

Wirral Youth Justice Strategic Plan

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Foreword

2021/22 saw our newly reformed Youth Justice Management Board develop the Wirral Youth Justice Strategic Plan. The annual planning cycle in youth justice presents a natural opportunity to review and reflect. This cycle also supports our desire in Children's Services to continuously improve, so that we can make Wirral great for children and families.

This plan allows us to build upon that Strategic Plan, updating against our progress and considering what new issues and challenges may have arisen in the interim.

The visit of Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation in July 2021 was a real catalyst in our development. I was incredibly proud that the inspection team recognised the outstanding work and professionalism of our youth justice service with the overall rating of 'Good'. I was especially pleased with the feedback provided by young people and how the inspectors recognised our innovation through initiatives such as Operation Inclusion.

The inspection also provided valuable insight as to where we can further develop our services; and improve outcomes for children, young people and victims in Wirral. This feedback from HMIP will remain central to our improvement plan, as set out within this document.

A 'Children First' vision remains at the heart of this plan. Our principles and commitment to equality are clear. In recognising diversity and seeing young people as children first and offenders second, we strive to identify and work with children's individual strengths and needs. The aim is to bring about positive change, helping our children and young people contribute fully to society and live a brighter future.

Our Youth Justice Service have a genuine passion for helping young people and families across Wirral. They are supported by a committed and diverse team of senior leaders at board level, which I am extremely proud to lead.

Elizabeth Hartley
Chair: Wirral Youth Justice Management Board

1. Introduction, vision and strategy

Each Local Authority is required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to have a Youth Justice Plan that sets out how local Youth Justice Services will be delivered within the available resources. This document sets out our strategy, plans and priorities for 2022-2023, which seeks to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people.

In preparing this plan, Wirral YJS and partners have considered the Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan 2021-2024, HMIP Annual Report 2021 and associated thematics.

In considering priorities and key performance focus, regard has been taken of the 2021 Wirral Youth Justice Inspection and findings.

Strategic Vision

Wirral Youth Justice Vision Statement remains:

- For our young people involved, or on the cusp of, the Criminal Justice System are seen as “Children First, Offenders Second”.
- For our young people to be treated fairly by the youth justice system; and receive help that recognises their individual needs and builds on their strengths, through statutory work or preventative support.
- To bring about change for our young people and their families, so they can contribute fully to society and live a brighter future, in safe and pleasant communities.

Principles

We remain committed to our principles, which underpin our operational and strategic approach.

- Respect for young offenders as young people.
- Young people’s view is integral to service provision.
- Regard for the safety of the public as a priority.
- Provision of a fair and equitable service to young people, parents/carers, staff, victims, and the wider community.
- Respect for diversity, respecting the needs and rights of victims, children, young people, and their families.
- Valuing staff as our most important resource.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Strategic Vision for Wirral Youth Justice aims ‘For our young people to be treated fairly by the youth justice system; and receive help that recognises their individual needs and builds on their strengths, through statutory work or preventative support’.

The public sector equality duty, set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to address diversity and equality issues. In doing so, the Wirral YJS must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

As a Youth Justice Service, we must consider how the way we work and what we do can affect different groups in different ways. Unless we do this, we are unlikely to achieve our vision and can inadvertently contribute to greater inequality.

In delivering this aspect of the vision, Wirral Youth Justice has the following overarching Equality Objectives:

- To remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by children due to their protected characteristics.
- To take steps to meet the needs of children from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other children.
- To encourage children from protected groups to participate in ways that meet their needs.

The YJMB quarterly performance reports and dashboard data help identify themes linked to protected characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity and disability. This information can then be used to ensure we continue to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. Local Context

Wirral is a microcosm of the social and economic make-up of the entire country. Within an area of approximately 60 square miles, the borough contains individual wards amongst some of the wealthiest in the country, as well as some of the very poorest.

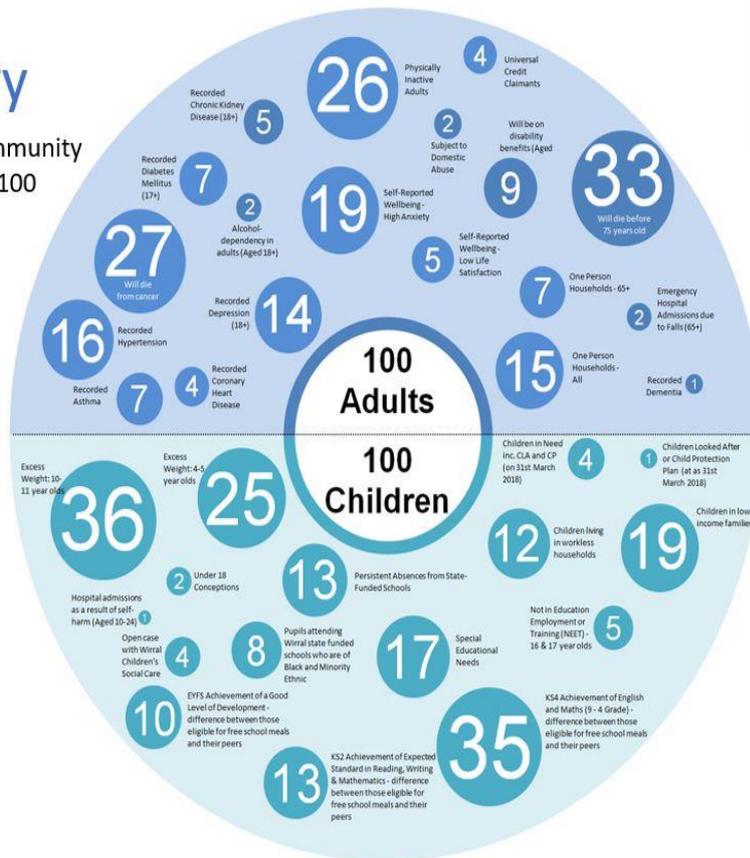
The population is 324,000 including approximately 71,500 children (0-18). The population is predominantly white British (90%) but significant ethnic minority groups exist, particularly Irish, Chinese, and Polish.

Almost two-thirds of the population live within the eastern urban area, where levels of deprivation are higher. Birkenhead is the largest town within the borough, historically built around the maritime trades associated with the Mersey docklands. The decline of this industry left a legacy of white working-class boys with reduced opportunities and aspirations.

In the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Wirral was ranked 77/326 most deprived authority. Fifteen percent of children aged 0-15 years live in poverty. 35.6% of the Wirral population live in the top 20% of the most deprived areas of England.

Summary

If Wirral was a community of 100 Adults and 100 Children...



Strategic Links

The Wirral Plan has been developed to take account of the changed social and economic landscape due to the pandemic and to set out what the Council's priorities will be and how we will transform the way we provide services between 2021 - 2026.

The 2021-2026 Plan sets out the primary areas of focus and activity against priorities that are realistic in the current local authority climate. Similarly, this plan considers the reduction in resources.

The Wirral 2021-2026 Plan focuses on the delivery of the following:

- Brighter futures for all regardless of their background.
- Safe and pleasant communities that our residents are proud of
- Active and healthy lives for all, with the right care, at the right time to enable residents to live longer and healthier lives.
- A thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all
- A clean-energy, sustainable borough, leading the way in tackling the environment crisis.

This Youth Justice Plan aims to contribute to the wider Corporate and Directorate objectives by providing an efficient service that prevents and diverts young people away from the criminal justice system, intervenes effectively to prevent re-offending and reduces the use of custody for young people. Effective and committed partnership

working will ensure local delivery effectively meets targets and achieves positive outcomes for the young people, families, victims, and the wider community in Wirral.

The Youth Justice Service and Youth Justice Management Board are cognisant of linked strategies across the Community Safety Partnership (Safer Wirral Strategy) and the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Partnership's (WSCP) Safer Adolescence Strategy 2021-2023.

The Youth Justice Management Board have established good strategic links locally, regionally and nationally; and continue to draw attention to the specific needs of young offenders wherever appropriate. Key areas of work include - the Early Help Strategy, the Youth Offer, the partnership domestic abuse strategy, and the Council-wide Prevention Framework.

3. Children First

Responding to young people that encounter the Youth Justice System as "children first" and "offenders second" enhances lives and reduces offending and re-offending.

To promote children in the Youth Justice System and see them as Children is in the best interest of the child. Understanding individual children's needs and building in their positive strengths is key to working with young people. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.

Wirral's youth justice service and youth justice system promotes children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

Wirral have recognised the importance of all the above principles and have undertaken development and training to develop for all staff to understand Trauma and Attachment. The service recognises that young people need to build trusted relationships before change can happen. With this understanding and the development of our Enhanced Case Management programme, Wirral YJS have made real progress in reducing young people's offending and re offending. This has improved outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children in Wirral.

