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The following report is an Information Item for the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

- 1 Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Offending Service: Youth Justice Plan 2021-23.



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23RD NOVEMBER 2021

**SUBJECT: BLAENAU GWENT & CAERPHILLY YOUTH OFFENDING
SERVICE: YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2021 – 2023**

REPORT BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present Scrutiny Committee with the 2021-2023 Youth Justice Plan for the joint Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Offending Service (YOS).

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Production of a Youth Justice Plan is a statutory requirement under Section 40 (4) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

2.2 Youth Justice Plans are produced and submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales, which monitors the operation of Youth Justice Services, a responsibility that is not devolved to the Welsh Government.

2.3 The Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Justice Plan, attached at Appendix 1, has been produced in full consultation with all statutory partners and is being presented to Scrutiny Committee in both Local Authorities for information purposes only.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the content of the Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Justice Plan for 2021 – 2023.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure Scrutiny Committee is aware of the work of the YOS and that the Service is fully compliant with statutory requirements.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS is hosted and managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council and the YOS Manager is jointly supervised by the Heads of Children's Services in both Local Authorities.

5.2 The attached Youth Justice Plan provides a review of the previous Plan for the 2018-2021 period including an overview of performance of the YOS against national performance indicators and the working arrangements employed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Plan then identifies areas for future development in order to meet statutory requirements going forward.

5.3 The Youth Justice Plan is a very detailed document and although it is presented for information only, if Scrutiny Committee Members have any particular issues, these can be raised directly with the Head of Children's Services.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no assumptions made or presumed in this report.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no direct funding implications for the Council arising from this report.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel or HR implications arising from this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The report is for information purposes and reflects the views of consultees.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

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Social Services Senior Management Team
YOS Local Management Board

Attachments:

Appendix 1: Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Offending Service – Youth Justice Plan for 2021/21
(Please note that this report may not be fully accessible, if you experience any issues or would like to receive this in an alternative format please contact the report author)

BLAENAU GWENT & CAERPHILLY

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YOUTH
OFFENDING
SERVICE

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2021-23

Michaela Rogers
Service Manager
July 2021

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Foreword

As joint chairs of the Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Offending Service (YOS) Local Management Board (LMB) we are pleased to set out this two-year strategic partnership plan. This 2021/2023 plan sets out our key priorities which have been informed by, and developed from, our continuing good performance and our knowledge and experience from lessons learnt.

As a partnership we have a strong ethos of “Child First”, which we know can enhance lives, reduce offending, promote safer communities and lead to fewer victims, as evidenced in the recently published “Child First Justice: The research evidence-base” report from Loughborough University. The partnership also has at the heart of its work the vision of the All Wales Youth Justice Strategy “Children and Young People First” with a focus on the five priorities identified in the strategy.

On behalf of the LMB we would like to thank the staff and volunteers working within, and supporting, the YOS, for their outstanding work and support to children and families. We acknowledge that the achievements of the partnership are only made possible through their hard work, commitment and dedication.

Gareth Jenkins and Tanya Evans

Joint Chairs of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Local Management Board (LMB)

Introduction

The Youth Justice Plan is produced and submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB), which monitors the operation of Youth Justice Services, a responsibility not devolved to the Welsh Government (WG). The annual plans are required to be produced by statute (section 40 (4) Crime and Disorder Act 1998). This Act places a duty on the local authority to formulate and implement an annual plan in consultation and co-operation with partner agencies.

The strategic aim of the Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Offending Service (YOS) partnership remains focused on preventing offending and reducing reoffending by children. This will be achieved by the delivery of integrated services that ensure children are safeguarded, the public and victims of crime are protected and those who enter the youth justice system are supported with robust risk management arrangements. Children will be supported to reintegrate into their local communities without offending and wherever possible with support from their families.

YOS Vision Statement

Inspiring, motivating and supporting children to live crime free lives.

We will do this by:

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- Preventing and diverting children from anti social and offending behaviour
- Valuing the diversity of children and help them to achieve better outcomes
- Ensuring children are kept safe and the risk to the public is minimised
- Providing effective support to families and victims engaged with the service whilst working to ensure safer, inclusive communities
- Ensuring restorative practice ethos, principles and approaches are embedded in every aspect of YOS service delivery
- Investing in staff and volunteers to ensure a professional, skilled and knowledgeable workforce
- Working in partnership

This plan will also support priorities within:

- Youth Justice Board (YJB) National Standards 2019
- YJB Strategic Plan 2021-24
- The Gwent Police and Crime Plan – “Delivering a Safer Gwent” 2017/21
- The Local Authorities Future Generations Wellbeing Plans
- Gwent Safeguarding Board Strategic Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23
- Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales November 2020
- The Local Authorities Safer Communities Plans
- Children & Young People First - the Welsh Government and the Youth Justice Board's joint strategy to improve services for children who offend or those at risk of offending
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Welsh Government Youth Engagement and Progression Framework
- Welsh Language Minimum Standards
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

This plan reviews the progress of the 2018/21 plan. It also reviews the progress of the “YOS 2020/22 Recovery Plan” along with the YOS performance data and key priority areas for 2018/21 based on improved outcomes for children. The plan covers a 2-year period with an annual review.

The YOS welcomes the opportunity to continue working in partnerships with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in order to further develop joint key priorities for the future. This plan also considers the annual “Safer Gwent Strategic Assessment 2018-19” published in June 2019.

The YOS also receives funding from the Welsh Government to implement the Welsh Government and the Youth Justice Board's joint strategy to improve services for children who offend or those at risk of offending called “Children and Young People First”. This funding is through the Children and Communities Grant. In May 2019 the Ministry of Justice published the “Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales” and associated Implementation Plan. Activity to respond to the Blueprint is funded by this grant.

The YOS has also incorporated messages and learning from the below range of sources over the past 24 months:

- YJB National Standards Audits 2019

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- YOS v Police National Computer (PNC) First Time Entrant (FTE) Quarterly Figures Audit January 2019-December 2019
- Transfer Of Children From Police Custody - Monitoring Review Panel Annual Reports for 2019 and 2020
- Annual local authority education audits 2019/20
- YOS Resettlement and Reintegration Panel Report 2018/19 and 2019/20
- Quarterly Education, Training & Employment Audits 2019/20 and 2020/21
- Serious Youth Violence Audit Reports for 2019/20 and 2020/21
- Findings from the completion of the YJB Disproportionality Toolkits 2019/20 and 2020/21
- The quality of education and training for young people engaged with youth offending teams – Estyn Report 2018
- Local Management Board (LMB) Self Assessment Findings – Organisational Delivery/Leadership & Governance
- Local Management Board Work Plan 2019/21
- Local Management Board Education, Training & Employment (ETE) Improvement Plan 2020/22
- Quarterly Participation Reports 2019/20 and 20/21
- Ministry of Justice Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales and associated Implementation Plan 2019
- How to Make Resettlement Constructive - YJB 2018
- HMIP Assessing Risk of Harm Guidance 2019
- Harmful Sexual Behaviours By Children – Children and Young Peoples Centre For Justice – May 2021
- Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS ViewPoint evaluations 2019/20 and 2020/21
- Testing an Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach for children with complex needs and/or prolific/persistent offending histories
- Wales Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators
- YJB Reoffending Toolkit Analysis/YJB Remand Toolkit Analysis 2019/20 and 20/21
- HMIP thematic inspection –Referral Orders - do they achieve their potential?
- Desistance and children – HMIP thematic inspection 2016
- Transitions Arrangements: A follow-up inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation
- The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach in Wales 2017
- Quality & Impact inspection The effectiveness of probation work in Gwent 2017
- The Knowledge Gap - Safeguarding missing children in Wales - September 2017
- The Lammy Review - An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System - September 2017
- HMIP - Thematic Inspection Report - The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public 2017
- Journey to Justice: Prioritising the wellbeing of children involved in criminal justice processes relating to sexual exploitation and abuse – Barnardo's 2017
- The state of youth justice 2017. An overview of trends and developments
- Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody October 2017
- HMI Prisons annual report on children in custody
- MoJ and YJB National Survey Report – Prevention

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- YJB Effective Practice Briefing - Prevention in youth justice
- Out-of-court disposal work in youth offending teams. An inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services March 2017
- Trauma Informed Youth Justice - Effective Practice Paper –YJB
- Ending The Criminalisation Of Children In Residential Care - Howard League For Penal Reform - Briefings 1 & 2
- Youth Justice Resettlement Consortia: A Process Evaluation
- National Protocol for Case Responsibility - Practice Guidance for Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales - January 2018
- AssetPlus Joint Working Protocol - A framework for collaborative case management
- A 'sexting' surge or a conceptual muddle? the challenges of analogue law and ambiguous crime recording – The Police Foundation 2018
- Thematic report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons “Incentivising and promoting good behaviour”
- All-Wales guidance for the appropriate management and transfer of children and young people by the Police and Local Authorities
- Managing extremism for under 18s - Community practice advice – YJB August 2018
- Guidance for joint targeted area inspections on the theme: Child sexual exploitation, children associated with gangs and at risk of exploitation gangs and children missing from home, care or education
- Independent Enquiry Child Sexual Abuse - Sexual Abuse of Children in Custodial Institutions: 2009–2017 Investigation Full Report & Summary Report February 2019

In 2018 a new inspection programme was launched by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). Work to communicate the new framework/programme and its Domains has happened via:

- The holding of two YOS Local Management Board (LMB) workshop events
- LMB self assessment
- Development event for YOS staff
- Review and benchmarking exercise against published YOT inspections under the new programme

Over the next 12 months there are a number of thematic inspections planned by HM Inspectorate of Probation. Learning and actions from these inspections will be included in any future reviews of this plan. During 2020 the following inspection reports were published which have informed the YOS practice:

- “A thematic review of the work of youth offending services during the COVID -19 pandemic 2020”
- ‘Feeling heard’: partner agencies working together to make a difference for children with mental ill health 2020
- “A joint thematic inspection of Integrated Offender Management 2020”

Quality Assurance

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The performance of the YOS continues to be monitored by the YOS Management Team and the LMB via quarterly Performance Reports, quarterly Participation Reports, toolkit/audit findings including themes identified and action plans relating to inspections or specific areas of YOS delivery. National Standards compliance, quality assurance activity and budget/resources information including staffing and IT are also closely monitored.

