

**Decision Maker:** CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

**Date:** Tuesday 9 July 2019

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** YOS UPDATE

**Contact Officer:** Betty McDonald, Head of Youth Support and Youth Offending Services  
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**Chief Officer:** Interim Director of Children's Social Care (ECHS)

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

This report provides an update on the work and strategic priorities of the Youth Offending Service including progress achieved in reducing offending and highlights of the planned work for the year ahead.

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a statutory service created under the auspice of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The service works with young people aged 10-17 years old and provides assessments, intervention and support to children and young people who commit offences as well as support to their families and victims of crime.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**Members are invited to consider the contents of this report and work being done to address offending.**

### Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The service works with young people aged 10-17 years old and provides assessments, intervention and support to children and young people who commit offences as well as support to their families and victims of crime.
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### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable:
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People:
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
  3. Budget head/performance centre:
  4. Total current budget for this head: £
  5. Source of funding:
- 

### Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
- 

### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
- 

### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications:
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
- 

### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

## **2. Background**

The work of the YOS is overseen by the YOS Partnership Board chaired by the interim Chief Executive Officer which brings together statutory partners and other representatives together to agree on the resources for delivering youth justice services in the London borough of Bromley as well as manage the performance of the service and the formulation of the youth justice annual plan and the operation of the service. The Board's function is to scrutinise YOS performance alongside that of the partners and develop actions for improvement where necessary.

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 children and 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.

All young people are assessed by the YOS using a national assessment tool known as AssetPlus. This is a structured assessment tool used by all Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales on all young people who come into contact with the youth justice system. It aims to look at the young person's offence and identify factors or circumstances which may have contributed to such behaviour. Interventions are then delivered to meet the needs and reduce the risk of further offending.

## **3. Governance**

In 2018 the previous YOS Management Board was changed into a Youth Offending Service Partnership Board less focused on the oversight of a single service (YOS) and more on the activities of the Partners that impact upon young people's involvement with offending.

The work of Bromley YOS is managed strategically by a YOS Partnership Board and consists of senior representatives of statutory partner agencies, together with other relevant partners. The Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan and delivering of youth justice services locally. The head of YOS provides quarterly reports to the Partnership Board against agreed performance targets and plans for improvement. The Board has recently shifted focus to oversee activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key national indicators for youth justice. This enables partners to coordinate and integrate the work done by partners and how it fits within their organisation.

In view of the change in chair of the Board as well as other national issues it was agreed that a facilitated session on the new HMIP framework and on inspection

readiness. One of the three "Domains" of the Inspection is on Organisational Delivery including governance and leadership. The YOS Partnership Board and particularly Chairs have key roles to play in either the single Inspection or Joint inspection. This Inspection form is very significantly different from previous HMIP inspections.

The session provided a key opportunity for the Chair to understand the role they will play, some tools were shared which may assist Board preparation for Inspection, and current issues for the Board in London.

#### **4. Inspection**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the body that inspect Youth Offending Services across England and Wales. They last inspected Bromley YOS in 2017 under the old framework and on that occasion the overall score were rated "Good." There were a number of findings and recommendations that formed an improvement action plan and was overseen by the YOS improvement Board chaired by the Director of Children's Social care reporting directly to the YOS Governance Board.

However this new approach is more stringent and challenging. Hence work is ongoing to improve partnership working and practice through management oversight, audit and quality assurance of the work of the service which we will continue to monitor through the various Boards within the Service.

YOS are working much more closely with Children's Social care and as part of the revised quality assurance process we will be involved in regular practice reviews, the will be included within the Practice Assurance Stocktake of casework using a partnership approach to the work. It is anticipated that having an independent overview of practice and the wider involvement in partner's contribution will enable the Service to really develop and enhance the work of the service.

#### **5. Strategic priorities**

As part of Bromley vision and values to which the YOS is part of:

*By working together with agency partners, we will ensure that every child in Bromley has the right help at the right time to keep them safe, and to meet their needs, so that they can achieve, thrive and reach their potential.* (Bromley, Roadmap to Excellence, 2019).

