

The Royal Borough of Greenwich

Youth Justice Service

Strategic Plan 2025 to 2028



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Foreword

As Chair of the Youth Justice Management Board, it is a privilege to introduce this new action plan, our shared vision for a youth justice system that truly places children at its heart. This plan reflects the collective effort of many: children, families, professionals and community partners, all working together to build a more compassionate and joined-up approach; one that values each child as an individual, with the least possible intervention.

We are united in our commitment to dismantling the barriers that too often stand in a child's way - stigma, disproportionality, and adultification among them. In their place, we want to offer understanding, opportunity, and belief in what young people can become. We want children to be known for their strengths, not their struggles - and to grow up with the support, relationships, and chances they need to thrive in their communities.

This plan builds on the real progress we have made together. The voices of children and young people have helped shape our direction, deepening our understanding of their lives and informing how we respond. We have strengthened the educational support available to those facing challenges, and we have brought services closer together - across early help, prevention, and youth justice - to offer more coherent, compassionate support.

We are especially proud of the ways in which children and their families are becoming partners in the work, not just recipients of it. Whether through peer mentoring, creative arts, co-produced leadership, or parents sharing their wisdom and lived experience, these relationships are creating space for healing, connection, and growth.

At the same time, we must acknowledge the pain and trauma that serious youth violence has brought to our borough, felt deeply by children, families, and the wider community here in Greenwich. Recovery and change are ongoing journeys, and we remain steadfast in our belief that healing, safety, and justice come through long-term commitment and collective care.

Looking ahead, this plan reaffirms our promise to keep listening and learning, and to act with courage, compassion, and humility. Every child deserves a childhood filled with hope and possibility, and it is our shared responsibility to help make that possible. Together, we will continue to build safer, fairer communities by investing in the strengths and futures of our children, and by respecting their rights every step of the way.

To everyone walking alongside us as partners, families, and above all, the children, we thank you. Your voices and experiences remain at the heart of this work.

With hope and determination,

Onder Beter
Chair, Youth Justice
Management Board



1. The voices of our children

1.1 We believe that your voices are critical to shaping the work that we do and the quality of our delivery. We take a real sense of pride in listening to your views, not just in one off moments but throughout your journey with us.

1.2 You deserve to be heard and to be involved in decisions that affect you and other children. You deserve to be engaged with in a way which is clearly explained and makes sense to you but also in a way that listens to and acts on your experiences whether you are working with us currently or have done so in the past.

1.3 We are proud that have made progress on our ambitions to strengthen our parent and child voice via our direct work, group activity and parent champions offer. Here are some of the things you've told us so far:

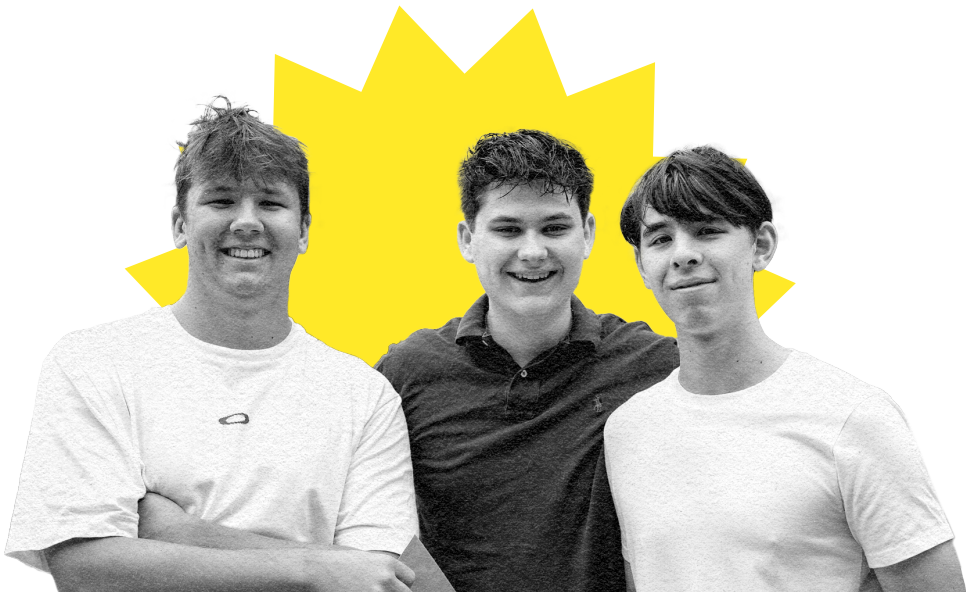
1.4 We hope to continue delivering services in a way that is considerate of and responsive to your needs, listens to your experiences and uses your feedback as an opportunity to improve the way we deliver services.

What does the YJS do that helps and encourages you to keep doing well? Please list as many as you can

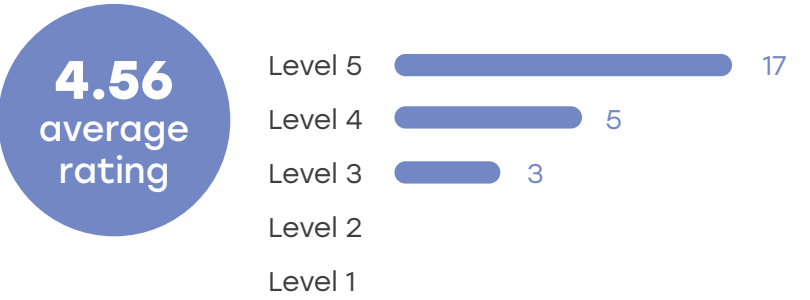
25
responses

2 respondents (8%) answered activities for this question.

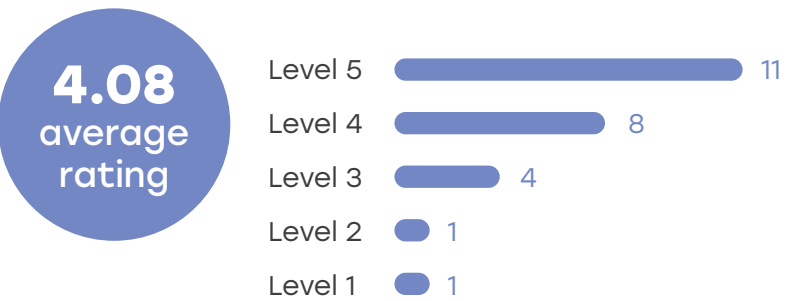
talks different interventions Text before appointment Football advice
noticed so far regular check **activities** opportunities for jobs busy
ok remind me of my appointments touch Bike project good influence
FOCUSED not to get into trouble trouble alot meeting because its a reminder



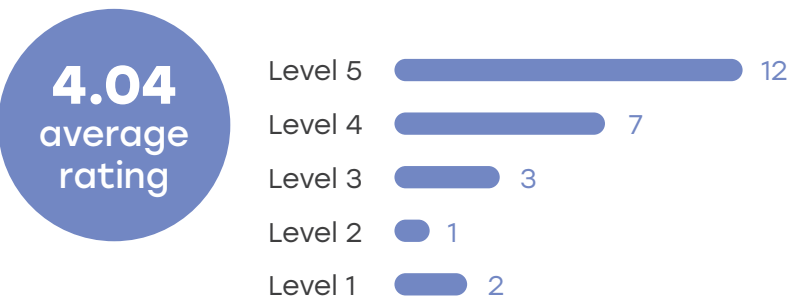
How good are the YJS at listening to you



