

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
COMMITTEE**

YOUTH VIOLENCE AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides an update to Committee on developments in tackling Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation further to the report brought in February 2020.
2. The report also seeks approval to establish 4 FTE Youth Worker and 16 x 3 hours per week part time Youth Support Worker grade posts on a temporary basis until July 2022. These were temporarily established in May 2019 on a fixed term contract until March 2021.

Information

Tackling Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation in Nottinghamshire

3. Criminal exploitation involves exploitative situations where a young person receives something (e.g. food, accommodation, alcohol, drugs, affection, gifts, money) in return for them completing a task of a criminal nature on behalf of another individual or group. County Lines is one example of criminal exploitation. County Lines is the process by which young people are groomed by adults and exploited to traffic class A drugs between counties, often from urban to rural areas. The 'line' refers to a dedicated mobile phone line used in this process. Nottinghamshire is acutely aware of the threat from County Lines and is working closely with the police to understand and intervene to disrupt such activity.
4. The Multi-Agency Serious Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation (YVCCE) Panel made up of senior colleagues from across the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership has continued to meet on a monthly basis to consider those young people in the County seen as being at the greatest level of risk. Since March 2020 the panel has continued to meet monthly on a virtual basis. A 'cohort approach' has been developed with young people being tracked by the Panel until agreed that the identified risks have been markedly reduced.
5. In addition to the children's services led panel, police colleagues have established a new model of managing risks of connected young people in a geographical location. Neighbourhood Safeguarding and Disruption (NSD) meetings are chaired by neighbourhood police inspectors and invite operational staff from children's social care,

youth justice service, the youth service and the district council to come together to discuss how to manage groups of young people spending time in a particular location. Both those vulnerable to exploitation and those at risk of perpetrating a violent crime are included in the discussions and outcomes are fed back to the YVCCE panel.

6. A Child Criminal Exploitation e-learning package and classroom-based training programme (delivered virtually at present) have been developed by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership and is being rolled out.
7. The YVCCE Steering Group, a sub-group of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The group provides strategic oversight of the partnership pathway for children at risk of violence and/or criminal exploitation including both intervention and prevention for those with emerging risks and targeted support and risk management for those at higher risk.
8. Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Partnerships were successful in entering a joint bid to the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme and work began to deliver this project in December 2020. The TCE Support Programme aims to enable a more effective strategic approach to safeguarding children and young people in relation to extra-familial harm and exploitation. Locally the project aim is to rationalise the cross authority strategic approach to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation which are currently managed through separate pathways.

Youth Work Interventions and Mentors Project

9. In May 2019 Policy Committee approved the establishment of a number of temporary Youth Worker and Youth Support Worker posts. This work was to be targeted at young people known to the Youth Justice Service and receiving a statutory service, as well as working with young people on the periphery of engaging in risky behaviours. After a successful recruitment round the countywide youth work interventions project began in October 2019.
10. The aims of the project were to reduce risk of young people committing or becoming a victim of violent crime, to reduce offending and re-offending, to improve aspirations and increase engagement in positive activities (education, training, youth centres etc).
11. The project had two delivery methods: activity based mentoring delivered by staff embedded within the Youth Justice Service, and tailored Youth Work Interventions delivered by Youth Workers in the Youth Service, with the aim of stepping young people down into mainstream provision, when it is safe to do so.
12. The activity based youth mentoring work in the Youth Justice Service combines positive activities with practical advice and mentoring. The team has successfully engaged 67 young people, all but one of the young people referred in to the project. This is a significant achievement in itself given the complex nature of the young people who are involved with the Youth Justice Service which can be a barrier to professionals' ability to complete meaningful work.
13. The outcomes of the project within the Youth Justice Service have been positive. There has been a significant reduction in re-offending, with only 5% of the cohort reoffended in a 12 month period, in comparison to an average re-offending rate of 22%. Several young people

have been supported to gain qualifications, to access training, return to education or to get work experience. The majority of the cohort have continued to access a new positive activity including gym membership and setting up music studios. Some of the young people have transitioned out of the secure estate and into the community safely with the support of their mentor, and others close to their 18th birthday have successfully transitioned from supported accommodation to independent living.

14. The project has been equally successful in the Youth Service. The Youth Work Intervention team based within the Youth Service has become a key part of the youth work offer in Nottinghamshire. Youth Workers have made contact with approximately 2,000 young people and have engaged 240 individual young people in youth work interventions. Of this number the team has stepped down 34 young people into universal provision, typically introducing them to their local Young People's Centre and youth worker, thus providing a critical pathway to step young people down into universal provision and offering longer term support and interventions at the earliest opportunity.
15. Working with key partners and using local intelligence has enabled the Youth Work Interventions teams to target areas which are 'hotspots' for youth violence. Youth Workers have been meeting vulnerable young people on the streets of Nottinghamshire since the project commenced and this continued throughout lockdown where young people proved to be even more at risk. The team has been a critical support service for many young people providing a trusted youth worker to talk to as well as signposting or offering engaging diversionary activities as appropriate or requested.
16. The locality based intervention teams each have a case load of young people that they have managed using the Rikter scale self-assessment tool and 'traffic light' model. Of these young people there have been a high number of positive outcomes including support with housing, placement stability, re-engagement with education, creating distance and distance from adult exploiters, anger management and mental health.
17. The Youth Work Interventions and Mentors Project has enabled both services to engage with young people and provide target interventions to an unfortunately growing number of young people involved in or at risk of serious youth violence and Child Criminal Exploitation. The strength of the model and associated pathway enables Youth Workers and Youth Mentors to receive and triage referrals from different organisations including schools, Social Care and high profile multi-agency meetings e.g. the YVCCE Panel and County Lines tracker.
18. This project has also witnessed a greater collaboration from key stakeholders from across the Council's Children's Services, Police, the Violence Reduction Unit and District Councils, where decisions made have been based on local need, consequently deploying targeted youth work intervention to the areas most in need. This approach has enabled effective joining up and delivery of services and undoubtedly benefitted from having shared objectives and resources, which directly improved the outcomes for young people.