The YOS has national targets set by the YJB that will continue to be a focus of our work. Our headline strategic priorities over the coming years 2019-2021

- Improve the quality of practice to improve outcomes for all young people in the youth justice system.
- Improved partnership working and community engagement
- Reduce the level of disproportionality in the youth justice system locally

- Development of a service which is able to better meet the needs of older children and their families
- Reduce the level of Serious Youth Violence
- Improve outcomes for looked after children who offend
- Work to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people to keep them safe from exploitation and out of custody.

There will have a clear focus on reducing offending and reoffending and maintaining strategic oversight of the delivery and performance of Bromley YOS.

## **6. Workforce development**

Bromley YOS is staffed in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1989, including having a 0.5FTE Probation Officer, an education worker, Police Officers and Social workers although they have varying terms of conditions in relation to their commitments to our service. We currently do not have a CAMHS worker seconded into the service although we have commissioned health provision that currently meets our needs. In addition we have a school nurse 2 days a week, substance misuse worker 2 days, Well-being practitioner 1 day per week. We have other staff employed directly by the local authority who work between one to five days per week delivering specialist interventions such as NEET worker, restorative justice worker, reparation worker, education welfare officer, YOS teacher and performance manager and business administrators and managers.

One of the developing strengths of the service is the multi-agency staff team and the varying expertise and skills they bring to the service. We have experienced recruitment issues and relied heavily on agency staff however this has shifted significantly. Stability and the appropriate skills mix has been an important element of our service make up so we continually keep challenging ourselves to keep abreast of changes as well as ensuring that the workforce is constantly developed to meet the needs and demands of the service we provide. (Appendix 1 YOS staffing structure chart).

In house we have a comprehensive training package via the Bromley Safeguarding Board training, learning and development training and the INSET training provided by the Youth Justice Board. All YOS staff will be trained in the Bromley relationship model as well as some specialist training for working with adolescents with complex presentations. We continue to have a very small contingent of agency staff and will be advertising these permanent positions shortly and anticipate this positions being filled.

YOS structure chart will be included as an appendix

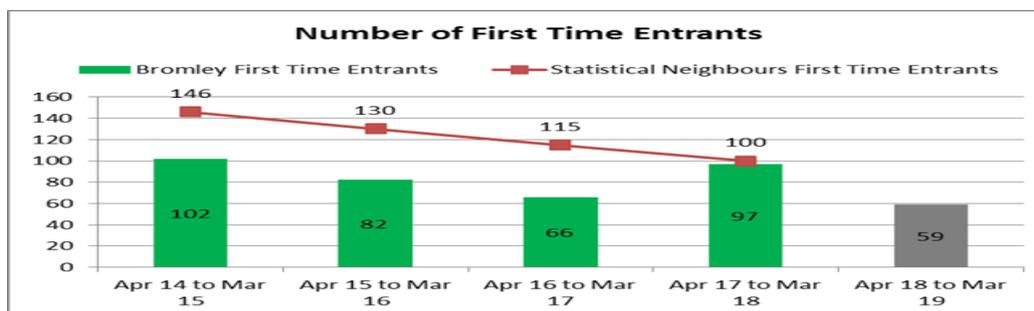
## **7. Performance**

The 3 national performance indicators for youth justice:

1. Reduce first time entrants to the Youth Justice System
2. Reduce reoffending by young people
3. Reduce the number young people sentenced to custody.

In addition priorities are informed by local partnership arrangements, local performance, national inspection outcomes and funding agreement outcomes.

