

Notice of a Meeting

Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday, 22 September 2026 at 10.00 am
Room 2&3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

These proceedings are open to the public

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Membership

Chair: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE

Deputy Chair: Councillor Andy Graham

Councillors:	Dr Izzy Creed	Emma Markham	Bethia Thomas
	Georgina Heritage	Toyah Overton	
	Johnny Hope-Smith	James Plumb	

Co-Optees:	Fraser Long	Peace Nnaji	Leah Q
	Toby Long	Elza B	

Date of Next Meeting: 24 November 2026

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Committee Officer: Richard Doney

Email: scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Dr Martin Reeves, OBE
Chief Executive

September 2026

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee focuses on on the following key areas a) All services and preventative activities/initiatives relating to children, young people, education (including Home to School Transport and Special Educational Needs and Disability but excluding adult education), and support of families; b) The Council's statutory functions in relation to children's social care and safeguarding. This includes public health as they relate to children and young people where they are not covered by the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee; c) Matters relating to care leavers and the transition between children's and adult services d) The welfare of unaccompanied young asylum seekers e) Services for Young Carers

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am 4 working day before the date of the meeting.**

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 69 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 763,200 residents.

These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £1.2 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 10 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets at least 4 times a year. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

See guidance note on the back page.

3. **Minutes (Pages 9 - 18)**

The Committee is recommended to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2026.

4. **Petitions and Public Addresses**

Members of the public who wish to speak on an item on the agenda at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 09.00 three working days before the meeting, i.e., Friday 18 September, 2026.

Requests should be submitted to the Scrutiny Officer at scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am on the day of the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

Where there are a number of requests from persons wishing to present similar views on the same issue, the Chair may require that the views be put by a single spokesperson. It is expected that only in exceptional circumstances will a person (or organisation) be allowed to address more than one meeting on a particular issue in any period of six months.

The public is reminded that the Committee is not a decision-making body and that it cannot investigate individual complaints. The Committee requests that no individual children are named when addressing the Committee

5. **Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2025-2026 (Pages 19 - 64)**

The Committee has requested a report on the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report.

Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services, and Laura Gadjus, Business Manager: OSCP, have been invited to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** the report, to **RAISE** any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

6. **Harm outside the home and child sex exploitation (Pages 65 - 98)**

The Committee has requested a report on harm outside the home and child sex exploitation.

Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services, and Jessie Dobson, Service Manager: Adolescence and Prevention, have been invited to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** the report, to **RAISE** any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

7. Youth Justice Annual Plan 2026-2029 (Pages 99 - 162)

The Committee has requested a report on the Oxfordshire Youth Justice Annual Plan.

Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services, and Jessie Dobson, Service Manager: Adolescence and Prevention, have been invited to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** the report, to **RAISE** any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

8. Apprenticeships (Pages 163 - 170)

The Committee has requested a report on Apprenticeships.

Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services, and Elaine North, Education, Employment, and Training Manager, have been invited to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** the report, to **RAISE** any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

9. Committee Forward Work Plan (Pages 171 - 174)

In order to inform its work planning, the Committee has requested an oral update on home to school transport.

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** its work programme for forthcoming meetings, having heard any changes from previous iterations, and taking account of the Cabinet Forward Plan and of the Budget Management Monitoring Report.

10. Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker (Pages 175 - 178)

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the progress of previous recommendations and actions arising from previous meetings, having raised any questions on the contents.

11. Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations

The Committee has not received any responses since its last meeting.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships
- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 26 June 2026 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 1.07 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE - in the Chair
(Deputy Chair)
Councillor Ron Batstone
Councillor Dr Izzy Creed
Councillor Georgina Heritage
Councillor Johnny Hope-Smith
Councillor Toyah Overton
Councillor James Plumb

Co-Optee Members: Peace Nnaji

Other Members in Attendance: Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak
Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People

Officers: Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services
Annette Pennington, Strategic Lead for Education, Policy, and Implementation
Laurie Baker, Deputy Director for Education and Inclusion
Carol Douch, Deputy Director for Safeguarding
Sophie Black, Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention
Deb Smit, Assistant Director for SEND and Inclusion
Laura Gadjus, Business Manager, OSCP
Harriet Preedy, Team Manager, Targeted Youth Support Service
Jenny Stoker, Operational Lead, Family Hubs
Lou Everatt, Head of Oxfordshire, HMPPS
Debbie Hartick, Director of Safeguarding (Thames Valley ICB)
Liane Lewis, Designated Nurse (Thames Valley ICB)
Annabel Kay, Chair of Safeguarding in Education Sub-group
Charlotte Donohoe, Head of Specialist Safeguarding, Thames Valley Police
Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

21/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Graham (substitute: Cllr Batstone) and from Fraser Long (co-opted member).

Cllr Gawrysiak attended as a guest of the Chair and Peace Nnaji attended remotely, at the Chair's discretion.

Leah Q and Elza B also attended informally, in advance of their appointment to the Committee.

22/26 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

23/26 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting on 27 February 2026 and on 12 May 2026 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record.

24/26 CO-OPTEE RECRUITMENT UPDATE

(Agenda No. 4)

The Committee considered the report and agreed to **NOTE** the update on activity undertaken to fill the Committee's vacant co-optee post for a parent governor and agreed to **APPOINT** Leah Q and Elza B as co-opted young people members subject to each completing and submitting a Register of Interests form, for two years, from the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

25/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

(Agenda No. 5)

There was one public speaker, with the Chair inviting her to speak before the Best Start in Life Plan item.

Dr Karen Bateson, speaking on behalf of voluntary sector partners, welcomed the Council's commitment to collaboration through Best Start in Life and Family Hubs but expressed concerns that recent decisions and engagement with the voluntary sector had not reflected the principles of trust, transparency, co-production and shared responsibility set out in Council strategies.

The Chair invited the Cabinet member to respond to the points raised and he thanked the speaker for attending and welcomed further discussion outside the meeting. Cllr Gaul advised that collaboration between the voluntary sector and the developing

Family Hub model would be discussed in more detail under the next agenda item, noting that the Council had received clear expectations from Government that Family Hubs should work closely with voluntary and community organisations. He reported that the Oxfordshire Family Alliance had recently been contacted to explore opportunities for joint working and ongoing dialogue.

In relation to the Infant Parent Perinatal Service, the Cabinet Member clarified that the service was commissioned and funded by the NHS rather than Oxfordshire County Council. He explained that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) had proposed withdrawing three services: the Infant Parent Perinatal Service, the Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service, and the Family Assessment and Safeguarding Service. He further noted that five Oxfordshire MPs had written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care requesting that the decision be reviewed and that the matter was currently under consideration by the successor Thames Valley ICB. He emphasised that the proposed service changes were not decisions of the County Council.

26/26 JTAI INSPECTION REPORT OF THE MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE
(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee had requested a report on the findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment in Oxfordshire.

Councillor Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, attended to present the report. He was accompanied by Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services and Chair of the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Laurie Baker, Deputy Director for Education and Inclusion, Annette Perrington, Strategic Lead, Carol Douch, Deputy Director Safeguarding, Laura Gadjus, Business Manager, Lou Everatt, Head of Oxfordshire (Probation Service), Debbie Hartick, Director of Safeguarding (Thames Valley Integrated Care Board), Liane Lewis, Designated Nurse, Annabel Kay, Chair of Safeguarding in Education Sub-group, Charlotte Donohoe, Head of Specialist Safeguarding (Thames Valley Police).

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member emphasised the gravity and sensitivity of the subject matter. He stated that the discussion was necessarily difficult, noting that such abuse often occurred in settings where children should be safest and was therefore particularly challenging to identify and address. He highlighted that the inspection did not provide a graded judgement but instead presented detailed thematic findings about system effectiveness. He welcomed the report and the opportunity it provided to reflect on safeguarding arrangements, placing on record his appreciation for the work of all those working in safeguarding across the county.

The Director of Children's Services explained that the inspection had focused specifically on child sexual abuse within the family environment, distinguishing this from exploitation outside the home. She noted that this form of abuse was significantly under-reported and often harder to detect due to the absence of disclosure and the private nature of family settings.

The Director emphasised that safeguarding was a shared responsibility across statutory partners, including the local authority, health services, the police, and education providers, with oversight provided through the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. She advised that, whilst the published letter summarising the inspection's findings, was relatively concise, the detailed feedback provided by inspectors had been more positive, particularly in relation to the quality and timeliness of responses where abuse had already been identified.

The Director further noted that a multi-agency action plan was being developed in response to the inspection, with submission required later in the summer, but that work to address identified issues had already commenced.

In discussion, the Committee discussed the following:

How data was shared across organisations and how the Partnership intended to improve its understanding of risk.

Officers acknowledged that, whilst individual agencies held strong datasets, integration across the system had been limited. The Deputy Director Safeguarding confirmed that a dedicated analyst had been appointed by the Partnership to develop a shared dashboard to provide a more comprehensive picture of safeguarding risks. She noted that progress had already been made although full system alignment remained complex.

Immediate changes being implemented

The Probation Service's Head of Oxfordshire explained that capacity within their service had improved following staffing changes and that a dedicated partnership manager had been appointed to strengthen engagement with safeguarding arrangements. Officers across agencies confirmed that actions had already begun, including increased collaboration and improved attendance at multi-agency meetings.

Accountability within multi-agency arrangements.

The Director of Children's Services explained that safeguarding responsibilities were joint across statutory partners (namely, Health, Children's Services at the Council, Thames Valley Police, and schools) but that operational leadership typically rested jointly with police and children's social care. She confirmed that, as statutory Director, she retained ultimate accountability for safeguarding outcomes within the local authority. However, it would be for the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to decide how to deal with a criminal investigation or trial.

Earlier identification of non-disclosed abuse

Officers acknowledged that this was inherently challenging, as it relied on recognising behavioural indicators and patterns rather than explicit evidence. They emphasised the importance of professional curiosity, awareness raising and training, and advised that tools and guidance had been reissued across the Partnership. Officers advised that increased awareness had already led to a modest rise in referrals.

Safeguarding training

Officers confirmed that training was being expanded across the education sector, including early years settings and governing bodies, and that additional resource had been allocated to the education safeguarding advisory team to support this work.

Performance measures

Members also questioned how improvement would be measured, noting the absence of clear performance indicators. Officers explained that national data on prevalence was limited and that increased reporting might indicate improved confidence rather than increased incidence. They advised that work was underway to develop more sophisticated measures, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights.

Concerns were raised regarding the high volume of referrals into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Officers reported that approximately 50,000 contacts were received annually and acknowledged that this created challenges in prioritising risk. They explained that work was underway to improve triage processes and to support partners in making more appropriate referrals.

Finally, Members asked about the management of risks posed by known offenders. Officers confirmed that this relied on effective information sharing and multi-agency risk management arrangements, including MAPPA processes. They acknowledged that this remained complex, particularly where information was incomplete or not shared promptly, and confirmed that improvements were being made in this area.

The Committee agreed to note the report and to request a progress update in early 2027.

27/26 BEST START IN LIFE PLAN (Agenda No. 7)

This item and the following one were merged during the course of the meeting.

The Committee considered the Best Start in Life Plan, presented by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. He was accompanied by Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services, Laurie Baker, Deputy Director for Education and Inclusion, Annette Pennington, Sophie Black, Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention, Harriet Preddie, Targeted Youth Support Service Manager, and Jenny Stoker, Operational Lead for Family Hubs.

In introducing the item, the Cabinet Member framed the Plan as a central strategic priority, expressing strong support for its ambition to improve outcomes for children in their earliest years. He focused particularly on the importance of children achieving a Good Level of Development at age five, describing this as a critical point in determining future educational success. Whilst acknowledging that Oxfordshire performed relatively well overall, he highlighted a significant gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers. He stated that he had not been

satisfied with the level of ambition in national targets and had therefore supported the adoption of more challenging local targets to reduce inequality more substantially.

The Director of Children's Services explained that the Plan brought together a range of existing strategies into a single, coordinated framework covering the period from pregnancy to school entry. She emphasised that early years outcomes were influenced by a wide range of factors, including health, parenting, early education and community support, and that effective delivery required a whole-system, partnership-based approach. She advised that governance arrangements were in place through the Children's Trust Board and supporting groups to ensure oversight of delivery, performance and resource allocation.

Officers further outlined the practical delivery model, including integration with Family Hubs, early identification of need, and investment in workforce development. They emphasised the importance of the first 1,001 days of a child's life and described how targeted support, including health visiting, inclusion practitioners and early intervention programmes, would be delivered through a coordinated system.

In discussion, Members asked how the Plan would translate into practical action. Officers provided examples including the introduction of auto-enrolment for free school meals, which would increase take-up and direct additional funding to schools, and the expansion of targeted early years support. Members queried whether sufficient focus was placed on the earliest years, including pre-school children. Officers confirmed that intervention began from pregnancy and infancy and included childcare sufficiency from nine months, targeted provision for two-year-olds, and support delivered through Family Hubs.

The Committee asked how progress would be monitored. Officers confirmed that targets and milestones were being developed and that progress would be tracked through governance structures, with flexibility to adapt approaches based on learning and data.

Members raised concerns regarding uptake of free school meals and childcare entitlements, including issues of stigma. Officers advised that auto-enrolment and sensitive engagement with families would address this, and that childcare sufficiency planning would ensure sufficient provision was available.

Members asked which interventions were likely to be most impactful. Officers emphasised the importance of speech, language and communication, along with parenting support, nutrition, and the home learning environment, noting that these factors were fundamental to school readiness.

The Committee **AGREED** to make the following recommendation to Cabinet which applied to both the Best Start in Life Plan and to the item on Best Start Family Hubs in Oxfordshire:

That the Council should ensure that sufficient resources are available to deliver the Best Start in Life Plan's ambition and to support achievement of Oxfordshire's ambitions for children, including the more stretching local targets for children eligible for free school meals.

28/26 BEST START FAMILY HUBS IN OXFORDSHIRE
(Agenda No. 8)

This item and the preceding one were merged during the course of the meeting.

The Committee also considered the report on the development of Best Start Family Hubs as a key delivery mechanism for the Best Start in Life Plan.

In introducing the item, the Cabinet Member described Family Hubs as a significant opportunity to transform how services for children and families were delivered, moving from a fragmented system to one that was more integrated, accessible and responsive. He emphasised that this approach required strong partnership working, particularly with the voluntary and community sector, and acknowledged that this represented a substantial shift in practice.

The Director of Children's Services outlined the proposed model, explaining that five locality-based hubs would be established, each supported by a network of partner organisations delivering services across the community. She emphasised that the intention was not to replace existing services but to bring them together in a more coherent system, ensuring families experienced support as joined up and easy to access.

Officers explained that Family Hubs would provide a combination of universal and targeted services, including parenting support, play and learning opportunities, health services and support for children with additional needs. They highlighted the importance of outreach and digital provision to ensure that services reached families who might not attend physical sites.

In discussion, Members raised concerns about partnership working with the voluntary and community sector. Officers explained that funding and infrastructure support would be provided to enable the sector to deliver services and to strengthen capacity. Members asked how the model would ensure accessibility for all communities. Officers confirmed that outreach, local delivery through partner venues and digital provision were central to the design.

Members questioned how Family Hubs would integrate with existing services, including youth services. Officers confirmed that the model was designed to create a continuous 0–19 (or 25 for SEND) pathway, aligning with youth partnerships and existing provision.

Concerns were raised about long-term sustainability. Officers confirmed that the model was designed to build on existing provision and partnerships, supported by three-year grant funding and ongoing Council investment.

The Committee noted the report and emphasised the importance of strong partnership working, accessibility and sustainability.

The Committee **AGREED** to make the following recommendation to Cabinet which applied to both the Best Start in Life Plan and to the item on Best Start Family Hubs

in Oxfordshire:

That the Council should ensure that sufficient resources are available to deliver the Best Start in Life Plan's ambition and to support achievement of Oxfordshire's ambitions for children, including the more stretching local targets for children eligible for free school meals.

29/26 SEND IMPROVEMENT NOTICE LETTER

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee received a report on the SEND Improvement Notice and the Council's response.

Cllr Sean Gaul attended to present the report. He was accompanied by Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services, Laurie Baker, Deputy Director for Education and Inclusion, Annette Pennington, Strategic Lead for Education, Policy and Implementation, and Deb Smit, Assistant Director for SEND and Inclusion.

In introducing the item, the Cabinet Member acknowledged the significance of the Improvement Notice and the broader challenges facing the SEND system nationally. He emphasised that addressing these issues would require sustained effort across all partners and that improvements needed to be both immediate and sustainable.

The Director of Children's Services explained that the Improvement Notice reflected wider system pressures, including increased demand, rising complexity of need and financial constraints. She set out the Council's response, which included developing a comprehensive improvement programme aligned with national SEND reform.

Officers described work underway to strengthen governance, improve early intervention and ensure more consistent provision across the county. They emphasised that the aim was not only to meet the requirements of the Improvement Notice but to create a more sustainable system overall, reducing reliance on high-cost specialist provision and improving outcomes for children and young people.

In discussion, Members sought assurance that progress was being made at an appropriate pace. Officers confirmed that a structured improvement programme was underway and that governance had been strengthened to provide clearer oversight. Members raised concerns about long-term sustainability, and officers reiterated that reforms were intended to deliver systemic change rather than short-term fixes.

Members asked about financial pressures, particularly the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit. Officers confirmed that this remained a significant issue and that the SEND Reform Plan would be critical in addressing it, including engagement with Government.

The Committee noted the report, commended the work of Steve Crocker, the Independent Chair, and all members of the SEND Improvement Assurance Board, and agreed to continue monitoring progress as part of its forward work programme.

30/26 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee **AGREED** the proposed work programme and **AGREED** that the November meeting should be all day in order to accommodate detailed scrutiny of the SEND Reform Plan if agreed by that point.

31/26 COMMITTEE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendation tracker.

32/26 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Agenda No. 12)

The Committee **NOTED** the Cabinet responses to its recommendations.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 22 September 2026

OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (OSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - a) note the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2025/26; and
 - b) consider the key safeguarding messages, achievements and areas for continued improvement identified by the Partnership.

Executive Summary

2. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) Annual Report 2025/26 provides an assessment of the effectiveness of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Oxfordshire.
3. The report highlights progress made by safeguarding partners in improving outcomes for children, strengthening multi-agency working, learning from reviews and audits, and responding to emerging safeguarding issues.
4. Priorities during the year included child neglect, harm outside the home and MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) alongside continued oversight of serious incidents, quality assurance activity, and partnership learning.
5. The Committee is invited to note the report and consider the key findings and priorities for 2026/27.

Background

6. Responsibility for Oxfordshire's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is shared by the three statutory safeguarding partners: Oxfordshire County Council, NHS Thames Valley Integrated Care Board and Thames Valley Police.
7. NHS Thames Valley Integrated Care Board was established on 1 April 2026, bringing together the former NHS Frimley and NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Boards.

8. The three safeguarding partners work together to co-ordinate their safeguarding services for children, provide strategic leadership, engage relevant agencies and implement learning from local and national reviews, including serious child safeguarding incidents. These arrangements are known as the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Key Issues

9. The OSCP Annual Report 2025/26 sets out the principal safeguarding challenges and areas for improvement in Oxfordshire. These include:
 - neglect;
 - child exploitation and harm outside the home; and
 - the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub partnership.
10. The report identifies the following key messages for system leaders:
 - strengthen the voice of children and families in planning, scrutiny and service delivery;
 - further develop the Partnership's use of data to inform targeted safeguarding activity;
 - maintain a collective focus on high-impact safeguarding issues, including neglect, exploitation and harm outside the home; and
 - continue to build a culture of learning, constructive challenge and continuous improvement.
11. During 2025/26, one serious incident notification was submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, resulting in a Rapid Review. The Partnership and the national Panel subsequently agreed that the case should progress to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.
12. One Child Safeguarding Practice Review remains active, and the Partnership is finalising the relevant arrangements with the national Panel.

Common Learning Themes

13. Common safeguarding themes identified through local and national reviews include:
 - the importance of early identification and professional curiosity, particularly where children are unable or unwilling to disclose harm;
 - effective and timely information sharing within and between agencies to support informed decision-making;
 - maintaining a clear focus on the child's lived experience throughout assessment, planning and intervention;
 - strong multi-agency oversight and co-ordination, particularly in complex cases involving several services; and

- consistent risk assessment and safety planning, including where risks are dynamic or escalating.

Strategic Policies and Priorities

14. The report outlines the Safeguarding Children Partnership's priorities, the learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, the outcomes of quality assurance work and the summarised findings with respect to the unexpected child deaths in Oxfordshire.

Financial Implications

15. There are no additional financial implications arising directly from noting this report.

Legal Implications

16. There are no legal implications for the Local Authority

The Council has general legal powers under the Children's Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 to support children in their area.

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 establishes Local Safeguarding Children Boards which safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

Section 17 of The Children Act 1989 places a general duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area by providing a range of services appropriate to those children's needs

Section 10 of The Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to work with other agencies for the benefit of children. They should work together to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in their area.

Staff Implications

17. There are no additional staff resources being requested by way of this report for the work outlined in the Annual Report.

Sustainability Implications

18. The Partnership continues to work in a virtual environment, reducing travel congestion, and no longer prints any materials for meetings or training sessions, instead making these available electronically. It has also reduced printing & design costs by making more things, such as this annual report, plain text on the OSCP website.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

19. Effective safeguarding partnership arrangements will need to continue throughout the transition to new unitary arrangements. Safeguarding partners will continue to monitor and respond to any risks associated with organisational change to ensure that children remain protected and that statutory safeguarding responsibilities continue to be discharged effectively.

Risk Management

20. The Partnership is made up of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies who contribute to and participate in its work, supported by a small Business Unit. The effectiveness of the Partnership relies upon the continued engagement, commitment and contribution of partner organisations.
21. Should partner engagement reduce significantly, there is a risk that the Partnership's ability to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, as set out in the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, could be affected. This could result in reputational risks for the safeguarding partners and may be highlighted through external inspection and assurance activity, including Ofsted inspections where relevant.
22. The Partnership maintains and regularly reviews a Partnership Risk Register through its governance arrangements. This includes monitoring risks relating to partner engagement, capacity and delivery of statutory functions, with mitigating actions identified and overseen by the safeguarding partners and relevant governance groups

Lisa Lyons
Director of Children Services

Annexes:

1. [OSCP-Annual-Report-2025-26.pdf](#) ;
2. [OSCP Annual Report at a glance](#)

Contact Officer: Laura Gajdus, Business Manager - OSCP

September 2026



OSCP

Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Partnership



Annual Report 2025-6

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1. Foreword by the Senior Safeguarding Partners

We are pleased to present the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) Yearly Report for the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. We would like to thank our front-line practitioners and managers for their continued dedication to championing positive outcomes and wellbeing for children in Oxfordshire. Their daily commitment, professionalism, and care are what keep children safe.

Over the past year, we have continued to embed our safeguarding arrangements following the significant changes introduced in the previous year. This work will continue into 2026–27, with further information to be published on our website in line with the requirements of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)*. During this period, several sub-groups have met in person to strengthen their development and effectiveness, and we thank colleagues for their time and commitment.

This Yearly Report sets out the work, progress, and complex issues the partnership is addressing in line with statutory guidance.

Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire County Council, chaired the Partnership during this reporting period. Plans are underway to rotate the chair position to another designated safeguarding partner after 18 months, in line with the arrangements.

A significant development towards the end of this reporting period was the strengthening of education representation within the partnership's leadership. The Director for Education at Oxfordshire County Council, alongside the Chair of the Safeguarding in Education Subgroup, joined the Executive Group alongside the Delegated Safeguarding Partners. This demonstrates a clear commitment to ensuring that education is central to strategic decision-making and to the development of the safeguarding system in Oxfordshire.

This year also marked the formal publication and early implementation of the updated Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). Our priority areas, neglect, harm outside the home, and the MASH partnership, remain in place to support long-term impact.

During the latter part of the reporting period, the partnership also began preparing for the implementation of the Families First reforms. This included supporting the development of Family Help arrangements and piloting a Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) model, helping partners test and strengthen integrated approaches to safeguarding children and supporting families.

This report highlights progress, challenges, key data trends, learning from reviews, and forward priorities. It demonstrates how arrangements have evolved in response to national reforms, supporting a transparent, child-centred and system-wide approach to safeguarding.

2. Independent Scrutineer Statement

I have been privileged to fulfil the role of Independent Scrutineer for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) during 2025/26. Over the past year, I have seen the partnership consolidate and strengthen its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, whilst developing a clearer understanding of the risks and challenges that require continued attention to improve outcomes for children and young people. As Independent Scrutineer, my role is to provide constructive challenge and support, helping to strengthen the effectiveness, accountability and impact of safeguarding arrangements across Oxfordshire.

My approach to scrutiny has been to develop a 360-degree assessment of the partnership through direct observation, analysis of quantitative and qualitative information, consideration of the lived experiences of children, young people and families, and feedback from frontline practitioners. This provides a robust evidence base through which to challenge and support senior leaders and assess the effectiveness of partnership arrangements.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the OSCP, I have focused on leadership and governance, partnership effectiveness, outcomes for children and young people, performance management, and the extent to which learning from audits, reviews, inspections and quality assurance activity is driving improvement across the safeguarding system.

During 2025/26, the partnership has strengthened its leadership and governance arrangements considerably. The Designated Safeguarding Partners have continued to work effectively together through the Executive Group and, importantly, have strengthened engagement with the Lead Safeguarding Partners. This has significantly improved oversight, accountability and strategic leadership for safeguarding across Oxfordshire. The partnership has also made substantial progress in implementing the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children and has reviewed its governance arrangements to ensure greater focus on priority areas, particularly Child Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home and Neglect.

Whilst leadership within the statutory safeguarding partners has remained stable during the year, the partnership has recognised the need to prepare for significant organisational change in the future. The development of a partnership risk register is an important step forward and provides a framework through which emerging risks can be identified, monitored and mitigated. Over the coming year, I would expect to see the risk management framework continue to mature, with a particular focus on business continuity and maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements through periods of organisational change.

The partnership has continued to strengthen engagement with a broad range of agencies. However, there remains an opportunity to further develop strategic influence and engagement with key partners, particularly within education and probation. Additional investment by the Executive Group has enabled a review and strengthening of partnership infrastructure, including dedicated capacity for project management, participation and engagement, and data analysis.

I am particularly pleased to see the continued development of collaborative relationships with other strategic partnerships across Oxfordshire, including the Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board. This has resulted in a refreshed joint protocol that supports greater alignment of priorities and activity across the safeguarding and community safety landscape.

2. Independent Scrutineer Statement

One of the most significant areas of progress during the year has been the improvement in partnership performance information and quality assurance. The OSCP has strengthened both the quality and use of quantitative and qualitative data, providing the Executive with a more comprehensive understanding of safeguarding performance across the system. This enhanced oversight has enabled the partnership to identify areas requiring deeper scrutiny, including the operation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements and pathways through the safeguarding system.

The ongoing programme of single and multi-agency audit has continued to provide valuable insight into practice. I have observed strong examples of how audit findings have informed strategic development, particularly in relation to Child Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home, where audit activity directly informed the development of the partnership strategy and action plan.

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment, undertaken in February 2026, provided an important independent assessment of safeguarding practice in Oxfordshire. The inspection identified both strengths and areas for further development. Significantly, inspectors concluded that when children are identified as being at risk of sexual abuse within their families, safeguarding responses are generally swift and effective, with timely access to therapeutic support and well-coordinated police investigations. The partnership has responded positively to the inspection findings and is committed to delivering further improvement through its action plan.

The partnership has also strengthened its focus on participation and engagement. New capacity has enabled the OSCP to place greater emphasis on hearing and responding to the voices of children and young people. Whilst this work remains at an early stage, strong foundations have been established to ensure that lived experience increasingly informs future safeguarding policy, practice and service development.

A strong learning culture continues to be central to the work of the OSCP. Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, audits and inspections has informed improvements in practice, governance and workforce development. In particular, learning arising from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review relating to neglect has supported strengthened training, professional practice and oversight arrangements. The partnership has also maintained a comprehensive programme of learning and development opportunities for leaders and practitioners.

Overall, I am confident that during 2025/26 the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has delivered a significant step forward in the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The partnership has strengthened its leadership, governance, performance management and learning culture whilst maintaining a clear focus on key safeguarding priorities, including exploitation and neglect. The challenge for 2026/27 will be to build on this strong foundation and demonstrate how these strengthened arrangements continue to improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

Ian Sutherland
Independent Scrutineer
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

3. Voice and Influence of Children

Strengthening the voice and influence of children, young people, and families remains a core commitment of the partnership. The 2024–2025 Annual Report identified participation and engagement as a key area for development, recognising the need to move towards a more comprehensive approach that empowers those with lived experience to contribute in meaningful and impactful ways.

In response, a Participation and Engagement Officer took up post in February 2026. Activity during this period has focused on establishing strong foundations for participation and engagement across the partnership, including building relationships with children, young people, and families, and developing a network of partner organisations to meaningfully inform OSCP strategy, learning, and practice.

