



meeting Community Services Select Committee

date 8th May 2006

agenda item number

Report of the Crime and Disorder Study Group

Final Report of Review of the Youth Service Crime and Disorder Team

Purpose of the Report

1. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Study Group that has examined the effectiveness of the Crime and Disorder Team in the Youth Service.

Background

2. In considering its work programme for the current year the Select Committee decided to examine the effectiveness of the council's community safety initiatives. At its meeting on 3rd October 2005 the Committee decided to focus on the work of the youth service with youth offenders, or young people who are at risk of offending, and established a study group to scrutinise the Crime and Disorder team.
3. The study group has met on five occasions. It has taken evidence from representatives of the Crime and Disorder Team, the Connexions Service, and the Assistant Director, Young People's Division. In addition, members were given the opportunity to observe the team at work to get a feel for the issues and to get the views of young people and their parents. Unfortunately, the logistics of this have proved problematic and we have not been able to observe as much as we would have wanted.
4. The Crime and Disorder team (C&DT) is believed to be unique. It was created to work alongside community safety initiatives when Youth Offending Teams were introduced. The work was funded initially by a grant from the Home Office to facilitate work in areas covered by courts in the north of the county. Most of the team is now mainstream funded, from the youth service budget, although funding for specific projects comes from the community safety portfolio and other areas.
5. The C&DT offers a range of interventions and schemes to young offenders or people at risk of offending. Particular programmes include:
 - a) The **Buddy** scheme provides 1-to-1 counselling and support to young people aged 10-17 referred by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) – ie

who have offended and are serving a court order. The young people are supported in addressing the issues that cause concern – including offending behaviour, missing school, lack of employment. Engagement is on a sessional basis – typically six sessions each lasting two-hours.

- b) **New Horizons** consists of two projects covering the North and South of the county. The scheme undertakes preventative work with young people who although they have not been found to be offending are at serious risk. Referrals are from any agency – including Connexions and the education welfare service.
- c) The **FX** project runs a range of preventative workshops and events for young people around offending and consequences. Workshops are delivered in schools and youth clubs, as well as 1-to-1 sessions on anger management.

The project also runs an annual Youth Crime Awareness Week with a range of events in schools involving the whole team.

- d) The **Resettlement and Aftercare Project (RAP)** is a project led by the YOS that works with young people who have left a youth offending institute. The crime and disorder team provides voluntary group activities for these ex-offenders.
- e) The new **Mediation** scheme will be piloted in areas of Gedling and Broxtowe where there is a perception of young people exhibiting anti-social behaviour. The team will deploy youth work skills to mediate between local communities and young people where an early intervention and mediation may remove the need to seek and enforce anti-social behaviour orders.

Findings

- 6. The study group took the view that ultimately the effectiveness of our crime and disorder work is indicated by our success in preventing young people at risk of offending from starting to offend, and preventing young offenders from continuing to offend. We recognise that this is a high standard to achieve and that there is no simple solution to youth offending.
- 7. Members on the study group were impressed with the commitment and obvious enthusiasm that the team members bring to their work and have no reason to question the quality of their work with young people. The C&DT's contribution to the youth service's overall targets shows the team's success in contacting difficult young people, and getting them to participate in its programmes including achieving accredited awards. The annual performance figures for 2005/6 are appended.
- 8. However, we have been unable to find any evidence which demonstrates the effectiveness of our crime and disorder work in preventing young people offending or re-offending. We were disappointed that there does not appear

to be a system for monitoring the young people with whom the C&DT works and assessing “what works”.

