
Youth Justice Plan

CYPE Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 23rd September 2025

Lead director/officer: Damian Elcock
Karen Manville

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
- Report author: Karen Manville, Head of Service
- Author contact details:
karen.manville@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V3

1. Summary

- To provide a summary of the five-year Youth Justice Plan 2025-30 (refreshed annually) highlighting strategic and operational priorities. This will be received at Board level and across the partnership and proceed through due diligence processes onto Full Council.
- This executive summary/briefing addresses the statutory Youth Justice Plan for 2025-2030 and provides an opportunity to direct any comments to the Head of Service for Prevention Services.
- This is the first year of the five-year plan which will help shape the direction of the service over the coming years.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:

CYPE Scrutiny Commission are invited to:

- To consider, and note, the achievements from 2024/5
- To consider, and agree, the strategic priorities for 2025-30 and tactical priorities that will be reviewed annually.

3. Detailed report

1. Summary

3.1 It is the duty of each local authority after consultation with partners to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan setting out:

- how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded; and
- how the Children and Young Peoples Justice Service will be composed and funded; how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out.

3.2 The purpose of this executive summary report is to present the plan for consideration and to seek agreement that it should proceed to Full Council for formal adoption. (the full plan has been provided)

- 3.3 The statutory youth justice plan is approved by the Leicester Youth Justice Management Board and must then be submitted to the national Youth Justice Board (YJB) by 30 June 2025. It must then be annually reviewed once formal approval has been granted from Full Council. As the Youth Justice Board require a draft plan by the 30th of June there is agreement that a draft is submitted prior to being formally ratified through political processes. This has always been the case and is due to the YJ grant procedures. The Youth Justice Board will ordinarily provide feedback by the end of July as part of the process. This year, the YJB have not provided amended guidance or a new template.
- 3.4 The document is the youth justice partnership's main statement of purpose and sets out its proposals to prevent offending by children and young people. The plan shows not only what the Children and Young People's Justice Service (CYPJS) will deliver as a service, but how strategic links with other supporting initiatives will be developed and maintained.
- 3.5 This plan supports a range of associated partnership strategies including the Leicester Early Help Strategy, Police and Crime Plan, Violence Reduction Strategy and strategic needs assessment, the Community Safety Partnership Plan and delivery plans within the Social Care, Early Help and Education department. The Youth Justice Plan is supported by a detailed Partnership Plan and Operational Delivery Plan overseen by the Head of Service for Prevention Services, who reports progress to the Leicester Youth Justice Management Board
- 3.6 As a statutory regulated service, youth offending services are normally inspected every three years by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). However, over the past two years the inspectorate has been in consultation with stakeholders and Youth Justice Services to redesign their HMIP Youth Justice Inspection Framework. The new inspection framework went live in the "spring" 2025 and Leicester was the third Youth Justice service to be inspected under the new framework and received the alert late February 2025 with the pre field work starting immediately and throughout March 2025. The report was published in June 2025 and all recommendations embedded in the YJ Plan and partnership planning.
- 3.7 The service is also monitored by The Youth Justice Board which introduced a new monitoring framework in 2023. It provides judgments against a range of criteria with 4 quadrants applied for each YOT across the country. Leicester is currently placed in quadrant 3 due to challenges around its First Time Entrants performance but the HOS has established a working group and working hard to ensure consistent improvements are made in this area. The Youth Justice Board and the framework is currently being reviewed. There has been significant progress on this performance indicator.
- 3.8 The Youth Justice Plan is required to address the areas of performance, structure and governance, resources, value for money, partnership arrangements and risks to future delivery. The plan considers local performance issues, lessons from inspections, together with learning from any serious incidents, Joint Area Inspections and other inspections that cover elements of youth justice.
- 3.9 The Youth Justice Management Board met in March 2025 to plan and consider strategic priorities for the coming five years and tactical priorities that will be

refreshed on an annual basis. This approach is tried and tested and a positive way to help shape the report and ensure the voice of the partnership is embedded within the plan.

3.10 Key priorities for the Leicester Youth Justice Management Board for 2025-30 include the following:

- To develop a comprehensive improvement plan in response to HMIP findings in March/April 2025 and ensure we deliver on all 8 recommendations cited above.
- Having a sophisticated data picture enabling us to predict those children most likely to be frequent / serious offenders so we can engage at the earliest opportunity.
- Partnership – making sure we utilise the right people in the right way to enhance our data sets across the partnership to build a picture of the city to target resources. To challenge ourselves as to whether we have always linked the right people into these discussions
- Having a clear way of approaching families who are reluctant to engage in early intervention even when we can identify significant risk. We have developed an opt out approach which is increasing engagement.
- Having a much better understanding of perpetrator, victim and group/“organisation” of exploitation in the local context so we can better plan services
- Increasing routes to employment for young people approaching adulthood
- To design a smaller executive board with a wider partnership delivery group and key working groups with the right membership at the right level. To ensure partners actively bring and take away from the board
- Redesigning the board to ensure voice is the golden thread within the board’s priorities to shape delivery models.
- To design a methodology for approaching learning and decision making such as Human Learning Systems.
- To ensure the board has core principles or “provocations” to challenge our performance and decisions.
- To develop a sophisticated approach to taking learning from comparable areas to continue to strive for excellence.
- To enhance resources where needed with a commitment to exploring SALT, Victim and Probation resources as a minimum.

We are committed to delivering the very best services to our children, families, networks, victims of Youth Crime and to our partners and communities.

3.11 The plan covers our key tactical priorities using our detailed performance report to align our priorities and next steps for ongoing improvement. We have a wide range of key performance indicators which we report through to the Youth Justice Management Board on a quarterly basis. We provide spotlight session at the board where we do deep dives into a selection of KPI’s where there is evidence of excellent practice or areas of concern that require a more detailed examination. Our core KPI’s and summary of actions:

4 First Time Entrants (FTE)

4.1 The plan identifies this as a key priority for this cohort of children including the ongoing development of the Early Intervention Team as well as the Youth Support Offer. (Detailed information and performance can be found in section 9 of the Youth Justice Plan and appendix 4).

4.2 Due to challenges with this KPI over the past 12 months we have established a working group, chaired by the HOS with a clear action plan to address our performance. Its pleasing to see improvements are being made but this will continue to remain in place until we see sustained improvements.

- 4.3 The city has separated from the county to develop its own joint decision-making panel to concentrate on city children and diverting them from formal justice routes where possible. The Head of Service has recently observed the panel identifying excellent practice as has the YJB and other partners.
- 4.4 The service has a well-established Early Intervention Team with outstanding successes impacting on FTE rates. We have an “opt out” approach to our diversionary work and take up rates for our children is excellent. We are currently working on ensuring a more targeted approach and advertising the pathway across the partnership specifically police and schools. The service is proud of the work undertaken in this space and used it as a spotlight session with the inspectorate in March 2025.

5 Re-offending

- 5.1 The plan identifies the key performance indicators for this priority. It evidences impact to date and work that needs to be undertaken to continue to strive to reduce the frequency and seriousness of reoffending at all tiers within the youth justice system. (Detailed information and data can be found in section 9 of the Youth Justice Plan and appendix 4).
- 5.2 The service has developed a range of programmes to meet the trends within reoffending data such as an increase in Motor offences. A new group work programme has been developed to work specifically with young people in this offence category called the brake project and will assist with diverting children from formal youth justice routes.
- 5.3 We use a trauma informed approach with all our children to explore behaviours and experiences that impact a child's life, the risks to themselves, others and increase potential to offend.
- 5.4 We recognise our performance is slightly higher than regional and national figures and a working group will be established to work specifically on a clear action plan to reduce reoffending rates and ensure the right packages of intervention are put in place for our children to keep them from harm and our communities and victims safe.

