



# Bristol Youth Links

## End of Year 2016 Report



# Introduction

In 2013 Bristol City Council commissioned Bristol Youth Links (BYL). Bristol Youth Links brings together this wide range of services, such as youth groups, play services, advice and guidance, and support to help young people volunteer and get involved in their communities. All of the services target the most deprived areas of the city and are for children and young people aged 8-19 (and up to 24 for those with learning difficulties).

Providers were issued with 5 year contracts which will run until the end of January 2018. The Bristol Youth Links services are made up of 9 different contracts, 7 of which are geographically based, and 2 of them are citywide.

Service	Cost
7 Area Based	£3,201,850
1 Specialist	£684,160
1 Virtual	£180,000
Total	£4,066,010

The following report summarises the April 2015 – March 2016 period including detail on service delivery, user engagement, progress towards achieving targets and an analysis of BYL's impact and what to expect in the future.

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# Overview of BYL Services

## Geographical Services, Lots 1-7 (Contract Value £ 3,201,850)

The geographical areas provide open access youth, play as well as targeted group and 1:1 work with children and young people in areas of high need, deprivation and in the communities that the most vulnerable live. Learning Partnership West deliver 5 of the contracts across the city, and Creative Youth network deliver the remaining 2 contracts.

The providers receive referrals from organisations such as Early Help, schools, Social Care and Youth Offending teams to work with Children and Young People to enable them to access positive activities, make positive relationships, and to address some issues they may be facing.

In addition providers work in schools to co-deliver 4YP sexual health services, and offer information advice and guidance drop-ins.

Providers also deliver structured programmes with children and young people (which can correspond with national themes and causes such as Black History Month or World Aids Day).

They also work in partnership with other organisations within their locality to respond to emerging needs and encourage young people's involvement in their community. A key element of this provision is to intervene early, provide support and prevent young people from needing to access higher threshold services.

Lot	Wards Supported	Provider	Value
1 North	Avonmouth, Henbury, Henleaze, Kingsweston, Southmead, Stoke Bishop & Westbury-on-Trym	LPW, Barnardos & 1625 Independent People	
2 North Central	Bishopston, Cotham, Horfield, Lockleaze, Redland	LPW, Barnardos & 1625 Independent People	

3 Inner City	Ashley, Easton & Lawrence Hill	LPW, Barnardos & 1625 Independent People	
4 East	Eastville, Frome Vale, Hillfields, St George East & West	CYN, Bristol Playbus & WECIL	
5 West	Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East	CYN, WECIL and Basement Studios	
6 South East	Brislington East and West, Filwood, Hengrove, Knowle, Stockwood, Windmill Hill	LPW, Barnardos & 1625 Independent People Independent People	
7 South West	Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe, Southville & Whitchurch Park	LPW, Barnardos & 1625 Independent People	

## **Specialist Service (Lot 8) (Contract Value £ 684,160)**

BYL's specialist services are citywide, and have focus on 6 areas; Sexual Health, Mental Health, Homelessness, Substance Misuse, LGBT Young People (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual And Transgender), Deaf children and young people.

The specialist service offers specific support on the above areas using methods of:

- 1: 1 sessions for children or young person identified in greater need or being at greater risk and needing time limited support to build their resilience, understand their behaviour and make changes in what they are doing to increase their safety and health and wellbeing.
- Peer education work and outreach, increasing young people's awareness of independent living and drug and alcohol education.
- Group workshops, relationship workshops around drugs, alcohol and healthy relationships.
- Targeted youth sessions with deaf children and LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex) young people.

## **BYL Virtual Service, Lot 9 (Contract Value £ 180,000)**

The virtual youth Service runs online information advice and guidance for children and young people. There are 3 online portals for children and young people to get engaged, find out information and activities: Rife Magazine, Rife Guide, and Go Places to Play. Rife magazine is for young people, written by young people that covers; film, music, art, culture, social issues and politics. Rife Guide is the sister site to Rife Magazine. Rife Guide acts as a complete revamp of Go Places Do Things. Rife Guide is a lively, informative site for young people to find out what's going on in Bristol – events, networking opportunities, jobs, places to hang out, courses, studio time, advice sessions and more. In time it hopes to list every single organisation in Bristol that works with young people and setting out what they do, and how they can help.

Go Places to Play lists parks, events for children aged 8-13 and promotes inspiring play environments across the city. It provides information on a wide range of services for the community, including Adventure Playgrounds, after school clubs and holiday play schemes, and play rangers in parks.

## **Overview of Performance Management Arrangements**

### **Contract Compliance**

Each BYL service produces a quarterly monitoring report that shows how they are working towards achieving the goals identified in their Service Contracts. This evidence is used to help demonstrate BYL's progress towards achieving the goals set out in the BYL Monitoring Framework (see appendix A). In particular, Providers are required to demonstrate the outcomes achieved by children and young people. The quality of delivery and how service providers identify, engage and understand the needs of individual young people are also crucial to the achievement of outcomes. There are 9 datasets that each provider must report against, they are:

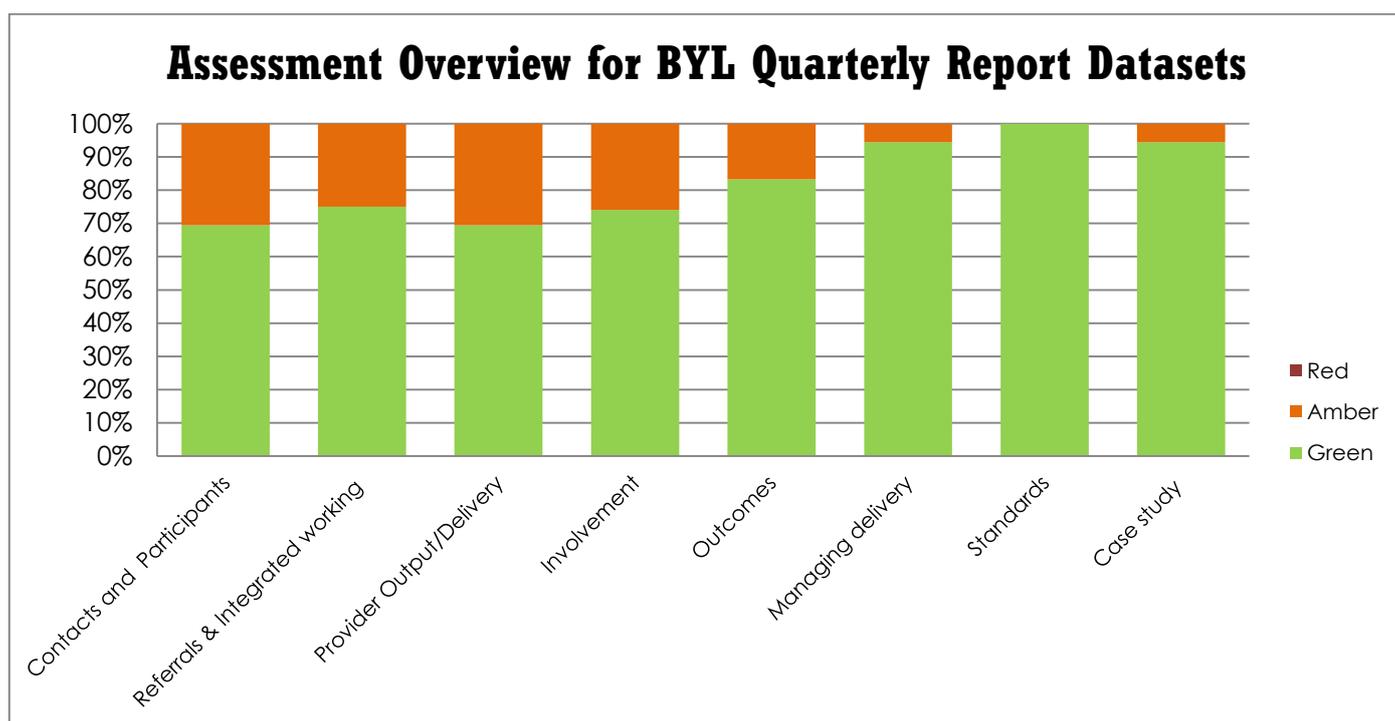
1. Contacts and Participants
2. Referrals and Integrated working
3. Provider Output/Delivery
4. Involvement

