
Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 22 November 2023

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

Title: YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE ANNUAL UPDATE

Contact Officer: Betty McDonald Head of Youth Justice and Youth Services:
Email: Betty.McDonald@Bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Richard Baldwin, Director of Children's Social Care:
Email: Richard.Baldwin@bromley.gov.uk

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on the work of Bromley Youth Justice Service, including work to address offending as well as the performance and other work of the service.
-

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **The Children, Education and Families PDS Committee is asked to provide any comments on the work of Bromley Youth Justice Service and note the annual update.**

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The Youth Justice Service provides support and services for young people within the Youth Justice system.
-

Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
 2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority (*delete as appropriate*):
(1) For children and young people to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home.
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: None
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A
 3. Budget head/performance centre: YJS Budget
 4. Total current budget for this head: £1,682m
 5. Source of funding: LBB. Statutory Partners and the Youth Justice Board
-

Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 30.5FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive decision
-

Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: None
-

Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: N/A
-

Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: N/A
-

Impact on the Local Economy

1. Summary of Local Economy Implications: N/A
-

Impact on Health and Wellbeing

1. Summary of Health and Wellbeing Implications: N/A
-

Customer Impact

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

Ward Councillor Views

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

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Youth Justice Service (YJS) is multi-disciplinary, multi-agency service with the statutory duty of supervising children and young people aged 10-18 years who are subject to Court orders and out of court disposals. We work with children and their families to deliver our statutory responsibilities in relation to a wide range of provision to prevent offending and reoffending.

Context

- 3.2 The statutory responsibilities of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) are set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which is further underpinned by other legislation such as Children's Act 1998 and 2000, Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing Act) 2000 and Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. These include the YJS responsibilities for out of court disposals, statutory supervision for those sentenced by the courts, including those sentenced to detention or on licence in the community, court work and those remanded on bail under supervision. The YJS is made up with staff from the local authority and seconded staff, all of whom are well embedded into the team in accordance with requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 3.3 This report provides the Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the work of the service, key areas of focus and developments of the coming year, highlighting key achievements during the last period of updates to this committee and assurance that there is an effective youth justice offer in place for children involved in the criminal justice system.
- 3.4 Bromley has become well established and effective in the delivery of services, and this is overseen by the Youth Justice Service Executive Board chaired by Ade Adetosoye, CBE. There is full membership of senior partners from key agencies, Police, Probation, Health, Education and Children's Social Care as well as other colleagues. The governance arrangements provide challenge and scrutiny as outlined in the statutory guidance. We have reduced our three operational subgroups to two as this was deemed a better use of partners' time and originally our subgroups mirrored the YJB's three national indicators. Since April 2023, the YJB has introduced ten more quantitative key performance indicators, so we made the change to accommodate these. The two groups are entitled the Pre-order subgroup, for out of court disposal and health, and the second is the Post order subgroup, which focuses on reoffending, education and accommodation.
- 3.5 Our youth justice vision:

Improving life chances and outcomes of children and young people in contact with the youth justice system or at risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour. Our work must be guided by the 'child first, offender second' principle, this means seeing them as children who need our help rather than as "young offenders".

3.6 We fulfil our vision by recognising the principle of enhancing desistance and focusing on early prevention and diversion to stop children and young people from entering the youth justice system; reduce first time entrants; reduce reoffending and, as such, improve life chances.

3.7 This joint strategy was developed with our partners to inform and shape our focus over a three-year period. The strategy sets out for key stakeholders, including partners, senior managers, elected members of Bromley Council, the national Youth Justice Board and managers within the Youth Justice Service, how we intend to improve practice and outcomes for children and young people offending or at risk of re-offending.

3.8 Our priorities:

- Reducing the number of first-time entrant children in the youth justice system
- Reducing reoffending by children in the youth justice system
- Improving the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system
- Addressing ethnicity disproportionality and the overrepresentation of other protected characteristics and vulnerable groups in the youth justice system
- Protecting the public and victims
- Strengthening our Partnership Board and workforce
- Emotional well being (new for 2023).

3.9 **Achievements over last year**

- Maintained very good performance across all our key indicators driven by better analysis of statistical data and information including feedback from parents/carers and children.
- Further extended the provision of Prevention support for children on the cusp of offending with the introduction of Turnaround and Engage to enhance the established prevention offer.
- Progress is ongoing with disproportionality action plans in place for both youth justice partners and the service.
- Introduced Youth Ink to provide greater opportunity for children's voices to be heard and to shape and influence the youth justice offer at strategic and practice levels.
- Our Health and Education Professionals' Panel (HEPP) enables us to have a more coordinated approach to health and education provision and support.
- A rigorous audit and quality assurance framework throughout the year.
- The voice of victims is heard, and harm is addressed through their wishes.
- The range of complexities that our children experience is well managed by the service and with partners.

