

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 MARCH 2020

MEDWAY YOUTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2020 - 2023

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Summary

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires Local Authorities to have a Youth Justice Plan which is annually updated to set out how youth justice will be delivered locally within available resources.

This plan (attached at Appendix 1) will cover a 3 year period from 2020 - 2023 and has been co-produced with Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) members and influenced by national research and evidence of effective practice and has taken examples across National Partnerships.

A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposals set out in this report and is attached at Appendix 2.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 A Youth Justice Plan is required under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 1.2 The Youth Justice Plan is a strategic plan and forms part of the Policy Framework for Medway Council (Chapter 2, Article 4.1 of the Constitution). The approval or adoption of the Policy Framework is a function of Full Council. The Youth Justice Plan therefore needs to be approved by Full Council prior to formal submission to the Ministry Of Justice. The submitted Plan is then placed in the House of Lords Library.
- 1.3 The Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan (attached at Appendix 1) is revised on an annual basis and forms part of the Council's policy framework.

- 1.4 The Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) will retain a clear focus on the principal aim of reducing offending and re-offending and maintains strategic oversight of the delivery and performance of the local youth justice system and contribution from all partners. The membership of the board provides senior representation from key partners to ensure that young people involved in the youth justice system have access to a range of services to support the partnership's responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to:
- Co-ordinate the provision of youth justice services for all those in the authority's area who need them;
 - Carry out such functions assigned in the youth justice plan formulated by the local authority;
 - In addition, by providing the youth justice services outlined at Section 38 (4) of the Act, the local authority also addresses its duty, under the Children Act 1989, to take reasonable steps designed to encourage children and young people within the area not to commit offences.

2. Background

- 2.1 Our 3-year strategic Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan for 2020-2023, reflects our successes as a partnership and sets out how we will continue to deliver high quality, high performing youth justice services over the next 3 years. It also builds on our previous plan (2017-2020).
- 2.2 The Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan will be refreshed each year. This refresh will take into account any changes to the national and local youth justice landscape and services, which impact on the strategic priorities. The objective of the annual refresh will be to ensure timely and appropriate action is taken to prevent and reduce youth offending in Medway. The strategic priorities, which will underpin our action planning cycle over the 3-year period, are aligned with the principal aims of the youth justice system. These are:
1. Prevent Youth Crime
 2. Reduce Re-offending
 3. Safeguard young people from harm
 4. Protect the public from harm
- 2.3 Through effective partnership working we will take action to engage with children and young people at risk of or involved in offending and support them to fulfil their potential so they:
- Thrive (in their community)
 - Learn and develop (through education, training or employment)
 - Be Healthy (easy and natural access and support)
- 2.4 The 3-year strategic plan will provide the greatest opportunity to deliver sustainable high quality youth justice outcomes, which can withstand short, medium and longer term risks. To deliver the partnership strategy we will align youth justice partnership activity with four strategic priorities that, through complementary quality assurance, partnership working, workforce development and governance, will provide a foundation and framework for planning the delivery of exceptional youth justice outcomes over the next 3 years.
- 2.5 To support children and young people to achieve positive outcomes, the work Medway YOT undertakes with schools, pupil referral units, alternative

provision and colleges will be key. Our links with the Attendance Advisory Support for Schools and Academies, to address attendance concerns will be important along that with work to support inclusion. Any challenges will be addressed through the Schools Support Group, a forum to discuss support for children who are at risk of exclusion. We will also have a renewed focus on children with special educational needs. We have strengthened the strategic plan to ensure those in the criminal justice system are a priority.

- 2.6 We will also build on strategic links with the Skills and Employability Board. We are aware that with a reduction in post 16 provision (12 settings to 2) we now have 142 less places for those aged 16 plus. This will need to be monitored and addressed as we have seen a decline in education, training and employment outcomes in the last 2 quarters for young people working with the YOT.
- 2.7 There has been healthy challenge and oversight of this work by the Youth Justice Strategic Board and the Lead Member, who will receive regular briefings in relation to progress and improvements made. This includes the natural links with community safety and the partnership arrangements as well as challenge through Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) to monitor performance and progress.
- 2.8 Critical to some of the preventative work that takes place is the youth service (including the youth centres). The service provides a critical role in providing resources in the community to ensure young people have somewhere to go and someone to talk to. The youth service will also play a critical role in the targeted youth work programme developed through the violent reduction programme tackling hot spots within the community.

3. Highlights

- 3.1 Local partnership working arrangements (between January 2018 and December 2019), have had a transformational impact on how we are able to deliver services and support our young people better. We have reformed many elements of our system in order to improve outcomes for young people, victims and communities. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) has provided a holistic and integrated case management response. This response has enabled vulnerable young people to overcome a range of barriers, including offending that would otherwise have negatively impacted on their ability to achieve their life chances.
- 3.2 Medway has been recognised as innovative leaders in the field of youth justice. Last year we presented at the National Justice Conference to talk about our work. We have subsequently been asked to work with national leads and universities, who want to learn more about how we have developed our desistance approach and child first plans.
- 3.3 There has been a marked change in the identified needs and complexities of the challenges affecting the children and young people we support. We have seen an increase in violent youth crime and weapon related incidents. Addressing these issues will be a focus for us over the coming 3 years. To enable this, we are moving into a trauma informed youth justice service. We have recruited a clinical psychologist to increase our capability to support our more complex children.

- 3.4 We have continued our collaborative work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent. This partnership work led to a successful bid to central government for resources that have enabled us to establish a Violence Reduction Unit. We have also recently accessed additional resources to put in place a North Kent initiative to address serious youth violence.
- 3.5 Staff retention has been a notable success. Through proactive workforce development, we have been able to retain and attract experienced and capable professionals, from an array of different disciplines and professional backgrounds, to work in Medway. Our skilled workforce enables us to continue to improve and embed good practice to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.6 However, we must not allow ourselves to become complacent about our successes.

4. Performance

- 4.1 We know Medway YOT is performing above expectations against the National Standards in our audit, peer reviews and pilot inspection feedback.
- 4.2 Medway YOT has gone through a recent inspection. We have been working hard to ensure we are delivering against the 3 areas of inspection:
- Organisational delivery
 - Court Order
 - Out of Court Disposals
- 4.3 We anticipate that the outcome of the inspection will reflect the significant contribution Medway YOT (and its partners) have made to improve outcomes for children and young people over the last 12 months.
- 4.4 This success has not come overnight. Medway YOT and partnership, had been assessed as not meeting expectations following an external peer review initiated by the new Head of Service some 30 months ago. Since that time, the YOT has been transformed. It has embraced self-improvement and piloted a new inspection framework. Using the findings from this pilot, a change programme and revised working arrangements to develop a wider partnership was initiated (Youth Justice Partnership Board).
- 4.5 The success of these interventions is evidenced by the findings of a focussed visit that occurred less than 10 months ago. The feedback from this visit was 'the child first model in Medway was clear and understood'. YOT plans for children were 'very strong and amongst the best they had ever seen and partnership working was now making a difference to young people'.
- 4.6 There is, however, still much more to do. Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board needs to be concerned with the number of:
- First time entrants
 - Use of custody
 - Reoffending rates (this is a key priority)

- 4.7 To support the delivery of our ambitious programme we have:
- Been successful with a joint bid with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent to access funding and establish a Violence Reduction Unit. This will facilitate support for young people, with intensive support to those at greatest risk of reoffending.
 - Working closely with the new Medway Task Force and Serious Youth Violence initiatives.
 - Increasing capacity and capability within the team through the recruitment of a dedicated psychologist and data analyst.
- 4.8 On a recent deep dive into the performance and data reporting (specifically in relation to Medway reoffending figures), we can assure members that Medway's position is much improved. Medway has been over reporting reoffending figures. This will see a reoffending figure of over 50% reduce to approximately 35%, which will place Medway below the national average. This issue has identified the need for a data analyst within the YOT, which has recently been approved for recruitment.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 Medway received a HMIP inspection of YOT between 24th and 28th February 2020. Rules and guidance on YOT inspections can be viewed using the following link: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/documentation-area/youth-offending-services-inspection/>

At the point of writing the report, the inspection outcome is not known. We will receive the published report on 1st June 2020.

- 5.2 Within this inspection (as of the 6th February 2020), our risk areas are:

- 5.2.1 The Medway YOT may receive a grading no higher than 'requires improvement' in their overall judgement. This is due to the fact all HMIP inspections where Children Services has been judged 'inadequate' have been graded no higher than requires improvement. .

