	<b>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b> 17 September 2025
	<b>Report from the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development</b>
	<b>Lead Cabinet Member – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)</b>
<b>The Impact of Youth Justice Service Delivery in Brent</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Draft Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<a href="#">The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide</a>
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Palvinder Kudhail Director, Early Help and Social Care <a href="mailto:Palvinder.kudhail@brent.gov.uk">Palvinder.kudhail@brent.gov.uk</a>  Serita Kwofie Head of Early Help <a href="mailto:Serita.kwofie@brent.gov.uk">Serita.kwofie@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a multidisciplinary, multiagency service that works with children and young people aged 10-17 years and their families. Brent YJS provides support in relation to diverting from offending, preventing crime, out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the planning and delivery of community interventions, indirect and direct work with victims, and custody and resettlement.
- 1.2 The YJS sits within the CWPCD Directorate and is managed by the Head of Early Help. The Director of Early Help and Social Care chairs the YJS Management Board. The Board provides strategic direction and support for

the YJS, ensuring that planning is undertaken to deliver effective youth justice services - which aim to reduce offending and safeguard children and young people. Secondly, the Board are informed by an understanding of the characteristics of the YJS cohort and the type and level of risk to children and young people and ensure proportionality in youth justice outcomes for all children and young people in Brent.

- 1.3 The YJS Management Board has representation across the partnership at senior levels and has maintained a stable and engaged membership with awareness and knowledge of children in the youth justice system. Board members have developed an effective teamwork approach and contribute to Inspectorate recommendations, wider planning, and challenges. This consistent approach is embedded operationally reflecting the partnership's strategic focus on addressing disparity and disproportionality. All Board members have been encouraged to observe practice. A case study is presented by a member of the YJS at each Management Board meeting, promoting a wider understanding of interventions and their impact. A review of the YJS Management Board's Terms of Reference, in adherence to YJB guidance, was approved in January 2025.
- 1.4 In line with the annual YJB Business Plan, Brent YJS has a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves. Brent YJS shared its staffing profile by ethnicity with the Youth Justice Board in September 2024. This showed it is diverse and representative of children in the Brent Youth Justice System. Brent has a Disproportionality Action Plan which it regularly monitors - via the YJS management Board - and continues to ensure that everyone who works for the YJS has planned and recorded individual training and development.
- 1.5 Brent YJS benefits from partner staffing contributions equivalent to 7.6 FTE, with senior members from partnership agencies at Board level. The YJS is compliant with the minimum staffing requirement set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – with multi agency staff representing the education sector, Health, Probation, and the Police:

**Table 1: Partnership staffing contributions**

Post	FTE
Police Officer	2
Seconded Probation Officer	0.6
Prospects Employment Advisor	2
CAMHS Practitioner	1
YJLD Liaison and Diversion (CNWL)	1
VIA Substance Misuse	1

- 1.6 This report provides an overview of the impact of YJS delivery outlined in the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028, which is due to be presented at Cabinet in October. This will include consideration of how the YJS contributes to Borough Plan and other strategic priorities, an overview of the impact of work delivered by YJS and its partners in 2024/25, and Brent YJS priorities for 2025/28.

## **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

### **2.1 That the Community and Wellbeing Committee:**

- Considers the content of the Draft Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028 (see Appendix: Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028).
- Notes the achievements and challenges detailed within the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028. These include the integration of child first principles into YJS practice, progress made to reduce reoffending, first-time entrants into the youth justice system, and custodial outcomes, and our continued commitment to addressing the overrepresentation of children from Black Heritage groups supported by Brent YJS.
- Notes the principal aims and commitments that subject to Cabinet approval, will shape the Brent YJS partnership in the next three years:
  - Embed the new Targeted Prevention Hub (TPH) within Brent.
  - Develop ever closer links with the voluntary and community sector – to include the ongoing identification of partners to join the TPH.
  - Implement and manage new substance misuse arrangements within Brent.
  - Embed new Appropriate Adult arrangements within Brent.
  - Increase access to victim's support.
  - Work with partners to develop pathways and create access for Speech and Language Therapy.
  - Refresh, implement, and monitor the Brent YJS Disproportionality Action Plan to tackle the over representation of children from Black Heritage Groups in the Brent Youth Justice System.
  - Support the delivery of the Brent Youth Strategy.
  - Collaborate with Social Care to reduce the criminalisation of children in care and care leavers.
  - Continue to promote evidence-based Child First approaches as the best means to reducing victims, promoting public protection, keeping communities safe and supporting children towards positive outcomes.
  - Support MPS Children's Strategy recommendations to help keep children in London safe, build their trust and bring to justice those who abuse and exploit them.
  - Continue to build a YJS partnership culture that encourages diversity in its workforce, promotes anti-racist practice in its thinking and inclusivity,

is supportive, encourages personal responsibility and is outcomes focused.

- Continue work within the YJS Management Board, the wider partnership, and YJS staff to prepare for the current round of HMIP Inspection, through a YJS focussed programme of case file audits, thematic Practice Development sessions and focused individual supervision.
- Broaden access to mentoring with clear referral pathways.
- Develop plans to expand the remit to care leavers who are involved in the criminal justice system.
- Map DFE Dashboard Outcomes to YJS key performance indicators.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

**3.1.1** The Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028 is closely aligned to three priorities within the Borough Plan 2023-27 as well as the strategies outlined below:

##### **3.1.2 *Thriving Communities***

Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) is working closely with community partners to make Brent safer. This includes delivering *Your Life You Choose* sessions, and other preventative workshops in schools in partnership with the Targeted Prevention Hub (Early Help), Willesden Magistrates Court, the Police, and the local voluntary sector. *Unlocking Your Potential* groupwork sessions led by YJS introduce young people to inspirational members from local and wider London communities. YJS also supports young people to access positive recreational activities at Family Wellbeing Centres.