Performance

3.10 The performance of the service is overseen by both 3 national key performance indicators set by the Youth Justice Board and we have 2 local indicators set by the YJS Executive Board. However, since April 2023 the

YJB has introduced 10 additional qualitative indicators that YJS will now be measured against with the first data submission in July 2023. The new KPIs:

- **SEND:** 18% reduction on previous year.
- **Mental Health care:** 4% annual increase in YP receiving support.
- **Substance Misuse:** 8% reduction in support on previous year
- **OOCD Completions:** 11% reduction in completions compared with previous year.
- **Wider Services:** 9% reduction in the number of CLA / 6% annual increase in the number of CIN / 7% annual increase in the number of CIN / 5% annual reduction in Early help referrals.
- **Management Board Attendance:** Overall good attendance from partnership agencies
- **Victims:** Low engagement levels as the majority of victims do not wish to participate in RJ. This is a national issue, and we will keep looking at ways to engage victims.
- **Serious youth violence (SYV):** Serious violence is recorded in line with the YJB definition as any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of 5 or more resulting in a caution or a court sentence. As a service this will continue to be a key focus of our work.

Between April 2022 to March 2023, there were 7 individuals who committed 16 SYV offences. The number of individuals involved in SYV is the same as the previous year. There was an annual increase in the rate of SYV from 2.1 to 4.9 Bromley's rate is 0.3 lower than the national average, 5.4 lower than London, 2.3 higher than the statistical neighbours.

- 3.11 Our performance continues to be strong, demonstrating our ability to maintain good outcomes against all the key indicators.

First Time Entrants

- 3.12 Bromley's first-time entrants rate has reduced considerably over time as the number of First-time entrants entering the criminal justice system is tracked by the YJS for an annual period. The latest comparator data available are for a 12-month period July 2022 – July 2023.

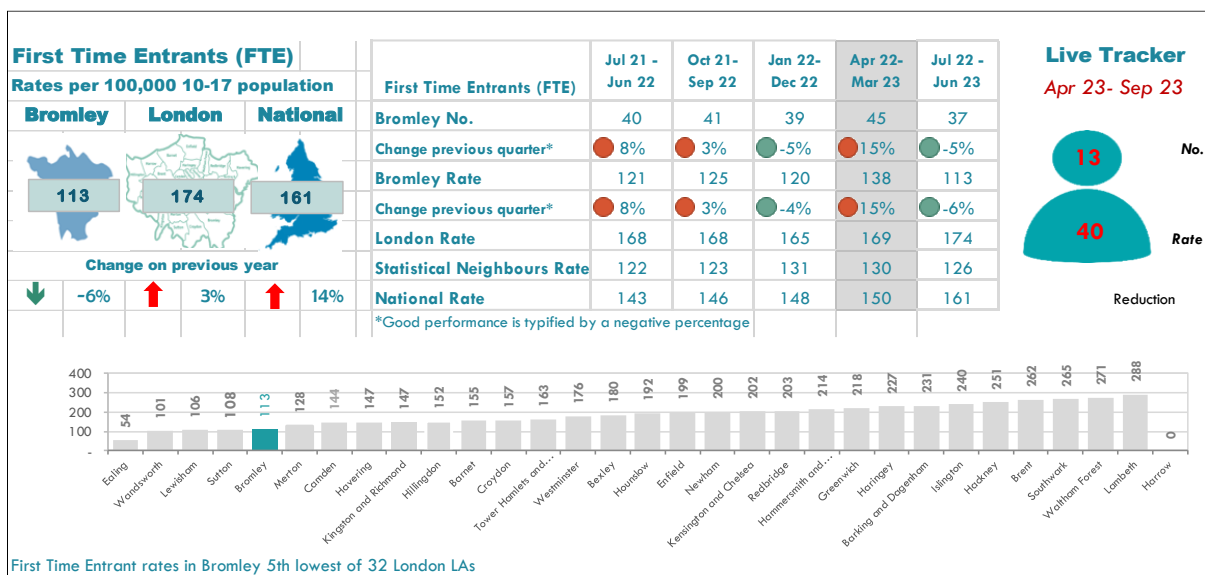
- 3.13 In this period we saw:

- 37 children became first time entrants into the criminal justice system.
- Bromley have achieved 8% annual reduction in the number of FTE (from 40 down to 37), an 18% quarterly reduction from 45 (Apr 22 – Mar 23) to 37 FTEs (Jul 22-Jun 23)
- Bromley's rate of first-time entrants has reduced annually by 7% and is 35% lower than the average for London. Bromley's rate is 19% below the national average and 30% lower than London. Bromley's first-time entrant rate is also 10% lower than our statistical neighbours. Bromley has the lowest rate

compared with the 6 surrounding boroughs. (Bexley, Croydon, Southwark, Lewisham, Lambeth, Greenwich)

