

LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE
& RUTLAND

Preventing Serious Violence After School

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www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk

Introduction

Each year the Violence Reduction Network produces a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) which provides a comprehensive assessment of serious violence across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). The SNA draws upon local and national data to provide an overview of the nature, extent and geography of serious violence in LLR, along with the profile of perpetrators and victims of serious violence ([7](#)).

Over the course of the past five years, a consistent finding from the Strategic Needs Assessment is that serious violence is most frequently committed in the afternoon through to the late evening with the most prevalent time of day being 3pm (1500 – 1559hrs) – a time which is commonly associated with the end of the school day.

This briefing aims to provide partners with recent data on serious violence which occurs after school and more specifically, the nature, extent and hotspot locations of this problem. It also brings together the evidence on the approaches and activities which are likely to be effective at preventing serious violence within this context.

The local definition of serious violence used within this briefing is the one adopted by the VRN partnership following the commencement of the Serious Violence Duty (2023):

“Violence resulting in significant physical injury and other serious harm, including sexual violence. Violence may be committed with or without weapons, and may take place in domestic or public places”

The offence groups which will be focused on through this report are:

- Violence with Injury
- Public Disorder
- Robbery of Personal Property
- Robbery of Business Property
- Arson
- Homicide

Nature and Extent of Serious Violence After School

Over the past two years, the volume of public place offences which took place between 3 – 4pm has increased by 4% when comparing 2023 against 2022. Analysing the rates by age group shows that under 18s (followed by under 25s) are the cohort with the greatest rates of perpetration.

When looking at the nature of serious violence after school and focusing specifically on those victims and suspects/offenders aged 18 and under, data shows that the majority of offences were within the ‘Assault with Injury’ group and is mostly made up of ABH (actual bodily harm) level of offences. It should be noted that ABH is a less serious offence within the ‘Assault with Injury’ group and typically involves less serious injury.

The second most common offence committed after school is ‘Robbery of Personal Property’ making up over 10% of the total number of offences for both cohorts.

Offence Type	Victims Under 18	Suspects/Offenders Under 18
Assault with Injury	83.5%	78.3%
Robbery of Personal Property	10.1%	10.3%
Assault with Intent to Cause Serious Harm	2.8%	2.2%
Affray / Offences Against State	1.6%	7.1%

Table 1: Proportion of serious violence offences in public places between 3-4pm involving under 18s by offence group (January – December 2023) across LLR (Source: Leicestershire Police)

Timing of Serious Violence After School

Month of the Year

The chart below shows the rate per 1000 of offences committed between 3-4pm between January and December 2023. The data shows each cohort follows a similar trend of peaks and troughs, and highlights that offences committed by those under 18 show the highest rates for the majority of months over this period, with under 25 rates only being higher in September. Peak months of March, May, and June were identified for both cohorts, with a notable decrease seen over the summer months (July–August).

