

Meeting of:	SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
Date of Meeting:	11 SEPTEMBER 2023
Report Title:	BRIDGEND YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE UPDATE AND OPERATIONAL PLAN
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	LINDSAY HARVEY CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT
Responsible Officer:	CHRISTA BONHAM-GRIFFITHS STRATEGIC YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect on policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report presents an update on the Youth Justice Service progression against the combined recommendations for Bridgend Youth Justice Service from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in February 2022 and its Youth Justice Annual Plan actions for 2022-2023.</p> <p>Recommendations and actions covered mental health provision, management board membership, Youth Bureau format, child exploitation framework, planning and services, and quality assurance processes.</p> <p>Progress to date includes developing mental health provision, improving the Youth Bureau, and enhancing trauma-informed support.</p> <p>For 2023-2024, plans include stronger collaboration, development of preventative models, compliance with performance measures, multi-agency partnership working, and the development of the trauma recovery model.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with an update on the progress made regarding the combined recommendations, actions and developments outlined in its Youth Justice Plan for 2022-2023 and the priorities identified in the current Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) Youth Justice Annual Plan for 2023-2024 (Appendix A).

2. Background

- 2.1 BYJS is a statutory multi-agency partnership that has a legal duty to co-operate to secure appropriate local youth justice services. The service is funded from a variety of sources including UK Government, Welsh Government and the statutory partners (that is, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), South Wales Police, the Probation Service and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board).
- 2.2 Statutory duties to prevent offending are outlined in criminal justice and civil legislation, including the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System 2019. The principle aim of Youth Justice Services in England and Wales is to prevent offending and

re-offending by children in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Local authorities in Wales also have statutory duties to provide preventative services contained in Section 15 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Local authorities must provide services to:

- encourage children not to commit offences;
- avoid the need for children to be placed in secure accommodation and enable children to live their lives as independently as possible; and
- work with victims of crime in compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims to offer restorative services and referral to specialist support services where necessary. The aim of this intervention is to repair harm and ensure the needs of victims are met.

3. Current situation/proposal

- 3.1 The BYJS plan for 2023-2024 is attached at Appendix A. This was developed with input from all partners including children and young people.
- 3.2 The plan is consistent with the relevant priorities contained within the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 and the Education and Family Support Directorate Strategic Plan for the same period.
- 3.3 Following His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection in March 2019, of the, then, Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Services (WBYJEIS) (which encompassed youth offending services in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, and Bridgend) the service received an 'Inadequate' rating in the report 'An inspection of youth offending services in Western Bay' <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/03/Western-Bay-YJS-inspection-report.pdf>. This assessment prompted a proactive and determined response from BCBC, leading to a series of significant structural enhancements aimed at rectifying the identified deficiencies.
- 3.4 In response to the 'Inadequate' rating, BCBC immediately decided to disaggregate from Western Bay and established the standalone Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS). This enabled BCBC to have full control over the improvement journey. A comprehensive reorganisation of the service was undertaken. This restructuring enabled the establishment of improved management oversight, ensuring a more robust framework for guiding and supporting the dedicated staff working with the children within their care. The objective was to foster an environment where every staff member is equipped with clear directions and substantial support, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the service.
- 3.5 A noteworthy focus of BYJS's efforts has been the enhancement of the quality and analytical depth of assessments conducted. By prioritising this aspect, BYJS aims to achieve a holistic understanding of each child's circumstances, paying specific attention to identifying and addressing potential risks of harm as well as concerns related to safety and overall well-being. This shift in approach aligns with the service's commitment to safeguard the interests and welfare of the children under their care.
- 3.6 Recognising the importance of collaboration and synergy within the realm of youth justice and early intervention, BYJS has actively forged and fortified relationships with partner agencies. This collaborative ethos has been instrumental in advancing a shared agenda aimed at augmenting the safety and well-being of the children involved, while also contributing to the broader welfare of the community at large.

- 3.7 A further inspection was undertaken in February 2022, and it was recognised by HMIP that BYJS was on a journey of improvement as outlined in the report entitled 'An inspection of youth services in Bridgend' <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/06/Annex-3-Bridgend-YJS-Inspection-report-v1.0.pdf>. The continued diligent and resolute endeavours of BYJS throughout 2022-2023, have borne effective results. The trajectory of progress has been so promising that the service has been deemed to have made substantial improvements, leading to its removal from requiring additional monitoring by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). This recognition serves as a testament to the commitment and diligence that BYJS has exhibited in its quest to elevate the standards of service delivery.
- 3.8 The service continues to strive to create effective strategies that yield positive intervention and outcomes for its stakeholders.
- 3.9 The service has developed a pathway process for children subject to BYJS intervention which is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the BYJS and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) teams. The CAMHS pathway has drastically improved operationally, and there are plans for CAMHS to deliver criteria training to the service. However, there has remained insufficient CAMHS resource for vulnerable children across the county borough. After some negotiation, the service is planning to appoint a specific CAMHS officer to be part of the Youth Justice Service which will enable immediate referral and advice from CAMHS for children who require service involvement, this will be a new post. A CAMHS Youth Justice manager is in post appointed to help to problem solve and overcome any blockages or issues for children involved with BYJS.
- 3.10 Additional speech and language support capacity is now in place for 2.5 days per week, an increase from one day per week, and a speech and language therapist commenced their role in January 2023. An updated service level agreement has been signed between the two services.
- 3.11 The BYJS Management Board membership has been reviewed and confirmed. The management board has identified a new chair and board members, including CAMHS and Forensic Assertive Community Treatment Service (FACTS), to ensure all YJS required representation and has developed knowledge and understanding of roles and responsibilities between members. The frequency of the Board meetings has been reviewed and the management board now operates on a bi-monthly basis. All reports prepared for the BYJS Management Board include recommendations and actions and these are followed up as part of the management board agenda. The team and board members have recently met to consult on the Youth Justice plan for 2023-2024 and have made combined improvement actions to further enhance quality and performance of the service.
- 3.12 The Bureau Panel has now been extended to include multi-agency partnership attendance from education, children's social care, health, substance misuse and victim services. The purpose of the Bureau Panel is to make out of court decisions in partnership on the most appropriate way to deal with lower-level offences where a child has pleaded guilty and acknowledges the harm caused by their offence. This process allows the child to receive an out-of-court disposal. The multi-agency panel provides a holistic approach to decision making for youth bureau interventions within Bridgend.
- 3.13 BYJS has devised an in-house process called 'My Voice', which is being utilised across all interventions (paper-based and online). This captures the child's perception of their needs

and strengths. It also includes any diversity needs and language requirements the child may have.

- 3.14 BYJS and its partners have proactively implemented development and education engagement meetings, with a strong focus on identifying and addressing the needs of children who seek their services. These meetings are an integral part of their approach to providing comprehensive and holistic support to the children they serve.
- 3.15 The Regional Safeguarding Board has developed a multi-agency forum focusing on a strategy and toolkit to address child exploitation issues. BYJS has been a pro-active representation on this group, and there is an assessment and screening toolkit being utilised by social workers within Children's Social Care and Youth Justice Team staff. Additionally, an Exploitation Panel has been set up in partnership with all relevant services including BYJS to effectively share intelligence, disrupt exploitative activity and create a robust multi agency plan for all children at risk of exploitation within the Authority. The exploitation lead for Children's Social Care meets weekly with the Youth Justice Service and any ongoing relevant intelligence is shared.
- 3.16 A quality assurance audit group runs bi-monthly with targeted themes being audited to assist improvement of practice with its stakeholders. To date, the service has concentrated its efforts on reoffending, violent offending, education training and employment, disproportionality and in September 2023 will concentrate the group efforts on auditing national standards for court services in line with Youth Justice Board requirements.
- 3.17 A Resettlement Policy has been developed in conjunction with all relevant partners. A resettlement panel is to be convened which will continue to monitor and plan for cases in relation to resettlement, transitions and custody.
- 3.18 Further developments have been made in conjunction with South Wales Police. An out-of-court disposal guidance document has been produced. BYJS has secured further funding from the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Programme to be able to offer restorative street disposal interventions where harm can be repaired without the child having to go through a formal police process.
- 3.19 The service also has developed its preventative services which aim to prevent children entering the police station and provide earlier intervention to those most at risk of criminality or harm related incidents. As part of this work, the service holds a multi-agency prevention panel for cases being referred and has developed its prevention assessment and planning toolkit.
- 3.20 Training on trauma-informed approaches has been provided to all staff members. The referral process for Enhanced Case Management (ECM) has been formalised, and there is a trauma screening process in place for all children. This will be further enhanced with the Relationship Building Together Project due to commence in September 2023 where this model of practice will be developed across the Education and Family Support departments. Links have been made with the ECM service for staff with cases going through the ECM process, and clinical supervision is in place. This supervision will be further extended when the Youth Endowment Project commences in October 2023.
- 3.21 Staff development and recognition of positive practice is now integral to the service planning. A development morning is held monthly where themed practice workshops are delivered. Positive examples of practice have been acknowledged as part of the Youth

Justice Plan and the service has utilised the Butler Trust award scheme to recognise innovative practitioners who have produced exemplary work for the service.

- 3.22 All necessary identified training for 2022-2023 has been delivered to service practitioners.
- 3.23 Regular monthly meetings are in place with all multi-agency partners, so there is adequate planning for service area delivery in place. There are many positive examples of joined-up planning for those most complex cases to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child are at the centre of the plan.
- 3.24 The implementation of the recommendations by BYJS reflects its strong commitment to achieving positive outcomes for the vulnerable children and young people in its care and upholding public safety. By taking proactive steps to address the areas identified for improvement, BYJS aims to enhance its effectiveness and the quality of its services.
- 3.25 Theme 12 of the Education and Family Support Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-2026 has an aim to ensure effective youth development and youth justice services. It recognises that BYJS has reduced the number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system and made significant improvements to the service (as reported by regulators). Additionally, there is a recognition that we have reduced reoffending rates. BYJS has made significant progress in reducing the rate of first-time entrants into the justice system. Comparing the current year's data to the previous year's figures, there has been a notable decrease of 10.7% in the rate of first-time entrants, with the rate dropping from 136 to 121. This decrease reflects a positive trend in preventing children from becoming involved in the justice system for the first time.
- 3.26 In conclusion, the BYJS Plan for 2023-2024 reflects a comprehensive and dedicated approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable children in Bridgend. The outlined strategies and initiatives emphasise early intervention, collaboration with partner agencies, trauma-informed responses, and a focus on the holistic well-being of the children and families served by BYJS.
- 3.27 By targeting the prevention of offending behaviours, prioritising education and individual development, amplifying the voices of children, and fostering strong relationships with Children's Social Care and other relevant entities, BYJS aim to create a seamless support network that promotes positive outcomes for the children. Through continuous training, the integration of trauma recovery models, and a commitment to multi-agency cooperation, our service is poised to evolve as effective, compassionate, and integrated entities, working in tandem to create a safer and more nurturing environment for the children and families of Bridgend.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals and principles prescribed for within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 connect directly to the approach to supporting children, young people and their families. The approach is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle and more specifically as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Long term | The approach family support services focuses on meeting the needs of a wide range of service beneficiaries including children, young people, adults, and families. |
| Prevention | The focus of family support services is upon early identification of need and ensuring that there is appropriate provision in place to meet individual needs. |
| Integration | The approach to family support services addresses the need for a coherent delivery of economic, social, environmental, and cultural outcomes. |
| Collaboration | A fundamental principal of the approach to family support focuses on improving collaboration and creating a unified system. |
| Involvement | Ensuring that children, young people, adults, and families are at the heart of the system and that needs are discussed in a person-centred way. |

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications resulting from this project. However, we are committed to supporting the implementation of the local authority's 'Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy' and Welsh Government's carbon reduction commitments.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 BYJS has a commitment to establishing and maintaining effective ties with Children's Social Care and this is evident through their engagement across various pivotal areas, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) services, long-term teams, and safeguarding leads. Involvement with these services has ensured quality of strategy meetings, thereby fostering improved coordination and integrated planning for children who are subject to interventions from both BYJS and social care.

7.2 In a clear demonstration of their proactive approach to holistic safety planning, BYJS staff have participated in the comprehensive Signs of Safety model training alongside their counterparts in social care. This synchronicity in training equips both teams with a shared framework, vocabulary, and methodology, allowing for consistent and coherent safety planning. This endeavour reinforces the vital connection between BYJS and Children's Social Care, creating a unified front in safeguarding and nurturing the well-being of the children they collectively serve.

7.3 BYJS's continuing involvement with care experienced children provides a wider depth of understanding of the unique challenges and needs faced by these individuals who have traversed the care system. The child's experience in foster care, residential care, or other forms of out-of-home placement necessitates a tailored and empathetic approach of support. BYJS recognises the imperative of comprehending the intricate tapestry of these care journeys to deliver interventions that are sensitive, relevant, and efficacious. The

trauma model enables robust multi-agency formulation and understanding of the child's needs and strengths, how to avoid re-traumatisation and provide a better response to those needs.

- 7.4 Aligned with this ethos, the YJB Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 underscores BYJS's alignment with a broader vision that seeks to shield children from undue criminalisation that stems from their vulnerabilities and the obstacles they encounter. This overarching plan provides a commitment to empowering children to overcome challenges and thrive in a nurturing environment.
- 7.5 BYJS's multi-faceted engagement with Children's Social Care, their emphasis on tailored care for those with unique experiences, and their alignment with progressive strategic goals exemplifies an organisation that not only recognises the importance of collaboration and understanding but actively champions the holistic well-being and development of all children under their care.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The ongoing development work is funded through the Youth Justice grant, Welsh Government, Police and Crime Commissioner Ministry of Justice Turnaround, Youth Endowment funding and Bridgend County Borough Council and partner funding.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the contents of the report and attached 2022-2023 Annual Plan and makes any comments on any further areas for development for the service.

Background documents

None

Appendix A



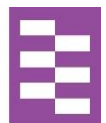
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board



South Wales Police
Heddlu De Cymru



Gwasanaeth Prawf
Cenedlaethol
National Probation
Service



BRIDGEND YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023-2024

Christa Bonham-Griffiths Strategic Manager, Youth Justice Service (YJS)

Chair of Bridgend Youth Justice Service: Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director
Education and Family Support, Bridgend County Borough Council

Together we will support children, children and victims to prevent offending behaviour by listening and responding to their voice. We will prevent harm, maintain and develop children and children's health and wellbeing by empowering them to achieve their potential, positive identities and support them to fully contribute confidently within and outside their communities.



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru
South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



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Appendix 7 – My Voice	My Voice.docx

Appendix 8 - Trauma Screening	Trauma Screening.docx
Appendix 9 – Child and parent self-assessment	Child-Parent Self assessment.docx
Appendix 10 – Feedback from children	Bridgend Youth Justice Service Feedback.docx
Appendix 11 – Performance Framework 31 December 2022	PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2022-2023.docx
Appendix 12 – Re-offending report September 2022	Re-offending report for BMB September 2022.docx
Appendix 13 – Bridgend Youth Justice training plan	YJS training plan 2023.docx

Executive Summary

As Chair of the Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) Management Board, I can confirm that the Annual Youth Justice Plan was officially agreed by all Management Board members on 9 June 2023 after a consultation exercise with Board members and BYJS staff. It was acknowledged by all members, that this plan is a comprehensive account of the BYJS developments and actions for the forthcoming year, and we look forward to reviewing the progress set against the targets.

Bridgend Youth Justice Service staff have adapted well during the past year and although welcoming the return to the usual way in which our business was conducted pre-pandemic, most can see the benefits of working in a more flexible way as we move forward.

These improvements included:

- improving accountability and functions of the staffing team.
- a commitment to embed a trauma informed approach to all areas of our practice.
- changing the overall structure of the service to provide a stronger focus on implementing agreed priorities.
- creating policies and procedures that reflect good quality youth justice work; and
- strengthening our partnership approach to working with children, victims and families.

The service has carried out significant development work in respect of the new Youth Justice Board (YJB) performance measures introduced from April 2023, although it is acknowledged that further work is ongoing and required to ensure all performance indicator measures have effective monitoring systems to collate information required in each area.

BYJS systematically demonstrates through its performance framework report, which is presented to the management board on a bi-monthly basis, those areas where there is required analysis, progress and development. This report also recognises the positive feedback received from children, victims and their families.

The challenges and opportunities ahead are clearly identified and the priorities for the service set out within this year's plan. As a service we need to ensure we meet the needs of children, young adults, families and victims and to achieve consistently better outcomes in the longer term.

There are multiple opportunities for the year ahead, including:

- further developing the trauma-recovery model (TRM) of practice across the service for children and their families who have experienced trauma using a tier-based approach which includes relationship-based practice and enhanced case management (This model will be aligned to the requirements of the Youth Endowment Fund and Kent University evaluation. This model of practice will include partnership alliance with Edge of Care Services, Youth Development Services and Early Help Services);
- continuing to enhance partnerships that enable effective preventative services for children at risk of offending or harm related behaviour.
- continuing to reduce reoffending rates particularly in relation to violent offending by effective quality assurance and analysis to enable learning and development of services.
- continuing to develop health provision across the service so children are receiving the right services at the right time in relation to both generic, emotional/mental health concerns, disabilities, neuro development and additional learning needs (ALN).

- ensuring safety planning for children is effective, timely and reviewed to ensure change is accounted for (This needs to correlate with the Children's Social Care Signs of Safety systems);
- ensuring children who have ALN receive provision which meets their individual needs and enhances their strengths, and they have an individual development plan where required.
- continuing to learn and development from systems where the voice of the stakeholder is considered in a format and language deemed most appropriate for them. The analysis of the feedback is crucial in BYJS system's understanding of the child and family viewpoint, to help shape future service development.
- where children are being diverted from criminality, BYJS will ensure out-of-court disposal systems are multi-agency led and reflect the findings and recommendations from the YJB consultation report.
- further developing efficient and effective systems that reflect the revised key performance measures for youth justice.
- ensuring the voice of the victim continues to be heard, they are offered optimum choice in terms of restorative services and vulnerable victims receive the offer of further specialist support if necessary and to create systems that make ease of access for victims much simpler.
- ensuring the constructive strands of resettlement are evident for those children who are being resettled from placement to placement or from custody to community.
- ensuring the recruitment and retention of community volunteers to support children and families subject to youth justice intervention; and
- ensuring the safety of children being exploited is prioritised and there are formalised multi-agency systems in place for protection of this vulnerable group.

Lindsay Harvey – Chair, Bridgend Youth Justice Service Management Board

Introduction, vision and strategy

BYJS is a statutory multi-agency partnership that has a legal duty to work in partnership to secure appropriate local Youth Justice services. The service is funded from a number of sources including UK Government, Welsh Government and the statutory partners (that is, Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, the Probation Service and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board).

Statutory duties to prevent offending are outlined in criminal justice and civil legislation. The principal aim of Youth Justice Services in England and Wales is to prevent offending and re-offending by children in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Local authorities in Wales also have statutory duties to provide preventative services contained in Section 15 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Local authorities must provide services to:

- encourage children not to commit offences.
- avoid the need for children to be placed in secure accommodation; and
- enable children to live their lives as independently as possible.

Throughout 2022-2023, further structural changes have been undertaken by the service to ensure there is adequate management oversight and clear direction of support for staff who work with children known to the service. There has been an ongoing emphasis on improving the quality and analysis of assessments to ensure risk of harm and safety and wellbeing concerns are identified and addressed. The service continues to build strong relationships with partner agencies to promote collaboration and improve the safety and wellbeing of the child and others.

BJYS has recently been removed from requiring additional monitoring from the YJB as it was felt that the service was making clear improvements. The service continues to work on a number of developments outlined from its most recent inspection, and the information within this plan will set out the clear direction of the service and how it continues to respond to the requirements set out by the YJB, Ministry of Justice and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

Our vision states:

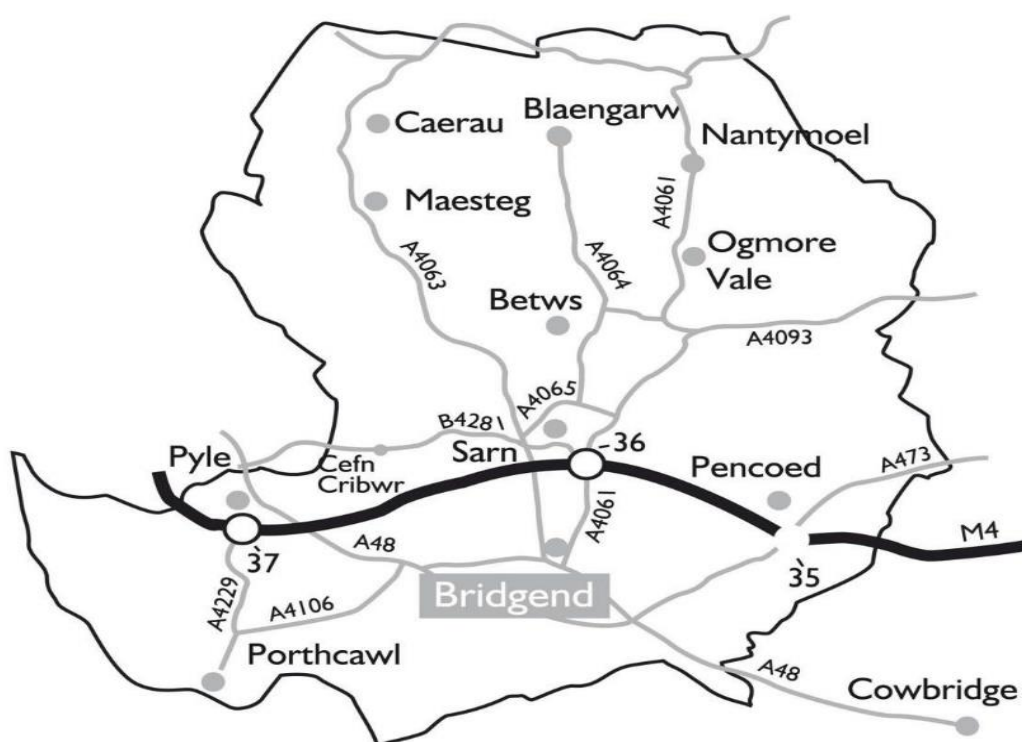
“Together we will support children, children and victims to prevent offending behaviour by listening and responding to their voice. We will prevent harm, maintain and develop children and children's health and wellbeing by empowering them to achieve their potential, positive identities and support them to fully contribute confidently within and outside their communities.”

In order to ensure the needs of children in Bridgend are met, it is imperative that BYJS works as a fully functioning multi-agency service, ensuring that all elements of support available from within and outside of the service are accessed in a timely manner in order to meet the needs of children. Additionally, working with local third sector organisations to provide diversionary activities in the community is crucial to prevent offending and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Collaboration with Bridgend's Community Safety Partnership and Youth Support Service to address ASB issues and to share information that identifies areas in local communities where there is evidence of emerging problems, is key in respect of our preventative approach. The Service Manager is a key member of the Community Safety Board (CSB) to ensure the strategic approach and plan is inclusive of and informed by a Youth Justice perspective.

Local context

BJYS work with children aged 10- to 18-year-old who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour and those who are facing a criminal charge and require an out of court disposal through the Youth Bureau. BYJS also works to prevent children committing an offence and operates a prevention model of practice where services can refer children who are deemed at risk of entering the Youth Justice system. Intervention is discussed and agreed at a multi-agency prevention panel to ensure that all services present in a child's life are represented. This will have the added effect of reduced duplication across services.

Since the prevention panel was formed prevention referrals to the service have increased from an average of 5.6 referrals per month (January to October 2022) to an average of 10 referrals per month (November 2022 to March 2023). In addition, through the Turnaround grant funding the BYJS now contact all children that have received a 'No further action' outcome from custody, court, those release under investigation, on bail cases or who have received a Police Street Restorative Disposal.



Bridgend County Borough Council is a local authority in South Wales with a total population of 147,539. The largest town is Bridgend, followed by Maesteg, Pencoed and the seaside resort of Porthcawl. In Bridgend, 49.6 % of the population are male, 50.4% are female, 1.5% are Black, Asian or minority ethnic, and 17% are Welsh speakers.

Child First

BYJS strives to ensure it takes a 'child first' approach to every individual being offered or receiving a service. We have further developed the Trauma Recovery Model to ensure we consider the trauma a child has experienced. We have introduced a trauma screening tool for every child entering our service and have enhanced our assessment, plan and intervention to become more responsive to the child's identified trauma needs. From February 2023, we have completed 37 trauma screenings to inform our assessments. We continue to plan to embed the trauma approach in partnership with other services to create a consistent method of delivery.

Where deemed appropriate, children are referred to the Enhanced Case Management (ECM). There is also an in-house Relationship-Based Practice (RBP) model of practice when capacity is reached through the psychologist (ECM) using our own team members who are trained in timelining and formulation chairing and who are trauma champions for the service.

Examples

ECM intervention

EW received a Youth Restorative Disposal for a common assault against her mother. EW had risk factors that included attempted suicide (five overdoses), is assessed as a victim of emotional abuse and there has been evidence of emotional neglect. EW was displaying aggression and was making threats against parents. EW had experienced school exclusions for persistent disruptive behaviour.

As part of the Youth Justice Intervention, an Enhanced Case Management formulation was convened. This multi-agency meeting included Clinical Psychology, Health, Police, Children's Social Care, FACTS and Education. EW has received intense support from Youth Justice Services (YJS) and Edge of Care Services, and her case remains open on a voluntary basis.

Intervention has included responding to her cognitive, social, and emotional ability, safety planning via Children's Social Care, CAMHS intervention and relationship building being the key to building trust with the YJS intervention coordinator.

A risk and vulnerability meeting were convened, and this plan was shared with all relevant partners. EW has received weekend support from BYJS and Edge of Care Services when she has been at her most vulnerable and was experiencing family breakdown and a struggle to find suitable accommodation.

EW is currently residing with her father, and this is currently going well. She has been entered to sit 5 GCSEs. She has a work placement in a hairdressing salon which is going well. She is happier and her confidence and self-esteem has improved greatly. She has formed trusting relationships with her workers and has not re-offended or had any further aggressive incidents.

We have completed a review of BYJS prevention service currently being offered to ensure that the child first and trauma informed approaches that already inform practice are strengthened. Additionally, the service has established a BYJS framework for prevention services which includes evaluating the success of the prevention work provided to children and their families.

There is ongoing partnership work with the police and the service has introduced a system for those being given Restorative Street Disposals and Outcome 21/22. Ministry of Justice Turnaround funding for this area of service will enable BYJS to extend this work further. This funding will ensure that there are processes and interventions in place to divert children and children from the Youth Justice system.

Restorative Street Disposal

A call was received by the police for theft and damage at a property.

Details

The caller stated that whilst she was out of the home, her daughter had a house party with over 50 people. During this time, a PlayStation was stolen, and damage was caused to a pool table totalling approximately £500. CCTV was viewed and all youth concerned were identified by the police.

Outcome

Police spoke to the victims and asked how they would like to proceed and after offering a restorative opportunity, the victims agreed to receiving an apology. The Police visited the youths concerned and spoke to them about the possible consequences of their actions and explained to the children what would happen if they continued to offend using an offending ladder diagram. The youths then completed a letter of apology to the victims, which was accepted.

This intervention has prevented the youths coming into the Youth Justice system. We have also listened to the views of the victim and enabled a response with which they were satisfied.

The Turnaround service has provided a framework of data reporting which includes restorative street disposals, the use of Outcome 21/22, those released under investigation, children released with no further action and those on bail or being fined. This data will assist the service understand the current use of these disposals and how we can be responsive to the child's needs.

Voice of the child

The service continues to utilise the ASSET Plus self-assessment process to gain the viewpoint of the child and their parent/carer in relation to their offending related behaviour.

The service has introduced a "My Voice" system which is an individual interactive questionnaire that gains the views from children which can be accessed via 'WhatsApp,' email, or a phone message. There is a theme of safety within the questionnaire and further in-depth questions regarding education, training and employment, learning styles and whether the individual needs of the child are being met. The child also has the option to request to complete the form in the language of their choice. We use the Language Line facility to support the required language translation service.

To date, 52 My Voice questionnaires have been completed and a further 45 self-assessments. These questionnaires have been collated into a formal report for our management board which have identified themes and trends of children's needs and wishes to inform the boards understanding and prioritise areas for development.

45 My Voices questionnaires have been completed since February 2023 and an example of the findings are:

- 25 (55%) attend school. Of those 25, 16 (64%) did not enjoy school. This information provided by individual children will be included in their plans so those individual issues can be addressed.
- 5 (11%) stated they did not have any friends so for those children, BYJS aims to build the child's connections with others via introduction to community activities. 22 (48%) stated they only sometimes got on with their family. In these cases, ongoing family mediation and parental support is necessary to influence a change in family dynamics.

- 23 (49%) said they would like support with their anger. Individual programmes that meet the need of a child will be included on the child's plan.

Included in the My Voice was a question, 'Where do you go to feel safe or where is your favourite place to go?' Answers included information such as "my room," "There's a river by Newbridge fields, I like it there.," "training at CCYD and Aberkenfig Football Club" These responses can assist the service to understand how to promote desistance, create stability and tackle underlying needs.

To further enhance the My Voice initiative, BYJS recognises the importance of providing feedback and opportunities for children to express their likes and dislikes in a more interactive and personalised manner.

Building on the initial feedback approach, the service has further developed My Voice by providing personalised responses to the information shared by the child. Instead of generic comments, staff members can craft responses that show genuine interest and understanding. For example, if a child expresses their love for football, the response could go beyond acknowledging their interest and delve into a conversation about their favourite team, players, or recent matches. This personalised feedback helps build rapport, trust, and a sense of connection with the child.

In addition to written feedback, the service will be introducing an audio recording as a method for children to express their likes and dislikes. This method provides an alternative channel for communication, particularly for children who may find it easier to express themselves verbally. By offering the option to audio record, the service allows children to convey their thoughts and feelings in a more natural and expressive way. This could be achieved through a dedicated audio recording platform or using voice memos.

When children have the opportunity to audio record what they like and dislike, the service can respond with reflective comments. Rather than simply acknowledging the child's preferences, staff members can listen to the recordings and provide thoughtful responses that show active listening and engagement. For example, if a child expresses their dislike for certain activities, the service can respond by suggesting alternative options that align with their interests or discussing potential solutions to address any concerns they may have.

The feedback received through the My Voice initiative can also inform the development of individualised support plans for children. By actively listening to the child's likes, dislikes, and preferences, the service can involve them in co-creating their support plans. This collaborative approach ensures that the child's voice and choices are respected and incorporated into the strategies and interventions implemented to address their needs.

To continuously enhance the effectiveness of My Voice, YJS can regularly review and evaluate the feedback system. Soliciting feedback from children on their experience with My Voice and seeking their suggestions for improvement can provide valuable insights. The service can also involve children in shaping the future development of the initiative, such as through focus groups, surveys, or participation in steering committees.

By expanding the feedback system to include personalised responses, audio recording opportunities, reflective comments, empowerment, and validation, the service can create a more engaging and inclusive experience through the My Voice initiative. This approach not only strengthens the relationship between the service and the child but also ensures their active involvement in decision-making and planning for their support and well-being.

The service has representation from a child known to BYJS at the Corporate Parenting Group. This child has been able to share their viewpoint in relation to looked after children and service suggest benefits or developments needed.

The Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) continues to advocate for children and young people and provide support when there are identified speech and language needs. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) has identified that up to 60% of young people in justice settings have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). The SALT worker will assess speech, language and communication development, this supports case managers better to understand the developmental level of each child and communicate information effectively, in a way the child understands which ensures full participation in assessments, planning and interventions. This enables more effective engagement between worker and child, supporting with positive relationship building. As part of a pilot project within the service, every child under the age of 13-year-old receives a SALT assessment at their transition from primary to secondary education. This has been implemented to support early identification of needs and ensure their difficulties are addressed as the earliest possible age and do not contribute to offending behaviour.

The Quarterly Outcome document (January to March 2023) from the Speech and Language Therapist reported that 14 children were accepted as a referral. 55% (8) of these cases were prevention cases, 35% (5) were out-of-court disposals and 10% (1) were children subject to bail conditions. The mean age of the children assessed was 14 years old. A further 5 children were seen as part of the pilot study. Further information is included as an addendum report. Individual case assessment will be used to inform the way case managers provide intervention to children.

The voice of the child has been incorporated within our annual plan to provide examples of feedback from children regarding service delivery and relationships with individual workers.

Case example of My Voice incorporated into an intervention plan

We worked diligently with a child who had ALN and had already completed a 'My Voice' exercise to express his preferences and needs. Through this process, we learned that he had a keen interest in rugby, enjoyed studying science at school, and considered Spain as his safe haven. However, due to his limited understanding, engaging with him was proving to be quite challenging.

To ensure that this child's voice was heard and to encourage his active participation, we incorporated his preferences into the intervention plan. Firstly, we arranged for his reparation hours to involve activities at a local rugby club. This not only allowed him to engage in his favourite sport but also provided an opportunity to build connections with peers who shared similar interests. The rugby club became a space where he could express himself and feel a sense of belonging. Moreover, we recognised the importance of not compromising his education while working with him. Therefore, whenever we visited him in school, we made sure he did not miss his science lessons. By prioritising his academic development, we aimed to empower him with knowledge and skills, which could enhance his overall confidence and engagement.

Understanding that he found comfort in thoughts of Spain, particularly during moments of practical anxiety, we incorporated elements of Spain into our interactions. We would show him pictures of Spain and encourage him to talk about his experiences and memories from his holidays there. This not only provided a source of relaxation but also served as a conversation starter, helping him express himself and establish a connection with us.

Utilising the valuable information gathered through the 'My Voice' exercise, we were able to provide tailored support to this child, ensuring his well-being and promoting his safeguarding. By informing other relevant agencies about his voice, we shared insights into his preferences, needs, and interests. This collaborative approach enabled all involved parties to work together effectively, considering the child's perspectives and optimising the support provided.

The Turnaround service has provided a framework of data reporting which includes restorative street disposals, the use of Outcome 21/22, those released under investigation, children released with no further action and those on bail or being fined. This data will assist the service understand the current use of these disposals and how we can be responsive to the child's needs.

Governance, leadership and partner arrangements

The Management Board continues to review the performance of BYJS including levels of first-time entrants, rates of re-offending, the use of custody, access to education, training and employment, substance use, mental health care, emotional wellbeing issues and accommodation. The new performance indicators have now extended this monitoring and oversight to victim services, children with additional learning needs, management board attendance, wider partnership engagement and serious violence. There is also wider information presented to the board in relation to assessment completion, staffing, sickness, supervision of staff, voice of the stakeholder and financial considerations.

As Bridgend has a secure establishment within its local authority, there is a partnership in place with His Majesty's Prison (HMP) Youth Offending Institute (YOI) Parc. There is now a Youth Justice staff member within HMP YOI Parc and a service level agreement in place with Youth Custody Services. The role ensures that children can access support that meets their needs whilst within the secure estate but also ensuring relevant local authorities continue to support their children effectively and plan appropriately for their return into the community. These roles also ensure there are timely safeguarding referrals made when necessary. There are regular meetings in place between the Youth Justice lead, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Bridgend County Borough Council, Youth Custody Services and HMP Parc.

The Children Unit at HMP and YOI Parc accommodates up to 42 children aged 15 to –18-years- old and is set within a much larger adult prison accommodating up to 1,700 category B prisoners. The unit nominally serves South Wales and the Southwest of England but, due to operational pressures on the secure estate and the necessity to separate certain individuals, there are children on the unit from most of the major cities and urban areas in England including London, Manchester and Birmingham.

The primary role of the role of the Senior Practitioner is to ensure that all the children in the Children Unit that are open to their respective home Children's Social Care teams continue to receive the services that they are entitled, and that they also have an advisory safeguarding role within the establishment to ensure that there are timely safeguarding referrals made when necessary. There are regular meetings in place between the Youth Justice lead, the LADO for Bridgend County Borough Council, Youth Custody Services and HMP Parc.

There are currently 33 children on the unit. Of these 25 are from England with just 8 from South Wales. 20 of the children are currently open to their respective home local authorities 10 of whom are currently care experienced with a further 5 open as care leavers and 3 open under care and support regulations.

BYJS continues to be managed as part of the Education and Family Support Directorate. This allows the service to be closely aligned with early help teams, edge of care services, education services and Youth Services. The Strategic Manager continues to meet with these services on a monthly basis to ensure the children working with BYJS have optimum support in place to meet their individual needs.

BYJS has continued to integrate further with Children's Social Care teams to ensure support for vulnerable children is collaborative to address the identified needs. This now involves the Strategic Manager's attendance at regular children's social care managers meetings and development days with staff across Early Help, Children's Services and BYJS sharing knowledge and experience of working with families. This increases awareness, strengthens relationships and ultimately improves support for children. There have been combined development days between safeguarding leads within Children's Social Care and Education to ensure appropriate safety planning is in place for all relevant children. BYJS Service Manager has recently worked with is currently planning with the Children Social Care Exploitation Lead to introduce an exploitation panel for those at risk. This panel commenced in May 2023.

BYJS has also continued to make effective links with Children's Social Care in terms of the multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA), long-term teams, and safeguarding leads to ensure more effective strategy meetings are held and there is improved joined up planning for children subject to intervention from both agencies. BYJS staff have also undertaken the Signs of Safety model training alongside social care staff to enable consistent planning around safety.

BYJS continue to develop its work within schools and has provided school prevention services such as ASB talks, offence education sessions for groups of children covering prevalent issues within the individual school environment.

BJYS and police partnership have further developed the multi -agency panel for its decision on the out-of-court disposal. There continues to be a regional Cwm Taf Morgannwg Scrutiny Panel led by the Police and Crime Commissioner department which quality assures individual diversion cases and provides advice and development planning for the out of court disposal system. This includes representation from YJS, Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Victim Focus, Police and Crime Commissioner department and Court Services.

BJYS has revised the service level agreement (SLA) with Barod and the Strategic Manager now sits on the substance use operational board and prevention board.

BYJS Specialist Health worker represents for all cases on trauma screening and trauma formulation.

Children Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are currently in the process of recruiting a link worker to work across Cwm Taf Morgannwg Youth Justice Services.

Forensic Adolescent Community Treatment Service (FACTS) have recently recruited additional Assistant Psychologists, a Clinical Psychologist and a Youth Justice Trauma Specialist Lead. FACTS are an integral partner in the development of the Trauma Recovery Model funded through the Youth Endowment Fund and our trauma model of practice.

BJYS has increased the in-house probation officer's hours from 1 day per week to 2.5 days per week. This was due to the acknowledgement that the provision was not effective and needed to increase to meet the needs of the service.

Board development

BJYS had made the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board aware of the lack of in-house health provision within the service. Since this time, mental health links have improved significantly.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) now have a consistent representation as part of the management board and there is a link Youth Justice CAMHS Service Manager in place who is assisting to create better links and referral mechanisms into services. Single Point of Access (SPOA) links have been created and meetings have been held with managers and staff to improve working links. SPOA have attended a YJS team meeting and provided resource links and advice for staff when working with individual cases.

The Management Board has developed its membership over the past year in line with inspectorate advice and the new KPI. A new chair has been appointed. There has been a development day between staff and management board members to consult on the plan for the forthcoming year. There is now improved membership from Health and FACTS.

It is crucial that board members and staff members continue to develop positive relationships and understand each other's roles, and how they both influence service improvements. Staff members are being invited to Management Boards to discuss themed areas of practice and how the board can assist with high-risk cases where there is a necessity.

Progress on previous plan

To ensure the effective implementation of recommendations from BYJS inspection and the Youth Justice Plan, a comprehensive action plan was developed for the 2022-2023 period. This action plan aimed to address the identified areas for improvement and ensure continuous progress towards the enhancement of services provided by BYJS. The plan has continued to encompass key actions and strategies derived from both inspection reports and Youth Justice recommendations.

To maintain accountability and monitor the progress of the action plan, regular reviews were conducted by the Management Board on a bi-monthly basis. These reviews served as a platform to assess the implementation of actions, identify any potential barriers or challenges, and ensure that the necessary steps were being taken to address the recommendations effectively.

In order to ensure quality assurance and facilitate ongoing improvement, BYJS established a dedicated staff group specifically focused on quality assurance tasks. This group undertook themed audits and evaluations to assess the effectiveness and compliance of various aspects of the service. Over the past year, the group has prioritised specific theme areas such as serious violence, child plans, education and how we include the voice of the stakeholder.

By conducting targeted audits within these themed areas, the quality assurance staff group has been able to delve deeper into specific aspects of the service's operations and identify areas that require further attention or improvement. This approach allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of the service's performance, ensuring that the identified themes are thoroughly examined, and appropriate measures are implemented to address any shortcomings or gaps. By actively monitoring progress, identifying areas for enhancement, and taking decisive action, the service remains focused on delivering high-quality support and interventions with children.

This approach encourages accountability, transparency, and responsiveness within BYJS. It enables the service to adapt to emerging challenges, address evolving needs, and align its practices with the ever-changing landscape of Youth Justice. Through the execution of the action plan and the evaluation of key areas, BYJS remains committed to delivering effective and impactful services to better serve the children and meet the expectations of stakeholders.

Resources and services

Below in tables 1, 2 and 3 are breakdowns of financial and staffing information relating to BYJS.

Table 1 – BYJS budget

Agency	Staffing Costs	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board	257334	37680	295014
Local authority	248379	53821	302200
Police		9532	73136
Police and Crime Commissioner	26646	5254	31900
Probation			0
Health			0
Welsh Government	188651	1940	190591
Other	67010	5400	72410
Total	788020	113627	965251

Table 2 - Staffing of BYJS by contract type as of 31 March 2023

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager (PT)	Strategic Manager (FT)	Operational Manager (PT)	Operational Manager (FT)	Practitioners (PT)	Practitioners (FT)	Administration (PT)	Administration (FT)	Sessional	Students/ trainees	Referral Order Panel Volunteer	Other Volunteer	Total
Permanent		1		2	1.6	11		2			6	0	23.6
Fixed-term						2					0	0	2
Outsourced						1					0	0	1
Temporary											0	0	0
Vacant						1					0	0	1
Seconded Children's Services											0	0	0
Seconded Probation					0.5						0	0	0.5
Seconded Police						1					0	0	1
Seconded Health (Substance misuse)											0	0	0
Seconded Health (Mental health)											0	0	0
Seconded Health (Physical health)						1					0	0	1
Seconded Health (Speech/language)					0.5						0	0	0.5
Other/Unspecified Seconded Health											0	0	0
Seconded Education					2						0	0	2
Seconded Connexions											0	0	0
Seconded Other											0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	2	4.6	17	0	2	0	0	6	0	32.6
Disabled (self-classified)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 3 - Staffing of BYJS by gender and ethnicity as of 31 March 2023

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian																	0	0
Black																	0	0
Mixed																	0	0
White		1	1	1	5	13		1				1		6			6	23
Any other ethnic group								1									0	1
Not known																	0	0
Total	0	1	1	1	5	13	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	6	0	0	6	24
Welsh Speakers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Staffing

BYJS has undergone a substantial change in its staff composition, resulting in a significant turnover. One of the notable additions is the appointment of a new Strategic Manager, who brings fresh leadership and vision to the team.

Currently, the service comprises a total of 16 permanent staff members, complemented by a combination of fixed-term and outsourced staff. This diverse mix of professionals enables the service to tap into a wide range of skills and expertise, enhancing its ability to effectively address the needs of the young individuals it serves.

Among the dedicated professionals in the team, there is a nurse who specialises in providing medical support and care to the children involved with the justice system. This nurse plays a vital role in addressing the physical and emotional health needs of the youth, ensuring they receive appropriate medical attention and support. Additionally, there is a substance use officer employed through Barod who work with children to address their substance use issues at a tier 2 level and works to a harm reduction model of practice.

Additionally, the service has a part-time probation officer who works closely with the children to manage their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. The probation officer's role involves creating individualised rehabilitation plans, monitoring progress, and connecting the young individuals with relevant support services.

To further enhance the holistic approach of BYJS, there is a SALT. This specialist focuses on identifying and addressing any communication difficulties or disorders that the children may have. By addressing these challenges, the Therapist aims to improve the youths' communication skills, facilitating their participation in various aspects of life.

Lastly, the service also benefits from the presence of a police officer, who serves as a liaison between the justice service and law enforcement agencies. This individual provides valuable insight into legal procedures, contribute to risk assessments, and offer guidance on matters related to police involvement in the youth justice system.

With this diverse array of professionals, the service is well-equipped to adopt a holistic approach in its work with children. By drawing on the collective expertise of the team, the service aims to address the multifaceted needs of the children, considering not only their legal circumstances but also their health, communication abilities, and overall well-being. This comprehensive approach increases the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes for the children involved, supporting their rehabilitation, and reducing the risk of reoffending.

Active offer

BYJS recognises the significance of proactively offering our services in Welsh, without the children involved with the service having to specifically request it. A cultural shift has taken place within our organisation to remove the burden from the child and place the responsibility on us to provide services through the medium of Welsh. Ensuring that our services are child-centred is a fundamental aspect of this "Active Offer" approach.

Making an "Active Offer" means refraining from assuming that all Welsh speakers also speak English. It entails treating Welsh-speaking children with dignity and respect by actively inquiring about their preferred language and taking appropriate action based on their response.

To support this "Active Offer," Bridgend Youth Justice Service has developed various resources. One such resource is the child's "My Voice" document, which is available in Welsh text. Additionally, for children with ALN, there is an option for the programme to read the document in the language of Welsh. These provisions aim to cater to the specific language needs of Welsh-speaking service users and ensure inclusivity.

To ensure adherence to the "Active Offer" approach, the Quality Assurance Forum has implemented auditing tools. These tools enable the monitoring and evaluation of how effectively the "Active Offer" is being implemented and ensure that children are consistently presented with the opportunity to access services through the medium of Welsh.

By embracing the "Active Offer" approach, BYJS is committed to providing equitable and accessible services to Welsh-speaking children. This proactive stance not only respects the language rights and preferences of individuals but also enhances the overall experience of children involved with our service. The development of resources and the implementation of quality assurance measures further strengthen our commitment to delivering services in a manner that reflects the principles of fairness, dignity, and respect.

Performance

Over the past year, BYJS has faced multiple changes, including the appointment of a new Strategic Manager and the integration of several new staff members. These changes have occurred in the context of recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has posed additional hurdles to delivering quality services.

To navigate these challenges and ensure continuous improvement, the service has implemented a performance improvement strategy. This strategy has been shaped by various sources of learning and feedback, including the national standard audit, actions carried forward from the previous year's plan (2021-2022), internal auditing processes, reviews of practices, the child's My Voice and responses to inspection findings. By drawing insights from these different sources, the service has been able to identify areas for growth and refine its approach to service delivery.

Based on the findings and recommendations derived from these learning processes, Bridgend Youth Justice Service has developed a comprehensive action plan. This plan outlines specific steps to be taken in response to identified areas of improvement. It also aligns these actions with the service's priorities and key performance indicators, ensuring a focused and strategic approach to enhancing performance.

The subsequent section of the report delves into the service's performance across these identified areas. It provides a detailed overview of the progress made, highlighting achievements, challenges encountered, and ongoing efforts to address any remaining gaps. By examining performance against the defined priorities and key performance indicators, the service aims to provide a transparent and comprehensive account of its effectiveness in meeting its objectives.

This performance evaluation process demonstrates the service's commitment to continuous learning, growth, and accountability. By actively engaging in self-assessment, incorporating external feedback, and aligning actions with strategic priorities, the service strives to deliver high-quality services and effectively address the needs of the children it serves.

Bridgend first-time entrants

BYJS has made significant progress in reducing the rate of first-time entrants into the justice system. Comparing the current year's data to the previous year's figures, there has been a notable decrease of 10.7% in the rate of first-time entrants, with the rate dropping from 136 to 121 children. This decrease reflects a positive trend in preventing children from becoming involved in the justice system for the first time.

In terms of the actual number of first-time entrants, there has been a decline from 18 to 16 children, indicating a reduction of 2 cases. This decrease further emphasises the effective efforts of the service in intervening in early intervention and diversion from the justice system. It is also important to consider the wider context by comparing the performance of Bridgend against other regions. Across South Wales, there has been a 3.3% increase in the rate of first-time entrants, highlighting

the challenges faced by neighbouring areas. However, in comparison, Bridgend has achieved a 2.9% reduction in the rate of first-time entrants across Wales as a whole. This indicates that Bridgend is performing better in terms of this key performance indicator when compared to other regions in Wales.

Furthermore, within the YJS family, there has been a modest reduction of 0.6% in the rate of first-time entrants. This suggests that Bridgend's efforts have been effective in mitigating the entry of children into the justice system compared to the overall performance of the YJS. The decrease in the rate of first-time entrants and the reduction in the actual number of cases reflect the service's commitment to early intervention, prevention, and diversionary measures. It is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the service, community partners, and stakeholders in creating a supportive and proactive environment for young individuals.

While there is still work to be done, the performance data indicates that the service is on the right track in achieving positive outcomes and reducing the involvement of children in the justice system. These results provide a solid foundation for the service to continue its efforts in preventing first-time entrants and promoting the overall well-being and success of children in Bridgend community.

Bridgend reoffending

BYJS has achieved a significant reduction in the annual reoffending rate, reflecting the effectiveness of its prevention interventions and support programs. Comparing the current year's data to the previous year, there has been a substantial decrease of 18.3% in the percentage of individuals who reoffended, with the rate dropping from 30.8% to 12.5%. This decrease indicates a noteworthy improvement in preventing children from engaging in further criminal activities after their initial contact with the service.

Furthermore, when considering the cumulative reoffending rate up to 31 December 2022, Bridgend has demonstrated even more progress. The percentage of individuals who reoffended stands at 38.2%, representing a significant reduction of 14.7% compared to the previous year's rate of 52.9%. This achievement highlights the effectiveness of the service's efforts in breaking the cycle of reoffending and supporting children to make positive choices.

In comparison to reoffending rates across Wales, South Wales, and the wider YJS family, Bridgend has outperformed these regions in terms of reducing reoffending. The greater reduction in reoffending rates in Bridgend indicates the service's commitment to implementing effective strategies, tailored interventions, and comprehensive support systems for children involved in the justice system.

The reduction in the reoffending rate is a testament to the dedication and collaborative efforts of BYJS, its staff, and its partner agencies. Through a holistic approach that addresses the underlying causes of offending behaviour, promotes rehabilitation, and provides ongoing support, the service has successfully steered children towards positive outcomes and reduced the likelihood of recidivism.

These encouraging results not only signify the impact of the service's work on individual lives but also contribute to the overall safety and well-being of the community. By effectively addressing reoffending, the service plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of crime, promoting rehabilitation, and helping children reintegrate into society without future offending.

The following numbers of children from across Bridgend County have received custodial sentences in the last three financial years.

Reporting year (April to March)	Number of children receiving a custodial sentence
2019-2020	2
2020-2021	0
2021-2022	0
2022-2023	1

For two consecutive years, BYJS achieved an outcome with zero custody numbers, indicating successful efforts in diverting young individuals away from custodial sentences. However, regrettably, there was an exceptional case in the reporting period that resulted in one child being placed in custody due to a murder conviction.

As per standard protocol, the details of this case have been shared with the YJB through the serious incident notification process. This ensures that the relevant authorities are informed and can provide appropriate oversight and guidance. Given the gravity of the situation, a child practice review has been conducted for this child. While the custody number for this reporting period deviates from the positive trend of previous years, it is essential to acknowledge that the service treats such incidents with the utmost seriousness and undertakes a comprehensive review to prevent any reoccurrence. By actively engaging in reflective practice and learning from these exceptional cases, the service aims to continually improve its practices, interventions, and safeguarding measures to better serve the needs children and reduce the likelihood of further serious incidents.

It is important to note that the exceptional nature of this case does not diminish the overall success and positive outcomes achieved by the service in diverting young individuals away from custodial sentences. The service remains dedicated to its mission of rehabilitation, prevention, and reintegration, working diligently to support young individuals in their journey toward positive change and a brighter future.

Bridgend suitable accommodation measures over 4 years 2019-2020 to 2022-2023

Year (April to March)	Age 10-15				Age 16-17+				Overall				Percentage in Suitable Accommodation at End
	Suitable Accommodation at Start		Suitable Accommodation at End		Suitable Accommodation at Start		Suitable Accommodation at End		Suitable Accommodation at Start		Suitable Accommodation at End		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
2019/20	2	0	2	0	26	1	25	2	28	1	27	2	93%
2020/21	1	0	1	0	14	0	13	1	15	0	14	1	93%
2021/22	2	0	2	0	11	1	12	0	13	1	14	0	100%
2022/23	6	0	6	0	9	1	9	1	15	1	15	1	93%

National KPIs

The national key performance indicators have been developed from April 2023 to include a wider scope of measures to monitor delivery of services against. The measures have evolved to include preventative services and out of court disposals. The measures only previously included statutory interventions which through time, have decreased substantially, with them being only a very small proportion of the service workload. The revised system allows YJS to be equally as accountable for all areas of practice and ensure interventions in these areas, are of optimum quality. Below is an explanation of the existing and revised measures and our services commitment to ensuring high quality provision that enables strong performance against each indicator.

Existing KPIs

Binary reoffending rate

The binary reoffending rate measures the percentage of children who commit another offense within a specified timeframe. The service has implemented various interventions and programs aimed at reducing reoffending rates among young individuals. Through targeted support, rehabilitation, and personalised interventions, the service has been successful in reducing the binary reoffending rate. Current data indicates a decrease in the rate compared to previous years, demonstrating the positive impact of the service's efforts.

