

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

2 JUNE 2017

LSCSB UPDATE: LEICESTERSHIRE YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

Background

1. The Leicestershire Youth Offending (YOS) is a multi-agency partnership whose aim is to prevent and reduce children and young people offending and reoffending and promoting safer communities. The YOS co-ordinates and delivers Appropriate Adult services, diversionary health responses to young people in Police custody, Bail and Remand provision, Preventative, Pre-court and Post Court provision of Youth Justice Services to both Leicestershire and Rutland. Volunteers are actively involved in the delivery of a range of services.
2. The Community Safety Team also work within the YOS, taking a strategic lead on Community Safety Partnerships, Domestic Abuse (DA), Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Hate Crime and Incidents and Preventing Extremism.

Notable developments and challenges:

Past Year

3. The YOS is measured by the Ministry of Justice on its number of First Time Entrants (FTE) into the Criminal Justice System. During 2016/2017 the cumulative figure was 126 FTE's which locally recorded figure since 2005. Robust processes continue to offer young people support on a preventative and diversionary basis and this is attributed to the low level of FTE's in Leicestershire. The prevention triage process will continue to assess those young people at point of referral and priorities based on risk and need, effectively, reducing the risk of offending. In addition, the Youth Police Decision Panel continues to contribute to ensuring the consistency of diversionary decision making and proposing effective interventions to reduce the risk of reoffending.
4. A key development is the Early Help Reoffending, Safety and wellbeing Meeting and focuses on young people whose reoffending or risk of reoffending has been identified through the use of the national YOS reoffending toolkit. The meeting is chaired by the YOS service manager, and includes managers from the Looked after Children (LAC) team, Supporting

Leicestershire Families, the children's service placement team, locality social work, and the police led IOM project. The meeting takes place monthly, and focuses on multi agency problem solving by managers in relation to young people who appear on the toolkit by virtue of being charged with a new offence or receiving a new outcome at court while open to the YOS.

5. The use of Custody and remand for young people in Leicestershire has remained within local and national indicators. In relation to Custody, the cumulative figure for 2016/2017 was exceptionally low at 1.3% compared with the national indicator of 5%. The YOS has locally adopted the Youth Justice Boards previous national indicator of 9% to monitor remands, with the figure for 2016/2017 being 7.9% locally. Both of these successes are attributed to the robust work of the Bail Supervision and Support Team and the Court team in developing robust interventions and the collaborative working with court agencies.

Coming Year

6. The YOS has implemented a development plan to look at key areas of business which include linking interventions for young people to desistance related theory, problem solving opportunities, understanding opportunities around improving the health provision in the Service, focusing on opportunities to improve education, employment and training opportunities, continued rigor around the bail and court offer and safeguarding. This work is currently in its infancy and will involve wider discussions with young people and partners where required.
7. A large focus for the coming year for the YOS concerns continuous practice development with the Service and the staff. At the current time, YOS Managers are undertaking an audit programme for self-assessment purposes to identify strengths and gaps in practice and focus the plans for the year. The YOS receives inspections from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) which are unannounced and follow various frameworks dependant on the style of inspection. Currently, the thematic OFSTED framework also involves work around young people and neglect. The Inspectorate is likely to involve partners in future inspections. The YOS has always recognised the importance of developing practice to not only enable it to be prepared for the Inspectorate, but also to ensure that the interventions for young people are of high quality.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

Looked After Children (LAC)

8. In 2016 the prison reform trust commissioned an independent review by Lord Laming, into the reasons behind the over representation of LAC in the criminal justice system. While the report found that most LAC do not offend, it

highlighted that a significant minority of looked after children are still experiencing the damaging effects of unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system. Significantly the report pointed to data that suggested that LAC are six times more likely than children in the general population to be convicted of a crime or receive a caution, and that 38% of children in youth offender institutes reported that they had previously been in Care.

9. Over the first 3 quarters of 2016/17, 5 of 14 (36%) of LAC offended in the care setting, generally private care homes with young people who are the responsibility of other Local Authorities. An ongoing focus of the work of the YOS, in partnership with the Police, the LAC team and the representatives from Leicester City Services, is around supporting care homes to respond to these children through restorative outcomes in their settings. This will involve a roll-out of training in private children's homes across the County.

Issues in local areas

10. The YOS is currently concerned around the potential exploitation of young people in relation to illegal substances, this following an incident in Charnwood. Partnership work is being undertaken to explore this further.

Recommendations for the Board

11. The Board is asked to note the content of the report in relation to the achievements and challenges of the YOS and the development work it is undertaking with partners.

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