

Report to COUNCIL

Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2024 - 2025

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Shaid Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Officer Contact: Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People (DCS)

Report Author: Louise Paterson/Clare Griffiths – Oldham YJS Head of Service

Ext. 0161 6219500

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Reason for Decision

The Oldham Youth Justice Plan requires approval by the Council. This plan has previously been considered by the Youth Justice Management Board, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board and the Cabinet.

Executive Summary

The Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan sets out the strategic direction for youth justice in Oldham, taking a partnership approach to reducing re-offending, reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system and reducing the use of custody.

There is acknowledgment that the plan is significant in length. However, this is dictated by the template provided by the national Youth Justice Board. The Youth Justice Service Plan and action plan can be found at the Appendices.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan detailed in the appendix (and associated action plan) be approved.

Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2024 – 2025

1 Background

- 1.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.

The plan should equally address the functions assigned to a youth justice service, including how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.

- 1.2 The Youth Justice Service in Oldham is commissioned to Positive Steps. The Youth Justice Service is Child First – remembering that children and first and foremost children. The service is also trauma-informed taking into account the impact that trauma has had on the children that we work with.
- 1.3 In Oldham the Youth Justice Service is proud to have a low rate of re-offending, first time entrants and children in custody.
- 1.4 At the last inspection of Youth Justice Services the outcome was that services were deemed to be 'good'. So this plan continues our journey towards being an 'outstanding' service.
- 1.5 Progress against the actions in last year's plan has been good with most actions being achieved and just two actions carried forwards into this year's plan.

2. Priorities

- 2.1 Serious Youth Violence continues to be a focus of our work and holding a prevention conference in Oldham involving practitioners working with children from across the borough in as many services as possible is a key part of this work. The conference will provide participants with a 'toolkit' to help them have conversations and undertake very early intervention work with children to prevent them becoming involved in crime and violence. The conference will also explore the impact of this work being completed by the professional who first recognises the needs of the child in this area.
- 2.2 The aim of the conference will be to increase understanding across the borough of how children become involved in crime and violence and to give practitioners the tools they need to reduce the risk of children becoming involved.

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- 2.3 We will continue our work to ensure that our re-offending rates, first time entrants and children in custody numbers remain low and our involvement in the Greater Manchester Remand Pilot will continue to inform our practice and improve outcomes for our children.
 - 2.4 We will be enhancing our work with the victims of crime ensuring that we are offering the support at the right time and in the right way by reducing barriers and providing signposting. Our restorative justice work will also continue, and we will further increase the number of places that children can 'give back' to the community.
 - 2.5 We are also going to be focusing on further enhancing our co-production of the service with children, parents and carers.
 - 2.6 Our work to reduce disproportionality within the youth justice system will continue and we have undertaken cultural awareness training which has further enhanced the service's understanding of racial trauma and intersectionality. During the next year this work will continue to become embedded within the service.
 - 2.7 Oldham Youth Justice Service is a key partner with Kingsland Alternative Education Provision and two staff members will be seconded to Kingsland to work three days a week as part of the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce project. The Speech and Language Therapist who is seconded to the Youth Justice Team will also be part of the taskforce and will be working one day a week at Kingsland (this is in addition to the 3 days a week they are seconded to the Youth Justice Service.) The aim of this project is to reduce the numbers of children being exploited and becoming involved in crime who are in alternative education in Oldham.
 - 2.8 We will continue to enhance working with partners and a good example of this is the plan for the lead practitioner for complex safeguarding in the Youth Justice Service being embedded within the complex safeguarding team within children's services on a regular basis to develop the relationship and improve information sharing. We have a close relationship with the Police and have a Police Officer seconded to the team. During the next year we will also have a CAMHS practitioner seconded to the team and the interviews for the post will be taking place shortly.
 - 2.9 The plan for 2024-2025 links to the vision of Oldham Council and to the strategic plan of Children's Services ensuring that there is continuity and a shared vision for children in the borough.
 - 2.10 Oldham Youth Justice Service is in a strong position to continue to improve the outcomes for the children that it works with by continuing to focus on prevention whilst still meeting the needs of the children who do become part of the criminal justice system.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 As this is a statutory duty for the local authority, it is not possible to provide an alternative option to this plan.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 The preferred option would be for this to be approved by Council.

5 **Consultation**

5.1 Staff from Oldham Youth Justice Service have been consulted in the formulation of this plan, as well as members of the Youth Justice Management Board.

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 Each Youth Justice Service must have an annual plan in place, in this format, as part of the requirements of the youth justice core grant.

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 There is a requirement for the plan to be approved by Council.

8 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

8.1 No.

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 No.

10 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 N/A.

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 None.

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan – 2024-25

13.2 Oldham Youth Justice Service Action Plan – 2024-25