

Medway Youth Justice plan



2026- 2029



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Foreword

Medway Council and its partners are committed to working together with children, young people and families to ensure they feel safe, secure, valued and supported. Our shared ambition is for children to grow up in stable, nurturing environments, supported by positive relationships that enable them to thrive and become confident, independent adults.

Medway Youth Justice Board has a crucial role in delivering this ambition for children who have come into contact with the youth justice system, and for those at risk of doing so. The positive outcomes achieved by children, families and victims are the result of strong partnership working across Children's Services, Police, Health, Education, Probation and the voluntary and community sector.

The May 2026 HMIP inspection recognised many strengths within Medway Youth Justice Service, highlighting the commitment and skill of practitioners, the positive relationships they develop with children and families, and the impact of their work in supporting children to achieve meaningful and lasting change. These findings reflect the dedication of our workforce and the collective commitment of partners to putting children first.

The inspection also identified areas where further improvement is required. As a partnership, we welcome this feedback and are committed to addressing the recommendations through stronger governance, increased accountability and a continued focus on delivering high-quality services and positive outcomes for both children and victims.

This three-year Youth Justice Plan sets out how we will build on our strengths, respond to the findings of the inspection and deliver sustainable improvement. Our priorities include preventing offending and reoffending, reducing disproportionality, protecting children from exploitation and serious harm, improving outcomes for victims and ensuring children receive the right support at the right time.

The period covered by this plan will also see significant change through Local Government Reorganisation. While structures and ways of working may evolve, our shared commitment to children, victims and communities will remain steadfast. Together, we will continue to focus on quality, performance and continuous improvement, ensuring that children are supported to reach their full potential, victims are listened to and supported, and communities are safer as a result of our work.

This plan reflects our collective ambition for the future and our determination to work together to deliver excellent outcomes for children, victims and communities across Medway over the next three years.



Cllr Adam Price
Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Medway Council



Dr. Lee-Anne Farach
Director of people
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Executive
Medway Council



Executive Summary

Medway has a population of approximately 278,000 residents, including approx. 34,000 10-17 years old. Many children grow up in stable, supportive families; however, in parts of Medway long standing social and economic challenges remain. In some neighbourhoods, particularly within parts of Chatham, Gillingham and Strood, outcomes relating to health, housing, educational attainment and employment are comparatively lower. These contextual factors shape patterns of vulnerability and safeguarding need and are important to understanding the circumstances of children known to the Youth Justice Service (YJS).

Children's Services in Medway continue to experience sustained demand and complexity. Domestic abuse, neglect, physical abuse, parental mental ill health and substance misuse remain the most common factors in referrals. These indicators overlap significantly with the needs of children in the youth justice cohort, many of whom have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, disrupted education and exclusion.

Educational outcomes in Medway are mixed. Overall attainment is improving; however, persistent absence, exclusion and a high proportion of children with Education, Health and Care Plans continue to present challenges. Children known to the YYS are disproportionately affected. Emotional wellbeing and mental health needs are significant, with growing demand for specialist support influencing risk and behaviour.

The HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection carried out in May 2026 recognised that the YJ management board, and the YYS have a culture of openness to learning how to improve outcomes for children which provides opportunities to address challenges as and when they arise. The service performs well in achieving positive change for children with this aspect of work being identified and praised by inspectors.

Planning to achieve positive change for children was impressive and well-informed by the context of the child, including their wider and social environment. Practitioners included the active participation of children in this work.

YYS practitioners were aspirational for children. This was reflected in detailed and strength-based planning, often carefully balanced and grounded in achievable steps for children, and tailored to children's learning needs, religious beliefs and neurodiversity. Planning broadly promoted key protective factors such as positive family relationships, positive activities and mentoring support. Where planning was particularly effective, it included the development of children's resilience, including positive and safe decision making

The partnership will think about how the risk to others can be better understood and responded to as this is less well embedded in practice. There is a challenge on the level of information shared, the timeliness and how it is shared in a pro-active manner across partners which needs to be addressed; without all relevant information it is not possible to adequately assess risk and then respond appropriately. The inspection also identified that more needs to be done to link with specialist roles who can support the front-line staff, and that the response to risks need a stronger multi-agency approach. This will be a significant challenge given that all partners are facing high demands for their services.

The inspection asks that the Board improves how it understands the needs of victims and will need to drive the coordination of the strategic partnership to ensure that YJS victims consistently receive personalised and responsive services which support their needs and safety. The Board will need to ensure that victims are kept safe from any immediate harm, and this requires an active multi-agency response to any identified risks. This will be in addition to providing the services to allow victims to recover from the impact of any harm they have experienced.

Vision and strategic priorities for 2026 - 2029

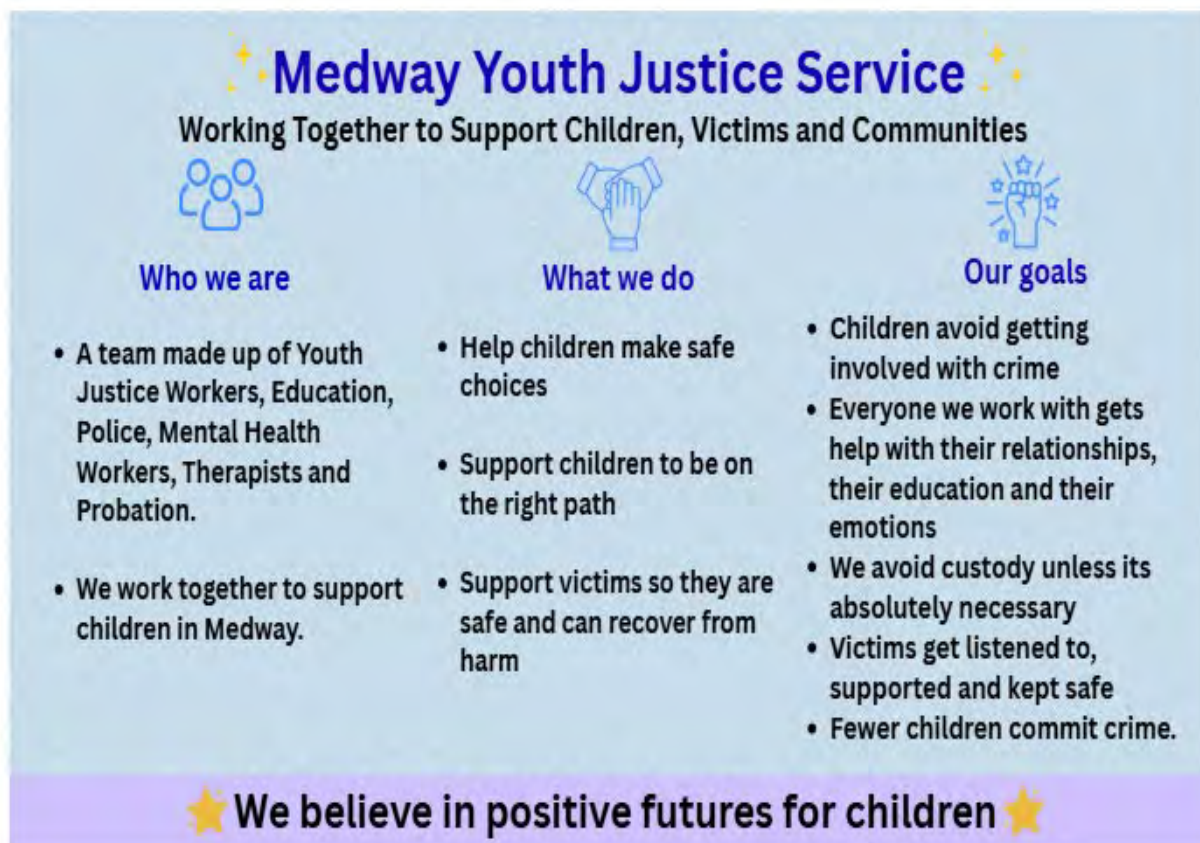
Our vision

Our vision is aligned with the national Youth Justice Board's vision.

Our vision is for a Child First youth justice system: a youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

Our key priorities are to:

1. Prevent offending and reoffending so that there are fewer victims of crime, harm reduces and our local communities are safe places for everyone.
2. Ensure that the children and victims we support have easy and swift access to the services they need to help them recover from harm and go on to live lives where they are positively engaged with their friends, families and communities.
3. Work as a strong multi-agency partnership which ensures that any risk of harm is responded to quickly so that people are kept safe. The partnership will focus on knife crime and violence against women and girls as priority areas.
4. Tackle disproportionality in the criminal justice system.
5. Ensure children and victims have their voices heard and responded to, from the Board down to any contact we have with them.