5. Outcomes
6. Managing delivery
7. Standards
8. Case study
9. Finance

Each service is RAG (Red, Amber or Green) rated on a quarterly basis against each of these datasets.

Rating	Definition
Green	Performance is good – fully meeting or exceeding criteria.
Amber	Performance is acceptable - mostly meeting criteria but with potential for improvement.
Red	Performance is poor - failing to meet criteria and requiring immediate corrective action.

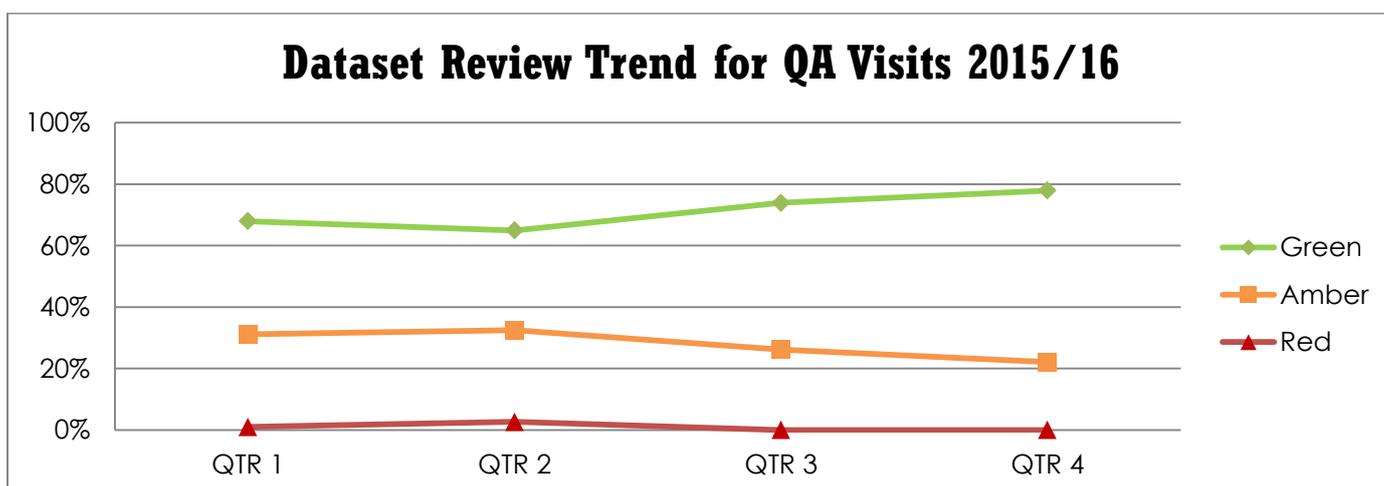
The following graph highlights how successful providers have been at achieving the appropriate standards as identified by the commissioners. All datasets have been judged to be either **Green (83%)** or **Amber (17%)**. There were no Red rated datasets.



