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FUTURE DIRECTIONS
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FUTURE DIRECTIONS: A FOCUSED DETERRENCE PILOT

12-MONTH UPDATE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Southampton Youth Justice Service

Child Friendly Southampton

Southampton City Council

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary

Executive Summary

Context

The Future Directions pilot started in July 2025 and has been running for over 12 months. During this time, data has been recorded by both police and Southampton Youth Justice Service (YJS) tracking an initial cohort of 30 young people on the focused deterrence (FD) intervention. The FD intervention is a violence reduction approach that uses desistance support, community influence, and deterrence messaging and enforcement.

Method

A two-arm, parallel-group Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) was conducted. Eligible individuals were identified by the inclusion criteria were randomly assigned to either:

- Intervention Group: allocated to a Young Person Practitioner (YPP) and receives the FD programme on top of business as usual (BAU).
- BAU Group: receives business as usual.

The primary outcome of the study was the number of serious violent (SV) suspect incidents and arrests of the cohort. There were four additional secondary outcomes explored, along with collection and analysis of qualitative data.

Early findings

Over the 12 months of the FD intervention running, both the intervention and BAU group saw significant decreases over time for all police recorded incidents other than voluntary attendance (VA). No significant difference was found between the groups, however greater decreases were seen for the intervention group.

- 24% decrease for SV flagged arrests
  - Knife crime flagged arrests decreased by 5 (41%)
- 39% decrease for overall arrests
  - One YP had 22 arrests during the 12 months prior, and had 13 recorded during the intervention period (41% decrease)
- 78% decrease for missing episodes
  - Those with the highest missing episodes had all decreased by between 93% and 96%
- 35% decrease in Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI)[1] scores for suspect incidents
  - 30% harm decrease for violence with injury incidents
  - Compared to a 16% increase for the BAU group

Of the 17 YP closed to the intervention at this stage after a minimum of 6 months intervention (unless moved out of area), 9 (53%) had no police recorded incidents since finishing the intervention. A third of these had no police recorded incidents since starting the intervention.

Successes

Interviews highlighted the YPPs and PC being the right people for the roles, meaning they have been able to build strong relationships with the YP they work with and understand how to best improve their situations to disrupt offending behaviour.

"(YPPs) have the best relationship with the young people compared to the other professionals involved...I think that's partly down to them and their personalities and the way they work, but also the offer of FD"

Other successes included:

- YP engaging with positive activities, including 30% having taken part in the Get Ready for Construction course.
- Supporting the families of the YP where there were concerns in and around the home and escalating this to the relevant services.
- Improvement had been seen in swift justice, specifically around getting outcomes for legacy investigations, supporting the enforcement element of FD.
- Youth SV impact wider than just the cohort members due to YPPs integrating themselves into the peer groups and as a result, having an impact on more YP.

Challenges and opportunities

Most process challenges highlighted in the interim evaluation had been ironed out at this stage, however, awareness of the FD intervention within other services was highlighted as an ongoing challenge. This involved partner services having limited knowledge of the FD programme, and at times there was potential for the roles of the YPPs to be uncertain compared to other professionals.

"(YPPs) treated like social workers and expected sometimes to do the role of a social worker... (YPPs) are of the mind that they would rather just get things done rather than relying on other people. But then that means their role is a little bit blurred"

Other challenges included concern around some YP who had been closed to the FD intervention due to a reduction in their SV offending, however contextual issues were still present. Additionally, YPPs found liaising with other services to be challenging when trying to manage deadlines whilst being held up by others.

Buddi tags[2] remained a positive opportunity within support and deterrence, with three YP having been on tag during the intervention so far. The opportunity for more community-based positive activities to be organised and having training options that guarantee work afterwards were also highlighted.

Concluding remarks

With the intervention having run for over 12 months, this evaluation has found that there has been a reduction in serious youth violence due to the FD intervention. The data collected up to this point not only highlights the positive work of the YPPs and PC in engaging with the YP, but also the wider impact of FD on YP outside of the cohort. The work of the YPPs within peer groups has provided the added benefit of disrupting networks of youth SV. Decreasing police recorded activity for the BAU group since the implementation of the programme may also suggest a wider impact on YJ and police practice.

[1] The Crime Harm Index – Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing Ltd.
[2] GPS electronic tags – monitoring young people at risk of criminal exploitation and repeat offending | College of Policing

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Acknowledgements

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We are also grateful for the contribution of Dr Liam Satchell from the University of Portsmouth who assisted with the statistical analysis and reviewing the report as a consultant to the VRU.

Introduction

Future Directions is the name given to the FD pilot being run in Southampton. The aim of this pilot project is to conduct a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to investigate the effectiveness of FD on reducing serious youth violence in young people in Southampton under 18 years of age. This will be compared with a business-as-usual condition. This will support a meaningful evaluation of the FD strategy in Southampton and allow comparison of outcomes with similar programmes in other local authorities and police forces. The early positive impact of the intervention has allowed wider roll-out to be seen in Portsmouth. The findings from the project may also be used to support the implementation of the FD strategy in other local authorities and police forces.

Background

Evaluations published by Thames Valley Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) in 2024[1] and Wiltshire Council's Young People's Service in 2025[2] suggest that FD contributes to reduction in offending behaviour and missing episodes, as well as crime harm. These evaluations provided an evidence base for the effectiveness of FD which has been utilised in the current report. Furthermore, as Wiltshire is one of Hampshire's most similar force areas, it suggested that the intervention could be similarly applied.

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) and the Home Office have also funded an FD pilot implemented across five sites in England (Leicester, Manchester, Nottingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton). The interim evaluation report published in April 2026[3] produced the following key conclusions:

- Sites have strengthened deterrence/enforcement through practical changes, frameworks and multi-agency working. Some challenges remain in communicating deterrence to young people while operating in a context of lengthy delays in the court system.
- VRU-led interventions committed more time to engaging participants and achieved a higher take-up of support through navigators. However, they were less consistent in delivering deterrence messaging. In contrast, police-led sites tended to place more emphasis on structured delivery, goal-focused behaviour change and compliance.
- Delivery success depends on substantial multi-agency working, preparation, strong governance and initial and ongoing investment in the cultural, administrative, community and technical elements of the partnerships.
- Participants' initial engagement with support was influenced by trust in navigators and family gatekeeping. Continued engagement was more influenced by peers, daily routines and mismatched aims.

These conclusions have been taken into account for the roll-out of FD in Portsmouth and provide guidance for the continuation of the intervention in Southampton.

Furthermore, the interim evaluation in Southampton highlighted challenges around the peer groups of the young people, specifically when they are friends with other cohort members as this increased the likelihood of them offending together. In a report published by the University of Cambridge in May 2026[4], 42% of youth suspects were recorded alongside at least one other person.

Being connected to a suspect of any crime type increased the odds of violent behaviour by around 30% and knife violence by 19%. This suggests that targeting the peer group of a young person who is committing offences is important to prevent co-participation in offences but also increase the effectiveness of the intervention through positive peer influence.

Objectives of the project

Based on this previous work, the project objectives are as follows:

1. To reduce serious youth violence in Southampton through the use of an FD strategy.
2. To investigate the effectiveness of the FD strategy on reducing serious youth violence using an RCT.
3. To ensure fidelity in delivering the FD strategy to the intervention group.
4. To obtain high quality data and to conduct a thorough analysis of the data to support and inform evidence-based decision-making regarding future roll out or expansion of the FD strategy.
5. To inform future policy around reducing serious youth violence in Southampton.

Intervention Description

Scope of the intervention
The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Under 18, living in relevant area of the program - must be at least 6 months prior to 18th birthday at point of selection.
- In the last 12 months a suspect in GBH level or above assault, Robbery or Possession of Knife, Offensive Weapon or Firearms.
- Multi-agency professional judgement identifying involvement in serious youth violence risk/harm but where above suspect criteria has not been met (e.g. they may have been arrested for common assault or affray), however multi-agency information suggests risk is likely to be ongoing and/or likely to escalate.

The initial cohort of 30 has been subject to change with some YP being closed to FD after a period of at least 6 months (unless they moved out of area). These individuals have either shown substantial reductions in their offending behaviour, have moved out of the area or are receiving enough wraparound support from other services and professionals. This has allowed new YP to access the intervention for the 2026/27 period.

The 30 in the initial cohort will be compared to a randomised BAU group of 31 YP, receiving business-as-usual in terms of policing and Youth Justice (YJ) and fitting the same inclusion criteria.

Roles within the project
The roles within the project have been split into Young Person Practitioner (YPP), Police and VRU, along with the governance and monitoring roles which apply to all those involved (contact VRU for full role profiles and see Appendix 1 for funding details).

The YPP role leads on the support pillar of FD, by ensuring the young person (YP) has bespoke support in place and is safeguarded, while working with the police on the deterrence and enforcement aspect, as well as responding to any critical moments. They are also responsible for engagement and communication aspects of the project, including agreeing the engagement approach for FD children and their parents/carers and wider communications with key partners.

The involved PC and police inspector are responsible for determining a fair and proportionate enforcement response where offences occur. The PC completes joint visits with the YPPs to communicate the deterrence message and help to rebuild the YP's relationship with the police. They will also ensure timely information sharing to YJS where any young people (YPs) have come to police attention. Both the PC and YPPs are jointly responsible for the community pillar of FD.

The VRU staff involved in the project are responsible for strategic oversight and evaluating the FD intervention. The project is governed and monitored through both strategic and operational meetings, alongside case study reviews and supervision reviews between the YPPs and the FD team manager. Co-location of police and YJS allow for maximised partnership working, and professional challenge and peer-based reflection is provided by the contextual safeguarding team.

Risk Management

Due to the cohort involved in the intervention, it is essential that appropriate risk management procedures are put in place. In the event of problem escalation or a critical moment (e.g. arrest), the responses are as follows.

The YPP will immediately check-in with the YP, face-to-face if this is safe or by phone. Following this, the PC will assess if a proportionate deterrence message or enforcement is needed, keeping the YPP informed. Finally, any significant blockers or challenges will be escalated to the Head of Service (HoS) and Deputy District Commander (DDC).

In addition to the above, a risk register was utilised throughout the intervention to track arising risks in service delivery, resourcing and finance. Consent and confidentiality risks, by getting consent from parents for all young people under the age of 16, and all data collected was required to be confidential. The FD PC wears plain clothes when completing joint visits to mitigate any negative family /community impacts around working with police and youth justice. Due to their initial risk level, the cohort identified are at risk of further offending whether they accept the offer of support or not (contact VRU for detailed risk management process).

Future Directions Process

The FD process is as follows:

- Identify cohort of young people who meet criteria.
- Cross-reference data (police, YJS, social care) to check bias, context to ensure appropriate to include.
- If systemic or contextual factors (e.g. exploitation, self-defence) identified, adjust approach rather than exclude.
- Anonymise cohort for random selection process for intervention and BAU group.

The YPP will contact the identified young people (and parent/carers) to arrange initial visit to explain the offer:

- Purpose: voluntary, relational support and police clarity on risk.
- Duration: up to 12 months (minimum 6 months anticipated or longer if deemed necessary).
- Support offer: weekly contact, young person led-planning, critical moment responses, access to education, training and employment (ETE) support, tutor, mentoring, speech & language, positive activities.
- Confidentiality and data sharing: shared with FD PC and Contextual Safeguarding team as needed.

If the offer is accepted, the consent form will be signed. If the young person declines support, contact will be regularly attempted whilst the intervention is running and their behaviour will continue to be monitored and responded to by police (contact VRU for detailed process). If re-engagement occurs at a later stage, the offer can still be progressed.

Oversight

Weekly operational meetings allowed for a process review to ensure that the police officers and YPP were happy with the running of the intervention. Following this there would be individual case discussions with each YPP, mentioning any challenges they were facing in terms of engagement or any critical incidents that had occurred. The strategic oversight meetings started weekly then moved to fortnightly, involving all key strategic staff. These meetings focused on the high-level strategic aspects of the intervention, ensuring that the partnership roles are working effectively and that delivery was on track.

The importance of the joined up working between the police and YJ cannot be underestimated. During case discussions, any concerns raised can be immediately actioned or have an action plan created by the relevant individual present. Having a member of the police available to look at police data in real-time means any questions related to an arrest or aspect of criminal justice can be answered. Likewise, YPPs can feedback on the YP's experience of custody to help the police take a more trauma-informed and child-centred approach. This is also the case for YJ and education, whereby the YPPs can be directed to the best person to contact within different schools to meet the needs of the young people.

Method

A two-arm, parallel-group RCT was conducted. Eligible individuals were identified by the inclusion criteria were randomly assigned to either:

- Intervention Group: allocated to a YPP and receives the FD programme on top of business as usual (BAU).
- BAU Group: receives business as usual.

Since the business-as-usual (BAU) offer is based on the risk level of the individual, members have not had a standardised experience and received differing levels of engagement with professionals. This may limit the robustness of comparing the two groups to determine the effectiveness of FD.

