

# SUPPORTING YOUTH REHABILITATION TRENDS REPORT

November 2024

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## B. TECHNICAL NOTE

### GENERAL

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**Community partners** are stakeholders in the people and private sectors who provide services and support to youth offenders and their families (e.g. volunteers, social service agencies, employers).

**Court** refers to the Court which youth offenders are charged in (e.g. Youth Court, State Courts).

**Detention Order** is an order issued by the Court, and it requires a youth offender to be detained in a place of detention for a period not exceeding six months.

**Diversionary programmes** refer to the Guidance Programme, Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme, and Enhanced Streetwise Programme and Streetwise Programme (collectively known as “(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme” in this report). These programmes, funded by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and run by Integrated Service Providers, aim to rehabilitate youth offenders arrested for minor offences (e.g. theft, trespassing) in a community-based setting, diverting them away from the Court system. Youths who successfully completed the diversionary programme are given a warning in lieu of Court prosecution.

- **(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme** targets youth offenders aged 10 to 18 years who associated with gangs, were involved in gang-related activities or played a minor role in gang-related offences.
- **Guidance Programme** targets youth offenders aged 10 to 18 years who committed minor offences (e.g. theft, trespassing).
- **Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme** targets youths under the age of 21 who are arrested for drug consumption for the first time.

**Integrated Service Providers** are social service agencies appointed by MSF to run the diversionary programmes.

**Juvenile Rehabilitation Order** is an order issued by the Court, and requires a youth offender to reside in a Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre for a period of not more than three years. It is imposed on youth offenders who generally display higher-risk behaviours, face complex needs, or come from family environments lacking support for rehabilitation. As compared to Detention Orders, Juvenile Rehabilitation Orders involve a longer length of stay within the Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres. This report focuses on youths placed on Juvenile Rehabilitation Orders in MSF Youth Homes.

**MSF Youth Homes** refer to the Singapore Boys’ Home and the Singapore Girls’ Home.

**MSF Youth Home Orders** refer to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Orders and Detention Orders in MSF Youth Homes.

**Probation** is a community-based rehabilitation programme ordered by the Court.

**Probation Officers** are officers who work with and supervise probationers to guide and rehabilitate them.

**Probation Order** is an order issued by the Court, and requires the youth offender to be under the supervision of a Probation Officer or a Volunteer Probation Officer.

**Probationers** are offenders who are given a Probation Order by the Court.

**Volunteer Probation Officers** work alongside Probation Officers to guide and rehabilitate probationers.

**Youths or youth offenders** refer to those aged 10 to below 21 years.

## STATISTICS

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**Two-year recidivism rate** is the percentage of youth offenders aged below 21 years who completed their rehabilitation programme or Court Order, and subsequently were found guilty of an offence within two years of completing their programme or Court Order.<sup>1</sup>

**Completion rate** is the percentage of youths aged 10 to below 21 years who successfully completed the rehabilitation programme or Court Order in the specified year, divided by the number of youths aged 10 to below 21 years who were discharged (successfully or unsuccessfully) from the rehabilitation programme or Court order in the specified year. Youth offenders on concurrent orders were counted twice.

**Number of youth offenders placed on rehabilitation programmes** is the number of youth offenders aged 10 to below 21 years who were referred to these rehabilitation programmes or ordered by the Court to undergo these rehabilitation programmes in the specified year. Youth offenders on concurrent orders were counted twice.

**Youth offending rate** is the number of youths aged 10 to below 21 years who were arrested in the specified year (including Singapore residents and non-residents), divided by the number of youths aged 10 to below 21 years (including Singapore residents and non-residents) in that year.

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<sup>1</sup> Does not include youths sent to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

## C. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Offenders below the age of 21 years are in their formative years and need guidance to address their risks and needs. Rehabilitation is therefore a key consideration in the youth justice system. The Government is committed to supporting and reintegrating these youths into society. Wherever possible, MSF involves the youths' families in the rehabilitation process, as the family is a crucial support system.

This inaugural edition of the Supporting Youth Rehabilitation Trends Report provides an overview of key youth rehabilitation trends in Singapore. It focuses on youth rehabilitation programmes overseen by MSF and the Integrated Service Providers (ISPs), aimed at supporting youth offenders in addressing their risks and needs to reduce reoffending. The trends reported are from 2019 to 2023 (unless otherwise stated).

The offending rate for persons aged below 21 years has remained low. A high percentage of youth offenders completed the various rehabilitation programmes, while two-year recidivism rates also remained low. Rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders require a whole-of-society effort. MSF will therefore continue its collaboration with Government agencies, youth offenders, their families, and community partners to keep the offending and recidivism rates low.



### KEY TRENDS

#### ***Youth offending rate has remained low***

The youth offending rate of those aged below 21 years has remained low, at an average of 5.2 per 1,000 youths. The collective efforts of MSF, Government agencies, youths' families and community partners to steer youths away from committing offences helped keep the offending rates low. The Probation Order and Guidance Programme remained the top two rehabilitation programmes given to youth offenders.

#### ***Top three offences by youth offenders were shop theft, cheating & related offences, and sexual offences***

The top three offences by youth offenders were shop theft, cheating & related offences, and sexual offence (penetration). The offences with the largest increase in the number of youth offenders were cheating & related offences, offences under the Computer Misuse Act and offences under the Corrosive and Explosive Substances and Offensive Weapons Act (CESOW). MSF takes into account the nature of youth offences in designing our rehabilitation programmes. This ensures their engagement and strengthens the likelihood of successful reintegration and reduces recidivism.

#### ***High completion rates for youth rehabilitation programmes***

Families and community partners work with MSF to journey alongside the youth offenders in their rehabilitation process. This contributed to high completion rates across the different rehabilitation programmes.

#### ***Overall two-year recidivism rates for youth offenders remained low***

Efforts by MSF and community partners to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders kept recidivism rates low. The recidivism rate for youth offenders placed on MSF Youth Home Orders was slightly higher as these youths generally had higher risks and needs.

## D. INTRODUCTION

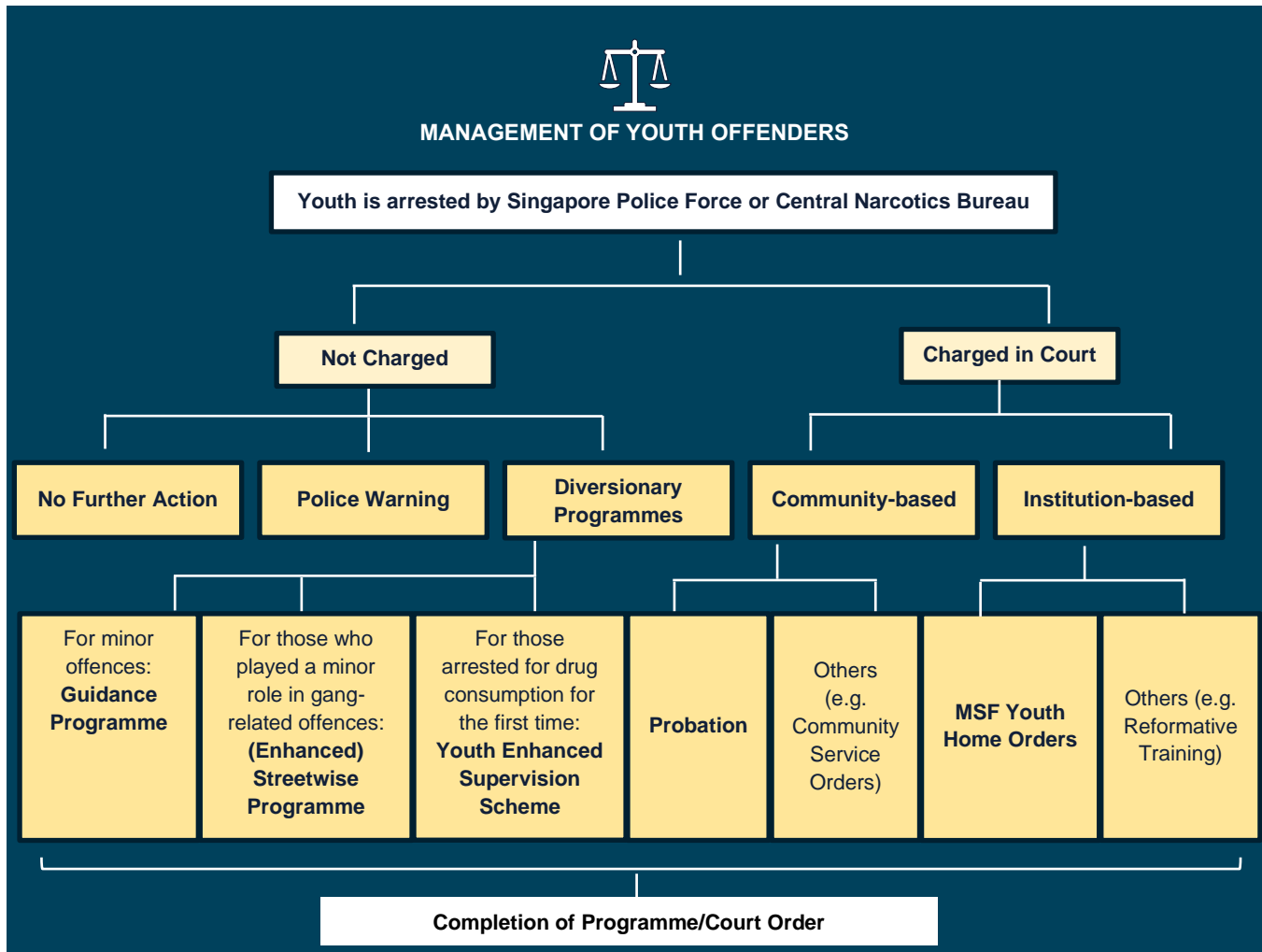
Youths are the future of our nation. Recognising this, the Government invests in building strong and stable families so youths can thrive, realise their fullest potential, and achieve their aspirations. However, some youths are exposed to negative influences or experience stressors. Without adequate support or guidance, these challenges can increase the likelihood of youths engaging in delinquent behaviour.

