



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
4 JUNE 2018

OVERVIEW OF THE YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the Youth Offending Service (YOS), focussing on the performance of the service against national youth justice board (YJB) indicators, and on a number of areas of work and development within the service linked to local and national priorities.

Policy Framework and Previous Decision(s)

2. The Youth Justice Plan was submitted to the Cabinet on 24 November 2017.

Background

3. The YOS national key performance indicators (KPI) are the reduction of First Time Entrants (FTE), reduce re-offending, and reduce the use of custody. Locally, the KPIs are to achieve 80% of young people in Education Employment and Training (EET) and to monitor use of remands to custody.
4. The YOS performance in relation to FTE's is measured by the number of FTE per 100,000 young people. Between October 2016 and September 2017 Leicestershire had 189 young people per 100,000 which is a 9.3% increase on the on the previous year (173 FTEs). However the YOS is significantly ahead of the regional position of 341 per 100,000 and the national position of 304 per 100,000.
5. Re-offending performance has two indicators, the binary re-offending rate and the re-offending frequency rate. The binary re-offending rate measures the percentage of young people who offend within 12 months of an outcome and the frequency rate measures the average number of offences in 12 months after an outcome.
6. The percentage of young people in the January 2016 to March 2016 cohort offending after 12 months is 38.6%, a percentage point increase of 3.4% compared to the previous year (35.2%). The Leicestershire re-offending rate is similar to Midlands region (38.2%) and ahead of the National performance

(42.1.%). The YOS is continuing to report on the January to March 2017 cohort of young people using more recent local data. The April to December 2017 re-offending rate was 0.60. This is slight reduction in performance of 0.02 points when compared with the same period last year (0.58).

7. The use of custody is measured by the number of young people receiving a custodial outcome in 12 months per 1,000 young people. In the period between January 2016 and December 2017 the YOS performance was 0.09 per 1,000, which is significantly below the regional figure of 0.42 and the national figure of 0.38. Between April 2017 and December 2017, five young people had received a custodial sentence post sentence.
8. The YOS EET performance target is 80% of young people in EET at the end of their order. Performance for the period October to December 2017 was 82.4% compared to 64.4% for the same period the previous year. This highlights the significant improvement in performance achieved by greater internal focus on EET performance and closer working with the Education Partnerships and with training providers.
9. The use of remand is an important performance indicator because young people should not experience remand if they are not going to receive a custodial sentence, and local authorities are required to pay the cost of those remanded into custody. The cumulative yearly total of young people remanded into custody between April and December 2017 is 9.5% (2 of 21 cases). This was a reduction of one young person when compared with the same period in 2016/17.
10. This reduction in the use of remand has occurred in the context of significantly declining numbers of young people being processed through the Courts in relation to remand to custody decisions. In part, the low use of remand to custody is linked to the work of the Bail and Remand team within the YOS which provides packages of monitoring and support as an alternative to custody.

The Lammy report

11. In 2017 the Lammy report was published by the Government. This report was critical of the Youth Justice System due to the experiences of the Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) group and highlighted that BAME young people were significantly over represented within First Time Entrants (FTE), had higher re-offending rates than their white counterparts and were significantly over represented in the youth secure estate population. The YOS looked at the BAME experience locally and found that the proportion of BAME young people becoming FTE was better than amongst the white group, that no BAME young people had received a custodial sentence for the last three years, and that BAME young people offended at a lower frequency rate than their white counterparts. However the binary re-offending rate was 15% higher than that for white young people. This is concerning and in order to ensure that its response is targeted effectively, the YOS is undertaking further

research to see if all the BAME groups are impacted in a similar way or if groups within the BAME group are impacted more than others.

Kick start your life project

12. Kick Start Your Life (KSYL) is an innovative programme focussing on young people who pose the greatest risk of offending and or causing harm to others. It has used sport as a mechanism to engage young people in activities which may provide an alternative to the negative activities they are involved in, together with increasing the pro-social influences on their lives. The funding for this project has come from Leicestershire and Rutland Sport who provided £10,000 in 2016 and this continues to fund the project. The criteria for the funding were that young people were not currently active in sport and that they demonstrated a commitment to engage in the activity for between 6 and 12 weeks.
13. KSYL does not try to deliver a standard programme of sport related activities for young people to fit into, instead it develops a bespoke programme for the young people based around the sporting activity that they want to do. Typically, a young person is asked what sport they would want to undertake if they had the choice. The YOS then identifies a club or trainer to work with the young person to undertake that sport. Once the young person has shown some commitment, the YOS will ensure that the young person has the equipment to undertake the sporting activity and will seek to ensure that they can make this part of their lives. The Project has had 18 young people engage in 2016/17 and 36 young people in 2017/18.
14. The YOS has agreed funding with the YOS Management Board to expand KSYL so that young people can have the opportunity to access arts provision as well as sporting activities. The hope is that this will broaden the appeal of the project so that more young people can access it.

The IMPACT project

15. The IMPACT project aims to work with young people involved in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The IMPACT team carries out street based work with young people in areas where ASB and young people have been identified as a problem. It accepts referrals from the Police, local Councillors, Joint Action Groups (JAG) and local Council Community Safety teams. The street based IMPACT teams undertake work in relation to drugs, knives, sexual health, risks of exploitation on line and on the street, and encourages young people to access local positive activities in their communities. In addition it provides group work activities designed to engage young people and to divert them away from ASB. It also provides communities with help and guidance about how they can increase opportunities for young people to access positive activities in their community.

16. During 2016/17 the IMPACT project worked with 734 young people, which consisted of 1247 contacts. IMPACT is currently working in the following areas:

- Loughborough town centre, Gorse Covert and Shepshed(Charnwood)
- Argents Mead (Hinckley and Bosworth)
- Fairmead (Melton)
- St John Court (Blaby)
- It is also planning work in Harborough at Ullersthorpe.

17. The IMPACT project is of significant importance to the YOS due to its contribution to reducing the numbers of young people who are entering the criminal justice system. IMPACT staff work closely with the YOS to identify which young people are of greatest concern so that the YOS can offer voluntary prevention work with the young people and their families. The YOS is currently part of the Early Help Transformation, which includes the IMPACT project.

Knife related crime

18. Nationally there has been increasing concern about the use of knives and the association with gangs and the dealing of drugs. The YOS has, over the last 12 months, been working with the Police and other partners to develop a response to knife crime. A knife crime awareness programme has been developed and is being delivered in schools - this was launched locally by the Police with the backing of Antony Joshua (World Heavy Weight Boxing Champion). The Police had also identified the top ten young people who carry knives in Leicester and Leicestershire and Rutland. A multi-agency group reviews the work that is being undertaken with the young people and considers if there is further activity that could be done to assist further.

19. The multi-agency strategy group led by the Police has also recognised the connection between knives, drugs and gangs and the Police has identified groups of young people within Leicester City and in Hinckley and Loughborough. The YOS has for some time been aware of groups of young people who are involved with adults in the distribution of drugs and that they are increasingly likely to also be knife carriers. The adults involved frequently have links to, or are part of, organised crime groups. It is becoming more evident that in some situations there is a grooming process to draw vulnerable young people into the activities, and once involved some young people find it very difficult to disengage.

20. The Police and YOS have also seen some evidence of “County Lines” activity - this is used to describe activity where organised crime groups move young people from their home area to another part of the county in order to undertake activities relating to drug dealing. Multi-agency work has begun to look at what approaches are effective in dealing with this type of crime. A protocol is currently being developed to look at safeguarding children who are

affected by serious youth violence, exploitation by serious and organised crime groups and gang activity.

Conclusions

21. The Youth Offending Service performance remains strong, and this has been sustained over the years by the ability to reduce the numbers of FTE and to undertake effective work with young people under its supervision. The work of IMPACT, the Youth Inclusion Support Programme (YISP) and notably intensive family support provided by the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) team has contributed to the extremely positive performance. The biggest challenges to maintaining the current performance is similar to those of many local authorities across the country - the rise of the use of knives, drug dealing and gang activity related to organised crime - whilst also having to reduce resources.
22. A great emphasis of the YOS locally has been to deliver its prevention and early intervention services alongside the statutory court related work. It is of note that recent research indicated that approximately only 40% of YOS's had maintained prevention services as a part of their structure. Locally the prevention and early intervention work has been the basis of the sustained low numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system and committing offences leading to custodial sentences, when compared to YOS's regionally and nationally.

Background papers

23. Youth Justice Plan 2016-19
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s133329/Updated%20Leicestershire%20YJ%20Strategic%20Plan%202016-2019.pdf>

Equality and Human Rights Implications

24. No EHRIA is required for this report. The impact of BAME young people in the criminal justice system is highlighted within this report along with the YOS intention to undertake further research in the development of its response to the issues identified.

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