



London Borough of Brent

Youth Justice Plan 2021/22

1.0 Introduction

The Brent Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a multidisciplinary, multiagency service that works with children and young people aged 10-17 years and their families in relation to out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the planning and delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement. The YOS is situated within the Children and Young People department and is managed by the Head of Early Help.

In addition to supporting young people who have offended to successfully complete court and police ordered youth justice disposals, the service offers non-statutory early interventions funded by MOPAC with staffing contributions from Early Help. Partner agencies and aligned services based within the YOS offer an increasingly diverse range of support delivered by Family Support Workers, Substance Misuse Key Workers, Careers Advisors, Mentors, and Mental Health Specialists. This growing focus on early interventions reflects the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than respond when difficulties have become acute and demand more intensive services.

Brent's Children and Young People's department Practice Framework provides a foundation for how the YOS works with children, young people and their families and carers in Brent, and how professionals work together including the learning and development offer for staff, and recruitment activity. A trauma informed approach has been added to the practice framework during 2019 to promote meaningful contact and trusting relationships, the removal of any unconscious bias and supporting interventions that influence and manage offending behaviours.

Since last year's Youth Justice Plan, the COVID Period - lockdown restrictions - have dominated and influenced practice within the criminal justice system. The impact of the pandemic cannot currently be realised particularly in terms of youth justice performance measures - but in reading this year's youth justice plan it is important to see things through a COVID lens to help an understanding of change and progress over this period. The Brent YOS Partnership's specific response resonates with that of many other YOTs with strong immediate contingency planning. This ensured that young people received supervision when social distancing regulations placed limitations on how support services could be provided. Close work with partners ensured that changes to service provision met local needs and high-risk young people continued to be robustly supervised. The importance during periods of lockdown and tiered restrictions to comply with Government and Local Authority guidance and legislation was emphasised around the need, when visiting young people to adhere to safety and hygiene requirements.

2.0 Governance and accountability

2.1 Governance of the YOS is the responsibility of the YOS Management Board, which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes. The Management Board is comprised of representatives of the agencies identified as having a duty to co-operate in the partnership. Members are of an appropriate level of seniority to meet the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Youth Justice Board guidance.

Membership includes representatives from the local authority, education, voluntary sector, police, National Probation Service, health, Youth Justice Board, Community Rehabilitation Company, and Willesden Magistrates Court.

The purpose of the Brent YOS Management Board is to provide strategic direction and support, to ensure that planning is undertaken to deliver effective youth justice services that reduce re-offending, safeguard children and young people and are informed by an understanding of the type and level of risks to children and young people and seek to ensure proportionality in disposals for all young people in Brent.

2.2 Brent YOS was inspected during August 2019. The report published (Dec'19) by the HMIP Inspectorate of Youth Justice Services found that:

- *The Brent YOS Management Board has robust governance arrangements and that the 'YOS partnership approach demonstrated strong leadership, high ambitions and aspirations for children, a focus on practice outcomes, and evolving systems to improve the work of the service.*
- *The Board has established key principles of YOS practice, focused on the trauma response model (Signs of Safety), family engagement, a partnership approach, and the delivery of appropriate interventions. This includes services to strengthen parenting roles and services to siblings, to prevent them from entering the criminal justice system. These arrangements are underpinned by the well-established Brent Practice Framework.*
- *The Management Board uses a range of data to understand performance. These include key performance indicators and examination of case studies. Detailed analytical information provided by the Safer Brent Partnership enables the Board to understand trends, including early indications of a decrease in knife crime. Overall, Board members know how their service contributes to the work of the YOS and can judge if their service's contribution is effective. The Board Chair has a good understanding of YOS work. His role, as operational director of integration and improved outcomes, has contributed to effective joint work and service integration.*

Since last year's Youth Justice Plan the YOS Partnership, through the Brent YOS Management Board, has worked on the 4 recommendations in the HMIP Inspection report which focused upon Out of Court Disposals, Education provision and safe spaces to see young people. The responses to the 4 recommendations are addressed in section 8.0.

3.0 Context

- 3.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework that outlines YOS responsibilities in relation to out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement.
- 3.2 The Brent Youth Offending Service (YOS) has a legal responsibility to co-ordinate and deliver youth justice services, as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Sections 38 and 39, within the London Borough of Brent.
- 3.3 The principal aims of the service are to:
- Reduce the likelihood of young people offending or re-offending.
 - Protect children and young people.
 - Protect members of the public.
 - Ensure that sentences are served.
- 3.4 The YOS also focuses on achieving three Youth Justice Outcomes:
- Reduction in youth re-offending.
 - Reduction in the numbers of first-time entrants to the justice system.
 - Reduction in the use of youth custody.
- 3.5 A multi-agency Operational Group meets quarterly. It reports directly to the YOS Management Board.

4.0 Achievements

2020/21 was a successful year across the YOS partnership. This included the following highlights:

- 4.1 Overall good rating for the HMIP Inspection of Youth Offending Services in Brent (19/20)
- 4.2 Good ratings throughout the Youth Justice Board required self-assessment National Standard Review (strategic and operational elements) across the five Youth Justice National Standard themes: Out of Court Disposals, Court, Community, Secure Settings, and Transitions and Resettlement .
- 4.3 Positive response to the Youth Justice Board review of policies within the National Standard review

- 4.4 Positive responses from service users during the COVID period in June '20 involved a survey of 76 participants - 47 young people and 29 Parents - to gain feedback from service users about their experiences during the pandemic especially during the first period of lockdown. Results included 96% of young people stating that the YOS had helped prevent them from further offending, with 94% stating that they had not missed out on YOS interventions whilst in lockdown. More findings are recorded in section 10.8.
- 4.5 Maintaining a stable workforce of largely permanently employed staff. All staff have accessed training through the Brent Council CYP training programme and INSET training delivered through the Youth Justice Board. Three Team Managers are completing courses in systemic management and there is a case manager completing her ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) as well as one who has completed the ASYE in 2020. In addition, the YOS has commissioned staff training for 2021 – 2022 to include specific training on Restorative Practice, Youth Justice Legal Training delivered by Just for Kids Law and Cultural Competency Training.
- 4.6 A revised version of the Youth Offending Service Handbook for YOS staff members (March 2020)
- 4.7 A revised version of the Youth Offending Service Volunteers Handbook to capture changes made to the support and guidance for panel members and reparation volunteers.
- 4.8 The establishment of a restorative justice lead within Brent YOS to engage with more victims of crime and encourage the further development of restorative justice approaches. This includes the Restorative Justice Improvement Group, which meets monthly and is chaired by the QA and Practice Development Manager. The police, court magistrate and YOS staff attend this meeting.
- 4.9 Focus on quality assurance and practice development with a dedicated manager to deliver on this agenda.
- 4.10 Maintaining a culture of learning within the YOS and a desire to improve casework practice with a more complex cohort. The YOS has been providing monthly practice development sessions since 2017.
- 4.11 Performance improvements. Long-term decline in the number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System. Brent's rate per 100,000 young people's rate currently stands at 320 (January '19 – December '19) which is a significant fall from 532 in the period April 2014 to March 2015. This represents however a rise from the period January to December 2018 (285).
- 4.11.1 Despite increasing levels of serious youth violence and gang involvement, the number of young people sentenced to custody has reduced from a high of 54 in the period April 2013/14, to 8 custodial sentences between October 2019 and September 2020 though, the latter small number will have been impacted by the lockdown periods / restrictions.

4.12 Increasingly close alignment and co-ordination of joint work with other Children and Young People services including the Family Solutions Service, Looked after Children Team, Localities Service, and the Accelerated Support Team.

5.0 Young People supported by the YOS

5.1 Brent Borough's Young People Profile (2021)

- 346,200 people live in Brent. It is the 6th largest Borough in London¹.
- Brent is one of the most diverse local authority areas in the country with 78% of the total population from BAME backgrounds².
- Brent's estimated child population aged 0-17 years in 2021 is 80,600 with the 10-17 population projection of 32,900
- Brent's child population represents 23% (0-17) and 10% (10-17) of the total Brent population, and 9% (0-17 population) 4% (0-17 population) of the London child population.

5.2 GLA Population Projection for 2021

	Projected Population 2021	
	Brent	London
Aged 0-17	80,600	2,105,000
Aged 10-17	32,900	874,700
All Ages	346,200	9,298,000

5.3 In 2019/20 the **YOS cohort** consisted of 176³ young people. This is 0.5% of the Brent 10-17 population.

5.4 Brent YOS 2019/20 case level data

¹ GLA Population Projections, 2016

² ONS 2011 Census

³ Youth Justice Board Data Summary

Brent YOS 2019/20 Case-level data															
Offences	Disposals					Offending population by ethnicity						Offending population by gender			
Total Offences	No. of Pre-court disposals	No. of First-tier disposals	No. of Community disposals	No. of Custody disposals	Total Disposals	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese or Other	Unknown	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
422	46	126	68	14	254	29 (16.5%)	12 (6.8%)	19 (10.8%)	97 (55.1%)	18 (10.2%)	1 (0.6%)	31 (17.6%)	145 (82.4%)	0 (0.0%)	176

- 5.5 In January 2021 there were 292 Looked After Children (LAC) – reduced by 15 compared to 307 in January 2020. Brent has a smaller LAC cohort than its statistical neighbours and less than the national average. In January 2021, Brent had a rate of 37.8 LAC per 10,000 children under 18-years. During the last three years (2017/18 – 2019/20) on average 54% of care leavers were known to be in education, employment, or training (EET).
- 5.6 Within an **overall YOS caseload** of 118 young people in February 2021, there were 22 LAC young people supervised by the YOS, compared to 25 LAC in April 2020 and 24 LAC in January 2019.

Overall, **Brent LAC young people** represented 18% (20) of the total number of Brent young people supervised by the YOS (114):

- 75% were male (68% in April 2020 and 79% in January 2019).
- 60 were aged 16 or 17 years (68% in April 2020 and 63% in January 2019).
- 50% were of Black African or Black Caribbean Heritage (64% in April 2020 and 63% in January 2019)
- 37% had committed a violent offence (76% in April 2020 and 46% in January 2019), 23% a drugs offence (32% in April 2020 and 58% in January 2019) and 9% committed a Robbery offence (24% in April 2020 and 27% in October 2019).

- Twelve looked after children, who had been in care for more than 12 months received a caution or conviction in 2019/20. Compared to fourteen looked after children, who had been in care for more than 12 months received a caution or conviction in 2018/19. The number for 2017/18 was twelve⁴.

5.7 **A snapshot of the YOS cohort in February 2021** showed that there were 118 young people known to the YOS for having received a court or police disposal or taking part in the Triage early intervention programme – this includes young people being care taken by Brent YOS and those placed out of borough.

- 57% were aged 16 or 17 years compared to 53% in February 2020 and 58% in February 2019
- 86% were male compared to 84% in February 2020 and 90% in February 2019
- 46% of young people from were a Black Caribbean or other Black Heritage Group compared to 63% in February 2020 and 60% in February 2019.
- 19%, inclusive of caretaking cases, were Looked After Children (LAC). 17% were Brent LAC.
- 24.3% were NEET (in academic years 12 and 13 and including young people residing out of Brent) compared to 29% in February 2020 and 23% in February 2019.
- 12% of the caseload were recorded as having an EHCP or Statement of SEN compared to 8% of the caseload in February 2020 and 7% in February 2019.
- The YOS cohort live across Brent although those wards with higher percentages are within Stonebridge, Barnhill, Harlesden, Queensbury, and Kensal Green. Young people residing in these wards represent over a third of the cohort. A significant proportion (almost a fifth) reside outside of Brent.

