



Ministry
of Justice

Turnaround Programme – Independent process and implementation evaluation

Final Report

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Glossary of key terms

Additional learning needs (ALN): As defined by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018,¹ this is when a person has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision. Learning difficulties and or disabilities make it harder for a child to learn compared to children of the same age.

Antisocial behaviour (ASB): As defined by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014,² this includes criminal and non-criminal behaviour such as threatening, harassing or unruly behaviour in public spaces, drug use, vandalism, graffiti, fly-tipping and littering, and disrupting neighbours consistently.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): Local NHS services across the UK that aim to support children and young people with mental health needs and difficult experiences.³

Care and Support Protection Plans (CASPPs): A care and support arrangement with an emphasis on protection or risk management that seeks to remove or reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.⁴

Child Protection Plans (CPPs): A formal agreement designed to safeguard children where there is reasonable suspicion that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm.⁵

¹ Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. (2018). Legislation.gov.uk. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents>

² Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. (2014). Legislation.gov.uk. [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/section/2/enacted#:~:text=\(1\)%20In%2](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/section/2/enacted#:~:text=(1)%20In%2)

³ NHS. (2023, July 19). Children and young people's mental health services. NHS. <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/mental-health-support/mental-health-services/>

⁴ [Section 54 of the Social Services and Well-being Act Wales \(2014\)](#). Wales Safeguarding Procedures. <https://safeguarding.wales/en/adu-i/adu-i-a4/a4-p2/>

⁵ Department for Education. (2019). Children in need of help and protection. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809108/CIN_review_final_analysis_publication.pdf

Children in need (CIN): Under section 17 of the Children Act 1989,⁶ a child is defined as ‘in need’ for a variety of reasons and in need of varying types of support or intervention; this includes but is not limited to: their health and or development is likely to be significantly impaired, they are disabled or unlikely to achieve a reasonable standard of development without provision of services by a local authority.

Community resolution (CR): A non-statutory out of court disposal intended to provide a response to low-level crime without recourse to a formal criminal justice sanction.⁷

Community safety partnerships (CSP): Partnerships between police, fire and rescue authorities, local authorities, health partners and probation service to implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in communities.⁸

Delivery partners: These are services and partners that assist Youth Offending Teams with the delivery of Turnaround, for example, police, early help services and local and voluntary organisations.

First Time Entrants (FTE): A first time entrant to the criminal justice system is an offender residing in England and Wales at the time of the offence, who has been recorded on the Police National Computer by an English or Welsh police force as having received their first conviction or caution.⁹

Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH): Arrangements that allow organisations with responsibility for safety of vulnerable people to work together by sharing information and co-locating staff from the local authority, health agencies and police.¹⁰

⁶ Children Act 1989. (1989). Legislation.gov.uk. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17>
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17>

⁷ Ministry of Justice. (2024). Turnaround programme year one management information: ad hoc statistical release.

⁸ Home Office. (2024, May 13). Community Safety Partnerships. GOV.UK
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-safety-partnerships/community-safety-partnerships>

⁹ Ministry of Justice. (2024). Turnaround programme year one management information: ad hoc statistical release.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/671bc9e51037a76fc9903e66/Signed_off_Turnaround_programme_year_one_management_information_web_1.pdf

¹⁰ HMICFRS. (2023, March 23). Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). HMICFRS.
<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/glossary/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash/>

No further action (NFA): Outcome whereby the police decide not to charge someone with an offence, including outcome 22.¹¹

Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET): Anybody who is not in any form of education or training (enrolled on an education course, doing an apprenticeship, on government-support employment or training programme, working towards a qualification or have job-related training that lasts for four weeks) and who is not in employment.¹²

Out of court disposals (OOCd): Different ways of resolving a situation without going to court, they can either be non-statutory (community resolution or no further action) or statutory options (youth caution or youth conditional caution).¹³

Parent or Carer: A person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a child for whom the person has parental responsibility.¹⁴

Pre-charge bail (PCB): Bail is an alternative to custody – it allows the police to continue the investigation without the suspect being detained and can involve placing conditions on the suspect.¹⁵

Released under investigation (RUI): When a suspect is released from custody without charge, is not subject to ‘no further action’ (NFA) and is not on bail.¹⁶

Reoffending or subsequent offending: a criminal offence committed after completing a Turnaround intervention. For children who offended before they were referred to

¹¹ Ministry of Justice. (2024). Turnaround programme year one management information: ad hoc statistical release.

¹² ONS. (2025, February 27) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 2025.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/february2025#glossary>

¹³ Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. (2022, October 12). Case management guidance. GOV.UK.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-use-out-of-court-disposals>

¹⁴ HM Government. (2023). Working together to safeguarding children 2023.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf

¹⁵ Home Office. (2023, June 9). Pre-charge bail statutory guidance. GOV.UK.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-charge-bail-statutory-guidance/pre-charge-bail-statutory-guidance-accessible> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-charge-bail-statutory-guidance/pre-charge-bail-statutory-guidance-accessible>

¹⁶ ibid

Turnaround this would be a reoffence. For children who did not offend before being referred this would be their first offence.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND): A child or young person who has a learning difficulty and or disability that need special health and education support.¹⁷

Turnaround worker: Staff members who are leading the delivery of Turnaround support for children. They are part of the frontline delivery participant group.

Turnaround lead: YOT Turnaround leads are senior members of staff who supervise delivery of the Turnaround programme in their Youth Offending Team. This participant group will be referred to as Turnaround lead(s) throughout the report.

Turnaround delivery staff or frontline delivery staff: These are staff members within the Youth Offending Team who deliver the Turnaround programme.

Total YOT funding: This is the funding that Youth Offending Teams receive from various sources, including central government, local authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners and other organisations, to support their work in preventing and addressing youth offending. This excludes the Turnaround grant.

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs): YOTs are multi-agency teams made up of representatives from police, probation, education, health and social services, and specialist workers, such as accommodation officers and substance misuse workers. Throughout this report, these multi-agency teams are referred to as YOTs or Youth Offending Teams. YOTs were set up following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act with the intention of reducing the risk of young people offending and reoffending. While 'Youth Offending Team' is the statutory name for YOTs and the name used in this publication, there is local variation in how YOTs refer to themselves, with 'Youth Justice Services' a commonly used term.¹⁸

¹⁷ NHS England. (n.d). Special educational needs and disability (SEND). NHS England. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/care/children-young-people/send/>

¹⁸ Ministry of Justice. (2024). Turnaround programme year one management information: ad hoc statistical release https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/671bc9e51037a76fc9903e66/Signed_off_Turnaround_programme_year_one_management_information_web_1_.pdf

1. Executive summary

Turnaround is a youth early intervention programme, launched in December 2022, led by the Ministry of Justice. Turnaround principles align with the Safer Streets mission, tackling root causes of youth offending by offering a structured ‘whole family’ approach delivered by Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to children on the cusp of the justice system.

Evaluation approach

A process and implementation evaluation of the programme took place between April 2024 and May 2025. The evaluation took a mixed-method approach and included:

- **A documentation review, a Theory of Change workshop and interviews with the programme’s national strategic stakeholders** to establish intended outcomes and impacts, understand its governance and partnership working.
- **A survey of all YOTs delivering the programme, focus groups with delivery staff and observations of Turnaround interventions** to gather insight into successes and challenges of delivery.
- **Analysis of the programme Management Information (MI)** to examine referral, completion and partial completion rates, and offending outcomes of children who completed Turnaround interventions.¹⁹
- **Interviews with children and parents accessing Turnaround interventions** to understand their views and experiences of the programme and its impacts.²⁰

Children’s outcomes

Low offending rates were recorded among children supported by Turnaround in England and Wales – on average, 7% of children who completed Turnaround interventions had

¹⁹ The analysis covered the first two years of programme delivery: December 2022 – December 2024.

²⁰ Programme impacts discussed throughout the report are based on self-reported MI. Given the lack of counterfactual, the conclusions should be read as suggestive rather than definitive.

received a judicial decision for offending or were cautioned as of the end of December 2024, as demonstrated by analysis of the programme MI. This was backed up by rich qualitative data gathered from children supported by the programme, their parents or carers, and practitioners who have led programme delivery locally, who reported that Turnaround has achieved its primary aim of reducing offending and reoffending.

Turnaround delivery staff, families and carers also reported improved behaviour, educational outcomes, and socio-emotional wellbeing, and more optimistic future outlook among children who completed Turnaround interventions. The programme was also reported to have improved family relationships and parents or carers' wellbeing.

Systemic impacts

According to Turnaround delivery staff, the programme has contributed to a systemic change within YOTs and their wider partnerships. Across both rural and urban areas in England and Wales, YOTs reported improved service delivery and strengthened collaboration with key stakeholders, including police officers, education, and health care workers, which were thought to have greatly contributed to the programme's success. Close working with the police was deemed important in securing referrals for Turnaround. In some cases, greater awareness of the programme had made officers more confident to issue less severe outcomes, where appropriate, for the child.

Successes and challenges of programme delivery

Participants valued Turnaround's core principles of voluntary participation, and lack of requirement to admit guilt to access support. These features were key to building trust and encouraging engagement. YOTs demonstrated a committed approach to delivery, including the early identification of eligible children, building trusting relationships with children and families, and leveraging prior multi-agency connections. These pre-existing partnerships in turn increased Turnaround's integration within local areas.

Turnaround has achieved the individual-level and systemic outcomes by delivering flexible and tailored interventions. Participants consistently highlighted the programme's value in filling a longstanding gap – the lack of consistent, nation-wide, diversionary offer for vulnerable children at risk of offending. In doing so, the programme has been successful in

engaging children who previously would not have accessed early intervention services - between December 2022 and end of December 2024, Turnaround received 38,704 referrals, just over half (55%) of which progressed to assessment, and 87% of assessed cases proceeded to intervention stage as of end of December 2024.

Challenges and barriers to programme implementation related more to systems than people. Across YOTs in England and Wales, these included tight programme mobilisation timeframes, staffing shortages, and what some YOTs found to be restrictive eligibility criteria. In addition, Welsh YOTs experienced a challenge with early programme materials that used terminology from England, such as SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) instead of ALN (Additional Learning Needs) used in Wales.

There were mixed views about how existing diversion and early intervention services influenced the setup and delivery of the Turnaround programme. Some participants valued these services for their experience working with similar groups of children and for helping engage key stakeholders during the programme's establishment. However, others raised concerns about potential overlaps between Turnaround and existing services, leading to uncertainty about what makes Turnaround distinct within the youth justice landscape.

2. Implications

2.1 YOTs and on-the-ground delivery partners

- **YOTs should continue addressing key barriers to engagement** including covering travel costs or home-based or virtual options and providing children with SEND or ALN or suspected needs accessible materials such as visual aids to clearly communicate the voluntary nature of the programme. While some YOTs already provide some of these adjustments, expanding on them could improve engagement with a variety of children and families.
- To ensure support remains inclusive and accessible, **continue providing holistic family-centred support** that reflects children's cultural background, neurodiversity and lived experience (such as time in care, discrimination, family dynamics, trauma etc.). Expansion of opportunities for children to re-engage with the programme following drop-out should be considered.
- **Introduce clear protocols to determine lead agency responsibilities in multi-agency cases** to outline which service is most appropriate to lead based on the child's needs. This will reduce delays, avoid duplication, and coordinate support, improving efficiency and outcomes for children.

2.2 National strategic stakeholders

- **A stronger role of education in prevention pathways (for example via national guidance or incentives)** may help increase schools' engagement in early intervention. Efforts could focus on improving capacity of schools to identify emerging risks earlier, particularly for pupils with SEND or ALN, or those at risk of exclusion. Improved use of data, staff training in trauma-informed practices, and formalised information-sharing processes that uphold safeguarding are key.
- Children's outcomes are closely linked to family wellbeing – as seen in chapter 6 – and require parallel support for parents, carers and siblings. **Where possible,**

cross-government investment in evidence-based parenting programmes and wraparound support would be beneficial. This would support child and parent exit planning strategies some YOTs are already delivering as part of Turnaround, ensuring continuity of support is crucial, preventing families from being left without help once initial support ends.

2.3 Ministry of Justice

- **Multi-year funding certainty for this programme and similar early intervention models**, including policy support, is important to promote pre-court diversion from the youth justice system, and contribute to better outcomes for vulnerable children. Greater flexibility in future funding, such as rollover provisions would be welcome.
- Future delivery should build on existing regional engagement with YOTs (e.g. via quarterly regional sessions), to enable more opportunities to circulate learning and best practice.²¹ Based on observations from YOTs in England and Wales, **greater emphasis on qualitative insights and use of case studies in quarterly reporting would provide richer insights into which delivery models are most effective** and for which cohorts of children (see more detail below on further research and evaluation).
- Some YOTs viewed the eligibility criteria for the programme as restrictive and advocated for their widening to include Children in Need, and those with a Child Protection Plan or a Care and Support Protection Plan. In response, the eligibility criteria for Turnaround were reviewed and changed for delivery in 2025 to 2026.²² Additionally, **allowing multiple points of return after disengagement would help ensure support is available when children are ready to engage at a later point in time.**

²¹ In response to this, approaches to share best practice are under consideration for year 4 of programme delivery.

²² Eligible children now include those who are part of an open family plan. This includes Family Help or Family Prevention Plans, Child Protection Plans or Care and Support Protection Plans and Child Looked After, and YOTs can continue to work with Children in Need/Children with a Care and Support Plan.

2.4 Further research and evaluation

Building on the findings of this evaluation, future research could explore the long-term value, reach, and sustainability of the programme and its outcomes.

- Future research should **examine the long-term impact of Turnaround**, as current findings are limited to short-term to medium-term self-reported outcomes. Longitudinal studies tracking children and families 12 to 24 months post-intervention would provide valuable insight into the sustainability of changes in outcomes, including reduced offending, improved school engagement, early career progression, and stronger family relationships.
- Additionally, while children across a range of backgrounds generally reported positive experiences, **future research should examine whether the programme is reaching and benefiting all demographic groups equally**. This includes exploring any barriers to access or engagement with children from minority ethnic backgrounds, SEND or ALN, or those living in more rural and or isolated areas, to understand whether adaptations may be needed to ensure consistently inclusive and equitable practice. This may be achieved through an equity audit.
- There is value in promoting learning and sharing best practice between YOTs, particularly around intervention design and delivery. **Future comparative analysis of delivery models could highlight most and least effective features of Turnaround, such as frequency of support, co-location with services, training needs, and alignment with children's evolving needs**. Mixed-method approaches, combining MI and follow-up surveys would provide deeper insight into which approaches deliver the greatest impact and for whom.
- **Future research should include co-produced or participatory elements**, for example youth-led interviews or family advisory panels. This will enable children, families, and frontline practitioners to shape the research and ground it in lived experience, ensuring that its findings remain close to the recipients of policies.

3. Context and background

The Turnaround programme, led by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), is an early intervention programme aimed at improving outcomes for children aged 10 to 17 at risk of entering the youth justice system.²³ It is a national programme, delivered by 155 YOTs across England and Wales between December 2022 and March 2025, and by all 157 YOTs in England and Wales since April 2025. This evaluation covers the period between December 2022 and March 2025.

Since December 2022, the programme has provided YOTs with approximately £3,000 extra funding per child, with the aim of enabling targeted, wrap-around support to up to 20,500 children on the cusp of the youth justice system,²⁴ but not on YOTs' statutory caseloads. This funding included an additional £1.5m provided to Turnaround across 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 to be distributed among YOTs in the 10 antisocial behaviour (ASB) hotspot areas identified by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (formerly the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities).²⁵

Turnaround is focused primarily on early intervention, with the aim of reducing the social and economic cost of offending and reoffending. Research evidence is clear that engagement with the formal criminal justice system can result in negative outcomes for children (mental health issues, social stigma, educational setbacks) and increase the likelihood of reoffending.²⁶ In 2019, the economic and social cost of reoffending by children and young people (i.e. those under the age of 18 at the time of entry into the cohort) in

²³ Turnaround received funding of £56 million between December 2022 and March 2025. The programme received additional £14.9m in financial year 2025 to 2026, making the total funding c.£71m as noted in Ministry of Justice (2025, April). Turnaround Programme [Turnaround Programme - GOV.UK](#)

²⁴ Initial funding enabled YOTs to support up to 17,100 children between December 2022 and March 2025 as reported by Ministry of Justice (2024).

²⁵ The following 10 hotspot areas were identified as part of the government's ASB action plan in 2023: South Yorkshire, West Midlands, Lancashire, South Wales, Durham, Derbyshire, Essex, Northumbria, Cleveland and Staffordshire.

²⁶ Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. (2022, October 12). Case management guidance. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-management-guidance/how-to-use-out-of-court-disposals>

England and Wales was estimated at £1.5 billion per year.²⁷ Around 80% of prolific adult offenders begin offending in childhood, with the cost of late intervention estimated at nearly £17 billion per year.²⁸

By contrast, research suggests pre-court diversion reduces reoffending by 13%.²⁹ If children are diverted and then commit a further offence, this offence is likely to be less serious.^{30,31} Studies also show that early intervention is beneficial to children's physical, cognitive, behavioural, and social and emotional development. Long-term benefits associated with effective early intervention include increased income and employment opportunities, reductions in crime, and increased life expectancy.³²

Children who meet a range of criteria are eligible for the programme, including those with justice-related outcomes such as receiving an out-of-court disposal (OOCd), being released under investigation (RUI) or being subject to pre-charge bail (PCB).³³ Eligibility criteria were extended in April 2023 to include children who have come to notice of agencies with enforcement powers for repeated involvement in ASB. Since April 2025, the eligibility criteria were extended further to include Child Looked After, children who have Child Protection Plans (CPP) or Care and Support Protection Plans (CASPPs), or have Family Help or Family Prevention Plans, if they also have the above justice-related or ASB outcomes.

Turnaround adopts a non-prescriptive approach to what interventions are offered to children, and positions YOTs as experts, recognising that YOTs best understand the opportunities and needs of children in their locality. YOTs are encouraged to use the Youth

²⁷ Newton, A., May, X., Eames, S., & Ahmad, M. (2019). Economic and social costs of reoffending. Ministry of Justice Analytical Series. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/economic-and-social-costs-of-reoffending>.

²⁸ Ministry of Justice (2017) Prolific Offenders – Characteristics of Prolific Offenders. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/681553/prolific-offenders-15-feb-2017.pdf

²⁹ Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. P. and White, H. (2021) Pre-Court Diversion: Toolkit technical report. Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: [Pre-Court-Diversion-technical-report-.pdf](https://www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk/yef-toolkit-what-works-to-prevent-youth-violence/)

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Youth Endowment Fund (n.d) YEF Toolkit – what works to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/yef-toolkit-what-works-to-prevent-youth-violence/>

³² Intervention Foundation (2018) Realising the potential of early intervention. <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/realising-the-potential-of-early-intervention>

³³ Full list of eligibility criteria available: Ministry of Justice (2025, April 1). Turnaround Programme. GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/turnaround-programme>

Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit, which helps them ensure that the interventions are safe, effective, and consistent with evidence-based strategies that successfully divert children from offending.³⁴ YOTs have the flexibility to determine the referral routes, assessment processes, and types of interventions used, and work with local partners to deliver tailored support. Moreover, YOTs have the flexibility to use grant funding to meet local need, including use of funding to increase staffing or to commission new or additional services. In adopting this approach, Turnaround does not aim to duplicate or override existing early intervention work across England and Wales but rather build on it to scale up existing YOT-led pre-court diversion provision.³⁵

The programme is based on similar principles to the Supporting Families programme,³⁶ with a key feature of having a family-centred, holistic approach of the support encompassing parents or carers as well as siblings. This reflects research evidence which demonstrates that family-based interventions, such as parenting training programmes, multisystemic and family therapy, work to divert them from the system.³⁷ Further, Turnaround emphasizes a child's voluntary participation and lack of a requirement for the child to admit guilt, recognising that children on the cusp of offending often have complex needs which require individual-focused, needs-based approach, and, that giving children a say in decisions about interventions they receive is key to effective engagement. By adopting these core principles, the programme aims to prevent children from formally entering the youth justice system via prosecution and sentencing.

