



Report of: Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Children's Scrutiny Committee	28 th March 2022	All

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SUBJECT: Youth Offending Service Update

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 To provide the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee with an update of the key developments and initiatives in relation to the Youth Offending Service.
- 1.2 To provide the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee with the evidence of the significant progress that the Youth Offending Service has made in recent years following previous poor inspection outcomes and concerning performance in respect of national key performance indicators.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 For members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to meet with a group of service users of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) in the near future to hear their journeys and experiences.

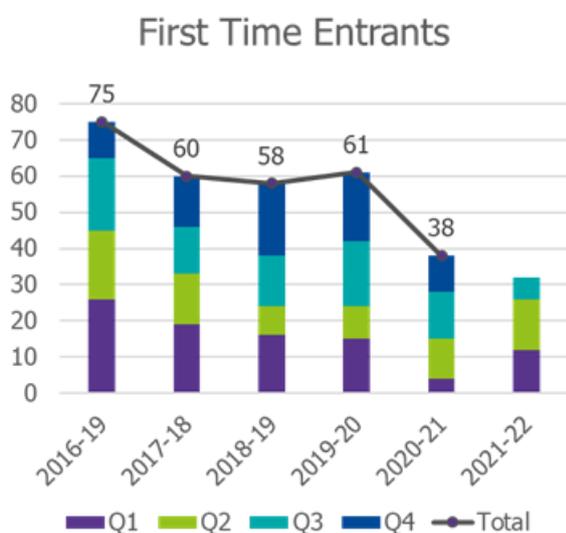
3. Background

3.1 Performance FTEs

Islington's First Time Entrant (FTE) rate has reduced considerably over time. Between 2016 and 2020, Islington's FTE rate has more than halved, from 534 per 100,000 children/young

people in 2016 to 252 per 100,000. In 2016, Islington had the 12th highest FTE rate in the country and the highest rate in London.

Although Islington remained above the England (172) and London (227) rates, the 2020 rate was in line with the YOT Family which includes other high need areas such as Haringey, Southwark, Lambeth and Hackney (250). Islington has narrowed the gap with comparators, as the Islington rate fell by over 30%, whereas the comparators fell by around 15% each. This fall has been happening over time and is not just a result of the impact of the pandemic. Between 2019 and 2020, the Islington FTE rate fell by over 30%, whereas our comparator rates only fell by around 15% each. This is a significant outcome for Islington’s children and the partnership. In 2018 the YOS started operating using Motivational Practice and Trauma Informed Practice Models, it's evident this has had impact as has our approach to early intervention and prevention services for young people at risk of offending and exploitation.



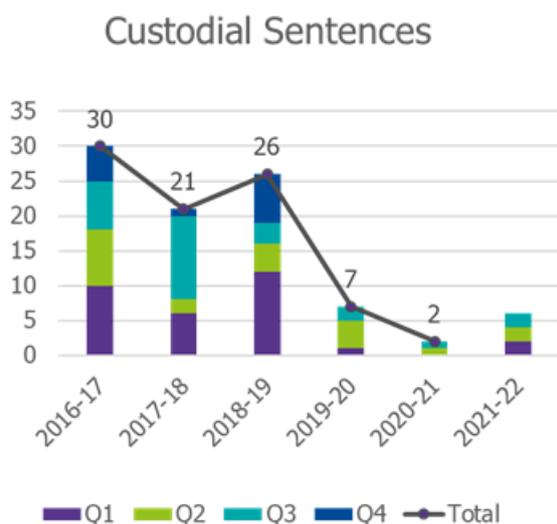
3.2 Custody

The YJB publish custodial figures as rates per 1,000 10-17 year olds, to allow comparisons to be made between different areas. The latest published Islington rate is for July 2020 – June 2021, when the Islington rate was just 0.11 per 1,000. The Islington rate was lower and better than the England (0.14), London (0.19) and the YOT Family (0.20) rates.

This significant reduction in the Islington custody rate is a major achievement. In 2016, Islington had the highest custody rate in the country at 2.22 per 1,000, and the Islington rate had been above 2 for the previous two and a half years. In the latest data, Islington only had the 74th highest rate out of 154 YOTs. The Islington rate has gradually reduced over time, falling below 1 per 1,000 for the first time in 2019, and the rate up to the end of March 2020 was the first time Islington’s rate has been below 0.5 per 1,000.