What success would look like by 2029

- Fewer First Time Entrants.
- Reduced reoffending.
- Improved victim satisfaction.
- Improved EET.
- Reduced disproportionality.
- Strong multi-agency risk management.
- Improved outcomes for children placed out of area

Local context

Medway is a unitary local authority in Kent, encompassing the urban areas of Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Rochester and Strood, with a population of approximately 278,000 residents, including around 65,000 children and young people.

Medway's population is predominantly White (84.3%), with around 14.7% of residents identifying as being from minority ethnic backgrounds. This demographic context is important in understanding disproportionality within the youth justice system and informs the YJS's focus on equality, inclusion and culturally responsive practice.

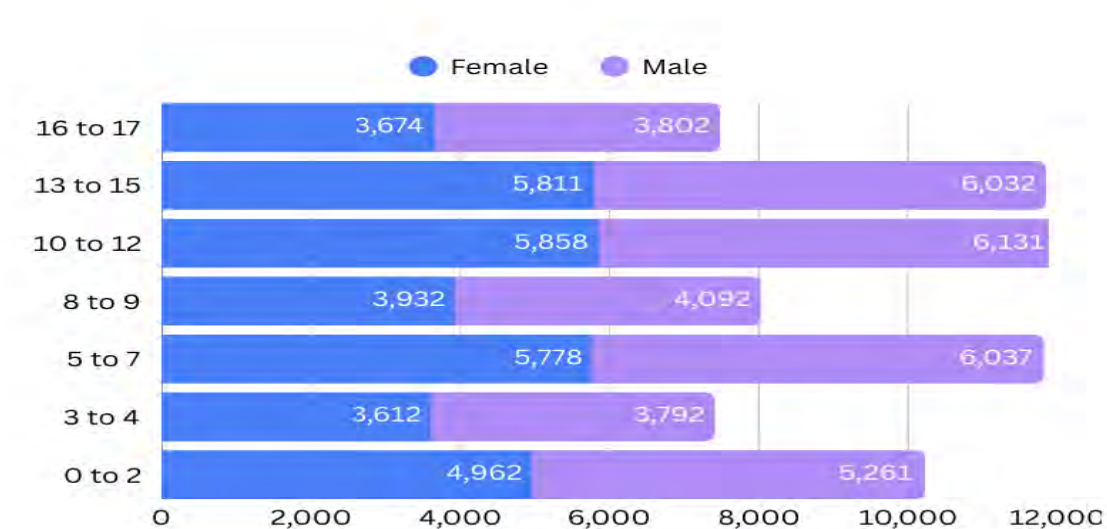
Among children aged 10 to 17, 77.5% identify as White, while the largest proportion within minority ethnic groups is made up of children from Black, Black British, Caribbean and African backgrounds.

Deprivation

Based on the 2021 Census, the Medway population of children aged 10–17 is predominantly White British (73%), with males accounting for 51%. Within this age group, 64% are aged 10–14, while 36% are aged 15–17.

More recent data from Medway's Public Health service provides additional insight into the local children's population. This includes information on children by age range and sex, with ethnicity data reported separately.

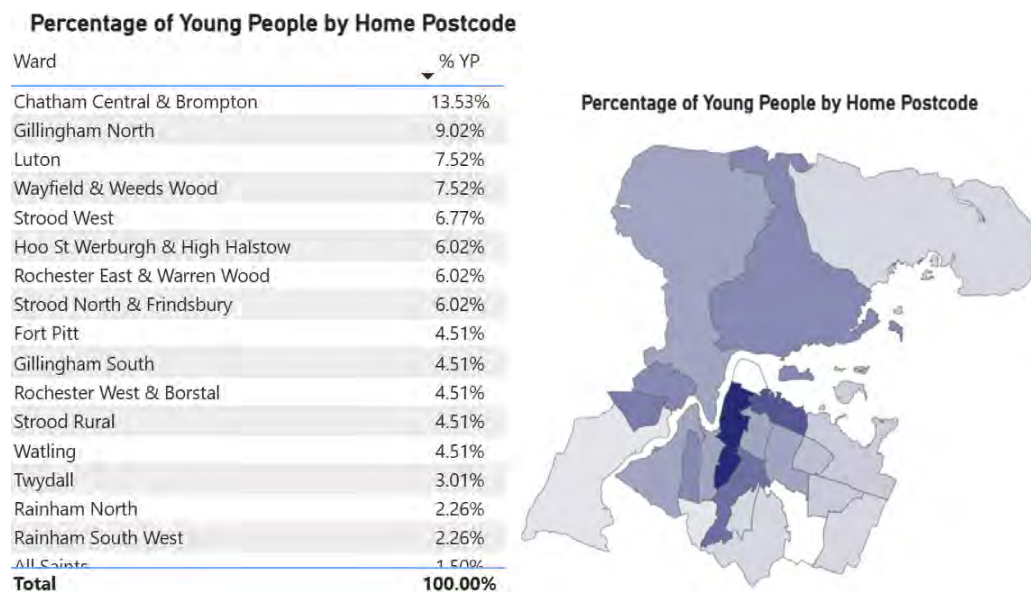
Children in Medway by age range and sex – 2024



Medway children: age and gender

Medway has 37 neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived areas in England, including 14 within the 10% most deprived, based on 2019 data. Deprivation is largely concentrated in urban areas such as Chatham, Gillingham and parts of Strood. Medway is ranked 70th out of 153 local authorities on the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation, with key challenges relating to income deprivation, access to housing and services, and environmental factors.

The charts below illustrate the neighbourhoods in which children known to Medway's Youth Justice Service reside.



Children who are open to or supported by Youth Justice Services are more likely to come from deprived households. The Free School Meals data presented below relates to the 2025–26 academic year.

Free school meals (FSM)

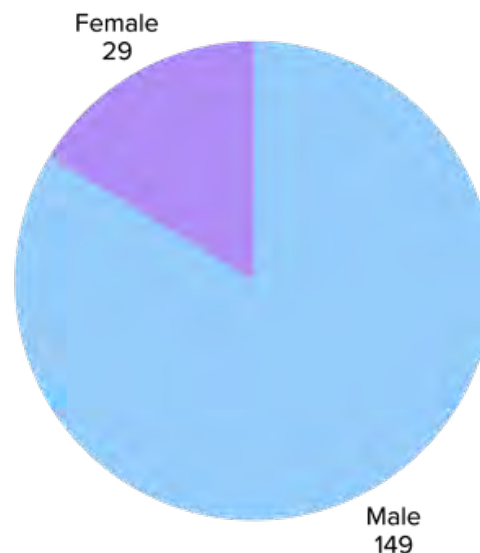
Total - all pupils			
Known to be FSM eligible	Medway	National	Medway YJS
	25.5%	25.7%	54.9%

Medway Youth Justice children cohort

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, the service worked with 178 children, with an average of 65 children receiving support at any given time.

Gender

The table below shows the proportion of boys and girls who were supported by the Youth Justice Service in 2025 – 26.



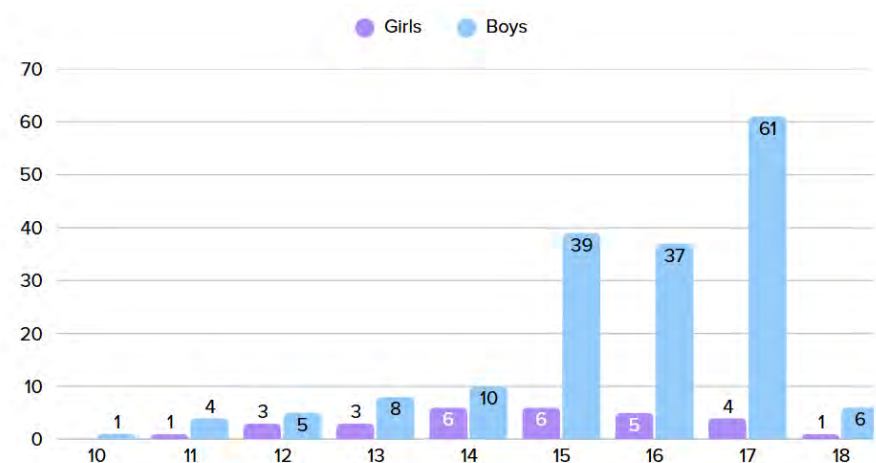
Medway YJS cohort 2025 – 26: sex

Males continue to form the majority of the YJS cohort, reflecting national trends. During 2025–26, girls represented 16% of Medway’s caseload, slightly higher than the national average of 14%. A notable proportion of girls had existing vulnerabilities and were open to children services due to their Children in Care, Child Protection Plans and Child in Need status.

