

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
16TH DECEMBER 2004**

SOUTH TEES YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

**BRENDA THOMPSON – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR
SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH**

**JAN DOUGLAS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL
SERVICES**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board with a summary of the support available from the Youth Offending Service for Children Looked After and to highlight issues relating to corporate parenting in respect of recent Youth Justice initiatives.

BACKGROUND

2. South Tees Youth Offending Service is a multi-agency service established as a result of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. Our aim is to prevent and reduce offending in children and young people aged 10 to 17 years across the boroughs of Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland. We work closely with partners from Police, Probation, Social Services, Education, Health, Connexions and the Youth Service, as well as a number of voluntary organisations.
3. We recognise that Children who are Looked After by the Local Authority represent some of the most vulnerable members of society and we therefore aim to maximise their life chances and to minimise risk of offending and exploitation.
4. We have recently signed up to a Protocol with our partners in Social Services in order to clarify roles and responsibilities and effectively share information.

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

5. As at 15 November 2004, there were 128 young people in the age group 10 to 17 years being Looked After in Middlesbrough. Of these young people, 13 have offended within the period November 2003 to November 2004, and are currently being supervised by the Youth Offending Service. This represents 10.15% of this population. Looking at a percentage of all ages of Looked After Children, this equates to 5.53%.
6. These young people are subject to a variety of statutory Orders ranging from Referral Orders to Detention & Training Orders. Depending on the level of risk and National Standards requirements, young people are supported by a YOS case manager who puts in place supervision plans commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and the welfare needs of the young person.
7. Social Services Care Plans form an integral part of any criminal justice intervention with close liaison taking place between the YOS case manager and the social worker.

PREVENTATIVE INITIATIVES

8. Currently the YOS is working with 239 young people on statutory Orders in Middlesbrough alone. In addition, we work alongside the local Youth Inclusion Projects targeting at risk young people as part of our preventative strategy.
9. **RAP – Resettlement Aftercare Provision and Community Support**
This project focuses on offering additional voluntary support for up to 27 hours per week for young people identified as having substance misuse issues. The Juvenile Substance Misuse Service (JSMS), which operates in the secure estate (Castington), works alongside our RAP support workers to ensure continuity from custody back into the community.
10. Those young people with substance misuse issues who are subject to community sentences, are also to be offered this additional support to ensure that they receive appropriate intervention i.e. counselling or treatment.
11. **Mandatory Drug Testing**
This Middlesbrough pilot has now been extended to include testing of all young people arrested in connection with an acquisitive crime.
12. Since the pilot began on 1st August when the criteria required testing on charge not arrest, there have been 55 Mandatory Drug tests of which 7 tested positive for cocaine/crack or heroin.
13. At the time of arrest/test, the young person should be accompanied by an appropriate adult, be it Corporate parent (social worker), parent/guardian or YOS duty worker.

14. At Teesside Court we also provide an Arrest Referral Service, which gives all young people access to advice and support. All young people accessing this service are made known to the YOS and checks are made to ensure that Social Services are contacted, particularly in relation to Children Looked After.
15. **Drug Treatment and Testing Requirements**
On 1st December 2004, Middlesbrough is piloting Drug Treatment and Testing Requirements, which require all young people appearing at Court for sentence, to be screened for substance misuse. YOS staff carry out assessments initially and referral is made, where necessary, to Make a Change for treatment plans to be drawn up. This information is then relayed to the Court who can make Drug Treatment and Testing Requirements (DTTRs) a condition of an Action Plan (3 month intervention) or Supervision Order. Social Services will always be consulted at every stage of the process.
16. We recognise that effective communication between agencies is essential in ensuring that young people are offered appropriate services and supported throughout the criminal justice process.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

17. Financial implications can include remand costs when the Courts deny a young person bail. South Tees YOS offers a comprehensive bail support package, with or without ISSP, depending on level of risk assessed by our experienced Court Team staff. In the majority of cases an alternative to custodial remand is offered to the Court.
18. There are issues of suitable accommodation for all age groups and reluctance of private landlords to take young people who are not eligible for benefits. In the case of Children Looked After, discussion always takes place between the YOS worker and Social Worker in order to provide the Court with a satisfactory address.
19. All ward areas are affected.

RECOMMENDATION

20. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive that all staff and carers with Corporate Parenting responsibilities should undertake training in respect of appropriate adult duties, particularly with reference to Mandatory Drug Testing.

REASONS

21. Staff and carers need to be aware of the legal implications attached to Mandatory Drug Testing in terms of offering the young person appropriate advice and making them aware of the consequences of refusing a test etc.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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