

# **COVID-19 Recovery Plan: Oldham Youth Justice Service 20/21**

**The following plan has been created in line with the template supplied by the Youth Justice Board and includes:**

- 1 Recovery Plan; including high level overview and service specific areas**
- 2 Grant Allocation of Resource**
- 3 Service Priorities**
- 4 Pooled Budget**
- 5 Overview of value for money and spending plan**
- 6 Authorisation**

## 1. Recovery Plan

### Introduction:

#### **1. An overview of the impact on governance and service delivery including ongoing challenges and success.**

Positive Steps is a charitable sector organisation which delivers the YJ service on behalf of the local authority. It is well established within partner arrangements including membership of the Oldham Children's Safeguarding Partnership and Community Safety Partnership. There is an active Youth Justice Management Board, chaired by the Managing Director (DCS) of Oldham Council. Within these arrangements Positive Steps were identified as key partners within COVID recovery plans and are active members of the Bronze planning group structure responding in real time to COVID challenges.

Oldham have worked pro-actively as a local authority and we have felt included and informed within arrangements. Bronze meetings are held twice a week (stepped down from daily meetings) and we have been active in raising concerns and developing plans for children and families affected by the youth justice system. We have developed a specific COVID risk assessment and action plan, approved by public health and commissioners.

Strategic and operational meetings have continued effectively, and IT infrastructure has been resilient. In some ways an unexpected strength has emerged relating to use of IT and developing innovative delivery in service delivery. Staff have used a range of web based and app support to deliver interventions and support remotely. Staffing levels were adversely affected early within the outbreak. This was exacerbated by a major refurbishment programme within the offices and recently departed managers. Tragically we have also lost a key member of the team, who was a subject expert in management information and performance during this period. This was indirectly related to COVID due to treatment access. This is a key concern of the service moving forward and we are prioritising solutions.

The pandemic placed strain on delivery mechanisms and staffing. In order to overcome this all staff were quickly equipped with laptops, smartphones and training in virtual delivery. All staff responded well and engaged quickly with children. A 'rag rating' system was set up and implemented by management, in collaboration with staff, and all young people continued to receive face to face

contact in line with PHE guidance. The frequency of face to face contact was determined by risk and safeguarding with the 'rag' rating document being a dynamic document subject to change throughout the pandemic. Most of the victim contact was completed virtually with some more sensitive cases/or those with safeguarding concerns taking place face to face in line with PHE guidance and risk assessment. All national standards remained compliant either through face to face or virtual contacts. Aside from delivery of Cautions due to Police Station closure and sentencing planning/review meetings for those in custody due to custodial restrictions. We have enhanced our contact with young people in prison and their families to support this.

Referral Order Panels, Risk management and safeguarding meetings were all maintained through virtual meetings and well attended by partnership organisations. The newly developed and implemented prevention and diversion panel also remained operational through virtual meetings and again has maintained partnership support. Our local Youth Court (Tameside Magistrates Court) closed during the pandemic and all young people appeared at Manchester and Salford Magistrates. We worked with our strategic ad operation colleagues across Greater Manchester to ensure we could offer the same service

Priorities remain focussed in line with national standards, reporting requirements (reduction of custody, First Time Entrants and Reoffending) and local priorities. These include additional focus on targeted groups (Children Looked After and BAME), improving the health offer within the service and a focus on supporting parents. Requirement to safeguard and protect young people underpin these aims. The service feels the priorities remain relevant to our aims, but additional focus will be placed on **domestic abuse, child to parent violence and mental health** due to the initial findings of COVID delivery. Staff briefings and training will be enhanced in these areas and managers asked to include them as standard items for supervision and appraisal.

We have completed a Covid-19 survey with young people and parents/carers who use our service. The respondents included both prevention and post court, different ethnicities, genders and varied in age. We are using the results of this to ensure we take what we have learnt from lockdown and how our young people and parents want us to deliver our service.



YJS Covid 19  
feedback Aug 2020.

Delivery remains viable within existing funding arrangements. The service was well equipped with IT remote resources for staff prior to the pandemic and this hasn't created a significant additional cost. As part of our overall priority's health

provision remains a priority and this will need additional focus to accommodate any additional mental health needs presenting. Work is ongoing to review this area and identify either training or additional external capacity. The service has a detailed COVID recovery plan in place which sits within a wider Positive Steps plan. This has been approved by PHE officials within Oldham. Staffing requirements will comply with the requirements set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, we have recently refilled vacancies on both GMP and NPS seconded officers. We also have access to a health professional through partnership with the CCG and a dedicated postholder responsible for education and resettlement.

Planned service reviews for 20/21 include:

- Health Review
- Serious Youth Violence Stocktake
- Problem Solving Court

### **The needs of staff (all sections)**

- Up to date and accurate information on working practices and risk assessments.
- Access to support from line managers through good quality supervision, team meetings, discussions, debriefs
- Provision of PPE equipment as appropriate and in line with Public Health guidance.
- Recognition and support for BAME staff who are disproportionately affected by Covid-19 and support any additional anxiety this may bring.
- Access to specialist support including financial, health, emotional and mental health, stress, bereavement. All accessed confidentially through the employee assistance programme.
- Additional training around changes to ways of working. Specifically, digital working and safeguarding staff and young people.
- Support with flexible working for childcare, caring or other commitments due to Covid.
- For any new staff an enhanced covid-19 related induction. Likewise, for those returning from maternity or sick leave. Supported by HR.

**At the Police Station:**

### **The needs of children**

- Custody as a last resort due to infection transmission and proximity to Police when under arrest and in the station.
- Parents to be fully informed by staff regarding the processes and safety measures in place.
- Young people can understand the processes with the addition of social distancing and face masks. Extra support will be given to those with impaired learning, SALT, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural needs.

### **The needs of staff**

- Staff will be briefed to understand the police covid risk assessment in custody
- Have access to young people in custody by phone, video or in person. This will support their ability to influence this decision based on safeguarding.
- Training/guidance on use of technology to access those in Police Custody.
- 2 newly appointed YJS PC's are familiarising themselves with the custody process and delivering cautions with support from YJS and Police colleagues.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

- Continue to promote custody as a last resort for children and young people
- Work with commissioners on the provision of a local authority bed.
- Arrest for breach of lockdown or Covid-19 related offences being the last resort.
- Young people will still have access to an appropriate adult.
- Out of court decision making/notification process remains the same and Police continue to refer all children and young people to YJS including those NFA'd.

### **Recommendations and Actions:**

- Police Officers to monitor all arrest and notify custody cases.

- Impact of COVID to be a standing item on YJMB
- Training/briefing session to be delivered on COVID protocols in custody for staff

## **Out of Court Disposals:**

### **The needs of children**

- Ethos of young people on prevention being seen at home or in their local community continues. Suitable buildings to be identified locally, and risk assessments gained.
- Same access to joint decision making around out of court disposal. Keeping these proportionate and challenging any inequalities.
- Referrals are still received and dealt with in a timely manner and the Prevention and Diversion Panel continues remotely to oversee decisions.

### **The needs of staff**

As per all staff section

### **Strategic Partnerships**

- YJS continue to be informed of all young people Police arrest including NFA's to offer opportunity to engage early where appropriate.
- Referrals to the service continue from across the partnership to continue early identification of young people.
- Diversion is still a focus and Mentally Vulnerable Offenders Partnership MVOP continues and is used for those that are suitable.

### **Recommendations and Actions:**

- To continue monitoring of OOC cases through the diversion panel and management board
- Monitor local restrictions and deliver service in accordance with these
- Monitor referral levels through the diversion panel and review staffing responsibilities and levels throughout period of COVID
- Maintain provision to support outdoor activities through our social enterprise (Positive Cycles)

## **At Court:**

### **The needs of children**

- Understanding the virtual courts process and being able to participate in the hearing. Those children and young people with additional needs or disabilities are recognised as unsuitable for virtual courts.
- Understanding social distancing in the Court building, not hindered by covid restriction i.e. mask wearing/distancing, plastic barriers in court cells in understating the court process and safeguarding.
- Feeling safe from Covid in the cells, whilst being transported and throughout the building.
- Covid doesn't limit sentencing options available.

### **The needs of staff**

- Continue to work with Greater Manchester YOTs on court rota and arrangements.
- See each Courts risk assessment and feel safe in this environment.
- Being well prepared for virtual courts, through training sessions, guidance and sharing experiences between practitioners.
- Limiting waiting times for all involved in the court building.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

- Covid not having a detrimental impact on sentencing. All option still viewed as viable particularly ISS as an alternative to custody.
- Children/young people have access to appropriate placements where the family home isn't suitable, or they are CLA. Particularly to enable Bail recommendations to the court.
- Breach action is taken where appropriate to manage risk and protect the public. Recall and custody are supported by the courts when recommended by YJS - in the very few cases where it is our assessment there is no other option.

### **Recommendations and Actions:**

- Monitor the number of court cases and COVID safe measures in court and adjust caseloads and service delivery as appropriate.

- Continual liaison with Greater Manchester colleagues to review and support court arrangements
- Manage lockdown restrictions impacting upon court delivery through use of technology or other control measures to ensure court users, families and court staff continue to receive an appropriate level of service.

## **In the Community:**

### **The needs of children**

- Knowledge around any changes in guidance, legislation or local lockdowns which is given in a suitable format for that child/young person.
- Access to face masks for use on YJS sessions and travelling to and from sessions.
- Access to activities face to face and virtually including mentoring, gym and giving back
- External funding from GMCA, Comic Relief is used to support programmes in communities (Contextual safeguarding, mentoring, girls and young women's project)
- Access to education, training and employment, support returning to education from staff.
- Access to support/and clear pathways for unmet or additional physical, emotional or mental health needs brought on due to covid-19. Including missed immunisations and bereavement.
- Staff recognise and enable access to any support for families. Including financial, bereavement, health, domestic abuse, child to parent violence through our service or referral on to other services.

### **The needs of staff**

- Maintain specific support in place for project work. Monitor and review this provision in line with any changes to COVID response locally.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

- Access to interventions including Restorative Justice remain available.
- Continue to access local community safety information and daily governance including 'hotspots. This includes young people congregating, young people families receiving advice from Police or warnings to support local messages and prevention of arrests.



- Continue to be a valued member of the Complex Safeguarding HUB and respond to any changes in exploitation patterns or intelligence.
- Regular monitoring and analysis of services through YJMB structure

#### **Recommendations and Actions:**

- Actively engage in partnership support for vulnerable groups. This includes a campaign to encourage return to education which will have benefits for the YJ cohort
- Respond to feedback given by YP and families in COVID questionnaire
- Respond through YJMB structures to any challenges in resource or identified service gaps
- Promote key public health messages through all community contacts

#### **Secure Settings:**

##### **The needs of children**

- To keep in contact (telephone, video, letter and face to face) with family and support networks including social workers. Support families navigate these new systems and understand their child's lived experience of custody throughout the pandemic.
- To see and speak with their YJS Workers and Resettlement Worker regularly and PSR's are completed face to face where possible.
- Understand restrictions and why they are in place within the establishment and be prepared for those on release.
- Continued or enhanced access to education, healthcare, programmes, psychology and mental health support - YJS staff proactively advocating for this.
- Recognise that BAME young people are over-represented in Oldham's children in custody and the disproportional impact of COVID -19 on BAME people. This could cause additional anxiety/worry for these young people and their families.

