

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Tuesday 1st July

at 5.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Boddy (VC), Buchan, Dunbar, Harrison, Holbrook, Little and Morley (C).

Co-opted Members: Gillian Hood, C of E Diocese and Joanne Wilson, RC Diocese representatives.

School Heads Representatives: Adam Palmer (Secondary), Sue Sharpe (Primary), Zoe Westley (Special).

Parent Governor Representative: Martin Pout

Six Young Peoples Representatives

Observer: Councillor Allen, Chair of Adult and Community Based Services Committee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2025 (*previously circulated and published*).

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

- 4.1 Youth Justice Strategic Plan – *Executive Director, Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

5. KEY DECISIONS

- 5.1 The Disaggregation of the Childrens Multi-Agency Hub from Stockton-On-Tees – *Assistant Director, Childrens and Joint Commissioning*

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

No items

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 7.1 Families First Reforms - *Assistant Director, Early Intervention, Performance and Commissioning*
- 7.2 OFSTED inspection of Exmoor Grove Childrens Home and Stockton Road Childrens Home – *Assistant Director, Children’s and Joint Commissioning*
- 7.3 School’s Capital Works Programme – *Executive Director, Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 23rd September at 5.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 JULY 2025



Subject: YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN
Report of: Executive Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning Services
Decision Type: Budget and Policy Framework

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present Children's Services Committee with the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2025 - 2026 (**Appendix 1**) and gain approval from the Committee to begin a consultation process for the approval of this plan. During the consultation process the plan will be presented to Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee 23 June 2025, Safer Hartlepool Partnership on 4 July 2025, , and Audit and Governance Committee on 5 July 2025.
- 2.2 Consultation responses will be incorporated into the final plan which will be reported back to Children's Services Committee on 23 September prior to final adoption of the plan by full Council on 2 October.
- 2.3 The final adopted plan will also be sent to the National Youth Justice Board.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The National Youth Justice System primarily exists to ensure that children and young people between the age of 10 and 17 do not engage in offending or re-offending behavior and to ensure that where a young person is arrested and charged with a criminal offence, they are dealt with differently to adult offenders to reflect their particular welfare needs as children.

- 3.2 Local Youth Offending Services were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to develop, deliver, commission and coordinate the provision of youth justice services within each Local Authority.
- 3.3 Hartlepool Youth Justice Service was established in April 2000 and is responsible for youth justice services locally. It is a multi-agency service and is made up of representatives from the Council's Children's Services, Police, Probation, Health and Education.
- 3.4 The primary objectives of Youth Justice Services are to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people and reduce the use of custody.
- 3.5 There is a statutory requirement for all Youth Justice Services to annually prepare, a local Youth Justice Plan for submission to the national Youth Justice Board.
- 3.6 The annual Youth Justice Plan provides an overview of how the Youth Justice Service, the Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board and wider partnership will ensure that the service has sufficient resources and infrastructure to deliver youth justice services in its area in line with the requirements of the National Standards for Youth Justice Services to:
- Promote performance improvement;
 - Shape youth justice system improvement; and
 - Improve outcomes for young people, victims and the broader community.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Youth Justice Service adopts the following Strategic Objectives and Priorities for 2025-2026 Plan.

Re-offending - reduce further offending by children who have committed crime with a particular emphasis on continuing the development of Service interventions that are structured, responsive, tailored to meet identified individual need and evaluated. (Both within Youth Justice Services and provided by external agencies).

Early/Targeted Intervention, Prevention & Diversion – sustain the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that creative strategies and services remain in place locally to prevent children from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Remand, Custody & Constructive Resettlement – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the need for remands and custody. Ensure bespoke constructive resettlement packages are implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Risk and Safety & Wellbeing (Asset Plus) – ensure all children entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a high quality structured needs assessment to identify risk of harm, safety and wellbeing concerns and desistance factors, to inform effective intervention and risk management.

Restorative Justice – ensure all victims of youth crime have the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is incorporated in to the work undertaken with children who offend.

Effective Governance – ensure that the Youth Justice Strategic Management Board is a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Justice Service performance and drives continuous improvement.

Voice of the Children – ensure that all children are actively involved in developing their own plans and are encouraged and supported to inform current and future service delivery.

'Child First' – ensure that the Child First principles are regularly reviewed and embedded within the Youth Justice Service and that every child has the opportunity to live a safe and crime free life and make a positive contribution to society.

Education, Training, Employment – Working in collaboration with partners i.e. Schools, Virtual School and One Stop Shop to ensure all children open to the YJS are actively engaging in some form of suitable ETE, thus reducing NEET numbers, increasing attendance and improving outcomes.

Substance Misuse – Working in collaboration with partners i.e. Horizons/START to improve and sustain the engagement of children open to the YJS within substance misuse services

Serious Violence & Exploitation – Working with and alongside all partners including the Police, MACE and Violence Reduction Unit to address and reduce serious violence and all forms of child exploitation

Over Represented Children - Identify and address any areas of over representation within the YJS cohort alongside the management board and partners.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	<p>The strategic plan identifies key risk to future delivery as detailed in Section 8. of the plan these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unpredictability associated with secure remand episodes and secure remand length has the potential to
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	<p>place significant financial pressure on Youth Justice Service and the broader Local Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the potential for reduction in YJB grant and partnership financial and 'in-kind' contributions pre and post 2024/25 • Performance on reoffending outcomes and impact on children • Continued concerns around Serious Youth Violence, Criminal Exploitation and County Lines.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no financial considerations arising from this report.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	Crime and Disorder Act 1998 A local authority must submit a youth justice plan annually to the Youth Justice Board setting out (a) how youth justice services are to be provided and funded in their area and (b) how the YOTs established by them are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate and what functions they are to carry out. The plan must be published in such manner and by such date as the Secretary of State may direct.
CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	There are no specific additional consideration relating to child and family poverty arising from this report, however such considerations are included in our assessment into the circumstances for children and young people and will, if necessary, have actions working alongside partners in place to seek to limit the impact upon children and families as a consequence of child poverty
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	Equality and Diversity is considered within the report in relation to specific individual and groups of young people
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no specific staffing considerations
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are no specific environmental, sustainability and climate change considerations arising from this report

CONSULTATION	The report is being presented to Children's Services Committee to seek approval to commence a programme of consultation on the draft 2025 – 2026 plan. Consultation will be undertaken with children, young people and their families, partners and other key stakeholders prior to a final draft of the plan being prepared which will be presented to Children's Services Committee and full Council.
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6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To note the progress made against the local Youth Justice Plan (2024/2025).
- 6.2 To approve the draft local Youth Justice Plan (2025/2026) for consultation as outlined in the report prior to the final report being presented to Children's Services Committee in September 2025.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The development of the Youth Justice Plan for 2025 – 2026 will provide the Youth Justice Service with a clear steer to bring about further reductions in youth offending and contribute to improving outcomes for children, young people and their families alongside the broader community.
- 7.2 The local Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2025 – 2026 will establish responsibility across the Youth Justice Service and the Youth Justice Strategic Board for taking each improvement activity forward within agreed timescales.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:
 - Crime and Disorder Act 1998

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off: -

Managing Director	Date: 10.06.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 10.06.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 10.06.2025



Hartlepool Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2025-26



Service	Hartlepool Youth Justice Service (YJS)
Assistant Director	Laura Gough, Assistant Director Children's Services
Chair of YJS Board	Jo Heaney, Head of Commissioning (Children, Young People and Maternity - Tees Valley) North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. (Chair Hartlepool YJS Management Board)

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Foreword

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Hartlepool Youth Justice Strategic Plan. This plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and the broader local Youth Justice Partnership for the next year.

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership, Community Safety Plan 2024-27 establishes a vision for the town:

“Hartlepool will be a place: - that is sustainable, clean, safe and green” and their strategic objective is “to make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit”. The priorities for the partnership are Anti-social Behaviour, Drugs and Alcohol, Domestic Violence and Abuse and Serious Violence.

The Youth Justice Service and broader partnership has a key role in contributing to this vision, by continuing to deliver a high quality, effective and safe youth justice service that prevents crime and the fear of crime, whilst ensuring that children who do offend are identified, managed and supported appropriately, without delay.

In recent years, Hartlepool has witnessed a significant reduction in youth crime. The local youth justice partnership has been particularly effective in reducing the numbers of children entering the youth justice system for the first time, but there remains a need to drive down incidents of re-offending by children who have previously offended.

This will be achieved through a combination of robust interventions designed to manage and reduce risk of harm, support safety & wellbeing, restore interpersonal relationships, promote whole family engagement and achieve positive outcomes all wrapped around a “Child First” ethos. Encouragingly, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service, alongside partners, continues to maintain a strong health offer for all children and is constantly striving to build upon its restorative offer, whilst ensuring that victims of youth crime also have a voice.

2023-2024 saw a continued increase in work placed upon the service; Turnaround continued to grow, the learning also continued around the new KPI's and the service continued to work alongside the OPCC and Community Safety partners with the Immediate Justice programme. Despite the added workload, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and the broader Youth Justice Partnership continue to help make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

In 2025-26, we will strive to continuously improve by:

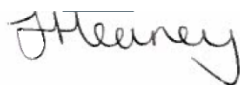
- Maintaining and building upon the current health offer, with trauma informed practice at its core.
- Continuing to work with partners to develop a clear and consistent approach to all forms of child exploitation.
- Embedding a ‘child first’ approach and making sure children are put first, regardless of their age.
- Continuing to maintain a creative Early/Targeted Intervention, Prevention and Diversion offer.
- Enhance the management of risk for those children assessed as being a high risk of harm to others, ensure we are safeguarding the public and preventing further victims of crime

None of the above will be possible without the continued support and close working relationships of our partners and Children's Services. In addition, these relationships allow us to mitigate the

risks of reducing partnership budgets whilst maintaining the quality and effectiveness of the Service.

As always, the local authority and Strategic Management Board is extremely grateful for the skill, commitment and dedication shown by managers, staff, employees and volunteers of the YJS in continuing to support children who offend or are at risk of becoming involved in offending.

On behalf of the Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board, I am pleased to pledge my support to, and endorse, the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2025-26

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Heaney', with a horizontal line above the first part of the name.

Jo Heaney, Head of Commissioning (Children, Young People and Maternity - Tees Valley)
North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.
(Chair Hartlepool YJS Management Board)

1. Introduction, vision, strategy & local context

Introduction

The National Youth Justice System primarily exists to ensure that children between the age of 10 and 17 (who are arrested and charged with a criminal offence) are dealt with differently to adult offenders, to reflect their welfare needs.

In summary, children who offend are:

- Dealt with by youth courts
- Given different sentences in comparison to adults and
- When necessary, detained in special secure centres for children.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority and statutory partners to secure and coordinate local youth justice services for children in our area, who encounter the Youth Justice System, because of their offending behaviour. This is achieved through the established Youth Justice Services.

The primary functions of Youth Justice Services are to prevent offending and re-offending by children, reduce the use of custody and ensure all the above are delivered with a “Child First” ethos embedded across the service.

Hartlepool Youth Justice Service was established in April 2000 and is a multiagency service, made up of representatives from Children’s Services, Police, Probation, Public Health, Health and Education. Hartlepool Youth Justice Service seeks to ensure that:

- All children entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment, to identify risk and protective factors associated with their offending behaviour, to inform effective interventions.
- Courts and Referral Order panels are provided with high quality reports that enable informed decisions to be made.
- Orders of the Court are managed in such a way that they support the primary aim of the youth justice system, alongside managing risk of harm, and ensuring there is due regard to the welfare of the child.
- Services provided to Courts are of a high quality and ensure that Magistrates and the judiciary have confidence in the YJS’s supervision of children.
- Comprehensive bail and remand management services are in place locally for children remanded sentenced to custody, or on bail whilst awaiting trial or sentence.
- The needs and risks of children, sentenced to custodial sentences (including long-term custodial sentences), are assessed to ensure effective resettlement and management of risk.
- Those in receipt of youth justice services are treated fairly, regardless of race, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other factor, and actions are put in place to address discrimination, if identified.

In addition to the above, the remit of the service has widened significantly in recent years, due to both national and local developments relating to prevention, diversion and restorative justice, and there is now a requirement to ensure that:

- Creative strategies and services are in place locally to prevent children from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour

- Out-of-court disposals deliver targeted and bespoke interventions for those at risk of entering the Youth Justice System
- Assistance is provided to the Police when determining whether Youth Caution's should be issued
- Restorative approaches are used, where appropriate, with victims of crime and ensures that restorative justice is central to work undertaken with children who offend
- The Turnaround Programme continues to meet targets in line with Government criteria

The Hartlepool Youth Justice Plan for 2025-2026 sets out how youth justice services will be delivered, funded and governed in response to both local need, national policy changes and in line with the standards for children in the youth justice system 2019, our most recent HMIP inspection findings, ongoing HMIP Thematic reports and the YJB Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027. It also highlights how Hartlepool Youth Justice Service will work in partnership to prevent offending and re-offending by children and reduce the use of remands and custody, ensuring we put the "child first" throughout all processes.

Vision & Strategy

Hartlepool's Children's Strategic Partnership has set out its vision for children within the town as follows:

Vision:

Our ambition, as a children's partnership, is to enable all children and families in Hartlepool to have the opportunity to make the most of their life chances and be supported to be safe in their homes and communities.

Priorities:

- Children can make the most of their life chances and are safe
- Improving family relationships, strengths, skills and resilience
- Reducing the impact of domestic violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol misuse on children and families
- Helping parents, carers and children to gain skills and secure jobs

The Youth Justice Service, as part of the wider Children's Services, seeks to deliver on the vision and objectives through a number of identified Youth Justice Service Strategic Priorities for 2025 - 2026.

In addition, these priorities align and overlap with the strategic priorities set by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership for 2024-27:

- Anti-social Behaviour;
- Drugs and Alcohol;
- Domestic Violence and Abuse and
- Serious Violence.

Youth Justice Service Strategic Objectives and Priorities – 2025-2026

We will use our grant, partner contributions and available resources, to deliver our services that enable us to work towards achieving the following objectives and priorities annually:

Re-offending - reduce further offending by children who have committed crime with a particular emphasis on continuing the development of Service interventions that are structured, responsive, tailored to meet identified individual need and evaluated. (Both within Youth Justice Services and provided by external agencies).

Early/Targeted Intervention, Prevention & Diversion – sustain the reduction of first-time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that creative strategies and services remain in place locally to prevent children from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Remand, Custody & Constructive Resettlement – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the need for remands and custody. Ensure bespoke constructive resettlement packages are implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Risk and Safety & Wellbeing (AssetPlus/Prevention and Diversion assessment) – ensure all children entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a high-quality structured needs assessment to identify risk of harm, safety and wellbeing concerns and desistance factors, to inform effective intervention and risk management.

Risk of Harm – Support for children who are assessed as being a high/very high risk of harm to others. Children who are deemed to be a significant risk to the public will benefit from a multiagency approach to manage and reduce their potential risk. Children who remain a high or a very high risk of harm, will now be subject to a separate review at the 12-week point, to see what, if anything, may be done differently to reduce the risk.

Restorative Justice – ensure all victims of youth crime have the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is incorporated into the work undertaken with children who offend.

Effective Governance – ensure that the Youth Justice Strategic Management Board is a well-constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board, which scrutinises Youth Justice Service performance and drives continuous improvement.

Voice of the Children – ensure that all children are actively involved in developing their own plans and are encouraged and supported to inform current and future service delivery both operationally and strategically.

‘Child First’ – ensure that the Child First principles are regularly reviewed and embedded within the Youth Justice Service and that every child has the opportunity to live a safe and crime free life and make a positive contribution to society. Ensure the children we support are treated as children, regardless of their age.

Education, Training, Employment – Working in collaboration with partners i.e. schools, virtual school and the One Stop Shop to ensure all children open to the YJS are actively engaging in some form of suitable ETE, thus reducing NEET numbers, increasing attendance and improving outcomes.

Substance Misuse – Working in collaboration with partners i.e. Start to improve and sustain the engagement of children, open to the YJS, within substance misuse services.

Serious Violence & Exploitation – Working with, and alongside, all partners including the Police, Harm outside the Home (HoTH) and Violence Reduction Unit to address and reduce serious violence and all forms of child exploitation

Overrepresented Children - Identify and address any areas of over representation within the YJS cohort alongside the management board and partners.

Local Context

Hartlepool Youth Justice Service (YJS) covers the local authority area of Hartlepool, which is impacted upon by a range of social, economic and environmental factors.

Using the 2019 average score of the Indices of Deprivation, Hartlepool is the 10th most deprived area based on percentage of LSOA's in 10% of most deprived areas nationally. High levels of unemployment, crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and substance misuse are all factors which provide significant challenges to the children we work with impacting on their behaviours and influencing outcomes. At the time of the plan being written, there was no new data published.

According to the mid 2023 population estimates – ONS, the population of Hartlepool is in the region of **95,366** with approx.**9750** being between the ages of 10-17.

The BAME population in Hartlepool has seen an increase, however, continues to remain somewhat low in comparison to other areas locally, **4574** or **4.9%** of Hartlepool Population (Non-White ethnic groups, Census – ONS). The 10-17year olds age range BAME population is – **662**. At the time of writing there was no new data published.

Current number of Children in our Care (CIOC), all ages – **338** (as of 31 March 2025, Hartlepool Performance Team)

Current CIOC figures 10–17 – **219** (as at 31 March 2025, Hartlepool Performance Team)

****At the time of writing this Strategic Plan there are 9 children open to the YJS who are CIOC.**

Hartlepool is served by five secondary schools, 1 Pupil Referral Unit (Horizon School) and Catcote Academy, which caters for secondary and post-16 students with special educational needs. There are four sixth form providers, two of which are located within secondary schools.

Hartlepool YJS has had to evolve over the years in response to changing local circumstances and economic factors. The current service is a traditional YJS model with two small operational teams delivering case management across Prevention/Diversion/Out of Court Disposals and Post Court Orders/DTO. The operational teams are supported by a Leadership Team, which carry out day-to-day operational oversight, performance management, service planning and policies & procedures. There is also a small business support team, as well as sessional staff and Referral Order panel volunteers who provide a very valuable service.

The YJS is constantly striving to ensure that the service can meet the current and future demands of the young people referred in, based on a '*fit for purpose*' structure, which supports high quality service delivery. Central to this, is the recognition that all staff will need to be well equipped to deal with a wide variety of service user needs and keep abreast of emerging areas of practice, not least trauma informed practice, the developing body of knowledge and evidence surrounding County Lines, Modern Day Slavery and Serious Youth Violence as well as findings from HMIP and other relevant inspection bodies.

As with the majority of YJS's the service is dealing with smaller caseloads, however these are much more complex individuals with multiple risks and vulnerabilities, the main cohort are predominantly young white males aged between 14 and 17, many of whom reside within

Hartlepool's most deprived neighbourhoods. Although not mutually exclusive, the common criminogenic and welfare issues prevalent amongst this cohort are identified as:

- higher than average mental health needs
- higher levels of drug and alcohol use than for the general population
- low educational attachment, attendance and attainment
- having family members or friends who offend
- higher than average levels of loss, bereavement, abuse and violence experienced within the family – historical trauma
- a history of family disruption
- chaotic and unstructured lifestyles
- vulnerable to all elements of exploitation
- exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) from a young age

Alongside this cohort of young males, there is another cohort of young, white females of similar age (14-17), whom, although perhaps not as prolific in terms of reoffending, are of significant concern due to multiple complex issues, which are more welfare orientated. These include substance misuse, chaotic lifestyles, sexual exploitation, missing from home episodes and family breakdown. Again, as with the male cohort, young females who are offending are noted to have a higher prevalence of poor emotional well-being and poor school attainment and outcomes.

As can be seen from the figures above Hartlepool does have a relatively low BAME percentage compared to locally and regionally, however the service does have the necessary training and skills to respond to work with children from a BAME or other diverse background. More notably the number of Children in Our Care (CIOC) does fluctuate within the YJS cohort, the data is regularly analysed and there is ongoing work with partners and carers to ensure appropriate actions are in place to support this vulnerable group of children. This is a strategic priority; actions and progress are reported to the Strategic Management Board on a quarterly basis.

The YJS Leadership Team are aware of the increase in children who have an EHCP, SEN or identified as needing SEN support. The YJS, through support with their commissioned services is ideally placed to identify children who may have an unmet educational need which may be masked with poor behaviour in an educational setting and schools using their behaviour policies to manage behaviour as opposed to the underlying need.

Working in partnership is key to supporting a greater understanding of these underlying issues and addressing them in a holistic and co-ordinated way, to provide “pathways out of offending”, reduce crime and break the cycle of offending behaviour across generations.

2. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

Governance:

The Youth Justice Service is part of Hartlepool Borough Council's Children & Joint Commissioning Services Department, which also includes Children's Social Care and Early Help services. The Management Board is chaired by Jo Heaney, Head of Commissioning (Children, Young People and Maternity - Tees Valley) North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

The board is made up of representatives from Children's Social Care, Police, Probation, Public Health, Courts, Education, Youth Support Services, and Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, Community Safety, and elected members.

Effective integrated strategic partnership working and clear oversight by the Management Board are critical to the success and effective delivery of youth justice services in Hartlepool. The board is directly responsible for:

- Determining how appropriate youth justice services are to be provided and funded
- Overseeing the formulation each year of the youth justice plan
- Agreeing measurable objectives linked to key performance indicators as part of the youth justice plan
- Ensuring delivery of the statutory aim to prevent offending by children and young people
- Giving strategic direction to Youth Justice Service Manager and Youth Justice Service Team
- Providing performance management of the prevention of youth crime and periodically report this to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership
- Ensuring that Standards for children in the youth justice system 2019 and the Child First ethos are embedded across the whole service and audits are completed within required timescales
- Promoting the key role played by the Youth Justice Service within local integrated offender management arrangements
- Advocate on behalf of the YJS within their own service areas and beyond, specifically supporting the YJS to overcome barriers to effective multiagency working
- Oversight of all data submissions to the YJB ensuring timeliness, especially conditions set out in the YJB grant
- Ensuring the recommendations outlined in YJB papers and HMIP inspection reports/thematic reviews are addressed and monitored at board meetings

The Management Board is clear about the priority areas for improvement and monitors the delivery of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan, performance and prevention/diversion work. It is well attended and receives comprehensive reports relating to performance, finance and specific areas of service delivery.

Members of the Board are knowledgeable, participate well in discussions and are members of other related boards, such as the Children and Young People's Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Safer Hartlepool Partnership and Health and Wellbeing partnerships, as well as the Cleveland Criminal Justice Board, all of which contribute to effective partnership working at a strategic level. Board meetings are well structured, and members are held accountable.

Leadership/Structure

Hartlepool Youth Justice Service has a total staff team of 25, which includes three seconded staff, and YJS volunteers, numbers fluctuate due to the nature of the arrangement although we are considering how we best utilise volunteers, so the arrangement is mutually beneficial and rewarding. (**Staffing structure attached at Appendix 1**). Within this figure, the service benefits from a team of three active volunteers who are Referral Order Panel members. All staff and volunteers are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, which are renewed every three years.

There are also three external staff commissioned into the service one x PT (0.3) Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) (funded by the YJS), one x PT Clinical Psychologist (funded by the ICB) and one x PT (0.1) Educational Psychologist (funded by the YJS).

Via the Violence Reduction Unit (CURV) four Custody Navigators have been employed; they are in the central custody suite (Middlesbrough) and engage all children entering the custody, with a view to support, guide and direct them for further support. (These are not included in the total staff team numbers)

At the time of writing this report all statutory partners have seconded staff within the YJS or have provided direct pathways i.e. Health, Education, Police, Social Care and Probation. The YJS are without a Seconded Probation Officer; in the absence of a Probation Officer, the National Probation Service provide a financial contribution. Despite there being no Probation Officer in post, the YJS have strong links with Probation to ensure those children who are transitioning from the YJS to Probation understand the roles, expectation and how service delivery and expectations are very different.

The YJS delivery model has been reconfigured and restructured during the last year to ensure the service remains sufficiently flexible to address future challenges. This will continue to be achieved through a generic case management and intervention delivery model, across pre and post court functions. This will ensure maximum resilience, capacity and flexibility to meet the needs of children and the service.

The current YJS structure aims to consolidate areas of strong performance and effective practice, whilst also providing a dynamic framework to respond to emerging priorities, recognised by both the Local Authority and key partners. This model (alongside the YJS strategic plan) allows the organisation and the wider YJS partnership to action the priorities for service delivery and to achieve best outcomes for children across the range of statutory and preventative services.

Hartlepool Borough Council recruited a new Assistant Director (AD) in the summer of 2024; the AD brings a wealth of experience in the field of Safeguarding and children in our Care, and exploitation of children. The AD Children & Families is also the designated Head of Service for the Youth Justice Service with a service manager having responsibility and oversight for all elements of service delivery. The AD reports directly to the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

Sadly, the YJS Team Manager, Roni Checksfield passed away suddenly in March 2025. The sudden death had a profound impact on the whole YJS team. Roni advocated on behalf of the team and was determined to ensure all children received the best possible service and their needs were met. Despite the significant emotional upheaval, it is testament to the team, that despite what they were going through, they continued supporting the children and providing the best possible service for children open to the YJS. Roni left a strong legacy that will continue to be built upon within the team. At the time of this report being written the recruitment process is ongoing.

Partnership Arrangements

Hartlepool Youth Justice Service is a statutory partnership which includes, but also extends beyond, the direct delivery of youth justice services. To deliver youth justice outcomes it must be able to function effectively in both of the two key sectors within which it operates, namely:

- Criminal justice services
- Services for children and their families

The Youth Justice Service contributes both to improving community safety and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and in particular protecting them from significant harm.

Many of the children involved with the Youth Justice Service are amongst the most vulnerable children in the Borough and are at greatest risk of social exclusion. The Youth Justice Service's multiagency approach ensures that it plays a significant role in meeting the safeguarding needs of these children. This is achieved through the effective assessment and management of safety & wellbeing, as well as risk, through working in partnership with other services; for example, Children's Services, Health, Education, Secure Estate and Police to ensure children's wellbeing is promoted and they are protected from harm. Regular communication, meetings, joint training opportunities and speedy information/intelligence sharing ensure ongoing strong links and relationships.

All high-risk cases can be escalated to the Multi Agency Harm Outside the Home (HoTH) or the Strategic Risk Management Group; Youth Justice Service has representation on both groups, which meet monthly. Discussions around serious youth violence, criminal exploitation and county lines are conducted within these forums, ensuring tight plans are implemented and strategic management oversight is afforded

The YJS also has good links into the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

The YJS has both operational and strategic representation on the following forums that all contribute to the support of children in the justice system.



3. Update on the previous Year 2024-2025

Progress on previous strategic priorities

Youth Justice Strategic Priorities 2024/25

Re-offending - reduce further offending by children who have committed crime with a particular emphasis continuing the development of Service interventions that are structured, responsive and tailored to meet identified individual need and evaluated. (Both within Youth Justice Services and provided by external agencies).

Key Actions

- Undertake quality assessments of children at risk of re-offending, ensuring risks, desistance factors and needs are identified which inform effective intervention planning
- Continue to improve interventions delivered, through innovation and collaboration where appropriate
- Improve intelligence and timely information sharing relating to those children who are at risk of offending, to inform service-wide improvement activity or targeted work
- Continue to improve the 'Child First' approach and Health offer within the service and with partners
- Continue to undertake activities in relation to retaining both the Speech & Language Therapist, Trauma Informed Care Pathway and Emotional Wellbeing pathways within the YJS beyond March 2025

Update

- All of the above actions have been achieved.
- Hartlepool YJS run a Reoffending report from Child View and are utilising the tracker available. The information being provided is timelier and allows us to update Leadership meetings and Management boards much quicker with data and analysis
- Senior representation at the regional Reoffending Group chaired by the OPCC
- Since the inception of the HoTH team there are now far greater sources of intelligence alongside the Police and partners, which aids service wide improvements and targeted work.
- Reoffending figures do however continue to fluctuate and there has been some considerable increase in time between charge and outcome for those children open under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Concerns

- No current concerns. Locally children who re-offend have a team around them to ensure there is adequate support and oversight in place.

Early & Targeted Intervention/Diversion – Continue to prioritise a reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that creative strategies and services remain in place locally to prevent children and children from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Key Actions

- Maintain and enhance the YJS Early & Targeted Intervention programme "Choices" across Children's Services and the partnership
- Operate a targeted approach to supporting individuals and groups of children at risk of offending - based on intelligence and collaborative working with key partners (Police, ASB, Early Help, Voluntary Community Sector, Schools, etc.)
- Work with the HOTH team and partners to reduce and respond to Child exploitation

- Ongoing trend analysis of past and current FTE's to identify key themes and responses
- Ongoing briefings to key partners (such as Police and Social Care) to emphasise and promote the Prevention and Diversion agenda
- Continue to review and deliver our point of arrest diversion as a distinct and substantially different response to formal out of court disposals
- Continue to review the Diversion & Prevention strategy in place ensuring it includes how children are identified for diversion/prevention, how the services are delivered, by whom and how success is evaluated.

Update:

- All the above actions were achieved
- Early & Targeted Intervention programme, Choices is continuing to receive referrals from within Children's Services.
- The service continues to work directly with children through our diversionary offer of Restorative Intervention and both Triage 1 and 2, all referrals are via the Police and Courts.
- The Turnaround programme continues to add a further offer alongside Preventions & Diversion
- Immediate Justice (Making Good) went live on the 25 Sept 2023, unfortunately the MoJ funded programme ended in March 2025

Concerns

- Turnaround was funded for 2025/26, unfortunately the funding was significantly reduced forcing us to review the programme and delivery model. If the programme continued beyond 2026, it would allow us to continue the programme but year on year funding is a concern for the staff it funds.
- Making Good was beginning to build momentum when the funding was stopped. The programme enabled us to identify children involved in ASB and deliver direct restorative interventions with a focus on victims and how the wider community is affected.

Remand and Custody & Resettlement – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody and the YJS Resettlement Policy is reviewed and evaluated.

Key Actions

- Monitor and maintain the use of Compliance Panels to ensure continued effectiveness
- Ensure the Service provides intensive packages of supervision and support to high intensity orders and bail arrangements
- Ensure that the needs of children in custody and the factors relating to their offending behaviour are addressed in the secure estate to prevent further offending upon release
- Continue to review and evaluate the Resettlement Policy in place for children upon release from the secure estate (HMIP Youth Justice inspection framework, standard 4.1 Resettlement, May 2021)
- Regularly review capacity to deliver ISS, and resource appropriately, through a multiagency approach

Update

- All the above was achieved
- We continue to utilise and review our Resettlement Policy.
- We continue to work closely with the courts and partners to ensure all children receive the best support available.
- Hartlepool YJS are part of the YRO (ISS) pilot, which commenced on the 3rd July 2023 and is ongoing at the time of the report being written.
- The YJS commission a Court Officer who has an excellent relationship with the Magistrates and knowledge of legislation and sentencing, which puts us in a

favourable position when liaising with the courts. The commissioning arrangement has been extended for a further three years.

Concerns

- There continues to be a national shortage of suitable regulated local placements for children remanded to local authority accommodation, which places huge challenges both financially and operationally on the authority, service and most importantly the children and their families. There are ongoing strategic discussions nationally.
- The Teesside Court User Group was due to be re implemented in June 2024, there are no confirmed dates for the meeting to be held.

Risk and Safety & Wellbeing (Asset Plus/Prevention and Diversion assessment)

– ensure all children who are at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk of harm, safety and wellbeing concerns and desistance factors, to inform effective intervention and risk management.

Key Actions

- Continued AssetPlus refresher training, ensuring robust assessment of a child's needs
- All of the YJS Pre-Court Team have had internal training on the completion of the YJB approved, Prevention and Diversion assessment which focusses on several areas including, building on strengths, family needs, child friendly language and more focus on behaviour.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to ensure there is a co-ordinated assessment and plan relating to a child's risk and safety & wellbeing
- Implement an audit cycle/performance clinic to ensure assessment and plans are meeting the appropriate quality standards through robust and transparent quality assurance and feedback.
- Ensure that desistance factors are identified and analysed in all assessments of every child subject to YJS supervision through quality assurance and staff supervision.
- Attendance and contribution to YJB Regional Effective Practice groups and peer collaboration with Tees Valley and North East YJS colleagues
- Ongoing internal staff training and workshops to benchmark quality standards in the management of risk and safety & wellbeing
- Continue to work alongside the partnership to identify suitable interventions and pathways for children, those criminally exploited and potentially being drawn into County Lines activity

Updates

- All above achieved however acknowledgement is given to children who are routinely assessed as being a high or very high risk of harm. The YJS Leadership Team are exploring factors that may be keeping a child as high or very high risk and what can be done differently to reduce the risk.
- The YJS Management Team have begun to explore what can be done differently in the management of risk. Meetings will be held with colleagues from Forensic CAMHS and Educational Psychology to look at an alternative approach.

Restorative Justice & Victims – ensure all victims of youth crime can participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is incorporated into the work undertaken with children who offend.

Key Actions

- Ensure that victims of youth crime can participate in restorative justice (RJ) approaches leading to improved outcomes for victims
- Continue to use restorative practice across all aspects of the Youth Justice Service

- Regularly re-visit, review and develop practice and process around Referral Order panels to ensure increased involvement from victims, panel members, children and their families
- Continue to develop the in-house RJ 'offer' to consolidate and embed current and better integrated working practices – including the victim's evaluation

Updates

- RJ continues to be a priority area across all service delivery
- We are seeing an increase in victim participation
- Victim evaluation & feedback is improving
- We continue to provide suitable reparation projects and will aim to source projects in line with the child's voice.
- The current YJS Victim Policy has been updated and re-written in line with the new Victim's Code
- There are no current concerns with our victim offer or the support offered to victims of youth crime
- The YJS now have a victim audit to monitor victims and ensure their needs and wishes are being met
- Victim audits will be completed once a month with a weekly RJ Surgery being held by the RJ Officer

Effective Governance – ensure that the Youth Justice Strategic Management Board is a well-constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board, which scrutinises Youth Justice Service performance.

Key Actions

- The Youth Justice Management Board will provide oversight and scrutiny of the service action plan and performance
- Ensure Management Board members attend regular development and shadowing opportunities as provided by the YJS Manager.
- Continue to review the Terms of Reference for the YJS board to ensure it is fit for purpose and includes appropriate representation and contribution of all statutory partners.
- Attendance and representation at YJB Regional executive meetings with colleague YJS Managers from the North East – to share learning and Governance issues to improve wider regional service delivery

Update

- All the above was achieved
- There is a continued programme in place for all board members
- Board members are regularly reminded to prioritise their attendance at the quarterly board meetings
- There are no current concerns

Voice of the Children – ensure that all children are actively involved in developing their own plans having the opportunity to develop and inform current and future service delivery

Key Actions

- Ensure children's involvement in relation to their assessment and plans is clearly evidenced within the records.
- Children to be actively involved in developing their own plans and their comments are captured at implementation, review and closure of all plans
- The service will ensure children are provided with opportunities to influence and shape service delivery – through access to, and completion of, Survey Monkey feedback, session evaluations, closure summaries and SAQ

- YJS leadership team to hold regular evaluation/feedback meetings to ensure all comments are seen and actioned where required and findings shared at quarterly management board meetings

Update

- Considerable work has been undertaken across the service with all staff, the implementation of a Child First operational guidance includes how we capture the voice of the child and more importantly, what we do with the findings. The Voice of the Child continues to be captured via SAQ, sessional feedback sheets, Survey Monkey and Closure Summaries. All findings are analysed at leadership meetings and produced at board meetings for further scrutiny and action.
- We continue to look at ways in which we can engage with and capture feedback from children to ensure that their views help shape the delivery of what we do. The YJS will look at ways in which children can actively be involved in board meetings, this may include focus groups on a specific topic that directly affects the children and the work we do

'Child First' – ensure that the Child First principles are regularly reviewed and embedded within the Youth Justice Service and that every child can live a safe and crime free life, and make a positive contribution to society.

Key Actions

- Prioritise the best interests of children, recognising their needs, capacities, rights and potential.
- Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion.
- Ensure that all work carried out by the service is a meaningful collaboration with children and their parents/carers.
- The YJS will promote a childhood that is removed from the Justice System, using prevention, diversion and minimal intervention and that all work minimises stigma.

Update

- We continue to advocate strongly on the "Child First" ethos embedded within the YJS
- We treat children as children and acknowledge those young people who may be 16/17 and approaching adulthood but have not yet transitioned to adult services. We continue to support young people from 10-17 and apply the Child First principles
- Guidance clearly highlights what is expected throughout assessment, planning, interventions, reviews and closures for all children within the YJS.
- The above is monitored by way of children feedback and evaluation as well as via supervision, QA, case audits and direct 1:1 with the child.
- There are no current concerns

Education, Training, Employment – Working in collaboration with partners i.e. schools, virtual school, One Stop Shop etc. to ensure all children open to the YJS are actively engaging in some form of suitable ETE, thus reducing NEET numbers and increasing attendance and attainment.

Key Actions

- Ensure education is suitably represented on the Strategic Management Board
- Education reports are submitted by partners for each Strategic Management Board meeting and contain as a minimum, how many children are not receiving their education entitlement, how many are excluded, on part time timetables or electively home educated. This data should be analysed to identify any disproportionality and care status of the child. The number of children who have Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) who are open to the service should be provided.
- Encourage children's active engagement with their respective education provider
- Continue working in collaboration regarding children with EHCP/SEN

Update

- Education reports are now presented at every management board meeting, data is provided on how many children are not receiving their education entitlement, how many are excluded, on part-time timetables or electively home educated. This data is analysed to identify any disproportionality and care status of the child. The number of children who have Education and Health Care plans (EHCP) who are open to the service is also provided, analysed and discussed.
- Our education support is growing and our communication and challenge with education providers is vastly improving. We have secured the time of an Education Psychologist (once per week), which is proving very beneficial for both children and staff.
- There are processes in place which remove the need for a separate YJS education meeting. The YJS has representation on the Hartlepool Inclusion Panel meeting and Vulnerable Pupils Operational Group

Concerns

- There are still far too many children receiving exclusions/suspensions. There is a need for schools, academies and education providers to engage and where needed reach out to wider services in a timelier manner.
- Schools and academies will routinely use alternative provision, or reduced timetables, as a means of 'managing' the child's behaviour, which can mask an unmet learning need. Hartlepool YJS will continue to challenge education providers to ensure children open to the service are receiving an appropriate education which meets their needs. They are also working with other services to manage behaviour to reduce exclusions.

Serious Youth Violence & Exploitation – Working in collaboration with the HoTH, Police and all other partners to ensure that all forms of serious youth violence and exploitation are identified and suitable plans implemented to reduce the risks.

Key Actions

- Continue to have representation at all HoTH meetings
- Ensure any identification of potential exploitation via assessment and ongoing work is referred into the HoTH straight away
- Alongside partners, ensure NRM referrals are completed for all relevant children and followed up
- Build upon the risk management meetings (RMM) convened by the YJS ensuring all actions are completed, safety plans are in place and suitable contingency plans are identified
- Continue to ensure senior YJS representation at all relevant strategies/complex case discussions and mapping meetings
- Continue to have senior representation at all PREVENT meetings
- Continue to work alongside the OPCC/Police and all partners in improving and sustaining the Violence Reduction Unit – CURV

Update

- The YJS have senior representation at all HoTH person and location of interest meetings
- All ongoing NRM and potential NRM are discussed and scrutinised at the HoTH meetings
- The YJS attend monthly Police Tactical Control Group (TCG) and Multi Agency Risk of Serious and Organised Crime meetings to discuss in depth Organised Crime Groups, Criminal Peer Groups and any children potentially linked to these
- Regular staff training is made available by the LA re exploitation, County Lines and all forms of Modern Day Slavery
- RUI continue to be analysed in monthly leadership meetings and scrutinised alongside serious youth violence offences with the Police and CPS, daily data spreadsheets are produced by the seconded Police Officer, giving live updates on all cases.
- The three Cleveland YJS's have strategic representation across all tiers of the VRU (CURV)

- Via CURV, and with management oversight by the Cleveland YJS's, we have 4 x Custody Navigators in post, this ensures earlier engagement with all children entering the Custody Suite.
- All children who are assessed as high or very high risk of harm are subject to internal RMM. The YJS Leadership Team will hold a separate review for all children who are assessed as a high or very high risk of harm and what, if anything, may be done differently to reduce the risk
- A separate report will now be completed which outlines the cohort of children open to both the YJS and HoTH

Concerns

- We still don't appear successful as a partnership in disrupting and prosecuting potential perpetrators of CCE. This is primarily Police led and staff from Hartlepool YJS will continue to submit intelligence reports to safeguard and support the disruption of child exploitation.

Substance Misuse – Working in collaboration with partners i.e. Horizon/Start to improve and sustain the engagement of children open to the YJS within substance misuse services.

Key Actions

- Ensure substance misuse providers are suitably represented on the Strategic Management Board
- Regular reports/updates submitted to the Strategic Management Board by substance misuse providers
- Ensure the continued working arrangements/pathways are embedded between the YJS and substance misuse partners
- All children identified as needing support are actively encouraged to engage with appropriate substance misuse services

Updates

- All the above has been achieved
- Pathways into substance misuse services are maintained with regular communication and their representation at board meetings
- 3 way introductory meetings are now held, where required, with children, Hartlepool YJS and Start to discuss and encourage engagement with the service.
- There will always be work to do in encouraging and maintaining a child's engagement with these services, however we are seeing more creative methods being implemented.

Concerns

- There continues to be an under representation of children within the YJS cohort open to substance misuse services, especially where misuse has been identified as a concern within assessments.
- At the time of the report being written there has been an increase in the use of street bought pregabalin. This is concerning, yet many children open to the YJS don't yet appear ready or willing to address their substance misuse.
- Hartlepool YJS continues to link in with the substance misuse service

Over represented children – Identify and address any areas of over representation within the YJS cohort alongside the management board and partners

Key Actions

- Ensure a quarterly needs analysis of the YJS cohort continues to be presented at each Management Board for analysis of over representation and ongoing needs/gaps within service delivery
- Continue to scrutinise all HMIP Thematic report findings i.e. the over representation of black and mixed heritage boys, Children in Our Care (CIOC), stop and searches/strip searches etc and ensure discussions and any potential actions are agreed and implemented by the management board

Update

- Disproportionality is now an agenda item within the YJS managers report, to quarterly management boards, highlighting any over representation. Discussions are undertaken and all actions are formulated and monitored.
- Stop searches and strip searches are monitored and all information/data discussed at Management Board meetings.
- Regular discussions with all partners including Police and Social Care are undertaken to address and look at potential actions for any areas of over representation within the service.
- If there is an increase in the number of over represented children the YJS will review referrals on an individual basis and respond accordingly.

Concerns

- No major concerns identified
- The YJS have recognised that the number of children open to the YJS who have an EHCP, SEN or SEN Support has increased. Whilst this is a concern, it is a positive that the YJS are proactive in referring to in-house commissioned service who are identifying unmet needs.

Performance over the previous year

Binary reoffending rate -

Hartlepool's data team, YJS Leadership team, have now completed work with Business support to set up the reoffending toolkit within our management information system Child View, this data is very useful and informative for management boards and any reports requested.

We continue to establish and embed a collaborative multiagency solution and response to reoffending. Strong communication across Children's Services and Cleveland Police ensures regular discussions/mapping meetings are being undertaken, with clear accountable actions for everyone. Alongside this, the YJS puts a great deal of focus on their multiagency risk management meetings for those small numbers of cases posing the highest risk of reoffending.

The YJS have representation on the Cleveland Reducing Re-offending Group, which feeds into the Cleveland and Durham Local Criminal Justice Partnership. There is also representation on the Cleveland Prevention and Diversion, and Youth Offending sub-groups.

The information below are local reports tracked through our MIS Child View and gives a timelier update on reoffending data. It is worth noting that the cohorts highlighted below are tracked from their start date for 12 months tracking and a further 6 months to ensure there is nothing outstanding, this is in line with the MOJ/YJB tracking model.

Latest last 4 Qtrs. reoffending Binary rates:

- 2024/25 Qtr 1 – Cohort used: Jan – March 2023 – 20% (3/15*)
- 2024/25 Qtr 2 – Cohort used: Apr – June 2023 – 20% (4/20)
- 2024/25 Qtr 3 – Cohort used: July – Sept 2023 – 32% (7/22)
- 2024/25 Qtr 4 – Cohort used: Oct – Dec 2023 – 20% (3/15)

The cohort we are reporting on is small which has an adverse impact on the overall re-offending percentage. Rates of re-offending can be attributed to a small number of children who, in most instances, are linked to criminal peer groups or are being exploited by adults. This is an area the YJS continue to work hard on to reduce and work with partners is continuing.

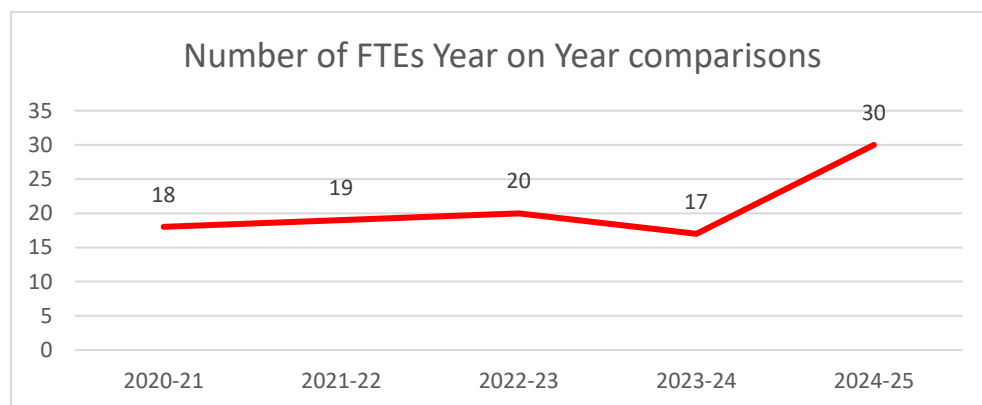
*these figures denote the number of children in the cohort and how many re-offended in the reporting period.

As can be seen from the figures above reoffending binary rates do fluctuate. It continues to be

an area of priority for the YJS and partners to identify these YP earlier and offer suitable packages of support.

First time entrants

The YJS continue to work hard to manage and reduce the number of FTE. Previous years have shown the FTE' to plateau, however there is a notable increase in the 2024/25 FTE'. Whilst this would ordinarily be a concern, the rise is linked to the violent disorder in July 2024 and the children who were involved. Following an extensive investigation and liaison between the Police, CPS and the YJS, it was agreed the children would be diverted away from Court and issued with Youth Conditional Cautions. All the children involved in the violent disorder were FTE' and whilst this may be a worry, with support and open communication with the Police/CPS, these children were successfully kept out of the judicial system. The YJS continue to apply child first principles when reviewing all referrals and will apply the lowest possible disposal which takes into consideration the offence, personal circumstances, previous YJS involvement. ACEs and any aggravating/mitigating factors. This is a strategy to support and divert children from further offending and keep them out of the criminal justice system.



Use of custody

There has been 1 remand to Local Authority Accommodation and a brief period of remand to Youth Detention Accommodation in early 2025/26; both episodes involved the same child. Where there is a risk of remand, Hartlepool YJS will explore what bail support packages are available to prevent the unnecessary use of remand, however, we also consider the potential risk to the victims, the wider community and the child.

Hartlepool YJS have a clear process for alternatives to custody through the offer of Bail/ISS packages and utilisation of pre-breach compliance meetings for those at risk of custody via non-compliance. Hartlepool YJS alongside other North East colleagues are also participating in the YRO (ISS) Pilot, which commenced in July 2023; to date we have had 2 children use the pilot.

Year	Remands	Custody
2021-22	0	1
2022-23	2	2
2023-24	1	2
2024-25	1	0
2025-26	1	2

Additional key performance indicators (KPIs)

It is a requirement of the service to report on the following new key performance indicators, our first submission was August 2023 and quarterly thereafter. Hartlepool YJS have purchased the KPI reporting tool from CACI for their MIS ChildView and are hoping to be in a position very shortly to provide more updated, accurate and in-depth data on the below KPI's.

Suitable accommodation – *The proportion of children in suitable accommodation at the end of their order*

We know that access to safe and suitable accommodation reduces the risk of reoffending. This KPI indicates how many children are in suitable/unsuitable accommodation. This will allow us to understand and evidence the barriers to escalate with partners and to target support when children are in unsuitable accommodation.

The YJS have senior representation on the local authority housing and accommodation panel. Attendance at all relevant Social Care meetings and ongoing communication will ensure we are able to identify suitable/unsuitable accommodation and challenge/address where needed.