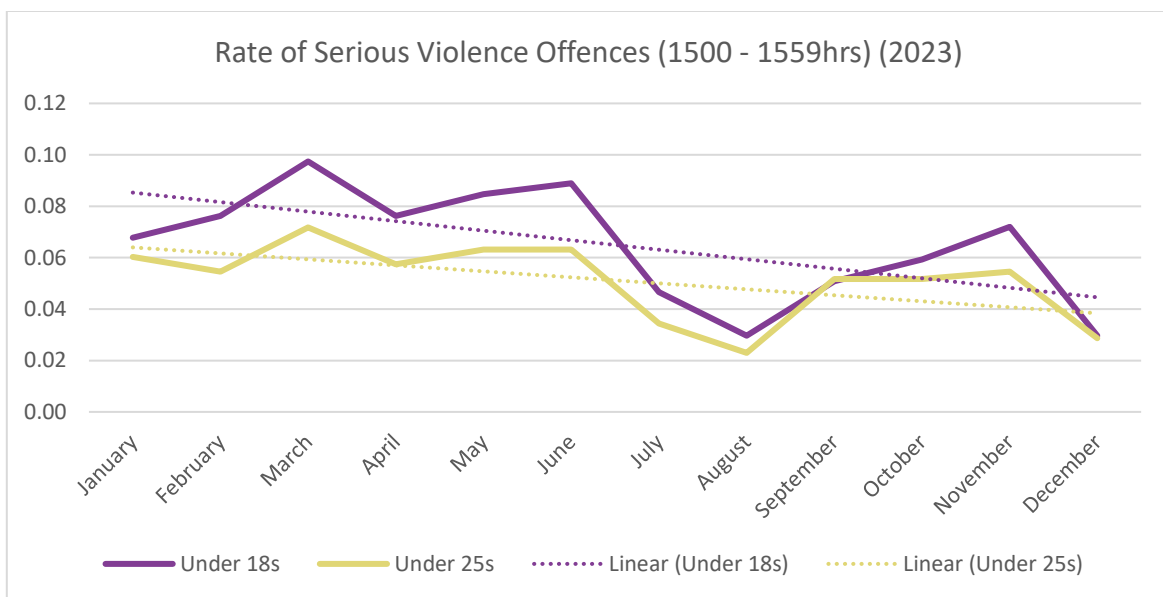


Figure 1: Rate of serious violence offences in public places between 3-4pm (January – December 2023) across LLR (Source: Leicestershire Police)

Day of the Week

Focusing on under 18s, the data shows a greater distribution of offences during the week (Monday – Friday) compared to the weekend (Saturday – Sunday) with the daily proportions seen on a weekday being roughly 2-3 times larger than the proportions seen at the weekend. The proportion of offences Monday – Friday are relatively consistent, with no significant peak day identified.

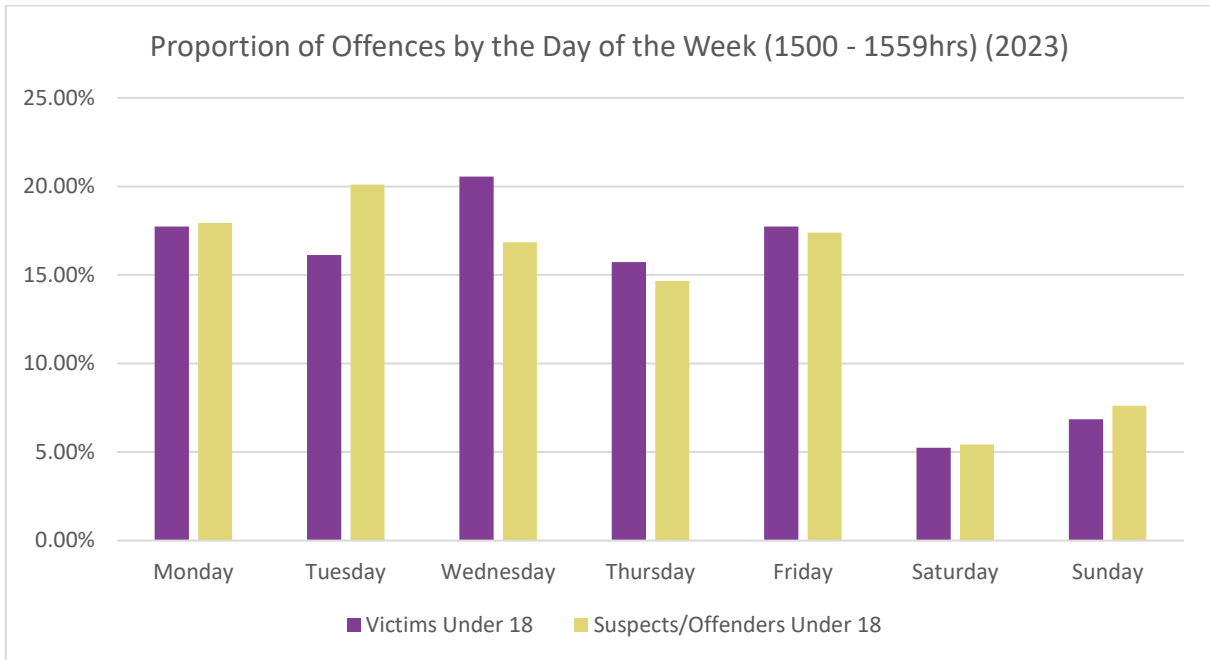


Figure 2: Proportion of serious violence offences in public places between 3-4pm involving under 18s by day of the week (January – December 2023) across LLR (Source: Leicestershire Police)

Distribution of Serious Violence After School

In terms of where after-school violence is most likely to take place, both cohorts of victims and suspects/offenders report similar proportions across each area with West Leicester, East Leicester, Hinckley & Blaby, and Charnwood being the top areas. South Leicester has a similar proportion of victims under 18 to Charnwood, despite having a lower proportion of suspects/offenders under 18.