### **First time entrants to the youth justice system**



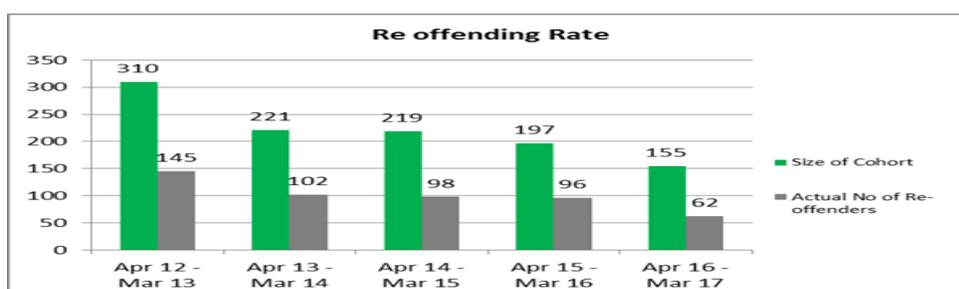
Bromley First time entrants rate

Over the years there have been sustained local reductions nationally and in relation to our statistical neighbours in the numbers of children and young people entering the youth justice system. However, locally we saw an increase in the rate of first time entrants (2016/17 and again in 2017/18) which exceeded the national and local picture. This appeared to be linked with local policing initiatives such as stop and search and with concerns regarding youth violence. In real terms this was an increase of 38 more young people (although this figure is yet to be formally ratified by the MoJ). The current picture for 2018/19 is our lowest reported reduction in first time entrants (FTE's) we have seen a 43% reduction since March 2015.

The reductions seen in Bromley have been significant and the percentage reduction decreases year on year has decelerated and may begin to plateau. However, this will continued to be monitored in line with the regular scrutiny of the performance data and acted on accordingly.

Policy and legislative changes have contributed to the reductions which have provided greater scope and opportunities for diverting young people who are involved in low level offending away from the criminal justice system through out of court disposals. This is further complimented by our partnership arrangement, with police and stronger working with the wider Children service's colleagues and the wider availability of Prevention support to children and families.

### **Reoffending of young people in the youth justice system**



Bromley re-offending rate

Data in relation to reoffending is taken from the Police National Computer (PNC) and is available three quarters in arrears to allow for arrests to be processed through the courts and for the data to be analysed and published by the Ministry of Justice.

We had a 57% reduction in the actual numbers of young people involved in offending in the borough in recent years (145 young people in 2012/13 compared to 62 in 2016/17) with the support offered by the YOS. This supports both the local and national view that a reduction in first time entrants means that young people who move into and remain in the criminal justice system have more complex needs and are likely to be the most prolific in their offending behaviours.

Prior to January 2012 the LBB binary reoffending rates rose by 3.2% against increases of 11.3% and 2.4% for the London and national rates respectively.

One causal factor has been the introduction of Triage programmes for minor offences, which notably are excluded from measures of reoffending. To a lesser degree, the impact of Triage programmes can be seen in the gradual rise in both the London and National rates during this period.

The YJB has provided youth offending services with a tool kit and the current focus is on using a “live tracking” of reoffending to ensure a more responsive approach to confronting, challenging and preventing offending. The information available from the toolkit will be used to target those most at risk of reoffending.

### ***The frequency of re-offending***

This highlights that there is a small group of young people in the borough who commit quite a lot of offences and it remains a focus for us in delivering interventions to effect change in young people who are prolific and persistent in their offending. One young person was responsible for committing 12 offences in a year with other prolific offenders responsible for up to 4 offences each.. In the current cohort of repeat offenders there is 149 young people being tracked for a year with 19 have reoffended and committed 120 offences accounting for 81% of the re-offences. This cohort tends to be male aged 15-17 years involved in drug and violent offending. It is anticipated that the reflective practice sessions and guidance from clinical psychologist that staff will better develop the skills to work with some of the challenges that the children and young people present

## Use of custody

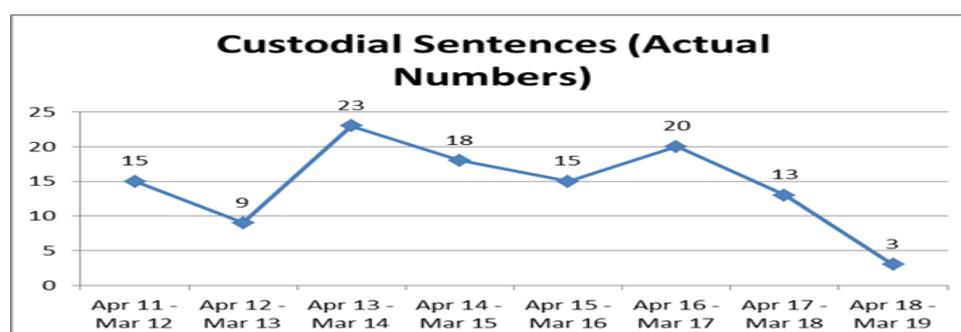


Table 1: Bromley custodial sentencing

The use of custody within LBB relates to reducing reoffending, protecting the public and safeguarding. The national data for young people sentenced to custody prior to January 2012 LBB custody rates were variable with 2013/14 reaching a peak of 23 custodial sentences. However, the downward trend continues from 2016/17 to 2018/19 where we have seen a high of 20 sentences to last fiscal year of 3 custodial sentences given. The trend is underpinned by our local courts confidence in the YOS to effectively manage young people. All of those young people in custody have committed serious offences and were sentenced at the Crown Court. Whilst custody is a last resort the seriousness of the offences leaves the court with no option other than custody. This is a volatile measure which can change on a daily basis.

