

London Metropolitan University

London Accommodation Pathfinder 2<sup>nd</sup> Evaluation

Final Report

Dr James Alexander, Dr Angie Phoenix and Dr Will Hughes  
3-13-2026

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this evaluation, including the London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) residents for sharing their views so openly, staff at Jonah House and members of the LAP steering groups and referral panels. We also recognise that this evaluation could not have been completed without the commitment and dedication of the LAP management team based at Camden Council, whose dedication to the LAP and to helping the evaluation team access the data we needed was evident throughout.

## Executive Summary

The London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) seeks to reduce the number of first-time entrants into custody, the over representation of children from minority ethnic backgrounds in the youth secure estate, and reduce reoffending rates for those placed in the LAP. Initially, 2 LAP properties were operational: Osiris House in Newham and Jonah House in Barnet. Due to delivery complexities, a decision was taken to close Osiris House and refine the model in Jonah House before expanding to other locations. This process has included revisions to the operations manual, particularly the safeguarding process, and has also led to a revised staffing model in Jonah House.

This evaluation aims to identify learning points from the LAP's set up and its two sub regional partnerships, analyse the LAP's effectiveness in supporting children's desistance journey and development of a pro-social identity, and its cost effectiveness in relation to the outcomes achieved. To do so, a mixed methods approach was utilised that included analysing data related to the children's referral, their time in the LAP and resettlement up until November 2025, documents produced by the LAP management team, interviews with key stakeholders, including YJS staff, St Christopher's Fellowship (SCF) staff, and residents/alumni, and observations from the evaluation team's visits to Jonah House.

The children placed in the LAP often had difficult life histories with 68% having some form of children's social care intervention before the arrest that led to the LAP referral, 73% were at risk of child criminal exploitation, and 64% had gone missing from their home at least once at the time of referral; 27% were identified as having signs of a mental health concern and 27% had a neurodiversity diagnosis.

Of the 22 children placed in the LAP, 11 placements were instead of a custodial sentence, 10 were in place of custodial remand, and 1 child resided in the LAP as part of their resettlement from custody. For children entering the LAP from custodial remand, the average time spent on remand was 57 days. Excluding three outliers, the average was 22 days, which is 51% lower than the published under-18 remand average. Additionally, there were no reports of direct or imminent risks of harm to the public. This should give the courts confidence that residents risks levels are sufficiently low to remain in the community. Overall, the LAP removed from or shortened 17 minority ethnic and mixed heritage children's time in custody. The equates with nearly 11% of Black children, and 9% of Mixed heritage children in the secure estate.

However, risks remain. There was an instance of a weapon being found in 1 of the children's rooms, reportedly related to his anxiety about a potential threat posed by another resident. Nevertheless, most children reported that they felt safe. There have also been incidents where children in the LAP were identified as possessing or selling drugs supplied by contacts known before the placement. These are signs of potential

child criminal exploitation and more needs to be done across the professional network supporting children in the LAP to safeguard residents against these concerns.

Aside from the relatively small sample, the evaluation was impacted by some significant data quality limitations (see '*Limitations*' section 2.4). Whilst we are obliged to note that the quantitative findings should be interpreted with caution, we are able to present some promising indicative findings. Currently, the LAP placement cost is £513.11 per night, which is cheaper than the costs of a secure children's home, a secure training centre, Oasis Restore and a high risk supported housing placement. In terms of cost benefit, the LAP has contributed to a post-LAP 81% reduction in arrests, 73% reduction in convictions and 89% reduction in court events, equating to a £70,423.52 saving per child<sup>1</sup> in costs associated with these factors. When including the costs of any pre-LAP youth detention accommodation, LAP accommodation costs and any post-LAP youth detention accommodation, the LAP saves £15,800.47 per child when comparing criminal justice costs 1 year before LAP placement and combining LAP and known post-LAP criminal justice costs.<sup>2</sup>

The LAP has developed significantly during the time it has been operational and is proving to be a safe and effective alternative to custody, with only 26% of those leaving the LAP reoffending, compared to 66% of children leaving youth custody. Further development of the model to ensure it is financially sustainable and meets emerging needs, will mean that more children will benefit from the intervention and youth reoffending will continue to fall. Considering the decreases in arrests and convictions post-LAP, it is proving to be an effective alternative to custody.

## Recommendations

The following should be considered in the short-term:

1. It is imperative that the child's professional network operates collaboratively from the first day, going beyond the statutory requirements for contacts. The provider, social care and youth justice service should work in partnership to ensure the child has a full timetable and is fully supported by the professional network.
2. External wrap around support should be managed locally, with collaborative action to maximise participation.
3. The LAP should have a content management system for its operations from referral to resettlement that all professionals working with the child can access and ensure that quality assurance checks are carried out on a regular basis.

---

<sup>1</sup> This figure is based on a sample of 7 LAP residents from 3 local authorities where pre and post LAP data could be collated and verified

<sup>2</sup> Here criminal justice costs include the cost YDA or LAP accommodation of arrest, and conviction court dates

4. The supported accommodation provider should be aided by experienced youth justice practitioners to help embed a LAP framework, based on Child First principles and which prioritises building trusted relationships with the children living in the LAP, into their practice.
5. Ensure trauma informed practice is embedded as the standard form of engagement within the house.
6. Establish an ongoing evaluation process that is child centred and considers the distance travelled for each child as well as overall LAP outcomes.
7. Resident focused outcomes should be collected for at least two years after they have left the LAP.
8. Ensure children living in the LAP are involved in the co-designing of support and wrap around provision so that they are structured around residents' needs and preferred ways of engagement.
9. Children should be supported in regularly engaging in constructive activities that support their well-being, interests, education, and employment with the aim of supporting their pro-social identity development.
10. Develop a clear safeguarding policy/practice to support a whole systems approach to safeguarding that is informed by children's voices and focused on their individual needs.
11. Ensure that there is an ongoing focus on the contextual risks children face in the home, including greater involvement from specialist services such as youth justice or children's social care to help mitigate exploitation risks. This should include a social or youth justice worker assigned to the LAP.
12. There should be a greater focus on ensuring a planned resettlement that has a strong focus on transitional safeguarding and considers the child's wishes around education, employment, family relationships, and housing needs, with transition plans being developed from the start of the placement.

The following should be considered as part of the longer-term development of the LAP:

13. Explore the suitability of the LAP management function sitting within a London-wide organisation rather than a local authority.
14. If regional partnerships are to continue, they should be structured around courts to take advantage of existing working relationships between YJS and key partners.
15. LAP placements and the location of any new properties should be based on the suitability of the geographic area, rather than simply the availability of properties.

16. Whilst children should be placed as close to home as possible, financial modelling should be on a pan-London footprint, rather than sub-regionally, to enable financial liability to be shared evenly.
17. Use of the remand budget should be considered to make the LAP more financially sustainable.

## Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Recommendations .....	3
<b>1. Introduction and Background</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Aims and Objectives of the LAP .....	9
1.2 Structure of the LAP .....	10
1.3 Evaluation Structure.....	10
<b>2. Methodology</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1 Aims and Objectives.....	13
2.2 Quantitative Data .....	15
2.2.1 Qualitative Data.....	16
2.3 Cost Benefit Analysis Modelling .....	16
2.4 Limitations .....	17
<b>3. Current Academic and Policy Focus Relating to Desistance and Safeguarding Children in YJS Settings</b> .....	<b>19</b>
3.1 Understanding Desistance.....	19
3.2 Desistance, change, and the promotion of a pro-social identity .....	19
3.3 Safety and Care, and Desistance .....	23
3.4 Safeguarding children and young people .....	24
<b>4. Understanding Children in the LAP</b> .....	<b>26</b>
4.1 Lap Residents’ Ethnicity.....	26
4.2 Difficult Life Histories .....	26
4.3 Previous YJS Engagement.....	27
4.4 A Child’s Journey to the LAP .....	28
4.4.1 Family background.....	28
4.4.2 Education.....	29
4.4.3 Peer relations .....	29
4.4.4 Youth justice contact .....	30
4.4.5 Experiences of racism .....	30
4.4.6 Key themes.....	31
<b>5. LAP Set Up and Oversight</b> .....	<b>32</b>

5.1 Structure and Set Up and Regional Partnerships.....	32
5.1.1 Structure of the Partnerships .....	32
5.2 Referral Process .....	33
5.3 Commissioning Support and Delivery Oversight .....	34
5.4 Learning Environment.....	34
5.4.1 Ofsted Registration .....	35
5.4.2 Staff Recruitment.....	35
5.4.3 Data Collection.....	36
5.5 LAP Set Up and Oversight Recommendations .....	37
<b>6. Service Impact: Benefits to Children .....</b>	<b>38</b>
6.1 Reduction in the use of custody .....	40
6.1.1 Reducing First Time Entrants into Custody .....	40
6.1.2 Reducing the Use of Custody .....	40
6.1.3 Reduction in the over-representation of minority ethnic children in custody	41
6.1.4 The LAP’s Impact on Breaches and Reoffending .....	41
6.2 Supporting Black and Mixed Ethnicity Children whilst in the LAP .....	43
6.2.1 House Dynamics .....	43
6.2.2 Wrap Around Services .....	44
6.3 Reducing the Risk of Harm .....	46
6.3.1 Ensuring Public Safety .....	46
6.3.2 Reducing Risks Faced by LAP Residents .....	46
6.3.3 Diverting Children Away from Risks .....	47
6.3.4 Contextual Risks .....	48
6.4.5 Safeguarding Children .....	49
6.4 Improved health and life chances for children .....	51
6.4.1 Educational Support .....	51
6.4.5 Employment Support .....	52
6.4.1 Physical Health.....	53
6.4.2 Mental Health .....	54
6.4.3 Family Dynamics .....	55
6.5 Child Voice .....	55
6.6 Child and LAP Delivery Recommendations .....	56

**7. Efficiency and Value for Money ..... 58**

    7.1 LAP Occupancy Rate ..... 58

        7.1.1 Proposed LAP Expansion Models ..... 59

    7.2 Cost Benefit Analysis..... 60

**8. Conclusion ..... 63**

    8.2 Lessons Learned ..... 65

    8.3. LAP Recommendations..... 66

**9. References ..... 69**

**Appendix 1: London Accommodation Pathfinder Theory of Change . Error! Bookmark not defined.**

# 1. Introduction and Background

The London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) offers the opportunity for children to be placed in a specialised supported accommodation provision as part of a resettlement arrangement, instead of being remanded into custody or in lieu of a custodial sentence. Participating youth justice services (YJS) can refer children to the LAP who meet the following thresholds:

1. They must be male and aged 16 or 17 at the point of referral
2. There must be a genuine risk of custody (remand or sentence).
3. The child is suitable as part of a resettlement package/license condition for release.
4. If it is a child's first appearance in Court, they are suitable for LAP to prevent custodial remand.

Children facing charges of Rape, Murder, or Attempted Murder were excluded from being placed in the LAP at the time of the evaluation.

A previous evaluation of the LAP was undertaken by Middlesex University's Centre for trauma and abuse studies, during 2023/24. The published report informed the current research were possible. However, it is noted that the authors of this evaluation reported significant limitations with the research that they undertook, most notably delays in the implementation of the programme meant there was an absence of children present in the LAP when the evaluation period had ended. While the report by staff at Middlesex University provides some useful insights into the early development of the LAP, the current evaluation is independent of this. It examines the project at a point further into its implementation, against its aims and objectives.

## 1.1 Aims and Objectives of the LAP

The LAP aims to contribute to the following:

- A reduction in the number of first-time entrants to custody.
- A reduction in the over-representation of minority ethnic children in custody.
- Reduced reoffending rates for children in receipt of a Pathfinder offer.
- Reduced risk of harm to self and others, and the protection of the public and victims
- Improved health and life chances for children.
- The pathfinder outcomes above are delivered more successfully than the existing alternatives.
- To demonstrate value for money.
- Communication to ensure that lessons are learnt and appropriately disseminated at policy, regional and practice level.
- To maximise occupancy of the bed spaces of the LAP.

## 1.2 Structure of the LAP

The LAP delivery was initially structured around two properties, 5 bed Osiris House in Newham that was to predominantly serve the East partnership of Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Newham, Havering, Tower Hamlets and Barking and Dagenham YJS, and 5 bed Jonah House in Barnet, which was to serve referrals from the North Central London (NCL) partnership, consisting of Islington, Camden, Barnet, Enfield, Hackney and Haringey YJS. The original plan was to open two more properties, which would serve South and West London YJS. However, due to the complexities of the model and the availability of suitable properties, a decision was taken to close Osiris House and refine the model in Jonah House, before expanding operations to other locations.

Both Osiris House and Jonah House have been operated by St Christopher's Fellowship an established provider of children's homes, supported housing, fostering and specialist support services, all designed for children in care, on the edge of care, or leaving care.

Frontline LAP operations were supported by a LAP management team based within Camden Council and funded by a Youth Justice Board (YJB) grant. The structure grew with the needs of the LAP and in the 2024/25 financial year cost £228,423 and is forecasted to cost £292,291 this financial year. The staff team now includes:

- London Accommodation and Resettlement Pathfinder (LARP) Strategic Manager (1fte)
- LAP Development Manager (.6fte since Feb 2024 until Oct 2025, reducing to .4fte)
- LAP Project Manager (.6fte since October 2025)
- Strategic Commissioning Manager (.4fte since Nov 2024)

The central management team oversee the project, collate data and work with partners to continually develop the project in line with the needs of the cohort and the partnership, manage referrals, contract manage the provider, procure additional services required such as wrap around support for children during their placement.

The cost of this function is forecasted to decrease from April 2026 and is expected to be absorbed into the LAP operating budget by April 2028.

## 1.3 Evaluation Structure

This report presents the findings of London Metropolitan University's evaluation of the LAP, with section 2 outlining the aims of the evaluation, the methodological approach taken, including the quantitative and qualitative data collected, and the modelling used to inform the cost benefit analysis.

Section 3 considers the core academic and policy debates that have informed our framework for evaluating the LAP. This includes a focus on desistance and the journey towards a pro-social identity that is supported by a sense of safety and care, and engagement in 'hooks for change' such as education, employment and positive relationships. The section then considers how ensuring children's safety is a key aspect of a professional's work with children and how this should be operationalised within the current supported accommodation regulations, before considering safeguarding practice and the challenge of supporting children through their transition to adulthood.

Section 4 outlines the demographic and social backgrounds of the residents, identifying that 86% of LAP residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the majority of whom are of African or Caribbean heritage. As such, the LAP is well placed to help reduce the over representation of children from minoritised backgrounds within youth custody. This section also considers the vulnerability of those placed in the LAP, with 68% of the residents entering the LAP already having a criminal conviction, 27% were identified as having a mental health concern, and 68% were open to social services before LAP involvement. Unsurprisingly, criminal exploitation and missing episodes featured highly in the backgrounds of residents, and 41% had National Referral Mechanism (NRM) conclusive grounds for exploitation.

Section 5 discusses findings and learnings from the LAP set-up and oversight including the effectiveness of the two geographically defined partnerships, the robustness of the referral and placement process, including the factors that hindered children being placed in the LAP. Here, there is a focus on the learning process that those involved in delivering the LAP have undergone, including managing Ofsted registration and reshaping the LAP staffing structure, which has ensured that LAP delivery has continued to develop and improve.

Section 6 considers the LAP delivery, with a primary focus on Jonah House, as Osiris House was no longer operational when this evaluation started. The section is structured to inform progress on the child-focused aims of reducing the number of first-time entrants to custody, reducing the over-representation of children from minority ethnic and mixed heritage backgrounds in custody, reducing reoffending rates for children in receipt of a Pathfinder offer, reducing the risk of harm to self and others, the protection of the public and victims, and the improved health and life chances for children. For children entering the LAP from custodial remand, the average time spent on remand was 57 days. However, when three outliers are removed from the data, the average was 22 days, which is 51% lower than the published under-18 remand average. In addition, children were more likely to feel that they could comply with bail and sentence conditions in the LAP, than they would if they were at home. Overall, children felt safe; however, some felt that more should be done to promote engagement with the

activities. This is backed up by the data, which shows limited participation in interventions such as counselling, the in-house education service, and mentoring.

Section 7 outlines the efficiency and cost benefit of the LAP, outlining how the LAP has contributed to a post-LAP 81% reduction in arrests, 73% reduction in convictions and 89% reduction in court events, which, when factoring in youth detention accommodation and LAP accommodation costs, equates to a £15,800.47 saving per child<sup>3</sup>.

