

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Youth Offending Service</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2019
<b>WARD</b>	(All Wards);
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The Wokingham Youth Offending Service (WYOS) perform statutory youth justice functions and undertake preventative work at an individual, group and community level. Service delivery is aimed at reducing offending, safeguarding young people and protection of the public.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the committee notes the report and comments on this.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report will provide an overview to the committee regarding the strategic and operational practices of WYOS. It will include a review of financial arrangements and offer a summary of partnerships and strategies designed to improve outcomes for young offenders and reduce re-offending. Additionally, the report will explain how WYOS intends to demonstrate adherence to National Standards for children in the Youth Justice system and outline activities being undertaken in preparation for inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation.

## **Analysis of Issues**

### **1. Funding/Budget**

The Youth Justice Board has confirmed that the Local Authority youth justice grant allocation for 2019/20 is £100,447; in cash terms 1% lower than in 2018/19. In order to receive this grant, WYOS are required to submit an annual Youth Justice Plan, which details how funding will be spent in the operation and delivery of youth justice services. This plan has been submitted and was approved by the Youth Justice Board on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019. The WYOS Management board agreed a subsequent action plan (9<sup>th</sup> September 2019) to ensure compliance at a local level with the targets set.

The Youth Justice Board also provides funds to each Local Authority to reflect the changes brought about by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (namely that all under 18s on remand are classified as Children in Care and as such may become eligible for Leaving Care services). The distribution of this funding is calculated using verified Young Offender Institution bed night usage over the three previous years; Wokingham was not allocated any funds as a result.

WYOS secured £14,600 in Police and Crime Commissioner Grant money from the Local Authority Community Safety Partnership, following the submission of bids for projects outlined in this report. There has been a £6,200 reduction in grant income for 2019/20 when compared to 2018/2019. This is following a review of the allocations process, which led to WYOS having to bid for the funds alongside other agencies, instead of monies being allocated automatically.

### **2. Staffing and Partnerships**

An agreement was reached with the National Probation Service for WYOS to recruit to a 0.5 FTE link worker post, which is a national requirement. The primary function of this role is to support the transition of young people from YOS to Probation Services. This post has now been recruited to, with an anticipated start date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

The provision of an Education worker, to be nominated by the Director of Children's Services, is a statutory minimum staffing requirement. An action to appoint this representative has been taken forward from the YOS Management Board.

Partnerships between WYOS and other agencies are considered to be of a good standard and are key to promoting positive outcomes for service users. Examples of this include:

- A Police Officer, attached to WYOS 2 days per week. This officer provides key intelligence relating to WYOS service users, works with young people to break down barriers, undertakes a variety of interventions and delivers youth/conditional cautions to young people alongside YOS workers.
- A Speech and Language Therapist, attached to WYOS ½ a day per week. This worker provides support in the identification of learning needs amongst WYOS service users, supports young people to access suitable education and offers consultation regarding how YOS intervention programmes should be tailored to support best learning.

- A CAMHS worker, attached to WYOS 1 day per week. This worker supports in fast tracking WYOS service users into mental health services and provides consultation to WYOS staff relating to working with young people with mental health concerns.
- A nurse, attached to WYOS 1 day per week. This nurse undertakes health assessments for all young people accessing WYOS services, ensures immunisations are up to date, supports access to hearing tests and offers advice regarding sexual health.

Following the discontinuation of the c-card scheme, WYOS have identified gaps in provision that are impacting on WYOS service users, namely access to sex and relationship education and the provision of condoms to promote safe sex practices. The Berkshire Health Foundation Trust representative on the WYOS Management Board has confirmed that she is currently liaising with the relevant partners to address this concern across all Youth Offending Services within the Berkshire West area.

### **3. HM Inspectorate of Probation**

HMI Probation has developed a more focused approach to inspecting smaller youth offending services. This approach will include youth offending services with smaller caseloads in close geographical proximity to each other. It aims to inspect them within the same four-year cycle as other services, but to do so over a shorter time period in order to reduce the burden on them.

Following consultation with the children's services leadership team, WYOS joined up with West Berkshire youth offending services to express interest in volunteering to take part in a pilot inspection. The pilots were originally scheduled to run over June and July 2019 but are now scheduled for later in the year. It is therefore possible that WYOS will be subject to the pilot HMIP inspection prior to the end of the year.

WYOS continues to explore the strengths and challenges it faces through self-assessment of the domains within the HMIP inspection framework. Following the completion of Domains 2 (post court cases) and 3 (out-of-court disposals), changes have been made to assessment tools and frameworks for planning, with a greater focus on safeguarding and well-being. A proposal has been made that WYOS is placed within the Continuous Improvement Program as an area of priority to a) draw upon resources for inspection preparation and b) to consider identifying an experienced YOS practitioner to review the WYOS offer and processes. This has been agreed by the Continuous Improvement Board and a meeting to progress these arrangements is scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

WYOS is committed to shaping the collection and analysis of performance data in order to evidence the application of trends arising from practice. The WYOS manager and the performance team within Children's Services are working together to progress this.

### **4. National Standards**

The new National Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System were set by the Secretary of State for Justice and came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. The YOS Management Board is required to satisfy themselves that WYOS has implemented these

standards. This will be evidenced to the Youth Justice Board in April 2020 via a transition audit following a self-assessment of the National Standards, which will involve partner agencies. The practicalities around this audit will be agreed at the next YOS Management Board meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

## **5. Operational Practice**

WYOS currently have 53 children on their caseload. Twenty eight of the cohort have been referred via the Children's Services front door for early intervention work and include referrals from EMRAC, the Anti-social Behaviour Prevention Group and the Children's Services transfer meetings. Referrals from the Youth Justice Unit (out of court disposals) total 9, and those sentenced in Youth Court (statutory court orders) total 16. The latter figure includes 2 young people on bail support, 1 custody case in HM YOI Feltham, and 3 Children in Care accommodated outside of the Borough.

WYOS has commenced work on initiatives around the decriminalisation of Children in Care. An initial meeting took place with local foster carers exploring a need for training on restorative processes. The next step is for the WYOS Restorative Justice Worker and a staff member from Training and Development to agree how to implement this training. This is an action in the Youth Justice Plan.

WYOS strive to reduce first time entrants through prevention and early help services and to reduce re-offending/custody rates through outcome based intervention programmes. As such, WYOS have secured PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner) funding for a variety of projects, the majority of which are facilitated by the WYOS Prevention and Early Help workers. Please see details as follows:

- A Boxing Course: To help develop skills for non-violent conflict resolution, in order to reduce the instances of young people carrying weapons/becoming involved in violent offences. It aimed to provide hard to reach young people with positive role models who were relatable to them, along with offering a structured and disciplined activity to build important life skills and boost self-esteem. The course ran for six weeks over the summer of 2019 and involved 8 young people.
- A DJ Music Group: Designed to give hard to reach young people an understanding of where the music they listen to comes from; the goal of which was to reduce the glamorisation of drug dealing and criminal behaviour. Work was undertaken relating to criminal exploitation (CE), with opportunities to speak with families impacted by CE. Participants also had the chance to develop a skill in music. This group ran for 12 weeks and involved 12 young people; a second course will be delivered in 2020.
- Direct work with schools to focus on: Improving partnership working; reducing exclusions relating to violent behaviour; increasing awareness regarding violent crime within schools and the local community; and reducing levels of offending and reoffending relating to violent crimes amongst young people.
- Delivering group work within schools for pupils displaying offending behaviour within the education setting. Settings that have requested this work include Norman House, High Close and Maiden Erlegh.
- A Criminal/Sexual Exploitation awareness campaign, delivered across the Wokingham Borough. The aim is to raise awareness amongst young people and

parents/carers by running pop up workshops that support in identifying signs of concern and promote safety. This work is currently underway.

As part of continuing professional development, WYOS staff have undergone training in Forensic Case Formulation; live case formulation sessions are also commissioned. WYOS consider this approach to practice a positive addition, as it has been evidenced to promote a reduction in re-offending rates when implemented in other settings.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
N/A

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
<p>1. Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.  <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/contents</a></p> <p>2. Youth Offending Services Inspection, Guidance Manual, May 2018.  <a href="https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/Youth-guidance-manual-external.pdf">https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/Youth-guidance-manual-external.pdf</a></p> <p>3. Standards for children in the youth justice system 2019.  <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780504/Standards_for_children_in_youth_justice_services_2019.doc.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780504/Standards_for_children_in_youth_justice_services_2019.doc.pdf</a></p>

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