

York Youth Justice Service Plan

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Contents

1. [Introduction, vision, and strategy](#)
2. [Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements](#)
3. [Local context](#)
4. [Update on the previous year](#)
5. [Performance over the previous year](#)
6. [Risks and issues](#)
7. [Plan for the forthcoming year](#)
8. [Resources and services](#)
9. [Board development](#)
10. [Workforce development](#)
11. [Evidence based practice and innovation](#)
12. [Priorities](#)
13. [Standards for children](#)
14. [Service development](#)
15. [National priority areas](#)
16. [Policing](#)
17. [Prevention and diversion](#)
18. [Education](#)
19. [Restorative approaches and victims](#)
20. [Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding](#)
21. [Detention in police custody](#)
22. [Remands](#)
23. [Use of custody and constructive resettlement](#)
24. [Working with families](#)
25. [Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding](#)
26. [Sign off, submission and approval](#)

[Appendix 1: Staffing structure](#)

[Appendix 2: Budget Costs and Contributions 2024](#)

1. Introduction, vision, and strategy

Welcome to the York Youth Justice Service strategic partnership plan, which outlines our commitment to collaborating with partners in the coming year to support some of the most complex and vulnerable children, young people, and their families in the city of York. Our goal is to provide quality services that lead to positive outcomes for all those we serve.

Over the past year, York Youth Justice Service have focused on diversion and prevention efforts, emphasising the importance of early intervention. Through effective collaboration with our partners, we have worked towards our common goal of reducing the number of children and young people entering the criminal justice system.

The plan is guided by the Youth Justice Service Management Board and has been created to ensure that our services meet the needs of our community, service users and victims. It will be reviewed annually to track our progress and make any necessary adjustments to better serve those that we work with. Thank you for joining us on this journey to make a difference in the lives of young people in York.

City of York Council Vision:

The City of York Council Plan: One City for All <https://colin.york.gov.uk/beconnected/about-cyc-and-york/the-council-plan/> incorporates four commitments for each and every one of us.

- Equalities and Human Rights
- Affordability
- Climate and Environment
- Health.

The Youth Justice Service also share the vision of the Children and Young People's Plan (<https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/downloads/file/159/cyscp-plan>), with a recognition that for many young people, children and families, York is a great place to live. We also understand that this may not be the narrative for all and there is a keen focus on the needs and diversity of the local population. The shared vision incorporates:

- Making York the best place to live and grow up for every child
- A place where children and young people understand their rights are active citizens who are involved in making York better
- A place where outcomes are good for all children but with a clear focus on closing gaps in outcomes for children and young people from vulnerable and deprived backgrounds

York Youth Justice Service Vision:

York YJS are closely aligned with our partners and share a vision across our wider services. As a criminal justice service, our focus for young people expands further and includes the following:

- York YJS believe in always putting the child first and we see children as children, we hear their voices and treat them fairly whilst building upon their strengths through use of Signs of Safety and trauma informed practice.
- York YJS aim to reduce offending, prevent re-offending and the use of custody and we strive to use evidence based, child centred, and preventative approaches to divert young people from the Criminal Justice System.
- York YJS connect with our communities and integrate young people into local networks to prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.
- We consider young people's networks and systems, ensuring relationships after service intervention are robust and supportive.
- York Youth Justice Service are part of the wider authority and partners. We strive to ensure collaborative working to secure positive outcomes for children and young people.

Strategy:

Reduce offending, prevent re-offending and the use of custody and we strive to use an evidence based, child centred, and preventative approach to divert young people away from the Criminal Justice System.

York Youth Justice Service were rated 'outstanding' by HM Inspectorate of Probation in 2022, highlighting York YJS as 'a skilled and committed staff team, ably led, and motivated by a strong management team. All are ambitious for children and unrelenting in their desire to improve the life chances of children'. Since the inspection, York Youth Justice continue to diligently uphold our aims of preventing offending and reducing re-offending, which is achieved through robust assessment, effective planning and delivery of both statutory and preventative interventions, with continuous service improvement as a focus. Our ethos remains that we can always develop and improve the outcomes for children in the city, through effective relationships with partners, hearing the voices of children and their families, and combined strategies with aligned goals.

York Youth Justice Service want to see young people achieve positive outcomes and fewer children and young people encountering crime.

We work collaboratively with our partners to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people with the City of York, supported by the Signs of Safety practice model and trauma informed practice to reflect a strengths-based approach to working with young people and their families.

2. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

The Management Board plays a crucial role in providing strategic oversight of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) to ensure the delivery of high-quality, personalized, and responsive services for all children. Meeting every other month, the Board is well attended and includes representation from statutory and local partners. Committed to strong leadership and governance, the Board works to drive innovation and effectiveness within the YJS, supporting and challenging through solution-focused leadership aligned with the priorities of the Youth Justice Plan.

The governance and leadership in York have been recognised by HMIP as outstanding, with a strategy aimed at reducing offending and providing preventative services through effective partnership working. The Board's work involves translating strategic aims into operational practice, with a focus on understanding the children involved with the YJS through the utilisation of data, performance dashboards, comparison reports, and thematic reviews. Locally agreed targets to reflect the priorities within the plan are agreed and monitored by the Youth Justice Service Management Board.

Chaired by a director, the Board comprises of senior management representatives from various organisations including the Police, Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority), Housing, Health, The Probation Service, Education, Clinical Commissioning Group, Early Help, and Her Majesty's Tribunal and Court Services. The Board takes a proactive and dynamic approach to youth justice outcomes, demonstrating a genuine commitment to the work of the YJS by providing necessary support and robust challenges where needed.

3. Local context

York is a relatively small walled city, spanning 272km² with a population of over 200,000 according to the Office for National Statistics Census 2021, an increase of 2.4% since 2011. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000014/>).

York is the largest urban area in North Yorkshire and attracts an influx of tourists due to its history and well-known night-time economy. It also has a large student population due to the two Universities and Law College in the City. The local context of the city of York enables collaborative working with colleagues in neighbouring youth justice services, including North Yorkshire and East Riding, alongside key criminal justice providers like the regional Probation Service, North Yorkshire Police, and the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Partner relationships within the city are strong, supporting efficient multi-agency working.

The Youth Justice Service comprises of highly experienced practitioners, including Youth justice practitioners, Social workers, Probation officer, and Police officer. The service also benefits from a Speech and Language provision, Turnaround practitioner and Trauma informed practitioner.

4. Update On the Previous Year

Progress on priorities in the previous plan

The YJS plan for 2023 highlighted a keen focus on expanding our offer of prevention and diversion to wider services with the aim of reducing first time entrants into the criminal justice system. This has been upheld and our offer of Triage and Diversion is now far reaching within the city. The Turnaround provision has enhanced this offer further, through a Turnaround Practitioner focusing on those young people eligible for the scheme and providing additional capacity. Alongside these interventions, the Youth Outcome Panel has diverted young people away from the criminal justice system with the introduction of Route 22, based on the police Outcome 22.

Reducing re-offending was and remains a priority of the service. Use of the Youth Justice Board 'tracker tool' has proved invaluable to the service as this not only enables monitoring of re-offending, but also provides analysis and patterns of offending behaviour. The tool has been used to identify types and seriousness of behaviours, leading to identification of gaps in provision that have been addressed.

Child exploitation and county lines was a focus in 2023/2024. The Youth Justice Service collaborated with colleagues in the York Exploitation Team to ensure that vulnerable young people were safeguarded, heard, and understood. The Youth Justice Service manager sits on the National Referral Mechanism group to ensure that young people within the service are recognised as vulnerable when being exploited, coerced or victims of modern slavery, servitude or forced compulsory labour.

Restorative practice is embedded within the service and integrated with working with victims of crime. During 2023, this provision expanded significantly with the YJS Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) advocating on behalf of victims to ensure they received a high-quality service in line with the Victims Code of Conduct. The victim work increased to a point where the Youth Justice Service were able to train volunteers to assist with the workload. The VLO has facilitated restorative conferences and expanded the role to specifically include supporting young victims of sexual assault within schools. The VLO is an active participant of the Youth Outcome Panel, ensuring that outcomes are victim led and the voice of the victim is heard within the panel. The VLO is also a trauma informed specialist and brings trauma informed practice to working with victims of crime.

Harmful sexual behaviour remained a focus of the YJS during 2023 and the service continued to deliver NSPCC preventative training to all staff and partners to ensure that practitioners felt comfortable and able to work with this client group. During 2023, York Youth Justice Service saw an increase in those referred for harmful sexual behaviour. This may not have been an increase in incidents, but likely to be due to practitioners being more aware that the service was able to facilitate the referrals and work with more young people displaying harmful behaviours.

Reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of Looked After Children was high on our agenda during 2023 and addressed using the 10 Point Checklist to ensure that young people were not unnecessarily criminalised. This systemic approach to decision making was utilised in the youth

Outcome Panel and considers the over representation of Looked After Children in the criminal justice system.

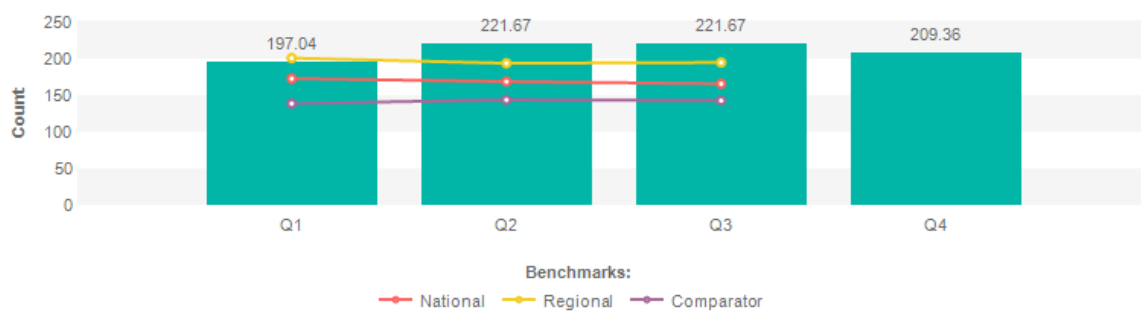
To ensure that children and young people’s broader needs are identified and assessed for appropriate support, the Youth Justice Service commenced training in Signs of Safety, the practice model adopted by the wider authority. This strengths-based approach aligns with the principles of Child First and changed our assessment and planning process. Assessments have more focus on strengths, alongside risk and this results in a truly holistic assessment. A further aspect of identifying needs is our trauma informed approach to practice. This ensures we are identifying the probable cause of behaviour and addressing the child’s needs, often stemming from earlier childhood. These facets correlate with ensuring that timely referrals to partners and services are made to meet the child’s needs at the earliest opportunity.

5. Performance over the previous year

First time entrants to the Youth Justice System

The number of First Time Offenders was slightly above comparator averages during 2023/24. There was an expected increase after the pandemic and the service work hard to ensure that children and young people are diverted from the Criminal Justice System where possible, through the Youth Outcome Panel and Triage and Diversion. Additional local factors include motoring offences now being counted whereby previously they were not, also the stance of the Crown Prosecution Service relating and those adjourned from court only receiving a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution, making them first time entrants as the CPS do not recognise Outcome 22.

First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (per 100,000 10-17 year olds in York) - (Rolling 12 Month) (by Quarter) - 2023/2024

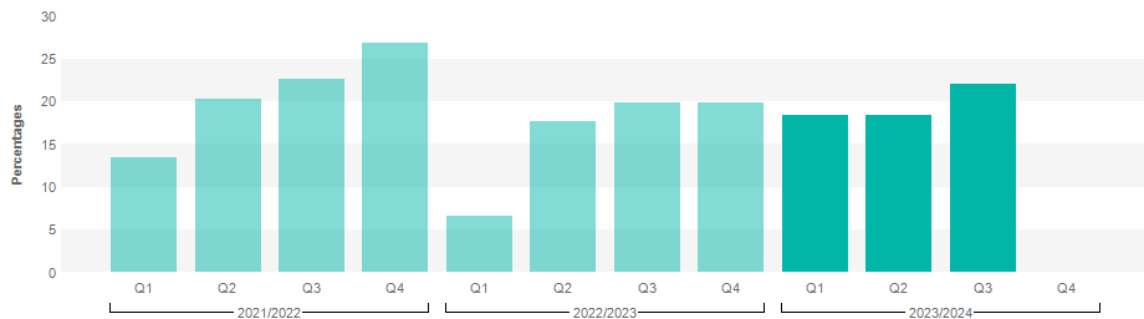


	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarterly Trend
First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (per 100,000 10-17 year olds in York) - (Rolling 12 Month)	197.04	221.67	221.67	209.36	

Proven re-offending

The re-offending data is a local measure that has been implemented due to the time lag encountered with Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board data. Re-offending of a fixed cohort of young people who received a substantive outcome are monitored at 3-month intervals. Reoffending performance in 2023/2024 shows some deterioration from 2022/2023. 22.2% of young people had reoffended after a period of 9 months, which is level with the same point in 2022/2023 and 2021/2022. Performance has considerably improved on 2020/2021.

% of 10-17 year old offenders who re-offend, measured at 3 month intervals to 12 months (Set 12 month cohort) - (YTD) (by Quarter) - Historic



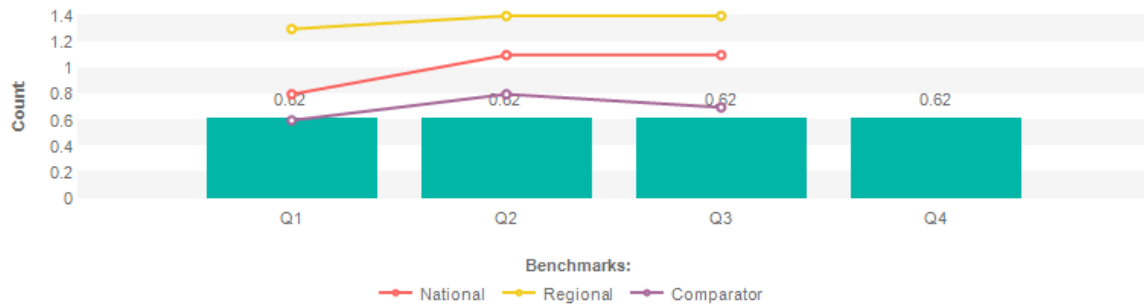
	Percentages			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2021/2022	13.64%	20.45%	22.73%	27%
2022/2023	6.67%	17.78%	20%	20%
2023/2024	18.52%	18.52%	22.22%	

Custodial sentences

York continues to see exceptionally low numbers of children and young people in custody. Within York, custody is monitored on a rolling 12-month cohort. At the end of 2023/24, one young person was sentenced to custody for a serious offence.

Coupled with Youth Detention Accommodation performance, this is a positive position for York young people and reflects good working relationships between the Youth Justice Service and the Courts.

Young people sentenced to custody (rate per 10,000 10-17 year olds in York) - (rolling 12 month cohort) (by Quarter) - 2023/2024



	Count				Quarterly Trend
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Young people sentenced to custody (rate per 10,000 10-17 year olds in York) - (rolling 12 month cohort)	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	

6. Risks and issues

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	ACTIONS
Exploitation of children	High	High	The YJS is involved with the multi-agency Child Criminal Exploitation panel to address such concerns and ensure actions are taken. York is piloting an NRM panel under the guidance of the Home Office and the service are part of the creation and implementation of devolving decision making to a local level. The service have a joint protocol with Children's Social Care for working with County Lines. York YJS also have access to St Giles Trust exploitation project.
Potential Increase in Children and Young People in Care	High	High	The service work with colleagues in Children's Social care to address challenges and are pivotal in the Prevention of Unnecessary Criminalisation of Looked after children protocol. The Youth Outcome Panel adheres to the 10 Point Checklist for Looked After Children and supports a restorative approach to working. York YJS are working closely with Together We Can around looked after young people.
Increased re-offending and serious offences	High	High	The service is focusing on prevention to address offending at an earlier stage to avoid further offences. Interventions are timely and appropriate, with a focus on meeting the needs of the child. York YJS have a focus on Serious Youth Violence and staff trained to use the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) assessment which is designed to structure appraisals of violence risk and risk management

			plans for adolescents. York YJS are involved in the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty
Inspection readiness	Medium	Medium	The service continues to prepare for inspection under the guidance of the Management Board, using the National Framework for inspection. Our last inspection was September 2022.
Maintaining staff and business continuity	High	Medium	A business continuity plan is in place and regularly reviewed. Commitment to staff welfare is a high priority. Regular supervision is accessible, alongside staff training. As a small service, staff absence or leaving would have significant impact, though staff retention has been good.
Funding	Medium	High	Budget constraints always feature as a significant risk and the service would be at risk if we were to lose funding. Finance is a standing item on the Youth Justice Service Management Board agenda and explores ways of using reserves and developing service delivery in line with budgets.
Turnaround funding	High	High	Losing funding for Turnaround is a risk to the service as this reduces capacity to work with young people in a preventative capacity

7. Plan For the Forthcoming Year

Children and young people first

The concept of Child First in the City of York has not only been adopted but is deeply embedded in practice and culture as reflected in the HMIP inspection who found that ‘York YJS has achieved our highest rating by providing services to children consistently well and establishing a culture of putting the needs of children first. The culture was clear at operational and strategic levels and across the partnership. It has been developed and sustained over time and was impressive in how it translated into services for children’. York Youth Justice Service ensure to follow the four Child First principles by ensuring to prioritise the best interests of children, recognising their needs, capacities, rights and potential. This is achieved in the Youth Justice Service by always recognising the child and respecting their individuality.

Offending behaviour is frequently a byproduct of trauma and we ensure to respond to children appropriately, consistently and with compassion to truly understand their needs and how we can provide appropriate and effective support.

York Youth Justice Service have adopted the City of York Signs of Safety model to ensure we are promoting children’s strengths and capacity to develop their prosocial identity for sustainable desistance. Within York, the ethos is to promote a positive childhood for children growing up in the city. This is achieved within the Youth Justice Service through a robust preventative approach, diversion from the criminal justice system and enabling children to be seen and understood as children, whilst also ensuring safer communities and fewer victims of crime.

Children are encouraged to actively participate and engage within society, with a focus on the community accepting young people as children, rather than labelling them as offenders. York

Youth Justice Service have a focus on community cohesion, reflected in our Restorative Justice Offer and reparation activities.

A focus of the service is to promote a childhood removed from the justice system to ensure children and young people are not stigmatised due to contact with the justice system. This is achieved through our robust prevention and diversion offer within the city.

To enhance the Child First approach, York Youth Justice Service have collaborated with the Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust as a pilot project for the Humber and North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Trauma Informed Care Program. This has enabled the service to recruit a Trauma Informed Practitioner to address childhood trauma and promote the best interests and rights of the child using trauma informed interventions and a strengths-based approach.

Voice of the child

The City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) continues to support that every conversation starts with the child and commit that all partners across the city support children and young people to understand their rights, to have a voice and to realise their rights. The partnership has developed a pledge to ensure commitment to understanding the lived experience of children and young people and based this on the four general principal articles of the United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Child (UNRC):

- Non-discrimination (article 2)
- Best interest of the child (article 3)
- Right to life, survival, and development (article 6)
- Right to be heard (article 12)

The Youth Justice Service adhere to this commitment and recognise that meaningful involvement of children and young people is a key component of the Local Authority. To ensure this, the Youth Justice Service actively involve children and young people's voices, both directly and indirectly in service delivery. This is achieved through gathering children's voices through assessments, forums, and direct work. Over the past year, young people have been active participants at the Youth Justice Service Management Board, enabling partners to hear young people directly and respond to any challenges and needs presented. The voice of the child remains high on the agenda of the Youth Justice Service, and we understand the benefits of hearing children and using their views to shape service delivery within the City.

8. Resources and services

York YJS is funded centrally and with a range of partner agencies providing funding and staff contributions.

These contributions are used to deliver youth justice services, in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The Youth Justice Board grant, partner contributions and available resources will be used to deliver statutory services and prevention within the city. Services will include:

- Statutory duties including all Orders
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service
- Prevention – Triage and Diversion
- Out of Court Disposals and the Youth Outcome Panel
- Child to Parent Violence
- Victim Liaison Service
- Substance Misuse service
- Speech and Language Service
- Forensic Panel
- Reducing re-offending (tracking tool)
- Probation support
- The Turnaround Programme
- Health
- Provide training to partners including Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Trauma Training
- AQA non vocational qualifications for young people

We believe these services produce improve outcomes for young people within the city as we are addressing behaviours at the earliest opportunity with the preventative element, in turn reducing the pressures on statutory services and entry into the youth justice system.

9. Board Development

The YJS management board has undergone evolution over time, maintaining a focus on Youth Justice and strategic leadership across key partners to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to children and young people. The board oversees the service's vision, ensuring not only compliance with required standards but also the provision of an innovative and creative service for young people in the City of York. Proactively addressing any gaps in provision, the Board ensures that the YJS has the necessary resources and is dedicated to supporting desistance and positive outcomes for children effectively.

In response to HMIP's recommendation to further consult with children, families, and carers, the management board extended invitations to young people, carers, and victims of crime to attend meetings. Board members actively seek to understand the YJS, its roles, and responsibilities through management reports and discussions with YJS representatives about their work.

10. Workforce Development

The culture of learning is strong in York and staff are supported to seek training opportunities through the comprehensive offer of the Workforce Development Unit. Staff are required to complete mandatory training and specialist training is also provided, including training around Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Trauma Informed Practice and presently undertaking Ambit training. Recently the entire staff team have also received training on the new case management system and comprehensive training on the use of Signs of Safety, which is ongoing. Staff members have also been provided the opportunity to complete the Youth Justice Degree and Social Work

Apprenticeship and we are hopeful these opportunities will continue over the coming year. During the HMIP inspection it was noted that York provides a robust training package for staff and highlighted the innovative training packages available. During 2024/2025, the service will upskill further in trauma informed practice, enhanced by the introduction of a Trauma Informed Practitioner to the service. We are in the process of implementing AQAs into our service offer, therefore staff will be trained on delivery of this educational provision.

Alongside training offered, York Youth Justice Service also deliver training to staff and partners through the Workforce Development Unit. This includes Harmful Sexual Behaviour training, Trauma informed practice and training to Appropriate Adults.

11. Evidence based practice and innovation.

Substance misuse

York Youth Justice Service provides a specialist substance misuse service for young people identified in need of support. The substance misuse specialist has well established links with North Yorkshire Police, enabling young people to access awareness and harm reduction interventions to avoid criminalisation if arrested for a drug offence for the first time. These interventions are delivered collaboratively with North Yorkshire Police and the Youth Justice Service through police Operation Choice. Every young person working with the service is offered support and screening enables needs led targeted or specialist interventions to take place. The service also utilises the local substance misuse offer of drug and alcohol support services for young people in the community. Feedback from young people includes gaining increased knowledge about the risks of substance misuse and feeling sessions 'inspired and motivated them to make a positive change'.

Trauma informed practice

Trauma-informed practice is essential when working with young people who are involved in crime, exploitation, or have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Working with Trauma is an integral part of working with young people who've experienced adversity. Knowledge, awareness, and practical measures can help build constructive relationships with children and other service users, leading to better outcomes. York Youth Justice Service are in the process of recruiting a Trauma Informed Practitioner to ensure that the service is truly trauma informed and this is embedded into our practice, with a focus on working with inter-generational trauma through direct working with parents and children. The service presently has three ARC champions, and all team members are trained in trauma informed practice.

Education

The service has recently signed up with the AQA Unit Award Scheme to become an AQA centre, enabling use of UAS units and accredited certification to support intervention programmes with young people. The scheme will allow students to engage with learning and have their achievements formally recognised, whilst building a portfolio of certificates that may be used for future employment to evidence their knowledge and skills. The aim of this scheme is to boost young people's confidence and motivation, whilst encouraging them to engage in future learning.

Skills for employment

With the assistance of Turnaround funding, York Youth Justice Service have created a 'skills for work' resource at Moor Lane Youth Centre. This resource is a carpentry workshop where young people can learn about carpentry and develop life skills for the future. This intervention aligns with restorative justice as young people can create pieces that are distributed within the community.

12. Priorities

Priorities for York Youth Justice Service include, but are not limited to the following:

- Prevention and Diversion to reduce first time entrants
- Reducing Re-offending
- Responding to Child Exploitation and County Lines
- Restorative Practice and holistic approach including supporting victims of crime
- Addressing harmful sexual behaviour across the city
- Reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of Looked After Children
- Ensuring children's broader needs are identified and assessed for appropriate support
- Making timely referrals to ensure the needs of the child are met
- Working in a trauma informed manner to address issues at the root cause
- Providing non vocational qualifications to young people

Prevention and diversion remain at the forefront of our practice within York. This will be achieved through use of interventions including Triage and Diversion to ensure that young people are diverted from the criminal justice system where possible. Presently Triage and Diversion is our most used outcome within the service. Turnaround has been used as a preventative strategy. Within York we have a Turnaround Practitioner, with a focus on working with schools in the local area. Though this funding will cease in March 2025, York Youth Justice Service will sustain a robust preventative offer through Triage and Diversion. The Youth Outcome Panel is another preventative solution whereby North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service and York Youth Justice Service work collaboratively to ensure that Out of Court Disposals decisions are robust, victim led and in the interest of the child's needs. This panel seeks to ensure that interventions are not over prescribed and aligns with the Youth Justice Board child first model.

Prevention schemes correlate with reducing re-offending, as the aim of prevention is to provide support at the earliest opportunity. In York, the Youth Justice Board tracker tool is funded by the Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority). This tool ensure that the service can analyse and consider re-offending in an in-depth manner. Through the identification of patterns of behaviour and offending, the service can ensure that we provide interventions that are appropriate and meet the needs of children and young people.

Exploitation and county lines offences are addressed in the city and York has an Exploitation Team situated in Children's Social Care. York Youth Justice Service work closely with this team to ensure that young people are safeguarded appropriately. The service also has access to the new exploitation service provided by St Giles Trust. The manager of the YJS sits on the National

Referral Mechanism panel, ensuring that young people who may be exploited or at risk of modern slavery are recognised and understood. The social worker for the service also sits on weekly meetings with the Exploitation Team to ensure that exploitation is addressed regularly.

Restorative practice is embedded within the service. The Victim Liaison Officer leads on restorative practice and has worked tirelessly to ensure that young people and victims of crime have the opportunity for mediation sessions where requested. Restorative justice also regularly takes place, with reparation schemes such as working with the local church to receive donations of clothing and distributing to families in need. Young people will be participating in a community garden project within the local area to ensure a space for residents. Every year the service works with the Spirit of Christmas charity, including wrapping donated presents and presenting these to children in the city during the festive season. Presently the young people are assisting North Yorkshire Police with a questionnaire that considers how to engage young people with the police.

The service has worked with young people exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour for many years, though our offer within the service has increased. All practitioners are trained in delivering AIM 3 assessment and NSPCC preventative interventions, with specialist workers able to deliver more specific assessment and intervention, such as working with children aged under twelve. During 2024/2025, the service will continue our statutory and preventative work with these young people, though we also aim to deliver harmful sexual behaviour training to wider partners, including schools.

We continue to have a focus on the unnecessary criminalisation of young people who are Looked After. The Youth Outcome Panel advocates the use of the 10 Point Checklist to ensure that young people are treated fairly, and their situation considered when decision making. Within York we have Together We Can, an initiative with a dedicated multi-disciplinary team, based within the children's home, that provides a wraparound package of assessment, support, and intervention. It offers young people, who are assessed as being 'edge of care' and their families intensive outreach support to prevent young people becoming looked after.

It also provides residential care and support for a very small cohort of young people, who are at significant risk and extremely vulnerable and where some time in residential care would be beneficial. This provides the young person and their family some much needed time and space, often taking the heat out of the situation and enabling the outreach team to assess the viability of returning the young person to live within their family network, into foster care or independence.

Ensuring that children's broader needs are identified and assessed for appropriate support is to be achieved through the use of robust assessment, alongside the Signs of Safety practice model to ensure a strengths-based focus on young people working with the service. In York we use Asset Plus as an assessment tool and will be introducing the new prevention assessment designed by the Youth Justice Board for other interventions. We recognise that Youth Justice assessments can be prescriptive in nature if used without considering the broader needs of the child, therefore ensuring to take a trauma focused approach assists in a more holistic approach, considering family, contextual safeguarding and community.

13. Standards for children

The Standards for Children- in the youth justice system replaced the previous *National Standards for Youth Justice (2013)*.

Self-assessment outcomes from April 2024:

Standard	Strategic self-assessed results	Operational self-assessed results
NS1	Out Of Court Disposals	OUTSTANDING
NS2	At Court	GOOD
NS3	In the Community	GOOD
NS4	In Secure Settings	GOOD
NS5	On Transition	GOOD

The Standards for Children (2019) are informed by the 'Child First' principles, that have guided the Youth Justice Services approach, which has maintained an approach and plan that is informed by up-to-date theory and recognised practice. A recent example of this is that York Youth Justice Service has secured fixed-term funding to employ a Trauma Informed Practitioner to develop the Trauma informed approach of York Youth Justice Service, and the wider partner services that we work alongside.

A key principle of the Standards for Children is to divert children and young people away from the youth justice system. York Youth Justice Service has seen a shift in the case work it is undertaking since it was last inspected, the service are now working alongside more children and young people on a voluntary basis that have been referred in from partner services to divert them away from the criminal justice system. This has seen a maintained 80-20% split of case work being centred on prevention, carried out on a voluntary basis. Subsequently we have had to shift focus and skills to work with sometimes a much younger age range, with prevention work on our Triage and Diversion schemes attracting referrals for an increased number of children between 10-12 years old.

York Youth Justice Service is a relatively small service and we have always worked with children and young people on an individual needs lead basis, delivering both voluntary and statutory interventions. We focus on bespoke plans to ensure the child's needs are met. The intervention plans we agree and deliver with children and young people, their families and carers are centred on their assessed direct needs, and we have developed our assessment processes around risk of harm, safety and wellbeing and likelihood of offending in all areas of our work.

To ensure we have oversight of the Standards for Children (2019), the service has a Quality Assurance Plan in place that identifies key audits of casework and practice. Full case file audits are undertaken regularly, as well as combined joint audits with neighbouring youth justice services for example completing MAPPA Level 1 Audits. An example of in-house audit process is that any new court ordered intervention is audited at the six weeks from sentence period. These audits are combined on a six-monthly basis to report to the YJS management board in the form of a report that can identify any themes of practice that need adjustment, this is then approached by staff development days and policy change if required. A recent JTAI mock audit took place where the Youth Justice Service were required to provide evidence of cases related to serious youth violence.

14. Service Development

Nationally the number of children entering the youth justice system has decreased dramatically over the last decade, as has the number of children in custody. (YJB strategy for delivering positive outcomes for children by reducing and creating safer communities 2024-2027).

As highlighted previously in this Youth Justice Plan prevention and diversion interventions are undertaken either on a voluntary basis, or through the local Youth Outcome Panel arrangements in the county and account for the majority of the current Youth Justice Service caseload. As the quote above highlights our statistics do match a national picture, particularly around the use of custody for young people coming under the services supervision.

York Youth Justice Service are continuing to develop our Trauma Informed approach to working with children, young people and their families in line with 'Child First' principles. We have secured funding to employ a Trauma Informed Practitioner to develop our service approach and aim to change element of our practice and processes. Staff development has focused on identifying appropriate training to develop our teams' skills and understanding around this area of knowledge.

The Youth Justice Board have developed a national assessment to be used by all youth justice services from April 2024. The assessment tool will be mandatory and used for all out-of-court disposals. The assessment tool has been developed so that it is suitable for prevention and Turnaround cases, but it will be optional whether services use this assessment for those children. York Youth Justice Service have created a full suite of assessments to address out of court disposals, including a robust Triage and Diversion assessment which is our voluntary intervention scheme. This was recently updated to include a Turnaround assessment. Incorporating the new assessment tool will be a key development for our staff and our service in the coming months.

York Youth Justice Service does not experience a high turnover of staff, we do enjoy the stability of a well-established team of professionals from a diverse background who are keen to develop their skills and knowledge as practitioners. Seconded staff are well as established professionals in the team and responsible for developing practitioner skills through effective practice sessions and general advice and guidance. With the shift towards prevention and diversion,

the service has experienced working with a young age range. Over 2024/2025, the service will concentrate on creating age-appropriate interventions for this age group.

As we have a close working relationship and sit under the Children Social Care directorate, the service has benefitted from accessing significant training, including the implementation of the *Signs of Safety* practice model. We have also accessed training around Trauma informed Practice, as well as accessing National Autism Awareness training, both of which will enable our staff team to deliver training to other partner services. This enhances our staff team knowledge and skills in developing and delivering proportionate and appropriate interventions to children and young people in the future.