Section 8 concludes with recommendations on how to develop the LAP delivery further, including ensuring the decisions about the location of future properties are based on where children feel safe, building in a greater sense of co-production in the planning of wrap around and support services, ensuring greater accountability around safeguarding and better coordination of the resettlement process.

---

<sup>3</sup> This figure is based on a sample of 7 LAP residents from 3 local authorities where pre and post LAP data could be collated and verified

## 2. Methodology

A mixed methods approach was employed to evaluate the LAP's effectiveness in helping residents develop a pro-social identity. This included analysing data related to the children's referral, their time in the LAP and resettlement up until November 2025, documents produced by the LAP management team, as well as data from interviews with key stakeholders, including YJS staff, SCF staff, and residents/alumni.

As part of the initial stages of the evaluation, key stakeholders from YJS and St Christopher's Fellowship took part in a series of Theory of Change (ToC) workshops. The ToC workshops sought to understand the process of change that the LAP can help residents go through on their path to developing a pro-social identity, with past LAP residents sharing their thoughts before the final ToC model was developed. The ToC was then used to help inform the evaluation team of the areas of focus during the data collection process.

### 2.1 Aims and Objectives

Table 1 outlines the areas of focus and questions guiding this evaluation. Findings relating to aims A and D relate to the LAP set-up and regional partnerships and are covered in section 5. Findings related to aim C are concerned with direct delivery, including children's experiences and outcomes, and are presented in section 6. The findings relating to LAP efficiency, including a Cost Benefit Analysis are presented in Section 7.

Evaluation Focus	Evaluation Questions	Corresponding LAP Aim
A) Set up of the LAP	<p>1. What are the lessons learnt in terms of set-up of the LAP in North Central London (NCL) and East, including financial sustainability and value for money for the host Local Authorities, the Lead Local Authority and the collaboration partnership?</p> <p>2. What are the lessons learnt regarding the LAP Practice model, operational oversight and governance?</p> <p>3. What are the lessons learnt regarding expansion and recommendations for future development?</p>	Communication to ensure that lessons are learnt and appropriately disseminated at policy, regional and practice level.

Table 1: Evaluation Aims and Questions		
Evaluation Focus	Evaluation Questions	Corresponding LAP Aim
B) Cost and Value for Money	<p>1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of the LAP in comparison to youth detention accommodation (YDA) and other intensive residential properties?</p> <p>2. What have been the benefits and realisation of the project linked to the LAP specifications and intended objectives?</p> <p>3. How effective is the LAP in reducing the overrepresentation of minority ethnic children in custody?</p>	<p>The pathfinder outcomes above are delivered more successfully than the existing alternatives.</p> <p>To demonstrate value for money.</p> <p>To maximise occupancy of bed spaces of the LAP.</p>
C) Outcomes for Children	<p>1. What are the potential benefits and shortcomings of the LAP in managing risks and challenging behaviours?</p> <p>2. How effective is the LAP planner in tracking progress and as an intervention tool?</p> <p>3. What are the benefits of the wraparound support services?</p> <p>4. What are the findings for children who have left the LAP in terms of adopting of a pro-social identity reducing recidivism and offending behaviours considering gravity and frequency?</p> <p>5. How effective is the transition process into follow-on accommodation following completion of the time in the LAP, acquittal or placement breakdown</p> <p>6. How effective is the LAP in supporting children to attain better outcomes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health (mental and physical)</li> <li>• educational outcomes</li> <li>• access to employment</li> <li>• life skills</li> <li>• relationships with their networks (family and professional)</li> </ul>	<p>A reduction in the number of first-time entrants to custody.</p> <p>A reduction in the over-representation of Black and Mixed ethnicity children in custody.</p> <p>Reduced reoffending rates for children in receipt of a Pathfinder offer.</p> <p>Reduced risk of harm to self and others and the protection of the public and victims.</p> <p>Improved health and life chances for children.</p>

Table 1: Evaluation Aims and Questions		
Evaluation Focus	Evaluation Questions	Corresponding LAP Aim
D) Sub regional framework	<p>1. What are the lessons learnt for YJS as the lead professional in the referral, intervention and transition process?</p> <p>2. What are the lessons learnt regarding the LAP Referral process including timeliness, eligibility and ability to identify children who would most benefit from a LAP placement?</p> <p>3. What are the Sub regional comparisons between North Central London and East (characteristics of children, offences, local demographics, staffing and recruitment) and how has this affected the utilisation of the LAP from the collaborating local authorities (LAs)?</p> <p>4. How effective is the Stakeholder engagement, including steering groups, LARP governance and community organisations.</p>	Communication to ensure that lessons are learnt and appropriately disseminated at policy, regional and practice level.

## 2.2 Quantitative Data

The sources of quantitative data include:

- Referral Forms
- Referral Tracker (completed by the LAP team, which included referral data and post LAP resettlement data)
- LAP Residents Journey Tracker which included details on:
  - A child's levels of engagement in support sessions whilst in the LAP
  - Desistance related progress achieved (completing college or job applications, work experience or similar)
  - Missing persons episodes
  - Curfew breaches
  - Arrest details
  - Court Events
- Children's Global Assessment Scale Scores Monthly Returns (completed by YJS staff)
  - Monthly risk ratings
  - Monthly activity engagement levels

The post-LAP data was collected by the LAP management team from professionals who were still in contact with past LAP residents. Using data from multiple sources identified

anomalies and gaps in some of the data sources. Triangulation helped ensure the final dataset was as complete and as accurate as possible.

Most of the analysis involved comparing nominal variables through crosstabulation; analysis involving interval variables used ANOVA or Bivariate Correlation, using SPSS 29. Due to the low number of cases, the results were not statistically significant at the  $P>0.05$  level.

### 2.2.1 Qualitative Data

The quantitative data analysis was complemented by qualitative data gathered during interviews with staff from participating local authority youth justice teams, SCF staff working at the LAP, and LAP residents past and present, alongside document analysis of internal reports and meeting notes, and observations from 5 visits to Jonah House.

Interviews with youth justice staff were conducted via Microsoft Teams and focused on the overall concept of the LAP, the referral process, and the support for children during their placement. Interviews with SCF staff at Jonah House focused on the support offered to residents and were conducted via Teams or face-to-face at the property.

The research team employed 2 past LAP residents as peer researchers who produced personalised accounts of their life experiences leading up to the LAP, their time in the LAP, and the support received once they left the LAP. 1 other former LAP resident was interviewed whilst in custody. Other past LAP residents were invited through social workers, youth justice caseworkers, and PAs to participate in the evaluation; however, none have been forthcoming. Interview transcriptions were thematically coded using NVivo 14. Table 2 below details the number of interview participants for each group.

<b>Table 2: Quantitative Interviewee Group</b>	<b>Data Sources Interview Type</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>YJS Managers</b>	Online Interviews	2
<b>LAP Commissioners and Management</b>	Online Interviews and Face to Face conversations	4
<b>YJS Caseworkers</b>	Online Interviews	8
<b>SCF Management</b>	Online Interviews	7
<b>SCF staff</b>	Group Face to Face Interviews	7
<b>LAP Residents</b>	Face to Face Interviews	4
<b>LAP Alumni</b>	Ongoing discussions	3

### 2.3 Cost Benefit Analysis Modelling

The cost benefit analysis was based on comparable criminal justice costs for children before, during and after their LAP placement. The costs were taken from the Greater Manchester (GM) Unit Cost Database and adjusted for inflation, using the Bank of England's inflation calculator. The model used the following costs:

- Custody (either Young Offender Institution or LAP cost)
- Arrests (from the GM unit cost database)
- Convictions (from the GM unit cost database)
- Court Events (from the GM unit cost database)

Costs associated with missing persons episodes were originally included in the model but later excluded due to there being no uniform way that this is recorded across local authorities.

Other factors, including pre- and post-social care involvement, educational attainment and post-LAP housing costs, were excluded from the model as the data was less reliable for these factors.

For LAP residents pre- and post-LAP criminal justice journeys to be used in the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) modelling, the following criteria had to be fulfilled:

1. The child needed to have left the LAP for at least a year at 15/11/2025
2. There needed to be 1-year pre-LAP youth justice data available
3. There needed to be 1-year post-LAP youth and criminal justice data available

Given the complexities of ensuring the accuracy of this data, 4 local authorities were chosen to provide data for the CBA modelling. In total, of the 12 LAP residents who fit the 1<sup>st</sup> criteria, 8 youth/criminal justice journeys were collated, and 7 were used, with 1 case rejected due to incomplete post-LAP data.

A comparison group of children, remanded to local authority accommodation and placed in supported accommodation, was provided by the same 4 local authorities to help assess the impact of the LAP compared to other forms of non-custodial accommodation. In total, pre- and post-Remand to Local Authority Accommodation youth justice journeys were collected for 8 cases. However, only 5 could be used for the CBA modelling due to a lack of accurate data for the period after the child finished their Remand to Local Authority Accommodation (RLAA) placement for 3 cases.

## 2.4 Limitations

Although every effort has been made to ensure the data within this evaluation is robust and accurate, there have been some difficulties experienced when trying to access data.

First, there were no permissions in place for the evaluation team to directly contact past LAP residents and attempts to negotiate access via professionals still in contact with alumni had limited success.

Secondly, accessing accurate data during this evaluation was problematic, with inaccurate or incomplete data often sent to the evaluation team, resulting in questions over data efficacy. For example, monthly returns were often incomplete, or a previous

month's data simply duplicated each month. Therefore, the evaluation team did not consider these accurate reflections of children's placement. The LAP Residents' Journey Tracker contained missing data, vague approximations, or indicated that the information asked for could not be found.

Thirdly, there were no permissions or processes in place to collect data on positive outcomes or offending for children once they turn 18. Any such data used in this report has been collected from services still in touch with past residents and, as such, may not be up to date. This has been rectified for those entering the LAP from early 2025 onwards. However, it has limited the types of analysis used in this evaluation on measures such as reoffending rates and data on employment and education engagement.

Finally, the nature of the evaluation means that there is a small sample size, and so the results of the data analysis in this report are not statistically significant nor are they generalisable.

## 3. Current Academic and Policy Focus Relating to Desistance and Safeguarding Children in YJS Settings

### 3.1 Understanding Desistance

Effective youth justice practice is based on the Child First framework, which understands meeting the child's welfare needs as essential for reducing offending behaviour and supporting the development of a pro-social identity.<sup>4</sup> This means collaborating with children so that children feel listened to; that they are understood, and that support is shaped by their views. It also means prioritising the best interests of children, recognising their individual needs and rights, as well as building support around developing their capabilities and potential. Recognising that children are different from adults involves the removal of the adultification of children and an understanding that offending behaviour is a normal part of adolescence, which typically subsides with maturity. Support should not simply manage the risks of offending, but consider the lived experiences of children, focus on their strengths, and help them build pro-social identities by achieving positive outcomes.

This approach considers desistance as a journey that includes periods of criminal activity and arrest before cessation.<sup>5</sup> A successful transition to a crime-free life is multifaceted, with factors such as maturation, changing social environments, and motivation important to this process. Developing a pro-social identity, aided by hooks of change such as engaging in education, employment, sobriety, strong positive relationships and safety nets, is often seen as the defining factor in this process.<sup>6</sup> Feeling safe and cared for is key for children establishing a pro-social identity<sup>7</sup> and thus an essential component of their desistance journey.

### 3.2 Desistance, change, and the promotion of a pro-social identity

The model of change underpinning this evaluation is informed by desistance-focused research, which has had a growing international influence in rehabilitative practice over

---

<sup>4</sup> Haines, K., & Case, S. (2015). *Positive youth justice: Children first, offenders second* (1st ed.). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t899qx>

<sup>5</sup> Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10430-000>

<sup>6</sup> Abrams, L.S. and Terry, D., 2017. *Everyday desistance: The transition to adulthood among formerly incarcerated youth*. Rutgers University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Heidi Aarum Hansen, Luuk Westerhof & Tina Gerds-Andresen (2024) From frozen words to dialogue: turning around involuntary relationships in social work practice, Nordic Social Work Research, DOI: [10.1080/2156857X.2024.2395938](https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2024.2395938)

the past two decades.<sup>8</sup> While this body of knowledge contains a diversity of arguments, there are unifying themes, and it can be regarded as providing a coherent set of principles about how to approach rehabilitative work and optimise impact. Fundamentally, a desistance-focused approach examines how change takes place, and how a move away from offending, or other harmful behaviours, can be supported by agencies and practitioners.<sup>9</sup> This section places a desistance-focused approach in context and outlines some of the key principles that research suggests are important in supporting positive change. This is used as a basis for assessing the work undertaken in the LAP, acknowledging where there is good practice and where there might be scope for development.

Understanding how people ‘desist’ from crime, and how best to support them in this endeavour, seems like an intuitively rational response to rehabilitation. However, a desistance-focused strategy contrasts with the approaches to rehabilitative work which dominated practice in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. These were informed by what is often referred to as the ‘what works’ or ‘effective practice’ initiatives. These suggest that rehabilitation interventions are effective if they target specific factors identified by research as having a causal relationship with offending. Additionally, ‘what works’-informed approaches suggested interventions were likely to be successful if they draw on cognitive behavioural psychology and are delivered consistently in accordance with their design.<sup>10</sup> Thus, without digressions based on the judgments of staff, or what the service users themselves identified as their most pressing needs. ‘What works’ interventions, therefore, tended to involve standardised programmes which focused on perceived psychological deficits and provided training in thinking skills. The perspectives of recipients of these programmes were not given substantial attention, nor were their social identities or understandings of themselves. Similarly, the relational dynamics between staff and service users were largely dismissed.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to the ‘what works’ approach described above, the desistance model of change challenges the value given to the perceived ‘causes’ of crime, within attempts to prevent re-offending. The factors which trigger involvement in criminal behaviour are, it is argued, likely to be quite distinct from those that sustain it, or from those that prompt people to desist. A desistance-focused approach encourages an understanding of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Todd-Kvam, J and Todd Kvam, M (2022). Talking good: analysing narratives of desistance in Norway, *British Journal of Criminology* 62(4): 914-930

<sup>9</sup> Halsey, M., Armstrong, R. and Wright, S. (2017) ‘F\*ck it!’ Matza and the mood of fatalism in the desistance process. *The British Journal of Criminology* 57(5): 1041-1060

<sup>10</sup> Chapman, T. and Hough, M. (1998) *Evidence Based Practice: A Guide to Effective Practice*. London, Home Office.

<sup>11</sup> Porporino, F. (2010). Bringing sense and sensitivity to corrections. In Bayford, J., Cowe, F., and Deering, J. (eds) *What Else Works? Creative Work with Offenders*. Cullompton: Willan.

complex pathways people follow in moving away from lifestyles involving crime or other harmful behaviours.<sup>12</sup>

Importantly, desistance from criminality is understood as taking place over time (rather than being a single event), often with lapses along the way.<sup>13</sup> The individual's own aspirations, perspectives and motivations are also regarded as central. Moving away from criminal behaviour has been demonstrated as being associated with developing relevant skills, acquiring employment, and/ or other opportunities to engage in positive activities.<sup>14</sup> Notably, desistance is also associated with a shift in self-identity. Much of the research that has been undertaken with children who have offended indicates that their desistance is supported by the development of a personal narrative or identity, in which the person recognises their skills and qualities, perceives a capacity for self-determination, and views past offending as temporary, and not reflective of who they are.<sup>15</sup> Research about desistance has also stressed that change is dependent on positive and meaningful relationships with the staff who are involved in rehabilitative work.<sup>16</sup> In practice, these considerations mean that rehabilitative work should be individualised and undertaken collaboratively, where the person subject to interventions is involved in setting goals and decisions, and where practitioners build motivation and facilitate opportunities to develop a positive social identity. Change is likely to take time, often involving incremental steps and obstacles. Change is also likely to involve resistance and lapses. Staff awareness of the challenges and complexity of achieving change is essential.

The LAP project provides significant opportunities to deliver interventions which support desistance. Given that the children live in a property provided by the LAP, the staff involved have the scope to spend considerable amounts of time with them. This creates opportunities to build relationships whereby the staff can develop an understanding of the difficulties that the children have managed and the skills that can be developed. Simply spending time with the children during day-to-day activities is

---

<sup>12</sup> Halsey, M., Armstrong, R. and Wright, S. (2017) 'F\*ck it!' Matza and the mood of fatalism in the desistance process. *The British Journal of Criminology* 57(5): 1041-1060; Maruna, S. (2004). Desistance from crime and explanatory style: A new direction in the psychology of reform. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 20 (2): 184-200.

