

Youth Justice Plan 2017-18

Wolverhampton (Final v.1)



Introduction

Wolverhampton Youth Offending Team (YOT) continues to work with some of the City's most challenging young people to prevent offending and reoffending. The Full Joint Inspection report published in February 2016 outlined strong performance within the top national quartile. Since this time we have delivered an Inspection Improvement Plan which was signed off successfully in Spring 2017. Operational delivery remains strong and well managed, confirmed by more recent audits. During 2016-17 there were a number of business process changes undertaken that supported the ongoing drive to be a confident and capable Youth Offending Team delivering high quality relevant services at a time of challenging resources.

This plan reviews our progress so far and outlines our plans for continuous improvement.

Key achievements in 2016-17

- Delivery and sign off of our Inspection Action Plan following our highly-rated report published in February 2016
- Reduction in the number of reoffences per offender below the national average
- Our National Standards Audit of services to Courts and Victims of Youth crime demonstrated strong practice
- We were part of the 'Good' OFSTED Inspection providing evidence of a strong partnership approach with Children's Services
- We have supported the development of a Black Country Youth Court sustaining our child focus within rationalised resources
- Strong resettlement approach for those in custody, embedding additional resources from the SOVA charitable organisation within our partnership approach
- Providing credible and safe options in the community for the Courts including a robust Intensive Surveillance and Supervision Scheme
- Our Section 11 Safeguarding Audit indicated we maintain and strive to always improve the protection of our children and young people
- Utilising our Police and Crime Commissioner grant from the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership (SWP) to develop a brief intervention approach to those young people on the cusp of the system receiving Community Resolutions
- Implementation of a new Youth Justice software system
- Training the workforce and embedding the 'ASSETplus' assessment framework in accordance with Youth Justice Board (YJB) requirements
- Transition of YOT data management to the centralised Business Intelligence Team (BIT) at City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) facilitating a more coordinated approach to the understanding of our data
- Improving the participation of young people in shaping our services including the delivery of a Music Project in Spring 2017
- Delivery of a more flexible and innovative Junior Attendance Centre offer
- Offering the whole YOT workforce training in Restorative Practice as part of the drive to embed this model of working across the whole of Children's Services which consolidates our long maintained approach

- Ensuring the Reparation and activity offer is inclusive and creative
- Supporting our Cabinet Member for Children and Young People present our approach to a National Offender Management Conference
- Utilising CWC digital transformation programme to offer agile and more efficient working equipment to staff

What do young people say about us??

A recent 'Viewpoint' survey analysed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (rated as 90% confidence level and error margin 10%) told us that:

- 85% of young people said that work with the YOT had made them realise that change is possible
- 97% of young people thought YOT services good or very good
- 40% of those responding to the survey identified themselves as white
- 89% of young people who had a Referral Order Contract felt they had enough say in its preparation
- 90% of young people subject to Referral Orders understood that their contract was to reduce reoffending
- 95% of young people felt they had enough say in their supervision plan
- 100% of young people reported they were asked about what would help them stop offending
- 85% of young people said that they had got better in their attitude to drugs
- 95% of young people said YOT workers did enough to help them take part in their Order

These headlines from an objective national survey with a sample size of 60 tell us that young people are understanding the approach of the YOT. Over the next planning cycle we are seeking to further engage with young people about their needs and wishes to shape our services.

Structure and governance

The work of the YOT is overseen by a well-attended strategic quarterly YOT Management Board (YMB) which receives regular reports on

- Resourcing: both finance and staffing including holding partners to account for any proposed changes
- Performance data in respect of three key national drivers and other local priorities – Reducing Reoffending; First time entrants to youth justice; custody rates and engagement of young offenders in education training and employment.
- National, regional and local developments including Inspection reports, the implications of the Taylor Report, the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the development of a Combined West Midlands Authority
- Operational practice presentations which bring alive the work of the YOT to those responsible for strategic decision making and development

- Compliance with YJB grant conditions for example the timely submission of this plan and data returns
- Ensuring Community Safety and Public Protection Incidents provide appropriate opportunities for operational and strategic learning. These are further embedded in the work of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board Serious Case Review Committee
- Safeguarding remains a standing item on the YMB agenda to allow any other Strategic or Operational safeguarding issue to be raised within this forum.

All of this is with a view to driving continuous improvement through a Strategic Action Plan, shaping future services in response to presenting trends and need. The YMB is a learning meeting where partners can share collective wisdom and experience to shape the future of Youth Justice in Wolverhampton. At all times the needs of children and young people stay at the heart of the agenda.