To try new things



Achieve your goals



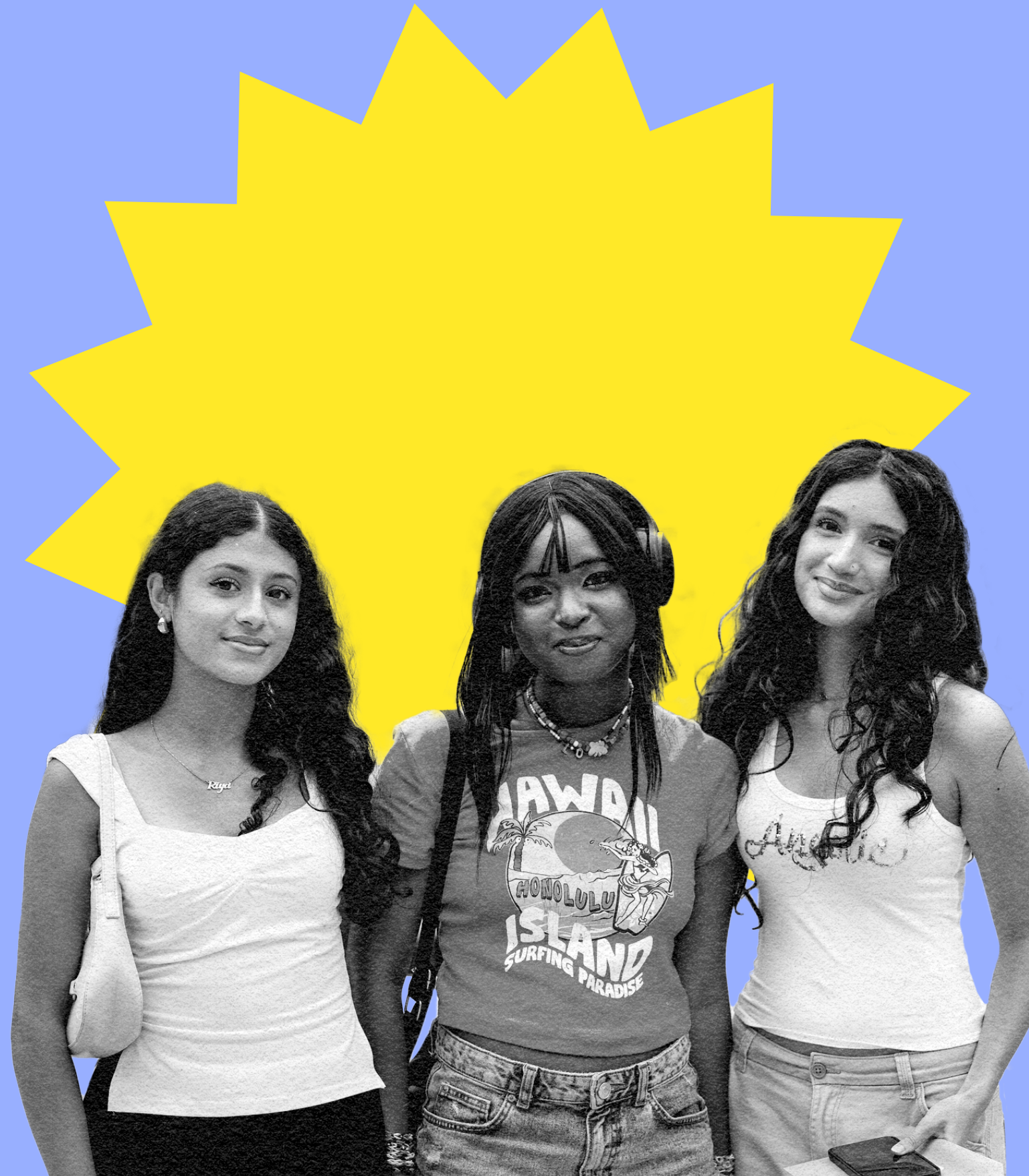
2. Our local context

2.1 Royal Greenwich has a vast and diverse community. The borough is approximately 19.5 square miles and is divided into 17 wards.

2.2 Amongst that, we know there are several areas of affluence within the borough; boasting one of Europe's biggest entertainment hubs with the O2 Arena and retail outlet as well as several cultural monuments, Greenwich Park, The Cutty Sark, The Artillery Barracks are to name a few. The financial district of London (Canary Wharf) is also highly visible from several parts of the borough. Simultaneously, there are several pockets of deprivation across the borough, with lower super output areas registering some of the highest ranked nationally and crime rates comparable to those of inner-city hotspots.

2.3 The borough is ranked amongst the top 20% of the most deprived local authorities in England with 3 neighbourhoods in the top 10% of the most deprived areas. There are also high rates of social and private renting for approximately 50% of the families with some of the nation's significant housing pressures not escaping us. Greenwich boasts a growing population with a declining average age.

- There are approximately 302,000 residents in the borough (2025 GLA projections)
- 64,000 of which are children aged 0-17 (Approximately 21%)
- Approximately 44.3% of all residents are from a Black and Global Majority background
- Approximately 44.3% of Royal Greenwich Children aged 10-17 are from Black and Global Majority backgrounds
- 404 Children in Care as of March 2025
- Latest DWP data suggests 21% of under 16's are living in households that meet the criteria of living in relative poverty; this is higher than London (18%)
- Greenwich has significant and diverse ethnic and migrant international communities including Afghan, Ukrainian, Somali, Syrian, Nepali and several other countries across the African Diaspora. This is also reflected in the range of languages spoken of which there are over 150.
- 30% of pupils in Greenwich Schools are eligible for free school meals.



3. Our governance structures and our partnership arrangements

3.1 The service is led by the Strategic Lead who reports directly to the Deputy Director of Children's Services. The Deputy Director is also the chair of the Youth Justice Management Board. (See Appendix A for Structure Chart).

3.2 The Service and Board activities report to the Director of Children's Services (via the Directorate Management Team Meeting) who is accountable to the Chief Executive of the Local Authority. In addition, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People holds the portfolio of the Youth Justice Service. (See Appendix B for Board Membership)

3.3 The Youth Justice Management Board has connectivity to a number of other strategic forums including Greenwich's Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Safer Greenwich Partnership, The Early Help and Prevention Board, The Health and Wellbeing Board and the Quality Assurance and Audit group. There are also connected activities between the Management Board and the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel. (See Appendix C for Governance Arrangements).

3.4 There are established and mature partnership arrangements in place with good representation and commitment from senior leaders across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

3.5 The board and members have had development days in recent months which have served to strengthen the existing relationships between partners and explore broader opportunities for collaboration in line with one another's strategic priorities.

3.6 There are three sub-groups of the Youth Justice Management Board, either solely or co-led between partners and members of the service. Activities from the sub-groups also feed into the main management board and inform themes, trends and topics for discussion but crucially help to inform future planning in relation to the service.

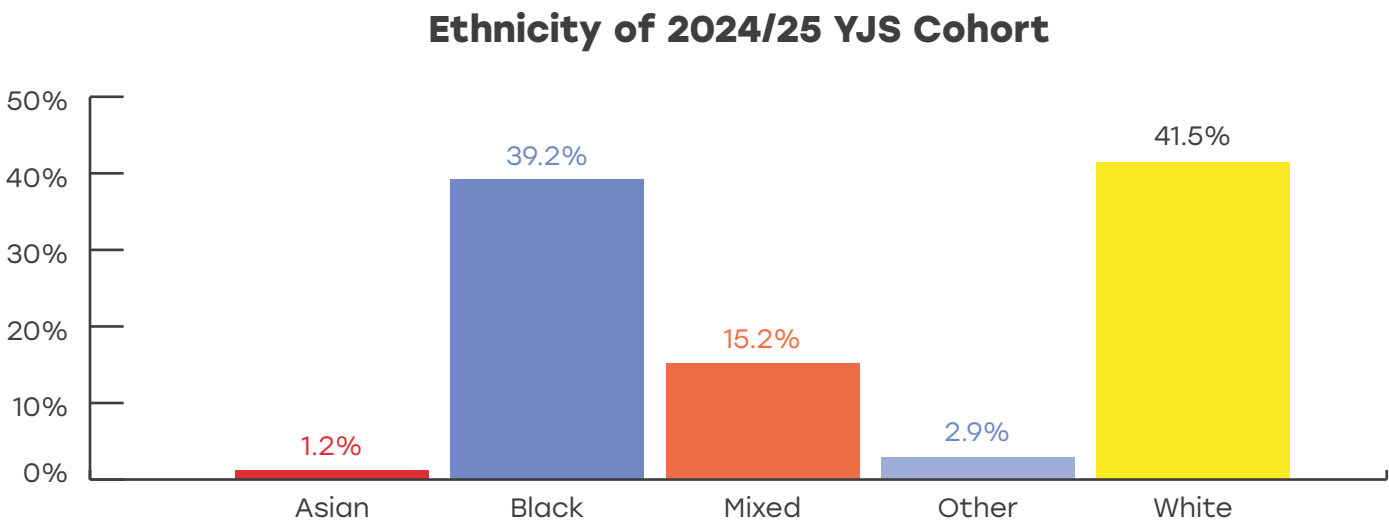
3.7 The service consists of a combination of directly employed and seconded staff including Youth Justice Workers, Police Officers, Probation, Nurse (Health), Substance Misuse, Speech and Language specialists, Education workers, a Liaison and Diversion Worker and Parenting Support. This continues to provide variety, multi-disciplined lenses to service delivery with children and families but also encourages a diversity of thought amongst professionals and a mix of specialisms and expertise to children.

3.8 Beyond this, we are also joined up with wider local, regional and national initiatives such as the Pan London Stop and Search Pilot and Operation Sharda (The MET Police's delivery on their race action plan).

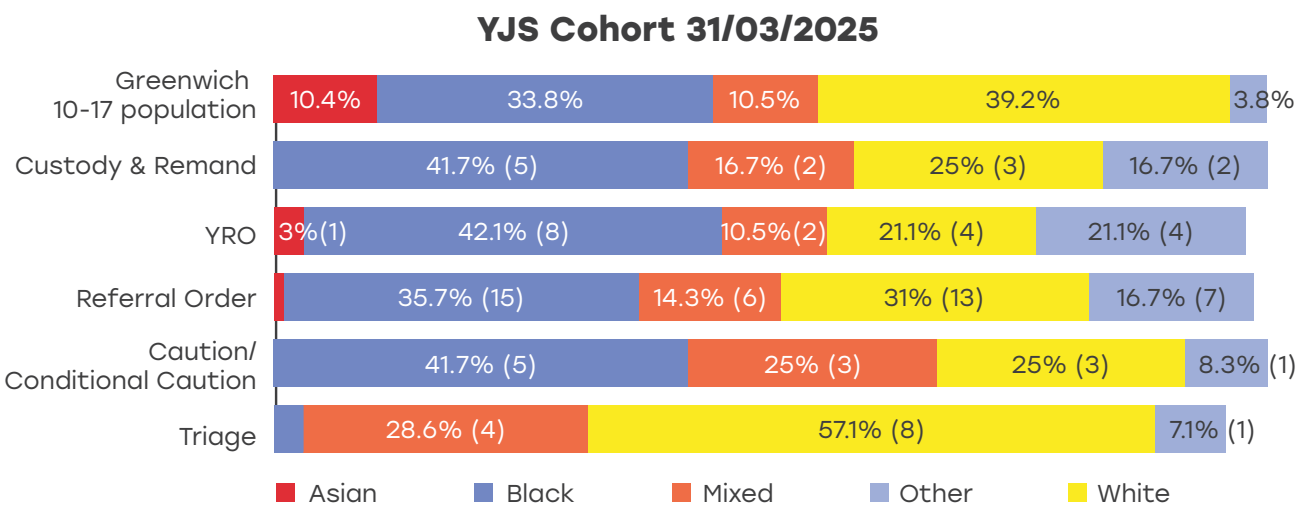


4. Our Youth Justice Service cohort

4.1 Overall, our Youth Justice Service (YJS) cohort reflects the wider borough population. However, children from global majority backgrounds, including those from mixed heritage, are overrepresented. This overrepresentation becomes even more obvious in higher-tariff cases.