Every youth offender deserves a second chance. For offenders aged 21 years and below, rehabilitation is a key consideration. At the same time, the Courts also consider various principles such as deterrence, prevention and retribution when dealing with youth offenders. The Courts evaluate the severity of the offences and the youth's risk of reoffending, along with other pertinent factors.

The Government is committed to supporting youth offenders in their rehabilitation journey and reintegrating them back into society. Successful rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders require a whole-of-society effort. Hence, the Government works closely with community partners to develop and implement policies and programmes that address the rehabilitative needs of youth offenders.

This report analyses youth rehabilitation trends by sex (i.e. male or female), and by the following age groups:

- 10 years<sup>2</sup> to below 16 years;
- 16 years to below 18 years<sup>3</sup>; and
- 18 years to below 21 years.



<sup>2</sup> Singapore's minimum age of criminal responsibility is 10 years.

<sup>3</sup> In 2019, the Children and Young Persons Act was amended to increase the age limit to cover those aged below 18 years (from below 16 years) to enhance the rehabilitation and reintegration of these individuals.



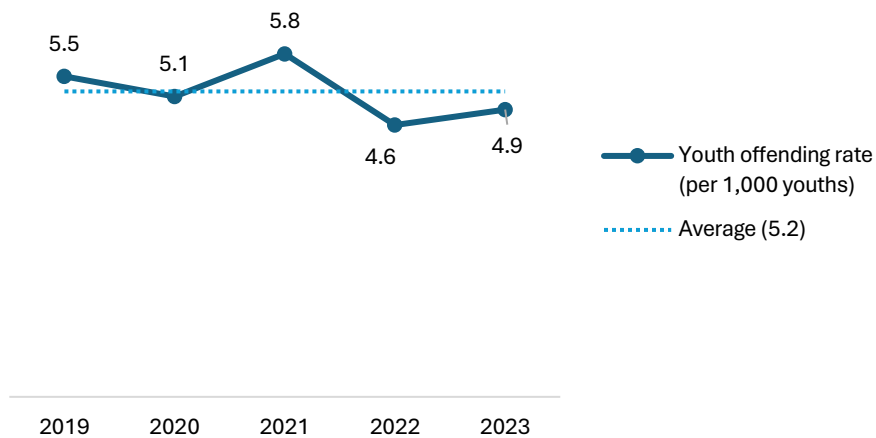
## E. BACKGROUND ON YOUTH OFFENDING

### E1. OFFENDING RATES

#### *Youth offending rate has remained low*

The offending rate for youths aged below 21 years has remained low, averaging 5.2 per 1,000 youths. The offending rate in 2023 was 4.9, comparable to the rate of 4.6 in 2022. This was low compared to some countries. For example, the offending rates in New Zealand were 7.6 per 1,000 children (aged 10 to 13 years) and 24.6 per 1,000 young persons (aged 14 to 16 years) in 2022-2023.<sup>4</sup> In Australia, the rate was 18.5 per 1,000 persons (aged 10 to 17 years) in 2022-2023.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, we can continue to strive for lower offending rates through successful rehabilitation. Some countries such as Japan with an offending rate of 2.8 per 1,000 persons (aged below 20 years) in 2022,<sup>6,7</sup> motivate us with their successes to adopt best practices and set new benchmarks tailored to our local context.

**CHART 1: OFFENDING RATES OF PERSONS AGED BELOW 21 YEARS PER 1,000 YOUTHS<sup>8</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> The offending rates were 76 per 10,000 children (aged 10 to 13 years) and 246 per 10,000 young people (aged 14 to 16 years). The offending rates reported by the New Zealand Ministry of Justice have been converted to per 1,000 children for the purposes of the Supporting Youth Rehabilitation Trends Report. New Zealand Ministry of Justice. (2024). *Youth Justice Indicators Summary Report*.

<sup>5</sup> The offending rate was 1,847 offenders per 100,000 persons aged between 10 and 17 years in 2022-2023. The offending rates reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics have been converted to per 1,000 persons for the purposes of the Supporting Youth Rehabilitation Trends Report. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022-23). *Recorded Crime-Offenders*.

<sup>6</sup> The offending rate of juveniles who committed Penal Code offences, dangerous driving causing death or injury, or negligent driving offences causing death or injury was 276.3 per 100,000 population of juveniles aged 10 or older. The offending rates reported by the Ministry of Justice, Japan have been converted to per 1,000 persons for the purposes of the Supporting Youth Rehabilitation Trends Report. Ministry of Justice, Japan (2023). *White Paper on Crime*.

<sup>7</sup> The youth offending rates in Australia, New Zealand and Japan were the closest comparison to Singapore's youth offending rates.

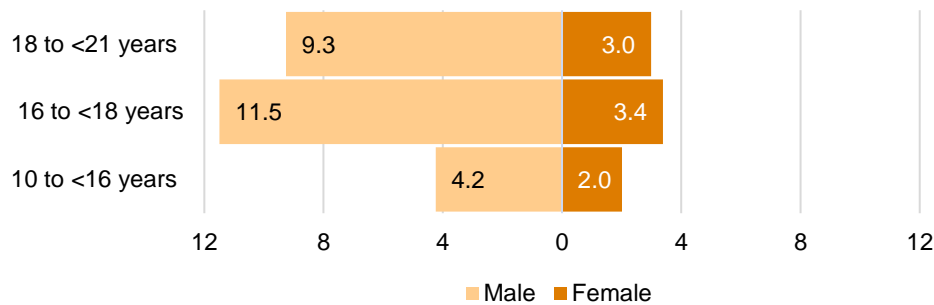
<sup>8</sup> The number of youths arrested included youths on the Short-Term Visit Pass.

## Males had higher offending rates compared to females

Males have consistently exhibited higher offending rates than females across all age groups, a trend observed globally. For instance, in 2022-2023, over two-thirds (68%) of youth offenders in Australia were male.<sup>9</sup> Similarly in England and Wales, the majority (87%) of offences committed by children (aged 10 to 17 years) during the same period were also by males.<sup>10</sup> One possible reason for higher offending rates among males is their greater tendency to exhibit externalising behaviours (e.g. physical aggression), which could have contributed to their involvement in offending behaviours.<sup>11,12</sup>

Youths aged 16 to below 18 years had the highest likelihood of offending. To provide age-appropriate support and rehabilitation, the Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) was amended to extend rehabilitation services to youth offenders aged 16 years to below 18 years. The amendments will be operationalised in January 2025.

**CHART 2: OFFENDING RATES PER 1,000 YOUTHS BY AGE AND SEX OF YOUTH (2023)<sup>13</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022-23). *Recorded Crime-Offenders*.

<sup>10</sup> Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. (2024). *Youth Justice Statistics: 2022 to 2023 (accessible version)*.

<sup>11</sup> Liu, J. (2004). Childhood externalising behavior: theory and implications. *Journal of child and adolescent psychiatric nursing: official publication of the Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nurses, Inc.*, 17(3), 93-103.