In response to this, a dedicated girls’ group was established in Autumn 2025 to provide a trauma-informed, gender-responsive space addressing health, wellbeing and justice-related issues.

Age

The Medway Youth Justice cohort reflects the nationally recognised age–crime curve. The local population of children aged 10–17 is weighted towards younger adolescents, with 64% aged 10–14 and 36% aged 15–17. Within the YJS cohort, older adolescents are more prominently represented, particularly among boys, while girls tend to have a younger age profile, with 82% of girls in school years 7–11 compared to 61% of boys.



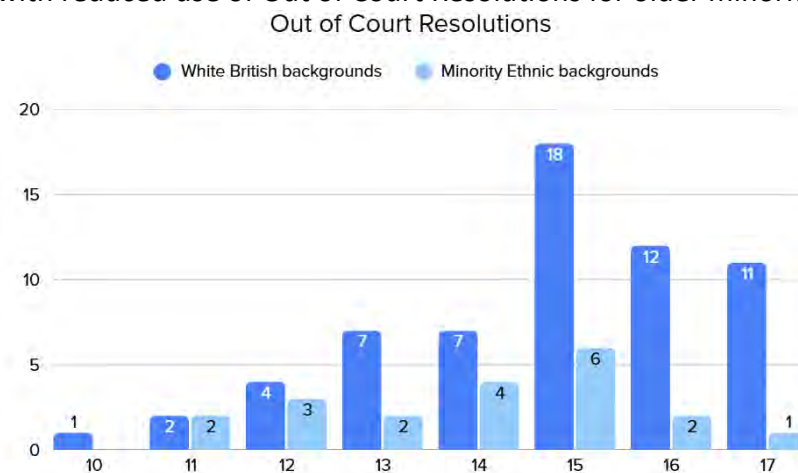
This pattern aligns with national research and reinforces the importance of early intervention and prevention for younger children entering the system.

In response, the service has strengthened its collaboration with the Medway Youth Service to ensure access to child-friendly venues where children can be seen and supported by youth workers when appropriate. The Youth Service co-delivers the Turnaround programme for children at risk of offending and those eligible through an Out of Court Resolution.

In addition, the service forms part of the Violence Reduction Unit's Young Futures pilot, which provides sport-based and youth work interventions for children at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Ethnicity

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are over-represented within the Medway YJS cohort when compared to the local 10–17 population. In particular, children from Black African, Black Caribbean and Other Black backgrounds feature disproportionately, with 86% of this group being male. Data indicates differential outcomes: 54% of children from minority ethnic backgrounds received court disposals, compared with 42% of White British children, with reduced use of Out of Court Resolutions for older minority ethnic children aged 16–17.



The service has received training delivered by the Youth Justice Legal Centre focusing on racism, bias and disproportionality. This training was provided to all Youth Justice Service

staff in November 2025 and subsequently to members of the Youth Justice Partnership Board in February 2026.

In addition, the service delivered training to 50 magistrates in December 2025, with a focus on Child First approaches and addressing disproportionality within the youth justice system.

Disability and Mental Health

Disability, including neurodivergence, is significantly over-represented within the Medway YJS cohort. Over half of children supported have identified SEN needs, with 22.9% having an EHCP and 31.3% receiving SEN Support, compared to much lower local and national averages. Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs are the dominant primary need, particularly among children with EHCPs (72.7%). This highlights a strong link between unmet additional needs and justice involvement.

<u>Cohort SEND breakdown</u>			
Overall - all pupils			
	Medway	National	Medway YJS
% EHCPs	4.4%	5.3%	22.92%
% SEN Support	14.5%	14.2%	31.25%

SEN support- Primary need	Medway	National	Medway YJS
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	5.4%	4.9%	4.4%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	23.7%	23.6%	71.1%
Specific Learning Difficulty	10.2%	13.6%	8.9%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	32.1%	25.7%	8.9%

In response, the service has embedded case formulation supported by clinical psychology input, alongside specialist ADHD training and dedicated CAMHS pathways, to strengthen assessment, understanding and targeted support for children.

In addition, the Therapeutic Alliance, an early emotional wellbeing and mental health support offer for children and young people across Medway, went live on 1 April 2026. This includes a dedicated pathway for children in care, care leavers, and those supported by the Youth Justice Service.

Children involved in the youth justice system are significantly more likely to have identified special educational needs and disabilities than their peers. In Medway, over half of children supported by the Youth Justice Service have an identified SEND need, with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs particularly prevalent. Many have experienced disrupted education, poor attendance, suspension, exclusion or difficulties accessing provision that meets their needs. The partnership recognises that educational disengagement, exclusion and unmet additional needs can increase vulnerability and the likelihood of offending.

Improving attendance, inclusion, attainment and access to appropriate educational provision will therefore be a key component in reducing offending and improving life chances. Through close collaboration between education, health, social care and youth justice partners, children will be supported to access the right provision and interventions at the right time, enabling them to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes.



Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

The diagram below provides an overview of the membership of the Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board. The Board has an independent chair. The independent chair is an experienced Youth Justice professional who has a background in local authority work, inspection and national workforce development and training. She has worked with HMIP as a seconded inspector and was the chair of the national youth justice apprenticeship trailblazer group. The board's independent chair has worked with the service in an improvement capacity for over 18 months, giving her a strong understanding of the service and its priorities. In her new role as Board Chair, she will continue to provide leadership and drive forward the service's improvement agenda.



The board maintains strategic oversight of the delivery and performance of the local youth justice system. The membership of the board provides senior representation from key partners to ensure that young people involved in the youth justice system have access to joined up universal and specialist services delivered across all partners and related agencies.

The board is responsible for ensuring that the service has clear, identified resources from police, health, education, social care, and probation. The board is fully engaged in the practice of youth justice and proactively works as a partnership to anticipate and address the needs of children in Medway involved in the Youth Justice System.

The Board is linked to other partnership boards and arrangements which support the prevention of offending or further offending. Going forward, an Operational Youth Justice Group will be established to provide focused oversight of service delivery, performance, and emerging operational issues. The group will bring together key partners to drive continuous improvement, monitor progress against priorities, and ensure that operational insights and recommendations are regularly reported into the Youth Justice Board to support strategic decision-making and governance.



The national Youth Justice Board require that, as a multi-agency partnership, all Youth Justice Services must contain specialists, or access to specialist provision for children being supervised, and this includes the police, health, education, social work and probation as a minimum.

Appendices 1 and 2 detail the structure chart for the service and where it sits within Medway Council's Children's Services Directorate.



Update on previous year

Progress against previous plan

The youth justice plan for 2025 – 2026 set out five priority areas for the Board and the service.

1. Prevention of offending

The service delivered the Turnaround program aimed at identifying and supporting children at an early point in their lives when offending is starting to become a concern. The program was a collaboration between the service, Medway's Youth service and third sector organisations who deliver sport, mentoring and construction skills.

42 children successfully completed the program and achieved AQA qualifications.

Turnaround success includes:

- Successful reintegration into school following suspensions. Noticeable improvements in behaviour, attendance, and emotional regulation. Increased participation in structured sports, mentoring, and pro-social activities.
- One young person attending football trials at Chatham Town, supported by Turnaround staff.
- One young person successfully securing a place on a roofing course, achieved through coordinated support between Strive Academy and Youth Justice Services.

Feedback and Testimonials

"The work provided to one of my young people has been exceptional. He is a victim of violence in the home and had extremely low school attendance. His peer group also put him at risk of criminal activity. He is now attending school on a part time timetable, engaging consistently in sport, and his general appearance and wellbeing have improved noticeably. He is much happier." WASP Team
Professional Feedback

"Without Rob's relationship, I don't believe we would have seen this level of progress. Please let him know how much his persistence is appreciated—he is going above and beyond."
Parent Feedback (Strive Academy 1:1 Mentoring)

"Communication with the Turnaround staff has been excellent—supportive, helpful, and consistent. The regular calls and meetings make a real difference. We are able to discuss concerns openly and reflect on what is working well for each young person and group."
Strive Academy & Unique Boxing Partner Feedback

Feedback from children has identified that they value the strong relationship that they have with their Youth Justice Workers. They regularly identify completing reparation activities as activities that they enjoy.



2. Victim support

Key achievements

The Youth Justice Partnership Board maintains oversight of victim work and receives updates on activity, training, and policy implementation. Victim work is now a standing item on the board agenda and a key area for the current Youth Justice Plan. Partnership working with Kent Police enables timely consent and accurate sharing of victim details.