Progress and Activity

Key activity has included:

- Engagement with internal and external services, as well as voluntary and community organisations, to raise awareness, promote involvement, and build a comprehensive partnership network
- Strengthening youth voice activity by expanding children and young people's forums within children's services, with 17 new members joining as a direct result of targeted engagement
- Mapping existing participation activity across partners to identify gaps and reduce duplication
- Developing policies, processes, and frameworks to support participation and engagement within OSCP
- Delivering regular engagement activity with a diverse range of children, young people, and families

There is early evidence that children and young people feel increasingly heard and involved, reporting that they are part of conversations and can see how their views are influencing change.

Impact and Learning

Early feedback highlights a positive shift in how children, young people, and families experience engagement. Participants report feeling empowered, valued, and able to influence change.

This work is reinforcing the importance of:

- Creating safe and inclusive spaces for participation
- Providing feedback loops so contributors can see the impact of their involvement
- Ensuring participation is embedded across practice, not treated as a one-off activity

3. Voice and Influence of Children

Voices from Children and Families

Insights from children and families highlight the value and impact of this work:

"I get out of it the fact that I'm helping with spreading the word for people in care... I've definitely noticed it now since you and Jo have started that we know what has changed and what's happening... Some words to sum it up would be: exciting, grateful, and knowing that I'm making an impact."

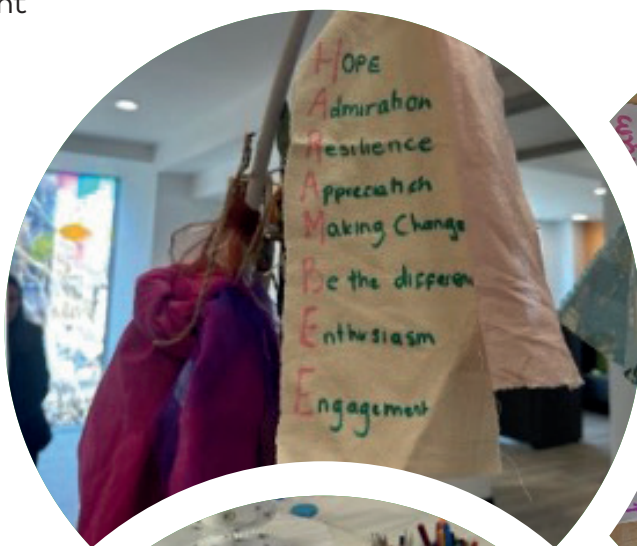
— Young person, Guardians For Us Forum

"It's a lot different than being on the receiving end of meetings... I know what to expect and I can have a say and some control."

— Young person, Youth Voice Forum

"I think being involved in participation and engagement is important because otherwise the services that need to change won't change... I feel very proud and privileged to be involved... I'm using what I've been through to help other people currently going through the system."

— Parent



4. About Oxfordshire – Children, Demographics and Education

Population and Demographics

Children and Young People

Oxfordshire, a diverse county in the South East, has around 763,000 residents in 2024, with over 150,000 children and young people representing about 20–21% of the population. The child population is growing and increasingly diverse, with varying needs and shifting age groups influenced by birth rates and migration.

Children's experiences are shaped by family, education, health, and community contexts, with these factors interacting to influence levels of need and vulnerability. This includes children experiencing poverty, exploitation, harm outside the home, mental health challenges, or instability within family life.

Understanding vulnerability across the system remains a key priority for the partnership, particularly where multiple risk factors intersect. Strengthening the use of data and intelligence across agencies will support a more nuanced understanding of emerging trends, enabling earlier identification of need and more targeted, coordinated responses.

The partnership continues to prioritise early help, ensuring that children and families receive the right support at the right time, while also maintaining a strong focus on safeguarding those at greatest risk of harm.

Education and Schools

Oxfordshire's education system includes a wide range of primary, secondary, special, and alternative provision settings; in Oxford city alone, over 50 schools support nearly 20,000 pupils.

Schools play a vital role in safeguarding, acting as universal services that are well placed to identify early signs of vulnerability, build trusted relationships with children and families, and provide safe, protective environments. They are key partners in multi-agency working, contributing to early help, statutory safeguarding processes, and ongoing support for children.

Learning from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI - see section 11 for more details.) highlights the important contribution of education in recognising and responding to risk, particularly in relation to issues such as exploitation, attendance, and children who may be less visible to services. Schools are often the first to notice changes in behaviour, patterns of absence, or indicators of harm, and their insights are critical to effective information sharing and decision-making.

The partnership continues to work closely with education partners to strengthen safeguarding practice, improve information sharing, and ensure consistent engagement across all settings, recognising the essential role of education in keeping children safe.

4. About Oxfordshire – Children, Demographics and Education

Children and Young People

The child population is growing and diverse, with varying needs and shifting age groups influenced by birth rates and migration.

Children's experiences are shaped by family, education, health, and community, driving the partnership's focus on early help and targeted support.

Education and Schools

Oxfordshire's education system includes many primary, secondary, special, and alternative schools; in Oxford city alone, over 50 schools support nearly 20,000 pupils.

Schools play a vital role in safeguarding, identifying risks, providing safe environments, and working with other agencies.

Why This Matters for Safeguarding

Oxfordshire's demographic and educational context highlights a growing, diverse child population, persistent inequalities, and the central role of education in safeguarding. This shapes partnership priorities and ensures safeguarding arrangements meet local needs.



5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.1 The Safeguarding Children Partnership enables local organisations and agencies to work together effectively to safeguard children. It ensures:

- A clear, shared vision for improving outcomes for children across all levels of need and types of harm
- Timely, appropriate, and effective responses to protect and support children
- Organisations and agencies challenge one another constructively and are held to account
- The views and experiences of children and families are heard and, alongside professional expertise and data, inform our understanding of strengths and areas for improvement
- Information is gathered, analysed, and shared to understand outcomes for children and identify emerging safeguarding risks
- Senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture that supports services to reflect on and continuously improve practice
- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of local practice and its impact on outcomes for children and families

5.2 Lead Safeguarding Partners

In Oxfordshire, the Lead Safeguarding Partners are:

- Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council
- Dr Nick Broughton, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
- Jason Hogg, Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police

The three safeguarding partners work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

Through the Executive Group and a range of sub-group structures, the partnership ensures that learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews is embedded, delivers multi-agency training, and coordinates a programme of quality assurance activity to drive continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

The partnership works collaboratively across a wide range of agencies to promote a culture of learning, apply best practice, and make a positive difference for children and young people in Oxfordshire.

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.3 Delegated Safeguarding Partners / Executive Group

To support the Lead Safeguarding Partners in delivering these responsibilities, each has appointed a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) from within their organisation. DSPs are authorised to take decisions on behalf of the LSPs (although key decisions remain with the LSPs) and are responsible for ensuring full and active participation in local safeguarding arrangements.

In Oxfordshire, the Delegated Safeguarding Partner roles are:

- Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services (Oxfordshire County Council)
- Ben Clark, Chief Superintendent, LCU Commander – Oxfordshire (Thames Valley Police)
- Katherine Elsmore, Director of Safeguarding (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board)

The DSPs, acting on behalf of the LSPs, work together as the Executive Group and hold primary responsibility for implementing the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. They provide oversight of the quality and effectiveness of delivery against shared priorities and ensure that robust processes are in place to assess compliance and the impact of multi-agency practice.

The DSPs ensure strong partnership working with education and other relevant agencies to support the effective identification of, and response to, harm. They also ensure that information and data are shared appropriately, and that rapid reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are completed to a high standard and within required timescales.

In addition, DSPs are responsible for ensuring that high-quality multi-agency safeguarding training is in place and that the views and experiences of children and families are actively sought and responded to, so that all children, including those from different communities and groups, can access the help and protection they need.

The Lead Safeguarding Partners meet with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners and the Independent Scrutineer as the MASA Strategic Group up to three times each year. These meetings provide oversight of the effectiveness of local arrangements and ensure strong leadership, connectivity, and accountability across the partnership.

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.4 Business Unit

The Business Unit ensures partners understand their roles in child safeguarding through training, learning, and resource development. Funded by partner contributions, the unit consists of four full-time, one part-time permanent staff, and three temporary full-time roles. The team collaborates across social care, education, health, police, schools, and voluntary sectors, and is supported by an Independent Scrutineer for external oversight. Committed to improving outcomes for children in Oxfordshire, the Business Unit coordinates over 60 meetings annually, supports multiple reviews, organises training for more than 10,000 practitioners, leads learning events, annual summits, practitioner activities, and manages safeguarding guidance and procedures.

Key responsibilities include:

- Facilitating meetings and supporting partnership groups
- Advancing priorities with subgroup and task group chairs
- Uniting strategic leadership to deliver local arrangements
- Promoting multi-agency practice for better outcomes
- Disseminating local and national learning from incidents
- Supporting scrutiny and incorporating findings
- Collecting, analysing, and reporting multi-agency data
- Delivering practice audits
- Developing and reviewing policies and guidance
- Designing, commissioning, and evaluating training
- Managing performance data for informed decisions
- Coordinating communications and website management
- Facilitating consultation and engagement on safeguarding
- Organising rapid and statutory Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.5 How do we achieve our arrangements:

Assessing the Effectiveness of Local Arrangements

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) is responsible for ensuring that there are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place to protect and promote the welfare of children. This responsibility is shared across the Lead Safeguarding Partners, supported by Delegated Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies.

The partnership uses a range of mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of its arrangements and ensure that safeguarding practice is of a high quality and delivering positive outcomes for children and families. These include:

- **Multi-agency governance and oversight:**
The Executive Group and Business Delivery Group provide strategic and operational oversight, monitoring progress against priorities and ensuring accountability across partners
- **Independent Scrutiny:**
The Independent Scrutineer provides objective challenge and assurance, assessing the effectiveness of the arrangements and the impact of partnership activity on children's outcomes
- **Quality assurance and audit activity:**
A programme of multi-agency audits, thematic reviews, and performance monitoring is used to assess the quality of practice, identify strengths, and highlight areas for improvement
- **Performance and data analysis:**
The partnership reviews multi-agency data to understand trends, identify emerging risks, and assess whether safeguarding responses are timely and effective
- **Learning from reviews:**
Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, rapid reviews, and national reports is systematically reviewed and embedded into practice, guidance, and training
- **Feedback from practitioners, children and families:**
Engagement activity, including practitioner forums and participation work, provides insight into how arrangements are experienced in practice and informs improvement activity

These mechanisms enable the partnership to build a comprehensive understanding of how effectively safeguarding arrangements are working across the system.

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Continuous Improvement and Strengthening Practice

The partnership is committed to a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This includes identifying areas of strength, recognising where improvement is needed, and taking coordinated action to strengthen safeguarding practice.

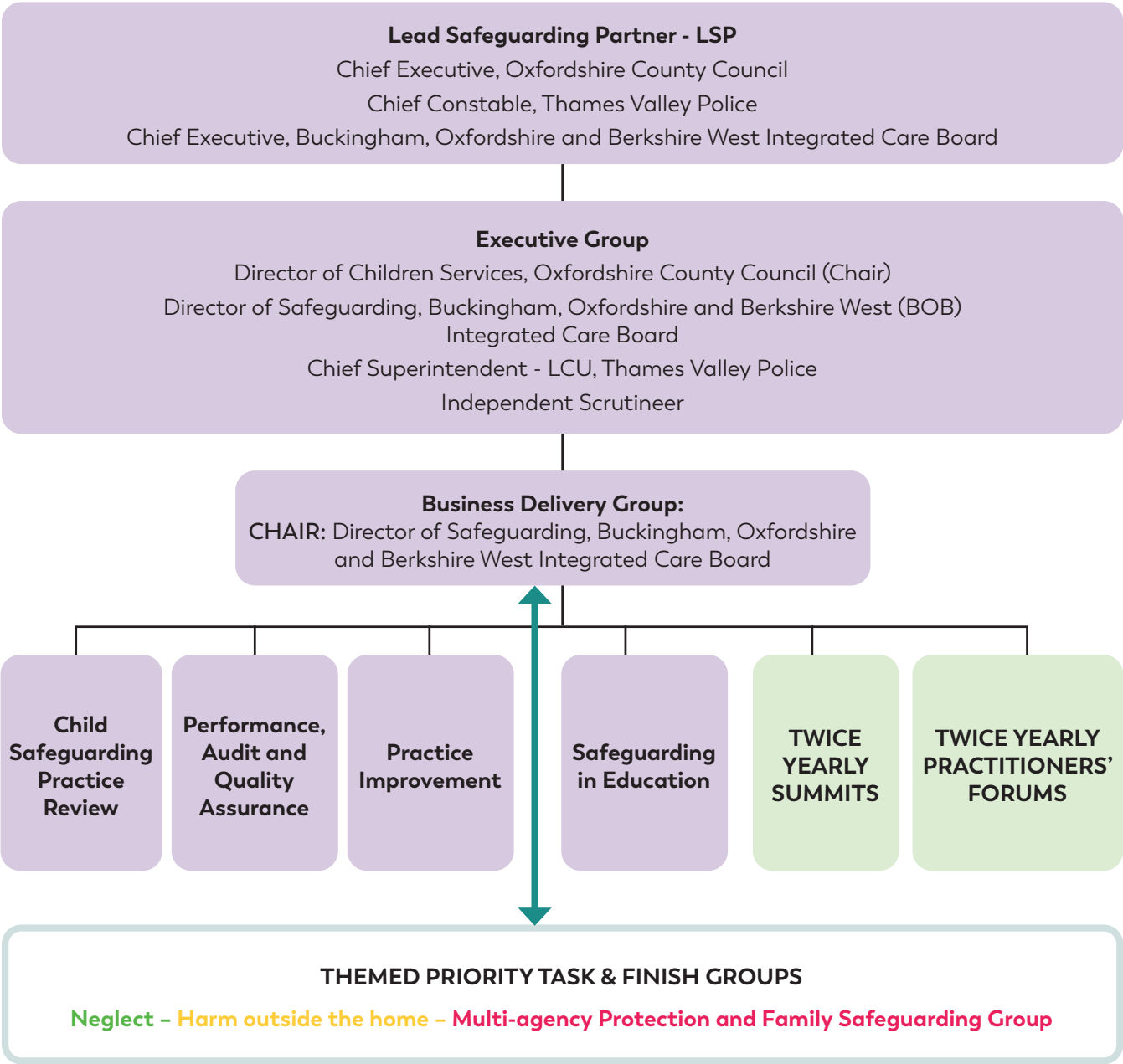
Key approaches to improvement include:

- **Continuous Improvement Planning (CIP):**
Strategic improvement plans are developed in response to local learning, inspection findings, and emerging priorities. These plans set out clear actions, responsibilities, and expected outcomes, and are subject to regular review
- **Learning and development:**
Multi-agency training, learning events, and practitioner forums ensure that learning from audits and reviews is translated into frontline practice
- **Strengthening systems and processes:**
Ongoing work to improve data quality, information sharing, and multi-agency coordination supports more effective and timely safeguarding responses
- **Embedding learning into practice:**
The partnership ensures that lessons from local and national scrutiny activity are reflected in policies, procedures, and operational guidance
- **Responding to inspection and external challenge:**
Findings from inspection activity, including the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), are used to drive improvement and strengthen the effectiveness of local arrangements



6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

OSCP structure:



6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

Partnership Governance Structure

Executive Group

The Executive Group provides strategic oversight of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and meets bi-monthly. It sets focused agendas aligned to the work of the Business Delivery Group and wider partnership priorities. Agendas are agreed by the Director of Children's Services (as Chair) and the OSCP Business Manager.

Executive meetings include:

- Setting time-limited priorities for the partnership
- Commissioning and overseeing local learning reviews and frameworks, and assessing the effectiveness of multi-agency practice and performance
- Agreeing the OSCP improvement plan, including responses to Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) findings and national recommendations
- Defining and reviewing the model for independent scrutiny
- Considering partnership resourcing and funding arrangements
- Reviewing the partnership structure to ensure it remains effective
- Setting priorities for intelligence and analysis
- Overseeing data and information-sharing arrangements
- Developing communication and engagement strategies with partners, children, and families
- Approving the annual plan as a public safeguarding assurance statement

6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

Partnership Governance Structure

Business Delivery Group

The Business Delivery Group meets bi-monthly, alternating with the Executive Group. It consists of nominated senior leads from statutory partners, subgroup chairs, and representatives from relevant agencies.

The Business Delivery Group:

- Ensures continuity of partnership functions through oversight of sub-groups and task and finish activity
- Leads the development of plans, projects, and activity to deliver partnership priorities
- Analyses data and performance information to assess effectiveness and impact
- Monitors front-line practice, escalating risks and issues to the Executive Group and highlighting good practice
- Receives and responds to findings from the Independent Scrutineer
- Leads the programme for the partnership summit and practitioner forums
- Reports directly to the Executive Group

Membership includes:

- ICB Delegated Safeguarding Partner – Chair
- ICB Designated Nurse and Designated Doctor
- Heads of Safeguarding (Oxford Health and Oxford University Hospitals)
- Deputy Director for Children's Social Care (and Chair of the CSPR Subgroup)
- Head of Service for QA, Safeguarding and Partnerships
- OSCP Business Manager
- Assistant Director for Early Help, Schools and Communities
- Public Health representative
- Thames Valley Police representatives (including Harm Reduction Unit and Public Protection Command)
- Representatives from education (schools, colleges, early years)
- Representatives from the voluntary and community sector

6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

Partnership Governance Structure

Sub-groups and Task and Finish Groups

To complement the strategic leadership of the partnership, OSCP operates a structured sub-group model that supports both operational and tactical delivery. These groups are responsible for progressing key elements of the partnership's work from different perspectives across the governance framework.

Sub-groups:

- Deliver the core functions of the partnership
- Lead on priority areas and specific themes
- Maintain and update multi-agency procedures and protocols
- Oversee learning from serious safeguarding incidents and reviews
- Identify workforce development needs and inform multi-agency training
- Support the implementation of partnership priorities and improvement activity

Task and finish groups are established as required to drive forward time-limited pieces of work aligned to agreed priorities.



7. Priority Areas for 2026–2027

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has agreed to continue to prioritise the following areas:

Child Neglect

Neglect is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including through the use of inappropriate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Provide suitable education
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026)

Harm Outside the Home

Harm outside the home refers to risks that occur beyond the family environment, including within peer groups, schools, communities, and online. Children may experience harm from both adults and other children.

This can include:

- Child criminal exploitation (including county lines and financial exploitation)
- Serious violence
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Online harm
- Child sexual exploitation (including group-based exploitation and teenage relationship abuse)

Children of all ages may be affected.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026)

7. Priority Areas for 2026–2027

Multi-Agency Protection (MASH Partnership)

Multi-agency protection refers to the coordinated approach between agencies, including local authorities, police, health, and education, to safeguard and support children and families.

Effective multi-agency arrangements depend on:

- Clear roles and responsibilities across partners
- Strong information sharing
- Timely and coordinated responses to risk
- A shared understanding of thresholds and decision-making

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026)



8. Performance and Learning Review

8.1 Learning from Reviews: Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR)

Throughout the 2025–2026 reporting period, the partnership upheld its statutory obligations regarding Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs). These processes continue to be integral to the partnership’s methodology for identifying learning opportunities, enhancing practice, and improving outcomes for children and families. During this timeframe, the partnership issued one serious incident notification which initiated a rapid review. It was subsequently agreed by both the partnership and the national panel that this review would progress into a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

Learning from completed reviews is systematically considered, with insights informing multi-agency training, policy development, audit activities, and the partnership’s Continuous Improvement Plans.

Key Themes of Learning

Consistent themes have emerged across reviews concluded during this reporting period:

- The significance of early identification and professional curiosity, especially when children are unable or unwilling to disclose harm.
- The necessity for effective information sharing across and within agencies to facilitate timely and informed decision-making.
- The imperative to maintain a focus on the child’s lived experience, ensuring it guides assessment, planning, and intervention.
- Enhancing multi-agency oversight and coordination, particularly in complex cases involving multiple services.
- The requirement for consistent risk assessment and safety planning, including situations with dynamic or escalating risks.

8. Performance and Learning Review

Progress and Impact

In response to identified themes, the partnership has advanced several initiatives:

- Strengthened expectations surrounding professional curiosity, escalation, and reflective practice within the workforce, supporting practitioners to better recognise and respond to emerging risk and vulnerability.
- Created [one-page learning summaries](#) to ensure key messages are accessible and consistently shared across the partnership, supporting a common understanding of practice improvements.
- Incorporated review learning into multi-agency training, practitioner forums, and learning events, enabling practitioners to reflect on real examples and apply learning to their day-to-day work.
- Enhanced guidance and tools relating to neglect, exploitation, and safety planning, supporting more confident and consistent responses to children experiencing complex and overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Improved multi-agency audit activity, strengthening the partnership's ability to understand how learning is being embedded in practice and to identify where further support or challenge is required.
- Integrated review outcomes into the partnership's Continuous Improvement Plans, ensuring a coordinated, transparent, and measurable approach to driving and sustaining improvement.

There is increasing evidence that insights gleaned from reviews are positively impacting practice, with practitioners reporting heightened awareness of risk factors and greater confidence in utilising learning in their daily responsibilities.

Overview of Learning Events: Summits and Forums

In 2025–2026, the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) delivered a programme of multi-agency learning events, including a biannual summit and two practitioner forums. These events focused on learning from local and national safeguarding reviews.

Evaluation feedback was reviewed to understand what worked well and the extent to which learning influenced practice.

8. Performance and Learning Review

Reach and Participation

Practitioners from across the partnership attended these events. However, overall attendance has reduced compared to previous years, including the annual conference, with notable variation in representation across some agencies and sectors.

Event	Date/ Format	Attendance	Evaluation Responses	Notes
Biannual Summit (Summer 2025)	20 June 2025 / In person	67 delegates (including 13 speakers)	65 (63 in person, 2 online)	Bookings did not reach full capacity
Practitioner Forum (Sept 2025)	25 Sept 2025 / In person	115 attended; 15 did not attend (DNA)	50	Slower bookings than previous years; some sectors under-represented
Practitioner Forum (March 2026)	11 March 2026 / Online	88 booked via LMS, plus 11 additional attendees; 22 did not attend or left early	5	Low response rate due to LMS error

Learning Impact

Across all events, participants consistently reported that they:

- Improved their awareness and understanding of OSCP priorities, roles, and learning from safeguarding reviews
- Valued opportunities for multi-agency discussion and reflection, supporting understanding of different professional perspectives
- Identified clear actions to apply learning in their practice

Common intended changes to practice included:

- Increased confidence in respectful challenge and escalation
- Greater professional curiosity
- Improved use of multi-agency chronologies
- Strengthened information sharing
- Increased focus on direct, face-to-face work with children and families

8. Performance and Learning Review

What Worked Well

Feedback highlighted several strengths:

- High-quality, engaging delivery
- Strong value placed on multi-agency networking and discussion
- Practical, practice-focused learning with clear application to day-to-day work
- Effective integration of local and national safeguarding learning, particularly from reviews
- The importance of in-person engagement in strengthening professional relationships

Key Learning and Areas for Improvement

Evaluation identified several areas to strengthen future impact:

- Clearer communication regarding the purpose and target audience of different events
- Improved and more consistent representation across partner agencies and sectors
- Increased time for discussion, reflection, and problem-solving during sessions
- Improved accessibility of materials, including reducing the use of unexplained acronyms

Practitioner Feedback

Feedback from attendees demonstrates the impact and value of the programme:

“Great networking and thank you to those who put in the hard work organising such a successful conference.”

“The most useful forum I can remember attending.”

“The day was very well run and chaired.”

“Inspirational and excellent speakers.”

“It’s so important we have these multi-agency sessions to share and reflect.”

“The training was powerful and thought provoking.”

“Very informative and helpful to hear from other agencies.”

Feedback also reflected opportunities to strengthen practice, including improving information sharing with schools and ensuring consistent communication across agencies.

9. Continuous Improvement Planning

Three Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) were developed towards the end of the 2025–2026 reporting year to underpin the partnership’s priorities, strategies, and outcomes. These plans are central to the partnership’s approach to reviewing and strengthening safeguarding practice, ensuring that improvement activity is sustained and responsive to emerging need.

Across priority areas, the CIPs support:

- **Child Neglect:** Strengthening early identification and intervention to ensure children receive appropriate care, supervision, and support
- **Harm Outside the Home:** Enhancing multi-agency responses to extra-familial harm, including exploitation and abuse across peer, community, and online contexts
- **Multi-Agency Protection (MASH):** Improving coordination, communication, and joint decision-making across partner agencies
- **JTAI into Child Sexual Abuse in the family.** Multi-agency action plan will be delivered through the Partnership.

By embedding continuous improvement planning across these areas, the partnership ensures that safeguarding practice remains dynamic, evidence-informed, and responsive to the evolving needs of children and families.



10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

Child Neglect

The OSCP multi-agency strategy for 2025–2029 places child neglect as a central priority across Oxfordshire. The partnership aims to ensure that children are seen, safe, and heard through earlier identification, timely coordinated intervention, and sustainable family support. This is underpinned by four key outcomes: that children are healthy, safe, supported, and successful.

Progress achieved under the previous strategy has provided a strong foundation for this work. During 2025–2026, key developments have included:

- Establishment of a multi-agency operational group to improve oversight and coordination
- Introduction of a neglect screening tool to support earlier identification
- Strengthened inter-agency relationships, with consistent representation and shared ownership
- Refresh and co-design of neglect tools to support greater consistency in practice
- Formal adoption of the NSPCC Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) by Children's Social Care and the 0–18 Service
- Continued use of multi-agency audits and practitioner forums to strengthen practice

There is increasing evidence that children's lived experiences are being more consistently reflected in assessment and planning. The partnership continues to promote a trauma-informed, strengths-based and evidence-informed approach, with a clear focus on relational practice and meaningful engagement with families.

Feedback from families has been central in shaping this work. Parents highlight the complex and contextual nature of neglect and the importance of understanding individual circumstances. Children describe neglect in both material and emotional terms, reinforcing the importance of emotional presence and supportive relationships.

Learning from reviews and practice has identified areas for improvement, including:

- Inconsistent recognition and escalation of early warning signs
- Disengagement being normalised in some cases
- Children's lived experiences not always sufficiently informing decision-making

In response, the partnership has strengthened expectations around the use of chronologies, escalation processes, and evidencing impact over time.

Data for April 2025 – March 2026 indicates that:

- Neglect is identified in 21% of Strengths and Needs Assessments
- 33% of Child and Family Assessments
- 60% of Child Protection Plans

Neglect is strongly associated with inequality, with children living in poverty more than twice as likely to be assessed at risk. While Oxfordshire is generally an affluent county, there remain areas of higher deprivation, including Greater Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, and Banbury Ruscote. These findings continue to inform targeted early help and prevention activity.

10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

10.1 Preparing for Families First and Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT)

During 2025-2026, the partnership has undertaken significant preparatory work to support the implementation of the national Families First reforms and the transition towards a strengthened multi-agency approach to safeguarding and family support.

Partners have worked collaboratively to review local safeguarding arrangements, governance structures, pathways, thresholds, and quality assurance processes to ensure alignment with the expectations set out within Families First reforms and the emerging requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

A key area of development has been the piloting of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT). The pilot brings together professionals from across agencies to strengthen joint decision-making, information sharing, risk assessment, and child protection planning. Early learning from the pilot is informing the future design of safeguarding arrangements and helping partners understand how an integrated multi-agency model can improve outcomes for children and families.

Alongside the MACPT pilot, the partnership has supported local planning for the introduction of Family Help arrangements, including engagement with partners, review of thresholds and pathways, workforce development, and consideration of how services can work more effectively together to provide the right help at the right time.

This work positions Oxfordshire well to respond to national reform and reflects the partnership's commitment to delivering integrated, child-centred safeguarding and family support services.



10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

Harm Outside the Home

The Harm Outside the Home Strategy (2025–2028) sets out Oxfordshire’s multi-agency approach to safeguarding children and young people from exploitation and extra-familial harm. The strategy focuses on prevention, protection, disruption of perpetrators, and the provision of victim-centred support, aligned to national guidance and local learning.

The ambition is to create safer environments across communities, schools, peer groups, and online spaces so that children and young people are better protected from harm.

The strategy addresses a range of risks, including:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE), including county lines
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Peer-on-peer abuse and teenage relationship violence
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Online exploitation
- Children missing from home or education

Key principles shaping delivery include:

- A contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that harm occurs beyond the family home
- A whole-family approach, strengthening early help and co-produced support
- Trauma-informed, victim-centred practice, recognising children as victims first
- A strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, addressing disproportionality
- The importance of voice and participation, using lived experience to shape delivery
- A commitment to learning and intelligence, using data and audit findings to inform action

Delivery is structured around the “Four Ps” framework:

- Prepare: Strengthening workforce knowledge, improving use of data, and building community awareness
- Prevent: Delivering coordinated prevention activity in communities and schools, including online safety awareness
- Protect: Ensuring consistent multi-agency planning and support, including effective use of MACE arrangements and transitional safeguarding
- Pursue: Identifying and disrupting perpetrators and unsafe locations, and strengthening accountability and outcomes

Governance is provided through the Child Exploitation / Harm Outside the Home Task and Finish Group, reporting into the OSCP governance structure. Progress is reviewed quarterly, with annual reporting and ongoing feedback from children, families, and practitioners to support continuous improvement.

10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

MASH Partnership – Key Achievements

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) coordinates responses for children at risk in Oxfordshire, overseen by the MASH Partnership Group to ensure timely and effective safeguarding.

