

	Cabinet 13 October 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides a brief overview of the purpose and rationale for creating the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28. It additionally describes how youth justice provision in Brent contributes to strategic and Borough Plan priorities, and outlines the partnership aims and commitments that will shape the Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership in the next three years.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the content of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28.
- 2.2 That Cabinet provides agreement for the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 to be presented to Full Council for formal sign-off and adoption.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 This report presents the Draft Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 and celebrates the commitment and achievements of our Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the wider partnership to support children and young people who are risk of or have entered the youth justice system. This is the first three-year version of the Brent Youth Justice Plan. As such it provides a more comprehensive approach to planning and delivering services than was possible in the annual versions that shaped the provision of youth justice services in Brent during the last 20 years.
- 3.1.2 Performance remains strong overall, particularly in respect of the reduction in young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time. These numbers have been falling for more than a decade, at a national and local level. The number of First Time Entrants (FTE) has now plateaued and most recently totalled 70 in the period April 2024 to March 2025. This is comparable to both our statistical family and the London rate of FTEs.
- 3.1.3 It is equally pleasing that the number of children sentenced to custody in 2024/25 was significantly less than the London and statistical family average. This is due to the strong focus on prevention and engagement with children and young people so that their views are heard and interventions are personalised to their needs and environment. Work on reducing the disproportionate number of young people in the criminal justice system from Black backgrounds continues with rigour and pace.
- 3.1.4 I am heartened by the feedback of the voice of the young people through surveys and individual engagement and wish to highlight these areas:
- 94% (64) believe their case manager understands what has happened in their life.
 - 96% (65) said they had their court order explained to them by the YJS officer.
 - 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.
 - When asked what has worked well or made the biggest difference, one respondent stated: 'I am not the person I was 2 years ago and that is a good thing.'
 - 100% said that their case manager has encouraged them to think about their future.
 - 99% (67) said that the case manager contacted them on the date and time expected for their session each week.
- 3.1.5 I would like to thank all the staff working for our Youth Justice Service for their hard work, diligence and innovation supporting young people, in what continues to be a challenging economic landscape.

- 3.1.6 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 the Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024/28.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The YJS is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency service that works with children and young people aged 10-17 years and their families. Brent YJS provides support in relation to out-of-court disposals, court work, bail and remands, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the planning and delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement. The YJS sits within the Children, Young People and Community Development directorate and is managed by the Head of Early Help.
- 3.2.2 Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide the Youth Justice Board (YJB), with a previously annual, but now three-year Youth Justice Plan that sets out how youth justice services are funded, operate, and function. They provide an opportunity to review performance and developments and plan for the next three years. This allows services to be able to respond to any changes that have taken place prior, including new legislation, demographic changes, delivery of key performance indicators (KPIs) and developments in service delivery.
- 3.2.3 Updated guidance to youth justice services, first published in March 2023 and revised in March 2024, introduced the requirement that plans must be signed off by Full Council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.
- 3.2.4 Content in the Draft Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 is presented in line with Youth Justice Board guidance. This information is analysed by the YJB to ensure compliance with statutory and financial requirements. Youth Justice Plans also serve to identify good practice capable of being replicated regionally and nationally.
- 3.2.5 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 contains statistical information about children in Brent, with a specific focus on those children within, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system. Brent is committed to the priorities outlined in the YJB Strategic Plan 2024-27, Thematic and Area Based Inspection recommendations, and local practice approaches. In keeping with this, the following are the principal aims and commitments that will shape the Brent YJS partnership over 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 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 children's social care services to reduce the risks of 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 the 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 focused programme of case file audits, thematic practice development sessions and individual supervision.
- Broaden access to mentoring with clear referral pathways.
- Develop a plan to expand the remit of the service to care leavers involved in the criminal justice system

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 was approved by the Brent Youth Justice Service Management Board on 24 July 2025.
- 4.2 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 was presented to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 17 September 2025.
- 4.3 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 was sent to the Youth Justice Board
- 4.4 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 will be presented to The Safer Brent Partnership Board – for information.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 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 £579k grant from the Youth Justice Board.
- 5.2 The Council's financial contribution in 2025/26 has been reduced by £105K to £735k to meet savings targets. The savings have been delivered through the deletion of two vacant posts.

- 5.3 It is expected that the aims and commitments of the Partnership during the next three years included in paragraph 3.7 will be delivered within existing resources. Any potential impact on service capacity as a result of the savings described in paragraph 5.2 and reduction in grant funding or in-kind contributions, will need to be absorbed within the Partnership.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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 YOTs to deliver statutory services.
- 6.3 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on local authorities to submit an annual youth justice plan.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 The Draft Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 details efforts to encourage young people within the youth justice system to share their views and opinions on issues of most relevance to them.
- 8.2 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.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 No additional considerations to note.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025/28 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