³⁴ YOTs are encouraged to use the YEF toolkit to ensure interventions offered are not harmful or counterproductive and are in line with the evidence base on 'what works' to divert children away from crime.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Department for Education and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. (2022, April 2). Supporting Families Programme guidance 2022 to 2025. GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-families-programme-guidance-2022-to-2025>

³⁷ Ministry of Justice (2016). What works in managing young people who offend. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498493/what-works-in-managing-young-people-who-offend.pdf

3.1 Independent implementation and process evaluation of the programme

In 2024, the MoJ commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to conduct an implementation and process evaluation (IPE) of the Turnaround programme. The evaluation concluded in May 2025 and had three main aims:

- 1.** To assess how effectively the programme was implemented and delivered, and to identify the factors that contributed to its successes and challenges.
- 2.** To evaluate outcomes, by examining perceptions of effectiveness among delivery staff and children, the results achieved, and the contexts in which they were realised.
- 3.** To extract key lessons and implications for future early intervention practice.

The evaluation was guided by the research questions outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Aims and research questions of the evaluation

Evaluation aim	Research question
Evaluation aims 1 and 2	What is the need for and value of Turnaround from the perspective of YOT staff and key stakeholders?
Evaluation aim 1	Are some aspects of the programme, such as elements of referrals, assessments, and interventions, implemented more successfully than others?
	What are the facilitators and barriers to implementation of Turnaround?
	To what extent is the programme providing consistent support to a cohort of children previously not eligible for statutory YOT support?
Evaluation aim 2	What are the perceived impacts of the programme on children's outcomes including pro-social behaviour, mental health outcomes, offending behaviour/attitudes towards offending behaviour? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these vary by contextual factors such as demographics and geography?
	What is the impact of Turnaround on the wider inter-agency working system to support young people on the cusp of the justice system? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these vary by contextual factors such as demographics and geography? • Has Turnaround led to changes in how YOTs work with others including the police and the voluntary and community sector?
Evaluation aim 3	How are YOTs learning and developing practice?

3.2 Report structure

This report presents the evaluation approach and research findings across four chapters:

- Chapter 4: Overview of the evaluation approach.
- Chapter 5: Findings on the set-up and delivery of the Turnaround programme.
- Chapter 6: Findings relating to the perceived programme outcomes and impacts.
- Chapter 7: Evaluation conclusions.

4. Evaluation approach

This chapter outlines the methodological approach. The study was organised into three streams: a scoping phase, which informed the design of the evaluation framework; a mainstage phase comprising case study research in 12 YOTs across England and Wales; and analysis of Turnaround MI. The chapter provides an overview of the evaluation phases and associated research activities, the sampling approach, and analytical methods used to interpret the data collected.

4.1 Scoping phase

1. Programme documentation review

A thematic review of 10 core documents (e.g. YOT guidance, programme funding breakdown and finance model) shaped interview and focus group topic guides used in the mainstage of evaluation and the development of Programme Logic Model.

2. Interviews with national-level strategic stakeholders

Nine interviews with ten national strategic stakeholders,³⁸ (including the Chair of the Association of YOT Managers (England), the Chair of YOT Managers Cymru (Wales), representatives from the Youth Justice Board, Endowment Fund, Home Office and the Department for Education) explored Turnaround's early planning, governance, partnerships, and outcomes. Findings informed development of the Programme Logic Model, recruitment materials, and topic guides for mainstage fieldwork.

3. Scoping survey of YOTs

A survey of 155 YOTs ran 14 to 28 May 2024, targeting key Turnaround key contacts. The survey received 103 YOTs' responses.³⁹ It covered funding use,

³⁸ This included one paired interview with two national strategic stakeholders.

³⁹ There was a partial completion from one YOT, with most of the findings from the scoping survey included in the report reflecting responses from 102 YOTs.

intervention types, delivery methods, partnerships, and perceived value of the programme. Analysis followed from 29 May to 5 June.

4. Logic Model workshop⁴⁰

Held in August 2024 with 11 stakeholders (including MoJ programme leads, Turnaround leads from 5 YOTs, and YJB officials), the workshop aimed to refine the Programme Logic Model and discussion covered the programme's target audience, interventions, desired outputs, outcomes (including offending behaviour or severity of offending), and moderating factors. The updated Programme Logic Model informed the interviews guides for interviews with children and parents during the mainstage of evaluation.

4.2 Mainstage phase

The mainstage of the evaluation was conducted in two phases, collectively involving 93 encounters across 12 YOTs at two distinct timepoints.⁴¹

- **Phase 1** fieldwork took place in eight YOTs, from July to October 2024. These YOTs were selected based on their alignment with the primary sampling criteria (outlined later in this section) and their responsiveness and engagement with the evaluation to date.
- **Phase 2** fieldwork took place in 12 YOTs from November 2024 to February 2025. Five additional YOTs were recruited, adding to the eight YOTs already recruited in Phase 1, to support overall participant recruitment.

⁴⁰ A Logic Model is a visual representation that outlines the logical relationships between the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes and intended impacts of a programme. In the context of Turnaround, the Logic Model helps to map out the theory of change, aligning interventions with short-term and long-term outcomes. The Logic Model workshops facilitated the collaborative development of the draft Logic Model, ensuring stakeholder input.

⁴¹ 13 YOTs were approached for the mainstage, with 8 taking part in Phase 1, and 4 taking part in Phase 2. One YOT withdrew their involvement in the evaluation in Phase 2.

The fieldwork comprised:

- **7 observations of Turnaround interventions** in Phase 1, to gain insight into how interventions were working in practice.⁴² **Further 2 observations** were conducted in Phase 2.
- **8 interviews with YOT Turnaround leads** in Phase 1, to gather insight into delivery, impacts, contextual factors, and key learnings. **8 follow-up interviews** to explore potential changes in perspectives over time.
- **8 focus groups with frontline staff delivering Turnaround interventions**, and **8 focus groups with YOT delivery partners (e.g. police officers and organisations delivering interventions)** conducted in Phase 1, to gather insight into Turnaround delivery, partnership working, and the impact of partnerships on Turnaround implementation and delivery.
- **26 interviews with children** who have received Turnaround support conducted in Phase 2, to explore their experiences of participating in the programme and its impact on them.
- **25 interviews with parents and carers** of children who received Turnaround support conducted in Phase 2, capturing their perspectives on their child's experience and any perceived impacts on their child(ren). Where relevant, parents and carers also reflected on their own experiences of receiving support through Turnaround.

⁴² Seven observations were conducted during Phase 1 fieldwork as one YOT asked for their observation to be conducted during Phase 2, to better align with their delivery timeline. In total 8 observations were conducted.

4.2.1 Case study sampling, recruitment and data collection – Phase 1 and 2

Sampling of YOTs

YOTs were selected based on primary sampling criteria:

- **Geography** – At least two YOTs in Wales; at least three YOTs in rural areas; at least two YOTs in coastal areas. This was to achieve adequate spread across England and Wales, including both urban and rural areas. This sampling criterion was met.
- **Turnaround delivery model** – A proportional split between YOTs who deliver interventions primarily via external contractors and YOTs where interventions were sourced in-house, to explore differences in perceptions of programme delivery and effectiveness across different delivery models.⁴³
- **Most common intervention type** – Sampling focused on YOTs delivering the most common interventions — mentoring and socio-emotional support — identified via the scoping survey. This criterion was met out of the 12 participating YOTs, seven YOTs primarily delivered mentoring interventions.⁴⁴
- **Stakeholder partnerships** – All YOTs must have worked with partners such as social workers, police officers, education and health workers, parenting coordinators and youth workers to deliver Turnaround. All YOTs met these criteria.

More information on site characteristics, including region, urban or rural classification, and main intervention type delivered, can be found in Appendices C and D.

Sampling of YOT staff

YOT staff (case managers, Turnaround coordinators, team managers, social workers) and stakeholders (police, educators, coaches, youth workers, psychologists, therapists) were

⁴³ 80% of YOTs primarily deliver Turnaround in-house, 6% primarily commission externally, 13% commission equally in-house and externally, and 1% commissions in a different way, through targeted youth workers.

⁴⁴ What is the most common intervention type that your Youth Offending Team delivers to children supported by Turnaround? [Single code]. Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

sampled purposively, for role diversity. Both senior and frontline staff were included to understand programme management and on-the-ground delivery.

Sampling of children

Children were selected based on the following primary sampling criteria:

- **Met Turnaround eligibility criteria**⁴⁵ – E.g. OOCB, PCB, NFA or had received notice or warnings for ASB.⁴⁶
- **Involvement and engagement in Turnaround** – Children who were either receiving Turnaround interventions or had completed them were targeted for recruitment.
- **Diversity in key characteristics**⁴⁷ – The sample of interviewed children aimed to reflect diversity in key characteristics: referral routes, offending factors (crime types and offending history) and demographics (ethnicity,⁴⁸ age,⁴⁹ gender,⁵⁰ SEND and ALN).⁵¹ Additionally, two quotas were introduced shortly after fieldwork commenced (for Black children and those referred following RUI or PCB).⁵²

Sampling of parents and carers

A purposive sampling approach was adopted for parents and carers whose children had received Turnaround support. While no additional selection criteria were applied, participation was based on the availability and willingness of parents and carers to engage

⁴⁵ Turnaround eligibility criteria sample: Community Resolution (8); RUI (4); ASB (4); OOCB (3); Not given (3); Outcome 22 (2); NFA (2).

⁴⁶ Full list of Turnaround eligibility criteria is available at: [Turnaround Programme - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/turnaround-programme)

⁴⁷ These characteristics were tracked by YOTs using a monitoring form developed by NatCen.

⁴⁸ Ethnicity sample: White unspecified (14); White British (6); White Eastern European (1); Black African (1); White British/Gypsy-Roma-Traveller (1); Mixed Black-White heritage (1); Black British (1); Other Asian Background (1).

⁴⁹ Age sample: 12 (4); 13 (4); 15 (6); 16 (1); 17 (3); 18 (1).

⁵⁰ Gender sample: Male (21); Female (5).

⁵¹ SEND/ALN status sample: Yes (15); No (10); Not disclosed (1).

⁵² To reflect the wider cohort of children supported by Turnaround, the sample included a quota for 20% of participating children to have experienced pre-charge bail (PCB) or who were Released under Investigation (RUI), and a quota for 10% of participating children to be Black (including of Black mixed heritage). 15% and 12% was achieved respectively. A 10% quota was established for Black children in recognition of their proportion within the overall Turnaround cohort and in response to their disproportionate representation in the criminal justice system (Youth Justice Board, 2023).

in the evaluation. As such, this sample was shaped by practical considerations, including accessibility and interest in taking part.

Additional information on NatCen’s approach to recruitment, sampling and data collection can be found in Appendix B.

Analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative interview and focus group data collected from Turnaround leads, delivery staff, delivery partners, children, and parents or carers were analysed using the Framework approach developed by NatCen (Spencer et al., 2014).⁵³ Analysis was guided by the evaluation research objectives, allowing identification of themes, variation and patterns in experiences and views across participant groups. All data sources — national stakeholder interviews, the YOT scoping survey, case study fieldwork — were coded systematically to draw out different perspectives and build a comprehensive picture of how the Turnaround programme was delivered and experienced.

4.3 Management information analysis

In addition to the qualitative fieldwork outlined above, analysis of the Turnaround programme’s Management Information, covering the period December 2022 to the end of December 2024 was conducted. The programme MI was captured via a bespoke quarterly reporting process, which required all funded YOTs to capture information including: the number of referrals into the programme, number of assessments, and children who started interventions, number of children who completed interventions partially, and the number of children who have completed Turnaround interventions. Key variables such as reasons for referral (including a community resolution, NFA, ASB, RUI or PCB) and reasons for partial completion of the programme were also captured.^{54, 55} Outcomes for children who have

⁵³ Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Ormston, R., et al (Eds.). (2014). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. Sage.

⁵⁴ Full list of reasons for referral categories captured within the MI included: 1) ASB – repeated notice of ASB, 2) ASB – community protection warning/notice, 3) ASB – acceptable behaviour contract, 4) ASB – civil order, 5) Interviewed under caution, 6) No further action, 7) community resolution, 8) first-time youth caution, 9) Released under investigation or pre-charge bail, 10) Discharged by court, 11) acquitted by court, 12) Fined by court.

⁵⁵ Full list of reasons for partial completion categories captured in the programme MI can be found on p.39.

completed Turnaround interventions was also collected and categorised as No Proven Offences, Proven Offences, or Outcome Cannot Be Accessed:

- **‘No Proven Offences’** captures children who had not offended, as proven by a judicial decision or caution, within 12 months since the closure of their Turnaround case.⁵⁶ This includes children who may still be in contact with the YOT due to receiving an outcome such as no further action (NFA) or a community resolution.
- **‘Proven Offences’** captures children who have offended or reoffended within 12 months of their Turnaround case closure as confirmed by a judicial decision or caution.⁵⁷ Children who may have offended but have not received a caution or a conviction by judicial decision are not counted in this category.
- **‘Outcome Cannot Be Accessed’** captures where YOTs have not been able to track children or monitor their outcomes after the intervention is over.

Outcomes of the Turnaround cohort are tracked for a period of 12 months after a child’s Turnaround interventions are completed, and their case is closed.⁵⁸ Because children joined the programme at different times throughout 2023, it is important to note that length of individual follow-up periods varied as of end of December 2024. For instance, a child whose case closed in September 2024 would only have three months of follow-up by end of December 2024. This means some children recorded as having no proven offences at the time of analysis may still go on to offend within the full 12-month period.⁵⁹

YOT-level variables, including region,⁶⁰ ASB status classification (binary) were also recorded within the MI and used for analysis. Additional YOT-level data on total funding received by each YOT was extracted from published Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024

⁵⁶ This category also includes children who had been found guilty of an offence they had committed prior to receiving Turnaround support and having been referred into the programme while RUI or on PCB.

⁵⁷ MI counts children who have offended, rather than offences.

⁵⁸ It is important to note that the reporting captures aggregate quarterly figures for each YOT, within which individuals are not identifiable.

⁵⁹ MI only shows whether a proven offence occurred; it does not capture how often children offended, the seriousness of offences, or the outcomes of those offences.

⁶⁰ The regional categories are consistent with those in the annual national Youth Justice Statistics released by the Youth Justice Board

dataset,^{61,62} and linked to the programme MI. This enabled a more detailed analysis of programme delivery, including regional variations in offending outcomes.

The analysis addressed six research questions described below. Analytical methods used to address each research question (RQ) can be found in Appendix E.

- **RQ1:** What are the rates of progression through the key stages of the programme?
- **RQ2:** Is there a relationship between YOT size (as measured by the total funding YOTs received) and partial completion rates?
- **RQ3:** What is the breakdown of reasons for partial completion of interventions, and what is the most common reason?
- **RQ4:** How do offending outcomes vary regionally?
- **RQ5:** Is there a relationship between YOT size (as measured by the total funding YOTs received) and 'No Proven Offences' outcome?
- **RQ6:** Are there regional differences in the rate of RUI or PCB and ASB referrals?

4.4 Limitations

This evaluation did not include co-produced or participatory elements, such as youth-led interviews, family advisory panels, or collaborative workshops with children and families. As a result, the perspectives of children and families may not be as fully embedded in the research as they might have been through more participatory approaches.

Discussion of programme impacts draws primarily on qualitative self-reported data, collected from a small sample of children relative to the total number of children who have engaged in Turnaround since the programme's inception in 2022. The evaluation did not include a counterfactual or comparison group and therefore cannot isolate the specific

⁶¹ This is the funding that Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) receive from various sources, including central government, local authorities, Police Crime Commissioners and other organisations, to support their work in preventing and addressing youth offending. This does not include the Turnaround funding.

⁶² [Youth justice statistics: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024)

effects of the Turnaround programme from other external factors such as school-based interventions, for example. Nor does it offer insight into the size and or statistical significance of any observed changes. These limitations are consistent with the scope and intent of an IPE but should be considered when interpreting the findings and their generalisability.

5. Set-up and delivery of Turnaround

Key finding	Details
Turnaround fills an early intervention gap.	Participants agreed that Turnaround was highly valued and addressed a clear need by filling existing gaps in prevention and early intervention for children at risk of offending and reoffending.
Referral, assessment and intervention delivery are mostly effective – but not without challenges.	Multi-agency panel meetings, child-focused assessments, and flexible funding were reported to be particularly effective. Challenges were noted around the eligibility criteria, the option to opt-out of the programme, and engaging some children in interventions.
Turnaround offers consistent support through early intervention for children previously excluded from statutory youth services.	Analysis of Management Information showed that between December 2022 and the end of December 2024, 38,704 children were referred to the programme, highlighting the number of children in need of early intervention support. Over the same period, 55% of referrals processed to assessment, 87% of assessed children moved on to intervention, and 77% of those completed the programme.
Turnaround led to new local partnerships and has become a core component of pre-court diversion provision in some YOTs.	7 in 10 YOTs reported that strong communication and a shared understanding in partnership working (with statutory and non-statutory services) had led to improvements resulting from the programme, particularly in the referral process and in the coordination of support for children.
The core principles of voluntary participation and lack of need for admission of guilt are working, but implementation had hurdles.	Facilitators of implementation and delivery included YOTs' ability to draw on existing prevention and diversion service structures, administrative support from the MoJ, the ability to build trusted relationships with children. Barriers included limited planning time, gaps in guidance and training, eligibility criteria that were deemed restrictive, and a lack of contextualisation for Wales.

5.1 What is the need for and value of Turnaround from the perspective of YOT staff and key stakeholders?

Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners all reported a clear and definitive need for the Turnaround programme within their area, with a consensus across regions, and urban and rural geographies. Similarly, they all reflected positively on the added value of the programme.

Filling a gap in existing provision

Turnaround leads and delivery partners indicated that although they had not initially recognised the value of Turnaround, once introduced it had filled clear gaps in existing early intervention, prevention and diversion provision and is now seen as a necessary and integral part of the work YOTs do.