Neighbourhood Policing Area	Victims Under 18	Suspects/Offenders Under 18
West Leicester	20.4%	17.9%
East Leicester	15.3%	15.8%
Hinckley and Blaby	14.0%	12.0%
Charnwood	10.2%	12.5%
South Leicester	10.2%	7.1%
Harborough and Wigston	8.9%	10.9%
Melton and Rutland	8.9%	6.5%
North West Leicestershire	8.1%	8.7%
Central Leicester	3.8%	3.3%

Table 2: Proportion of serious violence offences in public places between 3-4pm involving under 18s by offence location (Neighbourhood Policing Area) (January – December 2023) across LLR (Source: Leicestershire Police)

Profile of Perpetrators and Victims of Serious Violence After School

Crime data reveals that those aged 10-14 are most at risk of being a victim of serious violence across LLR between 3-4pm. The next age group most at risk is those aged 15-19. Analysing the individual ages reveals the greatest proportion of victims at this time of day are aged between 12-15 with an individual peak at 15 years old.

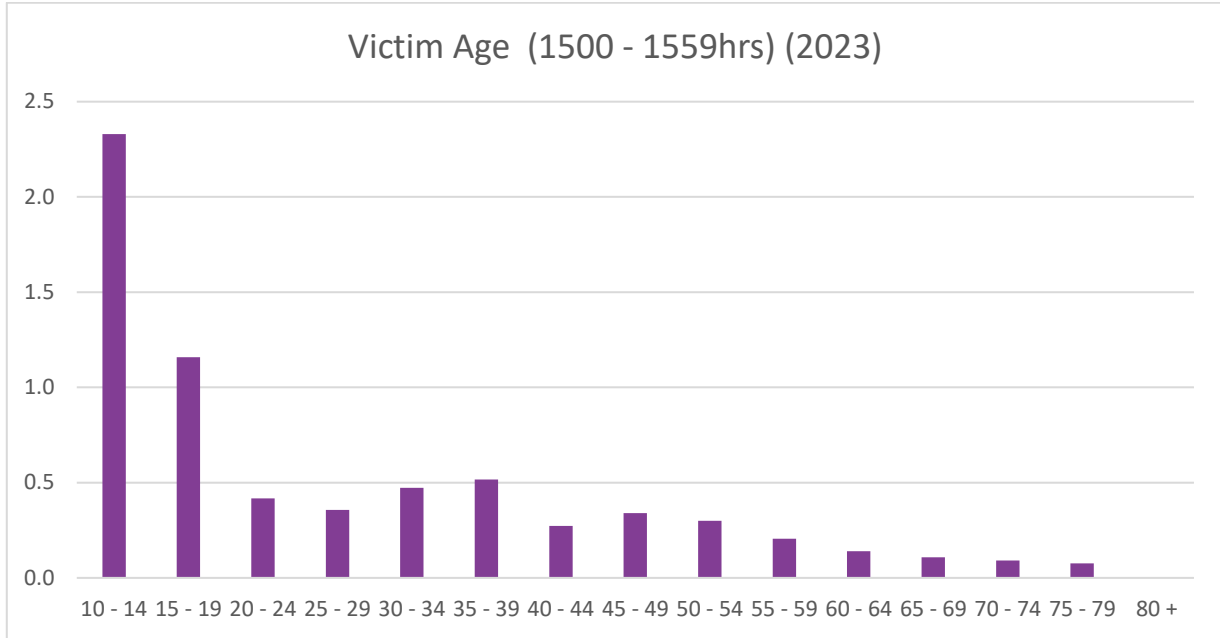


Figure 3: Rate (per 1000 population) of victims by age group (at date of offence) for serious violence offences committed between 1500 – 1559hrs in public places across LLR (January – December 2023) (Source: Leicestershire Police)

The chart below shows the ages of suspected perpetrators and also identifies 10-14 as the peak age group, followed by 15-19. Looking at the individual ages, the greatest proportion of suspected perpetrators are aged between 12-15 with 15-year-olds again showing the most significant peak. Therefore, the two key age ranges are the same as shown in Figure 3, and both figures show a similar distribution of those aged under or over 20, despite a slightly greater distribution to the older ages when looking at suspects/perpetrators compared to the data for victims.