The YOS uses self-assessment as a valuable learning process and endeavours to be open and honest with regard to reflecting and evaluating current practice. The YOSs “*Quality Assurance Framework 2020/23*” (please see below) underpins the YOSs drive for improved outcomes and the delivery of a quality service. Statements made have been based on evidence that is available externally for scrutiny. Information has been drawn from a range of sources to inform self assessment, areas of good practice and areas for development including:

- YJB National Indicators and Welsh National Indicators Performance
- Safeguarding audits undertaken in 2020 on a number of cases from across all areas of service delivery
- Full case audits undertaken in 2020 from across all areas of service delivery
- Victim services audits undertaken in 2020 on a number of cases from across all areas of service delivery
- Code Of Practice For Victims of Crime compliance self assessment 2020 and 2021
- Analysis of feedback during 2020 from children using Viewpoint and other evaluation methods; victims of youth crime, sentencers, volunteers, and parents/carers
- Robust quality assurance processes for assessments, planning, reviews and case closures
- Reoffending/remand toolkit analysis
- YJB National Standards Audits
- Education, Training and Employment (ETE) audits
- The timely sharing of reports with children and parent/carers before Panel and Court appearances
- Lateral Checks (Risk Checks) for assessment visits
- Caretaking cases in and out of the YOS
- Signed Community Resolution (CR) Plans and Disposal Form completion rates
- Self Assessment completion by children for assessments during 2020
- Complaints and Compliments processes

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YOS Quality
Assurance Framework

Pandemic – Coronavirus

The current Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, which began in December 2019, remains a major public health emergency. The response of the YOS to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak continues to be proactive and decisive. However, the YOS also know that as an organisation they need to be ready to act quickly if required, by responding to the rapidly changing situation and by ensuring that appropriate plans are in place to deliver key service areas, whilst protecting the interests of staff, volunteers, children and families and the wider communities. Numerous risk assessments have been created and

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shared with staff and volunteers regarding current practice and service delivery. The YOS continues to follow official advice from key agencies such as Welsh Government and Public Health Wales which includes hand washing guidance, the provision and use of personal protection equipment (PPE), the provision of hand sanitiser, social distancing and essential work messages. The situation is fast moving, and the advice is being constantly reviewed and updated.

The YOS has been maintaining contact with children and families via various platforms including FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, telephone, text, messenger, email and Royal Mail. Interventions are being delivered using many creative methods including the use of YouTube clips, worksheets sent through the post, emailed resources to parents/carers, discussions etc. If a child had no means of contact, the YOS has purchased a basic mobile phone to enable telephone contact. However, if an engagement/ compliance, public protection or safeguarding situation arose/escalated requiring face to face contact this has been facilitated via risk assessments.

However, at the end of July 2020 the YOS reviewed working practices to start moving forward as they moved further out of lockdown. For the YOS the two main areas were:

- Dropping off and collecting items from children, parents, volunteers etc
- Visiting children at their properties, remaining outside whilst ensuring confidentiality and following the Welsh Government's social distancing and staying safe guidance for risk management (serious harm/safeguarding), engagement/compliance improvement or responding to concerns regarding wellbeing in general

When schools reopened the YOS was then able to see some children in school premises with social distancing and personal protection equipment (PPE) in place. In January 2021 the YOS was able to start using its Cre8tive workshop for 1:1 appointments with some children socially distanced and opened up its office again in June 2021 to the public for appropriate face to face contact with children using risk assessed rooms and activities, Covid-19 screening questions, social distancing and the wearing of PPE.

The YOS is now considering how, as a service, it continues to slowly move forward. It will carefully plan any further easing of restrictions and what it will mean in practice, and this will be tailored to local circumstances, including any differences in approach between Wales and England given the devolution of many key areas including health and education in Wales. The YOS will also continue to work closely with its criminal justice partners to align recovery plans and practice. Progress in delivering more face to face services will be undertaken when safe to do so and may need to be reversed, and some restrictions re-imposed, in the event of any future lockdown activity. The YOS will ensure they are ready to do this in line with any wider Welsh Government messages by working closely with its partners. All learning from the past 15 months will be captured and utilised to merge new ways of working into current practice and service delivery to build a more resilient service.

The number of staff remaining in work and number of volunteers continuing to engage with the service has been incredible, along with partners supporting their seconded workers to remain YOS based. The YOS has been able to keep its office open throughout the pandemic and has a skeleton rota in place for staff based in the office on a daily basis. As a minimum this is a Team Manager, an Appropriate Adult (AA) Duty Officer and two members of the Business Support Team. All other staff and volunteers remain working from home/agile working. However, towards the latter part of June and early July 2020 staff with IT issues or wellbeing concerns also started to attend the YOS office to work on agreed days based on a rota system. Social distancing and overall numbers are monitored carefully to ensure all staff are protected, supported and the office environment remains

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safe. YOS staff and volunteers continue to do an outstanding job during challenging times.

However, it is recognised that if restrictions continue to be lifted there will be a need to support staff and volunteers to return to the workplace. This will involve the ongoing monitoring of staff and volunteer's health and wellbeing. Reassurance will be required regarding safe working practices in line with government guidelines and ongoing access to support from resources such as Care First and the Local Authority's Health & Safety Department. Areas such as engagement skills and perhaps the undertaking of some peer observations between staff to allow them to reflect on approaches etc. are some ways in which staff and volunteers could be further supported. The YOS will be guided by staff and volunteers at the appropriate time.

It's important to note that the YOS staff, volunteers, partner agencies, children and families involved with the service have adapted positively to different ways of working over the past 15 months. Various methods of remote/virtual engagement across a number of social/IT platforms have been utilised positively. At the start of the pandemic the YOS wrote to every parent/carer across all interventions explaining the service delivery and methods and thanked them for their support and understanding.

National Standards (NS)

In April 2019 the YJB published new National Standards for children in the youth justice system. They define the minimum expectation for all agencies that provide statutory services to ensure good outcomes for children in the youth justice system. At the start of 2020 the YOS completed and submitted its YJB National Standards Self Assessment. It was very pleased with the findings and outcomes across all areas. However, there are always improvements identified within any auditing process, therefore the YOS has created an action plan to develop any areas identified. During Covid-19 NS timescales/frequencies remained in place across all YOS interventions although they may be being met via different methods of communication and contact in line with government messages and safe practices for all involved.

Consultation/Participation

When creating the content of this plan the YOS Management Team consulted with staff members, Local Management Board members and volunteers. Children and families are asked for their views at all stages of the YOS delivery as outlined in the YOS Participation Strategy. All views have been incorporated into the commentary and priority actions. Members of the Local Management Board have also agreed this plan and the Chairs of the Management Board have signed it off. The YOS will begin implementing the Improvement Action Plan immediately.

Resources / Finance - Value for Money

Responsibility for resourcing the YOS is shared between the Youth Justice Effective Practice grant, statutory partners' contributions, the grant from the OPCC and the Children and Communities grant from the Welsh Government. YOS also oversees the local authority budgets provided to meet the costs of children remanded to the secure estate. There is a requirement to include details in this plan regarding how the Youth Justice Board Grant will be used. Please see attached.

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Copy of YJB Costed
Plan 21-22.xlsx

The following table summarises the total YOS budget for 2021/22 and sources of funding:

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board	366,417	0	48,016	414,433
Local Authority	626,905	0	82,151	709,056
Police	133,368	0	17,477	150,845
Police and Crime Commissioner	79,150	0	0	79,150
Probation	0	0	5,000	5,000
Health	50,166	0	6,574	56,740
Other	303,700	0	39,798	343,498
Total	1,559,706	0	199,016	1,758,722

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Structure, Governance and Partnership Arrangements

The YOS Local Management Board (LMB) provides governance to the YOS. The LMB is a high-level strategic group made up of key officers that are responsible for the strategic management of services, which are designed to prevent and reduce youth crime and anti social behaviour.

Name & Title	Authority/Organisation
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director, Children's Services (Co-Chair)	Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)
Tanya Evans, Assistant Director, Children's Services (Co-Chair)	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC)
Michaela Rogers, Service Manager	YOS
Adam Edwards, CAMHS Mental Health Advisor	Aneurin Bevan Health Board

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Mike Jones, Finance Service Manager	CCBC
Amanda Lewis, Head of Probation Delivery Unit Gwent	HM Prison & National Probation Service
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN, Education	CCBC
Ceri Edmunds, Environmental Health Manager	CCBC
Helena Hunt, Professional Lead for Community Safety	BGCBC
Lisa Adams, Senior Education Welfare Officer & CME Officer	BGCBC
Mark Congreve, Housing Officer	BGCBC
Kerry Denman, Housing Solutions Manager	CCBC
Councillor John Mason, Cabinet Member for Social Services	BGCBC
Councillor Shayne Cook, Cabinet Member for Social Services Caerphilly	CCBC
Caroline Hawkins, Policy Officer	Office of Police Crime and Commissioner, Gwent Police
Andrew Morris, Senior Legal Manager/ Lesley Kemp, Legal Team Manager	Gwent and South Wales Magistrates' Courts
Liam Thomas, Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator	BGCBC
John Poyner, Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator	CCBC
Helena Baker, Information and Performance Manager	YOS
Paty Wysom, Team Manager	Careers Wales
Richard Thomas, Detective Sergeant	Gwent Police

Governance remains firmly in place. The LMB meets quarterly and whilst the April 2020 meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19, the July 2020 meeting and subsequent meetings were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Future LMB meetings are planned and will use this virtual method for the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year. The LMB continues to scrutinise the YOS's resources, performance, participation feedback, acknowledge good performance and develop actions for improvement when necessary. The LMB undertakes annual reviews of its strategic and operational links between the YOS and its partnership structures, agencies and plans. Please see attached below.

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LMB Mapping
Exercise July 2021.doc

The YOS LMB is accountable to both local authorities Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's, which the Chairs or their representatives attend. In addition, members of the LMB report to their own individual agency / body Scrutiny Groups. Arrangements to report on the performance of the YOS to Local Authority Members, Police, Probation and Health are carried out by the respective Agency representative. The YOS is positioned within both authorities Children Services divisions and reports to both Heads of Children's Services who are members of the LMB, jointly chair the LMB and jointly line manage the YOS Service Manager.

The LMB takes an active role in ensuring that children at risk of entering, or those already involved in, the youth justice system have access to universal and specialist services within the YOS areas and that partner agency's recognise and maintain responsibility for contributing to the reduction of offending by children. This plan will be monitored by the LMB and there will continue to be a level of support and oversight from YJB Cymru. A YOS Workforce Development Strategy has been developed and reviewed to support the delivery of this plan. Please see attached below.