<sup>12</sup> Eme, R. (2016). Sex differences in the prevalence and expression of externalising behavior. In T.P. Beauchaine & S.P. Hinshaw (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of externalising spectrum disorders* (pp. 239-263). Oxford University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Rates are reflected on a proportion basis (i.e. per 1,000 youths).

## E2. COMMON OFFENCES COMMITTED BY YOUTHS

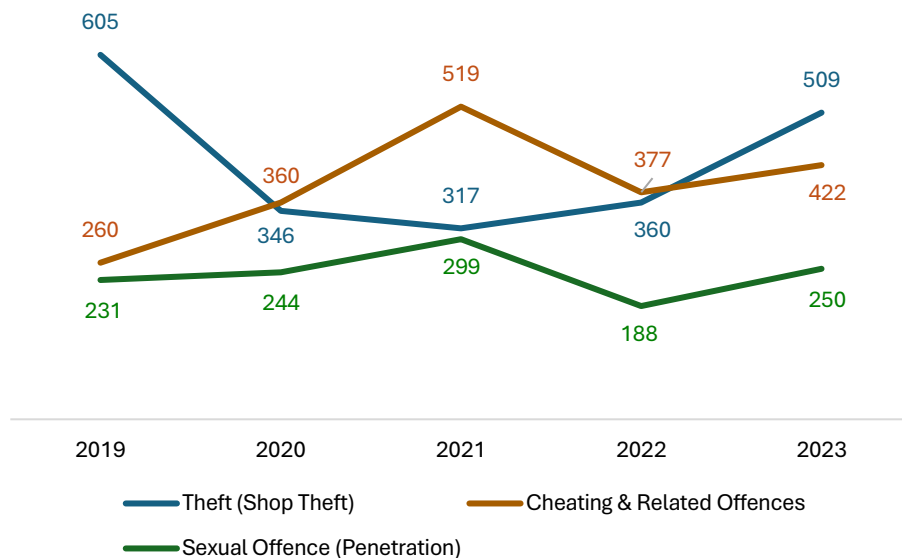
### *Top three offences by youth offenders were shop theft, cheating & related offences, and sexual offences*

The three most common offences committed by youth offenders were shop theft, cheating & related offences, and sexual offence (penetration). The number of youth offenders who committed shop theft increased to 509 in 2023 from 360 in 2022, but this remained below the pre-COVID figure of 605 in 2019. Shop theft was the most common offence (19.2% of all youth offenders) in 2023.

**TABLE 1: TOP THREE OFFENCES COMMITTED BY YOUTH OFFENDERS**

Year	Top offence	Second most common offence	Third most common offence
2019	Theft (Shop Theft)	Cheating & Related Offences	Sexual Offence (Penetration)
2020	Cheating & Related Offences	Theft (Shop Theft)	Sexual Offence (Penetration)
2021	Cheating & Related Offences	Theft (Shop Theft)	Sexual Offence (Penetration)
2022	Cheating & Related Offences	Theft (Shop Theft)	Sexual Offence (Penetration)
2023	Theft (Shop Theft)	Cheating & Related Offences	Sexual Offence (Penetration)

**CHART 3: NUMBER OF OFFENDERS WITHIN THE TOP THREE OFFENCES**



Source: Singapore Police Force

**Shop theft offences most common among youth offenders aged 10 to below 16 years; cheating & related offences most common among older youth offenders**

In 2023, shop theft offences were most common among youth offenders aged 10 to below 16 years, compared to older youth offenders. Cheating & related offences were most common among older youth offenders (135 offenders among those aged 16 to below 18 years; 254 offenders among those aged 18 to below 21 years). The majority of cheating & related offences committed was associated with scams and cybercrime.<sup>14</sup> Offences under Computer Misuse Act was the second most common offence committed by older youth offenders aged 18 to below 21 years (145 offenders).<sup>15</sup>

MSF takes into account the nature of youth offences to ensure that our rehabilitation programmes effectively address the evolving risks and needs of youth offenders. This targeted approach not only ensures their engagement but also strengthens the likelihood of successful reintegration and reduces recidivism.

Under the Guidance Programme or Probation Order, youth offenders involved in theft receive structured guidance from the ISPs or Probation Officers to take responsibility for their actions, understand the consequences, identify triggers, and develop self-management plan to control their impulses. By addressing the underlying causes of offending, this approach promotes meaningful and lasting rehabilitation.

To deepen their understanding of the impact of their behaviours, youth offenders also undergo the Victim Impact Programme. This initiative raises awareness of the harm caused to victims, fosters empathy, and encourages thoughtful consideration of the consequences of their actions, hence, enhancing accountability.

**TABLE 2: TOP THREE OFFENCES COMMITTED BY YOUTH OFFENDERS BY AGE (2023)**

Age	Top offence	Second most common offence	Third most common offence
10 to <16 years	Theft (Shop Theft) 269 offenders	Sexual Offence (Penetration) 130 offenders	Theft (in Dwelling) 46 offenders
16 to <18 years	Cheating & Related Offences 135 offenders	Theft (Shop Theft) 110 offenders	Sexual Offence (Penetration) 83 offenders
18 to <21 years	Cheating & Related Offences 254 offenders	Offences under Computer Misuse Act 145 offenders	Theft (Shop Theft) 130 offenders

Source: Singapore Police Force

<sup>14</sup> Cheating & related offences, and offences under the Computer Misuse Act can involve scams.

<sup>15</sup> Offences under Computer Misuse Act include unauthorised access to computer material, unauthorised modification of computer material, unauthorised use or interception of computer service.

***Cheating & related offences most common among male offenders; shop theft most common among female offenders***

In 2023, cheating & related offences were the most common offence among male youth offenders, while shop theft was the most common offence among female youth offenders.

**TABLE 3: TOP THREE OFFENCES COMMITTED BY YOUTH OFFENDERS BY SEX (2023)**

Sex	Top offence	Second most common offence	Third most common offence
Male	Cheating & Related Offences 291 offenders	Theft (Shop Theft) 264 offenders	Sexual Offence (Penetration) 191 offenders
Female	Theft (Shop Theft) 245 offenders	Cheating & Related Offences 131 offenders	Sexual Offence (Penetration) 59 offenders

Source: Singapore Police Force

### E3. OFFENCES WITH THE LARGEST INCREASE IN NUMBER OF YOUTH OFFENDERS

**Top three offences with the largest increase were cheating & related offences, offences under Computer Misuse Act and offences under CESOW**

Comparing 2019 and 2023, the offences with the largest increase in number of youth offenders were cheating & related offences (increase of 162), offences under Computer Misuse Act (increase of 142), and offences under CESOW (increase of 41).

The increase in cheating & related offences, and offences under Computer Misuse Act were mostly associated with scams. The increase in scam-related offences among youth offenders mirrored the overall increase in scams and cybercrimes in Singapore.<sup>16</sup> Offences under CESOW mainly involved youths who were sighted with offensive weapons (e.g. knives). There were also cases where offensive weapons were discovered at customs screenings or spot checks conducted by the Police.

**TABLE 4: TOP THREE OFFENCES WITH THE LARGEST INCREASE (2019 TO 2023)**

Top offence	Second offence	Third offence
<b>Cheating &amp; Related Offences</b>	<b>Offences under Computer Misuse Act</b>	<b>Offences under CESOW</b>
<b>Increase of 162 youth offenders</b>	<b>Increase of 142 youth offenders</b>	<b>Increase of 41 youth offenders</b>
<b>(260 offenders in 2019 to 422 offenders in 2023)</b>	<b>(53 offenders in 2019 to 195 offenders in 2023)</b>	<b>(92 offenders in 2019 to 133 offenders in 2023)</b>

Source: Singapore Police Force

<sup>16</sup> From January to June 2024, the number of scam and cybercrime cases increased by 18.0% to 28,751 cases, compared to 24,367 cases in the same period in 2023. Retrieved from the Singapore Police Force's Mid-Year Scams and Cybercrime Brief 2024.

**Offences under the CYPA had the largest increase among youth offenders aged 10 to below 16 years; cheating & related offences, and offences under Computer Misuse Act had the largest increase among youth offenders aged 16 to below 18 years and those aged 18 to below 21 years respectively**

Comparing 2019 and 2023, offences under the CYPA (ill treatment/sexual exploitation of child or young person) saw the largest increase in the number of youth offenders among those aged 10 to below 16 years (increase of 14). Most of these cases involved sexual exploitation of a child or young person. Cheating & related offences had the largest increase among youth offenders aged 16 to below 18 years (increase of 65), and offences under Computer Misuse Act had the largest increase among youth offenders aged 18 to below 21 years (increase of 108). Most of these offences were associated with scams.