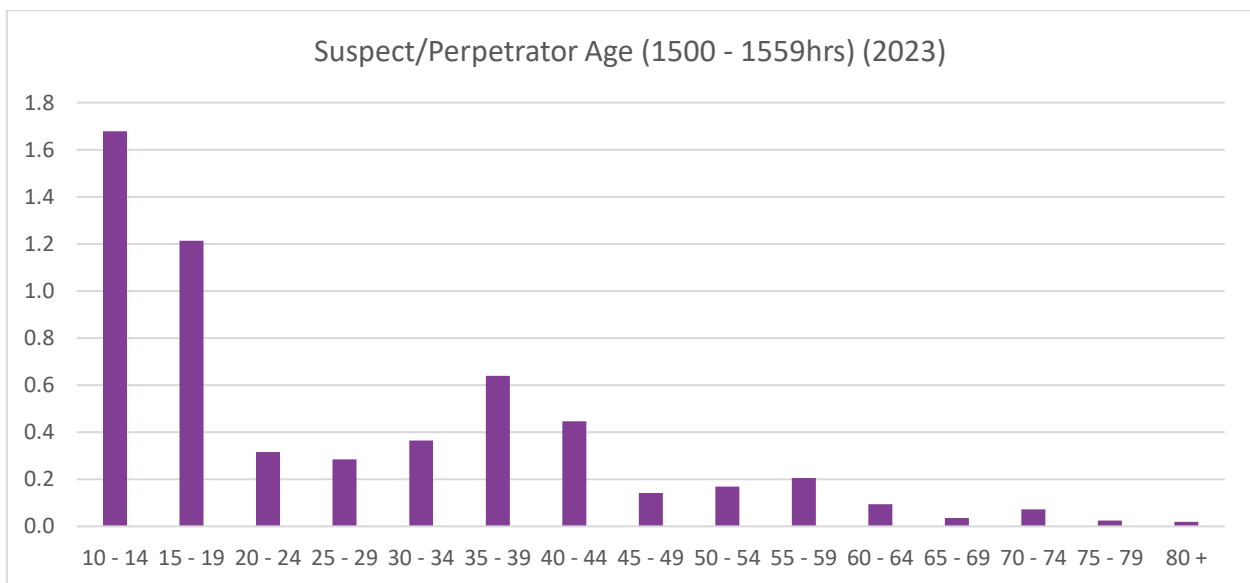


Figure 4: Rate (per 1000 population) of suspected perpetrators by age group (at date of offence) for serious violence offences committed between 1500 – 1559hrs in public places across LLR (January – December 2023) (Source: Leicestershire Police)

The table below shows the proportion of males and females for victims and suspects/offenders aged under 18. Both cohorts show males making up the majority, but a greater proportion of males are committing offences compared to being the victim. It should also be noted that females make up a significant minority of both cohorts. Similar proportions are also noted when looking at individuals of all ages and under 25s, though the data for all ages in 2023 shows a higher proportion of female victims, (38.3%).

	Victims Under 18s	Suspect/Offenders Under 18
Male	66.8%	69.4%
Female	33.2%	30.6%

Table 3: Proportion of victims and suspected perpetrators under 18 by gender for serious violence offences committed between 1500 – 1559hrs in public places across LLR (January – December 2023) (Source: Leicestershire Police)

Table 4 below provides a breakdown of the areas where victims and suspects/offenders aged under 18 and are involved in violence after school reside. Both cohorts report similar proportions across each area with West Leicester, East Leicester and Charnwood being in the top three areas for suspects/offenders, with Hinckley and Blaby replacing Charnwood when looking at victims. Charnwood has the largest disparity between the proportion of offenders compared to the victim data, with 15% of suspect/offenders of serious violence offences in 2023 residing there, compared to 10% of victims.

Neighbourhood Policing Area (Residency)	Victims Under 18s	Suspect/Offenders Under 18
West Leicester	20.4%	17.5%
East Leicester	15.7%	18.9%
Hinckley and Blaby	13.9%	12.7%
South Leicester	10.4%	7.1%
Charnwood	10.0%	15.6%
Melton and Rutland	9.1%	6.1%
Harborough and Wigston	8.3%	9.0%
North West Leicestershire	8.3%	10.4%
Central Leicester	4.4%	4.3%

Table 4: Proportion of victims and suspected perpetrators under 18 by residency (Neighbourhood Policing Area) for serious violence offences committed between 1500 – 1559hrs in public places across LLR (January – December 2023) (Source: Leicestershire Police)

Preventing serious violence after school

Implementing high quality, evidenced-based interventions is key to preventing and reducing serious violence. There is a growing body of evidence on effective interventions and approaches for diverting young people away from crime and violence and this section provides an overview of the programmes which show most promise. The section concludes by providing summaries of and links to local services which could also play a role in reducing after school violence.

The Evidence

Both the [College of Policing](#) and the [Youth Endowment Fund](#) have produced toolkits which summarise the best available research evidence about different approaches to preventing young people from becoming involved in crime and violence. Below is a summary – based upon the CoP and YEF toolkits – of the approaches and interventions which have most relevance to preventing violence after school.

After-school programmes

FIND OUT MORE

After-school programmes could prevent violence by supervising children during this time. The activities in after-school programmes could also lead to skill development, school engagement and pro-social behaviour. After-school programmes are typically implemented in school buildings but can be delivered by either school or external staff. Programmes often take place regularly throughout the school week and involve activities, such as:

- Academic support, tutoring or help with homework
- Enrichment activities including sport or art
- Activities to develop social and conflict resolution skills
- Mentoring

After-school programmes appear to be less effective when they only include recreation or non-academic activities so developing useful skills should be prioritised. Similarly, larger impacts are seen amongst 11-14 years and when activities are fun and interesting but supervised and structured.

Research suggests that, on average, after-school programmes can reduce crime overall by 8% and externalising behaviours by 14%.

Sport programmes

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Research suggests that programmes which engage at-risk or crime-involved young people in regular, organised sport or physical activity could lead to reductions in crime and violence. Programmes might be delivered by a charity, sports club or youth worker. They could involve both team sports, like football and basketball, or individual sports and physical activities, like boxing or dance.

Sport programmes might protect young people from involvement in crime and violence through supporting positive development (e.g. new skills), direct prevention (e.g. reduce exposure to negative influences), and providing a platform to engage in other helpful interventions (e.g. counselling, substance support).

Sport programmes are most effective when participating young people develop strong, trusting relationships with the adults running the session, when they are delivered in safe and accessible locations and tailored to needs and interests, and when they connect children with other positive interventions (e.g. education, training or employment opportunities).

Sport programmes could have a high impact on crime and violence, and have desirable impacts on reducing aggression and improving mental health.

Social skills training

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Social skills training supports children to think before they act, understand other people's perspectives, communicate effectively, and use strategies for managing impulsiveness or aggression.

Social skills training can be delivered through universal programmes, which work with all children, or through programmes which work in a targeted way with children who could benefit from more support. Programmes are often delivered at school through structured lessons and can vary in intensity from a single, short session to 40 or more sessions over eight months or more. Activities can include role playing, video demonstrations of positive behaviours and relaxation and deep breathing techniques.

SST programmes are most effective when they are targeted at children who need more intensive support, at groups of boys, and at nine- to ten-year olds.

On average SST programmes have reduced the number of children involved in crime by 32%, and are likely to have a significant impact on preventing violence.

Hot spots policing

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Locations with higher levels of crime and violence are known as 'hot spots'. Hot spots tend to form in small locations such as sections of streets or parks, areas around train stations, shops, pubs or clubs. Research shows that 58% of all crime happens in the top 10% of places with the most serious crime. Hot spots policing identifies locations where crime is most concentrated and focuses policing resources and activities on them. There are two main approaches to policing hot spots:

- Problem-oriented policing (POP), which aims to understand the root causes of crime in hot spot locations. It involves designing and implementing tailored interventions to reduce crime.
- Increased police presence, which aims to deter offenders from committing crimes in hot spot areas by increasing either the number of visits or the amount of time police officers spend in the hot spots.

