

YOT briefing for Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT) Position Statement

Purpose: To inform members of Children's Services Scrutiny Committee of the current position of Lancashire Youth Offending Team, to include; governance, finance, performance and service delivery, service developments and challenges to service delivery.

Governance

LYOT is governed by Lancashire's Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) chaired by Bob Stott, Director of Education Schools and Care. The board has representation from Lancashire County Council, the Youth Justice Board (YJB), Police, Police and Crime Commissioner, Health, Probation, Community Rehabilitation Company and Courts. The purpose of the Board is to oversee the performance, financial management, effective partnership working and service delivery. The YJMB ensures timely submission of data, compliance with secure estate placement information, completion of national standards audits and reviewing community safeguarding and public protection incidents.

Performance and service delivery

The service priorities for LYOT are to provide a service to children and young people age between the ages of 10-17 years and their families to prevent and reduce offending behaviour. LYOT also provides restorative justice services to the victims of the young people referred.

The national targets for Youth Offending Services are;

- To reduce first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- To reduce re offending.
- To reduce the number of young people in custodial settings.

The current performance for first time entrants into the youth justice system demonstrates reducing numbers, this has been consistent for a number of years. LYOT's performance is better than comparators i.e. regional, national and family YOTs and places LYOT in the top 25% of all YOTs in England and Wales.

Although LYOT has seen the reducing numbers of young people entering the youth justice system, those young people who remain in the system have the most complex needs and often the most challenging ingrained behaviour and reoffending remains an issue. The number of young people who are high risk to themselves or to the public remain high. For example there have been 5 serious incidents within the last 4 months where young people known to the YOT have made serious attempts at suicide.

The % of reoffenders in the overall population of offenders has recently increased significantly and stands at 41.3% of the total cohort for the period Apr 13 to Mar 14. This places Lancashire YOT in the third quartile of all YOTs. The high percentage reflects there being less young people in the system, and, those remaining in the youth justice system being those with more complex needs and challenging behaviour. It is worth noting that the absolute number of young people who are reoffending in Lancashire has been reducing across the County since 2008.

Lancashire YOT are now in the second year of a three year national Reducing Reoffending Project. As part of the second year, LYOT have commissioned a PHD student to undertake research and learning to support reducing reoffending.

The performance of reducing the use of custody have been excellent and stable for many years now. The current rate for Jan 15 to Dec 15 is 0.56 per 1,000 population of 10-17 year olds.

Currently, there are 26 young people from Lancashire placed in custody (5 remanded to custody and 21 sentenced to custody). Due to the closure of Hindley YOI the majority of young people are now placed in Wetherby YOI, this creates additional pressures for young people and their families in respect of contact, access to YOT staff and attendance at Court.

Service Developments

LYOT is in the process of implementing a nationally revised assessment system 'AssetPlus', this has been the most fundamental change to the Youth Justice system since the implementation of YOT's. LYOT is to go live with the new system this summer. LYOT have heavily invested in the preparation for AssetPlus. Social Workers have been trained to train and support staff across the County. The forecast benefits of AssetPlus to young people are: a more efficient and better quality assessment, leading to better quality plans and improved outcomes.

Lancashire's YJMB have temporarily appointed a LYOT Health Co-ordinator to oversee the delivery of the LYOT's Health Improvement plan. Significant developments have been progressed including a new consultation service from Speech and Language Therapists, the early implementation of AssetPlus screening tools for physical and mental health, communication, and use of alcohol. A health performance framework has been developed and outcomes are now reported to the YJMB and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). YOT Health clinics are in development where all young people new to the service will receive a comprehensive health assessment with pathways in place to all relevant health services.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) are currently reviewing the Youth Justice system with the focus on reducing offending and improving education for those young people who offend. The interim feedback is that improvements are required in the secure estate. The final report is due in July 2016.

HMI for Probation who have responsibility for inspecting YOT's have undertaken an annual review of YOT services with young people. 126 young people known to LYOT completed the survey in 2015-16. Overall the feedback is extremely positive. A headline quote from the survey:- 'Respondents were asked a number of questions about their overall view of the YOT and whether it had helped them to stop offending children and young people were overwhelmingly positive.

Challenges

The impact of financial challenge to the authority and reducing budget over the years to LYOT has and will bring significant challenges to service delivery, in particular parenting support, and prevention of offending. LYOT will rely on external services for this provision, previously grant funding enabled these services to be delivered in house. The challenge remains in developing an effective and consistent pathway to LCC's Well-being, Prevention and Early Help service, a service which is itself is undergoing a transformation. The reduction in resources in LYOT include a reduction in managers, business support, performance and information staff and front line practitioners.

LYOT is currently undergoing a restructure, to be implemented by the 1 September 2016.

Finance arrangements

The YOT's budget is a pooled budget with partnership contributions from Lancashire County Council, Youth Justice Board, Police, Probation and Health. There is no prescriptive model for partnership contributions. Below is a table of partner contributions over the last 5 years. The National Probation Service have recently undergone a national review. The outcome for LYOT will be a reduction in the contribution of seconded Probation Officers from the current 7 to 4.

Summary of Key Points

- Performance within LYOT is positive with year on year reductions in the numbers of first time offenders and the number of young people who reoffend.
- The complexities and risk factors of the cohort of young people who do reoffend is however high.
- Youth Justice Services are undergoing a nation review, the recommendations of which should be known in the summer months.
- Reducing resources will impact on service delivery, particularly in respect of parenting support and prevention, and, YOT Social Work caseloads. The service is undergoing a restructure to be fully implemented this summer.