##### **3.1.3 *The Best Start in Life***

Young people within the Brent youth justice system are seen and heard. A trauma informed approach to supporting children is embedded within YJS. Supported by a YJS Participation Officer, children and young people communicate with members of the YJS Management Board via a range of multi-media platforms including podcasts and short films. Joint work undertaken with the Brent Community Safety Team includes exploring options for broadening Brent's mentoring offer to young people affected by gangs and other forms of criminal exploitation, and the ongoing provision of early intervention preventative support to children and young people who receive the police issued *Triage* Out of Court Disposal.

##### **3.1.4 *A Healthier Brent***

Young people known to criminal justice services often have poor access to mental health provision. An NHS funded Youth Liaison and Diversion Officer, based within the YJS offers mental health screening to children who attend

police custody. A co-located CAMHS Mental Health Practitioner offers a range of support and refers those with more complex needs for specialist CAMHS support.

### **3.1.5 Brent Youth Strategy**

The Youth Justice Plan 2025-28 is aligned to the Brent Youth Strategy 2025-28 which includes youth participation, contextual safeguarding risk management, and the provision of educational support to children not in employment, education, and training.

### **3.1.6 The Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028**

Brent YJS is committed to tackling inequalities which includes the added strand of work which focuses on disproportionality. The service's work is closely aligned to two objectives within the Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028.

## **3.2 Background**

**3.2.1** Brent's operational responsibilities have remained broadly similar in their focus since they were introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This required each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework outlining youth justice responsibilities in relation to out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement.

**3.2.2** Brent's approach to delivering youth justice services shares much in common with the Child-First ambitions announced by the Youth Justice Board in 2021 and re-emphasised in their Strategy Plan for 2024-2027. These are to deliver positive outcomes for children by reducing offending and creating safer communities. We see children as children first, treat them fairly and help them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society as responsible citizens. It is also a method that provides Brent YJS with the necessary means to achieve its principal statutory aims:

- Reducing the likelihood of children offending or re-offending
- Protecting children and young people
- Protecting the public
- Ensuring that sentences are served

## **4.0 Overview of YJS work**

**4.1** The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028 outlines our work addressing the individual and often complex needs of children and young people who have entered, or are at risk of entering, the local youth justice system. In 2024, this totalled 201 children (0.6%) of the Brent 10-17 population who received 289 youth justice disposals:

**Table 2: No. of children supported by Brent YJS by disposal  
January to December 2024**

Type of disposals	No. of Children
Court Sentence	98
Out Of Court Disposals	59
Turnaround Programme	38
Remand / Bail support programme	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>

**4.2** A snapshot of the active caseload taken in April 2025 showed there were 112 open cases. Analysis of these children and young people reveals that:

- Sixty percent were aged 16 or 17 years - This figure has been relatively consistent over the last 4 years.
- Eighty-eight percent were male compared to 89%, the over representation of young Brent males has been relatively consistent over the last 4 years.
- Thirty-eight percent of children and young people were from a Black Caribbean or other Black Heritage Group compared to 54% in May 2024, 46% in June 2023, 48% in February 2022 and 46% in February 2021. Although some positive progress has been achieved, the overrepresentation of children and young people from Black Heritage groups in the youth justice system continues to be a systemic failure.
- Twenty-three percent, inclusive of caretaking cases, were LAC. The overrepresentation of care experienced children in the Brent youth justice system is a persistent problem that the Looked After Children and Permanency Service, and the Youth Justice Service have worked together to decrease in recent years.
- Twenty-three percent were NEET (in academic years 12 and 13 and including children and young people residing out of Brent). This figure has been relatively consistent over the last 4 years.
- Seven percent of the caseload (8) had an EHCP or Statement of SEN. This figure has been relatively consistent over the last 4 years.
- The wards containing the highest proportion of children in the April 2025 cohort were Alperton, Mapesbury, Stonebridge and Harlesden. Children and young people residing in these wards represent over 28% of all open cases. A significant proportion (almost a quarter) reside outside of Brent. The majority of these children are care-experienced or have been moved outside of Brent in response to contextual safeguarding or other risks to their safety and wellbeing.

**4.3** Within the overall YJS open caseload in April 2025 there were 17 LAC young people. Care experienced children known to the YJS are one of the most

vulnerable groups in Brent with many children experiencing high levels of harm and exploitation. Analysis of these children and young people reveals that:

- 94% were male.
- 76% were aged 16 or 17 years.
- 41% were of Black African or Black Caribbean Heritage (60% in May 2024).
- 59% had committed a violent offence (70% in May 2024).
- 12% had committed a drugs offence, a lower figure than previous years.
- 26% had committed a robbery offence. This is a relatively consistent figure over the last 4 years.

**4.4** Analysis of all 201 children and young people supported by Brent YJS between January and December 2024 found that:

- 52 (25.8%) of those children had committed a drugs offence - 51 (98%) of these children were found to be in possession of drugs.
- 24 of the 46 children referred to the YJS due to cannabis crime were referred for substance misuse treatment. This is consistent with the national picture where cannabis is the most common substance used by children referred for treatment (52%).
- 67% had mental health concerns.
- 26% were previously or currently open to children's social care as a child in need.
- 8% were previously or currently subject of a child protection plan.

## **5.0 Service Reform**

**5.1** In April 2024, Brent Council's Early Help and Social Care Department embarked on a new redesign programme to better support more holistic, joined up working and ensure a modern, fit for purpose service model, in line with the Government's Families First reform programme. The new model introduced in May 2025 brings together non-statutory Family Support Workers with Children's Social Workers in seven teams, each aligned to a Family Wellbeing Centre. Over time, Family Support Workers will receive training to begin to complete Child and Family Assessments under the guidance and supervision of a Social Worker. These teams will oversee all Family Support and Child in Need work. New Child Protection Teams will also be established, made up of Social Workers who will oversee caseloads of Child Protection, Section 47, Interim Care Order, Supervision Orders and Care Proceedings cases.

**5.2** The redesign also identified the need for, and subsequent creation of, a Targeted Prevention Hub (TPH). Located within the Brent Youth and Youth Justice Service and managed by the Youth and Youth Justice Manager (reporting to the Head of Service Early Help), the TPH brings together existing adolescent-focused resources across Early Help and Social Care to provide an expanded range of preventative support to children and young people in Brent. Introduced in stages from June 2025, it will also introduce a new Family Group Conferencing Service.

**5.3** TPH is expected to achieve a wide range of benefits by:

- Providing more support to services tackling risk outside the home.
- Strengthening Brent's approach to prevention and early intervention.
- Expanding resources for children returning home from care and supporting reunification with families.
- Unifying and coordinating existing resources from across Early Help and Children's Social Care.
- Improving experiences for children, young people, and families – providing a single, dedicated referral pathway.

**5.4** By creating a single pathway across Children's Social Care, TPH will fast-track access to a menu of services, including:

- Careers advice.
- Sexual Health advice.
- Expert advice re child sexual exploitation.
- 1:1 support for children who are gang affected/affiliated.
- Out of hours detached youth work.
- Mentoring.
- Missing children support.
- Mental health support.
- Substance misuse support from VIA.
- Contextual safeguarding support e.g. peer mapping, safety mapping, complex strategy meetings, and intelligence sharing.
- Brent YJS Turnaround. This is a four-year programme which has been funded by the MoJ until April 2026 to work and offer additional support to young people who are on the edge of entering the criminal justice system.
  - Educational awareness sessions on crime and exploitation.
  - Family group conferencing.
  - Reunification of children returning from home from being looked after.
  - Domestic abuse with Advance.

**5.5** TPH Outcomes will conform to DfE expectations in the Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme. These outcomes include:

- Fewer children in care.
- Reduction in the number of vulnerable children and young people becoming looked after.
- Increased understanding of youth criminal exploitation by children and their families.



- Reduced number of children entering the youth justice system.
- Reduction of children vulnerable to risk outside the home harm.
- Reduction of victims vulnerable to risk outside the home harm. Increase in the number of vulnerable children and young people being safely supported in the community.
- Improved access to, and performance of, preventative (wrap-around) services for young people and their families.

**5.6** The positioning of TPH within YJS provides an opportunity to map DFE expected outcomes to YJS key performance indicators. This will enable YJS' contribution to the Council's Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel and the wider safeguarding objectives to be measured, shared and monitored by the Brent YJS Management Board via the YJS Improvement Plan.

**5.7** The child-centred workplace culture that is evident in Brent YJS will be incorporated into TPH through modelling the directorate's 'ways of working' approach: *This is Brent CYP - This is How We Grow*. This ensures that all service development conforms to common values of Contribution to Society, Integrity, Creativity and Achievement. It also encourages all staff to remain Curious, Courageous and Kind in all aspects of their work, including anti-racist practice. Quality assurance tools continue to evolve and now include a reflective supervision template and enhanced requirements for robust management oversight.

**5.8** In terms of workforce development, the Brent YJS recruits staff who are committed to children's welfare and work co-productively with them to improve outcomes. YJS provides a supportive, yet challenging work environment that nurtures talent, values all contributions equally and strives for excellence. This is key to collaborating with the national Youth Justice Board (YJB) to deliver the three strategic objectives outlined in their Youth Justice Board Strategy 2024-2027:

1. Supporting the improvement of youth justice services in local communities.
2. Focusing on addressing persistent racial disparities across the youth justice system.
3. Influencing the development of policy and practice to advance the adoption of Child First principles throughout the youth justice system.

