

Appendix C Youth Violence Briefing

Children's services core offer

Preventing Youth Crime Project (- grant funded until end March 2020)

The programme has three strands of support that are delivered by CATCH 22 and Positive Youth Foundation, the project is co-ordinated by children's services with strong input from the Police, Community Safety and other partners. There are 3 main delivery strands:

- **Strand 1** - Front line professionals, parents and communities awareness training. Priority approach given to targeted areas. Training includes awareness raising (risk indicators) and response (how can they help their family, their communities and how to identify, access the right help at the right time).
- **Strand 2** - Prevention activity delivered in schools in the targeted areas. 'Future Proof' programme delivered in primary schools and awareness raising sessions through school assembly programme delivered to primary, secondary and special schools as well as alternative provision.
- **Strand 3** - Intervention activity, using a whole family approach and mentoring. The mentoring will be delivered to young people identified as low or medium risk of becoming involved in gangs or youth crime. The mentors will include young people and community representatives who will be trained to support these young people alongside a team of professional mentors. The other intervention will be an intensive family support package which focuses on addressing the needs of the young person who has been identified as high risk and is usually already engaged in gangs or youth violence and their family.

As part of the referral process for this project a Risk Management team lead on collating information about young people who are deemed to be at risk of exploitation or are being exploited. These young people are identified to the Child Exploitation Coordinator (CEC) via professionals making referrals. The CEC then collates information from a range of sources including, Social Care (LCS), Family Hubs (EHM), Police, Education in order to hold a full picture about these young people. This information is used to ensure that the young person receives the most suitable service which is hoped will result in sustainable change and improved outcomes.

There is information /data also used to map incidents and of needs across the city. This has informed service development through commissioning and expansion of existing specialist services around work to reduce youth violence. This includes the Preventing Youth Crime programme and the introduction of a specialist team within the Horizon service to specifically work with young people and their families who are identified as high risk of engagement of youth violence.

Multi agency Mapping and diversion meetings:

Every month the Coventry Police Chief Inspector, Paul Minor chairs a multi-agency meeting where professionals from Police, Children's services, Whitefriars (Housing), Probation, Department for Work and Pensions, Education, Public Health come together to map information relating to gang violence in the city, the meeting also focusses on diverting young people away from crime. This has been very successful in terms of preventing crime in the city.

Youth Work provision (based in Early Help)

Each of the 8 Family Hubs has a full time Youth Worker in the team. The offer to young people and their families includes:

- **Whole Family Working** – intensive family support where the needs identified are primarily linked to the young person/people in the family. This work might include direct work, advocacy work, supporting engagement in sports and recreational activities to improve their health and wellbeing. Support to ensure that young people are accessing education and or training, this includes improving attendance and reduction of exclusions
- **Return Home Interviews** for young people following missing from home episodes. The purpose is to identify why the young person was missing and to provide support as appropriate
- Deliver a range of **group activities** from the Family Hubs, targeting young people and working on specific issues and themes including child sexual exploitation (CSE), healthy lifestyles, poor self-esteem, isolation and bullying.
- **Detached Youth Work**, targeting young people in their local community where they congregate. This work supports young people to stay safe and understand their local area context.
- **Individual pieces of work** with the young person as part of a family support package. This work will focus on the specific needs of the young person.

- **Here to Help function** in the Family Hubs is supported by youth workers
- **Residential trips**, this has included outdoor pursuits activities both within the city and outside. The young people have been targeted and this has often been their only experience to date of a 'holiday'.
- **Acting as a mentor to community groups** who deliver services and activities to young people in the local community. This includes sharing good practice, signposting and raising awareness of where these groups can access help if they are worried about a young person and their family

Youth Violence Reduction Team

The Horizon team is separated into two sections which include Child Sexual Exploitation and Youth Violence Reduction. The Youth Violence Reduction Team includes two Children and Young People Social Workers, a Children and Families Worker, Youth worker, health representative and two police officers. The team work with young people aged 10-18 years that are residents of Coventry. They must either be deemed as high risk of youth violence under the Child Exploitation screening tool or via the Preventing Youth Crime Panel, having offending history that involves serious youth violence and is linked to group or gang criminality and violence or weapons intelligence in the last six months.

Serious youth violence' is defined by the Home Office Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) as '*any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19*', i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences.

Horizon hold Youth Violence Multi Agency Planning (MAP) meetings which is a forum to share and clarify information, establish risk, consider disruption and develop a multi-agency support plan to meet the needs of children and young people who are involved in Youth Violence (including support for parents/carers). The MAP will also consider whether it is appropriate to transfer a case into the Horizon team. Children/young people, parents/carers can be invited to all or part of the meeting where appropriate and depending on the circumstances and complexity of the case.

In working with young people the Youth Violence Reduction Team hope that they will be able to initiate attitudinal change, behaviour change, that there will be a reduction in offending and reoffending behaviour linked to a reduction in Police intelligence, reduced remand figures, higher engagement with Youth offending orders, young people no longer associating with gangs, reduction in missing episodes, engagement in education/employment, improved relationships within home environments, reduction in significant harm, positive lifestyle choices, increased awareness in terms of healthy relationships, self-respect, wellbeing, dealing with others and thinking about people's feelings.

The Horizon team will move to become a Child Exploitation Team in the near future so there is a dedicated team where case loads are smaller to allow a dedicated multi agency approach

Coventry Youth Offending Service (CYOS)

The key tasks of the service are:

- Assessing and delivering interventions to the Out-of-Court-Disposal cohort
- Management and delivery of community sentences
- Management and delivery of secure estate sentences and resettlement
- Servicing the Youth Court and Crown Courts (in terms of provision of a court team, Bail & Health Assessments, provision of Pre-Sentence Reports and Stand-down Reports)
- Parenting services and management of Parenting Orders
- Victim services

Youth violence challenges include:

- Young people are experiencing an increase in youth violence in their communities and while the majority have the resilience to avoid peer pressure and negative influence there are several young people who are more vulnerable. They have often experienced a number of adverse childhood experiences and are more susceptible to criminal exploitation. This is manifesting itself in several ways including young people receiving serious injuries, witnessing traumatic violence, perpetrating serious offences and being trafficked (county lines activity)

- Fear amongst young people and the misconception that carrying a knife will keep you safe may be translating in to young people with no criminal intent carrying knives for personal safety. **In the Coventry Youth survey 2018 (young people aged 11-18) 37% out of 960 respondents stated that they knew people who carried weapons and 11% knew more than ten people who carried a weapon.** This means that young people are more at risk both in terms of being injured but also being drawn up in to the CJS. Currently young people aged 16 who are carrying a knife must go to court, a life changing conviction for a young person whose motivation was fear
- The perception of the young people who are involved in this type of crime is often focused on the behaviour and not the vulnerability of the child and criminal exploitation that they have been subjected. This presents a risk of overreliance on punitive approaches which at best provide temporary respite for the public. There is growing recognition that young people who may commit offences are also victims. For example, young people are being referred to The National Crime Agency to be assessed for eligibility for “trafficked” status. If this is secured it provides additional support and some protection from prosecution for less serious offences. *In terms of protection from prosecution one of the tests is whether “would a child with the same characteristics of the child being considered behave in the same way in the same situation “*
- Serious youth violence has increased (including towards each other, increased use of weapons in the commission of offences including Robbery’s, Burglary’s and car jackings). This means that the pattern of reduced demand on the Youth Offending Service has ceased. Although the number of young people entering the criminal justice system has not seen significant increases the number of open cases has increased by 14% when comparing March 2018 to March 2019. Young people are getting longer sentences and in addition the contact / supervision levels required from CYOS is increasing
- In the last two financial years, there was an increase from 4 to 16 Intensive Supervision and Surveillance programmes (ISSP), a 25 hour a week programme. The responsibility for delivering this programme falls predominantly on CYOS. This increase, compared to the previous year, equated to an increase in staff hours to the value of just under 60K. This evidences the increased demands generated from just one type of order (CYOS will usually have at least 120 criminal supervision orders open as a snapshot)

- The tensions between the urban street gangs and those young people on the periphery of those groups means that CYOS is unable to use its city centre site for a high number of its supervision sessions as violence between young people attending is a very real risk. This means that a much higher number of offsite visits must take place and the number of group interventions on offer has had to reduce. This is an additional demand on the service as more one to one work is required to manage the young people's safety
- While there is a new Serious Youth Violence Board the impact of that activity is unlikely to be imminent therefore the demands on CYOS, and partners is likely to increase at least in the short term

CYOS activity

CYOS undertakes and supports a number of activities seeking to address youth violence and those detailed below are not an exhaustive list but demonstrate the range in that offer:

- Supporting the development and delivery of professional training opportunities for front line practitioners across the city, this has included developing an understanding of gangs, county lines issues and safeguarding activities such as those accessed via The National Referral Mechanism. This has included delivering training to a Coventry University BASW event
- CYOS provides restorative interventions to victims and offenders. A young person who engages in a restorative conference is less likely to reoffend compared to one that doesn't. The binary reoffending rate for young people at CYOS last year who participated in a conference was 11% compared to the main group at 39.6% (considerably below that of main CYOS cohort)
- CYOS led on a partnership bid securing funding from the Troubled Families Programme: Supporting Families against Youth Crime Fund (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government). This provides training for front line staff to support their responses to criminal exploitation, youth violence, mentoring and provide a service for those at high risk. The mentoring offer also includes an intensive whole family service for those where risk is greatest which is delivered by Catch 22. CYOS remain a core part of this activity
- In response to adverse childhood experiences (ACES) research, both national and local CYOS has an enhanced case management pathway that is available to young people

who have not had the resilience to cope with multiple ACES. This is supported by CYOS clinical nurse specialists in consultation with CAMHS who facilitate formulation meetings to inform the sequencing and identification of interventions

- The use of controls to protect the public and young people are also utilised by the service and this includes additional restrictions, such as curfews and electronic tagging and reporting conditions (for some this can be 7 days a week). In partnership with the police several Criminal Behaviour Order requirements are implemented as appropriate which can include imposing exclusion zones and non-association with specific people (groups of people). The ultimate sanction that CYOS can use is breach if a young person does not comply with the terms of their order. They will be returned to court by CYOS (who prosecute) and ultimately a custodial sentence can be imposed for breach alone
- Local AssetPlus health data identified from the 178 young people subject to AssetPlus assessments by Coventry Youth Offending Service since April 2018 that 74 already had contact with mental health services and 19 had diagnosed mental health conditions. The service has clinical nurse specialists within the team and they offer assessment and interventions as appropriate

Good outcomes/ impact

Youth offending services all have 3 National Indicators of impact. They are First Time Entrants in to the Youth Justice system (FTEs), Reoffending and Custody.

Coventry's Youth Offending Services performance against those indicators are judged against comparator groups including its family group (areas with a similar profile, determined by The Youth Justice Board), West Midlands area and the all England rate.

CYOS good outcomes included;

- Last year a positive fall in the number of FTEs reducing from 311 to 235, which means fewer young people were drawn into the formal criminal justice system. This is a good outcome, as statistically, once in the system young people are more likely to reoffend and are stigmatised by formal criminal record which can impact on their long-term well-being and prospects
- Reoffending performance compared well to its comparator groups (there are two types. Binary which is how many people CYOS worked with went on to reoffend and the

reoffending rate which is calculated taking the total number of reoffences divided by the number of young people CYOS is working with). Against each of those counting rules CYOS sat 2nd overall against the comparator groups. For example, the rate of reoffences for Coventry was at 1.26 compared to a family rate of 1.84 and an England rate of 1.58. In real terms the number of substantive offences went down from 479 to 319 last year

- Last year there was a record low number of young people receiving a custodial sentence in Coventry. This is good news as custody should only be used as a last resort for children and statistically people who went to custody are more likely to reoffend than those who don't. It is important to note that a significant increase in custody is likely in the context of high levels of youth violence. The indicators of this are the gravity of the offences being reported and also the increase in lengthy remands that was experienced at the end of last year.