

North Yorkshire

Youth Justice Service

ITEM 10 - REVIEW REPORT



Strategic Plan 2018-20

2018-19 Review



Chair's introduction

2018/19 has been a challenging, busy and rewarding year for North Yorkshire's Youth Justice Partnership.

The operational Youth Justice teams are now fully integrated with the Early Help Service, ensuring a more joined-up and effective provision. We are beginning to see new, innovative and collaborative practice emerging, in particular the development of a more child and family-focused approach to working with young people in trouble.

This has been pivotally supported by the opportunity to develop a locally-integrated alternative assessment model. We knew that our skilled practitioners were spending too much of their time on deskwork and procedural compliance, and that ASSETPlus was sometimes a barrier to effective support. We were very pleased when YJB and DfE invited high-performing Local Authorities to pilot new practice, and proud that North Yorkshire was one of only five YOT partnerships to be selected for this sector leadership role.

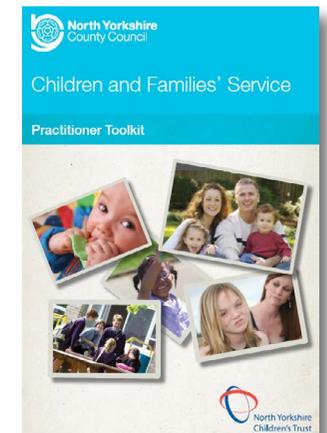
Alongside this transformative change programme, we are also working to ensure readiness for HMIP Inspection. To inform this, and to give the Management Board an independent 'critical friend' assessment, we commissioned a rigorous Peer Review from the Essex Youth Offending Service. It was a pleasure to receive their report, which described very high standards of practice by a motivated, effective and well-led team.

“Overall a service to be proud of with engaged staff and clear commitment at every level of leadership.
Peer Review Findings”

Despite these positive indications however, the Management Board continues to challenge some aspects of the Service's performance. Strong improvement has been achieved in reducing first-time entrants, and a recent, concerning spike in custodial sentencing is now coming back into line. But re-offending is still unacceptably high, and our partnership is determined that this must be our foremost priority now.

I firmly believe that improving our practice model is the key to this challenge. Our My Assessment Plan (MAP) model is built on the principles of Signs of Safety, ensuring recognition and interoperability with all other local services and support plans. It leads to a simple, holistic and strengths-based plan, and our staff working alongside the child and family, using positive, influential relationships to facilitate change. Combined with new, best practice restorative and family-centred working methods, this will deliver the required performance and outcome improvements

Finally, we will focus on improving support for looked-after children (LAC). This is important for our performance outcomes, because North Yorkshire has a large number of out-of-area LACs (placed here by other local authorities) and their disproportionately high re-offending significantly impacts upon our national KPI results. However this is not merely an exercise in statistical improvement – looked-after children are particularly vulnerable, and we need to ensure that they receive the best and most effective support available. The National Protocol on Reducing Unnecessary Criminalisation provides a pivotal opportunity for change and improvement across the partnerships.



The North Yorkshire Youth Justice Partnership has a transformational vision for the next 12-24 months

- We cannot accept the continuation of high reoffending, which harms the life chances of the children and also the wellbeing of victims and communities.
- We do not believe this can be rectified by current practice or service methods. The Youth Justice Service consistently achieves high standards of quality and compliance under the national model, but with insufficient effect upon re-offending outcomes.
- We believe that a decisive and radical change is necessary. The new practice model will “flip the ratio” for our practitioners, so that their space for direct work is doubled and their desk-based process work is halved.
- We will train, support and challenge our practitioners to go further than ever before, making real and sustained relationships with troubled adolescents and their families, which will then support real and sustained improvement in outcomes.
- We are confident that these changes will reduce the number of children who enter the criminal justice system, reduce reoffending and reduce detention in custody.

