



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/19

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES
& PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**(SITTING IN ITS ROLE AS THE DESIGNATED
CRIME & DISORDER COMMITTEE (UNDER
SECTIONS 19 & 20 OF THE POLICE &
JUSTICE ACT 2006)**

Agenda Item No. 3

**DIVERT 18-25 and
WISDOM project**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Elected Members on the current performance of the Divert 18-25 and WISDOM projects.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the content of the report, and presentation delivered, and consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters on the current performance of the Divert 18-25 and WISDOM projects.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 DIVERT 18-25 Project

Reducing offending and re-offending amongst the 18–25 age groups is a key priority for the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. In 2014, the Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Safety Team were approached by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office and asked if they would be willing to develop and coordinate a new project to reduce offending and prevent reoffending in the 18-25 year old cohort within Cwm Taf.

There is a strong evidence base that nationally, 18-25 year olds are responsible for a disproportionate amount of overall crime. In Cwm Taf

(Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr, 2014), 18-25 year olds accounted for 11% of the population and were responsible for 29% of offences. 72% of these offences were committed by first time entrants (FTE's) into the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Research into establishing an evidence base for the DIVERT 18-25 project highlighted the following: -

(All data below is for period 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2014)

- 29% of all detected offences committed within 2014 were committed by the 18-25 age group;
- The census of 2011 states that 11% of the Cwm Taf population were aged between 18-25;
- Violence against the person accounted for 48% of offences in this age group;
- Theft (14%), Criminal damage (11%) and drug related offences (9%) were also prominent;
- 81% of offenders were male.

First Time Entrants only

- A total of 396 First Time Entrants were aged 18-25 ;
- 64% of First Time Entrants were male (18-25);
- 51 % of offences were classified as violence against the person (18-25).

The above statistics were also reflective of the national picture.

The Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety teams saw value in implementing projects and practices to address this high offending cohort. Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Safety Team, in partnership with the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales, undertook research into a number of different models and consulted with key partner agencies that had an interest in the young adult and offending agenda.

Following a decision at the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership Board, it was agreed that the Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Safety Team would co-ordinate a pilot diversionary scheme in the Cwm Taf area which would initially concentrate on reducing the number of 18-21 year old first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System, with a view to expanding the criteria to the 18 – 25 year old cohort if warranted.

Key partners in the development and running of the project included South Wales Police, the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, the National Probation Service and the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service.

The aims of the project were to:

- Reducing offending and preventing re-offending in the 18-25 age group;

- Reduce offending and prevent re-offending in Cwm Taf;
- Engage with service providers and partner agencies to effectively tackle offender's prevailing issues;
- Reduce the number of First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System in this age group;
- Free up resources for partner agencies to allow intensive case management of re-offenders;
- Adopt an early intervention, problem solving approach for First Time Entrants (FTEs).

3.2 WISDOM Project

The aim of WISDOM is to reduce re-offending and the risk of serious harm via a multi-agency team comprising police, probation, forensic psychological service and other local partners working together.

WISDOM works with offenders subject to community supervision, license supervision and those who are not on statutory supervision to reduce risk.

The lead agencies for WISDOM are the Police and National Probation Service (NPS), working with Forensic Psychological Services, and is a collaborative arrangement between the Police and NPS with each bringing their own specialist skills to the programme.

Whilst WISDOM is primarily Police and Probation Service led, it operates within a multi-agency environment that works with and draws upon, the services of other partner agencies to manage risk.

Through the combined efforts of all the partners, the team will work with a select cohort of individuals who have committed an offence, and/or their behaviour gives reasonable grounds for believing that there is a likelihood of significant risk of re-offending and of causing serious harm.

The type of offenders that fall within the WISDOM definition of high risk of causing serious harm includes;

- Sexual and violent offenders;
- Priority domestic abuse perpetrators;
- Serious and organised crime nominals;
- High risk foreign nationals amongst other dangerous priority groups.

The WISDOM programme has been designed and is intended to complement Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and act as a support to MAPPA in the day to day management of offenders.

4. PROGRESS TO DATE

4.1 DIVERT 18-25 Project

The pilot DIVERT 18-25 project was launched in April 2016 with two DIVERT 18-25 Co-ordinator's in post employed by RCT Council and working across the Cwm Taf Region. The project is fully funded by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. The project's initial aim was to divert 18-21 year old first time entrants away from the Criminal Justice System. Due to the initial success, the eligibility criteria was quickly expanded to include 18-25 year olds.