***Ethnicity breakdown of 2024/25 YJS Cohort**



***Cohort breakdown by ethnicity and order/tariff**

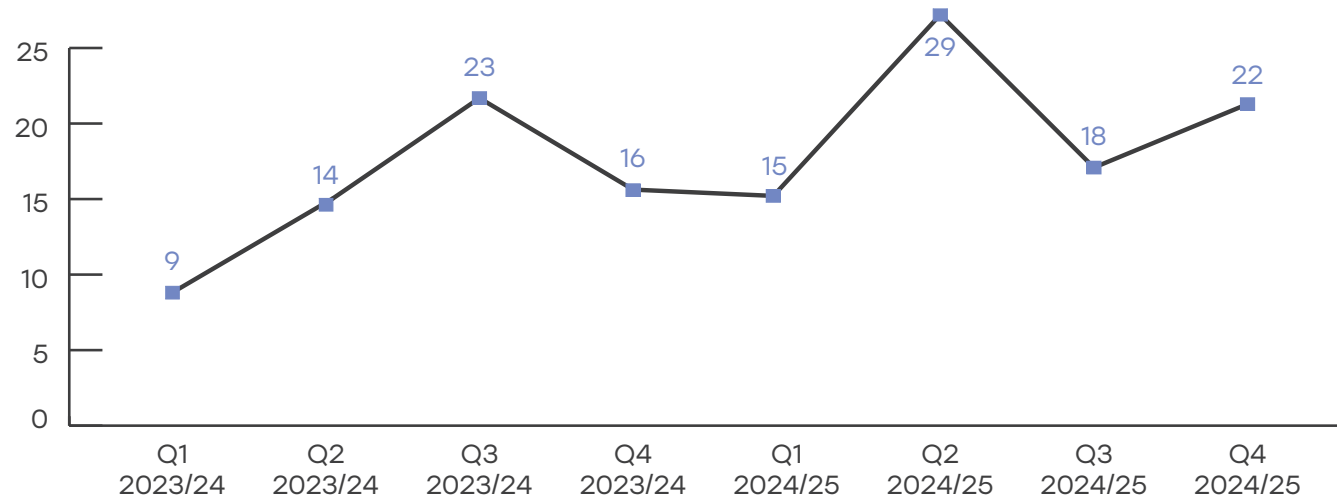
4.2 While we have had some quarters showing improvements of our first-time entrants, this remains an intractable problem for Greenwich. It is interesting to note that our family of YJS's have also seen an increase in first-time entrants, and we are no longer an outlier but sit below the family average of 271. Two significant service redesigns this year are planned; the piloting of adolescent safeguarding service and the wider Children's Social Care reforms. Both system changes will support the preventative agenda alongside the Early Help and Prevention Board.

4.3 Our first-time entrants have also been impacted, as has our reoffending rate, by the tragic murders in September 2004 and January 2025 of two children in Greenwich.

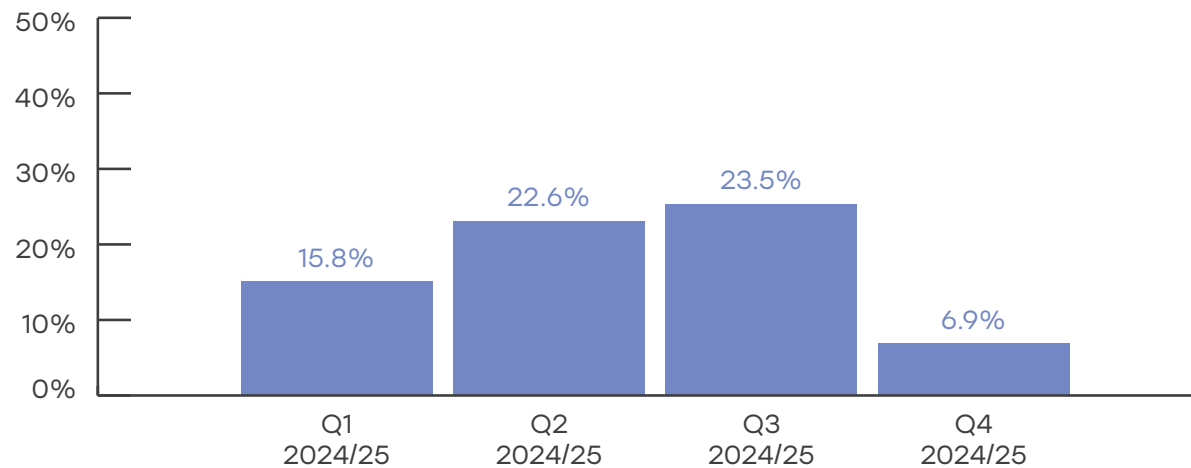
4.4 The community and particularly our children have been greatly impacted, with ripples continuing to be addressed in the work we do. Most first-time entrants are for knife offences, and we are grateful to the police for the work they are doing in the community to make our residents feel safer.

4.5 As partnership, we know we need to do more, earlier on to enable children to feel safer. We recognise that the earlier we intervene, the more success we see in stabilising/reducing our reoffending rates with Out of Court and First Referral Orders reoffending rate of 20%.

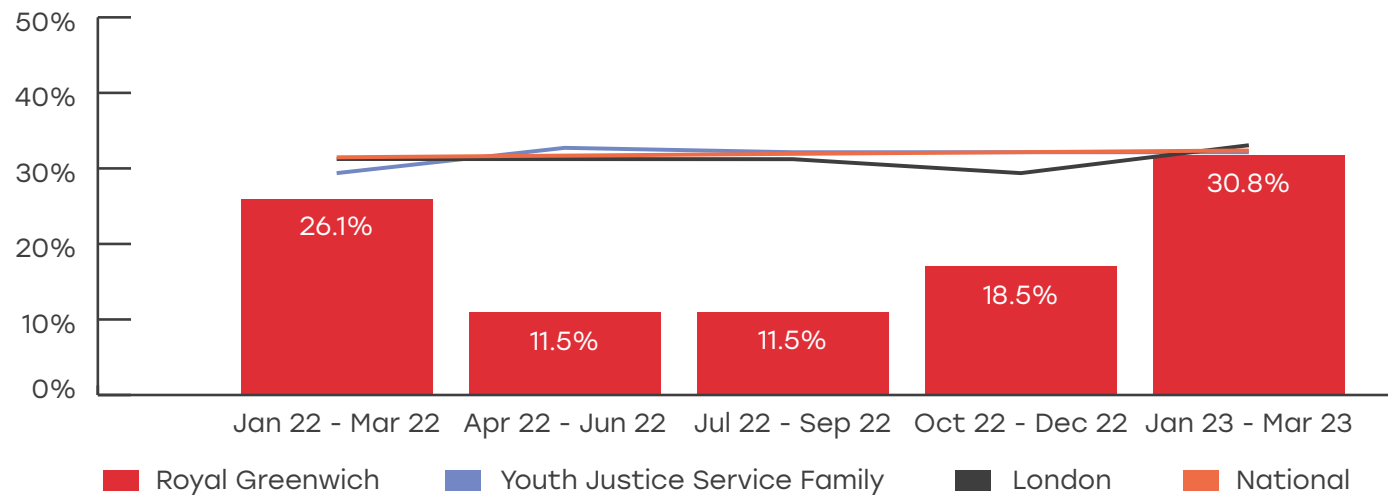
First time entrants to the YJS



Local reoffending 2024/25



Youth Justice Service Data Summary (YDS) Reoffending



4.6 We have done more work in 2024/2025 within the dynamics of networks, recognising that we need to intervene where children are and better understand the dynamics of their friendships and associations. We see this as an additional model of engagement that we will continue to explore and utilise this year as we manage the impact of the outcomes of both trials.

5. Our commitment to our children

5.1 We believe in second chances and in the boundless potential of every child. Regardless of the challenges they face or the mistakes they may have made, our children deserve to be seen, heard, nurtured and supported.

5.2 We are committed to walking alongside them in hope, not in judgement. Through care, compassion, guidance and providing opportunity, we will help

them navigate adversity and rediscover their strengths.

5.3 We believe that with the right support, today's children can overcome the odds and grow into the changemakers, role models, and leaders of tomorrow.



6. Our practice approach

6.1 Our primary approach to practice continues to be informed by the Youth Justice Board's Child First Principles and the four key tenets that underpin it.