Stuart Carlton

Chair of Youth Justice
Management Board and Director
of Children’s Services



YJS Young Leader supporting primary school adventure activities

Skill Mill entry-to-employment project



Head of Service Overview

I became the interim Head of Service for Youth Justice in October 2018. Having started my social work career in a youth justice team over 20 years ago, it has been a pleasure to catch up with developments in this sector. I was delighted to find that the professional ethics and values of youth justice remain unchanged – YJS staff are still highly committed and relentless advocates for their young people, and they understand the importance of a warm, trusting and influential relationship which permits constructive challenge. I have seen some outstanding examples of innovative interventions with young people, which will have a life changing impact for them.

What had significantly changed however was the burden of desk-based case management processes, which now dominated the working time of all practitioners. The staff team rightly highlighted this in their contribution to the 2018-20 Youth Justice Strategic Plan (page 8), urging us to prioritise direct work with children in their families, schools and communities.

It is important to note that this situation has developed gradually over nearly 20 years. The Youth Justice Service has during that time conscientiously implemented a vast regime of case management processes, as required by national governance or by our Careworks computer system. We have done this very well, as evidenced by the

excellent HMIP ratings received in 2010 and 2014. However a perfect and complete procedural record does not make any positive difference to the child's life, or protect the community from harm, unless also accompanied by sufficient skilled and persistent direct work.

We now have the opportunity to change this. We have recognised that professional judgement and discretion have become too constrained by process compliance requirements which often give little value to our work. No-one intended this to happen, and there is a universal eagerness for positive change. Importantly, we have the firm support of our local partnership and also the national Youth Justice Board for transformative change.



Custom dog planter made for an animal welfare fundraiser, as a reparation project



Our new My Assessment Plan (MAP) is the keystone of the new model. Designed and tested by our practitioners, in consultation with managers and practice leaders across the partnership, the MAP format decisively centres the child and family. Our new MAP is boldly concise, comprising only 10-15 pages of open and flexible space. Using plain language and a strengths-based, restorative approach, framed by Signs of Safety principles, our new MAP can be completed with young people and families around a kitchen table, and then understood and owned by everyone.

Accompanying this is a raft of new working methods and skills, drawn primarily from North Yorkshire's learning as a DfE Partner in Practice. This includes the Children's Services Practitioner Toolkit, and also training in Signs of Safety, family working and systemic practice. It is important to note that this does not replace or supersede the youth justice practitioner's specialised skills in assessing and managing risk, instead providing a richer, wider

palette of tools for professional expertise and judgement. Nor does it replace the continued use of ASSETPlus in a small number of very serious or complex cases where higher-level assessment and planning remains necessary.

We began introducing these new approaches in early 2019. Live testing of the new MAP model commenced in April 2019, and full implementation from July. It has been delightful to see the enthusiasm and innovation which has been unleashed during this short time.

We expect and look forward to a full Inspection visit during implementation of the new MAP and practice model. This will be an almost unique situation for the Inspectors, as nearly every YOT continues to use the national ASSETPlus approach. We have worked with partners and the Youth Justice Board to ensure that our new practice maintains the core elements of assessment, professional judgement and decision-making required by HMIP casework criteria. More broadly, we are working across the service and with partners to prepare for Inspection,

reviewing our performance and casework standards to ensure we can present at our best.

During the last year, significant progress has also been made in the emergent and challenging field of criminal exploitation. The Youth Justice Service is a key partner in our new York & North Yorkshire Trusted Relationships project, which focuses on supporting the stability, resilience and safety of children who might be vulnerable to exploitation. We have also led work with our Safeguarding partners to develop advanced practice and procedures for out-of-area children who are arrested in North Yorkshire under "County Lines" circumstances, ensuring that a joint safety plan is agreed with their home area before release. This partnership approach has been identified by the National County Lines Co-ordinating Centre as a best practice exemplar.



Surf Therapy builds confidence and self-esteem





A further highlight is the success of our Skill Mill project on the Scarborough Coast. Skill Mill provides supported entry to employment opportunities for our most needy and challenging young people. From the ten young people who have so far completed the programme, 60% obtained CSCS Cards (the mandatory entry training for construction work), and 60% are now in full-time employment.



Most remarkably, the typical 12 month offending rate of this cohort fell from 6.4 (before Skill Mill) to 1.1 (after Skill Mill). Six of the graduated trainees have committed no further offences at all. We are immensely proud of these young people, and the Skill Mill staff who supported them. We now hope to continue this provision through the national Life Chances Fund programme, with the support of local partners.

Skill Mill projects in action

Finally, I wish to thank the Youth Justice workforce for their continued hard work, creativity and commitment throughout the previous year. We have listened to their professional judgement and practice experience, and radically reformed the service to release them from procedural deskwork. They have seized this opportunity, and every day we see positive new practice emerging. This is an exciting and inspiring period of transformative change for the service, and I confidently expect to see a significant impact in performance outcomes.



Vicky Metheringham

Head of Youth Justice



Progress Towards Our 2018-20 Operational Delivery Objectives

Objective	Progress	Key Points
Every child will have a positive and influential relationship with their YJS worker	 70%	We have built upon the already strong capability of our staff team with new advanced training and best-practice working skills, supported by the new MAP assessment and planning system. Feedback from children and their families suggests we are making good progress in this objective.
Parents and carers will feel positively supported by their YJS worker	 70%	We have built upon the already strong capability of our staff team with new advanced training and best-practice working skills, supported by the new MAP assessment and planning system. Feedback from children and their families suggests we are making good progress in this objective.
Young victims will receive enhanced support, recognising their particular vulnerability to re-victimisation and reprisal	 50%	During 2017-18 we participated in a review of victim services led by the OPFCC, which continues to inform partnership development. YJS are also engaged in Trusted Relationships, and leading Criminal Exploitation practice. The key area for further work is peer-on-peer victimisation within communities.
YJS staff will spend more of their time on direct work with service users	 50%	A pre-MAP baselining analysis of practitioner diaries during March 2019 indicated that 20% of professional time was spent upon direct work. When this exercise is repeated in Sep 2019 we expect to have already reached 30%, and we intend to reach at least 40% by the end of the MAP pilot.
Closer collaboration with Emotional and Mental Health services	 80%	All our seconded Health practitioners have clinical expertise in EMH. NHS England have funded a Forensic Clinical Psychologist, and also specialist Speech & Language Therapists, shared with the City of York YOS. We have a continuing and effective link to the regional FCAMHS service.
The Management Board will be more closely involved in addressing gaps and challenges	 50%	The Board has recently been augmented by the Chair of the Youth Magistrates Bench and the Head of NYCC Inclusion Support Services. Board Members are individually visiting our operational teams to gain insight, with the aim of developing a more informed, pro-active and constructively challenging oversight.