##### **The needs of staff**

- Understand the custody risk assessment when visiting.
- Have access to young people in custody by phone, video or in person for the most vulnerable young people.
- Training/guidance on use of technology for those in custody where this is available.
- Understand the children and young peoples lived experience of custody throughout the pandemic.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

- Remain actively engaged in the resettlement agenda at GM level. Oldham has the lead in this area.
- Maintain oversight of the GM and Oldham cohort through social work post reporting at Wetherby YOI

### **Recommendations and Actions:**

- Please see transition and resettlement

## **On Transition and Resettlement**

### **The needs of children**

- Recognise and support reduction in loneliness and the emotional and mental health impact on this already disadvantaged group in and on release from custody.
- Placements being available on release are monitored throughout period.
- Resettlement is effective and not hindered by lack of access young people in custody by family, support networks and professionals.
- Education and training are available and ROTL returns to enable effective resettlement.
- Recognise and support any anxiety about and adjusting to the outside world and how this has changed on released.
- Transitions taking place and handovers not hindered by restrictions or changes to other services delivery. Including moving to a new house, school or health provision.

### **The needs of staff**

- Attend training offered on returning to school focussed on the emotional impact to be effective support for children and young people during this transition.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

- Children leaving custody get the best chance to succeed.
- YJS young people return to education successfully and transition between educational provisions/schools.
- Transitions are effective, successful and remain focused on young people's needs.

### **Recommendations and Actions:**

- Increase support available to young people on release with a particular focus on transition into 'COVID' community and mental health
- Continue to provide key support in areas (education, family engagement, health and accommodation) whilst adapting to COVID context. This will include proactive use of technologies to support young people

## **2. Service Priorities For 2020/21**

- a) Adapting to COVID 19 context, ensuring adapted and effective delivery alongside safe and well staff. This will include additional focus on domestic violence, parental support and mental health
- b) Development of locality-based working, supporting the wider strategy of Oldham Council
- c) Further reduction in first time entrants
- d) Reduction in re-offending
- f) Continued development of contextual safeguarding approach, in line with public health led youth violence strategy
- g) Improving the health offer for young people
- h) Developing effective approaches to support improvements in disproportionality
- i) Resettlement and Positive Progression
- j) Volunteers
- k) Continued focus on children looked after cohort – ensuring Restorative Justice is embedded within a partnership approach

### 3. Partner contributions to the youth offending partnership pooled budget 2020/21

\*Welsh YOTs only

\*\*For multi-authority YOTs, the totality of local authority contributions should be described as one figure.

\*\*\*Any money from the police and crime commissioner that has been routed through a local crime reduction partnership should be included here.

\*\*\*\*It should be noted that the 'Other' category is for additional funding that the YOT can use for any general youth justice activities which are funded through other routes with governance sitting with the YOS Partnership Board

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other Delegated Funds	Total
Youth Justice Board		471,887		471, 887
Local Authority		637,415		637,415
Police				0
Police and Crime Commissioner		45,000		45, 000
Probation		5,000		5000
Health				0
*Welsh Government				0
Other		58,592		58592
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,217,894</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1217,894</b>

#### **4. Resourcing and Value for Money**

The complexities of YJS funding streams, which identify resources for specific groups of clients, have both enabled us to target resources towards clients with the greatest need, but also allowed us some flexibility with individual specialisms to enable a wider group of young people to benefit from enhanced provision. This has been particularly useful through the COVID 19 epidemic as we have been able to adapt and provide technology to young people to support their needs. This has included the provision of tablets, sourced from the wider Positive Steps provision.

Oldham YJS, being part of an integrated services delivery model, benefits from increased value for money from many of the co-located service areas. We also benefit from our charitable status and this year have again benefitted from additional funding relating to youth violence, mentoring and support for young women which without this status would not have been available to us.

Oldham's Junior Attendance Centre grant supports a social enterprise project 'Positive Cycles'. The programme works to recycle bikes for those that are unemployed as well as completing repairs and hiring bikes to the local community. The centre is also a local community hub and hosts many health and wellbeing activities across the generations, making it an ideal place for young people to learn skills and broaden horizons.