This study employed a mixed-methods design, using both qualitative and quantitative data. Intention to Treat (ITT) analysis was used. Our data sources are as follows:

- Semi-structured interviews with YPP case workers, police officers, and other stakeholders.
- Routine performance monitoring using administrative data.
- Police offending data.

An ethics form was submitted to BOBHI[5] Public Health Research Ethics Committee delivered by the University of Southampton and partners to receive their feedback on the RCT. Their comments have been considered in this report.

Cohort Changes

Due to the closure of some members of the cohort, some individuals will have post-intervention data reported. At the time of writing, 17 individuals have been closed to the FD intervention having completed between 3 and 12 months. Those who completed less than 6 months had moved out of area during the intervention period.

Table 1 . Number of months each YP closed to FD spent on the intervention

Months in intervention	Number of YP
3	1
5	1
7	3
10	8
11	2
12	2

Outcomes

The primary outcome of the study will be the number of serious violent (SV) offences committed by the cohort. This will be quantified by the count of suspect incidents and arrests flagged as serious violence of individuals in the intervention and BAU groups during the intervention period. This allows us to assess the impact of the intervention on reducing violent behaviour.

The secondary outcomes are as follows:

- Number of knife related offences – Count of knife related suspect incidents and arrests of individuals in the intervention and BAU group during the evaluation period.
- Crime Harm Score – A measure of the severity of offence (using the Cambridge Crime Harm Index [6]) to capture the overall harm caused, not just frequency, to assess impact of the intervention on harm of offending.
- Time period to first offence – The duration in days from the start of the intervention to the first recorded offence, to assess whether there is any delay to the onset of offending behaviour.
- Attendance in education and employment – Education, employment and training (EET) status, School attendance, and exclusions, to explore potential positive behavioural or social outcomes beyond offending.
- Active learner rating and engagement in positive activities rating – Of the intervention group only, measuring on a 1-4 scale their level of engagement.

Qualitative data was collected from content analysis of the case discussions held during weekly operational meetings, as well as the semi-structured interviews undertaken with key stakeholders. Analysis of engagement logs and critical moments was undertaken to establish any themes.

Impact

Data collected over the intervention period has been taken from 11/08/25 – 11/08/26 since this is the point at which all cohort members started to have contact with their YPP, to the point when the final data pull was completed. Pre-intervention data was collected for the cohort for the 12 months prior to FD commencing (06/07/2024-06/07/2025).

When analysing the pre-intervention data collected for both groups, no significant differences were found. This suggests that randomization was successful in determining two groups that could be justifiably compared during the intervention period (contact VRU for full pre-intervention and intervention period data).

The following data is from 12 full months of the intervention running. As mentioned, members of the BAU group have not had a standardised experience and would have had differing levels of engagement with professionals. This may limit the robustness of comparing the two groups to determine the effectiveness of FD.

Total police recorded incidents (Aug 2025 – Aug 2026)

The tables below shows the police recorded data over the whole pre-intervention and intervention period so far, split by the measures recorded by police as incidents on their records management system (RMS). These include suspect incidents (where the YP has been a suspect in an offence), aggrieved incidents (where the YP has been a victim of an offence), arrests, and missing episodes. Data for voluntary attendance (VA; a formal interview for suspects, conducted under caution, but not under arrest), stop searches, and intelligence (information received by the police on the YP) was also collected (contact VRU).

The table below displays this data per quarter for the measures most relevant to the project (suspect, aggrieved, arrest incidents and missing episodes).

Table 2 . Suspect, aggrieved, arrest incidents and missing episodes per quarter

	Suspect		Aggrieved		Arrested		Missing	
	Intervention	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**
12 months prior	**250**	**247**	**43**	**51**	**59**	**59**	**194**	**58**
Q2 (Aug-Sept 2025)*	12	27	1	13	4	2	20	8
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	27	32	11	10	6	12	13	1
Q4 (Jan-Feb 2026)	38	30	6	7	6	13	2	5
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	37	28	9	8	16	9	7	0
Q2 (Jul-Aug 2026)*	9	17	2	3	4	4	1	1
Intervention total	**123**	**134**	**29**	**41**	**36**	**40**	**43**	**15**

*Shorter than three months due to the timeline of the programme

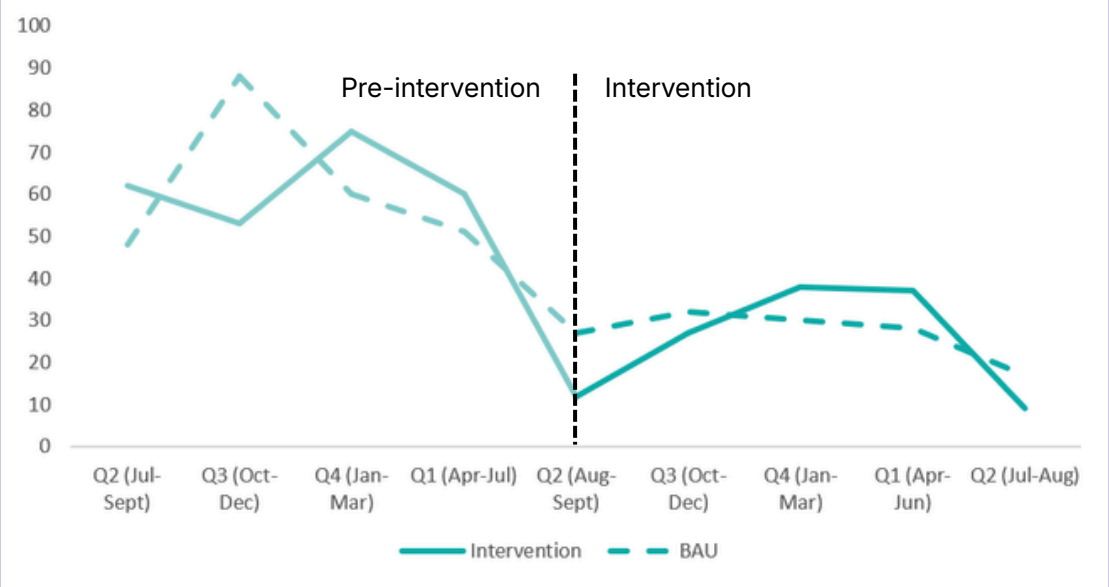
The intervention group does not consistently remain lower than the BAU group across measures. However, the intervention group did have fewer suspect and aggrieved incidents and arrests over the 12 months of the intervention running.

Suspect Incidents

Suspect incidents for the intervention group decreased by 51% (127) compared to the 12 months prior. There were 22 individuals with recorded suspect incidents during the intervention period (73%) compared to 30 in the previous 12 months (27% decrease). Most of the intervention group had a decrease in their suspect incidents (70%) compared to the 12 months prior.

The graph below shows the change in suspect incidents per quarter, with the dashed black line signifying the start of the FD intervention.

Chart 1 . Suspect incidents during pre-intervention and the intervention period

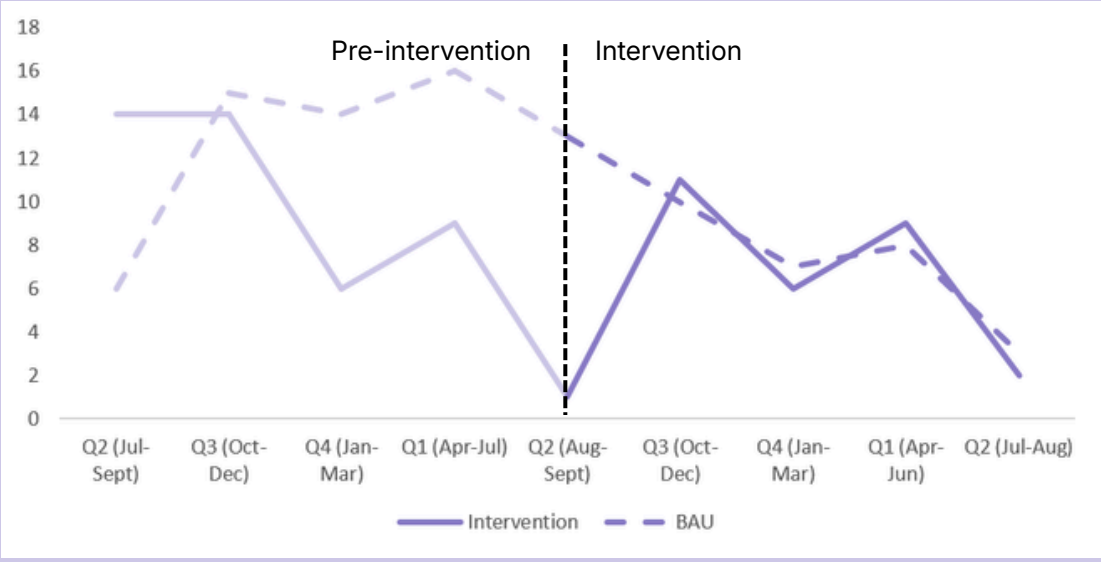


A small number of YP appeared to be responsible for most incidents, with 7 members of the intervention group (23%) accounting for 73% of total incidents (90). This included one YP responsible for 47 incidents (38%). Similarly, in the 12 months prior, 4 individuals accounted for 134 suspect incidents (54%), with one YP alone responsible for 58 (23%).

Aggrieved Incidents

There was a 33% (14) decrease for intervention group members being victims compared to the 12 months prior. Meanwhile, the BAU group had 41% more incidents than the intervention group. Most of the intervention group had a decrease in incidents of being a victim (71%) compared to the 12 months prior.

Chart 2. Aggrieved incidents during pre-intervention and the intervention period

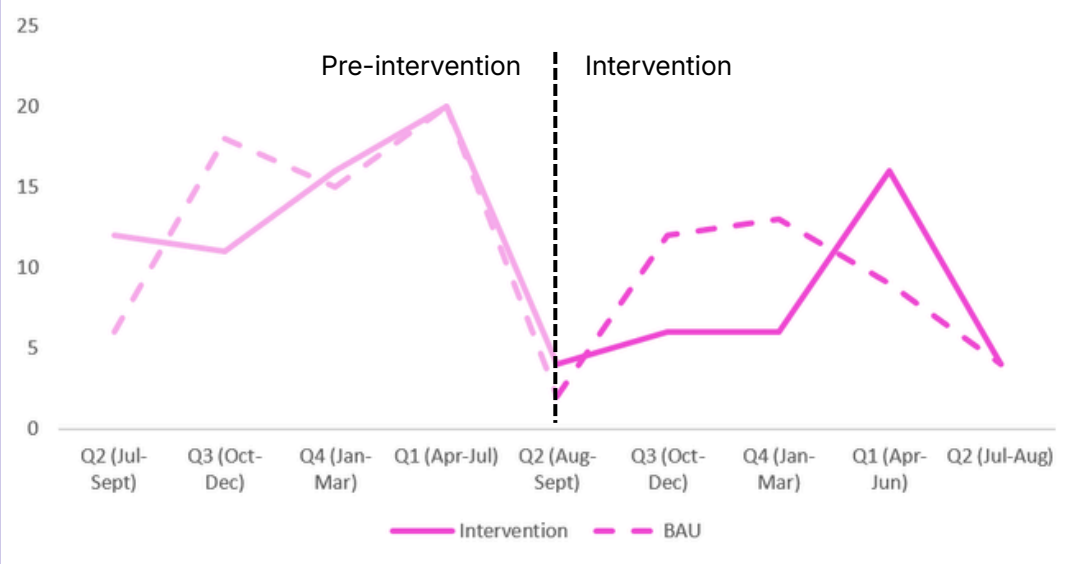


Results suggested that there was an equal amount of repeat victimisation experienced by those in both groups. In the intervention group, over half of those who had been victims (53%) had been a victim more than once, with one YP (nominal 8) having 8 aggrieved incidents. Meanwhile, 7 (47%) members of the BAU group had been a victim more than once, with one YP having 7 aggrieved incidents.

Arrests

While 22 members of the intervention group had been a suspect in the intervention period, 64% of these (14) had been arrested in this time. There was a 39% decrease in recorded arrests compared to the 12 months prior and a 22% decrease in individuals with arrests. Meanwhile, 18 BAU group members (58%) had been arrested 38 times over the intervention period, 2 more arrests than the intervention group. Two thirds of the intervention group (67%) had a decrease in their arrests compared to the 12 months prior.

Chart 3. Arrests during pre-intervention and the intervention period

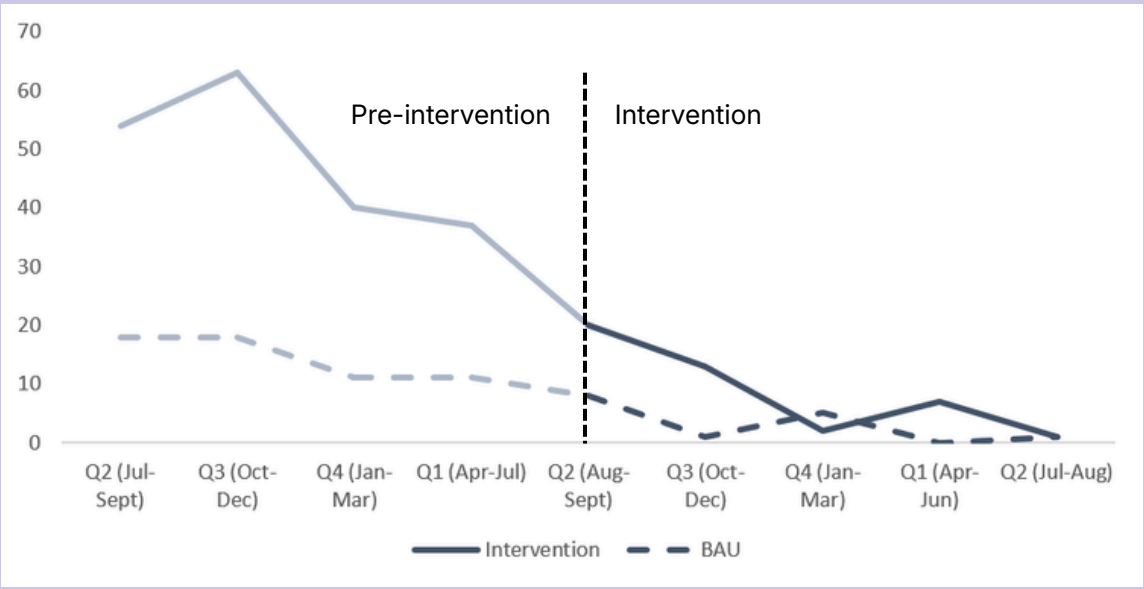


One intervention group member accounted for 36% of the arrests. Nominal 9 had 13 recorded arrests during the intervention period, however this is a 41% decrease compared to the previous 12 months.

Missing Episodes

Total missing episodes for the intervention group had reduced by 78% (151) compared to 12 months prior, and there was a 33% decrease in intervention group members with missing episodes.

Chart 4. Missing episodes during pre-intervention and the intervention period



One YP was responsible for the majority of these with 22 episodes (54% of the total 41). Those with the highest missing episodes 12 months prior to the intervention (nominals 9, 12 and 13) had reduced by between 93% and 96%.

Voluntary Attendance (VA), Stop Search and Intelligence Incidents
VA, stop search and intelligence incidents all decreased for both the intervention group and BAU group over the intervention period, however the BAU group had more stop searches and intelligence recorded than the intervention group (see Appendix 2).

Post-intervention data
At this stage, all individuals closed to FD have between 1 and 6 months of post-intervention data, which is not long enough to determine whether the FD intervention had a long-term impact on offending behaviour. At this stage, 53% (9) of closed individuals have had no police recorded incidents since being closed to the intervention. A third of these (3) also had no police recorded incidents during the intervention period.

It should also be noted that some of these YP were closed due to moving out of the area, therefore we can only track offending behaviour that occurred in Southampton since being closed to FD.

Statistical analysis
In our statistical analysis we found that everyone in the intervention and BAU group improved over time. There were not clear whole sample effects of the intervention. However, looking into the data, there was lots of variability between individuals, and those with the higher initial incidents received the greatest impact through engaging with the intervention (see Appendix 1 for full statistical analysis details).

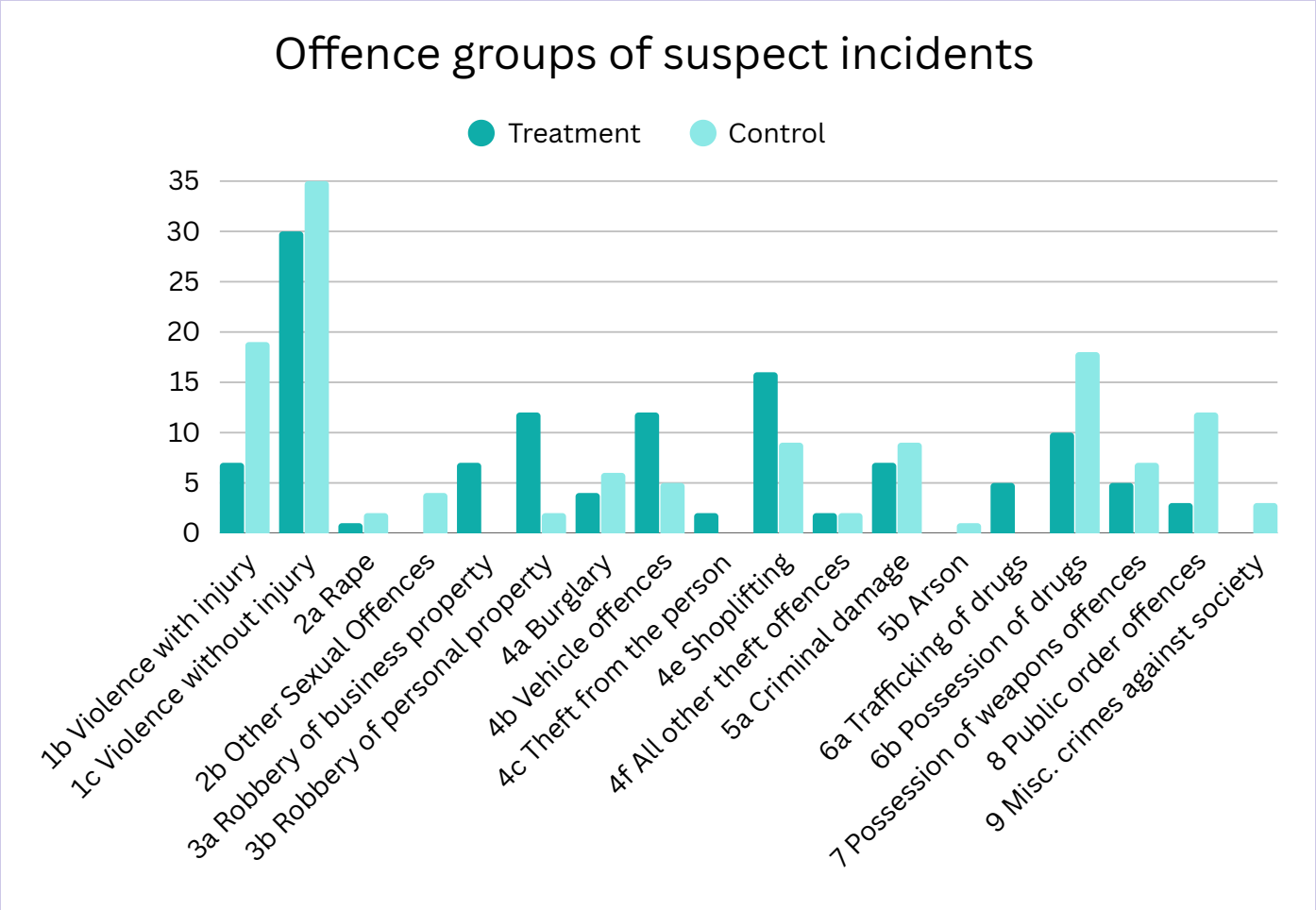
All measures, except for VA, decreased significantly for both the intervention and BAU groups. We hypothesize that this may be due to the wider reaching impact of FD due to the YPPs embedding themselves within their YP's peer group (see Stakeholder Interviews). The addition of the YPPs within Southampton YJ may also have assisted the workload of other professionals, potentially allowing them to spend more time engaging with individuals outside of the FD cohort. Furthermore, interviewees suggested that cohort members who have turned 16 or older may just be aging out of offending now that they could get a job. Research backs up this claim with qualitative research finding that desistance from serious youth violence is tied to processes of maturation[7].

Total Incidents by Offence Group
It was important not only to explore the number of incidents recorded for both groups, but also the types of offences that were being committed. The graphs below show the distribution of suspect, aggrieved and arrest incidents by offence group (contact VRU for full data).

Violence without injury was the most common offence group for suspect incidents of the intervention group, and this decreased by 34% over the intervention period. This was also the most common offence group for the BAU group with 35 incidents over the intervention period, five more than the intervention group. The BAU group also had 19 violence with injury incidents while the intervention group only had 7 (63% less).

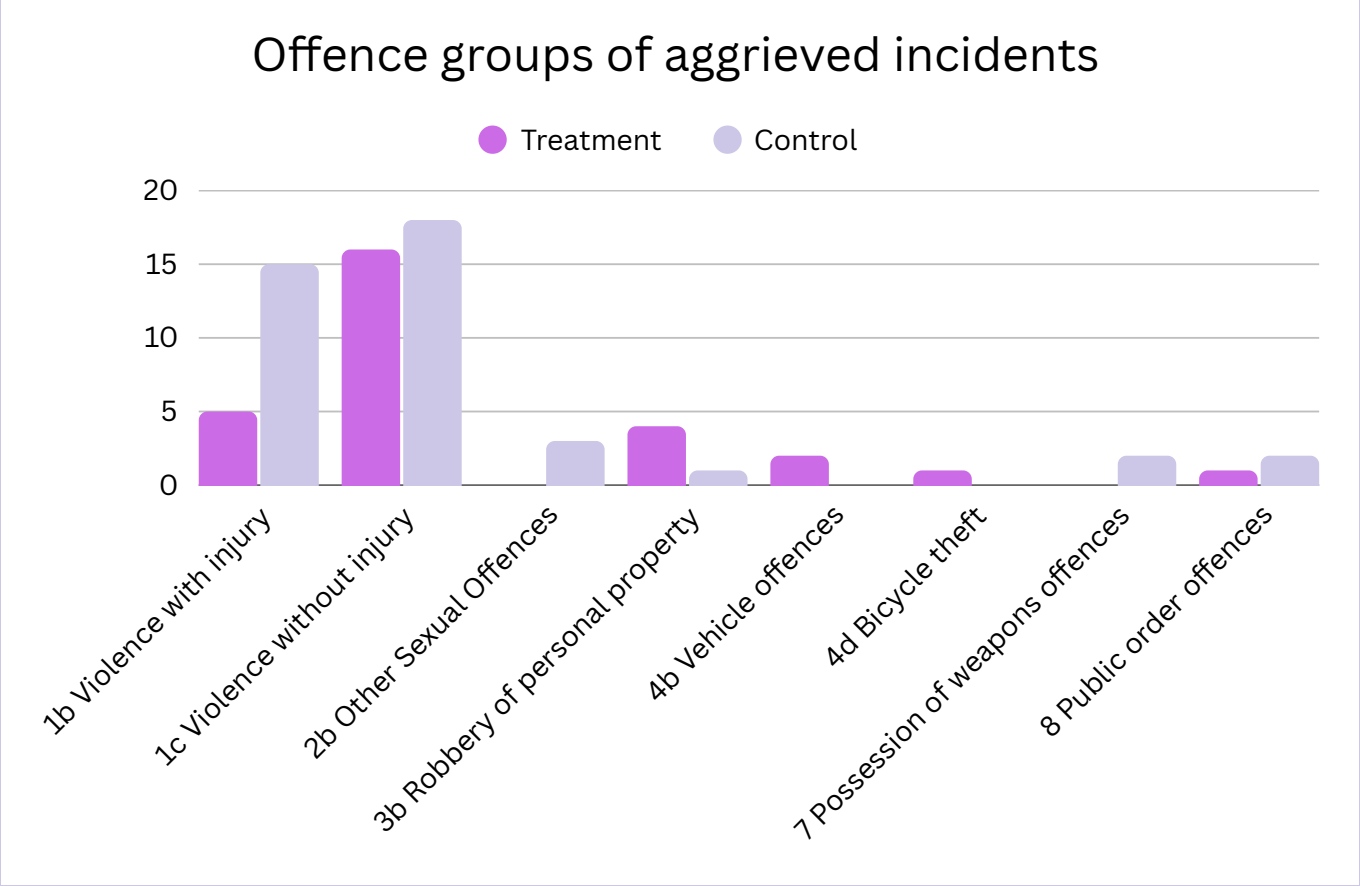
The chart below displays the suspect incidents for both groups during the intervention period.

Chart 5. Suspect incidents by offence group



Violence without injury was also the most common offence group when intervention group members were victims. This offence type had decreased by 40% over the intervention period, while the BAU groups had 3 more than the intervention group (see chart below). As with suspect incidents, the BAU group experienced 67% more incidents where they were victims of violence with injury than the intervention group.

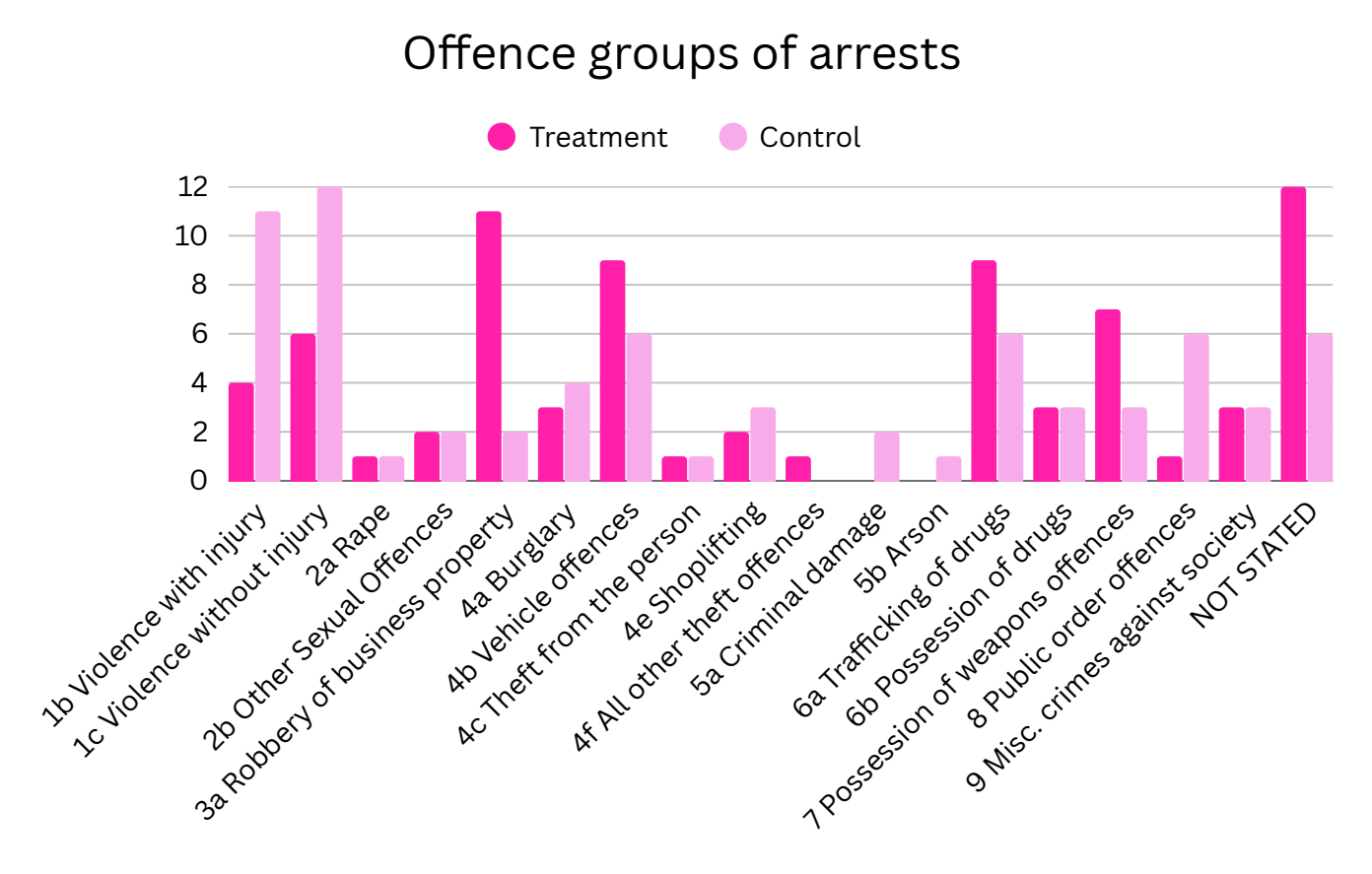
Chart 6. Aggrieved incidents by offence group



The most common type of offences for arrests in the intervention group were robbery of business property, vehicle offences or those not stated, which were largely related to motor vehicle offences. Of those who had been arrested in the intervention period, 64% (9) had been arrested at least once for one of these offences.

Results suggest that the intervention group were less likely to be arrested for a violent offence during the intervention period. The most common offence groups for BAU group arrests were both violence against the person offences, with 7 more violence with injury arrests and 6 more violence without injury arrests than the intervention group.

Chart 7. Arrests by offence group



Primary Outcome

The primary outcome of the study was to examine the number of violent offences committed by both groups. This was explored by looking at whether an incident had a serious violence (SV) flag when recorded by the police. This will allow us to assess the impact of the intervention on reducing violent behaviour. The table below displays the number of suspect, aggrieved and arrest incidents with the SV flag.

Table 3. Incidents with a serious violence flag per quarter

Quarter	Suspect		Aggrieved		Arrested	
	Intervention	BAU	Intervention	BAU	Intervention	BAU
12 months prior	**41**	**42**	**2**	**6**	**25**	**23**
Q2 (Aug-Sept 2025)*	4	0	0	1	2	0
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	3	5	4	2	2	5
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	4	1	1	0	3	1
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	13	1	2	1	10	1
Q2 (Jul-Aug 2026)*	2	8	0	1	2	5
Intervention total	**26**	**15**	**7**	**5**	**19**	**12**

*Shorter than three months due to the timeline of the programme

There was a 36% decrease in suspect incidents flagged as SV for the intervention group compared to 12 months prior. One YP (nominal 9) is responsible for 12 of the 26 suspect incidents (10 in Q1). If these were removed, the decrease would be 66%. The BAU group also had a decrease for suspect incidents flagged as SV by 71%. The offence types for both groups were possession of weapons, robbery offences and violence with injury offences.

The incidents resulted in an arrest in 19 cases (73%), and there was a 24% decrease in SV arrests compared the previous 12 months for the intervention group. As with the suspect incidents, nominal 9 was responsible for 9 of the 20 arrests (7 in Q1). Without these, the decrease would be 56%. Meanwhile, the BAU group had a 61% decrease in SV arrests compared to the previous 12 months. As the overall recorded arrests fell, those flagged as SV also saw a decrease. However, alongside this, proportionate decision making from the PC and YPPs meant voluntary attendance (VA) was used in certain cases.

For aggrieved incidents, there were 7 flagged as SV, four of these for one individual, and the offence types were violence with injury and robbery of personal property. The BAU group had 2 fewer aggrieved incidents flagged as SV for violence with injury, possession of weapons offences and robbery of personal property.

Secondary Outcomes

Number of knife related offences

When exploring incidents with a knife crime flag, both the BAU and intervention group had a lower number of knife crime flagged suspect and arrest incidents during the intervention period.

Table 4. Incidents with a knife crime flag per quarter

	Suspect		Aggrieved		Arrested	
	Intervention	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**
12 months prior	**19**	**18**	**2**	**3**	**12**	**12**
Q2 (Aug-Sept 2025)*	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	1	1	0	0	1	1
Q2 (Jul-Aug 2026)*	6	4	0	0	4	2
Intervention total	**9**	**7**	**2**	**2**	**7**	**5**

*Shorter than three months due to the timeline of the programme

Crime harm score

Whilst the number of violent offences committed was the primary outcome explored, it was also important to explore the Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI)[6] score for the suspect, aggrieved and arrest incidents. This score is a measure of the seriousness of crime harm to victims, a larger score signifying greater harm caused. This is also a useful measure for the police as higher harm crimes will often require more time and resources. The charts below display the total CCHI score for both groups over the quarters (contact VRU for full data).

Table 5. CCHI scores for suspect, aggrieved and arrested incidents per quarter

	Suspect		Aggrieved		Arrested	
	Intervention	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**	**Intervention**	**BAU**
12 months prior	**25,909**	**17,812.50**	**1,289**	**8,210.50**	**16,685.50**	**21,156.10**
Q2 (Aug-Sept 2025)*	1,505	2,004	3	2,780	1,518	48
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	4,289.50	8,156	3,870	1,406	4,785	9,219
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	3,041	2,579.50	751	770.5	4,752	5,608
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	6,658	134	927	1,324	5,590	1,219
Q2 (Jul-Aug 2026)*	1,295.50	2,762	183	731	2,443.50	62
Intervention period total	**16,789**	**15,635.50**	**5,734**	**7,011.50**	**19,088.50**	**16,156**

*Shorter than three months due to the timeline of the programme

The intervention group had a 35% decrease in CCHI scores for suspect incidents whereas the BAU group had a decrease of 12% compared to 12 months prior. For both groups, the incidents with the highest harm scores were violence with injury, rape and robbery of personal property. Most notably, the intervention group had a 30% harm score decrease for violence with injury incidents, compared to a 16% increase for the BAU group.

For arrests, there was a 14% increase in CCHI scores for the intervention group and 24% decrease for the BAU group over the intervention period compared to the previous 12 months. However, it should be noted that the crime harm figures will be skewed by a small number of YP committing SV offences with the highest crime harm scores.

For aggrieved CCHI scores, the intervention group increased by 4,445 in the intervention period compared to the previous 12 months. This was due to a higher CCHI score for violence with injury, with three GBH (CCHI score 1095) incidents occurring in the intervention period. Meanwhile, the BAU group had a decrease of 15% for the CCHI scores of aggrieved incidents compared to 12 months prior, with the highest harm for both violence with and without injury.

To explore whether individuals committing the most offences were also causing the most harm, each YP was given a ranking based on their combined CCHI scores. The CCHI scores for suspect and arrest incidents were combined (as these refer to harm caused) while the CCHI scores for aggrieved incidents were ranked separately (harm experienced).

Results suggest that over the intervention period, those committing the most offences were also committing offences with the highest harm in the intervention group (see table 6). Of the 5 individuals ranking highest for suspect and arrest CCHIs in the intervention group, 4 had also ranked in the top 5 for most incidents across all measures.

The intervention may also have contributed to a notable decrease in harm for individuals who were previously causing the most harm. Compared to the pre-intervention period, only two individuals remained in the top 5 (nominals 8 and 5). The remaining three had all ranked lower for harm scores for suspect and arrest incidents.

Table 6. Intervention group members with the 5 highest suspect and arrest CCHI scores

Rank	Nominal Number (Intervention)	Suspect CCHI	Arrest CCHI	Total Incidents Rank
1	9	4688.5	5209	1
2	25	3286	3285	6
3	8	2745.5	2571	3
4	5	1107	1097	4
5	11	745	1107	3

Ranked based on intervention period data

Results also suggest that some of the individuals causing the most harm experienced the most harm themselves. For the CCHI of aggrieved incidents, one individual in the top 5 for aggrieved CCHI is also in the top 5 for suspect and arrest CCHIs (nominal 8).

Nominal 8 was also the only YP in the top 5 CCHI for aggrieved incidents pre-intervention as well as during the intervention period. The remaining four had CCHI scores of between 0 and 3 in the pre-intervention period.

Table 7. Intervention group members with the 5 highest aggrieved CCHI scores

Rank	Nominal Number (Intervention)	Aggrieved CCHI
1	8	2574
2	2	1277
3	4	547
4	29	368
5	16	365

Ranked based on intervention period data

For the BAU group, results suggest that those committing the highest harm offences weren't necessarily the ones committing the most offences overall. Two individuals ranking highest for CCHIs of suspect and arrest incidents had also ranked in the top 5 for incidents across all measures (nominals 53 and 58).

Meanwhile, as with the intervention group, the intervention may have contributed to a notable decrease in harm for individuals who were previously causing the most harm. Compared to the pre-intervention period, only one individual remained in the top 5 (nominal 60). The remaining four had all ranked lower for harm scores for suspect and arrest incidents.

Table 8. BAU group members with the 5 highest suspect and arrest CCHI scores

Rank	Nominal Number (BAU)	Suspect CCHI	Arrest CCHI	Total Incidents Rank
1	58	5518	4420	4
2	60	3286	3287	10
3	53	2315	2785	6
4	32	1292.5	1294	3
5	50	373	1095	9

Ranked based on intervention period data

Results also suggest that for the BAU group, those who were causing the most harm may have experienced the most harm themselves. For CCHI of aggrieved incidents, one of the individuals in the top 5 was also in the top 5 for suspect and arrest CCHIs in the intervention period.

Table 9. BAU group members with the 5 highest aggrieved CCHI scores

Rank	Nominal Number (BAU)	Aggrieved CCHI
1	44	1472
2	32	1470
3	54	658.5
4	38	574
5	35	396

Ranked based on intervention period data

Time period to first offence

Results suggest that the intervention may have delayed the onset of offending behaviour. Most YP in the intervention group had their first suspect incidents from the first 3-5 months of the intervention running. However, 18% of those with recorded suspect incidents had a 6–10-month delay to the onset of offending behaviour.

For arrested incidents, most YP also had their first arrest between October and December, with 35% of those with arrests having a 6–11-month delay.

Table 10. Intervention group members' days until their first suspect incident and arrest

Intervention Group	Suspect	Average days until first suspect	Arrested	Average days until first arrest
Q2 (Aug-Sept 2025)*	6	17.5	3	29
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	12	86.6	6	81.7
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	1	190	2	181.5
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	3	266	3	257.7
Q2 (Jul-Aug 2026)*	0	-	0	-

*Shorter than three months due to the timeline of the programme

For the BAU group, over twice as many young people had a recorded suspect offence in the first two months of the intervention period. A further four had their first incident in Q3 while the remaining five had a 6–12-month delay.

For arrested incidents, the pattern is more similar to the intervention group, with most YP having their first arrest between October and December. However, two YP had a delay of between 12 and 13 months.