Demand and System Pressures

Rising demand has strained capacity, increasing backlogs and reliance on single-agency decisions. The partnership is focusing on system-wide solutions to address these risks.

Strengthening Multi-Agency Working

Progress includes enhanced engagement, new escalation pathways, improved information quality, and better child voice capture—leading to more coordinated decision-making.

Data Quality and Intelligence

Efforts to improve data consistency, accuracy, and dashboard alignment have helped the partnership better understand demand and assess effectiveness.

Audit and Quality Assurance

A commissioned multi-agency audit targets contact quality, thresholds, information sharing, and the impacts of system pressures to assure performance.

Learning and Practice Improvement

Key needs include fostering professional curiosity, ensuring oversight, and elevating the child's experience. Feedback and learning dissemination practices have been strengthened.

Impact and Next Steps

MASH continues its vital safeguarding role despite ongoing pressures. Priorities are managing demand, improving oversight and consistency, leveraging data for performance, and integrating audit findings into practice. Ongoing efforts aim to further benefit children and families through collaboration and governance.

11. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) examines how effectively local agencies work together to safeguard children in relation to a specific theme. In February 2026, Oxfordshire was subject to a JTAI focusing on the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment (CSAFE).

The inspection took place from 9 to 13 February 2026 and was carried out by inspectors from:

- Ofsted
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP)

The inspection assessed how well agencies collaborate to identify, protect, and support children affected by child sexual abuse within the family.

Headline Findings

During 2025–26, the partnership worked collectively to prepare for and respond to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) focused on the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment.

The inspection reflected the strength of multi-agency collaboration across Oxfordshire, demonstrating committed and engaged leadership, well-established governance arrangements, and a shared focus on safeguarding children through a child-centred approach.

Partners worked closely throughout all phases of the inspection, including pre-inspection preparation, coordinated information sharing, and multi-agency audit activity. This included joint review of cases, shared analysis of practice, and regular cross-partnership communication to ensure a consistent and transparent approach.

The partnership's established governance structures enabled effective oversight and coordination, with Delegated Safeguarding Partners and senior leaders working collectively to provide assurance, respond to emerging lines of enquiry, and support practitioners during the inspection process.

Importantly, the JTAI process itself strengthened partnership working. It provided a shared opportunity for agencies, including children's social care, police, health, probation, and education, to reflect together on practice, identify strengths, and agree priority areas for improvement. This collaborative approach has continued beyond the inspection, with partners jointly developing and implementing an action plan to address identified themes and drive system-wide improvement.

The inspection also reinforced the importance of effective multi-agency information sharing, consistent risk identification (including where there is no disclosure), and coordinated safety planning, areas which the partnership is actively progressing through its continuous improvement activity.

11. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Areas for Improvement

Inspectors identified the following key areas requiring further development across the partnership:

- Strengthening the involvement of the probation service in partnership working at a strategic level
- Improving the coordination and analysis of performance information and data to better understand the prevalence and nature of child sexual abuse in the family environment
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of safety planning for children
- Strengthening information sharing between and within partner agencies to support effective risk identification and assessment
- Improving identification of children at risk of child sexual abuse in the absence of clear disclosure
- Expanding the reach and impact of training on child sexual abuse beyond specialist roles
- Strengthening the identification and assessment of risk posed by adult sex offenders
- Improving the effectiveness and oversight of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Increasing professional confidence and curiosity where children's behaviour may indicate abuse

Strengths

The inspection also recognised several significant strengths across the partnership:

- Strong and consistent professional networks supporting children and families where abuse has been identified
- The contribution of local authority clinical psychologists in supporting practitioners to understand barriers to engagement
- Positive, trusting relationships between children, social workers, and investigating officers during police investigations
- Timely and effective police investigations once abuse has been identified
- Prompt access to therapeutic support for children
- Joint training between police officers and social workers to strengthen practice in achieving best evidence interviews
- The valuable role of education providers in identifying and supporting children affected by abuse

11. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Response and Continuous Improvement

In response to the inspection, safeguarding partners have committed to a coordinated programme of improvement. A Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is being developed collaboratively to:

- Clearly set out partner roles and responsibilities
- Identify priority actions and areas for development
- Define measurable objectives and outcomes
- Identify risks and mitigation actions

The plan will be subject to regular review and updating, ensuring that progress is monitored, improvements are embedded, and risks are actively managed.

This approach supports the partnership's ambition not only to address areas for improvement identified through the inspection, but also to build on existing strengths and continue to improve outcomes for children and families across Oxfordshire.



12. Data and Performance: Understanding Children’s Experiences in Oxfordshire

Building a Shared Intelligence Picture

Significant progress has been made in developing a shared multi-agency intelligence platform through the Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance (PAQA) subgroup, providing a stronger evidence base to support strategic decision-making and safeguarding activity across partner organisations. This represents an important step forward in creating a more connected and comprehensive understanding of vulnerable children and young people.

During 2025/26, progress has been made in bringing together intelligence and performance information from Children’s Social Care, health partners and Thames Valley Police to support strategic oversight and identify emerging safeguarding risks. This has strengthened the partnership’s ability to understand trends relating to child protection, missing children, exploitation, domestic abuse and wider safeguarding demand. Whilst significant progress has been made, work continues to improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of data across agencies to support an increasingly comprehensive understanding of vulnerability, risk and outcomes for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

PAQA Dashboard in Action

Daily refreshed data

Providing timely information to support strategic decision-making.

Shared intelligence

Bringing together information from social care, health and policing services.

Earlier identification of risk

Helping partners identify patterns and emerging vulnerabilities.

Better outcomes

Supporting more informed safeguarding responses for children and families.

The development of the Partnership Analytics and Quality Assurance (PAQA) dashboard has significantly enhanced the Partnership’s ability to monitor safeguarding activity, identify emerging trends and access timely, consistent data across agencies. The following analysis is drawn from the growing shared data asset and provides insight into the experiences and outcomes of children and young people across Oxfordshire.

Data highlights 2025/26

97.8% of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale.	Approximately 800 Children We Care For.	17.9% of pupils recorded attendance below 90% .	Elective Home Education increased to around 1,500 children.	Continued development of integrated multi-agency datasets
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12. Data and Performance: Understanding Children's Experiences in Oxfordshire

Protecting children at risk

What we know

Oxfordshire continues to perform strongly in the timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences. By January 2026, 97.8% were completed within statutory timescales following a Section 47 enquiry, significantly above statistical neighbour averages. The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans also remains below comparator authorities.

Why this matters

This suggests children who are experiencing, or are at risk of, significant harm are receiving timely safeguarding responses. The partnership continues to monitor both timeliness and quality to ensure that interventions remain focused on children's lived experiences.

Understanding demand and need

What we know

The number of Children We Care For has remained relatively stable at approximately 800 children throughout the reporting period. Whilst stability has been maintained, demand remains significant and reflects national trends.

Why this matters

Understanding placement demand, permanence planning and outcomes for children remains a key area of partnership focus. Enhanced data sharing is helping partners understand trends and plan services more effectively

Ensuring children remain visible

What we know

Attendance remains an important safeguarding indicator. During 2025/26, 17.9% of pupils recorded attendance below 90%, whilst 3% were severely absent. Elective Home Education has increased significantly, with numbers rising from approximately 800 to 1,500 children.

Why this matters

School attendance is a key indicator of children's wellbeing and visibility. Children who are persistently absent from education may be at greater risk of unmet need, vulnerability and harm. Understanding the factors contributing to absence and the significant increase in Elective Home Education remains a priority for the partnership. These findings reinforce the importance of partnership activity relating to neglect, harm outside the home and the role of education in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.

12. Data and Performance: Understanding Children's Experiences in Oxfordshire

Building a fuller picture through health data

What we know

Health data provides valuable insight into children's experiences and wellbeing. Improving the integration of health and safeguarding information enables partners to develop a richer understanding of need, identify vulnerability earlier and strengthen multi-agency decision-making.

Why this matters

Bringing together information that has traditionally sat in separate systems improves opportunities to identify emerging need earlier and strengthen multi-agency decision-making.

Looking Ahead 2026–2027

The partnership is moving beyond reporting activity towards developing a richer understanding of children's lived experiences and outcomes. As additional datasets are incorporated and analytical capability continues to develop, PAQA will play an increasingly important role in identifying emerging vulnerability, evaluating the impact of partnership activity and providing assurance that safeguarding arrangements are improving outcomes for children and young people across Oxfordshire. The continued development of a shared intelligence approach will support earlier intervention, more informed decision-making and stronger multi-agency safeguarding practice.

13. Multi-Agency Training

This section provides an overview of the multi-agency training programme coordinated and delivered by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) for the period 2025–2026. It outlines the training model, courses delivered, participation levels, organisational engagement, and the impact of training on professional practice.

Training Model

OSCP delivers a locally focused training programme led by frontline practitioners who volunteer as part of a dedicated training pool. Trainers are supported by the OSCP Business Unit under the oversight of the Training Coordinator.

This model continues to demonstrate its effectiveness and popularity, enabling the partnership to provide high-quality training at no cost to participants while benefiting from the expertise and experience of practitioners across the system.

Courses Offered and Attendance (2025–2026)

During the reporting period, a broad range of core and themed training was delivered through webinars, in-person sessions, and eLearning.

Course Type	Number of Courses	Offered Places	Attended
Core courses – webinar	94	2,358	2,208
Core courses – in-person	24	514	391
Early Years core courses – webinar	57	1,429	1,301
Early Years core courses – in-person	6	152	143
Themed courses – webinar	90	2,408	1,453
Themed courses – in-person	14	396	241
Total	285	7,257	5,737
Practitioner Events	2	233	180
Summit	1	140	58
eLearning	-	-	11,548

13. Multi-Agency Training

Attendance by Organisation

The training programme attracted participation from a wide range of organisations, demonstrating strong multi-agency engagement and commitment to safeguarding practice.

Category	Count
Adult Social Care	40
Childminders	270
Children's Social Care	385
District Council	164
Early Years (Other)	137
Foster Carers	13
GPs	15
Health	243
Housing	43
Oxfordshire County Council	172
Police	30
Private, Community and Voluntary Sector	471
Schools	2,239
Other	596
eLearning	-

13. Multi-Agency Training

Impact of Training on Practice

The Practice Improvement Subgroup has piloted an evaluation approach to better understand the impact of training on professional practice. This pilot used a narrative-based methodology, specifically “Most Significant Change” conversations, following training on child sexual abuse.

Findings from this pilot indicate:

- Increased practitioner confidence in responding to safeguarding concerns
- Greater professional curiosity and more effective challenge
- Evidence of changes in day-to-day decision-making and practice

As a result of this pilot, the partnership has agreed to extend this evaluation approach to other priority areas, including neglect and harm outside the home.

Summary and Impact

The 2025–2026 training programme has provided a robust, accessible, and inclusive offer, with strong engagement from a wide range of partner organisations.

The continued commitment to delivering high-quality, free multi-agency training—combined with strengthened evaluation of its impact—supports a confident and skilled workforce, better equipped to safeguard and support children and families across Oxfordshire.



14. Next Steps (2026–2027)

During 2026–2027, the focus will be on building on further embedding the voice of children, families, and communities across all areas of the partnership’s work.

Key priorities include:

- Gathering feedback from children, young people, and families on OSCP’s training and learning offer, and creating opportunities for lived experience to shape delivery
- Finalising and publishing the OSCP Participation and Engagement Framework and remuneration policy
- Working alongside the Independent Scrutineer to embed children’s voices within scrutiny activity
- Continuing to build trusted relationships with children and families to support safe and meaningful sharing of experiences



15. Funding/Budget Arrangements

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) is funded through contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners, the local authority, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, and Thames Valley Police. These partners share responsibility for ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to deliver effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), the safeguarding partners agree the level of funding required to support the delivery of the partnership's statutory responsibilities. This includes:

- Business and analytical support
- Independent scrutiny
- Partnership infrastructure
- Delivery of core functions such as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Multi-agency training and learning events

Funding contributions are agreed collectively by the Lead Safeguarding Partners and are expected to be equitable and proportionate, reflecting each partner's role and responsibilities within the safeguarding system.

During 2025–2026, partner organisations have continued their commitment to funding the partnership to ensure the effective delivery of safeguarding arrangements. The majority of the budget continues to be allocated to staffing the Business Unit, which provides the essential infrastructure to coordinate multi-agency activity and support delivery against partnership priorities. Professional services, including commissioned Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, represent a further significant area of expenditure.

Funding arrangements are subject to ongoing review by the safeguarding partners to ensure that resources remain sufficient to meet the needs of the partnership and respond to emerging priorities, risks, and national requirements.

OSCP Annual Report at a glance

Keeping Children Safe in Oxfordshire: 2025–26

Who are OSCP?

We are organisations working together to help keep children and young people safe.



Schools



Health
Services



Police



Children's
Social Care



Community
Organisations

Stronger together for children, young people and families across Oxfordshire.

What have we focused on this year?



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Neglect

Helping identify concerns earlier and supporting families sooner.



Harm Outside the Home

Protecting children from exploitation, abuse and online harm.



Multi-Agency Protection

Agencies working together to act quickly when children need help.

What have we learned?



Spotting concerns earlier makes a difference.



Listening to children and families matters.



Sharing information helps keep children safe.



Reviews and inspections help us improve.



Strong planning protects children.

Our Year in Numbers



97.8%

of Child Protection Conferences held within timescale



~800

Children We Care For



17.9%

of pupils had attendance below 90%



5,700+

safeguarding training places attended

These numbers help us understand children's experiences so we can focus support where it is needed most.

Looking ahead to 2026–27



Supporting children experiencing neglect



Preventing exploitation and harm outside the home



Strengthening multi-agency safeguarding responses

Our commitment to children and families

We want every child and young person in Oxfordshire to be:



Safe



Heard



Supported



Able to thrive



Your experiences, views and feedback help us improve services now and create better support for the future.



Working together for a safer Oxfordshire

Thank you to all children, young people, parents, carers and professionals who continue to work with us to keep children safe.

Together, we can make a difference.



OSCP

Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Partnership

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EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 22 September 2026

HARM OUTSIDE THE HOME AND CHILD SEX EXPLOITATION

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) note the contents of the report, its performance focus and future priorities for the year ahead.

Executive Summary

2. Oxfordshire has strengthened its response to harm outside the home through an integrated, multi-agency model combining early identification, specialist safeguarding, youth support, diversion and disruption. Over 2025/26, first-time entrants to the justice system fell by 53%, targeted youth services engaged 2,194 young people, and 94% of children referred to Family Bridges because of family breakdown had not entered local authority care by April 2026. The next phase will embed consistent ROTH pathways, strengthen education and SEND safeguarding, target prevention through shared intelligence, and improve evidence of outcomes.

Purpose and Background

3. Oxfordshire's current approach to exploitation and Harm Outside the Home is rooted in the learning from Operation Bullfinch and the subsequent development of the specialist Kingfisher model, which strengthened multi-agency identification, information sharing, disruption and support for children at risk of sexual exploitation.
4. This foundation has now been expanded through the integrated Adolescence and Prevention Service, recognising that adolescent risk is increasingly interconnected and may include criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, missing episodes, online harm, harmful peer relationships, school absence, SEND and trauma. The service brings together early help, specialist safeguarding, youth justice, prevention and disruption activity to support earlier identification, trusted relationships, coordinated intervention and stronger partnership oversight.

5. This report sets out the current picture of child exploitation and Harm Outside the Home in Oxfordshire, reviews partnership activity and impact over the past 12 months, and identifies priorities for further improvement. It aligns with national learning, including Baroness Casey's 2025 audit, by emphasising improved data, accountability, multi-agency working and consistently child-centred, trauma-informed practice.

Priorities and Delivery Focus

6. Over the next 12 months, Oxfordshire will focus on embedding a consistent Risk Outside the Home pathway, strengthening multi-agency assurance and disruption, and using shared safeguarding, police, missing and education data to target prevention earlier. Delivery will also prioritise effective modern-slavery responses, coordinated diversion for children at escalating risk, stronger education and SEND safeguarding, and ensuring children's voices shape safety planning. Improved performance monitoring and quarterly review will evidence whether these measures are making children safer and reducing escalation.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

7. The report supports the Council's strategic priorities to tackle inequalities, prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents, and create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential. It aligns with the council's wider ambitions for prevention, partnership working, community safety, improved educational inclusion, SEND improvement and better life chances for vulnerable children and young people.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

9. The Government through the Department for Education has issued Guidance regarding "*Child Sexual Exploitation - Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation*" dated February 2017. This non-statutory guidance has been produced to help practitioners, local leaders and decision makers who work with children and families to identify child sexual exploitation and take appropriate action in response. This includes the management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.
10. This advice should be read alongside Working Together to Safeguard Children (most recent updates available on gov.uk) which provide statutory guidance covering the legislative requirements on services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including in relation to child sexual exploitation.

11. Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding all children in their area. Their statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Act(s) include specific duties in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (under sections 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989).
12. Local agencies, including the police and health services, also have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people when carrying out their functions.
13. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to cooperate with agencies to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in each local authority area.
14. Section 17 of The Children Act 1989 places a general duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area by providing a range of services appropriate to those children's needs.

Staff Implications

15. There are no current staffing implications associated with the report teams mentioned. Any future staffing changes arising from service development would be managed through the Council's normal workforce processes and governance arrangements.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

16. Equality and inclusion are central to the way we work with adolescents, their families, partners and communities. We are live to overrepresentation and disproportionality, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, and improving outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The partnership will continue to use data, quality assurance and community insight to identify and address unequal outcomes for children from minoritised and over-represented groups.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

17. Local Government Reorganisation presents both opportunities and risks for Oxfordshire's approach to Harm Outside the Home and exploitation. The move to three unitary councils could enable stronger local alignment with communities, schools, district-based partners and neighbourhood responses; however, there is a significant risk that current countywide safeguarding arrangements become fragmented when Oxfordshire County Council ceases to operate from April 2028. Given that HOTH and exploitation are not confined by council boundaries and require a contextual safeguarding response across schools, public spaces, online environments, communities and partner

agencies, it will be essential to preserve a consistent countywide framework while adapting governance, commissioning and operational accountability to the new structures. This should include shared data and intelligence, stable multi-agency pathways, clear escalation routes, continuity of specialist expertise and equitable access to early intervention, so that children receive a consistent and effective response regardless of where they live. To mitigate, we will continue to work closely with partners, share information and follow an aligned footprint across Youth Partnerships, Family Hubs and SEND reform school clusters.

Sustainability Implications

18. This plan has no direct material sustainability or climate implications. Where actions arising from the work taking place and any future commissioning, or programme development with material environmental impact, these will be considered through the Council's usual climate and sustainability assessment processes.

Risk Management

19. The main risks are maintaining clear ownership of countywide pathways during local government reorganisation, sustaining partnership accountability, sharing information and outcome data effectively as well as protecting specialist capacity, targeting support through local risk data, and checking that integrated adolescent responses are keeping children safer and reducing exploitation.

Consultations

20. This report has been developed with input from Oxfordshire's Harm Reduction Unit and used data from performance sources across agencies.

LISA LYONS
Director of Children's Services

Annex: Harm Outside The Home and Exploitation Annual Report

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Jessie Dobson
Service Manager Adolescence and Prevention

August 2026



August 2026 annual report

Harm Outside The Home and Exploitation

The Purpose and Focus of this Report

This report focuses on Oxfordshire's;

- Current picture of Harm Outside the Home and exploitation
- The key achievements delivered through partnership working over the past 12 months.
- How we compare regionally and nationally
- Outlines how the Adolescence and Prevention Service alongside wider children's social care, Thames Valley Police, education, Health, Community Safety and Voluntary Sector partners are working together to identify risk earlier, protect children, disrupt exploitation and improve outcomes.

To note:

Throughout this report children are referred to as such, and not young people, to ensure adultification is avoided.

Definition

- As children grow and develop, they start to spend more time away from home. Some children experience abuse outside of the home, from individuals, groups of people or gangs who are not connected to their family. These people can be adults or other children and young people. The abuse can happen in various settings. We call this Harm Outside the Home (HOTH). Harm Outside the Home is also known as 'extra-familial harm', 'contextual safeguarding' or 'child exploitation'.

Exploitation

- Page 69
- Exploitation occurs when an individual or a group of people take advantage of another person, to the benefit of the abuser. This often means getting the person who is being exploited to do things they might not otherwise do. The abuser does this by having power over the other person. Abusers will often identify something that a child wants or needs. It could be something physical like money or expensive clothes, or it could be emotional, like affection or attention. They will give the child what they think they want, but they **will** expect something in return for this.
 - **HOTH (Harm Outside the Home)** describes the harm itself—such as exploitation, serious youth violence or abuse occurring through peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods or online.
 - **ROTH (Risk Outside the Home)** is the safeguarding framework used to identify, assess and respond to the risk of that harm.
 - HOTH is **what is happening**; ROTH is **how services respond**.

Exploitation

- **All forms of exploitation always involve a power imbalance between the person or people causing the harm and the victim. It can occur in places such as;**
- Schools
- With groups of other children and young people
- In public spaces such as parks
- Online
- In the wider community, such as hotels, shops, taxis and food outlets.
- Keeping children and young people safe beyond their homes requires a contextual approach to identify and respond to risks and harm.
- Contextual safeguarding means working together with parents/carers, their family network and people in the wider community who have influence locally and are the 'eyes and ears' on what is happening in their community. This could include schools, sports clubs, faith communities, youth clubs, housing officers, neighbourhood policing, and community guardians such as bus drivers and local businesses.

Identifying Harm Outside The Home (HOTH)

- It is important to remember that some children's behaviours may simply be part of normal child and teenage development. However, it is important to pay attention to changes that may seem unusual for that child. Often, a shift in behaviour, especially if it is out of character, can be one of the most significant signs that something might not be right for that child.
- **Any** child can become a victim of exploitation. It is important that practitioners and parents are aware of the possible warning signs and indicators that could suggest the child is at risk of or is being harmed.
- Oxfordshire continues to see children affected by child sexual exploitation, child criminal and drug exploitation, online exploitation and serious youth violence. These risks often intersect with missing episodes, school absence, SEND, trauma, peer relationships and wider community contexts.
- As a result, a multi agency, joined up approach is required when working with harm outside the home to ensure parents do not feel blamed and are fully supported when they are doing all they can to keep their children safe and the risk is coming from elsewhere.
- Harm outside the home remains a significant safeguarding and community safety priority. Partners are using evidence to focus on prevention, identify risk earlier and sustain coordinated protection, disruption and support where need is greatest.

Context of missing children

- During 2025/26, 1909 children have been reported missing, compared to 2355 the previous year. This is reduction of 19%
- Of those children reported missing 1050 were males, 859 were females; 2 were indeterminate
- The majority of missing children in Oxfordshire have had one missing episode which has been reported. A return home meeting has taken place to understand the context of this, with no further issues or repeats.
- At the other end of the scale, only 14 children have been missing repeatedly over 20 times. All of these children were children we care for, in homes placed outside of Oxfordshire. They have told us that the context around them going missing has been to return to Oxfordshire to see parents. This tells us that regardless of circumstances outside of the home including exploitation concerns, children's bonds with their parents are a priority. We need to focus wherever possible on ensuring children remain at home within their local communities with support to prevent further trauma and increased risk.

Frequency	Total
1	353
2-4	150
5-9	44
10-14	20
15-19	10
20+	14
Grand Total	591

PRIMARY REASON FOR GOING MISSING:

**NO OF YOUNG
PEOPLE**

%

To be with friend/partner	854	54%
Relationship difficulties with parent/carer/family	277	18%
Mental health/well-being issues	106	7%
Accommodation/placement issues	70	4%
Gang/peer network	61	4%
Education, training or employment issues (incl. bullying)	50	3%
Contact with biological family	47	3%
To access drinks/drugs	42	3%
Relationship difficulties with friend/partner	34	2%
Child drug exploitation (CDE)	21	1%
Criminal exploitation	7	0%
Child sexual exploitation (CSE)	4	0%
Not recorded	1	0%
Grand Total	1574	

Exploitation screening tools April 25-March 26

(multiple concerns can be raised on individual screenings, total 393 tools completed)

Top 10 exploitation concerns identified		
Concern	Number	%
Poor school attendance	283	72.0%
Parents struggling to manage behaviour	249	63.4%
Seen with unknown adults or older children	221	56.2%
Recent change in behaviour	212	53.9%
Alcohol or substance misuse	203	51.7%
Seen at hotels, pubs, nightclubs or travelling to other towns/cities	199	50.6%
Concerns regarding friendship group	197	50.1%
Change in self-care/hygiene	183	46.6%
Significant trauma or loss	174	44.3%
Reduced timetable	135	34.4%

National Referral Mechanism Referral demographics

AGE					GENDER				
	2025		2026			2025		2026	
11	1	2%	0	0%	Male	51	86%	39	81%
12	1	2%	1	2%	Female	8	14%	9	19%
13	1	2%	2	4%	All referrals	59		48	
14	6	10%	9	19%					
15	13	22%	9	19%					
16	20	34%	14	29%					
17	17	29%	13	27%					
All referrals	59		48						
ETHNICITY					EXPLOITATION TYPES				
	2025		2026			2025		2026	
Any Other Black Background	1	2%	2	4%	CCE	3	5%	1	2%
Any Other Ethnic Group	4	7%	0	0%	CDE	40	68%	32	67%
Any Other Mixed Background	3	5%	2	4%	CSE	3	5%	8	17%
Any Other White Background	2	3%	3	6%	Forced Labour	9	15%	6	13%
Arab	1	2%	0	0%	Smuggling	1	2%	0	0%
Bangladeshi	2	3%	1	2%	N/A for NRM / No Exploitation	6	10%	1	2%
Black African	5	8%	9	19%					
Black Caribbean	1	2%	3	6%					
Chinese	1	2%	0	0%					
Gypsy/Roma	0	0%	1	2%					
Indian	3	5%	0	0%					
Not Obtained / Refused	1	2%	2	4%					
Pakistani	0	0%	1	2%					
White British	31	53%	16	33%					
White and Asian	2	3%	2	4%					
White and Black African	2	3%	2	4%					
White and Black Caribbean	0	0%	4	8%					
All referrals	59		48						

The last 12 months (2025/26)

Indicator	Past 12-month position	What has changed or emerged
Exploitation screening and identification	Between April 2025 and March 2026, exploitation screening tools increased from 266 to 396, an increase of 130 tools.	The increase suggests that exploitation and harm outside the home are becoming more visible in the system. It may reflect improved awareness and identification, as well as continuing levels of demand and complexity.
CSE occurrences in Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire recorded 214 CSE police occurrences in 2024/25, a reduction from 236 in 2023/24.	This represents a 9.3% reduction over the year. However, Oxfordshire remained the highest-volume local command unit for CSE occurrences across the Thames Valley profile.
Quarterly CSE crime trend	Between January and March 2026, Thames Valley recorded 134 finalised CSE crimes, compared with 96 in the same quarter in 2025.	This represents a 39.6% regional increase in finalised crimes. Oxfordshire also contributed to a 19% local command unit increase, showing that the past 12 months include a changing and persistent CSE picture.
Locality variation in risk	Past-year partnership data shows variation across Oxfordshire, with reductions in Oxford City and South and Vale, but increases in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire.	Oxford City reduced by 11.2% and South and Vale reduced by 7.78%, while Cherwell increased by 31.25% from 672 to 882 and West Oxfordshire increased by 5.66% from 389 to 411.
NRM referrals and exploitation type	In the most recent NRM comparison, Oxfordshire recorded 48 referrals in 2026 to date, compared with a total of 59 in 2025.	Child drug exploitation remained the dominant recorded exploitation type, accounting for 67% of referrals in 2026. Child sexual exploitation increased to 17.

Regional and National comparisons

Prominent area	Oxfordshire	Regional / national comparison	Significance
Child drug exploitation dominates NRM	48 referrals in 2026 (59 in 2025); drug exploitation: 67% (68%).	National referrals: 23,411 in 2025 (+22%); criminal exploitation ≈ half of child referrals.	Oxfordshire’s profile is more concentrated on drug exploitation and county-lines harm.
CSE remains high in Thames Valley	214 occurrences in 2024/25 (236 prior); Q1 2026 contributed to a 19% rise.	Oxfordshire: 24.18% of Thames Valley cases; regional crimes rose 96→134 (+39.6%).	Annual fall is positive, but Oxfordshire remains the highest-volume local unit.
Exploitation risk is more visible	Screening rose 266→396 (Apr 2025–Mar 2026): +130.	National evidence is spread across slavery, exploitation, online, missing and contextual harm.	Consideration needs to be given as to whether this is due to better recognition, rising risk or both—and ensure responsive prevention through TYSS takes place.
Older adolescents dominate referrals (NRM)	Most referrals involve ages 14–17; ages 16–17 are the largest groups.	Nationally, criminal exploitation is prominent among UK national children.	This picture supports the need for specialist adolescent responses spanning missing, peers and education – as provided through the SAFER team and partners looking contextually.
Boys remain the majority; girls are increasing	Boys: 81% in 2026 (86% in 2025); girls: 19% (14%).	Boys are more visible in criminal or drug exploitation; girls’ exploitation can be less visible.	Maintain the response for boys and strengthen identification of girls.
Risk varies by locality	Cherwell: +31.25% (672→882); West Oxfordshire: +5.66% (389→411); other areas fell.	Geography reflects routes, peers, markets, deprivation, online activity and opportunity.	Target prevention, youth work, schools and disruption where risk rises.
Education and attendance signal risk	Poor attendance recurs with older associates and parental difficulty managing behaviour.	Absence, exclusion, unmet SEND, missing and online harm link to exploitation nationally.	This picture supports the need for focus on attendance, exclusion and SEND in SAFER and MACE responses.

Oxfordshire's Response to Harm Outside the Home and Exploitation

Oxfordshire's response to Harm Outside The Home and Exploitation is built around an integrated partnership model of which the Adolescence and Prevention Service is intrinsic to this.

It brings together a wide range of multi agency, support services that reflect a shared focus and understanding that children may be harmed through peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods, online spaces, transport routes and wider community settings.

It recognises that safeguarding must build safety around the child, their family, the people involved, and the places and contexts where harm is occurring and must be supported by a whole system approach.

Children affected by exploitation are recognised as children first and as victims of abuse. The service promotes language and practice that avoids blame, understands the impact of coercion and trauma, and supports young people, parents and carers to feel heard, believed and actively involved in safety planning.

Oxfordshire's Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) model

- Oxfordshire's ROTH model recognises that parents are often doing all they can to appropriately safeguard their children. Despite this, children remain at risk of significant harm due to ROTH.
- The Oxfordshire ROTH model provides a clear bridge between the Family First reform and the national policy direction emerging from the Home Office response to group-based child sexual exploitation. By recognising that children experience risk beyond the family home a ROTH plan strengthens the Family First emphasis on earlier, more relational and whole-family help, while ensuring that extra-familial harm is not misread as a parenting issue alone.
- A ROTH-informed Family First approach therefore enables local systems to respond both earlier and more intelligently: supporting families, building trusted relationships with children, and coordinating safeguarding, policing, youth justice, education and community safety activity around the places, people and networks where harm occurs.
- Over the past 6 months, children's social care have been piloting a ROTH pathway as part of its Families First model. It provides a consistent safeguarding response where the primary risk sits outside the family home. SAFER support statutory assessments to ensure relevant contextual information is included and fully considered. Extra-familial harm is treated with the same seriousness as significant harm within the home, (Child Protection) while reducing parental blame and working with parents and carers as partners in relational, child-centred safety planning.

The Adolescence and Prevention Service Offer

- **SAFER specialist support:** The Safeguarding Adolescents From Exploitation and Risk offer provides specialist advice, consultation and direct work where children are experiencing, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, modern slavery, online exploitation, serious youth violence or other forms of harm outside the home.
- **Exploitation screening and triage:** Use of the exploitation screening tool and weekly harm outside the home triage supports earlier identification of risk, clearer threshold decisions and proportionate routes into consultation, targeted support, SAFER direct work, MACE oversight or statutory safeguarding responses.
- **MACE and multi-agency disruption:** The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation arrangements provide operational oversight for children, peer groups and contexts where exploitation is known or suspected. MACE strengthens information sharing, identifies patterns and locations of concern, supports disruption activity and ensures partners use their powers collectively to protect children.
- **Contextual safeguarding and place-based planning:** The service brings children's social care, Thames Valley Police and other partners together around the child, family, people, places and contexts linked to harm—including peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods and online spaces. This enables coordinated plans to target unsafe places, strengthen protective networks, support schools and communities, and combine diversion, additional support, community safety and disruption activity.
- **Family Bridges** provides timely, targeted support to families at risk of breakdown, helping children remain safely at home rather than entering local authority care. Practitioners use trauma-informed, relationship-based approaches to strengthen family relationships, reduce conflict, and build parents' confidence, resilience and understanding of their children's needs.

The Adolescence and Prevention Service Offer

- **Targeted Youth Support and Community Prevention:** Where risks do not meet statutory thresholds, targeted youth work, detached youth work, group work around community safety, mentoring, focused VR headset programmes, school-based intervention and community provision provide practical, relationship-based support. This includes focus on online harm, healthy relationships and protective behaviours. They also deliver Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programmes offering food and enrichment activities for the most vulnerable over the holiday periods to prevent any escalation and build protective factors around young people in communities.
- **Strive** - Oxfordshire's longer-term mentoring offer for children and young people at risk of Serious Youth Violence. It provides consistent, relationship-based support and works alongside Turnaround, Youth Justice, SAFER and other targeted services to reduce risk and improve engagement, wellbeing and positive outcomes over time.
- **Prevent** is a safeguarding programme that aims to identify and support people who may be susceptible to radicalisation. In Oxfordshire, concerns can be raised through an organisation's safeguarding lead, Children's MASH, Adult Social Care or a Prevent referral; police then assess the information and may refer the person to the local Channel panel. Channel support is voluntary and tailored to need, drawing on services such as education, health, social care, community groups and specialist mentors to help reduce vulnerability and build resilience.
- **NRM and modern slavery response:** The service supports practitioners to identify potential victims of modern slavery and exploitation, complete National Referral Mechanism referrals where required, and contribute to decision-making and planning through the Oxfordshire devolved NRM arrangements.

Impact of the Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS)

- A total of **2,194** young people were engaged with TYSS in 2025 through 1-2-1 case work, Detached Youth work and group work.
- January – December 2025 TYSS ran **150** Detached youth work sessions, engaging approximately **553** young people in **16** different local communities.
- 228 young people were engaged in group work in schools and communities.
- A total of **1,698** young people that may otherwise not have had access to a trusted adult, diverted from antisocial behaviour or offered support or guidance in their communities.
- Of 268 children receiving 1-2-1 support, only **11** went onto statutory assessment. Of those only **2** went onto have stat involvement on CIN and **1** child became looked after

Impact of the Targeted Youth Support Service

- **1-2-1 Support Outcomes at the point of closure Jan – December 2025**

- 10% improvement in behaviour at school
- 28% - able to access to professional support such as GP, mental health professionals, teachers
- 23% - able to form new friendships and mix with others beyond their peer group
- 46%- Healthier and safer romantic relationships including sex and healthy relationship advise
- 41% – improved emotional regulation less emotional outburst resulting in harm to themselves or others
- 42% improved relationships with Family/carers
- 34% – improved relationships with friends/peers
- 33% – improved sleep and able to take part in family routine
- 40% – improved mental health and wellbeing
- 15% – less reported ASB in the community and improved relationships with community.
- 13% – No police arrests/contact during TYSS involvement
- 13% – preventing arrest
- 12% – reduction in missing episodes
- 27% – reduction in risk taking behaviours
- 23% – keep themselves safe online

Oxfordshire's Harm Reduction Unit Impact

- Oxfordshire's Police **Harm Reduction Unit** was set up in December 2024 and works to reduce harm from drug supply, county lines, child exploitation and serious violence. It uses intelligence, disruption and enforcement against those causing harm, while working with safeguarding, youth justice and community partners to protect vulnerable children, dismantle harmful networks and make local communities safer.
 - Where exploiters are identified, enforcement action is considered, whether that be via HRU or another investigative department. Identification takes place through the analysis of data/intelligence and proactive opportunities being explored.
- 75 children are currently supported by the HRU and children's social care across where there is suspected exploitation is taking place.

Since the introduction of the HRU:

- One operation in West Oxfordshire - 8 adult exploiters were arrested for drug supply after being identified as being involved in using children to have imported cannabis packages delivered to children's addresses.
- 5 other operations to date in relation to child exploitation have taken place
- The HRU also supports the police disruptions team with known County Drugs Lines
- In relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, the unit seeks to identify those exploiting, whether online or in person and again take enforcement action. Individuals have been arrested and prosecuted across Oxfordshire in relation to this area.

Key partnership achievements over the past 12 months and Impact for children

Main point	Evidence / change	Biggest impact for children
Clear strategy and integrated offer	The partnership HOTH 2025–28 strategy aligns prepare, prevent, protect and pursue processes across the system. Youth Justice, HOTH, NRM and targeted youth work now sit within one Adolescence and Prevention Service to respond alongside others.	A clearer route to help, less duplication and more consistent relationships with trusted adults.
ROTH pathway and SAFER expertise	ROTH gives extra-familial harm equal statutory weight. Screening is triaged twice weekly into consultation, direct work, MACE or statutory safeguarding.	Risks beyond home are identified earlier; parents and carers are partners in relational safety planning; children get specialist help sooner.
Stronger MACE and local NRM	Monthly MACE oversight links Social Care and Police HRU; fortnightly NRM panels bring safeguarding, health, justice and police decisions together.	Faster, coordinated plans protect children and disrupt unsafe people, networks and places.
Prevention, diversion and mentoring	Turnaround reached 69 children in 2025–26; only 9 of 133 completers since 2023 later received a caution or conviction. Strive adds long-term mentoring to support longer term positive impact.	More children avoid unnecessary criminalisation and receive sustained support before risk escalates.
Better use of data and intelligence	Partners combine prevalence, MACE, youth justice and exploitation data to identify trends, target resources and test outcomes.	Earlier, more localised responses—and clearer accountability for whether support is working.
	Plans include direct consultation and feedback from	Children are heard before decisions are made, and

Overall Impact for children

- Over the past 12 months, Oxfordshire's integrated response has delivered encouraging outcomes for children affected by, or at risk of, exploitation.
- First-time entrants to the justice system fell by **53%**. Turnaround supported **69 children** in 2025/26, and longer-term data shows that only **9 out of 133** programme completers later received a caution or conviction.
- Coordinated support for **75 children** where exploitation is suspected. This indicates that earlier intervention, trusted relationships, diversion and multi-agency disruption are helping children become safer and avoid unnecessary criminalisation.
- Avoiding Local Authority care. 2025-26 data: **16 of 17 children (94%)** whose parents requested accommodation remain with their families.
- **34 of 36 children (94%)** referred to our Family Bridges in the past 12 months had not entered care by April 2026.

The impact of working together; One child's success

Starting point for support

- When support began, X faced significant safeguarding concerns linked to criminal exploitation, offending and antisocial behaviour, with frequent police attention for robbery, theft, assault and other activity.
- Intelligence suggested cannabis supply on behalf of older individuals and involvement in recruiting younger children into criminal activity.
- X was subject to a Child in Need Plan, frequently excluded from education and awaiting an Education, Health and Care Plan assessment.
- His neurodevelopmental and sensory needs had not yet been identified, contributing to difficult interactions with professionals, including police.
- Overcrowding, strained family relationships, conflict, financial hardship and housing uncertainty added pressure at home.

Approach used

- Built trusted, consistent relationships using solution-focused approaches, elements of CBT and Mental Health First Aid principles.
- SAFER, Youth Justice and other practitioners used motivational interviewing and consistent messages to support reflection and positive choices.
- Provided education about criminal exploitation, county lines, joint enterprise, peer influence and “guilty by association”.
- Used positive male role models to offer challenge, encouragement and practical support.
- Combined family-focused and strengths-based practice with trauma- and neurodiversity-informed approaches adapted to X's sensory and communication needs.

The impact of working together; One child's success

Practical changes that enabled progress

- Police adapted how they approached X after understanding his sensory needs, reducing escalation linked to physical contact.
- Neurodevelopmental assessments led to ADHD and autism diagnoses, helping family and professionals respond more effectively.
- PIP, welfare and housing support reduced financial pressure; no-recourse restrictions were lifted to improve access to help.
- Dare to Dream educational provider re-engaged X in education, supported by practitioner transport while SEN transport was arranged.
- Family Bridges improved communication and understanding with parents; a hotel, respite and trusted-adult placements were used when safety risks escalated.
- SAFER, Social Care, Youth Justice, police, CAMHS, education, HRU and other partners formed a persistent wraparound network
- Timing of EHCP reviews
- * Timely transport to assist with education engagement

Difference made

- No new ongoing criminal charges since January 2026, although historical matters remain in process.
- Intelligence about exploitation, cannabis supply and recruitment of younger children has reduced significantly.
- X has disengaged from previous offending peers, attends educational provision consistently and is exploring entrepreneurship and business.
- Family relationships, accountability and understanding of neurodevelopmental needs have improved; financial and housing pressures have reduced.

Next steps and multi-agency learning

- Complete Youth Justice requirements; continue exploitation-risk and peer-association monitoring, positive mentoring and family support.
- Plan the transition into education, employment, training or self-employment and clarify the long-term living base.
- Reduce Social Care and SAFER support gradually so the professional network is not removed too quickly.
- **Key learning: shared goals, timely information, adapted practice, practical problem-solving and rapid crisis responses prevented gaps and supported the whole family.**

Conclusion

- The past 12-month picture shows that exploitation and Harm Outside The Home remain significant, visible and unevenly distributed across Oxfordshire.
- The Adolescence and Prevention Service continue to use SAFER triage, specialist consultation, MACE oversight, NRM decision-making, Youth Justice, targeted youth work, education intelligence and community safety activity as a single coordinated response.
- The increase in completion of exploitation screening, the continued high volume of CSE occurrences, the regional rise in finalised CSE crimes, locality variation, and the dominance of child drug exploitation in NRM referrals all point to the need for targeted locality prevention, stronger disruption activity, trauma-informed support for children affected by sexual and criminal exploitation, and sustained responses in diversion and community alternatives to custody for children.
- The data demonstrates why the close multi agency working is needed. The integrated adolescent services is demonstrating that it is improving children's experiences by preventing unnecessary entry into the justice system (reduction in First Time Entrants by 53% over the past year), strengthening safeguarding responses to exploitation, improving access to trusted adults and targeted intervention earlier, and enabling partners to build safer plans around children, families, peer groups and places.
- The service will continue to use data to evidence impact over the next 12 months, ensuring children are being identified earlier, supported by trusted adults, diverted from unnecessary criminalisation and made safer in the peer groups, places and communities around them.

Conclusion continued...

- The Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs has been established following Baroness Louise Casey's national audit, which identified repeated institutional failures to protect children from organised sexual abuse and called for stronger accountability, better data, survivor-informed practice and more effective multi-agency disruption.
- There is a new Chair (police) and Vice Chair (CSC) of the OSCP CSE Subgroup who are eager to ensure there is renewed momentum in ensuring multi agency partners are appropriately held accountable for their input and work.
- A ROTH flag is now available on all children's electronic files where there is evidenced ROTH. This flag will be inputted and monitored, to ensure the fluctuation in changes in a child's life is reflected in real time on their files.
- The ROTH conference model has been piloted in the south of the county. This will be reviewed in line with discussions with TVP to ensure it provides the most robust response to children experiencing ROTH and will then be rolled out across the County.
- The Adolescent teams regularly co locate with our Harm reduction Unit colleagues and share joint training events to inform multi agency problem solving and best practice opportunities.
- Multi Agency audits are completed regularly to provide reassurance that the provision of service is adequately meeting need.

National Referral Mechanism update August 2026 –

- The Government has announced the award of a new £25 million national contract to **Barnardo's** for the **Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship (ICTG) service** on 13th July. This service will now be rolled out across **all** local authorities in England and Wales, to support child victims of modern slavery.
- The new contract will support the delivery of a nationally consistent service. Working in partnership with local authorities, police forces and other safeguarding partners, it will help ensure that all children identified as potential or confirmed victims of modern slavery can access the specialist support they need.
- This also strengthens the commitment reflected in the measures set out in the Immigration and Asylum Bill and our determination to tackle modern slavery and protect and safeguard vulnerable children and improve support for victims.
- We currently await further details for next steps.

The next 12 months

These objectives will embed current ways of working, sharpen our prevention offer and demonstrate measurable impact

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01 Embed ROTH plans consistently

Apply one pathway across Oxfordshire: early screening, triage and assessment, timely SAFER input, consistent thresholds and contextual safety plans.

02 Strengthen assurance and disruption

Continue to build on use of MACE to coordinate intelligence, safeguarding and disruption around children, peer groups, locations and exploiters.

03 Target prevention through shared intelligence

Combine screening, missing, police and education data further to direct support where risk is rising, including Cherwell and West Oxfordshire.

04 Strengthen the NRM response

Sustain timely local decision-making and use learning from drug exploitation, CSE, CCE and modern slavery to improve practice and outcomes for children.

The next 12 months

05 Prevent escalation and sustain diversion

Further co ordinate Strive, Turnaround, Youth Justice, SAFER and targeted support for children at repeat or escalating risk.

06 Strengthen education and SEND safeguarding

Continue to work with schools at different levels to consider, attendance, alternative provision and SEND; treat persistent absence and unmet need as risk indicators earlier.

07 Put children's voices into decisions

Hear children through relationships with trusted adults before formal meetings and show how their views shape ROTH, MACE, NRM, Youth Justice and SAFER plans.

08 Governance for outcomes

Use quarterly reviews, improved performance monitoring and reporting, shared analysis to evidence safety, disruption, education, diversion and the experience of support and use strategically through OSCP Executive Board

Success in 12 months: consistent pathways, earlier prevention, coordinated disruption and clear evidence that children are safer.

Local Government Reform

- In light of Local Government Reorganisation decisions, it will be important to preserve a consistent countywide approach to adolescent safeguarding while adapting governance, commissioning and partnership arrangements to the new structures. Clear accountability, shared data, stable multi-agency pathways and continuity of specialist expertise will be essential to prevent fragmentation, maintain early intervention and ensure children receive an equitable response regardless of where they live.

In summary

- Oxfordshire partnership takes the continuing risk of harm outside the home and exploitation seriously and is committed to strengthening its collective response.
- **A stronger foundation**
 - Oxfordshire now has a more joined-up response, connecting specialist adolescent services, partnership oversight, prevention and disruption.
- **The priority now**
 - Embed consistent practice across the county and use shared intelligence to identify risk earlier, coordinate actions and focus resources where they will make the greatest difference.
- **The outcome that matters**
 - Children are safer beyond home, supported by trusted adults, included in decisions and helped to remain engaged in family, education and community life.

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EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 September 2026

OXFORDSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE ANNUAL PLAN 2026 – 2029

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) note the Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service Annual Plan 2026–2029; and
 - b) note the strategic priorities, governance arrangements and performance focus for delivery of youth justice services in Oxfordshire over the period 2026–2029.

Executive Summary

2. This report presents the Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) Annual Plan 2026–2029 for approval. The plan sets out the statutory youth justice plan for Oxfordshire and describes how partners will work together to deliver a child-centred, preventative and evidence-led approach to youth justice. It reflects national reform, including the Youth Justice White Paper, and local priorities to continue to maintain a reduction in first time entrants, reduce reoffending, reduce the use of custody, address disproportionality, strengthen diversion and improve outcomes for children, victims and communities.

Purpose and Background

3. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority, in partnership with key statutory agencies, to prepare and publish an annual youth justice plan. The Oxfordshire YJS Annual Plan 2026–2029 fulfils this requirement and sets out the county's strategic direction, governance arrangements, performance priorities and areas for improvement.
4. The plan is framed by a period of national reform and by Oxfordshire's ambition to deliver forward-thinking, preventative and child-centred services. It recognises that children in the youth justice system are often among the most vulnerable, with needs linked to trauma, exploitation, mental ill health, unmet special educational needs and disabilities, and disrupted education. The plan therefore places strong emphasis on early intervention, diversion, relational practice and whole-system partnership delivery.

5. For 2026–2029, the plan identifies strategic priorities to: strengthen prevention and diversion and continue to reduce first time entrants; improve the partnership response to reoffending and reduce the use of custody; further develop the county's response to adolescents, exploitation, harm outside the home and online risk; improve support for children with special educational needs and disabilities in the justice system; address overrepresentation and disproportionality through anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice; improve support for victims and families; and maintain a strong focus on workforce development and continuous improvement.
6. Governance of the plan is through the Youth Justice Management Board, bringing together the local authority, police, health, probation and voluntary and community sector partners. The plan describes how delivery will be overseen through performance management, partnership challenge and shared accountability for outcomes, including oversight of risks, issues and the disproportionality action plan.

Priorities and Delivery Focus

7. The plan includes a delivery focus on education, prevention and diversion, serious violence and exploitation, support for arrested children, custodial remand and resettlement, work with families, children from over-represented groups, and continuous improvement. It also reflects local commitments as a Marmot county to tackle inequality and the wider determinants that affect life chances for children involved in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

8. The plan supports the Council's strategic priorities to tackle inequalities, prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents, and create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential. It aligns with the council's wider ambitions for prevention, partnership working, community safety, improved educational inclusion, SEND improvement and better life chances for vulnerable children and young people.

Financial Implications

9. The Youth Justice Service Annual Plan 2026–2029 describes the strategic framework and delivery priorities for the existing youth justice partnership. It is a grant requirement from the YJB to produce this plan. Approval of the plan does not in itself create new financial commitments beyond existing approved budgets and partnership resources. Any future service developments arising from delivery of the plan that require additional investment will be subject to the Council's usual financial approval processes.

Legal Implications

10. The Council is required under section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, in consultation with relevant partner agencies, and to submit the plan in accordance with national requirements. Approval of this report supports the discharge of that statutory duty.

Staff Implications

11. The plan includes a focus on board and workforce development, reflective practice and continuous improvement. Delivery will be through the existing Youth Justice Service workforce and partner agencies. Any future staffing changes arising from service development would be managed through the Council's normal workforce processes and governance arrangements.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

12. Equality and inclusion are central to the plan. It includes a specific focus on overrepresentation and disproportionality, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, and improving outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The partnership will continue to use data, quality assurance and community insight to identify and address unequal outcomes for children from minoritised and over-represented groups.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

13. The reorganisation of councils in Oxfordshire into three unitary councils from April 2028 has both potential benefits and risks for delivery of the Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service Annual Plan 2026–2029. The creation of new unitary councils may provide opportunities to strengthen place-based working, align youth justice, prevention, education, community safety, family help and wider children's services more closely within local areas, and build stronger connections with district-level and community partners. However, the transition also creates risks around continuity of strategic leadership, governance, partnership accountability, data sharing, commissioning arrangements, workforce stability and consistent countywide delivery of statutory youth justice functions. Oxfordshire County Council will cease to operate from April 2028 and its relevant functions, staff and responsibilities will transfer to the new unitary councils. During the transition period, it will therefore be important to maintain clear Youth Justice Management Board oversight, protect statutory compliance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensure continuity of service for children, victims and families, and develop transition arrangements that preserve consistent practice standards, performance oversight and partnership accountability across the future unitary council footprint.

Sustainability Implications

14. The approval of this plan has no direct material sustainability or climate implications. Where actions arising from the plan lead to future commissioning, service redesign or programme development with material environmental impact, these will be considered through the Council's usual climate and sustainability assessment processes.

Risk Management

15. The plan recognises a number of strategic risks, including continued demand and complexity, disproportionality in the youth justice system, unmet SEND need, risks associated with serious violence and exploitation, and the need to sustain effective partnership performance through a period of national reform. These risks will be monitored through the Youth Justice Management Board, supported by performance oversight, escalation routes and delivery planning.

Consultations

16. The plan has been developed with Youth Justice Management Board partners and informed by service performance, learning from practice, feedback from children and families, and relevant partnership insight. Final consultation and sign-off will be completed through the Council's and Youth Justice Management Board's governance processes prior to publication.

Lisa Lyons
Director for Children's Services

Annex: Annex 1 – Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service Annual Plan
2026–2029

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

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June 2026



Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

OXFORDSHIRE



YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES



Probation
Service



Oxfordshire YJS

Youth Justice Plan 2026 - 2029

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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Oxfordshire Youth Justice Plan 2026–2029, setting out our shared partnership ambition to deliver forward thinking, preventative and child-centred youth justice services for Oxfordshire.

This plan is shaped by a period of significant national reform, including the Youth Justice White Paper, which signals a clear shift toward earlier intervention, prevention and a more consistent, proportionate system. In Oxfordshire, we are fully aligned with this direction in strengthening diversion, reducing unnecessary escalation into the justice system, and ensuring children and victims receive the right response at the right time.

At its core, our approach remains grounded in the 'Child First' principles —recognising that children in the youth justice system are often among the most vulnerable, with complex needs linked to trauma, exploitation, poor mental health and disrupted education. We will continue to deliver relational, strengths-based practice, alongside a clear commitment to victims and community safety.

The plan also reflects our response to national SEND reforms, recognising the high proportion of children in the youth justice system with additional and often unmet needs. We will prioritise:

- Earlier identification of need and support to prevent and reduce escalation
- Improved access to appropriate education and provision
- Strong alignment with the county's SEND improvement programme to improve outcomes for justice-involved children

As a Marmot county, Oxfordshire is committed to tackling health inequalities and addressing the wider determinants of disadvantage. Youth justice is a key part of this ambition. We recognise the strong link between inequality, adverse childhood experiences and involvement in the justice system, and will take a whole-system approach across health, education, communities and public services to improve life chances for our children. We will continue to:

- Strengthen diversion and reduce First Time Entrants
- Develop our response to adolescents to ensure we are delivering high quality, evidence-based services
- Respond more effectively to exploitation, harm outside the home and online risks

We are equally committed to tackling disproportionality and over-representation, embedding anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, improving use of data and insight, and working in partnership with our communities. We recognise and acknowledge the issue of disproportionality across our partnership organisations for minoritized groups and hold ourselves accountable in addressing this critical issue through improved understanding of our local data and service delivery and shared ownership of our Disproportionality Action Plan.

Our Youth Justice Management Board provides strong governance across the partnership, bringing together key agencies including the local authority, police, health, probation, and the voluntary and community sector. Together, we will ensure that this plan is delivered in a way that is ambitious, evidence-led and accountable, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for children, families, victims and communities across Oxfordshire.

This plan reflects not only our statutory responsibilities, but our shared commitment to ensuring that every child in Oxfordshire has the opportunity to be safe, supported and able to achieve their full potential.

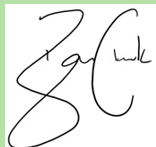
Delia Mann

Deputy Director for Oxfordshire Children's Services and Youth Justice Management Board Chair

Strategic Priorities for 2026-29

- Working in partnership to develop the prevention & diversion offer in Oxfordshire, and continue to monitor and support a reduction in First Time Entrants
- Working in partnership to improve outcomes for children with SEND in the youth justice system
- Working in partnership to improve support for arrested children
- Working in partnership to address over-representation and disproportionality for justice-involved children
- Working in partnership to effectively support victims of youth crime
- Working in partnership to tackle disproportionality and over representation for minoritised groups

“Partnership is at the heart of the Youth Justice Annual plan – our links with Thames Valley Police remain strong with both the Local Command Unit and the wider public protection commands working together to improve outcomes for children, protecting the most vulnerable and pursuing those who would exploit them. Our commitment to working together to put children first is one shared with local policing teams and community safety partnerships across the county.”

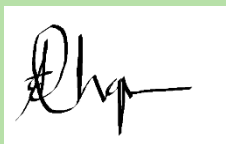


Ben Clark
Chief Superintendent
LOU Commander - Oxfordshire

“The YJ plan reflects our determination to ensure that children are at the heart of everything we do, supporting them whatever their circumstances to thrive and to overcome challenges they may be facing; working together as committed partners to achieve the best outcomes for our most vulnerable children.”

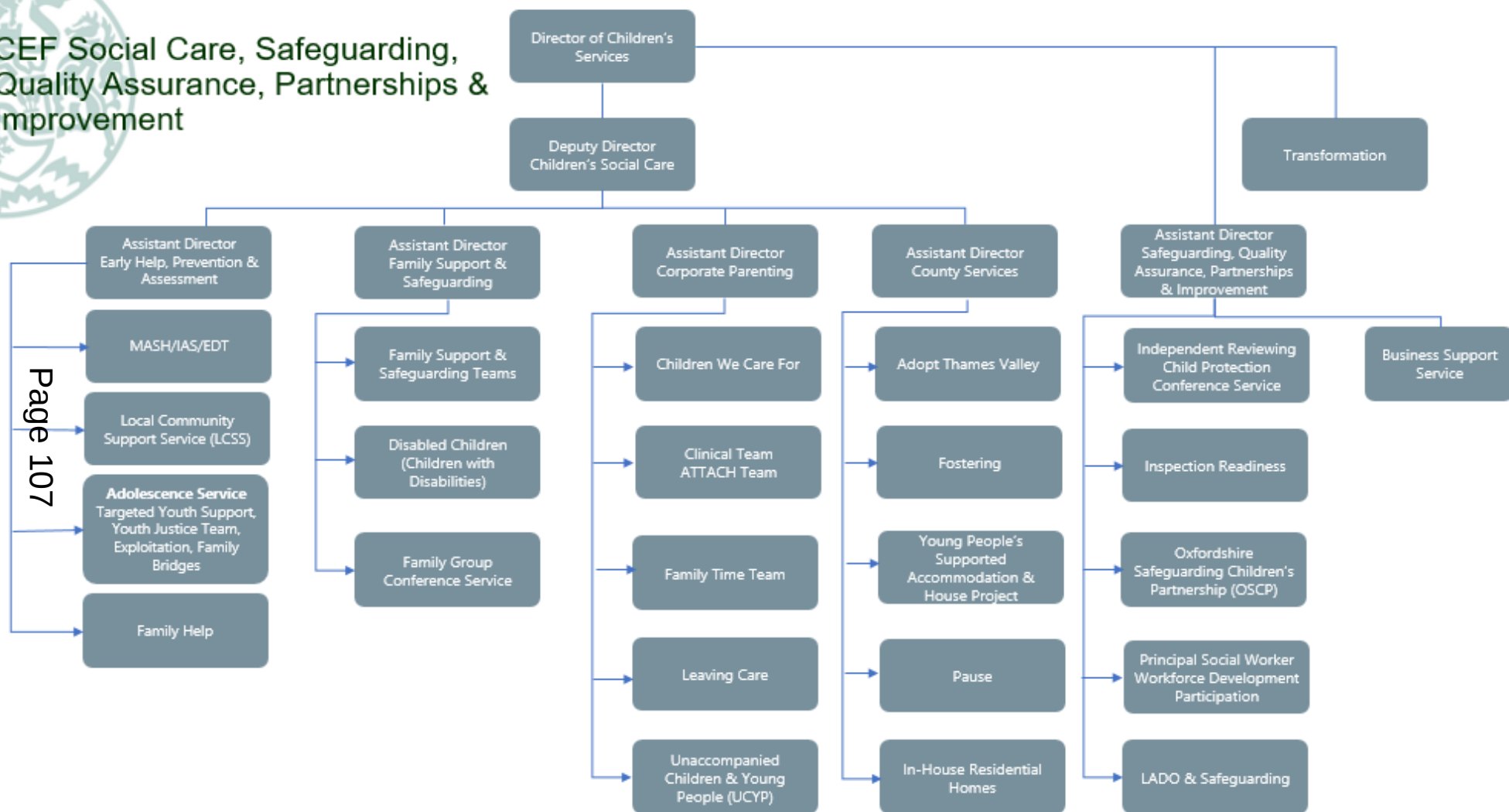
Annette Perrington
Strategic Lead for Education, Policy and Implementation
Children, Education & Families

“Health partners share the Youth Justice Partnership’s commitment to putting children first, recognising the central role that physical and emotional wellbeing plays in shaping outcomes for justice-involved children. Through health contribution, including CAMHS, 0-19 Team and the Phoenix Health Team, we are committed to working alongside partners to respond to trauma, address health inequalities and ensure children receive timely, joined-up support. There is a strengthened health provider representation at board level and supported the development of a partnership Speech and Language Therapy role within the Youth Justice team. Together, we will support prevention, resilience and improved life chances for some of Oxfordshire’s most vulnerable children.”



Alison Chapman
Head of Safeguarding & Designated Nurse for Children and Looked After
Children, NHS Thames Valley ICB

CEF Social Care, Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships & Improvement



Our Youth Justice Service (YJS) is located within Oxfordshire's Children Education and Families Directorate (CEF) under the Assistant Director for Early Help, Prevention and Assessment. The YYS sits within an Adolescence & Prevention Service alongside exploitation support, targeted youth work and Family Bridges.

The designated senior manager for Youth Justice is the Service Manager for the Adolescence and Prevention Service which includes Youth Justice, the Targeted Youth Support Service, the SAFER team (risk outside the home) and Family Bridges. The Service Manager reports to the Assistant Director for Prevention, Early Help & Assessment in Children's Services. The Service Manager is the strategic lead for Youth Justice, Prevent, Exploitation and Missing Children within Oxfordshire's Children's Services.

The Service Manager represents Children's Services at the Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership Strategic Board, Safer Oxfordshire's Partnership Co-ordination group, Prevent Board, Violence and Vulnerability subgroup and OSCP Exploitation subgroup. The Adolescence and Prevention Service is a key partner in delivery of preventative approaches around children in the County's Violence & Vulnerability strategy and delivery plan.

Resources & Services



The Youth Justice Service uses OPCC funding to commission Cranstoun (Here4Youth) to deliver the Drug Diversion Scheme (DDS). The DDS offers a treatment-based response and support to children arrested for any drug possession offence. Thames Valley Police refer children who receive Community Resolutions through to Cranstoun, who offer a brief assessment and intervention focused on harm reduction, exploitation risk and the child's health and well-being. This intervention supports the prevention offer to children in Oxfordshire who are at risk of offending, exploitation and serious violence.



The Phoenix Nurse provides health assessments for children on Court Orders only (23% of caseload) and ongoing support where consent is given. For pre-Court cases (77%) they offer advice, referrals, and links to school/college nurses but not a public health nurse assessment.

Strong Forensic CAMHS partnership provides:

- Assessment, intervention and specialist support (including SAVRY, AIM3 and other specialist assessments)
- Triage, consultation, clinical oversight and joint-working
- Regular Case Formulation with YJS practitioners and wider professionals
- 'Enhanced access' for the YJS to specialist services (including Tier 4)
- Liaison & Diversion services

Resources & Services

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Two Youth Justice Police Officers provide support to the service as outlined in the YJB job specification. Our YJ PCs attend the YJS Safety Panel to provide updates and act as a point of liaison with wider TVP teams and other Forces. Alongside delivery of out-of-court resolutions, our YJ PCs also support intervention with children. The YJ PCs assist in our public protection responsibilities by adding 'and maintaining flags' on children's Police records so YJ staff are swiftly notified when children are arrested or included in intelligence. The YJS is funding our YJ PCs to complete the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate to develop their knowledge and understanding of youth justice in practice.

**ACT|NOW ▶ OP DETER YOUTH**

The OPCC provides funding to Oxfordshire YJS to deliver the Act Now/Op Deter Youth project – this intervention provides a 90-minute response to children in Police custody arrested for knife and weapon offences. The YJS provides this service from 9am-8pm weekdays and 9am-5pm on weekends. Custody visits are then followed by a home visit to see the child within 48 hours. We complete an assessment and then a targeted intervention to support the child and family with identified needs and reduce the risk of knife crime.

Resources & Services

Our core YJB grant is spent in its entirety on staffing costs. We use partner contributions and available internal resources to deliver our statutory and voluntary services, to meet the needs of children and victims. Oversight for the service's budget and resources is provided through quarterly Board reporting and meetings.

Identified gaps, challenges and developments

- The Probation Service currently provide fixed-term funding for an OCC-hosted YJ Probation Officer role, in lieu of provision of a secondee. We have had a staff member in this role since February 2026.
- County Council funding has been identified for a fixed-term SALT post for the Adolescence & Prevention Service with a focus on Youth Justice and recruitment is a priority for 2026.
- The Management Board is aware that the physical health offer to YJS children is insufficient, as our case-load has significantly shifted towards pre-Court work since the service provision was previously agreed.
- Funding for a specialist harmful sexual behaviour service 'CAHBS' has ceased; this service provided clinical oversight and support for the YJS' harmful sexual behaviour work. Partnership conversations are currently taking place to mitigate the impact on the service and children.

Our First Time Entrant rate has reduced by 53% since March 2025 and is now lower than regional, national and family averages

We have implemented co-location and shared training arrangements with Oxfordshire's Harm Reduction Unit (TVP) to support strong partnership working and positives outcomes for children

The Adolescence & Prevention Service won the Children, Education & Families 'Award for Innovation'

We ran First Aid courses for children to up-skill them and improve their confidence to be active bystanders in their communities

Two of our children successfully completed work experience with the 'M Group' and have been offered apprenticeships

We successfully supported 69 children via the Turnaround Programme - funding from the Ministry of Justice and the OPCC enabled us to support greater numbers of children than in previous years

Delivered training for Magistrates and District Judges, Police and our volunteers on adolescent brain development, neuro-diversity, effective engagement with children and the wider work of the service

Our service and Board have completed training on Disproportionality & Disparities with The Liminality Group

Our children completed 439 Reparation and Unpaid Work sessions in our local communities

193

Total number of children in
YJ cohort for the period

102

Number of diversionary (informal)
outcomes that may have involved YJS
intervention in the period

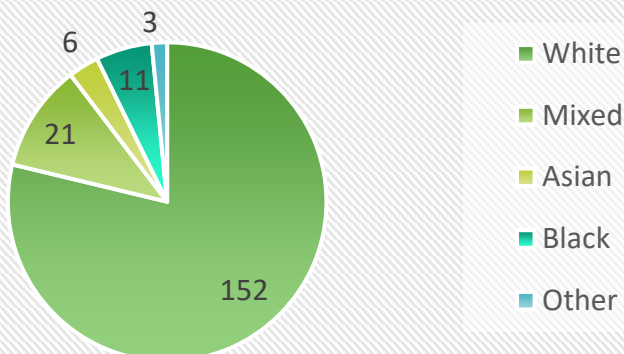
253

Total number of disposals
given to children in the period

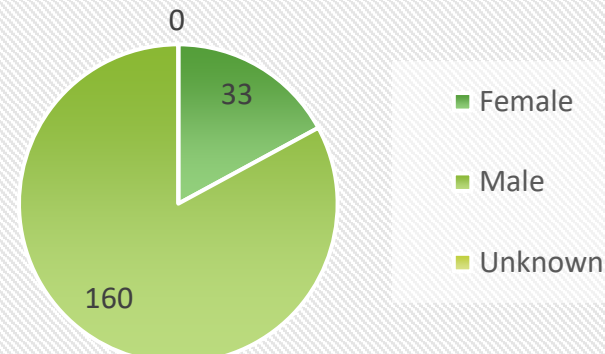
151

Number of formal pre-Court and Court
disposals given to children in the period

**Ethnicities of children within total YJS
cohort by %**



**Gender of children within total YJS
cohort by %**



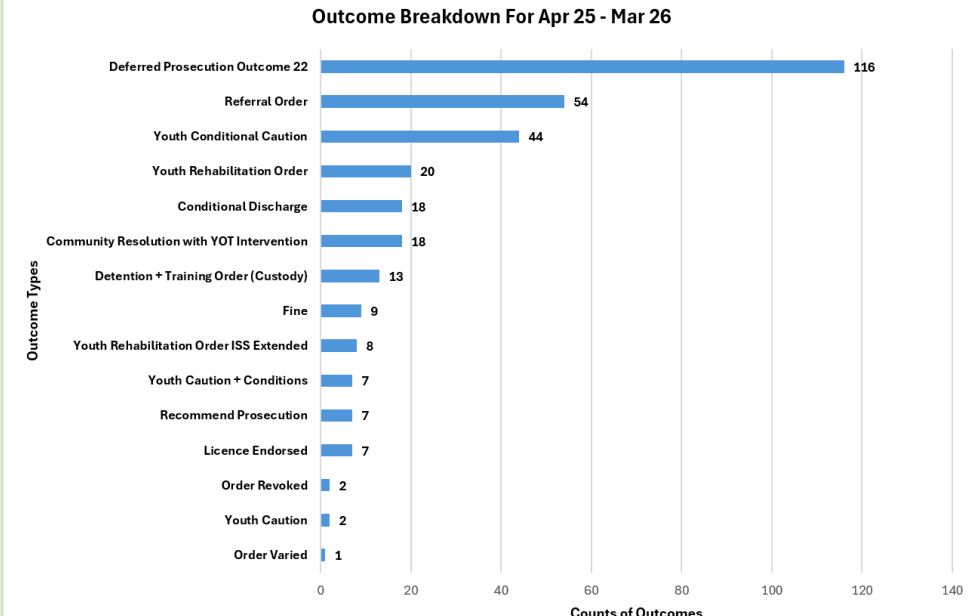
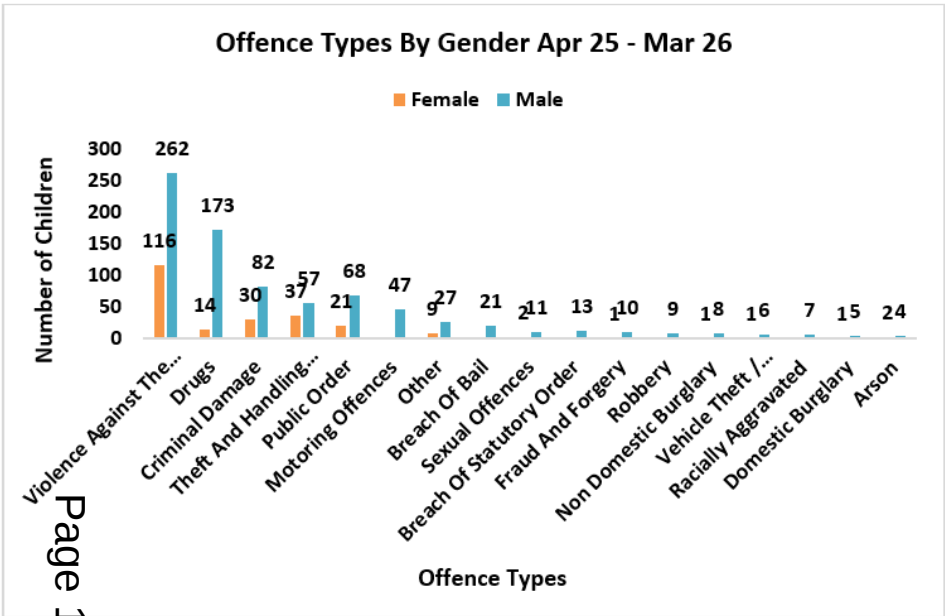
- The service is working to improve our recording and data performance processes around victim case-work in line with the HMIP Victims Standard. Vacancies within our Restorative Justice roles in 2025-26 impacted on the consistency of recording and sufficiency of reporting, which is an area of current focus within our continuous improvement work now both roles have been recruited to.

6 children were remanded between April 2025 – March 2026 in 7 episodes

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3 children received Detention & Training Orders (custodial sentence) for **serious violence** offences

Remand Type	Number of children
Remand Local Authority Accommodation (LAA)	2 (Male)
Remand LAA with GPS tag	1 (Male)
Remand Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) - YOI	2 (Male)
Remand YDA - STC	1 (Female)
Remand YDA - SCH	1 (repeat remand for one male child)
Child	Offences
Child 1 (White male, 16)	Section 18 – Attempt wounding with intent x2, Possess knife x2, Racially aggravated stalking x2
Child 2 (White male, 15)	Possess knife x4, Possess imitation firearm, Agg vehicle taking x2, Assault x2, Theft
Child 3 (White male, 17)	Section 20 – Wound/Inflict grievous bodily harm without intent



- The most prevalent offence types committed by children open to our YJS have consistently been violence and drug offences, particularly for boys. Girls are more likely to commit violence and criminal damage offences, which has also remained consistent over time. Inclusive of knife related offences, we have trained our case-managers across the YJS and some youth workers in TYSS on the ‘Behind the Blade’ intervention. OPCC funding was also secured to develop the ‘Strive’ intensive mentoring project which focuses on children at risk of serious violence (both as perpetrators and victims).
- The most common outcome type was Deferred Prosecution/Outcome 22 which has been a positive impact of the Youth Diversion Programme (YDP) pilot with Thames Valley Police. Whilst 527 ‘street’ Community Resolutions were issued to Oxfordshire children in the period, 18 were agreed through Joint Decision-Making Panel with the addition of voluntary youth justice intervention. The focus on children who received Community Resolutions has been to triage these for support from the Turnaround project. We still have a high number of Referral Orders coming through Court and we are monitoring changes in TVP policy that may preclude children from out-of-court resolution consideration.

Children we worked with said:

"Working with my YJ worker has been good. She is polite and respectful and good at reminders. She knows when to bring me up and when to pull me down. She really puts the effort in to help me."

"You actually got me and the other girl to speak...we spoke about our problems, and it helped me understand more about why we got into a fight."

"Thankyou for helping and working with me, I'm really thankful. You listened to how I felt and helped me find solutions to my problems."

Parents / carers we worked with said:

"We as a family have learned a lot. You have helped my two sons not to offend and helped me understand what's been going on for them."

"Thank you for really taking your time with J. He seems to have really taken on board what you have taught him."

"You've been really helpful in making my child feel comfortable talking about a difficult subject."

Victims we worked with said:

"The RJ Worker in YJS is the only person that has reached out to me and truly listened to me. She did everything she could within her remit to support me."

"Being part of the restorative process was a lovely experience. It was interesting to see how much valuable work goes on to ensure young people are supported and helped to thrive in the community. You do an incredible job, and it was a pleasure to work with you and your team".

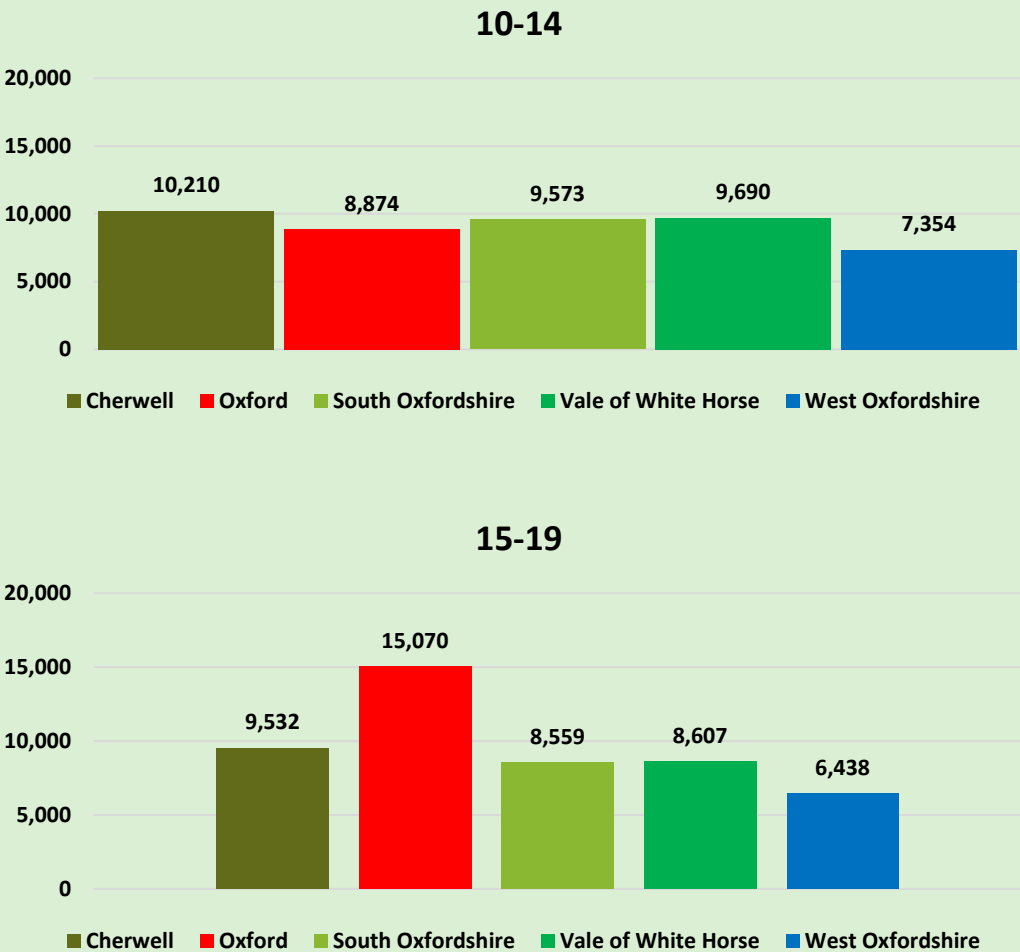
93,907

Total population of
10–19-year-olds in
Oxfordshire

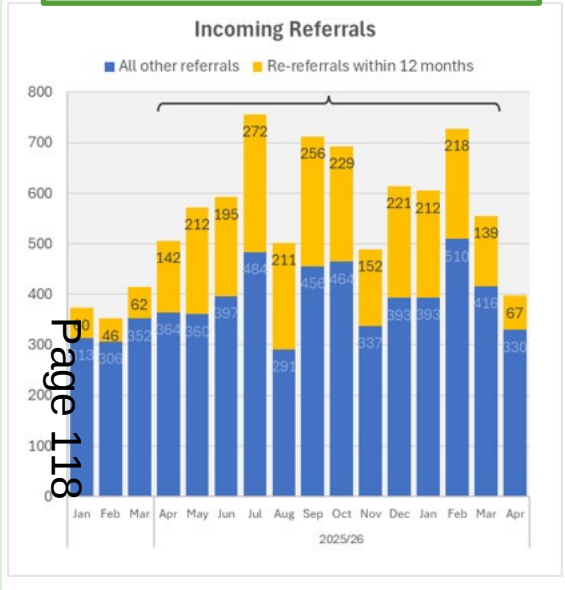
(ONS mid-year estimates
2024)

5-year age band	Cherwell	Oxford	South Oxfordshire	Vale of White Horse	West Oxfordshire	Total
10-14	10,210	8,874	9,573	9,690	7,354	45,701
15-19	9,532	15,070	8,559	8,607	6,438	48,206
Total	19,742	23,944	18,132	18,297	13,792	93,907

Oxfordshire’s population of 10–19-year-olds has gradually increased year on year, with relatively even distribution between the younger and older age groups. Oxford City has the highest number of older children, followed by Cherwell.



Referrals into Children’s Social Care



The percentage of 16–17-year-olds who are **NEET** has followed a similar pattern in Oxfordshire to that of the country and region. Since 2022, the percentage has increased from 1.7% to 2.7% in 2025. Most of Oxfordshire’s statistical neighbours mirror this trend, where the county sits joint-seventh compared to these counties.

(JSNA, 2025)

In many of the indicators related to **absence in secondary schools**, Oxfordshire reports relatively worse statistics than the majority of its statistical neighbours. This includes: -

- Percentage of severe absentees (second highest)
- Authorised absence rate (highest)
- Overall absence rate (highest)
- Persistent absentees (highest)
- Unauthorised absence rate (third highest)

(JSNA, 2025)

- The number of contacts into Oxfordshire’s MASH is high at 3600 per month. Referrals into Children’s Social Care in April 2026 were slightly lower than the same month last year.
- In May 2026, 38% of the YJS caseload were open to statutory Children’s Social Care (CSC). This is significantly higher than the wider population of 10–19-year-olds, of which 2.2% are open to CSC.
- The percentage of children eligible for free school meals in Oxfordshire has followed a similar path to that of the country and has risen every year since 2017/18, when it was 8.0%. In 2023/24, 15.7% of children in Oxfordshire were eligible for free school meals. Oxfordshire has the fifth-lowest percentage of children eligible for free school meals among its statistical neighbours.

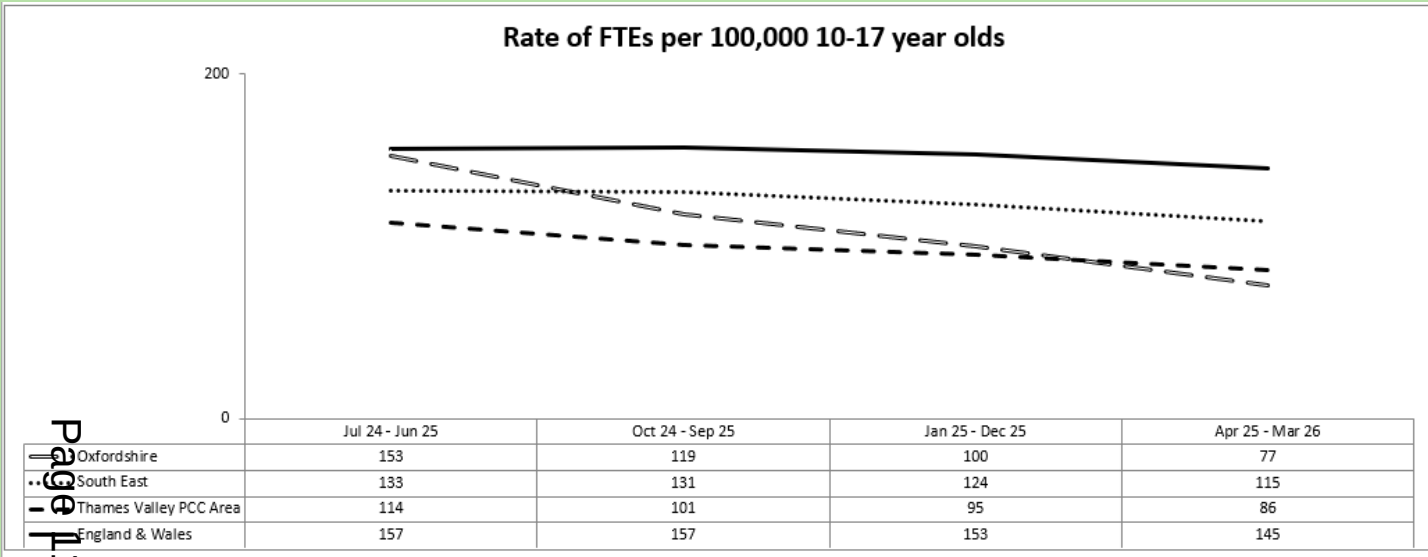
Number of YJS Children open to Statutory Children’s Social Care

CSC Status	#	% of YJS caseload
ChIN	21	16%
CWCF	9	7%
CPP	9	7%
Open C&FA	6	5%
Allocation - Status unknown	4	3%
Total	49	38%
Not open to CSC	79	62%



36% of children open to Oxfordshire YJS in May 2026 are eligible for **Free School Meals**

Reducing First Time Entrants



Oxfordshire YJS has made significant progress in reducing our First Time Entrant rate over the last 12 months. It has reduced by 53% since March 2025 dropping from 164. That is a reduction of 64 children from last year. This reflects the hard work of the service in implementing diversionary outcomes through our Joint Decision-Making Panel including the pilot ‘Youth Diversion Programme’ (Deferred Caution/Prosecution).

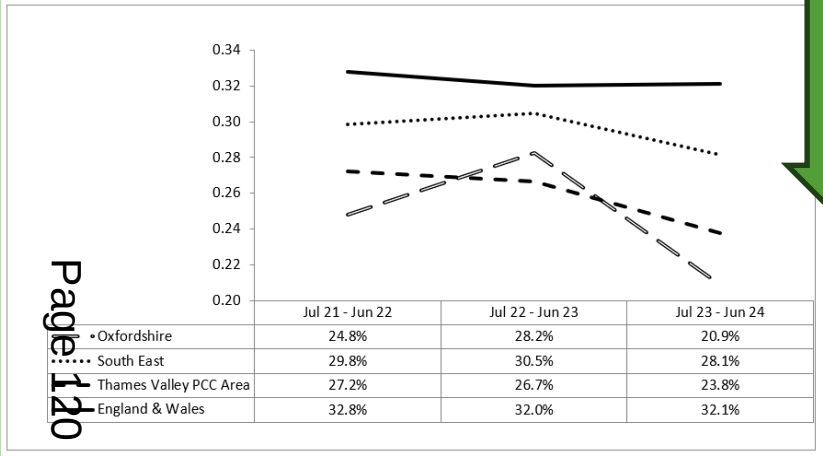
First Time Entrants are measured as a rate per 100,000 of the local 10- to 17-year-old population in Oxfordshire.

Risks to Delivery

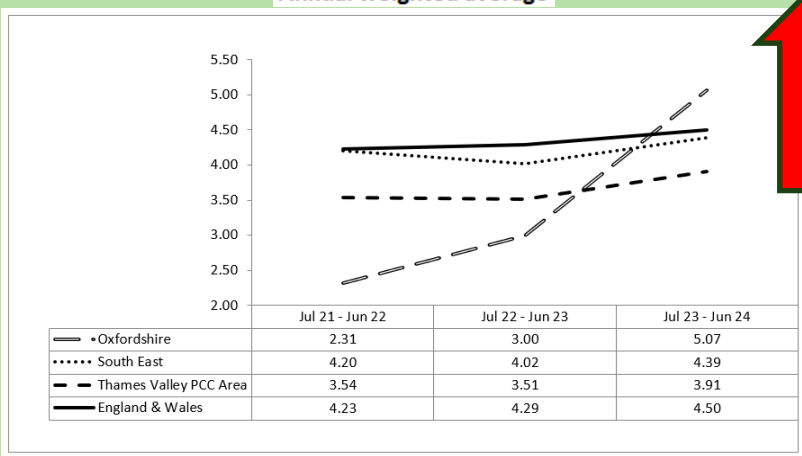
- The ‘Youth Diversion Programme’ (deferred caution/prosecution) pilot may not be continued from June 2026 and is awaiting decision by Thames Valley Police.
- From March 2026 Thames Valley Police adopted the NPCC guidance on admissions for Out of Court Resolutions and removed the ‘no comment/silent interview’ pathway for children in Thames Valley. This means more children who give no comment or remain silent in interview will go to Court.