- To be seen as children.
- To develop a pro-social identity.
- To collaborate with children.
- To divert children away from the criminal justice system.

6.2 We have incorporated this broader approach into our practice model, which is strengths based, compassionate and systemic whilst also ensuring robust identification and management of risk.

6.3 As a service, recognising our borough demographics as well as our YJS cohort, we are incredibly passionate about our anti-racist approach ensuring that we highlight structural racism, systemic inequities and racial disparities ensuring appropriate challenge and advocacy for our children. This could be in the context of young people encountering the police (i.e. stop and searches), school exclusions, advocacy for mental health or communication needs or providing challenge to institutes about the experiences of global majority children and highlighting disproportionality.

6.4 The Local Authority has a Tackling Structural Racism (TSR) staff reference group of which the YJS are well represented in that space using learning and experience to influence change across the wider council as well as taking learning from that staff reference group and applying to the specific context of the criminal justice system.

Diversion

6.5 We know children do their best when they are embedded into the local community and feel a sense of belonging. We work in partnership with several statutory and community-based organisations to deliver on our ambition of diversion.

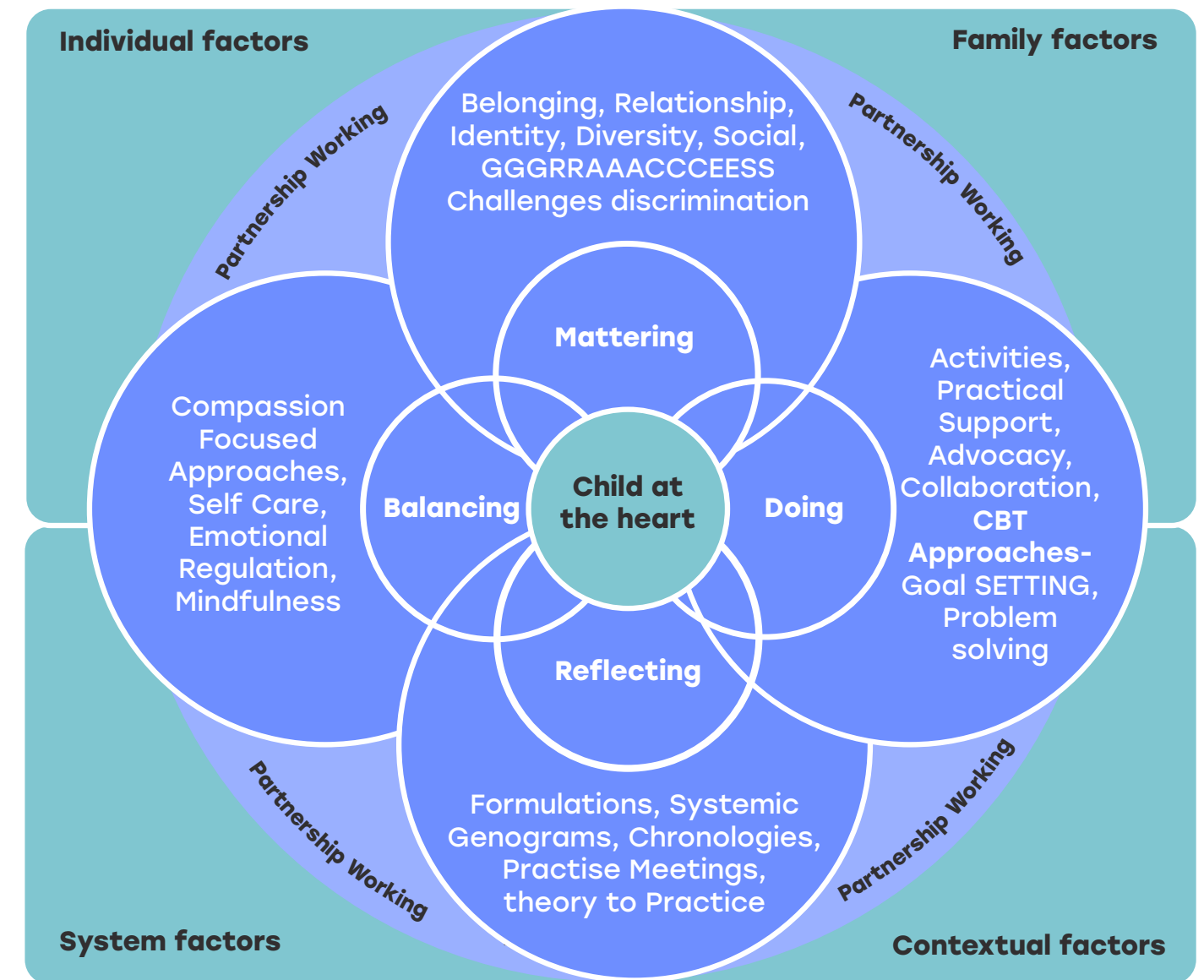
6.6 Young Greenwich is the borough's largest youth delivery partner and consists of Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) who provide both placed based youth hubs and targeted diversionary activities including the Vanguard programme, mentoring and sporting activities.

6.7 In 2024/25, CACT supported 60 children via their enhanced one to one mentoring services. Of those, 34 were engaged with education or training.

6.8 Our Family and Adolescent Support Service (FaASS) also supports with diversionary activities by utilising a whole family approach and stays rooted to the needs and wants of families. These interventions are structured in a goal orientated way and are very much child and family led enabling those families to remain in control and able to measure success based on their goals being met.

6.9 The approaches are systemic and consider relational dynamics and family compositions with goals as varied as improving school attendance, reducing missing episodes or reducing conflict in the home.

6.10 The Your Choice interventions have been utilised within the FaASS service using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and motivational interviewing to address behavioural changes in young people and supporting prevention or desistance from further criminality.



6.11 In addition, our Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) arrangements continue to provide oversight and intervention whilst offering support and strategic planning for front line practitioners working with children at risk of exploitation and/or youth violence. Multi-agency partner representation at this panel is fundamental to its success which also includes representation from CACT and Community Safety. These two partner agencies in particular lead on the responsibility for the deployment of and delivery of the outreach bus which delivers targeted, place-based interventions across the borough based on pre-emptive and responsive needs.

Case work

6.12 Our focus is firmly rooted in relational practice based on the tenants of Child First. Weekly practice meetings provide staff with space to consider the child and wider needs overseen by the Group Leader for case work and a clinical specialist. We aim to see children where they are most comfortable including home, school and youth hubs. Staff form strong relationships and challenge children and families' perceptions of Local Authority Services.

Quotes from children engaged with the service

“I love my caseworker; she took my number and texts me to see how I am. My dad told me coming here wouldn’t be helpful as the people won’t care about you, but he was wrong”

anonymised child

“He is great, he is polite and checks up on me between sessions.”

anonymised child

“Does what she says she is going to do.”

anonymised child

Specialist team

Substance Misuse team

6.13 As well as working with the YJS, our substance misuse team works across Children Social Care and schools. This ensures that children receive support at the earliest opportunity and do not wait for criminal justice involvement. We have provided monthly drop-in sessions held in schools and provide half termly updates to schools about current drug trends, these have included vapes and THC edibles.

6.14 We have noticed an increase in THC edibles and Magic Mushrooms this year and a decrease in Nitrous Oxide, single use vapes and refillable vapes. Cannabis and alcohol continue to be the main drugs referred to the service. Training is delivered to Fostering Service, CAMHS, School Nursing Service and Charlton Athletic Community Trust and well as twice a year to Children’s Social Care. The team works with on average 56 individual children at any one time.

***Table 1 – Outputs for Children engaged with the Substance Misuse Team**

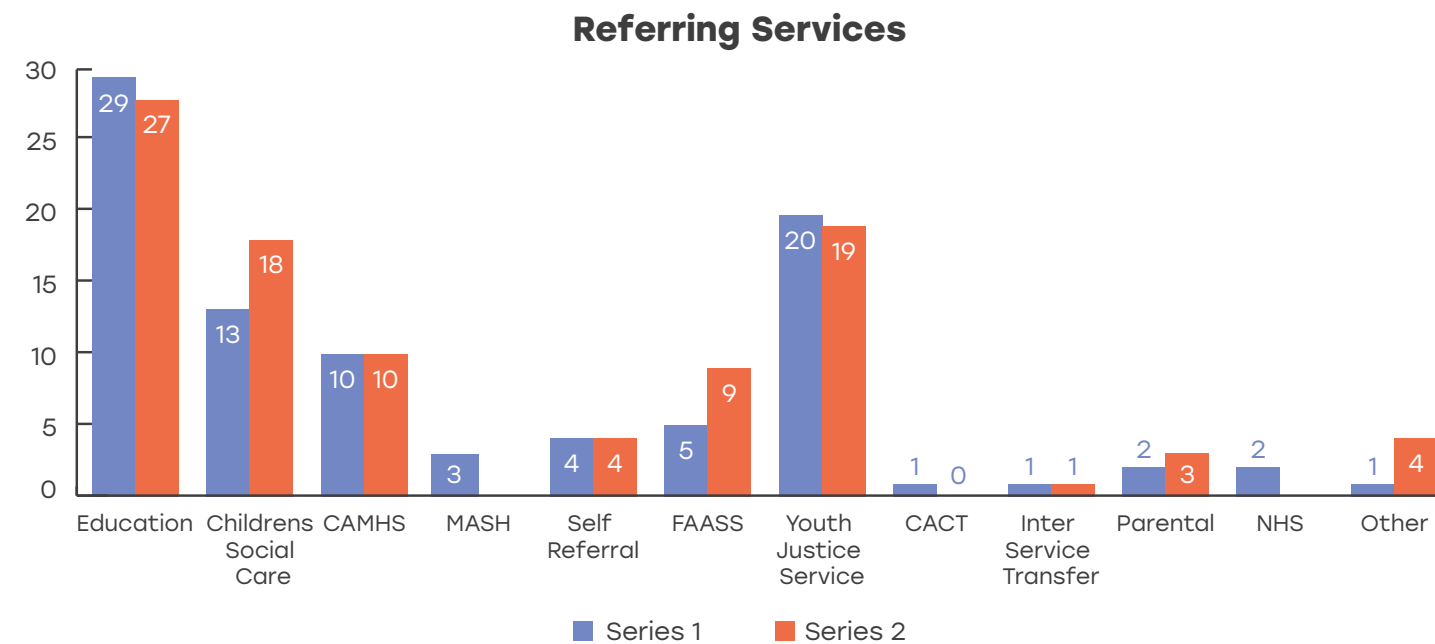
Ceased substance use	38%
Reduced substance use	43%
Ceased alcohol use	36%
Reduced alcohol use	45%
Dropped out/left	20%

