

Restorative Youth Services Work Programme 2015/16

Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3rd February 2016

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Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	Not Applicable

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1. The Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee have specific responsibility for the review of Local Authority services delivered to children and young people in Swindon. This includes the provision of specialist integrated services delivered against local and national performance indicators, including Restorative Youth Services (**RYS**) which comprise the Youth Offending Team, confidential youth counselling service On Trak, and the (youth) substance misuse service U-Turn.
- 1.2. The Committee's work programme requires a Report to be submitted providing an overview of the work of Restorative Youth Services, including progress in relation to targets and challenges to future service delivery.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and approve progress in relation to the strategies for meeting Government and local targets for reducing first time offending, re-offending, remand, custodial rates, and substance misuse. This Report also reflects on progress with the delivery of confidential youth counselling services.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Local Authority (Chief Executive) with responsibility for Children's Services is required to ensure that the range of Youth Justice Services outlined in section 38 (4) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are delivered through the Youth Offending Team and associated services.
- 3.2 The confidential youth counselling service On Trak, and the youth alcohol & drug misuse service U-Turn, are now under the direct management of the YOT's Manager (now entitled RYS Service Manager) and, accordingly, have separate plans incorporated into the Restorative Youth Services Plan 2015-16. This plan acknowledges national and local priorities relating to offending, substance misuse and counselling, and describes strategy, performance, partnerships,

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finance, as well as the challenges and opportunities which now govern future priorities.

- 3.3 The Restorative Youth Services Plan 2015/16 was approved by the Youth Offending Team Management Board on the 23 July 2015 and submitted to the Local Authority's Health and Wellbeing Board on the 9 December 2015 for approval. Board members offered their congratulations to the (RYS) team for the successful inspection which took place in March 2015. The RYS Plan was also approved by the Youth Justice Board on the 4 November 2015, and their letter of approval included a statement by the Head of the YJB South West Business Area stating that he was "particularly impressed by the highly detailed plan which meets the requirements of the YJB guidance expectations as well as providing a comprehensive description of the local inter-agency environment in which the YOS operates; and has a creative presentation which lends itself to a number of different audiences."
- 3.4 Developments in 2015 associated with the Youth Offending Team include a historic fall (year on year) in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system and a low rate of custody due in part to the success of working closely with the Courts to show that risk and rehabilitation, for even the most troubled young people, is manageable and effective in the local community. Re-offending rates experienced a spike as a result of a more complex cohort of offenders which was explored further in the HMIP Inspection of the Youth Offending Team in March 2015. This resulted in the production of a full report and a local post inspection Action Plan. This Plan incorporated subtle but important changes in operational practice and overarching strategies, including the more sophisticated analysis of re-offending data using a specialised tool kit. Other key factors (influencing progress with the objectives set out in the 2015/16 Plan) include: the provision for Magistrates to make a requirement known as 'Unpaid Work' in the community; the implementation of communications software programmes to improve the confidence and self-esteem of young people; intervention by a speech and language specialist; and a national overhaul and update of the ASSET assessment tool which will require the training of multi-agency staff in anticipation of new systems and processes due for implementation in May 2016 designed to assess the risks and causes of offending behaviour.
- 3.5 RYS Performance for period April 2015 to January 2016 shows that: -
- The rate of first time entrants into the youth justice system remains slightly above national and south west averages, but is continuing to reduce (from 138 to 117 over this period).
 - Since October 2013 custody rates have continued to fall (from 8 young people to 4 young people) well below the national average.

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- Re-offending rates are monitored in two ways. Firstly, by monitoring a cohort of young people who offended in the period January to December 2012. For this group, re-offending rates decreased from a peak of 41.7% to 41.2% at current rates. By comparison, national averages stand at 37.9%. A more realistic count of re-offending is now obtained from a new 'live tracker' tool, which monitors rates of re-offending for current offenders. This shows a rate of 35.4%, well under national averages.
 - The Local Authority and YOT have a target to reduce the number of remands into custody by providing packages of bail & remand support which have the confidence of Magistrates. This has resulted in a saving in the remand budget in the order of £30,000 (for 2015/16).
- 3.6 The Plan for 2015/16 also incorporates strategies to educate young people about the harm caused through the misuse of alcohol and drugs. To support this, U-Turn operates through the Traded Services initiative to help schools raise awareness about the impact of drugs (including legal highs) on the teenage brain. U-Turn worked with 129 young people in treatment last year and all were able to demonstrate positive outcomes. Out of these 129 young people, only 2 required specialist pharmacological treatments for class A use. U-Turn have received 89 referrals during April-December 2015, with 52 assessments completed. Close partnership working with CREATE studios resulted in a joint funding initiative to produce a short educational film to help young people understand the impact of substance misuse on the adolescent brain. The film was successfully launched at Cineworld in December 2015, receiving over 800 YouTube hits within the first few days, as well as extensive media coverage.
- 3.7 A number of challenges were faced at the beginning of 2015 in relation to the confidential youth counselling service On Trak. These included a high rate of referrals, mostly from GPs, which had resulted in over-long waiting times for young people in need of counselling, requiring new efforts from partners to find solutions and work in new ways. The Local Authority's Children's Services, as well as Health, allocated one-off funding of £30,000 and £70,000 respectively to recruit the additional skilled counsellors needed to address these problems, and waiting times have fallen as a result. In addition, On Trak are driving innovations associated with the development of new forms of social media and other digital tools, including an authoritative website with links to Health and other services delivered by the Local Authority and due for launch in April 2016. In 2015 On Trak worked with 132 young people who engaged in weekly one to one counselling sessions. In the past 18 months referrals have steadily increased which has caused some delay in young people commencing treatment after assessment. On Trak received 79 new referrals during April – December 2015, with an average 27.9 days referral to assessment.
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3.8 Against this overall background, Restorative Youth Service (RYS) is facing a series of unprecedented challenges associated with:

