

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/15**

**COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

15TH APRIL 2015

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Agenda Item 4

**PROVISION OF YOUTH
OFFENDING SERVICES FOR
CWM TAF**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform and update Members of the current arrangements that exist across the Cwm Taf area for the provision of Youth Offending Services (YOS), with a focus on the effectiveness of the service and its continued development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report and acknowledge the progress made in developing a regional Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service.
- 2.2 Note the maintenance of positive performance in relation to the key performance indicators.
- 2.3 Receive further reports in due course aimed at highlighting specific functions and developments of the service.

3. BACKGROUND

Current Arrangements for a Youth Offending Service

- 3.1 The Youth Offending Service is a statutory partnership legislated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and provides services across two local authority areas, namely Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The simple aim of the service is to prevent the offending and re-offending of children and young people. Historically two separate Youth Offending Services existed across the local authority areas. The statutory partners are: South Wales Police; Cwm Taf University Health Board; National Probation Service; and the local authority areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. These partners provide financial and staffing contributions to

the Youth Offending Service. The Youth Offending Service also attracts external grant funding from the Youth Justice Board, Welsh Government and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- 3.2 A steering group was convened in 2013 in order to scope out the potential and merits of a collaborative service across the Cwm Taf region. Ultimately, it was the view of the steering group that there was a clear and robust business case supporting the creation of a Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service. The primary rationale for the development of a Cwm Taf service was in order to promote resilience of the two services during times of increased austerity and a central focus on collaboration. The rationale and view was underpinned by Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf being two individual services that were well established and well performing with identified strengths and was further promoted by:
- Access to regional funding streams;
 - Recent and anticipated legislative changes;
 - Existing partnership arrangement across the Cwm Taf region;
 - Existing joint governance arrangements;
 - Changing trends in youth crime and youth offending service workloads.
- 3.3 The overriding factor was the provision of a service that focussed on positive outcomes for children, young people, their families and their communities whilst being efficient and effective in its delivery.
- 3.4 Consequently Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service came into existence in August 2014 with Rhondda Cynon Taf acting as the host authority and overall governance being facilitated by a Cwm Taf Regional Management Board which consists of all statutory partner agencies and other agencies/organisations as deemed appropriate by the board (e.g. housing, substance misuse agencies). The board meets quarterly to hold the service to account, examine performance, development and to set the priorities of the service.
- 3.5 In addition to the scrutiny provided via the Regional Management Board, the Youth Offending Service also reports its performance on a quarterly basis to the Youth Justice Board (referred to below). The service is also subject to an inspection regime carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and has recently taken part in a three day thematic inspection focussing on "Desistance", the findings of which will be available in August 2015.
- 3.6 The Youth Offending Service consists of two levels of provision aimed at delivering services focussing on preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system and services for young people once in the criminal justice system and in doing so, aims to positively impact upon overall performance and outcomes for young people, their families and their communities.
- 3.7 The current structure is outlined within **Appendix 1**.
- 3.8 As is indicated above, the financial contributions for the Youth Offending Service are generated from a range of sources. As has been anticipated, going forward into 2015/16 there have been firm indications of reductions in grant funding and

core funding. The Effective Practice Grant provided by the Youth Justice Board will be cut by 6.7% into 2015/16 in comparison to 2014/15. This equates to an overall reduction of £61,111 across the Cwm Taf region from an annual total of £804,093 to £742,982. Additionally, the service has a projected reduction in core budget via the pooled contribution of the local authorities, of £66,660. The anticipation of funding reductions was factored into the initial considerations for the development of a regional service. The current total indicative reduction of £127,771 will be absorbed due to the flexibility afforded via the merge and the ability to reduce the overall establishment via posts that have become/held vacant via the process of regionalisation.

4. PERFORMANCE

4.1 The work of the Youth Offending Service is measured via three national key performance indicators namely:

- A reduction in the number of first time entrants (FTEs) into the youth justice system.
- A reduction in the use of custody as a sentence.
- The proven rate of re-offending.

First Time Entrants (Appendix 2)

4.2 The Youth Offending Service, both in its historical format (RCT and Merthyr Tydfil) and within its current format (Cwm Taf), has achieved considerable results in terms of a reduction of the numbers of first time entrants into the criminal justice system and the use of custody as a sentence.

4.3 Within 2010/11 (April 1st – March 31st) there were 302 FTEs within Rhondda Cynon Taf and 72 FTEs within Merthyr Tydfil (Cwm Taf total 374). This figure has reduced year on year with the last full annual figure for 2013/14 showing that there were 59 FTEs within Rhondda Cynon Taf and 18 FTEs within Merthyr Tydfil (Cwm Taf Total 77 FTEs) evidencing an aggregate percentage reduction of -79.4% (over 4 years)

4.4 More latterly, and since the collaboration of the services, Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service has continued to positively impact upon an overall reduction of First Time Entrants into the criminal justice system across the Cwm Taf region. At the end of September 2014 there were a total of 78 first time entrants compared to a figure of 83 for the same period in 2013. It is generally acknowledged that the rate by which First Time Entrants reduces, will in it-self reduce and plateau off due to the continued smaller numbers involved.

Use of Custody (Appendix 2)

4.5 As is the case for FTEs, the Youth Offending Service in its historical and current format has achieved considerable results in terms of a reduction of the use of custody as a sentence.

- 4.6 Within 2010/11 there were 36 custodial sentences within Rhondda Cynon Taf and 18 custodial sentences within Merthyr Tydfil (Cwm Taf total 54). This figure has reduced year on year with the last full annual figure for 2013/14 showing that there were 3 custodial sentences within Rhondda Cynon Taf and 6 custodial sentences within Merthyr Tydfil (Cwm Taf total 9 custodial sentences) evidencing an aggregate reduction of -83.3%.
- 4.7 Since the collaboration of the services, Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service has continued to monitor and report on its use of custody. Overall, up to the end of quarter 3 (April 1st 2014 – Dec 31st 2014) there have been a total of 7 custodial sentences across the Cwm Taf region; this being comparable to the same overall figure (7) for the same period in 2013/14.

Re-Offending Rates (Appendix 3)

