

**Brighton & Hove City Council**

**For general release**

**Meeting: Children & Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 14 November 2006**

**Report of: Director of Children's Services**

**Subject: Joint Inspection of Brighton & Hove Youth Offending Team (YOT)**

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. To present the Joint Inspection Report on Brighton & Hove YOT carried out in April 2006 and the outline draft action plan which addresses the findings of the report.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Committee welcomes the Joint Inspection Report.
- 2.2 That the Committee comments on the outline draft action plan, with a view to those comments contributing to the final action plan.

**3. Context of the Report**

- 3.1 The YOT Inspection covered five core areas of work and were scored as follows: The scoring system is: 4: excellent; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: Inadequate.

- Management and partnership arrangements, including the role and functioning of the local Board (2)
- Work in courts (3)
- Work with children and young people in the community (2)
- Work with children and young people subject to detention training orders (3)
- Victims and restorative justice (2)

Findings from the YOT inspection inform the JAR and also the Corporate Assessment, Annual Performance Assessment and Comprehensive Performance.

- 3.2 The Inspection took place over two weeks with inspectors from HM Inspectorate of Probation, Commission for Social Care Inspection, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Healthcare Commission and OFSTED.

Each evening there was a debriefing session involving the YOT Practice Manager. The process was very thorough and challenging and led to some useful and vigorous debate between the Inspectors and YOT staff, including discussion about the scoring process.

3.3 For members information, the YOT structure chart and the YOT team structure chart are attached at Appendices A and B respectively.

3.4 The full Joint Inspection of Brighton and Hove Youth Offending Team Report is attached at Appendix C.

## **4. The Main Findings**

### **4.1 Management:**

- The Responsible Authorities Partnership (RAP) /Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) functioned as the YOT Steering Group, but it did not provide sufficient strategic steer to the YOT nor hold it sufficiently to account
- The YOT linked well with both children's services and community safety agencies and was held in high regard by its partners
- Performance management was not yet sufficiently rigorous to enable effectiveness to be measured and quality assured across all areas of practice.

### **4.2 Work in courts:**

- The YOT's work in the courts was described as "invaluable"
- Standard of court reports was inconsistent.

### **4.3 Work with children and young people in the community:**

- A close working relationship with the partnership community safety team and the YOT helped divert children and young people from offending and the target for reducing first time entrants into the criminal justice was being met
- A YOT 'employment project' had contributed to an 8% rise in employment, nonetheless there remained insufficient training opportunities for children and young people post-16.

### **4.4 Work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders (DTOs):**

- Overall work to support children and young people's integration into the community was good
- Assessments required some improvement.

### **4.5 Victims and Restorative Justice:**

- Although the number of victims invited to participate in Restorative Justice was high, levels of involvement were disappointing
- A varied programme of reparation work was available.

## 5. Inspection Recommendations

- An action plan to be devised within three months of the publication of the report (now due on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2006).
- The YOT and the RAP/DAAT develop a robust performance management framework to monitor and review the implementation of the Youth Justice Plan and inform the strategic direction of the YOT.
- Further training of staff to promote the use of Asset, a full understanding of internal risk management and Multi-Agency Public Protection processes, the assessment and management of high risk cases (Risk of Harm assessments).
- The profile of victim work, using restorative justice principles is raised across the team.
- The YOT and Primary Care Trust should ensure that a SLA is written governing the delivery of services.
- The YOT and Sussex Police should ensure that there is good exchange of information, including better YOT representation at appropriate meetings.
- The YOT and the children's social care services should ensure that the Service Level Agreement is amended to reflect children's social care service's as the responsible body for all children and young people remanded into local authority accommodation and practice is in line with this agreement.

## 6. Draft outline of the YOT Action Plan

### 6.1 Management:

The RAP/DAAT has provisionally approved the formation of a Youth Justice Strategy Group, the first meeting of which is due to take place on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006. Draft terms of reference have already been drawn up and are as follows:

#### **Youth Justice Strategy Group.**

##### **Purpose**

The Youth Justice Strategy Group will be accountable to the Children and Young People's Trust Board and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. It will be a senior officer group with delegated responsibility for planning, delivery and monitoring the quality and performance of Youth Justice Interventions targeted at the 8-19 age range.