“We might not have realised it at the time, but when Turnaround did come along, actually it just slotted straight into the gap so that, clearly, there was a need that we didn’t realise.” (Delivery partner)

In response to an open-ended question in the scoping survey about the level of need for the programme, 38% YOT leads cited the programme’s focus on ‘prevention and early intervention’, 23% on ‘diversion from the youth justice system,’ and 22% on ‘diversion from crime.’⁶³ In response to a similar open-ended question about how much value the programme adds, over half of YOT leads (53%) identified its role in providing ‘early intervention and diverting children away from the criminal justice system’.⁶⁴

Delivery partners in England and Wales, including police officers, echoed its value, stating that without the programme, children would be less aware of the local services available to them and face increased risks, such as higher rates of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the

⁶³ How much need do you think there is for the Turnaround programme in supporting children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system? [Open-ended] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024. Open-ended responses were thematically coded through a systematic process where responses were grouped based on recurring themes and patterns. This qualitative coding approach enables the identification of common viewpoints and the quantification of key themes across participant responses.

⁶⁴ In your opinion, how much value does the Turnaround programme add to your Youth Offending Team? [Open-ended] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024. Open-ended responses were thematically coded through a systematic process where responses were grouped based on recurring themes and patterns. This qualitative coding approach enables the identification of common viewpoints and the quantification of key themes across participant responses.

youth justice system, more serious offending, court orders, and more disengagement with school. While Welsh Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners noted early intervention was already embedded before Turnaround, a common perspective amongst leads in rural England was that Turnaround was a necessity as no other type of programme like it existed before.

Turnaround leads and delivery staff emphasised the programme's role in reaching children and families previously missed by services, such as children RUI. While some preventative measures were in place before Turnaround, they were considered limited by restrictive eligibility criteria and linked mainly to youth justice work via the courts. The scoping survey also identified that 23% of respondents valued the programme specifically due to its support for children RUI, on PCB, with NFA outcomes, or those subject to OOC.⁶⁵ More broadly, Turnaround leads noted that supporting children earlier also reduced pressure on YOT services.

Tailored and bespoke interventions and support

Turnaround leads and delivery partners cited the programme's value in offering tailored diversion support by working with bespoke agencies, such as the Lucy Faithfull Foundation.⁶⁶ In some areas, Turnaround was viewed as expanding existing work by increasing capacity, enabling a more targeted 'bolt-on' offer for filling gaps in existing provision, and engaging previously under-served groups. This includes:

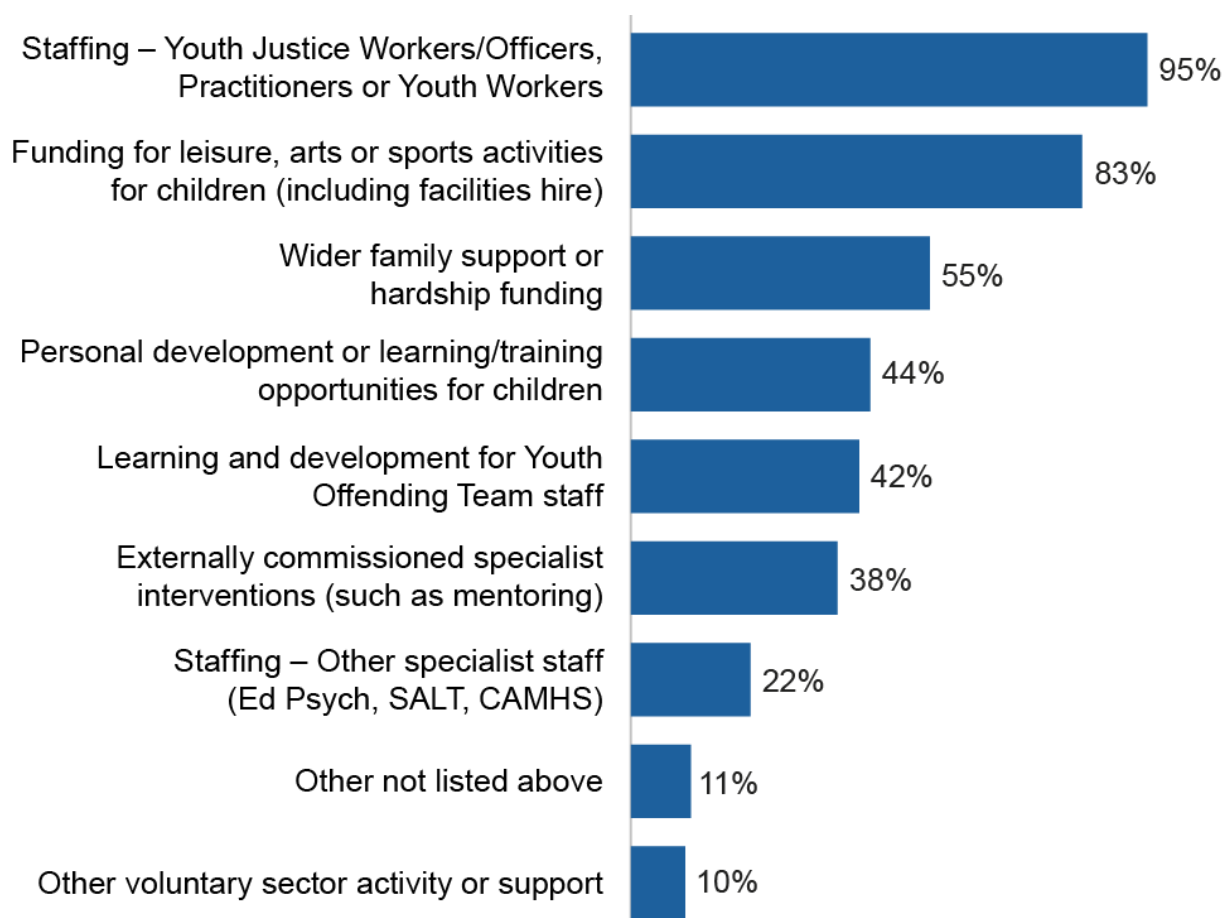
- Providing intervention support to children who engage in ASB which was not previously available, due to them not being charged with a criminal offence.
- Providing bespoke support to children who come through harmful sexual behaviour pathways, who had limited resources in the community and other programmes did not accept them.

⁶⁵ In your opinion, how much value does the Turnaround programme add to your Youth Offending Team? [Open-ended] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024. Open-ended responses were thematically coded through a systematic process where responses were grouped based on recurring themes and patterns. This qualitative coding approach enables the identification of common viewpoints and the quantification of key themes across participant responses.

⁶⁶ The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) is a UK-based child protection charity, aiming to reduce the risk of children being sexually abused via preventative work including awareness raising and education.

Examples of support available for these children included structured exit plans for those diverted through OOCs, helping to sustain desistance and encourage continued engagement with positive activities. These were seen as helping to keep children ‘off the streets’ and support their self-esteem and future aspirations. The findings are reinforced by the scoping survey, which found that 83% of YOTs used Turnaround funding to deliver activities for children.⁶⁷

Figure 1: The use of Turnaround funding in Youth Offending Teams



Other reported needs for Turnaround support

- **The number of children referred to Turnaround** – Turnaround leads and delivery staff stressed that the substantial number of referrals (38,704 children referred between December 2022 to end of December 2024) highlighted the large volume of children in need of early intervention support.

⁶⁷ In which of the following ways, if any, does your Youth Offending Team use the Turnaround funding? [Multicode] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

- **The need for additional staff within YOTs and across partner services –** Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners discussed needing additional staff, due to high demand for early intervention support. They described cases where Turnaround funding had been used to hire additional staff and or to provide additional capacity, which was seen as crucial. This was mirrored by the scoping survey, in which 26% of Turnaround leads highlighted the ‘greater resource and capacity’ made possible through the funding.⁶⁸
- **The need for improved interagency working –** Turnaround delivery staff emphasised the programme’s role in connecting partners, for example, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and speech and language therapists. It was noted that, as the process of receiving support can be overwhelming for children and families, improved interagency working provides clarity about which professionals will be supporting them with which aspect of the process, and also serves to streamline the support they receive.

The perceived type and level of need for Turnaround in local areas varied across geographies and regions. In Wales, although some participants felt that Turnaround was England-centric and there were difficulties aligning the programme with the Welsh context,⁶⁹ they still recognised its overall value. In other areas, particularly deprived urban locations, delivery partners identified a specific need for Turnaround support due to the lack of existing provision and opportunities for the children. Additional concerns were raised by delivery partners in urban areas about school exclusions, particularly within academies, with the view that Turnaround support was especially needed to help to keep excluded children occupied.

⁶⁸ In your opinion, how much value does the Turnaround programme add to your Youth Offending Team? [Open-ended] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May to 28th May 2024. Open-ended responses were thematically coded through a systematic process where responses were grouped based on recurring themes and patterns. This qualitative coding approach enables the identification of common viewpoints and the quantification of key themes across participant responses.

⁶⁹ Further detail on barriers to set-up, implementation and delivery of Turnaround specific to Welsh YOTs can be found in section 3.5.

5.2 How effective has the programme's implementation been across its different elements (including referrals, assessments, and interventions)?

Adherence to core principles

Participants expressed mixed views on the programme's voluntary nature. Many Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners regarded voluntary participation as a positive, highlighting that it empowered children to engage on their own terms. Some however reported that the voluntary approach left some children without support, as not all families were willing to engage or seek help for their child once referred. This is reflected in the programme MI, which shows that by end of December 2024, 57% of children who did not proceed to assessment following referral had declined to participate.

In addition, parents, carers, and children had mixed views on the voluntary nature of Turnaround. Some children reported feeling that they had a clear choice and wanted to take part, noting that Turnaround delivery staff had clearly communicated the voluntary basis of the offer. However, others felt they had less autonomy, and some children and families perceived participation as expected due to the seriousness of the child's outcome, with more serious legal repercussions to follow if the child opts not to engage. For example, one child thought that if they did not take part in the programme they would be proceeded against in court. Some children also felt obliged to participate due to parental engagement. This was particularly evident in a small number of cases involving SEND children, where children were unsure or hesitant about their involvement but participated anyway at their parent's request.

"If I'm honest, I didn't really give her the choice to say no because, 'You needed it and we've done it your way for so long. It ain't working, so now, we've got to try this.' (...) She had the choice to back out of it at some point if she didn't like it."
(Parent or Carer)

"My mum always said that I had to go, no matter what. She'd tell me."
(Child, aged 14)

The programme's principle of not requiring children to admit guilt to receive support was also widely supported by YOTs and partners. Participants explained that children might

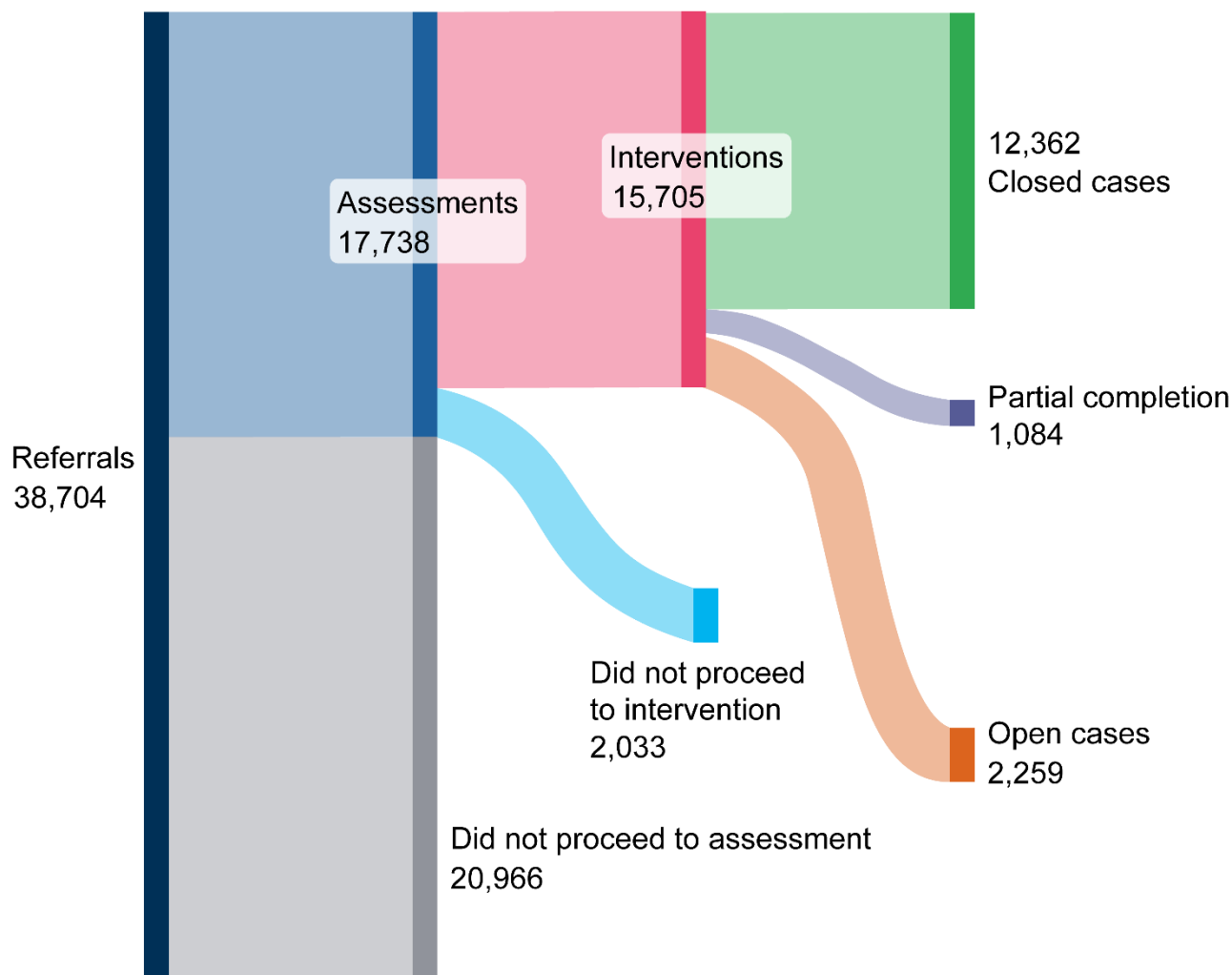
have various reasons for not admitting guilt, and that adopting a non-punitive approach allowed practitioners to ask open questions, better informing assessments and the targeted support offered. For example, one Turnaround lead discussed a spike in FTE to court prior to Turnaround, as solicitors advised children to deny guilt. As a result, some children were unnecessarily sent to court, with many cases falling below the threshold for court intervention, and being referred back to the YOT, wasting local resources. The lead highlighted that not requiring children to admit guilt helped prevent this situation.

Rates of progression through the programme

Between December 2022 and end of December 2024, 38,704 children were referred to the programme, of which 17,738 progressed to assessment and 15,705 entered the intervention phase. Of those who started interventions, 12,362 cases were formally closed by end of December 2024, while 1,084 children had withdrawn early or only partially completed their Turnaround interventions.

As shown in Figure 2, on average across all YOTs, 55% of referrals progressed to the assessment stage by the end of December 2024, indicating significant drop-off between these stages. The reasons children did not progress to the assessment stage varied and include factors such as declining participation, receiving support elsewhere, failing to meet the programme's eligibility criteria, and other factors that might be YOT specific. On the other hand, among assessed cases, 87% proceeded to the intervention stage and 77% of children receiving interventions completed the programme by end of December 2024 on average, resulting in their cases being closed. Across all YOTs, an average of 9% of children began interventions but either withdrew or only partially completed the programme. Common reasons for partial completions included voluntary exits, or children becoming no longer eligible for the programme due to entering YOTs' statutory caseload having committed new offences or being escalated to Child Protection Plans (CPPs).

Figure 2: Case progression through programme stages (referral to assessment to intervention to closure or partial completion), December 2022 to the end of December 2024⁷⁰



Referrals

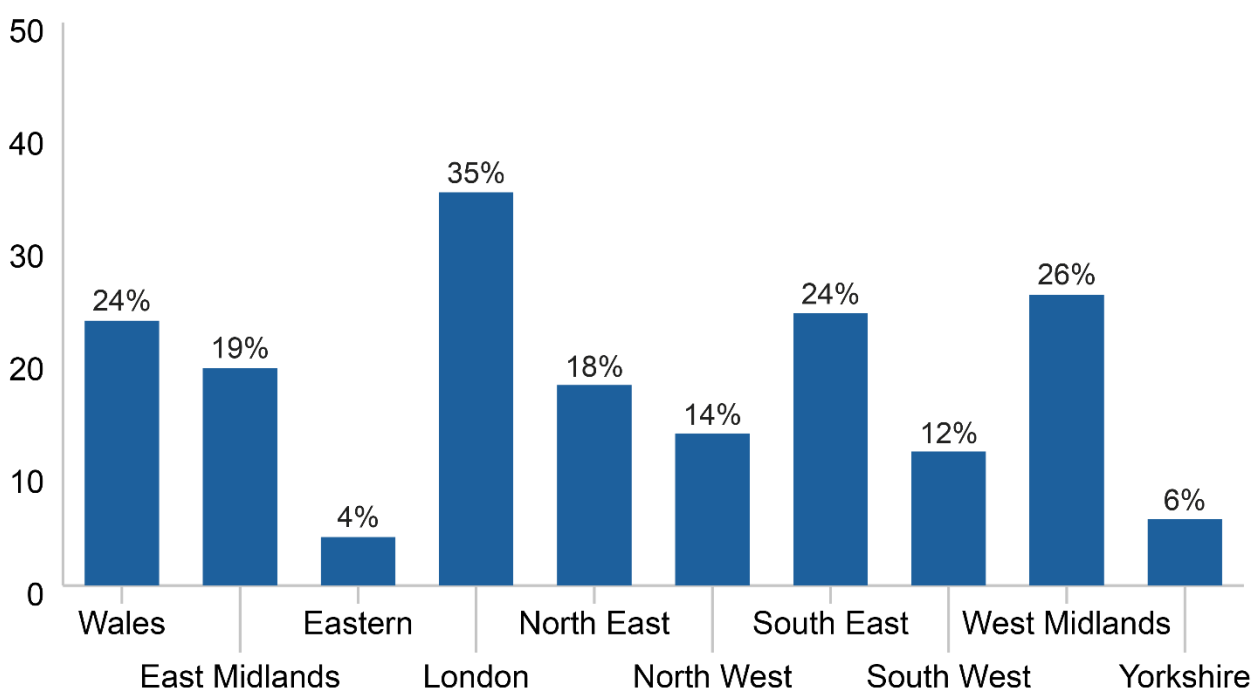
Referrals into the programme have typically come from police, social workers, and schools. They are triaged at multiagency meetings such as a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or 'sift' meetings,⁷¹ with YOTs and partners working to identify children eligible for Turnaround support. YOTs may also have internal meetings as well. Once a child's eligibility has been confirmed, consent is sought from parents.

⁷⁰ Open cases denote the number of children whose interventions were ongoing as of end of December 2024.

⁷¹ A 'sift' meeting, as described by participants, takes place between the Turnaround delivery staff and a member of the police and involves a review of police data and data stored on the ChildView database system, to identify any children who have been arrested, interviewed, or given a No Further Action (NFA) outcome.