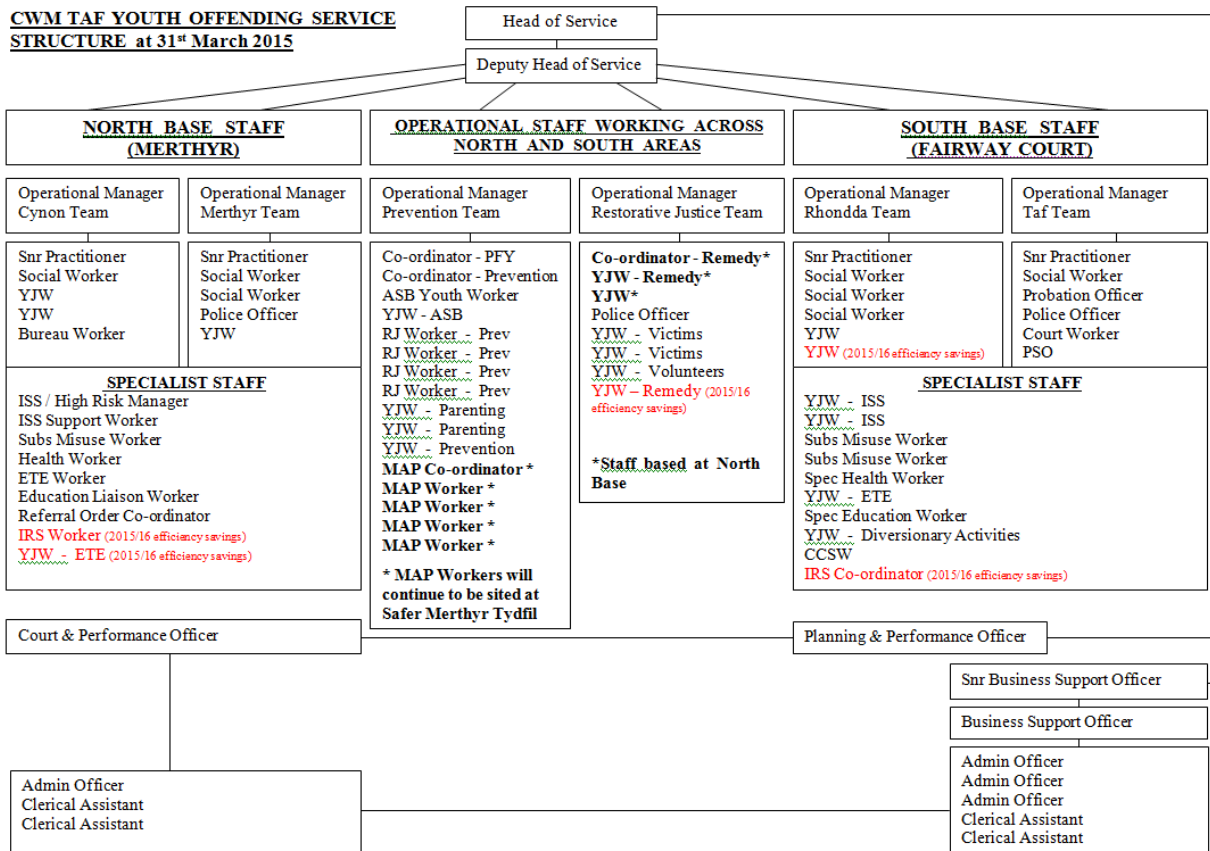
- 4.8 Due to the nature within which re-offending data is tracked the information provided in terms of this performance measure is historical, being 12+ months in the past. It relates to a rate associated with a cohort of young people within a defined period. As there has been a significant reduction in the number of first time entrants entering the system the cohort of young people within defined periods has also decreased but as preventative and diversionary methods have been effective in keeping a significant number of young people out of the criminal justice system, it follows that those who now enter the system generally have more complex needs and are subsequently likely to be more prolific in their offending.
- 4.9 Between the period January – December 2012 within Rhondda Cynon Taf, there were 193 young people within the re-offending cohort. Of these, 66 went on to re-offend with the cohort committing a total of 176 offences (0.91 offences per person – this being termed as frequency rate). The re-offending rate, i.e. the numbers of young people within the cohort that went on to re-offend was 34.2% (66 young people re-offending from a cohort of 193).
- 4.10 Between the period January – December 2011 within Rhondda Cynon Taf, there were 269 young people within the re-offending cohort. Of these 104 went on to re-offend with the cohort committing a total of 243 offences (0.90 offences per person). The re-offending rate for the period is 38.7% (104 young people re-offending from a cohort of 269).
- 4.11 Between the period January – December 2012 within Merthyr Tydfil, there were 44 young people within the re-offending cohort. Of these, 20 went on to re-offend with the cohort committing a total of 72 offences (1.64 offences per person). The re-offending rate for the period is 45.5% (20 young people re-offending from a cohort of 44).
- 4.12 Between the period January – December 2011 within Merthyr Tydfil, there were 81 young people within the re-offending cohort. Of these, 46 went on to re-offend with the cohort committing a total of 191 offences (2.36 offences per person), the re-offending rate for the period is 56.8% (46 young people re-offending from a cohort of 81).

- 4.13 In conjunction with the Youth justice Board, the youth offending service is in the process of utilising a “re-offending toolkit” and “live tracker” which will enable us to establish more contemporary information on a re-offending cohort.