The Youth Justice Service, Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) has developed the victim offer within the service over the last 5 year, through direct work with victims of crime and those young people that have caused harm. Over 2024/2025, the VLO will focus on working with the Pupil Referral Unit in York to develop Restorative Justice and victim work within the establishment. The victim offer can now also accept referrals from partners, including schools and Children's Social Care.

The service has a keen focus on education within the city and work closely with schools, though also understand that some young people do not thrive in the educational environment. On this basis, in 2024/2025 the service is introducing AQA's to our syllabus by becoming a centre through UAS, enabling the introduction of non-vocational qualifications for young people. This will enhance their capacity to secure employment as it displays motivation to succeed and engagement with education.

HMIP Outcomes:

York Youth Justice Service Fieldwork started September 2022	Score	32/36
Overall rating	Outstanding	
1.	Organisational delivery	
1.1	Governance and leadership	Outstanding
1.2	Staff	Outstanding
1.3	Partnerships and services	Outstanding
1.4	Information and facilities	Good
2.	Court disposals	
2.1	Assessment	Good
2.2	Planning	Outstanding
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding

2.4	Reviewing	Outstanding
3.	Out-of-court disposals	
3.1	Assessment	Good
3.2	Planning	Good
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
3.4	Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Outstanding
4.	Resettlement¹	
4.1	Resettlement policy and provision	Outstanding

Though York Youth Justice Service received an Outstanding outcome from the HMIP inspection in 2022, we recognise the necessity to continue to make improvements and develop the service further to ensure that we remain an outstanding service as we move forwards.

15. National priority areas

The demographics of the City of York differs to many other cities in the United Kingdom and our focus over the coming year is based on what we understand about children that may be considered over-represented within the city. The YJS and partnership strive to ensure that all children are prioritised, though also track data on those known to Children’s Social Care, children excluded from education, children identified as Special Educational Needs and children from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller backgrounds to monitor and understand over representation. During 2023/2024, York saw an increase in females within the arena of youth justice, predominantly for offences of violence. The Youth Justice Service Management Board have a particular interest in these females and have scrutinised case studies to gain a thorough understanding. The service has based their approach to working with females on research and understand the importance of relationship-based practice, also the use of a safe space to undertake the work. The HMIP inspectors outlined ‘work with children from travelling families was very good, with knowledge, skills and relationships having been built over time’.

16. Policing

Relationships between North Yorkshire Police and York Youth Justice Service are mature and positive. Police colleagues play an active role on the Management board, also the Youth Outcome Panel is chaired by a Police Inspector. The service benefits from a Police Constable (PC), who is highly pro-active in her approach and has a sound knowledge of youth justice. Some examples of the innovative work completed by the police officer within the service include: A complete rewrite of ABC contract for use by PCSOs and Safer Neighbourhood police constables to ensure a holistic approach and positive focus. This new approach provides the opportunity to enable police officers and young people to work together to identify factors against offending behaviour, whilst also providing guidance on referral pathways into other services. To enhance this approach further, leaflets were created with the guidance of a Speech and

Language therapist to help young people to understand outcomes. Moving forwards, further leaflets will be created to explain everything linked to police contact.

The YJS PC contributes to the Youth Outcome Panel assessment procedure, by profiling the young person based on previous offending history through a trauma informed lens. Out of Court disposals are delivered by the YJS PC, accompanied by direct intervention work. The role also incorporates data analysis that informs emerging trends and appropriate interventions.

The service is keen to promote improved relationships between young people and the police, therefore the YJS PC delivers sessions including 'a day in the life of a Police Officer', using multiple choice scenarios that take the young people through a typical shift as a Police Officer, highlighting responsibilities and risks, and how care for victims can be overshadowed by the need to deal with reckless behaviour from others.

Operation Divan is a police initiative, based on intelligence regarding the use and carrying weapons. The YJS PC delivers interventions that highlight legalities, risks and dangers of carrying weapons.

Information sharing between York Youth Justice Service and North Yorkshire Police is well developed and effective, though daily information shared from the Police system. This includes information pertaining to arrests, voluntary attendees and urgent briefing items.

The service has a robust intelligence sharing process in place, whereby Youth Justice staff will feed information directly to the PC, who then enters details into the wider police system.

To ensure information is shared with wider police officers, the YJS PC holds a secure spreadsheet to enable officers to view who is working with the service and the type of intervention or Order in place.

The YJS PC links in with all police teams to ensure they are well versed in communicating and dealing with young people. This extends further through providing direct training to officer recruits in the arena of youth justice.

The YJS PC facilitates training of Appropriate Adults, alongside a YJS practice manager and volunteer manager.

The YJS PC is trained in AIM3 assessment and intervention and facilitates training to CID regarding AIM3 assessments which can be carried out prior to Crown Prosecution Service advice, to better inform their decision.

17. Prevention and Diversion

As alluded to throughout this plan, prevention is a priority area for York Youth Justice Service which we have successfully focused on for the past five years. Prevention and early intervention prove predominant factors in reducing the likelihood of young people entering the criminal justice system. The approach of intervening prior to this critical point, increases the opportunities for young people in the future. Our prevention offer is strong, with Triage and Diversion being our most utilised intervention. The diversionary element of Triage and Diversion ensures that young people on the periphery of offending behaviour are also offered support. This is further supported by the City of York Early Help offer. Turnaround enhanced this provision

further, through recruitment of a Turnaround Practitioner providing increased capacity in numbers of young people receiving intervention.

The Youth Outcome Panel is a mature and recognised method of making informed decisions for out of court disposals within the City of York, ensuring that all young people placed before the panel receive an intervention from the Youth Justice Service, ranging from Cautions to Outcome 22 disposals.

18. Education

York YJS have established positive links with education providers within the city and the introduction of the Turnaround provision strengthened this further. The service has a positive relationship with the Police Liaison Officers within schools and regularly work collaboratively, particularly in the area of prevention and sharing information. Schools benefit from accessing the YJS Victim Liaison Officer, for advice, guidance and some direct work. A representative from Education sits on the YJS management board and York benefits from working closely with the Virtual Head of schools, for those young people that are not in mainstream education. The YJS continue to have positive links with the Special Educational Needs team. As part of the YJS's close links with both Primary and Secondary schools across the city, the Education, Training and Employment lead sits on the monthly panels of both the Fair Access and Learning Support Hub meetings. These meetings give providers direct access to advice and guidance around behavioural issues of young people within schools and where applicable, the YJS can then feed into agreed packages of support for those young people at risk of permanent exclusion due to the Anti-Social Behaviour within school communities, through both the Turnaround, Triage and Diversion programmes. The idea behind this process is to provide early intervention to minimise the risk of permanent exclusion.

