

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

20th JUNE 2025

LSCSB UPDATE: YOUTH JUSTICE, LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to appraise members of the Board of relevant Youth Justice updates.
2. This report relates to those children who are engaged with the Youth Justice Service through a voluntary prevention offer or through statutory work directed by the Out of Court Disposal Panel or through Court.

Background

3. Youth Justice Services were established by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as statutory multi agency partnerships. The principal statutory duty of the Youth Justice Service is “to prevent offending by children and young people aged 10 - 17”.
4. The Leicestershire provision is known as the Youth and Justice Service and is based at Leicestershire County Council.
5. Leicestershire County Council is also commissioned to deliver prevention and statutory youth justice work on behalf of Rutland County Council.

Performance Headlines 2024-2025

6. **First Time Entrants (FTE's)** into the Criminal Justice System (CJS) – This measure remains low, which is positive. Performance is well ahead of the East Midlands rate, that of the average Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the England rate. The Service is proud of the work undertaken to ensure that children are diverted away from the Criminal Justice System.
7. **Use of Custody** - The use of Custody for children across Leicestershire remains low and has continued to do so for the last four years. Again, performance remains strong when compared with the region, the average YJS and England. Currently, there is only one child serving a custodial sentence.
8. **Re-offending data** - The Service commenced local tracking of a cohort of children and whether they are involved in further offending, and at what rate,

from April 2025. This will be reported to the Board at a future date as the tracking takes a full year to undertake.

9. **Offence type** - Violence against the person remains the offence that children are most convicted for. The peak age of children becoming involved with Youth Justice is 16-17, this used to be 13-14.
10. **Over-representation** - Black and mixed heritage boys are over-represented within Youth Justice in Leicestershire. They form a larger population within the cohort of YJS children than they do in the population of Leicestershire children. What evidence tells the sector about black and mixed heritage boys is that they are not afforded their rights as children in that they are more likely to be viewed as making their own decisions and therefore are discriminated against through a process called “adultification”.
11. Girls are also over-represented and are more likely to receive a substantive Court outcome due to violent offending. Over-representation is a term used to describe a particular group, in this instance of children, where they are represented by a larger proportion than would be expected based of the population of Leicestershire of that group.
12. Performance is monitored quarterly by the statutory Youth and Justice Partnership Board which is chaired by the Director of Children’s Services at Leicestershire County Council.

Key Achievements and Developments

13. **Child First Approach “Seeing children as children”** – The Service has been focused on embedding the Child First approach which involves prioritising the needs and rights of children, even when they are involved in the system because of their offending behaviour. It promotes a focus on addressing the vulnerabilities of children and their developmental needs, rather than the traditional focus on offending behaviour. This strengths-based approach prevents offending, re-offending and creates safer communities and less victims. The academic research for this approach is through Loughborough University. Similar approaches are being undertaken by wider partners, for example the Child Centred Policing model used by the Police.
14. **Health** – Work continues to focus on the health inequalities that children face who are part of the CJS. These are often needs that have been unmet or have not been identified until support is provided by the CJS. The Service works in collaboration with Turning Point, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other health providers to support children to receive the Services that they require. The Service has a designated Health Lead who has supported in developing understanding around autism, navigating health services and development of health pathways. The Service has submitted a partnership bid with Leicester City Council and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust to acquire dedicated services for speech, language and communication as this is a key theme across YJS, but a gap in provision in Leicestershire.

15. **Diversion from Court** – There is a national framework which focuses on ensuring that children are presented before the Court only when this is necessary, for example, seriousness of offences committed. The remaining children are then diverted to a Panel, where they are reviewed in partnership, an outcome is decided in line with guidance, and intervention is offered where required. Outcomes can be both informal and formal, again depending on the seriousness of the offences and mitigating and aggravating factors. This work has been undertaken in partnership with Leicestershire Police and Leicester City Children and Young People's Justice Service. The purpose of diversionary work is focused on preventing offending behaviour, repairing harm to victims and the community and taking children out of the CJS.
16. **Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Projects** – The Service is involved in several research projects which are funded by the YEF. The YEF website provides further detail on each project by the evaluation partner:
 - a. **Focused Deterrence "Phoenix Programme"** – a tertiary prevention initiative which seeks to prevent violence and associated crime from recurring through a comprehensive multi-agency approach. This is a collaboration with Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Probation, Violence Reduction Network and the two Youth Justice Services across the whole county. The evaluation partner for the programme is the University of Hull.
 - b. **The Reach Programme** - a secondary prevention initiative which seeks to prevent escalation of the causes of violence through tackling them at an early stage. In the case of this programme the primary focus is supporting improved school attendance and engagement and preventing exclusion. The programme works with 11–16-year-olds in secondary schools through a high support mentoring programme in schools. The programme is delivered by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council Youth and Justice Services in partnership with a number of pilot schools. This project is set to conclude this summer, with the evaluation being published by Sheffield Hallam University later this year.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

17. **Keeping Town Centres Safe This Summer** – The Service is supporting colleagues across the partnership in line with the Home Office campaign where children are involved. The Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer will be a single point of contact for District colleagues and Police for discussions regarding children whose behaviour is of concern during the campaign. There is a heightened risk that children could enter the CJS at these times and therefore discussions are welcomed about collaborative working across locations. Further communications will be sent out to those leading on the campaign across the partnership shortly.
18. **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP)** – Youth Justice Services are inspected by HMIP. The Service was last inspected in 2021 and received an

outcome of “requires improvement”. In November 2024, HMIP launched a new inspection framework for Youth Justice Services which places an emphasis on partnerships, data and a collective understanding of what is happening with young people across Local Authority areas. Members of the Youth and Justice Management Board will be responsible for progressing this work. It is recognised that the Youth Justice System is as successful as those partnerships that support children to avoid entry into the system and those who support entry out of the system.

Recommendations for the Board

19. It is recommended that the Board notes the content of the report.

Officer to contact

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