The DIVERT 18-25 project offers eligible young adults (aged 18-25, resident of RCT or Merthyr, first offence/ previous caution, low level offence, admission of guilt, no previous referral to DIVERT 18-25) a voluntary referral to the scheme at the point of custody. As part of the project, each young adult undertakes a screening assessment to ensure that they are suitable for diversion. Following the assessment, each person is offered onward referrals to appropriate support services and also an invite to attend a compulsory workshop. This workshop is aimed to educate the young adults about the consequences of crime and a criminal record, addressing consequences of crime, consequential thinking, victim empathy, emotion management and drug and alcohol awareness. Successful completion of the project leads to the individual receiving an 'Out of Court Disposal' for their crime, rather than a criminal record.

In 2017, a further workshop was added in response to the high proportion of violent offences (65%) and offences committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol (84%) being identified. If the young adult had been involved in a crime which includes violence and alcohol or drug use, they are also required to attend an additional workshop which addresses this type of behaviour before they receive their disposal.

During the first two years of implementation 2016/17 and 2017/18, 194 young adults were accepted onto the project at the point of assessment, with 36 workshops being held. The most frequent offence categories referred to the DIVERT scheme during this time frame were Public Order Section 5 (causing harassment, alarm or distress) (23%), Assault (16%), Possession of Class A controlled substance (13%), Criminal Damage to property under £5000 (9%), Drunk and Disorderly (8%).

At the end of the 2018 financial year, analysis showed that for those participants who had completed the workshop and received a diversionary 'Out of Court Disposal', there had been a 96% non-reoffending rate when monitored over a 12 month period.

4.2 SUPPORT 18-25

In January 2017, after realising that there were a high number of 18-25 year olds entering custody who did not meet the DIVERT criteria, but were still in

need of support, the project was expanded to include a spin off scheme called SUPPORT 18-25. The SUPPORT project offers a needs assessment and onward referral to appropriate support services for ALL 18-25 year old offenders processed through Merthyr Custody Suite, who feel that they need some support with an element of their life i.e. mental health, drug and alcohol, housing, benefits, employment, education etc. In providing this service, the DIVERT 18-25 team aim to enable these individuals to access appropriate support services and thereby reduce the number of criminogenic risk factors in their lives and in turn, their likelihood of offending. In 2017/18, 87 young adults engaged with the SUPPORT scheme and received support, 160 onward referrals for support and 341 signposts to partner agencies were made.

4.3 **WISDOM Housing Project**

The WISDOM Housing Project is a partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Trivallis, Gwalia, South Wales Police and the National Probation Service.

It is based on the principles of the “Housing First” model, which provides independent and permanent accommodation for people with chronic and complex needs, to offer a broader housing- led approach offering additional support and other services as needed.

The overall purpose of the project is to better protect the public and to optimise collaboration in the day to day management of offenders who pose a high risk and threat to the public.

During the Project, Trivallis will provide 6 units of dispersed supported accommodation throughout Rhondda Cynon Taff to the individuals who are being supported by WISDOM.

Gwalia, who are funded by Supporting People Grant (SPG), provide a key worker approach to working proactively with clients on project to build on their strengths and encourage their engagement in support and other services. Trivallis also provide a dedicated key worker to assist with intensive housing management arrangements.

The project is delivered in a psychologically, trauma informed way that is sensitive to the needs of each individual.

Outcomes:

The intended outcomes for the WISDOM Housing Project are:

- Reduced re-offending by people convicted of serious and organised crime;
- Reduced re-offending by people convicted of domestic abuse;
- Attitudinal changes pre and post intervention to measure positive outcomes;
- Shifts in category/type of re-offending;
- Reduction in seriousness of offence;
- Greater efficiencies realised through better integrated services and reduced duplication;
- Provision of flexible support tailored to individual need.

5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 There is a strong commitment, between partners in Cwm Taf to deal effectively with offending and re-offending to ensure the management of offenders remains a priority. The two schemes outlined in this report (DIVERT 18-25 and the WISDOM project) provide evidence of the types of initiatives that are actively contributing to keeping the communities of Cwm Taf safe. The projects outline the scale of work that is being completed for both low level and high risk offenders.

A presentation of the two projects will be provided to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers:

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee report – 26th October 2017

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/PublicServiceDeliveryCommunitiesandProsperityScrutinyCommitteeCrimeandDisorder/2017/10/26/PSDCommunitiesandProsperityScrutinyCommitteeCrimeandDisorder26Oct2017.aspx>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY – CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25th OCTOBER 2018

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES.**

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