The police decision to move to an opt out victim consent system has led to increases in the number of victims referred to the YJS, and the quality of referrals for those children considered for out-of-court resolutions (OOCR) has improved.

As part of planned service development, the Victim Worker role was reviewed between December 2025 and March 2026 to enhance the support offered to victims. The revised post was recruited to in April 2026 with the successful candidate commencing in post shortly thereafter.

The YJS has continued to develop a strong, individualized approach to victim engagement, supported by the new Victim and RJ Policy (2026). Victims are contacted sensitively, and consent processes are handled in line with data protection and police protocols. The Victim worker provides clear information on the process and options for participation, including indirect or direct restorative work.

Victims' needs are assessed individually, with support offered to promote safety, wellbeing, and informed choice. The victim worker maintains regular communication, ensuring victims receive updates about the child's progress and relevant case milestones as appropriate, using their preferred method of contact.

Close working between case managers and the victim worker should ensure that victim perspectives are reflected in assessments, planning, and interventions with children. Victim feedback, where obtained, indicates that individuals feel listened to and respected. An online victim feedback form has been developed, and further development work is underway to enhance victim feedback analysis and ensure learning is shared across the team. A victim work audit tool has also been developed and is now in use.

All victim resources have been reviewed and a partnership approach with Kent Police has led to the development of child specific victim resources.

The service recognises that to have a more personalised service, awareness of protected characteristics is needed at an earlier stage. Given the high number of child victims coming through the service, Cognitive Behavioural therapy (CBT) for children who have been the victim of crime has been commissioned through the Mary Dolly Foundation which supports them with up to 12 CBT sessions.

The victim's views on how they were impacted and what they need to move forward are gained and their safety and wellbeing is assessed to ensure the victim is not at risk or in need of any further support. Where the victim feels unsafe, safety plans are made. For child victims, they are checked across social care systems to ascertain if they are working with services, if they are, the relevant worker will be contacted to ensure joint working and the correct support is provided.

Kent police have also developed a surrogate victim scheme for assault on worker cases where the direct victim is unable to engage in direct restorative activities.

The entire YJS team and Kent police colleagues received training in Restorative Practices and this was well received.

The Youth Justice Service and wider partnership understands the impact of youth offending on communities, not just individual victims. We will further strengthen the link between victim safety, community confidence, reparation, and restorative approaches

There is regular contact with probation victim liaison officers who provided training for the YJS team in 2025.

Victim work is regularly monitored by the YJS Practice Manager, and an annual review of work was completed. Quarterly reports are produced and shared at Youth Justice Partnership Board and within the YJS team. This includes a review of victim consent and contact rates, reparation and restorative justice, victim data including protected

characteristics where available, and victim feedback. An action tracker is completed and reviewed each quarter to ensure the service to victims continues to strengthen

Kent Police are continuing to develop the use of a live case system to record, monitor and access youth justice cases. Work will continue to consider how this approach can enhance access to relevant victim information.

It is recognised that there is more work to be done around victims and this area will remain a priority for the Youth Justice Service.

3. Skilled and effective Youth Justice service

There has been significant investment in the skills of staff working within the youth justice service. The aim has been to strengthen the teams core skills and specialist knowledge such that assessments, plans and interventions are impactful and of a high quality. The findings from the HMIP inspection have highlighted significant strengths in helping to achieve positive change for children and in how plans are developed with children in mind.

Alongside the significant strengths identified by HMIP, the inspection highlighted opportunities to further strengthen the consistency of risk assessment, management oversight and multi-agency information sharing. These areas will form an important part of our journey over the next three years, ensuring practitioners are supported by robust partnership arrangements, high-quality information and a confident, skilled multi-agency workforce working together to safeguard children, protect victims and reduce harm.

Training completed includes:

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour – AIM3 assessments, intervention and supervision
- Race, equity and equality
- Case formulation
- Asset Plus assessment training, Prevention and Diversion Assessment Training, and Pre-Sentence Report Writing training
- Restorative Justice

The progress towards a skilled and effective youth justice service has been positive. The May 2026 HMIP inspection has highlighted that, 'The Medway Youth Justice board, and the YJS had a culture of openness to learning how to improve outcomes for children. The review of the YJS in 2024 had led to some improvement activity and increased investment'.

The inspection also identified areas of practice where further strengthening is required. They have asked for a stronger response to the safety of others which includes the assessment of risk, the management oversight and the multi-agency response to identified risk. This includes work to better manage victim safety and to ensure that the victim's needs are understood and reflected in all aspects of work carried out. This will be addressed as part of the response to the inspection report.

However, given the significant investment in workforce development, the positive findings from the HMIP inspection, and the demonstrable improvements in practice quality, developing staff skills and knowledge should no longer remain a priority area within the Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

The workforce development will continue to be monitored through routine performance management, quality assurance and service improvement arrangements. Ongoing review and targeted support will ensure that emerging learning needs, inspection findings and changes in national policy or practice continue to be addressed, maintaining a highly skilled workforce capable of delivering effective outcomes for children, victims and communities.

4. Disproportionality (fairness, equity and inclusion)

The YJS is committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of its strategic leadership and operational practice. The Youth Justice Partnership Board provides clear oversight of EDI activity and uses data routinely to understand and address disproportionality within the local youth justice system. A deep-dive analysis undertaken in November 2024 identified the over-representation of racialised children within the YJS cohort. This analysis prompted focused participation work with children who had recently moved into Medway and were disproportionately represented within this group.

Feedback from this participation activity directly informed service improvements. As a result, transfer and caretaking documentation has been reviewed to reflect children's expressed concerns, and a *Welcome to Medway* information pack has been developed to support children moving into the local authority area. This demonstrates a clear commitment to listening to children's lived experience and translating insight into practical change.

Medway Youth Justice Board continues to strengthen its strategic approach to EDI through ongoing analysis of referral patterns, outcomes and engagement across protected characteristics. Targeted actions have already been implemented where disproportionality has been identified, including enhanced support for girls. Although girls are not over-represented, this creates a risk that their specific needs are not catered for. The service has implemented a specific response to girls to ensure that their needs and wellbeing are responded to in a way which allows their participation.

Further development work is planned to extend this analytical approach and ensure learning is embedded consistently across the service.

In February 2026, Medway Youth Justice Board commissioned and delivered a diversity and cultural humility development day for board members and senior leaders. This has informed next steps in refreshing the YJS Diversity Strategy and strengthening workforce confidence in addressing bias, discrimination and inequality. This work is supported by close collaboration with the Children's Services data team to improve the quality and use of local data in driving equitable service delivery.

Understanding the local demographic context is central to Medway's approach. While the majority of children and victims within the cohort identify as White British, the service

recognises that this increases the risk of unconscious bias and assumptions where diversity may be less visible. Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice is therefore prioritised through mandatory whole-service training and reflective practice opportunities. A Children's Services Conference focussing on diversity, with mandatory in-person attendance, reinforced shared expectations and accountability.

At an operational level, all assessments and plans explicitly consider diversity, identity and individual needs, ensuring interventions are inclusive and responsive. The YJS also recognises the impact of socio-economic disadvantage and locality-based inequality on access to services. Outreach delivery and flexible appointment locations are routinely offered to reduce barriers, particularly for families living in areas with limited public transport.

Victim work is similarly informed by an EDI lens. The Victim Worker actively considers potential barriers to engagement, including discrimination and accessibility issues, and adapt contact and support accordingly to promote safety, wellbeing and informed choice.

Partnership working underpins Medway YJS's inclusive approach. Strong collaboration with schools, health services, community organisations and voluntary sector partners ensures that children and victims receive coordinated, culturally responsive support, promoting fairness, opportunity and positive outcomes for all.

While significant progress has been made over the past year in strengthening the service's understanding of fairness, equity and inclusion, disproportionality remains a key area of focus for the Youth Justice Service and the Youth Justice Partnership Board. Analysis continues to show the over-representation of some groups of children within the youth justice system, particularly children from racialised communities, children in care and those with additional educational, communication and neurodiverse needs. Whilst the service is increasingly able to identify and understand these patterns, there is further work required to understand the factors driving differential outcomes and to ensure that interventions, decision-making and access to services are consistently equitable across the partnership.

The next phase of this work will focus on moving beyond identifying disproportionality to evidencing impact and reducing inequalities in outcomes for children and victims. This will include strengthening data analysis, increasing the use of lived experience to inform service development, improving the accessibility of services, and ensuring that all partners are able to demonstrate how they are contributing to more equitable outcomes. As a result, fairness, equity and inclusion will remain a strategic priority within this plan for 2026–2029, underpinning the partnership's commitment to delivering a Child First, anti-discriminatory and inclusive youth justice service.



Progress made to date

Performance over the previous year

First Time Entrants – April 2025 – March 2026

	Medway	SE Region	England
Per 100,000 of population	166	115	145
%age change	+ 16%	- 17%	- 9%

The number of first-time entrants increased from 45 children (2024 – 25) to 52 children (2025 – 26). The increase is a small number of children (7) but raises concerns that will need to be addressed within the partnership. The development of preventative and diversionary activity will include how children are prevented from entering the criminal justice system for the first time.

Reoffending – April 2024 – March 2025

	Medway	South East
Number of children in the cohort	37	417
# Children in the cohort who reoffended	10	112
# Number of reoffences committed by those children	43	474
# Average number of reoffences per child	4.30	4.23
% of the cohort who have reoffended	27.0%	26.86%

In the latest reporting period, 37 children formed the Medway reoffending cohort, of whom 10 reoffended, resulting in a reoffending rate of 27.0%. This is broadly in line with the South East average of 26.9%.

The 10 children who reoffended committed a total of 43 further offences, equating to an average of 4.3 reoffences per child, which is also comparable to the South East average of 4.23. While Medway's reoffending rate is marginally higher than the regional comparator,

the difference is negligible and represents less than one percentage point. Given the relatively small cohort size, the reoffending rate is particularly sensitive to changes involving a small number of children.

It is important to note that reoffending data is based on a historical cohort and therefore reflects the circumstances, risks and service delivery arrangements that were in place approximately two years prior to publication. Since that time, the Youth Justice Service has undergone significant development, including investment in workforce training, improvements in assessment and planning, enhanced partnership working and the implementation of evidence-based interventions. As a result, caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions about current service effectiveness from these figures alone.

The data demonstrates that reoffending remains concentrated within a small group of children, with only 10 individuals accounting for all 43 reoffences. This reinforces the importance of targeted interventions for those children with the most complex and persistent offending behaviours, alongside early help and prevention approaches designed to reduce entry into the youth justice system.

Strategic Risk Register

Risk Area	Risk Description	Potential Impact	Current Controls / Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
Local Government Reorganisation and System Reform	Significant organisational change through Local Government Reorganisation (April 2028), NHS restructuring, SEND reforms and implementation of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act, Family First Partnership programme (FFP) may impact partnership arrangements, governance structures and service delivery.	Reduced focus on youth justice priorities during transition; delays in decision-making; loss of organisational knowledge; increased uncertainty for staff, children and families.	Youth Justice Partnership Board oversight; early planning for future governance arrangements; active involvement in transformation programmes; regular review of transition risks.	High	High
Access to Education, Training and Employment (ETE)	Access to suitable full-time education, training and employment opportunities remains a challenge, particularly for children with SEND, exclusions, neurodiversity and complex needs.	Increased risk of offending and reoffending; poor educational attainment; reduced employment opportunities; poorer long-term outcomes.	Dedicated Education Worker; strengthened partnerships with schools and providers; individual ETE planning; regular performance monitoring through Partnership Board.	High	Medium
Information Sharing and Multi-Agency Collaboration	Information-sharing arrangements are not yet consistently effective across all agencies, limiting the ability to fully assess risk, protect victims and coordinate interventions.	Incomplete assessments and plans; missed safeguarding opportunities; poor understanding of risks; duplication of interventions; poorer outcomes for children and victims.	Delivery of HMIP improvement plan; development of information-sharing agreements; strengthened governance arrangements; multi-agency audits and quality assurance activity.	High	High

Managing High Levels of Risk and Vulnerability	A significant proportion of children supported by the YJS present with high levels of vulnerability and/or risk of serious harm. Additional challenges arise where children move into Medway or are placed by other authorities due to safeguarding concerns.	Increased risk of harm to children; increased risk to victims and communities; escalation of exploitation, violence and serious offending; inconsistent management of risk.	Multi-agency risk management arrangements; Youth Justice Risk Panels; contextual safeguarding and exploitation responses; development of a multi-agency case formulation framework; delivery of HMIP recommendations relating to assessment and management oversight.	High	High
Victim Services and Victim Engagement	HMIP identified the need to improve victim work. Whilst additional resources have been introduced, further work is required to strengthen strategic oversight, coordination of services and the incorporation of victims' views and wishes into intervention planning.	Victims receive duplicate offers of support or are overlooked; inefficient use of resources; reduced victim satisfaction; unmet victim needs; inability to provide a coordinated victim-centred response.	Dedicated Victim Worker; revised victim service model; implementation of HMIP victim recommendations; stronger partnership arrangements with Kent Police and commissioned victim services; development of victim data and performance reporting; expansion of restorative justice and reparation opportunities; improved governance through the Youth Justice Partnership Board.	High	Medium
Increasing Complexity of Need	Children known to the YJS are presenting with increasingly complex needs, including neurodiversity, SEND, speech and language difficulties,	Insufficient capacity to provide tailored support; increased reoffending; poorer outcomes for children; increased	Embedded case formulation and psychologically informed practice; dedicated CAMHS and substance misuse provision within YJS; access to	Medium	High

	trauma and emotional wellbeing needs. Twenty-three per cent of children supported by the YJS have an EHCP compared to 4.5% across Medway, and 71% of those identified with SEND have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Demand is also expected to increase as the local population of younger children grows.	safeguarding concerns; pressure on workforce and partner services; failure to effectively manage risks to children and communities.	the Medway Therapeutic Alliance; workforce development programme focused on SEND, neurodiversity and trauma-informed practice; strong partnerships with health, education and children's services.		
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Future Plan

The Medway YJS plan is set for a three-year period to allow the service to develop strong and robust responses to prevent offending and to support children and victims. The plan is built on a multi-agency partnership response where statutory partners and those from the third sector are actively engaged in delivering services.

The plan uses learning from the inspection by His Majesty's inspectorate of Probation which was carried out in May 2026 and responds to the findings and recommendations from their report.

Child's Voice

The HMIP Inspection found that *'Medway YJS was dedicated to listening to the voices of children and families, with some clear examples where this has led to changes in policy or resource provision.'*

The feedback gained (October 2025- March 2026) shows strong outcomes, including:

- 100% of children reporting being treated with respect;
- 80% stating they always felt listened to and included in decisions;
- 100% of parents feeling included in planning and well informed throughout their child's involvement;
- Children and parents both identifying reparation, relationship based work with case managers, and restorative understanding as particular strengths of the service.

During the life of this plan, participation activity will further develop into co-production wherever possible. Children, parents and carers will be involved in shaping service design, reviewing performance information, contributing to policy development and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and support services

Young People in Kent on Sexual Violence

Children in the service contributed to the survey on sexual violence. Children and young people consistently highlighted the importance of being heard, believed and empowered when speaking about sexual violence, valuing professionals who provide supportive responses, seek to understand what the young person wants, and validate their experiences.

This learning directly informed the development of the YJS Girls Group, launched in Autumn 2025, with its structure and content shaped by children's lived experience. The group included sessions on safety and wellbeing and was supported by a Sexual Health Nurse, demonstrating an increasingly strong connection between children's voices, service delivery and partnership response



2026-2029 Priorities

Our Priorities

1. Prevention of offending

Aim:

To prevent offending through high quality prevention and diversion of children away from the criminal justice system, to ensure that all children supported by the service have access to the services they need and that there is a multi-agency response to any emerging risks.

How:

1.1 Develop a framework for active multi-agency involvement in the management of the risk of harm to victims and communities, and to the safety and wellbeing of children.

By March 2027, all children assessed as presenting a high risk of harm or significant vulnerability will be subject to a coordinated multi-agency risk management process, with clear plans in place to reduce risks to victims and communities whilst promoting the child's safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes.

Measures of Success:

- 100% of high-risk children are subject to multi-agency risk management plans in which all relevant partners are represented
- Improved audit outcomes for assessment and planning.
- Improved partner attendance at risk discussions.
- Reduction in repeat serious violence and serious harmful behaviour.