Research suggests that hot spots policing can reduce violence crime by 14%, overall offending by 17%, drug offences by 30% and property crime by 16%.

Intervening on the journey to and from school

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There are a number of interventions which aim to help keep children and young people safe on their journey to and from school. For example, the 'Step Together' programme which has been tested in the West Midlands sees trained adult 'chaperones' based along routes to school, acting as trusted adults and a point of contact. Their job is to de-escalate potential violence and to build positive relationships with children and young people. Young people, schools, local communities and the police have come together to identify the key routes to and from school which are 'hot spots' for crime and violence.

The findings from the implementation and process evaluation of the 'Step Together' programme can be found [here](#).

This intervention is currently being tested by the Youth Endowment Fund to assess how effective is in reducing crime and violence before and after school.

Anti-bullying programmes

FIND OUT MORE

Anti-bullying programmes aim to reduce bullying in schools. They typically involve both the children involved in bullying, as well as other students, school staff, parents, and the wider community. Programmes tend to include one or more of the following activities.

- Understanding the causes of bullying.
- A whole-school approach. Many programmes will aim to develop whole-school policies and ensure these are implemented consistently.
- Training for staff.
- Activities with children.

Children who have bullied others are more likely to become involved in crime and violence. By reducing bullying in school, anti-bullying programmes might also prevent children and young people from becoming involved in serious offences later in their life.

Research suggests that anti-bullying programmes could lead to a small reduction in the number of children involved in violent crime.

Interventions to prevent school exclusion

FIND OUT MORE

Research has aimed to understand whether a range of different interventions might keep children safe by supporting them to stay in school. Some interventions work directly with individual children. This could include:

- Counselling or specialist therapy from community mental health services.
- Activities to develop social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, relationship and communication skills, and decision-making.
- Therapeutic techniques to help students regulate their behaviour and develop appropriate coping strategies.
- Mentoring which pairs students with a mentor who can provide pastoral or academic support.
- Academic tutoring.

Another set of approaches work across the whole school. For example, the 'SaferSanerSchools' programme focused on communication skills, encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions and using restorative principles after disruption or conflict has occurred.

Research estimates the impact is likely to be low. However, the evidence base is complex and different reviews have provided different conclusions.

Local Services & Interventions

Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council provide a wide-range of youth services which are targeted towards those young people and families who need additional support. Below is a summary of relevant services and interventions along with links to further information and referral pathways.

Leicester City Council		Leicestershire County Council	
FIND OUT MORE		FIND OUT MORE	
<p>Detached Youth Work</p> <p>Aims to deliver informal education to young people about ASB and crime, and signpost them to positive activities in their community.</p>	<p>Targeted Youth Support</p> <p>One to one support for young people in need of extra support (e.g. with staying in school or college, getting or keeping a job, building confidence).</p>	<p>IMPACT</p> <p>For young people out in the community who may be involved in ASB. Street-based youth workers identify the needs of the group and tailor activities accordingly.</p>	<p>Enhanced Youth Support</p> <p>Youth worker offers support and guidance on issues affecting the young person (e.g. CCE, CSE, mental ill-health, NEET) for up to six months.</p>

The Reach Programme

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

The Reach programme is a Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) funded project which was designed by the VRN central team in partnership with Leicester City and County Council youth services who are also the VRN's delivery partners in this project. The Reach Programme is an intensive six-month mentoring programme aimed at preventing exclusions. Working closely with and in schools, a youth worker is allocated to at-risk young people and offers a tailored package of support. This includes Social Skills Training, support with their confidence and wellbeing, and opportunities to participate in recreational activity (e.g. sports, arts and music). The programme also provides support to the young person's family and work with their friends.

Early Intervention Service

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

The Early Intervention Service is delivered by Prevention Officers who provide a 12-week tailored programme for young people who receive a community resolution or are at risk of offending. It seeks to prevent offending through improving well-being, offering emotional support and increasing engagement in positive activities such as education, training and employment. Support is also offered to the families and carers of those engaged with the programme. Young people between the ages of 10-17 years old who live in Leicester are eligible for this service. You can contact the Early Intervention Service on **0116 454 4600** or email CYP-Justiceservice@leicester.gov.uk.