




Haringey Council

Report for:	Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel 18 March 2015	Item Number:	
Title:	Young People in the Youth Justice System		
Report Authorised by:	 Jon Abbey Interim Director		
Lead Officer:	Simon Stone Acting Head of Service, Haringey Youth Offending Service		
Ward(s) affected: All	Report for information		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report outlines the work of the Youth Offending Service with particular regard to the young people in the youth justice system. It includes information in respect of outcome and performance measures, service user profile, types of intervention and restorative justice processes.

2. Cabinet Member introduction

2.1 Haringey's Youth Offending Service (YOS) was set up following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This act defined the role of the youth justice system as having the principal aim of preventing offending by children and young people and required all local authorities to establish a youth offending team in order to meet this aim. The Act requires the provision of a multi agency team that must include at least one of the following; probation officer, social worker, police officer, health and education professionals.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.



4. Alternative options considered

Not applicable – report is for information.

5. Background Information

5.1 Haringey's Youth Offending Service (YOS)

5.2 Haringey's Youth Offending Service works with children and young people between the ages of 8 and 18 and consists of approximately 50 staff arranged within four teams and subsidiaries. There is a Restorative Justice and Prevention Team (whose main aim is to prevent young people entering the formal youth justice system), and three Intervention teams (managing statutory community and custodial orders in addition to servicing the criminal courts in relation to reports and remand services). The teams vary in makeup according to need but include social workers, probation officers and a range of specialists. In addition to these teams, the Youth Offending Service has a data analyst and number of administrators.

5.3 The YOS utilises a range of interventions to engage children, young people and families including one to one sessions, group work and parenting support. We work closely with a range of partner agencies including Probation, Police and the third sector.

5.4 All work is carried out in accordance with Youth Justice Board (YJB) National Standards for Youth Justice, with quarterly reporting to the YJB who monitor performance against three identified outcome measures. The three measures are as detailed below in the performance section and success is determined in relation to the direction of travel rather than any hard targets.

5.5 Performance

5.5.1 Reducing the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System

This measure is in relation to the number of young people entering the youth justice system that have not had prior involvement with the formal criminal justice system. The data for this measure is taken from the Police National Computer (PNC) on a rolling, 12 month, basis.

5.5.2 Reducing the use of custody (as a means of sentence);

This target is in relation to the number of Haringey young people receiving a custodial sentence in a 12 month period.

5.5.3 Preventing Reoffending

Reoffending data is calculated via the Police National computer and measured in relation to a cohort of young people in a, rolling, 12 month period. As this data is collected from the PNC it includes young people that are not necessarily known to the Youth Offending Service and some who may not, in reality, be from Haringey beyond the date of arrest. Data in relation to the number of young people that have reoffended and the number of offences committed. Within this report the data given is the percentage of young people that have reoffended in the measured period for 12 months.



5.6 Performance Data

5.6.1 The Youth Offending Service submits quarterly returns in relation to the above performance measures on a quarterly basis. Haringey's YOS compares our own performance with our Family (areas with a similar demographic) and also the London average. The most recent data is for Quarter 3 - December 2014. The data below compares the latest figures with the equivalent data set in Quarter 3 of 2013, 2012, and 2011.

5.6.2 First Time Entrants

There were 95 first time entrants at Q3 of 2014 compared to 120 in 2013, 182 in 2012 and 268 in 2011. This performance is better than both our family and the London averages and highlights strong local performance in relation to diverting young people from the formal youth justice system and preventing offending.

5.6.3 Use of Custody

37 young people were sentenced to a custodial sentence at quarter 3 of 2014. This compares with 48 in the same period for 2013, 52 in 2012 and 60 in 2011. The current performance data, despite being comparatively high in relation to the family and London averages, represents the lowest number of Haringey young people entering custody in a 12 month period since this measure has been collated.

5.6.4 Reoffending

The latest reoffending rate for Haringey's young people stands at 40.9 %. This is the lowest that it has been since 2011 with the comparative data for the same periods being 47.2% in 2013, 47.1 in 2012 and 40.1 in 2011. This represents a dramatic reduction of 6.3% in the last 12 months after a lengthy period of increased reoffending.