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
1.1.1	Agree and publish an information sharing agreements that ensures that information shared across the partnership is a) relevant b) consistent c) up to date d) pro-active	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Education Kent and Medway Mental Health Probation Open Road substance misuse service Children's Social Work		30 th Sept 2026
1.1.2	Ensure that timely and relevant information is shared with the YJS so that practitioners can fully assess the safety of the child and the community and the identification of actual or potential victims HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Kent Police	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		30 th Sept 2026
1.1.3	Develop multi-agency data sets and analysis which allow statutory partners to understand the needs of children in the criminal justice system. Ensure that statutory partners respond to the identified needs and report into the Youth Justice Partnership Board on the impact that any responses are having on levels of identified need.	Medway Business Information Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Data and analytic leads from: Kent Police Education Kent and Medway Mental Health Probation		31 st Dec 2026

	HMIP RECOMMENDATION		Open Road substance misuse service Children's Social Work		
1.1.4	Establish a framework for the use of case formulation as a multi-agency approach to a) understanding the causes of risk b) identifying how services can contribute to preventing harm or reducing levels of risk HMIP GOOD PRACTICE	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Medway Public Health Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board		31 st Oct 2026
1.1.5	Revise the current Youth Justice Risk Panels to ensure that there is a multi-agency contribution to the discussions around risk and the plans to prevent harm. Consider the use of case formulation as the framework for Risk Panel discussions	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th November 2026
1.1.6	Refresh the training, guidance and support provided to youth justice staff to improve the quality of assessments in relation to keeping children, victims and the community safe from harm HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th Sept 2026
1.1.7					31 st Dec 2026

	Improve youth justice management oversight so it is consistently applied, robust and drives high quality work with children and victims HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			
1.1.8	Build workforce confidence and consistency through the delivery of multi-agency training on: Risk assessment and management. Safeguarding and public protection. Child criminal exploitation. Trauma-informed and child-first practice. Information sharing and professional challenge. Use the training to promote a shared understanding of risk across agencies.	Medway Children's Service Practice Development team	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager Nominated leads from the statutory Youth Justice partners		30 th Sept 2027

1.2 Set out the arrangements from the statutory services within the youth justice partnership so that children involved in crime can have swift and easy access to the services that will help them to achieve positive change within their lives. The arrangements will acknowledge that mainstream or traditional referral routes are unlikely to have engaged children in the criminal justice system or their families.

Measures of Success

- Increased access to specialist support services.
- Appropriate wait times for mental health interventions.
- Increased participation in suitable Education, Training and Employment.

- Improved outcomes for over-represented groups.
- Positive feedback from children and families on how they have been able to access services which are important to them.

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
1.2.1	Agree and publish the services available to children within the criminal justice system including the named representative from each service Agreements to be developed with: • Kent Police • Education • Kent and Medway Mental Health • Probation • Open Road substance misuse service • Children's Social Work	Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board representatives	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		30 th January 2027
1.2.2	Agree frameworks for how children from over-represented groups can be better supported to address the factors that lead to offending. The groups are: • Looked After Children • Children from Global Majority populations • Neurodiverse children including those with special educational needs	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Medway Children's Social Work Education		30 th April 2027

	Children with speech, language and communication needs				
1.2.3	Ensure that the Youth Justice Education Worker is an active contributor to education networks so that all children supported by youth justice are participating in appropriate full-time education or training	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th April 2027
1.2.4	Ensure that Youth Justice staff have access to specialist consultation around the Speech, Language and Communication Needs of children HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board education representative	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		30 th April 2027
1.2.5	Ensure that children have timely access to access specialist mental health services HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board health representative	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		30 th April 2027

1.3 Deliver a robust, effective and coordinated approach to preventing children from offending and diverting those away from the criminal justice system. Prevention and Diversion will ensure that children are offered relevant support that helps to increase their chances of doing well in life.

Measures of Success

Reduction in First Time Entrants.

- Increased use of diversion and Out of Court Resolutions.
- Increased completion of intervention programmes.
- Reduction in reoffending.
- Increased engagement in positive activities and ETE.

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
1.3.1	Agree and implement a process for Out of Court Resolutions (OOCR) that includes a child diversion option	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Youth Endowment Fund National Youth Justice Board		30 th December 2026
1.3.2	Publish the offer of support available to children who are dealt with by way of an OOCR. The support offer will outline what is available from: • Youth Justice • Police • Education • Children's mental health (CAMHS and the Medway Therapeutic Alliance) • Medway Youth Service	Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board representatives	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		30 th Dec 2026
1.3.3	Develop and agree a single Medway approach to crime prevention that brings together the Turnaround and Young Futures projects	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit		30 th April 2027

1.3.4	Set out the arrangements for Youth Justice to actively engage with the Medway Focused Deterrence work to tackle young street groups and violence	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Medway Youth Service Medway Contextual Safeguarding lead		30 th April 2027

2. Victim Support

Aim:

The work with victims will be individualised and responsive to their needs. Victims' needs will be understood and reflected in the work undertaken by the partnership and the safety of every victim will be prioritised within the planning and activity of the partnership.

How:

2.1 By March 2027, all victims affected by youth offending will be offered a personalised and responsive service, with their needs and views actively informing intervention planning, partnership activity and risk management processes. Victim safety will be prioritised through coordinated multi-agency action, resulting in improved victim satisfaction, support and confidence in the youth justice system.

The partnership will respond to the impact of youth offending on communities, not just individual victims.

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
2.1.1	The Youth Justice Partnership Board will establish a structure for overseeing and coordinating the strategic response to victim work. This will include: • governance arrangements to oversee and coordinate victim work across the partnership. • clear accountability for who is responsible for victim outcomes. HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Youth Justice Partnership Board chair	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Kent Police		31 st December 2026
2.1.2	Kent Police and the Youth Justice Service will improve the sharing and recording of victim information so that: a) The diversity and protected characteristics of victims can be understood b) The Board can understand whether the safety and wellbeing of victims has been sufficiently met	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police		31 st Dec 2026
2.1.3	Develop multi-agency data sets and analysis which allow statutory partners to understand the needs of victims Ensure that statutory partners respond to the identified needs and report into the Youth Justice Partnership	Kent Police Medway Business Intelligence	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner		31 st Dec 2026

	Board on the impact that any responses are having on levels of identified need. HMIP RECOMMENDATION		Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		
2.1.4	Provide regular summaries of the experiences of victims so that the Partnership Board, the Youth Justice Service and individual agencies can understand what works well and what needs to improve.	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th April 2027
2.1.5	Share the YJS victim information packs with Police and OPCC commissioned victim services. Develop a shared victim information pack based on the YJS victim information pack and the positive feedback from the HMIP inspectors HMIP GOOD PRACTICE	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner		30 th April 2027
2.1.6	Embed victim services within the broader YJS work to ensure alignment between victim workers and practitioners and maximising the effectiveness of joint interventions HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			31 st December 2026
2.1.7					31 st December

	Review and improve the use of restorative approaches and reparation so that: a) direct and indirect restorative work is a consistent feature of the youth justice service work b) reparation takes place in community settings and supports the child's engagement with their wider community HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner		2026
2.1.8	Prioritise Victim Safety by a) Ensure victim safety is routinely considered during risk assessment and risk management processes. b) Develop victim safety plans where ongoing risks are identified. c) Share relevant information with partner agencies to support victim protection. d) Review victim safety arrangements regularly, particularly where risks escalate.	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police		30 th April 2027
2.1.9	Use Victim Feedback to Improve Services by a) Develop mechanisms for gathering feedback from victims regarding their experience of the Youth Justice Service and wider partnership.	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			31 st December 2027

	b) Identify themes and learning from victim feedback. c) Report findings through governance arrangements and partnership boards. d) Use feedback to shape service development and commissioning decisions.				
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3. Violence and harm

Aim:

The Youth Justice Partnership will understand the impact of violence on victims, including those groups of victims who are over-represented within youth crime. The partnership will implement a response which focuses on the factors that lead to violence and which reduces incidents of violence.

How:

3.1 Serious youth violence involving knives and weapons. The partnership will develop a shared response to knife and weapon offences so that any child involved in weapon related offending or shows violence fixated behaviour is able to receive relevant support as soon as possible. The partnership will ensure that the response also includes multi-agency approach to the management of any immediate risks or threats which are identified.

