

Report to: Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27 August 2009

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Report No:

Contact Officer: Julie Thompson, Assistant Director

Tele No: Ext 4175

Report Title: **Youth Crime**

**Confidential /
Non Confidential:**

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

To inform the Scrutiny Panel of the statistical information in relation to the youth justice system, including first time entrants and the effects of the economic downturn on the figures

Recommendations:

To consider the information contained in this report

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

(for use on Exec Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Youth Justice Board sets a total of five key measures against which the performance of youth offending teams is measured. These indicators have evolved over the ten years that youth offending teams have been in existence into clear measures of outcomes rather than the process measures that typified youth offending team performance framework in their formative years. The measures pay particular attention to the key overarching objective of the youth justice system, which is to reduce offending by children and young people, and to those key pathways that research shows lead to increased risk of offending, namely the use of custody, access to suitable accommodation and access to suitable education, training or employment. The key measures are as follows:

- To reduce reoffending by children and young people
- To reduce the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system
- To reduce the proportion of young people sentenced to custody
- To ensure that children and young people have suitable education, training or employment at the end of a YOT intervention
- To ensure that children and young people have access to suitable accommodation at the end of a YOT intervention

PERFORMANCE

Reducing first time entrants

This measure is designed to calculate whether partnerships are implementing sufficient preventative measures to identify young people at risk of offending and to divert them from offending and anti-social behaviour by engaging them in alternative activities and support through either universal or targeted services.

The key tools in the strategy in the borough include the monthly Partnership Business Group which provides a detailed analysis of “hotspots”, young people subject to “stop and account” and a range of other detailed information to enable services such as the Youth Service, Youth Inclusion Project, Challenge and Support, Intensive Intervention Project and others to target their activities into the right geographical areas at the right times and at the right young people.

Year	Number of first time entrants
2007/08	578
2008/09	404
April-June 2009	96

This represents a reduction of 30% in the year. The figures for 2008/09 have yet to be confirmed as the information comes from the police national computer and the above figures are taken from the YOT management information system. There is no reason, however, to suppose that they are not accurate as the police notify the YOT of all disposals electronically.

Reoffending

This measure is calculated by tracking the reoffending of a cohort of young people over a period of twelve months. The baseline year is 2005 and the rate in Bolton for that year was 147 offences per 100 young people. The cohort size will vary but the figures for 2008/09 show a reduction in the rate of reoffending of 27% as detailed below:

	Total cohort	Number of young people reoffending	Number of offences	Frequency rate per 100 young people
2005 baseline	280	125	411	147

2008/09	231	82	248	107
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These first two measures to reduce first time entrants to the criminal justice system and reduce reoffending are the key “floor targets” for the YOT and partner agencies and it is extremely positive even in times of considerable economic difficulty to see such robust reductions.

Generally, acquisitive crime (theft) is generally seen to increase during recession periods and during 2008/09 Bolton saw an overall increase in acquisitive crime of 18.5% but at the same time the number of crimes committed by young people reduced considerably.

Reducing custody

The target is to reduce the use of custody to no more than 6% of all sentences. Perversely, although the actual number of young people sentenced to custody reduced by 20 young people in 2008/09, performance was slightly worse because of the success in reducing the number of first time entrants. This meant that the total number of young people sentenced was considerably reduced so the proportion of those sentenced to custody expressed as a percentage increased slightly.

	Total sentenced to custody	Total sentenced	Performance
2007/08	71	1091	6.5%
2008/09	51	735	6.9%
Apr-Jun 2009	10	149	6.7%

Suitable accommodation

The target here is to ensure that 95% of young people have suitable accommodation at the end of a YOT intervention. This target is routinely achieved.

	Total number in suitable accommodation	Total number of interventions ending	Performance
2008/09	519	530	97.9%
Apr-Jun 2009	90	93	97%

Education, Training and Employment

The target in this indicator is that 90% of young people should be engaged in suitable education, training or employment at the end of a YOT intervention. Inevitably, whilst the vast majority of those of school age can be provided with a suitable placement and assisted to attend, it is much more difficult to find employment or training for those young people with a criminal record who have left school. So far, however, there seems to have been little impact on performance during the economic downturn.

