

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE
MONITORING SUB- COMMITTEE
18TH JULY 2018**

London Borough Bromley Youth Offending Service - Update

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with feedback and an update of progress made by Bromley Youth Offending Service in securing improvement and responding to the inspection findings.

1. Background

The Charlie Taylor review of the Youth Justice Service in 2016 made recommendations to overhaul the Service. The recommendations were accepted by the government and last year Charlie Taylor was appointed by the Home Secretary to the role of Chair of the Youth Justice Board, following Lord McNally's departure. A new chief Executive was also appointed, Colin Allars to the Board and in the last few weeks new Board Members have been announced with plans to restructure at the YJB and to reduce the overall establishment at the Board.

The new Board has agreed and announced 6 priority themes for their work over the coming year:

- Revision of national standards for the supervision of young people
- Supporting best practice
- Improving resettlement and transitions between services
- Disproportionality
- Safety in custody
- Establishment of secure schools.

In September 2017 responsibility for Bromley YOS transferred from Education into Children's Social care, creating direct line management to Janet Bailey.

2. Local Overview of Performance

In line with the national trends, the numbers of young people coming into the youth justice system has fallen. In respect of the most up to date published data, there were 252 first time entrants into the youth justice system compared with 336 for July 2014-15, representing a 25.5% reduction. Part of the reason for this achievement is the success of being able to move young people away

from the justice sector through Triage programmes and the support that is provided to this cohort of young people. The first entrant's figures (table 1) are both below London (403) and England (313 averages

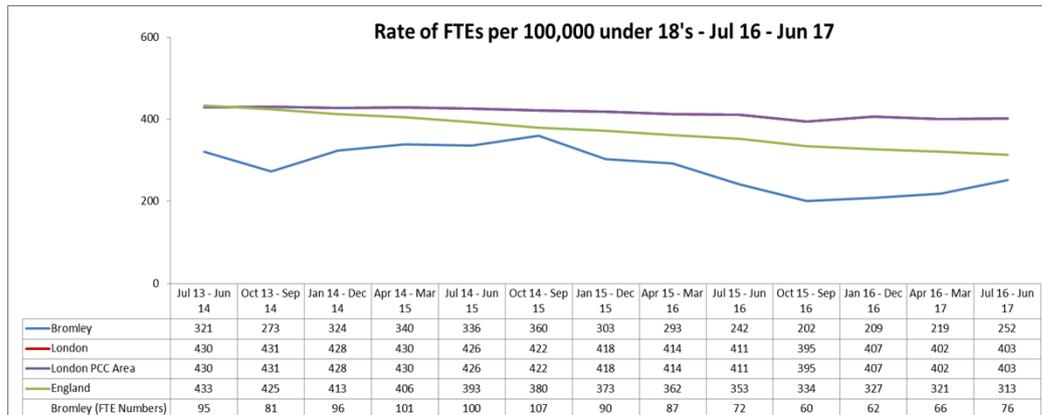


Table 1: First time entrants

The introduction of Triage scheme has enabled some young people who commit low level offences to be diverted from entering the criminal justice system. This involves a joint assessment between police and the YOS, young people are offered an offence focused intervention plus additional support. Those young people who engage and successfully complete will avoid getting a criminal record. Triage enables information to be shared, improved victim confidence and satisfaction and ultimately a further reduction in offending.

Data in relation to reoffending is taken from the Police National Computer and is available three quarters in arrears to allow for arrests to be processed through the courts and Ministry of Justice to analyse and publish the information. The latest reoffending data for Bromley (table 2) shows that the actual levels of re-offenders has fallen from highs of 261 young people being tracked to 190 and that this is slightly higher than the same period 12 months ago. However, whilst the picture shows an increase it is worth acknowledging that the actual number of offences committed has fallen by 20.7% on the same period last year, ranking Bromley (10.7%) lower than the London average and 2.5% higher than the National average. Bromley is further ranked the 3rd lowest frequency of reoffending rate in comparison to our statistical neighbours.