Reasons for referral were reported to differ by type of referral partner. For example, education referrals often focused on antisocial behaviour, while police referrals included cases of shoplifting and minor online offences. According to MI analysis, among the 38,704 referrals received across all YOTs by end of December 2024, the most common pathways into the programme were community resolution (CR) (27%) and no further action (27%).⁷² Children referred after being RUI or PCB (20%) were the third most common cohort, followed by ASB-related referrals (14%). There was some statistically significant regional variation in referral rates for children referred due to being RUI or on PCB,⁷³ with London and the West Midlands having the highest average referral rates of 35% and 26%, respectively. Notably, areas designated as ASB hotspots had an average ASB-related referral rate of 19%, while non-ASB hotspot areas had an average of 14%. However, this difference was not statistically significant.⁷⁴

Figure 3: Mean regional RUI or PCB referral rates, as of the end of December 2024
RUI/PCB Referral rate (%)



⁷² For a definition of community resolutions (CR), please refer to the glossary.

⁷³ $F(9, 141) = 5.089$, $n = 145$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2_p = 0.245$

⁷⁴ $F(1, 141) = 0.719$, $p = 0.398$, $\eta^2_p = 0.005$

What worked well

Multi-agency panel meetings were reported as a useful tool to facilitate sharing information, make decisions about children, and educate partners about the programme. These meetings have helped YOTs identify gaps in information within the referral process and eligibility criteria. YOTs and partners collaborate during triage, using partners' existing knowledge and support on referrals.

What worked less well

Some YOTs found existing diversion referral pathways more effective or applicable for a broader range of children than the prevention-focused Turnaround pathway. For example, they felt the programme might not reach some higher-risk or less-engaged children who could be more likely to engage through compulsory diversion routes. Other YOTs described external partners, especially police and social workers, questioning why Turnaround support could not be offered to specific cohorts of children (e.g. those on a CPP).⁷⁵ Some participants held the view that this limited the programme's ability to work preventatively.

Assessments

Assessments are completed before children receive Turnaround interventions to confirm their interest, and to co-produce tailored intervention plans. Assessment tools can include the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool (PDAT) from the Youth Justice Board, Prevention and Diversion Assessment (PANDA) or drug use screening tools (DUST). During assessments, YOTs explain the programme's voluntary nature, emphasising children's right to withdraw and outlining session boundaries such as disclosure. If a child withdraws, YOTs aim to reaffirm Turnaround's voluntary nature and facilitate referrals to other community agencies as necessary.

What worked well

Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners reported that Turnaround assessments are child-centred, aiming to develop a holistic understanding of children's needs, vulnerabilities, and interests. The assessments were reported to be effective in helping children identify the factors behind their offending and developing strategies for

⁷⁵ As noted in Chapter 1, the eligibility criteria have been extended to include and support these children, as of April 2025.

change, while also linking this to their broader life aspirations, for example, incorporating physical activities with restorative justice initiatives. Some delivery partners reported that they had access to information from the child's assessment, such as the goals the child had identified, through shared systems within their partnership or local authority, allowing them to more easily start working with the child.

Assessments were considered more effective when relationships were built with the child beforehand due to the personal nature of needs-assessment process. Broadly, Turnaround delivery staff were seen to positively identify needs and create intervention plans with children and families. Not requiring children to admit guilt before accessing support were reported to strengthen relationship building by preventing children feeling judged.

What worked less well

Turnaround delivery staff and delivery partners noted they felt the decision of a child to opt out can be frustrating, but they must accept the decision not to engage or to end an intervention prematurely, even when they believe the programme would benefit the child.

Delivery partners also experienced challenges when children's behaviour escalated. One delivery partner described a child committing an additional offence before starting Turnaround support. As a result, the partner had to tell the child that they would no longer be eligible for the support, as the child's case escalated to statutory YOT caseload.

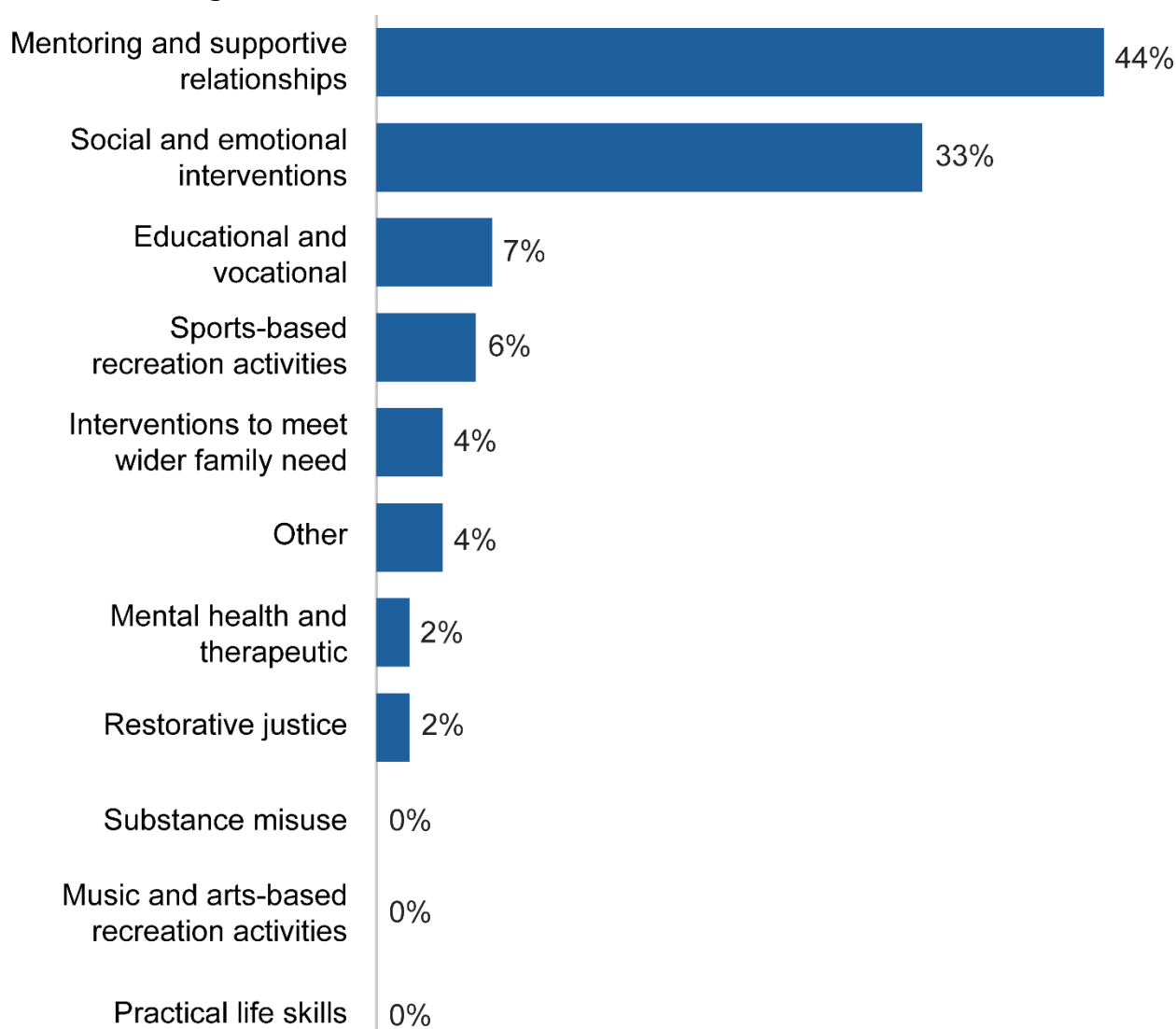
Interventions

Findings from the scoping survey show that most YOTs offer a broad range of interventions, including music and arts (97%), mentoring (91%), and educational and vocational activities (86%).⁷⁶ These findings were supported by Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners where participants discussed delivering mostly 1:1 bespoke interventions tailored to each child's needs and interests. For example, some interventions were grounded in a trauma-informed recovery model to accommodate a child's needs.

⁷⁶ Which, if any, of the following intervention types does your Youth Offending Team offer to children supported by Turnaround? [Multicode] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

Support was typically delivered by Turnaround delivery staff or other delivery partners, with YOTs frequently collaborating with external specialists, like CAMHS for tailored interventions, especially for neurodiverse children. While the majority of YOTs offered a range of interventions to children, findings from the scoping survey demonstrated that mentoring (44%), as well as social and emotional interventions (33%), were the most common.⁷⁷

Figure 4: Types of interventions that Youth Offending Teams deliver to support children through Turnaround



⁷⁷ What is the most common intervention type that your Youth Offending Team delivers to children supported by Turnaround? [Single code] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

What worked well

The flexibility of Turnaround funding was considered a key strength, allowing case managers to provide bespoke support for vulnerable children and create innovative intervention plans. This included new partnerships with local businesses and investing in specific programmes and targeted interventions based on local needs. Adopting a tailored, flexible approach enabled YOTs to address broader multi-agency risk factors and personalise interventions to each child.

Turnaround delivery staff tailored their communication to each child, and this was evident in observations. Delivery partners reflected that this child-centred approach was crucial for effective engagement. Delivery staff reported that offering face-to-face interventions and one-on-one (1:1) support increased buy-in, engagement, and the effectiveness of interventions for children. This was reflected in the findings of MI analysis, with less than 10% of children who started Turnaround interventions only completing them partially as of end of December 2024. Turnaround leads also identified gender-specific focus to some interventions, especially in YOTs that used funding for support on 'healthy masculinity'.

Fewer than 1 in 8 (12%) YOTs reported offering interventions to meet wider family needs.⁷⁸ However, interviewed delivery staff noted that the programme successfully extends support to siblings of eligible children. For example, offering activities such as joint boxing sessions where siblings can participate together. Similarly, support for parents and carers was thought to be effective at enhancing family dynamics and overall well-being by empowering them to manage challenging situations effectively, utilising approaches such as dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT),⁷⁹ mental and physical health support, and the Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme).⁸⁰ Section 6.3 explores family involvement in Turnaround and its impacts on relationships in more depth.

⁷⁸ The question in the scoping survey (footnote 74) refers to interventions offered to children so this may not fully / accurately capture the number of interventions offered to families. However, other interventions based on sports, arts, and social-emotional development have involved families in some way.

⁷⁹ Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a type of cognitive-behavioural therapy designed to help individuals manage intense emotions, improve interpersonal relationships, and build coping skills.

⁸⁰ The Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) is a multi-level parenting and family support system designed to help parents develop strategies to improve their child's social, emotional, and behavioural well-being, fostering supportive family environments and preventing behavioural problems.

What worked less well

Delivery staff and delivery partners highlighted some challenges in engaging children in interventions. For example, some children participating in Turnaround had communication difficulties, or felt unable to contribute to group settings or get involved in new activities. This was attributed to the lack of prior positive experiences of successful engagement in similar activities.

One delivery partner observed that children involved in isolated incidents or subject to community resolutions are more hesitant to engage. These children were reported to prefer to limit their participation to the specific requirements of their community resolution, showing reluctance to pursue further voluntary interventions.

YOTs observed challenges in the level of engagement with some families and children, with participation in other local diversionary programmes cited as a key reason for this. Others noted challenges around cultural beliefs, such as valuing privacy in family matters, with one delivery partner noting this was especially common among families from Traveller communities. Certain factors were identified by Turnaround delivery staff and delivery partners as key barriers to participation within larger and or rural regions. This included poor transport links that made commuting challenging, and a shortage of local facilities (e.g. gyms, youth centres), which limited the range of interventions offered.

Analysis of programme MI further revealed that key reasons for children completing their interventions partially were:

- **Offence-related**, with a child becoming ineligible having committed a new offence which escalated them to the YOT statutory caseload (21% of children who completed their interventions partially).
- **CPP or CSPP related**, with a child becoming ineligible having been escalated to a CPP or CSPP (8% of children who completed their interventions partially).
- **Verdict-related**, with a child becoming ineligible after guilty verdict from pre-Turnaround offence (9% of children who completed their interventions partially).

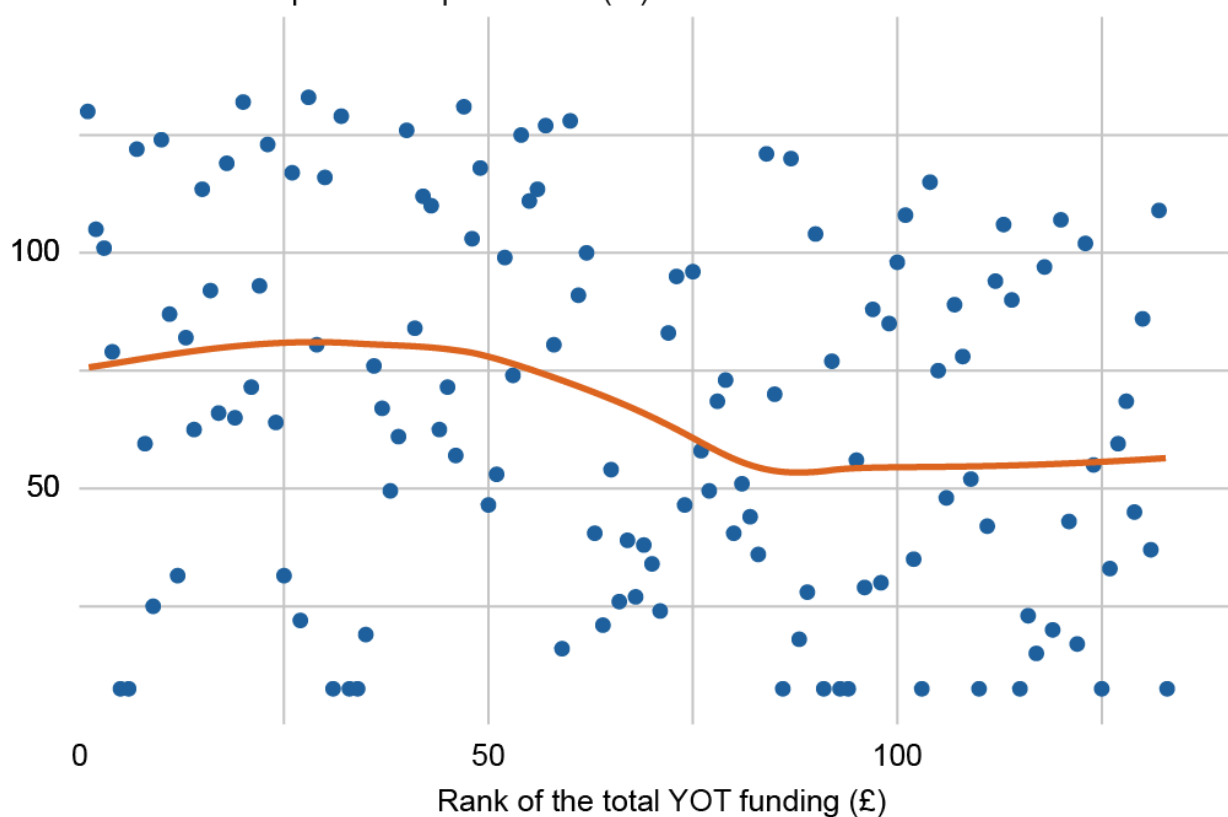
- **Other reasons**, including child disengaging from intervention (60% of children who completed their interventions partially).

There was also a weak but statistically significant (see Figure 5) correlation between the total YOT funding and the intervention-to-partial completion rate,⁸¹ indicating a negative association between total YOT funding and the proportion of children proceeded to intervention and completed their interventions partially. This indicates that as the total YOT funding increases, the rate of partial interventions decreases or vice versa. It is important to note however, that this is not a causal relationship, and a comprehensive understanding of what drives partial completions requires an in-depth multi-factorial analysis, including factors such as variations in reporting practices across YOTs of different sizes.

Figure 5: Relationship between the partial completion rate and the total YOT funding, as of the end of December 2024

Spearman Rank Correlation: $\rho = -0.254$, $p = 0.00318$

Rank of intervention partial completion rate (%)

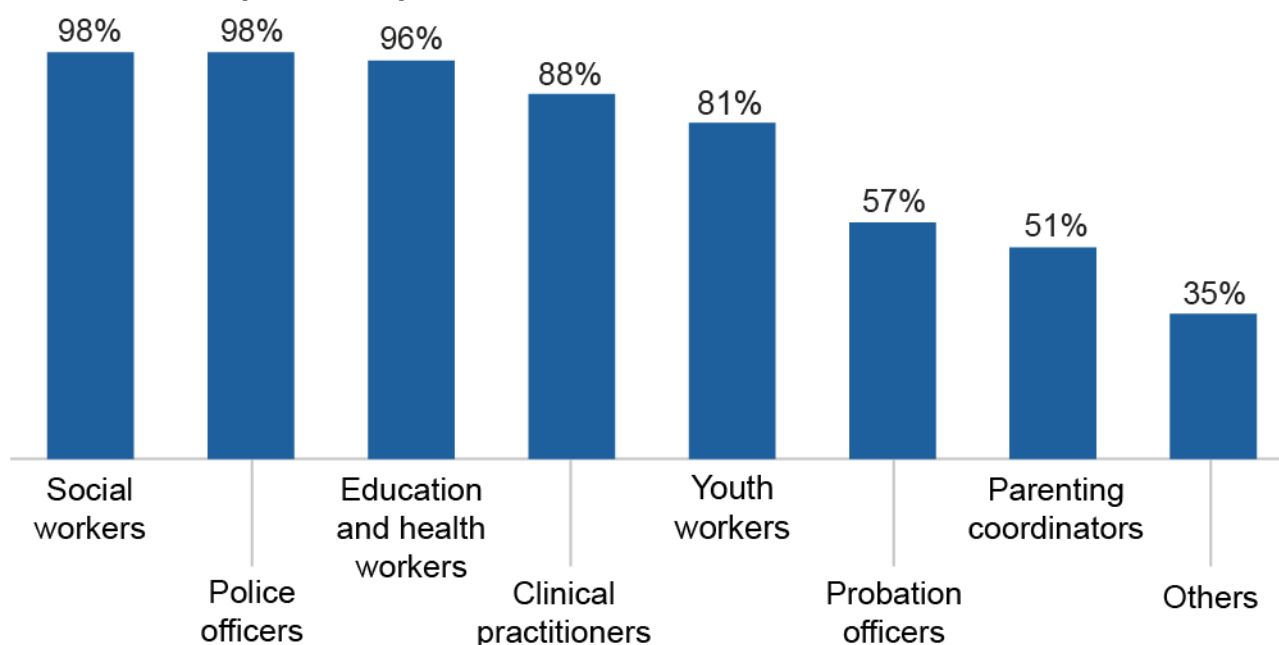


⁸¹ Spearman's $\rho = -0.254$, $p = 0.003$

5.3 Partnership working to deliver Turnaround – what is working well or less well?

Findings from the scoping survey with YOTs showed that a majority of YOTs reported working with other services, such as social workers, police officers, and education and health workers to deliver Turnaround, with these same close working relationships raised during interviews with Turnaround leads, delivery staff, and delivery partners.⁸²

Figure 6: Types of statutory and non-statutory services with which Youth Offending Teams work in partnership



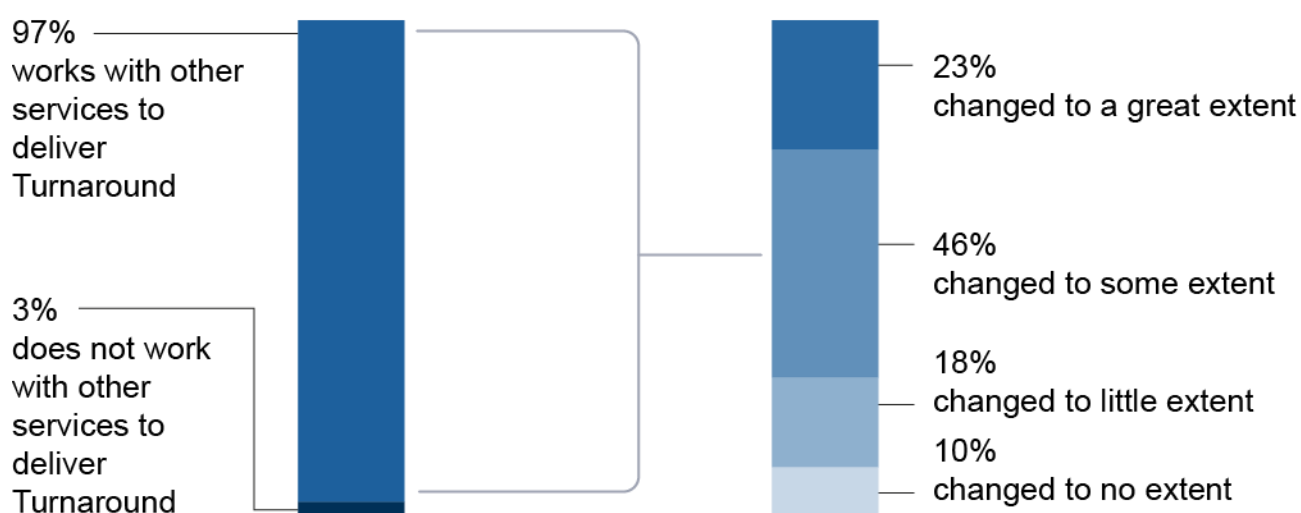
Of the YOTs who reported working with other professional statutory and non-statutory services (97%), 7 in 10 reported that integration and partnership working has changed to some or a great extent as a result of the programme.⁸³ This finding was reinforced through interviews with Turnaround leads and delivery staff, who reported improvements in partnership working, particularly in the referral process and the coordination of support provided to children.

