%													
Arson		0.0%	1	0.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.00%		0.00%	Arson
Breach of Bail	2	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	1.2%		0.0%		0.00%	1	0.65%	Breach of Bail
Breach of Conditional Discharge	2	0.4%	2	0.6%	1	0.3%	3	1.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.00%		0.00%	Breach of Conditional Discharge
Breach of Statutory Order	16	3.2%	27	7.6%	18	5.6%	21	9.7%	4	2.5%	6	5.8%	1	0.88%	4	2.60%	Breach of Statutory Order
Criminal Damage	16	3.2%	12	3.4%	10	3.1%	9	4.1%	5	3.1%	3	2.9%	1	0.88%	10	6.49%	Criminal Damage
Death or Injury by Dangerous Driving		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.00%		0.00%	Death or Injury by Dangerous Driving
Domestic Burglary	1	0.2%	3	0.8%		0.0%		0.0%	6	3.7%	1	1.0%	3	2.65%		0.00%	Domestic Burglary
Drugs	98	19.5%	79	22.2%	47	14.6%	41	18.9%	24	14.9%	20	19.4%	16	14%	15	9.74%	Drugs
Fraud and Forgery	9	1.8%	9	2.5%	7	2.2%	5	2.3%	5	3.1%	2	1.9%		0.00%	3	1.95%	Fraud and Forgery
Motoring	34	6.8%	20	5.6%	19	5.9%	9	4.1%	5	3.1%	11	10.7%	13	11.50%	20	12.99%	Motoring
Non Domestic Burglary		0.0%	1	0.3%	3	0.9%	2	0.9%	5	3.1%		0.0%		0.00%	5	3.25%	Non Domestic Burglary
Other	19	3.8%	11	3.1%	8	2.5%	4	1.8%	2	1.2%		0.0%	3	2.65%	2	1.30%	Other
Public Order	80	15.9%	27	7.6%	26	8.0%	9	4.1%	7	4.3%	3	2.9%	2	1.77%	2	1.30%	Public Order
Racially Aggravated	6	1.2%	4	1.1%	15	4.6%	4	1.8%	3	1.9%		0.0%		0.00%	2	1.30%	Racially Aggravated
Robbery	9	1.8%	21	5.9%	34	10.5%	24	11.1%	29	18.0%	13	12.6%	13	11.50%	15	9.74%	Robbery
Sexual	5	1.0%		0.0%	1	0.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.88%	4	2.60%	Sexual
Theft and Handling	21	4.2%	26	7.3%	34	10.5%	14	6.5%	23	14.3%	17	16.5%	17	15%	17	11.04%	Theft and Handling
Vehicle Theft	21	4.2%	20	5.6%	5	1.5%	9	4.1%	1	0.6%		0.0%		0.00%	4	2.60%	Vehicle Theft
Violence Against the Person	164	32.6%	93	26.1%	95	29.4%	63	29.0%	40	24.8%	27	26.2%	43	38%	50	32.47%	Violence Against the Person
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>		<b>356</b>		<b>323</b>		<b>217</b>		<b>161</b>		<b>103</b>		<b>113</b>		<b>154</b>		<b>Total</b>

**Appendix 2 - Local Reoffending data**

<b>Reoffending analysis YJS cohort Oct 18 - Sep 23</b>					
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Oct 22 - Sep 23</b>	<b>Oct 21 - Sep 22</b>	<b>Oct 20 - Sep 21</b>	<b>Oct 19 - Sep 20</b>	<b>Oct 18 - Sep 19</b>
<b>Cohort</b>					
1   Number of children in cohort	36	52	85	86	91
2   Number of children reoffending	17	11	15	26	28
3   % of cohort who reoffended (binary rate)	47%	21%	18%	30%	31%
4   Number of further offences committed by cohort members	47	58	53	62	113
5   Overall re-offences per reoffender rate	2.76	5.27	3.53	2.38	4.04
6   % of all further offending committed by those committing	26%	78%	49%	21%	71%
7   % of all re-offences committed within first month	23%	10%	57%	21%	32%
<b>Reoffending rates</b>					
8   Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution binary rate	58%	13%	18%	16%	23%
9   Referral Order binary rate	31%	36%	16%	35%	34%
10   Youth Rehabilitation Order binary rate	67%	30%	17%	50%	38%
11   Custody / post release binary rate	n/a	n/a	100%	0%	0%
12   Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution re-offences	1.67	5.00	2.40	2.40	1.33
13   Referral Order re-offences per reoffender rate	0.92	3.60	2.20	2.71	2.62
14   Youth Rehabilitation Order re-offences per reoffender rate	1.67	9.00	7.25	1.71	13.20
15   Custody / post release re-offences per reoffender rate	n/a	n/a	1.00	0.00	0.00

# Appendix 3 - Disproportionality Infograph

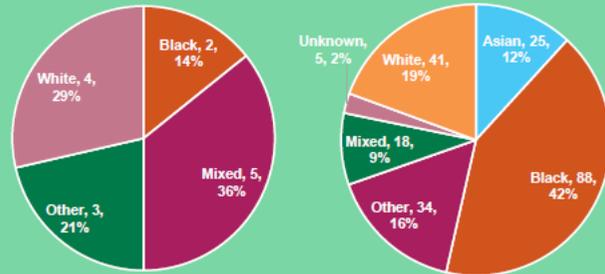


# Exploring Camden's racial disparity

How it affects children in their early years and within the Youth Justice System

## Children Looked After

Children Looked After open to YJS 23-24      All Looked After 10-17yrs old in Camden



Of the Children Looked After open to Camden Youth Justice Service, Mixed, White and Other children are overrepresented in the YJS cohort.

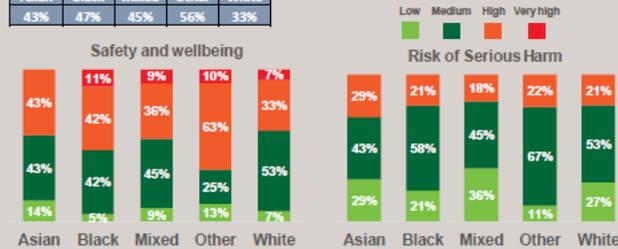
## Assessing the needs of sentenced children

61 Children had AssetPlus assessments in 2023/24 Overall, half of all global majority children were assessed to have a greater proportion of concerns with local issues

Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White
50%	58%	55%	83%	40%

Mental health concerns were less prevalent for White children

Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White
43%	47%	45%	56%	33%



\*'Local issues' are concerns about the child being adversely affected by specific local tensions, pressures or issues.  
 \*Other Ethnicity category added for 2023/24

Sources:  
 1. Camden CLA 2025

# Exploring Camden's racial disparity

How it affects children in their early years and within the Youth Justice System

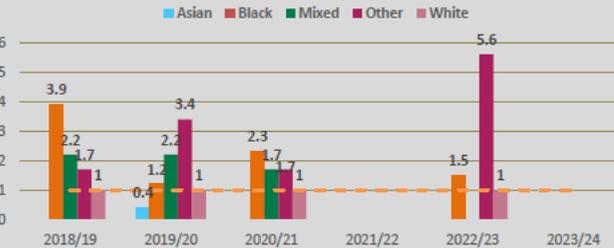
## YJS workforce

Role	Number of Global Majority role holders	The YJS workforce (%)	The National workforce (%)
Strategic Leader	0 (out of 1)	0%	12%
Operational manager	3 (out of 5)	40%	16%
Practitioner	15 (out of 21)	67%	20%
Administrative	2 (out of 3)	67%	16%
Volunteer	7 (out of 12)	58%	17%



## Breach and Failure to Comply Offences

Over the last 6 financial years, Camden's enforcement of breach offences has changed. From 2018 to 2024, Black and Mixed children were found to have breached their order at court at a higher rate than their White peers