All organisations face the continuing challenge of maximising resources and demonstrating value for money to funders and commissioners – Positive Steps is no different. Value for money is a significant benefit of the integrated service delivery model with a wide range of co-located services enabling practitioners to provide a high quality multi-faceted service to clients. We benefit from having an internal Business Support Team providing a cost effective, timely and high-quality support service across the organisation.

The successful Positive Steps Volunteer Strategy demonstrates value for money and offers opportunities for increased integration and mutual benefits across services. We have had several clients who have gained employment who have said the volunteering experience has helped them to achieve this.

Despite the pandemic we remain committed to our aims and recent outcomes demonstrate a clear impact on the groups we work with. We are also committed to supporting the wider partnership and its focus on 'place based' services. We have been at the vanguard of these developments, delivering contextual safeguarding programmes in schools and communities within a place-based methodology.

## 5. Spending Plan 2020/21

Activity	Outcome Supported	Developing Good Practice	Costs
<b>Strategic Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in FTE</li> <li>• Reduction in Re-Offending</li> <li>• Reduction in Custody</li> <li>• Effective Public Protection</li> <li>• Effective Safeguarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Manchester Combined Authority/Justice devolution</li> <li>• Greater Manchester Youth Justice Service Managers</li> <li>• Manchester Metropolitan University Strategic Partnership</li> <li>• Unpaid Work</li> <li>• Development of Youth Violence Strategy</li> <li>• Quality Assurance outcomes from:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Serious Case Reviews</li> <li>○ COVID 19 Audit</li> <li>○ Implementation on thematic reviews (HMIP)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Local Safeguarding Board and sub-groups</li> <li>• Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership</li> <li>• GM Resettlement Lead</li> <li>• GM Youth Violence lead</li> <li>• Volunteer Coordination Strategy</li> <li>• Attendance at other relevant conferences</li> <li>• Improved Health Offer</li> </ul>	£75,605
<b>Management time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision and support</li> <li>• Annual Appraisal</li> <li>• Representation at relevant GM forums: resettlement,</li> </ul>	£68,709

Activity	Outcome Supported	Developing Good Practice	Costs
		<p>court, operational managers, AIM, Asset plus development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel development, training and support</li> <li>• Oversight of GMYJUP</li> <li>• Volunteer coordination and supervision</li> <li>• Development and delivery of internal training programme</li> <li>• Service response to GM developments</li> <li>• Recruitment and training staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Induction development and delivery</li> <li>• Management support to students</li> <li>• Supporting development of contextual safeguarding approach</li> </ul>	
<b>Practitioner time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and peer review implementation</li> <li>• Restorative justice development and delivery</li> <li>• Trauma checklist delivery</li> <li>• Contextualised safeguarding delivery</li> <li>• Improved health delivery</li> <li>• Continued development of wrap-around court services</li> <li>• Development of problem-solving courts</li> <li>• Implementing court changes</li> <li>• Continuous development of resettlement support</li> </ul>	£310,569
<b>Information Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring system performance and providing reports</li> <li>• Working with YJS Managers to understand the MI to improve practice</li> </ul>	£14,153



Activity	Outcome Supported	Developing Good Practice	Costs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of statutory returns</li> <li>• Guidance on data protection issues</li> <li>• FOI requests</li> </ul>	
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff 3 days training per year</li> <li>• Restorative Justice Training</li> <li>• Management training</li> <li>• Training around contextual safeguarding</li> <li>• Trauma training</li> <li>• Continued attendance at relevant LSCB training</li> <li>• On-going Safeguarding training</li> <li>• Resettlement training</li> </ul>	£2,500
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Support</li> <li>• Subscriptions and publications</li> </ul>	£351
<b>Total</b>			<b>£471, 887</b>

## 6. Authorisation

**Sign Off:**

**Gerard Jones**

**YJMB Chair**

**Paul Axon**

**Head Of YJS**