The use of custody has reduced within Bromley the actual numbers of young people is small. The YOS provides a robust service to Bromley Youth court, with specialist staff working in the court on a rotational basis which includes Saturday and bank holiday cover. It is important that our services are able to support children and young people in a credible way to reduce risk.

## 8. Developments in Youth Justice in Bromley

### Forensic CAMHS

The numbers of young people entering the youth justice system has fallen sharply over the last years; those who remain in the system have a range of complexities requiring significant levels of more specialist intervention and support from the YOS and other agencies too. In response to this we have a dedicated consultant psychologist in the YOS. This provision involves:

- Interventions to those with the most complex needs and highest risk offending behaviour.
- Consultation and guidance to YOS practitioners managing children and young people with complex needs and high risk
- Support and guidance on risk management to the YOS staffing
- Delivery of mental health training to YOS staff
- Delivery of training and guidance to CAMHS practitioners on forensic mental health and engagement with hard to reach communities.

This service is proving to be invaluable in ensuring that some of our most vulnerable children who otherwise would not ordinarily engage with mental health services get access and support that they need.

### ***Liaison and Diversion***

We now have in place a newly developed Liaison and Diversion scheme, the Diversion worker is funded by NHS England. The 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.

### ***Speech and Language***

Individuals with speech and language and communication (SLCN) needs have difficulty communicating with others. Early language difficulty is often a risk factor for other problems like literacy or educational failure. National research indicates that around 10% of the general population have speech and language communication needs. When compared with children and young people in the justice system this raises to around 60%. Children and young people who experience emotional and behavioural issues should be assessed for SLCN

As a part of our work we screen most of the young people for SLCN but the demand for this provision exceeded what could realistically be delivered. The previous resource was a half day a month. However, our health partners have acknowledged

the importance of this screening and have increased the service provision for children and young people in the justice system to 2 days per week. We are able to provide child friendly guidance in terms of our work with children and young people including letters in a child friendly way as well as other materials which we are constantly developing and utilising the information gleaned from SLCN screening.

### ***Prevention support***

We are now offering support to young people who are deemed as being “at risk of offending” usually those young people who are engaging in anti-social behaviour, coming to the attention of police or other professionals or families have concerns about their behaviour. This is designed to help them avoid getting into further trouble that could lead to them having a criminal record as this can seriously impact on their futures. Therefore we provide support that makes it easier for young people to achieve positive outcomes and make positive decisions by delivering a tailored support plan designed to keep young people on the right path away from offending.

The aim is to work with young people and their parents/carers on a voluntary basis.

### ***Safeguarding***

Safeguarding is a statutory duty as defined in the Children’s Act 1989 and 2004 and the YOS adheres to this in its work and practice. We take reasonable steps to ensure that all children and young people are protected from harm when they are either perpetrators or victims of crime. Young people involved in offending are more likely to be victims of crime, neglect abuse and are vulnerable to a range of factors that can lead to offending and to them engaging in risky behaviours such as gang affiliation, substance use and sexual activity. These often lead to these young people being exploited, abused and at risk of violence; we work with these young people alongside other agencies in trying to reduce the risks they face and in keeping them safe.

The YOS participates in child protection conferences, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), YOS instigated safety and well-being risk panel and the Missing, Exploitation, Gang Affiliation (MEGA) panel that tracks and manages children and young peoples’ risk. All these meetings and others are designed to agree risk, devise and implement plan to reduce risks posed by the child or young people and share this where appropriate across the wider network.

## **10. Summary**

Within the YOS we are focused on continually improving the quality of our practice to achieve better outcomes for children and young people, families and victims.