For those young people on any YJS programmes, including Turnaround and Triage and Diversion whose attendance and participation at school is impacted by trauma or anxiety. The YJS can offer Talking Therapy (Drawing and Talking) sessions within the school setting. This is aimed at building the resilience of the young person within the setting, whilst also supporting improved engagement and participation. Working collaboratively with schools strengthens the support network for the young person by creating a team around the family approach, also enabling the YJS to support school plans for young people such as the My Support Plan and/or Education Health and Care Plan.

19. Restorative approaches and victims

York YJS offer to victims continues to increase, ensuring that victims are empowered and have a voice within the criminal justice system. Victim voice is central to all work of the YJS, including prevention, diversion, and statutory orders. The Victim Liaison Officer works tirelessly to advocate for victims and help them move forwards in their lives, through safety planning and support. The service also recognises that many children are victims of past experiences and utilise trauma informed practice to ensure such issues are addressed and worked with.

20. Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding

The Serious Violence Duty commenced on the 31st January 2023 and requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence that occurs in the area and implement strategy to address it. These authorities include police, justice, fire, and rescue, health and local authorities. The Home Office definition of serious violence refers to:

- Violence
- Violence against property
- Threats of violence

The definition is not limited to physical violence, so includes domestic abuse and sexual abuse, but does not include terrorism. Locally it has been agreed to keep the definition broad and include violence against women and girls. This profile will be reviewed annually.

A strategic needs assessment has been conducted in conjunction with the Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority) for the partnership area and a response strategy developed by January 2024. The Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority) have discretionary power to monitor local performance of the partnership against shared objectives. York YJS have low-level occurrences of serious violence compared to other major cities, however, will be immersed in the duty. Voluntary Bail Support is offered to all young people within the city involved in serious crimes, including violence. Individual officers within the team attend MARAC`s on behalf of YJS and the YJS Probation Officer attends MATAAC`s and MAPPA Meetings to ensure multi-agencies management of those considered high-risk offenders. Young People who are assessed of displaying a high risk of serious harm are also consulted with the FCAMHS service for further guidance and advice. Exploitation is also a consideration and York YJS work closely with other external agencies to ensure that information and intervention is provided to those young people at risk of exploitation. These include the attendance of Strategy, RAM and MACEM meetings all lead by Children`s Social Care as well as further multi-agency network partnerships with Trusted Relationship and Hand in Hand. York YJS have two social workers set within our structure, who work with young people considered to have higher complex needs including those at risk of exploitation. The YJS manager sits on the National Referral Mechanism panel in York and the Channel Panel.

21. Detention in police custody

Detention in police custody remains an area that the service focus on. During 2024, the YJS increased our capacity for Appropriate Adults (AA) to North Yorkshire Police by extending the hours where an AA is available, also ensuring that a YJS manager is available 7 days per week until midnight to provide support to our police colleagues. After midnight, the service uses the Emergency Duty Team. In the event of concerns about safeguarding and welfare, such as County Lines, the YJS have a protocol in place with colleagues in Children`s Social Care to ensure the welfare of the child and a focus on their release. We ensure to be compliant with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

22. Remands

In York, children subject to remands to Local Authority accommodation and children subject to remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) remains exceptionally low. Though the numbers are low in the city, the use of remands is considered by the partnership and any cases are discussed in the management board when they arise.

23. Use of custody and constructive resettlement

The National picture of the use of custody has significantly decreased, which is reflected in York. We recognise and understand the impact on children's lives when they receive a custodial sentence, such as disrupting their education and fracturing relationships with families. Use of custody in York is low, though occasionally happens with highly complex and often vulnerable young people being placed in the custodial environment. To address this from a strategic perspective, the Youth Justice Service management board have a comprehensive understanding of this cohort of children and address cases relating to custody through detailed case studies that outline the history of the young person, including social care history and educational attainment. The operational partnership with the courts in York is a particular strength and Pre-Sentence Reports provide robust assessment of young people that may be sentenced to custody. When bail packages are suggested, York YJS ensure to provide bespoke interventions that ensure young people, and the community are safe. Further to this, York YJS have devised a process whereby AIM 3 assessment is available prior to charge and have a service level agreement in place with North Yorkshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to provide a report to assist the CPS in their decision making.

We know the challenges faced by young people leaving custody, such as accommodation and have therefore ensured the policy, provision and pathway in York is high quality and evidence based. Resettlement focuses on individual need and personalised support to keep the child safe and manage risk of harm. Partners, such as Social Care, Health, Education and Housing understand their role in resettlement and provide services swiftly. The service benefits from access to specialist youth homelessness workers and a representative from Housing sits on the management board. The YJS undertake joint work with the secure estate and have named contacts at HMP Wetherby and Adel Beck Secure Children's Home. The management board actively review resettlement cases and address any barriers to effective resettlement. HMIP rated York's resettlement policy and provision as outstanding, highlighting 'the case we assessed evidenced meeting the child's individual needs, keeping the child safe and effective use of transitions to adult probation services, to manage risk of harm'.

24. Working with families

It is widely acknowledged that family relationships and young people's living arrangements and/or environments are background factors in offending behaviour. The available research indicates that family interventions can lead to improvements in family relationships and reduce recidivism. Good parenting interventions help to build self-confidence and awareness of how important effective parenting is. This is not only to prevent children from becoming involved in the justice system, but so that they may go on to lead productive and successful lives.

They can also increase the child's confidence and resilience and empower parents and carers in addressing complex issues. Parents are important in fostering and promoting a child's pro-social identity. Parenting support can reassure parents and carers and help them to understand what 'good enough' parenting looks like. In York we seek to engage family members at every stage of the young person's involvement with services and aspire to a collaborative approach ensuring families understand the goals and action plans implemented by the service. We aim to equip families with the support and tools that they need to promote, build, and maintain a positive relationship with their child as well as help them achieve meaningful change.

This takes place at the start of any intervention by ensuring their consent and co-operation to work alongside them as well as in conjunction with other services through the exchange of information. The voice of parents and carers is also captured at the beginning and regular intervals of any intervention via self-assessment and then regular updates on progress or challenges are relayed during home visits. In York the importance of family work is recognised however we are also aware of service limitations and pressures and consequently this is an area in need of development. The addition of a dedicated family/parenting worker would prove beneficial and ensure that the most challenging, risky, or vulnerable young people's families are provided with additional support and resource to help strengthen resilience and reduce recidivism. The YJS have strong links with wider services and do work collaboratively with Children's Services teams including Early Help and Exploitation teams to try to provide as robust a package of support as is required following assessment.

25. Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding

The Serious Violence Duty commenced on the 31st January 2023 and requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence that occurs in the area and implement strategy to address it. These authorities include police, justice, fire, and rescue, health and local authorities. The Home Office definition of serious violence refers to:

- Violence
- Violence against property
- Threats of violence

The definition is not limited to physical violence, so includes domestic abuse and sexual abuse, but does not include terrorism. Locally it has been agreed to keep the definition broad and include violence against women and girls. This profile will be reviewed annually.

