report

Meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP BOARD		
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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

The work of the Youth Offending Service in relation to the Emotional Health and Welfare of Children and Young People at Risk of Offending and who are Victims of Crime.

Purpose of report

1. This report updates the Board on the work of the Youth Offending Service in relation to the safeguarding aspects of youth justice provision within Nottinghamshire.

Information and advice

Background

2. The Youth Offending Service is a partnership managed by the County Council and which includes the Police, Probation Service, Connexions and Health. The financial contribution of the partners is shown in figure one below. The primary functions of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) in Nottinghamshire are to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people, to safeguard young people within the youth justice system and who are who are vulnerable to becoming victims of youth crime and to protect the public from harm. The Service is overseen by a Management Board comprising senior managers from all of the partner agencies and chaired by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services. The Board also includes senior managers from Supporting People and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team. The Management Board links closely to the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board as well as the Children and Young People's Partnership.

Figure 1: Partnership Contributions to the Youth Offending Service

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in Kind	Other Delegated Funds	Total
Police	144,338	0	84,304	228,642
Probation	112,670	0	98,640	211,310
Health	0	157,917	23,000	180917
Local Authority	1,959,962	0	531,975	2,491,937
YJB	1,362,803	0	362,945	1,725,748
Other	0	0	193,000	193000
Total	**3,579,773**	**157917**	**1,293,864**	**5,031,554**

3. At the time of writing the YOS is working with 1007 young people, 343 in a preventative capacity, 184 on Final Warning programmes, 387 on Community Orders and 93 in custody or subject to post-custody licences. The youngest child in touch with the service is seven years old and the oldest nineteen years old. The average age is 14.7 years. Seventeen percent of the caseload is female. Ethnic composition is broadly in line with the general youth population, although black and multiple heritage young people are over represented in terms of custody numbers.

4. The role of the Youth Offending Service in safeguarding children is complex as it extends to children's rights and their interactions with the criminal law, involves young people who normally have high vulnerability factors and limited protective factors and includes young people in extreme circumstances, for example those in prison or residential care settings or who are homeless. The work of the YOS also extends to working with victims, including child victims, of youth crime and this extends to serious violent and sexual offences and the active prevention of re-victimisation. Victims are not included within the caseload figures shown above.

5. The prevention of young people from entering the youth justice system is a key strategic and operational priority for the YOS. The YOS has a Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) team assessing and intervening with young people from ages 8-15 years and additional work with parents and carers. This work is carried out in close partnership with universal and targeted services, particularly schools and social care. An independent review by King's College due for publication in summer 2009 will conclude that the numbers of first time entrants to the youth justice system in Nottinghamshire has fallen 41 per cent since 2006 and that since 2005 the average age of an offender has risen by almost a third of a year largely because of a reduction in the number of 11-13 year-olds committing offences. Their assessment is that "the average age of an offender is an indicator that investments made in targeted interventions, such as the YISP, are beginning to pay dividend". Additional investment in targeted work in schools, with "hard to reach" parents (for example those with learning disabilities or substance misuse problems) and dedicated support to the YISP team by CAMHS

has been obtained for the coming year. Funding for prevention work comes from a mixture of grant and local funding. All current funding arrangements will end in March 2011.

6. One of the most important functions of the YOS in ensuring the welfare of young people is the provision of effective alternatives to custody to ensure that custody is only ever used as a last resort. This relies on effective provision and confidence in the YOS by sentencers and communities. The YOS has recently reviewed case management procedures and programme provision with the aim of reducing custodial sentences which the King's College paper reports has, with the exception of an increase in 2005, remained relatively stable.

7. Those young people who are sentenced to custody are highly vulnerable but often also present significant risks to others. Looked After Children in custody are a particularly vulnerable group and the YOS and Social Care have recently reviewed their joint working to improve outcomes for this group. The YOS directly commissions additional CAMHS services for young people in custody, who are often held a considerable distance from home. The YOS is also a key player in the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and leads the work in managing the risks posed by young people who have committed serious violent or sexual crime. King's College note that over the past five years violent offences by youths (resulting in a criminal justice outcome) have fallen by 52 per cent since 2005 and that "bearing in mind …. that the British Crime Survey shows that national reporting and recording rates were stable over this period, these figures suggest there have been real falls in youth crime".

8. Young people make up a high percentage of victims of youth crime and being a victim in itself is a risk factor for offending in the future. Crime can have a significant impact on young people's mental and emotional health, particularly their confidence and self-esteem. The Youth Offending Service commissions Remedi, a specialist voluntary sector provider, to provide restorative justice interventions including mediation. These interventions are proven to have high satisfaction ratings from victims and can be specifically tailored for young victims. The YOS is currently working with Remedi and the police to look at extending the use of restorative justice principles in children's homes and schools.

9. The reduction in first time entrants is a Local Area Agreement improvement target.. Current data suggests that during the 2008-09 the number of first time entrants reduced 24.5 percent from the baseline year placing the county on course to meet the target of an 8.3 percent reduction by March 2011. Proven re-offending by young offenders, another key LAA National Indicator, reduced by 3.8 percent in 2007-08 when compared to the baseline year. These figures will be validated by September 2009. Figure Two, below, shows the full set of LAA Youth Justice indicators

Figure 2: Local Area Agreement National Indicators for Youth Justice

Target	Explanation
NI 111: First time entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17	Notts LAA Improvement Target and plans to meet this are included within the Children and Young People's Plan. Baseline - Number of FTE 2007/08 1198. DCSF count as 1,530 FTEs per 100,000 population DCSF target range of FTE 1110-1126 Or 1,420-1,440 per 100,000 population by March 2011 2008-09 local out-turn of 903 or 1155 FTEs per 100,000 population.
NI 19: Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders	A local target has been set of **3%** reduction each year which would equate to an 8.8% reduction by March 2011**.** This is not included in the LAA.
NI 43: Young people within the Youth Justice System receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody	There is no numerical target and good performance against this indicator is typified by a reduction year-on-year.
NI 44: Ethnic composition of offenders on Youth Justice System disposals	This indicator aims to identify differences in representation within the youth justice system and in order to help in reducing disproportionate representation for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. There is no target set.
NI 45: Young offenders' engagement in suitable education, training and employment	There is no numerical target and good performance against this indicator is typified by an increase year-on-year.
NI 46: Young Offenders' access to suitable accommodation	There is no numerical target and good performance against this indicator is typified by an increase year-on-year.

RECOMMENDATION

10. The Board are asked to note the report and the service's key performance indicators and targets, and I would ask members of the Partnership Board to ensure that the needs of these young people

who offend, or who are at risk of offending, are reflected in their service planning.

LAURENCE JONES
Head of the Youth Offending Service