9. We understand that this problem is common to work on youth offending. However, without evidence of how effective particular types of work are we cannot judge how our resources are best deployed and whether this is a priority for investment. We were told by the Connexions Service that this information should be available. Given that the YOS is now in the Young People’s Division alongside the C&DT we would expect to see better sharing of information and better monitoring of the effectiveness of our crime and disorder work.
10. The areas covered by the different projects reflect the history of the team and its projects, and the availability of funding. In particular the Buddy scheme only operates in the north of the county (the areas covered by northern courts). The indications are that a similar service would be welcomed in the south of the county
11. Reducing youth offending is a particularly difficult issue. However, it is important that all agencies in this field work together effectively. We were informed that the Connexions Service has established a crime diversion team which includes seconded police officers but apparently there are no links with the Crime and Disorder Team. The development of integrated children’s services following the Children Act may go some way to resolving this but we believe it is important that efforts are made to ensure that the different teams are better aware of each other’s work and that their different skills are deployed appropriately.
12. The Youth Matters Green Paper proposes that local authorities assume responsibility for advice and guidance from April 2008. In effect, responsibility for commissioning services currently provided by Connexions will revert to the County Council. This would provide an opportunity to ensure that any duplication is eliminated and, where appropriate, functions are better aligned.
13. Sharing information between the different agencies involved with a young person at risk of offending is important if their contribution is to be maximised. Currently the C&DT has a simple database of the young people with whom it is working. The Integrated Children’s Information System should resolve this, but we need to be reassured that this will happen sufficiently quickly. However, sharing information should be more than access to a database, there is a need for improved liaison.
14. We have heard that although the agencies may have agreed information sharing protocols this may not have percolated to frontline workers. If the agreements are to work it is important that protocols are communicated, tested and further developed as necessary.
15. Research suggests that one of the key factors in diverting young people from offending is ensuring that they achieve a good education and make the transition to employment. Anecdotally, we have heard that some young people who are excluded from school receive only limited education, perhaps

3 hours per week. In January 2002 a working group of the Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee reported on the issue of pupil behaviour, exclusions and attendance. The report identified examples of good practice in addressing the needs of challenging students. In parallel with this review, a best value service review of support for children with special educational needs was undertaken. Clearly, students who exhibit challenging behaviour can have a disproportionate effect on schools and other students. However, we are concerned at the limited support which seems to be available for students who are not attending school.

16. We have also heard that there may be particular problems with a lack of opportunities for young people post-16 on the E2E (education to employment) programmes. We are aware that the Council's E2E programmes provide for young people who have offended or are at risk have not been able to follow up in depth the overall adequacy of provision.
17. The study group was concerned to ensure that the limited resources of the C&DT were used appropriately and that young people were not "dumped" onto the team by other agencies. We have been assured that the C&DT is aware of this risk and would resist inappropriate referrals. We feel that this needs reinforcing with other agencies.
18. We heard that the C&DT's work may be hampered on occasion by the attitude that some other professionals have towards youth workers. Members have no doubts about the value of youth work and felt that the youth service should make efforts to establish the credibility of its work with other agencies as well as the public more generally, and increase the recognition of the potential value of the voluntary nature of work with young people. This could be achieved in a number of ways, including perhaps a multi-agency conference.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Members' attention is however drawn to the following:

Equal Opportunities Implications

20. Our work in this area is with young people who are at risk of social exclusion.

Implications for service users

21. The report is aimed at developing an improved and more integrated service.

Crime and Disorder Implications

22. The work of the Crime and Disorder Team is consistent with the council's statutory responsibilities to do what it can to reduce crime and disorder in its area.

Recommendations

23. The select committee is asked to make the following recommendations to the Cabinet
- 1) Systems for monitoring and evaluation should be established for all the council's work in responding to crime and disorder. The systems should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's work and not just the overall levels of crime and disorder.
 - 2) Consideration be given to extending the Buddy Scheme to cover the whole of the County.
 - 3) Links between the Crime and Disorder team and the crime diversion team in the Connexions Service be strengthened and liaison formalised.
 - 4) When the funding for Connexions reverts to the County Council the functions to be undertaken by Connexions as opposed to the council or other agencies be reviewed as part of the commissioning process.
 - 5) The Cabinet satisfy itself that the integrated children's information system meets the council's requirements for crime diversion.
 - 6) Information sharing protocols be disseminated to the frontline staff in all relevant agencies.
 - 7) Discussions be held with the Learning and Skills Council on the adequacy of E2E provision for young offenders aged over 16.
 - 8) The adequacy of the provision for educating young people who do not attend schools should be reviewed.
 - 9) The basis of referrals from other agencies be formalised.
 - 10) The youth service consider how to raise the understanding of youth work and the standing of youth workers among other agencies.

Yvonne Davidson

Chair,
Community Services Select Committee

Legal Services Comments

The Community Service Select Committee has, as set out in the Council's Constitution and Section 21 (2) of the Local Government Act 2000, the power to make reports and/or recommendations to the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of functions relating to culture, arts, libraries, youth, community regeneration, economic development and public protection. Accordingly, the recommendations made in this report are within the remit of this Committee (PW 25/06/06).

Director of Resources' Financial Comments(C&C/RWK)

The report makes a number of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet. Any financial implications arising from these recommendations, which have not been quantified at this stage, will need to be contained within the 2006/07 revenue budget or considered as service developments as part of preparing the 2007/08 revenue budget.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Notes of meetings of the study group.

Electoral Division(s) Affected

All

Crime and Disorder Team: Performance against the REYS targets.

The REYS (Resourcing Excellent Youth Service) targets are set by Government to improve the number of young people that youth services nationally engage with. The Government expects that 25% of young people aged 13-19 should be contacted by the youth service, and 60% of these should participate in youth service activities. Of these participants, some 60% should achieve a recorded outcome and 30% achieve an accredited outcome.

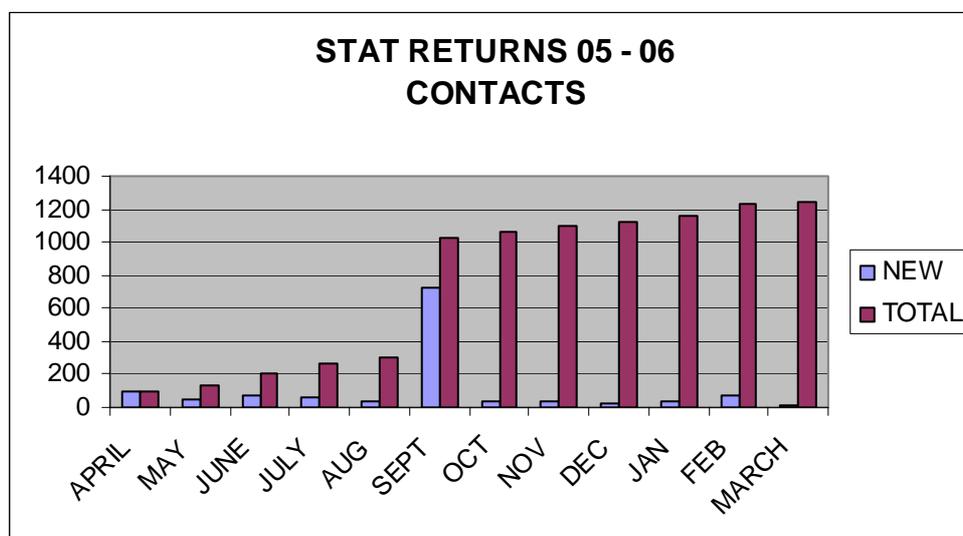
The overall targets apply to the service as a whole but are disaggregated to individual teams. The following figures relate to the Crime and Disorder Team.

CONTACT**CONTACTS**

annual target

400

MONTH	NEW	TOTAL
APRIL	94	94
MAY	44	138
JUNE	70	208
JULY	57	265
AUG	41	306
SEPT	722	1028
OCT	40	1068
NOV	36	1104
DEC	21	1125
JAN	33	1158
FEB	75	1233
MARCH	12	1245



Contact means

- ❖ The youth worker knows the name and face of the young person and is consciously building a relationship with them.

AND, for example

- ❖ The young person attends events occasionally,
- ❖ The young person may seek information or advice,
- ❖ The young person may be involved in issue-based session/s with a group at a school (but attendance at school assemblies don't count).

Note. The significant increase in contacts in September reflects the whole team focusing on going into schools to give sessions on community safety.

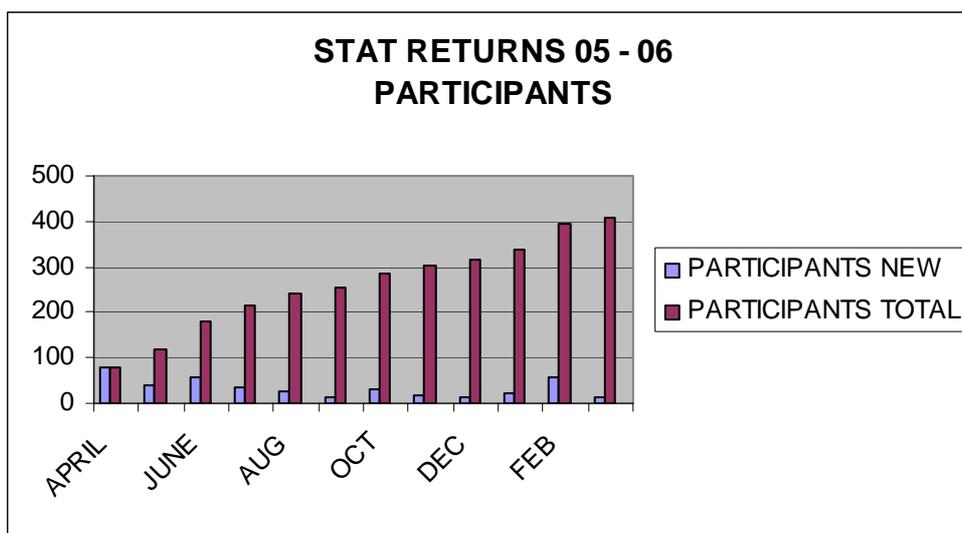
PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPANTS

Annual Target

300

MONTH	NEW	TOTAL
APRIL	81	81
MAY	38	119
JUNE	59	178
JULY	35	213
AUG	27	240
SEPT	14	254
OCT	31	285
NOV	16	301
DEC	13	314
JAN	23	337
FEB	58	395
MARCH	12	407



Participation means

- ❖ The youth worker has an ongoing relationship with the young person AND
- ❖ The young person is involved with/attends youth work sessions/activities on a regular basis and is participating in a youth work curriculum in some way or
- ❖ The young person takes part in a “concentrated experience” – a piece of focused work such as a residential event or project.