Table 11. BAU group members' days until their first suspect incident and arrest

BAU Group	Suspect	Average days until first suspect	Arrested	Average days until first arrest
Q2 (Aug-Sept 2025)*	13	24	2	24.5
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	4	110.8	8	115.6
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	3	188	5	192.8
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	1	283	3	297.3
Q2 (Jul-Aug 2026)*	1	362	2	347.5

*Shorter than three months due to the timeline of the programme

Attendance in education and employment

Analysis completed by the Department for Education and Ministry of Justice (2022)[8] suggested that being away from school not only limits a child's ability to succeed academically but also increases their risk of violence and criminal exploitation. Therefore, it was important to explore cohort members attendance in education or employment as a secondary outcome.

For this outcome, it is important to caveat that only 9 members of the intervention group (30%) were under the age of 16 by the end of the intervention period covered by the data. This will have potentially impacted their willingness to be involved in education, if they weren't already, as they may instead have been looking for employment.

Education data was collected by Southampton YJS throughout the FD intervention. The table below shows the number of YP in some form of education, employment or not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Table 12. Individuals in education, employed or NEET per quarter

Quarter	In education*		Employed		NEET	
	Intervention	BAU	Intervention	BAU	Intervention	BAU
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2025)	**24**	**21**	**-**	**-**	**6**	**10**
Q2 (Jul-Sept 2025)	27	14	2	-	1	17
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	21	15	2	-	7	16
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	22	17	3	1	5	13
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	20	14	2	-	7	16

*Mainstream, alternative provision, college, applied for college or elective home educated

Whilst there is an initial increase in intervention group members in education in the first two months of the intervention (August and September), this then sees a decrease. Part of this may be due to YP finishing their GCSEs. It has been important for the YPPs to continually support the cohort members with progressing job and college applications when they have reached this stage.

However, between two and three members of the intervention group were employed throughout the intervention period, suggesting that the intervention may have helped these YP get into work.

Of the cohort members attending education, their attendance levels vary. The table below shows the education percentages of these YP.

Table 13. Attendance in education per quarter

Quarter	<10%		10%-74%		75%-100%	
	Intervention	BAU	Intervention	BAU	Intervention	BAU
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2025)	**3**	**8**	**15**	**6**	**2**	**1**
Q2 (Jul-Sept 2025)	7	6	7	4	2	1
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025)	8	4	6	4	2	1
Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026)	7	6	7	3	2	1
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2026)	7	5	6	5	2	-

The majority of YP attending education have attendance of less than 10%. Therefore, where possible, the YPPs have utilised positive activities to help give these YP more of a structured routine and get them involved in sporting activities which they may be more engaged with. If the young person should be in school, then the YPP organised these activities within what they are allowed to offer.

Active learner rating

Active learner ratings were also completed for each YP based on their engagement with a form of education. The rating criteria are as follows:

Table 14. Active learner rating criteria

	1	YP has fully engaged and has completed all tasks set. The YP has worked well individually or within the group setting. The YP has required very little to no refocusing (above and beyond their required SEN support) from the session leader and has actively engaged with additional activities.
Intervention period average →	**2**	The YP has mostly been engaged with only some distraction. The YP has mostly completed the tasks asked of them with only some resistance. The YP has mostly worked well individually to in the group setting but has required some guidance (above and beyond their required SEN support) from the session leader to remain on track.
Pre-intervention average →	**3**	The YP has struggled to remain actively engaged in the session (above and beyond their required SEN support). They have often become distracted or shown resistance to completing the tasks required. The YP has required constant reminder and guidance from the session lead to remain on task.
	4	The YP did not attend / did not engage at all.

In the three months prior to the FD intervention, the average active learner rating was 3.5, suggesting that active engagement was limited. However, within the first three months of the FD intervention this had improved to 2.9, and remained consistent over the following 9 months.

Those most consistently achieving a rating of 1 or 2 were all in mainstream education, college or employed. Those still in education had consistent attendance of between 90% and 100%. This is not surprising, as those who are not attending mainstream school or are NEET will likely have found it harder to engage with any type of education.

Engagement in positive activities rating

The YP also received a rating each quarter for how well they were responding to the positive activities being offered to them. The rating criteria are as follows:

Table 15. Engagement in positive activities rating criteria

	1	YP has fully engaged with positive activities offered.
Average rating →	**2**	The YP has mostly been engaged with positive activities but has required some guidance/missed odd activities.
	3	The YP has struggled to remain actively engaged in positive activities offered, has been distracted or resistant during activities, motivation to be involved is up/down/inconsistent.
	4	The YP did not attend / did not engage at all / is not yet ready to think about any positive activities.

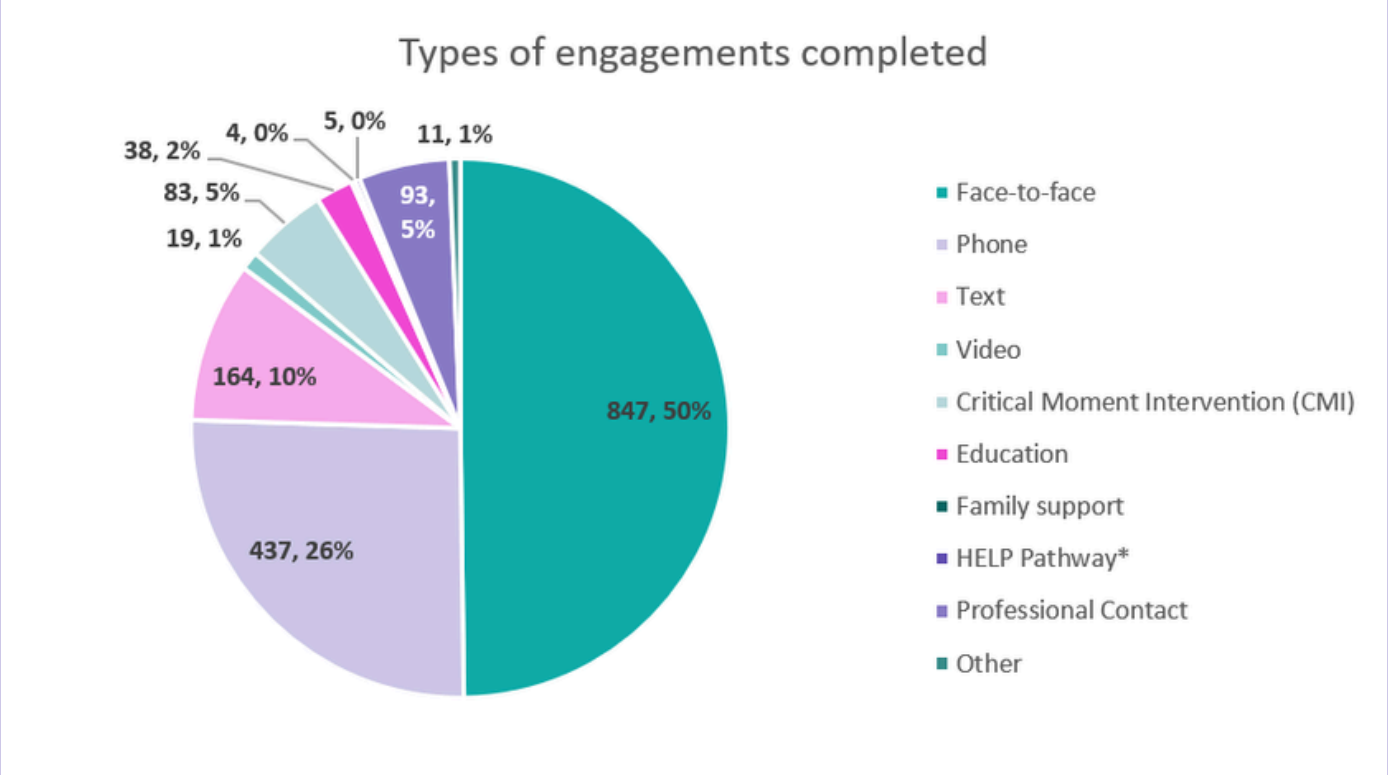
In the first three months of the intervention, the YP received an average rating of 2.8, suggesting that generally the YP struggled to remain actively engaged in activities. However, by the end of the final quarter of data, the average score was 2.1 suggesting that most YP had been engaged with positive activities but required some guidance or had missed a few.

Engagements

Throughout the intervention period, the YPPs tracked their engagements with the young people. This kept track of how often the YP had been engaged with, either by phone or in person and what was discussed/what activity was completed (contact VRU for full breakdown of engagements per cohort member). It is important to note that all members of the intervention group engaged with FD to some extent, suggesting that engagement wasn't a result of whether they were open to services previously but due to the efforts of the YPPs and PC to build rapport and provide a tailored approach.

Face-to-face (FtF) engagements were the most common (847, 50% of all engagements), followed by phone calls (437, 26%) and texts (164, 10%). All but one individual had an FtF engagement (29, 97%), while 100% (30) had phone engagement and 93% (28) had text. There was a large variability with the number of FtF engagements, ranging from 3 to 56, with an average of 28.2.

Chart 8. Types of engagements completed with the intervention group

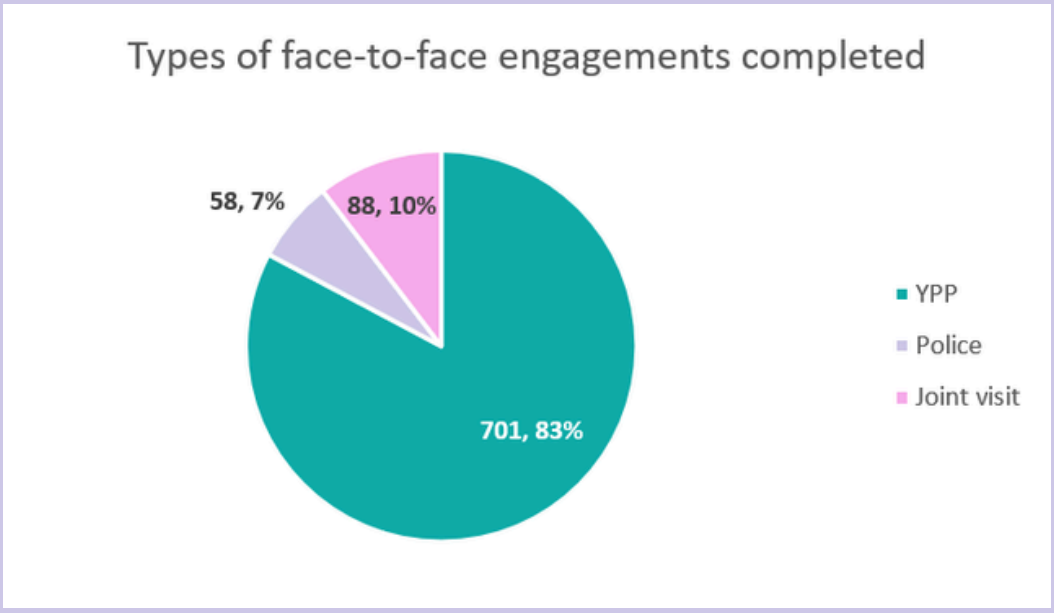


*The HELP Pathway is an internal YJS strategy meeting

The chart below breaks down the FtF visits into YPP alone, police alone and joint visits. Over three quarters of FtF visits completed were YPP alone (701, 83%), with far fewer joint visits (88, 10%) and police visits (58, 7%). Furthermore, 97% (29) cohort members had YPP visits, 87% (26) had a joint visit and only 57% (17) had a police visit.

The number of visits also varied between cohort members, while the majority (55%, 16) had fewer than 25 YPP visits, the remaining 13 individuals had between 25 and 52 each. Of those who had joint visits, the majority had fewer than 5 (73%, 19), with the remaining 7 having between 5 and 12 joint visits each. Finally, 59% of cohort members (10) who had police visits had one or two each, with the remaining 7 having between 3 and 10 each.