5.6.5 Active Caseload

- The above reduction in relation to first time entrants and success in relation to reoffending and preventative measures has led to a dramatic reduction in the numbers of young people being worked with by the Youth Offending Service. In December 2014 there were 173 young people actively engaged with the Youth Offending Service in relation to preventative work and criminal orders. The comparative figure for June 2014 was 195, June 2013, 333 and in June 2012 it was 396.
- Whilst we have seen a marked decrease in the numbers of young people being worked with by the Youth Offending Service there has been a noticeable increase in terms of the complexity of the issues affecting the young people and the levels of assessed need. All young people are assessed using ASSET, the Youth Justice Board's National Assessment Tool, that focuses on assessing young people in relation to range of areas leading that may or may not contribute to the risks posed in relation to their likelihood of reoffending, the risk of serious harm posed to the public and their own vulnerability.
- If we compare the assessed risks in each of these areas amongst the current caseload with those in 2012, we can detect a clear increase in relation to the risks posed and draw conclusions that, whilst taking account of improvements in assessment skills by practitioners, indicate an increased level of complexity.



- In 2012 the percentages of young people assessed as presenting a high risk of serious harm to others was 4% with 43% medium and 53% assessed as low. The current caseload is assessed as presenting a high risk in 26% (an increase of 22%), 37% medium and 37% low.
- In relation to vulnerability we see a similar shift with high risk being assessed in 21% as opposed to 5%, medium 41% from 35% and low vulnerability moving from 60% to 39%.
- The figures in both of these areas indicate that whilst the Youth Offending Service is working with fewer young people the needs of the young people and risks posed to others and themselves are more acute requiring more intensive intervention.

5.7 Profile of Young Offenders

5.7.1 The Youth Offending Service works with young people from a range of backgrounds and identities. Data is collated in order that we can identify who we are working with and understand changes in trends and respond accordingly to identified need. The current ethnicity make up of our case load includes 47% black, 37% white, 11% dual heritage, 3% Asian with 2% other. This represents a minus 9% disparity for the white population and a plus 19% disparity for the black population when compared with the Haringey census data.

5.7.2 The issue of disproportional representation of young black people in the youth justice system has been an issue for a considerable amount of time both locally and nationally due to a myriad of contributing factors. We are committed to addressing this issue where we can and have delivered a number of specific interventions in attempts to better meet the needs of young black people in the system. These have included group work programmes aimed at equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to achieve their potential to specific interventions targeting issues of gang membership and serious youth violence that have affected this group in the borough.

5.7.3 The Roma young people that we have worked with have been disproportionately affected by punitive sentencing in the Courts and have suffered levels of coercion from older community members leading to offending. The stereotypes within society that affect this group heavily influence how they are dealt with by agencies and Haringey Youth Offending Service has been determined to ensure that discrimination is addressed wherever possible by providing appropriate services.

5.7.4 Girls make up 12% of the current YOS caseload down from 29% in June 2012. This reduction is, in large part, due to the reduction in numbers of Roma young people that were involved in theft offences at that time. A recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation Report (HMIP) into girls in the Youth Justice System highlighted the safeguarding concerns present in working with girls in this context. Their involvement in offending, particularly when related to gangs, massively increases vulnerability issue and in turn the vulnerability issues increase the likelihood of reoffending. We are embarking on further analysis in relation to the girls that we work with in relation to this area and will be developing



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a strategy for addressing the identity related issues for females involved in the Youth Justice System when complete.

5.8 Why do young people offend?

5.8.1 The ASSET assessment tool focuses on a range of areas within a young person's life in order to determine which areas are most influential in terms of increasing the likelihood of them reoffending. These include family and personal relationships, lifestyle, substance misuse and education, to name a few. From an analysis of the assessments in place during December 2014, we can conclude that the most influential areas were thinking, behaviour and Lifestyle as these sections were rated as having a high correlation in most cases. These areas of assessment focus on the young person thinking skills and how they impact upon their behaviour, for example impulsivity and their daily routines and associations. A lack of structure and absence of positive activities are important factors in terms of risk of repeat offending and definable targets for intervention in order to reduce the levels of risk. Involvement with gangs or offending peer groups is a major risk factor for young people in relation to their offending. Girls involved in such groups are at heightened risk of offending linked to their vulnerability and issues of sexual exploitation amongst peers.

5.8.2 Other areas that are rated consistently as problematic are family and personal relationships and difficulties in education. The absence of caring and consistent significant others is often a factor and under achievement or lack of appropriate education often contributes toward a complex situation and increased level of risk. All of these issues are compounded by issues of poverty and neglect suffered by the most disadvantaged in our borough, as they are nationally.

