

<b>15 December 2010</b>		<b>ITEM 8</b>
<b>Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE FUNCTION AND PERFORMANCE</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> James Waud – Interim Service Manager – Youth Offending Service and Targeted Youth Support and Connexions		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> ALL	<b>Key Decision:</b> No	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Barbara Foster, Head of Care & Targeted Outcomes		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Jo Olsson, Corporate Director of Children, Education & Families		
<b>This report is</b> Public		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To update Members on the Youth Offending Service		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To give an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the YOS, its current performance and funding arrangements

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **1.1 The Committee to consider and comment on the report.**

### **2. Background**

2.1 Youth Offending Services were created by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act to prevent offending and re-offending by young people between the ages of ten and seventeen years. (YOS can work with young people upto 21). The YOS effectively has a dual duty; to provide interventions that turn young people away from crime, maximise their potential and keep them safe and to protect the public from their actions.

2.2 YOS is responsible for the enforcement of all criminal court orders and for the delivery of interventions attached to those orders plus the planning and

through care of those young people serving custodial sentences. Much of the work is done in the criminal courts both Magistrates (Youth) and Crown who cannot, in law, operate without YOS Officers in attendance to guide and advise in respect of suitable and available disposals that address identified risk factors. YOS also provide risk assessed bail packages offering viable alternatives to Remands in Custody and Court Ordered Secure Remands. Thurrock YOS is held in high esteem by legal advisors, advocates and magistrates. This is important as it is only with the confidence of the courts that we can achieve the best outcomes for our young people.

- 2.3 The YOS is multi-disciplinary staffed and funded by partner agencies in police, social care, education, probation and health and the Ministry of Justice via the Youth Justice Board to whom it reports. It has a governance board, comprising senior members of partner agencies with a dual reporting line to the Community Safety Partnership and the Children and Young People's Partnership and into the Shaping Thurrock Partnership. Line management of staff is through the Council and YOS manages staff from the partner agencies.

### **Structure and Staffing**

- 2.4 The YOS is in three parts. The biggest function has seven case managers, including the seconded probation officer, who manage all the court work, intervention, enforcement and through-care. The Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) and Triage function, focussed on prevention, consists of two full time officers plus some sessional workers who deliver prevention programmes for 8-16 year olds and pre-court diversion programmes for 10-17 year olds. The third function is ISS (Intensive Supervision and Surveillance) who also have two full time staff plus sessionals who deliver programmes for the most prolific/dangerous/high risk cases as a direct alternative to custody. Young people on those programmes receive a minimum twenty five hours, seven day per week contact. We currently have four young people on this programme two of whom are bailed from other authorities and are awaiting trial for very serious offences.
- 2.5 Supporting all three functions are a CAMHS specialist seconded from health, a Police Officer from Essex Police and a substance misuse worker whom we have located in Network.
- 2.6 YOS also employs a victim support worker as part of our statutory duty to offer reparation to victims of youth crime. Reparation may be direct in the form of Restorative Justice Conferences where victim and perpetrator meet under carefully controlled conditions or indirect in the form of unpaid work in the community. Much of this is done with the elderly population, either in their own homes or in sheltered housing complexes. This work generates some very appreciative letters.

## Performance

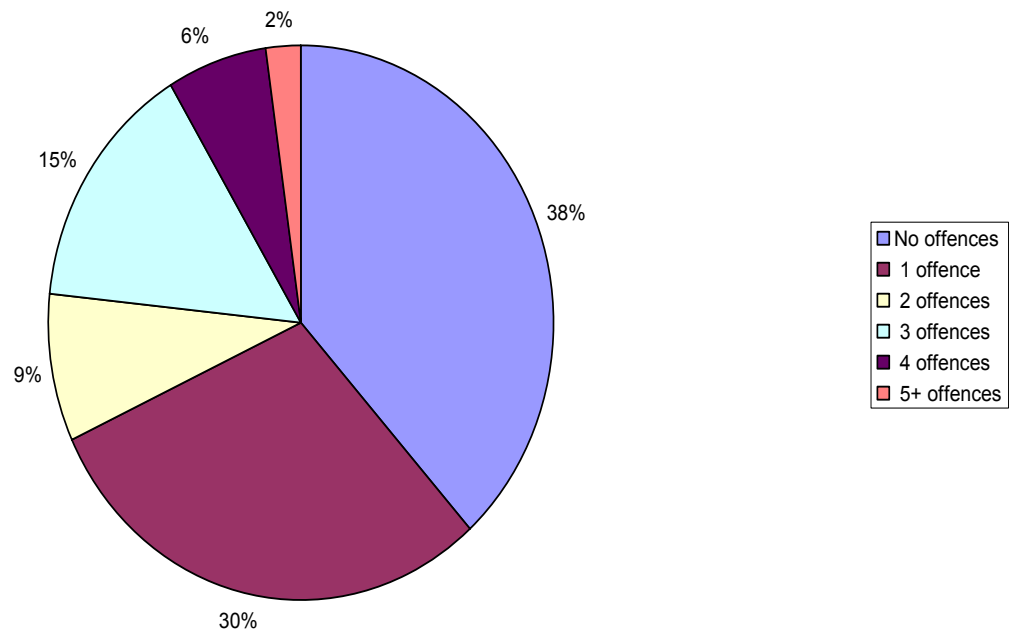
- 2.7 Thurrock is a low spending authority generally and has the smallest YOS in the country. The value for money indicators are therefore good for Thurrock's YOS. Thurrock YOS has consistently achieved a lower re-offending rate (NI 19) than the national, regional and family averages. This pattern of achievement was interrupted in the last quarter of last year when we ended up with a slightly higher rate than that achieved nationally. Analysis shows that this unusual blip was not reflective of the rest of the year or previous years performance. The data below shows that the increase was caused by primarily two offenders in the cohort committing a large number of offences between them.

### Re Offending – YOS Family

Region Name	Yot	Jan-Mar Cohort	Cohort Total	3M Rate	6M Rate	9M Rate	12M Rate
Eastern	Thurrock	2009	137	0.18	0.52	0.81	1.09
	Total		137	0.18	0.52	0.81	1.09
North East	Darlington	2009	54	0.22	0.52	0.89	1.07
	Total		54	0.22	0.52	0.89	1.07
North West	Rochdale	2009	153	0.33	0.63	0.90	1.12
	St. Helens	2009	121	0.21	0.53	0.88	1.03
	Total		274	0.28	0.59	0.89	1.08
South East	Medway	2009	182	0.33	0.69	0.83	0.92
	Total		182	0.33	0.69	0.83	0.92
South West	Swindon	2009	104	0.29	0.52	0.72	0.88
	Total		104	0.29	0.52	0.72	0.88
Wales	Bridgend	2009	82	0.30	0.52	0.74	0.90
	Newport	2009	141	0.32	0.53	0.74	0.91
	Total		223	0.31	0.53	0.74	0.91
Yorkshire	Calderdale	2009	138	0.31	0.62	0.80	0.93
	North East Lincolnshire	2009	161	0.32	0.70	0.89	0.97
	Total		299	0.32	0.66	0.85	0.95
Total			1273	0.29	0.59	0.82	0.98

- 2.8 The chart below shows 2009 data, based on a 2008 cohort (the rate is determined by offences committed in the 12 months following the end of the court order). These are the rates for convicted offenders and those with final warning. This cohort included one young person with significant emotional/mental health problems who committed eleven offences during the relevant period.

**Spread of re-offending, 2008 cohort**



- 2.9 Thurrock YOS achieved the third lowest custody rate (NI 43) in the country last year (2.4%), which is less than half the rate of national, regional and family comparators, with only seven young people receiving custodial sentences in 2009/2010. This is significant as it means that the community interventions being delivered by the YOS are proving effective. Under 15's remanded or sentenced to custody incur a considerable cost to the council.
- 2.10 There is one area of underperformance. The number of young offenders engaged in education, employment or training (NI 45), has rarely risen above 55%. Performance in 2010/11 has improved dramatically (72% in the first quarter and 78% in the second). This is in part due to some new systems and arrangements put in place at the beginning of the year and a redoubling of efforts by staff. The biggest challenge is the 16+ group but last month, using a ring fenced grant of £19,300 from the YJB we employed two sessional employment mentors whose sole task will be to engage this group in meaningful employment or training.
- 2.11 The success of the YOS on a very low budget is largely attributable to its success in retaining very high quality staff. The current management team has been in place for nine years and most of the staff have more than five years service – some considerably more. This means that there is a body of experience and expertise on tap and an intimate knowledge of the borough and its offending population.