A strategic needs assessment has been conducted in conjunction with the Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority) for the partnership area and a response strategy developed by January 2024. The Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority) have discretionary power to monitor local performance of the partnership against shared objectives. York YJS have low-level occurrences of serious violence compared to other major cities, however, will be immersed in the duty. Since the introduction of the **Home Office Serious Violence Duty** (January 2023), the York and North Yorkshire Office for Policing, Fire, Crime and Commissioning have worked with partners to provide a definition of serious violence that reflects issues found within the local area, and the impact and prevalence of different types of serious violence. Therefore, for North Yorkshire and York, the following crimes are included in our definition of serious violence and

were used during the Strategic Needs Assessment which can be found at: [Serious Violence Duty - Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner North Yorkshire \(northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk)

- Homicide
- Violence with Injury
- Domestic Abuse
- Rape and Sexual Offences
- Weapon Related Violence; including Weapon Possession
- Arson Endangering Life
- Stalking and Harassment; non-domestic

North Yorkshire and York aims:

- To understand the extent of violence throughout North Yorkshire through the analysis of characteristics, patterns of behaviour and the impact on the wider community.
- To establish the risk factors that increase the likelihood of violence, and how these factors can be reduced through prevention, diversion, and early intervention.
- To establish effective interventions in a variety of settings and monitor the impact on reducing serious violence these interventions produce.

North Yorkshire and York Serious Violence Duty - Our Response to Serious Violence



The below graph outlines a local reduction in serious violence crimes since 2022/2023 and further details can be found at <https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk/how-can-we-help/community-projects/svd/>

Offence Category	2022/23	2023/24	Difference	% Difference
Arson	26	31	5	19%
Homicide	5	0	-5	-100%
Serious Sexual Offences	680	574	-106	-16%
Possession of Weapons	398	377	-21	-5%
Rape Offences	525	367	-158	-30%
Violence with Injury	5,613	4,845	-768	-14%
Total	7,247	6,194	-1,053	-15%

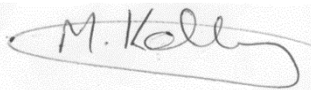
Exploitation

York YJS work closely with our colleagues in City of York Council's Exploitation Team to ensure we have robust structures to support those young people that may experience exploitation. We ensure that information is shared effectively, and intervention is provided to those young people at risk of being criminally exploited. The YJS manager sits on the National Referral Mechanism panel in York and a YJS practice manager attends the Channel Panel to ensure the service have a focus on radicalisation or potential extremist activity.

Safeguarding

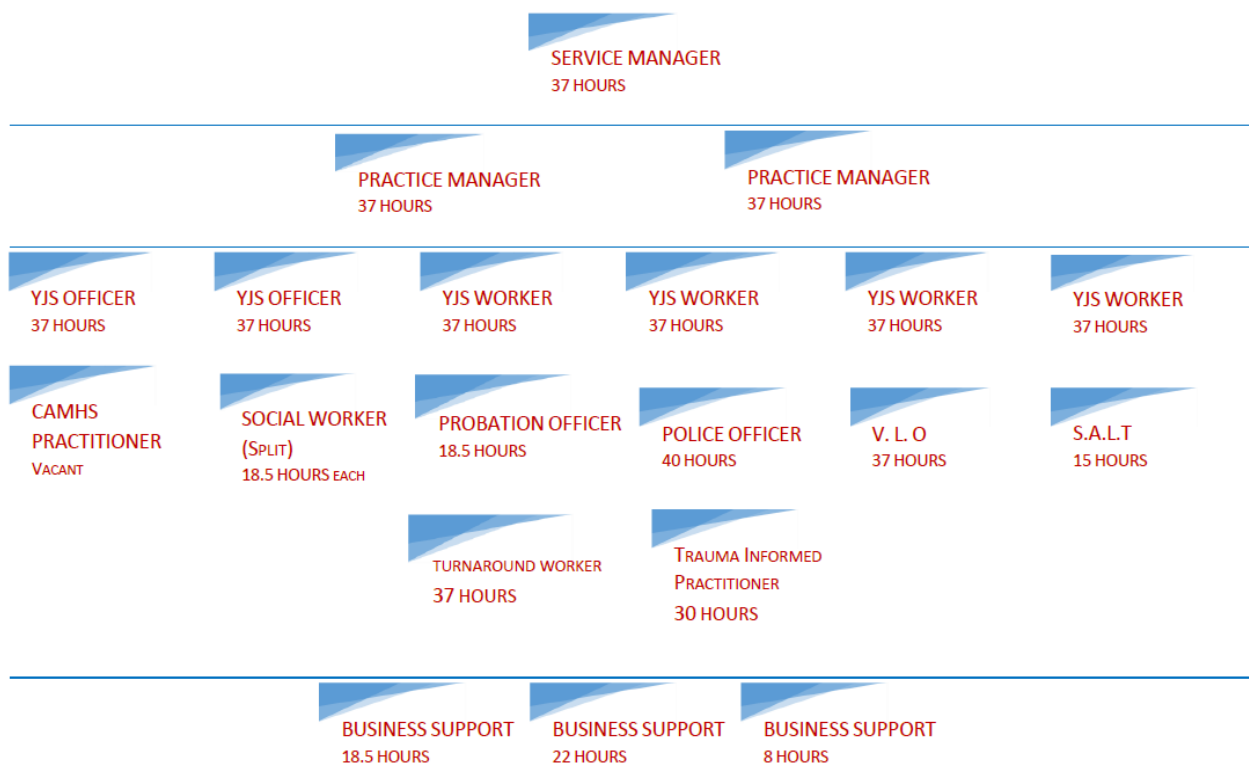
York YJS work closely with the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) and ensure that YJS staff understand the complexities of contextual safeguarding.

26. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	Martin Kelly
Signature	
Date	1/7/2024

27. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

YORK YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



The staffing structure outlines the core staff members within the YJS. Complimenting this further includes the volunteer service, including Appropriate Adults, Referral Order Panel Members and Victim Volunteers. The YJS regularly host students on a Social Work Apprenticeship whilst they are in their placement. The YJS manager reports directly to the Director of Safeguarding for the City of York Council.

28. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2024

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board	244,952		63,707	308,659
Local Authority	188,584		49,046	237,630
Police		48,277		48,277
Office for Policing Fire Crime and Commissioning (Y&NY CA)	71,692		21,356	93,048
Probation	3,707	17,171	1,293	22,171
Health	38,589			38,589
Welsh Government				0
Other				
Total	547,524	65,448	135,402	748,374