Youth offenders who have committed sexual offences receive intervention programmes tailored to their risks and needs. These interventions include the Positive Adolescent Sexuality Treatment (PAST) programme for youths who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours (e.g. outrage of modesty, voyeurism), designed to help them take responsibility for their actions and manage risk factors, to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Additionally, detailed relapse prevention plans are developed to support these youths in refraining from further offences.

**TABLE 5: TOP THREE OFFENCES WITH THE LARGEST INCREASE (2019 TO 2023), BY AGE GROUPS**

Age	Top offence	Second offence	Third offence	
10 to <16 years	Offences under CYPA (ill-treatment /sexual exploitation of child or young person) Increase of 14 youth offenders (3 offenders in 2019 to 17 offenders in 2023)	Sexual Offence (Penetration) Increase of 12 youth offenders (118 offenders in 2019 to 130 offenders in 2023)	Offences under CESOW Increase of 9 youth offenders (31 offenders in 2019 to 40 offenders in 2023)	
16 to <18 years	Cheating & Related Offences Increase of 65 youth offenders (70 offenders in 2019 to 135 offenders in 2023)	Offences under Computer Misuse Act Increase of 38 youth offenders (8 offenders in 2019 to 46 offenders in 2023)	Theft of Motor Vehicle Increase of 21 youth offenders (2 offenders in 2019 to 23 offenders in 2023)	Offences under CESOW Increase of 21 youth offenders (22 offenders in 2019 to 43 offenders in 2023)
18 to <21 years	Offences under Computer Misuse Act Increase of 108 youth offenders (37 offenders in 2019 to 145 offenders in 2023)	Cheating & Related Offences Increase of 100 youth offenders (154 offenders in 2019 to 254 offenders in 2023)	Offences under CESOW Increase of 11 youth offenders (39 offenders in 2019 to 50 offenders in 2023)	

Source: Singapore Police Force

**Offences under Computer Misuse Act had the largest increase among male offenders; cheating & related offences had the largest increase among female offenders**

Comparing 2019 and 2023, offences under Computer Misuse Act had the largest increase in the number of youth offenders among males (increase of 123), while cheating & related offences had the largest increase among females (increase of 42). Most of these offences were associated with scams.

**TABLE 6: TOP THREE OFFENCES WITH THE LARGEST INCREASE (2019 TO 2023), BY SEX**

Sex	Top offence	Second offence	Third offence
Male	Offences under Computer Misuse Act	Cheating & Related Offences	Offences under CESOW
	Increase of 123 youth offenders (36 offenders in 2019 to 159 offenders in 2023)	Increase of 120 youth offenders (171 offenders in 2019 to 291 offenders in 2023)	Increase of 36 youth offenders (84 offenders in 2019 to 120 offenders in 2023)
Female	Cheating & Related Offences	Offences under Computer Misuse Act	Theft (Shop Theft)
	Increase of 42 youth offenders (89 offenders in 2019 to 131 offenders in 2023)	Increase of 19 youth offenders (17 offenders in 2019 to 36 offenders in 2023)	Increase of 13 youth offenders (232 offenders in 2019 to 245 offenders in 2023)

Source: Singapore Police Force





## PREVENTING YOUTH SEXUAL OFFENDING

Sexual offences impact the lives and well-being of victims significantly in different ways. The wide use of smartphones has contributed to youths' easy access and exposure to sexually explicit media, including internet pornography. Pornographic content rarely portrays key tenets of healthy sexual relationships such as consent and respect, and often features violence. This can lead to young people developing inaccurate beliefs and expectations of intimate relationships and sexuality.

More can be done to prevent sexual offending and reoffending:

- 1. Increase capability of frontline professionals to manage concerns of harmful online sexual content and pornography presented by youths.**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), with support from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and MSF, has developed a practice guide for frontline professionals including school and community counsellors to help youths recognise and discern online sexual harms. MHA and MOE are conducting trainings for professionals on the use of the guide which would include educating youths on the inaccurate depiction of consent in pornography, sexual violence, derogatory depiction of women, deviant sexual scripts, and impact on adolescent brain, among other topics.

- 2. Equip youths with knowledge on personal safety and alcohol intoxication to protect themselves and others.**

The Singapore Police Force with support from MOE, is delivering assembly talks on personal safety and respect for boundaries, and alcohol intoxication for youths in Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges, and Millennia Institute. This aims to increase youths' understanding of factors contributing to youth sexual offending, with a focus on personal safety and respect for boundaries, and alcohol intoxication.

- 3. Rehabilitate and reintegrate youth sexual offenders in the community, through training suitable social service agencies.**

MSF and the Singapore Prison Service, with support from the State Courts, will train suitable social service agencies on rehabilitating and supporting youths with sexual offences in the community.

## F. REHABILITATION

After a youth is arrested and investigated, a range of rehabilitation programmes is available, including diversionary programmes and rehabilitative orders, as outlined in Section F2. Alternatively, the Police may issue an advisory and take no further action, such as in cases where there is insufficient evidence to prove an offence, or they may issue a police warning. The decision is based on the specific facts and circumstances of each case. Where appropriate, youths who commit relatively minor offences are not charged in Court but are placed on diversionary programmes instead. This helps prevent the stigma of criminal prosecution. If charged in Court, youths may be given Probation Orders, sent to an MSF Youth Home, or be subjected to other suitable orders.

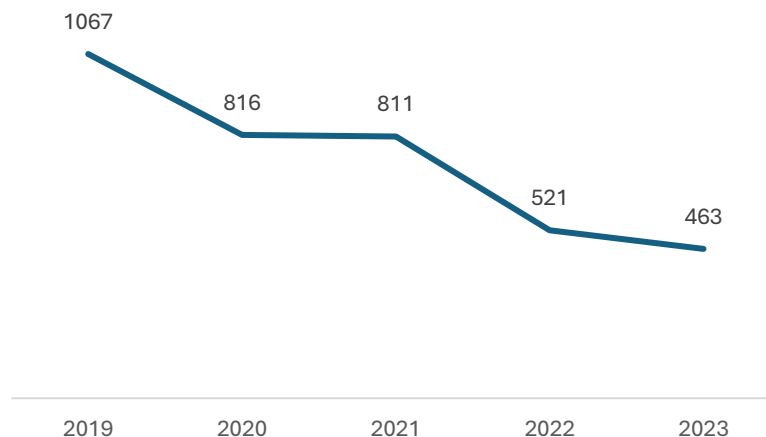
MSF's partnerships with other Government agencies and community partners help to steer youths away from committing offences and keep offending rates low. Together, they help address the underlying and varied risks and needs of youth offenders. Wherever possible, MSF involves the youths' families in the rehabilitation process to reinforce and support the progress made, as family support is integral to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of the youth.

### F1. OVERALL NUMBER OF YOUTH OFFENDERS PLACED ON REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

#### ***Overall number of youth offenders placed on rehabilitation programmes decreased***

The number of youth offenders placed on rehabilitation programmes has decreased.<sup>17</sup> Whether offenders were placed on such programmes or received other outcomes (e.g. no further action, warnings), depended on the circumstances of the case, the risk of reoffending, and other relevant factors. One possible reason is that rehabilitation programmes have seen higher completion rates, which suggests that participants were not given multiple rehabilitation referrals or orders in the same year.

**CHART 4: NUMBER OF YOUTH OFFENDERS PLACED ON REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES**



<sup>17</sup> The rehabilitation programmes in Chart 4 refer to Guidance Programme, (Enhanced) Streetwise Programme, Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme, Probation and MSF Youth Home Orders.

## F2. NUMBER OF YOUTH OFFENDERS PLACED ON INDIVIDUAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

There are various rehabilitation programmes designed to address the specific risks and needs of youth offenders.

### Diversiory Programmes

There are three diversionary programmes for youth offenders, run by social service agencies known as ISPs. These agencies are appointed by MSF to oversee the programmes.

- **Guidance Programme** targets youth offenders who committed minor offences such as theft and trespassing. The sessions usually cover topics such as taking personal responsibility for one's actions and forming healthy relationships.
- **(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme** targets youth offenders who associated with gangs, were involved in gang-related activities or played a minor role in gang related offences. The youths are taught the consequences of gang involvement and guided to dissociate from gangs, form healthy relationships with others and resolve conflicts in a healthy manner.
- **Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme** targets youths who were arrested for the first time for drug consumption. The youths are taught relapse prevention skills to desist from drug-taking.

