

Report to OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Youth Justice Strategic Plan – Annual Report

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Amanda Chadderton - Cabinet Member, Children's Services

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Purpose of the Report

The report gives an overview of the Youth Justice Plan, requiring approval from the council. The plan has already been subject to scrutiny from the Youth Justice Board and Director of Children's Services prior to this.

It is a statutory duty of the Local Authority to produce an annual plan. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan (Appendix A) sets out the strategy for Oldham Youth Justice Service (YJS) in 2019/20 with an outline action plan setting out how it will achieve its primary functions and key objectives.

Recommendations

For the Board to review and comment on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019/20

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019/20

1 Background

- 1.1 The youth justice plan is subject to annual review through the local authority. Following last year's approval, the 19/20 plan has been developed in line with feedback and recommendations from 18/19. The plan sets out the strategic objectives of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) in Oldham and focusses on key elements of delivery, recognizing the local demand and context. Within this year's plan we have placed specific focus on the developing agenda relating to serious youth violence as a key priority alongside the reduction of first-time entrants, protection of the public, safeguarding and preventing youth crime.
- 1.2 Oldham is one of nine Youth Offending Teams (YOT) in Greater Manchester within the North West region. To the best of our knowledge, Oldham YJS is the only statutory YJS in England & Wales which is sub-contracted by the Local Authority and directly delivered by an independent charitable trust - Positive Steps (PS). PS also provides an integrated range of Young People's services, including: Information, Advice & Guidance services; an 'Early Help' offer aimed at preventing young people from entering the youth justice system; a young people's substance misuse service; sexual health services, missing from home return interviews and the young carers' support service. We also deliver a range of family-based services.
- 1.3 The Centre, through which all these services are delivered, also hosts a range of partner services including: Healthy Young Minds; a generalist nurse and assistant practitioner team; counselling services; housing advocacy and mediation services and the after-care duty team from the Council's Children's Social Care. Oldham is a medium-sized YJS, employing 29 staff and currently has 15 volunteers. The staff team is a diverse reflection of the community we service with six staff from BAMER backgrounds.
- 1.4 In addition to our directly employed staff the YJS benefits from a seconded police officer. Health services provide a team of staff who assess all YJS clients and provides direct medical support or referral where needed. The Probation service seconds one full time officer. We employ a Volunteer Coordinator within Positive Steps and within the YJS have a strong volunteer workforce which contributes, in the main, to the work the service undertakes with young people subject to Reparation and Referral Orders. Additionally, we are supported by an education team based within Positive Steps; this ensures full compliance with the Crime and disorder Act provisions.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 This plan seeks to inform the strategic direction of Oldham Youth Justice Service (YJS) in 2019/20 and outline how it will achieve its primary functions and the identified key objectives and developments.
- 2.2 The strategic priorities of the service are:
- Preventing youth crime (including youth violence)
 - Reducing Reoffending (including the use of custody)
 - Safeguarding
 - Protecting the Public
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- 2.3 These are underpinned by a commitment to:
- Quality Assurance
 - Learning and Development
 - Partnership
 - Governance
- 2.4 The plan has been subject to scrutiny from the local Youth Justice Management Board (Chaired by Merlin Joseph) and at a national level from the Youth Justice Board and identified as an example of national best practice.
- 2.5 Performance within the reporting periods has been strong within youth justice across all indicators, succeeding when compared to family, regional and national comparators. This is a significant achievement within the context of Oldham's challenges. Oldham is also leading the way in developing innovative practice relating to complex safeguarding and youth violence through its contextual safeguarding pilot.
- 2.6 Oldham is working hard to ensure that young people at risk of or involved in offending are given the best opportunities to engage in positive activities and move away from decisions that put themselves and communities at risk. This was clear within 2018's HMIP inspection which found many areas of outstanding practice and noted 'children and young people are at the heart of everything this service does'. We want to build on these strong foundations, ensuring that the community is safe, and that victims of youth crime and disorder are given a strong voice within the system that can be a central part of diversion and rehabilitation. Through an increased focus on partnership working and an ambitious agenda for change we believe we can build on good performance and continue to improve to deliver these outcomes.
- 2.7 Oldham are setting the agenda for 'child first' approaches to youth justice and recent projects and practice in trauma and contextual safeguarding to support diversion and rehabilitation are strong evidence of this work. We will continue to support this best practice and have secured funding to deliver specific contextual safeguarding projects in two schools with the partnership support of the local authority, community safety and Greater Manchester Police with external scrutiny and research from the University of Bedfordshire. It is this kind of partnership approach, at the cutting edge of practice, that will allow us to develop improved outcomes for young people and families for 2019-2020.
- 2.8 Youth violence has become a key factor in shaping service delivery in Oldham. Across the community and partnership, the impact of serious violence has been felt over recent years with serious and multi-agency case reviews highlighting the damage caused and sometimes reactive nature of partnership responses. We have subsequently set up a serious youth violence strategic group and redesigned our services to meet acute needs. We recognise that those involved in youth violence are often not those that are familiar to the justice system and therefore need an improved partnership approach to intelligence sharing and identification of need. Oldham's 'youth panel' is a significant step in attempting to resolve this issue. The development of this approach and associated improvements in directing and targeting resources will be key to an overall strategy for success in incidents of youth violence and general diversion and prevention of offending.

3 Key Issues for Overview and Scrutiny to Discuss

- 3.1 Consideration of youth justice plan content and any related recommendations.
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4 Key Questions for Overview and Scrutiny to Consider

4.1 To review the plan and make recommendations from the overview and scrutiny board.

5 Links to Corporate Outcomes

5.1 The plan supports the development of stronger, safer and striving communities.

6 Additional Supporting Information

6.1 Response from Youth Justice Board to the Plan:

'Thank you for your Youth Justice Plan submitted on July 31st, 2019.

I can confirm that this complies with sections 40(1) & (2),40(3) and 40(4) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.'

6.2 The plan has been quality assured, and the following elements are of note:

- *the quality of this plan is outstanding and is being used as an exemplar to others*
- *the approach to priorities, setting out what will be achieved and when with success measures clear is innovative in its clarity and commitment*
- *the analysis of performance this year against local targets which were exceeded for ETE and reduction in offending by LAC*
- *there is strong analysis and overrepresentation of BAME children in the criminal justice system and commitment in the coming years to tackle this with partners*
- *an emerging approach, with community safety partners, to introduce a contextual safeguarding delivery model*

6.3 This submission complies with conditions of grant and a notification of acceptance of the plan is with YJB finance

'Congratulations on such a high-quality strategic plan'.

7 Consultation

7.1 Consultation has taken place with key partners, the Youth Justice Management Board and the Youth Justice Board. The Youth Justice Board has endorsed the priorities and spend outlined within the plan.

8 Appendices

8.1 Youth Justice Plan 2019/20

8.2 Youth Justice Board Acceptance Letter (13/08/2019)