Specific Projects and Teams it will have oversight of will include –

- The Youth Offending Team
- The Intensive Family Intervention Project
- The Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator (young people)
- The Youth Inclusion Support Project
- The Youth Inclusion Project
- The Youth Inclusion Project plus
- The Prolific and Priority Offenders Scheme

The main purpose of the group is to prevent youth offending and re-offending and keeping the community safe. Members will represent their own organisations, identify cross cutting issues and provide a strategic link into other relevant committees and partnerships.

### **Functions**

The group will have delegated authority from the CYPTB and the CDRP to undertake the following specific functions.

- Ensure that there is good communication between partner organisations, including the provision of operational intelligence.
- Ensure partner organisations and the partnerships they are represented on contribute to preventing youth crime.
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place in B&H for assessing and meeting the needs of young people in the youth justice system.
- To provide advice on policy direction for youth justice and an overarching strategy to the CYPTB and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).
- Provide leadership and direction for the development of new initiatives.
- Ensure that aggregated Asset and other data are used to improve the joint planning and commissioning of local services.
- Facilitate the mainstreaming of best practice projects across the City.
- Receive and review regular performance management reports.
- Ensure the delivery of the local youth Justice Plan.
- Assist in establishing a secure infrastructure and monitor value for money.

### **Membership**

Assistant Director CYPT  
Head of Youth Offending Team  
Head of Community Safety  
Superintendent Crime and Operations  
Assistant Chief Probation Officer  
Youth and Connexion Service Manager  
Divisional Legal Manager Sussex Courts  
Commissioner Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)  
Head of Housing Needs  
Chief Executive Hove YMCA  
Head of SEN, CYPT  
LSC Representative  
Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator

### **Meeting Protocols**

The Group will meet at least quarterly, prior to meetings of the CYPTB and CDRP.

The Group will be chaired by Assistant Director CYPT, West & Youth.

## **6.2 Work in Courts:**

Court reports are routinely gatekept but training has taken place on ensuring that more attention is paid to the section on the offence analysis and the risk assessment of young offenders.

6.2.1 The new District Judge to the Sussex Central Area (including Brighton & Hove) took up an invitation to meet staff and to inform him of the work the YOT does to try to keep young people from re-offending and from custody.

6.2.2 The YOT attends the quarterly meetings of the Youth Courts Users Group

6.3 Work with young people in the community:

6.3.1 All staff receive monthly supervision on the Youth Offending Information System (YOIS) and on Asset (the YOT's assessment framework).

6.3.2 Since the Inspection a days training was set aside on Asset and the Risk of Serious Harm Assessment.

6.3.3 One day a month is now set aside when the office is closed to the public and the staff will ensure that their recording is up to date.

6.3.4 The Employment Project monies are due to run out March 2007 and efforts are being made to obtain funding for this excellent project

6.4 Work with children and young people subject to DTOs:

6.4.1 See 6.3 above for the continuing work on the assessment process

6.5 Victims and Restorative Justice:

6.5.1 The YOT has always been aware of the disappointing uptake on restorative justice especially in relation to direct mediation. This is due to the fact that the victim co-ordinator is only 3 days a week and though there are 2 reparation co-ordinators they job share. At the moment direct mediation requires the caseworker to organise this and it is generally not seen as a priority in relation to all the other priorities. Avenues are being explored to find extra funding for this area of work.

## COMMITTEE REPORT – APPENDIX

<b>Meeting/Date</b>	Children & Young People’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee,
<b>Report of</b>	Director of Children’s Services
<b>Subject</b>	Joint Inspection of Brighton & Hove Youth Offending Team (YOT)
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

<p><b>Financial implications</b> Any financial implications arising from the response to the YOT report will be for the Children and Young People’s Trust Board to consider.</p> <p><i>Finance Officer consulted: Date:</i></p>	
<p><b>Legal implications</b> Any legal implications arising from the response to the YOT report will be for the Children and Young People’s Trust Board to consider.</p> <p><i>Lawyer consulted: John Heys</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Date: 01/11/06</i></span></p>	
<b>Corporate/Citywide implications</b>	<b>Risk assessment</b>
<b>Sustainability implications</b>	<p><b>Equalities implications</b> The Inspectors stated that they were encouraged to find that actions arising out of the Race Audit , such as diversity training to develop practice in this area had been pursued. The YOT’s Race Audit analysis indicated that BME children and young people were not over-represented in the youth offender population. Appreciation of diversity issues amongst staff was generally good and diversity needs were taken into account in the planning and delivery of services.</p>
<p><b>Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder</b> The YOT is working to the central aim of reducing offending and re-offending and all the developments above are to that end.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Background papers</b></p>	

**Contact Officer**

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