

Select Committee on Children's Services – 12th November 2009

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Report on the Performance and Future Developments for the Dudley Youth Offending Service

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Select Committee of the Youth Offending Services' progress in discharging it's duties as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
2. To inform Select Committee of current and future developments in relation to legislative changes and Central Government Guidance, which will impact on Youth Offending Service (YOS) Service delivery.

Background

3. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established three key responsibilities for Local Authorities and their partners in relation to youth offending these were:
 - Section 37 created the principle aim of the Youth Justice System "to prevent offending by children and young people". In addition this section states "in addition to any other duties to which they are subject, it shall be the duty of all bodies carrying out functions in relation to the youth justice system to have regard to that aim".
 - Section 38 establishes a range of Youth Justice Services which includes the preparation of reports to court, the supervision in the community of young people on court orders and the support for young people whilst in custody and on their return to the community.
 - Section 39 creates the responsibility on each LA to establish a multi agency Youth Offending Team that must comprise as minimum representatives from the Local Authority (a Social Worker and a representative from education), the Police, Probation and the local Health Authority. It is the duty of the YOT to co-ordinate and deliver Youth Justice Services for their area and set this out in a Youth Justice Plan.
4. Dudley Youth Offending Service has been established since April 2000. Many changes have taken place in the intervening nine years including changes in legislation, statutory guidance and practice. The team began with one manager, two assistant managers and thirteen staff mainly drawn from the statutory partners. However with partners realising the effectiveness of multi agency working the team has broadened it's ability to provide a more holistic range of services to this vulnerable group of young people. The service now comprises of:

- A Division Manger, three Assistant Managers, two Police Officers, two Probation Officers, a General Nurse Practitioner, a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Practitioner, six Social Workers, Substance Misuse Workers, one and a half time Victim Liaison Workers, a Reparation Co-ordinator, two Resettlement and Aftercare Workers, a Connexion Personal Advisor, a Youth Worker, a Teacher, a Housing Support Officer, Heantun Housing floating Support Staff, a Parenting Support Officer, three Caseworkers, an Administrative Manager, and nine Administrative Support Staff.
 - The YOS also has responsibility for 30 Community Volunteers who are specifically recruited to support the Referral Order process and 15 Sessional Support Staff who support the delivery of Reparation in the community, and provide an out of hours “Appropriate Adult” service.
5. Through specific Youth Justice Board ring-fenced funding the YOS also provides for two prevention projects:
- The “Circles Project” which is a Restorative Justice Service aimed at reducing the number of looked after children entering the Criminal Justice System inappropriately and more latterly working with schools and PRUs to facilitate better reintegration for excluded pupils.
 - The YOS also has funding for a Youth Inclusion and Support Panel. However with the development of locality working in townships this funding is to be redirected and combined with funding through the area based grant for “Positive Activities for Young People” – a funding stream designed to target these at risk of offending, exclusion or dropping out of education, training or employment.

Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme

- Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) - Dudley also manages the (ISSP) on behalf of the Black Country – this scheme offers a highly intensive level of supervision (25-hours per week) coupled with a level of surveillance (electronic monitoring / telephone contact).

Performance

6. Attached as appendix 1 is the data summary sheet produced by the Youth Justice Board for the period April 08 –March 09 summarising Dudley YOS’s performance against the key National Performance Indicators (NPIs).
7. Performance against the two primary National Performance Indicators of preventing offending and preventing re-offending is very strong with reductions in first time entrants reducing by 17.6% against a target of 5% and re-offending rates reducing by 29.4% against a target of 10%.
8. Engaging young people in education, training or employment is very challenging, particularly in the current economic climate. However having developed an innovative approach to engaging with young people (Path for Everyone) which has brought together a range of support services from colleges, Connexions and service providers the last quarter (March/April) has seen a dramatic improvement in positive outcomes.

9. It is in relation to the use of custody that Dudley struggles to improve performance. Rigorous scrutiny takes place in respect of reports to court ensuring that all appropriate alternatives have been explored.
10. The YOS is in early stages of developing a Custody Panel arrangement using the Howard League's model of best practice. This creates a multi agency scrutiny arrangement with representative drawn from the wider partnership. This panel will be able to Challenge YOS practice if appropriate but more importantly it will seek to identify alternative approaches from a much wider resource base.
11. The YOS's approach to the accommodation needs of young people in the Criminal Justice System is well respected by the Youth Justice Board and is promoted as an excellent example of practice in this area. The scheme is a partnership between the YOS, Dudley Housing service and Heantun Housing.
12. Overall the YOS's performance is rated as good by the Youth Justice Board and has required little outside support from them.

Future Developments

13. The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 requires YOTs to implement some major changes in the next few months the most significant of which is the introduction of the Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO). This order replaces all current community orders (attendance centre orders, supervision orders, community punishment orders et al) In future magistrates will be able to select from a menu of 18 requirements which can be inserted into the YRO which may include supervision, activity requirements, drug testing and treatment requirements, mental health treatment requirements exclusion requirements et al. There will not be a limit on the number of YROs an individual can have but only one YRO will be in place at any one time. Two new requirements of a YRO with intensive supervision, and a YRO with intensive fostering are placed on a statutory footing for the first time. In order to help magistrates decide on the most appropriate sentence YOTs will continue to provide reports to court. However the YJB have developed alongside the youth justice assessment tool ASSET a process for the prediction of future re-offending and the commensurate package of intervention to prevent such offending, this is referred to as the Scaled Approach. YOTs are required, through National Standards, to implement this method of working.
14. The Government's Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) was published in July 2008. This was one of a suite of documents produced by the Government to support their ambitions set out in the National Children's Plan. The YCAP sets out a triple track approach to tackle youth crime and anti social behaviour, they are:
 - To enforce and punish unacceptable behaviour.
 - To offer non negotiable support to children and families who are responsible for anti social behaviour and youth crime, and
 - To provide a range of early interventions to prevent youth crime and anti-social behaviour occurring.
15. The plan identifies eight key methods of working to achieve these aims:

Operation "Staysafe" - Partnerships between Local Authority services and the Police sweeping the local anti social behaviour hotspots and removing children who are at risk off the street at night to a place of safety then requiring parent to attend to collect their children. Advice and support is then offered to both child and parent to prevent a repeat of the behaviour.

Street based teams - partnerships between the Police and Youth workers keeping young people away from crime or anti social behaviour.

Increased reparation activity - young people making good for the harm they have caused to victims and the wider community in their leisure time, including Friday and Saturday nights.

YOTs working in Police custody suites - YOT staff located in police stations to facilitate rapid assessments of young people to assist police and the Crown Prosecution make decisions on next steps.

After School Patrols - Police and Community support Officers maintaining a highly visible presence following the end of the school day, around the school vicinity and nearby transport routes and interchanges.

Support for young victims - recognising that young people are not just perpetrators of youth crime but are also victims of it and require support.

Family Intervention Projects - provides support for the most vulnerable and problematic families with children at risk of offending.

Think family reforms - changes to systems and services to improve the support offered to vulnerable children young people and adults in the same family.

16. The Government have provided funding to sixty nine high crime areas to provide all or some of the services referred to above. Dudley is not included in this group except in relation to the family intervention project work and Think Family activity. Dudley has received £103k for this year and next to develop a Family Intervention Project to promote this type of joined up support for families with complex needs.
17. One activity that is highlighted above, "Operation Staysafe" is currently being piloted in the Borough the findings from the pilot will be available in November 2009.
18. The Division Manager for the YOS is currently undertaking a gap analysis of our current service provision to identify opportunities that may be available to the partnership to deliver some other services in line with those proposed in the YCAP within existing resources. A report will be available in December which will be presented to both the Community Safety Partnership and the Children's Trust Partnership.

Finance

19. The YOS is resourced through a pooled budget arrangement between the key statutory of the Local Authority, The Police, the National Offender Management

Service, and Dudley PCT. There is a significant contribution from the Youth Justice Board which as a condition of their grant insists that Partner agency contributions must be maintained at current levels. There are other contributions either “in kind” as in the Connexions PA or resource for specific activity as in the Supporting People funding to assist in our accommodation project. The contribution by agency is broken down as follows:

Dudley YOT Budget - Costs and Contributions 09/10

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in Kind	Other Delegated Funds	Total
Police		79,100	16,100	95,200
Probation		125,300	27,000	152,300
Health		85,400		85,400
Local Authority	889,400	101,800		991,200
YJB	440,100	291,400		731,500
Other				0
Total	1,329,500	683,000	43,100	2,055,600

Law

20. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each Local Authority to establish a YOT to co-ordinate youth justice services for their area.
21. Section 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires YOTs to be statutory partners in both Children’s Trusts and Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards.
22. Youth Rehabilitation Orders which will be introduced shortly as indicated in the report will be made under the Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation Act 2008.

Equality Impact

23. The work of the Dudley YOS supports parents, children, young people victims of crime and the wider community to help prevent offending and re-offending. The YOS services users are often amongst the most vulnerable in society as well as the most challenging. The service has to balance the safeguarding of the child/young person against the potential risk they may pose to the public.

Recommendation

24. It is recommended that the Committee note and approve this report and the work outlined and as appropriate request further updates on areas commented on.

Mark Wyatt

.....
Mark Wyatt
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Pauline Sharratt
Telephone: 01384 815803
Email: pauline.sharratt@dudley.gov.uk