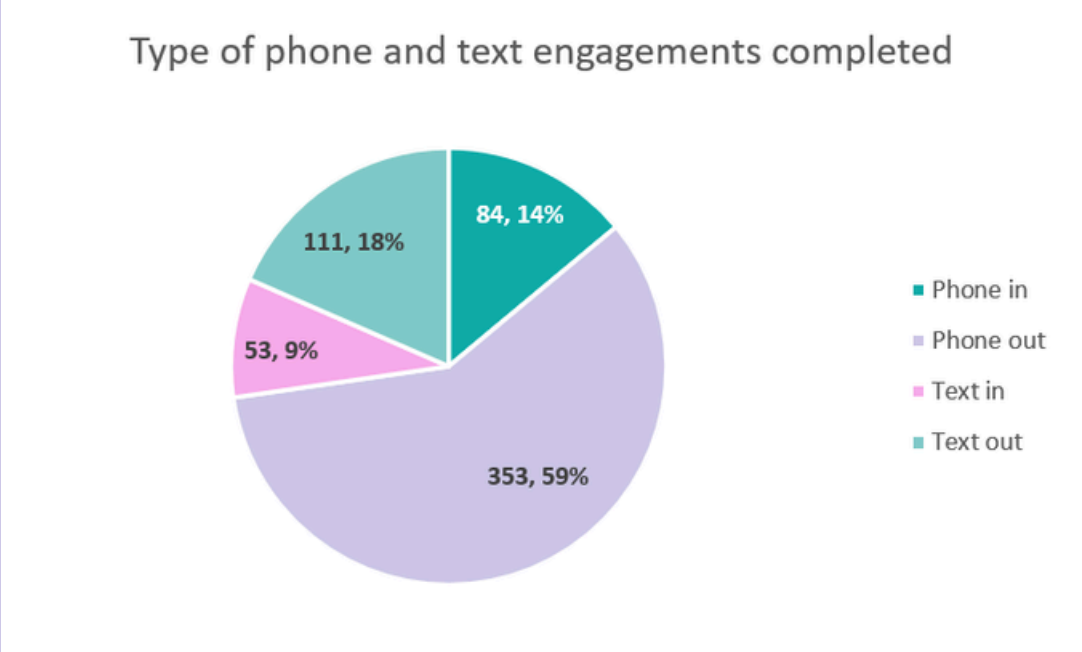
Chart 9. Types of FtF engagements completed with the intervention group



When looking at the types of phone and text engagements (see chart below), phone calls out to the cohort member were most common (59%, 353) compared to calls in (14%, 84). Similarly, texts out (18%, 111) were more common than texts in (9%, 53).

All cohort members (100%) had received between 1 and 10 phone outs from their YPPs, evenly split between those receiving fewer than 10 (47%, 14) and those receiving more than 10 (53%, 16). Two thirds of the cohort (67%, 20) had called in to their YPP, all 10 times or less except for one YP who called 21 times. YPPs had texted out to 90% (27) of the cohort, all between 1 and 12 times, while 70% (21) had texted their YPP also between 1 and 6 times.

Chart 10. Types of phone and text engagements completed with the intervention group



Critical Moments

Over the 12 months of the intervention running, 20 cohort members had a total of 106 recorded critical moments (contact VRU for breakdown of incident type, what response was given, and how responses were rated).

Most of the recorded critical moments had YPP visits as the response (61%, 65), with 24% (25) having joint visits with police, 10% (11) having police visits and 5% (5) having another response (including an unsuccessful intervention, voluntary interview and escalation into investigations). This follows the same pattern as general engagements with cohort members, where the majority were YPP visits, followed by joint visits and fewest police visits.

There didn't appear to be a consistent response type for any incident type other than school exclusions and court which had mostly YPP responses. For all other types of incidents, the response type varied. It is also worth noting that of the 20 cohort members who had recorded critical moments, 76% were the individuals who had more than one joint visit (13 of the total 17), highlighting that these were the individuals with the highest need.

The response to critical incidents also received a rating (see criteria below). The average response rating was 3.5, meaning that for most young people, they were able to engage and some positive impact was felt by the YPP/PC. There also didn't appear to be any difference in rating based on response type, with most responses receiving 3 or 4 ratings. Only two YP had an instance where they actively dismissed the response they received following a critical moment. One of these had a police visit as the response and the other was an unsuccessful critical moment intervention, meaning the YP did not agree to a YPP or police visit.

Table 16. Critical incident response scoring criteria

	1	Individual is actively dismissing the intervention and not engaging with PC/YPP
	2	Individual has expressed interest, but is not yet fully engaging with the intervention
Average rating →	**3**	Individual is engaging, however there is no current sign of any positive impact to risk of offending
	4	Engagement is working and some positive impact is felt by PC/YPP
	5	Engagement has made a significant impact and engaged professionals feel the risk of reoffending is reduced as a result

Support Offered

The types of support offered to the intervention group members over the intervention period is in the table below. These offers were tailored to the young people based on what the YPPs deemed appropriate.

Table 17. Types of support offered to members of the intervention group

Support offered	Number of YP	% of intervention group
Bespoke advice	30	100%
Pro-social identity	28	93%
Practical assistance	28	93%
Skills/education support	27	90%
Positive activities	27	90%
Trust building (in professionals)	24	80%
Employment support	16	53%
Substance misuse support	16	53%
Specialised exploitation support	13	43%
Stable housing	13	43%
Mental health support	12	40%
Financial support	7	23%
Domestic violence support	5	17%

All members of the intervention group were provided with bespoke advice over the course of the intervention period, while the majority were also offered pro-social identity support, practical assistance, skills/education support, positive activities, building trust in professionals, employment support and substance misuse support.

Qualitative findings

Qualitative data was collected through discussions in the weekly operational meetings and through interviews with key stakeholders. Weekly operational meetings were attended by all key stakeholders involved with the intervention and focussed on those with the highest risk and/or need at that point in time.

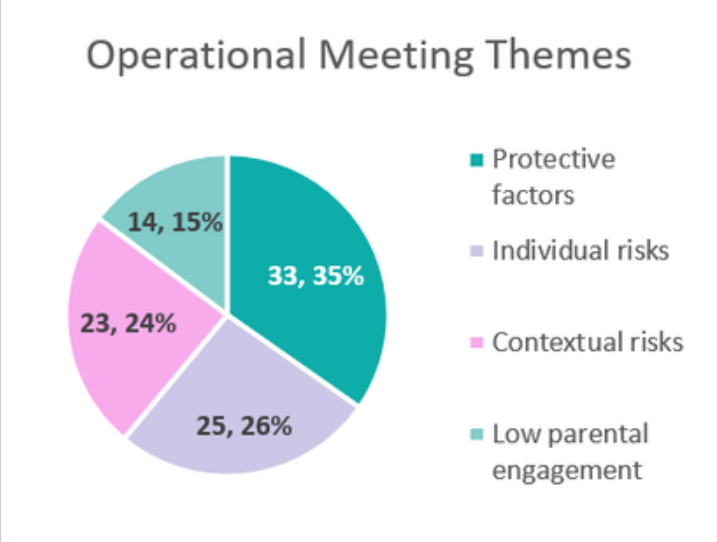
Weekly Operational Meetings

Using the qualitative data collected in the weekly operational meetings, three main themes emerged regarding the progress of the young people. These are taken from 21 (70%) members of the cohort as the weekly discussions did not include all 30 members.

The themes are:

1. Protective factors: including employment, training, tutoring, involvement in sports, and expressing an interest in school or gaining other skills e.g. driving licence.
2. Contextual risk factors: including peer group concerns, offences lacking swift follow-up, domestic abuse (DA) concerns, accommodation concerns and parental crime involvement.
3. Individual risk factors: including not wanting to attend school, drug use/selling, neurodiversity and resistance to working with professionals.
4. Low parental engagement: including a lack of communication between the parent and the YPP, the parent or carer lacking oversight of the young person, and the parent enabling the young person's behaviour by viewing them as a victim.

Chart 11. Themes from operational meetings



Risk factors emerged as the most discussed theme in discussions regarding 18 members of the intervention group (86% cohort members discussed, 50% of total recorded themes). This has been split into both contextual and individual risk factors, each contributing to a quarter of the operational meeting themes.

The most common risk factor discussed in meetings has been the peer groups of the young people (57% of cohort members, 12% of all themes).

Known friendships between cohort members means they may be more likely to commit offences with their peers who also have a history of offending[4]. Although, cohort members have made efforts to distance or remove themselves from peers who are committing criminal offences and/or anti-social behaviour since FD began. Similarly, where cohort members are making disclosures to their YPP about the behaviour of another YP, this provides additional insight where police intelligence may be limited.

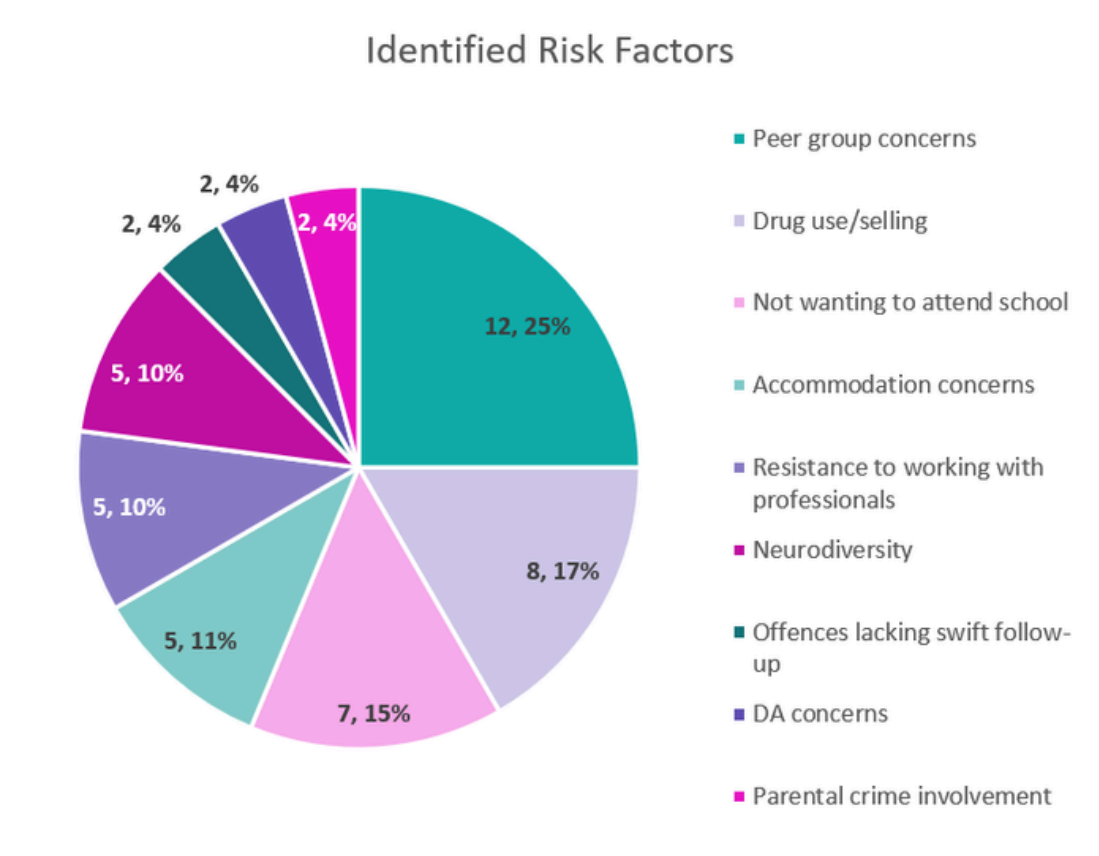
Drug use/selling was the second most prevalent risk factor, appearing for 38% of cohort members (8% of all themes). This risk came from intel suggesting that the YP had been involved with drugs or when they had previously been investigated for possession of drugs. In some cases, parents of the YP reported their awareness of their child possessing and selling drugs to earn money. Whilst drug use provides its own risk in terms of the health and safety of the YP, it can also cause risk related to money. Owed money or debts relating to drugs appeared in conversations for multiple YP, with concern that this could escalate to violence if the money wasn't paid.

Another prevalent risk factor has been the YP not wanting to attend school, with 27% (8 including alternative provision and elective home educated) of the cohort not attending mainstream school or college since the start of FD. However, even in cases where the young people are attending school, there have been some challenges around their behaviour, resulting in internal exclusions or suspensions. Furthermore, for those that are pulled out of mainstream school to be elective home educated, this limits the amount of oversight the child is receiving and means they cannot access the same opportunities as their peers who are attending school or college.

Neurodiversity, accommodation concerns and resistance to working with professionals were also identified as risks for a minority of the cohort, all impacting 5 YP (24%). Two YP have had autism and ADHD assessments since being on the FD intervention, which has been critical for helping to understand their behaviours ad the best way to communicate with them. Accommodation concerns have been highlighted where YP are living in supported accommodation, foster placements or when there are concerns around the safety of the YP in the family home. Lastly, resistance to working with professionals applied to YP where they didn't believe they needed the support of their YPP or wider professionals in their lives such as social workers. This made it difficult for the YPPs to build a relationship with these individuals, and as a result it was more challenging for them to understand the value of the intervention.

Finally, the risk factors of offences lacking swift follow-up, DA concerns and parental crime involvement featured for two individuals each. Swift justice is one of the key features of FD, however this is hard for the police to manage alongside their normal workload. In instances where the consequence to a YPs behaviour has not been swift, this may make them more likely to commit the same offence again. A few YP have also had DA concerns highlighted within the home, either between parental figure or between the YP and a parent. This suggests an unsafe home environment which may also impact the YP's offending behaviour. Similarly, where intel has highlighted crime involvement by members of a YP's family, this poses a risk to the YP in terms of exploitation.

Chart 12. Identified risk factors discussed in operational meetings



Protective factors were the second most common theme, covering 35% of all recorded themes and the most common protective factor being training, employment or other skills. With the support of their YPP, cohort members have engaged with positive activities including Switching Play[9], boxing, going to the gym, and the Get Ready for Construction course.