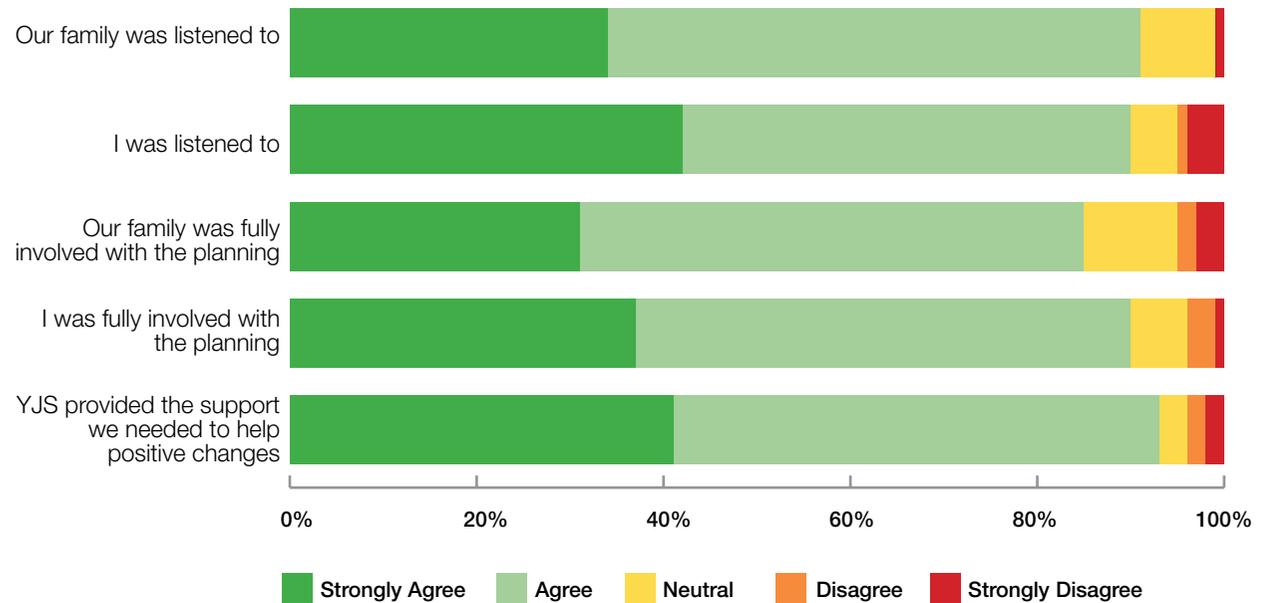


Service User's Voices

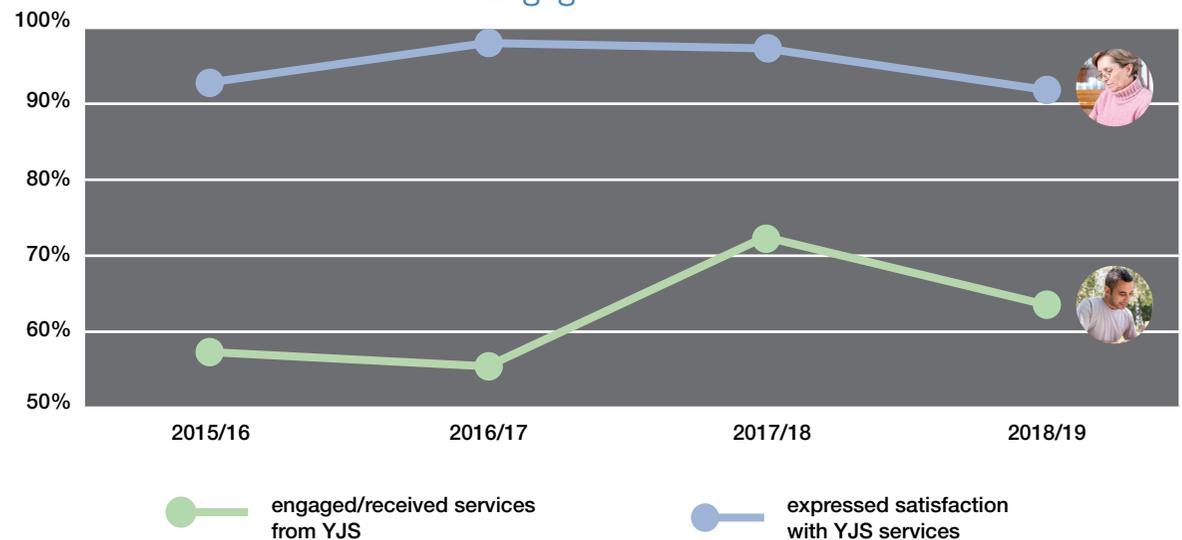
From August 2018, the Youth Justice Service has been operating a systematic online closure survey for young people and families, shared across all of the Children's Services teams in North Yorkshire. We can see the value and impact of our work, set within an integrated countywide mapping of service user views.