5.8 KPI performance

Reoffending

The **binary rate of reoffending** is the official measure of reoffending and the proportion of 'reoffenders' who make up the total cohort. Brent's overall trend appears to be that of a significantly fluctuating reoffending rate. Brent's rate using the new three-month cohort method has seen a gradual decrease – 54.1 per cent (Oct – Dec '16) – 50 per cent (Oct '17- Dec '17) to 37.8 per cent (Oct '18 – Dec '18). This masks some fluctuations in between these periods rising to a high of 62.2 per cent in Jan – Mar '18 with the 3 subsequent reporting periods witnessing a drop to 37.8per cent. Using the more stable 12-month average, the rate has remained below 52.6% for the past 3 years.

⁴ Latest published data from the Department for Education

The reoffending data conceals **considerable variation in the levels of reoffending between different types of orders**. The HMIP Annual Report of youth offending services including Brent (2019 - 2020) reported in 16 Inspections involving 768 cases, Out-of-court disposals such as youth cautions and youth conditional cautions had a reoffending rate of 26.6 per cent in 2018, while youth rehabilitation orders (YROs) and custodial orders had much higher rates, of 61.7 per cent and 69.3 per cent, respectively. Brent's reoffending rates across these interventions– 19 per cent (Pre court) – 56 per cent (Youth Rehabilitation Orders) and 60 per cent custodial orders have some resonance with those for the PNC National figures.

The Brent YOS is using the **YJB reoffending toolkit** in a range of operational and strategic settings to better understand and respond to trends and patterns around repeat offending. A reoffending report prepared for the YOS Management Board in January 2021 explored several lines of enquiry from data and information in the YJB live reoffending tracker. Several recommendations were made including multi agency deep dive case audits – responding to substance misuse – speech and language – and educational issues – effectively managing transitions and resettlement episodes – improving proportionality factors and constantly listening to the voice of the child. These recommendations and related actions are included within the YOS Partnership Improvement Action Plan 2021-22.

First Time Entrants

Brent's long-term trend shows a decline in the number of FTE's. Brent's rate currently stands at 320 (January 2019 – December 2019). This is higher than that of its YOT family and the London rate. The next reporting 4 periods will include the Covid-19 lockdown period when many courts were functioning at a reduced capacity so a further reduction in FTEs is likely. Whilst Brent's FTE rate is currently marginally above the YOS Family rate, both the London and YOS Family rates have risen in this period too.

Custody

Despite continued serious youth violence and gang involvement, the numbers sentenced to custody has reduced from a high of 54 in the period April 13-14 to 8 in the latest period - October 2019 - September 2020. The Covid-19 lockdown has most likely affected this indicator due to court activity being limited but is in line with a marked reduction in recent years. It is likely that as the court system clears through the backlog created from the lockdown in 2020 these numbers are likely to increase. In March 2021, the number of children in custody has risen to 10 – this includes children who are remanded and sentenced.

Work to improve upon current performance relating to all three youth justice domains is outlined within the Youth Justice Improvement Plan 2021/22. The plan has been produced to align with the actions arising from the HMIP Inspection - findings of the National Standards Audit 2020 – (and reviews in 2020 – 21) recommendations within the Reoffending Report (January 2021) and the Disproportionality Action Plan. .

6.0 Case complexity within the YOS cohort

- 6.1 Nationally, Youth Offending Service case numbers have dropped. The reduction in case numbers in recent years does mask the growing number of challenges that the youth justice cohort presents particularly as regards risk of harm and safety and wellbeing issues.
- 6.2 By considering a range of risk and vulnerability factors, the complexity of the active YOS caseload was assessed at the end of each of the last four years. These classifications are made by the YOS case manager and sign off from their line manager within the case file. In recent years, the case classifications have increased with high or very high especially amongst the 16 -18-year-olds. Statistically, the 16-18 age band could be seen to be a slightly more complex / risky group. On average, across the 4 snapshots (time periods from March 18 – June 20) 66.6 per cent of 16-18-year-olds were rated as High or Very high compared to 61.2 per cent in the 10-15 age group. Interestingly when taken as an average, 13-year-olds present as the most complex / risky single year age group with 83.3 per cent rated as either High or Very High. However, the number of young people in this age group is small with just 12 cases across 3 snapshots. Analysis shows that 66% of young people in 2019/20 were either high or very high complexity, compared to 59% in 2016/17. During the COVID lockdown and restricted periods, assessments of young people have been more complicated to assess through online contacts, which highlights the importance of additional information from other family members and partners.

	Court Ordered Sentences by Complexity							
	No. of cases				% of caseload			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Complexity								
Low	27	5	20	13	24%	3%	14%	12%
Medium	25	29	30	25	23%	18%	22%	23%
High	40	72	51	45	36%	46%	37%	41%
Very High	19	52	37	27	17%	33%	27%	25%
Total	111	158	138	110	100%	100%	100%	100%

7.0 Recorded crime in Brent

7.1 Between the financial years of 2013/14 to 2018/19, the total number of notifiable offences in Brent rose from 24,488 to 30,946, a 26.37% increase. The financial year of 2019/20 saw a reduction to 30,059. The following data is based upon data provided by Community Safety and relates to year-on-year changes between 2018/19 and 2019/20. It relates to Brent as a whole and not just the CYP cohort.

- A decrease in violence against the person offences – a reduction of 1.84%. Brent has the 6th highest number of violence against the person offences in London.
- A decrease in drugs offences – a 4.53% decrease. Brent has the 9th highest number of drugs offences in London.
- A decrease in robbery offences – a reduction of 3.6%. Brent has the 12th highest number of robbery offences in London.
- A decrease in serious youth violence offences* – 17.92%. Brent has the 17th highest number of serious youth violence offences in London. Please note that the classification of a serious youth violence offence used here differs from that used by the Youth Justice Board in the toolkit data presented above. In this context, serious youth violence offences are defined as any offence of Most Serious Violence or Weapon Enabled Crime where the victim is aged 1-19.
- A decrease in knife crime offences – a reduction of 13.51%. Brent has the 10th highest number of knife crime offences in London.
- A decrease in gun crime offences – a reduction of 18.45%. Brent has the 9th highest number of gun crime offences in London.

7.2 The **most prolific types of youth crime in Brent** are offences of violence against the person, drug possession and supply, robbery, and motoring offences. Serious youth violence involving the use of knives, sometimes associated with gang related activity and its links with drugs and county lines in Brent has increased the amount of statutory provision the YOS delivers to young people. This is due to the scaled approach to youth justice, which requires minimum levels in terms of contact, and support to increase or decrease in line with assessed risk - higher risk cases receive a greater degree of case management and oversight.

7.3 The Youth Justice Board produces a quarterly **Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Data Toolkit**. The toolkit shows trends in SYV offences, which are defined as any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of five or more. The latest version was published in January 2021 and contains data up to September 2020. The toolkit contains unpublished data intended for internal performance monitoring purposes and has been marked as sensitive so cannot be shared.

7.4 Data in the toolkit broadly supports the Police data, which shows that serious youth violence has improved, compared to last year. Whilst the toolkit does however indicate that robbery offences have increased significantly since 2016/17 there has been a significant dip during 2020 / 21, which is also echoed in the wider Police data. The COVID-19 pandemic has likely contributed to this decline as well as the overall fall in the SYV rate. The

conclusion of the data however shows overall a marked increase in the number of robbery offences. There has been a 63% increase from 38 offences (16-17) to 60 offences (19-20).

7.5 Disproportionality: Black African and Caribbean male young people are significantly disproportionately represented in the youth justice system in Brent. They currently represent 55 per cent of all young people in Brent who are known to the YOS. This compares unfavourably to the 28% of all young people from these heritage groups living in Brent according to the midterm 2011 census, though does represent a 31 per cent reduction compared with 2014 and 8 per cent with 2019.

Ethnic group	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	London PCC	Year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2020	Year ending March 2019 to year ending March 2020	2011 mid-year 10-17 population by ethnic group
									% change	% change	
Asian	41	36	21	17	11	11	19	322	-54%	73%	37.00 9,524
Black	140	151	144	133	114	106	97	1,468	-31%	-8%	38.00 8,237
Mixed	24	28	23	22	17	13	12	582	-50%	-8%	39.00 2,501
Other	4	10	28	29	23	13	18	244	n/a	38%	40.00 2,492
BAME	209	225	216	201	165	143	146	2,616	-30%	2%	41.00 22,754
White	43	51	42	37	46	26	29	1,292	-33%	12%	43.00 6,516
Unknown	45	5	11	11	7	6	1		n/a	n/a	42.00 -
Total	297	281	269	249	218	175	176	3,908	-41%	1%	29,270
	10	16	22	28	34						

								Percentage point change (1)				
Share of total	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		% point change from year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2019	% point change from year ending March 2019 to year ending March 2019	2011 mid-year 10-17 population by ethnic group	
Asian	16%	13%	8%	7%	5%	7%	11%	8%	-5.4 pp	4.3 pp	33%	
Black	56%	55%	56%	56%	54%	63%	55%	38%	-0.1 pp	-7.3 pp	28%	
Mixed	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	15%	-2.7 pp	-0.8 pp	9%	
Other	2%	4%	11%	12%	11%	8%	10%	6%	n/a	2.6 pp	9%	
BAME	83%	82%	84%	84%	78%	85%	83%	67%	0.5 pp	-1.2 pp	78%	

White	17%	18%	16%	16%	22%	15%	17%	33%	-0.5 pp	1.2 pp	22%
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8.0 HMIP Inspection

8.1 Brent Youth Offending Service was the subject of a 'single agency' HMIP Inspection during August 2019. The HMIP overall rating for Brent YOS was 'good'. Fuller details of the Inspection and findings were recorded within last year's youth justice plan. Brent YOS prepared an Inspection Improvement Plan, which covered the four primary recommendations made by HMIP. Actions have been taken to implement each recommendation and progress is monitored every quarter by the multiagency YOS Management Board comprising representatives from the local authority, voluntary sector, Police, National Probation Service, Brent CCG, educational settings, Youth Justice Board and Willesden Magistrates Court. Brief progress details are recorded under each recommendation below.

1. Review and monitor decision-making in out-of-court disposals, to ensure that there is no unnecessary criminalisation of children with high levels of welfare needs

The Brent Out of Court Disposal Panel (OOCDP) – formed in January 2019 - comprises local services including the Police, NHS Liaison and Diversion, Family Solutions, Restorative Justice, Children's Social Care and the YOS. The Panel uses YOS assessment information to inform decision making around risks, vulnerabilities, family support and other identified needs. Assessment information is also used to identify aggravating and mitigating factors that may increase or decrease an offence's gravity score (gravity scores determine which disposals are available). The OOCDP has met weekly – meeting virtually during the COVID period - and is jointly chaired by the Police and the YOS.