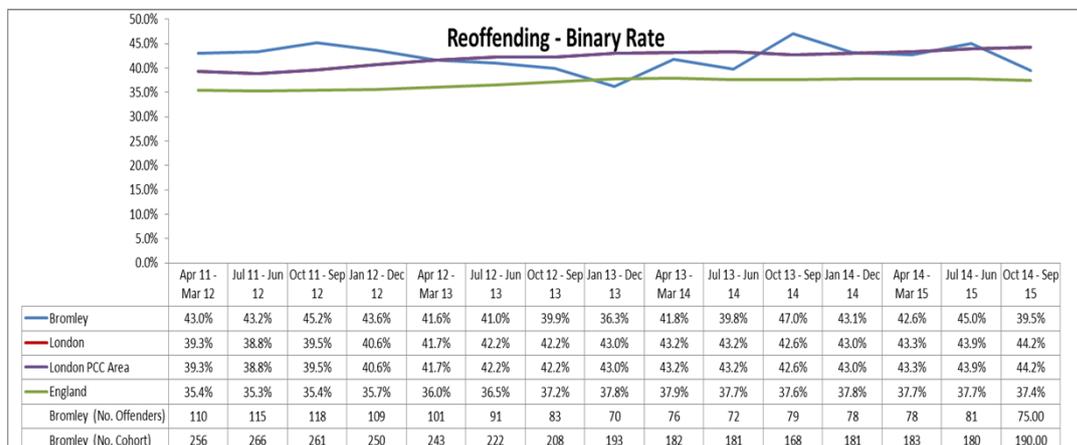


Table 2: Re-offending rates

Reoffending rates continues to be a challenge across the country. Re-offending is inevitably linked to the risk of custodial sentencing and there has been a significant reduction in custodial sentences in the last 2 years. The latest nationally published data on the numbers of children and young people in custody (under 18s) is 878 an increase of 2 young people on the previous period (Dec. 17 to Jan 2018) and of this there are 7 young people from Bromley. Custody numbers in the borough (table 3) are low and below the London average by 18% and 8% higher than the national average. Reducing the demand for custody is a key priority for the YOS however, all the young people currently in custody have all committed very serious offences and this leaves the Courts with very little option than to impose a custodial sentence. However, all these young people are supported by the YOS throughout their custodial phase and into the community.

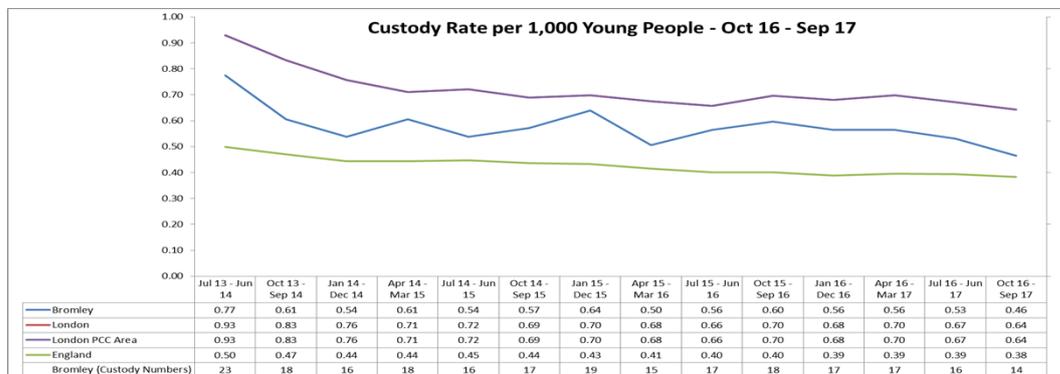


Table 3: Use of custody

In February 2018, the numbers of young people who were children looked after by the authority was 20 (23%); 8 on full care orders, 10 accommodated under section 20 and 2 of these young people CLA due to being remanded into custody. The YOS continues to work with colleagues in Children’s Services to improve processes, joint working and ultimately to achieve better outcomes for this group of children and young people and in prioritising their needs.

Bromley YOS performance against the key national indicators shows positive trajectory to meeting these targets, although sustainability is key to further improving and driving up performance in all of these key areas.

3. Improvement

Since the last update the YOS has formally established its own improvement Board chaired by the Director for Children’s Social care and this meets fortnightly. There are 7 key priorities that the YOS partnership is working towards, these were agreed by bringing together previous inspection findings and improvement plans to have one coherent overarching plan.