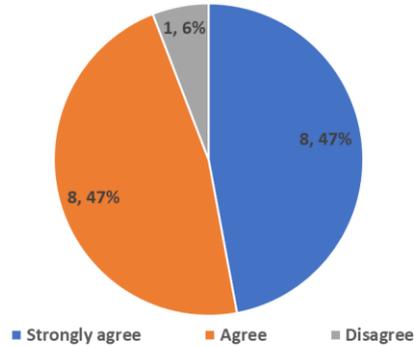
This information has been omitted because there were only 3 breaches in 2021/22 and 1 in 2023/24.

Sources:  
 1. HR system and Local data 2024  
 2. Local data 2023/24

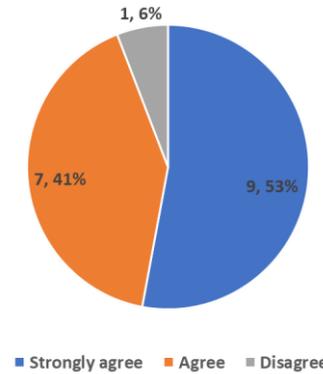
## Appendix 4 - End of Intervention questionnaire findings 2024/25

At the end of an order, children are invited to complete a feedback questionnaire. 18 responses were received during 2024/25. The questionnaire is anonymous and not compulsory. This is a small selection of the results.

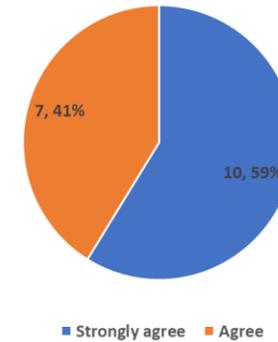
I have made some positive changes in my life



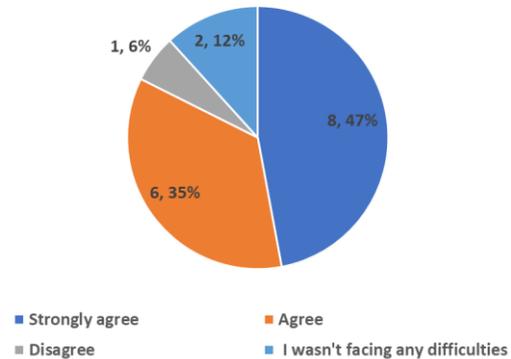
I am spending more time doing positive things than I was before



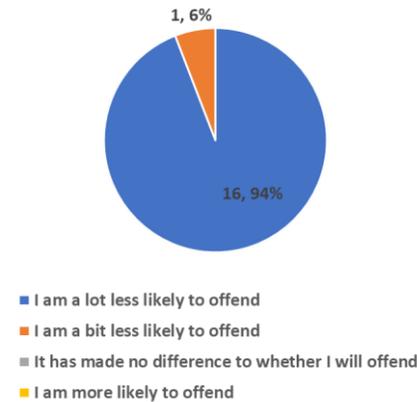
I feel I am more in control of my life and situation



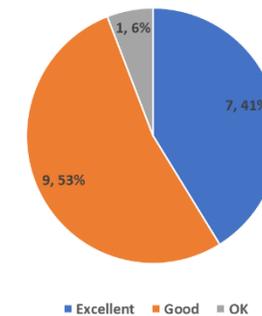
I feel I was supported to work through the difficulties I was facing