Brent YOS and the Police reviewed and revised the OOCDP Terms of Reference and operational procedures in November 2019 following the inspection. Vulnerabilities are now routinely explored as potential mitigating factors to be considered when determining the appropriateness and severity of disposals. Additional Social Care, Early Help, educational or mental health practitioners with specialist knowledge of a young person or their family are routinely invited to share their knowledge and views at panel meetings. The provision of wide-ranging professional opinion helps to ensure that disposals are proportionate to both the offence type and the capabilities of culpable young people.

Since the inspection, OOCDS have been monitored more closely to ensure that children are not unnecessarily criminalised. The North West London Scrutiny Panel meets every six months to scrutinize a sample of Borough Command Unit OOCDS. Brent was commended for its consistent practice and clearly evidenced decision making at the first meeting of the group.

An overview of post inspection performance was presented to the YOS Management Board in July 2020 and feedback was provided on the appropriateness of decision making in 51 cases. None of these cases were found to unnecessarily criminalise young people and decisions were being made in a collaborative manner. Police disposal recommendations were explored and challenged and there were several instances of a recommendation for a Youth Conditional Caution (YCC) being altered to a Youth Caution (YC) or Triage. In such cases, agreement was reached to issue a less serious disposal than initially recommended by the Police. Recent updates to the way the panel is working has included a set agenda for the panel to ensure minutes are consistent as well as an emphasis and discussion on the child's diversity, identity and cultural needs.

During October 2020, there was a number of OOCd cases being referred back from the youth court and this was causing some complex issues with children admitting to their offences after appearing on a charge at court. Brent YOS recognised this as a reoccurring issue and have implemented a new system at Court with the CPS. If a young person admits the offence at court and it is agreed with the CPS that the case can be refereed back for an OOCd then the CPS will complete evidence of their rationale and the young person will complete a section 10 statement. This has been particularly helpful, as it has given some children a further opportunity to admit the offence and receive a caution or triage.

2. Review the resources available to assess, plan and then meet the needs of children and young people who receive a community resolution

A restructure of YOS management in January 2020 has led to increased management oversight of all aspects of OOCd assessment, planning and delivery. Additional resources for community resolution provision have been obtained to create the capacity needed to improve assessments, allow better planning, develop a more varied interventions offer and increase family work. The YOS Management Board has sought continued commitment from partners to maintain this level of support given the high levels of risk being managed by the YOS - as identified within the inspection.

Additional staffing resources for OOCds as well as increasing family support provision has improved assessment and planning capacity as well as work with families and restorative justice options with victims. The assessment process has been improved through greater timeliness - so that interventions can be put in place at the earliest opportunity - and the inclusion of different assessment tools. A YOS review of OOCd progress between December 2019 and May 2020 found that the new three-tiered assessment process allowed better analysis from wider sources of partnership information, enabling wider consideration of a range and variety of different provision to meet the personalised needs of young people

The criticism that there was an overreliance on what was described as a "one size fits all" approach has now significantly changed to witness a wider range of interventions including mentoring (Air Network), individual sessions with case officers, Family Solutions, Prospects (NEET) and ETE providers and individual sessions with the YOS Case Manager with Restorative Justice lead responsibilities. Mental health screening sessions with the NHS Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) worker are offered to all young people. Mental health assessments are either completed at the point of arrest at the Wembley Police Station custody suite, or at the Brent Civic Centre. In many cases the YJLD worker co-ordinates onward referral to CAMHS and other support services. Whole family support is maintained until cases are accepted and handover has taken place. Young people from BAME heritage groups are also referred to

the YJB funded COVID-19 pathfinder project, which ensures provision is targeted to those who need early, help support via mentoring or emotional wellbeing support.

3. Provide services to children and young people who are not in education, training, and employment

Close oversight from the YOS Management Board has resulted in significantly improved outcomes for NEET Young people. This has been achieved operationally through intensive joint working between YOS, the education and training commissioned provider, Prospects, and the Virtual School for looked after children.

Staffing capacity has increased and there has been more directing and monitoring of provision. This includes:

- The formation of the NEET working group which now meets monthly to monitor cases and ensure plans are in place.
- Employment and training data from the YOS on a fortnightly basis so that interventions are put in place at the earliest opportunity and any children who have no recorded provision are flagged up
- Working closely with custodial units to ensure young people have a transition destination at the point of resettlement.
- Ensuring that Prospects Advisors are working closely with parents and YOS Case Managers, other professionals, and families.
- Deploying additional staffing when young people are already receiving support from a generic Prospects Advisor.
- The NEET group has extended its scope to include PLIAS employment adviser who can provide specialist support to those seeking employment and the construction CSCS card.

Operational oversight of NEET young people in the youth justice system is the responsibility of the **YOS NEET Working Group**. Membership of the Group consists of the Prospects Service Manager, YOS Deputy Service Manager, a Virtual School Officer, YOS Team Manager Prospects Officer and the Employment Adviser from PLIAS. All NEET cases are RAG rated, actions are set where required, and deadlines are issued at every monthly meeting.

The number of NEET young people known to Brent YOS is a relatively small but challenging cohort. Many have had negative educational experiences and a proportion are entrenched in lifestyles that are not conducive to EET - often because of exploitation, gang affiliation and disrupted educational history. However, the strategic approach adopted by Brent since HMIP inspected local youth justice provision, has shown that the number of good NEET outcomes will increase when services work in partnership. Quarterly monitoring and support from the YOS Management Board will ensure providers improve results further.

4. Provide suitable and sufficient places for children and young people to be seen and supervised

The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic has delayed progress significantly. It has also impeded the ability to make firm arrangements with several community partners who expressed willingness to explore options for accommodating YOS provision.

Despite the many challenges caused by the pandemic, this recommendation will be implemented when Government restrictions on social interaction are lifted and community providers are able to offer customer care that is conducive to face-to-face partnership work.

Several options have been explored and solutions offered. The establishment of Family Hubs from existing Children's Centres will significantly increase the ability to offer youth justice services in child friendly settings. Brent River College Pupil Referral Unit and the Brent Youth Zone as well as new premises found by the Brent Foundation (YBF) provide other possibilities. Brent Strategic Property services and the local Police have been requested by YOS Management Board Chair to explore alternative, safe locations. Supporting more young people in the communities where they reside will contribute to better risk management planning and reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring because of lengthy commutes.

8.2 The latest HMIP Annual report: inspection of youth offending services (2019-2020) provides guidance to improve practice with an underlying focus about preparation for future inspections within the current regime by raising concerns around different themes within youth justice across the 16 areas (including Brent) inspected – some clearly linked to national priorities.

The following areas have been highlighted through the annual report and many of them have associated actions included within the Brent YOS Improvement plan for 2021-2022

1) Knife crime statistics show that **knife crime** continues to increase year on year – County lines drug supply activity and sexual and criminal exploitation of young people by older adults also remain real concerns and have continued during the pandemic as organised criminals adapted their markets and delivery methods to a COVID-19 world.

2) Violent Crime constituted 50 per cent of the court cases of the 16 services inspected – and represented 47 per cent of the cases in Out of Court Disposals. Girls were more likely to have committed offences of violence (67 per cent for females and 46 per cent for males). Boys were more likely to have committed drug offences (12 per cent for males and 3 per cent for females).

3) Significant **violence by children against parents** for example older boys against single mothers – becoming worse during the lockdown period.

4) Increasing numbers of post court cases (88 per cent) and 62 per cent of Out of Court cases presented a **medium or high risk of harm**

- 5) An Increasing proportion of all **first -time entrants** to the youth justice system are now coming into the system because of crimes serious enough to go straight into court (45 per cent in the year to March 2019, compared with 10 per cent in 2009). This is a concern, and suggests that these children are not getting adequate preventative interventions earlier on and needs to change.
- 6) An analysis of the quality of **supervision of children on YOT caseloads who are in local authority care**, for example shows that the quality of assessment, planning and reviewing of these cases was poorer than for children not in care on almost every standard. The quality of services was particularly weak for children placed in accommodation outside their local area
- 7) Inspections showed that **disproportionate numbers of Asian and black children enter the youth justice system** each year. These children were however receiving the same quality of service as white children, in terms of the quality of assessment, planning and delivery, with parents and carers equally involved from each group. YOSs must assume a wider role in advocating with other local criminal justice and children's services or education partners to deal with the underlying factors that may be causing disproportionality upstream, before cases reach the doors of a YOT - for example, in relation to exclusions from school or policing or sentencing practice.
- 8) Children were not always receiving their **legal entitlement to education** and this was not being addressed strategically. In five of the 16 inspected areas, we made specific recommendations to local authorities to improve education provision to children. Significant numbers of children had **education, health, and care plans**, but their identified needs were not always reflected in YOT assessments and casework. Too often, the education, health and care plan had not been obtained due to poor processes between the YOT and education departments.
- 9) There are concerns about the **support offered to children coming out of custody** - who often have complex needs and higher safety and wellbeing and risk of harm levels. Little progress has been made since 2015. From spring 2021, HMIP will be inspecting and rating every YOT that has had custody cases on the quality of its work with those cases.
- 10) Effectiveness of **YOS governance and leadership** could be improved through Management Boards by:
- a) Scrutinising partnerships
 - b) Fully understanding the needs of children at a strategic level
 - c) Being aware of the strategic priorities and their role in achieving them and
 - d) Ensuring partnerships, including education, prioritise, or meet the needs of YOS children.

11) **Management oversight** was less effective during the 2nd year of Inspection (2019-20). Where insufficient oversight was found it lacked rigour and challenge, did not offer clear direction, actions were not followed up, and there was no evidence that cases were escalated appropriately. There was minimal evidence of learning being used to drive improvement, and action to improve services was not taken when it was required. There was minimal quality assurance or evaluation of the services delivered.

12) Significant **increase in the time it is now taking from the commission of an offence by a child to their court hearing and sentence**. This is mainly due to the police process of 'released under investigation', with the removal of police bail sometimes resulting in children being released under police investigation for long periods, in some cases a year. Lengthy delays make assessment and interventions harder to complete – as memories of details fade – potentially increasing long-term anxieties for children – and difficulties about getting their lives back on track.

Court Cases:

13) YOTs were good at **assessing, planning, and delivering interventions** in relation to desistance factors, but less good at doing this for safety and wellbeing and risk of serious harm factors. In fact, all aspects of managing risk of harm to others were assessed more negatively in 2019/2020.

14) As some YOSs move to more '**child-friendly**' plans, it appears that issues relating to risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing are not being included in these plans, and elements of this important work are not being captured in the planning process. **Planning** was being written for what the child would do while subject to YOT intervention but did not specify the work the YOT and other agencies would also be doing to keep the child or the public safe. Importance here of clear, practical planning that would make a difference to the child or the victim, or potential victim. The importance of **intervention** work to address risk of harm concerns demonstrating protection of actual and potential victims. The weakest area of practice across post court orders was **reviewing** risk of harm to others. Reviewing did not always lead to necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm.

Out of Court Cases:

15) HMIP witnessed a 'postcode lottery' in the use of out-of-court disposals, with wide variation in the policies and processes that govern local schemes. Some areas had no limit to the number of out-of-court disposals a child could receive (Surrey) and other areas a strict limit of one of this type of disposal at any age from 10 to 18 years (South Tees).

