



**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

## **Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Strategy 2020-23**



# Executive Summary

Youth Justice Services (YJS) in Nottinghamshire are made up of three multi-agency locality teams and a county wide Interventions team. The service meets all the statutory requirements of a YJS as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and includes seconded staff from Police, Probation, Health, and Futures (Education, Training and Employment).

## The aims of the YJS are to:

- Reduce the number of young people entering the criminal justice system;
- Reduce the frequency and rate of re-offending by children and young people who are already within the youth justice system; and
- Keep the numbers of young people experiencing custody – either on remand or as a sentence of the court – to a minimum.

Over the past year, performance against these measures has been good with data showing that Nottinghamshire is performing better than the national average.

- The number of first time entrants has, again, fallen and Nottinghamshire has seen a 32% reduction on last year's figures.
- Rates of re-offending and numbers of re-offences committed by re-offenders has reduced steadily over the past few years and, whilst there have been some local fluctuations, as indicated, figures show that Nottinghamshire is performing better than the national average.
- Numbers of young people remanded and sentenced to custody means that, both nationally and locally, fewer young people are experiencing a period of incarceration. Locally, the total numbers of young people remanded/sentenced to custody is reduced from last year.

In addition to the multi-agency team set up, the service works with partners and commissioned providers to support children and young people, and to achieve the strategy's outcomes. The Board works with partners to ensure that the health provision for young people who offend is equal to those of the general population. Partners also strive to work together to ensure that children are not criminalised or remanded unnecessarily.

Nottinghamshire YJS has maintained its commitment to working with children and young people in need of help, on a non-statutory basis. It delivers a high-quality service in relation to its youth diversion and detached services, thus, keeping a focus on reducing the numbers of First Time Entrants (FTEs). The service links closely with the Troubled Families agenda and acts as the lead professional where the young person committing crime or anti-social behaviour requires a whole family approach.

The YJS continues to monitor its activities and progress with quality assurance processes that are closely linked with other areas of children's services in Nottinghamshire. The quality management framework is closely aligned to the standards adopted by HMI Probation. This ensures that the standard of work with children and young people, assessments, and plans remains of high quality, regardless of their stage within the youth justice service.

# Introduction

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) in Nottinghamshire meets all the statutory requirements of a YJS as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and includes seconded staff from Police, Probation, Health, and Futures (Education, Training and Employment advisers). It is made up of three multi-agency locality teams and a county wide interventions team, which provides support with interventions to the locality teams, in addition to carrying out early prevention intervention and targeted detached youth work in areas where there is identified anti-social behaviour.

In addition to the multi-agency teams, the service commissions specialist external providers to help it deliver key statutory functions, such as substance misuse, reparation and victim services and appropriate adult work.

## The key aims of the YJS are to:

- Reduce the number of young people entering the criminal justice system;
- reduce the frequency and rate of re-offending by children and young people who are already within the youth justice system; and
- keep the numbers of young people experiencing custody – either on remand or as a sentence of the court – to a minimum.

Nottinghamshire YJS continues to monitor performance through its internal quality assurance processes and via quarterly case audits completed on a wide range of cases. Relevant learning is fully utilised across the service and actions are set and reviewed to improve service delivery.

Nottinghamshire Youth Justices Services (YJS) are part of the Local Authority's Children and Families service department. Line management of the service comes under the Corporate Director for Children's Services. The activities of the YJS are monitored and directed by the Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Service Director for Youth, Families and Social Work.

In addition to statutory partners, Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Partnership Board also benefits from having representatives from Education, Commissioning (Accommodation), the Community Safety Partnership and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The Board reports to the Safer Nottinghamshire Board, which feeds into the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Partnership Board meets on a quarterly basis with good attendance from all key partners who are represented at a senior level.

As part of YJ Diversion work, young people took part in a photo shoot, expressing their feelings with creative compositions. Their photos have been used throughout this strategy.

## Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Partnership Board holds the YJS to account, ensuring that it meets its statutory aims. The Board:

- ✓ Receives quarterly performance reports, identifying areas of opportunity and actively discussing potential risks to future performance.
- ✓ Reviews every Youth Justice Incident Report along with details of any subsequent progress made against actions set.
- ✓ Is actively involved in the quality assurance processes embedded within the YJS; thus, assisting in increasing individual board members' understanding of the work of the YJS.
- ✓ Agrees improvement/action plans; actively monitoring progress against these plans.
- ✓ Has a forward plan in place to ensure that the agenda of the Board is focused on strategic Youth Crime Issues which are specifically relevant to Nottinghamshire and have the potential to impact performance and resources.
- ✓ Receives regular service delivery updates from Team Managers, and other staff involved in operational service changes, which enables the Board to retain oversight and monitor progress.
- ✓ Has strengthened how it connects with staff by a YJ staff representative being an active member of the Board.
- ✓ Holds partner agencies to account for any deficits in their operations or practice which is impacting upon the YJS and hindering effective multi-agency working.
- ✓ Has consistent cross representation from the YJ Leadership Team; providing an effective link into the Management Board and supporting effective service delivery.

Nottinghamshire YJS has identified five key areas to provide focus over the next three years. This plan provides an overview of the work that has been completed so far in relation to these areas and outlines the work that the YJS intends to deliver over the following year (2020/21).

As well as supporting the YJS to carry out its statutory functions and meet its key aims, this plan also supports the work of the YJB in relation to their identified strategic objectives; these being;

### Statutory Function



*Strengthen and enhance the delivery of our statutory functions*

### Child First



*To see a youth justice system that sees children as children first, and offenders second*

### Custody & Resettlement



*To see an improvement in the standards of custody for children and promote further rollout on constructive*

### Over-represented Children



*To influence the youth justice system to treat children fairly and reduce over-representation*

### Serious youth violence & exploitation



*To see a reduction in serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation*

# Target 1

## To work with partners to promote a more holistic approach to meeting children and young people's needs in the Youth Justice System

Working closely with other teams, departments and partners is key to ensuring that every child or young person can achieve the best outcomes regardless of their place within the criminal justice system. This applies whether they are a child on the cusp of offending, or a young person in youth custody. A case manager will work with the child or young person to tailor an individual programme of intervention. They will identify ways to build on the young person's strengths and develop their potential. They will also identify ways to reduce the negative factors in the young person's life which may be pulling them into offending, or increasing the risk of harm to either themselves or others.

Nottinghamshire YJS is committed to working with a wide range of partners to provide a more holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people in the YJS. In the last year, improving outcomes for children and young people with Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) has continued to be an area of priority. Similarly, developing trauma informed practices has also been a key area of focus.



- ✓ Reducing First Time Entrants.
- ✓ Reducing reoffending.
- ✓ Keeping the numbers of children and young people who are experiencing custody to a minimum.

## We have...

- ✓ Developed staff's knowledge and skills regarding SLCN, and understanding what adjustments need to be made to improve the effectiveness of their work with children and young people.
- ✓ Enabled children and young people with complex SLCN to undergo an assessment and access specialist intervention.
- ✓ Developed staff's knowledge regarding trauma and how this impacts the children and young people they work with.
- ✓ Introduced one-to-one consultation and group supervision sessions, led by the clinical psychologist; providing staff with time for reflection on their current practice, with a focus on trauma.
- ✓ Continued to make direct referrals to Head2Head to access emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people.
- ✓ Continued to work closely with Change Grow Live (CGL), the commissioned provider of substance misuse services, to ensure that our children and young people are accessing the most appropriate level of support.
- ✓ Recruited mentors to provide individual support to children and young people identified as requiring a long term/enhanced level of support.
- ✓ Had a key role in strengthening multi agency approaches to tackling Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation; YJS is regularly represented at multi agency panels focussing on Youth Violence and has contributed to wider NCC staff training.

Nottinghamshire YJS promotes the principle of working that sees children as children first, and offender second. There will be a continued commitment to working with partners to promote this guiding principle; we will be reviewing and adopting ways of working to ensure there is a continued holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people in the youth justice system.

## Next steps...

- To strengthen staff's capability to developing a needs led holistic approach to intervention planning.
- To support partners to ensure that all children and young people, including those in custody, have a co-created intervention plan which can meet their individual needs.
- To work with the Liaison and Diversion team; to increase the accessibility of specialist assistance for children, young people and their families in relation to meeting their emotional and mental health needs at the earliest opportunity.
- Continue to work with partners to highlight how SLCN affects children and young people in the YJS and what improvements can be made across services.
- Continue to work with partners within health to increase staff's knowledge in relation to trauma and how best to work with children and young people who are impacted within the YJS.

## Talking about working with the YJS, young people said...

**I feel I am getting the support that I need**

**I feel like I am being listened to for the first time**

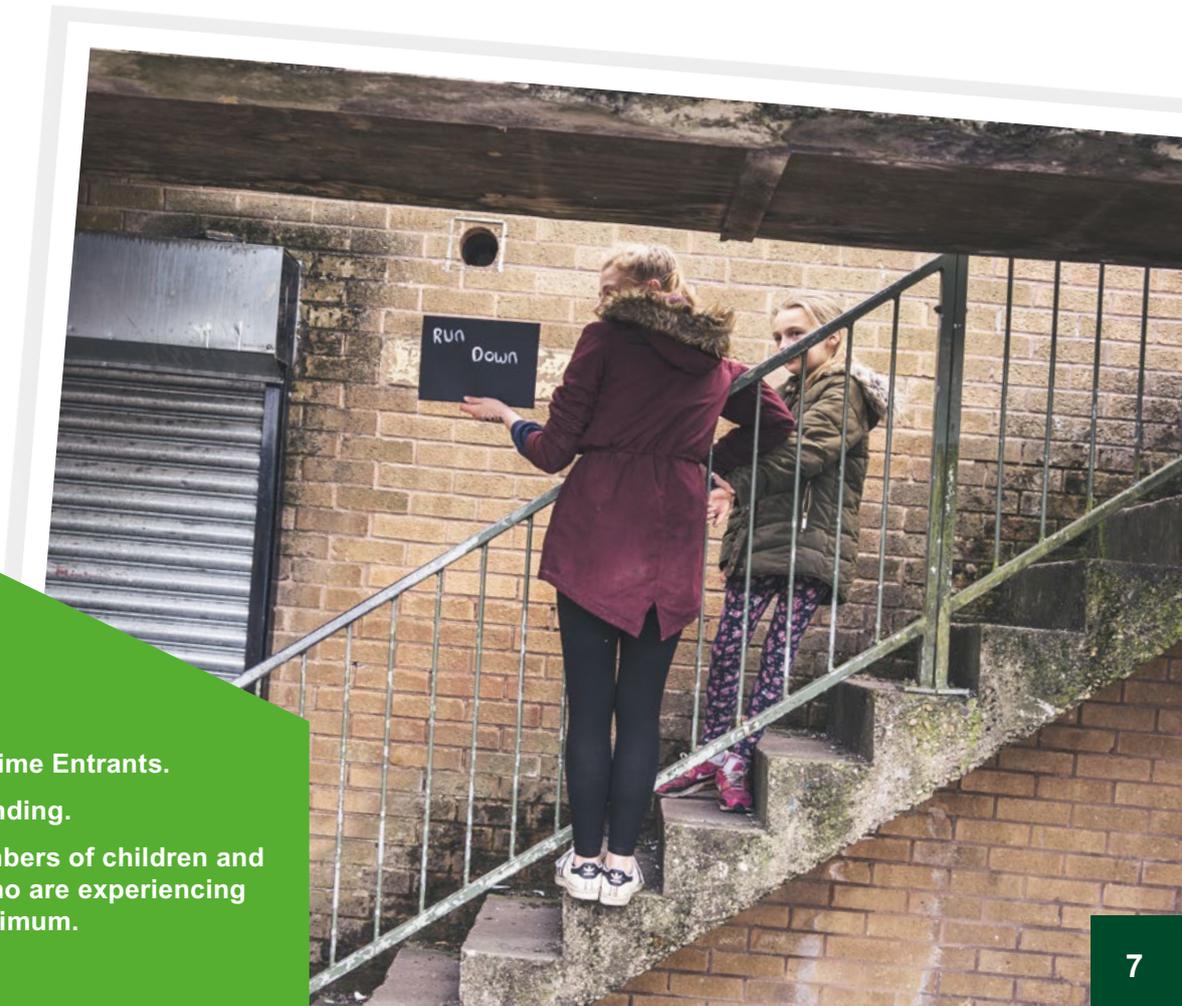
# Target 2

## **To increase the number of children and young people who are accessing early intervention aimed at reducing the potential of them entering the criminal justice system**

Nottinghamshire YJS outreach and interventions team has a preventative agenda. Staff work evenings, weekends and holiday periods targeting group work interventions to children and young people aged 10-18 that have been identified by agencies as being at risk of, or involved in, ASB within their community. Using outreach and detached youth work they are working to divert young people into meaningful and sustainable activities; creating informal education opportunities; encouraging individuals to explore and develop alternative ways of thinking is also an important aspect of this work.

Nottinghamshire has again seen a reduction in the number of First Time Entrants (FTEs), and this number is reduced by over 32% on the number of FTEs that were recorded last year. From April 2019 to March 2020 the actual number of FTEs was 171. This is also much lower than the national average of 276.

Efforts to reduce the criminalisation of young people at the Out of Court Disposal panels (OOC) also appears successful and the YJS is now working with a greater proportion of children and young people on a voluntary OOC basis. The service has recently reviewed and updated its offer of crime prevention to increase the number of children and young people who are able to access early intervention. The aim is that children and young people at risk of 'emerging threats' (including Child Criminal Exploitation) will be appropriately identified, supported and protected and, as part of this revised approach, there will be more children and young people able to access a broad range of positive activities underpinned by general youth work principles.



- ✓ Reducing First Time Entrants.
- ✓ Reducing reoffending.
- ✓ Keeping the numbers of children and young people who are experiencing custody to a minimum.

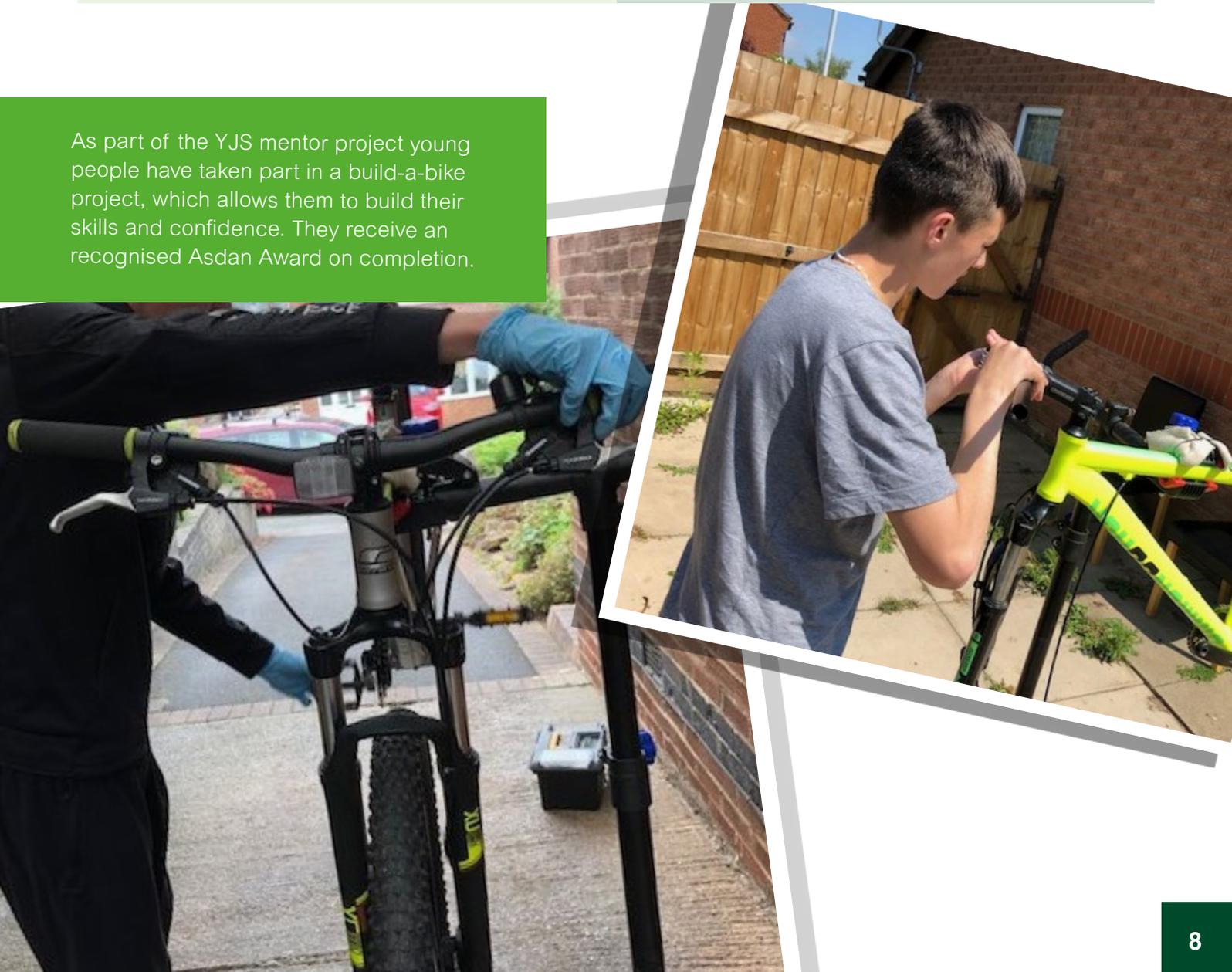
## We have...

- ✓ Rebranded the 'Crime Prevention' programme, with the assistance of children and young people ('My Future' Youth Support Programme).
- ✓ Revised the referral, allocation and intervention pathway within the YJS.
- ✓ Revised the referral pathway to broaden the cohort of children and young people eligible to access the 'Youth Support Programme' intervention.
- ✓ Communicated the revised criteria and referral pathway to partners (internal and external to NCC).
- ✓ Worked with partners to enable us to review the needs of children and young people named within Public Protection Notices (PPNs) at the earliest opportunity.

## Next steps...

- To continue to promote the 'My Future' Youth Support Programme across services.
- To establish pathways to ensure that children and young people at risk of emerging threats are being identified and supported to access suitable provision.
- Exploring how we can support children and young people longer term; establishing/strengthening their community links.
- To further embed the youth work mentor scheme within Nottinghamshire YJS, considering this as part of an ongoing model for engagement with children and young people.
- To develop pathways for children and young people to access longer term youth support.

As part of the YJS mentor project young people have taken part in a build-a-bike project, which allows them to build their skills and confidence. They receive an recognised Asdan Award on completion.



# Target 3

## **Every child and young person in contact with Nottinghamshire YJS has appropriate education, training and employment provision in place**

Meaningful full-time engagement in Education, Training and Employment (ETE) remains one of the most significant protective factors to reduce re-offending for young people. Qualified specialist advisers, seconded from Futures Careers Service, provide a bespoke package of support for young people involved with the YJS who are not accessing full time ETE provision. The ETE team's policies and procedures are aligned with the wider NCC's Children Missing Education policy and they take an active role in the Vulnerable Children's Education Commissioning group, providing multi agency solutions in relation to the education provision of vulnerable groups.

The ETE team has previously focused on children and young people engaged with the YJS on a statutory basis. In the next year, the service will work with children and young people who become known to the service on a statutory or voluntary basis. This is part of the service's aim for fewer children and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Increasing the support available for individuals, who are on a part time timetable or at risk of becoming NEET, will contribute towards improving the educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people within Nottinghamshire.

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- ✓ Reducing First Time Entrants.
  - ✓ Reducing reoffending.
  - ✓ Keeping the numbers of children and young people who are experiencing custody to a minimum.

## We have...

- ✓ Secured funding for an additional worker to run a programme known as 'unlocking potential'; this targets young people aged 15-24 who are at risk of becoming NEET.
- ✓ Met with post 16 providers to identify, and start to address barriers to securing suitable provision for children and young people known to the YJS.
- ✓ Developed clear partnership agreements with organisations who support our young people in post/pre16 provision.
- ✓ Specifically focused on the service's cohort of children and young people who are NEET; identifying areas of practice that can be improved.
- ✓ Provided targeted ETE support to all children and young people who were on a part-time timetable or identified as being at risk of becoming NEET.
- ✓ Commenced providing in-depth analysis on NEET cases (including data on gender, ethnic groups, historical FT exclusions, identified SEN etc) to the YJ Partnership Board; this enables the Board to maintain oversight of current practice and react to local issues and trends.
- ✓ Been making better use of the available data; providing a full individual analysis of all children and young people who are NEET; and a more detailed analysis of minority groups, to enable the identification of any areas of disproportionality.
- ✓ Worked with 'UNLOCK' to develop an information booklet regarding disclosure.
- ✓ Implemented group supervision to enable the team to share good practice and ensure the delivery of high-quality Information Advice and Guidance (IAG).

## Next steps...

- To ensure that every child and young person receiving an OOC or statutory Order is allocated an ETE adviser.
- To develop an ETE specialist post to engage with local employers to promote the appointment of young people who have offended for employment/work experience opportunities.
- To ensure that ETE is considered as an integral part of intervention planning; and SEN is clearly identified and addressed within the planning of interventions.
- To have an ETE adviser attend all youth crime panels to provide relevant and up to date information regarding the individual's ETE provision/identified need.
- To offer an enhanced level of support to children and young people at key ETE transition points.
- To apply for further 'Life Chances' funding; this will support two additional YJ ETE posts to support NEET young people aged 16 to 24 in the longer term.

**When talking about the support his son had received from the youth justice team, one parent said**

**I wish all services had this level of communication and support**

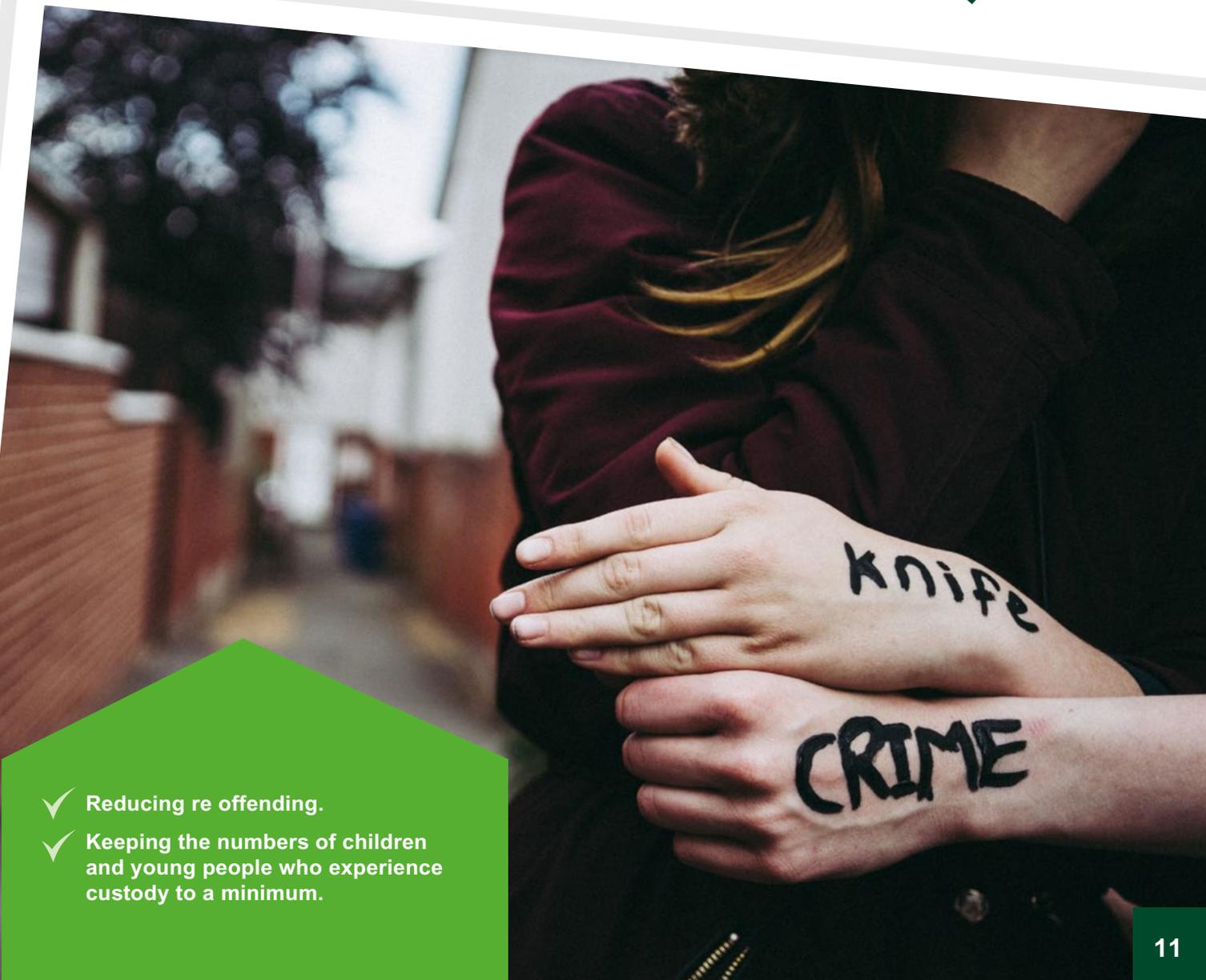
# Target 4

## To ensure that children and young people have the best support available to meet their needs when leaving custody

In April 2020 the YJS completed a National Standards Self-Assessment against the five domains as identified by the YJB (Out of Court Disposals, In the Community, At Court, In Secure and Transitions). Following this process, the areas of resettlement and transitions have been identified for further targeted work. There is a focus on the support offered to children and young people whilst in custody and on the planning for when children and young people leave custody. Constructive Resettlement aims to support individuals in developing a pro-social identity and focusses on their journey towards a positive future; something Nottinghamshire is committed to achieving with its children and young people.

When asked about what had changed in their life, one young person said;

“ I have a job now. Working is keeping me busy and helping me stay out of trouble ”



- ✓ Reducing re offending.
- ✓ Keeping the numbers of children and young people who experience custody to a minimum.

The key principles of Constructive Resettlement have been promoted across the service and a detailed improvement plan has been produced. This has been presented to the YJ Partnership Board to ensure continued oversight.

### **We have...**

- ✓ Identified a manager to have responsibility for Constructive Resettlement across Nottinghamshire YJS.
- ✓ Improved joint working with Children's Social Care (CSC); being influential in them identifying a resettlement lead.
- ✓ Been proactive in ensuring that placement request forms are being jointly completed with CSC.
- ✓ Jointly agreed an escalation process should a young person not have an address confirmed prior to their release from youth custody. Developed processes to ensure that young people and their parents and carers have access to relevant information in a timely manner.
- ✓ Increased staff's awareness of the principles of Constructive Resettlement; reinforcing the importance of individualised planning and support.
- ✓ Supported staff to contact children and young people using different methods of communication e.g. letter, email.

### **Next steps...**

- Continue to work with partners to secure a suitable release address for every young person at the earliest opportunity.
- To ensure adherence with the LAC custody placement agreement for relevant young people.
- To work with Resettlement leads within the Youth Custody Service to improve joint working and align plans in relation to Constructive Resettlement.
- To support staff to use Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) to improve resettlement outcomes for young people.
- To routinely capture and use feedback from young people leaving youth custody.
- To increase contact with children and young people in custody.
- To improve how we engage with children and young people whilst they are in YCS, ensuring that all contacts are purposeful and meaningful.
- To improve our work with parents and carers in relation to Constructive Resettlement
- To complete case audits to review service performance in relation to Constructive Resettlement.

**Of the 47 children/young people who have been supported by the YJS mentors, only 2 have gone on to reoffend which is a significant difference from the general offending population and feedback from young people and parents has been positive...**

**A - it's made me feel a bit more confident in myself**

**B - before I wouldn't put myself out there and do things on my own, but now I feel I've got the confidence**

**Mum - he was very up and down, totally different now, very calm, knows what he wants now. Yeh! He's more positive**

**Mum - "she's done brilliant with him, to how he is now, to how he used to be. He's a completely changed lad"**

## Target 5

To ensure that robust consultation processes are in place to enable all children and young people and parents and carers to have an opportunity to Shape Nottinghamshire YJS

Talking about the reparation work that they completed, one young person said...

**I did enjoy doing the work as it was a good positive thing to do for me and the community. I think it has got me on the straight and narrow and I don't want to get into trouble again.**

Of 16 young people questioned, all said that they thought reparation was a good thing.



**NO BALL GAMES  
ALLOWED**

In the last year the YJS has started to develop processes for seeking the views of children and young people, and their parents and carers, on the YJ Service. The overall aim is that the voice of the child / young person and their parents/ carers features in all aspects of service provision.

### **We have...**

- ✓ Gathered feedback from young people whose cases have been chosen for learning audits; gaining their views of the service.
- ✓ Gathered feedback from all children and young people who have taken part in reparation to help review outcomes.
- ✓ Gathered feedback from victims of Youth Crime who have engaged in Restorative Justice intervention to review the quality of service which is being provided.
- ✓ Facilitated focus groups with young women; giving them an opportunity to tell the Service Manager what they think about the service.
- ✓ With the help of the Speech and Language Therapist, revised the Self-Assessment Questionnaire that is used with children and young people.
- ✓ Implemented a new end of Order feedback form to enable children and young people to provide feedback to the service.
- ✓ Gathered young people's views on the use of social media which was used to improve the knowledge of staff.
- ✓ Sought the views of young people on the new name for our 'Crime Prevention' programme.
- ✓ Sought the views of young people in custody to gauge our progress in relation to resettlement practice.

In the coming year, the YJS will build on the work that has begun to take place to ensure that we are regularly consulting with young people, parents/carers and are being responsive, using the feedback in the design and delivery of the service.

### **Next steps...**

- The YJ Partnership Board is to be made aware of what children and young people and their parents and carers are saying about the work of the YJ Service; increasing the level of oversight that is provided by the Board; this will involve a young persons' representative attending the Board regularly.
- Young people will be invited to the Board to provide direct feedback on the service they have received.
- All children and young people will be asked about their experience of the service at the end of their intervention.
- All parents and carers will be asked about their experience of the service.
- Young people and parents and carers will be consulted about the work of the service in conjunction with cases that are chosen for quarterly audits.
- Focus groups will be held to gather feedback from children and young people on specific areas of practice which can be used to measure progress against existing improvement plans e.g. Transitions, Resettlement etc.
- Processes will be developed to ensure that the service routinely consults with children and young people, parents and carers in relation to key operational changes that are being considered.

# Other areas receiving focus in 2020/21



## Disproportionality

- There will continue to be a focus on disproportionality within Nottinghamshire YJS.
- The service has a Disproportionality Action Plan; progress against which is being reported on and continues to be monitored by the YJ Partnership Board;
- Disproportionality is included within quarterly performance reporting which is presented to the Board.
- So far, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) has been the primary focus of the YJS approach to addressing disproportionality; however, moving forward the intention is to broaden this to other areas of potential disproportionality, including Looked After Children.

## Transitions

- Recognising that transition for children and young people in the YJS can be frequent; Nottinghamshire YJS is striving to ensure that they are fully supported at all points of transition, be it education, housing or adulthood.
- The service has developed a detailed improvement plan to support effective transitions with an identified service lead responsible for monitoring progress.
- The service will continue to work closely with Children's Social Care and the National Probation Service, improving the experience of children and young people who transition between and within these services.
- The YJS will continue to assist partner services in the development of pathways / processes to support young people upon their transition across services/into adult hood.

## Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation

- The YJS will continue working with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) exploring ways to reduce Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation.
- In collaboration with the police and other partners, there will be a focus on FTEs for knife crime for young people under 16s.
- As indicated, the YJS will further embed the youth work mentor scheme within Nottinghamshire, considering this as part of an ongoing model for engagement with children and young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation.
- To work in collaboration with the police and partner agencies to further develop processes in relation Public Protection Notices (PPN) and Early Police Alert System (EPAS) to ensure children and young people in need of early intervention, those at risk of emerging threats, are appropriately identified and supported.



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