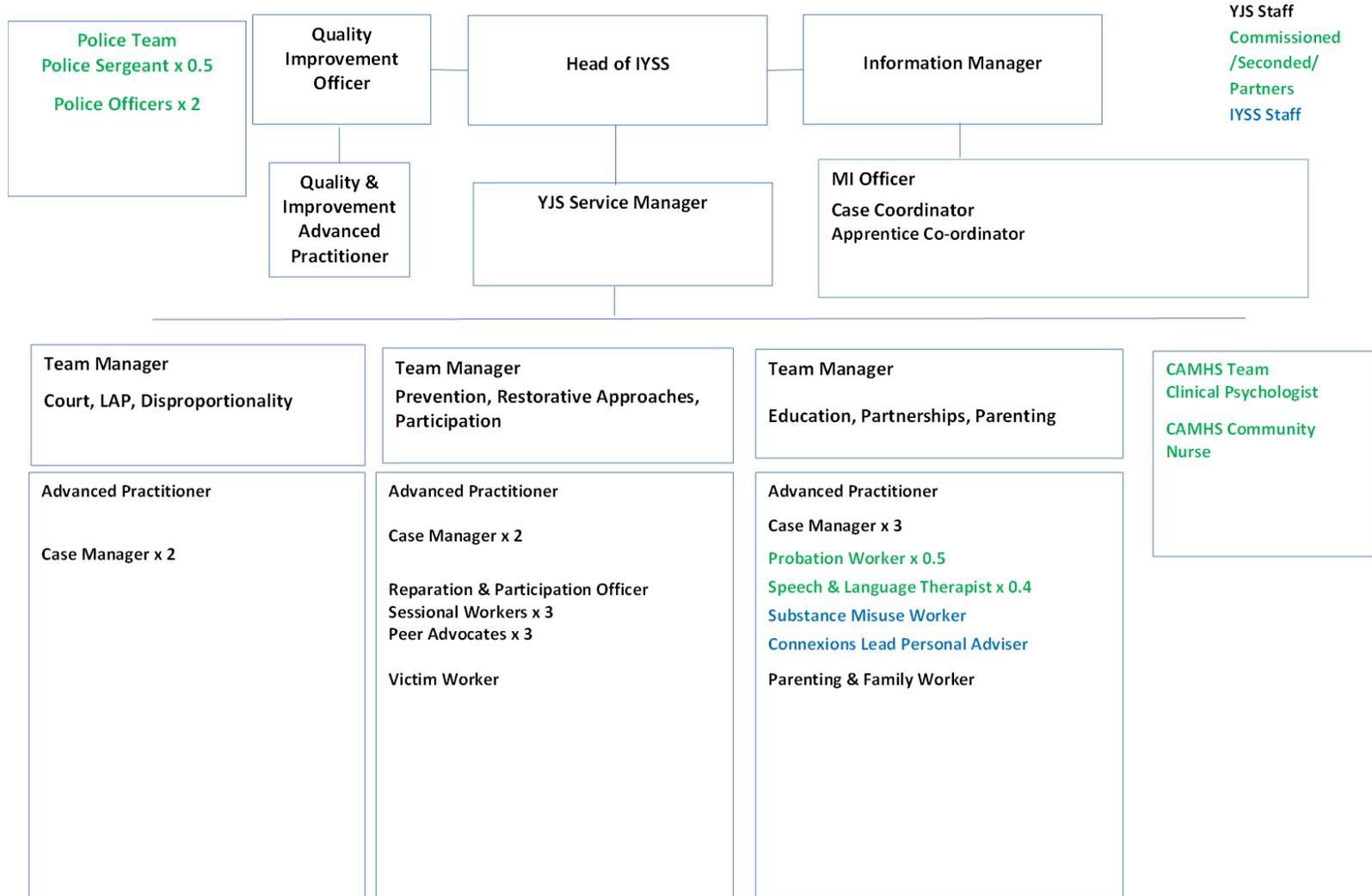
Since I started to work with the YJS...



Overall, how good was our service?