16) YOS's were good at assessing, planning, and delivering interventions in relation to desistance factors, they were less good in relation to safety and wellbeing and risk of serious harm factors, with all aspects of managing risk of harm to others assessed as slightly lower in 2019/2020

Assessments often focused only on the immediate offence that had resulted in the out-of-court disposal, rather than on the child's previous history. They lacked a clear explanation for risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing concerns.

Planning did not give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim.

Interventions are intended to be brief and low intensity but should still be personalised to the child and delivered well. Interventions need to protect the actual or potential victims.

There is **no national data on completion rates** for different forms of out-of-court disposal. This is a serious gap in our knowledge of their effectiveness.

9.0 Review of Youth Justice National Standards 2019-20

The Youth Justice Board required YOSs to assess how well they complied with new National Standards, which were revised in April 2019. The review in Brent took place between November 2019 and March 2020, across the five new Youth Justice National Standards themes. The review was led by members of the YOS Management Board. They were supported by YOS Managers and operational staff to form one small working group for each standard. The review covered strategic and operational practice. Summaries were provided in last year's Youth Justice Plan of the findings and responses to the Standards have been presented to the Youth Justice Board during 2020.

All the National Standards, Out of court disposals, at Court, the Community, in Secure Settings and Transitions were rated good for both the strategic and operational self-assessments. Results mirrored the good practice identified within the HMIP Inspection of Brent youth justice services in September 2019.

Reports on progress to address the review were presented to the YOS Management Board in June 2020, October 2020 and in April 2021. These related to National standard 1 OOSD's National standard 2, at Court and National standards 4 and 5 Secure Settings and Transitions. Both indicated that significant work had occurred to address the action points within the review.

Within the **Court National Standard**, progress report March 2021, actions centred around procedural improvements using the QA tool, provision of Victim Impact statements and improving magistrates' knowledge of practice through observation of the Referral Order panels/ YOS High Risk Panel. There was also a focus on improving quality through more detail in PSRs of a young person's early years, actions around ETE for LAC young people, capturing young people's views, use of parenting orders and the revision of the Court Induction Guide. Recent work to address disproportionality is also central to the development of PSR writing in the YOS. A presentation at the Disproportionality Workshop in February 2021 demonstrated the importance of telling the child's story and ensuring the court have an understanding of the experiences of all children – particularly in relation to the impact of gang related exploitation which many black male children who are with the YOS have been through.

Within the National standards on **Secure Settings and Transitions**, progress report October 2020, actions centred on the revision of the Resettlement protocol and the Resettlement and Aftercare panel. The panel is now based upon the 5 C's of Constructive Resettlement which are consistency, constructive, co-creation, customise and co-ordinated. In addition, there is a custody pack for parents when their son or daughter enters the secure estate. Furthermore, the Y2A programme for youth to adult transitions is used and there is the police involvement in both the resettlement panel and final custody reviews (where a child is due for release).

Any outstanding actions relating to the National Standards review will be addressed within this year's Youth Justice Improvement Plan

10.0 Case management and practice developments 2020/21

10.1 The HMIP Inspection included analysis and observations relating to **case management practice**. It reported how **assessments** were undertaken quickly and used a wide range of information sources to ensure a rounded and holistic view of the child and their circumstances including the impact of trauma, which many children and young people had experienced'. **Planning** was viewed to be a strong area of practice, which was coordinated by the YOS with the plans for children's social care and education, and demonstrated understanding of distinct and complementary roles and responsibilities. Partnership work at operational level was considered effective, especially between the YOS and children's social care. Information sharing is good. Children were able to access a **wide range of interventions and services** to understand why they had offended, the impact on other people, as well as interventions and services provided at a time that optimised the benefits of the work to the child. Case **reviewing** was an active and helpful process, undertaken by case managers, team leaders and partner agencies. The review of safety and wellbeing was not seen to be as strong as the reviewing of desistance and risk of serious harm and needed more attention. Reviews of desistance needs were timely. Reviews responded to changes in situations, and reconsidered motivation, engagement, and any barriers to achieving a crime-free life. Over the course of the year, the YOS has participated in number of practice development sessions, which have covered asset plus reviews, safety and wellbeing, risk of serious harm and planning. It is recognised by the management team, that focus on these core topics has to be delivered by internal training annually – this is in order to keep up with changes in practice, policy and emerging themes.

A number of case management considerations came out of the multi-agency YOS staff group focusing on the over representation of black children in youth justice. This group has been meeting every 6 – 8 weeks since August 2021 and emerged from reflective discussions following the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020. The group is chaired by the Service Manager and has focused on the following streams of work:

- The importance of work with parents whose children are in the YJS but for whom English is not their first language;
- Work in schools surrounding stop and search and awareness surrounding neurodevelopmental disorders and behavioural issues;
- Work surrounding identity and the trauma children experience as a result of discrimination;
- Training for the YOS team in cultural competency.

Additionally, work is being undertaken with the police to address barriers between the police and young people, and further work with the courts to work on sentences, and with defence lawyers surrounding the implications of no comment interviews. Much of this work was highlighted at the YOS Management Board Disproportionality Workshop in February 2021. This workshop gave YOS Management Board members an opportunity to listen to presentations from YOS team members as well as an overview of relevant data. The workshop resulted in an action plan, which focused on areas to address disproportionality and build on the work from the over-representation group. Action plan objectives have been carried forward into the YOS Improvement Plan 2021 – 2022.

Improving the quality and consistency of case practice was the principal feature of the **Brent YOS managers' workshop in February 2021**. Several key actions were agreed including:

- A consistent auditing approach,
- Pre-checks, prior to supervision around assessment, planning and intervention practice including adherence to quality and timeline standards especially for ROSH and SWB concerns,
- Changes to the quality assurance tools for asset plus.

10.2 There has been a steady and progressive response to **Out of Court Disposals** in recent years building upon the recommendations of the Inspectors and aligning with good practice. Inspectors saw overall that the quality of assessments and planning in out-of-court disposal cases was good: *"The OOCd procedures and processes in Brent were thoroughly reviewed in Jan'19 and again in Nov '19 in collaboration with senior managers from the local police, to align provision with the guidance from the OOCd HMIP Thematic Inspection in Feb'18 - the requirements of Domain 3 HMIP Inspection guidance and the findings of the HMIP Inspection of Youth Justice services within Brent."*

The new arrangements included an enhanced **multi-agency decision-making panel** with representatives from the Police, YOS, Early Help, and Social Care: "A ten – fifteen working day assessment period allows an opportunity to capture the voice of young people and their families at the earliest opportunity. A **rapid assessment tool** has been created to avoid the use of detailed Asset Plus assessment in circumstances where young people have presented as low risk and with minimal needs. An **additional OOCd Case Manager** who has been in post since March 2020 was recruited to provide greater assessment and planning capacity and this has enabled the Triage Officer with Early Interventions lead responsibilities to focus on youth engagement particularly with those young people who are at risk of non-compliance."

External OOCd scrutiny is provided by the North West London OOCd Scrutiny Panel, led by the Police. This meets every six months to scrutinise a sample of OOCds from Barnet, Harrow, and Brent. The panel consists of senior police, magistrates, Youth Justice Board representative,

MOPAC and YOS representatives. Feedback on Brent cases has been complimentary and there is reassurance amongst the partnership that the correct disposals are being administered taking into account the child's needs and offence type.

10.3 Trauma informed training has helped practitioners and managers to increase their knowledge and understanding of how early attachment, trauma and adverse life events can affect a young person's ability to engage effectively in youth justice interventions. Adoption of the method provides a psychology led approach to multi-agency case formulation and intervention planning. This allows YOS staff to tailor and sequence interventions more effectively according to the developmental and emotional / mental health needs of individual young people and is a key component in the ongoing struggle to tackle disproportionality. The training was delivered in 2017 / 18 and practitioners and managers would benefit from refresher training especially as there have been further developments across YOTs as regards its implementation and impact. There will be a renewed focus on trauma in one to one supervision and the inclusion of the trauma triangle into the supervision template.

10.4 Work undertaken by the seconded **CAMHS Mental Health Practitioner** demonstrates that this is a critical role, particularly given the prevalent mental health issues within the youth offending cohort. This will have been heightened by the current pandemic where mental health concerns have been highlighted amongst young people. A high proportion of the young people accessing YOS may be perceived as having conduct disorder. However, upon further assessment from the mental health practitioner it often becomes known that a young person has more complex undiagnosed neurological conditions. Integrated CAMHS provision enables young people with attachment difficulties and emotional dysregulation to access a CAMHS service that otherwise would not be provided. A referral to outpatient CAMHS or inpatient CAMHS is made where necessary. The CAMHS Mental Health Practitioner also provides an important consultative, supportive, and training role for YOS Case Managers and helps with the early identification of emotional health and learning needs in YOS young people where those needs may not have been previously recognised.

10.5 The NHS England funded **Liaison and Diversion scheme in Brent** offers mental health screening to young people held in police custody at Wembley Police Station. The CNWL employed Youth Justice Liaison & Diversion (YJLD) practitioner identifies any unmet mental health needs of young people and refers on to appropriate agencies. In Brent, the YJLD practitioner liaises closely with the NHS Intellectual Disability Liaison & Diversion Practitioner to assess young people who display symptoms of ADHD, ASD, Learning Difficulties and Disability. If the young person displays symptom the L & D practitioner will meet with their carer to obtain the young person's developmental history, which helps to determine whether the young person meets criteria for further assessment.

If a further assessment is required, a referral is made to the **Intellectual Disability Liaison & Diversion Practitioner** who, together with the L & D practitioner will meet the young person for further assessment. A report will be produced which is given to the family and all the professionals involved in the case. The report provides recommendations on how to support appropriately the young person based on their additional needs. Following the assessment, the young person will be referred to the appropriate agencies, where necessary. The reports are also used by court to determine the sentence for the young person. This service has helped young people, families, and professionals to understand the person's behaviour and to give the

young person the support that is needed. There has been a recognition of more support needed particularly, in terms of speech and language to children in the YOS. This will be included in the YOS Improvement Plan 2021 – 2022.

10.6 Support for **NEET young people** known to the Youth Offending Service in Brent has increased in line with HMIP recommendations. This work is led by educational provider Prospects in close partnership with the YOS. The NEET Working group meets monthly and is chaired by the YOS Deputy Service Manager. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure all cases are discussed, RAG rated and a plan agreed for each child. The Working Group is attended by Prospects, the Virtual School, YOS and PLIAS (resettlement and employment charity based in Brent). NEET data is shared on a fortnightly basis with Prospects by the YOS Information Manager. This allows Prospects to compare this data with the local authorities West London CCIS database, which identifies young people who are NEET across the whole of Brent. Having these young people registered as NEET on the CCIS database is essential to the ongoing support young people would receive both while they are on an order and having finished an order, as NEET young people are consistently followed up until the age of 19 (or up to 25 with an EHCP) by the Connexions Service. Locality advisers following up their NEET caseload also speak to the YOS NEET worker about young people to ensure a coordinated approach to support. Having the NEET data from the YOS allows Prospects to directly approach caseworkers in cases where referrals have not taken place.

10.7 The Prospects Service Manager has an overview of the NEET group and will prompt case managers to input destinations appropriately. For example, they have identified new NEET young people from the information provided and upon contacting the caseworker have found this not to be the case. This supports the process of accuracy in recording. Similarly, they are reporting cases that are not recorded as NEET so Child View can reflect this, and referrals are encouraged. Additional resource has been allocated to the YOS service with another NEET adviser and a greater distribution of cases being spread amongst the Prospects NEET Team. Due to COVID, much of these employability sessions have been delivered one to one on a virtual platform. As a result of the NEET, working group and other changes there has been a stabilisation the NEET data with an average monthly rate of between 21% and 25%.

10.8 Responding to the pandemic and recovery from COVID-19

We anticipate that the Government Road Map over the next few months leading into June will begin to unlock opportunities to work more flexibly with our young people adhering to the government and local authority procedural and safety requirements. Discussions will need to take place around changes to provision in anticipation of the loosening of Covid 19 restrictions in line with the Children and Young People 2020/21 Department Recovery Plan, and the early Help Service Recovery Plan, both of which organise actions into four key areas: Restore, Retain, Reinvent, and Remove.

Restore; A key objective for YOS within this theme is supporting contracted services to resume direct delivery of provision to young people, such as substance misuse and mentoring. YOS is exploring these issues with local providers EACH (substance misuse), Air Network (mentoring), Brent Centre for Young People (clinical psychologists), NHS (YJLD), Westminster Drugs Project, and Prospects (NEET). The YOS is ready to restore face-to-face work with

families and young people following the lifting of lockdown and subject to a Covid-19 risk assessment review with each family. Home visits for high-risk children continued during lockdown however as restrictions decrease the YOS will be able to offer more appointments within the civic and at family wellbeing centres.

Retain; The YOS will continue to see more families virtually than had previously been the case prior to the lockdown. This has proven to be a contact method that is popular with parents and carers. This will allow additional delivery as home visits will remain mandatory for all cases and new cases that have not been visited will need to be prioritised.

Reinvent; face to face, interventions that been adapted or adopted so work can be delivered remotely will continue to be used. For instance, the YOS has revamped the Weapons Awareness and Victims Awareness Programmes, and there are plans to do the same with the police led Crime Presentation for young people receiving out of court disposals. However, it is recognised some children have struggled to participate in one to one work delivered on a virtual platform. Many children despite having support with laptops and WIFI access have not participated as well as they would have in a face-to-face intervention. In these cases, the YOS team have had to be flexible with how the work is covered using much more discussion-based interventions rather than written worksheets. The use of videos where young people can watch and then discuss the topic has worked well as most have access to a smart phone.

When the COVID 19 outbreak started in March 2020, Bren, Council implemented contingency planning immediately to ensure young people received supervision when social distancing regulations placed limitations on how support services could be provided. The YOS worked closely with partners to ensure that changes to service provision met local needs and all staff were remotely based once the lockdown was announced. A contact recording form was created to give managers oversight of all contacts by type. A list of the 21 highest risk young people was created. A home visit-screening tool was created to determine which of these young people required face-to-face visits. Accompanying safe visiting guidance was issued. All other high-risk young people were supervised by the telephone or other digital media. Feedback from young people via the **COVID -19 SURVEY – June 2020** - has largely been positive about this form of supervision. However, it is not ideal for a minority of young people whose learning needs are better suited to face-to-face contact. Existing safeguarding arrangements continued as normal over these periods. From June 2020 YOS staff and the seconded Probation Officer took part in an Early Help rota which allows up to 10% of the work force that want to work occasionally from the Civic Centre to do so in line with Council Recovery planning measures that maintain social distancing and safeguard staff. The third lockdown in January 2021 led to a further review of home visits and children. In January 2021 there were 14 – 16 home visits being undertaken. This gradually increased as the lockdown has been replaced by an easing of restrictions. Currently CAMHS and Liaison and Diversion appointments are conducted face to face. Those children coming in for their Youth Conditional Cautions (YCC's) to be signed are also completed face to face.

The **COVID -19 Survey** highlighted the importance of engaging with young people, listening to their views, and building relationships to help promote positive outcomes. Obtaining the views of young people has been emphasised in recent years across social work and youth justice practice especially

within HMIP Inspections of Youth Justice services. This was particularly important during the COVID 19 period when it was anticipated that lockdown restrictions would have a detrimental impact upon young people generally. A survey of 47 young people (29 during 2019) and 29 parent/carer surveys were completed - totalling 76 participants. The YOS annual survey was completed in the last 2 weeks of June 2020. The aim of this survey was to gain feedback and capture the young people's and parent / carers unique experience of the YOS under the COVID-19 pandemic whilst under lockdown, their views of the YOS and staff they interacted with as well as their knowledge of their court order or pre court disposal.

Findings included:

Contacts & Communication

- 98% stated that their Case Manager **contacted** them at the agreed date and time set for their appointments and did what they said that they would do
- When asked how often they would like to be contacted 70% said that the contact was about right, 26% said less and 4% said that they would like more
- The majority had access to Wi-Fi, 29 had access to a smart phone and 28 had access to a laptop. 98% also stated that they preferred to be contacted via phone

Interventions – planning and activities

- 91% of the young people had been involved in creating their **intervention plan**
- **Interventions** - A range of 27 options were listed and young people could select as many options as possible, which were applicable to them. The intervention that was most selected by young people was consequential thinking (27) and decision making (20), followed by general discussion (18), then substance misuse (16). Education and training applications, peers /friendship work and *working on my offence* were selected 11 times.
- Most young people (96%) surveyed felt that the YOS had supported them to prevent further offending / re-offending, which is an increase of 7% from last year's 89%.

Overall Satisfaction

- 94% did not feel as though they had missed any part of their YOS intervention whilst in lockdown, the remaining 6% thought that they had missed substance misuse session, face-to-face contact, housing support and reparation.
- In terms of satisfaction whether their plans were being met, on a scale of 0 – 10, ten being that their plan was fully met, nearly 1/3 of young people surveyed rated this with a 10.

Parent / Carer Survey

Contacts and communication

- All parents had access to Wi-Fi and 90% preferred to be contacted via phone
- 69% stated that they were received regular updates about what was happening concerning their child's intervention. Approximately 2/3 of the parents were able to specify what intervention was taking place with their child. In 2/3rds of cases, this was a substance misuse intervention.

Services received

- The service that most parents received was support around substance misuse and counselling support. When asked what had gone well 15 out of 29 parents stated that everything was going well
- When asked if there was anything that we can offer that we do not offer now there was a variety of responses including: Job /apprenticeship opportunities, offering sessions in school around Criminal Behaviour, information about school activities and housing support

Overall Satisfaction

- Most parents felt that their children were well supported by the YOS
- When asked how we could improve support for the child - the results varied from more youth clubs to better communication with other agencies.

10.9 **Youth Court** listings were reduced to one day per week during March 2020 and a joint court rota was created with Barnet and Harrow – the other Willesden Magistrate Court users. Brent YOS based a team at court one day per week and additionally attended court as and when required. Brent received positive feedback from District Judges for its commitment to supporting young people at court in person throughout the lockdown and restricted periods. Many youth court cases were adjourned following lockdown. This created a build-up of "delayed" casework. An increasing number of young people released under investigation by the police may have added to the anticipated post pandemic spike in YOS casework. During July and August 2020, the YOS identified children who were on remand but have turned 18 during this period and were still awaiting sentencing. The YJB performance advisor escalated these cases within the Ministry of Justice. These cases were prioritised and resulted in one young person's charge being dropped due to a positive NRM and the other was sentenced to an intensive community order and then transferred over to Probation. The court duty at Willesden Magistrates has been running as a face-to-face contact throughout the lockdown periods in November 2020 and January 2021. The YOS has observed an increase in the number of children (Brent and out of borough) who are attending court since August 2020 when courts became fully operational again and the backlog of cases from the March 2020 started to be cleared. This backlog is still being cleared today and the number of cases being processed on a Brent Youth Court day has gone from an average of 11 before lockdown to an average of 18 since August 2020.

10.9 **Referral Order Panels** operated virtually. Young people, volunteers and families have responded well to the changes. Guidance was re-issued in April 2020 to support the process, which has been running on Zoom. Volunteers have also attended group supervision on a virtual platform as well as had their formal training, which was completed in April 2021.

10.11 The YOS **Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Risk Forum** the **Resettlement and Aftercare Forum** both occurred virtually every month. **Weekly Out of Court Disposal Decision Making Panels** also operated remotely.

10.12. Support is offered remotely by **partners** including St. Giles Trust, Air Network, EACH Brent, WDP, Prospects and CNWL (YJLD).

10.14 The Brent seconded **CAMHS Practitioner** supported young people remotely and undertook face to face visits where required. Essential provision accessible through emergency arrangements at Monks Park clinic.

10.15The **NPS seconded Probation Officer** has worked remotely, and supported young people face to face and at their home or court throughout the Pandemic. Initially there were some delays in the transfer of children from YOS to Probation however following the easing of restrictions in summer 2020, the transitions panel and other arrangements are still in place. Probation and CRC and also continued to operate virtually,

11.0 Strategic partnerships

11.1 The HMIP Inspection was complimentary about Brent youth justice partnership arrangements: *"The placement of the YOS in Early Help promotes a focus on early intervention, reflecting the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than respond when difficulties have become acute and demand action by statutory or more intensive services."*

11.2 Serious youth violence, gangs and knife crime are prominent issues in Brent. Strategic governance is delivered by the Safer Brent Partnership, and operational leadership and management through the leadership of the Children and Young People's department and Early Help service. *Inspectors noted that: "This arrangement effectively links criminal justice responsibilities with safety and wellbeing considerations."*

11.3 Inspectors also found that: *"The YOS partnership approach demonstrated strong leadership, high ambitions and aspirations for children, a focus on practice outcomes, and evolving systems to improve the work of the service."*

11.4 *The Brent YOS Youth Justice Plan is informed by and linked to The Brent Borough Plan – 2019 – 2023 – 'Building a Better Brent'*

The Head of Early Help is a member of strategic partnerships that include:

- *The Early Help and Prevention Board*

- *Youth Justice Board Heads of Service meetings*
- *Pan London Assistant Director Network*
- *Association of YOT Managers (AYM)*

Managers within the YOS contribute to local partnerships including:

- *Willesden Magistrates Quarterly Court Meetings and Magistrates Training sessions*
- *Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group.*
- *Entry to Care Panel*
- *Inclusion Strategic Board*
- *MAPPA*
- *Borough Violence Reduction Delivery Group*
- *Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel*
- *CAMHS Transformation Group*

11.5 **Family Wellbeing Centres** became operational towards the end of 2021 and offer a range of universal services and targeted support for families with 0-18-year-olds, in partnership with Council, health and voluntary sector partners.

11.6 Close alignment of **work undertaken jointly with Children and Young People colleagues** has been key to the declining numbers of first time entrants to the youth justice system and a decreasing number of young people remanded to custody or local authority care.

