

STRONG & SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 9
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Report of the Executive Director of Children’s Services

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YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION IN PETERBOROUGH

1. PURPOSE

To inform members on the initiatives being taken to tackle youth crime prevention in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee are asked to consider the approaches being taken to prevent youth crime in the city and to make recommendations on areas where improvement or alternative approaches may prove more impactful. The Committee are also asked to endorse the Restorative Justice approach to tackling the prevention of youth crime.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Working towards reducing crime amongst young people goes to the heart of the Sustainable Community Strategy of creating strong and supportive communities and reducing the fear of crime amongst the city’s population. A young person diverted from crime today becomes tomorrow’s law abiding responsible adult who is likely to bring up their family well and contribute to a safe and prosperous city. The strategy also aims to improve the inclusion of young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged and ensure that this is not allowed to impair young peoples life chances which may contribute to a drift into crime.

Crime prevention is mainly measured by the national indicator NI 111 First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17. This looks at the numbers of young people who are new entrants to the youth justice system, the target is to reduce this number year on year. This target has been adopted in the Peterborough local area agreement as one of the 10 top priority targets for children.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Whilst this target is reported by the Youth Offending Service, preventing young people committing crime in the first place, is all partners’ business, it is about providing the moral and supportive environment for young people to grow up and become law abiding and productive citizens.

There is a growing body of evidence on what the main risk factors for youth crime are and the keys ones are included at **Appendix 1**. It is very important to appreciate that these risk factors do not necessarily mean crime is inevitable, just more probable, and that many young people subject to a range of these risk factors do resist crime and grow up to be good citizens.

We do know, however, those populations of known offenders will have a higher incidence of these risk factors than the non offender population. Research has shown that preventative crime measures which

operate towards a younger age, and closer to their family, are more effective. Too often, young people become at risk of offending because they fail to access mainstream services that meet their particular needs. For example, a young person with acute learning difficulties, that does not access specialist help may become shy and isolated as they struggle to cope, becoming easily influenced by a delinquent, brighter peer who manipulates them to commit crime for the bright child's advantage, may be one of many potential scenarios:

Being excluded from school increases the chance of offending by 2 ½ times

Having a father with a criminal record gives the son a 63% chance of following suite

4.2 Funding

Several years ago the Youth Justice Board allocated funding out to all Youth Offending Services dedicated to preventing youth offending. This is currently £133k p.a. and is used to support the youth inclusion programming in Gladstone. This is also match funded by the Police, Schools and the City Council. It is also used to support part of the Prevention Manager salary and a prevention worker, However, when the 'Delivering through Localities' project goes live in 2010, the Central Prevention Manager role will go (saving money) with staff in each locality picking up prevention responsibilities.

5. KEY ISSUES

Clearly any service that is provided to young people has a preventative element in it and ensuring that all young people are able to access all the right services, at the right time, to enable them to grow up and mature into law abiding, responsible citizens, is the main plank of our crime prevention strategy.

The following is a list of services currently provided that aim to prevent crime or intervene early to nip problems in the bud before they can be developed. The young person, who starts missing school at 10, swears in class, can be rude and uncooperative; **can** move on to offending at 14. Many teachers assert they have a pretty good idea at age 10/11 of those young students who might be getting into trouble with the law when they get older, and we now use this "assessment" in our transitions programme to direct help and intervention at an earlier age.

Intervention	Type of intervention	Numbers of Young People Engaged
Safer Schools	Uniformed police officers stationed in seven secondary schools become part of the school community and restore calm authority and sort any problems. As a national initiative, it has been delivered with real success in Peterborough, with teachers, parents and young people reporting satisfaction. There has recently been a detailed review of the safer schools project.	Around 8,000
Restorative Justice	Initially piloted in Jack Hunt school and other schools wanting to develop restorative approaches. Used in several schools and recently training carried out in children's homes with good results.	Up to 2,000
Youth Inclusion Programme	Based on the national model and part funded by Government, this programme targets -16 years at risk of school exclusion and offending. Provided help with school support and positive role models. It is based in the Gaston district and this project has received national acclaim for its success in engaging with young people of Pakistani heritage.	50

