

1. Background

1.1 Youth Offending Service were created by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people aged between 10- seventeen years old. This is achieved by delivering and implementing interventions to reduce risk, allow young people to reach their potential and in keeping them and the public safe. Bromley YOS sit within Children's Social Care under the directorate of the Director of Children's Social care.

1.2 The YOS is multi-disciplinary team funded with staff from other agencies that directly provide services to young people as well secondments from Probation and the Metropolitan Police. The majority of the funding is from the Ministry of Justice and the local authority with other partner's contribution in kind and this is in the form of staffing.

1.3 The YOS governance Board comprises of senior managers of partner agencies and is chaired by Chief Executive Officer and following the departure of the previous CEO, the acting CEO has agreed to taken on this function which provides oversight and scrutiny of the work of the YOS Partnership at the highest level.

2. Performance

2.1 In relation to the nationally published performance data from the Ministry of Justice the Bromley position:

2.2 Re-offending rates (see Appendix one for London rates) – the data from this indicator comes from the police national computer and is tracks a cohort of young people who receive an outcome or are released from custody for a 12 month period and the results are usually published between 6 – 12 months thereafter thus a lag in real time reporting. Hence the latest published figure at the time of writing this report is January to December 2016. The Ministry of justice evidencing a 46.1% binary re-offending rate. This compares to the national average of 4.9% higher than the national average. However, in Bromley (table 1) there are fewer young people reoffending year on year. Performance reports are used gain understanding of the service and the work we do to target the most persistent and prolific offenders as well and ensuring that intervention plans are more tailored to address identified needs as well as the inclusion of reparative activities to repair the harm and damage caused by offending.

Re-offending

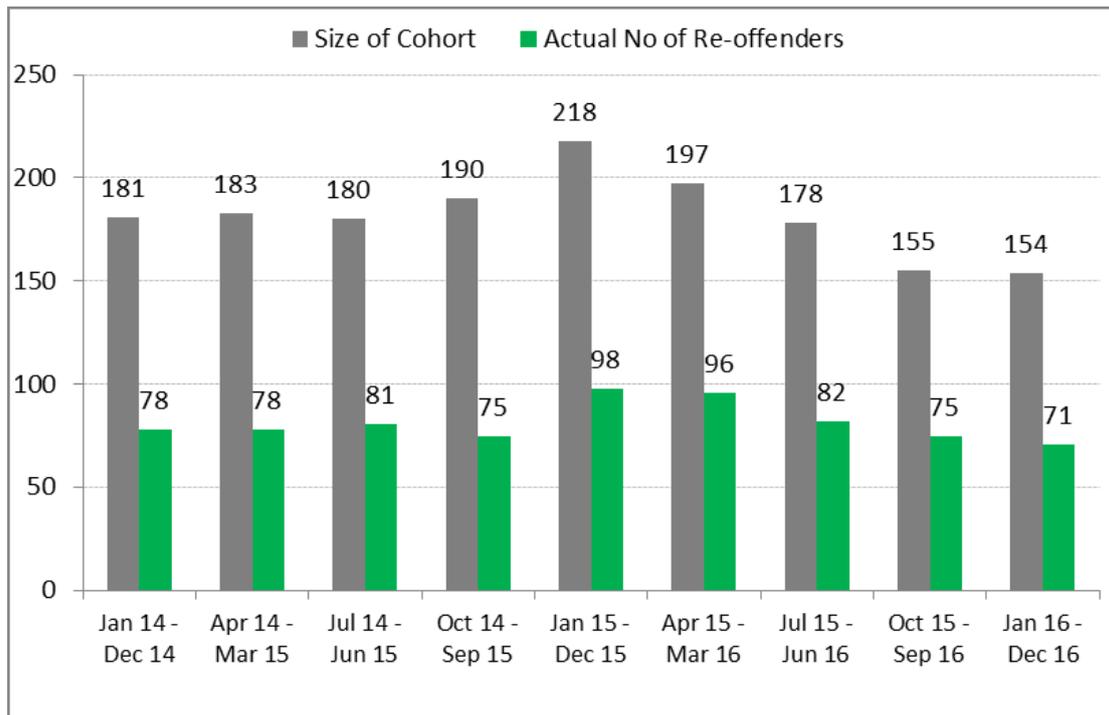


Table: 1

2.3 Reducing the use of custody has been an ongoing focus for the YOS with robust management oversight of young people who are on the cusp of custody due to their offending. We constantly strive to seek alternatives to custody with every high risk case. The use of the national AssetPlus assessment framework has improved the way we assess, plan, intervene and review cases has assisted in how we manage high risk young people, with more of a push towards strengths based approaches. In the latest published data for October 2017 – September 2018 we had 7 young people sentenced to custody compared with the same period the previous year when we had 14 young people serving custodial sentences. The performance in relation to custody represents a 27% reduction on the previous year, 34% below London average and 9% below the national average.

Custody rates

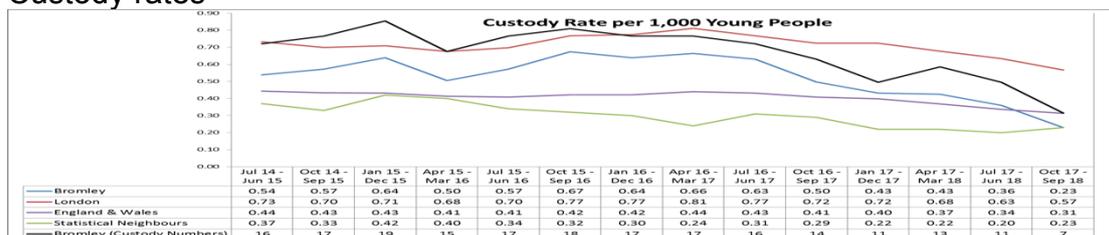


Table: 2

2.4 In respect of first time entrants to the criminal justice system we have seen increases in the borough in relation to this measure. Part of the increases is attributed to young people being arrested and having knives or other offensive weapons on their person. Last period (July 2017 – June 2018) there were 88 young people who came into the criminal justice system as first time offenders of which 47% were for violent offences and 35% were arrested for knife offences. These types of crimes (knife offences) are not eligible for diversion and therefore these young people are then brought into the criminal justice system. Our performance in Bromley is lower than the national average by 12% but higher nationally by 9%.

Table – First Time Entrants

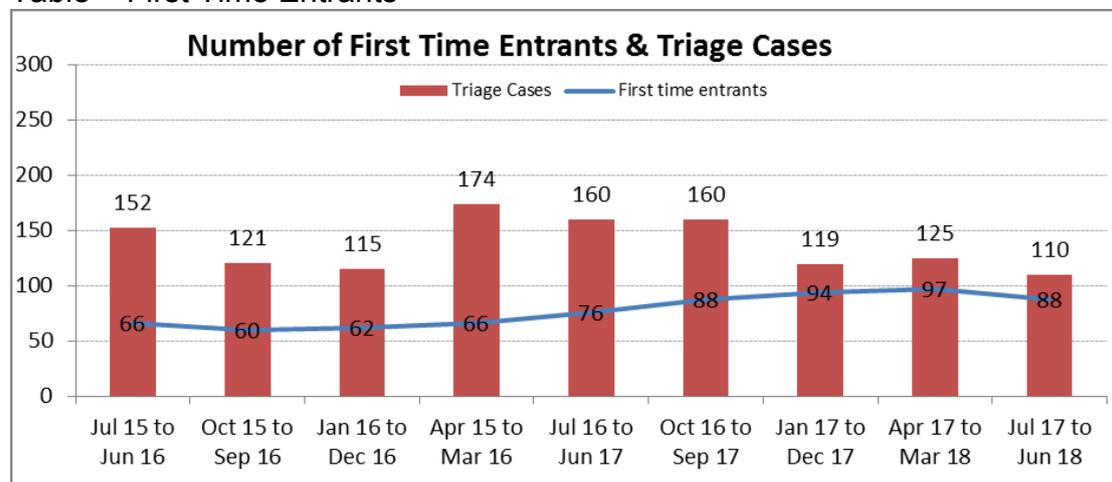


Table: 3

2.5 In terms of work to address this, we have created a newly funded post by NHS England for a diversion worker. Liaison and Diversion service will operate in the police station. The service offer screening and assessment of children and young people within police custody. Liaison and Diversion provision covers the first part of the pathway for entering the CJS, to ensure that where indicated all children and young people who commit an offence have the opportunity of a health and wellbeing assessment, followed by support to access appropriate services. The research and evidence from the pathway and pilot sites across the country demonstrate that this provision positively impacts on reducing and keeping low the numbers of first time entrants into the system; offering support and intervention.

