



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30TH JULY 2020

CWM TAF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON

**Author: Lyndon Lewis, Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Tel: 01443 827300 / 01685 724960**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to offer an annual review of the work of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) for 2019/20. This includes a summarised review of the implementation of a post inspection action plan following a Full Joint Inspection of the work of the YOS which took place during March 2017, the findings of which were published in July the same year.
- 1.2 The report also outlines changes that took place in 2018/19 and brings to the attention of the Board future strategic change and how this will impact upon future service delivery.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that members:
- 2.2 Acknowledge the proposed strategic changes within the Youth Justice System and potential impact upon YOS business;
- 2.3 Receive further reports in due course in order to be satisfied of the progress and improvements being made as a result of a proposed service change.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Cwm Taf 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 local authority YOS areas merged to form Cwm Taf YOS in August 2014. The aim of the service is to prevent the offending and re-offending of children and young people. The statutory partners are: South Wales Police; Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board; HM Prison and 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 Overall governance is facilitated by the Regional Cwm Taf Offender Management Board (OMB) which meets quarterly to hold the service to account, examine performance, and to monitor the delivery of the service.
- 3.3 In addition to the scrutiny provided via the Offender Management Board, the Youth Offending Service also reports its performance on a quarterly basis to the Youth Justice Board (YJB), and to the Welsh Government in relation to its prevention work. The YOS is also subject to an inspection regime carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).
- 3.4 The early intervention and preventative functions of the YOS are not currently legislated or regulated. Therefore, a Full Joint Inspection undertaken by HMIP in 2017 focussed only upon the statutory provision of the service. However, it should be acknowledged that a significant proportion of YOS business is carried out within the prevention arena, which has impacted positively on reducing the numbers of first time entrants (FTE's), meaning less young people coming through the law courts and entering into the criminal justice system.

4.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 4.1 The last report to Parenting Board provided a full summary of the 2017 Full Joint Inspection. Overall, the judgements of the inspection process was good and presented a balanced picture of the service. Subsequently, the YOS set out an action plan to make improvements in areas of practice that required improvement. This included the need for the Offender Management Board to strengthen its role in directing strategic planning, and to ensure that young people known to the service had access to mental health provision when necessary.
- 4.2 The Offender Management Board has monitored the required improvements, and initially agreed access to mental health provision via a CAMHS/YOS Pathway. However, at time of writing, we are in the process of renegotiating this provision with Health in order that it can be maintained for the coming financial year. The Offender Manager Board has been informed of this situation on a regular basis and the Board Chairs have written to Health to try to resolve the issue.
- 4.3 The YOS has continued to provide an effective and efficient service in 2019/20 against a backdrop of continued financial challenge. As in 2018/19, it has maintained, and in some areas, improved overall performance against the Youth Justice Board outcome indicators and the devolved performance measures for Wales. However, there continues to be further work required in order to deal more effectively with young people who repeat offend.
- 4.4 To meet this challenge, the YOS, in partnership with the YJB, initiated an Enhanced Case Management (ECM), 'trauma informed approach' in order to deal more effectively with young people who offend and who have been subject to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). This programme is currently undergoing

a full evaluation across youth justice services in Wales who have piloted the programme during the past 18 months. The ECM model will cease at the end in March 2020, and much of this is to do with the current and limited availability of psychologist input from Health, which is central to the provision. Nevertheless, the Cwm Taf YOS has begun to embed a trauma informed approach regardless of health provision, and is continuing to practice in this way to better meet the needs of young people who enter the into the youth justice system.

- 4.5 From April 2019, there has been changes to the method that the Youth Justice Board (YJB) monitors the performance of Youth Offending Teams. The three national indicators (below) are now overseen by a UK Performance Oversight Board (POB) that meets on a quarterly basis, and will notify YOTs should there be significant decline in performance in any of the three areas. Cwm Taf YOS is banded and ranked against services with similar demographics and levels of social deprivation, and the POB focuses upon those who rate lowest in the band, and, where necessary, uses a 'four stage' escalation process where significant concerns are identified. Those services that are in the Cwm Taf family includes Blaenau Gwent/Caerphilly, Burnley, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, St Helens, South Tees, Hartlepool, NE Lincolnshire, Wigan, Rotherham and Doncaster.