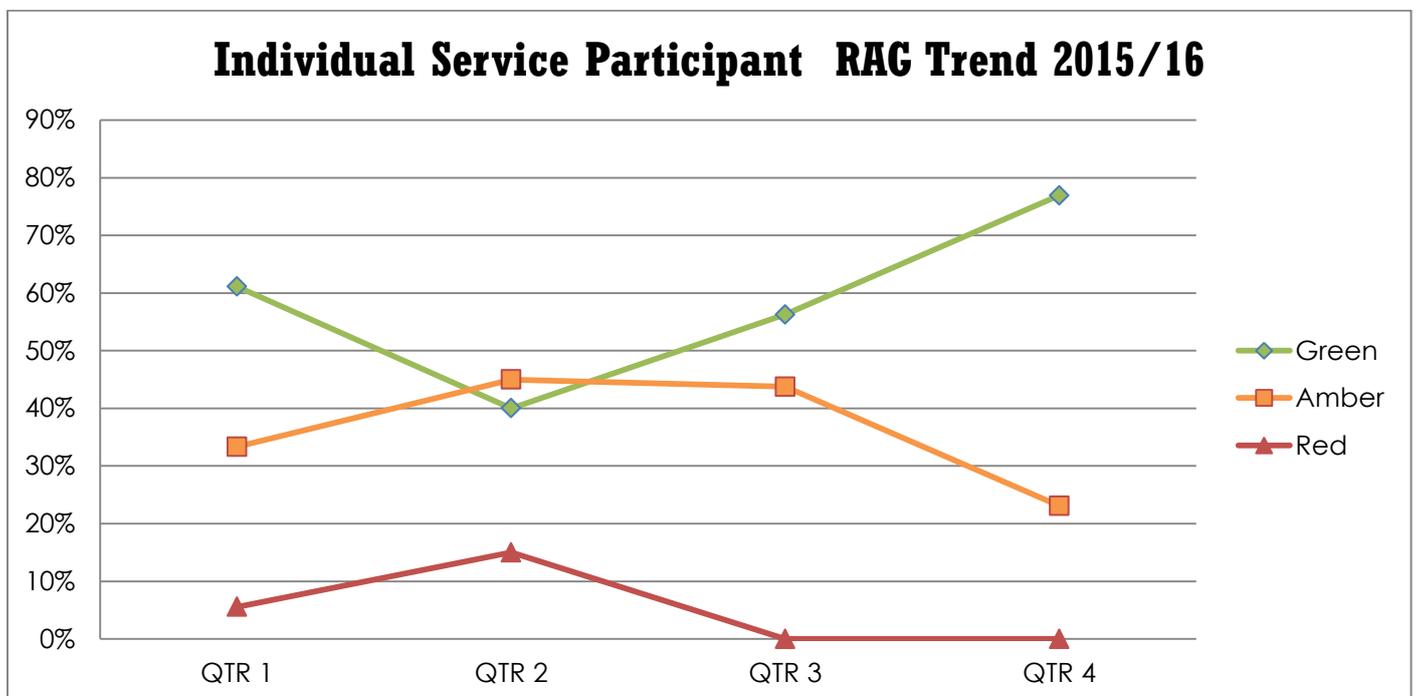
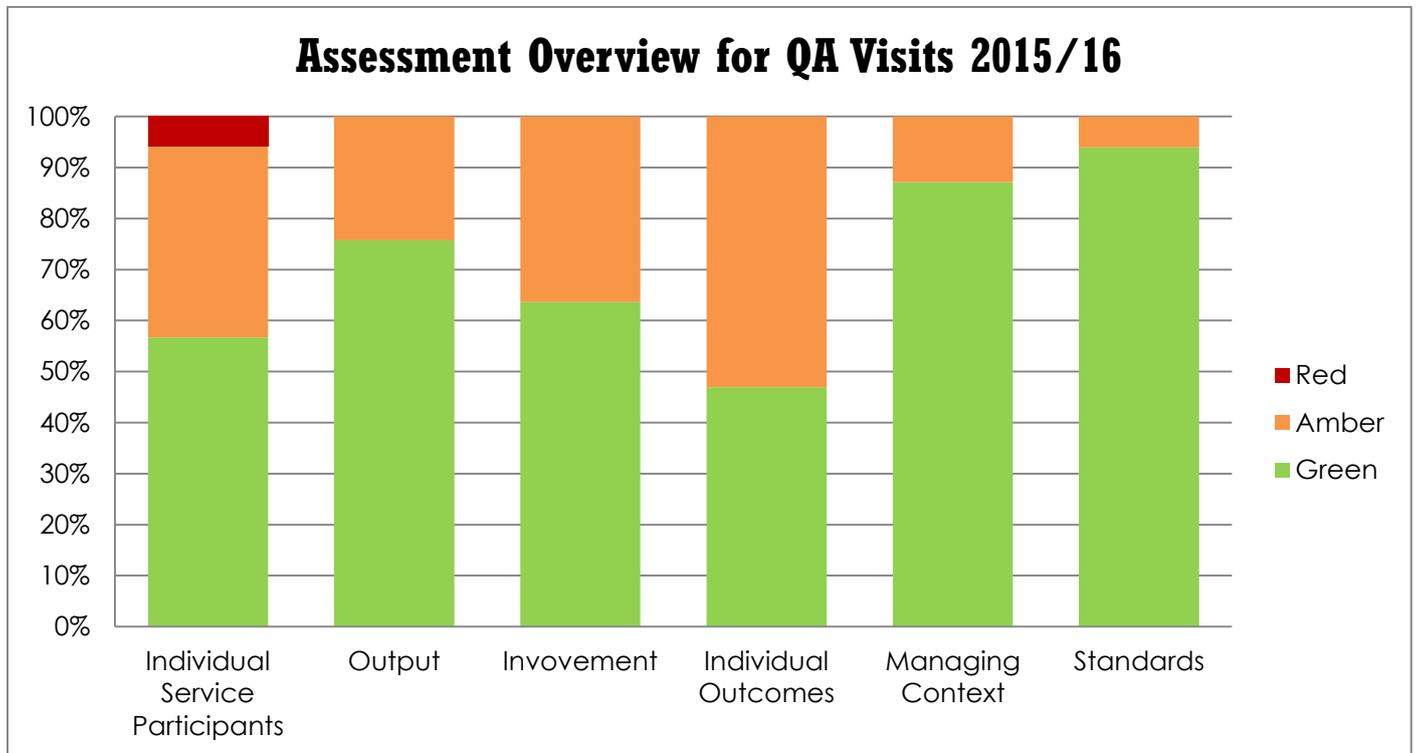
In addition to this, services are visited by Quality Assurance (QA) Team including 10 Young Assessors (See Appendix X for report on success of Young Assessor Pilot Scheme). The majority of QA visits have been judged to be either **Green (82%)** or **Amber (18%)**. All visits are assessed using the following criteria:

Category	Criteria Judged
Individual Service Participants.	Attendance, registration, publicity, representation (from local community, demographics & vulnerable groups), recorded referrals.
Output (Delivery)	Planned, engaging, developmental, accessible, integrated
Involvement	Session/Programme/Service/Community, you said – we did
Individual Outcomes	Promotion/celebration, verifiable/evidence based
Managing Context	Partnership working with School/Community/additional agencies, tackling emerging issues, strategic contribution
Standards	H&S, Safeguarding, staff development, data protection, equality, complaints

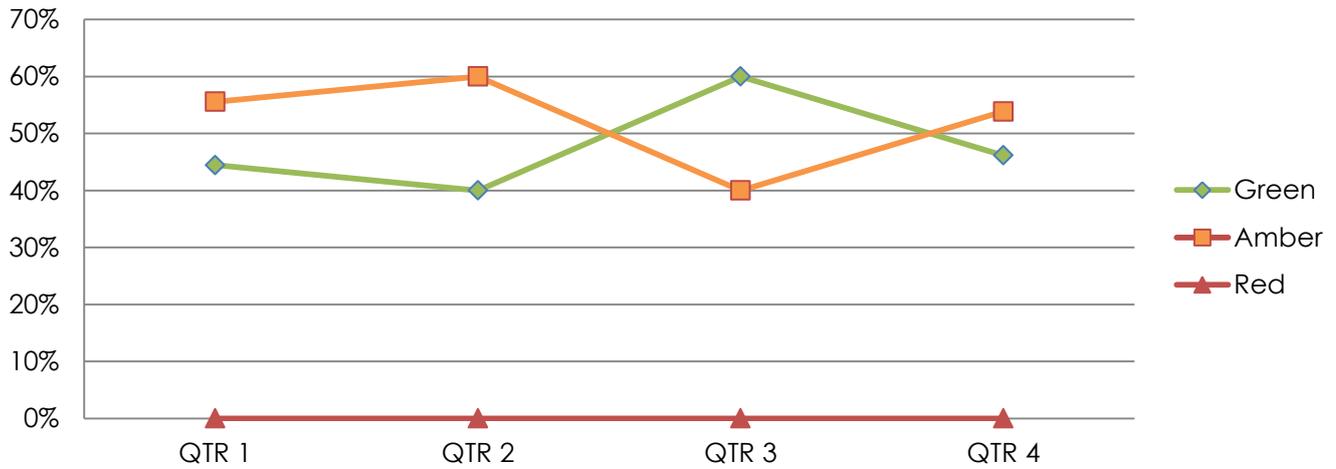
The chart below shows that the standard of quality is high, there have not been any Red reported criteria for 6 months and the underlying trend indicates that the number of sessions visited where the QA Officers rate datasets as Green are steadily growing.