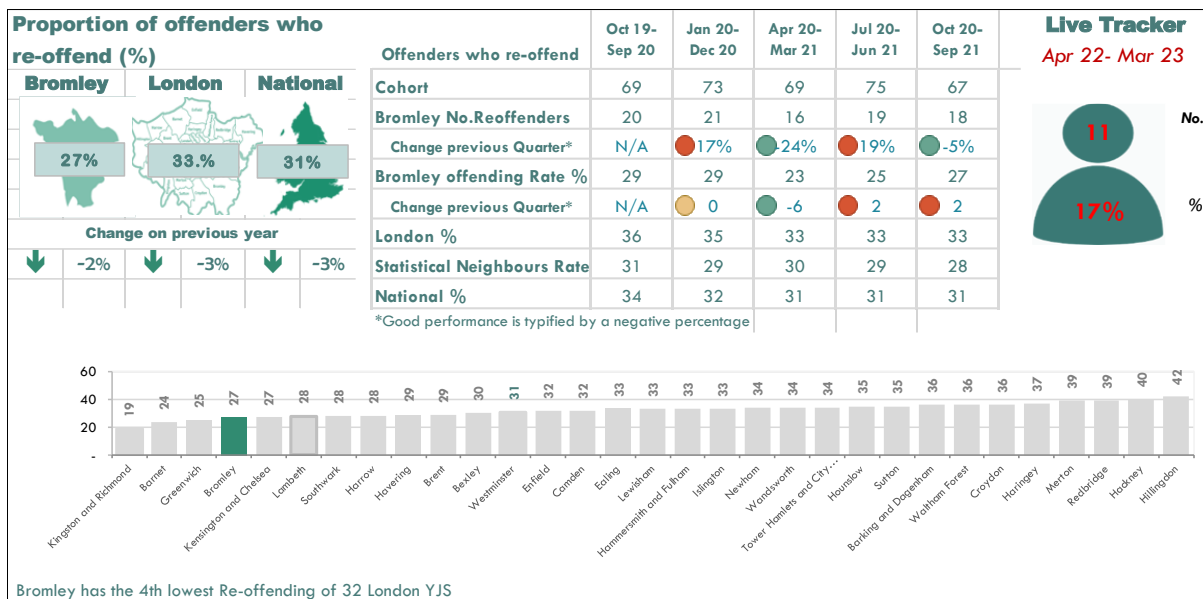
- Bromley has the 5th lowest FTE rate in London and are ranked 23rd out of the 154 YJS in the country.

3.14 This achievement continues to be impressive despite ongoing serious offending and recorded knife crime being at record levels in London. We continue to triage children and support our most vulnerable children at a much earlier stage. We have support from Bromley Y, CAMHS and our health colleagues in youth justice for those children who require specialist support. We also commission and work with other organisations who provide mentoring support, support via Liaison and diversion and substance misuse amongst other services.



Offending and reoffending

3.15 The latest figures available are for a 12-month period October 2020 – September 2021. (Tracked until the end of September 2022)



3.16 67 children and young people received a YJS intervention between October 2020 – September 2021.

3.17 This cohort of children and young people being tracked has reduced over the past 6 years where 107 young people were serving YJS interventions by the end of December 2015. This is a 37% (40 cases) reduction over a 6-year period.

- Of the 67 children and young people sentenced between October 2020 – September 2021, 18 (27%) reoffended within a 1-year tracking period. Bromley YJS have achieved a 2% reduction in the rate of reoffending compared with the previous year, October 2019 – September 2020.
- Bromley YJS reoffending rate is 6% lower than the average for London and is 4% lower than the National average. Bromley's rate of reoffending is 1% lower than statistical neighbours.
- Bromley has the 4th lowest reoffending rate in London and are ranked 36 out of the 154 YJS in the country.

3.18 Our extensive offer to children to promote desistance has contributed to fewer children reoffending through the interventions and support we provide, including intensive supervision, triage and diversionary activities for low level offending.

Live Reoffending Tracker

3.19 Bromley YJS also reports on live data, this is dynamic and is a good predictor of future published data by the MoJ. It identifies and tracks a cohort of

children for a 12-month period, with a 3 month drag on the data which allows time for cases to go through the criminal justice process.

3.20 The YJS tracks the reoffending for a cohort of children and young people who received a pre-court programme, a court disposal or were released from custody in a 12-month period. This is based on cases starting within the last year with some still being active today. The annual cohort is for the 12-month period of April 22 - March 23.

- 64 children and young people were sentenced and started interventions between April 22 and March 23 (excluding prevention & Triage interventions)
- This cohort size is in line with the previous year (April 21 to March 22)
- Of the 64 children and young people in the reoffending cohort, 11 have re-offended (17%)
- 31 offences have been committed by the 64 children and young people in the cohort (0.48 offence frequency rate).

3.21 Our local analysis of the data shows the cohort of children and young people who offend are predominately those with complex needs and vulnerabilities, thus making it more challenging to strengthen the desistance factors which help to effect change. The latest figures show that 17% (n11) reoffended. We provide multi-agency packages of support that can improve their life chances.