Whilst the latest data covers a period that could be affected by the pandemic, the evidence shows that the pandemic is not the only reason for the reductions as rates have been falling in recent years in any case. If we look instead at the year up to the end of March 2020, which would only have been affected by the pandemic in the last few weeks, the Islington rate is still

low at 0.35. This was still below the rates for the YOT Family (0.42) and the London average (0.36), although it is above the national rate (0.23).

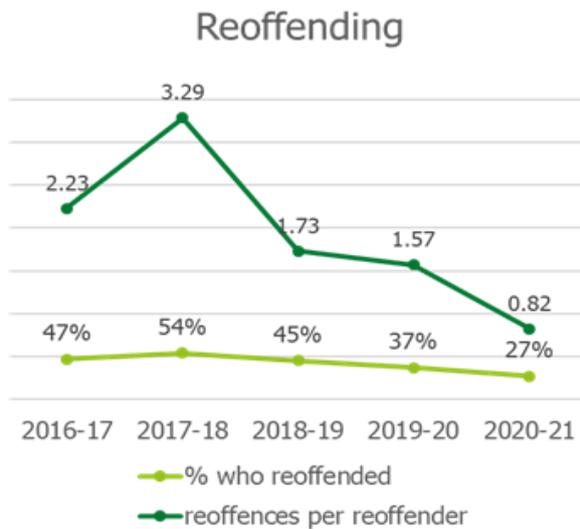


3.3 Reoffending

Our latest re-offending rate covers those who offended in Q3 2020/21, and their levels of re-offending during 2021. The provisional data for this period shows 27% of the cohort re-offended – seven young people re-offending out of an original cohort of 27 young people. Historically, the Islington re-offending rate has tended to be around 40-50%, so this is a relatively low level of re-offending.

The latest published data is for those that originally offended between October 2018 and Q2 September 2019. The Islington figures show 44.2% of these young people re-offended during the following year. This is higher than our YOT Family average (38.0%), the London average (40.4%) and the overall England re-offending rate (35.2%). However, the Islington rate did fall by 4.3 percentage points compared to the previous year, a larger reduction than our comparators. Looking back further shows the Islington annual re-offending rate has been falling over time - four years ago, the rate was 57.3% - the highest in London. The number of re-offences has also been falling. Four years ago, for every offender in the original cohort, there were 2.65 re-offences in the following year. The latest data shows there were only 1.25 re-offences per offender – below the averages for our comparators for the same period.

Comparator data on re-offending is published with a time-lag, so the latest data is for those that originally offended during Q2 2019/20, and shows quite a high rate of re-offending at over 50%. The cohort in question changes every quarter, so the figures tend to jump up and down quite a lot, especially as the size of the cohort has grown smaller for Islington over time, as our overall offending levels fall.



3.4 **Disproportionality work**

The Disproportionality Project: Addressing issues relating to the disproportionately high representation of Islington’s and Haringey’s Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people in the Criminal Justice System

The Disproportionality Project and subsequent report funded by the Youth Justice Board (and published in 2020) explores inequalities in relation to the youth and criminal justice arena and interdependent systems where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people are overrepresented. In Islington, this is particularly applicable to Black groups and to Black males in particular. With support from the Youth Justice Board (YJB), Islington and Haringey decided to develop a project with City University, which would help to identify, address and tackle the reasons why this disproportionality is so prevalent. One of the main areas where young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic are over-represented is the secure estate. This is particularly worrying as outcomes for children who have been sentenced to custody are significantly poorer.

This project involved evaluating a programme designed to tackle key issues and outcomes relating to the disproportionate representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people in the Criminal Justice System and beyond. The programme was attended by multiple agencies from two London Boroughs – Islington and Haringey – and sought to strengthen the multi-agency approach to addressing disproportionality. Attendees from Islington included Youth Services, Youth Offending Services and the Integrated Gangs Team. Attendees from Haringey included Youth Justice Service, Early Help and Youth Service. Police and Probation officers also attended sessions. Members of the research team attended all of the practitioner workshops, which took place between August and November 2019. Interviews with a cross-section of the frontline practitioners who attended workshops were conducted at Youth Offending Service sites in Islington and Haringey, respectively, in late 2019.

A number of parents’ workshops, which took place at neutral venues, were voice recorded for the purposes of evaluating the project and identifying parents’ lived experiences with regard to disproportionality. Finally, young people engaged in the Criminal Justice System were interviewed at Youth Offending Service sites with a view to capturing their experiences of criminal offending and victimisation, discrimination and disproportionality. The research team evaluated the delivery, outputs and, where possible, outcomes of the Disproportionality Project.