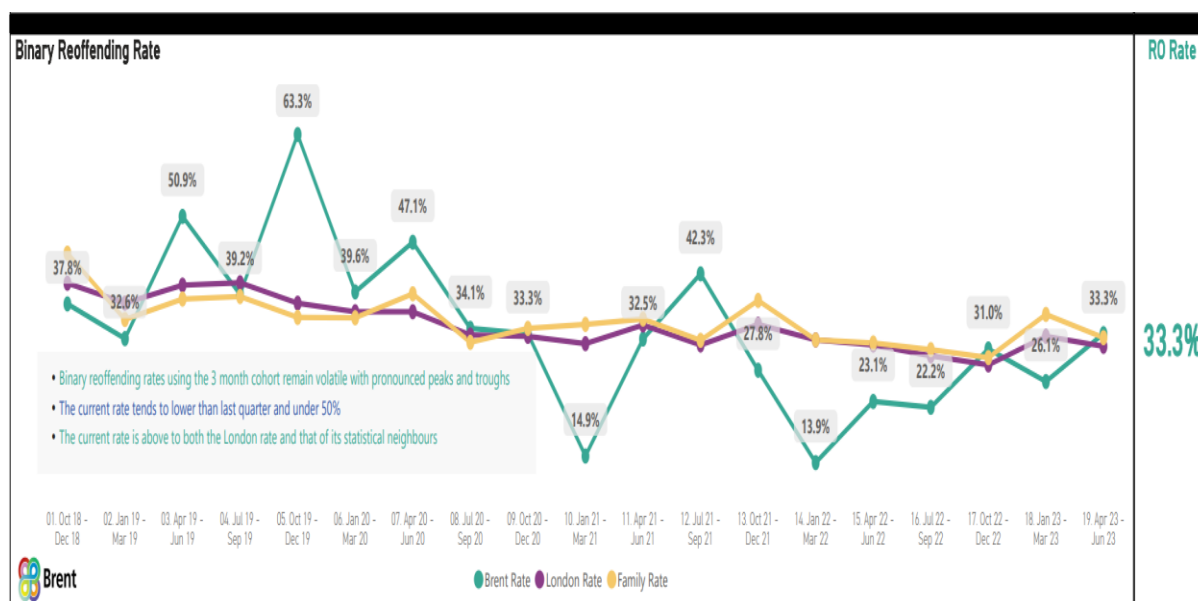
## **6.0 Performance and impact**

**6.1** During 2024/25, Brent YJS performed strongly across several key areas:

### **6.2 Re-offending**

Re-offending rates are prone to fluctuation and tracked over a period of 18 months. The low rates of reoffending that Brent has experienced in recent years is likely to have been influenced by the considerable programme of preventative work undertaken at this time. This included the COVID-19 Pathfinder for Overrepresented Children, the MOPAC Funded Disproportionality Project, and the Your Choice cognitive behavioural therapy programme. The establishment of TPH provides renewed confidence that reoffending rates will maintain their downwards trajectory.

**Table 3: Brent youth reoffending rates, October 2018 to June 2023**



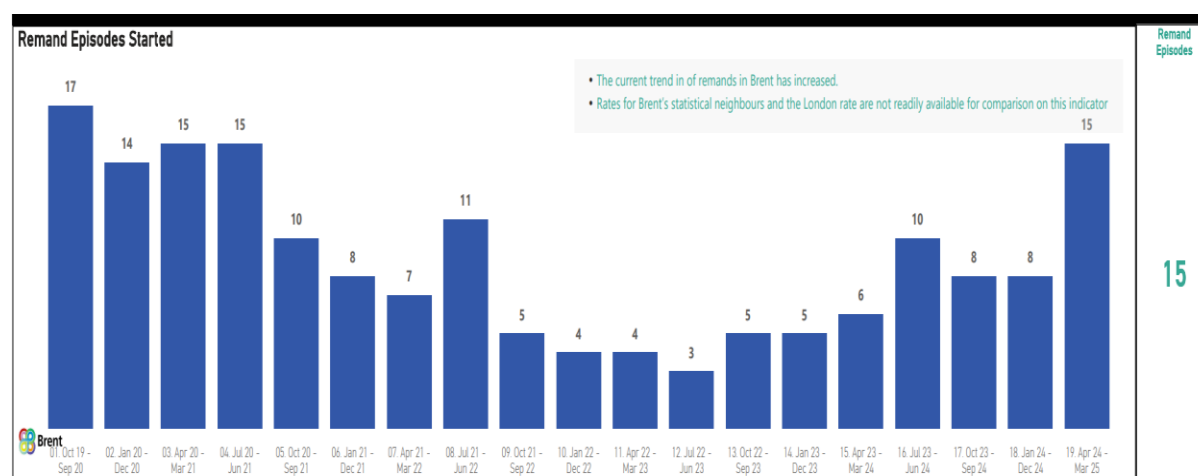
## 6.3 Custody and Remands

Brent's custodial population is lower than both our statistical neighbours and the London average. This has been influenced by work to tackle disproportionality in the youth justice system, the implementation of the Constructive Resettlement approach which helps children in custody shift from a pro-offending identity to a pro-social one by building on their strengths and goals, effective interventions, and multi-agency oversight including At Risk of Custody meetings. However, the number of remands has increased by three compared to the previous year (five) to total eight in 2024/25. This increase is attributed to two serious incidents involving eight children in 2024/25. Children from Black Heritage Groups continue to be overrepresented in both the YJS custody and remand cohorts.

**Table 4: Brent youth custody rate and numbers, October 2019 to March 2025**



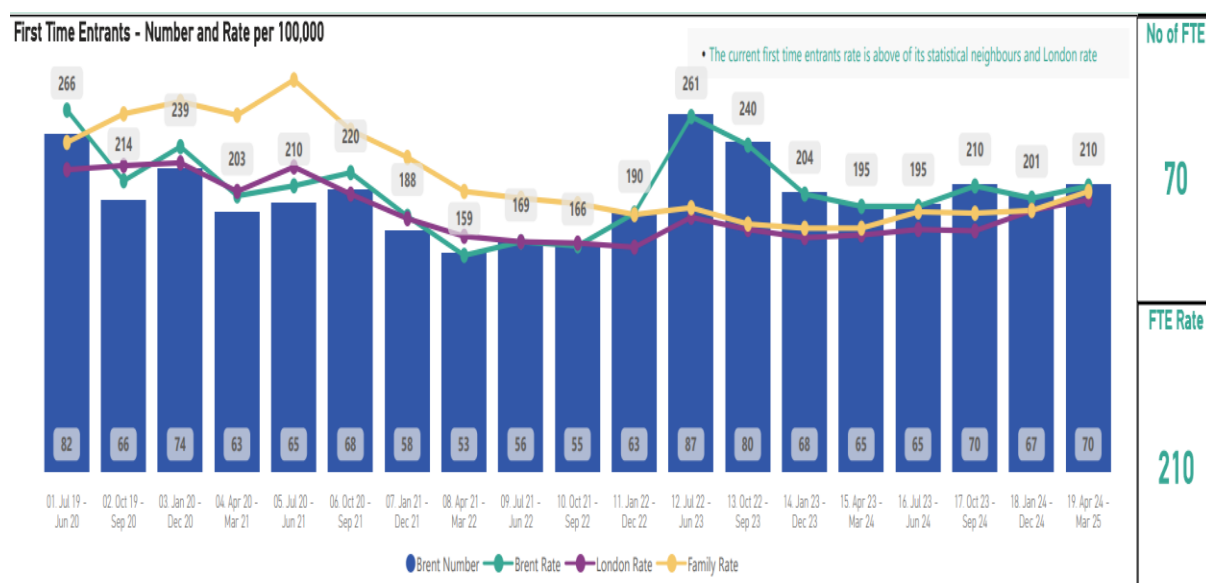
**Table 5: Brent youth remand numbers, October 2019 to March 2025**