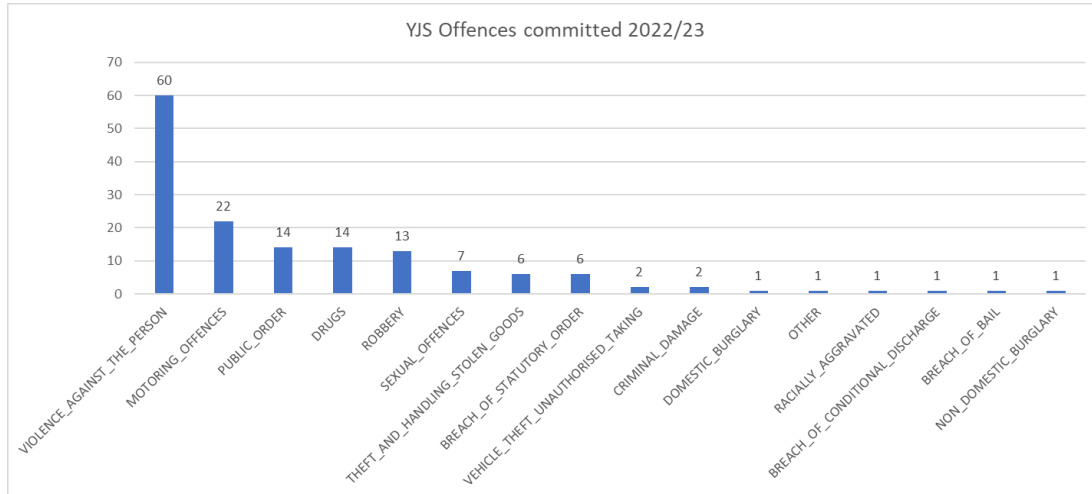
3.22 As a local authority we continue to have staff trained and delivering the “Your Choice” programme this is a violence reduction programme delivered to children and young people at risk of contextual harm or exploitation, using cognitive behavioural techniques. We have trained all YJS staff and staff in Leaving care and Safeguarding teams are also being trained. It is designed to be an empowering approach that will lead to children and young people making the right choices away from crime. The main aim is by moving beyond understanding why a child may behave in a certain way to providing tools and techniques that practitioners can employ to help the child keep themselves safe.

3.23 The reporting and engagement from our children and young people is demanding but we have early indication that those who engage leads to desistance from offending. This programme is being evaluated by the Institute for Fiscal studies when we will have validated evidence of impact.

3.24 The roll out of the trauma training further supports children and young people who have experienced trauma, including the trauma caused by serious youth violence.

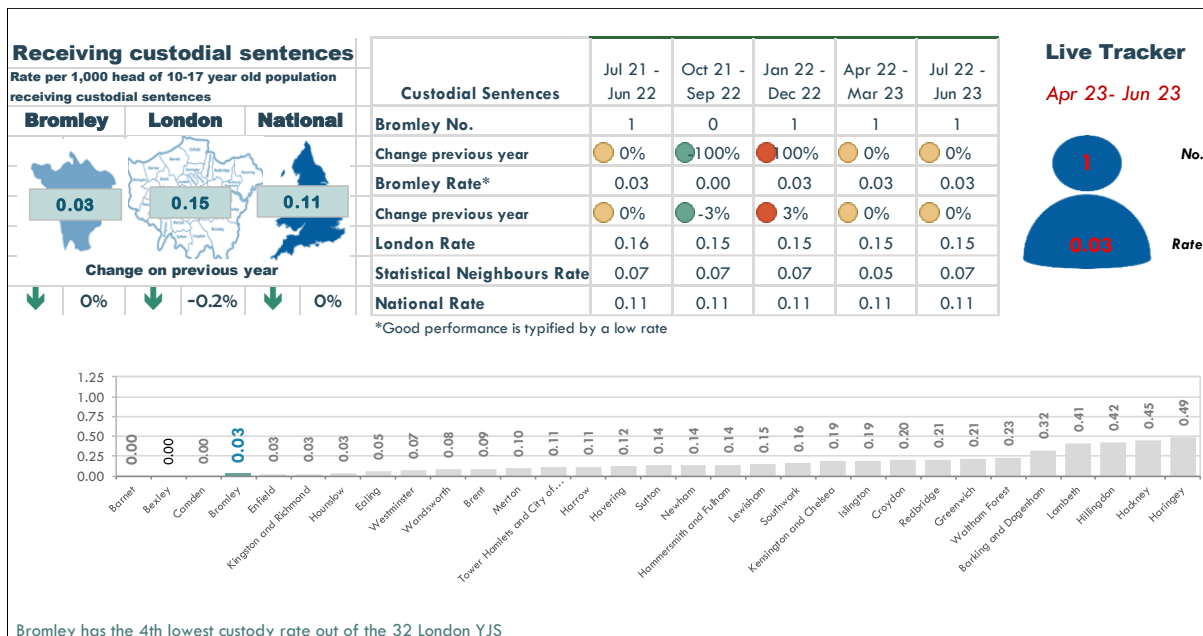
The types of offences committed by our children in Bromley,

3.25 The most recurrent offences are violence against a person 60 , motoring 22 and drugs/public order 14.



Custody

3.26 The YJS tracks the number of children and young people sentenced to custody in an annual period. The latest figures available are for the 12-month period of July 2022 – June 2023. Good performance is typified by a low figure.