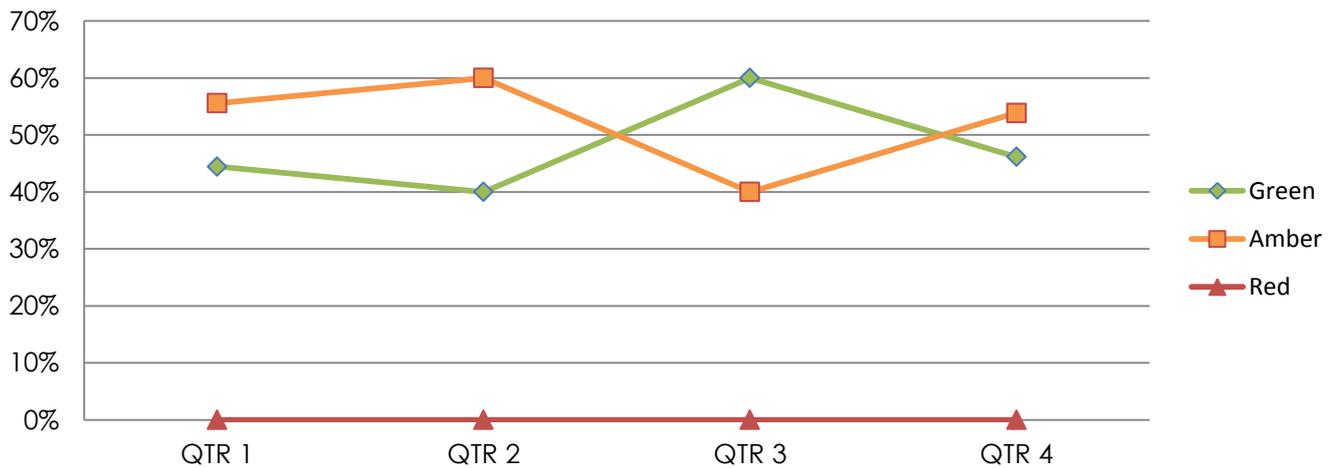
Whilst the overall standards of delivery are high, there are three areas that need to be further explored - increasing the number of Participants, increasing involvement and achieving and demonstrating individual outcomes for service users.



### Involvement RAG Trend 2015/16



### Individual Outcomes RAG Trend 2015/16



## Service Delivery

The following table provides a breakdown of the average number of sessions provided on a weekly/annual basis:

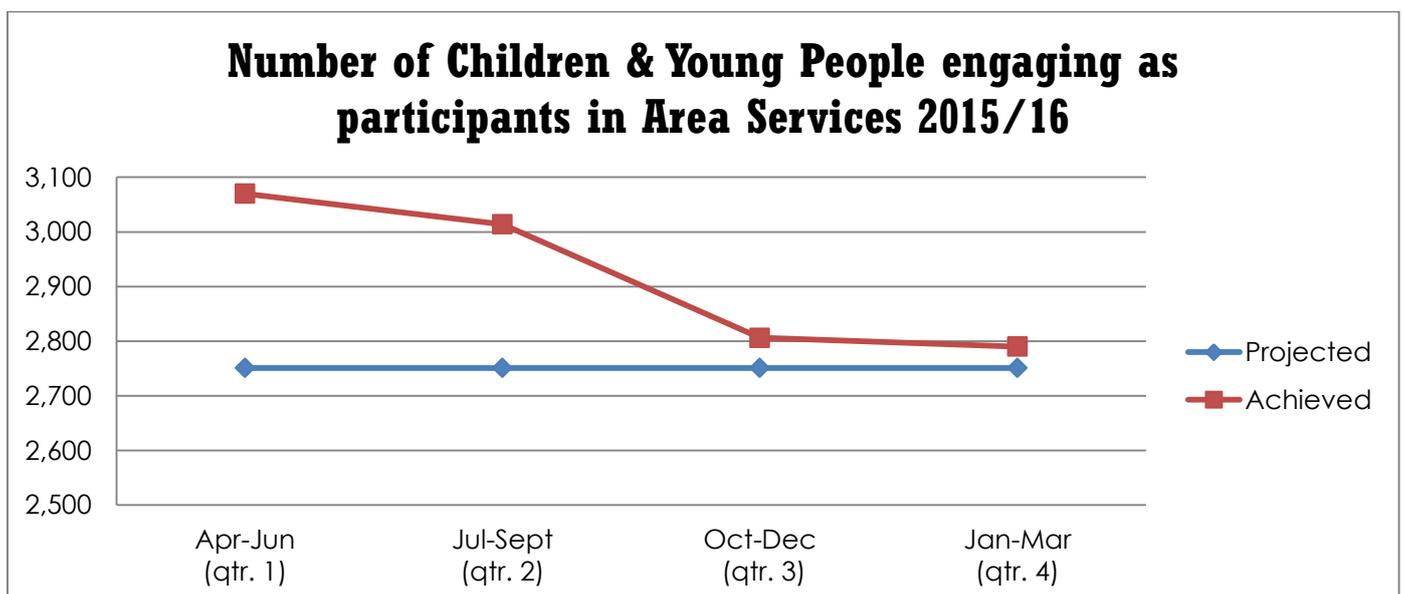
Delivery Method	Sessions (p/w)	Hours (p/w)	Sessions (a)	Hours (a)
IAG	12	35	624	1,841
Involvement	3	7	156	338
Play	28	57	1,456	2,964

Delivery Method	Sessions (p/w)	Hours (p/w)	Sessions (a)	Hours (a)
Positive activities	47	121	2,444	6,292
Targeted support	84	741	4,368	38,506
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>9,048</b>	<b>49,941</b>

All of the above support is delivered in a variety of settings, 45% of these sessions are Open Access, 16% are Closed Group and 39% are 1-2-1 sessions. 17% of these sessions are provided specifically to vulnerable service user groups (e.g. Young carers, Disabled, BME, and NEET).

## Service User Engagement

The service has met its overall target for reaching the required number of service users, per quarter, throughout the period April 2015 – March 2016. The number of individuals worked with during April 2015 – March 2016 is approximately **7,360**. Many service users continue to use the Locality Services for prolonged periods of time. Approximately 50% of service users remain engaged for at least 6 months whilst 23% of the clients engaged in Qtr.1 remained engaged for the remainder of the year. There are seasonal trends with more clients attending during the summer months.