Measures of Success

- By March 2027, 100% of children identified through weapon-related incidents will receive a coordinated multi-agency assessment, with high-risk cases discussed within agreed multi-agency risk management processes, resulting in a reduction in repeat weapon-related offending and improved safeguarding outcomes.
- All children who have a weapon related offence have a clear, agreed multi-agency plan that sets out how agencies will prevent any further offending or harm to others, and addresses the factors which have led to weapons being carried

- By March 2029 the response to weapon related crime or violence fixation will include representatives from all statutory YJS partners. The services available to prevent violence will be coordinated through the YJS Partnership Board who will assume a lead for violence prevention in Medway.
- Reoffending of children involved in weapons offences reduces year on year
- The Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board has an agreed strategy in place which sets out the partnership response to weapons offences including the prevention of offending and the response to victims of weapon related crime

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
3.1.1	Develop multi-agency data sets and analysis which allow statutory partners to understand the levels and impact of violence Ensure that statutory partners respond to the identified needs and report into the Youth Justice Partnership Board on the impact that any responses are having on levels of identified need.	Medway Performance and Intelligence (P&I) Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Data and analytic leads from Kent Police, Health and Probation		30 th April 2027
3.1.2	Implement a multi-agency protocol and response to violence linked to knives and weapons which includes a focus on: a) Tackling any immediate threats, risk and harm b) Addressing the factors which have led to knife possession or use c) Equips children with the skills and knowledge to be active bystanders	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Youth Endowment Fund Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit		30 th September 2027

	d) Uses an evidence based approach. This is potentially the development of Social Skills by the child as the most relevant of all evidence based approaches to violence.				
3.1.3	Agree a data sharing protocol with Kent Police that ensures that information linked to violence is shared between the Police and YJS in a manner so that it is Relevant, Consistent, Up to date, Pro-active HMIP RECOMMENDATION	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager Kent Police			31 st December 2026
3.1.4	Create an Early Identification and Referral Pathway. Include within this: a) A standard referral pathway for any child identified as carrying, possessing, using, or threatened by weapons. Included within this are children where there is an identified concern about violence fixated behaviours. b) Ensure that referrals can be made by schools, police, social care, health services, and community organisations. c) Introduce screening questions regarding weapon carrying within existing assessments.	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager Kent Police			30 th September 2027

	d) Ensure referrals are made within agreed timescales following an incident, and responses are timely and coordinated				
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3.2 Violence against women and girls- Children supported by Medway’s Youth Justice Service are supported to develop respectful, healthy relationships and challenged to reject harmful attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls. The partnership will work together to identify, assess and respond to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and related risks at the earliest opportunity, ensuring effective safeguarding, risk management and intervention for both victims and those displaying concerning behaviours.

Measures of Success

- All children where Harmful Sexual Behaviour is identified as a concern will be assessed using the AIM3 assessment tool.
- The voices and experiences of girls are reflected in the work carried out by Youth Justice with children on the topic of healthy relationships

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
3.2.1	Develop multi-agency data sets and analysis which allow statutory partners to understand the levels and impact of violence against women and girls Ensure that statutory partners respond to the identified needs and report into the Youth Justice Partnership Board on the impact that any responses are having on levels of identified need.	Medway Youth Justice Business Intelligence Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Data Analysts Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit analysts		30 th April 2027

3.2.2	Establish multi-agency risk management meetings for high-risk cases involving sexual violence or Harmful Sexual Behaviour to discuss the response where concerns are emerging, but where criminal charges have not been laid or a conviction secured. Ensure risk management includes the focus on protecting victims from harm as well	Youth Justice Head of Service	Kent Police		30 th September 2027
3.2.3	Develop a Medway Children's Services response to sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour so that all services and teams have the skills to assess levels of risk and can be part of a pan-authority response to identified risks	Youth Justice Head of Service	Medway Public Health CAMHS		30 th September 2027
3.2.4	Deliver a prevention program for children involved with the Youth Justice Service and those at risk of involvement in offending. The program will focus on: Respectful relationships Gender equality Consent Online safety Challenging misogyny and harmful peer cultures. The service will develop the program through:	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th April 2027

	a) Involvement of children in the co-design of prevention messages and campaigns. b) Developing specific work with boys and young men exploring masculinity, identity, emotional regulation and positive relationships. c) Engaging parents and carers through awareness sessions and resources.				
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4. Fairness, equity and inclusion

This objective aligns strongly with the Child First approach, recognising that reducing disproportionality is not simply about monitoring data but about changing systems, practice and partnership responses so that every child has an equal opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.

The Board recognises that disproportionality extends beyond ethnicity alone and includes children in care, care leavers, children with SEND, neurodiverse children, children subject to statutory social work involvement, children placed out of area and children experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Understanding and responding to the experiences and outcomes of these groups will form a central part of the partnership's equity and inclusion work.

Aim:

The Board is committed to understanding and addressing the over-representation of children from specific communities or groups within the youth justice system.

How:

4.1 By identifying patterns of disproportionality, the Board will develop and implement a strategic plan that promotes fairness, equity, and inclusion across services working with children and victims. The plan will also identify groups who may struggle to engage with youth justice services and put in place approaches that will allow all children and victims to receive a service that they can engage with.

Measures of Success

- By March 2027, the partnership will have implemented a comprehensive disproportionality strategy resulting in improved equity of access, decision-making and outcomes for all children
- The voices and experiences of children from groups who are over-represented within the criminal justice system will be routinely used to inform the work of the Board and the services delivered to those children.
- Youth Justice staff will have access to and consult with specialists (Speech, Language and Communication needs; neurodevelopmental needs) for all children where these needs are initially identified.

How:

No.	Action	Lead	Key partners	Progress Status	Timeframe
4.1.1	Develop a Clear Understanding of Local Disproportionality a) Analyse youth justice data by ethnicity, gender, age, disability, care experience, special educational needs and neurodiversity. b) Map disproportionality at each stage of the youth justice pathway, including arrest, out-of-court disposals, court outcomes, remand, custody and reoffending.	Medway Business Intelligence Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Data and analytics from Kent Police, Health and Probation Kent Police		30 th April 2027

	c) Identify trends, gaps and points where disproportionality is most evident. d) Report findings regularly to strategic governance boards. HMIP RECOMMENDATION				
4.1.2	Strengthen Diversion and Early Intervention a) Increase the use of diversionary and prevention services for children who may be disproportionately represented within the justice system. b) Review access to out-of-court disposals to ensure decisions are equitable and evidence based. c) Implement targeted support for groups identified as at higher risk of entering the justice system.	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager Kent Police			30 th April 2028
4.1.3	Improve Recognition and Support for SEND and Neurodiversity a) Strengthen screening and assessment processes for special educational needs, learning difficulties, speech and language needs, ADHD, autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions. b) Ensure timely referral to specialist services. c) Adapt interventions and communication methods to meet identified needs.	Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board leads for Health (CAMHS) and Education	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager		30 th June 2027

	d) Work closely with education and health partners to coordinate support. e) Work with a Speech and language therapist to review the documents used and how meetings & groups are conducted HMIP RECOMMENDATION				
4.1.4	Increase Participation of Children and Families a) Involve children and families from diverse backgrounds in service design, evaluation and improvement. b) Establish mechanisms to hear directly from groups who may experience discrimination or barriers to access. c) Use lived experience to inform policy, commissioning and practice development. d) Provide feedback on how participation has influenced change. e) Work with community groups that have trusted relationships with over-represented communities.	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th June 2027
4.1.5	Review Decision-Making Processes Actions Regularly audit key decision-making points including: • Diversion decisions.	Kent Police Medway Youth Justice Service Manager			30 th September 2027

	• Bail and remand recommendations. • Intervention allocation. • Risk assessments. • Enforcement activity. Implement learning from audits into workforce development.				
4.1.6	Develop Workforce Competence Deliver training to the YJS service including staff from all partners on: Anti-racist practice. Equality, diversity and inclusion. Cultural competence. Unconscious bias. Trauma-informed practice. Neurodiversity and SEND awareness. Promote reflective practice and professional challenge.	Medway Children's Services Practice Development team			30 th June 2027
4.1.7	Create a strategy to reduce the criminalisation of children in care	Medway Youth Justice Service Manager	Kent Police Medway Children's Social Work Care Providers		30 th June 2027



Key Performance Indicators

Accommodation

The Board lead is Nicoleta Stangu, Head of service Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice, Medway Children's Social Care

Youth Justice Board KPI	The proportion of children in suitable accommodation at the end of their intervention programme/order
Resources in the Youth Justice service	2 x FTE Youth Justice Social Workers

Education, training and employment

The Board lead is Joanna Mahadoo.

In addition to the statutory Youth Justice Board indicators, the Partnership Board will monitor a suite of local education and SEND measures to understand the effectiveness of support provided to children with additional needs, improve educational inclusion and reduce the risk factors associated with offending and reoffending.

Youth Justice Board KPI	The percentage of children in the community and being released from custody attending a suitable Education Training and Employment arrangement
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Resources in the Youth Justice service	1 FTE Education Worker 0.1 X Information Advice and Guidance worker
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Youth Justice Board KPI	The percentage of children who have an identified SEND need, are in suitable Education Training and Employment and have a formal learning plan in place for the current academic year
Resources in the Youth Justice service	1 FTE Education Worker 0.1 X Information Advice and Guidance worker

Health

The Board leads for health are Aeilish Geldenhuys (Public Health) and Integrated Care Board representative to be confirmed.