⁸² Which professional statutory and non-statutory services does your Youth Offending Team work with? [Multicode] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

⁸³ Does your Youth Offending Team work locally with other statutory and non-statutory services to support children supported by Turnaround? [Single coded] and to what extent do you think integration and partnership working has changed between your Youth Offending Team and other statutory and non-statutory services as a result of Turnaround? [Single code] Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

“Turnaround programme has allowed us to work in partnership with voluntary and community sector and invest in new resources with a larger cohort of children. Thus, it has benefited the YOS,⁸⁴ community, victims, children and their families.”
(Turnaround lead)

Figure 7: Proportion of YOTs that work with other services to deliver Turnaround and how much Turnaround leads feel partnership working has changed



5.3.1 Types of partnership that have developed due to the programme

Partnerships for referrals

In Phase 1 of the evaluation Turnaround delivery staff described leveraging pre-existing multi-agency panels or management board meetings to identify children eligible for Turnaround support, triage emerging needs and share learnings. Partnership working with the police was seen as particularly important in identifying children who had received an NFA or CR.

In Phase 2, YOTs reported that the police more proactively considered the programme during interactions with children, integrating the eligibility criteria into their routine practice. New ways of working with the police led to streamlining of referral pathways, which was found to improve the efficiency of identifying and supporting children.

“Turnaround risked bringing in a whole new set of referrals, pathways, forms and when you’re a busy police officer, you need one referral form. So, we established

⁸⁴ This refers to the Youth Justice Service, another name for a Youth Offending Team.

that with the police so that the form came into our front door, and we then sent it to the most appropriate place whether they were Turnaround eligible, they went that way. If they weren't, they still came in and we counted them a different way.”
(Turnaround delivery staff)

Observation case study 1: Allocation meeting and partnership working

A weekly online allocations meeting took place via Microsoft Teams, consisting of two police officers, a representative from the Liaison and Diversion (L&D) Team who works with children who are RUI and the Turnaround coordinator. The meeting's purpose was to discuss referrals and identify children suitable for the programme, in order to provide early intervention and reduce offending and reoffending. Referrals were brought to the meeting by the police officers and the L&D Team member and share existing information from other services to ensure that children's needs are met, and offending and reoffending is reduced.

Each case was discussed in detail, and the attendees' used data from the Liquid Logic database (containing existing data populated by early help and social care) and ChildView (dataset from the YOT) to inform their discussions. Partners would then decide on the eligibility of the cases for Turnaround interventions and the appropriate next steps regarding service provision.

The Turnaround coordinator reflected on the importance of these meetings and reported that this has enabled them to identify more children in need of support due to enhanced communication with partners.

To see further detail on the wider impact Turnaround has had on the police working with children on the cusp of offending, refer to section 6.4 of this report.

Strong connections with family intervention teams, exploitation teams, and drug and alcohol services were cited as valuable for addressing specific and often complex needs of children, particularly in enabling swift and effective referrals. Furthermore, YOTs reported positive experiences with multi-agency triage processes, including regular partnership meetings with Early Help, and Liaison and Diversion teams. Information sharing also helped to prevent duplication of services, by identifying referrals from the same families.

“We are able to work together to ensure it’s the right service at that level for them, and we’ve done that through partnership triage meetings where cases are discussed every week that fit all three services criteria and then we agree on which service is best to take that at that time.” (Turnaround lead)

One YOT highlighted their involvement in an Out of Court triage panel and said that they were well-positioned to provide support if a child is eligible for Turnaround, particularly those engaging with the justice system for the first time.

“That becomes (...) a way that we can give them a first-time YC (youth caution) as opposed to a youth conditional caution.” (Turnaround lead)

Partnerships for intervention delivery

YOTs reported that the programme had improved a range of existing partnerships with community and service providers. These included strong working relationships with football clubs, leisure centres, bicycle centres, gyms, boxing clubs, outdoor education centres, and training providers. These partnerships were used strategically to support children’s personal development and career readiness. Additionally, collaborations with universities and vocational training organisations enabled access to trade qualifications and licenses, creating clear pathways into employment.

Several YOTs also developed pre-existing relationships with local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. These relationships were further formalised and operationalised through area-based partnership meetings facilitated by Turnaround.

Notably, VCS involvement was often tailored to children’s specific vulnerabilities, with organisations contributing to individual child or family plans. Their role also extended to providing continuity of care through exit planning. This included offering ongoing support following the conclusion of work on Turnaround, helping to ensure that progress made during the programme could be maintained over time.

“To engage (children) in a positive activity such as the gym when they [leave] Turnaround (...) there is an opportunity for them to continue accessing that, whether it be at a reduced cost to them, whether it be if they volunteer and help out, they can access it for free and things like that.” (Turnaround delivery staff)

Findings from Phase 2 highlight that new partnerships that were formed in the earlier stages of the programme were further established due to increased awareness of the programme. This included gyms and VCS organisations like charities, the local fire service, and community crime safety partnerships. For example, one YOT collaborated with a charity that funds up to a year of positive hobby-based activities for young people. The local fire service of one YOT also ran a programme to teach first aid and drills to children.

One YOT highlighted the establishment of a multi-agency ‘problem-solving group’, led by representatives from the district council. As a result, Turnaround delivery staff created community events which successfully resulted in three additional schools engaging with the YOT.

5.3.2 What made partnership working easier

Strong communication

A foundation of strong pre-existing partnerships provided a valuable starting point. Clear and consistent communication with partners, coupled with the flexibility to adapt to requests, was also seen as important.

“Same with the police, he came to a school and the kids had loads of questions, so then (Turnaround delivery staff) made sure that she bridged the gap. They gave her the questions, she gave it to the police officer, he gave answers back through email.” (Turnaround lead)

Welsh YOTs reported challenges with police practices that adopted a ‘first response’ approach toward children, rather than one focused on prevention. Over time, their relationships have strengthened, and they have found more integrated ways of working. This shift was partly driven by a mutual recognition of the need to identify and support children for early intervention, as well as the importance of securing and maintaining police funding for joint initiatives. As a result, police are now reported to consider children’s eligibility for Turnaround and how their support can be integrated into the programme.

“But then (police early intervention partnership programme) did have this pot of funding ... (and we recognised) how we could complement each other in

identifying who those children are for early intervention, because their knowledge from PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers) on the streets, the knowledge for eyes and ears, is crucial to identifying those young people.” (Turnaround lead)

Strong partnerships and good communication with other teams enabled efficient sharing of resources and more coordinated responses to children’s needs. Partner organisations were often found to be highly aligned with the programme’s mission to improve outcomes for children and ensure that families can access support in their communities.

Shared vision

In some YOTs, having a shared vision was particularly effective in improving relationships with the police. For example, conversations helped reinforce a shared commitment to reducing antisocial behaviour and preventing offending among children.

YOTs that understood their partners’ priorities and operational pressures developed efficient, integrated ways of working. This not only strengthened professional relationships but also led to more cohesive and responsive service delivery.

“We’ve acknowledged that we need to be as close as we can to CSPs (Community Safety Partnership), managing the geography that we do. So, I think that would’ve happened regardless of Turnaround but obviously, with Turnaround we’ve got an offer that we can share with CSPs.” (Turnaround lead)

5.3.3 What made partnerships working more challenging

Findings from Welsh YOTs during Phase 2 suggest that while inter-agency links, such as those with the police and VCS, remain strong in principle, operational capacity has become a limiting factor.

A common challenge raised by both English and Welsh YOTs relates to the management of cases involving multiple statutory services. In such instances, determining which service is best placed to lead can be complex, potentially delaying intervention or causing duplication.

“it’s that understanding across the partnership that we might have criteria that means the child can’t be open to two services at once and you also wouldn’t want

that for a child and family, but it's making sure you have that conversation across each service" (Turnaround lead)

Welsh YOTs reported a decline in the presence and capacity of third sector organisations in their local areas, attributing this largely to the long-term impacts of austerity and reductions in public funding. This has resulted in a diminished pool of VCS services available to support children and families, particularly those offering early intervention or specialist provision. Despite this, Welsh YOTs continue to refer children directly to available services where possible, noting that there are no formal barriers or referral restrictions between them.

"An example of that is the substance misuse service. If we don't need to get involved, then we don't, and we refer them on to those specialists or we refer them on directly to youth service." (Turnaround lead)

YOTs reported that some partner organisations were not sufficiently engaging with children or lacked the flexibility required to meet their needs effectively, for example, only having times of availability between 1pm to 3pm when most children are in education. As a result, YOTs underutilised some local services.

"But it is making the point that actually, we don't want Turnaround to be seen as an instead of; we would like (partners) particularly to work alongside us with these cases, because that multi-partnership kind of intervention at that point is much stronger than just one of us." (Turnaround lead)

5.4 What are the facilitators and barriers to effective implementation and delivery of Turnaround?

5.4.1 Facilitators

Turnaround funding

YOTs reported that the level of funding was proportionate to the targets set and adequately covered both staffing and intervention-related costs, which facilitated efficient implementation, set-up and delivery of Turnaround. They particularly valued the autonomy provided, which enabled them to tailor services to meet local needs. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit for introducing new interventions was regarded as clear

and accessible, with its visual, user-friendly website supporting decision making. This encouraged services to reflect on existing provision and explore approaches not previously implemented.

“Sometimes with projects like this, much of your funding can go on staffing costs, which is absolutely the right thing to do, but it means that you’re left with little funding to try and develop interventions or be a bit more creative in terms of delivery, but I think the Turnaround budget has enabled us to do that.”

(Turnaround lead)

Additionally, internal financial teams were highlighted as a valuable source of support for budget monitoring particularly as the same teams oversaw all children’s services. YOTs also expressed strong enthusiasm following the announcement of continued funding for the financial year 2025 to 2026.

The flexibility and autonomy that YOT leads gave to Turnaround leads and delivery staff was reported as a key facilitator of effective delivery of the programme. The autonomy was also reflected in how YOTs operated, such as how they managed staffing. For example, in one YOT, Turnaround delivery staff work a 37-hour week with no core hours, allowing them to adjust their schedules according to intervention activities (for instance, starting later the next day after a late finish). This approach enabled staff to better meet the needs of children and families.

“In the main, they’re left to organise their calendar to best suit the young people and families they’re working with.” (Turnaround lead)

Existing prevention, diversion or early intervention services in place

Existing prevention, diversion or early intervention services within YOTs were said to be a key facilitator to set up and implementation of the Turnaround programme. Where there were existing services, YOTs were able to use existing staff while they were recruiting and build on existing partnerships, including with the police. Strategic stakeholders reported that this enabled those YOTs to begin operating straight away. In YOTs that needed new staff, recruitment delayed implementation.

“They had all worked with young people. They weren’t all completely new to the council, had no idea what to do, so they could all hit the ground running really, one way or another. That made it easier.” (Turnaround lead)

Infrastructure of administrative support from the MoJ

The availability and responsiveness of the Turnaround Programme team, as well as the volume of communication and guidance provided was seen as helpful. This included guidance documents, focus groups and quarterly conference calls with Turnaround teams from across each region, and training for Turnaround officers. Further, YOTs had a designated single point of contact at MoJ, whose support was found useful on several occasions. YOTs found the conference organised by the Turnaround Programme team to bring YOTs together in Birmingham in February 2024 valuable and regional meetings to be useful for information sharing,⁸⁵ particularly in early stages of the programme.

Effective partnership working

Partners who regularly and effectively worked together had better awareness of the needs of local children. This enabled more coordinated and responsive support, as services were better positioned to draw on each other’s expertise and resources. For assessments, a child’s existing relationship with a youth justice worker helped YOTs better identify their needs. Further, in some YOTs children coming through the OOCR route and receiving community resolutions continued to receive intervention activities from the same case manager.

“It’s just that really easy flow of communication because there’s inevitably crossover with the young people that we’re supporting.” (Delivery partner)

Building trusting relationships with children

The rapport between children and their Turnaround worker was identified as a critical factor in the programme’s success. Interviews with children, parents, and carers highlighted the strong communication skills of Turnaround delivery staff, including active

⁸⁵ Regular online meetings are organised by the MoJ, where MoJ single points of contact share programme updates, offer advice, and give YOTs a chance to share any local learning as well as flag local challenges.

listening, the use of age-appropriate and accessible language, and a genuine interest in each child's individual circumstances.

“Just the help that they (Turnaround worker) give and the support that they give and the time that they'll give you. They give me the time that I needed to speak to them. I would recommend it to other people who are like me and my age, maybe a bit older.” (Child, aged 13)

“The way he (Turnaround worker) talks about it, he just knows what I went through. I don't know how he knows. I don't know how he has that same feeling, but I like to have someone that can feel the same pain that I felt, because what I felt was really bad.” (Child, aged 14)

Similarly, observations conducted during Phase 1 fieldwork highlighted ongoing, tailored engagement by Turnaround delivery staff. Their empathetic, patient, and individualised approaches facilitated open, honest dialogue that was sensitive to each child's needs, abilities, and other commitments.

5.4.2 Barriers

Funding

Some YOTs reported challenges related to funding constraints in their areas, including uncertainty about whether funding for Turnaround will continue, which made it harder to plan. For example, YOTs in Wales reported that they submitted plans for their 2025 to 2026 work in June 2024, but Turnaround funding for the financial year 2025 to 2026 was confirmed in December 2024. This was considered to affect their ability to plan resources, such as job positions, in advance.

YOTs also reported difficulties in managing budgets amid inflation and the lack of flexibility to roll on Turnaround funding from one funding period to another. YOTs across both rural and urban areas in England suggested that allowing the rollover of unspent funds into the next financial year would support more effective planning and delivery. The current requirement to spend all funding within a single financial year was viewed as restrictive, particularly in cases of delayed implementation or where additional time to mobilise the programme was needed.

“There’s a disconnect, I believe, between perhaps government processes and decisions on spending, and then you look at local processes; the two don’t really align and match up always.” (Turnaround lead)

Difficulties mobilising Turnaround due to the timescales

One barrier to programme set-up, especially in YOTs which had previously lacked early intervention infrastructure, was a tight timeframe to mobilise the programme. While each YOT received a £11,000 mobilisation lump sum as part of the first-year grant, targets they were expected to reach, and a short lead-in time between the announcement of funding and receipt of grant agreements, both created pressure to deliver swiftly, leaving little time for planning and recruitment.

“If we had had six months before where this programme’s coming along, this is the criteria for it, let’s set this up. As opposed to we’ve got this pot of money, this is the criteria, let’s set it up, we felt like we were playing catch-up for a short period of time.” (Turnaround lead)

Navigating the risk of duplication of services

While some participants saw existing prevention, diversion and early intervention services as facilitators for implementing Turnaround, strategic stakeholders noted these services initially created barriers for some YOTs, particularly in Wales. The requirement to support new cohorts rather than expand existing early intervention limited the programme’s perceived added value in Wales, where many such services already existed. This condition meant that Welsh YOTs could not use Turnaround funding to enhance support for children already known to them. However, later in the programme, one Welsh YOT reported that Turnaround was helpful in supporting RUI or NFA children who may not have received support from other services.

Similarly, participants in both England and Wales saw service duplication as a risk, fearing families might be overwhelmed by multiple services. Some felt Turnaround needed to be distinct to mitigate this risk. Some were initially confused on whether families could be supported by both Turnaround and the Supporting Families programme, although this was addressed in the programme guidance.

“It’s a fine line between not overwhelming a family, not having too many plans in place, but making sure that there’s that communication to ensure who is the best person to keep it open.” (Turnaround lead)

Programme guidance and training

Strategic stakeholders noted that despite the Turnaround Programme team’s efforts to ensure clear communication, the volume of information and workload of Turnaround leads meant that key messages were not always absorbed. Some Turnaround leads also reported uncertainty during the programme set-up stage due to the changing guidance. Additionally, strategic stakeholders highlighted a lack of training on the programme’s purpose, particularly the whole-family approach. This was highlighted by Welsh YOTs, who reported that no training on this was offered by the MoJ and that they had to provide their own training during the implementation phase.

While the conference organised by the Turnaround Programme team to bring YOTs together in Birmingham in February 2024 was seen as valuable, YOTs noted that this could not be held often due to cost and resource constraints. Regional focus groups and conference calls were helpful early on, but YOTs expressed uncertainty about whether these would continue regularly.

YOTs noted the need for training on completing quarterly MI reporting forms with support from a small group or a single point of contact. Some YOTs also lacked understanding of why demographic information on children is collected at different stages in the programme, which the MoJ uses to monitor progression of different groups of children.

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria were also considered an ongoing barrier by some YOTs,⁸⁶ preventing Turnaround delivery teams from supporting some children referred to them, such as those with a Child Protection Plan or Care and Support Protection Plan or those who had been escalated to the statutory caseload.