The YOS has developed a strategic and operational action plan to address the recommendation and wider disproportionality within the Criminal Justice System. The disproportionality action plan was implemented covering each of the areas as identified as recommendations from this project. Through this action plan Islington YOS commissioned the Wipers Mentoring Support and Ether Programme. The Ether programme is a 'Personal Development & Leadership Programme. This highly motivational and inspirational leadership course directly addresses issues around race and identity and perceptions of self, as well as self-esteem and confidence, attitude and behaviour plus independent thinking.' Young people who attended gave positive feedback from and found it to be a safe and supportive space. The programme is currently running again with a new cohort.

The Local Disproportionality Working Group is a monthly space dedicated to exploring disproportionality within Islington and the focus of this group is to consider what actions could be taken to work more closely with partners, improve outcomes for young people and think about anti-racist practice within the YOS and beyond. The group is currently focussing on stop and search within the Borough, improving practitioner confidence and skills around the use of language and addressing issues surrounding race and disproportionality in reports and assessments, building wider resources to explore a young person's journey and developing and introducing key interventions around race and identity.

3.5 **COVID-19 Response**

From March 2020, the pandemic led to massive changes in terms of how youth offending services across the country were required to deliver services to children and services in Islington were no exception.

At the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, the YJB asked all YOS departments in England and Wales to produce contingency plans setting out how they were working with children in police stations, in the community, and how they were staying in touch with children who were placed within the secure estate.

In Islington, a Covid 19 Risk Assessment was introduced and was undertaken for all children and young people to assess if the young person would likely suffer increased harm in these unprecedented times due to the home environment, or present increased risk of harm to others and serious offending as a result of reduced supervision. Those young people identified as being high risk required weekly face to face welfare visits conducted to their home address. Amber RAG rated young people received a welfare visit every two weeks and Green RAG rated young people every three weeks. Face to face contact was a priority and all children and young people received welfare visits on a regular basis. The welfare checks were carried out by a YOS worker and social distancing and Public Health England Guidance has been maintained at all times.

Additional quality assurances measures were established by the YOS to ensure that the National Standards were maintained and that all children and young people received regular welfare checks and twice weekly virtual contact as a minimum requirement. Letters outlining the contact and supervision arrangements were sent to all young people and parent/carers with information sheets on keeping safe and well during the pandemic. There was significant concern in relation to the impact of young people not being able to access support networks and increased anxiety and as such regular contact and welfare visits were vital to ensure that the service could recognise and respond appropriately to changes in needs and increased vulnerability.

Video link capability was prioritised within the first phase of the operational contingency plan to ensure that young people who were on remand, or subject to custodial sentences could be seen and supported by their YOS offices. During this time, telephone contact was also regularly used with this cohort of young people.

The YOS gradually made a return to resuming face to face contacts with young people, but following the completion of risk assessments and with strict adherence to the use of social distancing.

3.6 **Inspection of Youth Offending Services**

Islington is waiting for its inspection of Youth Offending Services under the recently revised and updated framework. This will be carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) either on its own (if a single inspection is announced) or by HMIP, Ofsted, the Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Care Quality Commissioning if a full/joint inspection takes place. The inspectors will be inspecting the partnership (regardless of whether the inspection is a full or a single inspection in nature), on three domains:

- Organisational Delivery (Domain one)
- Court Disposals (Domain two)
- Out of Court Disposals (Domain three)

Much work is underway in order to prepare for the inspection. One of the pieces of work involves a peer audit and review process with Camden YOS.

One of the areas that we know that HMIP will be looking at is disproportionality (our work on this area was covered earlier). Islington YOS has been a leader in trying to address and tackle this issue. We are pleased that HMIP recognised our work in this area in its recent thematic inspection of Black and Mixed-Race boys. Islington is featured in HMIP's good practice review for our project with Haringey Council following this thematic inspection.

3.7 **Love and Loss Group – Responding to Knife Crime**

The Love and Loss program is an emotive knife crime prevention film which was made by the Youth Offending Service and bereaved families from the Love and Loss group. The group provides peer support to families who have experienced the devastating murder of a child or young person in their family. In the film eleven family members – mothers, fathers, cousins and siblings – bravely share their experiences with candour and dignity. They are determined to support and educate young people to make safer choices and want the film to be seen as widely as possible.

The film provides powerful and moving messages about the terrible consequences of knife crime and is designed to be used with young people as part of youth safety work in schools, Pupil Referral Units and youth work settings. The film is appropriate for ages 11+ and it is recommended that it is shown as part of a structured 1:1 or group work sessions.

It is also been shown to young people who are being supported via statutory interventions such as those under the supervision of Youth Offending Services and/or supported by Children's Social Care services e.g. through Child in Need or Child Protection Plans or via the child Being Looked After by the local authority. It is currently being rolled out by Islington's Targeted Youth Support Service in partnership with the Integrated Gangs Team, Youth Offending Service, Street Doctors, The Shaquan Sammy-Plummer Foundation and Project 10/10, to secondary schools and Pupil Referral Units across the borough. The Love and Loss film has been endorsed by the London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), the Youth Justice Board

and the Metropolitan Police. The VRU part funded the project with the Council. The Love and Loss film won the "Best Innovation" award at Islington Council's Epic Awards 2020 and a Civic Award was won by the families recently.

3.8 **Clinical Specialist Panel (CSP)**

The CSP provides a formal framework for multi-agency discussions and management oversight in relation young people with additional and complex needs known to the Youth Offending Service/Targeted Youth Support and Integrated Gangs Team. The panel ensures a co-ordinated approach to the provision of high quality and high impact clinical support to young people. The CSP makes recommendations about what it considers being the most appropriate interventions and referral pathways to both internal and external services and revises and monitors specialist and clinical interventions and outcomes.

The CSP ensures fair access to appropriate services and advocates where appropriate to reduce discrimination and to promote diversity in relation to the additional needs of young people. Youth Offending Service and partners have oversight of intervention plans and co-ordinate multi-agency resources in order to support young people identified of being in need of additional support. To provide management oversight and support the transition and provision for young people with additional needs in the secure estate and identify and ensure appropriate assessment of young people as part of court proceedings.

3.9 **Safeguarding Surgery**

The Safeguarding Surgery allows staff to bring cases for discussion where they have concerns in relation to the progression of a case from a safeguarding perspective. The surgery provides the space for the caseworker to have a discussion with the Head of Service, their manager and a manager from the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance department within Children's Social Care. The objective is also to assist with the wellbeing of staff due to the complexity of cases. There may be potential safeguarding concerns in relation to such a case and whilst the surgery can make decisions about such cases, it is clear that is it not a substitute for the referral of concerns to the 'front door' via the Children's Services Contact Team (CSCT), where there are significant and/or immediate concerns in relation to a child's welfare. The surgery takes place every month. It was highlighted as an area of good practice in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) which took place in December 2018.

3.10 **Islington Group Offending Partnership Panel (IGOPP):**

Tackling youth and young adult serious violence and gang related activity is a priority for the IGOPP. The Integrated Gangs Team has commissioned the introduction of the IGOPP to co-ordinate appropriate, intelligence-led and evidence based multi-agency partnership interventions with individuals who are involved in, at risk of involvement in or directly affected by serious violence and gang related activity across Islington and neighbouring boroughs. The over-arching purpose of the IGOPP is to safeguard the community from serious criminal behaviour by identifying lead agencies to provide targeted strategic responses to localities and the monitoring individuals to prevent association and involvement in group offending, disrupt criminal behaviour and provide support and exit strategies where appropriate. The IGOPP is co-chaired by the Head of Youth Offending, Targeted Youth Support and Integrated Gangs Team, the Detective Inspector for the Integrated Gangs Team and the Community Safety Head of Service.

3.11 **Multi Agency Risk Panel and Custody Panel**

The Multi-Agency Risk Management Panel (MARP) is the forum where statutory cases which are open to the Youth Offending Service are referred for discussion in order to further

safeguard the young person and/or manage the risk that they pose to themselves and/or the general public. The purpose of MARP is to ensure that risk is managed effectively within the Youth Offending Service and that there is high quality management oversight and accountability for all high risk cases. This should include escalation of cases where necessary to ensure shared multi agency responsibility in improving outcomes for young people. The Panel quality assures management decisions, amend Risk Management Plans, and escalate to other agencies at senior level where this is deemed necessary.

The panel further reviews all custody cases on a monthly basis and it is attended by key partners within the secure estate. The Custody component of the panel focuses on those in custody and on community licence. The panel is used to plan and implement intervention to meet individual need. This starts in the custodial establishment following sentence or remand to youth detention accommodation and will continue upon release for the length of the community supervision. Any intervention and support offers consistency and oversight of transition from custody to community. The Custody Panel reviews intervention plans and any additional resource to be identified by a multi professional panel including the secure estate and community partnerships.