Education, training and employment – *The proportion of children in suitable ETE at the end of their order*

There are established links between low educational engagement and attainment and the risk of childhood offending. This KPI will highlight where children are not in suitable ETE to help us to escalate concerns with ETE providers. At a wider level, this data will allow the MoJ and YJB to understand where the wider system acts as a barrier to a child's desistance and raise these with relevant other government departments if necessary. There is senior representation from the Virtual School and Post 16 service at management boards and a consolidated report is produced quarterly. The YJS have representation on the Hartlepool Inclusion Panel (HIP) and the Team Around Secondary School (TASS) meetings. Both meetings enable the YJS to work closely with the respective schools, most of which now have Academy status. Staff within the YJS are confident at challenging schools on what their offer is and how we may be able to support them. The post-16 education offer in Hartlepool is minimal for children who may have struggled in a mainstream school, or they may have been permanently excluded, electively home educated or accessing alternative provision. The YJS continues to work closely with the One Stop Shop to see what provision is available and how we support the child and provider if necessary.

Special educational needs and disabilities/additional learning needs – *The number of children with a formal plan in place as a proportion of children with identified SEND/ALN.*

Identifying SEND/ALN and providing support early is key to a child's educational engagement and attainment. This KPI should highlight where children are not receiving SEND/ALN support, to provide the evidence for us to escalate concerns with ETE providers.

Via the virtual school, pathways have been implemented with the SEND team. Regular communication, attendance at meetings and suitable challenge should ensure we are able to monitor and record sufficiently. The YJS continue to commission an Educational Psychologist (EP) for 0.5 days per week, the EP's knowledge and insight into SEN is proving invaluable to identify unmet learning needs and what support may be necessary to enable the child to reach their full potential.

Mental health care and emotional wellbeing – *The number of children with a screened or identified need for a mental health (MH) or emotional wellbeing (EW) intervention at the end of their order as a proportion of number of children with an order ending in the period.*

Rates of poor mental health are higher for children across all stages of the youth justice system than in the general population. We need to monitor access to mental health interventions so we can escalate concerns (at the appropriate level) where children are not receiving access to support for mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The YJS have a very good health offer via the YJS nurse specialist, Speech and Language therapist, Clinical Psychologist for the Trauma Informed Care Pathway (TICP) and Educational Psychologist. All have access to their own service systems and information and speedier (at times) processes for further referrals. Waiting lists locally for access to emotional wellbeing services, does cause some issues which are beyond the control of the YJS. Where a need is identified we will refer children into in-school services for low level psychological support. Unfortunately, there are waiting lists due to demand within schools. We are also able to refer to the School Nurses for continued support in school. However, the YJS have a relationship with CAMHS, we are acutely aware of what local support is available and there are online support services (Kooth) which allows children to engage with trained counsellors. Support is also available via the YJS Nurse.

Substance misuse – *The number of children with a screened or identified need for intervention or treatment to address substance misuse at the end of their order as a proportion of number of children with an order ending in the period.*

Children in the youth justice system are particularly vulnerable to substance misuse. We need to monitor access to substance misuse interventions and treatment so that we can escalate concerns where children are not receiving access to support for substance misuse.

The HOS for substance misuse attends the management board and produces a quarterly report. There are pathways/referral routes in place to ensure a speedy process and regular information sharing. The YJS continue to work closely with the substance misuse service and encourage children to engage with the service for support to address their problematic substance misuse. Where identified we will support children to meet with the substance misuse staff to address any concerns (anxieties) they may have. All YJS staff are trained to deliver low level brief intervention.

Out-of-Court Disposals – *The number of children who completed O OCD intervention programmes in the period as a proportion of the number of children with an O OCD intervention programme ending in the period.*

An increasing number of cases supervised by the YJS are now out-of-court-disposals (O OCD). We need to ensure that interventions attached to these are completed and that children achieve a positive outcome. We have a considerable amount of data and information available on all children engaging with the service via an O OCD as well as early/targeted intervention and Turnaround. The YJS Pre-Court Team, like many YOTs nationally, is generally the busiest service area in terms of the number of referrals being made. The level of need varies, although it is becoming abundantly clear that children referred in for consideration of an OoCD often have unmet needs which is a causal link to their behaviour and a factor in why they have been referred to the YJS.

Links to wider services – *The proportion of children connected to or supported by wider care and support services at end of order.*

Real, effective multiagency working is essential to reducing offending and reoffending. We need to engage consistently and proactively with other services to ensure holistic support and the early identification of risk. This KPI will help us to understand where we have good information sharing in place with social care and early help services etc. The YJS can clearly highlight and indicate the links to wider services and outward referrals made.

Management board attendance – *The number of senior partners attending management boards (MBs) out of five*

It is vital for YJSs to have strong leadership and consistent senior level representation at management boards. This KPI will indicate when there is an issue in this area. This will be monitored on a quarterly basis and board members politely reminded of attendance on an ongoing basis.

Serious violence – *The number of proven serious violence offences as a rate per 100,000 of the 10-17 population (2021).*

Serious Violence rates have increased and given the severity/ consequences of this form of crime, this is a high priority concern. Data on this will provide a more accurate picture and help to direct local, regional and/or national action to prevent and tackle knife and gang-related crime. The YJS has an excellent ongoing working relationship with Cleveland Police and is well represented within CURV where regular ongoing meetings are held to identify, discuss and analyse all elements of Serious Violence.

Victims – *The number of victims engaged with on Restorative Justice opportunities as a proportion of total number of victims who consent to be contacted.*

All YJSs have a statutory duty to provide support to victims. YJSs need to ensure compliance with the Victims' Code to protect the rights of victims. A lot of work is carried out with victims of crime, the YJS RJ worker contacts all victims and ascertains their willingness to engage and follows very clear processes. All data is collected and stored securely on the MIS. The revised Victims Code of Practice and HMIP inspection framework puts greater onus on YOTs to consider their victim offer and how victims receive the support they are entitled to, and their voice is heard, regardless of the crime and outcome.

Local performance

The service is dealing with smaller caseloads consisting of very complex individuals with multiple risks and vulnerabilities. The revised KPI' removed the need for a local needs analysis as it was seen and felt as though we were duplicating information which we can report on from our MiS. The size and demographics of the YJS caseload enable us to monitor any emerging or sudden trends linked to the behaviour of the children. Areas of concern will be raised in the Management Board meetings for strategic oversight and action where necessary.

Risks and Issues

The key risks and issues that have the capacity to have an adverse impact on the Youth Justice Service in the coming twelve months and potentially beyond are detailed below:

Risks	Potential Impact	Control Measures
An increase in secure Remand Costs and children remanded to Local Authority Accommodation	The continued unpredictability associated with remand episodes and remand length has the potential to place significant financial pressure on the YJS and broader Local Authority. The increasing and significant lack of suitable regulated accommodation locally for	It remains essential that the service can demonstrate to the courts that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody. Coordinated multiagency responses to children at risk of remand where safe and secure

	children RLAA leading to children being placed out of area in unregulated placements at significant costs.	accommodation is the precipitating factor and is continuously monitored and further developed. Remand budget is incorporated within Wider Children's Services placement costs. North East YJSs piloting the YRO (ISS) since July 23.
Grant received and there has been a slight uplift in the grant allocation.	Whilst the 2025/26 YJB Grant was received earlier than previous years, late confirmation of the grant award does not allow the forward planning of interventions to support the wider service aims and objectives. Restricts service creativity and forward planning	Targeted resources to address need. Continue to administer and embed the current structure and practice. Robust financial management and oversight from strategic board.
Continued concerns around Serious Youth Violence, Criminal Exploitation and County Lines	The unpredictability in reoffending rates, serious youth violence and exploitation of vulnerable children. Ultimately leading to criminalisation and wider service involvement having an adverse impact on Remand, Custody and CIOC figures.	Continued regular communication, intelligence and information sharing via HoTH/CURV and across all services. Ensuring a multiagency approach is adopted with senior strategic oversight. Ongoing joint training and regular updates on the national and local picture enabling timely and relevant interventions. Ensure clear processes and pathways (known to all staff) are implemented to work with identified children. Continue working alongside the OPCC, Cleveland Police and partners to support the VRU (CURV). The YJS and HoTH continue to work closely with those children who are at risk of exploitation. A report will now be produced for the quarterly board meeting
Issues	Potential Impact	Proposed Controls/actions
Much more onus being placed on YJS nationally by YJB, HMIP etc. via research, thematic and HMIP inspections to ensure	Much more pressure being placed on YJS to ensure a more bespoke package of support is available for children entering the service i.e. SALT, Trauma Informed Care Pathways etc and YJS not	Research has identified that 85% + children entering the youth justice system have a speech, language and/or communication need. Services need to be supported and funded to provide this offer to all

<p>certain services are available for children open to the YJS i.e. Speech and Language, TICP.</p>	<p>being adequately funded, supported for these specialist services.</p>	<p>children. Schools/academies are best placed to identify the early signs of communication difficulties, although this can often be perceived as 'difficult behaviour' and dealt with via the school's internal behaviour system as opposed to what may be influencing the child's behaviour.</p> <p>Hartlepool is a National Pilot area for Early Language Support in Schools (ELSEC). This is a different approach which may help shape future models, policies and service delivery.</p>
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4. Plan for the forthcoming year 2025/26

Child First

In line with the Youth Justice Boards Strategic Plan 2024-27 Hartlepool Youth Justice Service (YJS) is committed to:

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

We continue to ensure the "Child First" principles are embedded and maintained within all areas of service delivery in collaboration with other services and all partners.

In early 2022 Hartlepool YJS produced a "Child First" guidance for all staff to ensure this approach is embedded across all areas of service delivery from assessment, planning, intervention and at closure and exit.

The YJS have embedded the Child First ethos and regardless of the offence, children are seen and treat as children, whilst trying to understand what is driving and influencing their behaviour and intervening at the earliest possible stage. The current YJS makeup and health input is continuing to benefit the children referred in and identifying unmet need. It's acknowledged that we may not always see the outcomes, but we are the catalyst for implementing change, especially within an education setting

Voice of the child

Hartlepool YJS work collaboratively with all Children/Parents/Carers to ensure their voice is heard listened to and helps shape service delivery as required.

We continuously review and enhance our delivery, so that the views of children are sufficiently captured, central to our work, and lead to change in the system to support children into positive outcomes and successful adulthood.

We strongly promote and encourage relationship building between staff and children from the outset of all involvement with the YJS. Staff will start the process of capturing the child's voice during this period, which also aids assessment. All SAQ and feedback sessions are completed face to face where possible and relevant and staff will encourage the child to expand on their responses. This process is also carried out with parents/carers.

We ensure that the child's voice is captured throughout the child's journey with the service:

- All SAQs
- Designing the child's plan
- After all completed interventions
- Asset Plus and all other reviews
- Closure Summaries
- Survey Monkey

Very helpful,
support was
really good.

I don't want to get
in trouble and have
a criminal record

Some of the things
we have done has
been good

I found the team very
helpful towards myself
and my daughter.

Very helpful, support
was really good.

Feedback is consolidated from the various sources and analysed via the monthly leadership meetings and quarterly service management boards. Any potential areas for concern or good practice are addressed appropriately.

The YJS will always advocate on behalf of the child at all meetings attended and where required their voice and that of parents/carers will be gathered in advance. There has been a marked increase and improvement in this process which has been very evident within education meetings. More in depth discussions are now taking place with education providers on a regular basis especially around exclusions/suspensions, reduced timetables and alternative provision.

Example – The YJS Educational Psychologist recently completed some work with a young person, where over the course of several sessions exploring her views on school, she reported some difficulties with reading and words “moving about”. Rather than dismissing this, we explored the conditions where this happened for her and how this affected on her ability to access texts. Feeding this back to school, we were able to do some further work with her to identify changes to text to increase its readability, which school can adopt. Feeding this information back to mum through the Ed Psych and YJS Officer led to mum arranging an optician's appointment, where further assessment work is ongoing relating to a possible diagnosis of an eye condition.

This piece of work highlights the importance of drawing on successful positive relationships built with the young person (and staff) to feel comfortable sharing their difficulties, and the importance of sharing their voice with those around them to identify effective and timely support.

Resources and Services

The Youth Justice Service budget is resourced by a combination of Local Authority funding Youth Justice Board grant and partner contributions.

****2025/26 budget costs and contributions are attached at Appendix 2**

We received confirmation of our grant funding allocation on May 9th, 2025, there has been a slight uplift in the funding. Early notification has allowed the Service to plan and meet its objectives. At the time of the 2025/26 plan being written, like many YOTs, we are currently without a Seconded PO. It was agreed that the YJS would receive funding in lieu of a Probation Officer. The agreement £5,000 which does us allow us to plan and support other budget pressures. The ICB contribution is a non-cash contribution via the commissioning of the Trauma Informed Care Pathway and the YJS Nurse Specialist is funded from Public Health.

Cleveland Police continue to provide a full-time seconded Police Officer. Funding once again has been secured from the Police and Crime Commissioner towards the delivery of Triage, this is secured until 2026.

We use our grant, partner contributions and available resources to deliver the strategic priorities highlighted in Vision & Strategy previously and via the services identified below to all children. In 2025/26, we aim to improve and maintain our performance across all areas of delivery ensuring a child first ethos is embedded throughout.

- Early/Targeted Intervention
- Prevention & Diversion
- O OCD
- All Post Court orders

Board development

It has been agreed that Board members will also be given an overview of the new HMIP Inspection framework which came into effect as of Spring 2025. The inspection framework has undergone significant changes to make sure the inspectorate put the work delivered to children and victims is at the forefront of their inspections. The introduction of the new standalone victim standard will look at both the individual support given to victims and organisational arrangements. It is planned that an overview of the framework will be delivered in 2025.

	Board Development	Action Taken/Planned	Owner	Target Date/Completed
1	Board induction for all new members	Board induction to be undertaken with all new board members, utilising the template shared by the AYM	YJS Manager/Board chair	Ongoing throughout the year and as and when there is a new Board member.
2	Review the new HMIP framework, ensuring board members understand their role.	Board members will be given the revised HMIP framework documentation and an overview provided at a Board meeting.	YJS Manager/Board chair	YJS Manager/Board chair

Workforce Development

An annual YJS training needs analysis is completed with the staff and forwarded to the local authority Workforce Development team. The YJS is constantly looking at creative and bespoke training for the staff and in line with identified needs of the children we work with.

Staff also attend all relevant local authority training as and when required.

	Workforce Development	Action Taken/Planned	Owner	Target Date/Completed
1	YJS refresher trg - All staff to attend YJS internal training sessions identified in training programme.	1. Internal training programme updated and circulated to all staff 2. Attendance monitored to ensure all staff are captured within the training	YJS Manager/Health team/Business Support	1. Internal training programme ongoing 2. Programme reviewed 6 monthly
2	YJS training needs will continue to be reviewed and monitored.	1. Where needed, bespoke training will be sourced. All staff have access to the training provided by the Workforce Development Team	YJS Leadership Team	1. Ongoing – all staff are aware of the internal training. 2. Additional training opportunities may be identified through meetings held with partners, YJB bulletins or other communications
5.	YJS internal risk management review training.	YJS Leadership Team to review current risk management processes and what action to take for children who are assessed as High/Very High after 12 weeks or more.	YJS Leadership Team.	To be completed 2025/26

Evidence-based practice and innovation

The purpose of evidence-based practice and innovation is to promote effective practices, which achieve positive outcomes for children.

This includes systems, ways of working or specific interventions, which are based on the best available research, are child focused and developmentally informed.

Alongside this the YJS are constantly looking at creative ways to improve delivery and evidence effectiveness, all commissioned services deliver evidence-based practice i.e. SLCN, TICP.

The following 2 recent examples of emerging practice and innovation below had a very positive impact on the children, Staff and board members.

Emerging Practice – Sports based intervention. There is evidence which supports the use of sports as a means of engaging children. The YJS met with colleagues from Street Games to look at what is available locally and whether we can deliver a sports-based intervention. After completing the appropriate risk assessments as directed by Health and Safety, the YJS sports-based intervention was available for all children, regardless of their disposal. There are exceptions which include children arrested for sexual/violent offences or bail conditions prohibiting them from having contact with other children or the victim. Sessions can be mixed sex although ages are considered due to physical size of older children. The sessions are inclusive and not based on skill. Sessions go ahead regardless of how many children attend on the day. The sessions, whilst predominantly sports-based incorporate discussions on leadership, peer pressure, lifestyle and emotional well-being. Children will be risk assessed on an individual basis to make sure they are able to participate and there are no underlying reasons which would prevent their participation. Sessions are staffed by a minimum of 2 staff.

Innovation – Consideration is being given to developing a music-based project. All children, regardless of age, background and cultural beliefs enjoy music of different genres. Music is expressive and we think it is an opportunity for children to share how they feel through the art of music. Sessions may include song writing, music overlay or using different instruments/forms to produce a piece of music. Hartlepool has an established music venue, one of their primary aims is to *“empower and support local youth and underprivileged individuals to actively participate in musical arts and culture projects, encouraging creativity, collaboration, and personal growth”*. The YJS is keen to explore new methods of engaging children in something different and creative, allowing them an opportunity to grow on a personal level and try something new or something they had never considered. This is very much in the early stages but there is a belief that it is both an achievable and worthwhile goal to pursue. The intention is that this specific project would be open to all children, regardless of their disposal.

Evaluation - All areas of intervention and delivery continue to be evaluated on a regular basis; commissioned services submit quarterly reports, which are internally evaluated within the local authority Commissioning team. Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) and Trauma Informed Care Pathway (TICP)

5. Priorities

Standards for children in the justice system

Alongside the Strategic Priorities of the service, we need to ensure that we deliver all of our services in line with the Standards for Children in the justice system (2019).

These standards being:

N1 OOC

N2 At Court

N3 In the Community

N4 In Secure Settings
N5 On Transition and resettlement

The YJB recently (February 2025) published their report on the Standards for children in the justice system: 2023 to 2024. Findings from this report highlighted 75% of youth justice partnerships rated themselves as Good and 21% as Outstanding, Hartlepool YJS rated ourselves as Outstanding in 13 (59%) of the 22 (41%) individual questions.

Areas of practice which are deemed to be working well by the YJB align with Hartlepool YJS, these include

- Robust and thorough quality assurance processes – no report is submitted to the Court without being quality assured and checked again prior to submission
- Resourcing of Court work – Hartlepool YJS continue to have an excellent commissioning arrangement with South Tees Youth Justice Service, the arrangement allows consistency and a dedicated Court Officer with extensive court knowledge, sentencing powers and legislation
- Engagement of children in the process – children who are appearing at court for the first time are contacted prior to allow them an opportunity to visit the Court room, understand what will happen on the day and they can meet the Court Officer

The report also highlights areas of weakness linked to the Police; Hartlepool YJS has an excellent relationship with Cleveland Police. We consistently apply the Child First principles, use the Gravity Matrix as a means of diverting children away from Court and the OoCD Decision Making Panels are held for every child referred in for consideration. The Seconded YJS Police Officer is highly regarded within the force and has excellent links and knowledge. Where a child is charged, consideration will be given as to whether they may be diverted from Court and the CPS will be contacted to gather their views.

Hartlepool YJS Leadership Team are planning an internal self-assessment on N3 In the Community, consideration given to areas of practice where we may look to validate our approach to supporting children and young people in the community. The self-assessment may identify areas of weakness that can be addressed to enhance our offer and commitment to achieving positive outcomes, reducing re-offending and plans are responsive to the individual and their needs.

There were no areas identified for immediate improvement within this standard, however the service will be carrying out an internal self-assessment of all National Standards again this year.

Service development

This Improvement Plan is presented quarterly within Management Board reports produced by the YJS Manager and discussed/monitored to ensure that relevant senior strategic oversight is in place and direction of travel remains positive.

	Service Improvement	Action taken/Planned	Owner	Target Date/Completed
1.	Review of Risk Management processes for children assessed as High or Very High risk of harm over a 12+ week period or more.	1. YJS Management Team to review current RMM process. 2. Wider YJS to support in reviewing the process and what can be done differently to	YJS Management Team. Broader YJS staff. Partners were/if identified.	Initial date (21/05/2025) planned to begin review of current processes. Reviewed process to be implemented by August, 2025.

		<p>manage/reduce potential risk</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where identified, partners to be consulted and held to account with their role in managing and reducing risk Meet with colleagues from Forensic CAMHS and the commissioned Educational Psychologist to identify areas where we may need to focus on 		
2.	Capturing victims opinions/views on their involvement with the YJS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How to improve feedback on the service offered by the YJS to victims Where the victim's needs and wishes met throughout the period of the YJS being involved. 	YJS Management Team, YJS RJ Officer	01/05/2025 We have made subtle changes to how we capture victim feedback. Verbal feedback is received during the final closure meeting and transferred to paper with confirmation it is an accurate reflection of the victims views. We are considering other options, such as a QR code.
3.	Additional support for victims and unmet needs linked to their learning/unmet needs, specific to young victims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> YJS RJ Officer will complete a SLCN screening and if appropriate, refer into community SaLT services. We may also speak with the commissioned Educational Psychologist for further support. . Where there is an unmet need, the RJ Officer will make the appropriate referrals to put support in place. 	YJS RJ Officer	Ongoing as of 01/05/2025
4.	School attendance and attainment is an issue for children who are open to the YJS. We need to understand what is stopping a child from going to school and achieving their potential. What are the barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued attendance at the HIP will enable Hartlepool YJS to effectively challenge schools. YJS staff are advocating on behalf of children and exploring what support is in place. Hartlepool YJS Mgt Team now attend the Vulnerable Children's Operational Group, this may allow further 	YJS Management Team Executive Head Teacher of Vulnerable Pupils	Ongoing discussions with the Executive Head Teacher, and exploration of how we both identify and how we improve school attendance and understand what barriers are in the way which may be preventing the child from attending school.

	and how can we overcome these.	<p>discussions around overcoming barriers to their learning and supporting children to achieve their potential.</p> <p>4. With support from the Executive Head Teacher, there is an education plan in place for all children open to the YJS. The overarching goal is to put individual education plans in place for all children referred into Hartlepool YJS. .</p>		
5.	Increase the number of children who are working with the substance misuse service.	<p>1. Consideration given to recruiting a substance misuse worker on a fixed 1-year contract. This will allow us to be more reactive and have contact during the reachable moments when a child is agreeing to work with substance misuse services.</p> <p>2. Children misusing substances can be chaotic, having a dedicated substance misuse will be more responsive to individual need</p> <p>3. A dedicated worker will be solely responsible for children open to the YJS and not wider children's service which creates increased demand</p> <p>4. Recruitment will also allow us greater flexibility with appointments and availability.</p>	YJS Management Team HoS for START – substance misuse provider	Ongoing - This is in the early stages of planning and we need to meet with the HoS for the local Substance Misuse Service and discuss what options are available and feasible.

6. National Priority Areas

The service continues to work towards achieving and improving their delivery and outcomes of the identified Strategic Priorities highlighted earlier in this plan, which includes the National Priorities below:

Children from groups, which are over-represented

It is widely known that children from a range of backgrounds are over-represented in the youth justice system. Nationally it is known that black and mixed ethnicity boys are over-represented and a HMIP thematic report made a number of recommendations for local authorities, YJS partnerships and YJS managers in relation to these children.

However, it is not only black and mixed ethnicity children that are over-represented; the YJS are aware, and respond, to any local concerns about all children from over-represented groups. This includes but is not limited to children known to social care services, children excluded from school and Gypsy, Roma and traveller children.

There is no data to indicate that black and mixed ethnicity children are over-represented within Hartlepool YJS as well as Gypsy, Roma and traveller children. However, the number of children within our care does fluctuate and, at times, there can be an over-representation of these groups, as well as children excluded from school.

Disproportionality is covered within the YJS managers' report at quarterly management board meetings. The following information was presented and discussed at the board meeting held in May 2024.

Children in our Care (CIOC)

- As at 14.05.2025 there were **9** CYP who are CIOC open to the YJS, 5 on statutory court Orders, 4 on an OoCD.
- This equated to 15% of the current YJS cohort – as at 14.05.2025
- Of the **9** CYP **8** were CIOC before becoming open to the service and **1** due to the nature of the offences.
- As at the 14.05.2025 there were **219** CIOC 10–17-year-old – information received from Data Team
- **4%** of the overall 10-17 CIOC are currently open to the YJS which is a marginal increase compared to 2023/24

The YJS works very closely with Cleveland Police, CPS and the Courts to ensure protocol has been followed (10-point check) and there is clear transparent decision making. We also work alongside Social Care and the Through Care teams to ensure a good robust package of multiagency support is afforded to each child. RJ training is also available and delivered to Care Home staff if requested, and training is delivered by the YJS RJ officer.

Policing

Hartlepool YJS have excellent links and communication with Cleveland Police. Police representation at the management board is via a Chief Inspector whose input is invaluable. We are very fortunate to have a vastly experienced and knowledgeable seconded Police Officer who is located with the team and provides all daily information, data and intelligence as required. Regular meetings are held with Cleveland Police and within Local Policing Areas (LPA) that ensure we are always up to date with concerns, risks and challenges and more importantly, what is being done about them. As with most Police forces nationally, staff do move around roles and appointments quite quickly and at times this can cause a certain amount of uncertainty, especially re inducting a senior Police Officer onto the management board. Good communication, good links and pathways and open to good, frank discussions as required.

Prevention

Hartlepool YJS's early and/or targeted prevention programme is known locally as "The Choices Programme". Referrals are received from within Children's Services i.e. Social Care/Early Help for all children 10-17 displaying behaviours associated with offending, antisocial behaviour, or other vulnerabilities. All referrals are screened and discussed at management meetings

A worker is allocated from the Pre Court team who will gain consent and implement an intervention plan alongside the child, parent/carer. A copy of the plan is shared with the referrer to ensure there is no duplication of work. Feedback on engagement is provided to the referrer, the YJS will be invited to any meetings regarding the child.

The Choices programme is voluntary, children will and do decline to consent or disengage during interventions, we make every effort to keep all children engaged in the process which to date has proven effective. Where a child refuses to work with us, we offer advice and support to individual staff to support them in the delivery of YJS specific interventions.

As with all other YJSs nationally Hartlepool YJS has been heavily involved in the Turnaround Programme since its inception.

To date we have screened 566 children and directly worked with a total of 111.

The initial impact of the Turnaround Programme has shown promise in aligning youth justice partners with existing integrated early help models. It has led to a greater recognition by partners of the issues faced by children at risk of entering the youth justice system, including children missing school, those with neuro-diverse presentations, other speech, language & communications needs and their increasing need for mental health care. Prevention and diversion work, including out of court disposals, now accounts for a significant proportion of the YJS caseload, and we welcome the renewed focus on early help for children at risk of entering the criminal justice system. This needs to be viewed as an 'invest to save' model for our partners, which prevents the escalation into core statutory children's services and transition into adult criminal justice system. We welcomed the news that the MoJ would extend the Turnaround funding for 2025/26 although the funding was reduced significantly. The funding allowed us to continue offering support to children who are referred into the Service. We are on track to achieve the target set by the MoJ and will continue working with referrals up until the programme is due to end.

Hartlepool YJS were part of the Immediate Justice pilot programme, the programme was funded via the MoJ and aligned with the Anti-Social Behaviour Action plan. At the point of the programme ceasing on 31/03/2025, the YJS received a total of 42 referrals from our partners in Community Safety. Immediate Justice was a voluntary programme which meant the level of engagement fluctuated. Once the children were engaged, they generally completed the planned programme of work which was restorative in nature. The children completed a fantastic project in Burn Valley Community Park, this was an outdoor art gallery consisting of 12 Peter Pan themed paintings drew by the children.

At the time of compiling the plan, we are aware of the new Ministry of Justice initiative, Young Futures Prevention Partnership Panels Pilot. The guidance would align with Hartlepool YJS' aim of supporting children at the earliest stage and how we can intervene earlier to prevent offending by children and young people. At this time, a local pilot area has not yet been agreed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, it's something we are interested in as it supports the wider aims and objectives. We would welcome any ongoing discussions with relevant partners.

Diversion

Hartlepool YJS, as with the majority of YJS's, has a strong diversionary offer to steer children out of the criminal justice system and avoid criminal records.

Our direct diversionary offer delivered directly by YJS staff consists of:

- Restorative Intervention (RI)
- Triage1 & 2

Referrals are received via the Police (G26), a screening tool is carried out with family which is then presented at our weekly OoCD Joint-Decision Making Panel, all cases are discussed in depth and decisions agreed as to the most suitable programme for the child. Mitigation, Gravity Scores and historical factors are considered prior to any decisions being made. Attendance at the panels will be a YJS manager, YJS Police Officer, RJ Officer, SW/FSW (if open to other services). At times referrals can also be sent from the court for consideration of an OoCD and undergo the same process.

Prior to the OoCD panel being held, the referral is allocated and the YJS Officer will contact the family and child to gather their views on being referred to the YJS and what their thoughts are to working with us. It's important to acknowledge that a poor attitude or view of the offence/victim does not preclude the child from having an OoCD, nor will it up-tariff the disposal. Alongside this, the YJS RJ Officer will also contact the victim and get their views/feelings on the child being referred into the service and what, if anything, they may want from the YJS being involved and potential outcome. Victims wishes will be considered and incorporated into subsequent plans.

The YJS has senior representation on the Cleveland OoCD Scrutiny Panel where cases are looked at scrutinised/analysed i.e. was diversion the right offer, and all actions and future recommendations highlighted.

In 2024/25 Hartlepool YJS worked with 81 children via Triage (36), and RI (23), Youth Caution (11), Youth Conditional Caution (11)

Education

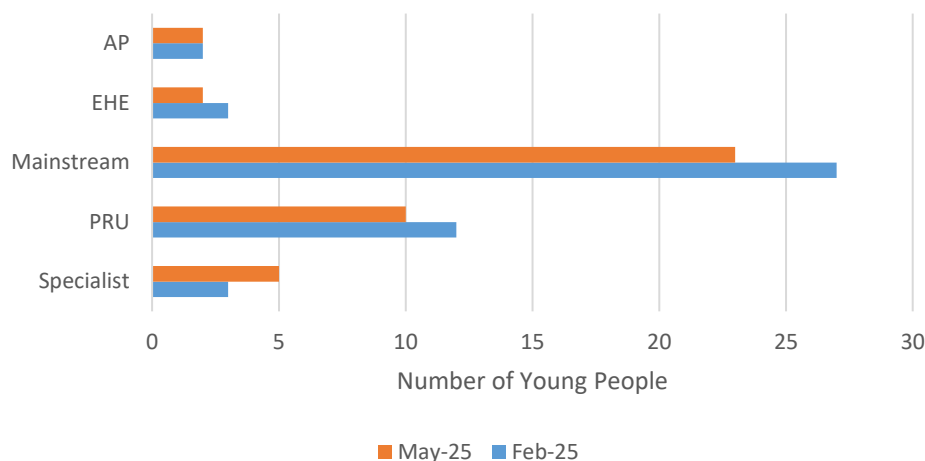
All YJS staff have direct access to a named Education worker within the Virtual School and a named worker within the One Stop Shop for all Post 16 children. The YJS have also commissioned time from an Educational Psychologist who has significantly added to our education support offer.

****The following is a snapshot of some of the data taken from the education report produced for the Management board meeting held in May 2025.**

As can be seen from the data below, education provides a clear and significant challenge to the partnership and one, which we are working very hard to understand better and be able to support both the children and education provider.

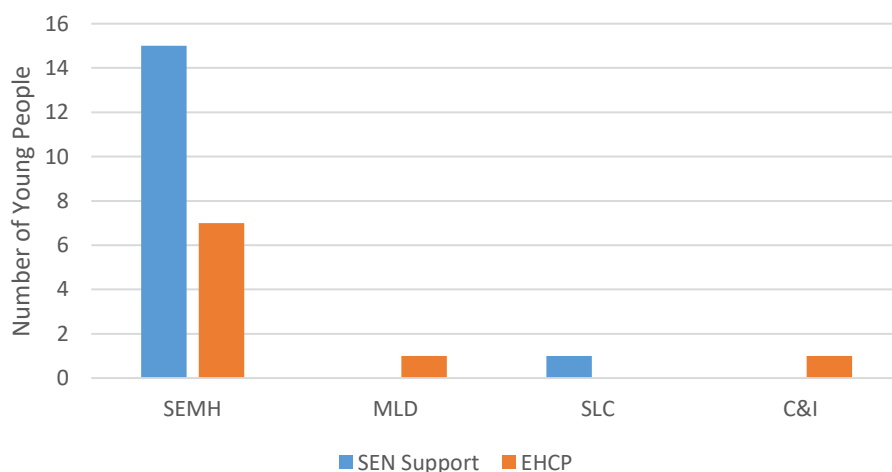
The data proved is invaluable and provides excellent discussion, challenges and clear actions moving forward.

Cohort- Education Provision



The below chart highlights the primary SEN need for children open to the YJS and accessing education is that of Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Very few children have a diagnosis of cognition and learning or a moderate learning disability. We need to be curious as to whether the child's presenting behaviour is masking their learning needs which can be difficult to understand when being assessed or observed in school, especially when attendance is an issue. There can also be a reluctance to engage with mental health professionals, education services and, or the Local Authority SEN Team. A child's experience of education varies, we often discover schools focus solely on behaviour as opposed to what may be influencing their attitudes and views of school and provision. Schools also fund EP time and may prioritise other students who are engaged in learning and do not display the same challenging behaviours and are not persistently absent. Commissioning the EP is proving worthwhile as it allows the YJS to effectively challenge schools and see what support is needed.

SEN- Primary Need



Attendance Band	Number of young people (Feb 2025)	Number of young people (May 2025)
100-95	3	2
94-90	2	1
89-85	2	4
84-80	2	2
79-75	4	2
74-70	0	0
69-65	2	3
64-60	5	2
59-55	4	3
54-50	2	4
49-45	1	1
44-40	2	0
Under 40	14	16

Academic attainment of children open to the YJS is concerning. There are far too many children who are assessed as working significantly below age related expectations. Attainment may be linked to number of interconnecting factors, which may include, school moves disrupting their learning, suspensions, accessing alternative provision, children electively home educated and undiagnosed learning needs. The YJS are in a position where we can advocate on behalf of children open to us, however we are also bound by timescales and children being open for a set period. There will be occasions when we do not see the results of YJS intervention and challenge/support to schools but we may be the catalyst for support being put in place.

Academic Attainment	No of young people (Feb 2025)	No of young people (May 2025)
Significantly below age related expectations	40	38
Below age related expectations	5	4
At age related expectations	0	0
Significantly above age-related expectations	0	0

Number of School Moves	Number of Young People (Feb 2025)	Number of Young People (May 2025)
0	15	14
1	19	15
2	8	8
3	3	3
4	2	1
5	1	1

Restorative approaches and victims

Whilst crime rates in Hartlepool have fallen, the likelihood of being a victim of crime remains a reality, especially in our most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. The YJS and broader Youth Justice Partnership are working hard to reduce the numbers of victims of crime, by incorporating the use of restorative justice practices. Restorative Justice (RJ) provides opportunities for those directly affected by an offence (victim, child responsible and members of the community) to communicate and ensure victims of youth crime have a voice. The YJS is currently re writing its Victim Policy in line with the recently published Victim's Code.

In addition, victims of youth crime are helped to access appropriate support pathways that enable them to move on from the impact of crime.

A personalised approach is taken to ensure that victims of crime in Hartlepool are placed at the centre. This includes ensuring that individual needs and wishes are fully considered. As a result, we aim to contact all victims (where consent is given) so they can access pathways to support, including the option to participate in restorative justice. Across 2024/25, there were **45** contacts with victims and the RJ Officer explored what their wishes were. As a Service we are focused on what the victim wants as opposed to what we think the victim may need. Some victims have shared that being listened to and an opportunity to share their concerns/worries was enough. However, some victims require a greater level of support, especially child victims who may have their own unmet needs.

RJ is an important underlying principle of all disposals for children on YJS caseload, from Diversion to Detention & Training Orders.

Whilst restorative processes technically result in practical reparation, for example participating in a task that benefits the community, the communication between victim and the child who has committed a crime, as part of this process, can also produce powerful emotional responses leading to mutual satisfaction and socially inclusive outcomes.

All YJS staff have undertaken service-wide RJ training, many to level 3 and the RJ/Victim lead to Level 4 plus Complex and Sensitive training to further enhance our offer to victims. The previous decision to bring RJ and victim work in house has enabled Hartlepool YJS to have direct control and influence in shaping the direction and quality of this work, including the establishment of updated working policies, practices and procedures. In turn, this has already begun to result in better outcomes for both victims and children and is much more responsive to local needs.

There is considerable evidence that RJ practice is much more integrated across all areas of the service. There is a closer link between those workers with additional RJ responsibility and case managers in relation to the needs and wishes of victims.

We aim where possible to ensure all children have a say in what they would like to do by means of practical reparation. We also have ongoing pieces of work, which are individual bespoke projects and are planned to take place involving furniture restoration, bird boxes for distribution to local groups, working alongside the RSPB, Heugh Gun Battery and local community projects at well-known landmarks/venues across the town.

Examples of the fantastic work completed by the children who have delivered reparation for the benefit of the community. The range of projects is diverse and tailored to the needs and interests of the individual and may, at times, be victim led/focused.



The above images, along with 9 others, were installed in a local park for the benefit of the community. A local resident emailed the ward Councillor;

"So it was with curiosity then delight we viewed these works daily. We now can name them in order before we even approach them. They bring joy. Especially Tinkerbell."

"So I would like to thank these young persons. No matter your backgrounds or why you were originally involved in anti social behaviour. Know this: you all can go on to lead lives filled with achievement and pull away from those influences. I thank you all for bringing joy to many other children. And I hope my words encourage you all."



A mud kitchen designed and built by a 17yr old as part of his reparation project. The kitchen was delivered and installed in a local Primary School for the Nursery/Reception children to encourage messy and sensory play.



Several children have been painting the fence at a community ran sports field. The local football team actively engage with the service and are open to children, of all ages and backgrounds to attend their provision.

Serious Violence and Exploitation

All three Cleveland YJS` have strategic representation within the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV). There are several meetings, boards and training events organised via CURV that the YJS attends. Improved data sharing and intelligence is evident and there are much clearer links across the local authority and wider partners regarding Serious Violence. The YJS manager within his role as Secretary for the Association of YOT Managers (AYM) executive board led and produced the AYM national response for the consultation regarding the Serious Violence Duty.

The YJS Leadership Team also has serious incidents within their quarterly report to the board and these are discussed and analysed for any lessons learned etc. During 2024/25 Hartlepool YJS reported **3** Serious Incident to the YJB which is an increase on 2023/24.

There is ever improving partnership work across Hartlepool to address child criminal exploitation and interaction with the NRM. Hartlepool's Harm Outside the Home Team (HOTH) lead on all matters regarding exploitation. There are regular case discussions and People/Areas of interest meetings, which the YJS has senior representation at. The YJS has very good communication and information/intelligence sharing with the HOTH team and co work many complex cases. A lot of work is ongoing with the SCA re NRM and regular liaison with the Police, CPS and Courts ensures everyone is as updated as can be. All YJS staff have attended various training events organised by the HoTH re exploitation.

All YJS staff have carried out up to date PREVENT training in line with local authority requirements.

The majority of children RUI who meet the criteria will be offered Turnaround. As part of the YJS managers' report to management board meetings all RUI and bail figures are shared and discussed to measure the time from arrest to outcome. Suitable challenge is made where required.

The following data is correct as of May 2025 regarding outstanding Police investigations/enquiries

42 offences

- 26 - RUI
- 16 - Unconditional/Conditional Bail
- 5 - with CPS
- 37 - Ongoing (including offences where CYP are open on Out of Court disposals)

- 18 - 0 to 3 months
- 12 - 3 to 6 months
- 8 - 6 to 9 months
- 0 - 9 to 12 months
- 3 - 12 to 15 months (all Sexual offences, Sent back from CPS with an Action Plan pre-Charge)
- 1 – 15 months + 1 sexual Offence with CPS

The YJS monitors time from offence to outcome and updates all data via the quarterly YJS management board meetings and challenges the Police/CPS as required.

Detention in police custody

A significant amount of work has been undertaken across Cleveland over the last couple of years re children detained in Police custody. There is a monthly “Children in Custody” meeting where we discuss all children who have been held in custody 12 hours or more in the previous month. The meeting is attended by senior representation from the 3 Cleveland YJS, Police Custody Management, EDT, Social Care, Custody health team, Custody Navigators and L&D. Every child is discussed to ascertain the reasons behind their length of stay in custody and suitable actions highlighted where required. The meeting is well attended, and a lot of valuable information is shared.

The CURV funded four Custody Navigators to engage, liaise and where needed support all children entering the custody suite. Management oversight is via South Tees YJS, however the Custody Navigators will engage all children and liaise directly with the home YJS, working across all three YJS's. This does speed up the process for children in the custody suite, and the Navigators offer further support alongside the parent YJS outside of the Custody Suite.

Excitingly an area of the custody suite has been set aside for children only and after an extensive plan of works is now available as a Child custody area. There is a separate entrance and exit, and areas have been prepared with suitable reading materials, fidget objects, painted walls, breakout rooms etc.

Remands

There is constant dialogue locally, regionally and nationally re the use of remands, and we welcome the current shift in focus on remands, which has often been overlooked, to reduce the number, the length and seek community alternatives.

In 2024/25 Hartlepool YJS had 1 remand to Local Authority Accommodation

As a service, we are constantly offering creative alternatives to the use of remands and custody. The changes to ISS and the current YRO (ISS) pilot with trail monitoring does enhance this offer and allow us the opportunity to offer a more creative and potentially robust alternative to custody with an improved process of oversight and management. In 2023/24 we had two children on the YRO (ISS) pilot.

Use of custody

Nationally the use of custody has decreased significantly over the past five years, and this is rightly a success in the youth justice system. When children do go to custody it can have a damaging effect on their lives, disrupting education and straining family relationships. Children in custody are likely to be amongst the most complex and vulnerable children in society.

Hartlepool YJS generally has relatively low numbers of children with custodial sentences, and every effort is made by the service to offer creative alternatives to a custodial sentence.

The service has very good links to the local secure estate and ensures timely communication and planning is always undertaken. All relevant services are involved from the outset of a

custodial sentence and the 7-point plan is instigated from the beginning of every custodial sentence and followed throughout their sentence ensuring **Constructive Resettlement**.

In 2024/25 Hartlepool had 2 children serve custodial sentences. Where possible, alternatives to the use of custody will be considered. However, when the custody threshold is met, community packages of support will be explored as a proposal to the judiciary to prevent a custodial sentence. Any recommendation also factors in public protection, engagement with bail arrangements, response to current Community Order and can the risk be safely managed.

Hartlepool YJS have implemented a Constructive Resettlement Guidance document, which all staff follow to ensure every child is supported from sentence to resettlement.

There is regular management oversight of this via meetings, supervisions and QA. The guidance also highlights processes to be undertaken prior to sentence including Pre Sentence Reports (PSR) and the need for child/family involvement throughout. Actions to be undertaken at court after sentence and in the first 10 days of sentence and then throughout their sentence planning for constructive resettlement.

7 Point Plan:

1. Case Management and Transition: Ensure that young people serving custodial sentences receive effective, end to end service provision based on a thorough assessment of need and risk, in order to reintegrate them into the community

2. Accommodation: To ensure that all young people leaving custody can access suitable accommodation and support where appropriate.

3. Education Training and Employment: Provide all young people with suitable and sustainable Education, Training and Employment through their sentence and beyond.

4. Health: Ensure that all young people in custody have access to suitable and sustainable general and specialist healthcare services, based on individual need, so that problems are assessed and treated at the earliest opportunity and in the most appropriate manner.

5. Substance Misuse: Ensure that all young people entering custody are screened for substance misuse, with recognition of previous interventions. Those with identified needs should receive specialist assessment access to appropriate interventions and treatment services, with their aftercare needs met on return to community.

6. Families: Ensure that families of young people in custody receive timely, high quality support and information, from the point of arrest and throughout the young person's sentence.

7. Finance, Benefits and Debt: Ensure young people leaving custody and their families are provided with information and advice so that they are able to access appropriate financial support.

A multiagency approach is embedded to ensure each area of the above plan is monitored and every child receives the best and most timely support available from all services involved. The service has direct links to all partners in relation to accommodation, health, education, finance/budget, substance misuse and children's services such as Social Care and Early Help who are brought together at the point of sentence.

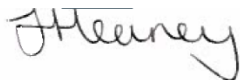
Working with families

The service works hard to include and work with families throughout a child's involvement. As highlighted throughout this plan the voice and input of parent/carers alongside those of the child are integral to successfully supporting children on their journey.

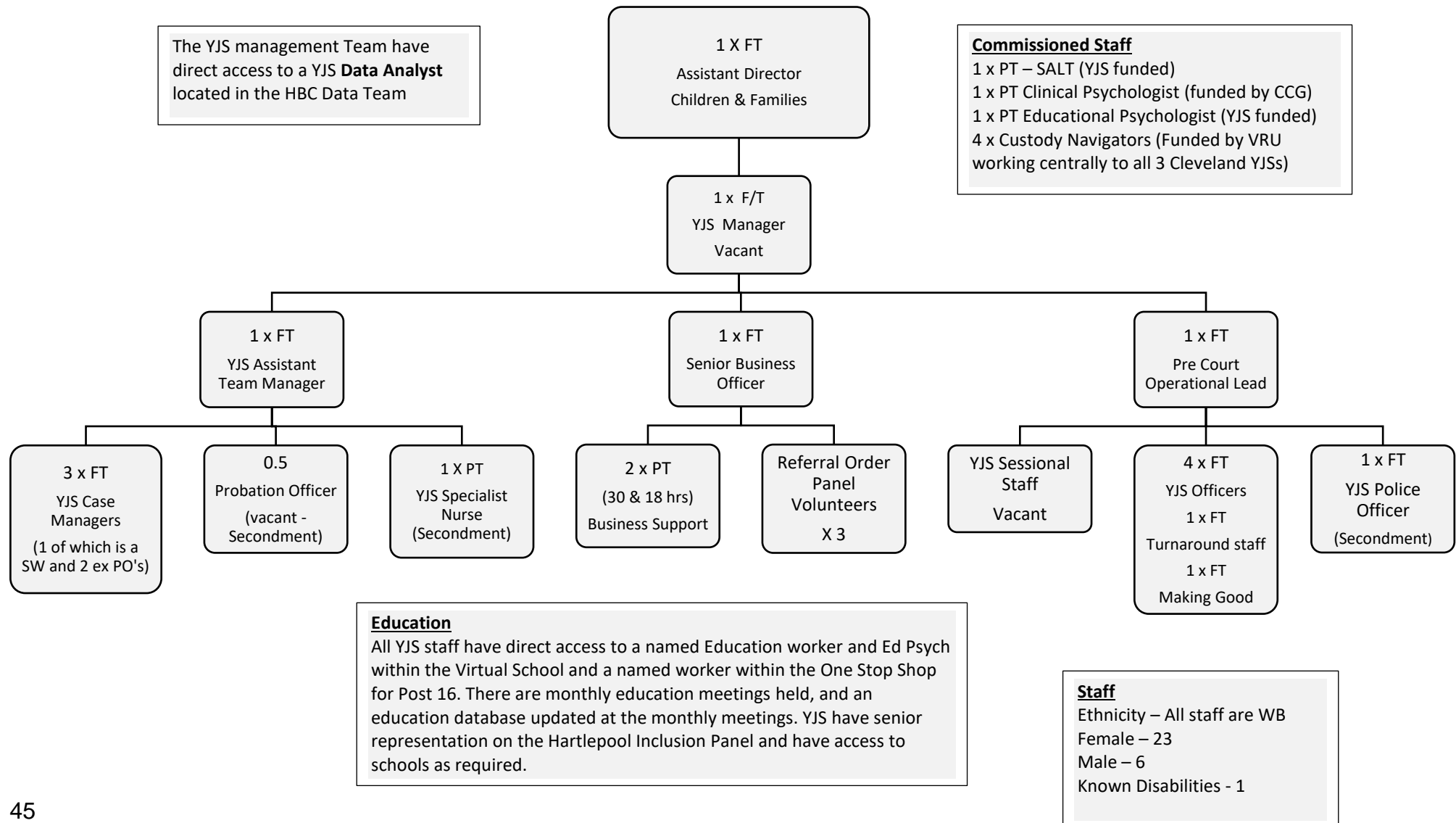
The YJS have staff trained to deliver the **Talking Teens** programme, this is based on the most recent research on adolescence, and consistent with the principles of the Nurturing Programme, the groups provide a positive view of teenage development and focus on relationships within the family, communication, negotiating, decision-making and strategies to reduce conflict. To date engagement with parents has been very positive; we have delivered it as group work and 1:1.

The **Turnaround** programme has been invaluable with helping support and work with families. This is currently the only programme available to the YJS with specific funding available to offer families direct support. The benefits of this have been huge, have enabled, and encouraged engagement from the outset. This needs to be viewed as an 'invest to save' model for our partners, which prevents the escalation into core statutory children's services and transition into adult criminal justice system. The initial multi-year funding for Turnaround has been very welcome, and we hope it can become permanent. There is always a worry that short-term initiatives come at the expense of investment in core service provision for the longer term, which requires sustained, multi-year settlements.

7. Sign off, submission and approval

Management Board Chair	Jo Heaney, Head of Commissioning (Children, Young People and Maternity - Tees Valley) North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Signature	
Date	20/05/2025

Appendix 2 – Hartlepool YJS Service Structure, March 2025



Appendix 2 – Budget costs & Contributions 2025/26

B5: YOT budget
Costs and Contributions

2025/26 Budget - Hartlepool Youth Justice Service

	Staffing	Non-Pay	In-Kind	Total
Agency	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Youth Justice Board	379	111	0	490
Hartlepool Borough Council	241	69	117	427
Cleveland Police	0	0	57	57
Police & Crime Commissioner	38	0	0	38
Probation Service	0	5	27	32
Health (Integrated Care Board)	0	0	6	6
Turnaround Grant	71	6	0	77
Total	729	191	207	1,127

'In-Kind' Contributions
<i>Hartlepool Borough Council - 0.6 FTE Specialist Nurse & Overhead Costs (eg. Management, accommodation, finance, legal etc)</i>
<i>Cleveland Police - 1 FTE Police Officer</i>
<i>Probation Service - 0.5 FTE Probation Officer</i>
<i>Integrated Care Board - 0.1 FTE Clinical Psychologist</i>

Common youth justice terms

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long-lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety

Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education Health and care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi-agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average

RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 JULY 2025



Subject: THE DISAGGREGATION OF THE CHILDRENS MULTI-AGENCY HUB FROM STOCKTON-ON-TEES

Report of: Assistant Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning

Decision Type: Key Decision – General Exception applies

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Children's Services Committee the joint proposal between Hartlepool Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Council to disaggregate the joint Childrens Hub (CHUB), and each authority having their own separate CHUB.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Families First nationally mandated reforms for children's services and the strategic direction of both Hartlepool Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council means the current arrangement is not consistent with the future direction of children's services for both Authorities. As a result, both Authorities are seeking to disaggregate the Children's Hub.

This means that each Authority will develop its own front door to services that will have a stronger focus on Early Help for families at the point of access and have a stronger focus on reviewing activity and adapting services and finance accordingly.

3.2 **National Policy Direction for Children's Social Care**

The national policy aims to transform children's social care by improving outcomes, keeping families together, enhancing information sharing, and fostering partnership and multi-agency collaboration. Key policy documents outlining the framework for change include:

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DFE 2023)

Children's Social Care: Stable Homes, Built on Love (2023)

Children's Social Care: National Framework (DFE 2024)

Families First Partnership Program (DFE 2025)

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (Government Bill 2025)

In March 2025, the government issued guidance to support the implementation of these reforms. This guidance encompasses a wide range of changes affecting children's services, from early help to safeguarding, tailored to the needs of local communities. Consequently, the future operation of the CHUB must align with local needs and partnership arrangements.

3.3 **CHUB Staff**

Hartlepool staff in the CHUB have been informed of the proposal to disaggregate. Work is ongoing to map out what this means for staff. The split in the demand is broadly 65% Stockton-on-Tees to 35% Hartlepool. However, it isn't as simplistic as a neat split in the staffing percentage, and other variables such as role requirements under the new reforms and vacancies across all children's services in Hartlepool will be taken into consideration. It is anticipated that some TUPE arrangements may take place for some staff, to transfer to Stockton-on-Tees HUB.

3.4 **Engagement with Partners**

Extensive discussions with leaders of Children's Services at Stockton-on-Tees has highlighted that, in the context of national reforms, the current arrangements for the CHUB are not fully aligned with Hartlepool's nor Stockton-on-Tees' strategic direction. While the CHUB has been an integral part of the Children's System North of Tees, the evolving operational circumstances suggest that a separation of the joint arrangements is necessary. This change will allow both Authorities to better align with their respective strategic goals and the broader national reforms.

Partners are aware of the proposal. It is envisaged that the current partners in the CHUB will remain in line with statutory expectations, and the national reforms.

3.5 **Timeline**

This will not be a quick process, with many activities to be undertaken including consultations, staffing and TUPE considerations. Completion of disaggregation is expected for January 2026

3.5 Anticipated Benefit

This is an opportunity to reflect on the current delivery model for how children and their families access services, aiming to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families in Hartlepool.

It will support the wider transformation of children's social care as mandated by national guidance and outlined in the children's transformation programme and allow Hartlepool to better utilise resources within the broader children's early help system.

4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 The CHUB is a statutory requirement, and a key function of the council's responsibility to keeping children safe.

4.2 At the Ofsted inspection in 2024, the Childrens Hub was commended for its practice in keeping children safe, and an overall Grading for Hartlepool of OUTSTANDING was made. This puts Hartlepool in a position of strength in ensuring that this is a seamless process, and that the safety of children remains at the heart of the process and going forward.

4.3 Stockton-on-Tees are Ofsted graded Requires Improvement. They have a significant improvement plan that Hartlepool are not, and should not, be a part of. The Disaggregation's allows them to prioritise and manage their arrangements in line with their improvement plan, and Hartlepool to continue to prioritise Hartlepool children and focus on the new reforms.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	<p>The council must provide a statutory response when there are concerns that a child may be at risk of or experiencing harm or in need of a service.</p> <p>Whilst the risk of service disruption is minimal, there will be some changes that will need to be carefully managed to mitigate this and ensure that statutory requirements continue to be met to an outstanding level.</p>
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	<p>The forecast 2025/2026 cost of the current Joint CHUB is £1,506,000 (plus pay award once agreed). This is currently jointly funded through contributions from Stockton Council (60%), Hartlepool Council (36%), Police and Crime Commissioner (2%) and CAMHS (2%). The disaggregation process will need to carefully consider the budget available for the new service delivery model and associated staffing structures.</p>

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	The disaggregation may have some legal contractual considerations that will need to be worked through by each authority.
CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	There are no specific child and family poverty implications arising from this report. Children referred to Hartlepool CHUB will continue to receive a service in line with their needs.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	The CHUB will continue to be sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith, or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are staffing considerations that will be worked through as part of the planning. Relevant agencies will be consulted with, and staff will be consulted with.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.
CONSULTATION	Consultation has taken place between senior leaders in each Authority, with staff and partners. This will be an ongoing process as part of the disaggregation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to consider this paper on the disaggregation of the Childrens HUB and note the positive relationship between Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees, the success of the shared CHUB and the national reform expectations and requirements for Hartlepool.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Safeguarding Children is a statutory requirement of all Local Authorities. The national reforms have placed expectations on all local authorities' children's services to change and align their arrangements to the new reforms. The current CHUB arrangements do not conform and as such the disaggregation allows both authorities to review arrangements and separately undertake the required changes.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 No additional papers

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

Laura Gough
Assistant Director
Children and Families
Email: Laura.Gough@Hartlepool.gov.uk

Sign Off: -

Managing Director	Date: 11.06.25
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11.06.25
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 11.06.25

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 JULY 2025



Subject: FAMILIES FIRST REFORMS

Report of: Assistant Director, Early Intervention, Performance and Commissioning

Decision Type: For information

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:

- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To present to Children's Services Committee information regarding the Families First for Children reforms and how these are being progressed in Hartlepool

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The **Independent Care Review** and **National Panel Review** made a number of ambitious recommendations to transform support and protection in children's social care (CSC). In response to these recommendations, the Department for Education (DfE) published its implementation strategy, '**Stable Homes, Built on Love**', in 2023 which sets out a range of proposed reforms in CSC.
- 3.2 The "Families First for Children (FFC)" programme brings together some of these recommendations into a reform initiative in children's social care that aims to improve the system of support for families and children. It focuses on early intervention, multi-agency collaboration, and increased involvement of family networks to help families stay together and ensure children's well-being.

- 3.3 The reforms have four key elements or pillars that will be expected to be delivered as whole system transformation with key features to consider for co-design and co-production:-

Element/pillar 1: Overarching system-led reform including leadership, partnerships, culture and information sharing

Key Features:

- **Stronger multi-agency safeguarding arrangements:** this includes an increased role for education, alongside health, police and children's social care.
- Establishing a system-wide, "families first" culture – including through prioritising family group decision making.
- Engaging with and ensuring a welcoming and effective system for children and families.
- Clarifying and strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASAs), ways of working and independent scrutiny.
- Strengthening the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Streamlining and supporting effective information sharing and systems.

Element/pillar 2: Welcoming and effective family help: Family help/lead practitioners, Family Help Service and multi-disciplinary team around the family (TAF).

Key Features:

- **Family help:** establishing local multi-disciplinary teams, merged from targeted early help and child in need services, to ensure families with multiple needs receive earlier, joined-up and non-stigmatising support to enable them to stay together.
- Integrating family help within existing systems and services.
- Composition of a multi-disciplinary family help service.
- How to deliver a "front door" and service that is welcoming, effectively identifies families' strengths and needs and decides on the appropriate practitioner for a family.
- Family help lead practitioner role.
- Family help threshold and assessment.
- Case management, oversight and supervision.

Additional areas for Hartlepool:

- Early help strategy and further development of support (level 2 and 3 Threshold Document)

Element/pillar 3: Dedicated and skilled Child Protection response: Lead Child Protection Practitioners, multi-agency child protection teams and parental representation.**Key Features:**

- **Multi-agency child protection teams:** setting up multi-agency child protection teams, with cases held by social worker lead child protection practitioners and also including representation from health and the police.
- The role and responsibilities of the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP).
- How co-working between family help and child protection works effectively.
- Supervision and case oversight for LCPP.
- The best model to operationalise a multi-agency child protection team (MACPT), their function and how to secure dedicated resource across agencies.
- Operationalising multi-agency child protection processes including enquiries, conferences and reviews.
- Improving parents' experiences and engagement with child protection, including through independent parental representation.

Additional areas for Hartlepool:

- Development of Hartlepool only Chub

Element/pillar 4:Unlocking the potential of family networks; Bringing family networks through the new systems: Family Group Decision Making, Family Group Conferencing and Family Network Support Packages.**Key Features:**

- **A bigger role for family networks:**involving the wider family in decision-making about children with needs or at risk, including by using family network support packages to help children at home.
- Family networks as a “golden thread” throughout the reformed system.
- How family group decision making/conferencing can best be aligned/integrated into decision making in family help and child protection.

- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).
- Family Group Conferencing (FGC).
- Family Network Support Packages (FNSP)

4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Initial Milestones/Timescales for this reform in Hartlepool are detailed below:

Milestone	Timescale
Initial engagement with relevant partners and staff to ensure an understanding of the FFC Programme and its objectives.	June 2025
Identify Co-Design and Co-Production Workstream Groups, attendees and develop Terms of Reference for all four pillars and the experts by experience group (phase 1 of pillar 2 will only focus on Early help strategy and further development of support - level 2 and 3 Threshold Document)	July/August 2025
Ensure awareness of the FFC Programme and its objectives. Clear communications via different channels.	July- September 2025
Set up all Co-Design and Co-Production Workstream Groups meetings	September 2025
Work with key colleagues to identify opportunities to increase available capacity or source more dedicated resource to ensure there is the capacity and resources to support the co-design and co-development of the reforms.	July - September 2025
High level design recommendations to Operational Delivery Group and Governance Group – Children's Strategic Partnership.	October 2025
Phase 2 Pillar 2 (family help) workstream discussions and development sessions	October – December 2025
Pillar 2 (family help) planning around system implementation	January – June 2026

Develop Q/A and performance framework	June 2026
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4.2 Our key partners are the following:

- NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and provider Trusts
- Hartlepool Children's Strategic Partnership
- Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Cleveland Police
- Hartlepool Council
- Children, young people and families in Hartlepool
- Education settings
- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations

4.3 Through delivery of the reforms we will engage with children and young people, parents/carers/families and other relevant stakeholders to support the design, production, implementation and evaluation of the FFC Programme in Hartlepool.

4.4 The co-design and development plan will be regularly reviewed and evaluated to check the plan is working. The outcome of the review and evaluation will be fed back to the Operational Delivery Group and Children's Strategic Partnership. A test and learn method will be used and any learning gained will be used to review and adjust recommendations and action plans accordingly.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	Local Authorities are expected to implement the national reforms in a safe and effective way, this will be subject to Ofsted scrutiny through the ILACS inspection process.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	Additional funding has been provided by Department for Education, there will be a need to reorganize some services to deliver ongoing changes to practice which will form part of the transformation planning.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	Not applicable.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. However the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is currently passing through Parliament; aspects of the reforms are included within the Bill and will pass into law.

CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	A cornerstone of the Families First approach is to support children remaining safely within in their families, although there are no direct child and poverty implications arising from the reforms, child poverty is a key factor in determining the outcomes for children and therefore forms part of social work interventions to support families.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	There are no direct equality or diversity considerations arising from this report.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	As the imlemention and delivery of the reforms develop there maybe staffing considerations but at this point we are not able to predict what, if any, these may be.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are no direct environment, sustainability and climate change considerations arising from this report.
CONSULTATION	Consultation will be undertaken with parents, carers, children and young people, staff and partners through seminars and forums as transformation year progresses.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That members of Children's Services Committee note the contents of this report.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Families First for Children reforms outline significant changes to the way children's social care and early help services are delivered to support children, young people and their families. Children's Services Committee need to be kept up to date of the reforms and how these are being delivered in Hartlepool. The Children's Strategic Partnership will provide strategic governance for delivery of the change programme.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

Rebecca Stephenson
Assistant Director Early Intervention, Performance and Commissioning
Tel:01429 284134
Rebecca.stephenson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 11.06.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11.06.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 10.06.2025

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 JULY 2025



Subject: OFSTED INSPECTION OF EXMOOR GROVE
CHILDRENS HOME AND STOCKTON ROAD
CHILDRENS HOME

Report of: Assistant Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning

Decision Type: For information

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- where people will be safe and protected from harm.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Children's Services Committee the recent full Ofsted inspection reports of Exmoor Grove Childrens Home which took place 21 & 22 January 2025 (**Appendix 1**) and Stockton Road Children's Home which took place on 18 & 19 February 2025 (**Appendix 2**).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Inspections of children's homes are carried out by Ofsted. Ofsted have a duty to inspect children's homes annually under The Children's Homes Regulations 2015. The scheduling of inspections takes account of.
- Children's standard of care.
 - previous inspection findings.
 - complaints and concerns about the service.
 - notifications from the home; and
 - The content of monitoring reports to Ofsted by children's homes under regulations 44 and 45 of The Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

- 3.2 The inspection judgments and descriptions for a full inspection are:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement.
- Inadequate

Inspectors will use the descriptors as the benchmark against which to grade and judge performance. Inspectors are required to weigh up the evidence in:

- How well children and young people are helped and protected.
- The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers and consider it against the evaluation criteria before making the judgment of the experience and progress of children and young people.

4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Both Childrens homes are operated and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council. Stockton Road provides care for children who may experience social and emotional difficulties whilst Exmoor Grove provides short break and permanent care for children and young people with complex needs and disabilities.
- 4.2 A full inspection of Exmoor Grove 21 & 22 January 2025, against the judgments and descriptors outlined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 above and the service was judged as **OUTSTANDING** overall. Therefore, meeting the criteria that 'The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for OUTSTANDING. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when the home received a GOOD judgement.
- 4.3 A full inspection of Stockton Road took place on 18 & 19 February 2025 against the judgments and descriptors outlined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 above and the service was judged as **GOOD** overall. Therefore, meeting the criteria that 'The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for GOOD. The home has therefore sustained its GOOD judgement from the previous inspection.
- 4.4 The full inspection reports are attached at **Appendix** 1 and 2 of this report and provide Members with the detailed findings reached by Ofsted in making their judgements.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	The Children's homes need to action and implement the statutory requirement and recommendations to ensure children and young people continue to receive a good service. If the children's home does not continue a programme of improvement and does not follow up on the recommendations made, it runs the risk of being judged
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	'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' meaning the care of children and young people has become unsafe or poor.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no financial considerations arising from this report.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no legal considerations arising from this report. Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	There are no specific child and family poverty implications arising from this report. Children in our care have their life chances promoted to achieve good outcomes. Good quality care and support provided by a children's home is essential to this.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	The inspection outlines how the children's home, care and practice is sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith, or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staffing considerations
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.
CONSULTATION	During the inspection, inspectors observed and sought the wishes and views of children and young people living at Exmore Grove and Stockton Road and this informed their findings

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the positive inspection reports of Exmoor Grove Childrens Home and Stockton Road Childrens Home. The provisions have been judged to be Outstanding and GOOD respectively; this is testament to the care, commitment, and skill of the staff teams.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Exmoor Grove and Stockton Road children's homes are regulated statutory services providing care for children and young people and Children's Service

Committee must be kept informed of inspections and the judgments of OFSTED in relation the provisions.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Appendix 1, Exmoor Grove Ofsted Full report 21 & 22 January 2025
Appendix 2, Stockton Road Ofsted Full report 19 & 19 February 2025

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

Laura Gough
Assistant Director, Children and Families
Email: Laura.Gough@Hartlepool.gov.uk

Sign Off: -

Managing Director	Date: 10.06.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 10.06.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 09.06.2025

SC472417

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2021.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
-------------------------------------------------------------	------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
-------------------------------------------	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2024	Full	Good
08/03/2023	Full	Good
10/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
25/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a warm and comfortable home. They have ample space to spend time together, have fun, talk about their day and enjoy each other's company. Children's bedrooms are individualised with their choice of decor, and provide them with personal space when they want it.

Children are prepared and supported well for their move into the home. They are encouraged to enjoy a range of activities with the other children who live in the home and the staff team prior to their move. This undoubtedly helps to settle any nerves the children may have and enables them to feel comfortable in a new environment.

Children are encouraged to develop the practical and emotional skills they need to look after themselves as they embark on the transition to young adulthood. A great deal of care and attention is given by staff to ensure that children are supported to move on positively from the home and where appropriate keep in touch. Staff continue to provide a listening ear and an open door; for example, one young person who left the home three years ago still visits and has written a lovely letter of appreciation to the staff about their time in the home.

Children are in good health. Staff support children to attend routine appointments and ensure that they access specialist care when needed. Staff are regularly supported by an in-house psychologist. This helps them find the best way to support children's emotional well-being.

Two children attend education and are making progress from their starting points. One child is not in education, employment or training. Staff are liaising closely with external professionals and the virtual school to find the most suitable education provision for the child. While out of education, staff diligently support ongoing learning and maintain the school day routine in preparation for the child's return to the classroom.

Children offer feedback and suggestions to staff in their key-work sessions and in casual conversations. One child has been identified as a 'consultation champion', picking a topic each month and feeding back the views of the children to the manager. This has really helped to empower the children to have a purposeful say over how they are cared for and how the home operates.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities. Staff encourage children to continue with things they like to do and to try new experiences. This has helped children to learn new skills and increased their confidence.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The manager and staff know the children and their risks well. They understand the value of spending time getting to know the children and developing meaningful relationships with them. Children have said that they feel safe in the home and have adults whom they can confide in when they feel concerned, angry or upset.

Staff are persistent in their efforts and build good-quality relationships with children. The quality of these relationships helps children to open up and begin to talk about difficult topics. Staff also encourage learning from general conversation about current events. This helps to broaden children's understanding and reflect on matters such as equality and diversity.

Children's care plans and risk assessments are regularly updated. Staff routinely follow these plans, which means that children have a consistent approach from those caring for them. Staff also use open and thoughtful language, which helps to give the message to children that they cared for and cared about.

Staff know what to do when children are missing from home. Staff follow the missing procedures and work diligently to look for the children. When staff have concerns that a child is vulnerable to exploitation, referrals are made for specialist support. Staff work with the children to help them understand the risk they face and to help them be safer.

The home has procedures in place to ensure that any health and safety issues are resolved. However, a recent threat to the home has led to fire doors being locked. The fire risk assessment is out of date and children's evacuation plans are not updated. This means that children may not necessarily be able to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is ambitious and enthusiastic. Leading by example, the manager has high expectations for the children. Staff are committed to the same values and children are cared for to a consistently high standard.

Staff are skilled at developing and maintaining strong working relationships with partner agencies. Professionals talk positively about that relationship, stating that it is staff at the forefront of pursuing what the children need.

Supervision takes place regularly and includes reflective discussion. Staff work diligently to find creative ways of helping children overcome trauma. One professional commented that the embedded reflective practice across the staff team has directly supported one child to feel able to reach out to staff for a hug.

The manager uses team meetings productively to involve the staff in the development of the home and to facilitate new learning. Information from the manager and the local authority is cascaded down to staff so that they continue to be well informed.

The manager uses a comprehensive tool to support the oversight and audit of the home. It covers all aspects of the home and is easy to read. The manager knows the home's strengths and areas for improvement and has a plan to continue developing the staff team.

Most staff are qualified or working towards the required qualification. There are two members of staff who are significantly outside of the allotted timescales, with no known solution as to when enrolment will take place. Leaders have a plan to ensure new workers enrolling on the training are not delayed.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home;</p> <p>provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire.</p> <p>(Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b))</p>	20 March 2025
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p>	20 March 2025

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC472417

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Zoe Davin

Inspectors

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector
Kirstie Sutherland, Social Care Inspector

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SC030967

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides short-breaks and four longer-term residential placements for children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2021.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
-------------------------------------------------------------	------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
-------------------------------------------	-------------

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2024	Full	Good
22/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
08/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
30/07/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff are dedicated to supporting children to achieve their potential. Staff and the manager set targets for the children, which helps them to make significant progress in all areas of their lives. One child has been supported to learn Makaton so they can communicate effectively with other children in the home. This supports children to build relationships with others. Another child has progressed from being non-verbal to being able to communicate effectively. This has broadened the social world of this child and has better enabled them to have a voice.

Children are remarkably well supported when they are introduced to the home. Staff have a range of ways to obtain information about the child, such as observing them in school and speaking with families. This helps to assess if staff can meet the child's individual needs. Where possible, the manager will arrange stays so that children can spend time with their friends. This helps children to maintain important relationships and contributes towards the children's progress with their social skills and self-confidence.

Staff personalise the method of communication they use with each child based on children's individual need. This extends to the social stories that staff create, which help children to understand any changes to their usual routine. This has helped one child to understand the reason they were being re-introduced to an important family member and contributed towards an especially successful outcome.

Children are exceptionally well supported with their education. This extends to children who visit for short breaks. Staff creatively provide children with additional learning to develop their skills and knowledge, such as creating science experiments in the garden. The manager also liaises with children's teachers to ensure that there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour. For one child, this approach has resulted in no incidents in the past year in school. It has supported another child to participate in a class of thirty children, from a starting point of a class of five children. Another child's attendance has increased from 60% to 100%. The ethos that the staff adopt to learning contributes towards exceptional outcomes for children.

Children are extremely well supported with transitions. Staff who currently work in this home will be moving with two children who are going to live in a newly established residential home. This helps children to maintain trusting relationships and will minimise any anxieties that they may face.

Children and their families build trusting relationships with staff. Families value the additional support that staff provide. For example, staff support families who struggle to attend medical appointments with their children outside of children's stays. Staff also contact children's families for an update in advance of their stay so that any necessary adjustments can be made to their child's care. Families are provided with a monthly newsletter which contains details of local events and activities, and a thorough report

after their child's stay. This communication is vital for parents to reassure them that their child is safe and well cared for during their stay.

The home has undergone an extensive refurbishment, which is still in progress. This has contributed towards a more homely environment for the children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff understand the needs of the children well. Children's care plans and risk assessments are detailed and personalised. They are updated regularly and contain clear strategies that support staff in caring for the children.

Incidents are recorded in detail by staff and include body maps of any injuries. This helps the manager to be satisfied that staff are following the necessary safeguarding procedures. Physical interventions are rarely used and only to help to keep children safe during an incident. Incidents and physical interventions have reduced in frequency because of the relationships the staff have with the children. Staff always communicate with children after an incident to try to help them understand the need for the intervention. This helps children to understand that staff want to help them to stay safe.

Staff support the children with their medical appointments. Staff contribute towards the review of children's prescribed medication to ensure that it meets the needs of the child. The staff have helped one child to understand that medical appointments and personal hygiene routines do not always mean a painful experience for them. This has resulted in the child attending all required medical appointments and has improved their personal hygiene and independence.

Due to the complex needs and vulnerability of the children accessing the service, external doors are operated by a key fob to help to keep children safe. Some internal doors are operated by using a keypad. However, monitoring devices are only used in specific situations to keep children safe and with the consent of those with parental responsibility.

Allegations made by children are responded to quickly. The necessary safeguarding steps are taken to help to keep children safe. However, the manager has failed to notify Ofsted of one allegation. Although the outcome of the investigation was that the allegation was unfounded, this prevents inspectors from being assured that the provider took appropriate action to safeguard children.

Staff generally adopt an approach of applying natural consequences to children's behaviour. For example, if a child kicks a ball into a neighbour's garden, the child is helped to understand they need to wait for the neighbour to return this before they can play with the ball again. However, when consequences are used, they are not always recorded in a way that allows the manager to review the effectiveness of the consequence.

There has been one error in the administration of medication to a child. This was responded to well and the child was unharmed. The manager has implemented additional monitoring systems to reduce the likelihood of this reoccurring.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is ambitious for the children in her care. She is dedicated to providing all children with an equal experience regardless of their level of need. She actively seeks to reduce the stigma and restrictions that are associated with children's disabilities. This provides children visiting for short breaks with experiences they are unable to be provided with at home. One staff member described the manager as inspirational.

The therapeutic approach adopted by the manager is embedded in staff practice. Staff understand their model of care exceptionally well and know how to apply this to meet the needs of the children. This consistent approach contributes towards the exceptional outcomes for children.

The manager sources specific additional training for staff and invites education professionals and families to these events. This contributes towards a consistent approach to children's needs being met, whatever environment they are in.

The manager is creative in satisfying herself that staff know the children well. She uses supervision sessions, team meetings and group supervisions to discuss all the children who visit or live in the home. She provides staff with regular quizzes to test their knowledge. This creates additional opportunities for learning and reflective discussions.

The manager is responsive to the needs of children and makes adjustments to help to improve their stay. When necessary, the manager employs additional bank staff ensuring that the same staff are used to provide continuity of care.

Some documents were seen to be missing some dates and signatures by the author of the documents. This has not been picked up through management audits and oversight of those documents.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's case records must be signed and dated by the author of the entry, and where management oversight is required, this is clearly signed and dated also. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that Ofsted is notified of any allegation made by a child against a staff member as specified in regulation 40. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that all sanctions are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and that the principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC030967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Natasha Salmon

Inspectors

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

Kirstie Sutherland, Social Care Inspector

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 JULY 2025



Subject: SCHOOL'S CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME

Report of: Executive Director, Children's and Joint
Commissioning Services

Decision Type: For Information

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:

- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The 2025/26 Schools' Capital Works Programme was approved by Members on 18th March 2025. Within the list of proposed works there was a project for High Tunstall College of Science (HTCS) Hydrotherapy pool to replace the filtration system with an estimated cost of £25,000.

On the 12 May, the Managing Director used the urgent decision making power delegated under MD8 at Part 3 of the Constitution, page 45, to reallocate this £25,000 to fund the HTCS Hydrotherapy Pool changing rooms renovation. This has been agreed at HTCS governing body meeting.

This delegation states that following the decision, it must be reported to the next meeting of the relevant committee explaining:

- the decision;
- the reasons for it; and
- the reasons why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

The purpose of this report is to comply with the above delegated decision process. A copy of the decision record is attached at **Appendix 1** and sets out the decision, the reasons for it and why it was urgent.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	The arrangements to manage the project are being in partnership with the Council's Construction team who will provide project management.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no changes to the funding allocated to this project through the Schools Capital Works programme 2025/26.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no legal considerations arising from the report
CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY	There are no child and family poverty considerations arising from this report
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS	There are no equality and diversity considerations arising from this report although it is noted that the capital works to the hydrotherapy pool at HTCS will particularly benefit children and young people with SEND.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staffing considerations
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	The report is concerned with the condition, protection and development of Council assets i.e. school buildings.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are none
CONSULTATION	The original proposed works to the hydrotherapy pool were noted at Schools Capital Subgroup meeting of the 30 th January 2025

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are asked to note the officer decision record and the reasons it was taken.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To comply with the Constitution in respect of the Managing Director's urgent decision making powers.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Children's Services Committee – 18 March 2025.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 11.06.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11.06.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 11.06.2025



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL
OFFICER DECISION RECORD

Department:

Division:

Date of Decision / Issue 12/05/2025
of Licence:

Officer Making Decision: MRS DG MCGUCKIN

Subject / Description &
Reason for Decision:
(for publication)

On the 18 March 2025 Children's Services Committee approved the Schools Capital Works Programme for 2025-26. One of the schemes of works approved was for the replacement of the filtration system for the Hydrotherapy Pool at High Tunstall College of Science (HTCS).

The changing room facilities which serve the Hydrotherapy Pool are in a poor state of repair, however, were not identified by the Committee as a scheme to pursue at this time.

Since the filtration system works were approved, the owner of 'Water Babies – Tees Valley' has approached Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) to offer funding to carry out the works to the filtration system at a reduced cost to the quote the HBC were able to obtain. The offer is made on the basis that the funding approved by the Committee is then used to renovate the changing room facilities.

Water Babies – Tees Valley have a long-standing relationship with HTCS and have been operating on a commercial basis from the pool for over 15 years.

HTCS are supportive of this proposal and have been in discussions with the owner of Water Babies – Tees Valley for some time. There is a lack of water facilities across the town, especially Hydrotherapy facilities of this size with the relevant equipment e.g. safe entry stairs/hoist. Completing the works in this way will enable children from across the town to access the hydrotherapy pool as it is proposed that the pool be made available to all Schools. This will be particularly important to those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Hydrotherapy offers a range of benefits for children with special educational needs by promoting physical development, sensory regulation, and emotional well-being. The warm, supportive water environment helps improve motor skills, muscle tone, balance, and posture while reducing pain and tension. Sensory input from the water can have a calming effect, particularly for children with autism or sensory processing difficulties. Hydrotherapy also encourages focus, communication, and social interaction through guided play and group activities, boosting confidence, reducing anxiety, and supporting overall learning and development in a fun, therapeutic setting.

The funding offer is time limited and can not wait for a meeting of Children's Committee. Therefore, the decision is taken to reallocate the £25,000 to the changing rooms renovation to enable the private investment to fund the filtration system.

Type of Decision:

Non Key

Nature of Delegation
Being Exercised:

Officer Delegated Authority - MD8

In consultation with the Leader (or in his absence the Deputy Leader), Chair of the relevant Committee (or in his absence Vice Chair) Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director (or in his/her absence the authorised Executive Director) may take a decision normally reserved to Full Council or a Committee where:

(a) Failure to take the decision quickly would, or would be likely to, harm the interests of the Council and the public.

(b) The decision is so urgent that it cannot wait until the next meeting of the Committee at which the decision would normally be taken.

The decision together with the reason as to why it was determined urgent must be recorded on an Officer Decision Record. The record of urgent decisions will be held by the Democratic Services team and will be made available for inspection. Following the decision, it be reported to the next meeting of the relevant committee explaining:

- the decision;
- the reasons for it; and
- the reasons why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

Alternative Options
Considered & Rejected:

HBC could have decided not to reallocate the funding which would mean the external funding would not be received and the changing rooms would remain in a poor state of repair.

Any Declared Register of
Interest:

Yes

Yes, the owner of Water Babies Tees Valley (funder) is Councillor Pamela Hargreaves. Water Babies - Tees Valley has commercial agreement with HTCS to use the Hydrotherapy Pool out of school hours.

OFFICER WITH THE DELEGATION

NAME: MRS DG MCGUCKIN

POSITION: Managing Director

IN CONSULTATION WITH...

NAME: JAMES MAGOG

POSITION: Director of Finance, IT & Digital

NAME: HAYLEY MARTIN

POSITION: Director of Legal, Governance & HR

NAME: Brenda Harrison

POSITION: Councillor

NAME: Martin Dunbar

POSITION: Councillor