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Report of the Chief Social Services Officer

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 14 December 2007

Subject: Inquiry into Youth Services – Youth Offending Service Response

Electoral Wards Affected: ALL

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Leeds Youth Offending Service has a number of targets which have been incorporated into the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services and the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Leeds YOS is not able to impact on these targets alone and is reliant on close partnership working with a range of agencies to prevent and reduce offending in Leeds. The Youth Service is a significant partner in the work of Leeds Youth Offending Service. Existing arrangements are strong, and there is room for the development of further relations particularly in respect of the prevention of offending and education, training and employment outcomes.

2.0 Purpose Of This Report

2.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Scrutiny Board of the impact of the partnership arrangements between Leeds Youth Offending Service and the Youth Service.

3.0 Background Information

BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The mission of Leeds YOS is to work with children, young people and their families to prevent and to challenge offending, encourage responsibility, develop victim empathy and reduce the fear of crime in communities.
- 3.2 Leeds Youth Offending Service (YOS) is one of the busiest in the country. In 2005/06 Leeds YOS worked with over 2,300 young people who committed over 5,500 offences. Over 130 staff and 120 volunteers currently work for the YOS with additional activities under development. Staff are organised into 4 area-based operational teams, the Youth Court and

Wetherby Young Offenders Institution. In addition, Leeds YOS has two Intensive Supervision and Surveillance teams (ISSP), a Resettlement & Aftercare Provision team (RAP) and a Referral Order & Restorative Justice team

- 3.3 Leeds Youth Offending Service works with nearly all young people in Leeds who are warned or charged with an offence. Leeds YOS therefore predominately works with young people who are aged between 10 and 17. The vast majority of young people that the YOS directly works with are aged 15, 16 or 17. Seventy four per cent of the YOS case load is male. All young people that the YOS directly works with are assessed using an assessment tool "ASSET". In completing ASSET, YOS case managers collate information from a range of sources which indicate "criminogenic need" – those factors in the individual young person's life that increase or reduce the risk of reoffending. An individual supervision plan is derived from ASSET and the role of the multi-agency YOS team is to work with the young person and their family to reduce the identified risk factors and build on protective factors thereby reduce reoffending and building on ECM outcomes for young people.
- 3.4 Leeds YOS has a number of targets set by the YJB. Five of these targets are incorporated in the Councils Annual Performance Assessment (APA) and also form part of the measures within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment CPA). These targets are
- **Prevention:** To Reduce Year on Year the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System by identifying children & young people at risk of offending or involved in anti-social behaviour through a YISP or other evidence based targeted means of intervention designed to reduce those risks and strengthen protective factors as demonstrated by ONSET [assessment tool] or other effective means of assessment and monitoring.
 - **Recidivism:** Reduce the recidivism rates against the figure provided for the calendar year of 2003 for: All recidivism populations (pre-court decisions, first tier penalties, community penalties, custodial sentences) by 5% by 31 December 2008
 - **Education, Training and Employment** Ensure that 90% of young offenders supervised by YOTs are in full-time education, training or employment.
 - **Substance Misuse** Ensure that all young people are screened for substance misuse (using ASSET) That those with identified needs receive appropriate specialist assessment within 5 working days and following the assessment access the early intervention and treatment service they require within 10 working days.
 - **Mental Health** Ensure that all (100%) of young people, who are assessed by ASSET (and the Mental Health Assessment Tool) as manifesting: acute mental health difficulties, to be referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for a formal assessment commenced within 5 working days of the receipt of the referral, with a view to their accessing a tier 3 service or other appropriate CAMHS tier service based on this assessment non-acute mental health concerns should be referred by the YOS for an assessment, and engagement by the appropriate CAMHS tier (1-3) commenced within 15 working days.
- 3.5 In addition two LPSA stretch targets have been negotiated with government office. The authority has agreed to reduce the number of fist time entrants by an additional 2% stretch over target by 2008.
- 3.6 Few if any of the above CPA targets can be achieved by the YOS alone. And indeed the YOS is only able to achieve most targets by working in partnership with a wide range of Children's Services and community safety agencies.

4.0 Main Issues

- 4.1 It is crucial that the YOS works in close partnership with the Youth Service to impact on the prevention target, the recidivism target and the ETE target. YOS targets are not inconsistent with Youth Matters. The Head of the Youth Service is a member of the Leeds Youth Offending Service Strategic Partnership (Management Board) and this assists to ensure

that there is a joined up approach between the agencies. The Youth Service and Youth Offending Service have signed a protocol covering their partnership working.

4.2 **Prevention**

- 4.2.1 The principle mechanism for the delivery of the preventative agenda is through Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) and Youth Inclusion and Support Programmes (YISPs). Both schemes have established multi agency referral systems to identify those young people deemed to be most “at risk” of committing anti-social behaviour or crime. The projects have developed skills in targeting and engaging these young people (and their families) and using intensive youth work techniques with a view to reducing these risk factors. Most YIPs offer accredited learning opportunities with a view to reintegrating young people back into full time education, training or employment. Evaluation evidence suggests that YIPs and YISPs are highly effective at preventing offending and / or preventing escalations in existing offending behaviour patterns.
- 4.2.2 Senior YIPs (13 – 16 year olds) operate in Middleton and Bramley and are delivered by NACRO and BARCA respectively. Both have attached Junior YIPS (8 – 12 year olds) and Crime Concern additionally delivers Junior YIPs in Osmanthorpe, Chapeltown and HydePark.
- 4.2.3 The Youth Service already provides some support to Senior and Junior YIPs. The partnership working with the youth service adds capacity to the YIP, and has assisted the development of both informal and formal learning opportunities for hard to reach young people. In particular the Youth Service has assisted the development of accredited learning outcomes. As YIPs seek to work with the top 50 most at risk young people within a defined geographical location at any one time, the engagement of the youth service is crucial in providing opportunities for these harder to reach young people to build relationships and ultimately to become involved in mainstream youth service provision.
- 4.2.4 The Youth Service is a valued and significant partner within the Middleton YIP and their contribution equates to 10 hours per week. Information exchange mechanisms are well established. In addition collaboration has taken place over responses to youth nuisance allegations as they have emerged in the locality and ad hoc joint holiday activities have been established.
- 4.2.5 The Youth Service has agreed, in principle, to replicate the excellent model in Middleton within Junior YIPs. Junior YIPs work with 8 – 12 year olds. YIP workers have expressed concern that 13 year olds leaving Junior YIP provision still have a degree of risk associated with crime, anti social behaviour or disengagement from education. The fear is that these young people may be left without supervision and support and thus may drift towards negative behaviour. If they subsequently come to the attention of the youth service, relationship building will be starting from scratch and could take some time. Thus outline agreement to provide an input into Junior YIPs should overcome these issues. The involvement of the youth service with older junior YIP young people will assist the process of relationship building and the transition of at risk young people into mainstream youth work provision in these localities. Work is still underway at a local level to develop these partnerships.

4.3 **Revizit**

- 4.3.1 Revizit is a joint initiative between the YOS and youth service and is a group work initiative targeting young people who are at risk of anti social behaviour, offending or have received reprimands. The Revizit group can accommodate up to 15 young people and meets weekly for 2 hours over a six week period. The curriculum is designed to assist young people to

make changes in their behaviour and fits in neatly with a number of Every Child Matters outcomes, particularly making a positive contribution.

- 4.3.2 The Revizit programme has been jointly delivered in the West area for a number of years. Evaluation of the model demonstrates that the majority of young people rate the programme highly. In addition YOS records demonstrate that very few young people who complete Revizit go on to (re)offend. Following a joint meeting between the YOS and Youth Service management teams earlier this year a decision has been taken to roll out the Revizit programme to all wedges of the city. Work is currently underway to make this happen.

4.4 **Recidivism**

- 4.4.1 The Youth Service has an important role to contribute to the CPA target of reducing recidivism. Recidivism is measured by tracking young people for a period of 2 years from the commencement of their YOS intervention. During statutory supervision, the YOS works actively to reduce the risk factors that are associated with reoffending. The YOS is encouraged to schedule in contacts with mainstream providers as part of individual supervision plans with young offenders and there remains scope for closer working arrangements with the youth service to facilitate this. As the length of YOS input is usually set by the Court it is rare for the YOS to work with young offenders for more than 12 months. Managing transition arrangements at the conclusion of YOS intervention to ensure young offenders continue to benefit from supervision, support and direction in relation to ongoing risk factors is crucial in reducing the risk of subsequent offending.

- 4.4.2 Alongside other statutory and voluntary partners, the Youth Service can play a vital part in providing young people with ongoing learning opportunities and constructive use of leisure time and thus access to this provision is key to the prevention of recidivism.

4.5 **Education, Training and Employment**

- 4.5.1 The YOS works closely with Education Leeds, Igen, Connexions and others to ensure that young people are in full time education, training or employment (ETE). Accessing full time ETE is one of the most significant factors in reducing the chance of young people offending. Not all young people are immediately able to sustain full time ETE and interim accredited learning opportunities which boost young people's confidence and ETE readiness are important to successful outcomes. The YOS already links in with Youth Service based Connexions Personal advisors and Youth Service accredited learning opportunities. There are numerous successful examples of partnership working, including a joint programme with the Leeds Rhinos which resulted in a number of young people obtaining a junior rugby league coaching award. Accessing or co-running such programmes is clearly beneficial in assisting young offenders to gain skills needed to make changes in their lives.
- 4.5.2 The YOS has historically struggled to achieve performance targets associated with education training and employment, and indeed performance against this target has reduced in recent months. Over the last 12 months around 60 % of young people completing statutory YOS supervision have been in full time ETE. Leeds YOS has secured funding from Connexions for 2 Personal Advisors (PAs) to be employed by the YOS. These PAs have a significant impact as they can work immediately with the identified post school age young offenders who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Cooperation with PAs can be written in as part of the young person's individual supervision contract. However the volume of work within the YOS means that the YOS based Connexions PAs are not able to offer a service to all NEET young people. The potential demand is such that the YOS considers that a doubling of dedicated PA time is necessary to offer a service to all NEET post school age young offenders. The YOS remains keen to explore with partner agencies further opportunities for designated additional PA time ring fenced to work with NEET young offenders.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 Leeds YOS has a number of outcomes which are closely related the Youth Matters agenda and has developed positive working arrangements with the Youth Service over a number of initiatives. The YOS coordinates targeted preventative activities with some young people in Leeds and there is clearly scope to increase this provision as part of the youth offer. In particular the youth Service input into Senior YIPs and the provision of a service to young people leaving Junior YIPS is a role that can be consolidated and expanded.
- 5.2 Enabling young people to achieve economic wellbeing through securing education, training or employment is crucial to reducing the risk of reoffending. The YOS is not currently resourced to allocate a YOS Connexions PA to all post school age NEET young offenders. The development of further partnerships with the Youth Service and others to ensure that all young people have this facility is key to securing positive outcomes for young people and a reduction in reoffending.