- Bromley YJS had one young person sentenced to custody Between July 2022 – June 2023 which is in line with the number of custodial sentences the previous year.

- Bromley currently has the 4th lowest rate of custodial sentences in London and ranked 30th nationally. Bromley has the 3rd lowest custodial sentence rate among our statistical neighbours.
- Bromley has the lowest custody rate in comparison to its 6 neighbouring boroughs. (Bexley, Croydon, Southwark, Lewisham, Lambeth, Greenwich)

Education, Training and Employment (ETE)

- 3.27 The latest reporting period is for April 2023 to June 2023. The YJS had 46 interventions which ended between April 2023 to June 2023. All school aged children and young people were on roll and attending an ETE provision at the end of their order. This is in line with the same period last year. There were 4 young people above school age who were Not in education, training or employment (NEET) at the end of their YJS intervention.
- 3.28 These young people were all referred to the 16+ education officer who assisted these individuals with CV writing, interviewing and motivational skills. The YJS has seen a 20% increase in the number of above school age young people being in a suitable education in comparison to last year. Overall, 91% of all children and young people completing their YJS interventions between April 2023 to June 2023 were in a suitable ETE provision. This is a 1% decrease on the previous year. However, we continue to have multi agency planning around those children with SEN with our education colleagues to ensure children and young people get the help and support they need.

Accommodation

- 3.29 The YJS had 46 interventions which ended between April 2023 to June 2023. 45 (98%) were living in a suitable accommodation, as one young person had been sentenced to custody which is not a suitable accommodation for children and young people. The percentage living in suitable accommodation is 6% higher than the previous year.

Update of work carried out since last PDS

- 3.30 Over the last year we have seen various trends in offending by children and young people:
- Fewer children offending both nationally and locally.
 - Changes in types of offences that children are committing.
 - Offences involving weapons and knives.
 - More reoffences committed by a smaller group.
- 3.31 There continues to be a backlog of children and adults going through the court system since the pandemic, so we will continue to monitor and review our

approaches to how we can prevent children coming into the criminal justice system, especially in view of the wider span of prevention services in the borough. This approach also aligns to the Child First principles adopted in Bromley (and advocated by the Youth Justice Board). In 2007, nationally there were 106,000 first time entrants and the current figure is 8,400, our collective partnership approach to tackling offending, supporting children and families and our own creative and innovative interventions continue to reduce number of children in the system. There have also been changes to policing methods and evidence-based approaches to our work.

- 3.32 **Disproportionality** is a priority both for the YJB and locally for us and this feeds through all the work we do. We know that this is an ongoing challenge to understand and explore disproportionality within Bromley. There is a lot of recent research published in relation to the disproportionate representation of children from Black and Global Majority heritage in the youth justice system, the care system and prisons.
- 3.33 Our focus remains on what action we can take with our partnership work to improve outcomes for children and think about anti racist practice. This will be key as we consider how we address the multiple layers of disadvantage and discrimination as highlighted. We have done work on stop and search, use of language, improving staff and managers' confidence and skills in addressing issues of race and disproportionality in our pre-sentence reports to the court, our assessments, the resources we have to explore the child's journey and we continue to ensure our commissioning of service provision has a race and identity feature.

Child First

- 3.34 The service remains committed to the principles of child first as part of our service delivery. The four tenets are at the heart of the service delivery:
- See children as children.
 - Develop pro-social identity for positive child outcomes.
 - Collaboration with children
 - Promote diversion.
- 3.35 Our work in youth justice is underpinned by the relational practice model which is further developed by trauma informed and restorative practices in terms of our work with children and families and with partners. As a service, we have always championed these practice models and in recent months we progressed to training staff in trauma informed practice through resources from our health colleagues. We provide opportunities for staff to have reflective space for case formulation and to support working with the complexities of some of the children and their presentation. We see this model as being complementary with the social care practice model on relationship building and this is complemented with the trauma approach.