“Thanks for sticking with me. It’s been a really long journey and you didn’t give up on me. I slip every now and then but I’m in such a good place now. Thank you”

anonymised child

“Really appreciate all your support and for never giving up”

anonymised child



*referrals - Series:1 2023-2024 and Series:2 2024-2025

Creative arts

6.15 We are delighted to continue to grow our creative arts offer with 16 children entered into the Kostler Arts award this year. We know our children have often received little recognition for their talents and parents are overwhelmed with concerns and anxiety about their children. Art exhibitions, awards and projects start to change the narrative and give children and their parents a different space of possibilities, encouragement and praise.

6.16 It also enables children to communicate with us regardless of language ability, 'a picture paints a thousand words.' We have been delighted with our continuing work with the Greenwich Maritime museums, participating in art workshops which focus on identity and place.

6.17 Creative arts work is accessible to all and being increasingly recognised by both the Arts Council and Mental Health services as a way of supporting people with mental health or those who are waiting for a statutory service. We remain committed to continuing to grow this strand of our work.



Child participants of the creative arts programme

"I love the art group and look forward to coming every week."

"Thank you so much for all the work you do with her. She loves it. Being part of the group has really helped her confidence"

Examples of art submissions



Clinical Health team

6.18 Our Clinical Health Team (CHT) is led by our CAHMS clinical psychologist and attended by all health professionals, speech and language, mental and physical health nurses, parenting support and substance misuse. We have also introduced an educational psychologist into the meeting. This model enables us to review all health aspects and support staff to plan and prioritise their interventions.

This year, we are revamping our model to improve our data collection which will enhance our understanding of the needs of our children, building on the launch of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and a multi-agency Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) audit. We know that many of our children are neurodiverse and while they may be below the threshold of CAMHS, have complex emotional needs because of their lived experiences.

Parent champions

6.19 We started our journey with The Metro Centre in 2022 developing and delivering the Parent Champion Network to the Royal Borough of Greenwich. This is a network open to all parents whose children are caught up in serious youth violence and/or exploitation.

Parents supporting parents

6.20 Alongside training for parents supporting parents, workshops are held at our Pupil Referral Unit open to all parents on common themes and issues for parents of adolescents.

6.21 We were pleased this year (2025/26) to introduce and offer compassionate minds training to parents. This model of practice has been rolled out to Children Social Care staff and our parents benefit from the same training providing a common framework and helping to bridge the divide between professionals and the families they support.

6.22 The majority of families come from single parent households (20) followed by blended families (15). Most families have more than one child with seven families of more than four children. The families benefit from regular one to one support as well as network meetings and a popular summer picnic, Christmas party and other social events throughout the year.

6.23 We have delivered nineteen workshops and fifty individual sessions. We are pleased that we have been able to support our Parent Champions being involved in any Local Authority consultation work undertaken including education which our parents are passionate about.



anonymised parent



anonymised parent

6.24 Support is also offered to children whose parents are involved with the network this has included one on one virtual therapeutic conversations specifically related to mental health, neurodivergent needs, school related difficulties such as undiagnosed ADHD/ASD and impact on attitude, learning, behaviour and emotions. Also diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health presentation such as anxiety, depression, low mood and obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD).

Victims work and restorative approaches

6.25 The Restorative Approaches team works with children and families across all disposals to deliver a range of interventions including direct victim support, restorative work with young people and their victims, family restorative inductions on entry to the YJS and further family restorative work where key relationships have broken down as a result of offending or challenging behaviours.

6.26 Where consent is given, support is offered to all victims and can include responding to any ongoing safety needs, providing updates on how the young person is engaging with the YJS and the offer of a safe space for victims to discuss their experience. The team are linked with Victim Support and other services so that additional emotional and practical support can be provided if needed.

6.27 Last year, 35 direct victims were contacted to be asked about their views, and to offer them victim support and safety, 26 victims were engaged beyond initial contact and offer, 14 were willing to engage in a restorative process, nine received a Restorative Outcome. A letter of apology was provided to four victims; shuttle mediation was provided to a further four and a face-to-face restorative meeting was provided for 1 victim.

6.28 In summary, 40% of contacted victims engaged in a full Restorative Enquiry and 25% of all contacted victims received a Restorative Outcome.

6.29 The necessity for Police to gain positive consent before passing on victim details to Restorative Teams continued to be a contributory factor to overall decline in the total number of direct victims being contacted in the first six months of this year. However, with agreement from Met Police management, victim details can now be passed onto the Restorative Approaches team where Police have been unable to make initial contact and as a result numbers in the last six months are showing a slight increase again. It is expected that this trend will continue.

6.30 Numbers of police victims willing to engage in a restorative process beyond initial contact has significantly declined compared to previous years with a resultant impact on restorative outcomes.

6.31 Following contact with victims, the restorative team provide reports to case managers outlining victim's needs. This information is shared with Referral Order panel members and is used to develop suitable restorative interventions.

6.32 Royal Greenwich YJS remains committed to recognising and addressing the harm caused to all parties, (including families) and so as well as direct engagement with victims, the restorative approaches team provide opportunity to engage the child's family. Numerous cases of family restorative work have achieved valuable outcomes this year, as well as 45 family restorative inductions having been delivered, serving to identify whole family needs and offer re-connection.

6.33 The restorative team also play a key role as part of a child's resettlement plan by carrying out family restorative work prior to a young person's release from custody. Support is provided to the child and significant family members to help them communicate their needs so that a smooth transition back into the community and family home can be made.

7. Performance

7.1 We pride ourselves on delivering high quality services for children and young people. In order to ensure this, we have robust performance management measures in place. This is undertaken using a combination of manual and systematic approaches, before being submitted via the Youth Justice Application Framework. We have measured ourselves against 3 key performance measures.

First time entrants (FTEs)

7.2 A common measure of our youth crime prevention is the number and rate of first-time entrants into the youth justice system. Our rate of FTEs to the youth justice system was 253/10,000 (binary rate). This figure is greater than our London and National averages respectively, although must not ignore the local context in which children in Royal Greenwich reside (as outlined above).

*Table 2 – FTEs: Comparative data

First time entrants	First time entrants - baseline			First time entrants current		
		Apr 23 - Mar 24			Apr 24 - Mar 25	
		2023			2023	
	Number	2023 population	Rate per 100,000	Number	2023 population	Rate per 100,000
Greenwich	61	28,440	214	75	28,440	264
New YJS family						
Enfield	71	38,315	185	91	38,315	238
Southwark	67	25,436	263	56	25,436	220
Haringey	59	24,196	244	67	24,196	277
Barking and Dagenham	69	28,988	238	80	28,988	276
Croydon	91	41,210	221	106	41,210	257
Lewisham	60	26,969	222	80	26,969	297
Waltham Forest	62	26,290	236	60	26,290	228
Hackney	54	23,849	226	76	23,849	319
Hammersmith and Fulham	32	13,960	229	33	13,960	236
Manchester	195	59,015	330	187	59,015	317
Family average	76	30,823	247	84	30,823	271

7.3 We have made use of a range of diversionary offers including utilising our targeted early help service (including our Family and Adolescent Support Service) to deliver whole family work, universal and targeted support from Young Greenwich, Engage Project, the Vanguard Project (delivered by Charlton Athletic Community Trust), motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural approaches using Your Choice and range of police led initiatives.

7.4 The Turnaround programme can be accessed via the Out of Court Disposal Panel which continues to function on a weekly basis looking at the range of disposals available for children coming to early attention of the youth justice service.

7.5 In addition, we have a range of multi-agency partnership panels in which children frequent including the MACE Risk Management Panel which places a dual focus on reactive and preventative planning for children where there are indicators of extra-familial harm.

7.6 Finally, in October 2025, we are set to pilot the Prevention Partnership Panel which looks at children coming to notice of professionals due to emerging anti-social behaviour or criminology. We are sure that this pilot will strengthen our existing foundations of excellent partnership working and ensure that children’s needs are identified and responded at the earliest opportunity, further diverting them away from criminality. We plan to incorporate any wider learning from the pilot into future service delivery.