3. Interventions

3.1 Children’s social care staff working with children and families will be adopting the Bromley relationship practice model for intervening with families. This will mean that the approach we take to the work enables children to be consistently protected from harm and their welfare rigorously promoted within their families, where this is consistent with their safety. Young people

involved in offending are rigorously challenged and supported to prevent offending through individual and group work programmes. We work with victims and young people to protect the public and work to ensure that children are kept safe and serve their sentences, where appropriate.

3.2 The YOS will also be complementing this relationship approach with all staff trained in a “Mentalisation” approach to working with children and young people with complex needs. Mentalisation-based therapy using the AMBIT model to help the staff discharge their duties with this challenging client group informed by a psychological therapy approach to working with colleagues in the same team and in partner agencies. The YOS is currently exploring opportunities for commissioning bespoke training from the tier 4 Adolescent At Risk and Forensic Service based at the Maudsley Hospital.

3.3 We are looking into opportunities for developing a Non Violent Resistance (NVR) group for parents of young people in the YOS – drawing on local CAMHS expertise if possible. NVR is a group designed to teach parents techniques to help them change their relationship with their child(ren); it relies strongly on the power of parent facilitators ‘lived experiences’ with their own children to provide hope for families. It has an emerging evidence base for conduct disorder. The YOS continues to have a consultant psychologist at the YOS on a part time based working to support staff working with high risk, high needs young people.

4. Staffing and structure

4.1 The last year has been challenging in appointing staff to the Service with vacancies being advertised on several occasions and not attracting suitable applicants. A range of advertising platforms have been tried and in the absence of securing staff to these positions then the service is then having to rely on locums at a premium rate. Recruitment within social care is managed under the Recruitment and Retention Board and strategies continue to be explored on how we can fill much needed vacancies, some of which are being filled with agency staff after a period of time with the Service have then gone onto applying for the permanent positions. So whilst the spend may initially be more we are seeing some signs of positive progress with those go onto becoming permanent members of staff. We currently have a total of 6 vacancies within the service from social workers to management level positions.

4.2 The service has recently been reconfigured to ensure that we are able to meet the demands of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to deliver services to children and young people. Supporting the core operational work of the YOS is led by a group manager and two team managers and a mixed staff group who enforce orders made by the court and the delivery of interventions attached to the orders, as well as supporting young people who are remanded into custody awaiting trial or sentence and those sentenced to custody by the Courts.

4.3 More recently we have dedicated one post to begin to develop our prevention offer supporting children and young people on the cusp of offending to see if we are able to reduce risk and divert them from the criminal justice system. We will further be increasing our preventative provision with the appointment of a Diversion worker and a new in house provision to divert and support young people away from the criminal justice system.

4.4 We currently have a full time tutor in the YOS providing educational support to young people and we are a registered examination centre enabling young people to sit functional skills entry level examinations. In terms of education we continue to perform, well with 100% of those young people who completed their YOS orders over the last quarter and of school age were in a suitable provision. We have a dedicated worker who works hard to engage and motivate young people into employment and training opportunities. The YOS has achieved some excellent outcomes with some very hard to engage young people, by contributing to the education Top Ten meeting and other panels when placements are sought for young people.

5. Improvement plan

5.1 Following the January 2017 Full Joint Inspection of the Bromley Youth Offending Service (YOS) (published June 2017) the YOS Improvement Plan was developed.

5.2 The YOS Improvement Plan included an initial mapping of all recommendations following the Full Joint Inspections of 2015 and 2017, BSCB Section 11 Audit Bromley YOS Action Plan (2016) and links to the recommendations and key priority areas within the Youth Justice Strategic Plan (2017-19) which was updated and developed in October 2017. The Plan was formally accepted at the July 2017 YOS Management Board following publication of the Full Joint Inspection in June 2017.

