



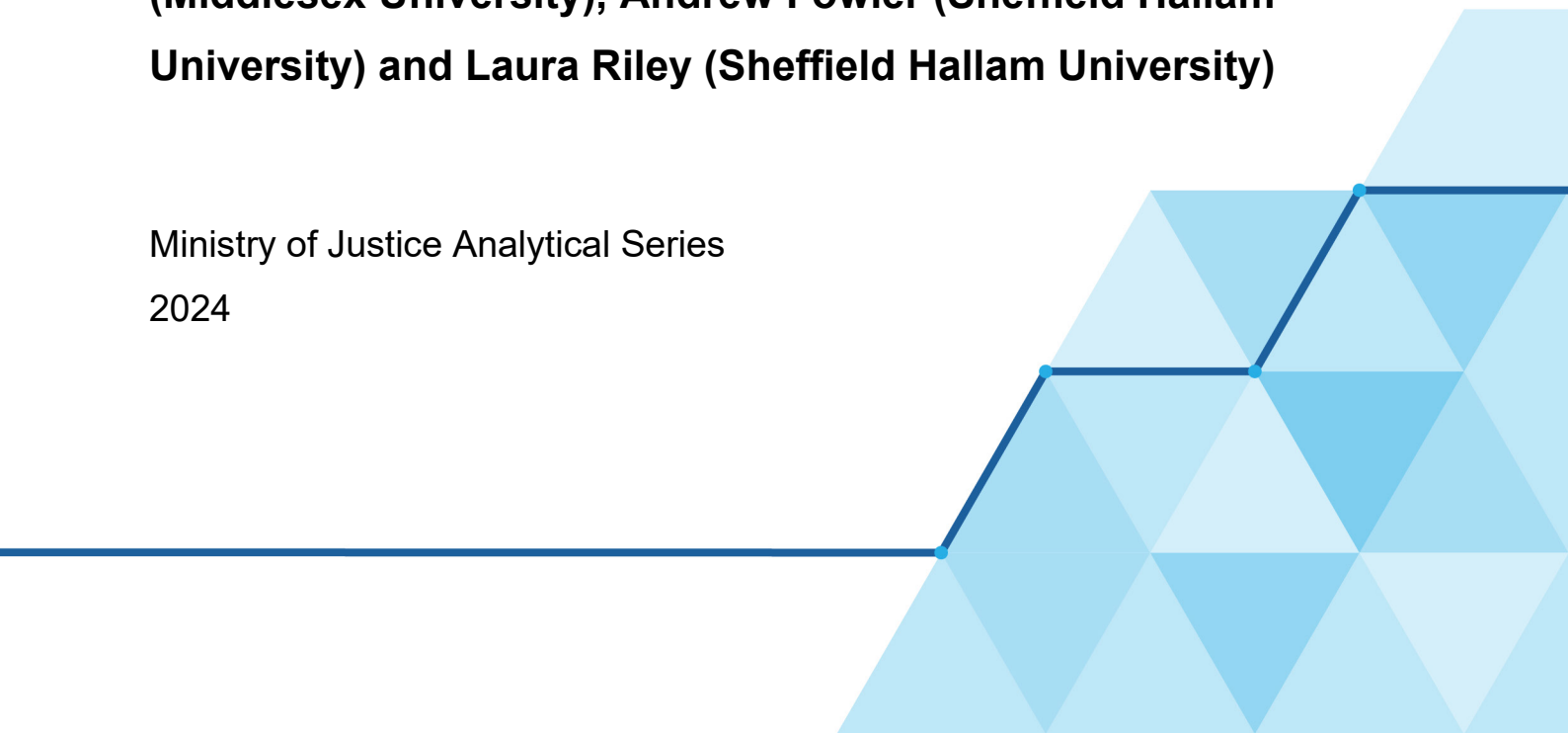
Ministry
of Justice

Process Evaluation of the Newham Y2A Hub

**Evaluating the implementation of a
specialist youth to adulthood transitions
service in probation**

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Glossary

CO – Community Order

CRS – Commissioned Rehabilitative Services

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

ETE – Employment, Training and Education

MOPAC – Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

OASys – Offender Assessment System

PDU – Probation Delivery Unit

PSO – Probation Services Officer

PO – Probation Officer

RAR – Rehabilitation Activity Requirement

SPO – Senior Probation Officer

SSO – Suspended Sentence Order

T2A – Transitions to Adulthood Alliance

UPW – Unpaid Work

Y2A Hub – 'Youth2Adulthood' Hub

YAT – Young Adult Team

YOS – Youth Offending Services

1. Summary

This report presents the findings from a two-year process evaluation that explored the implementation of a specialist young adult (18–25 year olds) probation Hub in Newham, East London. The Hub was designed to address the specific needs of young adults through a co-located probation and commissioned services model. The qualitative research design included interviews with 60 practitioners (probation and commissioned services staff) and 35 young adults over three phases of data collection.

The evaluation was designed to assess the implementation and delivery of this bespoke young adult probation Hub and whether its main aims and objectives were achieved. The primary aims of the Hub were to encourage compliance, promote desistance and reduce reoffending and to improve partnership working and information sharing between services. Supporting young adults in the development of pro-social identities, in building resilience to negative peer influence and to increase future orientation were also key aims.

Further evaluations are being completed by MOPAC: i) an impact evaluation testing changes which may have occurred and assessing the extent to which they can be attributed to the Hub, and ii) an economic evaluation, comparing the benefits and costs of the intervention. Both evaluations will be published on the MOPAC website in 2025.

1.1 Key findings

The operating model

The implementation of the Hub identified the core components necessary for a probation service model for young adults: co-located services in a dedicated, welcoming space; a committed workforce that is trained and motivated to work with young adults; flexibility around breach and enforcement (e.g. pre-breach interview); trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches; and processes that engage young adults and celebrate their successes. This could act as a template for application in other areas of London and England and Wales.

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The co-location of services was a key asset of the Hub. It enabled quick and easy referrals into services that aided their progress and desistance (e.g. mentoring, employment, training and education, well-being, speech and language etc.). The 'immediacy' at which referrals could be made was one of the Hub's greatest advantages.

A strong leadership and management team with effective oversight helped to create a staff identity, shared ethos and commitment to the cohort.

The 'young adult first', trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches were integral to the working practices of the Hub. This bespoke approach responds to the needs of this age group which are not met in adult mainstream probation services. The dedicated speech and language service was seen by staff as vital in responding to the needs of young adults with high levels of undiagnosed 'neurodiversity'. The innovative 'communication passport' helped the young adults to successfully access education, employment and other services.

Staff

Staff were positive about the impact the Hub was having on compliance and engagement, the successful completion of sentences and – perhaps most importantly – young adults' lives. They were able to identify success stories that showed how the Hub was supporting young adults to progress by gaining employment and training places, attain housing security, re-establish family bonds and form pro-social relationships.

Staff working in the Hub expressed high levels of job satisfaction. The knowledge exchange across professional practice and ongoing specialist training was highly valued and led to feelings of expanded skill sets and extra specialisms. For staff with experience of mainstream adult probation, the Hub enabled more time with young adults, in large part through the input of partner services.

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Young adults

Young adults on probation in Newham are predominately from Asian, Black and mixed heritage backgrounds and have experienced multiple forms of social and economic disadvantage including high levels of school exclusion. The welcoming and friendly environment created in the Hub staffed by people with a special interest in this age and trained to recognise the impacts of childhood adversity helped young adults to request support. The diversity of staff including people with similar experiences to the people on the caseload enabled trusting and productive relationships. Experiences of this nature embed elements of 'procedural justice' within young adult probation.

The mentoring and coaching, Education, Training and Employment (ETE), well-being and speech and language were particularly valued by those who had accessed them. In the eyes of young adults, employment support was critical (including self-employment support and training opportunities) and helped foster a sense of hope for their futures. Young adults need clear communication and flexibility in appointment times especially given their unique experiences of the employment market and experiences of poverty and trauma. Young women were also positive about the Hub and the women's centre for the separate gender-responsive, trauma-informed and flexible approach they offered.

Some issues hindering the flexibility of the Hub to operate in a fully 'young adult-first' way was communicated by young adults. These related to mandatory aspects of a Community Order such as Unpaid Work (UPW), that the Hub does not allocate or deliver. UPW is delivered differently to the Hub's ethos and this was conflicting for young people. This suggests a need for further thought around how a Hub such as this could interact with other aspects of the system which have not adopted a young-adult first approach.

Staff and young adults were unanimously in favour of rolling out similar young adult probation Hubs in other parts of London and more widely. This evaluation raises some important implications and points for consideration if the decision for wider rollout is made.

1.2 Implications

In relation to transferability and further rollout, the findings suggest that:

- A set of core components is needed. This includes: co-located services in a dedicated, welcoming space; a committed workforce that is trained and motivated to work with young adults; flexibility around breach and enforcement (e.g. pre-breach interview); trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches; and processes that engage young adults and celebrate their successes.
- Hubs require locally commissioned services that meet the needs of young adults. In Newham, the most widely-used services were mentoring and coaching, ETE, well-being support and speech and language. These services provide a solid foundation as minimum requirements, but specific support needs are likely to differ by local area.
- Keys to successful implementation include: a focus on needs-led referrals to voluntary services to avoid possible risks of 'overloading' and overwhelming young adults; clarity about the services offered; clear sequencing of interventions appropriate to needs; and careful management and oversight of staff changes and handovers. Staff turnover can have particularly detrimental effects because of the importance placed on trust relationships and needs to be managed carefully in future iterations of young adult hubs by focusing on continuity, and clear communication.
- Continuous feedback from young adults is necessary for developing and maintaining the relevance of provision within a Hub. If a service is to truly engage young adults, it is important young adults see it as their service and that their voices are listened and responded to.
- Offering a separate women-only probation space is important, but a flexible approach to where women are supervised is needed.
- Consideration could be given to how UPW is delivered (e.g. supervisors recognising the different needs of young adults) and the types of UPW projects young adults are placed onto (e.g. to help with employment if necessary).

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- Success with a project of this nature needs to be understood in wider terms. While public protection is the primary aim of probation, hubs should think about success more broadly, with a focus on intermediate outcomes and alternative measures (including obtaining training and education, gaining employment, establishing pro-social relationships). More systematic recording of data is needed on these outcomes and the Hub should build in ways of measuring impacts including intermediate outcomes if the model is implemented elsewhere.
- The wider rollout of young adult probation hubs might not be desirable, or even achievable in Probation Delivery Units (PDU) with lower caseloads. A dedicated young adult (18–25-year olds) team within mainstream adult probation that currently operates in some PDU areas, might be a better way forward.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background to the process evaluation

In March 2022, a specialist Youth2Adulthood Hub (the Y2A Hub) was created in the London Borough of Newham. The Hub was designed to address the specific needs of young adults (18–25-year olds) on probation through the delivery of a co-located probation and commissioned services model. The Hub was funded by His Majesty's Treasury's (HMT) Shared Outcomes fund for three years; one year of mobilisation and two years of delivery. An additional year's funding was secured in March 2023 via partnership between the Mayor for London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Probation Service, Barrow Cadbury Trust and Ministry of Justice (MoJ). This report presents the findings of a process evaluation that focused on the implementation of the Hub over the two-year pilot period.

The process evaluation assessed how this young adult probation Hub was implemented and whether its main aims and objectives were achieved. The Hub was intended to encourage compliance, promote desistance and reduce reoffending by young adults. By co-locating services within a single space, the Hub aimed to improve partnership working and information sharing between agencies and to support young adults in the development of pro-social identities, building resilience to negative peer influence and increasing future orientation. The evaluation was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the operational model of the Y2A Hub?
- What are the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the service delivery of the Y2A Hub?
- How do 18- to 25-year-olds experience this bespoke young adult service? What is most beneficial? What impact over time does the Hub model have on the lives of young adults who offend?
- How does the co-location of services help meet the distinct needs of young adults accessing the Hub? How do the partner agencies work together? What barriers and facilitators are there to good partnership working and information sharing?

The experiences of young women were included to reflect gender differences in how young people receive probation, with this focus added in after the evaluation had begun. The report aims to inform operational design if the decision was taken to roll out similar hubs in London and elsewhere. The implementation of the Hub is the focus of this report. Further evaluations are being completed by MOPAC: i) an impact evaluation, testing changes which may have occurred and assessing the extent to which they can be attributed to the hub, and ii) an economic evaluation, comparing the benefits and costs of the intervention. Both evaluations will be published on the MOPAC website in 2025.

2.2 Young adults in the criminal justice system

Young adults (18–25-year-olds) make up a significant proportion of the total probation caseload (around 21%) (Ministry of Justice, 2023b) and have relatively high rates of reoffending, 25.9% for ages 18 to 20, and 24% for ages 21 to 24 (Ministry of Justice, 2024). Young adults in the criminal justice system are receiving focused attention across a number of countries linked to the scientific evidence that associates this life phase with low levels of ‘maturity’ and patterns of criminal behaviour (Steinberg et al., 2015). Studies also show a high prevalence of neurodivergent conditions among young people in the criminal justice system, such as communication problems, ADHD and traumatic brain injury (TBI), all of which are considered to impact behaviour and decision-making (Hughes & Strong, 2016). Around 87% of justice-involved young have experienced at least one traumatic event (Malvaso et al., 2022). There is limited evidence around whether trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are causal drivers of offending, but research suggests, at the very least, that young adults would benefit from support around previous experiences.

In addition to life phase development, young adults are drawn into offending because of social inequality and poverty. A lack of money, opportunities and problematic relationships are important factors and addressing these is critical when supporting young adults away from criminalised activity (Bennett et al., 2021). An intersectional approach points to the highly racialised nature of poverty and criminalisation: institutional racism exacerbates inequality and poverty and increases the chances of young adults being over-policed and feeling discriminated against by the criminal justice system (Lammy 2017; Young 2014).

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This is particularly relevant in a borough such as Newham which has a high number of young Asian and Black adults who live in poverty, and which records high levels of stop and search policing (Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), 2024).

Asian and Black young men in the criminal justice system are more likely to experience discrimination, differential treatment in prison, racialised stereotyping in policing, and unfavourable attitudes from staff (Young, 2014). The importance of focusing on people as individuals and providing opportunities for them to build positive identities is important (Young, 2014: 11). Young women in the criminal justice system present with higher levels of mental health problems, trauma and previous poor experiences with social services (Ministry of Justice, 2023c).

The peak age for offending is 17 for males and 15 for females. Offending significantly declines in the early to mid-20s: this is known as the age-crime curve. Evidence suggests this age group is responsive to behavioural interventions and that age and developmentally appropriate services help facilitate crime desistance pathways. Indeed, some have argued young adulthood offers an ‘age of opportunity’ for intercepting the care to custody pipeline given the ‘susceptibility to change’ (Watt, 2022). However, young adults’ needs are not well supported by current operating models where young people are transferred to adult probation at age 18. Transitioning to adult justice from a Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a time of increased vulnerability that requires enhanced support (Price, 2020; Brewster, 2020). A joint national protocol by HMPPS and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) outlines each services’ respective responsibility to support the effective transfer of case management (HMPPS & YJB, 2021) and guidance on how the needs of young adults should be considered within supervision practice is available (Ministry of Justice and HMPPS 2022). Some adult probation services have developed specialist approaches for 18–25-year olds (Revolving Doors, 2016).

This evidence underscores the need for young adults to be treated as a distinct group within the criminal justice system with some recommending separate sentencing and supervision arrangements (Ward & Spence, 2023; House of Commons, 2016, 2018). Such an approach would enable the provision of relevant services delivered in a way that is responsive to the experience of young adults in the criminal justice system. As such, the

Barrow Cadbury Trust T2A Alliance has developed a set of recommendations based on its research and wider work in this area:

- The transition from YOS to adult probation, aspects of resettlement after prison and desistance from crime should be specialist services.
- Community sentences should be tailored to meet the particular needs of young adults and whether this should be achieved through universal training, or the creation of teams which become specialists in working with young adults.
- Finally, evidence suggests resettlement plans for young adults leaving custody should focus on supporting secure stable accommodation and long-term employment as effective routes away from offending.

Young people in the criminal justice require a specialist approach which is underpinned by good staff training and appropriate levels of assessment with a focus on not over-assessing. Wright, Liddle and Goodfellow (2016) warn against ‘overshooting the therapeutic window’ by providing too many interventions which set young adults up to fail. A range of justice system reforms are taking place across different countries to take account of young adult needs. This includes the removal of criminal convictions to reduce stigma and the application of ‘juvenile law’ to people up to the age of 21–23 years in the German, Croatian and Dutch systems (Schmidt et al., 2020). Matthews et al. (2018) contrast European practice as providing more developmentally appropriate responses to ‘emerging adults’ noting 28 out of 35 European countries have special legal provisions for young adults. Specialist young adult courts are in place in the USA and in New Zealand (Ward & Spence, 2023).

2.3 Newham

The Y2A Hub works with young adults aged 18 to 25 years and 17.5 year olds who live in the Borough of Newham. Newham experiences significant levels of social and economic deprivation, household and childhood poverty, unemployment, homelessness and relatively high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. According to the Trust for London (2024), Newham is the second most deprived Borough in London: in 2022, 50.3% of children and young people in Newham were living in poverty (Newham Community Safety Partnership, 2022). Newham has a diverse population with a large proportion (72%) from

minoritised ethnic backgrounds. Nearly one quarter (24.4%) are aged under 18 years. In 2022, Newham was ranked second highest in London for crime. The largest offence types were 'violence against the person' and 'theft', making up 54.9% of all crime in the 12 months to 2021. MPS data (2024) shows Newham recorded the fourth highest stop and search rate of all London boroughs with the 15 to 24-years most likely to experience stop and search.

2.4 The Newham Y2A Hub

The Newham Y2A Hub makes use of a dedicated, multidisciplinary team of probation professionals and external partner agencies. The Hub is overseen by a senior probation officer (SPO), and a manager, employed by MOPAC. A team of around ten probation officers (PO) and probation service officers (PSO) manage the young adult caseload. The probation worker has overall management of the case, makes referrals to partner agencies and monitors the risks, needs and well-being of the young adult. Probation practitioners can take enforcement action in response to failures to comply with sentence conditions, although an approach which seeks to reduce this is built into the operating model.

The specially commissioned services working in the Hub include: a mentoring and coaching project; psychological support; a substance misuse service, speech and language therapists, restorative justice practitioners, community mental health and well-being, art therapists and more. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); housing and education, training and employment support (ETE) (although this is provided through a regional rather than Hub-specific contract) are also present. All young women under probation in Newham are supervised by Hub practitioners and can access the Hub via the local women's centre or by attending the Hub itself. The Hub has adopted a 'young adult first' approach adapting the Youth Justice Board's (YJB) 'child first' agenda. This approach recognises the developmental life phase of young adults, seeing them as a young adult, rather than offender; it recognises that they are closer developmentally to children than adults (Case & Haines, 2015). Strengths-based and trauma-informed approaches are embedded across the Hub through training that was commissioned and delivered by an external organisation. The Hub has its own branded identity with a uniquely designed logo and is titled the Y2A Hub.

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The Hub has its own separate entrance and divided space within the Newham probation office so that young adults are seen separately from the wider adult probation population. All staff undertake specialist training in trauma-informed practice, issues of neurodiversity and developing maturity. Upon initial allocation, an OASys risk-assessment is undertaken, and a sentence plan is developed within a 15-day time frame. Part of this involves a maturity assessment to better understand individual needs.

3. Methodology

This process evaluation used qualitative data collection methods over three phases to document implementation of the Y2A Hub. Phase 1 ran from June – July 2022; Phase 2 from February – March 2023 and Phase 3 between November and December 2023. An interim report was produced after Phases 1 and 2 and shared internally with staff (see appendices B and C for the executive summaries). These reports included recommendations for the ongoing implementation of this specialist young adult Hub, which were addressed by the management team as appropriate.

3.1 Interviews

At all three phases, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with staff in the Hub and young adults on the caseload. Interviews enabled an in-depth understanding of the Hub and how staff and young adults experienced it. Some respondents were interviewed across all three phases, giving important longitudinal perspectives on the Hub's development from the early point of implementation to a fully established operational service. Interview guides (see Appendix A) were developed for each participant group to ensure they were tailored to the different roles whilst allowing for flexibility in participant responses. Interviews were also used to generate in-depth case studies of two young adults' experiences (see boxes on pages 51 and 58).

Sampling and recruitment

A purposive and convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants. For practitioners, all staff members (probation and commissioned services) working in the Hub were invited via email to take part. This yielded a high response rate due to buy-in from management and practitioners and we were able to interview a high proportion of all staff working in the Hub. Where possible, each researcher interviewed the same staff member across the three fieldwork phases to support rapport building and data generation. Young adults were either approached directly as they spent time in the Hub, or were identified by staff as potential willing participants. One researcher led on this process spending whole days in the Hub at each data collection point to build a presence and familiarity to aid recruitment.

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Sample

Interviews were conducted with 60 different members of staff (see Table 1). This number captured different seniority levels (i.e. managerial, front-line staff, case administrators) and specialisms within the Hub (e.g. single point of contact for 'gangs', personality disorder probation officer etc.), the support available through the commissioned services (e.g. mentoring and coaching, restorative justice, substance use etc.) and included organisations the Hub probation team work closely with, such as HMP ISIS, North East London magistrates' courts and Newham Youth Offending Services. Six Hub staff were interviewed three times, 17 at two time points, and 37 on one occasion. This yielded a total of 95 staff interviews. Those interviewed on 2 or 3 occasions were Hub probation staff, the established commissioned services and two managers. Those interviewed on one occasion included POs and PSOs and commissioned services staff who left and the one-off interviews with related agencies such as prison and courts.

Thirty-five young adults were interviewed: this represents around 17% of the total caseload. Six were involved at two phases and one at all three giving a total of 43 young adult interviews. Interviews with staff were conducted in-person and online, using MS Teams, whilst the young adult interviews were in-person at the Hub or women's centre. All were recorded (aside from a few young adults who did not consent to this) and transcribed using either a professional transcription service or automatically through the software built into MS Teams.

Table 1: Number of interviews conducted across three phases of data collection

Participant group	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total interview number
Young Men	13	12	10	35
Young Women	1	3	4	8
Total	14	15	14	43
Probation Practitioners	11	7	9	27
Commissioned External Partners	19	20	20	59
Leaders and managers	5	1	3	9
Total	35	28	32	95

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The young adult sample was closely split by age category with 16 of the 35 aged 18 to 20 years and 17 aged 21 to 25. Two were 17 years old. This related to the transition from Youth Offending Services (YOS) into adult probation at age 17.5 years if the sentence extends beyond the 18th birthday. Most young adults (n=28) were Asian or Black ethnicity.

Table 2: Young adult participants by age and gender

Age at 1st interview	Number
17	2
18 – 20	16
21 – 25	17
Total	35

Gender	Number
Male	29
Female	6
Total	35

Analysis

Interview data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide to reflexive thematic analysis. In practice, the researchers familiarised themselves with the data by reading through interview transcripts and coding thematically, drawing on: thoughts from the process of undertaking interviews; knowledge from existing academic literature; and the research questions guiding the evaluation. A team analysis day was held at each phase of the evaluation, attended by all researchers. Here, a set of themes from the codes was developed to increase coding and thematic reliability.

Observational methods

Ethnographic observation methods were also used to understand the functioning of the Hub and women's centre more holistically and to gain a general sense of the space and atmosphere (cf. Tidmarsh, 2021). To protect the anonymity of people at the Hub and simplify the process of gaining consent, observations were not used to generate potentially identifiable data on conversations or interactions that took place in the Hub. Rather, observations were used to aid understanding of the Hub model and generate first-hand, in-depth insights into the co-location working model; use of the physical space and an

overall appraisal of the Hub and women's centre as positive working environments that thrived on team support and were welcoming and nurturing spaces for the young adults. The embedded observation approach supported the process of recruiting young adults and the physical presence this required. Approximately 12 full days were spent at the Hub and five days at the women's centre (total five full days) at each phase. A graduation ceremony at the women's centre was also observed. Furthermore, insights were provided into some areas of tension, such as the competing demand for private interview rooms and the occasional reporting of missed or late appointments, but mainly observations were of busy atmospheres of young adults in one-to-one probation attendance meetings, group sessions and joining guest speaker events. Relevant descriptive analysis from these observations is included throughout this report.

3.2 Performance Data

In addition to the qualitative data, MOPAC collected and analysed monitoring information throughout the Hub pilot period. This information was drawn from probation records including: the number of young adults supervised by the Hub; how many were referred to commissioned services; and how many completed or disengaged from such services, plus the number of breach and recalls. These data were analysed using descriptive statistics by MOPAC. Analysis based on this data must be interpreted with care: it has been extracted from systems designed to administer or monitor an operational service, rather than for research purposes. Data is therefore subject to clerical and input errors, which has implications on the quality of the data, linking, and deduplication of records. The findings in this report are not comparable to other published statistics or research, including the MoJ Criminal Justice System Statistics and Criminal Court Statistics.

3.3 Ethics

The evaluation received full ethical approval from Sheffield Hallam University's research ethics committee and adhered to GDPR legislation at all times. The risk of harm to participants was low, as interviews focused only on their experiences of working in the Hub or – for young adults – being supervised by the Hub. Young adults were not asked directly about their offending, although some disclosure was made. The information sheet given to interviewees provided details about the research informing them that participation was

voluntary, could be withdrawn at any point and information provided would be confidential and pseudonymised in subsequent publications. All participants signed a consent form confirming their willingness to take part. Data were stored securely on Sheffield Hallam University's secure drive, which only the research team could access. Young adults could have felt obligated to take part, thinking that declining would impact their reputation for compliance. To overcome this, young adults were reminded at the start of the interview participation was entirely voluntary and they were not compelled to proceed. A number of young adults did not agree to participate, suggesting there were adequate safeguards in place to allow them to refuse to participate.

3.4 Limitations

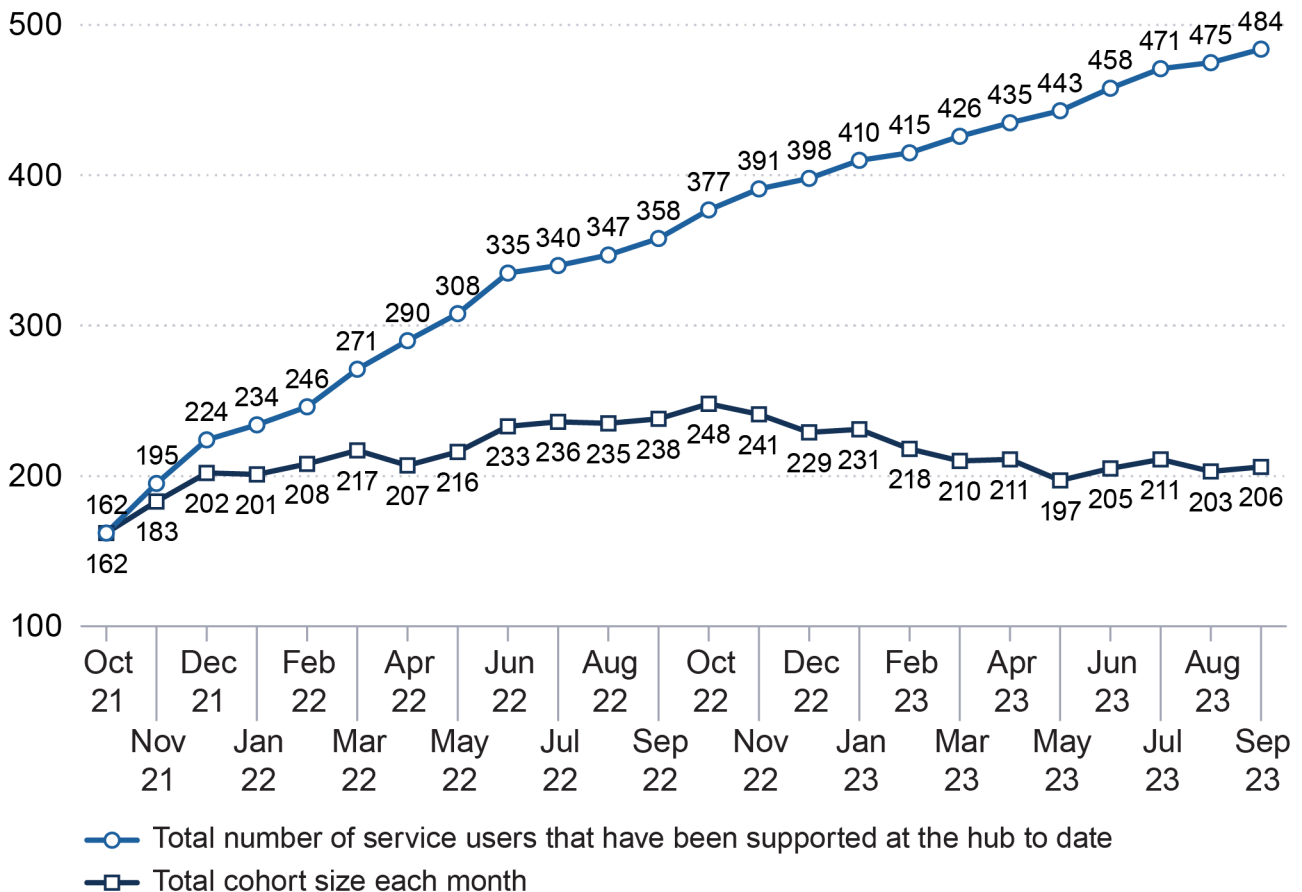
One difficulty of carrying out research with people on probation relates to distrust and stigmatisation making probation populations 'hard-to-reach' (Sirdifield et al., 2016). Even though a broad spectrum of young adults with a range of experiences and views were interviewed, researchers might have interviewed those more likely to engage and have positive experiences of the Hub. To overcome this potential skew and to reach a larger number, a survey at Phase 2 was attempted and a participatory lyric writing and music recording session was offered at Phase 3. Unfortunately, these were not successful due to limited Hub resourcing for recruitment and an overlap between the lyric writing and other creative activities available to young adults at the Hub.

4. Characteristics of the Cohort

4.1 Caseload

Between October 2021¹ and September 2023, the Hub supported a total of 484 young adults. The caseload grew to around 200 in the first two months of operation before stabilising at slightly above that figure throughout (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Total number of service users supported at the Hub: from October 2021 to September 2023. Source: MOPAC performance data



¹ The caseload began to be 'moved over' from October 2021 although the Hub was not fully operational until March 2022.

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In September 2023, 93% (n=192) of the caseload was male and 7% (n=14) were female (Table 3). This proportion was consistent across the evaluation period and reflects the broader gender breakdown of probation caseloads (Ministry of Justice, 2023a).

Table 3: Gender Breakdown of the Caseload, September 2023. Source: MOPAC performance data

Gender	N	%
Female	14	7%
Male	192	93%
Total	206	100%

The Hub caseload was diverse in terms of ethnicity with a similar high proportion from a minoritised ethnic background (74%) to that in the Newham population (Table 4). When compared to the wider population of Newham, young Black adults were overrepresented, and White and Asian British young adults were underrepresented. The overrepresentation of Black young adults reflects statistics drawn from across the criminal justice system (e.g. stop and search, custodial remands and prison population) (Ministry of Justice, 2023a).

Table 4: Hub caseload (N=206) by ethnic group and compared to wider Newham population. Source: MOPAC performance data

Ethnicity	Newham Hub caseload		Newham population ²	
	N	%	All ages (%)	Ages 16–25 (%)
Asian or Asian British	66	32%	42.2%	44.2%
Black or Black British	61	30%	17.5%	20.7%
Mixed	15	7%	4.7%	6.1%
White	44	21%	30.8%	24%
Other Ethnic Group	10	5%	4.9%	5.1%
Missing	10	5%	-	-
Total	206	100%	100%	100%

² These data were drawn from ONS data:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021>

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The mean age of the caseload was 22.4 years. Table 5 shows it was evenly spread across each year of age, with some skew towards the older ages: 73% were aged 21 years and over. This could be reflective of wider policing policy where approaches to divert young, low-level, first time offenders out of the criminal justice system are in place (HMI Probation, 2023).

Table 5: Age distribution across the Hub in September 2023 (N=206).

Source: MOPAC performance data

Age	N	%
18	12	6%
19	19	9%
20	25	12%
21	27	13%
22	34	17%
23	35	17%
24	38	18%
25	16	8%
Total	206	100%

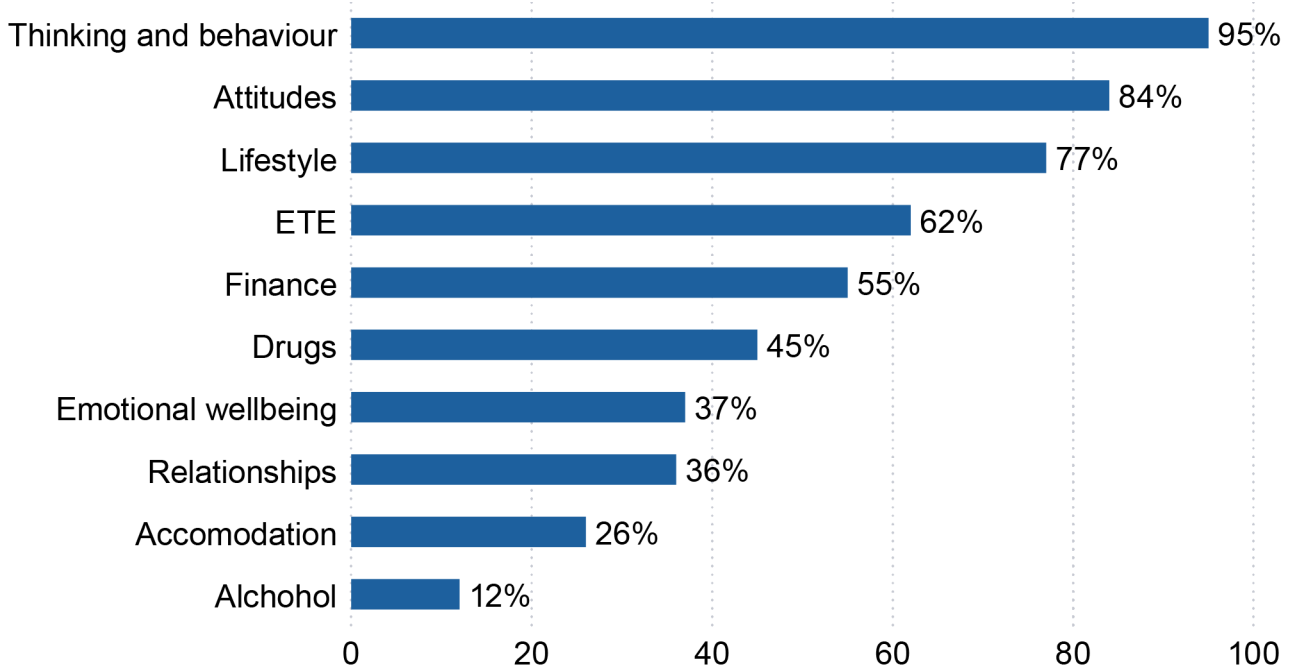
4.2 The needs of young adults in the Hub

Young adults on the Hub caseload are assessed for their specific needs using the Offender Assessment System (OASys) tool. Figure 2 shows the most prevalent needs recorded related to thinking and behaviour, attitudes and lifestyle. The least common were relationships, accommodation and alcohol, although one third did require support around relationships and housing. The percentage of those reporting alcohol misuse needs was lower than the wider 18 to 25 year old community sentenced population: 12% of the Hub caseload presented with alcohol misuse needs whilst 16% of the wider young adult caseload had alcohol misuse needs (Ministry of Justice, 2022).

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Figure 2: Percentage of young adults across the Hub with needs in specific areas: September 2023. Source: MOPAC performance data



4.3 Sentencing and Offending

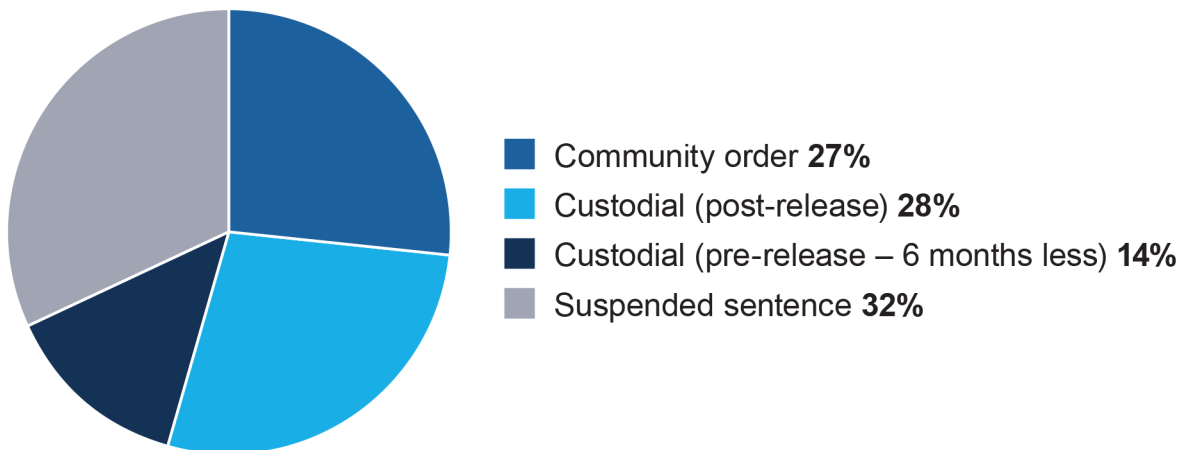
The most common recorded offence type among the caseload was violence (29%, n=60), followed by drug-related (19%, n=40) and acquisitive crimes (10%, n=40) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Breakdown of offence types amongst the caseload. Source: MOPAC performance data



Around one third of the caseload were serving a Community Order (CO) (27% n=55), one third were on Suspended Sentence Orders (SSOs) (32% n=65) and the remainder were either in custody (14%, n=29) or on post-release supervision (licence) (28%, n=57) (Figure 4). Approximately three quarters had received a suspended or immediate custodial sentence (74% n=151) reflecting the high prevalence of violent and drug-related offending.

Figure 4: Percentage of the caseload serving Community Orders, Suspended Sentence Orders or Custodial Sentences. Source: MOPAC performance data

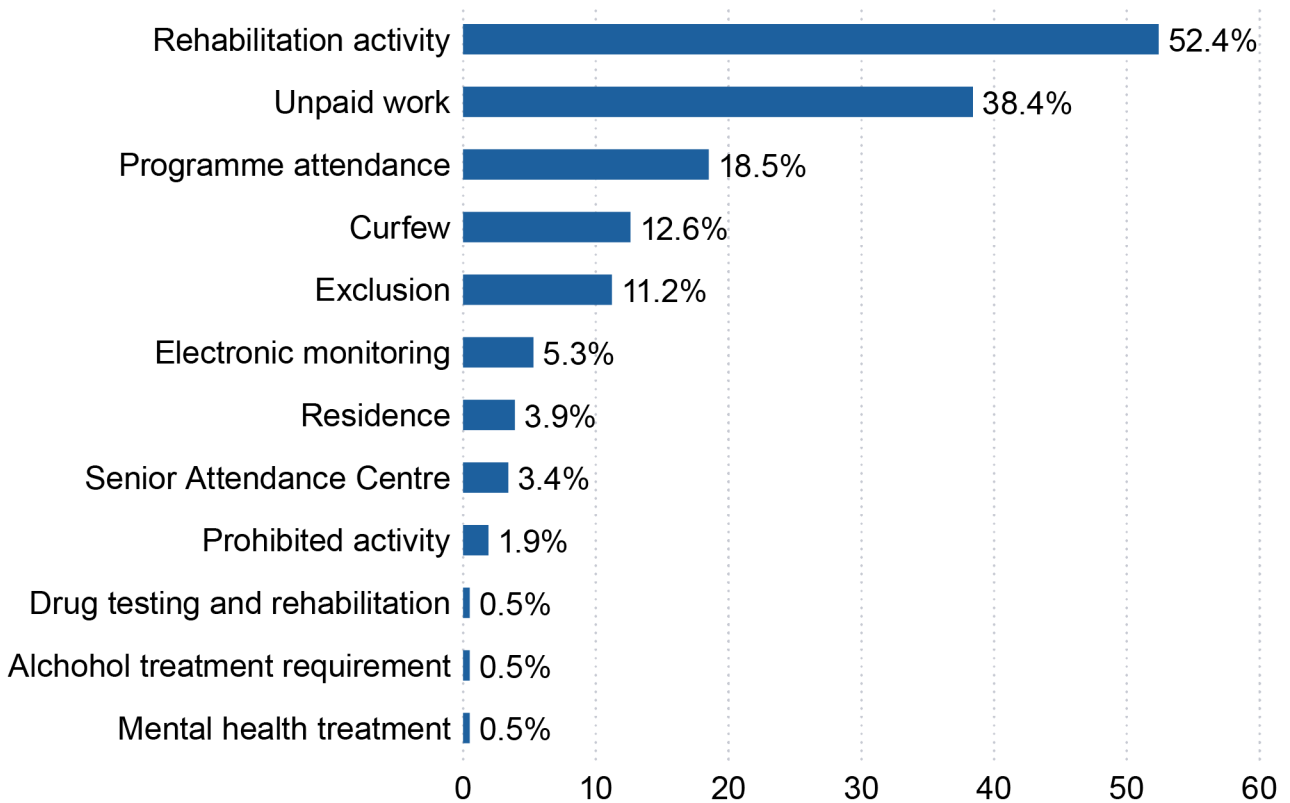


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People serving COs or SSOs are given requirements which dictate what they must do whilst on their Order (Figure 5). Over half (52.4% n=108) had been given a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) which provides practitioners with discretion and flexibility around what young adults do for this part of their sentence. Thirty-eight per cent (n=79) of young adults had been given an Unpaid Work (UPW) requirement, a potentially important point considering the Hub does not allocate or direct the UPW and has less control over what the young adults do, or how it is enforced; this is discussed in more detail below.

Figure 5: Breakdown of requirements imposed on young adults in Newham.
Source: MOPAC performance data



5. Implementing the operating model

Central questions for the process evaluation were around how the co-located operating model was implemented. The Hub model brings together statutory probation and voluntary services to oversee the delivery of a sentence and provide age-specific support to young adults on the caseload (see Table 6). Phase 1 of data collection (June – July 2022) focused on how the Hub was set up to deliver these services with attention on the early planning and preparation for implementation, commissioning and staff selection and training.

Table 6: Mandatory and voluntary aspects of young adult probation

Mandatory provision	Voluntary services
Probation attendance appointments RAR days UPW hours Monitoring of other requirements imposed as part of sentence or licence conditions	Mentoring and coaching Speech and language Psychology and well-being support Substance misuse (drugs & alcohol) ‘User Voice’ Restorative justice Art therapy Housing support Employment, training and education (ETE) Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

One of the first considerations for the Hub probation pilot was to identify a suitable venue. The decision to use the vacant space adjacent to the existing Newham probation office was primarily driven by financial and practical constraints; the space was already risk assessed and could be repurposed within the required start-up timeframes. One manager described some disadvantage to locating it in the probation building potentially making it feel ‘probation heavy’ and that engagement might be better ‘if probation reached into a

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community location' (Manager1 T1).³ Further, this would mirror the way other hub wraparound models operate (Kinsella et al., 2015). That said, the Hub is a probation-led initiative with an overarching aim to reduce reoffending and deliver sentences handed down by the court. The Hub location in a separate part of the Newham probation office worked well in terms of young adult engagement, yet the take up of support services by marginalised groups can be expanded if located in neutral, community settings (Albertson et al., 2022). Where a bespoke hub is located inherently sends a message about the balance between statutory and voluntary services with location a necessary consideration in any discussions of future roll out.

The Hub was designed to be a welcoming and open space with brightly coloured decor, comfortable furniture, pot plants, a foodbank, a mini-library and artworks by young adults (see Figures 6, 7 and 8). Over time, the Hub walls were filled with additional information about activities taking place.

Figure 6: Images of the main Hub space at Phase 1 and 3



³ Interview codes are used to distinguish between different participants. 'Probation' indicates a probation practitioner, 'External partner' refers to someone working for a commissioned service and 'Manager' is either a manager or a senior leader working in probation, MOPAC or Youth Offending Services. T1, T2 and T3 refer to the phase of data collection the interview took place within.

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Figure 7: Image of an interview room



Figure 8: Image of the foodbank area



The Hub was consistently referred to by staff and young adults as a relaxing place to be and that it aided young adults to communicate and express themselves:

There is something about the space that feels very relaxing and them having access to some books, some food as well. So, it doesn't feel like probation, it feels like a very chilled place to have a chat with someone. The physical space is very important. (External Partner 1, T1)

An extensive period of consultation and service commissioning was undertaken in the early Hub set-up phase. This involved an analysis of services already available via the 'dynamic purchasing framework' of the Newham PDU (e.g., ETE) and listening to suggestions by young adults on the type of services most useful to them with the resulting range of services as listed above (Table 7):

...what I've liked about this project is that whereas in the past the young adults would access generic adult services and those generic adult services would have to tailor their support to those young adults, we've been able to design services from the bottom-up based on young adults' distinct needs. (Manager 3, T1)

Managers recounted the commissioning process as complex and time-consuming, with delays to the start of some services. This mainly related to confidential information sharing agreements between services. Sufficient time and resourcing for the procurement process

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and data sharing needs to be factored in if the Hub operational model is adopted in any further rollout.

The young adult caseload needed separating from the adult caseload for sentence management in the Hub. This was reported as labour-intensive with some tensions arising. Firstly, Newham's PDU caseload became more focused on adults over 25 which altered the diversity of work for the remaining practitioners. Secondly, concerns that recruiting experienced staff from the PDU would leave it under-resourced were raised. A number of the adult team moved across to the Hub.

Probation practitioners and some young adults suggested that not all on the caseload should be automatically transferred. For example, if someone was nearing age 25, already had an established relationship with their probation practitioner or were coming towards the end of their sentence they should remain where they are. One Hub manager explained the young adult caseload reallocation process:

...we effectively set up a young adult specialist team within probation, ...there was a process of recruiting staff from the existing office, and then we also recruited externally ... we had to go through a process of reallocating older adults to non Y2A staff, and then bringing in the younger adults from the non-Y2A staff to the Y2A team, so that was quite a laborious process for probation, and because of wider staffing challenges within the PDU, there was some ... reluctance ... to move cases and let some of their staff go (Manager 1, T1)

These issues are particularly relevant in the current climate of low resources in probation (and in London especially) (HMI Probation, 2022).

As noted, the Hub was set up to operate with an explicit 'young adult-first' approach which drove professional practice from the start. The increasing responsibility that comes with the young adult life-phase – 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett, 2000) could also be observed:

more about preparing them for adulthood ... and preparing them for full independence ... preparing them to take on more responsibility, but it's similar in terms of collaboration, seeing them as a person first and an offender second, so

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that didn't change. We tried to emphasise getting them to take responsibility and moving on from more of that hand holding. (Manager 1, T1)

The Hub sought to provide a workforce that was dedicated to working in this way through training in relevant approaches, namely trauma-informed and strengths-based practices and in issues around maturity and neurological development. Trauma-informed approaches in probation are seen to follow six core values: Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration, Empowerment, and Inclusivity (Petrillo, 2022). Practitioners said the training widened their perspectives, gave them a better awareness of the context to young adults' lives and furthered their practice:

[following trauma-informed training] I have now observed and come to no doubt that young people have suffered a lot of trauma beyond what I even thought was possible in their lifetime, ...which has in some of them, if not all of them, shaped their behaviours which has somehow led them to be within the criminal justice system. (Probation 1, T1)

5.1 A diverse workforce

In addition to recruiting and training a dedicated, young adult-focused workforce, a diverse staff group that reflected the caseload – especially given the disproportionate number of people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds on the caseload – and local community was important. This was seen to provide opportunities to bring in support from agencies more detached from probation's compliance and enforcement function, enhancing access to a wider range of people with whom young adults can 'talk freely' (Probation 6, T1) including those with 'lived experience'. Participants commented on how a more informal, less structured form of support improves engagement:

our organisation is built up of a lot of people who've lived the experience..., I'm still on my journey at the moment, but it's good to be able to talk to these youngsters ... I think for them it's quite daunting because probation's not a place for you to think of seeing a youth worker or seeing someone who actually has been through the things that you've been through... Living in London ... it can be difficult, it can be hard ... having lived the experience gives me a good step up to be able to

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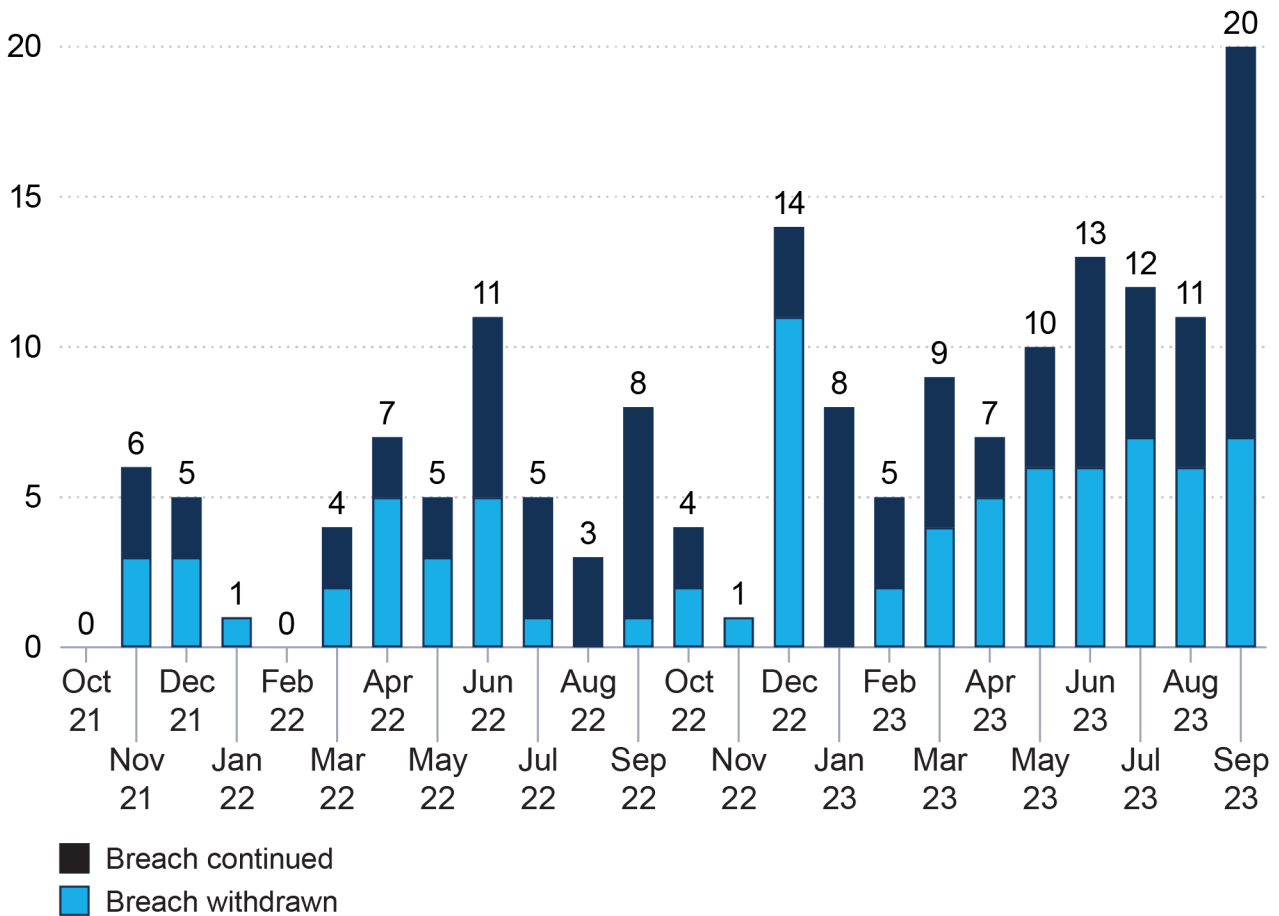
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engage with the people that we're dealing with here in the Hub. (External Partner 6, T1)

5.2 Breaches and recalls

The Hub operating model was designed to reduce the number of breaches and recalls imposed through the provision of age-appropriate, trauma-informed services and gave some flexibility and discretion to practitioners around enforcement. Figure 9 shows the number of breaches initiated and then withdrawn or proceeded against over the months of the Hub's duration. It was possible to infer from the number of breaches withdrawn that some flexibility was being applied by probation practitioners in the Hub. This is an encouraging outcome and an area for future exploration through comparisons with other areas and cohorts.

Figure 9: Number of breaches that were proceeded against and withdrawn across the Hub pilot period. Source: MOPAC performance data



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The number of recalls within the Hub were low with no more than three recalls in any given month. No young adult at the Hub was recalled between November 2022 and July 2023. As these numbers are low, it is difficult to discern trends or compare with young adults elsewhere.

By the end of Phase 1 the Hub had a committed group of probation staff working with young adults with specially commissioned services in place or coming on stream. Although the initial implementation took longer than expected (partly due to the COVID19 pandemic) and asked a lot from managers, most services were in place and operational by March 2022.

Some 'bedding in' issues were identified around referral processes and use of the Hub space. However, with ongoing managerial oversight focused on finding solutions in collaboration with Hub staff, these were effectively responded to. Phase 1 focused on the early implementation of the Hub and these data shed important light on the key issues which need to be considered when implementing a model such as this (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Implementing the Hub operating model

1. Developing the Hub model in conjunction with young adults
2. Identifying and designing the space to be welcoming and informal
3. Identifying services for co-location, tendering and commissioning according to local need
4. Extracting the 18–25-year-old cohort from the adult caseload whilst being responsive to young adults' existing relationships with their probation practitioner or the YOS
5. Appointing a young adult probation staff team
6. Providing training on young adult-first, trauma-informed & strengths-based approaches
7. Implementing a process for referrals and communication between services
8. Protecting staff caseloads
9. Developing a plan to transfer young adults back to mainstream probation at age 25. Keeping those who reach 25 on the caseload if they are settled in the Hub

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10. Creating a system for pre-breach interviews and a culture of flexibility that takes young adults' lives into account
11. Creating dedicated arrangements for young adult women
12. Supporting 17.5-year olds transition to the young adult team from YOS

6. Practitioner experiences of working in the Hub

Probation practitioners and commissioned services staff (n=60) talked in depth about their experiences of working in the Hub. The analysis identified a range of benefits as well as some challenges.

6.1 The benefits of co-location

A number of benefits were rooted in the co-location of services and good multi-agency partnership working that ensued. Having all services under one roof was a significant strength of the Hub. Staff talked about how being in the same building as other services meant they could easily link young adults into the help and support they required. Plus, referrals could be made much more quickly than was possible when working in adult probation. The immediacy of referrals in the Hub was seen as particularly important for this age group as moments of readiness can be fleeting. Fast referrals were also viewed as a good way for probation to show timely support:

...somebody who can talk to them and help them right then and there when they have a problem. That makes such a difference. It adds a degree of responsivity ... you can build up a little sincerity over time because there's an immediate result. They feel like they're being listened to. (Probation 14, T3)

There was also a recognition that young adults may struggle to access community-based services without the support or encouragement of a professional (such as a probation practitioner). Having services physically situated in the Hub helped overcome these barriers.

The co-located model enabled strong and collaborative working relationships and a productive team dynamic. Staff talked about their work being enjoyable and staff also spoke positively about their shared purpose of achieving the best for the young person:

There is a sense of shared purpose: ... relationship-wise, everyone really works well and we're looking at ... the welfare of that ... young person and see what's best for them. So, I think we've got that really nice environment here. (External partner 4, T2)

6.2 Benefitting from working with other professionals

A common theme was the exchange of professional knowledge taking place across the staff teams. Staff spoke about the specialist learning gained from the clinical psychologists, speech and language therapists and well-being coaches among others. Knowledge sharing sessions were initially established to help increase referrals into the commissioned services, but became a formalised and ongoing form of shared learning. Training and continuing professional development were strongly encouraged in the Hub:

...the support is definitely there for getting the training to working with young adults and then we've also got the generic probation training that you could on your own apply to young adults specifically about safeguarding and domestic abuse, for example. (Probation 22, T3)

Another benefit of the collaborative practice in the Hub was how some partners could act as an advocate for young adults when certain situations called for it. This was connected to the different layers of trust developed with a mentor for instance, in their role that sat outside of probation:

...I was in the middle. He had a good rapport with me, but a broken rapport with the probation officer and ... I spoke to him in terms of reiterating what she wants from him in a way that he understood. And then doing the same for her. He actually called her up and apologised ... which was amazing. (External partner 5, T3)

In this way, Hub staff were able to play to their different strengths and professional statuses to both incentivise and encourage the engagement of young adults. Meeting the dual needs of statutory probation which requires young adults to comply, attend on time and engage (despite the more flexible approach to enforcement action) came into conflict

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with the voluntary and slower paced nature of other services. Although there was a great deal of satisfaction among staff, some services – particularly the mentoring and well-being services – expressed preference towards delivering their service and meeting with young adults out in the community rather than being tied to the probation space.

Another benefit for probation staff was the adjusted caseloads that enabled more time working with young adults. This also related to working in a holistic way which had not always been possible in previous mainstream adult probation work. The Hub's collaborative operating model seemed to create some resilience in a system that experiences high workloads and resulted in more input for young adults.

Effective working relationships between staff from services were established and facilitated through various means, including: clearly defining the remit of different agencies to increase understanding of other services; frequent communication through staff meetings; and lastly, responsiveness from leaders to resolve issues and promote collaboration to minimise service overlap and the potential for competitiveness.

6.3 Involving new services in probation delivery

Encountering services they had not previously worked with was highly valued by probation practitioners. The presence of the speech and language service was particularly seen as a real innovation for the way probation can meet the needs of young adults. All young adults in the Hub underwent an assessment with many diagnosed as having problems that had not previously been picked up (e.g. dyslexia, autism). The unique value of the service was evident through one young man's account who spoke about his autism being identified through the Hub and the support he was now getting:

I've got the help as of now, but as you said, I needed this many, many years ago, but nobody's bothered to notice, or there was a lack of care, or a lack of funding to try and do things like that. (YP18, T2, male aged 24)

The speech and language therapists worked with young adults on expressive language, social communication and emotional regulation and the innovative 'communication

passport'; a booklet that conveys information about a young adult's needs was commented as particularly useful:

He's organised a communication passport, which goes through my strengths and weaknesses. So I can offer that to ... an employer or someone who I'm meant to be speaking to ... Can you do this? Can you explain this? ... So that does help quite a lot. (YP18, T2, male aged 24)

The speech and language service responded directly to the evidence that many young people in the criminal justice system have undiagnosed 'neurodiversity' (Criminal Justice Joint Investigation, 2021), which is routinely overlooked in adult probation and support difficult to access through mainstream healthcare provision.

6.4 Engagement, over referral and sequencing

One of the Hub's main aims was to create the conditions for deeper and more substantive engagement, and building this was a priority area for leadership and practitioners. In the early stages, engagement was fostered by encouraging probation staff to refer young adults to as many services as possible. For a model that has a set of commissioned services attached, engagement and sufficient numbers of referrals is critical for service survival. Whilst this meant young adults were able – in theory – to access all the support they required, it led to concerns of over-referral and 'overshooting' interventions and caused young adults to feel overwhelmed:

We had a period where we oversubscribed, ... like refer, refer, refer and all of a sudden it was like, stop, because we can't actually help, we're like, which one is it, refer or don't refer... (Probation 3, T1)

Efforts to resolve over-referral was made so that more emphasis was on appropriate rather than multiple referrals and recognising the importance of 'sequencing' support. Participants argued many young adults have urgent needs that require immediate attention before referrals into an intervention that might have longer term goals.

The Hub adopted several proactive practices to improve engagement. One of which involved going through the caseload to identify those who had not been referred to any

external services. This process demonstrated not all young adults need to be referred. Many of those who had not been referred: were engaging well with their probation practitioner, were nearing the end of their sentence or were not yet ready to engage. This confirmed the numbers of referrals were not necessarily a strong indicator of how well the Hub or individual services were operating. Referrals must be understood only in the context of an individual young adult’s circumstances, especially when taking the complex nature of the cohort into account. Other examples of encouraging the engagement of young adults in services included well-being drop-in days, rather than asking for commitment to a six-week programme.

6.5 Commissioned Services and Referrals

Mentoring and speech and language therapy were the most widely used commissioned services in the Hub (Table 7). Young adults – on average – attended one session per service per week. Across the pilot period, 724 referrals were made to the Hub’s commissioned services with 569 of those subsequently closed. Of the referrals closed, 36.9% (n=210) were due to completion of the planned programme of work and 27.8% (n=158) were closed due to lack of engagement and motivation. This can be partially explained by the design of some service interventions that were for a six-week duration, such as the well-being and mentoring Higher Aspire programmes. This was acknowledged as sometimes too onerous for a young person to commit to.

Table 7: Overview of work being carried out by commissioned services.
Source: MOPAC performance data

Service	Number of active cases (September 2023)	Total number of service users referred to the service by September 2023	Mean number of sessions delivered per service user in September 2023*	Average waiting time (days)
Speech & Language Therapy	40	145	0.5	18
Meaningful Activities	12	39	1.2	13
Mentoring	48	142	2.2	8
Restorative Justice & Mediation	5	14	1	21
Mental Health	34	116	1.2	35

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Service	Number of active cases (September 2023)	Total number of service users referred to the service by September 2023	Mean number of sessions delivered per service user in September 2023*	Average waiting time (days)
Accommodation	10	92	1.8	10
Young Women's Support	6	21	0.9	23

Another key feature of the Hub set out at the beginning was a degree of autonomy and flexibility, mirroring practice in youth justice services. Specifically, the Hub adopted the pre-breach interview to engage young adults before breach was proceeded with, giving extra opportunities to demonstrate compliance and to avoid enforcement action. Breach enforcement can involve additional requirements or time in prison. Pre-breach interviews were highly valued by staff in the Hub and were felt to make a significant, positive difference to the way sentences were set.

For a range of reasons engaging some young people in their Order can be challenging. One strategy the Hub adopted was the 'secondment' of a probation practitioner to work with YOS on the transition of 17.5-year olds turning 18 during their sentence and transferring into the Hub. The co-location of services within the Hub was highlighted as a significant strength for this service transition.

6.6 A local Hub in a national service

A few partner services were not solely located in the Hub.⁴ Services such as ETE worked to a probation contract held on a regional level with a longer period taken to establish a regular presence and develop a bespoke young adult approach. Despite young adults praising the support received from the ETE service, there was a perception among some staff of fragmentation in the delivery of the service and around an area of a sentence that should be well integrated:

⁴ A representative from DWP had an occasional presence in the Hub.

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As a client he's frustrated because he's ... 'Well I went there, I have done all of these forms, I've filled everything else, done what's required, and I'm still here twiddling my thumbs'. (External Partner 5, T3)

At times, the flexibility afforded to Hub staff was difficult to achieve in the context of the wider probation system. As one participant acknowledged:

We're one small part of the system ... we could definitely benefit from building stronger relationships with other parts of the system. (Manager 1, T2)

Both staff and young adults mentioned the breach warning letters, that are sent automatically after missed appointments, needed staff to step-in and rectify issues that arose from the process. Issues included court summons and additional stress for young adults. Further points about this are made in the next chapter, but it demonstrates some challenges inherent in creating and maintaining a Hub with a particular ethos that can be constrained by other parts of the system.