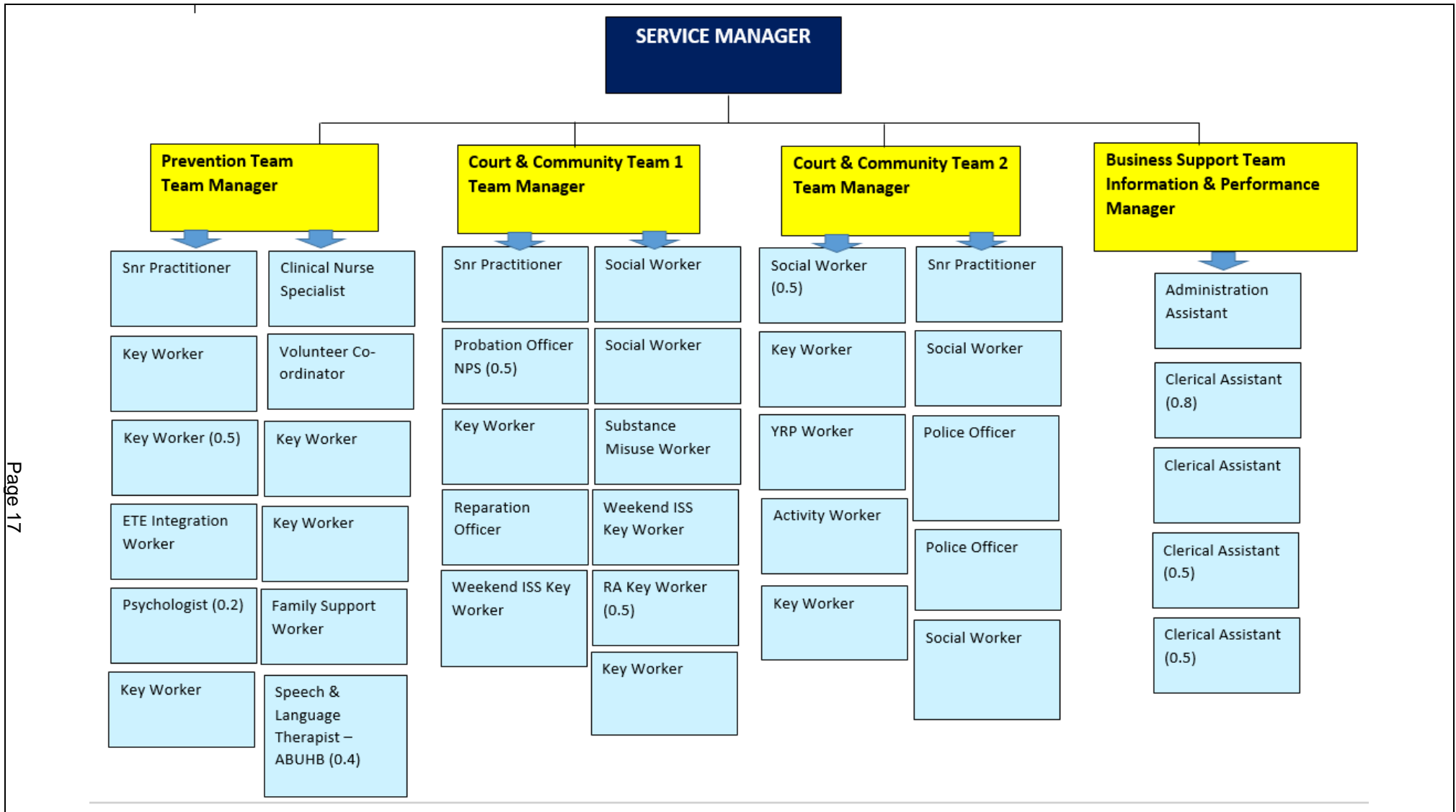


YOS Staff Volunteers
Workforce Development

The YOS Service Manager and both local authority Heads of Service sit both on the Regional Safeguarding Children Board and its Case Review subgroup. The YOS Service Manager also sits on the Safer Gwent Board, the Gwent Criminal Justice Strategy Board and both local authority Corporate Parenting Groups. The YOS Service Manager is currently the Chair of YOT Managers Cymru (YMC) and attends the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel, the Pan Wales Covid-19 Meetings and the Care Inspectorate Wales Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) Stakeholder Reference Group linked to YMC sharing responsibilities.

YOS Organisational Chart 2021

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Volunteers are an essential part of the service and the YOS recruit and train up to 30 volunteers every year for a variety of roles. Volunteers not only assist the YOS in supporting children, families and the victims of offending behaviour, but they also support the YOS undertaking work in the communities they reside. Volunteers are currently recruited by the YOS in the following roles: Mentors, Community Panel Members, Appropriate Adults, Reparation Supervisors, Bureau Community Representatives and Restorative Justice Conference Facilitators.

Wellbeing

The importance of staff, volunteers, children and family's wellbeing is a priority for the YOS. The YOS will work to ensure that Covid-19 symptomatic staff, children and families self-isolate at the earliest sign of symptoms with full support. YOS staff, volunteers, children and families are able to access testing as needed if they display any Covid-19 symptoms, and this will link them into the NHS Test and Trace system if they test positive.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, staff, volunteers, children and families may have been, and still can be, experiencing loneliness and /or isolation due to the government lockdown and/or restrictions. In an effort to save lives and prevent the spread of the virus usual activities of seeing friends, family and loved ones have been severely restricted. Experiencing loneliness or/and isolation for a prolonged period can affect mental health by causing stress, heightened anxiety and depression. To prevent this the YOS has adapted the ways to stay in touch with one another, volunteers, children and families by using technology when meeting in person isn't possible. The YOS also feels that it is important to try to maintain routines and interactions whilst being as creative as possible.

There are other areas of concern that will require a strong focus such as reengaging face to face with children and families on a regular basis, transitions including supporting children back into full time Education, Training and Employment (ETE) dependent on what provision is available post September and supporting staff and volunteers to return to the workplace when safe and appropriate to do so.

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Review of the YJ Plan 2018 /21 and Recovery Plan 2020/22

There were 48 actions in the delivery plan linked to the YOS 2018/21 Youth Justice Plan. Out of the 48 actions, 37 were fully completed, 1 was no longer feasible and 10 actions were in progress or not started and had been carried over and incorporated into the 2020/22 Recovery Plan if required.

There were 20 actions in the delivery plan linked to the YOS 2020/22 Recovery Plan. Out of the 20 actions, 14 were fully completed, 4 were in progress and 2 actions had not started. Any in progress or not started actions have been incorporated into this 2021/23 plan if required.

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Performance

Fifty-four children were cautioned or convicted in 2020/21 and were responsible for 140 offences. There has been a decrease of 8 children when comparing the previous year (2019/20) where 62 children were cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence and were responsible for 124 offences. However, the number of overall offences has increased.

Some children had multiple Youth Cautions (YCs), Youth Conditional Cautions (YCCs) or sentences and as a result the 54 children were responsible for 67 outcomes. The average number of offences for the cohort was 2.59 offences. The highest amount of offences recorded for one child was 9 offences.

The majority of the cautioned or convicted children were male, 47 out of the total 54 children (87%) and there were 7 females (13%).

Most of the cautioned or convicted children were white (98.15%). There was one child that identified as Any Other Mixed Background (1.85%).

Of the children who were cautioned or convicted the majority were aged 16 or under (79.62%). The ages were 2 at age 11 (3.70%), 1 at age 12 (1.88%), 3 at age 13 (5.55%), 7 at age 14 (13.0%), 17 at age 15 (31.5%), 13 at age 16 (24.0%) and 11 at age 17 (20.37%).

Of the children who were cautioned or convicted 10 children (18.52%) were Children Looked After (CLA) at the start of the intervention, with 8 placed in residential care (14.81%), 1 living with immediate family (1.85%) and 1 child placed in residential care at the start of the intervention but then returning home before the intervention ended. Two children became CLA during the course of the intervention and were placed in residential care (3.70%).

The highest committed offence categories in 2020/21 were:

1. Violence against the person (33%)
2. Criminal Damage (18%)
3. Motoring (14%)
4. Public Order (11%)
5. Drugs (8%)
6. Sexual Offences (4%)
7. Theft and Burglary (4%)
8. Other grouped offences (4%)
9. Breach (3%)
10. Arson (1%)

During 2020/21 violent offences remained the highest category with Criminal Damage increasing to replace Motoring as the second highest offence.

Motoring offences have decreased. In 2019/2020 there was one Racially Aggravated offence, which has not reoccurred in 2020/21. One incident of Arson has been recorded in 2020/21.

The highest committed offence categories in 2019/20 for comparison purposes were:

1. Violence against the person (31%)
2. Motoring (22%)
3. Criminal Damage (13%)
4. Public Order (10%)
5. Drugs (7%)
6. Sexual Offences (6%)
7. Theft and Burglary (5%)
8. Other grouped offences (3%)
9. Breach (2%)
10. Racially Aggravated (1%)

Quarterly reports are submitted to the LMB regarding the performance of the YOS and comparisons are made against Gwent, Wales and the YJB YOS Family for the National and Welsh indicators (where applicable). Regular updates and discussions on the YOSs performance form part of the LMB quarterly agenda and regular internal managers meetings focusing on performance are held within the YOS.

The performance of the YOS is discussed in the subsections below and the most up to date information has been used to provide information and context around the performance indicators. Where possible the most recent data has been used with comparisons to previous data referenced where possible.

First Time Entrants

Performance Data

The YJB measures First Time Entrants (FTEs) per 100,000 of the local 10 to 17-year-old population.

	Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
Rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: January – December 2019	150	139	189

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Rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population: January – December 2018	248	266	195
Percentage change from 2018 to 2019	-39.5%	-47.7%	-3%

Context

To date the YJB has only published FTE data from January to December 2019. Following a seven-year trend of decreasing the First Time Entrants (FTE's) rate the YOS is now at the lowest recorded level ever. This equates to 150 per 100,000 of the 10-17 population as demonstrated in the table above.

There were 34 FTE's in the period January – December 2019 (which resulted in the YOSs 150 rate per 100,000 of 10–17 population) who were responsible for 97 offences.

The offence categories were:

1. Violence against the person (31%)
2. Motoring (22%)
3. Criminal Damage (15%)
4. Public Order (9%)
5. Drugs (7%)
6. Sexual Offences (6%)
7. Other grouped offences (4%)
8. Burglary and Theft (3%)
9. Breach (2%)
10. Arson (1%)

The YOS Management Team continually scrutinise the FTE figures and inform the LMB of the findings to allow them to provide oversight to ensure that children are being dealt with appropriately by the agreed processes within Gwent, along with the correct proportionate disposals being administered through robust partnership working including the provision of effective interventions to prevent further offending behaviour.

The YOS Performance and Information Manager is continuing to work to resolve a discrepancy with the YOS information held on the database compared to the information which is extracted from the Police National Computer (PNC). For the past several quarters there has been a notable difference in the reported and publicised figures by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) compared to Youth Offending Service (YOS) records. The YJB FTE data is sourced directly from police information held on their databases.

When there is a disproportionate figure published by the YJB this has a negative impact on how the YOS performance is perceived. It is hoped that greater accuracy of the data held by both agencies can be achieved resulting in a true reflection of FTEs.

Strengths

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The YOS Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy is concerned with ensuring that targeted work takes place with those children most at risk of offending/anti-social behaviour and that interventions are as effective as possible. Effective prevention of youth crime and anti-social behaviour contributes to a wide range of improved outcomes for children, their families and communities. The practice of targeted early prevention is well established locally and is recognised as a worthwhile investment in children's lives before problems escalate and their attitudes and behaviour become entrenched.

Preventative work in the YOS has been developed to:

- identify children 'at risk' of offending/re-offending or committing acts of anti-social behaviour
- create a referral process for professionals working with children who are at risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour
- assess children to identify the level of risk that they pose
- provide interventions that are likely to reduce offending, reoffending and anti-social behaviour
- support families to assist in reducing offending, reoffending and anti-social behaviour
- maintain children in their home/family environment, when safe to do so
- involve community members in YOS service delivery
- promote local community resources for sustainable outcomes

There are various referral routes to access early intervention and support. During Covid-19, in April 2020, the YOS merged its two existing prevention projects (Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) - cusp of offending and Promise Project – antisocial behaviour) seamlessly into a new single prevention project called REACH (Reach, Engage and Change Happens). Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly REACH has been developed to provide a multi-agency response to children aged 8-17 at risk of offending or displaying anti-social behaviour. During 2020/21 there were 82 REACH referrals. Please see below for the YOS Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2020/23.

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Blaenau Gwent and
Caerphilly Youth Off

The YOS is working with Gwent Police to identify eligible children released with a "No Further Action (NFA)" outcome from arrest or Voluntary Attendance (VA) processes and offer them a referral to the REACH project. As part of this work all children and families who attend a VA interview will receive a letter and information prior to the VA processes which includes the importance of legal advice and offer any appropriate and identified support including signposting to other agencies.

The YOS fully understands the importance of engaging early and engaging effectively and the police station provides such opportunities. The YOS is providing Appropriate Adult (AA) provision in line with the recent "Interview Protocol between the National Police Chiefs Council, Crown Prosecution Service, Law Society, the Criminal Law Solicitors' Association and the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association" and the "Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984 Code C", which states that the interview of a child requires the physical presence of an appropriate adult. Therefore, all AA requests facilitated by the YOS are in person in the custody units. PPE is provided to all staff attending which includes face shields, face masks, gloves,

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aprons, and hand sanitisers. There is agreement that Covid-19 screening questions will be asked by YOS staff on arrival and that YOS staff can wear all the above PPE in all areas of the custody units. A YOS AA risk assessment has been created and shared with YOS staff and volunteers. Currently all AA requests are being undertaken by YOS staff rather than volunteers. The YOS delivers AA services in line with the below *“Protocol for Multi Agency Appropriate Adult Provision in Gwent (South East Wales) 2019-22”*.



Gwent AA Protocol
2019-22.doc

The YOS aims to ensure that children between 10-17 years inclusive spend the least amount of time in police custody that is required and are, where required, transferred out of police custody to appropriate local authority accommodation. The YOS Service Manager attends a monthly group that reviews cases involving children held overnight which is informed by the below *“Gwent Transfer of Children to Local Authority Accommodation from Police Detention 2019/22”* document.



Gwent Transfers
From Police Custody

A Community Resolution (CR) is an alternative way of dealing with crimes that allows the police to use their professional judgement when dealing with a child who has committed an offence. It would normally seek to resolve the offence in an informal way that brings closure for the victim, where one has been identified, in a timely manner. It may involve the child doing something that 'puts right' the harm caused to the satisfaction of the victim and should take account of their views. A CR may also be given where, following consideration of the options available, it is deemed more suitable than a Caution.

During 2020/21 the YOS worked with 144 CR's. The 144 children were responsible for 391 offences.

The highest offence categories were:

1. Violence against the person (29%)
2. Criminal Damage (25%)
3. Motoring (12%)
4. Public Order (11%)
5. Drugs (10%)
6. Other grouped offences (6%)

An additional strand to the YOS prevention agenda includes early intervention for those children identified by Children's Social Services as

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demonstrating Harmful Sexualised Behaviour (HSB). YOS staff have been trained in the use of AIM3, a specialist assessment tool for HSB, which allows for early identification and prevention work to be completed. Social Workers from both local authorities participated in the training alongside YOS staff.

Restorative Approaches (RA) are effective in preventing escalation. The YOSs dedicated Children Looked After (CLA) Key Worker aims to reduce the prosecution of Children Looked After, wherever possible and appropriate, by encouraging the use of Restorative Approaches. This intervention aims to strike a balance between the rights and needs of the children, the rights of staff, foster carers, and parent/carers, and the decision to involve the Police and/or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) whilst attempting to reduce the prosecution of Children Looked After wherever possible and appropriate. Training is provided to all Police Officers, Social Workers in fostering teams, Foster Carers, supported housing providers and residential unit staff on the delivery of Restorative Approaches along with referrals to the Key Worker for direct interventions. The training also provides tools created to assist in delivering this approach. This work is underlined by the below protocol:



Gwent Protocol To
Reduce the Prosecu!

During 2021/23 the YOS will be working in partnership with Gwent Police to ensure local Out Of Court Disposal arrangements continue to be fit for purpose and proportionate in meeting responsibilities to both divert and appropriately escalate in line with other police force areas. This includes a review of the issuing of Community Resolutions (CRs), their criteria for consideration of such a disposal and the number that can be issued including any related timescales.

The continued focus on the YOS prevention and early intervention services, such as REACH, HSB, RA and CRs etc, mean that children are being diverted away from antisocial or criminal behaviour before they officially enter the youth justice system.

Areas for Improvement

- Continue to work with Gwent Police and other partners to promote and increase eligible referrals to the REACH project
- To work with Gwent Police to embed the provision of information to parents and children in relation to VA interviews and an offer of YOS engagement and support via REACH for eligible children
- Continue to work to resolve the discrepancy between the YOS FTE information compared to the information which is extracted from the Police National Computer and publicised by the Youth Justice Board
- Increase the number of referrals to the YOS RA CLA Worker

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Reducing Re-Offending

Performance Data

Rate of proven offending by children in the Youth Justice System.

	Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
Frequency Rate after 12 months July 17 – June 18	0.67	0.97	1.7
Frequency Rate after 12 months July 16 – June 17	1.35	1.78	1.96
	Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
Binary Rate after 12 months July 17 – June 18	28.8%	34%	41.8%
Binary Rate after 12 months July 16 – June 17	37.0%	42.7%	46.9%
Percentage difference	- 8.2%	- 8.7%	- 5.1%
	Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
Reoffences per reoffenders after 12 months July 17 – June 18	2.3	2.83	4.0
Reoffences per reoffenders after 12 months July 16 – June 17	3.65	4.18	4.19

Context

Due to the way the YJB records and publishes reoffending data there will always be a significant delay in reoffending data. The latest published data is for July 2018 to December 2018. This is for only 6 months. Below are the performance statistics relating to the 6-month data.

Six Month Statistics – July – December 2018

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- The re-offending binary rate for the YOS decreased during the period of July 2018 to December 2018 when comparing the same period for the previous year from 26.8% to 22.2%, Gwent showed a decrease from 35.7% to 28.9%. Wales also showed a decrease from 43.23% to 41.02%
- The re-offending frequency rate for the YOS decreased during the period of July 2018 to December 2018 when comparing the same period for the previous year from 0.68 to 0.44. Gwent also showed a decrease from 1.02 to 0.93. Wales showed an increase from 1.6 to 1.76
- The reoffences per reoffender after 12 months decreased for the YOS during the period of July 2018 to December 2018 when comparing the same period for the previous year from 2.55 to 2. Gwent and Wales both showed an increase from 2.84 to 3.2 and 3.79 to 4.29 respectively
- The total cohort for July 2018 to December 2018 is in relation to 45 children. The reoffending cohort for July 2018 to December 2018 for the cohort of children is 10, which equates to 22.2%

For the period July 2017 – June 2018 there has been a decrease in the amount of children re-offending (Binary Rate) in comparison with the same period in the previous year from 37% to 28.8%. The frequency rate for the YOS also decreased during July 17 – June 18 compared to the previous year from 1.35 to 0.67. Gwent and Wales as a whole also achieved reductions in the same two areas.

The total cohort is in relation to 139 children for July 2017 to June 2018 compared to 154 in the previous year. The reoffending cohort for July 2017 to June 2018 is 40 compared to 57 in the previous year. The data indicates that the total cohort is reducing and the number of children that reoffend is also reducing when performance is compared over the two-year period.

Yearly Rate

- The re-offending binary rate for the YOS has decreased from 37.0% to 28.8% during July 2017 to June 2018 when comparing the previous year
- The re-offending frequency rate for the YOS has decreased from 1.35 to 0.67 during July 2017 to June 2018 when comparing the previous year
- The re-offending reoffences rate for the YOS has decreased from 3.65 to 2.3 during July 2017 to June 2018 when comparing the previous year

When reviewing both the yearly cohorts and the most recent six-month performance data for the YOS it demonstrates strong performance and significant achievements for the YOS partnership.

Strengths

The three Youth Offending Services across Gwent (namely, Monmouthshire and Torfaen; Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent; and Newport) have embarked upon a partnership Out of Court Disposal Framework with Gwent Police and other youth justice partners in order to encourage joint decision making, effectively gate-keep outcomes, encourage restorative justice interventions and to overall, reduce offending and re-offending by children. The YOS has also embedded learning from the Out Of Court Disposal Work in Youth Offending Teams Thematic Inspection through the creation and completion of an internal action plan. The *“Gwent Out Of Court Disposal’s (OOCDS) Framework incorporating the Bureau Panel Process 2019-22”* below explains how the YOS works with children, parent/carers and their victims to prevent reoffending and to divert children away from the youth justice system.

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Due to Covid-19 there is understandably a recognition that there may be some form of backlog regarding the identification and processing of suitable Out of Court Disposal (OCCD) cases involving children including Community Resolutions (CRs), Youth Cautions (YCs) and Youth Conditional Cautions (YCCs). Therefore, the YOS and the Gwent Criminal Justice Strategy Board have asked Gwent Police to undertake some form of analysis to ascertain/identify if there are any children currently waiting for outcomes linked to various police decisions from processes such as voluntary attendance (VA) interviews, released under investigation (RUI) decisions/outcomes and listed or summonsed to court cases that could be considered for OCCDs. The YOS wants to try and progress the outcomes for these children and their victims whilst managing any pressures potentially waiting in any backlog for various agencies regarding appropriate cases involving children. This will also include the identification of children who are nearing their 18th birthday, who may be vulnerable to receiving an adult outcome because of the current situation and their cases sitting in any backlog. The YOS will not be aware of all children aged 17 currently waiting in any backlog of cases from police processes. This issue was raised and discussed at the Gwent Criminal Justice Strategy Board on the 16th July 2020 and work is ongoing regarding this.

Throughout the financial year April 2020– March 2021, Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly YOS assessed 37 Bureau cases:

- Youth Caution = 8
- Youth Conditional Caution = 21
- Referred for a CR = 8

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The YOS is continuing its engagement with the Gwent wide Out Of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel chaired by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and its OCCD cohort tracking activities regarding reoffending and trends within the Gwent Child Centred Policing Strategic Steering Group. The YOS Service Manager attends both the aforementioned meetings.

During the pandemic YOS panel processes have moved to virtual panels which include Referral Orders, risk management, Bureau, Resettlement and Reintegration and others. When it is deemed safe to do so the YOS will slowly start introducing face to face panels again but will maintain the option of incorporating some aspects of virtual engagement on a case by case basis. For example, if an out of county child's social worker is not able to attend in person due to distance then perhaps a virtual engagement method for that worker could be incorporated to allow them to participate.

The YOS has noticed an increase in adolescent to parent/carer/sibling/partner abuse perpetrated by children. This includes the issuing of a number of Restraining Orders for children by the Court. To address this the YOS has the Youth Respect Programme which works with children aged 10-18, but with specific focus on the 14-18-year olds, identified as at risk of offending or re-offending related to domestic abuse. This project looks to provide complementary, specialist targeted prevention, intervention and support services to child perpetrators of domestic abuse; where a child is showing early indications of, or are already exhibiting abusive, aggressive and controlling behaviours in family or intimate relationships. Complimentary support is also

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provided to the parent(s)/carers to ensure change is monitored and sustainable. Through co-ordinated and effective case management, appropriate and simultaneous support interventions are offered and/or provided to the victims and their families. This model of work is supported by the 'Respect Toolkit', which seeks to address adolescent abusive and violent behaviours in close relationships whether in the family or in dating or peer relationships. This will remain a focus of YOS work over the next 12 months and beyond.

The YOS has also identified that Children Looked After (CLA) are a disproportionate and vulnerable cohort of children when examining its first time entrant and reoffending data. The YOS has a funded part time CLA Worker in the service as referenced earlier in this document.

All YOS staff have received training in the areas of Diversity and Speech Language and Communication needs. This will promote engagement and ensure the needs of all children are being met and address risk areas. YOS staff also attended training focusing on LGBTQ+, AIM3 and the YJB Enhanced Case Management (ECM) trauma informed practice programme.

The YOS has dedicated staff members trained in delivering a wide range of targeted and structured programmes aimed at reducing re-offending. This includes a Managing Anger Programme (MAP), Prevention of Burglary resource and Prevent, a tailored programme to tackle anti social behaviour. Over the past 24 months the YOS has focused on reviewing and improving their direct work and engagement skills in response to messages from desistance theory and approaches, attachment and trauma informed practice.

Comprehensive assessments including the completion by children of self assessments have continued remotely, as has reviewing and the delivery of interventions. In order to meet the assessed needs of children, the YOS has dedicated specialist workers who can work directly with a child on specific issues. This can relate to lack of constructive use of leisure time therefore, a referral will be made to an in-house activity worker. Likewise, substance misuse and emotional or mental health issues can be assessed via the in-house substance misuse worker or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). If a child is not engaged in any form of education or training, the YOS has a dedicated worker who can offer support and increase motivation to engage in education, training, or employment. It is recognised that an individual, holistic approach needs to be adopted to best support a child, therefore the YOS has a whole family approach embed into its daily practices. If required dedicated structured family support services are offered when needed via the YOS Family Support Worker.

The service has strong partnership links with Children's Services and the police. The YOS is represented at monthly Integrated Offender Management (IOM) meetings. Additionally, the service is represented within the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) meetings. All of these connections ensure robust oversight of children who are most at risk of re-offending. Strong multi agency partnership links allow the service to provide crime prevention programmes in local communities, such as the Phoenix Project, Fearless and the Cars and Consequences programme. The vast range of interventions available means the YOS can best reflect the preferred learning style of the child.

The development of exit strategies remains a significant strength for the YOS. "Good endings" allows the child to continue with the positive changes made after YOS intervention has ended, but they continue to feel supported in the community. It is imperative that the exit strategies are sustainable within the community. The YOS strongly advocates that case closure does not mean the end of relationships as good endings promote desistance and decrease risk.

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When a child's intervention is due to come to an end, their views are sought via various paper feedback questionnaires and ViewPoint, an electronic database. Part of this survey relates to the child reflecting on their perceived likelihood of re-offending and what elements of their lives have changed to ensure they do not offend again. Their views are also used to inform service delivery and service development. The YOSs "*Participation Strategy 2018/21*" below clearly sets out the participation activities within the YOS. The YOS has also created an easy read version of this document.



Participation Strategy 2018-21.do

The YOS ensures a child centred, strengths-based approach which encompasses trauma informed practice. Restorative Justice/Approaches are an integral theme throughout its delivery along with the voice of the child being heard, offers of advocacy services and a rights-based ethos. Supporting children to reach their aspirations and full potential underpins everything the YOS does. All engagement is based on the child's best interests, positivity, built on trust whilst promoting desistance and best outcomes. Over the past 12/24 months the YOS has focused on reviewing and improving their direct work and engagement skills in response to messages from desistance theory and approaches, attachment and trauma informed practice. The desistance thematic inspection by HMI Probation called "Desistance and children" published in May 2016 stated that "Desistance is the process of abstaining from crime amongst those who previously had engaged in a sustained pattern of offending'. In the report they confirmed that personalised approaches work best based on a good understanding of the individual's needs, history and circumstances. The YJB AssetPlus assessment framework also helps the YOS to personalise desistance support for children. All members of staff in the YOS are trained in desistance theory and an action plan was developed to respond to the recommendations from the inspection. The YOS has also embedded desistance and trauma informed practice principles by:

- Ensuring positive engagement and building trusting relationships are at the start of all interventions/plans – "good beginnings"
- Strength based, individual approaches
- Increasing self assessment completion
- Reviewed the YOS compliance policy, language, ethos and practice to emphasise the need for re engagement and renamed the process "Engagement"
- Embedding approaches and recording methods such as:

CPR	PACE	ACORDS	CRISS
Consistency	Playfulness	Aim – Human needs, good lives model etc	C - check in
Predictability	Acceptance	Content – Good lives wheel etc	R - review
Reliability	Curiosity	Outcome – what did the child learn? Grounding techniques etc	I - intervention
	Empathy	Risk of harm – any additional risk issues?	S - summary
		Diversity – Any needs? Literacy? Learning styles etc?	S - set tasks

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	Safeguarding – Any issues?	
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The YOSs Resettlement and Reintegration Panel (RRP) partnership celebrated its seventh anniversary in May 2021. Formed in May 2014, the successful partnership, coordinated by the YOS, provides additional support and great opportunities to children who have previously offended to prevent reoffending and achieve successful outcomes for children. The panel has achieved impressive outcomes by ensuring better services are available to children, helping them to reach their goals and aspirations for the future, and ultimately reducing their offending behaviour by supporting a more productive and positive lifestyle. By working alongside a framework called “The Seven Resettlement Pathways” and “Constructive Resettlement”, which are Youth Justice Board and Welsh Government initiatives, the RRP aims to ensure a child leads a crime free life after their involvement with the Youth Justice System. The Resettlement Pathways include accommodation, education, employment and training, health, substance misuse, family services, finance/ benefits/ debt and transitions. The YOS and its partners monitor the YOS and partners responses to the recommendations within the “Joint thematic inspection of resettlement services to children by Youth Offending Teams and partner agencies” through the panel.

To continue to address reoffending by children the YOS created an action plan to respond to the recommendations within the thematic inspection “Referral Orders – Do they achieve their potential?” published in July 2016. One area the YOS has embraced from the findings is the message regarding the importance of the critical period immediately after sentence being managed well. This has resulted in the YOS increasing their contacts with children and their families during the period prior to the Referral Order Panel being convened to monitor and motivate children. This learning has also been implemented in other areas of the YOS work such as Bureau Panel processes.

Restorative Justice continues to remain a priority during Covid-19. The YOS prides itself on its excellent victim services, which has resulted in excellent victim satisfaction rates and positive outcomes for children and victims. The YOS works to the Restorative Justice Council’s (RJC) principles of restorative practice which sets out the core values that should be held by all practitioners in the field. This area of work for the YOS is underpinned by its *Restorative Justice/Restorative Approaches Policy and Procedure 2019/21* which is attached below. The YOS undertakes annual compliance audits against the “Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales November 2020” and the “Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s Victim Charter”, which set out minimum standards for support to victims.



YOS Restorative
Justice-Restorative A

The YOS works closely with the National Probation Service in respect of youth to adult (Y2A) transfers in line with the “*Youth to adult transitions principles and guidance (Wales) Joint protocol for managing the cases of young people moving from Youth Offending Teams to the National Probation Service July 2020*”. When a child is approaching 18 years of age, their case is referred through the Integrated Offender Management process for discussion regarding suitability for a transfer to adult services. There is much liaison and joint work between the services to ensure that the child is transferred without any detriment and identified needs are met including the continuous commitment of existing YOS resources for the first 3 months of any transition period. Cases being discussed for a Y2A transfer are also discussed at the YOSs Resettlement and Reintegration Panel.

Channel / Prevent – YOS staff have been trained in a multi-agency approach to identify individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related

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activity. The process forms a key part of the Governments Prevent Strategy. Channel works in a similar way to existing successful partnership initiatives which aim to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable and protect them from harm, such as initiatives concerned with anti-social behaviour or crime and, where necessary, provide a support package tailored to an individual's needs.

During 2019/20 the YOS completed the YJB Disproportionality Toolkits. Findings have always resulted in a less than 2% outcome. However, in March 2020, the YJB revised the Summary Ethnic Disproportionality Tool to reflect the most recent data following the publication of the youth justice statistics: 2018 to 2019. The YOS is currently completing this toolkit for 2020/21 cases retrospectively to enable the YOS to identify whether the over-representation of particular groups is an issue in their local area. The YOS will also use it to analyse the data and provide a holistic response to the issues affecting any identified specific groups of children.

Areas for Improvement

- To continue to reduce overall numbers, frequency and seriousness of re-offending by children and better understand effectiveness of programmes
- Continue to increase joint working with colleagues across Children's Services and Gwent Police in relation to Children Looked After to reduce the need for criminal proceedings
- Continue to complete the YJB Reoffending Toolkit on a quarterly basis and analysis the findings to improve and inform practice
- Complete the YJB Disproportionality Toolkit for 2020/21
- When safe to do so consider the slow reintroduction of face to face panels across the YOS service delivery whilst ensuring learning from virtual panels is captured and considered in any planning or new ways of working

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Custody

Performance Data

Children receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody – Frequency Rate

	Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
Custodial disposals 2020/21	0	4	22
Custodial disposals 2019 /20	3	6	42

Children receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody – Binary Rate

	Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
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Custodial disposals 2020/21 Rate per 1,000	0.0	0.07	0.08
Custodial disposals 2019/20 Rate per 1,000	0.13	0.11	0.15

Context

There were no children sentenced to custody in 2020/21. There was an increase (3) in custodial sentences in 2019/2020 from 2018/2019 where there had been only one child. Of the 3 custodial sentences in 2019/20 one child was sentenced to a DTO for Robbery and two were sentenced to Section 91 Orders, both for violence against the person offences.

There were no children remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation in 2020/21. In 2019/2020 there were two children remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation. The first child was remanded for intimidating a witness and was subsequently given a YRO. The second child was remanded prior to being given a Section 91 for a serious sexual offence.

In October 2019, HMI Probation and HMI Prisons published its “*Youth resettlement – final report into work in the community- A thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons*”. In response the YOS created an action plan and convened a multiagency meeting including LMB members, to review the comments on the single YOS case in the report to identify any learning. An audit report was then presented to the LMB in October 2020 highlighting the findings from the meeting and associated subsequent audit work.

The YOS Case Managers ensure that when a Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) is requested by the Courts that there are robust community alternatives proposed to mitigate against the use of custody. During 2019/20 and 2020/21 there were several cases which were deemed to be at risk of custody however, robust alternative community sentences were proposed resulting in the children receiving community sentences.

