

SUFFOLK YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

2026-2027

EVERY child SUFFOLK

Suffolk County Council

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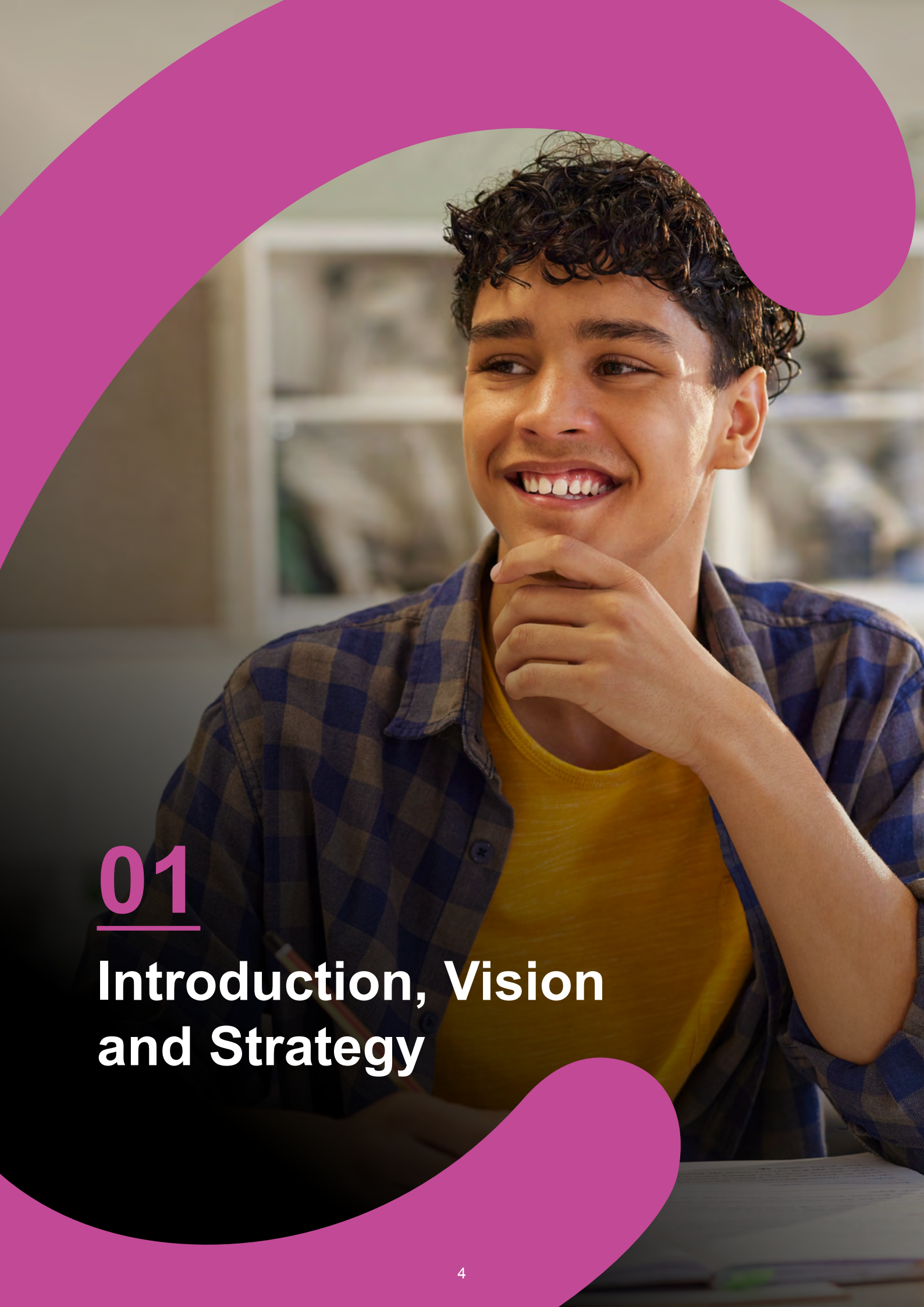
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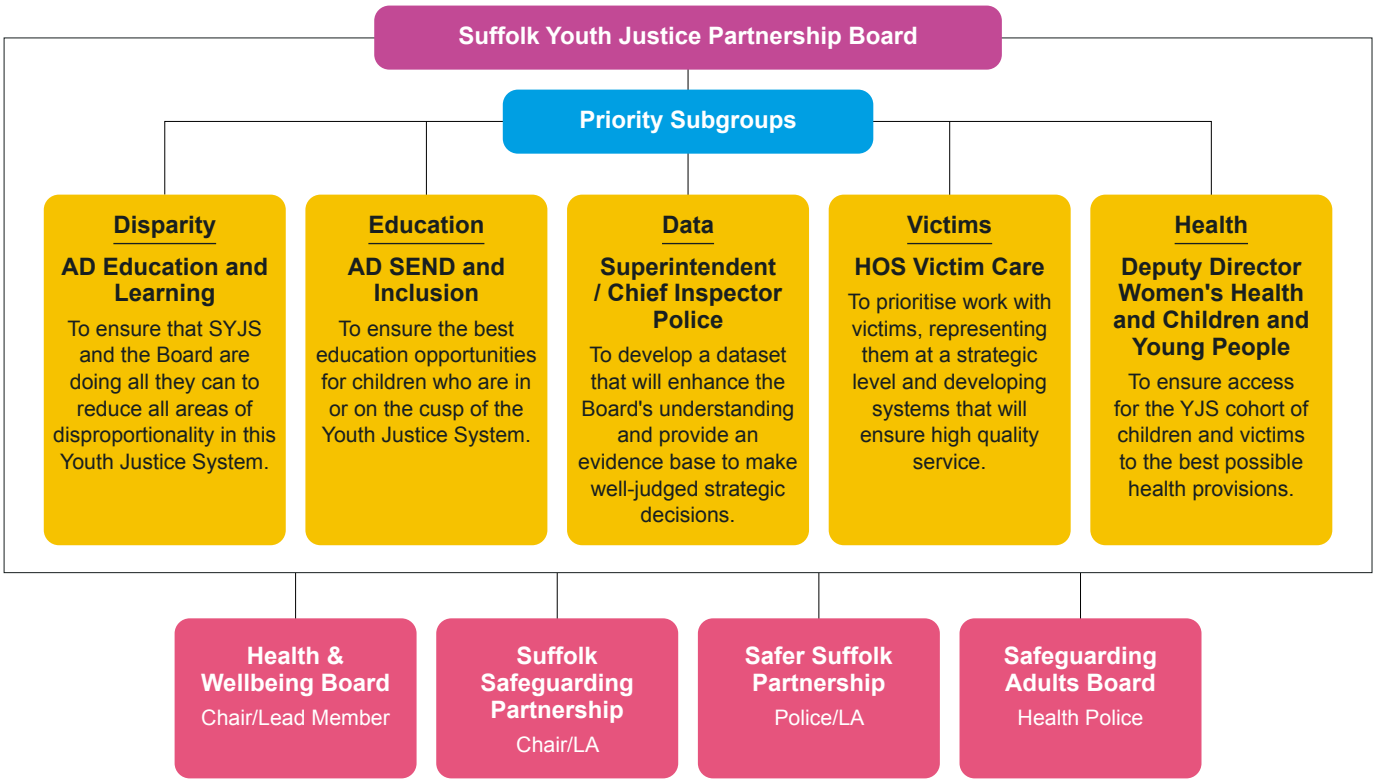
01

Introduction, Vision and Strategy

This is my first opportunity to contribute to the Suffolk Youth Justice Annual Report, having taken up the role of Independent Chair of the Suffolk Youth Justice Board midway through the reporting period. I have been truly pleased to step into this role and to have the chance to play a part in improving children's lives. Since joining, I have been struck by the dedication of the staff, volunteers and partners who work tirelessly to support children at different stages of their involvement in the criminal justice system. In a short time, I have already seen the care, professionalism and commitment they bring to this work every day. It is important that the Board matches that dedication by offering clear direction and strong support. I am confident that, together, we have the people, values and determination needed to keep building an excellent Youth Justice Service.

This report sets out our performance in detail, and I know it reflects the strong foundations on which Suffolk's Youth Justice Service is built. It shows that we are performing to a consistently good standard in most areas. We know our children, we understand our strengths and, just as importantly, we are honest about where we can strengthen further. That openness matters. The Board is determined to lead in the areas that matter most by setting clear direction and creating opportunities for best practice. To support this, we have strategic leads in several important areas. Our priorities for 2026/2027 are:

Suffolk Youth Justice Partnership Board Structure Chart



I have already spoken about how fortunate we are to have such committed staff working with our children, but I also want to recognise the strength of leadership behind them. Senior leaders, particularly in the local authority and police, are deeply committed to this work and to the children we serve. Suffolk Youth Justice Service is led by an exceptional Head of Service, supported by a strong management team. I want to acknowledge the excellent work they have carried out during this reporting period. We are very fortunate to have such thoughtful and dedicated leaders supporting our children and our service.

Our vision is clear - The Suffolk Youth Justice system is committed to putting children at the heart of everything we do. Guided by a child-first approach, our partnership is dedicated to diverting children from entering the criminal justice system wherever possible. When diversion is not possible, we focus on creating safe and inclusive environments where children can repair harm, build on their strengths, take an active role in shaping their futures, and achieve better outcomes

Finally, I will continue to do all I can to support Suffolk's commitment to a child-focused Youth Justice Service with high ambitions for every child. We want our children to be safe, heard and supported to succeed, and we are determined to provide the strongest possible help, opportunities and encouragement so they can build positive futures. Thank you for the support you continue to give to this important work.



Chris Robson
Independent Chair – Suffolk Youth Justice Board

I would like to echo the comments of the newly appointed Independent Chair of the Youth Justice Board in saying we are fortunate indeed to have such a dedicated, skilled and knowledgeable staff team across every level of the service.

Throughout my career working with addiction, its causes, harms and recovery I saw the consequences for so many young people as they became adults. The consequences of missed opportunities in becoming part of family and society, being in and out of the criminal justice system, in and out of employment, in and out of institutions.

This plan gives us the opportunity to really tackle youth crime in all its forms, eliminate childhood exploitation and, by placing the child, because they are still children, at the centre, address the issues of early life deficits. Central to this ambition is meaningful engagement with our communities and partners, working together to strengthen prevention, identify risks earlier and provide support before problems escalate into crisis or offending behaviour.

Enabling services to ‘respond with the right help and not just react to the presenting behaviour.’ Supporting parents to be better versions of themselves, being the foundation for their young person to build their life upon, is fundamental. I have heard the term ‘to scaffold the parent,’ and I share in this ambition and what it can deliver. This key intention runs through our plan.

Combined with greater emphasis upon parental support is the ‘By-stander’ programme. Co-produced with young people this programme offers an exciting opportunity to enable young people to be less likely to be perpetrators of crime, more confident in intervening, gain a greater sense of belonging and engagement in social and community life and develop a solid foundation in personal responsibility and accountability. All these skills lead to fully engaged, aspirational and motivated young people that will in turn inspire others.

Getting the balance right in terms of punishment, victim representation, restorative justice, and importantly reduction in offending and re-offending requires clear and determined leadership, multi-agency cooperation and committed staff. We have all these components in Suffolk. I look forward to working with the Board in ensuring we continue to deliver the services and interventions required to make Suffolk a safer place, a place where young people can achieve their ambitions free from crime either as victims or perpetrators.



Councillor Simon Aalders
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

Local Context

152,255

Children and young people 0-17
(ONS mid 2024 data)

19%

of the total Suffolk population
(786,231)

50,889

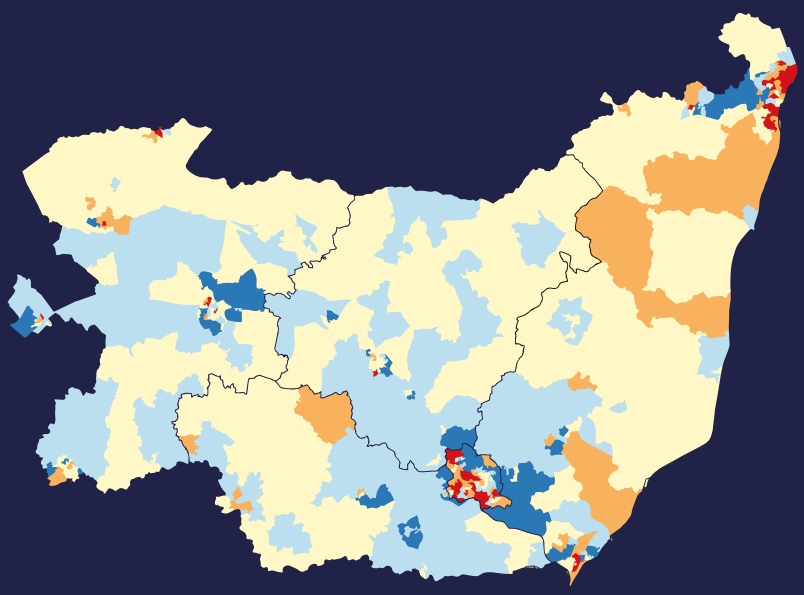
young people 18-25 (up to end of age 24) who we have a duty under the SEND Code of Practice to meet local needs and support better outcomes.

Children (under 16) living in low-income families (2024)

19.7%
in Suffolk

22.1%
England

Deprivation



- Least deprived **20%**
- Next least deprived **20%**
- Mid **20%**
- Next most deprived **20%**
- Most deprived **20%**

The 2025 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) ranks Suffolk 103 out of 153 Local Authorities i.e. in the top 30%. Education, skills and training remains a key area for further improvement.

Inequalities in Suffolk are not confined to the urban areas. We see areas in smaller towns featuring in the most deprived parts of England, with pockets of rural deprivation persisting.



Child population 0-17

The CYP population is forecast to decrease by **12%** by 2040 (2022 ONS)

The 2024 State of the Nation report ranked Suffolk **55** out of **203** Local Authorities for "Promising Prospects", and **99** out of **203** for "Conditions of Childhood" - both ranked in the "Middle Group" i.e. ery near the average.



Child population from global majority groups



In 2024/25, approximately **1** in **5** school children in Suffolk were Non-White British, compared to **2** in **5** for England.

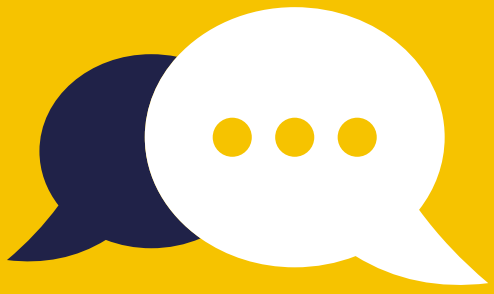
Largest Suffolk minority ethnic groups in Suffolk Schools

6.8% White–
Any other White background

3.1% Mixed–
Any other Mixed backgrounds

1.7% Black–
Black African





11.5%

Children in Suffolk schools with a first language other than English (2024/25) **21.4%** National figure



02

Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Governance of the Suffolk Youth Justice Service (YJS) is provided through the Suffolk Youth Justice Partnership Board, under the leadership of an independent chair and includes representation from all statutory youth justice partners. Each strategic priority within the Youth Justice Plan has a named lead partner responsible for driving progress and reporting on impact at Partnership Board meetings. This supports shared ownership and collective accountability across the system.