5. CONCLUSION

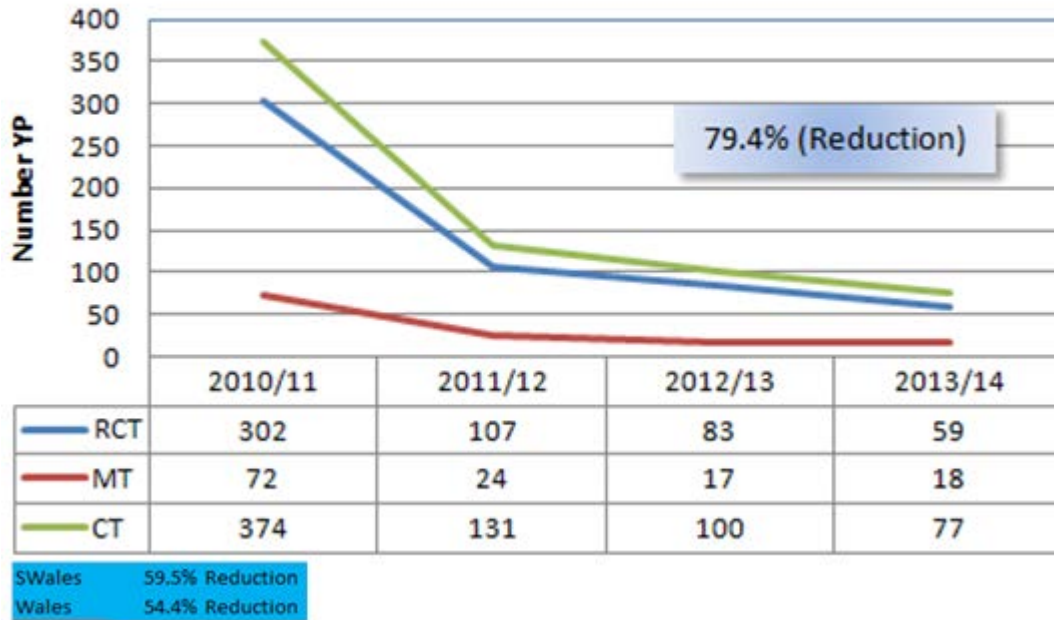
- 5.1 Cwm Taf Regional Youth Offending Service is the amalgamation of two historically well performing and well regarded services. The merging of two local authority Youth Offending Services was supported and initiated in order to create resilience whilst acknowledging the commonality that already existed across both services.
- 5.2 Although the collaborative service is within its relative infancy, there are clear indications of a service having been developed that is both efficient and effective and has been able to respond and be resilient to financial reductions whilst maintaining service provision.
- 5.3 The regional service will continue to monitor its performance and outcomes in line with quarterly and annual reporting as well as the outcomes of any inspection regime and report accordingly to the regional management board and Members at defined stages.

Appendix 1

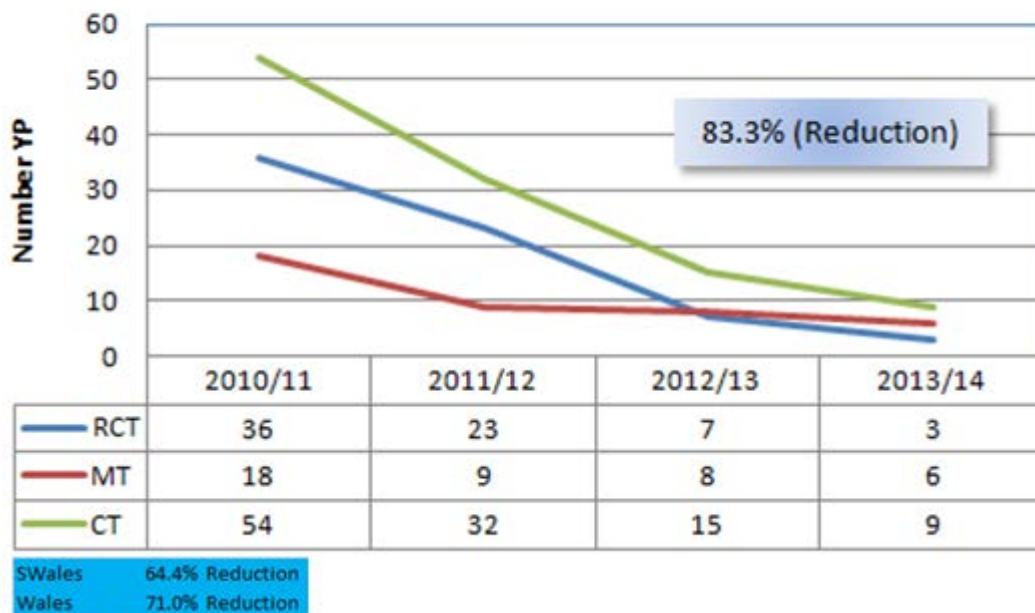


Appendix 2

First Time Entrants



Custody



Appendix 3

Re-Offending (Jan-Dec)