Additionally, the eligibility criteria stipulate that children are only able to engage with Turnaround once, which some participants felt was too restrictive. It was suggested that

⁸⁶ Eligibility criteria for Turnaround were expanded in the financial year 2025-2026.

re-engagement be permitted in cases where children were re-referred a few months later due to changes in maturity levels or mental preparedness. These views contribute to the broader perception of restrictive eligibility criteria, as seen in the YOT lead survey, where, when asked about what could be improved about the programme, 48% of respondents spontaneously responded that the eligibility criteria could be less restrictive.⁸⁷

“I think now, when children come into our service and they’re not Turnaround eligible, you see the frustrations on the case manager’s face that they wish that they were, because they feel that there’s so much more they could do to include in their intervention if they were, because of the resources and the budgets that come along with them.” (Turnaround lead)

In response to concerns about eligibility, the criteria were expanded in April 2025 to include children in contact with social services.

A contrasting view expressed by one strategic stakeholder was that the broad eligibility criteria created tensions and should be narrowly defined, as services were often already working with much of the same cohort of children that the Turnaround programme aimed to engage.

Communication regarding end of funding

In February 2024, ahead of the end-of-first-year Turnaround event in Birmingham, YOTs were informed that there would be no further Turnaround funding post-March 2025. Up until that point, without certainty that funding would continue, the MoJ advised YOTs to prepare for the end of the programme. This included considerations such as deciding when to stop accepting referrals so that all children who started interventions would be able to finish them. In December 2024, the MoJ informed to YOTs that funding would continue into 2025 to 2026. YOTs believed that communication and planning around the end of programme funding could have been improved, as they received no updates around funding between February 2024 and December 2024. The uncertainty negatively affected staffing, resources, project timelines, and exit planning in that period.

⁸⁷ What, if anything, would you change about the Turnaround programme to make it better? [Open-ended]. Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May to 28th May 2024.

Barriers specific to Welsh YOTs

Some Welsh participants reported that the Turnaround programme appeared to be London- and England-centric, lacking a thorough understanding of the Welsh context. This was seen as a barrier to effective implementation across Welsh YOTs.

“(Turnaround) was very much a Westminster-led initiative (...) I feel it didn’t have that nuance in terms of understanding the Welsh context (...) So, it was a challenge to try and identify where Turnaround would fit in within the suite of preventative support and pathways already in existence.” (Turnaround lead)

Initially the Turnaround programme used terminology for certain aspects of delivery that did not initially align with the Welsh context. For example, it referred to Special Educational Needs (SEND), whereas in Wales the term Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is used. This discrepancy led to some resistance and confusion amongst Welsh YOTs during the implementation process initially, however this was subsequently changed in the first update of the guidance.

Welsh YOTs highlighted operational challenges which hindered programme delivery. They noted the impact of Britain’s exit from the European Union (EU), specifically no longer having access to substantial grant funding for prevention previously received from the EU. There was also initial uncertainty about how Turnaround funding would integrate with existing grants without breaching their conditions, which was a barrier in setting-up of the programme in these areas.

“But we couldn’t work out where this piece of funding was to fit in the overall prevention because we didn’t want to jeopardise our grants, because much of the prevention work is grants. We would be going against the conditions of the grants, so a lot of it went to looking at how we could fit this in within that continuum of provision that we had [...] I think a lot of it was in terms of selling the added value that it would bring to the partnerships.” (Turnaround lead)

6. Programme outcomes

Key finding	Details
Positive impacts on children were consistently reported across England and Wales.	Regardless of children's demographics and referral routes, Turnaround was reported to have reduced offending, subsequent offending and risk-taking behaviour while improving socio-wellbeing. MI analysis showed that (as of the end of December 2024) across all regions, 91% of children had no proven offences after completing Turnaround.
Turnaround also had a positive impact on families.	Families noted that Turnaround positively impacted their family relationships, personal wellbeing and financial situation.
YOTs noted numerous changes to partnership working, influencing their early intervention practice.	English and Welsh YOTs identified key positive changes in how they and delivery partners including police, schools and local organisations work to support children at risk of offending as a result of Turnaround. For example, police issued less severe outcomes to children, where appropriate for the child, and some YOTs adapted their practice to meet the needs of specific demographics.

6.1 Intended impacts

Key overarching intended impacts identified in the Programme Logic Model workshop and interviews with national strategic stakeholders were twofold:

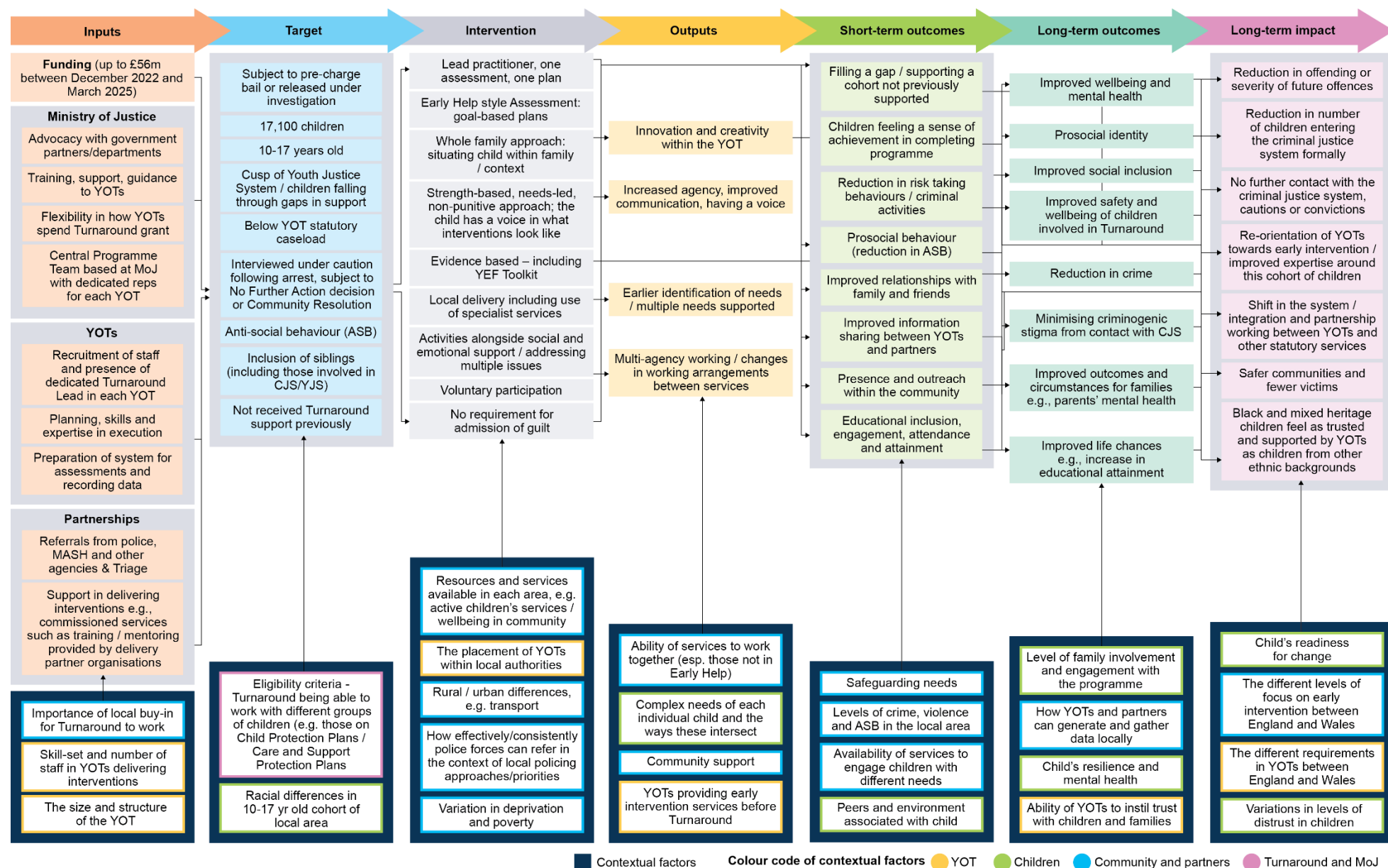
- 1. Child-focused impacts:** Reduced offending or reoffending, improved social emotional behaviours, academic outcomes, family dynamics.
- 2. System-focused impacts:** Filling a gap in the youth justice system and improved integration of YOTs' early intervention work with statutory and non-statutory services.

These views were reflected in interviews with parents or carers, Turnaround frontline staff, and delivery partners and aligned with the scoping survey results,⁸⁸ where 38% of

⁸⁸ How much need do you think there is for the Turnaround programme in supporting children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system? [Open-ended] Base: 102 leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

Turnaround leads highlighted the importance of prevention and early intervention, and 23% emphasised diversion from the youth justice system when asked about why the programme is needed.

All intended short-term, long-term outcomes, and long-term impacts are outlined in the Programme Logic Model below.

Figure 8: Finalised Programme Logic Model

6.2 Perceived impacts on children

In the scoping and mainstage phases, participants were asked about the programme's perceived impacts on children. Phase 1 focused on outcomes from the draft Programme Logic Model (Appendix A) including offending, educational outcomes, wellbeing and relationships. Phase 2 explored additional outcomes, such as views on youth crime and the ability to seek help. Unintended impacts, as discussed by participants, are also reported.

Throughout the chapter, these are referred to as 'impacts' as this term was used in discussion with participants. As such, findings on 'impacts' encompass the short-term and long-term outcomes in the finalised Programme Logic Model above (Figure 8). While distinct, they may overlap in their effects as seen in the model.

Offending and subsequent offending⁸⁹

Turnaround leads across England and Wales highlighted a low number of children in the Turnaround cohort who offended or re-entered the youth justice system. Two examples which highlight this include:

- **Example one** – An urban English YOT reported that out of 145 children who completed the programme, eight came back into the service under a youth conditional caution and nine under additional prevention and diversion referrals.
- **Example two** – A rural Welsh YOT highlighted a case manager's report showing that in 50 closed cases, 91% did not re-enter the system.

97% of respondents from the scoping survey, attributed the low offending rates in large part to Turnaround interventions such as CAMHS, speech and language therapy, and educational support as well as children being engaged in new interests that diverted them away from risk-taking behaviours.

⁸⁹ Reoffending / subsequent offending has been defined in the context that some children may have offended before their involvement with the Turnaround programme and as such, when looking at their outcomes after the case is closed it would be classed as a reoffence. In comparison, children who have offended after Turnaround but not before receiving support this would be seen as their first offence.

This is reflected in the analysis of the programme MI (see Figure 9). 91% of children who completed their Turnaround interventions as of end of December 2024 did not receive a judicial decision or a caution for offending as of end of December 2024. The No Proven Offences rate was highest in London (95%), the North East (94%) followed by the South East (92%), while in Wales it stood at 86%. Similarly, analysis of the programme MI showed low offending rates among Turnaround participants, with 7% of children who completed interventions receiving a judicial decision or caution as of December 2024. Some variation across both urban and rural classifications was observed, with Proven Offences rates ranging from around 4% for children living in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas to 10% in Largely Rural areas. Crucially, No Proven Offending rates were consistent across areas classified as ASB hotspots and non-ASB hotspot areas. As of end of December 2024, 7% of children who completed Turnaround interventions received a judicial decision or a caution for offending in ASB hotspot areas, and 6% in non-hotspot areas.

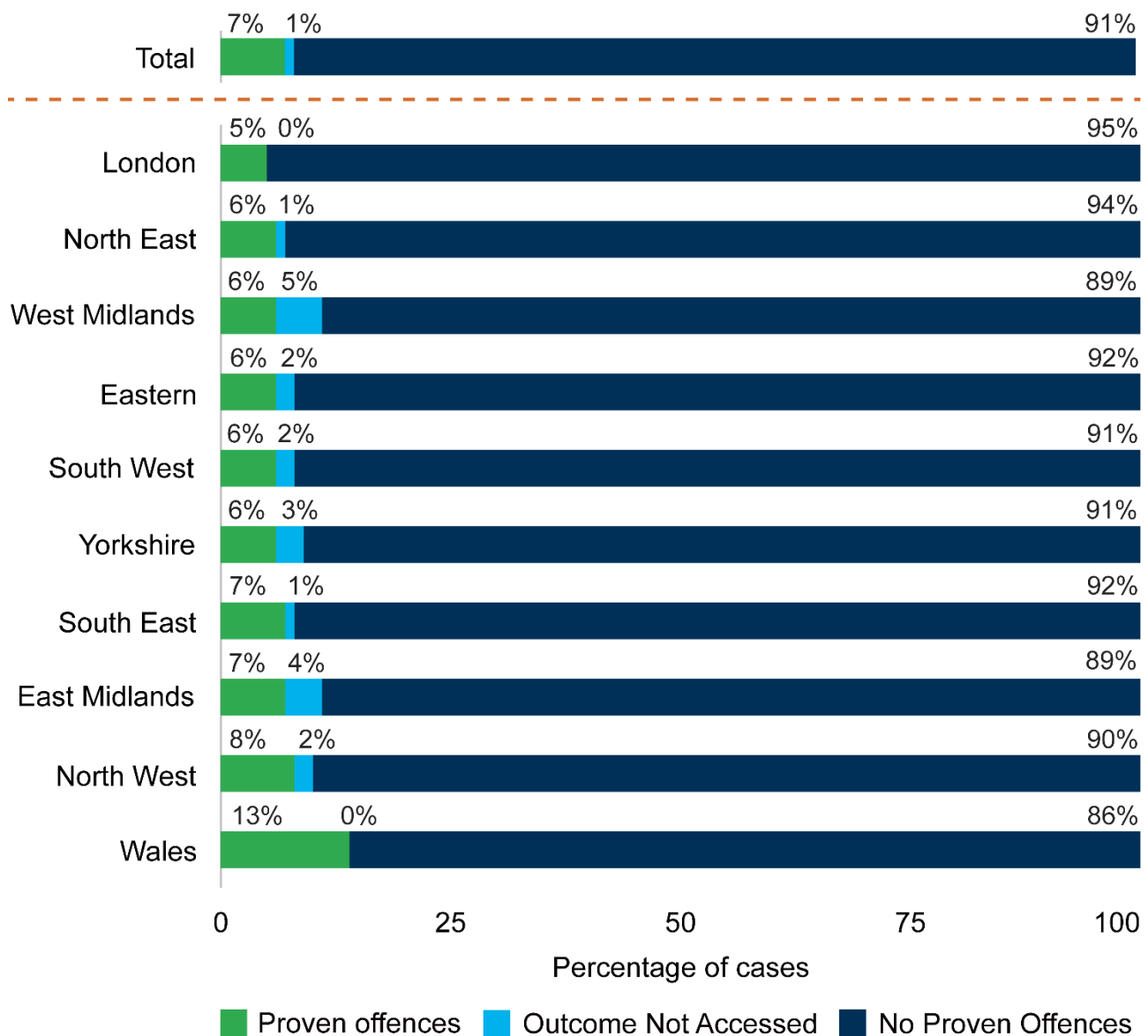
Figure 9: Offending outcomes of children who completed Turnaround interventions, by region, as of end of December 2024

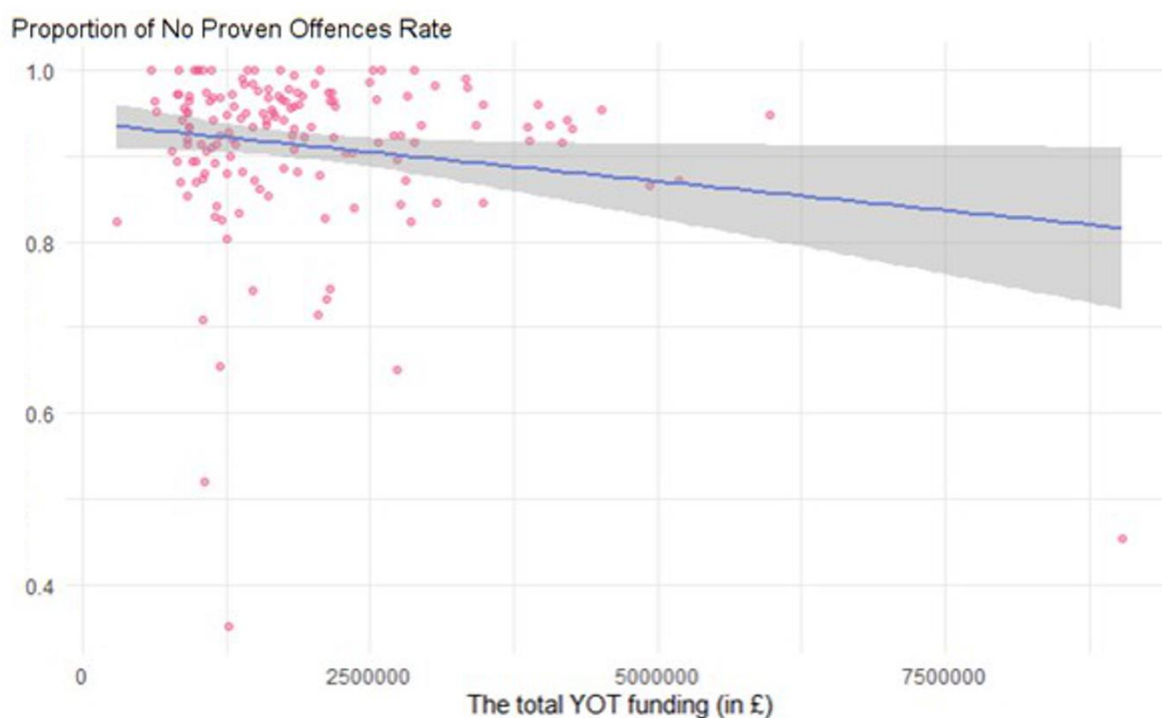
Figure 10 displays the relationship between the value of the total funding received by YOTs and No Proven Offences outcomes for children who completed their Turnaround interventions as of end of December 2024. There was a statistically significant but small association between the total YOT funding and No Proven Offences rates. Specifically, for every additional £100,000 increase in the total YOT funding, the rate decreased by 0.000136%.⁹⁰ Differences in total YOT funding explained approximately 2.7% of the variation in No Proven Offences rates.⁹¹ However, it is important to note that this

⁹⁰ The regression coefficient was -0.0000000136, $p = 0.042$

⁹¹ $R^2 = 0.027$

relationship is not causal and may reflect other factors unaccounted for in this analysis, notably deprivation rates. For example, a recent exploratory analysis of repeat offending by children and young people in England and Wales showed that prolific young offenders are more likely than non-prolific young offenders to live in deprived neighbourhoods.⁹²

Figure 10: Relationship between the total YOT funding and No Proven Offences outcome, as of end of December 2024



Risk-taking behaviour and decision-making

A perceived reduction in children's risk-taking behaviour was noted in interviews with parents, carers and children. Reportedly, after receiving Turnaround support, children displayed less of the risk-taking behaviours which had led to their original Turnaround involvement and, in some cases, police involvement. For example, a parent or carer reported that Turnaround support stopped their child from shoplifting, and they no longer engaged in drug and alcohol misuse.