The YOT is managed by the CWC within the Children's Service Area and is well placed to contribute to the wider agenda of CWC and the broader SWP. Reports about the work of the YOT are regularly presented to the CWC 'People' Leadership Team, the Strategic Executive Board and through Scrutiny and Cabinet. Particular areas of focus are reported within particular interest committees for example the Education Board. This Youth Justice Plan is approved and endorsed by CWC Cabinet and the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership.

Reducing Reoffending

The main aim of the Youth Justice system is to prevent offending and reoffending. The YJB Regional Performance Manager regularly assists the YMB with reports surrounding our reoffending performance. There is a 'task and finish' group from the YMB looking to target and embed the nationally developed reoffending toolkit which should provide more up to date business intelligence in terms of reoffending trends moving forward.

Reoffending rates are reported in a variety of ways. The most recent data from the YJB which has been tracked historically indicates that the binary rate of reoffending (any offender who reoffends) is slightly higher than the national and regional average. However, the number of reoffences those offenders commit and the frequency rate of reoffending is significantly lower than the regional and national averages for the same period and this trajectory is reducing for Wolverhampton. The story behind these figures is explored by the YMB but it is recognised that more up to date data and trends would assist in more efficient business planning.

Operational initiatives to reduce reoffending in the YOT are central to our work and include:

- Compliance meetings with young people and their carers to ensure that any deterioration in their response to YOT programmes of intervention is quickly understood, addressed and improved
- 7 day per week services for our most challenging and risky service users

- Involvement of young people in shaping our services and listening to their feedback
- Working with the Voluntary Sector to ensure services are diverse and relevant to our whole service user population e.g. SOVA, CATCH 22, Core Assets (IMPACT).
- ASSETPLUS – Continue to embed the comprehensive new assessment tool, which is strength and desistance focussed to improve targeting of smart and timely interventions
- Improved liaison with our partners within Children's Services e.g. the 'Looked After Children Transitions Team to produce better outcomes for our mutual population
- Work within the SWP and Children's partnerships to address the increasing threat of gang and youth violence, in particular the prevalence of weapon involved crime.
- Learn the lessons from our Interventions research to ensure that we understand what is best and effective practice
- Use of the BIT to develop the use of the YJB Reoffending Toolkit to provide more timely data to understand the patterns and trends in current reoffending.

First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice system

Both the YJB frequency rate per 100,000 and the actual binary number of FTE for 2016-17 compared against 2015-16 data has shown a decrease of 11.8% and 10% respectively. However, the YJB frequency rate for Wolverhampton remains above both the national and regional average. Recent trends have identified that offences of violence against the person and theft are the most common for FTE. The YOT partnership has recognised the need to address this, and work has been undertaken with the Early Help service to ensure that assessed needs and interventions offered upstream of statutory services include the propensity of children and young people (CYP) to offend. This upturn also reflects the changes in the number of low level Out of Court Disposal outcomes which would not have been previously included in these figures.

Key initiatives to prevent the increase in FTE:

- Development of Early Help assessment to identify upstream CYP at risk of offending
- Introduction of Community Resolution clinic to offer intervention and signposting to CYP on the cusp of FTE
- Work with schools and private Care Home providers to ensure that prosecutions for inappropriate behaviour are minimised and very much the last resort
- Work within the partnership to ensure the universal offer to CYP particularly in respect of Education is engaged with and relevant to the level of need.

Use of custody

It is recognised that some CYP need to be detained for the protection of themselves and the wider community, and that this would be a reflection of the severity of their offending. The YMB receives regular reports on custody rates, but also seeks assurance that those who are detained in the Secure estate are those for whom all other options have been exhausted or their sentence is proportionate to the crime committed.

The YOT Management Board receives regular reports in respect of disproportionality in the system and has been concerned and exercised by the over-representation of black young men in custody. The YOT will be involved in utilising the YJB disproportionality toolkit to closely monitor trends and shape the YOT responses to this issue.

Wolverhampton the rate of custody per 1,000 young people in the community is higher than the national and Midlands average, but is currently on a downward trajectory following a peak in 2016. Examination of individual custodial outcomes occurs after each sentencing event and the YOT senior management are generally satisfied that the YOT efforts to provide alternatives to custody for the Court are relevant and robust.