## Appendix 5 - YJS structure chart

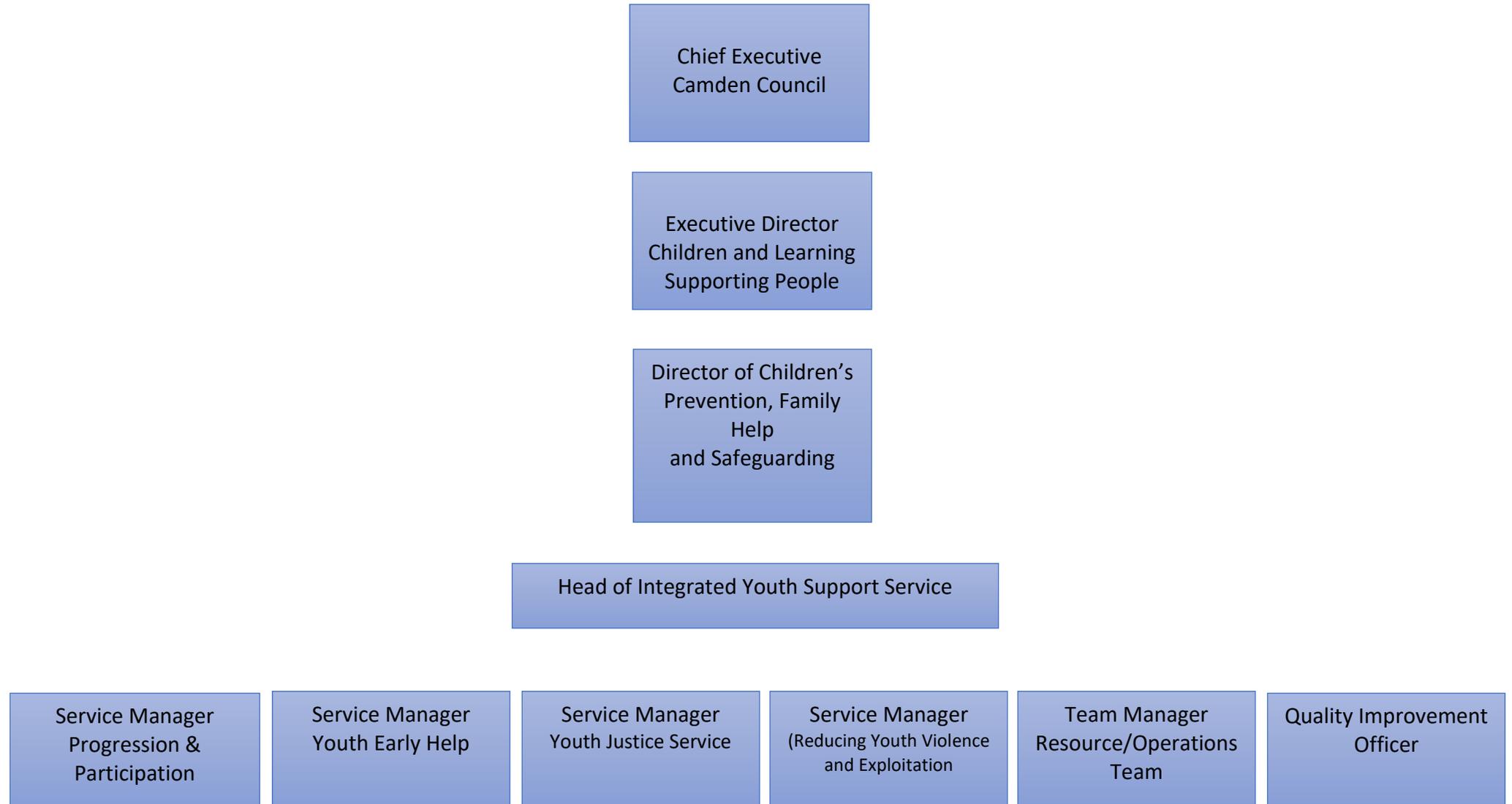


## Appendix 6 – YJS staff by Ethnicity, Gender and Disability

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager (PT)	Strategic Manager (FT)	Operational Manager (PT)	Operational Manager (FT)	Practitioners (PT)	Practitioners (FT)	Administration (PT)	Administration (FT)	Sessional	Students/trainees	Referral Order Panel Volunteer	Other Volunteer	Total
Permanent		1		4	1.4	12		3	0.83		0	0	22.23
Fixed-term						1		1	0.19		0	0	2.19
Outsourced											0	0	0
Temporary											0	0	0
Vacant											0	0	0
Seconded Children's Services											0	0	0
Seconded Probation											0	0	0
Seconded Police					0.5	2					0	0	2.5
Seconded Health (Substance misuse)						1					0	0	1
Seconded Health (Mental health)					0.4	1					0	0	1.4
Seconded Health (Physical health)											0	0	0
Seconded Health (Speech/language)					0.4						0	0	0.4
Other/Unspecified Seconded Health											0	0	0
Seconded Education					0.4						0	0	0.4
Seconded Connexions					0.6						0	0	0.6
Seconded Other											0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30.72</b>
Disabled (self-classified)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian					1	4	1		1				1	1			4	5
Black					1	6		1	2	2			1	3			4	12
Mixed				1			1		1								2	1
White	1		1	2	2	9	1						3	7			8	18
Any other ethnic group							1										0	1