## Area Services: Engagement Profile by Quarter

Area	Qtr. 1		Qtr. 2		Qtr. 3		Qtr. 4		Average	
	Projected	Achieved								
1 North	594	512	594	493	594	466	594	569	594	510 ▼
2 North Central	383	320	383	371	383	460	383	406	383	389 ▲
3 Inner City	331	417	331	521	331	381	331	343	331	416 ▲
4 East	333	353	333	389	333	307	333	274	333	331 ▼
5 West	200	355	200	256	200	315	200	302	200	307 ▲
6 South East	554	586	554	506	554	386	554	455	554	483 ▼
7 South West	357	527	357	478	357	491	357	441	357	484 ▲
Total	2,751	3,070	2,751	3,014	2,751	2,806	2,751	2,790	2,751	2,920 ▲

### Overview of Area Success

The overall figures indicate that BYL has met its target however, there are some geographical areas that are doing better than others. In some instances they have been some areas that have not met their targets. These have been offset by other areas that have exceeded their targets.

## Average % Success per Area Lot at meeting Engagement Target

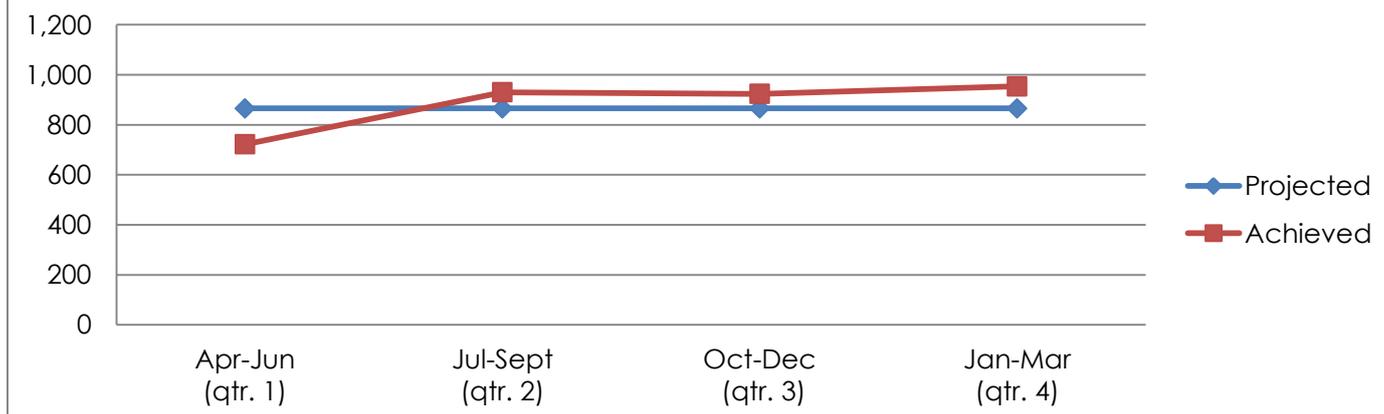


The above figures show 5 out of the 7 lots is meeting the engagement targets. Lot 1 doesn't meet targets as it is a large geographical area, with provision being focussed predominantly in Southmead and Lawrence Weston. Lot 6 doesn't meet target as there is more emphasis on 1:1 and targeted group work in this area.

### 1:1, Closed or Targeted Group Engagement

Overall figures indicate that BYL has met its target for this type of support. There are some Lots that are doing better than others and in some instances there have been some Lots that have not met their targets. These have been offset by other Lots that have exceeded their targets.

## Number of Children & Young People engaged in 1:1, closed or targeted groups 2015/16



### 1:1, Closed or Targeted Groups: Engagement Profile by Quarter

Lot	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4	Average

Lot	Qtr. 1		Qtr. 2		Qtr. 3		Qtr. 4		Average	
	Projected	Achieved								
1 North	178	144	178	190	178	216	178	238	178	197 ▲
2 North Central	115	73	115	76	115	123	115	137	115	102 ▼
3 Inner City	110	97	110	139	110	86	110	77	110	100 ▼
4 East	111	50	111	79	111	61	111	100	111	73 ▼
5 West	67	24	67	65	67	82	67	105	67	69 ▲
6 South East	166	196	166	210	166	163	166	168	166	184 ▲
7 South West	119	138	119	171	119	193	119	129	119	158 ▲
8 Specialist	449	486	449	310	449	420	449	344	449	390 ▼
Total	866	722	866	930	866	924	866	954	866	883 ▲

The current BYL model predicts that that approximately one third of all clients are expected to need more intense support because of additional needs. The above data indicates that not all areas are meeting their targets when it comes to working with the projected number of clients on a one-to-one basis. This may be due to lower referral rates into the service, or more emphasis on open access work in the area. The table below measures the current average number of clients engaged per quarter in comparison to the actual number (rather than contractual target) of clients engaged on a one-to-one basis. Once again the results are mixed but the majority of Lots have not met the 1/3rd target.

Lot	1/3 of engaged clients (Average per Qtr.)	Engaged in targeted support (Average per Qtr.)
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1 North	170	197 ▲
2 North Central	130	102 ▼
3 Inner City	139	100 ▼
4 East	110	73 ▼
5 West	102	69 ▼
6 South East	161	184 ▲
7 South West	161	158 ▼

## Family Outcome Plan & Indicators of Need

Many of the clients that BYL engage with are young people identified as at risk on Bristol City Council's [Family Outcome Plan](#). Individuals may be identified by the Family Outcome Plan for meeting indicators from the following themes:

1. Parents and young people involved in crime or antisocial behaviour
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly
3. Children who need help
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, and young people at high risk of worklessness
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems

Not all BYL clients are matched to these datasets. There are a number of reasons for this for example, not all BYL clients are of a school age and they would not be identified on the school census, in some cases there are BYL clients that do not come from the Bristol area. It is also worth noting that there is currently limited quantitative information available on the health needs of individuals available to us.

Clients	Apr 2015 – June 2015	Jul 2015 – Sep 2015	Jan 2016 – Mar 2016
Clients Reported	3,070	3,014	2,790
Matched to Family Outcome Database	2,352	2,404	2,322
% Matched	77%	80%	83%

Clients	Apr 2015 – June 2015	Jul 2015 – Sep 2015	Jan 2016 – Mar 2016
Indicator of need identified	862	679	644
No Indicator identified	1490	1707	1678
% Matched with one or more Indicators	37%	28%	28%

## Demographic Breakdown of Clients

Gender of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
Female	40%
Male	59%
Prefer not to say	1%
Not obtained	0%

Age of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
8-12	43%
13-19	50%
20+	5%
Prefer not to say	1%

Not Obtained	1%
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Ethnicity of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
White - British	60%
White - Eastern European	1%
White - Gypsy (Including English, Scottish and Roma Gypsy) or Irish Traveller	0%
White - Irish	1%
White - Other	1%
Black or Black British - African	1%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2%
Black or Black British - Somali	3%
Black or Black British - Other	2%
Mixed/ Dual Background - White and Asian	0%
Mixed/ Dual Background - White and Asian	0%
Mixed/ Dual Background - White and Black African (non Somali)	1%
Mixed/ Dual Background - White and Black Caribbean	5%
Mixed/ Dual Background - Other	2%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0%
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1%
Asian or Asian British - Other	1%
Other - Arab	0%

Ethnicity of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
Other - Iranian	0%
Other - Kurdish	0%
Other - Other	1%
Prefer not to say	16%
Not obtained	0%

There are a large number of clients where ethnicity is recorded as "Prefer not to say". A significant number of these are from open access sessions or sessions that have been run at schools. The trend for recording "Prefer not to say" has stayed the same or generally increased as the quarters have progressed.