## 6.4 First Time Entrants

The number of children entering the Youth Justice System has also been falling for more than a decade, at a national and local level. Locally, this reflects the effective planning, decision making and wide-ranging interventions offered by the YJS Out of Court Disposal team.

**Table 6: Brent first-time entrants to the youth justice system, July 2019 to March 2025**



## 6.5 Out of Court Disposals (O OCD)

Brent's O OCD procedures and processes highlight the voice of the victim, and promote a restorative justice offer. Work undertaken in partnership with the Police and the YJS Out of Court Disposal team is collaborative and focused on achieving fair and good outcomes for all children and young people. In 2024 Brent introduced the YJB Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool to make assessments more child-focused and to ensure interventions are needs led. The number of police referrals to the Out of Court Disposal Team is predicted to increase significantly during the life of this plan due to the strategic commitment to *child-first* policing made by the Metropolitan Police in April 2025.

## 6.6 Violence and Gangs

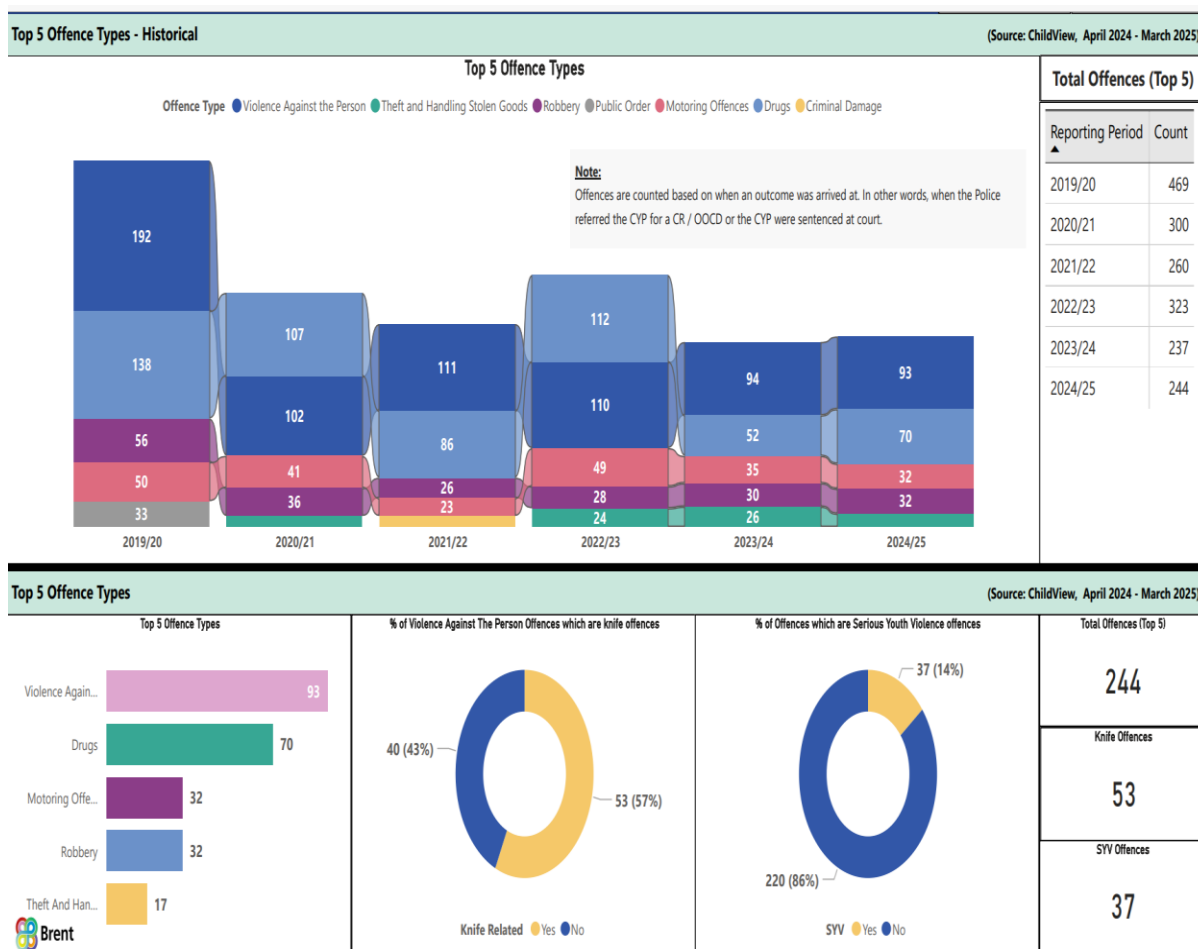
Brent YJS is committed to safeguarding young people affected by gangs and violence by understanding their challenges through a trauma informed lens and responding to neurodiverse needs. Serious Youth Violence has declined year on year since 2016/17 (66 SYV offences in the year 2016/17 to 37 in 2024/25, which is 44% decrease) - although within this cohort there has been an increase in the proportion of both robbery offences and knife crime for this cohort. For this reason, safety mapping is undertaken with all children supported by the YJS to better understand the harm they are exposed to in the community and where necessary plan how they can work safely with the YJS.

## 6.7 Serious Youth Violence Reductions

Serious Youth Violence reductions in Brent correspond to reductions experienced across London. This progress has been credited to a multi-faceted

strategy which includes targeted enforcement, community-led prevention programs, investment in early intervention and youth support services, and a commitment to addressing the root causes of violence, such as poverty and lack of opportunities. The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and local authorities are working in partnership with communities, families, and young people to provide resources, build trust, and develop solutions tailored to specific local needs.

**Table 7: Brent youth offences by type and serious youth violence, 2019 to 2025**



## 6.8 Courts

Brent receives a considerable amount of positive feedback from Magistrates at Willesden Youth Court about the quality of YJS court reports and the knowledge of the children who appear before the Youth Bench. For instance, in December 2024, it was noted that a Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) addressed all areas required to assist with sentencing. It was commented that it was a “good PSR with lots of detail”. All three areas of risk assessment: reoffending, risk of serious harm to others, and safety and wellbeing were evaluated as “very good”. Sentencing recommendations were deemed to assist sentencing and described as “excellent recommendations”.

Brent YJSs approach to sharing court facilities with Barnet and Harrow is collaborative and ensures all children are given the best possible opportunity to receive a fair outcome regardless of where they live. Brent is fortunate that our judiciary supports our continual strive for improvements in many ways which has included the adoption of trauma informed court reports and bail letters.

## **7.0 Partnership and Participation**

- 7.1 The voices of children and their families are heard and used to develop and shape service provision. YJS workers interact with children and young people with increasing creativity. This has included YJS children sharing short films made by Brent children with the YJS Management Board, working in partnership with the Raheem Sterling Foundation, and sharing youth insights on crime and disorder with the Police during Community Safety Team Roundtable discussions.
- 7.2 The 2024 Annual Brent YJS Children and Young Person Survey obtained encouraging responses from the 68 children who took part including:
- 100% of young people said their case manager had completed work with them prior to an initial referral order panel. This included a learning questionnaire, YP assessment, mood questionnaire, screening tools, parent assessments, career choices, negative peers, and learning styles assessment.
  - 97% (66) were offered an opportunity to engage in positive activities whilst in contact with the YJS.
  - 100% felt listened to by their case manager.
  - 99% (67) felt satisfied with the work that the case manager had completed with them.
  - 94% (64) said that the case manager had given them feedback about their progress.
  - When asked what has worked well or made the biggest difference on your order, responses included *'Obtaining a passport, kept me busy, knowing right and wrong, understand things more, anything can be a weapon, appointments give me a routine, cast off some friends, how to think and behave, good substance misuse sessions, helped my self-esteem and mental health, engaging with ETE, advice to keep me out of trouble, I like talking to you, session on decision making, having help from different people, substance misuse and mental health assessment'*. One respondent stated: *'I am not the person I was 2 years ago and that is a good thing.'*
- 7.3 The 2024 Annual Brent YJS Parents and Carers Survey obtained encouraging responses from the 29 parents who took part including:
- 100% of parents attended and participated in their child's initial YJS meeting.

- 97% of parents felt listened to and included in the preparation of their child's Intervention Plan.
- 97% felt they were able to speak to their child's case manager about any issues or concerns.
- 100% reported that they received up to date reports from the child's case manager about what is happening.
- Over 90% rated their experience highly when asked if their child was fully supported by the YJS.
- 93% were offered support, advice, and information about parenting.
- The support parents received was regarded positively overall: *'I could air my concerns, received excellent advice and support, given a lot of tools to keep calm, supported and encouraged throughout, really helpful, I followed the advice and its worked'*.

#### **7.4 Partnership and Joint Working**

The growing proportion of higher-risk children and young people on the YJS caseload requires good partnership work and close collaboration with wider Council services and external partners. Brent YJS continues to expand its partnerships with the local voluntary sector to provide access to existing and newly emerging preventative support including the *I Am Brent Consortium*. The new TPH will further strengthen joint working by offering access to a wide range of services including Family Group Conferencing, sexual health, and youth participation provision.

#### **7.5 Restorative Justice**

Our determination to support victims through direct and indirect mediation is underpinned by our Restorative Justice Policy. It is particularly pleasing that YJS Restorative Justice Workers convened Brent YJS first face to face Restorative Justice Conference in 2024. It is hoped that new arrangements introduced by the Police will significantly increase our ability to directly encourage victims to engage in restorative justice.

#### **7.6** The Brent YJS Disproportionality Action Plan is refreshed annually and is reflected throughout the work of the YJS. It is regularly monitored by the YJS Management Board and contains wide-ranging actions across the partnership. In 2024 an analysis was conducted of Police diversionary interventions which showed that whilst children from Black Heritage Groups in Brent have access to Out of Court Disposals, they remain under-represented when compared to children from White Heritage groups. Furthermore, children from Black Heritage groups are more likely to receive more serious youth justice disposals and when compared to children from White Heritage Groups. YJS will build upon this throughout 2025-2028 by seeking to understand whether disproportionate access to OOCs, is the result of child-first policing or the product of children from Black Heritage groups being subjected to disproportionate levels of Police attention.

## 8.0 Brent YJS priorities 2025-28: Council Services

### 8.1 Children's Social Care: safeguarding children and young people

8.2 Safeguarding children and young people from serious youth violence and risk outside the home is central to Brent YJS work. Brent YJS will continue to jointly take forward plans to reduce the criminalisation of children in care in collaboration with the Looked After Children, Leaving Care, Family Support and Child Protection and Court Teams, using the pan-London protocol to reduce the criminalisation of children in care as a guide.

8.3 Ongoing work undertaken with Early Help and Social Care teams to keep children safe, such as peer mapping and supporting children at court, has been enhanced through the establishment of the Brent Contextual Safeguarding and Violence Reduction Strategic Group (CSVRSRG). Introduced in May 2025, the purpose of CSVRSRG is to understand the profile of our most vulnerable and at-risk residents, oversee themes and trends and develop interventions to make individuals and Brent residents safer. The CSVRSRG supports the Safer Brent Partnership to achieve the priorities of the Safer Brent Strategy to tackle violent crime, challenge domestic abuse and sexual abuse and prevent violence against women and girls, focusing on incidents impacting the community and protecting the most vulnerable. Contextual safeguarding has been further embedded within the YJS through the repositioning of the Contextual Safeguarding Lead Officer post withing TPH.

#### Case study 1

*KH is a 16-year-old young man from a Black Heritage group. He lives with his mum and dad, and younger brother aged 10 years.*

*KH is currently subject to a 10-month Referral Order which started on 04.03.25 for being in possession of a knife in a Public Place.*

*KHs assessment identified risk factors such as negative peers, being a weapons carrier, poor thinking and decision-making skills, lack of consequential thinking, and poor critical thinking skills*

*KH has engaged well with the YJS. He has completed 23 hours of reparation activities to date at the Willesden dementia café for elderly residents. His duties include making hot drinks and washing up. It has been noted by staff that KH is very polite and helpful.*

*KH has engaged positively in sessions covering decision making, weapons awareness, victim awareness and peer influences. KH has attended all his YJS sessions, is thoughtful, reflective, able to see his mistakes, and explore positive changes. He remains in full-time education at Uxbridge College where he is studying Maths, English, and Plumbing.*

*KH has not come to the attention of the police, since receiving support from the YJS and has no outstanding criminal matters.*



### **Case study 2**

*KO is a 15-year-old young male of White Irish heritage. KO was referred to Brent Youth Justice Service to be considered for an Out of Court Disposal for three offences of assault on an emergency worker and one offence of assault by beating. KO was with his younger brother and his girlfriend when they got into altercation with a security guard and police officers.*

*KO previously resided in Westminster. The family were known to Westminster Social Care for concerns relating to physical and emotional abuse from parents, witnessing arguments within the home, animal cruelty and being forced to shoplift. The family moved to Brent in November 2024. KO has been in care of his older sister since 2022. KO has no contact with his parents.*

*KO received a Youth Conditional Caution (YCC) disposal. This is a formal Out of Court Disposal with mandatory conditions attached. As part of his YCC, KO agreed to undertake mental health screening with the YJS based NHS Liaison and Diversion practitioner. A referral to CAHMS was completed due to KO presenting with ADHD and ASD traits. KO also completed sessions around victim awareness. KO found these sessions difficult as he saw himself as a victim. However, when given examples and scenarios KO demonstrated understanding. KO also engaged in one-to-one sessions with his YJS case manager around how to manage his emotions and feelings. KO participated in a one-to-one session with YJS Police.*

*KOs case manager completed a referral to the Brent Inclusion Service for KOs sister who was supported to apply for an EHCP for KO. He successfully completed his Youth Conditional Caution and has had no further contact with the Youth Justice System.*

## **8.4 Community Safety Team: community participation**

Brent YJS and the Community Safety Team are committed to jointly promoting engagement with local communities and victims, and the ongoing development of local youth justice services. This includes working together to include mentoring provision for YJS children as part of 2026-2029 commissioning arrangements and delivering one of the priorities in the Overarching Safer Brent Action Plan 2024-2026: facilitating *Roundtable* conversations between children known to the Police and key stakeholders.

## **8.5 Improving Educational Outcomes: increasing opportunities**

YJS will continue to increase participation for those young people out of school. Educational staffing resources has increased to 2.0 FTE Prospects Careers Advisors, and this is complemented by one PLIAS Resettlement Worker who offers community-based support, advice and guidance to young people with criminal convictions. This combined with close oversight from the YJS NEET Working Group provides the tools and resources needed to reduce the number of children known to YJS who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). YJS will continue to deliver preventative workshops to mainstream and alternative schools. This will include working in partnership with the TPH

to deliver the Your Life You Choose programme. This is a multi-agency presentation which seeks to deter school students from crime, raise awareness of the consequences of their choices and empower them to make better decisions and keep themselves safe.

## **8.6 Victims: supporting local needs**

Brent YJS continues to work collaboratively with colleagues in the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children living in supported accommodation, by raising awareness about alternatives to reporting low level crime. This includes referral to the restorative justice offer which is open to all victims of crime and includes both direct and indirect mediation. Brent YJS has built upon plans to extend its reparations offer and now undertakes reparative work at Family Wellbeing Centres and the church-based Dementia Café. Children and young people also exhibited significant painting and decorating flair as part of a new reparations programme which has revamped the SEND area at Stonebridge Primary School. Victims' work is predicted to expand significantly following the recent decision from the Metropolitan Police to expedite victim access to support by allowing YJS' contact victims directly.