## **Funding**

- 2.12 Last year and funding from the YJB amounted to £419,000, £331,000 from the council and £94,000 from partner agencies (excluding the costs of seconded staff). Funding has been reduced by £71,000 and the YOS has delivered on the council's austerity measures designed to ensure that the council overall does not overspend. Thurrock YOS budget, of a little over £800,000 compares with £1.8m in Southend, our nearest unitary neighbour. Southend has a slightly higher potential offending population at 16,000; Thurrock 15,000.
- 2.13 Next year the YOS funding will remain ring fenced and not part of the ABG. However, it is expected to reduce by 15%.

## **Links with wider Children's Services.**

- 2.14 This year the links between YOS and Social Care have been strengthened by the Interim YOS Service manager becoming responsible for the Targeted Youth Support Team (adolescent social care and Connexions). This should improve the delivery of service to those young people who are known to both services or who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. YOS staff work closely with Social Care colleagues and are made aware of care plans before implementing their own intervention plans which must, of course, take any LAC, CIN or child protection plans into account to ensure cohesion and non-duplication of work. This is especially true of sex offenders who offend against children and young people. These young people are typically on long orders and need to be managed in the community in a way that minimises the risk to other children in the borough. It is important to note that on the whole in Thurrock young people do not start to offend when they come into the care system. It is more often the case that their offending is part of a pattern of behaviour that cause the family breakdown which initiates the care episode. We are due to deliver training to foster carers in February 2011 around the added responsibilities and risks that may affect young people in their care and who are in the criminal justice system.

## **3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 Future direction of YOS will not be known until the publication of the criminal justice Green Paper in December but early indications are that the government like the model and will largely continue with it
- 3.2 The biggest change will be the likely devolvement of custody costs to the Local Authorities in an effort to make them provide more robust alternatives such as Intensive Fostering. However this has not been finalised although it is probable.

- 3.3 Youth crime is a major issue for most communities and must be seen to be tackled effectively. Whilst most people look to the police in the first instance to tackle crime it is what happens post apprehension that impacts on the community especially in the management of violent or sexual offenders.
- 3.4 With government policy determined to reduce the use of custody this will inevitably mean more high risk offenders needing to be managed in the community which will have resource implications.

**Diversity and Equality**

Last year the BME element of Thurrocks offending population was :-

- 86.6% white British
- 4.4% Mix/Dual background
- 0.9% Asian and Asian British
- 8.1% Black and Black British

The latest data which is probably the best comparator is the schools data which is as follows :-

- 75.1% White British
- 3.7% Mix / dual background
- 3.3% Asian and Asian British
- 10.4% Black or Black British
- 4.9% White other

It can be seen from this that the BME population are not over represented in the offending population.

The YOS are currently in discussion with Coram, Thurrocks parenting provider, with a view to using some of their YOS funding to run a parenting group for the parents/carers of young people convicted of racially aggravated offences with a view to challenging some of their views and thus improving community cohesion.

The age and gender split for 09/10 was as follows:-

<b><u>Age</u></b>	<b><u>No of offences</u></b>	<b><u>Male</u></b>	<b><u>Female</u></b>
<b>10 yrs</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>11yrs</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>12yrs</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>13yrs</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>14yrs</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>15yrs</b>		<b>97</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>16yrs</b>		<b>142</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>17yrs</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>32</b>

Approximately 30% of all offences were committed by young women with the type of offence being as one would expect. Robbery, burglary and violent offences predominantly male and shoplifting predominantly female.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Thurrock has seen a year on year reduction in youth crime and the YOS provides an important, if largely unseen, service that contributes significantly to that, and, by default, to the community's perception of Thurrock and their own safety.

We are of course aware that financial arrangements and perhaps even the way YOS is structured and delivers may change during the course of next year and subsequent years but my own view is that we provide good value for money and hope to enjoy the continued support of the council.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: Yannick Stupples-Whyley  
Telephone and email: 01375 652532  
[Ystupples-whyley@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Ystupples-whyley@thurrock.gov.uk)

These are contained in the main body of the report.

##### **5.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: Lindsey Marks  
Telephone and email: 01375 652054  
[lmarks@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:lmarks@thurrock.gov.uk)

This report is for information only and there are no legal implications arising from this report.

##### **5.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: Samson DeAlyn  
Telephone and email: 01375 652472  
[sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk)

This report is for information purposes only and therefore has no direct diversity implications

5.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

Duties and responsibilities as described in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 particularly Part 3, S.37 – S.42.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:**

N/A

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

N/A

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