5.3 To ensure increased focus and pace, fortnightly YOS Improvement Boards were implemented from November 2017 with one Priority Areas covered at each meeting. As well as compliance updates, evidence is required by the YOS Improvement Board before an improved RAG-rating is given for each indicator within each of the Priority Areas. The YOS Improvement Plan Priority Areas are as follows:

- Safeguarding and Protecting the Child
- Reducing Reoffending
- Protecting the Public
- Governance and Partnerships
- Interventions to Reduce Reoffending
- Ensuring the Sentence is Served
- Improving Practice

Of the original 88 required actions within the YOS Improvement Plan, by December 2018 there was the following breakdown:

- 2 actions RAG-rated 'Red'
- 31 actions RAG-rated 'Amber'
- 46 actions RAG-rated 'Green'
- 9 actions RAG-rated 'Blue' (actions that can be no longer progressed)

5.4 YOS Improvement Plan actions are spread across the multi-agency partnership and are reviewed by the YOS Partnership Board on a quarterly basis. Progress has been steady and improvements have been made to the service including staff training, commissioning interventions and support services for young people from health related support sessions, to interventions support desistance from offending and work related training where some young people have completed work related learning to achieve the construction skills card to enable them to gain employment in the construction industry.

6. Serious offending

6.1 Over the last few months the numbers of young people being supervised by the YOS has largely remained constant. However, locally we have seen an increase on Police directive of increased levels of "Stop and Search" in response to intelligence and concerns related to serious youth violence and other concerns. This has identified young people carrying knives that are not diverted from the criminal justice system and therefore receive support from the YOS to reduce further offending.

6.2 Given increased tensions between rival groups from neighbouring boroughs and ongoing activities of gangs in the area, the 2 murders on the borough within the last year it is unlikely that the levels of Stop and Search will be reduced and Police colleagues will no doubt continue to utilise methods which help to prevent further serious offences from being committed.

6.3 The actual custody numbers are low in the borough and overall across the country the numbers of children in custody continues to be reducing from highs of over 3,000 children and young people over 15 years ago. The Ministry of Justice Youth Custody Service published its latest data on the numbers of children and young people in custody. The numbers of under 18s in custody was 859; this is a decrease of 2 from the previous month and a reduction of 61 from the previous year. In Bromley we currently have 2 young people serving custodial sentences and 5 on remand awaiting trial. All of these young people have committed serious offences that have led to them being sentenced or remanded for those offences and are due to appear at the Crown Court over the coming months. Over the same period last year in Bromley we had 6 young people serving sentences and the remand figures stayed the same.

6.4 Children and young people are supported and visited regularly by YOS workers and social workers to ensure that they are safe and well, plans for release form part of the regular sessions. There have been no safeguarding concerns raised regarding our children and young people in custody. With regards to levels of risk presented, there are 11 young people currently assessed as presenting a high risk of serious harm to others this is due to the nature of their offending and or repeated use or carrying of weapons. The majority of these young people will be known to Children's Social Care either as children in needs with some being discussed at the weekly Missing, Exploitation and Gang Affiliated (MEGA) meetings, where activity and information is shared and tracked via this panel and the YOS is represented at the panel.

6.5 One of the main challenges we face is the emergence of gangs and an increase in knife crime. This increase is not exclusive to Bromley but across the country. We deliver a knife crime intervention for young people involved in carrying or using weapons. All staff recently received training on weapons awareness and is equipped to deliver this programme. However, we recognise that there is a greater need to act to prevent escalations of such behaviours as well as effectively intervening earlier with this cohort. The YOS is working on a more consistent and robust approach to prevention in line with our youth services and identifying and targeting young people via Merlin reports and those coming to Police notice as being on the cusp or involved in offending.

6.6 The YOS continues to work with the courts and the secure estate and partners to implement conditions and requirements attached to individual court orders post custody licence aimed at restricting movement, to protect the public and reduce further offending.