Disability of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
Disabled	8%
Non-disabled	77%
Prefer not to say	6%
Not Obtained	9%

Sexuality of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
Heterosexual (straight)	29%
Gay	1%
Lesbian	1%
Bisexual	2%
Other	1%

Prefer not to say	63%
Not obtained	2%

The above table only contains the breakdown for those clients aged 14 or above.

Religion of clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
Christian	6%
Muslim	2%
Buddhist	0%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Sikh	0%
Other	1%
None	25%
Prefer not to say	63%
Not obtained	2%

## Geography of where Service Users live

Region address recorded by clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total
Bristol	81%
South Gloucestershire	4%
North Somerset	1%
B&NES	<1%
Not obtained	14%

## Bristol Clients

BYL area recorded by clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	%
South East	22%
South West	19%
North	17%
Inner City	15%
North Central	14%
East	11%
West	2%
Total	100%

BYL Ward recorded by clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	BYL Area	%
Southmead	North	9%
Filwood	South East	8%
Lawrence Hill	Inner City	8%
Lockleaze	North Central	7%
Whitchurch Park	South West	6%
Hartcliffe	South West	6%
Ashley	Inner City	4%
Hillfields	East	4%
Brislington East	South East	4%
Bishopsworth	South West	3%

BYL Ward recorded by clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	BYL Area	%
Horfield	North Central	3%
Easton	Inner City	3%
Knowle	South East	3%
Kingsweston	North	3%
St George West	East	3%
Henbury	North	2%
Stockwood	South East	2%
Hengrove	South East	2%
Avonmouth	North	2%
Bedminster	South West	2%
Windmill Hill	South East	2%
St George East	East	2%
Westbury-on-Trym	East	2%
Brislington West	South East	1%
Bishopston	North Central	1%
Southville	South West	1%
Eastville	East	1%
Cabot	West	1%
Frome Vale	East	1%
Redland	North Central	1%
Henleaze	North	1%

BYL Ward recorded by clients supported during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	BYL Area	%
Cotham	North Central	1%
Westbury-on-Trym	North	1%
Stoke Bishop	North	<1%
Clifton	West	<1%
Clifton East	West	<1%
Total		100%

## Referrals

The services continue to report referrals from a wide array of agencies with schools being the top referrers. The providers do provide open access sessions however, it is clear that a significant proportion of service users self-refer.

Agency	New Referrals from	% of total referrals
School	539	24%
College	473	21%
Other	423	19%
Early Help	308	14%
Internal (within Lot)	166	7%
Homelessness Prevention Agency	80	4%
Social Care	70	3%
Mental Health Services(Non BYL)	50	2%
BYL citywide	49	2%
BYL area base	39	2%

Agency	New Referrals from	% of total referrals
Youth Offending Team	29	1%
Substance Misuse Agency (Non BYL)	25	1%
BYL In House	22	1%
Family Intervention Team	21	1%
Teenage Pregnancy Agencies(Non BYL)	17	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,221</b>	<b>100%</b>

Agency	Number of Referrals to	% of total referrals
Other	136	21%
Homelessness Prevention Agency	92	14%
BYL citywide	74	11%
Substance Misuse Agency (Non BYL)	73	11%
Early Help	56	8%
Internal (within Lot)	44	7%
BYL area base	47	7%
Mental Health Services(Non BYL)	43	6%
College	35	5%
Teenage Pregnancy Agencies(Non BYL)	29	4%
School	18	3%
BYL In House	19	3%

Agency	Number of Referrals to	% of total referrals
Social Care	8	1%
Youth Offending Team	1	0%
Family Intervention Team	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Participation of Children and Young People

Each quarter BYL providers describe examples of children and young people's participation and how their involvement has made an impact. Children and Young people's participation is varied across the BYL projects. From Young Journalists creating content for Rife Magazine, presenting at a local Neighbourhood Partnership meeting, to deciding what activities they would like to take part in at their project.

## Service Outcomes

### 1. Reduce the proportion of young people frequently using illicit substances, alcohol or other volatile substances

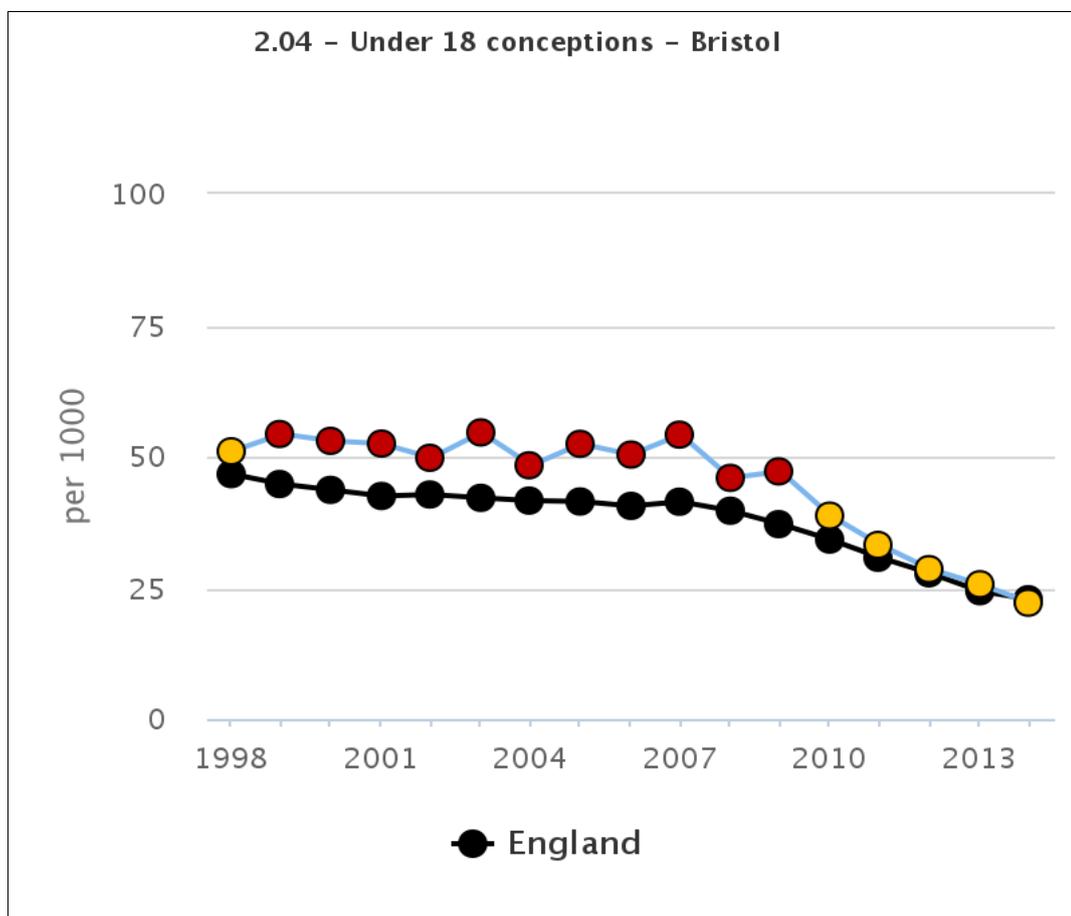
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### 2. Reduce the under 18 conception rate