Our children's voice

- 3.36 Bromley strives to be a more inclusive service and keep children's voices at the heart of what we do, and this is evidenced through engaging with them in a co-productive way. Children attend the YJS Executive Board having the opportunity to speak with the most senior officers in our organisation and partnership. They use this space appropriately talking about their lived experience, being stopped and searched and access to information may well have led them down a different pathway away from offending. Feedback from our children and parents states how they have valued the relationships and support they receive from the YJS practitioners, as such we continue to ensure we work in a way that addresses and acknowledges the trauma that most of our children experience, as well as building sound relationships with them.
- 3.37 We have worked hard to ensure that we are able to communicate effectively with children and families with easy read letters with the support of our speech and language worker. This is ongoing as we try to ensure that children understand what we are doing with them as well hearing and learning together. This will include our children being involved in drawing up a child friendly plan that outlines our priorities and plans to reduce risk and increase desistance.
- 3.38 **Feedback** Youthink is the peer advocacy service who work with our children and young people that have lived experience of the youth justice system. This has enabled reflection on the many ways that the service can support children's participation and how they can influence change. The advocates are currently working on ideas for our plans to re develop our Youth Service offer and we see this as a way to maximise opportunities for children and young people to provide feedback and feel listened to and heard.

What our children say?

The people here (YJS) have been really supportive and nice to me and I do feel that this is a safe space to talk about my feelings and if anything has been going bad I feel that I can speak about it. I feel like everyone has been really nice to me and I haven't met with any judgement.

If I say my problem the advice that's given to help solve them better.....

Even if there is something that isn't YOT you'll still give me your view and help with it. I think you and everyone is doing very very well.

Parents view:

He's matured a lot, he's grown up, he's more responsible, he gets himself to the meetings, he doesn't need me to bring him. I think all the help and support has helped him to really come out of his shell.....

I think you do very well at your job. You always give me phone calls.

Restorative Justice

- 3.39 The YJS provides restorative activities and support to victims of offences committed by children and young people. We also play an important part in delivering *Crime and Consequences* workshops with the police, apology letter to victims and indirect mediation. The take up of direct reparation is low with victims not wishing to meet the children and young people, hence we respect their wishes. The YJS continues to undertake work with the children and young people in understanding the effect and impact of their behaviour on the victim. We offer a wide range of placements for reparation and these include charity shops, bike maintenance, local foodbank and St. John's ambulance service amongst others.

Youth Justice Plan 2023 -24

- 3.40 The annual Youth Justice Plan is a statutory plan that each local authority is required to produce and submit to the YJB. This comes with detailed guidance from the YJB to include areas such as vision, strategy, governance, leadership and partnership arrangements. Whilst we currently have a two year plan written in 2022, a yearly refresh is required addressing the same issues/headings and reporting on progress. There is updated guidance released by the YJB with the expectation for inclusion in the plan for 2023/24. The plan is overseen by the YJS Executive Board and work delivered by the subgroups who report into the Executive. Our plan and strategy cover all aspects of youth justice from prevention to youth offending to managing the most serious offending and complexities faced by our children and young people as well as some of the local themes and escalating threats to our most vulnerable children. We set out the vision and priorities for the service and our localised priorities. We are aware that there are a number of challenges we face and this is set out in our Plan.
- 3.41 Using out of court disposals allows the police to deal swiftly and proportionately with offending and with those who offend for the first time when their offending does not warrant a prosecution.
- 3.42 We have a range of multi-agency panels providing a formal framework for discussions and management oversight in relation to children who come into the justice system with additional needs, this ensures a coordinated approach of intervention with our health specialist colleagues.
- 3.43 We contribute to the partnership approach of tracking and managing children with high vulnerability needs through MEGA and the YJS Risk and Safeguarding Panel, where children are discussed in order to further safeguard, and the risks posed to self or the public. This panel approach enables us to ensure that risk is being effectively managed within the service and that there is a high-level focus and management oversight of the work and plan with these children and the wider network of professionals who also contribute to these meetings. We have an escalation procedure, and this is used where necessary.

Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2023-2026

- 3.44 A Strategy has been drafted to be presented to the next YJS Executive Board for consideration. Whilst Bromley YJS has one of the lowest rates of reoffending in London and this has been sustained over a number of years, the Strategy sets out our ambitions to further reduce reoffending and in so doing, to contribute to the safety of all in the community.
- 3.45 As an ambitious local authority with an expectation that we deliver outstanding services, we know that we cannot rest on previous achievements. Furthermore, we foresee challenges for many in our community which can impact on the nature and rates of offending by our children and young people including:
- Economic challenges for the families we support with the national economy placing significant strain on so many;
 - The longer term impact of the pandemic, including children missing education, bereavement, loss and broader implications for mental and emotional health;
 - Anticipated funding pressures in the years ahead on wider public services.
- 3.46 Whilst the rates of proven reoffending have reduced, the children now involved are presenting with greater complexity, with multiple layers of education, health and social care needs. The nature of offending has shifted and there is greater recognition of the fact that many of our children (as seen across the country) are both at risk of being exploited whilst also presenting a risk of harm to others in their community, including to other children. The aim of this Strategy is therefore to support the wider Partnership in planning how to meet these changing needs with a view to keeping reoffending rates in Bromley low.