<sup>13</sup> Halsey, M., Armstrong, R. and Wright, S. (2017) 'F\*ck it!' Matza and the mood of fatalism in the desistance process. *The British Journal of Criminology* 57(5): 1041-1060

<sup>14</sup> McNeill, F. (2006). A desistance paradigm for offender management. *Criminology & Criminal Justice* [online], 6 (1), pp.39-62.

<sup>15</sup> McAdams, D. and McLean, K. (2013) Narrative identity. *Current directions in psychological science*. 22(3):233-238

<sup>16</sup> Hughes, W. (2012) Promoting offender engagement and compliance in sentence planning: practitioner and service user perspectives in Hertfordshire. *Probation Journal* 59(1): 49-65; Weaver, B. (2015) *Offending and Desistance. The Importance of Social Relations*. London Routledge

likely to be of considerable value, allowing for an exploration of goals and fostering a sense of hope about the future. The LAP specifically provides opportunities to access positive activities and pro-social relationships through direct work with staff, restorative work with family members, and contact with other agencies that provide relevant support services. There is also scope to engage the children in activities that support engagement with education, employment and training.

The development of a pro-social identity has been identified explicitly as a central LAP objective, which ties together all aspects of provision. The LAP manual indicates that this development in identity is envisaged as a two-stage process. The first is understood to involve 'individualised' support, where the route from an offending identity to a pro-social identity is explored and developed. The second stage is expected to involve structured support to facilitate the achievement of the pro-social identity, with attention given to accommodation, health, use of free time, and education and/ or employment.<sup>17</sup>

The LAP service provider specification provides further outcome measures which integrate the development of a positive identity, indicating:

1. The child enjoys good physical, emotional, mental and sexual health; has a healthy lifestyle and has access to information about health issues that allows them to make informed choices.
2. The child is physically safe, stable and emotionally secure. They are protected from ill treatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, they are free from bullying and discrimination and are protected from social exclusion through involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour and other risk-taking activities.
3. The child attends and is fully engaged in education, training or employment and receives encouragement and recognition for their achievements.
4. The child participates in restorative practices and receives encouragement and recognition for their achievements.
5. The Child is actively involved in decisions about their future and develops their confidence.
6. The child will increase their sense of identity. They understand the effects of racism and discrimination and can enhance their coping mechanisms.
7. The child positively engages with their family and services. Where possible, the child should be supported to move back to their family or otherwise into supported accommodation, or permanent independent living, making a smooth and successful transition.

---

<sup>17</sup> London Accommodation & Resettlement Pathfinder (2022) London Accommodation Pathfinder Operations Manual

### 3.3 Safety and Care, and Desistance

The importance of safety and care when supporting children up to the age of 18 years is articulated clearly within key child protection legislation and statutory guidance, which outlines clear duties and responsibilities for service providers. The principal statutory guidance for working with and safeguarding children in England, ‘*Working Together to Safeguard Children*,’<sup>18</sup> notes that “A child-centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child”.<sup>19</sup> In outlining their own safeguarding principles, the YJB are also clear that youth justice practice and decision making must be in the **best interests of the child**, and emphasises that safeguarding is **everyone’s responsibility** (emphasis in original).<sup>20</sup> The Department of Education (2023), in their ‘*Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards*’, state that “It is imperative that all supported accommodation settings are safe places where children are protected from harm and where their individual needs are met”.<sup>21</sup> They also outline the principles that underpin the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023, clearly stating that all “providers should ensure supported accommodation is delivered in a way that reflects the principles below”.<sup>22</sup>

#### Supported accommodation – key principles

1. I feel safe and secure where I live and in my wider environment.
2. My voice is respected, heard and advocated for, so I can influence the support I receive.
3. I have confidence that the adults who support me understand me, are skilled and work effectively together to best meet my needs.
4. I have my own space that I feel proud of and live in a comfortable, well maintained, and stable accommodation.
5. I receive high-quality, tailored support that sustains my health and wellbeing.

---

<sup>18</sup> HM Government (2023) *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> HM Government (2023) *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf) (page 23)

<sup>20</sup> Youth Justice Board (2023) *Supporting Safeguarding: Contributing to the safety and welfare of children*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguard-in-the-youth-justice-system>

<sup>21</sup> Department of Education (2023) *Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide\\_to\\_the\\_supported\\_accommodation\\_regulations\\_including\\_quality\\_standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide_to_the_supported_accommodation_regulations_including_quality_standards.pdf) (page 8)

<sup>22</sup> Department of Education (2023) *Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide\\_to\\_the\\_supported\\_accommodation\\_regulations\\_including\\_quality\\_standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide_to_the_supported_accommodation_regulations_including_quality_standards.pdf) (pp 6-7)

6. I have strong, trusting, and meaningful relationships within my support system and can rely on the adults around me.
7. I feel supported to learn and apply skills for independent adult living.
8. I feel positive about my future and opportunities as a result of the support I receive.

Source: [HM Government \(2023:7\) Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards.](#)

Importantly, these principles were developed with children who have experienced care. The voices of those children are crucial to developing more effective safeguarding practice and support services that can meet their needs. Recent research<sup>23</sup> collected the views of children leaving supported accommodation and took the young people's voices to Westminster, where the power of listening to young people was noted by MPs in terms of understanding what their needs are to transition to the next stages of their lives and for lasting change in policy and practice. The LAP is well placed to empower children to express their views and feelings in matters affecting them (UNCRC Article 12), and the voices of children should be central to the development of LAP service specifications as well as safeguarding policies and practice.

### 3.4 Safeguarding children

Given the 16-17 year old age range for children placed in the LAP, and the complexity of the risks and harms they may experience, it is important to think beyond the key legislation and statutory guidance for children at this stage of their development. Many of those placed may find that the safeguarding and support services available to them as children (16-17 years) will cease when they turn 18, as adult policy/practice takes effect. Cocker et al. (2022) argue that "Safeguarding is notable in retaining a binary notion of child/adulthood, despite the evidence that risk and harms respect no such boundary."<sup>24</sup> Hence, neither child nor adult safeguarding systems are designed with the developmental needs of children in mind. In the interests of ensuring that children do not face a 'cliff edge' in relation to the withdrawal of safeguarding support and services, these issues should be considered by YJS providers within the design and implementation of safeguarding policy and practice. Ideally, there would be more careful consideration towards transitional safeguarding:

“...an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from

---

<sup>23</sup> Ward et al (2024) Step by Step take young people's voices to Westminster

<https://www.stepbystep.org.uk/news/step-by-step-take-young-peoples-voices-to-westminster/>

<sup>24</sup> Cocker, C., Cooper, A. and Holmes, D. (2022). Transitional Safeguarding: Transforming How Adolescents and Young Adults are Safeguarded. In *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol 52, pp. 1287-1306. (p1290)

both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives”.<sup>25</sup>

For YJS providers involved in designing and developing services for children who are at significant developmental stages of their lives (16-17 years), safeguarding considerations should also fully acknowledge the concept of ‘adultification bias’ and how this might impact them. Adultification bias can lead to situations whereby “notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children”, and it should be noted that “regardless of the context in which adultification takes place, the impact results in children’s rights being either diminished or not upheld”.<sup>26</sup> For children who are known to YJS, such as those placed in the LAP, there are likely to be complexities of risk, safety and well-being, which are not always captured when there is a focus on them as an adult perpetrator.<sup>27</sup> As argued by Davis (2022), “Adultification erodes children’s rights and leaves them at a greater risk of harm due to a dereliction of safeguarding duty from individuals and organisations”.<sup>28</sup> Highlighting a range of contexts within which adultification bias is experienced (including domestic abuse, socio-economic disadvantage, transphobia and homelessness), Davis (2022) also notes that Black children are most likely to experience adultification bias and “this group of children are therefore at a heightened risk of their safeguarding needs being unmet”.<sup>29</sup> This further highlights the importance of considering the individual needs and experiences of children placed at the LAP. Essentially, a focus on the risks the children may experience, in terms of victimisation and wider involvement in criminal activity can lead to more effective planning and action around safeguarding at the LAP.

---

<sup>25</sup>Holmes and Smale (2018) in Cocker, C., Cooper, A. and Holmes, D. (2022) Transitional Safeguarding: Transforming How Adolescents and Young Adults are Safeguarded. In *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol 52, pp. 1287-1306. (p1288)

<sup>26</sup> Davis and Marsh, 2020, in Davis, J. (2022). Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7ea2794cde7a79e7c00582/t/65518cd5a7588544ea06f0ab/1699843285898/Adultification+bias.pdf> (p5)

<sup>27</sup> Cocker, C., Cooper, A. and Holmes, D. (2022). Transitional Safeguarding: Transforming How Adolescents and Young Adults are Safeguarded. In *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol 52, pp. 1287-1306.

<sup>28</sup> Davis, J. (2022). Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7ea2794cde7a79e7c00582/t/65518cd5a7588544ea06f0ab/1699843285898/Adultification+bias.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Davis, J. (2022). Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7ea2794cde7a79e7c00582/t/65518cd5a7588544ea06f0ab/1699843285898/Adultification+bias.pdf> (p5)uth c

## 4. Understanding Children in the LAP

When considering the life histories of the children placed in the LAP, most would fall into categories associated with over representation within the youth justice system.

### 4.1 Lap Residents' Ethnicity

A total of 22 children were supported across the two sites since the LAP became operational in August 2023. By November 2025, when the data for this report were analysed, 19 children had left the LAP. 86% of residents are from a non-White ethnic background. Black children were the largest group (50%), followed by mixed heritage children (32%). In addition, 37% of children residing in Osiris or Jonah House grew up in homes where English was not the parents' first language.

### 4.2 Difficult Life Histories

The children often had difficult life histories that included multiple adverse childhood experiences. Table 3 shows that 68% of the children were open to children's social care before coming to the LAP. This included 36% who have experienced care, 23% who were considered Children in Need (CIN) and 9% who had a child protection plan (CP) at some point in the past. This is broadly similar to Young Offender Institution (YOI) cohorts and is an indication that residents have experienced significant upheaval and trauma in their home lives whilst growing up.

	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
No	7	32	32
CIN	5	23	23
children who have experienced care	8	36	36
CP	2	9	9
Total	22	100	100

In terms of education, 27% had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place before entering the LAP, and a further 18% were believed to have learning difficulties but had no EHCP. 64% entered the LAP not in education, employment or training (NEET), whilst 27% attended school or college, and 9% were either tutored at home or attending a specialist project.

LAP children were at considerable risk of violence and exploitation at the time of referral, with only 18% not considered to be in or associated with a gang or group that has rivals. 73% were at risk of child criminal exploitation, and 64% had gone missing from their home at least once at the time of referral. Table 4 shows the NRM status of children at the time of LAP referral and shows that 41% had NRM conclusive grounds for

exploitation, and a further 23% suspected of being exploited, but there was not enough evidence for an NRM referral. In addition, 27% have been identified as showing signs of a mental health concern, and 27% of LAP residents had a neurodiversity diagnosis. Considering the intersection between mental health and exploitation<sup>30</sup>, 83% of those with a mental health issue were also identified as being exploited in the past.

	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
No Concerns	5	23	23
NRM submitted	2	9	9
NRM Reasonable Grounds	1	5	5
NRM Conclusive Grounds	9	41	41
Suspected, but no evidence	5	23	23
Total	22	100	100

### 4.3 Previous YJS Engagement

68% (15) of children placed had prior convictions for weapons offences, including 13 convictions for possession of an offensive weapon, of which one also had an aggravated burglary conviction, 1 Section 18 wounding, and 1 conviction for possession of ammunition without a certificate. 81% of the children with previous offences had multiple convictions, and 59% were still open to YJS when the arrest that triggered the referral was made.

All children residing in the LAP were referred due to weapons offences,<sup>31</sup> including 8 children (36%) charged with Section 18 wounding with intent. 20 children (91%) were charged with more than 1 offence at the time of referral, including multiple possession of an offensive weapon charges, aggravated burglary, and possession with intent to supply class A.

Of the 3 children who had no previous convictions, 2 were referred after arrests for Section 18 wounding with intent, and 1 for possession of an offensive weapon. 1 child had a previous conviction for Section 18 wounding with intent and was referred for the same offence.

<sup>30</sup> Sastre-Gomez, V., McKibbin, G., Bloxson, G., Humphreys, C., Dixon, S., 2026. The intersection of sexual and criminal exploitation for children going missing in residential care: patterns; problems; and opportunities. *Children and Youth Services Review* 184, 108894. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2026.108894>

<sup>31</sup> 84% were charged with multiple offences, of which at least one was a weapons offence.

## 4.4 A Child's Journey to the LAP

The following is a description of the background circumstances of a LAP resident, referred to as 'child A'. Rather than referring to a specific individual, Child A is an amalgam of characteristics that occur frequently among LAP residents. Child A is based on an analysis of the demographic and biographical profiles the researchers have identified, through interviews with current and past LAP residents, a review of the referral documents, and interviews with staff. The picture established is also informed by broader evidence about children who have contact with youth justice agencies.

It is important to stress that there is no single characteristic that is present in all cases, and each individual who has resided in the LAP has their own unique biography, set of circumstances, identity, and relationships. There is a risk that the production of a generalised case study obscures these complexities and reinforces negative or sweeping stereotypes. This is particularly important given that many of the residents will have been subject to negative judgements and assumptions, based on their ethnicity, age, and backgrounds. Despite these reservations, it is important to illustrate the challenges that LAP residents are likely to have faced prior to the arrival. This will help understand what their needs are likely to be and how they might respond to the staff who are working with them.

### 4.4.1 Family background

As with many children at the LAP, Child A had social services involvement in his family from a young age. Records from children's services indicate that he was regularly exposed to domestic violence. He was additionally identified as being at risk of neglect, and at risk of emotional harm. There were also substantial financial pressures. Despite these difficulties, Child A speaks positively about his early childhood and said he remembers being happy living together with his parents and 2 siblings. However, he acknowledges that he did not have an alternative family experience to compare with his own.

Concerns about child A's family circumstances appeared to intensify during his early adolescence. At the age of 12 he was moved into temporary foster care. This followed the death of his maternal grandmother, who appeared to be a source of stability for child A and his family. Experiences of bereavement feature with frequency among LAP residents. Partly because of the family circumstances, Child A did not receive substantial support in managing this loss. Child A is continuing to experience a profound sense of grief and disorientation related to the loss of his grandmother. He refers to problems at school and with relationships with peers as being impacted by this. The emotional difficulties experienced by child A are very reflective of LAP residents as a whole, who have a high frequency of childhood trauma and bereavement.

Child A's experiences of foster care were mixed. There was not the consistency he would have liked, although he did refer to developing a very positive relationship with 1 foster parent whom he described as seeming to 'really care'. At the time of placement, Child A had returned to live in the family home. The environment had stabilised by that time, although Child A emphasised that there were still some tensions and arguments. Reflecting the majority of children referred to the LAP, child A's case remained open to children's services at the point of referral, due to concerns about his emotional safety.

Child A has maintained positive relationships with his 2 siblings throughout his childhood. The move to the LAP has created challenges in sustaining regular direct contact with family members, because of the travel distances involved, and conditions which prevent him returning to his home area.

#### 4.4.2 Education

Child A reported frustrations about his experiences of school. He referred to being in trouble often, although he did say he enjoyed some subjects and had good relationships with some of the teachers. He reported finding it hard to concentrate because of having 'too much going on'. Child A was excluded from mainstream education at the age of 14 due to disruptive behaviour. He expressed disappointment about this. He feels that he should have received more support and understanding given his circumstances.

Although child A found school challenging, he recognised that exclusion was likely to have a detrimental impact on his opportunities and his ability to access a sufficiently good quality education and qualifications. There was a gap of several months between exclusion from school and enrolment in special provision. He said that the school he was eventually enrolled in was positive and he completed qualifications in functional skills, but was unable to complete GCSEs. He visited a local post-16 college after finishing school, to discuss enrolling on a course in mechanics. However, he was subsequently placed in the LAP and the travel distance made attendance difficult. Child A's experiences are reflective of other LAP residents; 64% were not in mainstream education at the time of referral and many have negative experiences of school.

Child A has not been assessed for any specific learning needs. However, it is worth noting the prevalence of neurodivergence, dyslexia and other individual needs among children who are in contact with the youth justice system. Often this will not have been diagnosed.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.4.3 Peer relations

Child A referred to school exclusion as nudging him towards spending more time with peers, outside of the family home. He refers to friends as being an antidote to boredom.

---

<sup>32</sup> Day, A. M., Allely, C., Robinson, L., Turner, K., KC, F. G., & Forrester, A. (2024). The over-representation of neurodivergent children in Youth Justice Systems and The Youth Court. *Medicine, Science and the Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00258024241274073>

Child A does not wish to speak in detail about all of the activities he was engaged in. However, he said he knew people who were involved in the supply of illegal substances and referred to associating with people who were much older than he is. While not explicit, his circumstances should be understood in the context of broader patterns of concerns about vulnerable children's risk of exploitation. The majority of children in the LAP met National Referral Mechanism criteria for risk of exploitation.

Child A has said that he feels happy enough at the LAP but also feels a bit isolated and bored. Child A has made a connection with 1 other resident in the house, who he spends a lot of time with. This is both inside and outside the house. There is some concern among staff about the possibility of exploitation and exposure to wider risks. When asked about his time prior to the LAP, Child A felt that he was often at risk of violence from other children. He felt that safety was not being provided by sources other than his friends, although also acknowledged the negative influence of some of the people he has associated with.

#### 4.4.4 Youth justice contact

The offence leading to referral was initially a charge of Section 18 assault occasioning grievous bodily harm. This was reduced by a plea to section 20. Child A was released on licence to the LAP at the end of a custodial sentence. Child A found his experience in the Young Offender Institution (YOI) very difficult but does not want to engage in discussion. Child A has a previous conviction for possession of a bladed article and for possession of illegal drugs. His current and previous convictions are reflective of a broader picture among LAP residents, of whom 84% are known to YJS, and 68% have a conviction for a weapons offence. This reflects a broader picture of where children's possession of weapons reflects a lack of safety within their local communities. Child A refers to the police as not being very supportive when he has engaged with them about his own victimisation. He referred to being a victim of burglary and robbery, neither of which prompted a supportive response.

#### 4.4.5 Experiences of racism

Child A does not explicitly refer to experiencing hostility on the basis of his ethnicity, although he did allude to being stopped and searched regularly. However, his circumstances should be understood as reflecting broader social and demographic patterns, which result in disadvantages for ethnic minority children.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Day, A. M., Allely, C., Robinson, L., Turner, K., KC, F. G., & Forrester, A. (2024). The over-representation of neurodivergent children in Youth Justice Systems and The Youth Court. *Medicine, Science and the Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00258024241274073>

#### 4.4.6 Key themes

As noted, Child A is based on a composite of the typical experiences of the children referred to the LAP. Childhood trauma, exclusion from educational provision, and vulnerability to exploitation are common themes. Many factors reduce the scope for appropriate adult support and require children to act independently in many aspects of their lives, while not having developed associated life skills or strategies for managing trauma. Associated with this is the tendency for Black male teenagers in particular to have adult expectations applied to them, and to be identified as a source of risk rather than a child in need of protection. Children at the LAP are likely to have a sense of mistrust of figures in authority and feel anxious about discussing their difficulties. They are also likely to have discomfort in communicating verbally about their feelings and anxieties. While not explicit in his presentation, Child A has significant difficulties with his self-esteem and his capacity to achieve positively. As with other children, feelings of low self-esteem are not communicated explicitly and are bound up with expectations about gender.

## 5. LAP Set Up and Oversight

### 5.1 Structure and Set Up and Regional Partnerships

Initially, the LAP was set up and delivered through two regional partnerships: The East Partnership made up of Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Newham, Havering, Tower Hamlets and Barking and Dagenham YJS; and the North Central London (NCL) partnership, consisting of Islington, Camden, Barnet, Enfield, Hackney and Haringey YJS. Each partnership had a primary property: Osiris House in Newham, for the East Partnership and Jonah House in Barnet, for the North Central London Partnership. Several YJS staff questioned the structure of these partnerships, with some local authorities finding themselves in a different partnership than expected. Although this was not necessarily an operational concern, the professionals who were affected suggested that basing the partnership structure around the court that normally serves the area would mean that LAP partnerships mirror existing informal working relationships.

By the time this evaluation started, some local authorities had left the East Partnership. Although costs were raised as a concern, the location and then closure of Osiris House were also contributing factors. Many East based YJS staff questioned the suitability of the East LAP property, stating that children's fear of Newham made it difficult to place referrals. 1 YJS worker stated that a child on their caseload stated:

“I would rather go to Feltham than Newham.”

#### 5.1.1 Structure of the Partnerships

Each regional partnership managed its own referral panel, which was made up of representatives of YJS staff, local wrap around services, and SCF. After the closure of Osiris House, the referral panels merged.

Referral panels are responsible for endorsing a placement after contextual safeguarding checks are completed, which include assessing data provided by the police, social services, YJS and SCF. A child's placement can only be endorsed if there are no concerns for the safety of any victims and no issues related to connections with children already placed.

Initially, it was expected that referrals from each area would be placed in the house local to the partnership, meaning that children would be placed close to their professional and personal support network. However, some, particularly host LAs (the local authority in which the LAP property was based), often found that their referrals could not be placed in their partnership's property once safety checks were completed; therefore, a degree of flexibility was built in to allow partnerships to use both houses.

## 5.2 Referral Process

In total, up until the end of October 2025, 47 boys have been referred to the LAP, with 46% (22 children) of those children being placed. It took an average of 17 days from a referral being made to a child being placed (41 days, counting outliers, including a referral that was made before the LAP opened). The referral process was described as thorough and effective, although some referral panel members felt that a reordering of the checks, so that the contextual risk check is carried out before panel meetings, would save time.

The majority, 69% of referrals and 73% of those placed, have come from the North Central London (NCL) partnership, which may reflect the closure of Osiris House and the withdrawal of some of the East network members from the Pathfinder. Since September 2025, 2 placements have been spot purchased by local authorities outside the LAP partnership.

Considering placed children only; 50% (8 out of 16) from the North Central London partnership identified as Black, compared to 25% (1 out of 4) from the East. Those identifying as having mixed ethnic backgrounds made up 13% (2) of North Central London placed referrals, and 50% (2) of placed East referrals. All placements through the spot fixing process have been for children identifying as Black. Although these numbers are small and generalisations cannot be made, the differences in ethnicities placed may indicate the need for specific culturally sensitive services to support the different demographics across referring local authorities. However, a more detailed analysis of the ethnic demographics of the children supported by the LAP than the groupings used by the Office of National Statistics and, by extension, the Youth Justice Board will be needed to ensure this is effective.

Of the 25 children who were not placed, 30% identified as Black; 16% (4 out of 25) were identified as having mixed ethnic background; 12% (3 out of 25) were from a North African background, and 16% (4 out of 25) of the referrals' ethnic backgrounds were not recorded.<sup>34</sup>

The main reasons for referrals not being placed in the LAP were:

- 30% (8 children) were withdrawn by the referring local authority for a variety of reasons, including the child turning 18 before the placement started, the location of the LAP house being deemed unsafe for the child, the child changing their plea or receiving additional charges.
- 19% (5) were rejected due to the risks related to managing the interaction between the referee and children already in the LAP, or their associates.

---

<sup>34</sup> There were 5 other ethnic backgrounds recorded, each with 1 young person referred. There were also inconsistencies in the reporting of ethnicity, with some referrers stating nationality or familial nationality and some reporting ethnicity.

- 19% (5) of referrals were sentenced to custody at court.
- 19% (5) of referrals were rejected due to concerns that the LAP could not meet their needs under the supported accommodation regulations.

Some YJS staff thought that the offence exclusion criteria were too prescriptive and there should be flexibility allowing some children who were charged with serious offences, but were not identified as the primary suspect, to be referred.

Overall, the referral checks and processes were considered robust and acted to safeguard the referred child, those already placed in the LAP, and victims. To date, there have only been 2 instances of potential concerns over a LAP resident's associations with other children once the placement has started. In both cases, the concerns related to associations made while on remand. These risks were managed by SCF staff and the appropriate YJS staff and have not led to any safeguarding incidents.

### 5.3 Commissioning Support and Delivery Oversight

The wrap around services commissioned centrally by the LAP management team are the trusted providers with a history of working with local YJS teams. The services were developed as the homes were opening, and agreements have not always reflected operational realities. Some providers have been more flexible and quicker to adjust delivery to meet the children's needs than others. Wrap around service providers often reported turning up to the LAP and the children not wanting to engage or still asleep. Although a degree of this is to be expected, commissioning the housing provider and wrap around services separately did seem to contribute to a lack of accountability regarding the residents' engagement.

The LAP management team are responsible for quality assurance checks and have raised concerns as to whether being the commissioner and referrer into the service poses a conflict of interest. No YJS staff have raised concerns about this arrangement, and the process has worked well, with the team at Camden adapting to meet needs that have arisen as the LAP delivery has developed. However, questions over whether this function should sit within a local authority or more centrally persist, with some suggesting that the management function would be better placed sitting within a London wide body, such as London Councils or the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

### 5.4 Learning Environment

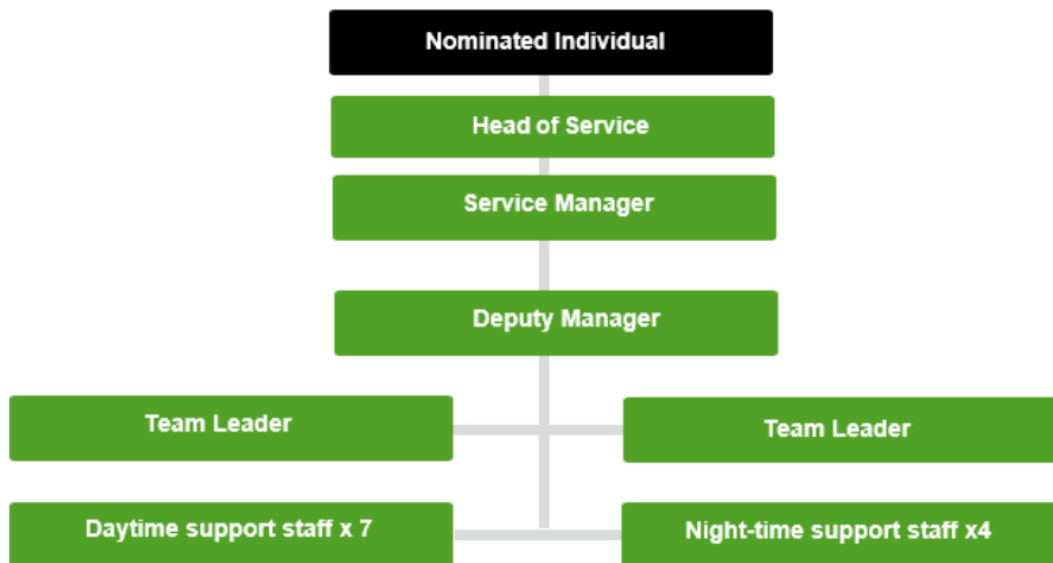
Since the LAP became operational, there have been significant lessons learnt, including the implications from the Ofsted registration, management and staff recruitment, and safeguarding children in the homes. This learning has led to revisions to the operations manual, including the development of an updated safeguarding process, all of which has informed the specification for the next round of commissioning.

### 5.4.1 Ofsted Registration

The need for housing providers to register with Ofsted as the LAP houses were opening, has impacted both how the LAP has operated and who was able to be placed. Before registration, some of the support provided by staff was classified by Ofsted as suitable within a children's home setting but not supported accommodation. Some SCF staff felt that the LAP properties should be registered as children's homes, giving them greater control over what the children could and could not do. However, there were concerns that this would be too restrictive and supportive accommodation registration was deemed more appropriate.

### 5.4.2 Staff Recruitment

Building positive relationships between residents and staff is a key component of the LAP delivery. However, there was an initial over-reliance on agency workers, which contributed to concerns about professionalism and maintaining appropriate boundaries with some staff and children. LAP alumni discussed how agency staff seemed less invested, and some staff were "just there." 1 child commented on the abrupt way some staff left, recalling how he only found out that a member of staff he had bonded with would not be coming back with no notice or chance to say goodbye. A review of safeguarding issues within the LAP reveals that staffing was a key issue from the very start, with concerns over delayed completion of Wellbeing and Safety Plans (WASP) a high turnover of staff, and in two cases, potential inappropriate relationships. These problems were in part caused by the underestimation of the LAP's running costs, resulting in difficulty in attracting/recruiting staff with the right levels of skill and experience. To help address the staffing concerns, the roles were reprofiled, including salary increases and additional managerial roles, which have helped reduce the use of agency staff. The new staffing model (see organisational chart below) includes a requirement for all frontline staff to have professional experience or academic training in children's social care or criminal justice.

**Home Staffing structure:**

The evaluation team visited Jonah House on 5 occasions, including before and after the new staffing model was introduced. Staff have commented that they now feel far more supported and able to respond proactively to the residents' needs. Jonah House management staff have commented that the introduction of a deputy manager and two team leads has ensured a management presence in the house every day of the week. This has improved consistency in decision making and accountability, resulting in a more stable and predictable environment. Involving children in the staff recruitment process and the changes outlined above have led to more meaningful interactions, better relationship-building, a delivery more aligned with restorative approaches, and improved outcomes for the residents.

#### 5.4.3 Data Collection

There have been significant challenges in accessing accurate data for both the children's time in the LAP and once they have left. For this report, SCF gave the evaluation team access to their data management system to help ensure the accuracy of the data. For the recommissioned LAP provision, it is expected that there will be a central content management system where all LAP data from referral, during the child's placement and post LAP outcomes will be stored. This will enable all staff working with LAP residents to see the same information, for the records to be quality checked and for there to be a better understanding of the medium-term impacts of the LAP.

The nature of Pathfinders means a level of learning and development is expected once a project goes live. The above examples show how the Pathfinder delivery has adapted and are an indication of the reflexive nature of those involved in the management and

delivery of the LAP. This learning has informed the recommissioning process, and there are plans to develop a LAP framework, which can help guide supported housing providers to understand the needs of children who may be referred to them via YJS.

## 5.5 LAP Set Up and Oversight Recommendations

The LAP set up and structure have developed since it became operational, with changes in management of the house and the opening up of referrals to boroughs that were not originally in the two partnerships being among the most significant. Listed below are some areas of consideration when planning future LAP delivery.

### LAP Set Up and Oversight Recommendations

1. If regional partnerships are to continue, they should be structured around courts to take advantage of existing working relationships between YJS.
2. LAP placements and the location of any new properties should be based on the suitability of the geographic area, rather than simply the availability of properties.
3. Whilst children should be placed as close to home as possible, financial modelling should be on a pan-London footprint, rather than sub-regionally, to enable financial liability to be shared evenly.
4. It is imperative that the child's professional network work collaboratively the first day, going beyond the statutory requirements for contacts. The Provider, social care and youth justice service should work in partnership to ensure the child has a full timetable and is fully supported by the professional network.
5. External wrap around support should be managed locally, with collaborative action to maximise participation.
6. Explore the suitability of the LAP management function sitting within a London-wide organisation rather than a local authority.
7. The LAP should have a content management system for its operations from referral to resettlement that all professionals working with the child can access, and that quality assurance checks are carried out on a regular basis

## 6. Service Impact: Benefits to Children

The child focused stated aims of the LAP are:

- A reduction in the number of first-time entrants to custody
- A reduction in the over-representation of minority ethnic children in custody
- Reduced reoffending rates for children in receipt of a Pathfinder offer
- Reduced risk of harm to self and others and the protection of the public and victims
- Improved health and life chances for children

It is recognised that there should be progress on all these aims, and it is essential that the LAP ensures the safety of residents, the public and victims. However, all stakeholders are also aware that desistance and the development of a pro-social identity is a journey that often includes relapses in offending behaviour before someone stops completely. Therefore, incidents of reoffending whilst in or once someone has left the LAP, do not constitute a failure on a child's or the LAP's part, nor does it indicate that a child is not on a journey towards desistance. The Fig 1 indicates the thought process behind how the LAP reduces the level of risk for a child during their youth justice journey compared to those placed in custody. This decreased level of risk and the support on offer during a child's stay in the LAP, should aid the development of a pro-social identity and the reduction of incidents of reoffending.



## OFFICIAL

During the Theory of Change workshops (see ToC diagram in Appendix 1) the LAP was positioned as the starting point of a child's desistance journey, characterised by helping to change the way that the residents see themselves and their potential before supporting them to engage in some 'hooks for change'. For some, a successful LAP experience was identified as applying for college or work, whilst for others it would be having the belief that they could achieve educationally and were motivated to secure work or training. As such, progress was considered as something that should be measured by the distance travelled by each individual child, rather than the LAP cohort as a whole. However, it is also important for the LAP to have tangible outcomes in the short term around reductions in the use of custody and reoffending rates, which are discussed below.