YP can be fast-tracked onto the Get Ready for Construction programme if they are deemed suitable and motivated, as this is also funded by the VRU. At this point, 10 cohort members have engaged with the CSCS course so far, with two having passed and the remaining still in the process of completing their tests at the time of writing.

> *Practical assistance around education, employment, positive activities, and community engagement was highlighted as being especially beneficial and contributed to increased confidence and motivation for the future*

Finally, a low engagement from the parents of cohort members has been the least common but still prevalent as a theme within discussions (15% of all recorded themes, although more frequent at the beginning of the intervention). As with their children, some parents have a resistance to professional involvement, often due to an ingrained distrust of the police or statutory services in general. This has prevented opportunities to engage with the young person and has caused delays in understanding their needs.

Other sub-themes include the parent having a lack of oversight of the YP, specifically being unaware if they are out of the house in the late evening or not knowing who they're with when they do go out. This can be a concern where the YP is then not reported missing as no measures have been taken to ensure they return safe. Furthermore, a minority of parents in the cohort are considered as viewing their child as the victim and as a result may be unintentionally enabling their offending behaviour. In these cases, it has been essential for the YPPs to build rapport with the parent to help them understand the FD process and how it aims to deter their child from crime. To help with this, a parent non-violent resistance (NVR)[10] group was run during the intervention to benefit the parents of certain YP on the cohort by providing support.

Stakeholder Interviews

Qualitative data was also collected from interviews with key stakeholders involved in the FD project. Stakeholders included involved YJS staff, police and VRU staff involved both directly and as part of strategic oversight. There were 6 interviews completed over August and September 2026, with 4 main themes identified (derived from 17 sub-themes).

These themes are:

1. Trust building: interviewees highlighted the strength of relationships built between YP and their YPP as well as PC and YP.
2. Joined up working: co-location and joint visits were important for the success of the FD intervention.
3. Training and awareness raising: the need for better understanding of FD across partner agencies.
4. YPP responsibilities: the roles taken on by the YPP that should be completed by other agencies.

The themes of having trust building and joined up working were mentioned by 83% of interviewees. Trust building specifically referred to the YPPs and PC being able to build strong relationships with the young people thanks to their consistency. This was particularly important for the PC to be able to challenge the anti-police beliefs ingrained in a lot of the YP because of their previous experiences. Interviewees noted that this relationship made the deterrence element more effective as it was coming from someone they trusted as opposed to an unknown officer. Likewise, for the YPPs it was important for them to build a good rapport with the YP to allow them to open up and speak to them as they may not have been able to with other professionals.

> *"(YPPs) have the best relationship with the young people compared to the other professionals involved...I think that's partly down to them and their personalities and the way they work, but also the offer of FD"*

> *"(PC) has done a really good job of building the relationship with young people where they're not just seeing him as like a general police officer coming in to give him a telling off... which goes a long way in terms of the messaging he's been able to give"*

For joined up working, interviewees mentioned the value of having the PC co-located within YJ to allow for efficient problem-solving discussions. Additionally, the ability to complete joint visits has created space for trust in the police to be built, as well as ensuring that the support and enforcement messages are aligned. This meant that when things did go wrong such as a critical incident occurring, the YP had a pre-established relationship with the PC.

> *"If anyone has any questions or anything else like that, it gets flagged to me quite quickly and I tend to resolve things as quickly as I can...if they need any checks or any information or anything else like that"*

Training and awareness raising was mentioned by 50% of interviewees. Interviewees suggested that awareness of the FD was still limited amongst those not directly working in the intervention. This has been a challenge when working with partner agencies as if they are not aware of the FD intervention and the role of the YPP, it may be more difficult for them to assist the YP in an efficient way. These agencies often have limited capacity, making it harder for quick decisions to be made for cohort members.

> *"Spending time like explaining what FD is...I think that's something that's just going to take time because they didn't necessarily have that exposure last year... It's coming up more and more in meetings...teams are being aware of becoming aware of who we are"*

A final theme also mentioned by 50% of interviewees was the difficulty in determining responsibilities that sit within the YPP role as opposed to with partner agencies. YPPs mentioned difficulties liaising with housing and education while being unsure whether these are tasks that should be picked up by another member of the professional network. However, in cases where a YP is not open to any other professionals, YPPs felt they had to take this work on. One interviewee suggestion was to have a designated contact from housing to attend weekly operational meeting where possible to assist with decision making.

> *"(YPPs) treated like social workers and expected sometimes to do the role of a social worker... (YPPs) are of the mind that they would rather just get things done rather than relying on other people. But then that means their role is a little bit blurred"*

> *"When you're the only professional open to that child at the time, it can feel a little bit tricky trying to do everything and be everything in one role... there's not anywhere to share responsibility or to pick up different things"*

Discussion

Successes

Within the year of the intervention running so far there have been notable successes. Whilst the data shows a significant reduction in almost all police recorded incidents, there has also been progress around education/work opportunities and addressing the needs of the young people.

With the support of their YPP, cohort members have engaged with many positive activities, including fun/sporting activities as well as training opportunities. Opportunities like the Get Ready for Construction course have been positive for their professional development and will allow them to pursue a career in construction. This is especially for those not in education as they are involved in a prosocial activity (see Appendix 4 for case studies mentioning involvement in activities). One member of the cohort has already started a job on a construction site after receiving help from his YPP for his CV.

Additionally, progress has been made in achieving swift justice, supporting the deterrence element of FD. Legacy investigations were reviewed by police staff with the aim of getting these resolved more quickly. Interviewees felt that where consequences have become evident for cohort members, this helped to reduce their reoffending, especially for those with a fear of custody. For the YP who had the most recorded suspect incidents and arrests over the intervention period, additional deterrence measures were required to help reduce his offending. This included bespoke requirements of a Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS), which contributed to the YP's increased school attendance and getting a college place confirmed.

Another successful aspect of the FD intervention is the wider support that can be offered to the cohort member's family. This is particularly important when there have been DA concerns towards the YP, or if the family begins to feel unsafe in the area that they live. YPPs have been able to suggest management moves or other assistance in these situations, helping to increase the trust between themselves and the YP.

> *Several families highlighted the value of having support available during periods of transition or challenge and expressed gratitude for the positive difference it had made.*

Finally, the results at this stage suggest that there is decreasing youth serious violence in Southampton wider than just those on the FD intervention. Whilst this evaluation is based on 61 YP including the BAU group, it suggests that the principles of FD may be having an impact on police and YJ practice generally. Interviewees mentioned that the YPPs have been able to place themselves in the peer groups of the individuals they work with, meaning that their support may be being felt by YP outside of the FD cohort. Or alternatively, the reductions in offending seen within the cohort are having a knock-on effect on their peers who are now no longer committing offences with these individuals. It may also be the case that having the YPPs within Southampton YJ may also have increased capacity for other professionals.

> *"(YPP) almost embeds herself in with the friendship group...if she's working with two of the friendship group and they're sort of like not getting involved in trouble, then that maybe potentially rubs off on their friends"*

Challenges

In the interim evaluation, workload was mentioned as a significant challenge for the YPPs where they were needing to split their time between 15 YP each. Fortunately, with the closure of some cases, this has become more manageable and means that the YPPs are able to spend longer with each YP. This informed development of the new FD cohort in Portsmouth. Furthermore, process challenges were not as prevalent at this stage. Interviewees noted that over time, any process issues were managed and ironed out, allowing the intervention to run more smoothly.

Challenges remained in terms of governance, with a recent change of aligning FD into YJ in Southampton where it had previous sat with the Contextual Safeguarding team. Interviewees also identified there still needed to be greater buy-in from strategic leads to improve the governance of the project.

An additional challenge was when YP had been closed to the intervention due to a reduction in their serious violence offending, however wider contextual issues were still present. Interviewees noted that at the point of closure some YP were still not in education or there was still concern around the home environment. In these instances, YPPs felt that these individuals needed more intense support from children's services as opposed to anything that FD could offer.

Finally, partner services having a limited knowledge of the FD intervention was highlighted as a challenge. As FD is a voluntary programme, this could cause confusion where cohort members had other statutory contacts. Interviewees also mentioned the difficulties of working to other services' deadlines while being held up by others. As the project continues, it was felt that understanding would improve and that it would become easier to manage roles that are taken on by the YPP and those belonging to social workers or other professionals.

Opportunities

Buddi tags[11] have been used as a means of both support and deterrence for this cohort, with three cohort members having voluntarily been on tag for up to 6 weeks. This has supported them by giving them an excuse to distance or remove themselves from peers who are committing criminal offences and/or anti-social behaviour. The tag provides a physical reminder that the individual's movements are being tracked by the police, therefore this appears to have supported them choosing not to spend time with other young people who may be offending.

There is also space for more community based positive activity to be occurring, better catered to the young people's needs. It was highlighted that while some work has been done to engage with groups of YP in specific areas of Southampton, these activities may be based on the opinions of professionals rather than hearing the young people's voice.

Similarly, it would be beneficial for a greater array of training opportunities to be available to the cohort, with guaranteed pathways into work where possible. While cohort members have engaged well with the Get Ready for Construction course and seem to be interested in manual labour as a profession, their route into work depends on available vacancies or having a family member that is able to get them into the business after they have their CSCS qualification.

Concluding remarks

With the intervention having run for over 12 months, this evaluation has found that there has been a reduction in serious youth violence due to the FD intervention. The intervention group saw significant decreases across all police recorded measures except for VA. The data collected up to this point not only highlights the positive work of the YPPs and PC in engaging with the YP, but also the wider impact of FD on YP outside of the cohort. The decreasing police recorded activity for the BAU group since the implementation of the programme, may suggest a wider impact on YJ and police practice.

For continued running of FD in Southampton and future rollout in other areas, it has been considered that the intervention may be more impactful for those higher risk individuals who have offended most recently. The data appears to suggest that those identified from pre-intervention data as being at the highest risk of offending, had the largest decrease in offences during intervention period. Meanwhile, the qualitative data suggested that those offending less often required assistance from their YPP in more of a Children's Services space with education or other referrals, rather than support to prevent reoffending.

Overall, the reduction in offending and crime harm, and positive engagement of high-risk YP have been key strengths of the intervention. Some of these YP had previously been difficult for professionals to engage with, and the continued dedication of the PC and YPPs to build relationships and become trusted adults cannot be understated. The evidence suggests that the work of these individuals may have a wider impact on YP outside of the intervention, with the added benefit of disrupting networks of youth SV.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Funding details

The intervention was funded by £200,000 of the VRU's budget in the 2025-26 financial year, and £150,000 for 2026-27. There has also been some in kind funding from police, youth justice and Young Peoples' Service. The existing Contextual Safeguarding Team in Southampton was expanded beyond 1 FTE Manager and 4 FTE staff, who had a focus on responding to context and enhancing safety in spaces where the young people spent time (peer groups, outside spaces, schools etc.), to the following:

- 1 FTE Dedicated Police Inspector-Policing Lead for Serious violence - In Kind Police funding.
- 1 FTE Dedicated FD Police Officer-Policing Lead for FD Enforcement - Funded by VRU costing £60,000.
- 2 FTE Dedicated FD Case Workers -FD Lead for Support - Funded by VRU costing £106,000.
- 0.2 Speech and Language (SALT) Specialist (1 day a week) - FD Specialist Health Support- Funded by VRU costing £15,000.
- 0.5 Tutor to provide bespoke one to one offer of English and Maths with linked accreditation – Funded by the VRU costing £13,000.

There is also a cost for training and development support – trauma informed, child first approaches across teams. This is also funded by the VRU costing £6,000.

Appendix 2 – Police recorded incidents totals tables

Intervention Group			
Suspect	**Pre-intervention**	**Intervention period**	**% change**
Total incidents	250	123	↓ 51%
Individuals	30	22	↓ 27%
Victim			
Total incidents	43	29	↓ 33%
Individuals	14	15	↑ 7%
Arrest			
Total incidents	59	36	↓ 39%
Individuals	18	14	↓ 22%
Missing			
Total incidents	194	43	↓ 78%
Individuals	15	11	↓ 27%
VA			
Total incidents	19	16	↓ 16%
Individuals	13	10	↓ 23%
Intel			
Total incidents	460	388	↓ 16%
Individuals	26	25	↓ 4%
Stop search			
Total incidents	78	63	↓ 19%
Individuals	20	14	↓ 30%

BAU Group			
Suspect	**Pre-intervention**	**Intervention period**	**% change**
Total incidents	247	134	↓ 46%
Individuals	31	22	↓ 29%
Victim			
Total incidents	51	41	↓ 20%
Individuals	23	18	↓ 22%
Arrest			
Total incidents	59	40	↓ 32%
Individuals	24	20	↓ 17%
Missing			
Total incidents	58	15	↓ 74%
Individuals	11	5	↓ 55%
VA			
Total incidents	12	9	↓ 25%
Individuals	10	9	↓ 10%
Intel			
Total incidents	731	518	↓ 29%
Individuals	30	28	↓ 7%
Stop search			
Total incidents	88	79	↓ 10%
Individuals	22	15	↓ 32%

Appendix 3 – Statistical analysis

We conducted a series of Zero-inflated Negative Binomial Mixed Effects Models. These statistical tools allow us to model the effect of the intervention and change over time on the frequencies data. These models also allow us to use all cases of data (so no variable is averaged) to understand the trajectory of every individual in the dataset.