11.7 The **Resettlement and Aftercare Panel**, chaired by the YOS Deputy Service Manager, comprises representatives from Children and Young People service areas including the YOS, Care Planning, Family Solutions, Locality Teams, and Commissioning and Resources Team (CRT) as well as the police, the custodial setting representative and Prospects. The group meets monthly to ensure that the accommodation and wider needs of young people due to be released from custody are identified and planned for in a timely and transparent fashion.

11.8 The **YOS and LAC Managers Meeting** was established in May 2017 to consider complex cases with meetings every three months which require senior manager oversight and additional support. Membership includes Team Managers from Care Planning Team.

The Group's Terms of Reference includes the following three aims:

- To ensure correct information is exchanged about offences, court dates, placement changes, release dates.
- To ensure there is a management oversight of Looked after Children who are subject to youth justice interventions.

- To resolve any difficulties or barriers in relation to Looked after Children who are also offending.

11.9 Early Help has made a significant contribution to training. All YOS staff have been trained to work with Families as Lead Professionals. Staff have received Signs of Safety training and the approach has been adopted as part of the YOS Risk Management Panel, for staff supervision, and for mapping complex cases. All frontline staff have undertaken the trauma informed training working with young people whose life chances are affected by traumatic experiences that professionals often fail to recognise.

11.10 The YOS contributes to **Social Care strategy meetings** wherever required and routinely shares risk, court outcomes, and other information needed to keep children and young people in the criminal justice system safe. There is a comprehensive and annually updated Protocol between the YOS and Children and Young People Social Care. This includes clear processes relating to young people in police custody, the use of Appropriate Adults, Looked after Children and young people remanded into Local Authority Accommodation. There continues to be close working relationships between YOS and social care colleagues. The YOS attend the Entry to Care Panel to ensure YOS input into decision about children coming into care. YOS are involved in discussions on children involved in contextual harm and are present in peer mapping events. In February 2021, following the murder of a 16-year-old boy in Brent the YOS was involved in a number of peer mapping, complex strategy meetings and safety planning meetings to ensure the risk to children is managed.

11.11. The YOS works closely with the **Family Solutions Team**. Family Solutions has four main teams across the borough supporting families with 0-18 years, by whole family working. This approach aims to address the underlying issues, which affect family functioning, and offers a range of interventions to develop resilience to withstand family crises in the future. It is represented on, and refers families to, the Early Help Panel. Parenting provision now includes a group work offer and staff have been trained to deliver the Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities programme. The provision of 2 dedicated 0.4 FTE Family Solutions Key Worker for the YOS Triage programme and other preventative work offers families support that can be used to prevent their children and young people from entering the criminal justice system. A focus of this work are families where there are younger siblings.

11.12. The YOS is developing strong partnership links to the **Young Brent Foundation** – which is now represented on the YOS Management Board. Regular meetings between the YBF Chief Executive and YOS identified joint training, shadowing opportunities, and regular referral meeting as joint priorities. The Young Brent Foundation have been commissioned to deliver cultural competency training to the YOS in 2021.

11.13. The YOS benefits from a **St. Giles' Trust mentor** within the team.

11.14 The YOS is a member of the **Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel** which coordinates the sharing of information between partners about young people at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour trafficking or modern slavery and those that are missing, to ensure identified risks are appropriately managed.

11.15. The **Brent YOS Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Management Risk Forum** meets monthly to manage the risk, and safety and wellbeing of high-risk young people.

11.16. The YOS benefits from well-established partnerships with **agencies within the voluntary sector** including:

- **Brent EACH:** A counselling and Support agency sited at Brent YOS. EACH delivers high quality counselling services and support for young people receiving Triage (no further action) outcomes. As part of whole family working, parents, carer(s) and siblings are also offered support.
- **WDP: Drug and alcohol charity** WDP have contributed the equivalent of 1.0 FTE advice, assessment and treatment support for Brent young people who are known to the youth justice system and have been affected by drug and alcohol problems. Services are delivered at the Brent Civic Centre, WDPs two facilities in Brent and within the local community.
- **Brent Centre for Young People (BCYP):** Offers a range of psychotherapeutic mental health interventions, designed specifically for young people who offend and who often struggle to engage with mental health services.
- **Air Network:** Working in collaboration with the Early Help, Accelerated Support Team, Air Network provide community based out of hours' youth mentoring. Air Network received increased funding during 19/20 from the YJB to increase capacity particularly at weekends.
- **St. Giles Trust:** Gang affected mentoring for young people involved in or at risk of criminal exploitation.

12.0 Internal programmes and interventions

12.1 The YOS has developed or accessed several programmes to address **desistance and offending behaviour**. The pandemic has affected, upon the nature and frequency of delivery however, worksheets and access to offending behaviour programmes has still been used by case managers.

12.2 **One to one and group work YOS programmes and interventions cover a range of themes.** There has been a list of resources developed for one-to-one work and these are available in the resources area on the 4th Floor of the Brent Civic Centre as well as on the YOS Shared Drive (Resources and Interventions). These include:

- 12.3 **Victim Awareness** group work and one to one programmes include 'Think Victim', 'Letter of Apology Programme', 'Writing Wrongs' 'What Have I Done?' Restorative justice support is provided where there is a direct or indirect victim contact. The programme has been adapted for virtual one to one sessions during the pandemic and a work guide is available to staff.
- 12.4 **Offending Behaviour / Risk / Safety interventions** include What's the Score? (YRO Game)', 'Practical Interventions for Young People at Risk, 'Safety Mapping work (Contextual Safeguarding), Positive Choices (1:1 programme), and 'Street Wise' interventions covering a range of offending behaviour / risk factors. Peer influences. Targets for effective change – covers all areas of offending behaviour work.
- 12.5 **Decision and Consequences interventions** include One to One 'Smart Thinking Programme', 'Streetwise – 'Doing Time' – The Impact of Custody', and 'Think First Programme' as well as the Crime presentation CD, Choose a different ending, Cannabis man, stop, and search. Values worksheet, and Desert Island
- 12.6 **Anger and Emotional Management** interventions include one to one 'Hitting Back' Anger Management Programme, Moods Cards, 'Don't Let Emotions Run Your Life Teens' and the Wheel of emotion
- 12.7 **Weapon and Knives interventions** include 'Behind the Blade' and 'Bite the Bullet', Relationship and Peer Groups / Gangs - 'Streetwise Gangs Education Programme', 'Streetwise Drug Dealers Education Programme', 'Working with Gangs Toolkit', 'and Safety mapping'

The **8-week Weapons Awareness Programme** for children and young people covers:

- Information about the law and weapons
- Knowledge of how being a victim of offences affects people.
- Knowledge of how weapons can affect society (which you are a part of)
- Learn new ways to deal with conflicts
- Learn about the physical and mental health consequences of weapons offences
- Learn about how convictions for weapons offences have affected other people.

This has now been adapted for virtual one to one use including lesson plans on each topic: Why carry knives - The impact of knife crime - Consequences of your actions - Conflict resolution - Victim support - Knife crime and the law - Friendship groups - Evaluation

- 12.8 **Teen Talk** is a Youth Health Education Program that provides services for young people from a harm reduction and prevention education perspective. It focuses on sexuality, reproductive health, body image, substance use awareness, mental health, issues of diversity and anti-violence issues and adheres to the belief that by providing youth with accurate, non-judgmental information – encouraging interactive discussions using

pictures / information on cards – so that they can make healthier decisions and choices for themselves. This programme is used for the younger age group of children.

12.9 Jointly delivered **group work** – this has not taken place due to the pandemic and will be planned once the restrictions have been lifted.

- **Your Life You Choose:** YOS team members run a workshop with other partners at local schools aimed at year 7's.
- **Crime Presentation:** Police Officers and YOS run this session covering crime, consequences, weapons and stop and search aimed at those who are first time entrants.
- **Victim Awareness Group:** Brent Centre for Young People and YOS initiative aimed at those who are first time entrants
- **Discussion Group:** Brent Centre for Young People counsellors run an open discussion group for young people to discuss feelings and emotional regulation.
- **Driving Awareness Workshop:** Groups run for young people who have committed a related driving offence. The workshop is run with a DI from the Traffic Unit and a member of the YOS team.
- **Bike Workshop:** Young people work on bicycles in need of repair.

13.0 Learning from serious incidents

13.1 Since 2017, the YOS has submitted ten Critical Learning Reviews (CLRs) to the Youth Justice Board on young people who had committed serious offences whilst under YOS supervision. Whilst there is not a mandatory requirement any longer to provide CLRs or ELRs (Extended Learning Reviews) to the Youth Justice Board – the Brent YOS Management Board have been keen to continue this practice – providing learning over the course of the YOS supervisory process rather than just the weeks preceding the offence(s). In 2020 – 2021, there were four young people charged with murder, one was found guilty of manslaughter, one was acquitted and there are two young people awaiting trial for murder. One of these children was subject to a CLR in December 2020.

13.2 CLRs are approved by senior managers, with resulting actions followed up within the YOS under the oversight of the YOS Management Board.

13.3 Themes include housing issues, social media concerns, non-school attendance, escalating risks during period of transitions, good practice issues within case management and most recently a need for the experiences of children impacted by COVID 19 to be included to demonstrate how the pandemic has affected their education, involvement in violence and exploitation.

14.0 Youth Justice Board – Strategic Plan 2021 - 24

This strategic plan was published in March 2021 and underlined its Child First strategic approach and central guiding principle,

‘Our ambition is to operate in a Child First system. We recognise that this is a long-term goal, which will extend beyond the lifespan of this plan – however, it is at the heart of who we are. We will focus our efforts on improving existing systems and influencing policy and practice at this current time. Our work is directly informed by an evidence base, which sees a strengths -based approach as being most effective in supporting the best outcomes for children and preventing offending and reoffending¹¹. Children in contact with the justice system have untapped potential which could benefit society, particularly as we recover from the effects of the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic. We will convey what the Child First evidence base looks like in practice and will work with sector partners and academics to develop this picture. Our understanding will support Ministers and policy makers to build systems aimed at delivering better outcomes for children. We will continue to provide guidance on national standards and develop case management operational guidance for the sector. We will use every opportunity to influence others to ensure that children’s needs are at the front and centre of system improvement’.

15.0 Key actions for Brent in 2021/22

The key priorities for actions within the YOS Partnership 21/22 centre upon areas identified within this Youth Justice Plan – the Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan – HMIP Annual Report 2019-20 of youth justice inspections – and any outstanding actions from the Brent HMIP Inspection (2019) and National Standards review (2019/20). The focus will largely be upon **resettlement – disproportionality – reoffending and concerns around serious youth violence (particularly the rise in recent years of robbery offences)**. A full list of these actions – at both a micro and macro level of activity - will be detailed in the Annual Youth Justice Improvement Plan 2021/22 - which will be presented to the YOS Management Board in April 2021.

15.1 Resettlement & Transitions:

The resettlement agenda has been highlighted within the HMIP Annual Inspection report 19/20 of youth justice services as an area across YOTs that needs improvement and where HMIP Inspections will particularly focus their attention - especially the support to young people coming out of custody and LAC YP out of Borough.

- YOS to continue its participation within the **London resettlement partnership** and implement any learning opportunities
- Implementing within the YOS the five characteristics that have been identified as key to **effective and constructive resettlement** and sustainable support - Constructive; Co-created; Customised; Consistent and Co-ordinated and thus help assist a child’s identity shift from pro-criminal to pro-social.

