

Brighton & Hove Youth Justice Plan 2026-2029

Introduction

Brighton & Hove is a city defined by energy, creativity and opportunity a place where young people can grow, contribute and shape their futures. Recognised as one of the UK's most vibrant and inclusive cities, it offers a rich cultural life, strong communities and an environment where diversity is championed and individuality thrives. For many children and young people, it is a place full of possibility.

However, not all young people experience these opportunities equally. Alongside affluence, the city faces deep-rooted inequalities that continue to shape the lives of some of our most vulnerable adolescents. Too many young people are growing up in the context of substance misuse, poor mental health, domestic abuse and exploitation. These factors increase the risk of harm, involvement in crime and contact with the youth justice system.

Youth justice in Brighton & Hove sits at the heart of this challenge and the opportunity. We know that contact with the criminal justice system is often a symptom of unmet need, trauma and vulnerability. Preventing offending, reducing reoffending and keeping children out of custody is not just a statutory responsibility; it is a shared ambition across the partnership to improve life chances and protect our young people from harm.

Our response is rooted in a strong and evolving partnership. The multi-disciplinary Adolescent Service, which includes the Youth Justice Service, brings together expertise across safeguarding, exploitation, substance use and edge of care to provide a coordinated response to those with the most complex needs. This integrated approach recognises that children involved in offending are often also victims and require a system that is collaborative, responsive and child-centred.

As a Young Futures Hub pilot area, Brighton & Hove is strengthening its commitment to early intervention and prevention, creating a more joined-up pathway from universal and targeted youth provision through to intensive support. This end-to-end model ensures that we intervene earlier, respond more effectively to risk, and sustain positive change for young people and their families.

This Youth Justice Plan sits within the wider Adolescent Strategy, owned by the Brighton & Hove Adolescent Strategic Partnership Board. Together, we are united in our ambition to:

- Prevent children from entering the criminal justice system
- Reduce reoffending through high-quality, trauma-informed practice
- Minimise the use of custody and support children to remain safely in their communities
- Address disproportionality and embed anti-racist practice across the system
- Ensure that the voices, experiences and strengths of children and young people shape everything we do

Fundamentally, this strategy is about more than reducing offending is about creating the conditions in which all young people can thrive. By working together, listening to young people and focusing relentlessly on what makes the greatest difference, we will continue to

build a youth justice system that is ambitious, inclusive and focused on hope, safety and opportunity.

Deb Austin, Corporate Director and Adam Muirhead, Director of Youth Work, Co Chairs of the Brighton & Hove Adolescent Partnership Board.

Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

The Adolescent Service, incorporating Youth Justice, is situated within the Children's Safeguarding and Care division of the Families, Children & Wellbeing Directorate, enabling strong operational and strategic alignment with the wider system supporting children, young people and their families. The service is underpinned by a clear relational principle: to demonstrate consistent care and commitment to young people, even where their behaviours are challenging, and to maintain persistent efforts to engage those who are often the most disengaged. This is supported through reflective group supervision, enabling practitioners to explore and adapt approaches where progress is limited. The model promotes a child-centred, integrated approach that reduces the number of professionals involved with each young person, minimising repetition of their experiences and fostering stronger, trusted relationships. A welcoming and youth-oriented environment further supports engagement, with young people encouraged to spend time in the service and build positive connections with staff.

The service works proactively with the wider community to address contextual risks, including exploitation, for example through partnership work with local businesses such as hotels to provide advice and training. Recent developments have expanded the service's remit to include youth provision across the city, including leadership of the Young Futures Hub, enabling a more cohesive continuum from prevention and early intervention through to intensive support for complex adolescents. This approach strengthens collaboration with the voluntary and community sector and aligns with wider reforms, including Family First, to create a more joined-up and responsive system.

Governance and strategic direction are provided through the Adolescent Partnership Board, which has evolved from the former Youth Offending Service Management Board to reflect a broader focus on complex adolescents. The Board meets quarterly, is co-chaired at senior level, and includes representation from all key statutory partners, the voluntary sector and education. It retains a strong focus on youth justice, setting priorities, overseeing performance and ensuring continued development, with the Youth Justice Plan embedded within a wider Complex Adolescents Strategy. Leadership is further strengthened through representation at key strategic partnerships, including criminal justice, community safety, violence reduction and safeguarding boards, ensuring that the needs of this vulnerable cohort are championed and consistently framed through a 'child first' lens.

Partnership working is a core strength, with well-established and effective relationships across Police, Probation, courts and community organisations, enabling a coordinated and robust response to risk, public protection and safeguarding. Collaborative work with targeted

youth provision and outreach services supports prevention, desistance and positive outcomes. As a result, the Youth Justice Service is well regarded both internally and externally, benefiting from its structural integration within social care and alignment with social work practice, and is well positioned to respond to the dual demands of welfare and justice for children and young people.

5.1 Update on the previous year:

Progress on priorities in previous plan:

The Youth Justice Team is fully integrated into the Adolescent Service. The Adolescent Strategic Partnership Board has set 3 main priorities for 2023-2026:

- To increase participation and the voice of the child;
- To continue the anti-racist journey and address disproportionality; and
- To continue to develop contextual safeguarding practice to better meet the needs of this cohort.

In addition, there were Youth Justice specific outcomes, reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs), reducing reoffending and reducing the use of custody.

- **To increase participation and the voice of the child**

In 2025, the Adolescent Service completed a survey of young people around their ideas, thoughts and experiences of transitioning to adult services. Some of the young people surveyed had been open to YJS. This information will be used to inform conversations about planning to make adult drug and alcohol services more responsive to this population.

In the YJS, we are collecting feedback from children and their parents/ carers about their experiences of the Youth Justice system and the intervention/ support they have received from the service. A simple online questionnaire is linked to a QR code, so that children and parents/ carers can immediately access this via their phones and complete a response via email or text anonymously. Unfortunately, we have not had many responses from children, despite encouragement from their YJ workers to provide feedback. Children tend to provide verbal feedback during sessions but we wanted to provide an anonymous route for them too.

We seek children's views throughout and at the end of their disposals. In almost all cases, children express that the relationship with their Youth Justice worker is the most important aspect of their experience, and especially that they can trust their Youth Justice worker. To date, feedback from children about their YJ workers has continued to be very positive and they have shared that they feel listened to, supported and respected.

We continue to encourage children to participate by being part of interview panels for practitioners and managers. Children are provided with advice and guidance, are asked to write their own questions for candidates and encouraged to take a full part in the interview process. They contribute to scoring and discussions about candidates at the end of interviews.

Below are some quotes from young people and parents received in the last year, with all except one being collected from the anonymous online survey:

Child:

"its been helpful having someone to talk to outside of the home, especially with everything that has happened with my mum's health.... sessions have helped me to think about my responses a bit more. It was helpful to talk to someone about my moods and self- harming, even though it was uncomfortable".

Parent:

"[worker] consistently showed excellent insight, rapport and understanding. She built a genuine connection with our son, who takes a long time to trust new people and her calm, respectful manner made a real difference to him and us as a family. She has a rare ability to see the whole picture and to relate authentically to neurodivergent young people and their parents"

Parent feedback o YJ worker via email:

"[worker's name], you are one of a kind, you went above and beyond for my girl you listened to her and made her feel like her side of the ongoing issue was valued. For [daughter], this was key as the school was not listen to her when she was reporting what was going on and this is why she ended up lashing out and hitting the other pupil. Your time spent with [daughter] was very helpful. [MH practitioner] spent little time with [daughter] but also got her engaged and has helped massively. You are both a credit to your teams. I wish you both all the best."

Parent:

"My child has been lucky to have such an amazing YJ worker [name]. Its impossible to do justice to how life changing this has been for my son's outcomes. At a time when he struggled to see a future for himself, she gave him consistency, safety, enabled him to build trust in an understanding adult over a prolonged period...she has always gone above and beyond in being there for him and also help guide me as his mum supporting him."

Parents:

[To YJ worker from parent via text] "In the 4-5 years this has been going on, I can honestly say, you're the only one I have fully trusted and you've gone above and beyond"

From survey regarding YJS:

"very good, clear and consistent communication and support"

"staff members are helpful and explain anything you might not understand"

- **To continue the anti-racist journey and address disproportionality.**

The Youth Justice Service is part of the Children's Safeguarding and Care Anti Racist Action Plan. The plan has been produced by the project board, including senior managers and practitioners and has three main workstreams, staff support, how we are working with children and families and the voices of families, children and carers. We have seen significant improvements in practice in the last year, including staff feeling more confident talking about race and the impact of discrimination, as well as significantly more examples of good practice seen in audits.

Following, joint training between the Police and the Adolescent Service to support the difficult conversations required to challenge and address examples of racism, we have continued to have open conversations with Police colleagues about the use of language, adultification and children's experiences of the CJS. We continue to share concerns about racism and disproportionality at strategic and operational levels. For example, we scrutinise the performance data, which is shared and discussed at the Adolescent Strategic Partnership Board. Where we see disproportionality within the Youth Justice cohort, we look at ways to examine and address this.

As part of the BHCC Anti-racist pledge, the Adolescent Service are committed to learning and development of best practice in anti-racism to improve outcomes for children and families and to creating a diverse workforce that feel safe and supported. Anti-racist practice is a regular agenda item for reflection and learning. The learning continues through the monthly Anti-Racist Forum, which involves learning across wider Children's Services, sharing best practice and discussions of topical issues affecting staff and local communities. More detail on disproportionality and measures to address this are included in the Performance section below.

- **To continue to develop contextual safeguarding practice to better meet the needs of this cohort.**

The Safeguarding Children Partnership (bhscp.org.uk) continues to have Safeguarding Children from Violence and Exploitation as one of its strategic priorities. Our model of Relationship Based Practice, shared across the partnership, aligns with our focus on Contextual Safeguarding. We have systems in place, such as Contextual Safeguarding Strategy Meetings to help provide structure to the work alongside AVRMs and our specialist Adolescent Services. BHSCP has completed recent thematic audits on exploitation and children who go missing which has helped drive best practice in these areas and acknowledged the good systems and joint working already in place. This has seen further developments of our work with the NRM Pilot and work with the Police to disrupt and support investigations into perpetrators of exploitation in the city. This activity is overseen by the Exploitation Sub Group that sits under the BHSCP safeguarding arrangements.

The multi-agency thematic audit conducted by the Brighton & Hove Children's Safeguarding Board (BHSCP) identified some key strengths around partnership practices, effective systems and processes to safeguard children and the use of contextual safeguarding. It was acknowledged that even though the multi-agency arrangements and practice was strong, there remained inconsistency in the improvement of the lived experience for some of these

children. The findings of this were shared through a learning event. We will use these findings to inform and continue to develop the work in this area.

There is ongoing partnership work with Police in relation to ASB, vulnerability/ exploitation and children at risk of perpetrating serious violence and/ or carrying weapons in the city. For example via the Focussed Deterrence programme funded via the VRP. This uses the habitual knife crime index to identify children at risk of carrying knives and causing harm and ensuring they have appropriate intervention in place. There is a dedicated youth engagement worker who uses assertive outreach and positive activities to engage this cohort. All children are discussed in a multi-agency meeting, involving the Youth Justice Service, Police and key partners, such as Trust for Developing Communities (TDC), Access to Education, Community Safety and the Police Exploitation team.

Brighton & Hove city council is part of a joint National Referral Mechanism (NRM) decision making panel with East Sussex County Council. The panel has been established for over two years now and we are seeing more timely decisions being made in respect for the vulnerable cohort of children. Another positive outcome is that this has enabled the voice of the child to be heard as part of the process.

- **To reduce First Time Entrants**

In the last year we have continued to strengthen partnership work with police and both statutory and voluntary partners to divert children away from the youth justice system. There has been a significant focus on prevention to improve the offer to children and their families and prevent the harmful impact of criminalisation. The results are starting to show in the performance data, with significant reduction in the number of FTEs in B&H.