Wirral YJS's development work around Trauma and Attachment is relatively new, however feedback from young justice system experienced young people has been very positive. Engaging young people using the Trauma Informed Interventions and Enhanced Case Management is proving effective and the Youth Justice Service in Wirral looks forward to continuing this development in support of the 'Children First' vision.

4. The voice of the child

Wirral YJS have continued to build upon last year's strategic and operational plans, where a specific priority area was to develop young person's participation and engagement. Working to this priority, the YJS identified a lead member of staff to work with our young people.

The developments in this area include the use of survey monkey for young people to share their experiences and seek ways the YJS can improve. This feedback is collated and given to the Youth Justice Management Board every six months. This, alongside anonymised case studies on priority themes, helps board members understand the experiences of children who work with the YJS.

The YJS have also developed a participation and engagement group of justice-experienced young people, who have helped make the YJS environment and interventions more Trauma informed; and given feedback on developing YJS letters, forms and templates to ensure that they are written in a child friendly manner that are understandable and relatable to young people. Over the next twelve months Wirral YJS want to continue to follow the 2021 YJS Participation and Engagement strategy; and build on this positive start

In addition to developing internal participation, Wirral YJS also link into various other children's forums across the partnership, such as the Leaving Care Council and the Special Education Needs (SEN) working group for young people.

Wirral Youth Justice Management Board include a standing 'case study' agenda item where operational staff from across youth justice present quarterly. Each case study is based on a specific priority theme. This helps strategic partners connect to the experiences and journey of a child within the Service.

5. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

The Youth Justice Service is a statutory service, as required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to provide youth justice services as a statutory multi agency partnership between the Local Authority, Police, Probation and Health. In July 2020, the Wirral Youth Justice Service became part of Children's Services Directorate, within the Contextual Safeguarding service area. This has helped develop the Children First vision and ethos, with the YJS leadership team working closely with the specialist child exploitation and missing service, youth workers and other contextual safeguarding colleagues.

The Contextual Safeguarding Service is part of Children's Service's Early Help and Prevention structure. Under the Deputy Director, the service sits alongside Early

Childhood Services, Family Matters Services, Schools and Communities Service, and wider community-based youth and family support. The Youth Justice Service within this context is strengthened through a consistent and appropriate network of services. As part of the Children's Services Directorate, the priorities of the YJS are meaningfully shared and included in the departmental performance reports that are subject to scrutiny from the Children, Young People and Education Committee. The Deputy Director of Children's Services also leads the Management Board as chair.

The Management structure for Wirral Youth Justice Service is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The HMIP Inspection of July 2021 noted that the Board was relatively new in formation at that time, yet had set a good direction. This board level development has and will continuously improve through the period of this plan.

The strategic aims of the Wirral Youth Justice Service align to those of the National Youth Justice Board (YJB) and support those contained within the Wirral's Corporate Plan. We aim to ensure that we have both the capacity and capability to achieve these aims by ensuring that all statutory partner agencies are strongly represented and actively engaged through the Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) at a senior level.

Wirral Youth Justice Management Board meets on a quarterly basis and in addition to statutory partners, has representatives from CAMHS, Youth Magistrates, Community Safety Partnership and Housing.

Since the HMIP inspection, the YJMB has co-opted additional Senior Local Authority Education Officers. This is in the form of the Virtual Head, whose role now extends beyond children who are looked after to include those who are open the Youth Justice. This reflects the emphasis that the local partnership places on securing an effective education for our young people.

Over the last 12 months the Youth Justice Management Board convened on the following dates:

- 7th July 2021,
- 13th October 2021,
- 17th February 2022, and
- 28th April 2022.

In addition to the formal board meetings workshops have also been held for board members. Specific reflection and development sessions were held on the 5th and 19th of May 2022 in support of this plan.

Appendix 1 references all of the current members of Wirral Youth Justice Board and their attendance at the quarterly board meetings.

With the recruitment of an dedicated victim worker within the operational staff team, feedback from victims through victim participation, engagement and consultation will be embedded in the YJMB performance reports. This builds on the existing 'child's voice' case study elements of the YJMB agenda.

The Wirral Youth Justice Management Board developed new Terms of Reference in 2021, these are reflected within the roles, responsibilities and objectives below.

The role of the YJMB is to:

- To provide leadership and oversight of youth justice services.
- To contribute to local multi-agency strategies and work with local and national criminal justice organisations.
- To safeguard children and young people who receive youth justice services.

To fulfil these responsibilities, the WYJMB will.

- Determine how the Youth Justice Service (sometimes referred to as the YOT) is to be composed and funded, how it is to operate and what functions it is to carry out.
- Oversee the formulation each year of a Youth Justice Plan (The Annual Plan).
- Oversee the appointment or designation of a Youth Justice Service Manager.
- As part of the Youth Justice Plan, agree measurable objectives linked to Key Performance Indicators, including the National Standards for Youth Justice.

The WYJMB's overall objectives are to:

- Provide a strategic overview of the work of the Youth Justice Service, to include oversight of serious incidents.
- Promote positive outcomes in the context of the youth justice system and services to children and young people.
- Agree, monitor, and review the implementation of the annual Youth Justice Plan and ensure co-ordination between the Youth Justice Plan and plans and strategies of partner agencies.
- Receive a structured analysis of performance and identify and monitor those measures where steps need to be taken to improve performance.
- Provide support and guidance to the Youth Justice Service to ensure it engages with local and national priorities, promotes race equality and maintains diversity.
- Agree an annual budget, including in-kind contributions and to provide support for additional targeted funding to meet identified and agreed need.
- Support, challenge and oversee the performance of the Youth Justice Service, provide strategic guidance, and hold the Service Manager to account for the work of the Service, when necessary.
- Agree the form and structure of protocols, contracts and Service Level Agreements between the Youth Justice Service and partner agencies.
- Provide a forum for the discussion of community issues which impact upon or are affected by the work of the Youth Justice Service.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of Youth Justice information between partners and the Youth Justice Service, to promote a pro-active approach to partnership working.

- To review, monitor and evaluate service information to ensure that the Youth Justice Service is contributing to improving outcomes for children, young people and the community.

Performance Management

The YJMB continues to monitor performance through quarterly quantitative and qualitative reports. The Wirral Youth Justice Service managers convene monthly to support operational delivery against the YJS priorities.

In addition to the key performance data, dashboard and the core quality assurance of cases conducted by YJS staff, the YJS operational managers will undertake four deep dive audits on priority themes agreed following the 2021 HMIP Inspection and as a result of YJMB performance management.

These are.

- Employment, training and education.
- Risk, Safety and Wellbeing.
- Out of Court Disposals.
- Re-offending.

All four deep dive audits will be presented at the Youth Justice Management Board for discussion and recommended actions on areas that can be improved. Progress is tracked through YJMB review.

Thematic case manager led case studies at the quarterly YJMB will continue to help strengthen the connections between board members and case managers in Wirral bringing the daily lived experience of a child to life through the case study moving from data to real life experiences. Over the past twelve months we have found that Case studies also ensure the business of the Youth Justice Management Board is grounded in considering the child's voice and impact on children and young people.

Partnership Arrangements

The YJMB has continued to place great emphasis on the role of strong partnership working and shared ownership of the youth justice performance targets. Wirral Youth Justice Service (YJS) is represented on all major strategic partnerships including the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Safer Wirral Partnership Board, the Partnership for Children, Young People and Families, Domestic Abuse Alliance Partnership Board, and the Channel Panel for radicalisation/extremism.

Wirral's YJS Service Manager sits on the Merseyside Criminal Justice Board (MCJB) and feeds back to the Pan Merseyside YOT Managers. The YJS Service Manager also sits on the Youth Performance Improvement Group and leads on a number of MCJB workstreams including the Strategic Domestic Violence & Abuse Group and Youth

Detention Scrutiny on behalf of Merseyside YOTs. The YJS Service Manager also attends the Community Safety Partnership Board and the Prevent & Chanel Panel.

Within Wirral Council, the Deputy Director of Childrens Services is the YJMB Chair and maintains strong links across a wide range of strategic boards including Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive Board, Safer Wirral Partnership Board, Partnership for Children, Young People and Families, Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Chair further ensures strong and effective stakeholder engagement and effective partnership working links and networks, which serve to strengthen and challenge the multi-agency working arrangements that support the Youth Justice Service. Additionally, The Head of Service for Contextual Safeguarding who has oversight and direct line management of the Service Manager for Youth Justice and Youth Justice Service leads the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Contextual Safeguarding Committee and has developed the safeguarding partnership's Safer Adolescence Strategy 2021/2023. This officer also co-chairs the local Multi Agency Child Exploitation panel, linking into Merseyside and regional forums for child exploitation, county lines and wider contextual safeguarding development. In recent months the Head of Service for contextual safeguarding has also taken lead on chairing the Chanel Panel.

Wirral's Youth Justice Service Manager also attends the Greater Merseyside Youth Justice Strategic Leads Group where cross boarder joint working, collaboration and shared practice across Merseyside YOTs occurs including training and development for YJS staff is identified, delivered and shared via the Collaborative Training Group (CTG). They have also recently taken up the role as the lead for the North West within the Assosation of YOT Managers.

Prevention and Early Intervention remain paramount to the work of Wirral YJS. The aspiration is that by working across local partners, young people who may benefit from support are recognised and supported at an early stage, being referred, and considered for prevention interventions. The prevention offer has been developed to meet different needs of young people, sharing well developed operational links across local organisations and agencies.

The YJS Business Manager provides data to enable early identification of families which may fit the criteria for the Supporting Families programme (formerly Troubled Families).

Data is provided to monitor the Wirral Supporting Families Outcomes Plan and the Breaking the Cycle Programme (BTC) Outcomes Plan. For example, reductions in re-offending and reductions in anti-social behaviour. Additionally, the Youth Justice Service also provides data for the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership's Quality Assurance Board and Contextual Committee, where the Service Manager presents feedback on themes and trends, highlighting challenges and good practice.

Wirral YJS holds the Restorative Practice Kite Mark from the Restorative Justice Council. The Service will continue to ensure that it upholds this good practice in line with the Restorative Practice Kite Mark and to build on positive restorative outcomes both within the YJS and with partner agencies. The recent role development and recruitment for a victim worker included a focus to develop the restorative offer to

victims and lead training and development in the use of Restorative Interventions for partner agencies.

6. Resources and Services

Wirral YJS continues to be funded by its statutory partners including the Council (Children's Services), Health, Police / PCC, and Probation. Contributions from Health, Police, Police Crime Commissioner and Probation 2022/23 contributions remain the same as the previous financial year.

We continue our partnership with Career Connect (formerly Connexions) with attached personnel in the service. The YJS continues to receive a financial Health contribution as well as personnel for funding for substance misuse interventions. There is named School Nurse who oversees the YJS Health provision. Wirral YJS have a CAMH's therapist based within the Service two days per week, as well as access to the Criminal Liaison Mental Health Team. Additionally, we have an Educational Psychologist based within the service for two and half days per week, who leads on our newly developing Trauma Lead Interventions and Enhanced Case Management.

Wirral YJS continues to comply with the minimum staffing requirements set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. We are privileged to still have a Prevention Service embedded within the Youth Justice Service which has had a positive impact on reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs) into the Criminal Justice System, year on year. With the impact of Covid in the last two years we saw a reduction in referrals I am pleased to say these are now returning to pre pandemic numbers meaning young people at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System are identified early and supported to reduce the risk of them entering the system, reducing their life chances in the future.

Wirral YJS also oversees the use of the Local Authority's budget provided to meet the cost of young people remanded to the secure estate, transferred under the provisions of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. The allocation received for 2022/23 financial year is £72,156 (which is £17,985 less than in 2021/22). In previous years the local authority has absorbed pressures to cover the costs of remand.

Should the period 2022/23 follow the same pattern as 2021/22 in terms of remand award and expenditure, the Youth Justice Service will be able to meet costs. At the time of writing this plan the award for 2022/23 is yet to be confirmed.

In Table 1 'Partner Contributions to the Youth Offending Partnership Pooled Budget' (Appendix 3) shows the financial, staffing, and contributions made by local partners. In addition, Wirral YJS Structure chart (Staffing Chart 'B7 & B8' Appendix 5 and 6) highlights the staffing information in relation to organisation, gender, and ethnicity.

All the Good Practice Grant will be spent on its intended use and Wirral YJS gives a commitment to using YJB allocation in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.

The Good Practice Grant is used specifically for the delivery of youth justice services including delivery of activities and effective specialist interventions such as Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Child to Adult Violence programme's as well as the Trauma development work that continues to be a main priority within this year's Plan. The Service has continued to support their core duties as well as developing the wider priority key areas. This will support delivery of performance as set out in the Performance and Priorities detailed further down in the Strategic Plan.

The Good Practice Grant also supports ongoing staff development for general development and responding to new themes and issues. This includes the Cross-Training Group (CTG) training plan for 2022/23 which was agreed by Greater Merseyside Youth Justice Managers and recognises the refresher training and emerging training needs of YJS staff for the coming year and beyond. In addition, Wirral also has specific local issues and training plans which the Grant supports and various in-house training courses.

7. Progress on Previous Plan

Wirral YJS and YJMB set nine local additional areas in addition to the three national Youth Justice Indicators. The 3 national indicators will be discussed in Section 8, below.

Child to Adult Violence

Last year Wirral YJS aimed to develop the service offered to parents and carers whose children become violent towards them in the family home. The offer has been extended in collaboration with community partners and Early Help and Prevention colleagues. The practice framework has been developed using the "who's in charge" model, now actively used at case level. This has been achieved through additional training and the development of a working group in support of implementation.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The Harmful Sexual Behaviour offer has been developed to be considered as part of prevention support, not just because of statutory intervention post sentence. The YJS delivered front-line training Children's workforce was adapted through the Covid effected period to be delivered online. This will continue in a Hybrid mixture of online delivery and face to face training.

The 2021 HMIP Inspection praised the HSB offer on Wirral. The focus on this area will continue with the HSB policy currently being developed in partnership with Children's Social Care. Additional AIM training will be rolled out for social work colleagues, to enhance the capacity for HSB focus within children's plans outside of direct YJS case management. AIM will undertake quarterly clinical supervision with our staff team to support them and ensure best practise in the Team.

Trauma Informed Practice and Enhanced Case Management

One of the primary development programmes set in 2021. Wirral have completed training for all Youth Justice Service staff. This has included general Trauma and Attachment training, as well as specific Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) training through the TRM Academy. All managers and a cohort of staff have undertaken bespoke Enhanced Case Management (ECM) Training to support implementation. This is a longer-term priority and work will continue to develop and embed this approach in 2022/23. An ECM case study and feedback from a young person is included at Appendix 7.

Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation

Wirral Youth Justice continues to attend the Community Safety Partnership Board meeting as well as the Local Authorities MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation) meeting, held once a fortnight with an identified Team Leader. The MACE link team leader also supports the MARTHR (Multi Agency Threat, Risk & Harm) meetings. These are multi-agency forums, with the Police taking the lead looking at perpetrators or those thought to be a risk to children and young people in the context of child exploitation linked to violence and intimidation.

From a Serious Youth Violence prevention aspect, Wirral YJS has developed the 'In the Zone' programme, with partners from Merseyside Police, Youth Workers and Catch 22. The In the Zone programme runs information days in secondary schools to all Year 9 students, they are based on themes around violence outside the home in line with the contextual safeguarding agenda, these themes are.

- Knife Crime
- Exploitation
- Gangs / Violence
- Peer pressure
- Drug and Alcohol
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Keeping Safe on the Internet (social media)

The initiative was extremely well received by young people and educational establishments. Schools have asked the collective to return next year, and for it to be a rolling programme for Year 9 students.

Serious Youth Violence will remain a Wirral Youth Justice priority area for 2022/23. The enactment of the Police Crime Courts and Sentencing Act 2021 places a Serious Violence Duty on specific organisations and agencies. This includes the Youth Justice Service. The Service and YJMB will work with strategic partners to fulfil our duty under the act.

Education, Employment and Training

Last year's priority was for all young people open to the Youth Justice Service 16+ to have the opportunity of a minimum of 12 hours Education, Employment and Training (EET).

The HMIP Inspection in the summer of 2021 observed that there was a lack of strategic focus on the educational needs of the Youth Justice Children. The YJS and YJMB have undertaken further audit and analysis to understand the needs of young

people; and added the Virtual Head to the board membership. The remit of The Virtual Head has also been expanded to include those children and young people open to the YJS.

Wirral are currently consulting on and developing a role profile for a dedicated YJS Educational Worker to support engagement, inclusion and reintegration.