Reoffending rates

7.7 Our reoffending rates for the most recent period available indicates that 30.8% of children whose order came to an end between January and March 2023 re-offended. This represents a figure of 4 in 13 children and compares favourably to our London and National averages.

7.8 We know most of our children who are involved in committing further offences are part of groups of children that are caught up in serious youth violence which intelligence tells us is also linked to

county lines, particularly protection of territory. We have introduced working within these dynamics and groups of children together to test if this model is more effective.

7.9 We have worked with the Local Authority’s Community Safety Teams to deliver a bespoke package to children directly affected by the murders in the borough which includes group work activities, access to a music studio and mentoring. This has been successful in engaging children with a high engagement rate and children identifying others who they want to attend. We have focused on offering positive activities and paid opportunities to distract and keep children busy.

7.10 When we ask children, they tell us that their focus is on finding work. We have run enhanced employment workshops for our children to support their understanding of what work entails, this includes basic skills, interviewing practice and ensuring the correct documentation. We have sourced some additional paid opportunities through work with our partners.

We recognise there is a gap between what our children want and what steps are needed to be work ready. We intend to continue our focus over the next three years on practical steps and support to source opportunities and have our children more prepared.



7.11 Our CAMHS nurse focuses on this cohort through sessions on emotional regulation and therapeutic support for the trauma's they have experienced. Our focus is on understanding their journeys to date and providing opportunities and spaces for them to learn about themselves and the strengths they possess.

We are concerned about the unmet or unidentified needs we see once they are with the YJS and will be increasing our educational psychological provision to provide a fast access to assessments and interventions that can identify and address these areas.

Custodial sentences

7.12 We have seen a marked increase in our remands this year with children being held accused of serious or grave crimes. Half of the children currently remanded to custody are on remand for murder and/or linked. The common themes identified are the links to county lines and drug dealing, with conflict between two main groups in Woolwich both of which 'hold territory' in the local drug supply.

This friction is compounded by the use of social media to sustain disputes and 'disrespect' one another leading to escalations and the prolonging and exacerbating of conflicts that may otherwise not be widely known to the peer networks.

This in turn forces a response and the victim of the social media feels belittled and diminished. Reputation is equally important to children amongst their peers as it is to adults, and their responses have been ones of significant violence including murder.

7.13 Greenwich Youth Justice Service works closely with Children's Social Care and placements to ensure that when there is a possibility of remand either to custody or the Local Authority, we work collaboratively on an alternative for the Court's consideration. Children who are at risk of remand are highlighted to the Group Leader for Casework and Service Lead to provide additional support if required and ensure a prompt response from all partners.

7.14 Training has been delivered to Children Social Care to help colleagues understand the time pressures and Criminal Court expectations. Where a child is in the care of the Local Authority or open to Children's Services, the social worker attends Court both as reassurance to the child and to facilitate direct communication to the Court regarding Children Social Care plans and interventions. Our global majority cohort represent a significant disproportionality in custody at 85%.



8. Our quality assurance framework

8.1 We have a robust quality assurance framework which takes on the form of appreciative enquiry audit cycle, peer observations and service user feedback. Monthly cycle, factoring in our national standards, key performance indicators and reflective of the revised HMIP inspection framework.

8.2 We have recently introduced a Quality Assurance Sub-Group (of the YJMB). This is a bi-monthly meeting looking at key areas of service performance, audit activity and ultimately the quality of practice throughout.

The purpose is to offer reassurance around areas of strength for the service (including partners), highlight areas of practice which require development/ improvement and highlight key themes and considerations for partners.

The sub-group will feed into the Youth Justice Management Board on a quarterly basis.

8.3 Monthly audits are undertaken within each of the standards for children framework. The audit tool has also been refreshed to incorporate the new HMIP inspection framework for 'YJS'.

8.4 Practice observations, peer reviews, reflective practice meetings and appreciative enquiry style feedback (from children and families) have been incorporated within quarterly cycles which will further diversify the range of approaches utilised to best understand the quality of practice throughout the service.



9. Our progress against last year's plan

9.1 We acknowledge that the service continues to move from strength to strength setting out high practice standards and ambitions. When measured against the annual Youth Justice Service Plan 2024, we are proud to have delivered on the following:

Priority 1 - Promote a whole system, child first approach that sees and addresses the particular needs, capacities, rights and potential of each child.

9.2 In July 2024, a permanent Strategic Lead covering the Youth Justice Service was appointed and has been in post since this time. One of the key priorities of the Strategic Lead was to develop and implement an Adolescent Safeguarding service to ensure that the responsibility of risk management, safeguarding and welfare is shared across the partnership in relation to extra-familial risk.

This service proposal has been through design phase and with approval and sign off from the Directorate Management Team of Children's Services. There is an implementation timeline in place for the service launch in September 2025.

9.3 The Strategic Lead for the service is also a portfolio holder for targeted family support and sits as a member of the Early Help and Prevention Board ensuring that there is better/appropriate join up between the activities of the Early Help System with the Youth Justice Service.

9.4 We have continued to grow in strengths in relation to the European Corporation in Science and Technology (COST) study broadening our understanding of the language needs of children

involved in the criminal justice system. This has been in partnership with the University of Greenwich and has seen presentation and delivery at the YJS Heads Meeting as well as at European conferences throughout the last year. The service is keen on taking and applying learning, thinking about incorporation into tools and resources for work with children displaying with language needs.

9.5 Linked to the above, the service has continued to develop its own awareness and understanding of children with Neurodiversity, the range of needs they have and the impact of their neurodiversity on their behaviours. A significant piece of work was undertaken in this regard with multi-agency deep dive audit commissioned by the Quality Assurance and Audit Subgroup of the Greenwich Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This work was led by the Designated Doctor for Safeguarding at the South East London Integrated Care System.

9.6 This activity reviewed the journey and lived experiences of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities of children who encountered the Youth Justice Service and highlighted several pertinent recommendations for the service and the wider partnership. The learning is being shared with all relevant Boards including the YJS Management Board with tangible actions identified.

9.7 Working in partnership to prevent school exclusions remains a challenge across the board however there is still an ambition to see a reduction of permanent exclusions for children open to the Youth Justice Service. In this regard, when children have been permanently excluded as a last resort, the service has advocated for a suitable alternative offer for them.

9.8 The service has remained engaged in both service and directorate specific works on anti-racism, has considered this in the context of its ongoing work direct with global majority children and families but also reflected on case recordings (assessment, intervention and planning) as well as in advocacy for children, training needs for the service, staff reflection and the workforce culture.

Priority 2: Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

9.9 We are delighted that we remain subject to excellent feedback following our scrutiny panels which have looked into the effectiveness of our Out of Court Disposal Panel. Our processes have reflected changes in line with the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool (PDAT) and are ensuring timely, needs led responses to children in order to divert them away from further criminality.

9.10 We have continued to work with our Policing partners on their own development journey and have taken forward agreed actions in relation to the Met Child First policy. This has included their race action plan, locally they are delivering on Operation Sharda. In addition, we have participated in the Pan London Stop and Search Pilot looking into children that have come into early contact with the police.

9.11 Community Safety have explored the range of powers available at their disposal. In light of the waves of community violence that have rippled through the Royal Borough of Greenwich, Community Protection Warnings and Notices have been a disrupter for children (over 16yrs old) in imposing restrictions on locations/hotspots, deterring from criminal/anti-social behaviours or providing forms of civil enforcement to accompany criminal conditions.

9.12 We have reviewed our MACE arrangements this year to ensure our focus on prevention and diversion, this includes attendance by our youth services who are also delivering on the Vanguard programme – A Pan London Service delivered by youth services in conjunction with Health that works with children identified as being 'at risk' or involved in serious youth violence.



9.13 The Well-Being in Schools Hub (WISH) - Greenwich's early intervention work in schools, has been established and is now working in several secondary schools to provide intensive support to children and families where school attendance is a concern. We recognise that school is where children should be and where positive relationships and development has the best opportunity to flourish. By addressing attendance related issues early on, we hope to change the trajectory of a child's risk factors from increasing.

Priority 3: Promote 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.

9.14 In the summer of 2024 we were delighted to have delivered on the Summer Jobs Programme partnering up with the Skills Mill Social Enterprise to offer paid work experience to 10 children open to the service. This is a four-year project, we saw great success with several of our children on the programme going on to secure paid, permanent employment or access further training.

We have also seen this as a successful mechanism for supporting desistance with none of those children going on to reoffend. We hope this project goes from strength to strength and that more of our children aged 16+ can access this intervention programme.

9.15 The above programme represents just one of several activities in a raft of summer programmes that the service is intent on delivering, all for the purpose and benefit of developing interests, hobbies

and positive activities to support pro-social identities of children. This has also included the range of reparation activities that young people are engaged with.

9.16 We continue our dialogue with partners to explore opportunities for our children including paid apprenticeships, but also local based organisations that could provide social value by giving back in our local area.

9.17 Our creative arts offer goes from strength to strength with a wider range of opportunities for children to be involved and discover their talents. This is also an opportunity for children to discover their borough through a creative eye with exploration activities.

9.18 Our group work offer has expanded in 2024/25 and we have delivered programmes specifically targeted at Global Majority children recognising the additional discrimination they experience in the wider community and the impact of racism on their development and perception of the world. This has focused on understanding their histories and motivation and aspirations recognising theirs and their families' strengths and resilience.