No less importantly, our expert Victim Liaison Officers offer information, support and participation opportunities to every identified victim. 60-70% of victims accept some support from YJS, and very high levels of satisfaction are consistently expressed by those victims at closure.

YJS Closure Feedback 2018/19



Victim Engagement & Satisfaction

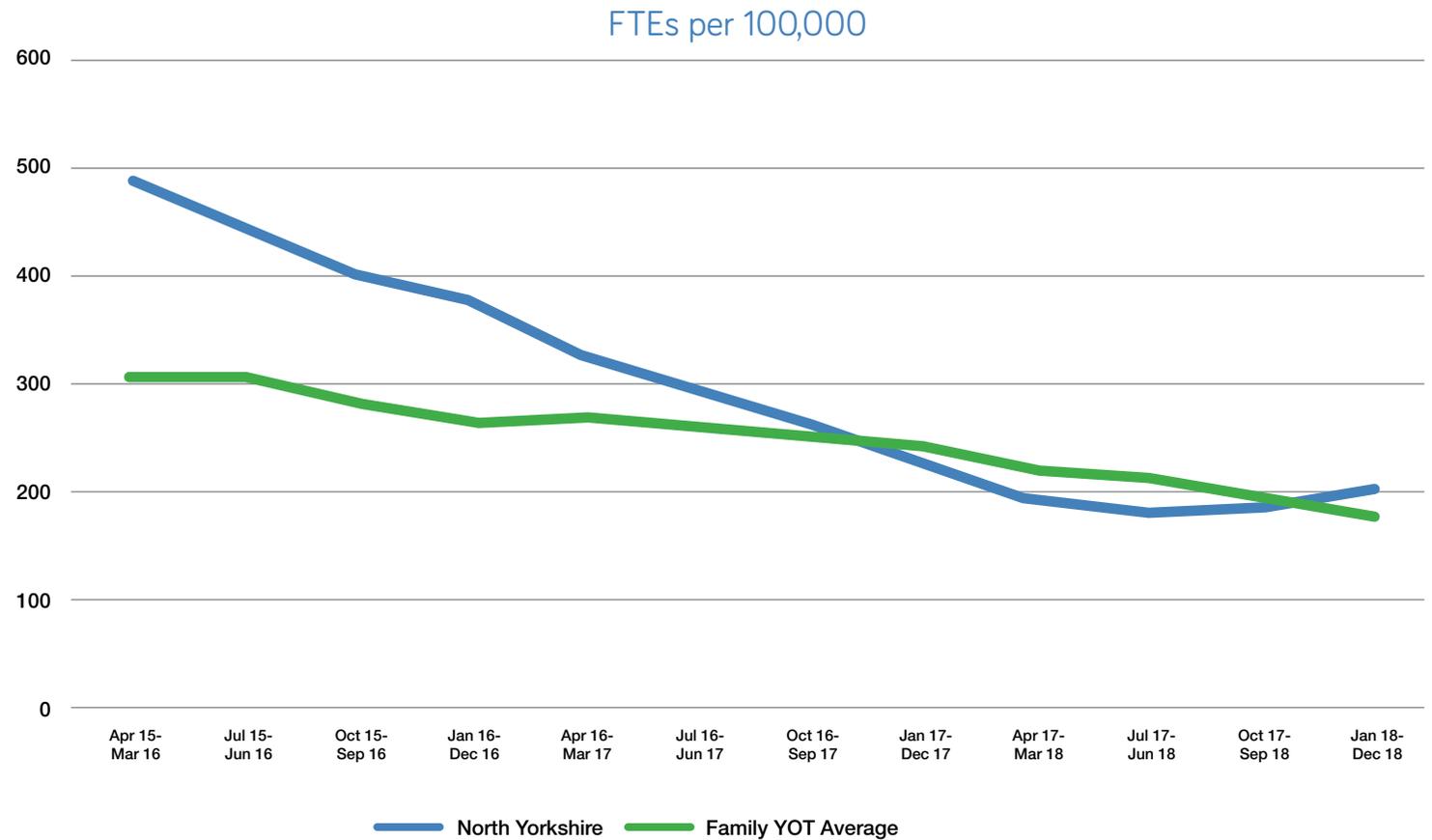


National Performance Indicators

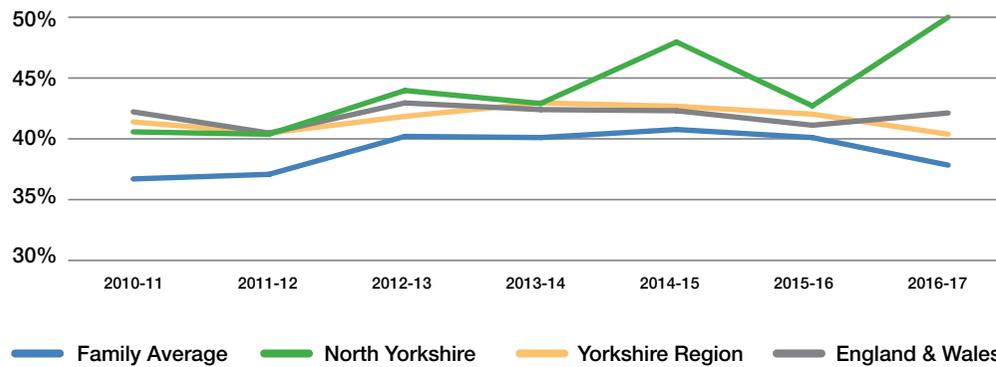
First Time Entrants

We know that entry to the criminal justice system has negative impacts on a child's self-perception, and also impairs their life chances. Wherever possible, children should be diverted to positive support and intervention.

Through a sustained and relentless focus on driving down our First Time Entrant rate, led by our partnership Youth Outcomes Panel, we have made very substantial progress. This continues to