6.7 Identifying, celebrating and measuring success in the Hub

Probation and commissioned services staff spoke in depth about the progress young adults were making: moving away from offending, the jobs they were getting, the courses they were undertaking and the family bonds they were re-establishing. By Phase 3 many young adults were engaging with one or more of the commissioned services and getting to the end of their Order and exiting probation:

I think the young people that have come through have left – they are way better off, way better off than when they first came. Young people who ... have hope, didn't even know what hope was. Just seeing over time their development, seeing their potential being unlocked. It's transformational. The Hub is transformational. (External Partner 3, T3)

To celebrate the achievement of young adults getting to the end of their sentence, the Hub introduced graduation ceremonies. These were received positively by all involved:

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I'm just proud, proud ... and it's just made me want more for myself in the future, like these guys in the Hub have given me a reassurance that I haven't really seen like, they've seen potential in myself that I haven't seen and they've made me see that. (YP19 T2, male aged 24)

It is critical for an initiative such as the Hub to demonstrate an impact on reoffending. However, practitioners also highlighted the importance of focusing on outcomes over and above this. They expressed concerns that other positive benefits arising from the Hub's work may be lost if the main indicator of success is reoffending rates. As one of the Hub's aims is to improve levels of engagement and enable access to services that are not ordinarily available, it is important to include this when considering the Hub's impact. Moreover, participants argued that because young adults in the Hub start from more disadvantaged places and with lower levels of social capital than other young adults, time is needed to turn their lives around:

It takes time for young people who haven't had the same benefits, the positive inputs, the positive attachments, the community. If they haven't had that, they need time and time isn't two years, it's three years, for long lasting change. You need at least 4–5 years. (External Partner 3, T3)

It is not possible to sum up all the different measures of success that participants discussed, but the general view is illustrated in the following quote:

For us, success is the most basic thing: engagement. So turning up to sessions, but also success can be anything from communicating, keeping eye contact, changing in behaviour – so having goals, but also in terms of direction, having a direction in life but also as well in terms of reoffending. ... That is success for us. (External Partner 3, T3)

Whilst the Y2A Hub must always be focused on reducing reoffending, participants suggested successful implementation of its operating model would involve generating data to measure softer, intermediate outcomes that occur (Maguire et al., 2019). However, there was no systematic way of recording successes such as this, and this represents an area for future consideration.

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By the end of the evaluation, participants were consistent in their views that the Hub was responding to the needs of young adults through the provision of co-located probation and commissioned services, in a venue that was more amenable to relational practice than traditional probation offices.

7. Young Adults' Experiences of the Hub

This section focuses on young adults' experiences of the Hub, what they found most beneficial and the impacts it was having. Before discussing the main findings, some wider context from perspectives of socioeconomic background and educational experiences is provided.

Thirty-five young adults were interviewed over the three data collection phases (Phase 1 n=14, Phase 2 n=15, Phase 3 n=14). All but six were male. The majority were of Asian or Black ethnicity (n=28) reflecting the wider Hub caseload and Newham population. Most were born and raised in Newham. The majority lived at home with family: just a small number resided independently. A few were in hostel accommodation or living in Approved Premises. Some were in paid employment, such as construction, rail track maintenance, digital design, security and catering. However, most were looking for jobs or training opportunities and were of limited financial means. Six had completed a university degree or were currently studying.

Many of the 29 young men recounted disrupted education with school exclusion at age 14 or 15 followed by attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Some related exclusion from mainstream education to their behavioural and learning difficulties, such as ADHD, dyslexia and autism:

...I was there until about Y9 and they kicked me out for failure to comply with behaviour and things like that. And then they ended up sending me to ... a PRU and then from the PRU ... I just mixed with the wrong people, and then ... things just spiralled out of control ... (YP 34 T3, age 17)

A high proportion of both male and female participants had been in prison at least once on remand or as a sentenced person. A few were recently released and gave accounts of resettlement, reconnecting with family and getting used to new community-based restrictions (e.g. Approved Premises, electronic monitored curfew). Others were coming to the end of a licence period and were preparing for this closure. Offence history was not

included in the interviews, but a few disclosed knife possession, drug selling and earlier ‘on road’ lifestyles.⁵

It was evident from young adults’ accounts that being on probation was difficult. The range of restrictions; the frequency of probation appointments and number of activities to be completed was demanding and extended over many months. Overriding feelings of fear of “putting a foot wrong” that could result in recall to prison were common. For some, even though the Hub was a welcoming space with friendly staff, it was ultimately ‘still probation’ and engaging in the commissioned services beyond the mandatory elements of supervision was not chosen. A few spoke of not trusting probation: ‘I don’t trust any probation officer’ (YP12 T3, male age 21) or saw they had done their time in prison and ‘probation just dragged on’ (YP3 T1, male age 22). Despite this, young adults were positive about the Hub and were able to identify ways they benefitted from it:

...They’ve been very helpful here ... I’ve been on licence for two years. ...I’ve had something hanging over my head since I was 16 ...So, December comes; that’s me. (YP25 T3, male aged 22)

7.1 Hub space and young adult workforce

Young adults commented on the specially decorated, colourful Hub space. The welcoming and open environment reflected, for them, a genuinely young adult-first and trauma-informed approach. Some described it as therapeutic. They reported positive relationships with their probation practitioner and valued the individualised support they received that focused on their personal needs, came from a strengths-based approach and saw them foremost as people rather than offenders:

I feel like if I actually wanted to, I could come into probation and just sit down, ...on a day I don’t have probation. They’re very friendly. I’ve got a lot of big brother type people here, or big older sister type people here. (YP25 T3, male aged 22)

⁵ ‘On road’ is a term that denotes youth street-based lifestyles involving violence and criminal behaviour (Levell et al., 2023; Young & Hallsworth, 2011).

Some participants had previous experience of YOS or adult probation and made comparisons. They found the Hub less stigmatising and commented on the 'grey', more securitised style of the adult office. These findings mirror staff perspectives on the benefits of creating a space that is conducive to establishing open and trusting relationships with young adults. Over the longer term, it introduces the possibility for shifting probation culture from one closely focused on managing 'risk' to combine with processes of restorative and 'generative justice' which is practices that respond to crime and punishment in ways that are generative of social relations (McNeill, 2022).

7.2 Responding to the needs of young adults

Young adults commented on the importance of a bespoke service due to the particular life phase they are going through, viewing it as something that comprised a space and time in which they could 'grow' and 'learn'. They recognised it as a service that is reflective of how perspective and sources of influences, such as peer groups are changing rapidly at this age point:

...obviously from 18–25 your whole life is changing, ...from a young teenager, you are basically growing into a young adult, so that transition in itself could possibly be quite difficult for people who may not have support ... with this project and with the people here, they can ... help you with a range of things. ...for instance, if you don't have your family around to tell you, the probation people can help you as well. (YP35 T3, female aged 24)

They talked about how they were consciously trying to move forward and make pro-social associations away from criminogenic activities:

I've matured ... if I was younger I probably would have done it, but now I'm a bit more mature and I realised that I'm not just going to go back... (YP27 T3, male age 19)

The changing attitudes and pro-social thinking these young adults expressed cannot be fully attributed to their Hub engagement, as these are usual life-course processes of

‘developing maturity’. However, they made connections between the young adult-first and strengths-based practices of the Hub and the goals they were achieving.

Everything, my past, my future, how to work through it. How to grow, expand, everything. It’s because he [mentor] also came from a similar background to me, ...he grew up East London same as I did, came from a poor background but he’s doing good for himself. Yes he kept his head high and I’m trying to do the same.
(YP8 T2, male age 21)

Employing people from the local area and with similar experiences was valued by young adults.

7.3 Training and employment opportunities and future aspirations

A common theme in the interviews with young adults was the help they were receiving to secure employment, undertake courses and foster hope for future aspirations. They expressed wanting to work and were frustrated if they were not. Being in work and meaningfully occupied was recognised as genuinely helpful for keeping them on track, stopping them ‘from straying’ and keeping them out of “jail”:

YP34: ...they’ve helped me out to be honest with you. They’ve put me in a better position. If it wasn’t for them, I think I would be in jail right now.

Interviewer: So when you say you would be in jail otherwise, what are they doing exactly?

YP34: Helping me get a job, paying for my courses, paying for things like that.
(YP34 T3, aged 17)

Young adults were conscious of the negative impacts a criminal conviction can have on future opportunities and spoke positively about the ETE service’s connection to companies that take on people with justice system experience. These options and the exploration of routes into self-employment played a critical role in building hope and seeing a future for themselves:

Probation also got me a job with a referral team called Maximus they've got me working for ... [railway track repair] which is good I've got part-time work. (YP8 T2, male aged 21)

7.4 Hub wrap-around support

Individual young adults talked about their engagement with a range of different commissioned services in the Hub, illustrating the wrap-around nature of support some were seeking. Some were attending regular sessions with three professionals: a mentor, a well-being coach and the art therapist for instance, and spoke about how they helped with coping with the challenges of being on probation. The non-judgemental ethos of the Hub and ease of access to staff was greatly valued:

...me and him meet at a local park..., he is always there if I need someone to call. ...Of course, we do talk about my case, we do talk about my arrest, but he looks past that and he just sees me as a person, instead of me as a criminal ...He's really helped me with my anxiety as well. (YP31 T3, male age 20)

These examples illustrate the importance of service provision tailored to individual need and circumstances who typically experienced difficult childhood and family histories, disrupted schooling and criminal justice system experiences at a young age.

Case Study 1 illustrates the myriad of support this man received and demonstrates how a Hub like this can be uniquely meaningful for Asian and Black young men who experience differential and racialised treatment in the criminal justice system (Young, 2014). It illustrates how trusted relationships can enhance peoples' experiences via voluntary sector organisations which develop 'social capital that can in turn facilitate positive resettlement outcomes' as emphasised by Young (2014: 11). This man's experiences also show how concentrating on diversity in the workforce and employing people with lived experience can reach the needs of young people in the system in impactful ways.

Figure 11: Case Study 1: Kyle⁶

Kyle, a 22-year old man, had one month of a two-year licence period remaining when interviewed for a second time in Phase 3. Kyle had spent two years in prison, mostly during the COVID-19 pandemic with little access to any 'purposeful activity'. Kyle had a difficult childhood as a young carer and a disrupted education with school exclusions from Year 7. During his time at the Hub, he completed different training courses and worked in rail track maintenance found through the ETE service. Kyle completed the 'Aspire Higher' peer mentoring programme and was nominated as a mentoring ambassador. With the Hub's support, Kyle was applying for apprenticeships and was keen to embark on a career in digital marketing.

Kyle's mentor commented on the trust that had developed between them; how important the feeling of having someone on 'his side' is for people such as Kyle so they can 'be open' and access the support they need. Kyle's mentor helped by providing guidance around financial management, studying and helping him access training and employment. His mentor said the Hub enabled Kyle to 'think that he could do anything ... it just kind of opened up for him'. Kyle's probation practitioner praised his engagement and talked about how he would spend extra time in the Hub because 'it's a bit of a safe space ... from their lives outside', reflecting the open and informal Hub environment. For Kyle, being on probation in the Hub was a positive experience 'it's been like moulding. Moulding my mentality and stuff' and one which he attributes to being able to move on from the criminal justice system successfully.

Staff suggested if this bespoke young adult service did not exist, the 18–25 age group would not receive the same interventions in adult probation, due to being mixed in with the general population of older ages:

We used to have the YATs, the young adult teams and that was disbanded and they've been mixed in with everybody else and so you'd be expecting ... someone who's 18, 19, to be doing the same as someone who's 30 and 40 and 50. But the point at which they're at in their life, ...the point of understanding that they have is

⁶ Pseudonyms have been given to protect the identity of young adults.

so, so different. ...And more recognition of how they've come to be where they're at and to make sure they don't stay there, but to help them to mature. And to actually find a different path. (Probation Staff 9, T1)

7.5 Importance of clear and consistent information

Young adult interviews revealed that clear communication relating to their sentence was critical; confusion exacerbated the already heightened anxiety surrounding missed appointments or lateness. However, communication gaps were reported mainly in connection to contacting staff. Difficulties with this caused some young adults to be less trustful and wary of probation:

I feel like they're trying to set me up to fail. Because when I miss my community service meetings I'm trying to tell her the reason and they will just basically say it's my fault ... but I would just say that communications should be better. (YP28 T3, male age 18)

Communication issues were also raised in relation to staff departures, absence and changes to an allocated probation practitioner. From a young adult's perspective, this caused confusion knowing who to report to for attendance. This was also raised early in the evaluation when some recounted being moved from the adult caseload into the Y2A Hub disrupting the already settled relationship they had:

[I] had a good relationship with probation officer in the adult team, he was very understanding... (YP12 T2, male age 20)

Probation staff were conscious of the need for consistency and managed cover between themselves to minimise the impact of staffing changes. A few young adults commented on how transitions to a new probation officer or a stand-in one on the day was well co-ordinated:

...I feel like I've got lucky twice, getting two good really understanding probation officers ...So it made that transition quite easy. (YP13 T3, male age 25)

Staff turnover is an inevitable part of managing any organisation: the key is to manage it well. The data suggested probation staff experienced the challenges of staff turnover less problematically compared to commissioned services staff. Commissioned services staff sometimes found it hard to know when the probation practitioner of a young adult they were working closely with had changed.