Priority 4: Encourage children's active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

9.19 In addition to our direct work with children where we capture views and develop our plans through our assessments and reports which are done in conjunction with children and families, we are pleased that we have a paid representative involved as a young commissioner.

We will be working with Commissioning this year to increase these opportunities. We have also worked with our children in a paid capacity to produce workshops for partners and academics who are involved in COST Youth Justice Language.

9.20 Understanding our children's experiences enables us to better plan interventions and services that interests and develops them.

9.21 We have also offered paid sessional work in the support of our Creative Arts project developing talent from within the space and providing opportunities for children.

9.22 Our Maritime Museum projects offer an opportunity for children and parents to attend together and share in the experiences as part of the final session.

9.23 We use feedback from group work to design and develop our offer including recommissioning of services that children have told us they found useful.

9.24 We have a new children's participation group lead by our Group Leader for Specialists' Services which meets quarterly to provide a specific formalised mechanism for children to feedback their experiences; what is working well, what we need to do more of and what we need to do differently. The group will also feed into the Youth

Justice Management Board to ensure their views are captured at a strategic level.

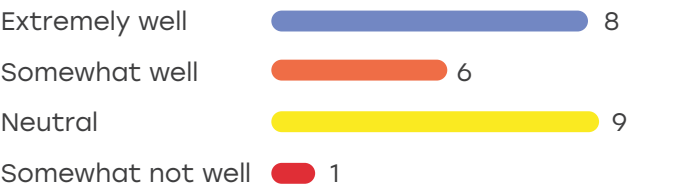
9.25 Our observations of practice include feedback from children on their experiences of the Youth Justice Service and are important for staff development and feedback.

9.26 We asked our children about how they were involved in decisions made about them... these are some of the responses we received:

- "Meetings, phone calls, video calls and text"
- "I tell them what is needed"
- "They speak to me first"
- "Ask for consent, check ins regular"
- "Let me know what my options are"
- "I am involved with every decision"

9.27 Captured below are the children's views of the Youth Justice Service.

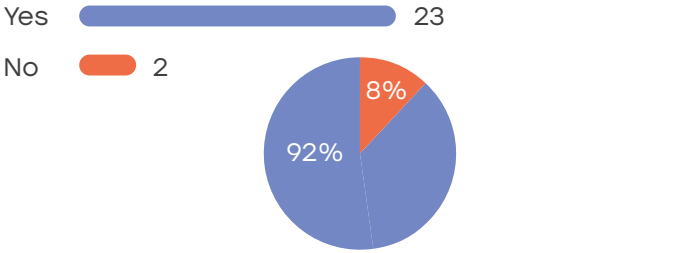
How well does your YJS officer understand what has happened in your life



How well does the service make sure you understand what is happening or what they are doing with you?



Do you feel that the YJS want you to be safe and not get into any more trouble



10. Our plan for the next three years

Priority 1 - Promote a whole system, child first approach that sees and addresses the particular needs, capacities, rights and potential of each child.

What we will do	By when	Who is responsible	What difference will it make?	Measure of success/ how we will know
Implement an action plan following the multi-agency deep dive SEND Audit and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to improve our response to children's needs. To include our identification, interventions and response to neurodiversity.	June 2026	Health subgroup	Better developed interventions will improve the whole system response to children	Review of SEND cohort for YJS children
Develop psychologically informed interventions and staff training in techniques	June 2027	Health Subgroup - CAMHS	Additional support for children to better manage their emotions who are below Tier 3 threshold or not ready for CAMHS support.	Number of staff trained Number of interventions delivered
Review Learning from European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) study into the language needs of children involved in the Criminal Justice system. This project is in its 2nd year.	2025-2028	Service Lead Youth Justice David Borland Integrated Commissioning Director	Raise awareness about the need of assessment to establish the language abilities of the youth before engaging in justice proceedings and to develop a blueprint of assessment tools targeting phenomena typically featured in police and court appearances	Dissemination of learning, including assessment tools. Improved understanding of the importance of assessment of language skills prior to interview and Court appearances.
Work with Oxleas on developing and designing a single point of entry for children mental health	June 2026	Health Subgroup	Children will be included on the design and development of services to improve early access to mental health and wellbeing support.	Number of children involved in the design
Review our interface with Health systems and data collection	June 2026	Health Subgroup	Improve our understanding of children's health needs to improve our interventions and timeliness of response.	Clear pathways and information to staff Increased use of appropriate resources and clear information to management boards

Priority 2: Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

What we will do	By when	Who is responsible	What difference will it make?	Measure of success/ how we will know
Delivery of detached youth engagement via a bus in emerging and/ or hot spot serious violence locations	March 2026	Community Safety	Enhances resources in these areas, regular visibility and a safe space for young people in their local community.	Number of sessions delivered; Number attending sessions; Number YP signposted for support; Number of locations attended; Number of surveys completed
Utilise new technology opportunities to improve our identification of children's needs and vulnerabilities working with NEC and digital services. Launch the Ending Male Violence strategy	June 2026	Youth Justice Service Lead	Improve our response times and understanding of the impact of our interventions.	Improved recording of impacts and outcomes as a Youth Justice Partnership
Disseminate the learning from the consultation with Children and develop an action plan which includes their ideas.	March 2026	Community safety	Interventions and design of the strategy will be developed based on the consultation with Children and the local community	Suite of measures including Workshops and training delivered to schools.
Implement a task and finish group alongside partners to combat the increasing number of FTE's and ways to	Autumn 2025 (To be reviewed quarterly)	Youth Justice Service, Policing, Young Greenwich, Community Safety & Education Services	Better understanding themes and trends amongst FTE's and seeking to disrupt the factors contributing to children entering into the criminal justice system.	Reductions & stabilisation in the volume of FTE's.



Priority 3: Promote 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.

What we will do	By when	Who is responsible	What difference will it make?	Measure of success/ how we will know
Further deliver the MyEnds Partnership Project which provides a holistic package of support and interventions to young people, adults and local communities most affected by serious violence (Woolwich Dockyard and Glyndon areas)	March 2026	Community Safety	Provides a wide range of interventions in highly targeted priority locations, which are in high need of support to prevent and reduce violence.	Number attending sessions and number of sessions delivered. All services delivering under this project have individual VRU set measures to capture impact
Continue to deliver a partnership response to critical incidents in the borough	March 2026	Community Safety	Provides timely interventions and support to those most impacted by critical incidents	Number of activities delivered; number engaged/attending; number of sessions delivered; surveys completed/feedback; VRU evaluation report.
Review our Victim Offer and pathways of support to children who are victims of crime.	April 2026	YJS Restorative Justice service	Victims of crime will be clear about the offer they can expect to receive. Services are aware of their role is safeguarding and supporting victims.	Feedback from victims Number of victims supported.
Revamp our public protection response to align with Children Service Developments and Policing Structures.	May 2026	Proactive Policing strand Youth Justice Service Lead	Children and the community will feel safer and better co-ordination of response across policing strands.	Reduction of serious incidents in the borough Children and families feedback

Priority 4: Encourage children’s active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

What we will do	By when	Who is responsible	What difference will it make?	Measure of success/ how we will know
Create Paid Youth Advisory Board on Safety and Crime Prevention	April 2026	Group Leader Specialist Services + Commissioning Participation	Children will be at the heart of YJS developments. The children will have paid work experience.	Plans will more clearly articulate the child’s voice and contribution.
Develop opportunities to work with the University of Greenwich to provide our children with a range of enrichment opportunities	June 2026	Group Leader Specialist	Children will be exposed to higher education in their local area	Number of children engaged with opportunities. Increased range of positive group work opportunities
Develop enrichment activities for children on part time education timetables or tutoring	June 2026	Education Subgroup	Children will be encouraged to develop their skills and interests. Children will continue to have a routine and pro social structure to their day	Number of children engaged with opportunities.
Explore opportunities to increase short courses throughout the year for post 16 children	June 2026	Education Subgroup	Children entering the Criminal Justice system regardless of when will be offered a opportunity to engage with a training programme	Reduction in the number of NEET post 16 children.
Work with Street Law and interested parties on developing additional support to children on stop and search including rights awareness and reporting.	April 2026	Service Lead Youth Justice	Children are more aware of their rights and have a safe space to escalate their concerns.	Number of children who access the service.



11. Our Workforce

11.1 We believe that people working with children most vulnerable in our society and opened to public services should be well-trained, well supported, professionally curious and always open to learning. Our Youth Justice Service (YJS) is made up of professionals who care about doing the best job possible, for children, their families, and the wider community in delivering high quality services.

11.2 To ensure that this happens we:

- **Invest in our workforce** – All staff have regular access to a wider range of training combining a number of internal and external practice resources. This includes but is not limited to Greenwich Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, The Practice Academy, The Youth Justice Board Resource Hub, London Innovation and Improvement Alliance and Research in Practice.

In addition, all staff are supported with regular supervision (individual, group and joint agency supervision) helping them to grow in their roles, perform their duties with confidence, be offered clear guidance and direction and support young people maximising the resources available.
- **Work in partnership** - Our service comprises of individuals from a range of different agencies and disciplines including education, health, probation and the police as well as close partnership working with children’s services and community safety.