be a priority area for service development, and further reduction is confidently expected as North Yorkshire's integrated Early Help model develops.



Binary Reoffending

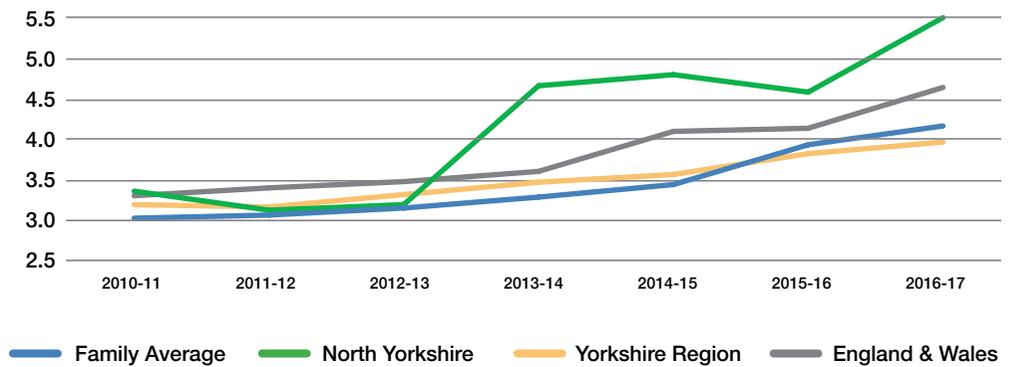


Binary reoffending is the simple percentage of children who re-offend. North Yorkshire's performance in this has been weak for some time, and significantly behind that of our Family YOTs. Our most recent PNC tracked outcomes (2016-17) are 33% higher than Family YOT average.

As stated in the Chair's introduction, poor re-offending performance has been a key concern for the service and Partnership Board over a number of years. We know that we have a strong and capable practitioner team, and we know that North Yorkshire is a safe and prosperous county with good opportunities and good public services (Education, Health, Policing etc). We should not be seeing outcomes like this.

It was these concerns which led us to a radical and transformative change for the service, integrating with NY Early Help to offer broader, more holistic support to children and families, adopting a relationships & strengths-based intervention model, and most recently developing a family-centred Signs of Safety assessment and planning approach. Because of the 21-24 month delay required for PNC tracking the impact of this new approach will

Frequency Reoffending



Frequency Reoffending is the average number of offences committed by the children who do reoffend. Again North Yorkshire has a markedly higher rate than any comparator, our most recent PNC tracked outcomes (2016-17) are 32% higher than Family YOT average.

not be immediately evident, but we are confident that substantial improvement is now being achieved.

Finally, it is also important to note that the national PNC reporting system is based upon each child's last recorded address, rather than the Local Authority or Youth Offending Team who are responsible for that child. North Yorkshire has a high level of inward placement of looked-after children from other areas, many of

whom are then counted against our performance (even though we may have had no contact with that child). And North Yorkshire very rarely places any of our own looked-after children outside our area, so our PNC report is distorted by disproportionate representation of looked-after children, who are themselves disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.



Use of Custody

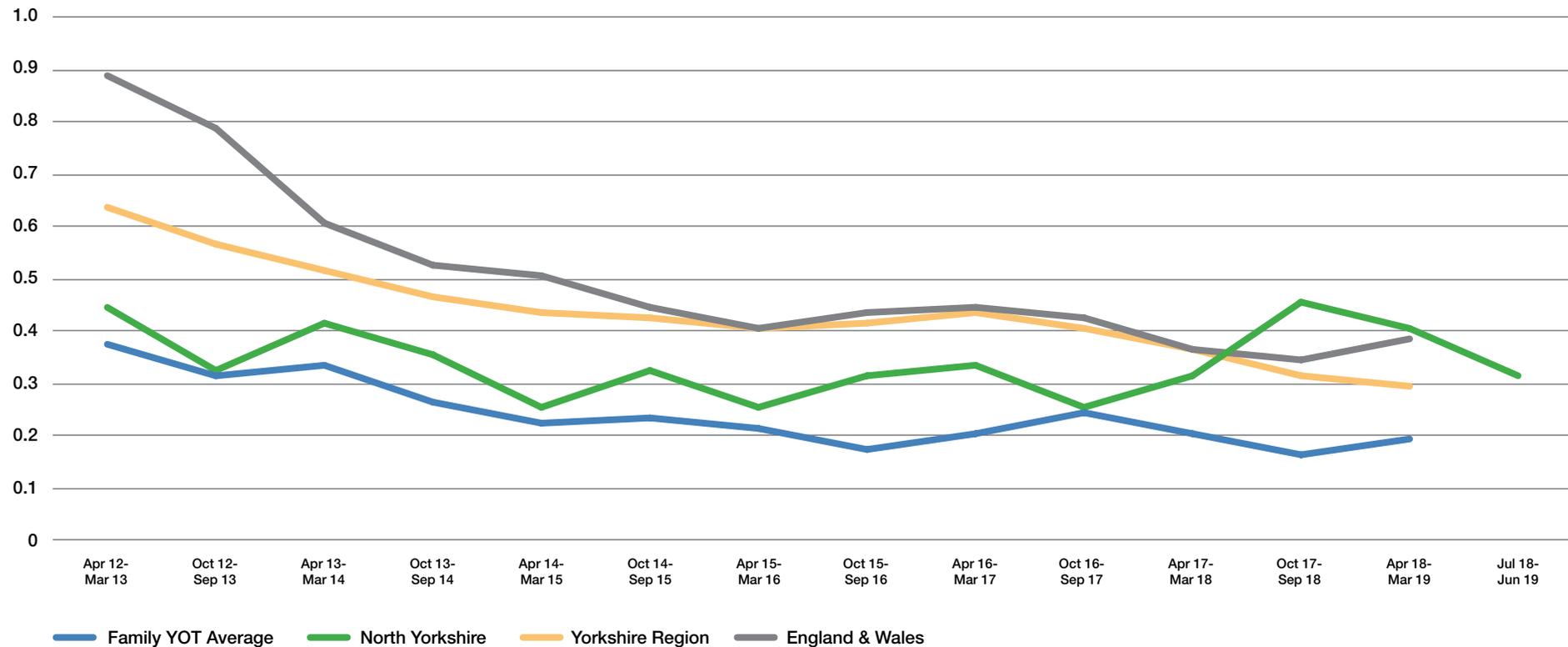
We know that custodial detention is harmful to the child's welfare, and rarely successful in changing their behaviour. Unless strictly necessary to protect the public from serious harm, we should divert those children to community supervision.