Quality of practice

- 3.47 Our work in relation to joint decision-making panel for out of court disposal is subject to scrutiny by a panel. These are facilitated twice yearly in order to quality assure our work and ensure that the decisions we are making are balanced, fair and appropriate. The panel is multi-agency led by the Police with representatives from youth justice, Crown Prosecution Service, Youth court and the Youth Justice Board. The process involves a dip sample of children whose case is reviewed and scored and the learning from this is taken back by the agencies. All our children were positively examined indicating that the joint decision making made the right decision for each child.
- 3.48 We continue to develop peer advocacy and sessional roles for young people with the opportunity to contribute much more widely to the development and shaping of services.
- 3.49 We continue to sample and audit our practice in line with our quality assurance process as well undertaking separate preparation for inspection. We assess our work against HM Inspectorate of Probation which is the department for the inspection of youth justice. Our audits over time have highlighted improvements in our practice and significant development of high-

quality practice. The most recent audits found joint working with agencies, direct work with children, as well as planning were areas of strength, more work on management oversight needed. These areas were subsequently improved upon by future audits of practice showing clear signs of management oversight and overall good examples of practice identified.

National standards

- 3.50 YJS are required to complete and submit a self-assessment to the Youth Justice Board 31 October 2023 with regard to our adherence to National Standards and in line with our statutory responsibilities focused on work in “Court.” There is a moderation process by the YJB. Early indicators show our work in relation to court is strong with preparatory work, our reports that help sentencers to make decisions as well as internal management quality assurance of court work is effective. Our rating is likely to be good with some outstanding features identified in respect of up-to-date policy and procedures that are followed, feedback from sentencers, reports involving parents and carers views and victims’ views were all highly rated.
- 3.51 We have maintained strong outcomes for our children and families through a decrease in offending, a wide-ranging offer of support and interventions and intensive work with those children with higher needs and high-risk presentations.
- 3.52 This self assessment needs approval by the YJS Executive Board and will then be submitted within the timescales required.

Inspection update

- 3.53 Bromley YJS partnership is currently in line for inspection by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. There is a five-year cycle for inspection, however this was interrupted by the pandemic by two years. The most recent dialogue with HMIP is that this has been pushed back by a further six months. We therefore anticipate that our unannounced inspection of the YJS will be between now and end of September 2024. We recognised that this is a way off, but we continue to maintain our position of continual service improvement. HMIP are already consulting on a new framework to begin around October 2024, and it is currently consulting with the sector.

Targeted Prevention update

Introduction

- 3.54 The Engage and Turnaround programmes were launched in Bromley in the Summer of 2023, to form part of the Youth Justice Service’s targeted prevention offer and response to reducing first time entrants. These two new initiatives work closely with the established Liaison and Diversion scheme in Bromley to broaden the scope and reach of the Targeted Prevention offer.
- 3.35 The programmes have been developed in accordance with the requirements of funding from the Violence Reduction Unit (MOPAC), for the Engage

programme and funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for the Turnaround offer. Both are aimed at providing support for children who are on the cusp of offending.

3.56 The purpose of this section is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with background information relating to each initiative and an update on progress made in implementing the programmes in Bromley.

3.57 Aims of Turnaround

The overall aims of the Turnaround programme are to:

- achieve positive outcomes for children with the ultimate aim of preventing them going on to offend;
- build on work already done to ensure all children on the cusp of the youth justice system are consistently offered a needs assessment and the opportunity for support;
- improve the socio-emotional, mental health and wellbeing of children; and
- improve the integration and partnership working between YOTs and other statutory services to support children.

3.58 Turnaround is based on similar principles to those underlying the Supporting Families programme, including the view that children on the cusp of offending often have complex needs.

3.59 The mandated elements are that children must meet the eligibility criteria set by the MoJ and that YJS must follow the three stage process of screening, assessment and intervention. Interventions need to be evidence based and this is linked to the Youth Endowment Fund toolkit, which provides a reference library for those interventions which have a strong research base supporting their effectiveness.

Current position in Bromley

3.60 A Prevention Practice Manager post was created in Spring 2023 with the Turnaround funding, with a view to the person in post managing the Liaison and Diversion and Engage Practitioners, whilst also engaging with the children open to the Turnaround programme.

3.61 The Ministry of Justice provided funding from December 2022 and so between then and September 2023, we have identified children eligible for Turnaround from those on relevant programmes supported by Youth Justice staff. In such instances, Turnaround enabled an extended level of voluntary contact, where this was deemed appropriate. The funding has been used to pay for courses (such as food hygiene for staff who will cook with children), for food vouchers, for items to support education or training or to attend activities to support children's engagement on the voluntary programme.

3.62 After three recruitment rounds, a suitable candidate was successfully recruited and started in post at the beginning of September 2023. The new Prevention Practice Manager is highly skilled and experienced and brings her wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to the role. She previously worked for a

different organisation in Bromley and so has also been able to build on good partnerships already developed to the benefit of the Turnaround programme, an example being her experience of delivering presentations to Bromley schools – staff and pupils – which will be developed for the Targeted Prevention offer.