The overall findings were that the whole sample generally changed over the observed quarters, significantly decreasing in the number of Suspect, Aggrieved, Arrested, Intel, Stopped and Missing events. However, there was no statistically significant difference between groups for any of these measures. Nor was there an interaction, with no notable evidence of the intervention affecting the change over time.

	Aggregate effects in study as estimate (p value)		
Predictor	Time	Group	Interaction
Suspect	-0.18 (<.001)*	0.26 (.296)	-0.01 (.867)
Aggrieved	-0.10 (.004)*	0.30 (.332)	0.02 (.822)
Arrest	-0.08 (.011)*	0.36 (.212)	0.01 (.831)
VA	-0.08 (.150)	-0.57 (.080)	-1.11 (.333)
Intel	-0.10 (<.001)*	0.54 (.150)	-0.07 (.175)
Stopped	-0.09 (.004)*	-0.03 (.926)	-0.03 (.664)
Missing	-0.35 (<.001)*	-1.10 (.152)	-0.05 (.664)

*Statistically significant

Individuals were notably varied in their event intercepts, meaning that there was a high variance in the impact of different individual cases in the dataset for Suspect (Intercept=-0.17, Variance=0.70), Aggrieved (Intercept=-1.69, Variance=0.80), Arrested (Intercept=-1.48, Variance=0.71), Intel (Intercept=0.59, Variance=1.85), Stopped (Intercept=-1.29, Variance=1.49) and Missing (Intercept=-3.27, Variance=5.46).

Taken together, there was evidence that all individuals in the sample improved over time (including those in the BAU condition). However, there was notable variation in the way individuals contributed to the dataset. Inspection of the figures demonstrated some individuals, with high counts at the start, lowered through the trial. Whereas, many individuals did not have room to change by decreasing, with high 'no behaviour rates'.

When looking specifically at the CCHI scores for suspect, victim and arrest incidents, the table below displays these modelled as linear effects.

	Aggregate effects in study as estimate (p value)		
Predictor	Time	Group	Interaction
Suspect	-14.23 (.078)	-38.24 (.359)	3.65 (.821)
Aggrieved	-1.35 (.720)	28.54 (.141)	-8.55 (.255)
Arrest	-3.58 (.655)	1.25 (.976)	-7.60 (.635)

Appendix 4 – Case studies

Case study 1

Context

BC is a 15-year-old male who was referred due to concerns relating to shoplifting, association with peers involved in drug use and drug dealing, and intelligence received regarding the potential carrying of knives. There were also concerns relating to malicious communications between peers and assaults towards local shopkeepers. One significant incident occurred outside Southampton Central Station, where BC was arrested in April following the assault of a shopkeeper.

BC lives at home with his mother, father, two older brothers and an older sister. He regularly speaks positively about his family and presents as having strong attachments within the home environment. BC and frequently talks about the various pets he has at home, including dogs and reptiles. He is especially fond of his pet snake, "Baby Jake", who he discusses with great enthusiasm.

BC attended Polygon School; however, his engagement in education reduced significantly following the Christmas period due to ongoing conflict with peers. Difficulties managing peer relationships have been a consistent theme, with BC becoming involved in frequent disputes that have escalated to both verbal and physical aggression. These challenges increased his time spent in the community and his exposure to peers involved in risk-taking and criminal behaviours.

Alongside concerns relating to his own behaviours and vulnerabilities, BC has also experienced significant trauma as a victim of crime. During the intervention period, BC was present at a peer's address when an aggravated burglary occurred in May 2026. Although he was not the intended target, offenders entered the address and held a knife to his throat. This was a highly distressing incident which highlighted the serious risks associated with the individuals and environments BC was associating with. The incident raised concerns regarding BC's safety, emotional wellbeing, and vulnerability to serious youth violence, while also demonstrating the potential consequences of spending time within high-risk peer groups.

Actions Taken

During this quarter, BC has continued to engage positively with Saints Switching Play, demonstrating consistent attendance and a willingness to access support. As part of his involvement with Saints Switching Play, BC was given the opportunity to be a ball boy at several Southampton FC matches. As a lifelong Saints supporter, this was a significant achievement and source of pride for him, especially being involved in the FA Cup fixture against Arsenal. These opportunities have helped to build his confidence, sense of belonging, and engagement in positive activities within the community.

BC has also taken part in two baking sessions at the Hub, which provided an opportunity to develop social skills and engage with a wider network of staff and peers. It was particularly encouraging to see him interact so positively within a group setting.

Education and future planning have also been a key focus during this period. BC attended and completed a tour of Oaktree College, where he met with staff and explored the educational opportunities available to him. Although he ultimately decided that the provision was not the right fit for him, the fact that he attended the visit, engaged with staff, and considered his options demonstrated considerable progress and a growing willingness to think about his future.

More recently, BC successfully completed a week-long CSCS preparation course, during which he passed both his Health and Safety qualification and PASMA Mobile Access Tower training. As part of the programme, he also toured a live construction site and engaged exceptionally well throughout the experience. BC demonstrated maturity, enthusiasm, and a genuine interest in the practical aspects of the course, with staff noting his positive engagement and willingness to learn. BC also managed a group of 9 other peers, and this was huge and helped to reinforce his confidence in managing group dynamics.

Having successfully completed the course requirements, BC is now in a position to sit his CSCS test. Ongoing support will be provided to help him access further education, training, or employment opportunities, building upon the motivation and positive engagement he has demonstrated throughout this quarter. These achievements highlight BC's ability to thrive when provided with structured opportunities that align with his interests and strengths, while also supporting his development of confidence, independence, and aspirations for the future.

Impact on outcomes for the child and wider community

Throughout the intervention period, BC has demonstrated significant progress in engaging with a range of positive opportunities, experiences, and activities that have supported his personal development and emotional wellbeing. Through consistent encouragement and support, BC has shown a willingness to step outside of his comfort zone, explore new interests, and participate in opportunities that have promoted growth, achievement, and a more positive outlook on his future.

BC has engaged positively with activities designed to build his confidence and self-esteem, and over time he has become more willing to recognise his own strengths, abilities, and potential. This has been reflected in his increased participation, improved motivation, and growing belief in his ability to achieve personal goals.

As a result, BC has begun to develop a more positive self-image and has demonstrated greater resilience when faced with challenges or setbacks.

The opportunities made available to BC during this intervention have also helped to broaden his aspirations and encourage him to think more positively about the future. Exposure to new experiences and positive role models has enabled him to consider alternative pathways and opportunities that align with his interests, skills, and ambitions. Through these experiences, BC has developed a greater understanding of what he would like to achieve and has shown increased motivation to work towards his longer-term goals.

Overall, BC has benefited greatly from increased access to positive opportunities, improved confidence in his own abilities, and a stronger belief in his future potential. The progress made throughout this intervention highlights his strengths, resilience, and capacity for positive change. While continued support and encouragement will be important in maintaining this momentum, BC has established a solid foundation from which to continue building a positive, successful, and fulfilling future.

There has been a notable reduction in concerns relating to offending behaviour during this intervention period. Through engagement in structured activities, positive community-based opportunities, and work focused on future aspirations, BC has spent more time participating in constructive pursuits and less time engaging in behaviours that previously brought him to the attention of police and local businesses.

The reduction in reported offending-related concerns has had a positive impact on the wider community, particularly given previous concerns regarding shoplifting, assaults, anti-social behaviour, and associations with individuals involved in criminal activity. By engaging BC in education, employability programmes, and positive recreational activities, opportunities have been created to divert him away from situations that may place him or others at risk.

The development of stronger pro-social relationships with trusted adults and engagement in community programmes has also increased BC's connection to positive influences within the local area. This has supported ongoing efforts to reduce risk, improve community safety, and encourage more positive participation within the community.

While continued support remains important, the progress made during this period demonstrates that when provided with meaningful opportunities and trusted relationships, BC is capable of making positive choices that benefit both himself and those around him.

Case Study 2

Context

JD is a 15-year-old child from Southampton who was identified as suitable for inclusion within the Future Directions (FD) programme during the initial cohort. The initial assessment of JD drew upon a range of multi-agency information, highlighting significant concerns regarding both his personal safety and the safety of the wider public.

JD has an extensive history of police involvement, including four incidents involving the possession or use of an offensive weapon, two assaults occasioning injury, and twelve assaults without injury. Additionally, he has been linked to numerous incidents involving shoplifting, drug-related offences, and anti-social behaviour. He is also subject to multiple warning markers relating to the carrying of weapons and knives.

JD has been known to Children's Services from an early age and has experienced a range of adverse childhood experiences, including sexual abuse, neglect, and significant trauma. He has also received a positive National Referral Mechanism (NRM) decision, recognising him as a victim of trafficking.

JD experiences ongoing mental health difficulties and presents with indicators consistent with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), possible Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). In terms of his developmental functioning, professionals have assessed JD as operating at an approximate developmental age of between 10 and 12 years.

When considering both equity and contextual safeguarding factors, JD is currently assessed as being at medium risk of child criminal exploitation. However, the extent to which exploitation may be contributing to his violent offending behaviour remains unclear. His neurodivergence and mental health needs are significant factors which must be carefully considered when seeking to understand his behaviour, decision-making, responses to interventions, and capacity to engage effectively with both supportive and deterrence-based approaches.

Actions Taken

JD returned to the Southampton area in December 2025 and was subsequently placed in foster care. Prior to his return, he had established a positive working relationship with his Youth Participation Practitioner (YPP), which continued following the move. He was also introduced to the police officer assigned to the Future Directions (FD) programme to support a coordinated intervention approach.

Initially, there appeared to be a reduction in incidents involving JD. However, from January onwards, a number of reports emerged linking him to low-level criminality alongside other young people in the Fareham area. During this period, JD was arrested on suspicion of theft of a motor vehicle and possession of a bladed article, resulting in the imposition of a Youth Referral Order (YRO). Whilst that investigation remained ongoing, JD also became involved in a series of shoplifting offences across Southampton and Hedge End.

Throughout this period, the YPP maintained consistent engagement with JD, whilst the FD police officer worked to develop a professional relationship with him. These interactions sought to reinforce clear expectations regarding acceptable behaviour, emphasising that criminal activity would be appropriately investigated while also ensuring that support remained available to him.

As concerns escalated, the FD officer adopted a more proactive role in the associated investigations. This included obtaining witness and victim statements, carrying out CCTV enquiries, completing identification procedures, and conducting a search of JD's room with consent. In addition, JD participated in a voluntary police interview conducted by the FD officer, with the YPP acting as his Appropriate Adult throughout the process to ensure that he was fully supported and that his welfare needs were appropriately considered.

Allegations relating to an aggravated burglary and a robbery were then made against JD. He was arrested in connection with these offences, appeared before the court, and was released subject to court-imposed bail conditions. During this period, JD received significant support from his YPP, with ongoing engagement also provided by the FD police officer. Given the importance of compliance with the bail conditions, the FD officer spent considerable time discussing the requirements with JD, reinforcing the deterrence message and making himself available to answer any questions or address any concerns. Similarly, the YPP worked closely with JD to ensure that they fully understood the conditions imposed by the court, as well as the potential consequences of any breaches.

Despite these efforts, the court bail conditions were breached on a number of occasions. From a policing perspective, this resulted in JD being arrested for the relevant breaches, with the FD officer ensuring that all associated court files were completed to the required evidential and procedural standards. Throughout these incidents, the YPP continued to provide support and guidance to JD, including during his arrests and subsequent court appearances.

Impact on outcomes for the child and wider community

More recently, there has been a noticeable stabilisation in JD's behaviour and a reduction in indicators of ongoing offending. JD has begun to engage positively with the conditions of his Youth Referral Order (YRO) and has demonstrated compliance with his court-imposed bail conditions. The YPP and FD officer continue to maintain regular contact with him, providing ongoing support, monitoring, and reinforcement of expectations to promote continued compliance and positive decision-making.

From a community perspective, reports of anti-social behaviour involving JD have ceased, and there have been no recent allegations linking him to shoplifting or other forms of low-level criminality. This represents a significant improvement when compared to the pattern of behaviour previously observed.

JD continues to receive support from a range of professional agencies, ensuring that both his welfare needs and risk factors are appropriately managed. Of particular note has been the development of a positive and constructive relationship between JD and the FD police officer. This is especially significant given JD's historically negative perception of the police and an underlying mistrust of law enforcement. Through consistent engagement, clear communication, and a balanced approach of support and accountability, a level of professional trust appears to have been established, enabling more meaningful dialogue and increasing JD's willingness to engage with interventions designed to support positive behavioural change.

Whilst continued oversight and support remain necessary, the progress observed to date suggests that the coordinated multi-agency approach, incorporating both supportive and deterrence-focused interventions, has contributed positively to JD's recent engagement and behavioural outcomes.