

TITLE	Prevention & Youth Justice Service: Youth Justice Plan
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 21 September 2023
WARD	Non-Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOMES/BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The Wokingham Prevention and Youth Justice Service (PYJS) is responsible for the delivery of statutory criminal youth justice services for children who live in the Wokingham Borough.

- **Legal parameters:** YJS (Youth Justice Services) were mandated through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and are governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector.
- **Function:** To provide statutory supervision of Court orders (including custodial sentences) and out of court disposals, to reduce the likelihood of re-offending of children aged 10-17 years old. This role has evolved to include the provision of diversionary and preventative interventions, to reduce the risk of children entering the criminal justice system.
- **Statutory partnership:** YJS are required to have dedicated staff from Local Authority Social Care and Education partners, the Police, the National Probation Service and local health services.
- **Governance:** Is held by the PYJS Partnership and Management Board, which is chaired by the Assistant Director for Children's Services (Social Care and Early Help). Statutory Board members include the CAMHS Service Manager, Police, Probation, the Education Welfare Service and the NEET Reduction Team. Other Board members are representatives from the Court and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
- **Governing body:** The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) monitors YJS performance and issues guidance to them about how things should be done, including quarterly returns on 13 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- **Funding:** YJS are predominantly funded by their Local Authority. They also receive grants from the YJB, in kind contributions from partners (Health, Police, Probation) and ad-hoc grants from Ministry of Justice, Police and Crime Commissioner or other bodies for agreed projects.

The Annual Youth Justice Plan

After consultation with partner agencies, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 40).

Plans should be submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in a timely manner and are a pre-requisite of the YJB Grant payment. The Wokingham PJYS Youth Justice Plan was submitted to the YJB on 30th June 2023, in line with their requirements.

During 2022-2023, the Wokingham PYJS has delivered the following outcomes/benefits to our community:

- **Crime reduction and prevention:** We have delivered statutory services to 35 children and have increased the delivery of prevention interventions to 55 children (45 the previous year). We delivered diversionary work to 81 children. Through our Exclusion Prevention Programme, we have supported 16 children to remain in education.
- **Serious Violence:** The rates of children convicted for a serious violent offence remains low. In the year ending March 2023, there were two serious violent offences committed by children from Wokingham (there were five the previous year).
- **Early (universal) Interventions:** Over the last year we have delivered Weapons Awareness sessions in schools, reaching over 1500 children. We have also supported Operation Sceptre weeks, through informative pop ups in the community (Arborfield and Wokingham Town Centre).
- **Partnerships:** With the Health Justice team (CAMHS, Speech and Language therapist and Physical Nurse), we have established Complex Case discussions to provide holistic support to our most vulnerable children. With Cranstoun, we designed Tier 1 workshops for children with low substance misuse needs, including children who vape. With the NEET Prevention team (Elevate), we have recently agreed dedicated support for our children, through weekly clinics at our office. We have worked very closely with the Education Welfare Service to identify early support for those children at risk of exclusion from school due to criminal behaviours. This has led to re-establishing the Vulnerable Children Panel.
- **Ongoing support:** We have identified the children who are most vulnerable to crime and have provided ongoing mentoring support to them.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council accept the Youth Justice Plan.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The PYJS Youth Justice Annual Plan includes a summary of the work delivered by the Prevention and Youth Justice Service (PYJS) during 2022-2023, outlining the key achievements, risks and challenges for the service. The plan also presents the Service Development plan for the current year.

Summary of Key Achievements

- **Establishing the Turnaround Programme:** Utilising the grant from the Ministry of Justice to develop additional prevention pathways.
- **Implementing the Exclusion Prevention Programme (EPP):** A programme to support children at risk of exclusion or multiple suspensions from school due to offending-type behaviours.
- **Focusing our support for children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND):** In May 2023, we achieved the Youth Justice SEND Quality Mark, recognising the quality of our services for children with special education needs.
- **Strengthening the prevention offer:** Expanding our Early Prevention (outreach work) and developing further prevention pathways.
- **Implementing a structured exit strategy,** with ongoing support for the most vulnerable (to crime) children through mentoring programmes.
- **Continuing to have low custody/remands into custody levels:** No children sentenced to custody or remanded during 2022-2023 period.

Summary of Service Development Plan

- Roll out the Exclusion Prevention Programme (EPP) to all Wokingham secondary schools in October 2023.
- Continue to support the development and delivery of the Serious Violence Strategy in partnership with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), through our participation in the Serious Violence and Exploitation Board.
- The PYJS will work jointly with Police to identify and implement an early prevention pathway, specifically designed for children arrested (or voluntarily interviewed) for weapon related offences.
- The PYJS will develop a structured programme of activities to offer as universal prevention in schools and in the community.
- Continue to invest in staff through training opportunities, career progression pathways and effective line management support.

Background

Youth justice plans in England must be signed off by the full council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

There is a requirement on youth justice services to publish their youth justice plan (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

Although it has always been a requirement for the plan to be signed off by Council, this has not previously been mandated by the YJB.

Analysis of Issues

The plan presents the key achievements of the PYJS and proposes the areas for service development across the coming year. The plan also identifies risks, challenges and strengths to the delivery of youth justice services in Wokingham.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	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	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
N/A

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty
Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.
N/A

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030
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Please state clearly what the impact of the decision being made would be on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

N/A

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers
Wokingham PYJS Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024

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