Strengths

The YOS currently do not have any children in the secure estate. For the 3 children sentenced to DTOs or a Section 91 in 2019/20, two have transferred to the National Probation Service under the Y2A process supported by the YOS and one has completed both the custodial and licence elements of their DTO resulting in their case being closed.

The YOS ensures that the transportation of children to the secure state is via YJB commissioned services and that assessments including risk, wellbeing and unmet needs are shared immediately with the secure estate. The YOS attend all initial planning meetings to help identify and plan for all transitions at the earliest opportunity whilst planning for a successful resettlement from the start of any sentence. They also attend remand review meetings, sentence review meetings and undertake welfare visits.

The full YOS resources are available for children in the secure estate alongside all other YOS interventions. These are provided either by case managers, partner agencies, linked up specialist workers in both the YOS and secure estate, or via planning and intervention delivery for both the custodial and community elements of any sentence. This includes:

- Case Management & transitions work
- Both settings ETE Workers
- Career Wales either in the settings or the community

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- Health screening – custody staff transfer for medical appointments
- CAMHS/FACTS – mental health provision
- Family Support/whole family approach
- Accommodation provision
- Finance/debt management and income maximisation
- Substance Misuse
- Activities/hobbies/aspirations/interests
- Speech, language and communication needs
- St Giles Trust involvement

Areas for Improvement

- In partnership with the University of South Wales and the Hwb Doeth Academic Partnership analyse the success and failure of resettlement from custody cases as part of the Resettlement and Reintegration Panel (RRP)
- In partnership with the University of South Wales and the Hwb Doeth Academic Partnership evaluate the effectiveness of the RRP

Education, Training and Employment (ETE)

Performance Data

Engagement in education, training and employment for children who are of statutory school age

Page 33

		Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
2020/21	Number of children of statutory school age	13	18	107
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – start	9.0	11.6	12.6
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – end	8.0	9.1	13.2
	Percentage change in ETE hours	-12%	-21.55%	4.8%
2019/20	Number of children of statutory school age	12.0	19	165
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – start	11.0	12.4	12.1

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	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – end	12.0	11.8	13.5
	Percentage change in ETE hours	9%	-4.8%	11.6%

Context - Statutory School Age

During 2020/2021 both the YOS and Gwent showed a decrease in hours attended at the end of interventions, 12% and 21.55% respectively. During the year 2020/2021 there were multiple school closures due to the Coronavirus which has had an impact on the number of school hours children attend.

During 2019/20 the YOS had increased the average hours for the children of school age on statutory interventions from an average of 11 hours to 12 hours. This is above the recorded average for Gwent but below the recorded average for Wales.

Engagement in education, training and employment for children who are above statutory school age

		Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
Page 34 2020/21	Number of children above statutory school age	18	51	257
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – start	14.0	9.6	9.7
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – end	18.0	13.4	12.5
	Percentage change in ETE hours	28.6%	39.6%	28.9%
2019/20	Number of children above statutory school age	26	62	319
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – start	13.0	11.4	9.8
	Average no. of hours in ETE per YP – end	13.0	12.9	12.9
	Percentage change in ETE hours	0%	13.2%	31.6%

Context - Above statutory school age

During 2020/21 the YOS has increased the average hours for the post 16 aged children on statutory interventions from an average of 14.0 hours to 18.0 hours. This is above the recorded figures for Gwent and Wales which are 13.4 and 12.5 respectively. The change from the start to the end equates to a positive 28.6% increase. The figure recorded of 18 hours at the end of the intervention is above the recommended 16 hours offered to children above statutory school age.

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During 2019/20 the YOS maintained the average hours attended at the start and end of the intervention. These hours were above the average hours recorded by both Gwent and Wales

Strengths

The YOS works closely with partners in both education authorities to enable each child to receive their entitlement of 25+ hours of education per week in an appropriate education setting. Links with dedicated members of staff in both local authorities have helped to manage issues before they are allowed to develop, thus ensuring more positive outcomes for children. Staff meet regularly in multi agency meetings to share information and contribute to Individual Support Plans. Meetings include monthly Children's Services meetings, Risk Panel Meetings, Problem Solving Groups, Resettlement and Reintegration Panel and Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) panels.

The YJB Education, Training & Employment (ETE) Key Performance Indicators will be impacted due to the closure of provision (schools, colleges, businesses – furloughing etc.) for children throughout the past 12+ months. It may also continue to be impacted due to anticipated reductions in provision as it starts to reopen. The potential impact on the above published data means it may be inaccurate, incomplete and possibly misunderstood. It is likely that this will remain a concern for a further period of 12 months or more as a minimum. However, the YOS is endeavouring to use local data to inform its understanding and service delivery including auditing areas of work and identifying any concerning areas of impact on children and families. Every child not receiving their full ETE entitlements are discussed at the YOS RRP.

The YOS Education, Training and Employment Worker represents the YOS at Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) meetings and accesses appropriate interventions aimed at reducing the population of children Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Good partnership working with Careers Wales, post 16 training providers and further and higher education providers also continues to improve ETE engagement and outcomes during YOS interventions. The YOS recognises that some children with whom they work encounter huge challenges to progression and are committed to tackling these barriers, particularly for those who need support the most.

The YOS has also ensured the two local authorities Youth Engagement & Progression Framework Officers have strong links with the YOS ETE Worker and they are both members of the YOS Resettlement & Reintegration Panel and Local Management Board. The YOS has also developed over the past 12 months its links to the Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work initiatives locally.

The YOS has received annual reports from both local authority representatives on the LMB. The reports demonstrate the challenges, provision and ETE hours of all children engaged with the YOS on statutory and prevention cases highlighting the full ETE picture. There are several recommendations within the reports which are aimed at improving the offer, attendance and attainment levels of the children the YOS works with in an effort to ensure that they are in receipt of their full ETE entitlement. An LMB ETE Improvement Plan was created in response to the above reports and their recommendations. The LMB is currently working to achieve all actions within the plan. During 2018 Estyn publicised the findings from its YOS survey across Wales. The YOS and LMB have considered the findings and any areas for improvement were added onto the LMB Education Plan for their oversight.

Due to lockdown restrictions, children's education, training and employment has been seriously impacted. The YOS will continue to work with children,

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families and education, Careers Wales and 16+ ETE providers to ensure smooth and positive transitions back to schools and 16+ provision in September 2021. Accessing and maintaining children's ETE provision is a priority for the YOS and its partners.

Over the next 12/24 months the YOS has committed to developing and implementing a Literacy & Numeracy Strategy. Training will be provided for YOS staff on addressing numeracy and literacy needs when assessed/identified and raise awareness of what local resources are available to support improvements when required. The YOS recognises that literacy and numeracy level identification, information gathering and recording on AssetPlus needs to be completed and reviewed at every assessment stage and inform planning.

The introduction of the Additional Learning Needs Act places responsibilities on the Education Directorate and providers of education for all children up to the age of 25, who require additional support to remain in education or training from September 2021. Some children engaged with the YOS are currently supported by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice and receive annually reviewed statements, it will therefore be important for YOS staff and education practitioners to gain a more in-depth understanding of the implications of this Act to ensure that children have their support needs assessed and addressed under the next Act. This could potentially have resource implications for both the Local Authority and YOS in terms of practitioner time and resources to support delivery.

The YOS recognises the benefits of having direct access to both local authority's databases to allow them to directly extract information in a timely manner to inform their assessments and planning. Discussions are ongoing regarding this area of work. Access and provision of training to databases such as Tribal, Capita One, SIMS, Strive etc. will allow the YOS to extract enrolment, numeracy, literacy, attainment, behavioural and attendance information.

Areas for Improvement

- Ensure all children and children involved with the YOS are supported to access their education entitlements
- Achieve all actions within the LMB ETE Improvement Plan
- Gain access at the YOS office to relevant educational databases/information management systems to allow the YOS to extract all the information they need to inform assessments, planning, ensure timely sharing of information and accurate ETE Key Performance Indicator (KPI) recordings
- Develop and implement a Literacy & Numeracy Strategy within the YOS
- Provide training for YOS staff on addressing numeracy and literacy needs when assessed/identified and raise awareness of what local resources are available to support improvements when required
- Literacy and numeracy level identification, information gathering and recording on AssetPlus needs to be completed and reviewed at every assessment stage and inform planning
- Obtain, share and embed in practice across the YOS greater understanding of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme

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Accommodation

Performance Data

Access to suitable accommodation		Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
2020/21	Number of children with closed disposals	34	75	395
	Suitable accommodation before the start	34	72	371
	Suitable accommodation at the end	34	70	365
	% point change all sentences: start versus end	0.0%	-2.8%	-1.6%
2019/20	Number of children with closed disposals	32	78	519
	Suitable accommodation before the start	32	76	490
	Suitable accommodation at the end	32	73	485
	% point change all sentences: start versus end	0.0%	-3.9%	-1.02%

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Context

During 2020/21 there was no change in accommodation. Out of 34 children, 34 started and 34 ended in suitable accommodation,

During 2019/20 there was no change in accommodation. Out of 32 children, 32 started and 32 ended in suitable accommodation.

Strengths

The Youth Offending Service has good partnership links established with local housing authorities and Children's Services departments in both the Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly areas which are formalised via Service Level Agreements (SLA's). Referrals to relevant services are acted upon swiftly and suitable accommodation is provided for children leaving custody as part of resettlement planning.

The YOS has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Caerphilly County Borough Council allowing urgent access to their Intensive Support Team (IST) to enable priority services to be dedicated to help maintain children in their home environment.

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The YOSs Resettlement & Reintegration Panel scrutinises children's accommodation provision and needs as a vital element of every case it reviews. The panel also has a Young Persons Homeless Officer as part of the membership.

It is acknowledged that police custody can be a distressing time for children, many of whom are vulnerable and may have additional needs. A Gwent Joint Working Agreement has been agreed which aims to ensure that children and children between 10-17 years inclusive spend the least amount of time in police custody that is required and are, where required, transferred out of police custody to appropriate local authority accommodation. In addition, where it has not been possible to achieve such outcomes, all relevant agencies have measures in place to review the decisions made in these instances in order to overcome barriers in future. The Gwent Monitoring & Review Panel commenced from January 2017 to undertake the aforementioned scrutiny and is chaired by one of the three Gwent YOS Service Managers on rotation. Learning is one month retrospectively, and findings are taken back to agencies by panel members following each panel. Annual reports are created and shared to allow themes to be collated, further scrutiny of cases by individual local authorities and to disseminate learning and awareness across the Gwent region.

Areas for Improvement

Promote, deliver training and increase referrals regarding the Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of Children Looked After to help stabilise placements and respond to any concerning behaviours

Substance Misuse

Performance Data

Access to appropriate specialist assessment and treatment services		Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
2020/21	Number of children requiring assessment	18	35	149
	Number commencing within 5 days	18	32	130
	% Commencing within 5 days	100%	91%	87%
	Number of children requiring treatment	16	30	133
	Number commencing within 10 days	16	30	130
	% Commencing within 10 days	100%	100%	98%
2019/20	Number of children requiring assessment	12	30	187
	Number commencing within 5 days	12	29	136

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% Commencing within 5 days	100%	97%	73%
Number of children requiring treatment	12	25	170
Number commencing within 10 days	12	25	168
% Commencing within 10 days	100%	100%	98%

Context

Between April 2020 and March 2021, 18 out of 18 children (100%) received a substance misuse assessment within the 5-day target and exceeded the Gwent and Wales average. Sixteen out of 16 also received treatment (100%) within the required timescales; this figure is also higher than the Wales average.