During the six-month programmes, caseworkers engage the youths through individual, group-based and family sessions. Since families play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of youth offenders, ISPs also work closely with them to create a supportive environment and help sustain the youths' progress. Other partners, such as schools, employers, and community agencies, also engage the youths in constructive activities and support them in pursuing their goals. Youths who successfully completed the diversionary programmes are given a warning in lieu of Court prosecution.

### Probation Orders

Probation is overseen by MSF's Probation and Community Rehabilitation Service and aims to rehabilitate youth offenders within the community, allowing them to continue their education or employment. Probation Officers supervise and regularly discuss the probationer's progress with key stakeholders such as caregivers, schools, and employers, while updating the Court on their progress. They also work closely with the probationer's family, providing support to strengthen family relationships and help parents carry out effective supervision.

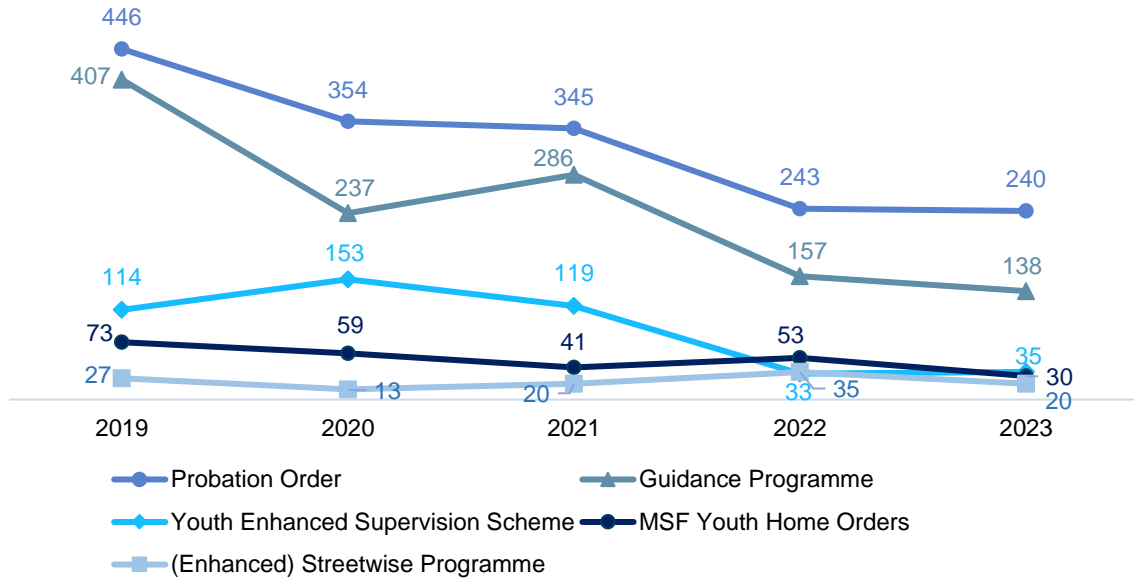
### MSF Youth Home Orders

Youths under MSF Youth Home Orders typically exhibit higher risks and needs. MSF Youth Homes provide academic, rehabilitative, and holistic development programmes designed to address their reoffending risks and rehabilitation needs. The MSF Youth Homes also collaborate closely with the offenders' families and caregivers, equipping them with skills to support the youths' reintegration into the community, such as monthly family sessions with caseworkers. MSF Youth Homes also work closely with community partners including social service agencies to support families in strengthening their parenting knowledge and capacity to mitigate offending risks.

**Majority of youth offenders given Probation Order and referred to Guidance Programme**

The Probation Order and Guidance Programme remained the top two rehabilitation programmes for youth offenders. This is consistent with the Government’s approach to prioritise rehabilitation in the community, which allows youth offenders to continue their education or work in the community. There were fewer youths placed on the (Enhanced) Streetwise Programme and Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme. These programmes cater to more specific groups of youth offenders, i.e. youths who committed gang- and drug-related offences respectively.

**CHART 5: NUMBER OF YOUTH OFFENDERS PLACED UNDER DIFFERENT REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES**





## YOUTH OFFENDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental well-being is integral to successful rehabilitation of youth offenders. From 2016 to 2018, one in two youth offenders were found to have experienced mental health problems. MSF strives to improve youths' mental well-being as part of their rehabilitation journey. For example, Probation Officers work with psychologists from MSF's Clinical and Forensic Psychology Service (CFPS) and partners such as the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) to assess and support probationers with suicidal ideation and self-harm risks, including developing plans to ensure they remain safe in the community. Probationers may be mandated to undergo psychological and/or psychiatric treatment as part of their probation, depending on their risks and needs. Probation Officers also provide psychoeducation to caregivers so they can better support the youths in their recovery journey.

Youths with mental health concerns in MSF Youth Homes are supported by a multi-disciplinary team comprising caseworkers, youth guidance officers, and CFPS psychologists. They may also be referred to the Child Guidance Clinic at the IMH.

Within two years of starting their rehabilitation journeys, the number of youth offenders with mental health problems decreased by 52% (from 427 to 208, out of 813 youths). Key protective factors that contributed to the improvement in their mental well-being over time included their family environment, self-efficacy and social competencies such as cooperation and communication.

More information on youth offenders and their mental health can be found in the book "Emotional and Behavioural Problems of Young Offenders in Singapore," by the National Council of Social Service. The book reports the findings from the Enhancing Positive Outcomes in Youth and the Community (EPYC) study, a nationwide 10-year longitudinal study on youth offenders in Singapore. For more information, please refer to the QR code below.



## G. COMPLETION RATES

The completion rates across the various rehabilitation programmes showed a general upward trend from 2019 to 2022, and remained high at around 90% in 2023.

### G1. COMPLETION RATES FOR DIVERSIONARY PROGRAMMES

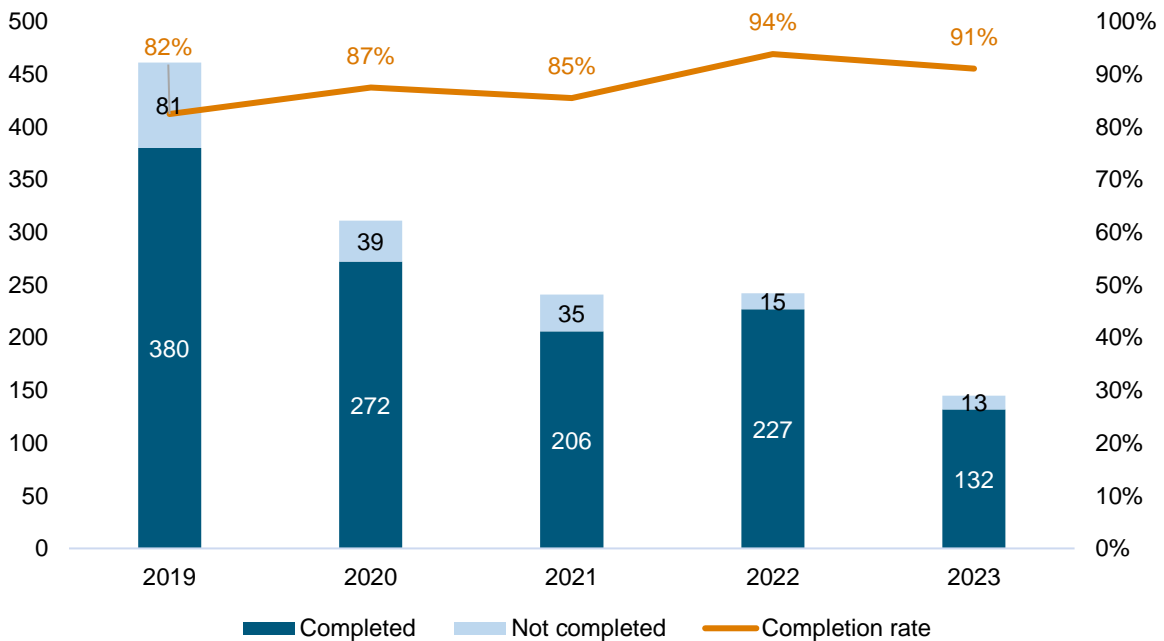
The completion rates across all three Diversionary Programmes were high. MSF's close collaboration with families, schools and community partners has been crucial in supporting youths in their rehabilitation. Over the years, the ISPs have strengthened their capabilities and competencies through upskilling, training and supervision. These factors have been crucial in the successful completion of programmes by youths.