A separate issue around communication related to UPW. For example, one man explained a situation when a letter from UPW had not reached him saying it 'nearly cost him' his liberty. He emphasised the role his probation officer played to make sure he was not breached erroneously. This again highlights the importance of establishing trust relationships for when skilled professional discretion is required in these fundamental decisions:

...as far as probation are concerned I'm doing alright, but as far as the community service were concerned I was breaching. So, I got a breach letter to my house threatening that I could be going to jail, but in my eyes I've not breached. But in their eyes, because there is a chain of command and communication it almost cost me when it shouldn't have. (YP13 T3, male age 25)

When the Hub is responsible for the sentence management of young adults, it has less control over what they do when undertaking UPW, or how it is enforced or organised. There is scope to consider how UPW work meets the needs of young adults in a similar way to the Hub does more generally.

7.6 Appointment flexibility

Some young adults talked about how probation appointments interfered with their work schedules and earning an income. To be responsive, probation practitioners offer flexibility for people in work and the Hub has a late-night opening at least one day a week. However, because young adults are often on precarious and zero hours contracts, fixed appointments are difficult as they result in giving up work hours that are sometimes offered at short notice:

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Like I could have a shift today, but instead I can't plan for that shift because I have to be at probation. So, I have to go and do a night shift or alternative days to work around probation, which gets in the way a little bit. (YP13 T3, age 25)

Whilst these issues are not inherent to probation, young adults are impacted disproportionately by the particularly precarious nature of work in the 'gig' economy (Montgomery & Baglioni, 2021) making appointment flexibility a key issue.

A few young adults spoke of their fear of coming to the Hub due to its location in a hotspot area of the Borough, and the high chance of running into rival young people. They were having early morning probation appointments and limiting their time at the Hub. One said 'they should listen to young people and their fears in relation to this' (YP27 T3, male age 20). Contingencies are in place within the Hub, such as meeting particular young adults at an office in another part of the Borough, but it was suggested more could be done. Other implications were the travel costs. One man could not travel by bus due to anxiety and trauma from his previous 'on road' lifestyle and knife violence injuries. Getting to appointments was using up his limited 'universal credit' income. Some financial support is available in the Hub on a case-by-case basis for travel to probation appointments. But, again, young adults are much more likely to be experiencing financial hardship and so whilst this affects all people on probation, there is a disproportionate effect on young adults.

8. Young Women's Experiences of the Hub

The number of women on the Newham young adult probation caseload is low. However, evidence shows women in the criminal justice system have gender-specific needs (Ministry of Justice, 2023c). During the planning stage, it was decided women would access the Hub via the women's centre commissioned partnership with the Advance Charity and East London Minerva Wrap Around service.⁷ The women's centre is three kilometres from the Hub in the north of the Borough. It has two Advance Charity staff, a manager and key worker, working in collaboration with Hub probation practitioners. To generate a detailed understanding of the women's centre, the staff based there, the probation practitioners managing a young women's caseload and six women were interviewed.

The six young women were aged between 20 and 25 and were more likely to be living independently so were also managing tenancy agreements, finances and running a household. Four were working, one was a mother of a five-year old. One had a university degree, and one was at university at the point of conviction. Four had been in prison on remand and/or sentenced. Points about imprisonment are important, as prison and re-entry to society are difficult, trauma-inducing experiences and have differential impacts on young adults in stages of developing 'maturity' (Easton & Piper, 2023: 244). Hub probation, women's centre and commissioned services staff were helping young adults overcome these experiences. According to young women and staff, mental health issues, difficult family dynamics through responsibilities on women, and influences within intimate relationships are common features of being a young woman in the criminal justice system:

Mental health is one of the main ones and housing, and ... relationships and understanding family dynamics, ... So for me, I've realised that those three are one

⁷ The Minerva service works with women and girls, aged 15 and above, in contact with the criminal justice system across London (www.advancecharity.org.uk).

of the main things I've been like tackling when I first meet them... (External Partner 10, T3)

As with much research on women in the criminal justice system, the young women spoken to had experiences of traumatic childhoods, demonstrating the need for both age and gender-specific services in probation.

8.1 Women's centre space

The young women found the women's centre to be a calm and therapeutic space with useful essential items available, such as sanitary and personal hygiene products. Furthermore, it was a place where they could discuss issues openly and freely in one-to-one and group session formats. Some preferred the women's centre because it made them feel as if they were attending a normal meeting rather than probation, and the dialogue that came from a strengths-based approach was valued:

It's comfortable, inviting, relaxing, welcoming, lots of like bright colours, relaxing colours, soothing colours, just have a nice atmosphere so you feel like you are not walking into a probation service or you don't feel like a criminal. Just feeling like a normal person walking into a building that is going to a meeting, that's it. (YP4 T1, female age 25)

One woman finding her first-time justice system experience difficult to cope with, liked the privacy of the women's centre saying she could not imagine being in 'this situation' mixed in with men:

This is the first women's only space that I've been in but it's nice, like it feels more free. I couldn't imagine what it would be like going to a centre and there are all these men and all these women, because especially with this situation, ... 'I want the most quietest place possible that I can come'... (YP32 T3, female age 25)

8.2 Trauma, mental ill-health and appointment flexibility

One woman talked about the depression she was going through, which was impacting her probation appointment reliability. She acknowledged staff were understanding, but also of

her fear before appointments. She was near the end of a two-year licence period and recall was an overriding concern. She would prefer if the appointments were less formal and could be arranged to take place out somewhere:

...to have an appointment where it's just like we're sitting on a bench ...Just like a conversation, I can look at it like it's not an appointment. We don't want to look at it as an appointment sometimes. (YP20 T3, female age 25)

Over time, she associated the women's centre with mandatory 'appointments' and had anxiety surrounding attending. There are messages for probation that young people with trauma and mental health difficulties struggle deeply with what can feel like the dominance of risk management practices which can permeate the probation system and subsequent operations.

8.3 Use of services

Young women talked about the usefulness of the services and resources provided at the women's centre. One referred to the advocacy role the key worker was helping in with her young son:

I've got people ... who are in my corner giving me the best advice and going to be helping me go to meetings with the school as my advocacy. ...just giving me that support that I need as a young mum. (YP4 T1, female age 25)

Some women chose to have their probation appointments at the Hub instead of the women's centre because they wanted to be in 'normal' and socialising type environments after imprisonment at age 16 for 3.5 years:

One of her reasons ... was that it's just the environment, all the different professionals there, everybody knows you. It almost feels like a family ... and she felt like there was just a lot more on offer there than here ...It's busy, there's an atmosphere. (Probation 19, T3)

Figure 12: Case Study 2: Leah

Leah, a 21-year old woman, had just finished a one-year period on licence when she was interviewed. She had received a four-year ten-month prison sentence at age 16 and spent 3.5 years in prison in total. Having been in prison from a young age, Leah experienced difficulties on re-entry: she struggled with a lack of familiarity with the outside world and had not been able to develop practical independent living skills such as: cooking, budgeting, opening a bank account, time-keeping and making study plans. Leah came out of prison as a care leaver and moved into independent accommodation. Despite having support through a leaving care personal assistant and a job in a bakery, which she said was useful for providing structure in the immediate period after release, she experienced some challenges. Leah worked with a core group of professionals at the Hub including her probation practitioner, a well-being coach and an art-therapist who helped her to devise strategies to manage and cope with her new environment. This practical and emotional support helped her keep her bakery job, attend her probation appointments and look after herself. Leah said the wrap-around support and welcome access to the Hub space had helped her to successfully complete her sentence and move on from the criminal justice system.

Another young woman noted the value of a women-only space due to the nature of experiences some women have been through:

...because some women could have gone through domestic or abuse or something where they don't feel comfortable speaking to ... a guy at probation ... so if it's just women and women probation officers I feel ... for people that have gone through that, maybe they will find it more easier to speak about things and not hide anything. (YP35 T3, female age 24)

The numbers of young women on the caseload and who were interviewed are small. However, the findings point to the need for a gender-specific service, offering the choice of attending a women-only or a mixed gender service, as well as a high degree of flexibility in how young women in particular are supported by probation.

9. Conclusions and Implications

This evaluation examined the implementation of a young adult probation Hub, how probation and commissioned services collaborated to deliver it and the ways young adults benefitted.

9.1 Benefits and challenges of the Y2A Hub

Staff experiences

The Hub was designed to address the specific needs of young adults on probation through the delivery of a co-located probation and commissioned services model. The Hub was successfully delivered as a separate and bespoke young adult service within Newham probation. By the end of this evaluation, young adults were accessing different services and staff felt positive about the impact it was having on compliance and engagement, the successful completion of sentences and, perhaps most importantly, young adults' lives. Throughout the evaluation, staff were able to identify success stories showing how the Hub supported young adults to progress by gaining employment and training places, attain housing security, re-establish family bonds and form pro-social relationships.

A key strength of the Hub was the co-location of services delivered under the same roof. This enabled quick and easy referrals into useful services that aided the engagement and achievements of young adults. The immediacy at which referrals could be made was seen as one of the Hub's greatest assets. A strong leadership and management team with effective oversight helped to create a staff identity, shared ethos and commitment to the cohort. The 'young adult first' practice and the trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches were integral to the Hub.

Staff working in the Hub expressed high levels of job satisfaction. The knowledge exchange across professional practice and ongoing specialist training was greatly valued and led to feelings of expanded skill sets and extra specialisms. The dedicated speech and language service was seen by staff as vital in responding to the needs of young adults with high levels of 'neurodiversity' who are largely undiagnosed. The innovative

‘communication passport’ helped the young adults to successfully access education, employment and other services.

At times, tensions between mandatory probation and the voluntary services were raised. The focus they have on building trusting relationships for meaningful engagement, in mentoring for instance, might be easier to achieve if delivered outside of the probation Hub. Young adults’ perceptions of probation as an enforcement agency can lead to them opting out for that reason. Some challenges lie outside of the Hub’s capacity to help, making it difficult for staff to address and support young adults comprehensively. Common examples were the presence of acute mental health problems and severe housing need among some young adults.

Young adults’ experiences

The welcoming and friendly environment created in the Hub staffed by people with a special interest in this age and trained to recognise the impacts of childhood adversity helped young adults open up in their requests for support. The diversity of staff including people with similar experiences to the people on the caseload enabled trusting and productive relationships. The caseload was very diverse in terms of ethnicity and this was reflected in the workforce. Experiences of this nature embed elements of ‘procedural justice’ with young adult probation. Young adults saw the Hub as a service that met their needs. The mentoring and coaching, ETE, well-being and speech and language were particularly valued by those who had accessed them. In the eyes of young adults, employment support was critical (including self-employment support and training opportunities) and helped foster a sense of hope for their futures. Young adults need clear communication and flexibility in appointment times especially given their unique experiences of the employment market and experiences of poverty and trauma. Young women were also positive about the Hub and the women’s centre for the separate gender-responsive, trauma-informed and flexible approach they offered.

Some issues hindering the flexibility of the Hub to operate in a fully ‘young adult-first’ way was communicated by young adults. These related to mandatory aspects of a Community Order such as UPW, that the Hub does not allocate or deliver. UPW is delivered differently to the Hub’s ethos and this was conflicting for young people. This suggests a need for

further thought around how a Hub such as this could interact with other aspects of the system which have not adopted a young-adult first approach.

9.2 Implications

Staff and young adults were unanimously in favour of rolling out similar young adult probation Hubs in other parts of London and more widely. This evaluation raises some important implications and points for consideration if the decision for wider rollout is made.

Planning phase

- If the Hub model was transferred elsewhere, it would need a set of core components including: co-located services in a dedicated, welcoming space; a workforce trained and motivated to work with young adults; flexibility around breach and enforcement; trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches; and processes that engage young adults and celebrate their successes.
- In the planning phase, close attention needs to be paid to the commissioning and procurement process that involves complex data sharing agreements. Sufficient time and resourcing needs to be factored in. The value of leadership and staff training needs to be prioritised.
- The location of a young adult probation Hub inherently sends a message about the balance between statutory and voluntary services. The take up of support services by marginalised groups may be able to be expanded if located in neutral, community settings and some voluntary services preferred if they could operate in a community setting.

Implementation

- Hubs need locally commissioned services that meet the needs of young adults. In Newham, the most widely-used services were mentoring and coaching, ETE, well-being support and speech and language. These services provide a solid foundation as minimum requirements, but there are likely to be specific support needs that differ by local area.
- Keys to successful implementation include: a focus on needs-led referrals to voluntary services to avoid possible risks of 'overloading' and overwhelming

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young adults; clarity about what services are offered; clear sequencing of interventions appropriate to needs; and careful management and oversight of staff changes and handovers. Staff turnover is inevitable but with young adults it can have particularly detrimental effects because of the importance placed on trust relationships. This needs to be managed carefully in future iterations of young adult hubs by focusing on continuity, and clear communication.