- Protecting the child or young person
- Reducing Reoffending
- Protecting the Public
- Governance and Partnerships

- Interventions to reduce offending
- Ensuring that the sentence is served
- Improving Practice

In the last year there has been progress in improving the YOS performance. The latest published data shows good outturns in relation to first time entrants and reductions in reoffending rates, however custody numbers have reduced and remains as an amber rating. The positive outturn demonstrates a commitment to improving performance, improved casework and partnership work that occurs daily to effect change with our young people.

Service

The service has recently had a turnover of staff and a reliance on agency workers. Recruitment of suitably qualified staff has been a key priority due to a number of vacancies within the service. We have successfully appointed a newly qualified social worker, 2 experienced social workers, a new Group Manager and a student social worker on final placement. The recruitment of social workers will increase capacity within the service to work more intensely with cases of an increasingly complex nature and ensure that concerns in relation to safeguarding are approached and managed in a consistent manner across the service.

The proposed restructure of the service and plans afoot in children's service for a clear practice framework supported by a comprehensive training and induction programme will shift the ethos to a more child centred approach and staff being upskilled and trained in evidence based approaches for working with children and families.

5. Work on priorities

Protecting the child or young person

Safeguarding adolescents continues to be an important part of the work we do with young people. Particularly ensuring that staff have a comprehensive understanding of the risks that young people face and an appropriate response and management of the risk in place. Over the last year there has been a commitment to staff training and development with all staff trained to identify child sexual exploitation and safeguarding training. There has also been training delivered in understanding the changes to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) changes and the process for those in the justice system. There have been changes to the allocation of cases to staff based on skills and experience with the most complex cases being under the remit of qualified social work staff.

A strong focus on practice skills development is provided through bespoke training for staff giving them the necessary skills to intervene differently. This is an ongoing programme as new interventions and research of different models comes to the fore

The YOS previously chaired risk meetings and managing risk of harm posed by young people. Panels are now more streamlined and a more effective approach to managing risk is now in place. There are multi-agency partnership meetings (MAP) for CSE and young people who go missing and these meetings alongside statutory Strategy meetings are now the forum for sharing and managing risk across the partnership.

Reducing reoffending

A great deal of work has been undertaken to develop greater integration between YOS and Targeted Youth Support Services (TYS). This is seen as important in YYS being able to work with these young people to prevent offending and provide ongoing support. We have shared management meetings, joint service planning and increased day to day contact about young people and local emerging issues. There is still work to be done but this is developing in a positive way.

A process is in place to ensure that exit plans are in place for all young people whose order with the YOS is expiring and are in need of additional support. Exit plans can include transitions to adult services and are usually delivered by Bromley Youth Support service that provides targeted support to vulnerable young people. However, this is an area of work that needs to be continually challenged and more referrals for support being made.

The YOS is now using the Youth Justice Board live tracking tool to begin to analyse and profile young people in Bromley involved in offending. Over time it is envisaged that as this becomes more established this information will enable us to target our resources more effectively.

YOS contact all victims of offences committed by young people and invite them to participate in Restorative Justice (RJ). There has been increasing demand for RJ services outside of the normal YOS court order remit such as requests from schools for support. During period October to December 2017 there were 60 victims identified and 50 (83%) were offered an intervention and 27 declined. There is a high level of victim contact and low level of engagement in the RJ process.

Where RJ is being considered by the victim a meeting between the YOS RJ Lead with both the victim of the offence and the young person to assess the appropriateness of a range of RJ disposals. Some victims of crime decline involvement in the RJ process however, support is provided if requested to update them with court outcomes or provide advice such as to how to claim property once a trial is completed to providing Crime Report numbers so that they can pursue insurance claims. In terms of young people they are encourage to engage in the RJ process if direct RJ is requested.

The need for public confidence in the work of all criminal justice agencies is supported by the YOS. Young people are often required by the courts to complete a number of hours of unpaid work in the borough and we have

increased the number of projects available in the last year linking with third sector organisations supporting many beneficiaries.