Not known																	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>
Welsh Speakers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

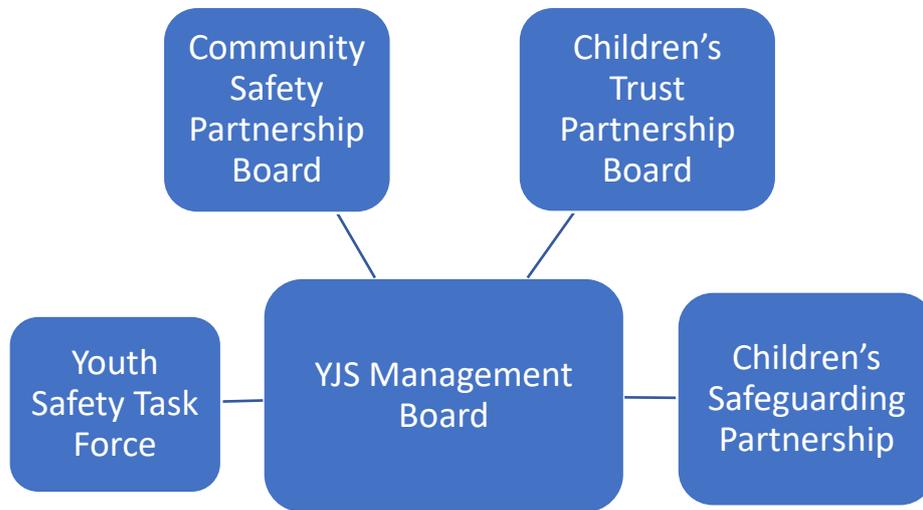
Appendix 7 - IYSS structure



## Appendix 8 - YJS Governance

The Board has a range of important strategic and operational links to other groups.

All of these groups have a shared vision and commitment to promoting desistance, and the safety and wellbeing of children and the community.



## Appendix 9 - Budget Costs and Contributions 2025/6

Youth Justice Area	Resource /Activity	Cost
<b>Reducing Custody</b>		
	2 x Case managers	£ 109,532
	1 x Parenting Worker	£ 54,766
	0.4 x Speech & Language Therapist	£ 34,217
<b>Reducing Re-offending</b>	1 x Victim Worker	£ 54,766
	1 x Reparation & Participation Officer	£ 59,744
	1 x Connexions Adviser	£ 59,744
<b>Quality and management Information</b>	1 x YJS Quality Improvement Officer	£ 65,701
	1 x YJS Management Information Officer	£ 65,701
<b>Total</b>		£ 504,171
<b>YJB Grant</b>		<b>£ 504,171</b>

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Police		£179,241		£179,241
Probation	£25,000	£5,000		£30,000
Health		£121,333		£121,333
Local Authority	£1,588,514			£1,588,514
YJB	£504,171		£82,550	£586,721
Other (Turnaround MoJ)	£79,713.00			£79,713
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£2,585,522</b>

## Appendix 10 - Feedback from Priorities Event