The other use of the Secure Estate is for CYP on remand and it is recognised that the YJB devolved budget is insufficient for the level of demand in Wolverhampton. The financial margins in these arrangements are small and a single adverse outcome can completely impact upon the budget. The overspend against this budget provision for 2016-17 £130,000. The YOT works hard to provide credible bail packages to the courts, but the ongoing difficulty in accessing bespoke placements for our most challenging children within such small timescales, can produce adverse Secure outcomes in Court. In addition, the YOT partnership is working to adhere to the PACE Concordat and produce a local protocol so that those vulnerable children detained in police cells have better options overnight.

The YOT works to ensure that the ambition to save the use of custody for cases where it is truly the only proportionate option by the following:

- Producing quality gatekept reports to the court, supported by proportionate and credible community sentence recommendations
- The maintenance of a robust ISS scheme offering oversight and creative interventions to address risky offending and offer real alternatives to custody and secure remands.
- Maintaining the confidence of the court in all tiers of interventions and bail options e.g. Referral Order panels by offering shadow visits, presentations to Youth Court Panel meetings etc.
- Clear and credible compliance and, where necessary, enforcement procedures
- A clear risk management policy that reviews and maintains management oversight
- Utilising the Voluntary and Third Sector to ensure relevance of service to all sectors of the community
- Use business intelligence to further understand disproportionality
- Developing clear guidance and working protocols with Children Services in the response and management of remand bail requests to avoid where appropriate secure remands.

Engagement in Education Training and Employment (ETE)

This is no longer a nationally collected indicator, but the local YOT partnership has recognised that engagement in ETE is a key protective factor against offending. The Inspection report published in 2017 recognised that there needed to be significant improvements in both the offer and engagement of young offenders in ETE and this was the main component of our inspection action plan. It is recognised that many of the changes required to effect improvement in the engagement of YOT young people in ETE will take some time to embed, and this is reflected in the out-turn figures for 2016-17 of 60%.

What can be proven at present is that young people exiting YOT orders are better engaged with ETE than they were at the start of their order. However, their entry level is significantly low and the wider partnership is working to understand how this occurs.

An ambitious target of 80% engagement has been set by our Education Board for 2017/18 and this continuous improvement will be driven by:

- The extension of the LAC Virtual Head role to include all YOT young people
- Work with Designated Teacher School forum to raise the profile and needs of young people who are disengaged from school age education
- Greater strategic support for YOT meetings convened to track those who are disengaged and ensure swift responses for a new more relevant offer
- Work with schools to encourage restorative responses to challenging behaviour
- Work within the local partnership to address the threat of increasing use of weapons and gang violence
- Support the development of the post 16 offer
- Support the SEND improvement strategy and action planning
- Dedicate YOT resources to assist ETE engagement
- The addition of Core Assets staff to the YOT workforce, funded by the European YEI IMPACT to encourage the engagement of the 16 plus age group in ETE

Resources and Value for Money

The Wolverhampton YOT partnership receives a variety of resources both financial and in kind from its partners all of which are overseen and understood within the strategic YOT Management Board.

The YJB grant is a main source of financial income that is used to finance staffing to support the wide range of Youth Justice functions undertaken across the partnership.

Appendix One to this Plan is the Youth Justice Application framework which indicates the finance and in kind contributions made by local partners. It is noted that in these resources some part of the local approach to Early Help and Crime Prevention is involved including the PCC grant.

In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Wolverhampton YOT receives contributions from all statutory partners – Police, Education, Health, Probation and Social Care. The level and type of these contributions has changed over the years since the

inception of YOTs, but all partners are active participants in YOT strategic and operational delivery. Any proposal to change the levels of resourcing are presented at YMB for discussion and ratification. It is pleasing to report that since our last YJ plan, a Children Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) practitioner is now in place in the YOT and service delivery has been greatly enhanced by this important component of our delivery. Health delivery within the YOT is of note with mental health, primary care and substance delivery all being represented as separate staff members, whilst working to achieve a joined up seamless approach to delivery.

CWC has historically made the biggest in-kind and financial contribution to the work of the YOT, and as part of Children's Service the YOT has been required to contribute to efficiency savings. However, the YOT has also been able to utilise CWC drives for efficiency improvements such as digital transformation and Business Intelligence to produce coordinated and more efficient business processes.

The Junior Attendance Centre continues to receive a ring-fenced budget from the YJB and this is now being utilised to provide bespoke and flexible services for young people generally more significantly involved in the Youth Justice system. The number of referrals from Wolverhampton has been steady and manageable. We have been pleased to consolidate our partnerships with Wolverhampton College and the Dog's Trust amongst others, to offer a diverse, and meaningful programme. It is intended that longer term we will seek to accredit our programmes.

Partnership Arrangements

The Youth Offending Team has strong links with key partnerships within the Children's and Community Safety areas of work.

The YOT Head of Service chairs the local Serious Case Review Sub Committee and is a full member of the local Safeguarding Board. The Sub Committee considers any Community Safety Public Protection Incidents alerted by the YOT to the YJB and as such there is an added layer of partnership oversight. The YOT undertakes an annual Section 11 audit providing evidence of our ongoing commitment to protecting vulnerable children. The YOT is represented at fora working to address issues of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), trafficking and the needs of those with various types of disability including learning disability. All young people attending the YOT are assessed for their risks to others, their risk of reoffending, and their individual safety and wellbeing issues. The YOT has strong links with the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub and can utilise referral procedures where necessary. The YOT leads on PREVENT training for Children's Services and recognises the growing climate of concern in respect of terrorist activity and the need to identify early the potential for radicalisation. The YOT is working to improve the step up and step down relationships with Early Help and other Children's Services.

Within the Safer Partnership, the YOT HOS is a full member of the Partnership Board and also attends the Delivery Board. The YOT has strongly contributed to the Gangs and Youth Violence Strategy and is actively working to understand the increasing tensions in the local community. The YOT has contributed to the PCC review of Youth Justice

Services and welcomes the opportunity to consider regional development and opportunity.

Risks and Actions for Future Delivery

Emerging trends and concerns in relation to Gang and Youth Violence will be a key component of our work moving forward as a YOT partnership. The level of risk and concern of both professionals and service users presents us with a challenge to ensure that young people feel safe in our community whilst accessing relevant services.

The embedding of Restorative Practice across Children's Services provides a real opportunity for the YOT to share its wisdom and history of work with this focus with a view to producing wider and better outcomes for CYP across the City.

In addition to this overarching plan with its continued focus on reducing reoffending, FTE, use of custody and ETE the YMB has an action plan to address a number of key areas of priority and delivery for the next year. Within this plan the three key areas that will be given significant priority will be:

- Addressing and responding to Gang and Youth Violence
- Achieving the ETE 80% engagement target
- Reducing the use of Youth Detention Accommodation and accessing remand placements in the community with Children Services.

The plan will therefore include the following:

- YOT contributing to a task and finish group reporting to the Multi-agency gang steering group to co-ordinate statutory and voluntary responses to Gang and Youth violence.
- YOT Action Plan to specifically address and respond to Gang and Youth Violence.
- Work with the local OMU to sustain MAPPA, Deter and serious offender management arrangements, including the management of Gang and Youth Violence.
- Sustain the targeted approach to the safeguarding and offending risks created by CSE
- Work with schools to improve engagement outcomes, reduce criminalisation and ensure that young people thrive
- Strengthen YOT remand management and review the remand offer with Children Services.
- Continually seek the opportunities provided by the community and voluntary sector to enhance and shape our services
- Continuing development of services with The Way Youth Zone to ensure that YOT young people are accessing the best of facilities
- Work with the Secure Estate to further improve communication and information exchange including health outcomes
- BIT to develop the Reoffending Toolkit

- Achievement of a local protocol in respect of PACE Concordat
- Improve the participation of CYP in shaping YOT services
- Achieve a health triage system that unifies delivery within the YOT whilst respecting the separate professional disciplines
- Sustain and improvement our Transition to adulthood arrangements

Approval

This plan is approved by the YOT partnership and signed off by the Chair of the YOT Management Board. It is also subject to Cabinet approval within CWC

Appendix and Table 1: Partner contributions to the youth offending partnership pooled budget 2017-18

Agency	Staffing costs (£)	Payments in kind – revenue (£)	Other delegated funds (£)	Total (£)
Local authority*	1,187,359	21,907	262,737	1,472,003
Police Service	27,360	58,800		86,160
National Probation Service		58,000		58,000
Health Service		118,786		118,786
Police and crime commissioner**	66,000			66,000
YJB Practice Grant	434,481			434,481
Welsh Government				
Other***		16,320		16,320
Total	1,715,200	273,813	262,737	2,251,750

* For multi-authority YOTs, the totality of local authority contributions should be described as one figure.

** Any money from the police and crime commissioner that has been routed through a local crime reduction partnership should be included here.

*** It should be noted that the 'Other' category is for additional funding that the YOT can use for any general youth justice activities.