- Maintain the **Brent YOS - Resettlement & After Care Meeting** as a focused approach – to assist planning – help prepare and support transitions from custody into the community and ensure attention to Licence conditions – accommodation – and support on release. Cases will also be discussed at the Entry to Care Panel, professional meetings, strategy meetings.
- Review our **resettlement procedures and processes** following release from custody and regularly audit custody cases
- **Transitions to probation / from custody** – transitions are usually periods of vulnerability and stress for children moving from a secure unit to a YOI as well those moving from a YOI to an adult custodial facility. Probation currently operate the OMIC (Offender Management in Custody) system. A young person who is due to turn 18 will be allocated, a Probation Officer within the secure estate and will complete all the assessments and paperwork. In Brent YOS, this has affected the children who have been serving long-term sentences.

15.2 Reoffending

Reducing reoffending has proven to be the most difficult youth justice objective to achieve in Brent. A YOS analysis of reoffending, was undertaken and presented to the YOS Management Board in January 2021. The paper included several recommendations to consolidate and expand upon current practice:

- Case managers will continue to **supervise young people** in line with national standards and principles of good practice outlined by HMIP.
- Further training to be provided to case managers to apply **principles of the trauma informed approach** more fully within their supervision of young people and increasingly utilise multiagency case formulations especially with high-risk young people in both the community and custody.
- The YOS will continue to use the **YJB reoffending tool kit** to provide live tracking of the reoffending cohort, improve offending analysis, and reshape interventions and tackle the disproportionate number of young people in the youth justice system from Black Caribbean and Black African Heritage Groups
- Ensure **CPRM's** are being held promptly within the start of the Order to ensure the **voice of the YP**.
- Increase the number of the YOS Cohort in **Employment Training and Education**
- Ensure that young people's **education, health, and care plans** and related identified needs are reflected in YOT assessments and casework.
- Improve the quality of **assessment, planning and reviewing** for children in Local Authority Care - particularly for children placed in accommodation outside of their local area
- While **Plans** include what the child would do while subject to **YOT intervention** they need to specify what work the YOT and other agencies would also be doing to keep the child or the public safe.
- The **sequencing of targets / interventions** will be monitored by management through the QA process – in line with the requirements of trauma informed practice.

- **Early offending at the outset of orders.** Commencing contact with young people on a voluntary basis as soon as a Referral Order is made at Court should be considered prior to the Referral Order Panel. This would help to build relationships – motivation – momentum and begin work on the intervention plan for the order. Camden YOT who secured an ‘Outstanding’ judgement from HMIP implemented this practice and they reported seeing some reductions to their re-offending rates within the referral order cohort.

15.3 YOS Governance and Leadership

The Brent HMIP youth justice inspection report (2019) was positive about the leadership and management of the YOS being clear and accessible, focusing on service improvement and working to a proven evidence base. This section provides actions to strengthen our governance and leadership – and provides actions to improve both our capacity, understanding of the youth justice cohort and our evidence-based service provision.

- HMIP state that the **governance and leadership of YOT management Boards** could be improved through Management Boards:
 - a) Scrutinising partnerships
 - b) Fully understanding the needs of children at a strategic level
 - c) Being aware of the strategic priorities and their role in achieving them and
 - d) Ensuring partnerships, including education prioritising, or meeting the needs of YOS children.
- **To help our understanding of themes and patterns and links with interventions** - *conduct a multi-agency ‘deep dive’ of several cases of prolific offending young people – known currently / previously to several agencies – to assess where intervention might have improved – more effective – missed – lacked coordination across agencies. What essentially can we learn across partner agencies within the wider partnership?*
- **To help our understanding of themes and patterns and links with interventions** - *conduct a multi-agency ‘deep dive’ of several cases of prolific offending young people who have been able to desist from offending for a period and / or involved in less serious offending / evidence of positive outcomes. What essentially can we learn across partner agencies within the wider partnership?*
- **Continue to target specific high risk/ vulnerable individuals at panels** – linked to ‘spread’ of offences amongst young people who have committed substantial numbers of offences.
- **Celebrate when young people who have been high risk / vulnerable at panels are removed from panels** through successful interventions and highlight learning.
- Review the work of **WDP** in terms of its engagement, intervention and outcomes in working with children and young people. The review will look at how the WDP operates in terms of its practice and approaches with young people, what outcomes it is achieving, its alignment with the YOS and general capacity issues, with one worker at the present time.

- Review how **speech and language provision** operates in terms of its practice and approaches with young people in the YOS and what outcomes it is achieving. Exploring whether - within existing resources - the focus should be upon working with a small group of young people with an additional focus on assessment, intervention and training of YOS staff.
- The **NEET working group** through its RAG rating enables resources to be more effectively directed and focused liaison with schools to occur. It is important that this group reports to the YOS Management Board on a regular basis about any challenges and problems that may require a strategic focus.

15.4 Reducing Disproportionality

The Brent YOS partnership has been proactive in exploring ways to address the overrepresentation of Black heritage group young people within the youth justice system. Several approaches have already been established.

- A **working group** has been formed utilising a multidisciplinary approach to improve outcomes for Black heritage group children with agreed streams of work: working with colleagues at court; being part of the magistrates training; work with RJ and the courts. Progress remains good despite the impact of COVID-19.
- **YJB's BAME COVID pathfinder** – started in October 2020 - is providing a comprehensive and focused preventative response. This includes a research programme especially focused upon COVID-19 and the impact on young people of BAME origin, an outreach project led by the voluntary sector to engage communities with children most at risk and a young people's community project. A Young People's panel informs all work.
- All panels across youth justice are being vigilant and focused to address disproportionality. For instance, **multi-agency resettlement panels**, held prior to court cases, are considering the good practice 5 Cs of resettlement, to come up with a customised, robust community alternative to custody.
- AROC (At Risk of Custody Meetings) for children and young people who are at risk of a custodial sentence. The AROC meeting brings together professionals in the child's network to ensure there is a robust community proposal for the court to consider – managing risk, meeting underlying need and tackling desistance. As black children are disproportionality sentenced to custody it provides the YOS with an opportunity to mitigate this as much as possible.

Specific Actions within the reoffending report (January 21) to help reduce disproportionality

- All partner agencies to actively support Brent's BAME COVID pathfinder and encourage the involvement of community groups and young people within the various aspects of the project.

- Improving data - More consistent and strengthened data capturing and sharing arrangements among youth justice partners would facilitate enhanced analysis of over-representation to better inform policies and services so they address the issues and deliver positive outcomes for BAME children and young people in the Youth Justice System. A brief audit to see which agencies can provide relevant data / information in this area would be helpful.
- More robust use of live tracker re disproportionality to explore patterns & trends around reoffending & their association with ethnicity to respond and reshape provision accordingly
- The MPS 'Turning Point' pilot programme started in Brent from January 2020. It is a deferred prosecution scheme with the intention of reducing disproportionality in youth justice outcomes. The project allows out of court disposals to be available to young people who do not admit guilt or provide 'no comment' interviews. This reduces the risk of young people entering the Youth Justice System for minor offences when they do not appreciate the consequences of no comment interviews, which then often lead to an automatic charge. Young people who successfully complete Turning Point do not receive a criminal record for the offence they have committed. To date numbers involved in the programme have been small, as few Brent young people have met the random sampling criteria. The Project Manager has attended the YOS Management Board to provide an overview of the programme and impact so far, she has also attended an OOD Panel as well as the YOS Team Meeting

Brent YOS held a **disproportionality workshop** attended by several agencies in February 2021. The aim of the workshop was to come up with ideas and creative solutions to tackle the issue of disproportionality across the partnership. Over representation was clear particularly amongst Black Heritage Group young people so it was important to distinguish between ethnic groups within discussions of disproportionality. The evidence presented suggested that the harsher the sentence a child receives, the more likely they are to reoffend. When Black children systematically receive harsher sentences, this then compounds the issue. Case studies shared by case managers at the workshop highlighted the importance of support for the family, not just the young person, and how early identification of neurodevelopmental disorder also increases the chance that a young person will be willing to engage with the diagnosis process.

The following **key actions** were agreed at the workshop:

1. **Early intervention:** developing a workshop offer to schools in Brent, which will focus on 'stop and search' and an understanding of the criminal justice system as well as increase awareness and understanding of the impact of neuro disabilities such as ADHD on those in education. In addition joint work with the Inclusion service and Education Welfare to monitor children missing education - where there is a focus on monitoring those who are at risk of being exploited by gangs and county lines.
2. **Response to exclusion especially around primary school / year 7 age groups:** the YOS Management Board agreed they would like to look at exclusion rates and how schools can be supported to make alternative decisions.
3. **Remand data:** Broken down by offence to include like for like offences by ethnicity and then by outcomes. We will then need scrutiny panels to compare whether for the same offence; Black Heritage Group children are receiving different outcomes.

4. **Speech, Language, and further support to address neuro disabilities at an earlier age:** a Clinical Commissioning Group YOS Management Board Member agreed to develop this further with YOS staff to have mechanisms within Brent to support children at an earlier stage who are showing signs of ADHD and ASD.
5. Listening to **young people's voices** and providing alternatives to crime, especially around educational access, that enthuses them. A proposal for a music workshop at community based music workshop is being developed.
6. **Deep dives: YOS Management Board members to be involved in deep dives** to examine cases and consider if anything more could have been done

Brent YOS will continue to identify methods to **tackle disproportionality** and work with agencies within the wider partnership. These currently include the live tracking of cohorts, training around cultural competency and greater integration of therapeutic approaches. Strengthening partnerships with community groups through increasingly aligned work with the Young Brent Foundation has facilitated the adoption of local expertise that has helped reduce disproportionality in the Brent youth justice system.

15.5 Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

Serious Youth Violence research (March 2021) presented at the YOS Operational Group, showed the importance of a continued focus upon SYV and related themes around county lines – drug possession and supply and child exploitation. The Youth Justice Board has recently published Youth Justice Statistics for 2019 to 2020 highlight that **Violence Against the Person accounted for 31% of all proven offences by children**. A small proportion of these offences (4%) had a higher gravity score of five to eight reflecting seriousness. Almost all offences concern children who have been let down or exploited and all involve victims, many of whom are children themselves.

- The YOS will continue to utilize the Youth Justice Board **Serious Youth Violence toolkit** and community safety data to help its analysis of patterns and trends of serious youth violence and improve and develop provision accordingly.
- The YOS will support the **BCU Robbery Strategic Group / police led interventions** to continue to reduce robbery offences committed by young people in Brent.
- Continue to develop **practices that safeguard children** who have been exploited and/or victimised through serious youth violence, including making referrals to victim support and other support services such as Rescue and Response.
- Some **wider analysis** of robbery offences, (linked with current plans to address wider reoffending), involving multi-agency 'deep dives' – to see what learning can be gained about the needs and characteristics of those young people committing robbery offences and what interventions can make an impact.