Identification of young people who are out of Education or on part time timetables has been strengthened through the Service Manager joining the fortnightly multi agency CME25 panel. This panel has oversight of young people open to YJS as well as other vulnerable cohorts who may not be receiving at least 25 hours of education per week. The service manager is also a member of the weekly vulnerable children's panel, which formulates specific plans of support for young people excluded or at risk of exclusion.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation also identified a gap in terms of the identification of Speech and Language difficulties for children within the Youth Justice Service. In response to this all YJS staff have undertaken training with Alder Hey Speech and Language Service. Further training is scheduled for later in 2022 to build on this knowledge and seek even earlier identification.

Participation and Engagement

This area was highlighted in the Wirral YJMBs Domain 1 Self-Assessment undertaken by in early 2021. Wirral identified a YJS lead officer who has developed a cohort of young people. These young people have, for example, undertaken reviews of YJS letter templates, plans, interventions, and meeting rooms to ensure that they are Trauma Informed and child friendly. This helps the service be more relatable to young people. The Participations and Engagement Lead officer has support from the wider Children's Services Participation and Engagement lead. This will remain a priority area for 2022/23.

Mental Health Support

This priority was identified from the HMIP Annual Report 2020 and Covid thematic reports nationally regarding children's mental health in lockdown periods. Wirral's embedded CAMHS worker was unfortunately away from work long term, leading to a recruitment process. This process, now complete, will see an increase in the CAMHS specialist mental health provision to Wirral YJS. In the interim, the wider CAMHS team offered priority service to YJS young people to maintain the support for this vulnerable cohort.

Prevention support for vulnerable cohorts

Last year's priority was to increase prevention activity/support for our looked after children cohort. The Head of Service and the Team Manager for Looked After Children are member on the Youth Justice Management Board and 2022 has seen some increase in prevention referrals for this cohort of young people. Awareness raising and training has taken place with providers, social workers and foster carers This will again be a priority for 2022/23, as set out in the strategic plan last year.

8. Performance and Priorities

Throughout 2021/22 performance has been reported on a quarterly basis to the YJMB and quarterly contact with the YJB’s North-West Business Area Local Partnership Advisor has been maintained to identify and address key areas of performance.

In addition to the three Youth Justice Indicators; (reducing first time entrants to the criminal justice system, reducing the use of custody, and reducing re-offending by young people in the criminal justice system), Wirral YJS also have local performance measures in place and reporting mechanisms for re-offending rates following Out of Court Disposals and offending by Looked After Children.

The final 2021/22 reported YJB data summary can be found in Appendix 4 detailing the Merseyside Performance Comparison, of which Wirral’s performance is included.

Reducing the Number of First Time Entrants

The longer terms trend has seen significant reductions in the numbers of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. In Wirral this was mainly attributable to the operation of Out of Court Disposals with Merseyside Police. Out of Court Disposals divert young people from the criminal justice system and provides assessment and a brief intervention.

First Time Entrants	Date	YJS Performance rate
Number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system (per 100,000 of 10-17 population)	January to December 2021	114 (35 young people)
	January to December 2020	99 (30 young people)

Source: YDS version 110

The YJB Performance Summary uses data from the Police National Computer (PNC). The latest data set published by the YJB compares January to December 2021 with January to December 2020. The YJB have used a population rate of 30,571 for young people living in Wirral aged 10 – 17 years for the 2021 cohort and a population of 30,158 for the 2020 cohort. The latest data set is showing a 15% increase in the frequency rate of FTE’s when comparing the above periods. This equates to an increase of five young people in the actual number of individual FTE’s.

The Merseyside average is a reduction of 31% and the National average is a reduction of 15% in FTE’s frequency rates.

The priorities set for 2022/23 reflect that fact that Wirral is focused on prevention and reducing first time entrants.

Wirral YJS continues to provide several preventative and diversionary services to young people at risk of offending or risk of anti-social behaviour. All these single agency referrals come direct to the Prevention Service to avoid delay in accessing intervention.

Following a successful funding bid through the Violent Reduction Partnership (VRP) Wirral YJS were able to develop a new programme named Operation Inclusion. The

programme has been developed with the support from Merseyside Police and Crown Prosecution Service to further support our young people and to reduce young people entering the Criminal Justice System. Young People and children who are arrested and whom have been identified as being exploited and/or vulnerable to exploitation are offered Operation Inclusion. These young people will have already been open to the YJS under the OOCB or Community Statutory Orders before being considered for the programme. Operation Inclusion is a programme that lasts up to 12 weeks. The young person and their families work with the YJS and Partner agencies to reduce offending behaviour and address the issues that lead to the offending behaviour. If they successfully complete the programme, then both Merseyside Police and the Crown Prosecution Service will discontinue any prosecution. This programme was originally run as a pilot scheme within Wirral; and now run throughout the Merseyside region.

In addition, the Pan Merseyside Out of Court Disposal Protocol continues to be used whereby young people receive a Community Resolution with restorative justice at the heart of the intervention. Community Resolutions across Merseyside have been very successful and have played a strong role in reducing First Time Entrants. The Merseyside OOCB Scrutiny Panel incorporates representatives from Merseyside YOT Managers, Merseyside Police and Magistrates. The Scrutiny Panel examines and samples OOCB to ensure consistency of decision making and suitability of disposals across Merseyside.

Reducing Re-offending

This measure tracks a rolling cohort of young people who have committed an offence in a 12-month (aggregated quarterly cohorts) period for the subsequent 12 months to identify if they are proven to have re-offended. The data for this performance indicator is taken from the Ministry of Justice published data (using the Police National Computer data) and because of the methodology used there is delay in the time periods tracked and reported.

Binary Re-offending	Date	YJS Performance
Proven re-offending rate of young offenders (Percentage of young people who have re-offended)	July 19 – June 20	41.9%
	July 18 – June 19	38.7%

Source: YDS version 110

The latest published data indicates 3.2% increase in the re-offending rates when comparing the above periods. It is important to recognise the significant reduction in the cohort numbers and acknowledge that those who remain within the cohort are the more persistent and complex young people who are entrenched in offending.

The actual **PNC** data for the Wirral **12-month** re-offending cohorts is presented below:

Re-offending rate cohort	Jul 19 – Jun 20	Jul 18 – Jun 19
Number in the cohort	86	124
Number of re-offenders	36	48
Number of re-offences	166	166

Average number of re-offences per re-offender	4.61	3.46
Frequency rate	1.93	1.34
Binary rate	41.9%	38.7%

Source: YDS version 110

It is recognised that Youth Justice Services are working with a smaller but more complex cohort of older young people who present with greater risks and vulnerabilities to themselves and the community. The challenge to reduce re-offending has been felt across Merseyside and was recognised as a priority for the MCJB. Re-offending of young people and the risks it presents including youth to adult transition were identified as key issues for the MCJB Reducing Re-offending Strategy. Merseyside YOT Operational Managers jointly collaborated to explore these issues, including revising the Transitions Protocol. Such joint working and collaboration have assisted in sharing good practice and local findings to focus on specific issues of re-offending to allow YOTs to respond to this increasing demand more easily.

Wirral YJS still addresses all matters pertaining to the young person's offending including attitudes to offending, victim awareness/ restorative practices, offending behaviour programmes, peers and other causal factors including substance misuse, Education Training and Employment (ETE), and Health / CAMHs support to address offending and welfare issues. Many young people are also supported by wider Team Around the Family, Child in Need or Child Protection multi agency support mechanisms. We find many of our high-risk re-offenders are also supported by our Family Matters Service due to the complex needs of the young person and their family.

Wirral YJS Management Team has set in place steps to ensure re-offending is a primary focus in intervention and management. This includes ensuring Case Management supervision specifically discusses young people who are re-offending, ensuring that case managers have addressed the re-offending and responded accordingly in relation to their intervention plans. Also, young people who receive Referral Orders are now seen prior to their Panel to commence interventions at an earlier opportunity. This increases support and intervention avoiding delays until the contract is agreed, which can be up to 20 working days after sentence. Such changes should identify need and commence support and intervention in a timelier manner to address offending earlier and more effectively.

Wirral YJS has been using the YJB re-offending live tracker tool to conduct analysis around the current cohorts of young people and to establish any trends in re-offending. Early indications show reductions in the re-offending rates for the 2021 cohorts. This will allow us to track the specific cohorts and identify specifics such as age, most common re-offending offence, timing of re-offending within an order and as such draw up an action plan to target the identified issues and areas. Findings from the live tracker tool will allow us to target local re-offending more effectively in 2022 and beyond.

Reduce the Use of Custody

The use of custody indicator looks at the number of custodial disposals presented as a rate per 1,000 of the local general 10 –17-year-old population. This data will come from YOT’s case-level data published in the Youth Justice Application Framework.