During 2019/20 the YOS achieved 100% compliance with assessing and delivering treatment for children requiring substance misuse interventions. Substance misuse assessments and treatment are also available for children on non statutory interventions. These include REACH cases and Out Of Court Disposals (OOCs) such as CRs, YCs and YCCs.

Strengths

The YOS has a full-time dedicated Substance Misuse Worker who is also the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for YOS referrals to appropriate community-based Drug and Alcohol Services. Referrals are made when children need to receive more intensive intervention e.g. Tier 3. It is also used as an exit strategy to general community provision at the end of YOS engagement. The worker works in conjunction with voluntary agencies when YOS children are referred to maintain their voluntary engagement and has a key role at the weekly Joint Allocation Meeting (JAM), which is the single referral route for children to access substance misuse services across Gwent. The YOS Substance Misuse Worker provides assessment and treatment for Tier 1 and Tier 2 services and ensures that the YOS staffing group are advised of trends and new substances. The YOS Substance Misuse Worker receives clinical supervision via the Gwent CAMHS Tier 3 Complex Substance Misuse Service.

A decision had been made in Gwent to provide all children's substance misuse services under one tendering exercise from 01.04.17. This has resulted in a single "Gwent Young Persons Substance Misuse Service" called "N-gage" provided by Barod (formerly Drug Aid). There are many positives to such an approach and the YOS understands the new provision and has developed professional relationships to underpin effective partnership working with the single commissioned service.

Areas for Improvement

None identified

Mental Health

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Performance Data				
Access to appropriate specialist assessment and treatment services		Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly YOS	Gwent	Wales
2020/21	Number of children requiring assessment	5	11	46
	Number commencing within 28 days screening	5	11	45
	% Commencing within 28 days	100%	100%	98%
	Number of children requiring treatment	4	10	36
	Number commencing treatment within 28 days	4	10	35
	% Commencing within 28 days	100%	100%	97%
2019/20	Number of children requiring assessment	6	14	62
	Number commencing within 28 days screening	6	14	54
	% Commencing within 28 days	100%	100%	87%
	Number of children requiring treatment	6	13	44
	Number commencing within 28 days assessment	6	13	42
	% Commencing within 28 days	100%	100%	95%
Context				
<p>The YOS has 100% performance across this area of their work. During 2020/21 the YOS screened 5 children and identified 4 as needing treatment, these all received treatment within the set timescale. Gwent also recorded 100% for screening and commencing treatment. The Wales percentages were recorded as follows, screening 97% and commencement 87%.</p> <p>During 2019/20 the YOS screened all 6 children within timescales resulting in 100% success rate, Gwent also recorded 100%, whereas the Wales</p>				

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percentage is recorded as 97%. All children from Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly that required treatment commenced within the required timescale.

Mental Health assessments and treatment are also available for children on non statutory interventions. These include REACH cases and Out Of Court Disposals (OOCs) such as CRs, YCs and YCCs.

Strengths

The YOS has a seconded Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) full time Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) worker.

There is a signed Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place between the YOS and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB). The CNS holds Friday morning consultation clinics where cases/referrals can be discussed, or strategies and guidance can be provided to YOS staff regarding effective approaches to aid and inform direct work with children involved with the YOS.

A Health Pathway has started to be created between the three Gwent YOSs and ABUHB for children and families engaged with the YOS. This health pathway looks across the entire youth justice system. It identifies where and how intervention can be earlier, faster and more effective to meet the health and wellbeing needs of children. It envisages that mainstream and specialist services will offer children active support and that their health and well-being needs will be identified and met at every point of contact with youth justice services.

The YOS was a pilot and test site for the YJB Enhanced Case Management (ECM) programme. This programme aimed to bring together current understanding about children who offend in order to create an applied intervention strategy for those with complex needs and prolific offending histories. The ECM draws on a range of psychological and criminological approaches, combining cognitive theories of child/adolescent development, attachment theory, desistance theory and emerging understanding on neurobiological development. Succession planning is currently being discussed to ensure sustainability from July 2021. However, the YOS has received a once a month resource for a psychology informed case discussion from the Gwent Attachment Service which has proved to be very successful and valued by the YOS. This resource is alongside the full time Clinical Nurse Specialist in the YOS who is present for each case discussion.

Areas for Improvement

- Work in partnership to sustain the Enhanced Case Management approach post September 2021
- Complete and implement a health pathway for children involved in the youth justice system.

Safeguarding

Performance Data

During the period April 2020 to March 2021 the YOS completed a total number of 264 initial assessments. Of these initial assessments there was 1 child assessed as very high, 23 children assessed as high, 163 as medium, and 77 as having low safety and well being.

Context

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The YOS is located within Caerphilly County Borough Children Services Directorate and follows the Wales Safeguarding Procedures to ensure robust joint management of cases. The YOS has a Service Level Agreement in place with both Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Children's Services departments.

The YOS has stringent procedures in place to identify and assess need in relation to safeguarding children (safety and wellbeing) who are involved with the service. Initial assessments and plans are quality assured by a Team Manager, and cases are discussed in supervision. There is also a clear understanding, which is shared between all staff, regarding the referral process for social services intervention.

All cases rated Very High or High regarding safety and wellbeing are referred to the YOS Risk Management Panel for review and multiagency oversight and management.

Strengths

The YOS uses the AssetPlus assessment framework to assess all children across both its statutory and non statutory interventions. All YOS Intervention plans include safety and wellbeing (safeguarding) interventions. The YOS reports to the LMB on a quarterly basis the safety and wellbeing (safeguarding) risk ratings across all assessments opened in a quarter. This includes the types of interventions, the gender and the relevant local authority. For cases rated as very High or High a brief synopsis of each child is also included. There is also a summary of safeguarding trends from assessments completed, the numbers of Multi Agency Referral Forms (MARFS) submitted and the number of children receiving care and support, are a Child Looked After (CLA) or on the Child Protection Register (CPR) assessed within the relevant quarter.

The YOS Service Manager sits on the regional South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) and represents all three Gwent YOSs. The Service Manager also sits on the SEWSCB Case Review Group. Two Senior Practitioners in the YOS attend both local authority "Safeguarding Networks" to represent the YOS and share learning, developments and practice. A further YOS staff member sits on the SEWSCB training group. Diversity training as well as Speech Language and Communication training, has been attended by all staff. Diversity needs are evidenced in all assessments and considered in all plans.

Safeguarding training is delivered to all staff and volunteers within the YOS by the Volunteer Co-ordinators and training sessions delivered by the SEWSCB. Various other courses are then accessed by staff and volunteers linked to safeguarding themes (child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), trafficked children, going missing, self harming, substance misuse, etc).

The YOS has access to both local authorities' databases. The South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) has access to the YOS database to inform out of hours interventions.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has, at its heart, two key objectives. Firstly, to improve the well-being outcomes for people who need care and support, together with carers who need support; and secondly, to reform social services law to deliver the Welsh Government's commitment to integrate Social Services to support people of all ages as part of families and communities. The legislation has an increased emphasis

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on prevention and early intervention and encouraging children not to commit offences and reducing the need for criminal proceedings against children are specified priorities for preventive services. The Act recognises that effective multi-agency co-operation and partnership working is essential to support and facilitate the successful re-integration of individuals within their communities.

Over the past 12 months there is a shared, increased understanding regarding Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) both on a local and “County Lines” basis across all partners. A regional decision has been made to consider all types of child exploitation via the piloting of an “Exploitation Toolkit” which has been referenced earlier in this document.

Areas for Improvement

- Maintain high quality management for all children with regards to concerns over their safety and wellbeing
- Promote a culture of awareness of child exploitation and continue to engage in the Gwent pilot for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) local decision making and the associated Exploitation Toolkit
- Ensure that children known to the YOS in need of care and support or in need of protection including from Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing etc are identified, safeguarded and their cases escalated where appropriate

Public Protection

Performance Data

During the period April 2020 to March 2021 the YOS completed a total number of 264 initial assessments. Of these initial assessments no children were assessed as very high risk, none were assessed as high, 75 were assessed as medium and 189 were assessed as low risk of serious harm.

Context

The YOSs work regarding the robust management of risk is informed by a number of policies and procedures, this includes the internal YOS Risk Management Policy, the YOS Risk Management Panel, and MAPPA guidance and engagement procedures. Risk of harm (Future Behaviour) is identified by the completion of an AssetPlus assessment across all interventions. The YOS has good working relationships with key partners who assist in the managing and reducing of identified risks and behaviours. Furthermore, the YOS has strong links to the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) processes and the Domestic Abuse Conference/Call (DAC) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which underpins the management of domestic abuse. Children assessed as presenting as high or very high risk of serious harm are supervised at an intensive level. Cases are also managed via the YOS Risk Management Panel and Resettlement & Reintegration Panel for multi-agency oversight and management.

Strengths

The YOS manages all forms of risk including future behaviours (public protection) and likelihood of reoffending across all its engagement and interventions. Risk management decisions are based on robust assessments. The YOS has a multiagency Risk Management Panel that continues to

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meet every fortnight by virtual methods to review, manage and provide oversight to all high or very high-risk cases. The YOS has reviewed its Risk Management Policy in 2021. Please see attached.



YOS Risk
Management Policy -

The YOS ensures that Victim Safety Assessments and Victim Contact reports are completed for all relevant cases and included in all victim work and referenced in assessment and planning.

YOS staff are trained to complete the AIM3 assessment framework for children who exhibit Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) and deliver appropriate interventions in partnership with other agencies.

Diversity training, as well as Speech Language and Communication training, has been attended by all staff. Diversity needs are now evidenced in all assessments and considered in all plans.

Robust information sharing protocols and Service Level Agreements are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure and strengthen the YOSs work to manage risk with partners.

A partnership has been established between the Youth Offending Service (YOS) (funded by the Welsh Government Children and Communities Grant) and Supporting Family Change (SFC), a Families First Team Around the Family (TAF) funded project (funded by the Welsh Government Families First Programme). YOS and SFC have recruited a fulltime Youth Respect Officer who is based in, and managed by, the YOS and is required to deliver a package of individual interventions to children at risk of perpetrating domestic abuse. As part of this role, the Youth Respect Officer has developed and utilised a strong set of monitoring tools to evaluate work undertaken, including the engagement and participation of children. The worker has developed and maintained effective working links with key partners and services to encourage appropriate referrals and joint working.