The latest under 18 conception figures released are for 2014. The number of under 18 conceptions in Bristol has reduced by 14 per cent below the 2013 rates, to 22.1 (per 1,000 women aged 15 to 17). In 1998 there were 339 conceptions to young women under 18 and this has reduced to 146 in 2014. In 2009, 73 young women under 16 became pregnant and this reduced to 20 in 2014.

This is compared to the national average, which fell 6 per cent to 22.8 (per 1,000 women aged 15 to 17). In Bristol conceptions in girls aged under 18 have reduced by more than

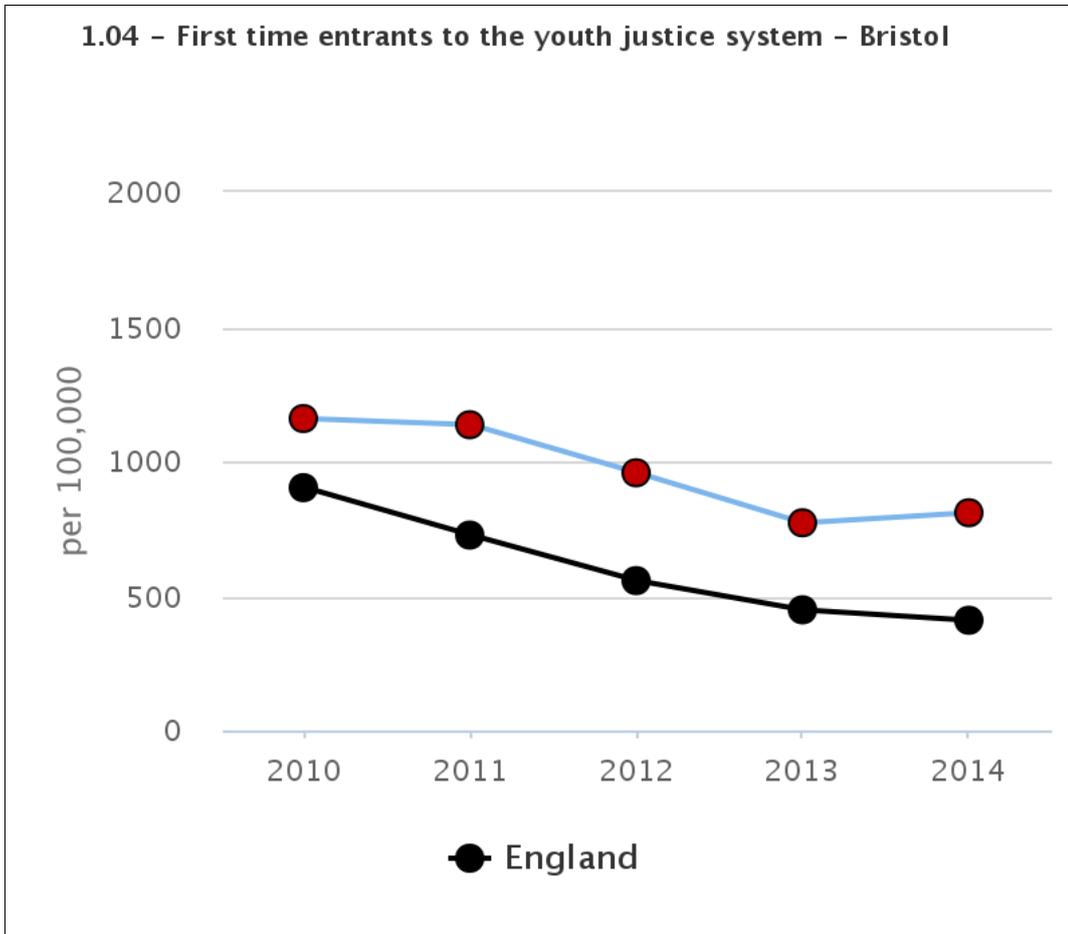
half (54 per cent) in the past decade, and 57 per cent since 1998 when the Bristol teenage pregnancy strategy began. This is the first year since then that Bristol's rate has been lower than the national average.



Source ONS 2014 data

### 3. Reduce the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system aged 10-17

The rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System in Bristol is 809 per 100,000 (2014), very significantly higher than the national average (409 per 100,000) and most other core cities. The gap had appeared to be widening, and in 2014 Bristol was ranked 13th highest of 152 local authorities on this measure (where highest is worst). Interim data for mid-2015 indicates a slight fall in rates for Bristol and nationally.



Source ONS 2014 data

#### **4. Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training**

Data taken from the ONS report: [Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\): February 2016](#) indicates that the percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET was 11.8%, up 0.1 percentage points from July to September 2015 and down 1.4 percentage points from a year earlier. Bristol is currently below the national average and on track to achieve its own target for Young People not participating in Education, Employment (with training) and Training (NEET):

Year	Target	Actual
2012-13	6.5%	7.3%
2013-14	6.0%	6.7%
2014-15	6.0%	6.6%
2015-16	6.0%	5.6%

## Specialist Services

BYL's specialist services are citywide, and have focus on 6 areas; Sexual Health, Mental Health, Homelessness, Substance Misuse, LGBT Young People (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual And Transgender), Deaf children and young people. They have achieved a number of outcomes for individual children and young people:

Outcomes Apr 2015 – Mar 2016	Achieved
Reducing and preventing substance misuse	277
Reducing the risk of homelessness	163
Improved Mental & Emotional Health	301
Improved Mental & Emotional Health for LGBT young people	132
Healthier relationships	149
Improved confidence and reducing social isolation for deaf young people	113
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,135</b>

## Positive Destinations

BYL clients that attend the Local Area Services can also be supported specifically towards achieving positive outcomes for Education, Employment & Training as well as securing work or volunteer placements:

Positive Destinations Apr 2015 – Mar 2016	Achieved
Number of Young People securing Education , Employment, Training, Volunteering or Work Placement	623

## Intermediate Outcomes

The BYL commission was heavily influenced by the Young Foundation's 2012 Report "[Framework of Outcomes for Young People](#)". This was based on a review of academic studies on young people's development in Britain and other countries, they identified the following 7 'clusters' of social and emotional capabilities which enable young people to make successful transitions to adulthood and cope with difficulties in their lives:

- Communication
- Confidence and agency
- Planning and problem solving
- Relationships and leadership
- Creativity
- Resilience and determination
- Managing feelings

Bristol used this model to produce its own set of intermediate outcomes and all of the services work with children and young people in order to achieve these personal intermediate outcomes that act as the 'stepping stones' which enable children and young people to go on and have more successful fulfilling lives, the full list of intermediate outcomes is as follows:

- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Improved Communication skills
- Acquired New skills and knowledge
- Made healthier lifestyle choices
- Understood rights and choices available
- Chose not to engage in risky/anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Developed and maintained positive relationships

As a result, this outcome focused approach meant that service specifications were not completely prescriptive on the types of service delivery, but rather services were able to work with children and young people in a more responsive/holistic way. Therefore, a young person 'Making healthier lifestyle choices' could achieve this in a number of ways,

for example, interventions could involve; healthy eating, physical activity, sexual or mental health, to name but a few. This method has also meant that as the outcomes are so personal and varied for each of the clients, BYL does not use these intermediate outcomes as performance indicators for the service. As a result of this there is not an aggregated list of indicators as a measurement of success for clients achieving outcomes these personal outcomes. The current measures for service success are based on the continued engagement of young people and the assessment of quality as identified by the Quality Assurance Team, Young Assessors and Contract Management Team.

This has proved problematic for providing feedback on the impact that the service has had on individual service members. The service needs to be able to demonstrate its impact in a quantifiable way, but should do so in a way that demonstrates the intrinsic value of Youth Work in relation to young people's development.

## Virtual Services

Of particular note is the success of Rife magazine which has far exceeded expectations in terms of readership. The Guide does not have a specific service target but on average it attracts 1,600 users per quarter.

Number of Users for Virtual Youth Service Users (Lot 9) during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Target	Actual	Success
Rife (Magazine & Guide)	60,000	108,805	181%
Go Places to Play	33,000	67,078	203%

Number of Sessions during Apr 2015 – Mar 2016:	Total	Page Views	Success*
Rife Magazine	126,341	207,729	82%
Rife Guide	8,997	30,256	168%
Go Places to Play	77,257	153,194	99%

The success is based on number of sessions where there has been more than one page view per session (The industry standard for page views per session is 2).

## Financial Reporting and Variance

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## Emerging Needs

The following emerging needs have been reported on over the last year:

- Increase in risk of child sexual exploitation leading to waiting lists for the 1:1 support delivered by Barnardos
- Other voluntary sector organisations in the city closing projects leading to a loss of services
- Addressing areas of the city with young people involved in anti-social behaviour (notably Lawrence Weston, Knowle)
- Increasing thresholds in statutory services have meant BYL services are supporting young people with more complex needs
- An increase in 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless

## Lessons learnt from Current Contract

### Strengths of the Service

Bristol has had a well-resourced youth offer secured for 5 years under the Bristol Youth Links Contract. When other local authorities have cut youth services, Bristol has protected the early intervention, voluntary approach based on young people gaining skills, knowledge and confidence building positive and trusted relationships with workers and peers.

Comparisons show BYL services are reaching targeted young people. Data comparing young people who access Bristol Youth Links services and areas of deprivation, low educational attainment, and young people with Think Family indicators are high. This information, coupled with the earlier section 'successes of the service' shows targeted young people have been successful in achieving individual outcomes, learning new experiences, and going on to positive destinations.

Through the outcomes approach young people have been given the opportunity to participate in services based on need, rather than historical precedence. As a result BYL services are flexible in their approach.

For example, responding to anti-social behaviour in Newquay Road, Knowle, and setting up new groups e.g. Young Carers, as a response to need.

The virtual youth service has been really successful in its delivery. The 3 websites deliver youth led content to attract young people getting involved in debate around political, cultural, and social issues, as well as providing links to support organisations and events calendar. This youth led approach has seen the sites grow from 13,000 users per quarter last year to over 33,000 users in the last quarter of this year.

The specialist services model (homeless prevention, counselling, relationship and sex advice, drug and alcohol support) has been successful in delivering a comprehensive citywide service that is integrated with schools and youth projects. Young people can access advice through group work sessions, workshop outreach and 1:1, depending on their needs.

Providers have successfully implemented a new approach to delivering youth services across Bristol. Services are integrated and there numerous examples of partnership working that has provided added social value by organisations working together meaning children and young people can benefit from other opportunities that are not BYL funded in addition. For example, accessing wider services via the Station, or family services via Bristol Drugs Project.

BYL services have been quality assured and monitored throughout by Commissioners, but also Young Assessors, providing feedback and advice on project progression. This is good evidence of the strength of the service as it is reviewed by the young people it is targeted at and has been commended by OFSTED as a good practice example of young people's involvement in the evaluation of services.

## **Weaknesses of the Service**

There are areas for improvement and evolution, Bristol Youth Links chose an outcomes commissioning model based on soft outcomes. The model in itself is well researched in terms of its impact and ability to achieve soft outcomes, leading to a young person's likelihood that they will achieve a more successful transition into adulthood. However the outcome based commissioning model omitted outputs; therefore contract hasn't been specific enough to communicate to stakeholders what the BYL offer to young people is. In addition the measurement of the soft outcomes has not met the needs of some stakeholders, who want to see impact from the services for certain targeted groups, e.g. Care leavers going from NEET to EET.

The contract and commissioning was seen to be very controversial at the time, with political criticism for the services run in some local communities. Examples of criticism have been about a lack of open access, and the BYL providers not having a workforce who are able to meet the needs of local young people.

There has been some division regarding the 'BYL brand' among organisations and stakeholders. The de-commissioning of the previous VCS grants left VCS organisations with the feeling of 'being left to survive' with no council funding or support. It has taken time for BYL and non BYL organisations in the youth sector to positively work together. The development of 'Our Journey Together: Strategic Priorities for you people in Bristol' has helped organisations work together.

## **Opportunities**

There are a number of opportunities for the re-commissioning of the Bristol Youth Links Services:

- To strengthen the performance framework and have defined pathways with specific reported outcomes (e.g. NEETs)
- To implement a new contract with the lessons learnt from the current contract.
- An opportunity to better engage with VCS, to provide leadership for the sector and use the 'Priorities for young people' document to inform the future approach.
- To embed the FOP / Early Help / Think Family approaches and systems into the new contract.