

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder 18 October 2011

ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT ON BROMLEY YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM PARTNERSHIP

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This is an annual report to the joint Children and Young People PDS Committee and the Public Protection and Safety PDS Committee on the progress of the Bromley Youth Offending Team (YOT) partnership during 2010/11. This brief report will be followed by a fuller report to CYP PDS and PPS PDS after the planned inspection of Bromley YOT by Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) in November 2011.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

2.1 **Governance**

In October 2010 it was announced that the leadership of youth justice and the specific functions undertaken by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) were being transferred solely to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The transition period is under way and it is estimated that this could be completed next year. The Youth Justice Board is currently continuing to fully support YOT partnerships during the transition period although their performance monitoring role and youth justice development support is likely to reduce in the longer term.

Locally the YOT is situated in the Children and Young People Department with direct line management of the YOT Group Manager through the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care. The YOT's two tier governance arrangements continue to be strategically and operationally managed through the Executive and Operational Board respectively. The Head of Community Safety was appointed chair of the Operational Board in April 2010 ensuring strong strategic links with the two boards and Community Safety operations. Attendance from the statutory partners and key agencies has been maintained.

2.2 Performance

The YOT produces performance reports for both the Executive and Operational Management Boards, the latter containing a detailed breakdown of offending activity and patterns. The Youth Justice Board continues to monitor performance and requires quarterly data reports against key performance indicators.

NI 111: First time entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTEs)

The YOT partnership has a target to reduce first time entrants by 2% each year. This target has been achieved for a third consecutive year. In 2008/09 there were 315 FTEs, in 2009/10 there were 203 and in 2010/11 there were 138. This downward trend looks set to continue as in the first quarter of 2011/12 there were only 20 first time entrants. The YOT police officer stringently manages Merlin notifications via the PENY system and the partnership is confident that its performance data is an accurate analysis of first time entrants activity in the borough, with the exception of notifications from out of borough first time entrants, an issue that all YOTs experience.

The introduction of Triage in October 2010 (a scheme which diverts young people who have not previously offended out of the criminal justice system), has had a significant impact on first time entrants. There were 121 cases referred to YOT between December 2010 and 30 August 2011. In these 121 cases only 5 young people reoffended. A success rate of 96%.

NI 19: Rate of proven re-offending by young people who offend

Good progress has also been made in this area. In 2009/10 the improvement rate was 1% (i.e. target was 108 actual 107) in 2010/11 the improvement rate was 21% (i.e. target was 105 actual 85).

NI 43: Young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody

	Total No of disposals	Sentenced to custody	%
Qtr 1 2011/12	59	3	5%
2010/2011	263	15	6%
2009/2010	347	22	6%

The Bromley YOT target for young people being sentenced to custody is 5%. During 2010/2011 there were 15 custody sentences; this represents a reduction of 7 compared with the same period previous year. As you can see, the total number of court disposals has also gone down. All custodial sentences are reviewed by the YOT to see if an alternative sentencing could have been offered and the YOT continues to discuss with the courts any sentencing we have concerns about. However, it is considered that the seriousness of the offences of the young people concerned make community sentencing as an alternative unlikely.

NI 45 : Engagement by young people who offend in suitable education, training and employment

In 2009/10 there were 78% of young people in education, training or employment. This is higher than the Youth Justice National Indicator family (comparator) performance. Performance in this area fell in 2010/11 to 73%. The target is 90%.

The young people who are entrenched NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) is primarily in the 16+ cohort. The decline in performance comes at a time when the dedicated YOT Connexions Worker was deleted as a result of Government cuts to grant funding. A number of actions are being put in place to reverse the small, but concerning downward trend.

2.3 Workforce and Organisational Development

The workforce has continued to remain relatively stable throughout 2010/11 although there has recently been more use of locum staff to cover some vacancies pending savings required as part of the council wide requirement to make 28% savings as well as changes and reductions to Youth Justice Board Grant funding of 10% in April 2011. These savings have necessitated the deletion of the dedicated YOT Head of Service post in April 2011, the ending of the Youth Inclusion and Support Programme short term contract posts (YISP), and the deletion of the dedicated YOS Connexions post, also in April 2011. The YOT's secondment arrangements with statutory partners have continued to be appropriately supported.

The service continues to access relevant Youth Justice Board training to ensure that YOT Officers are equipped to undertake their tasks. The service has continued to use its internal audit process to assist YOT Officers development and provide relevant material on safeguarding and risk management.

