

Safer Bromley Partnership

Youth Offending Service Report

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Operational Update:

The principal aim of the YOS is to prevent offending by children and young people aged 10 – 17 years involved in the criminal justice system. The Youth Justice Board oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales, with Board members being appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice.

The service is required to work within a comprehensive national standards framework which determines the nature and frequency of contact with young people. The YOS is responsible for the delivery and enforcement of court orders and the planning for release for those in custody as well as providing supervision once on release into the community. The YOS has a primary role to broker access to services such as education, health provisions both strategically and on behalf of individual young people.

Reoffending

The latest published figures from the Ministry of Justice shows that in RBKC the percentage of re-offenders decreased by 5.8%, which is below the London average of 43.5%. However the actual numbers of young people has reduced from 178 to 149. The cohort currently being measured includes young people who were involved in a spate of burglaries with adults in 2016/17.

The YOS is focused on reducing re-offending and whilst the numbers of young people in the youth justice system has reduced, the cohorts that remain have committed more offences and tend to have more complex needs and issues. This in turn contributes to a relatively higher reoffending rate. We are currently looking at where we can have the biggest impact through an in-depth analysis of the cohort to inform our approach in Bromley.

The YOS continues to work with children and young people to challenge and channel them into positive activities. The YOS offers a range of interventions to support young people and their families. We have recently introduced a Prevention support programme for young people at risk of offending; they are supported by a dedicated worker to assist them into leading a crime free lifestyle.

We have recently developed a Liaison and Diversion scheme, the diversion worker is funded by NHS England. Liaison and diversion services were established in YOS 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 individuals 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 widest sense, referring to both diversions out of, and within, the youth justice systems.

This is a welcomed addition to the borough where children can get the support they need that is more likely to have a positive outcome for them and their well-being.

The diversion worker has started undertaking some very positive pieces of work with young people, much of which includes developing good relationships with young people and finding creative means of engaging them with interventions which are relevant to their offence, but suited to their learning styles and needs. It is very early stages of the project and we hope to be able to report on activity and outcomes at future meetings.

Action for Safer Bromley Partnership: