

# MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

## Corporate Parenting Board

### Youth Offending Service Support to Children Looked After and Care Leavers

**Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning: Cllr Mike Carr**  
**Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings**

**2 February 2012**

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#### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on Youth Offending Service work with children looked after in Middlesbrough

#### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to note the information relating to the Youth Offending Service.

#### **IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION, WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?**

3. It is over the financial threshold (£75,000)   
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards   
Non Key

#### **DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE**

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

Non-urgent   
Urgent report

If urgent, please give full reasons.

## **BACKGROUND & EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

5. 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 by 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, Children, Families & Learning, Health, as well as a number of voluntary organisations.
6. We recognise that children who are looked after by the local authority represent some of the more vulnerable members of society and we therefore aim to maximise their life chances and minimise risk of offending, exploitation and increase social inclusion by joint working and providing appropriate levels of offence focussed intervention.
7. In order to support this, the Youth Offending Service has representation on the Middlesbrough Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP). This group has operational responsibility for corporate parenting, bringing together all agencies, which influence the services delivered to children looked after, and leaving care. The YOS representative on MALAP supplies information to that meeting to ensure that entry to the criminal justice system by children looked after is monitored and all efforts at diversion are being made. The YOS representative also maintains the links between the members of MALAP and the Resettlement Manager of Wetherby YOI. A recent HMIP Inspection 'Children Looked After in Custody' outlined the need for improvements in the care and resettlement of children looked after. As a result an invitation has been extended to prison staff at Wetherby to attend the Parenting the Public Child conference in March to improve their understanding of the experience of Children Looked After.
8. The YOS track new cases to ensure all those looked after are identified and allocated to appropriately experienced Case Managers who are regularly supervised to ensure they are working in partnership with Social Workers and carers towards the most positive outcome. YOS staff receive training, support and regular managerial oversight of their assessment and management of risk and vulnerability.
9. There are currently fifteen young people looked after by Middlesbrough subject to interventions from the Youth Offending Service. This equates to 4.1% of children looked after (down from 5.2% last year) and 14.8% of the total Middlesbrough YOS caseload (up from 12.2% last year). It is interesting to note that the YOS case load as a whole has reduced over the last year however the complexity of cases has increased. The result being that the YOS is working with fewer but more complex young people. Fourteen of these are subject to supervision in the community and one is serving a Detention and Training Order. Six young people are aged 17, three are 16, two are 15, two are 14, one 13, and one 12.
10. The YOS continues to make efforts to reduce the entry of children looked after to the youth justice system, promoting restorative processes to enable offending behaviour to be challenged and managed without resorting to criminal proceedings. A number of YOS staff are about to undertake accredited training in Restorative Conferencing and training others in working restoratively. The plan

is to offer these skills to a wider audience within the local authority to further reduce the need for criminal proceedings against young people.

11. South Tees YOS offers comprehensive bail support packages, with or without Intensive Supervision and Support, to those young people awaiting conviction or sentence on criminal charges. This provision enjoys the confidence of the local Youth and Crown Courts. In the majority of cases an alternative to custodial remand is offered and accepted by the Court. However some young people, either because the risk they pose to the public is too high or because they have no suitable accommodation, are remanded into custody.
12. Plans outlined in the Ministry of Justice Green Paper released in December 2010 to reduce the use of custodial remand by transferring the cost of such placements to the local authority continue to develop. While the eventual implementation of this seems likely there are no identified timescales as yet.

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

13. All social care services are delivered within a framework of anti-discriminatory practice and there are no specific issues arising from the information presented within this report.

### **OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT**

14. Not applicable to this piece of work.

### **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

15. The changes to remand charges proposed in the Ministry of Justice's Green Paper will, when it comes into force, have a significant financial impact on the local authority.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

16. That the Corporate Parenting Board advises the Executive to:
  - a) Note the information relating to the Ministry of Justices Green paper on changes to the funding of remands to custody.
  - b) Endorse the continued work of South Tees Youth Offending Service in offering appropriate interventions for those who offend and alternatives to custody to prevent children and young people coming into the Looked After system.

### **REASONS**

17. It is important that elected members are aware and approve of this aspect of Youth Offending Service work in order that they can effectively fulfil their responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Children Act 1989.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of Offenders' MOJ Green paper December 2010
- HMIP Inspection CLA in custody May 2011

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