- 5.2.2 Strategic:

- Data and analytical resources supporting YOT.
- All YOT's assessed as outstanding are required to demonstrate effective use of data and information and how they use information to understand and address risk factors that drive re-offending rates. We are working with the YJB to develop our use of data and information and a reoffending toolkit. We have recently visited Essex (assessed as outstanding) to determine how they manage data.
- Partnership learning through multi-agency audits. Previously we have audited cases and ensure learning is embedded within the team. Now we want to ensure Children's Services and all partners develop their work and practice with those in the criminal justice system.
(These are recent additions and too early to measure impact).

Actions:

- Task and finish groups in place to address both areas.
- Board have agreed the recruitment of a data analysis within the YOT.

5.2.3 Operational:

- Improve our prevention offer and pathways into Early Help (including step down at closure)
- The exit plans from YOT intervention are not as strong as they should be. This includes the amount of contact with the Police and over use of no further action (where we see young people offend 5+ times before being referred to the YOT).
- Delays in the manner in which Out of Court Disposals (OOC/ Police decisions) impact negatively on referrals to and from the YOT.
- More effective use of 'partnership data' and related information by those working with young people, to inform the intervention.

Actions:

- Review of case work under way with clear recommendations through learning audits.
- Working with the Police Crime Commissioners Office and Scrutiny panel to review this work.

5.2.4 Casework:

- Exit planning with partner agencies for case closures
- Undertaking reviews in a timely manner
- Ensuring we have the process to determine quality outcomes as opposed to process measurements.

Actions:

- Improvement in internal audits and staff feedback
- Using the same audit tool as Children's Services creating consistency in practice and learning.

5. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Poor inspection outcome grading the Youth Offending Team and Partners as 'inadequate'.	Medway will have an HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection of their YOT early in 2020. https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/documentation-area/youth-offending-services-inspection/ Reputational risk and improvement notice issued.	Case file audits. Completion of national standards. Pilot inspection with HMIP. Peer reviews, focused visits and recent inspections of Children's Services. Thematic audits. YOT manager put on the HMIP inspectors course and implemented statutory visits understanding what good looks like.	C3

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan 2020-23 has been circulated to partner organisations represented at the Youth Justice Partnership Board (previously the YOT Management Board).
- 6.2 Medway Youth Council have also been involved in the consultation of this document as well as those accessing the service.
- 6.3 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 2.

7. Implications for Looked After Children

- 7.1 There are important implications for children in care as 25% of children in the YOT cohort are children in care. The YOT have a joint protocol with Kent Police to ensure that children in care, are not over represented in the criminal justice system.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The Youth Offending Team now sits within Public Health. There is a significant transformation programme currently in progress across the health and social care landscape and the realignment of YOT to the public health function, creates a range of opportunities to further engage with our NHS and social care partners to ensure effective lasting change for young people and their families.
- 8.2 The YOT responsibilities are funded through contributions from the statutory partner agencies in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The table below outlines the current funding from each of the partner agencies. Each partner's contributions are reviewed annually.
- 8.3 In addition, the YOT also receives a Youth Justice Grant from both the Ministry of Justice and the Department Of Education, which is passported via Medway to the Youth Justice Board.

Delegated Funds from Partner Agencies

OPCC	£90,353
Probation	£2,500
Health (Public Health)	£56,000
Local Authority	£158,370
YJB	£304,366
Total	£611,589

Other:

NHS for trauma informed practice/ training	£56,000
NHS for restorative justice programme/ training	£25,000

- 8.4 The full resource implications are contained within the main Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategy.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year, a plan (a “Youth Justice Plan”) setting out how Youth Justice Services in their area are to be provided, funded and will deliver against their targets.

10. Next steps

- 10.1 The proposed Youth Justice Plan will be presented to Members as follows:

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	5 March 2020
Cabinet	7 April 2020
Full Council	23 April 2020

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 That the Committee recommend Cabinet to recommend Full Council to approve the 3 year strategy, accompanied by a 12 month action plan all underpinned by the use of a public health approach.
- 11.2 That the Committee recommend Cabinet to recommend Full Council to agree that reducing reoffending rates should be a major priority for all Members as well as the YJPB.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan 2020- 2023
Appendix 2 – Diversity impact Assessment

Background Papers

None.