Similarly, Phase 1 interviews with Turnaround leads highlighted that a decrease in risk-taking behaviour among the Turnaround cohort led to fewer interactions with the youth

⁹² Ministry of Justice (2025) A profile of Repeat Offending by Children and Young People in England and Wales. GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-profile-of-repeat-offending-by-children-and-young-people-in-england-and-wales/a-profile-of-repeat-offending-by-children-and-young-people-in-england-and-wales>

justice system, which in turn contributed to a broader reduction in offending and reoffending rates. These findings are reflected in the case study below and mirror the finalised Programme Logic Model (Figure 8).

Observation case study 2: Turnaround exit assessment interview

A Turnaround exit assessment was delivered in-person at a school with a child and focused on the progress made during Turnaround and next steps after they completed the programme. The child's involvement in Turnaround was due to a decline in their behaviour at school and they were referred through a community resolution.

As part of the exit interview, they reflected on three Turnaround activities: '**Over to you quiz**', '**Resilience framework**' and '**Me, myself and others**'. These activities looked at themes of consequences, friendships, emotions and identity. Following the discussion, the Turnaround worker and child spoke about the progress they achieved throughout Turnaround. The child felt that they saw improvement in their behaviour, as they had not been involved with the police since receiving Turnaround support. Additionally, the child said their relationship with their parent had improved by spending more quality time together while cooking.

However, parents and carers had mixed views on how the programme impacted day-to-day behaviour. While some parents and carers reported positive changes, those whose children were newer to the programme reported that it was too early to see any impact. Although views varied, some parents and carers from both rural and urban areas observed that their child became substantially less aggressive, less angry, and noticeably calmer. These parents and carers attributed improvements to Turnaround, for example, they noted their children were taught coping mechanisms to manage their anger which proved to be helpful.

In addition, some children reported positive changes in their behaviour such as developing greater self-control. They attributed these positive changes to the Turnaround support they received.

"Usually when I've been in class or something... I'll (try) to show off to my mates. Say like usually I throw a pen to my mate or something across the classroom, I

feel like now I (have...) more self-control or ability to stop trying to impress other people and just focus on myself.” (Child, aged 15)

Within this, children emphasised that their relationship with the Turnaround worker was pivotal, and some gave examples of their worker's support which had a positive impact on their day-to-day behaviour. Examples included counting backwards, taking a deep breath or speaking to someone about their feelings.

“If I say, ‘Oh, I’ve got a struggle with this.’ She (Turnaround worker) will always be like, ‘This is how you can solve it,’ she explains, ‘Oh, this is what’s good for you’ and it helps me a lot.” (Child, aged 16)

“I think it’s because she’s (Turnaround worker) telling me things to help it. Let’s say I get really angry; she’s told me things that could help me calm down.” (Child, aged 16)

Educational inclusion, attendance and attainment

Across Phases 1 and 2, participants identified positive educational impacts as a result of engaging in the programme. In English YOTs, Turnaround leads and delivery partners identified improved relationships between children and teachers. Some delivery partners also reported improved attendance, noting that they received emails from schools confirming that there was increased participation at school from pupils in the Turnaround cohort.

Similarly, parents and carers had noticed positive changes in their children’s attitudes towards school, including a clear difference before and after Turnaround. This was reflected in fewer phone calls from the school regarding poor behaviour and more positive feedback from educational professionals. Some parents and carers also noticed that their child’s mindset about school had changed, for example they were more engaged and focused on their future.

“His lecturers at college have been praising him. They’ve said that they’ve noticed a huge difference in his engagement, and one of them even said to him, ‘Your concentration has improved.’” (Parent or Carer)

“He is looking at that wider picture, and it’s certainly impacted on his behaviour in school. His behaviour for learning, albeit not perfect, it’s the highest score he’s had since he started school.” (Parent or Carer)

In comparison, children’s views on whether Turnaround influenced their feelings about school were mixed. While some felt it had made no difference, others reported positive changes in their educational engagement, noting that their Turnaround worker motivated them to succeed.

“He (Turnaround worker) just made me open my eyes a little bit and realise that your goal’s right there if you work hard and reach for it (...) now, I’m getting my head down.” (Child, aged 15)

From the perspective of Turnaround leads in England, positive educational impacts could be attributed to Turnaround interventions including speech and language therapy, educational support through mentoring inside and outside of school, and collaboration with schools. One example from an urban YOT reported that education became a key focus area over the past year due to an increase in permanent exclusions. As a result, interventions were tailored to address this issue, which led to success in both maintaining school placements and supporting children in transitioning to employment and further education.

Socio-emotional behaviour, wellbeing, physical and mental health

Delivery partners and frontline staff observed that children gained a more positive self-perception and greater self-worth which subsequently improved their confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing. Some parents or carers also noticed these changes, with their children expressing more confidence in their appearance including changes in how they dressed. In cases where YOTs used funding to provide clothing and hygiene products to children, parents, and carers also noted an improvement in children’s wellbeing.

“His whole way about him has totally changed for the positive. It is absolutely like a different person. It’s beautiful to see from a mum and a dad’s point of view because he is just a totally transformed young man.” (Parent or Carer)

Physical health

Parents and carers reported that their children had reduced or stopped behaviours which negatively impacted their physical health such as vaping, alcohol, and drug use, while engaged with Turnaround. These behavioural changes were also noted by delivery staff and children themselves across England and Wales. For example, boys from a YOT in England who participated in boxing through Turnaround described that the sport made them feel stronger and more disciplined, and one reported that it had helped him stop smoking. Additionally, the boys reported that boxing simultaneously improved their mental health.

“Positive, 100% man. Honestly, I love boxing. I love boxing a lot. (...) That’s the only thing that I love. I can be sad, and I can think about me going boxing on Friday and I’ll be happy” (Child, aged 18)⁹³

“The boxing has been really good. It’s (...) discipline, and now if someone offers me a cigarette or something, I’m less inclined to take it. I know I’ll be punished when I’m doing the circuit training (...)” (Child, aged 17)

Observation case study 3: Gym-based intervention

A gym-based intervention through Turnaround was delivered in-person 1:1 at a local gym. The intervention was two sessions a week, led by the Turnaround worker and had input from the child. The child was referred through Turnaround after having been released under caution.

The gym included sporting and training equipment with motivational quotes on the walls: **‘believe’, ‘discipline’, ‘strong’ and ‘consistency’**. Throughout the session, the Turnaround worker and child discussed their lived experiences and relationships. The worker gave constant reassurance and positive feedback to the child during their conversation.

After the session, the Turnaround worker said that within the seven months of working together the child had stopped taking drugs, gained confidence and improved their attendance at school.

⁹³ This participant was aged 17 when they accessed Turnaround support.

Mental health

Some children reported positive effects Turnaround had on their mental health. Children experiencing anxiety noted that the programme provided support through informal conversations and mentoring. This enabled them to talk openly with their individual Turnaround worker which gave a sense of relief and helped manage their concerns or worries.

“I realised that a lot recently. When I leave, I feel like because I open up as well, I let a lot out, which I normally don’t do, so it’s always really good.” (Child, aged 16)

“If something has happened and I’ve been able to talk about it and then calm down about it I feel happy.” (Child, aged 14)

Notably, children who were referred following a NFA from the police and Outcome 22,⁹⁴ stated that they either felt no change or were unsure of Turnaround’s influence on their mental health. Some explained that this was because they were new to the programme.

Despite mixed responses from children, parents and carers noted positive improvements. For example, one parent or carer of a child who experienced trauma felt that their child became more receptive to the continued Turnaround support. This was largely due to the relationships created through Turnaround which also had a positive impact on their mental health.

Positive peer relationships

Turnaround delivery staff and delivery partners reported that the programme created opportunities for children to meet new peers who positively influenced their attitudes and behaviours. This view was echoed by parents or carers, who also reported that Turnaround encouraged their child to reflect on their current peers. This was noticeable when Turnaround delivery staff held sessions on friendships and healthy relationships. Findings are further illustrated in the case study below.

⁹⁴ As defined in the MoJ (2024). Turnaround programme year one management information: ad hoc statistical release: an Outcome 22 is a police code used when it is decided the case does not meet the public interest test for any further action and the individual has been given the opportunity to engage with diversionary activity.

Observation case study 4: Group-based intervention on antisocial and risk-taking behaviour

A Turnaround intervention session was delivered in-person at a Youth Centre, with five white male 13 to 14-year-olds and focused on providing emotional and mentoring support. The intervention was weekly, tailored to the five children, and specific to an incident of ASB the group were involved in.

The intervention delivered involved a Turnaround worker reading out offence-based scenarios (e.g. carrying a knife, assaulting a female) and asking the children to rate the offences on a scale from 1 (not very serious) to 5 (very serious). Following this discussion, a video about knife crime was played which aimed to educate the children about joint enterprise and how one could be tried for a crime even if they did not physically carry out the crime (e.g. a stabbing).

At the end of the session, children were asked to reflect on how their behaviour and actions can affect others. The boys said they learnt from the session that they “should not participate in dangerous groups”, “don’t be in the wrong place at the wrong time” and “be careful who you go out with”.

Children expressed mixed responses on whether the programme influenced their friendships. Some, regardless of the circumstances which led to their referral to Turnaround, reported no change in their friendship groups. Others who were referred through community resolutions CR and OOCR described forming new relationships because of Turnaround. Notably, those who reported changes to their peer groups also reported improvements in their behaviour such as greater self-control and anger management. Reasons given were often because children wanted to avoid getting into trouble along with their friends.

“I didn’t want to leave (my friends) because I thought I was so cool and I was on top of the world, but I kind of realised they’re not my real friends. Real friends would never do that.” (Child, aged 12)

“When I first came in, I was with a really bad group of friends. That’s why I was offending so much. I don’t speak to them anymore. When I was on the

programme, I didn't have time to speak to them because I'm out with (the Turnaround worker)." (Child, aged 17)

Family and home environment

YOTs in both England and Wales linked improved family relationships to the Turnaround programme, noting that its impact on children's behaviour and socio-emotional wellbeing had a positive effect on their relationships with siblings and parents or carers. Children had mixed views on the programme's impact on their family relationships, with some who felt closer to their family, while others felt no noticeable change. Views and experiences of parents and carers are explored in section 6.3.

How children think about youth crime

Parents and carers from both rural and urban areas observed changes in their child's understanding of consequences and behaviour as a result of the Turnaround programme. They noted that their child reflected on their actions and developed a greater awareness of youth violence, crime, and its consequences. However, some parents and carers of children with or suspected SEND or ALN, felt that more support was needed to help their child's understanding. They felt this additional support was essential to help to further steer their child away from the 'wrong path'.

Interviews with children explored whether their views on youth crime – such as legal consequences, impacts on family and friends, and involvement with the police – changed because of Turnaround. Some said that they had a different view on crime after receiving support; these changes were categorised in three ways:

- 1. Greater awareness of the real-world impact of their offending and antisocial behaviour, including actions that led to their involvement in Turnaround:**

Consistent with perceived behavioural outcomes discussed earlier in the chapter, children reported a shift in how they viewed the behaviour that led to their involvement in the programme. Regardless of referral route, boys shared a similar view that Turnaround, particularly sessions focused on consequences, increased their awareness of the impacts of their offending behaviour on others.

- 2. Shift in perceptions of crime and role models:** Children had mixed views on offending and reoffending behaviours. One shift was in how some children

perceived criminal behaviour, particularly in relation to media influences. For example, one child who previously idolised individuals involved in criminal behaviour, which was depicted in music videos, described how, through support from Turnaround, they came to recognise the negative consequences of this behaviour and no longer viewed them as aspirational. However, not all experiences were the same. One child from an urban area who had subsequently offended after the programme expressed uncertainty about whether they would continue engaging in such behaviour.

- 3. An increased sense of trust in the youth justice system:** Children referred to Turnaround through community resolutions reported a positive change in their view of the justice system and police after taking part. They attributed this change to their direct engagement with the system through Turnaround and a positive relationship with delivery staff. This reflects a long-term impact identified in the finalised Programme Logic Model (Figure 8).

“It (Turnaround) made me realise the system is actually quite good. It’s good on second chances, so I’d say it’s given me a more positive outlook on the police (...)” (Child, aged 17)

How children feel: being heard and having a voice

Children from England and Wales, including those with known or suspected SEND or ALN, who understood that participation in Turnaround was voluntary (see section 5.2), generally reported feeling heard and supported by delivery staff, parents, and educational professionals. Parents and carers attributed this to the positive relationship their children developed with their Turnaround worker. This view was echoed by some children who reflected on the care shown by Turnaround leads and delivery teams. This highlights the importance of the voluntary nature of the programme in affording children agency over their participation, and in turn facilitating positive outcomes. However, one child, despite understanding the voluntary nature of Turnaround, did not feel a positive impact and expressed that generally ‘some people could listen but don’t’.

Ability to seek help and support

Children from both urban and rural YOTs felt comfortable speaking openly with their Turnaround worker and agreed that the programme had positively impacted their ability to seek help and support. They noted that their experience made it easier to communicate with others, including parents, school staff, and their Turnaround worker, even after their support had ended. Additionally, children who had not previously struggled to seek help acknowledged that their involvement in Turnaround had widened their formal support networks. Children from urban areas particularly valued the supportive approach of their Turnaround worker, noting that staff offered help rather than reprimands.

Note on variations in impacts on children

Across all research stages, no YOTs reported noticeable variations in impact of Turnaround according to child demographics or referral route. One Turnaround lead noted that variations were unlikely, as the nature of Turnaround and the interventions delivered in their YOT were tailored to the needs of each individual child.

Notable mediating factors

In Phase 2 interviews, Turnaround leads were asked whether any factors influenced the perceived outcomes for children. These factors were identified in English YOTs and were categorised in two ways:

- 1. Level of engagement shown by parents and carers:** Turnaround leads in both urban and rural YOTs emphasised that parent or carer engagement was a key factor influencing the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes for children. A lead from an urban YOT noted their internal work, which examined family engagement across their service more broadly, found a strong link between high engagement and better outcomes in their service.

“I think where parents see the value of the support that’s available through Turnaround and they advocate for it, get the child, and encourage them (...) wherever we can get parents and carers involved it’s much more successful.”
(Turnaround lead)

Additionally, Turnaround leads attributed some of programme’s success to parents or carers who were directly involved. For example, accompanying children to

sessions, actively arranging appointments, and taking part in assessments. They said that direct involvement increased the likelihood of children appreciating the programme's value, ultimately leading to more positive outcomes.

Turnaround leads noted cases with fewer positive outcomes often involved lower levels of parental or carer engagement. Reasons behind this included that some parents or carers had negative perceptions of the police and or the youth justice system due to personal experiences, or they believed their child did not require support after receiving a NFA outcome as they often saw this as a lesser outcome. It was suggested that this reluctance to engage influenced their child's view, engagement and likelihood of positive outcomes.

- 2. Level of crime, violence and deprivation:** This was considered to be another key factor which may influence outcomes in both urban and rural YOTs. In particular, the rise of ASB was seen to impact the attainment of positive outcomes in education as this behaviour can impact engagement in school. One urban YOT also said that higher levels of economic deprivation could further impact outcomes as this may increase children's vulnerability to criminal exploitation.

6.3 Perceived impacts on families, parents and carers

YOTs in both England and Wales associated improved family relationships with Turnaround, as the programme provided support through a holistic, family-centred approach. Turnaround delivery staff observed positive changes in parenting styles and relationships when parents received support through parenting classes, as well as referrals for mental health and financial support. Interviews with parents and carers highlighted additional forms of support provided, including emotional guidance from Turnaround delivery staff. These parents and carers expressed that this created a non-judgemental environment, helping them feel understood and supported.

“So, just someone explaining the system and how it works (...) and having this non-judgemental approach to just say, ‘It’s going to be okay’ that’s great.”

(Parent or Carer)

Parents and carers also reported that their child's Turnaround worker provided valuable support by in some instances reaching out to statutory professionals to secure additional help for their child. They appreciated the staff's role as an advocate, ensuring their child's needs were met. One parent or carer expressed gratitude, noting that without this support, they would have felt lost in the system.

"She's (child's Turnaround worker) been an inspiration, she's been so helpful. I would've been lost in the system. Nobody else had done anything for us, but she's contacted who she's needed to support me to get help." (Parent or Carer)

Additionally, parents and carers reported positive impacts on family relationships as parents, carers, and siblings were given the opportunity to participate in intervention activities. One parent or carer discussed their experience of organised family days out to football matches and pantomime performances which they felt had a positive impact on their relationship with their child in the past year. This sentiment was echoed by their child.

"I can't tell you how much everything's brought us closer together. As far apart as we were, we are now closer than we've ever been." (Parent or Carer)

In addition to direct participation in interventions, parents and carers highlighted the value of 'informal' support from their child's Turnaround worker such as open and frequent communication about their child's progress and engagement. Parents and carers felt that this support helped build a new and reliable network, which increased their confidence in parenting and provided reassurance. One parent or carer emphasised the financial relief offered by the programme, as it covered the cost of activities their child was involved in, providing opportunities that they would not have been able to afford independently.

6.4 Perceived impacts on wider inter-agency working

Turnaround leads, delivery staff and delivery partners were asked about the impacts of the programme on how YOTs worked with partners to support children on the cusp of the youth justice system. In Phase 1 and Phase 2, participants identified impacts which aligned with the draft (see Appendix A) and finalised Programme Logic Models (see Figure 8).

YOTs

As highlighted in section 5.3, some YOTs reported adapting their working relationships with the police to better support the Turnaround-eligible cohort. For example, efforts were made to bridge the gap between the police and children who held mistrust towards them, with one Welsh YOT organising a football game between children and police officers to foster positive interactions. Interviews with both English and Welsh YOTs emphasised a positive improvement in relationships between YOTs, the police, and children. They noted that, as a result of Turnaround, some children's perceptions of the police, and the youth justice system more broadly, had become more positive.

In addition, YOTs operating across larger geographic areas and using a hub-based model noted changes in how they support children on the cusp of offending.⁹⁵ For example, some changed from providing group support to 1:1 support as they observed better outcomes for children using the 1:1 approach. In addition, delivery partners from these hubs reported that Turnaround enabled a closer working relationship with YOTs such as improved information sharing, which enabled them to offer more localised and tailored support to families across the wider district. As a result, these hubs are now better positioned to continue supporting children and families even after their Turnaround case is closed.

“The outcome is the young person's involved in a service they would've never set foot in without that Turnaround worker bringing them to it and building their confidence to come to us. That's been a really big thing for us.” (Delivery partner)

Turnaround leads also highlighted that the programme provided valuable insights into a cohort of children they may not have worked with before. This has enabled YOTs to better understand and adapt their early intervention practice to meet the needs of specific demographics. For example, one English YOT noted that Turnaround included a higher proportion of girls compared to their usual cohort. In response, they began to consider more gender-specific interventions across their service, including their statutory caseload, to improve outcomes for girls.

⁹⁵ Some participants described their YOT working in partnership with family and youth hubs to deliver Turnaround. These hubs are places where children and families can access universal support in their local area.

Police

YOT frontline delivery staff and delivery partners such as the police in urban YOTs described the influence Turnaround had on police-decision making, with the view that officers' awareness of the programme had made them more willing and confident to give less severe outcomes to children, where appropriate for the child, for example youth cautions. Additionally, officers were more likely to consult YOTs to determine if a child was already receiving support or to recommend Turnaround rather than imposing stricter penalties.