For many years North Yorkshire has maintained a good custody rate – significantly better than national and regional averages, although not quite as low as our best-performing family YOTs.

Our custody rate spiked in 2017-18, partly because of an unconnected series of serious cases, but also because of a trend in local sentencing practice to impose multiple concurrent detention orders.

These factors have been addressed, and North Yorkshire's custody rate is now falling back into normal range.

Custody Rate per 1,000



Custodial Remand

Although not a discrete National KPI, reducing remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) is a key priority for the local partnership.

We applaud the national reduction of custodial detention by two-thirds since 2008. This has however led to closures of secure establishments, and concentration of the remaining, highest-need and most challenging young people into a smaller range of placement options. We know for example that our colleagues at Wetherby Young Offenders Institution (YOI) are now dealing with more serious, complex and risky young people from a wider catchment, and that gang-related violence is an increasing concern for all YOIs.

We have been concerned for some time about the welfare of North Yorkshire children remanded to this environment, and have often felt it necessary to recommend placement in a more protective and nurturing Secure Children's Home (SCH) or Secure Training Centre (STC) (the Youth Custody Service is the final decision-maker, but has usually

concurred with our assessment). As a result, North Yorkshire's ratio of placements into YOI is diametrically opposed to the national trend.

Although this leads to a better standard of immediate safety and care for the child, it presents other significant challenges. Family and professional contact is greatly impaired by typical return journeys of 300-400 miles, reducing our ability to maintain positive connections and plan for resettlement.

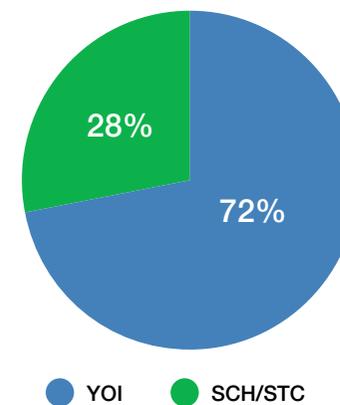
Finally, it became clear that the thinning of child remands to the highest-need and most challenging few was disproportionately impacting upon our looked-after children. Between 2013-18, looked-after children comprised 46% of all YDA remands, peaking in 2018 when 8 of the 9 YDA remanded children were already in the care of North Yorkshire County Council.

This led to a redoubling of efforts to prevent and divert YDA remands, by offering highly resilient and tailored wraparound packages to support those young people in the community, often in partnership with North Yorkshire's flagship No Wrong

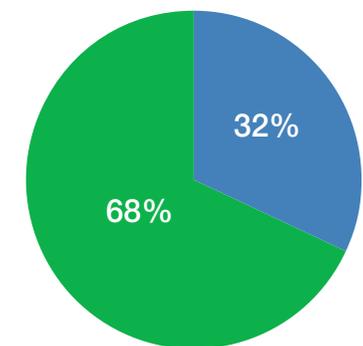
Door service. The Assistant Director for Children & Family Services has taken personal ownership of this bold strategy.

As a result, it has now been 9 months since any North Yorkshire child was remanded into custody, and we confidently expect to reduce YDA placements to less than half of our average 549 bed nights pa. This radical approach delivers better outcomes for the young people, and protects the public by more effectively reducing long-term re-offending.

National YDA Placements



North Yorkshire YDA Placements



Strategic Plan 2018-20