Reducing Reoffending

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders / Number in cohort)
Annual weighted average



Reoffences / Reoffenders
Annual weighted average

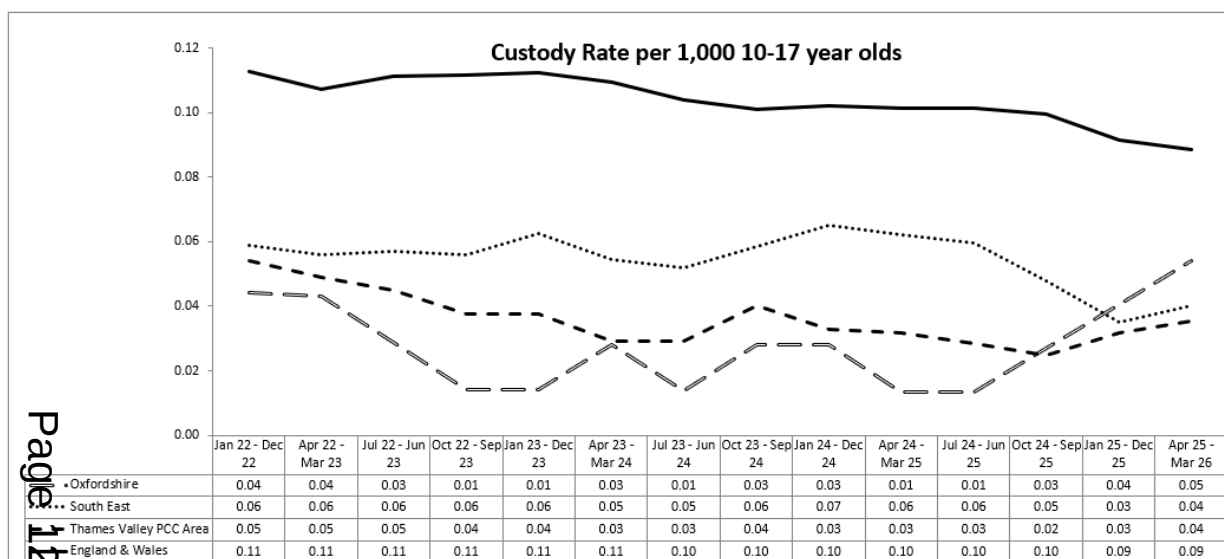


The latest available data on re-offending from the YJB indicates a positive reduction in reoffending overall by children in Oxfordshire, reducing below the Thames Valley rate. Between Q3 2023 – Q2 2024 41 children re-offended, committing a total of 208 further offences. Whilst it is positive the overall re-offending by children is reducing, our data shows that a small group of children are committing more offences when they do reoffend. The rate of reoffences per child has risen from 4.25 in 2023 to 7.83 in 2024, evidencing that a small cohort of children require more intensive intervention and support.

Risks to Delivery

- Delays in timeliness of investigations and outcomes for children impact our ability to intervene early and can lead to escalations in behaviours whilst children are subject to Bail or Released Under Investigation for lengthy periods. Outcome timeliness is monitored regionally at the Local Criminal Justice Board and outcome timeliness data for Oxfordshire is presented to the Management Board quarterly for scrutiny and oversight.
- Local interventions such as ‘Strive’ which provides intensive long-term mentoring for children identified as being at most risk for serious violence and reoffending are fixed-term funded via the OPCC and could end should funding cease.

Reducing the Use of Custody



The rate of custodial sentences given to children increased between April 2025 – March 2026 from 0.01 to 0.05. This represents an increase of **3** children from April 2025. Information about each of these children and the circumstances of their offending was shared with the Management Board for oversight and scrutiny around sentencing trends. A Critical Learning Review is being completed for 1 of these children.

The service also saw an increase in the use of Youth Rehabilitation Orders with Intensive Supervision & Surveillance in 2025-26 as a direct alternative to custody, with 5 children receiving ISS between Apr 25 – Mar 26 compared to 3 the previous year.

Risks to Delivery

- Any serious offending may lead to a custodial sentence, despite robust community sentencing proposals presented by the YJS.
- Offences committed as part of a group can lead to multiple children receiving custodial outcomes, which would have a significant impact on this data due to the very small sample size.
- Outcomes for children can be impacted by local and national priorities across our partnership, for example the government's focus on tackling knife crime, terrorism and violence against women and girls.
- A lack of suitable local provision for justice-involved children as direct alternatives to custody (to support Intensive Supervision & Surveillance or Remand LAA packages) in Oxfordshire negatively impacts their risk of escalation to custody.

What have we done in 2025-6?

- Supported 69 children through diversionary interventions via our Turnaround programme
- Supported 69 children via the Youth Diversion Programme (YDP) Deferred Caution/Prosecution pilot, with a further 24 currently in progress
- Our Targeted Youth Work Service supported 268 children identified as at risk of offending and exploitation via 1:1 interventions and delivered over 150 detached youth work sessions, engaging over 500 young people in our local communities
- Delivered targeted transition support to children moving from Year 6-7 who were identified using a range of vulnerability indicators
- Reviewed the demand into and functioning of our Joint Decision-Making Panel
- Engaged the Centre for Justice Innovation to support our review of diversion practice in Oxfordshire

What has happened as a result?

- Our First Time Entrant rate has decreased by 53% since April 2025
- As part of moving under an Adolescence & Prevention service umbrella the YJS has worked with the Targeted Youth Support Service to ensure alignment around triage of children using evidence-based indicators for 'right service, right time' support
- The service provided quantitative and qualitative impact data in contribution to TVP's review of the YDP pilot
- We have strengthened our partnership working with TVP'S Harm Reduction Unit in Oxfordshire and undertaken shared training to support child-centred practice
- Agreed a 'Fast Track JDMP pilot' with TVP to reduce demand and improve timeliness of resolutions for Gravity Score 1-3 offences
- Undertook a workshop on diversion with Thames Valley Police, facilitated by the Centre for Justice Innovation and completed the 'ORPIC' tool

What will we do next?

- Delivery of OPCC funded Focused Diversion programme to reach a wider cohort of children
- Ensure prevention is a key focus in local transformation programme and roll-out of Children's Social Care reforms
- Continue to work closely with the Harm Reduction Units with a planned training event to focus on partnership practice around missing children
- Continue to advocate for the continuation of a deferred caution/prosecution pathway for Oxfordshire's children
- Review the Youth Endowment Fund's ORPIC assessment and implement action plan in partnership with Thames Valley Police

What have we done in 2025-26?

- Children from the YJS have been invited and supported to participate in the SEND Youth Forum
- Colleagues from the Attendance and Inclusion teams have joined an Adolescence Service Day to improve staff awareness on processes, escalation routes and important changes in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act
- Worked with M Group (commissioned service for Highways in Oxfordshire) to implement a pilot for work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for children involved with the YJS
- Children's ETE is a focus within the YJS Safety Panel and MACE Panel for senior manager oversight and escalation
- Escalated gap in service around speech, language and communicated needs of YJS cohort to the ICB and Board

What has happened as a result?

- Secured funding for a temporary Speech & Language Therapist role within the Adolescence & Prevention Service
- Two children in the YJS were supported to engage in work experience with M Group for a week, and then with preparation for and participation in interviews for apprenticeships which start in September

What will we do next?

- Education representative at Management Board to be confirmed and to present on SEND continuous improvement journey to ensure connectivity with Youth Justice
- We will continue to work with M Group to monitor how the pilot can be developed and rolled out further
- Recruit to the SALT post
- Establish YJ Board Task & Finish group for Education with a focus on improved outcomes for justice-involved children

What have we done in 2025-26?

- Supported 37 children via the Act Now/Op Deter Youth project which provides a 90-minute response to children arrested in Oxfordshire for knife/weapon offences. We reviewed our offer with the OPCC based on learning from the first year's delivery and adapted it based on what worked best for children and families and our service locally.
- Presented to the YJ Management Board on the Youth Remand Concordat
- Established a Remand Working Group with EDT, Police, CAMHS, Commissioning and Provider Services to self-assess partnership practice in Oxfordshire against the national Youth Remand Concordat. This identified a need for a local agreement for clarity and accountability on local processes for children held in Police custody that each organisation would ascribe to.

What has happened as a result?

- The Act Now/Op Deter Youth project is now well embedded locally and we have a good success rate in engaging eligible children at point of first contact who then go on to accept support
- Data on children held in Police custody is scrutinised quarterly and discussed at the Thames Valley Children in Custody partnership meeting, as well as being shared with the Management Board for oversight

What will we do next?

- The Focused Diversion project (being delivered by the Targeted Youth Work Service) will support this YJS' priority through targeting support for supporting arrested children
- We will continue to deliver the Act Now/Op Deter Youth project whilst it is funded via the OPCC as part of our partnership commitment to addressing the root causes of knife crime and serious violence

What have we done in 2025-26?

- The whole service and Board completed experiential Disproportionality & Disparities training with The Liminality Group
- Any dispute on outcomes for children in the JDMP are escalated to the YJ Team Manager and Police Inspector for review
- Thames Valley Police provide stop and search data for scrutiny at the YJ Management Board
- Oxfordshire contributed caseload data to an evaluation of girls within the YJ cohorts in Thames Valley led by Wokingham YJS

What has happened as a result?

- Staff report increased confidence
- Language has been adapted in service and across the YJS management board to recognise minoritised children and families
- A reviewed and updated partnership Disproportionality Action Plan has been approved

What will we do next?

- Following the impact of the YJS training, The Liminality Group are presenting at the Education Safeguarding Conference in June 2026 to schools across the County
- The YJ Management Board will ensure shared ownership and partnership accountability in delivery of the Action Plan

What have we done in 2025-26?

- Data on our victim case-load and service delivery is presented quarterly to the Management Board
- A young victim attended the Management Board to talk about her experience of Restorative Justice
- We developed a Restorative Justice Improvement Plan for the service in line with the new HMIP Victims Standard
- We have worked with CACI and our Performance and Information Analyst to develop a Victims dashboard in Metabase to improve our performance oversight and reporting
- YJ Practitioners undertook refresher training on Restorative Justice with Remedi
- Our Restorative Justice Practitioner has achieved RJC Accreditation at Advanced Level

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What has happened as a result?

- Following discussions at Board, the Senior Practitioner for Restorative Justice in the YJS and a Board member undertook victim case-work audits
- Building a performance dashboard for our victim data has improved our ability to understand and interrogate our data
- Appointing to both the Senior Practitioner in RJ and RJ Practitioner roles has supported a renewed focus on victim service delivery

What will we do next?

- Focus on delivery against our RJ Improvement Plan
- Continue with victim case-work audits with a focus on the HMIP Victims Standard
- Support for victims will be a focus within Multi-Agency Case Discussions as part of our HMIP Inspection preparation and continuous improvement

Risk	Mitigation	Desired Outcome
First Time Entrant rate may increase due to TVP decisions around 'no comment/silent interviews', new Knife Crime Guidance and uncertainty around Youth Diversion Programme pilot	Board and Service monitoring of pre-Court decision-making including quarterly deep-dives of the FTE cohort Continue working with the YJB to escalate concerns around any increase in formal outcomes, charges to Court and FTE rates Oxfordshire YJS is a YJS with high levels of demand covering a large geographical area	Oxfordshire's FTE rate to remain in line with YJS family average by April 2027 Children are not inappropriately or disproportionately criminalised in Oxfordshire
Reduction in OPCC funding (40% in Year 3 of current bid cycle) will impact the Drug Diversion Scheme, Turnaround and Restorative Justice service delivery	Raised at Board as part of service finance reporting for senior leadership oversight and follow-up Horizon-scanning to identify funding opportunities for the service and pro-active approach to bid-writing Align internal triage functions across adolescence to ensure capacity is built and the right responses to prevention are used to support youth justice frameworks Incorporate funding loss into future budget forecasting and adjust recruitment as needed	Funding opportunities are identified and where appropriate applied for to contribute to resource for 2026-29 Statutory functions within service continue to be safely and sufficiently resourced and delivered and outcomes monitored Minimal to no disruption to service delivery and outcomes for children

Risk	Mitigation	Desired Outcome
Reduction in service capacity due to sickness, vacancies and difficulty recruiting to fixed-term roles impacting statutory service delivery Page 128	Recruitment to vacancies is prioritised and alternative support for statutory service delivery explored Caseloads and wider service demands are routinely monitored and reviewed to understand complexity and pressures Implementation of the service Contingency Plan in line with agreed capacity thresholds All staff receive appropriate training and CPD to enable them to provide effective and appropriate support for children and victims	Practitioners feel confident in fulfilling the functions of their roles and receive appropriate training to ensure they have the skill-set to do so Practitioners report positively in relation to wellbeing and workload management within staff surveys Children and victims receive timely and effective support, reporting positive feedback in relation to their experience of the service Support is timely and impactful in relation to reoffending and protection of the public
Youth Justice staff lack designated building space in which to see children in line with HMIP Inspection criteria	Exploration of appropriate buildings and spaces in line with wider council priorities is underway	Children feel safe and have accessible spaces to meet practitioners which are responsive to their individual needs as adolescents Staff feel they have sufficient resource in which to safely carry out their statutory roles and responsibilities The service can best evidence commitment to Child First principles through provision of child-centred environments

Listening to children and victims is a top priority. Their views inform service development and improve our understanding of the reasons children offend and the harm caused. We are updating feedback surveys for children and victims to ensure they are accessible and inclusive through improved questions and the use of QR codes

Many of our placements used for Reparation and Unpaid Work are focused on social inclusion for children and supporting investment into their local communities. Children undertake reparative activities at their local community centres, and some have chosen to continue volunteering beyond the end of their formal Reparation. Oxford Wood Recycling and Bicester Green are placements that support children to engage with environmental issues and sustainability practices, equipping them with skills for the future

Through the Local Youth Transformation Pilot for Oxfordshire, children supported by the YJS have the opportunity to feed into a countywide cross-sector Youth Voice Strategy which will inform ways in which children want to be heard. This work is currently underway alongside our Children's Social Care Engagement and Participation leads.

A
Activities



I
Interactions



R
Roles



Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Prevention & Diversion	Continue to work with the Centre for Justice Innovation (CJI) on local diversion offer	FTE rates do not increase beyond YJS family average rate	Board - All Adolescence Service Manager	For review at quarterly board meetings. Support in place until December 2026
	Closely monitor FTE rates and timely escalation of issues to Service Manager and Board	Equity of access to appropriate preventative and diversionary support for all children in Oxfordshire	YJ Team Manager TYSS Team Manager	Annual reporting into management board meeting and monitored within Children's Insight framework – monthly
	Ensure Board oversight of impact of policy decisions including TVP rescinding 'no comment/silent interview' pathway and YDP pilot review outcome	Children vulnerable to offending, exploitation and serious violence are identified and offered proportionate and timely support		
	Delivery of targeted transition support for eligible children moving from Year 6-7	Effective alignment and shared and well understood vision across Adolescence teams results in high quality, evidence-based services to children, families and victims		Relaunch in September 2026 across services with ongoing monitoring for impact
	Implement Focused Diversion project in line with OPCC guidance	Partner agencies and teams across Children's Social Care have a clear understanding of the pathways into Adolescence & Prevention and feel confident in service delivery		

Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Children with SEND in the justice-system in Oxfordshire	Set up task and finish group led by Education Board representative and SEND leads (to include M Group apprenticeship pathway)	All Board members have a shared understanding of the challenges justice-involved children face in relation to education, leading to increased accountability	Board Chair	Covered within continuous board development and evidenced through reporting into board
	Data-led approaches are used to identify children at risk of involvement with criminal justice at earliest opportunity	Good practice can be shared across the partnership in relation to working with children with SEND	Board rep for Education	Quarterly board reporting
	Board receives clear data on YJ children of statutory school age and above in relation to their characteristics, EET status, provision, attendance, suspensions/exclusions and outcomes for scrutiny and escalation where required	Suspensions and exclusions for the YJ cohort are scrutinised and challenged where appropriate – with increase in rates responded to pro-actively and swiftly.	Adolescence Service Manager	
	Recruitment to SALT post	Partnership practice is inclusive and consistent in line with Child First evidence and research	YJ Team Manager	
		Children with SLCN in YJ are consistently identified and screened/assessed/provided timely, individualised support and advocacy		By September 2026
	Clear link is established with SEND and Attendance Strategic Boards to the YJ Management Board to ensure connectivity in continuous improvement work and oversight	Learning can be cascaded to school leaders around the needs of children open to youth justice		Ongoing

Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Support for arrested children	Continuation of Act Now/Op Deter Youth project in line with OPCC service level agreement Implementation of the OPCC Focused Diversion project to increase reach to children who are not currently eligible for diversionary support (Act Now/Turnaround) Board and YJ managers to continue to monitor outcome timeliness for children via the Local Criminal Justice Board and data shared with YJ Management Board TVP to present update to Board on progress of work around timeliness of investigations and processes in relation to children	Children arrested for knife and weapon possession offences in Oxfordshire receive timely and individualised support to address the root causes of behaviour Outcomes for children and timeliness of process is scrutinised and challenged where appropriate to improve experience of youth justice system for children and victims	Board – TVP rep Adolescence Service Manager YJ Team Manager Act Now Coordinator TYSS Team Manager	Quarterly reporting to OPPC August 2026 Board meeting

Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Over-representation and disproportionality for justice-involved children	Ensure disproportionality is a specific agenda item for discussion at every Board for effective oversight and delivery of Disproportionality Action Plan All Board members to provide data on disproportionality and overrepresentation as it relates to children within their own organisations as per YJB KPI 8 (Management Board Attendance)	Accountability across the Board and appropriate escalation mechanisms in place to respond to identified areas of concern and need Reductions in over-representation of marginalised groups can be well evidenced across partnership organisations	Board - All	Quarterly

Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Support for victims	Delivery against the service's RJ Improvement Plan	Assurance of high-quality casework and positive outcomes for victims is well evidenced and supported by quantitative and qualitative data	Board rep for Victims Adolescence Service Manager	Monthly monitoring through Children's Insights
	Continue to undertake case-work audits and dip-sampling	Board has shared understanding and appreciation of needs of victims and required provision to provide high quality services in Oxfordshire	YJ Team Manager YJ Senior Practitioner for RJ	Twice annually, reported into board
	Refresh feedback survey shared with victims to improve victim voice	Feedback from victims evidences positive experiences of YJS support and highlights areas for continuous improvement		Quarterly board meeting
	Work with TVP to ensure the voice of victims is best captured to inform pre-Court decision-making at JDMP	Victims receive a high quality, inclusive and timely service		
	Using the findings from our HMIP victim data dry-run to continue to develop and improve the RJ performance data for effective oversight, monitoring and support of victim case-work and outcomes	Victims feel that their views are heard and considered in decision-making processes to build trust and confidence in the youth justice system		
		Children in the YJ cohort have an improved understand of the impact of their behaviour on others and are supported to develop empathy as part of skill-building intervention work		

Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Board & Workforce Development	Board Development workshops scheduled throughout 2026 to support Board member induction and understanding of the YJS, including their roles and responsibilities as Board members	A skilled, knowledgeable and committed Board will provide effective senior leadership and oversight of the Youth Justice Service, ensuring high quality and appropriate provision is in place for justice-involved children in line with the National Standards and HMIP Inspection framework	Board Chair	Ongoing
	Board Induction pack was updated in 2025 and is shared with existing and new Board members	All YJS staff will have a robust induction and ongoing CPD opportunities to ensure they can safely and effectively undertake their respective roles	Adolescence Service Manager	
	Board Chair to schedule 1:1s with all Board members to ensure effective oversight, accountability and partnership input into the YJS as part the YJB guidance and requirements of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998	Children, families and victims receive responsive and individualised support from confident, skilled and well-supported practitioners	YJ Team Manager	December 2026
	YJ Workforce Training & Development Plan to be written for clear understanding of skills required for each role and for a clear audit trail of training delivery			

Priority	Actions	Outcome for children/victims/staff	Leads	Timescale
Continuous improvement and quality assurance	Monthly YJ Service/Team Manager meetings with CSC 'Working Group' to oversee multi-agency audits and case-file sampling.	Improved quality assurance of practice and joined-up working will ensure effective service delivery to children, families and victims	Children's Social Care QA service	Monthly and quarterly reporting
	Multi agency audits take place with partnership input			
	'Children's Insights' – Deputy Director-led monthly performance review for Children's Social Care ensuring cross-departmental oversight; YJ Service Manager and Team Manager contribute service summaries and actions for coming months.	Opportunities for learning and improvement are pro-actively sought and acted upon	Colleagues from across the partnership and Board reps as required	Twice annual multi agency audit activity
	'Learning Conversations' – monthly Adolescence & Prevention meeting focused on improvement, barriers, staff wellbeing, demand, national updates, and feedback from children, families, and victims – responsive, continuous service improvement	The voices of children, victims and families are heard across teams and up to Director level to ensure they are at the heart of practice and improvement work		Routine QA activity as part of case-management oversight
	YJS QA Policy reviewed - clear QA framework is in place for accountability for YJ managers and practitioners		AD for Prevention, Early Help & Assessment	Monthly
	Serious Incident Notifications and subsequent learning reviews are shared with Board for oversight		Adolescence Service Manager	
			YJ Managers	As required

In April 2026, **121** children were open to the YJS.
Of these:

- **75** were of statutory school age
- **55** were on a school roll

Of these 55 children:

- **69%** had an EHCP (38 children), an increase from 2025 when it was 43%
- Most common need remains **Social, Emotional and Mental Health**
- Persistent and severe absence **increased** from last year which must be a priority in the Board's Education Task and Finish group
- Positively, **0** children in the YJS cohort were permanently excluded
- **Speech, Language & Communication Needs** remain under-identified within our cohort which we are working to address via recruitment to a SALT worker post in 2026

Academic year 2025/25. Terms 1-4 (55 pupils)	No.	%	2025*	Direction of travel
Average attendance*		51%	49%	Improved
Persistent absence >=10%*	48	87%	75%	Worse
Severe absence >=50%*	26	47%	45%	Worse
1 or more suspensions*	29	53%	53%	Same
Average no. suspensions per pupil (range 1-10)*	3.5		4.4	Improved
Permanent exclusions	0	0%	4%	Improved

Primary Need	EHCP	SEN support only	Any SEN
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	12	2	14
Moderate Learning Difficulty	1	14	15
Multi-Sensory Impairment		1	1
Other Difficulty/Disability		1	1
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	24	21	45
Specific Learning Difficulty		4	4
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	1	3	4
Total	38	46	84

In April 2026, **121** children were open to the YJS.

Of these:

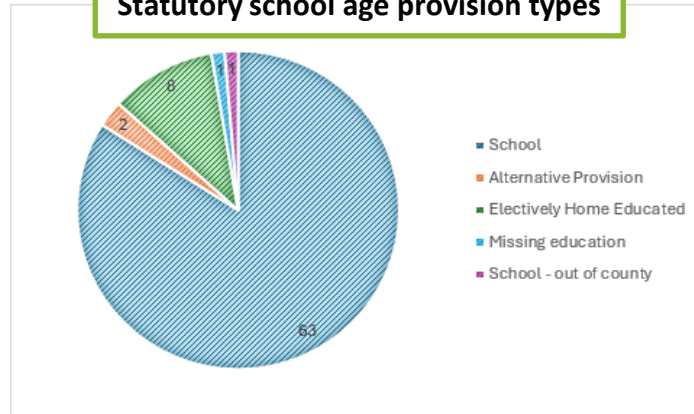
- **75** were of statutory school age
- **55** were on a school roll
- **46** children were over statutory school age

The Adolescence & Prevention Service have undertaken a workshop with colleagues from the Attendance & Inclusion teams

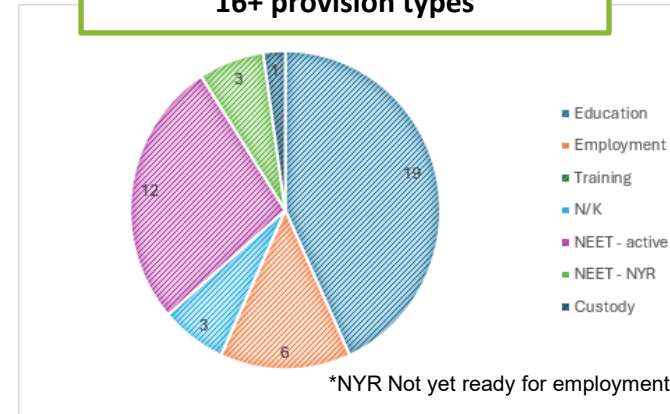


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Statutory school age provision types



16+ provision types



- **9** children were electively home educated within terms 1-4, and 8 were still open at the end of term 4
- **3** children had a period of being a “child missing education” during terms 1-4, 1 of these remained open at the end of term 4
- **2** children attended alternative provision other than school

Youth Diversion and Out of Court Resolution developments

Youth Diversion Programme (YDP):

- Pilot deferred caution/prosecution scheme running between Apr 2025–Jun 2026 with 16-week intervention and use of restorative approaches
- Oxfordshire YJS' Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) has made recommendations for YDPs for 109 children to date; 69 successfully completed their intervention, 24 are ongoing
- Very low incidences of non-engagement (4 cases) and evidence of strong completion rates
- Making a positive contribution to reducing our first-time entrants, with strong multi-agency support via the JDMP

Knife crime guidance (2026):

- New national guidance introduces a 4-week timeframe from disposal decision to intervention, requiring tighter joint-working with TVP
- Oxfordshire's Act Now/Op Deter Youth project work is already delivering against the new government guidance, supporting early intervention
- Removal of the "no comment/silent interview" option for out of court resolutions may increase court prosecutions and risk exacerbating disproportionality

Joint Decision-Making fast-track pilot:

- Following a partnership workshop on diversion hosted by the Centre for Justice Innovation, the YJS was able to highlight the significant demand coming into Oxfordshire's JDMP. This led to the development of a 'fast track' pilot with TVP which introduced out-of-panel triage for suitable cases. This has reduced demand on our Out of Court lead manager, reduced the length of the Panel, improved timeliness and supported partner engagement in the JDMP. A positive review of this pilot has led to extension through to Jan 2027

Key considerations and challenges:

- The CPS currently does not allow consideration of the YDP for children whose cases are returned from Court for out-of-court consideration, limiting opportunities for children to have equitable access to diversion
- The future of the YDP is uncertain and currently subject to review within Thames Valley Police
- The new Knife Crime guidance and removal of the out-of-court resolution 'no comment/silent interview' pathway has and will continue to increase the number of children charged to Court

Turnaround

Oxfordshire's Turnaround project has continued to work with children who received Community Resolutions, were on Bail / Released under investigation or were referred by partners due to concerns about police contact such as anti-social behaviour or a 'No Further Action' outcome. The work of our Youth & Family Practitioners focuses on the areas recommended in the Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit, particularly social and emotional interventions, music and sporting activities, mentoring and restorative justice. During the year we completed support with a total of 38 children, and at the end of March 2026 had a further 31 children who had been assessed and were engaging with support from Turnaround practitioners meaning we reached a total of 69 children during the year 2025-2026. Funding by the Ministry of Justice and the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner has allowed us to extend our reach and support greater numbers of children than in previous years.

The Turnaround Project locally and nationally tracks the outcomes for children who have had support and at the end of year 4 of the project we have data for 133 children who have completed Turnaround in Oxfordshire since 2023. Only 9 out of 133 (6.8%) have been convicted at court, or received a youth caution, for an offence committed after they closed to Turnaround Support. These figures are in line with the national data. Oxfordshire has been participating in further Ministry of Justice research which is being carried out about the effectiveness of Turnaround by sharing data about the local cohort with the research team and via participation in focus groups.

Feedback from a parent of a child we supported via Turnaround:

"Our Turnaround worker has been incredibly helpful, listening to my concerns and being very patient with B, especially when he didn't always want to engage. He seemed to understand B right away and was able to implement strategies that encouraged him to connect and engage. Thanks to our Turnaround worker B is now receiving support through Early Help, and with their assistance I'm hopeful that he will get the right support to help him make better choices and stay out of trouble. I want to express my gratitude to our worker for his exceptional support. He truly went above and beyond, and I honestly don't know how I would have managed the end of last year without him. Our worker made communication with various other authorities much smoother and guided me in ensuring we got the right support from the right sources. Not only did our worker support B, but he also helped me as a parent with strategies and guidance to support both myself to stay well."

Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS)

The Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS) sits alongside the YJS in the wider Adolescence and Prevention Service. It's areas of focus have been reviewed and are now much more closely aligned with the priorities of the YJS in terms of prevention and diversion.

- **Early Intervention and Prevention through Youth Work – Supporting Statutory Systems**

TYSS provides a comprehensive early-intervention and prevention offer designed to reduce the likelihood of young people entering statutory services. Practitioners engage directly in communities, offering consistent, trusted adult relationships that build resilience and foster a sense of belonging which is a known protective factor against offending and exploitation. The service identifies and signposts to positive activities, supports school attendance, and advocates for young people's needs and voice in meetings with schools, families and statutory partners. Practitioners use informal education and trauma-informed approaches to build pro-social skills, emotional regulation, resilience and confidence.

- **TYSS Targeted 1-2-1 Case Work**

TYSS delivers structured, targeted 1-2-1 case work for young people showing early indicators of risk linked to offending, exploitation, and community harm. Practitioners use intervention plans aligned to identified risks, needs and strengths. These include risks such as domestic abuse exposure, deprivation, poverty, NEET risk, repeated school exclusion, free school meal eligibility and being known to police or children's services. Sessions promote problem-solving, emotional literacy, safety planning, healthy relationships and increasing pro-social connections. The approach adopts contextual safeguarding principles, supporting young people in the settings where risks occur.

- **TYSS Group Work Programmes**

TYSS offers a wide range of evidence-based and needs-led group programmes designed to address key themes. Groups build peer connection, confidence, critical thinking and safer decision-making. Programmes targeted work both in schools and community settings.

Girls-only groups: explore healthy relationships, consent, gender inequality, coercive control, online pressures and self-esteem. Facilitators offer safe, trauma-informed spaces for girls to understand healthy boundaries and increase their confidence to disclose concerns or seek help. This work contributes to early prevention of harmful behaviours and supports safer peer cultures.

Positive Masculinity Groups: Group work that challenges harmful gender norms, toxic masculinity and attitudes linked to aggression, misogyny and exploitation. The group explore respectful relationships, communication, online influences (including incel content and Andrew Tate-style messaging) and positive identity development. Practitioners create a safe environment to challenge harmful attitudes without judgement or blame.

