



# **Youth Justice Plan 2024-2025**

***Building bridges and changing the course for  
young people***

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## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF THE YJS BOARD

I am delighted to present the South Tees Youth Justice Plan for 2024-25. The last 12 months have certainly been busy with an increase in interventions delivered and significant progress made against the priorities from last year. This plan outlines performance and achievements, areas for development, and risks and challenges going forwards along with describing some exciting new projects such as the opening of the new child custody suite, an innovative project the service have been heavily involved in developing with Cleveland Police and partners.

In addition to Turnaround, the Service has also rolled out other key projects in 2023-24 including Immediate Justice known locally as 'Making Good' in conjunction with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Custody Navigator Project in conjunction with the Cleveland Violence Reduction Unit (CURV) bringing support to young people in police custody at the earliest stage. Although in its infancy, the Navigators project has already supported many young people from across the Cleveland area and continues to receive positive feedback from partners. These projects have naturally brought about recruitment of staff and resulted in the need for increased management capacity and an internal restructure to cope with the new demands of all three projects. In addition, the service has increased the provision of speech and language therapy which has resulted in more children receiving timely support as it is required.

The service has embraced changes brought about by the Youth Justice Board's (YJB) new performance and oversight framework, which brought in a new set of national key performance indicators. Furthermore, the service has engaged in consultation events held by HMIP in respect of the new inspection framework due to be published later this year to ensure we can be in a strong position to align quickly to any new standards required.

Violence and exploitation continue to be a serious concern in our locality. Consequently, this remains a service priority this year along with resettlement, Education, Training and Employment, and establishing a restorative culture to support effective work with the communities we serve. As Turnaround draws to a close, the service is committed to continuing with a prevention offer to ensure there are opportunities for our young people to engage in early intervention to prevent future contact with the criminal justice system.

Looking to the future, there are a number of challenges ahead, as funding streams for key projects come to an end and we continue to adapt to the complexities and needs of our young people. The future will present further challenges and uncertainty over budgets and the direction to be taken by the new government. However, the service continues to forward plan looking for new opportunities, innovation, and transformation, and I have every confidence the service will continue to adapt to the changing landscape and have a positive impact on young people who come into contact with the service along with the communities it serves.



Rob Brown

Director of Education and Partnerships, Middlesbrough Council

Chair of the South Tees Youth Justice Board

## INTRODUCTION, VISION AND STRATEGY

Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement a Youth Justice Plan setting out:

- How Youth Justice Services in their area are to be provided and funded
- How the Youth Justice Service (YJS) will be composed and funded
- How it will operate and what functions it will carry out
- The priorities for the YJS

In addition to the production of a Youth Justice Plan, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a range of other statutory duties on YJS, these include:

- Complying with National Standards for Youth Justice
- Compliance with requirements of Sections 38-40 of the Act

**South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS) is a statutory multi-agency partnership including:**

- Middlesbrough Council
- Redcar and Cleveland Council
- Cleveland Police
- Probation Service
- North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

**The strategic purpose of STYJS is:**

- To reduce first time entrants to the youth justice system
- To prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people
- Reduce the use of custody for young people (both sentenced and remanded)

**This Youth Justice Plan 2024-2025 will provide:**

- An overview of STYJS performance and achievements during 2023-2024
- An overview of service developments during 2023-2024
- Details of STYJS structure and governance arrangements
- An overview of the principal partnerships STYJS engages in to support the delivery of services
- Assurance to the YJB in relation to STYJS plans for the use of our YJB Grant Funding
- Details of the principal areas for service improvement and development during 2024-2025
- Identification of any potential risks and challenges to the future delivery of Youth Justice Services
- STYJS strategies to mitigate against these risks

In addition, the Youth Justice Plan will also demonstrate how we intend to align our service priorities with those of the YJB Strategic Plan. The STYJS Plan will show how through our strategic priorities, we intend to respond to the YJB Strategic Objectives, with work to focus on how we engage with the communities we serve, how we promote the child first principle across all areas of our work and how we challenge all forms of disproportionality regarding young people in the Youth Justice system.

## The Principles and Values that underpin our work

STYJS embraces the YJB child first, ethos and this approach has been used to inform the values and principles which underpin our work with young people and their families. STYJS aims to work in partnership with young people, their families and all other services who are engaged with the young person to achieve effective and lasting outcomes through engagement, challenge and support. To achieve positive interaction the following values will inform and direct our work:

- Promoting engagement with the young person and their family to ensure their voice is heard in YJS processes
- All young people will be engaged as individuals with all interventions designed to meet their needs
- Young people will be challenged to take responsibility for their behaviours to protect the public and the communities we serve
- Intervening early to divert a young person away from crime and anti-social behaviour and prevent offending
- Ensuring a focus on the whole family in particular in the work of Turnaround and Prevention activities
- Working in partnership with other agencies to maximise opportunity and ensure access to services for all young people
- Identify and overcome any barriers to accessing information that can inform and guide our work
- Promote the rights of victims and ensure they have a voice in our work
- Engage with victims to ensure that they are satisfied with the services provided to them
- Provide high quality services that are effective, efficient and provide value for money

## Our Vision

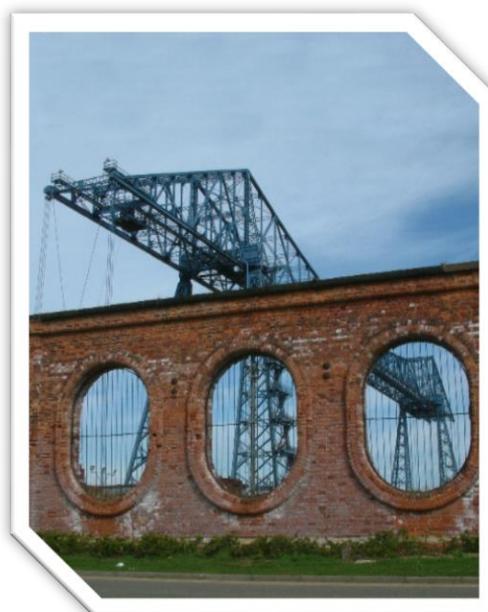
In line with the principles detailed above STYJS has established the following vision for the service, and this is shared by all staff, partners and stakeholders.

*“Building bridges and changing the course for young people”*

In addition, our mission statement has been designed to reflect the approaches taken by the YJS in our work with young people:

*“Working together to create a safe, positive community to allow children and young people opportunities to achieve their full potential whilst reducing offending behaviour”*

Discussions with young people and staff places significant emphasis on the word ‘opportunity’ and young people in particular are passionate about how their work with the YJS has created new opportunities for them.



## South Tees Youth Justice Service Practice Standards

The corporate governance for STYJS is provided by Middlesbrough Council. The STYJS sits within the Education and Partnerships section of Middlesbrough Children's Services. In partnership with Children's Services STYJS has designed a set of practice standards to inform how we model our behaviours and how we seek to deliver our work with young people to ensure that we place young people at the centre of everything we do. These practice standards are intended to direct the work of frontline staff and managers and detail a range of responsibilities.

The Practice Standards were revised in January 2024 to take into account changes in practice and shared areas of responsibilities across Children's Services and the YJS.

The practice standards identify the shared staff responsibilities as follows:

- I will make sure the young person and their care giver fully understands and is included at all stages of the Criminal Justice Process.
- I will always use language the young person and their care giver understands to explain what I and other services are doing in relation to the police, the courts and their Orders.
- I will always see the young person first and the offender second, conversations will be open and honest around both risk management and safety.
- I will ensure a young person's voice is part of the assessment and build on their strengths by involving them in the decisions around interventions and setting achievable targets.
- I will ensure I consider the victims of offences in our work and plans with a young person, enabling them to understand the impact of the offence on those harmed and offer the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and repair harm.
- The YJS role is one of support and guidance, we are here to help young people make sense of their journey, whilst trying to repair harm and change behaviours, using a restorative and educational approach.
- I will work with outside agencies that are best suited to the young person's needs and assist young people in accessing and building supportive/positive relationships which can last past their time with our service.
- I will offer support to parents/carers, ensuring they have been referred to appropriate services whilst keeping them involved and updated on their child's progress.
- I will review plans regularly with young people and reflect on what is and what is not working well. We will celebrate young people's progress and success, whilst ensuring robust exit strategies are in place so to encourage desistance and progression in their lives.
- All work will be completed/delivered in a timely manner and in line with the standards set out by the STYJS Board, YJB and HMIP.
- Support will continue for the young person throughout their time with the service and interventions will continue to be delivered in a non-judgmental and safe environment.
- I will make informed decisions around risk, safeguarding and enforcement to ensure the victims and general public are protected as well as safeguarding the young people we supervise.

The practice standards identify the manager's Responsibilities as follows:

- I will provide monthly supervision with a focus on staff wellbeing as well as case supervision
- I will Quality Assure work in line with STYJS policies and procedures and provide constructive feedback highlighting both areas for development and areas of good practice

- I will ensure staff are given opportunities to engage with continuous professional development
- I will encourage staff to become involved in the ongoing development and progression of STYJS to ensure we continue to deliver the best possible outcomes for the children and young people we work with.

In addition to the above in order to respond to shared responsibilities for young people in custody the following Practice Standards have been added to reflect the joined up approach to supporting young people through resettlement by the YJS and Children's Services:

Responsibilities of the Youth Justice Service worker:

- I will work collaboratively with YJS and social care and ensure I continue my role as corporate parent to the young person whilst they are in custody, I will arrange meetings and undertake joint visits where appropriate and ensure all parties each other's responsibilities, including who is visiting and when
- I will visit the young person in the court custody setting after they have been remanded/sentenced to ensure that they understand what will happen next and that all important information is passed onto the secure placement they will be transferred to (secure children's home or young offenders' institution).
- I will visit the young person in the custodial setting within 2 weeks of them being sentenced to complete their initial sentence plan or remand review. I will ensure that the young person's parent/carer is supported to attend this meeting.
- I will visit the young person once a month whilst they are in custody
- I will begin preparations for the young person's release from custody 3 months prior to the release date and ensure the young person's pathway plan is fully updated. I will explain the licence conditions and what this will mean for the young person.

Responsibilities of the Social Worker:

- I will provide you £10 per week to support getting essential items whilst in custody
- I will visit every 4 weeks and review your pathway plan; this will include an exit strategy from custody
- I will ensure you have appropriate accommodation upon release and support in place to set up home

Responsibilities of Managers in both services:

- I will ensure at least 3 monthly joint supervision between social care and the youth justice service.
- I will carry out monthly supervision in between.

## **Consultation with Staff and Partners in the Preparation of the 2024-2025 Youth Justice Plan**

In preparing this Youth Justice Plan a comprehensive consultation process was entered into and this included consultation with staff and partners and young people. The purpose of the consultation was to share the plans and service priorities, as proposed by the STYJS management team and also to secure the views of staff and partners on these proposals. This consultation has ensured that all key stakeholders have had a voice in the plan and the actions detailed in this plan are owned by all.

YJS staff supported the service priorities and agreed that these reflect the issues and factors which impact on their work with young people. Staff felt that there had been some significant successes achieved by the service during 2023-2024 including:

- The introduction of the Custody Navigators, Turnaround and Making Good programme which have contributed to increasing our knowledge and understanding of the young people referred to the YJS
- The blending of the work across all areas of the service which have come together to ensure that increasing workloads can be effectively managed in the face of reduced resources
- The development of new Reparation schemes to broaden the experience of young people
- The support offered by the 'specialist' areas of the service to the work of case managers, including the input of SALT, Transitions, Police and the ETE staff
- The extension of 'positive' activities for young people including the holiday programmes and group based activity

YJS staff identified further areas of development which would further enhance our work with young people:

- Further extending the resources available to case working staff to respond effectively to the increasingly complex needs of some of the young people we work with
- Re-establish links with CAMHS and the Trauma Informed approach
- Further develop the scope of whole family working in the prevention service
- Extend the scope of group activity to focus on key issues impacting on young people eg Education and Employment, Substance Use, serious violent offending and use of weapons etc.

STYJS partners were consulted during the STYJS Executive Board Meeting in January 2024, and the service priorities detailed below were presented to board members for their consideration. Board members supported the service priorities presented by the YJS Management Team. Board members stressed the importance of Education, Training and Employment as a key priority citing this as one of the most important factors to prevent young people offending and the need to ensure STYJS is aligned with other strategic priorities including those of the YJB.

### **2024-2025 STYJS Service Priorities:**

The priorities identified by STYJS to support the development of the service during 2024-2025 have been designed to reflect issues which affect the service at a local, regional and national level. Consideration has also been given to factors impacting on the young people, families and the communities we serve to ensure that we can affect positive change in these areas.

The priorities to support ongoing service development will include:

- Priority 1: Prevention and Diversion- To further develop opportunities for prevention and early intervention with young people and their families.
- Priority 2: Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation- To further develop practice to ensure that STYJS can respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of young people involved in or at risk of serious violence and/or exploitation.
- Priority 3: Preparation for Inspection- To ensure that STYJS are fully prepared for the challenge of a potential HMIP Inspection during 2024-25.
- Priority 4: Education, Training and Employment- To ensure that all young people supervised by STYJS have access to opportunities for Education, Training and Employment.
- Priority 5: Resettlement- To ensure that young people are effectively supported upon resettlement to the community.
- Priority 6: Restorative Practice- To establish a Restorative Culture in STYJS which supports effective work with the young people and communities we serve.

## **THE LOCAL CONTEXT**

South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS) delivers Youth Justice Services within the local authority areas of Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland. Communities in both local authorities are impacted upon by a range of social, economic and environmental factors. Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland have been identified as two of the most deprived local authorities, as detailed in the

English Indices of Deprivation 2019 with communities being affected by high levels of unemployment, poor health outcomes, crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, as well as challenges around educational access, inclusion and attainment. Both local authorities also experience higher than average numbers of children in the care of the Local Authority and significant pressure and demands placed on Children's Services and Early Help provision to support families in need. These communities have also been identified as experiencing higher than average issues of violent offending and offending where weapons have been used.

The geography and cultural make-up of the area presents further challenges. Redcar and Cleveland has large rural communities spanning across 96 square miles of rural land which can be isolated and transport links can be challenging. Middlesbrough is a compact urban community with a diverse ethnic and cultural make up, with large Asian and Eastern European communities. Young people face significant challenges in each local authority area and these impact on their behaviours and influence outcomes.



The behaviours of young people continue to be highlighted by negative factors including increasingly violent offending and the use of weapons. In addition, there are hot spot areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour by large groups of young people across both local authority areas, some of which receives national media attention. As a challenge to such behaviours the Cleveland Police area is a designated pilot area for the Immediate Justice initiative, the locally named 'Making Good' programme, and this offers opportunities to offer early intervention and prevention activity, delivering swift and restorative responses to those young people engaged in crime and anti-social behaviour in our communities.

The Cleveland Police area is also a designated Violence Reduction Unit area and the three Youth Justice Services in the Cleveland area have played a significant role with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to ensure that young people and early intervention and prevention are priorities for the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV). Examples of such work include the development of a trauma informed, youth custody suite in Middlesbrough Police HQ supported by the introduction of Custody Navigators into the Middlesbrough Police Custody Suite, a high-profile project for CURV. The role of the Custody Navigators is to promote engagement and support young people during the 'reachable and teachable' moment offered by their presence in police custody.

STYJS has evolved in recent years to respond to changing local circumstances, social and economic factors affecting young people. The current service model is a traditional YJS model with operational teams delivering case management in each local authority. The operational teams are supported by a Resource Team which includes Restorative Practice, Education, Training and Employment Support, SALT, Preventions, performance management, service planning, policy and procedures and back-office support in the form of admin and information management services. The rationale behind this is to ensure that the service can meet the challenges placed by users and changes to legislation with a 'fit for purpose' structure which supports high quality service delivery but flexible enough to adapt to changing priorities. Central to this is the recognition that our staff will need to be well equipped with

the knowledge and skills to support a wide variety of service user needs and the risks posed by an increasingly complex and challenging cohort of young people.