	Total number in suitable ETE	Total number supervised	Performance
2007/08	453	560	80.8%
2008/09	347	428	81.1%
Apr-Jun 2009	64	79	81%

Across all the YOT performance indicators it is difficult so far to discern any noticeable negative impact of the economic downturn on either offending rates or on YOT performance.

Other indicators – Community Strategy/LAA targets:

- Criminal damage incidents have fallen by 100% since 2007/08 baseline

- Calls to the police concerning youths causing annoyance have fallen by 22.5% since January 2009 (n = 1500 fewer calls)

NI17, the perception of anti-social behaviour, is both a community strategy target and in our LAA basket. Performance is measured through a set of seven questions. The table below demonstrates the responses since 2004. From April 2009 Greater Manchester Police introduced quarterly neighbourhood surveys which ask the same questions and thereby give us a quarterly picture on the direction of travel. The table below demonstrates the significant improvement in the perception of “teenagers hanging about”.

Basket of 7 ASB indicators:

	LGUS	SSUS	SSUS	SSUS	GMP	GMP	NSP	GMP	NSP
	2004	2006	2007	Q1 2008	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q3 2009	2004-2005	2008-2009
Teenagers hanging about	69%	64%	63%	54%	54%	51%	48%	46%	46%
Rubbish/litter	57%	57%	49%	48%	46%	43%	47%	51%	51%
People using or dealing drugs	70%	49%	47%	36%	35%	37%	32%	31%	31%
Vandalism, graffiti etc	67%	37%	35%	35%	33%	34%	29%	29%	29%
Drunk and rowdy behaviour	57%	33%	32%	32%	31%	33%	27%	26%	26%
Noisy neighbours	25%	15%	18%	17%	17%	17%	14%	15%	15%
Abandoned or broken down cars	28%	8%	7%	5%	5%	7%	5%	5%	5%

National youth reforms

As part of the Government's Ten Year Youth Strategy, Bolton has implemented integrated and targeted youth support both on a locality and borough-wide level. This new delivery model is intended to provide a more co-ordinated approach to support all young people to engage in positive activities, especially on a Friday and Saturday evening and during school holidays. Targeted youth support is developed to provide early support for those young people who are at risk of negative outcomes, including involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour. Early intervention and prevention are key to diverting young people from offending and anti-social behaviour.

Youth Crime Action Plan

Bolton is one of 69 Government youth crime priority areas and has received additional funding via the Youth Crime Action Plan to deliver:

- Street based youth teams - to work with young people on the streets
- After school patrols - designed to tackle anti-social behaviour at the end of the school day
- Operation Stay Safe - takes young people off the street at night and returns them to a place of safety, which may result in further referrals and work with parents
- Youth Offending officers in custody suites - to identify and address young offenders' needs early on and help to keep them out of the criminal justice system
- Reparation – young people are involved in community “pay back” activities on a Friday and Saturday evening

- Family Intervention Projects – intensive and persistent support for “chaotic” families with children at risk of committing crime and anti-social behaviour

Targeted projects

Bolton has also secured funding for two further projects: Challenge and Support, and Intensive Intervention. These projects provide key work support for those young people and their families who are identified at the greatest risk of getting involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. Parenting support is an essential element of both projects to ensure a whole family approach to supporting young people to have the best start in life.

Safer Schools Partnership

Children's Services and Bolton Division of Greater Manchester Police are working in partnership to deliver the Safer Schools Partnership to all schools in Bolton. This will build on the good informal arrangements that already exist between schools and the police. A new protocol will be developed which will allow the police to support schools and deal with crime without criminalising young people.

Early indications

The Youth Crime Action Plan was formally approved and implemented in April of this year, although funding was made available for pump priming activity from January to March. Early indications from Community Safety statistics show a borough-wide decrease of 22.5% (1500) in calls to the police about young people and anti-social behaviour when compared with the same period in 2008 (January to June).

In the eight priority neighbourhoods where there has been an increased focus of activity there has been a 42% reduction in calls to the police relating to young people and anti-social behaviour.

It will be necessary to undertake further long-term analysis in order to determine if the preventative positive activities and targeted programmes are diverting young people from getting engaged in offending and anti-social behaviour, although early indications would suggest that the new integrated and targeted youth support services are having a positive impact, despite the current economic downturn.

Equality Impact Assessment

This report does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the information contained in this report.