This enables a diversity of thought which enables healthy, respectful challenge and continuous learning from one another to best support children. Peer mentoring/support, coaching and reflective discussions/spaces are some of the enablers to fantastic partnership relationships.

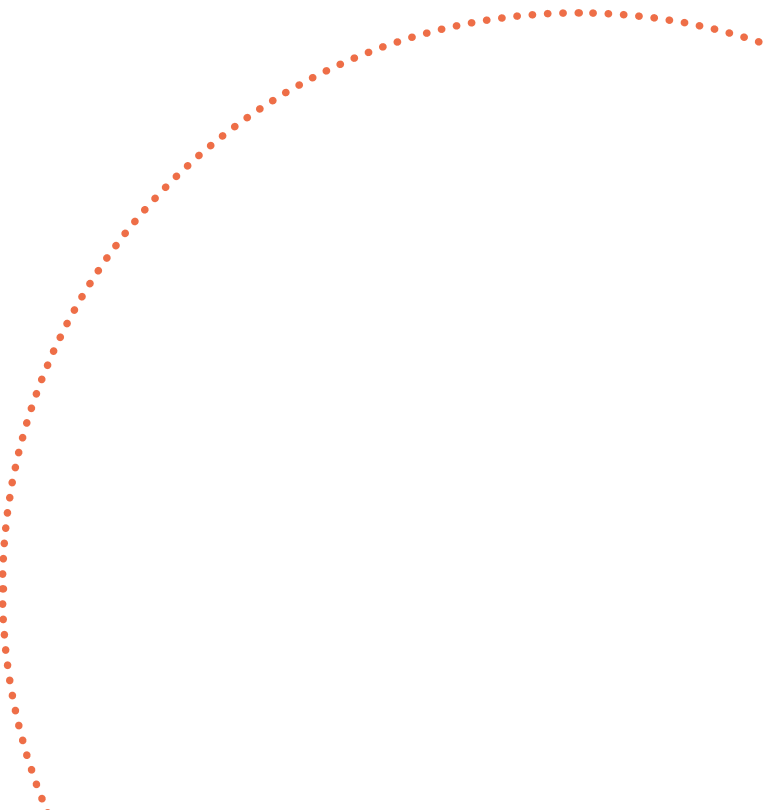
- **Listen and improve** - We use a combination of direct and indirect feedback from children, families and staff to inform and shape our service delivery making sure that we are meeting the needs of those we support. We like to take a “You Said, We Did” approach to feedback demonstrating that continuous learning approach and “closing the loop”. Data, analysis, complaints, case audits and reviews are central to helping us identify what’s working well and where we need to improve further.
- **Call out racism and inequality** – As a council we are dedicated to tackling structural racism and inequality. Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice is a core component of all we do and is fundamental to who we are as a service. We have built measures into our practice tools to further assist with our own self-evaluation and appraisal of our performance in this regard and will always advocate for fairness, respect, cultural competency and social graces. We are delighted to have a highly skilled and diverse service with lived experience and representation at all levels of our staffing structure.

- **Leadership at all levels** - Whether someone is new to the team or in a management role, everyone is encouraged to lead from where they are, share and contribute ideas and support others. Leadership is defined by the behaviours demonstrated rather than solely by the roles/ titles assumed.
- **Follow proven approaches** - We use the 70-20-10 model: 70% of learning through experience, 20% through others, and 10% through formal training. We also ensure that work undertaken is rooted in evidence and/or research
- **Expect high standards** - All staff are expected to complete professional training, including national qualifications like the Youth Justice Certificate in Effective Practice. Managers also complete leadership and supervision training to make sure they can support teams effectively.

11.3 We have a stable workforce (See Table Below) with stable leadership in place and a healthy workplace culture which continues to encourage and promote psychological safety, staff-wellbeing and an attitude of high support high challenge.

11.4 By building a strong, highly skilled and reflective team, we aim to offer you a service that is fair, consistent, and genuinely focused on your needs and potential.

Role	No of people in employment
Strategic Leads	2
Operational Managers	6
Operational Practitioners (Case Managers)	10
Operational Practitioners (Specialist)	8
Seconded Posts (Probation, Education, Health)	6
Police Officers (Seconded)	2
Sessional Staff	3
Administrative Staff	4
Total	41



12. Challenges, risks and issues

Identified risk	Potential harm	Mitigations
Continued increase of First Time Entrants (FTE's)	Socio-economic factors and community tensions continue to serve as a driver for children coming to increased notice of Police attention for moderate/high level offences.	Ongoing work with Education, Community Safety, Police and Youth Sector partners at an early intervention level to ensure that prevention and disruption measures are in place and that children are positively engaged at the earliest opportunity.
Use of remand and custody	Linked to socio-economic factors, young people in the local area continue to be engaged in grave offence types which place others and the wider community at risk of significant harm.	<p>We will ensure that we maintain robust risk assessments and ensure that appropriate thresholds for custodial remands/sentences are met.</p> <p>We will consider developments in this space including the London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) where appropriate as suitable alternatives to detention.</p> <p>We will build on our strong partnerships with Children's Social Care to consider suitable remands to local authority accommodation where appropriate.</p>
Custody provisions for children	Harm caused by inter prison violence, high levels of contraband, overcrowded prison estate and staff shortages	We will work with YCS and YJB to consider how best YJS Service can support our children on remand or sentenced. We will work with the health and security departments to ensure community associations and information is shared appropriately.
Post 16 offer	<p>We have high ambitions for our children and want to ensure that they are supported with further education, employment/training and work readiness to promote desistance and a life away from criminality.</p> <p>We would like to ensure variety in the range of offers put on the table for our children.</p>	<p>We are engaged with current opportunities as well as horizon scanning for future opportunities for our children.</p> <p>This includes the Skills Mills (Summer Programme), engagement with our Career, Employment, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) service.</p> <p>We continue to explore opportunities with commissioned services and local businesses, particularly those than can offer Social Value to our children.</p>

Management Information System (Pathways) - A challenging migration over to the management information which sees disruption to our delivery and capture of performance data.	Continued disruption to the management information system meaning that accurate records cannot be kept, performance is not accurately or consistently tracked. This will lead to manual measures being implemented to ensure robust performance management and oversight of operational delivery.	Regular meetings with system provider to ensure that migration is well managed and the system delivers on all of the key functions it is required to.
National Social Care Reforms – fails to recognise or preserve the uniqueness of the Youth Justice Service and seeks a change of delivery/integration which causes disruption to service delivery.	The unique qualities and features of the Youth Justice Service are lost; The Youth Justice Service are engaged in a whole system staffing restructure; changes to existing delivery models, staffing and management arrangements or where the service is positioned across the wider children's services.	<p>There is clarity about the directorates approach taken towards implementing the national reforms. The requirements of the Youth Justice Service are well understood, have been considered and will be upheld in any eventuality that the service falls within the scope of the reform.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership of Children and Families Services advocate for the needs of the service.</p>
Restorative justice and victim support	Victims do not receive the services they are entitled to due to delays in consent being obtained and lengthy Court delays. Fragmented service provisions.	<p>We will work with the Metropolitan Police to improve the speed of communication and data protection concerns.</p> <p>Review with police and partners information that is offered to victims prior to convictions. Work with other provides to improve information flow and support so victims are not contacted repeatedly for the same information.</p>
Serious Community Incidents	Children and the community are harmed through outbreaks of serious violence	Continue to develop our community responses and explore the redesign of our youth spaces and offer.

Appendix A: Youth Justice Service staffing structure



..... Casework Teams Specialist Interventions Teams Business Support Team

Appendix B: Youth Justice Management Board membership

Youth Justice Board Management Board Representatives

Chair: Onder Beter
Senior Assistant Director
Children Social Care

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People: Adel Khaireh

Board Members

Jim Aspinall;
Detective Chief
Inspector Police

David Borland;
Integrated
Commission
Director

Vicki Cuff; Senior
Assistant Direction
Inclusion Learning
and Achievement

Karl Mittelstadt;
Assistant
Director Quality
Improvement

Eric Beckford;
Head of Operation
Function Probation

Roneeta Campbell-Butler; Head of
Children and Young
People Integrated
Commissioning

Lucinda Hibberd;
Service Lead Family
and Adolescent
Service

Charlene Noel; Head
of Community Safety
and Integrated
Enforcement

Helen Buttivant;
Assistant Director
Public Health

Bob Collins;
Greenwich CAMHS
Operational
Manager

Charlie Macdonald;
Director Charlton
Athletic Trust

Charlotte Parkes;
Head of Integrated
Commissioning
Public Health

YJB Monitor: Shahan Ahmed

Youth Justice Service Representatives

Shaba Dachi; Strategic Lead
Adolescent Safeguarding and
Family Support

Emma Clements;
Service Lead
Youth Justice

Appendix C: Budget costs and contributions 2025/26

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board	472,919			472,919
Local Authority	1,463,394			1,463,394
Police				0
Police and Crime Commissioner	147,654			147,654
Probation	63,288			63,288
Health	241,072			241,072
* Welsh Government				0
Other	168,473			168,473
Total	2,556,800	0	0	2,556,800

* Welsh YOTs only

A photograph of two young women standing side-by-side, smiling. They are wearing dark tank tops and jeans. The background is a bright yellow circle with a dotted line around it.

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Royal Borough of Greenwich

Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2025 to 2028

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