- A wide-ranging review of youth justice services announced in October 2015 by the Rt. Hon Michael Gove to be conducted by Mr Charlie Taylor, Chief Executive of the National College for Teaching and Leadership. Mr Taylor has already made visits to several YOTs, establishments in the secure estate, police stations, and courts. The Association of YOT Managers has made strong representations, raising concerns about the current threats to services' budgets from within the MoJ, and the potential for the National Probation Service to alter its YOT funding model (see below) before the Taylor review has had time to do its work and report back in the late spring of 2016.
- A National Probation Service (NPS) review (E3) encompassing the funding arrangements and future roles of Probation staff seconded to youth offending teams (YOTs), and a reconfiguration of the level of management expected to represent NPS on YOT Boards. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is participating in the review, and has been working closely with NPS on this future allocation model. Against this background the YOT has already seen one of its one of its qualified seconded Probation Officers replaced by an 'unqualified' Probation Services Officer and is likely to see a further reduction in staffing seconded from the NPS.
- Further significant cuts in funding following on from a reduction in the complement of social worker posts (from three to two); the deletion of a post within the YOT's support functions; and an efficiency review of the RYS managerial structure which will result in the deletion of the post of the manager of the confidential youth counselling service On Trak on the 1 April 2016. Following extensive consultation under agreed local authority procedures, the post holder has elected to take redundancy rather than seek re-deployment, resulting in a saving of £45,000 per annum. However there are other financial cost pressures, including a further reduction in funding from the YJB, who had already announced an unexpected in year reduction in grant of 10.6% (equivalent to £26,966) which had to be met by holding a vacancy at Operational Manager level for eight months with effect from August 2015. Setting a balanced budget for 2016/17 remains challenging, whilst still awaiting details of the amount of further funding cuts from the Youth Justice Board, in addition to the potential withdrawal of funding from the National Probation Service.

3.9 In spite of these financial pressures RYS continues to have the full confidence of the YOT Management Board. Their scrutiny of performance has recently been the subject of a detailed review carried out after the HMIP inspection, leading to changes in the methodology used by partner agencies to receive and analyse performance data. The Youth Offending Team also has a close working

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relationship with other YOTs in the South West and is encouraged by the Youth Justice Board's local partnership adviser to compare outcomes in order to promote best practice and ensure that resources are deployed where they can be most effective. The Plans for 2015/16 take account of these challenges, and set out local objectives and targets, ensuring that young people in Swindon receive the best start in life and are afforded access to appropriate and timely resources and opportunities.

- 3.10 All three RYS services are also set in the wider context, acknowledging the influence of changes associated with 'Stronger Together', of which the move to Clarence House to co-locate with other teams from Children's Services was a key component.

4. Alternative Options

None

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The YOT is financed through a combination of funding from the Youth Justice Board, Local Authority (Children's Services), Wiltshire Police Crime Commissioner, and partner organisations. The total Youth Justice grant for 2015/16 amounts to £242,500 including funding set aside specifically for engaging more victims of crime in restorative justice processes, and helping to meet new devolved demands associated with Unpaid Work and Attendance Centre orders from Court. Partnership cash funding amounts to £373,661, of which £257,500 comes from Children's Services. The following agencies also provide cash contributions: £76,994 from the Police and Crime Commissioner; £19,067 from the National Probation Service; and £20,100 from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), in addition to staffing resources (based on secondments) such as the Police Officer, Health worker, Probation staff and Education worker.
- 5.2 The substance misuse service U-Turn is funded from three sources; Local Authority based Public Health (£75,000); Youth Justice grant funding transferred from YOT income to U Turn (£13,000); and Children's Services core funding (£26,800), in addition to £3,600 from Health, making a total budget of £118,400.
- 5.3 The youth counselling service On Trak is funded by the Local Authority (£134,000), and the CCG (£64,000) making a total budget of £198,000.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.4 The Plan conforms to all SBC protocols and policies concerning the Legal and Human Rights of Swindon residents.
- 5.5 The Plan also builds in interventions on behalf of young people designed to promote opportunities for constructive use of their leisure time and as a result, a reduction in anti – social behaviour or crime.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.6 Restorative Youth Services are uniquely placed to straddle the criminal justice and care environments, resulting in strong links with the overarching strategic themes encompassed within key partner agencies including the Police and Crime Commissioner (Wiltshire and Swindon).

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.7 The Plan takes account of developments incorporated into Local Authority plans (including Community Safety) around crime prevention and reducing re offending, as well as links to 'One Swindon' Priorities and specific targets around improving life for families in Swindon.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.8 The work of the YOT, substance misuse service U-Turn, and the youth counselling service On Trak, are embedded in the Restorative Youth Services Plan 2015-16 which includes the Diversity Impact Assessment.

Risk Management

- 5.9 Plans include activities or protocols and procedures designed to address known or anticipated risks, including those associated with the potential for public sector funding reductions, as well as safeguarding of staff and young people.

6. Consultees

- 6.1. The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

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8. Appendices

- 8.1 Post Inspection Action Plan (Exception Report).
- 8.2 Post Inspection Action Plan (Completed Actions).