Use of Custody	Date	YJS Performance
Young people receiving a custodial sentence (per 1,000 of 10-17 population)	April 2021 – March 2022	0.16 (5 young people)
	April 2020 – March 2021	0.07 (2 young people)

Source: YDS version 110

Wirral YJS has seen an increase in the custodial rate of 0.09 during the above period when comparing 0.16 with the baseline rate of 0.07. This equates to three more young people receiving custodial sentences. The local population for 2020 is 30,571.

It is widely recognised that imposing a custodial sentence should be used as a measure of last resort for children and young people.

The five young people sentenced to custody during April 2021 to March 2022 were all aged between 16 years and 18 years old. Four were White British males and one was a male of Black African ethnicity. Four males were sentenced on serious crimes that included violent offences and one male was sentenced to custody for a knife related offence.

Education

Education is an area of development for the YJMB and YJB following feedback from the HMIP Inspection. As of June 2022, the breakdown of Education type for current open young people is set out and explained below.

Education type	School Age	Above School Age
Alternative Provision	8	0
At School not attending	4	0
Full time education	18	0
Part time education	0	2
Elective Home Education	1	0
Not in ETE	4	7
Not started intervention	1	2
Working	0	3
College/further education	1	4
Residential school	1	0
Training	2	0
Unemployed	0	8
DTO school/training	0	4
Total	39	30

Of the above cases, 12 children are Wirral Children Looked After (CLA), and 5 children are CLA in other Local Authorities being caretaken by Wirral YJS. All CLA were in ETE except for three Wirral CLA and three caretaking cases who were not in education, training or employment.

25 children have ECHPs (36%).

School Age:

- 4 White British Females,
- 35 White British males

Above School Age:

- 1 White British Female,
- 2 Black British Males and
- 27 White British Males

Audit and analysis has been undertaken to help understand the educational profiles and journey of children open to the service. This has been presented to the YJMB, resulting in an action plan to address recommendations. The YJMB now includes The Virtual Head, whose remit has been extended to include children who are open to the YJS.

Wirral are also supported by an Educational Psychologist, based in the Service for two days a week. This professional has been instrumental in supporting young people through EHCP Assessment, working with school, undertaking case consultation and formulation; and supporting the Enhanced Case Management Interventions.

The service manager is consulting and developing a job description for an embedded Education Link Worker. The aspiration is to have a dedicated conduit between operational Youth Justice and education providers.

Equality and Diversity

Wirral's YJMB developed a set of Equality Objectives in the 2021/22 Strategic Plan, these are carried forward through 2022/23. This included a named board member with lead responsibility.

The Business Manager reports a range of performance data and includes a dashboard that outlines any concerns relating to children being over-represented in relation to ethnicity, looked after status, children excluded from school, protected characteristics including disability, mental health, SEN, speech, communication and language needs.

The YJB ethnic disproportionality toolkit 2019/20 for Wirral stated 96% of offenders were from a White background and 4% of offenders were from a BAME background.

During April 2021 to March 2022 the youth offending population in Wirral shows a slight disparity compared to the local general population in terms of ethnicity. The Wirral 10 to 17-year-old local population by ethnicity shows that 96% are from a White background and 4% of young people are from ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities).

In total 62 children were sentenced to a substantive outcome during April 2021 to March 2022. Of these 4 were White British females, 54 were White British males, 2 were Black African males and one was a male of Chinese other ethnicity. This equates to 95% White British, 3% Black African and 2% Chinese other ethnic groups.

When compared to the local 10 – 17-year-old general population there is a slightly higher proportion of BAME offenders i.e., 5% of BAME identified offenders compared to 4% of the local population being of a BAME heritage.

Of the five young people sentenced to custody during April 2021 to March 2022 – one young person was of Black African ethnicity and the other young people were of White ethnicity. This would equate to 80% White ethnicity and 20% Black African ethnicity were sentenced to custody during the above period. This shows a disproportionate number of young people from BAME background being sentenced to custody compared to the local general population of 10 to 17-year-olds on the Wirral. Whilst the YJB toolkit and analysis would recognise that the small volume set out above cannot be interpreted as statistically significant, the Wirral YJS and YJMB remain vigilant to disproportionality and conscious of the findings from the HMIPs thematic on experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the criminal justice system. This was evident in one recent example when supporting a young person's resettlement. The YJS and YJMB partners worked together to secure sustainable, appropriate accommodation in light of exploitation and organised crime risks.

Prevention and Diversion

There are several funding streams targeting prevention and diversionary activity for children and young people. Wirral YJS believe that early identification and support is key to changing life outcomes. This includes developing an exit strategy once the young person concludes work with the YJS, helping the young person and their family to be linked into the wider support networks.

Operation Inclusion

As referenced earlier in this plan, Inclusion an example of Wirral piloting and developing best practice to be rolled out across Merseyside YOTs, in working with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership.

Out of Court Disposals

Data on prevention and diversionary interventions are recorded on the YJS case management system. All Out of Court disposals are recorded initially as a Youth Restorative Disposal following a referral from the Police Service. Once the young person has been assessed and attended the Out of Court Disposal panel a decision is made whether the case is opened as a Community Resolution, Outcome 22 or Operation Inclusion intervention.

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 there were 78 Community Resolutions, 101 Outcome 22's and 188 Youth Restorative Disposals delivered by the YJS. 8 young people also received Operation Inclusion interventions prior to receiving a Community Resolution or Outcome 22. In addition, there were 9 Caution Plus (Police diversion for cannabis) delivered during the above period.

The 2021 Community Resolution cohort consisted of 39 young people (i.e., all those who received a Community Resolution during January to March 2021). This cohort was tracked forward for 12 months (i.e., From April 2020 to March 2021) and found only 2 young people went on to re-offend. This equates to a 5% re-offending rate for that cohort compared to the latest binary reoffending rate of 41.9% overall.

In the Zone

As explained earlier, the in the Zone programme is a multi-agency delivery of prevention and information sharing for year 9 students across all schools on the Wirral. The programme is run in a whole year group sessions for Year 9 students. Each Zone has a theme, run with approximately 20 young people in each group where they are

involved in a game or activity for 45 minutes. These short, intense, and fun sessions are intended to be more productive than power point presentations and assemblies. The YJS team have found that young people are more likely to speak to professionals in smaller groups and to ask questions with their peers.

The Youth Justice Service Manager continues to link in with the Wirral Safer Schools Police officers on identifying young people in need of Youth Justice Prevention services as well as identifying areas where the Youth Justice Service and Merseyside Police can undertake work together to support activity programmes to children through schools, and also one to one support.

Serious violence and exploitation

Wirral has seen increases in more serious violent offending in immediate post lockdown periods. Violence is also the main category of offending for youth justice case work. Tackling the prevalence of violence across Wirral is one of the areas of focus under the Safer Wirral Strategy and Safer Wirral Partnership Board. Wirral Youth Justice Service continue to have a seconded manager working within the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, ensuring the work of the partnership supports prevention using a public health approach. The prevention work highlighted in this plan includes targeted education interventions across schools against this theme. Mentors in Violence (MVP) is one such programme, promoting safe bystander interventions and peer support.

The YJS is located within the Contextual Safeguarding Service area. The area includes the specialist exploitation and missing service and the Head of Service Chairs the Safeguarding Partnerships Contextual committee and the Channel Panel. This ensures strong leadership connections and operational links across themes within the serious violence bracket. Wirral’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnership has developed a Safer Adolescence Strategy. Wirral has a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) to support children at risk of exploitation, the area also has a disruption panel. Both panels are attended by the YJS, who are an active contributor.

Compass, Wirral’s specialist exploitation team review overnight arrests, stop checks, intelligence and missing reports to ensure local partners are vigilant to signs of exploitation. Any such events would include contact and engagement with the YJS case workers and managers. One such example of the operational connections is the voluntary use of Enhanced Case Management approach for victims of exploitation either without offending, or who may have been drawn into other offending not linked to the Modern Slavery defence.

Additional work in this area has seen the recent approval of County Lines Practice Guidance for specialist teams, developed by Wirral but rolled out Pan Merseyside. Wirral is also leading national task and finish work on cross border safeguarding. This includes linking with Scottish and Welsh safeguarding and youth justice partners.