The Board has strengthened strategic oversight, scrutiny and challenge, and is responsible for monitoring performance, managing risk and overseeing delivery of the Youth Justice Plan. The Partnership Board uses performance data, audit findings, thematic reviews and lived experience insight to provide challenge, agree action and track improvement. Exception reporting is used to focus attention on areas of concern, including education access, remand to youth detention and disparity.

The Partnership Board provides assurance in relation to statutory responsibilities, safeguarding, public protection and compliance with Youth Justice Board (YJB) standards, supported by a jointly owned risk register.

The YJS sits within Suffolk County Council's Children's Services, with the Head of Youth Justice reporting to the Director for Social Care and Family Help. The service is embedded within wider county governance arrangements, with strong strategic links to the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership, Safer and Stronger Communities Board, Local Criminal Justice Board, MAPPA Strategic Board, MASH Strategic Board, and the Suffolk Constabulary Children and Young People's Board.



At an operational level, YJS is delivered through a fully multi-agency model, working closely with children's services, education, health and police partners alongside specialist practitioners within integrated locality teams. Education partners include the Suffolk Virtual School, which oversees and supports the educational needs of children open to the service. This joined-up approach ensures coordinated planning, effective information-sharing and timely intervention. The service also works closely with voluntary and community sector partners and plays an active role in countywide arrangements addressing serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding, ensuring a coordinated, Child-First and partnership-led response across Suffolk.

The YJS attends the Norfolk and Suffolk Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel. The service also participates with the Serious Violence Duty Partnership and Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel.





03

Update on the Previous Year

Progress on Priorities in 2025-2026

Youth Justice Social Action

During 2025–2026, as part of Suffolk's commitment to working with children and victims, YJS commissioned Volunteering Matters to deliver a social action project shaped by the lived experiences of children across Suffolk.



The hackathons provided a safe, creative and inclusive space for children to explore why children come into contact with the police and to co-design ideas for prevention and system change. Children were supported to share their experiences, challenge assumptions and develop practical recommendations focused on education, relationships with professionals, diversion, safety and support for families.

Learning from the hackathon events has been collated by Volunteering Matters and shared with senior leaders and the Youth Justice Partnership Board. The findings are being used to inform priorities within this Youth Justice Plan, shape service development and strengthen how children's voices directly influence decision-making at both operational and strategic levels.



Child First

Child First describes the evidence base for what helps children move away from offending. By grounding practice in this evidence, the YJS can give children the best chance of reducing further offending, which in turn helps reduce the number of victims and supports safer communities.

The Service made significant progress in embedding the Child First principles across practice, performance management and partnership working. This included strengthening Out-of-Court assessment quality and oversight, improving children's participation, developing earlier and more proportionate diversion pathways, and enhancing the use of data to understand children's experiences and outcomes.

- **Seeing Children as Children**
  Developing our approach to multi-agency case formulations, facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist. Case formulation supports the partnership to understanding a child's early life (and the impact on behaviour now) by giving a structured, evidence-informed explanation of how past experiences link to current needs, risks and strengths, enabling the child's network to respond with the right help rather than just reacting to the presenting behaviour.

- **Building Pro-Social Identity**
  Strengthening strengths-based practice by helping practitioners recognise, reinforce and build children's positive identity and capabilities, rather than focusing only on risk or offending behaviour, including through creative arts and reparation.

- **Collaborating with Children**
  Strengthened collaboration by embedding children's voices in assessments and actively involving them in practice and service design.

- **Diverting from Stigma**
  Improved joint decision-making with police, supporting more proportionate, child-centred outcomes and reducing the use of punitive responses where diversion was appropriate.

Performance, Quality and Workforce Development

The Service strengthened performance reporting, dashboards and audit activity, leading to improved oversight, partnership learning and improved practice quality. Data was used more proactively to support continuous improvement, while workforce development focused on embedding Child First principles, strengthening analysis and improving confidence and consistency across the service.

Creative Arts



The Service used creative arts as a strengths-based and inclusive approach to support children to express themselves, develop confidence and build positive identity. Children were offered the opportunity to undertake creative work that was meaningful to them, enabling them to communicate their experiences, talents and aspirations in ways that sit outside traditional justice processes.

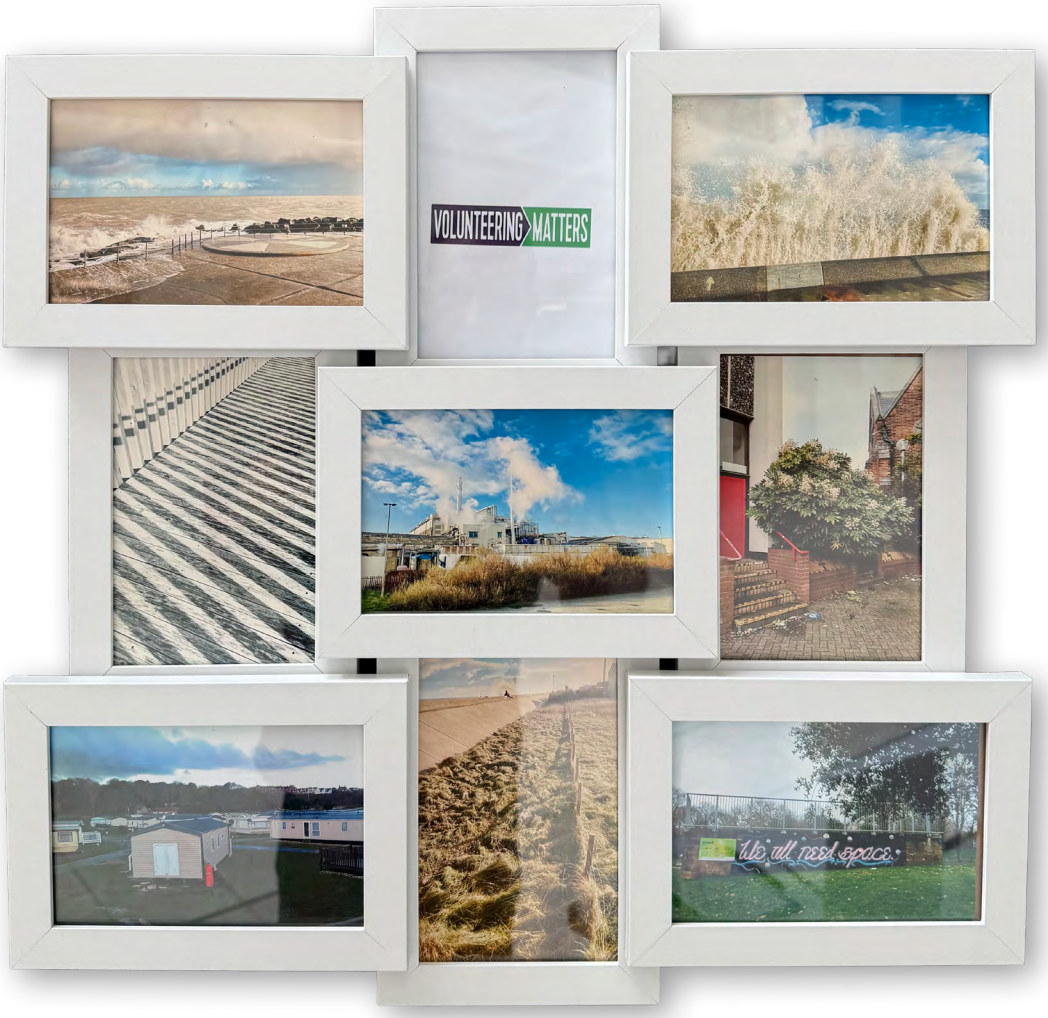
Children's creative work was showcased at The Hold, creating a public space to celebrate achievement and recognise the strengths and abilities of justice-involved children. This provided an opportunity for parents and carers to see children's talents recognised and valued, supporting pride, connection and positive relationships. The opportunity was also extended to victims of youth crime, supporting inclusion, shared understanding and community connection.

Examples of some of the artwork that was shared at the exhibition.








VOLUNTEERING MATTERS
We all need space.

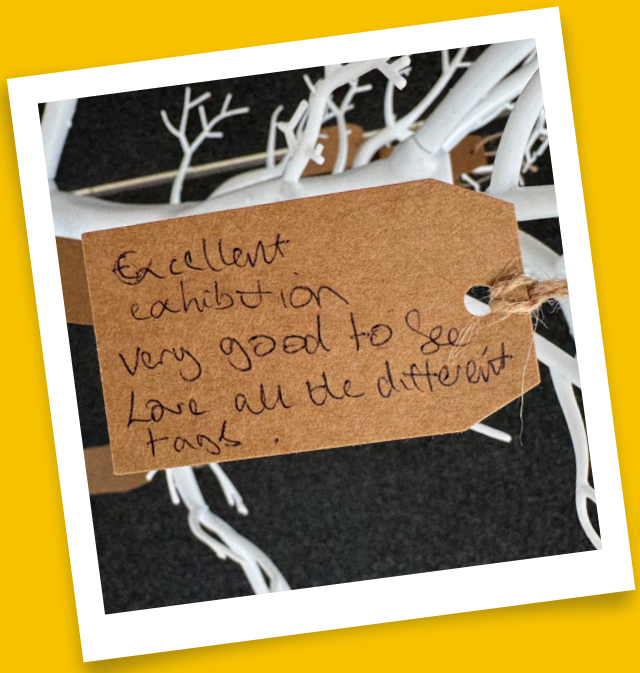




The creative arts offer contributed to the service's Child First approach by promoting participation, reducing stigma and enabling children to be seen for more than their offending behaviour. It supported emotional expression, pro-social identity and positive engagement, reinforcing messages of capability, belonging and hope for the future.

Below are some comments from members of the public.







Feedback frenzy and surveys with children and parents/caregivers

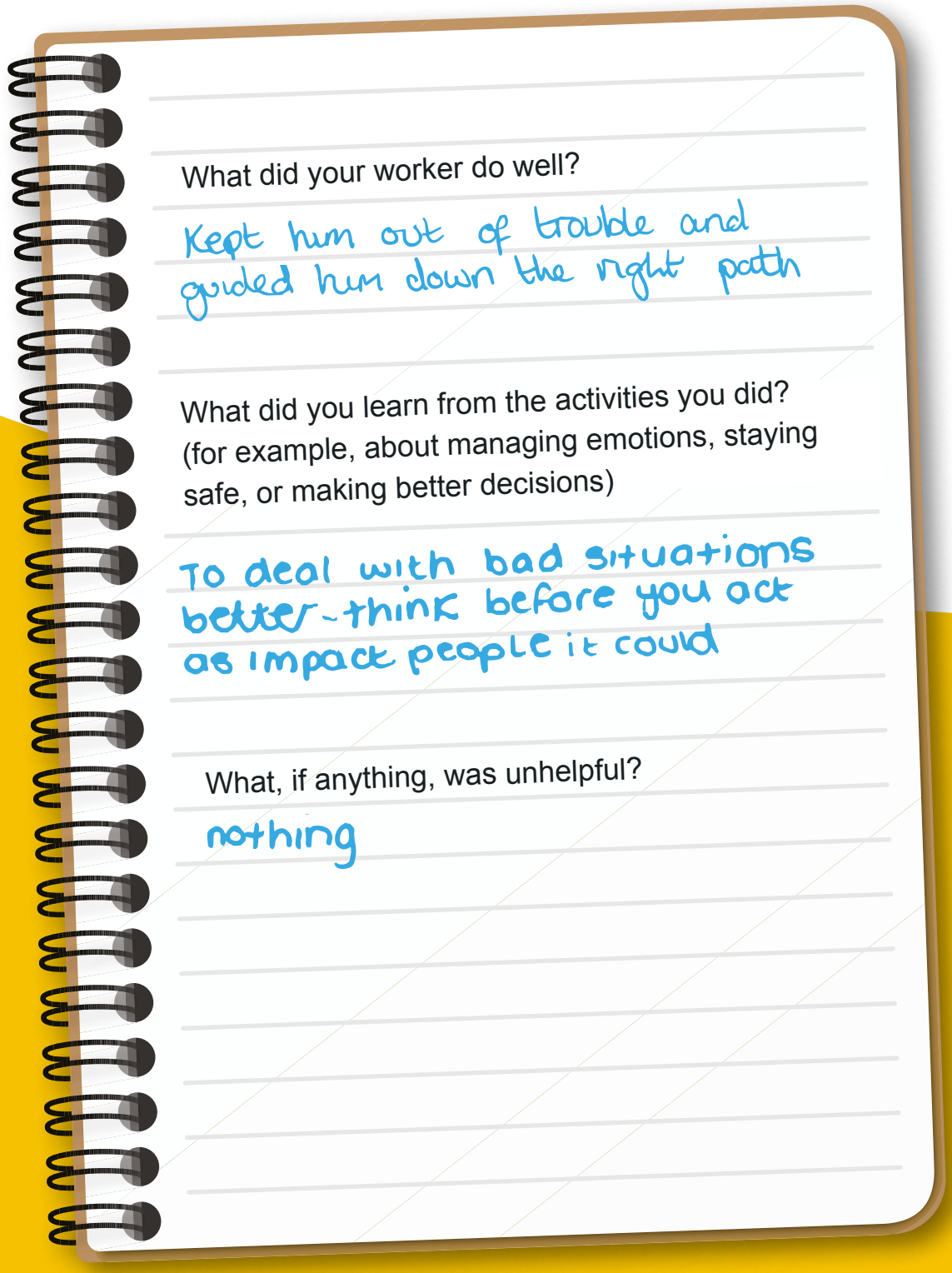
The Service strengthened its approach to gathering feedback from children, parents/carers and victims through a combination of surveys and direct contact, known as Feedback Frenzy. This proactive approach ensured that feedback was gathered at key points in a child's journey through the service, rather than relying solely on formal complaints or isolated consultation activity.

Feedback from calls and surveys was used to inform service development, practice improvement and strategic priorities. Children and families identified areas for improvement, including better communication at court, stronger planning with parents and caregivers, and more support for parents and carers.



The service is committed to continuing Feedback Frenzy activity alongside surveys on a twice-yearly basis, ensuring that the voices of children, parents/caregivers and victims are consistently heard, learning is acted upon, and changes are communicated back through a clear "you said, we did" approach. This supports transparency, trust and continuous improvement, and ensures the service remains responsive, Child First and informed by lived experience.

An example of feedback from a parent



Feedback frenzy with victims of youth crime

Victims told us they valued the contact they had with the service which they said was responsive to their needs. They felt that communication was good, they were kept informed and praised staff for being supportive, approachable and caring.

'Everyone I spoke to was very helpful in explaining what would happen and how the process works'.

Victims also told us they appreciated practical solutions that were offered to deal with day-to-day challenges they were experiencing such as access to services.

'They put a lot of time and effort into meeting our needs... they made sure the victim was okay and cared about their welfare',

and

'They came up with solutions to help in school...
...since these changes, things have improved'.



Partnership Board

The Youth Justice Partnership Board ensures that the voice of the child is heard and considered at every meeting. Children's perspectives are brought into Board discussions through a range of mechanisms, including feedback from participation activity, lived experience insight, partnership learning reviews, audit findings, and examples of practice with children, caregivers and victims. One child who had previously committed a high number of offences recorded a short video about their experience of offending and the youth justice system, which was shared at a Partnership Board meeting. This helped the Board understand the challenges some children face and the difference that positive, consistent relationships can make in supporting children to move away from offending.



Listening to the voice of children, caregivers and victims ensures that strategic decision-making is informed not only by performance data and risk, but also by an understanding of how services are experienced by those who use them.

Hearing the voice of the child at each meeting has strengthened the quality of challenge and scrutiny, helping the Board to test whether policies, plans and decisions are truly Child First, proportionate and effective. Children's feedback has influenced priorities for service development, shaped improvements to diversion, education support and family engagement.

Youth Advisory Board

The Service worked with the Criminal Exploitation Hubs to establish a Youth Advisory Board. While children contributed feedback on activities and reparation projects, sustaining engagement in the Board proved challenging despite multiple attempts. Learning from this, the YJS is now working with an Engagement Officer to review and strengthen the approach, ensuring future involvement is more accessible, meaningful and responsive to children's needs.

Reparation

The service has broadened the range of organisations and activities undertaken by children to help them give back to local communities, learn new skills and heal relationships. Reparation is increasingly being promoted as part of exit planning, ensuring that children have constructive and safe activities to engage with. Victims can also be offered the opportunity to receive direct reparation, which enables a child to make amends directly to them.



Suffolk Youth Justice Service | With SCC, Police, Health and Probation

SUFFOLK REPARATION & UNPAID WORK

WINTER/SPRING 2026











Welcome to the Suffolk Reparation & Unpaid Work Newsletter, which has been designed to inform you of the work currently taking place in your local community

Let's see what's been happening, see inside for more....







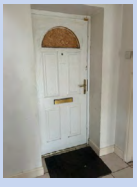


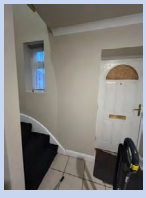
Celebratory News from Lou in the West!

A child I have been working with alongside Bury Town Council has now got a full-time job in construction as a roofer! I am very proud of his achievements with me while on reparation, he has worked very hard. Meeting different tradespeople such as landscapers, tree surgeons and council workers has given him encouragement and helped him gain work/life skills whilst completing his reparation hours in the community. This has put him in good stead, experiencing working with different trades, physical hard work, good time keeping, teamwork and H&S knowledge. Well done! - Lou

"Hi Liz, it was great having you and 'S' here. I hope it felt like a worthwhile experience for him. He worked hard, with real enthusiasm and growing proficiency in planting a hedge. A great help, thank you".
- New placement provider, Saxmundham Community Garden







Community Engagement

The YJS and Criminal Exploitation hosted the third annual Skate Jam event. The event was designed to bring together skate park communities from across the county, providing a platform to showcase their skills and foster a sense of togetherness among those who use the facilities.

Youth work charity The Mix in Stowmarket, supported the event and funded a local pizza van, which served freshly made pizzas to all competitors. Medical support was provided by St John Ambulance, and volunteers from the Salvation Army kindly staffed the recreation ground café. A local DJ and MC delivered an energetic soundtrack and live commentary throughout the day.

A total of 33 competitors, aged between 5 and 25, took part in the competition, impressing the 100-strong crowd with their stunts and tricks. At the request of the children, a new “Over 25s Dads’ Event” category was added, further enhancing the community spirit of the day.

Competitors and visitors also received important educational information about the risks of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).

The event was a fantastic demonstration of how children and young people of all ages and backgrounds can come together, break down geographical barriers, build relationships, and help ensure that facilities like skate parks remain safe, positive spaces, rather than becoming hotspots for anti-social behaviour or criminal exploitation.



Performance Over the Previous Year

Supporting Children

In the financial year 2025-2026 there were a total of 234 intervention programmes following a pre-court or court outcome, relating to 210 children. This is a decrease of 10% for interventions (down from 259) and 11% for children (down from 236) compared to 2024-25.

Court & Cautions	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
Custody	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	2	2
YRO (incl. ISS)	10	10	9	9	5	5	5	5	5	6	7	6
Referral Order	34	40	36	34	38	35	42	43	40	39	41	37
YCC and YC	16	14	13	9	6	7	9	11	10	9	8	7
Total C & C	63	69	62	56	53	51	60	62	57	55	58	52
Diversion	37	36	34	38	43	41	41	36	31	34	31	33
Other Support												
OOC Assessments	11	15	14	24	17	22	15	16	13	21	12	24
PSR	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	2	2
HSB	5	5	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0
Voluntary	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	0	0	0	2	4
CE Hub Support	5	7	11	9	8	6	11	13	13	8	8	6
Bail Support	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
Remand	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0
Total Other	31	34	35	42	36	39	33	34	32	35	29	39
Overall monthly total	131	139	131	136	132	131	134	132	120	124	118	124

In addition to the pre- and post- court interventions relating to 210 children, the service delivered:

179
Out of court assessments

11
Pre-sentence reports

7
Bail support interventions
(lasting up to 5 months)

4
Children were supported during secure remand

72
Children were supported by the Criminal Exploitation Hubs through 1-1 support.

13
Children who had committed sexual offences were supported through specialist Harmful Sexual Behaviour interventions.

1,212
hours of reparation/ community unpaid work

DELIVERED THROUGH

102 Children
to various various charities and community projects.

YJS specialist workers provided over **100** speech and language consultations or assessments, made more than **50** offers of substance misuse support, and Primary Mental Health workers worked directly with around **70** children. The Criminal Exploitation Hubs supported **72** children through one-to-one work and delivered **26** parent group sessions.

National Indicators

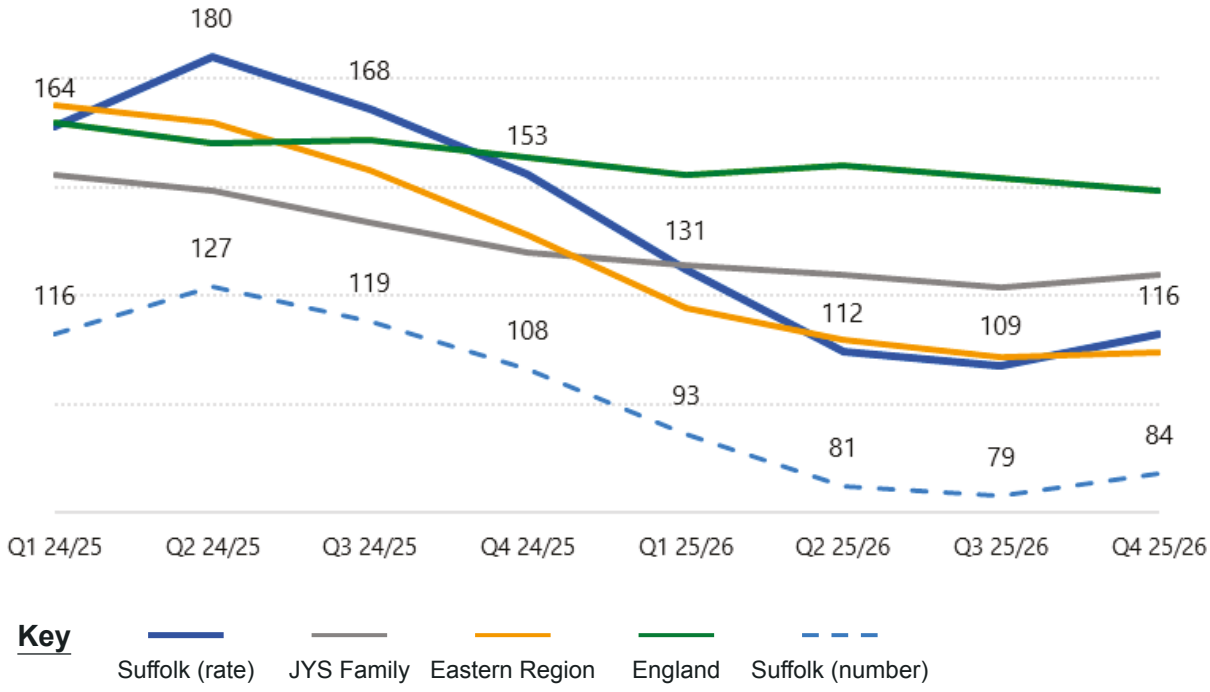
The service has seen positive performance against all National Indicators.

First Time Entrants (FTEs)

Children who receive a caution or court conviction for the first time within the period.

First Time Entrants	Jul 23-Jun 24	Oct 23-Sep 24	Jan 24-Dec 24	Apr 24-Mar 25	Jul 24-Jun 25	Oct 24-Sep 25	Jan 25-Dec 25	Apr 25-Mar 26	Jul 23-Jun 24 to Apr 25-Mar 26
First Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds	164	180	168	153	131	112	109	116	
Number of children who became First Time Entrants	116	127	119	108	93	81	79	84	

FTE per 100,000 10-17 year olds



Suffolk's rate is lower than the average rate for England and our YJS Family, and slightly higher than the Eastern region rate. The multi-agency out of court panel focuses on diverting children away from the formal criminal justice system is a key driver of the improving FTE rate in Suffolk seen in the last 18 months.

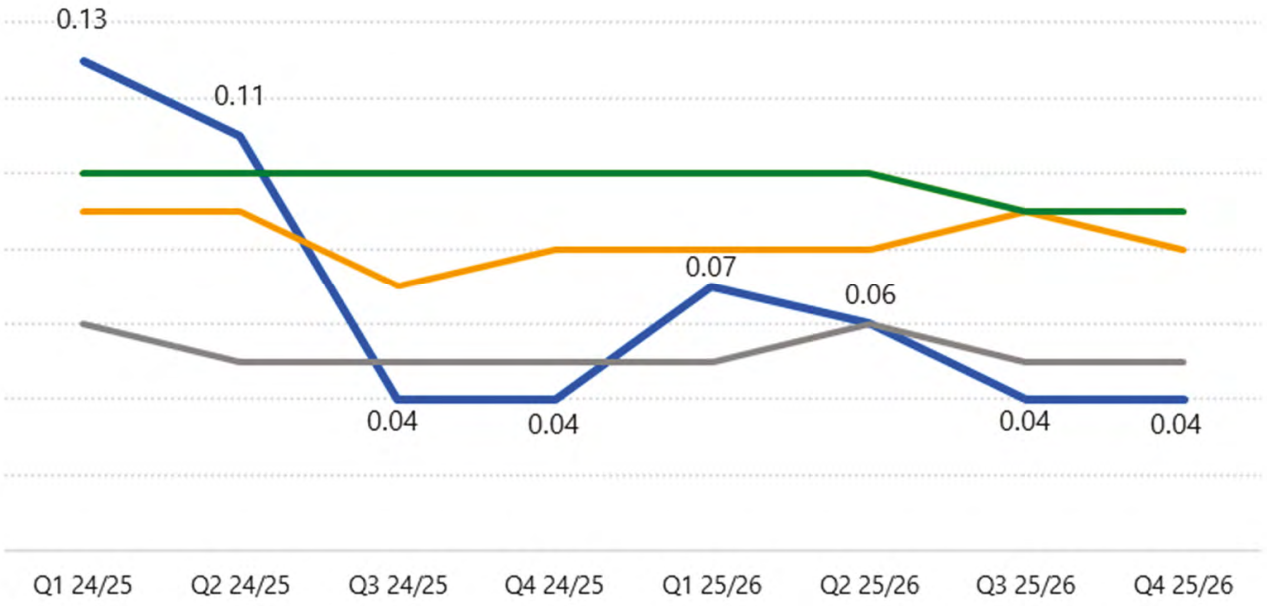
Although the total number of First Time Entrants (84 children) reduced (down 27% on the previous year), a higher proportion of children received a court outcome than in the previous year (61% compared to 58% in the previous year). Youth Conditional Cautions and Conditional Discharges also increased in 2025–26, despite the overall reduction in First Time Entrants. The reduction was greater for girls, whose numbers fell by 34.8%, compared with a 25.5% reduction for boys.

Use of custody

Children who receive a custodial sentence within the period.

Use of Custody	Jul 23-Jun 24	Oct 23-Sep 24	Jan 24-Dec 24	Apr 24-Mar 25	Jul 24-Jun 25	Oct 24-Sep 25	Jan 25-Dec 25	Apr 25-Mar 26	Jul 23-Jun 24 to Apr 25-Mar 26
Use of Custody per 1,000 10-17 year-olds	0.13	0.11	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.04	

Use of custody per 1,000 10-17 year olds



Key

Suffolk (rate) JYS Family Eastern Region England

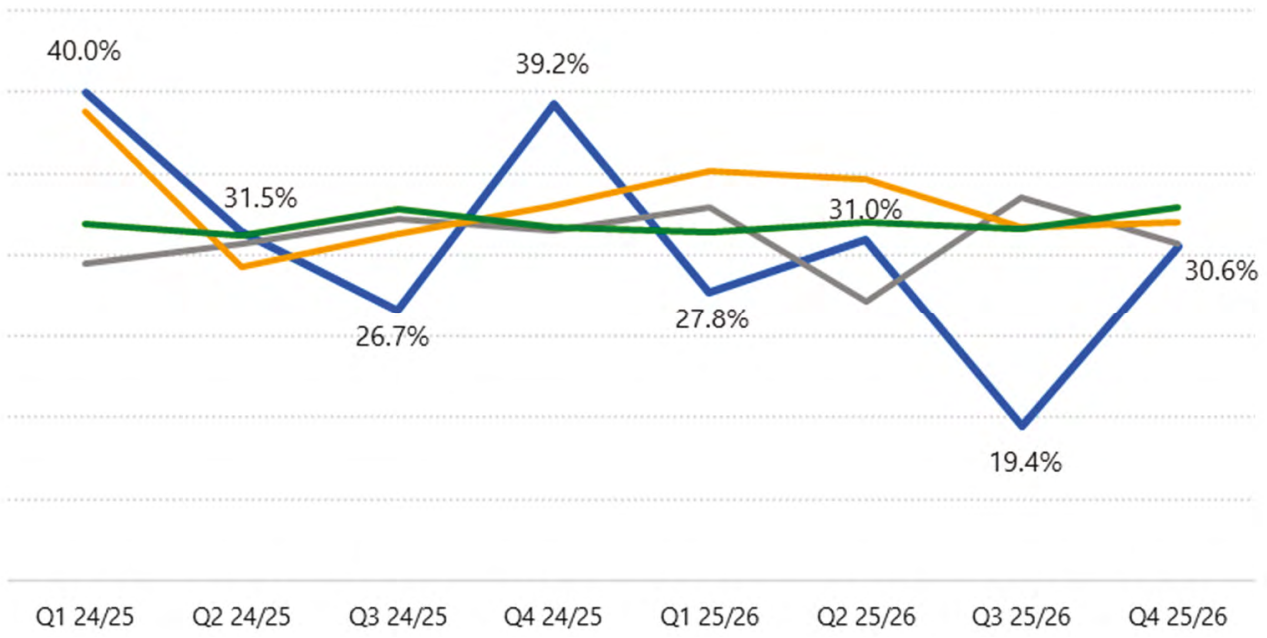
In 2025-2026 there were three children sentenced to custody in Suffolk. The three children are all boys. Two were 17 when they were sentenced, one was 16. Two of the boys were sentenced for offences committed two years earlier.

Re-offending

Children who receive a caution or conviction within the period and are then tracked for 12 months from that date to check whether they receive a further caution or conviction.

First Time Entrants	Jul 23-Jun 24	Oct 23-Sep 24	Jan 24-Dec 24	Apr 24-Mar 25	Jul 24-Jun 25	Oct 24-Sep 25	Jan 25-Dec 25	Apr 25-Mar 26	Jul 23-Jun 24 to Apr 25-Mar 26
Reoffending Binary Rate	40	31.5	26.7	39.2	27.8	31	19.4	30.6	
Reoffending Frequency Rate	6.00	6.88	11.75	5.90	7.27	6.00	5.57	5.40	
Cohort	55	54	30	51	54	42	36	49	
Re-offenders	22	17	8	20	15	13	7	15	
Re-offences	132	117	94	118	109	78	39	81	

Re-offending Binary rate

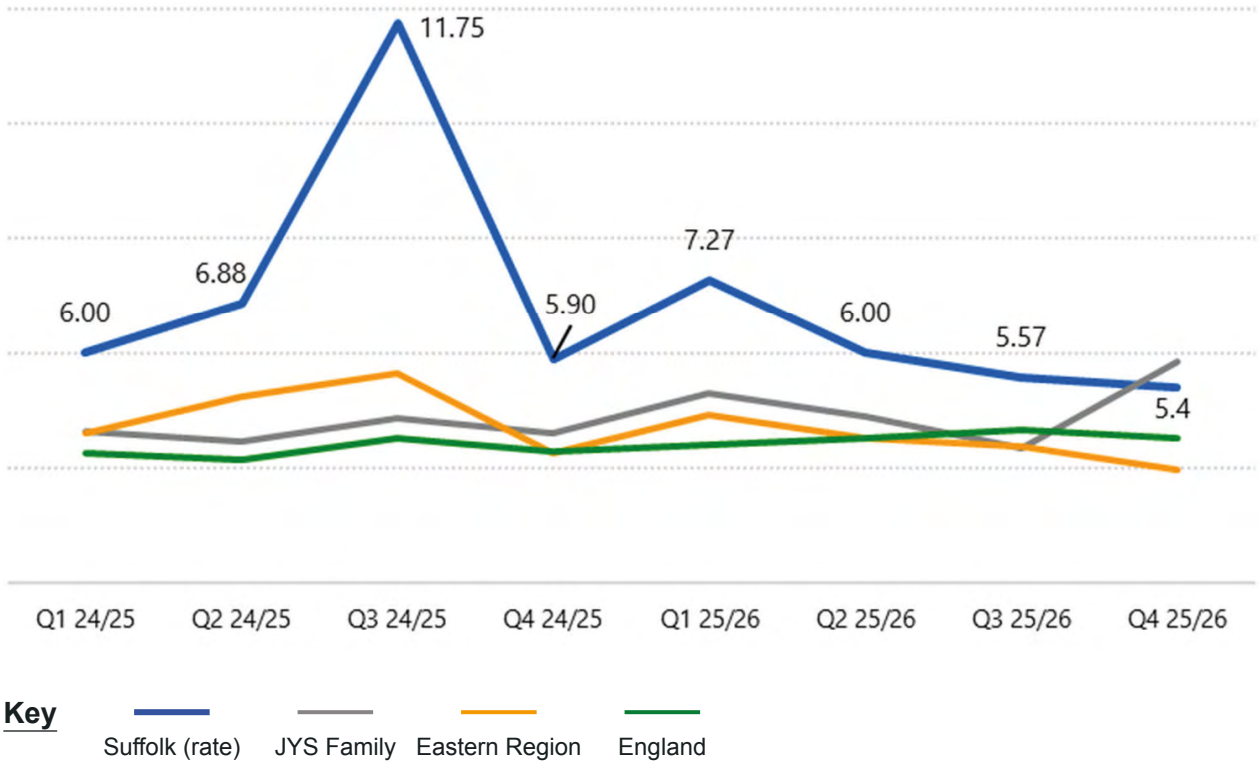


Key

Suffolk (rate) JYS Family Eastern Region England

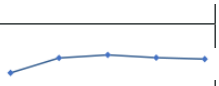
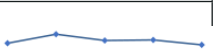
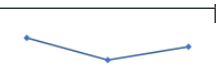
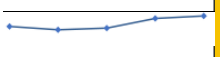
Suffolk's reoffending rate has fluctuated more than regional and national rates, which have remained relatively stable in the low 30s. Recent data suggests Suffolk is returning towards the national position, with continued focus needed to reduce variability and strengthen consistency in outcomes. The most common reoffending categories, based on the most serious reoffence in each case, were violence against the person (36%), criminal damage (19%) and drug offences (14%).

Re-offending frequency rate



Although Suffolk saw a notable spike in Q3 2024/25, this reflected a short-term fluctuation rather than a sustained decline in performance. Current performance is now in line with regional and national benchmarks. The YJS continues to strengthen early identification of emerging risks and embed consistent practice to reduce future volatility.

Key Performance Indicators

#	Key Performance Indicator	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Trend Q4 24/25-Q4 25/26
1	% Suitable Accommodation	99%	97%	97%	100%	96%	
2	% Suitable ETE	60.3%	71.9%	74.1%	72.1%	70.9%	
3	% with identified SEND	52.6%	60.9%	55.2%	55.7%	50.9%	
4	% with identified MH/EW need	34.6%	48.4%	34.5%	32.8%	32.7%	
5	% with identified SM need	25.6%	32.8%	41.4%	32.8%	34.5%	
6	% OOCD completed	88%	79%	79%	85%	85%	
7	% Wider Services Involvement	35.7%	28.1%	27.6%	37.7%	52.7%	
8	Management board attendance	3 of 5	5 of 5	5 of 5	5 of 5	4 of 5	
9	Serious Violence rate	N/A	0.97	0.28	0.69	N/A	
10	% Victims consent to contact	90%	87%	90%	65%	55%	
% Engaged in RJ opportunities		11%	15%	18%	26%	36%	
% Asked view prior to YJ outcome		84%	80%	82%	94%	97%	

Performance across key indicators shows a mixed picture, with areas of strong performance alongside emerging pressures. Suitable accommodation remains consistently high, fluctuating between 96% and 100%, indicating stable outcomes for most children.

Children with SEND are overrepresented in the youth justice system nationally. In Suffolk, the proportion of children with identified SEND has remained relatively steady, though there is a slight downward trend towards the end of the year. In contrast, the identification of speech, language and communication needs has increased overall, suggesting improved recognition of need within the cohort. There has been a notable rise in wider services involvement, increasing significantly to 52.7% by Q4, which reflects stronger partnership working and a more integrated, multi-agency response.

The serious violence rate has reduced over the year (from 0.97 to 0.69 by Q3), indicating positive progress in managing higher-risk behaviours. Most significantly, engagement in restorative justice opportunities has improved steadily from 11% to 36%, demonstrating a strengthened focus on victim engagement and Child First approaches.

Overall, the data highlights improving practice in partnership working and restorative approaches, alongside a need to continue monitoring consistency and emerging levels of need within the cohort.

Risk and Issues

The Youth Justice Partnership Board maintained oversight of key risks to the effective delivery of youth justice services through a jointly owned risk register, with each risk allocated to a named lead Board member. This ensured risks were actively monitored, mitigated and reviewed as part of routine governance and performance oversight.

Key risks during the year included education access, disparity and workforce capacity pressures. These risks were escalated through exception reporting to enable focused Board scrutiny and timely action.

To reduce risks relating to education, the Board strengthened oversight of education, training and employment outcomes, supported by closer working with the Suffolk Virtual School, and endorsed changes to management arrangements for ETE coordinators to improve system navigation, access to provision and educational planning for children open to the service.

Disparity remained a strategic risk, particularly for children from the global majority, Children in Care, children with SEND and girls in the out of court arena. The Board maintained ownership of this risk through data scrutiny, thematic reviews and the development of targeted strategies, with a continued focus on translating learning into coordinated multi-agency action.

Operational risks relating to practice quality and consistency were mitigated through strengthened performance dashboards, regular audit activity and external moderation, providing assurance on standards and enabling early identification of emerging issues.

Overall, the Board's approach to risk management during 2025–2026 strengthened system leadership, ensured shared accountability across partners and supported a proactive, transparent and improvement-focused response to risk.





04

Plan for the Forthcoming Year

Child First

YJS commissioned Volunteering Matters to deliver a structured social action project to inform the service's learning and development. The project gathered the views and lived experiences of children who are:

- Previously or currently involved with the Youth Justice Service
- On the periphery of youth justice involvement
- In mainstream or alternative education settings
- Affected by youth crime

The focus of the work was to understand why children offend or come into contact with the police and what could be done to prevent this, with findings intended to directly inform the Suffolk Youth Justice Plan.

As part of the project, Volunteering Matters provided an Engagement Manager who undertook:

- One-to-one work with children referred by YJS, using flexible engagement approaches.
- Intensive work with Alternative Provision settings, supporting children to shape and contribute to the work.
- Delivery of three county-wide hackathon-style events, bringing together children involved in one-to-one work, pupils from alternative provision and children from mainstream schools to explore prevention and system change ideas.

This activity ensured that the voices of just under 300 children were captured in a meaningful, creative and accessible way, particularly for those who may not engage through traditional consultation methods.



The findings from the Volunteering Matters work were collated into a report and presented to senior leaders and the Youth Justice Management Board. In summary, children told us they want:

- **To be listened to and taken seriously**
  Children want adults to listen without judgement, assume good intent, and seek to understand their views before correcting or enforcing rules. They report feeling safer and more respected when conversations are open and two-way, rather than authoritative or dismissive.
- **Fairness, respect and less stereotyping**
  They want to be treated as individuals, not judged based on appearance, background, behaviour of peers, or media stereotypes. Discrimination linked to race, disability, gender, neurodiversity, language or where they live was a strong concern.
- **Clear explanations of rules and consequences**
  Children said they are more likely to follow rules when they understand why they exist and feel those rules are applied consistently and respectfully. They want involvement in shaping rules that affect them.
- **Safe, welcoming places where they belong**
  They want youth-centred spaces – clubs, sports facilities and creative environments – where they can spend time safely, avoid boredom, and feel accepted rather than viewed as suspicious. These “places of shelter” are both physical and relational.
- **Town centres and communities that include them**
  Children want to be considered in regeneration and community planning. They described town centres as adult-dominated areas and asked to be involved in decisions about local spaces, safety, and development.
- **Positive role models they can relate to**
  Children value adults and peers with lived experience who act as role models, show understanding of their realities, and model respectful behaviour and emotional regulation.
- **More opportunities through sport, education and work**
  Children want accessible sport, training, apprenticeships and employment pathways, with clearer information about how to get involved. They see these opportunities as protective, confidence-building and motivating.
- **Voice in shaping services and solutions**
  They want to co-design solutions, not just be consulted. When children see their ideas influencing real change, trust improves and engagement increases.

These findings will now form part of a multi-agency plan.

Youth Advisory Board

The Service will focus on successfully launching the Youth Advisory Board, creating a sustainable and meaningful forum through which children can actively co-design service delivery, influence priorities and shape how youth justice services are delivered across Suffolk.

Speech Language & Communication

NHS funding has been secured to create Sensory First Aid kits for children with neurodiverse needs. Interactive sessions will help children design their own personalised kits. The Speech Language and Communication team will receive specialist training on sensory systems, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, substance misuse effects on communication, and dual diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder & trauma. They will then develop practice sessions for Youth Justice based on this training.

Substance Misuse

Plans are underway to improve substance misuse screening for Youth Justice Practitioners. The review will cover resources used for universal substance misuse awareness sessions for children, and practice workshops to strengthen practitioners' knowledge.

Education Psychology

Educational Psychologists will deliver practice sessions to Youth Justice Practitioners on using Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP). The sessions will cover translating EHCP information into assessments and plans, applying recommendations to support children, reflecting this in assessments, and highlighting unclear EHCP details for review.

Health and Hygiene Project

Public Health provided additional funding to establish Health and Hygiene Banks within each of the three locality teams. These banks grant children and victims access to resources that promote their health and wellbeing, such as essential hygiene items. Access to these products provides basic dignity and is vital for boosting confidence. Throughout the upcoming year, exit interviews with participating children will be conducted to gather feedback, which will be used to guide future initiatives and support efforts.



Resources and Services

In Suffolk, the YJB grant contributes to the core staffing and infrastructure required to deliver statutory youth justice services, including victim services.

The grant is also used to support multi-agency delivery, enabling access to specialist provision that is central to effective youth justice practice. This includes contributions towards health-related interventions, speech and language therapy, mental health support and psychology (educational and clinical). These arrangements ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed holistically and that risks to children and the public are managed effectively.



In line with the grant conditions, YJB funding supports prevention and diversion activity, including Out of Court Resolutions, victim support and restorative interventions. This investment helps reduce unnecessary criminalisation, divert children away from the formal justice system where appropriate, and ensure that victims' views and safety are considered in all decision-making.

The grant also contributes to quality assurance, performance monitoring and service improvement, including compliance with the YJB Key Performance Indicators, audit activity, and multi-agency learning reviews.
This ensures that the Management Board has sufficient assurance regarding practice quality, outcomes and value for money.

Our performance next year will be improved further by a system working together to prevent children entering the justice system and ensuring needs are identified and responded to earlier.

All YJB grant funding is ring-fenced for youth justice purposes and is subject to robust financial governance and oversight through Suffolk County Council's financial procedures and the Youth Justice Partnership Board. Any underspend or overspend against the core grant is managed in line with the grant conditions, with funds retained within youth justice reserves to respond to fluctuating demand and emerging pressures.

Board Development

The Board culture is developing, and the partnership is committed to strengthening system leadership and collective accountability through ensuring that responsibility for outcomes is clearly shared across all statutory partners rather than resting primarily with the Youth Justice Service.

The Board is committed to building its understanding of the service and will strengthen its insight into key areas of delivery through a range of opportunities, including joint quality assurance activity, attending team meetings, and spending time with staff, volunteers, children, parents/ carers and victims.

The Board is committed to using data more effectively to drive strategic decision-making. This includes using trend analysis, triangulating youth justice data with partner data (education, health, police and social care), and using insight to shape priorities, target resources and evaluate whether interventions are making a difference for specific groups of children.

The Board has a key role in owning and driving the system response to disparity. Further development should focus on translating data and learning into coordinated multi-agency action, holding partners to account for change within their own systems, and ensuring that progress is tracked and reviewed at Board level.

The Board will continue to develop its oversight of victim experience and safety, ensuring that victims' views are consistently represented in strategic discussions and that restorative approaches are delivered safely and effectively. This includes clearer assurance on how victim feedback influences policy and practice.



Workforce Development

Our Workforce Development Plan is designed to broaden our expertise and help us to:

- Achieve consistency of practice
- Improve professional curiosity, family work and multi-agency planning
- Grow experience and knowledge base of staff
- Offer development opportunities to further career prospects

- Host the Youth Endowment Fund to jointly train YJS and Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) staff in practical application of the toolkit to ensure that Suffolk provides a consistent and evidenced informed approach to tackling the root causes of knife crime.



Knife Possession Guidance

The YJS has developed a joint agreement with Suffolk Police to ensure compliance with the guidance through a combination of:

- Early notification to YJS from police of children arrested for possession of a knife
- Staff and Partnership Board briefings on the new guidance
- Robust decision-making
- Joint YJS / CYPS training to support the delivery of evidence informed interventions, as outlined in the Youth Endowment Fund toolkit

Furthermore, the service will organise a multi-sector event addressing youth crime. The conference will feature national experts from the Youth Endowment Fund, who will present insights into the factors contributing to violent offending and discuss evidence-based strategies for systemic reduction. This will lead to a shared understanding of local drivers across the Suffolk system and changes to practice.

Evidence Based Practice and Innovation

Active Bystander programme

The Bystander programme has been developed in relation to a number of specific needs of children.

The Service will consult with Suffolk children, victims and potential victims regarding the issues that affect them. Previous local and national research suggests this is likely to include racism, sexual abuse and assault, hate crimes such as homophobia, transphobia and disability discrimination and bullying. Following this initial consultation and in partnership with third sector community organisations, groupwork Bystander programmes will be co-created by children that cover issues identified by them. The programmes created will be co-delivered by YJS staff, other CYPS practitioners, and community groups such as The Mix in Stowmarket, Outreach Youth, The Emulate Project: Empowering Young Men in Ipswich and the Future Female Society.

Objectives

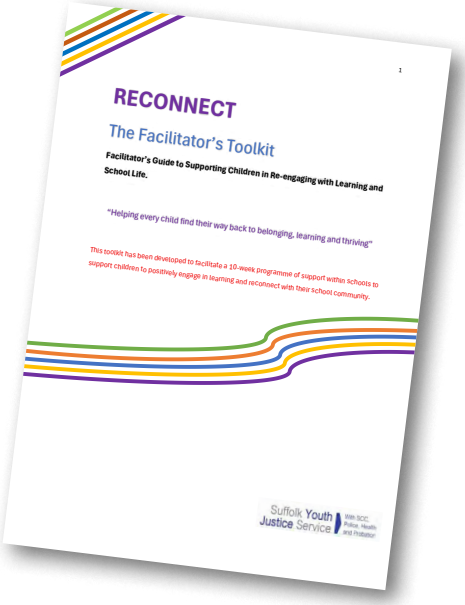
- Reduce participants' self-reported likelihood of perpetrating harm.
- Increase children's confidence and skills to intervene safely
- Strengthen pro-social norms
- Co-production of group work programmes with Suffolk children, including actual and potential victims with third sector partners.



YJS plans to introduce Bystander training to children within the youth justice service as part of their plans to enable them to develop awareness, attitudes and skills needed to help to keep themselves, their peers and their communities safer.

Reconnect Programme

Starting in November 2025, YJS introduced the Reconnect Programme as a targeted pilot intervention in a school in Ipswich. The programme was designed to support children remain in education. The 10-week, school-based programme aims to provide early, tailored support to help children positively re-integrate into school, rebuild their connection to learning and strengthen their sense of belonging with the school community.



The Programme is a modification of the FLATs programme, adapted to meet the needs of children in Suffolk who may be experiencing emotional, relational, or behavioural challenges in school. It has been developed in partnership with the Criminal Exploitation Hub, YJS practitioners, Speech and Language Therapy specialists, and the Restorative Approaches team, ensuring the approach remains trauma-informed, child-centred, and responsive to the real-life experiences of the children it supports.

To assess programme effectiveness, gather impact data, and guide future delivery with children's needs in mind, YJS and the school will run another group. The next pilot will use feedback from the first cohort, engage younger participants, allocate more time for building relationships, and include a schools-based practitioner to co-facilitate and support learning beyond the group.

Victims and Witnesses

Suffolk Restorative Approaches team have worked in partnership with the Criminal Justice Board to produce an online film resource for victims and witnesses. This will enable victims and witnesses to understand what to expect at each stage of the criminal justice system, based on a successful model run by Devon & Cornwall.



Evaluation

Centre for Justice Innovation

In 2024-2025 the Centre for Justice Innovation started working with Suffolk to review and advise on the delivery of out of court work in line with best practice nationally and this continued into 2025-2026. A consultant completed a number of activities including:

- Oversight of several Out of Court assessments to review the quality of assessments.
- Review of our Prevention and Diversion Policy and Procedure, leading to a strengthened YJS and Police Joint Operational Guidance for Prevention and Diversion.
- Provided training to our YJS Partnership Board to enhance their knowledge of the out-of-court space and clarify their responsibilities as Board members.
- Delivered a problem-solving and support session with YJS managers and a senior police colleague to help shape clear, evidence-informed priorities for further improvement.
- Attendance at the Out of Court Resolution decision making panel in order to support development of the chair.
- Attendance at the Suffolk/Norfolk Police joint scrutiny panel to review this process and support the development of future scrutiny provisions

Reconnect Programme

Early findings from the school based Reconnect Programme indicate that children who have attended the programme sessions consistently are engaging well and benefiting from the relational safety embedded across the sessions. These children are beginning to develop trust with facilitators and demonstrate increased willingness to participate and reflect. However, a key barrier has been the high frequency of suspensions among some children, which has limited their ability to attend regularly and made it more challenging to build sustained relationships and trust, and deliver core components of the programme.

Early indications suggest that the programme is most effective as a preventative intervention, particularly for children identified as being at 'risk of suspension' rather than those already experiencing high levels of exclusion. Learning from the pilot will inform future refinement of the offer, ensuring that the programme remains responsive, relational, and impactful.

Priorities for the Coming Year



Standards for children

The YJS has a local assessor within the service who undertakes regular quality assurance audits and presents these at each Partnership Board. External moderation of these audits is undertaken by an independent youth justice consultant to provide assurance on the accuracy of the findings. There has been a steady increase in the sufficiency of the work in all areas over the past year.

In response to the audit findings:

- The leadership team collaboratively reviewed the quality assurance tools
- The service has co-designed a child's plan. The rollout of the new plan is due to commence in April 2026.
- The process for victim views has been refined to allow for timely sharing

The service has conducted thematic reviews, including studies of children with the most offences and their victims. This was in response to the frequency rate for re-offending being stubbornly high.

The audit revealed that the boys with a high offence rate shared common traits and similar life histories. For instance, all displayed early aggressive behaviour, had contact with statutory services at a young age, experienced disrupted schooling, had EHCPs, were experiencing exploitation and eventually became Children in Care.

The report shows most victims were connected to children's care settings or related services, with care staff and emergency workers (like police) frequently affected. Victimisation often happened at home or in care settings, where criminal damage was common. While some peers and opportunistic victims were noted, the main pattern was that many victims were linked to the care environment and professionals supporting these children.

The current response to these children is seeing the frequency of these offences come down and includes:

- Clinical Psychologist: Provides trauma-informed supervision and partnership case formulation to support a shared understanding of the child and sequences plan.
- Prevention and Diversion: Working with police to divert children from the formal justice system, as appropriate.
- Restorative Offer: Supports victims through contextual safeguarding, support services, and restorative interventions.
- Criminalisation of Children in Care and Care Leavers: Suffolk uses a joint protocol to prevent unnecessary criminalisation, supported by a multi-agency plan.
- YJS Safety Panel: Reviews incidents, assesses victim impact, and coordinates support to prevent repeat harm.

For 2026/2027 the service will:

- Develop a Mentoring offer
- Host a multi-sector conference facilitated by the Youth Endowment Fund to support a shared understanding of the drivers and responses to youth violence.
- Review the local Protocol for the Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children in Care and Care Leavers, in line with the national review.
- Review the quality assurance process to ensure it informs improvements in individual practice and organisational learning.



In late 25/26 early 26/27 the YJS received support from the centralised CYPS Quality Assurance team in relation to dip-sampling the quality of the casework and multi-agency working. In addition, the YJS is also participating in a Local Government Association Peer Review, with a specific focus on our work with victims, leadership and management and the effectiveness of the Partnership Board. The learning from these will inform future work and development.

Service Development

This Service Development Plan brings together identified actions for 2026/2027 across the Youth Justice Plan. It is intended to provide a single point of oversight for delivery, including clear ownership, timescales and measures of success. Progress will be monitored through routine performance reporting and exception reporting to the Youth Justice Partnership Board.

Appendix 3 provides a high-level summary of the plan.

How the National Strategic Plan Informs the Suffolk Response

The Suffolk Youth Justice Plan is informed by and aligned to the YJB's national strategic direction, including the Child First principles, national standards and the YJB's published priority areas. This ensures that local partnership governance, service delivery and commissioning are focused on improving outcomes for children, reducing reoffending and keeping communities safe, while preventing unnecessary criminalisation and responding proportionately to risk and need. The YJB plan also shapes Suffolk's approach to assurance and improvement through the national performance framework and key performance indicators, audit and moderation activity, and a focus on addressing disproportionality and over-representation. In addition, YJB grant conditions and guidance inform Suffolk's resourcing decisions and the expected evidence base for prevention, diversion, victim services, and constructive resettlement, supporting clear accountability to the Youth Justice Partnership Board and consistent practice across the county.





05

National Priority Areas

Children from Groups who are Overrepresented

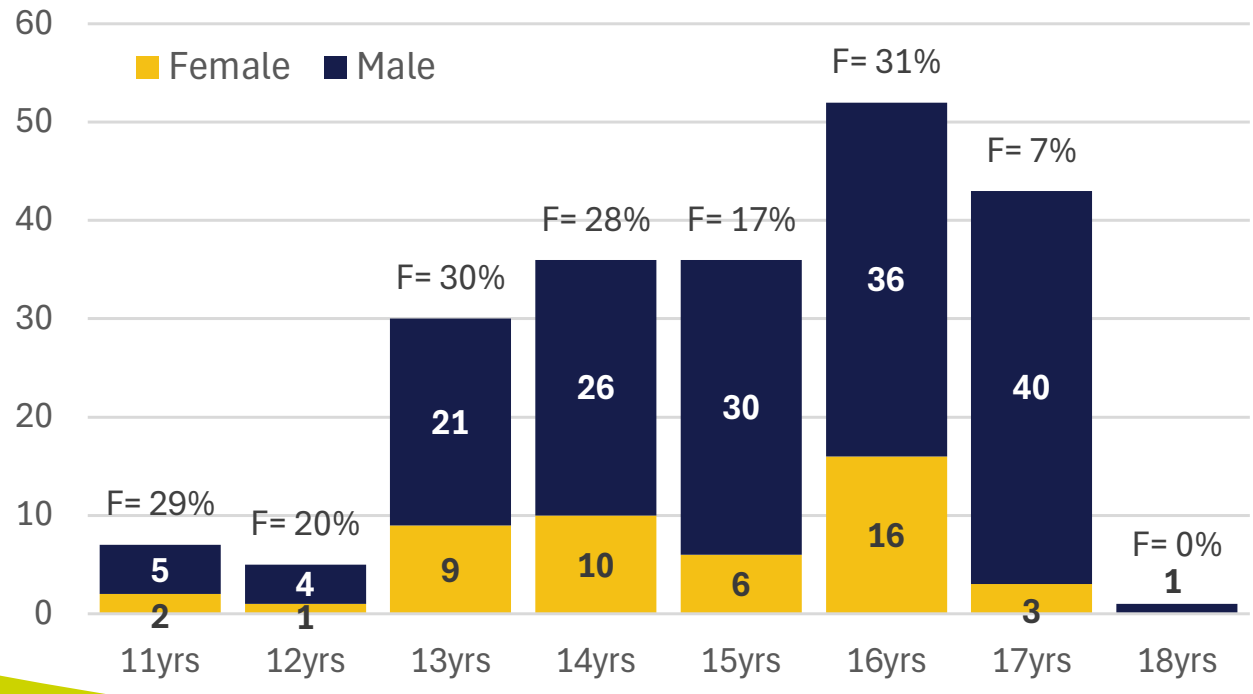
In addition to the joint protocol for Children in Care and Care Leavers, the service has specific strategies for:

- Younger children
- Girls
- Children from the global majority

These strategies set out Suffolk's commitment to a Child First approach that recognises that children experience the youth justice system in different ways. Each strategy provides a clear framework for tailoring practice, improving equity, reducing harm and ensuring that responses are proportionate, preventative and focused on long-term positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

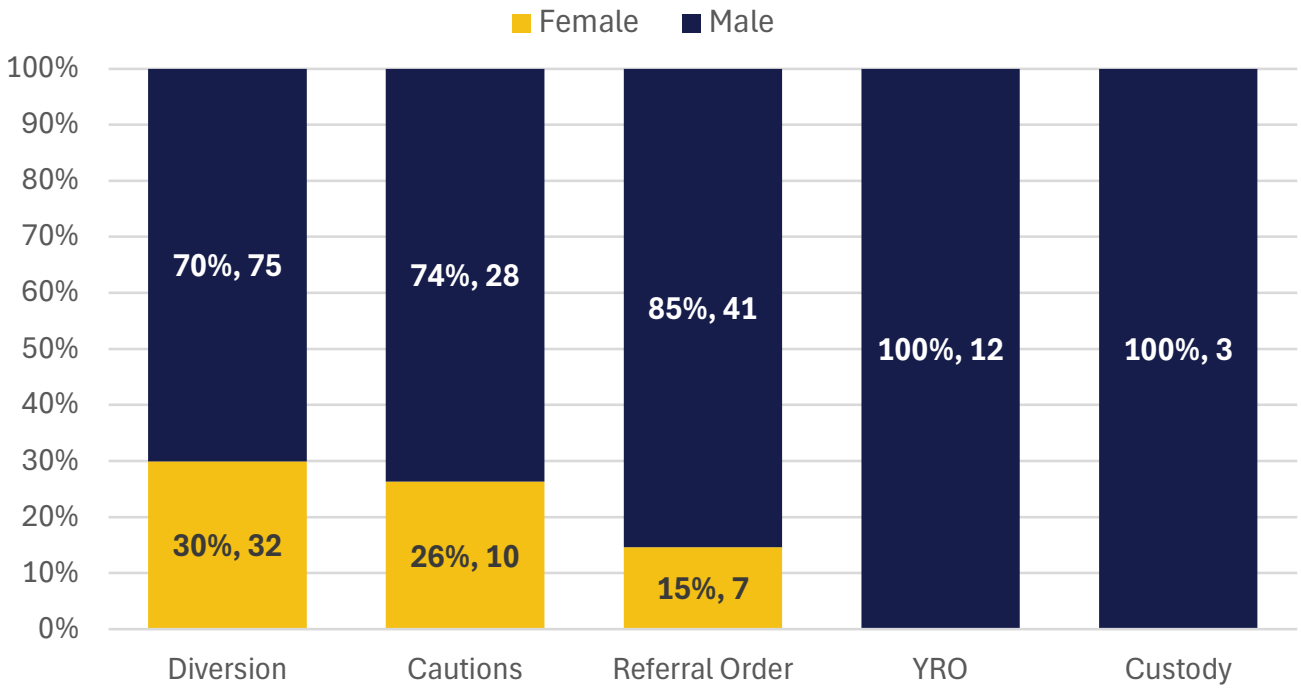
Girls make up a smaller proportion of the overall cohort (31%) and are more likely to be represented in the younger to mid-teen age groups rather than later adolescence. Their numbers peak at ages 13, 14 and 16, where they account for around 28–31% of the cohort, indicating greater involvement during these stages. However, participation declines sharply in older age groups, with very low numbers at age 17 and none at age 18. Overall, this pattern suggests that girls tend to enter the system earlier and are less likely to remain involved as they get older compared to boys

Number of children by age and gender, with % female



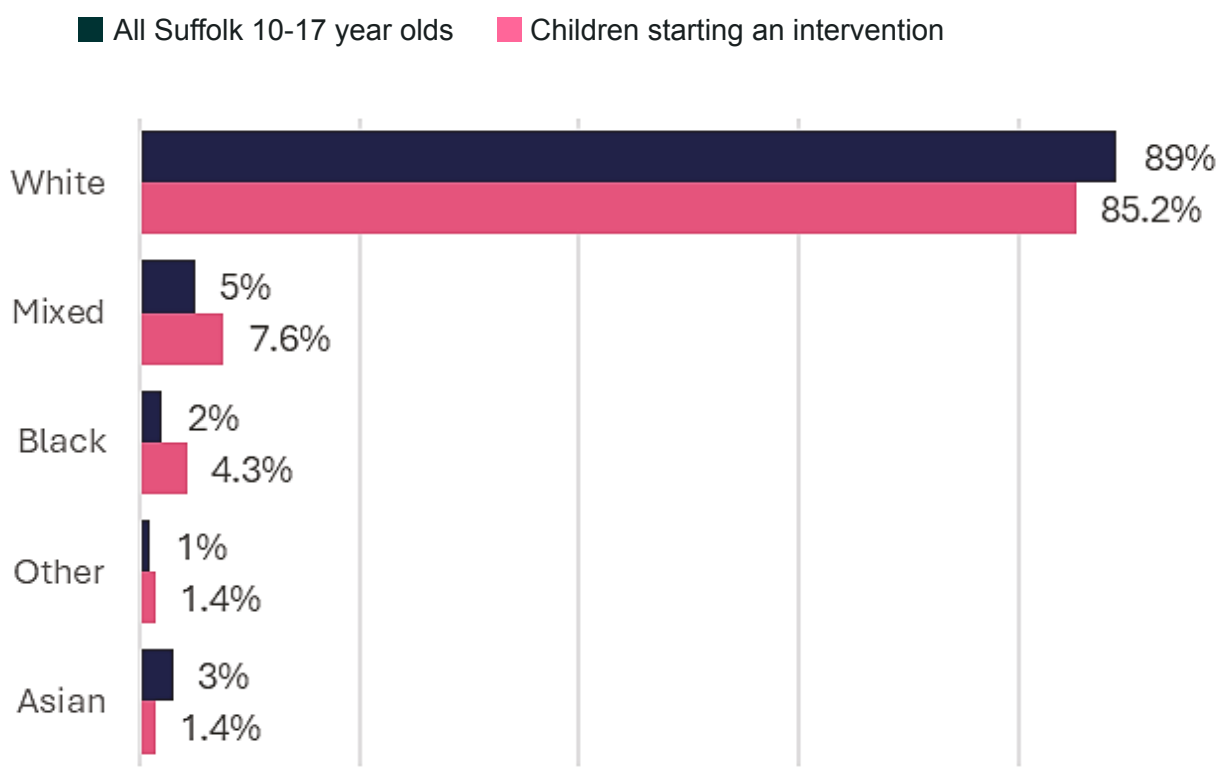
The data shows a clear gender disparity across outcome types, with boys making up the majority in every category. Girls are more represented at earlier, diversionary stages, accounting for 30% of diversion cases and 26% of cautions, suggesting greater use of lower-level early intervention. Their representation reduces as outcomes become more formal, falling to 15% at Referral Orders, with no girls receiving Youth Rehabilitation Orders or custody outcomes. This suggests girls are less likely to progress to higher-tariff outcomes, which may reflect offence type, seriousness or successful diversion. The findings reinforce the need to maintain effective early intervention for girls while ensuring their needs are fully understood and addressed, particularly where they are less visible in higher-end court outcomes.

Proportion and number of children



Mixed ethnicity children remain over-represented in the youth justice cohort, although their proportion has reduced by 1.9 percentage points to 7.6% (16 children). Over-representation is highest among 17-year-olds, where they make up 14% of the cohort. This sits within a wider pattern of disproportionality: White and Asian children are under-represented, while Black children are more than twice as represented compared with Suffolk's 10–17 population. The data highlights inequity, particularly for Black and mixed ethnicity children.

Ethnicity of children as a percentage (where known)



This data reinforces the need for continued attention to equity at key decision points and deeper analysis of the factors driving over-representation. As part of its response to over-representation, the service is exploring mentoring provision for specific groups, with a focus on understanding children's views and experiences.

Policing

The YJS is a key member of the Constabulary's Children and Young People's Board, which is Chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable. Both services provide challenge and support to each other and there is a proactive and strong relationship. Significant progress has been made in recent years to divert children appropriately and reduce First Time Entrants and re-offending. The Children and Young People's Board key priorities complement the Youth Justice Plan, including:

- Tackling disparity within the youth justice system
- Tackle knife crime
- Improve data
- Robust scrutiny of joint activity, including
  - diversionary outcomes
  - victim services
  - remand to custody cases
  - exception reporting for children detained in police custody for long periods of time

In addition, a new Police Electronic Notification to YOT (PENY) has been developed by Suffolk Constabulary, with contributions from YJS. This enhanced process will improve the quality and consistency of PENY submissions, strengthening the information shared between police and the YJS.

Opportunities will be explored to increase the level of direct contact that seconded police officers have with children and their families—particularly those from diverse communities and those who come into regular contact with the police. This aims to build positive relationships, divert children away from crime and antisocial behaviour, and ensure unmet needs are identified and appropriately supported.

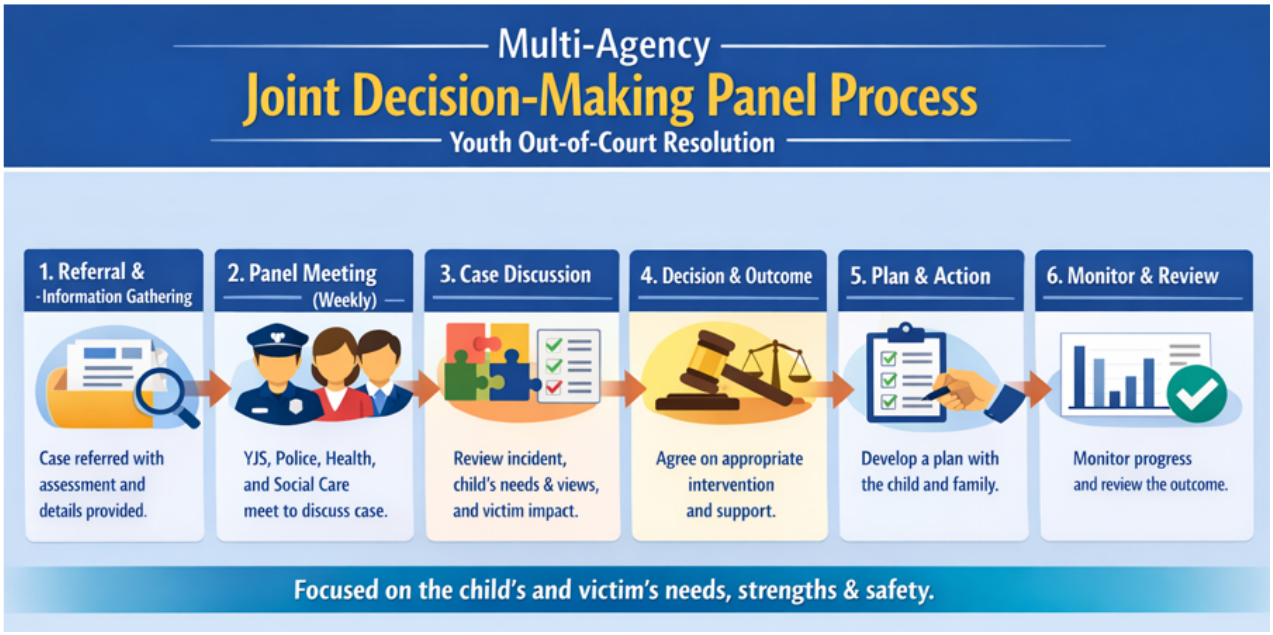
Prevention

In partnership with the Constabulary, the YJS will seek to engage and support children, via working in police custody. This presents a unique opportunity to utilise the reachable, teachable moment that detention can bring. Parents and caregivers will also be engaged to ensure they have the right support in place. In addition, the YJS will work with Children's Services to develop a targeted prevention offer that promotes positive outcomes and helps prevent children entering the justice system.

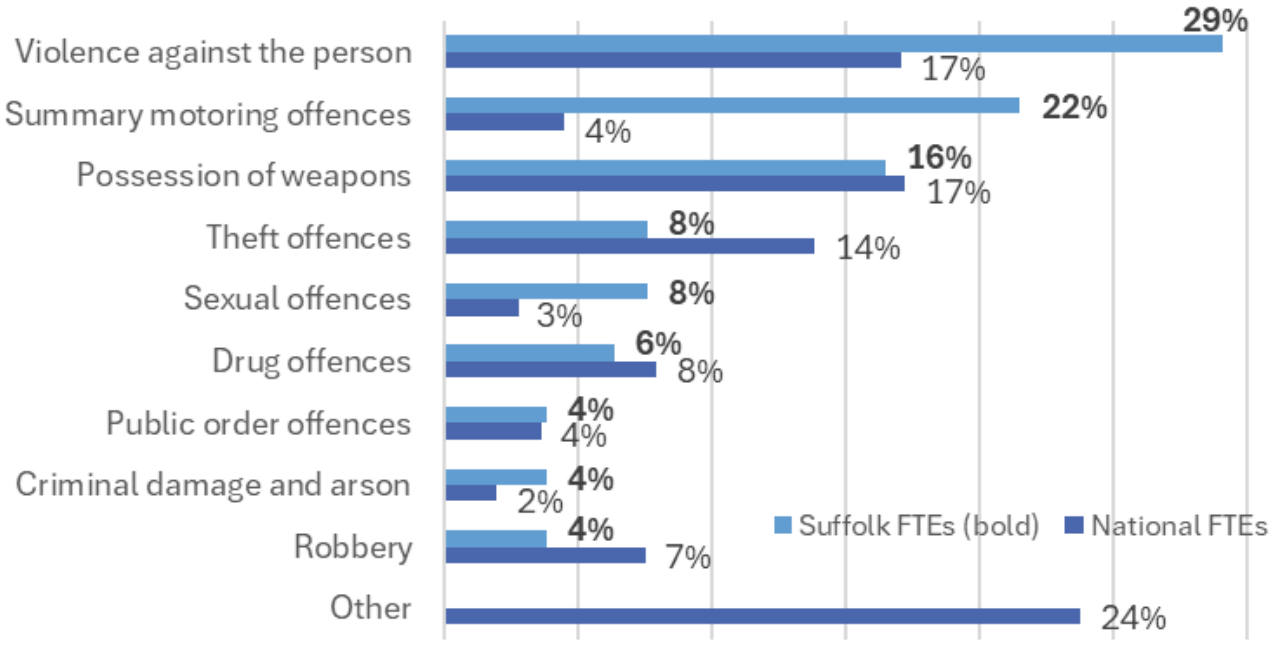
Diversion

All children referred into the YJS by the Police are assessed for their suitability for an Out of Court Resolution. This approach is designed to prevent unnecessary criminalisation and respond to children and victims in a proportionate, and evidence informed way, without net-widening.

Suffolk Constabulary will build upon the Deferred Prosecution Scheme introduced in June 2026 by ensuring it is considered for a broad range of offences and for all eligible children. In addition, a refreshed approach to police-led diversion will be introduced, enabling officers to utilise restorative justice for low-risk offences and children where appropriate.



Whilst Suffolk has seen positive outcomes from the multi-agency panel, motoring offences make up a much higher proportion of first-time entrants in Suffolk than they do nationally.



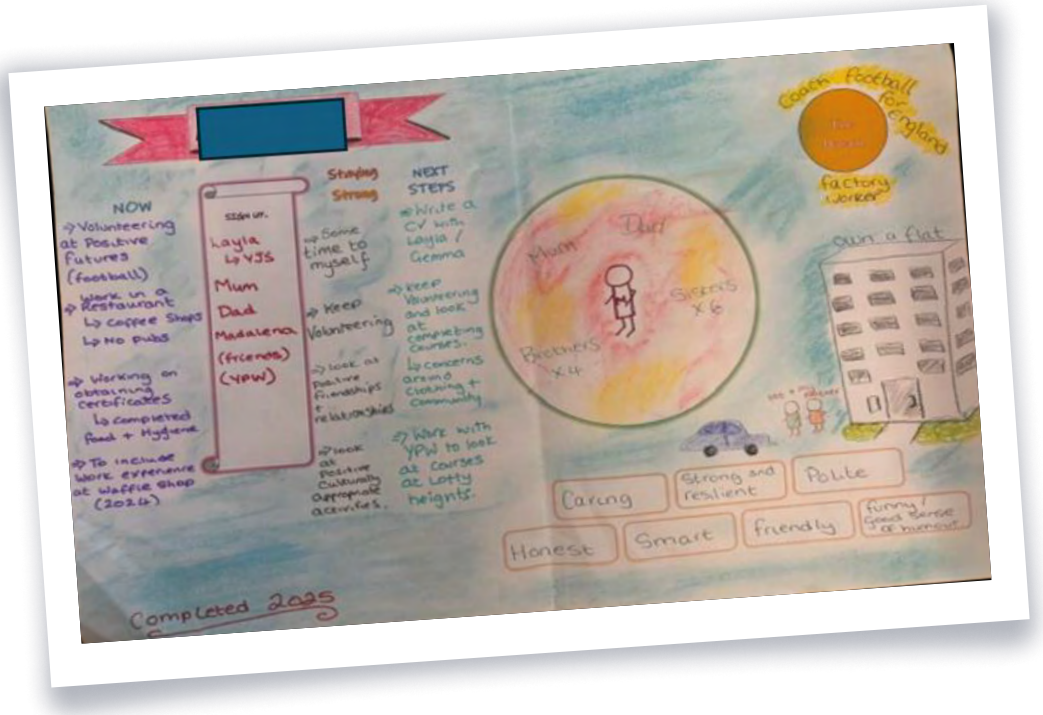
In order to address this, work will be undertaken to develop alternatives to prosecution for motoring offences, in partnership with Norfolk Police.

Education

The ETE Coordinators are now line managed by the Assistant Virtual Head. This decision was supported by the Board and enables the ETE coordinators to utilise expertise of navigating systems and processes to maximise the best outcomes for children. The role of the ETE Coordinator is to act as the educational specialist for the service. Providing information, advice, guidance and intervention to professionals and children whose educational needs and circumstances require specialist support, in conjunction with the YJS allocated Practitioner and professional network.

By collaborating with the Suffolk Virtual School, the YJS supports the coordinators to have access to advanced education systems and data, improving their knowledge and support of the children open to the service. Children who come into the service have ETE and SEND screenings which are RAG rated which formulate plans. The ETE coordinators work in tandem with the Speech, Language and Communication Therapist and the Educational Psychologist where appropriate, ensuring a joined-up approach.

The ETE Coordinators work directly with children, delivering Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) education using Pol-Ed for children who do not receive this through their education provision or who are not in education, regardless of age or SEND. The ETE Coordinators also undertake mini-path's with children to support their future planning.



The Youth Justice Board tasks youth justice services with measuring key performance indicators at the end of their involvement with youth justice. To that end, we look at a cohort of children who have ended (completed) an intervention in the financial year to assess their needs and education attendance. This number is different to the previously mentioned 210 children who started an intervention in the same year as some of these children are still open to Suffolk Youth Justice Service. Equally, some of the children ending their intervention this year will have started that intervention prior to the financial year.

ETE attendance	Statutory school age*		Above SSA*		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Full time	57	47%	47	44%	104	46%
Part time	47	39%	15	14%	62	27%
Not attending	10	8%	2	2%	12	5%
EHE	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%
CME/NEET	6	5%	43	40%	49	21%
Total	**121**	**100%**	**107**	**100%**	**228**	**100%**

**) Statutory school age (SSA) is up to and including academic year 11, above SSA is years 12-13.*

Areas of improvement since last year:

- Increase the proportion of children ending intervention in full-time education.
- Reduce the broader group of children who are CME/NEET, not attending despite having an offer, or electively home educated.
- Sustain engagement in part-time education for children who are not yet able to access full-time provision.
- Increase in the proportion of children leaving youth justice in suitable education, training or employment.

Social Care involvement	Children not in education		Children in education		All children ending YJ intervention	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Child in Care	12	19.%	21	13%	33	14%
Child Protection Plan	2	3%	9	5%	11	5%
Child in Need	14	23%	22	13%	36	16%
Early Help Plan	1	2%	2	1%	3	1%
No involvement	33	53%	112	68%	145	64%
Total	**62**	**100%**	**166**	**100%**	**228**	**100%**

Children not in education at the end of intervention were more likely to have Children's Services involvement than those in education, particularly as Children in Need or Children in Care. While 64% of all children ending intervention had no Children's Services involvement, this fell to 53% for children not in education, compared with 68% for those in education. This suggests that reduced education outcomes are more common among children with wider vulnerabilities and social care involvement.

Restorative Approaches and Victims

The service continues to deliver in line with the Code of Practice for Victims. 2025-2026 has seen further development of the restorative approaches team. The focus has been on embedding the revised policy and gaining victim views in a timely manner to support assessment, planning and decision making. Information available to victims using leaflets and other resources have been revised, as have the victim resources used by youth justice practitioners with children to support a restorative approach. Victim safety is routinely assessed and a collaborative safety plan devised to address any worries or concerns. We have noticed an increase in victims feeling more able to engage with restorative approaches with the children that caused them harm. During 2025 – 2026, the restorative team successfully facilitated five restorative justice conferences.

The Restorative Approaches Practitioners are developing links with a range of community provision to support the needs of victims. This includes drawing on the knowledge and skills of youth justice specialist workers such as education practitioners to address any unmet needs and support access to services.

The Restorative Approaches Assistant Operational Manager will be applying for their registration during 2026 – 2027 alongside a Restorative Approaches Practitioner which will mean the team will all be registered with the Restorative Approaches Council.

During 2026 – 2027, the team are developing a brochure to show victims and magistrates the type of reparation activities that are being undertaken by children as part of their contact with the service. The team will continue to develop through a two-year fixed term senior reparation co-ordinator to strengthen the coordination, oversight, quality assurance, and safety of reparation delivery across the county. The service will co-produce a review of service delivery, following the analysis of victim feedback and working with the Board Lead for Victims.




WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT?
THERE ARE MANY FORMS OF RESTORATIVE APPROACHES:
Restorative Justice Conference (RJC)
A RJC is a face-to-face meeting with your victim. The meeting will talk about what happened, who has been affected and how and how things can be put right. This can sometimes be a way of making amends with the harmed person, if that's something you feel you would like to do.
Letter of Explanation
A Letter of Explanation is another way of sharing your thoughts and feelings about the offence to the victim. This would be in your own words, and you would be supported by your practitioner to complete this.
Direct Reparation
You may be able to repair the damage you caused.
Shuttle Mediation
A practitioner will talk to the victim, and to you, and pass on their/your thoughts to the other.
Indirect Reparation
You may be able to carry out a practical task for the local community.

Case study: Direct restorative practice following a farm fire

What happened:

A fire destroyed a hay/straw store at a working mixed farm. No one was physically injured, but the damage caused major disruption (loss of feed and bedding, damage to buildings/equipment, clean-up and downtime). Police enquiries identified two local children as responsible; both admitted involvement, and the harmed person was offered a restorative option alongside youth justice interventions.



What work was undertaken

The restorative practitioner completed separate preparation meetings with the farm owner and with each child (with parents/carers), focusing on the principles of restorative meetings, emotional/practical safety, readiness to take responsibility, and what each person wanted from the process. A neutral venue and clear ground rules were agreed.

- Direct meeting (facilitated conference): the children described what happened and answered the owner's questions; the owner explained the real-life impact on the farm and staff; the facilitator ensured respectful communication and kept the discussion focused on harm and repair.

- Agreement: verbal and written apologies; supervised reparation hours supporting a community farm/rural charity (to avoid insurance and safety barriers on the harmed farm); completion of a fire-safety learning intervention; and indirect progress updates to the farm owner (via the practitioner), with clear boundaries around future contact.

What impact did it have?

After the meeting, each party was de-briefed and offered support. The agreement was shared (need-to-know) with relevant practitioners so actions could be delivered safely and completion could be confirmed back to the harmed person.

- **For the farm owner:** reported feeling heard, getting answers to key questions, and increased reassurance after seeing clear responsibility-taking and a concrete plan for repair.
- **For the children:** improved understanding of consequences beyond “property damage” (impact on people’s work, stress, and the practical knock-on effects for a farm); opportunity to make amends through structured, supervised reparation.
- **For the wider community:** visible constructive repair and prevention-focused learning (fire safety), supporting confidence that the issue was taken seriously.



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A family run Estate based in the heart of beautiful East Suffolk 🚜 🌳 🏡
www.naunton.net

Back in August last year, we suffered an arson attack on the Estate, a story that was widely reported. Just as the harvest team for @_westrope_ were finishing after a long day, they had to leap back into action, working alongside the @suffolkfrs to create a barrier and limit the risk of the fire spreading.

It was incredibly difficult for everyone involved.

It would have been all too easy for a story like this to simply fade away, as so many incidents in rural communities do, but this one hasn't.

With the support of the @suffolkcountycouncilofficial the two teenagers have come forward to apologise to us directly, supported by their families.

Saying sorry isn't easy, but it matters, and for that we commend them both. This year, they have returned to the Estate to undertake community service as part of making amends.

Here's to looking forward and to rural communities in Suffolk. 👏

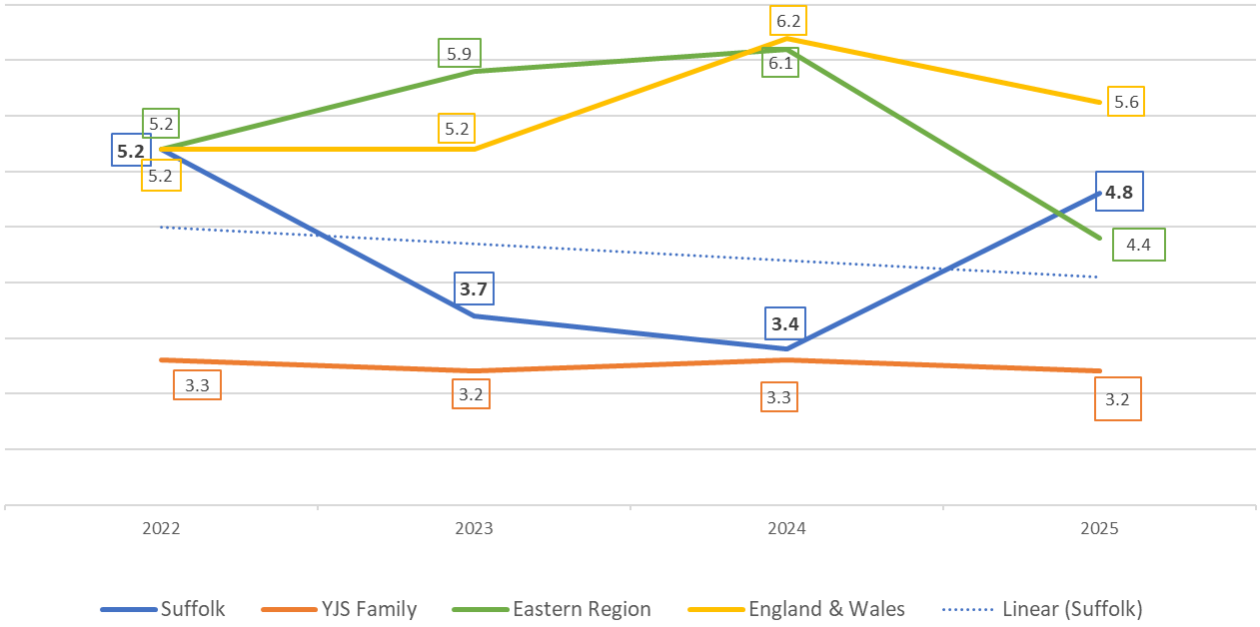
Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

A serious violence offence is defined as ‘any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of five or above’. Gravity scores range from 1 (least serious) to 8 (most serious). These gravity scores differ from the police gravity matrix scores.

The latest YJB SYV Toolkit published in March 2026 shows that Suffolk’s SYV rate per year has increased in 2025, after two years of decreasing rates. However, the longer-term direction of travel is a reducing SYV rate in Suffolk (see chart below).

Children in Suffolk who received an outcome in 2025 as a result of committing a serious offence waited an average of 42 weeks between committing the offence(s) and receiving an outcome, for 8 children it took over a year for the matter to reach sentencing at court.

Annual Serious Offence Rate Comparison (calendar year)



34 offences were committed by 22 children, all but one were boys. 5 were from global majority backgrounds and 7 children were in the 10-14 age group. They were all 14 when they received their outcome, but one was 12 when committing three robbery offences and one (the only girl) was 13 when she committed 2 violence offences. Six of the children had no previous involvement with Suffolk Youth Justice Service.

To support driving down SYV in Suffolk, both the YJS Partnership Board and Suffolk Public Health have endorsed a preventing youth violence conference in 2026-2027. This will support the Suffolk system to:

- Understand the local picture and drivers for youth violence
- Use the YEF evidence to shape local practice and strategy
- Support practitioners and leaders to translate evidence into practice

The Criminal Exploitation Hubs facilitated the Bystander session to assemblies across the county to over 30 different schools, following the successful pilot in the early part of 2025.

This presentation teaches children about types of criminal exploitation, its impact, and safe actions to take if they suspect someone is affected. To date over 15,000 children aged 10 – 15 have attended the presentation. The presentation has been so successful, it has received recognition from the NWG Network, who originally commissioned Bystander training for all adults within sports settings.



The service is tackling SYV by working closely with key strategic partners, including MAPPA, Police and Children's Services. The service also works alongside the restorative justice team to ensure victims have a safety plan, receive appropriate support, and are signposted to additional services where needed.



The county's exploitation service, Make A Change, sits within Children and Young People's Services. This enables close joint working with the YJS to improve outcomes for children. Where children are experiencing exploitation, they may also be discussed at partnership meetings, including those led by the police.

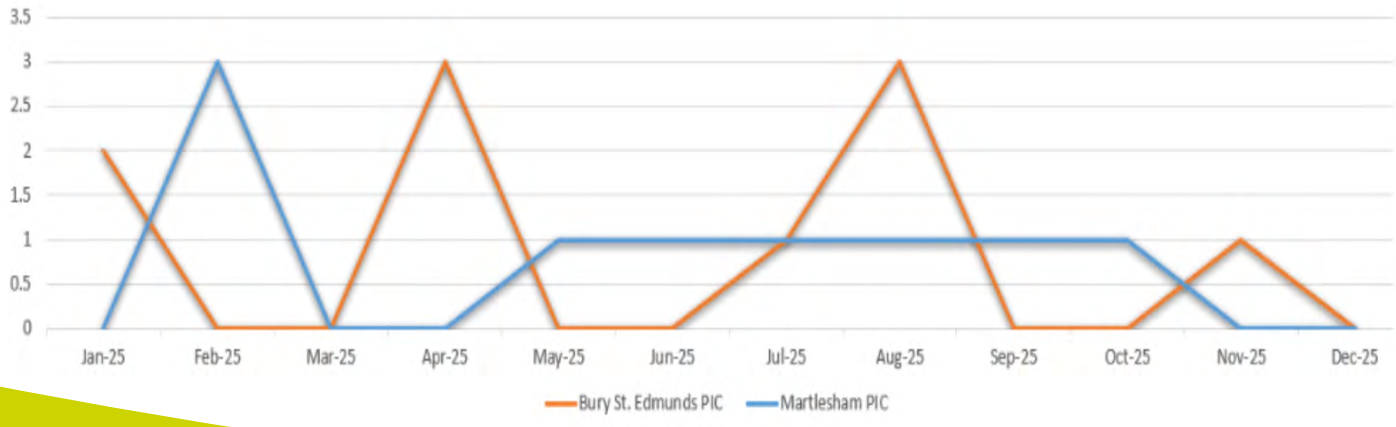
The CE Hubs will deliver presentations at the 2026 Crucial Crew events across Suffolk, providing targeted preventative education to Year 6 pupils. The sessions focus on raising awareness of criminal exploitation, helping children to recognise early warning signs and understand how exploitation can occur. This builds on the success from last year, where over 1,300 pupils received this input.

Additionally, all children assessed as high safety to others, safety and wellbeing for the child, and future offending are all overseen at the county Safety Panel which is Chaired by the YJS Deputy Head of Service.

Detention and Police Custody

In collaboration with Norfolk Youth Justice Service, Suffolk will continue to co-chair regular meetings with police custody staff, fostering and adoption services, and emergency out-of-hours duty services. These meetings will review the records of all children eligible for transfer to local authority accommodation under PACE regulations and address other safeguarding issues in police custody. This year we have seen the number of children remanded in police custody drop to 19 children, compared to 21 last year.

A multi-agency joint safeguarding audit of children in custody has been undertaken, with the learning outcomes and recommendations will form part of the service development plan.



Remands



The Bail and Remand Policy was introduced in May 25 which includes a process where any child at risk of remand to Youth Detention Accommodation an emergency professionals meeting is convened, which includes the YJS court officer, the Police and is chaired by Safeguarding. The meeting explores options for bespoke and robust bail packages to further reduce custodial remands. This is now an embedded process. Workshops have also been delivered to CYP staff in this area.

In 2025-2026 9 boys were subject to court remand. 4 children were remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation and the remaining 5 were Remanded to Local Authority Accommodation. Most children (7) went on to be sentenced to community orders, following a period of remand.

Suffolk will work with regional partners to improve bail support and community remands to ensure custody is a last resort

Use of Custody and Constructive Resettlement



Training on custody and resettlement has been delivered to a select number of practitioners, with the aim of developing a core team possessing this specialised knowledge base. The seconded probation officer has been secondarily allocated to all custodial sentences, making best use of their specialist skills and experiences.

All custody cases are discussed at the multi-agency safety panels and have Deputy Head of Service oversight. Workshops have been delivered to SEND Statutory Services, Leaving Care and Probation, to increase the understanding of youth custody and how best to support children as they resettle back into their communities.

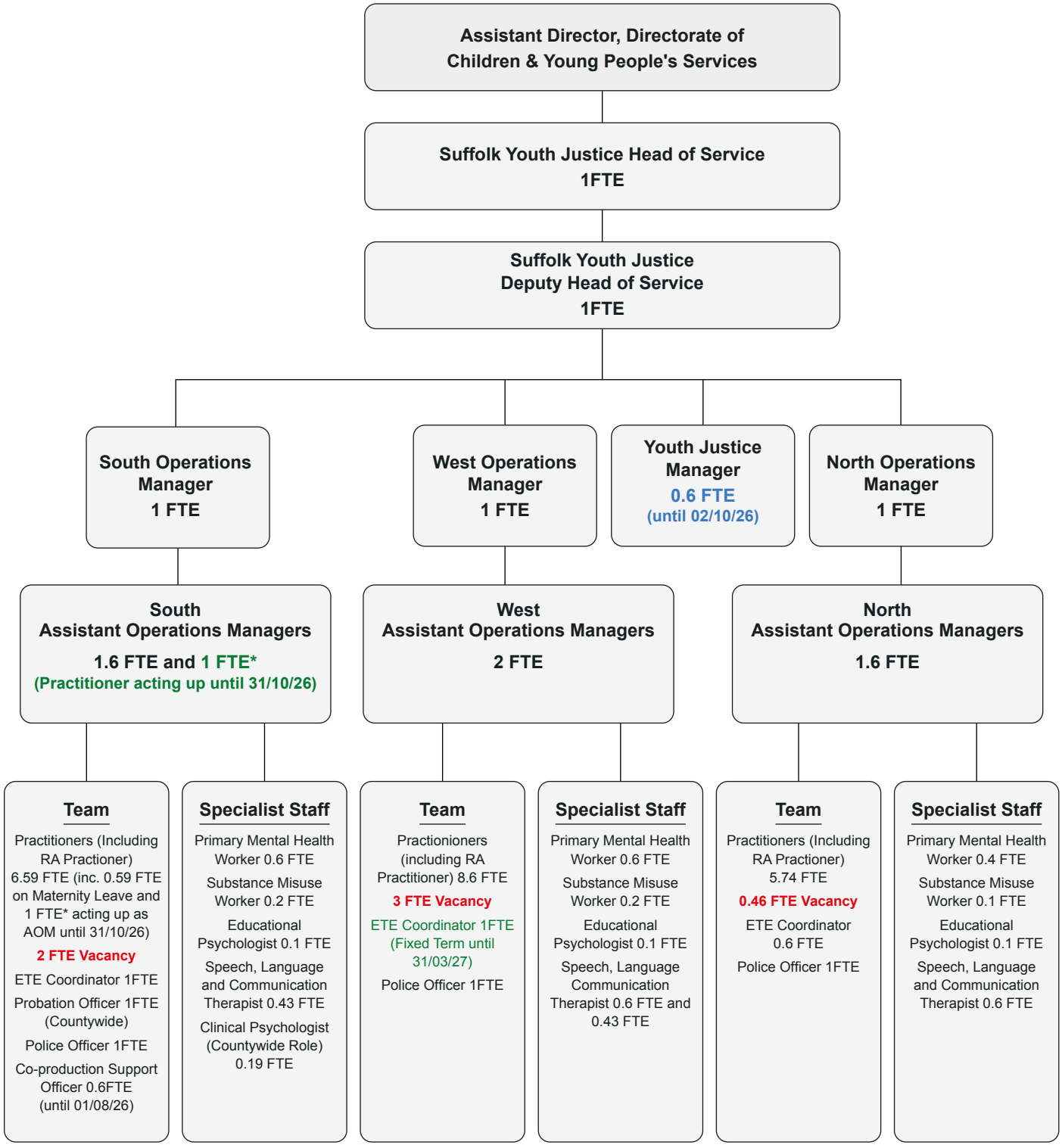
Working with Families

Seeing children ‘as children’, means that we must work with families to support children to move away from offending behaviour. Therefore, collaborating with families and personal networks remains a vital component of our work, ensuring that parents are equipped with the appropriate resources and support to enable them to navigate adolescence. This includes supporting parents / caregivers to hold conversations with their children and to find safe and effective solutions to resolve potential conflict.

Our objective this year is to enhance our collaboration with families by recognising their valuable contributions to planning, and by acknowledging the efforts they make to ensure the safety of their child and others.

Chair of YJS Board	Chris Robson
Signature	
Date	30 June 2026

Suffolk Youth Justice Partnership Board Structure Chart

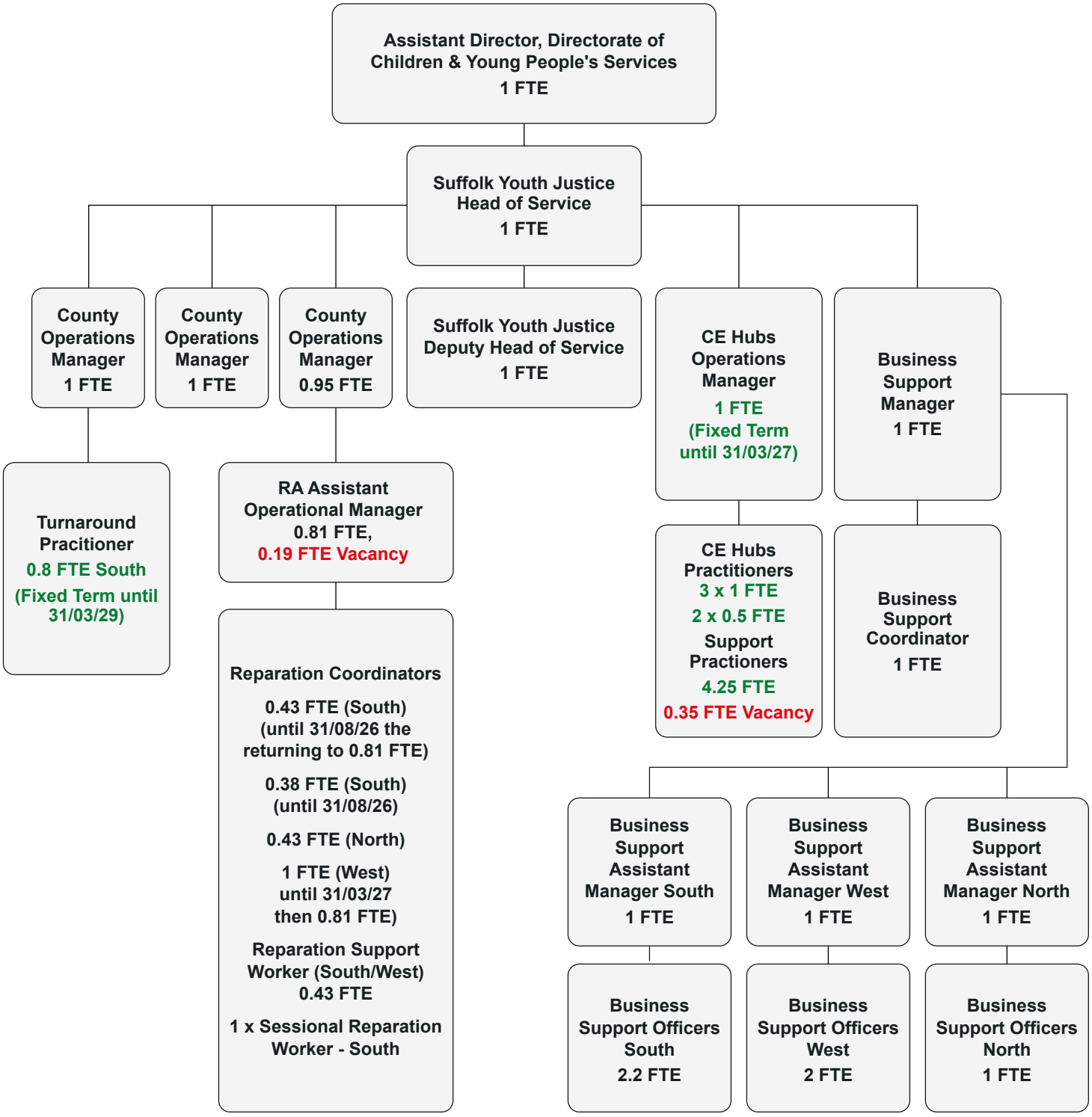


Key

Red = Vacancy **Green** = Fixed Term **Blue** = Temporary Staff

*Last updated 23/05/2026

Suffolk Youth Justice Partnership Board Structure Chart



Key

Red = Vacancy **Green** = Fixed Term **Blue** = Temporary Staff

*Last updated 23/05/2026

Staffing of SYJS by gender and ethnicity: No of individual people

*As at 23/05/2026

ETHNICITY	MANAGERS STRATEGIC (FEMALE)	MANAGERS STRATEGIC (MALE)	MANAGERS OPERATIONAL	MANAGERS OPERATIONAL (MALE)	PRACTITION-ERS (FEMALE)	PRACTITION-ERS (MALE)	ADMINISTRA-TIVE (FEMALE)	ADMINISTRA-TIVE (MALE)	SESSIONAL (FEMALE)	SESSIONAL (MALE)	TOTAL (FEMALE)	TOTAL (MALE)
Asian or Asian British											0	0
Black or Black British						4					0	4
Mixed				1	3	1					3	2
Chinese or Other								1			0	1
White or White British	1	2	13		36	9	13	1	6	1	69	13
Not Known											1	0
TOTAL	1	2	14	1	39	14	13	2	6	1	73	20
Known Disability			1		5	2	1		1	1	8	3

Appendix 3 - Service Development Plan

Theme / Priority	Action / Deliverable	Lead	Measures of success
Child First / Participation	Develop multi-agency plan responding to Volunteering Matters findings (children's priorities) and communicate "you said, we did".	HOS / Partnership Board	Actions delivered; children can see changes.
Child First / Participation	Launch and sustain Youth Advisory Board (clear offer, recruitment, support and meeting cycle).	Engagement Officer / YJS Leadership Team	Attendance sustained; evidence of influence on service decisions.
Child First / Feedback	Deliver Feedback Frenzy and surveys twice yearly with children, families and victims; collate and act on learning.	YJS Leadership Team	Two cycles completed; actions tracked; improved satisfaction.
Speech, Language & Communication	Create Sensory First Aid kits and deliver interactive design sessions with children; deliver specialist training and develop practice sessions for YJS.	SLC Team / NHS partners	Kits in use; staff trained; improved identification/support for sensory needs.
Substance Misuse	Improve substance misuse screening for practitioners and review universal resources and workshops.	Turning Point / YJS Improved screening completion and referrals; audit shows improved practice.	Improved screening completion and referrals; audit shows improved practice.
SEND / Education Psychology	Deliver EHCP practice sessions to practitioners (using EHCPs in assessments/plans; clarify unclear EHCP details for review).	Educational Psychology	Improved quality of plans; clearer SEND needs and adjustments recorded.
Health & Wellbeing	Operate Health and Hygiene Banks; complete exit interviews and use feedback to guide next steps.	YJS Leadership Team / Public Health	Feedback gathered; recommendations implemented.

Theme / Priority	Action / Deliverable	Lead	Measures of success
Standards / Quality	Roll out single child's plan for children across statutory and non-statutory caseloads and embed consistently.	YJS Leadership Team	Audit improvement; consistent plan quality across pathways.
Victims / Reparation	Develop brochure for victims and magistrates showing reparation offer and activity; embed communications in court/ victim offer.	Restorative Approaches Team	Brochure used in practice; improved understanding of reparation options and suggestions for new projects.
Workforce Development	Host Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) training with CYPS: practical application of toolkit and consistent evidence-informed practice (knife crime root causes).	YJS Leadership Team / YEF	Attendance and evaluation; evidence of toolkit use in plans and interventions.
Serious Violence	Host multi-sector preventing youth violence conference with national experts (YEF) and agree system actions.	YJS / Public Health / Partnership Board	Conference delivered; agreed actions tracked; practice changes implemented.
Prevention / Police custody	Deliver support in police custody (engage children at point of detention; involve parents/caregivers).	Police / Turnaround lead	Contacts delivered; referral follow-through; reduced repeat detention.
Policing / Data sharing	Implement Police Electronic Notification to YOT (planned Summer 2026) and monitor quality.	Suffolk Constabulary	Improved completeness/ consistency of notifications; reduced delays.
Diversion	Build on Deferred Prosecution Scheme and refreshed police-led diversion (use restorative justice for low-risk offences).	Police / YJS	Increased appropriate diversion; reduced unnecessary criminalisation.

Theme / Priority	Action / Deliverable	Lead	Measures of success
Diversion	Develop alternatives to prosecution for motoring offences with Norfolk Police (route suitable cases to Out of Court Disposal; expand diversionary options).	Police / YJS	Reduced prosecutions for eligible motoring offences; stable outcomes.
Education	Analyse education entitlement gaps (excluded, part-time timetables, EHE) including disparity and care status.	Virtual School / ETE Coordinators / Intelligence Hub	Clear baseline; actions reduce gaps; improved ETE outcomes.
Disparity / Over-represented groups	Develop a mentoring offer for over-represented groups (including engagement with children to understand needs and preferences).	SYJS / VCSE partners	Mentoring pathway in place; engagement sustained; improved outcomes for cohorts.
Children in Care / Care leavers	Review local Protocol for Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children in Care and Care Leavers in line with national review; update multi-agency plan.	YJS / Children's Social Care / Police	Protocol refreshed; practice changes evidenced; reduced avoidable criminalisation.
Custody / Safeguarding	Deliver actions from multi-agency safeguarding audit of children in custody and embed learning into practice.	YJS / Police Custody / Children's Social Care	Improved compliance with PACE transfers and safeguarding standards.
Remands	Deliver remand partnership workstreams (bail support, community remands, remand fostering testing, accommodation options, family support, increased supervision).	Regional Remand Partnership / YJS	Fewer custodial remands; improved bail packages.

Theme / Priority	Action / Deliverable	Lead	Measures of success
Evidence / Innovation	Co-create and deliver Active Bystander groupwork with children and VCSE partners; align content to local consultation findings.	YJS / VCSE	Programme delivered; participants report improved confidence/skills; evaluation report.
Education / Prevention	Continue and refine Reconnect Programme pilot (run next group; incorporate feedback; include schools-based practitioner; evaluate outcomes).	YJS / School / Partners	Attendance/ engagement improved; reduced suspensions; learning captured.
Data / Intelligence Hub	Develop youth justice “data universe” and refresh operational/strategic dashboards; develop additional dashboards (victims/restorative; KPI needs links).	Intelligence Hub	Dashboards live and used; improved insight for Board decisions; data quality improved.
Data / Partnership	Improve data sharing with police to strengthen insight into children’s journeys and victim impact.	Intelligence Hub / Police	Agreement in place; regular data flows; improved analytical outputs.
Workforce / Volunteers	Broaden and diversify Referral Order volunteer pipeline via targeted outreach and inclusive recruitment materials; monitor demographics	Referral Order Team / Volunteers Coordinator	Increased diversity of volunteers; improved conversion and retention rates.

Thank you
for reading our
document.