REDUCING THE RISK OF YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGING IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – WRITTEN SUBMISSION

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CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN HILLINGDON

- The rate of young people (per 100,000) entering the criminal justice system for the first time has reduced year on year since 2009/10 from 954 to 415 (13/14).
- This reduction is in part due to
  a) A reduction in reported crime;
  b) Changes in policing practice, for example the introduction of the triage system for young people caught for less serious offences;
  c) Effective early intervention provision for those identified as at risk.
- Although there is a smaller cohort within the youth justice system, the assessed needs of the group are high and often complex in nature. They and their families are amongst the hardest to reach in our community.
- In 13/14 violence against the person, theft and handling, drugs offences and robbery were the top categories of confirmed offending by young people.
- A number of local young people have been perpetrators of incidents of serious youth violence and have also been victims of such incidents.
- The distribution of drugs appears to be one factor in 'youth on youth' violence. These drug operations are believed to be led by adults both within and outside of the Borough, in particular Southall and Ealing.
- A possible connection with the organised sexual exploitation of young people has also been noted.

WORK UNDERTAKEN AND GAPS IN SERVICE

- The Hillingdon Youth Offending Service (YOS) works with young people aged 10-17 who come into contact with the criminal justice system.
- It has 27 permanent staff, 22 sessional workers and a further 15 volunteers (these being a statutory requirement).
- Some staff are seconded from partner agencies, others employed by the local authority. Disciplines within the YOS include social work, criminal justice case workers, police, mental health, substance misuse, education, training and employment advice and support, parenting and reparation/restorative justice.
- The YOS undertakes light touch assessments and interventions with young people as part of a pre-court disposal (Triage, conditional caution), where the offence is low seriousness and the police and YOS agree this to be appropriate.
- Young people within the court system are assessed using the ASSET national assessment tool which assesses young people against 12 known risk factors.
including an analysis of the offending behaviour, vulnerability and the risk of harm the young person presents to others.

- Based on the assessment, the appropriate court disposal is recommended to the court and interventions identified designed to reduce the impact of the risk factors. The intervention plan is agreed at a multi-disciplinary forum.
- Each plan is specific to the individual (see case examples) based on their needs. Most elements are delivered on a 1-1 basis (eg substance misuse, mental health sessions, offending curriculum work, ETE support) but the YOS also has group work activities ranging from offence specific through to broader social development programmes.
- Community reparation and restorative justice activities are also standard components of the intervention programmes.
- Intervention timeframes and contact levels are defined by National Standards based on the risk presented by the young person and how progressed they are in their order. Contact levels can range from once a month to 25 hours per week, however, the bulk of cases are seen at the more intensive end of the scale.
- As a multi-disciplinary service the YOS provides a holistic package of support for young people as and when required. Accessing the same level of support post-YOS involvement is a challenging part of exit planning.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- Local re-offending data is drawn down by the Youth Justice Board on a quarterly basis. Cases are tracked for re-offending for a period of 12 months after sentence.
- The last available data is for the group sentenced in the period October 2011 - September 2012. 34% of young people in the cohort re-offended which is lower than the London (39.5%), National (35.4%) and Comparator group (37%) averages.
- The average number of further offences committed by this group per individual (0.89) was also lower than London (1.06), National (1.03) and Comparator group (0.99) averages.
- As the cohort has become smaller and the complexity of needs greater, having an impact on the re-offending rate has become more challenging.