The Adolescent Service is designed to enable appropriate support and intervention for vulnerable children and those coming to notice, and their families, with a range of services delivered by skilled and experienced professionals. The Youth Justice Service has established diversion pathways that respond to the needs of the child and family. Police referrals are triaged, with diversion pathways including specialist drugs diversion via ru-ok? substance misuse service, Turnaround and Reboot mentoring (further details below).

Children open to Youth Justice have direct access to services such as Family Functional Therapy, support from Psychologist & MH practitioners and Engagement & Support service (bespoke mentoring). We have continued to develop and strengthen the OOCR offer in partnership with Police (see section on diversion below).

There are regular pan -Sussex meetings with the local YJ areas and Sussex Police to ensure alignment of the Child Outcome Pathway across Sussex and share and develop best practice. We also conduct regular reviews of OOCR decision-making through the pan - Sussex Multi-Agency Scrutiny Panel, which brings local partners together to moderate decision-making across the county.

The Early Intervention monthly meeting brings together local partners involved in crime prevention, including Youth Policing team and NPT, Community Safety and Exploitation team, Trust for Developing Communities and Youth hubs, BCRP (Brighton Crime Reduction Partnership) and YJS to identify children involved in ASB and offending and ensure there is an appropriate response.

- **To reduce re-offending**

Our core aim is to reduce re-offending, to protect victims and communities from harm and to improve outcomes for children within Youth Justice. As noted above, the integration of Youth Justice into Children's Services and as part of the Adolescent Service provides a sound basis for a ChildFirst approach, enabling joined up multi-agency intervention suited to meeting children's complex and diverse needs. The co-location of services facilitates close collaboration between professionals and children's networks. There is similarly close connection between service managers, joint planning and development of the service.

The Trauma Informed model is embedded into practice across the service, with specialist CAMHS practitioners attending reflective group supervision to support staff. In house MH practitioners also provide individual consultation, clinical supervision and advice. Youth Justice practitioners use the five Ps case formulation for assessing young people and have a good understanding of the children they work with. We have a strong partnership with the local F-CAMHS team, who provide forensic assessment, clinical consultation for staff and networks and direct intervention when violence and risk to others is a particular concern.

There is multi-agency oversight of young people who present a significant risk of re-offending and harm to others via the Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meeting. There is a strong partnership with local Police, with an experienced Police Officer embedded in the YJS and good relationships with the local Youth Policing team, which facilitates excellent information sharing and joint working.

In the last year, we have continued to develop the offer to victims and increase victim safety, in line with HMIP guidance and standards. Restorative practice is central to our practice and we strive to ensure victim's perspectives are included in planning and decision-making.

We continue to develop Transitions work in close liaison with the probation service. The current arrangement of a seconded Probation Officer in a split role, partly in YJS and partly in VERU (18-25 adult team) has significantly improved transitions for young people turning 18, providing continuity of relationships and access to adult services.

We have a full time Education Advisor, who works directly with schools and the B&H Inclusion Support Service (BHIS) with the aim that all children open to Youth Justice are offered suitable education provision where their needs are met.

- **To reduce the use of custody**

We have continued to work in partnership with local courts to embed a ChildFirst approach whereby custody is only used as a last resort. There is a high congruency rate with PSR proposals and disposals, which demonstrates the credibility the YJS holds with magistrates and judges.

Custody cases are discussed with the Strategic Management Board and deep dives of the data completed when issues are highlighted. Where children reach the custody threshold, there is consultation with the HoS regarding PSR proposals, to consider public protection concerns, risk management and the YJS offer to children at this level. Children and young people are offered robust community disposals in all cases unless the risk to the public is considered to be unacceptably high (i.e. could not be safety managed in the community) and/ or all other options have been tried.

Children identified as at risk of custody are offered an enhanced multi-agency package via the provisions of Youth Rehabilitation Orders, which can include a range of specialist adolescent services, such as Engagement and Support (mentoring), specialist Adolescent Social worker, Ru-ok? (substance misuse); FFT (Functional Family Therapy); support with emotional & mental health via seconded CAMHS practitioner and 1:1 support with education, training or employment. Programmes are bespoke, tailored to individual needs and wishes, with a balance of statutory appointments and activities to enhance engagement. This includes ISS programmes as part of a YRO or Bail Support programme.

Youth Justice practitioners are experienced, qualified and highly skilled, providing a daily service to the local courts to reduce the use of custodial remand.

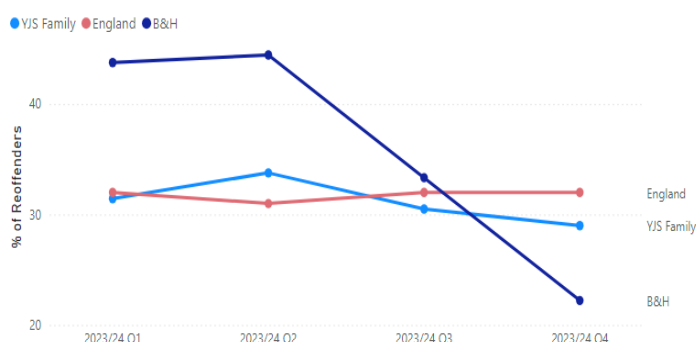
In respect of children being held overnight in custody, there is a protocol in place to prevent this wherever possible, which is monitored and upheld by Police.

Performance over the previous year:

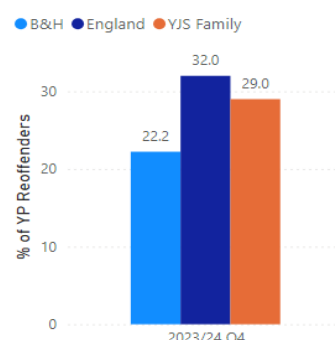
1. Re-offending rate

a) YJB quarterly comparative data:

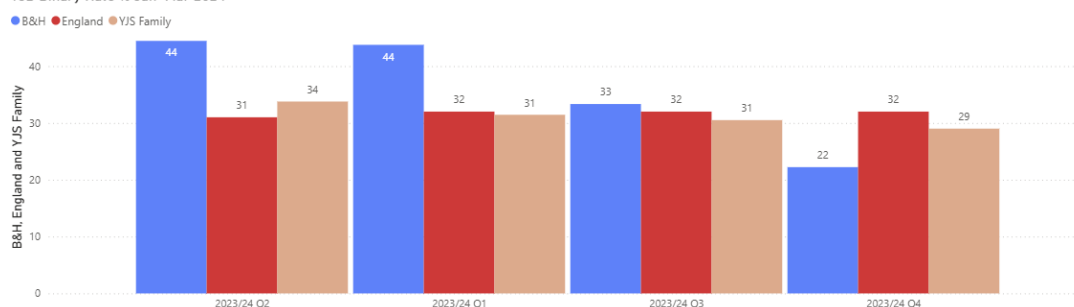
YJB Data B&H / England & Wales / YJS Family Average % of cohort who reoffen...



YJB Binary Rate % Jan-M...

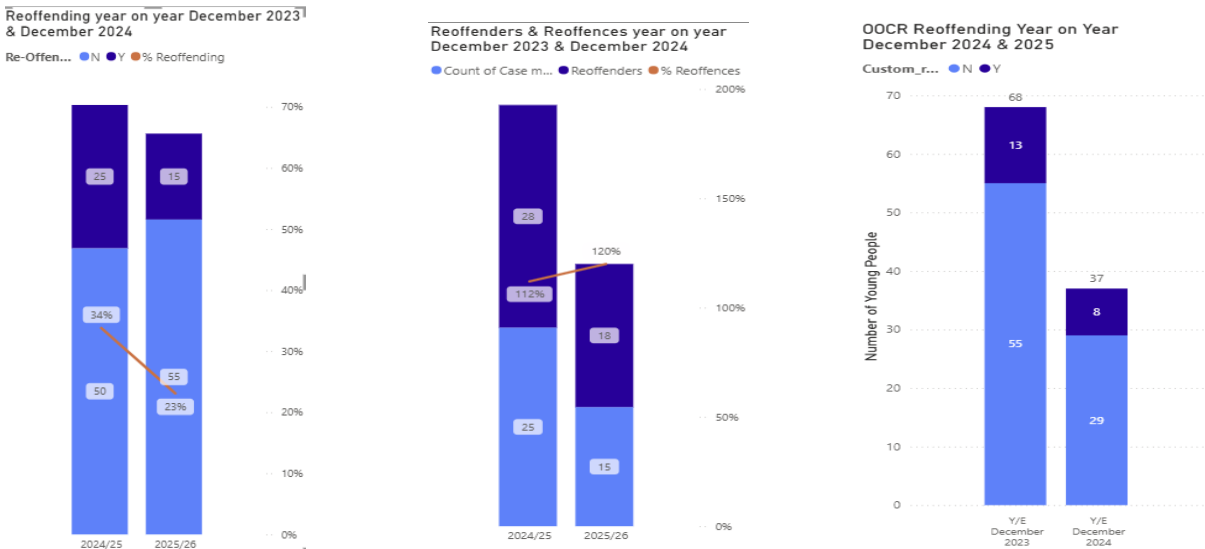


YJB Binary Rate % Jan-Mar 2024



The YJB data shows B&H re-offending rates have dropped below the national and family groups in Q4. The small cohort in B&H tends to produce vary variable re-offending rates, as a small group of re-offenders can have a disproportionate impact. However, the average rate for the whole year suggests a more sustained change, below:

b) Annual re-offending rates for B&H 2025-2026 (local data)

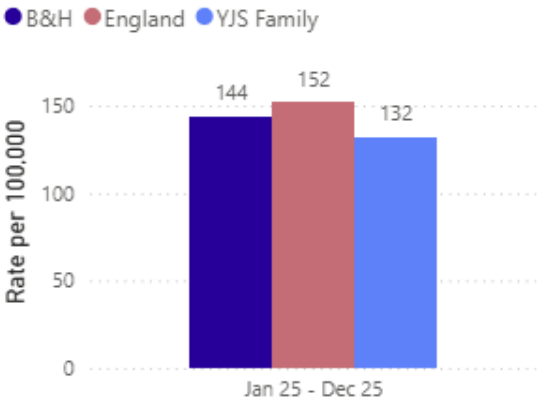


The re-offending (binary rate) for B&H (substantive outcomes) has significantly reduced compared to the previous year, from 34% to 23%, albeit the frequency rate has slightly increased from 112% (1.12 offences) to 120% (1.2 offences). The third chart above shows re-offending rates for Out of Court Resolutions (including cautions), which has slightly increased from 19% in 2025 to 21% in 2026.

2. First Time Entrants

a) FTE rates: YJB comparative data

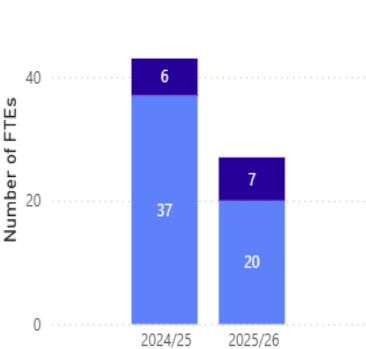
FTEs B&H / England & Wales / YJS Family
Average (rate per 100,000) for 12 Month
period ending 31st December 2025



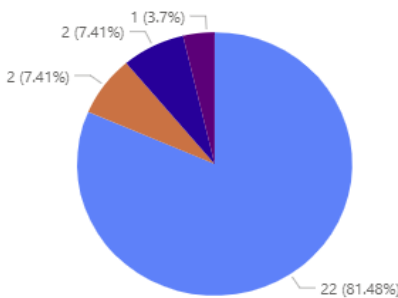
b) FTEs: Local data (annual) showing **gender and ethnicity**

FTEs y/e 2024/25 & 2025/26

● Male ● Female



FTEs Ethnicity y/e 2025/26



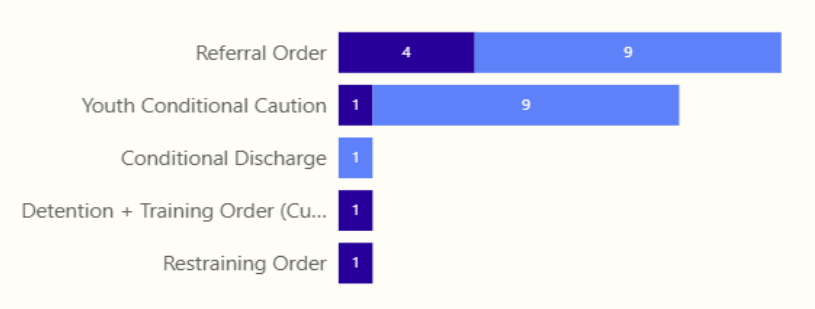
Ethnicity

- White
- Asian or Asian British
- Mixed/Dual background
- Black or Black British

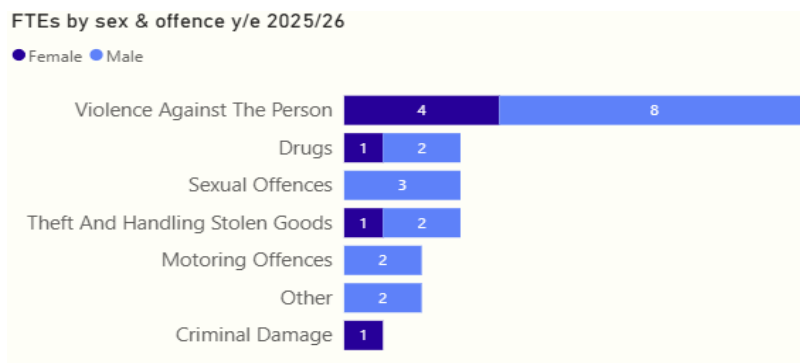
b) Local FTE data: **Outcomes** with gender

FTEs by sex & outcome y/e 2025/26

● Female ● Male



c) FTEs offence type



There has been a significant reduction in FTEs in B&H over the past 3 years (over 50%), from 58 in the year ending 2024, to 41 in the year ending 2025, a reduction of 17. This has since dropped further, to **27 in 2025-2026**. Comparative data from December 2025, shows B&H is now below national numbers for FTEs but slightly above YJS family, however, the B&H rate has reduced further in Q4.

In terms of outcomes, 10 of the FTEs were **YCCs** and 14 were **Referral Orders**. Comparing the data to 2024-2025, the number of Referral Orders has reduced from **22 to 14** and the number of YCCs has reduced from **18 to 10**. FTEs also included a Restraining Order (this child not otherwise cautioned or convicted), a DTO (GBH S 18) and a conditional discharge.

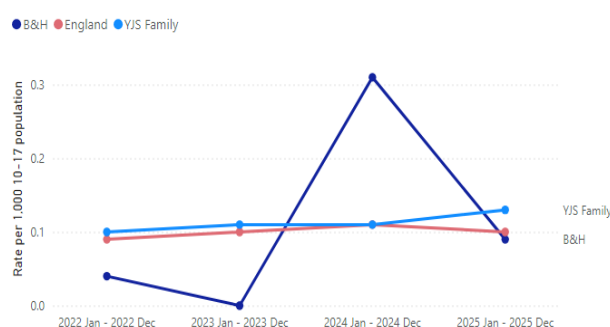
From chart (b), we can see that 22 (78%) of these children were white British and that Black and mixed heritage children are not over-represented in FTEs (mixed race children make up 10.4% of the school age population and Black children make up 2.1% of school age population from 2025 school census). Three of the children were dual heritage (10.71%), two were Asian British, with one being Black.

Chart (d) shows that Violence against the Person (including knife crime) remains the largest percentage in terms of offence types. Of these offences, five were knife related, including one for GBH with intent, one Threaten with a knife and three being simple possession. This is a significant reduction compared with 2024-2025, where there were 13 knife related crimes out of 21 violent offences.

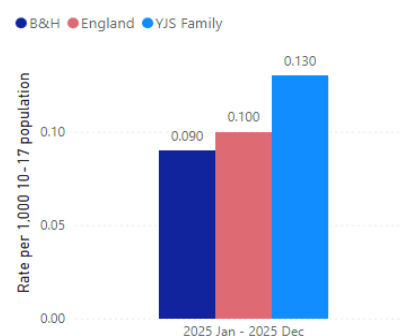
3. Custody

a) Custody rates per 1,000 of child population comparison:

YJB Data Custody Rates B&H, England & Wales and YJS Family Averag...

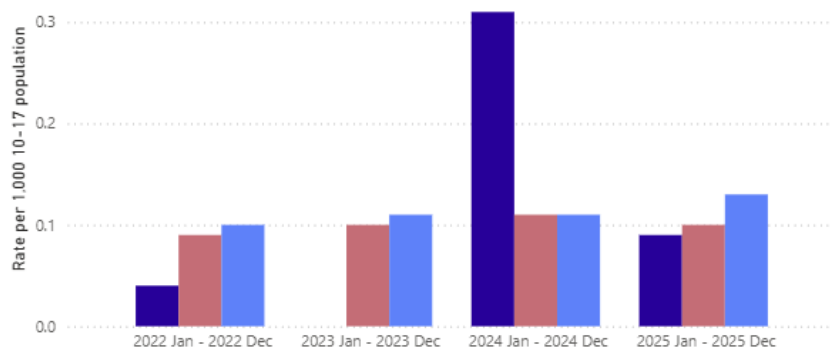


Custodial Sentences B&H/England...



YJB Data Custody Rates B&H, England & Wales and YJS Family Average (rate per 1,000 of 10-17 population) by rolling Year

● B&H ● England ● YJS Family



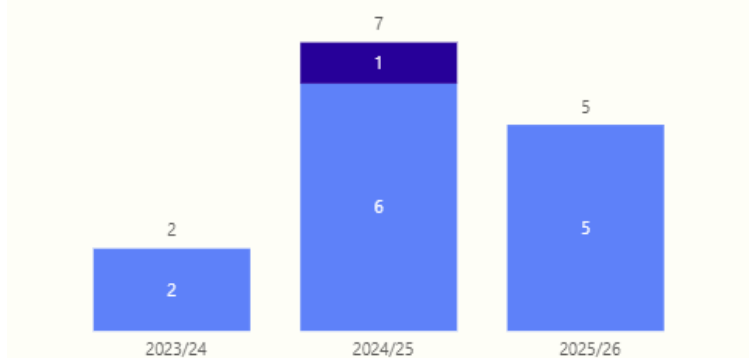
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As shown above, the B&H rate shows significant variations, which can be explained again by the small cohort. We have seen very low custody rates in 2022 and 2023, followed by a spike in 2024 and then a sharp reduction in the rate in 2025-2026. The custody rate is currently lower than national and YJS family averages, showing a decrease since 2024/25. This can also be seen in the local numerical data below:

b) Local data: B&H custodial sentences over 4 years (there were *no custody cases in 2022/23*)

Custody y/e 2023/24, 2024/25 & 2025/26

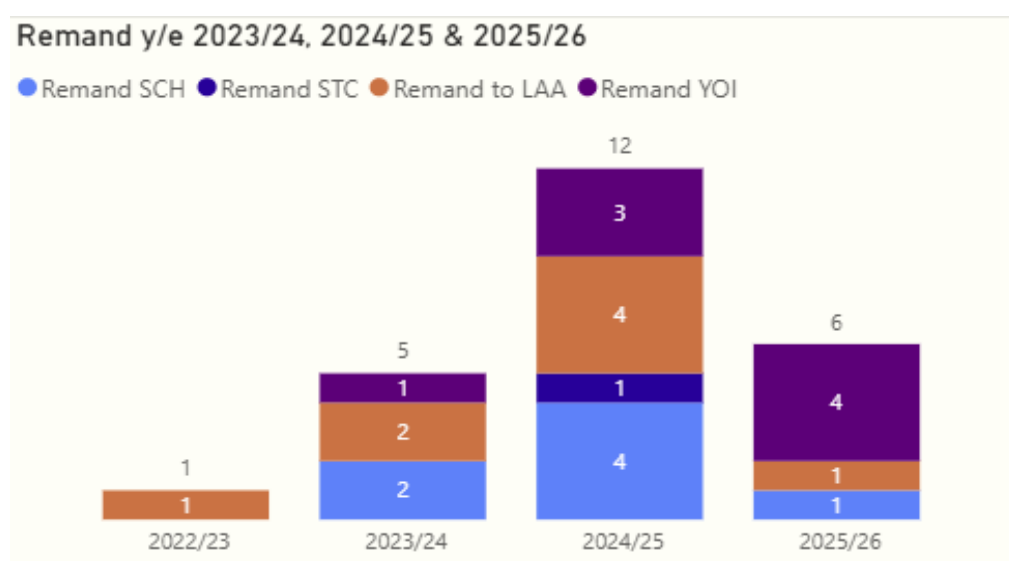
● DTO/Custody Programme ● Section 254 Custody (previously Section 226b)



In the year ending March 2026, four children were sentenced to custody and one child was recalled due to breach of licence conditions. This compares to 9 custodial sentences (including one recall) relating to 7 children in 2025. Of the five children, one was a white female, one a black (African) male, one mixed race male and two white males. This shows significant disparity in the custody cohort, albeit the numbers of black and mixed- race children are very low (2). The children received custodial sentences for serious violent crime, such as GBH S18, ABH and repeated knife crime and in all cases, the risk to the public was considered high or very high.

The average use of custodial sentences in B&H remains low, well within our local target of less than 7 (children) per year being sentenced to custody.

b) B&H Remand data



Compared to 2025, there has been a reduction in the use of secure remands in the past year, with 5 Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA) and one RLAA. The RLAA and secure remands relate to the same children that are in the custody cohort above, with one exception. They include one white female, one black male, 2 mixed-race males and one white male. In this cohort, the disparity is also stark, albeit relating to a small number of children being securely remanded.

All of the children remanded were assessed as posing high levels of serious harm to the community due to offences of GBH S 18, knife crime and violent crime (e.g. Robbery), in two cases, this was alongside repeated breaches of court bail conditions (the female was initially RLAA but repeatedly breached conditions). Four of these children were subject to a gang injunction and part of a particularly high- risk group of boys known to the YJS. There were also significant vulnerability and exploitation concerns around this group.

Of the 5 secure remands, all five resulted in custodial sentences.

Risks and issues

The main risks to the delivery of Youth Justice services relates to funding. Any reduction in the level of funding to the service would result in a reduction in the level of service provision

for this cohort. Reductions to funding to key voluntary sector partners is also likely to have an impact on this cohort as they provide additional support and provide desistance related activities. Families are also struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, causing more pressure on families. This management board is cognisant of these pressures and this is regularly discussed at Board in order to work together to find solutions, rather than retreating into silos.

The sufficiency concerns regarding residential placements for those that require it can also be a potential risk to Youth Justice service. This is particularly relevant where secure placements are required from police custody or where a robust care package is required to avoid a custodial sentence for children. The integrated model helps support this challenge, as the Youth Justice services works in partnership with social care to find creative solutions where possible.

There are times when a lack of understanding between the different partners can create some tension in the system, for example frontline Police being so concerned about particular children that they cannot understand why social care do not seek welfare secure placements for them. It may in fact be that this would not be the best long-term plan for the child, or they may not meet the criteria. The relationships at a senior level are robust enough to have challenging conversations about these cases and agree on a plan on how to resolve such issues.

Plan for the forthcoming year

Child First

The Brighton & Hove Adolescent Partnership Board are fully committed to the Child First principle. The multi-disciplinary model of the Adolescent Service, in which the Youth Justice Service is fully integrated supports this principle. Under this model, children's needs are considered in a holistic way, with Youth Justice being one of the teams in the service and not treated as a separate service. This means that each child's particular needs, strengths, skills and potential are recognised and their best interests are prioritised. The model fully supports the treatment of children coming to the attention of Police as children first and offenders second, with their behaviour viewed through a trauma informed lens, as a symptom of unmet need. Some elements of the Youth Justice work sit within the wider Adolescent Service, for example, including family work, substance misuse, mentoring, mental health and wellbeing.

Partner agencies have committed to the child first approach and work hard to keep children out of the criminal justice system. We try to involve children and young people and work with them to develop and improving the service. We regularly hear the child's voice through their workers or through them attending the board.

The partnership is keen to work collaboratively with children and are seeking a young person to co-chair the board meeting. There are arrangements in place locally in which the Corporate Parenting Board is chaired by young people. This is working well, and we plan to learn from this model. The key partner agencies have also demonstrated a commitment to this, for example Sussex Police has Youth Ambassadors, supporting and promoting child centred policing. There have been specific pieces of work commissioned to ensure we gain the views and experiences of children and young people from global majority communities.

The Youth Justice team are trained in and practice the ChildFirst approach. For example, trauma informed practice is embedded in Youth Justice work. Assessments include a case

formulation and young people and their families are discussed through the trauma -informed lens in group and 1:1 supervision. This facilitates exploration of the underlying issues and structural barriers affecting children, with a strong focus on supporting the practitioner and network to manage children's complex needs. Mental health specialists (seconded from CAMHS) provide oversight and clinical supervision, consultation and advice to the Youth Justice Team to support best practice. We also work closely with the Forensic CAMHS team, who offer case consultation, support and direct involvement where required. F-CAMHS offer oversight of SAVRY assessments and consultation where violence/ risk to others is a particular concern.

Resources and services

The Youth Justice Service is integrated into the Adolescent Service. This provides value for money as it ensures that the children and young people get the right support from the right professionals. The YJS budget is a pooled budget; the Youth Justice Board grant provides approximately 10% of the total budget. This grant is sent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant and is used to achieve the outcomes and priorities as detailed within this plan.

In addition to this we have received funding for specific areas of work. This has included Turnaround funding from the MoJ and PCC funding for Immediate Justice and Reboot mentoring. Whilst these funding pots are used to deliver discrete areas of work, this contributes to the delivery within this plan.

The majority of the funding goes on staffing which is our biggest resource. Any reduction in funding would result in a reduction in post, and therefore a reduction in service offer. In addition to this funding there are some contributions in kind, such as the seconded Probation Officer and the seconded Police Officer. We have attempted in the past to compare the resource allocation with local or similar demographic Youth Justice Service. This however has proved impossible, as every area has a very different set up and model.

Board development:

The Strategic Adolescent Management Board incorporates the functions of the Youth Justice Management Board. The board is well attended, and Board members play an active role in setting direction and vision for the Youth Justice Service. The Board meets quarterly, and in addition to this there is a yearly extended meeting to review progress and set priorities for the upcoming year. All Board members receive an induction, so they are clear on their roles and responsibilities. Membership is reviewed regularly.

We have recently held a board development workshop to review the priorities and develop this plan. We also reviewed the arrangements and functioning of the board. It was agreed that going forwards the name of the board will change to the Adolescent Partnership Board. The meetings will have themed sessions each quarter, along with a case study which reflect the issues in the themes.

The Board also now provides the governance arrangements for the Young Futures Development. Going forward we will hold further planning opportunities to ensure the Board Members are clear on the expectations that this brings. We will also review regularly to ensure the delivery is joined up, while the focus on youth justice is not lost.

Workforce Development

Brighton & Hove is committed to the continuous development of staff through training, supervision, mentoring and coaching, to support staff progression and retention and continue to offer a high-quality service to children & families.

Youth Justice staff have mandatory BHCC training as part of their initial induction to the service and continuous development is tailored to individual needs via the Personal Development Plan. There are further opportunities for staff to learn through consultation, shadowing and co-working with partnership staff in the Adolescent Service. Learning is disseminated at team meetings, whole service events, from thematic audits and feedback from children, parents/ carers and victims and stakeholders.

A wide range of training courses are accessible to Youth Justice staff, volunteers and partnership staff via the Brighton & Hove City Council Learning Zone. This includes courses specific to working with children & families & social work CPD modules. The Brighton & Hove Children's Services Training Plan includes Youth Justice practitioners.

Staff Induction

New staff have an induction for the first 4 weeks, including mandatory training, shadowing, peer mentoring, meeting partners and learning about the service. Senior workers take on the role of mentoring new staff, alongside their line manager, to provide additional support and practical guidance about the role. The induction will involve attending Adolescent Service team meetings, such as ru-ok?, EAS, Family Therapy team and the Adolescent social work team as well as visits to the wider service (FDFF, Family Hubs, local youth services), shadowing Youth Court and Diversion Panel and other relevant multi-agency meetings. New staff will have an induction programme organised by their manager, with a clear list of objectives and learning.

Ongoing Professional Development

The B&H Learning Zone provides the core training for practice with children & families and supports continuing professional development of staff. Youth Justice staff can request additional bespoke training relevant to their role or career progression.

The Adolescent Service practices the trauma-informed approach. All Youth Justice staff have received training & consolidation to embed the approach. Seconded MH practitioners and Forensic CAMHS practitioners offer consultation and advice.

Staff can refer to Partners in Change (PiC) for consultation, learning and advice. Through PiC, we also provide consultation and learning for social workers regarding children with sexually harmful behaviour.

The AMBIT model has been embedded across the service, with continuous training and development of staff and managers. Youth Justice staff have started to be involved in delivering AMBIT training and supporting others in the wider service to practice the model.

Below are some of the CPD inputs for the Youth Justice Team completed in 2025-2026 delivered through training events, group supervision, forums, service days and conferences:

- AMBIT within Adolescent Service
- Neurodiversity and ADHD

- Forensic CAMHS input: the nuances of neurodiversity, trauma and MH presentations.
- Child to Parent control & abuse
- Supporting parents of neurodiverse children
- Emotion coaching
- Substance Misuse and Young People
- Supporting Trans and gender
- Anti-racist Practice & Allyship (conference)
- Anti-racist forums
- Trauma informed practice for practitioners/ managers
- Motivational Interviewing
- Coaching for managers (senior workers)
- Working with refugees and migrant families

BHCC aims to become an anti-racist council and a core part of the anti-racist plan is to increase awareness through training, consultation and open forum discussion. Families, Children & Wellbeing provides a monthly forum on Anti-Racist practice, which includes seminars led by the Anti-Racist Lead Practitioner. These sessions are designed for all staff and managers to reflect openly on the issues and improve practice with black, Asian and dual heritage children & families. This learning is included in PDPs as part of ongoing professional development.

Supervision & Support

The Youth Justice Service provides weekly reflective group supervision as part of the Relationship -Based model to facilitate reflection and peer support. Individual line management supervision is also provided for each staff member every 4-6 weeks. Group supervision uses a reflective practice model to enable staff to explore issues, reflect on the impact and develop creative solutions. Discussions focus on stuck cases, immediate concerns or themes emerging from Youth Justice work (e.g. exploitation, working with girls & misogyny, peer relationships, MH complexities, etc.).

The trauma informed approach is used, including consideration of secondary trauma on staff working with children and victims. Individual supervision is focussed on staff development and support, with space for case discussion and oversight of complex or high- risk cases as required.

Managers have an 'open door' policy, whereby they are available to staff at all times for support and guidance. The senior YJ practitioners provide mentoring and support to less experienced staff and line manage the RJ and prevention workers.

Knife possession guidance

The knife crime policy is well established in Brighton & Hove, with close liaison and joint decision-making between Police and the YJS. There is a strong partnership with Sussex Police; we have built good relationships with the Youth Policing Team locally, with regular communication and contact through our seconded Police Officer and Youth Sergeant.

In respect of Out of Court Resolutions, knife possession guidance as outlined in the Child Gravity Matrix is followed, with a clear escalation route for any cases where deviation from the knife crime policy is recommended by the panel. All children referred to the YJS for knife crime are discussed at the joint decision-making panel, with oversight from the YJS manager and Police Sergeant. Where there is a recommendation for an informal disposal, the case is reviewed by the Youth Inspector, who will make the final decision. In line with the new knife crime guidance from April 2026, children will receive either a YCC or, in selected cases where it would be disproportionate to issue a Caution, an Outcome 23 would be given. The basis of decision-making is recorded in the panel notes, distributed to all relevant parties and recorded on the child's file.

Since the 2026 knife possession guidance, we have been working closely with Police to implement the new measures. The YJS is being notified directly by Police within 24 hours of a child coming to notice for knife crime and the consultation process is in place. For children being arrested for knife possession out of working hours, Sussex Police have opted to take appropriate action, such as making charging decisions, rather than bail to avoid unnecessary delays in processing children. Sussex Police have issued the following:

Knives and offensive Weapons

Sussex Police strictly follow NPCC guidance in relation to knife crime and offensive weapons [Knives and Offensive Weapons – See Pages 8 & 9](#)

Youth Justice service will accept offences where the following criteria is met

- Under 16 years old- unless exceptional circumstances exist for consideration of a YCC for 16/17 year olds
- No previous convictions or OoCR for knife/weapons
- No previous violent offending
- Offence fully admitted

All other cases that meet the evidential threshold must follow NPCC guidance and be charged or CPS advice sought

No comment but police found/witnessed- charge GAP

Admission- charge GAP

Denial regardless of who found- CPS NGAP

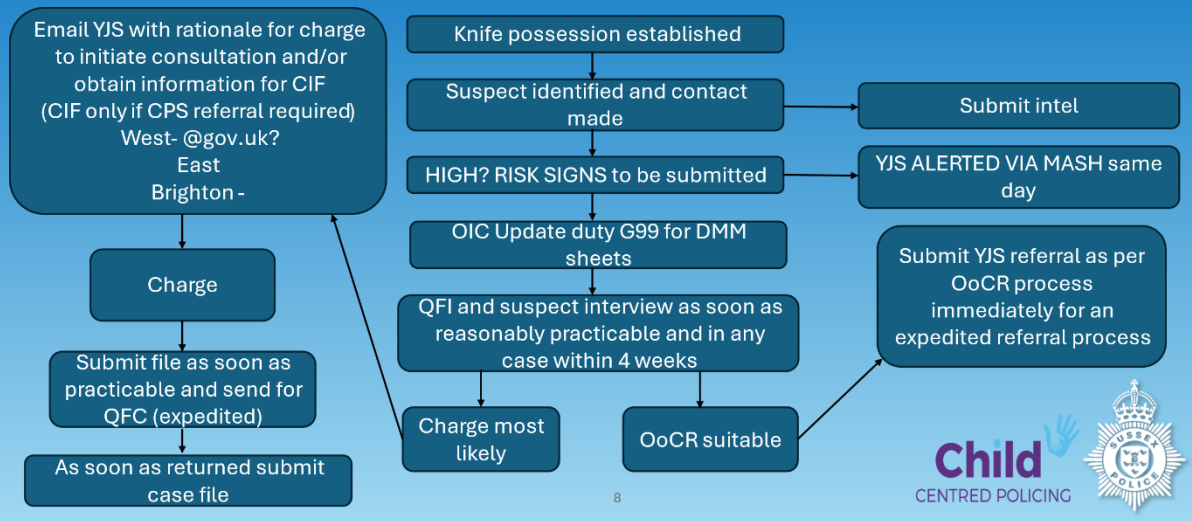
No comment and not police found/witnessed found CPS NGAP

No comment pathway is not available for knife or weapon offences



Knife crime- mock

The government introduced guidance that informed the following process which is mandatory for ALL knife possession only offences (excludes knife enabled crime). The main aim is to expedite investigations for the appropriate services to have intervention in place as soon as possible to maximise the reachable teachable moments and reduce further offending



Process issued to be followed from 1st April 2026:

- Initial notification from when child is identified and spoken to- SIGNS (which will have additional information boxes added) to be sent by MASH to the YJS group emails
 - Initial circumstances
 - Child's previous with police
 - Any relevant intel on child
 - Living circumstances if known
- Police to match 4 weeks action time to 4 week intervention time, which starts from point of OoCR referral or charge.
- OoCR referrals as per current process but to be sent immediately after interview- the YJS PCs will know to expedite referrals for knife crime.
- Immediately after interview, email to be sent to YJS inbox with child details and updated circumstances, which evokes consultation with OIC- to either discuss further and/or if matter for CPS, assist with Child Information Form.
- If still charge, Sussex Police expedite file building and checking to submit for court date.

Quarterly External Child Scrutiny Panel for Knife Crime and Out of Court Resolutions.

Sussex Police and the Youth Justice partnership have agreed that Out of Court decisions will be subject to formal external scrutiny on a regular basis through a new Multi-Agency Child Scrutiny Panel, formed in accordance with national guidelines (April 2026). The Child Scrutiny Panel will include an External Stakeholder group to promote transparency, consistency and accountability, where both knife crime outcomes and other Out of Court Resolutions will be reviewed. Terms of Reference have been developed for this child-focussed panel and meetings (starting July 2026) will be led by an experienced Independent Chair.

Cases are selected through a process where the Independent Chair chooses from a larger list covering the quarter. In each meeting, 12 cases, will be reviewed, with a 6/6 split between knife crime and broader Out of Court Resolution cases.

Evidence-based practice and innovation:

VR Knife Crime programme

The YJS delivers a structured knife crime programme to all children and young people referred for knife or weapons offences, as well as those committing other forms of violence, who are suspected to have carried weapons or associate with peers known or suspected to carry weapons. The Virtual Reality knife crime programme includes a short film developed by a London filmmaker with lived experience. The structured programme includes the legal framework, the VR film and a follow up session to reflect on learning and decision-making. The programme focusses particularly on the impact and consequences of knife crime from different perspectives, including the victim, perpetrator, parents, police, medical staff and friends. It has been designed to be accessible to children who are neurodiverse or have learning needs and is delivered in a way that is tailored to individuals.

We are currently reviewing the VR knife crime programme, through encouraging children and young people to provide feedback and participate in developing our knife crime intervention. A number of children and young people have expressed their views about the programme, with the majority feeling that it is a useful prompt for discussion. This is increasing engagement in the programme, as children and young people are asked their views and encouraged to think about what would work in preventing other children from carrying knives.

In previous evaluation, it was found that 75% of those completing the knife crime programme stated that they carried weapons due to fear of being seriously harmed in the community, believing that having a knife would protect them. The remaining 25% (15+ group) stated they carried a knife to prevent conflict or targeting by their rivals, believing if they had a knife that would de-escalate the situation. We have therefore placed specific emphasis in the programme on safeguarding, with the aim of re-educating children about the increased risk to themselves when carrying weapons.

Knife crime makes up a relatively small proportion of all offending in Brighton & Hove and in line with the national picture, the vast majority of weapons related crimes being simple possession. The number of crimes involving serious violence with weapons remains low.

VRP & Brighton Streets Project

Brighton Streets is a citywide, coordinated detached (street-based) youth work project providing 6 sessions per week across Brighton & Hove in an effort to provide contextual safeguarding to thousands of young people. It is delivered by a partnership of three local charities, who are all long-term providers of local youth work. The project links closely with different parts of the local system in support of young people who are at-risk of coming to harm, or engaging in criminal activity. For example, it delivers joint operations with Sussex Police, attends and informs Adolescent Vulnerability Risk Meetings (AVRM), targets provision with intelligence from Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings (assessing crime/anti-social behaviour hotspots), and supports the local Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) by targeting interventions to those young people identified as engaging in risky

behaviour through their intelligence gathering. In the external evaluation of the Brighton Streets project, evaluators heard directly from children and young people on how they had changed their behaviour as a result of the intervention.

Hospital Youth Work has been delivered in the Children's A&E at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital since May 2023. In that time, Hospital Youth Workers have supported hundreds of children and young people who attend A&E where there is social harm as a factor in their attendance (e.g. fights/violence, substance misuse, poor mental wellbeing).

Other developments:

The Focussed Deterrence Programme

The Sussex Focussed Deterrence programme, launched in 2025, is a multi-agency violence reduction programme that aims to reduce serious violence by identifying and directly engaging with a small group of children who are at risk of current or future involvement in knife carrying or knife-related harm. It combines clear, consistent communication about the risks and consequences of continued knife involvement with intensive, tailored support to encourage children to take up healthier and safer activities and opportunities. The overall aim is to reduce knife carrying, prevent harm, and strengthen protective factors like positive relationships, safety and engagement in education.

Brighton & Hove YJS have a full-time experienced Focussed Deterrence worker, supported by a senior YJ worker, who offers assertive outreach to children within a trauma-informed framework that focusses on positive activities and developing strengths and skills. They work alongside YJ practitioners and other professionals, as part of the network, to provide bespoke support to children as part of their multi-agency plans.

Children are identified predominantly using the Sussex Police Habitual Knife Carrier matrix and also via police intelligence, YJS practitioners, contextual safeguarding intel, etc. and discussed at monthly multi-agency meetings, such as AVRMS as well as via regular case management reviews to track progress. Each child will have a personalised support plan which can include mentoring, education/ training support, mental health, family support, substance misuse and safe recreation. Police involvement includes information sharing, and fair and timely enforcement if violence continues.

The project has been running for 6 months, so it is early days in terms of quantitative outcomes. However, so far children's engagement has been positive.

Sussex Custody Navigators Programme:

The Sussex Custody Navigators programme is a pan-Sussex initiative, involving Sussex Police and the three Sussex Youth Justice areas (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove) funded by the Violence Prevention Partnership. This will support children and young people aged 10 to 17 who are brought into police custody suites across Sussex (Worthing, Crawley, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne & Hastings).

Navigators engage with young people at moments when circumstances may feel overwhelming, at a 'reachable, teachable' moment. These moments offer opportunities for guidance and support when young people may be most receptive to positive intervention. Navigators prioritise the welfare, rights, and safety of each child, ensuring that they are treated fairly and supported to learn, grow, and move forward.

Support is offered flexibly, either at the police station or afterwards in a safe, comfortable environment chosen by the young person. Navigators also coordinate with parents, carers, and existing professionals, such as YJS workers, social workers, or key workers, to ensure a joined-up approach to safeguarding and positive outcomes.

Through early engagement and targeted support, Navigators play a vital role in preventing further involvement with the justice system, promoting wellbeing, and enabling young people to make constructive choices.

Brighton & Hove YJS is currently recruiting for this post, which will be embedded in the YJS.

Priorities for the coming year:

The priorities of this plan align with those of the Brighton & Hove Adolescent Strategy 2026-2029. These were agreed at the Strategic Adolescent Board, and are 3 year priorities, as it was agreed that focus of these needed to be for a three-year period in order to have the time for the achieve the desired change.

The aims of the Adolescent Strategy are to:

- Support for all young people, ensuring they receive the right support at the right time.
- Provide an accessible universal offer for all young people including opportunities to participate and influence.
- Ensure all support and services are inclusive, LGBTQ+ affirming and anti-racist.
- Deliver targeted support for young people at particular risk of substance use, offending behaviour, mental health challenges, or barriers to employment and education.
- Support young people experiencing extra-familial harm through a contextual safeguarding informed approach.
- Work collaboratively with partners to disrupt individuals or groups who exploit children and young people.
- Provide an intensive offer for the most vulnerable young people experiencing extra-familial harm.

Alongside this, the core values are relevant. We believe that children and young people should:

- Receive care, guidance and support whilst being allowed to make mistakes and learn in a safe, nurturing environment.
- Be heard and able to participate fully in their communities.
- Have a range of places where they feel safe and have a sense of belonging.
- Be empowered to be involved and included in planning and decision making around their safety and the safety of others.
- Have access to people who encourage safety, kindness and commitment in both their homes and communities.
- Be free from discrimination, be treated with respect and have equitable access to inclusive and representative services.
- Be able to safely access, enjoy and realise their aspirations through their education.
- Deserve to be happy and have fun.

In addition, there is a strong commitment to anti-racist work, reducing disproportionality across the system and increasing meaningful participation, including the voice of the child. Delivery will therefore all be considered through these lenses.

The key priorities for 2026-2029 are as follows:

Priority 1 Build a connected, preventative Youth System that provides accessible, joined-up support and growth opportunities for all young people.

Priority 2 Promote young people's wellbeing and strengthen safety, belonging and protection across home, community and wider environments

Priority 3 Provide youth focused services that actively reflects and responds to the diverse identities, cultures, and needs of the children and young people in our city

Alongside these objectives, reducing re-offending, reducing first time entrants and reducing the use of custody will continue to be key priorities for the Youth Justice Service.

Delivery Plan Overview

The following activity will be focused on delivering the key strategic priorities:

Universal

- City wide open access youth clubs, groups, services, youth voice forums, that form a core function of the externally commissioned youth offer, including Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation programmes

Prevention and Targeted support

- The Youth Justice Service Diversion Pathway provides Out of Court resolutions for children, including Outcome 22 (deferred prosecution).
- Reboot and Turnaround provide voluntary interventions for children identified by Police due to anti-social and offending behaviour.
- The Liaison and Diversion Service (LDS) practitioners work with children in police custody to assess their individual needs and offer support and signposting.
- Hospital Youth Work offer support for children admitted to hospital where there are concerns around exploitation, violence and harm from drugs and alcohol.
- Adolescent Service key workers in schools offer support to children at risk of experiencing extra-familial harm.
- SHIFT (AudioActive) As part of our early intervention offer, our partnership with AudioActive provides access to SHIFT, a six-month music mentoring programme for young people aged 11–17 at risk of serious youth violence and peer exploitation.
- Drug Alcohol and Sexual Health (DASH) Workers provide drop ins and 1:1 support in schools and colleges, offering advice on sexual health and substance use.

- Engagement and Support (EAS) Workers offer one to one support to children who are at risk of exploitation, youth custody or coming into care.
- Externally commissioned Youth Service provide targeted clubs, groups, case work and mentoring opportunities. This includes Young Futures Hubs which will develop services with a focus on Health and Wellbeing, Opportunities and Youth Crime and Violence.
- Youth Support and Advice services, groups and drop-ins, including Young Futures Youth, Information, Advice, Counselling Services, (YIACS).
- The development of transition age clubs, groups and services for children aged 10-12 years who are transitioning from primary to secondary school.
- Young Futures Brighton Streets Detached city-wide youth work and youth bus offering youth work where young people spend time in the city.
- Development of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) youth voice clubs, groups and youth voice pathways.
- Development of Integrated Care Board Health services within youth provision.
- Increased out of hours- after school and weekend youth provision via externally commissioned youth service.

Intensive and complex support

- Tailored support for vulnerable children experiencing exploitation and youth violence, provided by skilled practitioners who work with children and families in a relationship and trauma informed way.
- Youth Justice practitioners provide intensive supervision, support and holistic management of children subject to out of court and court disposals including community and custodial sentences.
- Skill Mill - provides children in youth justice with paid employment, working on local environmental projects, along with personalised support and training to help them build better prospects.
- Adolescent Social Work specialise working in a trauma informed and relationship-based way with children and families impacted by extra-familial harm.
- RUOK provide 1-1 support and guidance to young people at risk because of their drug or alcohol use.
- Advice, guidance and training for professionals working with young people affected by extra-familial harm.
- AudioActive Shift mentoring music focused programme for young people.
- Local decision -making National Referral Mechanism (NRM) panel for children affected by exploitation.
- Development work with East Sussex to prevent remand to custody

- Adolescent Mental Health workers offering support and intervention to address young people's mental health needs.

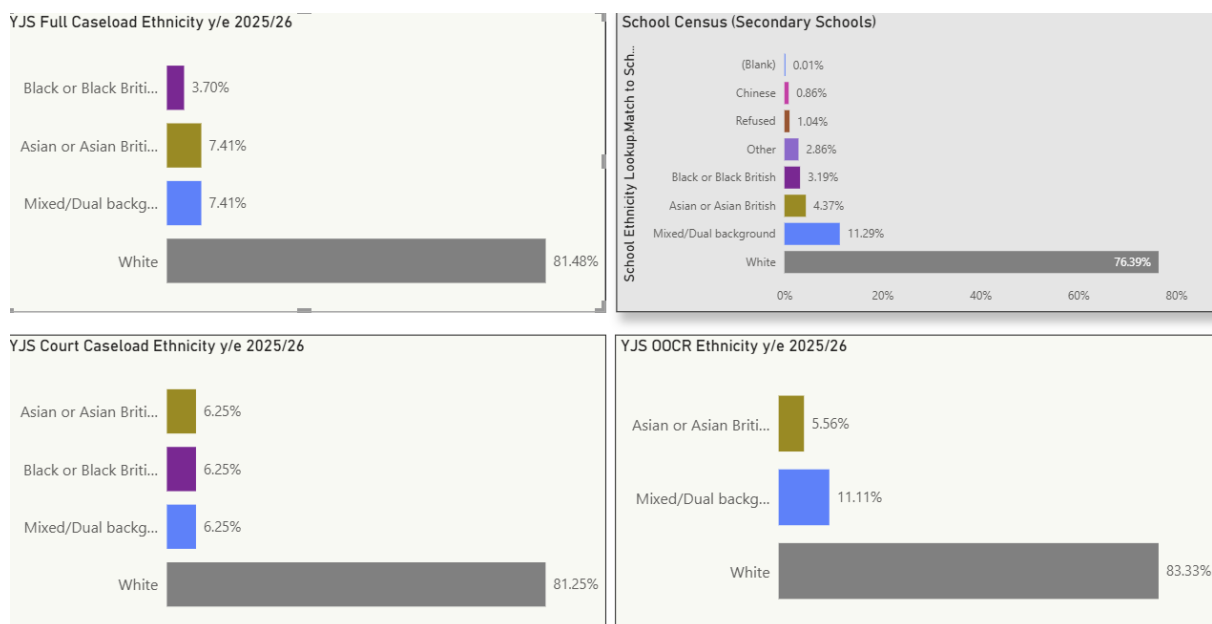
Youth Voice and Participation

- Citywide youth voice pathway development, providing accessible opportunities for all young people to lead on change, ensuring connected, clear routes from youth voice to decision-makers.
- Youth Participation Planning Tool (Lundy Model) implementation across Local Authority services working with children and young people.

5.3 National priority areas

Children from groups which are over-represented:

The 2025-2026 caseload data shows improvements in respect of disparity for B&H compared to the latest school census. 78% of the YJ cohort are white (76% in census), with no disparity showing for mixed race children and only very slight disproportionality for black children and Asian children. There is also less disparity for black and mixed-race children showing in the court cohort compared to the previous year.



Tackling disproportionality in the Youth Justice Service is one of our key priorities, as outlined in the Adolescent Service Strategy, fully endorsed and supported by the Board, partners and senior leaders in the council. An analysis of caseload data in respect of ethnicity is shared on a quarterly basis with the Management Board.

Practice measures in place include the non-admissions diversion pathway, whereby children can be diverted without admitting to offences, where this is in line with the Child Gravity

Matrix for OOCR. Provided the child engages with the assessment process and are willing to complete intervention, they will receive an Outcome 22 (informal disposal). This is monitored by Police in terms of effectiveness and numbers of referrals across Sussex. Furthermore, The Outcome 23 deferred prosecution (Caution) pathway has been in place since January 2026. This further supports all children, including those with global majority backgrounds, to be diverted from the formal justice system.

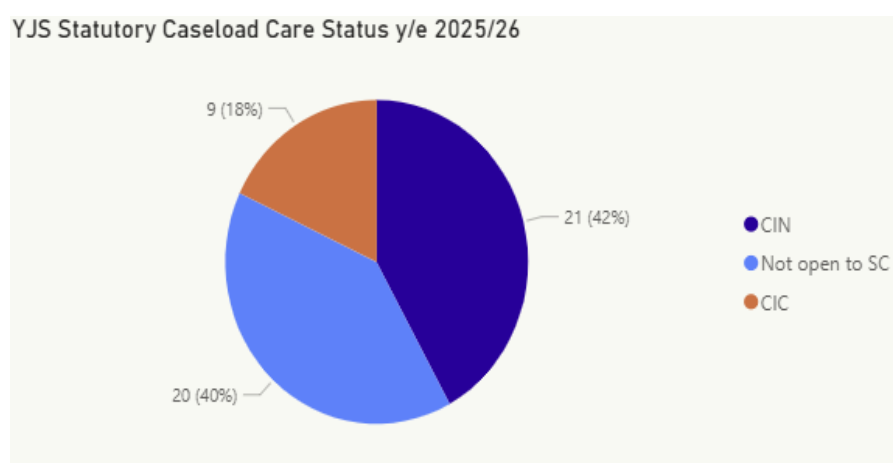
The anti-racist pledge includes challenging racism/ discrimination when this is experienced either from partners, staff, children or families in a way that is constructive, non-confrontational and facilitates learning. Any concerns and issues around racism can be referred for consultation to the PiC (Partners in Change) hub and / or the Anti-racist lead practitioner. This strategy is designed so that children who are within the Adolescent service receive a high-quality service and feel safe to talk about their experiences, that they are supported to be empowered and develop their skills and confidence. We seek feedback from Black, Asian, Arabic and mixed- race children on their experiences within the Youth Justice System and their views on what would improve things for them.

We are committed to increasing understanding and awareness of racism and discrimination to ensure that the child's experiences and impact on their social and emotional development can be taken into account in decision-making and plans. There is good management oversight via supervision and a QA process in place, with an emphasis on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, with attention to language and outcomes.

In terms of recruitment, we have pledged to have at least one person from a black or mixed-race background as part of the interview panel across the service. Selection processes include anti-racist practice as part of the essential criteria, for example on application forms and interview questions.

Children in Care

The chart below shows 9 Children in Care in the Youth Justice cohort for 2025-2026 including OOCR and court disposals. Two of these children were remanded to custody and one was RLAA, with the rest S 20 accommodation.



In B&H we remain committed to reducing the numbers of Children in Care (CiC) entering the Youth Justice and continue to work jointly with Police to ensure that CiC are not unnecessarily criminalised. We have an agreement with Sussex Police via the pan- Sussex

Joint Policy to Reduce Criminalisation of Children in Care and CiC status is taken into account in decision-making at Police level, the OOCR Diversion Panel and at Court (highlighted in Court reports). CiC in the Youth Justice caseload data is regularly monitored and shared with the Board, which unfortunately continues to show some disproportionality for this very vulnerable cohort.

Policing:

Sussex Police are key members of the Youth Justice Partnership locally. We have senior level representation on the Adolescent Partnership Board, and at other relevant partnership boards such as the Brighton & Hove Children's Safeguarding Board, The Sussex Criminal Justice Board, The Combatting Drugs Partnership Board, The Prevent Board and the Community Safety Partnership Board. The Head of Service for Adolescents attends the Police led Children and Young People Board. These governance arrangements promote a strong and well-established partnership. The effective partnership at both strategic and operational level has enabled joint working and appropriate challenge to resolve potential issues where required, for example to joint cultural competence training.

In the past year, we have continued partnership work with Sussex Police through the Joint Action Group, AVRMS and the Early Intervention Meeting. The Youth Justice Service is active in submitting Partnership Intel forms and this has enabled our Police colleagues to recognise the importance of relationship-based practice.

Following a joint Review of the Gang Injunctions with the Adolescent Service and senior Police decision-makers relating to a particularly high risk group of young people, close communication and regular meetings have been established for information sharing, planning and joint safety management in relation to serious youth violence in the community. This process has been a development of partnership work and effective safety planning by learning from previous experiences and identifying missed opportunities. This has facilitated the development of relationships and greater understanding and trust between partners, involving frontline YJ practitioners, Police and social workers.

The Youth Justice Service has a full time Police Officer seconded to the Youth Justice, with a split role focussing on Out of Court work as well as oversight of children whose offending is prolific and high-risk to others. We have a dedicated and experienced Police Sergeant (not seconded) who oversees decision-making at the OOCR panel and promotes child centred policing in the force. There is also a Youth Inspector for Sussex OOCRs and a B&H appointed Youth lead inspector, who has oversight for Focussed Deterrence. The Police sergeant manages the Youth Policing team in B&H and there is close working and communication between the YJS PC, sergeant and Youth Policing team, who advise of daily arrests and share information about children coming to notice.

Prevention

The integration of Youth Justice within the Adolescent Service and sitting under the umbrella of Families, Children and Learning in BHCC means that we are well positioned within children's services, with strong links to Family Hubs and access to relevant information databases.

The Early Intervention Meeting has continued to bring together local partners involved in crime prevention, including Youth Policing team and NPT, Community Safety and

Exploitation team, Trust for Developing Communities and Youth hubs, BCRP (Brighton Crime Reduction Partnership) and YJS to identify children involved in ASB and offending and ensure there is an appropriate response.

Reboot

Sussex Police have commissioned the three Youth Justice services, Brighton, East Sussex and West Sussex to deliver prevention work via Reboot mentoring. The success of this work from 2024 has led to increased targets and PCC funding for Brighton YJS to deliver the project. Reboot is delivered to increased numbers of children via experienced EAS (Engagement & Support) workers. This partnership arrangement brings crime prevention services under the Adolescent Service, so that children can access services appropriate to their needs.

Drugs diversion via ru-ok?

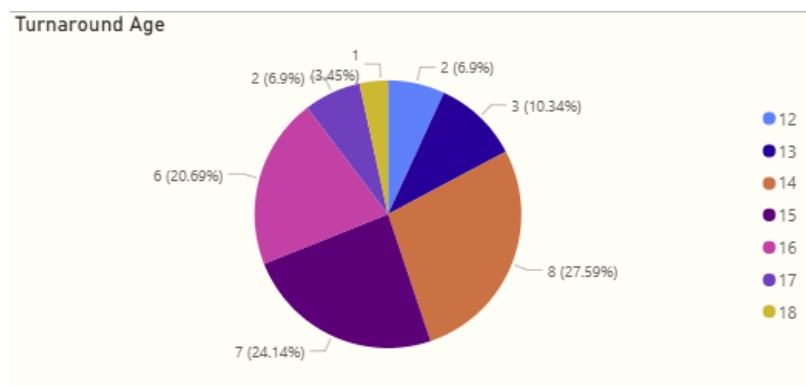
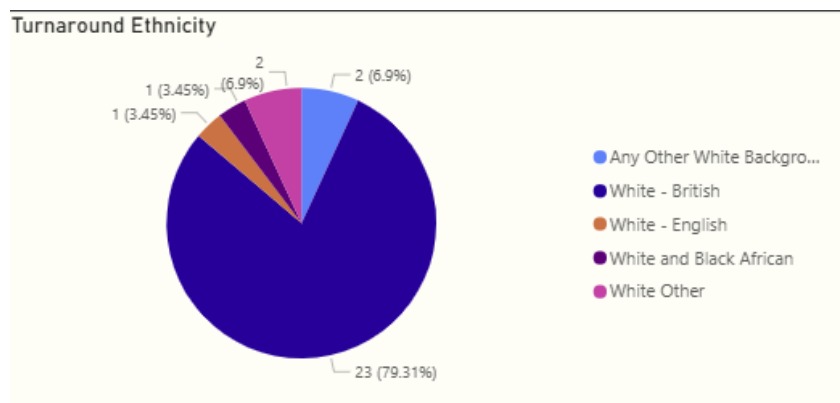
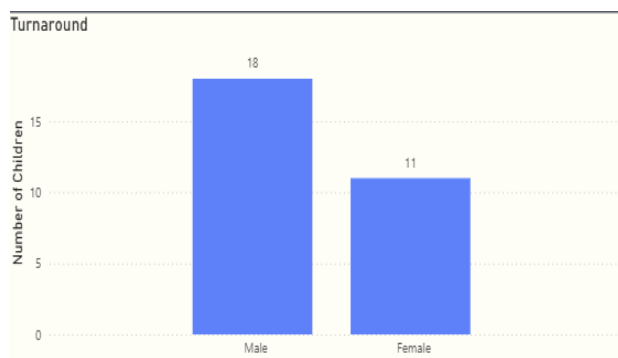
Within the Adolescent Service, the ru-ok? substance misuse service offer a point of arrest pathway via Police and Sussex Liaison & Diversion Service. ru-ok? also have skilled practitioners based in secondary schools in B&H, who offer a more informal drop-in service to children with advice about drugs and sexual health. Referral pathways have been established via the NHS A&E departments, paediatric hospital, Youth Justice Service, Front Door For Families (FDFF), Social Work teams, GPs and via self-referrals.

There has been discussion with Police to consider drugs diversion referrals in B&H. A concern has been raised formally with senior Police that 16 and 17 year olds are being referred to an online course Druglink instead of being referred to ru-ok? where they would receive 1:1 support from an experienced and qualified ru-ok? worker. The ru-ok? manager is liaising with Police to promote referral to ru-ok? for 16 and 17 year olds. He is also working with police as part of the local Combatting Drugs Strategy, which seeks to disrupt local drug supply chains and drug related crime. The need for police to refer via drugs diversion into ru-ok? will be promoted within these strategy meetings. This has also been highlighted through the Youth Policing and Neighbourhood teams, including Sergeants, Inspectors and up to senior levels in operational and strategic divisions, as well as via Training sessions delivered to response teams.

Turnaround

The partnership with TDC (Trust for Developing Communities) has continued into 2026 following the confirmation of MoJ funding in March 2026. Given the longer- term funding commitment, we have plans to develop the Turnaround programme, with a full- time dedicated youth worker from TDC who will be embedded in the YJS. The partnership with TDC, FDFF, Reboot and Police has enabled us to identify and target children at risk of offending and ASB, gain a better understanding of particular localities where children are at risk and offer bespoke programmes. Below is a breakdown of the Turnaround cohort by gender, age and ethnicity.

Children opened to Turnaround April 2025 to March 2026



Diversion:

Brighton & Hove YJS operates under the pan-Sussex Joint Out of Court Resolution (OOCR) protocol. The Child Outcome pathway is well established in B&H and there is consistent partnership and joint working with Police to divert children from prosecution wherever possible and appropriate. The Child Gravity Matrix has been fully implemented across Sussex and adherence to policy and guidance.

All children referred via this pathway are screened and assessed using the YJB Prevention & Diversion Assessment Tool prior to decision-making at the joint panel. Victims' perspectives are a key part of decision-making as far as practically possible, with a clear restorative offer (see RJ section).

Children subject to both formal (YCC) and informal (CRs/ Outcome 22) out of court disposals are offered a comprehensive programme of intervention based on the assessment including safety concerns. They can access wrap around support and provisions of the Adolescent

Service, including intensive family therapy, 1:1 emotional & mental health support, tier 2 or 3 substance misuse service and outreach support from the Engagement and Support Service (EAS), which specialises in working with children affected by exploitation. In addition, they can access support with their education/ schooling via the Adolescent Education Advisor, or advice with Education, Training & Employment through the local Youth Employability Service (YES). Engagement with OOCRs is high, with very few cases being returned to Police for enforcement.

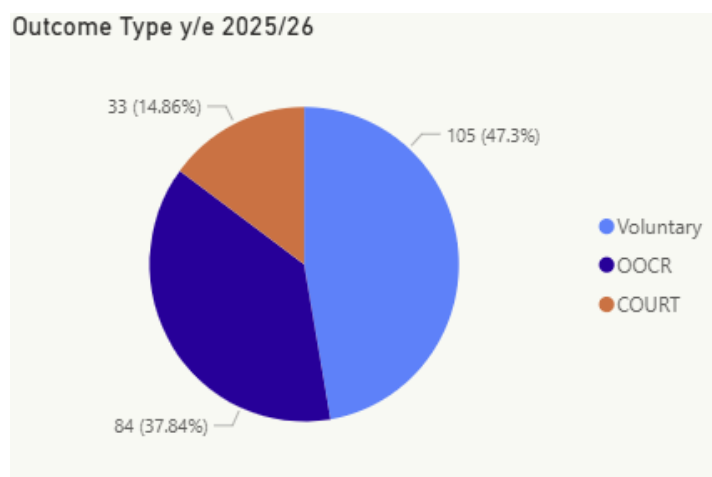
Outcomes for children are overseen via the pan- Sussex Multi-agency Scrutiny Panel, which is being developed with Police to focus solely on outcomes for children, as opposed to being part of the adult process.

The drugs diversion pathway is well established and involves direct referrals from Police or custody suites to Ru-ok? substance misuse service (point of arrest). Children referred by Police for simple possession of Cannabis/ Class B drugs are diverted directly to the Ru-ok? substance misuse service for assessment and focussed intervention. Ru-ok workers are sufficiently trained and qualified to work with children with all levels of risk and vulnerability, including those vulnerable to exploitation.

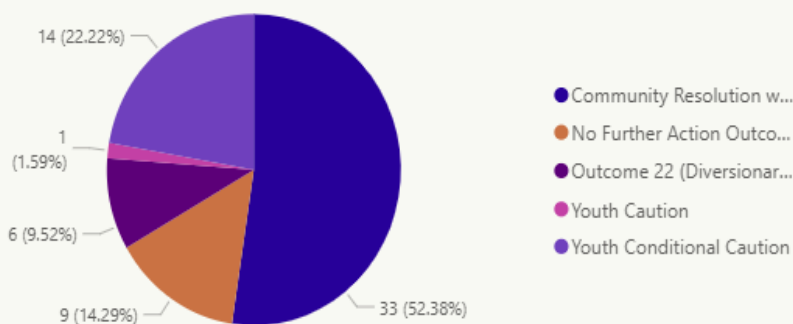
As shown in the charts below, children accessing prevention and diversion programmes make up a large proportion of the B&H Youth Justice cohort. Almost two thirds (62%) of all Out of Court Resolutions are informal outcomes, including CRs (52%) and Outcome 22/23. Since the previous year, we have seen an increase in the use of informal disposals compared to Cautions (previously 50% of all OOCRs). The data demonstrates that children are receiving better outcomes through the OOCR process.

Voluntary programmes shown in the chart below include Reboot, Turnaround and Immediate Justice (Police CR + Reparation).

Prevention and Diversion local data 2025-2026



OOCR y/e 2025/26

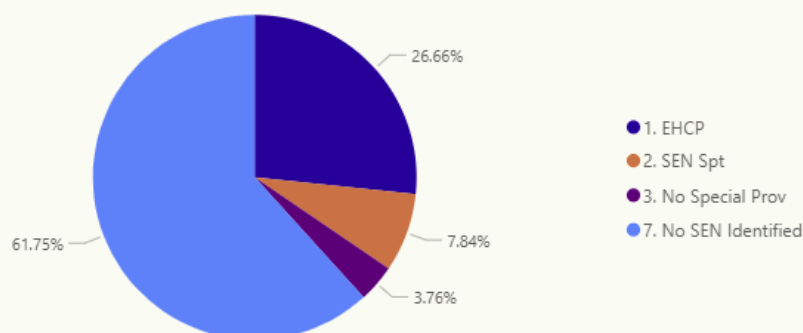


Education

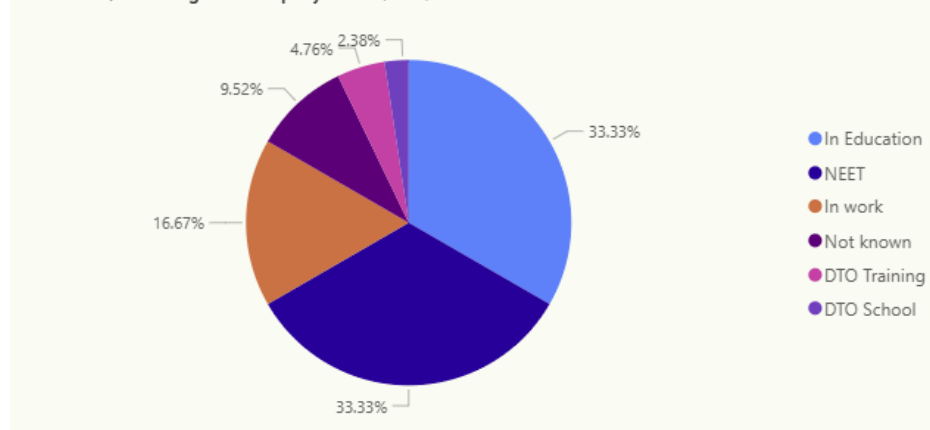
The Youth Justice Service has strong links with Education providers in the city through representation both on the Adolescent Strategic Management Board and at the Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Management (AVRM) meeting. The former has both the Access to Education Manager and a Secondary School Headteacher as key members and the latter includes regular attendance from an Education Lead who chairs the local Behaviour & Attendance Partnership (BAP) meetings, with representation from all Secondary schools (including Academies) the Police, and key Primary schools. The Access to Education Manager is responsible for the prevention of school suspensions and exclusions, school attendance, those who are electively home educated, as well as children with health needs not in school, Children Missing Education (CME) and the regular monitoring of all the children on part time timetables in the city and challenge to all schools regarding their use.

The Adolescent service includes an Education Advisor role, who acts as a conduit to all secondary schools in the city, meets regularly with the Education Adviser for all children with a Social Worker from the Virtual School and is part of the BAP which meets twice monthly. They also attend the joint agency suspension and exclusion meetings which strategically manages the reduction of suspension and exclusion across the city.

SEN 2025/26



Education, Training and Employment (ETE) 2025/26



Data taken from ChildView Youth Justice cohort 2025-2026, including court and out of court disposals, shows that 34% of children in the YJ cohort have special educational needs identified. This continues to be closely monitored at quarterly board meetings. The data also shows that a third of 16-17 year olds (relating to 13 B&H young people) were NEET, which is an area we are focussing on for 2026-2029. It is perhaps relevant that the current cohort of 16-17 year olds are the year groups particularly affected by the Covid lockdown in 2020-2022, with some children not returning to school at all, missing their whole secondary education. This, along with austerity, has compounded the difficulties of attaining ETE for our most vulnerable young people.

Plans to address this include the commissioning of Skill Mill in Brighton & Hove, a programme that provides paid employment with coaching and intensive support for NEET 16-17 year olds in the Youth Justice cohort alongside their intervention programmes. Young people will also receive personalised support from employment and education advisors for up to 9 months where needed to support them to attain paid employment or further training following the programme. It is hoped that this will provide accessible opportunities for young people who may otherwise struggle to attain employment. We also have strong links to the Youth Employability Service (YES) who work with young people from 16-19 years and provide flexible and pro-active support to young people around further education, training and employment.

Restorative approaches and victims

The YJS has a strong commitment to Restorative Justice practice and ensuring the victim's voice is heard. The partnership with Police at strategic and operational levels supports Youth Justice work in this respect, for example, commitment of a full time PC embedded in the YJS, a quarterly multi-agency OOCR scrutiny panel and close links to the Restorative Justice Police team. All Youth Justice staff are trained in Restorative Justice practice and there is close management oversight of RJ and victim work. In 2025, we recruited a Restorative Justice Co-ordinator, who is overseeing the continued development and improvement of restorative practice in the YJS. We have a victim liaison worker and a reparation worker who are both experienced and trained in RJ.

In the past year, we have focussed on developing the RJ offer, using feedback victims, community reparation projects, staff and young people. We are currently reviewing the offer

to victims to ensure our practice is in line with the HMIP standards. There is oversight of victim work and data from the PCC.

We deliver RJ within a ChildFirst and Trauma Informed approach, keeping in minds the best interests of both children and victims of crime. We are committed to listening to children's experiences but also ensuring that they are held to account for harmful behaviour. This is particularly important because many of the children we work with are victims in their own right, whether due to adverse childhood experiences or being victims of crime in their communities. A high proportion of violent crime for example, is perpetrated against children and young people.

There is a clear process in place to ensure that all identified victims of youth crime are contacted where possible, offered support and consulted about their wishes in respect of involvement in restorative justice. Victims are contacted at the earliest opportunity, prior to the joint decision-making panel, Referral Order panel or where possible prior to PSRs being completed. For all young people subject to disposals, a Restorative Plan is created based on the victim's wishes and any risk or safety considerations. This may include direct or indirect mediation, letters of apology and/ or community reparation. We seek feedback from victims, especially those involved in direct mediation or reparation.

The Youth Justice Service is committed to making Community Reparation meaningful to young people, by having individualised plans and matching children to community placements based on their offence and strengths or interests wherever possible. Projects include the Forest Garden, where young people maintain the allotments and pick and prepare for local community groups. We work with charities, community cafes and local food banks, helping to organise donations and prepare food for vulnerable or elderly people. AQA's have been attached to community projects, to develop skills and portfolios for young people.

Serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding

There is currently a 3 year Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) strategy in place that builds on previous annual VRP strategies. It uses evidence from our strategic needs assessment to set out the current picture of serious violence in Sussex and what collective action partners are undertaking.

The strategy includes an explanation of our Public Health approach and our model of delivery, which is a devolved structure, allowing each of our three VRP areas to make their own decisions on where funding and resources are best placed.

We explain how we use and share data to understand the risks and drivers for serious violence and how this, combined with robust evaluation, also helps shape our intervention activity. Our performance indicators and how we continually measure our success are also included.

Central to our approach is our commitment to engaging and consulting with the individuals and communities most affected by serious violence. Our forward plan includes more work to ensure that their voices are represented in our VRP, and that they are informing everything that we do.

Our delivery plan will be reviewed and revised annually, and this highlights the breadth of activity going on across Sussex aimed at reducing individual and community vulnerability to serious violence, exploitation, and other criminal behaviour.

Much progress has been made in the five years since the inception of the VRP, and sustaining this momentum remains a priority for the partnership. This involves all partners

working together to embed the response to serious violence in their day-to-day organisational delivery.

This is already happening through the creation of dedicated officers, teams, and structures and through additional funding sources. Over the next 12 months we will be collectively developing our plans to mitigate against the potential 'cliff edge' of intervention for those individuals and communities most at risk, ensuring that they continue to receive the support that they need.

Detention in police custody

The Pan Sussex Protocol on Transfer of Young People to Local Authority Accommodation from Police Custody is well established. We have seen a significant decrease in the numbers of young people being held overnight after charge. The process is scrutinised on a quarterly basis with senior members of the police, the HoS and the EDS duty Manager. There is also a process to discuss any cases more immediately where appropriate.

Remand to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA) & Remand to Local Authority Accommodation (RLAA)

Avoiding the use of secure remands unless absolutely necessary for reasons of public protection remains one of the Youth Justice Service core aims and priorities.

We have a joint protocol with local magistrates courts (pan- Sussex Courts Agreement 2024), which details operational guidelines for Youth Justice Services and Courts. For example, children at risk of remand are dealt with as a priority by courts and consideration for RLAA is given prior to secure remand, as per legal guidelines. The agreement covers provision of services to the local courts (including Saturday & Bank Holiday courts) to ensure children's welfare and rights are maintained and reduce unnecessary remands. This agreement highlights the child's right to Bail and the principle that all children at risk of secure remand are assessed for bail and offered a robust bail programme unless the risk of harm to the community/ victims is deemed unacceptable. This principle is supported by Senior Leadership Teams and Management Boards.

Brighton & Hove have a dedicated, experienced and highly skilled team of YJ officers who share the court duty. The co-location of the Youth Justice service within the Adolescent hub enables provision of intensive wrap around individually tailored programmes for children subject to bail as an alternative to custody. Supporting this, there is a strong partnership between Youth Justice and Children's Services and arrangements in place with Children's Placement Team (CPT). For example, all children at risk of remand are notified immediately to the Social Worker and CPT. B&H YJS holds credibility with the courts in terms of assessments, risk management planning and the offer to children & families, and there is a high congruency rate with Youth Justice proposals. Across Sussex, we have developed relationships and lines of communication with youth leads for Legal Advisers, CPS, magistrates and district judges and there are regular pan Sussex courts meetings where court issues and YJ developments can be discussed. This provides a forum for feedback between the Courts and YJ services and oversight of emerging court issues.

Use of custody and constructive resettlement:

It remains a key priority to minimise the use of custodial sentences. In principle and practice, we will offer community disposals (including bail supervision and support) to all children, even those committing serious violent offences, where we believe that the safety of the child and others can be effectively managed in the community by appropriate intervention, monitoring and controls.

There is a strong strategy in place to support this commitment to preventing children from entering secure settings. Rates of custody are regularly monitored by the Board as part of quarterly performance data and deep dive analysis completed where custody rates increase. Through the use of Intensive Referral Orders, ISS or alternative intensive programmes, the Youth Justice Service offers individualised wrap around programmes for children at risk of custody, based on their needs and abilities. This may include intensive social work support, mentoring constructive activities (via Engagement and Support team), substance misuse work, family therapy, MH & wellbeing support, community reparation and support with education, training & employment (via partner agency YES).

The YJ workforce are qualified and highly skilled, with the expertise to manage children presenting a high level of risk to others in the community in liaison with partners. There is good collaboration with Police and regular multi-agency oversight via Op Safety and AVRМ. For example, all children assessed as presenting a high level of risk to others are discussed at the Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meeting (AVRM), a weekly multi-agency forum with a focus on Exploitation. Risk management and safety plans receive multi-agency and HoS oversight.

The YJS has a strong relationship with wider Children's Services, who recently received an Outstanding Ofsted rating for the service to children and families in B&H. There is close collaboration and joint working with Children's Services, given the Youth Justice Service integration within Children's Services, and lines of accountability being direct to the AD and director via the Head of the Adolescent Service.

In respect of Resettlement, there is also good partnership work with the Probation Service and Children's Services (including Leaving Care team) to optimise opportunities for children on release from custody and those transitioning to adult services. The Probation Lead (Advanced Practitioner for Youth Justice) manages the seconded probation officer and attends regular meetings regarding transition. The seconded Probation Officer is the allocated PO for 17-18 years olds transitioning to probation. The PO has a split role between the Youth Justice and in VERU (18-24 team). This promotes relationship-based practice and continuity for young people transitioning to the adult estate or to probation when subject to Licence.

Youth Justice practice follows YJB case management guidance, using constructive resettlement and the identity shift model, focussing on developing pro-social identity, identifying and building on the young person's strengths and skills, with a strong desistance focus. YJ practitioners are well sighted on evidence based practice in resettlement in respect of the above models of practice. There is a strong focus on relationship-based work and maintaining a high level of contact with young people via regular visits to secure facilities, phone calls and virtual contact. Youth Justice workers prioritise the child's safety and wellbeing throughout their detention.

There is close management oversight of all custody cases, with escalation processes in place for safety concerns. We have good connections with the leads for resettlement and safeguarding at YOIs (e.g. Feltham), STCs (Oakhill), SCH (e.g. Vinney Green) and Oasis Secure School.

Working with families

It has been emphasised in the plan that the integration of the Youth Justice Service within the Adolescent Service and wider Children's Services provides strong strategic and operational links to the Family Hubs (Early Help) and enables the YJ team to work closely with partners, particularly around ensuring a joined up working with whole families. All YJ workers and managers have direct access to Children's Service database (which is the same as Family Hubs- Early Help). With the Transformation of Children's Services, this will improve further connections between early help and statutory services. The Head of Adolescent Service is part of the Senior Leadership Team in the Safeguarding and Care branch of the Families, Children and Wellbeing Directorate. On strategic and operational levels, whole Family working is therefore embedded in Youth Justice practice in Brighton & Hove. These working arrangements are further supported through the developments of the AMBIT model of practice, which has been rolled out throughout the Adolescent Service and wider Children's Services with ongoing service wide training and practice workshops.

Within the Adolescent Service, there is an experienced and trained team of family therapists, who offer Family Functional Therapy (FFT) to all families in need. This offer is focussed on preventing children entering care or custody by strengthening parent-child relationships and building resilience within families. The model is proven to help reduce offending behaviour by giving children more stability and attachment to their families. The pathway to FFT is via Front Door for Families or Children's social work, with families screened for specific criteria, which include children coming to notice of police, exploitation concerns and family breakdown. The FFT team have been co-located with Youth Justice since prior to the 2018 restructure of the service, so there are well established relationships between Youth Justice and FFT, at both management and practitioner level. The FFT manager attends weekly AVRMs (exploitation & risk) meetings and Adolescent Service manager's meetings, so has oversight of the most vulnerable children and young people in B&H. FFT practitioners have attended YJ team meetings to provide training and advice. Overall, this ensures that family therapy is well understood in the service and accessible to families meeting the criteria.

Signed

Designation

Date

Glossary

ABH- Actual Bodily Harm
AMBIT- Adaptive Mentalisation Based Integrative Treatment

AQA

ASB- Anti-social Behaviour
AVRM- Adolescent Vulnerability and Risk Meeting
B&H- Brighton & Hove
BAP- Behaviour & Attendance Partnership
BHCC- Brighton & Hove City Council
CAHMS- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CiC- Child in Care
CME- Children Missing Education
CPD- Continuing professional development
CPR- Childrens Placement Team
CR- Community Resolution
CSE- Child sexual exploitation
CV- Childview
DJ- District Judge
DTO- Detention and Training Order
EAS- Engagement and Support

EDS

ETE- Education Training Employment
FCAHMS- Forensic Child and Adolescent
MH - Mental Health Services
FCW – Families, Children & Wellbeing
FDFF- Front Door For Families
FFT- Functional Family Therapy
FTE- Full Time Equivalent
GBH- Grievous Bodily Harm
HMIP- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMYOI- His Majesty's Young Offender Institution
HoS- Head of Service
JAG- Joint Action Group
KPI- Key Performance Indicators
LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and more.
MASH- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MH- Mental Health
NEET- Not in Education Employment Training
NHS- National Health Service
NRM- National Referral Mechanism
OOCR- Out of Court Disposal
OPCC- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PACE- Police and Criminal Evidence

PC- Police Constable
PDP- Personal Development Planning
PiC- Partners in Change
PO- Probation Officer
PSR- Pre-Sentence Report
PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
QA- Quality Assured
RJ- Restorative Justice
RLAA- Remand to Local Authority Accommodation
RO- Referral Order
ROTL- Release on Temporary Licence
RYDA- Remand to Youth Detention Accommodation
SAVRY- Structured Assessment of Violence Risk
SV
SW- Social Worker
TDC- Trust for Developing Communities (
VR- Virtual Reality
VRP- Violence Reduction Partnership
YC- Youth Caution
YCC- Youth Conditional Caution
YCS- Youth Custody Service
YES- Youth Employability Service
YJAF- Youth Justice Application Framework
YJS- Youth Justice Service
YOS- Youth Offending Service
YRO- Youth Rehabilitation Order

Appendix 1: Staffing Structure

Brighton & Hove Adolescent Service Structure Chart June 2026

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