- Continuous feedback from young adults is necessary in developing and maintaining the relevance of provision within a Hub. If a service is to truly engage young adults, it is important young adults see it as their service and that their voices are listened to and acted upon.
- Offering a separate women-only probation space is important, but a flexible approach to where women are supervised is needed.
- Consideration could be given to how UPW is delivered (e.g. supervisors recognising the different needs of young adults) and the types of UPW projects young adults are placed onto (e.g. to help with employment if necessary).
- When working with young adults in the criminal justice system, success can sometimes take time to come to fruition, especially when multiple forms of disadvantage are a factor. Therefore, while public protection is the primary aim of probation, hubs should think about success more broadly, with a focus on intermediate outcomes and alternative measures (including obtaining training and education, gaining employment, establishing pro-social relationships). More systematic recording of data is needed on these outcomes and the Hub should build in ways of measuring impacts including intermediate outcomes if the model is implemented elsewhere.
- The wider rollout of young adult probation hubs might not be desirable, or even achievable in PDUs with lower caseloads. A dedicated young adult (18–25-year olds) team within mainstream adult probation that currently operates in some PDU areas, might be a better way forward.

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Appendix A

Interview Schedules

These interview schedules formed the basis of the interviews across all three phases. At Phases 1 and 2, the focus was implementation, ongoing delivery, changes to the delivery model or policy and the identification of success as well as aspects of delivery that were working well or needed improvement. At Phase 3, interviews were more focused on overall lessons and identifying barriers and facilitators to implementation as well as key successes across the whole pilot period.

Probation practitioners

Broad/intro questions:

- Please can you start by providing some background to your role within the probation service and within the Newham young adult hub.
- What is your professional/career background? How long have you been a probation officer?
- Why did you decide to work in the young adult probation hub? What are your motivations to work with this age group? What do you want to achieve?
- Thinking broadly about the hub, what is it trying to achieve?
- What do you think the MoJ/MOPAC are trying to achieve by funding the hub? [probe if sense of misalignment]
- How do you see / describe your role to others?
- What training have you had in relation to working with young adults ['developing maturity', use of plain language and communication etc.]

Describing the hub:

- How would you describe the hub to a fellow CJ professional?
- Do you know what evidence of model underpins the hub? Or why the hub has been implemented in this way? Do you know why was this chosen? What are the pros and cons to this model? Do you know what evidence underpins the decision to structure the hub in this way?

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- Can you describe an average working day to me...
- What is the general operational design of the young adult service? Are elements of youth justice practice incorporated in the way you work with young adults? What are these?
- How does young adult front-line probation officer practice differ to that used within the adult probation service? Are you using the 'choices and changes' resource pack? Is this working?
- What services are available for you to refer young adults on your caseload? Are these sufficient? Are there any gaps?
- Are there any challenges with delivering the hub model in the way you are being asked to? [PROMPT: expected referrals to external partner agencies, maintaining the 'sequencing' and prioritising need within a young adult's sentence plan].
- What capacity do you have to influence changes to the operating model of the young adult hub?

Setting up the hub:

- Were you involved in setting up the hub? If so:
- What was your involvement in the design of the young adult probation hub model?
- What went well with implementing the young adult hub model? What has needed altering and why?
- What could have been better?

What advice would you have for another Probation Division Unit in London or across England and Wales in setting up a hub like this?

Analysing/evaluating the hub

- Which services are you finding most useful for the young adults on your caseload?
- What is working well at the moment in the hub? What is the best thing about the hub so far?
- What is not working so well? What has been the biggest challenge so far?
- In your experience, are young adults more compliant? More engaged?

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- Are you seeing evidence of improved outcomes for the young adults who are accessing the hub?
- Are some young adults more responsive to the young adult service than others? If yes, what explains that?
- Are you seeing lower levels of breach and recall?

Evidencing the hub:

- Can you give us any examples of good practice?
- Can you think of any success stories?
- How do you think the hub's 'success' should be defined/measured?

Improving the hub:

- What needs to happen to improve the young adult service over the next 6 months?
- What do you think you might stop doing over the next 6 months?
- Do you have the autonomy to do this? What do you need to be able to achieve these changes? What capacity do you have to influence changes to the operating model of the young adult hub?

Final questions:

- You have been working here for ?? months – what are your general thoughts/overall impressions?
- The hub is funded until March 2023 – do you think it should carry on beyond that?
- We will be interviewing people again in 6 months – what do you think we should be asking people then?
- Is there anything we have missed that we need to know?

External Partners

Broad/intro questions:

- How did you get involved in working in this area? Do you have a particular interest in this group?

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- Please can you start by providing some background to the service you represent and why it is involved with young adult offenders and the Newham hub project?
- Was your service involved with Newham probation before the young adult hub was established? How was it involved?
- What are you/your service trying to achieve with the young adults?
- What sort of needs do the young adults in the Newham probation hub have? Are these distinct or different from other groups and in other areas?
- Thinking broadly about the hub, what do you think it is trying to achieve?

Using/working with the hub:

- How does your organisation/you work with the hub?
- Your organisation must rely on the referrals made by probation staff of young adults to your service. In terms of the 'sequencing' of priorities and needs of the young adults where would you say your service is positioned?
- How would you have worked with age group prior to this specialised service? Prior to this co-location of services?
- How are relationships with the other organisations working at the hub?
- How do you communicate?
- Where does your work overlap?
- What systems do you share?
- What are the pros / cons?
- What does good partnership work look like? How well is this met at the hub?

Analysing/evaluating the hub

- From your perspective what is working well at the moment in the hub? What is the best thing about the hub so far? What difference has it made to the way you are working with this age group?
- What is not working so well? How could these areas be improved? Is there any duplication of service?
- What are the key challenges in working in the hub?
- Is information shared sufficiently between probation and your service? What are the barriers and how does it impact your work? Are there any tensions/conflicts

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between the different agencies/organisations? If yes, describe these and reflect on how they might be resolved.

- Are you seeing evidence of improved outcomes for the young adults who are within the hub and who use your service?
- Are there any particular groups who do not respond to the service you provide or are more difficult than other young people to engage with? What groups are these and what are the barriers?

Evidencing the hub:

- How do you think the hub's 'success' should be defined/measured? What does success look like for your service?
- Can you give us any examples of good practice?
- Can you think of any success stories?

Improving the hub:

- What needs to happen to improve the hub over the next 6 months?
- What do you think the hub needs to stop doing over the next 6 months?

Final questions:

- You have been working with the hub for ?? months – what are your overall impressions?
- Is this hub model/project specific to social and economic demographics and problems of Newham/East London? How? How could the model be transferred across other London probation teams and more widely across England and Wales? What would need to be considered?
- The hub is funded until March 2023 – do you think it should carry on beyond that? Why?
- We will be interviewing people again in 6 months – what do you think we should be asking people then?
- Is there anything we have missed that we need to know? Is there anyone else we should speak to?

Managers/leaders

- What is your professional/career background?
- Please can you start by providing some background to your role within the probation service and within the Newham hub?
- Thinking broadly about the hub, what is it trying to achieve/what are its goals?
- Why did you decide to take on the Hub manager role? Was it a particular ambition to work with young adults (18–25 year olds)? What do you see as the distinct needs and strengths of this age group? [PROMPT: early independence, accommodation, learning disabilities etc.]

Describing the hub:

- Can you describe the general hub operating model and structure? [PROMPT: co-location of services] Why was this chosen? What are the pros and cons to this model?
- What evidence underpins the decision to structure the hub in this way?
- What does practice in the hub look like on a day-to-day basis?
- What services are available in the hub? What services are missing from the Hub? Why are these not included?

Setting up the hub:

- What was your involvement in creating the hub?
- What has gone well with implementation?
- What could have better?
- What have been some of the challenges with setting up the hub?
- Are there any particular difficulties creating this specialist young adult probation team and service within an already existing adult probation team?
- How have the partner agencies that are working alongside the hub been selected? Did the Newham adult probation service always work with these agencies i.e. mentoring and coaching, mental health etc., or have new groups based on young adult need been included?
- How was your team of probation officers and probation service officers selected to join the young adult hub?

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- Is there any resistance from within the wider probation team to implement this specialist young adult service and why? How is it reconciled?
- Are there any tensions between the different agencies/organisations working within the Hub? If yes, describe these. How could these be resolved? [PROMPT re pressure to refer]
- When we first heard about the hub we were told about maturity screening tool – why was this not used?

Analysing/evaluating the hub

- Which services are you finding most useful? Which aspect of the young adult hub and services/partner agencies do you find the most useful?
- What is working well at the moment in the hub? What is the best thing about the hub so far?
- What is not working so well? What has been the biggest challenge so far?
- In your experience, are young adults more engaged in a model that is tailored towards their particular age group? More compliant?
- How does the hub work in relation to the courts and sentencing and sentence planning – what is working well here?
- Are you seeing evidence of improved outcomes for the young adults who are accessing the hub?

Evidencing the hub:

- How do you think the hub's 'success' should be defined/measured? [PROMPT: ask for detailed description beyond 'reduced risk', 'reduced reoffending' i.e. smaller gains]
- Can you give us any examples of good practice?
- Can you think of any success stories?

Improving the hub:

- What needs to happen to improve the hub over the next 6 months?
- What do you think you might stop doing that over the next 6 months?
- Do you have the autonomy to do this? What do you need to be able to achieve these changes?

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- Are there any structural/policy constraints to doing what you need to do to improve the hub? Is there an alignment between what you are trying to achieve, and what the MoJ and MOPAC want from the hub?

Final questions:

- You have been working here for [ADD] months – what are your general thoughts/overall experiences?
- The hub is funded until March 2023 [OR MAYBE LONGER] – do you think it should carry on beyond that?
- We will be interviewing people again in 6 months – what do you think we should be asking people then?
- Is there anything we have missed that we need to know?

Young adult interview schedules

- Tell me a bit about yourself ... what's it like being a young person.
- Try to capture key things but not intrusive: age, gender, ethnicity, first language, school/education, housing, family, social service/care, children, health, socialising, money.
- "I have never been a YP on probation, so you are the expert here"...
- What has your experience of probation or the YOT been so far?
- Try to capture: sentence – a bit of history but mainly on general experiences and attitudes. What has impact of being on probation/in YOT been on life/family/education/work?
- If was in YOT – how is probation different? What happened when you moved from the YOT to probation? Is it better? Worse? How was the move across to the (young) adult probation service? Did you know what to expect?
- Do you know/ what do you know about this new Y2A hub?
- Try to capture: how often attend, what happens when attend, what services being accessed.
- Is it/ how is/ what do you get that is/ different from what you got before?
- Has it changed your relationship with your PO/ attitude to Probation?
- Does it encourage you to come to appointments more?

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- Do you get what you need from Probation? (How do you think Probation could help you more? What do you need? What would help you the most?)
- Can you tell me about the best experience you have had with probation?
- Can you tell me about the worst experience you have had with probation?
- If you were asked to design the most useful/ best probation service for young people – what would it look like?
- What are your plans for the future?
- How do you think probation could/might help you get there?

Young women interview schedules

- Tell me a bit about yourself (Capture key things but not intrusive: age, ethnicity, first language, school/education, housing, family, social services/state care, children, health, socialising, money)
- Previous experience with the criminal justice system (police, courts, YOT, prison custody)
- What is the penalty/sentence you are serving? What are the different requirements expected of you?
- In what ways is your offending associated with background experiences e.g. school exclusion, family problems, experience of abuse, state care, early parenthood, peer friendship groups, leisure lifestyle *etc.*
- How are these experiences gendered and distinct to you as a young woman? (e.g. type of peer group, young mother and primary carer *etc.*)
- How are these experiences distinct to you as a young woman from a Black, Asian or minoritized background?
- What is particular to young women on probation that requires a separate service to young men?
- What previous specialist service provision have you had during your young, teenage and young adult years that has been in place to support you with any issues you have had and how did they help you? (e.g. social services, mental health, family and domestic violence, specialist education, young carer, gender

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clinics, sexuality, addictions, risk of exploitation e.g. sexual, county lines, partner violence *etc.*)

- What was the quality service delivery within those previously approached e.g. professional staffing levels, disconnected services, lack of joined-up support. Any inappropriate, discriminatory service responses?
- What barriers have you/your parents, family faced accessing any of the services you needed to help you overcome problems you were facing in your young, teenage and young adult years? [were there any barriers based on eligibility (e.g. age, level of risk, multiple needs, being a young woman and gendered forms of service and social exclusion)]
- If the young woman has been in prison, what relevant gendered/support was available? How useful was the resettlement plan that was put in place for you in terms of providing stability e.g. housing security, protecting vulnerability.
- The Y2A project the young men are supervised within has a range of onsite services such as well-being, substance use support, speech and language, mentoring and coaching *etc.* Do you have access to these services as a young woman under probation in Newham?
- What choice did you have to be managed within a general young adult probation team rather than a gender-specific one? In what ways is the separation of the male and female services useful or not useful?
- What diversion from the criminal justice system mechanisms (diversion and liaison services) should have been in place for you? (policing level, prosecution, courts, sentencing *etc.*)
- In what ways were your policing, courts, jury trial, sentencing, prison, pre-trial, remand gendered experiences?
- What is your appraisal of your connection to useful community services, ability to access different services, functional relationships within and outside family, pro-social values and attitudes, positive hope and aspirations *etc.* (e.g. social capital) and how does this facilitate or impede you?
- What support services do you envisage beyond your time on probation to aid your desistance journey?

Sheffield Hallam University

Process evaluation of the Newham Y2A Hub. Evaluating the implementation of a specialist youth to adulthood transitions service in probation.

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