Online Safety: To support young people to navigate online spaces safely, including grooming indicators, pornography literacy, extremism, algorithm influence, digital footprints and understanding the law. Sessions build young people's ability to recognise risks, respond safely and act as positive bystanders.

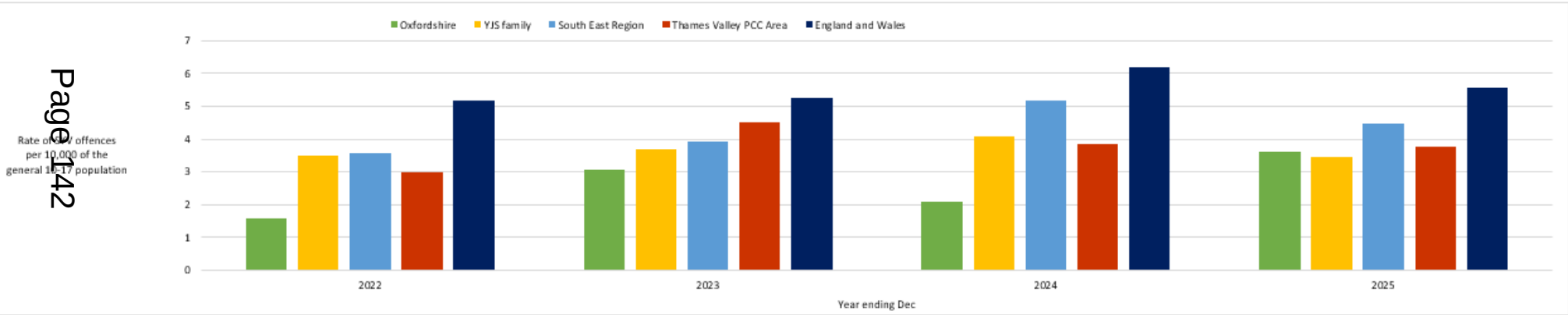
- **Year 6-7 transition programme**

These were implemented in response to national and local research and evidence that a poor transition from primary to secondary school can lead to poorer outcomes for the most vulnerable children, including reduced attendance, increased anxiety, disengagement and heightened risk of exploitation, offending or exclusion. The cohort is identified through a combination of indicators, including free school meal eligibility and/or multiple disadvantage, attendance concerns, SEND or additional needs, pastoral/behavioural concerns, previous fixed-term exclusion or high risk of exclusion and known to Children's Services. The aim is to build confidence, sense of belonging, practical skills and social-emotional readiness for secondary school. The approach supports attendance, engagement and reduces vulnerabilities associated with school exclusions.

Table 1: The number, rate and proportion of serious violence offences, Oxfordshire, Year ending Dec 2023 to Year ending Dec 2025

Oxfordshire	Latest 12 months		Change	Year ending Dec 2023	Change
	Year ending Dec 2025	Year ending Dec 2024			
Number of SV offences	26	15	+11	22	+4
Rate of SV offences	3.6	2.1	+1.5	3.1	+1
Proportion SV offences comprise of all offences	9%	4%	5.4 pp	5%	4.2 pp

Graph 3: The rate of serious violence offences per 10,000 children aged 10-17 by YJS, YJS family, YJS region, PCC area and national average, Year ending Dec 2022 to 2025



- In 2025 we saw an **increase in serious violence** offences by children to 26, up by 11 from 15 offences in 2024
- In 2025 serious violence offences comprised 9% of all offences by children in Oxfordshire, an increase of 5.4%
- **Possession of a blade/knife** has remained the most common serious violence offence since December 2024, followed by Possession of an offensive weapon
- Oxfordshire’s serious violence by children rate is **lower than the national, regional and Thames Valley rate**, but is slightly higher than our YJS statistical family rate

- The **Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Strategy 2024–2027** sets out the countywide, partnership-led response to the **Serious Violence Duty**, focusing on preventing and reducing violence linked to knife crime, drug-related exploitation, and harm to vulnerable adults and children. It adopts a public health approach, bringing together agencies to deliver activity across prevention, early intervention, enforcement, and safeguarding, underpinned by shared data, intelligence, and community engagement.
- Delivery of the strategy is supported by a multi-agency subgroup which meets on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by the OCC Fire & Rescue Partnership and Safeguarding Manager. Membership includes district Community Safety Partnership leads, Youth Justice, and the **Serious Violence Co-ordinator** (funded by the OPCC for 2025–26 and which sits in the Adolescence & Prevention Service), ensuring coordinated oversight, local delivery, and alignment with wider partnership priorities.



- The Adolescence and Prevention service has been awarded 3-year funding from the OPCC to deliver a new response to the prevention of serious violence by children in Oxfordshire using the **Youth Endowment Fund toolkit evidence base**. The **‘Strive’ project** provides **intensive long-term mentoring** for children at risk of serious violence (both as perpetrators and victims). By working across both secondary and tertiary referral pathways, ‘Strive’ will ensure that every child at risk of serious violence receives tailored mentoring support, helping them build resilience and achieve positive outcomes through relationship with a trusted and safe adult.
- Sitting within the Targeted Youth Support Service, ‘Strive’ is currently providing at a minimum, weekly one-to-one sessions for 45 children throughout Oxfordshire with capacity to support more as appropriate. Our 5 Youth Mentors, led by the Strive Lead & Serious Violence Coordinator, aim to support each child to develop a **pro-social identity** and realise their potential in line with **Child First principles**.

SAFER Team

- Safer practitioners provide 1:1 support for children where there is evidence of child criminal exploitation
- Works in close partnership with TVP's Harm Reduction Unit (HRU) to align thresholds and responses
- Provides contextual safeguarding expertise within Child in Need, Child Protection and Risk outside the Home plans
- Risk outside the Home pathway has been introduced (linked to the Families First pilot) and is being aligned with wider Children's Social Care, underpinned by research from Durham University
- SAFER will lead on key areas including Missing children, Prevent and radicalisation and the National Referral Mechanism local pilot
- The approach will be carefully integrated within wider Adolescence & Prevention to ensure effective and joined-up responses to children at risk

MACE Panels

- Co-chaired by the Service Manager for Adolescence & Prevention and the Harm Reduction Unit Inspector and inclusive of multi-agency partners including Education, Health, schools, Housing and Community Safety
- Monthly oversight of children being exploited and patterns of missing episodes
- Supports escalation of risk, disruption activity of the exploiters and wider contextual safeguarding responses within the community using the 4 P's approach (Prepare, Prevent, Pursue, Protect)

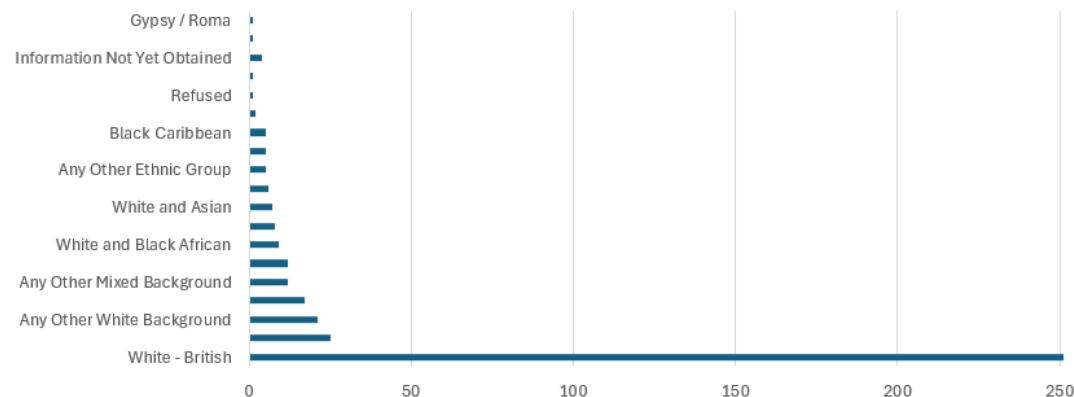
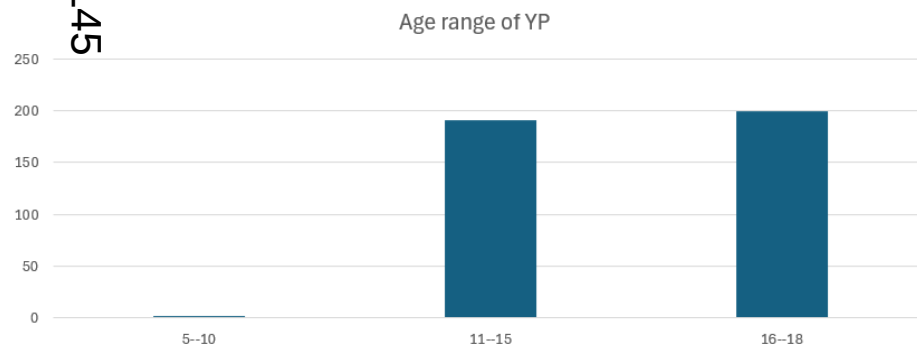
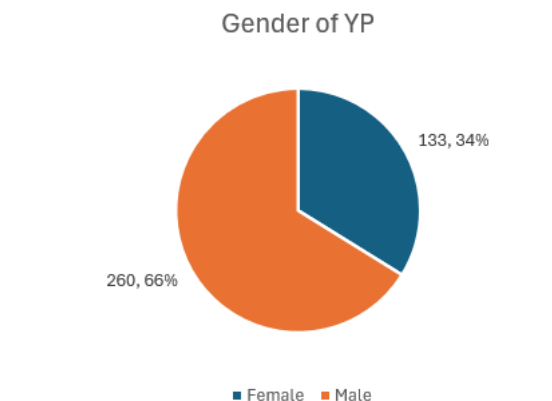
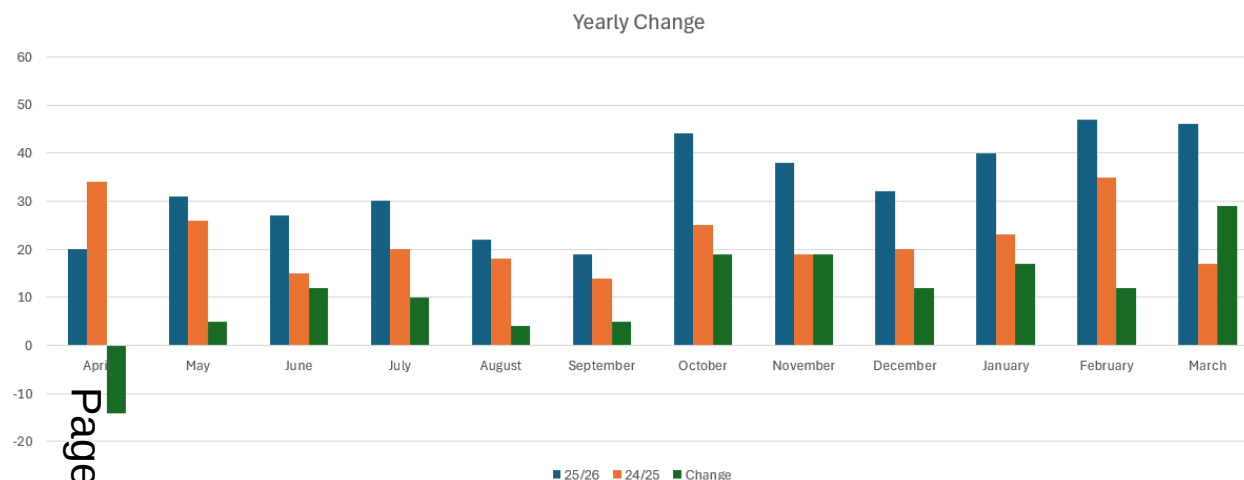
Act Now

- The YJS is meeting the new government Knife Crime guidance in partnership with Thames Valley Police via the Act Now/Op Deter Youth project. Under Act Now/Op Deter Youth the YJS is notified by TVP when a child is arrested for a knife/weapon possession offence, and we provide a 90-minute response to visit the child in police custody. We are working with TVP to ensure Inspector authorisation and caution delivery for these children are expedited to ensure intervention begins within 4 weeks.

Continuous Improvement

- The Adolescence & Prevention Service is working closely with the HRU around the use of the Philomena protocol for missing children to ensure effective join-up and information-sharing
- Corporate audit on missing children in October 2025 cited strong practice within MACE panels
- Children's Social Care's Missing Children Guidance has been reviewed and updated in April 2026 to support consistency in practice
- A performance dashboard and new recording pathways are being developed for the SAFER and Strive teams to monitor service performance and impact and track themes and trends

Data on exploitation screening tools received into Children's Services Apr 25 – Mar 26:



Data on exploitation screening tools received into Children's Services Apr 25 – Mar 26:



Screening tools are completed by multi-agency partners (incl. schools and community organisations) where exploitation is a concern.

- Significant increase this year: **266 → 396 (+230)**
- Most common concerns are poor **school attendance, parental difficulties in responding to children's behaviour** and **children being seen with older/unknown people**

How this informs practice

- Data used to target **training and awareness** for practitioners
- Supports **consistent identification of risk** and available interventions
- Drives **learning and improvement** through identification of trends, gaps in data and practice

Responses available

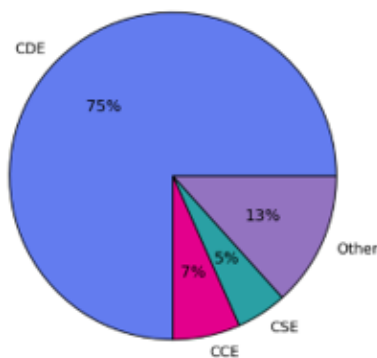
- SAFER team and partnership support
- MACE & YJ Safety panel oversight
- 1:1 interventions with children
- Police Harm Reduction Unit disruption activity
- Detached youth work responses

The local NRM devolved decision-making pilot and coordinator function now sits within the SAFER team.

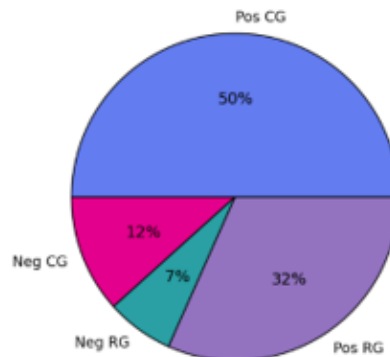
April 2025-March 2026

60 referrals between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026

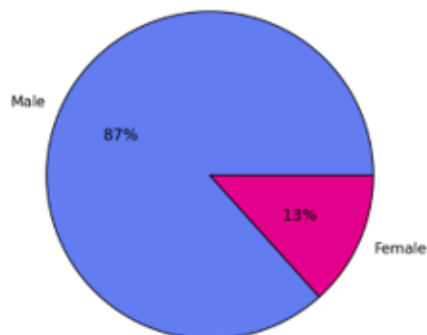
Exploitation Types



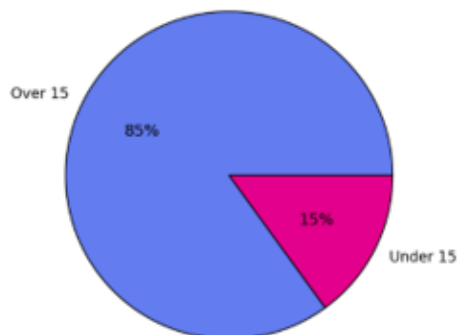
NRM Outcomes



Gender



Age Distribution



Key:

CDE – Child Drug Exploitation

CCE – Child Criminal exploitation

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation

Pos CG – Positive Conclusive Grounds

Pos RG - Positive Reasonable Grounds

Neg CG – Negative Conclusive Grounds

Neg RG – Negative Reasonable Grounds

What does the NRM pilot data tell us?

Ethnicity of children

53% White British
3% Any Other White Background
0% White and Black Caribbean
3% White and Black African
7% Black African
2% Black Caribbean
8% Any Other Black Background
5% Any Other Mixed Background
19% Any Other Asian Background

Exploitation Types

- 45 Child Drug Exploitation 75%
- 4 Child Criminal Exploitation 7%
- 3 Child Sexual Exploitation 5%
- 8 Other (Manual Labour, Kidnap for Ransom, Trafficking) 13%

Age

51 over 15 (85%)
9 under 15 (15%)

Gender

52 male (87%)
8 female (13%)

Outcomes

30 Positive Conclusive Grounds (50%)
7 Negative Conclusive Grounds (12%)
4 Negative Reasonable Grounds (7%)
19 Positive Reasonable Grounds (31%)

Most children referred to the local NRM panel are White British males over the age of 15. The prevalence of Positive Conclusive Ground decisions (overseen and ratified by the Single Competent Authority, SCA) indicates strength of identification, evidence and decision-making. We are mindful of the low rate of referrals for females and for Child Sexual Exploitation and this has been shared with the OSCP Exploitation Sub-Group. Next steps include further data analysis of Court outcomes for children where Positive CG were agreed, as well as comparison with other pilot areas to review trends and continuous improvement work.

- The YJS delivers an Appropriate Adult service for children who are arrested and taken to Police custody. The YJS has a team of 37 volunteers, of which 23 are trained Appropriate Adults. All have received in-house training to ensure compliance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and NAAN guidelines. The volunteers receive safeguarding training, regular supervision, access to support group meetings to raise any concerns / issues regarding their role, hear relevant service updates and receive specific training to enhance their skills and knowledge in the role.
- Refresher Appropriate Adult training is available, and Appropriate Adult full-day training is offered to Children's Services staff and Adult Social Care staff. The service also delivers an Appropriate Adult Awareness course twice yearly, open to all Oxfordshire County Council staff including partner agencies working with children and vulnerable adults to help them to understand this vital role. Experienced volunteers provide shadowing for new volunteers wishing to experience custody before working independently.
- The YJS monitors the number of strip-searches that a volunteer Appropriate Adult attends, including the ethnicity of the children who are strip-searched. In 2025-26 there were 8 children subject to intimate strip-searches, an increase of 7 from last year.
- A YJS Manager attends a quarterly Children in Custody meeting where data on children who are held overnight in custody suites across Thames Valley is scrutinised and discussed with partners including YJS', Emergency Duty Teams, Health colleagues and Social Care. As a result of partnership working through this meeting, data on Oxfordshire children held in Police custody is now shared with the Management Board each quarter.

Count of Children in Remand
Q4 25/26.

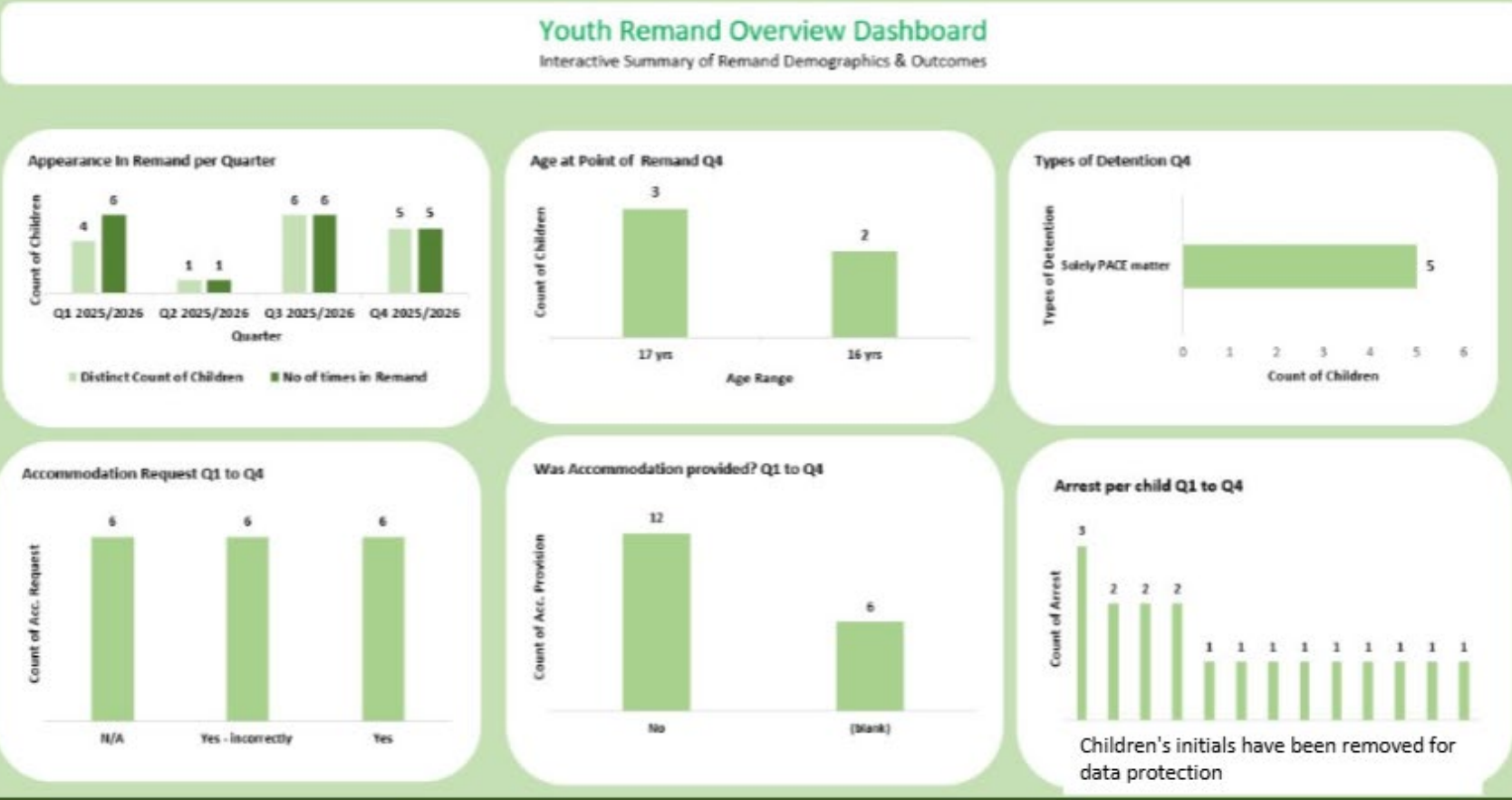
5

No of Distinct children In
Remand from Q1 to Q4.

13

Total Remand Episodes across
period

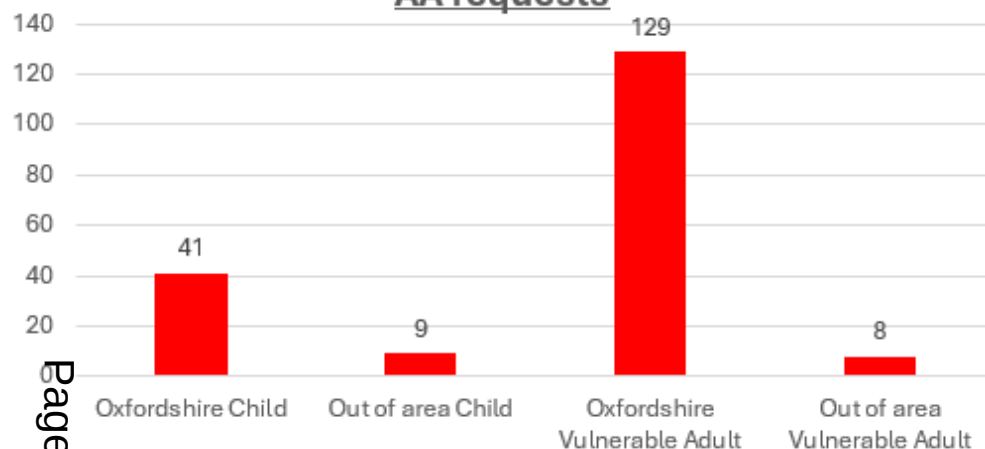
18



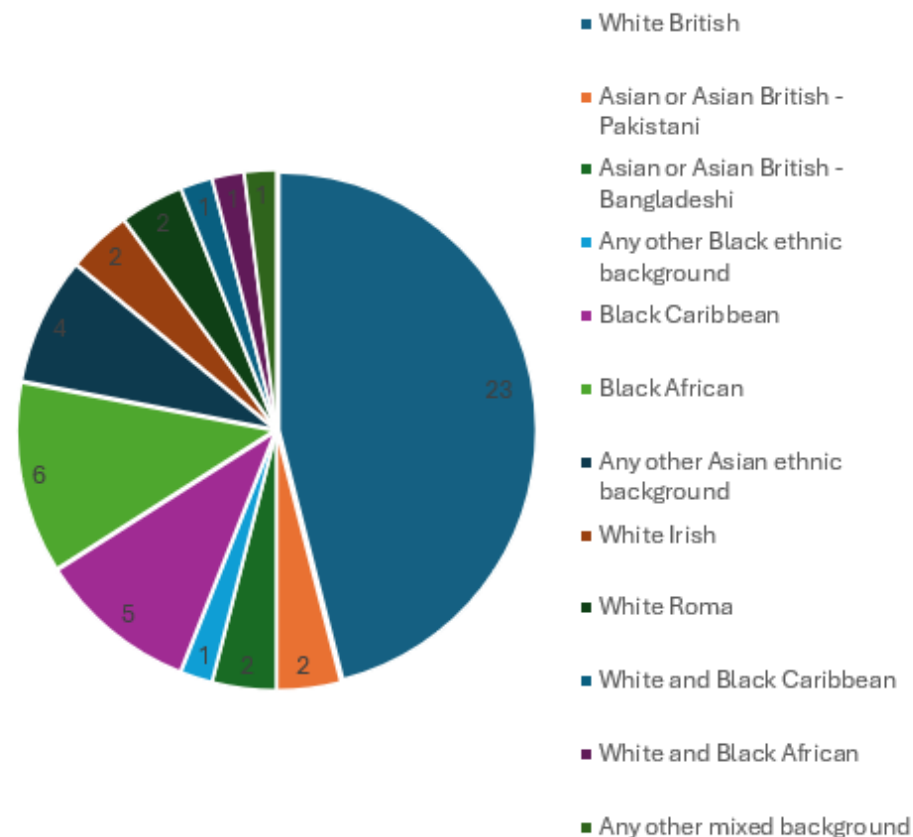
- The average number of children held overnight in Police custody between April 2025 – March 2026 was **4** each quarter. The average number of times each child was held on remand in Police custody was **4.5**.
- Only children aged 16+ were held overnight in this period.
- Alternative accommodation could not be provided by the Local Authority for any of the children.

Appropriate Adult provision April 2025 – April 2026

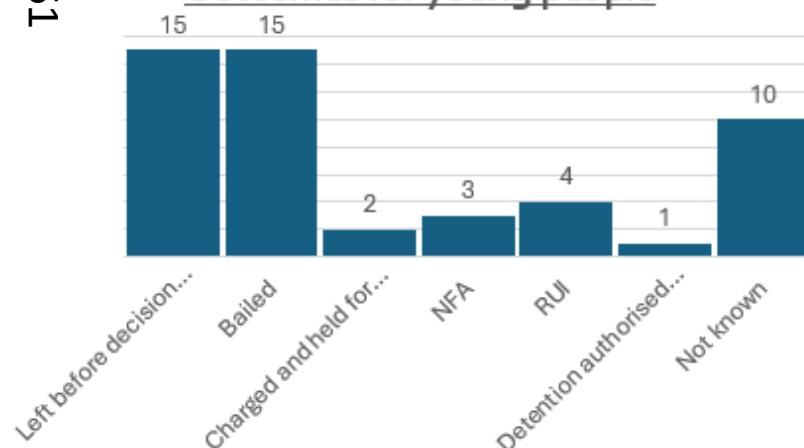
AA requests



Ethnicity of young people

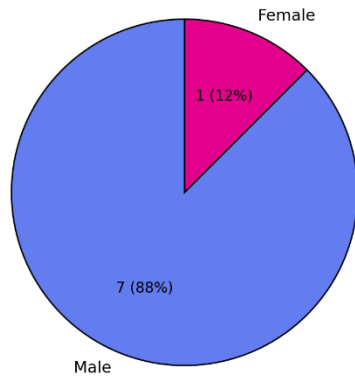


Outcomes for young people

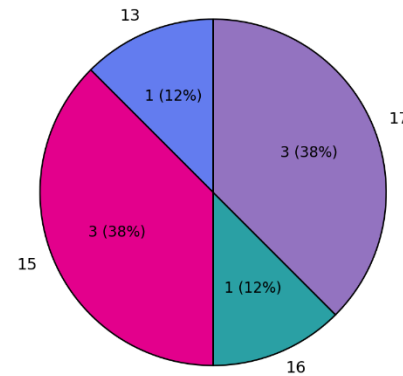


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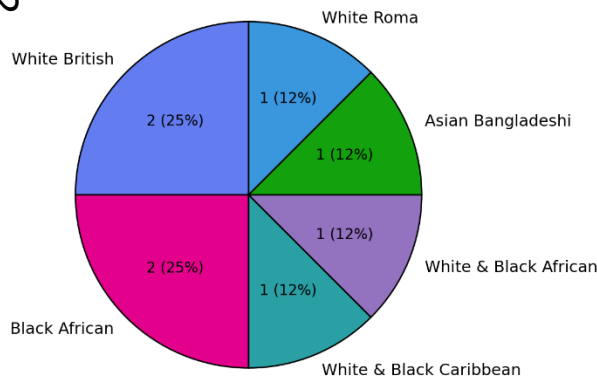
Strip search EIP by gender (n=8)



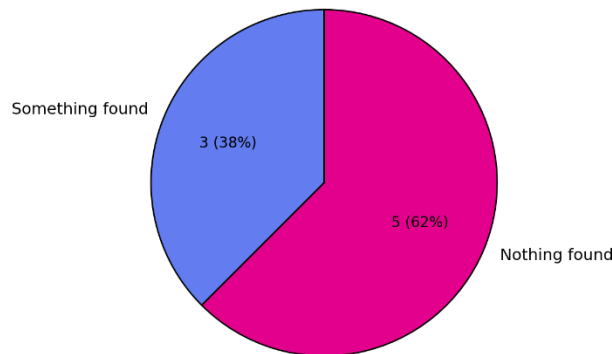
Strip search EIP by age (n=8)



Strip search EIP by ethnicity (n=8)



Strip search EIP outcome (n=8)



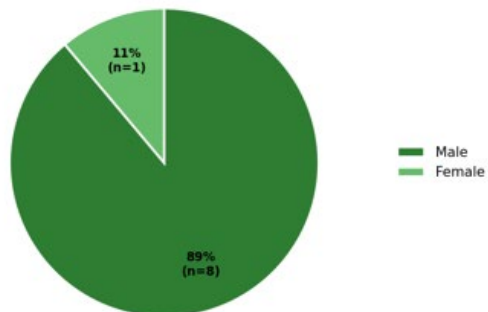
EIP = Expose Intimate Parts

Our Volunteer Coordinators who manage our Appropriate Adult provision collate data on all children subject to strip-searches within Police custody, and this is shared with the YJ Management Board.