6.7 The YOS supported by work with the police and community safety to tackle anti-social behaviour and serious youth violence. Information is shared across the network regarding locations of concern and other intelligence to prevent crime and public protection issues. Discussions continue to take place around enforcement and disruption activity and in supporting young people to exit gangs as well as consideration for applying for gang injunction and working with Safer London who support young people out of gangs.

6.8 In addition, the YOS within our resources have provided gang awareness training and knife prevention programmes to staff as well as contributing and delivering prevention support to secondary schools within the borough as part of the Impact Roadshow event.

6.9 The multi-agency makeup of the team the service works closely with partners and commissioned agencies at a strategic and operational level to achieve its outcome and aims. The service is working closely with police and community safety on the development of Bromley knife crime action plan as well as with wider partners on improving plans for early intervention to reduce risk of youth violence.

6.10 The YJB has launched its Serious Youth Violence Strategy. As part of the strategy, a serious youth violence good practice reference group has started. The aim of this group is to bring together youth offending teams (YOS) and stakeholders so that they can share effective approaches in this area and/or where significant challenges are faced. Bromley YOS are contributing to the meetings, to enable us to adopt and apply effective practice measures which will be tracked and shared. A serious youth violence toolkit will also be published in due course to help YOS put this into practice.

7. Summary

7.1 The YOS continues to work to improve the performance of the service and in challenging young people in relation to their offending and the impact it has on others. We are currently in the process of setting up a forum for young people involved in the justice system so that we can use their feedback to improve our service offer. The first such group will focus directly on the health needs of young people in the justice system following mapping exercise based on young people health needs. This session will be directly supported by colleagues in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and thereafter we will have themed sessions with young people. Also we continue to seek young people's active input into our assessments and interventions and further follow this up with a standardised feedback tool "What do you think?" that is completed by young people. Generally the feedback received is positive and young people welcoming the support that they get from the YOS officers.

7.2 The challenges going forward is continuing to develop a high quality responsive service through collaboration with partners and colleagues to ensure that we are having the desired impact to support young people, victims and reduce risk.

Appendix One: Reoffending Performance for London

Current performance commentary:

Binary Rate = The number of reoffenders divided by the total annual cohort of offenders.

Bromley YOS ranked 18th out of the 31 YOS in London for the reoffending Binary rate.

Frequency Rate = The number of offences committed, divided by the total cohort of offenders.

Bromley YOS ranked 19th out of the 31 YOS in London for the reoffending frequency rate.

Binary Rate (%)	Jan 16 - Dec 16
Havering	33.1%
Bexley	33.8%
Ealing	36.4%
Sutton	37.6%
Hounslow	38.4%
Harrow	38.8%
Barnet	40.2%
Kingston and Richmond	41.9%
Westminster	42.0%
Barking and Dagenham	42.0%
Enfield	42.3%
Hackney	42.8%
Newham	43.9%
Hillingdon	44.2%
Greenwich	44.5%
Tower Hamlets and City of London	44.9%
Waltham Forest	45.9%
Bromley	46.1%
Islington	48.0%
Haringey	49.3%
Brent	49.6%
Hammersmith and Fulham	49.7%
Croydon	50.5%
Southwark	51.3%
Camden	51.4%
Lewisham	51.7%
Kensington and Chelsea	51.8%
Lambeth	51.8%
Redbridge	54.1%
Merton	55.4%
Wandsworth	56.3%

Frequency Rate	Jan 16 - Dec 16
Harrow	0.87
Havering	0.92
Bexley	1.03
Ealing	1.13
Greenwich	1.28
Hounslow	1.33
Enfield	1.36
Kingston and Richmond	1.38
Newham	1.38
Hackney	1.43
Waltham Forest	1.44
Barking and Dagenham	1.46
Barnet	1.51
Sutton	1.54
Tower Hamlets and City of London	1.57
Southwark	1.59
Haringey	1.63
Lewisham	1.77
Bromley	1.82
Lambeth	1.87
Kensington and Chelsea	1.87
Hammersmith and Fulham	1.90
Camden	1.91
Croydon	1.91
Hillingdon	1.92
Brent	1.98
Westminster	2.01
Redbridge	2.19
Merton	2.32
Wandsworth	2.61
Islington	2.77