Nonetheless, a small number of youths did not complete the programmes. Reasons for non-completion included the youths breaching the programme requirements or committing new offences while on the programme. These cases were reported to the Police, and the youths could be required to comply with additional conditions, such as extending their time in the programme or being charged in Court for the earlier offence.

#### ***Completion rate for Guidance Programme remained high at above 80%***

The completion rate for the Guidance Programme remained high, exceeding 90% in both 2022 and 2023.

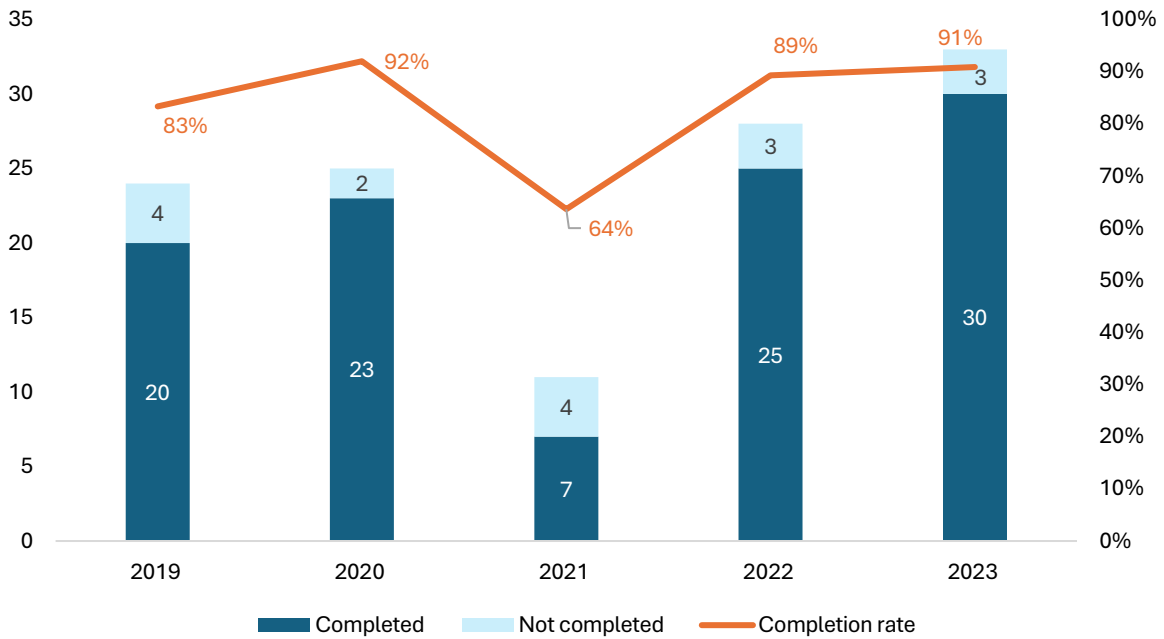
**CHART 6: NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED GUIDANCE PROGRAMME**



**Overall completion rates for (Enhanced) Streetwise Programme cases remained high**

The completion rate for the (Enhanced) Streetwise Programme also remained high, at above 83%, except in 2021. It is likely that the drop in 2021 is due to the much smaller base compared to other years.

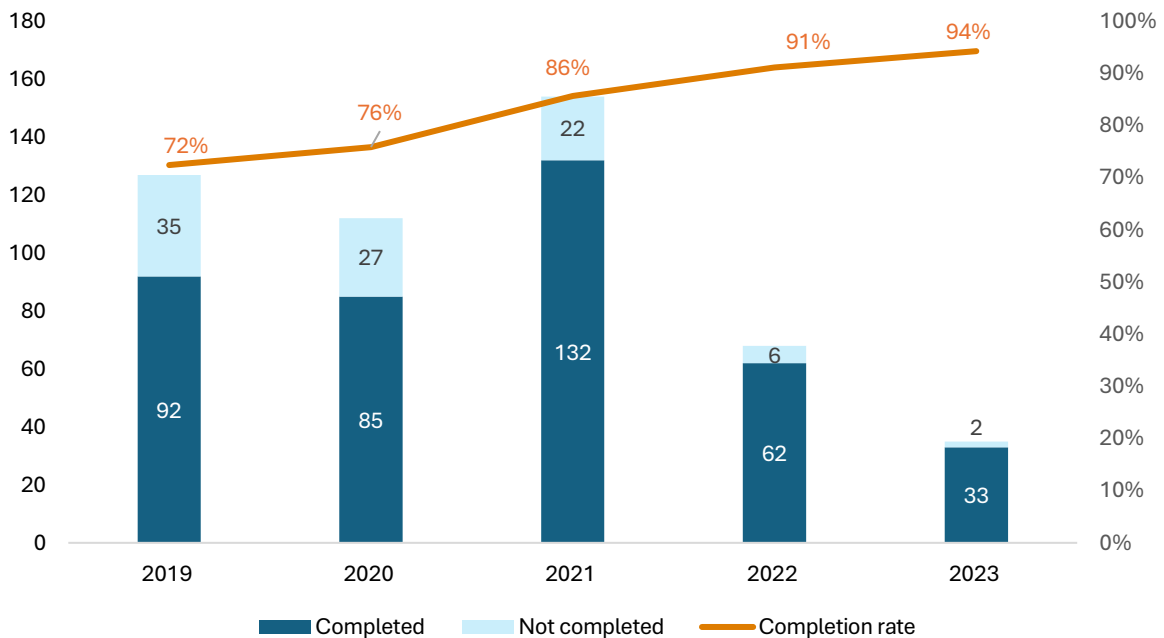
**CHART 7: NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED (ENHANCED) STREETWISE PROGRAMME**



**Completion rates for Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme showed 22%-point improvement from 2019 to 2023**

The completion rate for the Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme showed a 22%-point improvement, from 72% in 2019 to above 86% since 2021.

**CHART 8: NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED YOUTH ENHANCED SUPERVISION SCHEME**



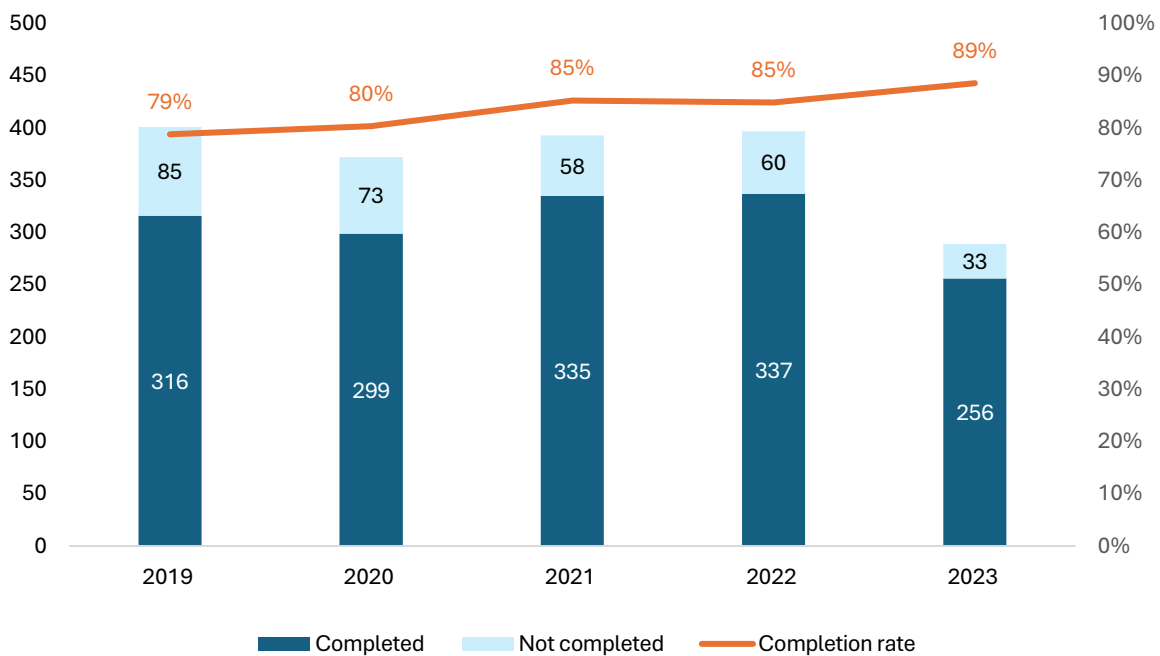
## G2. COMPLETION RATES FOR PROBATION ORDERS

### ***Completion rates for Probation Orders showed a general upward trend, highest at 89% in 2023***

The completion rate for Probation Orders improved over the years, reaching its highest at 89% in 2023. The upward trend was likely due to the collective efforts of the youths' families, Probation Officers, Volunteer Probation Officers and community partners who supported probationers in their rehabilitation journey. An inter-agency and multi-disciplinary approach involving educators, health professionals, law enforcement and community partners, contributed significantly to the high programme completion rate for probationers.