The service structure has been enhanced further during 2023-2024 with the introduction of Turnaround, Making Good and the Custody Navigators and such projects have brought new staff and operational delivery structures which have also necessitated further investment in our management structure to support these teams.

### **The profile of young people who engaged with STYJS in 2023-2024**

During 2023-2024 STYJS delivered a total of 646 interventions with young people. This included with:

- 559 males, 86.5% of the cohort
- 87 females, 13.5% of the cohort

By local authority area the figures show that there were 367 (56.8% of the cohort) young people from Middlesbrough and 268 (41.5% of the cohort) from Redcar and Cleveland, with 11 (1.7% of the cohort) young people subject to caretaking by STYJS on behalf of other YJS.

These show an increase of 139 (11.5%) interventions compared to the figures for 2022-2023.

These figures show that STYJS worked with a similar proportion of girls and young women during 2023-2024 with this figure decreasing slightly to 13.5% of the cohort, from 13.9% the previous year. During 2023-2024 STYJS has continued to develop interventions to support the needs of girls and young women, and this has included the introduction of the 'Ladybugs' programme an intervention activity designed to offer girls and young women their own safe space to engage with staff and other partner agencies.

The age profile was:

- 12 (1.8%) aged 10 years
- 20 (3.1%) aged 11 years
- 43 (6.7%) aged 12 years
- 54 (8.4%) aged 13 years
- 90 (13.9%) aged 14 years
- 123 (19.0%) aged 15 years
- 152 (23.5%) aged 16 years
- 145 (22.5%) aged 17 years
- 7 (1.1%) aged 18 years

These figures show that the proportion of the cohort aged 10-14 years during 2023-2024 drop significantly compared to 33.9% of the cohort compared to 42.2% for the previous year. The figures also show that the peak age of offending continues to be the 16-17 age group. For females the peak age of offending is now 15-17 years.

The ethnic minority profile was:

- 560 (86.7%) White European
- 3 (0.5%) Black or Black British
- 16 (2.5%) Asian or Asian British
- 29 (4.5%) Mixed Race
- 14 (2.1%) Chinese or other Asian ethnic group
- 24 (3.7%) Not Known

These figures are consistent with the figures shown by the ethnic minority breakdown in 2022-2023, with the cohort being overwhelmingly White British. The figures for other ethnic groups are consistent with previous years with only slight increases compared to 2022-2023 and these figures show that there is no over representation from any ethnic groups.

Overall, the STYJS cohort continues to be white, male and this is consistent with the profile for the cohort in recent years. Overall girls and young women are not overrepresented in this cohort although data presented to the YJS Executive Board meeting suggest that girls aged between 15-17 years are becoming a more prominent group. This was recognised by the YJS, and the Ladybugs programme is now a key area of our intervention with girls and young women.

## Profile of Interventions

Data shows that during 2022-2023 the breakdown of interventions included:

13 (2.0%)	Prevention Cases
242 (37.5%)	Turnaround Programme
247 (38.2%)	OOCD (Community Resolution, Restorative Disposals, Outcome 22, YC/YCC)
118 (18.3%)	Court Ordered Programmes (Referrals Orders, YRO and DTO etc)
8 (1.2%)	Civil Programmes (CBO and ASBI)
18 (2.8%)	Remand Programmes (Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA), LAA, Bail Support and ISS Bail)

These figures show that OOCs continue to represent the highest proportion of interventions delivered with young people and their families. Turnaround now represents the primary prevention activity offered by the STYJS. Court based programmes continue to represent approximately a fifth of the total interventions delivered, however we have experienced an increase in the use of Referral Orders during the second half of the year.

## Profile of the factors influencing the behaviours of young people:

An examination of 216 YJS assessments, undertaken with young people using the AssetPlus tool during 2023-2024 provides an illustration of the principal factors affecting young people and their behaviours.

The key factors that support the young person to desist from further offending behaviours include:

- Engagement and Participation
- Learning, Education, Training and Employment
- Family and wider networks
- Living arrangements, housing and financial considerations
- Resilience and goals
- Attitudes to Offending/Behaviours
- Substance Misuse
- How the young person relates to others

The information drawn from desistance factors in assessments shows that during 2023-2024 engagement and participation, learning, education, training and employment continue to be the most prevalent protective factors identified with young people. The influence of family, wider networks and living arrangements continue to be key factors in preventing further offending. This information suggests that where young people have a level of security and support from families, carers and a pro-social peer group and engage in ETE or with other services they have a more positive outlook, and this promotes positive outcomes as well as preventing further offending. Such desistance factors are broadly in line with the previous years and highlight the increasingly complex nature of the cohort of young people.

The key factors that increase the risk of the young person re-offending:

- Thinking and behaviour
- Features of lifestyle
- Emotional development and mental health
- Attitudes to offending and behaviours
- Substance misuse
- Learning, Education, Training and Employment
- Family and Wider Networks

- Parenting care and supervision
- Care History

The risk factors detailed above are broadly in line with those identified in the previous year and reflect the challenging nature of the cohort of young people who are referred to the STYJS. The above information continues to suggest that the risk factors influencing young people to re-offend are strongest around individual factors including self-identity, Attitudes to Offending and Thinking and Behaviour. The Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of young people is also a significant factor and reflects the influence of ACES and Trauma upon the young people we work with. The influence of a young person's legal status and care history have become areas of concern, and this reflects the increasing risks of exploitation for this vulnerable group.

STYJS will continue to monitor the nature of those desistance factors that impact on the young people we work with and seek to shape service delivery to respond and address these specific needs.

## Response to HMI Thematic Inspections

During 2023-2024 the following thematic inspection was undertaken which identified development actions for YJS:

*A joint thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention.*

The report for this inspection was published in November 2023 detailing a range of recommendations for Youth Justice Service Management Boards, YJS Managers, Childrens Services, Police Services and Central Government Departments and Services. With reference to YJS Management Boards and Service Managers the inspection recommended:

YJS Management Boards should:

- require detailed audit information on children who are subject to RYDA and on wider remand decision-making, including information on potential ethnic disparities at every stage of the youth justice system
- initiate a multi-agency review when a child is RYDA, which identifies reasons for the offending and missed opportunities to intervene
- address gaps in specialist provision for black and mixed heritage boys and their parents/ carers to reduce their likelihood of being subject to RYDA
- where they share a youth court area, in consultation with the court, conduct annual reviews of their joint working arrangements with those neighbouring YJSs.

YJS managers should:

- make sure that YJS practitioners and social workers have access to and use guidance and training that sets out how bail and remand processes work
- collaborate with their local police force to be able to contribute to police bail conditions to reduce the need for children to be brought before the court
- in collaboration with children's services, identify accommodation options for children at their first court appearance where there is a risk of RYDA, including bail and remand in local authority accommodation
- work with local defence solicitors to make sure that they are aware of data on outcomes for children in police custody, particularly the potential adverse impact of 'no comment' interviews.
- offer voluntary support to children who have been acquitted following a period of RYDA, including when they have reached the age of 18.

In response to these recommendation STYJS will be undertaking a review of all RYDA outcomes received during 2023-2024. The focus of this review will be to examine work undertaken with the young people subject to RYDA prior to them receiving these outcomes, what actions were undertaken by the STYJS to mitigate against a custodial remand and what were the final outcomes arising from each case. A report arising from this view will be presented to the STYJS Management Board and any actions or recommendations will be added to the service development plan.

In response to other recommendations raised by the inspection:

- STYJS management team undertake reviews of all custodial remand outcomes to ensure that these are both legal and appropriate.
- STYJS provide bail options to the court for the court where these can be safely managed in the community.
- The Children in Police Custody Group provides a forum to review all cases where young people have been held overnight or for over 12 hours and ensures that the PACE protocol is followed.
- With reference to voluntary support for children who have been acquitted following a RYDA, this has potential resource implications, but consideration can be given to including such responses as part of our prevention offer.
- With regards to the ongoing management of remand cases, joint working is in place with Children's Services and other partners to ensure opportunities can be identified to offer robust community intervention to offer to the court to reduce the risk of RYDA.
- There is a shared practice guidance with the Children's Services in each local authority which details how services will work together where a young person gets remanded.



## CHILD FIRST

During 2023-2024 STYJS has continued to underpin work with young people with the Child First principle. The approach of the service is to see every young person as an individual and ensure that all responses with the young person reflect their needs and interests and to ensure that the YJS and partners respond in a supportive and co-ordinated way. Young people are encouraged to engage and participate, and we seek to listen to them and ensure their voice can be heard and this approach will be enhanced during 2024-2025 to ensure that young people have a clear voice in how services are delivered with them.

During 2023-2024 we have sought to develop and shape our practice to ensure that this is responsive to individual needs and this approach has been informed by the following:

- Staff training and development- work has been undertaken with staff to ensure that the child first principle underpins all assessment and planning, and young people have a clear voice in this. All staff have been encouraged to focus on the needs and interests of the child with the offending behaviour no longer viewed as the central focus of our work. Staff are encouraged to focus on the positive influences and strengths in a young person's life and ensure intervention packages and approaches embrace these to support positive outcome focussed work.
- STJYS continues to take a trauma informed approach to our work with young people, and we believe it is important to base our work on the positives and strengths in a young person's life. The Trauma Informed model used by the YJS in partnership with TEWV CAMHS has been

paused during 2023-2024, however negotiations are ongoing to ensure a new model of delivery can be established to further enhance work in this area.

- During 2023-2024 we have further developed our partnership with the Speech and Language Service and extended the reach of this provision to include support to our prevention activity. The Specialist Speech and Language Therapist has provided an important point of reference to guide and support staff in how they deliver interventions and communicate with the young person. This approach is also supported by direct intervention with young people to assess and support the young person. Feedback from young people and families has been wholly positive with one young person stating:

*Thank you so much for all of your support – you get me!*

- During 2023-2024 we have continued to build on the success of our Tuff Tees and Ladybugs gender-based programmes to offer young people a safe space to engage with the service and our partners. During 2024-2025 we will be re-introducing the Pre Court intervention programmes to offer intervention with groups of young people supported by Turnaround, other prevention activity and OOCs.
- The Custody Navigator project has provided a mechanism to ensure that the needs and interests of young people are being identified and appropriately addressed in the Police Custody area. The Navigators are there to support and engage with young people, collaborate with other agencies in the custody area and provide ongoing support to young people to ensure they can access the services they need in the community.

STYJS has encountered differences of approach with partners who have enforcement responsibilities and communities affected by the behaviours of young people. This includes the responses to anti-social behaviour and the publicity of civil court outcomes which can conflict with the child first ethos. The YJS approach places an emphasis on the child and seeks to engage and challenge behaviours and this may not always have the immediate and visible response required by partners and communities.

## **VOICE OF THE CHILD**

The voice of the child is an important factor which underpins all our work with young people. During 2023-2024 STYJS has continued to promote the voice of the young person across all areas of our work, using self-assessments and learning style tools to ensure all work we undertake with young people reflects their experience and is delivered in ways which allows the young person to maximise their participation and involvement with the service.

STYJS has extended the provision offered by the Speech and Language Service and this now includes our prevention work and Turnaround. This role continues to assist and support STYJS staff, promotes engagement and support with young people and supports the training and development of STYJS staff. In addition, the Speech and Language Therapist has acted as an advocate for young people ensure that their voice is heard in such forums as School disciplinary processes, where the Therapist has provided input on the challenges facing young people including those with communication or neuro diversity needs.

### **What young people said about their YJS experience:**

STYJS provides all young people who have received an intervention with the service the opportunity to comment on their experience with the service through an online feedback survey. During 2023-2024, 273 young people responded and provided feedback through the survey:

- 95.97% said my YJS workers did enough to help me take part in the YJS work.
- 81.32% said the YJS helped me to feel safer.
- 91.21% said someone at the YJS asked me what I thought would help me stop offending.
- 85.35% said I had enough to say in what went into my YJS Contract/Intervention Plan.
- 93.77% said my work with the YJS has helped me realise I can change.
- 97.44% said the YJS took my views seriously.
- 99.63% said I have been treated fairly by the people who worked with me.

- 88.64% said I think the service given to me by the YJS was good.

These responses are consistent with responses provided by young people over previous years and show a high level of satisfaction in the work of the YJS and experience of young people. The survey provides further evidence of the work undertaken by YJS staff to engage young people, listen to what they have to say and support them to have their say in the work undertaken with them. This is reflected in the outcome to the question about the young person having a say in their contract/plan, with over 8 out of 10 young people saying they had an input into this. This reflects the ongoing developments we have made in the child first approach and ensuring that the voice of the young person and their parent/carer is heard and listened to. The outcomes from the survey have been used to target improvements in service delivery and how we engage with young people.

## **GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Partnership arrangements**

STYJS provides youth justice services for the local authorities of Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland. Corporate governance arrangements are provided by Middlesbrough Council and STYJS sits within Middlesbrough Council Children's Services, in the directorate of Education and Partnerships.

This offers the YJS a broad remit, working across all children service areas ensuring links with those services that can maximise outcomes for young people, including early help and safeguarding services. The Head of Partnerships (the STYJS Manager) is line managed by the Middlesbrough Council Director of Education and Partnerships (Chair of the Management Board), who is also a member of Middlesbrough's Children's Services Senior Management Team. The Head of Partnerships contributes and consults with Redcar and Cleveland's Children's Services Management Team on a quarterly basis, providing updates on service developments and performance.

In addition to our links with Children's Services, STYJS has strong links across other services and partner agencies in both local authorities, including Education Services, Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Teams and Early Help and Prevention Services. These links ensure that processes are in place that can promote joined up working to support young people into services as well as placing STYJS in a position to influence decision making around issues such as anti-social behaviour and how these impact on young people. Relationships with partners are very mature and create an environment of mutual respect and trust which allows STYJS to promote our child first approach and secure buy in from partners.

STYJS is also a key partner in the new SHiFT programmes in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland, with the Head of Service acting as line manager for the SHiFT lead in Middlesbrough. SHiFT is a new initiative that has been introduced in both authorities to support young people. SHiFT exists to break the destructive cycle of children involved in, or at risk of crime. The service works with children and young people up to the age of 25 for whom things are getting worse and who would benefit most from an intensive and therapeutic relationship. SHiFT aims to safely return children to Middlesbrough or Redcar and Cleveland who are currently cared for and placed outside of the local authority area, to return to live with their families or to live in a suitable setting closer to their family and community. In addition, SHiFT builds trusting professional relationships to support children with whom services have previously struggled to engage, but for whom risks are escalating, placing them at a heightened risk of becoming entrenched in criminal activity and/or exploitation.

STYJS also supports a range of partnerships which are essential to supporting and informing the work we do. These include:

- Work with Community Safety Partnerships in both local authorities with a focus on anti-social behaviour and problem solving with representation at the Community Safety Partnership meetings and AIM in Middlesbrough
- Working with the Safeguarding Children's Services in both local authorities to support service development, inspection readiness and service improvement. In addition, the Head of Service represents STYJS at the No Wrong Door Partnership meetings.

- Supporting Safeguarding Arrangements for children and young people, attending strategies, child protection and planning meetings for children and young people
- Ensuring representation at the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnerships, to monitor performance, support quality improvement and staff training and development activity.
- The Head of Service is the lead manager for the Middlesbrough Children's Trust and is a representative at the Redcar and Cleveland Young People's Partnership Board
- Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked (VEMT) arrangements for young people identified as at risk of this, in both local authorities, supporting both strategic and operational forums.
- The Head of Service is the lead officer with oversight of SHiFT and attends the partnerships boards in each local authority.
- The Head of Service currently chairs the Children in Custody group which reviews young people held in police custody and PACE decisions.
- Engaging in multi-agency forums for education, training and employment which focus on attendance, inclusion and behaviours in schools and to address issues impacting on NEETs.
- Attendance at the Prevent Bronze group to fulfil statutory duties relating to extremism and community tensions.
- Representation at the OPCC led CURV meetings to ensure involvement in the oversight of the work of the Violence Reduction Unit
- Representation at the Cleveland Local Criminal Justice Board
- Representation at the Strategic MAPPA Board

Within both local authorities STYJS have strong partnership arrangements with children's safeguarding services at strategic and operational levels. The STYJS Service Manager attends the South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership meetings, Corporate Parenting Board Strategic MACH groups and Strategic VEMT arrangements. This is supported operationally by attendance at a range of subgroups, learning and development forums and task and finish processes by other members of the management team.

In addition to the above, at an operational level STYJS is represented at a managerial level at a number of multi-agency forums designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people. These include:

- STSCP thematic groups
- CSE/VEMT Multi Agency and strategy meetings
- Safeguarding Risk Management Groups
- Vulnerable Young People's Groups
- Domestic Violence Partnerships
- Problem Solving Groups
- Education, Attendance and Behaviour meetings
- Early Help Huddles

STYJS also ensures attendance at any planning or strategy meetings for young people who are subject to Children's Services intervention.

Strong co-working arrangements are established at an operational level with both Children's Services Teams with clear systems in place for communication with in the two Local Authorities. The joint working agreements with both local authorities are subject to ongoing review and updated to reflect current practices. The STYJS safeguarding case managers provide another essential link to Children's Services teams in both Local Authorities as well as providing advice and guidance to colleagues on safeguarding issues and processes.

Arrangements are also now in place for YJS single points of contact for the two Multi Agency Children's Hubs and Early Help Hubs and this offers key points of contact for MACH/Early Help staff to contact for information and advice on young people known to STYJS. The MACH case admin has access to STYJS case management system 'Childview' this allows for checks to be made as a referral is received to the MACH to ascertain if the case is open to STYJS and ensure that joint working

commences at the earliest opportunity. These processes also assist with the identification of young people who could benefit from Turnaround support.

Reciprocal arrangements are in place to offer access to case management systems, and this allows YJS Service Support staff to access these systems to identify if new referrals are known to children's services and to access information. STYJS staff log new referrals into individual children's files where they are open to safeguarding teams and this ensures effective communication and joint working.

Joint supervision arrangements are now well established between the YJS and both Children's Services and this offers the opportunity to share decision making and agree strategies to meet the needs of young people known to both services.

The culture of working together among the youth justice services in the Tees Valley is well established and during 2023-2024 such collaboration supported the development of the Custody Navigators project and the introduction of the 'Making Good' Immediate Justice scheme.

One of our shared priorities during 2024-2025 will be to engage with the evaluation for the Custody Navigators project and use this to secure further funding for the project to ensure its continued delivery beyond March 2025. We will continue to work together to respond to challenges placed before us and continue to look for opportunities to develop services and improve practice. As a group we engage positively with the Cleveland Police and Police and Crime Commissioner, through a programme of monthly meetings. This has benefitted the youth justice services and we have achieved greater security in our funding from the OPCC.

The Trauma Informed Model of working with young people developed in partnership between the STYJS Cleveland area Youth Justice Services and TEWV NHS Trust has been paused due to issues over ongoing funding. During 2024-2025 STYJS in partnership with the ICB and the other Cleveland YJS will be negotiating a new model for this service, one which will offer wider capacity to support the YJS and ensure effective responses with young people. STYJS will also be re-establishing the pathways into the Forensic CAMHS to ensure that the needs of young people with emotional and mental health needs can be met, and they can be supported into services.

The accommodation arrangements of STYJS continue to offer co-location and co-working arrangements with the Middlesbrough Case Management and Resource Teams sharing an office space with Children's Services, Early Help and Education Teams. The Redcar Case Management Team will continue to be co-located within the Redcar Police HQ with links into Cleveland Police and Redcar Anti-Social Behaviour Teams. The YJS also has a full-time presence in the Youth Court and continues to provide a commissioned Court Service on behalf of Hartlepool YJS.

## **STYJS Management Board**

STYJS is accountable to a multi-agency Management Board, currently chaired by the Middlesbrough Director for Education and Partnerships. The membership and terms of reference of the Management Board are reviewed annually and membership is at an appropriate Senior Officer level to contribute to and support decision making in Management Board meetings. The Management Board is reflective of our statutory partners and other essential partners and consists of representatives from:

- Middlesbrough Council, Children's Services
- Middlesbrough Council Education Services
- Middlesbrough Council, Elected Member
- South Tees Public Health
- Redcar and Cleveland Council, Children's Services
- Redcar and Cleveland Council, Elected member
- Cleveland Police
- Probation Service
- Northeast and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The role of the Management Board is to:

- Provide strategic direction and challenge to the YJS management team on service delivery and development.
- Provide accountability for the performance of the service.
- Provide financial accountability to the service.
- Challenge partners with regards to their commitments to STYJS, including financial and resource commitments

The Management Board continues to ensure the multi-agency co-operation that enables STYJS to deliver effective youth justice services and improve outcomes for young people. Through a programme of quarterly meetings, the Management Board provides the strategic overview and direction and a framework for oversight and assurance for the work of STYJS.



The Management Board members provide links into other partnerships, and this offers the opportunity to promote the work of STYJS to a wider audience. This also offers the reciprocal arrangement where board members feed information from their partnerships to other board members and the management team to disseminate as appropriate to YJS staff.

During 2024-2025 we will be delivering development sessions with board members. The aim of these sessions will be to support board members to understand their role and responsibilities to the partnership, how they support the Head of Service, Service staff and seconded officers. In addition, there will be a focus on the new inspection standards and the expectations placed on board members. To support this, we will be drawing on materials and tools available through the Association of YOT Managers.

Also, during 2024 the responsibility of the chairing of the management board will pass to the Executive Director for Children's Services in Middlesbrough. This will offer a higher level of strategic oversight across Childrens Services locally and across the region.

## Links to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

The May 2024 Police and Crime Commissioner elections resulted in the election of a new PCC who also represents a different political party. This presents new challenges and new opportunities for STYJS as we develop new relationships and understand the priorities for the new PCC and how these can potentially impact on the work of the service. We will seek to work closely with the OPCC to develop services to young people, communities and victims of crime.

The OPCC continues to provide funding to STYJS to support the delivery of Out of Court Disposals, with specific reference to the delivery of the Community Resolution as the principal option to prevent young people entering the youth justice system, this has contributed significantly to reducing FTEs. During 2023-2024 the options for OOCDS have increased with the wider use of Outcome 22 as an educational intervention with young people, with the added offer of support from Turnaround.

During 2023-2024 STYJS introduced an Immediate Justice offer, locally branded as 'Making Good'. This programme aims to work with those young people who are engaging in anti-social behaviour in our communities and challenge them to engage with services and positive activities to divert them away from anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. Since the introduction of Making Good in September 2023 up to 31 March 2024 STYJS has engaged with 22 young people on this programme.

## Links to the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV)

Cleveland Police area is designated as a Violence Reduction Unit area and the OPCC has developed the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) to lead the delivery of the Violence Reduction Strategy locally. During 2023-2024 this partnership working with the OPCC and CURV has been further enhanced with the introduction of the Custody Navigators project, funded by the CURV. The Navigators provide additional support and engagement to young people in the custody area with the priority being those who have been arrested for serious violence offences. The project aims to build on the 'reachable and teachable' moments where a young person may be more receptive to intervention. Since the introduction of the Navigators 150 young people from the South Tees area have been supported in police custody. The Custody Navigators project is a central theme of the CURV model enabling services to engage with young people in police custody.

STYJS is a key partner in the CURV governance structures. As part of the oversight of CURV STYJS has secured representation at the strategic and operational meeting processes.

STYJS has also aligned itself with the CURV vision that allows...

*individuals, families and communities to live, learn and work in Cleveland free from the fear, effects and consequences of violence.*

This is reflected in the priorities outlined in this plan with a focus on prevention and diversion, challenging serious youth violence and exploitation seeking to ensure young people have access to support services with a specific focus on education, training and employment.

## Staffing

STYJS is staffed in line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), including, Social Workers, a Seconded Probation Officer (post currently unfilled) and Seconded Police Officers. The service will have 47 individual members of staff in 2024-2025 with no vacancies currently. This is an increase of 2 members of staff compared to the previous year. During 2023-2024 the staffing establishment was increased due to introduction of the new Making Good and Custody Navigator roles. One of the key risks and challenges for STYJS during 2024-2025 will be to secure the additional funding needed to secure the future of such roles. The service structure, detailed at appendix 3, shows how these staff are deployed. The service currently has 31 female members of staff and 11 males, with currently 5 vacancies which are currently being recruited to. In terms of ethnicity, 1 member of staff is of Pakistani origin, with the remaining staff being white British.

The majority of staff are employed by Middlesbrough Council on behalf of the partnership, with additional staff seconded from partners including Cleveland Police and the South Tees Speech and

Language Service. At present STYJS does not have seconded probation officer, despite this being part of the statutory requirements placed on our partners, there is currently an arrangement in place for the service to claim back the financial costs of this role. A pathway to access young people into adult services has been established and discussions are ongoing to secure the seconded officer.

STYJS has 3 core teams, these include 2 case management teams who service each local authority area and a resource team which works across the service area and supports the delivery of case management and service development activity.

The Case Management Teams are comprised of:

- An operations Manager
- Assistant Operations Manager
- Youth Justice Case Managers
- Probation Officer
- Support Workers

The Resource Team is comprised of:

- Partnerships Manager
- Prevention and Diversion Operations Manager
- 2 Assistant Operations Managers
- Education Training and Employment Specialist
- Restorative Justice Specialist
- Specialist Court Officer
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Prevention/Turnaround Case Managers
- Police Officers
- Restorative Justice Worker
- Custody Navigators
- Making Good Practitioner
- Support Workers
- Business Support Officer
- Business Support Workers

The YJS also has access to a Business Analytics Partner who is based within the Information and Governance Team in Middlesbrough Council and Finance support is provided by a Finance Business Partner from Middlesbrough Council's Finance Section.

The provision of a dedicated Court Specialist ensures that STYJS provides appropriate and timely responses to young people in the Court arena. The Court Specialist also advises and informs Court users and supports decision making. This Court Specialist is supported by other YJS staff during busy Court periods. STYJS also supports colleagues in other YJS areas delivering a Court service on behalf of Hartlepool YJS and supporting other services from the region when young people appear at Teesside Courts. The quality and the effectiveness of YJS staff in Court is recognised and valued by other Court users, including the judiciary.

STYJS structure ensures that the service is adaptable and responsive to changing needs and priorities, whilst ensuring both local authority areas are effectively served. This service model has supported us well in 2023-2024 allowing the service to absorb the challenges placed by introducing 3 new projects, Custody Navigators, Turnaround and Making Good without impacting on our ability to deliver core statutory services. The service model supports effective responses to the challenges posed by the changing nature of the types of offending we encounter with increases in serious and violent crime and the impact of forms of exploitation. The structure has also allowed us to develop opportunities to intervene earlier, expanding the opportunities at OOC, the delivery of Turnaround and group-based activity in the community and with schools. STYJS will continue to promote a learning and development culture in the service, which supports practice improvement and provides opportunity for staff development.

## Involvement of Community Volunteers

The work of STYJS is supported by a small group of volunteers recruited from our local community, who offer the service invaluable life skills, life experiences and local knowledge which can be used to great effect to engage and support young people. The main focus of this volunteer offer is with the Young People's Panels we deliver as part of the Referral Order and all volunteers receive a full training programme to equip them with the knowledge and skills to make a success of this role. Volunteers are trained to a Restorative Practice level 2 qualification and this training is enhanced by other opportunities reflecting emerging areas of practice with volunteers receiving training in the Trauma Informed Model, Speech, Language and Communication and Child First approaches.

## Staff Development and Training

An important factor in delivering high quality services is to develop the staff team to build an extensive skills, knowledge and experience base to fulfil the duties and requirements of their role. STYJS will be following the Middlesbrough Council People Strategy as we look to invest in our staff team to ensure that we have the right people with the right behaviours and skills to deliver the outcomes as detailed in this plan and the Council's Corporate Plan. STYJS continues to invest in our staff team using the following processes:

- Using the Middlesbrough Council Corporate Induction Programme for all new staff to ensure that they receive a co-ordinated introduction to the YJS, with all the necessary corporate training to meet statutory duties.
- Provide regular monthly supervision as a tool to support professional judgement, including regular performance related issues and staff development.
- Provide a process of annual appraisal and ongoing appraisal reviews to ensure performance is effectively managed and staff development opportunities can be realised.
- Provide opportunities for staff to access training and development opportunities to support their professional and personal growth, including.
  - Access to Middlesbrough Council Corporate Training
  - Access to the Youth Justice Application Framework
  - Accessing STSCP Training
  - Attending conferences and development sessions relevant to role

During 2023-2024 STYJS has embarked on a programme of staff development and team building sessions supported by Project Connect. These sessions have been designed to re-connect the service following the impact of COVID19, changes to the staff team with new members joining the service and the introduction of new hybrid working practices. The aim has been to support the staff team to re-establish meaningful connections and to re-build a team identity. This process will be further enhanced by the continued roll-out of restorative practice training across the whole service.

A key element of our training in 2024-2025 will be to deliver Restorative Practice training across all levels of the service to assist staff to develop skills in restorative approaches to support our work with young people and their families and support the development of a restorative culture and ethos across all levels of the service.

The service will align itself with the Middlesbrough Council People Strategy. This strategy forms part of the council Cultural Transformation Programme and the People Strategy has been designed to:

- employees and members have the knowledge and skills needed to maximise our ability to achieve improved outcomes for residents, within the future target operating model.

The People Strategy sets out to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels engaged and encouraged, with access to a diverse support and development offer, in order to be the best, they can be and deliver the best possible services they can.

STYJS delivers a programme of monthly team meetings with the full staff team. These meetings provide opportunities for professional collaboration among staff, with a focus on emerging issues and updates on service developments. The team meetings also offer an invaluable social function during the current hybrid working arrangements experienced by all staff, providing opportunities for the full team to come together and catch up with colleagues and friends.

## **RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

### **Budget 2024-2025**

The final grant figure from the YJB has yet to be set and information from the YJB indicates that there is the potential for a further delay in announcing the grant figure until after the upcoming General Election. Therefore, it is not currently possible to give a figure for the pooled income for 2024-2025. For the purposes of writing this plan, we will work on an assumption of a similar settlement to that of 2023-2024. The final budget figure will include contributions from partners as well as the YJB grant, plus the continued in-kind support of a seconded Probation Officer or a financial settlement if this post cannot be filled, 2 seconded Police Officers and the accommodation provided by Cleveland Police at the Redcar Police HQ. This figure will also include a £5000.00 payment from Hartlepool YJS for the provision of Court services.

During 2023-2024 STYJS has seen a reduction in contributions from local authority partners, reflecting the financial challenges faced by all services. This presents a renewed risk to the service and could impact on the level of service we are able to offer.

Staffing costs represent the largest expenditure item for STYJS and as detailed above during 2023-2024 STYJS has continued to invest in our staffing resources with the support of additional funding streams, securing new posts which will improve service delivery and promote positive outcomes for young people.

One of the challenges we need to consider when allocating resources will be the current high cost of living with continuing increases in the prices of the goods and services we use. Consideration will also need to be given to how this will impact on the young people and families we work with and how we respond to the challenges that families face.

### **YJB Grant Funding 2024-2025:**

The YJB grant allowance for 2024-2025 has not been agreed at the time of producing this plan. As a result, it is not possible to offer any indication currently as to how financial resources can be specifically allocated. This funding will continue to be the most significant element of the budget and continues to support the work we are looking to undertake in response to our priority areas and statutory duties. We look forward to the grant announcement and will make informed decisions on how this can be used based on data available to us and to invest in the priority areas detailed in this plan.

STYJS has been able to maintain service levels, sustain continuous improvements in our performance, achieving positive outcomes for the young people we work with. This has been achieved despite serving communities who experience significant levels of deprivation and with young people who demonstrate increasingly complex needs. The additional funding from the Youth Justice Grant has allowed STYJS to invest in access to a Speech and Language Therapist to support staff and engage with young people with language and communication needs.

The YJB Grant will continue to be used efficiently and to maximum effect to improve the range of services we have with young people.

### **Turnaround Funding 2024-2025:**

STYJS is to receive a grant of £242,159.95 from the Ministry of Justice to support the delivery of the Turnaround Programme during 2024-2025. This includes a grant of £15,244.85 to support young people accessing the programme from areas with high incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour. This funding will be used to assist STYJS to meet the target of 84 young people engaging in the Turnaround programme based on a 'base unit' of approximately £2,900 per child.

This funding will be used to support the programme and enhance activities with young people, a key element of this funding is the additional resource for Speech and Language Services we can offer through Turnaround.

### **Remand Framework for Children:**

The YJB Grant for Remands for 2024-2025 has been set at £95,005. This is an increase in the grant figure for the previous year of £71,300. During 2023-2024 the total remand costs for young people remanded from the STYJS area was £89,216.

It is anticipated that the costs for Remand to Youth Detention Accommodation will continue to present a significant risk to the YJS given the complex nature of the young people we work with, and the increasing risks to young people presented by forms of exploitation which can introduce young people into more serious types of offending. STYJS will continue to mitigate against remands to youth detention through the effective use of our court services and the offer to case manage young people in the community.

The remand grant is complimented by additional funding from the 2 local authorities, £30,400 from Middlesbrough and £35,120 from Redcar and Cleveland, and this additional funding will be used to mitigate against any additional costs over the allocated remand grant from the YJB.



### **Funding from the PCC:**

STYJS will continue to receive funding from the OPCC to support our early intervention and prevention work through the enhanced OOC model. During 2023-2024 STYJS has extended the OOC offer for young people with the increasing use of Outcome 22 as an educational intervention with young people, in many cases also supported by Turnaround. The extension of the provision offered as part of our OOC programme has led to a marked increase in work in this area and we continue to have low levels of re-offending by young people subject to OOCs.

During 2024-2025 STYJS will receive additional funding through CURV, of £177,668 to support the delivery of a Cleveland wide Custody Navigator project. This funding will continue to be used to support the staffing costs relating to the project with a small additional fund to support interventions and activities with young people. One of the priorities for the service during 2024-2025 will be to engage with the evaluation of the Custody Navigator project with the view to identifying future funding opportunities to support the delivery of the project beyond March 2025.

Funding for the Immediate Justice project will also come through the OPCC, the level of this funding is currently under discussion.

## PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2023-2024 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

During 2023-2024 the priorities for STYJS were to focus on further developing the prevention and diversion offer to ensure that we continue to reduce the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system. In addition, there was also focus on challenging serious youth violence the most significant challenge we currently face in our work with young people, especially those most vulnerable and difficult to engage. Underpinning all our work has been the child first principle, responding to the needs of the individual child and ensuring they have a voice and are listened to.

The 2023-2024 the priorities to support ongoing service development included:

- Priority 1: Prevention- to further embed the Turnaround Programme and develop alternative Prevention opportunities to support partners who cannot benefit from Turnaround.
- Priority 2: Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation- to ensure a co-ordinated approach with partners to support the needs of young people at risk of or subject to serious violence and/or exploitation.
- Priority 3: Preparation for Inspection- to ensure that the YJS are fully prepared for the challenge of a potential HMIP Inspection during 2023-24.
- Priority 4: Education- to continue to engage with partners and ETE service providers to ensure the best outcomes for young people engaged with the YJS.
- Priority 5: Restorative Practice- to establish a restorative culture and ethos across all areas of YJS practice.
- Priority 6: Performance- to ensure that the YJS is fully prepared for the challenge presented by the new YJB performance framework.

The priorities in the Youth Justice Plan are supported by the service development plan which details the actions to be achieved in relation to each of the service priorities. The service development plan for 2023-2024 outlined a total of 35 individual actions across the 6 priority areas. The service development plan provides the framework for the YJS management team to monitor progress against the key actions related to each priority area, to identify where progress is being made and to mitigate against those areas where further development is required or provide explanations where this will not be met. This development plan is monitored monthly by the YJS management team at the monthly management meetings.

Progress detailed in the service development plan shows that 23 of the actions were achieved with a further 6 making significant progress. The remaining 6 actions were not achieved over the course of the year and these included actions linked to the preparation for inspection where delays in finalising inspection criteria have meant that this priority will roll over into 2024-2025. In addition, one of the challenges we placed on ourselves was to engage with schools to look at restorative approaches to prevent exclusions and to support disciplinary matters. Unfortunately, little progress has been made in this area, although the ETE Specialist has been able to engage with schools to discuss support for young people at risk of exclusion.

Achievements made against each priority include:

Priority 1: Prevention- to further embed the Turnaround Programme and develop alternative Prevention opportunities to support partners who cannot benefit from Turnaround.

- Turnaround was introduced in January 2023 and is now the main prevention offer available to STYJS and its partners.
- One of the challenges we have faced with regards to the Turnaround programme has been to identify and engage young people into the programme. High levels of young people supported by Children's Services under Child Protection and as children in care across both authorities has meant that many the young people, we identify for the programme are not able to benefit from such support.
- During 2023-2024 significant efforts were made to engage with partners in the Anti-Social Behaviour Teams to ensure that this pathway offered an effective route for young people to access Turnaround for additional support.
- A pathway for schools and other education providers was also identified through the Turnaround criteria.

- The priority to work towards meeting the Turnaround targets has meant that resource has had to be prioritised into this area.

Priority 2: Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation- to ensure a co-ordinated approach with partners to support the needs of young people at risk of or subject to serious violence and/or exploitation.

- STYJS has senior management representation on the CURV Strategic Board and the Tees Strategic Exploitation Group
- Representation is also in place with the operational Management groups
- The Custody Navigators are now embedded into the Youth Custody area and viewed as a valued resource by all key partners

Priority 3: to ensure that the YJS are fully prepared for the challenge of a potential HMIP Inspection during 2023-24.

- YJS managers attended the HMIP consultation seminars on the new Inspection criteria
- STYJS has provided feedback through the HMIP consultation process
- A programme of audits has been maintained to monitor YJS practice

Priority 4: Education: to continue to engage with partners and ETE service providers to ensure the best outcomes for young people engaged with the YJS.

- The STYJS ETE Specialist has established monitoring systems to allow for the tracking of the ETE status of young people
- The ETE Specialist has established links with leads across a range of Education Support Services and Schools
- The Inclusion Pathway has now been embedded as the primary pathway to support young people at risk of exclusion or poor attendance

Priority 5: Restorative Practice- to establish a restorative culture and ethos across all areas of YJS practice.

- Restorative Practice Training has been delivered to YJS Support staff and Managers
- STYJS follows the Victims Code of Practice to support our work with victims of crime
- STYJS has established a broad range of Reparation Activity to engage young people and provide opportunities for them to make positive contributions to their communities

Priority 6: Performance- to ensure that the YJS is fully prepared for the challenge presented by the new YJB performance framework.

- The upgrade to Childview, including for performance reporting was undertaken successfully
- All staff have been trained and supported to understand their responsibilities to assisting the YJS to achieve the performance targets
- The performance reporting remains a challenge, with issues with the Case Management System pulling through the appropriate data. We are assured that these issues will be resolved with subsequent updates

## PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES

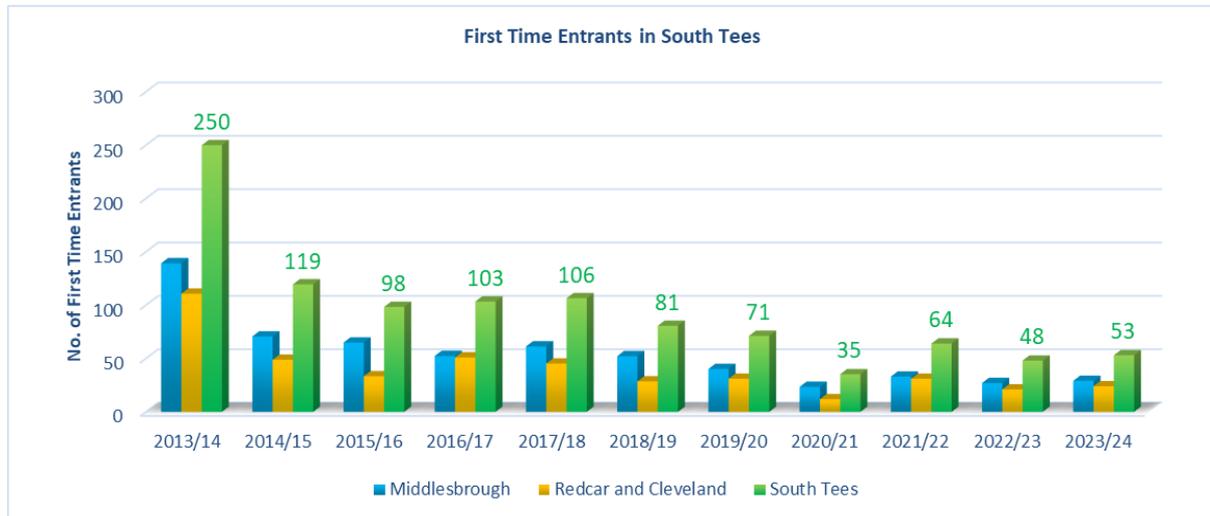
### National Outcome Measures

#### First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System:

During 2023-2024 there were 53 First Time Entrants (FTEs) into the Youth Justice system. This represents an increase of 5 FTES, 10%, from 48 the previous year, this included 29 from Middlesbrough and 24 from Redcar and Cleveland.

Despite this increase the figures for FTEs continue to be relatively low and demonstrate a 79% reduction for the numbers of FTEs from 10 years ago, 2013-2014. The trend for South Tees

continues to be downward over this period. STYJS continues to benefit from the enhanced OOD model currently being delivered in partnership with Cleveland Police and during 2023-2024 there has been an increase in the numbers of young people receiving Outcome 22 as a programme with many of these supported by Turnaround. The ending of Turnaround funding from March 2025 presents a risk to the prevention offer of STYJS and during 2023-2024 prevention activity will be subject to review to identify how the prevention offer will look after April 2025.



### Re-offending:

The re-offending cohort for 2023-2024 consists of 46 and this is an increase of 12 young people based on the cohort for 2022-2023. Broken down further to local authority area this cohort consists of 32 young people from Middlesbrough and 14 from Redcar and Cleveland. The increase in the cohort shows that there is now a trend for the re-offending cohort to be increasing in recent years.

Based on the available data on this cohort (to 31/12/22) a total of 12 young people re-offended or 26.1% of the cohort. This figure compares to a level of re-offending of 26.5% during the same period in 2022-23, where there were 34 young people in the cohort and 9 re-offended.

By area 6 young people from Middlesbrough re-offended, 18.8% of the cohort with these young people committing a total of 28 further offences during this period. For Redcar and Cleveland 5 young people re-offended or 35.7% of the cohort, with these young people committing 30 further offences.

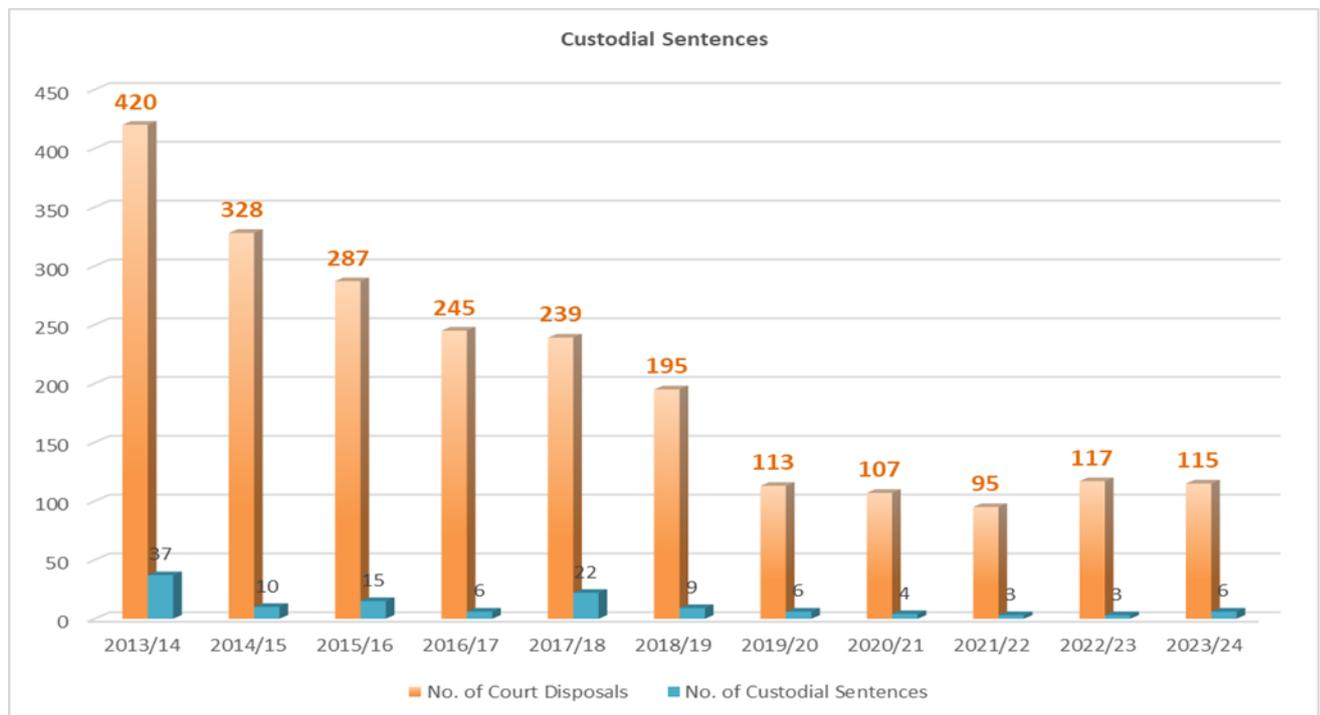
STYJS uses the re-offending tracking tool to monitor a number of cohorts to assess re-offending levels for live caseloads. These are monitored by the YJS management team on a monthly basis and enable us to identify and track those young people involved in offending and further amend our plans to challenge this behaviour.



### Use of custody - Custodial Sentences

During 2023-2024 there were a total of 6 custodial outcomes out of a total of 115 court outcomes. This represents an increase to the previous year's total of 6 custodial outcomes but maintains the relatively low numbers of young people entering custody as a result of their offending behaviour.

The overall custody rate for STYJS in 2023-2024 was 5.2% (6 out 115 court outcomes) and means that the custody rate was slightly above the indicative target of 5%. However, the figure does continue the trend of relatively low custodial outcomes compared to the figures for 2013-2014 and shows an 84% reduction in custodial sentences over this period.



All custodial outcomes are subject to scrutiny by STYJS Management Team to ensure that these are appropriate and from our reviews of custodial outcomes indicates that the young people we are working continue to be very complex and challenging with regards to the risks they pose to themselves and others, their engagement and compliance and levels of re-offending. This is reflected in the higher incidences of violent offending and use of weapons.

## Use of Custody- Remands to Youth Justice Accommodation

There were 6 remand episodes for 6 young people in 2023-2024 accounting for 272 remand bed nights. This is a decrease from the total young number people remanded in 2022-2023, and a reduction in the number of remand bed nights. All young people were aged between 15-17 years at the time of their remands and were all accommodated in a YOI. During 2023-2024, 1 young person was responsible for almost half of the remand bed nights (130) during a remand episode for the charge of attempted murder. Overall, the number of remand episodes reflect the serious nature of the offences committed by young people with 1 young person subject to a charge of murder, 1 young person subject to charge of attempted murder, 2 young people charged with Section 18 wounding, 2 young people charged with robbery and 2 young people charged with burglaries. The young person charged with murder was subsequently acquitted by court and as he was then aged 18 years, he declined further YJS support.

Young people were made subject to a custodial remand because bail was refused in all six cases due to the nature of the risks to the public and the seriousness of the offences. In 4 cases STYJS offered no bail package due to the seriousness of the offences and the difficulties managing the young person in the community.

Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation continue to be a significant financial challenge for STYJS with total remands costs of £89,216 for 2023-2024, which is significantly higher than the remand budget provided by the YJB and our partners.

All remand outcomes are subject to scrutiny by the STYJS Management Team to ensure that they are appropriate and in line with the alleged offending by the young person and meet the criteria for remands.

## New Key Performance Indicators

STYJS has supported the introduction of the ten new performance indicators introduced by the YJB from April 2023. The service has sought to provide complete and accurate returns as required by the YJB, however we have encountered some difficulties with the content and accuracy of our returns. Some areas of the return have proven difficult to extract data from the case management system and we are currently reviewing whether this is a data entry issue, software problem or misinterpretation of the YJB counting rules. As a service we hope to have resolved this by the time the April-June 2024 return needs to be submitted. We will continue to offer staff refresher training on case recording requirements to assist the service to deliver accurate returns.

## NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS

### Children from Groups Which are Overrepresented

There are no concerns regarding over representation of young people known to STYJS based on demographic criteria, personal needs, legal status or issues of vulnerability.

As detailed previously in this plan the population of young people who offend and come to the attention of STYJS are predominantly white British and male and this group made up 86.5% of the cohort. With regards to ethnicity the population figures for STYJS are in line with those of the school population indicating that there are no concerns regarding disproportionality based on ethnic groups. By age the cohort is dominated by the 15-17 year age group who represented over 60% of the caseload in 2023-2024.

STYJS now has 2 well established gender-based group activities with Tuff Tees for boys and young men and Ladybugs for girls and young women. These groups are needs based and respond to interests of the young people, including input from partner agencies, leisure activities and life skills.

In regard to other factors impacting on the cohort, 16 young people who were in local authority care were on the YJS caseload in 2023-2024 representing 2% of the cohort. This figure is less than the national average of 3% for England and below the average for our statistical neighbours. STYJS

ensures that we have representations at the child in care planning processes and arrangements are in place for joint supervision with children's services to ensure joined up plans and interventions. In regard to SEND there were 65 young people assessed with special educational needs on the caseload during 2023-2024, approximately 10% of the caseload. STYJS ensures that there are effective information sharing arrangements in place with the SEND teams to support joint working where this is required.

STYJS acknowledges the findings of the recent HMIP Bulletin, 'The supervision of care experienced children in the Youth Justice System'. This bulletin highlights a number of concerns regarding the experience of young people who come to the attention of the Youth Justice Service and other partners. In order to measure ourselves against such outcomes we will be undertaking a benchmarking exercise with the findings reported to the management board.

Data shows that at any one time there are 30+ young people on the caseload who have been assessed as vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked and STYJS ensures that we engage with the local arrangements for joint planning and intervention to support these young people and divert them away into more positive lifestyles.

## **Policing**

STYJS has strong and positive links with Cleveland Police and the strength of this partnership is evidenced by the presence of 2 highly experienced and knowledgeable Police Officers in the service and the positive work which has been undertaken to establish the young person's custody area in Middlesbrough.

The YJS seconded Police Officers provide a key link into operational police activity, sharing intelligence and information from YJS staff and in the opposite direction from Police systems. The YJS Police Officers have access to all required Police systems, and this supports the referral process for OOC and the identification process for young people who could be referred to Turnaround. YJS staff use the Police Intelligence form to share any necessary intelligence and concerns with the Police Officers to feed back to Policing teams. The YJS Police Officers are also available as sources of information to Police colleagues and offer advice and guidance on the options available to engage a young person.

The Children in Police Custody Group, detailed below provides a forum for positive discussion and learning regarding young people's experience in custody. Also, the development of the young person's custody area and the work of the Custody Navigators, both detailed below, have helped to further develop relationships with the Police. The STYJS also contributes to the Police Custody Partnership forum for discussing issues arising from custody, sharing information and sharing good practice.

## **Detention in Police Custody**

STYJS takes the lead for a Cleveland area wide Children in Police Custody Group which monitors the experience of young people in Police Custody under PACE. The group meets quarterly with a strong involvement from most key partners, including Cleveland Police, Youth Justice Services and agencies working within the Police Custody area.

The purpose of this Children in Police Custody steering group is to scrutinise instances where young people have been held overnight or longer than 12 hours in Police Custody. This group offers the opportunity for professional challenge and multi-agency learning when PACE transfers have been unsuccessful. This scrutiny activity offers all stakeholders the assurance that children and young people have been held in Police custody appropriately, and the PACE protocol has been adhered to. All PACE bed information is also reported to the Director of Children's Services in Middlesbrough.

This group reports on a quarterly basis to the YJS Management Board which provides scrutiny and a performance framework for reporting into other strategic forums. Data from January and February 2024 shows that 39 young people from the South Tees area were discussed, with 6 PACE beds being requested. The outcomes from such requests showed that no children were transferred due to the lack of availability of beds, with 2 young people deemed unpracticable to transfer due to the time

of night and requirement to be at Court the next morning. The availability of PACE beds continues to be a challenge, and this is an area for ongoing discussion locally. The group are satisfied all children are safeguarded appropriately during their custodial episode, and most safeguarding referrals were made appropriately and in a timely manner.

STYJS provides an Appropriate Adult service to support young people in custody within the Police Juvenile Custody area in Middlesbrough. The service is available for all instances where parents or other trusted adults and social are unavailable or unable to attend to support the young person in Police Custody. As well as meeting the needs of young people in the South Tees area the service also supports young people from other YJS areas who have been arrested locally. This service is also provided out of office hours by the Emergency Duty Team.

During 2023-24 STYJS played a lead in development of the bespoke, trauma informed, juvenile custody area within the Middlesbrough Police HQ, in partnership with Cleveland Police and the OPCC. This has created a safe space for young people in custody with their own access routes, and access to a breakout room for young people away from the adult area. The custody area provides trauma informed approach and additional support to young people is provided by the Custody Navigators, Mitie Nurses, Liaison and Diversion staff and the Custody Substance Misuse Team. STYJS played a lead partner role in this project with Cleveland Police, providing opportunities for young people to be engaged in the design and painting of the cells and other areas in the Young Person's Custody area. This project came about as a response to a challenge placed on Cleveland Police by the Inspectorate of Constabulary following an inspection of Cleveland Police, to make the custody area a younger person friendly environment. This project has transformed the environment in the Custody area and improved the young person's experience at this stressful time. One of the added benefits of this project is that it will mean that no child will ever need to come in to contact with an adult offender during their detention in Police Custody.

A key part of this project is the support offered by the Custody Navigators who are available to engage with young people at the 'reachable and teachable' moment when the young person enters the custody area. The Navigators have also been able to offer the young people intervention and diversion tools which can assist them to cope during the custody experience.

## Prevention

As detailed previously, Turnaround provides the primary preventions programme available to the YJS. During 2023-2024 242 young people were referred to Turnaround with 77 young people agreeing to engage with the programme and 65 young people successfully completing. STYJS has faced some significant challenges in regard to the identification of young people for the Turnaround programme, with high levels of deprivation, exploitation and violent and serious offending meaning that many young people receive children's services intervention under child protection or children in care. As a result, this had limited the numbers of young people who can benefit from the programme. Nevertheless, a number of young people have engaged in the programme and received positive outcomes, with no young people returning for YJS intervention as a result of offending behaviours.

The anticipated ending of Turnaround funding presents a challenge for STYJS with regards to establishing an effective preventions offer from March 2025. Consultation will be undertaken with stakeholders and staff to identify an appropriate model of service provision for early intervention and prevention from April 2025.

STYJS continues to deliver school-based group programmes and the Tuff Tees and Ladybugs programmes, and these will be enhanced by the re-introduction of our 'pre-court' programme during 2024.

## Diversion

The principle diversionary provision offered by STYJS is the enhanced OOC which we deliver in partnership with Cleveland Police. This scheme is based on referrals from Cleveland Police which are screened by the YJS Police Officers and duty manager to ensure they are suitable for an OOC as opposed to prosecution. This decision is based on any known previous history of the young

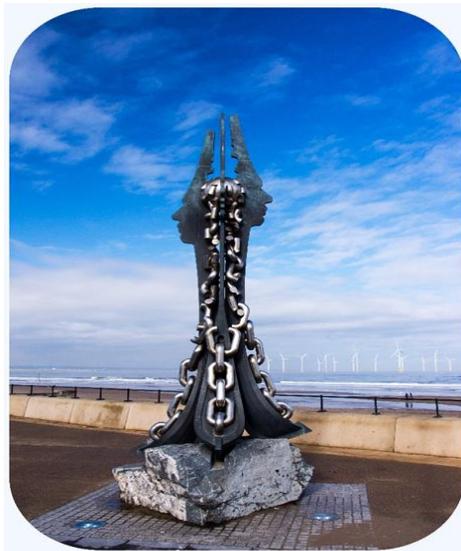
person, levels of engagement with previous programmes and the nature and seriousness of the offence. The referral is subsequently reviewed at the OOCB Panel, following assessment of the young person before a final decision can be made on the most appropriate option to be offered to meet the needs of the young person and respond to the needs of victims and communities.

The OOCB offer includes a range of interventions including Outcome 22, Restorative Intervention, Community Resolution, Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution, with Outcome 22 also supported by Turnaround where appropriate. There is no escalator for these outcomes with the young person able to receive any intervention which the Panel deems most appropriate to challenge their behaviours.

During 2023-2024 there were 247 OOCB outcomes with 10.9% going on to re-offend and be re-referred to the YJS. Offending for Community Resolution the principal OOCB programme was 6%.

There is a Cleveland OOCB Scrutiny Panel which provides oversight of the OOCB process which meets quarterly to review a sample of cases. Internally STYJS undertakes periodic audits of OOCB cases and reviews of the decision-making process, and all assessment and planning are subject to QA. The most recent audit was undertaken in July 2023 and this audit found:

- 92% of assessments were judged to be of the required standards
- Challenges were identified in regard to risk judgements in some cases
- 93% of cases showed good levels of engagement with consideration given to the learning and behavioural needs of young people
- 93% of cases showed that there was a strong partnership approach in cases
- 93% of the young people successfully completed the programme
- Only 1 young person (7%) went on to re-offend



## Remands

STYJS takes a proactive approach to reducing the use of Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation and seeks to offer the most appropriate options to the court. The introduction of the Custody Navigators has provided an opportunity to engage early with the young person in the youth custody suite to allow staff to build relationships, get to know the young person and build trust.

When considering options for young people at risk of Remand to YDA, STYJS Court staff will engage in discussion with other relevant court users (CPS and defence for example) to discuss what we feel is an appropriate option based on the nature of offending and the risks presented by the young person. All options will be considered including bail support and remands to local authority care where this is a suitable alternative to a remand to YDA.

During 2023-24 there were 18 remand outcomes including 6 RYDA for young people, 2 Remands to Local Authority Accommodation, 5 ISS Bail and 5 Court Bail.

The 2023 Standards for Children in the Justice System audit identified that the STYJS Remand Strategy was out of date, and this will be updated and revised during 2024-2025.

## **Restorative Approaches and victims**

When considering this section of the Youth Justice Plan it is important to differentiate between Restorative Justice and work with victims and the Restorative Practice which we seek to inform all our work.

With reference to restorative justice and victims of crime STYJS is compliant with the Victims Code of Practice and we seek to engage with all victims who wish to participate in restorative interventions. During 2024-2025 our focus will be on the timeliness of our engagement with victims to ensure the victims voice can be heard in decision making processes, including OOC Panels, Referral Order Panels and Pre-Sentence Reports. Focus will also be on what support can be provided to victims including referrals on to specialist support services and assistance with schemes such as Criminal Injuries and the Victims Right to Review. We will continue to assess victim satisfaction as this provides an indicator of the effectiveness of our work.

During 2023-2024 STYJS has sought to extend the range of reparation activity we can offer to victims and young people and there has been an increase in schemes working in shops, working with community gardens, a community mural and the In/Out of the Cold Homelessness project. The introduction of the community allotment has provided us with a scheme to contribute to the work of food banks by donating produce.

With reference to Restorative Practice, our aim is to have restorative principles and approaches as the underlying culture in our work. This offers the potential to build on our strengths and the strengths in the young person's lives through a high challenge and high support approach. To support this approach, we have embarked on a rolling programme of staff and volunteer training to raise awareness of this restorative approach and build the skills and knowledge base we need in the service to underpin this.

STYJS recognises the importance of effective support and guidance for our staff who are working with victims of crime. During 2024-2025 we will be seeking to identify a suitable local partner who can support our staff and provide reflective supervision for their work with victims.

## **Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding**

The Home Office Serious Violence Duty requires organisations to work together to challenge, prevent and reduce incidents of serious violence to make communities safer. STYJS adheres to this approach. Serious violence and exploitation are significant factors in the lives of the young people we work with and the YJS seeks to work with our colleagues in the Police, children's services and other public and voluntary sector services to co-ordinate our response to these issues.

STYJS reports all serious incidents which require notification to the YJB in a timely manner. YJB guidance requires all YJS's to report incidences of offending by young people relating to Murder/Manslaughter, Attempted Murder, Rape, Grievous Bodily/Wounding with intent Terrorism or where a child dies while they are on the YJS Caseload. Between April 2023 to March 2024 STYJS submitted 5 serious incident notifications to the YJB, this reflects the increasing seriousness of offending by young people.

STYJS plays a significant role in CURV, the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence with representation at both strategic and operational level enabling the YJS to have a voice in key decision making. The introduction of the Custody Navigators is an example of this joined up approach. Working in the police custody suite the Navigators provide an opportunity to engage with young people involved in serious and violent offending and offer them support and access to services. The Navigators work pro-actively with other services in custody to ensure a joined-up approach to meeting the needs of the young person and provide ongoing support in the community

where this is needed and the young person agrees to engage, including those young people released on bail or released under investigation.

STYJS is also represented by the Head of Service in the Tees Strategic Exploitation Group and representation is also in place at VEMT groups and vulnerable children/risk management groups in both local authorities. These also for a co-ordinated case level approach to supporting the young person with each agency accountable for their role in the young person's plan.

The introduction of SHiFT in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland offers a new intensive approach to working with young people at risk of exploitation. STYJS is co-located with the Middlesbrough SHiFT team, and we hope to develop strong working arrangements with both Teams as their practice becomes more embedded.

## **Working with Families**

The focus of much of the work of the STYJS is with the individual child, however in all cases we seek to engage with parents and carers to ensure that they can be supported to assist our work with their child. STYJS engages with Early Help services to offer pathways for those families which need more support, and we work closely with the Supporting Families Service to ensure that families can be identified for additional support where required.

Turnaround offers a whole family approach, and we assess the needs of all family members to ensure that the young person who was the basis of the referral can be supported in a wholistic way through support to parents and siblings.

The prevention group programme Tuff Tees and Ladybugs also offer support to siblings of young people engaged with this service. In this way we hope to maximise engagement and meet the needs of all family members where appropriate.

One of the challenges facing the YJS in regard to working with families is the absence of a suitable and accessible parenting offer which could support our work and support the parents of the young people we work with.

## **Use of Custody and Constructive Resettlement**

STYJS has experienced a rise in the use of custody during 2023-2024, with 6 young people receiving custodial outcomes at court, and this represents a doubling of the figure of 3 outcomes for 2022-2023. This increase is representative of the challenges the YJS faces with regards to increases in serious and violent offending and the impact of exploitation on an already vulnerable group.

The resettlement of young people has been identified as a priority in this plan. STYJS recognises the importance of a co-ordinated and positive resettlement approach, and we seek to ensure that all sentence planning is robust with discussion taking place from the point of sentence on the most appropriate license conditions to help support the young person back into the community.

STYJS also recognises the importance of resettlement planning, and we seek to ensure that this starts at the earliest stages. We undertake a multi-agency approach to build on the strengths identified with the young person and address any challenges to effective resettlement with discussions undertaken through the ETE Specialist who will act as a broker to ensure education, training or employment needs are a focus in the resettlement plan. Ongoing liaison takes place with children services and the allocated social worker, to ensure their duties to the young person are fulfilled and appropriate plans for release are in place within a timely manner. All young people are visited in line with the required standards, a minimum of once per month and families are actively encouraged and supported to attend visits and review meetings.

Case managers adopt the STYJS Trauma Informed Model during their assessment process which ensures where additional needs are identified, provisions in this area can be prioritised during the custodial period of the young person's sentence and continued support arranged for the community element.

STYJS continues to work with the Transitions Programme, which includes supporting young people as they leave custody and return to the community.

One of the challenges facing STYJS regarding the resettlement of young people is the transition process for those young people who reach 18 years of age during the custody and upon release. Pressures in the adult estate has meant the STYJS is continuing to hold case responsibility for young people in custody after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as part of Operation Safeguard. For young people in the community the absence of a seconded Probation Officer has meant that STYJS has had to develop a bridging plan with the Probation Service locally through a named officer to support transition into adult services upon release.

An area for development for the service, in partnership with custodial establishments is the use of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). STYJS will be investigating opportunities for the use of ROTL to support young people into ETE placements, build relationships with family and secure suitable accommodation on release.

## **Education Training and Employment**

2024-2025 will be a year of transition for STYJS as the Education Training and Employment Specialist who has been employed by the service since 2020 has moved on into a new post with SHiFT in Middlesbrough. The ETE Specialist has laid solid foundations for the service with effective information sharing arrangements with schools and other ETE providers, the Inclusion Pathway and joined up approaches to meet the ETE needs with education support services and the NEET teams.

The ETE Specialist role has re-established links with all education, training and support providers in the South Tees area, supporting this work with guidance documents and protocols to ensure joint approaches and the sharing of information. Links have been established with SEN, Inclusion, Schools, PRUs and other providers to ensure that where required additional support can be offered to assist young people to engage or re-engage with education. STYJS has joint working protocols in place that allows the service to share information and data on a monthly cycle on school age young people. This information goes to the virtual school, SEN and Inclusion team. This allows for robust and stronger partnership working and provides one consistent message to the family.

A key part of the work of the ETE specialist has been to challenge issues of attendance and inclusion and work in this area has included the Inclusion Pathway in the Middlesbrough area which is designed to improve access to education, attendance, and behaviours in schools. Arrangements are also in place with colleagues in Redcar and Cleveland to share information and undertake joint work with young people at risk of exclusion.

STYJS will be recruiting to the post of ETE specialist as a matter of priority and one of the challenges for the new worker will be to consolidate the work of their predecessor and build on any identified gaps in provision.

Following a successful community reparation scheme, delivered in partnership with a local social housing provider, STYJS are currently exploring an opportunity to develop a pathway for young people to access apprenticeship opportunities with this housing provider. This will be explored further during 2024-2025.

## **STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM**

In 2023-2024 STYJS undertook a self-assessment exercise to review practice against standard 2, Work in Courts of the Standards for Children in the Justice System, as required by the Youth Justice Board. The self-assessment allowed STYJS to rate itself against the 22 actions in this standard. STYJS rated itself to be Outstanding in 11 of the actions, Good in 7 actions and Requires Improvement in 4 of the actions, this outcome was validated and agreed by the YJB.

The self-assessment audit found a number of strengths in STYJS practice in Court, with a designated Court Specialist Officer, supported by other case management colleagues providing a high-quality service and also providing this service for Hartlepool YJS. In addition, the preparation and presentation of reports to Court was found to be a strength with reports being judged as of high

quality and child focussed, based on the feedback we receive from the Court and reports are always delivered in a timely fashion.

The self-assessment also placed some challenges on the service including for us to improve the recording of how parents/carers are informed of court outcomes, how we monitor and challenge any issues of disproportionality as well as identifying the need for an up-to-date remand strategy for the service. Such challenges have been acknowledged by the YJS and the management board and plans have been put in place to address these issues.

During 2024-2025 STYJS will engage in any further self-assessments of the Standards as required by the YJB. To judge compliance against the Standards as part of our ongoing programme of audits, checks will be undertaken to ensure continued good performance against the Standards for Children in the Justice System.

STYJS has a programme of audits every year to assist us to monitor practice, highlight areas of good practice and areas for further development, training and learning. During 2024-2024 the theme of such audits will focus on all areas of case management as we seek to prepare ourselves against a potential HMIP inspection.



Mural by young people in partnership with the YJS, other partner agencies and local residents

## PRIORITIES FOR STYJS IN 2024-2025

Following consultation with all stakeholders the following priorities have been identified by STYJS during 2024-2025. These priorities were presented to the YJS Management Board in January 2024 and received the Management Board's agreement.

### **Priority 1: Prevention and Diversion- To further develop opportunities for prevention and early intervention with young people and their families.**

The Turnaround Programme was introduced in January 2023 and is now the primary non-statutory prevention programme offered by STYJS. This programme is now established and provides a successful option for engaging young people and their families, securing positive outcomes for those who have engaged in the programme. Data for the programme to date shows that none of the young people who have completed a Turnaround intervention have returned to the service via a criminal justice pathway.

Turnaround funding is scheduled to come to an end on 31 March 2025 and information received from the Ministry of Justice indicates that the Turnaround programme will cease. Therefore, it is essential that the YJS starts making plans for how our prevention services will look beyond March 2025. This will include ongoing review and audit of Turnaround work to monitor the effectiveness of this provision.

Discussions will be undertaken with all stakeholders including YJS staff to identify how the YJS prevention offer will look post March 2025, including taking on board learning from Turnaround, the group work activities we deliver, including Tuff Tees and Ladybugs. One of the options available to the service will be to re-establish a prevention model similar to that which we delivered pre-Turnaround, although this is likely to be influenced by the funding and resources available to deliver this work. One of the benefits of this model was that it allowed a range of partners, including schools and other education providers to refer into the service without some of the barriers presented by the Turnaround Criteria.

**Priority 2: Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation- To further develop practice to ensure that STYJS can respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of young people involved in or at risk of serious violence and/or exploitation.**

Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation continue to represent the most significant challenges to the STYJS in our work with young people. During 2023-2024 we have continued to experience a significant increase in the willingness of young people to use weapons and to engage in serious types of offending. The challenge for the YJS is to continue to ensure that services do not work in isolation to address such issues but engage with co-ordinated strategies to engage and support those young people at risk of exploitation or becoming involved in violent offending.

The Custody Navigator scheme funded by the CURV programme, was introduced from July 2023 based within the Young Person's Custody Suite in Middlesbrough Police HQ. The Custody Navigators provide a new service, taking a trauma informed and child first approach to engage with young people involved in serious violence offences, who are brought into the Police Custody area at that 'reachable and teachable' moment at the point they are arrested and open to additional support and provide ongoing intervention and support to divert them away from offending behaviours.

The Custody Navigators have proven to be a highly effective and valued service, providing essential support and engagement to young people in the custody area. This project is funded until March 2025 as part of CURV and therefore discussions will be ongoing during 2024 with regards to securing the future of this provision. STYJS will be actively engaging with the evaluation of the programme which we hope will provide the evidence to highlight the benefits brought by the Navigators and support future funding decisions.

The introduction of SHiFT in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland offers a further opportunity to develop a joined-up approach to work intensively with the most vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming involved on forms of exploitation and serious offending.

**Priority 3: Preparation for Inspection- To ensure that STYJS are fully prepared for the challenge of a potential HMIP Inspection during 2024-25.**

It is 5 years since STYJS was inspected by the HMIP, receiving a very positive Good Rating across the whole service area and Outstanding Ratings across all but one area of our case management practice. The challenge is now to ensure that the YJS has further developed following the 2019 inspection, taking into consideration the challenges faced by the service brought by changing working arrangements and the significant issues faced by our young people brought by high levels of deprivation, issues of serious violence and exploitation.

Audits and quality assurance processes undertaken by the YJS show that there continues to be a high level of quality in our practice. During 2024-25 we will continue our programme of audits and will also seek to benchmark ourselves against the most recent Inspection Criteria and against the outcomes from other YJS services who have been inspected.

During 2024 STYJS will also be delivering a development session with Management Board members to ensure that they are equipped with a full understanding of the Inspection Criteria and the role that they will play in this.

A new Inspection Framework has now been established and this is planned to be rolled out during 2024 with the first inspections likely to be in early 2025. There is a significant likelihood that STYJS could be subject to an early inspection, given that we were the first YJS to be inspected under the previous framework. Therefore, we need to prepare ourselves for the potential for inspection.

**Priority 4: Education, Training and Employment- To ensure that all young people supervised by STYJS have access to opportunities for Education, Training and Employment.**

The introduction of the ETE Specialist following the previous YJS inspection has proven to be a considerable success with this role having proven to be effective in re-establishing our relationships with schools and other ETE providers, developing the inclusion pathways for young people. In 2024 the postholder moved on into a new opportunity with the SHiFT programme and therefore we face a renewed challenge to identify the right person to move this work forward.

Previous successes include the Inclusion Pathway, in Middlesbrough, which has allowed YJS staff to engage with partners in education and schools to ensure that those young people at risk of exclusion or with poor attendance levels receive the support they need to re-engage with school. The challenge for the new post holder will be to build on this success and engage with partners to ensure that we maximise opportunities for young people.

During 2024-25 we intend to embed our practice and build on our relationships with ETE providers to ensure that the YJS is in a strong position to respond to the new ETE KPI set by the YJB.

**Priority 5: Resettlement- To ensure that young people are effectively supported upon resettlement to the community.**

One of the challenges faced by the Youth Justice Service currently, is an increase in the numbers of young people being made subject to Remand to Youth Detention Accommodation and young people receiving custodial outcomes at court. Therefore, we must ensure that young people receive an effective and supportive experience in custody which contributes to and supports successful resettlement into the community.

Recent research has shown that the experience of young people in custody can best be described as mixed and this includes arrangements made to support their contact with their families and professionals as well the preparation time given to supporting effective resettlement and reducing re-offending.

During 2024-2025 we will be looking to review the custodial offer we make with young people, including the levels of support we offer the young person and the plans we make to support the young person's return to the community. This will also include looking at how other services continue to provide support the young person and ensure that we have a co-ordinated plan for the young person's resettlement.

**Priority 6: Restorative Practice- To establish a Restorative Culture in STYJS which supports effective work with the young people and communities we serve.**

South Tees Youth Justice Service achieved Registered Restorative Organisation approval by the Restorative Justice Council in 2023 and we hope to build on this success during 2024-2025.

The process for developing our submission for the Registered Restorative Organisation Approval showed that although positive steps had been made in our practice there was still challenges to be faced in establishing a truly restorative culture across all areas of the YJS. During 2023-2024 we have sought to further improve our restorative practice with training for Support Workers and Managers and we have also broadened the scope of the reparation work we are offering to support the re-assurance of victims and communities

Therefore during 2024-25 we will be continuing with our programme of training for staff in restorative practice and ensure that all policies and procedures and information we share with young people and victims reflects our restorative culture in terms of language, presentation and how we deliver services.



## CHALLENGES AND RISKS

The environment in which we work continues to be very difficult and challenging. The financial situation continues to present significant risks to the YJS budget with the potential pressures of higher case numbers, increases in remands and the challenging nature of our young people. Some highly successful projects face uncertain future, and this will impact on service delivery as we move forward.

Risks and challenges include:

### 1. Funding for the YJS

During the past year and going forward into 2024-2025 STYJS has benefitted from additional short-term funding to support the delivery of Turnaround, Custody Navigators and Making Good. Current indications are that these funding streams will come to an end in March 2025. This leaves significant question marks over the future delivery of these projects all of which have provided considerable success. STYJS will be working with partners to identify new sources of funding to continue the delivery of these projects or to offer alternative arrangements for service delivery.

Pressures on local authority budgets has resulted in both local authorities taking the decision to reduce their contributions to the STYJS budget, with Redcar and Cleveland reducing its contribution by £69,000 and Middlesbrough making a £7,000 reduction. Such reductions create significant risks for the future of service delivery and could mean that although the YJS will continue to deliver its statutory functions, delivery of non-statutory functions may be limited, and such a reduction will impact on other services provided by STYJS.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to present additional financial challenges for the YJS and the people we work with. The increasing costs of goods and services and staffing costs are not taken into consideration with regards to partner contributions to the budget and this, with the impact of the reductions detailed above add to the pressures on the YJS budgets. In addition, the impact on the young people and families of the cost-of-living crisis will further exacerbate the high levels of deprivation faced by our communities.

### 2. The new Key Performance Indicators

STYJS has embraced the new 10 new KPIs for YJS Partnerships introduced during 2023-2024 and significant work was undertaken to prepare staff and support upgrades to the case management system. However there have been some challenges presented by the new KPIs particularly with reference to the accuracy of reporting and missing information from reports. STYJS continues to work with the YJB and our software partners CACI/Child view, to roll out

the new software to assist YJS staff to record and report accurately to support the reporting of our performance against the 10 KPIs.

### **3. Access to Specialist Services: Mental Health**

During 2023-2024 STYJS was advised that the funding to support the delivery of the Trauma Informed Care Pathway for young people had come to an end and at that time there was no additional funding available to support the TIP pathway.

With the support from the Commissioner from the Integrated Care Board, funding to re-introduce a TIP model has now been secured and currently discussions are ongoing over the form any new service delivery model will take.

Access to Mental Health Services for young people continue to be a challenge, to mitigate against this, discussions are underway to re-establish a pathway into the FCAMHS services locally.

### **4. Access to Specialist Services: Health Practitioner**

STYJS does not have a designated Health Practitioner who can support case managers with health concerns and access health information to inform assessment and planning. This is a significant area of concern and a gap in our statutory duty. Previously the YJS commissioned a practitioner from the School Nursing Service, and this helped develop a pathway into services. During COVID19 this pathway ceased to be effective, and the service has not been able to rebuild the access we need.

### **5. Re-offending**

Re-offending by young people continues to present significant challenges for the YJS. We are now experiencing increases in the number of young people identified in the January to March cohort, the young people tracked for the re-offending KPI. This situation is also impacted upon by the challenges presented by the current YJS cohort many of whom are involved in serious and violent crime and are exploited or are at risk of becoming victims of exploitation.

STYJS will continue to track and monitor our quarterly cohorts to identify those young people who are re-offending and in particular those young people whose behaviours present the most significant concerns.

### **6. Use of Custody**

The increasing complex and challenging nature of the young people we work with will increase the risk of young people receiving custodial outcomes, including sentences and remands. This is evidenced by the relatively high numbers of custodial remands for young people during 2023-2024. Increasing youth violence and violent offending creates a risk that more young people will become involved in criminal exploitation, violent behaviours, use of weapons with higher volumes of offending. The challenge for the YJS is to continue to work with the Police and the Courts to provide meaningful community outcomes for young people.

### **7. Preventions**

The expected ending of Turnaround funding from March 2025 presents a challenge to STYJS with regards to how preventions services will look like after April 2025 and how these will be delivered and resourced. During 2024-2025 STYJS will be looking to learn from our Turnaround programme to identify areas of success and use this to continue to deliver a prevention service in the future. In addition, we will be working with staff and other stakeholders to examine potential future prevention services and how best these can be delivered.

## **8. Access to services to support young people who sexually offend**

Currently STYJS has access to no service provision to provide support and intervention for young people who have engaged in sexual offending or abuse. Previously support could be accessed through Adolescent Forensic Service offered by CAMHS and discussions are ongoing to establish a pathway with the FCAMHS service to support work in this area. YJS staff have been trained to deliver AIM3, but this can only offer a short-term solution which can only be delivered during the period of YJS intervention.

## **9. Provision of a Seconded Probation Officer**

STYJS continues to have no seconded Probation Officer and we have been advised by the Probation Service that they will be unable to provide a seconded Probation Officer to the YJS as is their responsibility under Section 38 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This will mean that the YJS will have to operate outside of the Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System and the Youth to Adult Transition Protocol and means that we are no longer compliant with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as a Youth Justice Service Partnership. This will inevitably mean the timely and safe transition of young people into adult provision will be affected by this. To mitigate against this a pathway has been established through a link worker in the Probation Service for transitions cases to be received, however we are encountering delays in the process and new guidance has meant that some young people continue to be supported by STYJS beyond their 18th birthday. STYJS have claimed financial recompense from Probation to enable the service to invest in additional staffing which can fill the gap created by the lack of a Probation Officer.

STYJS is aware of the ongoing 'Probation Reset' programme and we will work with Probation locally to understand what this means for the transition of young people and other areas of joint working.

## **10. First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System**

During 2023-2024 STYJS has experienced a steady increase in the numbers of First Time Entrants into the criminal justice system including a 200% increase during the third quarter of the year, October to December 2024. The YJS has experienced a number of years whereby the number FTEs has decreased there are now concerns that this may be the start of an upwards trend.

STYJS will continue to offer a range of diversionary OODD interventions to engage with young people and divert them away from offending and the introduction of a more wide-ranging preventions offer will also make a positive contribution to reducing offending and diverting young people away from the criminal justice system.

## **11. Serious and Violent Offending**

During 2023-2024 STYJS has experienced a significant increase in young people becoming involved in forms of serious and violent offending, including attempted murders, woundings and robbery offences. The Custody Navigators were introduced to provide support and intervention to young people in Police custody and following the introduction of the project to March 2024 150 young people from the South Tees area have engaged with the provision, including 139 young people arrested for serious and violent offences. Many of these young people are involved in organised crime groups and subject to forms of exploitation.

This presents a significant challenge to the YJS and other services to develop responses that can respond to the needs of young people involved in serious and violent offending and offer them opportunities to move away from such offending lifestyles.

Such behaviours present other challenges to the service, including increasing the risks to staff safety. To mitigate against such risk, we are delivering training on staff safety and personal protection.

## 12. 2024 General Election

The upcoming General Election presents a level of uncertainty for Youth Justice Services. The YJB has advised that due to the election there will be further delays in the announcement of the youth justice grant, and this causes uncertainty over funding levels which also impact on YJS's capacity to plan effectively. In addition, a new government will bring new direction and potential changes to the criminal justice system which could have implications for future service delivery.

## EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE AND INNOVATION

STYJS has sought to continually develop and improve our practice to ensure the best possible services to the young people we work with and the communities we serve. To this end we have welcomed opportunities to build new and innovative areas of practice and extend the services we offer. STYJS believe that we are innovative and seek to invest in activity which is proven in practice and promotes the best possible outcomes for young people. During 2023-2024 this has included:

### Prevention Intervention and Turnaround

The Turnaround Programme has developed to become the primary preventions offer during 2023-2024. There have been some challenges to the development of the programme in the STYJS area much of this driven by high levels of deprivation which has led to large numbers of children receiving input from Children's Services and therefore limiting their availability options for Turnaround. However, those young people engaged by Turnaround have benefitted from the additional support the programme offers including financial benefits and support, extended intervention and support from YJS staff and partners and the offer of Speech and Language Therapist intervention.

In addition to the case working of preventions cases, STYJS has also delivered the gender-based Tuff Tees and Ladybugs group-based programmes to support young people. These interventions delivered in partnership with the South Tees Public Health Service provide a safe space for young people, life skills interventions and access to other support services where these have been identified. During 2023-2024 we have invested in new equipment including Virtual Reality headsets to offer different ways to deliver intervention with young people.

Further group work opportunities will be provided by the re-introduction of our pre-court intervention programme during 2024-2025. This provision will focus on delivering a programme of interventions targeted towards those young people referred to the YJS for OOCs. The programme will provide a child first approach delivering life skills, inputs from other services and challenge around the impact and consequences of the young person's actions and behaviours.

### Interventions in Education Settings

As part of the Preventions offer STYJS has continued to deliver our school-based programmes, delivering intervention in schools and alternative education providers. Such interventions have focussed on issues including exploitation, violent crime, vaping and knife/weapon-based crime. The interventions have been well received by education providers and during 2024-2025 we hope to extend the reach of such interventions to include year 6/7 young people transitioning from primary to secondary school. To maximise the impact of such work we will also be seeking to co-ordinate delivery with other services including the Police and voluntary sector.

### Holiday Intervention Programmes

As part of our diversion activities with young people STYJS has introduced a programme of targeted holiday intervention. This was identified as a gap in provision for young people involved in crime and anti-social behaviour and STYJS sought to fill this gap. The activities have included such things as quad biking, arts activity, cooking and activities on the YJS allotment. There has been a good response to such activities, and these have included some of our hardest to reach young people who have actively participated and engaged well in the programmes offered. Feedback from young people

has been overwhelmingly positive and such work helps to build relationships between YJS staff and the young people we work with. Future schemes are also planned for the summer holidays in 2024 and we hope to enhance the offer by joining with other services and securing additional funding to support such activity.

### Custody Navigators

Introduced into the custody area in Middlesbrough Police HQ from July 2023 the Custody Navigators, funded by CURV, is unique project to provide support and intervention to young people who enter the police custody area. The aim of the Custody Navigators is to engage and provide immediate support with young people at that 'reachable and teachable moment' as the young person enters police custody and may be more receptive to the support offered. The project aims to work with those young people arrested for serious and violent offences, offering support in custody and in the community where the young person agrees to engage. Between July 2023 to March 2024 150 young people from the South Tees area have been supported by the Custody Navigators, including 139 arrested for serious and violent offences.

One of the successes of the Custody Navigator project has been the valued placed on the Navigators by other services in police custody, including detention officers, Police, the Mitie Nurses and Liaison and Diversion. The Custody Navigators have successfully developed effective working relationships and developed pathways with partners to maximise the support for young people.



**Breakout room in the youth custody suite**

More importantly the Custody Navigators are highly valued by young people who recognise the support now available in police custody. Young people now have access to a breakout room to reduce time spent in cells and are offered diversionary toys and activities to assist them during their period in custody.

Feedback received from young people, parents and partner agencies describe the Custody Navigators as 'approachable', 'knowledgeable', 'providing re-assurance' and 'kind'. One parent commented:

*Working extremely well with my son helping to support in making the right choices encouraging courses and help.*

A young person stated:

*"Never been arrested before and I didn't know what was happening, but I'm not as scared now I know what is happening and I've got to speak to you out of that horrible box"*

Case study of young person who has been supported by the Custody Navigators:

*First time arrest for female aged 17 who was brought in for affray, criminal damage and possession of a weapon (Machete).*

*Initially, this female was reluctant to engage in support from all services offered in custody. However, when stood at the booking in desk awaiting charge decision, she was encouraged to speak with K from the Custody Navigator team which was agreed too. K and female spent 1 hour and 40 minutes discussing circumstances she was facing in the community and her frustrations from previous support she was offered but wasn't listened too.*

*Female was then released on bail.*

*Female was then in regular contact with K via email as her phone had been seized from Police to support their investigation.*

*K supported the female in the community to complete a housing application, sign up for the 12-week Princes Trust Programme, re-engage into CAMHS support and access the YJS Turnaround project.*

This programme will be further enhanced by the introduction of an Enhanced Case Worker from May 2024, who will offer a Navigator type support to vulnerable adults in police custody. In addition, CURV are also funding Navigators to support vulnerable people in the Accident and Emergency Department at James Cook Hospital in Middlesbrough.

### Youth Custody Suite

In addition to the Custody Navigator project, STYJS has also played a lead role, with Cleveland Police and the OPCC in the design and delivery of a trauma informed, young person custody area at Middlesbrough Police HQ. This has included artwork painted on cell walls based on designs prepared by young people, a breakout room to offer young people time out of cells, young people have their own entry point and reception and a small exercise area. This means that no child will ever need to come in to contact with an adult offender during their detention. This project will not only benefit countless children for years to come but it also shows the strength in the partnership and Cleveland Police's vision to work differently in this area with children.

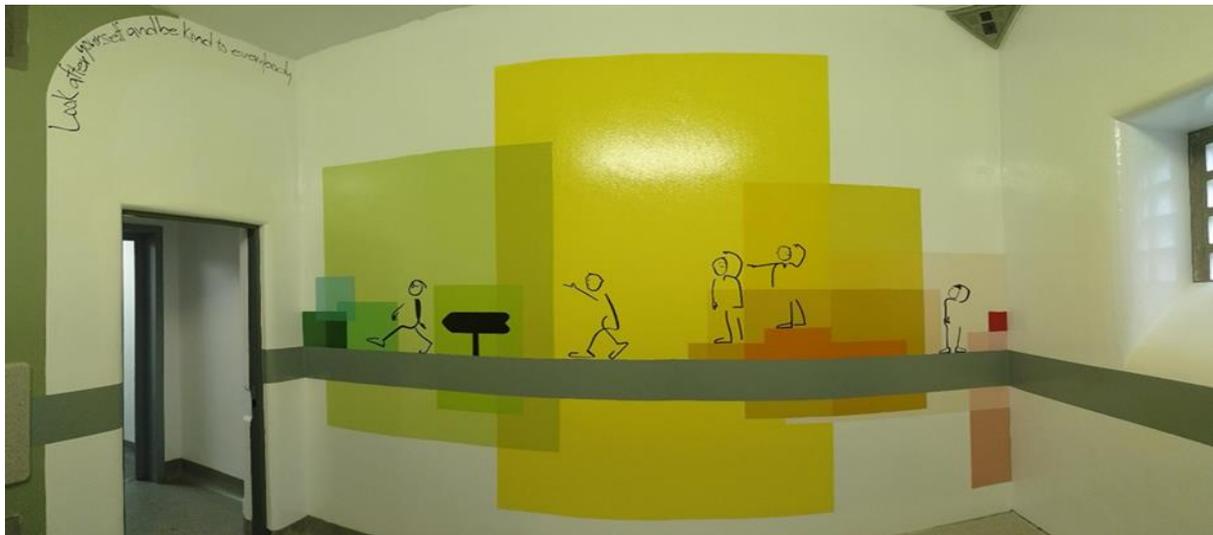


Image from the Youth Custody Suite at Middlesbrough Police HQ

### Inclusion Pathway

In January 2023 STYJS introduced the Inclusion Pathway for STYJS Case Managers to refer into the STYJS Education Training and Employment (ETE) Team for support for young people who are at risk of falling out of Education and Training. This pathway is designed for young people open to the STYJS and is to promote engagement in the education system, improve attendance, prevent exclusions (fixed-term and permanent), improve attainment, and deliver targeted educational support.

The Inclusion Pathway is supported by partners in Education and is designed to deliver effective practice in respect of partnership arrangements with Schools, Colleges and Training Providers which actively support the delivery of education.

During 2023 the Inclusion Pathway engaged with 89 young people identified as at risk of exclusion and/or poor attendance. The average attendance for all young people in the first month of commencement was 74%. The attendance was then captured on case closure and the average attendance increased to 87%. Therefore, giving a total of 13% increase in attendance for year 2023.

With reference to exclusions in the 2021/22 academic year there had been 120 permanent and fixed term exclusions for children open to the STYJS in Middlesbrough. This relates to 34 students, 4 of whom were excluded permanently. The Inclusion Pathway commencement dates were from Jan 2023 to Dec 2023. Over the course of this period there were 107 exclusions giving a decrease of 13 exclusions.

### Speech, Language and Communication

Since January 2023 South Tees Youth Justice Service has commissioned a highly specialist speech and language therapist (SALT) for 0.6WTE to meet the needs of the YJS service including Turnaround.

The Therapist has proven to be a highly successful resource for the YJS offering advice and guidance to staff, training in communication and language, support and intervention with young people and support to parents. Since the introduction of the SALT offer in January 2023 80 young people have been referred to service (31 from Redcar and Cleveland and 49 from Middlesbrough), with 65 young people receiving intervention.

In addition, the Therapist has worked closely with the ETE Specialist to challenge schools where a young person has been at risk of exclusion and promote the benefits of greater communication and language awareness to understand a child's behaviours and responses. Of the 80 young people referred for SALT intervention 34 young people had received a permanent exclusion from school.

The work of the Speech and Language Therapist is highly valued by staff, young people and parents. YJS staff view the SALT offer to be effective to their work and describe how the Therapist can always respond appropriately to the needs of young people.

Comments from parents show the value such work brings, with one parent stating:

*Just wanted to say thank for all of your help and support over the months. Finally, after your help I am getting somewhere.*

A young person commented:

*Thank you so much for all of your support – you get me!*

### Making Good/Immediate Justice

Part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, STYJS in partnership with the other Cleveland YJS and the OPCC launched the Making Good Immediate Justice Programme in September 2023. The aim of Making good is to engage with young people who have been referred following incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour. The Programme challenges such behaviours and engages young people into activities to repair any harm caused. Since the introduction of Making Good, 28 young people have been referred to the programme, with 18 being contacted within 48 hours and 6 completing the activity.

Case Study Child L:

*L came through to the Making Good programme on a referral from a Stage 2 Warning letter from Community Safety. The behaviour complained about is in relation to L being part of a group that were heaving intoxicated on the Esplanade at Redcar. Due to possible risks, it was necessary for Officers to bring L home. L's mum agreed for*

*her to participate in the Making Good Programme and specifically requested an intervention around alcohol due to concerns that L's behaviours were being influenced by alcohol use.*

*As part of the programme L engaged in 2 intervention sessions including a focus on ASB and her alcohol use. Work focussed on how L's behaviours can impact on victims and the community with an additional focus on the long-term impact of alcohol and risks caused by spiking of drinks. In addition, L completed a reparation activity in the Red Lion Garden in Redcar, and as part of this activity discussed how the garden was a haven for elderly residents with work focussing on clearing weeds and debris to improve access.*

*Through Making Good Intervention L has had the opportunity to open up and reflect on her history with anti-social behaviour, reflect on how this can affect herself and others within her community and she has now given something back to her community in the form of reparation. Workers involved feel like L has been focussed and possibly even felt a sense of accomplishment about completing the programme.*

*Feedback from L and her mum has been positive:*

*L stated: "I liked E (the worker). I found her very easy to talk to, she said she was not strict and found her very funny. L enjoyed her time with E doing the gardening."*

*Mum stated "I found E to be a lovely person, I must admit I was quite nervous at first and wasn't sure what to expect, but I needn't have worried as she was a normal person, easy to talk to and very friendly. I am thankful for all the advice and time that she has spent with L."*

## LOOKING FORWARD

Looking Forward to 2024-2025 there are a number of challenges facing the service and many of these are outlined above. With challenge comes opportunity and the STYJS will be looking forwards to further developing the scope of our work, with a specific focus on prevention and diversion and establishing a child focussed, restorative culture in the service.

- Prevention will be a significant area for development during 2024-2025 and the end of Turnaround presents a significant challenge to the service. There are uncertainties over funding, however STYJS will be looking forwards, engaging with key stakeholders and staff to identify a new model for prevention which creates opportunity for young people and supports them to move away from offending behaviour.
- The new SHiFT programmes in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland create opportunities for positive engagement with our most vulnerable and at-risk young people. As a key partner in both areas STYJS will be supporting the development of the SHiFT models locally and seeking to ensure that these offer maximum benefits for the young people engaging with these services.
- STYJS continues to identify opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities and repair any harm brought by their behaviours. Reparation activity has previously included working in charity shops, supporting the In/Out of the Cold annual homelessness project as well supporting work to improve community spaces. During 2024-2025 STYJS will be further developing our community reparation activity to create a project which can offer young people practical skills and interests, while also growing produce that can be donated to local community foodbanks.
- Developing a Restorative culture which encompasses all areas of the service and can influence how other services work with young people is an aspiration STYJS will continue to try to achieve. During 2023-2024 further steps were made to achieving this goal with training to support staff and managers and during 2024-2025 we will continue this staff development activity with training of all staff in the service and the development of a framework of procedures and practice guidance which can guide how we work.
- As child focussed service the voice of the child is an important part of the foundations upon which we are seeking to build the service. Previously we have engaged young people in the

redesign and rebranding of the YJS with a new vision and mission statement. During 2024-2025 we hope to build on the influence young people can have on service delivery and design with such activities as further developing our young person's survey, seeking young people's views on the services we deliver, listening to these and developing practice where this is possible.

## **SIGN OFF AND APPROVAL OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rob Brown', written on a light-colored background.

Rob Brown  
Director of Education and Partnerships- Middlesbrough  
Chare of the South Tees Youth Justice Service Management Board

## APPENDIX 1: STYJS Executive Management Board Membership

Name	Organisation
Director of Education & Partnerships	Middlesbrough Council (Chair of the Board)
Head of Partnerships	Head of STYJS
Cleveland Police	Head of Prevention, Intervention & Offender Management
Asst. Director of Partnerships, Quality & Performance	Redcar & Cleveland Council (Vice Chair)
Councillor	Redcar & Cleveland Council
Youth Justice Board for England & Wales	Head of Innovation & Engagement (Northeast)
Councillor	Middlesbrough Council
Acting Legal Team Manager	His Majesty's Courts & Tribunal Service (HMCTS)
Head of Commissioning & Strategy	Integrated Care Board (ICB)
Interim Public Health Principal	South Tees Public Health
Commissioning Officer	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
Head of Area (South Tees)	Probation Service
Head of Education and Alternative Provision	Middlesbrough Council

Meeting attendance	18/04/23	11/07/23	18/10/23	16/01/24
Prevention & Partnerships MBC	✓	Apols	Apols	Apols
STYJS (Head of Service)	✓	✓	✓	✓
YJB	✓	✓	✓	✓
R & C Children's Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
NPS			✓	
Police	Apols	✓	✓	✓
Commissioning - CCG		✓	✓	✓
Legal - Courts				
Public Health M'bro/R&C	✓	✓	✓	Apols
Councillor MBC	✓			✓
Councillor RC	Apols	✓	✓	
PCC	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education MBC	✓	Apols	✓	✓

## APPENDIX 2– STYJS Statutory Functions

### Statutory functions include:

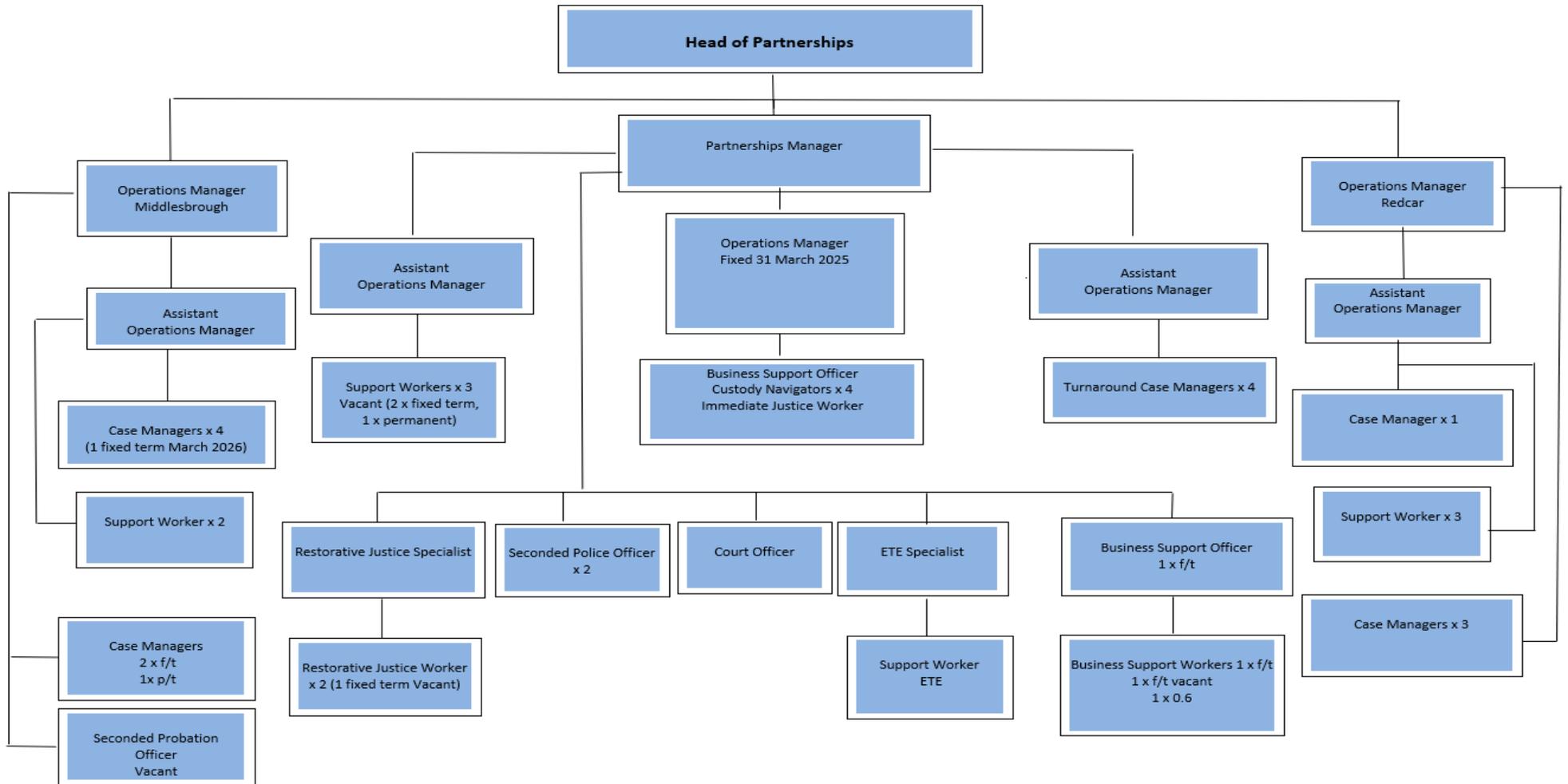
- Statutory Responsibility for Court Orders (Community and Custody) as they relate to young people, including all Requirements and Licences
- Compliance with National Standards for Youth Justice 2013 (accountable to Ministers)
- Enforcement of Court Orders and Licences
- Provision of Out of Court Disposals (Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions)
- Prevention of offending and re-offending by young people
- Provision of Court staffing (Youth, Crown, Remand Courts, including Saturdays and Bank holidays)
- Provision of Bail supervision functions
- Provision of Appropriate Adults for Police interviews
- Provision of Pre-Sentence Reports
- Provision of community volunteers for Referral Order panels
- Recruit, train, manage, supervise and deploy volunteers to carry out statutory functions
- Provision of Referral Order Panel reports
- Provision of YJMIS data/management information to YJB/MoJ regarding youth justice cases
- Delivery of Court ordered reparation to community and victims
- Provision of a service to victims of youth crime
- Comply with arrangements for multi-agency public protection (MAPP)
- Duty to cooperate with MAPP, LSCB, VEMT, CSPs etc.
- Duty to cooperate regarding safeguarding and public protection incidents in the community (YJB)
- Statutory duty to provide and support a Management Board for the YJS
- Management and development of the Junior Attendance Centre
- Statutory duty to produce and deliver an annual Youth Justice Plan
- Management of children Remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA)
- Statutory duty to cooperate with Children's Services to improve wellbeing of children
- Management of sex offenders (AIM) – young people under 18 years of age
- Provision of Parenting Orders imposed in the Youth Court (criminal matters)
- Provision of ASB escalation supervision (Criminal Behaviour Orders and Injunctions to prevent nuisance and annoyance)

### Additional functions include:

- Provision of integrated Out of Court delivery including Restorative Interventions, Community Resolution and Outcome 22
- Manage safeguarding and risk management inherent in all the above tasks
- Provision of prevention and diversion activities with young people and families, including Turnaround

APPENDIX 3 – STRUCTURE CHART

STYJS STRUCTURE MAY 2024



APPENDIX 4 South Tees Youth Offending Service: Service Development Plan

**South Tees Youth Justice Service: Service Development Plan 2024-2025**

<b>Priority 1: Prevention and Diversion- To further develop opportunities for prevention and early intervention with young people and their families.</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Review/Update on Actions/RAG Rating</b>
Undertake a scoping and consultation process with staff and stakeholders to identify a preferred model for prevention service delivery after April 2025.	Head of Service Partnerships Manager Operations Manager	September 2024	
Consult with partners in Police and voluntary sector to identify what provision they currently offer.	Head of Service Partnerships Manager Operations Manager	September 2024	
Prepare a report to the YJS Management Board outlining the options for prevention service delivery after April 2025.	Head of Service Partnerships Manager	October 2024	
Undertake discussions with the OPCC to identify opportunities to extend the funding for the Custody Navigators, Making Good and OOCDD programmes.	Head of Service Partnerships Manager	March 2025	
Further develop group-based programmes including working in schools, Tuff Tees, Lady Bugs. School holiday programmes and the Pre Court programme.	Asst Operations Manager	Ongoing	
Undertake and audit of prevention activity to identify the impact/success of this area of work.	Partnerships Manager Operations Manager	December 2024	
<b>Priority 2: Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation- To further develop practice to ensure that STYJS can respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of young people involved in or at risk of serious violence and/or exploitation.</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Review/Update on Actions/RAG Rating</b>
With partner agencies undertake a scoping exercise to understand the seriousness and extent of serious violence and how this impacts on young people.	Head of Service Partnerships Manager Operations Managers	December 2024	
Further develop opportunities for staff training and development in this area of work, including specialist training.	All Managers	Ongoing	
Develop the operational links with the SHiFT programme and areas for joined up working.	Operations Managers	Ongoing	
Identify proven in practice interventions and programmes which can support the work of the YJS.	All Managers	Ongoing	

Deliver programmes of intervention to engage and divert young people at risk of serious violence and exploitation	Asst Operations Managers	Ongoing	
<b>Priority 3: Preparation for Inspection – To ensure that STYJS are fully prepared for the challenge of a potential HMIP Inspection during 2024-25.</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Review/Update on Actions/RAG Rating</b>
Undertake a benchmarking exercise against the current Inspection Standards to identify the base line for STYJS	Partnerships Manager	October 2024	
Undertake a full case file audit of STYJS cases using the Inspection CARAG tool	All Managers	September 2024	
Develop a programme of case file audits which also reflects thematic inspections to establish the position of STYJS in relation to themes in criminal justice	All Managers	July 2024	
Benchmark STYJS against Youth Justice Inspection Reports and Thematic Inspection Reports to ensure STYJS preparedness for Inspection	Partnerships Manager Asst Operations Manager	Ongoing Action	
Deliver a development with session with Management Board Members to raise their awareness of the inspection process	Head of Service	October 2024	
<b>Priority 4: Education, Training and Employment- To ensure that all young people supervised by STYJS have access to opportunities for Education, Training and Employment.</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Review/Update on Actions/RAG Rating</b>
Employ a new Education, Training and Employment Specialist to lead in this area of work.	Partnerships Manager	July 2024	Interviews were held in May 2024 and awaiting clearance to appoint a new worker into post
Review practice in this area to identify gaps in provision and opportunities for new areas of work.	ETE Specialist	September 2024	
With partners, including Police, schools and Education Support Services undertake a review of offending by young people to identify levels of offending during school times.	ETE Specialist	December 2024	
YJS ETE Specialist to build maintain and enhance links to Education Support Services across both local authority areas.	ETE Specialist	Ongoing	
<b>Priority 5: Resettlement- To ensure that young people are effectively supported upon resettlement to the community.</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Review/Update on Actions/RAG Rating</b>
Prepare a new Remand Strategy to guide practice in this area.	Partnerships Manager Operations Managers	October 2024	

Undertake a review of RYDA cases from 2023-2024 to identify any learning and practice development areas to report this to the YJS Management Board	Partnerships Manager	October 2024	
Examine opportunities to extend the use of the Release on Temporary Licence scheme to support the resettlement of young people.	Operations Manager	December 2024	
Support and work with parents/families of young people to assist them during custody and resettlement processes.	All Staff	Ongoing	
Work with the Probation Service to understand the potential implications for practice of developments in the Probation Service relation to Transition and Resettlement of 18 year olds.	All Managers	December 2024	
Introduce Resettlement Panels as a multi-agency forum to support planning for the resettlement of young people.	Operations Managers	September 2024	
<b>Priority 6: Restorative Practice- To establish a Restorative Culture in STYJS which supports effective work with the young people and communities we serve.</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Review/Update on Actions/RAG Rating</b>
Roll out Restorative Practice Training to all staff in the YJS.	Restorative Justice Specialist	September 2024	
Prepare and re-submit application for Restorative Justice Organisation to the Restorative Justice Council.	Restorative Justice Specialist	September 2024	
Review Restorative Practice Guidance.	Restorative Justice Specialist	October 2024	
Undertake a scoping exercise of current Restorative practice and processes to identify gaps in practice and areas for development.	Partnerships Manager Restorative Justice Specialist	November 2024	
Prepare reports to the YJS Management Board on Restorative Justice activity, including a focus on work with victims, reparation, and forms of mediation.	Restorative Justice Specialist	Ongoing	
Identify opportunities to provide reflective support and supervision to staff working with victims of crime.	Partnerships Manager	September 2024	

## APPENDIX 5: Common Youth Justice Terms

<b>ACE</b>	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long-lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
<b>AIM 2 and 3</b>	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
<b>ASB</b>	Anti-social behaviour
<b>AssetPlus</b>	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and adolescent mental health services
<b>CCE</b>	Child Criminal Exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
<b>Children</b>	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
<b>Child First</b>	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
<b>Child looked-after</b>	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
<b>CME</b>	Child Missing Education
<b>Constructive resettlement</b>	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
<b>Contextual safeguarding</b>	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
<b>Community resolution</b>	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
<b>CURV</b>	Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence- a joined-up, preventative approach to tackling serious violence, with the Commissioner's office taking a leading role in bringing together local

	organisations such as the police, YJS, local authorities, public health teams and local hospital trusts.
<b>Custody Navigator</b>	A new role in the YJS designed to act as a key support to young people in the Police Custody area, to engage young people to divert them away from offending
<b>EHCP</b>	Education and Health Care Plan, a plan outlining the education, health, and social care needs of a child with additional needs
<b>ETE</b>	Education, Training or Employment
<b>EHE</b>	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
<b>EOTAS</b>	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
<b>FTE</b>	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
<b>HMIP</b>	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
<b>HSB</b>	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
<b>Immediate Justice-Making Good</b>	Part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, to engage young people involved in anti-social behaviour and crime into swift and visible interventions to challenge behaviours and reduce harm
<b>ISS</b>	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance-a high intensity programme used as part of the Youth Rehabilitation Order as an alternative to custody
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi agency public protection arrangements
<b>MFH</b>	Missing from Home
<b>NRM</b>	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
<b>OOCD</b>	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court

<b>Outcome 22/21</b>	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
<b>Over-represented children</b>	Number of children and young people appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
<b>RHI</b>	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
<b>ROTL</b>	Release on Temporary Licence
<b>SLCN</b>	Speech, Language and Communication needs
<b>STC</b>	Secure Training Centre
<b>SCH</b>	Secure Children's Home
<b>Turnaround</b>	This is an early intervention, diversion and prevention programme designed to divert young people away from involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour
<b>VEMT</b>	Relates to young people who may be Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing or Trafficked
<b>Young adult</b>	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
<b>YJS</b>	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
<b>Youth Justice KPIS</b>	This refers to the key performance indicators for Youth Justice with an additional 10 introduced from April 2023
<b>YOI</b>	Young Offender Institution