3.12 **Youth Offending Service Education, Training and Employment Panels:**

The Youth Offending Service has two education panels to maintain strategic and operational overview young people open to the service in regard to their employment, education and training.

School Age Education Panel – This monthly panel monitors the effectiveness of strategies put in place to ensure school age young people to able to access education provisions that are suited to their needs, risks and vulnerabilities.

Post 16 Tracking Panel – This panel meeting tracks and monitors young people’s post 16 progression and ensures those that are not in employment, education or training have appropriate plans and interventions in place to support them to access opportunities.

Each panel is made up of representatives from relevant stakeholders from Pupil Services, Alternative provision, Early Help, SEN, Educational Psychology and Virtual School as well as the Post 16 progress Manager, Progressions Advisor, iWork Coach. The panels are also supported by representatives from the data and performance teams.

3.13 **Out of Court Scrutiny Panels**

Islington was one of the first areas in London to run Out of Court Scrutiny Panels. These are facilitated twice a year in order to quality assure our work and ensure that the decisions that are being made in relation to such disposals are fair, balanced and appropriate. The panel comprises of senior partners from Police, Youth Offending Service, Her Majesty’s Court Service, Probation, Crown Prosecution Service and Youth Justice Board. At the panel, cases are dip sampled, reviewed and scored in turn by the panel and learning is taken back to the relevant individuals/agencies. These panels have been run to cover Islington and Camden young people due to the fact that the Police share the same Borough Command Unit. Islington’s cases have generally been scored positively indicating that the Out of Court Disposal was the right decision made by the partnership for young people.

In addition, Islington Youth Offending Service was selected by MOPAC to be part of an extraordinary ‘Knife Scrutiny Panel’. The panel comprised on MOPAC representatives, CPS, Police

and Youth Offending Service colleagues. The panel agreed with 90% of Islington's randomly selected cases. It was very positive that the analysis showed that 95% of the children engaged with the interventions and did not re-offend.

3.14 **Hearing and Responding to Young People's Voices**

Young people are partners in strategic and governance orientated meetings to ensure that they have an opportunity to influence the shape of the services that are being provided to them. There are existing forums that capture service user voice such as the Youth Parliament, Youth Council and the Corporate Parenting Board. Young people now also routinely attend the Youth Justices Services Management Board, the strategic youth crime board which is chaired by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, so that their views about the Council's youth crime reduction agenda can be considered.

The Youth Offending Service specifically is continuing to make inroads into increasing and maximising the voice of young people who are service users. There have been a number of well-attended Youth Offending Service participation groups, named You-Led, in recent years and this will continue. The groups combine groups of young people from the Youth Offending Service, Youth Council and from youth-orientated early intervention services and are providing invaluable information and perspectives about young people's needs, issues and challenges in the borough. We have also had participation from young people at our knife harm reduction meetings and community monitoring meetings for stop and search as their suggestions are so essential to tackling the issues as well as a young person speaking at a practitioners' forum on working with adolescents.

Youth Peer Advocate roles have been developed as paid sessional roles for young people known to Youth Offending Service, Integrated Gangs Team and Targeted Youth Support to contribute a wide range of forums and to provide opportunities to support young people in shaping service delivery. Islington young people with experience of the custodial estate and bail support placements have contributed to the London Accommodation Pathfinder focus group.

4. Implications

4.1 **Financial Implications:**

The TYS/YOS budget is £3.2m, of which £1.3m is funded by partners including public health. The service is on track to remain within budget for this financial year except for spend against the Youth Justice Board (YJB) remand grant (£219k), which is forecast to overspend by £300k due to an increase in activity during the year. Activity and spend is monitored closely and reported to Youth Justice Services management board.

4.2 **Legal Implications:**

Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council, following consultation with relevant partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual Youth Justice Plan setting out:

a) How youth justice services in the area will be provided and funded; and

b) How the Youth Offending Team is to be composed and funded, how it will operate and what functions it will carry out.

The plan must then be submitted to the Youth Justice Board.

4.3 **Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:**

There are no environmental implications to note for this report.

4.4 **Resident Impact Assessment:**

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

5. **Conclusion**

5.1 The YOS has made very significant progress in recent years and this is evidenced by some of the content of this report. Young people being worked with and supported by the YOS have often perpetrated concerning offences, but it can often be overlooked that these young people are often very traumatised and that they are victims themselves. The YOS has much work to do to keep these young people and the public safe, but it does so in conjunction with the key partners that help it form its multi-agency system and environment.

Signed by:

Interim Corporate Director Children's Services Date

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