5.9 Preventing offending and reoffending

5.9.1 The Youth Offending Service utilises a range of interventions to address offending and reoffending including one to one supervision, group work and referral to specialists both within and outside of the service.



5.9.2 Triage is a service aimed at reducing the number of first time entrants. This involves liaison with the Police at the point that a young person is arrested for a relatively low level offence. Where agreed, the young person is made subject to bail whilst they are assessed by a Youth Offending Service Triage Officer who then targets interventions in order to address any concerns. An example of this may be a young person arrested for possession of cannabis receiving a short substance misuse intervention or referral to the parenting worker in order to address boundary setting issues. If the young person cooperates with the intervention, the charges are discontinued and the young person diverted from the formal criminal justice system.

5.9.3 In addition to triage, the Youth Offending Service currently has prevention staff that receive referrals from a range of sources where a young person is believed to be at risk of becoming involved in offending. The Prevention Team will work with the young person and parent/carer to address the concerns and reduce the risk to the young person. This may involve working with schools and other community resources to ensure that the young person is linked into positive activities within the community.

5.9.4 Youth Offending Service staff are involved in delivering programmes in selected schools to prevent future offending and are developing programmes for parents in order that they can better identify issues in relation to substance misuse that increase the likelihood of offending.

5.9.5 Young people subject to Court Orders receive a range of interventions aimed at addressing the levels of risk posed and identified needs. This may involve one to one supervision utilising a range of techniques from motivational interviewing to group work programmes specifically for young black men involved in serious youth violence. Programmes are designed to address need and evaluated utilising a tool that measures attitudinal and behavioural change. The Youth Offending Service has recently completed a reoffending toolkit which identifies the groups of young people that are more likely to reoffend and is embarking on the use of a 'real time' toolkit in order that we can measure outcomes in order to address need with currently active cases.

6. Third Sector involvement

6.1 The Youth Offending Service works with a range of organisations in order to deliver services to young people. These include Catch 22 who provide an Appropriate Adult Service to young people in Police custody and Working Links who work with young people in custody in order to reintegrate them to education or work upon release from custody. We have strong links with Tottenham Hotspur who provide a range of mentoring programmes for young people as well as Safer London who work with girls at risk of sexual exploitation through gangs.

6.2 The Youth Offending Service has worked in partnership with the Red Cross for a number of years providing a weapons awareness course to young people both at the YOS and within schools. This programme provides young people with an insight into the dangers of knife crime and training in First Aid for which they receive a certificate. This intervention was first



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targeted at young people that had been arrested for knife related crime and has been broadened out due to its success.

6.3 In 2013/14, the Youth Offending Service worked closely with the Roma Support Group to develop a programme for Roma girls who were appearing before the Courts repeatedly. This programme taught life skills such as dress making whilst enabling us to build stronger trusting relationships with a cohort of young people that had previously found it difficult to engage with statutory services.

6.4 We are currently in discussion with Lift, a creative arts organisation committed to working in Tottenham over the next six years, in order to develop a programme for young people who are either not in employment, education or training (NEET) or at risk of offending. This project will work with young people to develop their own stories in a creative context whilst building interpersonal and social skills.

7. Restorative Justice

7.1 Restorative Justice places the victim and community at the centre of the youth justice system with the aim of reparative interventions being undertaken that both empowers individuals and make amends for crime committed.

7.2 The Youth Offending Service has two support workers tasked with victim contact and engagement and also staff involved in reparation projects within the community. We have had difficulties over many years in engaging victims in formal RJ processes which have been influenced by restrictive procedures. However we have recently made amendments to our internal processes with great effect and recently held our first RJ conference for some time with both the victim and perpetrator of a robbery offence. This process brought the victim and offender face to face in order that they could discuss and understand what had happened and the impact of the crime. This was extremely beneficial for both parties as the victim was able to have their voice heard and the offender was confronted with the very real consequences of their crime.

7.3 Reparation projects that are undertaken by young people aim to pay back to the community in a way that is visible and beneficial to the community. Young people have been involved in contributing to the Holocaust Memorial as well as a range of other duties such as gardening, assisting at community events, construction and clearing up around the borough.

8. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

N/A

9. Comments of the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and legal implications

N/A



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- 10. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**
- 11. Head of Procurement Comments**
N/A
- 12. Policy Implication**
N/A
- 13. Reasons for Decision**
N/A
- 14. Use of Appendices**
NA
- 15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**
NA