Frequency of reoffending

This indicator measures the average number of offences committed by each child within a given period. The service recognises the importance of addressing the underlying causes of reoffending and has implemented tailored strategies to reduce the frequency of reoffending among young individuals. By providing comprehensive support, mentoring, and skill-building programs, the service aims to break the cycle of repeated offences. Current data shows a decline in the frequency of reoffending, indicating positive progress in achieving this KPI.

First-time entrants

This indicator focuses on the number of young individuals entering the YJS for the first time. The service aims to divert young individuals away from formal criminal justice processes wherever possible, utilising restorative approaches, diversion programmes, and early intervention strategies. By prioritising prevention and early intervention, the service has successfully reduced the number of first-time entrants into the system. The data reveals a decrease in first-time entrants, highlighting the effectiveness of the service's preventive measures and community-based interventions.

Use of custody

This indicator measures the extent to which custody is utilised for children. The service recognises that custody should be a last resort and aims to promote alternatives to custody, such as community-based interventions and restorative justice approaches. By providing intensive support, targeted interventions, and wraparound services, the service seeks to reduce the reliance on custodial sentences. Current data demonstrates a decline in the use of custody, signifying the successful implementation of alternative measures to address the needs of children.

Additional KPIs (from April 2023)

The service is aware of the requirement to report on the following new key performance indicators from April 2023. While comprehensive data may not be available at this stage, the service has developed strategies and plans to address these indicators. These plans are aimed at improving outcomes and providing better support for young individuals. The service is actively working on the following indicators:

Suitable accommodation

The service recognises the importance of stable and suitable accommodation for successful reintegration and rehabilitation of children. Efforts are being made to ensure adequate accommodation options are available, considering individual needs and circumstances. The service

is collaborating with housing providers and support agencies to expand the availability of suitable accommodation options and reduce the risk of homelessness among young individuals.

Education, training, and employment

The service acknowledges the crucial role of education, training, and employment in breaking the cycle of offending behaviour. Plans are in place to enhance educational opportunities, vocational training, and employment support for children. By partnering with educational institutions, training providers, and employers, the service aims to improve access to quality education and employment opportunities for young individuals.

Additional learning needs

Recognising the diverse needs of children, the service is prioritising the identification and support of those with special educational needs, disabilities, and additional learning needs. Collaborative efforts with educational professionals and specialised support services are being implemented to ensure tailored interventions and appropriate settings are provided to address these specific needs effectively.

Mental health care and emotional wellbeing

The service acknowledges the significance of mental health care and emotional wellbeing in the rehabilitation process. Plans are underway to strengthen mental health support services, including assessments, interventions, and access to appropriate treatment. Collaborative partnerships with mental health professionals and organisations are being developed to ensure comprehensive and timely support for young individuals in need.

Substance use

The service recognises the link between substance use and offending behaviour. Efforts are being made to improve substance use interventions, including prevention programmes, early identification, and effective treatment options. Collaborations with substance use services and healthcare providers are being strengthened to address the complex needs of young individuals struggling with substance use.

Out of Court disposals

The service aims to promote alternatives to formal court proceedings where appropriate and beneficial. Plans include expanding restorative justice initiatives, community resolution approaches, and diversionary programs to divert children away from the criminal justice system. By utilising these out of court disposals, the service aims to reduce the burden on the formal justice system and provide more tailored interventions for young individuals.

Links to wider services

Recognising the importance of holistic support, the service is working towards strengthening links and collaborations with wider support services. This includes partnerships with health providers, social services, housing agencies, educational institutions, and community organisations. These collaborations aim to facilitate seamless transitions, improve coordination of support, and ensure comprehensive care for young individuals.

Management Board attendance

The service emphasises the importance of strong governance and effective leadership. Regular management board meetings are held to ensure strategic oversight, decision-making, and accountability. The service is committed to maintaining high attendance rates and active engagement from Management Board members to drive forward positive change and monitor progress against key objectives.

Serious violence

The service acknowledges the need to address the issue of serious violence among young individuals. Strategies are being developed to prevent serious violence, including targeted interventions, awareness campaigns, and collaborative approaches with relevant agencies. The service aims to reduce incidents of serious violence and evolve its responses to the associated risks children in our area are presented through this comprehensive measure.

Victims

The service is dedicated to addressing the needs and experiences of victims of youth crime. Plans include improving victim support services, enhancing communication and information sharing with victims, and promoting restorative justice practices to facilitate victim-offender dialogue and support the healing process.

By actively addressing these additional key performance indicators, the service aims to further improve outcomes for children, enhance collaboration with partner agencies, and ensure a more comprehensive and effective approach to Bridgend Youth Justice Services.

Children from groups which are over-represented

Every person should be equal in the eyes of the law, regardless of age, ethnicity or needs. However, research shows that the youth justice system treats children and children (10 to 18-years-old) from ethnic minority backgrounds differently.

The drivers for disproportionality in youth justice are complex, and many lie outside of the criminal justice system. The Youth Justice system alone cannot solve the problem but the policy makers and practitioners within it do have a responsibility to do everything they can to tackle disproportionality and to ensure that all children and children are treated equally, no matter their background.

Although Bridgend does not have a big proportion of children who are from ethnic minority background, the service still needs to consider the needs of all children coming through the service including those who are more likely to be marginalised such as those from care experienced backgrounds, travelling community, those from areas of deprivation and poverty.

Bridgend Youth Justice Service believes that a partnership approach is key to reducing disproportionality and ensuring partners understand the experiences of ethnic minority people.

The Lammy Review highlights that “the best way to ensure fair treatment is to subject decision-making to scrutiny” (David Lammy, 2017, p. 69). Knowing the realities that ethnic minority people face and understanding the adverse experiences of institutionalised racism is key in helping hold organisations to account and improving the systems to support and protect children, children and their families - regardless of their ethnicity.

As part of its commitment to explore and address disproportionality, a report was completed for the Management Board and recommendations have been included in the plan.

Prevention

The importance of how we link with early years and interventions, and how we can improve this with an all-system approach. How we engage with Early Help, community groups and community leaders to achieve local improvements.

Out of Court

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Court Scrutiny Panel will be completing a quality themed exercise on disproportionality to explore the local police decisions on a dip sample of cases for out of court disposals and identify any themes.

Court

Record details of judges/magistrates and identify any themes in relation to disproportional outcomes.

Child/children's voices

We have improved our -assessment tools and have including disproportionality questions.

Trauma-informed practice

Ongoing efforts will be made by Bridgend Youth Justice Service management to ensure that agency policies, procedures, training, supervision, and practices are trauma-informed; show a deep level of cultural awareness; and are culturally relevant for the children, children and families.

Unconscious Bias

Commitment for all Youth Justice Service staff to continue to be trained in unconscious bias.

Face-to-face work

Bridgend Youth Justice Service will continue to enable Youth Justice Service practitioners to recognise and acknowledge ethnic minority issues in all their work, including direct face-to-face work.

Pathways

We will continue to ensure appropriate pathways are in place for all ethnic minority people and children between the YJS and partners.

Care-experienced children

The service is working in partnership with HMIP Parc prison to promote a "no black bag" campaign which is providing bags and cases for children moving from placement to placement, so they do not have to move with a black bin liner with their possessions inside. This will mean that we can have access to appropriate resources, so no child feels stigmatised.

Male/female

The biggest proportion of our children are "white Welsh" and are male.

ALN

To address ALN in Wales, BYJS recognises the importance of providing comprehensive support and individualised plans for children with additional needs.

The service actively participates in the re-establishment of the "team around the school" model. This collaborative approach involves various agencies, such as educational professionals, social workers, mental health specialists, and community organisations, working together to support the child's educational progression. By pooling resources and expertise, the service can provide a holistic and coordinated support system for children with ALN.

For children who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), the service ensures the creation and implementation of individual development plans. These plans are tailored to the specific needs and goals of each child and are designed to support their re-engagement with education or help them find suitable employment or training opportunities. The service takes a proactive role in assisting NEET children and acts as a support agency responsible for their development and progress.

Recognising that children with ALN require personalised support, the service ensures that interventions and services are tailored to meet their specific needs. This includes providing additional educational support, accommodations, and adaptations to the learning environment, as well as access to specialised resources, therapies, and assistive technologies. The service works closely with educational institutions, health professionals, and relevant organisations to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

Early identification and intervention are crucial for effectively addressing ALN. BYJS promotes early identification of additional needs through close collaboration with schools, parents, and other professionals involved in the child's life. By implementing screening processes, assessments, and regular monitoring, the service can identify ALN at an early stage and provide timely and appropriate support. Early intervention strategies, such as targeted interventions, specialised programs, and therapeutic interventions, are then implemented to address the identified needs promptly.

To ensure that staff members within BYJS are equipped to support children with ALN effectively, the service emphasises continuous training and professional development. Staff members receive training on understanding different types of additional needs, implementing appropriate interventions, and promoting inclusive practices. This training enables them to better meet the diverse needs of children with ALN and ensures a supportive and inclusive environment within the service.

The service recognises the importance of involving parents and carers in the support process for children with ALN. Regular communication, collaboration, and sharing of information between the service, parents, and carers are encouraged. This partnership ensures that the child's support plan aligns with their home environment, and parents and carers can actively participate in decision-making and advocacy for their child's needs.

Regular evaluation and review of support strategies and interventions are essential to ensure their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. BYJS establishes a system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of support provided to children with ALN. This process involves collecting feedback from children, parents, and professionals involved, and using the data to make informed decisions and improve future support services.

By implementing these ideas, BYJS can effectively address ALN and provide the necessary support for children to reach their full potential.

The disproportionality report completed in 2022 highlighted a concerning trend of a higher number of females entering the youth justice service compared to males. This observation raised important questions about the underlying factors contributing to this gender disparity and the specific needs of young females within the criminal justice system. However, in 2023, it was noted that the proportion of females entering the youth justice service had decreased, indicating a positive shift in the overall trend.

As a response to the findings of the report, two key outcomes were identified and will be implemented. The first outcome was the establishment of an in-house girls' group. This group will be created to provide targeted support and address the unique challenges and needs faced by young females in the criminal justice system. By offering a safe and supportive space, the girls group will aim to empower and assist these children in their personal development, mental health, and rehabilitation. The group will focus on various aspects, such as building self-esteem, improving coping skills, and addressing trauma or other underlying issues that may have contributed to offending behaviour.

The second outcome of the report was a focus on relationship building within schools to promote healthy relationships between peers and divert females from engaging in offending behaviour. Recognising the importance of early intervention and prevention, efforts will be made to establish positive connections among students and foster a supportive environment within educational settings. By strengthening relationships and encouraging positive interactions, the aim is to create a sense of belonging and reduce the likelihood of female children becoming involved in criminal activities. This outcome is in its infancy and the first relationship building exercise is planned for July 2023.

It is important to note that the reduction in the proportion of females entering the youth justice service in 2023 indicates progress in addressing the initial gender disparity identified in the report. However, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives will be necessary to ensure their effectiveness and to identify any additional steps that may need to be taken in the future.

Bridgend Youth Justice Service is committed to addressing the socio-economic duty. The Welsh Government's socio-economic duty, established under the Equality Act 2010 (Wales), requires public bodies to consider how they can mitigate socio-economic disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity.

The socio-economic duty requires public bodies to consider how their decisions and actions can help reduce socio-economic inequalities and promote positive outcomes for individuals and communities. It involves addressing factors such as poverty, access to education, health, employment, housing, and overall well-being.

Bridgend Youth Justice Service have various strategies to address the Socio-economic Duty: Prevention and Early Intervention: Bridgend Youth Justice System recognises that prevention and early intervention are crucial in addressing the socio-economic factors contributing to youth offending. It focuses on identifying and addressing root causes such as poverty, inequality, lack of education, and limited access to services.

Collaboration with local authorities and community organisations

The service actively collaborates with local authorities, community organisations, and third-sector partners to address socio-economic challenges faced by young people. By working together, they

aim to provide a holistic support network that addresses the multifaceted needs of young offenders and their families.

Supportive Interventions

BYJS offers a range of supportive interventions to address socio-economic disparities and improve outcomes for young offenders. These include mentoring programs, educational support, vocational training, access to employment opportunities, and assistance with housing and welfare benefits.

Youth rehabilitation and reintegration

To promote successful reintegration into society, BYJS provides comprehensive rehabilitation programs that consider socio-economic factors. This includes assistance in securing employment, facilitating access to education and training, and addressing mental health and substance abuse issues.

Stakeholder engagement

The service actively engages with stakeholders, including children, their families, local communities, and relevant agencies. Their involvement helps shape policies and interventions, ensuring they are responsive to the socio-economic needs of the community and align with the Welsh Government's objectives.

BYJS is fully committed to addressing the Welsh Government's socio-economic duty. By focusing on prevention, collaboration, supportive interventions, rehabilitation, and reintegration, the system aims to reduce socio-economic inequalities and promote positive outcomes for young offenders. Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and multi-agency engagement are essential components of this commitment, ensuring continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the community. Through these efforts, the service plays a vital role in creating a fairer and more inclusive society for young people in Bridgend.

Disproportionality graph

The data for Bridgend Youth Justice Service Disproportionality Graph (see below) of the children involved with the service up to March 2023 provides important insights into the demographics and specific circumstances of the children:

White European

Accounting for 5% (4) of the children involved with the service, this category represents children who identify as having a White European ethnic background. It indicates a smaller representation of this particular ethnic group within the population served by the youth justice service.

Care and Support Plan

A significant proportion of 18% (15) of the children have a Care and Support Plan in place. This suggests that these children require additional assistance, supervision, or specialised care due to various factors such as behavioural challenges, developmental needs, or specific circumstances. The presence of Care and Support Plans highlights the need for tailored interventions and services to address the unique requirements of these children.

Child Protection Plan

8% (7) of the children are under a Child Protection Plan, indicating that they have been identified as being at risk or vulnerable and require safeguarding measures to ensure their well-being and safety. This emphasises the importance of prioritising child protection and implementing measures to support and protect these children from harm.

Care-experienced child

A significant proportion of 22% (19) of the children identify themselves as care experienced. This indicates that they have been involved with the care system, such as being in foster care, residential care, or having experienced other forms of out-of-home placement. Understanding the care experiences of these children is crucial for providing appropriate support and interventions that address their unique needs arising from their care journeys.

Females

20% (17) of the children involved with the service are females. This highlights the presence of girls within the population being supported and emphasises the importance of gender-responsive approaches in addressing their specific needs, challenges, and experiences within the youth justice system.

Males

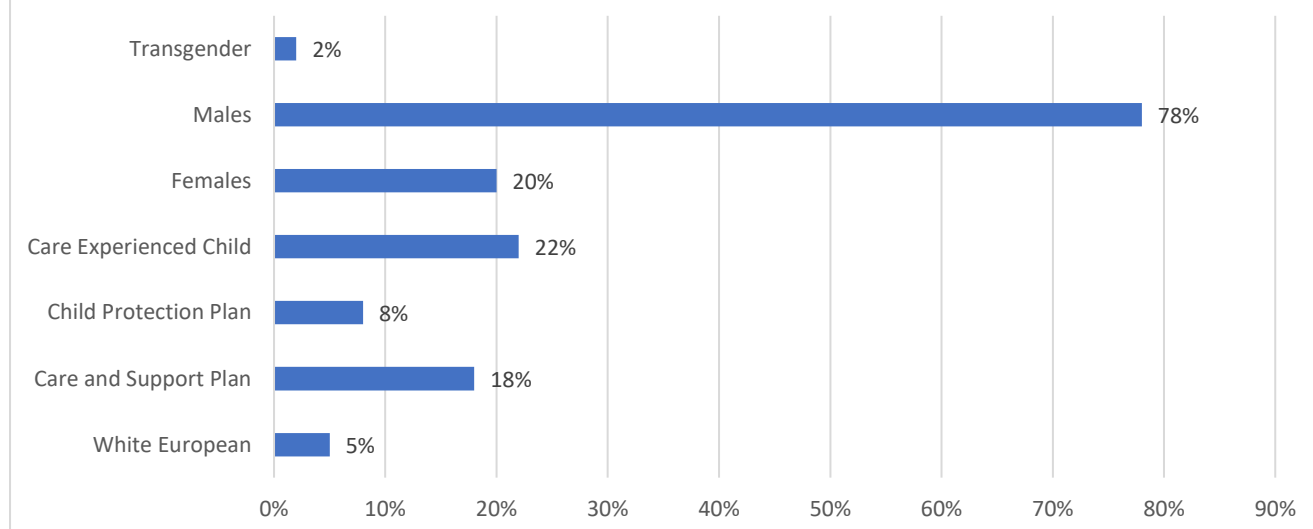
The majority of the children, comprising 78%, (68) are males. This indicates a higher representation of males within the population served by BYJS. Recognising the gender disparity is important for tailoring interventions that address the specific challenges faced by male youth within the youth justice system and promoting gender equality in service delivery.

Transgender

2% (2) of the children identify as transgender. This suggests that a small proportion of the children involved with the service identify as a gender different from the one assigned to them at birth. It highlights the importance of inclusive practices and ensuring that the specific needs and experiences of transgender children are considered in service provision.

This data provides a comprehensive picture of the demographic characteristics and specific circumstances of the children involved with BYJS. It underscores the need for tailored interventions, services, and support that address the diverse needs of different subgroups within the population. By recognising and addressing disproportionality, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring equitable service delivery, the service can work towards better outcomes for all the children involved, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.

Disproportionality Graph of children involved with the Bridgend Youth Justice System March 2023



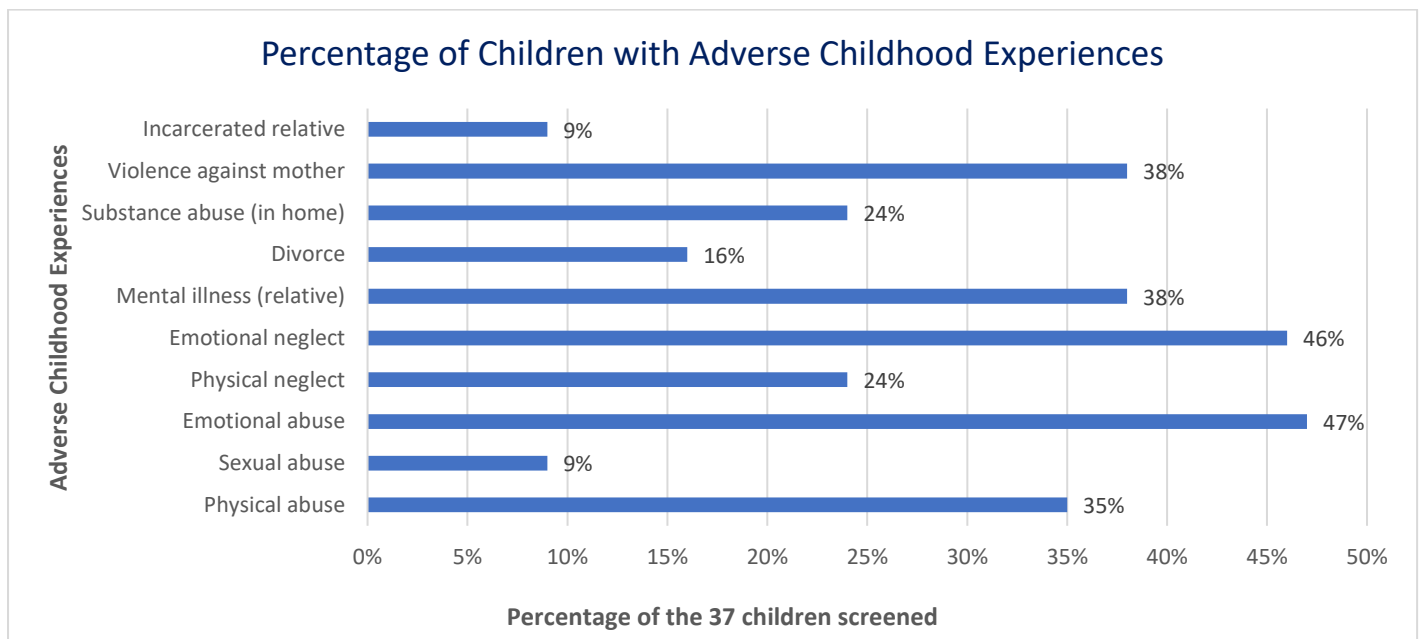
Trauma needs of our children

In order to identify the trauma needs of our children the service is committed to completing trauma screening for each child that has received an intervention. From the 1 April 2023 to 30 May 2023 the service conducted 37 trauma screenings for the children under their care, yielding insightful results. The analysis of these screenings has revealed significant findings regarding the children's experiences. All of the children screened have encountered one or more adverse childhood experiences, indicating the prevalence of trauma in their lives. 100% (37) of the children screened had experienced one or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs are stressful or traumatic events that occur during childhood and can have long-lasting effects on an individual's well-being. The following gives a further insight to the screening:

- Physical abuse: 35% (13) of the children screened had experienced physical abuse, indicating that they had been subjected to physical harm or violence.
- Sexual abuse: 9% (3) of the children screened had experienced sexual abuse, suggesting that they had encountered unwanted sexual behaviour or exploitation.
- Emotional abuse: 47% (17) of the children screened had experienced emotional abuse, indicating they had been subjected to psychological harm or manipulation.
- Physical neglect: 24% (9) of the children screened had experienced physical neglect, suggesting a lack of basic care, supervision, or provision of necessities.
- Emotional neglect: 46% (17) of the children screened had experienced emotional neglect, indicating a lack of emotional support, validation, or nurturing.
- Mental illness (relative): 38% (14) of the children screened had a relative with mental illness, implying that they may have been exposed to challenging family dynamics or inadequate support due to their relative's condition.
- Divorce: 16% (6) of the children screened had experienced parental divorce, suggesting they had gone through the dissolution of their parents' marriage or relationship.

- Substance abuse (in home): 24% (9) of the children screened lived in a household affected by substance abuse, indicating they had been exposed to substance use or addiction within their family environment.
- Violence against mother: 38% (14) of the children screened had witnessed violence against their mother, indicating they had observed or experienced domestic violence.
- Incarcerated relative: 9% (3) of the children screened had a relative who was incarcerated, suggesting they had experienced the absence or disruption of a family member's presence due to imprisonment.

These results highlight a significant prevalence of adverse childhood experiences among the screened children. It indicates that a substantial number of children have been exposed to various forms of abuse, neglect, family challenges, and trauma-related situations. These experiences can have profound effects on their physical and mental well-being, as well as their overall development. Understanding and addressing these ACEs are crucial for providing appropriate support, intervention, and care to help mitigate the negative consequences and promote healing and resilience in these children.



Bangor university findings on trauma summary

In 2021, Bangor University, in association with Public Health Wales, were commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation to assess the implementation of ECM within YOTs. The conclusion was that, in the Youth Justice system, there is increasing recognition among professionals that approaches which focus on managing risk and enforcing punitive consequences, often overlook the needs of the child and can be largely ineffective for achieving positive outcomes. Some YOTs, including Bridgend YJS, are reshaping how services are delivered to enable a 'Child-First' and trauma-informed approach being adopted. The findings of this report have highlighted that in Wales, there has been a shift in Youth Justice, with an increase in ACE- and trauma-informed awareness and practice.

Training on ACE- and trauma-informed approaches and the delivery of ECM have galvanised this shift, allowing some YOTs to move towards a more holistic approach that focuses on understanding what has happened to a child and the complex issues they experience, through which they are able to improve the support they provide to children, to develop their strengths and realise their potential. The findings demonstrate a number of benefits to the ECM approach, including a more comprehensive understanding of the child, effective collaboration across agencies, the delivery of meaningful and developmentally appropriate interventions and the provision of services that can be hard to secure for some children.

Furthermore, ECM enabled YOT workers to take a more considered view of breach, and a more trauma-informed approach to various transition processes. Overall, both YOT workers and children reported marked progression in positive outcomes as a result of ECM. Children developed positive relationships with their YOT worker and professionals from other agencies, more confidence to reach out to services using their own volition, improved emotional regulation, greater self-worth and a positive future orientation. However, the findings suggest there is still more to do to embed trauma-informed and 'Child-First' approaches into the Youth Justice system as a whole.

This work will now be built on using the Youth Endowment Fund and randomised control study to implement this model of practice across further service areas within the Education and Family Support directorate to provide consistency and a greater opportunity to discover through the Kent University evaluation, whether this model of practice should be extended even further.

Currently, BYJS Service Manager is involved in a His Majesty's Inspectorate inspection scoping group, as a Welsh Youth Offending Team manager representation. The aim of this group is to consult with Youth Justice Services to ensure the inspection process and themes are aligned with youth justice requirements and ensure service delivery is fit for purpose, meets the diverse needs of the child and ensures child safety through sound practice and partnership working.

Prevention

Recognising the importance of proactive intervention and early identification of potential risks, BYJS has established a prevention panel that serves as a platform for discussions and referrals from its partner agencies. The panel, which convenes on a fortnightly basis, plays a significant role in assessing the appropriateness of referrals based on the presence of risk factors related to offending behaviour or potential harm behaviour. This process is aided by a comprehensive screening tool which gives a defensible framework for deciding which referrals are accepted for intervention.

Since the implementation of the prevention panel, there has been a substantial increase in the number of referrals received by BYJS. This surge is indicative of the growing recognition among partner agencies of the value and effectiveness of early intervention in addressing youth-related challenges and preventing future offending or harm.

BYJS has developed a comprehensive prevention evaluation system. This system serves as a tool for assessing the successes achieved and identifying areas that require further development or improvement. By systematically evaluating the outcomes of prevention interventions, BYJS can gather valuable insights into the effectiveness of their strategies and make informed decisions on how to enhance their services and interventions.

The prevention evaluation system enables us to track and measure key indicators and outcomes related to prevention efforts. This includes the identification of successful interventions that have

effectively reduced the risk of offending behaviour or harm behaviour, as well as the identification of areas where improvements can be made to further enhance the prevention approach.

By establishing this evaluation system, we demonstrate our commitment to evidence-based practice and continuous improvement. The data and insights gathered through the evaluation process provide a valuable feedback system that informs decision-making, resource allocation, and the refinement of prevention strategies.

The prevention panel and evaluation system are a positive example of our collaborative approach and commitment to partnership working. By engaging with partner agencies and fostering a shared understanding of the importance of prevention, we can effectively address the needs of vulnerable children and mitigate risks before they escalate.

Diversion

BYJS has continued to utilise the Youth Bureau model for its Out of Court Disposals. HMIP provided some feedback and advice on the model in relation to ensuring the decision-making part of the panel was extended to include further multi-agency partners. BYJS has been pro-active and extended its partnership to include Health, Children's Social Care, Victim Services, Education and Substance use. It is also trialling a specific out of court disposal assessment which replaces the need for practitioners to complete a separate assessment and report.

Diversion programmes play a significant role in preventing children from entering the formal justice system and providing them with the necessary support to address their offending behaviour. BYJS recognises the importance of diversion and has established robust strategies and processes to effectively implement diversionary systems.

Identification of children for diversion

BYJS uses various methods to identify children who may be suitable for diversion. This includes referrals from partner agencies, schools and community organisations. Additionally, the service actively seeks to engage with children and families who have come to the attention of the police but are deemed suitable for diversion instead of formal prosecution.

Delivery of the diversion service

The diversion within BYJS is delivered through collaborative partnerships with a range of agencies and professionals. These may include youth workers, social workers, police officers, education professionals, and community support. The service adopts a multi-agency approach, ensuring that children and their families receive comprehensive support tailored to their specific needs.

Evaluation of success

The success of the diversion programmes is evaluated through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. Data is collected on various indicators, such as reoffending rates, educational attainment, and engagement in positive activities. Qualitative feedback is obtained through feedback forms and case studies to assess the impact of diversion on the lives of the children and their families. This evaluation process allows for continuous improvement and informs the development of effective diversion strategies.

Scrutiny and oversight

To ensure the quality and effectiveness of diversion practices, BYJS has established rigorous scrutiny and oversight mechanisms. Regular review meetings are held with partner agencies involved in diversion work to monitor progress, share best practices, and address any challenges. Additionally, a multi-agency Cwm Taf Morgannwg Scrutiny Panel has been established to provide a quality assurance mechanism for out of court disposals. Cases are chosen at random on a bi-monthly basis and the panel presents their findings on each individual case with recommendations set where necessary. The Management Board of BYJS continues to provide strategic oversight and accountability, reviewing diversion outcomes and making necessary adjustments to improve service delivery.

Further changes will be made, if necessary, in line with recommendations from the YJB in this area of practice.

Case examples:

Diversion to Outcome 22: A child was discussed at the multi-agency out of court disposal decision-making panel. Having identified the significant trauma that the child had experienced, the role of other services and the views of the victim it was decided that the child could be issued with an Outcome 22 rather than a more formal out of court disposal.

Restorative Justice Diversion: The service has implemented a restorative justice diversion programme that brings together offenders and victims. With the support of BYJS Victim Officer, young individuals gain a deeper understanding of the impact of their actions and work towards repairing harm. This approach promotes accountability, empathy, and learning, resulting in reduced reoffending rates and improved community relationships.

Additional supporting data: BYJS is in the process of collecting data on the outcomes of diversion programmes, including the number of children diverted and the outcomes achieved. The data will include reduced reoffending rates, improved school attendance, increased engagement in positive activities, and positive feedback from children and their families who have participated in diversion programmes.

BYJS recognises that diversion is a vital part of its prevention and intervention strategies. By identifying at-risk children, delivering targeted intervention through partnerships, evaluating success, the service ensures that children receive the necessary support to divert them from the justice system and provide opportunities for positive change and rehabilitation.

Education

Bridgend Education, Training, Employment (ETE) Measure over 4 years 2019-2020 to 2022-2023

School-aged children:

Year (April to March)	Number of interventions closed	Start				Average hours attended	End				Percentage change at end compared to start
		Hours offered at start	Hours attended at start	Average hours offered	Average hours attended		Hours offered at start	Hours attended at start	Average hours offered	Average hours attended	
2019/20	2	50	50	25	25	25	25	25	25	0%	
2020/21	1	25	25	25	25	0	0	0	0	-100%	
2021/22	2	40	40	20	20	50	50	25	25	25%	
2022/23	57	988	912	17	16	1262	1143	22	20	28%	

Year (April to March)	Number of interventions closed	Start				Average hours attended	End				Percentage change at end compared to start
		Hours offered at start	Hours attended at start	Average hours offered	Average hours attended		Hours offered at start	Hours attended at start	Average hours offered	Average hours attended	
2019/20	26	369	366	14.2	14.1	451	448	17.3	17.2	22%	
2020/21	13	142	107	10.9	8.2	109	109	8.4	8.4	2%	
2021/22	10	140	140	14	14	185	185	18.5	18.5	32%	
2022/23	67	818	680	12	10	1001	896	15	13	20%	

Since April 2023, BYJS has been required to submit performance data on education, training, and employment, as well as special educational needs and disabilities/additional learning needs. Recognising the significance of education in supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of children, BYJS has established robust partnerships and provisions to ensure that the education needs of all children known to the service are effectively addressed.

Education staffing provision within the service

BYJS understands the important role of education in the lives of children and has dedicated education staffing provision within its service. The service employs two qualified education professionals, who work closely with education establishments to support children and their educational needs. These professionals have expertise in addressing the specific challenges faced by children within BYJS, including ALN.

Partnership arrangements for meeting education needs

BYJS recognises that addressing the education needs of children extends beyond its own service provision. To ensure comprehensive support, the service collaborates with various partnership arrangements, including voluntary sector organisations, and the local authority. These partnerships facilitate access to a wider range of educational resources, expertise, and opportunities for children involved with BYJS. By working together, these partners strive to create a seamless pathway for children, enabling them to transition smoothly between different educational settings and receive the necessary support to reach their potential.

Education representation on the management board

Education representation is a vital aspect of BYJS Management Board to ensure that education needs remain at the forefront of decision-making and strategic planning. The board includes representative from educational settings, such as local schools, colleges, and educational services within the local authority. This representation brings valuable insights and expertise, to the board discussions, enabling effective decision making and coordination between BYJS and the education sector.

Strategies to ensure education needs are met

BYJS has implemented several strategies to ensure that the education needs of all children known to the service are met. These strategies include:

Individual education plans (IEPs): Each child within the service, which has educational needs, has an individualised education plan that outlines their specific learning goals, support requirements, and strategies for achieving educational success.

Education advocacy

BYJS employs education advocates who work closely with children to ensure their educational rights are protected and their needs are met. This advocate liaises with schools, colleges, and other educational settings to facilitate smooth transitions, address any barriers to learning, and advocate for appropriate support services.

Information sharing and coordination

BYJS maintains effective communication and information-sharing systems with educational settings, ensuring that relevant educational records and assessments are shared securely and in a timely manner. This coordination enables educational providers to make informed decisions regarding placements, accommodations, and support for children involved with the YJS. This includes speech and language assessments completed BYJS SALT.

Tailored educational interventions

BYJS collaborates with educational professionals to develop tailored interventions that address the specific educational needs and challenges faced by children involved with BYJS. These interventions may include catch-up programmes, vocational training, educational mentoring, and alternative educational placements, ensuring that children have access to suitable educational opportunities that promote their engagement and achievement.

By working in partnership with education providers, involving education representation on the management board, and implementing tailored strategies, BYJS strives to ensure that all children known to the service receive the necessary educational support. Through these collaborative efforts, the service aims to improve educational outcomes, reduce barriers to learning, and promote successful reintegration into mainstream education, training, or employment opportunities. A positive example of partnership practice is a meeting that has been established with school assistant heads and safeguarding leads to provide preventative Youth Justice support for individual schools. Schools now have the opportunity to discuss relevant Youth Justice related issues and cases and put a plan in place to address those issues.

The analysis of Education, Training, and Employment (ETE) for children being supported by Bridgend Youth Justice Service reveals the following attendance patterns:

High attendance

25 children have an attendance rate of over 85%. This indicates that they consistently attend their education, training, or employment programs, demonstrating a strong commitment to their educational and vocational pursuits.

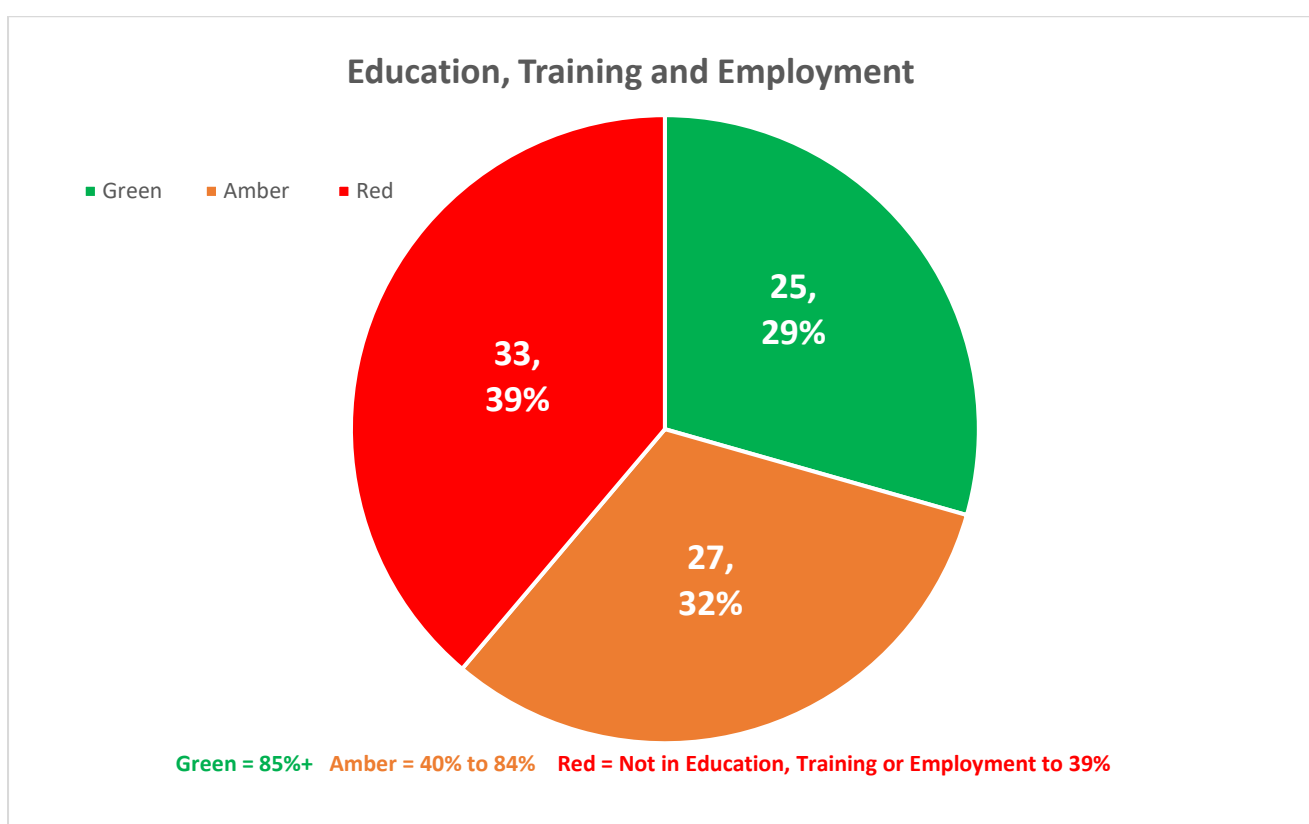
Moderate attendance

27 children have an attendance rate between 40% and 84%. This suggests that they attend their ETE programmes regularly but may have some sporadic absences or challenges in maintaining consistent attendance.

Low attendance

33 children have an attendance rate between 0% and 39%. This group shows a significant struggle in attending their ETE programmes, with frequent absences or non-attendance.

These attendance patterns provide insights into the engagement levels and commitment of the children supported by BYJS in their education, training, and employment endeavours. While a portion of the children demonstrates consistent attendance and dedication, there are others who face challenges in maintaining regular attendance. It is essential for the service to continue to identify and address the factors contributing to low attendance among the children, providing additional support, interventions, or resources as needed. Improving attendance rates can greatly enhance the children's educational and vocational outcomes, increasing their chances of successful reintegration into society and reducing the risk of reoffending. The 33 cases where children are struggling to engage with provision, have been identified and are discussed as part of the fortnightly meeting to consider individualised needs and planning to support the child to improve their engagement.



Restorative approaches and victims

The inspectorate report highlighted that the case managers within BYJS consider the wishes and needs of victims when relevant, as well as the actual and potential risks to victims when necessary. This victim-centred approach is fundamental to the service's operations and ensures that victims' voices are heard, and their needs are addressed appropriately in line with the Victim Code of Practice. Additionally, the report commended BYJS for its victim-led approach to reparation, emphasising that projects are designed to develop skills and provide tangible benefits to the community.

To further enhance BYJS restorative services, the evaluation process has been refined. This refinement aims to optimise the measurement of victim satisfaction regarding the services they have received. By gathering feedback and actively seeking input from victims, the service can continually improve its practices and ensure that the support provided aligns with victims' expectations and requirements.

Over the past year, BYJS has undertaken significant revisions to its Victim Policy and amended procedures to ensure compliance with the victim KPI. These revisions have allowed the service to collect and provide all the necessary information required to meet the KPI standards. This proactive approach demonstrates BYJS commitment to effective victim support and the importance placed on meeting established performance indicators.

Aligned with the all-Wales protocol on reducing the criminalisation of care-experienced children and young adults, BYJS has actively fostered connections with local children's residential homes and foster carers. This collaborative approach has been recognised as an exemplary practice in the associated toolkit produced by Missing People Wales. The aim is to prevent and divert children from the formal youth justice system by dealing with incidents using a restorative approach.

Overall, BYJS's dedication to a victim-led approach and continuous improvement is evident in its efforts to refine evaluation processes, revise policies and procedures, and establish fruitful partnerships with key stakeholders. By prioritising victim satisfaction, engaging in restorative practices, and aligning with national protocols, BYJS seeks to create a more inclusive and responsive Youth Justice service that supports victims, promotes community benefit, and facilitates positive outcomes for all involved.

In a joint BYJS Management Board and team meeting it was identified that there is little joined up working between restorative justice service providers situated in different agencies. A plan has been formulated to establish a multi-agency restorative justice group that can share practice and training opportunities, joint tackle barriers to victim involvement, co-ordinate events such as restorative Justice week and contribute to the training of student police officers.

Serious violence and exploitation

In accordance with the Home Office Serious Violence Duty (December 2022), services are encouraged to provide a local perspective on serious violence and exploitation. This includes highlighting any strategic partnerships and collaborations that exist to address these issues, as well as sharing insights and learnings from past serious incidents. By presenting this information, BYJS can demonstrate its commitment to tackling serious violence and exploitation within the community.

To address child criminal exploitation, BYJS actively engages in partnership work with relevant stakeholders including local authority newly implemented exploitation leads. The service also regularly collaborates with the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and equivalent local arrangements to identify and support children who may be victims of exploitation. By working closely with the NRM, the service can continue to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to safeguard and provide necessary interventions for children affected by criminal exploitation.

In addition to addressing child criminal exploitation, BYJS also recognises the importance of preventing radicalisation and extremist activity among young individuals. This involves implementing initiatives and practices that aim to counter radicalisation and promote community involvement. The service actively collaborates with relevant organisations, such as local authorities, community groups, and safeguarding partnerships, to develop comprehensive strategies and interventions in this area and is a member of Bridgend Channel Panel.

BYJS are currently working with a proportion of children subject to Release Under Investigation (RUI) arrangements. The service has additional funding through Turnaround to assist in providing improved packages of support for these children. It is acknowledged that not all of these case incidents relate to serious violence, so it is vital the service responds to individual needs and offers relevant and timely support. It is also essential for BYJS to work across the partnership to address the specific needs and risks associated with children in such circumstances. This includes collaborating with the police, social services, and other relevant organisations to ensure that appropriate support is in place. By taking a multi-agency approach, BYJS aims to address the underlying factors that contribute to the involvement of young individuals in serious violence and provide them with the necessary support and guidance to prevent further harm.

The service recognises the significance of addressing serious violence, exploitation, and related issues within the community. By actively participating in partnership work, engaging with the NRM or equivalent arrangements, and developing preventative measures against radicalisation, the service demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and young individuals.

Detention in police custody

Detention in police custody is a critical aspect that requires attention and proper handling by BYJS. The service acknowledges the importance of addressing the challenges associated with this issue while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

To effectively address the local challenges related to children detained in custody, BYJS has established collaborative partnerships with the police. This partnership enables effective communication and cooperation between the service and the police, ensuring that the welfare and rights of detained children are safeguarded. By maintaining a close working relationship with the police, BYJS can stay informed about any local challenges that may arise and work together to find appropriate solutions.

Compliance with PACE is an important aspect of BYJS's approach to detention in police custody. The service ensures that all procedures and practices align with the provisions set out in PACE to protect the rights and well-being of detained children. This includes adhering to guidelines regarding the treatment, supervision, and rights of children in custody.

BYJS works closely with relevant agencies to ensure that children in custody have access to appropriate support. This includes partnering with agencies responsible for providing appropriate adults who can assist and support detained children during their time in custody. BYJS collaborates with these organisations to establish local processes and procedures that enable the timely and effective provision of appropriate adult support. Additionally, we work in close coordination with the Emergency Duty Team, and provide a weekend rota for court which provides further assistance and support when needed.

BYJS has ongoing training and awareness programmes for staff members involved in the detention process. This ensures that they have a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of detained children and are equipped with the necessary skills to provide appropriate support and interventions. We emphasise the importance of communication and collaboration between all relevant agencies, including the police, appropriate adults, and emergency duty teams, to ensure a cohesive and effective approach to detention in police custody.

By prioritising the welfare, rights, and appropriate treatment of children detained in custody, we strive to create a safe and supportive environment that adheres to legal requirements and promotes positive outcomes for young individuals involved in the justice system.

Remands

BYJS recognises the significance of addressing the issue of children subject to remands to local authority accommodation and youth detention accommodation. These situations require careful consideration and efforts to ensure the well-being and appropriate treatment of these children within the justice system.

To effectively address this issue, we collaborate with local authorities, partner agencies, and agencies to develop strategic plans aimed at reducing the use of remands. These plans focus on alternative approaches that prioritise diversion, prevention, and rehabilitation as alternatives to remanding children into custody.

By implementing these strategic plans, we aim to provide suitable and supportive interventions that address the underlying causes of offending behaviour and promote positive outcomes for young individuals. These plans may involve the provision of comprehensive assessments, specialised interventions, and support services tailored to the unique needs of each child.

Data on the use of remands to local authority accommodation and youth detention accommodation is essential in assessing the effectiveness of these strategic plans. BYJS collects and analyses relevant data to gain insights into the patterns and trends associated with remands and to evaluate the impact of alternative approaches. This data helps inform decision-making processes and shape future strategies to further reduce the use of remands.

Additionally, BYJS actively engages with partner agencies, such as local authorities, to ensure collaborative efforts in finding suitable alternatives to remands. This involves establishing effective communication and sharing best practices to enhance partnership working and maximise resources.

The focus is on providing appropriate support and interventions to children subject to remands, including access to educational opportunities, mental health services, and rehabilitative programmes. The aim is to address their needs in a holistic and individualised manner, promoting their well-being and reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

Through a combination of strategic planning, data analysis, collaboration with partner agencies, and tailored interventions, the service aims to continually improve outcomes for children subject to remands, ultimately reducing the reliance on remands and providing more effective and supportive pathways within the Youth Justice system.

Use of custody

BYJS has achieved success in reducing the use of custody within the Youth Justice system. This accomplishment is due to BYJS the commitment to finding alternative approaches that prioritise the well-being and rehabilitation of children involved in the justice system.

The recognition that custody can have a detrimental impact on the lives of children is a driving force behind the efforts to reduce its utilisation. BYJS acknowledges that the experience of custody can disrupt a child's education, strain family relationships, and increase trauma. Understanding the potential consequences of custody reinforces the need for comprehensive and targeted support for children within the justice system.

Even though custody rates are low, BYJS recognises the importance of strategic planning and collaborative efforts across agencies to address the needs of children who do end up in custody. This extends beyond custody rates to include the provision of holistic and tailored support services that meet the unique challenges and complexities faced by these children.

Strategic planning involves close collaboration with partner agencies, including local authorities, education providers, health services, and community organisations. Through these partnerships, BYJS ensures that comprehensive support systems are in place to address the specific needs of children in custody and lessen the potential negative consequences of their incarceration.

Also, BYJS conducts in-depth analysis and assessment of the needs of children in custody. This analysis helps identify patterns, underlying factors contributing to their offending behaviour, and areas where interventions can be most effective. By understanding the trauma and vulnerabilities of these children, we are able to design and implement targeted interventions that address their needs and support their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

The focus on reducing the use of custody aligns with the broader principles of the Youth Justice system, which emphasise the importance of providing appropriate support and interventions for children who have engaged in offending behaviour. The service strives to create a system that prioritises the well-being and development of children, ensuring that they have access to the necessary educational, mental health, and rehabilitative resources to support their growth.

By maintaining a proactive approach to strategic planning, collaborative partnerships, and comprehensive analysis, we remain committed to further reducing the use of custody and continuously improving the support provided to children involved in the Youth Justice system

Constructive resettlement

Ensuring a smooth and successful transition for children leaving custody is a crucial aspect of BYJS's commitment to constructive resettlement. It has amended its policy to account for the developments in this area of practice. We recognise that children who have been in custody face specific challenges, particularly when it comes to finding suitable accommodation and reintegrating into the community. Efforts to implement the principles of constructive resettlement aim to provide comprehensive support and opportunities for these young individuals as they embark on their journey towards a positive future.

BYJS embraces the constructive resettlement 5 strand model and through our Senior Social Work Practitioner based on the Children's Unit HMP and YOI Parc, the team has an influence on the resettlement of children being released from the establishment not only from Bridgend but those from the other areas where there are Children placed at the establishment. As an integral part of their role, the Senior Practitioner is required to establish and maintain links with the home Local Authority of any of the care-experienced children in the establishment, and working alongside the home youth justice service, the local authority and the case management staff in the establishment, ensure that plans are in place for the constructive resettlement of care-experienced children being released from custody.

One of these key features of constructive resettlement in the establishment, is the use of temporary release, which allows children to attend appointments in the community ahead of their release and in some circumstances attend education/work experience placements along with educational opportunities under supervision such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions all of which is aimed to gradually transition children back into their respective community under controlled and

supportive conditions. And by gradually reintroducing children to the community, BYJS supports the rationale that children being released from custody can develop important skills and networks, reducing the likelihood of reoffending and improving their chances of successful reintegration.

Alongside the links with HMP and YOI Parc, the service supports the “No black bags” scheme which aims to ensure no child will move with a black bag and provides funding for bags and cases to be purchased which aims to prevent stigmatisation. The service is also assisting the corporate parenting team to provide a wider range of opportunities for children moving from placement to placement and requiring additional support.

Our service understands that constructive resettlement is an ongoing process that requires continuous improvement and development. As part of our future, BYJS is committed to further enhancing the constructive resettlement approach. This includes continuing to strengthen partnerships with housing providers, local authorities, and support organisations to ensure a comprehensive network of support is available for children leaving custody. By including these agencies, BYJS aims to address the specific housing needs of young individuals and facilitate their successful transition to stable and suitable accommodation.

We are committed to implementing the principles of constructive resettlement to support children leaving custody. By maximising the use of temporary release, strengthening partnerships, and continuously improving their approach, the service continuously strives to provide comprehensive support, suitable accommodation, and opportunities for successful reintegration.

Standards for children in the justice system

As part of the strategic self-assessment process, BYJS will conduct a review of key policies to ensure their continued effectiveness and relevance. The purpose of this review is to assess the implementation, accessibility, and practicality of these policies and identify any changes that may be required. The following policies have been identified for review:

Provision of appropriate adults

BYJS will review its policy on providing appropriate adults to safeguard the interests of children detained or questioned by police officers. This review will align with the National Appropriate Adult Network's National Standards to ensure that the provision meets the required guidelines.

Interviewing Children under PACE

The policy regarding children who may be interviewed under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) while remanded or sentenced in youth detention accommodation will be reviewed. This review aims to assess the effectiveness and practicality of the existing provisions, considering the specific needs and circumstances of the children involved.

Quality of case management

The policy on adhering to the quality of case management will be reviewed to evaluate its implementation and effectiveness. This review aims to assess the extent to which the policy is being followed and identify areas for improvement to ensure high-quality case management practices.

Public protection and desistance policies

BYJS will review its policies related to public protection and desistance, including release and recall arrangements for children on licence/supervision. This review will assess the effectiveness of existing policies in promoting public safety and supporting the reintegration of children into the community.

Engagement and compliance with court orders

The policy regarding engagement and compliance with court orders, remand, and bail programmes will be reviewed. This review will include responsibilities for enforcement actions where case management sits outside the youth offending service ensuring effective engagement and compliance with court orders.

Data protection

BYJS will review its data protection policy to ensure compliance with the relevant data protection principles outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). This review aims to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately and in accordance with data protection regulations.

Disproportionality

BYJS will review its policies to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. This review will assess the extent to which the BYJS upholds its duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different individuals when carrying out its activities.

In addition to policy reviews, the Management Boards and Operational YJT services will undertake a comprehensive review of the standards specified for out of court disposals, at court, in the community (on community orders), in secure accommodation, and on transition and resettlement. This review will enable BYJS to analyse the quality of work and case management within these different contexts.

By conducting these policy reviews and assessments, BYJS aims to ensure that its practices align with the latest standards, regulations, and best practices, ultimately enhancing the quality and effectiveness of its services for children involved in the justice system.

Workforce development

In the coming year, BYJS recognises the importance of investing in the development of its workforce to enhance service delivery. Several key areas have been identified for workforce development in 2023-2024 to address the specific needs of the staff:

ECM training

Recognising the evolving nature of youth justice work, we aim to provide comprehensive training on ECM practices. This training will equip staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage complex cases, ensure appropriate interventions, and promote positive outcomes for children.

Report writing training

Clear and accurate report writing is essential for effective communication within the Youth Justice system. BYJS intends to provide training focused on enhancing report writing skills, ensuring that

staff can produce high-quality reports that accurately capture relevant information and support informed decision-making.

Victims of sexual assault and toxic masculinity

Given the sensitive nature of supporting victims of sexual assault and addressing issues related to toxic masculinity, the service acknowledges the importance of providing specialised training in these areas. This training will enable staff to develop a deeper understanding of the unique needs of victims and equip them with the necessary skills to provide sensitive and appropriate support.

To deliver these training and development opportunities, the service has continued to plan a series of development days and team-building sessions throughout the year to build on our last year feedback from the practice development events that were held. These sessions will continue to provide dedicated time for staff to engage in learning, share best practices, and strengthen their collaborative working relationships.

Reflecting on the past year, BYJS has already implemented various training and development initiatives that have positively impacted service delivery. For example, specific training sessions on trauma-informed care, safeguarding, defensible decision making, and restorative justice practices have enhanced staff's ability to understand and respond to the complex needs of children involved in the justice system. This has resulted in improved engagement, better outcomes for children, and increased satisfaction among stakeholders.

In terms of supporting the workforce, the service is committed to promoting resilience and wellbeing among its staff. Specific measures have been implemented, including:

Clinical supervision

Staff have access to regular clinical supervision sessions, providing them with a supportive and confidential space to reflect on their practice, address challenges, and receive guidance from experienced professionals. This supervision helps to enhance staff resilience, well-being, and effectiveness in their roles.

Peer-to-peer mentoring

BYJS encourages peer-to-peer mentoring, where experienced staff members provide support and guidance to their colleagues. This mentorship promotes knowledge sharing, professional growth, and the development of a supportive and collaborative work environment.

Case discussion

The fortnightly case discussion sessions provide a forum where all practitioners can bring cases for problem solving or for presentation of effective practice with team members. This forum builds team consistency, ideas for innovative practice, knowledge sharing and upskilling of staff.

Childview clinic and ASSET clinic

These clinics have been set up to share best practice for Childview and ASSET completion. There have been handouts produced for staff to utilise for recording purposes which helps to enhance the YJB practice guides.

These support mechanisms play a vital role in nurturing a positive and healthy work culture within BYJS. By prioritising the wellbeing and professional development of staff, BYJS aims to create a

workforce that is resilient, motivated, and equipped to deliver high-quality services to the children they serve.

Evidence-based practice and innovation

Resources

An Intervention Coordinator within of BYJS, identified a gap in the resources available to support the comprehensive and holistic needs of the children we work with, particularly in relation to their progression towards desistance from offending.

Recognising the importance of addressing this gap, the Intervention Coordinator took proactive measures to develop valuable resources that would effectively cater to the individualised requirements of each child.

Drawing upon her extensive experience working with both diagnosed and undiagnosed children, the Intervention Coordinator utilised her expertise to create specific learning interventions tailored to the unique needs of each child. This resource development process was further enriched by the Intervention Coordinator's personal experiences within her own family, which provided her with invaluable insights into the challenges faced by children with similar diagnosis.

The dedication and effort invested in this initiative has resulted in the creation of a resource that the team acknowledges as a tool to enhance our support for the children we work with.

By leveraging her knowledge and drawing from her personal experiences, the Intervention Coordinator has successfully addressed the gap in resources, providing the team with assets to support the children's progress. The tailored learning interventions provided by this resource enable the team to effectively address the specific needs of each child, taking into consideration their unique circumstances, traumas, and challenges to enable each child to reach a pro-social identity in the community.

Moving forward, the team can continue to build upon and refine this resource, incorporating new insights and best practices to ensure its sustained effectiveness. Furthermore, the success of this resource demonstrates the team's commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in meeting the holistic needs of the children we work with.

Building Skills Project

BYJS Building Skills Project provides children with workplace skills, plays a crucial role in strengthening their sense of identity, boosting their confidence, and enhancing their self-esteem. Through the project, children not only acquire practical skills applicable to the workplace but also undergo personal growth and development.

Referrals can be made for children to participate in the Building Skills Project, which offers them various opportunities. These opportunities include alternative education provision, enabling them to continue their learning in a different setting. Additionally, children may engage in the project to fulfil their reparation hours, allowing them to contribute positively to their communities while learning valuable skills. Furthermore, participating in the project allows children to build their portfolio by gaining practical work experience, which can be beneficial for their future endeavours.

Within the Building Skills Project, children engage in the design and construction of wooden, bespoke play areas and equipment for schools and community groups. This hands-on experience not only enhances their construction skills but also fosters their creativity and problem-solving

abilities. By actively participating in the project, children gain practical knowledge in project planning, developing construction skills, managing budgets, prioritising health and safety measures, contributing to community regeneration, and acquiring valuable work experience.

To ensure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the programme, evaluations are conducted, and feedback is actively collected from the participating children, as well as the schools and community groups involved. This feedback serves as a valuable tool for assessing the impact of the programme and making necessary adjustments to further enhance its outcomes.

Overall, the Building Skills Project is a comprehensive initiative that offers children a range of benefits. It equips them with valuable workplace skills, while also nurturing their sense of identity, bolstering their confidence, and boosting their self-esteem. Through referrals and alternative education provisions, children are provided with diverse opportunities for growth and development. The project's evaluation and feedback mechanisms ensure its ongoing improvement, ensuring that it remains a valuable and impactful programme for the children, schools, and community groups involved.

Court adaptation

A Youth Justice Coordinator played a vital role in supporting a child throughout their court proceedings. It became apparent during the court procedure that the child was struggling to comprehend the implications of the legal process and was finding it challenging to grasp the technical language used.

To address this issue and ensure the child's understanding and active participation, the Youth Justice Coordinator took proactive measures. Recognising the importance of providing visual support, the coordinator developed a range of visual prompts specifically tailored to the child's needs. These prompts were designed to help the child understand the court environment, comprehend the questions posed to them, and comprehend the procedural steps they needed to follow.

The implementation of these visual prompts proved to be highly effective. The child, who was now equipped with additional resources, was able to grasp the questions asked and understand the court procedures more clearly. This, in turn, empowered the child to actively engage with the court process and demonstrate their presence in a meaningful way. By ensuring the child's comprehension and participation, the Youth Justice Coordinator paved the way for a more equitable and just court experience for the child.

Furthermore, the positive outcome achieved in this case highlighted the potential for a brighter future for the child. By providing the necessary support and resources, the child's understanding and engagement were enhanced, allowing them to navigate the court proceedings more effectively. This positive experience not only helped the child in their current situation but also enables a potential future free from offending.

The success of this intervention exemplifies the importance of recognising and addressing the specific needs of children who have experienced trauma and possess additional learning requirements. It underscores the significance of employing innovative approaches, such as the development of visual prompts, to bridge the communication and comprehension gaps that may exist in court settings.

This case serves as a reminder that with the right support, resources, and tailored interventions, children can be empowered to understand and actively participate in court proceedings, ultimately

promoting their own presence in the justice system. It also highlights the potential for positive outcomes and the possibility of a future that is free from further offending for these young individuals

Substance use Worker

The innovative work of a BYJS worker has led to impactful interventions and engagements with various target groups. Here are the details of the specific initiatives undertaken:

School Sessions: On April 27, 2023, BYJS worker conducted three sessions on vaping, general substance use, cannabis, and alcohol at Porthcawl Comprehensive School. The sessions included interactive activities such as discussions, and the use of beer goggles to simulate the effects of alcohol. Approximately 30 pupils attended each session, totalling over 90 children who received substance awareness education. These sessions provided an opportunity for children to learn about the risks associated with substance use and engage in meaningful conversations.

Stalls: On April 26, 2023, BYJS worker participated in a wellbeing event at Pencoed College. A stall was set up featuring drug boxes and a "spin the wheel" activity with substance-related questions. Children had the chance to win merchandise by answering questions correctly. The stall proved to be engaging, encouraging students to ask questions and share their personal experiences with drug use and their observations within the community. Approximately 150 children interacted with the stall and gained valuable insights into substance use.

BYJS worker conducted two sessions at Evergreen Youth Club. On March 2, 2023, a beer goggles activity was conducted to illustrate the effects of alcohol, along with discussions on its short and long-term impacts, involving 37 children. On April 27, 2023, substance boxes were showcased, and discussions were held on the effects of various substances, drug classifications, and personal experiences. Thirty-five children actively participated in this session. These interactive sessions aimed to raise awareness about the consequences of substance use and facilitate informed decision-making among children.

Parent and Carer Coffee Morning: A parent and carer coffee morning was organised on March 19, 2023, to provide support for individuals whose children are using substances. This informal event allowed parents to drop in and engage in conversations about their concerns. BYJS worker plans to provide structured PACT (Parent and Carer Training) sessions when there is sufficient interest. The next session is scheduled for May 17, 2023. This initiative recognises the importance of involving parents and carers in addressing substance use issues and providing them with the necessary support.

On April 25, 2023, BYJS worker conducted a basic substance awareness session for professionals at Hermon Road Children's Home. Ten professionals attended the session, which covered various aspects such as defining drugs, their names, categories, effects, and appearances. The training also focused on understanding motivations for drug use, different types of drug use, the continuum of drug use, the cycle of change, and exploring reasons for not using drugs. This training aimed to enhance professionals' knowledge and skills in addressing substance-related issues among children under their care.

These examples highlight BYJS worker's proactive and multifaceted approach in engaging different target groups, including students, parents/carers, children at youth clubs, and professionals. The sessions and activities were designed to increase awareness, provide education, and foster dialogue about substance use and its consequences.

Exploitation mapping

In an effort to identify potential service links to exploitation among the children they work with, the BYJS undertook a mapping exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to visually connect the different children they were currently assisting and determine if there were any direct associations or patterns that could indicate potential exploitation.

To conduct the mapping exercise, all team members gathered for a meeting. They utilised a large roll of paper to create a comprehensive list of all the children who were open to the service at that time. Each team member then began to establish links between the various children based on the information they had gathered throughout their interventions and interactions with the young individuals.

The result of this mapping exercise was a significant child mapping diagram that visually illustrated the connections and relationships between the children. The team observed clear links and identified similar concerning behaviours among the children included in the mapping exercise. Some of these behaviours included having unexplained amounts of money, frequently going missing, and absconding from school.

Recognising the importance of this information and its potential implications, the service shared the findings with relevant agencies involved in supporting these children. The information was specifically passed on to the child exploitation team, which has the necessary expertise and resources to further investigate and address potential exploitation cases.

By identifying these connections and concerning behaviours, the mapping exercise provided valuable insights for understanding the potential risks faced by the children in question. It allowed the team to take proactive steps in collaborating with other agencies and initiating investigations to safeguard the well-being of these vulnerable individuals. This exercise demonstrates the dedication of BYJS in identifying and addressing issues related to child exploitation within their jurisdiction.

Effective early prevention

A referral was made to BYJS concerning two young siblings who had been engaging in ASB. This behaviour manifested in activities such as fire setting and trespassing on train tracks. It was evident that the children did not fully comprehend the seriousness of their actions and were easily influenced by their peers. Additionally, there were concerns about the adequacy of parenting in their home environment.

To address the needs of these children, a Bridgend Youth Justice case manager took the initiative to conduct a comprehensive assessment. This assessment aimed to gain a thorough understanding of the factors contributing to the ASB and to develop an appropriate intervention plan. Recognising the importance of a coordinated approach, the Case Manager collaborated with the Early Help Team to create a joint plan. Under this plan, the Case Manager would primarily work with the children, while the Early Help Team would provide support to the parents.

The implementation of the joint plan has yielded positive outcomes for the children. As part of the intervention, the children underwent a speech and language assessment, highlighting the commitment to addressing their communication needs. Moreover, the children have demonstrated positive engagement with the intervention, indicating their willingness to participate and make progress. As a result, there has been a noticeable improvement in their presenting behaviour, indicating a positive change in their conduct.

The collaborative effort between BYJS, the Early Help Team, and other relevant professionals has proven effective in addressing the ASB exhibited by these siblings. By conducting a thorough

assessment and developing a joint plan, the Case Manager and the Early Help Team were able to tailor their support to meet the specific needs of the children and their family. The inclusion of a speech and language assessment further highlights the holistic approach taken to address the underlying issues contributing to the ASB. Following on from the speech and language assessment, it was identified that the younger of the siblings' language skills were immature for his age. Language intervention was then provided to develop the child's understanding of key vocabulary surrounding ASB to ensure interventions from other practitioners could be fully understood by the child.

The successful intervention in this case serves as an example of the effectiveness of a collaborative and comprehensive approach in supporting young individuals involved in ASB, addressing their underlying needs, and promoting positive behavioural change.

Evaluation

BYJS is committed to continuous improvement and development of its service delivery. In order to achieve this, they have been utilising various sources of information and conducting their own evaluations.

One important source of knowledge for the service is the findings from Youth Justice inspections, Youth Justice Board evaluation reports and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Scrutiny Panel. These reports provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different approaches and initiatives within the Youth Justice system. By studying these findings, Bridgend Youth Justice Service could identify best practices and areas that require improvement, allowing them to shape their future practices accordingly.

Additionally, the service has been conducting its own in-house evaluations to assess various aspects of their operations. These evaluations include the My Voice, Education Training and Employment audit, which examines the support provided to children in terms of their education, training, and employment opportunities. They also evaluate reoffending and violent offending rates to understand the effectiveness of their interventions in reducing these behaviours. Feedback from children and families, as well as evaluations on health, substance use, and speech, language, and communication, are also taken into consideration. Moreover, staff feedback is collected to gain insights into the service's internal operations and identify areas for improvement.

To address disproportionality within the service, BYJS conducted its own audit in the past year. However, recognising the need for further examination, the Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel has planned an additional audit specifically focused on Out of Court Disposals. This forthcoming audit will be discussed in the scrutiny panel in June 2023, with the aim of identifying any disparities and developing strategies to address them effectively.

In the pursuit of developing the Youth Endowment Funding Project for children experiencing trauma, Bridgend Youth Justice Service has partnered with Kent University. A team from the university has been assigned to conduct a mixed-method two-level individually randomised control efficacy trial to evaluate the TRM within Bridgend Early Help Services, Youth Support Services, and Youth Justice Services. This randomised control trial ensures that the interventions delivered are decided randomly, reducing bias in the evaluation process. The mixed-method approach combines quantitative data and qualitative information to gain a comprehensive understanding of the key questions being addressed.

Through this evaluation, the service aims to assess the relative effect of TRM when compared to the business-as-usual (BAU) approach on their desired outcomes. The efficacy trial will explore whether TRM is worse, the same, or better than the current approach in achieving positive outcomes

for the children involved in the justice system. The findings of this trial will further inform the service's decision-making process and potential adjustments to their practices.

Service Improvement Plan and Service development

Bridgend County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2023-2028 reports that Bridgend County Borough has worked with residents, staff, trade unions, elected members and businesses to shape its ambitions over the next five years.

The Corporate plan has several objectives. Wellbeing Objective states that we have, “Reduced the number of children aged between 10 and 17 going into the criminal justice system from 167 per 100,000 in July 2018 to 121 in 2022.” The forthcoming objective is to, “Identify children who are more likely to offend and provide them with support to reduce offending behaviour.”

The plan invites its community members to, “Become a community volunteer to assist BYJS delivery.

The Education and Family Support Directorate has also produced a strategic plan 2023-2026 which aligns to the Corporate Plan and outlines the directorates plans for the next 3 years.

The Education and Family Support Directorate is Bridgend County Borough Council’s largest directorate with an annual revenue budget exceeding £175m and around 4000 staff.

The three-year strategic plan is an important part of the directorate’s delivery model as it enables clear alignment with national policy and locally determined priorities. It recognises a need for Outstanding support for children and children with ALN.

Excellent family support services delivered by the right people, at the right time, to those most in need.

Youth Justice strategic plan

Robust safeguarding procedures across all the directorate’s service areas improve the offer for children who are NEET Theme 12 has an aim to ensure effective youth development and youth justice services, it recognises that Bridgend has reduced the number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system and made significant improvements to BYJS (as reported by regulators). Additionally, there is a recognition that we have reduced reoffending rates.

The plan outlines that we will:

- identify those most likely to offend at the earliest stage possible including identification work with schools.
- work with partner agencies to implement a local serious violence duty.
- develop the Youth Bureau Diversion Model.
- provide a trauma response to best meet needs at an early stage.
- embed and meet reporting requirements for the new KPIs from April 2023; and
- reduce the number of children who are NEET.

The Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan 2021-24 aims to ensure that children are unnecessarily criminalised as a result of their vulnerabilities and the challenges they face. BYJS continues to strive to be a youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build

on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

BYJS aims to drive system improvements that treat children as children. The plan has an emphasis on a number of main priorities. These are:

- to promote a holistic approach to address challenges facing children in contact with the youth justice system.
- to maximise opportunities for children; and
- to promote sector led practice development and strengthen ways to disseminate what is known about working with children across the youth justice sector and beyond.

BYJS will strive to meet these priorities and “promote children’s individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims.”

Additionally, the current aim for BYJS is to be constructive and future-focused, build on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society. It will encourage children’s active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion through having its own participation plan.

It will also ensure the service provides meaningful collaboration with children and their carers with varied strategies for engagement.

It will promote and develop its prevention service, so children are removed from the justice system using effective pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention which minimises criminogenic stigma.

BYJS have completed an annual training need plan for 2023-2024 which has been completed with a whole team approach as well as looking at individual roles within the team.

BYJS has experienced one serious incident in the past year. Currently this case is ongoing through the court process and once an outcome is reached, BYJS will collaborate with children’s social care to ensure learning through its safeguarding strategic and operational boards. BYJS will provide a detailed account of the period of its involvement to the safeguarding board when requested.

The definition of evidence-based practice is ‘integration of the best available and accessible evidence with professional expertise, in the context of working with children in contact with the Youth Justice system.’ [Professor Stephen Case](#), an expert in criminology at Loughborough University, has published a summary report “Child First Justice” setting out the evidence-base for the ‘Child First’ principle – the foundation of a progressive approach to how children should be understood, treated and supported after experiencing problems that have led them to commit a crime.

BYJS will continue to:

Ensure the best interests of children, recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights, and potential. The service wants to ensure that its work is child-focused and developmentally informed. Strive to develop pro-social identity for positive child outcomes: promote children’s individual strengths and capacities as a means of developing their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims, work being strength and positive outcome focussed, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

Create collaboration opportunities with children that encourages children's active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. All work carried out by BJYS should have a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers

In terms of Bridgend's younger children (aged 10 to 14), BJYS will:

Promote diversion and aim for its children to not enter the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention as evidence says that children will not then have criminogenic stigma

It will develop its work for this age group on evidence-based practice and the latest research outlined in the report, 'Supporting its youngest children in the youth justice system. What works to reduce offending and improve outcomes.' This research indicates there is strong evidence that family system approaches (for example, family therapy and multi-systemic therapy) are effective at reducing disruptive behaviour, antisocial behaviours, conduct disorder and substance use for all ages of children and some evidence they are more effective in younger children.

Behavioural approaches (for example, behavioural contracts) have been shown to be effective for reducing persistent offending behaviour for all ages of children

Police-led diversion schemes, using cautions, restorative actions and referrals to other services to avoid arrest have been shown to reduce re-offending rates by about 20% relative to usual practice. However, we also know that contact with the criminal justice system generally increases re-offending rates. Therefore, care should be taken when using police-led approaches not to increase contact with offending communities or negative contacts with the police

While there is a strong evidence base to suggest restorative justice approaches are effective at both reducing repeat offending and improving victim satisfaction rates in older children, there is a lack of evidence about effectiveness when used with children under the age of 14 years. Restorative justice may be less appropriate at earlier developmental stages so there needs to be work completed to ensure restorative work at this level is adapted for use with younger children.

Build on our ECM system that recognises and responds to the impact of ACEs and trauma on child behaviour. This is likely to mean providing training for professionals across sectors (including the police). It may also mean introducing earlier assessments to identify children likely to need more intensive support

Take a youth-led approach to designing or selecting activities and interventions. Evidence from practice suggests this will increase uptake and avoid wasting resources on unpopular programmes

Develop a culture of cooperation and support between linked youth offending services. In case studies, participants reported this facilitated programme success regardless of the approach taken. Good relationships between services improved the experiences of organisations, professionals, families, and children.

Continue to offer speech and language assessments for all children aged 12 and below to screen for unidentified developmental needs that may impact engagement with the BYJS as well as wider partner agencies and education.

Use of the Good Lives Model

The Good Lives Model is an important strengths-based component which is embedded within the Asset plus assessment system. It proposes that we all need to achieve a balance in our lives and, in so doing, develop pro-social ways of accomplishing primary goods that revolve around:

- secure relationships.
- health and wellbeing.
- community inclusion and involvement.
- the importance of agency.
- spirituality.
- excellence in work and play.
- creativity.
- knowledge.
- pleasure; and
- inner peace.

Tony Ward - *The Good Lives Model of Offender Rehabilitation - Profiles*. (n.d.). suggests that when people offend, they are attempting to achieve these goals but in anti-social, or perhaps impulsive ways which sometimes lack effective coping strategies or problem-solving skills. This requires BYJS to support children to understand this model and encourage children to build on their skills and abilities and set achievable and realistic targets that help them achieve their aspirations in a legitimate and pro-social way.

BYJS has ran a series of workshops that empower staff to have the confidence to work with the Good Lives Model. To learn how it can incorporate trauma informed and strength-based, task centred work which draws on research which suggests that these approaches are effective in promoting desistance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are currently several challenges for the service. These include:

Implementing the trauma model effectively in cases is currently a challenge for our service. We recognise the importance of developing the team's trauma practice skills and building their confidence to ensure that the model is fully utilised. Additionally, we understand the significance of gaining support from multiple agency partnerships and promoting attendance at formulation meetings. These meetings are crucial for fostering consistent responses and interventions that aim to establish trust, nurture relationships, and provide individualised support to children, ultimately promoting stability in their lives.

Although we have made significant progress in incorporating trauma-informed practice and ECM, we still face the hurdle of obtaining buy-in from other agencies. It is vital for us to demonstrate to all agencies that children who have experienced trauma require special case management in order to recover and reach their full potential. By actively participating in trauma-informed meetings, agencies can enhance and support outcomes for these children. To address this challenge, BYJS is currently in the co-design phase of a new project backed by the Youth Endowment Fund. This initiative aims to implement trauma-informed practice across various partner agencies, raising awareness of ECM and its benefits. Furthermore, it will enable our partners to access formal trauma training specifically tailored to BYJS's approach, thus facilitating a unified and effective response to trauma. One of the main risks for this project is the evaluation may deem the model as less effective.

However prior evaluations (albeit small numbers) have concluded this model of practice to have shown positive effects on both children, families and staff.

A key challenge faced by BYJS, and the wider local authority is the need to respond consistently to children who present with exploitation issues. This challenge highlights the importance of BYJS's involvement in the planning process led by Cwm Taf Morgannwg, which aims to establish a contextualised safeguarding process. The goal of this process is to provide a timely and appropriate safeguarding response for children who are potentially at risk of exploitation. The ultimate objective is to ensure that every child, regardless of the nature of the exploitation they may be facing, has an accurate and individualised multi-agency safety plan in place.

To address this challenge effectively, it is crucial for BYJS to collaborate closely with other agencies and stakeholders involved in the safeguarding of children. This collaboration will facilitate a coordinated and comprehensive approach that considers the specific circumstances and needs of each child. By actively participating in the contextualised safeguarding process, BYJS can contribute its expertise and experience to the development of robust safety plans.

Furthermore, it is essential for BYJS to enhance its understanding of various forms of exploitation and stay up to date with the latest research, strategies, and interventions related to tackling exploitation. This knowledge will enable BYJS to provide informed and effective support to children who are victims of exploitation. Building partnerships with specialist organisations and professionals and having membership on the newly formed exploitation panel in Bridgend to further develop a regular communication channel with those who specialise in addressing exploitation, can also strengthen BYJS's response and ensure that the children receive the necessary support and interventions.

In addition to these measures, it is crucial for BYJS to advocate for increased awareness and training on exploitation-related issues within the wider local authority and among partner agencies. By promoting a shared understanding of exploitation and its impact on children, BYJS can foster a collective commitment to addressing these issues and develop a consistent response across all agencies involved.

Overall, by actively engaging in the contextualised safeguarding process, prioritising knowledge and expertise in tackling exploitation, being a panel representation for Youth Justice as part of Bridgend exploitation operational panel and promoting collaboration and awareness, BYJS can contribute to the development of a robust and effective multi-agency response to safeguarding children at risk of exploitation.

A significant issue that we are currently facing is the high rate of violent offending. This poses a challenge for BYJS as we strive to reduce these rates over the next year. To address this challenge effectively, BYJS has devised a comprehensive plan that involves analysing data and conducting quality assurance audits for individual cases. By closely examining patterns and responses, we aim to gain valuable insights that will inform our strategies for reducing violent offending. We are also part of the wider serious violence strategy for the region and are currently assisting in the production of the strategic plan with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional partnership.

The analysis of data plays a crucial role in understanding the underlying factors contributing to the high rates of violent offending. By examining demographic information, socio-economic factors, and contextual variables, we can identify potential risk factors that make certain individuals more susceptible to engaging in violent behaviour. This data-driven approach allows us to develop targeted interventions and prevention programmes that address the specific needs and circumstances of at-risk children. This data will be shared at a local level with partners and assist to formulate the action plan.

Conducting quality assurance audits for individual cases is another integral part of our strategy. These audits enable us to thoroughly review the handling of each case, ensuring that proper procedures and interventions are implemented. By examining the effectiveness of our responses, we can identify any gaps or areas for improvement. This information is then used to refine our practices, enhance our interventions, and tailor our services to better support children involved in violent offending.

BYJS recognises the importance of collaboration and partnership with external agencies, community organisations, and relevant stakeholders in addressing violent offending. By fostering these relationships, we can develop a coordinated approach that involves sharing best practices, resources, and expertise. Collaborative efforts can lead to the implementation of comprehensive and holistic interventions that address the root causes of violent behaviour, while also promoting positive youth development.

Additionally, it is crucial for BYJS to invest in prevention and early intervention strategies. By identifying individuals at risk of engaging in violent behaviour at an early stage, we can provide targeted support and intervention to address underlying issues and prevent escalation. Early identification and intervention contribute to breaking the cycle of violence and promoting positive life outcomes for children.

An additional challenge lies in the provision of health services within BYJS. Although this provision has improved, we face resource limitations in terms of health provision. This challenge has been raised at the management board level and has had the attention at the chief executive level, with efforts underway to extend and augment the existing resources available to us. It is imperative that we address this issue to ensure that the health needs of the children we work with are met adequately.

One specific area that continues to require attention is the provision of CAMHS. Our last inspection report highlighted CAMHS as a significant challenge. Whilst progress has been made in this area, there is still work to be done to meet the demand for CAMHS support. Recognising the importance of collaboration, CAMHS representation has been established on the Management Board. This development has facilitated valuable connections with professionals through the implementation of a SPOA provision. The SPOA provision acts as a direct link between BYJS Health Specialist, Case Managers, and CAMHS, streamlining the process of accessing necessary support for children. There is also a link CAMHS Operational Manager who assists to problem solve where there are blockages or barriers to intervention.

Furthermore, plans are underway to create a specialist CAMHS post that will be shared between Bridgend and Cwm Taf Youth Justice Services. This plan aims to increase the provision of CAMHS services specifically for the children with whom we work. By sharing resources and expertise across services, we can expand the support available to children, ensuring their mental health needs are addressed effectively.

In addition to addressing CAMHS provision, it is essential that we examine the broader health offer within BYJS. This includes assessing the availability of general healthcare services, substance abuse treatment, and other specialised health support. By conducting a comprehensive assessment of our current health provision, we can identify gaps, allocate resources appropriately, and collaborate with relevant health professionals and agencies to ensure that the holistic health needs of the young individuals are met.

It is crucial to advocate for increased funding and resources for health provision within BYJS. This can involve engaging local health authorities to emphasise the importance of investing in the health

and well-being of children involved in the justice system. By highlighting the positive impact of good health provision on rehabilitation, reintegration, and reducing reoffending rates, we can get support and resources to strengthen our health services offered to support the children we work with.

Over the past year, BYJS has experienced significant changes in terms of staffing. While the core team members have accumulated a wealth of experience and expertise over the years, the recent period has witnessed the recruitment of several new staff members. These additions bring fresh perspectives and skills to the team, contributing to its overall strength and effectiveness. However, there is a continued necessity to ensure the training and development of all staff to ensure they are upskilled to deliver effective and good quality Youth Justice services.

Starting from April 2022, BYJS has welcomed a range of new professionals into key positions. A new Service Manager has joined the team, bringing valuable leadership and strategic planning abilities. The appointment of two new operational managers has enhanced the team's capacity to effectively manage and coordinate operations on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, a new senior practitioner has been appointed, adding specialised knowledge and experience to support the team's frontline work. Moreover, recognising the importance of data analysis and quality assurance, a new Data Performance and Quality Assurance Officer has been brought on board to ensure that data-driven decision-making and evaluation practices are in place.

There have also been significant changes within the case management team. Two social workers are currently on maternity leave, which has needed adjustments in workload distribution and support mechanisms. In response to these changes, two new social workers have been recruited to maintain the necessary staffing levels and ensure the continuity of services. Furthermore, three new appointments have been made within the wider case management team, strengthening the team's capacity to provide comprehensive support and interventions for children involved in the justice system.

The new additions to BYJS present both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the intake of fresh talent and expertise allows for innovative practices and approaches to address the needs of children more effectively. The diversity of experiences and perspectives within the team can foster creativity and continuous improvement in service delivery.

On the other hand, intake of new staff members into the existing team structure requires careful planning and support. Comprehensive induction and training programmes to familiarise the new team members with the policies, and procedures is vital. Promoting a positive team culture and facilitating effective communication channels can foster a sense of belonging and collaboration among all team members. BYJS should also use the expertise and experience of the existing long term team members. Their long-standing knowledge and understanding of the children can serve as a valuable resource for the new staff, helping them navigate their roles more effectively and ensuring a smooth transition.

Under the revised measures requires BYJS to showcase how its interventions and programmes align with the new performance standards. This entails demonstrating the positive impact of their work on young individuals' well-being, rehabilitation, and successful reintegration into society. We are committed to continually evaluating and refining its practices to ensure they are evidence-based and effective. This may involve implementing innovative approaches, collaborating with partner organisations, and regularly reviewing outcomes to make data-driven improvements. By actively evidencing their practice, the Youth Service can showcase its value, secure continued support, and promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Furthermore, BYJS is keenly aware of the importance of providing appropriate support for children with ALN. As defined in the ALN legislation, identifying and addressing the educational needs of

young individuals with ALN is vital to ensure they receive the necessary support to thrive. BYJS is committed to working closely with educational institutions, relevant agencies, and families to ensure that adequate ALN provision is in place for those identified as requiring it. This may involve developing personalised education plans, facilitating access to specialised support services, and advocating for resources to meet the diverse needs of young individuals with ALN.

In conclusion, the implementation of new performance measures presents a substantial challenge for BYJS in the year ahead. Addressing this challenge requires revising data collation systems to accurately capture the required information and demonstrating how the service's practices align with the revised measures. Ensuring appropriate ALN provision for young individuals is also crucial to promote their educational development and well-being. By actively addressing these challenges, BYJS can enhance its effectiveness.

Forward look

There are several key areas that require attention and development in order to enhance the effectiveness of BYJS. The following sections outline the forward-looking conclusions for each area:

Bureau new model of practice

To ensure the continuous improvement of service delivery, the implementation of the Bureau new model of practice is essential. This new model should be designed to streamline processes, improve coordination among agencies, and enhance communication and information sharing

Prevention

The prevention aspect of BYJS needs to be further strengthened. This involves adopting proactive strategies and interventions to address risk factors and prevent children from engaging in offending behaviours.

Health services

Recognising the importance of addressing the health needs of children in the justice system, it is crucial to prioritise the provision of comprehensive health services. This includes physical, mental, and emotional well-being support. The forward look should outline the strategies and collaborations intended to improve the accessibility and quality of health services for the young individuals served.

ALN

To cater to the diverse needs of children with additional learning needs, specific measures should be implemented. This involves developing tailored interventions, providing adequate support within the justice system, and collaborating with relevant educational and support services.

TRM

The implementation and evaluation of the TRM within Bridgend Early Help Services, Youth Support Services, and BYJS should continue. The forward look should detail the next steps, including ongoing evaluation, staff training plans, and potential adjustments to the model based on evaluation outcomes.

Exploitation

Given the concerning links and behaviours identified through the mapping exercise, addressing exploitation remains a priority. The forward look should emphasise the collaboration with the Child Exploitation Team and other relevant agencies to investigate cases, provide support to affected children, and develop strategies to prevent exploitation in the future.

Emerging concerns and Children's Services

As emerging issues and concerns arise within the Children's Services Department; it is crucial to remain vigilant and adaptive. The forward look should address how these emerging concerns may impact BYJS and outline the planned actions to mitigate risks and effectively respond to evolving needs.

Signs of Safety and ne Plan

The forward look should incorporate the importance of the Signs of Safety approach and the development of One Plan for children involved in the justice system. This includes aligning practices with the Signs of Safety framework, promoting multi-agency collaboration, and ensuring comprehensive planning and coordination of support services.

To enhance the voice of the child and ensure their active involvement in the intervention process, BYJS has developed comprehensive plans. These plans aim to create a more personalised and empowering experience for the children involved. Here are some key initiatives that will be implemented:

Renaming interventions to suit children's preferences

As mentioned earlier, the service recognises the importance of using language that resonates with the children. By renaming interventions to align with their preferences, the service aims to foster a sense of ownership and engagement. The new names will reflect the children's interests, aspirations, and cultural identities, creating a more relatable and motivating experience.

Pen picture of service professionals

To establish a stronger connection between the children and the professionals working with them, the service will create pen pictures of service professionals. These pen pictures will provide a brief summary of the professionals' backgrounds, areas of expertise, and personal interests. This initiative allows the children to get to know their support team on a more personal level, fostering trust and a positive working relationship.

One-age profile of the child

The service will develop a one-page profile for each child involved in the intervention program. This profile will serve as a comprehensive snapshot of the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and aspirations. It will capture relevant information about their personal background, interests, and support requirements. The one-page profile will be a living document that can be regularly updated to reflect the child's progress and changing needs.

Following the Child Through Intervention Years

To ensure continuity and consistency, the one-page profile of the child will follow them throughout their intervention years. This means that the profile will be updated and shared with professionals involved in the child's journey, including new staff members who join the service. By maintaining a

consistent record of the child's preferences, needs, and progress, the service can deliver targeted and individualised support at every stage.

Regular review and updates


The one-page profile of the child will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect their evolving needs and aspirations. This process will involve collaboration with the child, their families, and professionals working closely with them. By actively involving the child in the review and update process, the service ensures that their voice and preferences are at the forefront of decision-making.

Through these initiatives, BYJS aims to empower the child, strengthen their sense of identity and agency, and provide a more personalised and effective intervention experience. By actively considering the child's preferences, aspirations, and individuality, the service creates an environment where their voice is heard, valued, and integrated into the decision-making process.

Additionally, it is imperative to include a plan for workforce development within the forward look. The training plans and initiatives designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and capacity of staff members needs to be reviewed on a regular basis. The focus should be on aligning the workforce with the evolving needs of the Youth Justice system and equipping staff with the necessary tools to provide effective and evidence-based interventions.

In summary, the forward look for BYJS encompasses various aspects, including the Bureau new model of practice, prevention efforts, health services, addressing additional learning needs, TRM implementation, combating exploitation, responding to emerging concerns, and workforce development through training plans. These areas of focus aim to improve service delivery, enhance outcomes for children, and ensure the continued development and effectiveness of the service.

Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of BYJS Board - name	Lindsay Harvey
Signature	
Date	29 June 2023

Appendix 1

Bridgend Youth Justice Management Board Membership

Representative	Title	Organisation
Lindsay Harvey	Chair	Education and Family Support, Bridgend County Borough Council
Lee Evans	Clinical Service Group Manager	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Lisa Davies	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Carolyn Hoskins	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Emma Richards	Head of Probation Delivery Unit	National Probation Service
Christopher Grey	Detective Chief Inspector	South Wales Police
Nicola Echanis	Head of Service Education and Family Support	Education and Family Support, Bridgend County Borough Council
Mark Lewis	Group Manager Family Support	Education and Family Support, Bridgend County Borough Council
Marisa Douglas	Group Manager	Children's Social Care, Bridgend County Borough Council
Martin Morgans	Head of Partnership Services	Community Safety Partnership, Bridgend County Borough Council
Sam Gunnarsson	Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager	Bridgend College
Nik Bunston	Service Manager	Barod
Michael Dix-Williams	Service Manager	Victim Support
Christa Bonham – Griffiths	Youth Justice Service Manager	BYJS
Anne-Marie Jackson	Deputy Head of Childs Unit	G4S Care and Rehabilitation Services, HMP and YOI Parc

Scheduled BYJS Management Board Meetings

Date	Meeting name
9 June 2023	Joint Management Board and staff team development session
12 September 2023	Management Board meeting
16 November 2023	Management Board meeting
18 January 2024	Management Board meeting

Appendix 2 – Service Structure Chart