- 3.63 From December 2022 to 30th June 2023, Turnaround offered support to 18 children which was accepted albeit more often for a short-term programme. Engagement with the programme is voluntary and so requires the consent of the child throughout, so the programme does not always last as long as we might plan. Esme will be looking at ways to encourage greater engagement of children going forward and is currently reviewing a strengths-based assessment better suited to the children open to Turnaround.

Engage - Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), MOPAC

- 3.64 MOPAC have allocated £500,000 across the three local authorities of Bromley, Croydon and Sutton for the Engage project to be delivered over three years, from December 22 until March 2025. The project is led by Croydon Youth Justice Service, who manage the three dedicated youth workers.
- 3.65 The expectation is that all children in the two custody suites are seen, reaching them at a ‘teachable, reachable moment’ and supporting them onto more positive paths away from offending. Trained practitioners, co-located in police custody, have the flexibility to ensure a rapid response to children identified at risk of serious youth violence (SYV) and exploitation. The ambition is that this will further reduce the risk of children entering the youth justice system and ensure they are engaged at the earliest opportunity to support diversion from offending.
- 3.66 Practitioners engage children using evidence-based interventions, including restorative practices, relational approaches and brief solution focus therapy. The Bromley Engage practitioner is employed by Bromley supporting children to access local provision.

Aims of Engage

- 3.67 The project aims to work with children in police detention in Bromley, Croydon and Sutton. It will identify risk factors relating to Serious Youth Violence (SYV) and ensure appropriate and targeted responses via local interventions and provisions.
- 3.68 The project will ensure a dedicated and trained practitioner provides intervention in police custody at the point of arrest and as decisions are being made by Police and prosecution, providing:
- Direct and independent work with children (separate to the criminal investigation) using relational and evidence-based approaches such as restorative practices and brief solution focused therapies.

- Signposting and facilitating the introduction of parents to targeted interventions within the local area.

Current position in Bromley

- 3.69 The Engage programme is led by Croydon's Project Lead who has been in post since early 2023. The Bromley Engage Practitioner started in post in May 2023, and he has been attending Bromley custody suite, developing a working partnership with Police colleagues as well as supporting children arrested. When the Engage Practitioner is not available to attend the custody suite, for example in evenings or weekends, the Police notify the team of any arrests so that he is able to follow up and offer support to children as soon after the arrest as possible.
- 3.70 Since the programme started in June, there have been 38 children in the Bromley custody suite which have been brought to the attention of the Engage programme. Of the 38, 14 were seen by the Engage Practitioner in custody, 9 children rejected the offer of support, 9 were ineligible for ongoing support due to residing out of borough (their home boroughs were notified), for 7 children there was no response to the follow up calls, 4 children are working with other professionals and 2 further children were supported by the Liaison and Diversion Practitioner. There are 7 children who are currently open to the Engage Practitioner where home visits have been undertaken, consent given and activities they are involved in include BMX activity, boxing and gym, basketball, football and working with Bromley Changes for support with cannabis use.

Conclusion

- 3.71 Taking account of some of the known vulnerabilities for children on the cusp of offending, consideration is being given to how best to support children in the following areas:
- Mental and emotional health
 - Education support (including school absence and exclusions)
 - Undiagnosed learning needs
 - Substance use
 - Being a victim of crime or abuse
 - A child in need
- 3.72 The combined offer of Turnaround, Engage and Liaison and Diversion aims to coordinate and provide support in these key areas at an earlier stage for the child, responding to the points highlighted regarding unmet needs at the beginning of this report. Whilst the benefits of the multi-agency YJS will provide opportunity for support in key areas (e.g. the Speech and language therapist may support with screenings for communication needs), it will be important not to replicate a statutory order for children on the cusp of youth justice, when a key aim is to divert away from the youth justice system.
- 3.73 A focus for the new starters will therefore be considering how the needs identified above can be supported with the right services at the right time, for children on the cusp of offending.

Summary

3.74 Despite the challenges we remain optimistic that we are able to deliver a quality service with a commitment to change. Our staff team are dedicated and work in a child focused manner and we maintain strong partnerships that are positive to improve outcomes for children.

3.75 A recent email from a parent:

I would like to express my extreme gratitude towards Bromley YJS and the work they have done to support both myself and my son during a very difficult time. Person A. has gone above and beyond in supporting with an incident that occurred with my son at school. I honestly do not know how we would have got through these last few months without that support and words are not enough to express how thankful I am. The service your team offer is invaluable and although I hope to never have to use the service again (in the nicest possible way), I simply don't know that I would have coped as well with everything without that help. I wish you all the best and long may your service continue (Parent, 2023).

Non-Applicable Headings:	Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children; Transformation and Policy/Financial/Personnel/ Legal/Procurement/Property/Carbon Reduction and Social Value Implications; Impact on the Local Economy/Health and Wellbeing; Customer Impact; Ward Councillor Views.
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	N/A