### 6.1 Reduction in the use of custody

A LAP aim was to reduce the number of first-time entrants into custody; however, 64% (14) of residents were in custody before entering the LAP, 55% (12) were on custodial remand, and 9% (2) were serving a sentence. 1 Child had also previously served a custodial sentence. It therefore seemed appropriate to assess whether the LAP has reduced the average length of time a child spends in custody.

#### 6.1.1 Reducing First Time Entrants into Custody

Overall, 7 children were living at home or in the community before their LAP placement, with 6 of the 7 having since left the LAP. Of these 6 children, 2 have subsequently gone into custody, both for new matters, 1 of which involved possession with intent to supply of class A. Therefore, currently, the LAP has prevented 4 children (21% of alumni) from entering custody for the first time, the equivalent of 2 children per year.

Due to the seriousness of the offences that qualify someone for a LAP referral, reducing first-time entrants may need better coordination with courts so that children can be remanded within their local communities, including the utilisation of Section 38 beds, while referrals are made. If such an agreement were in place for the current cohort, an additional 5 children would not have entered custody.

#### 6.1.2 Reducing the Use of Custody

11 children were placed in the LAP instead of receiving custodial sentences. 8 of these resided in Jonah House, meaning 1 property housed the equivalent of nearly 2% of the children serving custodial sentences.

The average time a child spent on remand before starting their LAP placement was 57 days, 26% longer than the youth remand average of 45 days.<sup>35</sup> However, this includes 3

---

<sup>35</sup> YJB (2025) Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024#use-of-remand-for-children>

outliers, all of whom were Black children (75, 87 and 182 days), which, when removed, reduces the average time on remand before entering the LAP to 22 days, 51% shorter than the youth remand average. There are still some LAP alumni who are on bail awaiting trial, with their time in the LAP giving the courts confidence that they can remain in the community until trial. Therefore, the LAP not only contributed to a reduction in the time that children spent in custodial remand, but it also reduced the amount of time those facing unusually long remand stays spent in custody.

### 6.1.3 Reduction in the over-representation of minority ethnic children in custody

Disproportionality remains a significant concern within the youth justice system. The latest youth justice statistics show that of the 430 children in custody 24% are Black (103), 18% have Mixed ethnicity (77) and 9% (39) are classified as Asian or Other.<sup>36</sup>

There are also concerns over the increase in the use of remand as a proportion of the overall youth custody population, which currently stands at 43% (185). 27% (50) of the children on remand are Black, and 19% (35) are of Mixed heritage. The percentage of Black and Mixed heritage children in custody overall and on remand is therefore significantly disproportionate to that of the general population.<sup>37</sup>

The LAP reduced or shortened the custodial time of 11 Black and 7 of Mixed ethnicity children's time in custody, the equivalent of nearly 11% of Black children, and 9% of Mixed ethnicity children in the secure estate. 6 Black children's placements were sentences, equivalent of 11% of Black population serving custodial sentences. 5 Black Children were in the LAP instead of custodial remand which is the equivalent to 10% of the Black Children on remand within the secure estate.

### 6.1.4 The LAP's Impact on Breaches and Reoffending

By the time the reoffending data analysis was completed, 12 residents had left the LAP for over 12 months, the time needed for a LAP reoffending rate to be compared to the reoffending rates of other YJS institutions. However, once a resident turns 18 and is no longer supported by YJS, until recently, there has been no data sharing agreement in place with the young person, probation or social services. Therefore, permission from each LAP alumni needed to be sought via a social worker or other professional who was still in touch with them. As such, it has been difficult to ascertain accurate reoffending data for those leaving the LAP.

---

<sup>36</sup> YJB (2025) Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024#use-of-remand-for-children>

<sup>37</sup> YJB (2025) Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024#use-of-remand-for-children>

Considering the 19 children in total who have left the LAP, 37% (7 children) have become open to YJS or the criminal justice system for new matters; however, only 26% (5 children) had been found guilty of new offences. This equates to a reoffending rate for children leaving the LAP of 26%, considerably lower than other forms of YJS accommodation. All but 1 of those who have reoffended committed offences within the first few months, sometimes within weeks of leaving the LAP, which suggests more attention should be given to the support children receive once they have left the LAP. Table 5 shows how the LAP compares to other YJS related reoffending rates.

YJS Accommodation/Outcome	Reoffending Rate	Percentage +/- from LAP
LAP	26%	-
All children leaving custody	61.7% <sup>38</sup>	35.7%
Overall YJS reoffending rate	31.8	5.8%

The reoffending rate statistic for the LAP only includes those with a previous conviction, not those who had spent time on remand or had been charged but were subsequently not convicted. Therefore, the comparison related to those with a prior conviction. However, this did include convictions that may have occurred before the charge that led the child to be placed in the LAP.

In considering the quantitative impact of the LAP on residents' desistance, 10 children were arrested whilst in the LAP, some multiple times, with 13 arrests recorded in total. 6 of these were for breaches of bail conditions; however, there were some more serious charges, including possession with intent to supply Class A drugs and weapons offences.

However, overall, children participating in this evaluation commented that the LAP helped them comply with bail and sentence conditions. 1 child had breached his curfew a couple of times before entering the LAP, but explained:

*"I would be out chilling with them [his friends] if I was still home, but here is a bit far, so it's easier to just stay in and that way I don't miss curfew."*

LAP staff commented that it was quite common for children to have a history of breaching before referral, with such instances stopping shortly after they moved in.

In total, there were 4 children sent to custody from the LAP, including; 1 child who was in the LAP as part of their bail conditions but received a custodial sentence, 1 child who went missing from their LAP placement and was subsequently returned to custody once found, 1 child who breached their LAP bail conditions and was returned to custody and 1 child who was arrested during his placement and was remanded into custody.

<sup>38</sup> <https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/our-research/evidence-base-youth-justice/specific-types-of-delivery/resettlement-work/>

Another child was arrested for possession with intent to supply class A. Their placement was subsequently terminated by SCF, and the child was rehoused in another supported accommodation provision before being sent to custody.

All 4 children who were returned to custody identified as Black and all 4 children were known to social services, with 1 being in local authority care, 1 on a child protection plan, and the other 2 considered children in need before entering the LAP. 3 had NRM conclusive grounds outcomes, and 1 had a reasonable grounds outcome before entering the LAP. These children were particularly vulnerable to potential criminal exploitation. With more effective safeguarding measures in place, these custody incidents may have been prevented, and it is important that all involved in LAP delivery work together to mitigate the risks residents face.

## 6.2 Supporting Black and Mixed Ethnicity Children whilst in the LAP

In addition to offering an alternative to custody, the LAP has sought to reduce disproportionality within youth custody by providing culturally appropriate interventions aimed at helping residents engage in activities associated with developing a pro-social identity.

### 6.2.1 House Dynamics

House dynamics are a key part of the children's experience, and SCF's recruitment strategy has shown a clear plan to employ staff from similar backgrounds to those the LAP was set up to support. Artwork created at and displayed around the house, celebrates staff and residents' cultural diversity, providing the opportunity for staff and residents to talk about their cultural heritage. 1 child spoke of how they found it easier to connect with a particular member of staff because their families were from the same country, and how they bonded over cooking and watching TV shows together.

The values in the house are key to the progress made by the children, with 1 explaining

*“First day I get to the house. Everyone's just welcoming. Then yeah, the staff members took me out to get some food. They showed me around the house, and I realised like this is fine, this is way better than prison, so as soon as I saw how comfortable the house was, and I knew that I wasn't going to go back, it was like, how could I? It would just be me being a fool if I go back.”*

Another explained

*“When I arrived, they did make me feel welcomed automatically, as they did make me a home cooked meal.”*

There has been a distinct shift in ethos at Jonah House, with practice initially not always reflecting what would be expected when applying the Child First Framework. Managers spoke of a restorative approach as ‘the right approach’ and discussed how the staff

team were trained to work with children in this way. However, although the staff members' desire to support children was clear, they also discussed the importance of punishment and consequences. Some staff wanted more sanctioning power over the children, including restricting their ability to leave the house, as this would 'force' them to comply with rules and make residents more likely to engage in planned activities. Indeed, the lack of this level of control was identified as the reasons for children's low level of engagement in support activities.

The change in approach has led to a transformation in the way that incidents and notes are recorded, which now focus on the welfare and development of the child, rather than concerns and behaviours. The records, which children can now access via an app, focus on building on strengths and are written in a child friendly way.

The second noticeable change is in the handing out of sanctions letters. When this evaluation started, all staff members were able to issue sanction letters. According to the LAP Residents' Journey Tracker, a total of 76 warning letters have been given out to 11 residents, with 1 resident receiving 13 warning letters over their 22 weeks stay. Smoking cigarettes (20%) and smoking cannabis (17%) in the house were the main reasons for the sanctions. However, now only managers can issue warning letters, with a more discursive approach preferred. Since September 2025, no sanction letters have been issued.

New rules about how many staff can be in the staff-only office area at any time have helped ensure they spend more time in communal areas interacting with the children, with informal chats in the kitchen or discussions started whilst watching TV or playing a game in the evening considered often more impactful than key work sessions or formal interventions.

However, although there have been changes in the interactions between staff and children, more could have been done by the partnership as a whole to support SCF to embed the Child First framework into their delivery from the outset.

### 6.2.2 Wrap Around Services

The LAP's wrap around support included mentoring from Wipers, a service specialising in providing mentoring to Black children and young men. Initially, Wipers were commissioned to do group work; however, due to the occupancy level, this was changed to 1:1 sessions. Through the mentoring, children receive support on practical issues such as completing Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) so they can drive a moped, cook, and attend college, including being supported through the enrolment process. Mentors also supported children to explore their thoughts about upcoming court cases and plans for the future. There are examples of mentors using discussions on drill music to explore themes affecting children. The session logs suggest that the children who engaged for a sustained period built up good relationships with their mentors and

benefited from being able to connect with a professional who was external to the house. However, it is noted in the mentoring reports that residents are assigned a mentor, and Wipers have changed the mentors working with children at short notice. The mentoring reports also suggest that it was often difficult to engage the residents, with many reluctant to participate after the first few meetings. In total, 45% (10) of residents have taken part in mentoring sessions, and although two children participated in over 10 sessions, children who took part in the mentoring engaged in an average of 3.7 sessions each.

1 of the past LAP residents who participated in the evaluation stated that he did not know about the mentoring but would not have taken part if asked to. 2 other past residents commented that they did not see the point of meeting someone who would discuss things that they already knew and understood, with 1 stating:

*“They will come in to do a couple of sessions, but I know that I did engage. I remember them coming in, but I was just not trying to engage because I felt like it was beneath me. As in, like everything that they were saying. I already knew.”*

Although not statistically significant due to the small sample size, those who did not go into custody after their placement participated in an average of 4.25 mentoring sessions during their stay, compared to 3.22 for those who did experience custody post LAP. This may suggest that those who participated in more mentoring sessions were less likely to experience custody post LAP. However, correlation does not mean causation and participating in more mentoring sessions may be an indication that the children are already further along on their desistance journey than those who engaged less.

In considering how to improve the mentoring support to residents, it is important to understand that effective mentoring usually involves the following:

- A long-term relationship between the mentor and the mentee, with the length of the relationship impacting behavioural and academic outcomes.<sup>39</sup>
- Trust, understanding and an emotional bond between the mentor and mentee, giving the young person the confidence to open up about issues affecting them.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Goldner, L. and Ben-Eliyahu, A. (2021) ‘Unpacking Community-Based Youth Mentoring Relationships: An Integrative Review’, *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(11). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115666>; Schwartz, S.E.O. and Rhodes, J.E. (2016) ‘From Treatment to Empowerment: New Approaches to Youth Mentoring’, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 58(1–2), pp. 150–157. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12070>.

<sup>40</sup> Earnshaw, D. and Harrison, N. (2024) ‘An exploration of a mentoring programme for at-risk adolescents in the West Midlands, UK’, *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 32(5), pp. 618–632. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2024.2396468>.

- Involving children in the matching process and in goal setting, as this increases the chance of the mentoring relationship lasting and successfully achieving the identified outcomes.<sup>41</sup>
- Open and changeable agendas that allow mentees to explore the issues that are affecting them in the present.<sup>42</sup>

The mentoring sessions may be more effective if residents are involved in recruiting the mentor they are to work with, and there is a greater sense of co-production and co-planning around what happens in the sessions.

## 6.3 Reducing the Risk of Harm

For the LAP to be successful, the safety of the children placed in its care, the public and any victims needs to be paramount, particularly as 77% of LAP residents were considered at high risk of harm on referral, and 23% were considered as posing a high risk to other residents. The rigorous referral process mitigated much of this risk; however, it was essential that children feel safe and any risk to others was minimised.

### 6.3.1 Ensuring Public Safety

There have been no recorded incidents where the public or victims have been put at risk by children placed in the LAP. This would suggest that the LAP is evidence that, with the right support, keeping children charged with violent offences out of custody does not necessarily pose a risk to the public. In addition, no child was returned to custodial remand once their LAP bail placement came to a managed end, indicating that the courts have confidence that children can safely remain in the community once their time placement ends until their trial starts.

### 6.3.2 Reducing Risks Faced by LAP Residents

It is equally important to ensure the children are not simply constituted as a risk, but are seen as children who need support, care and protection. This starts with how children feel when they are in the house. All 7 children spoken to as part of this evaluation found the house a relaxing environment. Since October 2025, there have been 3 children living in Jonah House, and staff have commented on how they have found it easier to create a

---

<sup>41</sup> Goldner, L. and Ben-Eliyahu, A. (2021) 'Unpacking Community-Based Youth Mentoring Relationships: An Integrative Review.', *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(11). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115666>; Rahja, M. et al. (2016) 'Fostering transition to adulthood for young Australian males: an exploratory study of Men's Sheds' intergenerational mentoring programmes', *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 63(3), pp. 175–185. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12259>; Stump, K.N. et al. (2018) 'Mentoring Program Enhancements Supporting Effective Mentoring of Children of Incarcerated Parents', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 62(1–2), pp. 163–174. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12250>.

<sup>42</sup> Comfort, C., 2024. Evidence-based Good Practice for Youth Mentoring Programmes. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, (18), pp.195-207.

warm homely environment with more boys in the home. This relaxed environment was evident during house visits, with staff and children sitting in the lounge together watching TV and discussing musical tastes.

### 6.3.3 Diverting Children Away from Risks

Unstructured spare time increases the opportunities for children to be exposed to negative peer influences, misuse substances and engage in criminal activity.<sup>43</sup> Generally, how much spare time a child has is linked to the levels of parental influence in their lives, and those with a strong parental influence are less likely to find themselves with lots of spare time.<sup>44</sup> Living in the LAP will diminish parental influence. Therefore, it is important that children are provided a significant level of structured activities to mitigate the potential for decreased parental influence and increased unstructured spare time. Table 6 below indicates the different support offered by SCF each week, and children work with their key worker to develop a weekly timetable. However, involvement is voluntary, and Jonah House and LAP management staff have both expressed concern that children have too much unstructured spare time, with accounts from the children participating in the evaluation suggesting this is true.

<b>Table 6: SCF LAP Support Offer</b>	
<b>Direct Intervention</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Jonah House Education Support	2
Key Work	3
Organised Activity Offer	2
Jonah House Participation	2
Life Skills Sessions	2
<b>Direct Intervention Total</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Auxiliary Intervention</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Participation Team Sessions	2
Pulse Team Education Sessions	1
Therapeutic Team Support Offer	1
<b>Auxiliary Intervention Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Intervention Support</b>	<b>15</b>

2 LAP alumni believed more needed to be done to make LAP residents want to stay in the LAP house, where they are safe and less likely to be tempted to commit offences. Offering incentives that help children with their future plans, such as support with driving lessons was identified as a potential means to encourage children to participate

<sup>43</sup> Buil-Gil, D. (2025) The Structure of Unstructured Time and Crime: A Spare Time Model, *The British Journal of Criminology*, azaf035, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaf035>

<sup>44</sup> Buil-Gil, D. (2025) The Structure of Unstructured Time and Crime: A Spare Time Model, *The British Journal of Criminology*, azaf035, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaf035>

in activities more, resulting in them visiting friends less and being more protected from negative influences. 1 resident commented

*“It's there should be more focused on getting the young people to stay inside because you'd rather have them inside. Inside is safer than outside doing crime or on the streets or in the gang.”*

More needs to be done to ensure that the children's timetables are engaging, reflective of their needs and designed around helping residents develop a pro-social identity. This can only be achieved through a collaborative effort from YJS, social care and the housing provider to identify and provide opportunities and interventions based on the child's needs rather than minimum requirements.

#### 6.3.4 Contextual Risks

For some, the location of Jonah House itself has helped children remove themselves from such risks as the physical distance from previous contexts makes it easier to cut ties from negative peer groups. In discussing this, 1 child stated:

*“It's like, like discipline [needing to be back by curfew] because I feel like the people that I cut off, maybe I wouldn't have cut them off, if I was still around them.”*

Another commented:

*“Not going to back home as much and cutting off bad friends and people that I don't mess with anymore. That's what I did. That's what I ended up doing. I was in Barnet. Mm-hmm. Coz, I just said, cool. That's a good place. I know. If I go, there might be problems. So, yeah. Let me just stay in Barnet and just work on myself.”*

The location also helps expose children to a new geographical context, one that allows them to move about without fear of violence. 1 LAP resident stated:

*“It was so safe, like because the area I'm not even from there, it was just the area was nice as well. I was feeling so safe.”*

Such changes in the environment are often part of someone's desistance journey<sup>45</sup> and identifying properties that offer children the chance to experience living in an area where they do not need to fear for their safety, and are far enough away from their previous locations for them to be deterred from visiting on a regular basis, should be a key consideration when planning locations for new LAP properties.

---

<sup>45</sup> Alexander, J. (2023) 'Analysing the importance of drill artists' offline environment in the creation of violent online identities', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 35(3), pp. 340–354. doi: 10.1080/10345329.2023.2173512.

However, there have been some safeguarding concerns, including 2 instances where existing LAP residents have become aware that a new child had an altercation with 1 of their associates whilst in custody. This contributed to 1 incident where a child was found with a knife in his room, which he attributed to his feeling unsafe due to the new resident. The staff team responded to these situations, including ensuring a staff member is always in the same area of the house, including upstairs, if the children are together. Other children have also hidden weapons in their rooms. However, despite these incidents, there have been no issues between LAP residents.

Residents are still able to get hold of Cannabis, and although staff speak to residents about the risks of taking drugs and send official warnings when they are caught smoking in the home, it has been difficult to stop. Staff have raised concerns that some heavier smokers may have influenced others to smoke more during their time in the LAP.

Such activities can lead to residents seeking money, increasing their vulnerability to grooming and child criminal exploitation, particularly if they were still in contact with friends and associates from where they previously lived. SCF staff have indicated that there have been times when they suspect residents were dealing from outside the front of the building but could not do anything about it. This raises concerns that SCF staff, in identifying the dealing as the issue, can still see LAP residents as children who have offended rather than children vulnerable to exploitation, who need to be safeguarded against contextual risks.

This appears to be the case with 1 young person who ended up in custody after being arrested for possession with intent to supply Class A whilst in the Jonah House. When discussing this, the child stated that someone, who was an associate of a friend of his, contacted him through social media and groomed him into holding the drugs for him. Once he was holding the drugs, he felt trapped and didn't know what to do. The staff at Jonah House did not know about this until his room was searched by the police.

Given the vulnerabilities associated with the life histories of children placed in the LAP, it is essential that life in the house is shaped to safeguard children against contextual risks. It is therefore essential that there is a close working relationship between staff in the house and professionals from the referring local authority, with clear accountabilities to ensure children's needs are met and safety concerns addressed.

#### 6.4.5 Safeguarding Children

From the outset of this research, there have been several concerns raised about safeguarding and a lack of experience among some of the LAP staff. Safeguarding concerns raised during discussions, interviews, and documentary analysis include the discovery of weapons and some isolated concerns around the relationships between some staff and children. Both LAP houses became operational in August/September 2023, and by the end of December 2024, a range of serious safeguarding incidents had

become known that would have a significant impact upon the children and on the LAP provision more broadly. Internal strategic reports from March 2024 note that there were disruptions to the project due to a serious safeguarding incident and that there was a pause in placements to ensure safety and staffing issues were addressed. The issues were considered so significant that changes in staffing, as well as revisiting the purpose of the LAP and the operational model, were deemed necessary. Whilst it is recognised that swift action was taken by the LAP management team to address some of the safeguarding issues and concerns, there has been a lack of clarity as to what level of assessment and support was put in place by the provider and the children involved in specific safeguarding incidents, professional network before and after these issues were raised.

The LAP operations manual (2024) is clear that there should be an integrated (whole systems) plan for each child, which is based on their individual needs and informed by self-assessment. It states that the plan “will also need to detail the effective management of any risk and safeguarding concerns” (LAP Operations Manual, 2024). Both the LAP management team and SCF will have been aware of their role and responsibilities under statutory safeguarding guidelines to work together to safeguard children within the LAP.

It has been argued within this report that positive relationships, within an environment where the children can feel safe, are key to the development of a pro-social identity and the journey to desistance. Given the views and concerns expressed by adults involved with the LAP, it is clear to see how children (who have been identified as at risk in terms of safety and well-being) might become confused about the application of house rules and safeguarding plans at the LAP.

In terms of learning and development at the LAP, it is noted that there have already been some changes in management and staffing, as well as further training, which SCF suggest have led to improved understandings of safeguarding issues and improved staffing levels and procedures at the LAP. The ‘lessons learned’, the ‘highlighted risks’, and ‘strategic issues’ are clearly all under careful consideration by the LAP management team. However, it would be good to see a greater level of attention and focus on highlighting a broader range of risks and any safeguarding concerns as they are experienced by the children themselves. This would help to ensure a more balanced approach to safeguarding policy and practice within the LAP, where the children who are impacted the most by decision making, especially around safeguarding policy and practice, can feel heard, safe and cared for by key support staff. This should be a crucial element of the ongoing development and recommissioning of the LAP model.

## 6.4 Improved health and life chances for children

The initial evaluation methodology included considering measuring indicators of pro-social identity development, such as enrolling in mainstream education, gaining employment and forming relationships with those who are a positive influence, to help show the distance travelled by the children. However, although education and employment support were available, residents did not always engage. Due to the low level of engagement and outcomes recorded for the children, it is not possible to establish any correlation between engagement in educational or employment activities and a reduction in offending. Equally, the lack of data on post-LAP education and employment means that it is impossible to ascertain if the educational and employment support offered in the LAP has contributed to post-LAP educational engagement or employment. However, the information that is available is discussed below.

### 6.4.1 Educational Support

Both children and adults in the criminal justice system have often had negative experiences of formal education.<sup>46</sup> Yet, for many, reengaging with education is inextricably linked to their desistance journey, and those with a post-16 education are more likely to have more success transitioning to a crime-free lifestyle than those who do not.<sup>47</sup> Positive reengagement with education is therefore regarded as a key marker in children's development of a pro-social identity. There is evidence that most of the children had problematic experiences whilst at school. Only 36% (8) of children were in some form of education before coming to the LAP, including 6 in mainstream education, 1 attending a motorbike course and another being tutored from home. 63% (14) were NEET at the time of referral. Those still enrolled at school were offered virtual school support through their local authority during their placement.

Of the children for whom data on engagement is available, 58% took part in SCF's Pulse education support service, completing an average of 6 sessions each<sup>48</sup> and resulting in 37% collectively gaining 24 Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQAs).

The children participating in the evaluation discussed how the PULSE sessions were limited, with 1 person stating that they only engaged as it counted towards their youth justice service hours and described the education sessions as:

---

<sup>46</sup> Coates, S. (2016). *Unlocking Potential: A Review of Education in Prison*.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Jones, M and Jones, D. (2021). *Understanding Aspiration and Education towards Desistance from Offending: The Role of Higher Education in Wales*. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, v7 n1 p23-49

<sup>48</sup> Of the 11 young people engaging in Pulse sessions, two participated in 10 or more sessions, 6 engaged in between 5 and 10 sessions, and 3 engaged in under 5 sessions.

“Just writing sums of pieces of paper every day”

There is also a concern over the transferability of the AQAs that residents have gained. Although it is important to build up children’s confidence so that they believe they can achieve educationally, ideally, the qualifications should map across to those used by colleges in their application processes, it was not clear whether this was the case with all of the qualifications offered by the PULSE service.

In terms of reengagement in mainstream education, only 3 children were identified by LAP staff as enrolled in college or school, and a further 5 had applied to a college by the time they had exited the LAP, with there being no observable correlation between the number of PULSE sessions attended and applying or enrolling in education. College enrolment was something that has proven problematic. Most children’s placements did not coincide with college enrolment periods, meaning there was no opportunity to start courses while in the LAP and 2 children aired their frustration at being in limbo because of this situation. Location was also an issue. There was at least 1 instance of a resident enrolling in a college local to Jonah House but subsequently resettled to another part of London and so could not continue attending the course. As the LAP is only for 6 months, it would be preferable for the residents to enrol in a college near where they will be resettled so that it is easier for them to continue once they leave the LAP. For this to happen, transition plans that integrate housing, education and welfare needs will need to be developed earlier in a child’s placement.

#### 6.4.5 Employment Support

Similar to education, gaining employment plays a key role in a person’s desistance journey. Earning a legitimate income helps to shift social values and plays a role in producing a pro-social identity.<sup>49</sup> In terms of support, 6 children were guided to update their CVs, 2 children gained a job, and 4 children completed some form of work experience, with 2 securing external placements, and 2 residents supported SCF with their staff recruitment interviews.

When discussing employment opportunities, LAP residents commented:

*“100% employment, that would be the number 1 thing. You can have the young person work in a legit job, but earning legit money, that’s them [sorted].”*

Another explained:

*“Like they’re making their money, legally they have no problems.”*

---

<sup>49</sup> Rhoden, N., Senker, S. and Glorney, E. (2022), “A qualitative exploration of the role of employment in desistance and subsequent identity change – ex-prisoners’ lived experiences”, *The Journal of Forensic Practice*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 168-183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFP-11-2021-0055>

Therefore, the other support on offer, it is important that more is done to ensure children can use their time in the LAP to become more work ready as part of efforts to help children develop a pro-social identity.

#### 6.4.1 Physical Health

When a child enters the LAP, they are supported to register with a dentist and a doctor. SCF staff have commented that many of the residents have problems with their teeth and personal hygiene when they arrive and it can be difficult to get them to address it. Dental care, brushing and cutting hair and other self-care activities can be problematic for neurodiverse children.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, alongside helping residents, especially neurodivergent residents, to understand the importance of basic personal hygiene, there should be efforts to identify local professionals and services who know how to work with those who are reluctant in this area.

Fitness and gym activities were popular with the children, and access to a personal Trainer and gym was provided to LAP residents as part of the centrally commissioned wrap around support package. Initially, in Jonah House, this involved residents travelling to the Mentoring Academy Gym before the model was switched to a personal trainer visiting the house each week. In collaboration with the children, Jonah House staff also set up a gym on the property, and some children joined the local gym.

For Jonah House, the Mentoring Academy has supported 13 children. The feedback reports show a good level of engagement with the children. Support included participating in fitness activities and discussing issues relating to them with the Mentoring Academy trainers, including educational and employment ambitions, and avoiding involvement in violence. Although commissioned as a fitness provider, Mentoring Academy have been exploring how it can provide other activities, such as music production sessions, to further engage Jonah House residents.

It was clear that residents have benefited from interventions from external organisations, which are not seen as part of the formal support provided by SCF. Often, it is easier for an external organisation to engage children as they are outside of the pressures that come with the housing provider/tenant dynamic. The reports from external providers indicate the presence of care, concern, and a desire to support children in planning for the future. It appears that the children responded positively to this. However, the levels of engagement in the support services overall suggest that a more proactive approach is needed to encourage residents to make the most of the opportunities available. Given the backgrounds of the children, it should be expected that they may not readily engage, and it is important that there is a positive culture,

---

<sup>50</sup> Alegría, P. L., Landim, S. F., Branco, B. H. M., Carmine, F., Birditt, K., Sandoval, C., & González, M. M. (2024). Dental Hygiene Challenges in Children with Autism: Correlation with Parental Stress: A Scoping Review. *Journal of clinical medicine*, 13(16), 4675. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm13164675>

promoted by everyone working with each child, that promotes participation as the norm among LAP residents. This means setting higher expectations with all partners about what children can achieve and how efforts to support this achievement are recorded and monitored.

#### 6.4.2 Mental Health

Most children entered the LAP with a history of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and to help them along their desistance journey, residents have had access to a SCF therapist. This service was taken up by 42% of the children at least once, and those who did engage only attended an average of 3.7 sessions each. All of the children who participated in the evaluation said that speaking to a therapist was not something they felt comfortable doing, with 1 child stating:

*“I would rather speak to someone I know and get along with, speaking to a therapist, it’s not really me”*

Chart 3 shows that there is a moderate positive correlation (Pearson Correlation 0.529) between length of LAP placement and engagement in therapy, potentially suggesting that children are more likely to participate in sessions the longer they are in the LAP. However, the results are not statistically significant at the  $P > 0.05$  level.

The limited uptake is not unexpected considering that social and economic stressors, such as the experiences that children in the LAP have gone through, are a predictor of low engagement in therapeutic services,<sup>51</sup> and children who have previously shown aggressive behaviour are likely to disengage from such support early.<sup>52</sup> However, trauma-informed reflective support that can start children on a therapeutic journey does not need to be provided by psychologists and can be embedded into all practice with children.<sup>53</sup> The children’s engagement in the therapeutic support offered may have been increased if SCF staff were able to embed such practices in their everyday interactions with residents, rather than relying on discrete therapy sessions. Training all staff to have therapeutic conversations with residents may be a more effective approach to therapeutic support in the future.

---

<sup>51</sup> Phillips, D. A. *et al.* (2023) ‘Treatment Engagement in Adolescents: The Associations of Sociodemographic Characteristics, Caregiver Perceived Barriers, and Clinical Impairment’, *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 54(2), pp. 272–285. doi: 10.1080/15374416.2023.2222387.

<sup>52</sup> van Dijk, A., Brummelman, E., & de Castro, B. O. (2023). I’m not here to push you: Raising adolescents’ treatment engagement via autonomy support. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 164, 104304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2023.104304>

<sup>53</sup> Alexander, J. (2023). *Dealing, Music and Youth Violence: Neighbourhood Relational Change, Isolation and Youth Criminality*. Bristol University Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781529216530>.

### 6.4.3 Family Dynamics

Healthy relationships with family members and other loved ones are considered supportive of a successful desistance journey.<sup>54</sup> Although there are concerns that some of their existing relationships are problematic, children benefit from continued contact with their family members, with some parents visiting the LAP regularly.

Being in the LAP and learning about independent living is a maturing process, with children learning to budget, shop, cook and clean for themselves. For the 1 alumnus who moved back home after he finished his placement, this made him want to be more independent and rely on his parents less. He has spoken of a better family dynamic because of this.

Within this context, the LAP should be understood as providing children with the tools to be more independent and less dependent on others. This includes being more equipped to ensure relationships with family members are healthy and developing the skills needed to live independently. For a group of children who have had many decisions made for them, the LAP is a chance to gain the skills to take back some control and have a greater degree of agency over their own lives.

## 6.5 Child Voice

Children for whom interventions like the LAP are designed are often the least listened to. It is therefore important that the LAP gives residents the chance to be heard and then amplifies these voices. There was some evidence in visits to Jonah House of empowering children in the co-creation of personal timetables, the creation of a home gym and decisions around paint colour and room furnishings. As the service developed, residents were also involved in the hiring of new staff.

However, children seem to have minimal influence over many of the key decisions around service delivery and resettlement. Although the wrap around services were responsive to children's needs, they were commissioned without involvement of children and in the case of the mentoring, children were assigned a mentor, rather than given the opportunity to decide who to work with.

Resettlement is an area where there should be more planning that includes children's voices. 3 of the children who were in the LAP during the period of this evaluation were moved from the LAP at relatively short notice before their placement was due to end, and so it was only possible to speak to 2 alumni about their resettlement experience. 1 wanted and did move back to the family home, but the other spoke of his fear at not knowing where he would be placed and then relief when he was given a choice of 3 areas. However, he said that he was lucky, as others are just told where they will be

---

<sup>54</sup> Farmer, M. (2017) The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime: Ministry of Justice

living. There have been efforts by the LAP management team to involve service users within the new commissioning process, which is an important development, and it is hoped that there will be more opportunities in the future for children to shape what the LAP looks like and becomes. Overall, current services were designed to support children but were not necessarily designed with children. The lack of engagement is often a sign that things need to be done differently, and for support to reach LAP residents more effectively, they should be co-created with service users.

