



**Social Care Services Board
12 May 2016**

2015-20 Youth Justice Strategic Plan Review

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and Review.

In March 2015, the Children and Education Select Committee (now the Social Care Services Board) made two recommendations in relation to Surrey's Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20 and requested an update after 12-months. The recommendations were:

- That Surrey's Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) undertake evaluation with the probation service to understand what impact early youth justice interventions have on reducing long-term adult offending, and share these findings with the Committee at a later stage.
- That officers provide a report on the Reducing Re-offending Plan 2014-17 with details of how the Youth Support Service (YSS) and partners are working to address homelessness, NEET status and mental and emotional health issues as known factors in relation to re-offending.

The Board also requested a general update on Year 1 progress in relation to the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20, which is provided in this report.

Introduction:

1. Surrey's Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20 was published in May 2015, meeting the council's obligations under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. Youth justice relates to that area of the council's responsibilities for the management of young people who have committed criminal offences. These responsibilities are discharged in partnership with Surrey Police, the National Probation Service and NHS Surrey. The organisation within the council with lead responsibility for youth justice is Surrey Youth Support Service (YSS).
2. Surrey YSS comprises of local teams in each of Surrey's eleven boroughs and districts that deliver services to young people who offend. The YSS also provides services to young people who are homeless, who are deemed children in need (section 17 of the Children's Act 1989) or requiring targeted Early Help, who are open to the recently re-commissioned Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and who are Not in Employment,

Education or Training (NEET). Young people that offend will often fall into these other cohorts, and vice versa. Therefore, an integrated service such as the YSS is of benefit to meeting a range of overlapping needs.

3. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20 covers a 5-year period and was co-produced with Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) members, in addition to consultation with the Children and Education Select Committee. This clear partnership focus seeks to ensure key services and agencies work together to deliver an effective youth justice system that provides value for money. It is believed to be the only youth justice plan in England and Wales that has taken such a deliberate long term view to delivering sustainable, high quality youth justice outcomes, which can better withstand financial and regulatory demands.

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20 Priorities

4. The strategic priorities for the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20 are:
 - **Prevent Youth Crime**
 - **Reduce Re-offending**
 - **Safeguard young people from harm**
 - **Protect the public from harm**
5. In meeting these priorities, activity includes restorative justice approaches and the application of a clear safeguarding focus to prevent and reduce offending, improve victim satisfaction and raise public confidence. This involves developing an improved partnership understanding of adolescence as a unique stage of development, which thereby avoids inappropriate and disproportionate criminal justice responses. It also requires a transformational shift towards understanding persistent offending through a safeguarding 'lens', recognising that it is often intertwined with significant vulnerability and, therefore, addressing safeguarding need is a likely starting point for reducing entrenched youth offending behaviour.

Overview of Progress - Year 1

6. During Year 1, considerable progress has been made towards the stated ambition of the Youth Justice Strategic (YJS) Plan 2015-20 to **enable children and young people at risk of, or involved in offending, to lead safe, law abiding lives, in order to reach their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.**
7. Key performance outcomes and achievements, which are relevant to the priorities and ambition of the Plan include:
 - a) Only 6 young people from Surrey were sentenced to custody in 2015/16 (and only 8 in 2014/5), which means that the county remains one of the lowest users of youth custody in the South East and England.
 - b) Surrey currently has the lowest rate of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time in England and Wales. This has consistently been the case for the past 4-years, supported by the implementation of the joint Surrey YSS and Police Youth Restorative Intervention (YRI) out of court disposal scheme.
 - c) The outstanding success and innovation of the partnership YRI scheme was recognised in July 2015 through winning the prestigious Restorative Justice category at the Howard League for Penal

Reform's National Community Awards. This was followed by winning the Youth Justice Board Effective Practice Award in November 2015.

- d) Surrey YSS also received the Restorative Service Quality Mark from the Restorative Justice Council in July 2015, and whilst this reflected the broader work of the service, evidence around restorative justice and the YRI was a key element of this achievement.
- e) Significant reductions have been delivered in 2015/16 in relation to the arrest, denial of bail and detention of young people in police custody, particularly overnight, which has historically failed to meet the specific needs of children who have come into conflict with the law. This has been supported by the development of voluntary attendance suites and a joint local authority and police accommodation protocol agreed in April 2015.
- f) Surrey has the 2nd lowest level of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the country at 1.7%, which is the lowest level of NEET for any large local authority (DfE, 2015). Surrey YSS also achieved the Matrix standard in March 2016. This is a nationally recognised quality mark for organisations that can demonstrate high quality advice and guidance that supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.
- g) Only 1 Surrey young person under the age of 18 has been accommodated in Bed and Breakfast in 2015/16 (and for only 1 night) due to the work of the Homelessness Prevention Service (HPS), which sits within the YSS.
- h) Since the implementation of the Reducing Reoffending Plan 2014-17, reoffending performance has improved and is holding steady. The reoffending rate of the 2014/15 cohort was 32.7% and the projected reoffending rate of the 2015/16 cohort is 33.7%. This is compared to the 2013/14 performance of 41.9%. This has been achieved despite a reduction in the overall numbers of young people coming into the criminal justice system, leaving a smaller and more complex group to work with and support behaviour change.

Impact of youth justice interventions on adult offending trends

- 8. This understanding has been difficult to achieve due to the current limitations of the NICHE Police Records Management System in profiling by age breakdown. There was some previous YSS/Police analysis in 2013 (that now requires updating) which indicated a link between the introduction of the YRI and a subsequent reduction in the overall number of 18-21 year olds coming to the attention of the police. There had not been a similar trend for the older adult population, which suggested that the impact and experience of the YRI was contributing to overall lower levels of offending in early adulthood. Consequently, as part of the Transforming Justice strand of Surrey's Public Service Transformation Programme, it has recently been agreed that the YRI will initially be adapted for use with adult women offenders as part of a pilot from May 2016.
- 9. In March 2016, a new seconded probation officer started within the YSS with responsibility for ensuring that effective transition takes place between both services where relevant and that young people are fully prepared for transfer. Breach is one of the most common offences for which young adults are sentenced to custody and, therefore, it is imperative that those transferring from

YSS are fully prepared for the expectations that will come with probation supervision. At the same time, the seconded probation officer can support those within their home organisation to better understand that adolescent development does not necessarily end at 18 and that differentiated responses are required for the young adult population.

10. The seconded probation officer additionally has access to YSS and probation case management systems and will begin to systematically track young people transitioning between the services to monitor their progress and longer term reoffending rates. These findings can be reported back to the Social Care Services Board at a later date.

Re-offending and work to address known factors – homelessness, NEET, mental and emotional health issues

11. The performance highlights noted in the 'Overview of Progress – Year 1' of this report demonstrate how the YSS and wider partnership is working effectively to produce excellent outcomes in relation to these key factors and overall reoffending. A key driver has been the strategic decision in 2012 to place the functions of a Youth Offending Team within a holistic and integrated YSS that provides case management support for young people with a wide range of (often overlapping) needs, that may include offending. This ensures non-siloed responses for children with youth justice involvement and essentially means that they receive the same services and opportunities from the same practitioners as other vulnerable young people whose entry route to the service may have been through homelessness, mental health, unemployment or other factors which led them to be identified as a Child in Need. This non-stigmatising and non-labelling approach to working with young people that transgress the law is at the heart of the Reoffending Plan 2014-17 and has contributed to improved reoffending performance.
12. The YSS has assumed responsibility for all homeless 16 and 17-year olds in Surrey through the development of the HPS in 2013. This has included leading the commissioning and contract management of the different supported accommodation providers around the county. A re-commissioning exercise was completed in 2015 and has further improved the quantity and quality of emergency and longer-term supported accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds. Consequently, this means that the use of inappropriate bed and breakfast accommodation for young people has been virtually eradicated in Surrey. Given the link between homelessness and youth offending these improvements have been crucial.
13. Participation in education, training and employment remains the overarching purpose and goal of the YSS, in recognition of its positive impact on the life outcomes of a young person, including those that offend. There are examples across the county of effective partnership work with schools, colleges, training providers and employers that enable the most vulnerable young people to achieve their full potential. This includes the LEAP education programme in North West Surrey, which is delivered by the YSS in partnership with Brooklands College where young people who are not college-ready can achieve qualifications within a more informal youth centre setting. This is the type of innovative partnership which has contributed to Surrey having the second lowest level of NEET in England.

14. Similar partnership developments have occurred within the arena of mental and emotional health. As part of the CAMHS re-commissioning, Surrey YSS has been selected as one of the sub-contracted partners of Surrey and Borders Partnership Foundation NHS Trust (who hold the contract). This new integrated service model started on 1 April 2016 and has attracted significant additional funding, contributing to the recruitment of an additional 4 mental health workers within Surrey YSS. It is designed to ensure that children and young people have access to quality mental health and behavioural support provision at any point on the continuum from early help to crisis intervention. This transformed CAMHS offer has the potential to significantly improve outcomes for young people in the youth justice system that disproportionately experience emotional, mental health and behavioural difficulties. The Social Care Services Board may wish to receive an update on the impact of the new CAMHS delivery model on reoffending in 12-months time.

Conclusions:

15. Overall there has been significant progress made during Year 1 of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20, which is reflected in key performance measures, including reoffending, and the national recognition of youth justice work in Surrey. The strength of the plan is in the partnership endeavour that is at its core and has led to innovative and transformational development within key associated areas related to offending such as mental health, homelessness and education training and employment.
16. There is more to be achieved, however, and some elements of the local and national youth justice system remain under-reformed e.g. courts and sentencing, including custodial sentences. This is noted within Charlie Taylor's interim National Youth Justice Review report (which cites Surrey as an area of good practice) and when the final report is published in July 2016 it is likely to provide further impetus and permissions for developing an increasingly devolved and integrated 'child first, offender second' model at all stages of the youth justice system in Surrey.
17. Additionally, there is more to be achieved in understanding what impact early youth justice provision (particularly the YRI) is having on longer-term adult offending outcomes, particularly in relation to the young adult population who may have previously experienced this provision.

Recommendations:

18. The board may want to make the following recommendations:
 - a) Surrey's Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) undertake further evaluation with the police and probation service to understand what impact youth justice intervention has on offending in young adulthood and share these findings with the Social Care Services Board in 12-months time.
 - b) That officers provide a further update in 12-months on the progress of the Reducing Reoffending Plan 2014-17 with particular reference to how the new CAMHS integrated model, including the YSS sub-contracted element, has impacted on mental health and emotional and behavioural issues as a known factor in relation to re-offending.
 - c) That officers provide an update in 12-months in relation to progress made against the Youth Justice Strategic Plan in Year 2.

Next steps:

The board is asked to approve the above recommendations and timetable an updated report in 12-months time.

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Sources/background papers:

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20 – Refresh 2015/16 (appendix A)

Surrey YSS Youth Justice Performance Report Card - 2015/16 (appendix B)

Background Papers:

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-20

Review of the Youth Justice System – An interim report of emerging findings, Ministry of Justice, February 2016