Three National Performance Indicators

- Reduce numbers of first time entrants into the criminal justice system
 - Reduce the proven rate of reoffending
 - Reduce the use of custody as a sentencing option
- 4.6 To summarise performance in 2019/20, numbers of young people entering the youth justice system continues to remain low. Cwm Taf YOS can report that no young people entered into custody during the whole year April 2018 to March 2019, however, three young people entered into custody during the first two quarters of 2019/20 with knife crime being a feature in two of these cases. However, reoffending rates continue to fluctuate each quarter and remains one of long term challenges for the service.
- 4.7 The YJB has also introduced a new set of National Standards and these will also be subject to strict YJB monitoring activity. The YOS is currently self evaluating against a cohort of young people monitored between September 2019 to April 2020, and is preparing for this work alongside the development of a new quality assurance framework. The National Standards work is linked to the Structure and Governance of the service and will be overseen by the Offender Management Board.
- 4.8 The YOS will require operational and strategic 'buy in' from partners to undertake this work. On February 14th, the Offender Management Board held a development day with its partner agencies in order to raise awareness of what the work will entail. A further meeting of the OMB in May will review progress against the new standards and offer an assessment of the effectiveness of the YOS partnership and its impact upon current and future practice.


- 4.9 Alongside this, the YOS commissions a Viewpoint data system to capture the views of our cohort, and a collation of the feedback we receive will contribute to the future development of the service.
- 4.10 The YOS management have raised concerns and made presentations to the OMB to highlight some of the barriers that young people known to our service face in relation to accessing education, training and employment. Management have made progress alongside partners, including education, to try to resolve some of these issues, and this work will be prioritised during 2020/21.
- 4.11 In addition, a sub group of the Offender Management Board is currently working on a revised performance framework with which the Board can monitor and more collectively address as a partnership the issue of reoffending rates amongst young people and adults. Much of this work will align with the priorities set out in the Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan 2018/21.

5.0 FUTURE CHANGES AND IMPACT ON SERVICE

- 5.1 Following a review of the youth justice system across England and Wales, the YJB was asked to advise Welsh Gov't to develop a 'Blueprint for Youth Justice for Wales'. Subsequently, an Implementation Plan has now been drafted to take this work forward (see attachment below). The delivery of Early Intervention and Prevention services is a key component of the Blueprint and acknowledges that the Youth Justice System has, to a large extent, become broadly diversionary in its approach. The document sets out advice for a recommended vision for youth Justice in Wales, with a trauma informed, child focussed method of working. A Project Board has been set up to take the work forward and will be overseen by Welsh Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP). Managers overseeing youth justice across Wales are represented on the various workstreams to take the plans forward.
- 5.2 Enhanced monitoring of prevention activity is also recommended within the Implementation Plan in order to demonstrate the impact and improve the evidence base for this area of our work.
- 5.3 Funding from Welsh Government (Promoting Positive Engagement with Young People, PPEYP) has been confirmed for 2020/21 and remained the same as the previous year. However, the projects delivered within this fund are now part of the Flexible Funding Pathfinder across Cwm Taf, to focus on a single programme and provide flexibility across all grants. The YOS uses the PPEYP grant to develop, deliver and coordinate preventative interventions and services across the Cwm Taf area. Some of this work is coordinated alongside the Resilient Families Service (RFS) and also ensures that the Cwm Taf YOS Prevention Service can provide a swift and proportionate response to anti social behaviour (ASB), Restorative Justice Street Disposals (YRD's) and respond quickly to crisis referrals from the Children's Services Dept. As mentioned, the PPEYP fund sits alongside other funding streams within the Children and Communities Grant, and there are meetings planned to explore how this grant can be best utilised across the wider partnership in 2021/22.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Currently, prevention and diversionary activity accounts for over half of YOS business and identifies and addresses the needs of young people where the risk of offending can impact negatively upon the community and upon future welfare of young people/adults. Therefore, a more coordinated approach to prevention activity alongside partner agencies is crucial in order to manage the increasing volume of cases, and subsequently, these issues have caused us to examine the current structure and the roles and tasks carried out across the service.
- 6.2 A new proposed structure seeks to ensure better capacity across the Cwm Taf region and increase staff and management resilience within the prevention arena. In line with the Blueprint recommendations, we need to ensure that any change will promote consistency within our practice and deliver a more targeted needs led service that continues to be effective and outcome focussed.
- 6.3 The potential impact linked to the issues outlined above and the risks associated with potential changes to grant funding will need to be monitored closely to ensure that Cwm Taf YOS can properly meet the demands, aims and objectives ahead and to deliver better outcomes for young people who offend or who are at risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour.

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document (s)	Date	Document Location
Blueprint for Youth Justice Implementation Plan	2019	 youth-justice-implemenation-plan.pdf