

Sefton Safer Communities Partnership

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Sefton's Safer Communities Partnership (SSCP) on the activities undertaken by the Integrated Youth Support Service.

2 Recommendation(s) That: SSCP notes the report.

3 Youth Offending Service

3.1 Performance

- 3.2 In Sefton during January 2017 to March 2017 the rate of re-offending was 44.4% compared with 50% during January 2018 to March 2018 an increase of 5.6%. The YOT family average was 42.6%, Merseyside 46.2% and England with 39.2%. This is the highest reoffending rate for some time, with the predominant offences being for drugs and violence related offences.

- 3.3 Many of the young people who receive court orders are entrenched in criminal activity and are hard to engage, albeit YOT have had some recent successes with three young people who were high risk entrenched individuals who have now successfully secured employment. This level of engagement takes time and there are more opportunities to engage young people when they are sentenced to longer orders.

- 3.4 There is a more positive picture with regard to First Time Entrants (FTE), during October 2018 to September 2019 the rate of FTE's in Sefton were 195 compared with 262 during October 2018 to September 2019 a reduction of 67 per 100,000. In actual numbers this translates to a decrease from 61 to 46 in the same period. Sefton is listed as the seventh YOT as having the lowest number of FTE's out of 10 similar YOT's from October 2018 to September 2019.

- 3.5 Custody Rate is the number of young people receiving a custodial sentence. Sefton's custody rate during Apr 18 to Mar 19 was 0.04 and the same during Apr 19 to Mar 20. Performance compares extremely well when compared to the YOT family average of 0.23, Merseyside 0.31 and England 0.23. There are no Sefton young people in custody at present.

- 3.6 During January to March 2018/19, 45 young people in Sefton received an Out of Court Disposal (OOC) from April to June, at three months into their intervention, two of the cohort had re-offended, from April to September, at six months into their intervention five of the cohort had re-offended, from April to December, at nine months, five of the cohort had re-offended and at 12 months, 6 of the cohort had re-offended.

- 3.7 In comparison, January to March 2019/20, 49 young people in Sefton received an informal action, from April to June, at three months 1 of the cohort had re-offended, from April to September at six months six of the cohort had re-

offended, from April to December, at nine months, eight of the cohort had re-offended and at 12 months, 9 of the cohort had re-offended.

- 3.8 This translates into an increase in the re-offending rate for O OCD during 2019/20 with 18.4% compared with 13.3% during 2018/19 , the lowest over the previous eight years, and a reduction compared with 20.0% during 2017/18.
- 3.9 The Out of Court Disposals offer brief interventions up to a maximum of three months, our analysis has shown that many of the young people who access YOT services have had adverse childhood experiences (aces) but tend not engage well with larger youth groups to address the aces. YOT workers are currently adapting the programme to cater for 1-2-1 or small group aces programmes to support young people to increase their resilience and develop aspirations for the future.
- 3.10 YOT will receive funding to deliver these ACES interventions and other diversionary programmes from the Violence Reduction Partnership.

4 Impact of Covid

- 4.1 The impact of COVID-19 upon the operation and performance of youth justice in Sefton will not be fully apparent until the performance figures are available in the next quarter. It is anticipated that there will be a large variance in numbers of young people receiving interventions from the YOT. Initially the numbers of young people receiving new out of court disposals was largely unaffected, however, in recent weeks we have noted a reduction in these cases coming through to the out of court panel.
- 4.2 A proportion of statutory orders have ended, but due to changes in the operation of court, new orders temporarily ceased to be awarded, creating a short-term reduction in YOT caseloads. From this week we have begun to see an increase in young people being sentenced and expect a steady increase in numbers within the YOT cohort.
- 4.3 Prior to the pandemic, all Youth Courts in Merseyside had become centralised and operated out of the Queen Elizabeth II Law Courts (QE2), in Liverpool City Centre. YOT Staff from the centralised YOT court team have been working hard behind the scenes preparing for the 'new normal' and new measures were implemented in July when young people were required to attend court in person for sentence.
- 4.4 Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to support social distancing and safe working practices that will result in the opening of Sefton Magistrates and Wirral Magistrates to young people. Courts are now already processing cases where there has been overnight detention in police custody, breaches, trials and sentencing with pre-sentence reports. An uplift in new statutory cases began in the first week of July and we anticipate a continuation of this trajectory given that courts are now gearing up operations.
- 4.5 YOT interventions continue to take place using a range of methods both virtual and direct. Direct interventions are all risk assessed and YOT is in the process

of aligning risk assessments with other service areas. Young people continue to be risk assessed using a RAG rating system on a weekly basis to ensure that those young people who are most vulnerable or present the greatest risk within the community receive direct contact more frequently.

- 4.6 Sefton have been working with The Ariel Trust and other YOTs utilising funding from the VRP to develop an innovative and comprehensive programme that can be used with young people while lockdown measures remain in place. The programme is aimed at young people who commit (or are likely to commit) violent crimes and focuses on developing decision making skills and helps to build upon desistance factors. The programme uses a range of animations, worksheets and films that have been created locally for this project. Some Sefton young people formed part of a focus group prior to lockdown, in which they advised the programme creators about their experience of Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation, and methods and language that should be used to target this group effectively. The programme is now in its final stages and we hope to be able to launch it very soon.
- 4.7 Sefton YOT has also seized the opportunity to support a piece of research being led by the University of Exeter. The research project will engage with young people and parents open to Sefton YOT to understand how young people make decisions about entering their pleas, particularly when there are vulnerabilities present. It is envisaged that the result will be new guidelines to be utilised by the Law Society and this fits with Sefton YOT's commitment to understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and working with in a trauma informed way.

5 **Youth Service**

- 5.1 The Youth Offer and associated groups continue to operate and engages young people using virtual groups and maintaining additional contact via mobile phone and Apps.
- 5.2 Youth Workers are responding to emerging needs as they continue to support Green Sefton by working in partnership with the police, Police, National Trust, Rangers, Cleansing Department and the Fire along the coastal areas due to the high numbers of visitors converging there and leaving these sites without clearing up after themselves.
- 5.3 The Youth Service is working closely with the Commissioned groups and has signposted them to funding that is available during COVID-19 that will allow them to further develop the additional work they have been doing to support their local communities.
- 5.4 The Youth Service staff have continued to deliver outreach services at hot spot areas looking for any groups that may gather. In partnership with the Neighbourhoods team, staff from the Youth Team are maintaining visits to vulnerable people who the Government identified on the shielding list but have not been able to contact. This work continues with Youth Service support.

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- 5.5 Although It was not possible to celebrate PRIDE in the usual ways this year, celebrations took place using different platforms and young people from Sefton were able to take part in a video for the visual PRIDE. As previously reported, it is still hoped that the PRIDE event will take place at some time in the future.

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