Some probationers did not complete their probation. This included those who failed to follow the conditions of their order or reoffended during the order, resulting in warnings from their Probation Officers or having their cases brought before the Court. The Court could then decide to vary the conditions of the order, such as extending the Probation Order or issuing other appropriate orders.

**CHART 9: NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF PROBATIONERS WHO COMPLETED THEIR PROBATION ORDERS**



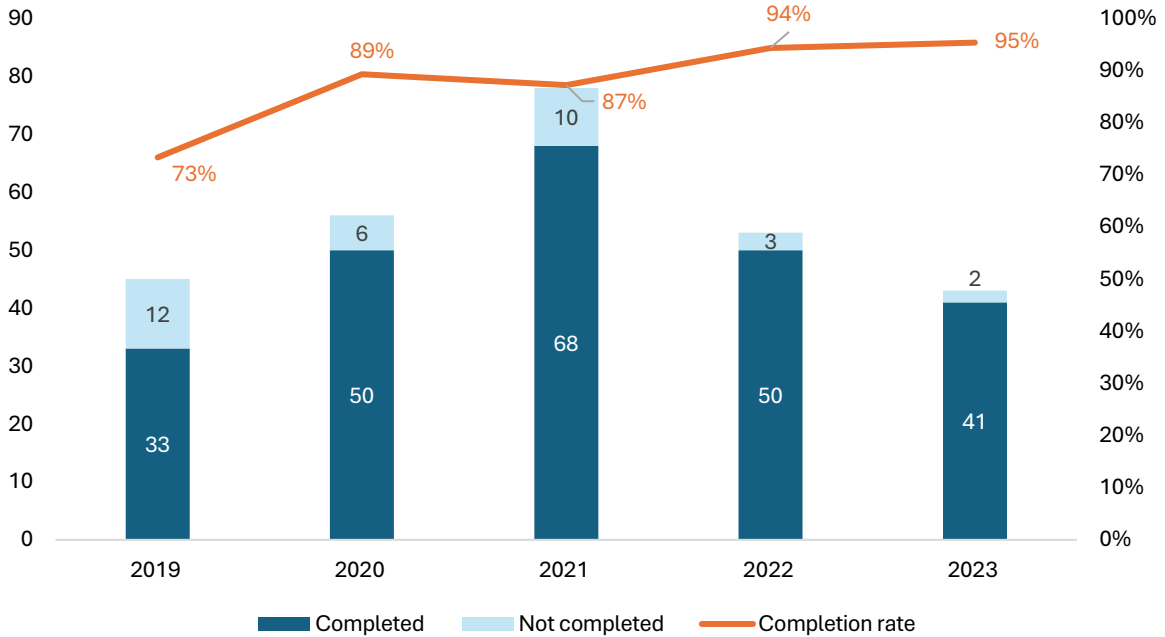


### G3. COMPLETION RATES FOR MSF YOUTH HOME ORDERS

**Completion rate for MSF Youth Home Orders showed an upward trend, reaching 95% in 2023**

The completion rate for the MSF Youth Home Orders showed a general upward trend. This high completion rate can be attributed to the collective efforts of the multi-disciplinary team at the MSF Youth Homes, who worked with community partners and families to support the youths in their rehabilitation journey.

**CHART 10: NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED MSF YOUTH HOME ORDERS**



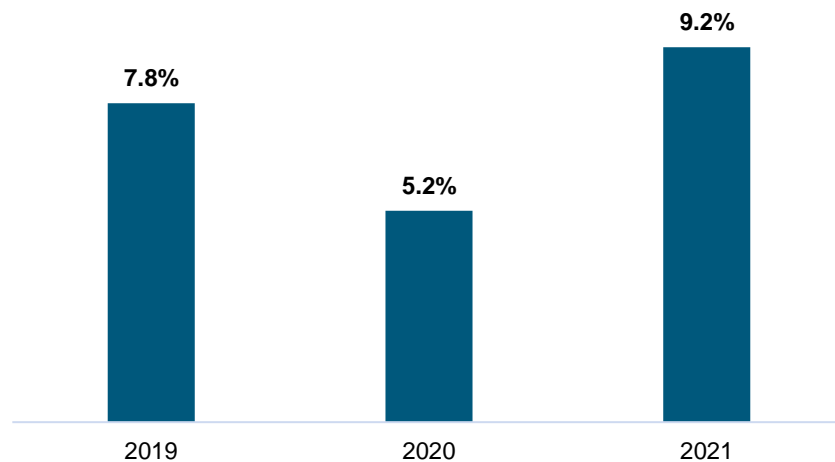
## H. RECIDIVISM RATES

### H1. OVERALL TWO-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES

#### ***Overall, two-year recidivism rates remained low***

The overall two-year recidivism (i.e. reoffending within two years of programme completion) rate for youth offenders remained below 10% from the 2019 cohort to the 2021 cohort. Following a dip in recidivism rate in 2020 (i.e. reoffending up to 2022) due to COVID restrictions, the recidivism rate returned to pre-COVID levels in 2021.<sup>18</sup> The recidivism rate was low compared to other countries. For example, the two-year recidivism rate of young people (aged 14 to 16 years) in New Zealand was 51% for the 2020 cohort, and the two-year recidivism rate of juveniles in Indiana, United States was 20.1% for the 2018 cohort.<sup>19,20</sup>

**CHART 11: TWO-YEAR OVERALL RECIDIVISM RATES OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES**



<sup>18</sup> The two-year recidivism rates were 8.8% in 2017 and 8.4% in 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Refers to the proportion of young people (aged 14 to 16 at the offence date) in the Youth Court proven in any Court to have reoffended within 24 months. New Zealand Ministry of Justice. (2024). *Youth Justice Indicators Summary Report*.

<sup>20</sup> Refers to a return to incarceration within two years of the juvenile's date of release from a state correctional institution. Indiana Department of Correction. (2021). *Juvenile Recidivism 2021*.

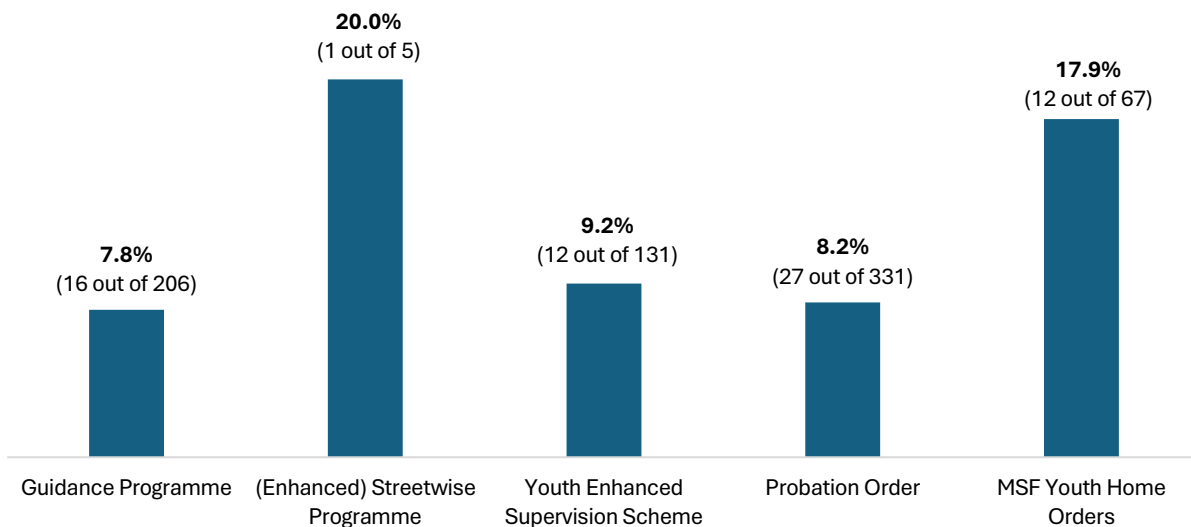
## H2. OVERALL TWO-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

### *The two-year recidivism rates for the individual rehabilitation programmes remained low*

The two-year recidivism rates for youth offenders under the various rehabilitation programmes were generally low. However, the recidivism rate for the (Enhanced) Streetwise Programme was higher at 20%, likely due to the small cohort size – only 1 out of 5 youths who completed the programme reoffended. The recidivism rate for the MSF Youth Home Orders was higher compared to the Guidance Programme and Probation Orders, because youths under the MSF Youth Home Orders generally had higher risks and needs.

