



Youth Justice Strategic Plan

Thursday 20 September 2018

Report from Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2018-2019. The Youth Justice Plan provides details of progress made against agreed outcomes for Children and Young People. It outlines priorities, alongside potential future challenges for the partnership over the coming year. The Youth Justice Plan highlights the partnership arrangements and budget position for the Youth Offending Service Partnership.

Background

1. Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service is a multi-agency partnership between the Police, Children's Services, Health Services, Probation, Community Safety and both voluntary and private sector providers.
2. The Youth Offending Service plays a key role in keeping our communities, families, children and young people safe through the prevention of offending and reoffending, reduction in the use of custody and through contributions to multi-agency protection and safeguarding.
3. The Youth Justice Plan is produced in compliance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 40 which stipulates the following:

'It shall be the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year a plan (a "youth justice plan") setting out—

(a) How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded; and

(b) How the Youth Offending Team (YOT) or teams established by them (whether alone or jointly with one or more other local authorities) are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out.'



4. The plan also incorporates guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.
5. The plan was developed in partnership with other agencies, including young people, probation, health and education via the YOS management partnership board and partners have had the opportunity to contribute and develop the plan and priorities.
6. Multi-agency Youth Offending Teams/Services (YOT/YOS) were established in 2000 following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, with the intention of reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend. The act stipulates the composition of the YOT and identifies statutory partners to work alongside the Local Authority.
7. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has set three national outcome indicators for all Youth Offending Teams which form the baseline for performance information included within this year's plan. These are as follows:
 - Reduce the number of first time entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
 - Reduce re-offending
 - Reduce the use of custody

Main section

8. 126 young people aged 10-17 entered the Youth Justice System in Bucks for the first time between October 2016 and September 2017.
9. Since 2008 there has been a significant reduction in first time entrants. Over the same period there has been sustained effective joint work between the Youth Offending Service and Thames Valley Police both in relation to the targeted work of the Early Help Panel and strong links with Liaison and Diversion.
10. Priorities to reduce first time entrants include improving the use of voluntary out of court interventions; promotion of family engagement and whole family approaches; and developing partnership approaches with the police and schools to reduce exclusion.
11. The custody rate in 2017 has increased on the previous year (0.23 per 1000) and risen above the average for Thames Valley. It is now in line with the South East, but remains lower than the national average.
12. This is the first increase in custody numbers in Buckinghamshire for six years. The increase can, in part, be attributed to five young people receiving custodial sentences for a very serious group robbery offence.
13. Whilst there have been challenges overall in terms of numbers of young people in custody, we have seen a significant reduction in the use of custodial remands.

14. Over the coming year, the service will focus on strengthening Pre-Sentence Report proposals - identifying ways in which current resources can be effectively used to provide robust alternatives to custody.
15. The actual number of young people who re-offend has reduced considerably over the last five years: 103 young people re-offended in Buckinghamshire in the latest 12 month period, compared to the 182 young people who re-offended in the same period five years earlier. The reoffending rate in Buckinghamshire was 42.7% during the last recording period (2015-16); this is higher than Thames Valley, South East and English comparators and represents an increase of 7% on the previous year. This overall increase in the reoffending rate can be explained by an increase in the numbers of offences per reoffender.
16. The Youth Offending Service tracks each young person open to the service and completes an audit of those who reoffend. This informs the way the service develops interventions and support services.
17. Alternative diversionary opportunities for young people will be identified in 2018-19 which, together with the development of innovative approaches in trauma-informed practice, should enhance the effectiveness of the service in engaging with the most complex reoffenders.

Priorities for the coming year

- 18. Continue to focus on reducing reoffending by adopting the enhanced case management model, with trauma informed practice at its core.**
19. The Buckinghamshire YOS have seen increasing levels of vulnerability and complexity in our cohort of young offenders, many of whom have experienced childhood trauma. For this reason we recognise the need to evolve in the way that we work with this group of young people by adopting the enhanced case management model which is being introduced by a number of other Youth Offending Teams nationally and is recognised as good practice throughout inspections and youth justice field.
- 20. Develop a clear and consistent approach to all forms of child exploitation.**
21. In Buckinghamshire the YOS has experienced the growth of 'county lines' which involves the criminal exploitation of young people in the drugs market and recognise the need to develop a clear and consistent approach to working with young people at risk of being exploited in this way.
- 22. Work closely with Children's Social Care to support the improvement journey.**
23. There is the potential for more integrated working across Children's Services to improve the outcomes for children and young people and this will be a key focus during the coming year.

24. Review and explore models of service delivery whilst maintaining an effective and efficient response to offending by young people and delivering value for money.

25. The YOS recognises need to deliver positive outcomes whilst also delivering value for money and will ensure efficiencies are made where possible.

Recommendation

Council is asked to:

1. Council is asked to approve the 2018-19 Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Appendix 1 – **Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan**