

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 4 January 2018

Subject: Youth Justice and Anti-Social Behaviour of Young People

Report of: Director of Children’s Services

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a progress update on developments within the Youth Justice Service including the joint work with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Recommendation

To note the contents of the report.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Previous report to Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee 11.10.16
Youth Justice Business Plan Executive Summary 17/18

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on the strategic priorities of the Youth Justice Service; highlights progress achieved in reducing offending and demonstrates the impact from effective partnership working.

2.0 Background

In Manchester, the Youth Offending Service changed its name to Youth Justice Service 3 years ago because of feedback from young people who were stigmatised by walking into a Youth Offending Service office. The name no longer reflected the services provided for victims, parents and families as well as young people. There are approximately 80 staff members within Youth Justice from a range of disciplines from public, private and voluntary sector organisations. These include:

- Local Authority
- Greater Manchester Police
- National Probation Service
- Central Manchester Foundation Trust
- Remedi (Restorative Justice charity)
- Work Solutions
- G4S
- Education

The work of the Youth Justice service is overseen by the Youth Justice Management Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services and which brings statutory partners and other appropriate representatives together to agree on the resourcing and operation of the service as well as the formulation of the annual Youth Justice Plan. The Board monitors performance and finance as well as providing guidance on the strategic direction of the development of the service.

The principle aim of the Youth Justice Service is to make Manchester an even safer place to live and to help young people achieve their full potential in life.

The three strategic objectives set by the Youth Justice Board nationally are:

- To reduce the numbers of children entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time
- To reduce reoffending
- To reduce the number of children in custody

The Manchester Youth Justice Service continues to achieve good outcomes and does this in partnership with partners and stakeholders which include young people, courts and local communities. There have been steady reductions in the numbers of children and young people entering the criminal justice system. Since 2013 there has been an overall reduction by 30%; which is attributed to effective joint work between the Youth Justice Service, the police and other partners.

The Youth Justice Service and partners are working to provide early help, prevention and diversionary services for those children on the edge of criminality to keep more children out of the courts and increasingly using restorative approaches to get the

right outcomes for both the victim, the young person and the wider community. It should be noted that linked to our success in reducing the number of children and young people that do come into the Youth Justice system, those that do tend to be due to more frequent and more serious offences. Subsequently the challenge for the service and its partners are equally greater and different to what they have historically been.

Notwithstanding the reduced number of 'first time entrants' and associated increased challenge, reoffending rates have reduced over the same period as well as the numbers of children going into custody.

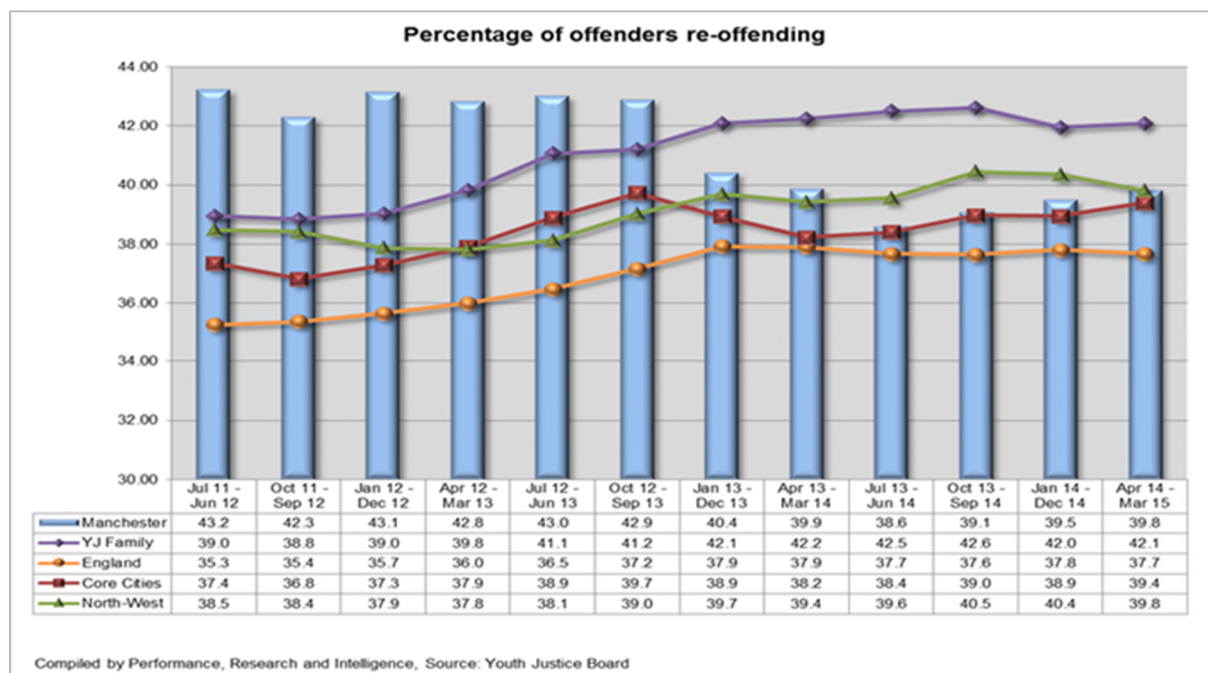
3. First Time Entrants

- 3.1 There has been considerable success in the strategic aim of reducing the numbers of children entering the criminal justice system for the first time over the past five years. This means that there are approximately 30% fewer children appearing in court for the first time. This has allowed those working within the service to target resources on those who commit more frequent and/or more serious offences.
- 3.2 Further work is planned to continue to reduce the numbers of First Time Entrants by having an integrated approach with the Early Help Service for those who are at risk of coming into the formal Criminal Justice Service. Managers from both services review those cases referred into Youth Justice for an 'Out of Court' Disposal to agree where the Early Help Service could provide support for the wider family. This will be influenced by the development of a new strategic approach and framework being developed at a Greater Manchester level between GMP and the Youth Justice Services across the 10 local authorities and will be piloted by Oldham and Tameside in January and due to be rolled out in April 2018.
- 3.3 The Youth Justice Service is working with the Manchester Pupil Referral Units as many of the young people known to the Service are in alternative education provision and together, we are developing a joint approach to managing those young people on the edge of criminal activity or at risk of entering the criminal justice system. A protocol setting out how both services work together is in place.
- 3.4 Managers in Youth Justice and the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team are working more closely than before to find more effective ways of intervening especially when there are clear indications that a young person is at the beginning of a criminal career. Managers and case-managers in both services have been working together on specific young people who are involved in anti-social behaviour and a joint protocol is under development. Together with other partners, Youth Justice workers have been part of the Damhead Estate Project to reduce crime and ASB in that area. Youth Justice and Remedi, the Restorative Justice Charity, have successfully bid to for Home Office Funding to reduce Hate Crime in the Damhead Estate and two Restorative Justice Workers are now engaging with children and families there to reduce hate crime. Government funded research has shown that Restorative Justice does meet the needs of victims and reduces the frequency of offending.

3.5 Youth Justice staff work closely with Social Workers in Children’s Services as many of the children and teenagers that come into the Criminal Justice System are already Looked After or are designated Children in Need or requiring measures of Child Protection. Whilst 10% of First Time Entrants to Manchester are Looked After Children, over 50% of those in custody over the past two years have been in care at some point. Young people in care often commit offences which by their very nature, are a reflection of their troubled backgrounds, are characterised by loss of emotional control and a disregard for enforced boundaries. Their ability to self-regulate and comply with rules can be limited and this means the risk of returning to Court for Breach Proceedings is high and can be a stepping stone to custody. Youth Justice Managers are proactive in their work with Children’s Homes in the city to ensure that challenging behaviour is managed appropriately and not criminalised.

4. Reducing Reoffending

4.1 As the number of those entering the system has reduced by 30%, those children that are on the caseload of the Youth Justice Service tend to be more complex in terms of need and risk so reductions in re-offending are harder to achieve. The table below shows that significant reductions have been achieved in the face of this challenge and comparative data from other core cities show that Manchester has been doing well although rates are starting to climb again.



4.2 This is the impact of positive engagement as well as evidence based interventions with those children and young people that are referred into the service. We continue to use quality interventions including the Signs of Safety model and focus on listening to the voice of the child in order to continually improve levels of engagement and the impact upon the outcomes for those children and families known to Youth Justice.

5. Custodial Sentences

5.1 The numbers of children in custody has reduced significantly. The number of children that were given a custodial sentence in 2012/13 was 76 and in 2016/17, it was 49 so there has been a reduction of 37%. A recent analysis of Manchester's data shows that there are generally two groups of young people receiving custodial sentences: those that fail to comply with court orders who continually re-offend and those that are largely unknown to Youth Justice and commit one very serious offence. Of those who went straight into custody, there have been charges of murder, death by dangerous driving and serious sexual offences.

5.2 Young people remanded or sentenced to custody are sent to Secure Children's Home (usually Barton Moss in Salford), Secure Training Centres (usually Rainsbrook near Rugby) or Young Offenders Institute (usually Wetherby, near York). Young men from Manchester (sentenced or remanded) are currently placed as follows:

- 15 placed at Wetherby YOI
- 6 placed at Hindley Prison (young men who are now over 18)
- 1 placed at Werrington YOI
- 2 placed at Forest Bank (young men who are now over 18)
- 1 placed at Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre
- 6 placed at Barton Moss Secure Children's Home

The newly established Youth Custody Service which sits within the Ministry of Justice decides which establishment young people go to and the allocation usually depends on age, level of vulnerability and availability of places. The Chief Inspector of Prisons in his annual report this year has expressed his concerns about the safety of young people in Young Offender Institutes given the rise in violence assaults that have been recorded.

5.3 Greater Manchester's Mayor's Office funds a Safeguarding Social Worker post at Wetherby YOI who reports monthly to the Heads of Youth Justice in Greater Manchester on safeguarding incidents. This includes the use of restraint and disciplinary procedures on our young people as well as the numbers of those self-harming. These issues have been raised with the Governor of Wetherby directly and actions taken to address concerns from Greater Manchester Youth Justice Services are included in the reports. This Social Work post has helped to improve communication between Youth Justices services locally, the Governor of Wetherby as well as the prison staff.

5.4 There are plans to build a Secure School in the North West, possibly in Greater Manchester. In January 2018, the Deputy Mayor, Baroness Hughes is hosting an 'Engagement Event' to bring partners and potential providers together to discuss.

6. Key Challenges

6.1 The Youth Justice Business Plan 17/18 sets out the key priorities for the Service which are informed by evidence, data and strategic planning. There are a number of key challenges at present, one of which is the high numbers of

particularly vulnerable adolescents on the Youth Justice caseload who are being exploited by adult males. All the indications are that this exploitation is of the 'County Lines' or 'Trapped' type where young people are being groomed to undertake crimes usually away from their home area. We became aware of this through the unusually high number of 'out of area' court appearances of Manchester young people for selling drugs in coastal towns such as Barrow-in-Furness, Scarborough, Southampton and Brighton. This exploitation now extends to other forms of crime including car theft and much of it appears to be more local across Greater Manchester and Lancashire/Merseyside boundaries. Where there is clear evidence of exploitation, the Youth Justice Service will refer cases to the Modern Slavery Unit which sits within the National Crime Agency. They will work to stop prosecution of the young person who has been trafficked and exploited.

- 6.2 A new Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub is being developed to be implemented in April 2018. The Complex Safeguarding Hub aims to bring relevant partners together into one base to collaborate on children with the most complex issues, share intelligence and jointly assess and plan appropriate action and monitor progress. Youth Justice will be part of this and it is likely to be a more effective approach and achieve better outcomes for those vulnerable young people who are caught up in this exploitation.

7. Summary

- 7.1 The Youth Justice Service is continuing to work with some of the most troubling and most troubled children in the city. The numbers arrested and being brought to court are decreasing and there is now a drive to reduce these figures further by targeting services earlier and preventing or diverting those at risk of entering the criminal justice system from doing so. In line with the Our Manchester approach, and together with our partners, Youth Justice will support all children and young people to live a safe, happier, healthier life so that they can make a positive contribution to the city and make a good life for themselves and their family.