Efforts by MSF and community partners to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders kept recidivism rates low. For example, youth offenders are taught skills to interact meaningfully with their families and others in society. Youths under the MSF Youth Home Orders are also provided with education and vocational studies to increase their employability, ensuring they remained meaningfully engaged (e.g. in education, training or employment) upon completing their order. Throughout the youth's rehabilitation, community partners and family members are continuously involved to support effective reintegration upon completion of their order.

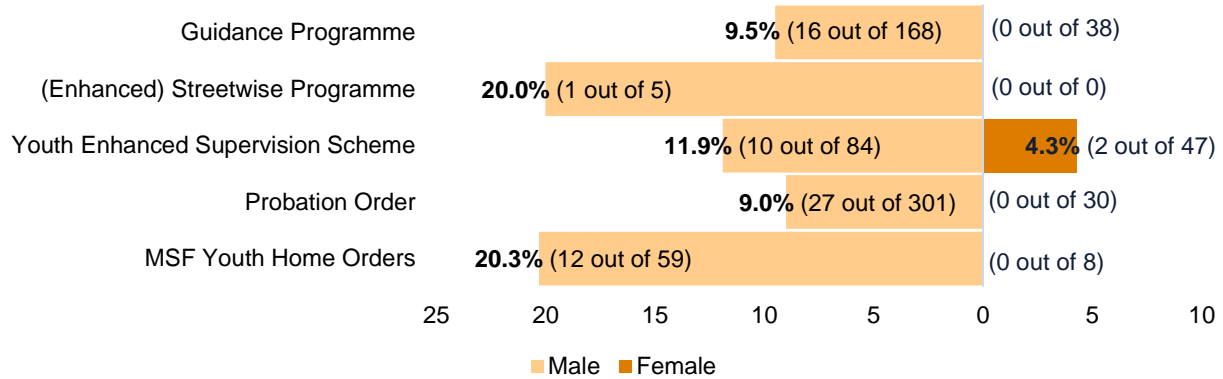
**CHART 12: TWO-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED THE SPECIFIED PROGRAMMES IN 2021**



**Males had higher two-year recidivism rates, compared to females**

Males had higher two-year recidivism rates compared to females. This mirrored global patterns in recidivism rates. For example, in England and Wales, the recidivism rate for males was 33.5%, compared to 23.6% for females in the year ending March 2022.<sup>21</sup>

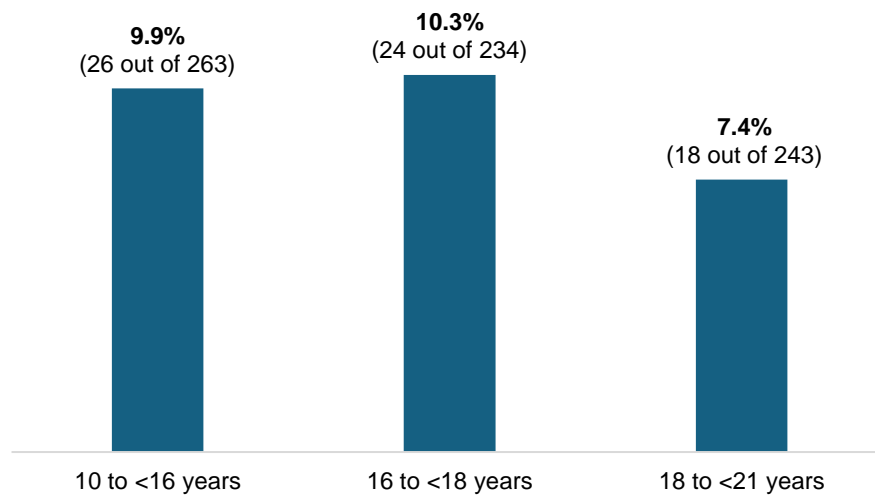
**CHART 13: TWO-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED THE SPECIFIED PROGRAMMES IN 2021, BY SEX OF YOUTH**



**Youths aged 10 to below 16 years and 16 to below 18 years had similar recidivism rates**

The recidivism rates for youths aged 10 to below 16 years old and youths aged 16 to below 18 years were similar. Youths aged 18 to below 21 years had slightly lower recidivism rates (7.4%) compared to those below 18 years.

**CHART 14: TWO-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES OF YOUTHS WHO COMPLETED THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES IN 2021, BY AGE OF YOUTH**



<sup>21</sup> Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. (2024). *Youth Justice Statistics: 2022 to 2023 (accessible version)*.

## I. CONCLUSION

The combined efforts of MSF, Government agencies, youths' families, and community partners have led to sustained high completion rates for rehabilitation programmes, along with low offending and recidivism rates. Low offending rates reflect fewer new crimes, while low recidivism rates indicate that youths who have previously offended are not returning to crime after completing their rehabilitation. MSF is also encouraged by our 200-strong pool of Volunteer Probation Officers and volunteers at MSF Youth Homes, who guide and support our youth offenders in their rehabilitation journey. MSF welcomes more volunteers to join us in this meaningful work to help youth offenders start anew.

Together, we can help our youths look forward to a brighter future and contribute back to society.



### BE A VOLUNTEER

Join us as a MSFCare Network volunteer to make a meaningful difference in youths' lives! Roles include:

- a. Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs). VPOs serve as mentors and role models to probationers and connect them to resources in the community. Find out more:



- b. Befrienders and mentors. Befrienders and mentors help to engage youths residing in MSF Youth Homes through activities and conversations, to help them reintegrate into the community and lead meaningful lives. Find out more:



## J. ANNEX

**Table A: Number of youths placed on different rehabilitation programmes**

Rehabilitation Programme	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Guidance Programme	407	237	286	157	138
(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme	27	13	20	35	20
Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme	114	153	119	33	35
Probation Order	446	354	345	243	240
MSF Youth Home Orders	73	59	41	53	30

**Table B: Number of youths placed on the different rehabilitation programmes by sex (2023)**

Rehabilitation Programme	Male	Female
Guidance Programme	113	25
(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme	20	0
Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme	17	18
Probation Order	219	21
MSF Youth Home Orders	26	4

**Table C: Number of youths placed on the different rehabilitation programmes by age (2023)**

Rehabilitation Programme	10 to <16	16 to <18	18 to <21
Guidance Programme	87	44	7
(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme	6	8	6
Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme	4	8	23
Probation Order	23	56	161
MSF Youth Home Orders	21	9	0

**Table D: Number and proportion of youths who completed the Guidance Programme**

Guidance Programme	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall completion	82%	87%	85%	94%	91%
Completed	380	272	206	227	132
Not completed	81	39	35	15	13
Total	461	311	241	242	145

**Table E: Number and proportion of youths who completed the (Enhanced) Streetwise Programme**

(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall completion	83%	92%	64%	89%	91%
Completed	20	23	7	25	30
Not completed	4	2	4	3	3
Total	24	25	11	28	33

**Table F: Number and proportion of youths who completed the Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme**

Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall completion	72%	76%	86%	91%	94%
Completed	92	85	132	62	33
Not completed	35	27	22	6	2
Total	127	112	154	68	35

**Table G: Number and proportion of youths who completed a Probation Order**

Probation	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall completion	79%	80%	85%	85%	89%
Completed	316	299	335	337	256
Not completed	85	73	58	60	33
Total	401	372	393	397	289

**Table H: Number and proportion of youths who completed the MSF Youth Home Orders**

<b>MSF Youth Home Orders</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Overall completion	73%	89%	87%	94%	95%
Completed	33	50	68	50	41
Not completed	12	6	10	3	2
Total	45	56	78	53	43

**Table I: Two-year recidivism rate of youths by rehabilitation programme**

<b>Rehabilitation Programme</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Guidance Programme	2.5%	1.5%	7.8%
(Enhanced) Streetwise Programme	0%	0%	20.0%
Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme	9.7%	4.7%	9.2%
Probation	10.3%	6.5%	8.2%
MSF Youth Home Orders	39.4%	18.0%	17.9%