

Suffolk Youth Justice Plan
2024 - 2025

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Suffolk Youth Justice Plan 2024-2025

1. Introduction

In 2022 Suffolk completed a three-year Youth Justice Plan covering 2022-2025 so this year has completed the final annual refresh. The contents of the refresh and the priorities in it, have been developed and agreed with the Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board and has been signed off by Suffolk County Council (SCC) Full Council. Children, staff, and volunteers have also been consulted about what is important to them.

Suffolk had a Joint Inspection led by His Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in Summer 2022. Since then, Suffolk Youth Justice Service (SYJS) and our partnership have been on an 'improvement journey' which has been focussed on making the necessary changes to ensure each child, family and victim consistently get a high-quality service.

In terms of performance, it is pleasing to see the progress made on reducing the number of children who enter the formal youth justice system for the first time. The quality of data and information available to the service and the wider partnership has also improved this year but we recognise there is much more to do to fulfil the partnership aspirations.

The Board and I are grateful for the commitment shown by staff and partners in the Suffolk Youth Justice Service to supporting the children they work with and helping them achieve their full potential.

I am pleased to introduce the Suffolk Youth Justice Plan for 2024-2025.



Assistant Chief Constable Eamonn Bridger

Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board Chair

2. Vision and Strategy

Suffolk Youth Justice Service (SYJS) shares the Youth Justice Board (YJB) vision for a Child First Youth Justice System, where children are seen as children, treated fairly, supported to build on their strengths and wherever possible diverted from the formal youth justice system.

In line with Child First principles SYJS has worked with staff to develop and embed our practice model which is set within the framework of Signs of Safety, which is the approach adopted by Childrens and Young Peoples Services (CYPS) in Suffolk County Council (SCC). The model also includes a locally developed trauma informed approach together with use of restorative values and practices. SYJS delivers child focussed relationship-based practice, placing children and those adults naturally connected to them at the centre of assessment, decision-making and planning, to ensure that all aspects of the work is informed by the views of children and those closest to them, including their professional network.

The strategic priorities for the service are to:

- Reduce the number of children entering the youth justice system.
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce the use of youth detention and improve resettlement outcomes.
- Improve safety, wellbeing, and outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

There are also cross cutting themes that sit alongside these strategic priorities and help deliver them. These are a focus on working in children's best interests; helping children develop a positive identity; collaboration with children, families, and partners; repairing harm and increasing victim safety, focussing on equality, valuing diversity and being inclusive and using the best available data and information to inform service delivery.

3. Governance leadership and partnership arrangements

Suffolk Youth Justice Service (SYJS) governance is through the Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board. From May 2024 the Board has had a new chair, an Assistant Chief Constable from Suffolk Constabulary.

All the statutory partners are represented on the board as well as Managers from Suffolk County Councils Family Support, Public Health, and Intelligence Hub. Educational representation includes both the Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Services (SEND) and the Head of Virtual School in Suffolk. There are also representatives from the Voluntary Sector, the Courts and a representative from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) also attends meetings. The Police and Crime Commissioners Office receives Board papers.

The Board meets on a quarterly basis and budget and performance reports are standard agenda items. The Board also receives regular reports on audits of practice, thematic audits, work to address the recommendations following the Joint Inspection

led by His Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in 2022, compliance with the YJB standards for children in the Youth Justice System and serious incidents as defined by the YJB.

SYJS sits within SCC Childrens Services and the Head of Service for Youth Justice reports to the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care, Corporate Parenting, Strategic Commissioning and Youth Justice.

SYJS is represented on the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care, Corporate Parenting, Strategic Commissioning and Youth Justice. The service is linked to The Safer and Stronger Communities Board through the Public Health representative on the board and direct involvement with the countywide work programme on reducing criminal exploitation. The Head or Deputy Head of Service also attend the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Strategic Board, Local Criminal Justice Board, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Strategic Board and the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Board and are linked into other SCC Children Services at a strategic level through regular Heads of Service meetings. The service is also represented at the Safer in Schools Board, Post 16 Participation Group, and co-chairs the Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children in Care and Care Leavers Meeting. Operational Managers attend the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) External Scrutiny of Police Powers Group and the Norfolk and Suffolk Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel.

Police staff, educational psychologists, speech, language and communication therapists (SALT), substance misuse and primary mental health workers (PMHW) are based in each locality team along with a probation officer who provides a service to the whole county. The service directly employs several qualified social workers. SYJS teams are co-located with other parts of SCC Children's Services and are based in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, and Lowestoft. The service has links both with the YMCA, ISCRE and Anglia Care Trust (who deliver the Appropriate Adult Service in Suffolk) and has been working this year to develop stronger local links with local community and voluntary organisations.

Appendix 1 shows the staffing structure of the Suffolk Youth Justice Service.

Appendix 2 shows the budget and partnership contributions.

Appendix 3 shows the ethnicity, sex and disability information for the service.

4. Progress on priorities in the 2023-24 plan

The priorities in the Suffolk Youth Justice Plan for 2023-2024 were to deliver the action plan developed to address the nine recommendations made after the HMIP led Joint Inspection in 2022. A summary, of the recommendations and progress to date is given below.

The HMIP action plan itself was reviewed and refreshed in April 2024 and outstanding or new actions identified as part of this process will be included in the service development plan for 2024-2025.

Recommendations 1 and 2 were to improve the quality of assessment and planning for children.

Actions broadly fell into three categories; increasing capacity to deliver improvements; improving management oversight and developing practitioner skills and knowledge. Capacity has been increased through sourcing additional specialist support for specific pieces of work, introducing Turnaround, a Ministry of Justice (MOJ) funded targeted prevention programme and ensuring recruitment and performance management is consistently robust.

Extensive staff development activity has also taken place for both practitioners and the leadership team with the focus initially on assessment quality. For example, management oversight has been improved through individual coaching and a bespoke development programme and practitioner skills and experience through staff training, focus groups and the introduction of case formulations.

To support managers and staff an operational dashboard has been introduced which enables users to see up to date details of their team or own caseloads. Audit and quality assurance guidance and documentation has also been reviewed and updated in line with the inspection findings.

More recently the focus has shifted to work to improve the quality of planning for children. Training has already been delivered on the AIR (activities roles and interventions framework developed by Hazel et al 2020) in plans. The AIR approach seeks to move children away from seeing themselves as 'offenders' by giving them opportunities to act in positive ways. Development work has also covered the use of external controls such as curfews in plans and collaborative planning with children and families and other professionals. The whole service day which took place in January 2024 included workshops on the diversity aspects of effective assessment and planning.

Internal auditing is now evidencing improvements in assessment quality but is not yet showing consistent improvements in planning. This is due to the work to improve planning taking place after the work to improve assessments and so not yet having been applied to the cases audited. The quality of both assessment and planning will continue to be monitored via the regular internal audit process.

Recommendations 3 and 5 related to the police staff within the service. The first was to review the role of police in teams and ensure they had up to date safeguarding training, both of which have been completed. The other to introduce flagging of cases known to SYJS on the police system and improving intelligence sharing with the service.

The flagging system is in place and flagged cases are regularly monitored to enable a better flow of information and planning in response to any change in risk. An

intelligence sharing mechanism with police has also been introduced. Both recommendations have now been signed off as completed.

Recommendation 4 was to ensure that all cases referred into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by SYJS are dealt with in line with child protection procedures.

A joint audit of cases has taken place and found that cases were referred in a timely manner with clear and appropriate information included. It did identify that where a case was not referred a clear rationale needed to be recorded by SYJS. Procedures in this respect have since been tightened up. In a minority of cases, auditors thought that the MASH should have sought a harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) consultation and that in some cases decisions were made on the referral information that should have proceeded to a MASH assessment. Workshops have since been held with MASH practitioners led by a specialist HSB worker to assist in their understanding of the issues.

Recommendation 6 was for the Board and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to review funding arrangements to ensure the YJS can meet statutory responsibilities effectively, as well as delivering quality diversionary interventions.

This recommendation was due to concerns at inspection about relatively high caseloads due to SYJS delivering a targeted prevention offer. This offer has since been replaced with the Ministry of Justice funded Turnaround Programme in 2023. The MOJ have indicated that Turnaround funding will finish in March 2025. This is therefore an area that will need to continue to be monitored carefully and has been added to the forward work plan for the Board to be discussed at a forthcoming board meeting.

Recommendation 7 referred to using data and information to facilitate strategic understanding and analysis at board level and to complete an assessment of the needs and characteristics of the cohort in Suffolk which would then be used to inform targeted service delivery for specific groups of children.

An assessment of the needs and characteristics of the SYJS statutory cohort has been completed and presented to the Management Board. The statutory cohort are children who are sentenced at court or given a caution. This has been used to inform work within the service and to identify specific groups of children who need a targeted approach. The service has introduced strategies for working with girls and children from minority ethnic backgrounds and is developing one to support younger children. Practice leads in the service have also been researching best practice and resources which can be used within the service for specific groups. Work is ongoing with the support of our voluntary sector representative on the board to build community links across the county to better meet the needs of diverse groups of children. A strategic dashboard has also been developed for board members and leaders in the service which includes data on offence types, reoffending, and outcomes in Suffolk.

Recommendation 8 referred to improving children's access and engagement in education, training, and employment (ETE) and reducing the proportion of children not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

An ETE project lead has been in post since May 2023 and has researched best practice in this area. The Board has agreed a twelve month pilot of dedicated Education, Training and Employment (ETE) co-ordinator roles within SYJS, and these are currently being recruited. Education data on children known to SYJS is now being shared with other professionals, such as Education Welfare Officers. All SYJS staff have access to a tool which enables them to check what other services in SCC CYP children are open to and who their named worker is. This includes SEND services and has helped to improve links to the SEND family services teams. The referral process for SALT services has also been reviewed to ensure provision is being used for all children, who may have unmet communication and language needs.

The service is also now offering Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) short courses to children as part of the reparation offer. This works well and is often a gateway to the child completing other education or training courses. It is hoped to expand this approach in 2024-25.

Recommendation 9 was to improve understanding of the needs and outcomes for diverse groups of children, including girls, children in care, and those from black, mixed heritage and minority ethnic groups.

A disproportionality analysis has been completed by Suffolk Office of Data Analytics (SODA) using available partnership data. Information from this on areas of disproportionality in specific areas (such as education) have been combined with findings from the cohort needs analysis and used in a presentation to the Management Board and SYJS staff. This showed the child's journey to becoming a first-time entrant (FTE) to the YJS and how differential outcomes for different groups of children contribute to their over-representation in the youth justice system. Findings from the disproportionality analysis have also been shared with the Suffolk Youth Bench and other Heads of Service in CYPS.

The service has been supported with dedicated project management capacity from Public Health and is currently working with partners to use the information from the analysis and cohort needs assessment to create a partnership action plan.

A whole service day has taken place which included workshops on working with girls, implicit bias and racialised groups, working with children in care and working with younger children. All of which were recorded and are available as training resources to all SYJS staff. An audit of how staff identify and talk about protected characteristics with children has also been completed and shared internally.

SYJS is also now part of the out of court scrutiny panel which is run jointly with Norfolk. It also co- chairs the Safeguarding children in custody group. The service now conducts the Out of Court Disposal Panels to decide on whether children should be diverted or not and issues of over-representation is a key consideration for the panels.

5. Performance over the previous year

SYJS worked with 364 children in 2023-2024. The Management Board monitors performance through the quarterly performance report presented at each board meeting. Suffolk's performance is compared to regional, national and YOT Family groups for the national indicators and narrative context is added based on operational feedback. The focus on reducing the first-time entrants' rates in Suffolk over the last year, including the introduction of out of court disposal decision making panels, has led to an improved performance.

First-time entrants (FTE)

First-time entrants to the YJS (Per 100,000 10-17 population)	2022	2023
Suffolk	227	144
England	181	166
Eastern Region	176	168
YJS Family	153	151

FTE's are the number of children, per 100,000 10-17 year olds, entering the youth justice system for the first time. The FTE rate for Suffolk in the latest period measured, January 2023 – December 2023, is 144 per 100,000 10–17-year-olds. This is now lower than it was 12 months ago and when compared to national, regional and YOT family groups Suffolk is showing the lowest FTE rate.

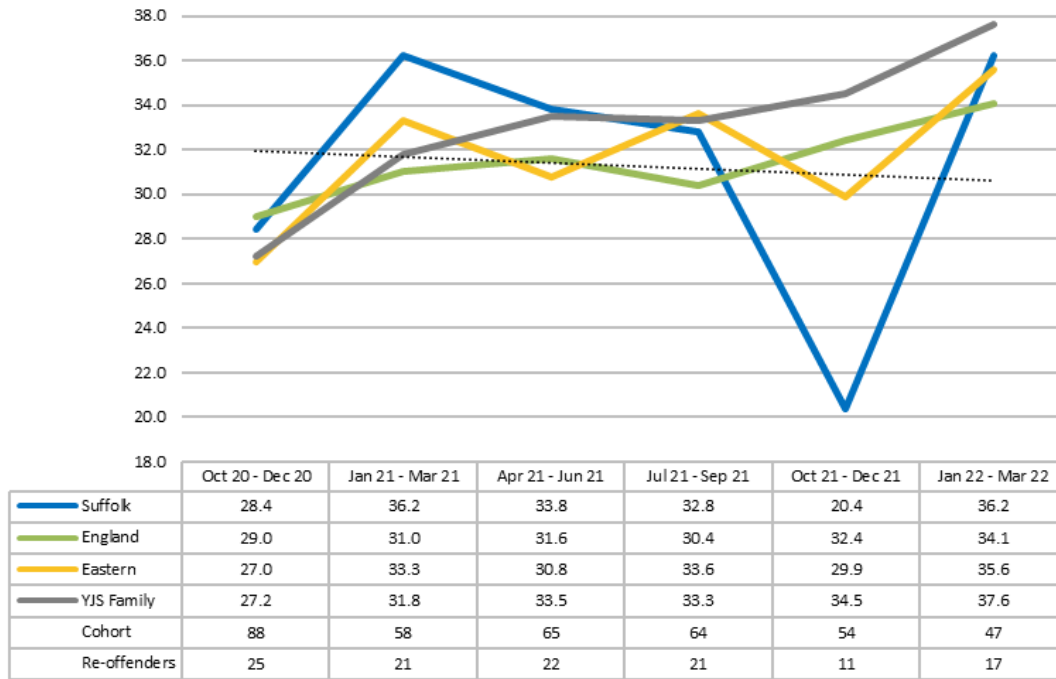
Reoffending

Re-offending measures are included in the newly developed strategic dashboard which will be available to the SYJS management board before the end of financial year 2023-2024. This will give the board and the wider SYJS management team access to trend information relating to reoffending rates (binary and frequency) as well as other national indicators. As well as displaying the types of offences and what outcomes are given by year and quarter, the characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and age) of the reoffending cohort is also available.

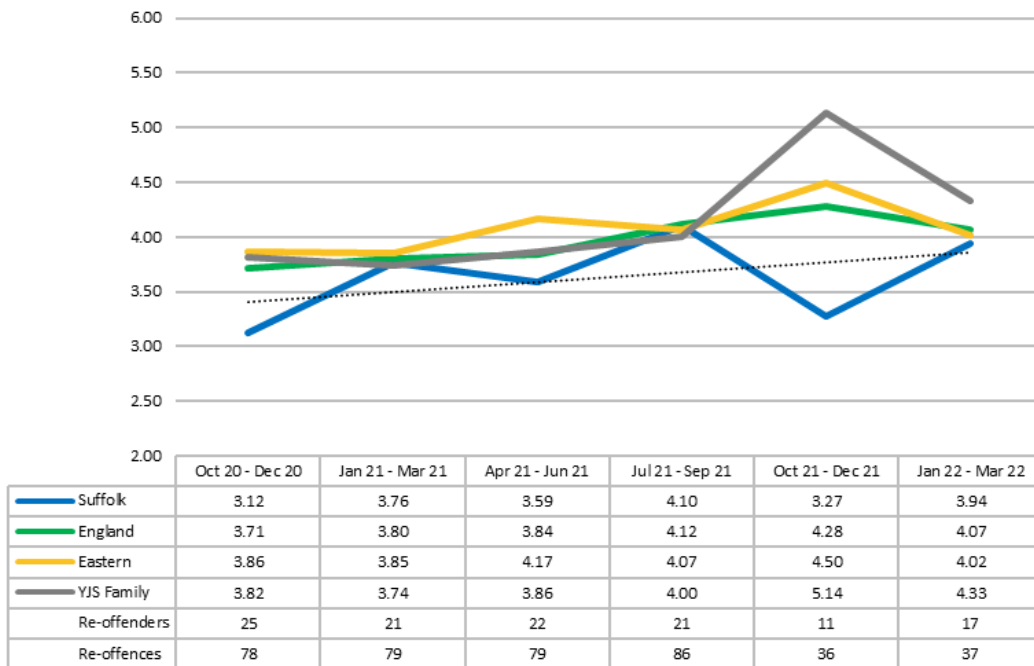
To gain deeper understanding of the needs of the reoffending cohort an in-depth report will be completed in the first quarter of 2024-2025 looking at the latest available data and how the profile of the reoffending cohort has changed over time.

Reoffending binary rate.

The re-offending binary rate is the proportion of children sentenced at youth court or given a caution (known as the statutory cohort) who re-offend. The reoffending rate in Suffolk declined (improved) sharply in the previous quarter but has increased in the latest quarter measured. The long term trend for this re-offending measure continues to be downwards.



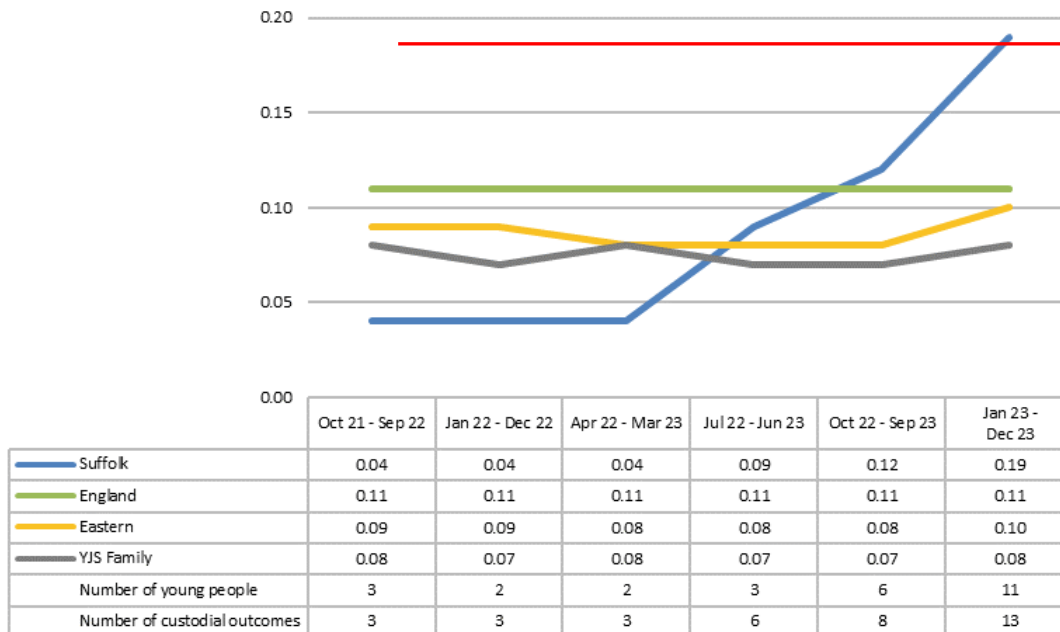
Reoffending frequency rate this is the average number of offences that those in the statutory cohort who re-offend go on to commit.



The reoffending frequency rate has increased slightly in the latest reporting period from 3.27 reoffences per reoffending child to 3.94 in the latest reporting period. Suffolk's reoffending frequency rate is now below (better than) all comparator groups.

Use of custody rate

The use of custody rate is the number of children, per 100,000 10-17 year olds, receiving a custodial sentence. It has increased in Suffolk (deteriorated) in the latest 12-month period from 0.12 to 0.19 per 1000 10-17-year-olds. The number of children receiving a custodial sentence increased from six to eleven. Five of those eleven children were not known to SYJS before they received a custodial sentence.



Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

The YJB introduced 10 new KPIs from quarter 1 of 2023-2024. The recording requirements for staff have increased as a result and the performance team continue to support the service to improve recording quality and consistency. A KPI dashboard is being developed to aid reporting to the Management Board and service. As data quality improves comparator groups will be added to the dashboard.

6. Risks and issues

SYJS maintains a risk register which is reviewed at the Management Board. There have been issues relating to service delivery and achieving strategic aims during 2023-24 through staff absences in key posts, the impact of vacancies and the challenges of recruiting suitable and experienced staff to fill them. The service has worked to streamline the recruitment process, reduce staff turnover, and stabilise the workforce and has been successful in doing so. This has been supported through implementation of the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Programme as the services targeted prevention offer. The news that the funding for this programme is unlikely to continue after March 2025 will pose a risk which the Management Board are already sighted on and is an agenda item for a forthcoming Board meeting.

SYJS is aware of the risks to staff safety and wellbeing posed by the impact of the work they do and has a range of measures in place to support staff including: providing personal safety devices for all frontline staff, staff training on professional boundaries, a new process for managers to use if staff have experienced a potentially traumatic incident at work to ensure they receive a consistent supportive response. Staff are also able to access a wide range of wellbeing support through SCC and have access to regular reflective supervision. Staff exit interview data is also used to identify any trends and themes.

There is also a risk that children from minority ethnic backgrounds, children in care (and girls and younger children when compared to other YOTs), will remain over-represented on the SYJS caseload. The service has already introduced Out of Court Disposal Panels, contributed to work on reducing any unnecessary criminalisation of children in care, completed and shared a disproportionality analysis based on partnership data and undertaken whole service development activity.

Further analysis of the drivers for continued over-representation including a commitment to ensure all data is analysed to identify where this may be occurring has been included in the priorities for 2024-25. Recognising that some of these will sit outside the span of influence for the service and will require a wider response.

Adapting to the new HMIP inspection framework once it is published is also recognised as a challenge.

Suffolk Youth Justice Plan for 2024-25

7. Child First

SYJS takes a child first approach which is based on the four tenets described below.

As children	Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.
Building pro-social identity	Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.
Collaborating with children	Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.
Diverting from stigma	Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

The Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board undertook a workshop on Child First practice in 2023-24 and has identified an ambition to work towards a youth justice

system in Suffolk that takes the same approach. This is one of the priorities for 2024- The partnership supports the delivery of the Diversion Programme delivered by SYJS with Suffolk Constabulary, recognising that there is evidence that diversion programmes can reduce offending compared to formal criminal justice processes, provide better outcomes for children and are often more cost-effective.

The service has also completed strategies on working with specific groups of children and is completing one on working with younger children which will be rolled out in 2024 -25 and help to ensure that work is age appropriate. Our practice model (see diagram below) is relationship and strengths based and promotes collaboration with children. SYJS will continue to refine this way of working going forward including promoting the use of the AIR framework in our work with children. All staff have done training on using the AIR approach this year.



Voice of the Child

As specified in the service co-produced participation strategy SYJS continues to use the following to inform service delivery:

Collaborative working with the child and the child's network during their contact with the service.

Children's interview panels to recruit staff.
Self-assessment questionnaires, end of order surveys and, as part of quality assurance audits, obtains feedback from children and parent/carers about their experience of working with the service.

In 2023 the service completed a consultation with children from groups that are over-represented within the youth justice system. Most of the children spoken to, including all children in care and black boys said they had felt discriminated against. They shared their experiences both positive and negative and emphasised the value of a relationship-based approach.

- girls particularly put emphasis on wanting to feel listened to and understood.
- children in care said that they didn't want to be treated differently just because they were in care.

In 2024 SYJS undertook another consultation.

- Children spoke about the importance of having positive activities which will be an area of focus in 2024. Teams now have a small amount of funding to facilitate this.
- They spoke about being happy with the support they received from SYJS and that they valued keeping workers they had built a relationship with. This principle is something SYJS remains committed to.
- They told us that they valued the specialist support provided by the specialist practitioners in teams (such as SALT workers).

- Some said that the court process was stressful and sometimes they didn't understand what would happen to them next, both at court and after contact with the police. This underlines the need to work with partners towards a more Child First system and to complete the action plan which was developed following the self-assessment At Court completed in 2023-24.

8. Resources and services

SYJS will use the Youth Justice Grant to directly employ staff within the service. Staff hold both statutory and diversion cases because this helps to minimise changes of worker for children and is also important in Suffolk due to the need to 'patch' work in rural areas with dispersed populations. Targeted Prevention cases are now managed through the Turnaround Programme. Staff who are seconded or based in the service include police officers and police support officers, a probation officer, educational psychologists, SALT workers, PMHW workers and substance misuse workers. The service also directly employs qualified social workers.

Full details of staffing are given in Appendix 1

9. Board development.

The Board has attended development sessions led by Child First Consultancy in 2023 that looked at the roles and responsibilities of board members, the Child First approach and the evidence base for it and understanding the SYJS practice model.

In 2024-25 the Management Board welcomed a new chair, and a full induction has been completed into the work of the service. The ongoing development of the new chair has been recognised in the priorities for 2024-25.

We will also be working to make the voice of the child more prominent at Board meetings through continuing to use case studies and reporting on feedback collected from children and families as part of our regular audit reports. We also hope to have children and parents known to the service attend the Board to talk about their experiences of the youth justice system and bring it to life.

10. Workforce Development

SYJS recognises that the development of skills and knowledge are not exclusively dependant on attendance at traditional training events and can be achieved via a variety of routes, e.g., online/e-learning courses; shadowing; coaching; self-directed learning; and supervision. All staff entering the service are provided with an induction programme, which includes a mentor. All practitioners receive regular supervision and most managers in the service completed training on reflective supervision in 2023-24.

Staff within the service continue to complete the recognised qualification in youth justice - the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate – to ensure a skilled and knowledgeable workforce are applying evidence-informed approaches to their work with children and communities.

Training undertaken in the 2023-24 includes the following:

- Principles of effective assessments in youth justice
- Practice development sessions that have focused on the practice model.
- Meeting the individual needs of specific groups of children including those from racialised groups, younger children, those who are care experienced and girls.
- Effective risk management in youth justice

All SYJS staff complete annual mandatory training specified by SCC on a range of topics. Requirements for 2024-25 have yet to be published but in 2023-24 this consisted of a range of topics including equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Service specific training in 2024-25 will include the following:

- Training on use of the prevention and diversion assessment tool.
- Constructive resettlement
- Court practice and report writing.
- Collaborative planning with children and their personal and professional networks.
- Mental Capacity Act for children and young people.
- Training on supervising staff working with children who display sexually harmful behaviour.
- Effective practice and interventions for working with children who display sexually harmful behaviour.
- Traumatic Brain Injury.
- Practice Development sessions that focus on the ASPIRE framework (Assessment, Sentence Planning, Implementation, Review and Evaluation).

In addition, in 2024-25 the service will reintroduce regular reflective group spaces for staff to support their wellbeing which will be facilitated by a psychologist.

11. Evidence-based practice and innovation.

The service is planning a pilot project with ISCRE to involve children's voices in the scrutiny of police powers.

The peer parent webinar which is part of the YJB funded county lines pathfinder resources is regularly used by the CE hubs in their work on an individual basis and has been so well received that it will be delivered on a group basis in 2024.

A 'Child Summary' report has been developed and is available in the case managements system (CMS). It shows all the relevant key recording for the child at the end of an intervention. This includes information such as protected characteristics as well as the KPI's to ensure all recording is completed before a case is signed off as complete.

The service is also facilitating an opportunity for a child to talk about the experience of girls in custody at a national multi-site partnership event between Youth Justice Services, and Young Offenders Institutions and Secure Training Centres.

12. Evaluation

The Management Board has identified the importance of evaluating the education, training and employment project which will be run during 2024-25 and the aim is to do this as an external evaluation.

13. Standards for children in the Youth Justice System

SYJS has completed a standards self-assessment of the Youth Justice Board At Court standard and achieved an overall rating of good. An action plan has been developed following the self-assessment to address areas of improvement and this will be delivered in 2024-25.

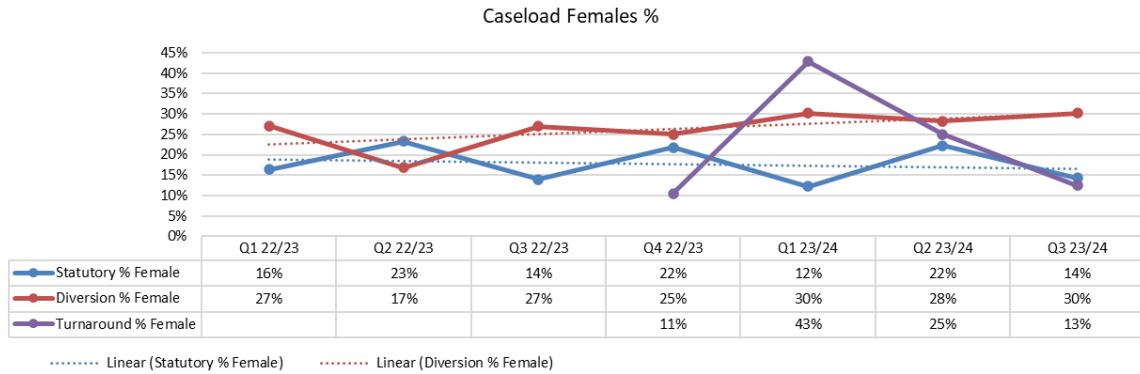
The service has quality assurance processes in place which include collaborative audits completed by managers and members of the quality assurance team to ensure that each case-holding practitioner have a case audited and feedback provided by someone other than their line manager and a fresh perspective on the work. This helps to ensure the quality of the work being delivered and is supported by feedback from children and families. The results of collaborative audits are regularly shared with the management board. The service quarterly audit process has been adapted so that it includes a focus on one standard for each audit. It will be reviewed following the publication of the new HMIP Inspection Framework to ensure alignment.

Thematic audits planned for the year include:

- A review of the locality base risk of harm panels.
- A joint audit with Probation on transitions between youth justice and Probation with a focus on outcomes for children in care.
- A safeguarding audit of children involved in criminal exploitation.

14. Children from groups which are over-represented.

Gender:

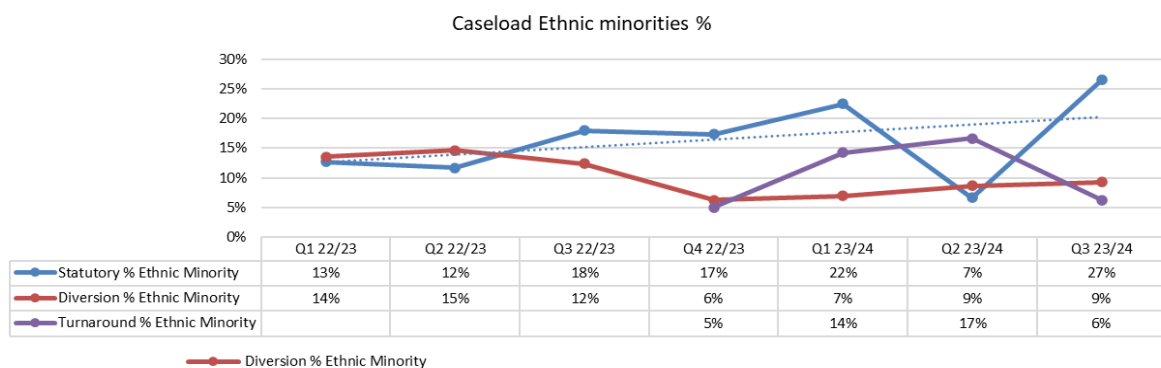


The long-term trend in Suffolk's statutory cohort is of a decreasing proportion of girls. For those girls who are diverted from the formal youth justice system or on the Turnaround Programme (the non-statutory cohort) there is an increase in the proportion over time. This is positive in that fewer girls are becoming first time entrants. In quarter 3 the 14% of girls in the statutory cohort is in line with the national figure produced by the YJB for financial year 2022/2023.

For the Diversion cohort the proportion of girls remains high at 30% in the latest quarter and further analysis will be completed to understand the reasons for this.

In quarter 3 the proportion of girls in the total caseload is 20%. As previously stated, a strategy for working with girls, staff training and targeted resources for girls have all been delivered in 2023-24. In 2024-25 further work will be done to ensure that the service is linked into specific community and voluntary groups for girls and young women.

Ethnicity:



After a low proportion of children from a minority ethnic background in the statutory cohort in quarter 2, the latest figures are showing as 27%. 9% of children starting a Diversion intervention in quarter 3 were from a minority ethnic background.

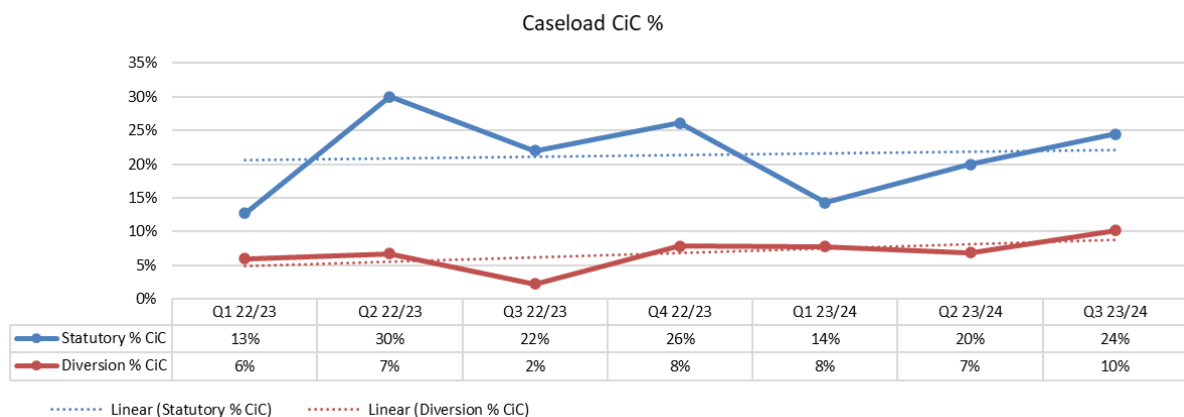
In quarter 3, 17% of the overall caseload is made up of children from a minority ethnic background.

National data for the statutory cohort showed 12% of children cautioned or sentenced in England in 2022-23 were from a minority ethnic background.

Changes to the Diversion Programme introduced in 2023 which were specifically designed to help reduce disproportionality in first time entrants had helped to reduce the number of children from black and minority ethnic groups entering the youth justice system for the first time in quarter 2. However, this improvement has not been sustained in the last quarters data. It will be important to establish whether this is a sustained trend or not.

As already mentioned, a strategy for working with children from minority ethnic backgrounds staff training and targeted resources have all been delivered in 2023-24. In 2024-25 further work will concentrate on developing the partnership disproportionality plan to help address some of the drivers of this issue.

Children in care:



The rates of children in care in both the Diversion and the statutory cohort are now showing a long-term increasing trend and the rates in the statutory cohort are consistently higher. In quarter 3, the proportion of children in care in the overall caseload is 17%.

Further in-depth analysis of what is driving this situation will be completed in 2024-25. Children remanded to secure accommodation or to local authority accommodation become looked after because of the remand.

15. Policing

Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2022-25 includes a commitment to working with SYJS to ensure appropriate diversion of children from the formal youth justice system and preventing their unnecessary criminalisation. Some examples of practical activity undertaken by the Constabulary in partnership with SYJS to achieve these aims are outlined below.

Police Electronic Notification to YOT (PENY) Best Practice

To improve the quality of notifications to SYJS countywide communications have been delivered regarding best practice, reinforced by direct contact by Youth Justice Police Officers with all Safer Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Response Teams.

Outcome 22 Awareness Training

To support the use of Outcome 22 in frontline policing in Suffolk all Response Investigation Teams (RIT) and Community Policing Teams (CPT) have been provided with awareness raising input in 2023-24. This was supported by the SYJS Manager who chairs the Out of Court Disposal Panels.

Diversion

Working closely with Suffolk Youth Justice Service, Suffolk Constabulary has where appropriate encouraged flexible outcomes to deliver bespoke diversion that is meaningful and effective without criminalising children.

First-Time Entrants

Suffolk Constabulary and the SYJS have implemented a Joint Action Plan to support delivery of the FTE target.

16. Prevention

Turnaround continues to be the prevention offer for SYJS. The Turnaround Programme supports children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. Turnaround has nationally set criteria and decisions about suitability for the programme are made by the out of court decision making panels, using a strengths-based approach.

SYJS also offers a direct referral route for the constabulary to refer in children of high concern and without current youth justice supervision.

17. Diversion

The Diversion Programme delivered in Suffolk has been reviewed and updated in line with best practice nationally. During 2023 county wide Out of Court Disposal (OoCD) panels were introduced. Representatives from SYJS, the police, safeguarding, mental health, and substance misuse services are all part of the panel which is given an overview of the incident which the child was involved in, the views of the victim and an overview of the assessment of the child. From this, the panel decide on the most appropriate outcome. The panel continue to utilise a wide range of disposals which allows it to ensure the most effective outcomes to reduce re-offending as well as reducing first-time entrants.

A weekly court planning meeting also takes place to scrutinise the Youth Court list. This ensures that children who might be diverted are identified and diverted to the

OoCD panel where appropriate. Both these measures have helped to reduce Suffolk's rate of first-time entrants.

18. Education

The education representatives on the Management Board are the Head of SEND and the Head of the Virtual School in Suffolk. Progress has been made in terms of data sharing between youth justice and education. Data on SEND support, education, health, and care plans (EHCP), exclusions and suspensions are now regularly shared with SYJS case managers and educational welfare officers.

The Management Board has also agreed the appointment of a named ETE lead for the service.

The ETE lead has assessed the services need for in-house education provision and looked in detail at the barriers to ETE for the cohort. A proposal was taken to the Management Board, and they have agreed funding for a twelve month pilot project. This will provide for an ETE coordinator in each locality team. The coordinators will be responsible for, establishing relationships with local education and training providers, attending specialist education meetings in their area such as the Fair Access and EHCP panel meetings and linking in with partner agencies and updating ETE KPI recording to ensure the best outcomes for every child on the SYJS cohort.

In the financial year 2023-2024 there were 364 children engaged in a supervised youth justice outcome:

	Statutory school age	Above statutory school age	Total
Pre-court (non-statutory)	168	46	214
Pre-court (statutory)	42	16	58
Post-court	31	61	92
Total	241	123	364

Split into statutory school age (SSA) and above statutory school age (>SSA), their education attendance was:

Statutory School Age	#	%	Above Statutory School Age	#	%
Full time education	110	46%	Full time education	64	52%
Part time education	66	27%	Part time education	11	9%
Not attending offered hrs	16	7%	Not attending offered hrs	0	0%
CME/no hrs offered	35	15%	NEET/no hrs offered	36	29%
<i>ETE not recorded</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>ETE not recorded</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>10%</i>
Total	241	100%	Total	123	100%

Suspensions, exclusions and electively home educated for children of Statutory School Age involved with SYJS in the financial year 2023 - 2024:

	SSA #	% of SSA Cohort	Statutory School Aged children who are:		
			CiC	Racialised groups	White
Total number of children	241		22	27	214
Children with exclusions	32	13%	0%	19%	13%
Children with suspensions	127	53%	41%	41%	54%
Children electively home educated	12	5%	0%	4%	5%

Of all the Statutory School Age children, 5% were electively home educated (EHE), none of these were children in care. 4% of children from racialised groups were EHE, slightly lower than the 5% of children with white ethnicity. A higher proportion of children from racialised groups (19%) were permanently excluded at some point during their time in school than those from white backgrounds (13%).

Of the Statutory School Age children involved in SYJS in 2023/24 the rate of suspension was relatively high however the proportion of suspensions were slightly lower for children in care and those in racialised groups.

19. Restorative approaches and victims

Restorative justice (RJ) gives those harmed by a crime or by conflict and those who inflicted the harm the chance to communicate. RJ empowers victims by giving them a voice, providing an opportunity for their views to be heard. SYJS works restoratively across all interventions with children, young people, their families and victims, from diversion through to custodial cases.

Restorative Approaches work within SYJS adheres to the guidelines set out in the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#). SYJS has a team of dedicated Restorative Justice Practitioners who work directly with victims of harm in a sensitive and compassionate way. Providing timely contact and an offer of involvement in a restorative process, with a thorough explanation of the benefits of RJ to them. Victim information and data is held and recorded separately on a secure database to ensure absolute privacy and confidentiality. SYJS Police colleagues seek consent from victims, in both statutory and out of court disposals, to ensure contact from SYJS Restorative Approaches practitioners is appropriate.

A range of interventions are offered (subject to assessment) which include: -

- Letter of Explanation
- Shuttle Mediation
- Restorative Justice Conference

- Direct or Indirect Reparation
- The opportunity for a Victim to be kept informed of a child progress
- The opportunity for a Victim to attend a Referral Order Panel

Every effort is made to ensure the views, needs and safety of victims, both actual and potential, inform assessments at an early stage. SYJS Practitioners work collaboratively with SYJS Restorative Approaches Practitioners, gaining the wishes and views of victims to develop restorative plans for children.

SYJS will support children, using restorative approaches, to understand their own behaviours and how these impact on others, to re-engage with their community and society by repairing harm and restoring relationships. RJ also supports the development of a pro-social identity through seeking and providing opportunities for the child to engage in activities, interactions, and roles to feel positive about themselves and their world (Hazel et al 2020).

The Restorative Approaches policy and procedures will be reviewed by Summer 2024. The reparation team also expand the delivery of ASDAN qualifications.

20. Serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding

SYJS is a member of the countywide multi-agency group overseeing the delivery of the serious violence duty introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. In terms of practice, SYJS has increased the number of children receiving case formulation in recognition of the complexity of many children now open to the service. The service has good links with the local MAPPA co-ordinator.

The service is an active partner in the delivering of the countywide criminal exploitation plan and hosts the Criminal Exploitation Hubs (CE Hubs) which are part of Suffolk's response to criminal exploitation. The CE Hubs have received funding for a further three years until 2028. SYJS also works closely with the Make a Change (MAC) Team which offers a service for children who are victims of or at risk of becoming victims of all types of child exploitation. SYJS is also involved in police discussions around specific operations.

SYJS is a standing member of Suffolk's Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) panels and refers into MACE. As a first responder, SYJS also works closely with partners to ensure that a National Referral Mechanism is submitted if a child is suspected to be a victim of modern-day slavery.

21. Detention in police custody

In collaboration with Norfolk Youth Offending Team (YOT) the service continues to co-chairs a regular meeting with police custody staff, fostering and adoption services and

the emergency out of hours duty services to review the cases of all children eligible for transfer to local authority accommodation under PACE regulations and discuss other safeguarding issues in police custody.

22. Remands

In 2024-25 the service and the Management Board will respond to the relevant recommendations to the Joint Thematic Inspection on work with children subject to remands to Youth Detention. The Management Board already monitors the number and length of remands as part of quarterly performance reporting. The outcome of remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) will need to be monitored in the future. There is inter-agency guidance in place to reduce the use of unnecessary secure remands and this was updated in 2021. Support for bail packages to avoid remands is a priority for value added hours for the reparation service.

23. Use of custody and resettlement

Suffolk is committed to reducing the use of custody for children and this is reflected in policies and procedures. The Board continues to monitor the use of custody through quarterly performance reporting and a deep dive into the recent rise in children going into custody will also be completed in 2024.

The resettlement policy launched in 2022 continues to be embedded across the county and training on constructive resettlement is included in the 2024-25 training plan. A list of all children remanded to YDA or sentenced to custody is sent to the Heads of Virtual School and Corporate Parenting to support partnership working.

24. Working with families

The importance of working with and supporting families is an integral part of the Signs of Safety approach and therefore the practice model for SYJS. The service intends to support work with families by extending the role of restorative practitioners to work restoratively to repair relationships in families where necessary.

25. Priorities for 2024-25

The priorities in the Suffolk Youth Justice Plan 2024-25 are based on: the YJB strategic plan priorities for 2024-27, national developments including changes to the inspection framework, local developments such as a new board chair, current performance, needs assessments, identified risks and challenges; consultation with

a wide range of stakeholders including feedback from the Management Board, children, staff, and volunteers and a review and refresh of work to deliver the recommendations of the HMIP Joint Inspection.

Overarching Priorities

The overarching youth justice priorities in Suffolk for 2024-25 are to:

- Improve the quality of work with children to support their safety and wellbeing and reduce the risk of reoffending and harm to others as measured via the regular reporting to the Management Board.
- To advocate for a Child First approach across the partnership.
- To promote and maximise the benefits of restorative approaches in service delivery.
- To increase the numbers of children working with the service in suitable education, training, or employment.
- To reduce the extent of over-representation of groups of children such as those from a minority ethnic background and children in care in the youth justice system.
- To improve the quality and availability of key data internally (for example mental health) as well as including available partnership data to ensure a robust understanding of the cohort and trends.

26. Service Development Plan

A summary board, data and service development plan is outlined below.

Management Board

- a. Provide an effective induction to the new Chair of the Youth Justice Management Board (starts May 2024).
- b. Complete the partnership plan to address over-representation of specific groups of children in the youth justice system.
- c. To deliver and externally evaluate the education, training, and employment pilot project.
- d. For the Board to agree specific actions that work towards a 'Child First' youth justice system in Suffolk.
- e. To agree next steps and an exit plan in advance of the end of the Turnaround Programme (March 25).
- f. To ensure that children open to youth justice are recognised as a vulnerable group in the Board's own agencies.

- g. To support the service to deliver the practice improvements identified by the HMIP Joint Inspection in 2022 including overseeing the remaining elements of the HMIP Improvement Plan.
- h. To support a constructive resettlement approach through helping to ensure relevant provision is available to Suffolk Children promptly on release from custody.
- i. To use the data and intelligence shared at the YJS Management Board as a catalysis to service improvements within each board members own organisation.
- j. To develop an understanding of the requirements of the new HMIP Inspection framework for Management Boards and Youth Justice Services.
- k. To complete a joint audit with Probation on transitions between youth justice and Probation with a focus on outcomes for children in care.
- l. To respond to the recommendations of the Joint Thematic Inspection on work with children subject to remands to Youth Detention.

Data and Information.

- a. To ensure youth justice performance data is consistently analysed to identify any over-representation of specific groups of children in Suffolk. To undertake a detailed analysis of groups that are over-represented especially on the statutory caseload including children in care and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- b. Introduce the prevention and diversion tool to Core + (case management system) and start reporting from it once available.
- c. To complete an analysis to improve understanding of why the proportion of girls and younger children (10-14) on the Youth Justice caseload are higher in Suffolk than nationally.
- d. To analyse the needs and characteristics of children who reoffend and the reoffences they commit in Suffolk.
- e. To support with data collection of the 10 new national key performance measures (KPIs) and establish an accurate baseline. To develop and introduce the new KPI dashboard.
- f. To support improving the accuracy, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of data recording (including mental health data). Seeking staff feedback on how the case management system might be made as user friendly as possible. Themed staff workshops will be run throughout the year.
- g. To regularly complete the YJB Serious Youth Violence toolkit and include the results in performance reports to the Board.
- h. To introduce a regular report on non-engagement activity in the service, broken down by team and highlighting any overrepresentation of groups of children.

- i. To work with the Management Board and service education leads to refine education, training and employment (ETE) performance reporting to provide a more detailed and accurate picture and to support the evaluation of the ETE pilot project and to utilise relevant partnership data to report to the Board.

Service

- a. To remain focussed on staff wellbeing, safety, and resilience.
- b. To actively ensure that practice improvements made so far are maintained: Including collecting feedback from staff to identify any areas where they feel further support is required.
- c. To improve the quality of planning for children: Including providing them with activities, interactions, and roles (AIR) which help them to develop a positive identity.
- d. To prioritise and support delivery and evaluation of the education, training and employment project including building closer links with family services.
- e. To improve the quality, comprehensiveness, and accuracy of case recording.
- f. To introduce the prevention and diversion tool to the case management system once available.
- g. To contribute towards developing a Child First youth justice system: for example, through delivering SALT training to volunteer Appropriate Adults to support children with undiagnosed needs presenting for police interview.
- h. To complete a themed safeguarding audit of a sample of cases to establish the proportion of children known to SYJS who are at risk of exploitation, including criminal exploitation, whether appropriate referrals have been made and appropriate safeguarding actions taken in all cases and what safeguarding trends and needs there are for children on the caseload.
- i. Training to be delivered to staff by PMHW on the THRIVE model and the presenting behaviours that different groups of children may display which may indicate mental health / wellbeing needs.
- j. To have a thorough shared understanding of what the new HMIP Inspection framework means in practice. To make any necessary alterations to processes, paperwork, policies, and guidance.
- k. To review the effectiveness of locality-based risk of harm panels.
- l. To develop our restorative approaches (RA) work. Including sourcing more tailored reparation placements, delivering more face-to-face restorative interventions, increase delivery of short education/training courses as part of reparation and to deliver bespoke training for reparation staff. To develop the role of restorative practitioners to work restoratively with families where appropriate.
- m. To review and revise work with victims including, policy, practice, and procedures.

- n. To survey volunteer panel members in relation to training needs, and how best to improve communication with the service and with volunteer colleagues and how best to involve them in exit planning and post exit.
- o. To continue to improve links with community and voluntary groups on a local basis. To ensure tailored approaches are used with specific groups of children.
- p. To focus on children on remand or in custody and their constructive resettlement into the community. Including consideration of multi-agency reviews of children at risk of these outcomes.
- q. To review the process for completing and disseminating learning reviews on serious incidents as defined by the YJB to ensure that they as far as possible they are co-ordinated with other review processes in CYPS.

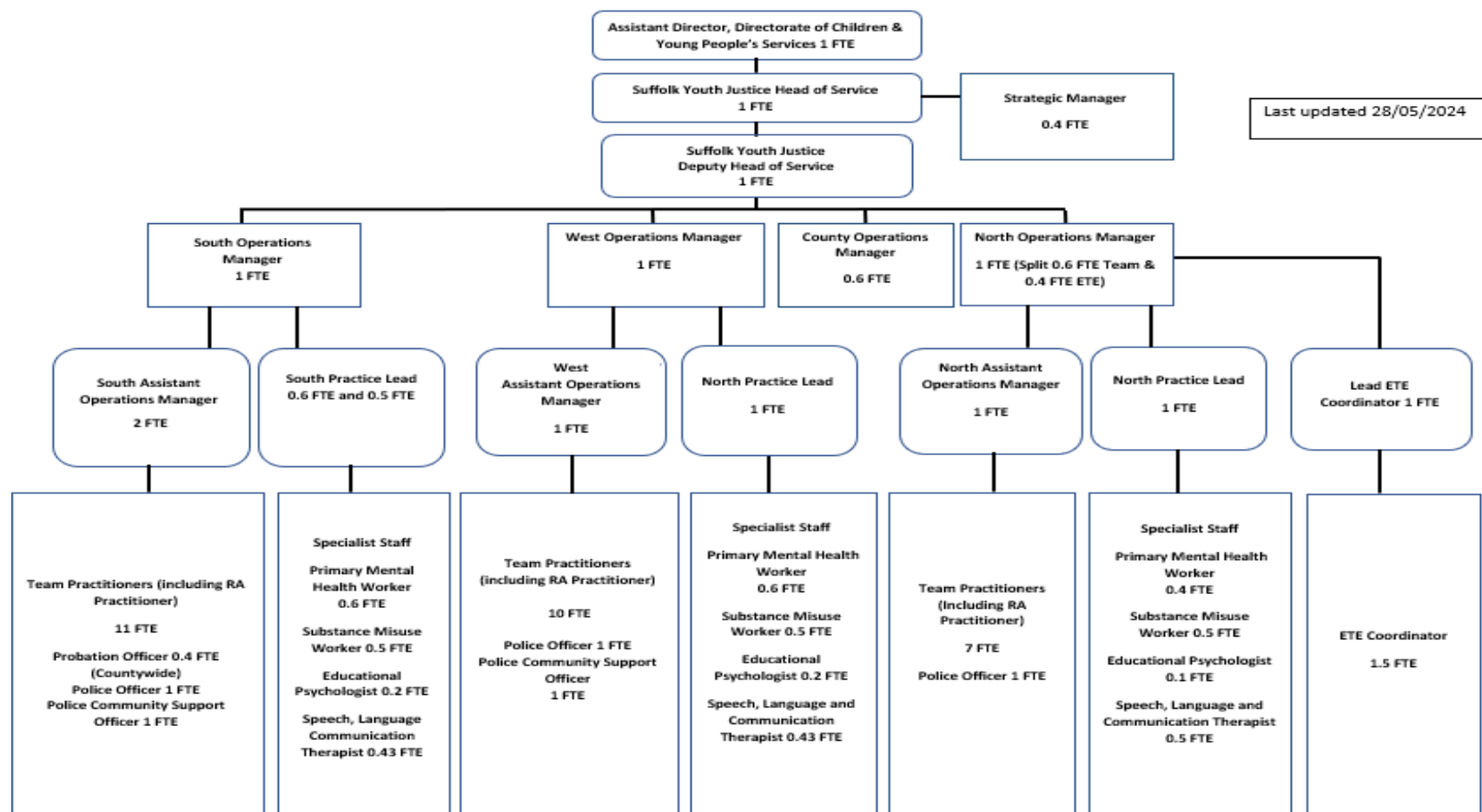
16. Signature

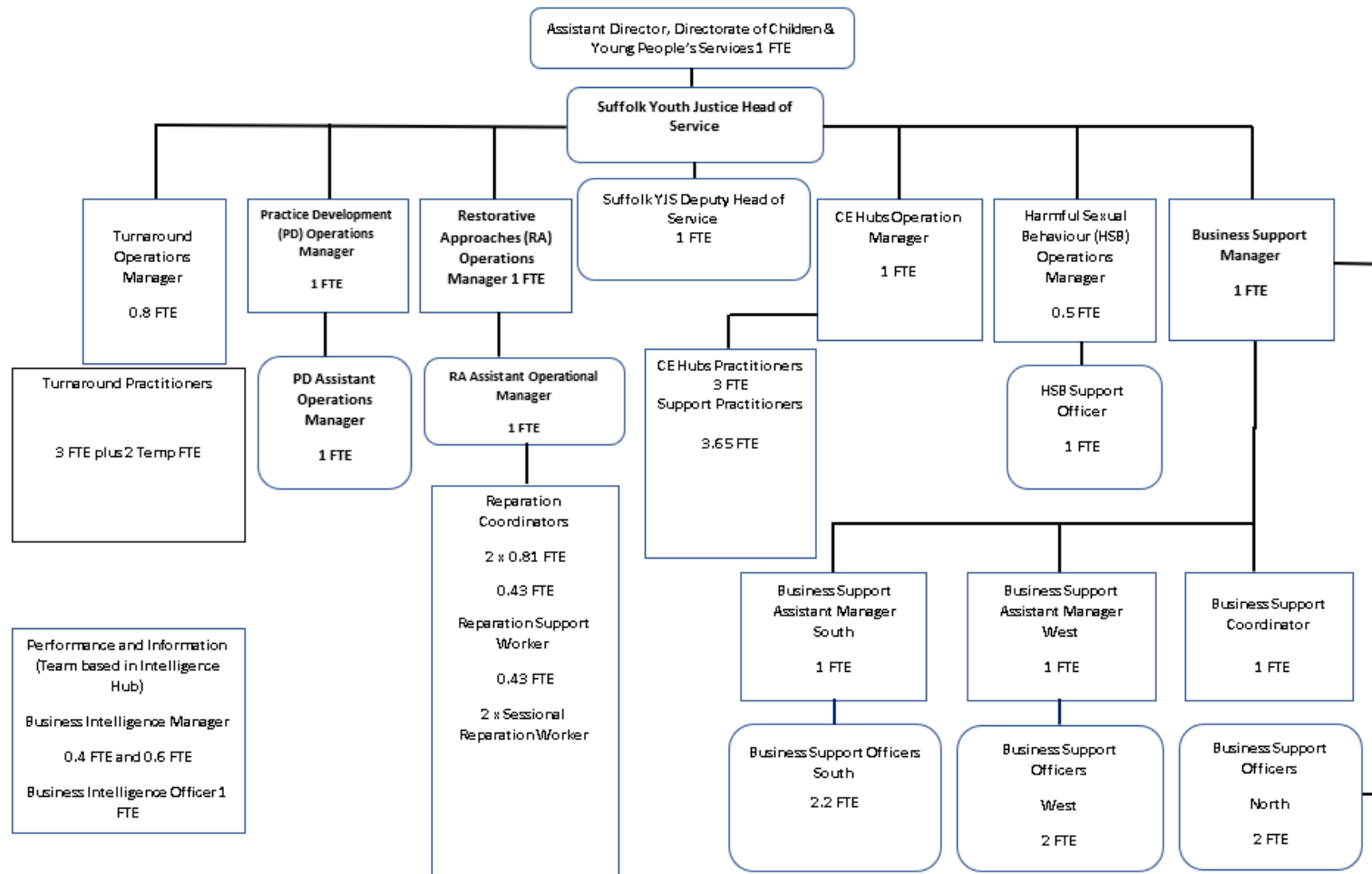
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eamonn Bridger', written in a cursive style.

Assistant Chief Constable Eamonn Bridger

Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board Chair

Appendix 1: Staffing Structure





Appendix 2: Budget costs and contributions

Suffolk									
INCOME	Youth Justice Board	Local Authority	Police	Police and Crime Commissioner	Probation	Health	Welsh Government	Other	Total
Cash	£847,155	£1,968,446	£131,529		£19,959	£333,495		£0	£3,300,584
In-kind			£220,380		£29,846				£250,226
Total income	£847,155	£1,968,446	£351,909	£0	£49,805	£333,495	£0	£0	£3,550,810
1. This includes <i>all expected</i> grants received from YJB									
If possible, please provide a breakdown against each funding source. If this information is not retained, please give details of the total amounts spent against each area.									
EXPENDITURE	Youth Justice Board	Local Authority	Police	Police and Crime Commissioner	Probation	Health	Welsh Government	Other	Total
Salaries	£847,155	£1,675,259	£337,408		£49,805	£333,495		£0	£3,243,122
Activity costs	£0	£117,323	£14,501						£131,824
Accommodation	£0								£0
Overheads	£0	£175,864							£175,864
Equipment	£0								£0
Total expenditure	£847,155	£1,968,446	£351,909	£0	£49,805	£333,495	£0	£0	£3,550,810

Appendix 3: Ethnicity, Sex and Disability

STAFFING OF SYJS BY GENDER AND ETHNICITY: NO. OF INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE

(As at 28/5/2024)

ETHNICITY	MANAGERS STRATEGIC (FEMALE)	MANAGERS STRATEGIC (MALE)	MANAGERS OPERATIONAL (FEMALE)	MANAGERS OPERATIONAL (MALE)	PRACTITIONERS (FEMALE)	PRACTITIONERS (MALE)	ADMINISTRATIVE (FEMALE)	ADMINISTRATIVE (MALE)	SESSIONAL (FEMALE)	SESSIONAL (MALE)	TOTAL (FEMALE)	TOTAL (MALE)
Asian or Asian British											0	0
Black or Black British						1					0	1
Mixed				1	4	1					4	2
Chinese or Other											0	0
White or White British	2	1	11	1	41	12	13	1	5	1	72	16
Not Known					1	2					1	2
Total	2	1	11	2	46	16	13	1	5	1	77	21
Known Disability			1	1	3	2	1				5	3

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