

**Briefing to:** Sefton Community Safety Partnership  
**Briefing from:** Ros Stanley, Localities Service Manager (YOT)  
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**Subject:** Youth Anti-Social Behaviour  
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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this briefing document is to highlight YOT's:

- experiences of Youth anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- interventions they put in place to deal with Youth ASB
- barriers to achieving success.

## **2 Experiences of Youth ASB**

2.1 Youth offending often extends beyond ASB however is likely to be perceived as ASB due to the impacts on the local community. Offending occurs on a continuum with low level offending involving ASB within the community, with high level offending leading to the commission of serious crime.

## **3 Interventions**

3.1 YOT works with children up from 10 years to 18 years old through out of court and statutory disposals to prevent their continued offending. Primarily this activity addresses safeguarding and risk factors in the child's life, unmet need and additional factors that drives offending behaviour. All children are assessed and planned work is delivered to address identified factors with a focus on prevention, diversion and to support the child to achieve positive outcomes.

3.2 YOT diverts children away from the criminal justice system through out of court disposals, utilising Youth Cautions, Youth Conditional Cautions and Community Resolutions which are brief interventions with the offers of additional support to address any underlying issues. Where possible, YOT encourages access to diversionary activities such as the current Weapons Down Gloves Up programme and the previous Boys Group programme, however these are often external funding dependent. Other services such as Catch 22 and Challenge Me can offer support for children at risk of exploitation and discussions are underway with St Giles Trust to develop their offer. YOT ensures that children and their parents / carers are aware of the youth offer delivered by commissioned providers across the borough.

YOT works in partnership with a wide range of agencies to tailor packages of support such as Venus to address emotional and mental health concerns and We Are With You for substance misuse support, just to name a few. Progress is monitored and further risks are assessed through Risk and Welfare Management Meetings.

## **4 Barriers**

- 4.1 Child exploitation and gang involvement are existing challenges within Sefton which can present barriers to engagement. Within the suite of interventions, work is delivered to educate and support young people to recognise when they are being exploited and support meaningful pathways to exit gang involvement. The partnership focuses upon emotional and mental health support, access to education, further training towards employment and engagement in activities which the young person is interested in, which are highly protective factors and can lead to successful outcomes.
- 4.2 Children attending the pupil referral unit 'Impact' are potentially at risk of exploitation, it was recently highlighted by a child that this was a source of gang recruitment. This has been escalated to Education Excellence and the senior leadership team at Impact. It should be noted that there are many changes within this setting currently, which Sefton's Senior Leaders are aware of.
- 4.3 Additional barriers include the availability of adequate resources across the partnership such as access to mental health support services. It is recognised that entrenched behaviour and dysfunctional family dynamics can create barriers of engagement in the context that help could have been offered at a much earlier point in the child's life. However, there is a current focus on strengthening the offer of support to parents and how YOT can secure integrated support from an emotional / mental health specialist via the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- 4.4 In November 2021, the Association for Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) produced a paper calling for reforms to the criminal justice system. They highlighted that YOTs are dealing with children who present a far greater level of complexity, that nationally more children are being managed on community orders rather than custodial sentences, yet Local Authorities and the Youth Justice Board have experienced significant austerity. Sefton YOT cohort aligns with the issues raised by the ADCS and it is acknowledged that they experience significant challenges. There is a barrier (nationally) in the range of specialist services available and existing capacity to support an increasingly vulnerable cohort of children.

## 5 **Summary**

- 5.1 It is recognised that youth offending is essentially anti-social behaviour and affects Sefton's communities. Through assessment and plans, YOT addresses the causes of offending behaviour and utilises the partnership to divert children away from the criminal justice system and prevent further offending, with the intention to support children to achieve positive outcomes as they head towards adulthood.

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