6 Custody and constructive resettlement

- 6.1 The plan identifies the key successes and challenges with this key performance indicator. Over the years the service has successfully reduced the number of remands and custodial sentences. However, the past 12 months the service has seen a spike on custodial sentences due to some high-profile serious offending often by children not known to any statutory services. The plan identifies key actions that are required to continue to ensure custody is only used where appropriate and all other options have been fully explored. The right packages are provided to children to reduce remand and custodial sentences as appropriate. (Section 9 of the plan provides a detailed reflection of work to date on this priority and what is required looking forward over the next year in appendix 4 performance report).

6.2 Close partnership working has enabled the service to fully support children who receive custodial sentences or held on remand. Our resettlement offer has been strengthened to ensure we work on key priorities with our children from the moment they enter a custodial establishment to have a robust plan in place for their release. All necessary referrals such as accommodation referrals are made at least three months prior to a child's release. Officers work on a resettlement plan as soon as a child enters custody.

6.3 We recognise that we can increase our contact with our children on remand and serving custodial sentences and we will review this to ensure we maximise contact and use a range of communication channels to further strengthen our relationship with children in custody.

7 Other identified tactical priorities – (Section 9 onwards in full plan)

7.1 The plan addresses other key priorities as part of the additional KPIs for the service and partnership highlighting why they have been selected and what the hopes are by identifying and delivering upon them.

- suitable accommodation
- education, training, and employment (ETE)
- special educational needs and disabilities/additional learning needs
- mental health care and emotional wellbeing
- substance misuse
- out-of-court disposals
- links to wider services
- management board attendance
- serious violence
- victims

7.2 A full breakdown of actions can be found in section 9 of the Youth Justice plan including additional priorities that don't form part of the suite of KPI's including

- How we hear the voice of our stakeholders
- Understanding and responding to serious youth violence and the exploitation of our children
- Continuing to strengthen culturally responsive services which promote equality, reduce discrimination, and enable our children, caregivers, victims, and staff to thrive
- Workforce development

8 Risks (section 13)

8.1 This is undoubtedly a challenging but exciting time for us in Leicester and this plan has set out our ambitions and priorities for 2025-30. We know that the scale of change within Children's Services over the coming year will be

unprecedented with the development of the Family Help approach, and whilst this brings with it significant opportunities, it also presents us with challenges.

8.2 CYPJS was inspected by HMIP (under the new inspection framework) in March 2025 and the report was published on 24th June 2025 with an overall judgment of requiring improvement and identifying 8 recommendations. The HOS has scoped out the mandatory improvement plan which was submitted to HMIP on the 11th July 2025 and positively responded to by HMIP the following day. The improvement plan will be embedded into the partnership and service delivery plans to ensure the improvements are driven forward and scrutinised regularly at partnership board level. HMIP and the YJB may request regular updates on our progress and will revisit the 8 recommendations when they next inspect the service.

8.3 We also continue to operate and deliver within a challenging financial climate in Leicester, a climate which may in time have an impact on our ability to realise some of our ambitious plans.

8.4 The commissioning of a new Case Management system and its implementation during the HMIP inspection has caused significant challenges to the workforce. However, it is hoped that the new system will be a better system once embedded and operating effectively. It is not yet clear how effective the reporting functions are. The transformation project team that supported the implementation of the new system required substantial resources, both in terms of financial investment and staff time at a time that the service was preparing for HMIP to arrive. The system was not fully operational upon their arrival which caused a risk to the successful outcome of the inspection and raising anxieties across the workforce. HMIP had been made aware of this prior to their arrival.

8.5 Estates is also a key area of focus for us as we plan of the implementation of the Family Help model. A project board has been established which will map out neighbourhood resources, based on robust data sets, in anticipation of the development of the Family Help vision.

8.6 Leicester has had a challenging 12/18 months with an increase in Serious Youth Violence and subsequent increase in both remands and custodial sentencing, with a significant number of children not known to statutory services. The challenges around serious youth violence crosscuts with concerns regarding exploitation which often has its root causes in exclusion, poverty, abuse, and neglect amongst other things. This plan has clearly set out that we cannot tackle offending in isolation and has articulated our intention to work differently, creatively and with relationships at the heart of what we do. However, managing and containing risk through external controls is also a critical element to our ability to safeguard victims and protect the public and one that as a partnership we remain committed to.

9 Innovation and evidenced based practice – (Section 12 of the full plan.)

9.1 Child first and the voice of the child. Ongoing work to capture the voice of children: Children wrote the first child plan in 2023/4, and we are committed to our children writing their yearly plan to help us ensure they are central to

the development of the service. We have ensured a qualitative approach to capturing verbatim thoughts, feelings and experiences of children. We have ensured we are engaging, interactive and finding modern ways of capturing children's voices, for example through Podcasts. We have strengthened our child first approach across the partnership and HMIP were highly complementary of our child first approach and embedded participation principles. They saw that children co-produce their plans consistently and children were clear that they felt heard and listened to.

9.2 The development of a dedicated SEND Panel which has been highly regarded by HMIP. This work has supported the CYPJS being awarded the SEND Youth Justice Charter Mark, as well as the aim to receive the SEND leaders award by the end of 2025.

9.3 Investing to save, as part of supporting the preventative agenda, has been a priority for CYPJS over the past year and will continue to do so throughout 2025/6. Examples to date:

9.4 The Early Interventions Team was independently evaluated, and the independent evaluation report of the Early Intervention Team was published. The findings demonstrate the significant impact the team are having on children and families across Leicester City. It highlights the importance of the relationship between staff and children as a key element in reducing further offending.

9.5 The Phoenix Programme, formally Focused Deterrence, launched in July 2023, CYPJS has been a significant partner in the design and delivery of the programme and will provide intensive support to children identified through the programme from Early Intervention and statutory areas of the service. This has now been extended until December 2025 with slight variations on the criteria being considered.

9.6 Dynamic management of all Habitual Knife Crime Carriers including all children not just those open to CYPJS. Each child is reviewed monthly, packages of prevention, partnership involvement and sustainability planning are reviewed, all recommendations made are shared with partners and professional support is provided by CYPJS if requested. The data is tracked on a quarterly basis and updated through the performance report to the board.

9.7 The REACH Team: Following a successful bid in partnership with the Violence Reduction Network and Leicestershire County Council, we developed a programme that reaches out to children who are at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded from education. The intervention adopts an innovative contextual prevention approach, spanning schools and the immediate community vicinity to proactively identify and engage children at 'teachable' moments in 'reachable' spaces thus recognising that school-based behavioural events are precursors to exclusion and criminal activity. Working alongside schools identified for high exclusion rates, children are identified for intervention using clear eligibility criteria. The overall aim of the intervention is to help children gain the skills and knowledge to improve their life chances and avoid further exclusion from school and becoming engaged in serious youth violence. The delivery was independently evaluated by Sheffield Hallam University, whereby it was highly regarded with strong evidence of impact. Although the funding from YEF has now ceased the partnership agreed that due to its success it would be funded for a further year through a prevention grant. Work is now required to consider how to sustain the model and ensure it is still targeting the right schools as well as

any growth in mentors to support children within the school to reduce the potential of.