## 6.6 Child and LAP Delivery Recommendations

### Child and Delivery Focused Recommendations

1. The supported accommodation provider should be aided by experienced youth justice practitioners to help embed a LAP framework, based on Child First principles and which prioritises building trusted relationships with the children living in the LAP, into their practice
2. Ensure trauma informed practice is embedded as the standard form of engagement within the house.
3. Establish an ongoing evaluation process that is child centred and considers the distance travelled for each child as well as overall LAP outcomes.
4. Resident focused outcomes should be collected for at least two years after they have left the LAP.
5. Ensure children living in the LAP are involved in the co-designing of support and wrap around provision so that they are structured around residents' needs and preferred ways of engagement.
6. Children should be supported in regularly engaging in constructive activities that support their well-being, interests, education and employment with the aim of supporting their pro-social identity development.
7. Develop a clear safeguarding policy/practice to support a whole system approach to safeguarding that is informed by children's and young people's voices and focused on their individual needs.
8. Ensure that there is an ongoing focus on the contextual risks children face in the home, including greater involvement from specialist services such as youth justice or children's social care to help mitigate exploitation risks. This should include exploring having a social or youth justice worker assigned to the LAP.

9. There should be a greater focus on ensuring a planned resettlement that has a strong focus on transitional safeguarding and considers the child's wishes around education, employment, family relationships and housing needs, with transition plans being developed from the start of the placement.
10. Use of the remand budget should be considered to make the LAP more financially sustainable.

## 7. Efficiency and Value for Money

For the LAP model to move from being a pathfinder to a standard way that children are supported within the youth justice system, it needs to be financially sustainable. This means ensuring efficiencies without compromising on the care afforded to residents and the protection of the public and victims.

Initially, the LAP was forecasted to cost an average of £75,866 per year over 5 years from 2021-22 to 2025-26 for each participating local authority (with the yearly cost gradually increasing to £93,935 in 2025-26). This assumed a 40% void rate, shared across 6 local authorities, resulting in an average nightly placement cost of £292. This would have been 8% cheaper than the cost of a YOI and 97% cheaper than a secure training centre (STC).

The new staffing model means that the predicted costs for a placement in 2025-26 is £513.11 per night.<sup>55</sup> In addition, a share of 1 void space per year has been set at £31,215, which, at a 40% void rate, is likely to mean that each local authority within the LAP partnership will pay an additional £62,430.

However, although the budget for the new commissioning has not been set, costs are expected to be lower than those stated above. To understand the LAP costs further, it is important to understand where improvements can be made and recognise the wider fiscal value that the LAP represents.

### 7.1 LAP Occupancy Rate

Since Jonah House opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025, its occupancy rate has been 49%. However, having only 1 house open has impacted the number of children who could be placed. 8 referrals from 5 local authorities were not endorsed due to safety concerns related to the geographical area, existing LAP residents or the closeness of the property to the victim's location. Assuming that each referral was for a 6-month placement, this equates to an additional 36% of occupancy. An optimal LAP occupancy rate of 80%, would mean these 8 referrals are equivalent to the bed space of a property equal in size to Jonah House for a year. Were the LAP to include more properties, locational concerns would be easier to mitigate, and a higher percentage of referrals would be placed.

Relatedly, the geographical approach to the LAP, may have impacted the occupancy rates, and since referrals from outside the initial LAP partnership members have been accepted, the occupancy rate has been 60%.

Cost is also a factor. The fact that the remand budget can be used when a child is placed in the secure estate but cannot be used for a LAP placement, means that LAP costs must come from already stretched children's social care budgets. Staff from 2

---

<sup>55</sup> This amount will remain for 2025/26, but will be revised as part of the recommissioning process.

youth justice teams stated that they wanted to refer children but were unable to secure funding from social care, and another commented that they were hoping to continue to be part of the LAP partnership going forward, but were waiting on children's social care budgets to be decided. There needs to be careful consideration around the funding model and whether the remand budget can be used to cover LAP costs.

### 7.1.1 Proposed LAP Expansion Models

In considering the best approach to expand the LAP, the following options should be considered.

#### **1. Multi-site LAP Accommodation**

Extending the current LAP model to include more homes may improve endorsements and reduce the void rate, thus reducing cost. This could be through commissioning individual homes or 1 provider to manage multiple homes. Although commissioning an existing supported accommodation that can manage multiple properties may be simpler, the current experience of the management of Jonah House suggests that established providers may be less flexible, and it may be harder to embed some of the therapeutic ways of working, which are core elements of the LAP. There also needs to be some consideration over house dynamics and whether placing 4-5 children with significant complex needs is the right approach. Any expansion of the current model needs to pay attention to how a culture that promotes engagement and pro-social activities is maintained as new children are placed.

#### **2. High Risk Supported Accommodation (Block and spot purchased)**

The LAP could block and spot purchase beds in approved accommodation providers, which have signed up to operate within an agreed framework. The LAP framework would then allow children to have access to support services such as centrally commissioned education, mentoring, employment and therapeutic support. This approach affords local authorities the flexibility to place children across many different sites, potentially making it easier to manage some contextual risks. It also allows placements to be chosen based on potential future resettlement and the suitability of local services. However, ensuring consistency throughout placements would be challenging.

#### **3. Local Hub Model**

Like the high-risk supported accommodation model, the LAP could follow a similar approach to that of some women's refuge organisations, which use existing suitable accommodation and then partner with organisations local to the property to provide the additional support. The accommodation provider and those offering support will need to agree to deliver to a LAP framework, and support could be commissioned centrally or by individual local authorities. The latter would mean that the LAP becomes an approach adopted by local authorities, rather than a centrally coordinated programme.

This would allow for flexibility and would ease the financial concerns of the current LAP model. It would also aid in ensuring there is continuity of support for children, especially if they remain local to where they were originally housed.

Given the complexities relating to area rivalries within London and the connectedness of children, placing children outside of London should be a consideration, particularly if it means fewer children will go into custody. Although the current practice is to try and place children so that it avoids disruption to their existing support network, this factor needs to be weighed up against the benefits of children moving to a new location and forming a new positive support network. However, this approach should only be considered if it is something the child feels positive about and there is long term support for the child, with the expectation that they will be resettled locally to the LAP.

## 7.2 Cost Benefit Analysis

Considering only the financial costs of a placement, Table 7 shows that although the current cost of a LAP bed is more expensive than the YOI, even with the cost increase, it is still significantly cheaper than other suitable alternatives such as placements in children's homes, secure training centres or Oasis Restore.

<b>Table 7: Accommodation Cost Comparison<sup>56</sup></b>		
<b>Placement Type</b>	<b>Placement Cost Per Night</b>	<b>% +/-</b>
<b>Current LAP Costs</b>	£513.11	
<b>YOI</b>	£354.34	31%
<b>Supported Accommodation*</b>	£331.50	35%
<b>High Need Supported Accommodation*</b>	£914	-78%
<b>RLAA to Children's Home</b>	£783	-53%
<b>Secure Children's Home</b>	£887 <sup>57</sup>	-73%
<b>Secure Training Centre</b>	£921	-79%
<b>Oasis Restore</b>	£772	-50%

\*Based on the averaged-out costs provided by Camden Council

However, other criminal justice costs that can be attributed to a young person's journey pre-intervention, during, and post-intervention should also be considered when assessing the cost benefit of services such as the LAP.

Notwithstanding the small sample size, the reoffending rate for children leaving the LAP is 35.7% lower than that of those leaving custody. Using the most recent costs

<sup>56</sup> These costs are for the 2025/26 financial year and refer to costs charged to local authorities for the use of the resource and do not necessarily include other costs covered by the Ministry of Justice or other central government departments.

<sup>57</sup> This refers to secure children's home costs for justice rather than social care placements.

published by the Home Office<sup>58</sup> (adjusting for inflation) and weighting for the prevalence of offences, where there is a cost available, the unit cost of an offence committed by a child is £14,364.24.<sup>59</sup> Considering that those who reoffend commit an average of 4.3 offences,<sup>60</sup> the average cost of reoffending for those leaving custody at a rate of 66% would be £40,766, compared to £16,059 for the LAP, equating to savings of £24,707 on the costs of reoffending, per child. This figure is on the conservative end and does not include savings from preventing future instances of incarceration or the financial benefits gained from children making a positive contribution to society as they grow older.

However, when calculating the impact of the LAP it is also possible to compare savings related to pre and post youth/criminal justice and social care costs, and doing so shows the impact of the LAP even further. Although many different factors such as social care, CAHMS and specialist support costs, were considered for inclusion in the LAP CBA, to ensure the robustness of the model, only factors that were recorded consistently on Asset Plus were used. These being:

- Pre, during, and post LAP custody/LAP stays
- Pre, during, and post LAP Arrests incidents<sup>61</sup>
- Pre, during, and post LAP Convictions
- Pre, during, and post LAP Court Events<sup>62</sup>

In terms of attribution, if an event occurred in 1 period in a child's journey, but related to another period, it was recorded as taking place in the period for which it related rather than when it occurred. For example, if a child was arrested during their LAP placement for an incident that occurred before they entered the LAP, then the arrest was considered a pre-LAP arrest. Similarly, if an incident occurred whilst a child was in the LAP, but an arrest or court appearance took place after they had left the LAP, then these events would be included as a LAP event.

---

<sup>58</sup>Heeks, M., Reed, S., Tadsiri, M and Prince, S. (2018). The economic and social costs of crime: Second Edition: Research Report 99. Home Office  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/732110/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732110/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> Unit cost of offence calculated by working out the average unit cost of crime types identified in the YJS Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024 and using the percentage prevalence for the crime type to weight the individual unit costs within the overall average cost.

<sup>60</sup> YJB (2025) Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024. Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024#proven-reoffending-by-children>

<sup>61</sup> Arrest number did not include arrest cost that led to a conviction, as this was subsumed into the conviction cost

<sup>62</sup> Court events do not include court costs where there was a conviction, as this was subsumed into the conviction cost

Unit costs were developed for each of the CBA factors by using previously established costs and adjusting for inflation using the Bank of England's Inflation Calculator. Table 8 outlines the unit cost of each of the factors within the CBA.

Table 8: Cost Benefit Analysis Unit Costs		
Factor	Unit Cost	Source
YOI Custody	£354.34	YOI Nightly Bed Cost
LAP Stay	£513.11	LAP Nightly Bed Cost
Arrest	£1011.11	The Greater Manchester Unit Cost Database adjusted for inflation
Conviction	14,364.24	Heeks, M., Reed, S., Tadsiri, M and Prince, S. (2018). The economic and social costs of crime: Second Edition: Research Report 99. Home Office (adjusted for inflation and weighted for crime prevalence)
Court Cost	£1,816.02	Law Society <sup>63</sup> (adjusted for inflation and assuming half a day of costs)

Table 9 outlines the cost/savings when factoring in the wider criminal justice costs of arrests, convictions and court events. Data from the children within the LAP CBA model showed arrests reduced by 81%, convictions reduced by 73%, and court appearances reduced by 89%.

Table 9: Cost/Savings (LAP and Post LAP combined)			
Factor	% +/-	Total Cost/Saving	Cost/Saving Per Child
Custody	N/A	+£325,839	+£46,548.38
Arrests	-81%	-£36,399.96	-£5,199.99
Convictions	-73%	-£272,920.56	-£38,988.65
Court Events	-89%	-£127,121.40	-£18,160.20
<b>Total LAP and Post LAP</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>-£110,603</b>	<b>-£15,800.47</b>

Table 9 indicates that the only cost that increases within this cost benefit analysis are the custody/accommodation costs during the LAP. When considering the financial cost/benefit by comparing the pre-LAP and post-LAP costs, LAP will produce £15,800.47 for the criminal justice system per child, when considering pre, during, and post youth/criminal justice costs.<sup>64</sup> This compares favourably to the data from children placed in supported housing as part of remand conditions but not in the LAP, with the comparison group's arrests reducing and court occurrences reducing by 26% and 10%

<sup>63</sup> Law Society (n.d) Cost of a day in court. Available at <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/research/cost-of-day-in-court-new-analysis-by-law-society>

<sup>64</sup> None of the CBA sample had periods of post LAP custody. The one excluded case did indicate a period of post LAP remand as an adult.

respectively, and convictions increasing post remand to local authority accommodation (RLAA) placement. As such the RLAA comparison group showed a post RLAA youth/criminal justice cost increase of £18,280.05 per child. The data available would suggest that the LAP is potentially more effective in supporting children to desist from criminal behaviour than other forms of youth justice accommodation, and when wider youth/criminal justice costs are included, overall, could be more cost effective than RLAA supported housing placements. However, it should be emphasised that given the small sample size and interacting variables, these findings should be treated with caution.

## 8. Conclusion

The LAP was developed to offer an alternative to custody for children, with the view of having 4 LAP houses across London. Such a service has the potential to safeguard children against the trauma, distress, and disruption that custody brings. Placing children within a community setting also offers the opportunity for them to receive support, build strong positive relationships, develop skills, self-confidence and belief in their potential. In essence, the LAP not only offers children the chance to avoid the negative impact of custody, but it can also provide residents with services and experiences to help them build a pro-social crime-free identity.

Initially, 2 properties opened, 1 in Barnet, primarily serving the North Central London Partnership and 1 in Newham for referrals from the East Partnership. After difficulties with staff recruitment and safeguarding concerns, it was decided to close the Osiris House in Newham and focus on developing the LAP model in 1 property.

Delivering the LAP has been a learning journey with continuous developments both in its central management and operations, before, during, and since the evaluation project. Many of the concerns raised by evaluation participants at the beginning of this project have been or are being addressed. Despite some of the issues raised in this report, the continual improvement suggests that there is potential for the Pathfinder to continue to deliver more effectively and efficiently in the future.

The new staffing model has increased managerial oversight, ensured the recruitment and support of suitably qualified and experienced staff, and improved consistency in the interactions between workers and residents. There is now a greater focus on staff interacting with children and making the most of informal as well as formal exchanges.

The LAP has the potential to safeguard children against the trauma, distress, and disruption that custody brings, whilst not causing undue risk to the public or victims. Placing children within a community setting also offers the opportunity to support children to build strong positive relationships, develop skills, self-confidence and belief in their potential.

The LAP's wrap around and additional support, including access to a therapist, Pulse, SCF's in-house education service, employment support and mentoring, shows a clear understanding of the 'hooks for change' within the desistance process. Some children made significant progress with their engagement in education, seized this opportunity and were able to gain qualifications, enrol on college courses, and take steps associated with desistance. For others who needed more support to engage, the LAP was less effective. To improve engagement in such services, there should be greater involvement of children in the design and planning of services aimed at supporting them.

In terms of impact, the difficulty in accessing LAP alumni and post 18 data means that the evaluation has been limited in its understanding of the medium to long-term impact of the LAP. This is being addressed through new data sharing consent forms for LAP residents, which will enable future evaluations to gain a better understanding of the LAP's influence on past residents' engagement in hooks for change, such as gaining a qualification or securing employment after they have left the LAP.

Considering the immediate impact, the known reoffending rate for the LAP is 26%, which represents a reduction of 35.7% when compared to the reoffending rate for children leaving custody. Post-LAP arrests reduced 81% compared to pre-LAP arrests, convictions reduced by 73% and children's post LAP court occurrences reduced by 89%. The data available during this evaluation identified a saving of £15,800.47 per child when factoring in pre-LAP, in-LAP, and post-LAP criminal justice costs. However, as we have noted above, these findings should be regarded as indicative only due to the calculations being made in the context of some significant data quality limitations, e.g. very small samples and missing data. Further analysis over a longer period will be needed to produce a more robust savings calculation.

Although after the changes in the staffing model, the nightly costs of placing a child in the LAP became more expensive than that of a YOI, it has remained cheaper than the average costs of a secure children's home, a secure training centre, Oasis Restore and a high-risk supported housing placement. The financial value of the LAP is enhanced when its wider impacts are factored in.

The reductions in reoffending and tangible changes in the lives of the children who were placed in the LAP, identified by post-LAP reductions in arrests, convictions and court dates, are evidence that the LAP can be effective in supporting children who may have otherwise been placed in custody. The fact that there have been no reported public safety concerns involving a child while they lived in the LAP suggests that placing children in the LAP does not amount to a significant or definite increase in the risk of harm to the public.

Despite the positive findings, there are some areas and risks to the children within the LAP that should be addressed to improve LAP delivery and outcomes for the children placed there. There have been several incidents of drugs and weapons being found in the LAP, and of potential drug dealing outside Jonah House. These are indications that children were still influenced and potentially exploited by others and require greater support from their professional network. Nevertheless, the children generally saw Jonah House as a safe space, with some commenting that the best way to keep residents safe and away from risks is for more to be done to motivate them to spend more time in the house rather than going to meet up with friends and associates.

Lasting change occurs, not through control or sanctions, but by supporting children to value themselves and believe in their potential. Often, this journey includes engaging in positive activities such as those on offer in the LAP. The overall lack of engagement is therefore problematic, and more should be done to encourage participation, including working with residents to design and plan what is offered to them. The *'Lessons Learned'* (see section 8.2) and *'Recommendations'* (see 8.3) sections point to a range of issues that require action. These include more meaningful collaborative action from the professional network to maximise participation, and to ensure that the children's voices inform the further development of safeguarding policy and practice. Across the course of this evaluation, it has been possible to see some early improvements. With more sustained commitment to addressing the implementation challenges and recommendations highlighted within this report the potential of the LAP going forward is clear.

Overall, the LAP's delivery has developed considerably since it became operational, and the outcomes achieved are evidence that alternatives to custody have the potential to impact significantly on reductions in reoffending and supporting children to develop a pro-social identity. Such initiatives should continue to be invested in and supported.

## 8.2 Lessons Learned

Everyone involved in the LAP delivery clearly showed a willingness to understand how to develop and adapt the service throughout the evaluation, and it was evident that this commitment to learning was there from the start of the project. As such, there is some generalised learning from the LAP that may be of benefit to the development of future pathfinders, these are:

- Allow for flexibility and adaptation within the delivery model

The current LAP model is based on having discrete properties across London, which are managed by a commissioned LAP housing provider. This has limited the rollout of the pathfinder, partly due to the difficulty in finding suitable properties.

Throughout the evaluation, it was also apparent that other options were of interest, including the development of a LAP framework, which housing providers could sign

up to, which would allow for block or spot purchasing of spaces in their/other properties. If different approaches were trialled during this initial rollout phase, then there would be a greater understanding of the benefits and challenges of these options. Therefore, going forward, it is advisable to ensure pathfinders incorporate different options in the initial set up and delivery process, so that more than one method of delivery can be trialled and evaluated at once.

- Ensure initial budgets and staffing models reflect the potential need

A little over a year after the LAP properties opened, the provider submitted proposals to restructure the staffing model, which resulted in a budgetary increase. It was clear during the evaluation period that this change improved the experiences of those placed in the LAP. It would be preferable for future pathfinders to start with staffing models that can be streamlined if needed, rather than the other way round, as this will allow for models to be more accurately costed and evaluated.

- Ensure data systems are widely accessible

Throughout the evaluation, there were difficulties accessing accurate data, partly as a consequence of there being different systems used at different stages of the child's referral, placement and resettlement. This impacts the robustness of the evaluation process but also limits the accountability of stakeholders. A single content management system that can be audited would help alleviate these issues and ensure that all stakeholders have access to the same information.

- Ensure coordination and involvement of stakeholders.

Pathfinder delivery needs engagement with and by wider services outside of the YJS. Their role should be established in the Pathfinder planning with terms of reference formally agreed during the set-up stage.

### 8.3. LAP Recommendations

The following should be considered in the short term:

1. It is imperative that the child's professional network work collaboratively from the first day, going beyond the statutory requirements for contacts. The provider, social care and youth justice service should work in partnership to ensure the child has a full timetable and is fully supported by the professional network.
2. External wrap around support should be managed locally, with collaborative action to maximise participation.

3. The LAP should have a content management system for its operations from referral to resettlement that all professionals working with the child can access, and that quality assurance checks are carried out on a regular basis.
4. The supported accommodation provider should be aided by experienced youth justice practitioners to help embed a LAP framework, based on Child First principles and which prioritises building trusted relationships with the children living in the LAP, into their practice
5. Ensure trauma informed practice is embedded as the standard form of engagement within the house.
6. Establish an ongoing evaluation process that is child centred and considers the distance travelled for each child as well as overall LAP outcomes.
7. Resident focused outcomes should be collected for at least two years after they have left the LAP.
8. Ensure children living in the LAP are involved in the co-designing of support and wrap around provision so that they are structured around residents' needs and preferred ways of engagement.
9. Children should be supported in regularly engaging in constructive activities that support their well-being, interests, education and employment with the aim of supporting their pro-social identity development.
10. Develop a clear safeguarding policy/practice to support a whole systems approach to safeguarding that is informed by children's voices and focused on their individual needs.
11. Ensure that there is an ongoing focus on the contextual risks children face in the home, including greater involvement from specialist services such as youth justice or children's social care to help mitigate exploitation risks. This should include exploring having a social or youth justice worker assigned to the LAP.
12. There should be a greater focus on ensuring a planned resettlement that has a strong focus on transitional safeguarding and considers the child's wishes around education, employment, family relationships and housing needs, with transition plans being developed from the start of the placement.

The following should be considered as part of the longer-term development of the LAP:

13. Explore the suitability of the LAP management function sitting within a London-wide organisation rather than a local authority.
14. If regional partnerships are to continue, they should be structured around courts to take advantage of existing working relationships between YJS.

15. LAP placements and the location of any new properties should be based on the suitability of the geographic area, rather than simply the availability of properties.
16. Whilst children should be placed as close to home as possible, financial modelling should be on a pan-London footprint, rather than sub-regionally, to enable financial liability to be shared evenly.
17. Use of the remand budget should be considered to make the LAP more financially sustainable.

## 9. References

Abrams, L.S. and Terry, D., 2017. *Everyday desistance: The transition to adulthood among formerly incarcerated youth*. Rutgers University Press.

Alegría, P. L., Landim, S. F., Branco, B. H. M., Carmine, F., Birditt, K., Sandoval, C., & González, M. M. (2024). Dental Hygiene Challenges in Children with Autism: Correlation with Parental Stress: A Scoping Review. *Journal of clinical medicine*, 13(16), 4675. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm13164675>.

Alexander, J. (2023). Dealing, Music and Youth Violence: Neighbourhood Relational Change, Isolation and Youth Criminality. Bristol University Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781529216530>.

Alexander, J. (2023) 'Analysing the importance of drill artists' offline environment in the creation of violent online identities', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 35(3), pp. 340–354. doi: 10.1080/10345329.2023.2173512.

Buil-Gil, D. (2025) The Structure of Unstructured Time and Crime: A Spare Time Model, *The British Journal of Criminology*, azaf035, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaf035>.

Chapman, T. and Hough, M. (1998) *Evidence Based Practice: A Guide to Effective Practice*. London, Home Office.

Coates, S. (2016). Unlocking Potential: A Review of Education in Prison. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf).

Cocker, C., Cooper, A. and Holmes, D. (2022). Transitional Safeguarding: Transforming How Adolescents and Young Adults are Safeguarded. In *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol 52, pp. 1287-1306. (p1290).

Comfort, C., 2024. Evidence-based Good Practice for Youth Mentoring Programmes. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, (18), pp.195-207.

Davis and Marsh, 2020, in Davis, J. (2022). Adulthood bias within child protection and safeguarding. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7ea2794cde7a79e7c00582/t/65518cd5a7588544ea06f0ab/1699843285898/Adulthood+bias.pdf>.

Department of Education (2023) Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide\\_to\\_the\\_supported\\_accommodation\\_regulations\\_including\\_quality\\_standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide_to_the_supported_accommodation_regulations_including_quality_standards.pdf) (pp 6-7).

Earnshaw, D. and Harrison, N. (2024) 'An exploration of a mentoring programme for at-risk adolescents in the West Midlands, UK', *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 32(5), pp. 618–632. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2024.2396468>.

Farmer, M. (2017) The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime: Ministry of Justice.

Goldner, L. and Ben-Eliyahu, A. (2021) 'Unpacking Community-Based Youth Mentoring Relationships: An Integrative Review.', *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(11). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115666>.

Haines, K., & Case, S. (2015). *Positive youth justice: Children first, offenders second* (1st ed.). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t899qx>.

Halsey, M., Armstrong, R. and Wright, S. (2017) 'F\*ck it!' Matza and the mood of fatalism in the desistance process. *The British Journal of Criminology* 57(5): 1041-1060.

Heeks, M., Reed, S., Tadsiri, M and Prince, S. (2018). The economic and social costs of crime: Second Edition: Research Report 99. Home Office  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/732110/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732110/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf).

Heidi Aarum Hansen, Luuk Westerhof & Tina Gerdtts-Andresen (2024) From frozen words to dialogue: turning around involuntary relationships in social work practice, *Nordic Social Work Research*, DOI: 10.1080/2156857X.2024.2395938.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (n.d) Youth justice - specific types of delivery. Available At <https://hmiprobation.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/our-research/evidence-base-youth-justice/specific-types-of-delivery/resettlement-work/>.

HM Government (2023) Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf).

Holmes and Smale (2018) in Cocker, C., Cooper, A. and Holmes, D. (2022) Transitional Safeguarding: Transforming How Adolescents and Young Adults are Safeguarded. In *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol 52, pp. 1287-1306. (p1288).

Hughes, W. (2012) Promoting offender engagement and compliance in sentence planning: practitioner and service user perspectives in Hertfordshire. *Probation Journal* 59(1): 49-65;  
Weaver, B. (2015) *Offending and Desistance. The Importance of Social Relations*. London Routledge.

Jones, M and Jones, D. (2021). Understanding Aspiration and Education towards Desistance from Offending: The Role of Higher Education in Wales. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, v7 n1 p23-49.

London Accommodation & Resettlement Pathfinder (2022) London Accommodation Pathfinder Operations Manual.

Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10430-000>.

McAdams, D. and McLean, K. (2013) Narrative identity. *Current directions in psychological science*. 22(3) :233-238.

McNeill, F. (2006). A desistance paradigm for offender management. *Criminology & Criminal Justice* [online], 6 (1), pp.39-62.

ONS (2022) The education and social care background of young people who interact with the criminal justice system: May 2022. Available at:  
<http://ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/theeducationandsocialcarebackgroundofyoungpeoplewhointeractwiththecriminaljusticesystem/may2022>

Phillips, D. A. *et al.* (2023) 'Treatment Engagement in Adolescents: The Associations of Sociodemographic Characteristics, Caregiver Perceived Barriers, and Clinical Impairment', *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 54(2), pp. 272–285. doi: 10.1080/15374416.2023.2222387.

Porporino, F. (2010). Bringing sense and sensitivity to corrections. In Bayford, J., Cowe, F., and Deering, J. (eds) *What Else Works? Creative Work with Offenders*. Cullompton: Willan.

Rahja, M. *et al.* (2016) 'Fostering transition to adulthood for young Australian males: an exploratory study of Men's Sheds' intergenerational mentoring programmes', *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 63(3), pp. 175–185. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12259>.

Rhoden, N., Senker, S. and Glorney, E. (2022), "A qualitative exploration of the role of employment in desistance and subsequent identity change – ex-prisoners' lived experiences", *The Journal of Forensic Practice*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 168-183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFP-11-2021-0055>.

Schwartz, S.E.O. and Rhodes, J.E. (2016) 'From Treatment to Empowerment: New Approaches to Youth Mentoring', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 58(1–2), pp. 150–157. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12070>.

Stump, K.N. *et al.* (2018) 'Mentoring Program Enhancements Supporting Effective Mentoring of Children of Incarcerated Parents', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 62(1–2), pp. 163–174. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12250>.

Todd-Kvam, J and Todd Kvam, M (2022). Talking good: analysing narratives of desistance in Norway, *British Journal of Criminology* 62(4): 914-930

van Dijk, A., Brummelman, E., & de Castro, B. O. (2023). I'm not here to push you: Raising adolescents' treatment engagement via autonomy support. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 164, 104304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2023.104304>.

Ward et al (2024) Step by Step take young people's voices to Westminster

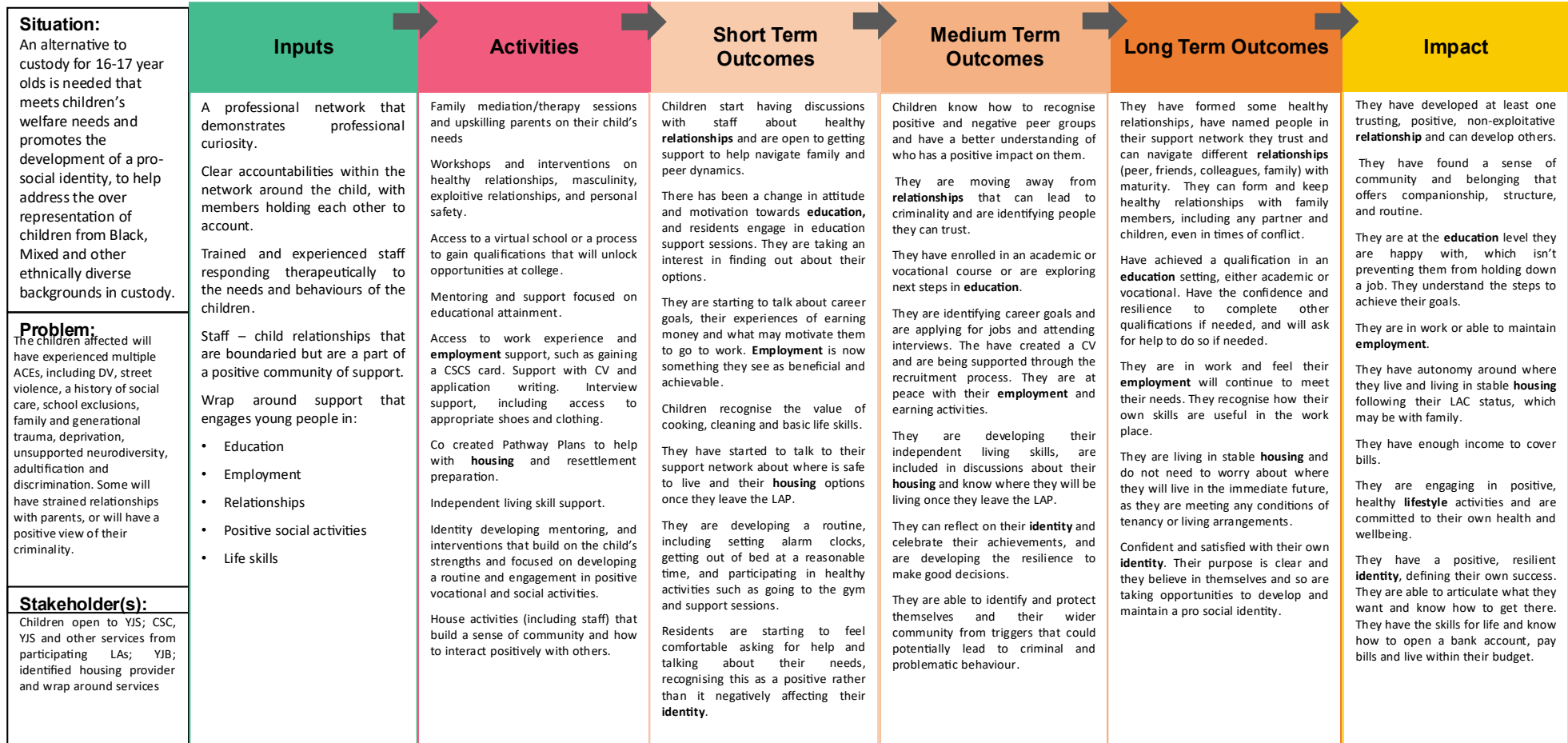
<https://www.stepbystep.org.uk/news/step-by-step-take-young-peoples-voices-to-westminster>

Youth Justice Board (2023) Supporting Safeguarding: Contributing to the safety and welfare of children. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguard-in-the-youth-justice-system>.

Youth Justice Board (2025) Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024#use-of-remand-for-children>

# Appendix 1: London Accommodation Pathfinder Theory of Change logic model

## LAP ToC Logic Model



**Assumptions:** Inputs and activities whilst in the LAP will produce short term outcomes and children will be achieving medium term outcomes by the time they leave the LAP.

**External Factors:** Court decisions affecting length of time in the LAP, engagement from family, consistency of YJS and CSC involvement