In terms of general violence and the YJS cohort. During April 2022 to March 2022 there were 31 individual children sentenced for a total of 46 violent offences. The breakdown of violent offences is listed below:

April 2021 – March 2022	
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Violent Offence	Number
Assault a person thereby occasioning them actual bodily harm	4
Assault by beating	8
Assault by beating of an emergency worker	4
Common assault	3
Common assault of an emergency worker	1
Possess an offensive weapon in a public place	8
Possess knife blade / sharp pointed article in a public place	10
Section 18 - wounding with intent	1
Threaten a person with a blade / sharply pointed article	4
Wound / inflict grievous bodily harm without intent	3
Total	46

The 31 individuals who committed the above violent offences consisted of 28 White British males aged 16 years and over, 1 White British Female aged 13 years, 1 Black African Male and 1 Chinese other male. This equates to 90% of violent offences being committed by White British males. The prevalence of knife crime is one of the drivers for the In the Zone theme on this topic.

There are several initiatives across the wider partnership focused on youth violence. Multi agency Safespace operations regularly take place in open spaces, as well as targeted high visibility patrolling in the violence hotspots to disrupt serious violence.

'Mini Pathfinders' is a Local Authority community safety led Primary age focused prevention programme for contextual risks. Police also have the more targeted prevention Pathfinders programme, working with higher risk cohorts, using Safer Schools officers across Wirral who link in and work closely with the YJS.

As laid out in the Strategic Plan of 2021/22, Prevention and Diversion, especially linked to serious violence and exploitation will continue to be key themes for Wirral in 2022/23 and beyond.

Gangs/Organised Crime

An emerging theme for 2022/23 is gangs and organised crime, Wirral has seen several firearms incidents through 2021/22, some involving young people. This has corresponded with an increase in safeguarding contacts for 'Gangs' at the Integrated Front Door (IFD). This has been identified through data and feedback from young people. The 'In the Zone' theme already targets prevention messages on this type of harm, however the local safeguarding, youth justice and community safety partners will consider how the local offer can be strengthened in light of this trend.

Constructive resettlement and the use of custody (including remands)

During April 2021 to March 2022 there were three young people who were remanded in custody prior to sentencing. The chart below shows their age, gender, ethnicity, and offence. All the young people remanded in custody received custodial sentences except for the 17-year-old Black African male. This young man was sentenced in April 2022 to a Youth Rehabilitation Order ISS Band 1. This outcome was felt to be influenced by the support and advocacy of the Youth Justice Service and YJMB.

Child	Age at beginning of RIC	Gender	Ethnicity	Offence
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A	17 years 10 months	Male	White British	Robbery/Knife
B	17 years 1 month	Male	White British	Wounding inflict GBH
C	17 years	Male	Black African	Possess & supply drugs

During April 2021 to March 2022 five young people were sentenced to custody. The chart below shows their age, gender, ethnicity, and court outcomes:

Child	Age at sentence	Gender	Ethnicity	Custodial outcome
A	17 years 11 months	Male	White British	DTO custody
B	17 years 5 months	Male	White British	Recalled to custody – sentenced to S228 with extended licence
E	17 years 9 months	Male	White British	DTO custody
F	17 years 6 months	Male	Black African	S259 custody
G	16 years 5 months	Male	White British	S254 custody

Resettlement was judged as ‘Requiring Improvement’ in the HMIP 2021 Inspection of Wirral. This was the first HMIP inspection to use the new criteria. Wirral had an action plan at that stage to address resettlement recommendations from a peer review. As part of that plan Wirral has developed a local Policy, in line with the national protocol.

Transition and accommodation

As with other areas nationally, there is challenge regarding accommodation. This is for a small number of young people who are on the cusp of turning 18 and transitioning to Probation. As a partnership board Wirral have recognised this area as needing further development. Work is currently underway to enhance the offer, this will support resettlement and transition; and contribute to reducing re-offending.

Restorative justice and victims

Following the HMIP Inspection of Wirral in July 2021, one of the recommendations was to address the service to victims. The Youth Justice Management Board and the YJS management team have recruited a victim worker who’s role includes the development the victim provision within the Wirral. This will be tracked through YJMB. The victim worker role will include developing the restorative offer as well as leading training with the Local Authority, Police, Education and other partners.

The current service sees victims contacted directly by the designated YJS case worker. Victims have the opportunity to feedback on their experiences; and are able to consider whether they would like to take part in direct or indirect reparation. Frequently victims request a letter of apology from the young person. Whilst Wirral offer Family Group Conferencing and face to face mediation, local experience shows the majority of victims did not wish to take part in this type of restorative process.

All victims contacted have expressed satisfaction with the service in the last 12 months, however, the data and reporting on victim service and satisfaction is less well developed than other areas of the YJS performance reporting cycle. This is something the YJS in Wirral will aim to further develop as the dedicated victim case worker role develops.

9. National Standards

Wirral YJS successfully completed and submitted the National Standards Audit 2020. The Audit result showed that all “Standards were Met” with the YJB advising they were satisfied that the self-assessment results were accurate.

Work will continue within the YJS to develop reporting to the YJMB on adherence to National Standards. Lead officers are aligned to each standard and as part of the ongoing board development, members will have one to one session with nominated YJS managers on each standard.

10. Challenges, Risks and Issues

Within last year strategic plan, there was much focus on the challenge of Covid and how Wirral YJS would be working to a “new normal”. Although workload’s and working arrangements are moving to pre pandemic levels it is acknowledged that Covid may yet further impact on services. The working arrangements set up during lockdown and recovery serve as contingencies should we see a re-emergence of Covid or a similar scenario. The longer-term economic impact of Covid on crime and education and employment opportunities may impact. The additional of the EET 14-19 Strategy lead as a YJMB member mitigates this risk for the YJS cohort.

Prolonged remand periods present a risk to young people and will draw on the limited YJS budget. Forward planning has allowed some resilience in this regard should Wirral see an increase in remand.

Any changes to pre-court disposal process (i.e., loss of Community Resolution) may lead to an increase in the number of First-Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System. The mitigation against this is the links between YJMB, MCJB and the OPCC.

Changes to governance arrangements, YJMB membership, and threats to contributions/secondments to YJS affecting financial and in-kind contributions may present a risk to service delivery. Mitigation here is the continued relationship and engagement of strategic leaders.

The Wirral SEND inspection findings present a risk across all young people who may require such specialist assessment services or support. The chair of the YJMB is also the strategic lead for SEND improvement. This ensures the YJS cohort are highly visible within the SEND improvement work.

11. Service Improvement Plan

The updated Youth Justice Board guidance for governance and leadership was circulated and considered as part of the Wirral Youth Justice Management Board development sessions in May 2022.

Wirral has not undertaken any statutory Serious Incident reviews in the reporting period. Findings from peer review in 2021 have been actioned and completed. An internal learning review is underway in relation to Harmful Sexual Behaviour matter, which did not constitute a Serious Incident. This has been initiated with the intent to identify learning and findings will be referenced into the next Annual Plan.

The Local Area SEND inspection highlighted areas for improvement for Wirral. As set out earlier in this plan (See Section 10). This improvement is being led at strategic level by the Deputy Director for Children Services who is also the YJMB Board Chair.

No other statutory partners have specific inspectorate improvement plans. Wirral Children’s Services remains committed to continuous improvement. This is clearly set out as part of the directorate plan. Directorate and Service plans are in place in this regard and senior managers remain involved on cross cutting development activity that may also supports improvement for the YJS cohort in Wirral.

The safeguarding partnership’s development of a Systems Based Approach to safeguarding and child protection may impact on how the YJS works with wider directorate colleagues. YJS managers are part of this development work.

Service improvement for 2022/23 therefore remains focused on those areas highlighted

	Improvement Area	Activity	Owner	Timescale
1	Work with management board members, so that they understand their role, and the function, data, and performance of the YJS, to enable them to advocate on behalf of children known to the service.	Development sessions set within the annual cycle. Settled membership. 2022/23 one to one sessions complete with lead members (National Standards/Thematics).	Deputy Director Elizabeth Hartley (YJMB Chair)	October 2022
2	Make sure that all children known to the YJS receive their statutory entitlement to education, and access to high-quality education and training services which are matched to their needs.	Embed YJMB reporting on cohort. Deliver the Education Deep Dive recommendations 2022.	Virtual Head and YJS Management.	October 2022
3	Ensure that provision is in place to identify the speech, language and	Complete enhanced training for YJS staff.	Kathy Gill Service Manager.	October 2022

by the HMIP, namely:

	communication needs of children known to the YJS.		Wirral Youth Justice Service	
4	Review the service to victims so that their wishes and needs are fully captured and, where appropriate, their engagement informs individual case management.	Embed the dedicated victim worker., Secure the suite of data and feedback to the YJMB on victim service, satisfaction and national standards links.	YJS Management	October 2022
5	Improve the quality of management oversight in out-of-court disposal work.	This improvement area is complete pending approval at YJMB July 2022.	YJS management	July 2022

The national performance indicators for youth justice will continue to be monitored through quarterly governance, including the use of the YJB live re-offending data sets. The YJMB performance management will monitor and direct activity to correct adverse performance as part of its core function.

The YJS service manager has consulted with the Safeguarding Partnership, leadership team, YJMB members and staff to set a Workforce Development and Training Plan in 2021. This is linked to areas of improvement as set out in earlier sections and takes into account the desired development of roles for victims, education link worker and speech and language support. Workforce development has extended beyond immediate staff to those colleagues within the contextual service area and other key operational staff who can support the Youth Justice Cohort. Trauma training is one such example.

Section 12 below references the focus on trauma awareness and enhanced case management.

12. Evidenced Based Practice and Innovation

Section 7 and 8 above set out the areas of innovation, using evidence-based practice.

Operation Inclusion was adapted from the concept of Operation Call-In in the Bristol area. Wirral YJS worked with the Merseyside VRP to adapt this in a way that suited the profile of young people on Wirral. The metric impact so inclusion and out of court disposal generally are set out in section 8.

The development of In the Zone is worthy of real recognition. This has reached a significant number of secondary school pupils and is being rolled out to include alternative providers for the next academic year.

Whilst the programme is very early in its cycle and not conducive to link to specific child level outcomes, the feedback from Children has been extremely positive.

The development of Trauma Informed approaches and Enhanced Case Management is perhaps the most prominent development and as set out in the Strategic Plan 2021 this is a longer-term programme of work to embed the approach. The model is based on the findings from the Welsh pilot work and in response to our own data which shows smaller cohorts, increased offending frequency and more complex needs.

13. Looking Forward

In view of the work undertaken by the YJMB, YJS and stakeholders last year in developing the strategic plan, there is no significant deviation in the forward look. The areas for service improvement have been driven by the HMIP findings, which came at a good time and acted as a real catalyst to help Wirral YJS and YJMB develop.

The longer-term commitment of three-year funding to the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership means that Wirral YJS can consider bidding for the longer-term resources that would support our strategic plan direction.

The enactment of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 (PCSCA 2021) and the Serious Violence Duty contained within it exert a statutory duty on the YJS and other partners. However, this is an area that the YJS and YJMB had already identified as a priority. The duty changes the challenge for 2022/23 towards coordinating a needs assessment and plan with a wider set of partners. The incidence of youth linked, and gang related firearms events as set out earlier in this plan is one area of development in terms of the changing local profile.

In the interests of identifying the new and larger area of focus for 2022/23, the below forward look considers the pieces of development work that may not yet be 'core' business for the YJS. Those referenced within Section 11's Improvement Plan are not duplicated here.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Further develop our wider offer and policy framework for Harmful Sexual Behaviour. This is in light of the 'Everyone's Invited' campaign and the Ofsted rapid review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges 2021.

Trauma Informed Practice and Enhanced Case Management

Progress the implementation of Trauma Informed practice and Enhanced Case Management. This will also develop

Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation

This is now a statutory duty under the recent Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act 2021 and work will need to be undertaken against this theme to satisfy this duty. This represents an opportunity to undertake a more detailed multi agency needs analysis and profile; and use wider partners to focus prevention and diversion activity. Violence accounts for the majority of YJS caseload and Wirral continues to see both criminal and sexual exploitation through crime and safeguarding referrals. Recent factional and organised crime/gang activity only serve to emphasise the importance and continued focus in this area.

Participation and Engagement

This area was highlighted in 2021 as part of the Wirral YJMB's HMIP Domain 1 Self-Assessment. Much progress has been made but the partners wish to maintain momentum in this area in line with the YJS Participation and Engagement Strategy. Once approved, this plan will be formatted in a child friendly version with young people.

Prevention coordination and support for vulnerable cohorts

Our analysis of YJS and Police data has identified that there may be opportunities to work preventatively with young people who do not enter the YJ system but are linked to crime. Merseyside Police and the Violence Reduction Partnership are seeking to place more emphasis on prevention generally. This supports the WSCP Safer Adolescence

Strategy's desire to adopt a more preventive approach to safeguarding and youth Justice.

As part of this area, there remains an intent to increase the amount of prevention work undertaken with children who are care experienced. Looked after children amount for a disproportionate proportion of statutory intervention work, this metric is embedded in the quarterly performance reporting cycle.

14. Sign off and approval

Name	Role	Signature	Date
Elizabeth Hartley	Deputy Director Children's Services Chair YJM2		30 th June 2022
Kathy Gill	Service Manager Wirral Youth Justice Service Wirral Council		30 th June 2022
Tony Kirk	Head of Service Contextual Safeguarding Wirral Council		30 th June 2022

Appendix 1: Wirral Youth Justice Management Board Membership

Name	Role	Organisation	Board dates attended
Eifion Burke	Member for Permanence CYP	Wirral Council	7/7/21 13/10/21 17/2/22 28/4/22
Carla Jones	Member for Probation	Probation	All
Anna Dollard	Member for SEN (Manager)	Wirral Council	7/7/2021 Apologies

			17/2/22 28/4/22
Kathy Gill	Member for YJS (Manager)	Wirral Council	All
Julie Graham	Member for Commissioning	Public Health	All
Elizabeth Hartley	Chair Deputy Director Children's Services	Wirral Council	All
Helen Heeley	Member Designated Nurse for LAC	NHS Safeguarding	Apologies 13/10/21 17/2/22 Apologies
Carolyn Hooper	Member Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Merseyside Police	All
Lynn Jones	Member for YJS (Business Manager)	Wirral Council	All
Alexsandra Kaitell	Member for Assessment and Intervention CYP	Wirral Council	Apologies Apologies 17/2/22 28/4/22
Anthony Kirk	Member for Contextual Safeguarding (HoS)	Wirral Council	All
Trish Lewis	Member for Improving Education Virtual School	Wirral Council	All
Mark Heron	Member for (Youth Chair)	Magistrates	All
Supt Martin Earl	Member	Merseyside Police	7/7/21 13/10/21 Apologies 28/4/22
Emma Meaney	Member for Edge of Care Management Early Help	Wirral Council	All
Lisa Newman	Member for Housing services	Wirral Council	All
Nicky Robinson	Member	NHS	7/7/21 13/10/21 Apologies 28/4/22
Paul Smith	Member for 14 – 19 Strategy	Wirral Council	All

Appendix 2: Wirral YJS structure chart June 2022

Wirral Youth Justice Service
Structure Chart
2022

Elizabeth Hartley – Deputy Director Early Help and Prevention YJMB Chair

Anthony Kirk – Head of Service Contextual Safeguarding

Kath Gill – Service Manager Youth Justice Service



Appendix 3: Partner Contributions to the Youth Offending Partnership Pooled budget 2022/23

Agency	Staffing costs (£)	Payments in kind – revenue (£)	Other delegated funds (£)	Total (£)
Local Authority	1,151,300	0.4 FTE Ed Psych 0.6 FTE Career Connect		1,151,300
Police		1.0 FTE		
Probation	5,000	0.6 FTE		5,000
Health		0.6 FTE CAMHS Named School Nurse	28,000	28,000
Police Crime Commissioner Grant (PCC)	76,591			76,591
YJB Youth Justice Grant**	571,000		72,156	643,156
Other				
Total	1,803,891		100,156	1,904,047

Estimate based on remand and YJB awards 2021/22.

Appendix 4 Merseyside Performance Comparison for April 2021 – March 2022

Source: YJB YOT Data Summary version 110

	Wirral	Liverpool	Knowsley	Sefton	St. Helens
Data Summary					
First Time Entrants					
Jan - Dec 2021 (latest period)					
PNC Numbers of FTEs	35	50	24	23	16
PNC rate per 100,000	114	128	168	94	98
Jan - Dec 2020					
PNC Numbers of FTE's	30	87	28	28	35
PNC rate per 100,000	99	226	202	117	220
Number difference	5	-27	-4	-5	-19
% Difference	15%	-44%	-17%	-20%	-55%

	Wirral	Liverpool	Knowsley	Sefton	St. Helens
Use of custody					
Apr 21 – Mar 22 (latest period)					
Custodial disposals	5	11	7	0	3
Rate per 1,000	0.17	0.29	0.51	0.00	0.19
Apr 20 – Mar 21					
Custodial disposals	2	7	3	0	0
Rate per 1,000	0.07	0.18	0.21	0.00	0.00
Difference in rates	10%	11%	30%	N/A	N/A

	Wirral	Liverpool	Knowsley	Sefton	St. Helens
Re-offending rate					
Jul 19 – Jun 20 cohort					
Number in the cohort	86	197	44	77	50
Number of re-offenders	36	70	17	24	22
Number of re-offences	166	203	36	48	51
Re-offences per re-offender	4.61	2.90	2.12	2.00	2.32
Frequency rate	1.93	1.03	0.82	0.62	1.02
Binary rate	41.9%	35.5%	38.6%	31.2%	44.0%

	Wirral	Liverpool	Knowsley	Sefton	St. Helens
Jul 18 – Jun 19 cohort					
Number in the cohort	124	274	77	118	74
Number of re-offenders	48	105	21	51	32
Number of re-offences	166	395	64	123	92
Re-offences per re-offender	3.46	3.76	3.05	2.41	2.88
Frequency rate	1.34	1.44	0.83	1.04	1.24
Binary rate	38.7%	38.3%	27.3%	43.2%	43.2%

Re-offences per re-offenders Difference	-3.5	-0.9	-0.9	-0.4	-0.6
Frequency rate difference	0.6	-0.4	0.0	-0.4	-0.2
Binary rate difference	3.2%	-2.8%	11.4%	-12.1%	0.8%

Appendix 5: Table B7 Staff by headcount

B7: Staff in the Youth Justice Team (by headcount as at 30.06.22)												
	Strategic Manager		Operational Manager		Practitioner		Administration		Sessional	Student	Volunteer	Total
	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT				
Permanent	0	1	1	4	6	15	1	3				31
Fixed Term												
Outsourced												
Temporary									2		16	18
Vacant												
Secondee Children's Services												
Secondee Probation					1							1
Secondee Police						1						1
Secondee Health (Mental Health)					1							1
Secondee Health (Physical health)												
Secondee Health (Other)												
Education					1							1
Connexions					1							1
Other												
TOTAL	0	1	1	4	10	16	1	4	2	0	16	54
Disabled (Self-Classified)		1	1		1							3

Appendix 6: Table B8 Staff by gender and ethnicity

B8: Staff in the Youth Justice Team by Gender and Ethnicity (as at 30.06.22)																
	Strategic Manager		Operational Manager		Practitioner		Administration		Sessional		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian																
Black																
Mixed					1					1					1	1
White		1	3	2	8	17		4		1	3	9	2	2	16	36
Any other ethnic group																
Not known																
Total	0	1	3	2	9	17	0	4	0	2	3	9	2	2	17	37
Welsh speakers*																

Appendix 7: Child First Case Study

Enhanced Case Management Case study from Wirral Youth Justice Service

Pseudonym - Richard

Summary of situation from referral and case formulation:

Historical – CLA since 2012 due to mother’s alcoholism and subsequent neglect of Richard. Father did not feel in position to look after him after a brief trial period. Parents rarely there for him during the 6 years as CLA. Father occasionally attended custody suite but interactions negative. Mother dealing with own needs and Richard always found this hard that she could not stop using substances (and return to being his mum) despite several periods in rehab. Several offences over teenage years – criminal damage, POCD, assault, aggravated TWOC. Engagement low on OOCs and court orders, and the disposals often resulted in breach action.

Education – disrupted. Mainstream primary school but quickly moved into the former PRU (Emslie Morgan Academy), APs, and later other courses which he did not complete.

Diagnosis – ADHD but had not taken medication for this for a long time.

Environment – current – housing placement at semi-independent but would rarely stay there as he stayed at girlfriend’s flat. This relationship was very confrontational and there would be regular breakdowns, resulting in Richard being ‘thrown out’. Richard would use substances to cope at times. Hated being in a flat on his own. This led to risk of provider withdrawing his tenancy. At the time of case formulation, he had a curfew imposed upon him that required him to stay 7am-7pm at his own flat. This was going to be extremely difficult for him.

Hypothesis

1 - Relationships the key factor – had difficulties being alone and found comfort in intimate relationships over the last few years. He was dependent on these relationships and most ended badly, with domestic abuse from Richard and from partners towards him. Link to insecure attachment, instability of key relationships through his life and the need to be cared for but also to care for others.

Richard ideally needs to be comfortable in himself in order to be able to spend time alone and develop as an individual.

2 – Money is important to Richard. Potentially related to him feeling “adult” or “mature” or may be related to him having a sense of control over his life. He may see money as giving him choices, perhaps choices which have been limited for him in childhood.

Support Richard to gain stability so that he can engage in a course that leads to employment.

In regard to the Trauma Recovery Model Richard was at the first layer of Need – stability.

Positives

Despite the adverse childhood experiences suffered by Richard and chaotic current situation, Richard had positives: he was (and still is!) an intelligent young man with great charisma, he communicated well, had empathy for others, could think things through when calm and he had a long-established relationship with his YJS worker. Although he had often breached previous orders, the positive relationship between them had been maintained.

Intervention

At the initial case formulation, we set targets to support his move towards independence (getting a bank account), supporting him to be able to stay overnight on his own to avoid breaching his EMC (improving the environment at his flat) and to begin work on positive relationships.

The group around Richard supported these targets and his YJS case manager spent a lot of time with him, helping him to make sense of both his previous and current relationship. Richard later half-jokingly described his YJS worker as his 'counsellor' because of all the time they spent after break ups, unpicking the behaviours of the couple and working through the difficult emotions. For most of the year he felt unable to leave this relationship despite his growing understanding of the toxicity of it and its impact upon his mental health. His YJS worker constantly advocated for him with housing (as he inevitably lost his flat after his tag was removed) and collaborated with his employability coach (who showed great nurture and persistence during this difficult year for Richard) to enable him to access courses that could lead to employment.

This year was an emotional rollercoaster for Richard. There were frequent Police call outs due to arguments between him and his girlfriend and she threw him out several times, leaving him 'sofa surfing'. His mother relapsed and Richard had to support her (at times including physical care) as she went into and came out of rehab. Housing was an ongoing challenge as he had placements removed due to not staying, but then needing them desperately as his girlfriend asked him to leave again. He started multiple courses, at times going in hungry and with little sleep; showing his great determination to try to move forward towards independence but ultimately being pulled back by the considerable stressors upon him. He would at times turn to substances to cope and the impact of these episodes were visible upon him – this was a young man who took great pride in his appearance and at these difficult times he neglected himself greatly.

Jumping forward - at the end of our time with him he had finished the toxic relationship and was adamant that he would not return to it – being able to communicate the impact it used to have upon him and what he wanted from future relationships. He had turned 18 and had got himself a job in which helped him to grow so much, introducing him to peers who enjoyed his company in a different way than he had experienced before. He had a bedsit – not where he wanted to be, but the important thing was that he was comfortable in his own space, his self-esteem was growing and his self-identity was back – not linked to a partner – to him, Richard. He was looking forward, he had options and was confident in pursuing them. In regard to the Trauma Recovery Model, we assessed Richard at level 5 to 6 – Future planning and moving on.

So, what worked?

Nurture, persistence, showing that we were there for him and that we would continue to support him when things were going well or when things were awful, and he couldn't see what came next. Letting him express his emotions and his voice – and listening to this. Knocking at 5 different doors to find him when he had been kicked out by his girlfriend. Little gestures: text messages to remind him of things and to support his confidence at an interview and to tell him well done, buying him food. Practical things – getting him a bank account and helping him to work out how to manage his money. Giving him money to get food or to attend interviews. Constantly reinforcing the strengths that he had to negotiate difficult moments. Holding case meetings regularly to keep agencies on task and fortnightly supervision with the Psych. lead which supported the case manager with this really challenging and emotionally involved work and helped them review and refine the approach.

As the TRM approach identifies – use yourself as the anchor when nothing else is stable: be consistent, predictable and reliable. Rebuild the young person's trust in other people using yourself as the model.

I haven't mentioned offence focused work here. We worked on the deeper causes of his offending behaviour, not the offending behaviour, and it works.

Feedback

I think you should work with everyone the way you have worked with me.

I have done the other type of YOT and it was boring and didn't help me at all.

Speaking is a lot easier than sitting circling things, I didn't get anything from it. It really helped having someone to talk to, acting like a counsellor.

Pick me up ... some kids don't have any motivation, they won't get to [Wirral YJS office].

Buying me food, it was really helpful.

I realise that the way I was 2 years ago is not the person I want to be, it has changed a lot my outlook on life.

It's good to have someone to be able to ring to tell good news to, and to share problems with.

Completing the YOT, I didn't think it was serious at one point, I thought it would go away but it didn't. I'm glad it didn't, there's way more depth to it than I thought, I thought it was for little divvies who had been nicked but it has changed who I am as a person.

Definitely been a positive thing for me, I don't know where I'd be without it. There's been no negatives for me.

Appendix 8: Common youth justice terms

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long-lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety

Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPAs	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing

SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution