

# Youth Justice Health Needs Assessment

Annual Report of the DPH 2023

The London Borough of Hammersmith and  
Fulham

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CAPRICORN	Collaborative Approach to Preventing Offending and Re-Offending By Children
CRE	Conflict Resolution Education
FTE	First Time Entrant
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
IDACI IoD	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index Indices of Deprivation
LBHF LSOA	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Lower layer Super Output Areas
LoR	Likelihood of Reoffending
MST	Multisystemic Therapy
NEET	Not In Education, Employment or Training
PHE	Public Health England
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trials
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm
SCH	Secure Children's Home
SLCN	Speech, Language, Communication and Neuro-Disability
STC	Secure Training Centre
VIP	Violence Intervention Project
YHFF	Young Hammersmith and Fulham Foundation
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJP	Youth Justice Plan
YJS	Youth Justice Service
YOGRS	Youth Offender Group Reconviction Score
YOI	Young persons in contact with YJS Institution
YOT	Youth Offending Team

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In this needs assessment, we outline the risk factors that may lead to offending in children in H&F, the characteristics of children in contact with the youth justice system, as well as offence types. We have also collated qualitative views from children in the borough, as well as the reflections of professionals working in the youth justice system.

In terms of risk factors for youth offending, H&F has higher levels of levels of parental substance misuse, child abuse and neglect than the London average, as well as higher levels of domestic violence and family breakdown.

In terms of the school system, educational attainment, school absence and the number of children not in employment or training, these factors are all lower in H&F than the London average, although school readiness is lower than the London average.

### **Key characteristics of children in the care of the youth justice system in H&F**

- 159 young people were referred to the H&F YJS between April 2020 and March 2022, with 296 offences committed by young people in that time.
- In 2021, there were 18 first time entrants to the YJS in H&F, which equates to a lower rate compared with London and England.
- 35% of young persons in contact with YJSs reoffended in Hammersmith & Fulham, with an average of 6 previous offences per offender.
- 84% of young persons in contact with YJSs in Hammersmith & Fulham were male, with the most common age at referral to the YJS 17 years.
- Black and mixed ethnic groups are over-represented in YJS referrals, compared to the total population.
- Young persons in contact with YJSs are more likely to be not in education, employment or training, compared with the general population.
- In the borough, children in care account for 29% of young people who came into contact with the youth justice system, i.e. they are over-represented in our local youth justice system, similar to the rest of the country.

### **Health needs of children in the H&F YJS**

- 53% of young persons in contact with YJSs were deemed to be at a high/very high risk of adverse Safety and Wellbeing outcomes.
- 52% of children in contact with the YJS were known to child and adolescent mental health services (over half), compared with CAMHS services nationally being aimed at 2% of the general population
- 72% of young persons in contact with YJSs revealed some evidence of substance misuse, compared with 24% in the general population.
- 35% of young persons in contact with YJSs had recorded concerns regarding their speech, language communication and neuro-disability, compared with 10% in the general population
- 21% of young persons in contact with YJSs had an identified special educational need or disability-this is difficult to benchmark with the general population of children

### **Young people's views**

- Young residents felt least safe on estates, transport, parks and playgrounds
- Increased police presence and more community engagement would let young residents feel more safe
- Young persons in contact with YJSs reported that the YJS was successful in helping them transition back into education and daily life, and had a good range of activities, although some felt that the YJS did not fully understand the actual issues and situations that they faced
- Young persons in contact with YJSs generally believed that they had committed an offence due to negative influences

### **Views of professionals in the YJS**

- Stakeholders within the YJS felt that assessments (including performing joint assessments), multi-disciplinary teamwork, working in partnership with stakeholders including family members, and youth-informed programmes, are all areas within the Youth Justice system which work well

- Stakeholders suggested that adopting earlier identification practices and embedding these practices with schools would improve the Youth Justice system overall

## 1 BACKGROUND

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In the United Kingdom, young persons in contact with the **Youth Justice Service (YJS)** are defined as children or young people aged between **10 and 17 years old** who have **committed an offence**, and received either a youth caution, a youth conditional caution or been convicted at court.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) has a **lower** rate of children **entering the youth justice system** than the London and England average, with **2.6 per 1,000 children** in LBHF, compared to 3.5 per 1,000 in London, and 2.8 per 1,000 in England [1].

This Youth Justice Needs Assessment 2022 aims to describe young persons in contact with YJSs in H&F. The report addresses six objectives, to:

- Summarise the local policy context on youth justice;
- Explore risk and protective factors for youth offending locally;
- Describe the epidemiology of youth offending in the borough: characteristics of the children, and their health needs;
- Summarise current local service provision for children in contact with the youth justice system
- Summarise the views of children in contact with the youth justice system, and of the professionals working with them
- Summarise existing literature on 'what works' to prevent youth offending

This document can be considered together with the current H&F Youth Justice Plan [2], Youth Crime Prevention Strategy [3], and the recent HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection of the Hammersmith & Fulham YJS (services judged 'outstanding') [4].



## 2 POLICY CONTEXT

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### 2.2.1 Hammersmith & Fulham Youth Crime Prevention Strategy 2022-2027

The Hammersmith & Fulham Youth Crime Prevention Strategy identified that **fear of violent crime** and **gang activity** are key concerns among young people. The strategy aims to create a **unified approach** across education, health, the police, local authority, voluntary and community sector and residents. [3]

### 2.2.2 Hammersmith & Fulham Youth Justice Plan

The Hammersmith & Fulham Youth Justice Plan (YJP) is foundational to the Youth Crime Prevention Strategy [2]. The YJP set out four key priorities:

- **Intervening early** to reduce first time entrants
- Keeping young people **safe and secure** in the community, enabling them to thrive and reducing re-offending
- **Supporting young people** to remain within the community to minimise use of custody
- **Reducing Disproportionality**

### 3 LOCAL RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS - FOR CONTACT WITH THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

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#### Summary

- In terms of risk factors for youth offending, H&F has higher levels of levels of parental substance misuse, child abuse and neglect than the London average, as well as higher levels of domestic violence and family breakdown
- In terms of the school system, educational attainment, school absence and number of children not in employment or training are all lower in H&F than the London average, all good protective factors, although school readiness is lower than the London average
- However, levels of poverty are increasing, and crime is higher in the borough, than the London average

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Risk factors for youth offending are present on varying different levels, including:

- **Individual** Level (e.g., substance misuse)
- **Family** Level (e.g., abuse and family breakdown)
- **School and peer group** level (e.g., poor educational attainment and gang membership)
- **Community** level (e.g., deprivation and homelessness)

Protective factors exist across the individual, family, school and community level, and can reduce the likelihood of a young person coming into contact with the youth justice system.

**Table 1** shows the rate of individual, family, school and peer group, and community level risk and protective factors.

Table 1: The rate of Youth Offending risk and protective factors in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF), London and England. The recent trend over the past several years is also shown for LBHF.

Factor	LBHF	London	England	Trend
<b>Individual Risk and Protective Factors</b>				
Hospital admissions due to alcohol misuse (Under 18s)	9 per 100,000	14 per 100,000	29 per 100,000	
Hospital admissions due to substance misuse (15-24 years)	17 per 100,000	57 per 100,000	81 per 100,000	
School readiness: percentage of children achieving expected level of development at the end of Reception	75%	75%	73%	
<b>Family Risk and Protective Factors</b>				
Children who have experience abuse or neglect	214 per 10,000 children	166 per 10,000 children	181 per 10,000 children	
Residents in treatment at specialist drug misuse services	6 residents per 1,000	4 residents per 1,000	4 residents per 1,000	
Residents in treatment at specialist alcohol misuse services	3 residents per 1,000	2 residents per 1,000	2 residents per 1,000	
Depression Prevalence	7%	8%	12%	
Severe Mental Illness	1%	1%	1%	
Domestic Abuse	35 per 1,000 population		30 per 1,000 population	
Children who have experienced Acute Family Stress	50 per 10,000 children	36 per 10,000 children	27 per 10,000 children	
Teenage Parents	0.5% of all births	0.3% of all births	0.6% of all births	
<b>School and Peer Risk and Protective Factors</b>				
Educational Attainment: Average Attainment 8 Score	55	54	51	
Persistent Absentees	12% of pupils	14% of pupils	15% of pupils	
Not in Education, Employment or Training	1% of 16-17 year olds	4% of 16-17 year olds	6% of 16-17 year olds	
<b>Community Risk and Protective Factors</b>				
Children living in relative low-income families	14%	18%	19%	
Children living in absolute low-income families	11%	15%	16%	
Crime Rate	222 crimes per 1,000 population	181 crimes per 1,000 population		
Unemployment Rate	5%	6%	4%	

## 4 CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN IN CONTACT WITH YJS IN H&F

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### Summary

- 159 young people were referred to the H&F YJS between April 2020 and March 2022.
  - There were 296 offences committed by young people between April 2020 and March 2022.
  - In 2021, there were 18 first time entrants to the YJS in H&F, which represents a lower rate compared with London and England.
  - 35% of young persons in contact with YJSs reoffended in Hammersmith & Fulham, with an average of 6 previous offences per offender.
  - 84% of young persons in contact with YJSs in Hammersmith & Fulham were male, with the most common age at referral to the YJS 17 years.
  - Black and mixed ethnic groups are over-represented in YJS referrals, compared to the total population.
  - Young persons in contact with YJSs are more likely to be not in education, employment or training, compared with the general population.
  - Children in care account for 29% of young people who came into contact with the H&F youth justice system, i.e. they are over-represented in our local youth justice system, similar to the rest of the country.
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### 4.1 BACKGROUND TO YOUTH OFFENDING IN H&F

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has a population of 183,153 with 17% of the population being aged 18 and under [5].

In 2020, Hammersmith & Fulham had a **crime rate** of **100 per 1,000** residents which is **higher** than the **London** rate of **87 per 1,000** residents. This ranks the borough **8th highest for crime** out of all 32 in London. [6]

LBHF ranks **112<sup>th</sup> most deprived** out of 317 local authority districts in England. On a Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) level, 1,199 (**1%**) of LBHF residents live in the

**most deprived decile** of LSOAs and a further 30,214 (16%) live in the **second most deprived decile**, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. [7]

In terms of **Crime Deprivation**<sup>1</sup>, 11,505 (6%) LBHF residents live in the **most deprived decile** of LSOAs, and a further 32,334 (18%) live in the **second most deprived decile** [7].

In LBHF the rate of children (10 – 17 years) **entering the youth justice** system is **2.6 per 1,000** in 2020/21 [1]. This is a **decrease** from previous years, and also the first time that LBHF has dropped **below** the London and England average since 2013/14. In 2020/21, the rate of children entering the youth justice system was 3.5 per 1,000 in London, and 2.8 per 1,000 in England.

#### **4.2 NUMBER OF YOUNG PERSONS IN CONTACT WITH YJS IN H&F**

Over the past two financial years (April 2020 – March 2022), **159 young people** have been referred to Hammersmith & Fulham **Youth Justice Service (YJS) intervention programme** or **assessment for pre-sentence report** requested by the Courts. Caseload figures do not include young people attending Court where no intervention is required, such as adjournments with simple bail conditions or those young people sentenced to conditional discharges, fine or other Court disposals without YJS intervention. Out-of-Court Disposals with YJS intervention programme are included, but those without YJS intervention are not counted.

Between April 2020 and March 2022, the number of young people subject to the YJSs' intervention programme **decreased** by 59% from 68 to 28 young people per month (Figure 1). [8]

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<sup>1</sup> A measure which contributes to the index of multiple deprivation, comprising violent crime, burglary, theft and criminal damage  
[English Indices of Deprivation 2019 FAQs \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781122/English-Indices-of-Deprivation-2019-FAQs.pdf)

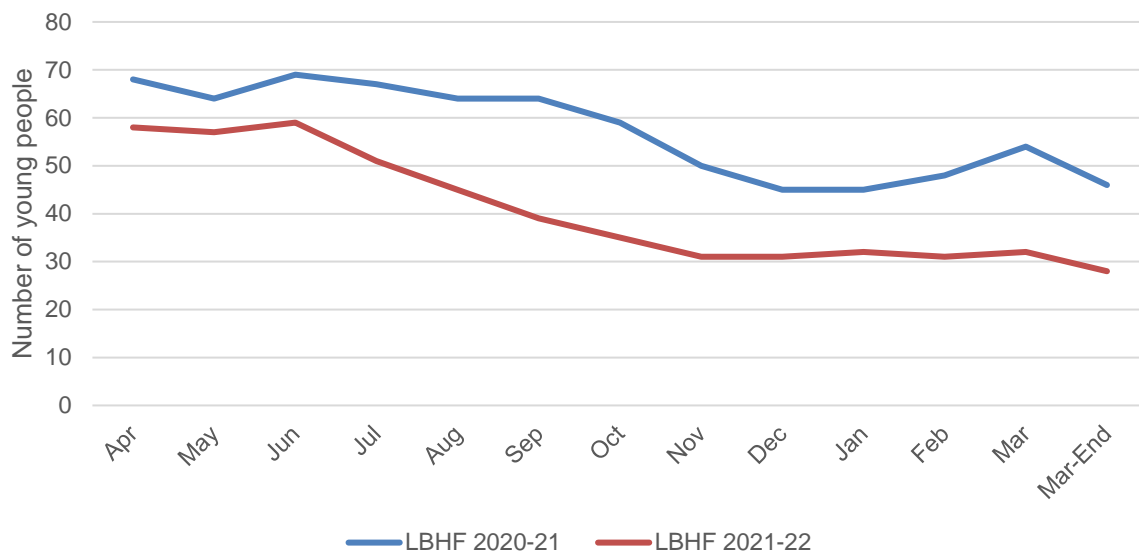


Figure 1: The number of young people who are subject to the Youth Justice Service intervention programme or assessment for pre-sentence report requested by the court, in LBHF between April 2020 and March 2022 [8].

As of 2020/21, **39 children** aged between 10 and 17 were **cautioned or sentenced** in LBHF. This equates to a rate of **3 children per 1,000 population**. This is **lower** than the London rate of 4 per 1,000 population, but similar to the national rate of 3 per 1,000 population. The number of children entering the youth justice system has **decreased** in LBHF from 150 in 2013/14 to 39 in 2020/21. [1]

In LBHF, in 2021 there were **18 first time entrants (FTEs)** in the youth justice system, which equates to a rate of **122 FTEs per 100,000 population**. This rate is **lower** than the London and national rate of 186 and 145 FTEs per 100,000 population respectively. [9]

Between July 2019 and June 2020, **35%** of young persons in contact with YJSs **reoffended** in LBHF, with an **average of 6 previous offences** per offender. The proportion of young persons in contact with YJSs who reoffend in LBHF is **lower** than that across London (38%), but **higher** than the national average (34%). The number of previous offences per offender in LBHF is **higher** than the London and national average number of previous offences per offender which is 3 for both London and England. [10]

### 4.3 AGE & GENDER

Over the past two financial years (April 2020 – March 2022), **84%** (134/159) of young people referred to the YJS in LBHF were **male**. Among both males and females, **the**

**most common age** of young people referred to the YJS were **aged 17**; 44% (11/25) of females and 39% (52/134) of males were aged 17. Age is measured upon receipt of first disposal in the period. [8]

#### 4.4 ETHNICITY

Between April 2020 and March 2022, the **largest proportion** of young persons in contact with YJSs were from **black ethnic backgrounds – 39%** (62/159). This is followed by young persons in contact with YJSs from **white ethnic backgrounds – 30%** (47/159) (Figure 2). Comparing with LBHF’s total 10–17-year-olds population, there is a significant **over-representation** of both the **black** and **mixed-race ethnic group** of young persons in contact with YJSs, while **white ethnic groups** are significantly **under-represented**. Asian and other ethnic groups are both slightly under-represented. These figures include triage cases and as such will differ from the headline YOT performance indicator charts on disproportionality which only count substantive disposals in the Youth Justice System. [8]

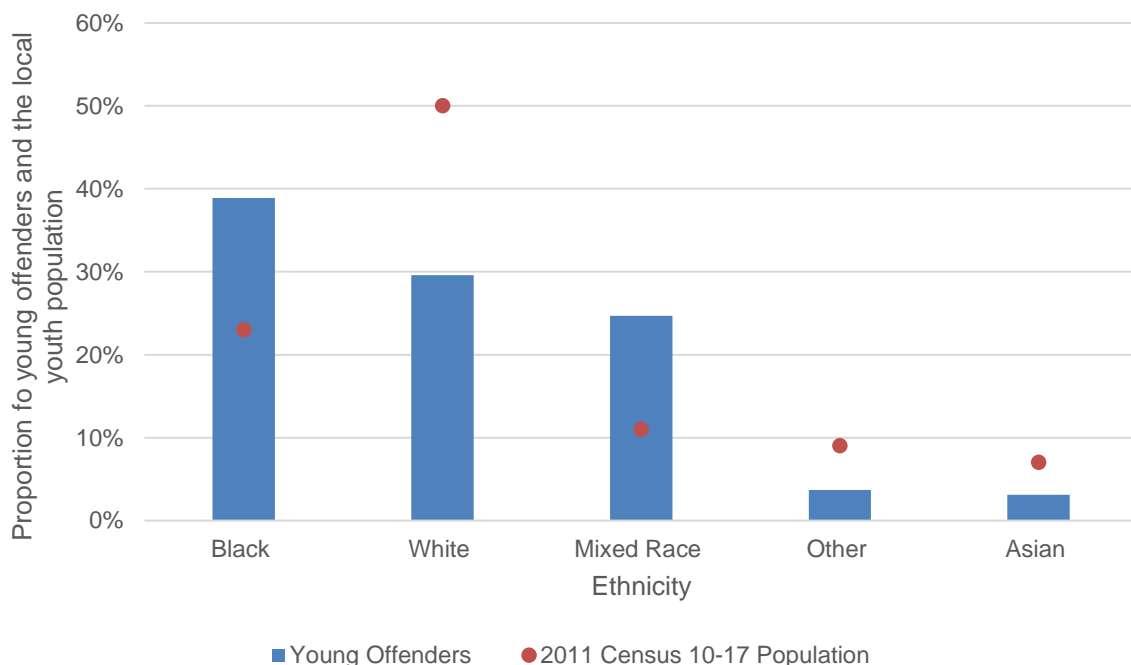


Figure 2: The proportion of young persons in contact with YJSs by Ethnicity, Hammersmith & Fulham April 2020 - March 2022. The proportion of young persons in contact with YJSs is compared the local population by ethnicity, as of the 2011 census demographics [8].

#### 4.5 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

There is a much **higher proportion** of children and young people who are **not in education, employment or training** (NEET) within the YOT (**30%**) [8] when compared with all 16-17 year olds in LBHF (1%) [11]. Young people who are NEET are disproportionately represented among young persons in contact with YJSs. These performance figures however do not reflect the numerous attempts made with young people to ensure that they have positive destinations after the expiry of the order.

#### 4.6 CHILDREN EXPERIENCING CARE<sup>2</sup>

Care experienced children are more likely to come into contact with the youth justice system compared with the general population; nationally, **7% of care experienced children** come into **contact with the youth justice system** compared to 3% of all children and young people [12].

In H&F, between April 2020 and March 2022, 46 care experienced children came into contact with the YOT; 27 during 2020/21 and 19 during 2021/22. In the borough, **Care Experienced Children** account for **29%** of young people who came into contact with the youth justice system, i.e. they are over-represented in our local youth justice system, similar to the rest of the country. [8]

Of the 46 care experienced children who were involved with the YOT between April 2020 and March 2022, **52%** (n=24) were **accommodated voluntarily under Section 20**. This

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<sup>2</sup> Full Care Order: The Local Authority shares legal responsibility for the child with the child's parents or persons with Parental responsibility. The Local Authority decides where the child shall live and with whom, and also has the final say on important decisions relating to the child. A Full Care Order lasts until the child is 18.

Interim Care Order: The Local Authority requests to court to make a temporary court order where the Local Authority takes the child into care on a temporary basis. This can be up to eight weeks at first.

Remand – Hospital Order: The child is deemed by two registered medical practitioners to be suffering from a mental disorder. A court imposes that the child is remanded in a hospital for medical treatment.

Remand – Local Authority Accommodation: A court imposes that the Local Authority is responsible for providing the most suitable accommodation for a child. This can be living with a relative, in foster care or in a children's home.

Remand – Youth Detention Accommodation: The court imposes that the child is remanded to youth detention accommodation. This can include a secure children's home, secure training unit or a young persons in contact with YJS's institution.

Section 20: A voluntary agreement where social workers invite a parent, or person with Parental Responsibility, to agree a child being taken out of their care and into another placement such as foster care for a short period of time.



is followed by **24%** (n=11) of young persons in contact with YJSs remanded to **Youth Detention Accommodation**. [8]

## 5 HEALTH & SOCIAL NEEDS OF YOUNG PERSONS IN CONTACT WITH THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

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### Summary

- 53% of young persons in contact with YJSs were deemed to be at a high/very high risk of adverse Safety and Wellbeing outcomes
  - 52% of children in contact with the YJS were known to child and adolescent mental health services (over half), compared with CAMHS services nationally being aimed at 2% of the general population
  - 72% of young persons in contact with YJSs revealed some evidence of substance misuse, compared with 24% in the general population.
  - 35% of young persons in contact with YJSs had recorded concerns regarding their speech, language communication and neuro-disability, compared with 10% in the general population
  - 21% of young persons in contact with YJSs had an identified special educational need or disability-this is difficult to benchmark with the general population of children
- 

### 5.1 HEALTH AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF YOUNG PERSONS IN CONTACT WITH YJSs IN LBHF

#### 5.1.1 Emotional Development and Mental Health

Young people are assessed with AssetPlus or the Systemic Assessment to determine their emotional development and mental health. In LBHF, between April 2020 and March 2022, 114 young persons in contact with YJSs were assessed. Of those assessed, **52%** (n=59) had some form of **contact with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**. Local CAMHS services are designed to meet the needs of 2% of children in the general population, so we can see the *over-representation of mental illness* in these children in contact with the youth justice system [13].

Furthermore, of the 114 young persons in contact with YJSs, **10%** (n=12) had a formally diagnosed **Mental Health Condition**. This may be an *underrepresentation* as nationally we estimate that **a third** of clients in the youth justice system have a mental health problem [14]-methods of calculating prevalence do vary, however [8].

### 5.1.2 Substance Misuse

In LBHF, between April 2020 and March 2022, 114 young persons in contact with YJSs were assessed with AssetPlus or the Systemic Assessment to determine the level of Substance Misuse. Of the assessed young persons in contact with YJSs, **72%** (n=82) revealed some evidence of **substance misuse** [8], this is interesting when contrasted with 24% of all pupils nationally in surveys [15].

Of the 82 young persons in contact with YJSs who revealed their substance misuse, 123 separate substance misuse types were recorded. Most of the young persons in contact with YJSs who revealed substance misuse, indicated that they used cannabis; **cannabis** account for **62%** (n=76) of substance misuse reports. The use of **tobacco** and **alcohol** accounted for **16%** (n=20) and **8%** (n=10) of substance misuse reports respectively. Other substances also included Inhalants & Volatile Substances, Over the Counter medications, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine, Opiates, Crack and Hallucinogens. [8]

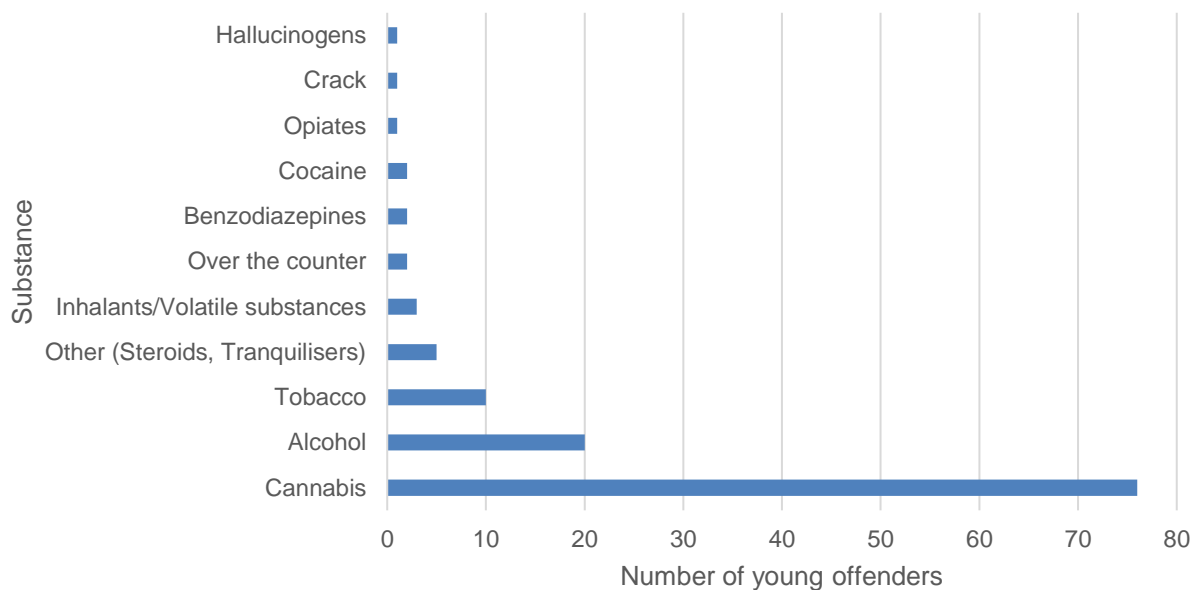


Figure 3: The number of young persons in contact with YJSs in Hammersmith & Fulham who revealed substance misuse, by substance, April 2020 to March 2022 [8].

### 5.1.3 Speech, Language, Communication and Neuro-Disability

Speech, Language, Communication and Neuro-Disability (SLCN) is assessed in Young persons in contact with YJSs using the AssetPlus screening tool. In LBHF, between April 2020 and March 2022, 114 young persons in contact with YJSs' SLCN status was assessed with AssetPlus. Of those assessed, **35%** (n=40) had recorded **concerns**

regarding their SLCN [8], compared with 10% in the general population [16]. However, it should be noted that with AssetPlus some of the questions alone do not necessarily point to a SLCN condition and such behaviour can be typical of young adolescents.

#### **5.1.4 Special Educational Needs**

In LBHF, between April 2020 and March 2022, 114 young persons in contact with YJSs' Special Educational Needs (SEND) were assessed through the question 'Have any Special Educational Needs or Disabilities been identified?'. Of those assessed, **21%** (n=24) had an identified **SEND**. [8] this is hard to contrast with the general population, in which 4 in 10 children are estimated to have a special need [17].

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES

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### Summary

- The Youth Justice Service supports young people who are subject to pre-court, community and custodial disposals.
  - The four main priorities of the Youth Justice Service are Reducing First Time Entrants, Reducing reoffending, Reducing disproportionality and Minimising the use of custody
- 

### 6.1 CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION - YJS

The YJS was established as a sovereign service in January 2018, prior to that the YJS was part of a tri borough arrangement. The Hammersmith and Fulham **Youth Justice Service (YJS) supports young people** who are subject to **pre-court, community and custodial disposals**. The YJS encompasses the concept of **restorative justice** focusing on **responsibility, reparation, and reintegration**. The YJS's investment in restorative justice work allows them to provide tailored support and reparations to victims of youth crime. The YJS works with other key services, such as **education providers, housing organisations, voluntary agencies** and other **non-statutory youth services**.

### 6.2 GANGS, VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION UNIT

In September 2020, LBHF council formed the Gangs, violence and exploitation unit (GVEU) to support vulnerable young people in LBHF. The GVEU is a non-statutory service made up of council professionals and LBHF Council-funded police officers. The GVEU aims to:

- **Identify** young people at risk of becoming involved in gang activity or exploitation
- Provide effective **early-intervention** strategies to vulnerable children, young people and their families
- Offer **long-term support** and guidance to young people that helps them **transition safely away from gang association**
- Identify, disrupt and enforce against specific gangs
- Provide **support** for **victims**

LBHF also works closely with several third sector organisations which provide resources to help young offenders and young residents. For brevity, they are not described here.

### 6.3 AMBULANCE CALLOUTS

In LBHF, between April 2020 and March 2022 there were **4,693 ambulance callouts** for residents aged 18 years and under. Of all the callouts, **2% (n=116)** were **violence- or sex-related**. **Knife injuries** accounted for **21% (n=24)** of violence and sex-related callouts. The highest number of violence-related ambulance callouts occurred in **College Park and Old Oak** with **21% (n=24)** of callouts. This is followed by Shepherd's Bush Green with 18% (n=21) of callouts, Hammersmith Broadway with 13% (n=15) of callouts, and Wormholt and White City with 10% (n=12) of callouts (Figure 4). [20]

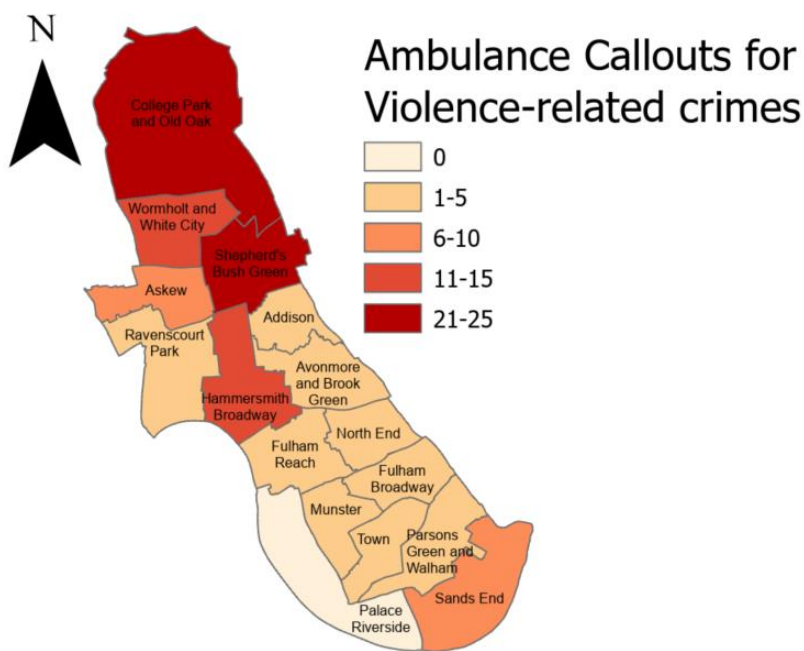


Figure 4: The number of ambulance callouts for violence and sex-related incidents among residents aged 18 years and under. Incidents occurred between April 2020 and March 2022. The number of incidents is shown by ward. [20]

## 7 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

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### Summary

- Young residents felt *least safe* on estates, transport, parks and playgrounds
- Reports of local crime, gatherings of large groups, gangs, excessive police presence and poor street lighting made young residents feel unsafe
- Increased police presence and more community engagement would let young residents feel more safe
- Young persons in contact with YJSs reported that the YJS was successful in helping them transition back into education and daily life, and had a good range of activities, although some felt that the YJS did not fully understand the actual issues and situations that they faced
- Young persons in contact with YJSs generally believed that they had committed an offence due to negative influence from peers
- 45% of young persons in contact with YJSs felt discriminated against on their way into the YJS, but did not feel discriminated against *within* the YJS
- Stakeholders within the YJS felt that assessments (including performing joint assessments), multi-disciplinary teamwork, working in partnership with stakeholders including family members, and youth-informed programmes, are all areas within the Youth Justice system which work well
- Stakeholders suggested that adopting earlier identification practices and embedding these practices with schools would improve the Youth Justice system overall

### 7.1 YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ABOUT CRIME

Research conducted by the Young Hammersmith and Fulham Foundation (YHFF) and Partnership for Young London [21], alongside feedback from young people captured through the Youth Takeover Day [22] and Make Your Mark Ballots [23], confirmed that **young people want to be able to feel safer** in the borough and **reduce the prevalence of crime** in the borough.

According to the survey conducted by YHFF and Partnership for Young London, young people in LBHF generally feel **least safe** on **estates**, on **transport**, in **parks** and in **playgrounds**. Young people feel **most safe** at **home**, at **school** and on **high streets** and **shopping centres**. Young **women** are almost **twice as likely** as young **men** to feel **unsafe** in **parks** and **playgrounds** (21% to 13%), and **three times as likely** to feel **unsafe** at **school** (9% to 3%). [21]

In the survey conducted by Youth Takeover Day young residents were asked about occurrences which made them feel unsafe. Answers included;

- **Reports of local crime:** reports of knife crime and murder make people feel especially unsafe in local areas [23].
- **Large Groups of People:** Specifically large groups of young people who engage in loud and intimidating behaviour.
- **Gangs and Gang Violence:** Gangs outside of schools make young people feel particularly unsafe.
- **Excessive Police Presence**
- **Insufficient Street Lighting:** Young residents feel unsafe in places with bad lighting, especially narrow streets and alleyways. Young people generally feel unsafe when going out at night. [22]

There were differing opinions among young residents as to what can be done to improve safety in the borough. Of the 264 young residents who answered the YHFF and Partnership for London survey, **35%** (n=92) suggested an **increased police presence** while **8%** (n=21) suggested **defunding the police**. [21]

The Youth Takeover Day identified what young residents thought that the Police could do to make young people feel safer. Answers included:

- **Increased Police Presence:** Young residents suggested that more police patrols could increase safety.
- **Improve Police Approachability:** through increased police involvement with the community and young people.
- **Increased Number of Stops and Searches:** It was stressed that this needs to be done in a justifiable and non-discriminatory way.



- **Improve Relationships between Police and Young Residents:** [22]

## 7.2 VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE YJS

LBHF Youth Justice Service (YJS) carried out a disproportionality survey between January and March 2022. This survey was aimed at **young residents who had contact with the YJS** and asked them about their experience of disproportionality both with the YJS and in other areas of their lives. In total, 11 young persons in contact with YJSs took part in the survey. [24]

When young people were asked about their experience with the YJS, including both positive experiences as well as areas that could be improved, several key themes emerged which are displayed in Figure 5 [24].

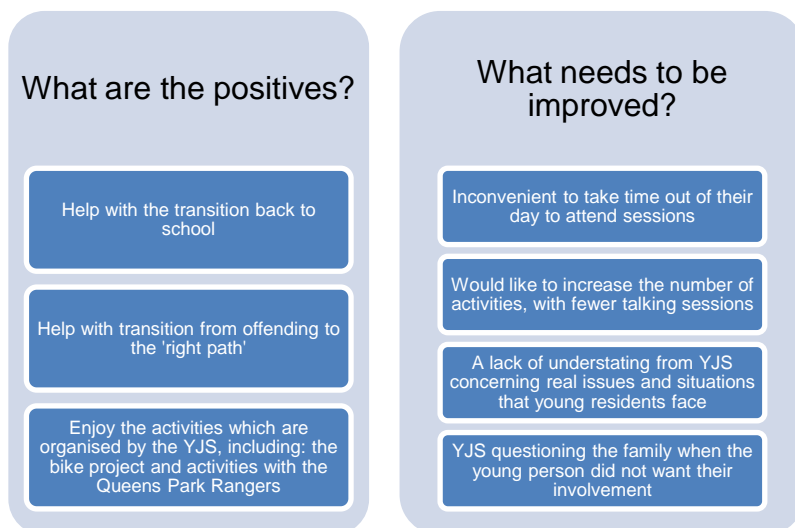


Figure 5: Responses from the Youth Justice Service Disproportionality Survey to the questions “What do you like about the youth justice service?” and “What needs improving?”. [24]

Young persons in contact with YJSs were also asked to reflect on why they believed that they got into trouble and came into contact with the YJS. The most common answer was that young residents believed that **negative influence from their peers** or “hanging with the wrong crowd” lead to them coming into contact with YJS. [24]

Discrimination within the justice system is a prevalent and important issue and young persons in contact with YJSs were asked as to whether they had faced discrimination within the YJS. While **45%** of respondents felt **discriminated against on their way into the YJS**, **no respondents felt discriminated against at the YJS**. When the respondents

were asked as to what made them feel discriminated against the two services which were identified as being discriminatory were **school** and the **police**. At school, the role of teachers in discrimination was highlighted, while respondents reported that the police had acted in a discriminatory way and made racist remarks. When asked why the respondent believed that they had been discriminated against, most respondents replied that they believed that their **ethnicity** (both white and black) played a role. [24]

### 7.3 PROFESSIONALS' VIEWS

LBHF council reached out to several local stakeholders to gain insight into the perspectives of organisations involved with supporting young persons in contact with YJSs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Autumn 2022 and identified aspects of practice that work well for youth justice and aspects which require improvement.

Six themes emerged from the interviews; four areas that work well, and two areas which could be strengthened.

#### 7.3.1 Aspects of Practice that Work Well for Youth Justice

The assessment of all new referrals to the youth justice team that was considered a particular strength. However, stakeholders acknowledged that this was an area where there was room for improvement, particularly within primary and secondary schools themselves. Embedded workers with the requisite skills to identify developmental difficulties and knowledge and awareness training for school staff were considered key in reducing referrals up stream. Multidisciplinary working practices and working in partnership with partner agencies were aspects of practice where stakeholder interviews revealed as beneficial. Lastly, youth-informed programmes, i.e. court orders with a positive requirement provide an account of initiatives and projects designed in collaboration with service users themselves that focus on positive rather than punitive results.

#### 7.3.2 Assessments

A cross-cutting theme identified through the analyses of stakeholder interviews and considered as a **fundamental aspect of service delivery** was the importance afforded to the **initial assessment** of all new referrals. This aspect was seen as an area that was done well but also where there was considerable room for improvement - particularly

within schools. For those assessed as having behavioural problems or diagnosed with a developmental disability, the assessment served the basis for service support provided by the youth justice team:

*‘So what’s worked well is that identification - that screening - that assessment - where they can - and that referral on - so that the child’s needs are beginning to get met, they have a profile - a communication profile so that the right support can be levered in.’*

Emphasis upon the timing of assessments was considered crucial in being able to achieve the best outcome possible for young people in the borough. Analyses revealed the need to push for **much earlier identification assessments** that serve either as a preventative measure to divert young people away from the service or as a means to provide the necessary information required to put in place the right services at the right time:

*‘...what needs to happen and what we’ve tried to push for is for that identification, that screening, to take place at a much earlier stage. So had the thinking being was that there’s more robust identification, assessment, support earlier so that the behaviour doesn’t escalate and they [youth] won’t find themselves in the youth justice system.’*

A particular strength of practice was evidenced by the way stakeholders’ assessments were incredibly youth focused. Conducting joint assessments so as not to overburden service users or ask them to repeat information were aspects that stakeholders considered to work well:

*‘...we’ll joint assess so that the children don’t have to have the same appointment over and over again. So I will do lots of joint appointments with a speech and language therapist...so to stop that kind of over-assessment we try to do things jointly where we can.’*

In the two corresponding excerpts below, the importance placed on early assessments and interventions - either to prevent criminal behaviour in the first place, or to break that cycle were recounted as best practice:

*‘Another good thing is that I’m in schools and in the community so a lot of the time I might know kids already or might be able to kind of share information.’*

The GVEU reported that working in partnership with other agencies to **identify individuals at a much earlier stage**, using data to intervene and break the cycle of criminal behaviour was an approach that stakeholders believed would pay dividends:

*'In terms of early intervention, we are just finalising our vulnerability tracker- so if young people-if they're beginning to come to the attention of the police-so with the criminal justice system- not the youth justice system yet-and they haven't entered into it- we're horizon scanning across a number of factors like domestic abuse in the home- coming to police attention- substance misuse- and by scoring those we think we can begin to identify who's going to be coming- next on our horizon- you know trying to prevent that entrance.'*

- GVEU

### **7.3.3 Multi-disciplinary Teamworking**

There was a consensus view that staff from different professional backgrounds working together as part a multi-disciplinary team gave substantial strength to what the service provided to those referred in. The unique perspective that team members brought with them was considered complimentary in nature to the services that had been commissioned by the local authority. As the following interviewee explains:

*'...what works really well is that we've had speech and language provision for the last 4 or 5 years- one day per week. In the last 3 years we've directly commissioned educational psychologist provision. We've commissioned CAMHS and we had a youth justice and diversion liaison worker whose background was that of an occupational therapist- so they formed a team and what's worked well.'*

*'The fact that we've got such a good multi-disciplinary team is a real strength so you'll know what we've got in the youth justice service: we have the CAMHS nurse, we've got speech and language and you've got me [Gangs, Violence, Exploitation Team] so that works because it means we can be really responsive to whatever walks through the door.'*

- GVEU

From a practical point of view, the different members of the team - each with access to separate electronic record systems were able to share knowledge and information about service users they were working with. This enabled effective working practices and allowed team members to share crucial and current information about particular cases:

*‘...other things that work because we’re multidisciplinary - we’ve all got access to the different databases - so like our CAMHS nurse will pop on RIO - I can like check the SEN stuff to see if they’ve got any EHCPs- that helps as well ‘cos we have access to different systems we can usually find out things really quickly.’*

#### **7.3.4 Working in Partnership with Other Key Stakeholders**

In addition to multi-disciplinary teamworking as an aspect that worked well for the youth justice service, interview analyses revealed the benefits brought about by **working in partnership** with other agencies and key stakeholders - including family members:

*‘I think what is working really well is with knife crime prevention orders and criminal behaviour orders - but although there’s a statutory obligation, we are coming together really well on those orders and can have a genuine conversation- “No” “What are you thinking?” “That’s great” “Or can you help me with this?”. That is something that has worked really well with youth justice and the police and ourselves where we’re involved - everyone piles together- and I don’t think that should be dismissed’. - GVEU*

Underpinning what worked well was the reference to the **importance of relationships** between the different organisations and individuals that have been built up over time. They were relationships that were understanding of, and respectful about organisational constraints and working practices. One example includes the transition from youth justice to probation services outlined in the second interview excerpt:

*‘...so you see a lot of joint visits- you see a lot of input of various ideas - ideas of where different agencies can help...this isn’t on just youth justice - this is on like a partnership level.’ - GVEU*

*‘...we don’t just do a 12 week jaunt you know- and that has shown to work- because then as with anything you’ve got this relationship over time - it builds and builds and builds- you know the family- you know the way each other thinks- so I think that’s why it is great to bring in other services because through no fault of youth justice, that relationship will end when that order ends - and it can be quite sad sometimes.’ - GVEU*

*‘...I think agencies working together shows strength.’ - GVEU*

### 7.3.5 Youth-Informed Programs Court Orders with a Positive Requirement

Stakeholders described the provision of a range of initiatives aimed at young persons in contact with YJSs to prevent future criminal behaviour. One of those initiatives was designed with the purpose of keeping young people who had either already committed a crime or were deemed to be at risk of committing a crime, off the streets and safe from harm. Described by one stakeholder interviewed as a ‘sophisticated form of youth club’ the following excerpts describe their intended objectives and anecdotal evidence that calls for a continuation of such initiatives:

*‘...that’s [youth club] by invitation only so we keep them safe- so if we keep them off the street 9-12 on a Friday night and then 10-6 all day Saturday- that’s a large proportion of the time they’re off the street.’ - GVEU*

*‘...we’re [youth justice team] mentoring - safe places to speak, food, transport there, transport back, door entry system. The first group did so well, and it’s rare that you hear this. This is not part of an order this one- this is all voluntary that they go. They said we want to keep learning - so we paid for a phase II for another ten weeks.’ - GVEU*

Stakeholders also described the **value of community-based orders** used by the courts when dealing with young persons in contact with YJSs who plead guilty that contain a ‘positive requirement’. Rather than pursuing a narrow focus on preventing risk-based negative outcomes, court orders containing a positive requirement designed to promote constructive behaviours, outcomes, services, and opportunities were considered far more beneficial in comparison to those that were punitive. Aligned to the principles of co-creation, youth offenders given these orders by the court were expected to play a pivotal role from beginning to end in terms what they involved and how they were shaped and delivered:

*‘I think bringing positive requirements into orders works as well - we’re just really beginning to see that. It’s been happening for some time but I’m really seeing it now.’ - GVEU*

Borough-based initiatives containing a positive requirement issued to youth offenders were seen to provide additional benefits such as a learning opportunity and helping youth offenders to develop interpersonal relationships with community workers:



*'...he's [youth offender] attending that every Sunday for half a day. We really recognise it in my team; not only are they learning something, not only are they becoming passionate - they've also developed relationships with the people running the project at Rebel Records which is great - but also it's keeping them off the street.'* - GVEU

### **7.3.6 Aspects of Practice that could be strengthened for Youth Justice**

Aspects of practice which were identified by stakeholders to need improvement, fell into two overarching themes: adopting earlier identification practices and embedding those practices within schools.

### **7.3.7 In Situ Assessments: Earlier, Embedded and Education Based**

Rather than focusing on the way in which youth justice services could be improved *per se*, stakeholder interviews revealed some considered and aspirational thinking about how current provision might be better adapted to deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour and reduce the number of referrals made to the youth justice team in the first instance, with reference to mainstream schools in particular. A theme to emerge in these accounts was the call for a fundamental shift in praxis: service provision that was less reactive and more proactive in its approach to assessment.

Interviews revealed doubts regarding delayed or missed assessment opportunities, and the impact of this on the child further down the line. Healthcare workers such as nurses embedded within schools would be capable of making early assessments. They could be supported by school staff members equipped who have an appropriate level of knowledge and awareness of developmental difficulties. This could avert referrals to the youth justice team. Whilst cognisant of the pressures that schools face, the following interviewee advocates for the importance of early intervention:

*'I think it's just that thing around earlier - much earlier for identification and ideally the schools are where children should be a captive audience for 5 hours a day. I know schools are under incredible pressure, but it's about thinking, and making full use of school nurses and equipping staff to be able to have those thoughts about what's this child's behaviour is telling me. It doesn't necessarily mean they're naughty- and really that increased awareness that they've taken on board and there's been some rolling out of autism awareness training for wider children's staff, because it's that thinking of what*

*is this child's behaviour telling me - just because they've got arrested and they may be being physically violent- what is that behaviour telling you? What is that about? What's going on in the home? And it's that a lot of times our children are coming from households where there's some kind of domestic abuse - that's quite common amongst our children. So, developing that professional understanding of what can be the impact on a child from growing up in a household where there's been domestic abuse - and significant domestic abuse - because some of our most violent children have come from that background.'*

Analyses also revealed numerous accounts where stakeholders had called into question whether **identification of need carried out at an earlier stage** might have been enough to prevent a referral to youth justice services in the first place:

*'...what needs to happen - and what we've tried to push for is for that identification - that screening to take place at a much earlier stage. So had the thinking been that there's more robust identification, assessment, support earlier then the behaviour doesn't escalate and they [youth] won't find themselves in the youth justice system in the first place.'*

Whilst the above account is hypothetical in nature, other stakeholders described cases whilst working in the youth justice services where perceived failings in the system had resulted in unsatisfactory outcomes. These included accounts focused on failures to assess and diagnose developmental difficulties, exclusions from mainstream school and a referral to youth justice services for committing common assault:

*'...these young people, they come to us when it feels like they've been failed from probably the primary school - by the time they reach ... us [youth justice team] - they are actually getting more support. But I think if their needs were met before they come to the criminal justice system, probably they would not even have come to us. We notice that there are a lot of ... young people who have kind of communication/developmental disorders, they even probably have ADHD, autism - and so they are not even assessed. They just kind of go through the whole system, and when they come to secondary school ... those needs are not identified.'*

The **need to determine developmental difficulties** as a root cause for anti-social behaviour earlier highlighted stakeholder accounts of poorer outcomes and a real sense



of frustration that opportunities were missed, and family members whose views were not taken account of:

*'...they [youth with developmental difficulties] need to be identified early because - actually we have a few young people - because I work with the educational psychologist and the speech and language therapists - so we are identifying these young people who are coming with these needs fortunately – yes, which is a good thing they are being assessed by us and we apply for the EHCP. But it would be kind of too late because they are already excluded from school.'*

*'there's a young person who came to me [youth justice team] recently - she's 13 - she offended. It was common assault - it was verbal abuse to a member of the public. But then I established that she does have some, she must have some problems, so she's actually in the process of being assessed. But she's already 18 and then she's already stopped going to school, but she feels she can't be understood- she's not supported. And Mum is like "I know my daughter- there's something. I know she's not very okay. I can see something is wrong, but I've tried for her to be assessed and that doesn't happen." Only when she came to us [youth justice team] - that's when we are able now to do this assessment, which is kind of frustrating on our part- on my part.'*

### **7.3.8 Improved Knowledge and Awareness of Developmental Difficulties for Schools**

Mainstream schools, and particularly the staff working in them, were considered by far the best places to observe episodes of anti-social behaviours as potential early indicators for developmental difficulties. Spotting these incidents and equipping the staff with the requisite knowledge and skills to refer pupils for further investigation at an earlier stage was fundamental:

*'...a lot of schools will have a SENCO or will buy in some sort of educational psychologist provision. But if that child's behaviour is seen as anti-social and they're removed from mainstream school then they may not access that provision - or you know, parents. It's a call to have much more of that understanding within schools so that they themselves can pick up and put that intervention in place, where the parents may not be - because the*

*parents who do get the support, their children are less likely to end up with us [youth justice]'*

Considered as an area where there was still room for improvement, there was a perceived need for **greater provision of trained staff embedded within schools** to identify individuals exhibiting anti-social behaviours, put plans and place and circumvent serious events such as exclusions:

*'I think it's very important that more work is done in high schools to prevent that- especially the exclusions. Young people are being excluded so much and sometimes when they are excluded sometimes they don't even understand why. They do have speech and language therapists in those places - in those schools, but I don't think they do have mental health workers. I think they do need mental health workers who come in - maybe even two or three times a week. At least there is a mental health nurse at least three times a week in the school to do that work - I'm sure that will help.'*

## 8 LITERATURE REVIEW OF WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

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### Summary

- The most effective and well evidenced approaches to tackling youth violence have a 'therapeutic' principle
- Interventions can be classified in terms of the individual, family, and community level
- At an individual level, interventions such as skills development for children and young people have been found to help prevent problem behaviours, aggression, anti-social behaviour, and violence
- At the family level, interventions such as parent training and family therapy have shown to be effective.
- Community based interventions can include mentoring and sports-based programmes. These interventions appear promising but have a more limited evidence base.

More detail can be found in **Appendix 1**

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## APPENDIX 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

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This literature review explores what works to prevent youth violence. **We have classified the interventions in terms of the individual, family, and community level.** Overall, the most effective and well evidenced approaches tend to have a **'therapeutic'** principle, which aims to create a positive change in the lives of young people and/or their families which **predominantly include interventions at an individual and family level.** Other methods of youth violence prevention which appear promising but have a more limited evidence base include community level interventions such as mentoring and sports-based programmes.

### Individual level interventions

Individual level interventions such as **skills development** for children and young people have been found to help prevent problem behaviours, aggression, anti-social behaviour, and violence. This is through **developing young people's problem solving, self-control, anger management, conflict resolution, social and emotional and other life skills.** Piquero et al (2010) conducted a systematic review of 34 randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of self-control interventions for children under the age of 10 years. The review showed that these interventions were overall effective in improving children's self-control, with small to medium statistically significant effects across teacher, direct-observer, clinical, and self-reports. The self-control interventions identified included social skills development programmes, cognitive coping strategies, and videotape training/role playing. [25]

Furthermore, Garrard and Lipsey (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of school-based conflict resolution education (CRE) in the USA using evidence from 36 studies. Studies comparing students who received a CRE programme to a control group was included. Overall, the meta-analysis found statistically significant, small improvements in young people's anti-social behaviour, with larger effects for older adolescents aged 14 to 17, followed by young adolescents aged 10 to 13, and children aged 5 to 9. [26]

## Family level interventions

Well evidenced family-level interventions include home visiting, parent training and family therapy.

### Home visiting and Parent Training

Home visiting programmes and parent training programmes are widely recognised approaches which aim to tackle causal factors at both an individual level and parent/family level. **Overall, there is good evidence of interventions that develop parenting skills, support families and strengthen relationships between children and their parents/carers can have an immediate impact on child behaviour and parenting practices.** However, research on long-term outcomes such as future anti-social behaviours, crime and delinquency is more limited.

Farrington and Welsh (2003) conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of family-based crime prevention approaches in several settings: home visiting programs, daycare/preschool programs, parent training programs, school-based programs, home/community programs with older adolescents, and multi-systemic therapy programs. Of the 40 eligible studies evaluated majority were RCTs. The evidence suggested that these approaches are effective in reducing children and young people's delinquency and anti-social behaviour. In longer-term follow ups the overall effect on anti-social behaviour was significant but to a lesser degree, whilst the effects on delinquency continued and increased. **The review also indicated that the most effective interventions utilised behavioural parent training, while the least effective were based in schools.** Finally, home-visiting, day care/preschool, home/community, and multi-systemic therapy programs were generally effective. [27]

A Cochrane review by Woolfenden et al (2002) on the effectiveness of parenting interventions with delinquent and conduct-disordered children and adolescents aged 10-17 summarised eight randomised experiments. The review concluded that parenting interventions led to a decreased rate of re-arrest. Eight trials met the inclusion criteria, a total of 749 children and their families were randomised to receive a family and parenting intervention or to be in a control group. At follow up, family parenting interventions

significantly reduced the time spent by juvenile delinquents at institutions. A significant reduction was also found in the risk of a juvenile delinquent being re-arrested. [28]

### Family therapy

**Family therapy is an internationally recognised method used in youth crime and violence prevention**, particularly in relation to at-risk adolescents and adolescents already involved in offending. Family therapy recognises that the attitudes and behaviours of young people are often a product of the wider “systems” within which they operate, such as their family or peer group. **Generally, these types of programmes aim to address family problems, increase positive communication and interaction, and in turn reduce delinquency and offending in young people.** [29]

**One of the most widely implemented family focused prevention programmes is Multisystemic Therapy (MST).** MST is an intensive family intervention targeting high risk 11–17-year-olds and their families. It aims to prevent out of home placements and re-offending. Cognitive behavioural therapy and parenting skills training are used to strengthen family cohesion, increase young people’s engagement with education, and tackle underlying health problems in the family. A RCT of an MST compared to usual services delivered to young offenders in London found larger improvements in non-violent offending and anti-social behaviour in the MST group. [30]

### Community level interventions

#### Mentoring Programmes

In 2008, an estimated 3,500 mentoring schemes were running in the UK [31]. Today, mentoring programmes are increasingly viewed as a way of potentially steering young people away from involvement in gangs and youth violence and helping them to realise their potential. [32]

**Whilst initial evidence suggests mentoring can have beneficial effects, programmes can vary substantially.** Overall, evidence about “what works” is limited and predominantly USA based [29]. Lipsey’s (2009) meta-analysis of studies with control groups found that mentoring interventions for young offenders were associated with a 21% reduction in reoffending [33]. In an evidence assessment of the effects of mentoring

for individuals at risk of offending or apprehended by the police, mentoring was associated with a 4-11% reduction in subsequent offending [34].

**Some evaluations have found insignificant or harmful effects.** For example, Wood and Mayo-Wilson (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of six randomised or quasi-experimental controlled studies to assess the effectiveness of school-based mentoring for adolescents [35]. Overall, the magnitude of effects across all outcomes was clinically unimportant. Additionally, a reanalysis of data from a large randomised controlled trial of a community-based mentoring programme in the USA found that short-lived mentoring relationships, ending in less than three months, may have detrimental effects on the self-worth and perceived academic competence of particularly at-risk youth [36].

#### Sports based programmes

Sports-based programmes are another commonly used approach to youth violence prevention in the community. It provides the opportunity to be involved in a supervised prosocial activity and aims to enable young people to learn new skills, build self-esteem and develop discipline, respect for others, teamwork and trust with other youths, schools, and communities.

**Whilst there is evidence showing positive effectiveness of sports-based programmes these are often based on studies that have a weak evaluation design.**

For example, the Project Oracle synthesis study (2013) included 18 studies, that assessed 11 sports-based programmes aiming to prevent youth violence. All of the evaluations reported some positive impact, however less than half also reported negative impacts. The studies which reported negative impacts on youth violence were based in housing estates. These studies found that a lack of adequate space for some activities, and territorial tensions between local gangs could spill over into violence during activities. [37]