

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Parenting Board

OVERVIEW OF YOUTH OFFENDING SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER
--

Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning: Cllr Mike Carr

Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings

18 January 2011

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on Youth Offending Service (YOS) 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.
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 eighteen young people looked after by Middlesbrough subject to interventions from the Youth Offending Service. This equates to 5.2% of children looked after and 12.2% of the total Middlesbrough YOS caseload. Two of those are subject to a Final Warning, twelve to supervision in the community (YRO or Referral Order) and four are serving Detention and Training Orders. Four young people are aged 17, seven are 16, four are 15, two are 14, and one is 11.
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. As yet, no detail is available as to the indicators likely to be introduced by central government to monitor this in the future. There is no longer a requirement to report under the previous PAF C18.
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. The Ministry of Justice Green Paper released in December 2010 stated the Government's intention to incentivise local authorities to reduce the use of custodial remand in their area by transferring the total cost of such placements to the local authority. Currently, remand places are funded centrally by the Ministry of Justice.

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 report.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

15. The changes to remand charges proposed in the Ministry of Justice's Green Paper will, if the legislation 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 Justice's 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

Author: Alison Brown, South Tees Youth Offending Service
Tel No: 01642 354011

Address: 2 Brighthouse Road, River Court, Middlesbrough TS1 1RT
Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>