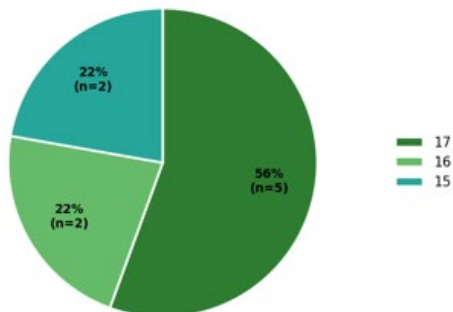
It is also reviewed at the partnership Children in Custody meeting for Thames Valley, led by Thames Valley Police.

Data for all remanded and sentenced (custody) children between Apr 25 – Mar 26

Gender



Age



Gender

Male: **89% (8)**

Female: **11% (1)**

Age

17: **56% (5)**

16: **22% (2)**

15: **22% (2)**

Ethnicity

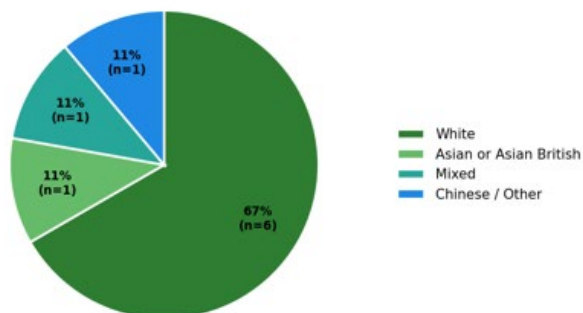
White: **67% (6)**

Asian or Asian British: **11% (1)**

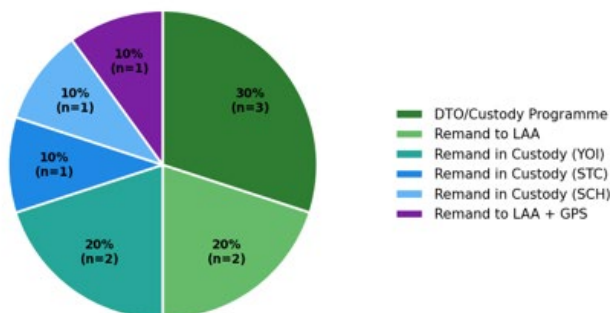
Mixed: **11% (1)**

Chinese / Other: **11% (1)**

Ethnicity



Intervention Type



Intervention Type

DTO/Custody Programme: **30% (3)**

Remand to LAA: **20% (2)**

Remand in Custody (YOI): **20% (2)**

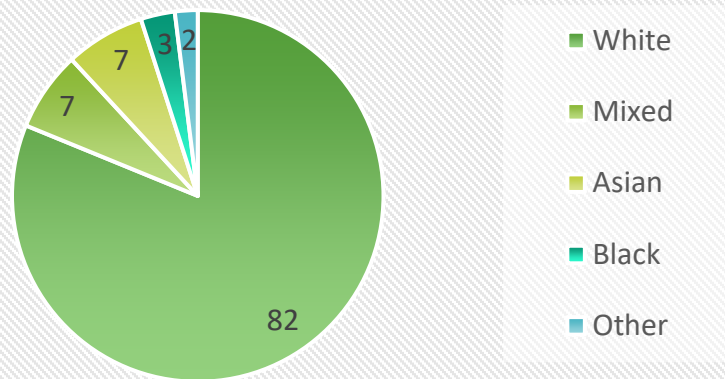
Remand in Custody (STC): **10% (1)**

Remand in Custody (SCH): **10% (1)**

Remand to LAA + GPS: **10% (1)**

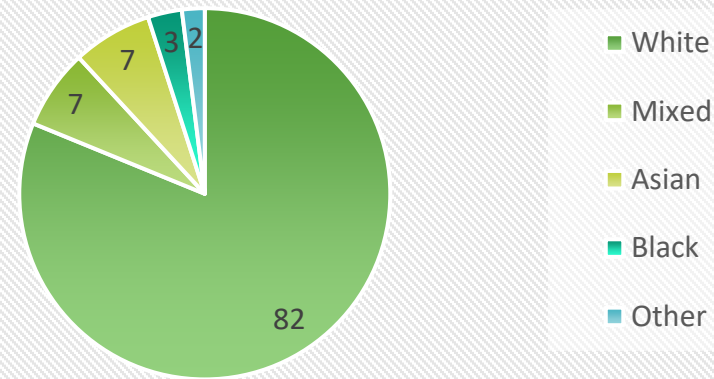
- The YJS developed a pathway for Remanded Children with Children's Social Care to ensure that newly remanded children not already open to CSC are expedited through MASH and allocated a Social Worker within 1 working day. The use of a newly developed Remand Notification informs senior leaders in Children's Services of the child's new status for oversight, support and escalation where required.
- YJS practitioners undertook training on Bail and Remand with the Youth Justice Legal Centre
- The YJS was successful in recruiting to a Youth Justice Probation Officer (in lieu of a secondee) who supports the team with oversight of transitions and resettlement practice and is lead practitioner for MAPPA.

Ethnicities of children within offending population* by % (Apr 25 – Mar 26)



*this YJB data excludes diversions

Ethnicities of children in Oxfordshire 10-17 mid-year population (2021 census)



When compared to the wider 10–17-year-old population in Oxfordshire:

- We know that Black children are over-represented within the YJ cohort by **1%**
- We know that children of mixed heritage (YJB definition) are over-represented by **3%** - this has **increased by 1%** since 24-25
- In both cases, the differences remain below the 5% threshold used by the YJB to indicate significant disparity between the offending and general populations of 10–17-year-olds, however, this must remain an issue that is closely monitored and addressed by the Management Board and service as part of our Disproportionality Action Plan.
- The service and Board recognises the need to focus on wider marginalised and over-represented groups (e.g. Girls, Gypsy, Roma & Traveller children, children with SEND) and ensure we have accurate data to drive and develop our Disproportionality Action Plan.

Our work with families is holistic, preventative and relationship-focused.

- We work with families to understand the broader context of a child's experiences, including factors that may contribute to behaviour and risks of reoffending.
- Caseworkers provide tailored support, including signposting, advocacy, and multi-agency coordination to address needs across the family unit and manage safety concerns to others and the child.
- The Family Bridges team offers targeted support where there is risk of family breakdown, using a mentalisation-based approach to strengthen understanding and rebuild relationships.
- Siblings are offered support through the Targeted Youth Work Service to create positive opportunities and help prevent negative trajectories.
- We actively seek and use family feedback to improve our service and ensure it remains responsive and effective.
- As a Family Safeguarding authority, we are committed to relational practice—working alongside children and families with empathy and respect for where they are in their journey of change. Our restorative approach recognises the impact of harmful behaviour not only on those directly involved, but also on the wider family and community.

Child 1

Joint working between Family Bridges and the YJS was particularly effective in A's case, where there had been a lack of consistency in professional support. We collaborated closely to improve responses to missing episodes and strengthen planning around the safety concerns. This included joint sessions to support introductions and contribute to the pre-sentence report writing process. We also worked together to explore A's thinking patterns and increase awareness of potential exploitation risks. This coordinated approach supported more consistent messaging and improved engagement with both A and his family.

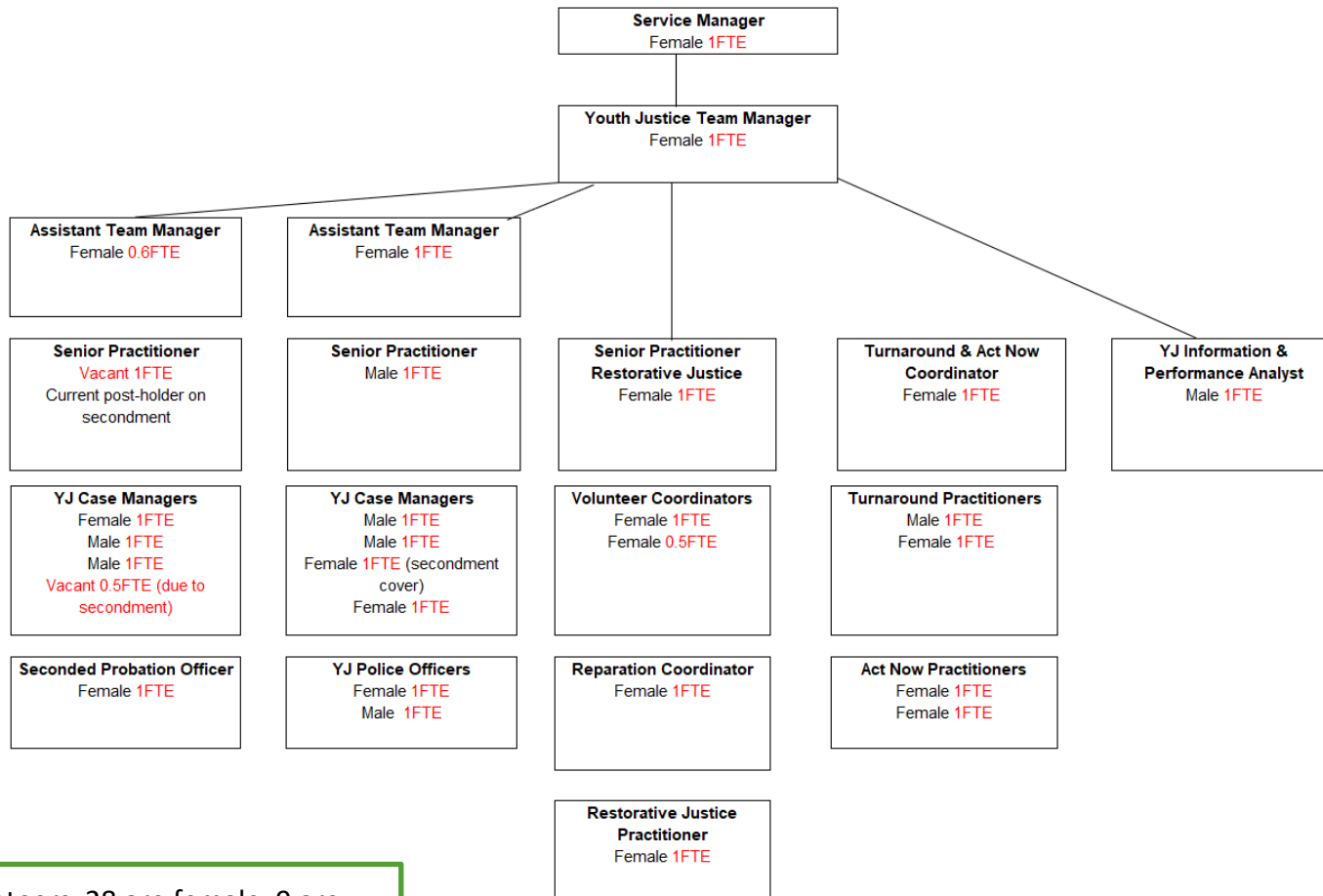
Child 2

There was strong collaboration with the YJS worker in J's case, particularly during periods of heightened safety concerns. The Family Bridges worker consulted with the YJS worker when J was found in possession of a sharp object to clarify whether this constituted a criminal offence and to ensure an appropriate, proportionate response. The practitioners worked together to support J and her mother during court proceedings, with the Family Bridges worker focused on supporting Mum to attend and engage, while the YJS worker provided direct support within Court and helped communicate J's needs. Since the completion of YJS involvement, there have been no further incidents of criminality, indicating a really positive impact.

Child 3

Multi-agency working with Family Bridges and the YJS through the Turnaround programme was very effective in B's case. Communication was strong, particularly in relation to risks around exploitation and fire-setting behaviours. The YJS worker primarily engaged directly with B, whilst the Family Bridges worker focused on supporting the parents to safety plan and respond consistently at home. This clear division of roles, alongside regular information-sharing, contributed to improved family functioning and reduced risk-taking behaviours. There have been no further incidents reported since this joint intervention.

Adolescence & Prevention: Youth Justice, SAFER, TYSS and Family Bridges



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We have 37 volunteers. 28 are female, 9 are male

FCAMHS link worker 0.2FTE

Phoenix Health Nurse 1FTE

Drug Diversion Scheme Worker (Cranstoun) 0.8FTE

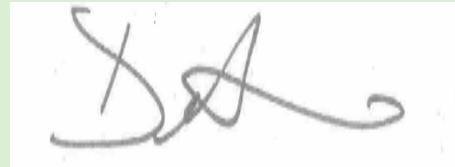
TYPE OF ROLE	NO. OF STAFF	GENDER	ETHNICITY	DISABILITY
Service Manager	1	F	White	
Team Manager	1	F	White	
Assistant Team Manager	2	F-2	White	
Performance and Information Analyst	1	M	Black	
Senior Practitioner	2	M-1 Vacant	White-1	
Youth Justice Practitioner	8	M-4 F-3 Vacant -1	White-7	
Restorative Justice Practitioner	2	F-2	White-1 Asian-1	
Act Now & Turnaround Co-ordinator	1	F	White	
Act Now Practitioner	2	F-2	White-2	
Turnaround Practitioner	2	M-1 F-1	Black-1 White-1	
Reparation Coordinator	1	F-1	White	
Volunteer Coordinator	2	F-2	White-1 Black-1	Yes
Volunteers	37	F-28 M-9	Black African x 1 Black Caribbean and White x 1 British Indian x 1 Other mixed x 1 Other mixed Arab x 1 White British x 29 White Other x 3	
Youth Justice Probation Officer (Fixed-term)	1	F-1	White	
Youth Justice Police Officers	2	M-1 F-1	Asian-1 White-1	
Speech & Language Therapist (fixed term)	Vacant			
Linked Specialists:				
Drug Diversion Scheme Worker	1	F	White Other	
SALT Worker	Vacant			
Specialist Nurse	1	F	White	
Forensic CAMHS link worker	1	F	White	

Signed by Chair of Board:

Delia Mann

Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

24th June 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SA', on a white rectangular background.

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EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 22 September 2026

APPRENTICESHIPS

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) Consider the current position regarding apprenticeship opportunities for young people aged 16-18 in Oxfordshire, including young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
 - b) Endorse continued partnership work between Oxfordshire County Council, apprenticeship training providers, education providers, Enterprise Oxfordshire and employers to increase awareness of, and access to, apprenticeship opportunities for young people, including those with SEND.
 - c) Support further targeted work to improve employer confidence in recruiting young people with SEND, including clearer guidance, improved access to specialist advice, education for employers around SEND and apprenticeships in general and strengthened mentoring and support arrangements.
 - d) Support further work to improve young people's work readiness, including through careers education, work experience, volunteering, employer encounters, pre-apprenticeship programmes and preparation for employment activity. In addition a consistent approach of support from all training providers.
 - e) Support the development of improved local data reporting on apprenticeship participation for young people aged 16-17, including where available those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or identified SEND.

Executive Summary

2. Apprenticeships provide an important route into education, employment and training for young people and support local employers to develop the future workforce. They offer young people the opportunity to earn while learning, gain practical workplace experience and work towards recognised qualifications.
3. This report provides an overview of apprenticeship opportunities for young people in Oxfordshire, with a particular focus on young people aged 16-18 and young people with SEND.

4. Engagement with local apprenticeship training providers indicates that employers are generally supportive of apprenticeships for young people aged 16-18 and are not inherently reluctant to employ young people with SEND. However, providers identified concerns about work readiness, supervision capacity and the practical challenges associated with supporting apprentices who may require additional assistance and whether they, as employers, have the expertise and resource required to do this well.
5. Feedback gathered from Enterprise Oxfordshire's engagement with employers shows a generally optimistic picture, with employers overall indicating a willingness to recruit younger apprentices and apprentices with SEND where appropriate support is available. However, it should be noted that training provider feedback was more cautious and highlighted practical barriers around capacity, confidence and readiness.
6. It is noteworthy that the themes emerging from employer and training provider engagement are consistent with wider government areas of focus relating to young people and their pathways into work, including those identified through the emerging Milburn Review and which include the importance of effective transition support, employer engagement, work experience, employability skills and the need for targeted support for vulnerable young people. Evidence gathered around apprenticeships highlights specific barriers such as employer confidence, mentoring requirements, employers having the expertise and resource themselves to support young apprentices and the need for support to secure travel independence. In tandem, both pieces of work highlight the need for coordinated partnership support to help vulnerable young people progress successfully into education, employment and training especially at key transition points such as moving into Year 12.
7. A consistent message from employer and training providers is that successful apprenticeships depend on effective matching, strong workplace mentoring, training provider support, SEND-specific guidance, advice on reasonable adjustments, work readiness and ongoing employer support.
8. This report identifies the following key themes:
 - a) Employer willingness exists, but confidence is variable.
 - b) Work readiness is the most significant barrier.
 - c) SEND itself is not the primary obstacle.
 - d) Mentoring and specialist support are critical to success and employers often do not have that specialist expertise
 - e) Larger employers may be better equipped than small and medium-sized enterprises.
 - f) Apprenticeships are often misunderstood by young people and families.
 - g) Transport, travel independence and delays in sharing EHCP information can create additional barriers for some young people with SEND.
 - h) Some inconsistency around training provider support.
 - i) The report recommends continued partnership action to strengthen employer confidence, improve young people's preparation for

employment, promote inclusive apprenticeship pathways and improve the visibility and quality of local apprenticeship data.

Context

9. The proportion of young people in Years 12 and 13 participating in apprenticeships has remained broadly comparable over the past two years and is in line with national, South East and neighbouring local authority benchmarks, particularly where cohort sizes are similar. However, individual Local Authorities and the national picture shows that there has been a decrease in young people in apprenticeships over the past 12 months.
10. Please note that March has been selected as the measurement point as it falls approximately six months after the start of the academic year and so provides a more reliable indicator of apprenticeship participation and retention following the initial period of apprenticeship recruitment.

Area	Year 12/13s March 2026	Actual in apprenticeships	March 2026 %	Year 12/13s March 2025	Actual in apprenticeships	March 2025 %
England	1,363,692	49,092	3.60%	1,337,297	52,275	3.90%
South East	222,243	7,112	3.20%	216,029	7,556	3.50%
Bucks	13,906	403	2.90%	13,713	514	3.74%
Cambs	15,183	516	3.40%	14,593	607	4.15%
Gloucs	14,980	569	3.80%	14,631	719	4.91%
Oxfordshire	15,112	589	3.90%	15,168	634	4.18%
Warks	13,228	463	3.50%	13,195	516	3.91%
Wilts	11,578	336	2.90%	11,256	347	3.08%

(Source National Client Caseload Information System March 2026)

11. Apprenticeships form an important part of the wider post-16 education, employment and training landscape. They provide a recognised route for young people to move into skilled employment while continuing to learn and develop.
12. For young people aged 16-18, apprenticeships can provide an alternative pathway to employment from school sixth form, college or other training routes. They can be particularly valuable for young people who are motivated by practical learning, workplace experience and progression into employment.
13. This briefing paper has been developed in response to local interest in apprenticeship opportunities for young people in Oxfordshire, including the accessibility of apprenticeships for young people with SEND.
14. The report draws on recent engagement undertaken with local apprenticeship training providers and Enterprise Oxfordshire employer engagement activity; including an employer focus group as well as a questionnaire sent to both

training providers and employers. The provider feedback specifically considered apprenticeships for young people aged 16-18 and young people with SEND.

15. The employer and training provider feedback provides useful insight into both the opportunities and barriers currently affecting apprenticeship participation. Employers were generally positive about recruiting younger apprentices provided there was accompanying support while training providers highlighted practical concerns such as supervision, maturity, capacity, and costs.

Financial Implications

16. There are no direct additional financial implications arising from this report. Current activity is being delivered through existing staffing and partnership arrangements. Any future proposals requiring additional resources will be subject to separate consideration through the Council's budget and governance processes.

Legal Implications

17. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The report is presented for consideration by the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and does not itself seek approval for a new policy, budget or statutory decision. Members should note that the public sector equality duty under s.149 Equality Act 2010 will apply to the development of any future proposals, and that any improved data reporting or sharing concerning young people with SEND will need to comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Any future proposals that create legal, contractual or statutory implications will be subject to separate legal advice.

Staff Implications

18. There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. Current activity is being undertaken through existing service and partnership arrangements.
19. Further work to improve employer engagement, data reporting, SEND guidance and apprenticeship pathways may require officer time across relevant services, including Education, Employment and Training, SEND, Enterprise Oxfordshire and partner organisations.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

20. This report has a clear equality and inclusion focus because it considers access to apprenticeship opportunities for young people with SEND.

21. Provider feedback indicates that SEND itself is not the primary barrier to apprenticeship recruitment. Instead, barriers are more commonly linked to employer capacity, confidence, access to support, travel independence, how quickly and effectively employers can access information about the needs of their young people, and how workplace expectations are communicated and supported. It was noted by training providers that the EHCP process can delay application. Often there are several layers to move through i.e. EHCP Team, apprenticeship provider, curriculum lead and this can be further complicated if the young person is from another county or requires their plan reviewing. If the apprenticeship vacancy has a short lead time then there are chronological barriers that may preclude an applicant with an EHCP.
22. Improving access to apprenticeships for young people with SEND will require attention to reasonable adjustments, specialist guidance, appropriate matching, mentoring and sustained support and some thinking around reducing the admin involved in an EHCP application.
23. Further work may require equality screening or an Equality Impact Assessment if new proposals, policies or service changes are developed.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

24. There are no immediate Local Government Reorganisation implications arising directly from this report.
25. However, education, employment and training pathways for young people, including young people with SEND, will remain important areas of work during and beyond future local government reorganisation. The Millburn Report Recommendations are expected to be published in Autumn 2026 and it is possible that there will be further implications or responsibilities for Local Authorities within these pending recommendations.
26. Strengthening partnership arrangements across the post 16 and employer landscape in Oxfordshire and developing clearer support pathways for young people who follow an apprenticeship route may support continuity during future organisational change.

Sustainability Implications

27. There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report. Apprenticeships may support young people to access local employment opportunities, although any specific sustainability implications would need to be considered in relation to future proposals, programmes or projects.

Risk Management

28. The following risks and mitigations have been identified:

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Low apprenticeship participation among young people	Young people may not access apprenticeships due to limited awareness, limited vacancies or lack of preparation.	Strengthen careers education, employer engagement and promotion of apprenticeship pathways.
Unequal access for young people with SEND	Young people with SEND may face additional barriers linked to support, travel, confidence, admin procedures or employer capacity.	Improve SEND guidance, mentoring, matching and access to specialist advice; especially for employers.
Employer reluctance or reduced confidence	Employers may be willing in principle but concerned about supervision, resource and support requirements.	Provide clear guidance, practical support and opportunities for direct employer engagement and education.
Poor matching between young people and employers	Apprenticeships may not be sustained if the role, employer and young person are not well matched.	Work with providers to strengthen matching and ongoing support arrangements.
Employability and work-readiness barriers	A proportion of young people face barriers to employment readiness, including limited work experience, lower confidence, poor attendance histories, unmet support needs or insufficient understanding of employer expectations. These factors may reduce access to apprenticeships and other employment opportunities.	Delivery of targeted employability support through education, employment and training services; promotion of work experience opportunities; early identification of barriers; and collaborative working with education providers, employers and partner agencies to support successful transitions into employment.
Lack of reliable local data	Limited data may make it difficult to assess participation trends for young people with EHCPs or SEND.	Develop local data reporting using available sources, including Core+/NCCIS and provider intelligence.

Consultations

29. This report draws on engagement with local apprenticeship training providers via Education's EET Service, as well as employer feedback gathered by Enterprise Oxfordshire during the period 1/8/2026 to 26/8/2026.
30. Due to the time of the year, there were some limitations around the engagement of training providers and employers but, as of 11th August 2026, a minimum of 20 employers/training providers have been consulted. An employer focus group took place on 26th August 2026 in collaboration with Enterprise Oxfordshire.

31. Provider engagement to date has identified key barriers including limited apprenticeship opportunities in some sectors i.e. construction where supervision for young apprentices (under 18) can be a challenge as well as implications of insurance from a Health & Safety perspective and young people being able to travel between construction sites. Also, smaller retail and hospitality businesses where staffing pressure impacts on training resource. In addition, employer capacity, finding the right qualification for an industry specific skill, supervision requirements, young people's work readiness, additional support requirements for some young people with SEND, transport and independence barriers, and a lack of understanding of apprenticeships and expectations amongst some young people, families and employers.
32. Employer engagement showed strong support for recruiting younger apprentices, but also identified a need for SEND guidance, ongoing support and advice, specialist resource on site or externally, access to specialist expertise, work readiness education and opportunities for discussion and networking.

Conclusion

33. The early local evidence from employer and provider engagement to date presents a broadly positive but nuanced picture. Employers are generally willing to consider recruiting young people aged 16-18 and young people with SEND, but confidence varies and practical barriers remain.
 - a) Work readiness, employer capacity, employer access to specialist support/mentoring. Long term and quality support from training provider and effective matching are the key factors influencing successful apprenticeship participation.
 - b) The findings suggest that the focus for Oxfordshire should be on strengthening young people's preparation for employment, improving employer confidence, making support easier to access, education for employers and improving local data on apprenticeship participation.
 - c) Further work will be required to incorporate local apprenticeship participation data, including data relating specifically to 16-17 year olds and, where available, young people with EHCPs or identified SEND. These groups are a particular focus because they can face additional barriers to accessing and sustaining apprenticeship opportunities. Improved data will provide a stronger evidence base for understanding participation rates, identifying any inequalities in access and informing future support and intervention activity

LISA LYONS
Director of Children's Services

Annex:	Nil
Background papers:	Nil
Contact Officer:	Elaine North Education, Employment & Training Manager

August 2026

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Work Programme 2026/27
Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liz Brighthouse, OBE, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Type	Report Leads
		22 September 2026		
Harm Outside the Home and Child Sex Exploitation	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To consider the Council's multi-agency approach and to review its performance focus and future priorities.	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons,
Apprenticeships	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To consider the accessibility and impact of apprenticeships (including those vulnerable or disadvantaged, inc. SEND and who might be in receipt of AEP)	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons



Youth Justice Annual Plan	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To consider the annual plan before it is adopted by the Youth Justice Board and adopted by Council; to be updated on the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies involved; to scrutinise the plans and priorities in this sphere.	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons; Jessie Dobson
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To receive the annual report	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons
		24 November 2026		
Virtual School annual report	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To receive the annual report	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons, Clare Pike
Adopt Thames Valley annual report	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To receive the annual report	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons, Charlotte Davy
SEND Reform Plan	Fairer; Greener; Healthier	To consider HMG's response to the SEND Reform Plan and the resulting work	Overview and Scrutiny	Lisa Lyons
		19 January 2027		
		<i>To be decided</i>		
		27 April 2027		
		<i>To be decided</i>		

SUB GROUP / WORKING GROUP

SUB GROUPS / WORKING GROUPS				
Name	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Members
Lessons Learned from Woodeaton	Create Opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential	Communications surrounding the Ofsted inspection	Report to Committee	Cllr Markham (Deputy Chair); Cllr Dr Creed; Cllr Heritage; Cllr Graham; Cllr Plumb.

BRIEFINGS FOR MEMBER INFORMATION

BRIEFINGS				
Name	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Members

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Recommendation Tracker

Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The recommendation update tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress accepted recommendations. The tracker is updated with recommendations accepted by Cabinet. Once a recommendation has been updated, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker. If the recommendation will be update in the form of a separate item, it will be shaded yellow.

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
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Recommendations:

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
26-Jun-26	Best Start in Life and Best Start in Life Family Hubs	1. <i>That the Council should ensure that sufficient resources are available to deliver the Best Start in Life Plan's ambition and to support achievement of Oxfordshire's ambitions for children, including the more stretching local targets for children eligible for free school meals.</i>	Lisa Lyons	Awaiting response

Recommendation Update Tracker

Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Actions:

Meeting date	Item	Action	Lead	Update/response
There are no outstanding action items				

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