The service team is currently being reviewed and realigned to meet the likely requirements of the Government Green paper, 'Breaking the Cycle'. It is also being brought together under one umbrella with the recently streamlined Integrated Youth Service as part of the Children and Young People Services restructure commencing 1 October 2011. In future, YOT will be managed alongside Integrated Youth Services to form an Integrated Specialist Youth Service.

The Green Paper 'Breaking the Cycle' has completed its consultation process and will be implemented in phases commencing November 2012. The Green Paper places an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, keeping young people out of custody as well as payment by results. There has been some discussion regarding the implementation of "Breaking the Cycle" with members of the Operational Board. The Youth Offending Team will liaise with all relevant partners to ensure that they are up-to-speed and are aware of any implications to their service delivery nearer the time of implementation.

The Triage service was developed in October 2010 with the support of Community Safety funding. It has had a very significant and positive impact on reducing first time entrants to the criminal justice system and will be further developed in 2011 to include those young people who may have previously received a final warning or reprimand. This service has been wholly funded from the YOT budget in 2011/12 and will become part of the establishment in the future realigned service. A number of youth offending teams and police have approached Bromley to look at our Triage model prior to implementing theirs. Bromley Youth Offending Team has acknowledged the critical role of Bromley Police in the successful development and joint working of Triage.

The Youth Offending Team has continued to maintain its relationship with the Courts, the service has participated in awareness/training for the youth bench, attendance at youth court users groups, and court users groups. The youth bench continues to complete quality assurance feedback on pre-sentencing reports, which enables the Youth Offending Team to respond more rapidly to the needs of the court when reviewing service delivery.

Locally changes to Youth Court arrangements will mean that from 2 January 2012 Lewisham and Bromley will be sharing the Bromley Youth Court. At weekends, the Bromley Youth Court will become the main court for the South East London Boroughs of Bromley, Lewisham, Bexley and Greenwich. Negotiations are currently taking place to agree a cross-borough protocol on how best to service the weekend Court, and manage the week day Court. The four boroughs will move to one working together protocol with the Court and liaise to ensure systems and capacity reflect the needs and activity of all partners.

The Youth Offending Team is expecting to participate in the Integrated Offender Manager (IOM) process when it commences in Bromley.

2.4 **Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP)**

The YJB implemented a revised performance improvement framework in 2010 which required the YOT partnership to complete a capacity and capability self-assessment. The assessment was validated by the Youth Justice Board London Regional Team during their visit in April 2010. The YJB concluded that the self assessment demonstrated the partnership is performing adequately against the youth justice national indicators and has a good capacity to sustain and improve its performance.

Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) will be undertaking a series of planned inspections across London in 2011 and will be visiting Bromley YOT for one week commencing 21 November 2011. The focus of the inspection is a core case work inspection, which will also look at the quality of offence focus interventions and victim work. A YOT Inspection Action Plan has been developed and is being progressed.

Unlike previous HMIP inspections of Youth Offending Team, this inspection will concentrate on case management and is a core case inspection. The main focus will be on case management and will address risk of harm to others, likelihood of reoffending, safeguarding, protecting the public by minimising risk of harm to others, achievement of outcomes and sustaining outcomes. It is the Children and Young People Services understanding that no senior officers or members of the Youth Offending Team partnership will be interviewed as part of the process. The service will have an opportunity to share with HMIP (as a part of the advance disclosure) the joint work that is being undertaken with partners. The Youth Offending Team Operational Manager for Court and Community will be trained by Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) as a local assessor and will be involved in the inspection of one London YOT. The learning from this training should assist in the ongoing service development post inspection.

The Youth Offending Team has identified funding from the Youth Justice Board specifically for Restorative Justice Training, in advance of the green paper which will place a greater emphasis on Restorative Justice and victim engagement. As a consequence all case workers and some specialist Officers will receive training in this area.

Bromley is one of the pilot borough's for the Youth to Adult transition (Y2A). This is a project that is supported by London Probation Trust, Youth Justice Board and the Ministry of Justice. The aim of the project is to improve the way transfer information is shared with the Probation Department when young people transfer from the Youth Offending Team to Probation. On completion of the pilot the process will be embedded across London.

3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All matters in this report contribute to the priorities identified in Building a Better Bromley 2008–2011, Bromley's Children's Partnership Plan 2011, Community Safety Strategy 2008-11, and the Youth Justice Board Performance Improvement Framework.