Impact of COVID 19

19. Before COVID examples of activities young people have been engaged with include mountain biking, football coaching, climbing, music production and gym sessions. However,

there are as many good examples of young people engaging well with youth workers and getting involved in a range of diversionary activities during the COVID 19 pandemic.

20. Since March 2020 and the differing levels of COVID restrictions, Youth Workers and Youth Mentors continued to use various methods to maintain contact with young people and build connections. Intervention has remained flexible and dynamic in its approach through delivering 1:1 support to young people who are most at risk, for instance delivering activity packs to young people, and remotely discussing and working through key issues and concerns together. Prioritised activities have also continued to be delivered from Young People's Centres and has included: cake making, board games, building remote control cars, mechanical clocks and bike repair. The Youth Service through their youth work interventions also received national recognition for their response during the Covid 19 pandemic. An article was published on the Local Government Website showcasing the youth work approach in Nottinghamshire. The article can be found [here](#) (scroll down to Children, Young People and Education, and click on Youth Interventions Project (Nottinghamshire)). This model of good practice has also been endorsed by Nottinghamshire Police who have expressed a real interest in the delivery model and clearly recognise the significance and value of Youth Work.

Proposal

21. Whilst recognising that the Council continues to face significant financial pressures, it is proposed that this project is continued with a small team of Youth Workers and Youth Support workers who will engage with young people identified as being at risk of youth violence through 1:1 youth work intervention, small group work and to ultimately support young people to independently access universal provision, when it safe to do so.
22. This additional capacity will allow the Youth Justice Service and Youth Service to target the most vulnerable and challenging young people with focussed youth work programmes, which concentrate on their interests and provides bespoke learning experiences. Through these activities and group work discussions, emphasis will be placed on addressing risk-taking, criminal behaviour, active citizenship and young people finding their role within society

Other Options Considered

23. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

24. On 10 October 2019, Nottinghamshire County Council Members unanimously agreed that work relating to Child Criminal Exploitation would be reported directly to Policy Committee at regular intervals and consider if the Council should take any further strategic action.
25. The Youth Work Mentoring programme has proven to be an effective tool in diverting children from the youth violence and criminal exploitation. The programme aligns with the Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Plan for 2020-2023 and with commitments in the Council Plan for 2017-21.

Statutory and Policy Implications

26. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

27. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires the local authority with its partners to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people and to deliver an effective local youth justice system.

Financial Implications

28. The cost of extending 4 FTE Professional Range Youth Workers and 16 x 3 hours per week part time Youth Support Worker grade posts (JNC) until July 2022 will be approximately £226,000 in 2021-22 which includes £204,000 for staffing including on costs, £20,000 for activities and £2,000 for travel and expenses. The total cost for the remaining 4 months in 2022-23 will be approximately £75,000 pro rata. This will be funded from the Troubled Families Grant Reserve which has a balance of £703,538.

Human Resources Implications

29. The posts will be recruited to in accordance with the agreed Vacancy Control Process and recruitment and selection policies.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) approves the proposal to extend 4 FTE Professional Range Youth Workers posts and 16 x 3 hours per week part time Youth Support Worker grade posts until July 2022 as detailed in the report.
- 2) agrees to receive a further update on developments in tackling Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation in 12 months' time.

Councillor Philip Owen

Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee

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Constitutional Comments (LW 08/03/21)

30. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 19/02/21)

31. The cost of extending 4 FTE Professional Range Youth Workers and 16 x 3 hour per week part time Youth Support Worker grade posts (JNC) until July 2022 will be approximately £226,000 in 2021-22 which includes £204,000 for staffing including on costs, £20,000 for activities and £2,000 for travel and expenses. The total cost for the remaining 4 months in 2022-23 will be approximately £75,000 pro rata. This will be funded from the Troubled Families Grant Reserve which has a balance of £703,538.

HR Comments (BC 04/03/21)

32. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Any vacant posts will be recruited to in accordance with the agreed Vacancy Control Process and recruitment and selection policies.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation – report to Policy Committee on 12th February 2020](#)

[Nottinghamshire's Knife Crime Strategy 2018 – report to Policy Committee on 22nd May 2019](#)

[Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Strategy 2019 – report to Full Council on 10th October 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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