Emotional and Mental Health

Youth Justice Board KPI	The percentage of children in the community and being released from custody with a screened or identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing; and of that, the percentage of planned/offered interventions; of that, the percentage of children attending interventions.
Resources in the Youth Justice service	0.4 x Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Youth Justice Mental Health worker The service also has priority access to the Medway Therapeutic Partnership who an emotional wellbeing support service for children and young people in Medway. The partnership brings together a range of trusted organisations to provide joined-up support through one clear and accessible service.

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Substance Misuse

Youth Justice Board KPI	The percentage of children with a screened or identified need for specialist treatment intervention to address substance misuse; and of that the percentage of children with planned or offered intervention/treatment; and of that the percentage number of children attending intervention/treatment.
Resources in the Youth Justice service	0.4 x Open Road Substance Misuse worker.

There are five additional Key Performance Indicators which are reported to the national Youth Justice Board

KPI 6 – Out-of-court disposals	The number of children who completed intervention programmes in the period as a proportion of the number of children with an out-of-court disposal ending in the period
KPI 7 - Wider services	The proportion of children connected to/supported by wider care and support services at the end of their order
KPI 8 - Management board	The number of senior partners attending management boards (out of 5)
KPI 9 - Serious violence	The number of proven serious violence offences as a proportion of the 10 to 17-year-old population
KPI 10 - Victims	The number of victims engaged in restorative justice opportunities as a proportion of the total number of victims who consent to be contacted

Detention in police custody

The service maintains close links with the Police and the NHS Liaison and Diversion Service to ensure that children are only held in police custody when necessary and that those children in custody are supported by NHS professionals. The Head of Service attends the Children in Custody Concordat meetings which are chaired by the Police Superintendent responsible for custody.

Remands

The numbers of children who have been subject to a Remand to the Local Authority (RLAA) or to Youth Detention are low and this is due to the service offering a strong community based package to the courts. The service will review any child who is subject to RLAA or RYDA.

The service has worked with Kent County Council's Youth Justice Service and has secured funding from the Ministry of Justice for a Remand Prevention Coordinator. The postholder will be employed by KCC and will work across Medway and Kent to identify children at risk of a remand and to provide additional resources to prevent children from being remanded.

Use of custody and constructive resettlement

There has been an increase in custodial sentences in the previous 12 months. The reasons for this were that 2 children had breached their orders and three were convicted of robbery or serious violence offences. The numbers remain low.

Working with families

Medway Council has invested in the Positive Behaviour Support program and the DICE Adolescent Parenting program which is available to Youth Justice staff. Services for partners are commissioned by Medway's Public Health Service who are represented on the Youth Justice Partnership Board.



Resources and services

Staff development and support:

The Youth Justice Service set out a Workforce Development plan for 2025 – 2026 which establishes the key skills and learning required from any staff in the service including those from partners outside Medway Council. The Workforce Development plan will be updated in 2026 – 2027 to reflect the learning from the Youth Justice Inspection and the training completed so far

The Youth Justice Board will ensure that staff seconded to or directly supporting the Youth Justice Service attend all relevant training arranged for the service. This will include:

Medway Youth Justice Workforce Development plan – key areas from the HMIP Inspection report and feedback from HMIP Inspectors. Training for 2026 – 27:

- a) The service will develop case formulation to understand the causes of risk and drive a multi-agency response to high risk, and to support the development of staff skills and knowledge.
- b) Develop clinical supervision for the Youth Justice Victim coordinator
- c) The service will ensure joint supervision for any child who is also supported by a Social Worker.
- d) Commission training for youth justice staff to improve the quality of assessing in relation to keeping the child and the community safe
- e) Commission training to Improve management oversight so it is consistently applied, robust and drives high quality work with children and victims
- f) Commission training to develop and embed consistent and effective victim safety practice within the work with children and victims
- g) Develop systems to increase confidence in, and maximise the potential of restorative justice and reparative opportunities with victims
- h) Train the youth justice service in the use of co-produced 'identity plans' which contribute to effective and personalised delivery of services. Ensure that assessments and identity plans explore the intersection of race, culture and neurodiversity.

- i) Train the youth justice service to consistently deliver living skills work, such as sourcing culturally appropriate food and self-care practices with the religious and cultural beliefs of children and families.
- j) Develop a Youth Justice apprenticeship offer and Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEP) offer for staff.

Board Development

The purpose of the Board is to offer leadership to increase influence on the strategic direction of the service driving improvement across the partnership. Previously the review of the Youth Justice Service was commissioned by the Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board and the Local Authority supported the recommendations made in the report regarding how the service should increase capacity so that the practice of the service and the outcomes for children improve.

The Board will use the 2026 HMIP report to shape the governance of the partnership and to inform the role of the Board in providing leadership and coordination of services across the youth justice landscape. This will include the use of data from all partners to provide multi-agency data sets and strengthening the voices of children, parents and victims so that their views guide the work of the service.

The Board will also ensure that there is service continuity throughout the period of Local Government Reorganisation.

Evidence based practice and innovation

The service works closely with the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit and has developed the Focused Deterrence approach to tackle gangs or Young Street Groups. The approach has a high impact on violence and is recommended by the Youth Endowment Fund.

The service has begun the planning to enhance diversionary activities within the borough. The Turnaround Project uses a Social Skills approach to underpin all activities and support being provided to children and is focused on those at risk of entering the criminal justice system. It is linked with the Child Centred Policing team who currently deliver support to children through the Outcome 22 outcome. The service is in discussion with the Violence Reduction Unit about testing a Young Futures Prevention Panel which will extend the diversionary and preventative reach of the service. The panel will be subject to formal evaluation that is commissioned by the Home Office.

The service has been accepted as one of four areas to test a 'Whole Area Model' with the Youth Endowment Fund. The work will consider how the whole Police Force area can be a beacon of good practice around Out of Court and Diversion work and so will include Kent Police and Kent

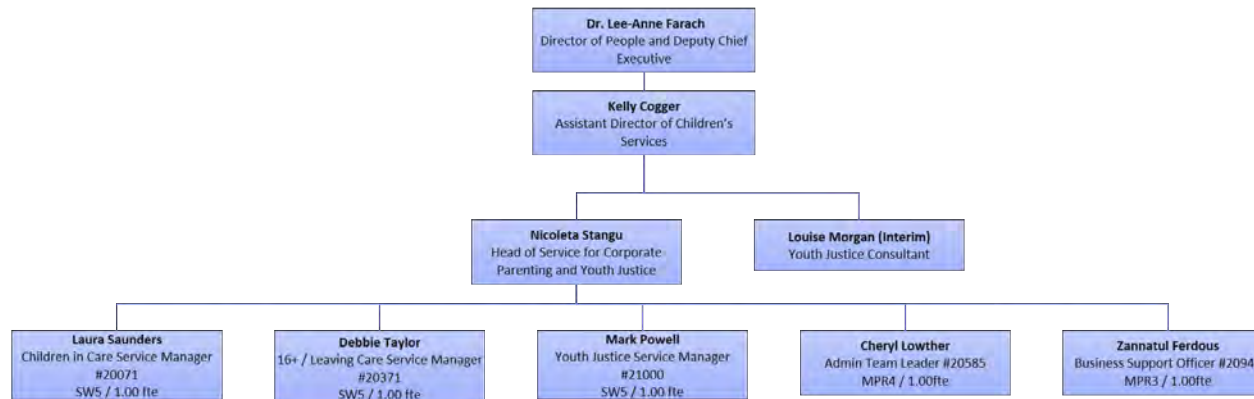
County Council. The Youth Endowment Fund will evaluate the work and use the project to create good practice guidance to be used by youth justice services across England and Wales.



Appendices

Medway Youth Justice Structure

The senior leadership team of the Youth Justice Service are represented in the structure chart below



The Medway Youth Justice Service structure chart is shown below. The chart summarises the service including the representatives from partner agencies who are the named leads to work with Medway's Youth Justice staff. The partnership resources dedicated to Youth Justice are:

Service	Resource	Service	Resource
CAMHS	0.4 x CAMHS Mental Health Worker	Probation	0.6 x Probation officer
Open Road substance misuse	0.4 Substance Misuse Worker	Social Work	2 x YJ Social Workers
Education	1 x Education Worker 2 x 0.1 IAG	Police	0.2 x Police civilian staff member

Medway Youth Justice Service

As of 15th June 2026