## **8.7 Public Health: investment in early intervention and youth support services**

Brent YJS works closely with Public Health. Work undertaken last year resulted in the creation of a new substance misuse provision pathway. Introduced in April this year, all children who receive Police Out of Court Disposals can access support from VIA, a voluntary sector provider that specialises in substance misuse provision for children and young people in Brent. To promote closer working between Brent YJS and VIA, the two organisations held a service wide meeting in May this year, that enabled practitioners to identify service improvements and new ways of working - which include a commitment to offer groupwork. This work dovetails with TPH plans to extend access to public health initiatives that support the physical and emotional health of children, especially those who are missing or excluded from school, or misusing drugs and alcohol.

## **8.8 Partnership priorities**

## **8.9 Disproportionality**

### **Courts**

Brent YJS will improve the court experience and outcomes for children through ever closer working with Court Services partners. Issues of disproportionality affecting children from Black Heritage Groups will continue to be tackled. More widely Brent will build upon work to enable all children to better understand what will happen at court and facilitate their active participation in ensuring they are involved and listened to during court proceedings.

## **8.10 Transitioning to adult services**

### **Probation**

The partnership between Brent YJS and the Brent Probation service is strong. For many years this has enabled Brent YJS to benefit from the provision of effective staffing resources and operational processes that ensure our children transition seamlessly from the youth justice system into adult services.

## **8.11 Increasing access to funded services and community knowledge**

### **Voluntary Sector**

The continued sharing of community wide knowledge is vital to achieving good outcomes for children. This includes information shared by the Young Brent Foundation at Management Board meetings relating to contextual safeguarding, deprivation and the quality and sufficiency of safe spaces and activities for children and young people. Brent YJS will continue to access to the broad range of youth provision offered by the Violence Reduction Unit funded *I Am Brent* consortium.

## **8.12 Supporting adolescent mental health needs**

### **Improved Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The Brent YJS Mental Health Practitioner seconded from the CAMHS Enhanced Treatment Team will continue to provide onward referral, advice and support for all children likely to require Tier 3 specialised CAMHS interventions. YJS Case Managers holding cases where children are suspected to possess less acute mental health needs can access general advice and guidance about emotional wellbeing and other community support from the Brent Centre for Young People and TPH.

## **8.13 Targeted, child-centred enforcement**

### **Police**

Brent YJS will assist the Police to ensure the safety of children and better protect the public. This will include the ongoing delivery of Police led Victim Awareness and Crime Prevention group work sessions, Police One to One sessions with children and young people supported by YJS, and the joint sharing of risk and safety information between YJS and the Police. YJS will continue to support the Police to implement the child-centred ambitions contained within the new [Metropolitan Police Service Children's Strategy](#), by identifying new opportunities to listen to and respond to the voices of children. Brent YJS will continue to support the Community Safety Team to facilitate Roundtable events between YJS children and the Police.

## **9.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 9.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025 - 2028 was approved by the Brent Youth Justice Service Management Board on 24 July 2025.
- 9.2 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025 – 2028 will be presented to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 17 September 2025.

- 9.3 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025 – 2028 will thereafter be presented to The Safer Brent Partnership Board – for information and to Full Council - for formal sign-off and adoption.
- 9.4 A final version of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28 will be sent to the Youth Justice Board following approval.

## **10.0 Financial Considerations**

- 10.1 The commitments and activities of the Youth Justice Plan are funded from the Partnership Budget that includes cash and in-kind contributions from a number of partners including the Police and the Health Service. The total partnership budget is expected to be £1.7m including the grant from the Youth Justice Board.
- 10.2 The Council's financial contribution in 2025/26 has been reduced by £105K as part of the savings targets. The savings have been delivered through the deletion of two vacant posts.
- 10.3 It is expected that the aims and commitments of the Partnership during the next three years included in paragraph 3.2.5 will be delivered within existing resources. Any potential impact on service capacity as a result of the savings described in paragraph 5.2, will need to be absorbed within the Partnership.

## **11.0 Legal Considerations**

- 11.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a requirement that all local authorities must establish a Youth Offending Team (YOT) comprising members from the police, social services, probation, health and education. Most local authorities, including Brent, have renamed YOT provision as Youth Justice Services.
- 11.2 The Act also created the Youth Justice Board to oversee and monitor youth justice services in England and Wales. One of the YJB's key functions is to provide local authorities with funding to enable YOT's to deliver statutory services.
- 11.3 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on local authorities to submit an annual youth justice plan.

## **12.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 12.1 The proposed Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028 supports Brent Council's commitment to equality equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is also in compliant with the statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. Brent YJS considers all individuals when conducting their day-to-day work. This includes YJS Management Board oversight of YJS work to reduce the overrepresentation of children from Black Heritage groups in the youth justice system, child-centred operational policies, and a commitment to trauma informed work practices.

- 12.2 Brent YJS seeks to reduce health inequalities through the provision of good assessment and intervention planning for all children who enter the local youth justice system. This includes referral to substance misuse services, CAMHS, and CNWL mental health screening,

### **13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 13.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan details efforts to encourage young people within the youth justice system to share their views and opinions on issues of most relevance to them.
- 13.2 Youth participation and co-production is an evolving initiative within the Youth Justice Service. This work is aligned to the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030, which aims to equip children and young people with the skills and opportunities needed to take action to protect the environment and tackle climate change.

### **14.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

- 14.1 N/A

### **15.0 Communication Considerations**

- 15.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan will be shared with all services and organisations represented on the Youth Justice Service Management Board.

#### **Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children, Young People and  
Community Development