

# Complex Adolescent Strategy

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The aim of this strategy is to set out how we plan to address and respond to the needs and challenges faced by complex adolescents within Brighton and Hove. It will also look at how we aim to reduce the harm caused by some of the behaviours. The strategy will incorporate the Youth Justice Strategy, produced in previous years. It widens the remit to better reflect the local arrangements and approach within Brighton and Hove.

## **2. Background and context**

2.1 There is a requirement through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for named statutory partners to form a YOT (Youth Offending Team). Section 38 identifies the statutory partners and places a duty on them to cooperate in order to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area. These statutory partners are: the local authority, the police, the probation service and health. Additional partners may also be asked to join the joint strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people. In previous years, Brighton and Hove have formalised these arrangements and strategic planning through annual and tri annual Youth Justice Strategies. We are now in a position to move to a new three-year plan that will cover the services relating to complex adolescents as well as youth justice. This will be a better fit with the local arrangements.

2.2 In order to provide a comprehensive and cogent response to complex needs of this cohort, the key teams in Brighton & Hove were brought together in 2018 to form one co located Adolescent Service. This multi-disciplinary service consists of:

- The Youth Offending Team
- ru-ok? a substance misuse team for young people
- A health team providing sexual health, mental health and wellbeing support
- An Adolescent Social Work Pod who work with the most vulnerable and risky young people in the city
- Functional Family Therapy
- Extended Adolescent Service, which offers flexible support to children and young people at risk of becoming looked after or being exploited.

The Youth Employability Service (YES) are also co-located with the service.

2.3 The teams work closely together whilst still retaining their distinct identities. The management structures, processes and staff recognise the need to work differently in order to meet the needs of this complex cohort of young people.

2.4 A team around the relationship ethos is central to the working practice of the Adolescent Service. In supporting our complex adolescents, the young person is at the centre, with the team supporting the worker with the relationship to assist the young person in addressing their needs.

2.5 The Adolescent Service also works closely with partners including voluntary sector partners to ensure effective joint working and where possible services complement each other to best meet the needs and to engage with this vulnerable cohort of children.

### **3. Themes/principles**

3.1 The following themes will underpin all of the activity outlined within this strategy:

- Wherever possible and appropriate a whole-family approach will be used in the delivery of services;
- The service will strive to best meet the diverse needs of the residents and communities of Brighton and Hove;
- All of the service delivery will be child-centred; and
- Services will use trauma-informed approaches.

### **4. Local strategic plans**

4.1 Brighton & Hove City Council has adopted a vision of 'a fairer city, a sustainable future'. The draft plan has six core outcomes that we will be working to achieve for the city.

1. A city to call home
2. A city working for all
3. A stronger city
4. A growing and learning city
5. A sustainable city
6. A healthy and caring city

Each outcome has a set of priority actions which shape directorate and service plans, and day to day business.

4.2 The Adolescent Service sits within the Families, Children and Learning (FCL) directorate within the city council. The FCL directorate plan has the following objectives:

- Take a whole family approach to support safe and stable lives
- Improve outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable people by promoting independence, resilience and learning
- Provide high quality and inclusive education, SEND and employment support and early years, social care and youth provision
- Develop and engage with staff and stakeholders to deliver good quality services and change within the directorate and across council services

4.3 Brighton & Hove's Community Safety Partnership's overarching duty is to reduce crime and disorder, improve community safety, and to reduce reoffending in Brighton & Hove. This is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits the city. The focus of the Community Safety & Crime Reduction Strategy 2020-23 is on taking early action to prevent crime and disorder, tackling the issues which have the biggest impact on people and reducing fear of crime and meeting the needs of victims. This strategy contains a section related to exploitation including modern slavery and trafficking. There is a multi-agency exploitation action plan to deliver the aims of the strategy.

4.4 Brighton & Hove City Council is part of a pan-Sussex group that has developed contextual safeguarding principles to ensure people involved in gangs / local crime groups are supported and their needs met. We will also seek to prevent vulnerable people becoming involved with gangs / local crime groups through peer support and workshops for families, parents, carers and guardians.

4.5 There will be ongoing work to disrupt criminal activity via multi-agency tactical operations and intensification weeks for emerging vulnerable locations or issues. Our enforcement activity will continue to use tools and powers against those who exploit vulnerable people. The numbers of people referred into the National Referral Mechanism as potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking are relatively low and we aim to raise awareness of criminal exploitation amongst young people into organised criminal activity such as county lines.

## **5. Data and performance**

### **Performance and progress against previous priorities.**

The following priorities were set in the Youth Justice Strategy 2019/20:

#### **5.1 Reduce entrants into the Youth Justice System:**

The Brighton & Hove target for reducing first time entrant to the criminal justice system is to maintain the FTE rate at under 31 per annum.

The number of FTEs in Brighton & Hove from April 2019- March 2020 is 20, with quarterly (Q) data showing slight variations: Q1:7; Q2:3; Q3: 5; Q4: 5. This suggests that the rate of FTEs in Brighton and Hove has averaged at 5 FTEs per quarter. This compares favorably to the 2018-2019 FTE rate, which was 31 for the year April 2018- March 2019, with the quarterly numbers of 9,5,11 and 6 respectively (there is a slight discrepancy between YJB data and local data).

In the past 4 years from March to April, the FTE rate for Brighton & Hove has shown variations, with annual numbers being 30 (year ending 2017), 24 (year ending 2018) 30 (as described above) for 2019, which is followed by a drop to 20 for the year ending 2020.

There have been some changes in Policing, in the past 24 months, for example due to the response to knife crime and changes in legislation, which for example increase the gravity of offences. There has been an increase in the use of Youth Conditional Cautions for young people committing high gravity offences, which may partly account for the increase in FTEs. There is an analysis underway of the 2019 data to explore the reasons for the increase. However, the data overall shows that Court is generally being used only where proportionate and necessary in respect of gravity and harm to victims. For example, for Quarter 4 2019/20 data, all 5 FTEs were male, had a substantive outcome of Referral Order and the offences were of Violence Against the Person. Overall the FTEs for Brighton and Hove remain low and within the target set by the management board.

#### **5.2 Reduce reoffending:**

There are quite significant variations in the re-offending rates for Brighton & Hove between quarters, considered to be due to the low number in the cohort, which can lead to distortions in the data. Therefore, it is useful to look at annual data.

There is an overall reduction in the re-offending rate, according to the latest available YJB annual data. For April 2016- March 2017, the number of young people who offended was 117, of whom 68 re-offended, with a binary rate (% of re-offenders) of 58.1%. For the following year's cohort, April 2017- March 2018, the total number of young people who offended was 61 and of those, 27 re-offended, with a binary rate of 44.3 %. In terms of the frequency of offending (number of offences per offender), the annual data shows a slight decline, with the aggregate quarterly average decreasing from 4.47 (March 2017- April 2018 cohort) to 4.44 (April 2017 – March 2018 cohort). The quarterly data shows spikes and drops in the past year's recording, with the latest

recording on the cohort January 2018- March 2018 being 3.4 (compared to the previous year 4.18). Although slight, the reduction in frequency needs to be considered alongside the significant reduction in custodial sentences and remands in the past two years and the smaller cohort of young people in the youth justice system. This indicates that even slight decreases in the re-offending rate are more significant given the complex and high-risk cohort of young people being supervised in the community. This also needs to take into account the fact that a small number of young people who are prolific offenders can distort the data.

There have been historically high re-offending rates in the Brighton & Hove area compared to national data and neighboring areas, which is associated with the contextual issues, such as child exploitation, high levels of drug use, organised crime and gang activity including county lines and the associated increase in violence and weapons offences.

It is positive that the data shows gradual improvements in re-offending rates in the past two to three years. However, reducing re-offending, and particularly targeting the high risk (and often vulnerable) cohort of young people in the area remains a key priority for the service both in terms of strategy and practice. It is recognised that the most prolific offenders are often hard to reach young people with complex needs, and managing and preventing re-offending requires a robust and long term multi-agency response.

### **5.3 To reduce the numbers of young people sentenced to custody:**

There has been a strong strategic and operational focus on reducing the numbers of young people in custody. In the past four years, the numbers of custodial sentences have decreased from 12 in 2016, to six in 2017, to three in 2018, to one in 2019. No young people were sentenced to custody in Q1-3 2019/2020 and one young person was sentenced to custody in Q4.

The custody rate has therefore significantly reduced and remains below the national rate, the YOT family average and the southeast average. Brighton and Hove's custody rate is ranked 11th lowest out of 155 YOTs in England and Wales.

This objective has been achieved but continues to be a strategic priority for the Adolescent Service.

### **5.4 To embed and enable Trauma Informed Practice in the YOT:**

The YOT has continued to develop and embed trauma-informed practice (TIP). All YOT practitioners have been trained in TIP and case formulation, starting with an intensive two day whole service training in October 2018 delivered by Beacon House. At the same time, Families, Children & Learning rolled out bespoke training to social workers and professionals working with children and young people, with the trauma informed model being promoted in the wider services as key to effective practice.

Assessments, including those completed for Out of Court Disposals and Courts Orders via AssetPlus, include a case formulation as part of the analysis of offending behaviour and desistance. This has supported practitioners in understanding the behaviour of young people through a more clinical lens and in making appropriate referrals to CAMHS and the Clinical Health Adolescent Team (CHAT).

With CHAT as consultants and/ or for direct work with young people where appropriate, YOS have used the trauma informed and AMBIT models to work effectively with young people with complex emotional and mental health needs. Whilst there is not currently specific numerical data relating to referrals and outcomes, it is evident that the engagement of young people with complex needs has improved in the past two years, given the low breach rates in YOT. Also,

relationship-based practice and engagement of young people has been highlighted in audits as a strength and area of excellent practice in YOT.

### **5.5 To develop more child-friendly intervention plans across the service that incorporate the good lives model, balanced with risk and safety planning:**

In the past year, there has been significant work to develop child friendly plans. Firstly, the Referral Order process and paperwork have been fully reviewed, including child-friendly packs, with visual designs and child-friendly language, designed by practitioners to increase the engagement of children and young people in planning and in their Referral Order panels. Volunteers have received additional guidance and training to ensure the panel process is more child-friendly and restorative. This has led to an improvement in Referral Order contracts, including more focus on desistance activity and objectives for the young person that focus on what they can/ and want to achieve. The Good Lives model is used by practitioners to explore needs and goals with young people..

For Youth Rehabilitation Orders, a new plan format has been designed to be completed with the young person and parent, so that the young person can either write their objectives or have these written in their own words. Unfortunately completing plans face to face with young people and their parents/carers has been very challenging during COVID and lockdown and plans have had to be completed through virtual contact in many cases. Guidance and advice has been provided to staff to manage this with good practice examples being discussed in group supervision (e.g. peer support).

In terms of risk and safety planning, a YOT risk/safety plan was developed in 2019 as part of the Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meeting (AVRM) review. The YOT risk management plan (RMP) is now being used routinely for all young people being referred to the AVRM and also other cases (e.g. medium risk) where this is appropriate. The use of a separate RMP (which can include safety measures where appropriate) has enabled more a focussed and robust approach to risk management in the YOT and allows clear information sharing and multi-agency collaboration in managing risk. The RMP is shared and discussed with the young person and parent / carer as part of this process.

### **5.6 To deliver a more strength-based service which focuses on building resilience in young people and families**

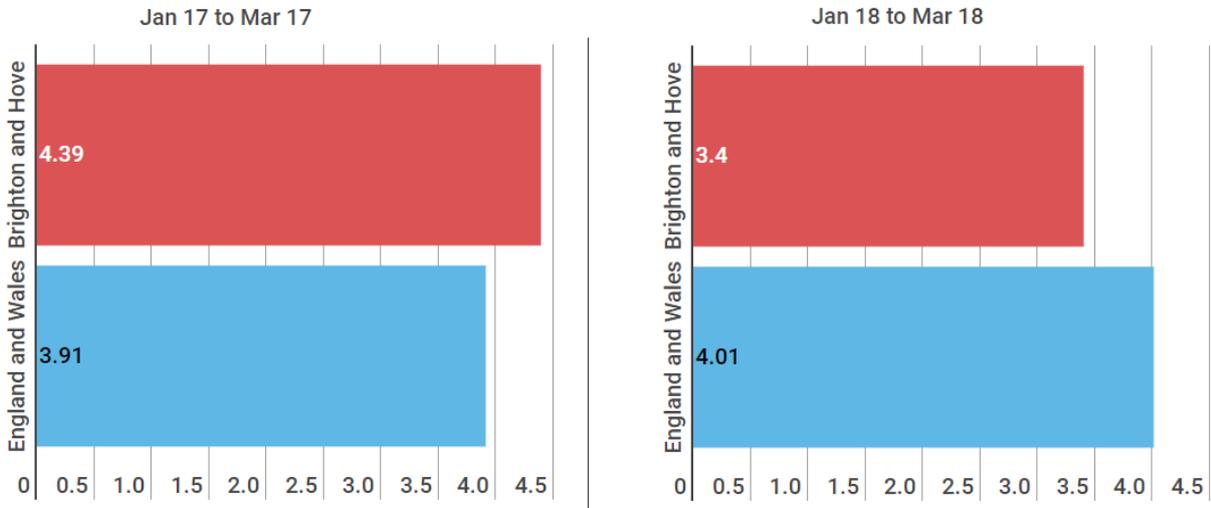
There has been a strong focus on developing a service to young people and families which emphasizes building on existing strengths and supporting desistance through positive activities, training and education. This is a key area assessed via YOT whole case audits (in line with HMIP standards) and the self-assessment for the Standards for Children & Young People in Youth Justice 2019. The results overall have been positive, with assessments, plans – and intervention in particular - showing a strong focus on encouraging young people to engage in education, training and employment, skills-based and sporting activities. For example, the use of AudioActive and projects such as Albion in the Community and WBC (boxing) projects. The YOT performed well in audits in terms of strength-based work, demonstrated in the recent Self-Assessment, which was rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' in the five areas of practice. One area of outstanding work was a pro-active approach to desistance work.

## 5.7 Performance Data

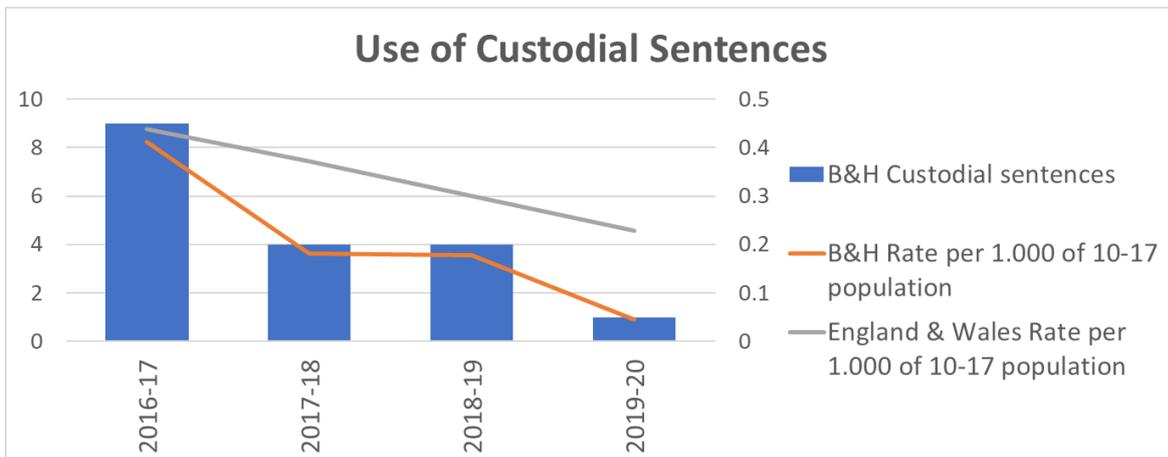
### First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System



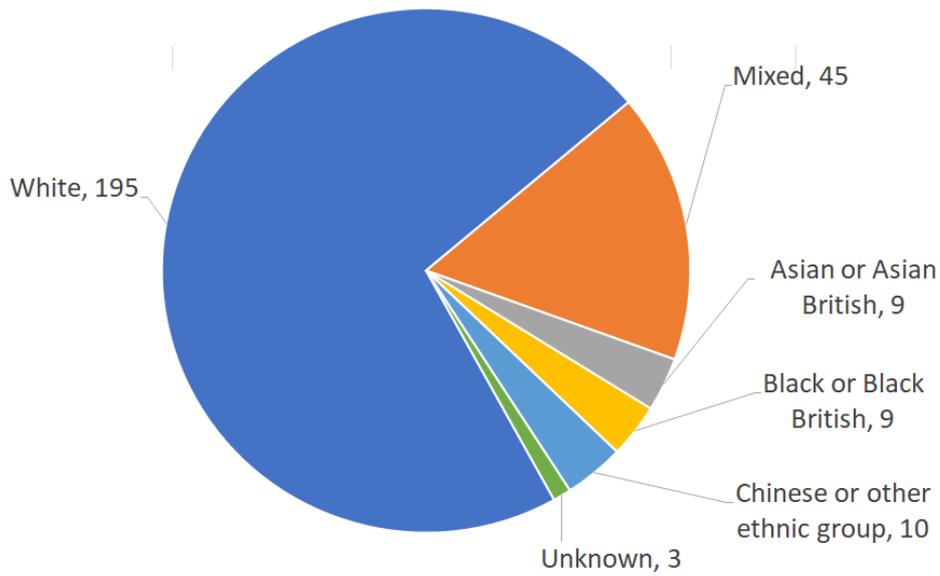
### Frequency Rate (the number of reoffences per reoffender)



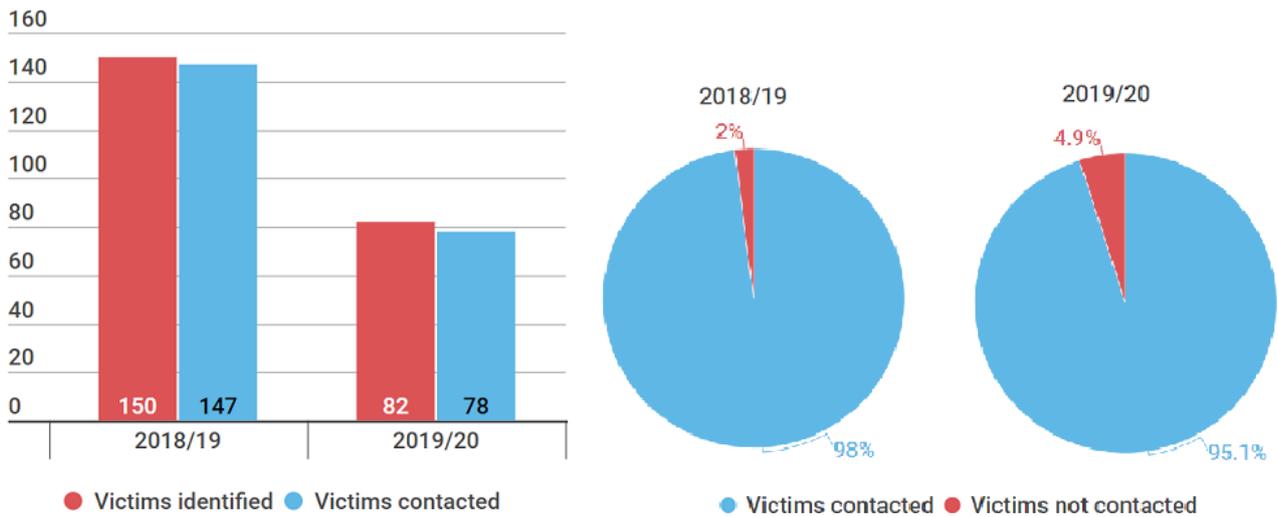
### Use of Custodial Sentences



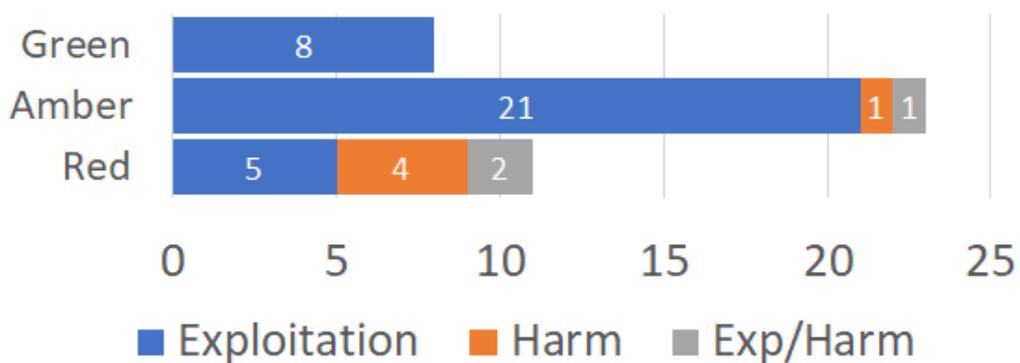
### Youth Offending Service 2019-20 Caseload by Ethnicity



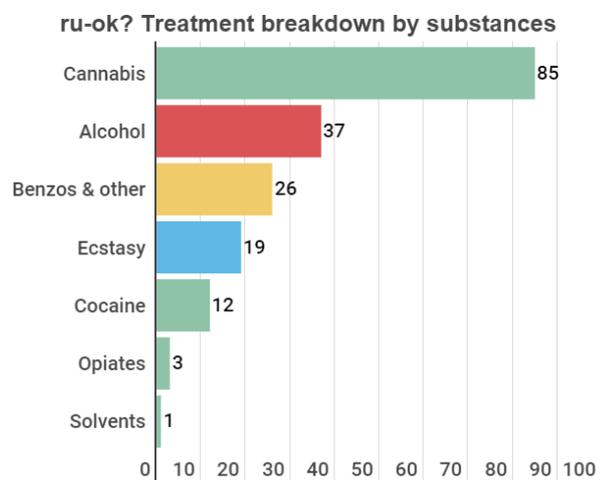
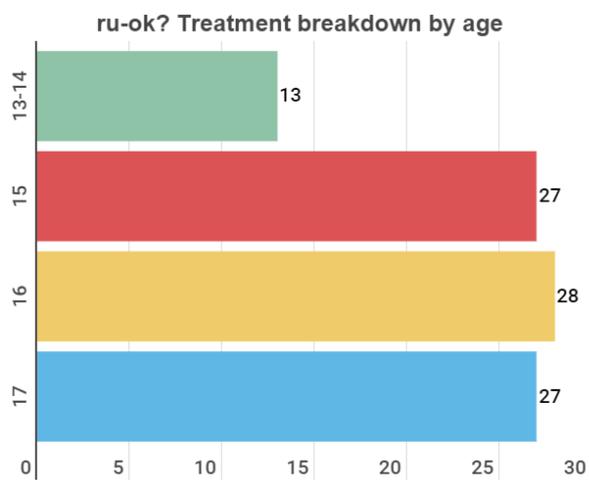
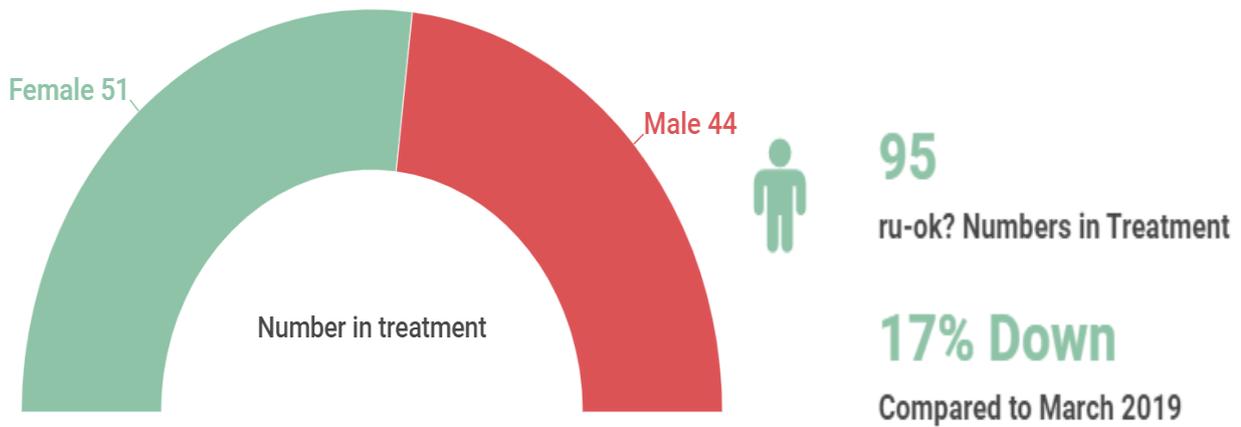
### Victims contacted with an offer to take part in a restorative process



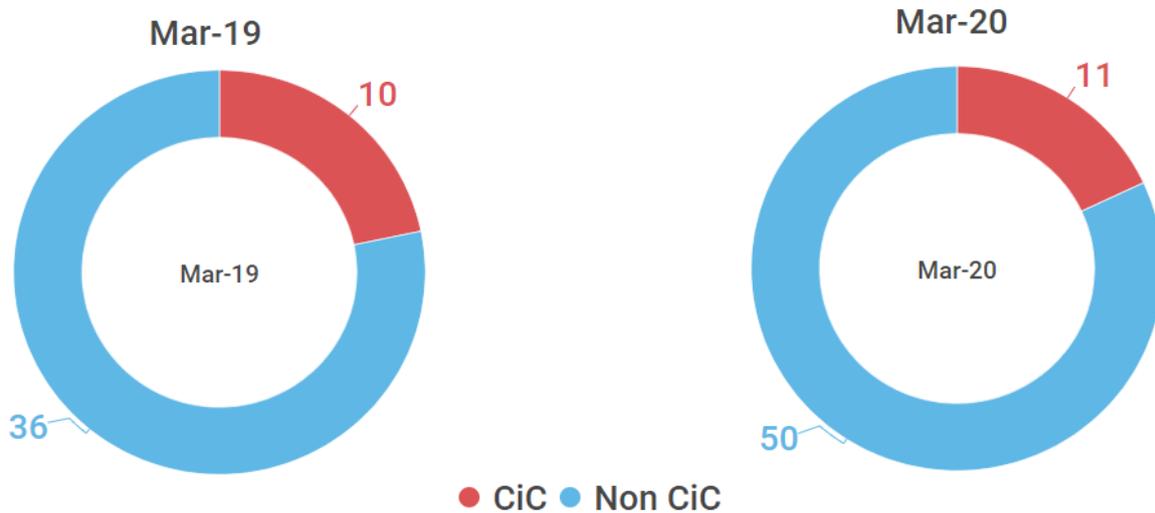
### AVRM Cases



ru-ok? treatment, breakdown by gender



**Number of young people on the Caseload who were Children in Care (CiC) on the last day of the quarter.**



## 6. National Standards Self-Assessment

6.1 Overall, the YOT performed well on the self-assessment of Standards for Children & Young People in Youth Justice. The overall ratings for Strategic / Operational audits respectively were as follows:

|                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Out of Court Disposals: | Good/ Outstanding                 |
| At Court:               | Good/ Good                        |
| In the Community:       | Outstanding/ Outstanding          |
| In Secure Settings:     | Good/ Outstanding                 |
| On Transition:          | Requires Improvement/ Outstanding |

The findings are summarised broadly below:

### 6.2 National Standards - Strengths:

Overall, YOT being integrated into the Adolescent Service with the structure, co-location and joined up working in the service highlighted as a strength, supporting effective work in all areas of youth justice from prevention and diversion through to community and custody work, as well as transitions between services. Specifically, the ability of YOT practitioners to build relationships and work closely with other professionals, including social workers, substance misuse workers and family therapists, from the assessment and planning stages to delivery and review. The audit highlighted good access to bespoke services for young people, supported by the structure and location of services, with in-house services, such as CAMHS and educational psychology and links to wider services for specialist support being key to a therapeutic approach.

This means that children and young people coming to the attention of Police are treated in a holistic way, with a focus on their diverse needs and abilities and there is correspondingly a strong emphasis on diversion and avoiding the unnecessary criminalisation of children. This is supported by a strong strategic adolescent partnership board with shared principles in relation to youth justice and child welfare, chaired by the Director of Children's Services.

Overall, operational practice was found to be strong, with outstanding practice in three of the five areas. Having a dedicated team of qualified and highly skilled case workers in YOT with specialist knowledge of criminal justice processes was highlighted as a strength. Recognised and approved models of practice are embedded and effectively utilised by YOT to improve outcomes, such as the relationship-based model, trauma-informed practice and desistance models. This shows intervention led by a deep understanding of young people, a therapeutic approach and focus on young people achieving their goals with practical and emotional support.

Multi-agency working was strong across YOT case management, with evidence of well co-ordinated approaches to risk and safeguarding. An example of this is the response to complex safeguarding and risk management regarding child exploitation, via the AVR. M.

The audit found a high level of management oversight and accountability, with robust quality assurance in place and regular reporting to the management board of performance outcomes.

In terms of OOC, strong partnership working was identified, with information sharing agreements which are clear and effective in identifying children and young people at an early stage when coming to notice of Police and services and preventing the majority of young people from unnecessary escalation into the criminal justice system. Early intervention offer through

universal, as well as targeted, services and clear protocols in place to divert young people from the criminal justice system by offering robust multi-agency packages of support and intervention.

In terms of court work, there is good partnership agreements in place and regular meetings with legal advisors and magistrates, with good relationships and feedback being openly discussed around court issues, reports and court processes. Regular liaison with courts, especially during COVID-19, when there have been daily court user briefings for the southeast region. Evidence of this includes positive feedback from the courts, 100 % congruency with YOT proposals since 2018 and low levels of custodial remand & sentence (significantly reduced in last three years for Brighton & Hove).

In community work, in addition to the overview above, excellent practice was highlighted in restorative practice and reparation, with a focus on developing skills and strengths, sense of achievement, and links to community (e.g. food bank projects, cooking projects, day centres, Headway clinic, Christmas cards for elderly, etc).

In Secure Settings, the overall standard of practice is high with pro-active and persistent approach by YOT workers to promote best interests of young people, including access to education and specialist support. Relationship-based model highlighted as effective in managing safety and risk, with resettlement planning with focus on desistance also being areas of strength.

### 6.3 National Standards - Areas for development

The key areas for development highlighted are as follows:

- Finalisation of pan-Sussex OOCB protocol and implementation of new process by police to ensure clear pathways for prevention & diversion;
- Improved partnership working and oversight via Police strategic lead attendance at management board;
- Development of bespoke services for young people at risk of or being affected by criminal exploitation and gang culture - in progress following termination of two year St.Giles Trust contract;
- Clear escalation process to be formalised between YOT & secure estate, particularly HMYOI Cookham Wood, where there have been ongoing difficulties with communication and information sharing;
- Transition process strong in practice, however YOT needs to work with National Probation Service (NPS) to ensure there is a Probation Officer in place to ensure smooth transitions to adult services;
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) with CAMHS to be agreed and written in relation to seconded staff and escalation processes;
- Deep-dive analysis of data better understand themes in youth justice, such as FTE numbers and disproportionality, e.g. with BAME focus;
- Reporting of audit outcomes and plan to the management board - to be formalised;
- Reporting to the board of more in depth case studies where appropriate to highlight issues e.g. custody case;.
- YOT manager to disseminate practice guidance aligned with Standards in all five areas to ensure clarity and consistency of practice.
- Development of user engagement and participation to inform development on operational and strategic levels (Regency Road User Group (RRUG) planning in progress);
- More consistent use of formal reviews with young people, parents/carers (e.g. YROs);
- Specific transition plans to be introduced in relevant cases.

## **7. Inspections**

7.1 The last inspection of the YOT was a Short Quality Screening (SQS) in November 2012. We are therefore expecting and preparing for an inspection in the near future. All inspections will now include judgements and ratings about YOT governance, leadership and partnership arrangements. The quality of service will be rated using a new set of standards. The standards framework covers three domains: organisational delivery, court disposals and out of court disposals. Following the COVID-19 restrictions, HMIP are currently in the process of exploring how inspections will be conducted virtually.

7.2 Brighton & Hove Children's Services had a focused visit from Ofsted in February 2020. A range of evidence was reviewed, including case discussions with social workers, managers and parents. Inspectors looked at case records and local authority performance management and quality assurance information. The inspectors found that "vulnerable and at risk adolescents benefit from thoughtful, creative and well planned work that is focused on securing their engagement and participation. This is supported by effective multi agency teamwork. Staff listen to children and make plans with them that are informed with careful consideration of risks, for example by supporting an older adolescent under a child in need plan, while ensuring that the nature and timeliness of visits and network meetings reflect the level of risk. The child accepts this approach and it has empowered them".

## **8. Serious incidents**

8.1 There are local arrangements in place to ensure safeguarding and public protection incidents are brought to the attention of the Adolescent Strategic Management Board. A decision will be made in relation whether a review is required and the type of review. There were no reviews required in 2019/20.

## **9. Structure**

9.1 Youth Offending (YO) work sits within the Adolescent Service within the Social Work branch in the Families, Children and Learning Directorate within the city council. The Head of Service is accountable to the Director of Families, Children and Learning through the Assistant Director of Social Work. The Adolescent Strategic Management Board reports to the Community Safety Partnership Board, chaired by the Chief Executive of Brighton & Hove City Council, in regard to youth offending.

## **10. Governance**

10.1 The governance arrangements for complex adolescents, which includes youth offending, is provided by the Adolescent Strategic Management Board. It oversees the local delivery of responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Chaired by the Director of Families, Children and Learning, the Board is responsible for the governance of the Service and monitors and challenges the functions and performance of the Adolescent Service and the wider partnership. The Board reports to the City Council's Children and Young People's committee/Health and Well Being Board annually on the strategic plan and quarterly to the Community Safety Partnership. The Adolescent Strategic Management Board will also report to and seek governance from the Sussex Criminal Justice Board as appropriate.

10.2 The Adolescent Board meets quarterly and is made up of partners from statutory and voluntary sector organisations. The board is made up of members who are senior representatives of their organisations and are able to make a significant contribution to the prevention and reduction of youth crime, with enough seniority and authority to be able to commit resources to address youth offending and wider youth crime agenda.

10.3 The Adolescent Board scrutinises performance and develops actions for improvement where necessary. Its purpose is also to provide clarity for partners about the scope of their role in governing the service and to maintain a good understanding of the range and quality of services delivered in Brighton & Hove. Staffing and resource issues are reviewed and the Board assists in setting the strategic direction of the service as a whole and the work around youth offending and issues relating to complex adolescents.

10.4 All key partners are represented on the Management Board and where appropriate the Board will extend its membership to other partners to ensure the progression of a specific development issue.

## 11. Resource and value for money

11.1 The Youth Offending element of the work funded through contributions from the statutory partner agencies in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. These are the Local Authority (including Education), the National Probation Service, the National Health Service and the Police Service. The Adolescent Service is mainly funded through the City Council, however there are elements funded by other partner agencies, such as Public Health. The total budget for the Adolescent Service is currently £2 303 400. The table below shows the percentage of funding contributions from each of the partner agencies for the year 2020/21

| Source        | %     |
|---------------|-------|
| BHCC          | 73.10 |
| YJB           | 8.17  |
| OPCC          | 2.86  |
| Sussex Police | 1.43  |
| Probation     | 0.16  |
| Public Health | 10.25 |
| DSG           | 1.35  |
| Other         | 2.69  |

11.2 It is impossible to compare Brighton & Hove with other authorities to compare value for money as all authorities include different elements in their YOT budget, therefore we are unable to complete like for like comparisons.

## 12. Staffing

12.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the YOT has a workforce which is made up of professionals from a variety of agencies whose skills and experience complement the needs of our services users. Staff are recruited into all the posts

based upon their experience and expertise and their skills are developed through supervision, appraisal and training.

12.2 Regular analysis of need and review of service provision have underpinned staff training and development to ensure that partnership resources are used effectively. This will continue to be a priority and through the use of performance development plans we ensure that staff have clear direction and are enabled to further develop the skills required to respond to new youth justice legislation and the changing landscape in regard to regulation and inspection.

12.3 To ensure the quality of practice by the workforce, and as part of the workforce development plan, all staff will be supervised in line with Families, Children and Learning social work supervision policy and Performance Development Plans will be undertaken on a yearly basis with a 6 month review cycle. There is also a robust quality assurance framework in place to ensure staff are working in an effective evidence based way.

### **13. Partnership arrangements**

13.1 There are well established and effective partnership arrangements in place within Brighton and Hove. The work of the Adolescent service relies on the support of these arrangements in order to deliver good outcomes for the complex adolescent cohort.

13.2 The Adolescent Service Model enables effective joint and partnership working across the teams. The Youth Offending Team is one of the teams within the service, though much of the work is spread across the wider service. This Service sits within the Families, Children and Learning Directorate, which promotes a good operational and strategic fit with the wider services for children, young people and their families. The YOT is also currently represented on the Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP) and will continue to be included in the future developments in relation to safeguarding arrangements.

13.3 Brighton and Hove is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people, their needs and their impact on the community and to others. AVRMs (Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meetings) are city wide multi agency decision making forums, designed to ensure that adolescent need is holistically and robustly assessed and monitored. The purpose of the meeting is to bring together agencies with the aim of facilitating joint work to identify, share information and mitigate risk to young people who are considered to be at risk of exploitation or harm to others. The Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meeting, while also offering consultation will review risk plans.

13.4 There are good links between the adolescent work and the community safety agenda. There is strategic representation on the Community Safety Partnership Board and the Sussex Criminal Justice Board. There is an Exploitation and Serious Violence Action Plan in place as part of the city's Community Safety & Crime Reduction Strategy . Youth Offending and the wider Adolescent Service are well linking into this planning with the Head of Service being one of the strategic leads. The Adolescent Service is also a key partner in the Pan Sussex work in place to embed contextual safeguarding principles across the partnerships in Sussex.

13.5 Sussex received funding to set up a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Sussex. There is a Pan Sussex Steering group, led by the Police and the PCC to oversee the development and establishment of this. A Brighton and Hove VRU has recently been set up to establish the local arrangements and direct the Brighton and Hove elements of this work. This has been jointly led by the Police, the Community Safety Team and the Adolescent Service. The activity intervention

within this arrangement has been commissioned out to Brighton Streets Project, a collaboration of Brighton voluntary sector groups delivering a targeted detached youth work based model.

13.6 The Adolescent Service is linked into the wider arrangements in Brighton & Hove to fulfil the duties involved in the Prevent agenda. The Adolescent Service is represented on both the Prevent Board and the Channel Panel. The staff team has received training on recognising the signs of radicalisation and procedures are included in the risk policy.

13.7 There continues to be strong partnerships with the Police and the Courts. There is representation on the Police Youth Oversight Board and the pan Sussex Youth Justice/Courts Agreement was reviewed in 2019.

13.8 The YOTs across Sussex continue to work closely together, working collaboratively on initiatives where appropriate. There has been work together with Sussex Police to reduce the numbers of children kept in police custody overnight. A Pan Sussex protocol has been implemented. A multi-agency scrutiny panel oversees, challenges and learn from cases in where children have been detained overnight. This has resulted in a significant reduction. There are also Pan Sussex protocols in place for the use of Appropriate Adults for children, ensuring their needs are met whilst in custody. The Sussex YOT are in the process of working with key partners to review the local protocols to reduce the criminalisation of children in care. The YOT managers also represent all of the YOT at strategic meetings and boards, for example the Head of Service in Brighton & Hove represents all of the Sussex YOT at the Sussex Criminal Justice Board and the YOT Manager in West Sussex sits on the MAPPA Strategic Board.

13.9 The Brighton & Hove Head of Service is also currently the co-chair of the national Youth Justice Sector Improvement Programme Board, working in partnership with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Association of YOT Managers (AYM) to develop and improve sector led improvement across England and Wales.

13.10 Restorative Justice (RJ) continues to be a key component of youth offending work. RJ has found that such an approach can have a positive effect on victim satisfaction and on re-offending rates. Brighton & Hove has always seen RJ work as a priority. The service works closely with partners across the city and with the PCC and Sussex Criminal Justice Board to ensure the work of the YOT compliments the wider RJ strategy across Sussex. The YOT is represented on the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership. The service achieved the Restorative Service Quality Marker (RSQM) in 2018 and is an accredited training provider.

13.11 There are also strong partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector. The Adolescent Service has a partnership programme with Audio Active and the Clock Tower Sanctuary funded by Youth Music to provide a music mentoring service. There is ongoing work in place to identify how we can best increase the skill set and confidence jointly between the Adolescent Service and the voluntary sector to support young people involved in gang activity or county lines. The Adolescent Service works closely with the YMCA Wise Project to support young people at risk of CSE. The Adolescent Service also works closely with and is represented on the Steering Group for the Reboot, early intervention and diversion project.

## **14.COVID-19**

14.1 The impact of the COVID-19 has been a challenging time for the Adolescent Service and for the further developments of the work with complex adolescents. The work for this strategy started before the pandemic, and the priorities for this strategy were set by the board, without the current context. As this is a three-year strategy, the initially identified priorities for the service will

remain, however alongside this we will deliver a recovery plan which will outline how the service will continue to deliver the required service in a new and more flexible way. In 2020/21 it will not be possible to deliver on the priorities to the same extent in which we first envisaged, however with the outlined plans and the oversight of the board we are confident that we will continue to be able to deliver an effective service with good outcomes for young people.

14.2 A COVID Contingency Plan was produced at the start of the restrictions. This has worked well and the YOT and Adolescent Service have been able to deliver a service throughout this period. We are now at the stage where we have moved into the recovery phase. This plans how we move into the new normal, identifying areas of work that have worked well and that we will keep, along with ways in which we can increase the level of face to face interventions and continue to plan the future arrangements. Moving forward the service delivery will need continue to be flexible, responsive and nimble in order to quickly switch from one set of working arrangements and restrictions to another. The recovery planning will be detailed alongside the planning to meet the agreed priorities and the improvements identified through the National Standards audit, in an overall workplan. This will be a live document that will be brought quarterly to the Adolescent Strategic Management Board.

## **15. Risks and challenges**

15.1 COVID-19 clearly brings the current most significant risk to service delivery. The Contingency and Recovery Plan will mitigate a lot of this risk by detailing how the services will continue to be delivered. The potential increase in demand for services and reduction in the resilience within families will be regularly monitored and address where possible. Where there are identified spikes and pressures on services, issues will be reported to the Adolescent Strategic Management Board for partnership support

15.2 One of the main risks to the service delivery as a result of COVID is the potential reduction of resources or cuts to the grant or budget. The resources available to the service was an identified risk prior to the additional pressure present by COVID. Despite there being very little change to the YJB grant in the previous two years, prior to this there have been significant reductions. This has resulted in a much leaner service, which means there is less resilience if further reductions are required.

15.3 The Adolescent Service, including the YOS cohort, continues to increase in complexity, vulnerability and risk. The Adolescent Service Model has helped to mitigate this risk through the key teams working closely together to manage this. The COVID restrictions have added pressure to this as it is more difficult to work as collaboratively with the majority of the workforce continuing to work mainly from home. Partnership work is also more difficult, as all partners have needed to focus on core business, and therefore there is a greater risk of silo working. Different ICT systems, resources and policies across the partnership also present challenges. This will be monitored and addressed at an operational and board level and will covered in the recovery plan.

15.4 There continues to be concerns around County Line activity in Brighton & Hove. Local children are safeguarded through the AVRMA (Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meeting Agenda). However, we see a number of young people for other areas arrested for related offending, often with adults. We work with other areas to ensure there is good exchange of information, and also have started some work with CPS and the Courts to ensure the information required around the children's needs and vulnerabilities is available. There has been joint training with the police and Adolescent Service on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process. All out of area county line related strategy meetings are now chaired through the Adolescent Service, to enable us to have a better understanding of local activity. We have seen an increase

in this since the COVID restrictions, though still relatively low numbers. This is being closely monitored.

15.5 The Adolescent Service will continue to monitor and address areas of disproportionality which can have an adverse impact on certain cohorts. Thematic reviews of BAME children and Children in Care have been taken to the Strategic Adolescent Management Board to ensure board members have a good understand of the challenges and are working together to readdress any concerns. Brighton & Hove City Council has signed up to be an anti-racist council. Work is being done within the Adolescent Service to ensure that the partnership is proactive in support this.

15.6 There will continue to be a need to closely monitor the work of the youth justice elements of the Adolescent Service and the Strategic Adolescent Board to ensure that this aspect of service delivery and cohort continue to receive appropriate attention and priority and that service delivery is not compromised through the new structure. This will be monitored by the Strategic Adolescent Board. There are robust quality assurance arrangements in place including regular case audits. A peer review was planned for June 2020 to provide some external scrutiny. This has been postponed due to the COVID restrictions.

## **16. Priorities 20/23**

16.1 The Adolescent Strategic Board Members held a special workshop in December 2019, to set the priorities for 2020/23. The following priorities were subsequently agreed. This was prior to the COVID restrictions being put in place. The plan will continue to work towards these priorities, however in 20/21 the main focus will be the recovery plan. The board will closely monitor the progress through the work plan (Appendix 1).

16.2 The agreed priorities for 2020/23 are:

- To continue to divert the right children away from the criminal Justice System
- To gain a better understanding of why children reoffend to respond appropriately
- To continue to maintain the low number of custodial sentencing and to avoid this wherever possible
- To embed contextual safeguarding approaches in the city and ensure there is a robust multi agency response to child exploitation
- To increase service user participation
- To ensure there is a shared understanding of children and young people's substance use across the city, and there are appropriate responses in place to address the harm caused in relation to this.

## 17. Sign off

This plan has been agreed at the Adolescent Strategic Management Board on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It is signed off by the chair on behalf of the board.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Austin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deb Austin

Chair of the Adolescent Strategic Management Board, Interim DCS

Date 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020