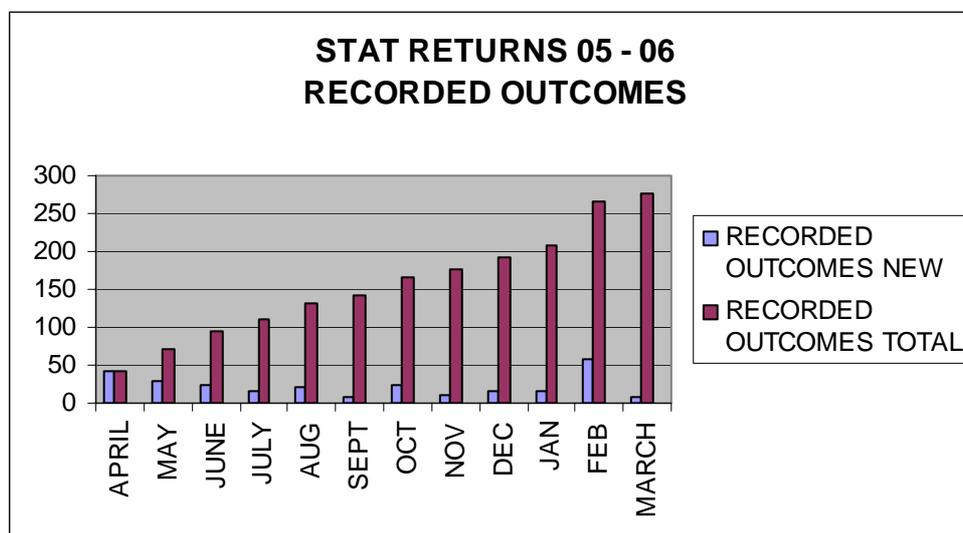
RECORDED OUTCOMES

RECORDED OUTCOMES

Annual Target

200

MONTH	NEW	TOTAL
APRIL	42	42
MAY	28	70
JUNE	25	95
JULY	16	111
AUG	21	132
SEPT	9	141
OCT	25	166
NOV	11	177
DEC	16	193
JAN	16	209
FEB	58	267
MARCH	9	276



A recorded outcome is achieved when an intervention by a youth worker leads the young person to do something which may not otherwise have happened, for example;

- ❖ Take a course of training.
- ❖ Move from parents or carers home to their own.
- ❖ Be part of a project that has no accredited outcome, such as drugs information in the youth centre.

This outcome must be recorded somewhere e.g. sessional recording sheet or individual young person’s record.

The target relates to the number of young people and not the number of recorded outcomes, so if a young person gains more than one recorded outcome, this only counts as one towards the target.

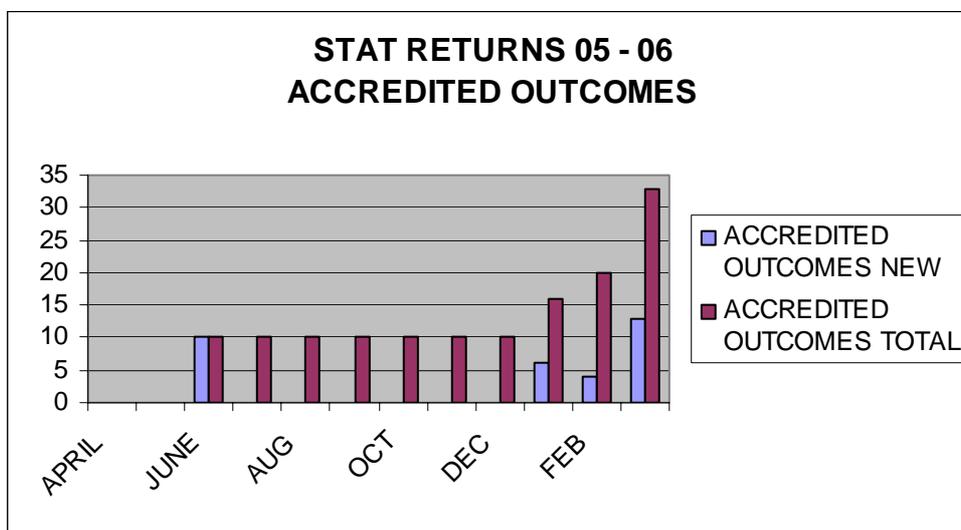
ACCREDITED OUTCOMES

Accredited Outcomes

Annual Target

40

MONTH	NEW	TOTAL
APRIL	0	0
MAY	0	0
JUNE	10	10
JULY	0	10
AUG	0	10
SEPT	0	10
OCT	0	10
NOV	0	10
DEC	0	10
JAN	6	16
FEB	4	20
MARCH	13	33



These are achieved when a young person completes a module towards a nationally accredited award such as a Youth Achievement Award or a Duke of Edinburgh Award. Achievement of an accredited outcome should be supported within the youth work process and have credibility outside youth work. Where possible the award should have a link to employment, education and training.

N.B. The target relates to the number of young people – not the number of accreditations, i.e. if a young person achieves more than one accreditation this only counts as one towards the target.