Protecting the public

The YOS take reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded, protected from harm whether they are perpetrators and or victims. Young people involved in offending are more likely to be victims of neglect abuse and are vulnerable to a range of factors that can lead to offending and their engagement in risky behaviours such as drug taking, serious youth violence and exploitation. Young people in the secure estate either sentenced to custody, awaiting trial or sentence can further led to increased vulnerability and additional safeguarding concerns exacerbated in such institutions. Therefore it is important for the YOS to ensure that young people are kept safe and secure either in custody or in the community.

The YOS continues to provide individualised packages of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance provision to the court to reduce the use of custody including remands. There is management oversight of cases to ensure that young people are not inappropriately placed on remand to youth detention accommodation given the likely impact upon emotional health and wellbeing. Keeping remands to youth detention accommodation to a minimum is important as we are aware that the associated financial costs are the responsibility of the authorities with the young person being designated a Children Looked After by virtue of their remand. The YOS works closely with Children’s Social Care around this agenda and in finding suitable placements both in borough or beyond to enable young people to remain in the community with support. There has been 13 young people remanded to custody this year, all for very serious and grave offences, all young males, 3 out of 13 were sentenced to a custodial sentence; 5 the charge against them were dismissed; 3 remain ongoing remands and 1 sentenced in the community and one remanded to local authority accommodation.

Bromley Custodial Remand Costs

Date of Report - 31/03/18	April 2015 - March 2016	April 2016 - March 2017	April 2017 - March 2018	Annual Difference
Remand Type	Remand Bed Night Costs	Remand Bed Night Costs	Remand Bed Night Costs	Difference in Bed Night Costs
STC (Bed night costs £497)	£84,490.00	£153,076.00	£103,873.00	£-49,203.00
YOI (Bed night cost £177)	£72,747.00	£64,251.00	£67,437.00	£3,186.00
SCH (Bed night Cost £559)	£0.00	£1,677.00	£0.00	£-1,677.00
Total spend to date	£157,237.00	£219,004.00	£171,310.00	£-47,694.00

Table 4: Remand Costs

Remand bed nights

Date of Report - 31/03/18	April 2015 - March 2016	April 2016 - March 2017	April 2017 - March 2018	Annual Difference
Remand Type	Bed Nights	Bed Nights	Bed Nights	% Difference
STC (Bed night costs £497)	170	308	209	-32%
YOI (Bed night cost £177)	411	363	381	-5%
SCH (Bed night Cost £559)	0	3	0	100%
Total Remand Bed Nights	581	674	590	-18%

Table 5

Furthermore whilst the numbers of young people are low it is worth noting that overall remand periods varies significantly dependent on a number of factors such as the seriousness of the offence and whether the case is being dealt with by the Crown Court or delays related to the Crown Prosecution Service. In the last financial year we had 3 young people charged with a serious offence and all remanded in custody, however they have all been released from custody and the matter discontinued. As demonstrated in tables 4 and 5 above there are reductions in custody but the associated costs are high with over £170k spend on 13 young people over the last financial year.

There is a need for a cultural and practice change in the YOS to include making a number of improvements in the following areas simultaneously if a discernible change is registered through increased remands:

- Improve the level of court confidence in YOS services. This can be achieved by servicing the court better, highly trained court staff and developing a better range of services for young people
- Monitor the level of remands so that we can begin to have a better narrative around our performance
- Managing the coordination and interface with Children Looked After (CLA) given the potential increase in demand on CLA and Leaving Care services as a result of the remand.

Closer working on CSE, Gangs and Missing agenda's between colleagues in Children's Social Care has enabled YOS staff to be able to identify and refer young people as appropriate and to ensure the right process and procedures are followed. However, there is further work to do on sharing intelligence and mapping gang activity.

Governance and Leadership

Governance and leadership of the YOS is provided by the YOS Partnership Management Board chaired by the Chief Executive. The Board meets quarterly and is made up of senior officer from partner agencies. The Board

has strategic oversight of the service and scrutinises performance data and ensuring that work contributes to reducing and preventing offending.

6. Practice improvement

We are currently working on our other priority areas including the use of wider interventions to help young people to reduce the risk and better understand the impact of their behaviour such as the use of restorative approaches in our work with young people and victims and in getting young people to repair the damage caused by their offending by engaging in reparation activities in the community.

