

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 July 2021
Title of Report:	Children's Scrutiny Committee report for Youth Justice
Lead Member:	Councillor David Downie
Lead Strategic Director:	Alison Botham (Director for Childrens Services)
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Your Reference:	N/A
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Summary of Report

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) works with children and young people who have offended, to help prevent them getting into further trouble. In Plymouth, we work with parents, carers, victims and the community to help young people understand the consequences of their actions. We also offer diversion programmes to children aged 10 to 18 who might be at risk of offending.

The Team includes a police officer, social workers, probation officers, YOT workers, drug and alcohol worker, education welfare officer, Children's Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHs) workers and a Speech and Language therapist. The Team receive funding from Plymouth City Council, the Youth Justice Board, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Livewell to work to:

- prevent offending
- reduce the risk of further offending
- support victims
- support young people on bail
- prepare reports for the court
- supervise young people on court orders
- help with young people remanded to local authority care
- help young people during and after custodial sentences
- help parents

2. Response to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) 2019.

Whilst identifying many positive aspects of the work undertaken in Plymouth such as our work with Young People and families as well as a multi agencies response, the JTAI identified 3 areas of concern relating to the YOT;

The Governance Arrangements for the Youth Offending Team (YOT) are weak and require urgent attention.

Action Taken: The Pan Devon Governance Board arrangements were replaced in February 2020 by a Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board, the board meet quarterly and meetings are well attended. In May 2021, the board agreed a Plymouth Youth Justice Plan for the city for the next 12 months which has been accepted by the Youth Justice Board.

The emotional well-being and mental health needs of children accessing the YOT are not yet fully known or understood, and the partnership cannot be confident that they are being met.

Action Taken: All staff undertaking assessments have undergone training to analyse the impact of a child's lived experience and incorporating this into their intervention plans to address their behaviour. This includes an assessment of any mental health concerns raised. In addition, a new auditing process has been introduced to ensure managers check this is addressed in the Young Peoples intervention plans before they countersign.

Outcomes for a small number of children could be improved through more effective information-sharing between Devon and Cornwall police and the YOT.

Action Taken: A Practice Manager from the YOT now meets weekly with the Child Centred Policing team to consider all Young People who have either been arrested that week, had concerns raised about their vulnerability or partners believe they are at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

3. Performance

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) has 5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to achieve, which are set nationally by the Youth Justice Board. These are set out below with a summary of how we are performing against them.

It is important to note that the national data reported here is up to 2 years old as a result of the way the national Youth Justice Board and the Home office collate the information. However, there is a clear pattern of more young people entering the criminal justice system when compared with our geographical neighbouring YOTs or those placed in our family of YOTs which compares local authorities of similar size and socio economic sizes)

- I. **Young People in custody** – Plymouth currently has 2 young people in custody. This number is comparable with our geographical neighbours.
- II. **First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System** – The latest national data published by the National Youth Justice Board was released 05 March 2021 and evidenced that 74 Young People were first time entrants during the period Jan 2019 – Dec 2019, (a rate of 340 Young People per 100,000*). This represents an increase from the previous year's data (Jan 2018 – Dec 2018) figure of 65 Young People (a rate of 305 Young People per 100,000*). Please see section 4 of this report for the way we are working to address this.
- III. **Re-offending Rate** - The latest national data published by the Youth Justice Board was released on the 05 March 2021 evidencing a rate of 41.2% of Young People who were open to the YOT in December 2018. This represented an increase from the previous year (December 2017) figure of 32.3%*. As this data is 2 years old, we have created a local live tracking tool to monitor the 90 young people open to the YOT between the 01 April 2020 to 20 May 2021 for any further offences. To date we have a re-offending rate of 12%, which evidences a considerable improvement in our local performance.

- IV. **Young People in suitable Education and Employment** – The latest national data published by the Youth Justice Board was released 05 March 21 evidenced that 85% of the Young People whose orders ended between 01 Jan – 31 Mar 21 where in suitable education, training or employment, the average for England is 38%. This represents very positive performance.
- V. **Suitable Accommodation** - the latest national data published by the Youth Justice Board was released 05 March 2021 evidenced that 96% of the Young People whose orders ended between 01 Jan 2021 – 31 Mar 2021 where in suitable accommodation, the average for England is 84%. We are continuing to perform above the national average.

4. Future Developments/Innovations

Diversion Project (The Impact Project):

Plymouth has a high level of first time entrants into the criminal justice system when compared to our geographical neighbours and those local authorities of similar size and socio economic similarity. To address this, the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board have agreed to the development of an early help diversion scheme aimed at diverting young people away from the criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity. Police data analysed in partnership with the YOT managers, evidenced that between January and December 2020, 1,042 young people were either arrested or suspected of offences in that year. In the same period only 109 young people were offered interventions designed to reduce re-offending by the Youth Offending Team (YOT), therefore, the vast majority of young people who offended or were suspected of offending were offered no interventions and we want to change this to support early intervention and prevention. We agreed as a partnership across the city that we wanted to do something to change this and intervene in a more preventative way with young people.

As a result, the Impact Project (named following consultation with young people) has recently been launched on the 24 May 2021. Initially, a weekly triage meeting is held between the Youth Offending Team and the Child Centred Policing to Team to look at which young people have come to their attention over the week. Young people are identified based on Police intelligence, patterns of offending behaviour and vulnerability such as missing episodes or child exploitation and an assessment is undertaken. Some young people are signposted to other agencies for help such as Harbour if a young people has been found to be in possession of a small amount of cannabis for their own use. Others need a more structured, whole family approach and are allocated a worker from the YOT.

Interventions on offer include.

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour interventions
- Child Exploitation awareness
- Substance use
- Sport - StreetGames
- Youth Services
- Education
- CAMHs
- Parenting work

Already, the demand is outstripping the current resources, the Police and Crime Commissioner has committed £15,000 per year over the next 2 years which has been used towards the funding of 2 new posts which are currently being advertised, the remaining funding for these posts has come from the Plymouth Youth Justice Management Board budget. The Police and Crime Commissioner has also funded SteetGames to coordinate sporting diversions in the city and 9 sporting groups in the city have been identified to provide this diversion.

The Youth Offending Team have also developed a volunteer programme and are currently in the process of recruiting up to 20 volunteers who will all have training to mentor and support those young people on the edge of entering the criminal justice system.

Plymouth University have agreed to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Impact scheme over a 2 year period.

Enhanced Case Management

Nationally, over the last 3 years, the number of people in the youth justice system has been declining, however, it is also recognised, the complexity of issues Youth Offending Teams are working with has increased, Plymouth has followed these trends. Plymouth is a trauma informed city and the ambition is that we all work in a trauma informed way. Therefore the Youth Justice Management Board agreed the appointment of a Clinical Psychologist who will join the team on the 05 July 2021. Many young people who enter the criminal justice system have suffered trauma and/or adverse childhood experiences linked to their offending. Utilising the Trauma Recovery Intervention model, the Enhanced Case Management approach concentrates on the developmental causes of a young person's behaviour and builds interventions designed to address these issues. Following a 2 year trial of this approach in Wales, it is estimated 25% of the young people open to a Youth Offending Team would benefit from a Trauma Informed approach.

Violence Reduction Partnerships

Within the Queens Speech in May 2021, the government announced all local authorities, the police, criminal justice agencies, health and fire and rescue services must work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. Safer Plymouth will lead on this within the city and the YOT will be a lead agency in the implementation of the violence reduction partnership.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation are responsible for the undertaking of inspections of YOTs in England. These inspections should take place on a 4 yearly cycle. Plymouth YOT was last inspected in June 2015. Inspections were placed on hold in February 2020 for all medium and large YOTs (Plymouth is classed as a medium YOT) due to the pandemic and inspections recommenced on 01 June 2021. Given we have not been inspected for 6 years, we are working on the principle that an inspection is imminent. Classed as small YOTs, both Torbay and Cornwall were inspected recently, we have met with managers from both to look at lessons learnt and our preparations for an inspection are at an advanced stage.

Youth Justice Plan

Each local authority is required to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan which must be agreed by the Youth Justice Board. The submission date for this is no later than 30 June 2021. We have submitted our plan which has now been approved by the Youth Justice Board. This document is 52 pages and sets out our priorities for 2021- 2022. Once we have received this document back, it will be uploaded to <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/youngpeople/youthoffending>

Young People Participation

In May 2020, we asked the young people who work with us for their views on how the pandemic was affecting them and their engagement with us. This led to a range of improvements including the use of WhatsApp to communicate with young people we couldn't see face to face.

As a result of their engagement, we have developed our participation and feedback process to ensure that we gather their views on a regular basis and this is shared with the Youth Justice Management Board quarterly and is considered in decision making and development of services.

Some of the actions we have taken as a result of their feedback includes moving to the Frederick Street Centre as young people stated they felt uncomfortable in Midland House, changing the intervention plans with the support of the Speech and Language Therapist and some of the young people we work with as these were considered confusing and we have introduced a staff buddy system to reduce the need for young people seeing multiple workers during their order as they found this hard to have to tell their story multiple times.

Recommendations and Reasons

This paper is to brief Education and Children' Social Care Scrutiny Panel on the Youth Offending Team.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Caring for People and Communities priority

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

We are working to reduce the number of children who require a statutory CYPFS service including any need for care.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Not applicable

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The Youth Offending Team work closely with strategic partners across the city to ensure that children in Plymouth grow up healthy, happy, safe and able to achieve and aspire.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Jean Kelly											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 28/06/2021											
Cabinet Member approval: <i>Via email Councillor Downie</i> Date approved: 29/06/2021											