“Whereas now, I can feel a lot more confident in giving that lower outcome or perhaps no outcome at all, but I know they’re going to get this really good support. I’d say that’s a wider effect on myself and on the children in the area that I cover.”
(Delivery partner)

A contrasting view among police officers in rural areas was that they did not feel that Turnaround changed their wider working arrangements, including their interactions with children, suggesting this change may not be widespread across regions.

Schools

Frontline delivery staff highlighted that Turnaround encouraged schools to consider referring to YOTs for additional support. In Phase 2, some Turnaround leads reported that the programme had improved their overall engagement with both schools and children. For example, one urban YOT noted that working with Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) children and those with SEND or ALN, through input from speech and language therapists and education psychologists, not only reduced pressure on schools but also provided targeted support to these children. This approach also helped YOTs to further develop their knowledge and practice in supporting children with SEND or ALN.

“We are able to provide schools with an offer that can genuinely help them to take the pressures off their teaching staff.” (Turnaround lead)

Turnaround leads from both rural and urban YOTs echoed that improved relationships with schools had strengthened the support available to children. Some provided anecdotal examples of how - through Turnaround - YOTs had worked with schools to prevent

suspensions and exclusions, enabling children to remain in education and stay engaged in learning.

Engagement with local voluntary organisations

In Phase 1, Turnaround leads, and frontline delivery staff observed early signs that the programme was enhancing how YOTs were perceived, positioning them as a valuable service that other agencies (both statutory and local voluntary organisations) could refer children to for support. This perception was further reinforced in Phase 2 interviews, where YOT leads reported that local grass-roots partners were increasingly relying on YOTs in their areas. As noted in section 5.3, multi-agency allocation meetings played a key role in this shift by improving communication between services and enabling more effective identification and referral of children to the most appropriate support that best meets their needs.

7. Conclusions

This evaluation provides evidence of Turnaround's value as a programme, in terms of reducing offending and reoffending, individual outcomes for children, and change in how YOTs work to provide support to children on the cusp of offending. Participants consistently emphasised the programme's role in addressing a gap in existing pre-court diversion provision and its effectiveness in engaging new and often underserved cohorts of children, who are outside of YOTs' statutory caseloads.

The Turnaround programme's core principles, particularly its voluntary nature and the absence of a requirement to admit guilt, were seen as key to enabling children's trust and positive engagement in interventions. Turnaround's delivery involved multi-agency referral practices, assessment, and intervention processes that centred on the child's voice and needs. Rapport-building between children, parents or carers, and delivery partners, flexibility in how YOTs spent Turnaround funding, and tailored interventions were repeatedly cited as integral to its effectiveness. Conversely, perceptions of restrictive eligibility criteria, delays in recruitment, and time constraints for YOTs during implementation phase were noted as challenges. In response to concerns about eligibility, the criteria were expanded to include children in contact with social services.

YOTs and delivery partners demonstrated consistent dedication in delivering the programme, including identification of eligible children and building trusting relationships with families. The ability of YOTs to leverage pre-existing inter-agency relationships, while establishing new partnerships, emerged as a key strength. Turnaround's visibility among key delivery partners such as police, schools, and local and voluntary sector organisations increased since its inception. While this visibility contributed to more coordinated referral pathways, some partnership working challenges remained including limited availability of partner organisations – such as only being available during school hours – which led to underutilisation of local services in some YOTs.

The programme has delivered a wide range of positive outcomes for children, as reported by all participant groups (Turnaround leads, frontline delivery staff, delivery partners,

parents or carers, and children). This includes reductions in offending and reoffending reported by delivery staff, with Turnaround MI analysis showing that in the first two years of programme delivery between December 2022 and end of December 2024, 91% of children recorded no proven offences post-intervention, and proven offence rates remained low nationwide, averaging 7% over the same time period.⁹⁶ Other perceived impacts include improvements in behaviour, educational outcomes, and enhanced socio-emotional development, relationships, and future outlooks. Self-reported impacts on parents or carers, captured in Phase 2 of the evaluation, included improved family relationships and wellbeing, suggesting the broader effects of Turnaround within the home environment.

Turnaround was reported to have contributed to a systemic change within YOTs and their partner networks. YOTs reported improved engagement between the police and children, and an increase in referrals from schools to YOTs for additional support. These developments were seen as delivering positive outcomes for individual children, as described above, but also longer-term improvements in diversionary and collaborative practices across the youth justice system, particularly in partnership with schools, police, and voluntary sector organisations.

The programme has demonstrated itself to be a scalable and valued early intervention scheme. Turnaround's evolution, from a perceived light-touch initiative to a core part of local youth provision in some YOTs, illustrates its growing credibility and embeddedness within services. This is notably supported by the programme MI, which shows that 87% of children assessed as eligible for Turnaround progressed to intervention, with 77% completing the programme, as of end of December 2024. To maintain and build on this, continued funding for early intervention, inter-agency collaboration, YOT capacity, and flexible, tailored delivery models will be important.

⁹⁶ The remaining 2% of children were those whose outcome was not accessed.

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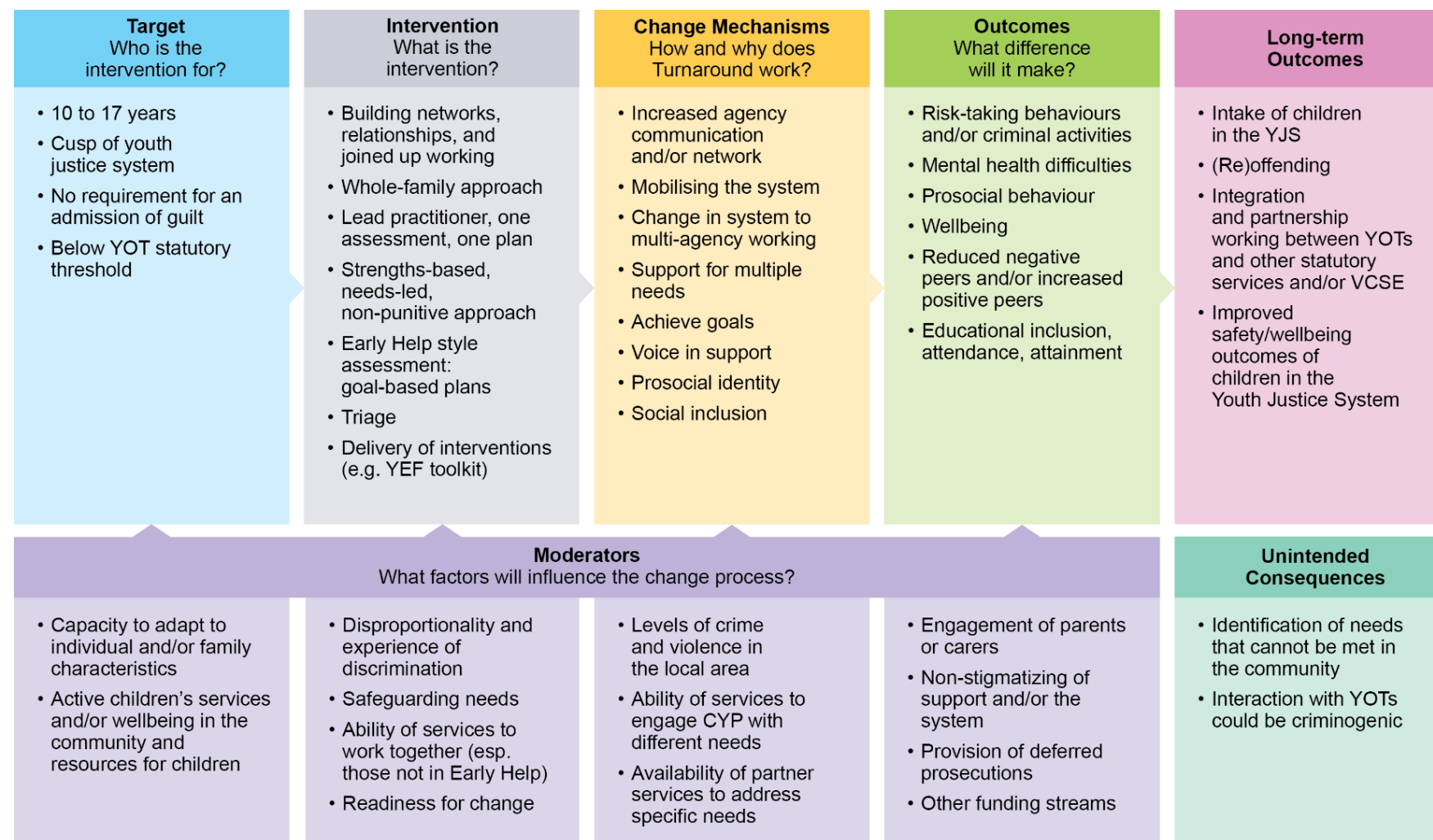
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9. Appendices

Appendix A

Draft Turnaround Programme Logic Model



Appendix B

Ethics

Ethical approach and consideration

This evaluation underwent a full review by NatCen's Research Ethics Committee (REC), which operates in line with the requirements of the Government Social Research (GSR) professional guidance and Social Research Association (SRA) Research Ethics Frameworks. Prior to interviews, the research team ensured that all participants were fully informed about the research topic, the issues that might arise, what participation would involve, and procedures in the event of a disclosure. This information was communicated both in writing and verbally to support informed consent.

Approach to ensuring anonymity of participants

To protect the anonymity of participants, the following measures were implemented:

- **File Transfer Protocols (FTP)** – Sensitive monitoring data on children was shared securely via FTPs between NatCen and Turnaround leads, ensuring no identifiable information was transmitted through unsecured channels.
- **Briefing calls with YOTs** – NatCen conducted briefing calls with YOTs to outline data policies, emphasising anonymisation procedures and secure data-sharing practices.
- **Incident breach procedures** – Before fieldwork, NatCen briefed YOT leads on anonymity measures and the use of FTPs for sharing demographic data. Clear protocols were in place to report and manage any data breaches, mitigating any risks to participant confidentiality.
- **Anonymising verbatim quotes** – Verbatim quotations and examples from interviews used throughout chapters 3 and 4 to illustrate findings were anonymised and excluded any identifiable information.

Approach to ensuring confidentiality of collected data

- **Secure data storage** – All collected data was stored in a secure folder accessible only to the NatCen Turnaround Evaluation research team, ensuring compliance with data protection standards and preventing unauthorised access.
- **Secure data destruction after study completion** – As was communicated to participants in privacy notices and interview introductions, personal data will be securely deleted once the project has been completed. Identifiable data will be stored by NatCen for six months after publication of the report (which we expect to be by autumn 2025) and then will be securely destroyed.

Approach to interviews with children

A tailored qualitative approach was implemented, using active listening and open questioning to build rapport. Fieldwork materials for children included creative tools, such as vignettes, visual aids (e.g. 'blob trees'), timelines, and sorting exercises, to support expression of views and experiences, explore factors like home life, offending history, and engagement with the system.

Two topic guides were developed to suit different age groups (10-12 and 13-17 age), with flexibility to use the most appropriate version for each child. Topic guides were further adapted to meet individual needs, including those related to SEND/ALN such as Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), as identified by YOT Turnaround gatekeepers. One interview was conducted with the support of an interpreter to accommodate a participant's request that the interview take part in a language other than English. When requested, children were able to take part with the support of a trusted Turnaround practitioner.

Approach to quality assurance

To ensure analytical rigour and minimise bias, data analysis was conducted collaboratively by a team of researchers. Prior to analysis, charts were drop-tested by the most senior members of the research team to check for accuracy, completeness and consistency. The NatCen Turnaround project lead reviewed all charting outputs to ensure consistency to the agreed framework.

Three analysis workshops were held at key points during the project lifecycle, after the completion of Phase 1 fieldwork and two during Phase 2 fieldwork, one halfway through data collection and one at the end of it. These sessions brought together all researchers involved in qualitative data collection and MI analysis to discuss emerging findings, explore connections across datasets, and identify areas requiring further probing in interviews.

Appendix C

Characteristics of YOTs participating in Phase 1 of mainstage fieldwork

Table C1: Characteristics of YOTs participating in Phase 1 of mainstage fieldwork

YOT	Region	Urban/rural location⁹⁷	Intervention delivery model⁹⁸	Most common intervention type⁹⁹
1	Eastern	Largely rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	Primarily delivered in-house	Mentoring and supportive relationships
2	Wales	Rural village and dispersed	Primarily delivered in-house	Mentoring and supportive relationships
3	South East / South West	Largely rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%) & coastal	Primarily delivered in-house	Socio-emotional interventions
4	London	Urban with major conurbation	Commissioned equally in-house and externally	Mentoring and supportive relationships
5	North East / North West	Urban with city and town & coastal	Primarily delivered in-house	Socio- emotional interventions
6¹⁰⁰	Wales	Rural town and fringe	-	-
7	East / West Midlands	Urban with city and town	Commissioned equally in-house and externally	Mentoring and supportive relationships
8	Yorkshire	Urban with city and town	Primarily delivered in-house	Socio- emotional interventions

⁹⁷ Urban/rural classification was determined using the RUCLAD20111 classifications for Local Authority Districts, available at [2011 Rural Urban Classification for Local Authorities - GOV.UK](#) (for YOTs in England) and [DataMapWales](#) (for YOTs in Wales).

⁹⁸ Are the Turnaround interventions your Youth Offending Team delivers primary in-house, or are they primarily commissioned externally? [Single code]. Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

⁹⁹ What is the most common intervention type that your Youth Offending Team delivers to children supported by Turnaround? [Single code]. Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May – 28th May 2024.

¹⁰⁰ Information on YOT 6's delivery model or main intervention type was not available as it had not provided it in the scoping survey in the scoping phase.

Appendix D

Characteristics of YOTs participating in Phase 2 of mainstage fieldwork

Table D1: Characteristics of YOTs participating in Phase 2 of mainstage fieldwork

YOT name	Region	Urban/rural	Delivery model¹⁰¹	Main intervention type¹⁰²
9	London	Urban with major conurbation	Primarily delivered in-house	Mentoring and supportive relationships
10	East Midlands	Urban with city and town	Primarily delivered in-house	Mentoring and supportive relationships
11	North West	Urban with major conurbation	Primarily delivered in-house	Mentoring and supportive relationships
12¹⁰³	Eastern	Largely rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	-	-

¹⁰¹ Are the Turnaround interventions your Youth Offending Team delivers primary in-house, or are they primarily commissioned externally? [Single code]. Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

¹⁰² What is the most common intervention type that your Youth Offending Team delivers to children supported by Turnaround? [Single code]. Base: 102 YOT leads – Fieldwork: 14th May - 28th May 2024.

¹⁰³ Information on YOT 12's delivery model or main intervention type was not available, as this was not provided by this YOT in the scoping survey.

Appendix E

Analysis of programme MI – research questions and analytical approach

Table E1: Analysis of programme MI – research questions and analytical approach

Monitoring Information analysis research question (RQ)	Analysis conducted
RQ1: What are the rates of progression through the key stages of the programme?	<p>The proportion of children progressing through each stage of the Turnaround programme was calculated as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral-to-assessment: the proportion of children who, after being referred through various channels, proceeded to an assessment of their needs. • Assessment-to-intervention: the proportion of assessed children who commenced participation in Turnaround interventions.¹⁰⁴ • Intervention-to-closed case: the proportion of children who completed the intervention phase, resulting in their Turnaround cases being formally closed. • Intervention-to-partial completion: The partial completion rate has been calculated as total partial completions / total interventions started. The rates are presented as the proportion of children who started but did not finish interventions.
RQ2: Is there a relationship between YOT size (as measured by the total funding YOTs received) and partial completion rates?	<p>To examine whether there was an association between the total YOT funding received and partial completion rates, a linear regression was conducted. However, assumption checks revealed significant non-normality in the residuals, which persisted despite the application of common transformations (logarithmic, square root, and inverse).</p>

¹⁰⁴ For 19 YOTs, the reported number of children receiving interventions exceeded the number recorded as having been assessed. These YOTs were excluded from the analysis of assessment-to-intervention progression rates only.

Monitoring Information analysis research question (RQ)	Analysis conducted
	<p>As the linear model assumptions could not be met, Spearman's rank correlation was used as a non-parametric alternative.¹⁰⁵ Unlike linear regression, Spearman's rho does not assume normally distributed residuals and instead assesses the strength and direction of a monotonic relationship between variables, making it more appropriate for analysing associations under these distributional conditions. Six YOTs were excluded from funding-related analyses due to discrepancies in how their funding data was reported, such as shared funding allocations that could not be accurately linked with YOT-level MI.</p>
<p>RQ3: What is the breakdown of reasons for partial completion of interventions, and what is the most common reason?</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics showing the proportion of partially completed cases by reason were produced. The reasons for partial completions categories included in the programme quarterly reporting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offence-related factors: Cases where a child committed a new offence while on the programme, making them ineligible and transferring them to a statutory YOT caseload. • Child Protection Plan (CPP, England) and Care and Support Protection Plans (CSPP, Wales) related escalations: Cases where a child's risk level increased, leading to escalation to a formal Child Protection Plan or Care and Support Protection Plan. • Verdict-related: Cases where a child was found guilty of an offence committed before starting Turnaround, rendering them retrospectively ineligible. • Other: Cases involving children disengaging from the intervention or withdrawing for other, often unspecified, reasons.

¹⁰⁵ Spearman's rank correlation is a measure of association between two variables that does not require the assumption of normality of residuals. Instead, it assesses how well the relationship between two variables can be described using a monotonic function, which means the relationship is consistently increasing or decreasing, but not necessarily linear.

Monitoring Information analysis research question (RQ)	Analysis conducted
RQ4: How do offending outcomes vary by region?	To understand how outcomes of Turnaround varied by geography, descriptive statistics showing the proportion of offending outcomes by region were produced for each region. The outcomes categories were: No Proven Offences, Proven Offences and Outcome Cannot Be Accessed.
RQ5: Is there a relationship between YOT size (as measured by the total funding YOTs received) and ‘No Proven Offences’ outcome?	A linear regression was conducted to examine the relationship between total YOT funding and the proportion of No Proven Offences. This statistical approach allowed to quantify the relationship between total YOT funding (independent variable) and successful intervention outcomes (dependent variable). ¹⁰⁶ The unstandardised regression coefficient (β) indicates both the direction and strength of this association. A positive coefficient suggests that higher YOT funding are associated with higher rates of No Proven Offences, while a negative coefficient implies the opposite. For example, a coefficient of 0.5 would indicate a 0.5 percentage point increase in No Proven Offences for every additional £1,000 in budget.
RQ6: Are there regional differences in the rate of RUI/PCB and ASB referrals?	Multifactorial ANOVA (region/ASB hotspot vs. RUI/PCB referral rate/ ASB referral rate), along with pairwise comparisons (Tukey’s HSD) to assess whether there are significant differences in RUI/PCB and ASB referral rates between regions.

¹⁰⁶ It’s important to note that while regression can identify associations, it cannot establish causation as there would be unmeasured factors, that influence both YOT budget and outcomes as there would be unmeasured factors, such as regional deprivation levels or population coverage, that might influence both YOT budget and outcomes. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting these associations, and further research may be needed to account for these potential confounders.