- 9.8 The service has embedded a robust offer to children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Trauma (ACE) in their lives and how to support children with a history of trauma. Staff have been fully trained, and regular case formulations take place to enhance the direct work with our children. This was highly commended by HMIP
- 9.9 Focussed deep dives through task and finish groups, exploring disproportionality and unconscious bias within the CYPJS cohort in relation to ethnicity and children who are looked after. All staff have received training, and the recommendations are routinely revisited and presented to the management board for ongoing development and sharing of best practice. The service has embedded the identification and support in regard to diversity needs into all areas of practice and this was highly commended by HMIP.
- 9.10 Leicester City Violent Crime Joint Action Group (JAG) and youth JAGs. Working in partnership the JAGs have been redesigned across the city to provide greater collaboration and integrated working and ensure Youth JAGs are seen as a key to this. There are two Youth JAGs that have now been established and the service is encouraging children to participate and have a say in what is needed to keep them and their communities safe.
- 9.11 Working alongside the Community Cohesion Policing Team in the East at the beginning of 2024 due to ASB near Spinney Hill Park to help support community engagement and reduce anti-social behaviour within the area.
- 9.12 Attending community events at the Mosque, local BEAT surgeries, patch walks and undertaken consultation with young people in Evington, new parks and Beaumont leys in partnership with police, to gain children and young people's voice on development of a new youth centre in the area
- 9.13 Working closely with grassroots organisations throughout Leicester, i.e Team Hub community centre in New Parks, to build relationships with estates on the West
- 9.14 Placing ourselves in community venues, support alongside Youth Service colleagues to engage children at risk of offending, ASB and CCE

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial Implications

The 25/26 Gross budget is £2.5m, this includes funding of £0.9m of Youth Justice grant.

Signed: Paresh Radia 13.06.2025.

Dated:13.06.2025

4.2 Legal Implications

no implications from an employment and education law perspective.

Hayley McDade
Senior Solicitor

For City Barrister and Head of Standards

Local authority partnerships have a statutory duty to submit a youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services; Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, in consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how YJSs in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.

There are no direct legal implications from a Social Care and Safeguarding perspective as a result of this report.

Amy Owen-Davis, Principal Solicitor, Childcare, Social Care and Safeguarding.

Signed: Amy Owen-Davis, Principal Solicitor, Childcare, Social Care and Safeguarding.

Dated: 13.06.2025

4.3 Equalities Implications

Equality implications:

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report sets out a summary of the five-year statutory Leicester City Youth Justice Plan 2025-30 which is refreshed annually, highlighting strategic and operational priorities. From the perspective of meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty aims, the Youth Justice Plan sets

out priority activities that seek to promote equality of opportunity for children and young people by reducing the adverse impacts they are likely to experience through involvement with the criminal justice system; and by achieving these outcomes and enabling children and young people to take part in city and community life and contribute to improved good relations between different groups of people.

In terms of the protected characteristic of race, the Leicester Youth Justice Management Board will continue to implement the recommendations from the task and finish group findings, by carrying out focussed deep dives exploring disproportionality of ethnicity and children looked after. In terms of the protected characteristic of disability, the service will continue to respond to the needs of children and young people with EHCPs, those who have identified learning and/or disabilities and neuro diversity needs as well as strengthening its approach to children presenting with Speech Language and Communication Needs and development of the SEND panel will help to ensure this takes place.

Disproportionality within CYPJS processes and practice affecting young people's experience and outcomes will remain a priority and key to partnership working and monitoring of these will include at least include sex, race, disability, religion and belief. Diversity needs identification and support has been embedded across the service and staff have received training. The Early Intervention offer is ensuring that we are reaching more girls and this work should continue. Overall, the service is continuing to encourage a partnership wide child first approach to strategy, planning and delivery, which should continue to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The proposed Youth Justice Plan 2025-30 offers a high-level overview of the planned work for 2025-30 along with annual reviews of agree priorities. However, there are a number of strands of work where equalities, and particularly the PSED, will need to be an on-going consideration, such as HMIP Inspection findings from March/April 2025 and delivery of all 8 recommendations, the work of the Case Management and Diversity Panel, work of the SEND Panel and partnership working. It may be the case that an Equality Impact Assessment is required for some strands of work such as reviewing policies and services, where changes will directly impact on young people in the service, and advice can be sought from the Equalities Team on this as required.

Signed:Sukhi

Dated:14.06.2025

4.4 Climate Emergency Implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Signed: **Duncan Bell** **MIEMA, CEnv** | Change Manager (Climate Emergency)

Dated:13.06.2025

4.5 Other Implications

Signed:

Dated:

