

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW- PREVENTING YOUTH CRIME
WEDNESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2010**

Councillors: Newton (Chair), Christophides, Engert, Gibson, and Reece

Co-opted Young Advisers: Ghouchi Dobson
Members: Headteacher: Mr Singh
Officers: Linda James - Strategic Manager Youth Offending Service,
Ayten Kiani – Deputy Head Youth Services – Targetted Support, Laris
Bucknor Fisher – Prevention Manager Youth Offending Service,
Lauren Scheider – Targetted Youth Inclusion Manager, Louise Jones –
Head of Intergrated Support.

PYC1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

PYC2 .URGENT BUSINESS

None.

PYC3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PYC4. SCOPE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF REVIEW

AGREED:

That the Terms of Reference and proposed co-options onto the Panel be approved and recommended to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

PYC5. OVERVIEW REPORT ON PREVENTING YOUTH CRIME

The Strategic Manager for the Youth Offending Service gave an overview to the Panel of the current services engaged in the prevention of youth crime. In particular the Panel were informed that there was an over representation of young black African or black Caribbean males in the youth justice system. Also the Panel noted the possible risk factors associated with youth crime. Regretfully, due to the uncertain future of provision for youth crime prevention it had not been possible to obtain comparative data from the range of other “family” boroughs. Officers advised that the recommendations from the joint Inspection report by HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation, Care Quality Commission and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales into Youth Crime Prevention which was completed over a year ago, but just published, would be acted upon. A publication “Fresh Start” showed costings for a young person of £173,000 from start to finish entering into the youth justice system, in comparison to £47,500 for alternative measures and the cost of custody ranged from £69,000 to £193,000 a year per place.

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There ensued a series of questions and answers as follows:-

1. Is there any evidence that the reduction in funding as identified has had any affect on youth crime?

Over the last few years the number of referrals had continually gone up as identified below. It was noted that young people were generally having more difficulties than they did 5 years ago and that problems were tending to occur at an earlier age and were of a more complex nature. It was acknowledged that early intervention with 0-3 year old (as the brain was developing) was important and that primary schools should be targeted for specialist support as necessary. Although there were a lot of good schemes available and evidence of good partnership working there was a need for more 1-1 support for young people.

01/12/2004	01/12/2005	01/06/2006	01/12/2007	01/12/2008	01/12/2009	01/06/2010
68	67	94	93	151	188	192

2. In view of the likely future funding position what key services are a priority for retention and how would services be specifically targeted and what criteria would be used to set priorities?

The current position was that statutory duties within the YOS would have to receive priority funding and there would be no money available for any prevention work. Beyond statutory functions, a priority would be to retain the Triage project plus a reduced number of outreach workers to carry out the work, as there was substantial evidence that it helped to reduce the number of young people entering the criminal justice system. It was noted that part of the youth service was core- funded and this provided universal services. The targeted youth service provision was almost all grant funded, ending in March 2011. All work carried out by Connexions was Area Based grant funded. The Youth Offending Service had lost £176,000 from this year's ABG via CYPS . The grant received from the Youth Justice Board budget is currently ring- fenced, and the hope is that this would continue to remain although the future amount and ring - fence are uncertain. The YOS currently received £854,500 from the AGB and £859,100 was core -funding. There was serious concern that the service was dependant upon discretionary funding. This uncertainty had also affected the service's ability to retain good quality staff.

3. Are voluntary sector organisations involved in any schemes and is there any potential for increasing this?

In the past some good contracts for the provision of services had been commissioned with the voluntary sector. More recently the focus had been on engaging with voluntary organisations that had secured their own funding. The

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potential to increase any further was limited. Whilst volunteers and mentors had also been engaged, the service had to set up, recruit, train and support them. It was noted that a successful Somali mentoring scheme set up within the YOS would end in February 2011.

4. Is there any scope for joint commissioning of services or pooling of resources

A pilot within the CYPS was looking at joint strategic commissioning of services and examining whether there was any duplication of services, it was due to report at the end of November. Members requested that a copy of this report be sent to them when available. Joint commissioning with Barnet and Enfield in respect of high level intensive supervision and support was in place already.

5. How closely do the teams work with the probation service?

It was acknowledged there was further work to be done with regard to closer working with the Probation service and it was suggested that there could be more referrals made by the Probation service. The joint Inspection report is due to be considered by the YOS Partnership Board in early Dec 10. It was noted that referrals from the probation service would include the children and siblings of known adult offenders and having an adult offender within the family was a risk in offending.

6. How long do they track a young person ? When do they close files? is there a clear exit strategy? Is there any further tracking once person no longer getting support?

A young person was usually worked with by Triage anywhere from 6 weeks upwards and then tracked for a year after that. All YOS and TYIP young people are tracked for a year to identify whether they have re-offended. The services hoped to effect some change in the young person after about 6 months. A clear plan was developed with the young person and files were closed when the service was convinced that there was no more work to do and changes could be seen. At present there were no pressures to complete cases, although there have been waiting lists held due to the number of referrals received . The service did not have the capacity to track beyond one year. It was suggested that lessons could be learnt on the impact of prevention work from LB Enfield who had commissioned research to track children who had received interventions in previous years, to find out if they had entered the criminal justice system. However it was noted that Connexions tracked all young people in the borough up to 19 to establish if they were in education, employment or training.

7. Is N111 the only indicator used for measuring outcomes?

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It was noted that the YJB considered that the use of N111 was too crude a measure of the success of prevention work and that a more qualitative measure was likely to be introduced from 2011. Various other indicators were available such as NI 117 and NI113

8. What training is provided to staff in order to assess/identify need? And on safeguarding?

Staff were well trained in a good range of specialisms - i.e. safeguarding, cognitive- behaviour therapy and restorative approaches.

9. What checks are in place to ensure that needs are accurately assessed?

Staff were supervised and systematic monitoring was in place. Additionally managers carry out audits and quality assurance checks and random checks were undertaken. Independent audits are carried out in the YOS twice a year, but this will end in 2011 and be carried out by managers. Also the young people and their parents give the services feedback.

10. What training is given on the use of CAF and ONSET to partners and do they fully understand the use of CAF and ONSET

Panel were advised of the difference between CAF and ONSET, the latter which contained details of criminogenic factors and had health input. Intervention Plans which emulated from either process were voluntary and the parents signed up to them. All staff receive training on Onset and selected staff on CAF

11. Is there any duplication in assessment methods and if so can this cause problems?

The Youth Offending Service has key performance indicators set by the Youth Justice Board including NI.111, others included NI 119 (the rate of proven re-offending by young people in the criminal justice system) N143 (young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody); N144 (ethnic composition of young people on youth justice disposals) and NI 45 (engagement of youth offenders in full time suitable education, training and employment. The meeting also noted that it was important to complete final assessments and compare to initial assessments to ascertain individual progress.

12. Do all young people have up to date intervention plans, which are regularly reviewed, with clear outcomes and exit strategies

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The CAF and Onset referral and assessment tools contain similar factors. All young people did have up to date intervention plans which were regularly reviewed with clear outcomes and exit strategies. It was considered that interagency working had improved over the years.

13. Has there been any thought to or is it possible to mainstreaming services in order to provide longer term continuity?

Mainstreaming the services would greatly assist the service and this has been attempted without success in the past. If the funding for a three year period was known the service could be able to plan ahead. Also it would help retain good quality staff. Furthermore officers spent time chasing small pots of short term funding rather than actually delivering a service. Currently there was no borough youth crime strategy as the funding was uncertain. Additionally it was difficult to plan strategically.

14. What assessment of young people identified as being at risk is given in respect of their health needs

Health issues were part of the young persons overall assessment. Also a mental health social worker, part time school nurse and two substance misuse workers were based in the Youth Offending Service. The 2 substance misuse workers are developing joint work with the YIP. The TYIP also made referrals to Haringey Young People's Counselling Service to address mental and emotional concerns, this was a preferred option by young people as it allowed them to gain support without the stigma of mental health agency.

15. How do the respective Partnership Boards set strategic objectives, how do they monitored progress and are outcomes were in line with expectations etc.

It was noted that the Youth Offending Service reported to the Youth Justice Board and Youth Offending Service Partnership Board and a range of other boards, details of which would be supplied to members. The objectives of the YOS Partnership Board were set centrally by the Youth Justice Board, but local issues and priorities are also identified and monitored. Also there was a multi agency partnership board for young people (youth crime prevention panel), but this is not currently operating due to uncertainty surrounding this area of work. However it was considered that links with the Children's Trust could be improved.

With regard to the continuum of need included in the Prevention strategy it was noted that targeted youth crime prevention services operated at levels

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2b to 3. Over the past few years the difficulties the young people face have become more complex, for example drugs were often used, not as a recreational pastime, but in order to mask underlying problems.

The Panel heard from the young adviser that the relationship between the young person and their key worker was very important. He also considered that the provision of services and activities to divert a young person away from crime was crucial such as youth centres.

The Panel noted that specific provision for younger children with disabilities and those with special needs was limited. Provision for younger children was likely to be made through early years and play and schools.

Cllr Gibson enquired about a 7up project carried out a number of years ago and it was noted that a similar youth response project had been instigated in Haringey. This scheme enabled young people who had experience of living in the Borough be trained as youth workers. Currently an evaluation of the impact was being prepared.

MARTIN NEWTON

CHAIR