In the past 24 months the YOS has become more aware and involved in areas such as child criminal exploitation, child trafficking, organised gangs, county lines, dangerous weapons/knife crime and serious drug related offences. This is an area of work that is still developing, and staff will require increased training and resources to address these types of offences to safeguard children and protect the public. The YOS is now able to refer children displaying serious youth violence, drug offences, or where there are concerns regarding organised crime groups or child criminal exploitation, to the St Giles Trust for interventions and support. This is funded by the Gwent OPCC and brings a much needed resource into the YOS. A Team Manager in the YOS is now also trained to be part of a local decision making process regarding National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals. The YOS is also supporting the piloting of an Exploitation Toolkit for professionals to complete if any form of child exploitation is identified. A multi agency response is then put in place to respond via safeguarding processes and procedures.

With reference to “*The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public - An inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation October 2017*”, the YOS has focused on the recommendations within. The YOS Management Team and members of the wider staffing group have received training from the

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TARIAN/Regional Cyber Crime Unit.
Areas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain high quality risk management for those children deemed at risk of causing serious harm • Respond to child criminal exploitation, child trafficking, organised gangs, county lines, dangerous weapons and knife crime and serious drug related offences by identifying relevant training and resources to address these types of offences to safeguard children and protect the public
Restorative Justice
Performance Data
<p>During the period April 2020 – March 2021, 201 victims of youth crime were identified and 146 of this group chose to participate in some form of restorative work. This equates to an engagement rate of 73%. Of the 146 participants 33 completed our feedback questionnaire (23%). 82% of this group reported that they were “Very Satisfied” with the service and 15% reported being “Satisfied” with the service. There was one victim who was dissatisfied equalling 3%. The dissatisfaction expressed was regarding the victim being dissatisfied with the letter of apology they received.</p> <p>In 2020/21 the YOS facilitated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 face to face apologies • 89 letters of apology/explanation
Context
<p>The YOS works strictly to the “<i>Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales November 2020</i>” and the principles of Restorative Justice/Practice. The YOS is currently undertaking a self assessment against the new Code of Practice referenced above. The YOS also always ensures it meets the minimum standards set out in the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent Victims’ Charter. The YOS Victim Liaison Officers identifies all victims of youth crime and contacts them to provide opportunities for victims, children and the community to engage.</p> <p>The YOS are keen to ensure quality delivery of Restorative Justice whilst at the same time improving access to services for victims across the youth justice system, not only with Referral Orders but also within Out Of Court Disposals, other community orders, custody and resettlement.</p>
Strengths
<p>The YOS has two dedicated Victim Liaison Officers who are Gwent Police Officers to manage capacity to ensure all identified victims of youth crime receive a quality service. There is a YOS Gwent wide “<i>Restorative Justice</i>” victim leaflet produced by the 3 Gwent YOSs to share with victims to highlight the opportunities available via restorative justice and the role of the YOS.</p>

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A victim safety assessment process and a standardised victim contact report are embedded into daily practice for both statutory interventions and OOCs including CRs.

Restorative justice training for staff and volunteers has been delivered and it is repeated annually for new starters.

The YOS routinely receives excellent feedback from victims with the majority providing positive feedback on services provided regarding their experiences and opportunities to participate in restorative justice via the YOS. Victim satisfaction rates are shared with the LMB via the Quarterly Participation Reports.

The YOS has a victim case audit tool and undertook a number of audits during 2020/21 to inform its communication, recording and how it offers support and restorative justice opportunities to victims of youth crime.

The YOS has a dedicated Restorative Approaches Key Worker who works directly with Children Looked After to prevent their prosecution when safe and appropriate to do so. Restorative Approaches training is delivered by this worker to residential unit staff, foster carers and other accommodation providers to assist in behaviour management and proportionate responses. A further aspect of this workers role is to help stabilise placements.

Areas for Improvement

None

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Risks To Future Delivery

A significant risk to the structure and delivery of the current YOS Service provision is related to any future YJB grant decreases. If reductions do occur the YOS LMB will need to plan to mitigate the risk which will include exploring new methods of working and possible service restructure. Linked to the above a significant risk also exists in relation to any future reductions in partner contributions. A similar course of action will need to be taken to mitigate risks associated with such action.

A financial risk to both local authorities is regarding the inability to determine future remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) demand and the associated financial costs/pressures on the reduced grant from the YJB. To mitigate this risk the YOS has in place a robust monitoring system which includes management oversight, a compliance process, weekend and bank holiday Court support and has services in place to offer alternative robust community bail programmes.

A number of posts and services supporting the YOS are grant funded on an annual basis. The unknown impact regarding the Welsh Governments Children and Communities Grant post March 2022 is a risk. The YOS currently receives funding from this grant which along with 7 other grants has been merged as part of the creation of a new wider grant. The YOS receives financial support from this grant from both local authorities' allocation and

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any reduction threatens the stability of funded services within the YOS. It's important to note that prevention and early intervention services included within the Welsh Governments Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales and its associated Implementation Plan are funded via this grant in the YOS.

Ongoing annual grant confirmation from the OPCC for funding YOS projects can also create uncertainty regarding posts and services delivered by the YOS.

Addressing the first-time entry (FTE) rate and the re-offending rate and the expectation to continue to reduce it is an ongoing challenge to the YOS. The FTE rate is accepted to be a wider partnership issue, but the YOS takes a lead role in this.

The YOS continues to recognise and respond to the risk of offending and reoffending and the impact of this on children's futures, victims of youth crime and the wider community. It is widely acknowledged that working to reduce reoffending often involves engaging with a very challenging cohort with complex needs. The YOS has a number of initiatives to underpin this work which include:

- Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy
- REACH Project
- Community Resolution initiative
- Gwent Out Of Court Disposal Framework
- Trauma informed practice
- Completion of the YJB Remand Toolkit
- Quarterly use of the Reoffending Toolkit
- Completion of the YJB Disproportionality Toolkit
- Serious Youth Violence annual audits
- Creation of a Gwent Protocol To Reduce The Prosecution Of Children Looked After
- Participation Strategy
- Transfer of Children to Local Authority Accommodation from Police Detention Joint Working Agreement

The above risks will also be mitigated by:

- Robust financial planning and continued development of shared resources with partner agencies
- Ensuring the Gwent Out Of Court Disposal Framework which incorporates the Bureau Panel process is fit for purpose and proportionate in meeting responsibilities to both divert and appropriately escalate
- Partnership working

Improvement Delivery Plan

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REDUCING FIRST TIME ENTRANTS		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Continue to work with Gwent Police and other partners to promote and increase eligible referrals to the REACH project.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.22
To work with Gwent Police to embed the provision of information to parents and children in relation to VA interviews and an offer of YOS engagement and support via REACH for eligible children.	YOS Management Team	30.09.21
Continue to work to resolve the discrepancy between the YOS FTE information compared to the information which is extracted from the Police National Computer and publicised by the Youth Justice Board.	LMB Members, and YOS Management Team	31.03.22
Increase the number of referrals to the YOS RA CLA Worker.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.22
REDUCING RE-OFFENDING		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Continue to reduce overall numbers, frequency and seriousness of re-offending by children and better understand effectiveness of programmes.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Continue to increase joint working with colleagues across Children's Services and Gwent Police in relation to Children Looked After to reduce the need for criminal proceedings.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Continue to complete the YJB Reoffending Toolkit on a quarterly basis and analysis the findings to improve and inform practice.	YOS Management Team	31.03.2022
Complete the YJB Disproportionality Toolkit for 2020/21.	YOS Management Team	30.09.2021
When safe to do so consider the slow reintroduction of face to face panels across the YOS service delivery whilst ensuring learning from virtual panels is captured and considered in any planning or new ways of working.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
REDUCING THE USE OF CUSTODY		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE

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In partnership with the University of South Wales and the Hwb Doeth Academic Partnership analyse the success and failure of resettlement from custody cases as part of the Resettlement and Reintegration Panel (RRP).	LMB Members, and YOS Management Team	31.03.2023
In partnership with the University of South Wales and the Hwb Doeth Academic Partnership evaluate the effectiveness of the RRP.	LMB Members, and YOS Management Team	31.03.2023
EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDING		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Maintain high quality management for all children with regards to concerns over their safety and wellbeing	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Promote a culture of awareness of child exploitation and continue to engage in the Gwent pilot for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) local decision making and the associated Exploitation Toolkit.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Ensure that children known to the YOS in need of care and support or in need of protection including from Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing etc are identified, safeguarded and their cases escalated where appropriate.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SERIOUS HARM /PUBLIC PROTECTION		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Maintain high quality risk management for those children deemed at risk of causing serious harm.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Respond to child criminal exploitation, child trafficking, organised gangs, county lines, dangerous weapons and knife crime and serious drug related offences by identifying relevant training and resources to address these types of offences to safeguard children and protect the public.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
ACCOMMODATION		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Promote, deliver training and increase referrals regarding the Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of Children Looked After to help stabilise placements and respond to any concerning behaviours.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2023
EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT (ETE)		


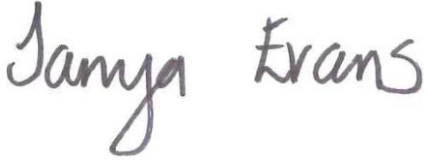
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PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE
Ensure all children and children involved with the YOS are supported to access their education entitlements.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2023
Achieve all actions within the LMB ETE Improvement Plan.	LMB Members	31.03.2023
Gain access at the YOS office to relevant educational databases/information management systems to allow the YOS to extract all the information they need to inform assessments, planning, ensure timely sharing of information and accurate ETE Key Performance Indicator (KPI) recordings.	LMB Education Dept. representatives, YOS Management Team and wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Develop and implement a Literacy & Numeracy Strategy within the YOS.	CCBC Education Dept. LMB Member	31.03.2022
	BGCBC Education Dept. LMB Member	31.03.2022
Provide training for YOS staff on addressing numeracy and literacy needs when assessed/identified and raise awareness of what local resources are available to support improvements when required.	LMB Members and YOS Management Team	31.03.2022
YOS Literacy and numeracy level identification, information gathering and recording on AssetPlus needs to be completed and reviewed at every assessment stage and inform planning.	CCBC & BGCBC Education Dept. LMB Members & YOS Management Team	31.03.2022
Obtain, share and embed in practice across the YOS greater understanding of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme.	LMB Education Dept. representatives, YOS Management Team and wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
HEALTH		
Work in partnership to sustain the Enhanced Case Management approach post September 2021.	LMB Members and YOS Management Team.	31.03.2022
Complete and implement a health pathway for children involved in the youth justice system.	LMB Health. Representatives and YOS Management Team	31.03.2022
OTHER		
PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD	DEADLINE

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Deliver the comprehensive YOS Workforce Development Strategy for 2021/23 to meet identified training and development needs across the service	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Implement the findings from future Thematic Inspections	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Consider the staff and volunteers needs regarding skills such as engagement, communication and other support areas when they return to the workplace and face to face engagement with children and families.	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group.	31.03.2022
Complete future National Standard Audits	LMB Members, YOS Management Team & wider staffing group	31.03.2023

Local Management Board Chairs

Name	Signature	Date
Mr Gareth Jenkins		July 2021
Mrs Tanya Evans		July 2021

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