Many of the young people involved who come to the YOS already have experienced a range of issues which might include witnessing domestic violence, abuse or neglect which can heighten their risk and some of the choices that they make in their adolescence. Hence, we continually strive to ensure that we are up to date with new initiatives to challenge their behaviour and ultimately reduce their offending.

Bromley YOS with the support of Bromley CCG were successful in a bid to NHS England to develop a forensic pilot project. A Consultant Psychologist from CAMHS has been seconded into the YOS for a year to develop this service. The remit of the work is to facilitate accessibility to specialist CAMHS by children and young people in the justice system. The service offer includes:

- a) Interventions with those with the most complex needs and highest risk offending behaviour and offered one to one support on an ongoing basis.
- b) Family interventions as part of the offer to young people
- c) Consultation, guidance and support to YOS practitioners managing cases with complex needs and high risk
- d) Delivery of mental health training to YOS staff
- e) Delivery of training and guidance to CAMHS practitioners on forensic mental health and engagement with hard to reach communities.

The Consultant Clinical Psychologist only having commenced with the YOS in December 2017, the role appears to have been initially effective in raising the profile and awareness of the mental health needs of this group, providing training and consultation to the YOS workers and meeting with the health workers at the YOS to start the process of initiating a more coordinated health response.

The role also provides a more senior health presence, consultation and advice to YOS managers helping to address concerns raised within the Full Joint Inspection of 2017 in relation to:

“...a deficit in the operational management within the YOS of health services...”

7. New developments

Liaison and Diversion

Bromley YOS has received funding from NHS England to establish a Liaison and diversion services to improve the health and justice outcomes for children and young people who come into contact with the youth justice system where a range of complex needs are identified as factors in their offending behaviour.

The youth justice systems have not always catered well for people with mental health problems or learning disabilities. Nonetheless, many young people only access relevant mental health and/or social care services when they enter the youth justice systems. Practical solutions are required to ease the transition across the interface between the youth justice systems and other health and social care sectors. Liaison and diversion schemes are a vital part of this process.

This is a process whereby children and young people with mental health problems, this includes: a learning disability, substance misuse problems and other vulnerabilities are identified and assessed as early as possible as they pass through the youth justice systems. Following screening and assessment, individuals are given access to appropriate services including, mental and physical health care, sometimes social care and/or substance misuse treatment. Information from liaison and diversion assessments is shared appropriately with relevant agencies so that informed decisions can be made on issues of diversion, charging, case management and sentencing. In some cases young people will still be charged but with additional information known about them, professionals and the court can be advised so the appropriate support is provided.

Diversion should be interpreted in its wider sense, referring to both diversions out of, and within, the youth justice systems. This service is currently being developed in Bromley and there will be a dedicated worker appointed to deliver this service.

8. Resources

The National Probation Service has played an integral part as statutory partner through the secondment of staff to the YOS and the transfer of cases once young people turn 18. They have again nationally reviewed their contribution to the partnership and the current resource allocation for Bromley will change from a full time secondee to a 0.5FTE at the beginning of this year. This will be a loss to the service provision for Bromley.

The financial position of the YOS for 2018/19 was confirmed from central government on 3 May 2018; this is unacceptably late given that any reductions in the grant could have impacted on the wider staff budget. I am pleased to announce that the budget has remained the same as the last 2 years, disappointedly there is no inflation uplift therefore a reduction in real terms. In recognising that change to the current delivery model will be made by the YJB

the Board is planning to reduce the grant to use this money to focus on their priorities in future years with a consultation proposed. There will inevitably be reductions in service provision; however, we will continue to work to meet our statutory obligations to deliver a service.

9. Summary

The approaches and progress outlined in this report is part of the ongoing work that the YOS is doing to challenge and support the needs of the young people we work with to achieve positive outcomes. The YOS recognises that in tackling the many issues that these young people face requires early and effective preventative action from key partners and continues to seek and work with statutory and non-statutory partners as well as other criminal justice agencies. The YOS Partnership Governance Board continues to have the oversight and scrutiny of the YOS Partnership.

Overall, the level of improvement to the service is positive and is moving in the right direction and maintenance is under the close scrutiny of the Improvement Board, the YOS Governance Board and senior leadership within the Council.

Betty McDonald
Head of Service - YOS