

AMBITIOUS SCRUTINY PANEL

Update Report: Youth Services Transformation January 2015



1. Introduction:

Following the Youth Service review in Jan-Apr 2013 the Service's transformation plan was ratified and now drives the delivery of a three-year transformation programme that aims to deliver significant budget reductions and key service improvements in response to the needs of young people in the city. This update report focuses on the progress against the key actions taken to date.

2. The Key Finance and Staffing Implications:

The three-year target budget reduction was set at £481K to be achieved by the end of 2016-17. This will be achieved as follows:

- **Phase 1** (Nov 13 to Mar 14): Management Rationalisation: **Completed**
- **Phase 2** (Mar 14 to April 14): Reorganisation into integrated service and management model: **Completed**
- **Phase 3** (Apr 14 to Mar 15): Target budget reduction through reorganised management structure and operational efficiencies £178,730 – **Target reduction achieved**
- **Phase 4** (April 15 to Mar 16): Target budget reduction through reconfigured structure £150,635 – savings identified and achievable through vacancy management currently total £152,745 – **Fully achievable and necessary reconfiguration in place**
- **Phase 5** (April 16 to Mar 17): Target budget reduction planned through reorganised structure £150,635 - projected savings identified through further vacancy management/temp contracts total £57,128 – **Significant progress made 18 months ahead of implementation date** (6x temporary community contracts ending in 16/17 totalling 89 hours = 2.4 ftes)

3. Volunteers

To offset some of the challenge of providing an adequate youth offer within reducing capacity and budgets we agreed to develop key areas of work, including the role of volunteers.

The Youth Services currently have 106 active volunteers supporting work with young people in roles such as Appropriate Adults, Referral Panel Members, DofE and Community Youth Work across the city. At the start of 2014 there were approximately 55 active volunteers equating to a 92% increase to date. In the last quarter we recruited an additional 31 volunteers who are undergoing checks and training and will active this quarter. In addition we have a further 13 candidates for interview in January 2015. This volunteer workforce is proving to be a valuable asset in the early help offer for young people.

4. Targeted Youth Support (TYS): TYS continues to respond to meet both the demand and need for an improved early help offer in the city.

The TYS teams received 314 referrals through their early help referral HUB process in this 6 month period (April – Sept 2014). In addition, the homelessness pathway received 82 referrals in quarters 1-2, a 2.5% increase on the previous year. These homelessness referrals resulted in only 2 young people requiring accommodation in care under section 20 duties.

In the first 6 months of 2014/15 REACH received 371 Police notifications of young people who were reported missing (40% were looked after young people).

2014/15 is the first year where REACH has been required to monitor the number of return interviews completed within a 72 hour framework. This is in line with Government Guidance issued in January 2014. In April 2014 the team evidenced contact at 82% dipping to 69% in June, due to staffing capacity although for the overall quarter performance the indicator was met in 75% of instances. In quarter 2 the indicator was reached in each of the three months Jul 80% (39), Aug 84% (38) and Sep 85% (53). This performance holds up strongly against national comparisons.

The team following the completion of the return interviews also identified and further assessed those young people that are potentially at risk of child sexual exploitation. In the last fully reported quarter (July-Sept) there were 4 young people assessed where child sexual exploitation was considered a concern and appropriate action with Police and Children's Social Care was initiated.

5. Community Youth Offer

The Youth Services are committed to ensuring that an open access offer of preventative positive activities, information and support is maintained in the local community to ensure young people have 'somewhere to go', 'something to do' and 'someone to talk to' outside of the school day/term, evenings and at weekends. As anticipated, this aspect of the offer has been particularly challenged by the reorganisation and budget reductions; however, the team has completed a review of priorities and reconfigured delivery around a systems managements and community development & support model. By March 2015 we will effectively have a 50% reduction in Youth Service staffing capacity compared with March 2013. This has required the team to increase levels of partnership delivery with the VCS, increase the role of volunteers and utilise the remaining staffing resources more effectively. New initiatives include partnership work and funding with The Plymouth Deaf Children's Society delivering adventurous programmes and 'Battling Back' that brings together ex-service personnel and troubled young people. Work has also continued through existing programmes such as Young Carers, The Life Centre and Summer Mix that offered over 3000 course places this summer across 114 course subjects with 1628 young people registered to enrol (a 2% increase on last year with £20K less funding available).

6. Care Leavers 18+ Ofsted

Plymouth City Council's 18+ Care Leavers Team provides support and resources to young people aged 18-21 who have been in local authority care. The team, over the last 18 months, has improved the offer for young people and is now delivering services in line with all key Government guidelines and recommended entitlements for Care Leavers. Further improvements to increase engagement in education, employment and training are necessary and have been prioritised alongside further

improvements in assessing and helping young people understand what is available to them as care leavers.

7. Youth Offending Team

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales latest quarterly review (Dec 2014) reported that:

“The Head of Service continues to provide a strong strategic leadership. Revised protocols, process reviews and quality assurance activities continue”.

“The Plymouth YOT continues to perform well across all 3 National Indicators. This Quarter the YOT is highly performing achieving a consistency of performance in Re-offending frequency and binary”.

In 2015-16 the YOT is facing partnership funding cuts with a £30K reduction announced in the Police and Crime Commissioners funding allocation, £35K by the YJB and further cuts anticipated that are not yet declared by partners. This will mean that a review and reorganisation of frontline resources will be necessary following the business support and management rationalisation already implemented. The Head of Service has already met with Service Managers, HR and Finance to begin planning for this work January – March 2015.

9. Conclusion

The three-year strategy to transform Plymouth Youth Services through integrated management & working and to reduce budgets in response to corporate priorities & challenges is delivering on all of the key targets and to date. There is a high level of confidence that the current plan is achievable over the next phase with some good progress in key developments to secure the targets for year three. The next two years will be critical as this is the period we will experience the largest drop in frontline capacity as we enter the middle phase of the transformation. In order to achieve the target financial savings it will be essential that any further developments or wider changes fully consider the risk and consequences to this plan. This is important in order to ensure our youth offer continues to be effective at prioritising prevention by providing early help to safeguard young people and champion their voice within the city.

John Miller
Head of Youth Services
05 Jan 2015