15.6 Early Intervention / Prevention

Two of the Brent HMIP Inspection (2019) recommendations related to the Out of Court Disposal scheme. Brent YOS has made significant progress in this area as reported by the Head of Early Help, Children and Young People to the Safer Brent Partnership (October 2020)

- The link between the **prevention agenda and reduction of FTEs** has been strengthened by the improvements to the Out of Court Disposal scheme and access to provision afforded to the YOS by being embedded within Early Help. The YOS has built upon this and formed new voluntary sector partnerships. It has found new ways to collaborate with Young Brent Foundation to tackle disproportionality and support community groups to improve the quality of life for young people known to be at risk of criminal exploitation and offending.

16.0 Structure

16.1 Brent **Youth Offending Service** is located within the Children and Young People Directorate and forms part of the Brent Early Help service area. Reporting to the Head of Early Help, the YOS Service Manager has overall management oversight of 24.6 FTE staff members. This includes a management team comprised of a Deputy Service Manager Quality & Practice Development Manager and five Team Managers.

16.2 The following **lead areas and responsibilities** are shared across the management group:

Quality Assurance, Interventions, Safeguarding - Mental Health - Public protection – Partnerships – Court - First-time entrants - Early interventions - Pre-court disposals - Data quality - Specialist interventions – Reoffending – LAC - Group work – Families - Probation – Education - Employment and Training - Intensive Supervision and Surveillance - Referral Order Panel - Restorative justice – Victims – Volunteers – Court – Custody – Resettlement – Bail and Remand

16.3 **Resources and value for money:** YJB funding will be used exclusively for the delivery of youth justice provision, aligned to effective practice and the achievement of the three youth justice core outcomes:

- Reduction in youth re-offending.
- Reduction in the numbers of first-time entrants to the justice system.
- Reduction in the use of youth custody.

16.4 Staffing

YOS Staff 2020/21		
Post	FTE	Funding Source
Interim Service Manager	1	YJB/Brent Council
Operational Manager	1	YJB/Brent Council
Quality & Practice Development Manager	1	YJB/Brent Council
Team Leaders	5	YJB/Brent Council
Restorative Justice Lead	0.8	YJB/Brent Council
Case Managers	13	YJB/Brent Council
Data Quality Officer	1	YJB/Brent Council
Family Support Key Worker 1	0.4	YJB/Brent Council
Family Support Key Worker 2	0.4	YJB/Brent Council
Early intervention Officer – Triage	1	MOPAC
Total	24.6	

The **service wide YOS staff group** of 24.6 FTE is supplemented by the following 10.0 FTE secondments and colocation arrangements:

Post	FTE
Police Officer	3.0
NPS Probation Officer	1
Prospects Employment Advisor	1
CAMHS Practitioner	1
YJLD Liaison and Diversion (CNWL)	1
WDP Substance Misuse	1

EACH Family Support and Substance Misuse	2
St Giles Gangs Mentor	1
Total	11.0

16.5 **Staff** by gender and ethnicity

Gender	Total
Female	27
Male	11
Total	38

Ethnicity	Total
BAME	24
Prefer not to say	0
White	14
Total	38

16.6 **Volunteers** by gender and ethnicity

Gender	Total
Female	12
Male	4
Total	16

Ethnicity	Total
BAME	8
Prefer not to say	0
White	8

Total	16
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16.7 Compliance with the **minimum staffing requirement** set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Brent YOS has the following multi agency staffing as required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998:

	Gender	Total
Police Officer		3
Probation Services		1
Education Worker		1
Health Worker		2
Total		7.0

16.8 **Brent Police** continue to provide a continuous staffing contribution that exceeds the minimum statutory requirement of 1.0 FTE. There are 4 Police Officers – although 1 post is a job share.

16.9 **Education provision** is funded by the Brent Direct Schools Grant. In addition to the provision of a YOS manager with dedicated education responsibilities, an additional four Team Managers have crosscutting responsibilities to produce good educational outcomes for school aged young people. Prospects employment service has a careers advisor based within the YOS with additional staffing deployed when demand is high.

16.10 YOS Partnership Budget 2020/21

Agency	Cash	In-kind Contributions	Partnership Funding	Total
Brent Council	£694,370	£182,800	-	£724,370
Police	-	£120,000	-	£120,000
National Probation	£5,000	£50,000		£55,000

Health (NHS)	-	£100,000	-	£100,000
Public Health		£45,000		
MOPAC	£58,232	-	-	£58,232
YJB	£447,695	-	-	£447,695
Other: Direct Schools Grant (DSG)	£114,000	-	-	£114,000
Total	£1,319,297	£497,800	£5,000	

16.0 Risks to Future Delivery against Youth Justice Outcome Measures

Brent's commitment to ongoing youth justice improvement and innovation is resource dependent. We are confident of achieving our ambitions for 2021/22. This is part of a longer-term decrease in funding, during which Brent has worked creatively and flexibly to protect and improve frontline service provision. There is however little capacity to absorb further reductions. Therefore, if funding contributions diminish further in 2021/22, there is a very real risk that this would prove to be an impediment to the current concerted partnership effort to reduce serious youth violence and improve outcomes for young people in the criminal justice system.

Approval and Sign-Off

Signed:



Date:

28/06/2021

Name:

Nigel Chapman

Position:

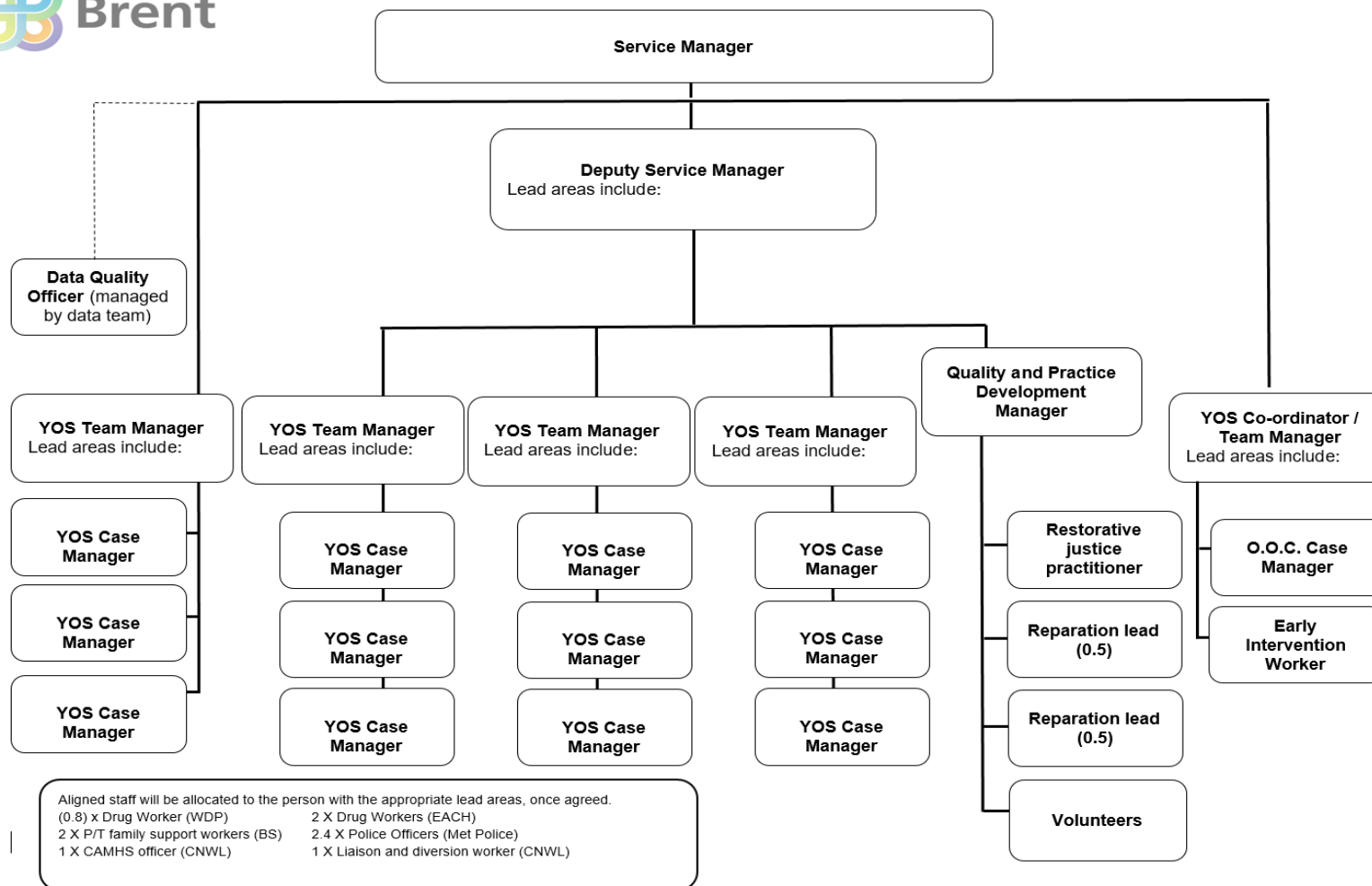
Operational Director – Integration and Improved Outcomes

Children and Young People – Brent Council Chair of the YOS Management Board

Appendix 1: Youth Offending Service Structure Chart 2020-21



Early Help- Brent Youth Offending Service Proposed Structure



Appendix 2: Partnership Arrangements and Aligned Work

Partner/Service Area/Agency	Partnership Engagement
National Probation Service	YOS Management Board membership.
	Performance meetings between Brent NPS / CRC and YOS.
	Transitions Panel for YOS to Probation / CRC cases
	Operational joint supervision and oversight of 1.0 FTE seconded officers.
Social Care	YOS Management Board membership.
	Case conferences
	Resettlement and Aftercare Meeting
	Case management joint work
	Service leads/management joint work
	Exploitation Violence and Vulnerability Panel
	Entry to Care Panel
	Brent Family Front Door
	YOS / LAC monthly meetings
	Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group
	Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Management Forum
	Brent Integrated Risk Management Meeting (IRM)
WDP	Substance misuse, emotional health, and sexual health referrals.
	Key worker provision/ meetings with YOS and WDP management
	Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Management Forum
EACH Counselling	Professional supervision.
	Progress reviews involving EACH Chief Executive and YOS Service Manager.
Prospects	Progress reviews involving Prospects Manager and YOS Deputy Service Manager.

Partner/Service Area/Agency	Partnership Engagement
Family Solutions/Working with Families	YOS Management Board membership.
	Early Help Senior Leadership Team.
	Resettlement and Aftercare Meeting.
	Case management joint work.
	Service leads/management joint work.
	Family Solutions Panels.
	Parenting Forum.
	Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Management Forum
	Working with Families Operational Group
Community Protection	YOS Management Board membership.
	MOPAC
	Exploitation Violence and Vulnerability Programme
	Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Management Forum
	Sharing Data and Intelligence
Youth Justice Board	YOS Management Board membership.
	Serious Youth Violence Reference Group
	YJB Effective Practice
	YJB Workforce Development
Public Health	YOS Management Board membership.
Willesden Magistrates Court	YOS Management Board membership.
	Court User Meetings
	Magistrates Training Sessions
Brent LSCB	LSCB Performance Group.

Partner/Service Area/Agency	Partnership Engagement
Police	YOS Management Board membership.
	O OCD Joint Decision-making group
	Operational joint supervision and oversight of 3.0 FTE equivalent seconded officers.