Intervention	Type of intervention	Numbers of Young People Engaged
Transitions	Transitions support. A city-wide service provided by the YMCA that provides individual support to young people at critical transitional stages in their life, particularly at the time of moving from primary to secondary school.	200
Youth Crime Action Plan	A Government funded programme over 2008/11 puts a menu of research based projects into operation, fully reported on, in the background information.	Around 2500
Local Integrated processes panel boards	New multi agency panels operating on locality basis who will review work with young people which are not succeeding i.e. a young person who still does not attend school despite the work of the Attendance Officer. Monthly boards for each of the three localities.	Numbers to be established

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Performance** is measured against NI 111, a local area priority, the DCSF has set a target of reducing the numbers of first time entrants by 2% year on year, currently performance is below this but there is some confidence the new initiatives now coming into play including the mental health and vulnerabilities pilot and police custody triage scheme and the expanded work to support transition across the city for those young people moving from primary to secondary will bring this target back into line by the end of the year
- 6.2 **Restorative Justice Approach or RJ.** This can best be described as bringing people together to sort out problems in a way which is likely to lead to satisfaction for all parties at the outcome. Government research has already concluded that this approach improves outcomes for victims and a high impact on reoffending. It is an extremely effective way of holding someone to account, allowing everyone involved to have their say and an opportunity to put it right. There is growing appetite within Peterborough to adopt the restorative approach in tackling crimes and resolving conflict between people. The Jack Hunt pilot has successfully introduced Restorative Justice as a whole school approach with much success. Training on Restorative Justice is currently being delivered in children's' homes, plus there have been numerous requests from different schools for training and support to deliver this effective approach. The strategy is to develop restorative approaches widely throughout
- 6.3 **Value for money** One of the principal aims of developing integrated services for children is to ensure that needs are met early and with light touch rather wait until problems escalate. Crime prevention measures are an effective application of this principle, for example the government have estimated that the following costs are attributed to youth crime.

	No. of offences committed in Peterborough by 10-17 year olds in 2008/09	Average cost per offence (Home Office estimate)	Estimated cost per offence in Peterborough in 2008/09
Theft of vehicle	42	4,700	197,400
Burglary	56	2,300	128,800
Criminal damage	131	500	65,500
Total			391,700

7. CONSULTATION

The issues raised in this paper have been discussed and debated at the Youth Offending Partnership Management Board and the Safer Peterborough Partnership Board during 2009.

8. NEXT STEPS

The Youth Crime Prevention Strategy will be implemented as outlined above with particular focus on ensuring that the new 'Delivering through Localities' arrangement focus on early identification of risk factors and appropriate intervention.

This strategy should be reviewed again by the Scrutiny Committee in the autumn of 2010.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Youth Justice Planning Frame Work 2009

(Youth Justice Board) YJB TOWARDS CRIME PREVENTION [towards A Youth Crime Prevention Strategy](#)

Youth Crime Action Plan Update

For those Committee members who do not have access to the internet please call Sheila Kelly on 01733 864682 for a copy of this very informative report which is 37 pages long.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Risk and Protective Factors around Youth Offending

Risk and Protective Factors around Youth Offending

Young people from all sections of society can, and do, commit crime. There are no definite predictors, but known offenders will be more closely associated with the risk factors listed below. However, it needs to be understood that many young people with some or all of these risk factors do not commit crime. The role of the Youth Offending Service in preventing and responding to crime is to identify young people at risk of committing crime or re-offending and developing services which divert young people into positive activities.

Risk factors: Primary risk factors include:

- Parenting problems, including supervision and conflict
- Negative peer influences
- School engagement problems, including truancy and exclusion
- Substance misuse
- Criminal family/neighbourhood influences
- Mental health issues

Protective factors include:

- Positive activities during out-of-school time
- Positive adult role models
- Opportunities for positive involvement in the community

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